

Social Justice and Regeneration Committee

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Draft Refugee Inclusion Strategy

Executive Summary

The Refugee Inclusion Strategy for Wales sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's vision and 3 year strategy for achieving refugee inclusion in Wales. It also sets out the core principles which will underpin this work.

The evidence base for the Strategy was developed through focus group research; a comprehensive literature review; questionnaire feedback; and workshops and interviews with key stakeholders.

The Strategy is placed within a policy and legislative context, taking into account the profile of refugee, asylum seeking and receiving communities in Wales and work already undertaken to date.

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with partners to deliver the strategy and will continue to seek ongoing advice from those with expertise in this area. The document sets out its overall arrangements for doing this.

Six key areas provide the framework for the Strategy:

Language, communication and information: increasing access to high quality and appropriate interpretation and translation facilities; promoting better understanding and challenging negative attitudes in refugee and receiving communities; making reliable and easy to understand information available for receiving and refugee and asylum seeking communities, and building refugee understanding of life in the UK and our rights and responsibilities.

Building strong communities: building stronger links and greater understanding between refugee and asylum seeking and non-refugee communities; increasing the capacity of Refugee Community Organisations and voluntary and community groups working towards refugee inclusion; developing better links between service providers, decision makers and refugee communities and building safe communities.

Fulfilling potential: strengthening the workforce in Wales by improving refugee access to appropriate employment and training; improving refugee and asylum seeker English and Welsh language skills; promoting volunteering and strengthening Wales' cultural identity through participation in arts, culture and sports.

Accessing core services: providing fair and equal access to the core services which people are entitled

to including Housing, Education, Health and Social Care; increasing advice and advocacy services to support asylum seekers and refugees to access these services; providing information and training for service providers and refugees and asylum seekers; developing a good evidence base for service planning; promoting flexible service provision to meet needs.

Understanding diversity and supporting the most vulnerable: recognising t

A framework for monitoring and evaluation: providing clear mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and review to ensure the strategy is effective over time.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Vision

Global migration is a reality of the 21st century and brings many exciting opportunities for Wales. Wales has a rich heritage of migration and it will continue to be an important part of our future. It can also bring challenges and we are determined to manage the impact of migration effectively to make sure we overcome these and harness the opportunities.

People fleeing war and persecution have a right to asylum and we are proud to continue to provide a place of safety for them in Wales. The strategy aims to ensure that they are able to restart their lives here and make a full contribution to society.

This strategy is one of a range of ways in which the Welsh Assembly Government is working towards a prosperous future for Wales which is free from racism and discrimination and where everyone is enabled to fulfil their potential, to have fair and equal access to services and participate fully in the political and civic life of the country.

Who is the strategy aimed at?

The strategy is aimed at policy makers and service providers working with refugees and asylum seekers across Wales, whether in the public, private or voluntary sector.

This includes Welsh Assembly Government officials, Local Authorities, Local Health Boards, Local Education Authorities, Housing providers, Colleges and Universities, Careers Wales, Jobcentre Plus, Police Authorities, Community Voluntary Councils, Volunteer Bureaux, Refugee Community Organisations and key voluntary groups.

Purpose of the strategy

The strategy intends to:

provide a clear strategic framework for all those working towards refugee inclusion in Wales;

co-ordinate the work of the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners to maximise impact and resources;

set out actions that the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners will take over the coming 3 years; and

set out a framework for monitoring and evaluation.

How has the strategy been developed?

The Welsh Assembly Government All Wales Refugee Policy Forum (AWRPF) established a multi-agency steering group to advise on the strategy's development. The group met regularly throughout the strategy's development

In order to develop an evidence base for the strategy, the Welsh Assembly Government commissioned Cardiff University to conduct a literature review and focus group research with refugees and asylum seekers across Wales. Thirty five focus groups held with 137 refugees and asylum seekers as well as some one to one interviews. They were held in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham across different national groups and included men, women, children and young people, disabled people, traumatised and older refugees and asylum seekers.

In addition, all partners and stakeholders were invited to provide evidence and feed in proposals through a questionnaire and consultation sessions were held at key networks.

Reports setting out the evidence base will be available on the Welsh Assembly Government website at www.wales.gov.uk.

Definitions

Refugee Inclusion

Refugee inclusion is a long term, dynamic, two-way process which places demands on both refugee individuals and communities and wider society. The objective of refugee inclusion is the establishment of mutual and responsible relationships between refugees and their communities, civil society and government. Refugee inclusion takes place when a refugee becomes a fully active member of society, participating in and contributing to the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the country.

Asylum Seeker and Refugee

An asylum seeker is a person who is fleeing persecution in their homeland, has arrived in another country, made themselves known to the authorities and exercised the legal right to apply for asylum in the UK.

Under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees a refugee is a person 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 nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...".

The UK Government recognises an asylum seeker as a refugee when s/he satisfies the above definition.

Within this policy, the term 'refugee' also refers to those who have not been recognised as refugees, but have been granted indefinite leave to remain (ILR), humanitarian protection (HP) or discretionary leave (DL) following their asylum claim.

Successful refugee inclusion is highly dependent on refugees' and receiving communities' experiences of the asylum system. The strategy therefore also refers to issues relating to the asylum process.

Receiving communities

The communities into which refugees settle are called receiving communities. This term can refer to the range of different communities – whether the immediate local community, a community of interest or broader society.

Refugee inclusion is a two way process and it is important for the receiving community to play an active role in its achievement, as it is for refugee communities.

Migration

Migration is the movement of people from one country or locality to another. People migrate to Wales for a number of different reasons and refugee movements are a distinct form of international migration. The Welsh Assembly Government has a range of initiatives to support people who have migrated to Wales fulfil their potential and contribute effectively to our society and where refugees share common issues with other migrant groups, these initiatives will be linked.

Principles

The strategy is underpinned by a number of fundamental principles:

The Welsh Assembly Government welcomes refugees and asylum seekers to Wales. Refugees make an enormous contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of Wales.

Refugee inclusion is about participation and partnership. It places demands on both the receiving society and on refugees so that together we can make Wales a better country. Participation of refugees in decision making processes as well as monitoring and evaluating policy is central to inclusion, as is the need to address concerns of non-refugee communities. Refugee inclusion is not about assimilation.

Inclusion begins on day one of arrival in the UK and successful inclusion is closely related to the standard of reception procedures and people's experiences as asylum seekers.

While refugees and asylum seekers may face extraordinary circumstances, in other respects they are ordinary people and have a right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.

Refugees and asylum seekers are not a homogenous group. There is enormous diversity amongst refugee and asylum seeker communities in Wales, in terms of gender, age, nationality, language, faith, culture and skills. The diversity that refugees and asylum seekers bring to Wales, is to be celebrated and the Welsh Assembly Government actively promotes equality of opportunity for all.

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises the existence of racism, including institutional racism and will challenge this and actively promote good relations. This may involve positive action but not positive discrimination.

If refugee inclusion is to become a reality, it must be mainstreamed across the work of the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners.

Chapter 2: Policy and legislative context

The Strategy will operate within the context of International, European and UK immigration, asylum and integration policies and legislation as well as the Welsh Assembly Government's wider strategic agenda. The Welsh Assembly Government's work on Refugee Inclusion is significantly impacted by EU and UK Government policies and legislation.

International and European

The status and rights of refugees are set out under international laws, in particular the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Refugees and asylum seekers are also protected under other international agreements, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to the principles set out in the Convention and to upholding its responsibilities under the Human Rights Act.

We will also seek opportunities to engage in the European Commission's programmes to promote the social and economic integration of refugees.

UK

Powers and responsibilities relating to Immigration and Asylum have not been devolved to the National Assembly and remain the responsibility of the UK Government through the Home Office.

The Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999 introduced significant changes to the way asylum seekers are supported in the UK, including dispersal. Under this people seeking asylum are dispersed to certain

regions in the UK on a no choice basis and in 2001 asylum seekers arrived in Wales under this scheme. The Home Office dispersal policy contains a number of principles that should take account of local needs and foster community cohesion in the dispersal communities. The Welsh Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (WCRAS) facilitates a Regional Strategic Forum to enable strategic discussion around dispersal by key stakeholders in Wales.

In February 2005, the UK Government set out a 5-year asylum and immigration strategy, *Controlling Our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain*. It is being implemented through the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006 and other policy initiatives such as the New Asylum Model (NAM).

People recognised as refugees are no longer granted indefinite leave to remain but only limited leave to remain. If conditions in the country of origin improve within 5 years they will be expected to return. The Welsh Assembly Government is concerned this could be a barrier for refugee inclusion, bringing uncertainty for refugees and others, including employers.

NAM focuses on a faster, more tightly managed asylum process including the removal of unsuccessful applicants. All applications will be processed within the new model by late 2006. NAM represents a major change in the way asylum seekers are supported and will undoubtedly have a significant impact on refugee and asylum seeking and receiving communities.

The UK Government has also developed a strategy relating to refugee integration, *Integration Matters: A National Strategy for Refugee Integration*. Whilst the strategy focuses on England, it also includes UK-wide initiatives, in particular the Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Services (Sunrise) and Gateway Protection Programme (Gateway).

Under Sunrise, refugees will work with one caseworker to manage the transition from asylum seeker to refugee and produce a Personal Integration Plan covering longer-term integration objectives. The Welsh Assembly Government has already supported Move On programmes and agencies in Wales will be well placed to deliver the Sunrise programme.

Gateway is a resettlement programme that aims to bring modest numbers of refugees into the UK who would not otherwise have the means to make the journey. Resettlement is one of the three long-term solutions the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) works for on behalf of refugees. The Welsh Assembly Government will encourage Local Authorities across Wales to consider the potential for introducing the Gateway programme.

