

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN THE LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL LONDON NORTH AREA



“U.K. is a good place, but with no English it is difficult to do daily activities like shopping”

A Study by Africa Educational Trust

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Executive Summary

This study was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council London North (boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest). The purpose of the study was to map out the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers living in the LSC London North area, establish the issues that they face and the priority areas for service improvement.

The main findings of the study are as follows:

Background

- The five largest refugee and asylum seeker communities (represented by an RCO) in the boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Waltham Forest are the Turkish, Kurdish, Tamil, Somali and Zairean Congolese communities.
- There are between 58,000 and 72,000 refugees and asylum seekers living in the LSC London North boroughs.
- Many refugees and asylum seekers in the four boroughs are living in already deprived areas.

Education and training

- There is a need for more ESOL provision in the four boroughs.
- ESOL classes need to be more practical and should be more appropriate to the level of the students.
- Many people wanted classes to help them understand British culture and the roles and responsibilities of service providers.
- Most refugees and asylum seekers were unwilling or unable to travel outside their locality to attend education or training.
- Many of those at the focus groups relied on their RCO for ESOL as they felt that the classes run by RCOs were more suited to their needs. Many also lacked the confidence to access other training providers.
- 82% of the refugees and asylum seekers interviewed had completed secondary school education or above. 12% had completed university.
- 2% were at university when they fled their home country.
- 72% of those interviewed had undertaken education or training in the UK.
- Accessing education and training differed significantly between communities. Somalis for example, were more likely to have undertaken education or training than those from the Zairean Congolese or Turkish communities.
- ESOL was the highest-level course that 38% of the respondents had taken in the UK.
- Immigration status affects access to education and training in north London. Asylum seekers are less likely to undertake education or training than those with refugee status, at all levels except ESOL. Age also affected the likelihood of accessing education or training in the UK.

Employment

- 76% of those who had worked in the UK had accessed education or training in the UK.
- 54% of the interview respondents had worked in their home country (this does not include those working in subsistence agriculture).
- 53% of the interview respondents had worked in the UK. There were large variations in the different communities. 65% of Somalis had worked in the UK compared to 28% of Kurds.
- The overall level of employment in the UK was lower than in their home country. A higher proportion were working in semi-skilled or manual employment in the UK than in their home country.
- Immigration status affected the likelihood of working in the UK. 77% of those with residency and 55% of those with refugee status had worked in the UK compared with only 30% of asylum seekers.

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- In general, time spent in the UK influenced the likelihood of working. Time spent also influenced the level of employment achieved. The numbers accessing skilled employment increased after five years in the UK. There was also a steady increase in those accessing semi-skilled and manual employment.
- Language skills also affect the chances of employment. 83% of those who had worked in the UK had English skills at intermediate level or above.
- Level of education also affected the likelihood of finding employment. 88% of those who had worked in the UK had completed secondary school or above.

Access to services

- Service provider networks have helped the co-ordination of information in North London to some extent. However, many refugees and asylum seekers were still unaware of many of the services available to them.
- The vast majority of refugees and asylum seekers in the four boroughs rely on their RCO for information and advice. Many were unaware of other service providers and did not have the confidence to access their services.
- The standard of interpreters provided by local authorities was heavily criticised at the focus groups.
- RCOs were considered by refugees and asylum seekers to be the most helpful service providers. The Refugee Arrivals Project, Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture and the Citizen's Advice Bureau were also praised. The Home Office, NASS, local authorities and job centres were criticised heavily.
- Service providers, including several of those specialising in services for refugees and asylum seekers, were unable to estimate the number of refugees and asylum seekers in their borough and many did not know where they came from.
- In general, refugees and asylum seekers in the four boroughs are living in areas that are already deprived and in poor quality and inappropriate accommodation.
- Many refugees and asylum seekers in the four boroughs had experienced difficulties registering with a GP. The outreach health worker project in Waltham Forest was praised.

Integration

- There is currently very little opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to meet British people in a social setting. Of the 138 focus group participants, only four knew British people they would consider to be their friends.
- Many focus group participants wanted classes to help them understand British culture and the roles and responsibilities of service providers such as the police and local authorities.
- Waiting for a decision on an asylum application was considered to be the most psychologically distressing experience people had in the UK. This was considered to be the major difference between those with refugee status and those who were asylum seekers. Asylum seekers found it extremely difficult to consider integration in the UK.
- Language was the main barrier to integration identified by those with refugee status.
- Younger refugees and asylum seekers found it easier to integrate and make friends than older people. A number of people felt that this was causing problems within the family.

Introduction

Background of the study

This study was commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council London North (boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest). The purpose of the study was to map out the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers living in the LSC London North area, establish the issues that they face and the priority areas for service improvement.

Proposed changes in legislation:

The Government White Paper, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven' on asylum, migration and citizenship was published in February 2002. This is the fourth attempt in less than ten years to reform asylum legislation in the UK. It is expected that the new bill on asylum will be passed by Parliament in November 2002 although aspects of it do not require primary legislation and this may mean earlier implementation. The intended reforms will affect all new arrivals and will influence every aspect of the asylum process. The new system for arrivals will be based on induction, accommodation and reporting centres. Vouchers will be replaced by cash but support levels will continue to be at least 30% below current income support levels. Unaccompanied minors will continue to be cared for under the 1989 Children's Act.

The project objectives were as follows:

- To establish the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers residing in the LSC London North area with borough estimates for the main communities.
- To produce maps which locate where in each borough the main refugee and asylum seekers communities are residing.
- To establish the range of qualifications that refugees and asylum seekers in the LSC London North area possess and their experiences of having them recognised in the UK.
- To ascertain the main barriers that refugees and asylum seekers face in the UK, including access to education and training and other key services such as health and accommodation.
- To draw out positive and negative case studies and establish the key factors of success and failure especially with regards to accessing education, training and employment.

The Africa Educational Trust (AET) was commissioned to carry out the study during a three and a half month period from January to May 2002. The work involved conducting interviews with three hundred and fifty six refugees and asylum seekers from the five main refugee and asylum seeker communities in the London North area. Focus group meetings were held with one hundred and thirty eight refugees and asylum seekers from seventeen different communities living in Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest. Discussions and interviews were conducted with a wide range of service providers from all four of the LSC London North boroughs, including refugee organisations, community groups, council representatives, training providers and colleges and other voluntary organisations. Literature and materials concerning the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and in particular those living in London was reviewed.

Structure of report

This report is based on the findings of the 356 interviews with refugees and asylum seekers, the twelve focus groups with 138 participants, interviews with service providers and desk research.

Section One covers the methodology of the study, background information on refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and estimates of the number of refugees and asylum seekers living in the LSC London North area.

Section Two reports on the findings of the 356 community interviews with respondents from the five main refugee and asylum seeker communities in the area. Particular emphasis is placed upon education, training and employment.

Section Three reports on the findings of the twelve focus group discussions. The focus groups involved discussion of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and their experiences in accessing key services such as education, training, employment, accommodation and health.

Section Four covers the findings of the interviews with a range of service providers from the four LSC London North boroughs.

Section Five gives recommendations on priority areas for service improvement.

1.1 Definitions

The study was commissioned to advise on the needs and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers living within the LSC London North boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest. The study aimed to map out the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in the LSC London North area, establish the issues that they face and the priority areas for service improvement. It was stated that a clear distinction should be made between those who were 'refugees' and those who were 'asylum seekers'. In order to conduct the study it was therefore necessary to first define what was meant or implied by each term.

In this study, the term 'refugee' applies to a person who, having applied for asylum has been given 'recognised refugee' status, 'Exceptional Leave to Remain' in the UK or 'Indefinite Leave to Remain' in the UK¹.

The term 'asylum seeker' will be used in this study to refer to those people who have applied for asylum and whose applications are under consideration or those who have received a refusal decision but have not yet returned to their home country.

It should also be noted that far from being a homogenous group, asylum seekers are likely to have had very different experiences in the UK depending on when and where they made their application for asylum. This is due to changes in legislation during the past decade which have meant that some asylum seekers are able to access certain entitlements whilst others are not. Table 1 shows the main categories of refugees and asylum seekers currently living in the UK.

Table 1. Main categories of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

- Those who have been given 'recognised refugee' status, ILR or ELR.
- Pre-July 2000 in country applicants awaiting decision.
- Pre- April 2000 at port applicants awaiting decision.
- Unaccompanied children (under 18).
- Asylum seekers applying since 3rd April (at port) or 24th July 2000 (in-country).
- Those whose cases have been rejected and are appealing.
- Those who have been rejected and have exhausted all their appeals.

Table 2 shows what each main category of refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to in the UK.

Category:

Entitled to:	Refugee, ELR,ILR	Pre-July 2000 in country applicants awaiting decision	Pre- April 2000 at port applicants awaiting decision	Asylum seekers applying since 3rd April (at port) or 24th July 2000 (in-country)	Those whose cases have been rejected and are appealing	Those who have been rejected and have exhausted all their appeals	Unaccompanied children (under 18)
NHS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Early years provision	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
School (5–16)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Further Education Grants/loans	As Home Student	Overseas Student rate in theory but presently concessionary fees for part time students on welfare benefits/vouchers. Those applying under NASS have free access to ESOL but no access to government funded training schemes				No	N/A
Higher education fees	As Home Student (after 3 years for ELR)	Overseas Student rate	Overseas Student rate	Overseas Student rate	Overseas Student rate	No	N/A
Permission to work	Yes and early entry to New Deal for those with basic skills	Can apply for work after six months (often only granted to principle applicant). Can undertake voluntary work during first six months				No	N/A
Welfare Benefits	Yes	Vouchers for single people and couples or Child Support Act	90% of income support, 100% housing and council tax benefit only	Vouchers and £10 per person per week	'Disbenefited' - NASS assumes responsibility	No	No Responsibility of London borough social services departments under the Children's Act and entitled to benefits on leaving care
Social housing	Yes (in theory permanent housing)	Temporary accom. under Interim Arrangements scheme	Temporary accom. under Housing Act 1996	Temporary accom. Very rarely available in London	Can be dispersed by NASS. Exceptions are those with school age children - allowed to remain in existing accom. In-country applicants remain the responsibility of London boroughs	No	Yes – under Children's Act
Social services	Yes	Yes	Yes	In general *	Yes	No	No
Family Reunion	Yes (after 4 years ELR)	No	No	No	No	No	No

*Asylum seekers excluded from National Assistance Act and Children's Act provision where need is based solely on destitution and excluded from some community care services.

One full time researcher and one part time researcher carried out the study, from mid-January until May 2002. The study encompassed both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

1.2 Desk research

Literature and materials regarding refugees and asylum seekers in the UK was collated. In particular, information was sought on issues of education, training and employment as well as health, accommodation and integration. The desk research involved surveying all relevant published sources as well as asking all those contacted if they were aware of any additional materials, or if their organisation had conducted a study of its own which might be relevant. Sources included reports, books, journal articles, internet sources and 'official' data. A bibliography of literature referred to in this study is detailed in Annex 1.

1.3 Establishment of the largest refugee and asylum seeker communities

Part of the study involved identifying the main refugee and asylum seeker communities living in the four LSC London North boroughs. Part of the desk research involved identifying all refugee community organisations (RCOs), based in the LSC London North boroughs. A list of these RCOs was drawn up by AET and cross checked with relevant organisations including the Learning and Skills Council London North, the Refugee Council, Pan London Refugee Training and Employment Network, World University Service and the Refugee Women's Association. Each RCO from the list was contacted and asked to estimate the number of refugees and asylum seekers from their community living in each borough. Each RCO was also asked if they knew of any RCOs, which were not on the original list. Literature was also analysed to establish the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers from each community in the four boroughs. The five largest communities were identified as being the Turkish, Kurdish, Tamil, Somali and Zairean Congolese communities.

1.4 Community Interviews

Once the five largest refugee and asylum seeker communities had been identified one RCO representing each community was nominated. They in turn were asked to nominate a researcher from their community who would be willing and able to conduct up to one hundred interviews with members of their community to establish their education, training, employment backgrounds, experiences and needs in the UK. Each researcher was also asked to detail three case studies from their community.

Training Workshops

Each researcher attended two training workshops at the Africa Centre. The first three day workshop was held from the 4th – 6th March 2002 and involved training in research and interviewing skills and the drawing up of a standardised semi-structured interview questionnaire.

The second workshop was held from the 27th – 28th March 2002. During this workshop each researcher was trained to analyse the information they had gathered during the research and to present it in a report for use in the Learning and Skills Council London North study and for use by the community itself.

1.5 Focus Group Meetings

Twelve focus group discussion meetings were held with refugees and asylum seekers from a wide variety of backgrounds. In this study a focus group was comprised of an average of twelve participants. Focus group discussion meetings were held with refugees and asylum seekers from seventeen different communities and nineteen different countries². In total, twelve focus group discussions were held for refugees and asylum seekers living in the boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet or Waltham Forest. One focus group was held for refugees and asylum seekers from each of the five largest communities in the London north area. Two of these focus groups were conducted in Haringey, and one in each of the other LSC London North boroughs. Separate focus groups were held for a cross section of refugees from other communities, as were focus groups for a cross section of asylum seekers. Within this cross-section, separate focus groups were held for female refugees, female asylum seekers, male refugees and male asylum seekers. Focus group discussions were held in RCO offices and community centres in the four boroughs.

During each meeting key questions were asked to the participants for discussion to establish their experiences and needs in the UK. Participants were selected by refugee community organisations (RCOs) in each borough.

The criteria for selection was that those chosen should;

- be refugees or asylum seekers,
- be of working age (over the age of sixteen but under the age of sixty)
- live in Haringey, Enfield, Barnet or Waltham Forest
- come from as diverse a range of socio-economic backgrounds as possible.

In some cases English was spoken during the discussions, but several of the focus group discussions required an interpreter. Providing an interpreter ensured that refugees and asylum seekers who did not speak English were included in the study.

1.6 Interviews with service providers

A list of relevant service providers was drawn up and cross-checked with the Learning and Skills Council and the Refugee Council. When service providers were contacted they were also asked if they knew of any additional organisations that they felt AET should contact. Interview questions were drawn up in consultation with service providers and RCOs to establish what services were being provided and what perceptions providers had of refugees' and asylum seekers' experiences in the UK. A wide variety of service providers from all four boroughs were interviewed either over the telephone or face to face.

1.7 Mapping of refugee and asylum seeker communities

The researchers from the five main refugee and asylum seeker communities asked each person interviewed to tell them which area within each borough they lived in and where they thought significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers from their community lived. Participants in the focus group discussions as well as service providers were also asked which areas they thought the main refugee and asylum seeker communities lived.

2. Focus group participants came from the five largest communities, namely Kurdish (from Turkey and Iraq), Turkish, Somali, Tamil and Zairean Congolese as well as representatives from the Angolan, Rwandan, Ugandan, Ivorian, Sierra Leonean, Senegalese, Ecuadorian, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Roma (from Czech Republic and Poland) and Turkish Cypriot communities.

AET estimates that there are between 58,500 – 72,000 refugees and asylum seekers residing in the four LSC London North boroughs

1.8 Refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

One aim of the LSC London North study was to find out approximately how many refugees and asylum seekers lived in the boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest. Establishing refugee and asylum seeker numbers is a notoriously difficult task. Firstly, although the Home Office publishes annual statistics on the numbers and origin of people seeking asylum in the UK, those being granted asylum and those being refused, there is still no commonly accepted figure on the total number of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK at any one time. This is due partly to the way in which figures are published and partly because the decisions on applications often take many years and go through many different stages. For, example, while in one case it may take only a few months for a decision to be made on an asylum claim, in others it can take many years. If a negative decision has been made, it is usually possible to appeal against the decision.

Most estimates of the numbers of refugee and asylum seekers in the UK have been derived from the figures produced by the Home Office. The differences in estimates are very often due to how the Home Office figures are interpreted. In the mid - late 1990s, a number of studies estimated that there were between 215,000 – 300,000 refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. The Refugee Council (1997) for example, estimated 218,000, while the Africa Educational Trust (1998) estimated 256,700.

In 1999, UNHCR estimated that 265,000 refugees and asylum seekers were living in the UK (UNHCR, 1999) while The Health of Londoners Project (1999), gave an estimate of 240,000 – 280,000. More recently, the Greater London Authority (2001) estimated that there were 350,000 – 420,000 refugees and asylum seekers in London alone.

1.9 Refugees and asylum seekers in London

It is extremely difficult to obtain data on refugees and asylum seekers at a local or borough level. The data available tends to be national figures, from small local surveys or data from records of people using existing services (Storkey and Bardsley, in Health of Londoners Project, 1999). Even data produced by the recently established National Asylum Support Service (NASS) is available only at a regional level. Previous studies have sometimes used data from the 1991 Census of Great Britain to help estimate refugee and asylum seeker figures at a local level. However, the most recently collected census figures are not yet available and those collected during the 1991 census are now too old to be considered valid. Use of Census figures must also be treated with caution as some countries of origin are not specified as separate countries of birth (Haringey Council 1997).

It is frequently suggested that at least 85% of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK are living in London (Health of Londoners Project 1999). Despite the 1999 legislation that introduced the dispersal system, the situation is unlikely to change significantly, at least in the short to medium term. This is supported by figures produced by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS). At the end of September 2001, only 2.6% of asylum seekers who had applied for NASS support had received accommodation in the London region, as it is NASS policy to disperse away from London except in exceptional (usually medical) circumstances. However, despite the introduction of the dispersal system, 71% of those receiving NASS voucher support were living in the London region. Figures supplied by NASS and compiled by LASC show that by November 2001, 81% of the new applicants claiming voucher support only were living in London. This shows that asylum seekers are choosing to forego support for accommodation so that they can live in London.

According to the Greater London Authority (2001), approximately one in twenty of London's population arrived in the UK seeking asylum. This, they estimate is about thirty times higher than the UK national average proportion and far above the European Union average.

1.10 Refugees and asylum seekers in the LSC London North boroughs

There are very few data sources that provide information on refugees and asylum seekers at a borough level. The data available often do not include all categories of refugees and asylum seekers. Figures from the London Asylum Seekers Consortium, for example, only represent those who applied in country and are being supported by social services departments. However, by comparing the data that are available, it is possible to calculate an average percentage of those who live in the four LSC London North boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest.

AET also contacted all Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) in the four boroughs and asked them to estimate the number of refugees and asylum seekers from their community living in each of the four boroughs.

AET estimates that there are between 58,500 – 72,000 refugees and asylum seekers residing in the four LSC London North boroughs. This figure has been obtained by calculating the average percentage of refugees and asylum seekers in London who live in the four boroughs (see 'a' below) and by using the London wide figures estimated by two of the most recent major studies on refugees and asylum seekers in London (GLA 2001 and the Health of Londoners project 1999), see 'b' below. Figures obtained show the following:

a) Estimates of the percentage of refugees and asylum seekers in London who are residing within the LSC London North boroughs:

London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC) figures for asylum seekers supported by social services departments (25.01.02)

Borough	Number	Percentage
Haringey	6229	11%
Enfield	2088	3.8%
Barnet	1413	2.6%
Waltham Forest	1855	3.4%
TOTAL	11,585	20.8%
Rest of London	43,352	79%

NASS / LASC figures for those claiming voucher only support in London (November 2001)

Borough	Number (at November 2001)	Percentage
Haringey	1744	9%
Enfield	846	4.4%
Barnet	571	3%
Waltham Forest	800	4.2%
TOTAL	3961	20.6%
Rest of London	15316	79.6%

Bed And Breakfast Information Exchange (BABIE) figures on numbers in temporary accomodation (average of 1990 - 1997 homeless household data and 1998 figures on asylum seekers)

Haringey	5.4%
Enfield	2.8%
Barnet	2.6%
Waltham Forest	1.7%
TOTAL	12.5%
Rest of London	87.5%

Refugee Council estimates of refugee and asylum seeker children in each borough based on numbers of children in London schools (1997)

Borough	Number	Percentage
Haringey	2485	6.5%
Enfield	2382	6.2%
Barnet	2083	5.4%
Waltham Forest	900	2.3%
TOTAL	7850	20.4%
Rest of London	30605	79.6%

Refugees and asylum seekers entering the country between 1983 – 1999 (Health of Londoners Project 1999) = 16.5%

Borough	Number	Percentage
Haringey	15,000 - 18,500	6.3%
Enfield	18,400 - 9,800	3.5%
Barnet	10,400 - 12,100	4.3%
Waltham Forest	5,800 - 6,700	2.4%
TOTAL	39,600 - 46,100	16.5%
Rest of London	200,400 - 233,900	83.5%

Using these data it is possible to estimate that 18.16% of refugees and asylum seekers in London live in the boroughs of Haringey, Barnet, Enfield and Waltham Forest.

Using the above sources the percentage breakdown by borough is as follows:

Haringey	7.64%
Enfield	4.14%
Barnet	3.58%
Waltham Forest	2.80%
TOTAL	18.16%

b) The calculation of London North estimates

AET then used two recent estimates of refugees and asylum seekers in London to calculate the actual number that reside in the LSC London North boroughs. The Health of Londoners Project (1999) calculated that between 240,000 – 280,000 refugees and asylum seekers were living in London. A more recent study by the GLA (2001) estimates the numbers at between 350,000 – 420,000.

If a calculation is made using the lowest figure of 240,000, the estimated number of refugees and asylum seekers residing in the LSC London North area is 43,632. If a calculation is made using the highest figure of 420,000 the estimate for the LSC London North boroughs would be 76,356.

AET also contacted all RCOs based in the four boroughs to try and obtain estimates from the community groups of the numbers of their community living in the LSC London North boroughs. Although figures were obtained from all RCOs in the boroughs it must be remembered that there are also a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers who are living in the boroughs but who are not represented by a community group based within the four boroughs. Where possible RCOs from other boroughs thought to represent significant numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in London North were contacted and asked to estimate the numbers of their community in the four boroughs. This was the case with the Afghan community and the Iranian community. AET consulted with the Refugee Council and Refugee Women’s Association but was unable to locate an East European RCO in London.

Annex 2 shows the RCO estimates for each community in the four boroughs. Some figures given are the average of several estimates.

It must be noted that RCOs very often overestimate the numbers of those from their communities. This is partly due to the fact that RCOs do not operate within rigid borough boundaries and that it is very likely that a significant number of their clients are living in other boroughs. This is particularly true of those from communities that have only one or two RCOs representing them. It must also be noted that no estimates have been obtained for those refugees and asylum seekers not represented by a refugee community organisation, for example, those from some of the East European communities.

