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London enriched

The Mayor's refugee integration strategy





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Foreword

The Mayor's vision for refugee integration

London has a long history of offering sanctuary to refugees fleeing persecution and conflict. Refugees, like other newcomers to London, enrich our city and contribute to its growth and development. I want to ensure that London remains a haven for those in need of protection under the UN Convention on Refugees. The lives of refugees who have been granted sanctuary and are legally entitled to settle in the UK should be fully integrated into the life of the city.

My vision for refugee integration in London is one of equal opportunity for refugees to have a decent quality of life and contribute fully, in safety and dignity, to London and its development. Integration takes in all aspects of life: economic, social, cultural, civic and political. The process may continue for a long time after arrival, and must be a two-way street, built on positive engagement by both refugees and the settled communities. Successful integration starts on arrival, and may be affected by the experiences of asylum seekers while they are waiting to be recognised as refugees.

London Enriched is my strategy for delivering that vision. It reflects my determination to promote equality of opportunity and community cohesion in a city where diversity and cultural difference are positive strengths. A key aim of *London Enriched* is to ensure that my other strategies for London and my commitment to sustainable development also help refugees to integrate.

Many challenges confront refugees as they seek to build new lives in London. The ordeal of persecution and flight may end with arrival



in the UK, but the consequences of these experiences often persist and the sense of dislocation and loss may be permanent. Arrival brings freedom from fear and danger, but it also brings new challenges. The aim of this strategy is to help refugees overcome these challenges and take their place as active members of the community, alongside their fellow Londoners, and continue to make a substantial and valued contribution to the city.

The success of this strategy will depend on many partners. I have agreed to lead the London Strategic Migration Partnership, with support from the UK Border Agency. This body will bring together key strategic partners, coordinating and supporting their efforts to implement this strategy. The strategy itself owes much to work done by these and other stakeholders. I am grateful for their efforts and look forward to working together as we implement the strategy.

The London Strategic Migration Partnership will also take on the wider issues of migration

and asylum. Migrants make an important contribution to the economic, cultural and civic life of London. I am determined that through the Partnership we continue to promote the integration of migrants and refugees for the benefit of all Londoners. *London Enriched* will become an integration strategy not only for refugees, but for all migrants.

Whilst there may sometimes be differences in policy perspective between the UK Border Agency and the positions in this strategy, we share a commitment to work together to enable refugees to integrate and achieve their potential.

I am determined as well to address the issues of irregular migration and destitution, particularly among asylum seekers. On these national questions, I will continue to call for an honest debate on current policies and their impact on community cohesion, integration and the prosperity and wellbeing of all Londoners.



Boris Johnson
Mayor of London



1 The strategy: vision and core objectives

1.1 The Mayor's vision

London Enriched sets out to define and implement the Mayor's vision for refugee integration in London. This vision sees refugees living in security and dignity, sharing with all Londoners the same chances for a decent quality of life and the opportunity to contribute to London and its development. The strategy will guide the implementation of this vision over the three-year period from 2009 to 2012.

1.2 The London Strategic Migration Partnership and national policy

Crucial to this vision will be the contributions of key partners and stakeholders. The Mayor leads the new London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP), with the support of the UK Border Agency. The LSMP Board brings together strategic regional bodies to plan and coordinate delivery. The Mayor's Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP) reflect community perspectives and are represented on the LSMP Board. Link bodies led by key partners will coordinate delivery on the main themes of the strategy.

The strategy will also draw support from national initiatives such as work on migration and community cohesion led by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The strategy will seek to ensure that action at national level supports refugee integration in London.

1.3 London boroughs and local impact

Ultimately, the strategy is about what happens at local level where individuals get the services they need and participate in their communities. The Mayor is keen to work with and support London boroughs and local services in furthering

successful integration and community cohesion. This also means support for voluntary and community organisations and their vital contributions to refugee integration.

1.4 Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers

London Enriched supports successful integration for all London's refugees - those who have come to the UK and been granted refugee status, humanitarian leave or discretionary leave to remain in the UK. In most cases, these individuals will have applied for asylum on or after arrival in this country. All are united in having fled persecution and all face similar challenges in building new lives in London.

Some of these same challenges confront other international migrants who live and work in London. The strategy defines migrants as people who have come to London from abroad for reasons other than study, tourism or visits to family and friends, and who intend to stay in London for at least twelve months. Where migrants face similar challenges to those of refugees, where their arrival has a similar impact on the community, and where measures to address these challenges can accommodate both migrants and refugees, the current strategy promotes migrant as well as refugee integration. During year 1 of the strategy, actions focus primarily on refugee integration; alongside these, however, the Mayor and LSMP will also undertake a number of initiatives focusing on migrants. From year 2, the strategy will include migrants as well as refugees, and *London Enriched* will become a comprehensive strategy for the integration of migrants in London.

The strategy also recognises that the experiences of asylum seekers while awaiting decisions on their asylum claims can affect their ability to integrate successfully once they are recognised as refugees. The London Strategic Migration Partnership will address asylum issues and their impact on refugee integration.

1.5 Refugee integration: defining the challenge

London Enriched defines integration as a two-way process requiring positive engagement by both refugees and the settled community. Integration takes in all aspects of life: economic, social, cultural, civic and political. In keeping with the government's definition as set out in *Integration Matters*¹ and confirmed in *Moving on Together – Government's recommitment to supporting refugees*,² the refugee integration strategy for London will empower refugees to achieve their full potential, contribute to the community and gain access to the services to which they are entitled. But *London Enriched* promotes these aspects of integration within the Mayor's broader framework of equal life chances for all. And a key feature of the strategy is its emphasis on refugees as active agents in their own integration – helping their own communities, reaching out to the settled community and taking an active part in the life of London. Access to English language support for refugees will be crucial to integration.

The Mayor's support for the strategy rests on a commitment to providing refuge for those who have lacked the protection of human rights, civil society and the rule of law. Offering sanctuary in London for refugees demonstrates

a commitment to upholding these rights and principles around the world.

The strategy recognises the multiple challenges faced by refugees once they arrive in the UK, and the need for effective measures to help overcome these obstacles, particularly in the period following arrival. Early action to assist integration can avoid difficulties in the long term.

