



Lighting the way:
Supporting city and
regional leaders to
create positive
outcomes for people in
the immigration system

**UCL
Policy Lab**



Sixty-Second Summary

The gap between the ways in which national and local governments tackle the varied challenges of migration in England creates opportunities for more progressive policies in local communities. Here, we survey the ways in which four local authorities and their civil society partners have attempted to respond to this opportunity and identify the conditions which enable these efforts to succeed. We conclude by suggesting that sustained investment in these endeavours should be of interest to all of those committed to progressive reactions to the challenges of migration, even in the context of any possible change in national government.

About the Policy Lab

The UCL Policy Lab brings together ideas, individuals, and institutions in a collaborative method to understand and tackle the challenges facing communities in the UK and around the world. With diverse networks in politics, research, and communities, the Policy Lab facilitates dialogue between those addressing complex societal challenges.

If you have an idea or a challenge you're seeking to explore, get in touch with the team at policylab@ucl.ac.uk

Contributions from

Alexandra Hartman,
Associate Professor
in Political Science, UCL

Judith Spirig,
Lecturer in Political
Science, UCL

Moritz Marbach,
Associate Professor in
Data Science & Public
Policy, UCL

Marc Stears,
Director, UCL Policy Lab

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Methods

The data and insights from this report are drawn from two sources of data. First, we conducted a review of the relevant academic literature, as well as reports produced by civil society, government departments, and non-governmental organisations. Second, we spoke with local leaders, members of civil society, and current and former members of local government from four authorities (Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol and Sheffield). We used thematic coding to analyse the transcripts of open-ended interviews.

Supported by

The Refugee, Asylum and Migration Policy (RAMP) project. RAMP works with political leaders across the political spectrum to re-imagine a world-class migration system for a successful and integrated Britain.

Executive Summary

- Public policy concerning migration and social integration in England takes place in what can be called a “decoupled” policy environment, with sharp differentiation between how national and local government approach the question.
- This leads to a lack of meaningful coordination – and sometimes open conflict – between local policy and national policy on immigration and integration.
- In recent years, the national policy context has made it increasingly hard for local leaders to create a more equal and inclusive environment that benefits both those subject to immigration control and others.
- Despite the possibility of a change of government in the near future, fundamental change in the national policy context on immigration and integration may remain unlikely.
- Nonetheless, opportunities for improvement remain. The escalating political attractiveness of the devolution of powers to the local level to all sides and increasing investment in local economies present significant opportunities for local leaders looking to move towards policy success on immigration and integration.
- This ‘arms race’ on devolution and ‘levelling up’ may have some negative consequences, such as reinforcing the existing ‘decoupled policy environment’. But it could also create more opportunities for action at the local level.
- Local leaders report that they understand the need for integration and have strong ideas as to how to make it happen locally.
- Philanthropic funders have recently made efforts to support local leaders. In interviews with local key stakeholders in these initiatives, these stakeholders report to have been successful in promoting integration and inclusion, especially when they bring together committed leaders and qualified and well-connected advisors.
- From interviews with key stakeholders in these initiatives, we distil key principles of strategic action that should guide support: (i) *strategic coordination*; (ii) *cultural leadership* and (iii) *centring lived experience*. In addition, (iv) *adequate resources* are, unsurprisingly, an important component of what stakeholders perceive as necessary for success.
- With regard to specific projects, based on our research, we recommend that funders continue to support initiatives of these kind, while supporting the following: the greater inclusion of the perspectives of those with as diverse a range of lived experience as possible; the strategic vision of local leaders; the co-ordination and sharing of knowledge; and more systematic impact evaluations of future efforts so as to deepen the knowledge base as to what works most well.
- In the longer-term, funders and supported policy stakeholders can advocate for faster clearance of the backlog in asylum applications, the removal of barriers to entering the labour market for asylum-seekers and modernisation of the asylum-seeker dispersal mechanism.

Introduction

The future of immigration and integration policy in England is far from clear-cut.

This is, in part, because of the current fluidity in the country's general political context. Since the political chaos of Autumn 2022, with the collapse of Liz Truss' short-lived Prime Ministership, there has been a significant shift in the polls and an increasing sense that new directions are emerging in British politics. While much time remains before the general election, and many different political outcomes remain possible, experts and advocates in public policy have been reassessing the political context and their own operating assumptions. Civil servants in Whitehall have begun to imagine what a new government might do in office. And local leaders, including metro mayors, are starting to do the same.

