Improving housing outcomes for refugees

A toolkit

About the authors

Philip Brown is a Professor of Housing and Communities at the University of Huddersfield. Phil has worked in the field of refugee housing since 1999, first as a practitioner within a local authority, and then as an academic. His research interests focus on the intersection of health and inclusion with housing and communities. He has worked across the European Union and with a range of organisations across the UK.

Santokh Gill is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Huddersfield. Santokh has a longstanding interest in the areas of race, ethnicity and migration, informed by over twenty years of research, personal experience and a commitment to social inclusion.

Jamie Halsall is a Reader in Social Sciences at the University of Huddersfield. Jamie has a background in Geography and Sociology. His research interests include work in: Civil Society, Social Enterprise and Public Policy; Sustainability and Globalisation; and Coaching and Mentorship.

Tom Simcock is a Research Fellow and Research Manager of the Healthy Housing Initiative at the University of Huddersfield. Tom has extensive experience of leading research and evaluations across a diverse spectrum of policy areas, with a specialism in housing and public sector reform.

Akosiwa Agbokou is a Community Researcher within Migration Yorkshire. Akosiwa has a background in Marketing and Business administration and has experience in undertaking quantitative and qualitative marketing research. Her experience of being a refugee in the UK has informed her extensive experience of research with refugee and new arrival communities in the UK.

About the project

This toolkit draws on research that has been produced as part of Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber. The project ran from January 2021 to December 2023. It sought to understand the housing pathways and experiences of refugees who had settled in the UK over a 30-year period. It has involved extensive scoping reviews of the literature and in-depth research with over 80 refugees and over 100 policy actors and practitioners.

Suggested citation:

> Brown, P., Gill, S., Halsall, J. P., Simcock, T. and Agbokou, A. (2023) *Improving housing outcomes for refugees: A toolkit.* The University of Huddersfield.

To discuss the report or any aspect of the issues raised, including potentially linking up with other organisations working in this area, please contact:

> Prof. Phil Brown on p.a.brown@hud.ac.uk

Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Affordable Accommodation / Housing	A broad term which describes a range of government schemes where housing is offered at below-market value for purchase or rent.
Affordable Rent	Typically, affordable rent is set to 80% of local market rent.
Asylum Seeker	An individual who has departed from their country of origin and is seeking protection from persecution and severe human rights violations in a different country. The term is used when a person applies for asylum in another country but a decision on their application has not yet been determined.
Bond/Deposit	A sum of money paid to a landlord as security during a period of rental, which is returned at the end of the lease. It is intended to cover potential rent arrears and malicious damage caused by the tenant and their household.
Local Housing Allowance	The calculated rate of housing benefit for tenants who are renting from private landlords.
Market Rent	The amount of money that a landlord might fairly expect to obtain, and a tenant may realistically expect to pay for a tenancy. Differs across areas.
Private Rented Sector	Accommodation, whether a house, or an apartment or a house in multiple occupation, owned and maintained by a private landlord. Currently accommodates around 20% of households in England.
Refugee Community Organisation (RCO)	A centre and/or group that welcomes and supports refugees who arrive in the UK. These are groups that are community led and work with different stakeholders to advocate for positive links between refugees and the host community.
Refugee	Is used to describe an individual granted leave to remain in the UK because they have a 'well-founded fear of persecution', as defined in the 1951 Refugee Convention. Usually, refugees in the UK are given five years' leave to remain, after which they can apply for indefinite leave to remain and British citizenship. Included in this category are individuals granted similar forms of protection, including humanitarian protection or, in some cases, Discretionary Leave. Equally, refugees in this research may also now have British citizenship.
Resettled refugee	Describes an individual who has been granted refugee status outside the UK and has been voluntarily relocated to the UK by the UK government – typically because of vulnerabilities experienced by the individual in their country of origin.
Right to Rent	A term first coined in the UK Government Immigration Act of 2016. This policy requires landlords to check the immigration status of the tenants of the properties they own and reject those people who cannot show they are allowed to live in a rented property in the UK.

Term	Definition
Social Housing	Social housing is provided by either housing associations (not-for-profit organisations that own, let, and manage rented housing) or the local council. Usually the most affordable accommodation.
Third Sector/ Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)	Organisations that are neither from the public nor private sectors. Typically, third sector/VCS are mainly charity or social enterprise based bodies
Universal Credit	Introduced in April 2013, Universal Credit is a payment for people over 18 but under State Pension age who are on a low income or out of work. It includes support for the cost of housing, children and childcare, and financial support for people with disabilities, carers and people too ill to work.

Contents

Toolkit overview

This toolkit builds on existing good practice guides, research and evidence. We have consulted many different individuals and organisations in its development including those involved in delivering housing, housing-related services and supporting refugees and diverse communities, as well as refugees themselves. The toolkit provides a suite of resources including:

- a checklist for engagement with and for refugees about their housing circumstances,
- information on key issues,
- a snapshot of key policies,
- good practice examples,
- links to useful resources.

What is the toolkit for?

Housing is a core determinant of refugees' settlem ent. Positive housing outcomes will lead to better employment, access to education and training, improved health and wellbeing, reduce poverty and provide refugees with the stability and safety people need in order to continue their lives in exile. This toolkit has been developed to help make real changes in strategy, policy and practicse in relation to the housing issues facing refugees.

As many individuals and organisations are operating in silos, but experience similar challenges, this toolkit collates key issues and practise to help practitioners in their day-to-day work with refugees.

What is new about this tool?

The tool will help a range of organisations and people to think about their current practicses and to identify and challenge the barriers preventing progress. This Tool is the first of its kind to bring together published evidence with the experience of both refugees and a range of stakeholders to help to develop approaches to improving housing and housing-related outcomes for refugees.

It should be noted that the toolkit takes the world as it is, not as it should be. In that, many of the housing challenges that refugees face could be addressed by increasing the volume of housing available, upgrading existing housing and providing one-to-one housing support at scale. These are targets that should remain the focus of systemic policy change. However, in the meantime there are ways to improve outcomes for refugees within the current policy environment and this is the focus of this toolkit.

How will it help me?

The toolkit will help you to:

- Improve your understanding about the various actors that can make a tangible difference to the lives of refugees.
- Meet a variety of legislative requirements (e.g. The Equality Act 2010).
- Enhance your existing equality and diversity assessments.
- Improve a range of services to meet the needs and aspirations of refugees.
- Overcome barriers between those working in different service areas or organisations.
- Encourage, share and develop good practice.
- Provide refugees with a greater level of knowledge about the services that are available.
- Provide tangible benefits for refugees.

Who should use it?

This toolkit is aimed at organisations who are directly or indirectly involved in the settlement of refugees into accommodation and communities. It is written with the intention of providing the context within which refugees are currently living in, with a view to improving the outcomes refugees experience.

This document focusses on refugees: people who have received leave to remain in the UK either through a refugee resettlement programme or after receiving a determination through the asylum system. It does not focus on those who are awaiting a decision on their asylum application.

Charities, voluntary and community groups who are supporting refugees may find the content of this toolkit useful upon which to draw to improve or develop the work they already do.

Housing providers and local authorities that are looking for ways to improve housing outcomes for refugees may also find the content of this toolkit useful. The toolkit provides content that can be used at both operational and strategic levels to explore the ways in they can tackle some of the systemic issues facing refugees.

Background

It is widely understood that refugees are more likely to face a greater level of poverty, live in poorer quality housing, and have poorer financial situations than the majority population, including many from minority ethnic groups[1]. This is despite the provision of accommodation being central to the settlement experience of refugees. As Brown et al (2022) note:

> "The settlement of refugees is, at its core, a housing issue. Refugees are faced with the impossible decision to flee from their home, often navigating several places, to arrive in a country with hopes of being provided with security of status and assistance to continue their lives. At the foundation of this promise of refuge is the provision of a safe and secure home. Yet, refugees experience the worst housing outcomes of any migrant group". (p. 9[2])

From a United Kingdom (UK) perspective, in addition to the asylum system, there are different routes people may take to settle in the UK. A recent policy paper published by the Home Office (2023) points out that that there are eight safe and legal organised routes into the UK:

- UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)
- Community Sponsorship
- Mandate Resettlement Scheme
- Family Reunion
- Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
- Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Welcome Programme
- Ukraine schemes which are comprised into three distinct arrangements:
    1. The Ukraine Family Scheme,
    2. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and
    3. The Ukraine Extension Scheme.

Upon arrival, refugees face challenges and barriers when it comes to their accommodation[3]. Depending on their pathway into the UK, there are differences in how someone is accommodated. This could be in the form of bridging or temporary accommodation, some may be housed in accommodation centres or hotels. Others may be dispersed directly into the community to live independently or with hosts. Those leaving the asylum system have to find independent accommodation in the mainstream housing market.

---

1   Mayblin, L., & James, P. (2019). Asylum and refugee support in the UK: civil society filling the gaps?. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 45(3), 375-394; Allsopp, J., Sigona, N., & Phillimore, J. (2014). Poverty among refugees and asylum seekers in the UK: An evidence and policy review. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, Institute for Research into Superdiversity; Platt, L. (2007) Poverty and Ethnicity in the UK. Bristol: Policy.

2   Brown, P., Gill, S., Halsall, J. P., Agbokou, A., Garcia, J., James, K., Mahmood, S., & Yemane, T. (2022). Housing and refugees: Policy briefing. University of Huddersfield.

3   Ibid; Brown, P., Gill, S., & Halsall, J. P. (2021). The impact of housing on refugees: A research digest. University of Huddersfield.

