

July 2008

London Enriched

The Mayor's draft strategy for refugee integration in London
Summary report on the Mayor's Consultation



MAYOR OF LONDON

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Greater London Authority
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Introduction

In July 2007, the GLA published *London Enriched*, the Mayor's Draft Strategy for Refugee Integration in London, and embarked on extensive consultation across the city, seeking people's views on the strategy and its proposed actions. The consultation closed on 29 October 2007 and this report presents a summary of the views voiced by respondents.

Many Londoners gave their views, through a range of events designed to attract people of all ages and backgrounds. For example, the consultation's launch was marked with a City Hall event where more than 100 young people, many of them refugees, used their skills and creativity to express their views about becoming a Londoner to decision-makers invited to listen to what they had to say.

The consultation was designed to be itself a first step in the integration of London's refugees. It reflected the draft Strategy's focus on the key importance of communities' own voice in guiding the work of providers and politicians. Community participation was therefore at the heart of the consultation. A majority of the events city-wide were hosted and run by the community and voluntary sector itself, so the views of the communities they serve could be heard. Many said they had never experienced such a wide-ranging attempt to hear their views.

The process was also strongly supported by boroughs and other statutory sector partners, for example with staff time and with financial help from London Councils and the London Development Centre.

Some consultation feedback came from individuals, but in most cases responses were collective. These ranged from statements by small groups focused on very specific issues, to detailed comment on the Strategy submitted from large events with over 100 participants. The 142 documents received in response to the GLA consultation (Table 1 below) thus embody the views of a far greater number of individual organisations – probably several times as many, in the region of 400 organisations and 2000 individuals.

"[The Chair] congratulated the team on the outreach in their consultation, which everyone agreed was a model process."

London Funders Asylum, Refugee and Migration Project Group
minutes of meeting held 17 June 2008 - chair Mubin Haq
(Director of Policy & Grants, City Parochial Foundation)

"The consultation reached the unreachable. It was a happy process. I could see that communities wanted to take part and felt like they owned the process. As a facilitator and a participant I was excited by the consultation events and our role in the strategy."

Dr Anba Farhan-Ali MBE
Refugee activist, Director of Refugees into Jobs
member BRIL and MRAP

Given the very large scale and variety of the consultation response, this report cannot include them all and focuses instead on its main messages. Many respondents also offered very detailed feedback, advice and guidance on particular issues or approaches, including existing programmes of work that are examples of good practice, and personal testimonies illustrating the points being made. While they cannot all be set out here,

they are highly valued and will help guide the Mayor's work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the future.

Since the publication of the draft strategy, there have been major changes in the way this work is led by the Mayor and Board for Refugee Integration in London (BRIL). Boris Johnson, elected Mayor of London in May 2008, confirmed the agreement with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) that BRIL should expand its remit to include issues facing asylum seekers and migrants, and should be relaunched as the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) later in 2008.

This is a far-reaching shift, bringing on to the future agenda of the Mayor and his LSMP Board the settlement of London's very large population of migrants. They share some needs and experience with refugees and asylum seekers, but also raise new issues for the work of the Mayor and Partnership.

While the consultation did refer to other migrants, its focus remained on refugees and asylum seekers so this report keeps that focus. It covers each of the core themes tackled by the draft strategy, adding feedback on a range of other areas that generated particular interest during the consultation.

Methodology

A priority for the consultation was to hear the views of refugees and asylum seekers who would not normally get the opportunity to give their opinions on strategies that affect them. The majority of views were collected through a series of consultation events across London. They were arranged by organisations that work closely with refugees, with the Mayor's Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP) playing a crucial advisory and implementation role. Organisations and individuals were also encouraged to submit written feedback on the strategy, either through a questionnaire that was available on the website during the consultation period, or through a format of their own choice. The table below shows the number of responses received.

Some key points running through the consultation responses

Respondents:

- Broadly welcome and endorse the content of the consultation draft
- Value the consistent positive message from the Mayor and the Board in relation to refugees and asylum seekers, putting equality of opportunity at the heart of the integration process
- Welcome the broadening of the Mayor's agenda to include asylum seekers and migrants
- Value the GLA role, in partnership with other pan-London bodies, in sharing good practice and information
- Are concerned about a lack of 'hard data' and urge the Mayor to commission research and data collection to develop baseline information with regard to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in London and a more in-depth understanding of certain issues and groups
- Recognise the importance of participation of refugees – from individual, local level involvement through to higher level representation
- Urge the Mayor to identify additional resources and develop partnerships that will enable the successful implementation of the strategy.