Refugees who arrive in the UK may have experienced intimidation, physical abuse, imprisonment, gender-based violence or torture and the loss of loved ones, friends and property before abandoning their country and seeking protection here. Flight and the journey to the UK often inflict additional hardships and trauma, and always bring loss and dislocation.

Arrival in the UK means relief and safety, but also brings new fears and uncertainties, as newly arrived asylum seekers await a decision on their asylum claims in conditions that guarantee only bare subsistence in new and often hostile surroundings. Availability of services and other support may be limited, with access made more difficult by lack of English, unfamiliarity with systems and ways of doing things and services that may not respond effectively to refugee needs.

This period of uncertainty, isolation and straitened circumstances can have a detrimental effect on the ability to integrate once the asylum seeker has been granted leave to remain.

Those granted leave to stay in the UK then face fresh challenges. They must find accommodation,

seek employment or gain access to appropriate benefits, maintain their health and wellbeing. They must also begin to find a place in the community that enables them to live in safety and engage in the social, cultural, faith, recreational and other activities that constitute a full and satisfying life. Refugees with children will need to ensure their health and wellbeing, education and social development. Among people who have come to the UK as refugees, some groups may face additional difficulties. Women, older people, people with disabilities, children and young people, especially separated young people who lack the support of their family, members of faith communities and refugees who are lesbians, gay men, bisexual or trans people may all encounter additional obstacles to integration.

The new Refugee Integration and Employment Service, commissioned by the UK Border Agency and available to all newly recognised refugees, recognises and addresses the need to support integration during the period following the grant of refugee status or leave to remain. The new service means that from October 2008 all newly recognised refugees are entitled to assistance in meeting the initial challenges of integration through employment support, mentoring and befriending.

In London, the Refugee Council delivers this new service. UKBA policy means the service is not available to earlier arrivals that are still engaged in the long-term process of integration. Nor is it available to asylum seekers granted leave to remain by the Case Resolution Directorate set up to clear the backlog of unresolved asylum claims made before 2007. Despite these limitations, the

Refugee Integration and Employment Service forms a central element of this strategy.

1.6 Core objectives

In setting out the Mayor's vision for refugee integration in London, the strategy has identified seven core themes and objectives for each:

English language

Ensure that all refugees have access to appropriate tuition in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

Housing

Ensure that refugees have access to channels for housing provision.

Employment, skills and enterprise

Improve the ability of all refugees to find employment, reduce underemployment and enhance progression in work by promoting access to appropriate training and skills development, high quality employment advice and support for enterprise.

Health

Ensure that refugees' health needs are met by eliminating the specific disadvantages they face in obtaining appropriate services and support.

Community safety

Ensure that the police and justice system deliver high quality services for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in communities that are cohesive and welcoming.

Children and young people

Overcome the challenges faced by refugee

children and young people in London in order to improve their health, wellbeing, safety and educational and post-18 attainment and ensure they enjoy the same life chances as their peers.

Community development and participation

Strengthen the ability of refugees to meet the needs of their own communities and engage effectively in civic, political and community life.

1.7 Cross-cutting themes

In addition to the seven core themes and objectives, the strategy has two crosscutting themes. Like the Mayor's wider crosscutting responsibilities to promote equal opportunities and sustainable development, the crosscutting themes will inform all aspects of the strategy and are instrumental to achieving the core objectives. They are:

Equal life chances for all

Equal life chances are part of the Mayor's vision for London, reflecting his responsibility to promote equality of opportunity. *London Enriched* offers a vision of refugee integration founded on the principle that refugees must have the same chances as all Londoners if they are to build new lives and contribute to the cultural, economic and civic life of London.

This means equal chances for employment, health and wellbeing, decent housing, a sense of belonging and security and the ability to take an active part in the community. Refugee children and young people must share with their peers the same opportunities for educational attainment, safety and security, health and wellbeing, social development and escape from the poverty that affects 39 per cent of

London children.³ Equal life chances must be extended to all members of refugee and migrant communities, including people with disabilities, older people, women, members of faith communities and those who are lesbians, gay men, bisexual or trans people.

By adopting equal life chances as a crosscutting theme, *London Enriched* ensures that the Mayor's vision results in practical actions on the core themes and contributes to refugee integration. Language is a key to opportunity, and access to ESOL is a core objective of *London Enriched*. Advice, information and advocacy also unlock opportunity. The Mayor is determined that advice is available during the economic downturn, and *London Enriched* will promote refugee access to advice. Engagement, another core objective, also promotes opportunity. Actions will draw support from the new Single Equalities Bill as well as other human rights and equalities legislation.

Community cohesion

Integration is easier where communities are cohesive and offer equality of opportunity, a sense of belonging, mutual understanding and positive contacts between people of diverse backgrounds; conversely, actions to promote integration can be opportunities to enhance mutual understanding and positive contacts between refugees and the wider community. The strategy will take specific action to promote cohesion and look for opportunities to build cohesion through action on its core themes.

The following chapters describe in detail the challenges associated with each core theme, and set out actions to achieve each of the core objectives.

2 Delivering the strategy

The Mayor's commitment to a strategy for refugee integration goes beyond his statutory duties. Other strategies such as the Mayor's London Plan, London Housing Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and Health Inequalities Strategy, and the London Skills and Employment Strategy, have a role to play in supporting integration, but success will depend crucially on the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP). The Mayor will provide leadership and effective coordination through the partnership and associated bodies.

2.1 The London Strategic Migration Partnership Board

The LSMP Board provides strategic coordination through regional partners representing the strategy's main themes or key delivery organisations. Its members include:

- Deputy Mayor of London (chair)
- UK Border Agency
- Department of Communities and Local Government
- Government Office for London
- London Development Agency
- London Councils
- Association of London Directors of Children's Services
- London Region National Housing Federation
- NHS London
- London JobcentrePlus
- Third Sector Alliance
- Metropolitan Police Authority
- The Refugee Council
- South East Regional Trades Union Congress
- London First
- Three Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel representatives (one asylum seeker, one refugee, one migrant).

2.2 The Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel

The Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP) includes asylum seekers, refugees and migrants who work with these communities. They ensure that community perspectives inform the LSMP and give practical direction based on grassroots experience. The panel will have a key role in monitoring the impact of the strategy on communities.

