

Report June 2002

REFUGEE HOUSING PROJECT

NORTH EAST

REFUGEE ASPIRATIONS ON 'MOVE ON' / SECOND STAGE / FUTURE HOUSING
NEEDS IN THE NORTH EAST OF ENGLAND



**University of
Sunderland**

**REGIONAL
REFUGEE
FORUM
NORTH EAST**



North of England
REFUGEE SERVICE



BOW
COMMUNITY
PROJECTS

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'Over and above the marginality of many minority groups, the specific social and personal experiences of forced migrants – family separation, loss of homeland, life-long memories of trauma – highlight the sensitivity which is needed in supporting refugees and asylum seekers.' (Zetter 1999, page 80)

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The study was conducted under the auspices of a joint Steering Group comprising representatives of North of England Refugee Service; BOW Community Projects; the University of Sunderland; the Regional Refugee Forum North East and NECASS (North East Consortium for Asylum Support Service).
- The driver for this study was concern among the partner agencies that little was being done in this part of the country to consider the “second stage” or “move-on” housing issues of refugees dispersed to the region.
- The purposes of the research were to identify the needs and aspirations of refugees in the region in relation to “move on” accommodation, in the context of “integration” and of “retention” of refugees dispersed to the North East of England. And to identify “requirements for success” of any future second stage housing provision.
- The research was undertaken by ReACT (Refugee Advisory Committee on Tyneside) with data analysis by Sunderland University. It involved detailed interviews with people from 42 asylum seeker households, (totalling 101 persons in all), in their language of choice. The report was written by ReaCT with input from Rick Bowler of Sunderland University, Georgina Fletcher of NERS and Simon Underwood of BOW Community Projects.
- The profile of survey respondents was typical of the current refugee population as known in the North East region – average age being mid twenties and 75% being male. Respondents came from 16 different countries of origin – predominantly from Africa, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia.
- The respondent’s average length of time living in the North East was approximately one year. Two thirds were living in private sector NASS contracted accommodation, one third in public sector contracted accommodation.
- Key results of the study were....
 - That approximately 43% of respondents stated that they would definitely, and a further 38% would possibly, like to remain living in the North East region when considering their move on from NASS contracted dispersal accommodation.
 - That access to training and employment, access to housing and support services and opportunities for social inclusion and community support were the “top three” critical factors in influencing whether respondents decided to remain in the Region.

- That if they were to choose to live in another part of the UK, the most popular location of choice - for 48% of respondents - would be London.
 - That respondent's preferred areas for move on housing in the North East were areas other than those into which they had been dispersed – principally for reasons of personal safety and the avoidance of racial harassment.
 - That respondent's preferred type of move on housing was self contained, not shared homes, in secure neighbourhoods. With the majority expressing an interest in buying their own home.
 - That 50% of black and 30% of white respondents had been the victims of racially motivated crime and harassment while in the region – most on several occasions. Comparatively few - under 5% - reported that they had been the victims of other crime.
 - That the most quoted continuing support needs were in relation to housing and employment and training in that order. Also, that respondents saw refugee based organisations rather than “mainstream” providers as their preferred source of such support.
 - The report also identified positive and negative “indicators” in respect of second stage / move-on housing needs, preferences and aspirations. These are factors to be taken into account in any future provision planning.
 - The report concludes that the key elements to be considered in the provision of move-on accommodation are as follows;
 - Opportunities for belonging - feelings of security, community and support - are critical to successful integration and the retention of refugees in the North East region,
 - Information, advice and support needs – early, accessible and refugee focussed advice and support – particularly in the field of housing are a key requirement,
 - Opportunities for economic inclusion – education, housing and employment opportunities – although not the focus of this study, are with housing, the other key factor in retention decisions,
 - Access to appropriate housing – supply side issues – the location, type, quality and tenure of housing available, are also key factors in decisions by refugees to remain in the region.
- The report concludes that the housing needs and aspirations of refugees are basically the same as what we know to be those of the rest of the people of the North East – we all want decent secure affordable housing in popular locations in which we feel we can belong.
 - The report suggests that to assist in enabling effective move on housing by refugees in the North East the following key elements are needed;
 - Firstly; racism is a key issue region wide. An anti-racist multi cultural framework for action is needed. This must be supported, enabled and where necessary led, by policy makers and professionals. The inclusive stakeholder model, outlined in the European Commission Report “ Hearing the voices of refugees in the policy and

practice of integration in the European Union”, is a recommended model for enabling this to happen.

- Secondly; the provision of refugee centred services to refugees - both in support, information and in the provision of accessible move on housing, is the other key prerequisite of a successful move on housing and integration strategy region wide.
- It is the recommendation of the Project Steering Group that the findings of this study highlight the need to a] identify clearly the barriers in access to appropriate information, advice, and sustainable move on housing; b] to work to break down these barriers and c] to identify and develop good practice and delivery methods.

2. INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

2.1 Background

In April 2000 the Government began implementation of Dispersal. Individual asylum seekers who were supported through the NASS system whilst awaiting a decision on their cases were, on a no-choice basis, allocated contracted accommodation in designated dispersal areas throughout the UK. The policy determined that once an individual had received a positive decision – i.e.: leave to remain in the UK – they must *move on* from the NASS contracted accommodation within 14 days.

One of the contracted functions of the One Stop Service was to provide an advice session of two hours, within this very short two week period¹, to an individual given notice to 'move-on' to independent housing. This advice was to cover options for housing on leaving NASS accommodation, and how to apply for welfare benefit, housing benefits and council tax benefit²

It is at this juncture that the Government's policy on support for asylum seekers interfaces with its policy on the integration of recognised refugees and those with exceptional leave to remain in the UK. The Government has explicitly stated its hopes to promote permanent settlement/integration in the location to which the individual was dispersed, rather than see 'drift back' to London and the South East. This hope is also reflected within the dispersal regions themselves, where the potential positive social, cultural and economic contribution of refugees to the regional community as a whole is acknowledged.

However, the choice of location of 'second stage' settlement lies with the individual refugees themselves, as once a positive decision has been granted, they may move anywhere in the UK. Therefore, in order to promote second stage settlement within the dispersal region, the aspirations of refugees themselves must also be considered and identified. It is universally recognised by all sectors, including refugees themselves, that housing is a critical factor in promoting this integration. The issue of access to and availability of appropriate 'move on' accommodation in dispersal areas is therefore a priority, and has become increasingly so as more individuals receive their status decisions.

It is in recognition of this need to address the issue of 'move on' accommodation and support that the North of England Refugee Service (NERS) and Banks of the Wear Community Projects (BOWCP) led the initiative to establish the Refugee Housing Project North East.

2.2 The Refugee Housing Project North East

In early 2001, NERS and BOWCP met to discuss the issue of housing and settlement and its impact on refugees in the North East. Following a series of meetings with a range of interested parties, the initial meeting of the Steering Group took place in July 2001 to launch the Refugee Housing Project North East. The Steering Group is made up of Key Agency representatives who have knowledge and expertise in the field and its members

¹ The limitations of this time scale were later recognised by the Government and since April 8th 2002 the move on period has been extended to 28 days.

² The experience of the North of England Refugee Service, which operates the One Stop Service for the North East region, is that clients present themselves for advice only a few days prior to their deadline for move-on. NERS actually provides 6 to 8 hours client time to such individuals, contacting the Homeless Person's Unit, contacting Housing Associations, and assisting the client in completing many housing application forms.

brought a combination of grounded³ and anecdotal evidence to the table, highlighting the difficulties refugees faced with integration and settlement in the region.

Steering Group membership:

Simon Underwood	Managing Director, BOW Community Projects
Rick Bowler	Senior Lecturer, University of Sunderland
Georgina Fletcher	Co-ordinator, Regional Refugee Forum North East
Amer Ratkusic	ReACT (Refugee Advisory Committee on Tyneside)
Sead Masic	ReACT
Masoud Abedini	ReACT
Daoud Zaaroura	Chief Executive, North of England Refugee Service (NERS)
Mike Ball	Sub-regional Co-ordinator, NECASS (North East Consortium for Asylum Support Service)

The Steering Group's remit is to identify measures that would facilitate access to move on accommodation and any appropriate support necessary for the integration of refugees within the region. The group's focus meets the legal and policy framework established by the Government's National Integration Strategy⁴ and the North East Consortium for Asylum Support Services' (NECASS) regional draft policy on move on accommodation⁵.

