

Preventative Services for Asylum Seeking Children:

A Final Report of the
National Evaluation of the Children's Fund

Research Report
No 780

*Preventative Services for
Asylum Seeking Children:*

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National Evaluation of the Children's Fund*

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The National Evaluation of the Children's Fund (NECF) ran from January 2003 to March 2006. A large number of people were involved in a variety of ways. Here we list members of the team who worked on either part-time or full-time bases during the thirty-nine months of the evaluation.

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Executive Summary

This report considers the strategies adopted by two Children's Fund partnerships for preventative work with refugee and asylum seeking children and young people. This element of the evaluation adopted a Theory of Change approach intended to make links between the activities put in place and the intended outcomes.

Context and Key Issues

- Asylum seekers and refugees commonly experience multiple problems of social exclusion including material poverty, poor quality housing, discrimination, poor diets and problematic access to health and social care services.
- The dispersal policy has fostered isolation amongst refugee and asylum seeking families, housing them in neighbourhoods with previously small minority ethnic populations; services in those areas are often not aware of, nor geared to address, the variety of different needs of this group.
- In both partnerships, the decision to target this group was set within a framework of demographic changes, gaps in service provision, local concerns about this group, and political interest.
- In the Metropolitan Authority, the Children's Fund partnership took both a thematic and an area-based approach to developing and commissioning services. Most of the services commissioned worked with the generic group of newly arrived children and their families.
- In the London Borough, the Children's Fund partnership worked with both newly arrived children and young people and second-generation refugees, whose educational underachievement was causing concern.

Impact

- The child-level data we gathered indicated the positive short and medium-term impact that therapeutic services in both local authorities had on the emotional well-being of young refugees and asylum seekers.
- NECF observed that the design and delivery of therapeutic services had been adapted in such a way as to allow children with limited English language proficiency to take part in group activities, engage in team work and make contact with others in verbal and non-verbal ways.

- These and other out-of-school and holiday activities helped children's integration in the school environment through promoting their social and emotional skills and providing them with the necessary confidence, self-esteem and trust to approach other children in the classroom or on the playground.
- The children attending after-school homework clubs in the London Borough and their parents underscored the importance for young refugees and asylum seekers of having access to space and support for homework. They documented how this had changed their attitudes and experiences of school and learning.
- In both local authorities, the Children's Fund partnerships helped to raise the profile of young refugees in local schools by acting as their advocate in the short and medium-term.
- Both Children's Fund programmes helped to ensure that young refugees and asylum seekers obtained school places and that parents received advice and/or support regarding filling out forms, bureaucratic procedures and claiming their rights, such as free school meals and uniforms.
- The community-based organisations in the London Borough and the services commissioned to promote children's integration in schools in the Metropolitan Authority also provided parents with the necessary skills, information and confidence to argue for additional resources and/or change in schools. This dual strategy strengthened parents' and children's demands for English as an additional language (EAL) and classroom assistants.
- The recruitment of classroom assistants and/or bilingual support workers created and developed positive home-school relationships. Parents and project workers identified home-school liaison as a crucial aspect of their strategy to address the emotional and educational needs of young refugees in ways which are effective, sustainable and culturally appropriate.
- In the Metropolitan Authority's Children's Fund, reviews of services have led to a greater emphasis being placed on home-school liaison.
- In the London Borough, therapeutic services struggled to secure parental involvement due to problematic or non-existent home-school relationships with newly arrived families.
- Parents and children valued the family support delivered by the two community-based organisations in the London Borough and the three non-therapeutic services in the Metropolitan Authority. These services were

described as responding to families' particular needs by helping to access and effectively engage with statutory, voluntary and community sector services.

- Children and parents from a refugee or asylum seeking background also valued opportunities that these organisations created to meet others in similar situations, exchange information and advice and gain peer support in overcoming material and emotional difficulties. This in turn constituted a significant buffer against isolation and/or discrimination.
- Volunteering opportunities for adults were seen as contributing to improved mental health and well-being for those involved, and the benefits of these were felt more widely within the family.
- Over the period of evaluation, the services in the Metropolitan Authority refined their procedures to assess the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children, employing a mix of, often innovative or alternative, resources and techniques which had not been available within mainstream services and schools.
- NECF observed how the two services established to promote integration in schools in the Metropolitan Authority evolved a model of working which ensures that schools are able to appropriately meet the needs of individual children referred, whilst also developing general school approaches to, and understandings of, the needs of the target group.
- These two services also developed a flexible model of working to respond to the changing contexts in which they operate, with the schools being at different points in terms of their experience and capacity of working with this target group.

Review of Strategies

- The strategy adopted by the London Borough was to employ a development officer responsible for commissioning services, alongside the support of a parent-led community-based organisation.
- In the Metropolitan Authority, an analysis of needs by target group and area led to the identification of a portfolio of services, for which organisations were invited to tender.
- In the Metropolitan Authority, the Children's Fund recruited a consultant to act as co-ordinator of this theme and organise regular meetings where services were encouraged to discuss common areas of practice and identify learning that could be transferred across. The learning that was fostered in those

meetings resulted in, and helped to inform, the development of the multi-agency team to support newly arrived children and young people.

- Whilst the position of Development Officer was located within the education service, there was a less structured approach to the support of, and learning from, the services commissioned in the London Borough Children's Fund. Here the effectiveness of the strategy was more dependent upon the skills and capacities of the Development Officer.
- Both strategies demonstrated an understanding of the multi-dimensional and inter-related issues faced by refugee and asylum seeking children and families. Some services developed a holistic approach to meeting needs, others focused on one aspect of need.
- Both partnerships were well placed within the local education service to advocate on the part of refugees and asylum seekers to raise awareness amongst schools and the education service about the needs and rights of this group and the resources available to respond to them.
- Both partnerships perceived developing home-school liaison as not only part of a holistic approach to enhance the educational attendance and attainment of the individual child, but also as making an important contribution to schools' understanding of the needs, concerns and interests of their pupils who are refugees and asylum seekers.
- Therapeutic services in both partnerships worked to contact parents to gain consent for their children's engagement in the service, but they did not work with parents in a sustained way and were often dependent on the state of home-school liaison in the schools they worked.
- In terms of family support, service providers worked towards ensuring appropriate access to mainstream services; encouragement in talking to and gaining help from appropriate professionals who are aware of and able to address particular issues through supported signposting and access; and providing links to community and other networks to reduce isolation and foster long-term independence.
- A number of features of the provision for refugees and asylum seekers can be described as 'responsive'. There was, however, the potential for greater involvement of children and young people in initial assessment processes, and thus in establishing the aims of particular sets of interventions, for working on the basis of strength-based models, and for examining how a failure to

change structures, systems and processes linked to social exclusion might affect the level and long-term nature of impacts.

- Both Children's Fund partnerships commissioned therapeutic services to explore ways to alter, modify or complement practices in traditional, western mental health services. Art, music, play therapy and horticulture were portrayed as offering appropriate means for young refugees and asylum seekers, especially those with limited attainment in English language, to express and engage with their feelings or experiences when they felt comfortable to do so.
- Our evidence suggests that therapeutic services which not only seek to involve parents in the assessment of the child's needs and concerns, but also pursue change in the social context shaping the child's distress and framing his/her response to it, are likely to have positive long-term impacts.

Recommendations

- In order for services to come together and think and act strategically, they require co-ordination and continuous support. This can foster the continuous development and review of strategies and services.
- Effective services recognise the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and frame their provision within this. They acknowledge and devise ways to alter the impact of wider structures, systems and processes linked to social exclusion.
- Responsive services need to build on the strengths of newly arrived children and their families and actively seek to create dialogue through which appropriate interventions can be negotiated.
- In addition to ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers can effectively engage with services (social links), it is important to put strategies in place that make them more independent in securing material and psychosocial support in the long term. This requires the promotion of networks between refugee and asylum seeking children and families from similar and different ethnic, national or religious backgrounds (social bonds and social bridges).

Chapter 1: Introduction

This report draws on research conducted as part of the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund (NECF). The focus of NECF is to explore the ways the Children's Fund initiative has developed multi-agency and multi-sector collaborative working that promotes effective participatory, preventative services for children aged five to thirteen deemed to be at risk of social exclusion across all 150 local authority areas in England.

This report is one result of our work to understand how Children's Fund partnerships have worked with particular target groups: black and minority ethnic children, Gypsy/Traveller children, children from refugee and asylum seeking families, disabled children, and children at risk of crime and anti-social behaviour. Literature reviews commissioned by NECF indicate that there is limited experience of preventative work with most of these groups and the learning from this element of the evaluation is intended to help those designing preventative services for some of the most marginalised groups of children and young people. This report is based on work carried out in two of the 16 case study partnerships that were the focus of the national evaluation.

The Children's Fund: An Outline

The Children's Fund Prevention Programme was announced as part of the UK 2000 Spending Review, following the work of the Social Exclusion Unit and in particular the 'PAT12' report, 'Young People at Risk' (SEU, 2000), which highlighted the need for multi-agency services for children and young people at risk of social exclusion. Full guidance was issued in early 2001 and each local authority area in England was invited to develop a multi-agency Partnership Board, which should include voluntary and community sector representation, to design a strategic plan for service delivery. The Children's Fund was delivered across all 150 top tier local authorities in 149 partnership arrangements. Plans outlined the demographic features of the area, structures in place for the delivery of the programme, details of inter-agency collaboration including capacity building with voluntary and community groups and evidence of consultation with children and young people. They also provided information on intended strategies for the prevention of social exclusion and the participation of children, young people and their families in service development.

The Children's Fund *Guidance* (CYPU, 2001) was issued by the cross-departmental Children and Young People's Unit, which managed the Children's Fund as part of a wider portfolio of preventative services for children, young people and families. Changes in the structure of children's services within central government, culminating in the Children Act 2004, led to the Unit being absorbed into a new 'Children, Young People and Families Directorate' located within DfES in late 2003. The *Guidance* set out the overarching objective of the Children's Fund:

to provide additional resources over and above those provided through mainstream statutory funding, specific programmes and through specific earmarked funding streams. It should engage and support voluntary and community organisations in playing an active part and should enable the full range of services to work together to help children overcome poverty and disadvantage. (CYPU, 2001, p6)

Beyond this, there were two key objectives and seven sub-objectives. These encouraged Children's Fund partnerships to focus on effective collaborative working to address needs linked to education, health, anti-social behaviour, user involvement and capacity building. Partnerships were also expected to enter into an 'ongoing dialogue' with children, families and their communities in order to facilitate their participation in the development, design and delivery of Children's Fund programmes and services. Such services should offer early intervention, and be multi-agency and focused on prevention (see below).

The first wave of programmes was funded from January 2001; Wave Two from February 2002 and Wave Three from December 2002. Funding was initially secured until 2006. It was subsequently extended until 2008, although the allocation reduced over time in order to promote the mainstreaming of effective services and the establishment of links to the emerging joint planning and commissioning arrangements arising from the Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (DfES, 2003) and the subsequent Children Act 2004 (HMSO, 2004). The allocation to the programme overall has been £966.6m from 2001-08.

The *Guidance* provided a model for understanding the focus of the initiative using four levels – ranging from broad general services through to focused remedial services. The model draws on the earlier work of Hardiker (Hardiker *et al.*, 1991; Hardiker, 1999) and Children's Fund services were expected to address levels 2 and 3:

Level One: Diversionary. Here the focus is before problems can be seen – thus prevention strategies are likely to focus on whole populations.

Level Two: Early prevention implies that problems are already beginning to manifest themselves and action is needed to prevent them becoming serious or worse.

Level Three: Heavy-end prevention would focus on where there are multiple, complex and long-standing difficulties that will require a customisation of services to meet the needs of the individual concerned.

Level Four: Restorative prevention focuses on reducing the impact of an intrusive intervention. This is the level of prevention that would apply to, for example, children and young people in public care, those permanently excluded from school or in youth offender institutions or supervision and/or those receiving assistance within the child protection framework.

(CYPUP, 2001, p37)

One consequence of the work of NECF has been to suggest an alternative way of thinking about prevention that recognises the multi-dimensional nature of the needs and circumstances of children at risk of social exclusion. This is outlined in the overall final report of the project (Edwards *et al.*, 2006).

NECF's mapping of the Children's Fund revealed that in planning services partnerships developed programmes of services that targeted geographical neighbourhoods, areas and communities, and particular social groups (NECF, 2003, see also Hughes and Fielding, 2006). Calculation of overall usage of Children's Fund services has not been possible, but survey work conducted in selected wards indicated that 10% of families and 9% of children living in those wards has used services in the previous 12 months (Edwards *et al.*, 2006, Chapter 4).

Methods

The aim of looking at approaches in two partnerships was to compare the approaches adopted, what these were able to achieve, and the implications of any differences in the strategies adopted. This was intended to contribute learning about the design of programmes of work capable of addressing the social exclusion experienced by young refugees and asylum seekers, and their families.

We used a Theories of Change (ToC) approach to evaluation (Connell and Kubisch, 1998). A Theory of Change is a statement coming from those designing and delivering services of how and why the actions planned will deliver the outcomes that

are sought. The rationales or assumptions underpinning decisions about activities and services are usually implicit within change programmes. A ToC approach to evaluation involves researchers working with stakeholders as closely as possible to the start of the programme to make them *explicit*. It links changes to be achieved in services and systems with outcomes for those targeted by the programme. Through individual interviews and facilitated workshops the researchers, on behalf of the stakeholders, generate a statement which sets out:

1. The group being targeted for change.
2. The context in which the change programme is being delivered.
3. The long-term objectives sought.
4. Actions being taken to meet these objectives.
5. Anticipated short and medium-term outcomes which indicate progress towards long-term objectives.
6. Why actions will lead to outcomes.

Once this framework has been established it guides the evaluation activity: the questions that are asked and the issues that are explored. It enables researchers to review the extent to which outcomes achieved were those that were anticipated and thus whether the 'theory' underpinning the approach was robust. It also focuses attention on the extent to which the proposed strategy was implemented in the way that was intended.

Follow-up data collection involved the following:

Metropolitan Authority

Data were collected over the period July 2004 to October 2005. This comprised semi-structured interviews (including interviews with some respondents on more than one occasion) with:

- 25 service providers (including project co-ordinators and staff and management committee members);
- Nine Children's Fund strategic stakeholders (members of the central team, Partnership Board members, members of the children's trust);
- Four representatives of statutory agencies;
- 24 members of school staff (head teachers, academic and behavioural support staff);

- 22 parents/carers of children attending the service, four of whom were foster carers;
- 37 young refugees or asylum seekers.

We conducted a total of 26 observation sessions in 22 settings and also accessed services' own monitoring data, such as case files.

London Borough

Data were collected over the period November 2004 to October 2005. Data collection comprised semi-structured interviews (including interviews with some respondents on more than one occasion) with:

- 14 service providers (including project co-ordinators and staff and management committee members);
- Three Children's Fund strategic stakeholders (members of the central team, the Partnership Board and the children's trust);
- Three representatives of statutory agencies;
- Four members of academic and behavioural support staff in schools;
- 21 parents/carers of children attending the service;
- 39 young refugees or asylum seekers.

We conducted a total of three observation sessions in three settings and also accessed services' own monitoring data, such as children's questionnaires.

Report Structure

The remainder of the report is structured as follows:

In Chapter 2 we provide a brief review of key issues relating to the social exclusion of young refugees and asylum seekers, consider the way in which these two partnerships defined the 'target group' and reflect on evidence of who actually used these services.

Chapter 3 describes the services put in place to deliver outcome objectives and the rationales underpinning these.

Chapter 4 addresses the short to medium-term impacts of these two strategies, considering the experiences of children who used the services and evidence of any change in services and systems.