But there is more driving the uncertainty in immigration and integration than just this. In this policy area, as in many others, political leadership has often been characterised by a nervousness about being out of step with perceived mainstream opinion. On the Conservative side, the Prime Minister's focus on stopping small boats (one of his five priorities) is driven by a perceived political opportunity, with a strong instinct in senior Conservative ranks that more restrictive migration policies retain their ability to attract otherwise sceptical voters. It can also be seen with particular reference to the Labour Party. Its anxiety in the area is demonstrated by its lack of an explicit migration policy, combined with its handling of the political argument around small boats (Labour largely treats this not as an ethical issue but one of competency, and seeking to show up the government's failure to deal with the problem rather than taking a substantive position on asylum policy) and its argument that we should not rely on migrants to prop up the economy but instead employ more British workers.

In practice, this means that the whatever happens within the national political conversation in the short term there are unlikely to be many immediate new openings for those advocating any major shift, such as a more substantive national inclusion and integration policy, even if there is a substantial change in Parliamentary arithmetic after the next election.

Political opportunities are not restricted to specific national policy areas, however. A broader trend has also been noticeable in recent political debate, which

creates additional opportunities. This is the shift towards a positive attitude to the devolution of powers from Westminster and Whitehall to local authorities. After many years in which the Conservatives have proposed "city deals" and introducing reforms to enable greater powers by city region mayors, there is now significant rhetorical commitment by the Labour leadership on empowering local leaders as a means of tackling the big problems facing the country.¹ This continues to butt up against a perceived need to be seen as fiscally responsible, which explains the insistence by Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves that Labour is not planning to devolve tax-raising powers to local authorities.

Despite this tension within Labour, however, there are clear signs of an 'arms race' between the two main parties on devolving powers to the local level. The Prime Minister is, by all accounts, not a natural devolutionist, but key personnel around him, including both his Chief of Staff Liam Booth-Smith and his Deputy Chief of Staff Will Tanner, have strong roots in localist policy development. And the two most prominent Conservative mayors, Andy Street in West Midlands and Ben Houchen in Tees Valley, have been lobbying hard for continued action on devolution and investment in local economies.³ That has played out in announcements in the 2023 Spring Budget on deeper 'trailblazer' devolution deals in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands, and a promise for a 'new wave' of devolution deals around the country.

This, combined with the fact that Labour's 'five missions' are underpinned by a commitment to empower local leaders in order to deliver them, suggests that we will continue to see greater devolution of powers to the local level. Whether or not these powers include anything explicitly related to integration, the context is likely to be one of increasingly-assertive local politicians able to obtain greater purchase over issues that matter to them. That in turn is likely to reinforce the 'decoupled' nature of the policy environment on integration and inclusion – where the differences between the local and the national can create new potential opportunities for city leaders, and others in local government, to create more positive outcomes for people in the immigration system, largely independent of developments in national politics.

Our research approach, and the key context of the 'decoupled' policy environment

Given the political context above, we consulted reports and evaluations of existing integration and inclusion initiatives, projects and programmes in England, academic literature and research on integration and inclusion in the UK and other contexts, and brought that to bear on four case studies: Manchester, Bristol, Sheffield and Liverpool. In these four case studies, we reviewed what others have said has worked to advance better outcomes for people living locally and then interviewed local stakeholders about what they thought had worked.

Through all of this work, we see that local stakeholders repeatedly raise the conflicted context in which they work on local immigration and integration in England and describe how they have attempted to strategise within it. Those to whom we spoke describe a complex policymaking environment that requires constant compromise and invention given the fragmentation or decoupling of policy goals between the national and local levels. It is our primary finding that how successfully these stakeholders find themselves able to deal with that decoupling is a key element in determining their overall success. And this is critical context for the sections that follow.

To put that more specifically, throughout our discussions, stakeholders describe facing a conflict between the "hostile" national immigration policy and the absence of a national integration policy framework in England on the one hand, and the desire to create a more equal and inclusive environment at the local level on the other. When asked directly about what would enable policy success, local stakeholders foregrounded their analysis in these conditions. For example, as one member of an engaged civil society organisation stated:

It can be a little bit like, all right, you guys in Westminster, but how does that play out on the ground here?... From a practical perspective of it is local authorities who are having to deal with the practicalities of supporting communities with this national immigration framework and the mess that that causes?