The Steering Group established a project work plan in July 2001. The group sought funding from a variety of sources to implement the whole plan but was unsuccessful at this time in gaining support from the Home Office and the Housing Corporation. Tees Valley Housing Group and BOWCP provided £5000 start up funding and the steering group decided to utilise these resources to focus the work on one initial aspect of the work plan. Therefore, the Steering Group took the decision to concentrate the limited available resources on undertaking a small-scale needs analysis of refugees facing move-on in the region.

The Steering Group's research aim was to:

- Identify the needs and aspirations of refugees in the region in relation to move on accommodation. What do refugees believe will aid them in the process of integration and settlement, within a housing context, in the region?
- Identify the 'requirements for success' of second stage housing provision.

This survey involved 42 households representing 101 men, women and children from 16 different countries in South East Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Eastern Europe. This report therefore provides a snapshot of the housing aspirations of members of the refugee communities who face move-on across the North East. It also identifies secondary supports needs in relation to move-on accommodation. The researchers and the steering group do not claim the findings as representative, although this report provides the best evidence to-date on the aspirations and needs of refugees in relation to housing and settlement in the North East region⁶.

³ NERS for the European Commission, A Trans-national Network; Hearing the Voices of Refugees in the Policy and Practice of Integration in the European Union, JAI 1999/D.4/1011, 2000

⁴ Full and Equal Citizens. A strategy for the integration of refugees into the United Kingdom; Home Office 2001.

⁵ A Regional Policy Framework on move on accommodation; North east Consortium for Asylum Support Services, March 2001

⁶ Home Office IRSS Research Methods Working Group Workshop April 2002 (for working with asylum seekers, refugees, irregular migrants and 'difficult to research' populations): workshop participants recognised the need

This project represents a partnership innovation generating an evidence-based approach to refugee settlement in the region. Given the high rate of dispersal into the region, the project aims to contribute to the development of best practice in integration in the UK. This report is the beginning of meeting that aim.

2.3 The North East context

- Prior to dispersal the rate of arrival of asylum seekers directly into the region was c.150 per year.
- In the first two years of dispersal (April 2000-February 2002) the region has hosted over 5,500 primary applicant asylum seekers⁷. The total population of asylum seekers in the region (i.e. including dependents) is estimated to be 17,500 at June 2002⁸. The North East is the 4th largest dispersal region in the UK, hosting c.12% of all dispersals.
- There are now over 90 different nationalities represented in the region's asylum seeker and refugee community.
- Prior to dispersal there were 5 existing Refugee Community Organisations. Since dispersal NERS has enabled the emergence of a further 10 RCOs. The existence of a strong co-community is identified as a major factor affecting the decision to stay in the North East or move away south.
- The region is recognised as facing particular challenges in relation to social inclusion, cultural diversity, racism and equal opportunities⁹. It is a national and European target regeneration area; it has low graduate retention level. These indicators suggest there is an increased need to consider the promotion of integration through means other than employment.
- The increase in numbers of asylum seekers settling in the region has significant implications for service development and delivery throughout the region across a wide range of sectors. All sectors have been committed to producing a response to this challenge, but have encountered a steep learning curve and time delay in implementation of appropriate strategies. It is acknowledged that in this situation, efforts to meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees have fallen disproportionately on the community and voluntary sector, which has been under-resourced to produce this response.

2.4 Developing The Research

'Evidence points to the need for good practice to deliver improved management systems to handle problems with accommodation, provide information and advice, review financial practices and ensure that there are effective procedures to handle complaints. Best practice in these areas must be targeted specifically to refugees and asylum seekers and sensitive to the cultural and gender issues, which are of concern to them.' (Zetter, 1999, page 79)

The research team for this study was drawn from the Steering Group agencies and adopted an inclusive and participatory approach (Everitt, 1992, Reason, 1988, Weinstein, 1999).

for small-scale qualitative studies (with 60 to 100 research participants). These small-scale studies are able to provide an in-depth exploration of particular issues – something that is not always possible in large-scale surveys. It was noted that small-scale qualitative studies can be conducted as stand-alone pieces of research or complement and/or inform major surveys.

⁷ Includes those dispersed and those newly arriving directly into the region.

⁸ Home Office Statistics for preparation of ARC (Asylum Registration Cards) June 2002.

⁹ Equal Opportunities Report, Appraisal and Report on the North East Regional Economic Strategy; Unlocking our Potential, centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies, 1999.

This methodology is of increasing interest to the Immigration Research & Statistics Service of the Home Office¹⁰ and has been used in research commissioned by them¹¹. The method of enquiry, as process, sought to make central the role of refugees in the research. Members of the Refugee Advisory Committee on Tyneside (ReACT) worked closely with professional housing and research advisors on the Steering Group to devise a questionnaire and to co-ordinate a snowball sample through the participation of members of the Regional Refugee Forum North East (the region's Refugee Community Organisations).

The research methods involved both quantitative and qualitative questions. The Steering Group also drew on previous research findings to establish a framework on integration that informed the research process. That is that:

The foundations of early and successful integration lie in the conditions of first settlement¹². The existence of a strong and informed co-community is identified as a major factor affecting the decision to stay in the North East or move away south¹³.

Members of ReACT and members of the Regional Refugee Forum North East (the regions RCO's) used the developed questionnaire to interview members of their own communities who faced move-on. Interviews were therefore conducted in the respondent's own language by members of their own community. Researcher-interpreters were paid fees and the respondents were given £10 in respect for their time and commitment to the project¹⁴.

Participant members of the Regional Refugee Forum North East:

- ACANE – African Community Advice in the North East
- Iranian Centre North East
- Iraqi Community Association North East
- NEACA – North East Angolan Community Association
- Sri Lankan Society
- ReACT – Refugee Advisory Committee on Tyneside
- ZICONE – Zimbabwe Community Organisation in the North East

The field research took place during October – December 2001.

2.5 Acknowledgements

To ReACT and members of the Regional Refugee Forum North East, who undertook the field research

To Rick Bowler (University of Sunderland), Masoud Abedini and Sead Masic (ReACT) and Georgina Fletcher (Regional Refugee Forum North East) for drafting this report. To Simon Underwood of BOWCP for editorial assistance.

To members of the Steering Group for their comments and support in undertaking this work.

¹⁰ Home Office IRSS Research Methods Working Group.

¹¹ Home Office Foundation Project: Immigration and Statistics Service, Investigating Community groups in the North East of England Dispersal Area, community based Integration Initiatives. NERS for IRSS Home Office 2001.

¹² Ibid (2)

¹³ Ibid (9)

¹⁴ The matter of payments to respondents has been recognised as an important methodological issues in working with asylum seekers, refugees, irregular migrants and 'difficult to research' populations by the Home Office IRSS, who have secured ministerial approval for the use of payments where appropriate to secure participation and trust.

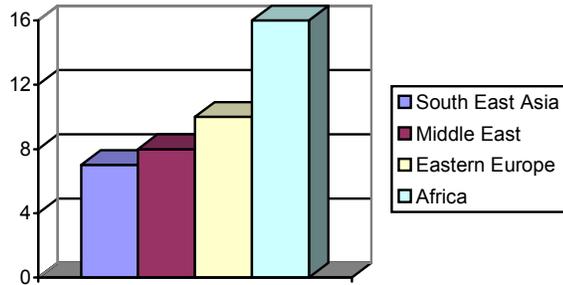
To BOWCP and Tees Valley Housing Group for their financial support which enabled this work to be undertaken.

To Hazel Evans, Regional Manager NASS (National Asylum Support Service) for her support and advice.