The accommodation options that are available to refugees can be very limited and for many are frequently insecure or of poorer quality, which in turn enhances the jeopardy of homelessness. In addition to the above, newly arrived refugees also suffer in other areas. Table 1 presents an overview of the key challenges facing refugees living in the UK. One of the most striking is the health and wellbeing impact after migrating to the UK. Indeed, the Refugee Council has estimated that in the UK "500% of refugees are five times more likely to have mental health needs than the UK population and 61% of asylum seekers experience serious mental distress."[4]

Table 1: Key challenges and barriers commonly faced by refugees.	
Key Challenge	**Explanation**
Asylum System	The Refugee Council have stated that at a UK Governmental level the asylum system is strictly controlled and complex[5]. It has been well documented by advocates, solicitors, campaigners, the third sector, and social researchers that seeking asylum in the UK is one of the most stressful experiences that an individual could undergo.
Knowledge of Rights	It has been highlighted by caseworkers that refugees and asylum seekers are sometimes not fully aware of their rights, especially when it comes to free healthcare[6]. This also extends to knowledge of their housing rights[7].
Support Services	Refugees are not always aware of the support services that are available to them[8]. As research has shown, the third sector is crucial in directing refugees to the correct support services[9].
Vulnerability of children	In April 2023, the Childhood Trust stated that in the geographical area of London a substantial population of refugee children are experiencing numerous challenges, which include poverty, housing insecurity, poor mental health, and language and educational barriers[10].

4   British Red Cross. (2023). More than 50,000 refugees could become homeless by the end of the year, British Red Cross warns. https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/news-and-media/media-centre/press-releases/refugees-could-become-homeless

5   Refugee Council. (2023). Mental health support for refugees and asylum seekers. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-support-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/

6   Asif, Z., & Kienzler, H. (2022). Structural barriers to refugee, asylum seeker and undocumented migrant healthcare access. Perceptions of Doctors of the World caseworkers in the UK. SSM-Mental Health, 2, 100088.

7   Strang, A.B., Baillot, H. & Mignard, E. (2018) "I want to participate." Transition experiences of new refugees in Glasgow, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 44, pp. 197–214.

8   NSPCC. (2014). First generation immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees: learning from case reviews, NSPCC Learning, https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1337/learning-from-case-reviews_first-generation-immigrants-asylum-seekers-and-refugees.pdf

9   Lombard, M. (2023) The experience of precarity: low-paid economic migrants' housing in Manchester, Housing Studies, 38:2, 307-326 https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2021.1882663 ; Trueba, M. L., Axelrod, T., and Ayeb-Karlsson, S. (2023). Are asylum seekers and refugees provided with appropriate mental health support in the United Kingdom?. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 1-21; Pollard, T., and Howard, N. (2021). Mental healthcare for asylum-seekers and refugees residing in the United Kingdom: a scoping review of policies, barriers, and enablers. International Journal of Mental Health Systems, 15(1), 1-15.

10   Zahra, M. (2023). A place called home. Refugee children in London, The Childhood Trust. https://www.childhoodtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Refugee-Children-in-London-The-Childhood-Trust-Report-April-2023.pdf

Table 1: Key challenges and barriers commonly faced by refugees.	
Key Challenge	**Explanation**
Social Housing	The scarcity of social housing is a continuous problem for refugees, as it is for different communities. There is a real lack of choice and many wait a long time for social housing, with people often having to reside in hotel accommodation for long periods of time[11].
Private Rented Sector	The private-rented sector is now where the majority of refugees reside. However, the private rented sector is often unaffordable and because refugees are particularly financially insecure, they tend to reside in the cheapest homes in the sector. These homes are typically of the lowest quality and non-decent which impacts on health, wellbeing and security[12].
Language and Isolation	For many refugees, language can be a barrier if English is not their first language or if they have a limited grasp of the English language. As noted by Migration Yorkshire, this can be extremely daunting for refugees "with little or no prior experience of education or limited literacy" and can make the individual feel isolated[13].
Employment	Evidence shows that refugees struggle to secure employment. Having secure work is a critical way for individuals to improve their living circumstances. However, refugees struggle to find secure employment that is compatible with their skills and education level. Refugees often work part-time, on zero hour or other precarious contracts[14].

To try and tackle these poor housing outcomes, this toolkit presents expert knowledge to guide stakeholders to reproduce best practice in the housing and refugee context. This toolkit presents the strategies and recommendations for those who seek to obtain skills/guidance OR other specific outcomes. The toolkit provides an overview of the ways housing needs can be addressed and suggests policies, pathways, and housing options for refugees.

---

11   Local Government Association. (2023) Bridging hotels and homelessness for Afghan households https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/bridging-hotels-and-homelessness-afghan-households-research-report

12   Cross, S., Bywaters, P., Brown, P., & Featherstone, B. (2022). Housing, Homelessness and Children's Social Care: Towards an Urgent Research Agenda. British Journal of Social Work, 52(4), 1988-2007; Newton, D., Lucock, M., Armitage, R., Monchuk, L., & Brown, P. (2022). Understanding the mental health impacts of poor quality private-rented housing during the UK's first COVID-19 lockdown. Health and Place, 78,

13   Migration Yorkshire. (2023). Language and communication. https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/refugee-integration-yorkshire-and-humber/making-connections-building-resilience/cross-cutting-themes/language-and-communication

14   Terren, S., & Walkey, C. (2022). Refugee employment dynamics in Yorkshire and the Humber: An iunformation guide. https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/DOC008-refugee-employment-dynamics-yh-info-guide-v10-acc.pdf

In this toolkit you will find

Drawing on extensive engagement with refugees and those working with refugees, this toolkit contains information, guidance and ideas relating to a number of areas.

1. Understanding refugees' knowledge, experience and views of housing

We know very little about how refugees themselves experience the housing system in the UK. Refugees are not systematically engaged with on housing options and have an understandable low level of knowledge about how the housing system works. Section 1 aims to provide a structure to think about what you (as a person with experience as a refugee) know about housing in the UK. Alternatively, it can be used by advocates who are working with refugees to try to ascertain levels of knowledge, need and aspiration in order to improve the circumstances facing households and the way services are delivered. Alternatively, you may have been asked by a service provider to provide some input to service improvement by assessing, from your point of view, the work of an organisation in meeting the needs of refugees.

2. The role and contribution of the social housing sector

Social housing in the UK is provided by either housing associations, which are not-for-profit organisations that own, let and manage housing, or a local authority. Typically for households, social housing is more affordable when compared to private renting, it tends to be of higher quality and tends to offer more secure, long-term tenancies. Social housing organisations are typically value led with a strong social conscience and should be considered allies in working with refugees. However, social housing organisations do not always fully understand and appreciate how they could collaborate on improving housing outcomes for refugees. This section points those in practice to some ways to help increase the involvement of social housing organisations in refugee housing work.

3. Working with the private rented sector

With the challenges in accessing social housing, and homeownership out of reach for many, the private rented sector is often a tenure of necessity over choice. Refugees can face challenges in finding affordable housing in the private rented sector or could face discrimination. This section aims to provide tools to support different actors in overcoming barriers to working with the private rented sector. This includes addressing challenges in the upfront affordability of rental housing, improving standards, and building relationships with landlords and letting agents.

4. Education, employment and networking support for refugees

From when they first arrive in the UK and have their indefinite leave to remain status refugees are eager to make a fresh start and rebuild their life. Evidence shows that engaging with education and employment are two of the first tools that help someone in their resettlement. This section provides a narrative on why education, employment, and support networks are fundamental for a refugee in their settlement in the UK.

5. Collaboration and communication across services and government

Effective collaboration between different actors is essential for achieving successful housing outcomes for refugees. This includes collaboration between third sector organisations, the statutory sector, landlords in both the private and social housing sector, and refugees themselves. This section considers the importance of advocacy in supporting refugees to access appropriate housing solutions. It also considers how the creation of housing portfolios (through building relationships with collegiate landlords) can enable positive housing outcomes and provide increased access to accommodation options. Housing cannot be viewed in isolation from other needs, and therefore effective solutions to housing problems require co-ordinated service delivery through multi-agency working. In this respect, we consider several ways this can work in practice. For all these approaches, effective communication between stakeholders and methods for providing access to up-to-date information is necessary. This should include mechanisms for keeping landlords and refugees informed about rights, obligations, and support. The use of walk-in and drop-in spaces is also discussed as a means of providing information and more unified intervention.

6. Collaborative integration – building social connections

Creating an integrated society can be challenging. Integration requires a wide range of people, organisations and institutions to come together and create a shared and inclusive sense of belonging. As such this work can be seen as 'collaborative integration' and is a way of work that enables the affiliation of, and close working relationships between, different stakeholders. Building partnerships between organisations is crucial as it allows for increased communication, the efficient use of services and amplifies the opportunities refugees have for getting the support they need. This section provides some ideas for different ways to develop connections across organisations.

7. Challenging systems

Many systems unwittingly embed exclusion within them which combine to increase the likelihood of poor housing outcomes. In the absence of clear policy and strategic direction at the national level, organisations at the regional and local levels have been working hard to ensure refugees are not left behind and community tensions are avoided. This section focuses on ways in which the housing system can be challenged and positively disrupted to benefit those most in need.

Housing Transitions: A Story of Refugee Lives

In this comic[1] you can read about people's experiences after being granted refugee status. The stories presented in this comic reflect the experiences the researchers heard from refugees during the study. The events are real events but drawn from a number of different refugee participants.

This comic is a valuable resource for communicating the experiences of refugees, and please consider this as a resource for teaching and training activties. The comic is available on our website here.

1　　　Goldring, H., Trueman, E., Brown, P., Gill, S., Halsall, J.P., Agbokou, A., García, J., James, K., Mahmood, S. & Yemane, T. (2022) Transitions: A Story of Refugee Lives. Ottawa: Petroglyph Studios.