Calculating an average of the estimates produced by the Health of Londoners Project (260,000), the GLA study (385,000) and then calculating 18.16% of this figure provides an estimate of 58,566 refugees and asylum seekers living in the four LSC London North boroughs. If the RCO estimate is also included it is possible to calculate an average figure for London and then calculate 18.16% of this total. This calculation provides an estimate of 72,083 refugees and asylum seekers living in the four boroughs. If this figure was used to estimate the overall London figure it would come to 396,933, which falls well within the estimates given by the GLA study. AET estimates therefore that there are between 58,500 – 72,000 refugees and asylum seekers living in the boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest.

Using the same approach, average estimates for each borough are as follows:

Haringey	24,639 – 30,325
Enfield	13,352 – 16,433
Barnet	11,546 – 14,210
Waltham Forest	9030 – 11,114
TOTAL	58,566 – 72,083

1.11 Main refugee and asylum seeker communities

Part of the study involved identifying the five main refugee and asylum seeker communities living in the LSC London North boroughs. This was done using the estimates given by the RCOs. Using this data the five largest communities (represented by an RCO) are as follows:

- Kurds
- Turks and Turkish Cypriots
- Somalis
- Tamils and
- Zairean Congolese

As mentioned earlier, it is likely that the figures given by many of the RCOs are overestimates. However, other data obtained also implies that these communities are amongst the largest refugee and asylum seeker communities in the four boroughs. Whilst there are refugees and asylum seekers from the five main groups living in all of the four boroughs, it was clear that each community was far more prevalent in one or two of the boroughs than others. The Kurdish, Turkish and Somali communities for example, are more prevalent in Haringey and Enfield than in Barnet and Waltham Forest. The Zairean Congolese community was thought to be concentrated mainly in Haringey, while the Tamil community was concentrated mainly in Waltham Forest and Haringey. A study by Baker and Eversley (2000) on the major languages spoken by children in schools across London boroughs, for example, found that Turkish (also spoken by Kurds from Turkey) was the major (non-English) language spoken by children in Haringey and Enfield. Figures from Enfield College show that in 2000/2001 Turkish speakers made up 27% of all full time students, Kurdish speakers made up 9% and Somalis 5%. French speakers, which would include many Zairean Congolese, made up 6% and Lingala 0.8%. Somali was the third major language in Haringey schools.

This section is based on the findings of three hundred and fifty six interviews with refugees and asylum seekers living in Barnet, Enfield, Haringey or Waltham Forest. The main aim of the interviews was to establish the range of qualifications and skills of refugees and asylum seekers from a wide range of backgrounds.

The interviews indicate how many refugees and asylum seekers from the four boroughs have accessed post sixteen education and training in the UK and the level of courses people have undertaken. The interviews also provided information on the number of refugees and asylum seekers who had been in employment in their home countries and those who have been in employment in the UK. Comparison is made between the positions people held in their home countries and those held in the UK.

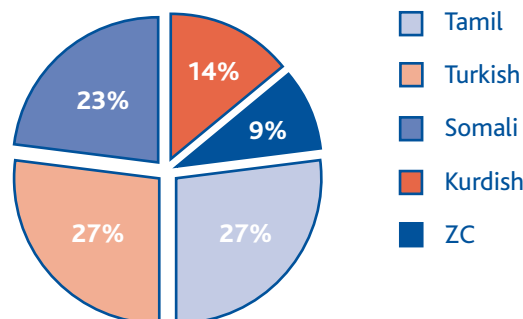
Five community members were nominated by the RCOs to conduct the interviews. Interviewers were asked to interview respondents from as wide a range of backgrounds as possible.

2.1 Background of respondents

Community group

Those interviewed came from the five main refugee and asylum seeker communities living in the LSC London North boroughs, represented by an RCO, namely Tamils, Turks, Kurds, Somalis and Zairean Congolese. Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents from each community.

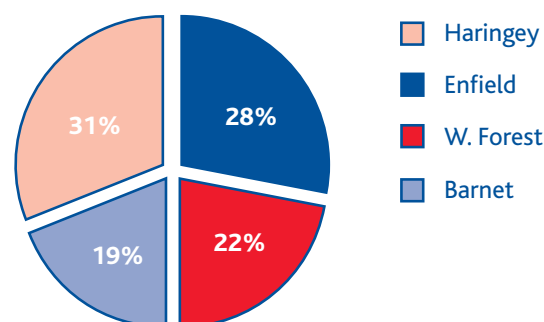
Figure 1
Percentage interviewed according to community



Location

Each of the five communities was concentrated more in one or two of the four LSC London North boroughs than others. For example, a larger proportion of Tamils live in Waltham Forest than the other three boroughs. However, the interviewers were asked to interview people from their community living in all four of the boroughs. Figure 2 shows the overall percentage of the people interviewed in each borough.

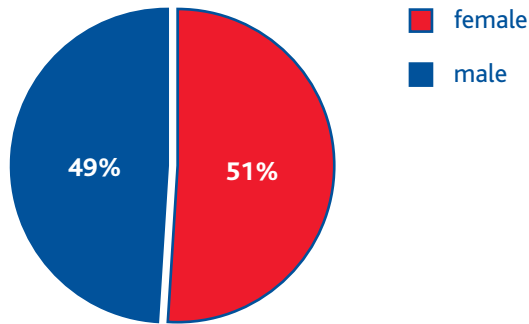
Figure 2
Percentage interviewed according to borough



Gender

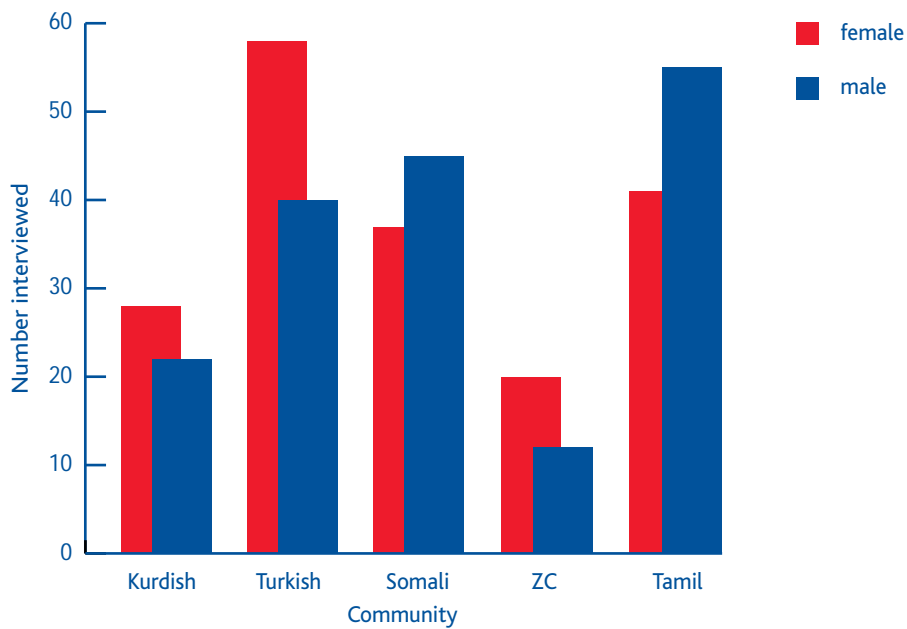
Overall, fifty one per cent of those interviewed were women and forty nine per cent were men. The proportion of women and men interviewed varied by community, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 3
Percentage of males and females interviewed



As Figure 4 shows, a larger number of women than men were interviewed in the Kurdish, Turkish and Zairean Congolese (referred to as ZC on figures) communities but larger numbers of men than women were interviewed in the Somali and Tamil communities.

Figure 4
Number of people interviewed by community



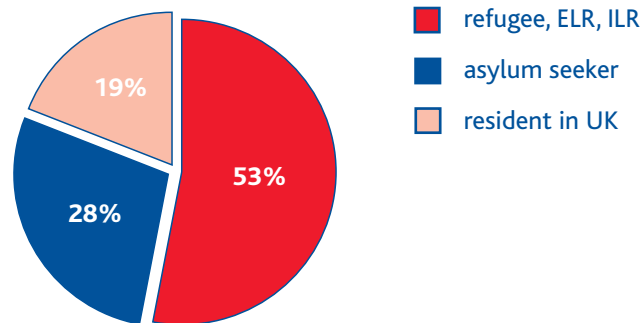
Age

During the first training workshop, the community interviewers were asked to agree upon age categories that would be used during the interviews. It was decided that there were three distinct age categories of refugees and asylum seekers from the five communities who would have experience of education, training and employment. Those aged between sixteen and twenty five, those aged twenty six to thirty five and those aged over thirty six. 21% of those interviewed were aged between sixteen and twenty five, 47% were aged between twenty six and thirty five and 32% were over the age of thirty six.

Immigration status

Fifty three per cent (53%) of those interviewed had recognised refugee status, exceptional leave to remain or indefinite leave to remain. A further 19% had arrived in the UK seeking asylum and after being recognised as refugees had been given residency in the UK. However, they still regarded themselves as refugees. 28% of those interviewed had applied for asylum and were either awaiting a decision or were appealing against a negative decision.

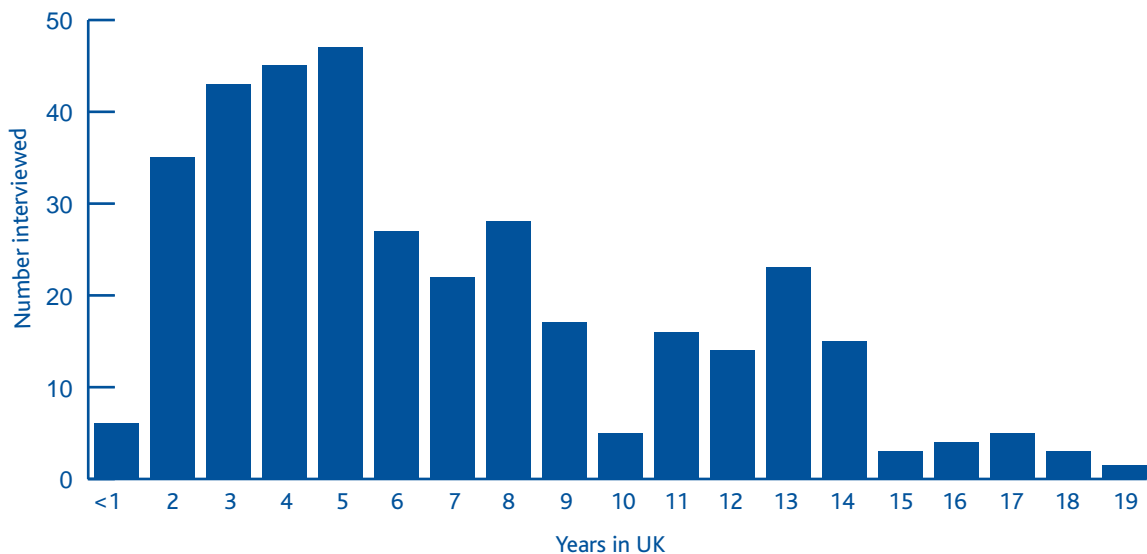
Figure 5
Immigration status



Time lived in UK

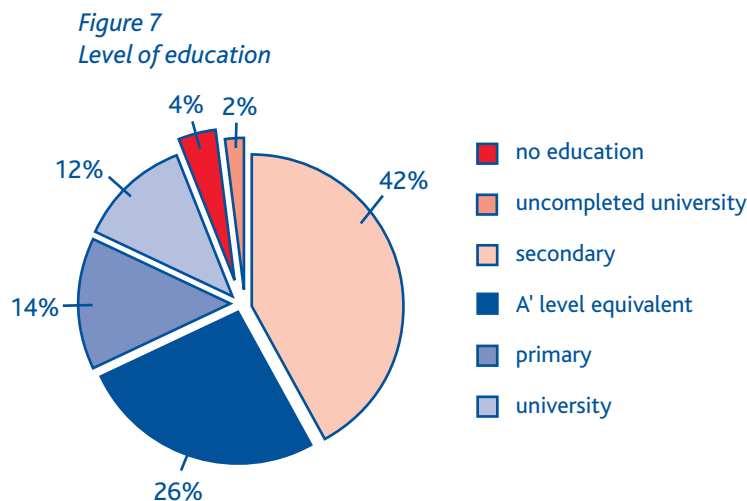
While six of those interviewed had been in the UK for less than one year, eleven of those interviewed had been in the UK for over fifteen years. The largest proportion of those interviewed had been in the UK for between one and five years.

Figure 6
Years lived in UK



2.2 Education

Eighty two per cent of all those interviewed in the four boroughs had completed secondary education or above, either in their home country or in the UK. 12% had completed university at either undergraduate or postgraduate level and a further 2% had been at university when they fled their country.



Level of education

As Table 1 shows, the level of education of those interviewed depended partly on their origin. It must be remembered that in some cases it is the most highly qualified people who have been persecuted because they are considered a threat to those in power while in other cases persecuted people have been denied access to basic rights such as education. However, as the community interviews show, there is a wide diversity of educational backgrounds not only between communities but within them.

Table 1. Highest level of education completed

Community	No education	Primary	Secondary	A level equivalent	Uncomplete university	University
Turkish	14.5%	17%	34%	16%	4%	14.5%
Somali	1%	10%	46%	20%	2%	21%
Kurdish	10%	32%	38%	4%	2%	14%
ZC	0	3%	42%	55%	0	0
Tamil	0	8%	46%	42%	0	3%

While 14.5% of those interviewed from the Turkish community have had no education, a further 14.5% have completed university. Likewise, 10% of those interviewed from the Kurdish community had no education but 14% had completed university. In the Somali community, 21% of those interviewed had completed university and almost half had completed secondary school. In the Tamil and Zairean Congolese communities, the overwhelming majority of respondents had completed education at either A' Level equivalent or secondary school level.

Forty-one respondents (12%) had completed university and approximately the same number were currently at university. Of those who had been to university, one Somali had completed a PhD and nine respondents had completed or were currently undertaking Masters degrees (four Somalis, three Tamils, one Turk and one Zairean Congolese). Seventy-one had completed or were currently undertaking undergraduate degree courses.

Training qualifications

One hundred and thirty three (37%) of the respondents had training qualifications either from their home country or from the UK. The range of qualifications people held was extremely wide and included people trained at police academy to those trained as plumbers or hairdressers. It is therefore not possible to categorise vocational training undertaken. However, catering, IT, administration and security training were the most frequently cited areas of training undertaken either in the respondents' home country or in the UK.

Education and training in the UK

Two hundred and fifty five respondents (72%) had undertaken education or training courses in the UK. Table 2 shows the highest level of course respondents from each community have taken whilst in the UK and the percentage of each community who have accessed education or training in the UK

Table 2. Highest level of course taken in UK (%)

Community	ESOL	ESOL and basic skills	Secondary	A level	FE	University degree	Masters	PhD	Other	Total of community
Turkish	46	7	1	1	3	0	0	0	0	58
Somali	24	1	6	24	21	6	2	0	4	88
Kurdish	36	16	6	0	6	2	0	0	0	66
ZC	13	0	0	0	35	3	0	0	6	57
Tamil	46	1	1	0	21	8	1	0	0	78

As Table 2 shows, 88% of Somalis interviewed in the four LSC London North boroughs have accessed education or training in the UK compared with only 57% of the Zairean Congolese community and 58% of the Turkish community. During the focus group discussions the Turkish community emphasised the fact that fewer of their members had accessed education or training in the UK compared with most other communities. They felt that this was partly because a significant number of their community were not literate in their own language and found the prospect of education and training in English daunting.

Overall, 66% of the women interviewed had accessed education or training in the UK. 83% of Somali women and 83% of Tamil women had attended classes compared to 50% of Kurdish women, 50% of women from Turkey and 47% of women from the Zairean Congolese community.

Overall, 74% of the men interviewed had accessed education or training in the UK. In all five communities 70% or more of the men interviewed had attended classes in the UK.

As Table 3 shows, the proportion of refugees and asylum seekers accessing education and training in each borough was similar although figures are significantly lower in Waltham Forest.

Table 3

Borough	% accessing education/training
Barnet	74%
Enfield	73%
Haringey	72%
Waltham Forest	60%

Immigration status and accessing education and training in North London

Analysis of the interview data shows that immigration status can influence the likelihood of an individual accessing education and training in North London. 74% of those with refugee status, ELR or ILR and 74% of those with residency have accessed education or training compared with 59% of those who are asylum seekers.

Immigration status can also affect the level of education and training taken in the UK. Whilst the percentage of those who have taken ESOL as their highest level course in the UK is the same for both refugees and asylum seekers (37%), the percentage of asylum seekers in Further or Higher Education is lower than that of refugees. 14% of those with refugee status and 16% of those with residency have taken FE courses in the UK compared with 9% of asylum seekers. 5% of those with refugee status and 4% of those with residency have taken degree courses in the UK compared with 0% of asylum seekers.

Age and accessing education and training

Age was also a significant factor affecting the proportion of those who had undertaken education and training in the UK. 39% of those in the 36+ age group had not attended classes in the UK, compared with 27% of those in the 26-25 age group and 25% of the 16-25 age group.

Home country employment and accessing education and training

Of the women who had never accessed education or training in the UK, 65% were unemployed in their home country compared to 24% of men. However, 11% of women not accessing education or training in the UK had worked in professional employment in their home country as had 6.5% of men.

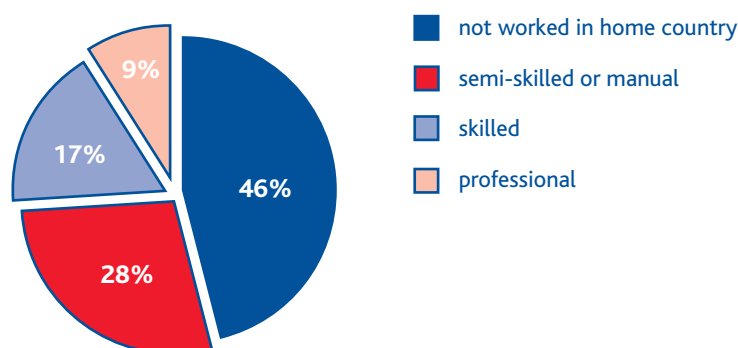
Of those who had never accessed education or training in the UK, and had worked in professional employment in their home country, six had worked as teachers, one as a lecturer, one as a nurse and one as a surgeon. Only one had found professional employment in the UK, three were working in semi-skilled jobs and six were unemployed. Seven had English skills of intermediate level or above. The time they had spent in the UK was not a significant factor for this group regarding accessing education and training.

2.3 Employment

Employment in home country

Fifty four per cent (54%) of respondents had been in employment in their home country. Of those who had worked in their home country, 36% were female and 64% were male. Of those who had never worked in their home country, 67% (114) were female and 33% (55) were male. The fact that many people did not consider working in subsistence agriculture to be 'employment' may account for the significant number of people, particularly men, who had not worked in their home country. Seven of the males were under the age of sixteen before they came to the UK, which may be why they were not in employment.

Figure 8
Work in home country

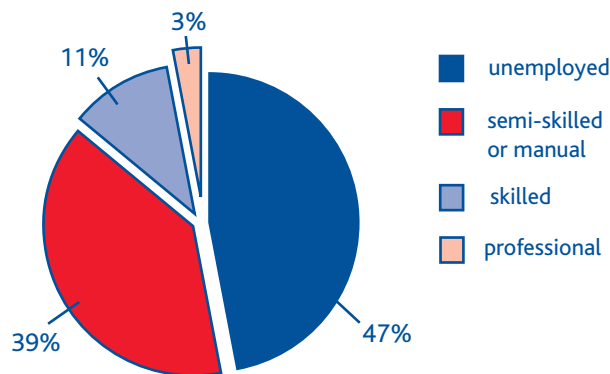


Overall, 9% of the respondents had worked in professional employment³ in their home countries, 17% in skilled employment and 28% in semi-skilled or manual employment.

Employment in the UK

53% of those interviewed had worked in the UK (although they were not necessarily currently in employment). 35% were women and 65% were men. These figures are very similar to those employed in their home country. However, they do not necessarily relate to the same respondents. Of those who were working in their home country 49% have never worked in the UK.

Figure 9
Employment in the UK



Most of those working in professional employment in the UK were accountants or engineers. The most common employment of those working in skilled employment was in administration or as shop managers. The vast majority of those in semi-skilled or manual employment worked in shops. A large number worked in factories (mainly clothing), and in restaurants.

Table 4 compares the overall level of employment of those who worked in their home country with those who have worked in the UK.

Table 4 Comparison of home employment and UK employment

Community	Professional		Skilled		Semi-skilled and Manual		Unemployed	
	UK	Home	UK	Home	UK	Home	UK	Home
Turkish	0	5%	9%	28%	37%	29%	54%	37%
Somali	4%	20%	11%	16%	50%	13%	35%	51%
Kurdish	2%	0	8%	8%	18%	37%	72%	55%
ZC	3%	13%	10%	23%	35%	3%	51%	61%
Tamil	6%	17%	12%	11%	21%	44%	49%	38%

The Table shows that the proportion of those in professional and skilled employment is lower in the UK than in their home country. In the Turkish, Somali and Zairean Congolese communities there has been a significant increase in the proportion of those employed in semi-skilled and manual labour in the UK but a decrease in the Kurdish and Tamil communities where those who were in semi-skilled and manual labour in their home country accounted for 37% and 44% of interviewed respectively.

3. 'Professional' employment here mean those in jobs which have required Higher Education, skilled means jobs that required prolonged training (previous or ongoing), and semi-skilled or manual include jobs which do not require prolonged or ongoing training.

Figure 10 shows the percentage of each community who have worked in the UK. Only 28% of the Kurdish community have been employed in the UK compared to 65% of the Somali community. Table 5 shows the percentage of males and females from each community who have worked in the UK. Almost fifty per cent of the Tamil males had been in employment in the UK compared to only twenty per cent of the Kurdish men.