Table 1: Overview of responses to the consultation

	Written feedback	Questionnaire	Total
Government	6		6
Local Authorities	4	10	15
Funders	4		4
Public Sector	13	6	19
Third Sector	7	11	18
Other Agencies	13	11	24
Refugee organisations/agencies	11	13	24
Individuals not linked to an organisation	6	2	8
EU		1	1
Sub-regional refugee events	7	1	8
Thematic events reports	8		8
Equalities and faith group reports	7		7
	86	55	142

Table 2: Overview of consultation events and meetings

	Special consultation events (a)	Other meetings (b)
Local Authorities	1	
Public Sector	1	4
Funders		1
Refugee organisations/agencies	1	
Sub-regional refugee events	9	
Other Third Sector	1	
Thematic events (c)	6	2
Equalities and faith group	8	1
Total	27	8

Notes:

- a. Event specially organised for consultation on refugee strategy
- b. Discussion of the draft strategy in planned organisations meetings
- c. Events organised by range of partners to discuss specific strategy core themes

Part 1 Emerging issues and areas

1.1 Asylum Seekers

The extension of the Mayor's remit to include asylum seekers was welcomed with enthusiasm by all respondents, many of whom have been calling for this inclusion for some time.

Key issues highlighted by respondents included:

- Detention
- Aspects of the asylum system forcing people into criminality
- The right to work
- Legal advice
- Access and entitlement to services particularly where policy prohibits access
- Poverty and destitution
- Transport costs
- The need to treat asylum seeking children, including unaccompanied minors, as children first, before any consideration of immigration status is made
- Homelessness, particularly for equalities groups and single adults, including hidden homelessness
- Destitute asylum seekers, with no access to public funding but not in a position to return home
- ESOL and the right to further or adult education
- The impact of the Border and Immigration Agency case resolution programme.

1.2 Migrants

The proposal for BRIL to develop into the 'London Strategic Migration Partnership' from April 2008 was welcomed with enthusiasm by respondents. While some recommended an immediate implementation of work with migrants, others advised more caution, pointing out that while there are some similarities with the agenda concerning refugees and asylum seekers, there are also important differences.

1.3 Equalities groups

Coverage of equalities groups was identified as weak in several areas of the draft strategy. In a move towards addressing this, the consultation process planned specifically targeted discussion with the following groups:

- Older refugees
- Disabled refugees
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender refugees (LGBT)
- Refugee women
- Children and young people
- Faith groups.

There was also some very helpful written feedback from the above groups and those supporting them, and from organisations advocating for people living with HIV & AIDS. Overall, the 'multiple marginalisation' of equalities groups was highlighted, compounding the issues that refugees face when trying to integrate. Greater awareness

and understanding within the mainstream was called for, as well as the need for specialist services to meet specific needs in some areas.

Overall, it was felt that not enough is known about how intersecting factors impact on people's experiences and needs, and how these can best be taken into account when planning and developing services and policies, and that more research in a range of areas would be helpful.

1.4 Information, Advice and Advocacy Services

Respondents pointed out that, while good information, advice and advocacy is important for all refugees, it is particularly important to people seeking asylum and those whose asylum claim has been rejected. Early access to advice, information and advocacy services is particularly important for certain equalities groups, particularly LGBT refugees and older refugees. The absence of proposals in relation to access to legal representation and legal aid in the strategy document were pointed out as a gap.

1.5 Central and Local Government initiatives

Many respondents raised the question about how the refugee integration strategy fits with the work of the central Government department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), particularly the recent work of the Commission for Integration and Cohesion, and how refugees can influence Local Area Agreements (LAA) and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP). The strategy needs to consider the overall strategic direction being adopted by central government and its implementation at a more local level – including regional, sub-regional, borough and neighbourhood level. It was felt by some respondents that the draft strategy neglects to recognise fully the role of local authorities.

A number of respondents felt that the Mayor's draft strategy would benefit from a sharper focus on community cohesion, addressing perceptions within existing settled communities about the allocation of resources. The negative portrayal of refugees and other migrant communities in the media in particular was felt to exacerbate negative perceptions. The complexity of community cohesion was recognised by respondents, who emphasised the need for the development of systems and structures that enable participation by refugees in social, political and economic life in communities.

Respondents stressed that it is important for the strategy to develop the means to access central and local funding opportunities to support integration initiatives.

1.6 Culture, Leisure and the Media

Feedback from the culture sector described a wealth of work that has been running for many years, much of it 'in an independent, self motivated, and sometimes, isolated context'. This opinion was supported by other respondents, recognising that, although culture and leisure contribute to well-being and integration of refugees, it is often unrecognised or under-resourced, which may be because it is not 'problem-based' and can be seen as non-essential.

The role of the **media** was raised in two ways:

- A source of information to people who are new to the country - the strategy could promote more creative means of using the media to assist refugees' integration and enable host communities to learn more about refugees
- Conveying impressions of refugees to the general public - the strategy needs to do more to challenge negative media stereotyping and promote positive images of refugees.

Access to the wider community, cultural and leisure opportunities that London offers was raised as a key issue. In particular, access to the transport network is key and transport costs, personal safety and perception of safety are all issues that were raised.

1.7 Environment

A link with the environmental justice agenda was highlighted, as it was pointed out that often the most disadvantaged groups live in some of the most environmentally poor places. The link to environmental change was also considered important, as evidence suggests that migration flows could increase considerably in the future as the climate changes due to global warming. It was recommended that this should link with the social and economic factors already identified in the strategy to form a more complete sustainable approach.

