



## LANGUAGE AND HOUSING FACTORS

### **Background**

The term 'migrant' is used throughout this report to refer to all those born outside the UK. It therefore relates to migrants in the very broadest sense, ranging from those whose residence is temporary (as the term is often taken to imply), to people whose settlement is long-term and permanent.<sup>1</sup>

When looking at good practices in the UK, London represents a good starting point: The number of people living in London who were born outside the UK now exceeds 34 percent of the population. In terms of the population, migrants make up a greater share of the resident population in inner London (40 percent) than in outer London (30 percent). In Westminster, Newham and Brent, over 50 percent of the population is born outside the UK. However, nearly half of the migrant population in Brent, and over a third in Newham and Westminster have British nationality (2008 and 2009).

There are a number of different categories of migrant in London today, including refugees and asylum seekers, who make up a small proportion of London's migrant stock and of new residents, but also labour migrants, family reunion migrants, overseas students and irregular migrants, who can face different but also similar barriers to integration. There are also key differences between 'old' and 'new' migrants – the former arriving with Empire and Commonwealth connections to meet post-war labour demand or for family reunification, the latter associated more often with the labour market demand in the economic growth period from the early 1990s to 2008. Many in the former category have similar entitlements to the UK-born population.

What is integration? Integration is a series of dynamic two-way processes of interaction and participation which begins the moment someone arrives in a place, whether they are staying for a year or for life. It occurs in different domains, including the economic, social, cultural and civic, and in relation to identity, each of which is related and which need to be considered together, not in isolation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> An evidence base on migration and integration in London: ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, University of Oxford

<sup>2</sup> S Spencer, *The Migration Debate*, forthcoming, London: The Policy Press, 2010, Chapter 6

### Good practices in London

Language acquisition is absolutely central to integration, but not alone. The evidence is not clear on what works best and what provides value for money. Some elements, however, stand out:

- access to classes in places and at times migrants can attend,
- rooting of programmes in local communities, for example through mentoring programmes<sup>3</sup>
- enhancing pedagogy by building in personal and community development,
- good contacts with employers<sup>3</sup>, and gearing learning towards facilitating integration processes, including labour force integration and social interaction.

Evidence to support these observations comes from a wide range of studies:

### English as a factor in successful integration<sup>4</sup>

- Fluency in English (as assessed by an interviewer) increases the average hourly occupational wage by approximately 20 percent.<sup>5</sup>
- Language increases productivity and communication (and hence the market wage) and also increases employment probabilities.<sup>6</sup>
- A Canadian study concluded that immigrants who do not usually speak either English or French (the two official Canadian languages) at home have earnings 10-12 per cent lower than those who do. This study also found that those with better language skills receive more benefit from an additional year of education (in terms of the wages earned).<sup>7</sup>

### Housing as a factor in successful integration

Housing has also been identified as a key factor: Migrants face multiple barriers in the housing market, but work to address these barriers needs to be placed in the context of meeting the needs of other residents too. Specifically, it is clear that the widespread perceptions of other residents that asylum seekers and other migrants jump the housing queue are unfounded; migrants have very limited access to social housing.

However, factors which concentrate migrants in particular parts of the housing market (primarily in lower rent private rented housing) have knock-on effects on the social housing

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<sup>3</sup> NGO Network of Integration Focal Points, Introduction programmes and language courses: Recommendations for the Integration of Refugees and Migrants in Europe October 2006, p 7

<sup>4</sup> Communities and Local Government Guidance for Local Authorities on Translation of Publications 2007: 17.

<sup>5</sup> M A Shields and S Wheatly-Price, 'The English language fluency and occupational success of ethnic minority immigrant men living in English metropolitan areas', Journal of Population Economics, 2002, 15 (1), pp 137-160.