*Figure 10
Percentage of each community who have worked in the UK*

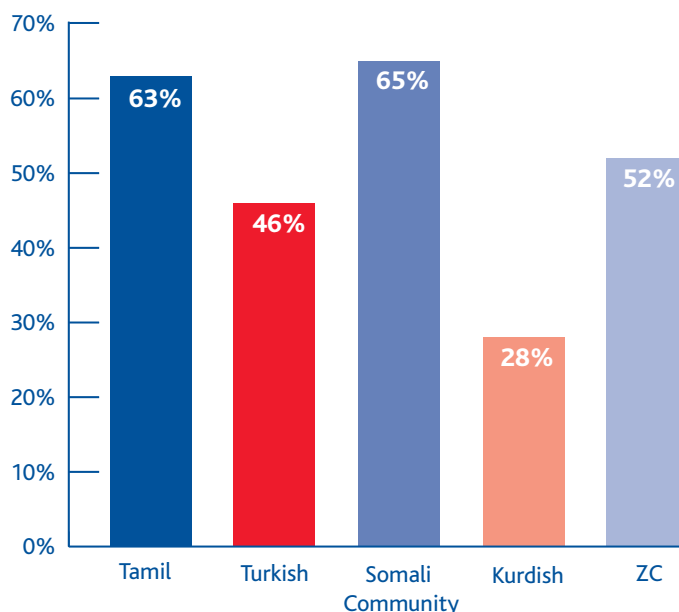


Table 5. Percentage of males and females from each community who have been employed in the UK.

Community	Male	Female
Tamil	48%	14%
Turkish	26%	20%
Somali	37%	28%
Kurdish	20%	8%
Zairean Congolese	32%	19%

43% of those who had been in employment in the UK had not worked previously in their home country. 81% of those who had never worked in their home country but had worked since coming to the UK had undertaken education or training in the UK. So education and training in the UK seems to influence the likelihood of finding employment in the UK.

Age also influenced those who had worked in the UK but not in their home country. 29% of the 16-25 year age group, had worked in the UK but not in their home country compared with 25% of the 26-35 year age group and 11% of those over the age of 36.

Those not looking for employment

54% of the women interviewed have not tried to find employment, compared to 27% of men. Of those who are not working in the UK, 77% have not tried to find employment. The reasons given are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 reasons for not looking for employment in the UK

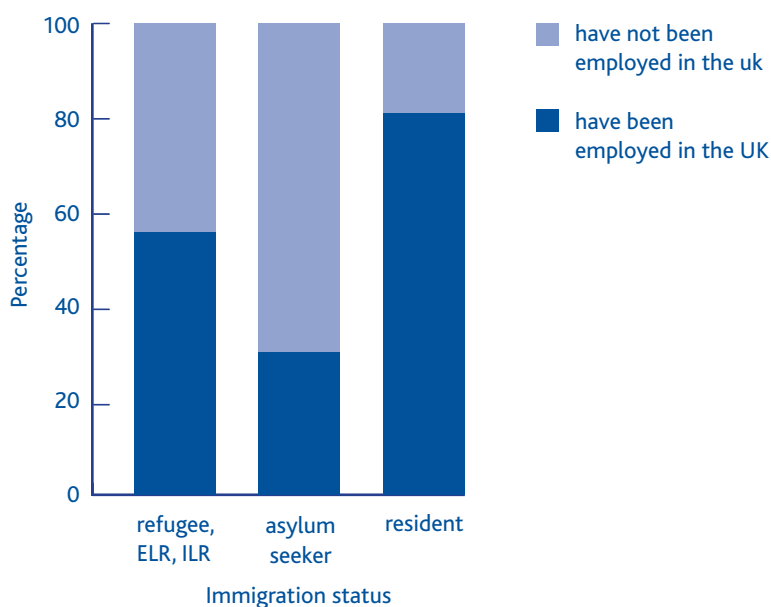
Reason not looking for employment in UK	Female % not looking for work	Male % not looking for work
Not allowed	22%	45%
No NI number	8%	11%
Language barriers	3%	4%
Have children to look after	38%	0%
Studying	13%	4%
Feel too old	2%	2%
No job that they want to do	5%	26%
Other	11%	4%

Having children to look after was the main reason cited by women who were not looking for employment. For men, the main reason was not being allowed to work in the UK. A significant number of men (26%) also felt that there were no jobs available to them that they wanted to do. Most of the respondents who said 'other' reasons said that they did not work for medical reasons or in the case of several women, because their husband was working.

Immigration status and UK employment

As Figure 11 shows, 81% of those who have been given refugee status and since become residents in the UK have been employed in the UK. 55% of those who have refugee status, ELR or ILR have worked in the UK, compared to only 30% of those with asylum seeker status.

Figure 11
Percentage of people who have been employed in UK by immigration status



Time in UK and employment

In general the number of years the respondent had lived in the UK did influence the likelihood of having worked in the UK with those who had been in the country longer being more likely to have worked. For example, 87% of those who had been in the UK for twelve years (twenty three respondents) had worked compared with only 41% of those who had been in the UK for four years (twenty two respondents).

*Figure 12
Time in UK and percentage likelihood of employment*

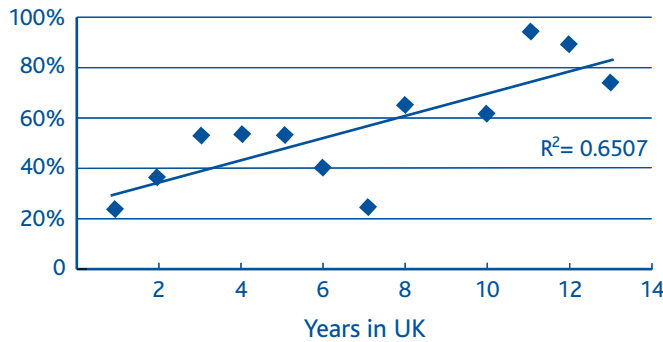
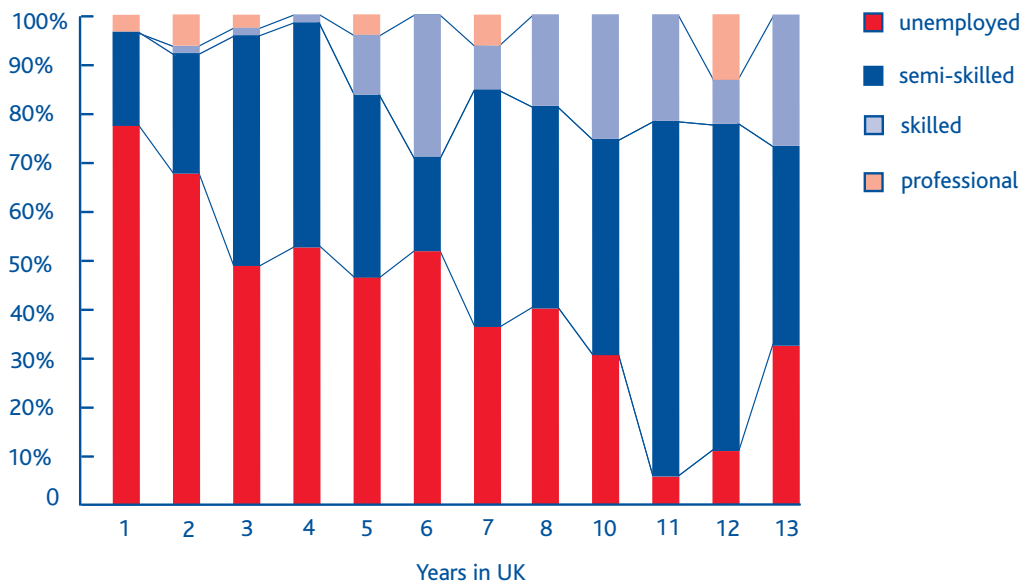


Figure 12 shows the relationship between time spent in the UK and the number of respondents who have been, or currently are, employed in the UK (using only data with a sample of over ten respondents).

Time spent in the UK also has some influence on the level of employment achieved. Figure 13 is based on the experiences of respondents who have been in the UK for every year where there was a sample size of over ten respondents. The figure shows that not only do unemployment levels decrease over time, but that the proportion of those achieving employment in the skilled sector increases, particularly after five years in the UK. Likewise, employment in the professional sector increases over time although the proportion of those achieving this level of employment in the UK remains small. The graph also shows a steady increase over time of those in the semi-skilled sector.

*Figure 13
Number of years in UK and level of employment reached*



English language and UK employment

English language skills significantly affected respondent's experiences. Of those who had worked in the UK, 83% described their English skills as being intermediate or above. Thirteen of the twenty-two respondents employed in professional jobs in the UK were fluent in English.

Seventeen per cent of those who had been in employment in the UK described their level of English as either 'no English' or 'a little English'. Lack of English skills did not therefore prevent people from finding employment. However, it did influence the kinds of employment available. All of those with a little or no English who were in employment were working in manual or unskilled jobs, such as factory work and working in shops run by people from the same community.

Level of education and UK employment

Of those who had worked in the UK, 88% had completed secondary school education or above, either in the UK or in their home countries. 76% of those who had been employed in the UK had accessed some form of education or training since coming to the UK.

All of those who had succeeded in finding 'professional' employment in the UK had been to university. 87% of those in professional employment in the UK had been to university in the UK. However, 10% of those with a university education had only been able to find skilled, unskilled or manual employment in fields such as shop work, factories and security and 37% had never worked in the UK.

2.4 Summary of each community

Somali Community

Large numbers of the Somali community live in Tottenham, Colindale, Edmonton and Edgware.

In general the Somali community are highly educated. Approximately half had completed secondary education and a further fifth of those interviewed had completed university.

Most Somalis had attended education or training courses in the UK and over half had done a course at FE or HE level. Most Somali women had accessed education or training in the UK. The vast majority of Somalis have English skills of intermediate level or above.

Over half of the Somali community have worked in the UK. 20% of Somalis had worked in professional employment in Somalia. Many of these people had worked as engineers or teachers. Only 4% had found professional employment in the UK. Half had worked in semi-skilled or manual jobs in the UK compared to 13% in Somalia.

Turkish Community

Large numbers of the Turkish and Turkish Cypriot community live in Edmonton Green, Edmonton, and Green Lanes.

In general, English skills for this community were not high. Those from the Turkish Cypriot community tend to have a higher level of English than those from the mainland. Overall, women had higher English skills than men. A significant number had not received any education either in their home country or in the UK and were illiterate in both Turkish and English. However, two thirds had completed education at secondary level or above.

58% had accessed education or training in the UK. The vast majority of them had not taken courses above ESOL. A significant number of men were looking for employment rather than accessing education or training.

Almost half had worked in the UK. Most had found work in factories, shops and restaurants. Many had done similar work in Turkey or Cyprus.

Tamil Community

Large numbers of the Tamil community live in Walthamstow, Lower Edmonton, Tottenham and Edgware.

Those from the Tamil community have relatively high levels of education and good English skills. Over 40% had completed secondary school and 21% had completed university. A further 8% were at university when they were forced to flee Sri Lanka. A third had vocational training qualifications from Sri Lanka. The most common areas of training were in accountancy, mechanics and teaching.

Three quarters had accessed education or training in the UK. 23% had accessed Further Education and 8% Higher Education.

Approximately half had worked in the UK. Most women had not worked in Sri Lanka or in the UK. 17% had worked in professional jobs in Sri Lanka compared to 6% in the UK. Those who had professional jobs in the UK worked as accountants.

Kurdish Community

Large numbers of the Kurdish community live in Tottenham, Wood Green and Green Lanes.

The majority of the Kurdish community in the London North area are from Turkey.

The Kurdish community had very mixed levels of education. Approximately one third had completed primary education and a further 38% had secondary education. 14% had completed university although 10% had no education at all. Two thirds had accessed education or training in the UK although this was mainly ESOL or ESOL and basic skills courses. Only half of the women interviewed had undertaken education or training in the UK.

Less than one third of the Kurdish community had been employed in the UK. Those who had were mainly working in shops. Few women had worked in the UK or in the home country. Overall 72% had not worked in the UK compared with 55% in the home country.

Almost two thirds had English skills below intermediate level.

Zairean Congolese Community

Large numbers of the Zairean Congolese community live in Tottenham and Seven Sisters. Unlike the other four communities, the Zairean Congolese community is not yet well established in the London North area.

Almost half of those interviewed had completed secondary school and just over half had completed A'Levels or equivalent.

Less than two thirds had accessed education or training in the UK, although of those who had more had accessed Further Education than ESOL.

The proportion of those in professional or skilled employment in the home country was relatively high. However, only half had worked in the UK and nearly all at a lower level than in Congo.

Levels of English ranged widely. However, most people had English skills of intermediate level or above.

The aim of this section is to emphasise the main points identified during the focus group discussions on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers living in the four LSC London North boroughs. This section discusses the experiences and problems refugees and asylum seekers face in accessing education, training and employment in London. It also emphasises their experiences finding accommodation and accessing healthcare services.

One hundred and thirty eight refugees and asylum seekers participated in the focus group discussions. In this study a focus group comprised of an average of twelve participants. Focus group discussion meetings were held with refugees and asylum seekers from seventeen different communities and nineteen different countries⁴. In total, twelve focus group discussions were held for refugees and asylum seekers living in the boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet or Waltham Forest. One focus group was held for refugees and asylum seekers from each of the five largest communities in the London north area. Two of these focus groups were conducted in Haringey, and one in each of the other LSC London North boroughs. Separate focus groups were held for a cross section of refugees from other communities and for a cross section of asylum seekers. Within this cross-section, separate focus groups were held for female refugees, female asylum seekers, male refugees and male asylum seekers. Focus group discussions were held in RCO offices and community centres in the four boroughs.

Several of the RCOs contacted regarding the running of the focus group discussions were initially quite suspicious and reluctant to participate. This was particularly true of those RCOs that had only recently been established and had not been involved in previous research studies. In general however, the participants welcomed the focus group discussions as many felt that they had not previously had the opportunity to voice their feelings during research studies.

During each meeting key questions were asked for the participants to discuss to establish their experiences and needs in the UK (see Annex 3). Discussion areas were decided upon after consultations with RCOs and service providers in the four boroughs.

3.1 Background of participants

Participants came from a very wide range of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and were aged between sixteen and sixty. While some had been in the UK for less than six months, others had been in the UK for over twenty years. Many had work experience from their home country but the vast majority had no experience of employment in the UK, and those who did were generally working part time or in low paid, often menial employment.

Participants had very different experiences applying for asylum in the UK. Some had been given ILR or ELR within a year of arrival; some had been waiting for several years for the first decision on their application, while others had arrived in the UK to reunite with their family. A significant number of participants had been granted residency in the UK but still considered themselves to be refugees and continued to rely upon the services of RCOs.

3.2 Arriving in the UK

The vast majority of the participants had arrived in the UK seeking asylum. A small number had arrived in the UK to join family members who had been given refugee status, under the family reunion programme. Those arriving in the UK to seek asylum all went through a similar process although those who already had friends and relatives in the UK or belonged to a well established community, found that they had more immediate support than those who did not,

“The Tamil community helped me. People I knew from back home who were living a stable life were able to help with coming to terms with the cultural shock”
(Tamil asylum seeker, in the UK for 4 years)

Positive and negative experiences

All participants felt that their arrival in the UK was a positive experience in that it meant that they were safe from the persecution they had suffered in their home countries;

“Since coming to the UK I feel safe. In Turkey I felt that the police were surrounding our house every day, but here I am not afraid of them”
(Kurdish asylum seeker, in the UK for 1.5 years)

4. Focus group participants came from the five largest communities, namely Kurdish (from Turkey and Iraq), Turkish, Somali, Tamil and Zairean Congolese as well as representatives from the Angolan, Rwandan, Ugandan, Ivorian, Sierra Leonean, Senegalese, Ecuadorean, Ethiopian, Eritrean, Roma (from Czech Republic and Poland) and Turkish Cypriot communities.

"The first thing we experienced in the UK was peace"
(Somali asylum seeker, in the UK for 3 years)

"I'm not afraid to say I'm Kurdish here which we could never do in Turkey, I can speak Kurdish here and I'm not afraid of the police officers"
(Kurdish asylum seeker, 1.5 years)

Only those who had been given refugee status, ILR or ELR felt able to comment on other positive experiences they had in the UK when they first arrived,

"When you arrive here at least they give you a roof and food and small children can go to school"
(Zairean-Congolese with resident status, in the UK for 10 years)

"The only positive thing was being able to go to college and have an educational opportunity. I have been here for six years and was well received. Socially it was very difficult, trying to fit in. It was good being able to put my children in school"
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 6 years)

"The English people welcomed us, gave us survival, accommodation, education and support for health and we pray for them"
(Somali with British citizenship, in the UK for 8 years)

All participants, particularly those without established networks, felt that arriving in the UK was an extremely confusing process and that insufficient information was given to them regarding the asylum process,

"I'm completely confused. It's like going back to being a baby and re-learning everything"
(Zairean-Congolese asylum seeker in the UK for 3 weeks)

"I was detained for one month and then was given ELR. I had no entitlements to anything; I did not know where to go. I didn't understand. I was told to sign on but I don't know what signing on means. I had no money for a few weeks, it was a very confusing time for me."
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 12 years)

"We had enough problems with repression in Turkey and now in the UK we feel like we are in a labyrinth. We can't do anything, we just get depressed and always have to rely on interpreters who often get things wrong"
(Kurdish asylum seeker in the UK for 1.5 years)

"People tell you to go and find the Refugee Council, but you don't know how to get there, and there is no-one who can help you. It was very very bad."
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 12 years)

Language was identified as one of the main problems on arrival in the UK. Without English language skills people felt extremely isolated and scared,

"I didn't know even one word of English so I couldn't communicate with anyone"
(Somali refugee, in the UK for 8 years)

"When we arrive we can't do shopping or even go outside because we can't ask any questions"
(Zairean-Congolese, resident, in the UK for 10 years)

"UK is a good place but with no English it's very hard to do just daily activities like shopping"
(Kurdish asylum seeker, in the UK for 6 months)

Without English language skills people were not able to understand their rights nor the processes they were expected to go through during the asylum application period. Although interpreters are available for asylum seekers on arrival, participants in every focus group discussion emphasised the poor quality of service provided by many interpreters.

Summary

- Arriving in the UK was considered a positive experience in that people were safe from the persecution suffered in their home country.
- Arriving in the UK was also considered to be a confusing process as insufficient information and support was available.
- People were heavily reliant upon the support of family and friends already in North London. Without English language skills people felt isolated and scared. Interpreter services were criticised.

3.3 Awaiting a decision

The fundamental difference between those with refugee status and those with asylum seeker status was that those awaiting a decision suffered constant psychological stress and were unable to settle.

The experiences of a person seeking asylum in the UK were heavily influenced by the time they had to wait for a decision to be made on their asylum application. All agreed that this waiting period was the most psychologically stressful experience they had in the UK and did not understand why the waiting period was often so long. Until they had received a decision on their application they could not start to settle and make medium – long term plans. This was considered by participants to be the fundamental difference between those with 'refugee' status and those who were 'asylum seekers'.

"It is a psychological war as we are made to wait so long for a decision. Until then we cannot settle"
(Kurdish asylum seeker, in the UK for 1.5 years)

"No-one explains why you have to wait. It's like going to a doctor and not being told what the medicine is for"
(Zairean-Congolese asylum seeker, in the UK for 10 months)

A significant number of the participants at the focus groups had to wait for over five years to receive the first decision on their asylum application. One Kurdish man had been in the UK for seven years and was still waiting for a decision while one Somali man had waited eleven years for the first decision on his application.

As well as being psychologically detrimental, those who receive no decision on their application for several years continue to have disadvantaged access to many services. Access to full time Further Education and training for example is only available at overseas student rates (or at the discretion of the college) as is Higher Education for those still considered 'asylum seekers'. This had significant implications for those people at the focus groups who had been in the UK for up to eleven years without receiving a decision on their application.

The focus group discussions highlighted the significant number of participants who did not know what their asylum status or entitlements were. One Somali woman for example, had arrived in the UK to join her young children who had been given refugee status. She was not sure whether she was automatically entitled to refugee status because she was joining her children or whether her application could be refused. She had been in the UK for three years but had not received a response to her application for asylum.

In 1999 the Government announced that many of those who had applied for asylum in 1995 or earlier and had not yet received an initial negative decision, would be given ELR or ILR to help reduce the backlog of applications. Several participants who had been in the UK for this long with no decision commented that they had heard about this 'policy' but they did not know how it had affected their status, if at all, as no-one had contacted them to inform them. One Kurdish man who had waited for seven years without an initial decision had recently had his benefits withdrawn without any explanation.

Summary

- Time taken for a decision to be made on an application strongly affects the experiences refugees and asylum seekers have in London.
- Waiting for a decision was considered the most psychological and stressful experience.
- Those awaiting a decision felt they could not begin to settle in the UK.
- A significant number of people are still waiting over five years for an initial decision.
- Those awaiting a decision have disadvantaged access to services.
- Many people were unsure of their immigration status.

3.4 Organisations and service providers

One question that was asked was how did refugees and asylum seekers find out about key services such as accommodation and health and which organisations or service providers proved to be particularly helpful or unhelpful in assisting them in accessing these services. The vast majority agreed that their Refugee Community Organisation was the most supportive and informative organisation⁵. Those from the Tamil, Turkish and Somali communities which are now well established in North London, also emphasised the important role played by their family and friends who were already living in the UK in helping them to find out and access services. Those without established communities were not able to rely upon these networks.

On the initial arrival in the UK, participants had contact with RCOs, the Home Office, NASS (for those arriving since 2000), and local authorities. A significant number had also used the services of the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture. Although services such as libraries and advice centres were available, the majority were not aware of these services or did not have the confidence to access them. Only after participants had been in the UK for over a year did some start to consider accessing other service providers such as job centres, training providers and advice centres, and even then this was often through referral from their RCO. The three organisations besides the RCO that were cited as helpful and informative by participants in almost every focus group were the Refugee Arrivals Project, the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. A large number of those who had been in the UK for several years also praised the work of the Refugee Education and Training Advice Service (RETAS).

Criticism was made of the services and attitudes of the Home Office and the National Asylum Support Service (NASS),

"Home Office people are like policemen, they have angry faces and it's scary to meet them the first time"
(Zairean-Congolese asylum seeker, in the UK for 10 months)

"NASS have been horrible. I did not want to move out of London so I am staying with a friend in London"
(Ethiopian asylum seeker, in the UK for 6 months)

"When you arrive NASS just gives you a map and some money and says get on with it"
(Zairean-Congolese asylum seeker, in the UK for 10 months)

The services provided by local authorities and job centres in North London were also criticised by those who had experience of using them. Participants felt that many of the staff working for these organisations were insensitive to the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and had little understanding of the problems they had faced in their home countries. The perceived attitudes of these service providers led to widespread criticism by many participants,

"Job centres and benefits agencies look down on asylum seekers"
(Zairean-Congolese ELR, in the UK for 8 years)

*"Refugees and asylum seekers are humiliated in the UK. The authorities never explain legislation, they just humiliate us.
This happens to every Kurd in Haringey"*
(Kurdish asylum seeker in the UK for 1.5 years)

"These people do not understand that people ran away from their countries for a purpose"
(Sierra Leonean RCO worker)

*"There are all these problems and issues that the job centre does not look at, they just tell you "there is a cleaning job
what's wrong with that?"*
(Turkish Cypriot refugee, in the UK for 20 years)

*"They are not educated in the policies. I had to explain what it all meant because I spoke the English.
It must be horrible if you don't actually speak English"*
(Ugandan refugee, in the UK for 11 years)

Summary

- RCOs were considered to be the most helpful organisations. The Refugee Arrivals Project, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture were also praised.
- 'Official' organisations such as the Home Office, NASS, local authorities and job centres were heavily criticised for their services and attitudes.
- Few were aware of service providers outside their RCO. Those who were often lacked the confidence to approach them.
- Most people who did use service providers such as job centres, training providers and advice centres accessed them only after being in the UK for over a year.