1. Understanding refugees' knowledge, experience and views of housing

Overview

The evidence that exists about what works to improve the housing outcomes of refugees highlights the importance of engaging with refugees themselves in order to understand the extent of their knowledge of the system they are living within. Many studies have placed notable weight on ensuring services adapt to the lives refugees lead by ensuring refugees are engaged in the design of services that impact directly upon them[15]. However, it is not always clear how to have conversations to uncover the depth of knowledge about systems many of us take for granted. It is hoped this section of the toolkit will be useful to structure these conversations.

This section asks you, your advocates or organisations that work with people who have experience of the UK refugee system, some questions about your views and experiences of housing and housing-related support. Answer the questions and think about what things are like now and what you think needs to be done to improve things. Under each question are some points that may help you in providing answers and comments.

It is very important to realise that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers.

---

15   Synovec, C. E., & Aceituno, L. (2020). Social justice considerations for occupational therapy: The role of addressing social determinants of health in unstably housed populations. Work, 65(2), 235-246; Willems, S., De Smet, H., & Heylighen, A. (2020). Seeking a balance between privacy and connectedness in housing for refugees. Journal of Housing and the Built Environment, 35, 45-64.

	Key Question		Please give details	What needs to be done?
1.	Has anyone asked you before for your views about housing and support?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
	• Does the organisation communicate in your preferred first language or a language you can understand? • Do you feel you can talk to someone from the organisation easily – if not why not, what could be done to improve this? • What particular things are not being done or what things could be made better?			
2.	Do you like where you live at present?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
	• Are there things about your home or your living arrangements that you would like to change? – if so describe these here. • If you would like to live elsewhere or change something describe what it is you would want.			
3.	Have you had or are receiving any help with your housing?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
	• Do they communicate with you in a way you find useful? • How do you think they help you? What particular things are not being done or what things could be made better?			
4.	Is there help you would like but don't get?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
	• Are there things that could be made better for you?			

	Key Question		Please give details	What needs to be done?
5.	Do you know about local housing options?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
•	Are there alternatives to your present accommodation that you would like to know more about?			
6.	Do you know where you would go to find out information about housing and support?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
•	Do the organisations that you talk to communicate in your preferred first language or a language you can understand?			
7.	Are you provided with information in any or all of the following ways?	leaflets web based social media open meetings face to face audio video		
•	Which of these methods do you prefer?			
8.	Do you feel that the organisation(s) you talk to reaches those refugees who are culturally, socially and/or geographically isolated?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
•	Think about people with disabilities, LGBTQI+, women, older people, people living in rural areas, people from minority groups.			
•	Do you feel some people can easily get their voices heard?			
•	Do you know of others with refugee status that need support but who have not come forward?			

	Key Question		Please give details	What needs to be done?
9.	Are you aware if the organisations that provide you with services have complaints procedures?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
	• Does the organisation communicate in your preferred first language or a language you can understand? • Do you feel you can talk to someone from the organisation easily – if not why not, what could be done to improve this? • What particular things are not being done or what things could be made better?			
10.	Would you feel able to complain about something?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		
	• Is the complaints procedure translated into a range of languages? • Is it made public in a range of formats?			
11.	Is there any information about housing and related support that you think you would now like to know about, from this discussion?	Yes Yes, in part No Don't know		

Summary of main points and actions:

2. The role and contribution of the social housing sector

Overview

Social housing in the UK is provided by either housing associations, which are not-for-profit organisations that own, let, and manage housing, or a local authority. Typically, for households, social housing is more affordable when compared to private renting, it tends to be of higher quality, and tends to offer more secure, long-term tenancies. This means that for individual households social housing offers better rights and more security than privately renting accommodation. Social housing is also a heavily regulated sector; the Regulator of Social Housing assesses the performance of providers of social housing on their viability and governance. Similarly, the Housing Ombudsman Scheme provides a route for tenants and other individuals to complain about social housing and support with the resolution of disputes. Together this means that social housing should be[16]:

- **Affordable**. Social housing is the only type of housing where rent is linked to local incomes which often makes social housing significantly cheaper than private rented housing.

- **Available for those who need it**. The current law makes provisions for who is entitled to social housing, and those seen as in priority need get preference on a waiting list. There is lots of flexibility for social landlords to determine who can live in their homes. However, there is a large number of households on waiting lists and a chronic shortage of social homes. This means there is a lack of homes for those people who urgently need it.

- **Secure and stable**. Tenants in social housing tend to have secure tenancies which gives them greater protection from eviction, enhanced rights and support from their landlords. This means there is greater chance for people to settle within communities for the long-term.

- **Good quality**. As social housing is regulated, social homes are more likely to meet the standard for 'decent' housing. When compared to privately rented housing this means they tend to be warm, efficient to run, in good repair and safe. Although due to underinvestment more needs to be done to improve existing social housing stock.

These elements are fundamental building blocks for refugees as they start and sustain their settlement in the UK. It was more common for social landlords to house refugees in the 1990s and 2000s than the present day. A shortage of social housing has been attributed as the main reason why it is becoming less likely for refugees, from all pathways, to be placed in social housing. Whilst a few social landlords have been active participants in refugee resettlement schemes over the years, recent research has illustrated that many social landlords have tended to have a basic awareness of the transformational role they could play in the lives of refugees regardless of their pathway to refugee status[17].

---

16   Adapted from Shelter https://england.shelter.org.uk/support_us/campaigns/what_is_social_housing

17   Brown, P., Walkey, C. and Martin, P. (2020) Integration works: The role of organisations in refugee integration in Yorkshire and the Humber. The University of Huddersfield.

It remains unknown how many refugees are currently accommodated in social housing in the UK. However, research published in 2020 found that only a handful of social landlords have an enhanced understanding of the issues refugees face. Where there is an awareness, this understanding has developed from direct experience of accommodating refugees over the years. Inevitably, refugees will be tenants of a wide range of housing associations and local authorities. Some social landlords have talked about adapting their practice over this time, whilst others with little experience of accommodating refugees, knowingly or otherwise, often struggle to know how best to support people.

> 'One organisation, in an area with prior experience, described how they attributed their success around refugee integration to the fact they had developed their services over the long period of time they had worked with refugees. Another organisation, who was working with refugees for the first time, described a range of cultural and language barriers that they said resulted from the fact they had not worked with similar populations before and said they felt unprepared.' [18]

Outside specific resettlement programmes, housing organisations often do not appreciate the direct role they play and they could play in the integration of refugees in communities. This has been partly attributed to the many challenges placed on staff capacity facing housing organisations as they work across a range of responsibilities and other more core agendas (e.g. homelessness, provision of older people's accommodation and support).

Developing local housing partnerships

In many local areas there will exist partnerships of local housing organisations. Whilst each organisation will likely have their own organisational strategy, social housing organisations come together with one another, local authorities and other stakeholders. The sort of collaborative activities that take place include: sharing learning and knowledge, delivering services, and, in some cases, the sharing of resources. Social housing organisations tend to naturally seek out areas for collaboration and sharing in order to meet their primary objective of providing housing for social good. Organisations who are working on the periphery of established partnerships should establish contact with them and explore how they could be involved in future work. In areas where partnerships are not currently active it would be useful to bring key housing organisations together in order to discuss solutions and potential ways forward.

18   Ibid

Guide to housing and support services for asylum seekers and refugees

In the 2000s, prior to the onset of austerity, it was common to find examples of housing organisations, and others, directly supporting refugee, and other migrant, communities in the UK. The Housing Association Charitable Trust (HACT) was particularly active in this area and, in partnership with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, published a helpful guide for organisations[19]. Whilst the policy context has become more restrictive this guide remains a useful reference in order to illustrate to housing organisations, and partners, what the possibilities might be. It provides some practical ways that organisations can make a real contribution to the lives refugees are leading and align initiatives to their organisation's core values.

The No Accommodation Network toolkit

The No Accommodation Network launched a toolkit aimed at groups who wish to work with housing associations[20]. The aim of the Toolkit is to showcase the different ways in which housing organisations are already working with a variety of organisations to support a variety of people at various stages in the immigration system. Through a combination of detailed, but accessible, explanation and case studies the toolkit amplifies the creative innovation and partnership working that already exists. The toolkit also focuses on providing the rationale to trustees, boards and senior management teams for why housing organisations should engage in supporting a variety of refugee groups.

---

19   JRF (2005) Guide to housing and support services for asylum seekers and refugees. https://www.jrf.org.uk/housing/guide-to-housing-and-support-services-for-asylum-seekers-and-refugees

20   No Accommodation Network (2023) Working with housing associations: a toolkit. Available at: https://naccom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/NACCOM-HousingToolkit_2023-10-05_DIGITAL.pdf

3. Working with the private rented sector

Overview

In the UK, there has been a significant increase in the number of people living in the private-rented sector, from 2.8 million in 2007 to 4.4 million in 2021. Whilst the security of tenure afforded by the social housing sector is often the goal for those who have sought sanctuary the shortage of social housing makes the private rented sector the home of many new and established refugees. Therefore, the collaboration between third-sector organisations, community groups, and local authorities with private landlords plays a pivotal role in supporting refugees and a range of other migrants to find housing, which provides the foundations for future successful integration into communities. Whilst engaging with the private rented sector might seem challenging, research and engagement in this area has revealed several ways for helping increase the number of homes available for refugees. This section of the toolkit outlines key strategies and initiatives aimed at fostering partnerships with the private rented sector (PRS) to facilitate housing for refugees. There are three over-arching themes to how different groups can work with private landlords to facilitate access to high-quality homes to rent, firstly, engagement with private landlords; secondly, empowering access to the PRS through different services; and finally, promoting good property standards and implementing enforcement.