Integration Matters also contains commitments in areas which have not been devolved to Wales, such as some aspects of employment. Both Integration Matters and the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum Action Plan address some of the same areas that are addressed in this strategy, such as health and education. The Welsh Assembly Government will continue to maintain close dialogue with the Home Office and the Scottish Executive on refugee inclusion, including through the National Refugee Integration Forum, to share good practice and maximise impact and resources.

Wales:

The Welsh Assembly Government's strategic agenda is set out in 'Wales A Better Country'. The Refugee Inclusion Strategy has been developed within this wider framework of Assembly Government policy initiatives and responsibilities and aims to mainstream refugee inclusion across the work of the Assembly.

The following Welsh Assembly Government commitments will be particularly important to delivering refugee inclusion in Wales:

Equality of opportunity for all people in Wales and fulfilling our statutory duty to ensure that equality of opportunity is embedded in our work;

Racial equality and promoting good relations between different communities, as set out in our 'Race Equality Scheme 2005-2008';

Social justice for the people of Wales, providing annual reports on how we are delivering our social justice agenda across all the Assembly Government;

Improved public services for people of all generations, circumstances and communities, as set out in Making the Connections and Delivering the Connections;

ACTION:

The Welsh Assembly Government will maintain close dialogue and work with its partners in Wales and the UK to:

Ensure key UK and EU programmes relating to refugee inclusion are delivered appropriately in Wales.

Chapter 3: Refugees and receiving communities in Wales

Refugee experience

Refugees will have arrived in Wales for different reasons and had different experiences in their countries of origin as well as on their journey to the UK. Many refugees will have experienced traumatic events and many will have arrived in Wales with few if any family or social links, knowledge of Welsh society and culture or English or Welsh language skills. The impact of having to leave the country of origin and associated trauma, loss of home, possessions and status cannot be underestimated.

Refugee profile

The Welsh Refugee Council (WRC) estimates that there are at least 10,000 refugees currently living in Wales (less than 0.33% of the Welsh population), but there is very little hard data available. Reliable official data is needed to give a clear picture of refugee communities in Wales.

Prior to 2001, relatively low numbers of refugees decided to settle in Wales compared to some parts of the UK, with approximately 3565 refugees in Wales in 1997. When Wales became an official reception area for asylum seekers in 2001, the numbers of refugees increased as a relatively high number of those given leave to remain choose to settle here. The areas where most refugees are settled are Cardiff, Newport and Swansea with smaller numbers in Wrexham and smaller numbers again living outside these areas.

Asylum seeker profile

The asylum seeker population falls under two distinct sub-groups: people who receive NASS (National Asylum Support Service) accommodation and support and have been dispersed to Wales on a no-choice basis; and people who receive subsistence only NASS support, have chosen to live in Wales and found their own accommodation. In March 2004, 95% of people seeking asylum in Wales received NASS accommodation and support.

David Owen*, Ceri Peach+, Vaughan Robinson++, Richard Gale+

Asylum seekers are dispersed to NASS accommodation in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and a small number (2%) in Wrexham. There are currently up to 2,500 people seeking asylum living in Wales (less than 0.1% of the total population). A small number of asylum seekers live outside these local authority areas.

Asylum seekers currently in Wales currently originate from over 60 countries and speak over 40 different languages. Refugee movement is dependent on world events and the countries of origin of asylum seekers change over time. In June 2005, Pakistan, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo were amongst the top countries of origin.

Despite common perceptions, most asylum seekers live within families in Wales. Only 3% of asylum seekers are single females and only 14% are single males whilst 83% live within families. The majority of families (63%) are headed by a single female.

Approximately 110 unaccompanied asylum seeker children live in Wales at any one time. They are the responsibility of the Social Services Department in the area where they first seek support.

The focus group research suggested that there are relatively few older refugees in Wales. This may be because they can be isolated and difficult to identify or because they are less likely to have fled their home country.

Receiving communities in Wales

The main receiving communities in Wales are in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. Recent research from the Home Office highlights that a high proportion of asylum seekers are dispersed into areas of relative deprivation. This research is borne out in Wales, where a high proportion of refugees live in Communities First areas. Receiving communities are themselves diverse and BME

communities have played a particularly significant role.

Chapter 4: Where are we now?

Refugee inclusion is already taking place in Wales, notably through education and health provision. Schools are a crucial site for inclusion and many refugee and asylum seeking children and young people are succeeding in school and have high ambitions for their future. A range of programmes have had a positive impact including in housing, employment, arts and sports and mentoring, as well as Refugee Week Wales, and several community initiatives, including those led by refugees.

The evidence also reveals that there is a long way to go before our vision for refugee inclusion is achieved:

Poverty remains the single most significant issue in inhibiting inclusion – both for refugees and asylum seekers and often the receiving communities in which they live.

Despite the commitment of many front line staff, refugees and asylum seekers are often not accessing the level of core services that they need and are entitled to.

Refugees and asylum seekers still encounter institutional and other forms of racism and discrimination in all aspects of their daily lives.

Professionals want more training to understand how their services can better meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Language barriers continue to be a problem, both in terms levels of proficiency in English and Welsh and appropriate use of interpretation and translation services.

A significant number of people in Wales don't understand why refugees or asylum seekers have come here to live and some feel hostile towards them.

The enormous potential that many refugees and asylum seekers bring to Wales is often wasted, including through un- and underemployment and there are a lack of post-16 education initiatives.

Short term funding means that many initiatives that have a positive impact on refugee inclusion are not sustained.

The Welsh Assembly Government Work to Date

The Welsh Assembly Government is already working alongside other public bodies and voluntary groups to ensure asylum seekers and refugees are able to access services and participate in life in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government has demonstrated its commitment to lead on issues relating to

refugee inclusion, and has been supported in this by colleagues across the National Assembly.

The All Wales Refugee Policy Forum (AWRPF) was established by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration in November 2003 to ensure a strategic approach to taking forward issue relating to refugees in Wales. The AWRPF is chaired by the Minister and provides an important forum for dialogue between the Welsh Assembly Government and its various stakeholders and partners.

Specific initiatives have been developed across key service areas:

Housing: We have issued guidance on refugee and asylum seeker housing provision, provided funding for refugee housing support and will issue a Refugee Housing Action Plan.

Health: We have established a multi-agency group to advise on asylum seeker and refugee health policies, issued guidance for health practitioners, provided targeted funding and a system of monitoring delivery through Local Health Boards and developed a database of refugee health professionals.

Education: We have provided targeted funding for Local Education Authorities to support refugee inclusion through schools and will promote refugee inclusion through the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy and guidance for teachers being developed to complement the strategy.

Voluntary and community organisation initiatives: We have funded a range of voluntary sector initiatives specifically aimed at promoting refugee inclusion. Voluntary and community organisations working in this field are also eligible to apply for other Welsh Assembly Government grants.

The Refugee Inclusion Strategy will build on the firm foundations that have already been developed by The Welsh Assembly Government and its partners.

Chapter 5 Working together

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that it cannot achieve its aims by working alone. We will work in partnership with others in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors as well as the media and political parties to achieve our vision. We recognise the enormous amount of work that has already been undertaken in this area and the energy and commitment that has been given by individuals, groups, organisations and agencies in Wales, often with minimal resources.

Joint working and listening to our partners

In order to refine the vision and ensure we continue to go in the right direction and to monitor and evaluate our work, we will continue to listen to our partners across Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government's All Wales Refugee Policy Forum (AWRPF) is the main vehicle for doing this. It is chaired by the Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration and is a multi-agency group that brings together representatives from across Wales.

Central to our vision is the participation of refugees in decision making processes as well as monitoring and evaluating policy and their representation on the AWRPF is key.

Relevant officials from across the Welsh Assembly Government also attend the AWRPF to ensure that our work is co-ordinated and joined-up effectively internally.

The AWRPF should link with networks focussed on refugee and asylum issues, especially those which are Assembly Government-led. Many already sit on the Forum but others are not formally represented. The AWRPF also has sub- groups and the potential for further sub-groups or task and finish groups to be established where needed.

Building on what works regionally

The Wales Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (WCRAS) plays an important role in co-ordinating the work of relevant agencies in each dispersal area and across Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government will work with WCRAS to build on the structures it has already developed for regional strategic coordination to delivering refugee inclusion across Wales.

Each dispersal area has a different history of receiving refugees and and asylum seekers and a different local context. There is a need to understand the needs of and build on the best practice that has been developed by each region.

Refugee inclusion needs to be built into the overall planning for each dispersal area. It is important that it is reflected within relevant local government Community Strategies and the Wales Spatial Plan. This should include support for and participation by voluntary groups and Refugee Community Organisations in activities to promote refugee inclusion.

Working together to deliver

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that those best placed to deliver on many policy commitments will come from range of bodies in Wales – public, voluntary and private sector as well as academia and the media. Consideration will be given as to who would be best placed to deliver each action. The Welsh Assembly Government will identify key strategic partners to support delivery.

We will promote the key objectives of the strategy across all of our work and encourage all partners to promote them across their work.

ACTION:

The Welsh Assembly Government will:

Review the AWRPF terms of reference and membership, including its sub-groups in light of the Refugee Inclusion Strategy objectives;

Identify key strategic partners to support effective delivery of the strategy.

Chapter 6 Communication and information

Vision

Good communications between receiving communities and refugee and asylum seeking communities and the availability of reliable information is essential to facilitating refugee inclusion. The strategy aims to find ways of tackling the widespread misunderstandings that currently exist concerning refugees.

Better communications and information is also needed to improve services and access to services. Accessible information on services is needed as well as interpretation and translation facilities where relevant. If services are to be responsive to the needs of these communities, they need to listen to the issues that they face.

