Finding Sanctuary, Enriching Yorkshire & Humber


December 2008
Written and Developed by:

Dave Brown
Refugee Integration Manager
Yorkshire & Humber Regional Migration Partnership
Contents

1. Introduction 4
2. About the Integration Strategy 5
3. Vision, Aim & Objectives 6
4. Defining Refugees and Asylum Seekers 8
5. Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Yorkshire & Humber 9
6. Integration 10
7. Consultation and Research 11
8. Housing 12
9. Health 13
10. Employment & Skills 14
11. Safety 15
12. Community & Society 16
13. Children & Young People 17
Appendix: How To Take Part In The Consultation 18
1. Introduction

This document is the draft integration strategy for refugees and asylum seekers in the Yorkshire & Humber region (Y&H). The consultation period is from 11th December 2008 until 13th March 2009. Details of how to respond to the consultation are in the Appendix, p.18.

1.1 Yorkshire & Humber Regional Migration Partnership

The Yorkshire & Humber Regional Migration Partnership (YHRMP) is a partnership of organisations from the statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors that work to ensure appropriate policies, services, advice and support for refugees, asylum seekers, migrant workers and other migrants the Yorkshire and Humber region. YHRMP acts as the secretariat for the Yorkshire & Humber Strategic Migration Group (YHSMG), which is the executive body bringing the partners together and co-ordinating the strategic approach across the region.

1.2 Refugee Integration Programme

The Refugee Integration Programme is funded by Yorkshire Forward and delivered by the Refugee Integration Manager at YHRMP. The Refugee Integration Programme is funded for three years to provide strategic co-ordination for refugee and asylum seeker integration across Y&H. This includes a number of different projects in partnership with other organisations and the writing and implementation of the Integration Strategy for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

1.3 Previous Integration Strategy (2003-2006)

The previous Y&H refugee ‘Regional Integration Strategy 2003 – 2006’ was published in 2003 by the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (previous name of YHRMP). This was the first regional refugee strategy in the UK and introduced the particular barriers, needs and issues for refugees in Y&H providing a strategic framework and a useful tool for policy-makers and practitioners. The new strategy will build on this success, with additional elements of increased consultation, an action plan and a Refugee Integration Manager to oversee the implementation.

1.4 Strategic Context

The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Integration Strategy links to a number of other strategies, both mainstream and relating to refugees and asylum seekers.

1.4.1 Refugee and Asylum Seeker Strategies

The national refugee integration strategy, ‘integration matters’ was published in 2005 by the Home Office and is currently being reviewed. Other regions (and nations) of the UK have produced or are developing refugee (and asylum seeker) integration strategies. Local refugee strategies have been produced in some areas of Y&H and currently being developed in others.

1.4.2 Mainstream Strategies

The Integrated Regional Framework provides a basis from which to develop a Single Regional Strategy setting out the region’s economic, environmental and social objectives. The Integrated Regional Framework states that a key regional action is to, “respond to the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers resident throughout the region”\(^2\). The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Integration Strategy is related to other regional strategies such as the Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Housing Strategy. The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Integration Strategy also links to Local Area Agreements (LAAs) and can be used in the development and delivery of LAA outcomes and indicators e.g. cohesion.

---

\(^1\) Yorkshire and Humber Assembly, ‘Growing Together: Integrated regional Framework’

\(^2\) Yorkshire & Humber Assembly, P. 63 (Regional Challenge 9 ‘reducing inequality and embracing diversity’),
2. About the Integration Strategy
This document is a draft strategy. The final strategy will be published after the consultation. The draft includes a number of different sections. Details of how to respond to the consultation, and areas which we are particularly keen to gather your views on, are in the Appendix, p.18.

2.2 Vision, Aims and Objectives (Section 3)
There is an overall vision, aim and objectives for the strategy. All proposals throughout the document link to the vision, aim and objectives.

2.1 Background (Sections 4 – 7)
These sections set the context, define refugees and asylum seekers, integration and detail of the consultation.

2.3 Subject Areas (Sections 8 – 13)
There are six subject areas of integration in the strategy:
- Housing
- Health
- Employment & Skills
- Safety
- Community & Society
- Children & Young People

2.3.1 Challenges
For each subject area, there is a sub-section focusing on the challenges for refugees and asylum seekers. These challenges are regional due to nature of the dispersal and settlement of refugees and asylum seekers across the region.