Engaging private landlords: Facilitating acceptance and support

One of the key areas for potential action is to engage private landlords to raise awareness of their obligations and to 'myth-bust' potential perceptions and views. Through research, we have identified areas of best practice and developed recommendations for how private landlords can be engaged.

Developing landlord forums

Working proactively and having close relationships with landlords was often reported as making a positive difference. A core approach that was identified to help facilitate these conversations was the development of a local landlord forum or network.

These networks and forums can help local authorities in developing relationships with private landlords and letting agents and provide a space for regular communications and discussions on different topics. This can range from local digital communications, such as newsletters, to in-person events and meetings, such as training or forum meetings.

Things to consider when developing your local landlord forum or networks:

- Consider the purpose of the forum and network and link this to the needs of the landlord and letting agents in your local community.
- Consider how the network/forum will be advertised to recruit members. It might be useful to involve representative bodies such as PropertyMark[21] and National Residential

---

21   See https://www.propertymark.co.uk/

Landlords Association[22] in the initial set up.

- A further consideration is the time and date of meetings. Some landlords may have other employment and find it difficult to attend meetings during the week. It could be beneficial to organise meetings in the evening or on weekends.

- Actively involve local landlords and letting agents in the forum/network and co-develop agendas and sessions to help the forum reflect the needs of attendees.

Right to rent checks

The Immigration Act 2014 introduced the requirement for landlords and their agents to ensure households have the 'right to rent' before letting out a property, with potential financial and criminal penalties for not complying with their legal duties. These duties can cause confusion for private landlords over what documents and statuses indicate that someone has the 'right to rent'.

Some third-sector organisations, community groups and local authorities expressed that providing comprehensive guidance and support to landlords about Right to Rent checks was crucial. This can be in the form of accessible resources, workshops and training, or even online tools to educate landlords about their legal obligations and best practices in this area.

Leasing schemes and providing an incentive to landlords

Introducing leasing schemes that guarantee rental income and provide financial incentives for private landlords can open up accommodation for refugees.

The development of these schemes, whether undertaken by local authorities or third-sector organisations (such as social lettings agencies), were identified as critical in reducing perceptions of risk and were seen by private landlords as providing stable income. In one example, whilst it might not be sustainable in the long-term, a local authority was paying an additional fee to private landlords above the LHA rate, in some cases, an additional £200-300 per month, to ensure the household could stay in the same local area and so the household wouldn't lose local connections. In another example, the local authority representative highlighted that private landlords liked their scheme as the scheme would pay towards or providing decorating in-between tenancies.

When designing these schemes, the core elements to consider are:

- Is there a financial benefit, such as increased rents or guaranteed rent?

- Does the scheme reduce the work for private landlords? Such as reducing decorating, organising the maintenance of the property, and providing longer-term tenancies.

- What budget is available, whether there are Government schemes that could be applied for, or whether cross-authority schemes might prove useful in pooling resources.

---

22   See https://www.nrla.org.uk/

- One particular scheme to consider is the Welsh Government, Leasing Scheme Wales[23]. A total of 16 local authorities have signed up to this scheme. This scheme enables local authorities to lease properties for the long-term and access funding to directly bring properties up to standard (both in quality and energy efficiency). In particular, Pembrokeshire Council offer up to £25,000 in grant funding to improve the quality of the property[24].

Empowering access to the Private Rented Sector

Another key area for supporting refugees and migrants into the private rented sector is empowering households to be able to access the sector in the first place.

Support services for finding a property

Knowledge of the housing system can be transformational in supporting households traverse the different systems. A core tool for different actors (whether local authorities or third-sector organisations) is providing support to help people "get tenant ready". This support needs to be provided from the start, and should focus on the following elements:

- Information about the housing system

- What to expect from the private rented sector (for example, what is a Section 21 notice, how can landlords increase the rent, gas safety certificates)

- What is expected from them to secure a private rented property and what support is available (for example, deposit requirements, first month rent, general responsibilities of being a renter)

Financial support (Bonds and deposits)

Households coming through different refugee and migration routes often have limited financial means. For many, the 28-day move-on procedure will be a stressful period in trying to find a new home. Typically, for refugees coming through an asylum route, they will not have been able to work and will have limited financial means to secure a property. Many private landlords and letting agents will ask for a deposit. This deposit is, within England, limited to a maximum of five weeks rent for rents under £50,000 per annum[25]. Being able to afford a deposit can be difficult for some refugees.

To support low-income households, including refugees, some local authorities have developed bond and deposit guarantee services/schemes. The main aims of these schemes are to facilitate the securing of the property for the household and to prevent the potential use of temporary accommodation. Some of these schemes will pay for the deposit for the household, other

---

23   For more information on the Leasing Scheme Wales, visit: https://www.gov.wales/leasing-scheme-wales-guidance

24   For information on the Pembrokeshire Council Leasing Scheme and Renovation Grant, visit: https://www. pembrokeshire.gov.uk/private-housing/leasing-scheme-wales-information-for-landlords

25   This is limited by the Tenant Fees Act 2019. Find out more information about this Act here: https://assets.publishing. service.gov.uk/media/5f745d69d3bf7f287328e5a5/Tenant_Fees_Act_-_Tenant_Guidance.pdf

schemes, such as those by The Bond Board[26], will provide a written bond guarantee to replace the cash deposit.

These schemes can be a core tool to support households into private rental accommodation rather than relying on temporary accommodation. When designing these schemes, core elements to consider include:

- How will the deposit be covered? Will this be a cash deposit provided to the landlord or letting agent to be protected or will this be a written bond guarantee?
- How will this scheme be funded? Will you apply for central funding, seek to work with charities or foundations, or seek alternative funding?
- Can this scheme be included into other potential schemes, such as a private landlord leasing scheme?

In addition, there is the Refugee Integration Loan which eligible refugees can apply for which can help to pay for essential expenses such as rent deposits or rent[27].

Utilising Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates had until November 2023 been frozen since 2020, but have now been re-set to the 30th percentile of local rents. Since 2020, rental increases have put increasing financial pressure on all households, including refugees and migrants, in finding affordable housing.

To support households, some local authorities reported using DHP to provide top-ups between the amount provided through the Housing Element of Universal Credit and the rent, enabling households to find suitable housing and reduce pressure on other services. Local authorities can seek to utilise DHPs to support households into private rentals, out of, often expensive and inappropriate, temporary accommodation, and support households to stay out of housing debt.

Despite the re-setting of LHA rates to the 30th percentile as part of the Autumn Statement 2023, it is expected that households will still struggle to find affordable or suitable housing and DHPs can be an important tool to support households in accessing the private rented sector. The DWP have produced a good practice guide for the running of DHP schemes, you may want to refer to this guide when examining your own DHP schemes[28] and practices.

---

26   For more information on The Bond Board, visit: https://www.thebondboard.org.uk/

27   For more information see https://www.gov.uk/refugee-integration-loan

28   DWP (2022) Discretionary Housing Payments guidance manual. Available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62960c8ed3bf7f0371a9b06a/discretionary-housing-payments-guide.pdf

Promoting good property standards and implementing enforcement

The private rented sector has the largest proportion of non-decent homes (approximately 25% of all PRS households[29]). While supporting households to find affordable housing is important, on the other hand, local authorities, and actors in the sector (such as letting agents, landlords, charities, and other relevant groups) need to work together to ensure all homes are of a decent quality and provide a safe and secure foundation for the household to flourish.

There are well known challenges to enforcement in the private rented sector[30], from staffing and resourcing to the time needed for collection of evidence for a successful enforcement. There are also a variety of responses, from informal to formal enforcement[31], and depending on the route taken can provide the household with protection from eviction.

There are several considerations to be taken when working to promote good property standards in the private rented sector. The following is a checklist of possible actions that could be taken:

- Ensure that the routes to complain about poor quality standards is readily and easily accessible for all households. Many households are not aware of their rights or how to challenge poor practice[32]. It would be worth developing a broad range of communication materials that can be shared with local community groups to help increase knowledge of rights and responsibilities across the private rented sector.

- If the household is at risk of, or feels at risk of eviction when complaining about poor standards, and if there is a Category 1 hazard present, serve a formal enforcement notice. Only with the serving of the formal enforcement notice, will the household be protected from eviction under current legislation. Following this, it would be useful to provide constructive support to both the landlord and tenant to improve the relationship between both parties.

- Working with the Police. You should seek closer collaboration with the Police Service and develop a training package, such as that developed by Safer Renting[33], to provide training to local Police colleagues about illegal eviction. This will help the Police to understand their duties under relevant legislation, how illegal eviction is a criminal matter – not a civil matter - and encourage greater partnership working to improve lives across communities.

29   DLUHC (2022) English Housing Survey. London, UK: DLUHC.

30   Simcock & Mykkannen (2018) The Postcode Lottery of Local Authority Enforcement in the Private Rented Sector. Residential Landlords Association. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.15441.58729; Reeve et al., (2022) Local authority enforcement in the private rented sector: headline report. DLUHC. Available here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-authority-enforcement-in-the-private-rented-sector-headline-report/local-authority-enforcement-in-the-private-rented-sector-headline-report

31   Harris, Marsh & Cowan (2020) Improving compliance in the private rented sector. UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence. Available from: https://housingevidence.ac.uk/publications/improving-compliance-in-the-private-rented-sector-information-for-local-authorities/

32   Simcock et al., (2022). What do lower income tenants in Scotland's private rented sector want to see from a new Rented Sector? Summary Report. UK Collaborative Centre for Housing Evidence (CaCHE). Available from: https://housingevidence.ac.uk/publications/what-do-lower-income-tenants-in-scotlands-private-rented-sector-want-to-see-from-a-new-rented-sector/

33   For more information on Safer Renting and their training for the Police on illegal eviction, please see: https://ch1889.org/safer-renting-blog/oavbhd14cg5olc049oi9zimj2v4pb2

- Licensing schemes can be useful in improving conditions[34] across private rented sectors. However, it would be useful to consider the implementation of these schemes, such as considering developing schemes that are similar in requirements across local and regional areas to avoid a patchwork of different requirements for landlords. Furthermore, the cost of a licence for the property should be considered and the payment for the licence. These could help address objections from landlords when developing these schemes.

