

## **INTERVENTION STUDY**

# **Supporting asylum seeker and refugee children**

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## Contents

<b>Executive summary</b> .....	4
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	9
1.1 Background .....	9
1.2 The study .....	11
<b>2. Supporting asylum seeker and refugee children: a national overview</b> .....	13
2.1 Introduction .....	13
2.2 Numbers and identification of asylum seeker and refugee children .....	13
2.3 LA staff providing support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils .....	24
2.4 The range of LA support .....	30
2.5 Other support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils .....	39
2.6 Funding .....	43
2.7 Supporting asylum seekers and refugees: issues and challenges .....	44
2.8 Examples of good practice .....	47
<b>3. Local authorities' approach to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils</b> .....	53
3.1 Introduction .....	53
3.2 Models and approaches .....	53
3.3 The typology of support .....	54
3.4 Local authority profiles .....	55
3.5 The support continuum .....	68
3.6 Staffing .....	70
<b>4. Support provided: main areas of input</b> .....	76
4.1 Introduction .....	76
4.2 Admission .....	76
4.3 Induction .....	78
4.4 The assessment process .....	82
4.5 Language support .....	84
4.6 Pastoral support .....	90
4.7 Family support .....	93
4.8 Resources .....	98
4.9 Out-of-school activities .....	103
4.10 Awareness raising .....	105
4.11 Alternative provision .....	108
4.12 Concluding comments: changes in practice at school and LA level .....	110
<b>5. Training</b> .....	116
5.1 Introduction .....	116
5.3 Training issues .....	118
5.4 Training recommendations .....	119
5.5 Areas for development .....	119

<b>6. Multi-agency support and the role of other agencies</b> .....	<b>121</b>
6.1 Introduction.....	121
6.2 Multi-agency partnerships for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils 121	
6.3 The role of voluntary agencies and refugee community organisations in multi-agency partnerships.....	123
6.4 Policies and procedures for collaborative working and strategies to include parents.....	125
<b>7. Contributions and barriers to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families</b> .....	<b>127</b>
7.1 Introduction.....	127
7.2 Contributions .....	127
7.3 Barriers and solutions.....	128
<b>8. Overview</b> .....	<b>137</b>
8.1 Introduction.....	137
8.2 Key factors in providing effective support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils 137	
8.3 Areas for development .....	139
8.4 Learning outcomes .....	141
<b>References</b> .....	<b>145</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	<b>147</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b> .....	<b>148</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b> .....	<b>150</b>
<b>Appendix 4</b> .....	<b>151</b>
<b>Appendix 5</b> .....	<b>154</b>
Exemplars of good practice .....	154

## Executive summary

### Introduction

This report relays the findings from one of two complementary studies funded by CfBT focusing on educational support for asylum seeker and refugee children. The research was conducted between April 2005 and May 2006 and was divided into two phases.

The first phase focused on providing an audit of the range of support by local authorities (LAs) for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families in England via a questionnaire survey to all LAs. The second phase focused on case study work in six LAs. The case study LAs were selected from questionnaire respondents. Using information gathered during the questionnaire survey, the LAs selected had a range of good practice examples of strategies and interventions for supporting asylum seeker and refugee children and included LAs that have had a long history of supporting such pupils, as well as those whose experience was relatively recent.

The report draws on the data from both phases of the research. It provides a national overview of support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils (the questionnaire data), an exploration of LAs' approaches to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils, details of the support provided and the impact of such support, the training provided by LA staff, multi-agency support and the role of other agencies in providing support, the contributions made by asylum seeker and refugee pupils to the schools they attend, and the challenges identified in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. It concludes by exploring key factors in providing effective support and suggested areas for future development.

### National overview

A total of 95 questionnaires were received, representing 63 per cent of all LAs in England.

The numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils supported by each LA ranged from 0 to 9732; the average number was 619. In total, 37 LAs were able to provide actual figures on the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA area, compared with 39 LAs who provided estimated figures, reflecting the difficulties of accessing accurate data.

Nearly three-fifths of LA respondents said they did not have access to data on the numbers of pre-school asylum seeker and refugee children in the LA. A similar number of respondents did not have access to the numbers of 16–19-year-olds in the LA area. For several LAs, the lack of information on the number of pre-school and post-16 asylum seeker and refugee pupils was highlighted as an issue in identifying and monitoring and providing support for the client group.

Most frequently, LAs were informed about the arrival of pupils by the Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS). However, issues continued to be raised about the quality of the information received.

Key issues regarding identifying and monitoring numbers of pupils in the LA most commonly focused on lack of communication, lack of LA level systems to identify pupils or specific groups of pupils and pupils' and families' mobility which made identification and monitoring difficult.

The Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG) and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) were the most frequently accessed funding sources used by LAs to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. However, it should be noted that VCG funding was used to support access to education for a wide range of vulnerable young people and that the majority of EMAG funding was devolved to schools.

Costs or funding issues were mentioned the most in relation to challenges for LAs in providing support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

## **LAs' approach to supporting the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils**

The research was able to draw a distinction between the case study LAs in their overall strategic approach to supporting the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. This centred on the extent to which they adopted a centralised or mainstreamed approach to support.

In the centralised model, LA staff provided direct support to schools for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, such as support for admissions and/or teaching English as an additional language (EAL) from a central team. Across the case studies, this approach was often adopted by those LAs with more recent experience of supporting the needs of the client group and also with smaller numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Here, LAs provided direct support at operational level to schools and families.

In the mainstreamed model, LA staff focused on raising schools' awareness of, and responsibility for, supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In this model, the LAs took a more strategic overview in relation to support of the client group.

The most mainstreamed approach was also reflected in those LAs where funding mechanisms meant that the LA could only provide a strategic and advisory role focusing on raising achievement, rather than providing direct support to schools.

Factors which appeared to influence the type of approach adopted included the LA's dispersal status, its experience of supporting the client group, and the number of asylum seekers in the LA area.

## **The support provided by LA staff**

Both national survey and case study work identified the wide range of intervention provided by LA staff to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Such support generally focused on the arenas of admission and induction, assessment, language support, pastoral support, family support, the development of resources, out-of-school activities, awareness raising, and alternative provision.

Strategies for the successful admission of asylum seeker and refugee pupils included clear policies and procedures, a designated day for admissions, the appointment of a key worker, a pre-admission school visit and an admissions interview. Having a designated day for admissions enabled schools and the LA to prepare for the arrival of new pupils and arrange for appropriate translation or interpretation services.

Several stages of the induction process were identified by interviewees from the case study LAs as good practice. These included staff and class briefings, induction interviews, pupil

placement (the allocation of pupils to an appropriate year or teaching group) and the use of buddy systems for new arrivals.

Distinguishing between pupils' language needs and their academic ability was felt to be a key factor in relation to successful pupil placement. However, several other factors were often considered when determining which year or teaching group a pupil should be placed in. These included social and personal factors, EAL needs, academic factors and previous educational experience.

On arrival in school, an assessment of pupils' educational and other needs was usually conducted by a LA officer such as an EAL teacher and included a basic initial assessment (i.e. of personal details). This supported the initial placement of a pupil in school. Following the initial assessment, three main types of formal assessment were identified in the schools in the study: English language assessment, assessment in pupils' own language, and assessment of any additional needs. Allowing a short settling-in period prior to assessing a pupil's English language ability was felt to be good practice in relation to pupil assessment.

In-class language support was usually preferred to withdrawing pupils from class. However, withdrawal sessions were felt to be valuable for providing intensive language support. Several factors determined the type of language support provided (i.e. in-class or withdrawal). These included teachers' preference, pupil age, English ability, level of literacy (in own language), previous experience of schooling and lesson type.

Pastoral support was one of the main areas of additional support provided by LA and school staff for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The areas of need supported through the pastoral system included increasing pupils' awareness and understanding of the education system, supporting pupils' personal and social needs, supporting pupils' wider needs (e.g. emotional needs, family circumstances), and support at key times (e.g. during transition).

In the case study LAs, a number of initiatives had been introduced by LA and school staff to ensure that parents and carers were involved in their children's education. The support available to families from LA and school staff was felt to have impacted on their understanding of the UK education system. Interviewees noted that the availability of translation services and interpretation support meant that families were more likely to attend meetings because they could both understand and be understood.

A range of resources had been developed to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. These could be broadly categorised into the following areas: classroom materials to support teaching and learning; curriculum enrichment resources; DVDs, CDs, videos and other materials focusing on raising schools' and parents' awareness; ICT-based resources; and information leaflets, guides and handbooks.

The opportunity to access extracurricular activities provided by LA and school staff facilitated pupils' involvement in social activities and wider school life. These opportunities were seen to help reduce the isolation of some asylum seeker and refugee pupils, particularly unaccompanied asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

Raising awareness of the different cultures of the asylum seeker and refugee communities was a key area of support provided by LA and school staff. A variety of strategies were used to create a welcoming climate for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, including celebration events and activities, lessons, and assemblies and use of the school environment (e.g. the use of display areas and the corridors). However, the importance of adopting a sensitive approach to promoting and celebrating different cultures was noted. Celebration and awareness-raising events were felt by interviewees to have an impact on non-asylum seeker

and refugee pupils in a number of ways, including an increased awareness of the issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees and a greater empathy towards pupils and their families.

Despite the variety of support provided, several individual pupil factors were also felt to be influential on the impact of support on asylum seeker and refugee pupils, particularly in their attainment. These included the extent of previous schooling, arrival during the primary phase, and asylum seeker and refugee pupils' drive, determination, and commitment to learning.

Impacts of support on the local community were seen as variable across the LAs in the study. In some cases, interviewees felt that there had been a significant impact on members of the local community in their awareness and acceptance of asylum seeker and refugee families. In other LAs, however, support was felt to have had a marginal impact on entrenched racist attitudes.

## Training

A number of challenges in relation to the provision of training were highlighted. The most common challenge identified was the funding of training, as well as the availability of LA staff to deliver it. Furthermore, interviewees highlighted the difficulties faced by school staff in obtaining time to attend training events.

Interviewees provided a number of recommendations for LAs wishing to establish professional development programmes focusing on support for refugee and asylum seeker pupils, including: that training should be available for all school staff; that it should provide staff with practical resources and strategies; and that it should be linked to broader issues and agendas.

## Multi-agency partnerships

Interviewees highlighted a number of challenges in engaging refugee community organisations in multi-agency partnerships. These included issues of cultural sensitivity and elements of distrust and uncertainty, a lack of understanding and/or social confidence among refugees and asylum seekers to take part in discussions, and the frequent formation and disbanding of groups which meant that establishing and maintaining relationships between organisations could be difficult.

## Contributions and barriers

Despite the many barriers faced by asylum seeker and refugee children, schools highlighted their enthusiasm and motivation to learn and the positive impact they had on the school community, as well as the positive ambitions that asylum seeker and refugee parents had for their children.

Barriers to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils were identified at a strategic, school and individual pupil level. Interviewees noted, however, that although the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee pupils presented several challenges, through experience, schools and LAs had developed a range of solutions to overcoming the issues.

LAs were keen to ensure equality of support across schools, although this presented a specific challenge in LAs where resources were stretched and accessing support was at the discretion of individual schools.

Some schools' lack of experience in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils presented challenges both for schools and for LAs. Raising schools' awareness of the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was key to addressing this challenge, with LA training playing an important role.

## Overview

When interviewees discussed key factors in providing effective support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their responses fell into the following areas: the nature of the support provided; strategic support and multi-agency working; work with parents/community; and school practice.

There were commonalities between school and LA staff in areas identified for development. These were developing practice, the need for community development work, and access to funding to maintain and/or developing existing support mechanisms.

Interviewees felt that the experience of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils could be used to enhance support for other pupils in school, for example in relation to school admission and induction policies and procedures.

Interviewees also identified other young people who might be vulnerable to underachievement and who might benefit from the strategies used to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils, notably looked-after children, Gypsy and Traveller pupils and underachieving boys.



## 1 Introduction

This report presents the findings from one of two complementary studies funded by CfBT focusing on educational support for asylum seeker and refugee children.

### About CfBT

CfBT is an education trust. Our purpose is to provide education for the public benefit and we are leaders in our field worldwide. We work across a wide variety of learning and skills settings in the UK and around the world, managing projects and developing products and services to client specifications. Our work is concerned with efficiently run schools, effective teaching, and raising standards as well as reform and the implementation of education policy at government level. CfBT is a registered charity, and surpluses made on operational activities are placed in trust to fund educational research and development work. Each year the CfBT trustees commit more than £1 million in this way. We strongly believe that education is an instrument for economic and social progress.

The complementary study was undertaken by Northumbria University Disaster and Development Centre (DDC) between April 2005 and April 2006, and primarily focused on educational support for asylum seekers and refugees in the north-east of England.

### 1.1 Background

This research focuses on the support offered to asylum seeker and refugee children and their families and how, in turn, this may lead to improvements in meeting the needs (educational, social and cultural) of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in school. Schools can play a key role in integrating children and their families into local communities and have been described as the 'ideal starting point to enable these children to rebuild their lives' (Dennis, 2002). Nevertheless, the diverse range of needs that asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families may present is likely to require a broad range of support and input from a number of agencies. Asylum seeking and refugee families in turn bring resources to the educational system, which can make a positive contribution to the quality of schooling experiences for all children. In the provision of appropriate support to asylum seekers and refugees, schools require a detailed knowledge and understanding of the issues they face and the contribution they can make.

The number of people seeking asylum in the UK rose rapidly between 1996 and 2002, with figures suggesting an increase in the number of asylum applications from 29 640 in 1996 to 84 130 in 2002. However, latest figures show a decrease in applications of 21 per cent, from 32 025 in 2004/05 to 25 155 in 2005/06. During the first quarter of 2006 there were 6455 applications for asylum (7530 including dependents). This represented a 5 per cent increase on the previous quarter but was 8 per cent less than in the first quarter of 2005. The top five applicant nationalities were Zimbabwean, Eritrean, Iranian, Somali and Afghan (National Statistics, 2006).

Nevertheless, a paucity of official, accurate figures on the number of asylum seeker and refugee children is evident and represents one of the major concerns for those agencies working with this group of children. Despite the lack of official data, it is estimated that in 2002 there were approximately 80 000 asylum seeker and refugee children in UK schools (Rutter, 2003). Since April 2000, the Home Office, through the National Asylum Support Service, has operated a policy of dispersing some asylum seeker families away from previous concentrations in the south-east and London (Ofsted, 2003). This has presented challenges

to areas with little or no experience of asylum seekers and refugees, and in some cases, little experience of minority ethnic communities (Remsbery, 2003).

Support for refugee and asylum seeker children poses a challenge to service providers, policymakers and local host communities. In order for schools and LAs to effectively support pupils and their families a number of issues may need to be addressed. For example, asylum seeker and refugee children often arrive in the UK with little information regarding their background (educational and otherwise), hence making assessment and the provision of support for them particularly difficult (Stanley, 2001). Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) are a particularly vulnerable sub-group who may present with a range of issues and problems regarding psychological trauma, their looked-after status, and access to education (Clarke, 2003). Thus, appropriate support to schools from relevant agencies is crucial, to both identify and address these needs, and help schools provide effectively for the educational needs of asylum seeking and refugee pupils and their communities.

Asylum seeker and refugee children may experience barriers to accessing a school place, including shortage of places, resistance of schools, lack of EAL support, and arrival outside of standard admissions times (Dennis, 2002). In schools, bullying and racial harassment are common experiences (Bolloten *et al.*, 2004; Stanley, 2001) and schools' often limited awareness of the needs and/or culture of some groups of refugee and asylum seekers may limit the effectiveness of their responses. However, strategies that have been seen to be effective in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their parents include clear admissions and induction procedures; support from individuals from the refugee communities, for example in-class support, interpretation services and links with the community; home-school liaison; and a range of additional in-school support (Ofsted, 2003; DfES, 2002).

The importance of teacher training for the identification, assessment and support of pupils' learning, and teachers having up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the linguistic, educational and cultural needs of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils has been highlighted (Clarke, 2003; Ofsted, 2003; Refugee Council, 2004). Thus, there is a recognised need to raise awareness among school staff to ensure that the educational participation of these young people and their families is maintained. This research explores the extent to which this is happening in practice. In addition to raising awareness, including the implications of legislation such as the Race Relations (Amendment Act) 2000, there may also be a need to access resources, develop community and family liaison, develop staff knowledge and skills, and focus on values and practice and the ethos of schools. The support, training and advisory work provided by specialist services and the availability of funding streams are crucial in providing school staff and other agencies and services with the skills and resources to address the needs of these pupils and their families. The support provided by specialist services is well documented but there is a need to see what is actually going on in practice.

## 1.2 The study

### 1.2.1 Aims

The aims of the research were:

- to conduct a national audit of LA support provided for refugee and asylum seeker pupils and their families, in order to map the support available
- to examine the impact of such support on schools' understanding of refugee and asylum seeker pupils, their perceived ability to meet the needs of these pupils and their families, the attitudes and practice of school staff and the ethos of the school
- to relay perceived effective practice in supporting refugee and asylum seeker pupils at LA, school and classroom level.
- to highlight any implications for supporting other groups of vulnerable or at risk pupils.

### 1.2.2 Methodology

The study was divided into two phases:

- Phase 1: Audit;
- Phase 2: Case study research.

#### Phase 1: Audit

A postal survey of all LAs<sup>1</sup> in England was undertaken to explore the educational support provided by local education authorities. Areas of enquiry included:

- the numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils known to LAs;
- the roles and remit of staff working to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils;
- the types of support provided by LAs and other agencies;
- sources of funding to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils;
- issues and challenges for the LA in providing support;
- examples of perceived good practice and evidence of impact.

At the beginning of the audit phase, researchers identified LA officers responsible for the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in each of the 150 LAs in England. This was achieved via phone contact with LAs, using existing NFER links within LAs and via web-based searches (with phone follow-up). The questionnaire was piloted with a number of LA officers responsible for providing support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The questionnaires were sent out in May 2005 to the identified contacts in each LA. Researchers sent out reminder letters and also conducted reminder phone calls to LAs who did not respond within the given timeframe.

#### Phase 2: Case study research

In order to examine the implementation of support in practice, six LAs were selected for case study research. Using information gathered during the postal survey, the LAs selected had a range of good practice examples of strategies and interventions for supporting asylum seeker and refugee children and included both LAs that had a long history of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and those whose experience was relatively recent.

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the survey, Children's Services were being formed and local education authorities (LEAs) were ceasing to exist. However, questionnaires were sent to those education-based staff who would have been or were still based within the LEA. Thus, all references to LAs focus on what were previously identified as LEAs.

Within each LA interviews were conducted with a range of staff, including:

- LA strategic managers, for example heads of ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS);
- EAL or ethnic minority and Traveller achievement grant (EMTAG) staff, including advisory teachers and family liaison officers;
- teachers and school-based staff, for example home–school liaison (HSL) officers, mentors;
- other agencies or support involved, for example Education Welfare Service, Connexions;
- specialist staff providing bilingual support;
- school staff with designated responsibility for refugee and asylum seeker pupils.

Interviews explored:

- strategies, interventions and support provided and the impact of such support;
- examples of effective practice;
- the main issues and challenges in supporting pupils and their families;
- training provided and its perceived effectiveness;
- multi-agency input in providing support, including the role of voluntary agencies.

## 1.3 The report

The report draws on the data from both phases of the research. Chapter 2 presents a national overview of support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils by presenting the questionnaire data. Exemplars of good practice, highlighted by questionnaire respondents, are included in appendix 5. The exemplars highlight the types of support provided, the key agencies involved and the outcomes identified by respondents.

Chapter 3 draws on the data from the case study LAs to explore LAs' approaches to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils in further detail.

Chapter 4 presents details of the support provided for asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the case study LAs and examines the impact of such support.

Chapter 5 outlines the range of training available to school staff offering support to refugee and asylum seeker pupils across the case study LAs. It discusses the issues and challenges of delivering such training and outlines interviewees' recommendations to other LAs wishing to establish training programmes focusing on this client group.

Chapter 6 focuses on multi-agency support and the role of other agencies in providing support in the case study LAs.

Chapter 7 highlights the contributions made by asylum seeker and refugee pupils to the schools they attend. It also focuses on the barriers identified by staff supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

Chapter 8 provides an overview by exploring key factors in providing effective support and suggested areas for future development. It also examines learning outcomes in terms of whether the experience of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils can be used to enhance support for other pupils, along with recommendations to schools and LAs whose experience of supporting these pupils is relatively new.

## 2 Supporting asylum seeker and refugee children: a national overview

### 2.1 Introduction

In May 2005, NFER sent questionnaires to all 150 LAs in England. This chapter documents the findings from those LA respondents who completed and returned them. The chapter begins by describing the details of the responding LAs, then outlines information on the numbers and identification of asylum seeker and refugee children in those LA areas. It then goes on to focus on the LA staff identified as having a remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and the types of support they provided. This is followed by an exploration of the other agencies and services that LA staff worked or liaised with that provided support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Sources of funding used by LAs to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils are also identified, along with issues and challenges identified by respondents in supporting pupils. An overview of the good practice exemplars nominated by respondents is presented. A more detailed good practice guide is contained in appendix 5.

### 2.2 Numbers and identification of asylum seeker and refugee children

#### 2.2.1 Number of respondents and sample representation

A total of 95 questionnaires were returned, giving an overall response rate of 63 per cent. The returns could be broken down into the following LA types, as shown in table 2.1.

**Table 2.1** The types of responding LAs

LA type	Frequency	% of sample	National % of LA type	Respondents as % of LA type
London borough	17	18	22	52
Metropolitan authorities	27	28	24	75
Unitary authorities	29	31	31	46
Counties	22	23	23	65
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>N/A</b>

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

As table 2.1 shows, the sample of responding LAs was fairly evenly spread across the four LA types. The proportion of respondents from unitary and county authorities exactly mirrored national figures, while those for metropolitan made up a slightly larger proportion and those from London boroughs a slightly smaller proportion. Apart from the unitary authorities, the survey elicited responses from over half of each type of LA, with three-quarters of metropolitan authorities responding.

A range of LA personnel completed questionnaires. Information regarding the role of the individual completing the questionnaire was available from 90 LAs and the roles identified

could be broadly grouped into one of six categories. Table 2.2 outlines the six main categories and the number of respondents in each.

**Table 2.2** Number of respondents in each category

Category	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS)	37	41
Asylum seeker and refugee teams	17	19
English as an additional language (EAL)	14	16
Other	8	9
Inclusion	6	7
Education welfare service (EWS)	4	4
Behaviour support/special educational needs (SEN)	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

As table 2.2 highlights, most frequently, questionnaires were completed by staff in the ethnic minority achievement service, an asylum seeker and refugee team or the EAL team. As Arnot and Pinson (2005) highlighted, the location of responsibility for asylum seeker and refugee pupils in a LA can be seen to reflect funding arrangements in the LA, but also its view on young people's support needs, for example a focus on language needs, ethnicity or inclusion.

Over two-fifths (41 per cent) of the total number of returned questionnaires were completed by individuals working in an ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS) or a variation thereof: ethnic minority and Traveller achievement service (EMTAS), Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG) team, ethnic minority achievement team (EMAT). LA personnel in this category included advisers or advisory teachers for ethnic minority achievement (EMA), teachers or specialist teachers, such as teachers for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, team leaders, coordinators and service managers. Responses from Traveller education service staff in one LA reflected their work with Roma pupils.

A further 17 of the questionnaires (representing almost a fifth of the total number of returns) were completed and returned by staff working in a dedicated asylum and refugee team in the LA. In this category, the majority of questionnaires were completed by the coordinators or leaders of these teams, but also, in some cases, by a support or advisory teacher, consultant or education officer in the team. Similarly, the 18 individuals in the EAL and behaviour support/SEN category included predominantly senior staff such as heads of service, managers and coordinators, as well as teachers and advisers.

In the 'other' category, staff roles included, for example, vulnerable children coordinator, school effectiveness and improvement development officer, education officer – pupil access, and children missing education officer. These roles highlighted a range of foci, from access to education to standards.

Finally, individuals with responsibility for inclusion completed a total of six questionnaires. This included staff with responsibility for race equality and/or equal opportunities, such as advisers or officers and senior staff with these roles. Senior and principal officers were represented among those returning questionnaires from the education welfare service.

In this way, it can be seen that while the majority of respondents were from ethnic minority achievement and related services, a significant minority were located in a wide range of other LA departments including education welfare and inclusion.

## 2.2.2 Numbers of asylum seekers and refugees aged 5 to 16 supported by the local authorities

A total of 89 LAs provided information regarding the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils they were aware of in their LA. Across these LAs, the numbers of young people identified aged between 5 and 16 ranged from none to 9732 (in one London borough). The average number of young people in this age range per LA was 619. The median<sup>2</sup> was 150. The relatively large difference between the median and average figure was due to the fact that a number of LAs had extremely small numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, while a small number of LAs also had relatively large numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Further analysis showed that a quarter of LAs in the survey identified fewer than 21 asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA, while a further quarter identified more than 480 (up to 9372). Respondents from 12 LAs indicated that over 1000 asylum seeker and refugee pupils aged 5–16 years were known to them in their LA area. All but one of these 12 LAs were London boroughs (four inner and seven outer London boroughs). The remaining LA was a metropolitan authority. For the purpose of the present report, the percentile measures outlined will be used to describe the number of asylum seekers and refugees aged 5–16 years in LAs under four categories: very low, low, medium, and high (see table 2.3).

**Table 2.3** Number of asylum seekers and refugees aged 5–16 years identified by LAs

Percentile	Number of asylum seekers and refugees 5-16 yrs	Category
25th	0–20	Very low
50th	21–150	Low
75th	151–480	Medium
High	481–9372	High

*Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005*

Of the 16 London boroughs that provided data, 13 had more than 480 identified asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA (see table 2.4). London boroughs accounted for more than half (13) of the 22 LAs with high numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Over two-fifths of respondents from metropolitan authorities indicated that they were aware of between 151 and 480 pupils in their LA, whereas in unitary and county authorities numbers tended to be much lower.

**Table 2.4** Type of LA and number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils

LA type	0–20 pupils	21–150 pupils	151–480 pupils	481+ pupils	Total
London borough	0	2	1	13	16
Metropolitan	1	8	11	6	26

<sup>2</sup> The median is the halfway point in the data set: that is, half the data falls below this figure and half lies above it.

Unitary	13	4	7	2	26
Counties	9	8	3	1	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>89</b>

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

The respondents that provided data on numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils were also grouped according to government office region. Table 2.5 provides an overview. Again this shows the predominance of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the London boroughs and the south-east.

**Table 2.5** Respondents and numbers of asylum seekers by government office region

Region	No. of respondents providing data	0–20 pupils	21–150 pupils	151–480 pupils	481+ pupils
North-East	9	4	3	2	0
North-West/ Merseyside	15	4	6	4	1
Yorkshire and the Humber	11	3	2	4	2
East Midlands	7	3	1	1	2
West Midlands	7	1	1	2	3
Eastern	4	0	1	2	1
London	16	0	2	1	13
South-East	13	3	4	6	0
South-West	7	5	2	0	0

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether the data provided were actual or estimated figures. Of those who responded (76 LAs), actual figures were provided by 37 and estimated figures by 39 LAs, reflecting difficulties of accessing accurate data. Respondents were also asked to indicate the date this information was sourced (82 LAs provided this information). Approximately four-fifths of the data provided related to 2005 counts. Only four LAs provided data from the preceding year (2004), while three provided data from 2003, 2002 and 2001 respectively. Four of the LAs that did not provide this information stated that they did not count the numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA. Respondents raised concerns regarding the identification and counting of pupils according to their immigration status, rather than according to their educational needs or ethnicity.

### 2.2.3 Number of asylum seekers and refugees living with relatives and the numbers of unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees

Approximately two-thirds of respondents were able to provide a breakdown of the number of pupils residing in the LA area who were living with relatives and the number who were unaccompanied.

The number identified by LAs of unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees aged 5–16 ranged from zero to 200, with the average number being 22 young people per LA. However, again the median figure was much lower, at just five young people per LA. The LA with the



largest number of unaccompanied asylum seekers identified (200) was a London borough. LAs were more likely to be able to provide actual numbers for unaccompanied pupils as opposed to those living with relatives. Despite this, nearly a third of the data for unaccompanied young people (20 of 56) were estimated figures. Again LAs with larger numbers of unaccompanied pupils were clustered in the London boroughs (see table 2.6), reflecting the larger concentrations of asylum seekers and refugees in these LA areas overall.

**Table 2.6** LA type and number of unaccompanied pupils

LA type	Number of unaccompanied pupils				Total
	0–2 pupils	3–5 pupils	6–25 pupils	26+ pupils	
London borough (17)*	0	1	0	6	7
Metropolitan (27)	7	6	3	4	20
Unitary (29)	4	6	3	1	14
Counties (22)	3	3	6	3	15
Total	14	16	12	14	56

\* Numbers in brackets denote overall number of respondents from this LA type in the sample of 95

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

#### 2.2.4 Access to data on pre-school and post-16 numbers

The questionnaire also sought to identify whether LAs had access to information regarding the number of pre-school and post-16 asylum seekers and refugees in the LA area. Under current legislation, all asylum seeking and refugee children have the same entitlement to early years provision as UK residents and thus, all eligible three- and four-year-olds are entitled to a free part-time place in a pre-school setting. In addition, LAs are obliged to account for the services available for asylum seeker and refugee children and Ofsted is responsible for inspecting all early years provision to ensure that the needs of asylum seeker and refugee children are being met. Moreover, it is widely accepted that early years provision for asylum seeker and refugee children has numerous benefits relating to their educational, social, and personal development. As such, several initiatives (e.g. Sure Start) have been introduced which aim to facilitate all children's access to early years provision, including asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

Despite this, of the 90 LAs that responded to this question, nearly three-fifths (58 per cent) said that they did not have access to data on the numbers of pre-school asylum seeker and refugee children in the LA. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that asylum seeking and refugee children are often under-represented in nurseries, playgroups and other forms of pre-school placements (DfES, 2004). Asylum seeker and refugee pupils' under-representation in early years provision was reiterated by questionnaire respondents.

In further education (post-16), under current legislation, asylum seekers and refugees between ages 16 and 19 have the same entitlement beyond compulsory school age as other UK nationals. However, this is at the discretion of the further and higher education institutions, as there is no legal obligation regarding provision. In addition, the lack of security regarding pupils' immigration status post-16 was highlighted as a barrier to their accessing further or higher education placements. For example, pupils might feel uncertain about their future, fearing deportation when they reach 18 years of age and therefore may not apply for post-16 placements. Equally, they may be deported during this time. As with early education, of the LAs that responded, over three-fifths (63 per cent) cited that they did not have access to information on the numbers of 16–19-year-old asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Rather, it was felt that this information was held with other agencies such as Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council.

For several LAs, the lack of information on the number of pre-school and post-16 asylum seeker and refugee pupils was highlighted as an issue in identifying and monitoring and providing support for the client group. However, with the introduction of integrated children's services, LAs have a duty to ensure that all children and young people from birth to 19 are given the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Moreover, the emphasis placed on partnership

working in LAs may go some way to improving the coordination of information between providers of pre-and post-16 provision and LAs, in order that asylum seekers and refugees may be supported at these times.

## 2.2.5 Dispersal and non-dispersal LAs

Of the LAs included in the sample, approximately 50 per cent indicated that they had been, or were currently, a dispersal area for asylum seekers and refugees. Table 2.7 highlights dispersal status linked to the number of pupils in the LA. As table 2.7 highlights, three-quarters of respondents that identified themselves as dispersal authorities had low and medium numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, while a quarter had high numbers, that is, more than 480. Three-quarters of the 12 LAs with high numbers of pupils that were not dispersal areas were London boroughs. The remaining three LAs consisted of a southern unitary authority and a metropolitan and county authority in the Midlands.

**Table 2.7** Dispersal areas and number of asylum seekers

LA type	Number of pupils				Total
	0–20 pupils	21–150 pupils	151–480 pupils	481+ pupils	
Current dispersal	0	12	12	8	32
Past dispersal	3	3	5	1	12
Never dispersal	20	7	4	12	43
Total	23	22	21	21	87

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Table 2.8 provides details of whether LAs indicated that they were a dispersal area and whether they also said that they had a specific service or team supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Table 2.8 shows that one in six LAs that were current dispersal areas did not have a specific service or team, one in four LAs that were previously a dispersal area did not have a service or team and over half of the LAs that had never been a dispersal area did not have a service or team. From this, it can be seen that non-dispersal areas were much less likely to have dedicated teams supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

**Table 2.8** Dispersal areas and existence of a specific team

LA type	Specific service/team		
	Yes	No	Total
Current dispersal	27	6	33
Past dispersal	9	3	12
Never dispersal	21	26	47
Total	57	35	92

Source: LA survey responses (received by NFER between May and July 2005).

## 2.2.6 When LAs began collecting data

LAs were also asked to provide details of the year (and month where available) in which they first began to collect data on the number of asylum seekers and refugees in the LA area. Nearly a third of respondents (30) did not reply to the question. Where this information was provided (from 65 LAs), most LAs had begun collecting information within the last five years, with the year 2000 being the most frequently nominated response (35 per cent of the LAs). In

addition, a further 17 per cent of the LAs identified that they had begun collecting data in 1999.

During this time, the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 were introduced, placing specific legal duties on LAs towards asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In this way, LAs were encouraged to develop local policies and procedures to facilitate access to and support in local schools for asylum seeker and refugee pupils (including, for example, the production of a written educational policy on support for asylum seeking and refugee children).

## 2.2.7 How LAs are informed about the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees

LA representatives were also asked to provide details about how the LAs were informed about asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the LA area. The following services or agencies were identified most frequently as providing this information (in rank order).

- Home Office National Asylum Support Service<sup>3</sup>
- Schools
- Housing (LA and private)
- Social services
- Asylum seeker teams

This would appear to support the findings from recent research on the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils conducted by Arnot and Pinson (2005, p.34). They identified four different strategies of LA data collection, which included (in rank order):

- a monitoring strategy, including a specific category on an LA database for asylum seekers and refugees – the LA relies on one source of data, for example the National Asylum Support Service, or creates a network of information, updated regularly, which includes the National Asylum Support Service, housing, social services, schools, and voluntary organisations;
- a partial database – data are collected by schools, mainly on admission, and also by LAs that collected annual data but did not record movement or mid-term admissions;
- a deductive strategy – here, numbers are deduced from other databases such as EAL, new arrivals and the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), as the LA does not want to single out asylum seekers and refugees;
- no collection of data – rationales here related to LAs having low numbers of asylum seekers and refugees, data collection not being seen as relevant to the services provided, the information being considered too sensitive or the population too transient.

The services or agencies highlighted by respondents across the 95 LAs included in the present study corresponded to those included in the monitoring strategy category as defined by Arnot and Pinson (2005) and thus offer further support for this approach.

Table 2.9 provides an overview of all the sources of information identified by respondents that were nominated more than once.

**Table 2.9** How LAs are informed about the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee pupils

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<sup>1</sup> The National Asylum Support Service was set up by the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. It provides accommodation in dispersal areas and subsistence payments for asylum seekers and refugees awaiting a decision on their status.

Service or agency	No. of responses
Home Office National Asylum Support Service (NASS)	54
Schools	33
Housing (LA and private)	29
Social services	26
Asylum seeker teams	23
Admissions	14
Health	10
Refugee organisations	9
Families	8
Other agencies	6
No system	6
Other LAs	5
Unknown	4
Educational welfare officers (EWOs)	4
Local community	4
Police	3
Fostering agencies	3
Resettlement/dispersal team	3

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Although the National Asylum Support Service was the most frequently cited source of information regarding asylum seeker and refugee children, numerous issues were raised regarding the lack of both accuracy and consistency.

On inaccuracy:

- it often did not reflect the actual or current situation: for example, families identified did not arrive or were placed in different accommodation;
- the information was often out of date or received too late, for example, if families were refused status, or moved for some other reason;
- a standard information sheet was used which did not include all the necessary details, for example the most up-to-date immigration status;
- information was only available for those asylum seeker and refugee pupils supported by the National Asylum Support Service.

On inconsistency:

- LAs did not always receive the necessary information from the National Asylum Support Service, with contact variously referred to as occasional, random, and unhelpful.

Likewise, in several cases, LAs pointed to issues regarding the quality of the information they received from schools (Arnot and Pinson's 'partial database' approach to the collection of data by LAs). In particular, they highlighted that schools were not obliged to (and therefore did not always) inform LAs of the admittance of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In addition, where this information was passed on, it was often a lengthy process to access it. Respondents also noted that schools were often poor at passing on relevant information between themselves (that is, from primary to secondary school). Fewer comments were provided regarding the information received from other agencies, although in some cases, it was felt that a lack of information was evident from private housing providers.

### 2.2.8 Effectiveness of the systems for identifying and monitoring asylum seeker and refugee pupils

Respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of the systems for identifying and monitoring the numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA on a five-point scale (with 1 being wholly ineffective and 5 being very effective). Of the 85 LAs that responded, views were evenly spread between those who felt the systems were effective, those who saw them as ineffective, and those who provided neutral responses (indicating that the systems were neither effective nor ineffective).

Previous research has highlighted the difficulty faced by LAs in collecting data and maintaining up-to-date databases. In their 2003 report *The education of asylum-seeker pupils*, Ofsted concluded that in several of the LAs they visited, the information available to LAs regarding asylum seeker and refugee pupils was variable in both quality and quantity, and that this had the potential to hinder the admissions and induction process. They therefore suggested that agencies involved in providing this information (and specifically the National Asylum Support Service) should take steps to 'improve the co-ordination and accuracy of the information about the asylum-seeker pupils and families before it is passed to LAs' (Ofsted, 2003). Equally, they encouraged the closer inter-agency working between education, health, social services and housing in order to increase the availability and accuracy of information regarding asylum seeker and refugee children.

Respondents' ratings of the effectiveness of their monitoring systems were cross-tabulated with the numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA to see if there was any relationship between the two. Table 2.10 provides an overview of the findings, which show that views regarding effectiveness were relatively evenly spread across the LAs with small, medium and large numbers of pupils. However, those LAs with very low numbers of pupils were slightly more likely to rate monitoring systems as ineffective than those with larger numbers of pupils, although no LAs with high numbers of pupils (more than 481) rated their monitoring systems as very effective.

**Table 2.10** Number of asylum seekers and effectiveness of monitoring systems

Number of asylum seekers	Number of pupils					Total
	Wholly ineffective	Ineffective	Neither effective nor ineffective	Effective	Very effective	
0–20 pupils	2	7	5	3	2	19
21–150 pupils	2	2	9	8	1	22
151–480 pupils	1	5	7	7	1	21
481+ pupils	1	6	8	6	0	21
Total	6	20	29	24	4	83

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## 2.2.9 Issues regarding identifying and monitoring numbers of asylum seekers and refugees

Respondents were then asked to highlight the key issues around identifying and monitoring the number of asylum seeker and refugee children in the LA. An open-ended question was used to give respondents the opportunity to answer freely about the key issues for their LA.

A range of issues were identified by respondents. However, the five most frequently identified challenges were (in rank order):

- a lack of communication;
- no system for identification or for identifying specific groups at LA level; pupils' and families' mobility;
- a lack of information, monitoring and tracking;
- the definition of asylum seeker and refugee children.

Table 2.11 sets out the top ten issues around identifying and monitoring the number of asylum seeker and refugee children in an LA area, as indicated by respondents.

**Table 2.11** Top 10 issues on identifying and monitoring pupils

Key issue	No. of responses
Lack of communication	36
No system for identification or the identification of specific groups at LA level	32
Mobility	21
Lack of monitoring or tracking	18
Defining asylum seeker and refugee populations	13
Families reluctant to identify themselves as asylum seekers or refugees	11
Lack of awareness of school staff regarding asylum seeker and refugee pupils	10
No centralised system for identification and monitoring	7
Schools not obliged to collect data on asylum seekers and refugees or inform the LA	6
Confidentiality/sensitivity issues	5

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Of the 87 LAs that responded, the most common issue raised was a lack of communication. More than two-fifths of respondents highlighted this as a key issue for the identification of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. This included a lack of communication between agencies, as well as issues regarding the transfer of information across school phases (between primary and secondary school). Several respondents reported that information regarding asylum seeker and refugee pupils was often out of date as a result.

Just over a third of respondents highlighted the issue of not having a system for the identification of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (that is, no procedure for the automatic collection of data from schools, and no identification process at admission). Furthermore, respondents in several LAs noted that no system was available for identifying specific groups of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. For example, respondents highlighted challenges relating to the identification of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and those identified as entering the LA area by the voluntary sector, asylum seekers and refugees not supported

by the National Asylum Support Service, and pupils or families making direct applications to schools.