Refugees and asylum seekers bring a rich diversity of languages, but in order to participate fully men, women, children and young people refugees also need English or Welsh skills. The strategy aims to improve access to language skills training (see Chapter 8, Fulfilling Potential).

Promoting better understanding

Research undertaken for the Welsh Assembly Government demonstrates that whilst attitudes in Wales are less hostile than most other parts of the UK, a considerable degree of hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees still exists.

Knowledge and understanding of refugees and asylum seekers in receiving communities is generally low, including by some service providers, and basic misunderstandings are prevalent. Most people want to know more and to have more information from trusted sources. Politicians and community leaders have a responsibility to communicate effectively with communities and the media about refugee and asylum seekers.

Many refugees and asylum seekers lack information about Welsh society and culture, as well as their rights and responsibilities, which can lead to misunderstandings. Refugees and asylum seekers are keen to learn more about the society they are living in and have accurate information.

Where we are now

The Welsh Assembly Government has already taken steps to address negative attitudes and provided strong leadership on refugee inclusion, including in statements to the media. We have supported and provided funding for Refugee Week Wales, an annual positive image campaign promoting better understanding of refugee issues and CROESO, a Commission for Racial Equality Cymru initiative that promotes better understanding and good relations between different groups in Wales.

The Refugee Media Group, a network of voluntary organisations working with refugees, RCOs and the media in Wales has come together to challenge negative and stereotypical portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers and to promote refugee and asylum seeker voices in the media. It has taken forward a number of positive and effective initiatives.

ACTIONS

The Welsh Assembly Government will continue existing initiatives to promote better understanding and work with partners in local government, political parties, the voluntary sector and higher and further education bodies to:

Increase public understanding of issues relating to refugee inclusion through promoting positive images, providing consistent and positive messages as well as accessible and accurate information;

Increase refugee and asylum seeker knowledge and understanding of life in the UK, including rights and responsibilities;

Enable meaningful opportunities for dialogue and consultation with and between receiving and refugee and asylum seeking communities;

Information and communication between service providers and refugees

Many asylum seekers arrive in Wales with little knowledge of their entitlements or how to access basic services. Many will have few, if any, family or social links who they can turn to for advice and information. Accessing accurate information can be very difficult, particularly in the early days and when leave to remain is granted. Language barriers can compound these difficulties.

Trusted sources of information and advice need to have accurate information in accessible formats to enable them to signpost effectively.

Service providers have a duty to ensure they can communicate effectively with their clients. To provide accessible and appropriate services, providers need to listen to men, women, children and young people refugees and asylum seekers and have accurate and accessible information about their needs (see also Chapter 9: Accessing Services).

Lack of access to information and advice or communication with services providers can be extremely damaging to inclusion.

Where we are now

Refugees and asylum seekers can access mainstream information and advice services for general advice and information. The Welsh Refugee Council provides a One Stop Shop service, funded by the Home Office, to provide information, advice and support to asylum seekers, especially those newly arrived. The Welsh Assembly Government is working with partners in developing an Advice Strategy for Wales.

Welcome packs providing basic information for asylum seekers have been available in some dispersal areas but not all asylum seekers are receiving these and current packs regularly become out of date. Updated information is not available on line.

The Welsh Assembly Government Refugee Well Housing programme funds targeted advice and information for refugees, particularly those who have recently gained status, through advice workers based in the Welsh Refugee Council in each dispersal area. Voluntary groups provide basic support and information and the British Red Cross has developed successful orientation and integration programmes in Swansea and recently Newport.

A sub-group of the All Wales Refugee Policy Forum is developing an Interpretation and Translation Strategy for Wales which will need to:

address the need for well trained and accredited interpreters and translators, including specialist training for areas such as health;

provide guidance on the use of interpreters, including use of children and young people;

consider ways of developing capacity and sharing resources effectively to improve service levels;

develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating interpretation services, including through user-feedback.

The Welsh Assembly Government has also committed to fund an interpretation course at Cardiff University to train refugees to give appropriate support to their communities.

Public service providers have put in place their own provisions for interpretation and translation services, including language line but evidence shows that current use of these facilities is patchy, including in critical situations such as childbirth. Interpreters are sometimes used inappropriately, including using children and people who are not accredited to interpret. There is significant scope to share resources more effectively across public bodies to improve the quality of interpretation and translation provision.

ACTIONS:

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with partners to:

Ensure all asylum seekers arriving in Wales receive a welcome pack with accessible and up-to-date information in community languages on key services and support available;

Provide targeted advice & information for people who have recently been given leave to remain;

Develop and implement a Translation and Interpretation Strategy for Wales.

Refugee Well Housing Project

The Refugee Well Housing Project is an all Wales scheme which aims to prevent homelessness amongst refugees by providing specialist housing advice. A particular focus is supporting and enabling refugees to 'move on' from NASS accommodation to mainstream accommodation within the time limit of 28 days following a successful decision on their claim. As well as housing, it advises and supports clients on finance, benefits, employment and education options as well as advice relevant to the status obtained (eg family reunion). The team works with some 300 clients and has over 1500 client contact episodes a quarter and signposts and refers clients to other agencies for support. The Refugee Well Housing Project is funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and delivered in each dispersal area by the Welsh Refugee Council. The project works closely with appropriate partners in each dispersal area.

Chapter 7 Building strong communities

Building strong communities is key to our vision of achieving refugee inclusion in Wales. Individuals live within numerous different types of communities, all of which are unique, whether grouped around interests or geography. Successful inclusion demands strong and vibrant refugee communities, bridges between receiving and refugee communities and strong links between them and governmental and non-governmental services as well as the democratic and political processes.

Refugee Communities

Refugees arrive in the UK often with no or few family, friends or social connections. A sense of belonging to a particular group or community, with which you share a common identity is crucial. Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) are important forms of self-expression and provide trusted information, advice and services to many refugees and asylum seekers. They provide forums for collective action to address shared needs, challenge exclusion and champion refugee rights. RCOs are a foundation for building bridges with the receiving community, service providers and decision makers.

Not all refugees want to participate in RCOs but a diverse and inclusive refugee community sector can help to enable participation and support refugees and asylum seekers to access services. Many refugees and asylum seekers also share a sense of belonging with and seek advice and support from existing faith and ethnic minority groups.

Where we are now

There is a range of formal and informal RCOs in Wales, which are actively engaged in partnerships bringing services and opportunities to their communities. RCOs have established an umbrella organisation called Refugee Voice Wales (RVW).

RCOs currently have very little capacity. Few have access to training, information or advice to support organisational management such as inclusive, representative, transparent and accountable

processes and funding application skills. Many are not aware of the support available and there are virtually no paid workers. Many are embryonic, with no RCOs currently in Wrexham. Not all the diverse groups of refugees and asylum seekers currently participate actively in RCOs for a number of reasons.

Some voluntary groups, notably WRC, Displaced People in Action (DPIA) have initiatives to support refugee community development and these could be developed further.

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with partners to:

Support the development of a strong, active and inclusive RCO sector in Wales including through a dedicated funding stream.

Refugee Voice Wales

In 2004, a group of RCO leaders came together to discuss how the voice of asylum seekers and refugees might be more effectively heard in Wales. Out of these discussions, Refugee Voice Wales was born to:

create an umbrella for different RCOs to come together and share experiences;

collectively raise issues with key policy makers and service providers often through representation on the appropriate fora;

campaign and advocate on issues that affect refugees and asylum seekers; and

work in partnership to build the capacity of RCOs.

Refugee Voice Wales has now begun to represent and coordinate RCO's issues and activities. It meets regularly and is committed to being membership driven. Working with Oxfam and the Welsh Refugee Council it has undertaken a mapping exercise and workshops to identify the needs and expectations of RCOs in relation to the work of RVW. RVW currently has a database of 31 organisations and 30 individuals.

Building bridges between refugee communities and receiving communities

Establishing good relationships with people from other national, ethnic and religious groups should be an active process by receiving and refugee communities. These relationships support cohesion and enrich all our communities culturally, socially and economically.

All communities are unique and initiatives will be delivered flexibly and engage with local partners. Local receiving communities are often amongst the poorest communities in Wales. Ethnic minority

communities, amongst the most disadvantaged, are often the first to develop relationships with refugees. Poverty is often a significant barrier to participation for both receiving and refugee communities.

Where we are now

Research undertaken for the Welsh Assembly Government suggests that whilst hostility towards refugees and asylum seekers exists in the receiving community, it is less so than many other parts of the UK. We will build on this to maximise potential for new and positive relations.

The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support Groups in Newport, Swansea and Wrexham have provided valuable opportunities for refugee and asylum seeking and receiving communities to come together for support and friendship. They have initiated a range of

innovative projects to do this from maintaining an allotment to publishing collections of poetry. Other arts, cultural, mentoring and volunteering initiatives have provided opportunities for different communities to come together but many have not been sustained.

Newport & District Refugee Support Group

Newport & District Refugee Support Group is a multi-agency group that seeks to give practical support to refugees and asylum seekers as well as raise awareness and promote understanding. It provides a weekly drop in for refugees and asylum seekers to meet and access information, a weekly art and craft group for asylum seeking and refugee families and an allotment project which meets once or twice a week depending on the season, and arrange parties and outings throughout the year, depending on funding opportunities. The group also puts on a range of activities and events aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the issues.

The group's activities enable refugees and asylum seekers and local volunteers, whether alone or with their families, come together and meet each other in a safe and friendly atmosphere. (For more information see <http://www.newport-refugees.org.uk>)

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with partners in local government, Volunteer Bureaux, and the voluntary sector to:

Foster strong links between refugee and receiving communities through:

supporting local activities that develop relationships between refugee and receiving communities;

promoting volunteering initiatives across different communities;

supporting mentoring and befriending schemes for asylum seekers and refugees;

encouraging mainstream statutory and voluntary groups to actively engage refugees and asylum seekers in local services and activities.

