

Reference document
March 2016

Asylum Seeker Support available in Leicester

Delivering on our commitment to
Still Human Still Here

Foreword

Leicester has a long and proud history of welcoming people from all over the world to settle here. Those who have gone on to establish roots in our communities have helped create the vibrancy and diversity for which the city is renowned. Past and present migrants play a key role in the social and economic life of the city, and will continue to do so.

For a range of reasons the pace for migration into the city is increasing as demonstrated by the 2011 census findings which identified a 17% increase in the city's population, and that of the 110,000 Leicester residents who were born outside of the UK, just under half (53,000) arrived between 2001 and 2011.

Migrants arrive in our city for many reasons. Some are economic migrants taking advantage of their right as a citizen of a European Union member state, or are 'documented migrants' sponsored by employers. Others come to seek sanctuary from war torn and politically unstable countries where their lives are no longer safe. This report focuses on this broad and in itself diverse group – the asylum seekers who come to the city as a place of refuge and a hope for a new beginning.

As part of the national Still Human Still Here campaign I proposed a motion to Council in March 2014. This motion aimed to raise awareness of the plight of asylum seekers and the level of destitution many of them face in this country as a result of the restrictions of the asylum process and the limitations of the support available to them. The publication of this document is the final action arising from this successful council motion.

This document has been painstakingly compiled over a period when the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers have been at the forefront of the news agenda. It is hoped that this report assists local residents and organisations to understand the context which frames the wide and varied experiences of asylum seekers and other migrants in the city, and enables them to explore the role they can play in enabling the city to be that safe sanctuary they are seeking.

Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in developing this report and delivering the services described within it. Particularly I wish to thank those council officers, representatives of voluntary organisations and fellow members of Leicester City Council who recognise that, whatever their reasons for seeking sanctuary in our city, refugees and asylum seekers are still human and they are still here.

Councillor Adam Clarke

Purpose of this report

The report summarises existing support available for asylum seekers in the city. This report was requested as part of the council's motion in March 2014 about the plight of destitute asylum seekers in the city.

Council agreed to:

“...Produce a report summarising existing support for asylum seekers available in Leicester including housing, training, education, and legal advice open to vulnerable asylum applicants.”

The report aims to set the national and local context for support to asylum seekers.

Issues not covered in this report

The plight of migrants fleeing persecution in their home countries has accelerated over the past summer along with the demand that the UK provide increased support to these vulnerable refugees. This report only focuses on those refugees who have officially sought asylum in the UK in keeping with the parameters of the council motion. It does not focus on the needs of other refugee or migrant groups and the support available to them locally.

However, it is useful to have an overview of the circumstances facing the other migrant groups below. This is summarised in Appendix 2 of the report.

- Refugees – successful asylum seekers who have received official refugee status and leave to remain in the UK
- Refugees who are part of UK resettlement programmes – the Gateway programme and the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme - who are granted leave to remain on grounds of humanitarian protection
- Refused asylum seekers – those whose asylum application has been refused and appeals exhausted
- Undocumented migrants – those who have no legal status to remain in this country but who at the same time cannot go back to their home countries
- Documented migrants – those who have been granted some form of leave to either work or study in this country
- EU/EEA migrants – those who have leave to live and work in this country because of their EU/EEA status.

Report contents

The asylum process:

- Types of application for asylum 6
- Application process 7

Government provision of support:

- Adult asylum seekers: Accommodation and subsistence 12
- Housing: asylum dispersal 14
- Unaccompanied children seeking asylum: local authority support 16
- National asylum support services 17

Local provision of support:

- Legal advice, asylum advice and support 18
- Health services 19
- Statutory social care needs 19
- Education 20
- Social and personal support 20

Local working groups that focus on asylum issues and problems:

- Multi Agency Forum (MAF) 21
- New Arrivals Strategy Group (NASG) 21
- East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (EMSMP) 21

Statistics on asylum seekers nationally and locally

- Long term trend for numbers of asylum seekers in the UK 22
- Q3 2015 national asylum statistics 22
- National statistics on unaccompanied children seeking asylum 23

Report references

Appendices:

- Appendix 1: Council motion in support of asylum seekers 28
- Appendix 2: Overview of status and issues facing different
refugee/migrant groups 30
- Appendix 3: Description and contact details for local VCS groups
supporting asylum seekers in the city 43
- Appendix 4: Terms of reference for the Multi Agency Forum and New
Arrivals Strategy Group 49

The asylum process

Types of application for asylum

There are two groups of groups of people who seek asylum in the UK: people aged over 18, some of whom have dependents/families with them; unaccompanied children under 18. Each group undergoes a separate asylum process because of the basis of their claim for asylum. The report describes each asylum process below.

Adult asylum seekers and their dependents

An asylum seeker for support purposes is a person of 18 or over who has made an asylum claim. Under the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, asylum seekers must show that they have a well-founded fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, and are unable or unwilling to seek protection from the authorities in their own country.

A claim can also be under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) if removing them from the UK would be in breach of their rights as set out under the ECHR. A person who has only made a claim for leave to remain on private or family life grounds (under Article 8 of the ECHR) will not be eligible for support, unless they have also made an asylum or Article 3 claim.

A dependent can be a husband/wife/civil partner, an unmarried couple (if living together for more than 2 of the last 3 years), a child under 18 or a member of the household who is over 18 and is in need of care and attention due to disability. The dependent of an asylum seeker will be entitled to support regardless of their own immigration status.

Although some asylum seekers might enter the UK illegally, once they have applied for asylum they are no longer 'illegal'. Anyone seeking protection is entitled to stay in the UK while awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. The right to claim asylum is in international law. Governments are obliged to provide protection to people who meet the criteria for asylum.

The Government introduced a Detained Fast Track system in 2003 for male asylum seekers and extended this to women in 2005. Following their initial interview, a decision is made as to whether the case can be decided quickly and would be suitable for fast tracking. Often this decision is made on the basis of the person's country of origin. Asylum seekers making a claim and others appealing their decision could be held in one of three detention centres in the country. Those not detained and requiring accommodation because they are destitute, will be dispersed to designated housing across the country, outside of the south east.

The Court of Appeal in July 2015 found the detention of asylum seekers who are not at risk of absconding while their appeals are pending to be unlawful and ordered the Home Secretary to suspend the fast track immigration appeals system. The Immigration Minister suspended the fast track system in July 2015 for new asylum seekers, although those at risk of absconding or who face imminent removal have continued to be detained in the detention centres. The suspension is in force until the Lord Chancellor and Home Secretary have resolved their appeal of the court decision.

The Government has introduced a new Immigration Bill that is currently before Parliament which aims to significantly change the support provided to unsuccessful asylum seekers. The implications of various aspects of the Immigration Bill on asylum seekers is presented in Appendix 1. The Government's stated aim of the Immigration Bill is to:

- Deter illegal migrants from coming to the UK in the first instance,
- Allow the Home Office to identify and enforce the removal of illegal migrants,
- Encourage more of those who are here unlawfully to leave,
- Reduce the cost of the immigration system through fewer appeals and more cost recovery through fees,
- Reduce pressure on services.

Application process

Adults and dependent children

Decisions on asylum and human rights claims in the UK are made by UK Visas and Immigration, an agency of the Home Office. Asylum claims should be made to an immigration officer as soon as an asylum seeker arrives in the UK. If not, the person may be denied welfare support and accommodation. Each asylum application is assigned to a specific member of UK Visas and Immigration staff who will be responsible for the case and all decisions taken on it from the time the application is made until the person is granted permission to stay or is removed from the UK.

Asylum seekers are entitled to publicly funded legal representation (legal aid) to pursue their application.

There will be an initial screening interview where personal details of the applicant and their journey to the UK are taken, checks made if they have claimed asylum in the UK or Europe before, and are given a reference number for their application.

A few days later the applicant will be asked to attend a first reporting event where they will meet the case worker who will deal with their case.

The substantive interview (asylum interview) is held within the next couple of weeks. The applicant is given the opportunity to describe what has happened to them and what it is they fear in their own country.

Asylum seekers may be asked to attend regular reporting meetings with case workers at all stages of the asylum process.

Most asylum seekers have a right of appeal to the First Tier Tribunal if their claim is refused. They are allowed to remain in the UK while they wait for their appeal. Those who come from countries the Home Office presumes produce unfounded asylum claims or if they have already claimed asylum in a safe third country can only appeal after they have been removed from the UK.

An independent Immigration Judge who is not employed by the Home Office, hears the appeal. Asylum seekers are only entitled to legal aid to pursue their appeal if it has a 50% chance of success.

Once the appeal has been heard it is only possible to make a further appeal on a point of law. Legal advice will be necessary to decide whether it is possible to appeal further.