3.5 Education and Training***Overseas qualifications***

Participants were asked what qualifications they had from their home country and what experience they had of education and training in the UK. In general it was found that skill levels and associated qualifications varied according to the national and social origin of the participants and that gender and age were also significant factors. Many of those from Somalia (particularly men) for example, have high-level qualifications, whilst a significant number of those from Turkey have never been to school and are illiterate in their own language. As mentioned previously, in some cases it is the most highly qualified people who have been persecuted because they are considered a threat to those in power while in other cases persecuted people have been denied access to basic rights such as education. However, as the focus groups and the community interviews show, there is a wide diversity of educational backgrounds not only between communities but within them.

36% of focus group participants had qualifications at further or higher education levels from their home country. Nine per cent had been studying at university when they were forced to flee their home country so had never been able to complete the course and gain a qualification. This was common amongst the focus group participants from the Tamil and Somali communities.

Only four participants, (three from the Somali community, one from Ethiopia) had attempted to get their qualifications recognised in the UK. One man had qualified as a chemical engineer in Somalia. He was advised to do a refresher course in the UK but this would have taken two years and he did not want to spend that amount of time re-training. Likewise, a woman from Ethiopia had qualified as an accountant before coming to the UK but would have had to pay overseas fees to do a refresher course in the UK,

"I had to do an update course but because I did not have any papers I will be charged overseas fee. So, I could not do the course, and now I am doing very silly ESOL and basic computing just to feel like I am doing something"
(Ethiopian asylum seeker, in the UK for 6 months)

One woman had been for an interview for a course at a college in North London. She had a degree in chemistry from Somalia and had work experience. The woman who assessed her application did not recognise her qualifications and so she was unable to enrol on the course. However, another Somali woman had applied for a course at the same college and was interviewed by a woman who was able to contact the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) and get her qualifications recognised enabling her to register on the course.

Education and training in the UK

Almost all of those participating in the focus group discussions had attended an education or training course in the UK, although few had done anything other than ESOL. Other courses undertaken were in computing, accounting and dressmaking and one person had done an advanced media studies course.

The reasons that few people were attending courses other than ESOL were:

- They did not know what courses were available
- They could not afford to pay for courses, and resulting travel and child care costs
- They did not have the language skills required to undertake a course

A lack of information on available courses is an issue that was identified by a previous AET study (1997) on refugees and asylum seekers in London. While attempts have been made to rectify the problem by co-ordinating information through networks such as the Refugee Training Partnership and the Pan London Refugee Training and Employment Network, and through INFORM information bulletins produced and circulated by AET, it is clear that the problem continues.

It was emphasised that courses other than ESOL were not usually free. Asylum seekers were in theory expected to pay for further education courses at overseas student rates. Although concessionary fees were available to part time students on welfare benefits or vouchers, very few of the focus group participants' felt that they could afford to enrol on them. For women, the issue of childcare was particularly evident, as was the time and money spent travelling to courses that were not located nearby. As well as paying for childcare, women from several different countries said that they did not like to leave their children with childminders who they did not know, as they could afford only the cheapest available childcare they worried that their children would receive sub-standard care.

Several people commented that they were unwilling to pay fees for courses as they did not know how well taught the course would be. As found during the AET study into the education, training and employment needs of young refugees in Haringey, (1998), practical work placements were considered by many to be necessary if a course were to be successful,

"If the training is not attached to an employment program there isn't much point, it's just a waste of time"
(Ugandan refugee, in the UK for 11 years)

The focus groups did not reveal a major difference between those with refugee status and those who were asylum seekers when it came to accessing further education. However, the community interviews found that only 9% of asylum seekers had taken FE courses compared with 14% of those with refugee status and 16% of those who were residents. A study conducted by AET in 1998 for Haringey Council, also found that unemployed people with refugee status aged between the ages of 18 – 24 and living in Haringey were likely to be in further or higher education rather than ESOL⁶. There are two key reasons for this:

Firstly, many people of this age group who have refugee status will have been in the UK for several years and are likely to have attended school in Britain. They are likely therefore to have English language skills and will have been given advice and information on accessing further and higher education while at school.

Those with refugee status (including ELR and ILR) are also entitled to home student fees, grants and loans (after three years for those with ELR), which asylum seekers are not.

A major point to come from the focus group discussions was that refugees and asylum seekers could not attend courses other than ESOL until their English skills were sufficient. Although this is an obvious point, it has significant implications for training providers. Many people have been in the UK for several years and, as discussed below, have not been able to make significant progress with their English skills and therefore have not been able to attend training courses other than those run in their own language. One woman for example, had not progressed beyond ESOL Level 2, despite being in the UK for twenty-nine years.

Although the vast majority of focus group participants had undertaken education or training courses in the UK, there are a large number of refugees and asylum seekers who have not although this differed between communities. Representatives from the Roma, West African and Tamil communities felt that the majority of their community had attended classes in the UK. However, the Somali community felt that there were a significant number of Somali women, particularly single women, who had not attended education or training courses because they had young children. The Zairean-Congolese community felt that while the majority of those aged between sixteen and nineteen were accessing education and training, very few over this age were. The Angolan group felt that only a few of their members were accessing courses. They felt that many young people were working in low paid jobs instead as they did not see their elders being able to utilise their skills and qualifications to gain employment in the UK.

One Kurdish group felt that most of their community were attending ESOL classes, although a mixed group of Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriots felt that only 10% of the women in their communities, and less than 10% of the men were. As well as travel and childcare costs they felt that men were too busy trying to find employment to attend a course. They also felt that they had little encouragement to study and that the men from their community were too proud to attend ESOL classes as people would then know that they could not speak English. Many of the refugees and asylum seekers from mainland Turkey are illiterate in their own language and have never attended school so the prospect of attending classes in the UK is considered daunting.

"The Kurdish have a problem with learning Turkish let alone English. They are not literate in their own language so the whole literacy concept is difficult for them"
(Kurdish asylum seeker, in the UK for 2 years)

One issue that was raised was that those refugees or asylum seekers who were working rarely had the time to attend education or training courses. Those in work were often doing menial and low paid jobs but were unable to access education and training that may enable them to get better jobs.

ESOL provision

Access to ESOL courses was considered to be the most important educational need of all refugees and asylum seekers in North London. Many of the participants from the Tamil and African communities spoke some English on arrival in the UK as it was taught at school in their home countries. However, they knew of many people from their communities who had no knowledge of English. Those who did speak some English wanted to improve their language skills. In particular they wanted to learn conversational English and more specialised terminology. Very few of the participants from the Turkish, Kurdish and Roma communities spoke any English on arrival in the UK.

The majority of participants who had done or who were currently doing ESOL classes felt that the courses run by RCOs were preferable to those run by colleges and other training providers. A number of participants were attending ESOL classes that were run by RCOs other than their own. For example, an ESOL course run by the Ugandan Community Relief Organisation in Haringey was also attended by people from Somalia. The courses run by RCOs were considered to be more appropriate to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers than those run by other training providers. RCOs often used teachers from their own community, which enabled students to discuss any queries that they had in their own language. However, many people also felt that once a basic level of English had been acquired it was better to have teachers who were themselves English as they could teach them language that was up to date.

Many participants commented that courses run by training providers other than RCOs were too fast and that their language level was not assessed properly, resulting in those who had a reasonable knowledge of English being put in classes with beginners. Several people commented that teachers at colleges were insensitive to their needs, did not understand the issues they faced in the UK and got angry if they were not making adequate progress. One woman said of college teachers,

*"They say you've been here for nine years you should know English.
They don't understand that we arrived with only a suitcase"*
(Turkish RCO worker)

One of the main points to be made regarding the current provision of ESOL at all levels was that the way it was being taught was very dull, with people having to learn 'text book grammar', rather than conversational English. Participants said that they would like the lessons to be more practical and therefore more fun.

"We need humour as we have lost so much. Everything is boring and frozen at the moment"
(Tamil ESOL teacher with residency in the UK. In the UK for 29 years)

"At the moment it's really boring"
(Zairean-Congolese, ILR, in the UK for 11 years)

"At evening classes teachers are tired so just leave you with books and tell you to get on with it"
(Zairean Congolese, ELR, in the UK for 8 years)

Current provision

Participants were asked whether the education and training opportunities currently available in the LSC London North boroughs were adequate and relevant to their needs. They were also asked what courses they would like to be available to them. Every participant felt that ESOL provision in the four boroughs was not adequate. Many had to wait several months before they could register on an ESOL course and, as noted above, progression was often slow because the classes were uninspiring and not suited to the English level of students. In all focus groups, participants said that the current provision of ESOL was not flexible enough to suit their needs. Whilst some women for example, wanted ESOL courses to be available to them during the day while their children were at school, other women wanted courses in the evening when their husbands and family could care for their children.

Many participants felt that it would be beneficial to run courses in self-development to try to help refugees and asylum seekers regain their confidence in the UK. They also felt that there should be more classes available in job search skills, such as writing a curriculum vitae and interview skills, as well as classes in office skills, for example, using a fax or photocopier machine.

Focus group participants at every discussion group emphasised the fact that they knew very little not only about UK work culture but also about British culture in general. Many participants suggested that it would be beneficial to run classes on British culture so that they would have a better understanding of British customs and norms. It was felt that this would help them to integrate better into the host community. Many of the younger participants felt that cultural classes could provide a more practical and fun approach to learning and would help them to meet British people. This is discussed in more detail later on in the study.

More classes were also wanted in IT skills. Like ESOL, people complained of having to wait for places on courses. They felt that it would be beneficial to have access to computing facilities outside of the course to enable them to practice their skills and make quicker progress. Many suggested that computing courses that were more specialised would be beneficial in helping them to gain employment.

Many participants said that they did not know what employment was available in the UK and therefore that they did not know what courses would be of use to them,

"We don't know what courses would be useful to help us get jobs. We would like the Learning and Skills Council to provide courses that it thinks will help us to get jobs"
(Tamil asylum seeker, in the UK for 2 years)

Many also commented that it was unfair that people who had been waiting for several years for a decision on their application were expected to pay for further and higher education courses. Several people suggested that education and training should be available at home fee rate at least to those who had good academic potential and had waited for a decision for over two years.

Summary

- 36% of the participants had higher or further education qualifications from their home countries.
- 9% had been at university when they were forced to flee.
- Only one participant had succeeded in getting her qualifications recognised in north London.
- Few participants had undertaken classes in north London other than ESOL.
- Course fees and travel and childcare costs were the main barrier to courses.
- There is a lack of co-ordinated information on available courses in North London.
- Participants were unwilling to travel outside their locality to attend courses.
- Many participants had not tried to access classes other than those run by RCOs.
- ESOL provision is often of poor standard and classes not suited to the level of students.
- ESOL classes are dull and uninspiring and progress often slow.
- People often have to wait several months before they can access ESOL.
- There is a need for self development and 'cultural classes'.
- Many people did not know which courses would help them to find employment in London.

3.6 Employment

Employment in home country

Thirty seven per cent of the participants had been employed in their home countries (excluding those who had worked in subsistence agriculture). Twenty three per cent (32) had been employed in professional or managerial positions, seven per cent (10) in skilled labour and seven percent (9) in unskilled labour. Those in professional positions included twelve accountants, one stockbroker, two government workers, seven teachers, one doctor, two nurses, a foreign diplomat, an advertising manager and two chemical engineers.

Nine per cent were studying at a higher education level when they were forced to flee their country. This included people studying to be teachers, engineers, biologists, agriculturalists and nurses.

A large number of people who were not in employment in an 'official' capacity in their home country were working as farmers.

Employment in UK

Of the 138 participants, only eighteen (13%) had ever worked in the UK in 'legal' employment. Several others had worked unofficially in the UK. This figure is much lower than that from the community interviews. Of those who had work experience in the UK, thirteen had worked for their RCO and therefore, only five (4%) had work experience outside their community group. Of these four, one had worked in a factory, one worked part time as a shop assistant, one was doing voluntary work for Islington Volunteer Centre and RETAS, one worked as a health advisor and one worked as an assistant manager at a garage.

The fact that the focus group discussions were held during the day when anyone who was in full-time employment would be at work may explain why this figure is so low. However, participants in this study were asked how many people they knew of from their community who had been able to access employment in the UK. Few people were aware of anyone from their community in official employment and only a very small number who were working in the field they had qualified in.

"I know of only one man. He graduated in the UK as a doctor and works at a hospital. He is the only one I know"
(Somali refugee, in the UK for 8 years)

"I have been here for five years but I can say I do not believe there is any one Angolan person using their qualification from Angola"
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 12 years)

"There are some Somali support teachers but not many and they are qualified teachers in Somalia"
(Somali with British citizenship, in the UK 10 years)

Participants felt that a lack of awareness of people from their communities who had succeeded in finding employment in their field caused low morale and provided no incentive for them to study in the UK to increase their employment prospects.

"A lot of young people say I don't want to go to school because I see there is no job after school so I will do the cleaning job and get some money"
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 12 years)

"Peoples' morale is down. My husband is qualified as a graduate but he has diabetes and can't do manual work but he can't get anything in an office"
(Somali with British citizenship, in the UK for 10 years)

A significant number of participants had worked or knew of others working informally in the UK. While informal employment was usually poorly paid it was more accessible than formal employment. One participant felt that it was necessary to take any work available as his family were expected to help new arrivals in the UK,

"A lot of men are forced into the informal market because they have to support recent refugee arrivals"
(Tamil asylum seeker, in the UK for 4 years)

Those participants who had good qualifications and skills had not found it any easier to gain employment in the UK than those who did not, even when they had gained their qualifications in the UK or elsewhere in Europe. One Somali man for example, had qualified as a chemical engineer in Somalia. When he arrived in the UK thirteen years ago he completed a GNVQ in Administration and then completed training as a teacher. Despite having experience through work placements and voluntary work he has not been able to get a job in the UK. He now works for the RCO. The husband of one woman had completed a PhD in Botany in Italy but had never been able to find work in his field in the UK. All of the community interview respondents who had found work in the professional sector in the UK had been to university. However, 10% of those with degrees had only found work in the skilled, semi-skilled or manual sectors and a further 37% were unemployed.

The focus group participants who did not have high qualifications or work experience said that they would be happy to do any work in the UK, while those with qualifications and/or work experience felt that they did not want to work in poorly paid menial employment. However, many of the latter said that they would not turn a job offer down even if it was poorly paid and below their capabilities.

Participants were asked what they considered to be the main barriers people from their community faced in getting employment in the UK. Language was identified as the major barrier.

"When you go to sign on they keep asking when are you going to get a job, but the newspaper and computer are all in English, so you get nothing. I had six years training in job search but I still have no job"
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 12 years)

Other employment issues

Other issues identified were a lack of understanding of job seeking culture in the UK, not being allowed to work, not being given a National Insurance number, discrimination, lack of references and UK work experience, and not being able to get overseas qualifications recognised. These findings are supported by those of other studies into the barriers facing refugees and asylum seekers getting employment in the UK, (AET 1998, Refugee Skills Net 1999).

"Finding a job is not very easy. Once you tell them about experience they ask for a reference. I do not have them. I run from my country. I didn't bring a family photo - why would I bring a reference"
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 12 years)

"[Tamil] People are shy to speak, we respect our elders. The UK job system is therefore very unnatural"
(Tamil refugee, in the UK for 20 years)

"Many people would like a work permit but do not know how to proceed"
(Roma asylum seeker, in the UK for 2 years)

"Once you say you are an asylum seeker you have no chance of getting a job"
(Senegalese refugee, in the UK for 10 years)

"It is easier to employ someone who is not an asylum seeker"
(Roma asylum seeker, in the UK for 4 years)

"My daughter tried to get a job. She was told she needed a National Insurance number. DSS asked her to bring a pay slip, but she doesn't have one because she doesn't have a job because she doesn't have a number. It is like a circle and someone is laughing"
(Rwandan refugee, in the UK for 1.5 years)

Discrimination (real or perceived) was considered a continuing problem for participants from all the four LSC London North boroughs. One Tamil man felt that because he had received no explanation as to why he did not get a job after being shortlisted he was being discriminated against. One Somali woman said that she had worked at Marks and Spencer's for a day but was then told that she could not wear her headscarf while at work. Others claimed to have been asked questions, which they felt, would not have been asked of a 'white' person. One Zairean Congolese man for example, said that he felt discriminated against when he had attended an interview to work with Royal Mail as he was asked whether he could cope with wearing a uniform and how he would spend his wages.

Summary

- 37% had been employed in their home countries, 23% of which had worked in professional or managerial positions.
- 9% had been university students when they left their home country.
- Only 13% had ever worked in the UK and only 4% had worked outside of their community group. This is much lower than the community interview results.
- Lack of role models in employment caused low morale and a lack of incentive to attend education or training classes.
- Main barriers to employment are lack of English language skills, lack of understanding of UK work culture, not being allowed to work, discrimination, lack of references and UK work experience, not being able to get overseas qualifications recognised.
- In general people were heavily reliant upon hearing about employment opportunities through word of mouth rather than job centres or newspapers.

3.7 Accommodation

Lack of appropriate and acceptable accommodation was cited as one of the main problems facing refugees and asylum seekers. Very few of the participants were living in accommodation that they felt was of an acceptable standard. Many had been placed in accommodation that was inappropriate to their needs. This was a major issue at all stages of the asylum process. As shown by the maps in Annex 4, refugees and asylum seekers in the London North area are often housed in areas which are already severely deprived. According to the Audit Commission (2000) these are also areas where overcrowding and poor quality accommodation is common.

A study into the condition of private rented accommodation provided for asylum seekers was conducted by Shelter (2000) after the number of asylum seekers contacting the charity for advice doubled in two years. The study found that asylum seekers placed in the private rented sector are being housed in some of the worst accommodation that is available. Because they have fewer rights and means of redress, face language barriers and a lack of understanding about how the housing system works in the UK, they face major difficulties in dealing with their housing problems. Many were also afraid that making complaints about their accommodation would jeopardise their asylum claim.

The Shelter study also found that nearly a fifth of the accommodation inspected during the study was "unfit for human habitation", rising to 43% of bed-sits. Nineteen per cent of occupied dwellings were infested and one in ten were very poorly furnished with severely inadequate facilities, which posed a health risk. Households in over 80% of houses in multiple occupation had inadequate means of escape from fire. A significant number had been placed in accommodation where they were harassed because of their ethnicity or gender.

Many of the dwellings being provided for asylum seekers had already been deemed unfit for use by the local authority due to dangers such as faulty gas and electrical appliances. In some areas it was found that properties had been contracted from unscrupulous private landlords who already had poor reputations with local Environmental Health Departments. Other health risks prevalent in poor quality accommodation include dampness, poor sanitation, unhygienic cooking facilities, infestation and overcrowding. With little money to spend, many asylum seekers spend significant amounts of their time inside, giving them little respite from the poor conditions. Lack of money and language barriers also prevent many from carrying out basic repairs to improve their accommodation.

During the focus group meetings a number of participants said that they had been visited at home by salespeople from different gas and electricity companies. Because they did not understand the implications of what the salesperson was saying they had been pressured into signing contracts with new companies which were often more expensive.

Overcrowding

Overcrowding was also deemed a major issue amongst asylum seekers. The Shelter study found that nearly half of the children involved in the study were living in one room with their families and having to share cooking and bathroom facilities with other families.

A study by the Tamil Community Housing Association (1998), found that over half of their sample of 1136 people from the Tamil community in London said that their accommodation was unsuitable because of overcrowding.

Since the introduction of the NASS system in 2000, accommodation in London has been available only in exceptional cases when specialist medical support is required. However, as September 2001 figures from NASS and the London Asylum Seekers Consortium show, 81% of all new applicants have opted to live in London and receive voucher only support. This has significant implications for the quality of life of both newly arrived asylum seekers and those who arrived in the UK before 2000, as new arrivals choosing to live in London tend to stay with their friends and relatives in what is often already overcrowded and poor quality housing.

As London boroughs are still required to support existing in-country asylum seekers, the housing costs incurred by these boroughs remains considerable. In order to reduce housing costs, the borough of Haringey assists a number of families to stay with friends or relatives. While this means that Haringey has the lowest family unit costs in outer London, (Audit Commission, 2000) it may well have significant implications with overcrowding problems.

During the focus group discussions, many participants discussed the problems they had faced getting acceptable and appropriate accommodation in the UK.

One disabled Kurdish man had been referred to an agent in North London by social services in Dover. The room he has been given is tiny with no room to move around. The electricity and heating rarely works and the ceiling is leaking. His RCO in Haringey have called the agency on numerous occasions. They have said they will deal with it but have failed to do so. Often the agency puts the phone down on them. The man has ILR and has been in the UK for nine years.

One Turkish woman in Enfield had arrived in the UK with psychological problems and had used the services of the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture. When she arrived she was accompanied by her five young children. They were housed in council accommodation, which was extremely cold and damp. The RCO have complained to the council on numerous occasions in the past fifteen years but they have only sent someone round once to talk to the woman. She and her children are still living there fifteen years later.

One Somali woman in Waltham Forest described her accommodation as "not a place where a human can live". She was told that she could paint the flat but she had no money to do this. She was told by the agent that if she complained she would make herself homeless. She wanted to get a lawyer to help her but did not know how to do this.

One Senegalese woman in Haringey had been homeless for five weeks after giving birth to twins. She had to stay with a friend until she could be housed.

One Somali woman in Waltham Forest has been living in a flat on the sixth floor for the past two years. She is sixty and has arthritis. There is a lift but she is afraid of using it.

Frequency of relocating

Many asylum seekers are also moved around several times during their first few years in the UK. A study conducted by the Tamil Community Housing Association (1998), found that over half of the 1136 people they sampled from the Tamil community in London had lived in their accommodation for less than a year, and that even some of those who had been in the UK for several years were still being moved around.