Another stakeholder explained:

So, if we were to really have a major impact, it would be to change the [national] legislation. Under which these conditions are created. The conditions that force people into homelessness and destitution. [We cannot do that] so we still feel like we are kind of making the best of the situation, of the structure of the situation. But actually, the structure is also the problem.

The following sections outline our findings from this research in more detail. The first section outlines our specific findings from a detailed review of existing evaluations about which initiatives aimed at supporting local leaders in their inclusion and integration efforts appear to work well, and explore how they achieve this success. The second section draws on the case studies and interviews further to explore factors that unlock success. The final section makes concrete recommendations for future activities to improve inclusion and integration at the local level based on our analysis as well as research that has been done in other contexts, both for the short and for the longer term.

¹ See especially [Keir Starmer's New Year speech](#) and the [Gordon Brown Commission on the UK's Future](#)

One: Learning from previous research

For the last decade, a number of key civil society organisations and local authorities have created a number of local policies, funded through a diverse set of public and private initiatives, all designed to enhance the lives of those who have migrated to the UK, despite the challenges posed by a much less welcoming national policy.

All of these efforts have been rooted in the fact that local leaders, and especially city leadership, enjoy more effective responsibility when it comes to the integration of communities within the wider community and the labour market than national government. This includes but is not limited to: English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL); supporting local labour market integration; planning local housing; assisting local people access key services (including health and legal services); and organising welcoming activities for people newly-arrived.

In these policy areas, local leaders can take a range of actions. They can prioritise the issue or a subsection of it, by funding and launching a strategic integration into the local authority/Mayor's office. They can seek to innovate with new approaches, including the development of an overall integration strategy. They can create partnerships with other stakeholders in civil society, business or elsewhere. They can publicly advocate for the importance of integration and inclusion both locally and nationally.

In recent years, spurred both by new opportunities that have followed from devolution and from their desire to react to the hostile national policy environment on immigration, local leaders have implemented a range of policies in the inclusion and integration space. A few examples are the following:

- *Our Liverpool*, launched by the Liverpool City Council in 2018 (Welcoming International, 2022);
- The London Mayor's *ESOL Plus programme* and broader, 'All of Us' approach to social integration, including the appointment of a Deputy Mayor for integration (Greater London Authority, 2020);
- *The Bristol Model*, Bristol's approach to No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), developed by Bristol Refugee Rights and the RAMP project (BRR & RAMP, 2022));
- Manchester's specialist No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) team (BRR & RAMP, 2022).

There are also projects put forward by local authorities that are, in fact, directly funded by the national government, e.g. through the Controlling Migration Fund (DLUHC, 2022). A few examples of such policies are:

- *Operation Warm Welcome* (RAMP Project, 2022);
- *The Local Authority Asylum Seeker and Refugee Liaison Officer (LAASLO)* programme (DLUHC, 2022);
- *Sheffield Community Investment Deal* (DLUHC, 2022);
- The Leeds' *Community Connector Project*²

Many of these and other policies were initiated, supported, promoted by civil society actors. There are several initiatives that seek to help local leaders -- including City Mayors and councils -- provide more and better support to migrant communities. These initiatives include the following:

- *The Inclusive Cities programme*: a knowledge exchange programme at the city level that aims to assist local authorities to take charge of integration and advance their strategies for incorporating newcomers at the community level, including "inclusive narratives to strengthen the newcomers' sense of belonging" (Broadhead, 2020), currently supporting 12 UK cities including Bristol, Liverpool and Sheffield among our four case studies
- *Citizenship and Integration Initiative (CII)*: a London-based initiative (with pooled fund) that aims to promote and support the integration of new migrants and refugees into society through funding "secondments to the Greater London Authority for people working in civil society organisations"³ with expertise around integration (Renaisi, 2022).
- *RAMP Bristol*: initiative to second two part-time Inclusion Advisors into the Mayor of Bristol's Office to assist in making inclusion a central theme of the mayor's administration.
- *City of Sanctuary*: The City of Sanctuary movement started in 2005 with the mission to work to build a culture of welcome hospitality and inclusiveness right across every sphere and sector of society (RASM Review Team, 2020). All our case studies feature Cities of Sanctuary.