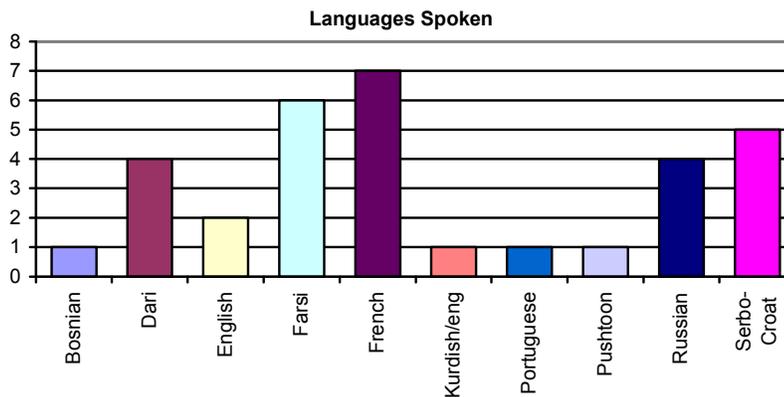
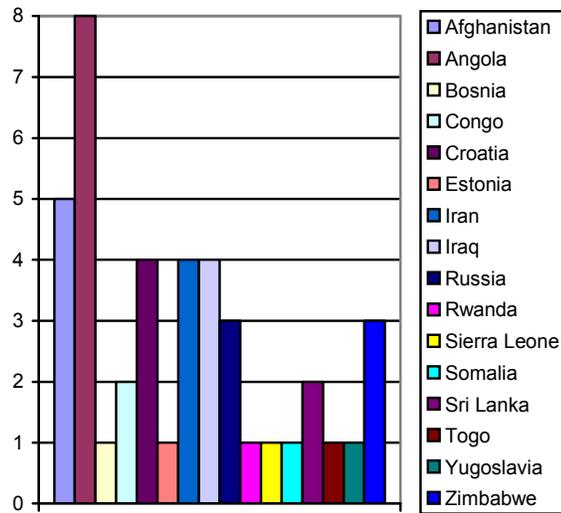
3. PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The research team interviewed 42 households involving a total of 101 men, women and children.

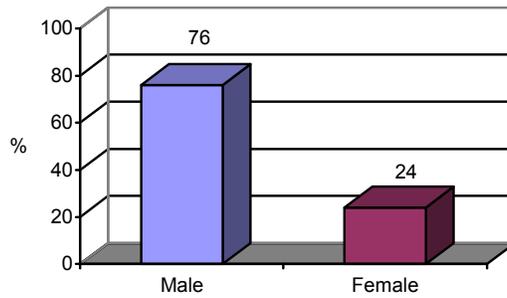
3.1 Regions of origin



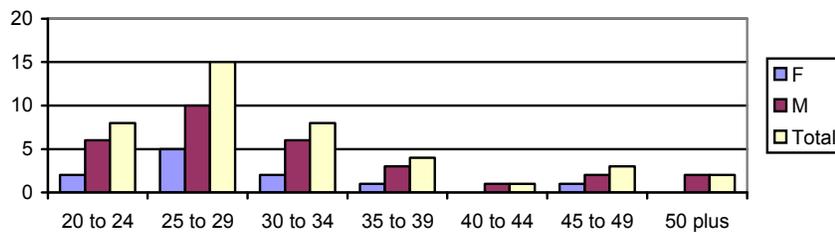
3.2 Country of origin



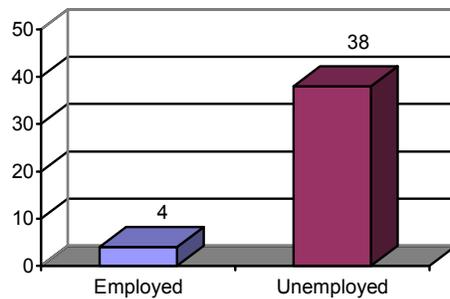
3.3 Gender and age of respondents



Ages and Gender



3.4 Employment and Education



Half of the respondents had work permits, although some of those still awaiting permission to work had been waiting for over 1 year. Only 4 respondents had employment, despite a wide range of skills/work experience drawn from their country of origin. 18 were currently attending further education courses in the UK, mostly concerned with English language learning, but others reflecting the need to have a British recognised certificate or qualifications for employment opportunities.

The range of skills from the country of origin included:

- | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Electrician | Teacher | Mechanic | Doctor |
| Business Owner | Shop Owner | Joiner | Labourer |
| Tailor | Policeman | Fisherman | Student |
| Dancer | Jeweller | Farmer | Stock Broker |
| Self-employed | Logistics | Army personnel | Clerk |
| Shop assistant | Engineer | Lorry driver | Agricultural technician |
| Painter | Customer services | Administrator | Housewife |

The types of further education being undertaken:

- Health & Safety
- European Computers Driving Licence
- Information Technology
- English as second or other language
- Academic English
- Management and communication

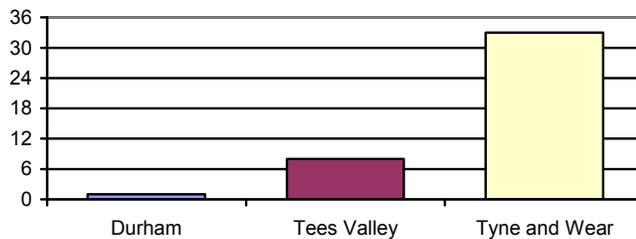
3.5 Housing in country of origin

- 11 of the respondents were from rural areas in their countries of origin; 31 from urban areas.
- 28 respondents had lived in houses in their country of origin. The other 14 had lived in flats.

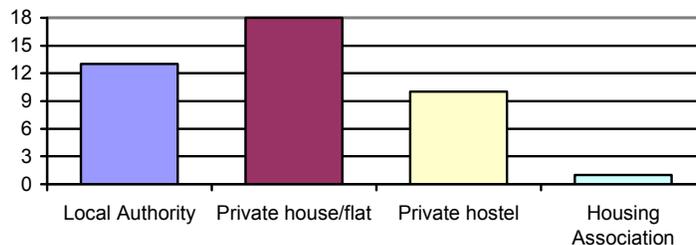
3.6 Length of time in the North East of England

- Ranged from 1 month to 5 years and 3 months for individual still awaiting a decision.
- Of the remaining respondents, the average time of residence in the region was 12 months.
- Respondents were composed of those still awaiting a decision and those who had recently received a decision and faced imminent move-on.

3.7 Geographical spread of respondents in the region



3.8 Current NASS Accommodation provider



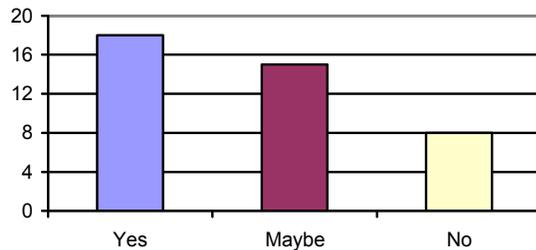
13 respondents were housing in council accommodation. The remaining respondents were accommodated through the private sector contracts, one in a housing association property.

4. FACTORS AFFECTING MOVE ON HOUSING LOCATION

4.1 Retention in the North East region

All respondents were asked whether, when considering where to 'move-on' to, they would seek to remain in the region or seek to move away, and to give their reasons for this choice.

Q: Would you like to remain living in the North East region?



Q: What do you like about living in the North East? (x no. of respondents)

- Home Housing is very supportive, our flat is dry and good, and the children's schools are very near.
- I have established a very good relationship with my teacher of English, who is also a volunteer and is helping me to cope better.
- I have got used to the area, it is easier to find a house here, the life is 'slower'.
- Friendly people, quiet life (x9)
- I can walk home easily
- Very cheap (x5)
- No choice because it's the only place that I know
- Nice clubs for night-life
- Health, transport
- Like shopping
- I like the area
- The quality of service is good
- Education opportunities (x4)
- More help is available in the North East
- Contacts and community centres
- NE is more suitable for socialising and family outgoing
- Better access to church

Positive Indicators for second stage / move-on housing

The response show the range of factors involved in making a location an area which can be considered a positive environment for second stage or permanent settlement. These include:

- Housing support

- Supportive friendships
- Access to other support services and facilities
- Community contacts, including faith groups
- Cost of living

These can be summarised as:

- Access to supportive services
- Opportunities for social inclusion
- Cost of living

Q: What don't you like about living in the North East?