Mobility was nominated as a further issue, negating effective identification and monitoring of pupils. In particular, respondents pointed to issues arising from children and families housed in temporary accommodation who would often, as a consequence, move on (or be moved on) at short notice, without informing either schools or the LA.

A general lack of information regarding asylum seeker and refugee pupils was considered to be a significant issue for LA support, particularly regarding family background, application decisions and identification of pre-school and post-16 asylum seeker and refugee children. Furthermore, respondents felt that the systems for monitoring and tracking asylum seeker and refugee pupils were often inadequate, and often were only in place while a service was being received (that is, pupil monitoring might cease when EAL provision ended). In addition, the challenges associated with monitoring pupils placed outside of the LA, as well as those entering the LA independently, was also noted.

A number of respondents also expressed concerns about the changing terminology used to define asylum seekers and refugees and highlighted the implications of this for identifying and monitoring the numbers in their LA areas. Similarly, it was noted that the current ethnicity data categories do not include information regarding an individual's immigration status and thus present obvious challenges for identifying a pupil as an asylum seeker or refugee.

Other challenges identified by respondents included, in order of frequency, the reluctance of families to make themselves known to the LA, a lack of awareness and/or reluctance of school staff to query pupils' immigration status, no centralised system being available, a lack of obligation on schools to collect and provide data on asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and confidentiality issues. Also a number of respondents identified new arrivals from EU member states who may have similar needs to asylum seekers and refugees but would not be classified as such: that is, the terminology served to exclude some of the most needy pupils. Issues about identifying young people by their immigration status rather than by their needs were also raised. Furthermore, the negative connotations associated with 'asylum seeker' also made families reluctant to identify themselves as such.

Other issues less frequently highlighted by respondents included language barriers, ongoing changes in the identification and monitoring process at LA level, LA size (which made monitoring of a small population difficult), and the availability of funding to establish monitoring systems. In addition, six LAs felt that there were no issues for them, although they acknowledged that they were supporting very few asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

## 2.3 LA staff providing support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils

This section looks at the LA staff providing educational support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families.

### 2.3.1 Existence of a team

When asked whether they had a specific team to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils, nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) of the 94 respondents to this question said that they did. However, some caution should be used when interpreting this finding, as a number (seven) of 'teams' were made up of less than one full-time equivalent member of staff. Also, some of those who stated that they had a relatively large team (more than 10 members of staff) were



referring to the whole ethnic minority achievement service whose remit would include refugee and asylum seeker pupils. Over a third of respondents stated that they did not have a specific service or team for supporting pupils. As highlighted in the previous section, the majority of dispersal areas had a team, whereas those LAs that were not dispersal areas were roughly divided between those that did have and those that did not have a team.

Table 2.12 shows that those LAs with more than 20 asylum seeker and refugee pupils were more likely to have someone with a specific remit (full or partial) for supporting them and that those with high numbers of pupils were more likely to have a dedicated team.

**Table 2.12** Number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and existence of a LA service/team

Number of asylum seekers	Specific service/team		
	Yes	No	Total
0–20 pupils	5	17	22
21–150 pupils	16	6	22
151–480 pupils	15	7	22
481+ pupils	20	2	22
Total	56	32	88

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

A total of 56 out of a possible 58 respondents provided information about the time their service or team had been in place. The most common response was five or six years. Nearly a quarter of services or teams had been in place for five years and four-fifths were established in the last six years. Eight had been established ten years or more, including two that had been in existence for 20 and 25 years respectively (a London borough and a southern unitary authority).

A total of 55 out of a possible 58 respondents stated the size of team in place. This ranged from 0.4 to 24, with the average size of the team or service being 4.4 members of staff. The words of caution noted previously should be reiterated, as nearly a quarter (15) of the 55 'teams' were made up of one person or less, with one member of staff being the most common response. These findings may reflect the funding constraints that LAs are under when trying to fund LA posts to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils, with the bulk of funding (for example, via EMAG) going directly to schools. For example, the London borough with the largest number of asylum-seeker and refugee pupils (an estimated 9372) only had 2.5 full time equivalent members of staff supporting pupils. However, the team was not responsible for providing EAL support. Similarly, another London borough with 4300 pupils from an asylum seeker or refugee background, representing over 21 per cent of the school population, did not have a specific team or service but its entire EMAS staff worked with asylum seekers and refugees. Staff included an ethnic minority achievement inspector, a consultant for refugee education, three SEN advisory teachers for African-Caribbean and Turkish pupils, one SEN officer, one senior learning mentor, one education officer for boys' achievement, one officer focusing on support for primary–secondary transfer and ten bilingual community workers. Teams were most likely to be based in the following locations: minority ethnic achievement, school improvement/development and inclusion.

### 2.3.2 LA staff supporting asylum seekers

Respondents were asked to provide details of the LA staff with a full or partial remit for providing educational support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, indicating their service location and brief details of their main areas of support. A number of respondents went beyond the remit of educational support and included housing workers, health practitioners, community cohesion and equal opportunities officers, and police officers. In total, 42 different job titles were provided in response to this question, highlighting the wide range of practitioners working with asylum seekers and refugees. Table 2.13 provides details of the top ten job titles provided by respondents. A detailed list of all 42 job titles is provided in appendix 1.

**Table 2.13** LA staff supporting asylum seekers and refugees

Job title	No. of responses	% of responses
Advisory teacher	108	31
Coordinator/team leader	58	17
Language support assistant/teaching assistant (TA)	35	10
Home–school liaison (HSL) officer	32	9
Education welfare officer	21	6
Social worker/looked-after children (LAC) adviser	16	5
Inclusion officer	9	3
Admissions officer	6	2
Educational psychologist	5	1
Interpreter	5	1

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

As Table 2.13 shows, the most common support staff employed were advisory teachers. In total, 108 references to advisory teachers were made, with nearly three-quarters of respondents (68 of 95) indicating that they employed advisory teachers to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Therefore, some LAs were employing more than one advisory teacher. Overall, nearly a third (31 per cent) of the staff supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils identified by respondents were advisory teachers. Most of the practitioners were peripatetic members of staff providing support to schools as and when needed, although some might be based in specific schools.

When the types of staff employed were cross-tabulated with the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees it was clear that advisory teachers and coordinators were most commonly employed, regardless of the numbers of pupils in the LA. However, home–school liaison officers were far more likely to be employed in those LAs with high levels of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, accounting for half of all those employed in these LAs.

Respondents were also asked to provide brief details of the main areas of support provided by the staff identified with a remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA. Table 2.14 provides an overview of the main areas of support identified by respondents.

**Table 2.14** Areas of support provided by LA staff

Area of support	No. of responses	% of responses
Teaching/pupil support	128	18
Advisory work/guidance	95	14
Home–school liaison	92	13
Admissions/induction	54	8
Training/professional development	52	8
Management and coordination	43	6
Translation/interpretation	33	5
Liaising with other agencies	23	3
Attendance/education welfare	22	3
Social care	20	3

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

The most common area of support was teaching/pupil support (accounting for nearly a fifth of responses), followed by advisory work/guidance and home–school liaison. These responses reflected the most frequently identified staff roles of advisory teacher, coordinator/team leader and home–school liaison officer. It should be noted that although some LAs had specific home–school liaison officers, this role was also often an intrinsic part of the work of the advisory teachers and other support staff, highlighting the importance of links and communication with parents. In addition, a small number of staff were involved in family learning support. The admission and induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was another key area of support, along with training and professional development of school staff.

The social care provided by staff focused not only on social services support for unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees but also on social care issues for those young people with their families. LAs had also appointed staff to focus on specific areas of need or difficulty, for example early years, boys' achievement and primary–secondary transfer.

Respondents were also asked to identify the service location of staff supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The highest proportion (more than two-fifths, 42 per cent) of staff identified were employed in ethnic minority achievement teams, followed by the education effectiveness service (eight per cent), education (seven per cent), inclusion and social services (five per cent).

Table 2.15 shows the types of support provided by the most common staff roles identified. This was a multiple response question.

**Table 2.15** Main areas of support provided by LA staff

Type of support (no. of responses)	Advisory teacher	Coordinator/team leader	Language support/TA	HSL officer	EWO	Social worker/LAC adviser
Teaching/pupil support	77	8	30	5	2	0
Advisory work/guidance	47	23	5	6	1	2
Training/professional development	24	18	0	1	0	0
Home-school liaison	22	10	12	30	10	0
Admission/induction	17	9	2	7	9	1
Management and coordination	4	33	0	0	0	2
Translation/interpretation	6	1	8	7	3	1
Attendance/education welfare	0	1	0	3	14	1
Family learning/support	0	1	0	7	0	0
Social care	3	1	0	0	1	14
Accommodation	0	1	0	0	0	2
Brokering other services	0	0	0	1	0	2

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Advisory teachers, most of whom were based in ethnic minority achievement teams, focused on teaching and pupil support and advisory work and guidance, and roughly a fifth were providing training and professional development for school staff and home-school liaison.

Coordinators and team leaders tended to be centrally based and provided the strategic management of support. Roughly half of the coordinators and team leaders were based in ethnic minority achievement teams, while others were located in a range of services such as inclusion, education effectiveness service, pupil and student services, and social services. The main focus of their work was, in rank order, management and coordination, advisory work and guidance, and training and professional development of school staff.

Language support and teaching assistants (35 were identified in total) were also employed by LAs to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Most provided pupil support, and also home-school liaison and interpretation and translation services.

A total of 21 educational welfare officers had a full or partial remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils; half of these were based in the Education Welfare Service. The rest were in a wide range of locations including pupil and student services, social services, behaviour

support services and Traveller education services. Their primary focus was on attendance and home–school liaison, but they also provided support with admissions/induction and translation and interpretation.

Social workers/looked-after children advisers with a specific full or partial remit to support asylum seekers and refugees were identified in 12 LAs: nearly two-thirds were based in social services, although others were based in ethnic minority achievement teams and education welfare services. Their work focused primarily on social care; however, some were also providing advisory work and guidance, management and coordination, accessing accommodation and brokering other services.

### 2.3.3 Sufficiency of staffing

On sufficiency of staffing, over two-fifths of the responding LAs felt that it was sufficient to meet their needs (although only three respondents felt that it was fully sufficient). Over a fifth thought it was insufficient, and over a third felt that it was neither sufficient nor insufficient. Table 2.16 provides an overview of the numbers of asylum seekers compared with respondents' views on the sufficiency of staffing.

**Table 2.16** Number of asylum seekers and sufficiency of staffing

Number of asylum seekers	Sufficiency of staffing					Total
	Wholly insufficient	Insufficient	Neither sufficient nor insufficient	Sufficient	Fully sufficient	
0–20 pupils	3	2	5	6	3	19
21–150 pupils	1	5	6	10	0	22
151–480 pupils	0	1	10	7	0	18
481+ pupils	1	4	9	8	0	22
Total	5	12	30	31	3	81

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## 2.4 The range of LA support

This section focuses on providing a more detailed overview of the range of support provided by LA staff with a brief for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The questionnaire sought to identify the types of support provided directly by LA staff identified in the questionnaire who had a remit for working with asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their families and schools. Respondents were given a tick list of different types of support across five arenas:

1. LA support for **schools** regarding asylum seeker and refugee pupils;
2. LA support for asylum seeker and refugee **pupils**;
3. LA support for asylum seeker and refugee **families**;
4. **Policies and strategies** specifically for asylum seeker and refugee pupils;
5. **Multi-agency working** regarding asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

They were also asked to indicate whether the support identified was provided at primary and/or secondary level. The most frequently identified types of LA support are shown in table 2.17.

**Table 2.17** LA support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their families and schools

Type of support	Total (%)	Focus of support*	Top 6 most time/most resources
Information and guidance materials on educational needs	86	S	5
Provision of EAL resources	82	S	6
Training on educational needs	79	S	2
Advisory support	79	S	1
Assessment of educational needs	79	P	3
Home-school liaison	75	F	
Culturally relevant material	71	S	
Liaison with outside agencies	71	MA	
Information and guidance materials on personal, social and cultural needs	70	S	
Translation/interpretation	70	F	
Training on personal, social and cultural needs	69	S	
In-school learning support	64	P	4
Admission	62	P/S	
Brokering of alternative education provision	59	P	
Induction	55	P/S	
Support for personal, social or emotional needs	54	P	
Multi-agency panels	50	MA	
Community liaison	48	F	
Assessment of personal, social and emotional needs	47	P	
Whole-school activities	36	S	
Advocacy	31	F	
Study skills classes	30	P	
Attendance	30	P/S	
Top-up classes	24	P	
Life skills	22	P	
Leisure activities	22	P	
Bursaries	17	S	

Respondents could tick more than one type of support

\* S: Support for schools; P: Support for pupils; F: Support for families; P/S: Support in developing policies/strategies; MA: Involvement in multi-agency working regarding asylum seeker and refugee pupils

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Responses regarding the focus of support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their families and schools were provided by all LAs that completed and returned questionnaires (95). Analysis of the responses to this question identified six main types of LA support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The four most frequently nominated areas of support related to LA support for schools. Less frequently identified areas of support (identified by less than half of the sample) focused on direct support for pupils. Thus, the majority of LA staff input focused on providing support for schools to support pupils more effectively.

Few differences between the types of support offered to primary and secondary schools were apparent, apart from age-specific areas such as the brokering of alternative education provision. Similarly, at the secondary level LA staff were involved in the provision of study skills classes, top-up classes, life skills and leisure activities. This is perhaps not surprising, given that the focus of this support (social and educational development) could be of particular importance for pupils of secondary age (during adolescence and in preparation for examinations). For example, top-up classes and study skills classes are likely to be related to GCSE examination preparation, and life skills and leisure activities might be particularly important for relatively new arrivals in Key Stage 4.

In addition, a slight difference was observed between the percentage of LAs providing culturally relevant material for supporting pupils at primary and secondary level. Support in providing culturally relevant resources was more prevalent in the primary sector.

The range of support activities provided by LA staff was similar at both primary and secondary level: 26 and 27 different nominated strategies respectively. On average, respondents indicated that they were offering 14 or 15 different types of support for both primary and secondary pupils.

Respondents were also asked to highlight the six areas to which the most time or resources were devoted. Table 2.17 shows that with one exception (in-school learning support), the main types of support identified were also the areas to which LA staff devoted most time or resources. In-school learning support, although identified as an area of support by less than two-thirds of respondents, was nevertheless highlighted as an area of high investment. The nature of this type of support will mean that it is likely to have a relatively high time or resources input.

In some instances, respondents provided additional information relating to the type of support provided. Table 2.18 provides examples of the types of LA support highlighted by respondents. The types of support provided could also be linked to the good practice exemplars identified by questionnaire respondents. Therefore, by way of further exemplification, table 2.18 also provides exemplars of related good practice identified by questionnaire respondents for these types of support. Further details of these exemplars are provided in the good practice guide in appendix 5.

A number of additional points were raised in relation to the provision of certain types of support. These focused on the following.

**Whole-school activities**, such as the provision of 'cultural days': Respondents noted that LA staff may prefer to encourage an overall school ethos, embedding the value of different cultures in the school, rather than encouraging one-off events.



**Assessment of educational and personal, social and emotional needs:** In assessing pupils' educational needs, respondents noted that this might be carried out by the LA peripatetic team or through social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) assessment. In some LAs assessments were completed on request rather than as standard practice. Similarly, an assessment of pupils' emotional needs might be carried out by a peripatetic teaching team or social care department.

**Leisure activities:** These activities were often funded by outside agencies or alternative funding sources (for example activities for unaccompanied asylum seekers through the budget for looked-after children). Respondents noted that they encouraged participation in extracurricular activities but did not offer these directly.

**Translation/interpretation:** Where this support was not provided by LA staff, respondents noted that the service was available through other organisations such as the Race Equality Council (REC), but was not provided by the LA directly. Thus, schools and families could access this support if necessary but would be required to pay for it themselves. In other LAs, respondents pointed to the difficulty of funding this type of support, noting that it was rarely provided and that more support of this nature was required.

**Induction policies and programmes** specifically for asylum seekers and refugees: A small number of respondents noted that this was the responsibility of schools and therefore individual schools were responsible for devising their own policies.

**Attendance policies:** Some respondents noted that attendance policies were the same for all pupils, that they were the responsibility of individual schools, and that LA guidance, but not specific policy, was available regarding this matter.

**Table 2.18** LA support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their families and schools

Type of support	Total (%)	Exemplars of related good practice
<b>School support</b>		
Information/guidance materials on educational needs	86	LA materials and those provided by external organisations such as the Refugee Council Raising awareness in schools (e.g. through drama), curriculum development, curriculum development project for new arrivals, good practice guides/handbooks.
Provision of EAL curriculum resources	82	Resource bank of bilingual materials and multilingual video for parents
Training on educational needs	79	Training for school staff and other agencies
Advisory support	79	Teaching and management support, advice on Key Stage 4 options, support for new arrivals, existence of a specialist team or staff, transition support (early years, primary–secondary, accessing further and higher education)
Provision of culturally relevant material	71	Integrating language and refugee issues in the curriculum, school resource packs, development of asylum seeker and refugee website
Information and guidance materials on personal, social and cultural needs	70	LA materials and those provided by external organisations such as the Refugee Council
Training on personal, social and cultural needs	69	Training for school staff and other agencies, e.g. racism, emotional well-being, asylum issues
Whole-school activities	36	Citizenship talks or days, school assemblies, diversity and refugee week projects, asylum seeker and refugee awards
Bursaries for schools	17	Bursaries to employ staff to provide additional support for new arrivals, e.g. to support integration and attainment

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Table 2.18 continued ...

Type of support	Total (%)	Exemplars of related good practice
<b>Pupil support</b>		
Assessment of educational needs	79	Initial language assessments, employment of bilingual support staff
In-school learning support	64	Language support for new arrivals, employment of bilingual support staff providing language support, support also provided by teaching assistants and Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant teachers
Brokering of alternative education provision for Key Stage 4, e.g. college places for Year 11 pupils	59	Alternative education provision for Key Stage 4 arrivals
Support for personal, social or emotional needs	54	Mentoring programme for new arrivals, art and music therapy, play therapy
Assessment of personal, social and emotional needs	47	Art and music therapy, play therapy
Study skills classes	30	After-school clubs, study support group, language classes, family learning
Top-up classes	24	Saturday top-up classes run by LAs for all pupils
Life skills	22	Life skills provision from further education providers (i.e. as part of college courses) and also through schools as part of personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons; independent living skills for Key Stage 4 new arrivals, particularly unaccompanied asylum seekers
Leisure activities, e.g. subsidised sports passes	22	Connexions project for young people learning EAL

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Table 2.18 continued ...

Type of support	Total (%)	Exemplars of related good practice
<b>Family support</b>		
Home-school liaison	75	Welcome booklets and DVDs, employment of home-school and family liaison officers, employment of bilingual community workers and linguistic and cultural mediators, parent/carer liaison sessions, advice workshops for parents
Translation/interpretation	70	Employment of bilingual support staff, translation of key documentation for families, access to an LA-funded community language service or register of language providers
Community liaison	48	Community involvement in conferences or in-service training, English language classes for parents, community drop-in sessions, work with community or supplementary schools This was often in partnership with other services or agencies (internal or external), such as the LA's refugee service or team or specific community projects or initiatives such as the Somali community association. In one LA, close links had been established between the LA and the local Somali association through the home-school liaison officer. This had resulted in training being delivered to a Somali women's group to inform families about the school system and the ways in which they might support their children's education.
Advocacy	31	LA and police intervention focusing on addressing racism in the local community; one-stop shops providing families with advice and support

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Table 2.18 continued ...

Type of support	Total (%)	Exemplars of related good practice
<b>Multi-agency input</b>		
Multi-agency panels	71	Multi-agency panel identifying children out of school, multi-agency team supporting pupils, multi-agency road show, inter-agency approach to support, input on LAC panels and asylum seeker and refugee panels One LA's asylum seeker and refugee panel was a strategic forum which included heads of service and representatives from statutory and voluntary agencies. The panel met bi-monthly to discuss issues relating to support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, e.g. accessing a school place.
Liaison with outside agencies	50	Liaison with refugee community organisations (RCOs), social services, health and housing

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Type of support	Total (%)	Exemplars of related good practice
<b>Policies/strategies</b>		
Admission	62	Admissions of new arrivals, rapid response policy, mid-phase admissions, mid-phase admission guidance
Induction policies and programmes specifically for asylum seekers and refugees	55	Induction programmes and toolkits, e.g. for Key Stage 3 and 4, induction centre or bases for new arrivals, welcome booklets, new arrivals parent workshops
Attendance policies	30	Collaborative working between services in the LA on attendance, e.g. asylum seeker and refugee teachers working with school attendance officers

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## 2.4.1 Other types of support provided

Respondents were also asked to list any other types of support provided by LA staff. Table 2.19 shows the five most frequently identified other types of support provided in each arena in rank order.

**Table 2.19** Other types of support provided by LA staff

Other types of support provided for...
Pupils (23) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holiday programmes</li> <li>• Alternative provision: education other than at school (EOTAS), e.g. tuition while waiting for a school place</li> <li>• Observation/induction</li> <li>• Homework clubs</li> <li>• International projects</li> </ul>
Multi-agency working (20) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaising with other LAs</li> <li>• Work with local churches</li> <li>• Provision of multi-agency training</li> <li>• Collaborative working with voluntary groups</li> </ul>
Policies and strategies (20) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aspects of admissions policy, including appeals procedures and mid-term admissions</li> <li>• Inclusion policies</li> <li>• Ethnic minority achievement policies</li> <li>• Policies or strategies regarding access to further education</li> </ul>
Schools (19) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching (including specific EAL teaching)</li> <li>• Home visits</li> <li>• Induction programmes</li> <li>• English language assessment</li> <li>• Mid-phase admission support</li> </ul>
Families (14) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-agency working</li> <li>• Availability of an adult and community language service, including family learning programmes and courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)</li> <li>• Parent meetings</li> <li>• Signposting to other services</li> <li>• Informing families of social events</li> </ul>

Numbers in brackets relate to number of respondents

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Many of the additional types of support highlighted by respondents related to the existing categories already provided, for example alternative provision at Key Stage 4. Additional support (for schools and pupils) provided by LA staff at the secondary level included in-school support at Key Stage 4, 14–19 ESOL support, higher education taster days, and support from

Connexions. For families, additional support also included the provision of general advice, for example regarding schools or status.

Finally, respondents were asked to list any additional support or provision made by the LA specifically for unaccompanied asylum seeker pupils. Responses to this open question were provided by a total of 30 LAs, from which a range of support was identified. The top three areas of support nominated were, in order of frequency:

- provision of additional agency input (e.g. social services, education) to support pupils;
- a designated or key worker for unaccompanied asylum seekers;
- multi-agency working or liaison to provide additional support for pupils.

Other areas of additional support highlighted by respondents included, in order of frequency, specific projects for unaccompanied asylum seeking children, study support, education other than at school (specifically for Key Stage 4), specialist EAL teaching, and individual education plans (which as children in public care they should have anyway).

## 2.5 Other support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils

This section focuses on other support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their families and schools, as identified by questionnaire respondents. It begins with an overview of the top ten other agencies or services with which respondents liaised or worked jointly to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families and/or communities. It then goes on to discuss the most common types of support provided by other agencies or services.

Respondents were asked to identify up to six other agencies or services they worked jointly or liaised with to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families and/or communities. In total, the names of 42 other agencies, services and organisations were provided in response to this question. A detailed list of these agencies, services and organisations is provided in appendix 2. Overall, there were 346 responses from 78 respondents. So, on average, respondents referred to at least four other agencies they were working with. Table 2.20 shows, in rank order, the top ten other agencies cited by respondents.

**Table 2.20** Other agency liaison and support

Type of other agency	Number of responses (N = 346)	Type of support provided
Refugee organisations	80	General advice and advocacy, information sharing, community support or integration, family services or support and specific advice, training, multi-agency support and liaison, education, e.g. language classes
Social services/social care	42	Social care, information sharing, family services or support, specific advice
Health (including mental health providers)	31	Healthcare support, training, information sharing, counselling, emotional, personal and social skills support, home-school liaison
Housing and accommodation providers	23	Housing and accommodation support; also information sharing, referrals, family support, specific and general advice and welfare
Asylum seekers team (under social care or housing)	19	Support related to housing and social care, family services or support and community support or integration, liaison with other agencies, accessing school places
Further education colleges and community education providers	17	Educational and training opportunities, e.g. language classes; also leisure activities and holiday clubs
Connexions/other agencies providing careers advice	17	Careers advice as well as more general advice and leisure activities and holiday clubs
Other voluntary organisations and community groups	12	Community support and integration, leisure activities and holiday clubs, family services or support and specific advice
Interpreter services	11	Language support plus some advice and advocacy
Education Welfare Service	10	Addressing school attendance issues, welfare, assistance in accessing school places, home-school liaison and behaviour

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Table 2.20 shows that refugee organisations were the most frequently identified other agency or service which respondents reported working or liaising with to provide support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families and/or communities. Table 2.20 shows that some respondents referred to more than one refugee organisation. Refugee organisations identified by respondents reflected national and local groups and included:



- refugee community organisations, e.g. Sudanese Association, Somali Association;
- the Refugee Council;
- the Refugee Support Forum;
- the Refugee Support Council;
- Refugee Action;
- Migrant Helpline;
- the Refugee Network;
- Asylum Aid;
- Immigration Advice.

Respondents identified 27 different forms of support provided by refugee organisations, with respondents most frequently referring to organisations in this category providing general advice and advocacy. Other frequent forms of support included information sharing, community support or integration, family services support, community language classes for children, basic skills classes for adults and specific advice.

After refugee organisations, the next four most commonly identified agencies or services were other LA services.

**Social services/social care providers**, particularly in relation to providing support for unaccompanied minors, but also working with families: Respondents identified 18 forms of support provided by social services or social care agencies. While half of the responses related specifically to social care, for example liaison regarding foster placements and residential homes and developing action plans for unaccompanied minors, other commonly identified forms of support included information sharing, family services or support, and specific advice.

**Health**, including mental health, dedicated health clinics and liaising with health visitors: Some respondents also highlighted working with specific asylum/refugee health teams. These teams focused on accessing mainstream health services for new arrivals and providing support and training for health staff who worked with asylum seekers and refugees. Teams also advised health professionals on the requirements and entitlements of the asylum system and, where appropriate, would attend appointments, for example to provide language support. Other than healthcare support, respondents detailed 13 other types of support provided by health agencies/services. These included training, information sharing, counselling, emotional, personal and social skills support, and to a lesser extent, home–school liaison.

**Housing**, for example housing support workers providing practical support for establishing life in a new society and work with the Homeless Person's Unit to develop shared protocols on temporary housing: The majority of respondents identified specific housing or accommodation support. Six other types of support were also identified as provided by housing organisations: information sharing, for example providing advance notice of arrivals and data on the citywide distribution of families, referrals, family support, welfare, and specific and general advice.

**Asylum seeker teams** (housing or social care based): These provided general support for families and liaison with other agencies. Fifteen types of support were identified as being provided by asylum seeker teams. Those most commonly cited were support related to housing and social care, family services or support, and community support or integration.

The above agencies and services all provided primary support for meeting and responding to families and young people's 'basic needs'.

Other agencies or services were frequently cited, included those providing educational support and careers advice. This included further education colleges, community education

providers and Connexions staff. Further education colleges were identified as providing a range of support including language and basic skills provision for Key Stage 4 pupils, as well as for post-16s and adults. Connexions staff also played an important role in providing advice and guidance for young people accessing college (pre- and post-16). Organisations supporting the community, including voluntary services and language support from interpreter services, were also frequently cited as other agencies that respondents worked or liaised with.

Less frequently identified (receiving fewer than ten responses) included youth services; early years providers; religious faith groups; police, youth offending service or NACRO; admissions; the educational psychology service (EPS); and the Race Equality Council (REC) or Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).

Of the other agencies or services that respondents worked or liaised with, 60 per cent were identified as statutory organisations and 35 per cent were identified as voluntary organisations. Five per cent of respondents did not respond. Thus, one in three nominations were from the voluntary sector, suggesting the vital role they play in providing support.

Respondents were also asked to provide brief details of the types of support provided by these other agencies. The support provided by the most frequently identified agencies has already been discussed. A total of 555 responses were provided by respondents and 45 different forms of support were identified. A detailed list of the support provided is detailed in appendix 3. The following table shows, in rank order, the top ten types of support provided by other agencies.

**Table 2.21** Other agency support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families

Type of support	Number of responses (N = 555)
General advice/support/advocacy	77
Information sharing (development of shared protocols/liaison)	41
Social work support/social care (unaccompanied asylum seeking children and families)	41
Family services or support including pre-school support	38
Health including mental health	32
Community support or integration	31
Specific advice/support/information	29
Housing needs (LA and private)/accommodation information	29
Training	26
Education (e.g. language classes)	23

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

General advice, support and advocacy was by far the most frequently identified form of support provided by other agencies or services that LA staff worked or liaised with. This category received nearly twice as many nominations as the next most frequently identified. General advice, support and advocacy was in the main provided by refugee organisations and other advisory groups, for example the Refugee Council, Refugee Action, local refugee community organisations, and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. These organisations often acted as a one-stop shop for a range of needs, including accommodation and education. They provided advice and information for families but also liaised with and supported LA staff

working in this area, for example providing network contacts. Other agencies or services were also identified as providing more specific advice and support for families and LA staff, for example liaising with LA staff regarding the provision of Refugee Week activities, providing families with legal advice on immigration issues and providing women’s support groups.

Respondents also noted that other agencies or services providing specialist support, for example for children in public care or housing, or organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees, also gave support by sharing their specialist knowledge with LA staff. Thus, information sharing was identified as the second most common form of support.

The support provided by social care, health and housing agencies, services and organisations has already been discussed. In addition, LA staff also worked with those agencies supporting families directly, for example early years providers – children’s centres providing pre-school education and parenting skills; and organisations focusing on community support or integration, such as drop-in centres providing support for families and singles support, such as support for young men). Other organisations identified, such as the Race Equality Council and educational psychology service, also provided training for LA staff. In some instances LA staff and agency staff providing joint training and worked collaboratively on training teachers to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Other organisations and agencies were identified as providing additional educational support for young people and their families via the provision of language classes (including ESOL), ICT, basic skills, religious classes, and life skills classes provided by adult education.

The most common forms of support provided by other agencies focused on supporting the personal, social, health and cultural needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families and/or communities. Less frequently (with five or fewer responses), other nominated types of support provided by other agencies or services included welfare, careers advice, language support, individual support, leisure or holiday clubs, multi-agency support, liaison and referrals, home–school liaison, school attendance, legal advice, study support, events and celebrations, emotional, personal and social skills, and mentoring.

Respondents were also asked to provide details of any other agencies or services that were major providers of support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families and/or communities in the LA area. The majority of responses related to those already discussed, but in addition respondents identified the charity Save the Children, law firms providing advice on legal issues and the immigration service and the library service (involved with project work and after-school provision).

## 2.6 Funding

This section focuses on the sources of funding identified by respondents which were used to fund staffing, operating costs and other activities to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils during the financial year 2005/06.

Respondents were asked to indicate which (if any) of the following three sources of core funding they accessed to provide educational support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils: the Vulnerable Children Grant (Standards Fund), the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), and/or core LA budgets.

Table 2.22 provides an overview of sources of funding identified.

**Table 2.22** Current sources of funding

Type of funding	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
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	(N)	(%)
Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG)	67	71
Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG)	66	70
Core LA budget	43	45

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

As Table 2.22 indicates, the VCG and EMAG were the most frequently used sources of funding accessed by LAs to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. However, it should be noted that VCG funding was used to support access to education for a wide range of vulnerable young people and that the majority of EMAG funding was devolved to schools. From April 2006, the VCG's incorporation into the Children's Services grant means that this funding supports an even wider range of vulnerable young people with no ring fencing of allocation. A total of 19 LAs indicated that they accessed only one source of funding, which was fairly evenly divided between those who were only used EMAG funding (9) and those who only used their VCG budget (10). No LA was using only their core LA budget but just under a half made a contribution to asylum seeker and refugee support from this source. Twenty-nine LAs indicated that they accessed two sources of funding: the majority accessed EMAG and VCG (19), while the remaining respondents were evenly divided between those who accessed LA and EMAG funding and those who accessed LA core funding and VCG. Over a third of respondents (33) accessed all three sources of funding.

Respondents were also asked to provide details of additional sources of funding used to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. A further 19 sources were offered which were generally project specific: funding had been applied for to fund a specific project working with asylum seekers and refugees. Those most frequently cited included:

- the Children's Fund (6);
- the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (5);
- other LA funds (5), for example Rights, Advice and Entitlements and discretionary grants, funding from social services and Connexions;
- local government and Home Office grants (4), for example the Challenge Fund, the European Refugee Fund and the Purposeful Activities Fund;
- the Family Learning Service/Fund (2).

Other sources of funding included national government initiatives such as Excellence in Cities and Aimhigher, and local sources of funding such as primary partnerships, learning nets and local network funds, for example to support an after-school club. Charities such as the National Children's Home and commercial companies such as Tesco and Ikea were also identified as sources of funding by individual respondents.

## 2.7 Supporting asylum seekers and refugees: issues and challenges

Respondents were also asked to comment on additional issues or challenges for the LA in providing support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Table 2.23 highlights the most frequent responses to this question. A total of 51 respondents answered the question. It is significant that more than half of respondents chose to reference costs or funding as an issue.

**Table 2.23** Issues and challenges

Type of funding	Number of responses (N)
Costs/funding issues	26

Unpredictability of numbers	11
Information	8
Identification	8
Access issues	6
Support issues	6
Mobility	6
Isolation	6

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## 2.7.1 Funding issues

The costs or funding issues identified by respondents could be broken down into the following areas:

- competition for funding with other vulnerable groups;
- how funding is allocated and changes in allocations of funding;
- reductions in and/or inadequacy of funding to support the numbers of asylum seekers and refugee pupils in the LA.

A number of respondents noted that VCG funding allocations for asylum seekers and refugees had to compete with other vulnerable groups supported by the grant. The VCG was a limited resource and other groups were sometimes seen to take priority over asylum seekers and refugees. Thus, a lack of earmarked funding for refugee children was identified as a challenge. It was noted that as the VCG was not ring fenced, the amount allocated to asylum seekers and refugees, irrespective of need, could fluctuate dependent on the needs of other groups. Previous research on the implementation of the VCG showed that on average, LAs allocated 10 per cent of their grant to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils but that this allocation ranged from 0.3 per cent to 28 per cent (Kendall *et al.*, 2004). In this survey, one of the ways LAs used the grant to support pupils was to provide bursaries to schools for additional EAL support for new arrivals.

Respondents also identified additional challenges relating to how funding to support asylum seekers and refugees was allocated. One particular issue highlighted was that EMAG funding was devolved to schools based on the annual PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census). However, this did not take into account provision for new arrivals coming into the LA during the course of the year, which meant that funding was not linked to the actual numbers of asylum seeker and refugees in the LA area. This resulted in LA staff having to identify and access additional funding from other sources for an unpredictable number of new arrivals. The insecurity of funding streams was also seen to have an adverse effect on staff recruitment. LAs' reliance on short-term funding meant that it was difficult to establish a robust infrastructure of support.

Challenges identified also related to reductions in and inadequacy of funding. One respondent noted that cuts in EMAG funding had reduced the LA's flexibility of response to meeting asylum seekers' needs. Others noted that LA funding was slowly being reduced as funding was increasingly devolved to schools, thus depleting the level of LA support that could be provided; and that at the same time, there were more calls on the funding held centrally to support a wide range of vulnerable young people. One respondent noted that funding was wholly inadequate to ensure the integration of asylum seekers and refugees and that the senior officer with responsibility for this client group constantly sought additional funding streams. These reductions in funding were placing some LA-based support teams under threat. For example, one respondent noted that EMAG funding had been reduced by £100 000, there had been no increase in the VCG, and as more money was devolved to schools, this threatened the existence of its LA-based support. Another LA had seen its EMAG reduced by 40 per cent while still trying to maintain existing levels of EAL and pastoral

support. In addition, schools in the LA were struggling to maintain their current staffing levels in this area. For others, levels of VCG or EMAG funding were insufficient to develop a LA team. Respondents noted that they found it increasingly difficult to maintain existing levels of funding, irrespective of inflation and greater numbers of pupils. The inadequacy of funding to support pupils, especially when numbers were increasing, resulted in a growing pressure on what were already seen as inadequate resources.

Funding for particular areas of support and development such as transport, college places and professional development were also identified as a challenge. For example, one respondent noted that they had no funding for transport, which presented difficulties in working with schools. In another LA, the lack of funding for staff training and attendance at conferences to network and exchange information and practice was seen to be a particular challenge. Respondents also noted that schools' access to interpreting and translating services was a particular cost issue.

While noting the benefits of employing school-based staff, there were concerns that the devolution of funding to schools and the removal of or reduction in peripatetic LA support staff may adversely affect those asylum seeker and refugee pupils requiring additional support who are relatively isolated in schools: that is, pupils in schools where there are very few asylum seeker and refugee pupils or Black and minority ethnic (BME) pupils.

## 2.7.2 Other challenges

Other comments related to the unpredictable numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the LA area, affecting LAs' support for pupils when funding was fixed for the year. This meant that LAs were unable to plan for the number of pupils they were likely to support. Other respondents noted that the numbers of other international new arrivals, particularly from EU countries, were now larger than the asylum seeker and refugee population, which meant that time and resources had to be shared between these groups. It was highlighted that many needy pupils, for example Czech Roma, were not classified as asylum seekers or refugees and therefore may not receive additional support, although Traveller education services were likely to be involved in supporting Roma pupils.

Another challenge noted by respondents was the lack of information they received about new arrivals from the National Asylum Support Service: they did not know who was going to arrive or when. Pupils' departure from the LA might also be as sudden as their arrival. Information was often incomplete and incorrect and in some LAs there was still felt to be a lack of coordination of information transfer between services. The challenge of devising and maintaining manageable and accurate data collection mechanisms to ensure appropriate support in schools was also noted.

Identifying asylum seeker and refugee pupils was also noted as a challenge for LAs because families and pupils did not want to describe themselves as asylum seekers because of the negative connotations associated with the term. Furthermore, in LAs with very small numbers of asylum seekers and refugees identification could be difficult and schools would not necessarily know or feel it appropriate to ask about someone's immigration status. A lack of rigorous mechanisms for identifying asylum seekers and refugees in the LA area was also seen to be an issue.

Access issues and support issues presented challenges for LA staff. Access was a particular ongoing issue at Key Stage 4. It was noted that some schools were still reluctant to admit new arrivals at Key Stage 4, or there was a lack of school places and there were funding issues regarding accessing alternative forms of provision such as college placements. Issues identified relating to support focused on a lack of social services support, a lack of established

support systems because the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees were so small, the LA having to provide additional funds so schools would take pupils and a lack of coordination of provision between providers.

The mobility of families and pupils presented additional challenges for LAs. Respondents noted that high levels of pupil mobility were not reflected in their funding allocations. Moves due to accommodation relocation, for example from hostel to housing and subsequent moves when, or if, families were granted refugee status, meant that pupils were also likely to move school. One respondent noted that they were liaising with the housing department to try and get them to take pupils' educational needs into account when allocating accommodation. Respondents from London boroughs noted that mobility was a major issue for a large number of schools: this reflected the temporary housing situation and was aggravated by other London boroughs housing families in the LA. Dispersal was felt to have resulted in additional mobility as families returned to LAs where they had previously been settled but without accommodation supported by the National Asylum Support Service. Children who left schools sometimes could not be traced as families disappeared and it was felt that further tracking and information sharing was required.

The isolation of pupils and families presented challenges for support staff as well as for the young people and families themselves. Small numbers of pupils widely dispersed across the LA meant that a child might be the only speaker of a particular language in their school. Small numbers of pupils meant that there was also a lack of support agencies and experience found in other LAs with larger communities. Respondents noted that in LAs with small numbers of asylum seekers and refugees it was difficult to coordinate support when a large number of people in different departments had limited involvement with pupils and families. Schools in these LAs were felt to be relatively inexperienced in meeting the needs of EAL learners and were often not fully aware of the issues involved. Conversely, one respondent felt that due to the very small numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (no more than three in any one school) the ethnic minority achievement service and supportive attitudes of schools meant that they could provide a considerable amount of support for pupils but that things would be different with larger numbers of pupils to support.

## 2.8 Examples of good practice

### 2.8.1 Areas of good practice identified by respondents

This section focuses on the examples of good practice provided by respondents. Respondents were asked to provide details of up to two examples of effective practice in their work with asylum seeker and refugee pupils. They were asked to outline the activity or area of work, the agencies involved and any outcomes or evidence of impact. They were also asked to provide any additional documentation in relation to the support provided. An overview of the good practice identified is provided in this chapter, while more detailed exemplars are provided in the good practice guide in appendix 5.