If the claim is allowed on the grounds of the 1951 Geneva Convention, the applicant is normally granted leave to remain in the UK for 5 years, and at the end of that period can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK. Some refugees can have their leave to remain reviewed during this period.

If protection is granted on human rights grounds, the applicant usually gets Humanitarian Protection. This status is initially granted for five years and subject to review.

Once a person is granted protection in the UK, they have the right to work, to claim benefits and be re-united with their spouse and children (those aged under 18).

In some cases a more limited form of status called Discretionary Leave may be granted, usually for cases involving children under 18 who cannot be returned to their country of origin. It is initially granted for up to three years, after which time the person can apply for an extension. After six years they can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

If new evidence comes to light for failed asylum claims, a second asylum claim can be made. If there is no new evidence, refused asylum seekers are expected to make arrangements for leaving the UK. If a person does not leave the UK after their claim has been refused, UK Visas and Immigration may arrange an enforced return.

Unaccompanied children under the age of 18

An unaccompanied asylum seeking child is a child who is applying for asylum in their own right and is separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who in law or by custom has responsibility to do so. When an unaccompanied migrant child comes into contact with authorities in the UK, the first step is to process the child in order to enter them formally into the asylum and immigration system managed by UK Visas and Immigration agency of the Home Office. This screening enables travel documents to be checked, details logged and a short interview about the application being made. If it is accepted that the child is under the age of 18, they will be referred to the relevant local authority for accommodation and support while an application for asylum or other leave is being considered. If their age is disputed, they will be referred to a local authority social services department for an age assessment to be undertaken. If they are considered to be significantly over the age of 18, they will be treated as an adult for the purposes of determining their claim for asylum and provision of support.

The assessment of an applicant's age has become increasingly prominent in the asylum and immigration process for unaccompanied children as age has been disputed for approximately 30% of cases. The correct assessment is necessary to ensure that the UK upholds its domestic and international obligations to those who are children. The duty for such an assessment requires that local authorities assess age to determine where an individual may be a young person entitled to support under the Children Act 1989. If an applicant disagrees with that assessment, they can seek judicial review of the decision.

Local authorities have a duty under Sections 17 and 20 of the Children Act 1989 to provide support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Section 17 places a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need by providing services appropriate to those children's needs; Section 20 requires the local authority to accommodate children in need. The local authority's assessment of individual needs will be the basis on which the authority provides them with suitable accommodation and related support. The local authority will also be responsible for assisting the child in making their asylum claim by arranging for the child to have an independent solicitor, copy and place appropriate documentation on file and support the child in making contact with the Refugee Council – their Children's Panel Advice Service helps separated children through the asylum system and ensures they are protected.

A first reporting event is initiated by UK Visas and Immigration to establish contact with the child, explain the asylum process and the substance of the asylum application, check that the child has legal representation, their progress in completing their Statement of Evidence Form (SEF) and provision of information about the family tracing and reunification service provided by the Red Cross as well as the assisted voluntary returns service. They are required to establish an appropriate contact management strategy with the child's social worker for the various application milestones. A substantive interview will be held to collect the child's evidence to support their claim, with their designated responsible adult(s) and/or legal representative.

There are a range of potential outcomes for applications for asylum:

- **Refugee status and the grant of asylum:** where a child fulfils the criteria set out in the 1951 Convention or 1967 Protocol is a refugee. In granting asylum the UK recognises the refugee's status and extending the protection required under its international obligations. It will usually be clear that the child's best interests are served by remaining in the UK. Social workers should then ensure that the child's pathway plan reflects the likelihood of long term residency.
- **Humanitarian protection:** when a child's claim does not qualify for refugee status, but there are substantial grounds for believing that the child faces a real risk of harm in the country of return. As above, it will be in the child's best interests to remain in the UK. This status, as stated above for adult asylum seekers, is subject to review.
- **Discretionary leave:** children who do not fulfil the criteria for asylum or humanitarian protection, should be granted discretionary leave if they meet that criteria set out for discretionary leave. Again the best interests of the child need to be considered. Discretionary leave is granted for 3 years or until the young person reaches 17 ½, whichever is sooner.
- **UASC leave:** UK Visas and Immigration have a policy commitment that no unaccompanied child will be removed from the UK unless the Secretary of State is satisfied that safe and adequate reception arrangements are in place in the country to which the child is to be removed. The overall assessment of the child's best interests will be a matter of considering the child's individual circumstances and experiences in the UK alongside information about the conditions the child would face in the country of return. Only if it is decided that the child's best interests are outweighed by the need to uphold immigration control, should the child be refused outright. In all other cases, the child should be granted UASC leave and this would apply until they reach the age of 17 ½.
- **Outright refusal:** A decision to refuse outright should only be made if the child does not qualify for leave under the categories set out above.

At the age of 18, young people transition out of social care, and become an adult from an immigration perspective. Care leavers are eligible for appropriate leaving care support which can include entitlements such as higher education bursaries, a personal adviser and provision of vacation accommodation if they are in higher education. The legislation requires all care leavers to be considered. The current Immigration Bill proposes to end such arrangements and no longer require local authorities to fund university tuition fees for unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

If the child has not been successful in getting refugee status granted, and they have exhausted all of their discretionary leave extensions and basis for appeals they would be considered ARE – Appeal Rights Exhausted. UK Visas and Immigration ceases reimbursement of local authorities for the social care costs of unaccompanied children 3 months after they have been declared ARE. Any continued support deemed necessary by the local authority after this period must be paid for by the authority.

Ceasing support requires a Human Rights Assessment by the local authority. Under current asylum legislation, the local authority will still be under a duty to provide support if this is necessary to prevent a breach of the individual's human rights. A decision that would result in a person sleeping rough or being without shelter or funds would usually be considered inhuman or degrading treatment.

The local authority would need to assess whether their decision would result in such treatment. The local authority is not entitled to take account of the possibility of their receiving Section 4 support (discussed below as support available for unsuccessful adult asylum seekers).

If the local authority concludes there is no alternative support available, it might need to accommodate the individual. However, if they are able to return to their country of origin, the situation would change. The local authority would have to consider whether there are any obstacles in place to their return and work with the person to consider the options available to them.

Government provision of support

Adult asylum seekers: accommodation and subsistence

The Home Office provides accommodation and support for individuals and families seeking asylum who are assessed as being destitute. Applicants are deemed to appear destitute if:

- They and their dependents do not have adequate accommodation or any means of obtaining it (irrespective of whether other essential living needs are met); or
- They and their dependents have adequate accommodation or the means of obtaining it, but cannot meet essential living needs.

Section 95 support can be provided if the asylum seeker or their dependents appear to be destitute or are likely to become destitute within a prescribed period (14 calendar days). The support can be:

- Accommodation only, or
- Subsistence only (regular cash payments), or
- Both accommodation and subsistence.

Section 98 support: That asylum seekers or dependents of asylum seekers may be destitute pending the consideration of their support application under Section 95, and Section 98 support is for short term use until their Section 95 application is determined.

Gov.UK lists the following benefits and credits for those seeking asylum support:

- They may get housing and money to support them and their family while they wait to find out if they will be given asylum.
- They will be given somewhere to live by the Asylum Support Service (Home Office) but they cannot choose where they want to live.
- They will be able to collect money from a local post office each week for items such as food, clothing and toiletries. Weekly payment rates were amended on 10 August 2015, resulting in significant reduction of support for families with children. The payment is now a flat rate of £36.95 per person per week.

	Single parent + 1 child	Single parent + 2 children	Couple + 1 child	Couple + 2 children
Previous payment	£96.90	£149.86	£125.48	£178.44
New payment	£73.90	£110.85	£110.85	£147.80

- Extra payments are still available for pregnant women and children under 3 for healthy food as well as a one off maternity payment for women.
- Children must attend school if they are aged 5 to 17. Children will go to a free state school and may be able to get free school meals.
- The asylum seeker and their family may get free NHS healthcare and also get:
 - Free prescriptions for medicine
 - Free dental care for teeth
 - Free eyesight tests
 - Help paying for glasses.

If asylum seekers have been refused asylum, are homeless and do not have any money to buy food and can show there is a reason why they can't leave the UK yet, they can be eligible to receive Section 4 support which includes:

- Short-term housing
- Help with prescriptions for medicine, dental care for teeth, eyesight tests and glasses
- A payment card for food and toiletries (weekly amount of £35.39). The payment card will be given instead of cash and will not be given without the housing. The Azure Card is restricted to use at a specified set of national retailers and cannot be used to access cash.

At the time of writing the Government is proposing to end Section 4 support, merging it with Section 95 support, through proposed amendment of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. This would leave failed asylum seekers with no means of support. At present, failed asylum seeker families with children under the age of 18 are eligible for continued Section 4 support until they leave the UK or are granted leave or the child reaches 18. The Government proposes that all such support end for all new future asylum seekers once the amended legislation is passed by Parliament. The implications for children's safeguarding are not addressed within the Government's consultation document on the proposed changes.