- People are racist (x4)
- Racial harassment
- Discrimination
- Isolation of the African communities
- There is no established Afghan community
- Isolation living on my own (x4)
- There are few black children. My child has no friends and doesn't enjoy school
- People behaviour, as this leads to difficulties getting a job or integrating
- High crime (x3)
- The quality of the flats
- The condition of housing is depressing and not clean
- In some areas streets are dirty, rubbish is everywhere, people are irresponsible, children use bad language and swear all the time in normal conversation
- Finding a decent job is difficult (related to my studies) (x2)
- It is difficult to obtain certain foods that I am used to
- The climate, it's very cold, it rains and it is very grim sometimes (x5)
- Many of my friends and family live in London

Negative indicators for second stage / move-on housing

The response shows the range of negative factors impacting on the choice of second stage settlement, they can be summarised as:

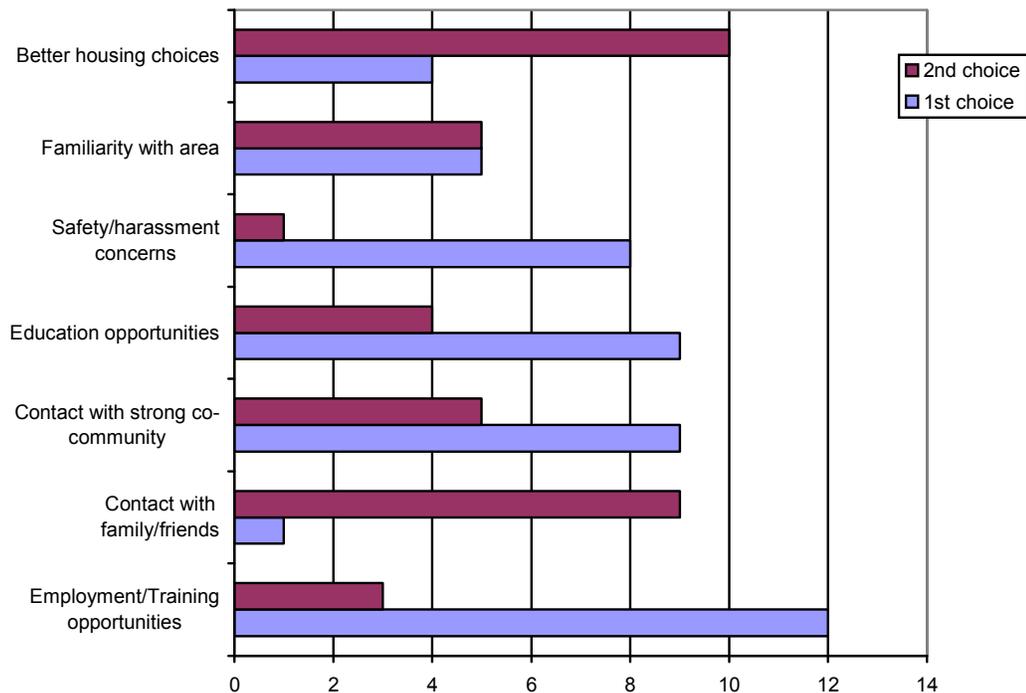
- Racial discrimination – ranging from harassment to discrimination in employment
- Being different (to the host population)
- Social isolation – from family, friends, own co-community, host community
- Poor quality of accommodation and local environment
- Anti-social behaviour of host population
- Crime

- Limited employment opportunities
- The climate
- Absence of facilities that relate to multicultural society

4.2 Factors involved in decision to move or stay

Q: on a scale of 1 (most important) to 8 (least important) what are the factors that influence your choice to stay in the region or to leave?

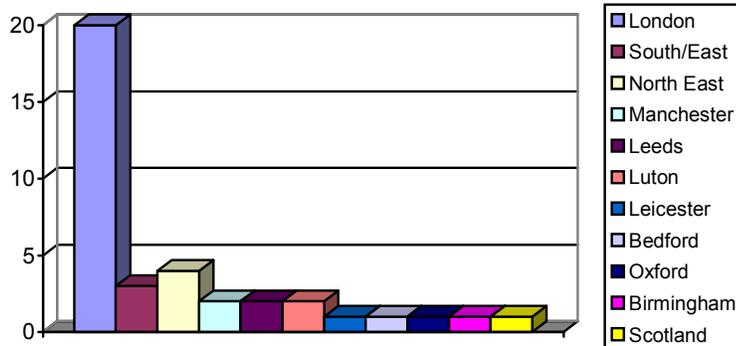
First and second choices only noted here. Analysis of the further choices reinforced the first and second choice factor priorities.



NB: some respondents pointed out that they did not have any friends or family in the UK so this could not be a factor in decision making.

4.3 Other preferred areas for move-on in UK

Q: If you could choose to live in another part of the UK, what area would you choose and please explain why?



Reasons given:

- London, because there are more chances to get employment
- London, as people in London understand how to live with people such as myself or us. If not, I would prefer to live here if conditions improve
- London or Luton – as I have family there
- London, as there are many Afghans and more possibilities for a job
- London as my family there can provide additional support and help me to find a job
- London because it's a city of education and more possibilities for jobs
- Anywhere in the South East, as the weather is better there
- Leeds is multicultural and there are more jobs. I love Leeds but I cannot explain why, but all my friends and relatives are there.
- Leicester, Bradford, Corby, Halifax, because there are a lot of people from my country there
- Scotland, as it is very similar to the country that I was born in

Positive indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- proximity to friends and family members / family reunion and the support this provides
- proximity to co-community and the support this provides
- employment opportunities

multicultural environment and host population familiarity with multiculturalism

4.4 Urban or Rural housing preference

Only one of the 11 respondents who had lived in rural areas in their country of origin still wanted to live in a rural area of the UK. One of those who had lived in an urban environment wished to live in a rural one in the UK and 4 expressed no preference.

4.5 Preferred areas for move-on within the North East region

Q: if you choose to stay in the North East, which area would you prefer to live in?

- Heaton and Jesmond. They are nice and there is access to amenities
- Jesmond and Gosforth because its very quiet and nice. No problems compared with other areas.
- Smaller towns like Chester-le-Street, or any rural, quiet area. I would like to live in a village and have good neighbours. I enjoy the nature.
- Byker, Gosforth and Durham. Its more secure and life is normal there
- Jesmond, Heaton, walker as its quiet there
- Stockton, because it is calm, there is access to services, and I'm familiar with it (x3)
- Wallsend, because I don't like to change accommodation and people. I am afraid of changes
- Newcastle, as I have friends here (x4)
- Gateshead because of familiarity with the area (x2)
- Stockton, because I'm familiar with the place, and second choice Newcastle because it's the biggest city in the North East
- Redcar and Middlesbrough because there is better access to services and I am used to the area (x2)
- Central Newcastle, because its close to the education and I like to be surrounded by lots of people
- Anywhere without racial harassment
- Somewhere with decent neighbours and near the town centre so that there is access to amenities
- Any part of the North East without racial harassment, but close to a university
- I cannot comment because I am not aware of other locations
- It makes no difference

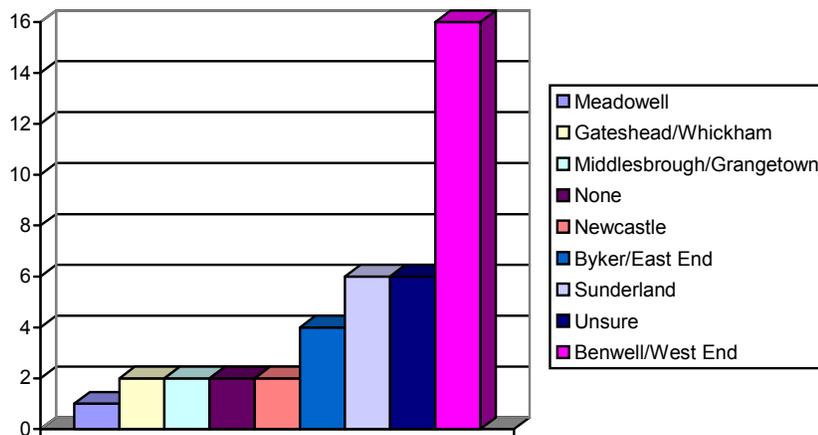
Positive Indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Peace and quiet
- Good neighbours
- Security and safety
- Free from racial harassment and anti-social behaviour

- Good access to services
- Good access to amenities
- Familiarity with area
- A knowledge of or experience of other areas on which to make an informed choice

4.6 Areas to avoid for move-on within North East

Q: Are there any areas in the North East that you would particularly like to avoid living in?



Reasons given for wishing to avoid these areas:

- Benwell, it's very dangerous, the streets are empty, there are no people, harassment, verbal abuse, racial harassment, people get insulted and attacked in there. And there are a lot of thieves. I don't want anything to do with this place. (x12)
- Howden, Meadowell, New York, Benwell, Fenham – these are problematic areas as are some parts of Gateshead
- Sunderland, because of racial harassment (x4)
- Middlesbrough – racial harassment
- Whickham because of crime
- Gateshead because of racial harassment
- Byker, people are rough and constantly swear (x4)
- Certainly Middlesbrough, for racial harassment, I don't know the other areas
- Grangetown, people get abused, harassed and attacked. In some cases houses get vandalised and set fire to
- West-end and East-end of Newcastle, they are not safe

The least desired areas for move on, that is Benwell, Sunderland and Byker, all represent the highest density areas of NASS accommodation and therefore the locations of first stage

settlement as asylum seekers. These are areas with significant housing voids, which are recognised as being areas where the host population suffers from significant social exclusion problems. This is recognised by the asylum seekers and refugees themselves.