In Chapter 5 we review the effectiveness of these strategies in the light of the overall objectives of the Children's Fund and the issues discussed in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 6 we offer some conclusions about ways forward in relation to prevention and young refugees and asylum seekers.

Chapter 2: Context and Key Issues

Context

Asylum seekers and refugees who move to industrialised countries such as the UK commonly experience multiple problems of social exclusion including material poverty and high degrees of isolation (Bloch, 2000; Duke *et al.*, 1999; Geddes, 2003; Jones and Gill, 1998a; Schellekens, 2001; Taylor and Gair, 1999; Zetter *et al.*, 2002; Zetter and Pearl, 2000). Arguably, restrictive immigration and asylum policies have contributed to this social exclusion, by progressively withdrawing entitlements to social care as disincentives to attempts to settle in the country (Joly, 1996). The compulsory programme of dispersal administered by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and introduced by the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 has resulted in asylum seekers being moved to areas of the country that have limited experiences of receiving immigrant groups. This in turn has limited their abilities to draw on supportive social networks (Duke *et al.*, 1999; Sales, 2002; Woodhead, 2000). Asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences of social exclusion are also highly racialised in that they often face similar problems to other black and minority ethnic groups living in the UK including discrimination, dislocation and limited power (Pierson, 2002).

In addition to the range of experiences that asylum seekers and refugees have before exile, several studies suggest that the physical and mental health of asylum seekers across the UK may deteriorate over time due to overcrowding, poor quality housing, material poverty, poor diets and problematic access to health and social care services (for example, Brent and Harrow Health Agency, 1995; British Medical Association Board of Science and Education, 2002; Gammell *et al.*, 1993; Woodhead, 2000). Despite asylum seekers' and refugees' full legal entitlement to National Health Service (NHS) care (Refugee Council, 2002) they may experience many barriers to using health services including language barriers and the limited availability of information about eligibility to use services – misunderstandings which are also reported among some NHS staff. Whilst the NHS provides interpretation services, these services, together with printed materials in minority languages, are in limited supply, a problem that exists across the UK (Jones and Gill, 1998b; Taylor and Gair, 1999; Woodhead, 2000; Burnett and Peel, 2001; GLA Policy Support Unit, 2001; British Medical Association Board of Science and Education, 2002).

Although all young refugees or asylum seekers aged five to 16 years are entitled to receive education in the UK, research has found that in practice lengthy delays can be experienced in enrolling asylum seeking children in schools due to over-subscription. This is exacerbated by high mobility rates (Hek, 2005; Kidane, 2001a; Power *et al.*, 1998). The Audit Commission (2000) identified two further reasons for some schools' reluctance to accept young refugees or asylum seekers: their inability to offer appropriate support, such as language support and some schools' reluctance to admit these groups since it is believed that the overall test performance would be adversely affected.

The problems of social exclusion among young refugees and asylum seekers and their families in the two local authority areas

From our work with services, professionals and service users, we can identify how interconnected and complex processes reinforce young refugees' and asylum seekers', and their families', experiences of social exclusion within the two local authority areas we studied. Some neighbourhoods within these areas have long histories of migrant communities settling in the area, and some service provision has grown and developed around their needs. However, the dispersal policy has meant that services have had to respond to high numbers of refugee and asylum seeking families, with a variety of different needs which services were not geared to address. Other neighbourhoods within the two local authority areas did not have histories of housing refugees or asylum seekers; these were typically also neighbourhoods with previously small minority ethnic populations. There were concerns that this was leading to feelings of isolation amongst families (both cultural and linguistic) and to families living in areas where there were few services designed for them and little history among professionals of working with this group. The circumstances and needs of refugee and asylum seeking groups were very varied. Appropriate service provision tended to be limited, suffering from a history of poor levels of funding. Indeed, many mainstream services were reported as having poor levels of awareness of young refugees' and asylum seekers' and their families' needs, priorities and concerns and hence services tended to be poorly adapted to their needs. This was compounded by the variety of languages spoken by newly arrived families. There were many languages for which mainstream health and social care services did not provide interpretation services (a common experience across the UK) and several languages for which demand exceeded available supply.

Interviewees' accounts suggested that when dispersed to such areas, newly arrived families were often isolated since the locations in which they were placed were unfamiliar and could be physically isolated from areas where there were other families with similar backgrounds, or facilities which could meet their cultural and material needs. In addition, new dispersal areas tend to be characterised by poverty and relatively high levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. Newly arrived families participating in the study indicated that they had limited awareness of, and means of access to services provided both by the mainstream and voluntary and community sectors. They also found it difficult to engage with services, for example through a lack of language skills or mistrust of services or professionals. Refugees and asylum seekers experienced difficulties in fulfilling their basic needs and in gaining the necessary knowledge of English and of bureaucratic practices to access mainstream services, such as health, education, benefits and housing. Complex bureaucratic processes for accessing services were widely reported as significantly undermining refugees' and asylum seekers' abilities to effectively engage basic health and social care services. Poor levels of social support exaggerated these problems for many families living in areas with limited histories of immigration. This affected not only their capacities to effectively engage with service providers in order to ensure their needs were met, but also to challenge statutory agencies' decisions about their allocations of housing or schools. Moreover, interviewees' accounts suggested that organisations that provide services for young refugees and asylum seekers in the two local authority areas had limited information on patterns of asylum seekers' dispersal at a local level. Indeed, information about dispersal is sensitive and it is not shared with agencies by the Home Office. Therefore services relied on referrals from other services or from private landlords. The latter is an important group but a difficult one with which to develop trusting relationships.

Many children and families interviewed had experienced traumatic events in their countries of origin and in their subsequent journeys to the UK. Problems may arise from experiences of loss or bereavement, or experiences of transfer and relocation. These experiences, alone or in combination, can result in low self-esteem and mental health problems. It was apparent that many schools in the two local authority areas lacked the resources to address needs of this type, needs resulting from poor mental health or well-being or from lack of language or other skills required in the formal setting of the school. There was a lack of awareness, and in some instances a reluctance to enrol these children within schools. Some children had had problems at

previous schools and found it difficult to settle. Parents were also often unable to engage with the school as a result of their lack of skills or confidence.

This brief review of the research evidence – including evidence from NECF - illustrates the multi-faceted experience of social exclusion as this applies to refugee and asylum seeking children and their families. This relates to all dimensions of the experience of social exclusion that we identified in our interim report (NECF, 2005):

- Material: including both poverty and poor or inappropriate housing;
- Access to public and private resources;
- Spatial: restrictions on where it is possible to live and on mobility within and across areas;
- Health and well-being: the physical prerequisites of social participation;
- Cultural: marginalised identities;
- Self-determination: assumptions of lack of capacity, both cognitive and physical;
- Decision-making: not being able to take part in decisions that affect your life.

Defining the Target Group

In both partnerships the decision to target refugees and asylum seekers as a discrete strand of activity was set within a context in which:

- the demography of both areas was undergoing significant changes due to a rise in the number of newly arrived people and a concomitant shift in the ethnic minority composition of the population;
- mainstream services and agencies were experiencing difficulties in reaching this target group and fulfilling their statutory obligations of responding to their needs and interests;
- specific issues and concerns about this group were coming to the fore in schools;
- political interest in this target group was creating a momentum.

Children's Fund activity was not directed at children and families on the basis of legal definitions, such as refugees and asylum seekers, but rather according to the perception of need, the specific objectives of the organisations and projects funded, and the interests of stakeholders involved. In the Metropolitan Authority, the

Children's Fund took both a thematic and an area-based approach to developing and commissioning services. Particular neighbourhoods were targeted as well as particular groups. Although most of the services commissioned by this Children's Fund programme worked with the generic group of newly arrived children and their families, one service targeted a more specific group amongst them, that is, young refugees and asylum seekers displaying problematic behaviour due to the trauma, bereavement and loss they may have suffered.

In the London Borough, the Children's Fund partnership worked with both newly arrived children and young people and second-generation refugees. This decision resulted from the growing concerns within the education service regarding the underachievement of this group. The call for action to promote the educational attendance and attainment of the younger generation of more established refugee communities was strengthened by representatives of those communities, and a parents-led community support network came to play a key role in the early Children's Fund discussions.

It could be argued that, whereas the Children's Fund partnership in the Metropolitan Authority constructed its target group around the experiences of newly arrived people, with a particular focus on those who had endured traumatic events, the target group defined by the London Borough reflected a concern with how the experiences of being a refugee or asylum seeker and a member of a particular ethnic group affected their chances of social inclusion.

Summary

- Asylum seekers and refugees commonly experience multiple problems of social exclusion including material poverty, poor quality housing, discrimination, poor diets and problematic access to health and social care services.
- The dispersal policy has fostered isolation amongst refugee and asylum seeking families; housing them in neighbourhoods with previously small minority ethnic populations. Services in those areas are often not aware of, and geared to address, the variety of different needs of this group.

- In both partnerships, the decision to target this group was set within a framework of demographic changes; gaps in service provision; local concerns about this group; and political interest.
- In the Metropolitan Authority, the Children's Fund partnership took both a thematic and an area-based approach to developing and commissioning services. Most of the services commissioned worked with the generic group of newly arrived children and their families.
- In the London Borough, the Children's Fund partnership worked with both newly arrived children and young people and second-generation refugees, whose educational underachievement was causing concern.

Chapter 3: Objectives and Services

In this section we consider the strategies being pursued by these two Children's Fund partnerships in relation to work with refugee and asylum seeking children and their families. We describe the activities they put in place to meet their defined long-term objectives, the rationales for these, and the short and medium-term changes they expected to see if these were to be met. It is based on the Theory of Change (see Appendix).

Objectives

Metropolitan Authority

Four long-term objectives were defined by key stakeholders as guiding the work of the four case study projects (described below).

1. ***Support integration into school and improve educational attainment***

The first aim was to help children settle at, and be supported in, attending school and thus achieve at school and gain the skills required for later life. Schools were recognised as requiring greater awareness of the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children and of the services and support they could draw upon to meet those needs. The induction of newly arrived children was to be improved by developing an early assessment of need and providing an appropriate package of support. Mentoring, one-to-one support and 'buddying' schemes were to be set up and links between parents and schools promoted, so that parents could engage with the education of their children.

2. ***Improve the mental health and well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and families***

Helping children to deal with the issues which arise from the trauma, bereavement and loss they may have suffered was a second focus of the partnership. The intention was to offer a range of therapeutic interventions that were child appropriate, in and outside of the school setting, as well as a wider range of support to raise the self-esteem of children and their families, improve their confidence, and help them settle into their new lives in the area.

3. ***Support families newly arrived in the city***

The provision of a range of services which could be tailored to meet the broad and varied needs of refugee and asylum seeking families constituted a third area of

concern. The development of a strength-based model of assessment, which would take account of capabilities and skills of families who felt overwhelmed by their problems, was a core element of this. To meet the needs identified, families were to be signposted to services local to them and across the city, receive direct support and/or be exposed to training and education in a variety of informal settings, including within communities. The assumption was that this range of support, training and signposting would raise the skills and confidence of families and thus empower them, enabling them to access services which could meet their needs.

4. *Raise capacity within mainstream and voluntary and community sector service providers, organisations and agencies*

In addition to direct service provision, the need to increase capacity and promote multi-agency working between organisations, agencies and services was identified. It was anticipated that this would lead to more appropriate, timely and holistic approaches to the needs of refugee and asylum seekers which would address the social exclusion they experience. The profile of refugee and asylum seekers as a group was to be raised throughout the city, countering the reluctance of some services to work with this target group, even where they have a statutory duty to do so.

Services commissioned were as follows:

Support team for newly arrived people (SNAP)

The support team sought to engage asylum seeking, refugee and newly arrived families as partners in a co-ordinated approach to support their transition and induction to living in the city. They sought to ensure children's needs were quickly assessed and that the young people, their families and their schools were subsequently supported to enable integration. The eventual outcomes of provision were seen to be 'empowerment', increased independence and the prevention of isolation. In order to achieve this, the team comprised workers from a range of agencies and also drew on the experiences of other services for refugees and newly arrived children and families in the city.

Although the project was commissioned by the Children's Fund partnership, the multi-agency team was jointly funded through a partnership comprising a range of agencies within the education service and the NHS, together with voluntary sector organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers. By working together

operationally and strategically, the team aimed to develop joint-working practices and collaborative provision. Further links were being developed with other health service providers, housing and social services, and youth justice services. Through such a partnership SNAP provides education support; family support; play and leisure; and support and training for staff in schools.

There was a significant development stage for the project from initial funding agreement – September 2004 – to full-scale service provision – September 2005, which affected the level of work NECF was able to undertake with this service. After having held regular conversations with the project co-ordinator, NECF was able to visit the service to observe practice in October 2005.

Project for newly arrived children with emotional and trauma support needs (NACETS)

This project was based within the 'Diversity and Inclusion' section of the LEA and aimed to meet the emotional and psychological needs of newly arrived children aged five to 13 years. It aimed to assist schools in supporting refugee and asylum seeking children who were traumatised by past experiences and uprooting, and who were emotionally and psychologically in need of additional and specialist support.

Upon referral from schools, the project organised a meeting with the child and her/his caregivers to assess the needs and concerns of the child and to gather additional information. Subsequently, the project organised and delivered individually tailored support that drew upon the range of in-house or other services as appropriate. An educational psychologist played an important role in this initial assessment and any referrals to other agencies, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). A number of forms of intervention were delivered by the service: play therapy/structured play activities, Therapeutic Horticulture, art therapy, and counselling. In addition, NACETS organises pastoral care and bilingual support for the child within the school.

NACETS asks each school to identify a link worker, a liaison officer between the school and the NACETS service. This member of staff generally takes up a supportive role or does pastoral work in the school. In addition to having more background information on the children involved in the service, the link person represents the school and pursues issues and concerns that arise with particular children during the sessions.

Support for newly arrived children's effective integration into schools (EIS)

EIS seeks to provide the support necessary to enable the child or young person to settle in, and therefore engage with, school, and to enable the school to work with the young person effectively. In order to achieve this they *aim to work in partnership with schools, families and communities to ensure that all newly arrived children, facing challenging circumstances, settle into their school and community as quickly and smoothly as possible*. Examples of the variety of support that EIS offers to young refugees and asylum seekers include support to promote emotional literacy, social skills, out-of-school interests and hobbies. The wide range of support provided to the young person, but also to his/her family, reveals a complex understanding of the factors likely to impact upon a young person's ability to integrate in a new school.

During the course of our research, EIS has undertaken a significant process of restructuring and reorganisation of the service in order to reassert its purpose and practice. On the basis of continual liaison and development of relations with each school, appropriate working practices and protocols are being developed, with a particular focus on referral and assessment processes. As from September 2004, EIS has been engaging children in holiday activities. Partnerships are being developed with other agencies in order to ensure no overlaps or gaps in provision and to allow for appropriate cross-referral and coherent packages of services for those young people and families accessing a number of services.

Responsive family-based support (RFS)

The RFS project aims to provide intensive, individually tailored support for newly arrived asylum seeking and refugee families with children. The support is intended to address the specific needs of families including assisting them in accessing and effectively engaging with statutory and voluntary and community sector services, school enrolment and aiming to reduce isolation. The project also aims to raise the capacity of mainstream and VCS agencies and organisations across the city by training service providers on the particular needs of refugees and asylum seekers, through advocacy work and by challenging providers' practice if issues emerge during the course of supporting families. An important aspect of the work of the project is to respond to complex, diverse sets of needs and to carefully negotiate appropriate interventions and outcomes with families rather than offering a generic service. RFS project workers referred to the importance of them building trusting relationships with service users over time in order to fully understand the complexity

of issues some families were experiencing. The project aims to empower families and make them independent in the longer term.

London Borough

The following four long-term objectives were defined by key stakeholders as guiding the work of the eight case study projects.