1.8 Education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Education was raised as an important issue. Respondents emphasised the need for education, beyond school age, for reasons other than employment, e.g. as a vehicle to achieving better health, better parenting and ultimately better overall integration.

ESOL was highlighted as, by far, the number one education issue. Contradictions in central Government messages on 'cohesion' were highlighted repeatedly by respondents. The move away from provision of interpreters and translated materials, at the same time as changing funding priorities thus reducing opportunities for some of the most vulnerable new arrivals to access English classes, were seen to be at odds with messages about the need for people to integrate. There was some very specific feedback given with regard to the complexities of accessing ESOL, highlighting both its importance and the difficulties that are posed to some people, particularly equalities groups, related to integration, settlement and citizenship requirements.

Concern was raised that the strategy made little mention of further and adult education.

Part 2 Theme chapters

Running throughout responses to all chapters were the following areas:

- The importance of thorough data collection
- The necessity to source adequate funding and resourcing to carry forward the actions
- The need for an action plan to outline priorities, time-frames and lead agencies for implementation
- The need to use plain English and explain terminology.

2.1 Housing (Chapter 5 in London Enriched)

The majority of respondents identified housing supply and the boroughs' role as priorities, with data identified by a significant number of respondents as a crucial gap.

There was emphasis on the need to include a range of issues and proposals specific to asylum seekers, with homelessness cited as a major problem for many people seeking asylum. Specific issues facing the equalities groups in 1.3 above were detailed, as were the issues facing asylum seekers mentioned in 1.1 above. Women experiencing domestic violence, who have no recourse to public funds, and women trafficked for sexual exploitation were also specifically mentioned.

In addition to refugee community organisations (RCO), faith-based groups were mentioned by a number of respondents as being crucial to the support of destitute, homeless asylum seekers.

Advice also featured highly in the responses on this chapter, particularly in relation to asylum seekers and refugees newly arriving in London (either from dispersal areas or other EU countries).

There was also considerable concern about negative feelings within host communities generated by media and politicians with regard to refugees and perceived favouritism in the social housing market.

Proposal 5A: Refugees and the Mayor's Housing Strategy

There was overall support for the actions in this proposal, with emphasis on continued refugee participation in the development of the Mayor's housing strategy.

Proposal 5B: Demonstration project – housing supply

While the concept of the New Migrant Demonstration Model was supported, there was concern from a large number of respondents that including it in the strategy could generate a message of 'special treatment' for refugees, enhancing the negative perception felt by many in the 'host community' of favourable treatment of asylum seekers.

Proposal 5C: London Co-ordination

There was widespread support for the development of a pan-London co-ordinating group and respondents welcomed further work on this proposed action.

Proposal 5D: Borough Role

Boroughs were seen as the gateway to housing for most refugees. Training and awareness-raising of housing workers was identified as a key need by most respondents, as was an awareness of rights and entitlements by refugees and asylum seekers and improved knowledge of the housing system amongst RCOs and other organisations giving housing advice or sign posting.

Respondents also supported the 'package' approach to tenancies and borough level refugee participation in decision-making.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)¹ schemes were generally considered to be difficult to understand and access. However, some examples of good practice were cited and it was recommended that learning be shared across London. The Capital Moves² initiative was supported by several respondents.

Proposal 5E: Partnership – mainstream providers and refugee groups

This proposal was given widespread support. Many respondents felt that it should include partnership with other Registered Social Landlords as well as Housing Associations³ and training and awareness raising with all these partners was stressed.

It was recommended that the Mayor should try to influence the G15, a group made up of 15 of the largest Housing Associations, to take forward the recommended actions.

2.2 Employment, Training and Enterprise (Chapter 6 in London Enriched)

As with other chapters, the proposed actions received overall endorsement. The long term nature of the process of moving from the point of first seeking asylum to a position of being in secure employment was emphasised by many, linked to a call for longer-term funding to back employment initiatives if they are to be sustainable. This combined with a call to give asylum seekers the right to work, which would shorten periods of unemployment and considerably speed up integration.

Key points:

- The need for capacity building of small organisations
- The opportunities offered by the recent development of the London Skills and Employment Board (LSEB), with close links to the Learning and Skills Council as a key partner
- Trade unions should be brought into the work of the strategy and BRIL, particularly Southern and Eastern Trade Union Congress (SERTUC)
- The need to continue to support provision of ESOL and to maintain pressure on ESOL providers not to reduce provision
- Concern that the chapter was very much focused on employment-related training and the strategy, with the absence of an education chapter, gives little scope to explore the promotion of education as a tool for integration in itself.

Proposal 6A: ETE maps: find your way

¹ A lettings arrangement giving applicants for social housing greater choice and freedom to move by enabling them to 'bid' for properties in their own, and other, local authorities

² The Capital Moves concept is to develop a pan-London choice based lettings and mobility scheme

³ All Registered Social Landlords (RSL) are not for profit organisations registered with the Housing Corporation. Some are known as Housing Associations but others use different terms, e.g. Housing Trust. Not all Housing Associations are registered.