The number responding as unsure reflects the reality that many people recognise that they have not had the opportunity to know about or experience areas other than the location of their first stage settlement.

Negative Indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

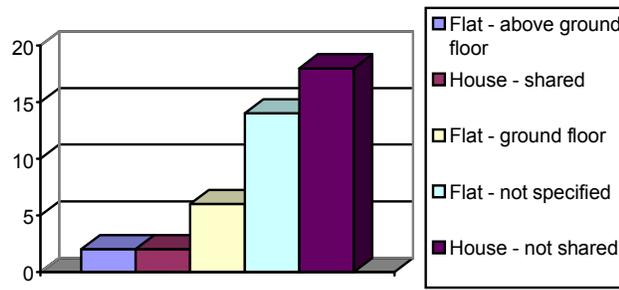
- Fears about personal safety
- Fears about security of belongings
- Racism
- Anti-social behaviour
- Lack of knowledge or experience of other areas on which to make an informed choice

5. PREFERRED MOVE ON HOUSING TYPE

5.1 Type of housing

All respondents were to consider what type of housing they wished to 'move-on' to, and to give their reasons for this choice.

Q: What type of housing would you like to move on to?



Q: Why would you prefer this type of housing?

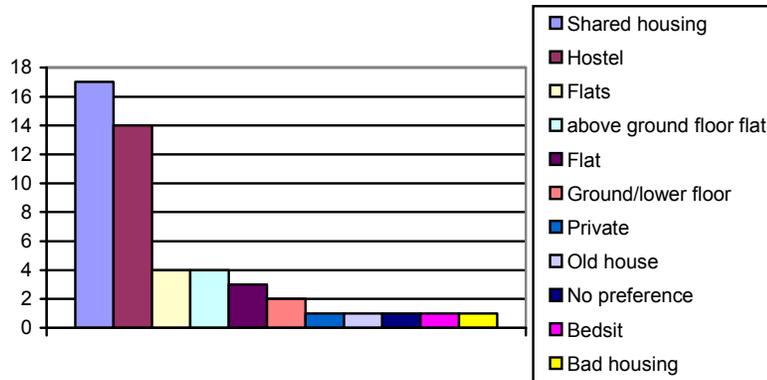
- Because we are used to it. It is quiet, no noise, we lived in one in our country (x3)
- I would be on my own. I lived before in a house and this is the best accommodation, also thinking of establishing family
- Not shared accommodation, as we can live as we want and don't have to worry about others, especially our cooking may not be liked by others, I mean the smell of curry.
- Feel more secure and I like my privacy
- Comfort and ability to study properly
- Because I don't trust people
- Because of size of family
- It has to have privacy- cannot share with stranger- would like to pray but if share will not be able to pray
- Because of difference in culture and types of food
- Just do not feel comfortable sharing and want to be independent (x4)
- There are a lot of people and I wouldn't be isolated and would have a lot of neighbours.
- I would like a 2 or 3 bedroom flat shared with two other people I know. Because too many people living together will certainly have problems but I find it difficult to live by myself, it can be quite depressing.
- It most suits my needs
- Because I have a baby so it is easier for me to manage
- Safety (x2)

Positive indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Privacy and peace

- Freedom to live according to own cultural values and ways
- Independence
- Reduced isolation
- Security and safety
- Familiarity with type of housing / replicate type of housing from country of origin
- Adequate size for family composition

Q: What type of housing would you like to avoid?



Q: Why would you want to avoid this type of housing?

- I want to avoid private accommodation, as I can't get support from my landlord at all. If I need something I need to wait a long time before repairs are made
- I don't want a hostel or hotel – toilet facilities are very bad, also I am afraid of lifts (x7)
- I don't want an old house (disrepair), a house next to racist neighbours or crowded house
- Bad housing (poor condition of bathrooms, heating, card meters for gas and electricity)
- I have large family so need more than a flat
- I wouldn't want to live somewhere where houses are far apart
- I would avoid a house away from others because of safety and ground floor house because of my experience with insects.
- I don't want a shared house-you don't have your freedom there and I wouldn't feel secure (x20)
- I am scared to be the target of terror, and if the lift breaks down
- I wouldn't want to live in a building (4th 5th floor), because of noise.
- Block of flats
- High rise flats (x2)
- I don't want a bedsit because of the lack of privacy (x2)
- I would avoid house in an elderly neighbourhood because they don't stand children
- I want to avoid a rough neighbourhood
- I would avoid housing in areas with little lighting at night

Negative indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Non-supportive or responsive landlords
- Lack of privacy and security in shared accommodation
- Poor quality housing fabric and hygiene standards of interior furnishing
- Isolation
- Fears over high rise living (harassment, lift breakdown, noise)
- Problem neighbours and neighbourhood

5.2 Facilities

Q: What essential items or fixtures would you want the housing to have?

- Burglar alarm, to be secure and safe, also double locks on the door (x9)
- (CCTV) camera and so can see who is visiting (x3)
- Security locks – it increases our security and security of our children against racial harassment (x9)
- Security warden and outside lights
- Do not mind as long as it is safe for my family
- Fire alarm (x3)
- Health & safety provisions
- Heating (x3)
- Furnished
- Unbroken beds and good mattress
- Bathroom in good condition
- Telephone (x2)
- Shower (x2)

Positive indicators for second stage / move-on housing;

- Critical security features – against theft, racial harassment and attack, and fire
- Health and safety considerations within the accommodation
- Decent quality interior furnishing
- Good operational heating
- Communication

5.3 Location of move on housing

Q: What special considerations do you have about the location in which you will live?

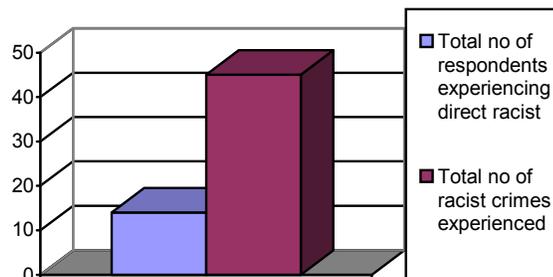
- Close to schools, further education (x16)
- Close to public transport (x16)
- In a good and safe neighbourhood (x14)
- With satisfactory street lights (x11)
- Safe (x4)
- Close to shops (x14)
- Close to halal food shops (x2)
- Close to a hospital (x5)
- Somewhere where children can enjoy their education with other black children
- Somewhere where there is a job
- Accessible to everything
- Close to family
- Close to religious people, and good and friendly people
- Close to centre for recreation

Positive indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Accessibility to services and facilities
- Safety and friendliness of neighbourhood
- Close to schools with multicultural intake
- Employment opportunities
- Close to family

5.4 Racism and personal security

Q: Have you been the victim of what you consider to be racially motivated crime whilst you have been living in the North East?



Approximately 40% of those interviewed reported that they had experienced racially motivated abuse during their stay in the North East.

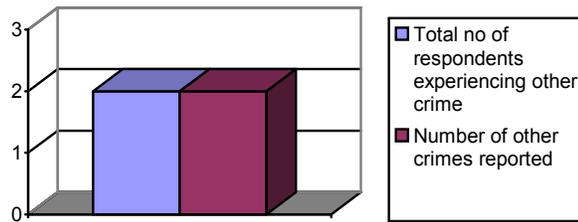
Approximately 50% of black respondents and 30% of white respondents had experienced abuse. All but one experiencing abuse had experienced multiple instances of abuse.