- Consider greater use of property inspections. Property inspections can be a useful tool in identifying poor quality housing and can support the running of leasing schemes or schemes that help place households into privately rented properties. An example of good practice we identified was in Manchester, where the private rental sector team would, when a landlord was taken on through a leasing scheme, go out and inspect the property, for instance ensuring smoke alarms and gas safety certificate are in place, and making sure the property is in a reasonable condition to be let, before the property could then be let out to households.

---

34   Lawrence & Wilson (2019). An Independent Review of the Use and Effectiveness of Selective Licensing. MHCLG. Available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/selective-licensing-review

4. Education, Employment, and Networking Support for Refugees

Overview

Education and employment are central to improving housing outcomes. Public policymakers, academics, and politicians have frequently pointed out that participation in education and employment drives up household income, wider prosperity and helps to tackle inequalities in society. Moreover, when individuals engage in education and gain qualifications this often enables them to work in highly skilled jobs. Research has consistently shown that engaging in education and the labour market are priorities for improving lives in exile[35]. This is beneficial for refugees, as they can improve their wellbeing, employability, and ultimately their housing options. Refugees, and those with similar legal statuses, such as humanitarian protection and discretionary leave, have the legal right to work in the UK.

Refugees and new arrivals who move to the UK have vast experience in different employment sectors, and current government policy does not really tap into this expertise[36]. Some people though look for opportunities to retrain and choose a new profession or employment pathway. This can require people to access educational courses (i.e. language based, vocational, or academic) whether in the further or higher education sectors. Amongst the potential ways of supporting refugees, there are two overarching approaches that can be taken by those working with refugees to improve employment opportunities which will often lead to better housing and settlement outcomes. These are supporting people to reengage with established careers and retraining and engaging with the UK labour market.

Continuation of careers and skills

In exile, refugees access education and employment in different ways; support from public agencies and community groups is pivotal for someone to move forward in their new life in the UK. In many instances people want to continue their career, or use core skills they already possess. The people who were interviewed in our research came from different employment backgrounds, from professional skills sectors (e.g. doctors, engineers, nurses, teachers), semi-skilled roles (e.g. delivery drivers, taxi drivers, wood machinist), as well as some unskilled workers (e.g. cleaner, warehouse package handler).

If a person is looking to continue their career in exile it may be helpful for them to engage with professional bodies to discuss accreditation. This may particularly be the case for individuals who have worked in sectors such as education, health, and social care. For several refugees

---

35   See Oliver, C., Geuijen, K., & Dekker, R. (2023). Challenging the 'Youth Gaze': Building Diversity into Refugee and Asylum Reception and Integration Programmes. Journal of Refugee Studies, https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feac064 , Lumley-Sapanski, A., & Callahan, N. J. (2019). Mutual Benefit: How Vocational Training Programs Utilize Employer Engagement and Refugee Strengths to Facilitate Integration. Social Sciences, 8(5), 145.

36   Fernández-Reino, M., & Rienzo, C. (2022). Migrants in the UK labour market: An overview. Oxford: Migration Observatory. https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MigObs-Briefing-Migrants-in-the-UK-labour-market-an-overview.pdf; Kone, Z., Ruiz, I., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2019). Refugees and the UK labour market. Oxford: Compas Report. https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2019/refugees-and-the-uk-labour-market/ Rolfe, H., and Benson, T. (2023) From HK to UK: Hong Kongers and their new lives in Britain, British Future https://www.welcomehk.org/research/hk-to-uk;

and new arrivals (e.g. Hong Kongers) spoken to during this project, there was a requirement for the individual to undertake a professionally recognised conversion course that meets UK requirements[37]. Figure 1 presents a four-stage approach to how refugees, and those working with them, can tackle some of the practical, and interpersonal, obstacles encountered in the labour market in the UK.

Figure 1: The four-stage approach to overcoming unemployment barriers as a refugee[38].

1. Career and Recruitment

Information and workshop sessions can assist an individual to plan, tailor and write a CV in a specific employment sector. These can also help in helping people provide responses to common questions in person specifications that tend to feature in a lot of roles in the UK. More crucial information about interviews and practice interviews can help the individual to gain the know-how to find employment successfully.

2. Training Opportunities and Work Placements

Organisations, whether public, private, or third sector, can offer a variety of vital pre-employment training opportunities to support an individual to advance the skills they need to achieve employment. The pre-employment training openings can involve work placements, vocational or on-the-job training courses and apprenticeships.

3. Entrepreneurial Skills

Entrepreneurial skills can allow an individual to develop a new skillset by creating new innovative ideas to solve a particular social, economic, or environmental problem in society. In the UK context especially, this has been a very popular tool to break down employment barriers.

4. Professional Mentoring

Mentoring is a fantastic way to improve an individual's employment knowledge, sector-based awareness, and career ambitions. Individuals can access mentorship via recruitment to an organisation as a volunteer where a mentor can share their expertise, knowledge, and experience of a specific sector.

Retraining and engaging with the UK labour market

Finding employment is often a crucial part of integration. It allows refugees to support themselves and their families, and ensures their independence, sense of security and confidence. Employment can also assist refugees to improve their English language skills, build social connections and feel a part of a community. Evidence shows that refugees struggle to secure employment. Unemployment rates are above the national average with only 56% of

---

37   Rolfe, H., and Benson, T. (2023) From HK to UK: Hong Kongers and their new lives in Britain, British Future https://www.welcomehk.org/research/hk-to-uk

38   Adapted from Terren, S., & Walkey, C. (2022). Refugee employment dynamics in Yorkshire and the Humber: An information guide.
https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/DOC008-refugee-employment-dynamics-yh-info-guide-v10-acc.pdf

working age people who came to the UK to claim asylum in employment, compared with 78% of UK nationals[39]. The more exposure people can get to the labour market, ideally in paid work, will increase their chances of obtaining long term secure work.

Many Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) and other groups provide volunteering opportunities to refugees to enable a pathway into employment. One such example is below. In this example volunteering is facilitated by the organisation providing internal opportunities, which then enables the individual to build up experience that in turn allows the volunteer to obtain a reference from the organisation.

Figure 2: A five-step approach to the volunteering process into education and employment.

Step One: Create the voluntary opportunity in the organisation.

Activity: This is where the organisation examines what areas of voluntary support can be provided.

Step Two: Understand the individual's skillset and needs.

Activity: The organisation speaks to the individual they are engaged with to identify their current skillset and areas for development.

Step Three: Undertake the voluntary experience for a period of time.

Activity: The individual starts their voluntary work experience and is supervised by a member of staff who works for the organisation.

Step Four: Provide a reference after completion of the volunteering experience.

Activity: After the voluntary experience has been completed, the organisation writes a reference for the individual. In some cases, the reference is provided when the individual is offered a place at an educational institution or paid employment.

Step Five: Direct to the right education and employment support services.

Activity: The organisation provides advice on how to seek education and employment opportunities within the regional area.

39　　Terren, S., & Walkey, C. (2022). Refugee employment dynamics in Yorkshire and the Humber: An information guide. https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/DOC008-refugee-employment-dynamics-yh-info-guide-v10-acc.pdf

Useful resources

There are a range of resources available, which can help with an individual's professional development. Further useful information:

Career skills and training

The central GOV.UK website has been created to provide a number of links to other useful external websites: the National Careers Service (England), My World of Work (Scotland), Careers Wales, and Careers Service Northern Ireland. Further links are available for individuals who are interested in improving their skills, for graduates who want to enhance their professional development, and for anyone who needs information or guidance on further opportunities in training, apprenticeships, and learning cost support.

https://www.gov.uk/career-skills-and-training

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

The CIPD is an association for organisations and people who are interested in personal development. In particular, the CIPD provides a series of fascinating and accessible articles that contain a whole host of materials for human resources, learning and development, and organisational development.

https://www.cipd.org/uk

Education, The UN Refugee agency (UNHCR), UK

The UN Refugee agency (UNHCR), which was established in 1950, has a specific focus on educational research updates and resources. The website has themed the different aspects of education into five key areas: (1) primary and youth education, (2) tertiary education, (3) teaching about refugees, (4) the refugee connected education challenge, and (5) enhancing education opportunities in the UK.

https://www.unhcr.org/uk/what-we-do/build-better-futures/education

Working in the UK: A guide to finding employment for people new to the UK

This Toolkit, which is developed by Migration Yorkshire, gives newcomers to the UK an overview of employment in this country. It can also be used by people who support refugees and other migrants who are looking for work.

https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/working-uk

Professional bodies and supporting highly-skilled refugees into employment

This resource was compiled by Leeds Beckett University and focuses on supporting highly skilled refugees into employment. A number of themes relate to the role that professional bodies have in supporting skilled refugees into paid work.

https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/refugee-integration-yorkshire-and-humber/professional-bodies-and-supporting-highly-skilled-refugees-employment

Skills for Life

This website gives individual information on the UK government's lifelong learning strategy. The key purpose of this plan is to improve adults' skills in terms of reading, writing, maths, and technical skills. The online platform has a number of suggested training courses for individuals at different levels (e.g. English essential skills, numeracy essential skills, higher technical qualifications, etc).

https://skillsforlife.campaign.gov.uk/

Refugee Education UK

Refugee Education, which is a charity based in the UK, is a guidance hub to bring down barriers to education for refugees. This website provides useful information for practitioners, parents, and young people on how refugees engage with education at different levels, whether at primary, secondary, further, or higher education establishments. Moreover, this website provides a number of case studies of individuals engaging in educational activities.

https://www.reuk.org/

5. Collaboration and communication across services and government

Overview

Improving the housing outcomes for refugees is not within the remit of a single organisation, it is a collaborative endeavour. Our research has highlighted the importance of collaborative working and effective communication across many organisations. The development of trust is crucial to this, as is the willingness to work with a variety of individuals and agencies who may have differing priorities. Organisations who work with refugees have been shown to welcome partnership working[40]. Existing connections may have previously developed due to increasing knowledge and awareness gained by individual staff members, formal partnerships on projects and resettlement schemes and attending joint events, drop-in centres and local or regional strategic meetings. A deep commitment to supporting refugees tends to encourage organisations to work together, signpost clients and avoid, where possible, duplication of work. However, there are cold and hot spots of collaboration in this area of work which is punctuated by the location, type of organisation and extent to which they work with refugees as a core group. This section examines some of the ways in which collaboration happens between organisations to improve the housing outcomes for refugees. We highlight four of the ways in which organisations have been working:

1. Through advocacy.
2. Increasing access to housing through the use of housing portfolios.
3. Co-ordinated service delivery through multi-agency working.
4. Creating 'all channel' communication networks.