Exemplars of good practice were identified across the age range, from early years to positive post-16 progression, focusing on the attainment of pupils themselves, work with families or communities and developing the practice of educational practitioners in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

The most common types of good practice identified are detailed in table 2.24. It should be noted that the good practice identified sometimes fell into more than one category.

**Table 2.24** Areas of good practice identified by respondents

Good practice in ...	Number of responses
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Arrival, admission and induction	30
Advisory work, training and raising awareness	26
Language support	23
Development of resources	20
Family learning	14
Alternative education for Key Stage 4 new arrivals	9
Curriculum support/development	9
Home-school liaison	8

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

The areas of good practice most frequently identified reflected those areas that LA support staff were most likely to be working in: arrival, admission and induction, advisory work training and raising awareness and language support. A detailed list of the good practice identified by respondents is provided in appendix 4.

## 2.8.2 Agencies involved in good practice

Respondents were asked to detail the agencies involved in the good practice identified. The most common responses, highlighted five or more times, are detailed in table 2.25. The good practice identified usually had a range of agencies involved.

**Table 2.25** Agencies involved in good practice

Agencies involved	No. of responses
LA refugee and asylum team (including teams based in social services and housing)	65
Schools/pupil referral units (PRUs)	53
Social services/social care	20
Further education college and education other than at school (EOTAS) (including higher education)	19
Refugee organisations and community groups	16
Education	14
Arts-based/media organisations	13
Other LAs	12
Health	8
Connexions	8
Charities, including Save the Children and the British Red Cross	8
Housing	7
Sure Start	6
Admissions	5
Interpreting services	5
Other agencies	5

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

Details of the other agencies, organisations and individuals identified are included in appendix 4. These included:



- Asylum seeker and refugee families themselves or the carers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (4) and the fostering agencies supporting unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees (2);
- Other agencies (education-focused and non-education focused) working with pupils, families and the community: education-focused agencies included the educational psychology service (3), the achievement support service (3), the education welfare service (3), advice and inspection (2) and supplementary or community schools; other agencies or services involved in examples of good practice included the police (3), the youth service or youth organisations (3), and LA services focusing on social inclusion (3) and regeneration (2);
- Four examples identified good practice funded by the Children's Fund.

### **2.8.3 Outcomes identified**

Respondents were also asked to provide evidence of impact of the good practice identified. Table 2.26 provides an overview of the outcomes identified.

**Table 2.26** Outcomes of good practice

Outcomes identified	No. of responses
Better/quicker placing and induction of new arrivals/improved induction process	27
Language skills developed and improved pupil progress/attainment/achievement	25
Families feel supported/greater community involvement, e.g. in education	24
Improved integration (pupils and families)	23
Increased awareness among school/agency staff/community	19
Improved school practice/pupils' progress monitored and teachers better informed about needs	17
Improved confidence/motivation/self-esteem	17
Improved staying-on rates, transition and positive post-16 progression	15
Positive feedback from schools/positive evaluation (including DfES and Ofsted)	11
Not completed/evaluated yet	11
Processes and resources developed	9
Attendance improved	8
Education/the curriculum accessed	7
Young people involved in leisure activities	7
Other pupils better informed about asylum seekers and refugees	6
Psychiatric referrals reduced	6
Key Stage 4 pupils access education	5
Skills development	5

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

The most common outcomes identified by respondents focused on the successful placing, integration and induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The examples of good practice related to the fact that this process was improving and that it was taking place more quickly. Respondents referred to the quicker placing and induction of new arrivals, as well as improvements in the induction process. Linked to this, four respondents identified the implementation of processes which had resulted in the quicker identification of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA and of their needs.

There was also a significant focus on ensuring that families felt supported and that there was greater community involvement in education, as LAs realised that this was key to successful participation. Linked to this were the outcomes associated with improving the integration of pupils and families into education and the community.

One of the most important requirements for successful integration is the development of language skills, so again the good practice identified focused on developing pupils' language skills, which in turn led to improved pupil progress, attainment and achievement.

## Key findings

- A total of 95 questionnaires were received (representing 63 per cent of all LAs in England).
- Responses were received from the following types of LA: London boroughs (17), metropolitan authorities (27), unitary authorities (29), and counties (22).
- Questionnaires were most likely to be completed by staff from ethnic minority achievement services.
- The numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils supported in each LA ranged from 0 to 9732. The average was 619.
- In total, 37 LAs were able to provide actual figures on the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA, compared with 39 LAs who provided estimated figures. The vast majority of the data counts related to 2005 data. Four LAs commented that they did not count the numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA, reflecting issues about whether LAs should be counting asylum seekers and refugees or just responding to the needs of individual pupils.
- Nearly three-fifths of LAs that replied said they did not have access to data on the numbers of pre-school children in the LA, and a similar number of respondents did not have access to the numbers of 16–19-year-olds in the LA area (it was felt that this information was held with other agencies such as Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council).
- The majority of the LAs that provided information on when they began collecting data indicated that this had begun over the last five years.
- Most frequently LAs were informed about the arrival of pupils from the National Asylum Support Service. However, issues were raised about the quality of the information received, for example that the information is often out of date, families do not arrive, or families are placed in accommodation other than that identified.
- Key issues regarding identifying and monitoring numbers of pupils in the LA most commonly focused on lack of communication, lack of systems to identify pupils or specific groups of pupils at LA level and mobility of pupils' and families' making identification and monitoring difficult.
- There were six main types of LA support identified by respondents. In rank order, these were information and guidance materials on educational needs, EAL resources, training on educational needs, advisory support, assessment of educational needs, and home–school

liaison. The first four areas of support related to LA support for schools.

- Respondents indicated that they spent the most time or resources on advisory support, training on educational needs, and assessment of educational needs.
- When asked to identify examples of good practice in the support of asylum seekers and their families, respondents focused on, in rank order, practice relating to arrival, admission and induction; advisory work or training and raising awareness; language support; the development of resources; and family-focused support or community involvement.

## Local authorities' approach to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils

### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the approach to supporting the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in each of the six case study LAs. Case study LAs were chosen to:

- reflect a range of good practice identified in the questionnaires;
- reflect a range of population size and ethnicities;
- reflect a range of staffing support;
- include dispersal and non-dispersal areas;
- include different types of LA such as London boroughs and metropolitan and county authorities;
- include LAs with a long history of supporting asylum seekers as well as those whose experience was relatively recent.

The chapter begins by describing the ways in which LA support is organised, and the conceptual models of asylum seeker and refugee support identified by Arnot and Pinson (2005). It then goes on to describe how asylum seeker and refugee support in the six case study LAs was typologised for this study. Following this, profiles of each case study LA are presented, outlining their main features and overall approach to supporting asylum seekers and refugees. Each profile concludes by categorising the LA in relation to the models described by Arnot and Pinson, and using this study's typology of support. An overview of the approaches of each LA in relation to their position along the continuum devised for the present study is then discussed. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the types of LA, school and other agency staff supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LAs.

### 3.2 Models and approaches

Arnot and Pinson's (2005) study on educational provision for asylum seeker and refugee children focused on the values, policies and practices of LAs and schools. As part of their study, Arnot and Pinson collected information on LA support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils in England. They then categorised the organisation of LA support, and identified a number of conceptual models which they felt underpinned these approaches.

In Arnot and Pinson's study, the organisation of LA support services was classified in the following ways (in order of frequency):

- Support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils is managed by ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS) officers with a focus on raising achievement.
- Support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils is the responsibility of an asylum seeker and refugee pupil support officer or coordinator. This person is likely to reside in an EMAS, English as an additional language (EAL), inclusion or race equality team.
- Support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils is the responsibility of the race equality/diversity or multicultural team.
- Support is provided by a dedicated asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team (usually line managed by EMAS).
- Support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils is the responsibility of the EAL service or the new arrivals team.

Further to this, Arnot and Pinson also identified six conceptual models to explain the approaches employed by the LAs (although these were not exclusive). The conceptual models devised by Arnot and Pinson included the following, in order of frequency:

- *EAL model*: The needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils are perceived as ultimately language based and support is therefore targeted to promote language development.
- *Holistic model*: The needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils (learning, social and emotional) are perceived as multiple and complex, and therefore the approach of the LA is to support the social inclusion, well-being and all-round development of these pupils.
- *Minority ethnic model*: Asylum seeker and refugee pupils are ultimately regarded as minority ethnic groups and are thus recognised as being at risk of underachievement. Support therefore focuses on raising academic outcomes.
- *New arrivals model*: Asylum seeker and refugee pupils are defined as new arrivals and their associated needs as a consequence of this circumstance (i.e. language needs, previous educational experience, mid-term arrival). Support is therefore focused on schools' admission and induction of pupils.
- *Race equality model*: Race equality issues underpin the LA's approach to asylum seeker and refugee pupils and therefore support focuses on raising awareness across communities.
- *Vulnerable children model*: Asylum seeker and refugee children are regarded as an at-risk group, and therefore additional support is targeted to ensure fair and equal access to education.

The approaches adopted by each of the six case study LAs in the present study could be seen to relate to several of the conceptual models and organisational approaches described by Arnot and Pinson (2005). These are identified at the end of each LA profile in section 3.4.

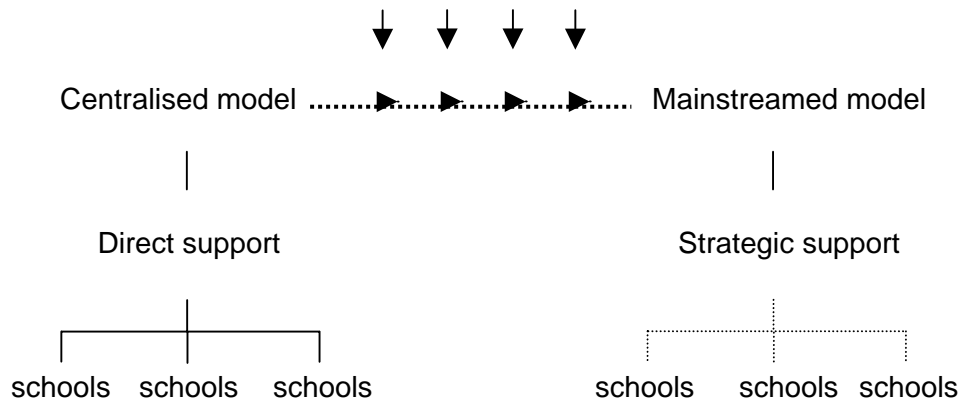
### 3.3 The typology of support

The present study was also able to draw a distinction between the six case study LAs in their overall strategic approach to supporting the needs of the client group. In this way, it was felt that the LAs could be distinguished by the extent to which they adopted a **centralised** or **mainstreamed** approach to supporting the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. The **centralised model** was defined by an approach in which the LA provided direct support to schools for asylum seeker and refugee pupils (for example, admission and EAL support from the central team). Across the six case study LAs, this approach was often adopted by those with more recent experience of supporting the needs of the client group, and with fewer asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In this way, the LAs were seen to adopt a more reactive approach to the organisation of their support (see case study 1).

Alternatively, the **mainstreamed model** focused on raising schools' awareness of and responsibility for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In this model, the LA was seen to take a more strategic overview in relation to the support of the client group (see case study 6).

However, the six LAs could not be categorised as operating a wholly centralised or mainstreamed model. Rather, it was felt that they could be placed along a continuum between the central and mainstream points (see figure 1). Factors that influenced the point at which a LA was placed included the LA's dispersal status, its experience of supporting the client group, the number of asylum seekers in the LA area, and the way in which LA support for asylum seekers and refugees was organised. In addition, the conceptual models adopted by each LA in relation to the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils were considered (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

**Figure 1** The continuum of support



## 3.4 Local authority profiles

The following section provides a brief description of each of the six case study LAs. Each profile describes:

- the history of asylum seekers and refugees residing in the LA area;
- the LA's overall strategic approach to supporting asylum seekers and refugees;
- the staffing structure;
- developments and changes in the LA's strategic approach.

At the end of each profile, the LA's approach is classified along the continuum of support devised for the present study. In addition, each LA is categorised according to the conceptual models outlined by Arnot and Pinson (2005), and their organisation of support.

### Case study 1

#### Background on asylum seekers and refugees

The arrival of asylum seekers and refugees began in 2000 due to the dispersal of families to the LA. The most common countries of origin include Africa (particularly the north-eastern and sub-Saharan countries), South America, several Eastern European countries, Iraq and Iran. Acceptance in the community was reported to be generally good, although some initial press negativity had led to detrimental stereotypes being developed in some parts of the LA area. One of the first issues to be addressed in the LA was therefore to raise awareness of asylum seeker and refugee families and overcome the stereotypes that had developed.

Although the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was reported to have decreased in 2005, it was estimated that there were approximately 100 school-age pupils in the LA, whose total school population was 50 000. Prior to the arrival of the asylum seeker and refugee population into the LA area, the distribution of Black and minority ethnic pupils was concentrated in four primary schools and one secondary school. In these schools, pupils were

mainly from the Bangladeshi community. In addition, a small number of relatively isolated Black and minority ethnic pupils attended other schools around the city. However, almost half of the schools in the LA had no experience of supporting minority ethnic pupils prior to the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees. When families were placed in emergency accommodation in these areas, schools did not feel equipped to meet pupils' needs.

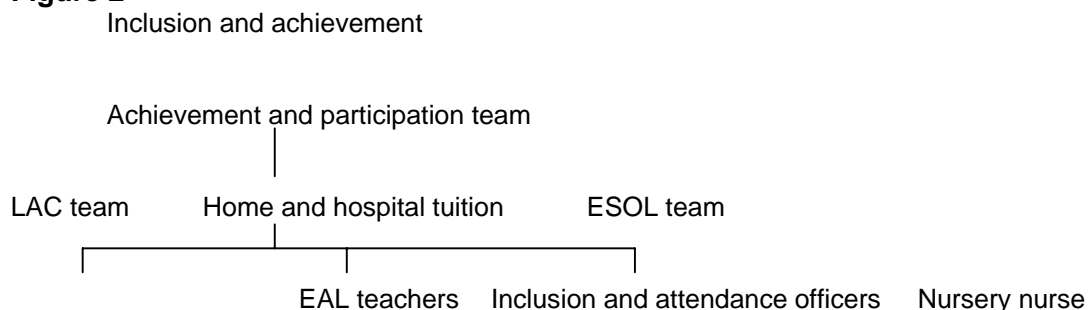
## Overall strategic approach

The initial priority of the team was to focus on pupils' immediate issues in relation to their access to school and education, such as transport, uniform and induction. The aim of this was to ensure that pupils and their families were well equipped and prepared for their initial school placement. In addition, the team aimed to develop its support for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) in schools with the intention of providing schools with strategies and resources to mainstream language provision for asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the future.

## Staffing

The support for asylum seeker and refugee families fell within the achievement and participation team of the LA's inclusion and achievement service. Three strands operated within the service, which included the looked-after children's team, the home and hospital tuition service and the ESOL team, in which asylum seeker and refugee pupils were supported by a small number of staff with a specific remit for supporting them (as well as other ESOL pupils). Staff working with asylum seeker and refugee families included an inclusion and attendance officer for every 30 pupils arriving into the LA (at the time of writing, this was provided by two full-time educational welfare officers) and a nursery nurse with specific responsibility for asylum seeker and refugee arrivals.

**Figure 2**



## Developments and changes over the past five years

The main development of the service has been in relation to the role and remit of the inclusion and attendance officers. Initially, support from these officers for new arrivals focused solely on facilitating pupils' admission and induction into schools. However, due to the reduction of asylum seeker and refugee pupil numbers, support staff were able to expand their role, taking on a more holistic approach to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families in the local community (for example, engaging in small projects such as film making and dance evenings).

## Categorisation of approach

The approach adopted by the LA was categorised by this research as a **centralised model** given the nature of support available and the structure of the team. Due to the relatively new arrival and low numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, the LA had opted to focus on key areas of support for new arrivals, namely induction and admission and EAL support. For the former, support was provided by existing staff whose role had been extended specifically



to support access to school by asylum seeker and refugee pupils. EAL support was provided by the existing EAL team.

In relation to the approaches identified by Arnot and Pinson (2005), the organisation of the support services in the LA reflected that of the **asylum seeker and refugee pupils support officer approach** adopted by approximately a third of the sample in that study, which was the second most common approach identified. This approach was reflected in the role of the inclusion and achievement officer. The conceptual model underlying this method, as defined by Arnot and Pinson, appears to be the **new arrivals model**, due to the LA's specific focus on the admission and induction of pupils alongside EAL support.

## Case study 2

### Background on asylum seekers and refugees

The LA has a long history of Black and minority ethnic communities residing in the LA area. There are well established communities from Africa (including Somalia) and Asia (including Hong Kong and Bangladesh). The LA also has one of the oldest Chinese communities in Western Europe. Roma and Gypsy Travellers have also been historically part of the community. Of the more recent asylum seeker and refugee arrivals, the Kosovan community was the first to arrive approximately six years ago. Since then, the LA has supported communities from all over the world. The largest numbers of asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the LA area in 2005 were from Somalia

In 2005, there were 1040 asylum seeker pupils of statutory school age, including those unaccompanied asylum seekers known to the LA. Until recently, the majority of the asylum seeker and refugee population resided in the east of the LA area where accommodation was available. Although there is still a concentration of asylum seekers and refugees in and around this area, there is now a wider distribution in the outskirts of the city centre. This has had implications for staff supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils as they now have a more peripatetic role in order to respond to the needs of pupils and families over a wider geographical area.

### Overall strategic approach

The LA's overarching strategic approach is to work with schools, communities and other agencies to raise the standards of achievement for minority group learners. One way in which this is achieved is through the newcomer peripatetic team, which focuses on the integration and educational attainment of new arrivals and support for their families. In addition to this, there are professionals with asylum expertise in each of the services (for example health, social services and education). In the newcomer peripatetic team a nominated officer links with all of the agencies supporting asylum seekers and refugees. The LA's Safeguarding Children Board also ensures inter-agency contact between professional groups.

### Staffing

The LA's ethnic minority and Traveller achievement service (EMTAS) worked with schools, communities and other agencies to raise the standards of achievement for minority group learners. The Vulnerable Children Grant (VCG) and the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) funded the service. Within the service, there were the following teams or projects:

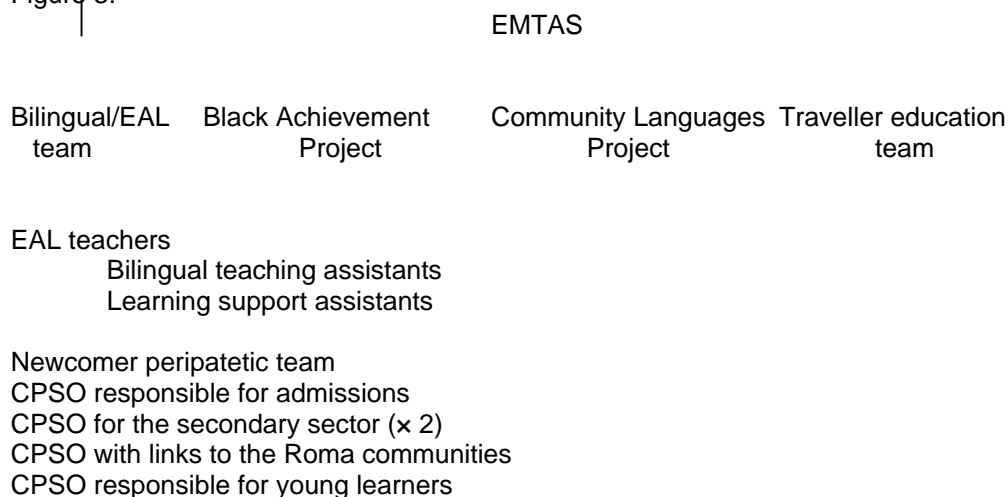
- the newcomer peripatetic team
- the bilingual/EAL team
- the Traveller education team
- the Black Achievement Project
- the Community Languages Project

Asylum seekers fell under the remit of EMTAS, particularly the newcomer peripatetic team, which had a particular focus on supporting newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The newcomer peripatetic team provided schools with a range of services relating to asylum seeker and refugee pupils, isolated linguistic learners and new arrivals. The team offered a range of expertise including both curriculum and pastoral support. The team included an assistant manager with responsibility for coordinating the team and five curriculum and pastoral support officers (CPSOs). The peripatetic officers provided curriculum support in schools and also had a pastoral role to link with outside agencies and focus on inclusion. The officers also provided out-of-school and holiday initiatives to support all children.

### CPSO staff responsibilities included:

- admissions;
- young learners who are not in school but access college places (Key Stage 4);
- secondary school support for pupils and teachers;
- support for Roma pupils and families.

Figure 3:



Although the bilingual/EAL team does not have a direct remit for asylum seeker pupils, it does provide support for those with EAL needs. The team consists of teachers and bilingual teaching assistants with specialist skills in supporting bilingual pupils to access the curriculum. EAL staff work predominantly in schools that qualify for the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), enabling them to buy back their services. Other schools also enter into service level agreements with EMTAS to access this provision.

### Developments and changes over the past five years

Initially, due to the fairly small numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA, the LA's approach focused on assisting individual pupils in class and supporting particular schools in and around the main geographical concentrations. Due to the rise in the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, there was felt to be a need to recruit more staff with a peripatetic role. Until 2005, the education service had its own asylum team; however, due to restructuring, the asylum team has now joined with the EAL team. Other changes to the LA's approach included:

Establishing clearer staff roles and remits: when the numbers of pupils were smaller, staff such as curriculum and pastoral support officers had a wide ranging pastoral role, for example supporting families to complete housing application forms. Due to the increase in the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their approach changed and instead they had to direct

those in need of support (outside of their remit) on to appropriate support agencies and organisations, i.e. developing more of a signposting role.

Awareness raising: initial difficulties faced by the team related to schools' inexperience of admitting asylum seeker pupils and raising schools' awareness about the issues relating to asylum seekers. Interviewees felt that schools were now more aware of EMTAS and who they should contact for support.

Data collection and tracking: initially, tracking of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was paper based. There is now an electronic database for recording and tracking pupils. This means that the LA is able to track pupils' progress.

### **Categorisation of approach**

Due to the increasing number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA, the work of the team had developed in recent years from a more reactive to a proactive approach to supporting the needs of the client group, although the central team was still involved in providing direct support, such as language and pastoral support. On the continuum devised for the present study, the LA therefore lies between the mid-point and centralised model.

Of the five forms of LA support services for asylum seeker and refugee pupils categorised by Arnot and Pinson the approach adopted by the case study LA related most closely to the asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement, which was a team with several officers for supporting pupils (often line managed by EMAS). This was one of the least common approaches evident across the 58 LAs included in the 2005 study, identified in only seven per cent of cases. The conceptual model underpinning the organisation of the support would appear to fit within the new arrivals model as the team's main focus was on support for newcomer pupils.

## **Case study 3**

### **Background on asylum seekers and refugees**

The recent history of asylum seeker and refugee families residing in the LA area began in 2000 when the LA became a dispersal area following the introduction of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999). In addition, a number of refugee families voluntarily chose to move to the area once they had been granted refugee status. The total number of asylum seekers and refugees in the LA area was estimated to be between 4000 and 6000, representing around three per cent of the total population of approximately 200 000. The LA is no longer a dispersal area so the number of asylum seeker families in the area has declined in recent years, though the arrival of unaccompanied minors, mainly from Afghanistan, is a significant feature at present. The main countries of origin of the new refugee communities include Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and other parts of Africa (particularly the Congo, with Somalis predominating in number).

Acceptance in the LA area is mixed, and some tension was reported where refugee communities had moved to predominantly White areas. In addition, in 2002, some community tensions were experienced between the main refugee groups (particularly Afghan) and existing Black and minority ethnic communities in the LA area (mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi).

The asylum seeker and refugee community is typically situated within the inner city, alongside the main minority ethnic population. Pupils are therefore concentrated in specific schools in these areas: three main primary schools and two main secondary schools. The proximity of

these schools to the asylum seeker and refugee communities, and the supportive networks that developed in these schools as a result of their experience of admitting asylum seeker and refugee pupils, were highlighted as beneficial outcomes of the population concentration. However, it was reported that families were now also beginning to move into predominantly White areas of the LA area. New schools with less experience of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils, including some that previously had been reluctant to admit such pupils (particularly those whose prior schooling has been severely disrupted or was non-existent), were now asking for support from the LA. The schools visited during the course of this study were extremely diverse with a large Black and minority ethnic population and high levels of children with EAL needs. It was estimated that the LA supported approximately 300 asylum seeker and refugee pupils, representing one per cent of the total school population of 24 044.

## **Overall strategic approach**

The overall strategic approach of the LA is to support the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils within mainstream provision, and the approach to supporting pupils falls under the LA's inclusion and race equality policies.

## **Staffing**

The ethnic minority achievement support service (EMASS) was part of the learning services and inclusion divisions within the Education and Leisure directorate. EMASS consists of a manager, a senior ethnic minority achievement (EMA) consultant, a refugee consultant (with additional experience in mental health and trauma) and leads the team of two full-time and two part-time linguistic and cultural mediators from refugee backgrounds. EMASS also employs a large team of bilingual assistants. In addition, the service is coordinated by a support officer assisted by a part-time administrator.

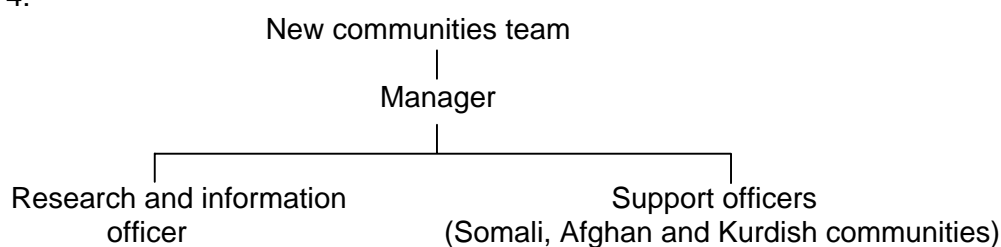
EMASS worked in partnership with schools, the LA, communities and other agencies (internal and external) in order to raise achievement and enhance life chances, ensuring that learning met the specific needs of minority ethnic and EAL learners, including asylum seekers and refugees. The refugee team of consultant and mediators works within and in conjunction with the five schools previously mentioned, supporting pupils, facilitating homework clubs and cross-phase transfers, and liaising with parents, the new refugee communities, and outside agencies. The service also recognised that asylum seeker and refugee families may need emotional and practical help and support in issues such as asylum, housing, health and social care and fostering care. Team members are skilled in facilitating empowerment by offering both emotional and practical support including liaising with the admissions team in accessing school places, and in dealing positively regarding other immediate concerns such as those listed above.

Within Children's Services and Learning, the education welfare service is the umbrella for the home-school links project, comprising a home-school links teacher and a home-school links community worker, who liaise with ethnic minority pupils, schools and families.

In addition, in 2002 a new communities team was formed in the LA in response to increased tension between existing resident communities, many from Black and minority ethnic minorities, and newly arrived refugee communities. The team included a manager, an information and research officer, a full-time support worker (working mainly with the Somali community), two part-time support workers (one working mainly with the Afghan community and one working mainly with the Kurdish community). The team worked in partnership with statutory and charitable agencies whose work involved employment, job creation and training, and wherever possible sought to involve refugee representatives in this process. The team initiated and developed a wide range of activities and initiatives to improve community relations locally, including formal and informal meetings between representatives of different communities, recreational trips and social events, and bringing together different ethnic and

religious groups. In addition, the team accesses mainstream services such as employment, housing, and health services on behalf of people from refugee communities. In this way, the team aimed to raise awareness about the range of services available to asylum seeker and refugee families. Alongside this, the team also offered feedback to service providers about any issues relating to cultural sensitivity and the needs of asylum seeker and refugee families in order to raise awareness and understanding of the new communities. Through this, the team aimed to develop a process of mediation and conflict management and build dialogue and trust across communities with the ultimate aim of developing formal refugee associations to express the needs of their communities.

Figure 4:



### Developments and changes over the past five years

Prior to the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees into the LA area, support for minority ethnic groups was seen as an addition to mainstream provision. However, a shift in the mindset was reported following a move towards mainstreaming support for minority ethnic groups. The needs of and support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils as well as those from other ethnic minority groups were now embedded in the mainstream provision of the LA and schools, as part of the support for all pupils.

### Categorisation of approach

Due to the organisation of support in the LA, which focused partly on in-school support and partly on project work, family liaison and increasing schools' responsibility for supporting the needs of the client group, the LA was placed on the mid-point along the continuum, between the centralised and mainstreamed models devised for the present study.

In addition, due to the structure of the LA's ethnic minority achievement support service (EMASS), which included a range of staff with various roles and remits for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils (such as home-school liaison, language support, and awareness raising), the organisation of support in the LA related to the asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement described by Arnot and Pinson (2005). The conceptual model underpinning this approach would appear to fit within Arnot and Pinson's holistic model in which support is organised in order to address the multiple and complex needs (learning, social and emotional) of the client group. In this way, the prime aim of the support system is to contribute to the educational, social and personal development of these pupils.

## Case study 4

### Background on asylum seekers and refugees

Following the introduction of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999), asylum seeker and refugee families began to be dispersed to this LA as part of the voluntary dispersal of families from the London boroughs. The dispersal process began soon after the introduction of the Act, and was coordinated by the Local Government Association. Families began to arrive in the LA area in early 2000. Over the last five years, the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the area was reported to have increased such that the asylum seeker and refugee population is now estimated at 5500, representing 2.3 per cent of the total population. Approximately 42 different Black and minority ethnic groups were estimated to live in the LA area and the main countries of origin identified were the Congo, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Ivory Coast, Somalia and Zimbabwe.

The reception of asylum seeker and refugee families was felt to be generally good, particularly in certain geographical areas of the LA area where families were fully integrated into the community and had well developed support networks. However, in other areas, community awareness and acceptance of asylum seeker and refugee families was reported to be low. The asylum seeker and refugee population was concentrated in two main areas of the LA where an asylum seeker and refugee community was well established.

It was estimated that there were approximately 1000 asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA, representing 2.7 per cent of the total school population, although it was acknowledged that numbers had declined in recent years. Approximately 12 schools in the LA regularly received significant numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, each receiving similar numbers. The schools visited during the research project were diverse, with a large Black and minority ethnic population, and high levels of children with EAL needs.

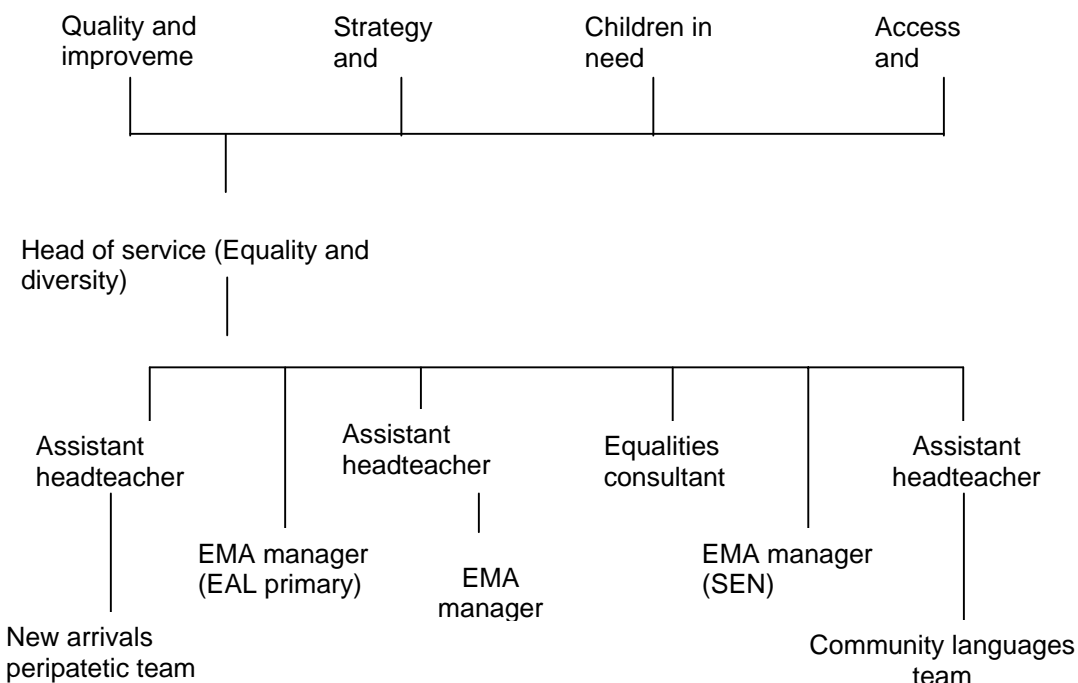
### Overall strategic approach

Supporting schools with training, resources and (limited) pupil intervention was identified as the key aim underpinning the LA's strategic approach. In addition, the LA highlighted the importance of informing asylum seeker and refugee communities (parents and pupils) about the services and support available.

### Staffing

The LA's central team is located within the equality and diversity education service (EDES) which is based in the Quality and Improvement Directorate of the Children and Young People's Service. EDES staff comprises a head of service (Equality and diversity), two assistant headteachers (EMA), one assistant headteacher (community languages), one equalities consultant, three EMA managers and a new arrivals peripatetic support team consisting of 5.6 full-time equivalent new arrivals peripatetic teachers.

Figure 5:



## Developments and changes over the past five years

The EMAG allocation to the LA was frozen between 1999 and 2004, and was slightly reduced in the past two years, resulting in a considerable reduction in real terms. Despite this, the number of peripatetic staff remained almost the same as the LA was able to contribute funding to support these posts from its mainstream budget. At the same time, the LA has experienced an increase in the numbers of new arrivals to its area, due to dispersal arrangements. Consequently, the LA has been unable to provide individual support to pupils to the extent that it had previously. However, it is important to note that the emphasis on supporting schools in developing expertise in meeting the needs of new arrivals (through training and resources) was only partly influenced by the LA context (the reduced central funding and increased numbers of asylum seekers), and was far greater influenced by the LA's strategic direction, which considered this approach to be the most effective use of the resource. In addition, it was reported that schools were now less reluctant to accept asylum seeker and refugee pupils as they had become more aware of pupils' positive contribution to the school community, and more confident in their ability to support the needs of these young people.

## Categorisation of approach

The overall approach of the LA was to support schools with training, resources and (limited) pupil intervention, and to inform the asylum seeker and refugee communities of the services available to them. However, the LA was still involved in providing some direct support to schools. The approach of the LA was therefore classified as between the **mid-point** and **mainstreamed model** on the continuum devised for the present study.

The approach offered by the LA was most closely related to the **asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement** identified by Arnot and Pinson. The conceptual model underpinning the organisation of this support appears to correspond most closely with the

**vulnerable children model** outlined by Arnot and Pinson, which focuses on ensuring equal access to education and other services for at-risk groups.



## Case study 5

### Background on asylum seekers and refugees

In the 1990s the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA increased. One reason for this was that a large number of Bosnians were evacuated to the LA via a medical programme. In recent years, the LA received more unaccompanied minors. A suggested reason for this was that a lorry park in the LA area was regularly used as the first stop-off point for lorry drivers arriving from France.

In 2005, it was estimated that there were approximately 211 asylum seekers and refugee pupils aged 5 to 16 known to the LA. Overall, less than one per cent of the pupil population in the LA are asylum seekers and refugees. The LA does not have a specific geographical concentration of asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

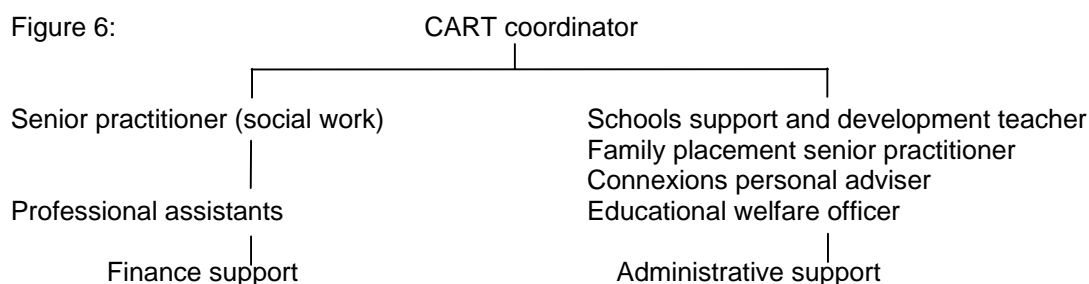
### Overall strategic approach

The children's asylum-seeker and refugee team (CART) is a multidisciplinary team aiming to provide a cohesive and integrated approach to supporting unaccompanied asylum seekers. The team provides support for unaccompanied minors in the following areas: accommodation, fostering services, finance, health services, social work, education, interpreting and translation services and immigration. The overall strategic approach in the LA is to provide holistic support for asylum seekers and refugees by grouping staff together to serve the whole LA, rather than splitting staff to cover four sectors of the LA as had previously been the case; and by bringing together people from all different agencies.

### Staffing

The team offers a range of expertise and includes a coordinator who has responsibility for managing the team and senior practitioner from social services who manages the social work aspect of the team and line manages the professional assistants (PAs) responsible for direct casework. The schools support and development teacher assists schools and liaises with other professionals to support unaccompanied minors in schools to raise their achievement and attainment. The team also includes an educational welfare officer who is responsible for identifying young people arriving in the LA area, ensures that they have access to appropriate education and supports pupils' attendance at school. The educational welfare officers also liaise with schools, parents/carers and other support agencies. The family placement senior practitioner in the team is responsible for recruiting suitable foster carers for unaccompanied minors, assesses their suitability and provides training and ongoing support. The Connexions personal adviser identifies the needs of all unaccompanied minors and helps them to take part in education, training, work and self-development, providing information, advice, guidance and personal development opportunities to unaccompanied minors. Professional assistants assess the social and emotional needs of unaccompanied asylum seekers and coordinate access to the range of services available. The finance support officer makes up payments for clients for their accommodation costs and pays for all other associated costs such as utilities, and also prepares claims for funding from the Home Office. The team also has access to administrative support.

Figure 6:



## **Developments/changes over the past five years**

Previously the LA was split into four quadrants. When unaccompanied asylum seekers were identified they were supported by the social services team in one of the quadrants. If the young people were 16 or 17, they were referred to the asylum seekers team, which supported asylum seeking and refugee families and single adults. The asylum seekers team, previously run through adult services, was not deemed an effective approach to supporting unaccompanied minors. It was felt that the adult team did not have the expertise or the number of workers to focus directly on the needs of young people, who required a different level of support to adults. The decision was made to establish the CART team and build on existing expertise within the multi-ethnic curriculum support service. Further to this, because of the 'Hillingdon Judgement' and the requirement for LAs to take responsibility for young people until they are 21 or 24 if they are in full-time education, the team supports young people in school and post-16.

## **Categorisation of approach**

This LA operated a multidisciplinary (for example social services, Connexions) approach to supporting unaccompanied minors. In this study, the LA could be categorised as operating between the **mid-point** and **mainstreamed** approach, as the centralised team focused on supporting unaccompanied minors in the following areas: accommodation, fostering services, finance, health services, social work, education, interpreting and translation services and immigration.

In relation to the different types of LA support services for asylum seeker and refugee pupils suggested by Arnot and Pinson, the approach adopted in this LA related most closely to the **asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement**, which described a team with several officers for supporting pupils. This model was one of the least common approaches identified by Arnot and Pinson. The conceptual model underpinning the organisation of the support would appear to fit within their **holistic model** as, through their multi-agency approach, the team sought to address the wider needs of pupils in order to promote their educational, social, personal and emotional development.

## Case study 6

### Background on asylum seekers and refugees

It was reported that there were approximately 3548 known asylum seekers, adults and children, in the LA area. In addition there were families from other LAs, a large number of individuals with refugee status and/or those with extended leave to remain residing in the area. The precise figure of the latter groups was unknown.

The LA area has an east–west divide, with many asylum seeker pupils and their families residing in temporary accommodation in the east of the area. Results at Key Stage 4 for all pupils were ten per cent below the national average in the east of the LA, while they were ten per cent above the national average in the west. The majority of the work carried out by the school improvement officers for refugee education was focused in the east of the area, which housed most of the asylum seeker and refugee population. It was noted that schools in the east were experienced in supporting asylum seeker and refugee families. Consequently, it was felt that teachers were more aware of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and schools in this part of the LA were generally better able to meet the needs of new arrivals. In contrast, in the west of the area, schools were reported to be less experienced in supporting the client group and so did not always have the necessary skills available, and were not necessarily able to offer a whole-school approach to supporting refugee and asylum seeker pupils.