- I was living in a house with another 3 refugees who provoked me and made remarks about my nationality, and that I am a Muslim. They were Christians. At one point they showed me a knife to scare me. The police and Roselodge (accommodation provider) was informed. I was moved on the same day, and I was happy that they acted so quickly.
- In Benwell and Byker on my way to visit friends – a group of kids aged between 8 and 16 threw some stones on me treating me “F*****g black b*****d”. I had to run to save my life. I didn’t report it to the police, as it usually does nothing to help asylum seekers.
- I was attacked and my vouchers were stolen, I was abused, somebody spat on me, people threw stones on me
- Racist attack happened in Sunderland, where African people should not live.
- I was walking on the street and someone kicked me with a ball
- My windows were smashed. I reported it to the police but they said it’s not an emergency. I am not satisfied because police is racist as well. They left me to sleep in a house with broken windows and provided me with crime number after three days. I hate police.
- I was present when my friend has been attacked
- I was verbally abused when friend attacked in Sunderland
- I live near Elswick, people spit at me which is depressing and unfair
- While walking near Betts Avenue, a group of youngsters put rubbish in the hood of my jacket and pulled my hair.
- I took my children to Halloween party they didn’t let us to sit and asked us to leave and I took my children back home crying.
- In 3 incidents we were attacked and people threw stone to our windows. We are still receiving bullets and stones through our yard.
- People throw stone to my house, cut my aerial from outside very often. I was called names and thrown at regularly. Police put security cameras around the house and talked to neighbours house to house.
- A week after I moved in to my house in Redcar people smashed my windows. During the next two months it happened again 4 times. Police came around, nothing happened. I stopped calling the police. After a while people just stopped the attacks

Negative indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Local area crime statistics, especially relating to burglary and theft
- Conflict inherent between and within asylum seeker communities

Q: Have you been the victims of any other type of crime that you consider was not racially motivated?



Comparative to racially motivated abuse and crime, respondents had experienced far less other or general crime.

- I had my flat broken into 3 times in 3 months. I reported every incident but nothing happened. I expected nothing to happen.
- Someone tried to steal my son's bicycle. The bicycle was a gift.
- My flat mate attacked me because he did not like me. He was from my country.

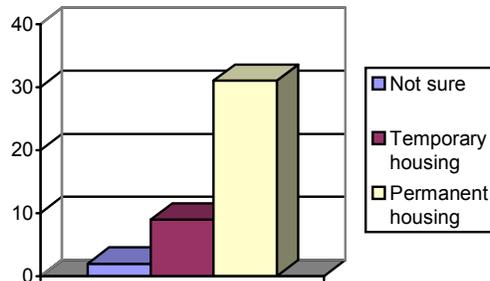
Negative indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Local area crime statistics, especially relating to burglary and theft
- Conflict inherent between and within asylum seeker communities

6. SUPPORT NEEDS

6.1 Preference for Permanent or Temporary Move-On Accommodation

Q: Do you want your next housing to be somewhere you can live for as long as you want to, or would you prefer / see yourself as needing some form of temporary housing where you can stay until you identify a permanent place to live?



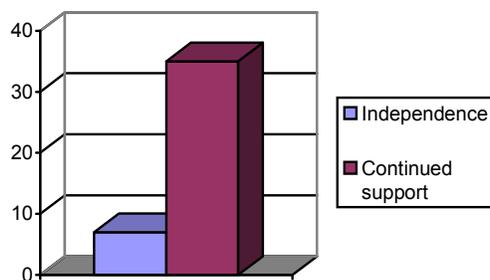
- I don't want to keep moving because it will affect my son's education
- I would like it to be for as long as I want it, as long as I need it, for the rest of my life (x31)
- As long as I just get somewhere to live I won't worry too much
- Temporary; for a short period of time; until I identify a permanent place to live (x9)

Positive indicator for second stage / move-on housing:

- Move on housing should have the option to be for permanent / long term occupancy

6.2 Preference for continued support

Q: Would you prefer to move to totally independent living, or would you prefer some form of continued support and advice in relation to your housing?



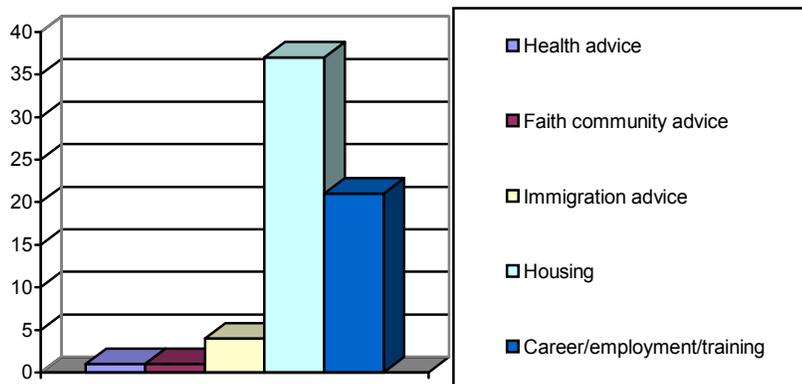
- I don't know the British legislation, and the system here is very complicated
- As I don't know about many things while living in this country, I would need advice to be sure not to make mistakes
- I keep on learning therefore I need continued advice
- I have no knowledge of owning house – therefore I need advice
- Because I am not sure where to go for the right information and advice
- I need support related to housing
- As I am on low income it is better to stay on continued support in case of difficulties
- Because my English is not very good

Positive indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Continued access to advice and information specific to living in Britain
- Confidence that support or advice is available for those vulnerable on low incomes
- Access to information and advice for speakers of English as a second language

6.3 Preferred types of continued support and advice

Q: What types of continued support and advice would be useful to you?



Includes advice, support and information on:

- Housing benefit, tenancies, repairs, utilities, installations, budget planning
- Careers, training and education
- Business and self-employment
- Welfare rights
- Health
- Immigration & citizenship
- Faith and community

Positive indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Access to a range of advice, information and support specific to those orientating themselves in the UK and seeking to rebuild their life

Q: How long do you think you will need this support for?

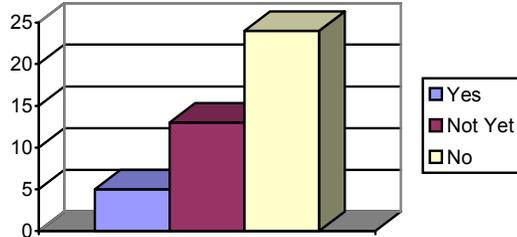
The majority of respondents cited periods of between 1 and 3 years in terms of ongoing support. They demarcated the period also in terms such as “until my language is good enough” and “throughout my period of study”.

Respondents had varying confidence in the amount of time it would take them to fully achieve economic and experiential independence.

Positive indicator for second stage / move on housing:

- Access to advice, information and support for up to two years target period

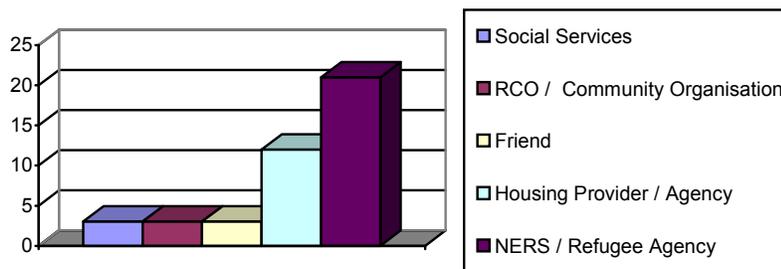
Q: Have you already tried to get advice, information and support about move-on housing options?



6.4 Preferred sources of support

Very few respondents (approximately 12%) had already sought advice about move on accommodation. This is likely to be due to the lack of available advice, uncertainty about people’s futures whilst awaiting decisions and the pressure on existing contract support services meaning that support agencies do not/can not prioritise such advice.

Q: Where have you been for advice on move-on, or where would you go for such advice?



Positive indicator for second stage / move-on housing:

- Availability of and access to clearly identified advice service for those facing move on

Q: Who would you prefer to give you that support and advice?

Priority – choice		1st	2nd	3rd
Refugee Community Org.		11	12	6
Specialist Refugee Agency		12	8	5
Local Authority	7	4	4	
Outreach worker		7	4	6
Housing provider		3	4	6
Other agency	5	6	6	

Respondents identify refugee centric organisations as preferred sources of future advice on move-on accommodation. Note however, that this response will be also influenced by respondents previous experience/contact with advice agencies.