2.3.2 Proposals
There are proposals under each subject area which will form the basis of the final action plan (see below section 2.4). The proposals relate specifically to the regional level, but could also be replicated locally. The proposals do not focus on national policy and provision.

2.3.3 Strategic Links
There will be an indication of how each subject area links strategically on a regional and local level to the Regional Challenges in the Integrated Regional Framework and National Indicators in Local Area Agreements.

2.4 Action Plan
The final strategy will include an action plan based upon the proposals, identifying who will carry out the actions with a timetable for delivery.

2.5 Implementation
All regional partners will have their specific responsibilities for implementation and the Refugee Integration Manager will oversee the overall implementation of the strategy.

2.6 Timescale
The final strategy will be launched in May 2009. The lifeline of the strategy fits with that of other regional strategies and will require a review in 2011. It is anticipated that at this point the strategy will be reviewed, updated and continued.
3. Vision, Aim & Objectives:

3.1 Vision:
The vision for refugee and asylum seeker integration in the region is:

*Refugees and asylum seekers find sanctuary in Yorkshire & Humber, become full members of society and contribute to all aspects of life in the region.*

3.2 Aim:
The aim of the integration strategy is to:

- **Integrate** refugees and asylum seekers into the Yorkshire and Humber region and its local communities

3.3 Objectives:
The objectives of the integration strategy are to:

- Develop **data**, statistics and intelligence about refugees and asylum seekers
- Improve **understanding** of refugees and asylum seekers
- Provide **co-ordination** and co-operation across the region
- Enable **planning**, strategies and policies include refugees and asylum seekers
- Ensure that **services** meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers
- Increase **participation** and representation of refugees and asylum seekers
- Enhance **contributions** of refugees and asylum seekers to the region
4. Defining Refugees and Asylum Seekers

‘Refugees and Asylum Seekers’ refers collectively to all refugees, asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers, as defined below. Refugees and asylum seekers are ‘forced migrants’, who have made a claim for protection under the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The UN Convention defines refugees as people who,

“owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his [or her] nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself [or herself] of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his [or her] formal habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” 3.

Refugees and asylum seekers, while sharing certain needs with other groups of migrants and BME groups, suffer from specific multiple disadvantage, exclusion, inequalities and needs. Certain groups of refugees and asylum seekers experience further disadvantage, for example due to their gender, age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation.

4.1 Refugee

A person given leave to remain in the UK as a result of a process which began with a claim and/or assessment under the UN Convention.

In the UK and internationally, a refugee is defined in legal terms as a person who fits the criteria of the UN convention (see above). UK policy towards ‘refugees’ includes people who receive leave to remain in the UK on a similar basis but who do not necessarily fit into the strict criteria of the UN Convention and ‘Refugee Status’. 4 There are different statuses of refugees including Refugee Status (RS), Humanitarian Protection (HP), Discretionary Leave (DL), Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) 5 and Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). Most refugees in the UK have been asylum seekers, receiving a decision on their claim and being given RS, ELR, HP or DL. Some refugees receive a positive decision on their case as part of backlog criteria such as the ‘Family ILR Exercise’ and ‘Case Resolution’, and these refugees receive ILR. Some people arrive as refugees through the ‘Gateway’ resettlement programme, having already been granted refugee status prior to entering the UK. 6

Refugees in general have the same rights as British Citizens, including the right to work, benefits, social housing, and healthcare. However, some entitlements are more complicated and differ between different statuses such as family reunion, travel documents, Higher Education financial support and the integration loan. 7

Refugees receiving RS or HP since 1st October 2008 can access the Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES), which is a national programme funded by UKBA, delivered on a regional basis through a number of partners to provide support particularly in the transition period upon becoming a refugee. Refugees arriving into the UK through the Gateway

---

3 UN, 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
5 ELR was replaced by HP and DL on 1st April 2003
7 See Brown, 2008, ‘Status and Category Matter: Refugee types, entitlements and integration support’, YHRMP.
resettlement scheme receive support for one year. Refugees who receive ILR through Case Resolution or refugees receiving Discretionary Leave do not receive any integration support.