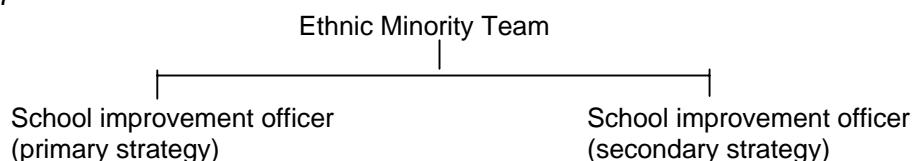
### Overall strategic approach

The strategic aim of the LA was to secure the educational progression of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In this way, as outlined in their education development plan (EDP) 2006–09, the LA aimed to focus on reducing the gap in achievement between certain minority ethnic groups. The EDP also highlighted the impact of pupil mobility on attainment, and aimed to target its support on new arrivals in order to address these issues.

### Staffing

Support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils came under the remit of two school improvement officers who were part of the Ethnic Minority team. Ninety per cent of the LA's EMAG funding was devolved to schools, which resulted in a significant reduction in the employment of LA staff to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Posts such as primary refugee education teachers were now part of school staffing. Since the introduction of the Children's Service one of the school improvement officer posts focused on the LA's primary strategy, and the other on its secondary strategy.

Figure 7



### Developments and changes over the past five years

Initially, the two school improvement officers for refugee education worked as part of the ethnic minority team. As a consequence of the Excellence in Cities initiative, the officers then began developing their work with a core group of schools with the aim of developing strategies to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils. These support strategies were then rolled out across schools in the LA with the aim of raising the attainment of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. However, as schools' awareness of the strategies increased, and as staff became more experienced in supporting mobile and EAL pupils, progression and reducing the gaps in achievement between certain minority ethnic groups became the focus of the LA's

approach.

Support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was always an intrinsic part of the LA's EDP; however, recently it has become less prominent. This was because the LA felt that schools had the confidence to cope effectively with new arrivals and that examination results showed that asylum seeker and refugee pupils were achieving well in the LA.

### Categorisation of approach

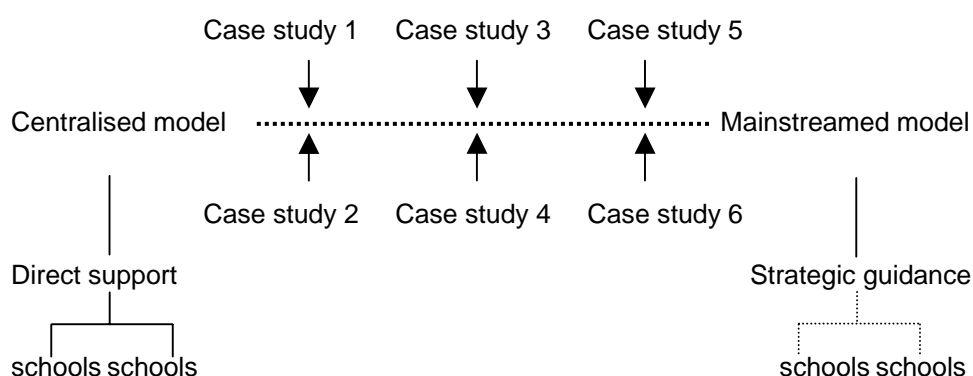
In this LA, the vast majority of EMAG funding (90 per cent) was devolved to schools and as a consequence, the LA had changed its overall approach from a team of primary refugee education teachers providing in-school support to a more strategic or advisory approach via the deployment of two school improvement officers with responsibility for refugee education. On the continuum devised for the present study the approach of this LA was therefore centred on the **mainstreamed model**.

The LA's approach corresponded most closely to the most common of Arnot and Pinson's models of support services, identified by 37 per cent of the LAs. In this model, responsibility for asylum seeker and refugee pupils resided with EMAS officers, usually line managed through school improvement and therefore often focused on the 'raising achievement' agenda. The conceptual model underpinning the organisation of the support would appear to fit within Arnot and Pinson's **minority ethnic model** whereby asylum seekers and refugee pupils are identified as minority ethnic groups at risk of underachieving.

## 3.5 The support continuum

As highlighted in the profiles in section 3.4, each case study LA was identified in relation to its position along the continuum of support devised for the present study. An overview of this continuum is outlined in figure 8.

**Figure 8** LA positions along a continuum of support



It is important to note that the case study LAs have been placed according to their best fit along the continuum. In this way, case study 1 has been categorised as the LA that operated the most centralised model in relation to the direct support provided to schools and families. Case studies 2, 3 and 4 all centred around the mid-point of the continuum, although were placed in relation to the extent to which their approach was more centralised or mainstreamed. These positions reflect the LAs' commitment to developing a mainstreamed approach, while still providing some direct and/or casework. Case study 6 was categorised as the LA with the most mainstreamed approach due to the strategic and advisory role adopted by the LA. This was reflected in the organisation of staff within the LA: two school

improvement officers and a focus on raising achievement. Finally, case study 5 was then felt to offer the next most mainstreamed approach in relation to the organisation of its multi-agency team providing overarching and strategic support for asylum seekers and refugees. As described above, the position of each LA was mainly determined by the LA's approach to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and the structure of the team or support offered. However, it is acknowledged that these positions are changeable, and were likely to vary over time depending on needs in and experience of each LA. Moreover, the continuum does not assume that either the centralised or mainstreamed model is preferable: positions simply reflect what was felt to be the approach of each LA at the time of each visit. In this way, positions should be contextualised in relation to the experience of each LA, and the growth of its relationship with the refugee and asylum seeker population.

Table 3.1 outlines the organisation of support, and the conceptual models underpinning each approach according to the categories devised by Arnot and Pinson (2005), as well as the position of each LA on the continuum of support devised for the present study.

**Table 3.1** Overview of case study profiles

Case study	Models		
	Organisation of support*	Conceptual model*	Continuum of support
1	Asylum seeker and refugee pupils support officer approach	New arrivals model	Centralised
2	Asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement	New arrivals model	Mid-point
3	Asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement	Holistic model	Mid-point
4	Asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement	Vulnerable children model	Mid-point
5	Asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team arrangement	Holistic model	Mainstreamed (multi-agency)
6	Responsibility resides with EMAS officers, often focused on the raising achievement agenda	Minority ethnic model	Mainstreamed

\*Arnot and Pinson (2005)

Despite being among the least common arrangements across the 58 LAs surveyed by Arnot and Pinson (2005), it would appear that the **asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team** arrangement was the most common approach identified in the present study, adopted by four of the six case study LAs. However, there were several variations in the organisation of the four teams, summarised as follows:

**Case study 2:** a team of peripatetic curriculum and pastoral support officers each with a specific role, for example admissions, pupils out of school, in-school support and community group liaison;

**Case study 3:** a mainly operational level team which focused on home–school liaison, multi-agency working and the provision of EAL support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils with some strategic direction via the consultant role;

**Case study 4:** combining a core of strategic staff and an operational team of peripatetic EAL teachers;

**Case study 5:** a multi-agency team (including Connexions, the education welfare service, advisory support and social services) which provided holistic support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

Associations could also be drawn between the organisation of support and conceptual model adopted by each LA, and whether they were classified as mainly centralised or mainstreamed. Case study 6, for example, was identified as a mainstreamed model, categorised by the LA's experience in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and its well-developed service, which had evolved to focus on a more strategic and advisory approach. Through training, resources and staff development, schools had become competent and experienced in supporting the needs of the client group. This enabled both schools and the LA to focus on raising the achievement of asylum seekers and refugees as minority ethnic groups, rather than focusing on developing strategies to support their needs as asylum seeker and refugee pupils (which were already well established).

Conversely, case study 1 was categorised as a centralised model. Here, the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee families presented new challenges to the LA, whose experience of supporting asylum seekers and refugees was relatively recent. This required the LA to react quickly in order to respond to the needs of the client group. Such circumstances would appear to be reflected by the LA identifying asylum seekers and refugees first and foremost as new arrivals and adapting the role of existing members of the EAL team in order to provide specific support to address their needs.

## 3.6 Staffing

As outlined in the LA profiles, a range of LA staff, school staff and other agency staff with a full or partial remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils were employed within the six case study LAs. This section provides further details on the roles of the support staff. Details of the types and impacts of the support provided by these staff is detailed in chapter 4.

### 3.6.1 Local authority staff with a remit to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families

Among the case study LAs there was a range of LA staff with a remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The numbers of staff ranged from two, in a London borough supporting a large number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and where the majority of funding was devolved to schools, to a team of 13 staff working as part of a multi-agency team to support unaccompanied asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Staff roles and remits could be categorised into the following six broad themes:

- managerial or strategic staff, for example coordinator, manager, head of service, line manager, consultant;
- schools support staff, for example school improvement officer, schools support and development teacher, EAL teacher, nursery nurse;
- attendance and inclusion staff, for example educational welfare officer, inclusion and attendance officer;
- pastoral staff, for example new arrival peripatetic teacher, curriculum and pastoral support officer, Connexions personal adviser;
- social work or other agency staff, for example senior practitioner (social work), professional assistant, family placement senior practitioner;
- administrative personnel, for example finance officer, administration staff.

Four of the LAs operated a dedicated asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team and of these, all included **managerial or strategic level** staff.

The managerial roles fell into two main areas: those focusing mainly on the coordination of personnel, and those with a focus on strategy and policy development. For example, in case study 2, the team manager was responsible for the deployment of EAL teachers and curriculum and pastoral support officers to schools, based on the numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and the level of need identified. The team manager also had responsibility to link with other agencies. Similarly in case study 5, which operated a multi-agency team, the manager's main responsibility was the coordination of the team, ensuring that all strands of support interlinked and that the young people received the services they required according to statutory guidelines. In contrast, in case studies 3 and 4, the team manager's roles were to take forward strategy and policy development. For example, in case study 4 the team manager had the responsibility of informing and implementing LA policy with regard to asylum seeker and refugee pupils and ensuring that the LA met its legal obligations regarding this client group.

Several of the LA practitioners in the case study LAs also had a specific remit to provide direct **support to schools**. This included both in-class support, aimed at raising the achievement and attainment of asylum seeker pupils (for example language support provided by EAL teachers) and whole-school support (for example training for school staff on asylum seeker and refugee issues, provided by school improvement officers).

In two LAs, staff roles specifically focused on **attendance and inclusion** (e.g. educational welfare officer, inclusion and attendance officer). Here, staff were responsible for the identification of asylum seeker and refugee pupils arriving in the LA, facilitating appropriate educational placements for them and supporting and monitoring their attendance at school. The remit of **pastoral support staff** such as curriculum and pastoral support officers and Connexions personal advisers extended beyond educational support, and such staff specifically focused on providing holistic support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Such staff were evident in three of the case study LAs.

Only one of the case study LAs (case study 2) had social work staff with a specific remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Here, the social work element to the multi-agency team was vital in that the team's remit was to support unaccompanied asylum seekers. The senior practitioner and professional assistants were responsible for assessing the social and emotional needs of unaccompanied asylum seekers, and the family placement senior practitioner was responsible for accommodating pupils with foster carers.

In at least half of the case study LAs, some staff with a remit to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils were also refugees themselves. For example, in case study 5, the multi-agency team employed an interpreter/teaching assistant who was a refugee from Iran. Interviewees reported that refugees working in support teams or employed directly by the schools were extremely beneficial. Such staff were able to give a direct insight into the needs and issues faced by such pupils, they provided good role models for the pupils themselves and had an impact on the ethos of the school by representing and exposing both pupils and staff members to different cultures.

### **3.6.2 School staff with a remit to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families**

Interviewees in each of the case study LAs were asked to provide details of **school staff** working in the LA with a full or partial remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In order of frequency, the staff were:

- EMA coordinators;
- EAL teachers or coordinators;
- teaching assistants or bilingual support assistants;
- designated teachers;

- headteachers;
- special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs);
- home–school liaison teachers;
- pupil support officers;
- inclusion managers or officers;
- induction mentors;
- learning mentors;
- nursery nurses.

The most commonly cited member of school staff with a specific remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils in schools were EMA coordinators, whose main role was to organise curriculum support for all ethnic minority groups. EAL teachers and coordinators in both primary and secondary schools also had specific responsibility for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and not only were such staff responsible for language support but they also commonly had a pastoral role. Other school staff with specific responsibility for asylum seeker and refugee pupils in schools included teaching assistants and learning mentors.

In at least two LAs, EMAG funding devolved directly to schools meant that schools themselves had recruited staff with either a full or partial remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. For example, in case study 4, EMAG funding had been used by a school to employ a nursery nurse and a teaching assistant to work with identified groups of asylum seeker and refugee pupils who required further support. Moreover, in case study 6, as the result of a national mobility project funded by the DfES, an induction mentor was recruited to work across three schools in the LA. The role of the induction mentor was to carry out assessments of new arrivals and collect and share with school staff other relevant information about asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The induction mentor also acted as a link between home and school.

Although many schools employed staff with a specific remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, in some schools staff with broader roles took an overview of the needs of this client group (for example designated teachers for looked-after children, inclusion officers, pupil support officers, home–school liaison officers, headteachers, heads of year, and SENCOs). In these schools, such staff would commonly act as the main point of contact in the school for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Further, where schools did not have staff with specific responsibility for this group of pupils, interviewees were keen to note that there were wider support systems in place such as inclusion units or learning support centres that such pupils could access where necessary. This was particularly the case for schools with small numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

*We find that by and large, the children just go into the mainstream classes, they don't need anything other than that. By having the teaching assistant there providing the direct support where needed that is fine – we don't need to make any other provision apart from that.*

School staff, case study 1

### 3.6.3 Other agency staff with a remit to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families

Other agency staff working in each of the case study LAs with a full or partial remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families included staff from the following agencies:

- health or mental health, for example health services, mental health project;
- education, for example the tuition service, further education colleges;
- volunteer and community-related, for example refugee community organisations;



- offending or crime, for example the youth offending team, the police;
- housing or accommodation, for example housing and resettlement;
- family support, for example social services, family centres, money advice unit.

One of the main ways staff from other agencies supported asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families was in relation to both their **physical** and **mental health needs**. For example, in one LA (case study 5) a designated nurse for looked-after children, based in the looked-after children team, also had a remit to support unaccompanied asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In addition, in case study 2, a therapist working as part of a project funded by the local children's hospital had a remit to provide psychological support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

Other agency staff with a remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils included **education staff**. Here, tutors from further education colleges were identified as providing language support as well as numeracy and literacy classes for Year 11 asylum seeker and refugee students without a school place. Furthermore, tuition service staff also had a remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Such staff offered English classes, arranged school admissions interviews and provided pupils with school uniforms.

Volunteers from **community organisations and voluntary groups** were also highlighted by interviewees as having a remit for this client group. They offered support in language needs such as translation and interpretation, and also ran drop-in centres. In one LA, interviewees reported working closely with groups such as Refugee Action as they were often a first point of contact for newly arrived families. In this way, voluntary and community organisations regularly informed the team or officers about the arrival into the LA area of new families and their potential needs.

Other agency staff who worked with LA staff and school staff to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families included social services (particularly in relation to unaccompanied asylum seekers), the youth offending team and the police (particularly in relation to pupil non-attendance), and housing agencies who provided accommodation for newly arrived families. Further information in relation to other agency staff working with asylum seeker and refugee communities, and details about the types of support provided, were also gathered during the national survey which preceded the case study phase of the research. This information is presented in the appendices 2 and 3.

## Key findings

The study was able to draw a distinction between the six case study LAs in their overall strategic approach to supporting the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. LAs could be distinguished by the extent to which they adopted a **centralised** or **mainstreamed** approach.

In the **centralised** model, LA staff provided direct support to schools for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, such as admissions and/or EAL support from a central team. Across the case studies, this approach was often adopted by those LAs with more recent experience of supporting the needs of the client group and with smaller numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Here, the LAs adopted a more reactive approach to the organisation of their support (see case study 1), providing direct support at operational level to schools and families.

In the **mainstreamed** model, LA staff focused on raising schools' awareness of and responsibility for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In this model, the LAs took a more strategic overview in relation to support of the client group (see case study 6).

The most mainstreamed approach was reflected by the organisation of staff in one LA (the employment of two school improvement officers who focused on providing advice and guidance to schools). In this LA, EMAG funding was devolved to schools, so the LA adopted a more strategic and advisory role with the aim of raising achievement, and provided less direct support to schools from the central team (see case study 1).

Factors that influenced the point at which an LA was placed on the continuum included the LA's dispersal status, their experience of supporting the client group, the number of asylum seekers in the LA area and the way in which LA support for asylum seekers and refugees was organised.

The six LAs could not be categorised as operating a wholly centralised or mainstreamed model; instead, they were placed along a continuum between the central and mainstream points according to their **best fit**. In addition, it was acknowledged that the position of each LA along the continuum would be likely to vary over time depending on needs in and experience of each LA.

The models and approaches suggested by Arnot and Pinson (2005) were also considered. The present study aimed to identify each of the six case study LAs in terms of their **organisation of support**, which refers to the way in which support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was organised in the LAs, either within the ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS), as an individual officer or coordinator, within the race equality team, as part of a dedicated asylum seeker and refugee pupil support team, or as an EAL service or new arrivals team (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). Likewise, the **conceptual models** that Arnot and Pinson put forward as underpinning LAs' approaches were also applied to the six case study LAs. These included: the EAL model, the holistic model, the minority ethnic model, the new arrivals model, the race equality model, and the

vulnerable children model (Arnot and Pinson, 2005).

Among the six case study LAs, there was a range of staff with a remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Staff roles could be categorised into **six broad themes** which included:

- managerial or strategic staff;
- school support staff;
- attendance and inclusion staff;
- pastoral staff;
- social work or other agency staff;
- administrative personnel.

The most commonly cited members of school staff with a specific remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils were **EMA coordinators** whose main role was to organise curriculum support for all ethnic minority groups, including asylum seekers and refugees. However, there were also other staff with broader roles, who also had an overview of the needs of this client group.

In at least two of the six case studies, EMAG funding devolved directly to schools had led to schools **independently recruiting staff** to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils (with either a full or partial remit).

A variety of staff **from other agencies** were also working in the case study LAs to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. This included staff from the following sectors: health or mental health, education, offending or crime, housing or accommodation, volunteer and community-related organisations (for example refugee community organisations) and family support services.

## 4. Support provided: main areas of input

### 4.1 Introduction

The information obtained from the case study LAs in relation to the support provided for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families reflected findings obtained during phase 1 of the present research: the national survey. Therefore, the information gathered during the case study phase of the research has been used to complement these findings, and provides **further details** of and **evidence of impact** from the six case study LAs in relation to their support for asylum seekers and refugees.

In addition, a good practice document has been produced as an appendix to the report. This document also reflects the types of support identified in both the national survey and the case study phases of the research, but draws together the **key features** and **examples of good practice** identified in relation to each of the areas of support identified (see appendix 5). The following section looks at the different types of support provided for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families across the six case study LAs. It draws on information obtained from the range of LA and school staff interviewed in the LAs.

The types of LA and school support identified could be categorised into the following areas and are discussed in this section:

- admission;
- induction;
- assessment;
- language support;
- pastoral support;
- family support;
- resources;
- out-of-school activities;
- awareness raising;
- alternative provision.

In addition, interviewees at both school and LA level in the case study LAs were asked to describe the impact of these types of LA or school support on:

- asylum seeker and refugee pupils themselves;
- non-asylum seeker and refugee pupils;
- asylum seeker and refugee pupils' families;
- the local community;
- the attitudes and practice of school staff;
- the ethos of the school.

As well as describing the types of support delivered across the six case study LAs, this section highlights the impact of that support in the areas listed above, and provides boxed exemplars of practice.

### 4.2 Admission

The admission of asylum seeker or refugee pupils should be the same as the admission of all other pupils, so LAs are responsible for ensuring that asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families do not experience any unreasonable delays in accessing a school place (DfES, 2004). As asylum seeker and refugee families are new to the English education system, most need support in finding and accessing a school place and understanding the mechanisms for

doing this. Responsibility is therefore placed on LAs and schools to support families through the admissions process. Consequently, research has identified that a well established admissions policy and clear admissions procedures are central to the effective admission of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the education system (Ofsted, 2003). Furthermore, the national survey preceding the case study phase of this research highlighted admission and induction policies and procedures as a key feature of good practice in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

Interviewees from several of the LAs referred to the existence of LA **policies and procedures** for the admission of new arrivals, and a number of schools had also developed their own admission and induction procedures (in some cases with support from the LA). For example, one LA had developed a specific admissions and induction programme, and offered support to schools in tailoring the programme to meet their specific needs. As part of the admissions process, a small number of schools also referred to a **designated day for admissions**. This was felt to be a particularly useful strategy for giving staff and pupils time to prepare for the arrival of a new pupil, such as time to brief pupils and staff and to organise LA representation and/or translation support. This also ensured that the school's routine was not too disrupted, and that both schools and the LA were well prepared in relation to the admission and induction of new arrivals so that families' initial experience was positive (well organised and high quality). This was also felt to be valuable in introducing families to a sense of routine from the outset, which was considered to be particularly useful given that they were trying to adapt to their new circumstances.

In each of the case study LAs, a **key person** was allocated specific responsibility for the admission of new arrivals, including asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Across the six case study LAs, this role was performed by both LA and school staff, for example by an LA officer and/or an EAL coordinator. Typically, this key worker would take charge of the whole admissions process, including making initial contact with the pupil and the family, arranging a school visit, and supporting the pupil and family during the subsequent induction process. For example, in one LA, an education welfare officer was responsible for arranging school admissions for unplaced asylum seeker and refugee pupils. As part of this, the educational welfare officer was the main point of contact for other services in the LA and thus would receive referrals from a variety of agencies, including other LAs, schools, hospitals, and housing services and/or private landlords. Following a referral, the educational welfare officer would visit the family, identify any reasons why the pupil had not been able to access a school place and gather any background information that might affect the pupil's placement (for example language spoken, details of other family members locally, any special circumstances such as current immigration status). This information would then be used to identify and apply for the most suitable school place for the pupil. The key worker would then also support the family to access school uniform grants, apply for their free school meal entitlement and arrange transport. In this way, the key worker was able to provide families with both holistic support and continuity of support.

In one LA, an **initial visit** to the school would be arranged for pupils and their parents prior to admission. Here, the LA key worker would accompany the family during the visit and arrange for a translator or interpreter to be present if possible. This enabled the family to become familiar with the school, exchange information and questions and prepare the pupil for the first day:

*I would go along on the visit just so that the parents get the information about the school, the child gets to see where the class is and to meet the teacher and to sort out uniform.*

LA practitioner, case study 1

In some cases the schools would conduct an **interview** with pupils and parents prior to or during the initial visit as part of the admission process. This was felt to be very useful for obtaining information about the family's history (including details of the pupil's previous educational experience), arranging support for any dietary needs, transportation and access to uniform, and for informing pupils and parents about the schools' policies and procedures. In some LAs, the LA or school key worker would also support families during the appeal process if the application for a school place was unsuccessful.

## 4.3 Induction

An effective induction programme has been recognised as one of the key features in the successful integration and education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils: 'Investing time in developing a good induction policy is almost certainly time well spent, anticipating and preventing problems later' (DfES, 2004).

Across the six case study LAs, several stages to an effective induction process were identified. These included:

- staff and class briefing;
- induction interview, including the provision of information and guidance;
- pupil placement;
- buddy systems.

### 4.3.1 Induction: staff and class briefing

School interviewees reported spending time preparing staff and pupils for the admission and induction of new arrivals. For the headteacher, this involved meeting with staff to discuss the needs and issues of the new pupils, setting the expectations of staff and reinforcing the school's policies and procedures. For the class teacher and other staff, it involved talking to other pupils about the arrival of a new classmate (for example, discussing ideas for welcoming the new pupil) and preparing them to support the new arrival. In one primary school, for example, if a class was expecting a new pupil, each child from the class would prepare for this by writing a short sentence about themselves. This was placed in a book which contained pictures and names of each pupil in the class and was presented to the new pupil upon their arrival, to welcome them to the school and to their new classmates.

### 4.3.2 Induction: the induction interview

An interview with pupils and parents formed a key part of the induction process in schools across the six case study LAs. However, communication difficulties due to language barriers were identified as one of the main challenges experienced by schools during this process (see chapter 7). In some cases, families would be accompanied by a friend or relative to translate and interpret information; however, in the majority of cases, some form of official interpretation or translation service was required. This ensured that schools could access as much background information as possible, and that pupils and parents could understand the information presented to them and thus were fully aware of the school's processes and expectations.

Where possible a school or LA representative with the ability to translate information (such as a bilingual support assistant) or an external interpreter would be present during the induction interview to translate and interpret information for the parent, pupil, and staff. Here, the financial implications of accessing support from an outside agency would be negotiated between the LA and the school. The interpreter or translator would be used to pass on general information to parents (for example about uniform, lessons, lunchtimes and bus passes) as well as information about the school's policies and procedures (for example the induction procedures, behaviour policy). In addition, parental concerns or questions could be fed back to school staff.

*If we can get one of the mediators or one of the bilingual assistants to come to that meeting, it is reassuring on both sides. The parents know that they are making themselves understood, we know that all the information has passed [to them]. Very often the mediators will find out things, because they know the children's background, that our questions wouldn't have found out.*

School staff, case study 3

In other cases, older pupils from the school were used to communicate with parents and the pupil in their first language in order to ensure that they were supported and could understand the induction and admission process. The additional benefit of this was that parents and prospective pupils were made aware of other children in the school who spoke the same language. This was often useful for putting both parties at ease. However, interviewees noted that it was important that not too much responsibility was placed on individual pupils in this way. Further, they questioned the appropriateness of using another child to translate, and raised a number of concerns, namely that parents may not deem it to be suitable, and thus may not discuss personal issues, and that the child may misinterpret the information.

In addition to translation or interpretation support, in all six case study LAs the induction of newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their parents involved a member of support staff from the LA, often the person identified as the key worker. Likewise, new arrivals and their parents would also meet with the key contact at school level (often an EMA coordinator or learning mentor) during the induction process. This person usually had considerable experience of supporting new arrivals and was responsible for coordinating the support available. The involvement of LA and school support staff during the induction process was seen to be particularly important for establishing the initial relationship between pupil, parent and school and this time was used to introduce families to a friendly face who would then be the first point of contact for the pupil and family in the future.

Information sought during the induction interview varied between schools and across the six case study LAs, although generally the information obtained included details on:

- the family history, including any details of siblings, and current family circumstances;
- details of previous educational experience: years of schooling, subjects studied, gaps in education;
- languages spoken and level of literacy.

During the induction period, pupils and parents would also be shown around the school and introduced to other members of staff such as the class teacher and non-teaching staff.

Information passed to pupils and parents during the induction interview included details on:

- the education system: the National Curriculum, literacy, numeracy, school phases (key stages and the primary to secondary transition);
- the school system: times, uniform, rules, homework, holidays, school meals, special events;
- timetable, including details of any option choices, examination dates;
- staff, including key contacts and support available from other agencies.

This information could be relayed to pupils and parents by staff, using interpreters where necessary, or via information and guidance materials. For example, **welcome booklets** and **DVDs** had also been developed in the case study LAs to support the induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. These were available in a variety of languages and could be used by parents, schools, community groups and other services. Booklets and/or DVDs typically contained information about the school day such as times, uniform, rules, and key staff and contacts (see section 4.8 for more details).

### 4.3.3 Induction: pupil placement

The importance of distinguishing between pupils' language needs and their academic ability was highlighted as a key factor in placing pupils in the appropriate year group and thus enabling them to reach their full potential. Across the six case study LAs, various strategies were employed in relation to placing new arrivals in the appropriate teaching groups, although these differed between schools and LAs.

Generally, asylum seeker and refugee pupils were placed in their appropriate year groups according to their age. However, a range of additional factors was also used by schools to determine the most appropriate placement in relation to year group or teaching group. These included:

- social and personal factors (the peer group);
- EAL needs;
- academic factors (pupils' level of ability, the competence of fellow pupils);
- previous educational experience (years of schooling).

In one LA, in some cases asylum seeker and refugee pupils with high EAL needs were initially placed in a lower year group which was less academically demanding, and where they could access more intensive support (due to the number of support assistants in the class). However, in most LAs, the lower ability groups were felt to offer a less suitable social environment for asylum seeker and refugee pupils due to the existing needs of the pupils in those groups, and it was felt that fellow pupils would have a less positive impact on the development of the asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Furthermore, placing pupils in lower year groups or lower ability sets was considered undesirable for personal reasons, for example if pupils associated this with failure.

In contrast, at a secondary school in case study 3 the policy was to place all newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the highest ability group, with the most able pupils. Here it was felt that asylum seeker and refugee pupils would benefit from working alongside high ability pupils with a strong command of the English language. Through this, it was felt that their peers would act as positive role models for the new pupils in their language, academic and social development: 'We go for the group that is going to be most supportive, there are good role models in the top groups' (school staff, case study 3). Here however, the EMA coordinator acknowledged that this placement was often only maintained initially, and that pupils would often be reassigned to a lower ability group once their needs and ability had been further assessed and the most suitable placement determined:

*I would place the pupils in the top sets anyway just because I want them to be with the children who are going to be most articulate, most able to explain things to them, the pupils who aren't struggling themselves with their learning. The pupils who can divert their attention away from their class work to help out a buddy who needs their help.*

School staff, case study 3

As Government legislation highlights, all pupils have an equal entitlement to be taught the National Curriculum at a level appropriate to their ability, and therefore an asylum seeker or refugee pupil should not be denied this right on the grounds of their linguistic ability. Given this, and as research suggests, pupils should be placed in the appropriate year group in relation to their chronological age as well as their ability, to enable them to develop to their full potential (DfES, 2005; Spafford and Bolloten, 1995).

Moreover, interviewees felt that careful consideration when making the initial placement was important so that it would be maintained wherever possible and thus avoid further disruption to the pupils. Given this, it was felt that placing a pupil should not be hurried, and that taking



time to consider the appropriateness should not be overlooked in favour of accessing a place in a particular group or set. Securing this continuity was felt to be particularly important given that pupils had often experienced interrupted education previously and might be uncertain about their future. Staff therefore aimed to give pupils as much stability as possible. In one LA, a specialist **induction centre** for primary aged new arrivals had been established to support pupils' integration into mainstream education. This was felt by LA interviewees to be an example of good practice in induction. Further details are provided in the box below.

## LA primary induction base

The induction base for new arrivals is attached to a primary school in one of the main dispersal areas in the LA. The base caters for up to 10 children at any one time. In the first instance, prior to their admission to school, pupils attend the base each morning between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon for half a term. After this period, pupils are then integrated into the mainstream classroom on a full-time basis. However, if a child is showing particular signs of trauma, is unable to settle, or has showed little progress in their use and acquisition of English, their time at the induction base may be extended to a term. In these cases, pupils would then continue to attend the base during the morning and would also attend their designated class during the afternoon. The base is staffed by members of the LA's new arrivals peripatetic team in close collaboration with the school. It employs five staff who work on a rotational basis. Two staff work at the base at all times.

In 2004/05 the induction base received children from a range of countries including Iraq, Poland, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sweden, Palestine, Pakistan, Austria, Germany, France, Portugal, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Iran, Somalia, the Czech Republic, Columbia and Ecuador. The children have a range of educational backgrounds, from formal schooling in their home country to no previous experience of education. All children speak little or no English.

The induction base focuses on developing pupils' language and adheres closely to a language-based development programme linked to the National Curriculum. The aim of the programme is to support pupils to acquire the vocabulary to talk about themselves, count, and know the names of everyday people, places and objects. On arrival at the induction base, children are assessed by the EAL teachers. This determines their current ability level and helps to identify the next stages in their language development. A package of intensive support is then devised to develop pupils' language. A range of techniques, activities and resources are used to promote pupils' language development, including storytelling, drama, use of jigsaws, displays, and ICT. Pupils' progress is recorded and records of achievement are passed on when children leave the base.

Since its inception, a total of 250 pupils have attended the provision and the response from primary schools has been positive. However, interviewees felt that the base offered more than a site for pupil induction but that as it had evolved, it had also become a good practice example of induction policy. Here interviewees described how practice and attitudes from the base were being incorporated into the primary school where it was located as well as being communicated to other schools in the LA. In addition, the induction base had developed a wide range of resources (such as key words, worksheets and dual language cards) to complement existing schemes of work and texts (such as Goldilocks) used to support pupils' language development. In this way, the base itself was used by many schools as a resource library.

*It used to be a case of induction and then straight into mainstream school and then forget what had happened before. Now it is a case of staff realising that they have actually got to progress the good work that has gone on in the induction base. It has become a whole-school investment rather than just a partial investment*

LA strategic staff, case study 4

In some schools, a **gradual integration programme** was devised for pupils to enable them to settle into school slowly. This involved pupils attending school on a part-time basis initially to enable them to gradually become familiar with the school environment. At the same time, pupils could attend separate classes to develop their English. This was often dependent on the needs of individual pupils and on the advice of the teacher (for example, taking into account a pupil's background or circumstances, how well the pupil appeared to be settling in, and the level of support required):

*It really does depend on what kind of pupil we are talking about, what experiences they are coming with and whether it is a total culture shock for them or whether they are confident and able to cope with it.*

School staff, case study 3

#### 4.3.4 Induction: the buddy system

In several LAs, a buddy system for new pupils had been established as part of the induction process. This involved a new arrival being paired with another pupil during the first few weeks at school. Interviewees acknowledged the importance of careful consideration when choosing a pupil to act as a buddy to a new arrival, and wherever possible schools would aim to partner an asylum seeker or refugee pupil with another pupil who spoke their home language, or a pupil from the same year group the class teacher felt would be supportive. In addition, the importance was highlighted of ensuring that the buddy was made fully aware of the task and its importance. As part of the system, buddies would commonly be asked to show the new pupil around the school and explain different parts of the school environment to them (such as the playground, the toilets and the canteen). Buddies were also asked to stay with and support the pupil during lunchtime and break times, and introduce the new pupil to different teachers, support staff and other pupils.

## 4.4 The assessment process

Across the six case study LAs, a range of assessment techniques were used to identify the abilities and needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils upon their arrival to school. In many cases, the assessment process would begin with a basic **initial assessment** carried out by LA or school staff to determine pupils' competence, make an initial placement, and devise an appropriate package of support. A standard assessment form was often used to obtain the initial information, although it was widely acknowledged that further assessment would then be required at a later date in order to gain more detailed information about the pupil.

Information collected during the initial pupil assessment usually included:

- personal details;
- further information about pupils' educational experiences;
- home language details and skills (competence in reading, writing and translation);
- a basic assessment of English competency (for example basic skills, vocabulary checklist).

Importantly, several interviewees from across the six case study LAs highlighted the significance of allowing for a short settling-in period prior to assessing pupils' English language competence, although the length of time allocated varied considerably between LAs. In one LA for example, assessment of pupils' EAL needs would be conducted once the pupil had had time to acquire some English, and therefore was usually conducted after a period of two to three months. This enabled the pupil to settle into school and also ensured that an accurate evaluation of their level of English could be formed. From this, realistic targets could then be set for the pupil and any learning difficulties over and above their language needs could be identified more easily and the necessary assessment and support arranged. In another LA, a formal assessment of pupils' English capabilities was conducted after a period of about two weeks following their arrival. Again, it was felt that this allowed

sufficient time for the pupil to settle into the school, and ensured that the assessment process did not place any further stress on the pupil. Further assessments of pupils' progress were then carried out at subsequent points during the term, usually on a termly or half-termly cycle. Following the initial assessment, and settling-in period where applicable, three main types of formal assessment were identified. These included:

- English language assessment, to assess pupils' proficiency in the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing in English;
- assessment in pupils' own language, to assess pupils' ability in different subject areas;
- assessment of any other needs such as SEN.

In several LAs, standard assessment procedures and forms were used to conduct the formative assessment of pupils' ability and needs in each of the areas listed above. To assess pupils' English language ability, schools used similar assessment forms which were linked to National Curriculum levels in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils would then be tracked and recorded as they progressed through each level. In addition, LA and school staff drew on a range of techniques to assess pupils' progress, including drawing, listening to pupils' reading, observation, conversation, and questioning techniques. All of these techniques enabled staff to assess pupils' understanding of what they had been taught, and identify the level at which they were working. These assessments were usually carried out by the EAL teacher or LA support officer. Ongoing communication between the EAL teacher or LA officer and the class teacher to ensure that pupils' progress was regularly updated was also felt to be a key feature of pupil assessment. Often, LA and school staff also tracked the progress of individual pupils to demonstrate the impact of their intervention. Here, staff would complete a standard assessment form for each pupil at the beginning and at the end of their input (such as a series of withdrawal sessions to provide intensive language support) to provide evidence of the impact of their support on pupils' development and attainment.

Assessment was felt to be key in distinguishing between pupils' English language needs and identification of any additional learning needs that they might have. Many schools aimed to conduct an assessment in a pupil's first language as well as an assessment of their English language proficiency, particularly if some concern had been expressed regarding a pupil's educational progress. This could then be used to determine any other learning needs a pupil might have. Following this, standard procedures for the assessment of SEN could then be carried out if applicable. However, interviewees highlighted the importance of ensuring that a pupil's EAL needs were not confused with any SEN requirements, and noted the significance of a thorough assessment process in this respect.

*There is a danger of equating SEN and EAL and the two very rarely go together. The special need is a pure language development need and so what we try to do is involve the children in as much of what is going on in the mainstream class as we possibly can but then where there is a difficulty with the actual language, to have a teaching assistant with them while they are working, just to support them.*

School staff, case study 1

However, as noted by Rutter (2001) it is equally important to avoid the assumption that pupils' learning difficulties are mostly related to their English language needs, to ensure that any additional special educational needs can be identified and assessed and the appropriate SEN support arranged (Rutter, 2001; Clarke, 2003).

In some cases, the LA's approach to assessment appeared to be influenced by a number of factors, including their experience of supporting the client group, the number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the LA, and the organisation of the support available. Whether pupil assessment was conducted by LA or school staff could be loosely related to the positions of different LAs along the continuum devised for the present study. Case study 4, for example,

was identified as being located at the mid-point along the continuum, defined by its commitment to moving towards a mainstreamed approach to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils, while also providing some direct support to schools. This was also reflected in the LA's approach to the assessment of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Here, due to an increased number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and a reduction in centralised LA staff funded through EMAG, the central team had moved away from conducting direct assessments of new arrivals and now focused on guiding and supporting schools in completing their own assessments. In this way, the team was moving towards the mainstreamed approach in relation to assessment, by focusing on supporting and developing assessment at a whole-school level, rather than carrying out direct assessments of individual pupils. As part of this approach, the LA had developed an assessment pack which could be used by the new arrivals peripatetic team, as well as by schools directly. In addition, schools were encouraged to develop their own assessment procedures with support from the LA, underpinned by the LA's assessment guidelines. Conversely, in case study 1, which was identified as operating a mainly centralised approach due to the relatively small number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their relatively new experience in supporting the client group, language teachers deployed from the LA's ESOL team were responsible for conducting the language assessments of all new arrivals.

## 4.5 Language support

Most asylum seeker and refugee pupils arrive in the UK speaking little or no English, and over 70 per cent of asylum seeker and refugee children come from homes where little or no English is spoken (DFES, 2004). Asylum seeker and refugee pupils will therefore often require additional English language support during their integration into schools. A well established language policy is therefore key to meeting the language needs of newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee pupils (DfES, 2004).

Across the six case study LAs, language support was organised as either **in-class** support or as pupil **withdrawal sessions**. However, in most cases the support available was based around a combination of the two approaches.

### 4.5.1 In-class support

In many of the schools across the six case study LAs, and in line with DfES guidance, introducing new arrivals straight into the mainstream classroom was the favoured approach in relation to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils' language development. Both social and linguistic benefits of this approach were acknowledged by interviewees, namely the opportunity to interact with their peers and the chance for pupils to develop their English within the classroom context. Ultimately, this approach meant that new arrivals were exposed to a rich language environment through which they could then begin to develop their English proficiency. Moreover, it ensured that pupils were given full access to the National Curriculum while still meeting their linguistic needs using support provided by an EAL teacher or bilingual assistant:

*Language support is best provided within the mainstream classroom wherever possible, as time out of subject lessons for additional language tuition may cause the learner to fall behind in the curriculum.*

DfES (2005)

However, interviewees also acknowledged that due to their language barriers, asylum seeker and refugee pupils might initially be very quiet and withdrawn in a classroom situation with many other pupils. The importance was noted of appreciating that newly arrived pupils would often require a silent period during which they could become accustomed to the language being spoken around them and gain the confidence and skills to engage fully in lessons.