1. *Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people*

A general concern for the emotional well-being and health of refugee and asylum seeking children who might have experienced trauma due to loss or upheaval was given further weight by a heightened awareness of its impact on their educational attendance and attainment. Services were to be provided which would help raise self-esteem, improve social and communication skills, and enable greater self-expression.

2. *Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people*

A range of services was to be provided to meet different types and levels of need and delivered in both school and community settings. Work with children was designed to increase their proficiency in language and maths, to enable them to realise their full potential within school. Work with parents was to enable them to support their children's learning by helping with their own skills development as well as parenting itself. A final strategy to promote the integration and educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children was to work with schools, such as building home-school liaison.

3. *Improve community cohesion and integration*

Improving community cohesion and the integration of refugee and asylum seeking families within their communities was a third area of concern of the partnership. Services were to be provided which would raise cultural awareness amongst service users, within services themselves or those hosting them, and amongst the wider community. In addition to reducing segregation within service provision, refugee and asylum seeking children, families and communities were to be invited to participate in service planning and delivery. The need to reduce the exposure to crime and improve inter-generational relations within refugee and asylum seeking communities was identified.

4. *Change practice*

Changing practice was perceived as enabling the previous long-term objectives to be achieved in a way which would be more effective, inclusive and sustainable.

Networks for sharing information and for developing links within and between practices were to be developed; training and resources provided; and awareness of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers within and across sectors promoted.

Those involved in the partnership were to act as advocates and respond to need through a development approach.

Services commissioned were as follows:

Development officer post

Corresponding with the inception of the partnership a development officer post was created, located in a LEA team focusing on ethnic minorities, a location that enabled the officer to link across the different areas and departments of the authority to advocate, raise awareness and link services and provision to need. The role involved working with communities, and groups and institutions working with them, in order to identify needs and to seek provision which meets these. Where there was no existing provision, the aim was to encourage and oversee service development, through new and existing partnerships and applying to funding streams where possible.

Funding a community-led organisation: The parents' network

A parents' network was established in 2001 in response to the concerns of parents from a particular minority ethnic group about the low educational attainment of children and young people, the significant proportion that dropped out of school, and a group of boys who had become involved in anti-social behaviour and crime. The parents' network set up a weekday evening homework club to tackle underachievement and promote better home-school relationships. Parents were also encouraged to attend advice sessions which raised their awareness of, and increased access to, mainstream services. Older young people were given the opportunity to attend training courses, to work and volunteer at the centre or to design and deliver activities for younger children.

Projects commissioned by the Development Officer were:

Art therapy project and music therapy projects

Two separate therapeutic projects were commissioned in response to concerns about the emotional well-being of young refugee and asylum seekers: art and music therapy. Beliefs in the effectiveness of art and music therapy as interventions and their suitability for individuals with a lower level of English language proficiency had been evidenced from previous practices. The therapists adapt the design and delivery of existing music and art therapy services to this target group. It was decided to work through schools, which could provide referrals and suitable facilities. The Development Officer subsequently contacted schools identified as having a relatively high proportion of refugee and asylum seeking children to raise awareness of the services and, if these expressed interest, to negotiate the delivery.

Library after-school club

This after-school club organised 'fun' activities with the aim of providing constructive activities, which enabled children from different backgrounds to mix, friendships to form, and educational and emotional needs to be met. The use of the library as a venue encouraged use of its resources including IT. Some sessions were primarily craft-based whilst others focused on ICT skills and more explicitly aimed to raise literacy levels. Although it targeted refugee and asylum seeking children and young people, this service was also open to others.

Football project

A football project was commissioned in response to a request by a particular community for sports activities for young people from a specific minority ethnic community. It was delivered in conjunction with the English and maths classes discussed below. The football project also launched a pilot programme with sports and outdoor activities to improve the relationships between boys from this particular minority ethnic group and their fathers.

Numeracy and literacy lessons project

The project was set up in response to the finding of the LEA that pupils speaking a particular minority ethnic language were consistently underachieving in mainstream education and that their level of exclusion and truancy was on the increase. The English language and maths lessons were delivered by a community-based organisation. Although the project targeted children and young people speaking this

particular minority ethnic language, the service and the community-based organisation in general were open to others.

School-based educational attainment project

This was a one-off project with second-generation refugees from a particular country of origin who were identified by a school co-ordinator as displaying a low level of educational achievement. The Development Officer commissioned a developmental art project, intended to raise the girls' confidence, promote their identity and strengthen their sense of belonging in the school. The girls were asked to invite friends from different ethnic backgrounds to participate in the making of videos exploring different cultural practices, objects, foods, physical traits and religions. The co-ordinator explored ways to present the videos through school events to disseminate their key messages.

Comparing the Approaches

Education and emotional well-being were considered key priorities to achieve the social inclusion of young refugees and asylum seekers in both partnerships. In order to achieve this work with children, parents and schools was considered necessary.

Both partnerships aimed to support schools in fulfilling their responsibility of providing places for newly arrived children, offering appropriate induction, acknowledging the skills and knowledge children have prior to arrival and helping them to realise their full potential in their new educational setting. Both assumed that developing home-school liaison would not only enhance educational attendance and attainment of individual children, but also make an important contribution to schools' understanding of the needs, concerns and interests of pupils who are refugees or asylum seekers. Whereas services in the Metropolitan Authority aimed to provide packages of support responsive to the immediate needs of newly arrived children and their families, those in the London Borough focused on help with homework, specific language skills and maths classes, and action to promote the cultural identity of more established refugee communities.

A decision to fund therapeutic services for children suffering emotional problems was presented as indicative of, or a catalyst for, the shift to a more holistic approach where emotional well-being is seen as intertwined with educational attendance and attainment. Therapy was not only construed as an appropriate way to deal with the traumatic experiences presumed to accompany the refugee experience, but also as

promoting children's emotional and social skills. It was anticipated that these skills would help children to make new friends and facilitate integration within their new environments. In the Metropolitan Authority, support for therapeutic services extended to children's families, reflecting the view that changing the social environment of the child is an essential part of any strategy pursuing emotional well-being and social inclusion. Both partnerships adopted the role of piloting therapeutic interventions for young refugees and asylum seekers with the intention that these would be mainstreamed.

The long-term objectives of the two programmes also focused on *raising capacity within organisations* and *changing practice*. Both programmes aimed to facilitate links and share information, act as advocates, organise awareness raising events, deliver training packages, and pilot new measures, activities and initiatives. The types and levels of multi-agency working to be adopted, however, were reflective of the context in which the programmes operated. While the London Borough opted for a developmental approach to respond to new or changing needs of young refugees and asylum seekers, the Metropolitan Authority assumed that improved multi-agency working would provide the necessary flexibility and responsiveness as common areas of practice and learning were identified.

The clearest difference between the two programmes in terms of their objectives lay in their work around families and communities. While the Metropolitan Authority adopted an objective of *supporting newly arrived families*, the London Borough aimed to *improve community cohesion and integration*. This appeared to reflect the fact that the latter focused on more established refugee communities and could draw upon the knowledge, skills and resources of voluntary or community-based organisations. The Metropolitan Authority proposed a strengths-based model that recognised and aimed to mobilise the capacities of refugee and asylum seeking parents and families, while the London Borough's programme was based on a view that the empowerment of young refugees and asylum seekers and their families would emerge from networks within the communities of which they are a part.

Chapter 4: Impact

In this section we discuss the impact these approaches were able to achieve in the short to medium term. We hereby focus on the experiences of young refugees and asylum seekers and their families as well as consider the evidence relating to the development of services and service systems.

London Borough

Emotional well-being

Some of the projects were described as having positive, albeit indirect effects on the emotional well-being of their service users. Others, namely the art and music therapy projects, were commissioned to directly address this issue.

The therapists aimed to create a therapeutic space in which children could share their experiences, feelings and views, even with limited English language proficiency. A refugee girl who participated in an art therapy group described how the therapists sought to create a protected space by *putting stuff around the windows so [...] only the group could see our work and [...] no-one was allowed to tell anyone anything about our secrets*. This sense of protection in turn helped to foster a relationship of trust between the pupils and also with the art therapists. The art therapists told the children in the first session that *we should be comfortable [...] and we shouldn't be afraid of anyone. And we can share our thoughts if we want to* (child). In addition, the children interviewed described the project staff as friendly, open and easy to talk to: *she is a very nice lady and she has helped me a lot, so I think it would help other children as well*.

In addition to creating a protected space and developing a relationship of trust within the group, the art therapists also adopted a non-directive, child-centred approach for children to address issues. The fun activities at art therapy seemed to offer the children and young people temporary respite from their emotional problems or any pressure to 'resolve' or deal with them. But the art therapy session also offered them opportunities to talk about their art work and use this as a platform to discuss their current or past experiences and feelings. A refugee girl said: *And [the other pupils] kept on saying "What happens in art therapy?" and I was like "just having fun". I couldn't tell them about what all the secrets and I just kept my mouth shut*.

When deemed appropriate, the art therapists used the above mentioned conversations to explore with the children (alternative) ways of dealing with emotions.

In art therapy you can discuss with the children whether they could think of any other ways how to contain their anger healthily and then they might come up with oh it helps me to play football or it helps me to do boxing or whatever. [...] And then they start to understand how it works and then they can transfer what they've learned in art therapy to things outside of art therapy.

By working on their social and emotional literacy skills and providing them with the necessary confidence, self-esteem and trust to approach other children, the art therapy sessions also facilitated the development of friendships within and outside the group.

We became special friends and sometimes she will tell me all about her stories all about her having nightmares when she was sleeping sometimes. (child)

These peer relationships are of particular significance to children who are often isolated at schools and victims or perpetrators of bullying and teasing. One girl explained:

some people are racist about her...about where she comes from and they say "[...] girl" or something. And they would be racist to her. But I supported her and she is good to me.

The art therapists aimed to contact and meet with parents to talk to them about their child's needs and hopes for the benefits of the service, but this was often difficult to achieve. An art therapist explained that *it also depends on the contact person in the school because, if they have good relationships with the families, then often it's a lot easier to meet them.* The therapists also gave regular feedback to teachers and school personnel to discuss the child's progress, provided that this did not breach confidentiality.

The next sections discuss how other Children's Fund services and projects have beneficial, indirect effects on emotional well-being of children and parents by providing family support and/or developing social networks.

Educational attainment

Ensuring that these children obtain a place in school and English as an additional language (EAL) support was a key responsibility of the Development Officer. The two

community-based organisations funded by the Children's Fund programme also helped refugees and asylum seekers to access and engage with local schools. Offering advice on bureaucratic procedures and entitlements and offering translation was a recurring task:

when a child comes into this country and you want to get them in school and help them to settle in a school, you have to help the family fill in all the forms you know [...] so they have got benefits.

The parents using the two community-based organisations claimed that: *If difficulties arise in the school with your child, at least you have got somewhere to go for help.* Some of them recounted the support they had received when the school threatened to exclude their child.

In addition to responding to individual cases and needs, the Children's Fund partnership adopted the strategy of raising the profile of young refugees and asylum seekers in schools to encourage their integration. It also engaged in advocacy to ensure their needs and rights were met. For example, Children's Fund services and projects sought to communicate the importance for young refugees and asylum seekers to have access to a space to do homework and receive support.

Several Children's Fund services or projects set up after-school homework clubs. They adopted the approach of informal learning and/or of offering children and young people a mixed package of learning and leisure. All the children and service providers interviewed spoke of a range of activities which were enjoyable and stimulated learning: *We have fun and laugh, play on the computer. It helps us to improve ... reading and writing.*

The parents of children underscored the beneficial impact of the after-school homework clubs on the educational attendance and attainment of the children.

The children are more confident and more happier and they can go to the mainstream and pick up on things.

They are happy in school now. After school they are not tired, they are happy, they come in and they'll then do homework.

This Children's Fund partnership also considered effective home-school liaison as a crucial strategy to improve the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people. The Development Officer networked with the Home

School Liaison Officers based in the LEA to establish this. Refugee parents used the two community-based organisations *to get advice, information and guidance about how to help with the education of their children*. This constituted a response to the finding that large numbers of (second-generation) refugees received limited or no help with their school work from their parents, who only had a limited knowledge of English and were unable to engage with the English education system. This additional advice and information often facilitated better links with the school and parental confidence to draw on those links.

If I've got problems with my daughter I would go straight to teacher, look my daughter I know she is getting better but I think she needs a bit more help.

Parental advocacy was effective in leading to the recruitment of (additional) classroom assistants. A parent proudly described how services at her daughter's school had significantly improved: *every Thursday a Turkish lady [comes in] and she is helping the children. [...] she's teaching them spelling, reading, whatever they want to learn.*

Finally, some of the services, organisations and projects offered opportunities for young people to get involved in their planning and delivery, boosting their individual skills and experiences as a result. One of the after-school clubs came up with the idea of producing a newsletter: *We had a brilliant brainstorming session with them as to what could go in it... all the work in it is their own* (project worker). Within this space for creativity the children and young people develop skills, such as working with computers, scanners and printers and with particular software programmes. In addition, they gain skills of where and how to obtain knowledge on particular subjects: *Whenever we needed to do any research for this, particularly for the illusion bit, [the children] made a lot of use of our [library] stock and Internet resources as well.*

Community cohesion and integration

One of the two community-based organisations set up a drop-in centre for refugee families, where it provides information, translation and advice on an individual and group basis and engages in handholding. It organised a series of meetings and consultation days with mainstream services, such as housing and education, to advocate the needs, concerns and cultural norms of (particular groups of) refugees and asylum seekers. It also provided an opportunity for discussion with

representatives of mainstream services of the barriers to reaching this community. Both community-based organisations established links with institutions that offer adult education and vocational training.

Parents described these organisations as offering spaces and opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to meet up, share traditional drinks and foods and exchange stories: *It gives us an excuse. You come here for your children and you socialise as well.* These informal contacts often resulted in parents advising others on how to deal with the problems they face: *I think socially for myself I can share other parents' ideas and understanding.* Several parents had become actively involved in these organisations.

Young refugees and asylum seekers also valued opportunities to meet others in similar situations, gain peer support and boost their confidence.

We all know each other and most of us get along and then we won't be shy of what are they going to say about me [...]. In English school no one would have the guts to get up and dance or get up and sing or get up and do what they can do. [...] In here people won't say that, oh Turkish people can do that because you're Turkish yourself.

A parent claimed:

Well they are quite happy because they get to find their identity and be proud of who they are. Once you do that confidence comes back. So you are building confidence in the mainstream, if someone says you're not English or not, they can say no I'm not I'm Turkish and I'm proud of it, which if you are bullied or something like that and if you didn't have an identity you are pushed in a corner and left there.

The young people attending the after-school clubs often highlighted the limited facilities for youth within their local areas and therefore suggested to *make this a bigger place. Make it a homework club and a youth club.*

In general, the partnership sought to challenge a tradition of segregated youth provision in the borough. Whilst some projects adopted an integrative approach by inviting children from different ethnic, national or cultural backgrounds to participate in the activities, other organisations funded by the Children's Fund opened their doors and services to other communities and cross-referred children and young people. The refugee boys and girls interviewed often provided positive commentary

on after-school and holiday activities. Their experiences suggested such activities were effective in promoting their integration into the wider community by facilitating interaction and relationships with members of other communities and stimulating cross-cultural learning.

Changing practice

The Development Officer successfully organised training for school staff *on how to deal with refugees, asylum seeker background pupils*. For example, the Development Officer set up training to promote staff's understanding of how to identify and respond to mental health needs of refugees and asylum seekers. In relation to the training organised for schools on how to create a whole school approach to support newly arrived children, the Development Officer described how at subsequent Ethnic Minority Achievement Team (EMAT) meetings

they discussed what they'd learnt at the training. For example they went, oh this is what we've looked at in terms of [...] children who are kind of entering school say halfway through... they always start on the same day, we make sure everyone knows who is coming in, we make sure where they're going.