Several people attending the focus group discussions said that frequently being moved around was particularly problematic for those with children, as they had to try to re-register and settle at new schools. One woman from Turkey for example, has been in the UK for six years and has ELR. During the six years she and her children have been moved several times. She has tried to re-register her children at schools in the locality where she is currently living. However, she has not been able to do this and has to travel with her children on the bus every day to the other side of Enfield.

Under the NASS arrangements, asylum seekers are given one offer of accommodation, which can be at any of the dispersal centres in the UK. Under this scheme therefore, the frequency with which people are moved around should in theory have decreased. However, one Roma family from the Czech Republic who participated in a focus group discussion, had been in the UK for only one year but had already been moved by NASS firstly to Cambridge, then to Rotherham and then to London.

Summary

- Lack of appropriate and acceptable accommodation was a major issue for those living in the four LSC, London North boroughs at all stages of the asylum process.
- Refugees and asylum seekers are often housed in already deprived areas within the four boroughs.
- Overcrowding and poor conditions were major issues for new arrivals and the friends and relatives who accommodated them in North London.
- Unscrupulous landlords and salespeople take advantage of refugees and asylum seekers, particularly those without English language skills.
- Asylum seekers were frequently re-located. Many have problems re-registering their children at new schools.

3.8 Health

All those claiming asylum in the UK are entitled to free health care from the NHS. A 1999 study by the Health of Londoners Project, found that many of the health problems faced by refugees and asylum seekers were not specific to their status as immigrants but were concurrent with the health problems of deprived or excluded groups in the UK. It also found that the average physical health status of refugees and asylum seekers on arrival was not significantly poor and that most of those seeking asylum are young and physically fit.

However, it also identified health problems that are specific to and characteristic of refugees and asylum seekers:

- Physical after-effects of war, torture, displacement and journey to the UK.
- Communicable diseases, particularly tuberculosis.
- Mental health problems following trauma.
- Social and psychological problems arising from coping with a new culture, loss of status etc.
(This can include problems resulting from uncertainty around the process of claiming asylum in the UK).

Point four was discussed widely by the participants during the focus group meetings. Many people felt that they had been degraded and humiliated under the UK's asylum processes and policies and that this was one of the main causes of their low morale, depression and lack of self esteem,

"Whatever we had we left behind, whatever we loved we left behind. Every authority here thinks we are beggars. We have been humiliated"

(Kurdish asylum seeker, in the UK for 1.5 years)

"Most of those from West Africa left a better life to come to this degrading position. For a doctor, a teacher, a lecturer to come here and end up on vouchers is totally degrading"

(Sierra Leonean RCO worker)

"Immigration problems can be a big problem. Mentally it can take away your confidence"

(Angolan asylum seeker, in the UK for 1 month)

"The voucher system is humiliating and very impractical"

(Rwandan refugee, in the UK for 1.5 years)

Several of the focus group participants had received support from the Medical Foundation for the Victims of Torture. Many others had used the health service, but the experiences cited of the health service were overwhelmingly negative. The major problem with the health service that was identified by participants was that little explanation was given to them on medical and bureaucratic procedures and waiting times and that without English language skills they could not ask what was going on,

"I have had no health provision for six months. I am very sick. I know I can wait for a decision to be made about my stay in UK but I can't just put my health on the shelf, it is not a document. I still don't have NHS cover. I am very worried and no-one is taking responsibility"

(Ethiopian asylum seeker, in the UK for 6 months)

The other major complaint was the difficulties some had experienced registering with a GP. This was particularly problematic for those who did not speak English. One asylum seeker from Turkey for example, had been in the UK for four months, during which time the RCO in Enfield had been trying to get her registered with a GP. The RCO had tried twenty one different GPs in the area but all said that they could not take new patients on or that they could not take on a non-English speaker as they did not have interpreters. The RCO knows of one GP in the area that does provide interpreters but they are heavily over-subscribed and can not take on more patients.

A significant number of participants, particularly women, felt that GPs in the UK had little understanding of their culture and some of the health issues they faced and that getting referred to a specialist was extremely difficult. Many Somali women for example, have been circumcised and said that they were reluctant and embarrassed to go to their GP who they felt would not understand their culture. Several of the Somali women participating in the focus groups said that they knew that there were a number of Somali mid-wives in the UK but that they did not know of any in North London. They were however, aware of a Somali woman who worked as a health advisor in Leyton and many had chosen to see her rather than their GP. The women did not know who the advisor worked for but felt strongly that she should be allowed to carry out practical work as well as giving advice.

Outreach health workers in Waltham Forest

The advisor that the Somali women praised works for the Waltham Forest and Redbridge Health Authority. She worked as a consultant gynaecologist in Somalia before fleeing to the UK seven years ago to seek asylum. Along with another refugee doctor, she is working as a lay health advisor alongside an outreach nurse at a clinic funded by the health authority. The clinic is run in the back offices of a refugee advice centre, deemed the best place to reach their target clientele. According to one of the doctors, "People have great difficulties understanding how our system works [in the UK] and how to access it, especially in areas where there are already issues about inadequate supplies of GPs and school places. So they're competing with people already living in areas of deprivation and that just makes things harder for people" (BBC News, 2001). The outreach clinic also means that refugees and asylum seekers do not have to go from doctor to doctor trying to get registered, as the clinic assesses their needs and then allocates them with a GP. If they have an urgent health need they try to fast track them to the required service.

Because the doctors do not have the recognised qualifications and experience required to practice as a doctor in the UK, they are unable to perform practical work and cannot even offer clinical advice to the nurses who run the project (The Guardian, 2001). The clinic has been well received and although most of the patients are asylum seekers and refugees from the locality, clients have also come from as far away as Newham, Hackney and Camden.

Summary

- Participants felt humiliated and degraded by their treatment in the UK.
- Many participants did not understand medical and bureaucratic procedures in the UK and felt that they were being made to wait long periods of time for appointments because they were refugees and asylum seekers.
- A significant number had experienced problems registering with GPs in the four LSC, London North boroughs.
- Many, particularly women, felt that doctors in the UK did not understand their health problems.
- The outreach health advisor scheme in Waltham Forest was highly praised.

3.9 Integration

Focus group participants were asked to discuss their feelings and experiences of integrating into the host community in the UK. Employment was considered to be a key factor in integration as not only did it enable people to meet others from outside their own community, it also provided them with a means of self-support and therefore increased confidence and self respect,

"Dignity, giving back self esteem and quality of life. People want a normal life again"
(Sierra Leonean RCO worker)

"Working with British people can be very helpful, you will feel like you are all working for the same society"
(Angolan refugee, in the UK for 12 years)

Many participants felt that there was little attempt to help refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into the host community and that there was no opportunity to mix with British people in a social setting. Of the one hundred and thirty eight participants, only eight (6%) knew any British⁷ people that they would consider to be their friends. Most had only had contact with British people through services such as councils, NASS and the Home Office. Of the eight who did have British friends, three had met them through employment. Three of the eight had neighbours who they considered to be their friends and one woman had met her friends while in hospital. Participants felt that it was easier for young refugees and asylum seekers to meet people from outside their communities, as they were the ones most likely to be in education or training outside the RCO.

A large number of participants said that they would like 'cultural classes' to be run for them to increase their understanding of British culture. They felt that cultural classes would be beneficial if they helped them to understand British cultural norms and issues such as the roles of service providers. It was felt that cultural classes should be taught by British teachers and should involve talks with representatives from a wide variety of service providers such as the police and the council so that refugees and asylum seekers could have a better understanding of what they did. Many people for example, emphasised the repressive role of the police in their home countries and wanted to know what the roles and responsibilities of the police in the UK were. People also felt that they were not able to maximise the opportunities available to them in the UK as they did not know what opportunities there were or how to access these and that cultural classes could help them overcome this problem.

The majority of participants felt that language was a key barrier to integration and that without English language skills they could not even begin to integrate.

*"People assume you can speak English so we look stupid because we can't.
People look down at you because you can't show your skills and you can't communicate to them"*
(Kurdish asylum seeker, in the UK for 1.5 years)

*"At the end, everything comes down to language. We tend to shy away in our close knit community,
not because we want to but because we have no choice"*
(Turkish RCO worker)

All participants felt that ESOL should be available to everyone on arrival rather than having to wait for several months as is common. Some felt that ESOL should be compulsory.

Immigration status in the UK was identified as a key issue in integration. In every focus group, participants stated that it was extremely difficult to even consider starting to integrate until they had received a positive decision on their application. This has major implications for those who do not receive a positive decision for several years.

"If you know you are going to stay here you can start to relax, have a home, learn the language"
(Roma asylum seeker, in the UK for 3 years)

"We are daily being told we will be deported. We don't know what our future is so how can we settle"
(Kurdish asylum seeker, in the UK for 5 years)

"The main obstruction is uncertainty about the future"
(Senegalese refugee, in the UK for 10 years)

Summary

- Employment and language were considered key to integration.
- Only 6% knew any British people they would consider friends.
- Little attempt is currently being made for refugees and asylum seekers to meet British people in a social setting.
- There is a need for classes on British culture and the roles and responsibilities of service providers.
- People felt ESOL should be available on arrival in the UK and some thought it should be compulsory.
- Integration was easier for younger people, particularly those who had been to school in the UK. However, this made it more problematic if people were refused asylum in the UK.
- Those awaiting a decision found it extremely difficult to integrate even if they had been waiting for several years.

All focus group participants felt that it was easier for young refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into the host community, particularly those who had been to school in the UK. However, a significant number of people said that they believed this difference in ability to integrate was causing problems within their communities. Some for example, felt that young people were rebelling against their cultures,

*"Our children have gone from one world to another.
There is a huge conflict between what is going on in the house and outside it"*
(Zairean Congolese with British residency, in the UK for 10 years)

Others felt that their children were losing their first language and knowledge of their cultures as they grew up in the UK. This was considered a major problem by those who were still awaiting a positive decision on their application after several years as they did not know how their children would cope if they were sent back to their home country,

"Uncertainty of the future is the worst thing. If you have children it's a disaster being sent back"
(Senegalese refugee, in the UK for 10 years)

All relevant service providers located in the four Learning and Skills Council London North boroughs were contacted regarding the project and were given the opportunity to be interviewed. Emphasis was placed upon those providing education and training services. Service providers were asked what services they provided for refugees and asylum seekers and what perceptions they had of the needs and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in the four boroughs. Service providers contacted and interviewed are listed in Annex 5.

4.1 Current Provision

Annex 6 provides information on courses available in the four LSC London North boroughs. In general, it was found that few services offered by training providers catered specifically for refugees and asylum seekers. However, the services available to them appear to be wide-ranging. The accessibility of the courses available depended largely on the course fees and whether or not childcare facilities were available. Many of the basic skills courses provided were free or of low cost and some provided reimbursement for travel and childcare. Above a basic skills level courses become decreasingly accessible, particularly for those with asylum seeker status. Only those with recognised refugee status, indefinite leave to remain or exceptional leave to remain are accepted as home students at further and higher education (after three years residency in the UK for ELR) level. Those who are asylum seekers are expected to pay overseas student rates for full time courses, although concessionary fees are available for those studying part time who receive welfare benefits or vouchers.

Service providers felt that current basic education and training provision for refugees and asylum seekers was adequate, as many of the opportunities available to refugees and asylum seekers were no different to those offered to any one else. The major exception identified was the provision of ESOL. All service providers who ran education and training courses said that they always had lengthy waiting lists for people who wanted ESOL classes,

"ESOL is under-resourced. Every ESOL course that ever runs is over subscribed"
(Service provider, Haringey)

Several training providers and many of the RCOs felt that the ESOL that was being provided was often of poor quality and that many students were not progressing, despite having attended classes over lengthy periods of time. This was also emphasised during the focus groups. Several training providers and RCOs felt that there was a need for specialised ESOL classes to be more readily available for refugees and asylum seekers, for example, business terminology and ESOL that would be of use to those wishing to go on to higher education.

Many focus group participants and RCOs from all four boroughs felt that opportunities for training in IT were not adequate. Training providers were aware of this complaint but in general felt that they were meeting the need. Some did acknowledge that they were not able to offer the facilities required for people to practice what they learnt as the facilities were being fully used for classes.

Lack of worthwhile work placement opportunities in training programmes was also emphasised by focus group participants. Few of the training providers interviewed provided work experience placements. One training provider in Enfield who does provide work placement opportunities for young people said that they do not take on many refugees or asylum seekers because of the bureaucracy involved,

"We only take them on when they have all the proper paperwork which is very rare. It is our obligation to thoroughly check all paperwork otherwise we get fined"

As mentioned above, current education and training provision in the four boroughs above a basic skills level is wide-ranging. However, it is not generally accessible for those without refugee status as asylum seekers are expected to pay overseas student fees. Focus group participants felt that this was unfair, particularly for those who had had to wait several years for a decision on their application. This problem was recognised by the service providers running further education courses and several commented that under certain circumstances and at the discretion of the college, they were able to accept some asylum seekers as home students. AET's experience in providing education and training advice has shown that whilst one asylum seeker may be accepted on a course as a home student, another asylum seeker applying for the same course, sometimes even at the same college, and under similar circumstances, will be accepted only as an overseas student.

4.2 Course selection and follow-up

Training providers were asked how they had selected the courses that they ran. For example, were they running the course as a result of a study that had shown that the qualifications and skills gained from the course were actually useful in securing employment or because funding was available for a particular course. None of the training providers interviewed had actually carried out specific research on what education and training opportunities their clients wanted or deemed useful although one organisation who provided capacity building training for RCOs said that they only ran courses once they have been asked to by the RCOs. Most organisations felt that because they had long worked with refugees and asylum seekers they were aware of what their needs were. One training provider in Enfield stated,

"We have been running these courses for donkey's years and there is still demand for them so we think they are successful"

All those interviewed were asked whether or not they did follow-up work to find out whether their clients had been able to make use of their training. Most training providers said that although they would like to conduct follow-up work with their clients they did not have the time or resources required. Often no distinction was made by service providers between those clients who were refugees or asylum seekers and those who were not, so even if follow-ups were done using existing data they would not be able to provide information on the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers.

4.3 Awareness of services

The most common methods of finding out what education and training courses and other services were available was through word of mouth or through RCOs. The importance of oral communication was emphasised during the focus groups and has been cited by a number of studies (Olden 1999, Refugee Skills Net, 1999). Extremely few of those who participated in the focus group discussions had ever used services such as libraries or advice centres and those who did had generally been referred to them by their RCO. Several people at the focus groups commented that they would never have the confidence to approach such service providers without having a direct referral from their community group.

All service providers interviewed said that they thought that their services were well advertised. However, most advertised mainly in libraries and newspapers, which participants at the focus groups said they very rarely used. Some service providers said that they did send information to RCOs while others said that they thought that RCOs were aware of them but did not always send them up to date information. One training provider said that they purposefully did not send information on their services to RCOs, as they did not think that refugees and asylum seekers would be able to provide the necessary paperwork showing that they were entitled to training and work placements in the UK.

Many of the service providers interviewed were not fully aware of the aims and activities of other service providers in the locality. However, an increasing number of service provider networks have been established in recent years and those belonging to a network felt that they were better informed than previously. All claimed to work with other organisations on occasion but this was often only when they were working on a particular project. Most were only aware of the general work of other organisations rather than any specific developments within groups. However, the majority of the service providers interviewed claimed that they did refer people to other service providers if necessary. The most commonly cited point for referral from service providers in all boroughs was to the Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) at the University of North London.

The focus groups emphasised the fact that, in general, refugees and asylum seekers were not willing to travel outside their immediate locality for services such as education, training and advice because of the time taken and the resulting travel and childcare costs. Many refugees and asylum seekers are therefore heavily reliant upon the services within their locality and as yet there is still no adequate centralised information system detailing all training and employment opportunities in the boroughs. Although bulletins produced by the Africa Educational Trust provide this information for all London boroughs and are circulated to all RCOs and training providers in North London, it is clear that refugees and asylum seekers would benefit from more detailed, locally specific information and at more frequent intervals.

4.4 Life skills courses

The majority of courses that participants in the focus groups and those interviewed were accessing were courses that would enable them to gain language and basic skills such as computing and sewing. The purpose of the majority of those attending basic skills courses was to improve their English and their knowledge of basic skills. However, it was evident that a significant number of participants were attending basic skills classes simply to relieve their boredom as it was the only education or training opportunity they could afford to access.

4.5 Training and employment

A number of courses above a basic ESOL level incorporated job search skills such as interview techniques, writing curriculum vitae and filling in application forms.

However, very few of the service providers in the four boroughs had conducted studies or were aware of any studies which showed that the qualifications and skills gained from the courses offered have actually helped students to secure employment. Colleges in the four boroughs offer careers advice services for all students who wished to undertake or had undertaken courses at the college. However, very few refugees and asylum seekers at the focus groups had ever used these advice services as they were either not aware of them or lacked the confidence to use them without a direct referral from their community group. This suggests that refugees and asylum seekers who wish to or who are undertaking courses above a basic skills level are doing so without a full understanding of what the course involves nor the possible implications it could have on securing employment.

4.6 Lack of information on refugees and asylum seekers

It was evident that little information on refugees and asylum seekers was actually collected by the local authorities in the boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Barnet and Waltham Forest. None of the Education Departments for example, could provide specific and up to date figures on the number or origin of refugee and asylum seeker children registered at schools in the borough. Enfield Council did however claim that they were intending to collect information on refugees and asylum seekers in Enfield during 2002.

According to the Audit Commission (2000), only around fifty per cent of the London boroughs they had surveyed had consulted with refugee communities to inform service planning. Many RCOs and focus group participants, particularly those in Haringey and Enfield, commented that they were rarely involved in any planning decisions, which could affect them.

Many RCOs, particularly those in Haringey, commented that they were fed up with research studies being conducted as they were rarely consulted and even when they were very little came of the research.

Very few of the service providers were able to say where the majority of refugees and asylum seekers in their borough were from and even fewer felt able to estimate the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in the borough they were based in. Little was known about the location of refugees and asylum seekers within each borough, although most people assumed that they were located in the more deprived areas of the boroughs. As mentioned previously, the location of courses is important as many refugees and asylum seekers are unwilling or unable to travel outside their locality to attend education or training.

It must be remembered that many of the findings of this study are based on the views of refugees and asylum seekers who use the services of refugee community organisations. There are a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers who do not access RCOs. Any provision for refugees and asylum seekers should take this into account.

- **Without English skills refugees and asylum seekers cannot access other education and training courses and have extremely limited chances of finding employment. Our main recommendation is that refugees and asylum seekers in the LSC London North area should have better access to English courses. Many people had to wait several months to access ESOL classes. AET recommends that ESOL provision at a range of levels is available to all refugees and asylum seekers as soon as they arrive in the UK.**
- **The study found that most refugees and asylum seekers felt more comfortable attending ESOL classes that were run by their RCO and in their immediate locality than travelling to access courses run by colleges or other training providers. AET recommends that the Learning and Skills Council London North support ESOL courses that are run by or in co-operation with RCOs. People felt more comfortable if basic ESOL (level one and two) was taught by someone from their own community. However, those with ESOL skills above level two felt that they would benefit more if they were taught by a native English speaker. AET recommends that ESOL classes above level two are run by or in co-operation with RCOs but are taught by someone whose first language is English.**
- **The study found that for the majority of refugees and asylum seekers in the LSC London North area, ESOL was the highest-level course they had undertaken in the UK. Many people found ESOL courses dull and uninspiring as they concentrated solely on textbook grammar. AET recommends that ESOL courses should be developed which are more practical and relevant to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.**
- **Many people felt that they did not understand enough about British culture, the services available to them and their entitlements in the UK. AET recommends that the LSC London North commission the development of course materials for RCOs on British culture and service providers. It is recommended that the course should include face to face contact with representatives from key organisations such as the police, the council, hospitals, colleges and schools who would explain their roles in UK society. This would provide an opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to meet British people in a less formal environment.**
- **The study found that there was a level of cynicism amongst service providers and RCOs towards research and its apparent lack of effect on policy. A number of service providers and RCOs appeared insular, competitive and negative about the services provided by other organisations. It is recommended that LSC London North instigate a forum whereby RCOs and service providers meet on a regular basis to enable them to have a better understanding of each other's needs and objectives.**
- **There was a lack of understanding by refugees and asylum seekers of the opportunities available to them in the four boroughs. There was a lack of understanding by service providers of the numbers, location and needs of refugees and asylum seekers. There is a need for continual co-operation amongst RCOs, service providers and refugees and asylum seekers to ensure that people are aware of what courses and other opportunities are available. This could be done through regular forum meetings or through regular locally produced newsletters specific to the LSC London North area.**

Glossary

LSC	Learning and Skills Council
RCO	Refugee Community Organisation
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
AET	Africa Educational Trust
ELR	Exceptional Leave to Remain
ILR	Indefinite Leave to Remain

- Africa Educational Trust
Refugee Education, Training and Employment in Inner London
Focus Central London Ltd. (1998)
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Employment Issues Facing Young Refugees in Haringey
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in Libri Vol.49, No. 4, pp 212- 224 (1999)
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Peabody Trust/London Research Centre(1999)
- Refugee Review Report*
Refugee Council
- Refugee Children in British Schools*
Refugee Council (1997)
- Shelter, Far From Home
The Housing of Asylum seekers in Private Rented Accommodation
Shelter (2000)
- New Arrivals, New Communities: A research report into the housing and support needs of Tamil people in London*
Tamil Community Housing Association (1998)
- Refugee Doctors Left in Limbo*
The Guardian (April 12, 2001)
- Refugees and others of concern, statistical overview*
UNHCR (1999)

RCO estimates of refugees and asylum seekers in the four boroughs

Somalis

Haringey average estimate	9,000
Enfield average estimate	4,750
Barnet average estimate	2,767
W.Forest average estimate	2,133
Total estimate from RCOs	18,650

Ghanains

Haringey estimate	2,375
Enfield estimate	150
Barnet estimate	150
W.Forest estimate	2,000
Total estimate from RCO	4,675

* Kurds, Turks and Turkish Cypriot

Haringey average estimate	21,333
Enfield average estimate	5,000
Barnet average estimate	1,500
W.Forest average estimate	1,500
Total estimate from RCOs	29,333

* separate figures not available

Iranians

Haringey estimate	275
Enfield estimate	167
Barnet estimate	302
W.Forest estimate *	
Total estimate from RCO	744

Tamils

Haringey average estimate	10,000
Enfield average estimate	5,000
Barnet average estimate *	
W.Forest average estimate	10,000
Total estimate from RCOs	25,000

