An evaluation of the Gateway Protection Programme: a report commissioned by the Home Office

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Aims

The report documents an evaluation of the Gateway Protection Programme [GPP] which explores how the programme has been delivered by different agencies and investigates the experiences of refugees and their process of resettlement within the first 18 months of arriving in the UK. The evaluation was commissioned by the Home Office.

Methodology

146 adult refugees participated in the research: 105 from Iraq, 18 from Democratic of Republic of Congo and 23 from Burma of Rohingya ethnicity.

Methods included:

- 146 questionnaires with refugees
- focus groups with 35 men and women from the three nationality groups
- 48 interviews with agency staff running the GPP

Data was collected across the UK [locations included Bradford, Hull and Sheffield] at 6, 12 and 18 months after the refugees' arrival in the UK and took place between October 2009 and November 2010.

Key issues

The report focuses on:

- satisfaction with support to new arrivals
- access to ESOL
- integration to life in the UK
- service provider responses to refugees' needs

- access to employment and volunteering
- satisfaction with accommodation
- incidents of hate crimes
- access to health care

Conclusions

The report highlights that while GPP caseworkers tried to promote greater independence amongst clients after 12 months, client satisfaction was related to how often they had contact with their caseworker. Client satisfaction therefore lessened over time. ESOL provision was not sufficient in meeting demand. There was evidence of social networks and support amongst all three nationality groups. A significant minority faced barriers in accessing health care and a large minority experienced race hate crime. Experiences of integration were shaped by gender, nationality and the area they lived in.

Recommendations

- Support should be tailored to the specific needs of individuals and nationalities.
- Learning English is critical for integration and therefore ESOL provision needs to be extended.
- Training and employment support should be extended beyond 12 months.

- Clients need greater support in reporting hate crime.
- The continued promotion of volunteering is necessary as an important first step towards employment.

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