Service providers and decision makers linking with refugee communities

Service providers and decision makers need to link with refugee communities in order to ensure that they design and deliver effective policies and services that meet the needs of all. Refugees will not be fully included until they have an equal voice in the way governmental and voluntary organisations plan and deliver services. This includes refugees and asylum seekers being actively involved in governance within the voluntary and statutory sectors.

Where we are now

The Welsh Assembly Government encourages the voices of all citizens, including children, to be heard when making key decisions and planning and delivering services. We have a number of programmes aimed at achieving this, notably the Voluntary Sector Scheme, Communities First and Making the Connections. We need to be clear how effectively these include refugee and asylum seeker communities and develop targeted and innovative ways of enabling refugees and asylum seekers to participate where there are gaps.

ACTIONS:

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with local government, political parties, RCOs, WCVA, and other voluntary sector groups to:

Support men, women, children and young people in refugee and asylum seeking communities, alongside receiving communities, to engage in effective dialogue with decision makers and participate in key policy and service delivery decisions that affect their lives, using the Scottish programme Framework for Dialogue as a model.

One Wrexham and One Wrexham Charter of Belonging

One Wrexham is a new initiative being led by the Council to promote good relationships between everyone who resides or works in the County Borough. The idea is to engender a common sense of belonging across all communities and cultures to ensure Wrexham is a welcoming, inclusive and tolerant place to be. To progress towards this goal we have created the One Wrexham Charter of Belonging which is a one page certificate setting out a statement of values and commitment. We are encouraging public bodies, voluntary and community organisations and businesses to sign up to the Charter to make a positive and meaningful statement about equalities and respect for diversity.

Community Safety

Safe, secure and stable communities are essential for refugee inclusion. Experiences of insecurity, victimisation or mistrust can make it virtually impossible for people to play an active part in the

community.

Our scoping exercise suggests that many refugees do feel safe in Wales but that, racism on the grounds of immigration status and faith are still common experiences. There have been incidents of physical attacks on property and people, including one racially motivated killing since dispersal began. A number of refugees and asylum seekers do not report incidents of prejudice, violence or harassment and there is evidence that elements of individual and institutional racism still exist in the police.

Where we are now

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has published a guide to identifying and combating hate crime called *Breaking the Power of Fear and Hate*. This guide draws together the lessons learned from previous investigations and provides practical advice from front-line officers on how to deal with this form of crime.

ACPO has also produced an *Operational Guide for the Management of Inter-Ethnic Conflict*. This document aims to encourage the formation of strong links between the police and minority communities, affirming the importance of building up community intelligence and providing a platform for two-way communication between the police and the community.

Guidance on tackling racist anti-social behaviour was issued by the Home Office in June 2001 to crime reduction partnerships and a *Racist Crime and Harassment Toolkit* has been published on the Home Office Crime Reduction website (www.homeoffice.gov.uk), offering further advice to practitioners on the handling of advice of racist incidents.

In Wales, this work is being driven forward by the All Wales Police Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, a sub-group of the AWRPF. It is a multi-agency group chaired by the police. Initiatives are being developed to train the police on liaising with refugee and other BME communities including third party reporting of racist incidents. The Welsh Assembly Government works closely with Community Safety Partnerships to promote the particular needs of refugee groups within their local strategies to tackle crime and disorder.

ACTIONS:

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with the All Wales Police Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers to:

Reflect the needs of new communities in crime and disorder partnerships;

Work with refugee and asylum seeking and faith communities to encourage reporting of racist incidents affecting these communities to the police.

Chapter 8 Fulfilling potential

The Welsh Assembly Government will harness the skills and ideas that refugees and asylum seekers bring to Wales for the benefit of the whole country, as well as fulfilling individual ambitions. We will do this firstly through tackling refugee unemployment and underemployment and by removing barriers to adult education and training for refugees.

We will promote opportunities to volunteer as a way in which individuals can build their skills, confidence, experience and training as well as contribute to wider society. Volunteering can be a stepping-stone to employment.

Refugees and asylum seekers come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and can make a rich contribution to our cultural understanding and identity as well as our cultural industries.

Accessing Employment

Refugees come to Wales to seek safety, rather than for economic reasons. They bring with them a variety of skills and ideas. Many are highly skilled and experienced professionals and entrepreneurs, whilst others are relatively low skilled. Refugees want to work and have much to contribute to the Welsh economy.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) estimate that unemployment among refugees is about six times the national average, despite the fact that refugees have, on average, higher levels of qualifications. Home Office research suggests that conditions of refugee employment are poor and "notably worse" than those of other ethnic minorities.

Refugees have the same rights to work and train as UK citizens. Most people seeking asylum in the UK are currently not allowed to work or receive vocational training.

Where are we now?

Employment policy is reserved to the UK Government and sits within the DWP. The DWP published *Working to Rebuild Lives: A Refugee Employment Strategy* in March 2005 and Jobcentre Plus has published a framework for partnership working to help refugees fulfil their potential: *Working together to help rebuild lives*. Jobcentre Plus Wales has developed outreach projects that are models of good practice.

The Welsh Assembly Government has funded initiatives to support professional refugees to retrain and increase recognition of their qualifications. The WARD programme for refugee doctors, delivered by DPIA, has been particularly successful. We are developing a database of Refugee Healthcare Professionals and providing seed funding for a project providing targeted support for healthcare professionals in the University of Glamorgan.

Careers Wales provides impartial advice and guidance on learning, training and career opportunities to young people and adults in Wales free of charge and is available in schools, colleges and careers centres/ shops. It offers its services at community "outreach" venues including a Careers Advisor part-time with WRC in Cardiff to provide direct support to asylum seekers and refugees. A project worker

with ethnic minority language skills provides advice and guidance to ethnic minority communities in Cardiff and will be working with WRC and the Parade in Cardiff to track the progress of ESOL learners and evaluate the impact of the project.

The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) has established the Ethnic Business Support Programme to bridge the gap between ethnic minority communities, including refugee entrepreneurs and mainstream business support agencies.

A number of RCOs and other voluntary organisations are providing valued advice and information as well as mutual support. DPIA run a project promoting employability which provides practical advice on CV and interview skills.

DPIA run a project promoting employability which provides practical advice on a range of employment related issues such as writing a CV and developing interview skills.

An EQUAL partnership in Wales aims to improve the employment prospects of refugees and black and ethnic minorities. It will include refugee capacity building, accessing appropriate training and language skills, recognition of overseas qualifications and experience, volunteering and work placements and a conference.

At a UK level, NARIC (National Recognition Information Centre) offer advice on how overseas qualifications relate to UK qualifications. There is good practice available across the UK.

The Wales Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors Group (WARD)

In 2002 the Wales Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors Group received funding from the Welsh Assembly Government to set up and manage an in-house study programme in Cardiff for asylum seeking and refugee doctors in Wales. The programme is run by the School of Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education and consists of ongoing IELTS courses as well as PLAB 1 and 2 lectures delivered by qualified medical doctors. WARD members have access to medical textbooks, journals, practice materials and the internet. As well as offering a drop-in facility, WARD provides funding for refugee doctors to take their exams. WARD has a total of 57 members. 31 members have revalidated their medical diplomas, and of these 27 are employed (18 were allocated within the Wales Foundation Programme F1/F2). There are a further 20 refugee and asylum seeking doctors, currently re-training with the help of WARD.

There is a need to co-ordinate these efforts and to:

Share information on how Working to Rebuild Lives: A Refugee Employment Strategy and Working together to help rebuild lives is being implemented in Wales;

Develop structured routes for refugees with professional or practical skills to access re-training, work experience and recognition of qualifications and experience;

Promote work-based training, work-shadowing, work-experience and volunteering for refugees and

asylum seekers;

Provide appropriate advice, information and practical guidance for refugees on the UK labour market and routes to employment, retraining, recognition of qualifications, and business start-up;

Provide accessible and user-friendly information on the services and support available to refugees;

Provide accessible information and advice to employers and encourage employers to take proactive steps to remove barriers refugees face to accessing work;

Combat and confront discrimination in employment;

Spread existing good practice from across Wales and the UK;

Collect and analyse data on refugee skills and employment levels to enable effective planning, monitoring and evaluation.

ACTION:

The Welsh Assembly Government will:

Establish a multi-agency Employment and Training sub-group of the AWRPF to co-ordinate efforts and resources and develop a Refugee Employment and Skills Action Plan for Wales, to address the issues raised above.

Adult Education and Training

Refugees and asylum seekers have a range of training and skills needs. We are committed to ensuring that everyone in Wales has the generic skills needed by employers for a sustainable and competitive economy. This includes basic skills and we will ensure asylum seekers and refugees who need additional language skills can benefit from accessible English or Welsh languages courses as well as access to other basic skills training. All asylum seekers and refugees should have access to 'Life in the UK' training from day one. Many refugees lack work experience in the UK and we will explore the development of work-based training models.

Access to further and higher education can further develop refugee and asylum seeker skills, whether learning new skills or retraining in a profession. Access to further and higher education is particularly important for the progression of high achieving school-leavers.

Barriers faced by refugees in accessing education and training include issues relating to poverty such as ability to pay tuition fees, access to childcare and transport. More accessible provision and clarity for providers on eligibility to access education and training programmes is needed.

Where we are now

The recently published Learning Insight: Asylum Seekers and Refugees sets out key issues around refugee and asylum seeker access to post-16 education and training and recommendations for improving uptake. There is a lack of research into the skills and qualifications held by asylum seekers and refugees, which inhibits strategic planning and targeting resources effectively.

Improving English and Welsh language skills

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes are available in each dispersal area. ESOL provision is addressed and reviewed within the Wales Basic Skills Strategy and delivered by the Basic Skills Agency. There are often low or no fees for ESOL and it is the main education provision for adult asylum seekers and refugees.