Ethiopians

Haringey estimate	2,000
Enfield estimate	350
Barnet estimate	350
Waltham Forest estimate *	
Total estimate from RCO	2,700

Ugandans

Haringey average estimate	1,046
Enfield average estimate	759
Barnet average estimate	1,589
W.Forest average estimate	621
Total estimate from RCO	4,015

Zairean Congolese

Haringey estimate	6,000
Enfield estimate	1,500
Barnet estimate	700
Waltham Forest estimate	1,000
Total estimate from RCO	9,200

Afghans

Haringey estimate	1,000
Enfield estimate	1,600
Barnet estimate	1,600
W.Forest estimate	200
Total estimate from RCO	4,400

Angolan

Haringey estimate*	
Enfield estimate *	
Barnet estimate *	
Waltham Forest estimate	400
Total estimate from RCO	400

Total estimate - 99,117

* = estimate not available

Questions for focus groups

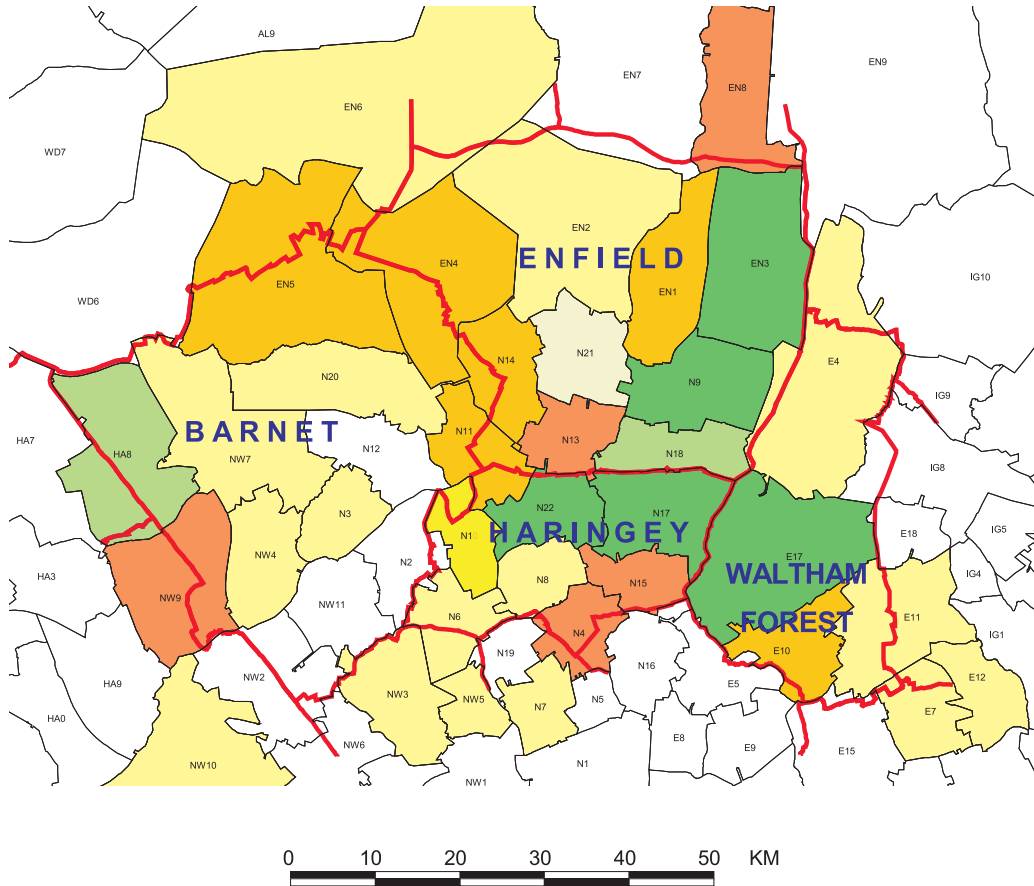
Asked to each participant:

- 1) What is your nationality?
- 2) How long have you been in the UK?
- 3) What is your immigration status?

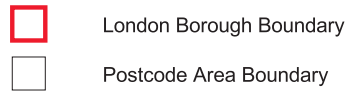
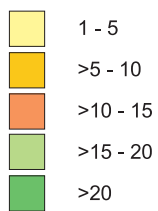
Asked to the group for discussion:

- 1) What good experiences and what bad experiences did you have when you first arrived in the UK?
- 2) How did you find out about services such as accommodation, health, education and training? Which organisations proved particularly helpful or unhelpful in assisting you to find out about the services?
- 3) Have you been able to access services? What experiences have you had trying to access education, training and other important services such as health and accommodation? Which organisations proved particularly helpful or unhelpful in assisting you to access the services?
- 4) What experiences have you had trying to find employment in the UK? For those who have found work, how does it compare with what you were doing in your home country?
- 5) For those with qualifications and / or skills: What experiences have you had in getting the qualifications and skills you acquired in your home country recognised in the UK?
- 6) What qualifications and skills do the refugees and asylum seekers you know have?
- 7) How many refugees and asylum seekers from your community have attended education or training classes in the UK?
- 8) Do you think that there are adequate and relevant education and training opportunities in the borough? If not what could be improved? Are there any courses or opportunities, which you feel, should be provided but which are not currently available?
- 9) What do you think are the main barriers refugees and asylum seekers from your community face in getting employment in the UK?
- 10) What would help refugees and asylum seekers from your community to integrate into the host community?
- 11) LSC are considering locating education and training courses near the areas where refugees and asylum seekers live. Which parts of the borough do you think that most refugees and asylum seekers from your community are living in? (Street names or postcodes).

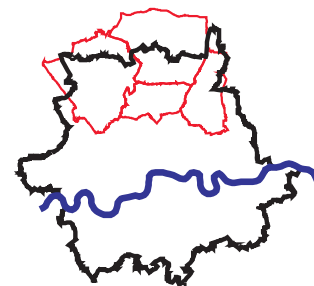
Map of North London showing postcode areas and total number of refugees and asylum seekers living there according to survey.



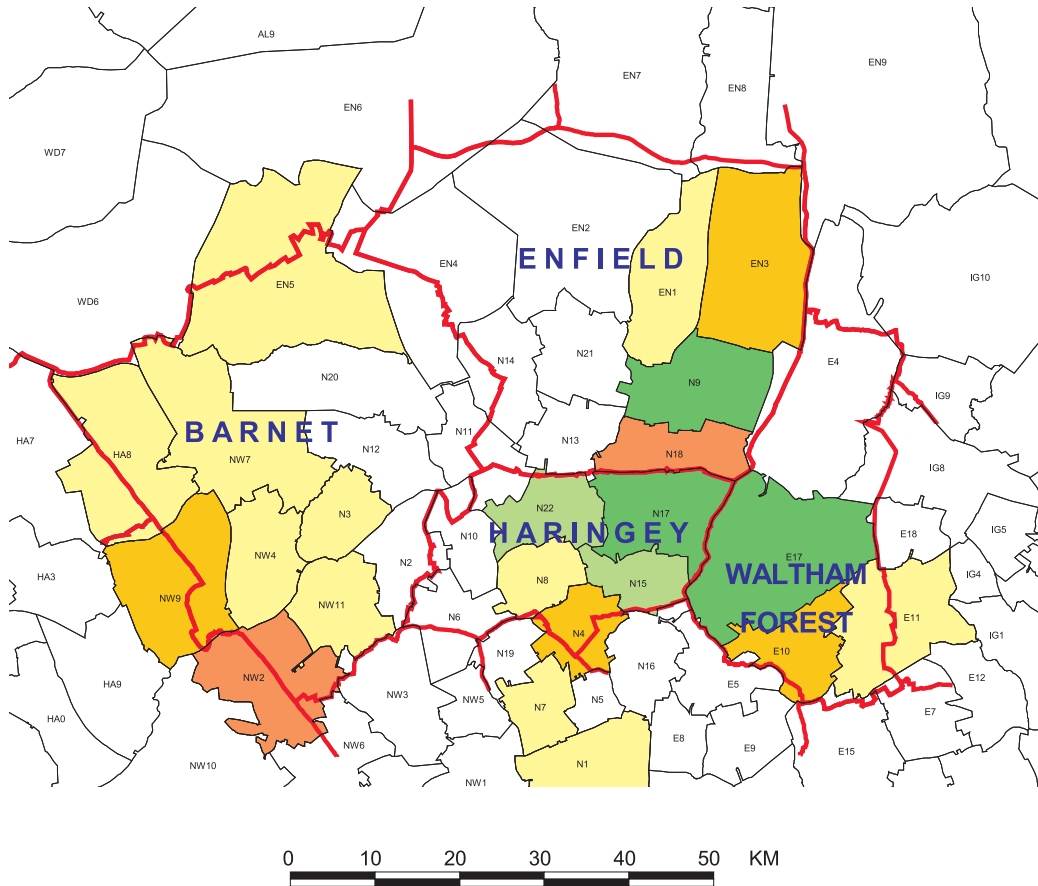
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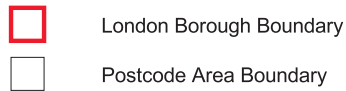
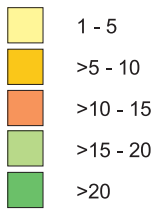
Location map showing Greater London and the north London Boroughs



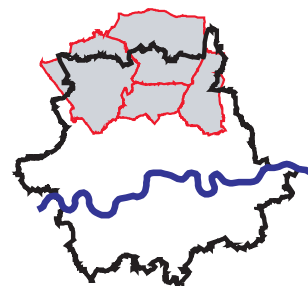
Map of North London showing postcode areas and number of survey respondents who believe that refugees and asylum seekers live there.



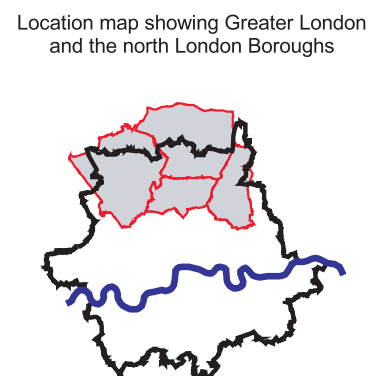
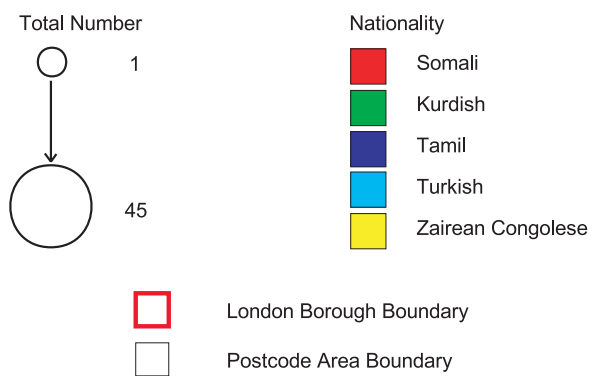
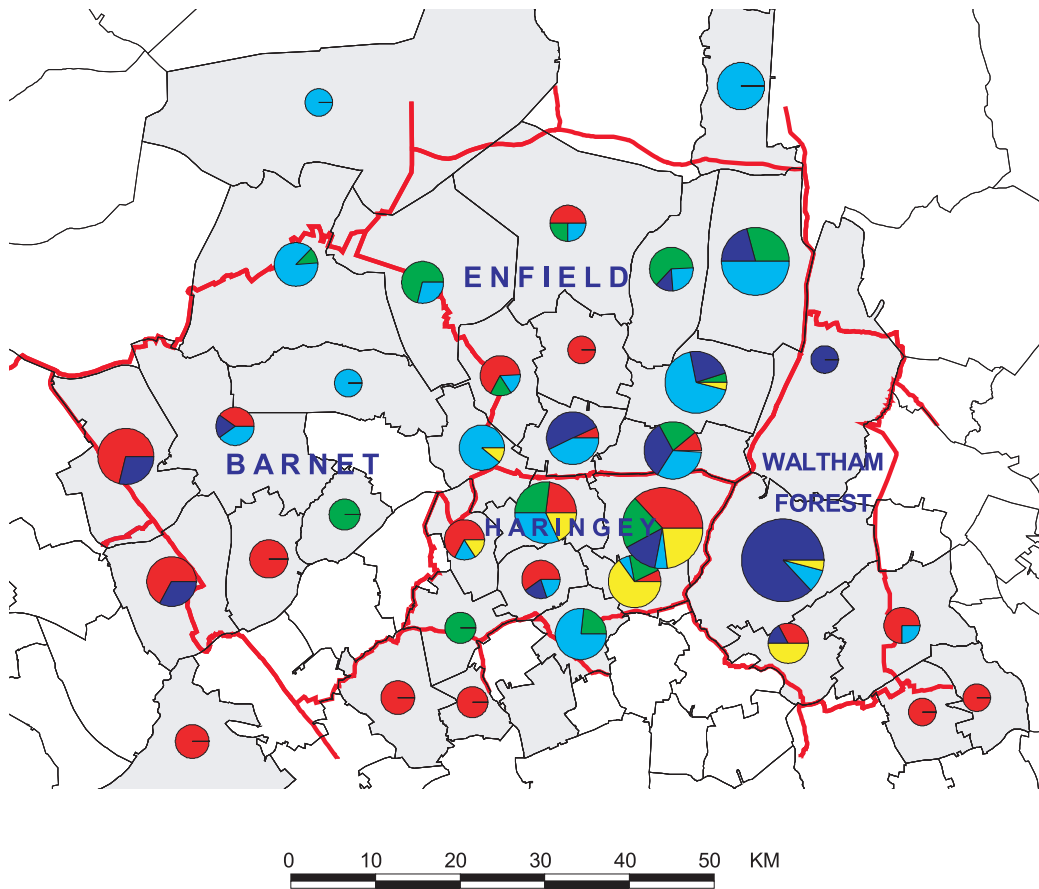
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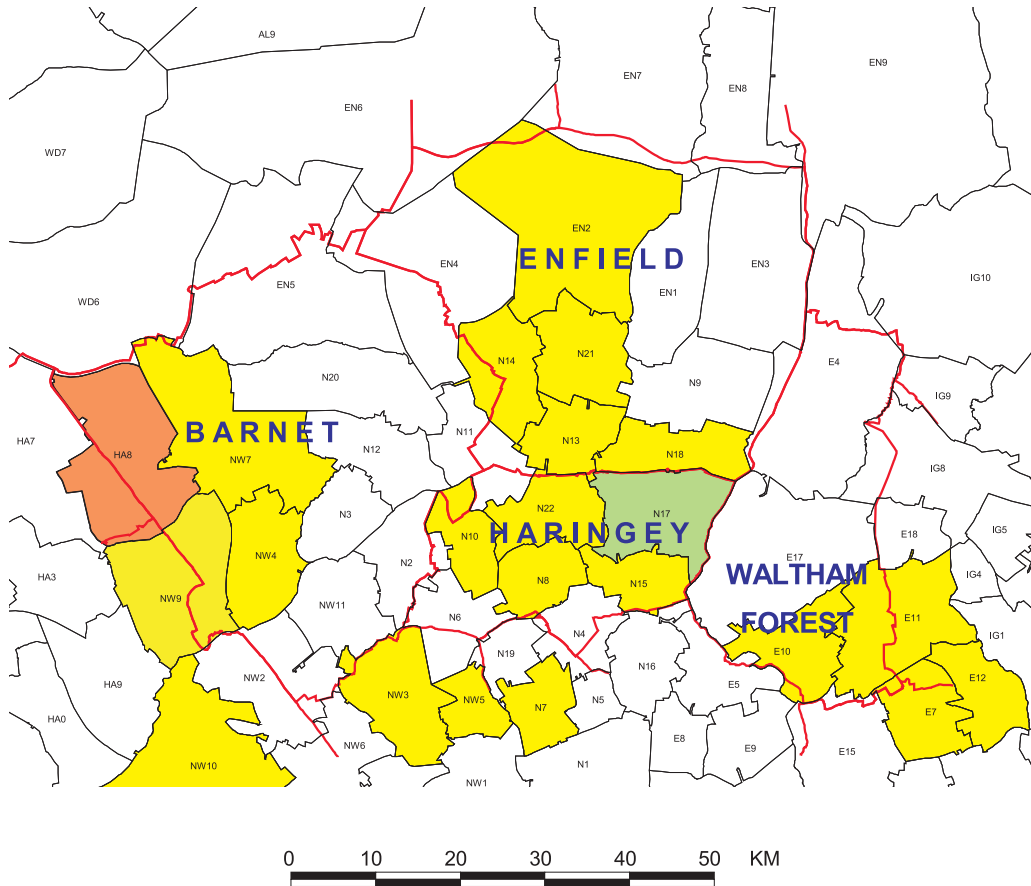
Location map showing Greater London and the north London Boroughs



Map of North London showing postcode areas and proportions of refugees and asylum seekers living there according to survey.



Map of North London showing postcode areas and number of Somalian refugees and asylum seekers living there according to survey.



Quantity

- 1 - 5
- >5 - 10
- >10 - 15
- >15 - 20
- >20

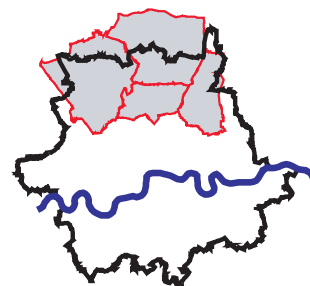


London Borough Boundary

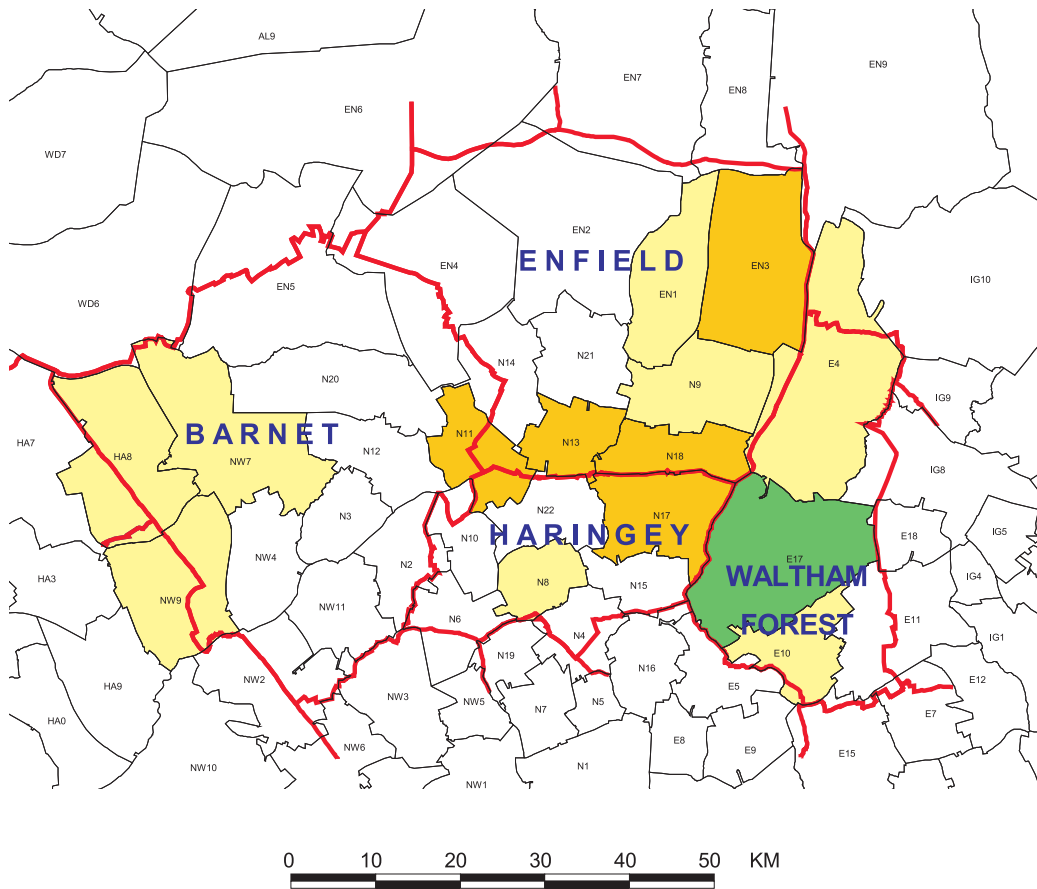


Postcode Area Boundary

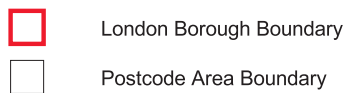
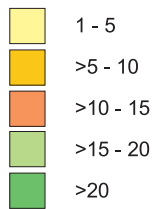
Location map showing Greater London and the north London Boroughs



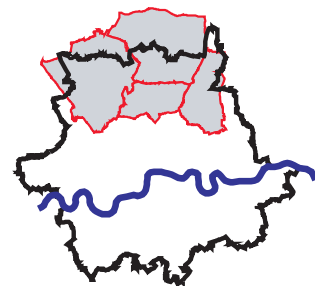
Map of North London showing postcode areas and number of Tamil refugees and asylum seekers living there according to survey.