Asylum applicants are not allowed to work while their application is being considered unless they have waited for longer than 12 months for an initial decision. They can request permission to work but will only be allowed to take up a job that is on the list of shortage occupations published by UK Visas and Immigration. Permission must be sought to work and undertake voluntary activity or vocational training from caseworkers dealing with asylum caseworkers and asylum seekers are directed to the general inquiry line.

Asylum seekers are able to access ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision after they have been in the country for six months. However, they are not eligible for free ESOL classes available for those on benefits and actively seeking work and would only be able to access fee paying classes if they had the income to pay for them. In addition, the level of ESOL provision in the city through Leicester College has been severely affected by Skills Funding Agency reductions in further education funding and the termination of ESOL+

classes accessed through Job Centres. Many local asylum seekers are reliant on 'community' ESOL classes provided by VSC organisations' volunteers as provided by several organisations cited in Appendix 2.

Housing: asylum dispersal

Asylum dispersal was introduced in 2000 in response to increasing pressures that were experienced by local authorities in the South East to house asylum seekers. Asylum support caseworkers must have regard to the desirability of providing accommodation in areas in which there is a ready supply of accommodation as a general rule, outside London and the South East. In deciding whether it is reasonable to allocation dispersed accommodation, particular attention is given to: medical treatment; unaccompanied asylum seeking children who are leaving care; family ties; education; ethnic group; religion; employment; and legal advice. However, in general the guidance indicates that the need for dispersal takes precedence over other considerations unless personal circumstances require otherwise.

Since January 2013, the Government have consolidated the delivery of accommodation for asylum seekers under one provider regionally. G4S is the provider within the East Midlands. They are responsible for the provision of dispersed accommodation across the region, full board initial accommodation (prior to dispersal into dispersed accommodation), and a transport service (between initial accommodation and dispersed accommodation).

The chart below sets out G4S figures on Section 4 and Section 95 support in the city.

	Sec 4	Sec 95	Total
September 2014	187	802	1034
September 2015	170	843	1013

Source: G4S

For December 2015, the following people (by type of household) were supported:

	Sec 4	Sec 95	Total
Family Members	120	599	719
Singles	42	259	301
Total	162	858	—

Source: G4S

There are 305 properties managed by G4S in the city. The dispersal of properties and people housed across the city as of September 2015 is as follows:

	Properties	People
LE5	21	77
LE4	41	156
LE3	152	541
LE2	84	236
La1	4	10

Source: G4S

Leicester houses more asylum seekers than Derby or Nottingham. Recent G4S S4 and S95 figures for these cities are as follows:

	People
Derby	671
Leicester	986
Nottingham	837

The East Midlands houses less people than the West Midlands. Recent G4S S4 and S95 figures for the regions it operates in are:

	People
East Midlands	2497
West Midlands	4802
East of England	362

The East Midlands Councils' report on the impact of international migration states that although national figures between March 2013 and March 2014 show a 17.7% increase in the number of asylum seekers, regionally there has been a 76% increase in the number of supported asylum seekers. The report raises concern about regional dispersal policy with dispersal tending to be concentrated in particular wards or postcode areas rather than being more widely dispersed. This type of dispersal causes more strain upon public services in specific local areas and potential negative impacts on community cohesion. It also does not take into account the impact of other forms of migration or the availability of services in a particular area.

Some cities, such as Derby, have written to the Immigration Minister asking for a halt on dispersal in the city. Discussions are taking place between the LGA and the Home Office on dispersal policy. A dispersal policy based on local intelligence and experience rather than the current ratio of 1:200 (asylum seekers per local population) is being considered by the Home Office and is the favoured option supported by councils in the East Midlands. Nottingham City Council record the location of properties by ward, super output area, school availability, and associated details such as number of bedrooms, use, environmental health comments, and more general community safety/community cohesion concerns about the area.

Unaccompanied children seeking asylum: local authority support

Where a Referral/Child and Family Assessment identifies that a young unaccompanied asylum seeker is in need of services, the young person should be provided with information about the services available to them from the local authority and other agencies, such as the Refugee Council and its Children's Panel Advice Service or the Red Cross's family tracking service. The young person will be supported by a social worker who will keep track of their asylum claim and key milestones. They will also be given assistance to register with a GP and dentist, and enrol in a local school or college.

Depending on the young person's needs and level of ability, they are placed either in foster care or in hostel accommodation. Where the Child and Family Assessment identifies that an unaccompanied young asylum-seeker needs to come into care, all the procedures are completed to meet their appropriate needs.

All unaccompanied young asylum-seekers who are eligible for a service will be entitled to financial assistance in keeping with the authority's financial procedures. Travel cards or warrants will be issued to young unaccompanied asylum-seekers in relation to appointments at the Home Office.

The city council currently is responsible for the following number of unaccompanied children seeking asylum:

Age	Number
15 and under	5
16 – 17	5 (3 pending Age Assessments)
Over 18	12

National asylum support services

There are several asylum helplines available nationally.

Migrant Help, a charity based in the South East of England have been awarded a UK wide contract by the Home Office to provide advice services to asylum seekers. Their service Asylum Advice UK (<http://asylumhelpuk.org>) provides telephone advice (tel: 0808 8000 630, available in different languages) and face to face advice to newly arrived asylum seekers in initial accommodation sites (the first step of the accommodation dispersal process described above). Their website also provides answers (in written format and in full audio that is available in different languages) to questions on the various aspects of the asylum process (claiming asylum, prior to screening, prior to substantive interview (the main interview), post decision – positive, post decision – refusal, application for support (financial and/or accommodation). The advice covers: how to claim asylum, the asylum process, accommodation support, financial support, accessing health care, finding legal representation, and any other asylum issues.

Asylum Support Application UK provides assistance in completing applications for asylum support and applications to notify the Home Office of any change of circumstances. (<http://asylumhelpuk.org/our-services/asylum-support-application-uk/>)

The Children's Panel Advice Service, a national service provided by the Refugee Council, (http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/what_we_do/childrens_services/youth_activities_and_educational_services) works directly with separated children seeking asylum, helping them through the asylum system and ensuring that they are protected. The team offers advice and information to carers and other professionals working with children and young people. Contact can be by email or by telephone.

Legal advice, asylum advice and support

Asylum seekers are eligible for legal aid to assist them in their legal claim for asylum. National helplines as well as local accredited providers are available for their use.

Gov.UK sets out how to find a regulated immigration adviser and explains the support available. Their main recommendation is to use a regulated adviser. The regulated advisers listed for Leicester are:

- Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau
- Highfields Centre
- Community Logg Sewa

The Immigration Advisory Service, offering legal advice on immigration issues, are now back in Leicester.

Within Leicester, assistance for asylum seekers to complete their applications is available from a number of local organisations. The city council funds the Citizens Advice Bureau to provide advice and support locally and this includes assistance for asylum seekers with their applications. Other city council funded VCS groups, also provide assistance to asylum seekers: the Race Equality Centre and the LGBT Centre both provide support to asylum seekers who come to them for assistance based upon their protected characteristic. A number of other local VCS organisations provide a range of support to asylum seekers to support them during their application process and also become adjusted to life in the city.

The local Red Cross supports refugees and asylum seekers in a variety of ways, from offering emergency provisions to those facing severe hardship to providing support and advice to help vulnerable and newly arrived asylum seekers adapt to life in a new country. It co-ordinates the Leicestershire Refugee and Asylum Seeker Orientation and Support Service, a five year project that is predominantly funded by the Big Lottery Fund. The aim of the project is to mitigate destitution, and to give confidence to asylum seekers and refugees to access services, volunteer and improve their skills and employment prospects.

The City of Sanctuary tries to make asylum seekers and new refugees welcome in the city and in the country. They raise the profile of who asylum seekers are and why they need our help by giving talks to schools and other organisations and writing letters and articles in the press. They also aim to improve life for asylum seekers and refugees by providing advocacy support and signposting for advice and other forms of practical support such as: running a regular drop-in centre which includes hot food, arranging outings and social activities, providing various classes and workshops (English, IT and sewing), organising a NEST scheme (New Evidence Support Team) helping asylum seekers find new evidence to support their claims, maintaining a small hardship fund for people in crisis, and helping people find items they cannot afford to buy.

Refugee Action has provided support in the city to those already in the asylum system for a number of years. Unfortunately it will close its local office at the end of December 2015, and its services will operate out of its London, Bristol, Manchester and Birmingham offices.

Appendix 2 provides further details of local support provided, along with contact details for these organisations. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of support as many other groups across the city also help where they can. The organisations cited in this appendix will signpost asylum seekers to other appropriate groups whose work they are aware of.