2.3 Link bodies

Link bodies for each of the main themes will advise on the strategy and coordinate delivery. Link bodies will be led by key strategic partners and include operational staff from relevant stakeholders. Membership will also reflect community perspectives.

2.4 Developing the strategy

London Enriched is the result of a process that began under the previous administration with support from the UK Border Agency. This work was informed by the Mayor's Board for Refugee Integration in London (BRIL) and the Mayor's Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP). Consultation on the draft strategy took place in 2007. A wide range of events, many organised by stakeholders, gathered views on the draft strategy. The current strategy reflects not only the consultation draft but also the views of many stakeholders. These views are published along with the strategy.

London Enriched has also been informed by extensive research and other information on refugee integration. This has been compiled in a reference document⁴ that is designed to be read in conjunction with the strategy. The

reference document has been recently revised and updated with particular emphasis on quantitative data.

Finally, *London Enriched* has been shaped by the current administration. The Mayor is grateful to all stakeholders who have contributed their experience and expertise to the current document. Without them, the strategy would not have been possible, and its successful implementation will also depend on their efforts. The Mayor looks forward to working with all stakeholders as we promote refugee integration in London.

During its first year, the LSMP will also identify some key migration issues and take action on these alongside actions on refugee integration. At the end of year 1, the strategy will be revised to encompass wider migration issues during years 2 and 3. The refugee integration strategy will thus become part of a *London Enriched* that is a comprehensive strategy for migrant integration in London – without losing sight of the specific challenges faced by refugees, or the commitment to providing international protection in support of human rights, civil society and the rule of law.

2.5 Resources

A grant from the UKBA enables the GLA to support the London Strategic Migration Partnership. The GLA also contributes a budget to deliver the strategy.

Delivering the strategy relies on the contribution of many partners in all sectors. Some may contribute as part of their statutory

responsibilities while others, particularly in the third sector, need to secure funding to sustain their contributions. The partnership offers scope, however, for coordinated funding bids within the framework of the strategy. The strategy will be delivered in part by ensuring that refugee communities are fairly served by existing funding streams.

2.6 London Enriched and local delivery

The Mayor places a high priority on working with London boroughs and other local partners such as primary care trusts. The Mayor is committed to providing effective strategic support for local action to promote integration and cohesion.

The strategy faces three key challenges in successful implementation:

- Ensuring that the strategy effectively supports local planning and services
- Achieving effective delivery to meet local needs across London
- Supporting effective action on issues that cross borough boundaries.

In addition to London boroughs, which will play a key role, the following local structures are crucial to the strategy as it addresses these challenges.

2.7 Local area agreements and local strategic partnerships

Many aspects of refugee integration are reflected in the national indicators contained in local area agreements. For the strategy to be successful, refugees must benefit equally from the delivery of local area agreement actions.

Conversely, ensuring that local actions benefit refugees will contribute to the successful delivery of local area agreement targets. Delivery bodies will support local strategic partnerships in helping local area agreements contribute both to *London Enriched* and local targets.

2.8 Delivery principles

Just as the two crosscutting themes will inform and shape the strategy's main themes, delivery of the strategy and its success will be guided by three principles:

Information and evidence

A serious barrier to developing this strategy has been the lack of systematic information about refugees and their needs. Reliable and accurate information will inform the development, implementation and monitoring of the strategy.

Integrated mainstream and specialist services

The mainstream services that are available to all should also meet the needs of refugees. Specialist services, however, are sometimes the best way to ensure equal outcomes for refugees. The strategy will ensure that mainstream and specialist providers work together to provide an appropriate and cost-effective balance of accessible, high quality, user-centred services for refugees.

Coordination

Successful implementation of the strategy will depend on many partners and stakeholders working together, including GLA teams supporting the Mayor's other strategies. *London Enriched* will support cooperation and coordination in order to deliver efficient, cost-



effective services and other positive outcomes for all refugees.

2.9 Monitoring, evaluation and Key Performance Indicators

A baseline assessment will be made, against which progress in implementing *London Enriched* can be charted. Along with separate actions to gather information on individual themes, this assessment will be used to identify Key Performance Indicators for year 1 of the strategy. Appropriate monitoring systems and evaluation measures will then be set up to track and assess performance.

3 English language

3.1 Core objective: Ensure that all refugees and asylum seekers have access to appropriate tuition in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

3.2 The challenge

Being able to understand and speak English is essential for all aspects of integration. Finding employment and accommodation, using local services and mixing with members of the wider community all depend on the ability to speak English.

Research and consultation indicate that current courses do not meet all the diverse needs of refugee communities. Lack of coordination among funders, teaching institutions, employers and communities means not enough courses at the right level, at the right time, achieving the right employment and cohesion results for refugees.

Refugees with disabilities, older refugees and refugee women may face difficulty in finding appropriate tuition. For women, lack of childcare is often a barrier to attending classes.

The recommendations of the Commission for Integration and Cohesion mean the Government is emphasising English for cohesion. Councils are now responsible for identifying priority needs in their localities and building partnerships to fill the gaps.

Improving readiness for work is the key priority for skills development in London, including access to ESOL tuition. As new

employment services are developed, it is crucial to ensure they incorporate effective English language support. Also essential is the continued integration of ESOL into Train to Gain opportunities for refugees in work. This can improve social mobility and reduce underemployment among skilled refugees.

The challenge for *London Enriched* is to ensure that the specific needs of refugees are well understood and that courses not only meet those needs but are also accessible to all members of the refugee community.

And while learning English is a priority for its ability to empower, a further challenge is to provide high quality, cost-effective interpreting and translation for new arrivals or those who require language support for other reasons.

3.3 Actions in year 1

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will work together to deliver the following actions in year 1 of the strategy:

- 3.3.1 Ensure that the new approach to ESOL for cohesion meets the needs of refugees.
- 3.3.2 Lobby with London Skills and Employment Board for funding and policies that fill gaps and shortfall in ESOL for refugee integration in London.

3.4 Options for actions in years 2 and 3

The GLA, LSMP and other partners will review the following options and finalise actions for years 2 and 3 of a comprehensive Migrant and Refugee Integration Strategy to take effect from year 2.

- 3.4.1 Support a project to develop high quality, cost effective and comprehensive language support services for services and users across London.