The proposal to develop a process to enable refugees to move into meaningful employment at the earliest possible opportunity was welcomed and considered a high priority for many respondents.

Key points – respondents expressed a need:

- For flexible services offering a realistic number of support hours
- To link any employment-focused initiative into support programmes addressing other areas of need
- For quality information, advice and guidance, with improved referral systems
- For effective partnerships between the public sector and other stakeholders
- To build initiatives into existing programmes
- For training and standards-setting of advisors
- To ensure smaller, refugee led agencies providing employment services are not pushed out of the sector by the popularity of commissioning and other funding systems that favour larger organisations
- To recognise the potential of RCOs to support larger agencies by training staff on refugee issues.

Proposal 6B: Employer role

There was widespread support for initiatives with employers, to promote increased employment of refugees and greater understanding between refugees and employers. Most respondents endorsed the work placement programme proposal.

Respondents recommended:

- The development of information about the contribution that refugees can make to the work force
- Initiatives to promote positive images
- That proposals do not focus only on professionals, but provide opportunities for all levels of potential employees
- The need to offer incentives to employers, to make the employment of refugees an attractive option
- Clarification of the legal position of employers wanting to directly target refugees in positive recruitment campaigns.

Proposal 6C: Skills

Respondents felt that the role of the refugee community sector should be strengthened to provide skills training (including ESOL). Many respondents agreed with the proposal to explore ways to speed up the processes of accreditation and recognition of qualifications from abroad – enabling the process to start at the point of arrival would make refugees job-ready much more quickly upon receiving a positive decision. Many urged the development of centres or co-ordinated work beyond the one proposed for health professionals, which received widespread endorsement.

Several respondents pointed out that volunteering was missing from the chapter and should be built into the proposals.

Proposal 6D: Enterprise: business start-up

Enterprise was recognised as an important option that refugees may want to take in their search for employment and the proposals were broadly endorsed.

Key points:

- Enterprise development can pose additional risks for people such as refugees, who often have fewer social and economic networks and less financial security than other people – risk reduction is therefore needed
- Include recommended actions around social enterprise, particularly ‘green enterprise’, and self-employment
- LSEB may be able to find business members who can support the development of work in this section, for both business start-up and sustainability
- A Refugee Business Forum could be set up, led by refugees who have been successful in business, social enterprise and self-employment.

Proposal 6E: Informal Sector: pathways to the mainstream

Key points:

- The central government policy to exclude most asylum seekers from the right to work is the key factor in the encouragement of working in the informal sector
- Further research is needed
- The benefits system doesn’t give incentive to move off benefits and into low paid work and refugees may have less knowledge of benefits such as tax credit, designed to support people on low income
- Housing costs are also likely to be a strong influencing factor for those who have not been able to access social housing and are living in expensive private rented accommodation
- The pilot scheme suggested in this section would be well placed within the refugee sector, where there may be a greater degree of trust.

2.3 Health (Chapter 7 in London Enriched)

There was overall support from respondents for the proposals in the strategy, with proposal 7D, Rights, Entitlement and Access to Services, being identified by almost all respondents as the priority.

Key points:

- The idea of ‘polyclinics’, or one-stop-shops, bringing together a range of services under one roof, was suggested
- With the widened remit of the Mayor and BRIL, there needs to be re-wording of the strategy to strengthen the response to the issues facing asylum seekers. In particular, the policy position of the Mayor concerning access to free health care needs to be asserted strongly
- There needs to be greater awareness of difference within the refugee community and not to treat refugees as a homogenous group
- Mental health, drug and alcohol use and sexual health services, in particular, need to be more culturally aware, taking into account equalities groups, and greater partnership between refugee communities and statutory services is needed to make this happen.

Proposal 7A: Refugees and the Mayor’s Health Inequalities Strategy

Respondents all welcomed the link to the Mayor’s health inequalities strategy and were clear about the need to formally add refugee issues to high-level strategic development for health.

Recommendations made included awareness raising with commissioners about refugee health issues; formalising standards of care provision and early health needs assessment; and building work with refugees into the Local Area Agreement process. There was a call for a comprehensive needs assessment of refugee health in London, to form a baseline of needs from which to develop service provision.

Proposal 7B: Participation

There was a recommendation that participation needs to come out more strongly in the chapter and the impact of overall powerlessness in society upon mental and physical health and well-being needs to be acknowledged. There was particularly strong support for a forum enabling grass roots practitioners and refugee representatives to feed key issues into decision-making processes on health.

Proposal 7C: Evidence

Most respondents supported a call for more evidence, particularly a baseline survey of refugee health needs, to be followed up periodically. The proposal to work with the London Health Observatory was supported, with the encouragement of a multi-agency approach and greater involvement of PCTs.