The Wales Basic Skills Strategy has supported early years and family programmes, programmes for young people who arrive in Wales towards the end of statutory schooling, and teacher training to help deliver the ESOL curriculum for adults. New materials support all these activities, and the Basic Skills Agency works with ESOL providers to help them achieve the Quality Mark.

Many refugees and asylum seekers have given positive feedback on their experience of ESOL and providers have been developing best practice across Wales. Yale College in Wrexham has developed ESOL Improve Your English using Computers, increasing access for those working long hours. To support the new Citizenship test, citizenship for ESOL learners is being developed across the UK and specific materials will be available for Wales.

Cardiff Parade ESOL service

The Parade centre has a large outreach provision, working in 22 locations across Cardiff. The service helps over 2000 adult learners, between 400 and 500 of whom are asylum seekers and refugees. Courses are provided at 14 different levels of English with slow and fast track provision. 'Contextualised ESOL' recognises the different needs of learners in terms of progression and type of language needed. 'Life in the UK' helps with day-to-day issues such as opening bank accounts and dealing with schools. ESOL Hairdressing and Beauty, and An Introduction to Childcare help learners before they enrol on FE vocational courses. The ESOL programme, in partnership with the police, developed the POLICESOL resource which won a Fforwm award in 2005. The Parade service is now developing Workplace ESOL provision with funding from the Welsh Assembly Government Department of Lifelong Learning to help non-English speakers working in Cardiff's hospitality and catering sector.

ESOL provision is currently insufficient to meet demand. Demand for ESOL has increased and is set to increase further with new requirements to demonstrate English language skills at ESOL Entry level 3 or higher to gain citizenship. There has also been an increase in demand from learners from the new EU countries. Provision is currently planned according to funding constraints and accommodation rather than demand.

Providers have begun to respond to the diversity of refugee needs through flexible provision and a

greater emphasis on this is needed. There is much diversity within refugee groups in terms of age, gender, social class and educational background which impacts on their ability to access ESOL. More targeted provision is needed, for example English for professional or vocational development and specialist support for those who are new to formal education.

There are many practical barriers to attending classes. The main reason women state for not attending ESOL classes is childcare and one of the main reasons for not attending ESOL classes for both women and men is the cost of transport. Many refugees work long anti-social hours so attending classes at a specific time is difficult. Education is not always the first priority for an asylum seeker who might not have basic needs fulfilled.

ACTION:

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with the Basic Skills Agency Wales, ESOL providers and voluntary sector refugee groups to:

Increase levels of English or Welsh language skills through:

A review of funding arrangements in light of the Learning Insight report;

Increased ESOL provision with information and advice on appropriate courses;

Targeted and flexible provision to reflect different language needs and practical barriers to attendance.

Further and Higher Education

Life in the UK skills are increasingly being taught as part of ESOL provision. The development of other basic skills can also be supported through ESOL. Refugees who have high English language skills also need to be able to access training on these areas.

Examples of specific projects to increase refugee and asylum seeker participation in further and higher education include the University of Glamorgan Race Ethnicity and Access to Learning (REAL) project and its current programme to support re-training and re-accreditation of refugee health professionals. One college in Cardiff provides subsidised courses for asylum seekers and refugees.

Hard data on the number of refugees and asylum seekers enrolling on higher or further education courses is not available, but it appears the numbers are low. The main barrier is ability to finance or access financial support for courses. Refugees and asylum seekers have access to further and higher education as long as they meet the entrance requirements for the course, can pay the fees and support themselves financially. Asylum seekers are not eligible for Student Support, Access Funds or Hardship Loans, and have to pay overseas student fees (with some exceptions). This causes severe difficulties in participating in further and higher education and is particularly problematic for high achieving young people.

Other barriers include lack of accessible information and advice on appropriate education and training available as well as practical barriers associated with poverty such as inability to access transport, childcare or attend courses at the prescribed times, some of which are also faced by other students.

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with voluntary sector refugee agencies HEFCW, Further and Higher Education Institutions and Careers Wales to:

Ensure higher and further education institutions are fully aware of refugee and asylum seeker entitlements as well as best practice on overcoming barriers to access;

Provide accessible information, advice and guidance as well as direct financial and other support to increase access to further and higher education by refugees and asylum seekers.

Volunteering

Volunteering can be a route into employment and an opportunity for refugees to gain work experience in the UK, acquire or develop skills and obtain UK references. Mentoring and work shadowing can be key to helping refugees to make the transition to employment. For asylum seekers, without permission to work, volunteering can provide a purposeful activity, opportunities to contribute to their new communities, maintain self-esteem and motivation as well as gaining experience knowledge and skills.

Volunteering and mentoring also provide important opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to interact with the wider community, create friendships and promote good relations.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving access to volunteering for people from all sections of society and to take special measures to include those who are vulnerable to social exclusion.

ACTION:

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with RCOs, DPIA, WRC, WCRAS, WCVA, Volunteer Bureaux and CSV to:

Provide targeted information, advice and support for refugees and asylum seekers to access the wide range of volunteering opportunities available.

Strengthening our cultural identity

Refugees and asylum seekers come from diverse cultural backgrounds and can make a rich contribution to our cultural understanding and identity as well as our cultural and sporting industries.

Arts, sports and culture provide routes for bridging between different communities and can enable different groups to value and understand each other. They have an important role in promoting inclusion, combating racism and building strong communities.

Arts, sports and culture can play a key role in personal development. For many, engagement in these activities can be therapeutic, offering forms of expression to deal with difficult situations, from the past and present.

Where are we now?

The Welsh Assembly Government's culture strategy is delivered through public bodies, notably the Arts Council of Wales (ACW), the Sports Council for Wales, the National Museums and Galleries of Wales and the National Library of Wales. As public bodies, they have a duty to promote good race relations and race equality, as does the Welsh Assembly Government. Their Race Equality Schemes will address inclusion for Black and Minority Ethnic groups, including asylum seekers and refugees and will be an important mechanism for delivering this strategy.

Refugees Writing in Wales

Swansea Bay Asylum Seeker Support Group, run by locals and refugees, provides regular drop-ins, occasional big social events and runs a football team. In 2003 they set up a publisher (Hafan Books) to raise funds for the group and the Welsh Refugee Council hardship fund. They publish annual books which contain poems, fiction, testimony and opinion by refugees and asylum seekers, side by side with work by established Wales-based writers. The series gives refugees and asylum seekers an opportunity to make themselves heard, in the company of well-known Welsh writers, and so helps readers appreciate the diversity of experiences and talents which refugees bring to Wales. Some were established writers in their own countries, while others have taken up writing here. For many, writing has therapeutic value, helping them deal with traumas. To be published is also an important affirmation of their dignity. The work is selected on the basis of literary interest and variety. The editors work with the writers individually, and with translators, to get the best version of each person's work. About 30 refugee writers have been published, from as many countries.

The books have received much positive feedback and have been so successful that some titles have sold out. The fourth title (a Welsh/English bilingual edition) was launched in Refugee Week 2006. For more information see <http://www.hafan.org/>

The Arts Council for Wales and the National Museums and Galleries of Wales have both initiated or supported projects that have promoted refugee inclusion. The Welsh Assembly Government and other public bodies have also supported and promoted Refugee Week Wales, an annual event celebrating the positive contribution that refugees make to Welsh life and promoting better understanding by receiving communities. An enormous range of arts, sports and cultural events that promote refugee inclusion have been led by voluntary and community groups, often without any public funding.

However, a significant number of men, women, children and young people refugees and asylum

seekers do not participate in cultural or sporting activities. This can be because of barriers created by the poverty making access to transport, ability to pay for equipment, membership and other fees difficult; stresses of the asylum claim; and lack of information about opportunities, knowledge of how to access support and funding and institutional barriers created through the funding applications process.

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with arts, sports and cultural public bodies, local government and voluntary groups to:

Increase participation of men, women, children and young people refugees and asylum seekers in arts, sports, culture and leisure activities by addressing practical barriers to participation, training funders and providing accessible information and advice to refugees and asylum seekers;

Promote arts, sports and cultural activities across Wales that enhance refugee inclusion.

Chapter 9 Accessing core services

Fair and equal access to housing, health and social care, and education services is fundamental to the quality of life of refugees and asylum seekers and their ability to be part of their community. Service providers need to understand individual and community needs, maintaining regular dialogue with men, women, children and young people refugee and asylum seeker service users, in order to deliver services effectively.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to improving public services for people of all communities through making them more responsive and accessible. Making the Connections sets out the Welsh Assembly Government's vision, and Delivering the Connections sets out how this will be achieved. This will be an important mechanism for delivering improved services and access for refugees and asylum seekers.

Whilst each service area needs to respond to the specific issues that arise for their service users, there are also common issues that need to be addressed across all service areas.

Shared aims across all service areas

In order to provide high quality and effective services that are accessible to men, women, children and young people refugees and asylum seekers, all services providers should work with partners to:

promote effective partnership working across the different agencies in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including Refugee Community Organisations, to drive improvements in policy and practice;

develop flexible service delivery to respond to barriers faced by service users because of poverty, such as access to transport, childcare and ability to pay for additional goods;

make basic and accessible information for refugees and asylum seekers readily available in community languages on the range of services available, how to access them and user rights and entitlements;

support independent advocacy and advice services as well as mentoring programmes to support individual access;

provide high quality, professional and appropriate translation and interpretation services to all clients who need them (see chapter 6);

ensuring service planners and providers are aware of refugee needs and their rights to access services through providing specialist guidance as well as training, advice and support to all those involved in service delivery and inspection;

develop clear mechanisms for dialogue with service users to ensure services are effective and delivered appropriately;

collect and have access to baseline data on refugee and asylum seeker profile, needs and use of services and where appropriate commission research, in order to plan, monitor and evaluate services.

develop 3 to 5 year funding agreements, which can be adapted against changes in circumstances over time.