4 Housing

4.1 Core objective: refugees have access to channels for housing provision

4.2 The challenge

Like all Londoners, refugees and refugee families need decent housing. Stable, good quality accommodation contributes to health and wellbeing, provides a secure base for access to employment and career development and is a prerequisite for participation in the wider community. For children, good housing is a key determinant of health, wellbeing and educational attainment.

Information on the housing and other needs of refugees is in short supply. Official datasets do not identify refugees and limited research has been carried out. Better information on the housing and other needs of refugees is a priority for this strategy.

Existing information points to a number of challenges that refugees face in finding suitable housing. Like other migrants, newly arrived refugees live predominantly in private rented accommodation, and over time proportionally more become social tenants than owner-occupiers.⁵ Greater London has the highest proportion of households in temporary accommodation of any region and overcrowding is on the rise. Members of minority ethnic communities, many of whom are refugees, are overrepresented in these groups. The damaging effect of temporary housing on the social development and educational attainment of children is recognised in the draft London Housing Strategy.⁶

Factors that influence housing options and choices for refugees have been identified as:

- household income and savings
- family size
- employment
- immigration status
- local housing markets
- perceptions of safety in particular areas.⁷

Quantitative data is needed on how these factors affect availability and accessibility.

Improvement in the ability to meet the housing needs of refugees will be constrained by the current scarcity of social and affordable housing in London. Competition for scarce accommodation can fuel community tensions, particularly where refugees and other migrants are seen as adding to pressure on housing, particularly social housing. In the current economic conditions, these tensions may become more acute.

The ability of refugees to obtain suitable housing may also be limited by language, unfamiliarity with entitlements and options, limited access to information and advice on housing and lack of awareness by housing providers of refugee needs. Refugee women, people with disabilities, older people, members of faith communities or those who are lesbians, gay men, bisexual or trans people may also face particular barriers.

Homelessness is also high among refugees,⁸ particularly those with the multiple social needs often found among this group.⁹ Evidence suggests high rates of homelessness and destitution among asylum seekers and refused



asylum seekers. This can place a burden on refugee communities and inhibit integration.

Board to tackle rough sleeping by asylum seekers and refugees.

4.3 Actions in year 1

The Mayor, LSMP Board members and other partners will contribute to the following actions in year 1:

- 4.3.1 Survey information on barriers faced by refugees in meeting their housing needs (as part of the general baseline assessment to be carried out for this strategy).
- 4.3.2 Contribute to delivery of the London Housing Strategy by:
 - improving awareness among relevant stakeholders of barriers faced by refugees in meeting their housing needs
 - ensuring that housing information is available to refugees
 - monitoring the impact on refugees of key initiatives in the London Housing Strategy.
- 4.3.3 Help the Mayor to end rough sleeping in London by supporting the London Delivery

- 4.3.4 Support London boroughs and local strategic partnerships to ensure local area agreements promote refugee integration and achieve national targets.

4.4 Options for actions in years 2 and 3

The GLA, LSMP Board and other partners will review the following options and finalise actions in years 2 and 3:

- 4.4.1 Partnerships between Registered Social Landlords, other housing providers and migrant and refugee community organisations (MRCOs) have improved the ability of refugees to meet their housing needs in a variety of ways. Use these findings to develop and promote a model for funders to encourage similar projects in London.
- 4.4.2 Support the development of community land trusts that address barriers faced by refugees in meeting their housing needs.

5 Employment, skills and enterprise

5.1 Core objective: Improve the ability of refugees to find employment, reduce underemployment and enhance progression in work by promoting access to appropriate training and skills development, high quality employment advice and support for enterprise.

5.2 The challenge

Employment is a key factor in successful integration, central to the fulfilment of personal aspirations and the ability to contribute to the economy and the community. Refugees bring skills, experience, knowledge and often an entrepreneurial spirit that can make a vital contribution to London's economy.

As for other factors in integration, data on refugee employment is limited. Available evidence suggests two important but contradictory observations about refugees. As a group they are likely to have higher levels of qualifications and skills than the UK population. But despite these skills and strong motivation to work, refugees are less successful in finding jobs: the employment rate for refugees in London is less than 30 per cent,¹⁰ underemployment (in jobs below their level of skills and experience) is common and a large proportion of refugees say they are not actively seeking work.¹¹

Refugees face many barriers to employment. Competence and confidence in English may be inadequate, qualifications from abroad may not be recognised in the UK, skills may need to be refreshed or tailored to the UK labour market, and understanding of British work culture and

recruitment practices may be limited. While as a group possessing relatively high levels of qualifications and skills, many refugees are severely disadvantaged by a lack of basic skills and literacy.

Policy may also limit employment prospects. Asylum seekers with no right to work may miss out on opportunities to maintain and develop their skills, enter and progress in the labour market or prepare for self-employment. The limited leave to remain granted to refugees may also reduce opportunities for employment and progression.

Help in overcoming these barriers is not always adequate or available. Access to appropriate employment advice may be limited. Mainstream providers such as JobcentrePlus can find it difficult to meet the specific needs of refugees. Specialist services for refugees exist in some places, but coverage is patchy, services are not always coordinated and quality can be inconsistent.

Self-employment may be an option for some refugees, but unfamiliarity with the UK regulations can be a major obstacle, mainstream business support may be unable to meet their specific needs, and access to credit may be more difficult for refugees.

Competence and confidence in English cannot be underestimated as a factor in gaining employment. Current levels of English tuition cannot satisfy the demand among refugees seeking to improve their language skills for employment.

Employment advice, business support and existing English instruction may be even less accessible for women or refugees with disabilities seeking to enter the workforce, though some specialist services for women are available in London.

Refugees, like other migrants, are more likely to be active in the informal economy, a substantial sector involving members of the settled population as well as migrants. Information about the informal economy and refugee involvement is limited, but the sector is often associated with low pay, poor working conditions and exploitation.

The London Skills and Employment Strategy aims to tackle London's high rate of worklessness and the disadvantages faced by many groups. It has a key role to play in promoting refugee employment. Other mainstream services and initiatives will also contribute. These include JobcentrePlus, the new National Apprenticeship Programme, Business Link London, Train to Gain and providers of further and higher education. The new Adult Advancement and Careers Service has the potential to improve employment support for refugees by providing a central gateway for all users and enabling access to specific support for priority groups through signposting to specialist support networks.