<sup>6</sup> C Dustmann, A van Soest, 2003. 'The Language and earnings of immigrants' Industrial and labour relations review, 2003, 55 (3)

<sup>7</sup> B R Chiswick and P W Miller PW, 'The complementarity of language and other human capital: Immigrant earnings in Canada' Economics of Education Review, October 2003, 22 (5), pp 469-80

market and raise a number of integration issues, both in inner city zones, where migrant clustering has both positive and negative integration outcomes, and in outer city zones. The evidence suggests that there is a need to focus work on addressing the integration issues related to housing in outer city zones.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence suggests that migrants often choose to live near people of the same background and benefit in several ways from doing so; this can be a factor for successful integration in a number of domains, including the labour market.<sup>8</sup> Because of this, there is considerable evidence that these areas attract migrants for reasons other than purely housing market factors – for example, the preference among new migrants from outside the EU for locations where family or friends live.<sup>9</sup>

If living in a neighbourhood with high numbers of migrants is a clear positive factor for migrant integration in the socio-economic and political domains, it is less clear that it is a positive factor for culture and identity – it may be a negative factor. Government policy since 2001 has increasingly seen ethnic clustering as socially problematic and as having a negative impact on cohesion.<sup>10</sup>

### Employment, skills and enterprise

The impact of migrants on the labour market is unclear, but the evidence suggests that at a national and regional level, migrants contribute positively to the economy and to income levels. However, at a local level in areas where there is a low skills base (as in the more deprived parts of the capital) they may have a slight negative impact.

Different groups of migrants fare very differently in the labour market, and face very different issues:

At one end, some groups have limited or no entitlement to work in the UK: including asylum seekers, asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected, pre-university students (who can only work 10 hours per week) and their dependents (who cannot work), and various categories of irregular migrants.

At the other end, highly skilled labour migrants entering on particular sector-based schemes clearly have ready access to high wage jobs, as do EEA and EU15 citizens.

Despite the skills gaps which remain open, migrants in general and certain categories of migrant in particular suffer from relatively higher unemployment than the UK and London population as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> D Robinson and K Reeve, Neighbourhood experiences of new immigration: Reflections from the evidence base, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2006

<sup>9</sup> E Markova and R Black, New East European Immigration and Community Cohesion, York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007

<sup>10</sup> T Cattle, Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team, London: Home Office, 2001; H Ouseley, Community Pride not prejudice, Bradford: Bradford Vision, 2000; D Ritchie, The Oldham Independent Review Panel Report, Oldham: Oldham Independent Review, 2001; J Denham, Building Cohesive Communities:

<sup>11</sup> E Kofman, S Lukes, A D'Angelo and N Montagna, 'The equality implications of being a migrant in Britain', Equality and Human Rights Commission Research Report 19, 2009

Most categories of migrants 'face multiple barriers to work including insufficient language skills and a lack of knowledge of processes involved in looking, and applying for, work in England.'<sup>12</sup> Many of the barriers are the same barriers faced by all members of the population, but are often felt more intensely by new arrivals.<sup>13</sup>

There have been a number of initiatives focusing on refugee employment; these have included

- assistance in obtaining national insurance numbers and bank accounts,
- interpreters to enable them to use Job Centre Plus,
- facilitating access to New Deal,
- work-focused language tuition,
- targeting some of the Ethnic Minority Outreach service on unemployed refugees, and
- supporting professionals to adapt their qualifications to practice in the UK.

In 2006, the government announced a Refugee Integration and Employment Service providing a 12 month advice, employment support and mentoring service to every individual granted refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK.<sup>14</sup>

Despite all this, there is a lack of evidence about what works best. However, the literature suggests that key factors include

- quality of employment provision,
- focusing on holistic, developmental support and
- sustainable employment.

Due to issues of employment retention noted above, emphasis is needed not just on employment but in sustainable employment.

Some examples of good practice have been identified:

For example, the Migrants and Refugees Qualifications project in London was delivered in the mid-noughties by the Institute for Employment Research, University of Warwick.