Where are we now?

In each service area, a Welsh Assembly Government-led multi-agency group has developed identified ways of working together and providing effective service to asylum seekers and refugees. Many of the issues above have been considered, and we need to ensure all are delivered effectively.

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government, AWRPF and its sub-groups will:

Deliver the shared aims for service delivery across all core services areas.

Meeting Refugee Housing Needs

Where are we now?

Poor quality housing continues to be a key barrier to inclusion. In response to this, the Housing Directorate issued guidance on asylum seeker and refugee housing in March 2005, 'Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Guidance for housing and related service providers in Wales' gives detailed information to help existing and potential service providers to develop and deliver responsive housing

services to asylum seekers and refugees.

The Housing Directorate set up a multi-agency Housing Sub Group of the AWRPF September 2003. The group identified the main barriers to refugee inclusion and set out measures to address these in the Refugee Housing Action Plan, which went out to consultation in late 2005.

The Welsh Assembly Government has identified grant programmes that can enable refugee housing and support needs

to be met. Through the Refugee Well Housing Project, the Assembly Government funds the WRC to provide information and advice on housing and support available to refugees in Wales. The Refugee Housing Action Plan identifies a number of Welsh Assembly Government housing and support grant programmes available.

Refugee Resettlement Service, City and County of Swansea Council

The City and County of Swansea Council Refugee Resettlement Service (RRS), part funded by the Welsh Assembly Government BME Housing Grant Scheme, helps those who have recently received refugee status to settle in Swansea through providing advice and help in finding a home, information on other key services and signposting to key organisations. It works closely with the Welsh Refugee Council Move-On worker and British Red Cross tenant support service to ensure clients receive a well rounded service and avoid duplication.

Since it began in November 2004 it has been successful in housing families and singles in a range of Council Housing, private and Housing Association accommodation, with clients also receiving advice and information on move-on.

The inter-agency approach has worked very well. The referral system and efficient lines of communication has helped clients to secure permanent accommodation, maximise their benefits and receive information and advocacy in the all important 28 day period once status is received. All agencies are very happy with the improved communication between support services and Housing Options and agree that the RRS has greatly improved the service provided to applicants.

Local authorities and voluntary organisations have developed and delivered a number of refugee housing initiatives in different areas. Unfortunately, some successful initiatives are no longer in operation due to funding constraints.

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government will:

Deliver the All Wales Refugee Housing Action Plan and report annually to the AWRPF.

Meeting Refugee Health and Social Care

Where are we now?

Many refugee and asylum seekers' experience of health and social care professionals have been very positive. They express gratitude for the care and dedication shown to them by doctors and nurses, social workers and mental health professionals. There are also a number of areas that need to be improved.

In 2004 the Welsh Assembly Government established a multi agency task and finish group, the All Wales Selected Minority Group (SMG), to identify and provide guidelines on health issues common to a number of different minority groups including homeless people, Gypsies and Travellers, the minority ethnic community and asylum seekers & refugees.

In summer 2006 the SMG will produce guidance on Service Development & Commissioning Guidance for Selected Minority Groups for Local Health Boards (LHBs) and Trusts on good practice in addressing the health needs of the four selected minority groups.

The Welsh Assembly Government has established the Welsh Asylum Seeker & Refugee Health Advisory Group (WASRHAG). It is chaired by the National Public Health Service for Wales and has representation from statutory and voluntary sector organisations, including the All Wales Asylum Seeker Nursing Group. WASRHAG reports to the Selected Minority Group.

WASRHAG have updated the Asylum Seekers Healthcare Guidance and produced 'Meeting the Healthcare Needs of Asylum Seekers' to inform stakeholders of the current health care issues for asylum seekers and where appropriate refugees. It contains a series of recommendations for LHBs to improve: access to primary care; culturally sensitive services; communication and information and information sharing.

The Welsh Assembly Government provides additional funding to the LHBs in dispersal areas to support basic medical costs including; health needs assessments, a contribution to primary care and access to Language Line. The Welsh Assembly Government also funds a Health Development and Advocacy Officer in the Welsh Refugee Council.

Mental health

Psychological distress affects the ability of a person to actively engage socially, economically, culturally and politically in their new community and the Welsh Assembly Government aims to provide quality mental health support services.

Refugees and asylum seekers have differing concepts and knowledge of mental health, differing expectations of services and differing mental health needs. Not all refugees and asylum seekers have mental health problems, but some have severe mental health issues arising from their experiences. Others experience psychological distress appropriate to their present situation. Social isolation, poverty, racism and hostility from the host community in the UK can also affect mental health.

Mental illness may be treated within primary care or depending on the severity of the illness may

need a referral to secondary care. NICE (National Institute of Clinical Excellence) referral guidelines have been developed for GPs and there are locally agreed referral pathways. More support is needed for GPs in dealing with issues of mental health and psychological problems of asylum seekers and refugees.

Newport Local Health Board and Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust have appointed a Specialist Mental Health Nurse to work solely with refugees and asylum seekers, which has had a positive impact.

Voluntary organisations provide mental health support services, including specialised outreach services for BME communities. Unlike some other parts of the UK the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture does not currently have an office in Wales.

Psychological distress may not require medical intervention, but may be alleviated by non-medical support such as reducing isolation and dependence, having suitable accommodation and spending time more creatively through education, work and other meaningful activities.

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government, working with LHBs, local authorities and the voluntary sector, will:

Implement the recommendations in Meeting the Healthcare Needs of Asylum Seekers and take steps to encourage compliance with Service Development & Commissioning Guidance for Selected Minority Groups, including through Local Needs Assessments and Health Social Care & Well Being Strategies.

Set out a strategic vision for the provision of mental health services to asylum seekers and refugees in Wales;

Provide a specialist mental health professional in each dispersal area.

Meeting Refugee Children and Young People's Education Needs

Where are we now?

Some of the most positive experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales are of education provision. Parents and children and young people have expressed satisfaction with mainstream education provision and refugee and asylum seeking children and young people have enriched the life of their schools. These children and young people are often highly motivated and keen to ensure that they achieve to the limit of their abilities.

We recognize there are still many areas where we need to improve. Racist and other bullying is relatively widespread. Participation in extracurricular activities can be hindered by a number of factors, including poverty. Some teachers have demonstrated low expectations for these children and

young people and are not challenging racism effectively. Schools where numbers of minority ethnic pupils are low are less aware of their responsibilities or how to respond to particular issues asylum seeking and refugee children and young people can face.

The Welsh Assembly Government is developing an Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy and one strand will relate specifically to refugee and asylum seeking children and young people. It will guide Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and schools on how best to provide services for this especially vulnerable group to ensure that they are supported to reach their full potential. A multi-agency group has been established to advice on the development of the strategy and to provide quality assurance.

To complement the strategy, guidance will be developed to support teachers. This will further raise awareness in LEAs, schools and other educational settings of the needs of pupils from minority ethnic groups. It will illustrate ways in which schools can value cultural diversity and prevent racism through the curriculum and will provide examples of effective inclusive practice from schools and LEAs.

The Welsh Assembly Government has taken a lead in addressing the problem of bullying in school through Respecting Others. Unevenness in standards remains an issue and better monitoring is needed. This is partly being addressed by the development of guidance to support class teachers.

Our World - Our Journeys, St Willows High School

A new educational resource pack initiated by the British Council Wales was launched in March 2006 to assist teachers to meet the challenge of integrating asylum seeker and refugee children and young people into the school community. A key aspect of the resource pack is the video 'Our World – Our Journey' produced by Valley and Vale Community Arts and the Willows High School in Tremorfa, Cardiff. It is a moving story created by local children and young asylum seekers about their lives in Wales and how they are each seen by the other. The Welsh Assembly Government provided financial support to implement the project and the resource pack has now been distributed to 150 schools and other interested bodies.

The Welsh Assembly Government has two relevant funding streams to ensure better access to education services by asylum seekers and refugees. The Asylum Seeker Special Grant makes additional funding available to LEAs for provision of additional school places and central support requirements for pupils who are asylum seekers.

The second is the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), which is distributed among LEAs on the basis of the number of minority ethnic learners of English as an additional language, their stage of English acquisition and their key stage. This includes support for refugee children and young people accessing education.

ACTIONS

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with Estyn, Local Education Authorities, local multi-agency Young People's Partnerships (YPPs) and other partners to:

Deliver the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy;

Develop measures to address current barriers to participation in extra-curricular activities;

Promote good race relations and respect for others regardless of race or religion through the school curriculum;

Develop additional training materials, giving examples of best practice, suitable for incorporation into teacher training, continuing professional development and governor and inspector training to address the question of racist bullying.

Chapter 10 Understanding diversity and supporting the most vulnerable

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises and welcomes the diversity of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales. Whilst all refugees share a common experience of having fled persecution in their country of origin and sought sanctuary here, they are far from a homogenous group. There is enormous diversity in terms of gender, age, nationality, ethnicity, language, faith, sexual orientation. There are also many disabled refugees and asylum seekers. Individuals and different groups have different experiences and may experience situations in different ways.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to developing policies and practices that are adaptable and flexible to enable all refugees and asylum seekers to be included. We are committed to supporting those who are particularly vulnerable.

Research in relation to the experiences of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people in Wales has been undertaken and used to inform our policies. More information needs to be gathered about other groups of refugees and asylum seekers to gain a better understanding of the diversity of refugee communities and the different issues they face.

Inclusion for All

Where are we now?