The challenge for the strategy is to unlock the skills, experience and energy of refugees by ensuring that mainstream services are accessible and effective for refugee users and by developing specialist responses to address barriers to refugees. Active coordination of

statutory and specialist services delivered by the voluntary sector is essential.

5.3 Actions in year 1

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will work together to deliver the following actions in year 1 of the strategy:

- 5.3.1 Help London's new Adult Advancement and Careers Service meet refugee needs.
- 5.3.2 Ensure the London Skills and Employment Strategy benefits adult refugees.
- 5.3.3 Assist employer engagement initiatives to include refugees.
- 5.3.4 Support an inquiry into London's informal economy to identify ways for refugees to enter mainstream employment and formalise their economic activity.
- 5.3.5 Make refugees and advice workers who support them more aware of refugee employment rights and existing sources of advice and support.

5.4 Options for years 2 and 3

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will review the following options and finalise actions for years 2 and 3 of the strategy:

- 5.4.1 Work with Business Link in London and refugee sector providers to build on specialist experience in supporting refugees into business and make mainstream business support services more accessible and effective for refugees.

5.4.2 Work with the Learning and Skills Council, Jobcentre Plus and Employer Partnerships on measures to promote work trials and volunteering opportunities for refugee jobseekers.

5.4.3 Ensure refugee tenants are included in initiatives by registered social landlords to promote employment opportunities for their workless tenants.



6.1 Core objective: Ensure that refugees' health needs are met by eliminating the specific disadvantages they face in obtaining and accessing appropriate services and support.

6.2 The challenge

Good health is a prerequisite for successful settlement and integration. Poor health can inhibit progress in other areas such as learning English, seeking employment, educational attainment and participating in the community. Access to appropriate health care is one of the multiple challenges facing refugees as they seek to integrate and build new lives in the UK.

Many newly arrived refugees are younger than the general population and place less demand on health services. At the same time, refugees may bring special health care needs. Persecution, flight, dislocation and isolation in a new setting can have an impact on both physical and mental wellbeing in ways that present unfamiliar challenges for UK health services. Those who have experienced torture and other forms of physical and psychological abuse may require specialist treatment. Conditions in countries of origin may mean increased susceptibility to health risks such as tuberculosis.

In addition to specific needs that may challenge UK health services, refugees may also experience difficulties gaining access to appropriate care. Language, unfamiliarity with the system, confusion as to entitlements, cultural factors and expectations based on experience of health care in countries of origin may present obstacles to

treatment. Health service staff unfamiliar with refugee entitlements and other issues may also be a barrier, as can discrimination.

Within refugee communities, women, people with disabilities, older people, children and young people and refugees who are lesbians, gay men, bisexual or trans people may exhibit high levels of need or face particular challenges in gaining access to appropriate care.

The Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy, along with other strategic initiatives to improve health outcomes for Londoners, can help meet these challenges. The LSMP has a key role to play in ensuring that this potential is realised.

6.3 Actions in year 1

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will work together to deliver the following actions in year 1 of the strategy:

- 6.3.1 Map information on refugee health needs, barriers to accessing services and health outcomes currently held by Health Link Body members and work with MRAP and the wider practitioners group to recommend steps that strengthen the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment process for identifying refugee health needs, barriers to access and outcomes.
- 6.3.2 Ensure the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy delivers relevant commitments for refugees.
- 6.3.3 Information, refugee user engagement and appropriate procedures and practice will



improve refugees' access to health, mental health and social care.

- 6.3.4 Work with the NHS and Primary Care Trusts to ensure staff awareness of refugee health needs, entitlements and the role of interpreting and translation in ensuring access and effective treatment.
- 6.3.5 Work with London's Mental Health Trusts, Primary Care Trusts, NHS London and other partners to ensure that the mental health needs of refugees are considered in the planning, commissioning and delivery of mental health services for London.

6.4 Options for action in years 2 and 3

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will review the following options and agree actions for years 2 and 3:

- 6.4.1 Work with UKBA to establish a system for notifying relevant NHS services of new arrivals and confirming asylum seekers'

entitlements to health care; extend across London the practice of local teams or community health workers carrying out early health screening for asylum seekers that links them with local care services.

- 6.4.2 Work with refugee organisations to develop a coordinated citywide campaign, in line with the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy, that promotes better understanding among providers of refugee and asylum seeker rights, entitlements and ability to access services, including the special needs of those facing major health risks.
- 6.4.3 Work with local communities, councils, and other organisations to involve refugees and asylum seekers in activities such as libraries, sports, allotment schemes, city farms and environmental activities with potential for building community cohesion.
- 6.4.4 Work with refugee communities and refugee organisations to ensure that the Mayor's Cultural Strategy provides opportunities for refugees to take part in cultural events and other initiatives that alleviate isolation and exclusion and promote the positive contact and understanding that underpin community cohesion and wellbeing.
- 6.4.5 Work with the LSMP and other partners to influence the Department of Health and Home Office review of access to NHS services by foreign nationals and ensure outcomes that benefit all Londoners.

7.1 Core objective: Ensure that the police and justice system deliver high quality services for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in communities that are cohesive and welcoming.

7.2 Safe and secure surroundings

Safe and secure surroundings are essential to the wellbeing of all Londoners. For refugees building new lives in the UK after the hardships and anguish of persecution, flight and coming to grips with life in a new country, security is even more important.

But refugees can face many obstacles and challenges. Hostile attitudes and lack of understanding towards asylum seekers and refugees in the UK may compound the effects of their experiences in countries of origin. There is evidence of physical and verbal abuse directed at asylum seekers and refugees.¹² Refugees living in accommodation that may be temporary, poorly maintained or overcrowded are also exposed to a higher risk of fire, crime and other threats.

Unfamiliarity with British society and systems, lack of English and isolation can make it hard for refugees to achieve a sense of security and ease. Their engagement with the police, fire brigade and other authorities may be inhibited by experiences in home countries, where at worst the authorities may have been party to persecution and at best failed to provide protection. As a result, refugee expectations of the police and justice system can be different from those of British citizens. And while the police and other authorities in London have

developed positive practices in relations with the city's diverse population, refugee communities may offer specific challenges and there is room for further progress in this area.