There is no clear definition of when someone stops being a ‘refugee’, as this is dependent on an individual’s perception and identity. For some, gaining British Citizenship can mark this point but others remain a ‘refugee’ for life and sometimes into following generations. This strategy focuses on refugees who have entered Yorkshire & Humber since the beginning of the dispersal process to the region in 1999.

4.2 Asylum Seeker

A person who has applied for protection under the UN Convention and is awaiting a decision on this outcome (including those who are at different stages of appeal).

Most asylum seekers dispersed in Y&H will be placed in Initial Accommodation (induction centres) for a short period of time. They will then be dispersed to one of ten areas within the region receiving housing a ‘no-choice basis’ and financial support equivalent to 70% of Income Support (Section 95 Support). Some asylum seekers may choose ‘Subsistence Only Support’, which is the financial support without the housing.8

Asylum seekers are not allowed to work, but may be given permission if they are waiting for longer than 12 months for an initial decision on their asylum claim. They have full entitlements to healthcare.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) are supported by Social Services.

4.3 Refused Asylum Seeker

A person who was previously an asylum seeker, whose claim for asylum and subsequent appeals have been refused with all appeal rights exhausted.

Refused asylum seekers may have access to Section 4 Support, which includes housing on a ‘no-choice basis’ and £35 vouchers per week.9 However, there is strict eligibility criteria including signing to voluntary return to their country of origin. Refused asylum seekers who do not access Section 4 Support have no access to housing or financial support and are sometimes referred to as ‘destitute’.

Refused asylum seekers are not allowed to work. They have full entitlements to healthcare (at the time of writing).

4.4 Including All Refugees and Asylum Seekers

In Y&H, we believe that all refugees and asylum seekers should be integrated as far as their status allows. ‘Integration’ (see section 6) is harder for asylum seekers and particularly difficult for refused asylum seekers, because of their status and national policy on rights and entitlements.

We believe that the integration of refugees and asylum seekers is beneficial to these individuals and also enriches the whole of the Yorkshire and Humber region. This is important for community cohesion, fulfilling social responsibilities and as part of a civilised and decent society.

---

8 The housing and financial support for asylum seekers is paid for by UKBA. Housing is provided by Local Authorities and other providers.

9 Section 4 Support is paid for by UKBA, and provided by Local Authorities and other providers.
5. Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Yorkshire & Humber

5.1 History
Migration to the Yorkshire & Humber has occurred for hundreds of years. Early refugee groups in the UK include Huguenots (late 17th century), and Jews fleeing persecution in Eastern Europe (late 19th century). There were many groups of refugees throughout the 20th Century arriving in Y&H including from the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, Hungarians, Ugandan Asians, Chileans, Vietnamese, Bosnians and Kosovans.

5.2 Dispersal
The dispersal of asylum seekers across the UK began in 1999 in order to relieve the perceived pressure on accommodation and services in London and the South East. This led to a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers in Y&H (and other regions), and development of support services working with refugees and asylum seekers.

5.3 Numbers of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Y&H

5.3.1 Estimate of Total Number of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Y&H
The estimated total number of refugees and asylum seekers in the Yorkshire & Humber region is 28,000 – 39,000. This represents 0.5% – 0.75% of the total population of the Yorkshire & Humber region.

5.3.2 Refugees
There are 15,000 – 20,000 refugees estimated to be living in Y&H. Roughly 50% of asylum seekers in Y&H become refugees. Estimating the number of refugees is difficult because there is not accurate data available for every type of refugee that receives status\(^{10}\), and little information on the number of refugees entering or leaving the region after receiving their status.

5.3.3 Asylum Seekers
There are 5,500 asylum seekers estimated to be living in Y&H at the time of writing:
- 300 – 350 asylum seekers estimated to be in Initial Accommodation (Induction centres)
- 4,400 in dispersal housing and receiving Subsistence Support
- 240 asylum seekers receiving Subsistence Only Support
- 400 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASCs)
- There are also a few unsupported asylum seekers, but there is no estimate of the number

5.3.4 Refused Asylum Seekers
There are 7,500 – 13,500 refused asylum seekers estimated to be living in Y&H.
- 3,500 refused asylum seekers receiving Section 4 Support
- 4,000 – 10,000 destitute refused asylum seekers estimated to be living in Y&H. Estimating the number of destitute refused asylum seekers there are in the region is difficult because there is no clear data on the number of people who return to their country of origin, or those who enter or leave the region.