The Development Officer had also responded to problems raised by schools, such as producing guidelines for how to deal with *Home Office removals people arriving at the school's doorstep*.

Similarly, the two community-based organisations and the school-based educational attainment project set out to raise the profile of (particular groups of) young refugees in local schools by acting as their advocate in the short and medium term. In addition, the community-based organisations adopted strategies to empower parents by providing them with the necessary skills, information and confidence to argue for additional resources and/or change in schools. The above illustrated how this dual strategy strengthened parents' and children's demands for EAL and classroom assistants.

Metropolitan Authority

Integration into school and educational attainment

The key purpose of EIS and SNAP is to provide the support necessary to enable the child or young person to settle in, and therefore engage with, school, and to increase the capacity of the school to work with the young person effectively. Each young

person referred to the scheme is recognised to have individual needs, requiring the provision of specific and appropriate interventions to meet diverse and evolving requirements. The identification of specific needs is therefore a crucial outcome of EIS and SNAP. NECF observed how both services continuously refined their assessment procedures and hereby explored alternative and innovative ways for young refugees and asylum seekers to communicate concerns and needs. The resources (for example, interpreter), techniques (for example, use of tactile materials to prompt non-verbal communication) and relationships between project workers and families were often not available or easily replicable in mainstream schools without support from Children's Fund services. In both services, a detailed assessment results in a subsequent time limited package of provision, aimed at addressing those identified needs, and is continuously reviewed to ensure progress is appropriate and maintained.

Reviews of cases from each service were carried out by the NECF team. In the majority of cases observed the aims of the provision were found to have been achieved, or progress made towards them and the means to onward progression identified. Evidence of the achievement of such outcomes drew upon the observations of both project workers and school staff, within a variety of settings. Interviews with parents and class teachers were unanimous in portraying the benefits of support for their particular children.

For example, a refugee mother described her son as having *very high potential that needed to be tapped* and argued that without the specialist one-to-one support afforded by EIS this *might not have happened*, believing that it would have been easy to ignore her son as he was *obviously going to do well* and showed no signs of disrupting his fellow pupils. As such he did not represent a priority for the school.

In addition to support within the classroom, Children's Fund services presented a range of non-curriculum based activities intended to provide the skills necessary to allow the young person to participate more effectively within the classroom. Within EIS and SNAP this was principally achieved through access to holiday and out-of-school activities, which were also designed to broaden a young person's experiences, promote social interaction and practise newly acquired English language skills. In relation to the Therapeutic Horticulture delivered by NACETS, a link worker explained that:

One of our few rules, which is actually a rule which comes from the children, not from us, is that everybody speaks English down there. [...] I mean we have some students who, when they get together start speaking Farsi, and other people quickly pick them up about it.

In general, NECF observed how the therapeutic services organised by NACETS allowed children with limited English language proficiency to take part in group activities, engage in team work and make contact with others in verbal and non-verbal ways. For example, in horticulture a boy from Zimbabwe was showing a boy from Palestine how to plant potatoes. In previous sessions, these boys often kept to themselves and did not speak a lot due to limited English language skills. As the young refugees and asylum seekers referred to NACETS are often isolated at schools and the victims or perpetrators of bullying and teasing, these new or strengthened peer relationships are of particular significance.

School staff interviewed also stated that NACETS helped children's integration in the school environment through promoting their social and emotional skills and providing them with the necessary confidence, self-esteem and trust to approach other children in the classroom or on the playground. For example, with regards to play therapy, a link worker described how a refugee girl:

was mixed [in the Players group] with another class and she tried in her own way to communicate with the others. [...] usually in a class you see her sit back and watch others, she was very withdrawn. But [now] she was getting herself more involved, which was nice to see.

Academic and behavioural support staff argued that *for a lot of the children it has affected self-esteem and their social skills and that will have an impact on their learning*. The beneficial impact on educational attendance and attainment was also evidenced by some children who stated that NACETS activities made them *happier* or *excited* about coming to school and some had found it easier to learn new things.

Within their overall model of working with families in a supportive and facilitative way, RFS project workers have supported families when accessing school places and interim educational provision and when family concerns arise. Home-school liaison has been gaining a more prominent position in the provision of RFS, EIS and SNAP. This is seen to have the potential added benefit of getting parents into and engaged in schools, and to begin to understand how they can help children with their curriculum.

Mental health and well-being

This section begins with a description of the activity of NACETS for whom such support represents the central aim of the service. In contrast, the provision described by both RFS and SNAP in relation to 'well-being' is seen as intertwined with, or promoted by, practical support for the child and his/her family. EIS can be seen to embrace both perspectives as a means to aiding integration, providing emotional support, utilising both the techniques and the staff of NACETS, and practical support.

Our data provided evidence of the non-directive, child-centred approach that NACETS adopted and how this approach allowed young refugees and asylum seekers to raise and deal with issues at their own pace. A link worker, for example, observed how the children *were painting away but they did talk to each other about things and they talked with us about memories*. The children we interviewed explained that *we can share like each other's paintings and we could talk to each other about our ideas*. As such, the art activities created opportunities for discussing, for example, their countries of origin, their cultural traditions, and their journeys to the UK. These in turn presented gateways for the therapists into the past and present experiences of the young people.

For example, a refugee girl, who used NACETS services, recounted that when she arrived in the UK she was suffering from nightmares, experienced insomnia and as a result dreaded going to bed. She explained that in her previous country of residence there *was a lot of bad things [...] I always kept on thinking about*. This had a negative impact on her experience at school: *So I got dead frightened when I came to England, I was scared to see new people or to go to school*. The girl explained how the art therapy provided helped her to forget about the nightmares, to talk about their content and origins to someone she trusted and to explore methods to deal with those nightmares if they reoccurred. With the support of the art therapist and counsellor of the project, the fear eventually dissipated and soon the girl *had lot of friends at school that helped me*.

Recognising that emotional needs can impact upon the ability of young refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into school, EIS sometimes provides centre, and school-based art therapy and counselling, employing the same staff and techniques as NACETS. One of the differences between NACETS and EIS is that EIS sometimes worked with parent and child together when the emotional problems of the young person were seen to be closely connected to the relationship with his/her parents.

For example, the assessment carried out by EIS on referral of a refugee girl revealed that her isolation and withdrawn behaviour stemmed from the lack of communication and distress between the girl and her mother. The mother was depressed, sleeping a lot and not showing sufficient 'interest' in her daughter. The art therapist, therefore, started joint sessions with mother and daughter, in order to work on building their relationship. Both the art therapist and the mother reported improvements over the course of this provision.

RFS aims to assist refugees and asylum seekers in forming and developing social networks through convening groups of adults and children and young people in similar circumstances. Interviewees explained that these meetings represented an important opportunity to exchange information and views and offer mutual support that helped cope with uncertainty. For example, a mother said:

[there are]... different forms of support... you know, just sitting and talking to somebody... that can help people. You know, reassuring them, different, lots of ways you can help other people.

Volunteering opportunities for adults were seen as contributing to improved mental health and well-being for those involved, and the benefits of these were felt more widely within the family. One parent interviewed explained that providing language and emotional support for others gave her a sense of purpose and she was starting to develop her skills in order to do voluntary work.

The previous section also referred to the friendships that newly arrived children and young people established through attending holiday and after-school activities, which were in turn facilitated by improved English language proficiency and social and emotional skills. RFS, SNAP and EIS also indirectly impacted upon the emotional well-being of young refugees and asylum seekers through family support, which is discussed in the next section.

Support for newly arrived families

Both RFS and SNAP saw support to the family as central and of equal importance to support aimed at children. Many parents indicated that they felt RFS had been responsive to their particular sets of needs. Illustrating this view a parent said:

The RFS project has always been there for me. Every time that I requested the help... Every time that I felt the need – I had a problem – I just called them and they tried to address the issues and problems.

Similarly another parent described the way in which RFS addressed her family's particular needs by helping to access and effectively engage with statutory, voluntary and community sector services:

I can phone the RFS office if I feel sad. At least someone is helping. When I lost my post office card everything [my benefits] was stopped. [RFS] referred me to social services and Mercy Aid... [They provided] a ramp for [my husband] and has provided an interpreter for the doctor and for support at the job centre, filling in forms, understanding paperwork.

RFS aims to empower families by making them independent and introducing them to social networks that can offer support in the longer term. A further area of intervention of RFS is to introduce children and young people to sport and leisure activities. Play and leisure opportunities are seen as part of a holistic provision to the family, recognising the need for its consideration alongside educational needs.

The family support element of SNAP is developed directly from that of RFS. While SNAP seconded a RFS family worker and adopted its working practices and approaches, the multi-disciplinary nature of the team have led to some changes over time. Established networks and working relationships have been utilised to develop provision specific to the families now accessing SNAP. This development illustrates the learning that occurred within this particular Children's Fund partnership.

SNAP has seconded a full-time play worker to support access to a broad range of leisure opportunities for newly arrived children and their parents. These leisure opportunities are to be further developed on the basis of an audit done by the play worker. The play worker is also to link up with the Players Project of NACETS in order to provide therapeutic play. Furthermore, the secondment of a representative from Metropolitan Authority Adult Education Service (MAES) has led to the ongoing development of a range of family learning opportunities. Feedback indicated the

success of a family literacy course and of an ESOL five-day learning course with a dual focus on literacy (speaking and vocabulary) and helping families to become familiar with the city. The latter project is to be rolled out across the city.

As mentioned in the above, EIS offers family provision where appropriate and possible and is currently working to increase this support through liaison with RFS. In common with SNAP and RFS, the family work of EIS includes supporting access to leisure facilities, community groups and social networks, and referral to other agencies. The link between family support and home-school liaison has gained more attention, with project workers of RFS helping to develop the skills of family support workers in schools.

The remit of NACETS is work with children and young people and does not include direct work with family members. NACETS makes contact with the parents or carers upon a child's referral and sets up a meeting to gain a more in-depth insight into the child's behaviour at home and school and the family's past and current circumstances. Where contact with their family indicates needs within the family, NACETS refers on to Children's Fund projects or others within the City. NACETS has referred families to the British Red Cross, Black Health Agency, RFS, EIS, and other mainstream and local community services.

Organisational capacity building

The final stated objective of the programme draws upon much of the activity discussed above. The projects work with a variety of other agencies, both directly and indirectly. In doing so it is clear that the Children's Fund funded services have had some impact both on service provision for this target group and on the approaches taken by agencies and organisations within the area, through both informal and formal activity.

The aim of SNAP in working with schools can be seen to be broadly similar to that of EIS. The services aim to ensure schools are able to appropriately meet the needs of individual children referred, whilst also developing general school approaches to, and understandings of, the needs of the target group. NECF observed how every school in the district is being encouraged to undertake an audit of need, addressing how a school must plan, recognise, and analyse the needs of EAL pupils at all levels and for all subjects. The context in which SNAP and EIS are working is also similar, since schools in the districts covered are all perceived to be at different points in terms of

their experience and capacity of working with this target group. Thus, there is a different system in each school within which EIS and SNAP must place itself, with a slightly different role taken on by the service in each school.

During our work with SNAP we were able to explore the impact of this work. In one school, where the team was asked to develop EAL provision, SNAP trained teachers helped to draw up a plan for personal development, staff training and administrative systems, and the subsequent redesigning of induction processes and policies. In addition to a new contact admission form, new EAL policy was drawn up requiring staff to develop and carry out a language acquisition plan for each child under the supervision of the nominated EAL lead. Also a file or pack was developed to support class teachers in addressing the 'additional needs' of their students, including special needs as well as EAL.

Although raising capacity was not a primary focus of NACETS, schools have developed services or reflected on the place of newly arrived children within their school as a result of the service being delivered there. NACETS workers were often formally or informally consulted in the development of these new services (for example, training of school staff). In one primary school, the success of the art therapy sessions inspired the Head Teacher to create a 'nurturing room' in the school which would be accessible to all pupils. A greenhouse was built on the premises of a school, which has been working with the Therapeutic Horticulture project over the last two years, and, since September 2005, have integrated horticulture into the school's curriculum. The EMA co-ordinator portrayed these developments as *the major thing that's come out of all this apart from the benefit to the students, [...] the school has taken this on board and is prepared to develop it.*

RFS aims to raise the capacity of mainstream and VCS agencies and organisations across the city through delivering training to service providers on the particular needs of refugees and asylum seekers, through advocacy work and by challenging providers' practice if issues emerge during the course of supporting families. RFS have developed a strong reputation with both statutory and non-statutory sectors and is active in cross-city activities.

Summary

- The child-level data we gathered indicated the positive short and medium-term impacts that therapeutic services in both local authorities had on the emotional well-being of young refugees and asylum seekers.
- The design and delivery of therapeutic services had been adapted in such a way as to allow children with limited English language proficiency to take part in group activities, engage in team work and make contact with others in verbal and non-verbal ways.
- These and other out-of-school and holiday activities helped children's integration in the school environment through promoting their social and emotional skills and providing them with the necessary confidence, self-esteem and trust to approach other children in the classroom or on the playground.
- The children attending after-school homework clubs in the London Borough and their parents underscored the importance for young refugees and asylum seekers to have access to space and support for homework and documented how this had changed their attitudes and experiences of school and learning.
- In both local authorities, the Children's Fund partnership helped to raise the profile of young refugees in local schools by acting as their advocate in the short and medium term.
- Both Children's Fund programmes helped to ensure that young refugees and asylum seekers obtained school places and that parents received advice and/or support regarding filling out forms, bureaucratic procedures and claiming their rights, such as free school meals and uniforms.
- The community-based organisations in the London Borough and the services commissioned to promote children's integration in schools in the Metropolitan Authority also provided parents with the necessary skills, information and confidence to argue for additional resources and/or change in schools. This dual strategy strengthened parents' and children's demands for EAL and classroom assistants.

- The recruitment of classroom assistants and/or bilingual support workers created and developed positive home-school relationships. Parents and project workers identified home-school liaison as a crucial aspect of their strategy to address the emotional and educational needs of young refugees in ways which are effective, sustainable and culturally appropriate.
- In the Metropolitan Authority's Children's Fund, reviews of services have led to a greater emphasis being placed on home-school liaison.
- In the London Borough, therapeutic services struggled to secure parental involvement due to problematic or non-existent home-school relationships with newly arrived families.
- Parents and children valued the family support delivered by the two community-based organisations in the London Borough and the three non-therapeutic services in the Metropolitan Authority. These services were described as responding to families' particular needs by helping to access and effectively engage with statutory, voluntary and community sector services.
- Children and parents from a refugee or asylum seeking background also valued opportunities that these organisations created to meet others in similar situations, exchange information and advice and gain peer support in overcoming material and emotional difficulties. This in turn constituted a significant buffer against isolation and/or discrimination.
- Volunteering opportunities for adults were seen as contributing to improved mental health and well-being for those involved, and the benefits of these were felt more widely within the family.
- Over the period of evaluation, the services in the Metropolitan Authority refined their procedures to assess the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children, employing a mix of, often innovative or alternative, resources and techniques which had not been available within mainstream services and schools.

- NECF observed how the two services established to promote integration in schools in the Metropolitan Authority evolved a model of working which ensures that schools are able to appropriately meet the needs of individual children referred, whilst also developing general school approaches to, and understandings of, the needs of the target group.
- These two services also developed a flexible model of working to respond to the changing contexts in which they operate, with the schools being at different points in terms of their experience and capacity of working with this target group.

Chapter 5: Reviewing the Strategy

This chapter compares the two strategies and explores key themes which emerge to identify similarities, differences, and learning from the two Children's Fund programmes.