Health services

ASSIST (Leicester City Assist Practice) is part of the NHS in Leicester and its services are specifically tailored to meet the healthcare needs of asylum seekers in the city. In addition to general health care, ASSIST provides a range of specialist care, advice and assistance for mental health issues, wellbeing, malnutrition, sexual health, infectious diseases, stress related problems and dermatological conditions.

The NHS has several helplines that asylum seekers can also contact for advice:

- The free NHS 111 helpline for help and advice with non-emergency health problems (call 111).
- The NHS Help with Health Costs (tel: 0845 850 1166) helpline for help with prescriptions for medicine, dental care, eyesight tests and buying glasses.

The Leicestershire AIDS Support Service (LASS) provides support, information and advocacy to asylum seekers with and affected by HIV.

Statutory social care needs

Under Section 21 (1) of the National Assistance Act 1948, a local authority can accommodate people over the age of 18 who because of age, illness, disability or any other circumstances are in need of care and attention which they cannot access anywhere else. People subject to immigration control – asylum seekers and those refused asylum – are eligible for Section 21 support if they have these additional health needs.

Unaccompanied children seeking asylum are supported by the local authority under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989. They are treated in the same way as British children who have been taken into care. Upon leaving care, the former child may be entitled to continued support from the local authority, including accommodation, until they reach 21.

Education

Asylum seekers are required to enrol their children in local schools. The council facilitates these applications and schools accommodate children within their intake.

Social and personal support

The city council provides funding for the After 18 project which provides support for young people (particularly unaccompanied young asylum seekers) and adults who are separated from their family. The Centre Project runs a Freedom Club drop in sessions for unaccompanied young asylum seekers as well.

The city council's library service provides their users free internet access and access to other library resources and community information. The council operates the Pass it On Scheme whereby bulky furniture and items in clean and working order are donated to people in crisis.

There are a number of organisations who provide social support to asylum seekers. The City of Sanctuary provides social as well as advice support. Many groups work with the Diocese of Leicester, such as the Leicester Faiths Support Group who are active in writing to MPs on asylum support issues. The Welcome Project gives immediate practical support to asylum seekers, with gifts of food, clothes and toiletries. The project also aims to help people when having difficulties: making phone calls, writing letters, advocating for them and referring them to appropriate organisations for advice and support. There is a drop in session open to all asylum seekers every Thursday morning at St Martin's House, Peacock Lane.

The Open Hands Trust operates out of its Compassion Centre on Highfield Street and operates a number of different activities that aim to make a powerful and lasting difference to those it serves. It provides the Open Hands Meal every Tuesday evening to those in need of a hot meal. Its furniture restoration project restores donated furniture that is then available by referral only through its furniture project. Its Storehouse provides food hampers, baby hampers and new home hampers to those in need. It runs various courses ranging from learning new skills in English language to women focused initiatives such as Emerge, Acts of Kindness and Beauty for Ashes that provide opportunities for women to develop friendships and confidence.

Local working groups that focus on asylum issues and problems

Multi Agency Forum (MAF)

MAF is a group of providers in the city who support asylum seekers and refugees. They meet monthly to share issues and problems related to their individual cases. Their focus is on solving problems arising from local provision of support for asylum seekers.

New Arrivals Strategy Group (NASG)

NASG involves members of MAF along with representatives from the range of public services involved in supporting broad areas supporting asylum seekers and new arrivals to the city: education, health, homelessness, and community safety. The aim of NASG is to bring together the wider community of providers to raise their awareness of asylum seekers' and new arrivals' needs and issues facing them and in so doing influence the way they work.

Because of organisational changes to health and adult social care, Public Health currently supports NASG (chairing and providing admin support for meetings) to enable the group to maintain profile of the issues faced by new arrivals in the city related to the above mainstream service areas.

Terms of reference and sample agendas and meetings of both groups can be found in Appendix 3.

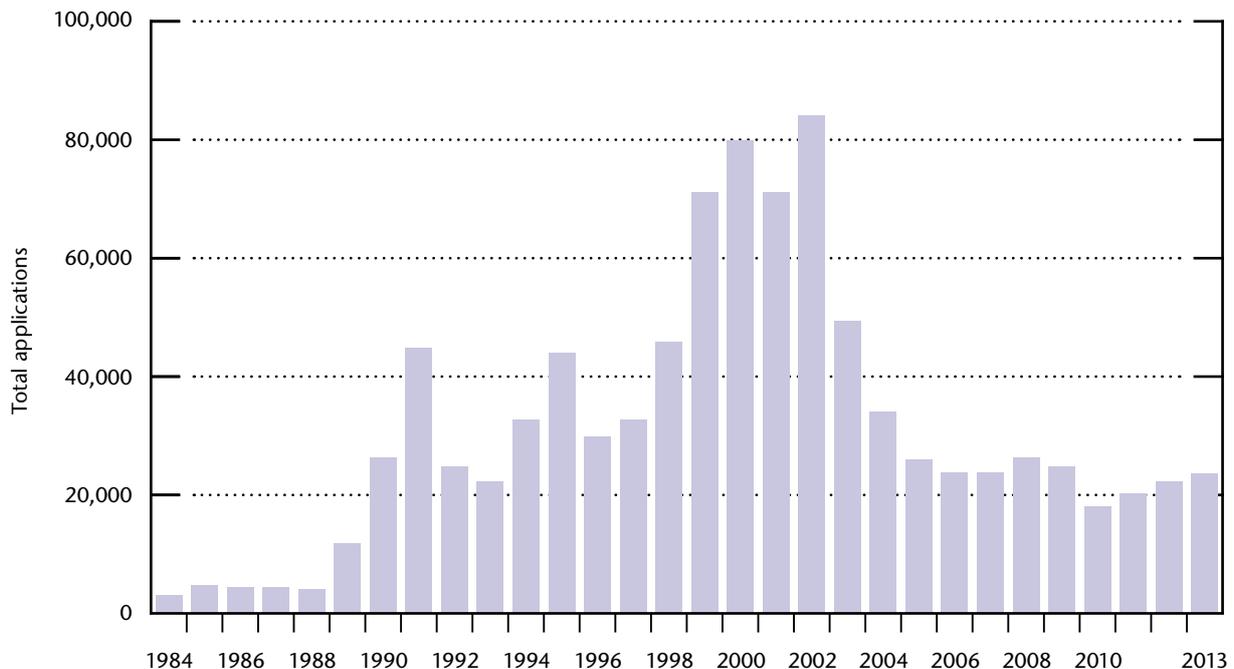
East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (EMSMP)

The EMSMP are members of the national Strategic Migration Partnership overseen by the LGA and funded by the Home Office. The aim of the EMSMP is to gather data on trends and monitor and assess the impact of asylum and other immigration policies on the region. They focus on the dispersal process along with the provision of support and services for asylum seekers, unsuccessful asylum seekers, refugees and migrant workers in the East Midlands. They recently produced a report on the impact of international migration on the East Midlands which included the issue of dispersal of asylum seekers across the region.

Statistics on asylum seekers nationally and locally

Long term trend for numbers of asylum seekers in the UK

Chart 1: Asylum numbers over time



Source: Home Office

- 1 S Spencer, 'The Migration Debate', Policy Press, 2011.
- 2 O Hawkins, 'Asylum Statistics', House of Commons, 6 May 2014.

Q3 2015 national asylum statistics

Still Human, Still Here provide the city council with regular emails containing national asylum seeker numbers and information on a range of issues related to asylum seekers and refugees: updates on Government policies and provision; reports on the conditions faced by asylum seekers and refugees; updates on actions pursued by national organisations supporting asylum seekers (which reflect their local branches mentioned in the report).

Applications:

In Q3, there were 10,156 asylum applications, compared with 6,203 in Q2

Decisions:

There were 6,755 initial decisions in Q3, of which 36% were grants of asylum (2,450) and 1% were grants of HP/DL (76). This compares with 6,318 initial decisions in Q2 of which 37% were grants of asylum (2,360) and 1% were grants of HP/DL (71)

Pending cases:

There were 15,487 cases pending initial decision at the end of Q3 (of which 3,623 were over 6 months old). This compares with 12,368 cases pending initial decision at the end of Q2 (of which 3,606 were over 6 months old).

Appeals:

In Q3, 3,055 appeals were received and 2,561 were determined, 38% were allowed (971). In Q2, 3,532 appeals were received and 2,299 were determined, 32% were allowed (744).

Some nationalities continued to have high percentages of appeals allowed in Q3:

Eritrea: 86% (177 successful appeals)

Afghanistan: 59% (83 successful appeals)

Sudan: 50% (16 successful appeals)

Libya: 44% (24 successful appeals)

Iran: 42% (90 successful appeals)

Iraq: 40% (28 successful appeals)

Sri Lanka: 41% (144 successful appeals)

Asylum Support:

At the end of Q3, 31,896 were supported (3,276 subsistence only, 28,620 dispersed accommodation), compared with 30,457 in Q2 (3,473 subsistence only, 26,984 dispersed accommodation).