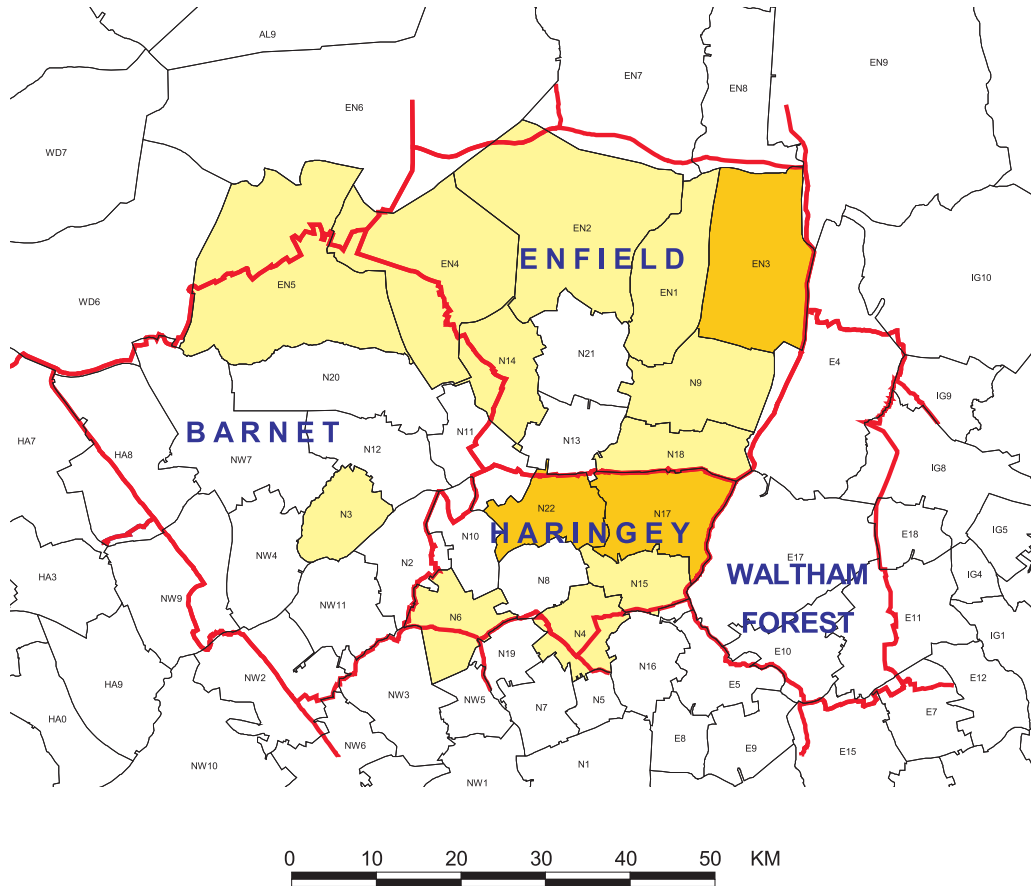
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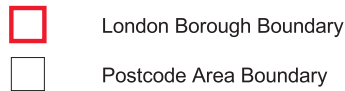
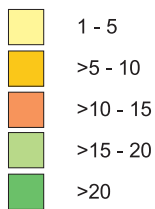
Location map showing Greater London and the north London Boroughs



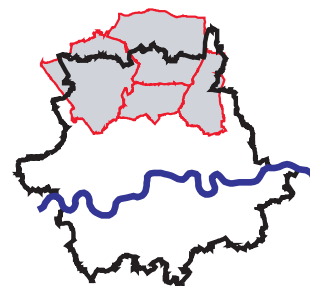
Map of North London showing postcode areas and number of Kurdish refugees and asylum seekers living there according to survey.



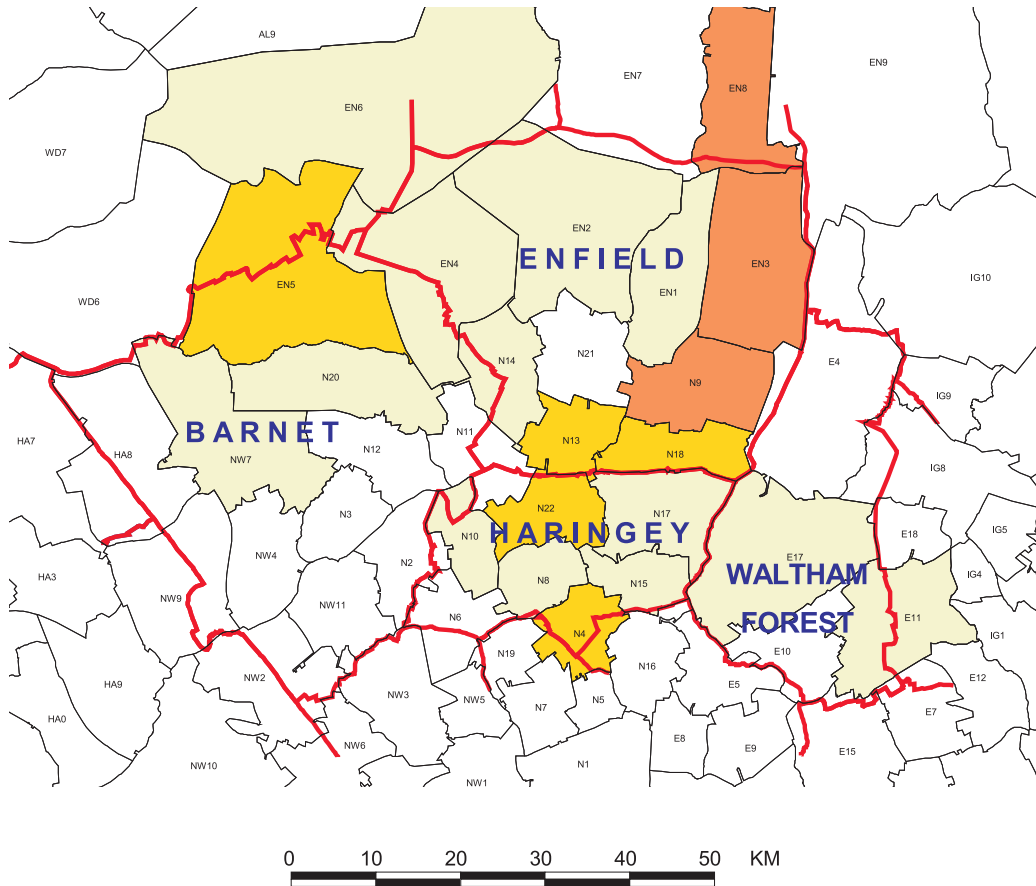
Quantity



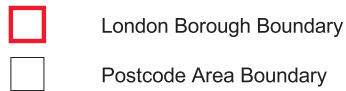
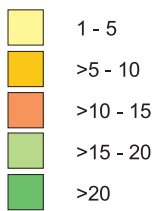
Location map showing Greater London and the north London Boroughs



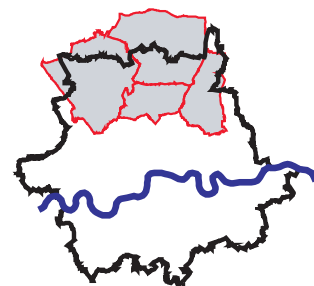
Map of North London showing postcode areas and number of Turkish refugees and asylum seekers living there according to survey.



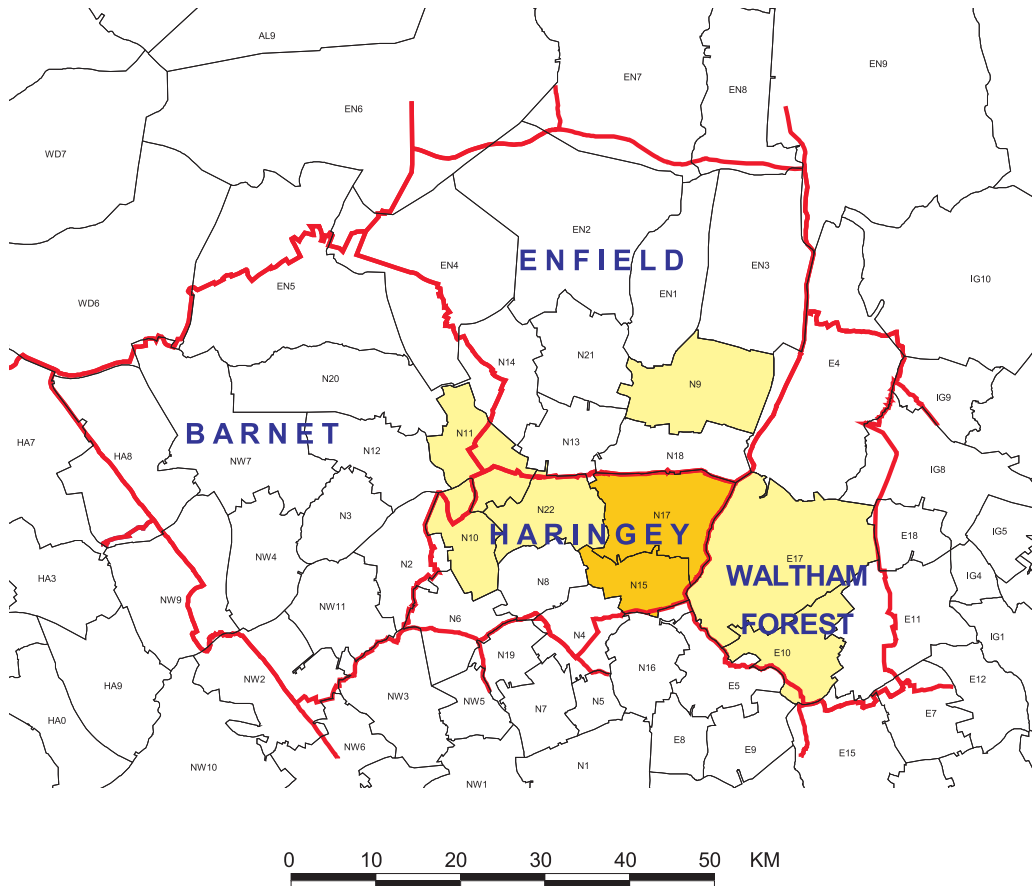
Quantity



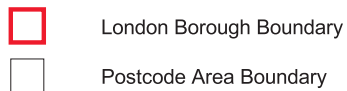
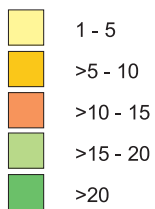
Location map showing Greater London and the north London Boroughs



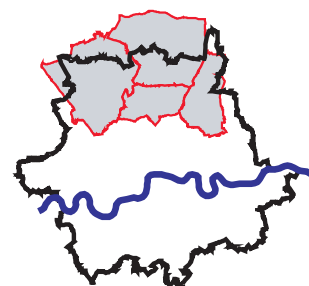
Map of North London showing postcode areas and number of Zairean Congolese refugees and asylum seekers living there according to survey.



Quantity



Location map showing Greater London and the north London Boroughs



Service Providers contacted:

Haringey

Haringey Education Department
Haringey Council Policy Partnerships Team
Haringey Asylum Seekers Service
Ebenezer Welfare Centre
Haringey Refugee Consortium
Horn Reflections
Haringey Training Network
Haringey Adult Learning Service
Voluntary Action Haringey
Vista Training
Haringey Women's Forum
Noam Hatorah Community Enterprise

Barnet

Barnet Education Department
Barnet Asylum Seekers Team
Barnet College

Enfield

Enfield Education Department
Enfield Asylum Seekers Team
Enfield Adult Guidance Service
Enfield College
Enfield Enterprise Agency
First Rung

Waltham Forest

Waltham Forest Education Department
Waltham Forest Asylum Seekers Team
Refugee Advice Centre

Cross-borough service providers contacted:

Refugee Council
Employment Service
Race Equality Council
London Asylum Seekers Consortium
National Asylum Seekers Service
Refugee Women's Association
Pan London Refugee Training
RETAS
North London Muslim Housing Association

Courses available in the four LSC London North boroughs

London Borough of Haringey - The College of North East London

Address:	Tottenham Center, High Road, London N15 4RU Tottenham Green Center, town Hall Approach road, London N15 4RX, Muswell Hill Center, Rhodes Avenue, London N22 4UT. Middelsex University, Bounds Green Campus, Bounds Green road, London N11 2NQ
Tel Information Line:	020 8442 3055 or 020 8802 3111
Courses:	Cover a wide range of courses including: Art and Design, Accounting, ESOL Level I & II, Modern and Community Languages, Information Technology, Engineering and Health and Social Care.
Fees:	Under 19 free. Over 19- ESOL free with £25.00 registration fee. For other courses reduced fees with exemption. Without exemption: fees will be different for each course. <small>* For further and up to date information on Tuition fees, Please contact the Information Line on 020 8442 3055</small>
Entry Requirements:	This will be different for each course and you need to check carefully in the entry section of the course details.
Additional Support:	Tutorial support - personal tutor Learning support - specialised help with one-to-one support for extra help with English lessons. Counseling service and Careers Educational Guidance.
Registration:	Spring Term 2002: <i>Begins</i> - Monday 22nd April 2002 <i>Ends</i> - Friday 7th June 2002 Autum Term 2002 - 2003: <i>Begins</i> - Tuesday 3rd September 2002 All day enrollment 10:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. <small>*To confirm term and enrolment dates on your chosen course please contact Information on 020 8802 3111</small>

London Borough of Enfield - Enfield College

Address:	73 Hertford Road, Enfield, EN3 5HA
Tel:	020 8443 3434
Fax:	020 8804 7025
Courses:	Cover a wide range of subjects including: Art Media and Performing Arts, ESOL, Business, Information technology, Health and Social Care.
Fees:	Under 19 free. Over 19 ESOL free with £25.00 registration fee. Over 19 years old; with exemption reduced fees. Without exemption: fees will be different for each course. <small>* For further and up to date information on Tuition fees, Please contact the Information Line on 020 8443 3434</small>
Entry Requirements:	This will be different for each course and you need to check carefully in the entry section of the course details or telephone 020 8372 7600.
Additional Support:	Access to learning Support. Learning Center - extra help with English. Allow the use of various facilities for course work.
Entry Requirements:	This will be different for each course and you need to check carefully in the entry section of the course details or telephone 020 8372 7600.

London Borough of Waltham Forest - Waltham Forest College

Address:	Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JD.
Tel:	020 8501 8501 You can call in or telephone Information and Guidance anytime during opening hours.
e-mail:	i&g@waltham.ac.uk
Term Time:	Monday - Thursday 9.00a.m. - 8.00 p.m. Friday- 9.00a.m. - 4.45 p.m.
Vacation:	Monday- Thursday 9.00a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Friday 9.00a.m.- 4.45 p.m.
Courses:	There are a wide range of courses available ranging from Art, Design and Fashion, Hospitality and Catering, ESOL, Counseling, Care and Health. For further information on courses available please contact Information and Guidance at the above number.
Fees:	Under 19 free. Over 19 ESOL free with £25.00 registration fee. Over 19 years old; with exemption reduced fees. Without exemption: fees will be different for each course. *Please contact the Information Line for further and up to date information on Tuition fees.
Entry Requirements:	This will be different for each course and you need to check carefully in the entry section of the course details.
Additional Support:	Information and Guidance Department. Careers and Educational Guidance Childcare- there is a Nursery open from- 8:50 a.m. – 5:00p.m. Monday to Friday. English and Math learning Center
Registration 2001-2002:	•Summer Term : <i>Begins</i> - Monday 15th April 2002 <i>Ends</i> - Friday 5th July 2002 For an accurate registration times and dates for your chosen course please contact Information and Guidance on 020-8501 8501

London Borough of Barnet - Barnet College

Address:	Graham Park Center, Colindale, NW9 5RA, Tel: 020 8266 4046/47/50 Montagu Road Center, Hendon, London NW4 3ES, Tel: 020 8266 4046/47/50 Wood Street Center, Barnet EN5 4AZ, Tel: 020 827 2816/7 Stanhope Road Center, Finchely, London, N12 9DX, Tel: 020 827 2816/7 Russell Lane Center, Whetstone, London N20 0AX, Tel: 020 8362 8036
Courses:	There are over a thousand course at Barnet college including Accounting, Construction and DIY, Performing Arts, ESOL, Hairdressing, Law, and Travel and Tourism. For further information about courses available please contact Course Information or make an appointment with Guidance Counselor on the above numbers.
Fees:	Under 19 free. Over 19 ESOL free with £25.00 registration fee. Over 19 years old; with exemption reduced fees. Without exemption: fees will be different for each course. * For further and up to date information on Tuition fees, Please contact the Information Line on 020 8443 3434
Entry Requirements:	This will be different for each course and you need to check carefully in the entry section of the course details.
Additional Support:	Childcare at Russell Lane and Graham Park. Educational Advice Guidance service. ESOL - for additional support with learning English contact 020-8266 4133 at Graham Park.
Registration:	Spring Term 2002: <i>Begins</i> - 4th April 2002 <i>Ends</i> - 28th July 2002 Summer Term 2002: <i>Begins</i> - July 2002 <i>Ends</i> - 29th August 2002 (Summer term is for those taking ESOL summer course only). Autumn Term: <i>Begins</i> - September 4th full-time courses, September 9th part-time courses. Enrollment on 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th of September 2003. For accurate times and dates for your chose course please contact enrollment on 020-8275 2875

London Borough of Barnet - Somali Community Group

Formed in 1993 to provide services for the Somali community. The catchment area is Barnet and surrounding London Boroughs. *Services provided include* Information, Advice and Guidance in Education, IT, Employment, Housing, Welfare Rights, Immigration & Nationality, Health, Translating and Interpreting.

Address:	Barnet Multi-Cultural Community Centre, Algernon Road, London NW4 3TA
Contact:	Abdi Isse, Development Worker
Telephone:	020 8202 9311
Fax:	020 8202 3957
E-mail:	abdi@barnetb.fsnet.co.uk
Opening Hours:	10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Monday – Thursday
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; Referrals to ESOL classes providers (i.e. Hendon College).
Employment services provision:	Job search; support with job application forms completion, support with CV writing, coaching in job interview techniques. Information technology training services provision: Referrals to IT training providers. Make office computers available for client use in job search.
Other training services provision:	Saturday supplementary school for secondary school students. Subjects covered include English, Mathematics and General Science. Internet training for the Youth.
Eligibility:	Any Somali nationals in the catchment area.
Special provision:	Pays volunteers’ travel cost; wheel chair access.
Networks:	Barnet Asian All People’s Association, Barnet Afro-Caribbean Association, BVSC, Refugee Council, AET, RETAS, JCWI, Somali RCOs, Ethiopian RCOs, Evelyn Oldfield Unit.
Other relevant information:	Organises summer trips for children and families; Sundays Women Meeting Group with Information workshops.

London Borough of Barnet - Barnet African Health Organisation

Formed in 1996 to provide services for disadvantaged ethnic minority people, particularly African. The catchment area is Barnet and neighbouring boroughs. Services provided include Health promotion, Education and Advocacy.

Address:	14 The Concourse, Grahame Park, Colindale, London NW9 5XA
Contact:	David Sandi, Director
Tel:	020 8205 2960
Fax:	020 8205 5665
Opening hours:	10.00a.m. – 7.00 p.m. Monday to Friday
Education Service Provision:	Educational guidance and advice Supplementary education for children (after school club).
Employment Training Service provision:	We provide training in Care. Starts from pre NVQ Foundation to NVQ level 2 in Care. Course carried out in conjunction with City and Guilds.
Information Technology service provision:	We provide IT training at beginners and intermediate level in association with Barnet college.
Other Training Provision:	Health Education (prevention of HIV and AIDS and other STD’s). Workshops on prevention of teenage pregnancies. Advocacy, Supervisory management courses.
Eligibility:	Africans and people from ethnic minority communities.
Special provision:	Provide limited interpreting support. Pays volunteer’s travel cost.
Network:	Community sector organisations in Barnet.
Other relevant information:	Runs drugs misuse workshops. Provides general welfare information and advice.

London Borough of Barnet - Somali Bravanese Welfare Association

Formed in 1994 to provide services for Somali Bravanese. The catchment area is Barnet and neighbouring boroughs. Services Provided Include Educational Guidance And Advice

Job Search	Advocacy And Advice In Welfare Rights, Housing And Health And Do Referrals In Immigration And Nationality Cases.
Address:	Bravanese Center, 116 Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill, London N10 1JS
Contact:	Ali A, Chairman
Tel:	020 8444 2975
Fax:	020 844 5768
Opening Hours:	10.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Monday to Thursday. And 10.00 a.m. – 7.00 p.m. Fridays.

London Borough of Barnet - Somali Bravanese Welfare Association (continued)

Education Service Provision:	Education Guidance and Advice. ESOL beginners, maintains a database of Educational Grant giving charities; Referrals to institutions of further and higher education.
Employment Training Service provision:	Referrals to employment and training providers, support CV writing, job application forms completion, job interview techniques training, referrals to the Job Center.
Information Technology service provision:	Referrals to IT training providers, assists client with word-processing.
Eligibility:	Somali Bravanese refugees and asylum seekers.
Special provision:	Pays volunteers travel cost.
Network:	RAGU; AET: local refugee community organisation, RTP, Refugees Council, Refugees Legal; RETAS
Other relevant information:	Assists with school registration, Assists with GP registration; Saturday mother tongue classes (Arabic) Outreach services for the elderly and disabled, Cultural and Social Event.

London Borough of Barnet - Refugee Health Access Project

Formed in 1996 to provide services for d refugees and asylum seekers. The catchment area London borough of Barnet Services provided include We seek to promote the health needs of refugees and asylum seekers in Barnet. We do this by giving information/ guidance to individual asylum seekers. We organise health promotion training for the community organisation.

Address:	28 Church End, Hendon, London NW4 4JX
Contact:	Tim Cowen, Development Worker
Tel:	020 844 6624
Fax:	020 8202 2425
Opening hours:	9.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday- Friday.
Education Service Provision:	Education advice and Guidance and Advise. Keeps a Database of FE & HE Institution.
Employment Training Service provision:	Referrals to Employment Training providers.
Information Technology Service provision:	Referrals to Employment Training providers.
Other training provision:	Organising training around health related subject.
Eligibility:	Refugees and Asylum seekers living or with connection in Barnet.
Special provision:	Provides interpreting services if required by client.
Network:	Links with community groups in Barnet; the Africa educational Trust; health Authority.
Other relevant information:	Support refugee's and asylum seeker's parents access school places for their children.

London Borough of Enfield- Tamil Relief Centre

Formed in 1992 to provide services for Tamil refugees, asylum seekers, other minorities and unemployed people. The catchment area is Greater London. Services provided by the organisation include Advice, Information and Advocacy in Education, Employment, Welfare Rights, Immigration and Nationality, Housing and Health.

Address:	Community House, 311 Fore Street, Edmonton, London N9 0PZ
Contact:	S. Thangarajah, Co-ordinator
Telephone:	020 8373 6249
Fax:	020 8373 6250
E-mail:	trc@teleregion.co.uk
Opening hours:	9.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Monday - Friday
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; Provides support in applications to further and higher educational institutions. Maintains a database of Educational Grant Giving Charities. Runs ESOL classes for adults (including Word power and Number power) City & Guilds levels 1&2. Provides additional support in Mathematics, English Language, and General Science to 8 – 16 years olds.
Employment training services provision:	Provides career guidance, advice and counselling; Job search, job interview skills training, support in CV writing, and help in the completion of job application forms. Arranges work experience placements with local employers. Participates in the New Deal for Young people. Skills training for women (cooking, needlework and crafts)
Information Technology training services provision:	Provides IT training levels 1 & 2 City and Guilds (vocational qualification). Arranges referrals to other IT providers including institutions of Further Education.

London Borough of Barnet - Tamil Relief Centre (continued)

Runs assertiveness (make yourself count) training for women. Also runs language classes for women. Organise seminars and workshops on matters affecting women and children.