The in-class support offered to pupils with EAL needs was generally used to help pupils to access the curriculum. This involved EAL teachers or bilingual assistants explaining the questions set by teachers. Often this involved the EAL teachers repeating key text, describing the meaning of words and terms, making the vocabulary more visual by depicting different words or phrases, and/or using gestures to clarify instructions. Where bilingual support assistants were available, a pupil's first language was often used to explain questions and text. For example, bilingual support assistants would provide written or oral translations of individual words or questions in mathematics and science lessons to enable pupils to access the curriculum. In other cases, bilingual assistants were encouraged to discuss work with pupils in their home language. This enabled pupils to demonstrate their knowledge, despite the language barriers.

In-class support was typically organised around the teacher's lesson plans so that the support complemented the activities that had been planned. In some cases, EAL teachers or bilingual support assistants were also involved in planning lessons or schemes of work with the class teacher to ensure that best use was made of the support available. Through this approach, lessons could be organised so that the EAL teacher or bilingual assistant could work with a small group of pupils on a specific activity. In one LA, for example, the service promoted partnership teaching. This was an example of a model of LA support which aimed to build schools' capacity to mainstream the support provided for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. This involved LA support officers working alongside class teachers to develop strategies for teaching and learning. In light of this approach, withdrawal-based support was less widely promoted within the LA, unless specifically suggested by the class teacher and/or support officer. Where this was the case, short withdrawal sessions (sometimes of just 10–15 minutes) would be planned to offer extremely focused and purposeful support to individuals or small groups of pupils. Pupils would then return to their mainstream lessons.

#### 4.5.2 Withdrawal

In addition to the in-class support provided, several schools, both primary and secondary, reported withdrawing asylum seeker and refugee pupils from the mainstream classroom to access EAL support. This approach was felt to be particularly useful for pupils requiring more intensive support. Furthermore, it was felt that withdrawing pupils initially was also of benefit for other pupils, as it reduced the level of disruption and distraction in the mainstream classroom, for example where support staff were translating or explaining questions or tasks:

*Sometimes I have to speak in different languages and so I don't want to interrupt the other children. Other times I want to work with them and just repeat and focus more on what the teacher says.*

LA practitioner, case study 3

On language support, the debate over the benefits of either entering pupils into the mainstream classroom immediately or withdrawing pupils for EAL support sessions is acknowledged. For example, as Remsbery (2003) noted, the benefits of withdrawing pupils differed between the primary and secondary phase. Remsbery found that the impact of withdrawal support was more effective at the primary level than the secondary level where impacts were more variable, with some pupils making good progress and others showing less development. Moreover, as Remsbery noted, the procedures for withdrawing pupils should be carefully planned to avoid any adverse academic or social impacts as a result of being removed from the mainstream classroom.

The content of withdrawal sessions varied across schools in the six case study LAs, although the structure of sessions was similar in most cases. Sessions focused on providing individuals or small groups of pupils with intensive language support for a fixed period of time and at secondary level in particular, the sessions were used to revisit work covered during previous

lessons that week. At both primary and secondary level, the language support sessions were usually topic based and linked to the curriculum wherever possible (for example focusing on literacy or numeracy). Alternatively, the sessions could be structured around a more general topic aimed at supporting pupils' personal and social development as well as their language acquisition. For example, developing pupils' language in everyday topics such as the weather, food and, in particular, the school, was felt to be particularly valuable in supporting pupils' ability to integrate into the school and engage with their peers. Likewise, in one LA, EAL teachers reported spending much of the initial period of support focusing on 'survival English' with pupils, which involved discussing common questions used in school (such as asking to use the toilet) and explaining the meaning of different words that new arrivals had heard other pupils use.

Interviewees acknowledged that by spending some time initially discussing general issues and topics with new arrivals, pupils were given the opportunity to draw on their own experiences and contribute to the sessions, increasing their self-confidence. Several interviewees reported that the initial withdrawal sessions would often be organised as informal conversation-style meetings in order to make pupils feel at ease and encourage them to engage with others. Role-play and hot-seating activities (where one person takes on the role of another) were also identified as useful strategies for enhancing pupils' speaking and listening opportunities, and thus developing their communication skills and language acquisition:

*We use a lot of drama initially so even if they don't understand the language, they understand the intonation of your voice and they are getting used to using gestures and expressions which begins to form some sort of communication.*

LA practitioner, case study 1

In one case study LA, a language enrichment officer was employed to work alongside school support staff to devise activities to support children's language development. This involved using drama and role-play to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills and develop their acquisition of the English language. In addition, the opportunity to engage in small-group work with other pupils across the school at these sessions was felt to be particularly helpful in developing pupils' social and interpersonal skills.

Indeed, the opportunity for **small-group work** during withdrawal sessions was felt to offer an ideal environment for working with newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee pupils as it increased the opportunities for pupils to speak, listen and interact with others, and thus develop their confidence and self-esteem. Moreover, interviewees acknowledged the social benefits of working in a small-group situation, rather than on a one-to-one basis: 'it is better I think if they have peers around them to respond to' (LA practitioner, case study 1). In cases where pupils received support on an individual basis, staff aimed to move pupils into a group setting or the mainstream classroom as soon as possible.

Several strategies were used during withdrawal sessions to support pupils' language development. At primary level these included: creating picture dictionaries, for example of words from school life or home life which could then be referred back to at a later date. This involved pupils drawing or taking photographs of objects relating to everyday school or home vocabulary and presenting these in a file with the words written underneath. At secondary level, pupils were involved in producing bilingual glossaries on different subjects, were supported in using writing frames (frameworks to help them gather, organise and record their thoughts), were given strategies on drafting and redrafting work, and were encouraged to use bilingual dictionaries as much as possible. Studying the names and sounds (phonics) of letters also formed a large part of the support sessions at primary and secondary level.

The length of a withdrawal period varied across LAs and was often dependent on the progress of individual pupils and the level of support available. However, some LAs placed time limits on withdrawal sessions, such as for a maximum of six weeks. In these cases, interviewees felt that the length of time specified was sufficient for teachers to build a relationship with pupils, but not so long that pupils became detached from the mainstream classroom and their peers. At both primary and secondary level, withdrawal sessions would typically be for two to three hours per week. During the withdrawal period, EMA teachers would work closely with the classroom teachers and/or the school support staff (for example a learning mentor or bilingual support assistant) to discuss the progress of the pupil and continually re-evaluate the support provided. This also ensured that the withdrawal sessions complemented the curriculum covered and that the teachers were aware of pupils' progress so that their needs could be supported when they were in the mainstream classroom.

Following a period of withdrawal, EAL teachers, along with the class teacher and/or support staff, would then often develop a package of in-class support to continue to support pupils' access to the curriculum.

In addition to support for English language development, in two LAs, opportunities were also made available for pupils to study in their home language. In one LA, school and LA staff promoted 'home language maintenance' with asylum seeker and refugee pupils, particularly at secondary level. This involved introducing pupils to a variety of websites which offered information and news from their home country. The aim of this was to encourage pupils to maintain links with their home country and access information in their home language, which provided them with the opportunity to develop their language skills in their mother tongue. This had proved to be very popular with many of the pupils, although it was noted that some were not as enthusiastic to maintain their links and language as they did not want to be seen as different from the other children in the school. Likewise, in another LA, in order to meet the needs of pupils from one of the asylum seeker and refugee communities, the school had established links with another local school to enable some of its pupils to take a GCSE in their first language (Russian). Here, the school was committed to recognising and promoting pupils' abilities wherever possible, and therefore actively encouraged pupils to maintain their first language and take the appropriate GCSE in that language. The impact of this opportunity for increasing pupils' motivation and self-confidence as a result of their achievements was also highlighted. Moreover, and as has been widely acknowledged by research, providing opportunities for pupils to maintain and build on their knowledge and skills in their first language has positive impacts on their English language development (Remsbery, 2003). Likewise, NFER research into vulnerable children's access to examinations at Key Stage 4 also highlighted a number of benefits of entering pupils for GCSE examinations in their first language which included the opportunity to experience the examination system and procedures in a subject they were confident in, as well as those described above (Kendall *et al.*, 2005).

**Language support: impact on the attainment of asylum seeker and refugee pupils**

Overall, interviewees reported that the language support provided by LA and school staff for asylum seeker and refugee pupils had had a **positive impact on their attainment**. On LA support, case study 3 had examined data and Ofsted reports to compare the attainment of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in those schools receiving specific support from the LA to the attainment of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in schools without such support. They found that the highest achieving pupils were located in the schools where there had been specialist input, including in-class language support, intensive withdrawal sessions to develop pupils' English, and homework clubs. Through these strategies, pupils' language skills developed, so they were more able to access the curriculum.

In other LAs, the impact of support was evident through pupils' comparative achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4. In case study 4, interviewees reported that asylum seeker and refugee pupils' progress was in line with and in some cases exceeded that of other pupils in the school. In case study 3, interviewees reported that the majority of asylum seeker and refugee pupils achieved a number of GCSEs (mostly G and F grade passes). In other cases, evidence of individual pupil achievements was apparent by the progression of some students into sixth form.

However, despite the achievements of many pupils, interviewees highlighted that in attainment, asylum seeker and refugee pupils (particularly those at secondary level) made most progress in subjects less dependent on language, such as mathematics, and that the attainment of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in literacy and numeracy was still much lower than the national average. Indeed, irrespective of the support provided, interviewees acknowledged that often a number of other factors impacted on pupils' levels of attainment. The **extent of pupils' previous schooling** was felt to be a key factor in pupils' attainment, such that those who had attended school in their home countries progressed more quickly than those without previous school experience. Likewise, a pupil's progress and/or the grade achieved was influenced by the length of time the pupil had been in the country and attending school, which was often reflected in their understanding of and proficiency in English. In addition, pupils' age, and particularly whether or not they **arrived during the primary phase**, was felt to be a key factor in their future development. Here it was suggested that young people who arrived in the country while of primary age tended to progress more quickly than those who arrived at secondary level. It was felt that primary schools enabled pupils to access more intensive support and begin to interact with peers from an earlier age, which was beneficial for their future attainment.

Furthermore, a number of interviewees commented on asylum seeker and refugees' general attitude, in particular their **drive, determination, and commitment to learning** as being key to their success, a factor which has been widely acknowledged elsewhere (Clarke, 2003; Ofsted, 2003).



#### **Language support: impact on pupils other than asylum seekers or refugees**

In-class support aimed at supporting the attainment and progression of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was also felt to be of benefit to other pupils. For example, in case study 3, although asylum seeker and refugee pupils were the main focus of the support provided by the LA staff, the linguistic and cultural mediators usually worked in small groups or worked in close proximity to other pupils. Consequently, their support would often extend to the other pupils in the class. This meant that more pupils received additional in-class support, and that asylum seeker and refugee pupils did not feel singled out, which was particularly beneficial for promoting integration in the classroom.

#### **Language support: impact on school staff**

An awareness of the language support available for new arrivals from a dedicated member of school or LA staff reassured class teachers that they had the time to prepare for the new addition to their class and could access support in relation to lesson planning. In addition, the provision of in-class support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils also meant that class teachers could direct their attention to the whole class in the knowledge that pupils requiring additional help were being supported. Moreover, this support provided teachers with additional time during lessons, which was felt to alleviate some of the pressures on them.

#### **4.5.3 Factors affecting the type of language support provided**

A range of factors determined the type of language support offered to asylum seeker and refugee pupils (in-class support or withdrawal sessions). These included:

- teachers' preference for in-class support or withdrawal;
- pupils' age;
- pupils' level of English acquisition;
- pupils' previous experience of schooling and levels of literacy in their own language;
- the type of lesson.

Often it was the **class teacher** who determined whether a pupil received language support in class or as a package of withdrawal sessions. For example, in some schools, withdrawal support was requested by teachers to avoid disruption to other pupils, or if the teacher felt that a newly arrived pupil was unable to cope in the mainstream classroom. In other cases, the **age of the pupil** sometimes determined whether or not support was provided in class. In this respect, in-class support was often more successful in the early years or primary phase than at secondary level. This was because secondary pupils often required more intensive support and at a faster pace in order to develop their language skills sufficiently: 'basically to give them a crash course in English' (ESOL teacher, case study 1). This type of support therefore required more one-to-one or small-group work with pupils and was usually more appropriately conducted away from the mainstream classroom. In addition, for secondary pupils in Years 10 or 11, **coursework and examination preparation** was often a priority and therefore withdrawing pupils to focus on these specific tasks was considered to be the most appropriate form of supporting pupils at that time. However, as Remsbery (2003) noted, the level of success in relation to withdrawal support at secondary level was often variable. Pupils' **level of English** acquisition was also an influential factor in the organisation of their language support. Specifically, for pupils with limited English more intensive support was often necessary and therefore withdrawal sessions were felt to be more appropriate in supporting these pupils. Where pupils' level of English was more advanced, in-class support could usually be provided to address any language needs as they arose. Similarly, pupils with little or no **previous experience of schooling** or low levels of literacy in their home language were initially more likely to receive withdrawal than in-class support, to support their gradual integration into the mainstream classroom environment. In several cases, the type of support

offered was also determined by the **lesson** itself. For example, pupils would be more likely to be withdrawn during the more academic lessons (such as English or mathematics) which required more focus and concentration, than in other lessons such as art, which were more flexible and thus required less support. Withdrawing pupils during lessons that required more intensive support also ensured that other pupils in the class were not distracted.

#### 4.5.4 Language support staff

A range of LA and school staff were involved in providing language support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, although across the LAs, this support was most commonly provided by **EAL teachers or specialists** and/or **bilingual support assistants**. These staff were usually employed by the LA, but in some cases were employed directly by the school through their EMAG funding. As one LA interviewee noted in relation to the LA support provided:

*Without the bilingual assistant they [pupils] suffer because they [teachers] don't understand what they speak and they don't have someone to support them. They don't know how to say some things and there is a lot of frustration in the schools because the pupil doesn't understand and nobody understands their language.*

LA practitioner, case study 3

In some LAs, in addition to the EAL support received from the LA or employed by schools directly, schools had employed **representatives from the local community** to work as bilingual assistants to support pupils in school and develop school–parent–community links. In these cases, the support assistants would work with pupils in their first language to translate information during the lessons. In addition, several primary schools and some secondary schools were able to make use of the support offered by **teaching assistants** and **learning mentors** to provide language support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

## 4.6 Pastoral support

A strong pastoral support system was felt to be key in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils to become accustomed to and integrated in the English education system: 'A school which meets a child's academic and social needs is one where that child will feel happy' (DfES, 2004). This was one of the main areas of support provided by school staff following the admission of a newly arrived pupil, and focused on:

- increasing pupils' awareness and understanding of the education system;
- supporting pupils' personal and social needs;
- supporting pupils' wider needs, such as emotional needs, family circumstances;
- support at key times, such as transition between primary and secondary school.

Often pupils' pastoral needs would be supported by a key worker based within the LA or school. However, other school-based teaching and non-teaching staff were also responsible for supporting pupils' successful integration into schools. In many schools, **existing pastoral systems** were used to support pupils' pastoral needs. In particular, interviewees pointed to the value of inclusion or learning support centres within schools which offered support to a range of vulnerable pupils and could also be accessed by asylum seeker and refugee pupils. These centres provided a safe place where new arrivals could feel secure and comfortable. In addition, the centres acted as a base where staff were usually available for pupils to access support. In one secondary school, for example, following arrival and assessment asylum seeker and refugee pupils were allocated a learning mentor and were initially supported by their mentor in the learning support centre. The centre was open to all vulnerable pupils at break time and lunchtime and was used by pupils at these times as a space in which they could sit with a small group of friends.

Interviewees also spoke of the need to increase asylum seeker and refugee **pupils' awareness and understanding of the English education system**, and to support them in adjusting accordingly. In particular, some interviewees noted that asylum seeker and refugee pupils from some communities required support in adapting to the informality of the English education system compared with their previous school experiences. Conversely, for other pupils, particularly those with little experience of education, interviewees noted that a significant amount of time was required to develop pupils' understanding of the structure of the school day and the different areas of the school (for example the toilets and the playground). The importance of this has also been identified in much of the research available on supporting the education of asylum seekers and refugees (Refugee Council, 2005). Understanding the culture in a new country, and learning how to interact with other children, were highlighted as the main challenges faced by asylum seeker and refugee pupils. LA and school staff described how pupils were often unfamiliar with what they 'could' and 'could not' do in school, as well as how to interact with other pupils and staff. Supporting pupils' **personal and social development** was therefore identified as one of the main areas of additional input required of LA and school staff.

As part of this, teachers and support staff often offered one-to-one pastoral support to pupils during break times and lunchtime, such as accompanying pupils into the playground during break time, and sitting with them during their lunch. In one LA, for example, the support officer (who was also a qualified youth worker) was able to use these skills to spend time with newly arrived pupils during lunchtime and break time and encourage them to become involved in playground activities with other pupils.

Many of the staff working with asylum seeker and refugee pupils were also involved in **supporting their immediate and wider needs**. This involved providing holistic support for pupils, and in some cases, their families. This included support for accessing uniform, obtaining free school meal passes, explaining the lunch system including the different foods available, and dealing with ongoing queries as they arose: 'It is everything. How many lessons they have a day, what time they have to be in school, PE kit, can they swim, have they got any allergies' (school staff, case study 1). In another LA, support staff were also involved in liaising with pupils, parents and the school in relation to pupil attendance or behavioural issues (for example, representing the pupil concerned and ensuring that they and their parents understood the issues and outcomes). Likewise, if a pupil experienced an incident in school such as bullying, this could be reported to the member of support staff who would then pass the information on to the class teacher or headteacher and ensure that the issue was dealt with appropriately.

**Emotional support** was also identified as critical in helping pupils to address any issues and adapt to their new environment. In one LA, a number of support strategies were in place to address the pupils' emotional needs and well-being. These included the employment of a mental health professional to support pupils in relation to the continuing effects of the traumas they might have experienced and that could affect their personal, social and emotional development and impede their learning. In most cases, the mental health worker would support pupils within the school environment so as to not disrupt the child's routine further. The LA had also appointed an art therapist to support primary pupils' emotional needs by enabling the children to express their emotions through a medium other than words. This was felt to be a particularly useful approach due to the language barriers faced by many of the newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee children. The use of play formed a major part of this approach and pupils were encouraged to participate in drama and play activities individually and alongside other pupils to express and address their feelings and emotions, as well as to develop their confidence and support their social development:

*Art therapy can help children to tap into thoughts and emotions that may be tracked back because the child doesn't want to think about them. Through play and art children can access things that they might not talk about... Where the local population children will show their distress in behavioural problems, refugee and asylum seekers will often stay quiet... but they are sitting on a lot of thoughts and feelings, and art and drama are useful in painting that process.*

LA practitioner, case study 2

## **Pastoral support: impact on the social and emotional development of asylum seeker and refugee pupils**

A main impact of the pastoral support provided for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was on their **social inclusion and integration into school**. Having a key contact or key worker to reassure and provide a continuity of support was believed to have had a significant impact on the pupils themselves. For example, in a school in case study 3, having a member of school staff (the EMA coordinator) responsible for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was seen as important as pupils felt they had someone looking out for them and could access support whenever they needed it.

In addition, by building relationships with pupils, the key contact or key workers were able to support pupils' **emotional development**. In case study 5, for example, a bilingual teaching assistant was deployed to schools during the first months of a pupil's arrival. Not only was the teaching assistant able to provide language support, and thus impact on developing pupils' communication skills and understanding in lessons (for example, in relation to instructions from the class teacher and conversations with peers) but the assistant also provided important support for their emotional needs such as the opportunity to talk about their feelings and express any concerns with someone who spoke the same language. This additional pastoral support was felt to be particularly significant for pupils as many arrived at school withdrawn and traumatised, and the emotional support helped pupils to feel more secure and content. As the senior manager from case study 5 noted:

*They are very scared; they have often travelled from countries where they live in fear of the authorities. The first impact we have is moving their perception of how they can be supported away from their country, and beginning to build trust with them. For some of them, building trust in adults, particularly strange adults, is an alien concept to them. They have often lived in cultures where the only people they can trust are their own family.*

LA strategic staff, case study 5

Increasing asylum seeker and refugee pupils' self-confidence and aspirations for the future was a further impact identified by interviewees in relation to the pastoral support provided by staff. For example, in case study 5, LA staff had arranged for several Year 11 asylum seeker and refugee pupils to visit a local university. These visits enabled young people and their parents/carers to access advice and guidance about higher education, raising their awareness of higher education opportunities. More importantly however, the visits demonstrated what pupils could achieve in the future and the options available to them achieve their goals, raising their aspirations. Similar good practice examples can be found in appendix 5.

## Case study 5: Connexions personal adviser for unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees

In case study 5, a Connexions personal adviser (PA) within the LA's multi-agency support team, which focused on supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children, was identified as the main point of contact for pupils in relation to any support they might need, educational or otherwise. This was felt to be particularly important for those young people who were in semi-independent living or for those in foster care as it provided them with a key contact through whom they could access support for a range of issues. The main impact of this role, as identified by interviewees in the LA, was that the PA provided the young people with continuity of support. For example, pupils always had access to the PA by phone and the PA would visit pupils at home regularly and when requested by the young people themselves. The PA offered a wide range of support, for example attending school progress meetings and presentation evenings, and also provided the young people with careers information and assistance with interview preparation. In addition, if any of the young people had social care issues and were unable to contact their social worker they could contact the PA. As the team was multidisciplinary, the PA could then easily pass on any concerns to the social worker to be dealt with promptly.

The value of the PA as a key worker for the young person was in the ability to spend time with him and build the relationship. As a result the young person was able to follow a course suited to his interests, rather than simply a course to develop his English language skills.

In other LAs, school and LA staff had established specific packages to support pupils at key points in their educational careers. In particular, support during the **transition from primary to secondary school** was identified as a crucial time for asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

## Supporting primary to secondary transition

In order to support pupils during their transition from primary to secondary school, one LA had developed a programme of events to support pupils. As part of the programme, pupils were encouraged to develop strategies to increase their confidence and self-esteem and thus prepare them for the secondary school environment. This included arranging visits to the local secondary schools, working with pupils from other year groups, and a trip to a local theatre company where pupils were able to discuss their aspirations and anxieties about the future through drama.

In case study 4, LA staff worked across primary and secondary schools in the LA, and therefore were able to maintain support for individual pupils during the transition period. As part of this, support officers continued to provide support to the primary pupils on their transition to secondary school. This meant that pupils were supported by a familiar and friendly face in their secondary school environment. By targeting support to pupils and schools during this time, the LA ensured that the transition process was as smooth as possible and therefore minimised the level of disruption and stress for the pupils involved.

## 4.7 Family support

Establishing strong links with parents was felt to be a key area of support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. Across the six case study LAs, a number of initiatives had been introduced to ensure that parents and carers were involved in their child's education. These included:

- home-school liaison, for example home visits, parents' evenings, translation support;
- extracurricular activities, for example after-school clubs, school trips;
- community activities, for example drop-in centres, family clubs, language classes.

A flexible approach to supporting parents of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was felt to be key to schools' success in including parents from new communities. Interviewees highlighted the fact that support for parents was ongoing, and described how LA support officers would regularly speak formally and informally to parents at any time, for example before and after school and over the phone.

## 4.7.1 Home-school liaison

Home-school liaison was felt to be a key strategy for including the parents of asylum seeker and refugee children. In several of the case study LAs, teams employed staff with a specific responsibility for liaising between the school and the family. The role of these staff was to support families during admission, induction and beyond as required. For example in case study 3, four linguistic and cultural mediators from different countries reflecting the main community groups in the LA area had been employed by the LA to develop school and LA links with parents and the local asylum seeker and refugee communities. One of the main roles of the mediators was to liaise between families, the local community and schools. A range of strategies were employed by the mediators in order to maintain regular communication with parents. These included frequent phone conversations, regular appointments with teachers to monitor pupils' progress and report back to parents, regular formal and informal meetings with parents regarding pupils' progress, and arranging and attending meetings between the pupils, parents and school staff where necessary. One mediator highlighted the role they played in raising parents' awareness of what their children were learning:

*If the parents don't actually understand what is going on in school and what children are actually learning, then they are not actually able to help the children in the home. What I can do is find out what is going on in the school, what sort of topics the teachers are covering and then I can develop a relationship with the parents and say if you want to help your child these are the areas, these are the topics, this is the focus you need to actually follow.*

LA practitioner, case study 3

In other LAs, specific staff at both school and LA level had a designated responsibility for home-school liaison, for example learning mentors or the SENCO. In other cases, interviewees reported that EAL teachers would also make home visits if required, for example if there was an issue regarding pupils' non-attendance. In addition, several interviewees recognised the key role played by bilingual support staff in liaising with parents to ensure that translation support was available during home visits. Likewise, interviewees acknowledged the importance of ensuring that any supporting documentation (such as school information) or school letters (for example, regarding attendance or school trips) were available in a variety of different languages. In a number of schools, templates for school letters commonly used had been developed in several languages.

In another LA, home visits were arranged in conjunction with other services. As part of this, the initial home visit involved representatives from the Education Service and the local refugee support organisations. This was felt to be a particularly useful arrangement as it avoided the family being visited at different times by various different agencies and ensured that all agencies could benefit from the range of background information obtained:

*A lot of the information is relevant to us all and so rather than doing three individual visits we go out and do a visit together. It also saves the families going over the same information.*

LA practitioner, case study 1

## **Family support: the impact of support on asylum seeker and refugee families**

The support available to families from LA and school staff was felt to have impacted on their understanding of the UK education system. Translation services and interpretation support meant that families were more likely to attend meetings because they could both understand and be understood. For example, following the appointment of the linguistic and cultural mediators in case study 3, parents' ability to access information about their children's education had improved, and attendance at parent meetings had increased. Furthermore, the mediators from their own backgrounds were able to provide schools with some background information about the families and their culture which had increased the awareness and understanding of school staff.

Ensuring that any information sent out to asylum seeker and refugee families was available in or translated into community languages meant that parents' understanding was enhanced and helped avoid potential confusion or distress caused by the arrival of official documents such as school letters. In many cases, staff from asylum seeker and refugee support teams spoke a variety of languages; consequently, they were also able to support families in completing documentation and accessing resources such as bus passes.

By ensuring that families could access and understand the information presented to them, schools and LAs were also able to ensure that parents had **realistic expectations** of the education system, as well as their role in supporting their children's development:

*Sometimes parents are not aware of how the education system works. Where we come from in Somalia, most of the teaching is done at school and parents do not worry about teaching the children at home, so parents think it is the same here, you send the children to school and they will learn. You need to make sure that parents understand that they have a role to play and that they need to work with their children at home, making sure that they do their homework and that their children read books and those kind of things.*

LA practitioner, case study 3

To a degree, the extent to which LAs focused on developing strategies to actively involve the parents of asylum seeker and refugee children could be linked to their overall strategic approach, and thus related to the position along the continuum devised for the present study. For example, in case study 1, an LA with relatively small numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and characterised by its centralised approach, interviewees highlighted that LA support staff working with asylum seeker and refugee pupils had been able to take on a more holistic approach to meeting their needs. Due to the focus on providing direct and holistic support for pupils, the flexibility in their role, and the time available to support pupils (due to the reduced numbers), staff had been able to take on a wider supporting role and had begun to provide some support for family issues, such as signposting families to other services. Interviewees recognised that this was outside their educational remit but acknowledged the benefits of this in gaining valuable background information about the families and thus developing a rounded knowledge of family circumstances from which they could provide the most appropriate support.

Conversely, in case study 3, where a more mainstreamed approach to supporting the needs of the client group was becoming established, the EMAG manager acknowledged that although strategies to include and support parents were being developed, the main focus was on supporting schools to meet the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In this way the LA highlighted the crucial role of other agencies such as the LA's asylum seeker and refugee

support team (housing-based), and a local asylum seeker and refugee support group (voluntary) for providing parental support within the LA.

## 4.7.2 Extracurricular activities

Several schools across the case study LAs also provided opportunities for parents to be involved in extracurricular activities with their children including, for example, pupil homework clubs, computer clubs, English classes and literacy groups. (See section 4.9 for further details of the activities.)

For example, in one LA, a number of strategies had been developed to support the inclusion of parents of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. As part of this approach, parents were invited to attend educational visits with their children (for example, to a local museum and other local attractions), and were also encouraged to attend workshops organised by the LA which focused on giving parents the skills to support their children's development in reading and writing. These strategies were felt to be particularly successful in integrating newcomer families into the local community, as well as promoting family learning and home-school collaboration.

In another LA, a local primary school with high numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils had introduced a guided reading scheme with the aim of developing home-school links further. As part of this, parents were invited to attend a presentation on guided reading at the school and were encouraged to become involved with the scheme. All parents were then given a home-school reading book which outlined the planned reading to be completed by pupils each week. In this book, parents were encouraged to comment on their child's progress, and to identify any issues or concerns that they had. The strategy was seen to be working particularly well with the asylum seeker and refugee parents as they were able to write comments in their own language and these could then be translated by the schools' bilingual assistants. This gave parents the opportunity to communicate with the school, as well as become more involved with their child's educational progress. Moreover, the scheme had been a particularly successful way of establishing links between parents and the school. Similarly, in a secondary school in case study 4, contact with parents was maintained through the use of student planners (homework diaries), which were issued to all students. These outlined pupils' targets and progress through which parents could monitor their children's development, using their home language as necessary.

## 4.7.3 Community activities

Local community meetings involving parents, carers and representatives from service providers were felt to be a useful strategy for involving asylum seeker and refugee parents in the school. Several schools provided rooms in the school buildings which were used as drop-in centres to support families and communities.

In some cases, the **drop-in sessions** would be organised and staffed by LA or school staff directly. In other LAs and schools, staff would attend drop-in sessions held by other agencies to support parents with education-related queries, as well as to network with other parents and agencies. The drop-in sessions gave parents the opportunity for discussions with staff and to access a variety of information and guidance materials. The sessions were also a useful opportunity for representatives from different agencies to network, raise issues and share good practice. Moreover, drop-in sessions provided an opportunity for parents to access support on a range of issues including housing, health, and benefits. In most cases, this would involve support workers signposting parents to other services and organisations able to offer support in these areas. Many parents would also use the drop-in sessions to access support in filling in application forms for various services or entitlements: 'it is to support the everyday needs of families' (LA strategic staff, case study 3).



Similarly, in another case study LA, some of the schools organised mums' groups and coffee mornings for the local community which were open to all parents. These were felt to provide a useful opportunity for families from new communities to engage with other local parents.

## Community activities

**Drop-in sessions:** Community drop-in sessions offered a one-stop shop for supporting the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. Staff provide face-to-face support to new families and thus are able to give immediate advice and guidance for a whole range of issues including health, housing and education.

**Family club:** In case study 2, a family club was organised at one of the local primary schools. All parents were invited to come into the school for fifteen minutes at the end of the school day. This time was used for parents to discuss with the teacher the areas of the curriculum being covered and the topics being taught to their children at that time. The club aimed to raise parents' awareness of the education system and teaching and learning strategies, and also provided parents with the knowledge and understanding to be able to support their children at home.

The young people and their parents were then invited to a programme of after-school activities during which parents were given the opportunity to work with their children on their school work. Families were also given activities to take home to complete. As a result, parents became more aware of the school system and were better able to support their children's learning. Moreover, the sessions helped to develop asylum seeker and refugee parents' English language skills, and integrate them with other parents from the local community.

**Community arts project:** In case study 6, a number of successful creative arts initiatives had been organised to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. These involved artists working in schools with parents and pupils as part of a number of different arts-based projects, including photography and sculpture. Following the projects, pupils' and parents' work was displayed at the National Portrait Gallery.

In case study 1, LA support officers and volunteers from other agencies in the LA held a two-day event which included an international fashion show. This provided an opportunity for some of the local community to meet with families from the refugee communities in an informal and social environment. In addition, the LA had organised a number of discos to bring both people in the local community together with some of the asylum seeker and refugee families:

*At the start of the night, everybody is kind of on different sides and then by the end of the night it is lovely to see people mixing. It is giving people in the local area the opportunity to actually meet people and see them as people rather than with the 'asylum seeker' label.*

LA practitioner, case study 1

Other ways in which LAs and schools had worked to raise awareness of asylum seeker and refugee issues included arts projects and displays of asylum seeker and refugee pupils' art work in local museums, talks by asylum seeker and refugee support teams at community meetings, promotional materials including leaflets and CD-ROMs, and press releases in the local media. For example, one LA, in conjunction with a local asylum seeker and refugee support agency, had used press releases of their policies and the experiences of local asylum seeker and refugee families in local newspapers to try to change attitudes in the community. This had helped to promote their service and to raise awareness and acceptance of the new communities.

### Family support: the impact of support on asylum seeker and refugee families

By increasing the participation of asylum seeker and refugee families in school activities, such as parent–toddler groups and family learning groups, parents were reported to have **established friendships** with other families and further integrated themselves into the school and local community.

In addition, several of the activities to support families (particularly home–school liaison and drop-in sessions) had impacted on parents in providing important opportunities for passing on and accessing **information, advice and guidance**, as well as **signposting** parents to other services and voluntary and statutory agencies.

### Family support: the impact of support on the local community

In some LAs, interviewees felt that there had been a significant impact on members of the local community in their **awareness and acceptance of asylum seeker and refugee families**. Community activities such as those described previously (such as family clubs, social events) had helped to break down some of the barriers and myths associated with the asylum seeker and refugee population by providing an opportunity for parents from different communities to interact with each other.

However, it was reported by other interviewees that support had only had a marginal impact on the local community and that racist attitudes were still entrenched. One of the reasons given for this was that media images and stereotypes of asylum seekers and refugees had reinforced and perpetuated people's negative views. It was also noted that community attitudes varied widely across the LA, with some areas being more accepting of asylum seeker and refugee families than others. Here it was acknowledged that changing deep-rooted attitudes takes time:

*On the children there is [impact] but it is a much bigger 'ask' to get that kind of impact in the community. The community I would have to say has been through some bumpy times with asylum seekers and some asylum seeker families have had to move because of the intolerance of people in the community... but I do feel it is improving... in school it is what we are fostering and so hopefully the children are taking it out, so we will hopefully take some credit for it.*

School staff, case study 1

## 4.8 Resources

The development of resources to support the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was one of the main areas of support offered by the case study LAs. A range of resources and materials had been developed by LA and school. These could be broadly categorised into the following areas:

- classroom materials to support **teaching and learning**, such as language development resources and dual language resources;
- **curriculum enrichment** resources such as texts and materials representing asylum seeker and refugee issues;
- DVDs, CDs, videos and other materials focusing on **raising schools' and parents' awareness**, for example, documentaries for staff on the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and induction materials for pupils and parents;
- **ICT-based resources**, for example language support software, courses and websites;

- **information leaflets, guides and handbooks**, for example on good practice and the admission and/or induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

In many cases, the development of resources focused mainly on producing **teaching and learning materials** to enable asylum seeker and refugee pupils to access the curriculum. Translation materials to accompany existing schemes of work were particularly useful in this respect as they were felt to have helped school staff to support pupils. Translation materials were also used to help schools communicate with young people and their families. For example, during meetings with families from different communities schools were able to access a range of bilingual materials available from the LA such as dual language texts. Other resources and materials included:

- bilingual glossaries, dictionaries and phrase books;
- welcome posters in different languages;
- key words for different subjects in both English and other languages;
- story packs;
- visual aids such as flash cards;
- worksheets and diagrams.

In case study 3, the LA's linguistic and cultural mediator had recently developed science resources to support a secondary pupil. This involved re-labelling body parts in a diagram of the body in the pupils' home language. This enabled the pupil to learn the parts of the body and the English words for those parts and therefore engage fully in the learning experience. In case study 4, a curriculum development project had been established by LA staff. This involved the LA team working with schools to develop a set of resources to support Key Stage 4 asylum seeker and refugee pupils to access the curriculum.

## Curriculum development project

As part of a curriculum development project, members of the LA team in case study 4 had developed a range of resources to support Key Stage 4 asylum seeker and refugee pupils in different areas of the curriculum. The aim of the project was to build up a bank of resources which could be shared between secondary schools. EMA teachers from the team are allocated one afternoon each week to develop resources.

As part of this, staff began working with school departments to produce packs of materials to support Key Stage 4 new arrivals. This included the development of a number of support materials and resources for the texts most widely studied in the Key Stage 4 English curriculum. These included John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, and Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

Packs to support pupils all followed the same structure and included:

- chapter summaries (in simple English);
- visual resources to explain words or phrases;
- key words to accompany each chapter;
- language activities or worksheets relating to the text and linked to the themes to be studied.

The materials are available to schools on CD-ROM and have also been used in LA training as examples of good practice in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In addition, teachers described how the materials had been useful for supporting other students, for example where the text was unfamiliar or to catch up when a pupil had missed a number of lessons. The aim of the project was to develop resources that would be relevant to the curriculum content and thus useful for the teacher. A key part of the project has been LA staff working closely with class teachers in schools to determine the types of resources required and the areas they should address. In addition, teachers are able to request resources for a particular topic or activity. This has also had the added impact of encouraging class teachers to be involved in contributing to and developing resources themselves:

*A lot of schools have recognised that in-house products are of just as high quality as outsourced materials. This is really good for two reasons: they are in-house and so obviously in terms of cost that is good; and that [schools] can then develop from those resources their own packages of resources and schools are doing that now.*

LA strategic staff, case study 4

In addition to developing materials to support existing schemes of work, several LAs **bought in new resources and materials** to ensure that asylum seeker and refugee pupils were represented in the curriculum. In case study 5 for example, the centre from which the LA team worked included a resource library which held a wide range of texts in a variety of languages and stories representing different cultures. In case study 3, a similar library had been established which included a range of materials for supporting pupils with EAL needs, for example dual language texts, in addition to other texts in different languages. All newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee pupils would be introduced to the library during their induction and were invited to make use of the resources available at any point during their school career. Families and community groups were also invited to use the materials available. By providing resources such as dual language texts to families, parents could support their children as well as improve their own learning. For example, in one LA, foster carers for unaccompanied asylum seeker pupils were able to request resources from the designated teacher to enable them to support the young person with their coursework (for example, a *Romeo and Juliet* DVD). The team also ensured that schools were aware of the

range of materials available by issuing a regular mailing list to all schools through which materials could be ordered.

As noted previously, across the six case study LAs, Welcome booklets and DVDs had been developed in several different languages to support the admission and induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In addition, several LAs made use of the training materials and guidance published by national organisations such as Save the Children and the Refugee Council. These materials enabled good practice to be disseminated and were felt to be key to improving asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences of education.

## Welcome DVD

In case study 6, a DVD had been produced for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families which aimed to provide information about the national and local education system and raised awareness about local schools and other services available to asylum seeker and refugee families.

The DVD was produced in ten different languages: Arabic, Chinese, English (with British Sign Language), French, Kurdish, Portuguese, Spanish, Somali and Turkish. It was distributed to 80 schools in the LA as well as various other agencies and services, such as other LA departments, libraries and a number of community organisations. The LA provided each school with a DVD player to enable them to show the DVD as part of their welcome and induction of new families.

The DVD has five sections, three focusing solely on the education system. These include sections on primary education, secondary education, and post-16 opportunities. To address families' needs, the DVD also includes a section on where to get advice and a section on transport in the LA area, providing details of bus and tube links. A booklet is provided with each DVD giving addresses and phone numbers for all the services covered in the DVD.

The DVD has been awarded Beacon status by the Home Office. In addition, Ofsted praised the LA's effective induction policies and procedures and noted improvement in schools' confidence in receiving and meeting the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

Similarly, several LAs had developed a range of **information and guidance documents** for parents, schools and other agencies. At school level, resources often focused on raising schools' awareness of asylum seeker and refugee issues and providing support and guidance for different policies and procedures, with the aim of improving practice across schools. These materials were therefore often linked to LA training programmes.

In addition, across the six case study LAs, a range of information and guidance materials had been produced to support the parents of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. This included information on the education and school system and the contact details of local and national organisations such as voluntary support groups. For example, in case study 6, an audio tape had been developed specifically for Roma parents to provide information that would support parents during the primary to secondary transition. This information was felt to be particularly important for the Roma community because many of the pupils and their parents had very limited experience of schooling and were particularly apprehensive about transition. The tape outlined what happens when pupils attend secondary school, for example that they would receive homework and be asked to keep a diary. It also outlined where parents could purchase uniforms and how to apply for free school meals.