Advocacy

Evidence has shown that advocating on behalf of, and with refugees, can have a huge impact on their ability to meaningfully engage with services and to be aware of their rights. This is especially evident when refugees are navigating the private rented sector. In these cases, what we will term 'advocates' (e.g. third sector agencies, local authority housing officers) work with private landlords directly, to try to secure appropriate housing for refugees. As we have indicated, landlords, in both the private rented sector and social housing, play a key role where there is a shortage of accommodation and high demand for housing.

We would recommend:
- Advocates supporting refugees to navigate the private rental sector.
- Advocates fostering positive working relationships with landlords in both the private and social housing sector to achieve the best possible housing outcomes for refugees.

---

40   Brown, P., Walkey, C. and Martin, P. (2020) Integration works: The role of organisations in refugee integration in Yorkshire and the Humber. The University of Huddersfield.

Third sector organisations highlight the importance of advocating for refugees and provide a voice for groups who are vulnerable and not familiar with their rights and entitlements. Examples of such advocacy may include connecting with Local Authorities to deal with damp/mould issues in social housing. This applies for those who have come through either the asylum route or through settlement programmes, along the different stages of their housing pathways. For those in resettlement schemes, this is particularly pertinent when support facilitated by the resettlement schemes cease.

In order to develop a positive relationship between advocates, landlords and refugees, it is important to challenge myths and misconceptions which persist in the private rented sector.

This could be achieved via:

- Forums to provide information and reassurance for private sector landlords and other stakeholders, particularly due to concerns around the right to rent.
- Communicating information regarding incentives and financial support available to refugees and landlords.
- Equipping refugees and landlords with up-to-date information about their rights and obligations with regards to property standards and housing quality.

In terms of good practice, we found that third sector organisations have taken important steps in developing good working relationships with landlords, through dialogue and reaching out. Within the context of a 'hostile environment', where refugees find challenges in accessing housing, this, along with 'myth busting' is crucial[41].

Increasing access to housing through housing portfolios

There is evidence that positive relationships between landlords and 'advocates' can increase refugees' access to housing, by enabling agencies to establish a portfolio of landlords who are prepared to accommodate refugees. Typically landlords have been offered support from dedicated housing officers or case workers to help alleviate any concerns and reduce the sense of risk (largely brought about by the Right to Rent policy) from landlords accommodating refugees. Such relationships have been established through both online and in person invitations, word of mouth, recommendations, and endorsements from landlords and letting agents. This has been seen to be critical in building trust and dialogue and providing landlords with information and reassurance.

We have spoken to a range of organisations about how relationships with landlords work in practice and the importance of preparing refugees for tenancies through 'tenancy ready' courses which covers tenancy 'basics' including paying bills, bins and recycling, searching for accommodation and what to do when you do acquire accommodation.

---

41   Generation Rent (2023) Housing in a hostile environment: The experiences of migrant groups in navigating the Private Rented Sector and temporary accommodation (accessible on https://www.generationrent.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/GR_Migrant-Private-Renters-Report_Digital2.pdf)

Key elements of this good practice include:
- Building up a portfolio of landlords
- Securing more properties from landlords in social housing
- Providing a 'tenancy ready' training course
- Support and provide access to wider capacity building opportunities to support integration

Co-ordinated service delivery through multi-agency working

Key third sector organisations have stated that it is important to build positive relationships with statutory organisations such as the Home Office, asylum housing providers, and Local Authorities. Whilst there may be differing ideological approaches, building trusting relationships between different stakeholders has been important in supporting refugees and reducing the risk of homelessness. This leads to:
- improved communication and support.
- more preparation to meet client needs within the limited timeframe.
- two-way support.

This approach has enabled asylum accommodation providers to be more flexible than would have otherwise been the case, and helped ensure that refugees are supported in the most effective way upon their receipt of a positive decision on their asylum case.

Effective 'all channel' communication

In terms of best practice, the use of walk-in and drop-in spaces where a range of organisations come together to provide appropriate information/advice has been utilized by a number of third sector and statutory organisations. In this setting, through collaborative working, specialists can come together to provide something more unified that responds to the various needs of clients, in this case refugees. This also has the benefit of ensuring communication flows between services and organisations as well which maximises opportunities to collaborate more effectively.

Key elements of best practice we identified include:
- Shared spaces which foster dialogue and provide more practical ways of overcoming organisational limitations and practices.
- Encouraging access to vulnerable, hard to reach and marginalised groups.
- Ability to provide a more client focused approach, which can help overcome organisational priorities.

Case Study: The SPRING Project, Sheffield

A shining example of an initiative that draws together collaboration across different organisations is the SPRING Project, based in Sheffield. Built around a partnership of six organisations, The SPRING Project operates through a referral process to provide immediate support for refugees (with leave to remain) to access housing, benefits and medical intervention, and in relation to more long term needs to support integration. Partners include City of Sanctuary Sheffield, Citizens Advice, Sheffield City Council (to provide housing advice and support), Savte (providing English language support), the New Beginnings Project (employment, education, and volunteering advice) and Solace (who provide therapeutic support for refugees experiencing trauma and mental health issues). These partners work to meet immediate and longer-term needs of refugee clients. The organisation is careful not to replicate the work of others aided by the referral process and by focussing on targeted, individual support, but also to ensure that those with priority needs gain the appropriate housing support. A key step in this is to gain as much information as possible on client needs early on through the referral process to help them devise strategies to access housing needs and identify appropriate housing options. The collaborative partners work together to help meet these needs.

Key elements of this case study include:

- **Focus on developing dialogue and effective two-way communication with statutory agencies and third sector organisations, placing client needs first.**
- **Provide a platform and space for inter-agency working.**
- **Early needs assessments to target tailored multiagency support.**
- **Monitoring clients' needs throughout their housing pathway.**
- **Recognition that working together leads to a win-win outcome.**

6. Collaborative Integration: Building Social Connections

Overview

Creating an integrated society can be challenging. Integration requires a wide range of people, organisations and institutions to come together and create a shared and inclusive sense of belonging. Integration is a complex, multifaceted and multidimensional process involving a combination of factors and actors. It involves actors including those who have migrated and longer-standing communities and a range of organisations and institutions, as well as the socio-legal and policy frameworks within which all these are nested. As such this work can be seen as 'collaborative integration' and is a way of working that enables the affiliation of, and close working relationships between, different stakeholders. Professional networks and social connections are at the centre of effective collaborative integration. As has been established in our work, and through previous work in this area, there are a wide number of institutions directly involved in shaping how refugees experience the housing system.

The way integration policy has been developed in the UK provides a great deal of latitude about the ways in which various people, communities and institutions work regarding refugee integration. Our research has shown that overall, organisations who work with refugees often demonstrate creativity and motivation, particularly in the voluntary sector. Despite a shortage of resources, fragile strategic leadership and a policy environment that many view as antithetical to their aims and values, organisations manage to provide significant direct and indirect support to refugees. Organisations find volunteering opportunities in the absence of any systematic employment schemes and offer a wide array of prospects for refugees to learn English in place of systematic government-led provision. Organisations work closely with each other and signpost refugees to each other on the basis of their personal knowledge of the sector.

Principles of collaboration

Developing collaborative practices requires organisations, and individuals within them, to follow the three basic principles in effective collaboration.

As Figure 3 demonstrates, 'the three Cs' are the key processes that crystallize collaboration between different support organisations.

Figure 3: The three Cs of collaboration.

1. Communication is the first crucial part of the collaboration. Stakeholders are required to work out which are the best forms of communication. For example, is it better to have online meetings on a regular basis or should these be undertaken in a written format. As noted by workshop participants, the stakeholders who are collaborating together are consistent in what they do, i.e. meeting up online very week.

2. Coordination is a procedure that requires individuals to organise the tasks that need to be completed. For coordination to work smoothly and efficiently it is vital that the individual who is coordinating the tasks that need to be completed sets realistic outcomes in an achievable and timely fashion.

3. Cooperation is a key process that enables different organisations working together to achieve the same common goal. Therefore, cooperation needs to be proactive and involve all stakeholders.

Strategic collaboration in refugee integration

In any organisation it is always good practice to reflect on how it is doing and how it could be improved. In this sense, organisational behaviour is crucial, as it considers how individuals, and internal and external groups interact with each other. The public and private sectors' agendas are continuously moving at a fast pace, whether at an economic level, in an international humanitarian crisis, or in a shifting public policy context. Khan and Halsall (2017) note that collaborative working in an organisation has many facets; these include leadership and management, finances, marketing, and networking with external organisations[42].