Eligibility:	Tamil refugees, other minorities and unemployed people.
Special provision:	Pays travel cost and provide lunch allowance for volunteers.
Networks:	London Borough of Enfield, Refugee Council, WUS, Medical Foundation, North London TEC, Edmonton Disablement Association, Enfield Parents Centre, Age Concern, Edmonton Community Police, RIJ, Refugee Working Party, Evelyn Oldfield Unit, London Voluntary Sector Training Consortium, RAGU, First Rung, other RCOs.
Other relevant information:	Drop-in session for the elderly, provides information on community care, organises leisure activities.

London Borough of Enfield- First Rung

Formed in 1993 to provide services for young people seeking work and qualification. The catchment area is Tottenham, Edmonton, Enfield and Hertfordshire.

Services provided the organisation:	include NVQ Training, Information Technology, Office Administration, Childcare, Retail, Work by experience placements, Numeracy and Literacy.
Address:	1 – 4 Knights Chambers, South Mall, Edmonton Green, London N9 0TL
Contact:	Jayne Buckland, Manager
Telephone:	020 8803 4764
Fax:	020 8807 7292
E-mail:	elmes@firstrung.org.uk
http:	www.FIRST RUNG.org.uk
Opening hours:	9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Monday – Friday
Education services provision:	Administration training leading to an NVQ qualification. Life Skill courses for people having social problems.
Employment services provision:	National Traineeship, Modern Apprenticeship, and Key Skills. (Due to start in 6 months) Arranges Work Placements (WP). Provides WP income during training. Runs Childcare courses leading to NVQ qualifications.
Information Technology services provision:	Runs a Using IT NVQ level 1, 2 programme. Training includes basic computer skills covering word processing, database management, and spreadsheets. Trainees are offered work experience placement with solicitor firms, estate agents, insurance companies, warehouses and stores.
Other training services provision:	Warehousing and Stores, Retailing, Customer Service. D32, D33, D34 all related to NVQ training.
Eligibility:	16 – 19 year olds. For refugees only those with Home Office documents stating their eligibility to undertake a government funded courses.
Networks:	Careers Service, RCOs in Enfield
Other relevant information:	Support employers willing to take students on work experience placements.

London Borough of Enfield- Somali Enfield Community & Cultural Association

Formed in 1989 to provide services for the Somali community in Enfield. The catchment area is the London Borough of Enfield. Services provided by the Association include Advice and Information on Education, Employment, Health, Housing, and Immigration and Community development.

Address:	311 Fore Street, Edmonton, London N9 0PZ
Contact:	Mohammed Dahir, Co-ordinator
Telephone:	020 8373 6207
Fax:	020 8373 6256
Opening hours:	9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Monday – Friday.
Educational services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; ESOL (beginners & intermediate). Maintains a database of Educational Grant Giving Charities.
Employment training services provision:	Job search and Employment networking, assists with CV writing, assists with job application forms completion. Arranges work experience placements, Provides job references.
Information Technology services provision:	Referrals to IT training providers. Starting in-house IT training provision in October 2000.
Other training services provision:	Fashion and dress design for women.

London Borough of Enfield- Somali Enfield Community & Cultural Association (continued)

Eligibility:	Somalis resident in Enfield. And other parts of London.
Special provision	Pays volunteers' travel cost.
Networks:	Medical Foundation; Refugee Council; RETAS; AET; other RCOs.
Other relevant information:	Runs cultural classes and arranges annual summer trips for children and the elderly.

London Borough of Enfield- Refugee Consortium

Formed in 1989 to provide services for the Somali community in Enfield. The catchment area is the London Borough of Enfield. Services provided by the Association include Advice and Information on Education, Employment, Health, Housing, and Immigration and Community development.

Address:	311 Fore Street, Edmonton, London N9 0PZ
Contact:	Mohammed Dahir, Co-ordinator
Telephone:	020 8373 6207
Fax:	020 8373 6256
Opening hours:	9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Monday – Friday.
Educational services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; ESOL (beginners & intermediate). Maintains a database of Educational Grant Giving Charities.
Employment training services provision:	Job search and Employment networking, assists with CV writing, assists with job application forms completion. Arranges work experience placements; Provides job references.
Information Technology services provision:	Referrals to IT training providers. Starting in-house IT training provision in October 2000.
Other training services provision:	Fashion and dress design for women.
Eligibility:	Somalis resident in Enfield. And other parts of London.
Special provision:	Pays volunteers' travel cost.
Networks:	Medical Foundation; Refugee Council; RETAS; AET; other RCOs.
Other relevant information:	Runs cultural classes and arranges annual summer trips for children and the elderly.

London Borough of Haringey - Horn Reflections Ltd.

Formed in 1993 to provide services for refugees and asylum seekers. The catchment area is LB of Haringey and neighbouring Boroughs. Services provided by the Consortium include Educational Guidance, Employment Training, and IT/IS.

Address:	Selby Centre, Selby Road, London N17 8JS
Contact:	Gheregher Araia, Director
Telephone:	020 8885 5511
Fax:	020 8808 0994
E-mail:	HRC Consortium@netscapeonline.co.uk
Opening hours:	10.00 a.m.- 5.30 p.m. Mon - Thursday
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance & Advice; Keeps and updates Database of Educational Grant Giving Charities in the UK ESOL levels 1,11 &111.
Employment training services provision:	Personal/career development Courses, Job search skills including support in CV writing, confidence building, job interview techniques. Arranges mock interviews for job ready clients. Also runs a job club in conjunction with targeted employers in North London. Provides telephone facilities for clients' use in job search. Mini-cab training - includes ESOL, map reading, customer care, and car maintenance. This activity is undertaken in conjunction with Southgate College.
Information Technology services provision:	Computer maintenance, A-Plus Courses (programming), MCP.
Eligibility:	Refugees and asylum seekers.
Special provision:	Pays childcare allowances and travel costs.
Networks:	NLTEC, Middlesex University, CONEL, Employment Agencies; World University Service (RETAS); Refugee Council, Local Authorities.
Other relevant information:	Referrals in all other enquiries.

London Borough of Haringey - Kurdish Advice Centre

Formed in 1997 to provide services for refugees and asylum seekers from the Horn of Africa. The catchment area is London wide. Services provided include Health Promotion (through Art performances), Educational Advice, Guidance and Referrals.

Address:	Selby Centre, Selby Road, London N17 8JN
Contact:	Mowes G Aden, Director
Telephone:	020 8808 5524
Fax:	020 8808 5524
Opening hours:	9.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m. Mon. – Fri.
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance, Advice and Referrals. Maintains database of educational grant giving organisations.
Employment services provision:	Support with CV writing, job application, form completion, job interview skills training through mock exercise.
Information Technology services provision:	Tailored IT courses. Referrals to IT training providers.
Other training services provision:	Drama /Theatre workshops; Acting Courses, Dance workshop leading to performance.
Eligibility:	Refugees and asylum seekers as well as immigrant from the Horn of Africa.
Networks:	Some refugee community organisations in London AET, the Refugee Council, RAGU, RETAS.
Other relevant information:	Referrals in all other cases.

London Borough of Haringey - Eritrean Community in Haringey

Formed in 1986 to provide services for Eritrean citizens. The catchment area is Haringey and neighbouring boroughs. Services provided by the Community include Advice, Information and Advocacy in the following areas; Health, Education, Immigration and Welfare Benefits.

Address:	Selby Centre, Selby Road, London N17 8JN
Contact:	Aden Mowes, Co-ordinator
Telephone:	020 8365 0819
Fax:	020 8808 9219
Opening hours:	9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Mon - Fri
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance; Advice and information on Courses and Grant Giving bodies; referrals to ESOL providers in Haringey and neighbouring boroughs.
Employment training and services provision:	Referral to Employment Guidance Agencies, Guidance in CV writing, Assistance in Job Search job interview techniques.
Information Technology services provision:	Offers training in keyboard skills and word processing. Packages include Claris works, Microsoft Office and Word
Other training services provision:	Mother tongue classes in Tigrinya and Arabic, (Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.).
Eligibility:	Eritrean nationals resident in Haringey and neighbouring Boroughs.
Special provision:	Pays travel costs for course attendees.
Networks:	All African community organisations in Haringey. Also works with other London based RCOs.
Other relevant information:	Referrals in all other cases.

London Borough of Haringey - Ethiopian Community Center in the UK

Formed in 1994 to provide services for Ethiopian citizens. The catchment area is UK wide. Services provided by the Association include Education, Employment Training, IT and Business start-up; Health Promotion; Immigration, Housing and Welfare Rights Advice and Advocacy. Referral Service.

Address:	Selby Centre, Selby Road, London N17 8JS
Contact:	Alem Gebrehiwot, Manager
Telephone:	020 8801 9224
Fax:	020 8801 0244
E-mail:	erah@netlineUK.net

London Borough of Haringey - Ethiopian Community Center in the UK (continued)

Opening hours:	10.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. Mon - Fri.
Education services provision:	ESOL classes in association with CONEL (levels 1& 11) Educational Guidance – Advice and Information on courses and sources of educational grants.
Employment with services provision:	Work experience placements; Advice and guidance on business start-ups; Maintains contact employers for regularly vacancies. Help with the completion of job application forms, CV writing, interview techniques.
Information Technology services provision:	Referral to IT training providers. Information and advice on accessing training.
Other training services provision:	Mother tongue classes in Amharic (2 .00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. on Saturdays).
Eligibility:	All Ethiopian in the UK (refugees, asylum seekers and other Ethiopian temporarily or permanently residing in the UK)
Networks:	Migrant Training Company; Haringey Refugee Consortium; CONEL, University of N. London including RAGU; Middlesex University and AET.

London Borough of Haringey - Haringey Somali Community & Cultural Association

Formed in 1989 to provide services for Somali refugees and asylum seekers. The catchment area is Haringey and neighbouring boroughs. Services provided by the Community include Advice, Information and Advocacy in the following areas; Health, Education, Immigration and Welfare Benefits.

Address:	Selby Centre, Selby Road, London N17 8JN
Contact:	Aden Mowes
Position:	Co-ordinator
Telephone:	020 8365 0819
Fax:	020 8808 9219
Opening hours:	9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Mon - Fri
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance; Advice and information on Courses and Grant Giving bodies; referrals to ESOL providers in Haringey and neighbouring boroughs.
Employment and services provision:	Referral to Employment Guidance Agencies, Guidance in CV writing, Assistance in Job Search job interview techniques.
Information Technology services provision:	Offers training in keyboard skills and word processing. Packages include Claris works, Microsoft Office and Word
Other training services provision:	Mother tongue classes in Tigrinya and Arabic, (Saturdays from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.).
Eligibility:	Eritrean nationals resident in Haringey and neighbouring Boroughs.
Special provision:	Pays travel costs for course attendees.
Networks:	All African community organisations in Haringey. Also works with other London based RCOs.
Other relevant information:	Referrals in all other cases.

London Borough of Haringey - Ebenezer Welfare Centre

Formed in 1991 to provide services for refugees and asylum seekers from Africa & unemployed migrants. The catchment area is Haringey and neighbouring London Boroughs of Enfield, Walthamstow; Barnet and Hackney. Services provided by the Centre include Education (ESOL); Dress making, Hair dressing; Information Technology, NVQ level 11 in Care Assistance.

Address:	726/728 Seven Sisters Road, N15 5NH
Contact:	O A Kwarteng, Manager
Telephone:	020 8800 6621
Fax:	020 8809 3762
Opening hours:	9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Mon - Fri.
Education services provision:	ESOL (Basic & Elementary) Pitman accredited; NVQ level 11 in Care (Health & Social Care) leading to City & Guilds; Educational Guidance, Support & Counselling. Also Educational Referrals, i.e. signposts clients to appropriate colleges for courses. Runs O & A level revision classes.
Employment services provision:	Career Advice & Development. Work experience placement. Training in Dress Making and Hair Dressing (both lead to City & Guilds qualification); Job search.

London Borough of Haringey - Ebenezer Welfare Centre (continued)

Information Technology services provision:	Word Processing (Packages include Windows 95), Spread sheet; DTP & Graphics.
Eligibility:	All African refugees and asylum seekers the unemployed and other migrants resident in the LB of Haringey and neighbouring boroughs.
Networks:	Accreditation bodies, RCOs, Refugee Training Partnership, Universities, Colleges and schools.
Other relevant information:	The Centre is run by a few paid staff and many willing volunteers. Referrals in all other cases

London Borough of Haringey - Zairean Congolese Community Association

Formed in 1991 to provide services for refugees and asylum seekers from the Congo. The catchment area is London wide. Services provided by the Association include Education, Employment, and Information Technology. Also provides Welfare Rights & Immigration Advice and Advocacy.

Address:	Selby Centre, Selby Road, London N17 8JN
Contact:	Bob Ilunga, Director
Telephone:	020 8365 1665
Fax:	020 8365 1665
Opening hours:	9.30 a.m. – 5.30 p.m.
Education services provision:	Provides Educational Information, Advice and Guidance; Arranges referrals to other ESOL providers including the College of NE London.
Employment training services provision:	Employment Guidance and Job search: Assistance in the completion of job application forms, Guidance in CV writing, & Job interviews. Guidance in the preparation of Personal Development Plans (PDP).
Information Technology services provision:	Low level provision of training in computer maintenance and programming leading to the development of commercial software packages. Packages include Oracle and Unix. Also provides Web design courses. Planned expansion in the pipeline.
Eligibility:	Congolese and other French speaking African refugees and asylum seekers in London.
Networks:	Haringey Refugee Consortium, WUS/RETAS, APEX Training, AET and other RCOs.
Other relevant information:	Runs the Congolese Run-Away Children Project; supports unsettled children. Advise parents on multiculturalism. Runs a Parental Outreach Project advising Congolese parents of their role in Schools.

London Borough of Haringey - African Women’s Welfare Group

Formed in 1989 to provide services for African women particularly those from refugee and asylum seeking households. The catchment area is London wide. Services provided by the Group include Education, Training, Employment, Personal Development, Research and Project Evaluation, Advice and Advocacy in Welfare Rights and Health Promotion.

Address:	Hesta Annex, 301 White Hart Lane, N17 7BT
Contact:	Mrs Hadija Said, Community Development Manager
Telephone:	020 8885 5822
Fax:	020 8801 5266
Opening hours:	9.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Mon - Fri.
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance; ESOL (Beginners & Elementary). ESOL students receive Pitmans Accreditation. Health and Social Care Training. Pre-Access Teacher Training.
Employment services provision:	Referral to employment training providers. Dress Making & Clothing Technology.
Information Technology services provision:	Referrals to IT training providers.
Other services provision:	Personal Development Training.
Eligibility:	African and refugee women.
Special provision:	Childcare & Travel cost paid for ESF programmes. Drop-in-service and crèche facilities provided on Tuesdays and Thursdays. HIV drop-in-services. This service is for women and families.
Networks:	Enfield & Haringey NHS Trust; Brent & Harrow NHS Trust, Refugee Council; RAP; JCWI; AET.

London Borough of Haringey - Somali Welfare Centre

Formed in 1991 to provide services for Somali refugees. The catchment area is the North London Boroughs of Hackney, Haringey, Islington, Camden, and Edmonton. Services provided by the organisation include Advice and Information on Education; Employment; Health; Welfare Rights; Immigration and Nationality.

Address:	94 Moray Road, London N4 3LA
Contact:	Ibrahim Musa, Manager
Telephone:	020 7263 8441
Fax:	020 7263 8441
Opening hours:	10.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. Monday - Friday
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; Arranges referrals to ESOL classes providers.
Employment training services provision:	Sewing with ESOL.
Information Technology services provision:	Introduction to IT; referrals to other IT training providers.
Eligibility:	Any refugee or asylum seeker resident in the catchment area.
Special provision:	Pays volunteers' travel cost.
Networks:	Islington Social services; Islington Training Network Refugee Council, AET, RETAS and other RCOs.
Other relevant information:	Runs mother tongue classes on Saturdays; Operates Homework club in Science and Mathematics.

London Borough of Haringey - The Kurdish Community Centre

Formed in 1990 to provide services for the Kurdish community. The catchment area is the London Boroughs of Haringey, Enfield, Hackney and Islington. Services provided by the Organisation include Advice and Information on Education, Employment, Welfare Rights, Immigration and Health.

Address:	Fairfax Hall, 11 Portland Gardens, London N4 1HY
Contact:	Ayar Atar, Co-ordinator
Telephone:	020 8809 0743 or 020 8880 1804
Fax:	020 8802 9963
E-mail:	zagroz@free.uk.com
Opening hours:	9.00 a.m. - 5 .00 p.m. Monday - Friday
Educational services provision:	ESOL classes [beginners to intermediate] Educational Guidance and Advice.
Employment training services provision:	Job search; Office skills.
Information technology services provision:	Provides basic IT training on site. Referrals to other IT training providers.
Other training services provision:	Local crafts (carpet weaving).
Eligibility:	Kurdish community.
Special provision:	Pays volunteers travel cost. Provides free food and temporary accommodation for homeless asylum seekers.
Networks:	Haringey Council, other RCOs, AET, RAGU, RETAS, JCWI, local law firms, the Refugee Council City Parochial Foundation.
Other relevant information:	Cultural activities. Dance; Theatre and Drama. Referrals in all other cases.

London Borough of Waltham Forest - Angolan Refugee Project

Formed in 1993 to provide services for Angolan refugees and asylum seekers. The catchment area is London wide. Services provided by the organisation include Advice and Information on Education, Employment, IT, Health, Immigration & Nationality, Housing, Welfare Rights.

Address:	William Morris Community Centre, Greenleaf Road, London E17 6QQ
Contact:	Jorge Wai, Co-ordinator
Telephone:	020 8223 0818
Fax:	020 8223 0818

London Borough of Waltham Forest - Angolan Refugee Project (continued)

E-mail:	angolanproject@hotmail.com
Opening hours:	Mondays 10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m., Wednesdays –Fridays 11.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; Maintains a database of Educational Grant Giving Charities; Provides ESOL classes for adults on Saturdays (3.00 p.m. – 6.00 p.m.)
Employment services provision:	Job search on line; Assists with CV writing; Assists with job application forms completion; Arranges work experience placements.
Information Technology services provision:	Word processing (Microsoft Office 98); Referrals to IT training providers.
Other services provision:	Organises Drama, Art, and African and Modern Dance classes on Saturdays. 12 noon – 3.00 p.m.
Eligibility:	Angolan refugees and asylum seekers. Other Portuguese speaking African refugees and asylum seekers.
Special provision:	Pays volunteers travel cost; also provides lunch allowance.
Networks:	Immigration Aid; Refugee Advice Centre; RETAS; Refugee Legal Centre; JCWI; CAB; AET, Refugee Council.

London Borough of Waltham Forest - Somali Women’s Association

Formed in 1993 to provide services for Somali refugees and asylum seekers. The catchment area is Waltham Forest and Redbridge. Services provided by the organisation include Advice and Guidance in Housing, Welfare Rights, Health Promotion, Immigration and Nationality, Education, IT and Employment.

Address:	William Morris Community Centre, Greenleaf Road, London E17 6QQ
Contact:	Mariam Adan, Chair
Telephone:	020 8503 7121
Fax:	020 8503 7121
Opening hours:	11.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Mondays & Fridays (advice) 12 noon – 4.00 p.m. Mondays –Fridays (training)
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; ESOL (Beginners and Intermediate). Maintains a database of Educational Grant Giving Charities.
Employment services provision:	Runs sewing classes; operates a Job search service, assists with CV writing; arranges work experience placements and provides job references.
Information Technology services provision:	Advice and Guidance; Referral to IT training providers.
Other services provision:	Homework support for school children; Also runs an after school club
Eligibility:	Any Somali refugee or asylum seeking woman.
Special provision:	Pays volunteers travel cost. Provides lunch allowance depending on the availability of funds.
Networks:	Medical Foundation, Solicitor firms, CAB, AET, other RCOs
Other relevant information:	Referrals in all other cases. Provides interpreters at GP Surgeries, Hospitals, law firms, Social Services, HPU etc.

London Borough of Waltham Forest - Waltham Forest Somali Welfare & Cultural Association

Formed in 1995 to provide services for Somalis. The catchment area is Waltham Forest and neighbouring London Boroughs. Services provided by the organisation include Advice and Information on Welfare Rights, Health, Housing, Education, Employment, Immigration and Nationality.

Address:	263a High Street, Walthamstow, London E17 7BH
Contact:	Abdi Hassan, Treasurer
Telephone:	020 8521 8851
Fax:	020 8509 1217
Opening hours:	10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. Monday – Friday
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; ESOL classes for Somali refugees and asylum seekers.
Employment services provision:	Referrals to Employment training providers. Job search, assists with CV writing.
Information Technology services provision:	Referrals to IT training providers.

London Borough of Waltham Forest - Waltham Forest Somali Welfare & Cultural Association (continued)

Other services provision:	Women's Sexual Health Promotion seminars and workshops.
Eligibility:	Mainly Somalis but other African refugees are welcome.
Special provision:	Pays travel cost for ESOL students and volunteers. Arranges Home Visits for the disabled and elderly.
Networks:	Refugee Advice Centre; Refugee Council; AET; JCWI; other Somali RCOs in London.
Other relevant information:	Supplementary support classes for Somali children. Also runs the Somali Youth Project.

London Borough of Waltham Forest - Refugee Advice Centre

Formed in 1992 to provide services for refugees and other migrants. The catchment area is London wide. Services provided by the organisation include Advice and Information on Education; Employment; IT; Immigration and Nationality; Health Promotion; Welfare Rights; Housing; and Advocacy.

Address:	702 High Road, Leyton, London E10 6JP
Contact:	BL Omope, Advocacy Officer
Telephone:	020 8558 6928
Fax:	020 8558 6928
E-mail:	refugeeadvice@ein.org.uk
Opening hours:	9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Monday - Friday
Education services provision:	Educational Guidance and Advice; Operates a database of Educational Grant Giving Charities; Provides ESOL classes (Beginners and Intermediate); Runs Word-power and Number-power classes for adults.
Employment services provision:	Job search; Arranges work experience placement; Assists with job application form completion; Provides training in job interview skills acquisition; Assists with CV writing.
Information Technology services provision:	Provides IT training (keyboard skills and Microsoft Office 98 Package), also undertakes referrals for Computer Maintenance and Networking Training.
Eligibility:	Any refugee, asylum seeker or migrant.
Networks:	FIAC; Refugee Council; Voluntary Action Waltham Forest; Refugee Legal Centre; RETAS; JCWI; Medical Foundation, AET and Forum for Refugees.
Other relevant information:	Provides advocacy service including interpreting and translation. Also undertakes referral services



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