At the end of Q3, 2,834 were receiving S4 support, compared with 3,318 at the end of Q2

In Q3 2015, the UK received a total of 12,000 asylum applicants (including dependents) - 4% of the EU15 total. Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands and Austria all received more applications than the UK, with Germany receiving more than ten times as many (108,300).

National statistics on unaccompanied children seeking asylum

The Refugee Council provides the following profile of unaccompanied children seeking asylum in the UK in 2014:

- Total number of applications in 2014: 1,861
- 88% were male
- Age ranges were: 62% were 16-17; 28% were 14-15; 6% were under 14
- 17% of applications were age disputed cases
- In 2013, 70% of grants of discretionary leave were to children aged 17 and under although they accounted for less than 5% of decisions
- For decisions on children who have reached the age of 18 their refusal rate was 70% in 2013.

Top six child asylum applicant countries (excluding dependents) were:

	2012	2013	2014
Albania	265	470	617
Eritrea	80	131	446
Afghanistan	235	150	168
Syria	21	64	129
Vietnam	62	68	98
Iran	119	76	71

Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children aged 17 and under:

	Total	Refuge Status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or private life	Refusals
2014	992	415	9	24	378	415	162
2013	936	237	4	380	119	237	178
2012	594	159	3	342	–	–	90

Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18:

	Total	Refuge Status	Humanitarian Protection	Discretionary Leave	UASC Leave	Family or private life	Refusals
2014	285	68	1	1	0	1	214
2013	176	50	0	3	0	2	121
2012	87	26	0	8	–	0	53

Initial asylum decisions on unaccompanied children who have reached the age of 18 by country of origin:

Albania	100 decisions, of which 99 were refusals, and 1 grant of asylum
Eritrea	34 decisions, of which 3 were refusals, and 31 grants of asylum
Afghanistan	25 decisions, of which 22 were refusals, and 2 grants of asylum
Iran	22 decisions, of which 16 were refusals and 6 grants of asylum

Report references

Asylum seekers:

(report) A place of sanctuary? Creating a fair and efficient asylum system, Centre Forum, November 2014.

(website) Asylum Aid (asylum process): www.asylumaid.org.uk

(website) Asylum Helplines, Gov.UK, www.gov.uk

(report) Asylum support instructions: policy bulletins, UK Visas and Immigration, September 2014,

(factsheet) Asylum Support Appeals Project: Local authority assistance for asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers, Factsheet 8, April 2012

(report) COMPASS contracts for the provision of accommodation for asylum seekers, National Audit Office, January 2014

(report) Destitution and Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Leicester, British Red Cross, June 2013

(website) Dispersal guidelines, Policy bulletin 31, Home Office, version 8 July 2014

(website) East European Advice Centre, Poverty and destitution, 15 November 2015, www.eeac.org.uk

(report) East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership report, East Midlands Councils Item 7, 17 November 2014

(website) Find a regulated immigration adviser, Gov.UK

(report) How to improve support and services for destitute migrants, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, July 2015

(factsheet) Immigration Bill factsheet, October 2013, Gov.UK

(report) The impact of international migration on the East Midlands, East Midlands Councils, July 2014

(website) Liberty (the fast track system): www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk

(report) The move-on period: an ordeal for new refugees, British Red Cross, 2014

(Government consultation) Reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other illegal migrants, Home Office, August 2015

(website) Section 95 Support, Factsheet 1, Asylum Support Appeals Project

(emails) Still Human, Still Here emails: Mike Kaye (Amnesty International)

(report) Support available to asylum seekers and refugees in Manchester, Manchester City Council, Communities Scrutiny Commission, 5 March 2014

(website) Support for Asylum Seekers, Gov.UK

(website) Working in the UK while an asylum case is considered, UK Visas and Immigration guidance, Gov.UK, February 2014

Unaccompanied children seeking asylum:

(report) Assessment and support of post 18 UASC's listed as Appeal Rights Exhausted as of June 2012, Local Government Association, ADCS, and NRPF Network

(report) Children in the Asylum System, March 2015, Refugee Action Information

(website) Children's Commissioner questions: I have just been granted refugee status. What happens now? www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/get-advice

(report) Human Rights of unaccompanied migrant children and young people in the UK, Human Rights Joint Committee, House of Lords and House of Commons, June 2013

(website) Migrant children leaving care to have support cut under new proposals, www.theguardian.com, 30 December 2015

(website) New Clause 17 (Immigration Bill 2015/16) Public Bill Committee, Tuesday 17 November, www.parliament.uk

(report) Processing an asylum application for a child, www.gov.uk/government

(website) Safeguarding refugee youth: turning 18 in the asylum system, <http://migrantforum.org.uk>

(website) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, North Somerset Council, <http://old.n-somerset.gov.uk/Associate/Carewizard>

Other migrant groups:

(report) 28 days later: experiences of new refugees in the UK, Refugee Council, May 2014

(report) Asylum support: accommodation and financial support for asylum seekers, House of Commons Library Briefing Paper Number 1909, August 2015

(website) Homeless EU and EEA nationals, Shelter, www.England.shelter.org.uk

(report) How to improve support and services for destitute migrants, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, July 2015

(website) Immigration Bill Factsheet: Overview of the Bill, www.gov.uk

(website) Immigration Health Surcharge: common casework questions, Research Briefings, <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/>

(report), Refugees, Asylum, and Immigration: a Primer, LGIU Policy Briefing , October 2015

(website) UK Visitor Visas, UK Permits, www.ukpermits.com

Author

Irene Kszyk, corporate equalities lead (tel 0116 454 4147)

Appendix 1

ITEM 8 COUNCIL MOTION IN SUPPORT OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

Proposed by Councillor Clarke, Seconded by Councillor Sood:

“Leicester City Council recognises the plight of asylum seekers forced to flee their home countries due to conflict and persecution. Many arrive in the UK after having been threatened, detained, beaten or tortured.

An adult seeking protection in this country who has no other source of support will receive just over £5 a day to pay for food, clothing, toiletries and travel (accommodation and utilities are paid for separately for those who have nowhere to live). They are not allowed to work to support themselves. If their claims are refused by the Home Office, they lose all support and are left destitute and street homeless.

In the last six months of 2013 the British Red Cross Leicester Refugee Support Services have carried out 1,659 actions (e.g. the issuing of food parcels, sleeping bags) to support 325 destitute asylum seekers in Leicester. Of these 108 were new cases and it is likely that this reflects the impact of welfare reforms in general and has resulted in a reduction in community capacity to continue to support such persons. Leicester City Council is concerned about such destitution and its impact on local communities.

Leicester is a welcoming and inclusive city and wants to join those local authorities (Liverpool, Bristol, Sheffield, Oxford, Glasgow, Leeds and Bradford) petitioning the Home Secretary to relieve the suffering of people seeking sanctuary and especially those people who have yet to be granted leave to remain in the UK.

Leicester City Council approves the following actions:

1. Write on behalf of Leicester City Council to the Minister of State for Immigration questioning Government policies that force asylum seekers into destitution; expressing concern over the low level of support available to asylum seekers; seeking a change of policy to allow local authorities to assist refused asylum seekers who are in danger of falling into destitution; asking that such asylum seekers should be able to work to support themselves if they have been waiting for more than 6 months for their cases to be resolved; and demanding that local authorities should be permitted to provide emergency provision to refused asylum seekers as to other homeless people.

2. Ask Leicester's MPs to support the spirit of this motion, to raise the matter in the House of Commons, and to support a change in current laws regarding asylum applications by removing restrictions on local authorities in the support they can provide to destitute asylum seekers.
3. Leicester City Council officers to produce a report summarising existing support for asylum seekers available in Leicester including housing, training, education, and legal advice open to vulnerable asylum applicants.
4. Leicester City Council to join the national campaign "Still Human, Still Here" (a coalition of 60 organisations, including several city councils, the Church of England and Catholic Archbishop Conferences, Crisis, Oxfam, and the Red Cross, who are proposing practical solutions to ending the destitution of refused asylum seekers in the UK).
5. Leicester City Council to seek further support for this motion and action via the Local Government Association and by encouraging other Councils in the UK to join us on this issue."