Key questions to help organisations think about to maximise their strategic approach to refugee integration:

1. How do policies and strategies at the local, regional, and national levels 'govern' refugee integration?

2. Who is involved in 'doing' refugee integration and how do they do their work?

3. What networks already exist with regards to refugees in your area, and do you attend to and contribute to these? Can you do more?

4. Does your organisation have particularly strong and weak ties to other key actors in the area in which you work?

5. Where is the leadership in the networks you hold or need? What leadership can you bring to the area?

6. What are organisations' 'evaluations' of the ongoing successes and challenges of refugee integration?

7. Which organisations and people are missing from this work?

Effective collaboration

Effective collaboration has the real ability to bring key players together to discuss solutions and ways forward. Effective collaboration also stimulates the use of latent capacity to ensure that services and resources are utilized as efficiently as possible for the benefit of meeting the housing and support needs of refugees. The following was a small example of how one practitioner we spoke to had undertaken collaboration when attempting to increase the volume of homes that were available to move refugees into:

- **Making contact:** Working out who is working in the area you want to change and establish contact with key people, in the right positions in key organisations.

- **Being consistent:** Building on the initial contact will mean regular check-ins and communication. The frequency of these will depend on the challenge and the capacity within partners. Frequent but short meetings are preferable to infrequent long meetings in order to ensure there is awareness across partners and enthusiasm is maintained.

42   Khan, Y., & Halsall, J. P. (2017). Collaborative working in the statutory and voluntary sectors. In J. P. Halsall & M. Snowden (Eds.) The pedagogy of the social sciences curriculum (pp. 55–68). Springer.

- **Getting new partners on board:** As the collaboration continues it will be important to keep an open door of new partners to join the collaboration, particularly those who were previously outliers, opposed and/or new to the field of refugee housing. The introduction of new partners can be positively disruptive and inspire new thinking and innovation.

Resources to help with collaboration

There are a range of resources available to help develop, or refine, effective approaches to collaborative integration. Some of these are suggested below:

Working together: A toolkit for campaigns collaboration across the public sector
Created by the UK Government Communication Services (GCS) body in 2016, this toolkit aims to offer realistic suggestions, directions, and tools to inspire open and helpful collaborative working between different stakeholders. In this toolkit GCS (2016) outline five key components: (1) Identifying Shared Objectives, (2) Levels of Collaboration, (3) Collaboration Route-Map, (4) Initial Partnering Meeting, and (5) Campaign Plan.

https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/publications/working-together-a-toolkit-for-campaigns-collaboration-across-the-public-sector/

How to improve collaboration across government
Developed by Institute for Government in 2020, this roundtable summary document discusses how to progress collaboration in a central government context. The document covers the following themes: structures, culture in the civil service, and having common resolve and objectives.

https://www.oracle.com/uk/a/ocom/docs/ifg-oracle-collaboration-across-government.pdf

Partnerships and collaboration
Created by the Local Government Association in 2023, the webpage provides a brief overview of the guiding principles on the nature of partnerships and collaboration, and a series of useful questions for the organisation that wants to strengthen partnerships and collaborative working. Further to this article, the are two external links (journal article and report), which go into more detail in this important area.

https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/guidance-and-resources/community-action/community-action-overview/six-guiding-4

7. Challenging Systems

Overview

In the absence of clear policy and strategic direction at the national level, organisations at the regional and local levels have been working hard to ensure refugees are not left behind and community tensions are avoided. However, a lack of labour market engagement, insecure housing options and a lack of understanding about refugees among longer-standing communities represents a long-term failure of national integration policy. Furthermore, just within the provision of language education there are multiple systemic challenges such as: challenges in accessing ESOL, having oversight of multiple ESOL funding streams and eligibility criteria, and ESOL waiting lists all combine to make the system of learning English difficult.

The presence of this level of disadvantage amplifies the need to develop a clear national policy on refugee integration specifically that provides practical guidance to the diverse range of actors involved in integration. In the absence of clear guidance and leadership at national levels there is a need for various actors and organsations to challenge established systems. Many systems unwittingly embed exclusion within them which combine to increase the likelihood of poor housing outcomes. This section looks at some of the key areas that our work with stakeholders has revealed could make a real difference for helping refugees achieve positive housing outcomes.

Supporting homelessness applications

The Refugee Council published guidance in 2019 to assist those supporting refugees to make homelessness applications[43]. The guide makes it clear that it is not a substitute for up-to-date legal advice. However, the content provides useful information and guidance that can help people working with refugees in many different ways. Its aim is to support refugees to make a homelessness application to a local authority and it has a particular focus on the needs and entitlements of newly recognised adult refugees who have a priority need for accommodation due to their health. It illustrates how a refugee's mental and physical health can be affected by their experiences and how this can impact on their homelessness application. It also provides guidance on how to have sensitive conversations with someone about their health, how to make an effective homelessness application and how to challenge homelessness decisions.

Exercising a person-centred approach in housing options

The shortage of social housing makes it challenging for local authorities and housing associations to meet the current demand for housing. According to data published by Shelter, over 1 million households are waiting for social homes. To manage housing needs and allocate housing a banding system is used to prioritise the needs of those with the most urgent applicants such as people threatened with homelessness, people needing to move for medical reasons and those living in overcrowded or insanitary housing. In our work, issues related to the way housing is allocated were among key challenges practitioners raised which prevented refugees' access to secure and affordable housing. Being a refugee on its own does not entitle

---

43   Refugee Council (2019) Making homelessness application for refugees in England: a guide for anyone supporting newly recognised single refugees. Available at: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Good-Practice-Guide.pdf

a person to a priority need, instead they need to demonstrate a particular vulnerability or characteristic such as: being pregnant, having dependent children or some other form of vulnerability such as mental ill health. As one practitioner commented,

> 'If you're not in the priority need, for example, if you are a single male, certain age able-bodied and everything, there's just no chance basically. So, it really is those who are in the priority need who can get some element of support, but otherwise they're on their own'. (Voluntary sector manager).

The lack of knowledge amongst refugees about their housing options and rights underscore the support needed. Our work, and established evidence has shown that to be most effective such support should be person-centred. Having a single point of contact or case worker approach has been repeatedly shown to have significant benefits over more traditional approaches at signposting. Voluntary sector organisations in particular have reported that a move towards a personalised, rights-based way of working within the contexts of housing, education, employment and health has led to significant successes. Personalised working recognises that some people need more intensive support than others and there may be multiple routes for people to access the support they need, which can be provided by a well-connected network. The diversity of backgrounds, vulnerabilities and situations faced by refugees means that a personalised approach, such as that delivered through many of the caseworkers in resettlement programmes, is often considered the most effective approach, but the delivery of this approach at scale for all refugees (incl asylum pathway refugees) is often hindered by shortage of resources. However, in many cases taking a person-centred approach with refugees does not necessarily need to absorb disproportionate amounts of time.

From consultations with practitioners the approach consists of:

- **Facilitating a series of conversations:** Here individuals explore their housing options within the context of their lived experience and aspiration for the future. This way the person's experience and where they are at a giving time is integrated in the decision process and the service they receive.

- **Knowledge building:** individuals build on their knowledge of the housing system which empower them throughout the process. As a result, they have a better understanding of their housing options and are aware of how their housing situation will evolve in time. The tool in Section 1 of this toolkit can help here.

- **Establish an asset base:** Establishing individuals' strengths and things that matter the most to them. Identifying these helps address the things that are not working in the person's life and help set up plans to resolve them.

Practitioners reported on different ways in which their services had evolved in order to take a person-centred approach to housing options such as having a specialist refugee housing role within councils and keeping refugee housing support services in-house. This can be more involved at the outset and taper over weeks and months. However, having an approachable, trusted single-point of contact over the long-term helps provide valuable reassurance and signposting although this does not need to be the same caseworker who worked with the household initially.

Case Study: A specialist housing role (Barnsley MBC)

"Housing is a specialist role, it's definitely a specialist role" said a stakeholder during one of our workshops, and the Support Liaison Officer role within Barnsley Council illustrates this perfectly. This role is part of the council's housing team and is an perfect example of how a person-centred approach has been implemented in the allocation policy. These services are particularly designed to support refugees navigate the housing system as well as other services (such as helping them connect with with ease employment providers and other professionals around mental health, education, and legal advice). This includes the following steps:

Step 1: Information gathering through conversation.
The support liaison officer organises a series of support sessions aim at assessing each clients:
- Knowledge of the housing system
- Tenancy readiness
- Ability to live independently.

This allows the officer to understand people's lived experience and the stage their lives are at in terms of wellbeing, knowledge and ability to rent.

Step 2: Exploring options – Assessing risks and benefits.
With the information gathered, the officer is able to identify possible issues, explore solutions and select the best course of action. Decisions are made as to whether the client is better off in a supported accommodation or independent living.

Step 3: Agreeing the plan, what will be provided and how.
At this stage, each client's understanding of the overall housing system and process is built through further conversations. They are made aware of their strengths and limitations regarding renting in the UK. They are then prepared to choose and/or accept the option deemed suitable for their circumstances.

Step 4: Delivering the care and support plan in line with the client's situation.
This support can range from instructing refugees how to top up electricity meters, and other forms of practical everyday support. Also, clients who are placed in supported accommodation are monitored and supported until they are ready to move on.

Training and attitudinal change among workers

Stakeholders during our consultations have emphasised how impactful empathy and interest to refugees housing needs could be, considering the pre-displacement trauma many refugees experienced. Being aware and understanding the possible traumatic experiences refugees faced could turn hostility into compassion and positively impact the way service providers relate to them which, could in turn improve the service's quality.