The Children's Fund as a strategic change mechanism?

Both Children's Fund programmes developed a strategic approach to meeting the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people. In the London Borough, this strategy primarily centred upon a developmental approach through the employment of a development officer responsible for commissioning services, alongside the support of a parent-led community-based organisation. In the Metropolitan Authority, an analysis of needs by target group and area led to the identification of a portfolio of services, for which organisations were invited to tender, according to specification agreed by the Children's Fund partnership. Both strategies involved the delivery of a range of services, and included work to raise awareness and capacity and thus work to change mainstream and other practice over time. However, there were differences in how the services and activities were supported as part of a strategic approach.

In the Metropolitan Authority, the commissioning panel which took initial funding decisions was intended to act as a support and development group for the themed approach; it proved difficult to maintain the engagement of this group of local stakeholders, and services were not working together. A consultant was then employed as a co-ordinator, to develop the strategic approach. This co-ordinator organised and facilitated regular (bi-monthly) meetings to bring the services together. Common areas of practice and learning were identified through regular contact and discussion and information was shared. Staff from different services began to see each other as colleagues working towards a common set of goals – the production of the Theory of Change statement by NECF was used to support this development (see Appendix). The consultant worked to identify common outcome indicators across the services so that each could begin to identify their contribution as well as key learning from practice. The success of this approach was illustrated by the development of SNAP. This project was a response to learning from EIS, which showed the need for support for children and for schools in working to help newly arrived children become established and successful in school, and to the learning from RFS that highlighted the importance of an approach which worked with families

in order to help their children. The support of the theme by the co-ordinator enabled learning to transfer between projects on an ongoing basis, and for joint working including the part-time and temporary secondment of staff. The newly established project was led by the Children's Fund but involved professionals from NHS, education and other agencies and organisations, indicating learning beyond the Children's Fund and possible long-term impacts of this work informing strategic change. As services in the authority move to locality based models, SNAP is continuing to develop innovative ways of working.

In contrast, the strategy of the London Borough Children's Fund partnership was not as intensively supported. Meetings were held to bring practitioners together, but they were infrequent. The Development Officer managed different projects and used these operational contacts to share learning and raise awareness amongst services. But the profile of services developed met a range of needs across the borough, having less of a geographical focus than the Metropolitan Authority. Therefore it was more difficult to identify commonality across services and activities. Services addressed different needs, at different times, in different parts of the Borough. Whilst located within the education service, there was a less structured approach to the support of, and learning from, the services commissioned. The effectiveness of the strategy was dependent upon the skills and capacities of the Development Officer, and when this person left, the learning beyond the services themselves appeared vulnerable; it was not clear if there would be learning at a strategic level, beyond the funded services.

In both programmes, the local context influenced the availability of services for refugees and asylum seekers and the strategies did not develop or deliver services which worked across their locales comprehensively; services were based on identifying gaps in provision. In the London Borough, none of the commissioning was locality based, and thus services were established by the Children's Fund across the Borough for different target groups. Yet, in practice, services for refugees and asylum seekers were developed in response to local, neighbourhood or school-based, needs and thus families and children and young people were only able to access provision that was local to them. For example, art therapy was provided in different schools at different times, and for a set period each time; it was only available to pupils when it was made available to their school. In the Metropolitan Authority, services were based in a number of localities, determined by the sites where newly arrived families were being placed under the NASS system of dispersal. As different areas began to

receive families, new needs were created as schools and other services were not familiar with working with newly arrived parents and children. The Children's Fund developed the 'support team' project in response to this emergent need in one area. Both of these strategies suggest that flexibility is required when targeting work with refugee and asylum seeking children and families.

Conceptualising and responding to the social exclusion of refugees and asylum seekers

Both strategies demonstrated an understanding of the multi-dimensional and inter-related issues faced by refugee and asylum seeking children and families. Some services developed a holistic approach to meeting needs, others focused on one aspect of need.

Both partnerships recognised that asylum seekers and refugees commonly experience multiple problems of social exclusion including material poverty, poor housing, limited access to social benefits and health and social welfare services, limited English language support, high degrees of isolation and limited supportive social networks. This reflects many of the dimensions of social exclusion identified in a previous NECF report (NECF, 2005), and as discussed in Chapter 2 of this report. Four dimensions of social exclusion were particularly evident in project activities targeting young refugees and asylum seekers in the two Children's Fund programmes described here:

1. *Access to public and private resources*

A number of projects supported by the two partnerships were concerned with ensuring refugees and asylum seekers gain access to services. This included raising awareness of rights and entitlements to provision, as well as helping to overcome barriers to access, including those relating to language, transport and money, but also factors relating to the services themselves that make access difficult or the service received inappropriate. A particular focus was to promote young refugees' and asylum seekers' integration into school, which was recognised as a very important route out of their longer-term exclusion.

2. *Health and well-being*

The other key strand of activity detailed above relates to health and well-being. Despite asylum seekers' and refugees' full legal entitlement to NHS care, the services discussed recognised the potential barriers to using health services

including the limited availability of information about eligibility to use services and language barriers. Whilst physical health was considered through family access to appropriate health services, the services were more directly concerned with emotional health, including provision to help overcome possible trauma associated with experiences prior to, or subsequent to, arrival.

3. *Self-determination*

In the representations of the projects, provision was framed around a discourse of empowerment. This was most clearly defined by the workers of the responsive family-based support project in the Metropolitan Authority and the community-based organisations in the London Borough. These projects aimed to empower families by making them independent and to link people with social networks that could offer support in the longer term. Rather than simply guiding families through the services needed at the time of provision, there was a commitment to helping them learn how to access similar services in the future should other needs arise. The participation of young people in the design and delivery of Children's Fund services, a feature that was particularly prominent in the community-based organisations in the London Borough, worked towards enabling asylum seekers and refugees to identify their needs and interests and the most appropriate and effective ways of responding to those.

4. *Cultural identities*

A number of projects supported by the London Borough had the explicit aims of strengthening the cultural identity of young people from refugee families, enhancing their confidence about their background and cultural heritage, and raising awareness among pupils of the cultural background and identity of other ethnic groups attending schools. Other projects addressed these issues more indirectly. In this context, a positive, strong cultural identity and sense of belonging to a cultural group was presented as inter-related with other outcomes that the Children's Fund services set themselves, such as emotional well-being and educational attainment and attendance.

In the remainder of this chapter, we briefly compare and discuss the strategies that the two Children's Fund partnerships adopted to pursue the long-term objectives identified in the Theory of Change frameworks.

Education

Both partnerships addressed educational attainment through supporting emotional well-being and culturally appropriate practical support. Although there were differences in the strategies developed, both located activity within the local education service. In the London Borough, the Development Officer post was placed within the education service with the aim of linking services to educational attainment and changing practice; in the Metropolitan Authority three of the four services were led by the 'Diversity and Inclusion' division of the education service and aimed to explore innovative practice to lead to changes in practice without a reliance on a particular champion. Both partnerships acted as advocates on the part of refugees and asylum seekers to raise awareness amongst schools in particular, and the education service in general, about the needs and rights of this group and the resources that are available to respond to these.

Our evidence suggests, however, that the strategies adopted by the two partnerships might have a differential impact in terms of the sustainability of that capacity building. The Development Officer in the London Borough organised successful training sessions on, for example, mental health issues and whole school procedures to inducting newly arrived children, but these generally constituted one-off events. The sustainability of these opportunities for learning might be at risk, being dependent upon the initiative of the Development Officer in post. The Metropolitan Authority partnership learnt that demand for support changed over time as schools gained experience of working with different groups and developed capacity for addressing children's needs, particularly through an awareness of available support and resources. This suggests that support needs to be provided in a sustained, structured and flexible way.

Academic and behavioural support staff interviewed in both partnerships expressed concern about the short-term nature of the projects offered. On the one hand, the Children's Fund has created a space for the exploration of new, innovative or alternative ways of working with refugees and asylum seekers, in particular to address their emotional needs and promote their integration. On the other hand, since school staff generally have limited previous knowledge of those approaches and services, such as art and music therapy, and, as they are often resource-intensive, the sustainability and potential long-term impact is at threat unless service providers work to raise capacity within schools rather than use them solely as a site

for service delivery. Short-term interventions that do not raise capacity will limit positive outcomes to the short term.

Home-school liaison

Both partnerships perceived developing home-school liaison as not only (part of a holistic approach) to enhance the educational attendance and attainment of the individual child, but also as making an important contribution to schools' understandings of the needs, concerns and interests of their pupils who are refugees and asylum seekers.

Parents, children and schools gave positive feedback on those services that opted for the multiple strategy of raising the profile of refugee children and young people in schools by acting as advocates for children and parents in the short and medium term, and in the long term by promoting the skills and knowledge of parents to understand the educational needs of their children at home and at school and thus to become able to effectively address and pursue these through the improved home-school links. Children's Fund services and projects in the two partnerships adopted a range of strategies to develop home-school liaison, such as information and advice sessions, organising parent groups in schools, delivering family literacy classes in schools, recruiting home-school liaison officers and/or classroom assistants from particular ethnic, linguistic or cultural groups.

The difficulties experienced by therapeutic services in the London Borough in contacting parents for consent highlighted the importance of home-school liaison and the reliance on existing resources and structures within schools. The therapeutic services in both partnerships worked to contact parents to gain consent for their children's engagement in the service, but they did not work with parents in a sustained way. Where this capacity does not exist, it needs to be developed in order for services to be as effective as possible. The experiences of services in the Metropolitan Authority led to the development of a school-based support team with family support a central element of support for newly arrived children.

Family support

Beyond linking with parents through home-school liaison, several Children's Fund services offered general support for families in order to meet children's broader needs and enable parents to better support their children. Service providers worked towards ensuring appropriate access to mainstream services; encouragement in

talking to and gaining help from appropriate professionals who are aware of and able to address particular issues through supported signposting and access; and reducing isolation by providing links to community and other networks. As such, family work included supporting access to leisure facilities, community groups and social networks, and referral to other agencies. There was one project centring on family support in each partnership, but the development of a school-based support team in the Metropolitan Authority was a recognition of the central importance of this when working to support children. Family support services recognised the need to empower parents - through raising skills and confidence.

Social bonds, social bridges and social links

Our evidence indicates the success of those Children's Fund services that develop and/or strengthen social networks between refugees and asylum seekers and members of other communities. These findings echo other research studies, which proclaim social networks as important in promoting refugees' and asylum seekers' social inclusion. Agar and Strang's Home Office Report (2004) on refugee integration adopts a number of Putnam's (1993) concepts of social capital (see also Woolcock, 1998), namely *social bonds*, *social bridges* and *social links* as part of its indicators of integration framework. Each is seen as an important dimension of refugees' integration. The concept *social bonds* denotes the social connections within communities defined by ethnic, national or religious identities. *Social bridges* represent the connections with communities that have other ethnic, national or religious identities; in the case of asylum seekers and refugees this might mean the majority ethnic population. *Social links* indicates connections people have with institutions, organisations and services, such as state health and social care agencies.

Our findings were in line with other research studies, which have found social networks to offer newly arrived people important, practical, and indeed psychosocial support. Practical support includes help in accessing and engaging with health, education, housing and other social welfare services, as well as interpretation and financial support (Boswell, 2001; Sales, 2002; Zetter and Pearl, 2000). Social networks can provide psychological support, for example, through helping newly arrived people to develop their self-esteem and confidence in coping with life in a new country, as well as the psychological benefits of reduced feelings of isolation. Social networks may, therefore, help to maintain asylum seekers' and refugees'

physical and emotional health and sense of identity (Burnett and Peel, 2001; Kidane, 2001b; Burnett, 2002; Stanley, 2001; Morrow, 2003).

Social support may also be important in helping young refugees and asylum seekers feel a sense of belonging and security in the UK, which are conditions that help them settle (Save the Children, 2004). The value that children and parents in our case studies attached to social bonds often reflected how these promoted a sense of belonging and community, a stronger cultural identity and increased confidence, all of which, in turn, helped the young people in their interaction and engagement with people from different communities.

The benefits of mixing with pupils from a range of backgrounds is also stressed in a number of studies (Hek, 2005; Sales, 2002; Stanley, 2001). Some of the Children's Fund projects sought to promote the integration of adults and children into the wider community by allowing young people from other minority ethnic communities access to its services, that is, the promotion of *social bridges*. Some organisations in the voluntary and community sector have worked towards cross-referral of children and young people to each other's activities. Others sought to promote cross-cultural learning through the activities and practices they set up.

Responsive services

Evidence from this study emphasises the importance of responsive services. By 'responsive' we mean the way in which practitioners go beyond simply delivering generic services and activities, to working in a child-centred way and responding to a child's changing trajectory over time (Edwards, 2004). This reflects a holistic focus on the child or young person, by engaging with children's family networks and working with other key professionals and services to build a package of support around the child. Our research suggests a number of key features of provision that is 'responsive' in this way, but also raised the following issues for consideration.

Firstly, some interviewees claimed that there was the potential for greater involvement of children and young people in initial assessment processes, and thus in establishing the aims of particular sets of interventions. For example, a service provider argued that an understanding of what the child or young person *wants to get out of the support* should be established alongside the needs recognised by professionals involved in the case. Such assessment was also argued to benefit from the input of other family members, and even from taking place in the family home, as

a means of establishing contact and understanding need, although this was also recognised as resource-intensive.

Secondly, we should avoid regarding refugees and asylum seekers as a homogenous group. Loizos (2002, p42) points out that there is a tendency to create 'a simple universal idea' of refugees, and who they are. He warns that creating such an image can lead to stereotyping, and a misconception of the actual needs of individual refugees. We also need to avoid a model of provision that views all refugee and asylum seekers as presenting needs and failing to recognise the strengths within families. Services which empower parents, empower families to achieve their potential.

Thirdly, there is a need for services working with refugees and asylum seekers to recognise their ability to affect the context for children and young people beyond the individual needs on which they may be focusing. Although services may not have the capacity or remit to offer a holistic approach that addresses the broad spheres of community and family experience, services need to be able to refer to others and recognise the limits on their long-term impacts that a failure to change structures, systems and processes linked to social exclusion brings.

Fourthly, the limits imposed on services by resource constraints and high levels of demand are such that the longer term or fundamental aim of the service might not be achieved in the timescale available. Therefore, when establishing aims beyond addressing an immediate presenting need, it is important to consider or develop strategies for negotiating 'cut-off points' for provision, with a definition of the purpose of the service agreed. In this context, the 'exit strategy' for a particular case is a vital element of provision, with regular case review on completion and onward referral through links to other agencies and initiatives that can maintain support key to achieving longer-term aims. Responsive services are resource intensive, constraining work to a small numbers of cases and thus a high level of funding is required.

Our evidence suggests that community-based organisations are ideally placed to deliver or be involved in the development of responsive services, alone or alongside, and in partnership, with other provision. This finding is similar to that emerging from our work with services focusing on black and minority ethnic children and raises

similar issues about the need for support for such organisations (see Morris *et al.*, 2006).

Therapeutic services for refugee and asylum seeking children

In both localities, it was the first time that therapeutic services directly or solely targeted refugee and asylum seeking children and that these were offered to mainstream schools. This resulted in a developmental period in which therapists (in collaboration with representatives from education services) adapted the design and delivery of therapy services to this target group and the host institution.

Both Children's Fund partnerships commissioned therapeutic services to explore ways to alter, modify or complement practices in traditional, western mental health services. Counselling and other talk therapies may not be something of which young refugees and asylum seekers have any experience or knowledge, and it may not be common practice to discuss personal feelings with people outside of the family in some countries (Summerfield, 1998). Instead, art, music, play therapy and horticulture were portrayed as offering appropriate means for young refugees and asylum seekers, especially those with limited attainment in English language, to express and engage with their feelings or experiences, as and when they felt comfortable to do so.