Proposal 7D: Rights, entitlement and access to services

This proposal received almost universal support as the number one priority for the work of the Mayor with regard to refugee health. There was overwhelming support from respondents for the right to health services for all asylum seekers, including refused asylum seekers and refugees.

Failure to access health care early on can damage long-term health and is impeded by several factors, including demands made on refugees to produce papers, which they often don't have and which are not necessary, when registering with a GP and refugees and health service providers' lack of awareness of refugee and asylum seeker rights to access services

Language:

- Interpretation, advocacy and other language services are crucial to access
- The right to an interpreter needs to be made clear, both to refugees and to service providers; sensitive and complex issues need a very high level of English and interpreters will continue to be needed
- More training of people who are fluent in community languages to work in health is needed
- Encouragement of health service providers to make double appointments to give time for interpretation to be done effectively.

It was felt that there is an under-use of refugee health professionals; if work can be done to make re-qualification quicker, this will assist reduction of unemployment and underemployment

Health promotion

Key messages:

- There is a role for RCOs in appropriately developed and targeted health promotion activities

- It is important to challenge common myths – e.g. ‘health tourism’; blaming refugees and asylum seekers for illnesses like TB. The link between high forced mobility and missing preventive services such as smears and immunisation was highlighted
- There was a call for a central, on-line bank of translated health advice materials – libraries were suggested as places that can be used as centres of information as well as places to meet.

A range of additional issues or points were added, including promotion of access to healthy food, exercise and leisure schemes; tools to assist access to social care; co-ordination of information; telephone and web-based support services; free and confidential screening for HIV and a comprehensive, community based TB screening service; existing health promotion activities to be culturally adapted, e.g. alcohol misuse, diabetes, obesity, smoking and heart problems; Female Genital Mutilation (FGM); work specific to quat/khat⁴ use and focused work with parents.

Proposal 7E: Mental Health

Respondents supported this proposal, but many felt that it needed more detail. The suggestion of the use of different methods to address mental health issues was welcomed and a range of ideas were put forward, including:

- More joint working between and within health services, local authorities and voluntary organisations
- Access to arts and leisure opportunities
- Self-help groups, outreach mental health services and art therapy
- Recognising underlying causes of mental ill health and implementing preventive measures
- Mental health professionals need to be more aware of refugee issues
- Mentoring and volunteering as a way to tackle mental health issues
- Faith organisations are used by many refugees, who can gain both spiritual and practical support from them
- Educational opportunities and their link to health and well-being.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) services are important, but not the only mental health solution. More local availability of these services would be welcome.

It was suggested that the following issues are specifically mentioned in the strategy:

- Stronger emphasis on culture and gender differences
- Breaking down stigma
- Impact of loss of male role model, particularly on boys
- Self-harm and suicide
- The physical impact of mental health problems.

⁴ Khat is a stimulant drug, popular mainly amongst men from the Horn of Africa. It is not normally addictive and is not a controlled substance in the UK, although it is in several other European countries. It has a wide range of negative side effects, including mild depression, susceptibility to ulcers, poor concentration, diminished sex drive, lethargy and an impact on liver function

Some respondents raised concerns about refugees with mental health issues in detention.

2.4 Community Safety Chapter (Chapter 8 in London Enriched)

As with other chapters, the Community Safety chapter was endorsed by the majority of respondents.

Key points:

- The chapter was too heavily focused on the police - community safety depends on other partners too - rather than focus purely on crime and disorder, the chapter could include a broader safety agenda
- A need to include issues of detention in the strategy
- The asylum system can force people into criminality from the point of arrival - removing the right to work from asylum seekers and other migrants can force them into the informal economy/illegal working and increase susceptibility to the crimes of exploitation
- Poor legal advice can be an underlying cause of a range of community safety issues as it can prolong asylum seekers' life 'in limbo'
- The role of the media in perpetuating anti-refugee messages.

Proposal 8A: Local relationships; communities and the Metropolitan Police Service

A number of respondents expressed a need to broaden local relationships beyond MPS to include local authorities and other agencies more explicitly.

Key issues:

- The need for more refugee recruitment beyond the level of 'community policing' and volunteering
- Developing working relationships, sharing information and building trust between the police and communities, including young people
- The concept of third party reporting⁵ was supported by most respondents, although some hadn't heard of it
- Training of workers should be extended to hospital staff, social workers and other 'front-line' staff and emergency service workers.

Proposal 8B: Reducing local tension, building solidarity

A number of respondents stressed the need to make this section more 'two-way', as it is currently heavily focused on the refugee sector but cannot be achieved without the 'buy in' of local communities. Techniques recommended included conflict resolution, tackling anti-social behaviour early, provision of clear and comprehensive information, use of the arts and culture and mentoring programmes and a public education strategy.

Proposal 8C: Tackling anti-asylum hate crime

A broader range of partner agencies were identified including RCO's, advocacy and rights organisations and others giving direct support to refugees and asylum seekers. It was also suggested that the recently commissioned work by the MPA and GLA to examine why victims and witnesses from migrant communities fail to report crime to police, should be specifically mentioned in this section.