> I think for workers in this field as well, what is crucial is their level of emotional intelligence. We're dealing with people who have fled atrocious conditions and that compassion, that understanding of just having to uproot and leave your country, your family, the journey, the effects up here and just having that, treating them as you would like to be treated and just giving them the time [is priceless]. Just being there, just being that listening ear [make a massive difference]. (Voluntary sector manager).

Events and experiences evoke reactions which alter perceptions and inform the way we interpret the world around us. Gaining insight into people's experiences through this training has the potential to impact perceptions, and subsequently the way in which staff relate to people with a migrant background.

Case Study: Migration Yorkshire training course – Introduction to migration

Migration Yorkshire runs regular 'Introduction to Migration' training sessions with the aim of improving understanding and awareness about migration among local authority staff and their partners, particularly those who encounter people with a migrant background as part of their roles[44]. Organisations can also commission additional training from Migration Yorkshire. The training aims to promote cohesion and foster compassion and empathy, in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The training sessions are usually delivered in person, aimed at staff working in a particular geographical area, which provides an opportunity for attendees to consider and discuss their response to migration issues in their own locale. The slides are adapted to each location and made available afterwards as a resource pack for ongoing use. If a local authority were to commission a session specifically for housing staff, adaptations could be made such as including scenarios with a housing focus.

The training offers a mix of delivered content and activities and seeks to:

- Provide an overview about migration and an explanation of the wider context.
- Help identify and promote an understanding of different migrant groups, their experiences, and their needs by exploring the question of why people migrate or flee persecution, and under what circumstances they arrive in the UK, as well as challenges faced after arrival.
- Create a space where local authority and frontline workers come together to talk about migration, how that relates to the work they do and how they might be able to better meet the needs of migrants in the communities they serve.
- Provide information about relevant support services at a local, regional and national level.
- Explore refugees' journeys and experiences through activities.

The training includes an activity which aims to foster empathy and compassion - participants are asked to put themselves in the shoes of a family fleeing Syria and trying to reach safety in the UK. They discuss the thought process in making critical decisions during their journey to safety and how they would like to be regarded, assisted and spoken to. This activity helps attendees understand the limited choices available, as well as the significant trauma that people claiming asylum in the UK may have experienced.

Participants also consider scenarios - examples of situations where staff might encounter different types of migrants in their day-to-day work. They are asked to identify their concerns, what action they would take and which services or organisations they would engage with to do this. It's an opportunity to consolidate what has been covered in the session and also to share their existing professional and personal expertise and experience in handling a 'real life' situation they might face in their work.

44   See https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/ for more details

Summary and Checklist for Action

Overview

Housing has an increasingly central role to play in supporting the settlement and meaningful integration of refugees. Whilst the experiences of refugees in accessing good quality and affordable housing have much in common with those of other higher risk groups, refugees are typically multiply disadvantaged. A lack of awareness of their rights and familiarity with the UK housing system, developing English language skills, trauma exacerbated by their experiences in exile and, in many cases the asylum system, are just some of the factors which create multiple exclusion for refugees in the UK.

Whilst there are significant challenges in place for refugees which prevent them having positive housing outcomes, there are significant opportunities for housing organisations, charities, local authorities and community groups to influence and challenge practice and inequalities.

To do so effectively it is necessary to recognise the challenges that refugees face and develop proactive strategies and activities which start to overcome these. This toolkit aims to share some of these practices, information and knowledge to provide organisations with tools with which to change the status quo.

Checklist for Action on Supporting Positive Housing Outcomes for Refugees

The following checklist is aimed to be a quick summary of some of the key issues used in this toolkit and for the time-constrained this might be a useful resource to consider key issues:

1. Refugees' experience and views of housing

Q. Have the people with experience of being a refugee been asked what their knowledge is of the housing system in the UK?

For example:

- Has anyone asked people if they have any questions about how the housing system works in the UK?

- Do people have any concerns or aspirations when it comes to how they would like to live in the short to medium term?

- Do they know of other people from refugee backgrounds who are struggling with their housing who may need help?

2. Working with the social housing sector

Q. Is the social housing sector in your area working with refugees routinely to help meet accommodation needs?

For example:

- Are social housing organisations aware of the extent of need arising from the refugee communities and do they know the ways they can help?
- Are social housing organisations aware of how their peers are already supporting refugee communities?
- Do social housing organisations run employment or training schemes which local refugee communities could access?

3. Working with the private rented sector

Q. Do you have an awareness of who provides private rented sector housing in your area?

For example:

- Are there established landlord forums in the area?
- If there are networks for landlords how could you engage with these?
- If there are no networks or forums for landlords have you considered how you might work to develop these?

Q. Do landlords understand the impacts they are having and the policy frameworks they are working within?

For example:

- Are there resources and materials available that would provide information in a suitable format to help landlords understand the Right to Rent policy better?
- Are there resources and materials available that would help landlords understand their responsibilities in maintaining good quality properties?
- Is there a clear and visible policy on how and when enforcement actions will be taken against landlords?

Q. Do organisations and advocates supporting refugees have access to a range of suitable accommodation within the private sector?

For example:

- Is there a portfolio of landlords who are willing to provide housing to refugees?

- If not, what action needs to be taken to build this resource?

- What support could be provided by those working within local services to encourage landlords to participate and provide access to accommodation for refugees?

Q. Has there been innovative thinking that would instigate a shift in how refugees access the private rented sector?

For example:

- Has thought been given to ways refugees can be supported in the early stages of a tenancy?

- Would it be possible to introduce leasing schemes or provide incentives to landlords?

- Are there innovations going on that could be extended to refugee communities?

4. Education, employment and networking support for refugees

Q. What ways could those supporting refugee resettlement contribute to supporting education and employment opportunities for refugees?

For example:

- Has thought been given to existing educational institutions providing extra skills training for refugees? Could they do more than is currently offered?

- What role could the community play in supporting education and employment opportunities?

- What mentorship schemes could be developed to support refugees?

- Could organisations from different sectors (i.e. Public, Private and the Third Sectors) be encouraged to develop volunteer work placements for refugees?

5. Colaboration and communication across services and government

Q. Do local groups working with migrants have good working relationships with landlords in the private and social housing sector to enable greater access to housing?

For example:

- Are there individuals from local organisations who can 'advocate' for refugees and support them to navigate a range of different housing options?
- What actions could enable positive working relationships between landlords, advocacy groups and refugees to enable positive housing solutions?

Q. Are there effective communication mechanisms between advocates, landlords and refugees?

For example:

- Are there forums for stakeholders which can provide information for private sector landlords and other stakeholders?
- How is information regarding incentives, financial support, property standards and housing quality communicated to refugees and landlords?
- Could a 'drop in' or 'walk in' space be developed to enable and improve communication and effective inter-agency working?

6. Collaborative integration – building social connectedness

Q. Do stakeholders fully take advantage of collaboration and enhancing social connections?

For example:

- Do you have any weak connections to important people and organisations? How could you improve this?
- Do you, your organisation and/or other organisations take a strategic approach when it comes to refugee integration?
- Are you aware of the variety of organisations and services active in the area in which you work? Is this systematically mapped? Is this mapping regularly updated?

7. Challenging systems

Q. What scope do you have to make a positive disruption to some of the key policies, procedures and systems that hinder positive outcomes for refugees?

For example:

- How could you, your organisation or another organisation deliver their services differently in order to respond to the individual challenges each person has?

- Are you aware of the alternative but successful ways of doing things that are available through organisations such as NACCOM, the Centre for Homelessness Impact, Shelter, Crisis and others? See the list of key organisations at the back of this toolkit for some of these.

- Do you, your organisation and those you work with really understand the issues refugees face? Would you benefit from training?

List of key organisations

British Red Cross	https://www.redcross.org.uk/
Centre for Homelessness Impact	https://www.homelessnessimpact.org/
Chartered Institute for Housing	https://www.cih.org
Choose Love	https://chooselove.org/
City of Sanctuary UK	https://cityofsanctuary.org/
Commonweal Housing	https://www.commonwealhousing.org.uk/
COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership	https://migrationscotland.org.uk/
Crisis	https://www.crisis.org.uk/
East of England Strategic Migration Partnership	https://smp.eelga.gov.uk/
East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership	https://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/Migration-Hub
Free from Torture	https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/
Generation Rent	https://www.generationrent.org
Homeless Link	https://homeless.org.uk
Home Office	https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/asylum
Housing Studies Association	https://www.housing-studies-association.org
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants	https://www.jcwi.org.uk/
London Strategic Migration Partnership	https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/migrants-and-refugees/london-strategic-migration-partnership-lsmp
NACCOM Network	https://naccom.org.uk/
National Residential Landlords Association	https://www.nrla.org.uk/
Mears Group PLC.	https://www.mearsgroup.co.uk/
Migrant Help UK	https://www.migranthelpuk.org/
Migrants Rights Network	https://migrantsrights.org.uk/
Migration Yorkshire	https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/
Positive Action in Housing	https://www.paih.org/
Propertymark	https://www.propertymark.co.uk/

Refugee Action	https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/
Refugee Council	https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/
Refugees at Home	https://www.refugeesathome.org/
Reset Communities and Refugees	https://resetuk.org/
Save the Children	https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/
Safe Passage	https://www.safepassage.org.uk/
Scottish Refugee Council	https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/
Shelter	https://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/homelessness/housing_for_refugees
UN Refugee Agency	https://www.unhcr.org/
Women for Refugee Women	https://www.refugeewomen.co.uk/

University of
HUDDERSFIELD
Inspiring global professionals

Healthy Housing Initiative