Both children and service providers referred to activities bringing to the surface different cultural beliefs and practices and the therapists seeking to create a space in which the children felt free to discuss those cultural differences. It remains unclear to what extent these activities actually take account of, or work with, the particular cultural traditions and coping mechanisms of the children and young people with whom they are working.

Several parents and children felt that coming to a community project was an easy and safe way to get emotional support, which drew upon cultural traditions. A father, who also heads a community-based organisation for refugees and asylum seekers, explained in a focus group that:

We can do the counselling...our culture is you know ... I mean, there they are able to do counselling in different ways. Advice is always something that needs to be appropriate you know, when you are thinking of cultures. I mean, culturally appropriate advice is something that many different minorities you know, would like to

receive. When you are with a family you know, with the culture thing, you may have been linked to or fall into a culturally sensitive issue; and that may damage the person you are giving advice to unless you are aware you know, of the parties you know, and know something.

Furthermore, our evidence suggests that therapeutic services which not only seek to involve parents in the assessment of the child's needs and concerns, but also pursue change in the social context shaping the child's distress and framing his/her response to it, are likely to have positive long-term impacts.

The decision whether to provide specialist versus integrationist services for refugees and asylum seekers was also prominent in relation to Children's Fund partnerships' strategies for responding to emotional needs. While some, such as the Players Group and Therapeutic Horticulture, generally adopted an integrative approach, the other therapeutic services opted for a separatist provision where children could communicate and interact with those who shared similar experiences or circumstances, which in turn often resulted in new and strong friendships. Furthermore, school staff often argued the need for these therapeutic services to be sustained over time and to be extended to a wider target group: *There might have been a couple of [other] children [in my class] who it might have been useful for who have had traumatic or emotional upset in their lives, bereavement or something like that.*

Some school staff expressed concern that this might stigmatise refugees and asylum seekers by targeting solely on the basis of their legal status. There was concern that this may lead to reinforcing the common-sense perception that all (young) refugees and asylum seekers suffer emotional and mental health problems and are passive victims rather than competent survivors of adversity. As Hek (2005) argues, it is important to find a balance between extending emotional and psychological support to young refugees and asylum seekers that makes sense to them and which is culturally appropriate without being stigmatising, whilst avoiding the assumption that all young refugees and asylum seekers need such interventions.

Summary

- The strategy adopted by the London Borough was to employ a development officer responsible for commissioning services, alongside the support of a parent-led community-based organisation.
- In the Metropolitan Authority, an analysis of needs by target group and area, led to the identification of a portfolio of services, for which organisations were invited to tender.
- In the Metropolitan Authority, the Children's Fund recruited a consultant to act as co-ordinator of the refugee and asylum seeking theme and organise regular meetings where services were encouraged to discuss common areas of practice and identify learning that could be transferred across. The learning that was fostered in those meetings resulted in, and helped to inform, the development of the multi-agency team to support newly arrived children and young people (SNAP).
- Whilst the position of Development Officer was located within the education service, there was a less structured approach to the support of, and learning from, the services commissioned in the London Borough Children's Fund. Here the effectiveness of the strategy was more dependent upon the skills and capacities of the Development Officer.
- Both strategies demonstrated an understanding of the multi-dimensional and inter-related issues faced by refugee and asylum seeking children and families. Some services developed a holistic approach to meeting needs, others focused on one aspect of need.
- Located within the local education service, both partnerships were well placed to advocate on the part of refugees and asylum seekers to raise awareness amongst schools and the education service about the needs and rights of this group and the resources that are available to respond to these.
- Both partnerships perceived developing home-school liaison as not only part of a holistic approach to enhance the educational attendance and attainment of the individual child, but also as making an important contribution to schools'

understandings of the needs, concerns and interests of their pupils who are refugees and asylum seekers.

- The therapeutic services in both partnerships worked to contact parents to gain consent for their children's engagement in the service, but they did not work with parents in a sustained way and were often dependent on the state of home-school liaison in the schools in which they worked.
- In terms of family support, service providers worked towards ensuring appropriate access to mainstream services; encouragement in talking to and gaining help from appropriate professionals who are aware of, and able to, address particular issues through supported signposting and access; and providing links to community and other networks to reduce isolation and foster long-term independence.
- A number of features of the provision for refugees and asylum seekers of the two Children's Fund programmes can be described as 'responsive'. There was, however, the potential for greater involvement of children and young people in initial assessment processes, and thus in establishing the aims of particular sets of interventions, for working on the basis of strength-based models, and for examining how a failure to change structures, systems and processes linked to social exclusion might affect the level and long-term nature of impacts.
- Both Children's Fund partnerships commissioned therapeutic services to explore ways to alter, modify or complement practices in traditional, western mental health services. Art, music, play therapy and horticulture were portrayed as offering appropriate means for young refugees and asylum seekers, especially those with limited attainment in English language, to express and engage with their feelings or experiences as and when they felt comfortable to do so.
- Our evidence suggests that therapeutic services which not only seek to involve parents in the assessment of the child's needs and concerns, but also pursue change in the social context shaping the child's distress and framing his/her response to it, are likely to have positive long-term impacts.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Ways Forward

Here we consider what these experiences suggest for the further development of strategies intended to prevent refugee and asylum seeking children and their families becoming socially excluded.

Developing a Strategic Change Mechanism

In order for services to come together and think and act strategically, they require co-ordination and continuous support. It is important to create spaces for identifying common areas of practice, for information to be shared, for learning to transfer between projects on an ongoing basis and for joint working. These spaces can promote the development and review of strategies and services, giving them that flexibility needed to respond to the emergent needs of newly arrived children and families.

Conceptualising Social Exclusion and Adopting a Barriers Approach

Effective services recognise the multi-dimensional nature of social exclusion and frame their provision within this. Although services may not have the capacity or remit to offer a holistic approach that addresses the broad spheres of community and family experience, services need to acknowledge, and devise ways to alter the impact of wider structures, systems and processes linked to social exclusion. For example, short-term benefits for individual children will not be available for others unless capacity within schools is built in a structured, flexible and sustained way.

Responsive Services

Strategies and services need to recognise the heterogeneity of circumstances, experiences and levels of need amongst refugee and asylum seeking children and families. It is also important to avoid a model of provision that views all refugee and asylum seekers as presenting needs and fails to recognise the strengths within families. Responsive services need to build on their strengths and actively seek to create dialogue through which appropriate interventions can be negotiated. This includes a consideration of the cultural traditions that newly arrived families bring with them, and the social networks which might help them to mobilise those traditions to deal with their situation. Services which empower parents, empower families to achieve their potential. As responsive services are resource intensive, strategies for negotiating cut-off points for service provision need to be put in place.

Social Links, Social Bonds and Social Bridges

Ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers have access to and can effectively engage with mainstream, voluntary and community sector services (social links) constitutes a significant factor in relation to the integration of this target group. This requires awareness among service providers of the needs and concerns of newly arrived children and their families, and of the bureaucratic and discriminatory barriers they encounter when they seek to address these. In addition to a commitment to change practice, it is important to put strategies in place that empower young refugees and asylum seekers and their parents, making them more independent in securing material and psychosocial support in the long term. As such, services and strategies that strengthen or develop networks between refugee and asylum seeking children and families from similar and different ethnic, national or religious backgrounds (social bonds and social bridges) are more effective in pursuing the long-term goal of reducing the social exclusion of this group.

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Appendix: Theories of Change

Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund

Theory of Change Statement (revised)

Refugee and Newly Arrived Theme

NECF April 2005

Introduction

This draft 'Theory of Change' (ToC) statement aims to capture the thinking behind work taking place with refugee and newly arrived children and families which is being funded by and undertaken through Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund. It presents the theory behind the work – what is being aimed for, what is in place to achieve these aims, why are these the activities which are in place, and how will success against objectives be measured. The ToC covers the period of activity 2004-06, although NECF will conclude its data collection in the autumn of 2005.

This draft is our second analysis, and is developed and refined from our first draft statement, which was produced in the autumn of 2004. This statement is therefore based upon contributions to a workshop we held, booklets which services have completed to tell us about their work and meetings we have held with those involved in delivering the services and activities funded by Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund.

Because the ToC is intended to reflect the thinking of the Children's Fund programme and the services within that, the pronoun 'we' is used as the collective voice of those involved. As projects, services and activities contribute in different ways to the programme, and hence the ToC, overall we have mapped out the different elements which we know about at this time. We expect a more comprehensive picture and understanding to emerge as our work progresses, and further revisions to the ToC will be produced.

Summary

In order to achieve our long-term objective of reduced social exclusion for refugee and newly arrived children and their families we need to develop a range of services that address their multi-faceted and wide ranging needs. We also need to work with existing services and structures, so that there is greater multi-agency and partnership working, and in order to develop awareness of, and capacity to deal with, the needs of refugee and asylum seekers within and across Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund.

Context

Refugee and asylum seekers are arriving in Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund in increasing numbers and existing services have been unable to meet their needs. With the expansion of the EU the countries of origin have increased in number, but the pattern is not a stable one due to the nature of changing world events that lead families to leave their homes. Metropolitan Authority is part of [a group of authorities], which holds a contract with the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS) to take asylum seekers through the 'Dispersal' system; this requires Metropolitan Authority to provide supported accommodation to asylum seekers

placed within the City, and signposts to support services. Metropolitan Authority also leads a smaller consortium, which holds an 'Induction' contract with NASS. Induction services are provided for new arrivals that have not yet made an application for asylum. Some families arrive as EU citizens and therefore do not qualify for 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker' status, or arrive in Metropolitan Authority after time spent in other locations within the UK and Europe. Although services began as targeting 'refugees and asylum seekers', it may be more appropriate to define the group as 'newly arrived'; within this Theory of Change (ToC) 'RAS' is used as an umbrella term for convenience.

Within the City (or Local Authority area) there are some important structures in place, developed in part as a response to or result of those contracts with NASS. Metropolitan Authority has an Asylum Team responsible for 'statutory services', which are those that all local authorities have to provide, for example meeting the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. There is then an 'Asylum Team: Non-Statutory Services', which: has one team providing accommodation and sign posting to and some direct support under the 'Dispersal' contract; one team providing legal assistance, health screening and other services as part of the 'Induction' process being piloted as part of that contract; a team providing development support to refugee community-led and based services, and providing a structure for cross sector and agency working in the city, ['Multi-Agency Network']. [A large voluntary sector organisation] has a contract with NASS to offer advice and emergency accommodation; they also provide other services for refugees and asylum seekers.

Newly arrived families in Metropolitan Authority are often isolated since the locations in which they are placed are unfamiliar and are often physically isolated from areas where there are other families with similar backgrounds or facilities which can meet their cultural and material needs. Families lack awareness of, and means of access to, services provided both by the mainstream and voluntary and community sectors. They also find it difficult to engage with services, for example through a lack of language skills or a lack of capacity through factors such as mistrust of services or professionals. This means they are unable to engage with service providers in order to ensure their needs are met, for example in challenging decisions around housing or schools. Services often do not know that the families are there; as the information about dispersal is sensitive information it is not shared with agencies by the Home Office. Therefore services rely on referrals from other services or from private landlords. The latter is an important group but a difficult one to develop relationships based on trust with. Within the Dispersal contract, 70% of accommodation is provided by the private sector and 30% is provided by the Local Authority.

Many children and families have experienced trauma, in their countries of origin and in their subsequent journeys to the UK and Metropolitan Authority. Some children are unaccompanied. Problems may arise from experiences of loss or bereavement, or experiences of transfer and relocation. These experiences, alone or in combination, can result in low self-esteem and mental health problems.

Schools can lack the resources to address the needs of RAS children, such as those which result from poor mental health or well-being, or from their lack of language or other skills required in the formal setting of the school. There may be a lack of awareness, or a reluctance to have RAS children within the school. Children can find it difficult to settle, and may have had problems at previous schools. Parents are also often unable to engage with the school as a result of their lack of skills or confidence.

Mainstream and voluntary and community sector services can lack awareness of the needs of RAS children and families, and may be reluctant to engage with them.

Portrayals in the print and broadcast media can compound negative attitudes towards RAS, as they are almost always hostile towards them and there is a heightened political tension around the group, both locally and nationally. Organisations, agencies and services do not work together effectively to meet the broad and varied needs of RAS children and families and often lack the resources or perceive that they do.

When Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund first began, panels were set up to cover the programme's locality areas and the theme areas. The panels were established from across the statutory and voluntary sectors. These panels commissioned services from the tenders submitted by organisations and agencies. The panel for the Refugee and Asylum Seeker theme was subsequently engaged as a scrutiny and review panel, to oversee and assist with the development of the services funded. In the first two years of Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund (2001-03) a 'community grants' fund was held and managed by the panel, and this was used to provide small amounts of funding to refugee community organisations. In the re-profiling required from late 2003 and early 2004, budgets across the programme were reduced and the 'community grants' fund was stopped. A football project targeting Somali children also did not have funding continued, as the project struggled to deliver against the targets it had set itself, and in the re-profiling review it was decided that funding was likely to be most effective in terms of service outcomes and the impact on practice, if it was concentrated on more substantive services.

In the autumn of 2004 new funding was announced for the Children's Fund, to cover the period 2005-08, when children's trusts will be responsible for the commissioning and strategic development of services for children and families. In Metropolitan Authority services will be organised by local districts. Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund has decided to continue with the profile of services for 2004-06, with the 2006-08 period developed through a new commissioning process. This Theory of Change covers the period 2004-06.

Long-term objectives

In order to achieve the long-term outcomes of improved well-being, empowerment and social inclusion for refugee and asylum seeking children and families we need to develop services which address four areas of need:

1. Support integration into school and improve educational attainment

If we are to improve the educational attainment of asylum seeker and newly arrived children, we need to improve children's induction into schools and assist schools in meeting their needs within school. We need to improve children's induction into school, by developing an early assessment of need and providing an appropriate package of support. We need to provide mentoring, 1:1 support and buddying schemes. We need to do this in order to help children settle at and be supported in attending school, and thus achieve at school and gain the skills required for later life. We need to work with schools to raise awareness of the needs of RAS children and of the services and support we can provide to them. We need to do this because schools can feel that they lack the resources and skills necessary to support the education of RAS children. We also need to support links between parents and schools, so that parents can engage with the education of their children.

2. Improve the mental health and well-being of RAS children and families

By providing a range of therapeutic interventions that are child appropriate, in and outside of the school setting, we will help children deal with the issues which arise from the trauma, bereavement and loss they may have suffered. This will follow an assessment and be provided on an open referral basis, and a group of children will be followed after they have received a programme of services so that we are able to monitor their progress. We also need to raise the self-esteem of children and their families, improving their confidence, by providing a range of support (and this links to the next area of our work). We need to do this in order to address suffering that may be experienced, and to support children and families in engaging with school, other services, and in settling into their new lives in Metropolitan Authority

3. Support families newly arrived in Metropolitan Authority

We need to provide a range of services which can be tailored to meet the broad and varied needs of RAS families. We need to develop a strength based model of assessment so that the emphasis is on the capabilities and skills of families who feel overwhelmed by their problems and to have project workers who can act as a single point of contact. We need to consult with families about the services and facilities they require, and provide training and education in a variety of informal settings, including within communities. We need to provide direct support, for example through advocacy or support at meetings with statutory agencies, or through facilities for meetings or leisure opportunities, but we also need to signpost families to services local to them and across the city which can meet the needs they identify. We can also provide opportunities for voluntary work, providing peer support for communities and raising skill levels and capacity. We need to provide this range of support, training and signposting in order to raise the skills and confidence of families and thus to empower them, enabling them to access services which can meet their needs.