## Information leaflets and materials

In case study 6, a series of information booklets and audiotapes about the education system had been developed. These were available in 10 languages. In addition, the LA set up a directory containing information, advice and contact details in relation to the most common issues and concerns expressed by asylum seeker and refugee pupils. This was developed following a small project in which the LA's parental outreach worker carried out a survey of concerns raised by asylum seeker and refugee families in selected schools over a one week period. Following this, each issue or concern was recorded and a researcher was appointed to work alongside the LA team to seek information and advice in relation to the issues raised. This information was then used to develop a directory based around the issues identified and was issued to all schools in the LA. The directory can be used by school staff and newly arrived asylum seeker and refugee families to access information on a range of issues and concerns, for example how to register with a GP and how to obtain school uniform.

The LA also produced a termly bulletin to schools on asylum seeker and refugee issues. The bulletin contained information about the work of the LA support team and details of previous activities and upcoming events.

Several LAs had also made use of **ICT-based language software** which was felt to be a useful tool for supporting pupils' language acquisition and development. For example, in one LA, staff and pupils were able to access curriculum support on a dedicated website for bilingual learners.

## Refugee education website

In case study 6, a refugee education website was developed to support schools and asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. The website provided a range of materials to support schools and teachers working with asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The website included resources and guidance for induction, assessment, supporting pupils in the classroom (for example phrasebooks in a variety of languages, lesson plans), monitoring, guidance on supporting pupils with special educational needs and LA policy documentation. In addition, the website includes examples of good practice and identifies links to other useful websites.

## Resources: the impact of support on school staff, asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families

A range of impacts associated with the resources available were identified by interviewees. The materials and resources developed by LA staff and schools were felt to have enabled asylum seeker and refugee pupils to access the curriculum and supported their attainment. In addition, they enabled the LA and schools to communicate with pupils and their parents about the school system and expectations. Furthermore, it was felt that the resources, ideas and teaching strategies suggested by LA staff had supported class teachers in welcoming new arrivals, as well as providing support for lesson planning. As a result, interviewees suggested that teachers and schools were more confident in supporting the needs of the client group and were beginning to demonstrate more inclusive practice.

Moreover, it was felt that by both developing in-house resources and buying in external materials, asylum seeker and refugee experiences and issues were beginning to become embedded, and thus more integrated into the curriculum.

As with other areas of support, the range of resources developed by and available across the six LAs could be broadly linked to their positions along the continuum, reflecting the degree to which they adopted a centralised or mainstreamed approach to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In case study 6, for example, which operated a mainstreamed approach, the high number of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in schools and the LA's vast experience of

supporting the client group had led to the development of a number of resources over time to support the admission and induction of refugee children and their families, as well as supporting pupils' language development. Similarly, in other LAs that adopted a more mainstreamed approach, resources and materials were a key feature of the support, because LA staff were providing less day-to-day support. This was highlighted in case study 5 which provided a large resource library that formed part of the induction of new arrivals (they were introduced to the library during the induction process) and which was widely promoted as a resource to support schools (for example by issuing a regular mailing list of the resources available). In case study 4, the establishment of a curriculum development project was an integral part of the LA's commitment to encouraging and supporting schools to take on board their responsibilities with respect to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

## 4.9 Out-of-school activities

Across the six case study LAs, a variety of out-of-school activities were available to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. These fell into two main areas:

- extracurricular activities, for example homework clubs and computer classes;
- leisure and social activities, for example trips to local attractions and sporting events.

In this respect, several interviewees also acknowledged the benefit of the extended schools initiative in relation to the provision of extracurricular activities for asylum seeker and refugee families. As part of this, a number of schools were in the process of establishing themselves as community schools, through which they were actively developing their links with the local community, for example by providing ESOL and ICT courses for parents.

In the majority of the case study LAs, at both primary and secondary level, after-school **study support sessions** were provided to support the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. At primary level, homework clubs were often used to support pupils' language development using a set of pre-organised activities for pupils to complete each week. Pupils could then progress through the activities as they became more competent. In other cases, sessions would be guided by the pupils' class teacher, for example when pupils experienced difficulty in a particular lesson. The homework sessions could then be used to work through the topic or lesson with pupils again, to develop their understanding in that area.

At secondary level, the homework clubs were usually structured more as revision sessions or study support groups allowing pupils and support staff to focus on particular subject areas. This was felt to be an extremely valuable opportunity for pupils, especially if they had experienced comprehension difficulties in class during the lesson:

*For example, if they have done maths, linear equations and those types of things, and they don't understand it, I will go over it again with them and make sure they understand what they have already covered.*

LA practitioner, case study 3

In other cases, pupils were invited to use sessions to complete coursework, for examination preparation, or to receive additional support in completing homework set during a previous lesson. Similarly, in another LA, pupils were invited to attend national test and GCSE booster sessions at a local learning centre. Homework clubs also provided both primary and secondary pupils with the opportunity to access bilingual support on a one-to-one or small-group basis, and also encouraged pupils to develop friendships with other children.

In one LA, staff had been involved in drafting and sending letters to the parents of asylum seeker and refugee pupils to inform them of after-school sessions available and to reinforce

the value of the facility. In addition, parents were invited to attend the homework club alongside their children. Through this, support staff also aimed to provide parents with a better understanding of their children's education and give them strategies to support their children's learning at home.

## **Homework clubs**

In case study 3, several homework clubs were offered for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The sessions were available for any child, although support officers tended to encourage the asylum seeker and refugee children they supported to attend. The homework clubs were available on a weekly basis and were organised as two support sessions per week.

## **Summer camps**

One LA had established an ethnic minority achievement summer school for new arrivals for two weeks during the summer holidays. This provided pupils with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with local community services such as the leisure centre and library, to receive language support, and to establish friendships with other pupils. Unfortunately, due to funding constraints this provision had come to an end after two years. Other LAs, however, also offered activities during the summer holidays for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, such as ESOL courses and visits to local attractions.

In case study 2, staff had developed a rich extracurricular programme to support the integration of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. This included a package of activities, including dance, badminton, science and ICT workshops. The activities took place at lunchtime and after school and also included weekend visits to the theatre and a number of sporting events, as well as a half-term Dance Academy. Interviewees from the LA spoke extremely positively of the benefit of this programme for the integration of newly arrived pupils and this was further acknowledged by Ofsted, who described the programme as unique in supporting the inclusion and attainment of new arrivals.

Similarly, in case study 1, a group of pupils were involved in a film-making project to raise awareness of their experiences. As part of this, the LA support officer and a local museum worked with a group of new arrivals and other pupils from two local youth groups to make a CD-ROM about the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Pupils were given some film-making lessons, learned how to write stories, and spent time filming each other to familiarise themselves with the video equipment. Pupils then came together to record the film each Saturday morning over a period of several months. Subsequently, the documentary was being used as part of the training sessions delivered to schools in the LA.



### **Out-of-school activities: impact on the social integration of asylum seeker and refugee pupils**

Extracurricular activities both supported pupils' language and academic development, and facilitated their involvement in the wider social aspects of school life. In one LA, interviewees reported that the establishment of a homework club had raised pupils' levels of attainment above those who had not attended. In addition, some schools reported that following the introduction of the homework club, parents' attendance at school functions had increased, and this had enabled a positive relationship between the school and the asylum seeker and refugee community to begin to develop. Parents had become more aware of the structure of the education system, the educational level of their children, and how best to support their development. In addition, by interacting with parents at the homework club, school staff had become more aware of asylum seeker and refugee issues.

Other out-of-school activities such as summer schools and clubs provided opportunities for asylum seeker and refugee pupils to socialise with other pupils and were felt to have helped reduce the isolation of some young asylum seekers and refugees. This was seen to be particularly significant for unaccompanied asylum seeker and refugee pupils who were seen as living independent and different lives to their peers. Here, pupils' involvement in out-of-school activities was seen to have helped restore a sense of normality into their lives.

In case study 2, however, interviewees reported that the number of pupils attending specific extracurricular events for asylum seeker and refugee pupils had begun to decline, but noted that this was because the summer schools and after-school clubs that those pupils had been attending had made pupils aware of other initiatives in the LA. As a result, the asylum seeker and refugee pupils had begun to access existing mainstream provision, rather than the activities specifically arranged for them, highlighting the positive impact of the out-of-school activities on their personal and social development.

## **4.10 Awareness raising**

LA and school staff played a key role in raising awareness of asylum seeker and refugee cultures in schools. A variety of strategies were used by LA and school staff to create a welcoming climate for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. These included:

- celebration events and activities;
- lessons and assemblies;
- the general school environment.

However, interviewees also acknowledged the importance of adopting a sensitive approach to celebrating different cultures and ensuring that pupils were fairly represented and involved in the events and activities which took place.

Schools were actively involved in the celebration of different cultures, languages and backgrounds through a range of **events and activities**. Theme weeks, cultural festivals and the arts were identified as key areas through which different cultures and backgrounds could be explored, and awareness and understanding of the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils could be raised. In addition, many schools used annual events such as Refugee Week as an opportunity to learn about and celebrate the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Likewise, several schools organised celebration events to promote specific nationalities at various points throughout the year, for example Somali National Day. Here, pupils and parents were encouraged to dress in their national costume and bring information and traditional foods into school to raise awareness of their culture. Schools across the case study LAs were also keen to celebrate other faiths such as during Eid and

Diwali, and one school had taken the decision to offer only vegetarian food in school in order to ensure that the needs and religions of pupils from different cultures in the school were respected.

On promoting diversity, interviewees from case study 2 described how the LA had provided funding for three schools in the LA to take part in a diversity week, during which children were given the opportunities to engage in a variety of activities and events to celebrate different cultures, for example musical activities and cooking from around the world. Subsequently, several schools in the LA had planned and self-funded a diversity week for their pupils.

## **Awareness raising: the impact of celebration events and activities on pupils other than asylum seekers and refugees**

Celebration and awareness-raising events were felt to have had a **positive impact on pupils other than asylum seekers and refugees** in a number of ways. It was noted that there was an impact on pupils' attitudes. In one school, for example, staff arranged a visit to an exhibition of real-life stories about the lives of asylum seekers and refugees. This was felt to have had a significant impact on the pupils who attended in **increasing awareness** of the issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees, and **greater empathy** towards such pupils and their families. In the same way, events such as Refugee Week and Black History Week, which celebrated the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers to UK society, as well as highlighting the reasons why people seek sanctuary, had impacted positively on pupils' understanding. During Refugee Week in one school, children were asked to submit an entry for a poetry competition. Here the teacher noted how children from White British backgrounds wrote about what it must feel like to be displaced from their country, exemplifying their deepened understanding.

Though not a direct impact of the strategies employed, several interviewees also highlighted the value of pupils other than asylum seekers and refugees taking attitudes and ideas back to their parents as a result of their school experiences, and acknowledged the central role of the school in promoting equality and inclusion across the school for the benefit of wider society.

School interviewees also described using the **curriculum** to raise awareness about asylum seeker and refugee issues. PSHE and citizenship lessons were felt to be a particularly useful arena in which to discuss different cultures and religions. In case study 5, a project focusing on asylum seekers and refugees had been developed and launched in schools to raise awareness and promote positive images of the new communities across the LA area. As part of the project, schools in four areas of the LA were given a film and accompanying resource pack. Teachers and support staff in the schools were then offered training on how to use the materials with their pupils. This could then be used by schools as a specific resource, or incorporated into lessons to counter negative images of asylum seekers and refugees, and educate pupils about the positive contributions of local asylum seeker and refugee families. The project was regarded as particularly successful and was recognised as a good practice example on the DfES/Home Office website (DfES and Home Office, 2005). The project has now been extended to other schools in the LA.

In addition, in case study 2, the assistant manager of the asylum seeker and refugee support team was invited to a school assembly on human rights during which children had planted peace roses. The team had also been approached by three schools in the LA who were interested in establishing a collaborative project to challenge racism.

### Awareness-raising strategies: quizzes

In one LA, support staff had developed several quizzes which could be used by schools to raise awareness of the experiences and needs of asylum seeker and refugee families, address issues of racism in schools, and dispel some of the stereotypes and myths which had developed regarding the asylum seeker and refugee communities. As part of these activities pupils were asked to complete an initial quiz to assess their knowledge and understanding of asylum seekers and refugees, and an exercise to determine pupils' perceptions of the asylum seeker and refugee population. Here pupils were asked to draw a person and label the picture with the characteristics of, and information about, asylum seekers and refugees. Pupils were then shown a video and engaged in a discussion with the LA support officers on the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. Pupils were then asked to repeat the initial exercise in light of their increased knowledge and understanding. As a result of this, LA staff realised further work needed to be carried out to raise awareness of asylum seeker and refugee issues among the pupils who were not asylum seekers or refugees. LA staff, asylum seeker and refugee pupils and a local museum therefore came together to produce a film about the lives and experiences of asylum seekers and refugees (as described in section 4.9 previously).

Although one-off events and activities were felt to be useful in raising awareness about asylum seekers and refugees, several interviewees acknowledged that it was often preferable to aim to develop awareness and acceptance at a whole-school level (i.e. the school ethos), rather than focusing on one-off events and celebrations. Indeed, the importance of establishing an inclusive **whole-school ethos** was identified by interviewees as one of the key factors in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In many cases, this was reflected in the schools' race equality and/or inclusion policies, and was reinforced by the headteacher to ensure that all staff contributed to creating a positive and welcoming environment for all pupils. In particular, the importance of pronouncing pupils' names correctly and ensuring that staff and pupils were welcoming in their approach to new arrivals was felt to be key. As the headteacher noted:

*It is about getting children quickly integrated into the whole culture of the school, which is a 'smiley' culture. That is one of the ground rules of the school, you have got to smile... it is that kind of warm atmosphere which pervades the whole thing – and it is about getting those children involved in that.*

School staff, case study 1

Indeed, the headteacher and other senior staff were felt to be central in promoting and maintaining an inclusive whole-school ethos, and ensuring that the school's policies were reflected in the practice of staff.

Furthermore, the use of **classroom displays** and presenting pupils' artwork around the school was felt to be particularly valuable in celebrating different cultures. In one LA, the linguistic and cultural mediator was responsible for a number of display areas in schools. These areas were used to promote and display information about different events and issues related to asylum seekers and refugees, including bullying, Black history month, and national celebrations from around the world. Furthermore, the asylum seeker and refugee pupils themselves were encouraged to contribute to the displays in order to share their culture and experience with the rest of the school. However, the importance of adopting a sensitive approach to the celebration of different cultures was recognised by interviewees. For example, interviewees described how some pupils were reluctant to celebrate their culture or share their experiences as they did not want to be differentiated from the other pupils in the school, for example for fear of racism and social exclusion.

#### **Awareness raising: the impact of support on school staff**

By working alongside specialist LA asylum seeker and refugee support staff and participating in projects and training events aimed at raising awareness of the needs of asylum seekers and refugees (in relation to education and more generally, such as challenging myths and stereotypes) interviewees believed that there had been a **positive change in attitudes and perceptions** among school staff. In case study 2, staff involved in a mental health project focusing on asylum seeker and refugee pupils completed a survey which showed that 14 of the 15 staff involved had changed their views about asylum seeker and refugee children and were more positive since participating in the project.

The package of support provided by LAs also helped **raise teachers' awareness** of refugee and asylum seeker issues. In particular, asylum seekers and refugees were no longer perceived as 'problem' pupils, merely as new arrivals requiring additional support. The impact of this was that teachers felt more confident in their ability to support pupils and were more flexible in their approach:

*The staff now are incredibly welcoming... they will welcome them with open arms because they are the ones that work... They know [the asylum seeker and refugee pupils] will work hard and will get good grades, they boost your GCSE results.*

School staff, case study 2

#### **Awareness raising: the impact of support on whole-school culture**

Support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was reported to have had some impact on the ethos of schools. For example, in one LA an interviewee noted that when the dedicated asylum seeker and refugee support team was first established, racism among staff in schools was evident. Furthermore, some schools were reluctant to admit asylum seeker and refugee pupils due to concerns that they would have a negative impact on results or create too much work for classroom teachers. However, it was reported that these attitudes were now less apparent because of the support provided by the LA, which in conjunction with the introduction of the Race Relations Act had drawn schools' attention to their responsibilities. In addition, it was felt that teachers were now more aware and accepting of asylum seeker and refugee pupils as a result of more effective teacher training, for example during initial teacher training, as newly qualified teachers, and from the LA.

## **4.11 Alternative provision**

Although LAs and schools aimed to ensure that asylum seeker and refugee pupils were able to obtain a school place, at Key Stage 4 several schools were involved in accessing alternative educational provision for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, particularly those arriving mid-term. A number of approaches had been developed to enable pupils to access some form of alternative education where a school place was not available. In many schools, this involved establishing and developing close links with local further education colleges to facilitate the admission of Key Stage 4 pupils where possible. In case study 6, for example, close links with the local further education colleges had enabled a small number of college places to be obtained for Year 11 asylum seeker and refugee pupils. However, interviewees acknowledged that given the increasing number of new Key Stage 4 arrivals and the limited number of places available at local colleges, accessing sufficient alternative provision still presented the LA with a major challenge.

In another LA, a package of alternative provision was established for Key Stage 4 pupils awaiting a school place. This combined a programme of ESOL provision (literacy and

numeracy classes) with a range of enrichment activities. Enrichment activities included history sessions delivered in conjunction with the local museum, an arts, crafts and music session delivered by the youth service, and a drama session. Social activities were also provided for pupils including day trips to local attractions and other cities and a variety of planned leisure activities during the holiday periods. In addition, for Year 11 pupils who were felt to be relatively competent in English, the ESOL course was deemed to be too basic so additional alternative provision was sought. For those pupils, LA funding was available to support pupils onto a specific college course which offered GCSE equivalent qualifications with additional language support.

On alternative provision, however, the Refugee Council has expressed concern that in some cases alternative provision may not meet statutory standards, and moreover, that where pupils attend their placement on a part-time basis (as is common practice) this does not provide pupils with an opportunity to integrate with their peers. Further, they have suggested that some of the provision has not been developed to meet best practice in relation to the induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and therefore does not meet their needs sufficiently (Refugee Council, 2005). It is felt that in most cases, pupils' cognitive development, acquisition of language, and personal and social development tends to take place most efficiently within the mainstream school environment. Despite this, however, the value of a short-term alternative provision placement such as an interim induction course has been identified as good practice in supporting new arrivals, for example by providing pupils with the opportunity to adjust to their new circumstances and thus support their future integration into the education system.

## 4.12 Concluding comments: changes in practice at school and LA level

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the types of support and an indication of the priority given to each area in each of the case study LAs.

**Table 4.1** The main areas of support provided in the case study LAs

Type of support	LA					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Admission	1	2	2	2	2	2
Induction	1	2	1	1	2	2
Assessment	2	2	2	2	1	1
Language support	1	2	1	1	2	2
Pastoral support	1	1	1	2	1	2
Family support	2	2	1	3	3	1
Resources	2	3	1	1	1	1
Out-of-school activities	2	1	2	3	3	2
Awareness raising	2	2	2	2	1	2
Alternative provision	3	1	3	3	2	2
Training	3	2	2	1	3	1

**Key: Priority**

1 = High

2 = Medium

3 = Low

As table 4.1 outlines, the main priority areas of support across the LAs were, in rank order:

- pastoral support;
- resources;
- induction;
- language support.

It would appear from this that in the six case study LAs, the focus within LAs was still on supporting the immediate needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Responding to the instant needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils on their arrival and targeting funding to address those needs may be the reason why support was focused on these areas in the case study LAs. The areas of support which appeared to be less of a priority across the six case study LAs were, in rank order:

- alternative provision;
- family support;
- extracurricular activities.

Indeed, it appeared that given the focus on supporting pupils' immediate needs, LAs were less likely to target provision to provide broader support for pupils and their families. Despite this, however, and as highlighted in the examples throughout the previous chapter, many LAs were beginning to develop a range of innovative strategies for supporting pupils' wider needs, for example to support their social and future development. Furthermore, in some of the case study LAs, such as in case study 2, these areas of support already appeared to be being addressed as a priority.

In addition to some of the differences identified across the six case study LAs, interviewees identified several changes and developments at both school and LA level that had come about as a result of supporting refugee and asylum seeker pupils and their families. On **changes in practice at school level**, interviewees suggested that in recent years schools had become more able and confident in their ability to support the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Interviewees described how schools were now demonstrating an acceptance of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and a greater willingness to work with them. In addition, schools were felt to be more willing to work with specialist asylum seeker and refugee support staff or teams from the LA.

Interviewees also reported that schools were beginning to be more proactive in their support for asylum seekers and refugees and were often involved in initiating their own celebration and awareness-raising events, as well as devising innovative support strategies and projects. In addition, interviewees reported that schools were also more flexible and were willing to adapt and change their approach where necessary to meet the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families.

However, although schools' understanding of refugee and asylum seeker pupils and their families and their perceived ability to meet their needs had improved, many interviewees acknowledged that there was still more to be done. In particular, interviewees recognised that changing perceptions and practice was a slow process requiring support and commitment at LA and school level as well as from the communities themselves. Interviewees acknowledged that existing pressures in schools meant that other issues might take priority. A gradual approach was therefore favoured. Here, the importance of partnership working between the LA, schools and the local community, as well as ongoing training and awareness raising were felt to be key to the further developing of support.

Several interviewees also felt that many schools had already adopted a supportive and inclusive culture and were always receptive to children from different backgrounds. For example, in case study 1 a special needs unit at one of the local primary schools had been established for 18 years. The school was more than willing to support children with various learning needs, including children with English as an additional language and other new arrivals, and had considerable experience of doing so.

Several **changes in practice at LA level** as a direct result of providing support for refugee and asylum seeker pupils were also reported by interviewees across the six case study LAs. An increase in the extent of multi-agency work in order to meet the diverse needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families was one of the main areas of change identified by LA interviewees.

Interviewees from some LAs also felt that working with asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families had encouraged the LA to reflect on its **policies and practice** in relation to the support available for the client group. In one LA, for example, a key aim was to ensure that the voice of parents was listened to and that their comments and opinions were used to guide future support.

Moreover, interviewees at LA level acknowledged that LAs constantly adapted the nature and extent of their provision in response to their experiences, the identification of any gaps in provision, and on recommendations of others such as the local community and other agencies. Despite this, interviewees acknowledged that introducing change was a slow process, and that the support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families was best developed over time and in relation to the organic growth of the relationship between schools, the LA and the new communities.

## Key findings: support and its impact

- The following types of LA and school support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families were identified across the six case study LAs:
  - admission and induction;
  - assessment;
  - language support;
  - pastoral support;
  - family support;
  - resources;
  - out-of-school activities;
  - awareness raising;
  - alternative provision.
  
- Interviewees from schools and LAs reported that the support provided by LA and school staff had led to a range of impacts for asylum seeker and refugee pupils themselves, other pupils, asylum seeker and refugee pupils' families, the local community, the attitudes and practice of school staff, and the ethos of the school.
  
- Strategies for the successful **admission** of asylum seeker and refugee pupils included: clear policies and procedures, a designated day for admissions, the appointment of a key worker, a pre-admission school visit and an admissions interview. Having a designated day for admissions ensured that the school 'routine' was not disrupted and enabled schools and the LA to prepare for the arrival of a new pupil (e.g. to brief other pupils and teachers and arrange for appropriate translation/interpretation services). The key worker was often the first point of contact for the young people and their parents and thus was able to provide families with holistic and continuity of support.
  
- Several stages to the **induction process** were identified as good practice by interviewees from the case study LAs. These included staff and class briefings, induction interviews (including information and guidance), pupil placement (the allocation of pupils to an appropriate year or teaching group) and the use of buddy systems for new arrivals. The establishment of a specific induction base and the introduction of a gradual integration programme were other strategies employed by LAs to support the induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Support focused on the welcome and induction of pupils and this was felt to have had a positive impact on pupils' **social inclusion and integration into school**.
  
- Distinguishing between pupils' **language needs** and their **academic ability** was felt to be a key factor in relation to successful pupil placement. However, several other factors were often considered when determining which year group or teaching group a pupil should be placed in. These included social and personal factors (peer group), EAL needs, academic factors (pupils' level of ability, the competence of fellow pupils), and previous educational experience (years of schooling). The impact of this was that pupils were placed in the most appropriate



groups to make the best possible social and academic progress.

- On arrival in school, an **assessment of pupils' educational and other needs** was usually conducted by an LA officer such as an EAL teacher and included a basic initial assessment (of personal details). This supported the initial placement of a pupil in school. Following the initial assessment, three main types of formal assessment were identified in the schools in the study: English language assessment (to assess pupils' proficiency in speaking, listening, reading and writing in English), assessment in pupils' own language (to assess pupils' ability in different subject areas), and assessment of any other needs (such as SEN). Allowing a short settling-in period prior to assessing a pupils' English language ability was felt to be good practice in pupil assessment.
- In-class **language support** was usually preferred to withdrawing pupils from class. However, withdrawal sessions were felt to be valuable for providing intensive language support. Several factors determined the type of language support provided (in-class or withdrawal). These included teachers' preference, pupils' age, pupils' level of English acquisition, pupils' level of literacy in their own language, pupils' previous experience of schooling and the type of lesson.
- The impact of support was evident by pupils' achievement at Key Stages 3 and 4. For example, in case study 4, interviewees reported that asylum seeker and refugee pupils' progress was in line with and in some cases exceeded that of other pupils in the school. In addition, the support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was felt to be of benefit to a wider range of pupils. For example, in case study 3, by working in close proximity to other pupils or in small groups, the support available from LA staff would often extend to the other pupils in the class.
- Despite the variety of support provided, several individual pupil factors were also felt to be influential in the impact of support on asylum seeker and refugee pupils, particularly on their attainment. These included the extent of previous schooling, whether or not a pupil arrived during the primary phase, and asylum seeker and refugee pupils' drive, determination, and commitment to learning.
- Pastoral support was one of the main areas of additional support provided by LA and school staff for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The areas of need supported through the pastoral system included: increasing pupils' awareness and understanding of the education system, supporting pupils' personal and social needs, supporting pupils' wider needs (such as emotional needs, family circumstances), and support at key times (such as during transition). Inclusion or learning support centres were felt to be particularly useful for facilitating pupils' successful integration into school because of the pastoral support they offered. A main impact from providing pastoral support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was on their social inclusion and integration into school as it helped to relieve some of the external stresses and support them in becoming familiar with their new situation.
- In the case study LAs, a number of initiatives had been introduced by LA and school staff to ensure that **parents and carers** were involved in their children's education. These included home–school liaison (such as

home visits, parents' evenings, translation support), extracurricular activities (such as after-school clubs, school trips), and community activities (such as drop-in centres, family clubs, language classes). These initiatives were also complemented by information, advice, guidance and resources such as welcome booklets and DVDs were provided by the LA and schools.

- The support available to families from LA and school staff was felt to have impacted on their **understanding of the UK education system**. Interviewees noted that translation services and interpretation support meant that families were more likely to attend meetings because they could both understand and be understood. As well as providing translation services, bilingual support assistants also supported families in completing documentation to access resources, for example bus passes. Staff also made use of bilingual materials and resources available from the LA and outside agencies such as the DfES, as well as developing their own materials such as a Welcome DVD to facilitate communication. This supported parents' understanding and helped avoid potential confusion or distress caused by the arrival of official documents such as school letters. By ensuring that families could access and understand the information presented to them, schools and LAs were also able to ensure that parents had **realistic expectations** of the education system.
- Interviewees also felt that community activities to engage families had impacted on the local community's **awareness and acceptance** of asylum seeker and refugee families.
- A range of **resources** had been developed to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. These could be broadly categorised into the following areas:
  - classroom materials to support teaching and learning, for example language development resources and dual language resources;
  - curriculum enrichment resources, for example texts and materials representing asylum seeker and refugee issues;
  - DVDs, CDs, videos and other materials focusing on raising schools' and parents' awareness, for example documentaries for staff on the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and induction materials for pupils and parents;
  - ICT-based resources, for example language support software, courses and websites;
  - information leaflets, guides and handbooks, for example on good practice and the admission or induction of asylum seeker and refugee pupils.
- A range of impacts associated with the resources were identified by interviewees. The materials and resources developed by LA staff **supported class teachers**, and enabled asylum seeker and refugee pupils to **access the curriculum**. Furthermore, it was felt that the ideas and teaching strategies suggested by LA staff meant that teachers were beginning to demonstrate more inclusive practice, particularly in

welcoming newcomer pupils and in lesson planning.

- **Out-of-school activities** included study support sessions such as homework clubs, revision sessions and booster classes. Here, the benefit of the extended schools initiative for increasing pupil and community involvement with the school was noted.
- The opportunity to access extracurricular activities provided by LA and school staff facilitated pupils' **involvement in social activities and wider school life**. These opportunities were seen to help reduce the isolation of some asylum seeker and refugee pupils, particularly unaccompanied asylum seeker and refugee pupils.
- **Alternative educational provision** was an option for some asylum seeker and refugee pupils, particularly Key Stage 4 pupils arriving mid-term or at the end of the secondary phase. However, the importance of ensuring that such provision appropriately meets the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was acknowledged as particularly important.
- **Raising awareness of the different cultures** of the asylum seeker and refugee communities was a key area of support provided by LA and school staff. A variety of strategies were used to create a welcoming climate for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, including celebration events and activities, lessons and assemblies and use of the school environment, for example the use of display areas and the corridors. However, the importance of adopting a sensitive approach to celebrating different cultures was noted.
- Celebration and awareness-raising events were felt by interviewees to have an impact on pupils other than asylum seekers and refugees in a number of ways, including an **increased awareness** of the issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees and a **greater empathy** towards such pupils and their families.
- The impact of support on the local community was seen as variable across the LAs in the study. In some cases, interviewees felt that there had been a significant impact on members of the local community in their **awareness and acceptance of asylum seeker and refugee families**, for example as a result of press releases in the media which had raised awareness and acceptance.
- In other LAs, however, support was felt to have had a marginal impact on the local community and racist attitudes were still felt to be entrenched in some areas. It was acknowledged here that shifting deep-rooted attitudes takes time, and work to facilitate such attitudinal change was at times confounded by the negative portrayal of asylum seekers and refugees by the media.

## Training

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the range of training available to school staff offering support to refugee and asylum seeker pupils across the six case study LAs. It goes on to discuss the issues and challenges of delivering such training and outlines interviewees' recommendations to other LAs wishing to establish training programmes focusing on this client group. Following this, areas for development in relation to training are listed.

### 5.2 Training available to school staff

Interviewees in the case study LAs were asked to provide details of the training available to teaching and non-teaching school staff focusing on supporting refugee and asylum seeker pupils. While some interviewees described training relating specifically to asylum seekers and refugees it should be noted that interviewees also described training that focused on wider areas such as ethnic minority achievement and EAL support. In order of frequency, the following forms of training were highlighted:

- centralised training and whole-school training days or meetings;
- informal training and sharing of good practice;
- training for specific groups of staff;
- training on specific areas of support.

#### 5.2.1 Whole-school training days or meetings

Across the LAs in the study, the most common form of training available to schools was in-service training. Whole-school in-service training provided by the LA commonly focused on raising awareness of the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families with the aim of developing staff understanding of the client group. In this way, in-service training covered information on the reasons why asylum seekers and refugees may come to the UK, why they left their countries of origin, and the emotional difficulties such pupils may experience. Often this training also highlighted the other support services available for asylum seekers and refugees that could be accessed by schools, for example mental health services, translation services, refugee community organisations and the National Asylum Support Service. Training was also commonly provided by the LA during staff meetings as required by individual schools. Again, the wider issues of asylum seeker and refugee pupils were presented along with practical guidance on supporting their needs, such as teaching strategies and admission and induction procedures. One LA interviewee believed that training through staff meetings had the most impact on school staff. One of the reasons given for this was that teachers were not required to come out of school, which was often an issue for them due to time demands. In addition, training during staff meetings meant that support and guidance could be focused on the specific needs of the school.

#### 5.2.2 Informal training and sharing of good practice

Informal training sessions and meetings facilitated by LA personnel, where staff shared good practice in relation to strategies for support, were also types of training identified by interviewees. For example, in case study 4 the equality and diversity team organised half-termly network meetings for school staff with an interest in asylum seekers and refugees. The network meetings provided staff with an opportunity to come together to discuss experiences and share good practice and resources. In addition to this, across the LAs, officers with a remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils commonly provided advice and guidance to school staff on a regular basis. For example, in case study 3, one of the roles of the LA's refugee consultant was to provide ongoing training and support to class teachers.

### 5.2.3 Training for specific groups of staff

Case study LAs also provided training focusing on asylum seeker and refugee issues which was aimed at specific groups of school staff such as senior managers, teaching assistants, school governors, EMA coordinators and designated teachers. For example, in case study 4, the LA had recently introduced an EMA specialist teachers' course, which was accredited by a local university. The course was made up of three components: language acquisition, racial equality, and raising achievement, and culminated in a school-based research project. While the course had a wider remit than that of asylum seeker and refugee issues, much of its content was pertinent to this client group. Similarly, the same LA offered an accredited course for senior managers which focused on race equality, bilingualism and development and attitudes for managers. Here, interviewees reported that the first cohort to have accessed this training found it useful, and particularly that senior managers liked the fact that the course was accredited and that it was linked to schools' aims and targets.

In case study 5, the LA provided in-house training for peripatetic teachers and teaching assistants employed through the LA's Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service. This was thought to be essential as these LA staff worked in a number of schools across the LA and needed to be aware of the range of support available to asylum seeker and refugee pupils, as well as how to access the information and resources available to school staff. In this same LA, the LA's schools support and development teacher for asylum seeker and refugee pupils also conducted training for designated teachers (for example for looked-after children) and school governors and where possible would include information about the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the session. In addition to this, school improvement officers in case study 6 ran training courses for administrative staff in schools. The importance of training for this group of school staff was emphasised, as they were the first point of contact with asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families on their arrival at school. The training for administrative staff focused mainly on good practice in admissions procedures. Indeed, providing training for frontline staff in schools about the cultural backgrounds of the local communities and the services to which they are entitled, as well as training staff on the information newly arrived families require, was identified by Ofsted (2003) as good practice in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families.

Finally, interviewees from two LAs described how they provided training on asylum seeker and refugee issues to trainee teachers and newly qualified teachers (NQTs). For example, in case study 2, LA staff had established links with initial teacher training (ITT) providers at the local university and ran a session as part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) course. Furthermore, in case study 6, LA staff provided a half-day training session each year on refugee issues for all of the newly qualified teachers in the LA.

### 5.2.4 Training on specific areas of support

A small number of interviewees reported that training was available for school staff in particular areas, such as supporting pupils' EAL needs. Although this form of training was not specific to the client group, in many cases information and guidance in relation to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils in particular was also provided. For example in case study 1, an EAL teacher from the ESOL team was responsible for delivering a pilot training programme to schools. The aim of the training was to develop teachers' skills in supporting pupils with language needs. The training was spread over six sessions and covered the following areas: scaffolding language, speaking and listening, learning guides, developing curriculum targets, language development targets, and culture and identity. The EAL teacher provided classroom teachers with resources and materials, as well as ideas and support strategies. These could then be used to support EAL pupils, including asylum seekers and refugees.

All case study LAs offered training to schools; however, they varied in the range of training available. Those LAs closer to the mainstreamed model had more sophisticated and

developed training packages. For example, in case study 6 this was due to the LA's long-standing experience in supporting the client group and their overall strategic approach, which was reflected in the organisation of staff (two school improvement officers whose role had a strong focus on training). In contrast, those LAs placed towards the centralised end of the continuum seemed to focus less on providing formal training sessions to schools and were more involved in offering direct support. However, it should be noted that this direct support often included LA practitioners providing advice and guidance to school staff on a wide range of issues. Further, in case study 2, although the majority of staff from the Newcomer Peripatetic Team did not provide formal training to schools, staff development and training programmes were provided by the LA's training team. This team offered advice and guidance for mainstream staff, school-based in-service training, courses on language development and inclusion issues and for training for specific groups of staff such as trainee teachers.

#### **Training: the impact of training on school staff**

Interviewees highlighted the fact that those staff with little experience of working with asylum seeker and refugee pupils had **gained in expertise** through formal training programmes and informally by working with specialist LA staff. For example, in case study 2 the LA's primary team teacher supported class teachers (typically NQTs). This support focused on providing teachers with reassurance as well as useful advice and guidance, for example tips and ideas for supporting such pupils: not to use single words that would limit the vocabulary of a pupil, not to use slang, and to be consistent with phrasing. Interviewees reported that as a result of such support, there had been an impact on teachers' confidence and their **perceived ability to meet the needs** of asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

The impact of training and support provided by LA staff was felt to have increased **awareness of refugee and asylum seeker issues** and led to a **positive change in staff attitudes and perceptions** of asylum seeker pupils.

Overall, the resources, ideas and teaching strategies provided during both formal and informal training sessions meant that class teachers were beginning to **demonstrate more inclusive practice**, particularly in relation to welcoming newcomer pupils and in their lesson planning.

However, while training courses are important in raising awareness, it should be acknowledged here that attending courses alone does not change attitudes.

## **5.3 Training issues**

A number of challenges in relation to the provision of training were also highlighted. The most common challenge identified was the **funding of training** as well as the **availability of LA staff** to deliver such training. In case study 2, interviewees noted that although formal training sessions attracted a fee they would input into staff meetings free of charge. Here it was noted that there was a need to balance the economic viability of providing training and ensuring that good practice was shared between schools.

As schools received asylum seeker and refugee pupils throughout the year, LAs found it **difficult to arrange the timing of training** to meet the needs of all schools. It was also difficult for LAs to **determine the session content**, as some schools were more experienced than others, and therefore required different types of support. As a result, take-up of training by school staff was sometimes identified as an issue. In one LA, they no longer provided centralised training and instead delivered needs-based training in individual schools. Interviewees also highlighted the difficulty in staff being permitted to attend training on support

for asylum seeker and refugee pupils that was not perceived as having a **direct impact on standards** (such as training on the emotional traumas faced by survivors of torture). Further issues cited were that schools had small training budgets and asylum seeker and refugee issues were often not seen as a priority. In addition, where the numbers of asylum seeker and refugee pupils were relatively low and pupils were spread across a large number of different schools, again training in this area would not be prioritised:

*If you just offer training in general they'll just look at it and think 'we have only got a couple of children here'. If it becomes an issue that is part of citizenship or can be fitted into the literacy hour, then you get more teachers interested.*

LA strategic staff, case study 5

## 5.4 Training recommendations

Recommendations made by interviewees for LAs wishing to establish training programmes focusing on support for refugee and asylum seeker pupils could be categorised into three main areas. The first was to provide **awareness-raising** training on asylum seeker and refugee issues for all school staff to address any potential prejudice and to disseminate good practice in admissions, inclusion and in-class support. (The cost of funding of such training was, however, highlighted as a challenge: see section 5.3). The second was to provide teaching staff with **practical resources** to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils in the classroom during training sessions, rather than focusing on theoretical approaches. Finally, training should be linked to **broader issues and agendas** such as mobility, citizenship or the literacy hour, which may be of wider relevance to schools. Indeed, unless training was linked to current agendas, the numbers of staff attending training sessions on asylum seeker and refugee issues were likely to be low. Certainly, in a number of LAs, asylum seeker and refugee issues were incorporated into training on the citizenship curriculum.

## 5.5 Areas for development

A small number of interviewees in the case study LAs reported areas for development relating to training focusing on refugee and asylum seeker pupils. These included:

- human rights and citizenship;
- racism and bullying;
- awareness raising of asylum seeker and refugee issues;
- EAL teaching strategies;
- mental health issues;
- first day inductions, specifically for support assistants;
- reflecting asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences in the curriculum, for example refugee stories used in mainstream literacy and humanities subjects;
- specific training for primary schools;
- input into the LA's wider training programme, for example speaking about asylum seeker issues at conferences and workshops;
- disseminating the work of the asylum seeker and refugee support team to the LA's other services.

## Key findings

- The most common form of training available to school staff focusing on supporting refugee and asylum seeker pupils was centralised training and whole-school training days or meetings provided by the LA.
- The impact of training and support provided by LA staff included an increased awareness of refugee and asylum seeker issues, a positive change in staff attitudes and perceptions of asylum seeker pupils, and increased confidence in their ability to meet the needs of such pupils.
- Challenges in relation to the provision of training included funding, the availability of LA staff to deliver training, school staff obtaining release time to attend training events, the timing of training events to coincide with pupil admissions, and the session content being relevant to a number of schools.
- Recommendations for LAs wishing to establish training programmes focusing on support for refugee and asylum seeker pupils included providing awareness-raising training all school staff to address any potential prejudice and to disseminate good practice, to provide teaching staff with practical resources rather than theoretical approaches, and to link training to broader issues and agendas such as mobility and citizenship.