\(^{10}\) See section 4.1
6. Integration

6.1 Existing Definitions
Integration is a contested concept and defined in many ways. Below are a selection of some existing relevant definitions of ‘integration’, relating to refugees and asylum seekers.

6.1.1 European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE). This is a Europe-wide definition which was used in the previous Y&H Refugee Integration Strategy:

“A long-term two-way process of change that relates to both the conditions for and the actual participation of refugees in all aspects of life of the country of durable asylum as well as to the refugees’ own sense of belonging and membership of European societies. The objective of integration programmes and policies should be the establishment of a mutual and responsible relationship between individual refugees, civil society and host states which promotes equality, self-determination and sustainable self-sufficiency and acceptance and positive action in favour of refugees by European governments and societies” (Report of the Third European Conference on the Integration of Refugees, Brussels, 1999)

6.1.2 Home Office
Definition from ‘Integration Matters: A national strategy for refugee integration’:

“Integration takes place when refugees are empowered to: achieve their full potential; contribute to the community; and access the services to which they are entitled” (Home Office, 2005)

6.1.3 Commission on Integration & Cohesion
Definition of integration in ‘Our Shared Future’:

“…Integration is principally the process that ensures new residents adapt to one another” (CIC, 2007)

6.1.4 Refugee Council
Definition of integration in ‘Agenda for Integration’:

“Fundamentally it is a two-way process which places demands in both the receiving society and on the refugee” (Refugee Council, 2004)

6.2 Yorkshire & Humber Definition of Integration
The Refugee Integration Programme in Y&H has been based on two principles:

- Integration is a two-way process involving both refugees and asylum seekers, and local host communities.
- Integration begins on day one

Through all stages of the consultation (see section 7.1), people have been asked to define integration. There has been a variety of responses with key themes emerging. These include mixing, fitting in, welcome, acceptance, feeling safe, equality, two-way process, contributing, understanding, respect, participation, living with different people, being part of the community and society.

In the final strategy we will clarify how we define the ‘integration’ of refugees and asylum seekers in the Yorkshire & Humber region, taking all of these into account.
7. Consultation and Research
Consultation and research has been central to the development of this strategy and the main elements are detailed below. These have formed the basis of the challenges identified and the proposals.

7.1 Consultation
There has been a long period of consultation for this strategy, composed of different elements, targeting refugees and asylum seekers and organisations and individuals working with refugees and asylum seekers. The detailed findings and results of all of these consultations will be available in a separate report.

7.1.1 Refugee and Asylum Seeker Consultation
There were 302 responses to the consultation received from refugees and asylum seekers. 2,600 questionnaires were circulated through 40 organisations in August and September 2008.

7.1.2 Refugee Focus Groups
Focus groups with 3 different ‘types’ of refugees were held in Spring 2008 with 28 participants. A report has been written and is available on the refugeeaccess website in January 2009.11

7.1.3 Organisations and Individuals Written Consultation
There were 37 responses from a range of organisations and individuals across the region. The Written Consultation for Organisations and Individuals was circulated in May 2008.

7.1.4 Culture Consultation
There were 25 responses to the Culture and Integration consultation in Autumn 2007. The consultation was open to anyone, and the respondents included refugees and asylum seekers, and other individuals across the region.

7.1.5 Other Consultation
Other consultation sessions have been held with organisations, groups and individuals.

7.2 Research
Two projects have been key to collating and using the evidence from existing research on refugees and asylum seekers in Y&H in order to develop the strategy.

7.2.1 Asylum Seeker and Refugee Research Yorkshire & Humber Bibliography
Developed by the Refugee Integration Manager to collect all research about refugees and asylum seekers in Y&H, and make the list available to people across the region. Over 60 reports were found, and a bibliography produced to go on the refugeeaccess website12.

7.2.2 ‘Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Yorkshire & Humber, 1999-2008: A review of literature for Yorkshire Futures’13
Report commissioned by Yorkshire Futures (in partnership with YHRMP) to review existing research into refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants in Y&H. The final report will be published in January 2009 and the findings have fed directly into this draft strategy.

11 Dwyer, (forthcoming) Integration? The perceptions and experiences of refugees in Yorkshire and the Humber, YHRMP.
12 www.refugeeaccess.info/integration
8. Housing

8.1 Challenges
Refugees and asylum seekers have mixed experiences of housing. The majority of have positive experiences of housing, although some have less positive experiences.