4. Raise capacity within mainstream and voluntary and community sector service providers, organisations and agencies

As well as the direct service provision we can provide, we need to work to increase the capacity of service providers to meet the needs of RAS children and families. This is because some services, organisations and agencies are reluctant to work with RAS as a group, even where they have a statutory duty to do so. We will raise the profile of RAS as a group through various forums throughout the city. We will also provide awareness raising events and packages of training, and challenge practice where required. We will work across the city to develop multi-agency approaches to meeting the needs of RAS. Services will be co-ordinated from Diversity and Inclusion within the City Council and this will build on existing multi-agency work; Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund can also facilitate linkages. Increased capacity and more developed working links between organisations, agencies and services will lead to more appropriate, timely and holistic approaches to the needs of RAS and their social exclusion.

Activities

We have a number of funded services which combine to deliver these outcomes. Each is now briefly described and their contribution to the ToC indicated.

Project for newly arrived children with emotional and trauma support needs (NACETS)

This project provides a range of services to meet the psychological and emotional needs of RAS children, working with schools across the City. Schools are made aware of the project through literature and visits from members of the team. A structured referral form is used by teachers, and all referrals are discussed by a panel (gathered from across the service); those who are suitable for the service are then referred on to one or more parts of the service, as appropriate. Some children may use just one element of the service, others may use more than one, depending on the individual's needs. The form provides a base line for the work which is undertaken with the child. Parents are contacted to gain their consent, and to identify any broader needs which the family themselves may require assistance with, and partner organisations are contacted where necessary. NACETS is led by Diversity and Inclusion within the Local Education Authority, and has been funded by Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund since 2001. NACETS consists of:

- *Art Therapy* – one-on-one therapeutic sessions, where art is used to enable self-expression and reflection. Each programme of work is tailored to the needs of the child.
- *Play Journeys* – structured play for groups of children, consisting of a programme of sessions delivered within the school. Referred children can bring a friend, and a teacher from the school attends as a link worker.
- *Counselling* – to address bereavement and loss, one-on-one counselling is provided.
- *Therapeutic Horticulture* – small groups are taken away from the school site to a dedicated allotment with indoor growing space provided by a poly-tunnel. Purposeful and practical sessions, provide opportunities for reflection and expression through the metaphors provided by growing plants in Metropolitan Authority soil, following the grow cycle to harvest, and the positive experiences this provides. A horticulturist is supervised by a clinical psychologist.

Support integration into school and improve educational attainment

- Each of the four strands aims to help children integrate into the school environment, in order to enable children to make the most of the opportunities offered and thus to raise educational attainment

Improve the mental health and well-being of RAS children and families

- This is the central aim of all of NACETS activity.
- Each of the strands of NACETS aims to address the mental health needs of refugee, asylum seeking and newly arrived children. Where contact with the family indicates needs within the family, NACETS refers on to the RFS and SNAP projects or others within the City.

Support families newly arrived in Metropolitan Authority

- The focus of NACETS is children within schools, but where contact with their family indicates needs within the family, NACETS refers on to the RFS and SNAP projects or others within the City.

Raise capacity within mainstream and voluntary and community sector service providers, organisations and agencies

- Through the awareness raising undertaken for the service, NACETS aims to raise awareness of the resources available to schools in supporting asylum seeking and newly arrived children. NACETS may not always be the most appropriate response to the needs of individual children within schools, and the knowledge of the NACETS staff, based within Diversity and Inclusion, is used to inform schools about the range of support available.
- The *Players* strand works explicitly with each school where they provide a programme, primarily through the link teacher, to provide learning for the school in the role of play in providing positive experiences for children.

Responsive family-based support (RFS)

The RFS project provides support to RAS families with children aged five to 13 who have recently arrived in Metropolitan Authority. It provides links to mainstream and voluntary and community support services, works to increase the capacity of those services to meet the needs of RAS families, and works to reduce the isolation of families in their communities. RFS takes referrals from organisations and agencies across the city, and works in partnership with the other Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund funded RAS services. RFS works primarily with families who are placed within private landlord accommodation, and works with landlords so that they refer families to the service. RFS begins with a strength-based assessment of the family's needs. A broad range of support is offered, focusing upon helping the family settle in their new home and neighbourhood. Supported signposting and assistance is provided, so that families are accompanied to meetings, and shown around the City and its services and facilities. Families are supported in accessing health and social welfare services they require. Volunteering opportunities are provided, and tailored support as need arises.

Support integration into school and improve educational attainment

- RFS supports families in accessing education for their children. RFS workers will accompany families to meetings, assist with the collation of information, and advocate on their behalf where required. RFS works with the other (including MCF) services, referring children to those specialising in school support, where appropriate.

Improve the mental health and well-being of RAS children and families

- RFS does not provide any therapeutic services, but through supported access and signposting aims to provide positive experiences for families as they are introduced to Metropolitan Authority.

- RFS provides opportunities for informal groups, and has brought together a group of Pakistani women. These provide supportive environments for members, who are able to meet with their peers for mutual support.
- RFS provides volunteering opportunities within the service but also provides links to other opportunities within the city. Adults who have asylum seeker status are unable to work; volunteering provides purposeful activity, enables people to help others in similar positions to themselves, and can raise confidence and self-esteem.

Support families newly arrived in Metropolitan Authority

- This is the main focus of RFS work. As well as the direct support and supported signposting provided, RFS provides more informal support. For example, by accompanying families around different parts of the City, so that they are made aware of the different areas and their diverse communities.
- RFS also advocates on behalf of families, and will help with issues such as racism, which some families face.
- RFS has case workers with different language skills and from diverse backgrounds, and aims to provide tailored support for families in order to ensure they have positive and supported experiences, and gain the skills and confidence to settle within their community.

Raise capacity within mainstream and voluntary and community sector service providers, organisations and agencies

- RFS provides training for services and agencies from across the City.
- RFS works to raise awareness through its advocacy work and by challenging practice where issues emerge through the work supporting families.

Support for newly arrived children's effective integration into schools (EIS)

EIS seeks to help children newly arrived in Metropolitan Authority to settle into their new school and their community. This includes refugee and asylum seeking children and their families and children who are homeless. Following an assessment of need, the team provides a range of educational and emotional support strategies to ensure integration into mainstream school. Support can be provided in the child's classroom or off-site at EIS. This service began as part of Excellence in Cities. It was then part funded by Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund from 2001. The management of the service was moved from a voluntary sector organisation that had struggled to deliver against agreed outcomes. The service was re-commissioned as Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund sole funded project in 2004. A new manager came into post in summer 2004 and has reviewed and consolidated the work of the service. When EIS first began, few schools in the Metropolitan Authority central area had experience of working with asylum seeker and newly arrived children; now many have and the support they require may be different than before. In order to ensure it works as effectively as possible towards the outcomes agreed, short-term activity has centred on meeting with schools and mapping need, alongside a consolidation of the activities EIS provides.

EIS aims to support children in managing their own circumstances so that they can participate fully in home, school and community life. Activities are organised into three broad areas:

- Educational Support - support with learning in and out of the class room setting for individual children and their families. Work with schools to increase capacity and raise awareness. Emotional support is also provided where required, through group art therapy activities.
- Out of School Activities and Hobbies - children are encouraged to, and assisted in, accessing activities out of school.
- Family Work - a worker seconded from RFS provides tailored support for families where it is required, to help them settle and integrate into their home and community.

Support integration into school and improve educational attainment

- This objective is central to the work of EIS. EIS aims to co-ordinate a range of support for children in or out of school, using the EIS centre, to ensure that children's induction and integration into school is a positive one. Individual packages of support are provided following an assessment of the child's needs. EIS is able to provide group art therapy work, language support, and educational resources which reflect diverse backgrounds.
- A family worker seconded from RFS works to enable parents to support their children's learning.
- As well as direct provision, the project aims to raise the awareness and capacity within schools themselves.

Improve the mental health and well-being of RAS children and families

- Although EIS is not a therapeutic service, group art therapy is provided to provide a safe space for reflection.
- The provision of other positive activities and experiences aims to raise self-esteem for children and their sense of well-being. EIS aims to support children in developing their own skills and capacity. By working with children to identify hobbies and other leisure activities, and supporting them in accessing them, RFS aims to raise the skills of children and their participation in their communities. We aim to enable children to seek out and access other opportunities independently.
- The family worker provides packages of tailored support for families where this is required.

Support families newly arrived in Metropolitan Authority

- The family worker provides this support.

Raise capacity within mainstream and voluntary and community sector service providers, organisations and agencies.

- EIS works to raise awareness within schools of the range of support available from EIS but also from other organisations and agencies across the city.

Support team for newly arrived people (SNAP)

The SNAP Project is seeking to address the needs of the rising number of asylum seekers and refugees housed in the east of the city, and to support those schools not skilled or confident to work with these groups. The project offers a similar service to EIS and RFS combined, and as such is exploring a new way of delivering an integrated service. The SNAP Project operates a 'virtual team', employing a central co-ordinator but other workers will be based within their own services, and used when appropriate. SNAP was commissioned in 2004 and will begin to deliver in spring 2004. The SNAP Project will provide:

- Education Support - helping with language and other skills, within the classroom setting
- Family Support - through a family worker seconded from RFS
- Play and Leisure - play opportunities for children provided by a dedicated play worker
- Support and Training to staff in schools - training provided for schools, to raise their capacity.

Support integration into school and improve educational attainment

- SNAP will provide individual packages of support for newly arrived children, within the school environment. An early assessment of need will be used to determine the needs of each child across the schools in the east district; this will be based on the model developed by EIS.
- SNAP will also work with schools to ensure that they are better able to provide support themselves.

Improve the mental health and well-being of RAS children and families

- All of our work, either that which takes place in schools with individual children, and our work with families, will aim to raise self-esteem and confidence.
- Where required, we will refer on to the therapeutic services provided by NACETS.

Support families newly arrived in Metropolitan Authority

- A family worker seconded from RFS will provide packages of support for families.
- A play worker will work with children below school age, and will provide positive play experiences for groups of newly arrived children.

Raise capacity within mainstream and voluntary and community sector service providers, organisations and agencies

- SNAP is based within a new 'Extended School' – a national DfES initiative to use schools as a base for broader community support and facilities. By being positioned within the centre, SNAP will work with a range of partners across the East District.
- Awareness raising will be undertaken through contacts with schools across the District, and training for teachers and others within schools provided.

Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund Central Team

If we are to provide a multi-agency approach to the development and delivery of services for asylum seeking and newly arrived children and families, Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund needs to provide overall support and co-ordination across our services. If we are to achieve long-term change in the provision of mainstream services, we need to link in with forums and structures across the city, and advocate and awareness raise beyond the work of individual services themselves. We need to develop effective services that are capable of demonstrating impact, within the new framework and structures provided by the Children Act 2004 and *Every Child Matters*.

To achieve this Metropolitan Authority Children's Fund has the following activities in place:

- A co-ordinator for the theme as whole – providing direct support and facilitating links across the services. Also providing links into forums within the city.
- Bi-monthly theme meetings – all services within the theme meet regularly to review progress across the theme, to share information from each service but also from each member's networks or networks attended on behalf of the group.
- Support with targets and indicators – a set of common targets has been developed, with individual ones developed from these with each service. Services are supported in developing, reviewing and meeting their targets.

London Borough Children's Fund
Theory of Change Statement
Focus on Work with Refugees and Asylum Seekers
NECF March 2005

Summary

In order to achieve our long-term objectives of both improved educational outcomes for asylum seeking and refugee children and of the promotion of their emotional well-being, we need to provide services for this group and their families which are both school and community based, in order to provide inclusive education. We need to provide advocacy of the group's needs across agencies and sectors, as part of a developmental post which can respond to emerging need. As our emphasis is on education, our funded post has been created within the local education service. A third strand to our work focuses on the needs of a particularly significant community within the borough, through the funding of a community-led organisation's work to improve the educational attainment of children from a particular ethnic community through the provision of child and family support.

Who is our work targeting?

This programme of work targets refugee and asylum seeking children aged five to 13 years (and their families), who are having difficulties at school. Some of our work is targeted at children who have experienced trauma and as such can benefit from a therapeutic intervention. Some of our work is targeted more broadly at children who are identified as having problems with communication, social relationships or their behaviour within school and can benefit from more individualised support. Some of our work is targeted at children and parents who require support in developing particular skills and knowledge, such as literacy and the functioning of the (English) education system. Some work targets particular communities who require help in setting up (positive) activities for children and families to promote their settlement and integration in local areas. And some of our work is targeting agencies and organisations, such as schools, to advocate and raise awareness of the culturally diverse groups of children they work with and provide tailored training and support.

Context

This borough has a number of different communities within it. Some of these are established refugee or asylum seeker communities, others are less established. Some refugee and asylum seeking families entering the borough are isolated from these larger communities; the nature of refugees and asylum seekers themselves means that they are often mobile or transient families and that communities may build slowly over time or may emerge quite quickly depending on circumstance.

Some places within the borough experience racial tension and have done so over time. There is also a heightened and, often strongly, negative media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK currently and this is intensifying as we near the general election 2005. But the UK's strong tradition of welcoming different cultures is a strength with which to counter some of this negativity.

The Local Authority (LA) has a Refugee and Asylum Team which deals with new arrivals and the allocation of housing and other family welfare issues. The local education service has not had a dedicated post working with refugees and asylum seeking children and families. There is an established voluntary and community

sector in the borough, but there is also a more emergent and young sector and traditionally these groups were less well supported by the LA and hence less involved in service development and delivery.

Several groups of refugees and asylum seeking children and young people are known to be underachieving in their educational attainment in the borough. How this Children's Fund partnership has worked to meet their needs has changed over time. An important contextual factor has been the changes to the Children's Fund nationally since its beginnings in 2001. Re-profiling of Children's Fund programmes and their services has been required at different times, with 2004-06 as the agreed time period for the programme in early 2003 subsequently revised in late 2003 when budgets for the Children's Fund were confirmed for 2005-08. The programme of services for this latter period is to be continued from the agreed profile of services for 2004-06.

When the Children's Fund programme began (2002) a development officer post was created in the local education service to co-ordinate service provision and to advocate the needs of refugees and asylum seekers regarding their education and emotional well-being. As the post became settled and functional the Development Officer began to apply for funding for pieces of work, services and projects which targeted refugees and asylum seekers. Some of this funding was sought from the Children's Fund and an agreement was reached with the Children's Fund towards the end of 2003 to consolidate these projects into a programme of work which would sit alongside the advocacy and ongoing developmental work required by the post for the period 2004-05. In tandem to these developments, since 2001 the Children's Fund has a community-led organisation working with a particular ethnic community. Although increasingly established, and concentrated in certain areas of the borough, the educational achievement of children and young people from this community was particularly low and mainstream services had been unsuccessful in developing links with the community. This successful project was therefore continued across the same period.

Long-term objectives

In order to achieve our long-term objectives of both improved educational outcomes of asylum seeking and refugee children and of the promotion of their emotional well-being, we need to organise our activities (those which are fixed but also those which are developmental) under the following broad outcome headings:

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

If refugee and asylum seeking children are to fulfil their potential and achieve at school we need to provide a range of services, meeting different types and levels of need and which are provided in both school and community settings. We need to work with children to increase their proficiency in language and maths, to enable them to realise their full potential within school. We need to work with parents to enable them to support their children's learning by helping with their own skills development as well as parenting itself. We need to work with schools, to enable them to integrate refugees and asylum seeking children successfully. And we need to work with schools, children and their families to enable better home-school relations.

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

We need to address the emotional well-being needs of refugee and asylum seeking children, who have sometimes experienced trauma due to loss or upheaval. We also need to provide services which help raise self-esteem, improve social and communication skills, and which enable greater self-expression. We need to do this in order to help children who are having difficulties at school, for example if they are isolated or if they display behavioural problems.