⁵ Third party reporting offers the opportunity for crime to be reported through organisations other than the police, e.g. community organisations.

Proposal 8D: Immigration enforcement and community confidence

While most respondents agreed that serious criminals need to be removed from communities in order to ensure the safety of the majority, concern was expressed that the definitions of 'serious crime' and 'harm' are not agreed between different agencies. This needs to be resolved and the definition(s) made clear, even if agencies 'agree to differ' and develop means to work around this.

Additional concerns included support to families of criminals; people leaving the criminal justice system and returning to the community in the UK; trafficking; petty crimes resulting in periods in detention. Concern was expressed about refugees and asylum seekers being badly treated during enforcement action and it was suggested that methods of formally and safely reporting these incidents be developed. Nighttime raids were reported as having a particularly harsh effect upon children.

The role of RCOs and other community organisations in the collation of evidence at local level was emphasised.

Proposal 8E: Equalities and community safety

This section was considered to be very limited and in need of expansion.

Key points:

- Agreement with the principle of focusing on the rights of the survivor of violence and abuse
- Suggested expansion of the 'domestic violence' section to 'gender violence'
- More work specifically with women in communities recommended
- Female genital mutilation should not be ignored
- Victims of domestic violence with no recourse to public funds are particularly vulnerable - further research was requested in this area
- Susceptibility to elder abuse, particularly for older refugees with no recourse to public funds
- Older refugees experiencing fear on public transport and fear of going out – a call to do more on active prevention and campaigns
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) refugees and asylum seekers face particular safety issues and a range of recommendations were made
- Disabled refugees reported very low representation in mainstream RCOs and suggested the need for specialist disabled refugee organisations
- Young refugees in unsuitable foster care arrangements may put themselves at risk if they leave without anywhere to go. Young people turning 18, who have a negative asylum decision, may go 'underground'.

Proposal 8F: Refugee Offenders

Concern was expressed that the title of this proposal encouraged people's perception of an automatic link between refugees and criminality. Changing the title to 'refugees in the criminal justice system' was suggested. Some respondents shared positive feedback from service users about the experience that they had with the probation services and suggested this may be an area where learning from good practice can take place.

2.5 Young Refugees (Chapter 9 in London Enriched)

Almost all respondents expressed support of the decision to place the proposed actions within this chapter within the Every Child Matters (ECM) Framework, emphasising the

need to treat refugee and asylum seeking children as children first, before any consideration of immigration status is made. Many respondents cited the need for the Mayor to maintain a policy message to Government to remove the Reservation on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which allows immigration status to take precedence over children's law in some cases.

With the expansion of the Mayor's remit to include asylum seekers, it was felt that the absence of a strong proposal around advice was a key omission. It was also felt that there should be more work to celebrate the positive contribution of young refugees. Several respondents fed back that the specific needs of certain equalities groups, particularly young lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender (LGBT) refugees and disabled young refugees need to be included in the implementation of the proposals.

Proposal 9A: Aligning Policy

The majority of respondents felt that young refugees should not be treated any differently from other young people. A range of additional policy areas were suggested, given the Mayor's expanded remit, including issues such as detention, children leaving care and children in care, access to school places, the right to education and access to solicitors and legal aid.

Many respondents supported the need for the GLA to work closely with Government Office for London (GOL).

Proposal 9B: Be healthy

There was broad support for this proposal by respondents and the health issues of children and young people also featured strongly in responses to the health chapter (chapter 7).

Key points:

- Broader determinants of health, particularly the impact of high forced mobility experienced and the impact of long periods of time without a school place
- The insecurity of waiting for an asylum decision upon mental health
- The impact of other aspects of the asylum process, such as immigration enforcement measures ('dawn raids') and detention
- 'One stop shop' style services were identified as popular, not only for health issues but broader service provision such as advice and guidance
- Affordability and accessibility of leisure services – not only costs to pay for the services themselves, but also transport costs
- Peer support and volunteering was supported, with an additional suggestion of more cross-generational working.

Proposal 9C: Stay Safe

The potential exploitation of young refugees was a concern for many respondents, who felt that more understanding and knowledge of this issue is needed, combined with the development of work to address it.

Many respondents, particularly at community level, expressed concern about lack of understanding of 'young people', fear of gangs and worries that families are becoming separated by generational tensions. The need for greater understanding between the generations was repeated in many contexts, as was the need for more things for young

people to do. Partnership work with local police was highlighted as vital to achieve this proposal.

Proposal 9D: Enjoy and Achieve

Key points:

- Access to School is a priority
- The positive role of refugee advisory teams in some boroughs – a call to share good practice
- More joint working between refugee community organisations running supplementary schools, homework clubs etc and mainstream schools, and inclusion of mother tongue schools and faith organisations
- Joint English language classes for parents and children – the opportunity to discuss cultural differences and enhance parents’ understanding of the British school system and other issues
- Citizenship classes in schools to include awareness of refugee issues
- Access to further and higher education, access to ESOL and access to vocational training are important
- Support for the proposal to enhance cultural opportunities, with an emphasis that access includes transport issues
- The proposal to take forward further research on issues facing disabled children and children with learning difficulties was supported.