## 6 Multi-agency support and the role of other agencies

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an overview of the multi-agency partnerships operating at LA level focusing on asylum seeker and refugee support. It moves on to discuss the roles of voluntary agencies and refugee community organisations within such multi-agency partnerships as well as LAs' and schools' policies and procedures for collaborative working. Finally, the chapter illustrates the strategies employed by LAs to actively include parents of asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

### 6.2 Multi-agency partnerships for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils

Interviewees from each of the six case study LAs were asked to identify the multi-agency partnerships providing support, training and/or advisory work for refugee and asylum seeker pupils in the LA. Multi-agency partnerships were in evidence at both a strategic and operational level.

At a **strategic level**, interviewees reported that much of their multi-agency working was facilitated through various working parties or groups, such as pupil panels, which included representation from a range of services such as health, social services, child protection, education, housing, the police and the voluntary sector. Indeed, such multi-agency meetings were used as a forum to discuss policy, legislation and guidance on asylum seeker and refugee issues and its impact on practice, and to determine how it could be incorporated in the LA's strategic approach. In addition to this, at a strategic level, multi-agency partnerships were used to inform the direction of support for refugee and asylum seekers to avoid overlap and duplication of resources. Such partnerships were also seen to be a valuable means of future planning.

At an **operational level**, interviewees reported that multi-agency teams and multi-agency meetings, where staff from teams such as refugee services and children's services were brought together, provided an opportunity for key personnel with a remit for supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils to network and develop working relationships with other agencies. Such multi-agency partnerships, some more formal than others, enabled staff to share information on asylum seeker and refugee issues and resources such as newsletters. Multi-agency partnerships were also seen as key to the early identification and planning of support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Example 1 provides details of the impact of operating a multi-agency team approach to supporting the needs of the client group.

## Example 1: Children's asylum seeker and refugee multi-agency team (case study 5)

The multi-agency team is made up of staff from a range of services including education, social services, education welfare and Connexions. The aim of the team is to provide a cohesive and integrated approach to supporting unaccompanied asylum seekers. The staff, previously based in teams in four geographical areas of the LA, were grouped together in a central team to serve the whole LA.

*It means that we are all aware of local situations and individual situations in a better way that one would get if they were dealt with as they were in this county previously, in quadrants. There is a much more knowledgeable approach now whereas before it was very much individuals coming and going and someone who has never dealt with a case before might pick it up then you wouldn't know where to go with it. Having this central team, it means that they do get a quick and personable approach.*

LA strategic staff, case study 5

Further to this, close working relationships existed between staff, and there had been no change in the core staff structure in two years. This was particularly beneficial as it meant that staff were well aware of each other's roles and responsibilities. The inclusion of staff with varying professional backgrounds and specialisms was seen as a key factor in the effectiveness of the team. The key benefits of this multi-agency approach were the ability to take a **holistic approach** to the educational, health and social needs of pupils and to provide specialist input as required. In addition, this team approach enabled the collaborative pooling of skills and exchange of expertise in relation to supporting the diverse needs of the client group.

Not only was inter-agency working within the team effective, but there were also felt to be good working relationships with outside agencies such as health. Indeed, the composition of the team enabled staff from different services to retain the links with their parent agencies, thus facilitating multi-agency working within the LA. Here, communication was key to this success, particularly in ensuring that external staff from other agencies (such as designated nurses for looked-after children) were aware of the remit of the team.

Where LAs worked with other agencies and organisations to extend the support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils the following examples of partnership working were identified across the six case study LAs:

- **museums and galleries:** to increase pupils' access to local venues and support LA and school project work, for example displaying pupils' artwork and holding exhibitions to raise awareness;
- **sport and leisure centres:** to increase pupils' access to local amenities – another example included links with football clubs;

- **job centres:** to provide access to support for pupils in relation to CV writing and interview skills training in order to prepare pupils for the world of work;
- **further and higher education establishments:** providing language support such as ESOL courses and visits to raise pupils' awareness of further and higher education opportunities;
- **the National Asylum Support Service (NASS):** to access information on new families moving into the LA area and to obtain information about pupils in relation to non-attendance or other concerns about pupil welfare;
- **churches and mosques:** offering support for community languages and support for pupils with English as an additional language. These were also used as venues for drop-in sessions.

Partnership working with these other agencies was often in relation to one-off events to support individuals or small groups of pupils in specific areas. Relationships with such organisations tended to be less formal than those with statutory agencies such as health and social services.

## 6.3 The role of voluntary agencies and refugee community organisations in multi-agency partnerships

Interviewees reported that the main role of voluntary agencies and refugee community organisations within multi-agency partnerships was to represent the views of the local communities. For example, in one LA (case study 6), as part of the move towards the development of Children's Services in the LA, two umbrella voluntary agency groups had been set up to provide community feedback into the decision-making process of the LA. Voluntary and community groups in multi-agency partnerships also played a key role in providing access to a range of support services for asylum seeker and refugee communities. In addition, they organised drop-in sessions in the local community and in some cases, provided the LA with access to volunteers to engage in support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. The multi-agency partnerships were also seen to be a valuable mechanism through which the represented agencies could seek funding. Schools were seen to be key to connecting with community and voluntary agencies as these groups would often use school premises to hold their meetings.

### **Example 2: Community organisation for refugees (case study 3)**

The organisation was established in 2000 and is funded through various means including the National Lottery, the council and a number of small trusts. Staff comprise: a full-time project coordinator; three part-time advice workers who provide general advice to the community and support individuals on a range of issues; and an employment worker who provides assistance with writing CVs and applying for higher education courses.

The organisation provides a range of services for asylum seeker and refugee communities, including:

- one-to-one support and befriending;
- practical help such as support in completing forms;
- advocacy, such as advice and guidance in relation to employment;
- a drop-in centre;

- English classes;
- leisure activities;
- a bike workshop to recycle bikes.

Although the team does not employ anyone with specific responsibility for school-age pupils, if newly arrived families with children are referred staff will support families with any education-related issues. Here the close working relationship with the EMASS team in the LA was felt to be key to accessing support in relation to schooling. School-age children also have the opportunity to attend English lessons with their parents during the summer holidays. In addition, staff had organised a number of one-off events for children and families, such as visits to local attractions and day trips.

Multi-agency working, and in particular being known to the different communities in the LA area, was felt to be key to the success of the work of the organisation. Staff maintained close links with other agencies providing support for asylum seekers and refugees, including the LA, the Job Centre, higher education institutions, a local multicultural trust which encourages different communities and cultures to work together, local voluntary organisations and a number of refugee community organisations including the local Somali Community Association, the Afghan Community Association, and a recently established Kurdish Organisation. The organisation also works closely with a member of staff from 'Timebank', a government scheme which recruits mentors to help refugees and asylum seekers. Furthermore, a refugee umbrella group exists in the LA to bring together any organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers to discuss issues and aid future planning.

In some cases, interviewees highlighted the difficulties in engaging refugee community organisations in multi-agency partnerships. For example, it was suggested that some of the refugee communities lacked understanding and/or social confidence to take part in discussions. Moreover, interviewees described issues of cultural sensitivity and elements of distrust and uncertainty by some members of newly arrived refugee communities, which impacted on their likely participation in multi-agency partnerships. In order to overcome these issues, one case study LA had established a New Communities team:

### **Example 3: New Communities team (case study 3)**

The aim of the New Communities team is to raise awareness among asylum seeker and refugee communities about the range of services they can access, for example, housing and health services, and their rights to use such services. The team, which includes a manager, a research and information officer and three support officers, also provides feedback to service providers about issues relating to cultural sensitivity and the need for services to be open and understanding to the needs of asylum seeker and refugee communities. (See chapter 3, case study 3 for further details.)

Further challenges in engaging refugee community organisations in multi-agency partnerships identified by interviewees were that multi-agency meetings were often held during the day and this posed difficulties for some members of community groups due to work commitments. Other concerns raised were that some of the community groups were not well established or well organised and that new community groups were regularly being formed and disbanded, which meant that establishing and maintaining relationships between organisations was particularly difficult. Finally, in LAs with small numbers of ethnic minorities, finding culturally relevant community groups was highlighted as a concern.

## 6.4 Policies and procedures for collaborative working and strategies to include parents

Interviewees at LA and school level were asked to provide details of any policies and procedures for collaborative working for support, training and/or advisory work for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In the six case study LAs, details of the support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils was often outlined in their inclusion and/or race equality policies. In addition, several of the LAs had developed specific guidance for schools on meeting the needs of newly arrived pupils. Communication between the LA, schools and other agency staff was identified as a key feature of the success of the procedures in place in the six case study LAs.

Interviewees in the six case study LAs were also asked to report if there were any particular strategies in the LA to actively include parents of refugee and asylum seeker pupils. While specific activities to engage parents of asylum seeker and refugee pupils in schools are outlined in section 4.7, at LA level interviewees described how LAs aimed to actively include parents through events such as user groups and conferences. These sessions offered asylum seeker and refugee parents the opportunity to discuss issues directly with the LA and suggest improvements to the support offered. The LA also used such activities to consult with parents, for example to elicit feedback on new materials to support pupils' induction into school. In one LA, an interviewee noted that although officers with a remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils received feedback from parents, this was ad hoc and meant that the information obtained from parents was not able to influence LA policy as much as they would have liked. Finally, in one LA (case study 3), LA staff posts were established specifically to facilitate multi-agency working between education, the home and other agencies, ensuring that the needs of pupils were met in a holistic way. The four cultural and linguistic mediators were allocated to work with specific agencies to ensure that the LA's dedicated refugee and asylum seeker support team was represented and kept informed of changes and developments in these other agencies.

## Key findings

- Multi-agency partnerships were in evidence, at both a strategic and operational level.
- At a strategic level, interviewees reported that much of their multi-agency working was facilitated through various working parties or groups, for example pupil panels.
- At an operational level, multi-agency meetings were used as an opportunity for key personnel with a remit for asylum seeker and refugee pupils to network and develop working relationships with other agencies.
- The main role of voluntary agencies and refugee community organisations within multi-agency partnerships was to represent the views of the local communities.
- Interviewees highlighted some of the difficulties in engaging refugee community organisations in multi-agency partnerships. These included:
  - issues of cultural sensitivity and elements of distrust and uncertainty for some members of newly arrived refugee communities;
  - a lack of understanding and/or social confidence among refugees and asylum seekers to take part in discussions;
  - new community groups regularly being formed and disbanded, which meant that establishing and maintaining relationships between organisations was particularly difficult;
  - in LAs with small numbers of minority ethnic groups, finding culturally relevant community groups was highlighted as a challenge.

## 7 Contributions and barriers to supporting asylum

### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the contributions and barriers to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. It draws on information provided by interviewees in the six case study LAs, as well as the experiences and perceptions of speakers and delegates attending the DDC/NFER research seminar 'Supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugee Children', held at Northumbria University in January 2006.

The chapter begins by outlining the contributions that asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families were said to bring to schools and communities, and goes on to identify some of the barriers experienced by interviewees in supporting the client group.

### 7.2 Contributions

Asylum seeker and refugee pupils were felt to bring several benefits to schools and local communities, which could be categorised into three main areas:

- **diversity:** their contribution to the language and culture of the school or community;
- **inclusion:** curriculum developments, social acceptance;
- **motivation:** a positive work ethos and willingness and enthusiasm to learn.

The **diversity** brought to the classroom by the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was identified as the main benefit of supporting asylum seeker and refugee children within the mainstream classroom: 'they bring a real breadth and depth and a different dimension to school' (School staff, case study 4).

Teachers spoke positively of the enrichment provided to the **language and culture** of the school following the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and highlighted the benefit to other pupils of seeing issues of asylum from a real-life perspective through the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils themselves. For example, in one school the teacher described how the asylum seeker and refugee pupils were particularly interested in promoting their culture and experiences to other pupils, and were keen to be involved in celebration events and other cultural enrichment activities, which involved inviting parents into school and encouraging pupils to contribute to displays about their culture. This was felt to be of real benefit to the school.

*You can learn about different cultures and you can read about it but when you have actually got someone from a different country and who has got that experience, and a different way of looking at things, it is just really positive.*

LA practitioner, case study 1

In several cases, it was also acknowledged that the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee pupils had prompted schools to **develop the curriculum** in order to meet the needs and reflect the experiences of all pupils. For example, several LAs had established resource libraries through which schools could access a range of texts and materials that represented the different cultures and experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Schools were encouraged to incorporate these materials into the curriculum. In addition, asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families were able to access the resources available. Likewise, the contribution the experiences of asylum seeker and refugee pupils could make to citizenship and PSHE lessons was particularly valued by teachers. Indeed, speaking at the DDC/NFER seminar on the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, speakers acknowledged the

opportunity provided by the arrival of new communities to develop and internationalise the curriculum for all children.

*It has meant that we have had to have a look at the way we do things, we have always tried to be cross-cultural, certainly in terms of RE. We are now having to look at this a little more closely.*

School staff, case study 1

Asylum seeker and refugee pupils' 'willingness to learn' was also identified as a particular feature of their value to the school. Teachers spoke positively of the **motivation and enthusiasm** expressed by the asylum seeker and refugee pupils, and acknowledged the **dedication and determination** of pupils to achieve:

*They are extra keen, they want to learn and they want education. I always remember one pupil saying to me, but [name of teacher], I need to know everything. And he did, he wanted to know everything.*

LA practitioner, case study 1

In this way, teachers acknowledged the positive impact of asylum seeker and refugee pupils on both other pupils' attitudes towards education and the whole-school ethos. Asylum seeker and refugee pupils were regarded by teachers as an asset to their school.

Several interviewees also acknowledged the wider benefits of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils in school in their contribution to the promotion of **inclusion** in the school system. In this respect, teachers described how many of the strategies employed to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils (such as promoting different cultures and supporting pupils to achieve their potential) were central to the outcomes set out in the Every Child Matters agenda (for example staying safe, enjoying and achieving and making a positive contribution: DfES, 2003) and were thus a key feature of effective and inclusive education for all children. Likewise, it was felt that by working alongside newly arrived pupils in the classroom, and developing an inclusive school ethos, wider community benefits such as social integration and acceptance could be promoted (for example, as pupils' attitudes filtered into their home environment and the wider community).

## 7.3 Barriers and solutions

The following section describes some of the barriers highlighted by LA and school staff in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. In addition, where offered, interviewees' solutions to overcoming these barriers are presented. Once again, the section is supported with solutions suggested by speakers and delegates attending the DDC/NFER seminar at Northumbria University. Drawing together the issues raised, the barriers identified could be grouped into four main areas:

- **identifying need:** accessing background information, monitoring pupils' emotional well-being;
- **supporting need:** schools' experience in supporting the client group, accessing support from central services, resources;
- **pupil mobility:** preparing for the admission of new arrivals, monitoring and tracking pupils;
- **acceptance and awareness:** challenging stereotypes and racism, promoting cultural sensitivity, and pupil, parent and school expectations.



### 7.3.1 Identifying need

The **lack of background information** available for some newly arrived pupils and their families was identified as a key challenge in providing effective support for the client group. In particular, interviewees described how pupils often arrived with no information on their previous educational experience and/or attainment, making assessment of, and subsequent provision for their educational needs, particularly problematic. Other issues associated with the lack of information related to the difficulties in conducting health and safety and other risk assessment exercises.

Several interviewees also described that asylum seeker and refugee pupils would often be **quiet and withdrawn** for some time following their admission to school, and acknowledged that additional support was often required in order to support pupils during this time, in order to overcome this potential barrier to learning. In this respect, several teachers acknowledged how previous **traumatic experiences** often underpinned such issues, and recognised the importance of, but challenge in providing or accessing appropriate support for pupils to address them.

#### Solutions: pastoral support

Speakers at the DDC NFER seminar on the education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils acknowledged the importance of a strong pastoral support system in order to meet the needs of the client group. In addition, extracurricular activities to support pupils and families to adjust to life in British society were identified as a valuable strategy for overcoming this challenge.

However, other interviewees also acknowledged that asylum seeker and refugee pupils often required increased support from the class teacher and support staff, which could reduce the amount of time available to support other pupils in the classroom:

*I only have one pupil at the moment so I can devote most of my time to him. Whereas before, when I have had four or five pupils, trying to organise so that I can be with them as much as possible was rather difficult.*

School staff, case study 1

For one LA, the additional pastoral and language support required by asylum seeker and refugee pupils had led to schools requiring additional external support from central services, increasing the pressure on the LA's resources.

### 7.3.2 Supporting need

Schools' **lack of experience** in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils was identified as one of the main challenges in providing support across the six case study LAs. Interviewees described how this was particularly problematic when there was a sudden influx of families who required a rapid response from unprepared schools. Here, LAs highlighted the importance of working closely with classroom teachers and other support staff to provide them with the strategies to support new arrivals. Interviewees also stressed the need to work at a whole-school level to raise awareness and understanding of the experiences and needs of the client group, for example, in relation to EAL needs, varying levels of previous education and possible traumatic experience.

Similarly, in one LA, supporting **isolated asylum seeker and refugee pupils** was identified as a current challenge. This had arisen as families moved into the predominantly White areas

of the LA area where schools had little or no experience of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Indeed, in another LA, schools' reluctance to accept asylum seeker and refugee pupils, due to fears about their possible negative impact on the schools' overall academic performance, was identified as a key challenge faced by the LA.

Likewise, several LA staff described how some schools felt that they did not need to address issues of multicultural education as they had they had no minority ethnic pupils on roll. Here the LA's role was noted in ensuring that all schools across the LA had awareness of different cultures and were keen to work together to address the needs of new communities.

### **Solutions: improving schools' knowledge and understanding**

Raising schools' awareness of pupils' commitment to learning and the educational progress they often make, as well as highlighting that in certain circumstances asylum seeker and refugee pupils can be omitted from national tests and GCSE results (DfES, 2004), were strategies used to address this issue.

Ensuring **equality of support** across schools was identified as a particular challenge for those LAs operating a peripatetic service. In addition, the limited availability of key staff was raised as a challenge in several LAs, where in order to make the most of their expertise, experienced staff were often required to support numerous schools. In one LA, as a result of the devolution of EMAG funding, schools were required to buy in the support of the EAL teachers from the central EMTAS team. It was felt that support was not always directed to schools where it was most needed, as it was up to individual schools whether they accessed and paid for the support available. Similarly, interviewees from other LAs described how the reduction of central EMAG funding had reduced the number of EAL teachers, and thus limited the support available centrally.

Likewise, the importance of **maintaining support**, particularly once pupils had begun to make good progress, was identified as key to ensuring their future success. However, the challenge was noted of achieving this, given the limited support available, and interviewees reported that due to funding constraints it was common for support to be withdrawn from pupils showing signs of progress so that it could be targeted at the less advanced pupils. This was also a concern raised by interviewees in previous research (Kendall *et al.*, 2005) who noted that due to these factors, schools often withdrew language support for pupils at the point at which they achieved communicative competence. As a result, it was felt that many pupils only achieved surface fluency in a language, as opposed to full academic literacy.

### **Solutions: equality of support**

Increasing the number of teaching assistants in schools, and deploying more learning support assistants to schools during the admission and induction of new arrivals were identified as possible means of overcoming this challenge. In addition, speakers at the DDC/NFER seminar at Northumbria University described how the use of LA funding alerts to identify and access other sources of funding, such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and the European Refugee Fund might be one way of addressing and overcoming funding challenges.

**Language** was identified as a further challenge in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. In particular, accessing adequate and timely interpretation and translation services was highlighted as a common difficulty experienced by the six LAs in the case study phase of the research. Likewise, interviewees called for more in-school bilingual

support across a broader range of languages in order to address the increasing number of languages being spoken in schools. For example, in one case study LA, it was estimated that 52 different languages were spoken, and access to more bilingual support for both the school and the pupils themselves was needed.

## **Solutions: language support**

Speakers at the DDC/NFER seminar acknowledged the importance of suitable language support in order to make appropriate assessments and provision for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families. Here, the value of central services such as EMAG teams, the Traveller education service and the education welfare service working together was highlighted as key to overcoming the language barriers.

### **7.3.3 Pupil mobility**

The **mobile and transient nature** of the asylum seeker and refugee communities was felt to present several challenges in relation to supporting the group, particularly in monitoring and tracking pupils' academic progress and overall welfare. The relocation of families without warning (following an asylum application being granted or rejected) and incidences of families 'disappearing' following an asylum application refusal were identified as key issues in this respect. Here, interviewees acknowledged the unsettling nature of this for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, as well as for their peers in school. Interviewees also pointed to the frustration felt by teachers, particularly where pupils had made good educational progress, and were then not admitted to another school for some time: 'It is so wrong. After you have worked hard and they have got to such a good level and it [education] has stopped, for months in some cases' (LA practitioner, case study 1). The uncertainty surrounding the future of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was also felt to be a challenge for staff working with them, particularly when discussing their ambitions. Here, interviewees acknowledged the dilemma of being positive, but still realistic, when discussing future plans:

*Sometimes you are talking to children about the future and trying to give them the confidence to feel that 'if you want to do something you can do it', but you sometimes think 'I can't tell them that because I don't even know if they are going to be here'. And sometimes that is the hardest thing; the uncertainty, and not being able to say that there is something you can do about it.*

LA practitioner, case study 1

Likewise, supporting the asylum seeker and refugee pupils themselves to remain positive and motivated during periods of uncertainty was also highlighted as a challenge for support staff working with them. This was felt to be a particular issue for pupils approaching the age of 18, at which point it was acknowledged that pupils' priorities would often move from education to employment and earnings.

## **Solutions: raising expectations and aspirations**

The key worker role was felt to be central to supporting pupils' motivation and ambitions for the future. Through the relationship established between pupils and their key worker, young people are able to build the trust and confidence to share their hopes and aspirations.

Further, the key worker is able to provide holistic support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and thus is ideally placed to provide information, advice and guidance in a range of areas such as education, training, work and self-development, to raise pupils' awareness and aspirations and ensure equality of opportunity.

**Mid-term admission** of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was also identified as a challenge by several interviewees across the six case study LAs. Interviewees reported that asylum seeker and refugee pupils were often admitted throughout the term, but acknowledged the difficulty associated with planning for such admissions. Similarly, the arrival and admission of Key Stage 4 pupils was also felt to be particularly problematic. Interviewees reported difficulties in relation to pupils' ability to access the curriculum at this stage, and described how pupils would often be placed in subjects not heavily dependent on language (such as art and PE) because of the language barriers, irrespective of their ability in other (more 'academic') subjects. In one LA, where applicable, a college place was sought for Key Stage 4 pupils arriving mid-way through the term. However, this was often a challenge in itself, and was not always possible. Interviewees called for more flexibility between the pre- and post-16 boundary to enable alternative education to be accessed more easily for newly arrived pupils, for example to enable newly arrived Year 11 pupils to access an intensive ESOL college course as an alternative to taking GCSE examinations. Similar problems with mid-term admissions were experienced at primary level, particularly with pupils arriving at the end of the primary phase. Here, interviewees described the difficulty of adequately preparing pupils for their transition to secondary school, and the challenge in relation to the pace at which this progress had to be achieved, particularly where the pupils had little previous experience of formal education and/or with little understanding of the English language.

#### **Solutions: admission and induction**

Clear and effective admission and induction policies and procedures were highlighted as central to addressing and overcoming the challenge of managing the mid-term admission of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. For example, in one case study LA a new protocol relating to casual admissions which aimed to raise schools' awareness of their responsibilities in relation to admitting newly arrived pupils had been recently developed and issued to schools for consultation.

#### **7.3.4 Acceptance and awareness**

Addressing and overcoming wider community issues such as **stereotyping and racism** was identified as one of the main challenges faced by schools supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils. In one LA, schools were actively extending their service into the wider community as part of the Extended Schools agenda. Through this, schools were beginning to play a wider role in the local community, and were able to raise awareness and encourage community cohesion. **Tensions** between the asylum seeker and refugee population and other Black and minority ethnic communities were also identified as a challenge in some LAs, such as in case study 3. This was also a key issue discussed at the DDC/NFER seminar held in January 2006.

## **Solutions: raising awareness**

The importance of raising awareness of tensions between different groups and the need to be sensitive to these tensions in the inclusion agenda were felt to be key to overcoming issues of tensions between communities. In addition, a well established race equality and inclusion policy was felt to be crucial to addressing this issue by interviewees from the case study LAs. Moreover, these policies needed to be well implemented and adhered to by schools. Flexibility in the inclusion agenda (for example not assuming that asylum seeker and refugee communities will necessarily be supported by other Black and minority ethnic groups) was felt to be key in acknowledging the potential tensions between groups and thus addressing this challenge.

The challenge of ensuring **cultural sensitivity** in schools was also identified as a key challenge by interviewees across the six LAs. For example, a secondary school teacher from one case study school described how a newly arrived asylum seeker pupil had shown little respect towards the schools' female teachers. To address this issue, the teacher suggested that the LA should develop a formal induction programme for all newly arrived pupils prior to their admission into school in order to outline the cultural norms of western society, as well as provide them with other useful information. In another case, interviewees from a primary school reported that while the school was sensitive and accommodating to different cultures in the school (such as promoting the celebration of festivals of Eid and Diwali), at times, the new communities showed some reluctance in engaging with western cultural norms. For example, the headteacher described how parents from one of the asylum seeker and refugee communities had prevented their children from attending church celebrations at Christmas, and noted how this was particularly difficult for staff to understand and accept.

*The staff feel in a way that for a group to remove themselves from one of our festivals is undermining our ethos and that is hard for our staff to take. But what I have said to the staff is that we have to be patient – this is a very new community and they are very insecure and this is what they need to do.*

School staff, case study 3

## **Solutions: cultural sensitivity**

Raising awareness of asylum seeker and refugee issues among school staff (for example through training), as well as promoting and celebrating cultural differences through the curriculum, assemblies, displays, and the use of different languages in teaching were highlighted as strategies to help address and overcome issues of cultural sensitivity. However, the importance of finding an appropriate and sensitive approach to celebrating different cultures was identified as key to addressing this issue.

Indeed, in case study 3 the importance of supporting staff to understand and empathise with new communities' situations and circumstances was felt to be key to overcoming the issue described above. Here, the headteacher explained how highlighting to staff the values underlying parents' decisions to exclude their children from the Christmas celebrations, as well as the potential anxieties and insecurities felt

by parents in their new situation, was central to overcoming this issue. The need to allow time for parents to adjust and to offer support to facilitate this, was also felt to be key.

In one LA, schools' **low expectations** of asylum seeker and refugee pupils were identified as a challenge. Conversely, in some cases, the need to guide schools to have realistic expectations of the capabilities and potential achievements of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was noted. Here, the importance of schools adopting a can-do rather than a deficit approach to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils was felt to be key in addressing this issue. Similarly, the expectation of some asylum seeker and refugee parents was identified as a challenge in various LAs. In their guidance *The education of asylum seeker and refugee pupils*, Ofsted (2003) acknowledged that such pupils and their families had high expectations of schooling, and recognised their support for schools and teachers. Across the six case study LAs, interviewees also spoke positively of parents' and pupils' commitment to learning, but highlighted that parents' expectations of the education system were sometimes unrealistic in relation to the organisation of teaching and pupils' educational progress, and acknowledged the challenge this presented. For example, in one case study LA, interviewees reported that some parents' perceptions and expectations were based on a traditional and formal education system. This presented the local schools with the challenge of justifying the educational arrangements available to their children, for example explaining the structure of lessons, the benefits of using play in the early years and the expected and realistic level of achievement for their children.

### **Solutions: involving asylum seeker and refugee parents**

The importance of informing parents about the education system and developing strategies for encouraging parental involvement in the school community were identified as solutions for increasing their understanding and acceptance of the school system. The importance of being proactive in involving the parents of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was also identified as key by speakers and delegates at the DDC/NFER seminar. However, participants also highlighted the need for appropriate funding to support such initiatives, and acknowledged that the arrangement of such interventions was often more successful at primary level where schools had more contact with parents.

Interviewees also acknowledged the importance of recognising that pupils and families often had **complex and multiple needs** relating to immigration, housing and health and that education may not be their main priority in all cases or at all times. However, at the same time, the vital role played by education in the lives of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was also recognised, particularly in relation to the sense of security and normalisation afforded by the school routine.

## Solutions: partnership working

The importance of establishing positive relationships with the pupils and maintaining ongoing communication to identify and address any issues was highlighted as an important factor in overcoming this challenge. In addition, speakers and delegates at the DDC/NFER seminar at Northumbria University highlighted the key role for partnership working to respond appropriately to the needs of the client group.

## Key findings

- Despite the many problems asylum seeker and refugee children face, schools highlighted their **enthusiasm and motivation** to learn and the positive impact they have on the school community, as well as the positive ambitions that asylum seeker and refugee parents have for their children.
- Asylum seeker and refugee children add **diversity** to schools through **the language and cultural enrichment** they bring to the classroom. Schools are continually aiming to become more inclusive, for example through developing their curriculum and environment. This is of benefit for the whole school, pupils and staff.
- Although several challenges have been presented by the arrival of asylum seeker and refugee pupils, through experience, schools and LAs have developed a **range of solutions** to overcoming the issues.
- Some schools **lacked experience** in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils which presented challenges for both the school and LA, particularly in LAs where numbers were increasing and therefore pupils were seeking places in less experienced schools. Raising schools' awareness of the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils was key to addressing this challenge, with LA training playing an important part.
- LAs were keen to ensure **equality of support** across schools but this presented a specific challenge in some LAs, particularly where resources were stretched, and accessing support was at the discretion of individual schools. Increasing use of existing support staff in schools and accessing additional sources of funding to provide further support, were suggested as ways of overcoming this issue.
- Overcoming the **language barriers** faced was a significant challenge for schools, LAs, pupils and families. The importance of the availability of translation and interpretation services, as well as language support resources was noted.
- Asylum seeker and refugee children often arrive in the UK with **little information** regarding their background, educational and otherwise, making assessment and support arrangements particularly difficult for schools and LAs.
- The **mobile and transient nature** of the asylum seeker and refugee population presented several challenges for schools in mid-term

admissions, providing consistent support, and planning ahead. Clear and effective admissions and induction procedures were central to dealing with these demands.

- Supporting pupils with any **psychological trauma** they may have experienced was felt to be an area that required patience and a sensitive approach. A strong pastoral system was felt to be crucial to addressing this issue. Likewise, recognising and supporting the **complex needs** of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families was identified as an aspect of support that demanded particular attention from schools and LAs.
- Ensuring **cultural sensitivity** and **tackling racism and bullying** were felt to be areas of challenge presented to schools, together with acknowledging tensions between different Black and minority ethnic groups.
- Promoting **realistic and positive expectations** from staff, pupils and parents was felt to be an area of challenge in some LAs and communication between home and school was key to achieving this.



## 8 Overview

### 8.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview by exploring:

- key factors in providing effective support for asylum seekers and refugees, as identified by interviewees during the case study phase of the research;
- suggested areas for development, including the support required for future development;
- learning outcomes in terms of: i) whether the experience of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils can be used to enhance support for other pupils and ii) recommendations to schools and LAs whose experience of supporting these pupils is relatively new.

### 8.2 Key factors in providing effective support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils

When interviewees discussed key factors in providing effective support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their responses could be seen to fall into the following areas:

- the nature of the support provided;
- strategic support and multi-agency working;
- work with parents and the community;
- school practice.

The majority of interviewees' comments about the provision of effective support focused on the **nature** of that support. Primarily, interviewees referred to the skills of LA staff working with asylum seekers and refugees, language support and developing language skills, and to a lesser extent, the sufficiency of staffing levels and the nature of assessment processes. The need for staff to have strong interpersonal skills and to be able to build rapport with a range of individuals was seen as an essential component of effective provision. Being able to advocate for and have empathy with pupils and their families while maintaining a degree of emotional detachment was also felt to be necessary. Other skills identified included the ability to take a non-judgemental approach, to be responsive to the changing needs of children and families, and to have an awareness and understanding of asylum and refugee issues and how they change over time. It was noted that staff needed to be flexible in their approach in order to be responsive to the needs and issues faced and adjust their work accordingly. Consequently, the support of senior managers to allow staff to be flexible and to adapt their role to meet the needs of families was viewed as key to successful working.

Providing additional input to develop pupils' language skills and their understanding of the English language was also seen as an essential component of effective support. LA staff highlighted the importance of children gaining understanding of English in the classroom and to have staff working in the classroom able to assess their levels of understanding and competence. Support for academic language competence, and ultimately academic literacy, was highlighted by interviewees as key to effective progress. Indeed, previous research (Kendall *et al.*, 2005) showed that a lack of academic literacy was a substantial barrier to asylum seeker and refugee pupils achieving their full potential in examinations at Key Stage 4.

Interviewees in the present study also highlighted the importance of access to language support (interpreters) for asylum seeker and refugee parents. As already noted in chapter 4, interviewees felt that assessments should be conducted in pupils' first language to identify any additional learning needs and to ensure that SEN and EAL needs were not confused.

Interviewees also noted that staffing levels had to be sufficient to support the learning and language needs of students. It was noted, particularly in LAs where the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees were increasing but the levels of staffing were not, that staff levels were no longer sufficient to adequately support these language needs.

Interviews also identified **strategic support and multi-agency working** as necessary components of effective support. It was felt that schools and LAs should take collective responsibility for asylum seeker and refugee pupils and that a clear strategic lead at both school and LA level was required. Interviewees noted that supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils should be a whole-school policy and should be led by the senior management team. Similarly, suggestions were made that schools should not be over-reliant on the support services available and that they needed to take ownership of all their pupils. Thus, while acknowledging the importance of and need for a key worker in supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils, it was crucial that this role did not diminish the collective responsibility of others.

Multi-agency working and inter-agency liaison were also raised in relation to the issue of collective responsibility. It was noted that there had to be liaison between schools, the LA, and pupils and families for support to be effective, although in itself, multi-agency liaison might not be sufficient. That is, effective practice required genuine joint working between agencies, for example by providing a focus on joint activity and working via strategic groups in the LA. LA interviewees also expressed a desire to work more as a multi-agency team within their own teams and to find out more about the roles and responsibilities of each team member. Thus, to be effective, it was felt that all agencies involved needed to work together as a team, to take ownership and work closely with service providers.

Information sharing was also identified as a key component to enable the provision of effective support. School interviewees highlighted the importance of having sufficient information on pupils' backgrounds prior to their arrival in school, which would give schools greater understanding of the difficulties faced by young people. Presently schools had to try and access this the best way they could, for example through home-school liaison. It was also noted that for support to be effective, newly arrived families also required access to accurate information about the country, including the services available to them. Furthermore, this information needed to be available in an accessible format (in their first language, either written or on audio tape), and face-to-face meetings were identified as the preferred means of facilitating access to services.

The need was noted for holistic approach systems to support families on arrival, for example the creation of drop-in centres where parents can discuss a range of issues, not just education.

Key factors identified also focused on **working with parents and asylum seeker and refugee communities** to ensure that families and children received appropriate support. One of the most important strategies was the need to have representatives from the communities working in this area. Without this community representation, there was felt to be the danger of a 'communication gulf, never mind a gap' (LA interviewee, case study 3). Similarly, there was a need to ensure that refugee community organisations were created (and by inference that there were the right conditions and support for these to be formed) to represent asylum seeker and refugee communities. The importance of working with parents to ensure that children received appropriate support at home was also identified. Such strategies would contribute to ensuring that parents understood the consequences of their children not completing homework and making academic progress, for example.

Comments on key factors relating to effective support for asylum seekers and refugees also focused on **school practice**. School interviewees noted the need for schools to have a welcoming and caring ethos and an underlying culture of supporting children. This should include clear policies for addressing children's needs and staff with skills to support pupils with a variety of needs. LA interviewees also highlighted the importance of schools' understanding of the issues affecting asylum seeker and refugee pupils and how these might impact on pupils' progress, as well as the need for cultural awareness raising in schools.

## 8.3 Areas for development

Interviewees were asked to highlight any aspects of their work that were felt to be in need of further development or were working less well. They were also asked to provide suggestions for improvement and the support required for future developments. A number of the areas identified focused on or were linked to the challenges discussed in chapter 7 and the key factors in effective practice identified above.

The main areas for development identified by LA staff focused on:

- developing the LA support provided;
- developing school practice;
- community development work;
- funding and staffing;
- the impact of immigration status and information sharing.

The main areas for development identified by school staff focused on:

- developing school support systems;
- funding and staffing;
- parental and community development work;
- improving the attainment of particular ethnic minority groups.

Thus, there were commonalities between school and LA staff in developing practice, the need for community development work and in accessing funding to maintain and/or develop existing support mechanisms.

In **developing LA support**, interviewees identified the need to develop or maintain their own support mechanisms by continuing to ensure that young people, wherever they were located in the LA, were able to access the same levels of support from the service. Ensuring equality of access was seen as a continuing challenge for all LA peripatetic services. Furthermore, the need to ensure that the support provided was culturally sensitive and adapted to meet the needs of each individual case was identified as an area for continuing development. The development of support in particular areas, such as targeted transition support (for example for Roma pupils) and post-16 support (for example for unaccompanied asylum seekers at college), was also identified. Ensuring that LA staff provided the most appropriate type of support, for example for unaccompanied asylum seekers, or education other than at school (EOTAS) for those not in school or counselling support for those young people who required it, was identified as a further area for development by LA staff. For unaccompanied asylum seekers, developing interventions that equipped young people with strategies to support themselves rather than 'doing it for them' and learning how to help young people adapt to different cultures were seen as areas requiring further development.

It was suggested that developing more systematic links with leaving care teams and voluntary agencies was a way forward. Interviewees working with unaccompanied asylum seekers also pointed out that they needed to prepare young people for the possibility that they might be returned to their country of origin when they reached age 18. Working with other LAs to look

at their practice was also suggested as a strategy for developing practice, particularly for those staff and LAs relatively new to supporting asylum seekers and refugees.

LA staff also highlighted the need to continue to raise awareness of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and the issues that might affect them. In some instances, LA staff were beginning to work in schools where there were very few or no asylum seeker and refugee pupils but where numbers were likely to increase, to ensure that the schools were prepared for their arrival. It could be argued that raising awareness in these schools is particularly important. Disseminating the work of LA staff, for example via newsletters, was also seen as a way of raising awareness and ensuring that LA services did not duplicate work. LA staff also highlighted a desire to develop work in the creative arts in order to raise awareness of the issues among more people in an informative but fun way.

Both LA and school staff identified the need to **develop school practice and systems of support**. LA staff focused on the continuing need to ensure that school attitudes were supportive of asylum seeker and refugee children. This particularly focused on schools that may have had little experience of supporting such pupils and in some instances it was noted that entrenched attitudes in schools towards asylum seekers and refugees had to be addressed. The other area for development identified by LA staff focused on concern as to whether schools would retain existing levels of support when centralised funding was removed. It was hoped that most schools would maintain existing levels of support because they could see its value and the positive 'knock-on effect on the rest of the school community' (LA strategic manager, case study 4). However, there were still felt to be some schools that did not recognise the value of additional support and LA staff expressed concern that such schools would not retain support when ring-fenced funding was removed. LA interviewees also focused on the need to continue to develop schools' practice and the LA's links with schools in relation to the placing of pupils, ensuring that class work was appropriate (that it was within pupils' sphere of knowledge and experience), and developing a school approach to asylum seeker and refugee issues through PSHE.

On the placing of pupils, it was noted that although practice was beginning to change, there were still instances where schools placed secondary-age children in bottom sets or special needs groups because this was where support for their language needs was located. This practice did not reflect pupils' levels of ability in their own language. Although increasing numbers of pupils were placed in top sets (and gained from this practice in their language development and support from able peers) this was still felt to be an area requiring further development.

On curriculum development, interviewees highlighted the need for schools to embed asylum seeker and refugee experiences in planned schemes of work, rather than see them as an add-on to the curriculum and to continue to develop curriculum materials which were accessible for new arrivals. School interviewees also highlighted the requirement for asylum seeker and refugee pupils to be able to find connections with their own culture in the curriculum. Without this crucial linkage it is likely to be extremely difficult for them to engage in learning effectively. To exemplify this point, an example was provided of a class teacher who asked pupils to recount the story of Cinderella when half of the class did not know who she was. Additional staff training focusing on asylum seeker and refugee issues and mental health issues was also felt to be required in some LAs.

On developing school practice, school interviewees highlighted the need to develop existing systems such as induction processes so that a more structured approach could be taken. For others, the levels of support provided by the LA and other agencies was not the issue, it was more how that support could be built into schools' existing practice and be used to enhance it.

Other common areas for development identified by both LA and school staff focused on **parental links and community development** and **funding and staffing**. LA staff identified a need for additional community development work, for example community youth work, while staff from one school focused on the need to continue to address the 'collision of cultures' in the school. School staff also focused on the need to develop links with parents, but acknowledged that in order to develop home–school links the level of school-based support would have to be reduced. School staff also highlighted the role they needed to continue to fulfil in addressing the anxieties of refugee and asylum seeker communities about their children's future, by ensuring that young people had access to education and by providing them with the necessary support to be able to achieve educationally.