There is no reliable data on refugee housing needs, experiences and settlement patterns across the region.

Refugees, when they receive their status, have up to 28 days to leave their previous accommodation and move into mainstream housing. They often encounter difficulties in the transition period after leaving asylum support, such as waiting times, lack of availability of social housing and difficulties entering private housing. Refugees are not always fully aware of the housing processes and entitlements.

Most asylum seekers will be accommodated in Initial Accommodation (induction centres), and then moved on a no-choice basis into dispersal housing across Y&H. Asylum seekers may have different experiences of housing in terms of standards and support between providers and services.

Refused asylum seekers may access Section 4 Support housing, although the standards may vary. However, most refused asylum seekers are ‘destitute’, either rough sleeping or ‘hidden homeless’.

Refugees and asylum seekers have limited participation in housing issues.

8.2 Proposals
1. Research housing needs and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers
2. Address housing needs of refugees and asylum seekers in regional and local strategies
3. Meet housing needs of refugees particularly during transition from asylum support
4. Provide suitable housing for asylum seekers
5. Reduce the impact of homelessness among destitute refused asylum seekers
6. Increase refugee and asylum seeker participation in housing matters

8.3 Strategic Links
• Integrated Regional Framework – Regional Challenge numbers 5 & 9
• Local Area Agreements – National Indicator numbers 154-160
9. Health

9.1 Challenges
Refugees and asylum seekers often have specific health needs relating to persecution in their country of origin, existing health conditions or those that have developed since coming to the UK.

Refugees and asylum seekers currently all have full entitlements to healthcare services, although some are unclear of their entitlements and fear being charged, and health workers may sometimes be equally unclear. Access to services such as GPs, secondary care and dentists can be a problem for refugees and asylum seekers with impacts upon their health and well-being and other aspects of their lives and integration. Language can create problems in communication and interpreters are not always provided.

Refugees and asylum seekers may have health conditions which are related to the period of time before entering the UK, such as certain communicable diseases, longer-term health conditions, injuries and chronic pain linked to torture, and conditions relating to their sexual health. There are also specific health needs for groups including women, disabled and older refugees and asylum seekers.

A high proportion of refugees and asylum seekers suffer from mental health issues, which can include for example depression, anxiety, PTSD, trauma and surviving torture. There are few specialist mental health services for refugees and asylum seekers and where these exist they tend to have large waiting lists.

9.2 Proposals
1. Research health needs of refugees and asylum seekers and service provision
2. Regional strategic health co-ordination for refugees and asylum seekers, and ensuring health needs addressed in regional and local strategies
3. Ensure access to health services and clarity of entitlements
4. Provide adequate health services for refugees and asylum seekers
5. Ensure mental health needs are met for refugees and asylum seekers suffering from trauma and surviving torture
6. Improve participation of refugees and asylum seekers in health services

9.3 Strategic Links
- Integrated Regional Framework – Regional Challenge numbers 6 & 9
- Local Area Agreements – National Indicator numbers 119 - 150

---

Refused asylum seekers previously had some restrictions on healthcare until April 2008
10. Employment & Skills

10.1 Challenges
Refugees have permission to work but a high proportion are unemployed despite many having qualifications, experience and a desire to work. Where refugees are employed, they are often also underemployed in jobs that do not match their skills and experience. Barriers include language, lack of UK work experience, and not recognising qualifications. The attitudes of employers and staff in mainstream organisations can also be a barrier, as some are not aware of refugees’ entitlements, needs and barriers to employment.

Asylum seekers are not entitled to work\(^\text{15}\), which can be a difficult experience and may last for a number of years. Refused asylum seekers are not allowed to work and being either destitute or receiving limited support, they are especially vulnerable to informal working and exploitation.

Volunteering can be important for refugees and asylum seekers to build their skills, gain experience of UK working culture and society and provide a sense of contribution and self-worth. This is particularly important for those without permission to work.

English language is one of the most important factors for refugees and asylum seekers gaining employment, accessing services and integration. Refugees are entitled to free ESOL, but asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers are entitled only if they’ve been in the UK over 6 months and receiving support\(^\text{16}\). There can also be difficulties accessing all levels of English language provision due to waiting lists, lack of classes and costs.