Positive indicator for second stage / move-on housing:

- Access to advice, information and support about move on, and during second stage settlement from a Refugee Community Organisation or specialist refugee agency is preferred

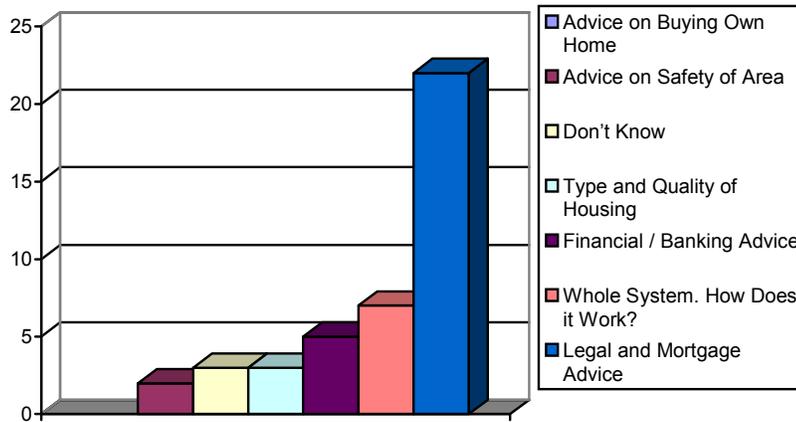
6.5 Tenure preferences**Q: When you move out of NASS accommodation, do you see yourself as buying or renting your next housing?**

- I would like to buy a house because it will be my own property, I will look after it and maintain it (x11)
- I would like to buy if possible, but it depends on a job or the financial resources to do so (x6)
- I would like to buy because it shows total independence
- I would prefer to own my own house. It is the only way to have privacy (x8)
- I would rent as it is easier to move if necessary
- Houses are too expensive to buy in England

Positive Indicator for second stage / move on housing:

- The availability of and access to rented accommodation.
- Buying one’s own house remains a future aspiration. The reality is that refugees must consider rented housing as move-on. While the majority of respondents expressed a preference for buying a house, they recognised that this was dependent on obtaining employment or economic/financial independence.

Q: If you want to buy your own accommodation, what assistance do you think you will need?



- Mortgage advice, solicitor’s advice about signing contracts (x9)
- Assistance from the beginning through to completion (x3)
- No idea, not sure (x3)
- Money and information about the UK system
- How to check quality and value of the house
- Advice about the area, whether it is high risk or not

Positive indicator for second stage / move-on housing:

- Access to advice, information and support for buying a home (3rd stage housing) should to be available during second stage settlement
- The survey found that respondents’ intention to stay in the North East region was largely dependent on the level of support available within the region.

7. REFUGEE VOICES

‘Migrant settlement is a two-way process, depending both on the willingness and ability of the migrant to adapt and integrate, and on the extent which the host society provides access to economic, social and political life.’ (Home Office, 2001, page 51)

The survey also asked for general feedback and opinions from asylum seekers on the experience of dispersal under the NASS system.

7.1 Q: What do you think are the biggest problems that refugees face in finding suitable housing in the North East region?

- ‘I would advise refugees not to go to X private provider as they have bad accommodation. There is also a problem with burglary, nuisance caused by children (in deprived areas)’
- ‘Communication barrier, legislation – people don’t know about their rights, different mentalities, different way of life in this country than in my country of origin.’
- ‘Good quality houses are hard to find. In every house there is a problem with draft noise, neighbours. There aren’t enough people to talk about housing problems and also my English is very poor.’
- ‘Many people are living in private accommodation and a landlord didn’t show much of interest in support – there is no contact with landlords.’
- ‘Housing providers were not supportive at all, language barrier, money problems’
- ‘Not enough houses for refugees’
- ‘There is no one to protect you from the private landlord’
- ‘Lack of support for new arrivals, lack of sufficient advice, money matters, discrimination, bad reputation of Asylum System due to system management, lack of trust in Asylum System’
- ‘The biggest problem is that we are placed where we don’t like to be placed and we have no right or access to live in certain areas’
- ‘We have been classified as bad people’
- ‘Refugees don’t have much information or advice about housing and no choice of the area in which they are going to live’
- ‘All refugee houses are located in abandoned streets full of thugs. British people decided not to live there anymore because of nature of the streets and refugees have no choice and therefore are told to live everywhere.’
- ‘There are no other families from Afghanistan in NE’
- ‘There is no choice, no support for youths, no communities, no special housing provider for such a group of people’

- ❑ 'Refugees don't know where to start. There is no material in their own language to guide them regarding housing.'
- ❑ 'The language in my opinion is the biggest barrier'
- ❑ 'Not knowing their rights. Not knowing the environment or the area they live in.'
- ❑ 'You get nothing in your flat and no help'
- ❑ 'Not knowing the system. Limited housing options'
- ❑ 'High rent. Low income'

Negative indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Lack of knowledge of the system and one's rights
- Not knowing what the options are: lack of knowledge or experience of areas other than their area of immediate/first stage housing
- Language barrier to access information and advice
- Lack of access to / availability of information in own language
- Lack of specialist housing provider for refugees facing move-on
- Lack of information, advice and support from landlords of NASS accommodation
- Mistrust of landlords of NASS accommodation
- High rent in comparison to low income
- Lack of orientation and cultural familiarisation: Different systems and ways of life compared to country of origin
- Negative first stage housing experience as an asylum seeker i.e.: poor quality housing and problematic neighbourhoods
- Discrimination and stigmatising
- Lack of houses
- Isolation from co-community

7.2 Q: Do you have any suggestions for improving the situation about finding a suitable place to live when leaving NASS accommodation?

- ❑ 'It is very hard to cope when they put you in accommodation in the area where there is a high turnover. We have suffered racial harassment and as a result we moved to another accommodation. If there is a chance to find accommodation in a quiet part of a town this would mean we can finally find the peace and have a better chance to settle and integrate.'
- ❑ 'To have someone to ask for advice, options or support as regards my housing needs'
- ❑ 'It would be good if there is a housing organisation that would take care about asylum seekers and refugees just to solve all of their housing problems.'
- ❑ 'Landlords have to take better care about people living in their accommodation; they should visit us sometimes to see where we are living.'

- ❑ 'Suggest to NASS to have a housing department that will provide enough advice and guidance for those people to find a secure environment.'
- ❑ 'The Authorities should understand our complaints and try to improve accommodation conditions.'
- ❑ 'It will be better if they (Asylum Seekers) can have a choice of area and to get advice and support, which will help them to find suitable, place.'
- ❑ 'I have no knowledge of move on situation and need to be taught about it.'
- ❑ 'Improved assistance by NERS'
- ❑ 'People should go to NERS and get advice'
- ❑ 'To be able to move from NASS accommodation to a city where they want to stay'
- ❑ 'A special housing provider with furnished houses and advisers is needed'
- ❑ 'Service providers should keep helping asylum seekers to find a suitable place for them to move in to'
- ❑ 'Accommodation should be provided with necessary items like carpet, furniture, bathroom, fridge, etc. Because how can a refugee provide all that by him or herself? its not possible. Or there should be some sort of grants available for such people'
- ❑ 'Informing refugees where they can go to find an accommodation'.
- ❑ 'We should not be suddenly cut off and left alone all to ourselves. There should be centres and places or community organisations to contact to gain help regarding our future accommodation'
- ❑ 'It is useful to have starting pack. Just knowing the law doesn't help, we should know how to enforce it and our community does it for us. Community organisations must have strong links with housing providers. They must be enabled to provide housing for us otherwise we will be in the waiting list forever and not in the property'

Positive indicators for second stage / move-on housing:

- Access to information, advice and support
- A specialist agency or housing organisation for refugees facing move on and whilst living in second stage housing
- A specialised agency or housing organisation offering furnished houses and advisers
- Strong Refugee Community Organisations as source of advice, information, support and advocacy
- Strong links between Refugee Community Organisations and housing providers
- Landlords who care about and offer support to their tenants (visits and information and advice)
- Fully furnished accommodation or financial assistance in the form of grants (& deposits)
- The opportunity to find accommodation in a location that allows one to live in peace

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Summary of key indicators

Positive Indicators encouraging second stage settlement	Negative indicators discouraging second stage settlement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly identifiable access to appropriate information, advice and support for up to two years, accessible for speakers of English as a second language • Existence of a knowledgeable/expert refugee agency or Refugee Community Organisation providing such support, information and advice • Safety of self, family and belongings is critical • Proximity to co-community (nationality / ethnicity / faith / family / friends) • Independence, privacy, peace and quiet. • Freedom to live according to own cultural practices • Good neighbours, good neighbourhood • Opportunities for social inclusion and belonging • Multi-cultural environment • Employment, education & training opportunities in the area/region • Access to other services, facilities and amenities • Ability to make an informed choice • Quality, affordable, furnished rented housing • Supportive Landlords, who 'care' • Cost of living • Familiarity with area • Possibility for move-on housing to be permanent / long-term 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative first stage settlement experience • Racism; discrimination; anti-social behaviour; fear of personal safety • Crime levels in locality • Being different; lack of familiarity with multi-culturalism within local community; non-acceptance by local community; exclusion; lack of opportunities for social inclusion • Social isolation from co-community • Lack of knowledge about system and rights • Lack of knowledge about the area in general on which to make informed choice • Lack of access to information, advice and support in own language • Lack of knowledge/expertise within advice giving agencies themselves • Poor quality accommodation and local environment • Un-supportive landlords and mistrust of NASS contractors • High rents in comparison to low income • Limited employment opportunities • Climate • Racial and political tensions within and between refugee communities • Lack of affordable, quality rented accommodation

This survey has found that refugee needs are people needs, in that the aspiration for security, safety, good neighbourhood, quality housing, independence and belonging – the aspects of integration that are created through housing - are shared with any individual or family. However, respondents have self-identified that, in order to achieve this, they require additional support both prior to and after the period of move-on. Therefore, any policy or strategy aimed at promoting second stage settlement must address the need for:

1. Opportunities for Belonging (safety, security, social inclusion and multi-culturalism)
2. Clearly identifiable access to need-to-know information and advice *in preparation for* move-on and *continued* wide range of secondary support for up to two years following move-on
3. Opportunities for economic inclusion, education or training within the area of second stage settlement
4. Availability, quality and affordability of move-on housing stock

These are critical issues in making integration a reality.