20 March 2014

Appendix 2 Overview of status and issues facing different refugee/migrant groups

	Asylum seekers	Refugees (granted asylum)	Resettled refugees (humanitarian protection)
Legal status	<p>An asylum seeker is someone who has applied for asylum and is waiting for a decision as to whether or not they are a refugee.</p> <p>Adult asylum seekers (aged 18 and over) can be individuals seeking asylum or have other dependents with them.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children aged 18 and under, separated from their parents and not being cared for by an adult with responsibility to do so, are eligible to claim asylum in their own right. Unless they are refused asylum outright, there are various forms of discretionary leave that enable them to stay until they are 18 or when a decision has been taken regarding their refugee claim.</p>	<p>Adult asylum seekers: Refugee status granted to asylum seekers who are found to meet the Refugee Convention's definition of a refugee – a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution in their own country.</p> <p>Permission to remain for 5 years with the possibility of eventually applying for indefinite leave to remain.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children seeking asylum: Those granted refugee status will be eligible to remain for 5 years and then apply indefinite leave to remain.</p>	<p>Humanitarian protection is granted to asylum seekers who are found to be at real risk of suffering serious harm, but for reasons not covered by the Refugee Convention. They are given leave to remain for 5 years.</p> <p>Resettlement schemes enable selected refugees to come to settle in the UK without having to go through the asylum process.</p> <p>Gateway Protection Programme operated by UK Visas and Immigration and UNHCR, offering legal route for refugees to settle in UK. Applications made to UNHCR.</p> <p>Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme prioritises help for survivors of torture and violence, women and children at risk, and those in need of medical care. The Gov't works with UNCHR to identify suitable cases. Those in scheme will be granted humanitarian protection and if after 5 years they have not been able to return to Syria may be eligible to apply for settlement in the UK.</p>

Refused asylum seekers	Undocumented migrants	Documented migrants	EU/EEA migrants
<p>Adults: If asylum application refused, they have no legal right to live in the UK and are expected to either leave the UK voluntarily, or the Gov't will have arrangements made for removal.</p> <p>If cannot leave immediately, and become destitute, may receive S4 support (without children) or if have children, may receive S95 support until youngest reaches 18 years of age.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children: When they become 18 years of age are then no longer entitled to stay in the UK. However, if they are deemed to be vulnerable, they may continue to receive support from the local authority who has overseen their care as a child. Otherwise they are expected to leave the UK voluntarily.</p>	<p>Undocumented migrants are those who have no legal right to stay in the UK, could have a right but need to establish it, or have a right but cannot prove it. Most have entered UK legally, but some are illegal entrants.</p> <p>If they are visa overstayers, 'outside the rule' cases or human rights article 8 appeals (family life) they may be able to seek leave to remain in the UK.</p> <p>Undocumented children under the age of 18 who have lived in the UK for a long period may be eligible to stay because of their particular circumstances.</p>	<p>Documented migrants are those who have applied for a visa to come and remain in the UK for a specific purpose. The main visa categories are:</p> <p>Tier 1 (previously highly skilled migrants): Points based entry – 95 points. Covers: entrepreneurs, investors, post study work. Initial visa 2 years with extension to enable them to complete 5 years residence. Then eligible to apply for indefinite leave to remain.</p> <p>Tier 2 (skilled migrants): Points based entry – 70 points Covers: minister of religion, sportsperson, intra-company transfer. Initial 3 years visa or according to contract offered by sponsor. Can apply for permanent residence on completion of 5 years on sponsorship.</p> <p>Tier 4 (international student): Points based entry – 40 points Visa for the duration of the course.</p> <p>Tier 5 (temporary workers): Youth mobility scheme – 50 points; 18-30; no dependants; sponsored by gov't of participating country. 2 year visa.</p> <p>Temporary workers scheme – 40 points; those with a specific job offer, sponsor & certificate of sponsorship. Entry clearance valid for 12 months; extension up to 12 months.</p> <p>Visitor visa: must be able to demonstrate will leave the country after 6 months.</p>	<p>Have automatic right to be resident in UK but rights are limited in the first 3 months of stay if not working.</p> <p>Have worker or self-employed status if earning over £153 per week.</p> <p>If have lived in UK for at least 5 years, may have permanent right to reside.</p>

	Asylum seekers	Refugees (granted asylum)	Resettled refugees (humanitarian protection)
Ability to work/claim benefits	<p>Adult asylum seekers: Employment restrictions: if have waited for over 12 months for an initial decision on their asylum claim but can only do jobs on the official shortage occupation list. Permission to work expires when claim has been finally determined.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children: if refused refugee status, then not eligible to work or claim benefits from the state once they are 18. If they are considered vulnerable by their local authority they are eligible for continued support by them.</p>	<p>Adults and unaccompanied children seeking asylum when they become adults: When have been granted leave to remain are able to work. Need to get national insurance number to be able to claim benefits, look for work</p>	<p>Eligible for mainstream benefits and services. Eligible to work.</p>

Refused asylum seekers	Undocumented migrants	Documented migrants	EU/EEA migrants
<p>Adults and former unaccompanied children: Not entitled to work or to claim certain welfare benefits.</p>	<p>Not entitled to work or to claim benefits (No recourse to public funds).</p>	<p>Tier 1: based on expertise, investment income. Must demonstrate have money to cover maintenance and accommodation for themselves and dependants.</p> <p>Tier 2: based on contract with sponsor. Must demonstrate have money to cover maintenance and accommodation for themselves and dependants.</p> <p>Tier 4: can work up to 20 hours per week. Spouse can work if student given leave to remain in UK 12+ months. Must have money to cover course and monthly living costs.</p> <p>Tier 5: youth mobility scheme - £1600 Temporary workers scheme – sufficient funds to support themselves/dependants during period of stay.</p> <p>Visitor visa: have sufficient funds to maintain and accommodate themselves & dependants.</p>	<p>Able to work and if in work, claim benefits.</p> <p>Need national insurance number.</p>

	Asylum seekers	Refugees (granted asylum)	Resettled refugees (humanitarian protection)
Entitlement to Gov't support	<p>Adult asylum seekers: Classified as destitute if do not have adequate accommodation or money to meet their expenses within the next fortnight.</p> <p>Are then eligible to receive S95 funding (£36.95 per week); extra payment for pregnant women & children under 3 for healthy food; one off maternity payment for women.</p> <p>Receive accommodation (outside London) Access to specialist GP Access to health care Access to legal aid</p> <p>Unaccompanied children seeking asylum: If assessed as meeting criteria for need under Children Act 1989, then will receive local authority social services support. Upon leaving care, they may be entitled to continued support from the Local Authority, including accommodation, until they reach 21.</p>	<p>Adult refugee: Asylum support terminated 28 days after a positive decision is made on the asylum application.</p> <p>Person is eligible to work in UK without restrictions and to claim welfare benefits on the same basis as British citizens.</p> <p>No gov't support provided to help them access benefits and employment. Some local provision is available – see appendix 2.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children refugees: Upon leaving care, they may be entitled to continued support from the Local Authority, including accommodation, until they reach 21.</p>	<p>Support provided through Gateway Programme: Government contracts formal partnerships to deliver housing and reception and integration support for refugees. Assistance provided to access benefits and employment, schools and local health services.</p> <p>Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme: Government meets costs of arrivals for orientation support, health and education costs for first year.</p>

Refused asylum seekers	Undocumented migrants	Documented migrants	EU/EEA migrants
<p>Asylum support is terminated 21 days after the claim has been finally determined. If destitute, can apply for Section 4 support if there is a temporary obstacle to their departure/removal from UK.</p> <p>Without children: Support not given in cash – accommodation and Azure payment card are given. Weekly allowance: £35.39 per person.</p> <p>Adults with children under 18: Refused asylum seekers with children born before their claim was fully determined considered as asylum seekers for support purposes until their youngest child turns 18; qualify for S95 support: £36.95 per week plus accommodation out of London. Emergency housing and food provision provided through various local projects – see Appendix 2.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children seeking asylum when they reach 18: Refused asylum seekers with care needs will not be excluded from community care if support is needed to avoid a breach of their human rights under the European Convention of Human Rights.</p>	<p>Emergency housing and food provision provided through various local projects – see Appendix 2.</p>	<p>Health surcharge: students pay £150 and all other applicants pay £200 each when applying to stay in UK for more than 6 months. Entitled to free NHS treatment on same basis as permanent residents.</p> <p>If staying under 6 months, must pay for NHS treatment they receive at point of access.</p>	<p>If not working in first 3 months - cannot get help with emergency or longer-term housing or claim benefits; some provision of free cold weather shelters to those not eligible and in need.</p> <p>If have worker or self-employed status, right to make homeless application; apply for social housing; claim housing and other benefits.</p>