Several respondents felt that there is an omission of an employment-related proposal here. Also linking to the ETE chapter, several respondents expressed a need for greater representation from refugee communities within teaching staff in schools and amongst school governors.

Proposal 9E: Make a positive contribution

Existing organisations that support young refugees, many of which have a very strong participation focus, were seen as very positive and something to be built on and developed.

Key points:

- Facilitating links with MP’s and councillors
- Promoting the positive contribution of young refugees
- Targeted work to promote young refugees’ participation, and possible employment, in the media
- Capacity building of RCOs and awareness-raising among their members around how to work with young refugees.

2.6 Community Development, participation and Funding (Chapter 10 in London Enriched)

There was considerable debate around this chapter – funding and resources dominated much of the discussion, needed to successfully implement the recommendations. There was overall support for the inclusion of both asylum seeker issues and the wider migration agenda in the work of the Mayor.

Funding

The work currently being undertaken with the London Funders group was seen as positive and the Mayor's capacity to act as a conduit between refugees and funding bodies is valued. It was suggested that a role as a BRIL board member for a representative of London's independent funding bodies would assist this development.

Concern about the increasing popularity of commissioning over grant-giving was heavily emphasised. Respondents also stressed the need for the strategy to explore new Government initiatives, e.g. the cohesion work of the CLG and the London Youth Offer. Support was expressed with regard to the strategy's emphasis on the need for longer-term funding.

Faith Groups and small, non-refugee-led community groups

It was pointed out that organisations that are not necessarily refugee-led, but often support many refugees at a local level, are missing from the strategy. This includes faith groups and local community groups. The use of the term 'third sector' was seen to be more inclusive by some respondents, as it covers groups such as faith groups, where some of the other terminology doesn't.

Equalities

It was pointed out that the heterogeneity of the refugee community needs to be much more clear in the strategy as 'generic' RCOs currently do not always have the capacity to meet the needs of specific groups, for example LGBT refugees, disabled refugees, refugee women, children and young people and refugees who have been through a particular experience (e.g. rape).

Communication

A website was suggested as a good way of enabling refugees, RCOs, fora and sub-regional or 2nd tier bodies to share information and have a central focal point

The Olympics

Several respondents expressed the opportunity that the Olympics presented to develop cross-cultural awareness and enhance refugee integration in London, particularly East London.

Issues of central and local government policy, e.g. on cohesion, were discussed at some length, as detailed in section 1.5 above.

Feedback on the options in chapter ten

Community development organisational structures

The following summarises feedback on each of the options in the strategy as they appear in chapter 10. There was overall agreement that a clear line of communication between the Mayor and London's refugees is definitely needed. Respect for the Mayor as a champion of refugee rights was reflected in many meetings and responses.

A. Sub-regional hub structures

The idea of the development of sub-regional hubs received, overall, a cautious welcome. They were not seen as a number one priority for the early stages of the strategy implementation and need further exploration, including their own funding strategy. Guidance on the roles of sub-regional hubs and fora, giving their strategic direction, would be needed.

B. Borough refugee fora

It was emphasised by the majority of respondents that many borough fora exist already, although some are strong and others are in name only, with variations in-between, and existing forum structures should be built on, not duplicated. Support of refugee fora at borough⁶ level was seen as an early priority, to strengthen the sector.

It was suggested that research should take place to establish why some fora are successful and others not, to agree a shared definition and role for fora, to identify funding sources and partners and to explore the potential of fora sitting within local CVS or other structures.

It was felt that resources should be directed towards refugees being actors in their own community development – strengthening the voice and capacity to participate rather than developing separate structures. Most respondents felt that fora need to be refugee-led and representative and need to be assisted to access and have an open and equal dialogue with the mainstream.

C. RCO Specialisation

Most respondents agree that RCOs are instrumental in offering holistic, front-line services, particularly when people first arrive. While specialisation offers a good opportunity for mutual learning and better links to mainstream specialists, it needs to be approached cautiously. It was also felt that improved referral systems and signposting, and more partnership work with mainstream, might be more effective solutions. Some respondents felt that mapping of specialist needs should happen first so specialisation is well planned. It was suggested that as part of the proposed baseline survey of refugees, inclusion of mapping of specialist services may be useful.

D. Second Tier Bodies

Concerns about second tier bodies were similar to those expressed about sub-regional hubs and, as mentioned, there was some confusion about how the two would differ, complement each other, and not duplicate services. It was agreed that second tier bodies can provide stability in a sector where many RCOs change and come and go. Further development of second tier bodies needs to be done in close consultation with wider voluntary and community sector and other organisations that provide support to refugees and RCOs and linked to any work on sub-regional hubs.