The project's approach includes a review of migrants' qualification comparability and of unrecognised skills, as well as support and active brokerage including the production of a personal development plan.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Beatty, R Crisp, M Foden, P Lawless and I Wilson, Understanding and Tackling Worklessness Volume 2: Neighbourhood Level Problems, Interventions, and Outcomes – Evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme, Communities and Local Government, October 2009, p 26

<sup>13</sup> F Froy, 'From Immigration to Integration: Comparing local practices' in From Immigration to Integration: Local Solutions to a Global Challenge, Paris: OECD, 2006

<sup>14</sup> T Choudhury, S Spencer, C Slauson, B Cooper and S Ali, Social Inclusion among Selected Migrant and Minority Groups in the United Kingdom, ESRC Centre on Migration Policy and Society University of Oxford, 2008

<sup>15</sup> A Green, 'Routes into employment for refugees: a review of local approaches in London' in: OECD (ed.), From Immigration to Integration: Local Solutions to a Global Challenge, Paris: OECD, 2005, pp 189–238

A similar holistic approach was commended in an academic evaluation of another London project, the Refugee Education, Employment, Training and Advice project (REETA), which offers tailored and culturally sensitive support to refugees to help them not just to access but also to retain employment.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, the Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit at London Metropolitan University has developed and evaluated pilot projects on work placements in London local authorities and in the NHS in London for refugees, and found them to be an effective means to address integration issues.<sup>17</sup> In short, such a holistic approach has been described in the literature as expensive, but effective.<sup>18</sup> It should also be noted that most of these examples were funded on an ad hoc project basis under short-term programmes.

### **Experiences in the north of England<sup>19</sup>**

The previous sections were constructed from the experiences of London; however, migrants have settled in a wide range of locations in the UK. The following extracts are taken from the integration strategy for refugees and asylum seekers in Yorkshire and Humber.

The aim of the strategy is the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into the Yorkshire and Humber region and its local communities. There are four key cross-cutting objectives of the strategy:

- Information and Understanding - Develop information, data and research to improve understanding about refugees and asylum seekers
- Service Delivery - Deliver services to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and regional partners
- Co-ordination and Planning - Provide co-ordination and co-operation across the region to improve planning, strategies and policies for refugees and asylum seekers
- Participation and Contribution - Increase participation and representation, and enhance the contributions of refugees and asylum seekers to the region

The region's priorities for action resulting from their work are:

- Housing
- Health
- Work and skills
- Safety

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<sup>16</sup> B Gidley, The Refugee Employment Project: 2003-4 Evaluation Report, London: Centre for Urban and Community Research for Pepys Community Forum, 2004

<sup>17</sup> Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit, Diversity Works: Research report on work placements for refugees in the NHS, London Metropolitan University, September 2006; Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit, Work Placements in Local Authorities for refugee professionals: A report on the Diversity Works programme, London Metropolitan University, November 2007

<sup>18</sup> A E Green, 'Local Action on Labour Market Integration of new Arrivals: Issues and Dilemmas for Policy' Local Economy, Nov 2007, 22 (4), pp 349-361, p 355

<sup>19</sup> Integration Strategy for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Yorkshire and Humber (2009-2011)

For each of these priorities, a number of actions were identified:

Housing:

1. Research the housing needs and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers to inform housing planning and provision
2. Ensure that the housing needs of refugees and asylum seekers are recognised in regional and local strategies
3. Provide suitable housing for asylum seekers
4. Meet the housing needs of refugees particularly during transition from asylum support
5. Reduce the impact of homelessness among destitute refused asylum seekers
6. Increase refugee and asylum seeker participation in housing matters

Health:

1. Understand the health needs of refugees and asylum seekers, planning and providing services accordingly
2. Provide strategic co-ordination for refugee and asylum seeker health across the region
3. Raise the profile of refugee and asylum seeker health needs within the region
4. Provide clarity of entitlements and improve access to services
5. Address the mental health needs of refugees and asylum seekers
6. Improve the participation of refugees and asylum seekers in planning and delivering of health services