Further Education entitlements are the same as for ESOL and therefore access for some is limited. Further Education is important for qualifications, training, skills and advice especially for those without entitlement to work. Access to Higher Education is limited as only refugees receive home fee status, and financial support is available for only certain types of refugee. Refugees and asylum seekers also often do not receive or access the support needed to help them in to Further and Higher Education.

10.2 Proposals
[This section of the strategy will be very closely linked to the ‘Framework for action on employment and skills for refugee and asylum seekers in Yorkshire and the Humber’\(^\text{17}\)]
1. Improve data on refugee and asylum seeker employment and skills
2. Meet English Language needs for all refugees and asylum seekers
3. Increase access and support into Further Education and Higher Education
4. Increase employment rate of refugees and the level at which they are employed
5. Support refugee entrepreneurs and business start-up
6. Increase employer engagement with refugees and asylum seekers
7. Encourage volunteering opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers

10.3 Strategic Links
- Integrated Regional Framework – Regional Challenge numbers 4, 7 & 9
- Local Area Agreements – National Indicator numbers 6, 151-153, 161-166, 171-174, 176, 180-184

\(^{15}\) Unless they have not received an initial decision on their asylum claim in 12 months
\(^{16}\) Such as Section 95 Support or Section 4 Support
\(^{17}\) Skills Strategy Research (forthcoming) developed on behalf of the Regional Skills Partnership
11. Safety

11.1 Challenges
The primary reason for refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK is for safety, and most are grateful to be safe from persecution, to have peace, human rights, and freedom. However, some believe that they have not always received the sanctuary, rights and treatment that they hoped for.

Many refugees and asylum seekers have difficulties accessing legal provision and representation, particularly since the reduction in legal aid funding. A lack of adequate legal representation can potentially affect the outcome of an asylum claim and thus whether an asylum seeker becomes a refugee or is returned to danger in their country of origin.

Discrimination, racism and harassment are significant issues for refugees and asylum seekers. It is likely these are under-reported for a variety of reasons. Discrimination, racism and harassment can have impacts upon all aspects of integration and their life in the UK.

Family separation can be particularly difficult for refugees and asylum seekers, particularly separation from family in their country of origin, whose whereabouts are sometimes unknown. Refugees may face difficulties being reunited with their families.

Pressures and tensions within families can increase as a result of refugee and asylum seeker experiences in their country of origin, in transit between countries and after arrival in the UK. Refugees and asylum seeker women who experience domestic violence may have particular difficulties because as they may be dependent on their husband’s (partner’s) asylum claim, and additionally a women’s refuge may not support them because of their status.

11.2 Proposals
1. Promote Yorkshire & Humber as a region of safety and sanctuary
2. Monitor and reduce discrimination, racism and harassment
3. Ensure refugees and asylum seekers access adequate services and information related to family separation and reunion
4. Support refugees and asylum seekers with issues of domestic violence and family tensions
5. Provide adequate legal representation for refugees and asylum seekers
6. Provide information to refugees and asylum seekers on their rights and responsibilities

11.3 Strategic Links
- Integrated Regional Framework – Regional Challenge numbers 8 & 9
- Local Area Agreements – National Indicator numbers 15 – 49
12. Community & Society

12.1 Challenges

Lack of awareness, misconceptions, prejudice and fear can lead to negative perceptions and attitudes of local host communities, and can be a major barrier to integration.

The media has a central role in influencing public opinion around the issue of refugees and asylum seekers, providing much of the local host communities’ knowledge on the issue. Negative media coverage impacts directly upon the integration of refugees and asylum seekers. Politicians have also sometimes heightened the debate around refugees and asylum seekers, affecting public opinion. The media and politicians generally have tended to be more positive about refugees and asylum seekers locally than nationally.

Local host communities sometimes believe that they have not been adequately consulted about refugees and asylum seekers in their neighbourhoods and this can lead to a belief that legitimate concerns are not taken seriously or are dismissed.

Refugees and asylum seekers and local host communities do not always mix together. Mixing is central to integration but sometimes the lives of refugees and asylum seekers and those of local host communities do not overlap.

Refugees and asylum seekers make some use of libraries, but less is known of museums and galleries and the arts. Refugees and asylum seekers often do not participate in sport.