E. Generic London Agencies

There was widespread support for the suggestion to improve co-ordination between generic or mainstream and refugee organisations and it was generally agreed that better, more open communication would be mutually beneficial.

F. Small Grants Funding

Responses to the suggested London small grants fund link very closely to the comments in the funding section above. Small grants were seen as helpful for specific projects that small groups may want to undertake and they can be particularly useful to promote activities with host communities. However, it was felt by most that, if there is additional funding, small grants might not be the priority, as they can't substitute core funding,

⁶ In some areas, where there are fewer refugees, a forum that combines more than one borough may be advisable, e.g. outer south-west London

which was generally seen as the main priority. There was general support for the idea of multi-agency local funding panels.

G. EU match funding process

There was widespread support for the idea of developing a co-ordinated system to improve match-funding opportunities for European funding. Continuation of an ESF co-financing programme with a specific refugee strand was agreed as important.

H. Refugee Participation

The suggestion to develop a programme to enhance refugees' participation in governance received widespread support but the need for resources was highlighted. Many respondents fed back that awareness of voting rights for refugees is important and missing in the strategy - an awareness campaign was recommended.

The need to look at refugee involvement at more local levels – e.g. in the wider voluntary sector, public bodies etc – was also supported and a wide range of initiatives were given, demonstrating the need for the development of co-ordinated work in this area.

I. Representation

There was general support for the development of more formal, pan-London representation, but it was an area where many notes of caution were raised, to ensure transparency and inclusion.

Part 3 Monitoring and evaluation – key issues

Most respondents highlighted data collection as crucial. It is seen as vital to developing an argument for funding allocations, for targeting services appropriately and for making a case for dedicated work with a 'minority group'.

Concern was expressed that refugees are under-recorded on Census forms and the ONS population estimates, leading to under-estimation, under-funding and a lack of understanding of refugees' complex needs. In the context of Local Area Agreements, the absence of baseline data would make it difficult to include refugee integration targets into local plans and strategies.

Most respondents also acknowledged the difficulties faced in trying to develop a comprehensive framework for data collection and a range of suggestions were made with regard to both the collection of 'hard evidence' plus the issue of gathering qualitative information to influence monitoring and evaluation of refugee integration work.

Respondents welcomed the suggestion that a regular survey of refugees in London be carried out and the need to carry the first survey out as soon as possible was highlighted, in order to establish baseline information.

A number of local authorities responding to the draft strategy welcomed the opportunity to share cross-borough learning on good practice and successes. This also extended to non-statutory agencies, many of which carry out in-depth analysis and evaluation of their work that could assist to develop a 'London picture' of refugee integration.

Several organizations also offered to share expertise they have developed in constructing data-collection systems or to assist implementation of data collection once a London-wide system has been developed.

It was pointed out that organisations such as London boroughs and primary care trusts could benefit from the survey findings, which should provide them with more reliable information on the number and demographics of the population that they serve. This information could help them press central government for fairer funding allocations. It was therefore recommended that these organisations should be invited to be involved in the survey's development, perhaps through NHS London and London Councils.

Thanks

Special thanks to the following organisations for their support in organising events: Arts Council, Barnet Refugee Forum, Board for Refugee Integration in London, Brent Refugee Forum and LB Brent, BRIL link bodies, BRIL steering group, Crossroads Women's Centre and All Africa Women's Group, EASI, PRESTO and RAISE, Evelyn Oldfield Unit, Faiths Forum for London, Hammersmith and Fulham Refugee Forum, Hope Project, Islington Refugee Integration Service/LB Islington, London Funders, London Housing Federation, London Refugee Economic Action (LORECA) Stakeholder Group, London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC), Mayor's Refugee Advisory Panel, Migrant and Refugee Communities Forum, Migrant Resource Centre, Praxis, Refugee and Migrant Forum for East London (RAMFEL) and LB Redbridge, Refugee Council, Refugee Health Team Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham, Refugee Women's Association, Refugees in Effective Partnership (REAP), Refugees Into Jobs, Refugee Youth, South West London Refugee Alliance, Southwark Refugee Communities Forum and LB Southwark, UKLGIG, UNISON (Brixton), West London Refugee Women's Forum

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Chinese

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Vietnamese

Nếu bạn muốn có văn bản tài liệu này bằng ngôn ngữ của mình, hãy liên hệ theo số điện thoại hoặc địa chỉ dưới đây.

Greek

Αν θέλετε να αποκτήσετε αντίγραφο του παρόντος εγγράφου στη δική σας γλώσσα, παρακαλείστε να επικοινωνήσετε τηλεφωνικά στον αριθμό αυτό ή ταχυδρομικά στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bu belgenin kendi dilinizde hazırlanmış bir nüshasını edinmek için, lütfen aşağıdaki telefon numarasını arayınız veya adrese başvurunuz.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नंबर पर फोन करें अथवा नीचे दिये गये पते पर संपर्क करें

Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি (কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دئے گئے نمبر پر فون کریں یا دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ کریں

Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو مراسلة العنوان أدناه

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.