Under the Government of Wales Act, the National Assembly for Wales has a duty to promote equality of opportunity in all that it does. UK legislation outlaws discrimination on the grounds of gender, race and disability within goods and services and employment and on the grounds of age, sexual orientation and faith within employment. Public bodies have a duty, enshrined in legislation, to promote good race relations and will shortly also have a duty to promote gender and disability equality. The principles of equality and diversity underpin all the work of the Welsh Assembly Government.

Apart from children and young people, we have very little knowledge or information about the diversity of refugees and asylum seekers and their experiences. We do know that despite common perceptions, most asylum seekers are living within families in Wales and the majority of these are

headed by women. Only 14% are single males. We are also aware that we need to respond to the specific issues faced by women refugees and asylum seekers including access to care during pregnancy, sensitivity of maternity services, opportunities to socialise with women in a similar situation and stamping out the practice of Female Genital Mutilation which exists in a small number of communities.

Whilst we do not have a profile of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) refugees and asylum seekers in Wales, and only limited information of their experiences, what information we do have again shows a need to respond. LGBT refugees and asylum seekers can face high levels of isolation both from ethnic minority, faith and refugee communities as well as LGBT 'communities' in the UK. There is a lack of awareness of the issues that LGBT refugees and asylum seekers can face and many suffer multiple discrimination by both service providers and refugee communities. There is a lack of accessible information for LGBT refugees and asylum seekers on their rights and where to access support.

We are also aware that other groups of refugees and asylum seekers including men, older people and disabled people have different experiences and needs. We suspect that some are particularly isolated and vulnerable and we are committed to finding out what their needs are.

Actions

The Welsh Assembly Government, working with partners in the voluntary sector and refugee communities, will:

Promote training, information and awareness raising amongst organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers to increase their understanding of the diversity of needs and the availability of specialist support;

Encourage equality and diversity bodies to respond to the diverse needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Children and Young People

The Welsh Assembly Government recognises that asylum seeker and refugee children are children first and foremost and, due to their circumstances, are among the most vulnerable children in Wales. The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which inform all of its work in respect of children. This includes an aspirational commitment to Article 22, which requires that such children receive 'appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance' in the exercise of their rights under the convention.

Although immigration and asylum are non-devolved the provision of the majority of services that asylum-seekers in Wales receive is the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government, Local Authorities and other public bodies in Wales.

The circumstances of many asylum seeking and refugee children and young people are exceptionally complex. By virtue of their experiences on their journeys to Wales and in their countries of origin as well as their financial, cultural and social circumstances in the UK, asylum seeker and refugee children and young people are more likely to be regarded as 'children in need'.

Asylum seeking and refugee children and young people also have diverse health needs. These can be challenging for various reasons including access to healthcare and experiences in their country of origin and on their journeys to the UK as well as poverty, limited access to and continuity of healthcare in the UK. Key remedial measures are needed to protect and promote the health of some asylum seeking and refugee children and young people.

Children and young people's mental health can be substantially affected by personal trauma or by having been witness to trauma in others, something which many asylum seeking and refugee children and young people have experienced.

The Welsh Assembly Government is committed to effective, multi-agency assessment across health, education and social care with effective access to language services. A holistic assessment as close to the point of entry into Wales as possible is required. Arrangements for dealing with asylum claims (especially in relation to 'age assessments') should be managed effectively and delivered with adequate access to support, including legal advice.

Where are we now?

Asylum seeker children in Wales are subject to two different systems of support depending on their family circumstances. Accompanied children, those children living within a family unit, are mainly subject to support via NASS. Separated (unaccompanied) children, those under the age of 18 who do not have an adult relative or guardian in the UK, remain the responsibility of the Local Authority in which they seek help. These two 'groups' of asylum seeking children have common and distinct needs. Refugee children should be able to access the same service and support as UK citizens.

Relatively small numbers of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people live in Wales compared to other parts of the UK. These are concentrated in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. Data on the precise numbers of such children and young people are incomplete. Qualitative data are more readily available but there is no systematic or structured data collection mechanism in place in Wales that could be used to inform policy and to direct resources. The implementation of the National Register for Unaccompanied Children could be improved.

The Welsh Assembly Government's policy commitments for children and young people in Wales do not sit easily with some aspects of UK asylum and immigration policy - in particular, the peremptory removal of children and young people from their homes, schools and communities.

Rapid changes in immigration policy and legislation and the relatively small numbers and uneven distribution of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people in Wales, has made it difficult to develop sufficient knowledge and expertise, combining subject specialist knowledge (e.g. children's health) and the particular needs of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people.

This is true within the Welsh Assembly Government and statutory and voluntary sector service providers.

There is a premium on effective, multi-agency assessment across the various dimensions of health, education and social care. The Welsh Assembly Government is developing a Common Assessment Framework which builds on the Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (Welsh Assembly Government and Home Office, 2002) to ensure that all children in need receive appropriate services. Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children may have particular difficulty in accessing services and negotiating the asylum process without the services of a specialist advocate. We are considering how specialist advocacy services can be provided, especially for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

The Welsh Assembly Government has developed guidance on safeguarding children under the Children's Act. Safeguarding principles apply to all children including refugee and asylum seeking children. The guidance states that asylum seeking children should be provided with the same quality of individual assessment and related services as any other children presenting as being 'in need'. This guidance also sets out the role and responsibilities of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards for vulnerable children including those associated with child trafficking. We will build on the existing examples of good practice in dispersal areas.

The appointment of specialist nurses working with asylum seeking and refugee families in the dispersal areas has improved healthcare provision. The Welsh Assembly Government has included specific reference to asylum seeking and refugee children in the National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services in Wales (NSF) where they are recognised as children in special circumstances. Monitoring the progress of the NSF will be vital to meeting the needs and entitlements of these children. We are committed to improving Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) throughout Wales and the particular needs of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people will feature substantially in these developments. (See Chapter 9 for wider mental health issues).

ACTIONS

The Welsh Assembly Government will take a lead to work with partners in local government, local health boards, social services, the Wales Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Clic Online, DeNIAS and the voluntary sector to:

The Welsh Assembly Government will continue its dialogue with the UK Government to ensure that the implementation of immigration and asylum policy is compatible with the UNCRC derived principles underpinning children's policies and programmes in Wales;

Establish a specialist all Wales resource that can supply information and advice to those providing services to asylum seeking and refugee children and young people;

Put in place arrangements to collate and share existing administrative data and derive new data on the population of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people in order to better inform future

policy and to direct resources;

Establish a dedicated resource within the Welsh Assembly Government who will act as a point of reference for the development of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people's policy;

Develop a Welsh Assembly Government protocol setting out standards and expectations for the assessment of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people, paying particular attention to language issues and the circumstances of unaccompanied children;

Develop specialist, independent advocacy for asylum seeker and refugee children as part of the current Welsh Assembly Government review of advocacy provision across Wales;

Develop a programme of targeted health protection and health promotion measures to meet the needs of asylum seeking and refugee children, linked to improved assessment practice.

Chapter 11 Research and Statistics

In order to continue to develop a clear evidence base for the strategy, to increase our understanding of the steps that need to be taken to achieve refugee inclusion and to assess the impact of our actions, there is a need to undertake further research as well as data collection and analysis.

Where are we now

The Welsh Assembly Government commissioned Cardiff University to conduct a literature review and hold focus groups with refugees across Wales as part of its commitment to establish a clear evidence base for the strategy. In order to take the strategy forward there is also a need to:

develop mechanisms for capturing and analysing reliable data on the profile, distribution and needs of refugee, asylum seeker and receiving communities;

map and analyse racial incidents affecting refugees and asylum seekers reported to the police;

record and monitor the number of asylum seekers and refugees accessing ESOL classes across Wales;

research the skills and qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers;

research current refugee and asylum seeker uptake of higher and further education courses;

collect data routinely on the health of selected minority populations to help make systematic comparisons with the general population and inform future service delivery;

undertake further research to identify the diverse needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales;

address diversity of refugee and asylum seeker experiences and needs when commissioning new

research.

ACTION

The Welsh Assembly Government will:

Develop a research and statistics programme to underpin the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Refugee Inclusion Strategy.

Chapter 12 Monitoring and Evaluation

The Welsh Assembly Government will monitor and evaluate the inclusion strategy to assess how effectively it is impacting on refugee inclusion in Wales. Monitoring will be against the 3 year action plan that will be developed to accompany the strategy. The Welsh Assembly Government will prepare an annual report on delivery of the action plan for the AWRPF.

In order to assess how our actions have impacted on refugee inclusion, the strategy will be evaluated every three years. In order to do this we will collect data on standardised measures, and look at trends over time. Selecting effective performance indicators and collecting baseline data is fundamental to this process. The following indicators will form a key part of the framework for monitoring and evaluation and are based on the Indicators of Integration report (2002) by Ager and Strang and the availability of data.

Employment

Skills audit (survey being conducted by DPIA with RVW)

WARD Refugee doctors database

WRC employment project and other programmes

Health

Access to GP and other medical services (survey of refugees)

Availability of translation services (survey of refugees)

Housing

Refugee Housing Action Plan

WRC Move On programme

Education

Access to part 2 and part 3 ESOL (survey of refugees, survey of providers)

Social Connection

Social Bridges

Friendliness of local people (survey of refugees)

Social bonds

Numbers actively engaged with refugee organisations (proposed survey of refugee organisations)

Numbers of registered refugee community organisations

% of refugees who were asylum seekers who have stayed in the host community (date from Swansea resettlement team – but nowhere else)

Facilitators

Social Bridges

% who have attended a citizenship course

% who have an ESOL qualification at various levels

% who have attended a Welsh course

(All of above-proposed survey of refugees)

Foundation

Rights and Citizenship

% of refugees who have completed a citizenship course (see above)

Data on refugee status is not routinely collected therefore the underlying issue in monitoring and evaluating the strategy is the difficulty in identifying and tracing individuals once they achieve refugee status.