	Asylum seekers	Refugees (granted asylum)	Resettled refugees (humanitarian protection)
Access to council services	<p>Adult asylum seekers and their dependents: Schools: If have children, children have to go to school</p> <p>Need to show they have additional health needs to be eligible for S21 National Assistance Act 1948 support from the local authority – accommodating and looking after them.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children: if meet criteria for support under Children Act 1989 S17 and S20 will receive support from their local authority until they are 18.</p>	<p>Have access to all eligible council services based on household need.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children refugees: Eligible to receive leaving care support when they are 18. If they are considered to be vulnerable, can continue to be supported by local authority.</p>	<p>Have access to all eligible council services based on household need. Some costs of provision covered by Government.</p>
Benefits/work	<p>Adult asylum seekers: After 12 months, but only for jobs on the official shortage occupation list. No access to public funds such as welfare benefits.</p>	<p>Adult refugees: Eligible for mainstream benefits and services. Eligible to work.</p>	<p>Adult resettled refugees: Eligible for mainstream benefits and services. Eligible to work.</p>

Refused asylum seekers	Undocumented migrants	Documented migrants	EU/EEA migrants
<p>Adult asylum seekers and their dependents: Schools: If have children, children have to go to school.</p> <p>Adults and unaccompanied children when they turn 18: May be entitled to community care if have a need for care and attention that does not arise solely from their destitution, or if refusing support might breach their human rights.</p>	<p>Adult and their dependents: Schools: If have children, children have to go to school.</p> <p>Adults: Under Section 21(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 a local authority can accommodate people over 18 who because of age, illness, disability or any other circumstances are in need of care and attention which they cannot access anywhere else.</p> <p>Children: Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 requires local authorities to provide support to any child in need. Social services have a power to accommodate a child's family with the child.</p>	<p>If visa states no recourse to public funds, children cannot attend council schools.</p> <p>Tier 4 (International students) – children entitled to attend council schools.</p>	<p>Schools: If have children, children have to go to school.</p> <p>Housing-homeless application or for social housing if eligible; Social services if meet eligibility criteria; Discretionary welfare support if eligible.</p>
<p>Adult asylum seekers: Unable to work legally, no access to public funds such as welfare benefits.</p>	<p>Adult undocumented migrants: Unable to work legally, no access to public funds such as welfare benefits.</p>	<p>Responsible for costs of their own maintenance and accommodation.</p>	<p>Eligible to work. Habitual resident test. Eligible for benefits after 3 months.</p>

	Asylum seekers	Refugees (granted asylum)	Resettled refugees (humanitarian protection)
Causes of destitution	<p>Adult asylum seekers: If don't apply for S95 support.</p> <p>Costs of travel – regional centres in order to receive advice on making their asylum claim.</p>	<p>Have to very quickly obtain housing and a means to support and feed themselves and their families after S95 support ends.</p> <p>Delays in receiving documentation (Biometric Residence Permits, National Insurance Numbers) and opening bank accounts can result in delays in finding housing and receiving benefits, causing them to become homeless and reliant on friends and charities for food and shelter.</p>	–

Refused asylum seekers	Undocumented migrants	Documented migrants	EU/EEA migrants
<p>Adult asylum seekers: If don't apply for S4 support. Dependent on support from family, friends, charities, support from migrant communities. Some work illegally. Many become rough sleepers and are at risk of exploitation by people traffickers or employers.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children: No longer eligible for local authority support and accommodation or other forms of benefits. May fall into criminal activities or prostitution to get money to live on.</p>	<p>Adults and their dependents: Dependent on support from family, friends, charities, support from migrant communities. Some work illegally. Many become rough sleepers and are at risk of exploitation by people traffickers or employers.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children: No longer eligible for local authority support and accommodation or other forms of benefits. May fall into criminal activities or prostitution to get money to live on.</p>	<p>–</p>	<p>Link between low income, loss of work, difficulty in accessing social aid and homelessness for Eastern European migrants.</p>

	Asylum seekers	Refugees (granted asylum)	Resettled refugees (humanitarian protection)
Proposed changes by Gov't/new Immigration Bill	<p>Unaccompanied children seeking asylum: When they are deemed ARE (appeal rights exhausted) at 18, will no longer be able to access local authority support. Alternative provision will be made for their accommodation subsistence and other support before they leave the UK.</p> <p>Local authorities will no longer have to pay the higher education tuition fees of those leaving care. They will be required to qualify for a student loan under the Student Support Regulations.</p> <p>Local authority responsibility for caring for an unaccompanied child seeking asylum can be transferred from one authority to another.</p>	<p>Unaccompanied children granted refugee status: Local authorities will no longer have to pay the higher education tuition fees of those leaving care. They will be required to qualify for a student loan under the Student Support Regulations.</p> <p>Local authority responsibility for caring for an unaccompanied child seeking asylum can be transferred from one authority to another.</p>	–

Refused asylum seekers	Undocumented migrants	Documented migrants	EU/EEA migrants
<p>Adults with dependents: Amend S4 support – only provided if there is an obstacle to person leaving the UK. Changing support entitlements for refused asylum seeker households with children – S95 support to end after 28 days unless there were obstacles to family leaving the UK.</p> <p>Unaccompanied children leaving care: When they are deemed ARE (appeal rights exhausted) at 18, will no longer be able to access local authority support. Alternative provision will be made for their accommodation subsistence and other support before they leave the UK. Local authorities will no longer have to pay the higher education tuition fees of those leaving care. They will be required to qualify for a student loan under the Student Support Regulations.</p>	<p>Proposed new legislation requiring private landlords to check the immigration status of new tenants before providing rented accommodation; Requiring banks to check against database of known illegal offenders before opening accounts; new powers to check driving licence applicants' immigration status before issuing licence and revoking licence when migrants have overstayed in UK.</p>	<p>–</p>	<p>Claims for tax credits and child benefits restricted to those who have lived in UK over 4 years New residency requirement of 4 years for social housing. No child benefit or tax credit for child living abroad. No job-seeking benefits for EU jobseekers. Jobseekers to leave if haven't found job after 6 months.</p>

Appendix 3 Local support provided to asylum seekers

Name of organisation	Official support	Asylum process	Social support	Other information and contact details
The Race Equality Centre	–	Yes	–	<p>Offer advice and assistance for people who have been granted refugee status. Assistance is offered with integration and resettlement. TREC also offer benefit advice, housing advice, a form filling service and sign posting towards organisations including in house Job Club which helps with job searching and help setting up own businesses. Service has been in existence since 2001, majority of new arrival refugees in the city are aware of the organisations service.</p> <p>Website: http://www.theraceequalitycentre.org.uk/ Tel: 0116 2042790</p>
LGBT Centre	–	Yes	–	<p>Work sporadically with organisations such as City of Sanctuary and Red Cross. Offer help in contacting the Home Office to highlight the conditions faced by LGBT people in their country of origin such as; official sanctions, homophobia of government officials and societal attitudes to LGBT people. Most asylum seekers are members of the Centre, integrated into the local LGBT communities.</p> <p>Website: http://leicesterlgbtcentre.org/#welcome Tel: 0116 2547412</p>

Name of organisation	Official support	Asylum process	Social support	Other information and contact details
British Red Cross	Yes	–	–	<p>Only agency in the city offering comprehensive support for asylum seekers. Offer help accessing services for; destitution, education/skills development, healthcare, community groups, support. Make referrals for; volunteer opportunities, immigration advice and legal representation. In some circumstances Red Cross can also provide; food, tinned provisions, baby items, street sleeping goods and transport costs. Also help with form filling and family reunion. Organisation can also provide an international tracing service. Red Cross aims to provide support during the ‘move-on period’ - the transition process for all those with newly granted status.</p> <p>Website: http://www.redcross.org.uk/ Oadby office address: Bradbury House 54 Kenilworth Drive Oadby LE2 5LG Tel: 0116 2710359</p>
City of Sanctuary	–	Yes	Yes	<p>City of Sanctuary provide a range of services including; free lunch, contributions towards bus fares, help and advice including help contacting G4S regarding accommodation problems, access to sewing machines and computers and English classes held at Booth Hall. Can also provide support with accessing food banks and emergency food parcels.</p> <p>Website: https://leicester.cityofsanctuary.org/ Email: leicestercityofsanctuary@gmail.com</p>

Name of organisation	Official support	Asylum process	Social support	Other information and contact details
Refugee Action (Leicester offices closes 31 December 2015)	–	Yes	–	<p>Work focuses around three areas; preventing asylum homelessness, provision of accommodation and support with the decision making process behind whether asylum seekers choose to stay in the country or return to their country of origin. Refugee Action also provide a safe, confidential and supportive environment with information to help support asylum seekers when making decisions about their future.</p> <p>Website: http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/in_your_area/east_midlands</p> <p>For enquiries relating to the resettlement of refugees please contact;</p> <p>Ruth Davany RuthD@refugee-action.org.uk</p>
ASSIST	Yes	–	–	<p>ASSIST is an NHS healthcare practice that provides healthcare for asylum seekers. ASSIST provides specialist mental health support. Past ASSIST Annual Reports have shown that managing the psychological condition of asylum seekers is crucial to the support they receive. ASSIST has developed a proactive approach to supporting acutely distressed patients. ASSIST also provide a wide range of health advice, screening for diseases and vaccinations and immunisations.</p> <p>Tel: 0116 295 2400 Address: 1a Clyde Street, Leicester, Leicestershire, LE1 2BG</p>