8.2 The self-identified need for ‘Belonging’

Refugees, in common with people need, see community safety and neighbourliness as pre-requisites for building a future in the region.

‘The possibility of belonging must exist. In order for integration to be allowed to happen there must be a fundamental acceptance within the host society and in local communities that there is a place for refugees in that society. This necessitates the implementation of positive measures to enhance race and community relations. The issue of racism both as cause and consequence of non-integration is central. Racism impacts heavily on the refugees themselves and threatens the very security and protection they sought in the host country’
(Transnational partnership led by NERS for European Commission, 2000)

Racism, Isolation and Community Safety are all central concerns of those facing move-on. These concerns have been directly created through the negative experience of first stage settlement. In that the Dispersal policy has been accommodation led, it has involved a primary settlement experience in areas with high deprivation and exclusion indicators. These problems are not in the power of refugees to solve.

Racism, Isolation and Community Safety cannot be resolved by imposing settlement into areas of high deprivation without the necessary will or policy to create environments that enable whole community belonging.

Therefore, a critical factor for local decision-makers and practitioners is to develop ‘organic’ methods of neighbourhood support, which holds ‘belonging for all’ as a central focus of their work.

The process of settlement and belonging is now a central focus of national policy, following the inner city disturbances in Oldham, Bradford, Burnley and other northern towns and cities during Summer 2000. The Home Office’s own report on community cohesion stresses

the need for integration¹. Social Exclusion, Segregation and Institutional Racism are identified as causal factors in those disturbances. This study has uncovered a high rate of racist crime and a high concern amongst those facing move-on for individual, community and family safety.

Safety is central to a feeling of belonging. Integration as a two-way process cannot be actualised without an environment for belonging. Belonging is not a viable option if the environment in which people are dispersed is flavoured with persistent racist attitudes, behaviours and action, combined with social, cultural and economic isolation. A critical factor arising from this study was the depth of concern amongst respondents about their personal safety in the areas they had been dispersed to and were now living.

The region has serious problems with creating a non-racist environment, which is essential to a stable and sustainable integration agenda.

‘Without planned action to manage the tensions which may exist between the indigenous population and asylum seekers, significant racial tensions and public disorder may result.’
(ACPO, 2001. p6)

It is clear that urgent measures are needed to counter racism, isolation and the absence of good quality local information, support and advice. By making the local ‘lived environment’ safe for refugees we will be making the total ‘lived environment’ a safe place for all.

Respondents clearly had experienced positive alongside negative responses from the longer term settled communities in the region. In many ways these positive features of life in the region are of critical importance to the integration and settlement agenda. They impact by countering those with racist attitudes and should be the starting point in any anti-racist practice in all localities within the region. A clear framework is needed from regional and sub-regional policy makers to envision a non-racist whole community approach to neighbourhood renewal.

This can be achieved through the joining-up of organic methods of good practice with instrumentalist or “top down” approaches to partnerships in regeneration, community safety, citizenship and social inclusion. Work is needed on the ground, which clearly enables critical dialogue about building community cohesion. Policy makers, practitioners and ‘ordinary folk’ must all be involved and learn from each other about the practical realities of ensuring policy measures designed to improve neighbourhoods, and ensure they are not mono-cultural and racist.

A common value base should underpin all work on settlement, belonging and integration. This would include a focus on building equality environments through inter- / intra-community development work.

‘Migrant settlement is a two-way process, depending both on the willingness and ability of the migrant to adapt and integrate, and on the extent which the host society provides access to economic, social and political life.’ (Home Office, 2001, page 51)

¹ Ritchie Report, Oldham Independent Review; One Oldham One Future, December 2001, Government Office for the North West

‘Integration must be a two-way process in practical reality, with intrinsic roles and responsibilities for both refugees and the host community. It is critical that real involvement of both refugees and the host society is engaged and that this engagement is framed within an anti-racist and multi-cultural discourse’
(NERS for European Commission, 2000)

Policy makers and practitioners must activate whole community participation within an inter-cultural framework for action.

8.3 The self-identified need for support

A pro-active response to second stage settlement and belonging is needed. The majority of respondents want to stay in the region. However a sizeable number are uncertain. Support packages to maximise integration, and thereby the positive contributions that refugees bring to the region are essential.

All respondents stated they needed a seamless system of support that was accessible both prior to move-on and for some time afterwards. They identified a range of pre-move on support and continued support needed in order to ensure that their needs relating to housing, as a major factor in promoting integration, are met. Health, Faith, Immigration, Housing maintenance, Housing tenure, Housing benefit and Employment, Education, language and community development were all identified.

The majority of respondents would seek support and advice from either a known refugee agency, a refugee community organisation, or from the housing provider.

Despite a large variation in the time actually spent in the region during first stage settlement, all respondents acknowledged that they had a limited overall pattern of knowledge on how the housing system works, due to a lack of co-ordinated and localised advice and support services. This highlights how accessible advice, support and information has become ‘front-end loaded’ due to the rapid implementation of Dispersal and its acknowledged under-resourcing and operational problems.

This context has reduced the ability of refugee agencies and refugee community organisations to produce the ‘seamless’ package of support identified as required, by sucking limited resources into crisis intervention measures and propping up an inherently problematic system². This overburden on the voluntary and community sector has left new asylum seekers and refugees in a vulnerable position without the necessary services available or the necessary information to establish the foundations for successful settlement.

The tensions inherent in the design of the Dispersal system as both deterrence and support clearly affects the long-term integration of refugees through the negative experiences of first stage settlement, the overburdening of existing support services, and the perceptions and attitudes of the longer term settled communities.

It is clear from this study that current housing providers are offering different levels of information and advice to clients. Only 12% of respondents had been given advice or support in relation to move-on accommodation. Clearly the points of contact for accessing

²North of England Refugee Service for the IRSS, Home Office, (2001) *Foundation Project: Investigating Community Groups in the North East of England Dispersal Area, Community based Integration Initiatives*. Home Office Immigration and Statistics Service,

support depend on the quality of trust and safety during the early contacts in the dispersal process. The current gap identified by respondents in the availability of adequate and accurate information to refugees has created additional pressures on a limited number of agencies to provide a whole range of advice. Mainstream services in the region need to facilitate closer working relationships with refugee agencies and refugee community groups to develop local advice and support on the range of issues identified by respondents.

'It is important to recognise that supporting asylum seekers is not just about money. Asylum seekers are vulnerable people. Many are recovering from trauma while facing up to new challenges in this country. The quality of the care and support provided..... is vital, and decisions on how and where to support asylum seekers must be influenced by humanitarian, as well as financial considerations.' (Audit Commission, 2001, page 9)

'In that it is recognised that integration is a two way process, it must be a two way process in operational reality. Refugees must be partners in research that forms the basis of evidence-based policy development and in the structures through which policy is implemented in practice. Partnerships must be genuinely inclusive (and not merely extractive) and ones of parity. Partnerships are only as effective as they are genuine. The experience of all stakeholders identifies that inclusive decision making mechanisms and partnerships in delivery of services are not simple processes in practice.' (Transnational Partnership led by NERS for European Commission, 2000)

8.4 Applications of the research

Although this survey represents the views of only 42 households in the North East region, the findings match the experience/expertise of the Steering Group members. The findings can therefore be taken to have further applications, rather than indicate the need for further research into refugee needs. Refugee needs are people needs.

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