There is insufficient information about the importance of religion, faith and faith communities to refugees and asylum seekers and the affect upon integration.

Refugees and asylum seekers have limited participation in their local communities and neighbourhoods either as Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) or as individuals.

12.2 Proposals

1. Improve ‘mixing’ of refugees and asylums seekers with other communities
2. Develop information and consultation with local host communities about refugees and asylum seekers
3. Encourage responsible media and political coverage of refugee and asylum seeker issues
4. Plan and increase the cultural participation of refugees and asylum seekers (e.g. Arts, Museums, Libraries and Galleries)
5. Increase refugee and asylum seeker participation in sport
6. Improve representation of refugees and asylum seekers through refugee community organisations and as individuals

12.3 Strategic Links

- Integrated Regional Framework – Regional Challenge numbers 6, 8 & 9
- Local Area Agreements – National Indicator numbers 1 - 14, 21 -25, 175, 195, 196
13. Children & Young People

13.1 Challenges
Refugee and asylum seeker children and young people have a range of needs and experiences which differ from adults, and if unaccompanied they also have different statuses and support structures.

There is a lack of knowledge and evidence on a regional level about the lives, experiences and needs of refugee and asylum seeker children and young people.

Schools may have difficulties with refugee and asylum seeker children if the school are unprepared or inexperienced in working with this group. Schools can be a difficult experience for some refugee and asylum seeker children. Entering education at a later age can often be problematic for refugee and asylum seekers, and may lead to them not receiving adequate education, skills and qualifications.

Mainstream services do not always recognise the specific problems faced by refugee and asylum seeker children and young people, and receive no training that would enable this.

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASCs) may face particular difficulties as children and also in the transition to adulthood.

Often some services and support are designed for UASCs, without similar support for issues faced by children and young people who are part of a refugee and asylum seeker family.

Childcare for refugees and asylum seekers is often a barrier for accessing services and employment.

Child poverty and social exclusion for refugees and asylum seekers can impact on them throughout their lives.

13.2 Proposals
1. Research the needs of refugee and asylum seeker children and young people
2. Ensure that the needs of refugee and asylum seeker children are met and recognising the needs of the child as central, regardless of immigration status
3. Ensure sufficient support for schools and refugee and asylum seeker children who attend them
4. Enable people working with refugee and asylum seeker children to understand and identify their needs
5. Provide suitable and consistent support for UASCs across the region
6. Meet the childcare needs of refugees and asylum seekers
7. Increase participation of refugee and asylum seeker children and young people in issues that affect them

13.3 Strategic Links
- Integrated Regional Framework – Regional Challenge numbers 7 & 9
- Local Area Agreements – National Indicator numbers 50 – 118
Appendix: How to take part in the consultation

The consultation period is from 11th December until 13th March 2009.

Responding to the Consultation
Comments are welcome on any part of the strategy. In particular the following comments would be useful:

1. **Vision, Aims & Objectives (Sections 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3)** – Do you think that these are correct for refugee and asylum seeker integration in Y&H?
2. **Integration (Sections 6.1 & 6.2)** – How should we define integration in Yorkshire & Humber?
3. **Challenges (Sections 8 – 13)** – Are the challenges identified the correct regional challenges for Y&H?
4. **Proposals (Sections 8 – 13)** – Are the proposals the correct regional proposals for Y&H?
5. **Action Plan (Sections 8 – 13)** – What actions should be taken at the regional level to take these proposals forward? What actions will your organisation be taking to address the challenges and proposals?
6. **Strategic Links (Sections 8 – 13)** – Are the Regional Challenges and National Indicators correct for each section? Which strategies should link to and include refugee and asylum seeker integration? What is the best way in which to include these issues in other strategies?

Returning your consultation response
Please send consultation responses no later than 13th March 2009. Include your name, organisation and contact details.

Electronic: 
davd.2.brown@leeds.gov.uk

By Post:
David Brown
Refugee Integration Manager
Yorkshire & Humber Regional Migration Partnership
4th Floor Phoenix House,
3 South Parade
Leeds
LS1 5QX

Further Information:
For further information about the strategy or to discuss issues relating to refugee and asylum seeker integration, please contact the Refugee Integration Manager:

Dave Brown
0113 2143946
david.2.brown@leeds.gov.uk