Name of organisation	Official support	Asylum process	Social support	Other information and contact details
LASS	–	–	Yes	<p>LASS provides support, information and advocacy to asylum seekers with and affected by HIV. We work in partnership with other organisations to meet their health, social and emotional wellbeing needs. We provide training and free HIV Rapid testing and HIV awareness.</p> <p>Website: www.lass.org.uk Email: reception@lass.org.uk Tel: 0116 2559995</p>
Diocese of Leicester	–	–	Yes	<p>The Diocese is providing a co-ordinating role around voluntary sector and public support for refugees and asylum seekers.</p> <p>Website: http://www.leicester.anglican.org/faith-and-life-events/social-responsibility/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/ Email: Alison.adams@leccofe.org Tel: 0116 2615333</p>
Welcome Project	–	Yes	–	<p>Give immediate practical support to asylum seekers living in and near Leicester with gifts of food, clothes and toiletries. The Project can also try and help people who are having difficulties making phone calls and writing letters. Welcome Project supports asylum seekers by referring them to appropriate organisations and giving informal advice.</p> <p>Website: http://leicestercathedral.org/our-life-and-work/community-outreach/leicester-welcome-project/ Tel: Roger Ivens on 0116 287 6038</p>

Name of organisation	Official support	Asylum process	Social support	Other information and contact details
Open Hands Trust	–	Yes	–	<p>The Open Hands Trust operates out of its Compassion Centre on Highfield Street and carries out a number of different activities that aim to make a powerful and lasting difference to those it serves. It provides the Open Hands Meal every Tuesday evening to those in need of a hot meal. The Trust provide clothes, household items and donated furniture that are available by referral only through their Tuesday and Thursday morning sessions. Its Storehouse provides food, baby hampers, toiletry packs and new home hampers to those in need. It runs various courses ranging from learning new skills in English language and the ‘Emerge’ course helping build confidence and self esteem in ladies.</p> <p>Please email: admin@openhandsleicester.org.uk</p>
One Roof Leicester	–	–	Yes	<p>One Roof Leicester is developing and delivering the projects that help ensure that all people at risk of, experiencing or previously homeless are provided with sustainable housing, given an opportunity to share their experiences and provided with on-going relevant advice, information and support.</p> <p>Website: http://www.oneroof.org.uk/ Tel: 07989 698483</p>

Name of organisation	Official support	Asylum process	Social support	Other information and contact details
Centre Project	–	–	Yes	<p>The Centre Project run Freedom Club, a service targeting unaccompanied refugee and asylum seeking children and new arrivals in Leicester aged between 13-19 years. The youth club has open access to young people on Tuesday and Friday, 5.30pm – 8.00 pm, 1 Alfred Place, Leicester. The Centre Project also runs 3 community drop-in sessions which are open to refugees and asylum seekers. Asylum seekers can come in to prevent social isolation and for practical support such as use of telephone, form filling and sign posting.</p> <p>Website: http://www.centreproject.org/ Tel: 0116 255 4013</p>
After 18 Project	–	Yes	Yes	<p>After18 is an organisation working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young adults as they turn 18 and make the transition into adulthood. Most of the young people have been separated from their families and are alone in a new country where everything is unfamiliar. After 18 aim to be a trusted source of information for young people to find out about life in the UK. Young adults in the asylum system are supported to understand what is happening, consider their options and plan for their future. Young asylum seekers are able to call the organisations helpline to ask questions, discuss their problems and be signposted to organisations which can meet their needs, thus creating a network of support around young adults. After 18 also runs projects to help young people socialise and gain new skills and works to raise awareness of the issues young asylum seekers face.</p> <p>Website: http://www.after18.org.uk/ Tel: 07851022125</p>

Name of organisation	Official support	Asylum process	Social support	Other information and contact details
In Leicestershire:				
Baca Project	–	Yes	Yes	<p>Work closely with Youth Shelter, young people are passed onto them. Provide housing, support and education to unaccompanied asylum seeking children, aged 16 to 18. Organisation works with local social workers and the police to ensure that as many young asylum seekers as possible are referred to them. Conduct medical and needs assessments. The new arrivals receive intense independent living tuition, gaining skills in cooking, cleaning, personal hygiene, budgeting and a full orientation of the local shops and amenities. Baca seeks to support the young people as they work through the asylum process and accompanies them to interviews and appointments in liaison with social workers. Project also runs entry level English courses designed to gain new arrivals acceptance into college. New arrivals are continuously assessed to see whether they are ready to move into semi-independent housing. Do not currently operate within Leicester but would consider expanding services if demand is sufficient.</p> <p>Website: http://www.bacaproject.org.uk/ Tel: 01509 550438</p>

Appendix 4 **Terms of Reference for MAF and NASG**

MAF - Leicester Asylum Seekers and Refugees Multi Agency Forum

Organisations which regularly attend meetings:

- The Race Equality Council (Chair)
- Open Hands Trust
- LASS
- After 18
- Red Cross
- Refugee Action
- Migrant Help (commissioned by Government to provide advice for asylum seekers)
- G4S (commissioned by Government to provide accommodation for destitute asylum seekers)
- City of Sanctuary
- Leicester Welcome Project
- Leicester City Council Housing Options

On occasion:

- One Roof Leicester
- Leicester Cathedral
- Castle Park Solicitors (offer free advice sessions for asylum seekers and refugees)
- East Midlands Strategic Partnership

Terms of Reference (2008)

Purpose of the Forum

The purpose of the Leicester Asylum Seekers and Refugees Multi Agency Forum (MAF) is to facilitate and support a multi-agency partnership approach to meeting the diverse needs of asylum seekers and refugees in the city of Leicester, working within the wider context of the city's New Arrivals Strategy.

Aims

- 1 To provide a mechanism for co-operative working, networking and collaboration in order to effectively meet the needs of asylum seekers and refugees,
- 2 To act as a consultative group on policies and procedures that affect asylum seekers and refugees,
- 3 To actively participate in the regional structure on asylum seekers and refugees and engage with regional and national issues,
- 4 To define areas of specific inter-agency co-operation,

- 5 To share information and concerns related to the issues of asylum and refugees,
- 6 To deliver specific pieces of work deemed appropriate by the membership of the Forum,
- 7 To raise awareness and promote a positive perception of asylum seekers and refugees, and
- 8 To play an active part in the structure established to deliver the New Arrivals Strategy and make a positive contribution to the implementation of the s

Membership

- Regional bodies and private sector groups
- Voluntary sector and community groups
- Statutory agencies

Organisation

- 1 The Forum will meet each month at 10am on the second Tuesday of each month.
- 2 A chair will be elected every two-years with the option for a further two-years (to be rotated as needed between the Chair and Vice Chair of the Leicester Asylum Seeker and Refugee Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF)).
- 3 Administration support will be provided by the City Council.
- 4 Membership is open to any Leicester based group supporting the aims of the Forum.
- 5 The Forum may invite members of statutory bodies and other agencies to provide information or attend meetings as required.
- 6 The Forum will seek funding as appropriate to meet any costs that may arise.

NASG - New Arrivals Strategy Group

Organisations which regularly attend meetings:

- Leicester City Council, Public Health (Chair)
- The Race Equality Centre
- Refugee Action
- G4S
- Leicestershire Police, Hate Crime Officer
- LPT, Open Mind
- Inclusion Healthcare
- East Midlands Strategic Partnership
- Advisory Teacher for GRT education

On occasion:

- ASSIST (GP practice for asylum seekers)
- Leicester City Council STAR Service
- LPT, Hate crime prevention officer
- Police

Terms of reference

Leicester New Arrivals Strategy Group

Purpose

The Leicester New Arrivals Strategy Group (NASG) has been charged by the Stronger Communities Partnership to influence local policy and procedures to provide the context for the successful integration of new arrivals to the city.

Aim

The NASG will aim to improve the quality and effectiveness of current service delivery for new arrivals. It will do this by developing a local Strategy and Action Plan:

- to meet the needs of new arrivals
- to address issues of inequality of access and outcome to services
- to raise awareness of, and identify gaps in, services.

Membership

The membership of the NASG is drawn from the statutory agencies and voluntary and community groups involved in working towards the successful integration of new arrivals in Leicester, with the option of co-opting other agencies when necessary.

The group will be supported by the Leicester City Council's Strategic Support Services Division.

Frequency of meetings

The NASG will meet bi-monthly.

Reporting

The NASG will report an update on the Strategy and Action Plan to the Stronger Communities Partnership every six months beginning January 2012.