The Welsh Assembly Government will consider if the strategy needs to be revised every three years to coincide with the evaluation process. This will take into consideration changing legislation and policy such as the five year strategy which includes the New Asylum Model, Gateway and Sunrise.

ACTION

Set out a clear monitoring and evaluation plan to accompany the strategy and the action plan.

Chapter 13: Developing An Action Plan

Following consultation, we will work with our partners to develop a 3 year action plan which will set out how and by when we will deliver on each commitment with appropriate targets and methods of monitoring.

SUMMARY OF ACTIONS

The Welsh Assembly Government will work with its partners to:

Working Together

Ensure key UK and EU programmes relating to refugee inclusion are delivered appropriately in Wales;

Review the AWRPF terms of reference and membership, including its sub-groups in light of the Refugee Inclusion Strategy objectives;

Identify key strategic partners to support effective delivery of the strategy;

Communication and information

Increase public understanding of issues relating to refugee inclusion through promoting positive images, providing consistent and positive messages as well as accessible and accurate information;

Increase refugee and asylum seeker knowledge and understanding of life in the UK, including our rights and responsibilities;

Enable meaningful opportunities for dialogue and consultation with and between receiving and refugee and asylum seeking communities;

Ensure all asylum seekers arriving in Wales receive a welcome pack with accessible and up-to-date information in community languages on key services and support available;

Provide targeted advice & information for people who have recently been given leave to remain;

Develop and implement a Translation and Interpretation Strategy for Wales;

Building Strong Communities

Support the development of a strong, active and inclusive RCO sector in Wales including through a dedicated funding stream.

Foster strong links between refugee and receiving communities through:

supporting local activities that develop relationships between refugee and receiving communities;

promoting volunteering initiatives across different communities;

supporting mentoring and befriending schemes for asylum seekers and refugees;

encouraging mainstream statutory and voluntary groups to actively engage refugees and asylum seekers in local services and activities.

Support men, women, children and young people in refugee and asylum seeking communities, alongside receiving communities, to engage in effective dialogue with decision makers and participate in key policy and service delivery decisions that affect their lives, using the Scottish programme Framework for Dialogue as a model.

Reflect the needs of new communities in crime and disorder partnerships;

Work with refugee and asylum seeking and faith communities to encourage reporting of racist incidents affecting these communities to the police.

Fulfilling Potential

Establish a multi-agency Employment and Training sub-group of the AWRPF to co-ordinate efforts and resources and develop a Refugee Employment and Skills Action Plan for Wales, to address the issues raised above.

Increase levels of English or Welsh language skills through:

A review of funding arrangements in light of the Learning Insight report;

Increased ESOL provision with information and advice on appropriate courses;

Targeted and flexible provision to reflect different language needs and practical barriers to attendance.

Ensure higher and further education institutions are fully aware of refugee and asylum seeker entitlements as well as best practice on overcoming barriers to access;

Provide accessible information, advice and guidance as well as direct financial and other support to increase access to further and higher education by refugees and asylum seekers.

Provide targeted information, advice and support for refugees and asylum seekers to access the wide range of volunteering opportunities available;

Increase participation of men, women, children and young people refugees and asylum seekers in arts, sports, culture and leisure activities by addressing practical barriers to participation, training funders and providing accessible information and advice to refugees and asylum seekers;

Promote arts, sports and cultural activities across Wales that enhance refugee inclusion.

Accessing Core Services

Deliver the shared aims for service delivery across all core services areas.

Deliver the All Wales Refugee Housing Action Plan and report annually to the AWRPF.

Implement the recommendations in Meeting the Healthcare Needs of Asylum Seekers and take steps to encourage compliance with Service Development & Commissioning Guidance for Selected Minority Groups, including through Local Needs Assessments and Health Social Care & Well Being Strategies.

Set out a strategic vision for the provision of mental health services to asylum seekers and refugees in Wales;

Provide a specialist mental health professional in each dispersal area.

Deliver the Ethnic Minority Achievement Strategy;

Develop measures to address current barriers to participation in extra-curricular activities;

Promote good race relations and respect for others regardless of race or religion through the school curriculum;

Develop additional training materials, giving examples of best practice, suitable for incorporation into teacher training, continuing professional development and governor and inspector training to address the question of racist bullying.

Understanding Diversity and Supporting the Most Vulnerable

Promote training, information and awareness raising amongst organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers to increase their understanding of the diversity of needs and the availability of specialist support;

Encourage equality and diversity bodies to respond to the diverse needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Welsh Assembly Government will continue its dialogue with the UK Government to ensure that the implementation of immigration and asylum policy is compatible with the UNCRC derived principles underpinning children's policies and programmes in Wales;

Establish a specialist all Wales resource that can supply information and advice to those providing services to asylum seeking and refugee children and young people;

Put in place arrangements to collate and share existing administrative data and derive new data on the population of asylum seeking and refugee children in order to better inform future policy and to direct resources;

Establish a dedicated resource within the Welsh Assembly Government who will act as a point of reference for the development of refugee and asylum seeking children policy;

Develop a Welsh Assembly Government protocol setting out standards and expectations for the assessment of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people, paying particular attention to language issues and the circumstances of unaccompanied children;

Develop specialist, independent advocacy for asylum seeker and refugee children as part of the current Welsh Assembly Government review of advocacy provision across Wales;

Develop a programme of targeted health protection and health promotion measures to meet the needs of asylum seeking and refugee children, linked to improved assessment practice.

Research and statistics

Develop a research and statistics programme to underpin the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Refugee Inclusion Strategy.

Monitoring and evaluation

Set out a clear monitoring and evaluation plan to accompany the strategy and the action plan.

Glossary

Acronyms

ACPO – Association of Chief Police Officers

AWRPF – All Wales Refugee Policy Forum

BME – Black and Minority Ethnic

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CRAC – Cymru Refugee Academic Council

CSV – Community Service Volunteers

DPIA - Displaced People in Action

DWP – Department for Work and Pensions

EMAG – Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (education)

ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages

GP – General Practitioner (health)

HEFCW – Higher Education Funding Council for Wales

ICAR - is an independent information and research organisation based in the School of Social Sciences at City University in London

LEA – Local Education Authority

LGBT – Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender

LHB – Local Health Board

NASS – National Asylum Support Services

NICE – National Institute of Clinical Excellence

SMG – All Wales Selected Minority Group (relates to health)

RCO(s) – Refugee Community Organisation(s)

RVW – Refugee Voice Wales

UNCRC – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNHCR – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UK NARIC – National Recognition Information Centre UK

WARD – Wales Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors Group

WASHRAG – Wales Asylum Seeker & Refugee Health Advisory Group

WCVA – Wales Council for Voluntary Action

WCRAS – Welsh Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

WRC – Welsh Refugee Council

YPPs – Young People’s Partnerships

Annex 1: List of existing networks and forums

All Wales Refugee Policy Forum (AWRPF)*

Housing Sub-Group of the AWRPF*

Minority Ethnic Achievement Strategy Steering Group*

Translation and Interpretation sub-group of the AWRPF*

Selected Minority Group (health)*

Wales Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (WCRAS)

Regional Stakeholder groups

Refugee Voice Wales

All Wales Police Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Wales Asylum Seeker Refugee Health Advisory Group

All Wales Nurses Group

Asylum Seeking Children, Practitioner Group

Refugee Media Group

* = Welsh Assembly Government led

Annex 2: Participation in scoping exercise

Responses to the scoping questionnaire were received from:

ACCAC	Powys Centre for Culture Diversity
Bahá'I Council for Wales	Powys Local Health Board
BMA Cymru/Wales	RESOLVE
Bridgend County Borough Council	Royal College of Nursing
Caer Las Cymru	Save the Children Fund
Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust	Small World Theatre
Cardiff Health Access Team	Swansea LEA 2
Careers Wales	Swansea University
Carmarthenshire County Council	T&G Cymru/ Wales
City & Council of Swansea Asylum Seekers and Refugee Team (ASART)	Ta'aleem Alynssa Women's Group (Bahá'i)
Cymru Refugee and Asylum Seekers Academic Council	Tan Dance
Flintshire LHB	Torfaen LHB
Gofal Cymru	Victim Support
Gwent Police	WCVA
Health Professions Wales	WDA
LEAs	Welsh Assembly Government
MAMS Group	Welsh Assembly Government
NACPDE	Welsh Refugee Council
NCH Cymru	WRC
NHS CEHR	WRC
	WRSSG

Workshop/ discussion sessions were held at the following networks:

All Wales Police Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Asylum Seekers & Refugees Strategic Liaison Group (Wrexham)

Cardiff Stakeholder Group

Equality and Human Rights Coalition

Minority Ethnic Achievement Strategy Steering Group

Newport Multi-Agency group

Refugee Voice Wales

Refugee Media Group

Swansea Multi-Agency group

Wales Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Advisory Group

All Wales Nurses Group

Asylum Seeking Children, Practitioner Group

Further Information

Further information is available from the following sources:

Careers Wales – www.careerswales.com

Civis Trust - www.cvsconsultants.com/

Department for Work and Pensions – www.dwp.gov.uk

Employability Forum – www.employabilityforum.co.uk

European Commission – www.europa.eu

ICAR – www.icar.org.uk

Immigration and Nationality Department, Home Office - www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/

Welsh Refugee Council – www.welshrefugeecouncil.org

Wales Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers - wcras.info@newport.gov.uk

Jobcentre Plus - www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Refugee Voice Wales – www.welshrefugeecouncil.org (currently)

UNHCR – www.unhcr.org

Wales Council for Voluntary Action – www.wcva.org.uk

Welsh Assembly Government/ National Assembly for Wales – www.wales.gov.uk