3. Improve community cohesion and integration

We need to provide services which raise cultural awareness amongst service users, within services themselves or those hosting them, and amongst the wider community. We need to improve the participation of refugee and asylum seeking children, families and communities in service planning and delivery, and reduce segregation within service provision. We also need to reduce the exposure to crime and improve inter-generational relations within refugee and asylum seeker communities. We need to do this in order to improve community cohesion and the integration of refugee and asylum seeking families within their communities.

4. Change practice

If we are to achieve our overall goals of services which improve education and promote the emotional well-being of refugees and asylum seekers in a way which is more effective, inclusive and sustainable, we need to develop and influence practice. We need to provide networks for sharing of information and for developing links within and between practice. We need to provide training and resources, and raise awareness of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers within and across sectors. We also need to raise awareness amongst refugee and asylum seeking families and communities about the services which are available to them. We need to act as advocates and be able to respond to need through a development approach.

Activities

We have a number of funded services and two funded posts. Each is now described and their contribution to the elements of the ToC indicated.

Development officer post

This post has been created within Ethnic Minority Achievement (EMA) team of the local education service. This location enables the Development Officer to link across the different areas and departments of the authority to advocate, raise awareness and link services and provision to need. The role involves working with communities, and groups and institutions working with them, in order to identify needs and to seek provision which meets these. Securing places for refugees and asylum seekers in schools constitutes an important part of that. Where there is no existing provision, the developmental side to the role requires the development of services to be encouraged, through new and existing partnerships and applying to funding streams where possible.

This post involves responsibility for the oversight of a core of services set up during the early days of the post (described below) as well as those commissioned through the developmental side of the post.

The direct work of the Development Officer is varied and flexible, in order to respond to need. All work contributes to the overall broad outcomes identified – the detail achieved across the services as outlined below. Other activities centre around:

4. Change practice

- Attending network meetings
- Producing guidance for schools
- Producing a newsletter for schools
- Supporting monitoring and evaluation within services
- Training and awareness raising within schools
- Advocacy across sectors.

Art therapy service

Art therapy was developed from a pilot service delivered in community settings. The pilot was commissioned by the Development Officer in response to concerns about the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and an awareness of evidence and testimony as to the effectiveness of art therapy as an intervention and its suitability for individuals with a lower level of English language proficiency. The pilot indicated that a community setting might not be the most appropriate for the ongoing, confidential nature of the work, or for the identification of and access for those who would benefit most from the work. It was therefore decided to work through schools, who can provide both referrals and facilities.

The art therapy service is provided by two art therapists who work together with two schools, and one group of children within each, at a time. There was a mapping of the numbers of refugee and asylum seeking children across the borough's school. The number of refugee and asylum seeking children within the schools is used as an indicator of need. The service is offered to schools and how it is delivered is negotiated with each school – a protected space is required, and the service uses the school's own art resources. The school identifies a group of up to four children, whose cases are subsequently referred and reviewed by the therapists. The service works with each group once a week until the therapy is concluded – this is determined by each child's need rather than being fixed. Outcomes identified mostly relate to this time schedule of work; where they do not, this is indicated.

Art therapy provides a supported and safe space where issues can be addressed. The art itself is stimulating and the sessions are non-directive. The service contacts and meets with parents, to talk to them about their child's needs and hopes for the benefits of the service but this can be difficult to achieve. The two therapists also give regular feedback to teachers and school personnel to discuss the child's progress, provided that this does not breach confidentiality.

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Helping children and young people to deal with trauma and working to enable greater self-expression and improve social skills (Long-term).
- Formal feedback sessions held with class teachers throughout intervention (Short-term).
- Parents engaged (Medium-term).

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- This is the focus of our service. Each child's individual needs are identified and the programme of work aims to address these. Only when the therapists are confident these have been addressed does the therapy end. The intervention is reviewed with the children, teachers and parents (Short-term).
- Provide a working link with the 'Children and Adults Mental Health Team' where there is need which the service cannot address (Short-term).
- Produce a leaflet providing information, and make it available in different languages (Short-term).

3. Improve community cohesion and integration

- Raise awareness of refugee and asylum seeker issues within schools (Medium-term).
- Improve skills within school to increase integration for individual children (Long-term).

4. Change practice

- Raising awareness within schools about the practice and potential benefits of an art therapy service (Short-term).
- Provide training within schools about the practice and potential benefits of an art therapy service (Short-term).

Library after-school club

This after-school club takes place in a local library and although it targets refugee and asylum seeking children and young people, it is not closed to others. This means that a mixed group attend the sessions. The club runs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fun activities are provided after school, with the aim of providing constructive out of school activities which enable children from different backgrounds to mix, friendships to form, and educational and emotional needs to be met. The use of the library as a venue encourages use of its resources including IT. The Thursday club was the first session to be funded and is primarily craft-based; the Tuesday session developed from the first and is more IT based and more explicitly aiming to raise literacy levels through this work.

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Activities based on language – spoken and written – help raise skill levels (Medium-term).
- Use of the library as a venue raises awareness of the educational resources and opportunities available within the library (Short-term).
- The club provides a setting for informal learning.
- Parents' awareness of the library is raised, enabling them to support their children (Medium-term).

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Fun and constructive leisure activities provided in a safe space. Enjoyment is an important element of the service (Short-term).
- Friendships formed through the group – with both commonality of experience and across different communities and cultures (Medium-term).

3. Improve community cohesion and integration

- Friendships formed through the group – with both commonality of experience and across different communities and cultures (Medium-term).

4. Change practice

- Demonstrate the benefits of library based services: this is the first in the borough (Long-term).

Football project

The football project was commissioned by the Development Officer in response to a request by the Turkish community for sports activities for the younger generation. An earlier football project, which children and young people had been attending, had come to an end. A community-led organisation identified a core group of young people who would benefit from football coaching. While targeting these young people, the coaching sessions are open to others. Every Saturday, the football project delivers three sessions from 10am-1pm at a community centre. The numbers of children and young people attending each session varies as the football training coincides with classes of English language, maths and music taught at the centre for Turkish youth. The young people are encouraged to bring friends along and hereby reach beyond their own community. The football project has recently launched a pilot programme with sports and outdoor activities to improve the relationships between Turkish boys and their fathers.

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Encouraging young people to go on coaching courses that might help to secure future employment and increase the proportion of football coaches coming from the communities themselves (Medium-term).

- Promote achievement of sporting excellence (Medium-term).
- Encourage cross over with English language, maths and music classes as well as other activities based at the centre (Short-term).

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Engage children and young people in positive structured activities to improve communication and social skills, boost self-confidence and self-esteem (Medium-term).
- Organise outdoor activities for boys and father to strengthen bonds and promote mutual understanding (Medium-term).

3. Improve community cohesion and integration

- Stimulate children and young people to bring along friends to ensure that they communicate and form friendships with members from different cultural backgrounds (Medium-term).
- Respond to the lack of positive, structured activities for asylum seeking and refugee children and young people which leaves them hanging out on the streets and at risk of engagement in anti-social behaviour (Long-term).

Numeracy and literacy lessons project

The project was set up in response to the finding of the local education service that pupils from the Turkish community are consistently underachieving in mainstream education and that their level of exclusion and truancy is on the increase. In addition, these children and young people sometimes receive little support in their education from their parents who may have limited numeracy and literacy skills and poor relationships with the school.

The English language and maths lessons take place in a community centre on Saturdays. Although the lessons are targeted children and young people from this particular community, they are not closed to others. This means that a mixed group attend the lessons. Fun activities are also provided after school (see football project above), with the aim of providing constructive out of school activities which enable children from different backgrounds to mix, friendships to form, and educational and emotional needs to be met.

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Respond to the underachievement of children and young people and the high level of truancy and exclusion by improving their English language and maths skills (Long-term).
- Promote home-school relationships to enable parents to offer better support in relation to children's schooling (Medium-term).

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Improve communication and social skills, boost self-confidence and esteem by upgrading their English language and Maths knowledge and raising their educational attainment (Medium-term).
- Improve communication and social skills, boost self-confidence and esteem by friendships formed through the group – with both commonality of experience and across different communities and cultures (Medium-term).

3. Improve community cohesion and integration

- Stimulate children and young people to bring along non-Turkish friends to ensure that they communicate and form friendships with members from different cultural backgrounds (Medium-term).

Music therapy service

The music therapy service was another service commissioned by the Development Officer in response to concerns about the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and an awareness of evidence and testimony as to the effectiveness of music therapy as an intervention. The Primary Care Trust, which has a long-standing tradition of providing music therapy in schools in the borough, approached the Children's Fund presenting music therapy as an appropriate intervention for refugees and asylum seekers. There was a developmental period, in which the Development Officer and the music therapist adapted the design and delivery of the PCT music therapy service to this target group. They contacted schools identified through the mapping mentioned above as having a relatively high proportion of refugee and asylum seeking children to raise awareness of the service and, if these expressed interest, arranged meetings to explain which children would benefit if referred.

The service is offered to one primary school at the time and how it is delivered is negotiated with the school – a protected space is required, and the service uses the school's own musical instruments. The school identifies a group of up to four to six children, whose cases are subsequently referred and reviewed by the therapist. The music therapist works with the group once a week after school hours. Each session lasts for an hour. The service is session-based in that its beginning and end coincides with those of the school terms.

Music therapy provides a supported and safe space where issues can be addressed through verbal and non-verbal means. The music itself is stimulating and the sessions are non-directive. The music therapist gives regular feedback to teachers and school personnel to discuss the child's progress, provided that this does not breach confidentiality. The school decides whether to pass this information on to the parents or keep it in the case-file of the pupils.

The outcomes identified relate to the six-week cycle of the service, unless otherwise indicated.

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Helping children and young people to deal with trauma and working to enable greater self-expression and improve social skills (Long-term).
- Formal feedback sessions held with class teachers throughout intervention (Short-term).

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- This is the focus of our service. The semi-structured nature of the sessions allows for/ensures the participation of the children. Each child is encouraged to make his/her own music and to make suggestions about the kind of music that the group plays together. This might help the children to reflect on how they feel. As such, the structure and content of the sessions vary depending on the moods of the participants (Short-term).
- Produce a leaflet providing information for parents (Short-term).
- Produce a leaflet providing information for schools (Short-term).

4. Change practice

- Raising awareness within schools about the practice and potential benefits of a music therapy service (Medium-term).

School-based educational attainment project

This was a one-off project at a primary school with second-generation refugees from the Vietnamese community. The project originated from the school EMA Co-ordinator who became aware of the low level of educational achievement (GCSEs) amongst girls from this background within the school. Work by the EMA Co-ordinator indicated that these girls were second-generation refugees whose parents had limited English language proficiency, which impacted on the learning of the girls at school. The EMA Co-ordinator raised these issues with the Development Officer who proposed a developmental art project, which would raise the girls' confidence, promote their identity and strengthen their sense of belonging to the school.

The organisation which was commissioned to deliver the project proposed a media project to investigate and share cultural heritage and asked the girls to invite friends from different ethnic backgrounds to the project. The girls were split in two age groups (Years 8-9 and 10-11) and each produced a video that visualised and confronted different cultural practices, objects, foods, different physical traits, religions, and more. The EMA Co-ordinator is currently exploring ways to present the videos in school and disseminate their key messages.

Some outcomes identified are related to the limited time period; others relate to the longer term.

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Responding to the underachievement of the girls by raising their profile, promoting their integration in the school and enabling the school to recognise and respond to the girls' needs (Long-term).

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Friendships formed through the group – with both commonality of experience and across different communities and cultures (Medium-term).
- Providing a space for the girls to explore their own and other cultures, their location within the school and the community at large and hereby boost their self-confidence and esteem (Medium-term).

3. Improve community cohesion and integration

- Friendships formed through the group – with both commonality of experience and across different communities and cultures (Medium-term).

4. Change practice

- Raise profile of the girls in school and improve skills within school to increase their integration (Long-term).

The parents' network

The parents' network was set up in 2001 in response to parents' concerns about the low educational attainment of children and young people from the Somali community, the significant proportion that dropped out of school, and a group of boys who became involved in anti-social behaviour and crime. These children and young people reported racist abuse and bullying at school. Large numbers also received limited or no help with their school work from their parents who only had a limited knowledge of English and were unable to engage with the English education system. The parents' network subsequently set up a homework club on Monday and Thursday evenings to tackle their underachievement and promote better home-school relationships. The parents from this particular community were also encouraged to attend advice sessions which raise their awareness of, and increase access, to mainstream services. The Children's Fund pays the salary of one full-time post, i.e. the Advice Worker, partly funds the summer activities and contributes to the running costs of the organisation. The older youths are given the opportunity to attend in training courses, to work and volunteer at the centre or to design and deliver activities for the younger children. Much youth service provision in the borough is delivered to a particular target group and thus young people can become segregated. The parents' network has opened their centre and after-school club to other communities to promote integration.

1. Raise the educational attainment of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Respond to the underachievement of children and young people from the Somali community by setting up an after-school homework club (Medium-term).
- Promote better home-school relationships and increase parents' understanding of the British education system to enable parents to support their children's educational attainment (Medium-term).

- Raise the profile of these children and young people in schools to encourage their integration and act as advocates to ensure their needs and rights are met (Medium-term).
- Provide opportunities for youths to take on responsibilities at the centre, to contribute to the planning and delivery of activities and to attend in training courses (Medium-term).

2. Promote and improve the emotional well-being of refugee and asylum seeking children and young people

- Friendships formed through the homework club – with both commonality of experience and across different communities and cultures (Medium-term).
- Provide opportunities for youths to take on responsibilities at the centre, to contribute to the planning and delivery of activities and to partake in training courses (Medium-term).
- Drop-in centre for family support (Short-term).

3. Improve community cohesion and integration

- Raise awareness and increase access among members of this particular community to mainstream services (Long-term).
- Friendships formed through the homework club – with both commonality of experience and across different communities and cultures (Medium-term).

4. Change practice

- Challenge the segregated provision of youth provision in the borough by opening the centre to members of other ethnic communities (Long-term).
- Raise the profile of these children and young people in schools to encourage their integration and act as advocates to ensure their needs and rights are met (Medium-term).

Conclusion/implications for the evaluation

In order to assess the success of the development of this range of services to meet the needs of refugee and asylum seeking children and families, the impact on mainstream provision, the development of multi-agency partnership working, and the long, medium and short-term outcomes identified, the NECF team need to:

- Track the progress of services through their monitoring returns, and other internal sources of information such as work around indicators.
- Attend meetings of the group of services as facilitated by this Children's Fund. Link in with the work of the Children's Fund around service development and support.
- Have regular discussion with project leads and those with overall responsibility, either in person, by email or over the telephone.
- Undertake a programme of data collection across each of the services.

- Interview key stakeholders in the Children's Fund's work with refugees and asylum seekers and key people outside of that structure to explore impact on the mainstream.
- Provide regular feedback to this Children's Fund.

In order to understand how each of the projects is working, and the experiences and perceptions of the users of their services, the NECF team needs to develop a programme of data collection. NECF needs to:

- Identify programmes of work for services.
- Identify and agree with services appropriate times for data collection within their overall programmes of work – it is likely that key activities will need to be focused upon.
- Identify children, young people and families who we can include in the research, and ensure that research methods proposed are culturally appropriate, through work with the services themselves.
- Work with children and families, through formal and informal techniques, to explore their experiences and perceptions, as well as the impact(s), of the services, which they have received. These may be one-off sessions or repeated across time and co-ordinated around key events or times.
- Interview workers within services to gain their perspectives, again in both one-off sessions and over time.
- Interview service providers with whom the Children's Fund services have links.
- Interview key stakeholders outside the Children's Fund to explore wider learning impact of Children's Fund activity outside of the Children's Fund partnership: the mainstreaming and migration of prevention.

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