Groups within refugee communities – such as women, children and young people, people with disabilities, older people and refugees who are lesbian, gay men, bisexual or trans people – may experience particular or higher level risks of crime and abuse or intimidation. There is evidence that migrant women, including refugees, find it harder to get help when they are subjected to domestic violence.¹³ Some groups can be more susceptible to the isolation and other factors that can lead to feelings of insecurity and vulnerability.

A further challenge for refugee community safety lies in the risk of offending or involvement in criminal or anti-social activities. This risk is increased by the poverty, unemployment and exclusion that disproportionately characterise refugee communities.

The Mayor's responsibility for police, fire and emergency services mean that London-wide initiatives on community safety can address the specific needs and concerns of refugee Londoners. Action on specific needs, such as the Mayor's strategy *The Way Forward: A Call for Action to End Violence Against Women* and the new Police Pledge can make a positive contribution to refugee community safety and promote integration.

London Enriched also recognises that cohesive communities are the best guarantee of community safety. The strategy includes action

to foster mutual understanding and positive relations among refugees, migrants and the wider community.

7.3 Actions in year 1

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will work together to deliver the following actions in year 1 of the strategy:

- 7.3.1 Support the Police Pledge and efforts by the Metropolitan Police Service to ensure that policing for asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants is of the same high standard as for other Londoners and send a clear message that the Police are committed to tackling crime and protecting all Londoners regardless of immigration status.
- 7.3.2 Develop and support practical actions to promote constructive local dialogue on refugees, asylum and migration and to foster positive engagement between asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and local communities.
- 7.3.3 Ensure that The Way Forward: A Call for Action to End Violence Against Women addresses the specific needs of asylum seeking, refugee and migrant women.
- 7.3.4 Support Refugee Week in promoting public awareness of asylum and refugee issues.
- 7.3.5 Work with the Office of the Chief Inspector of the UKBA to support improvements in UKBA operations, including immigration enforcement work.

7.4 Options for action in years 2 and 3

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will review the following options and agree actions for years 2 and 3 of the strategy:

- 7.4.1 Develop and pilot a model for third party reporting of crime, harassment and abuse directed at refugees and other migrants who feel unable to contact the police directly.
- 7.4.2 Work with councils to develop a commitment and identify practical steps so that local Crime and Disorder Partnerships and Local Strategic Partnerships can engage effectively with refugees and migrants on community safety issues.
- 7.4.3 Work with the Metropolitan Police Service and UKBA to develop a joint approach to immigration enforcement that focuses on offenders who harm communities and ensures that asylum-seekers, refugees and other migrants who approach the police for protection or to pass on information are first treated as victims or witnesses.
- 7.4.4 Work with relevant bodies in the criminal justice system to ensure that services address specific issues for refugee offenders, especially around mental health and gender, and engage with the London Criminal Justice Board and London Resettlement Board to reduce repeated offending among asylum seekers, refugees and migrant offenders.
- 7.4.5 Build on an earlier study by the GLA and work with other regional strategic migration

partnerships to assess the role of the media in promoting or inhibiting community

cohesion, and develop guidelines or other measures for a more constructive approach.



8 Refugee Children and Young People

8.1 Core objective: to overcome the specific challenges faced by refugee children and young people in London in order to improve their health, wellbeing, safety and educational and post-18 attainment and ensure they enjoy the same life chances as their peers.

8.2 The challenge

A sizeable proportion of London's children and young people are refugees, comprising as much as six per cent of London school rolls.¹⁴ Among the most vulnerable members of refugee communities, children and young people also offer the greatest potential for successful integration. The strategy gives a high priority to realising this potential so that London benefits from the contributions of refugee children and young people as they come of age and grow with the city.

The experience of becoming a refugee can profoundly affect children and young people. Parents who are refugees themselves may struggle to meet the needs of their children as families learn to live in a new environment. Unaccompanied children face these and other challenges without the support of their immediate families.

The positive impact of the protection afforded to asylum seeking and refugee children, and the guarantee of life's basic necessities, should not be underestimated. Escape from conflict and deprivation, access to health care and other services, and above all the opportunity to attend school, can seem like priceless gifts

to children newly arrived from dangerous and threatening places.

But these benefits are often accompanied by difficulties. Access to health care, particularly for mental health needs, may not be straightforward, or even possible. Childcare, nursery and school places can be more difficult for asylum seeker and refugee parents to secure. Schools may struggle to provide language support for refugee children and lack of settled accommodation can disrupt schooling and social development. Refugee children are often more susceptible to bullying. Hostility and lack of understanding in the wider community, particularly when these lead to harassment and abuse, can be deeply disturbing for refugee children and young people learning to live in a new and unfamiliar setting.

When refugee children are threatened by domestic violence or abuse, child protection services may find it more difficult to identify the dangers and intervene. The trafficking of children and young people also requires action in London.

London affords a wealth of opportunities and experiences but can also bring challenges. Child poverty, for instance, is higher in London than any other part of the UK.

National initiatives can help address many of these issues. Every Child Matters and The Children's Plan provide a framework for achieving key outcomes for all UK children:

- Be healthy
- Stay safe

- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic wellbeing.

The challenge for this strategy is to achieve these outcomes for asylum seeking and refugee children and young people. The structures responsible for delivering these aims – Children’s Trusts, Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards, Children and Young People’s Plans, Sure Start Children’s Centres and local children’s services such as Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance services (CEIAG), including Connexions services – can help address the challenges facing asylum seeking and refugee children.

In London, strategic policy and service planning are coordinated by Young London Matters, the London Children and Young People’s Partnership. The partnership, along with London Councils’ Children and Young People Forum and the Association of London Directors of Children’s Services, will be a focal point for promoting effective cooperation and a consistent London-wide approach to working with refugee children and young people. Time for Action, the Mayor’s strategy to equip children for the future and prevent violence, the London Development Agency’s youth investment strategy and the Mayor’s wider strategic policy work across the GLA group can all help deliver positive action for refugee children and young people.