Work and skills

1. Collect and analyse data on refugee and asylum seeker employment and skills to improve services, individual progression and maximise their contribution to the region
2. Improve the co-ordination of English language provision for refugees and asylum seekers
3. Increase access and support into Further Education and Higher Education
4. Increase the employment rate of refugees and the level at which they are employed to close the gap with that of the wider population
5. Support refugee entrepreneurs and business start-up
6. Increase employer engagement with refugees and asylum seekers
7. Encourage volunteering opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers

Safety

1. Promote Yorkshire and Humber as a region of safety and sanctuary
2. Monitor and reduce discrimination, racism and harassment
3. Provide services and information related to family separation and reunion
4. Support refugees and asylum seekers experiencing domestic violence or family tensions
5. Enable the provision of good quality legal representation for asylum seekers
6. Provide information to refugees and asylum seekers on their rights and responsibilities

### **The Casey Review**

In 2016 a major review into opportunity and integration for migrants in the UK was undertaken by Dame Louise Casey on behalf of the UK Government.<sup>20</sup>

In her foreword to the report, Dame Louise observed:

*“At the start of this review, I had thought that I knew what some of the problems might be and what I might report on. Discrimination and disadvantage feeding a sense of grievance and unfairness, isolating communities from modern British society and all it has to offer.*

*I did find this. Black boys still not getting jobs, white working class kids on free school meals still doing badly in our education system, Muslim girls getting good grades at school but no decent employment opportunities; these remain absolutely vital problems to tackle and get right to improve our society.*

*But I also found other, equally worrying things including high levels of social and economic isolation in some places and cultural and religious practices in communities that are not only holding some of our citizens back but run contrary to British values and sometimes our laws. Time and time again I found it was women and children who were the targets of these regressive practices. And too often, leaders and institutions were not doing enough to stand up against them and protect those who were vulnerable.”*

Her conclusions / findings included the following:

- *Build local communities’ resilience in the towns and cities where the greatest challenges exist, by:*
  - (1) Providing additional funding for area-based plans and projects that will address the key priorities identified in this review, including the promotion of English language skills, empowering marginalised women, promoting more social mixing, particularly among young people, and tackling barriers to employment for the most socially isolated groups.
  - (2) Developing a set of local indicators of integration and requiring regular collection of the data supporting these indicators.
  - (3) Identifying and promoting successful approaches to integration.

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<sup>20</sup> The Casey Review: A review into opportunity and integration, December 2016; [www.gov.uk/dclg](http://www.gov.uk/dclg)

- *Improve the integration of communities in Britain and establish a set of values around which people from all different backgrounds can unite, by:*
  - (4) Attaching more weight to British values, laws and history in our schools.
  - (5) Considering what additional support or advice should be provided to immigrants to help them get off to the best start in understanding their rights and obligations and our expectations for integration.
  - (6) Reviewing the route to British citizenship and considering the introduction of an integration oath on arrival for immigrants intending to settle in Britain.
- *Reduce economic exclusion, inequality and segregation in our most isolated and deprived communities and schools, by:*
  - (7) Working with schools' providers and local communities to promote more integrated schools and opportunities for pupils to mix with others from different backgrounds.
  - (8) Developing approaches to help overcome cultural barriers to employment.
  - (9) Improving English language provision through funding for community-based classes and appropriate prioritisation of adult skills budgets.
  - (10) Improving our understanding of how housing and regeneration policies could improve integration or reduce segregation.
  - (11) Introducing stronger safeguards for children who are not in mainstream education, including those being home schooled.
- *Increase standards of leadership and integrity in public office, by:*
  - (12) Ensuring that British values such as respect for the rule of law, equality and tolerance are enshrined in the principles of public life and developing a new oath for holders of public office.