

NIACE Research and Development



Key Findings



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New migrant communities: education, training, employment and integration matters

Abstract

In partnership with the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham, NIACE undertook a programme of research to help fill knowledge gaps in relation to the size, skills and needs of the asylum seeker and refugee (ASR) population and the issues they face. The research explores the experience of organisations supporting them, identifies lessons of good practice as well as gaps in service provision. It emphasises the positive contribution of new migrants and focuses on developing positive solutions to the issues identified.

Research methodology:

- ❖ A multi-method research approach was adopted, carried out in a series of phases: analysis of literature and legislation; secondary data analysis to identify numbers and location of ASRs; household survey; questionnaire and site visits to non-statutory service providers; 36 in-depth interviews with newcomers; postal questionnaire of education providers; development of ESOL tutors database; dissemination seminar.

Key Findings

The main conclusions of the project are:

- ❖ Wolverhampton is seen as the preferred city of residence for asylum seekers and refugees (ASRs) within the West Midlands.
- ❖ 37% of refugees residing in the region and in employment, with unemployment significantly higher than in the wider population.
- ❖ Findings from the household survey suggest that ASRs in the Black Country have slightly lower levels of qualifications compared with ASRs living elsewhere in the West Midlands.
- ❖ ASRs are a very highly motivated group in terms of learning and locating employment, however, policy constraints, lack of language abilities, poor health

and childcare provision are some of the barriers experienced in relation to education, training and employment.

- ❖ The Black Country colleges appear to play a greater role in the provision of ESOL and advice and guidance than their sub regional counterparts. However a number of gaps in provision were identified as well as the need for staff development to improve understanding of ASRS issues and service delivery.
- ❖ There have been positive developments in education, training and employment provision as a result of working directly with ASRs and refugee community organisations (RCOs).
- ❖ Funding and lack of resources of a major concern for non-statutory providers.

Recommendations

A wide range of recommendations were made including:

- ❖ Creation of a central information source of ASR rights and entitlements.
- ❖ Integration of mental health support into colleges, IAG provision and RCOs.
- ❖ Development of programmes to accredit prior experiential learning (APEL).
- ❖ More flexible training and rolling educational programmes.
- ❖ ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision to be widened to include more programmes of cultural orientation and preparation for work.
- ❖ Provision of free childcare to prevent women with children being excluded from ESOL provision.
- ❖ A review of funding streams to support newcomers in employment.
- ❖ Development of work experience programmes.
- ❖ The need for greater partnership working between statutory and non-statutory agencies.

Output

- ❖ Phillimore, J. et al (2005) *New migrant communities: education, training, employment and integration matters* (unpublished).
- ❖ Phillimore, J. and Goodson, L. (2005) *Developing pathways to education, training and employment for new migrants in the Black Country* (unpublished).

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