London boroughs are responsible for educating under-16s and by 2010-2011 will take over responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council for commissioning 16-19 year-old education and training. Through a regional

strategic commissioning process led by the London Regional Planning Group, London boroughs will be responsible for commissioning the full range of 14-19 year-old entitlements that deliver the right learning and training opportunities for every young person. This transition is an opportunity for *London Enriched* to ensure that refugee young people have access to appropriate provision such as the new National Apprenticeship Service, including some 3,000 apprenticeships offered by the GLA group.

Local area agreements monitor progress against national indicators for educational attainment and other areas of children’s services. They are a focal point for ensuring local services are accessible and appropriate for refugee children and young people. By supporting London boroughs to make services accessible to refugee children, *London Enriched* can also support improved performance against Local Area Agreement targets.

8.3 Actions for year 1

The GLA, LSMP and other partners will work together to deliver the following actions in year 1 of the strategy:

- 8.3.1 Ensure that the Mayor’s strategies help to meet the specific needs of asylum seeking and refugee children and young people.
- 8.3.2 Ensure that Young London Matters strands and other pan-London strategic work deliver Every Child Matters objectives for asylum seeking and refugee children.
- 8.3.3 Address the specific needs of separated asylum seeking children and young people.

8.3.4 Improve protection for trafficked children and young people.

8.3.5 Work with the London 14-19 Regional Planning Group to ensure the commissioning of 14-19 year-old services that meet the needs of refugee children and young people.

8.4 Options for action in years 2 and 3

8.4.1 Identify good practice and support local safeguarding arrangements, Children and

Young People's Plans, Children's Trusts, Sure Start Children's Centres and local CEIAG services, including Connexions, to ensure access and appropriate provision for asylum seeking and refugee children.

8.4.2 Take action to meet the specific needs and remove barriers to the educational and post-18 attainment of refugee children.

8.4.3 Work with the new National Apprenticeship Service to ensure equal access for refugees.



9 Community development and participation

9.1 Core objective: Strengthen the ability of refugees to meet the needs of their own communities and engage effectively in civic, political and community life.

9.2 The challenge

London Enriched has identified refugee community development and participation as a key element in refugee integration and an important factor in supporting the crosscutting theme of equal life chances.

Community development occurs when people work together to bring about positive change. Community development, according to the Community Development Foundation, 'often plays a special role in overcoming poverty and disadvantage, knitting society together at the grass roots and deepening democracy'. This process mobilises the knowledge and skills of the community, builds relationships and secures the resources for successful joint action for the public good. Refugees in London need to complement the wealth of skills and experience they bring with them by acquiring the knowledge required in their new surroundings.

London Enriched defines refugee community development in London as:

The process by which refugee communities build the relationships, resources and confidence they need to play their full part in collective action to secure equality of opportunity for the city's refugees.

Refugee community development is thus central to successful integration. The Framework

for Refugee Community Development, commissioned by the Home Office and developed by Praxis, describes the process of refugee community development as:

- Challenging barriers
- Enabling refugees to participate actively as equal UK citizens
- Building links with receiving communities
- Giving refugees a voice in planning services and in the wider democratic process.¹⁵

Refugee communities in London have a long history of taking an active role in these processes, often through refugee community organisations (RCOs). Sustaining this activity is a crucial challenge for the strategy.

The very diversity of this activity requires greater coordination and cooperation among the many refugee-led organisations serving refugee communities in London. They must join together to break down barriers and build successful relationships with the wider community, with service providers, and with key partners such as local government. They can strengthen their influence and build their capacity by forging closer relationships with mainstream voluntary organisations, particularly the second tier organisations that provide a voice for the sector.

Funding is a critical challenge for community groups, one that could be met partly by jointly analysing needs and working with local services to meet those needs through an appropriate mix of mainstream and specialist provision. Strengthening joint needs analysis and service development would provide evidence for the

role often played by RCOs in promoting access to housing and employment, improving health and building cohesion. The results delivered by community groups should be supported by ensuring access to funding streams such as the programme recently announced by the government in response to the recession. Greater coordination and engagement could also help meet the challenge of increased commissioning and deliver more effective funding by raising awareness of how community groups contribute to integration and to the national outcomes reflected in Local Area Agreements.

Individual refugees as well as organisations should be encouraged to take an active role in civic, political and community life. Along with English and language support services, advice, information and advocacy help ensure equal life chances. Increased demand for advice services by refugees and other migrants reflects this.¹⁶ Refugee community development and engagement must be supported by high quality advice, information and advocacy. The new Refugee Integration and Employment Service offers advice and mentoring to new refugees. *London Enriched* will promote advice and information that meets the needs of all asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Support for refugee community development and engagement must also tackle extreme exclusion. There is evidence that asylum seekers and refugees often become destitute, with no means of securing the basic requirements of life. *London Enriched* will monitor destitution and exclusion in these groups.

Community development and participation have been recognised by the Department of Communities and Local Government as crucial not only to refugee integration, but to the improvement of community and civic life, political engagement and community cohesion. A range of national initiatives support community development, empowerment and cohesion, and have the potential to promote integration by helping refugees to participate.

Local strategic partnerships and local area agreements offer opportunities to engage and influence. They are also opportunities to highlight the activities of migrant and refugee communities and their contributions to community cohesion and integration.

The challenge is to ensure that refugees benefit from national initiatives for equality and community empowerment, and to deliver practical community development support that helps refugees take an active role in achieving the aims of *London Enriched*.

9.3 Actions in year 1

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will work together to deliver the following actions in year 1 of the strategy:

- 9.3.1 Support more effective and sustainable funding of migrant and refugee community organisations by promoting better understanding of their role in integration.
- 9.3.2 Bring together migrant and refugee community organisations to assess progress and plan action to support integration

through community development and engagement.

- 9.3.3 Promote refugee access to volunteering and mentoring opportunities.
- 9.3.4 Survey the extent to which unemployment, poverty, isolation and other factors result in extreme exclusion among asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and refugees.

9.4 Options for actions in years 2 and 3

The GLA, LSMP and other partners will review the following options and finalise actions for years 2 and 3 of a comprehensive Migrant and Refugee Integration Strategy to take effect from year 2.