Comments on funding and staffing focused on a desire to maintain or expand existing levels of staffing to meet the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. This was highlighted both by LA and by school staff. In some instances interviewees noted that due to a reduction in EMAG funding existing levels of staffing had been reduced significantly. Access to funding was also the most frequent response when interviewees were asked what support was needed to maintain and/or develop their work in the future. The short-term nature and uncertainty of the funding to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils meant that the continuity of support was often in jeopardy. One LA interviewee pointed out that funding for their own post was due to cease at the end of the financial year: 'if it comes to an end it will be really difficult for those children to actually get the support in school'. In addition to providing support for pupils, this officer also played a key role in home–school liaison. Interviewees called for the mainstreaming of support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils to ensure that it was not subject to the vagaries of funding streams.

LA staff also felt that the availability of contingency funding to support individual cases would enable them to respond more flexibly to pupils' needs, as and when they arose: 'there are sometimes issues which arise which need to be dealt with but there is not the funding to available to input the support' (LA practitioner, case study 1). School staff also noted that access to additional funding would enable them to buy in more staff so that support in school would be available when pupils required it.

An additional area for development identified by LA interviewees focused on the impact of families' **immigration status and the sharing of information** about their status with LA support staff. LA staff highlighted the lack of awareness of the impact on changes of immigration status on children in school and the need to develop procedures and processes to cope with this and for more account to be taken of the effect of these changes on children. It was noted that LA staff did not receive information about individual ongoing cases and therefore had no warning about what was going to happen to families. Earlier notification of the outcomes of cases would enable LA staff to plan more effective packages of support for pupils. It was also suggested that it would be useful if part of the National Asylum Support Service could have an educational officer to help raise awareness of how its other policies impacted on education. School interviewees also highlighted the need to **improve the attainment of pupils** from particular ethnic groups, for example Somali pupils. (It should be noted that a number of the good practice exemplars highlighted by questionnaire respondents focused on the attainment of Somali pupils.)

## 8.4 Learning outcomes

Interviewees were asked whether the experience of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils could be used to enhance support for other pupils in school and whether they had any recommendations for schools and LAs new to providing support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils.

On providing support for other pupils, the experience of working with asylum seeker and refugee pupils was felt to have resulted in a number of outcomes. Interviewees noted that the

support strategies implemented for asylum seeker and refugee pupils could be beneficial for all pupils. Most commonly, interviewees identified how induction and admission processes and strategies implemented for asylum seeker and refugee children were beneficial for all new arrivals. LA teams had been able to use the admission and induction of asylum seekers and refugees as a way of addressing these processes generally within the LA. Similarly, it was felt that unless race equality issues in LAs and schools were addressed in relation to asylum seeker and refugee pupils and other minority ethnic pupils, then other policies on inclusion would not be effective. Interviewees noted that if their support systems were effective for asylum seekers and refugees they would also be effective for other pupils.

Asylum seeker and refugee pupils were felt to be some of the most vulnerable young people in school in their mobility and the ease with which they could 'slip through the net': 'if we are happy with the provision we give for refugees and asylum seekers, the provision we give for other groups should follow' (LA strategic staff, case study 6). Although the principles may be transferable, it was suggested that the support provided had to be tailored to the specific groups and individuals staff worked with, in order to meet their needs effectively.

Staff working in schools noted that the support they provided in class was available to all students who required it, not just for asylum seeker and refugee pupils. Similarly, other children from the EU not classed as asylum seekers or refugees still had the same sorts of needs and benefited from the same type of support provided by LA staff. Interviewees also identified other vulnerable groups who might particularly benefit from the strategies used in relation to asylum seeker and refugee pupils, notably looked-after children, Gypsy Travellers and underachieving boys. In one LA, officers who worked with asylum seekers and refugees were also exploring the possibility of working with looked-after children who were disengaged from education. They hoped to incorporate some of the creative strategies and project work used with asylum seekers and refugees with looked-after children. These officers were also going to be responsible for monitoring the attendance of looked-after children in the same way that they worked with asylum seeker and refugee pupils, that is, focusing on pupils' general well-being and visiting them in their care placements.

It was also felt that the multi-agency team approach used by one LA to support unaccompanied asylum seekers provided a useful model for working with all looked-after children. At that time the looked-after children's service was being changed so that advisory teachers and social workers were colocated in the same office.

In one LA, LA support workers' posts for asylum seekers and refugees were replicated by other teams in the LA who worked with Black and dual heritage children. It was felt that this role could also be used to support Gypsy Travellers and other new arrivals and EAL children. Similarly, in another LA it was felt that the individualised approach staff had taken in meeting the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils would also be beneficial for Gypsy Traveller pupils. An EMAG manager from one LA also felt that the strategies used for underachieving African-Caribbean boys could also be used with underachieving White boys. The strategies employed focused on schools embedding support in their practice and ensuring that they identified background issues and factors that affected students' progress in school. This approach looked at establishing the cause, that is, the underlying reasons for underachievement, rather than just looking at and trying to deal with the problems or issues presented by pupils. Thus, it was felt that in this LA good practice had come out of schools' work with asylum seekers and refugees because they had to look at the causes of underachievement rather than see it as a problem: 'They have to see that there is a cause behind everything and those methods are now being used with other groups' (LA strategic staff, case study 4).

On recommendations made by interviewees to LAs and schools that might be new to supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils, most of these reflected strategies already highlighted in this report, notably:

## Staffing

- the benefit of a key contact for asylum seeker and refugee pupils;
- the need for staff to be able to take a flexible approach;
- the provision of support staff who can provide both curriculum and pastoral support, including home–school liaison;

## Relationships

- the need for school and LA staff to establish a positive rapport with pupils;
- the need to build links with voluntary agencies and refugee community organisations;
- the need for good communication between agencies and services and the importance of valuing each other's roles;

## Awareness raising

- the need to raise awareness among other pupils of asylum seeker and refugee issues, for example dispelling the myths and stereotypes;
- ensuring that all schools are aware of the support available and that they make use of that support;
- training for teachers regarding pupils' EAL needs, and not confusing language needs and special educational needs.

## Key findings

- When interviewees discussed key factors in providing effective support for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their responses covered the nature of the support provided, strategic support and multi-agency working, work with parents/community, and school practice.
- Interviewees were also asked to highlight any aspects of their work that were felt to be in need of further development or were working less well. The main areas identified by **LA staff** focused on developing the LA support provided, developing school practice, community development work, funding and staffing, and the impact of immigration status and information sharing.
- The main areas for development identified by **school staff** focused on developing school support systems, funding and staffing, parental and community development work, and improving the attainment of specific ethnic minority groups.
- Thus, there were commonalities between school and LA staff in areas identified for development: developing practice, the need for community development work, and access to funding to maintain and/or develop existing support mechanisms.
- Interviewees felt that the experience of supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils could be used to enhance support for other pupils in school, for example in relation to schools' admission and induction policies and procedures.
- Interviewees also identified other vulnerable groups who might benefit from the strategies used for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, notably looked-after children, Gypsy Travellers and underachieving boys.



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## Appendix 1

**Table A1 Job titles of LA staff supporting asylum seeker and refugee pupils**

1. Advisory teachers	22. Traveller education service adviser
2. Coordinator/team leader	23. Play therapist
3. Language support assistants/teaching assistants	24. Portage
4. Home-school liaison officers	25. Behaviour support officer
5. Education welfare officers	26. Police officer
6. Social worker/LAC adviser	27. Family advice and support
7. Inclusion officer	28. Youth worker
8. Admissions officer	29. Counsellor
9. Educational psychologist	30. Housing officer
10. Interpreter	31. Housing support worker
11. Project officer/worker	32. Resettlement worker
12. Adviser	33. Disability team
13. Administrative officer	34. Equal opportunities officer
14. Connexions PA	35. Community cohesion officer
15. Early years staff	36. Boys achievement
16. Learning support staff	37. Primary/secondary transfer
17. Health practitioner	38. Fostering officer
18. Mentor	39. IMPACT officer
19. Finance officer	40. School effectiveness
20. SEN/Head of SEN	41. Headteacher
21. Professional assistant	42. EAL tutor

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## Appendix 2

**Table A2 Agencies, services and organisations LA staff work with (grouped according to organisation type)**

<p><b>Refugee organisations and related NGOs</b></p> <p>1. Refugee organisations including the Refugee Council, Refugee Support Forum, Asylum Aid, refugee community organisations</p> <p>2. Race Equality Council/Commission for Racial Equality</p>	<p>21. <b>Schools</b></p> <p>22. <b>Early years providers</b> e.g. Sure Start, nurseries, early years children's centres</p>
<p><b>Charities</b></p> <p>3. British Red Cross</p> <p>4. National Children's Home (NCH)/Children's Society, e.g. shared training with LA staff</p> <p>5. Other charities</p>	<p><b>Other educational provision and training</b></p> <p>23. Further education colleges and community education providers</p> <p>24. Training providers</p>
<p><b>Advice and support</b></p> <p>6. Drop-in centres</p> <p>7. Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB)</p> <p>8. Family support, e.g. LA unity project</p> <p>9. Interpreter service (LA or non-LA)</p> <p>10. Religious/faith groups e.g. Churches Together, Faiths Together, community churches</p>	<p><b>LA/council and related services</b></p> <p>25. LA/council, e.g. LA community safety officer</p> <p>26. Housing and private accommodation providers</p> <p>27. Asylum seekers team (housing or social services based)</p> <p>28. Regeneration team</p> <p>29. Parent partnership</p> <p>30. Social inclusion and justice</p> <p>31. Children's information service</p>
<p>11. <b>Other voluntary organisations and community groups</b> e.g. Voluntary Action, scouts</p>	<p><b>Statutory services and related organisations</b></p> <p>32. Social services/social care</p> <p>33. Police e.g. police hate crime officer/Youth Offending Service/NACRO</p> <p>34. Health including mental health providers</p> <p>35. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)</p>

<p><b>LA services (education-focused)</b></p> <p>12. Education welfare service (EWS)</p> <p>13. Educational psychology service (EPS)</p> <p>14. Behaviour support service (BSS)</p> <p>15. Admissions</p> <p>16. Study support</p> <p>17. Traveller education service (TES)</p> <p>18. Out-of-hours learning</p> <p>19. Pupil assessment and support team</p> <p>20. Pupil support service</p>	<p>36. Youth service</p> <p>37. Connexions and other agencies providing careers advice</p> <p>38. Immigration</p> <p>39. The National Asylum Support Service (NASS)</p> <p>40. Sports providers</p> <p>41. Multi-agency forum</p> <p>42. Children's Fund</p>
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Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## Appendix 3

**Table A3 Support provided by other agencies (in rank order)**

1. General advice/advocacy	24. Emotional, personal and social needs
2. Information sharing (development of shared protocols/liaison)	25. Events/celebrations
3. Social work support	26. Meetings, e.g. policy guidance meetings
4. Family services/support including pre-school support	27. School support/pupil support in school
5. Health-related support including mental health	28. Special needs assessments/statutory assessments (educational psychology service)
6. Community support/integration	29. Funding
7. Specific advice/support/information	30. Counselling
8. Housing needs (LA and private)/accommodation information	31. Behaviour
9. Training	32. Reception/introduction to the LA
10. Education, e.g. ESOL/language classes	33. Policy/strategic development
11. Welfare, e.g. clothes, finance, food, racism, hate crimes, community safety	34. Publicity
12. Careers advice/transition support	35. Supplementary classes/schools
13. Language support/translation/interpretation/language assessment	36. Awareness raising
14. Leisure activities including holiday clubs/programmes, after-school clubs and sports programmes	37. Assessment/intervention
15. Individual support	38. School-based supervision
16. School places/admissions	39. Play/art therapy
17. Multi-agency support/liaison	40. Transport
18. Referrals	41. Volunteer support
19. School attendance	42. Resources
20. Legal advice	43. Interaction with other asylum seekers and refugees
21. Home-school liaison	44. Project work to support needs
22. Study support, including in-class support	45. Education other than at school (EOTAS)
23. Mentoring	

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## Appendix 4

**Table A4.1 Good practice identified (in rank order)**

Good practice identified	No. of responses
Arrival, admission and induction	30
Advisory work, training and raising awareness	26
Language support	23
Development of resources/procedures including ICT	20
Family learning/support including early years	14
Alternative educational provision for Key Stage 4 arrivals	9
Curriculum support/development	9
Home-school liaison	8
Existence of dedicated team, service or staff to support asylum seekers and refugees	8
Addressing racism in the community/schools	7
Multi-agency support	7
GCSE support	6
Media/arts project	5
Emotional well-being/counselling/pastoral support/nurture groups	5
After-school club	5
Play therapy/art therapy	4
Leisure activities/youth projects including sports	4
Support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children	4
Events/celebrations	4
Mentoring	3
Drop-in service	3
Skill development, e.g. via ICT	2
Higher and further education: raising awareness	2
Information and data management	2
Identifying children out of school	1
Behaviour support	1
Holiday programmes/summer school	1
Study support	1
Bilingual community workers	1
Asylum seeker and refugee awards	1
Attendance	1
Bursaries	1
Supporting appeals	1
Adult education	1
Community involvement: raising awareness in school	1
Developing relationships between community schools and	1

schools	
Transition support	1

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

**Table A4.2 Agencies involved in good practice**

Agencies	No. of responses
LA refugee and asylum team (including LA asylum team)	65
Schools/pupil referral units (PRUs)	53
Social services/social care	20
Further education college and education other than at school (including higher education)	19
Refugee organisations and community groups	16
Education	14
Arts-based/media organisations, libraries, museums and theatres	13
Other LAs	12
Health	8
Connexions	8
Charities (including Save the Children)	8
Housing	7
Sure Start	6
Admissions	5
Interpreting services	5
Other agencies	5
Children's Fund	4
Family/carers	4
Educational Psychology Service (EPS)	3
Police	3
Youth service/organisations	3
Social inclusion	3
Achievement support service	3
Education Welfare Service	3
Advice and Inspection	2
Fostering agency	2
Regeneration team	2
Supplementary schools/community schools	2
Special educational needs	1
Race Equality Council	1
Citizen's Advice Bureau	1
Community Safety Team	1
Fire service	1
Study support	1
European Refugee Fund	1
Sports providers	1
Children and Young People's Service	1

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005



**Table A4.3 Outcomes of good practice**

Outcomes identified	No. of responses
Better/quicker placing and induction of new arrivals/improved induction process	27
Language skills developed and improved pupil progress/attainment/achievement	25
Families feel supported/greater community involvement, e.g. in education	24
Improved integration (pupils and families)	23
Increased awareness among school/agency staff/community	23
Improved school practice/pupils' progress monitored and teachers better informed about needs	19
Improved confidence/motivation/self-esteem	17
Improved staying-on rates, transition and positive post-16 progression	17
Positive feedback	15
Not completed/evaluated yet	11
Processes and resources developed	11
Attendance improved	9
Education/the curriculum accessed	8
Young people involved in leisure activities	7
Other pupils better informed about asylum seekers and refugees	7
Psychiatric referrals reduced	6
Key Stage 4 pupils access education	6
Skills development	5
Better/quicker placing and induction of new arrivals/improved induction process	5
Quicker identification of asylum seekers and refugees and their needs	4
Increased access to services	4
Accreditation gained	4
Friendship and support networks developed	4
Schools asking for information and input into activities	3
Used as an example of good practice in the LA and beyond	3
Curriculum diversified, including asylum seeker and refugee issues	3
Individual needs met	3
Services provided for families under one roof	3
Homework completed	2
Raising profile of or focus on asylum seekers and refugees/developing cultural identity	2
Exclusions reduced	1
Supporting appeals	1
Greater consultation	1
Inter-agency protocol developed	1
Recognition of achievement and competence in first language	1
Employment for parents	1

Respondents could give more than one answer

Source: LA survey responses received by NFER between May and July 2005

## Appendix 5

### Exemplars of good practice

The following provides an overview of the good practice identified by questionnaire respondents. It highlights the types of support provided, the key agencies involved and the outcomes identified by respondents. Boxed exemplars are included to provide further illustration.

#### 1. Arrival, admission and induction: procedures, policies and programmes

##### Good practice identified

- Multi-agency panels identifying asylum seeker and refugee children out of school and supporting admission
- Time-specific targets for admission or LA response to call from school

##### Time-specific targets for admission

**LA 1:** All families are visited by a senior teacher and interpreter (if required). The teacher liaises directly with schools regarding admission and most new arrivals are placed within three weeks of notification of arrival (northern metropolitan LA).

**LA 2:** All newly arrived pupils have a school place within ten school days (northern metropolitan LA).

**LA 3:** The coordinator contacts families within two days of their arrival, schools are identified and visits arranged and support and resources provided. (Northern metropolitan LA)

- Admission and induction procedures for new arrivals
- LA staff supporting admission and induction procedures and monitoring progress

##### Rapid response policy

The EMAS responds to a school call within seven days, an initial language assessment is conducted within seven days, support is allocated, schools are provided with resources and dual language materials and the LA's database is updated. This has resulted in the successful induction of 434 pupils from 52 countries across 46 schools. Pupils' attainment is monitored using QCA Steps assessment and schools are required to complete an annual report and progress sheet, (Midlands metropolitan LA)

- Specific induction procedures developed for new arrivals in Key Stages 3 and 4 and for mid-phase admissions

For example, an education action zone in one London borough had produced a practice guidance folder on mid-phase admissions. Key Stage 4 induction programmes and toolkits focused on school induction and transition to further education, along with the provision of intensive language support and counselling.

- Focused in-school support provided by the LA for new arrivals

## **New arrivals team**

A team was established comprising a language teacher and two support staff focusing on providing support for new arrivals in eight pilot schools in the LA. The team works on induction, assessment, learning and teaching for new arrivals, using ICT to disseminate good practice to other schools in the LA. (Northern metropolitan LA)

- Peer mentoring programme for new arrivals
- Bursaries for schools to employ staff to provide initial additional support for new arrivals
- Specialist induction centres for new arrivals, for example a primary induction base

## **LA primary induction base**

For primary-age new arrivals attached to a primary school in the main dispersal area in the LA. Up to 10 children attend in the mornings for half a term prior to admission to school. A language-based curriculum is linked to the National Curriculum. Staffed by members of the new arrivals peripatetic team in close collaboration with the school. A total of 250 pupils have attended the provision and the response from primary schools has been positive. Records of achievement are passed on when children leave. (Midlands metropolitan LA)

## **Key agencies involved**

- LA staff responsible for asylum seeker and refugee pupils
- Schools
- Admissions
- Social services

## **Outcomes**

- Quicker identification of asylum seekers and refugees out of school
- Quicker admission of pupils and improved admission and induction procedures in schools
- Schools establishing their own induction processes and welcome packs
- Better monitoring in the LA of asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their progress
- Schools better informed of asylum seeker and refugee needs and appropriate support provided
- Parents and pupils feel supported and have a named contact if they have concerns
- Asylum seekers and refugees placed in higher sets on the advice of LA support staff leading to improved progress and attainment
- Liaison between LA and school staff regarding pupils prior to their admission ensured that pupils were placed where they could access appropriate support

## 2. Arrival, admission and induction: parent- and pupil-focused support

- Welcome booklets and DVDs for parents and pupils developed by schools and LAs

### **Photographic welcome booklets**

Welcome booklets developed in major languages in 21 schools as part of their admission and induction procedures (schools, community groups and more than 20 other agencies were involved). Ofsted praised the LA's effective induction policies and procedures and noted improvement in schools' confidence in receiving and meeting the needs of asylum seeker and refugee pupils. (London borough)

- Parent workshops: new arrivals and their parents attend sample lessons with an EAL teacher and an interpreter

### **New arrivals parent workshops**

Parents and pupils attend sample lessons with EAL teacher and interpreters. There are opportunities for parents to talk to schools about any concerns they might have and work with their children in school. The lessons developed during the project have been translated into 13 languages and are due to be published. (Northern metropolitan LA)

### **Key agencies involved**

- LA staff responsible for asylum seeker and refugee pupils
- Schools
- Community groups
- Other agencies
- Children's Fund
- Education action zone

### **Outcomes**

- LA-wide effective induction policies and procedures
- Schools more confident in receiving and meeting the needs of asylum seekers and refugees
- Improved liaison between parents and schools
- Improved parental awareness of how schools operate; schools more aware of parental concerns
- Lessons used during parent workshops translated into a number of languages will be used as a teaching resource

### 3. Arrival, admission and induction: alternative educational provision for Key Stage 4 arrivals

#### Good practice identified

- Alternative provision for those asylum seekers and refugees without a school place or for unaccompanied asylum seeking children following a multi-agency assessment of their needs

#### Alternative provision for Key Stage 4 pupils

Alternative provision for Key Stage 4 pupils without a school place was coordinated by a specialist teacher and supported by a learning mentor. Young people accessed courses at a local college, including ESOL courses. It was noted that all students involved had subsequently gained places at school or college to continue their education. The role of the learning mentor was seen as invaluable in this area and strong links were being forged with schools and colleges to ensure that students' educational needs were met. (London borough)

- Accessing college provision, for example ESOL and other courses, with support from specialist teachers and learning mentors
- Providing roll-on roll-off college programmes

#### Roll-on roll-off college programmes

Key Stage 4 alternative educational provision for unaccompanied new arrivals following a multi-agency assessment of need determining that this is the most appropriate provision. Intensive roll-on roll-off college programmes focusing on English, mathematics, ICT, PSHE and volunteering opportunities. All progress onto vocational or academic programmes with high rates of attendance. Four further education colleges, social services, education, Connexions, and the alternative curriculum manager are involved in this provision. (County LA)

#### Key agencies involved

- LA staff responsible for asylum seeker and refugee pupils
- Colleges
- Pupil referral unit (PRU)
- Education other than at school (EOTAS)
- Social services
- Connexions

#### Outcomes

- Positive transition to school or further college courses
- Accreditation achieved in a range of areas including ESOL and ICT

## 4. Advisory work, training and raising awareness: school staff

### Good practice identified

- LA staff providing training, advice and support for school and other agency staff (some joint training was noted) on asylum seeker and refugee needs and teaching strategies, and related issues such as racism
- Training included courses on practical strategies for supporting new arrivals, the emotional well-being of asylum seekers and refugees, managing mid-phase admissions, tackling racism, and on the asylum and refugee system
- Provision of multicultural training resources (see resources)
- Community involvement in in-service training and conferences (see community involvement)

### Key agencies involved

- LA staff responsible for asylum seeker and refugee pupils
- Schools
- Community groups
- Other agencies

### Outcomes

- Increased awareness among staff of pupils' needs (for example EAL and pastoral needs) and increased confidence in meeting those needs
- Increased awareness of the issues faced by pupils and families, for example the asylum system, racism
- Improved induction procedures, for example the establishment of induction processes and welcome packs created by individual schools, as a result of training and advice to schools
- Skills and good practice embedded in mainstream practice
- Pupils' progress in acquiring English language skills and cross-curricular achievement
- Better monitoring of progress in schools

## 5. Advisory work, training and raising awareness: primary school staff

### Good practice identified

EMA team (teachers and bilingual assistants) providing peripatetic support for primary schools

#### Peripatetic support for primary schools

Peripatetic support for primary schools from the EMA team (teachers and seven bilingual classroom assistants). This has led to an increase in parental involvement in schools and the establishment of Somali parent groups. It has also resulted in an increase in community involvement, community members being employed as teaching assistants and members of governing bodies. There have also been improvements in attendance at parents' evenings and an improvement in pupils' progress with an increase in the numbers of pupils moving from level 1 to level 2. (London borough)

### Key agencies involved

- EMA team
- Schools
- Community groups
- Parents

### Outcomes

- Increased parental and community involvement in schools
- Improved pupil progress

## 6. Advisory work, training and raising awareness: pupils' awareness

### Good practice identified

- LA staff providing citizenship talks or days; input into school assemblies and diversity and Refugee Week activities, including myth-busting quizzes

Refugee Week activities identified were also focused in the local community outside the context of school, for example Refugee Week celebrations in community centres and schools, increasing awareness of asylum seeker and refugee cultures and the issues faced.

#### Citizenship talks

Refugee liaison teacher in a London borough with a relatively small number of refugee pupils runs these talks in primary (Year 6) and secondary schools. Primary talks consist of two sessions: 1. What is a refugee? and 2. Using a UNHCR video to get children to identify with refugee pupils, for example through what they like doing out of school and what they would take with them if they had to flee their country. Secondary talks address media stereotypes, provide factual information, for example on numbers, and include a presentation from refugees about their experiences to dispel many of the myths and challenge views. The issue of take-up by secondary schools was noted.

#### Myth-busting quizzes and related activities

Quizzes developed to raise awareness: for example one LA had produced a myth-busting quiz for a particular school in response to issues of racial bullying in the school to help raise other pupils' awareness of asylum seekers and refugees, address issues of racism and dispel myths.

One unitary authority in conjunction with neighbouring LAs, refugee organisations and race equality services had developed an asylum seeker and refugee website. This provided a wide range of information for schools, including resources, details of the support available, training offered, initial assessment forms and LA policy documentation. The site also provided details of support available for students, information on local support groups and other resources. An asylum seeker and refugee quiz was available for pupils to find out about issues to do with refugees and asylum seekers in the UK: for example, 'How many people applied for asylum in the UK in 2004?' The quiz had a version for Key Stage 2 and another for Key Stage 3 and above. The site had received a European e-learning award.

- Drama activities on asylum seeker and refugee issues, for example a theatre company project funded by the Home Office for Key Stage 2 pupils focusing on presenting positive images of asylum seekers and refugees

#### Drama activities

An EAL drama performance for Refugee Week in four schools in a northern metropolitan authority. The drama was used to promote understanding of asylum seeker and refugee issues. It also brought asylum seeker and refugee parents into school, raised awareness of the issues families are dealing with and brought schools, teachers, parents and pupils together from different schools. It also provided an opportunity to model teaching techniques.



## **Key agencies involved**

- LA staff
- Schools
- Refugee community and refugee community organisations
- Parents

## **Outcomes**

- Raising awareness of asylum seeker and refugee issues and dispelling and challenging myths and stereotypes
- Bringing parents into schools and bringing schools, teachers, parents and pupils together from different schools

## 7. A multi-agency approach

A number of the strategies identified had a particular multi-agency focus.

### Good practice identified

- A multi-agency road show for schools and other agencies supporting asylum seekers and refugees to share information

#### Multi-agency road show

A total of 37 different agencies came together to share information. The road show provided opportunities for agencies to network and for school staff to learn what support is available. A brochure was produced with contact details for schools and agencies. (London borough)

- A multi-agency working group/panel for placing unaccompanied asylum seeking children and identifying asylum seekers and refugees out of school

### Key agencies involved

- A wide range of agencies, including schools

### Outcomes

- Providing networking opportunities and increasing awareness of the support available
- Agencies coming together to identify asylum seekers and refugees out of school and ensure their swift admission into appropriate educational placements

## 8. Pupil support: language support

### Good practice identified

- Language assessment: initial assessments conducted in children's first language to identify their educational needs
- Language support, for example some classroom activities, conducted in children's first language and access to LA EAL specialists; other strategies identified included language support for new arrivals

#### Language support for new arrivals

In one metropolitan Midlands LA, the LA's asylum seeker and refugee team and the City Learning Centre were using presentation software and interactive whiteboards in three secondary and three primary schools to provide language support for new arrivals. In another northern metropolitan LA, ICT-based language software and laptops were lent to schools and homes for English language skills development. A support website for schools, parents and pupils providing an online EAL course had also been developed.

- A register of language providers (in more than 20 languages) established by the multilingual service
- Employment of bilingual support assistants
- English language classes for parents

### Key agencies involved

- LA asylum seeker and refugee team
- EAL specialists
- Schools
- City Learning Centres

### Outcomes

- By conducting initial assessments in a child's first language, schools are provided with accurate information on children's previous levels of educational attainment
- Access to EAL specialists helps remove barriers to access and language learning, resulting in improved levels of achievement
- Pupils' English language skills developed
- A register of language providers enabled the provision of rapid focused support, improving pupils' inclusion, progress and performance (however the cost of this provision was an issue)

## 9. Pupil support: curriculum development and study support

### Good practice identified

- Curriculum support and development, for example LA staff providing input into the citizenship curriculum, integrating asylum seeker and refugee issues and language in the whole curriculum, and support for new arrivals at Key Stage 4.

#### Curriculum development

In conjunction with the local community college, LA staff developed an eight-week study programme on migration for primary and secondary pupils which included units on refugees. The local film and TV archive, the museum, schools and community groups were also involved. An evaluation of the pilot programmes showed that pupils were better informed about the facts rather than the myths surrounding asylum seekers and refugees and more welcoming to new arrivals. (Southern unitary LA)

- Study support, for example after-school clubs and study support groups for Key Stage 4 pupils or targeting new arrivals

#### Study support

An after-school club was established in one LA for asylum seeker and refugee pupils, their parents/carers and friends. As well as focusing on the completion of homework, the club also acted as a community meeting place and provided parental support. (Southern county LA)

In other LAs additional support provided for GCSE students, such as intensive language support, had led to improvements in students' predicted grades.

In another LA, a study support group was held at the central library for Key Stage 4 pupils to help with revision, coursework, etc. Staff from the ethnic minority achievement service, the library service and a study support officer funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund provided support. (Northern metropolitan LA)

#### Curriculum development project for new arrivals

The LA had developed resources for Key Stage 4 English GCSE courses. This included the development of visuals, chapter summaries, and language activities relating to the themes covered in class. Schools used CD-ROMs and materials developed by the LA, and these materials were used in training as examples of good practice. (Midlands metropolitan LA)

### Key agencies involved

- LA asylum seeker and refugee team
- EAL specialists
- Schools
- City learning centres
- Museums
- Community groups
- Film and TV companies
- Libraries
- Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

## 10. Pupil support: personal, social and emotional development

A number of good practice exemplars highlighted focused on pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

### Good practice identified

- Art and music therapy was identified as good practice by a small number of respondents

#### Art and music therapy

In one LA, art and music therapy was funded by the Children's Fund. It focused on helping young people settle and concentrate in class, develop relationships, promote achievement, and feel safe. In another Midlands unitary LA, the provision of therapeutic art workshops for primary school pupils was felt to have resulted in improved emotional well-being among children, greater involvement of families and better mainstream practice in schools.

- Play therapy

#### Play therapy

Based on life story work. This intervention had resulted in a reduction in the number of psychiatric referrals from 48 per cent to three per cent in less than two years. Children were better integrated, their attendance had improved, and there was a sharing of achievement with families as a result of this intervention.

- Asylum seeker and refugee awards

#### Asylum seeker and refugee awards

These awards were presented by a charitable trust. They were for asylum seeker and refugee pupils who had made significant contributions to their school or college (both the young people and the educational institution received a financial award). These awards helped present a positive focus on asylum seekers and refugees in the LA's area, as well as improving resources for schools and colleges and raising the self-esteem of individual pupils. (London borough)

- Leisure activities, for example a Connexions project for young people with English as an additional language, many of whom were asylum seekers and refugees: this was a weekly session offering ICT and other leisure activities for young people aged up to 19
- Mentoring programme for new arrivals, for example Year 10 pupils mentoring new arrivals and providing form tutors with information on support.

### Key agencies involved

- Therapeutic interventions funded by the Children's Fund, with social services also involved in play therapy
- Charitable trust providing awards
- Connexions involved in the provision of leisure activities

### Outcomes

- Art and music therapy helped pupils integrate into class and play therapy had resulted in a reduction in psychiatric referrals

- Leisure activities helped young people's confidence increase and developed their life skills

## 11. Pupil support: transition support and positive progression

### Good practice identified

- Early years service ensuring that families access pre-school provision
- Primary–secondary transition, for example summer schools, focused transition support for vulnerable pupils from liaison officers, such as additional induction activities.

#### Primary–secondary transition support

**LA 1:** The ethnic minority achievement service ran a summer school and a refugee day centre for 60 Year 6 pupils enabling them to experience secondary school prior to transfer. Pupils also had the opportunity to experience activities families could not afford, along with opportunities for social development and inclusion (London borough).

**LA 2:** The LA provided focused transition support for vulnerable pupils. LA staff identified children vulnerable at the transition stage and offered a range of support to primary and secondary schools, pupils and parents, including family liaison, transition projects, additional opportunities to taste secondary education, assisting parents with administrative requirements and finding school places, accompanying parents and children on transfer visits and devising and supporting induction plans. Schools valued the skills of LA refugee and language teachers in guiding the assessment and learning programmes for refugee children requiring EAL support. Schools also noted the importance of continuing with focused support to ensure that subject-specific vocabulary, technical language and idiomatic language and concepts were understood. LA staff focused on resolving transition issues by building confidence and relationships of trust with parents, simplifying transition arrangements, assisting parents with school selections and acknowledging reasons for parental preference, ensuring good and early communication between schools and with parents, facilitating adult education development, boosting children's academic skills, developing schools' understanding of the impact of culture on parental attitudes to education and how these influence views on transition, implementing transition projects such as additional induction activities to meet the needs of vulnerable children, focusing on parents' levels of English and their familiarity with the English education system, for example translating information letters into community languages. (Southern county LA)

- Access to further and higher education, for example 'Want to go to college' meetings providing advice and guidance for young people and their parents/carers and a summer university and university visits to raise awareness of opportunities and raise aspirations

**Access to further education:** one northern metropolitan authority ran 'Want to go to college' meetings providing advice and guidance for young people and their parents/carers. This year over 50 students attended, both on and off a school roll – that is, they included new arrivals. All the students signed up for college places and summer youth activities. The strategy has resulted in an increase in numbers of young people in the LA area remaining in education. A range of participants were involved, including all the sixth form colleges in the LA and the community college, the Prince's Trust, the youth service, Connexions, and a boys' and girls' club.

**Access to higher education:** A Somali summer university was highlighted by one

London borough as helping to improve access to higher education by asylum seekers and refugees. Another LA in the Midlands had focused on improving access to higher education by new arrivals by organising university visits to raise awareness of the opportunities available, to increase motivation, and to raise family aspirations and support for young people in school. Improved attendance at school and raised pupil attainment were noted as a result of these visits. They were also seen to have had a positive influence on social perceptions of new arrivals.

## **Key agencies involved**

- Schools
- Early years providers
- EMAS or equivalent
- Refugee community organisations
- Colleges and universities
- Prince's Trust
- Youth service
- Connexions

## **Outcomes**

- Successful transition, for example primary to secondary
- Resolution of possible transition issues
- An increase in the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees remaining in education as a result of the LA supporting access to further education and increasing numbers of asylum seekers and refugees considering higher education

## 12. Development of resources

### Good practice identified

- Good practice guides/handbooks, DVDs and CDs focusing on raising schools' awareness and improving practice produced by a number of LAs

Resources focused on raising schools' awareness and improving practice. LAs noted that they had received positive feedback from schools following the provision of resources and training linked to those resources. Other resources for schools included the *Home from Home* manual published by Save the Children. An overview of a good practice guide developed by a LA and a charity is presented below.

#### Good practice guide

Developed by a London borough and refugee charity and disseminated to all schools in the borough. The guide covered the following.

1. **Introduction**, focusing on definitions, the policy framework (the role of LAs and senior management in schools)
2. **Teacher awareness**, including possible experiences of refugee children prior to arriving in the borough; risk and protective factors and factors that aid achievement; the major refugee groups in the borough
3. **Induction**, including suggested induction strategies for primary and secondary schools, welcome packs for parents and basic information for teachers with a new child in the class
4. **Assessing the curriculum**: checklist for welcoming children to the class, including things to do before they arrive and when they are new to the class; initial assessments, beginners' EAL pack, strategies for support
5. **Involving refugee parents**, including home-school liaison checklist, children in distress and deportation advice
6. **Resources**: useful resources for schools and contact details of services, agencies and organisations

- Welcome booklets and DVDs for schools, community groups and other services in a variety of languages

#### Welcome booklets and DVDs

One London borough developed a welcome DVD in 10 languages which was given to all schools, community groups and other services such as libraries in the LA. The DVD focused on primary, secondary and tertiary education, transport, where to get advice in the LA, etc. Four more languages were in production. The DVD was used as part of the school induction process for pupils and parents and in parental ESOL classes, and copies had also been requested by police and magistrates.

- Videos for parents and school staff, for example for parents with children about to start primary school and a documentary produced for school staff on the lives and backgrounds of asylum seekers and refugees
- School resources pack developed for Refugee Week
- ICT-based resources developed, for example language support, courses and websites; websites used as a multicultural training resource



## Key agencies involved

- LA asylum seeker and refugee support staff
- Charities, for example Save the Children Fund
- Education action zone
- Community groups

## Outcomes

- Curriculum more valuing of diversity
- Welcome booklets and DVDs used as by schools and other agencies as a resource
- School staff more confident in working with asylum seekers and refugees because they feel better informed

## 13. Family-focused support and community involvement

### Good practice identified

- Community involvement in conferences and in-service training as keynote speakers and workshop leaders
- Producing school newsletters in community languages and community members organising sessions for schools to disseminate information
- LA and police intervention focusing on addressing racism in the community
- Community drop-in sessions
- Family learning and resources for parents, for example videos for parents, new arrivals parent workshops, Saturday English language classes, supplementary schools, family learning opportunities

#### Multilingual video for parents

This was produced by the Early Years team in one London borough to encourage support for bilingual pupils at home and school on transition to school. The video is available in a range of languages, including Arabic, Farsi, Punjabi, Somali and Urdu. The video was seen as helping to raise the attainment of asylum seeker and refugee pupils by recognising mother tongue achievement and competence and increasing parental involvement and understanding of school.

#### Saturday English language classes and family learning

This intervention was run in a Midlands metropolitan LA. A total of 35 young people and 12 adults were participating at the time the questionnaire was completed. A wide range of outcomes were identified among participants, including improved English language skills, involvement in leisure and outdoor activities, establishing friendship and support networks, increased independence, increased family understanding of the benefits of education leading to better support in school, for example regarding attendance. Another family learning project was identified as good practice by a county authority: this focused on isolated families in the LA area.

- Employment of home–school liaison officers, for example bilingual community workers to support families, pupils and schools

As well as providing support for individual pupils and families, good practice identified by respondents focused on the role of these staff in developing consistent practice in schools across LAs, community outreach workers focusing on early years provision (ensuring that

all families access some pre-school provision) and providing innovative extracurricular and holiday programmes.

## **Bilingual community workers**

Staff employed from within communities, for example the Somali community, as bilingual community workers to support families, pupils and schools. Outcomes identified included increased community engagement in school life, better knowledge of the educational system and how school works, better parental support for children's achievement and confidence in dealing with school issues. In one LA, the employment of three Somali linguistic and cultural mediators meant that parents were able to access information about their children's education and had led to improved attendance at parents' meetings. Interaction between community groups was also seen to have increased. The establishment of a homework club had raised pupils' levels of attainment above those who had not attended. Overall, the employment of the mediators had raised the achievement and attainment of refugee students in all schools and colleges in the LA. There was improved parental interaction and attendance at school and college functions, awareness of refugee parental expectations had been raised, and there was increased understanding in the mainstream of refugee issues.

- Parent/carer liaison sessions in schools and advice workshops for parents

## **Parent/carer liaison sessions**

One London borough had been running these sessions since 2001 and they had been particularly successful in accessing hard-to-reach parents. The initiative was highly commended by Ofsted. Another London borough ran advice workshops for parents in three primary schools. The advice workshops were run by an outreach worker. Identified outcomes included refugee families feeling part of the school system and being better able to support their children.

- Work with community education providers and supplementary schools

## **Links with community education providers**

One London borough highlighted its work with community education providers, including training and consultation with providers, as an example of good practice. This work had resulted in the development of close links between schools and community schools in the LA to support asylum seeker and refugee pupils and their families in educational development and achievement. As a consequence, community schools were felt to be better informed about mainstream school practice and procedures and were in a better position to support National Curriculum work.

## **Key agencies involved**

- Refugee community organisations
- Schools
- LA staff
- Police
- A range of other agencies involved in drop-in sessions including housing, health, adult education etc.
- Community education providers

## **Outcomes**

- Increased awareness among LA and school staff of asylum seeker and refugee needs and issues, resulting in more schools requesting support
- Closer links with the community
- Schools' senior management team more confident in dealing with and understanding, for example, Islamic issues
- Addressing racism in the community leading to improved school attendance
- One-stop shops providing families with advice and support regarding education and a range of other issues, for example health, housing
- Impact of the support provided by home-school liaison officers reflected in low rates of exclusion, successful retention of pupils in school and progression onto further education



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