- 9.4.1 Build on work carried out in year 1 (see 8.3.2) to develop a local process for joint needs assessment that will allow more effective funding for migrant and refugee community organisations (MRCOs). Extend these processes to include better coordination of MRCO and mainstream services to reduce duplication, fill gaps and improve user satisfaction.
- 9.4.2 Improved awareness of voting rights and registration procedures will promote citizenship and civic participation among refugees and migrants.
- 9.4.3 Strengthen the migrant and refugee sector by examining the engagement of refugee and migrant community organisations in local, sub-regional and regional policy and planning structures. Develop practical measures to support more effective

migrant and refugee engagement and improve access to mainstream third sector infrastructure services. This work will involve migrant and refugee forums and other refugee and migrant second tier organisations, the Third Sector Alliance, the London Empowerment Network and regional statutory sector bodies such as Capital Ambition.

- 9.4.4 Build on existing work by migrant and refugee communities in sustainable living and technology and support refugee and migrant engagement with the London Climate Change Action Plan and other Mayoral work on environmental issues and sustainable development. Support local refugee and migrant engagement on these issues as part of the refugee and migrant community participation action in 8.4.3.
- 9.4.5 Develop an integrated information guide for refugees and migrants in London.
- 9.4.6 Work with key stakeholders to assess the advice needs of refugees and support the development of appropriate services to meet those needs.



10 Next steps

10.1 Information on refugee needs

Information on refugee experiences in relation to the core themes of this strategy will be the key to setting targets for refugee integration and for monitoring the impact of *London Enriched*.

10.2 The challenge

A major difficulty in developing this strategy has been the lack of comprehensive information on refugees in London. Whilst there is much anecdotal evidence that provides an understanding of the experiences of refugees in using services, seeking employment and living in the community, more detailed and systematic data is needed.

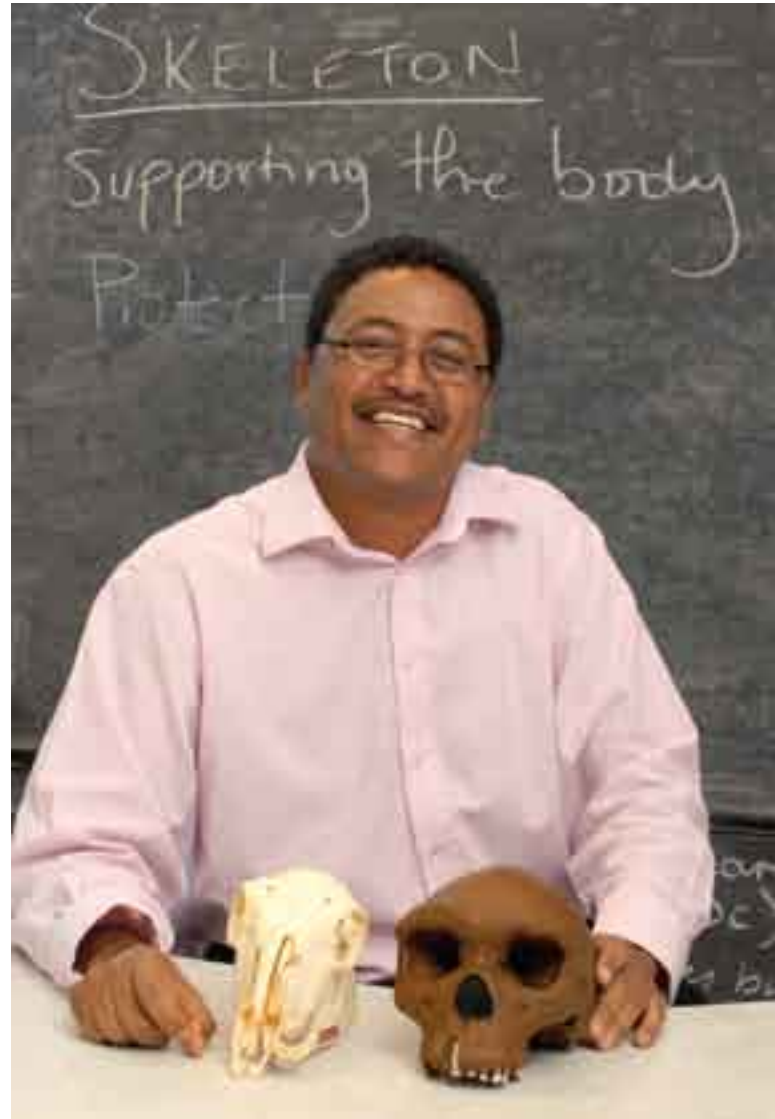
The challenge for the strategy is to map existing information and find ways to improve it. A particular challenge is to capture the knowledge of refugee communities and their organisations, as well as that of other agencies working directly with refugees.

A crucial first step is to gather the information that can be used to set targets for monitoring progress against the objectives of *London Enriched*.

10.3 Actions in year 1

The Mayor, LSMP and other partners will work together to deliver the following actions in year 1 of the strategy:

1.1.1 Carry out an assessment to identify key performance indicators and establish a baseline for monitoring the implementation of *London Enriched* and its impact on refugee integration.



1.1.2 Use the results of the baseline survey to identify steps for improving the collection of high quality data on refugee needs.

1.1.3 Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of *London Enriched* and progress against its core objectives and Key Performance Indicators identified in Action 10.3.1.

Endnotes

- 1 Home Office, 2006
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- 5 Rutter and Latorre, *Social Housing Allocation and Immigrant Communities*, Equalities and Human Rights Commission, forthcoming
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- 7 Rutter, Cooley, Reynolds and Seldon, *From refugee to citizen: ‘Standing on my own two feet’* London: Refugee Support, 2007
- 8 *Survey of homelessness sector services provided to asylum seeker and refugee clients*, Broadway and the Refugee Council, 2004
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- 10 Bloch, *Refugees’ Opportunities and Barriers in Employment and Training*, 2002
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- 13 *Victims of Domestic Violence: Accessing Legal and Social Welfare Assistance under EU and UK*, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, 2004
- 14 Rutter, *Refugee Children in the UK*, 2006
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- 16 *Estimating the scale and impacts of migration at the local level*, Institute of Community Cohesion, 2007



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Vietnamese

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

Greek

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

Turkish

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

Punjabi

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

Hindi

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

Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি (কপি) চান, তা হলে नीचे के फोन नम्बर वा ठिकानায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu

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

Arabic

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

Gujarati

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