Experience and leadership

Clearly a key question that precedes any plans for next steps concerns the success of these civil society initiatives, especially as many are supported by philanthropic funders. It was key to our research, therefore, to distil key lessons and success factors, drawing on a detailed review of existing evaluations.

Two key factors emerge from that review: it matters greatly who the seconded staff are; and it matters too, how committed local leaders are to making substantial progress in the integration and inclusion space, despite contrasting efforts at a national level.

Crucial findings from previous studies begin with the vital role of knowledgeable, skilled and connected staff and advisors on any local initiative. The importance of precisely who the staff or seconded advisors are is mentioned in several evaluations of initiatives, including that of RAMP Bristol (Thorton, 2020), LAASLO in Greater Manchester (DLUHC, 2022, 64) and *Our Liverpool* (DLUHC, 2022). This theme emerges consistently. To provide some examples:

Stakeholders both within and external to the local authority in Liverpool reported that the Our Liverpool project team were knowledgeable and readily available for advice on where to signpost refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants and linked up services so that they could provide more effective support for these groups. The team was also considered to represent a coordinated voice between different statutory and third sector services. Identifying and recruiting project staff with relevant professional backgrounds and skills (for example in the voluntary, housing or education sectors) also facilitated network-building and improved coordination between services, teams, and organisations. (DLUHC, 2022, 63-64)

In a similar vein, Coley et al. (2019) note that: "Projects seeking quick solutions or run by organisations without prior knowledge of refugees are less likely to be successful than those with experience (Phillimore, 2012)." The RAMP Bristol review also noted the importance of the secondment advisors' knowledge, expertise, credibility and connections:

The other bit of learning that is important is it was a really good move to appoint Forward into the role – he has a really good knowledge of everything happening in Bristol with refugees and asylum seekers... He's got credibility, from his work outside this [initiative], which means that he is respected by the community sector and the Mayor and everybody else. Appointing Forward to that role was crucial. (Thorton, 2020)

The importance of a advisors or secondees having broad networks also becomes visible when evaluations turn to the difficulties facing some communities who feel that initiatives have not properly responded to their concerns. The Bristol (2020) evaluation uncovered that some felt that there were specific communities where the authority did not have a strong existing network of activity to tap into and who have consequently been left out. In addition, RAMP Project (2021b) note with regard to the Inclusive Cities programme, that whilst most "migrant community groups are usually well represented, engagement with longer standing communities and newer migrant communities without established infrastructure is more patchy. Whilst there are examples of good practice (eg Newport participatory budgeting work) wide community engagement and devolution of decision making to communities remains limited."

This networking ability is further related to the ability of advisors or secondees to draw on the practical wisdom and lived experience of those with personal experiences of the migration system and of integration challenges. Several interviewees and survey respondents in Thorton (2020) highlight that they value how the RAMP Bristol advisors helped to create new opportunities for refugees and asylum-seekers to share their personal stories in the city council. The Greater London Authority (2020) report similarly highlights that one of the benefits of partnering with CII is lived experience: "It has also drawn on the lived experiences of Londoners to allow City Hall a greater voice on complex issues." Interviewees as part of the CII evaluation stress this point too: "Prior to the CII, some felt that the GLA 'operated within a bubble', but that the new model brought learnings from lived experience into the heart of decision-making (e.g., experience of the difficulties of the immigration system)." (Renaisi, 2022, 23)

In addition to this emphasis on the specific talents and background of advisors and secondees, it is also often remarked that a defining characteristic of successful initiatives is that they are backed by vocal local leaders who care about inclusion and are publicly and politically committed to making progress in the area. According to Thorton (2020), RAMP Bristol was able to

2 See <https://news.leeds.gov.uk/leeds-spotlight/community-connectors-project-mhclg-governmentfunded>

3 See <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/issues/people/citizenship-integration-initiative/>

catalyse progress on the inclusion agenda because its engagement *complemented* the Mayor's pre-existing commitment to the inclusion agenda: "Inclusion was already an important policy issue for Mayor Marvin Rees. However, the RAMP Bristol advisors have provided the expertise, capacity and authority to drive that agenda forwards within the Council." (Thorton, 2020). The story from London is similar. In 2016, the large civil society organisation, Citizens UK, approached all 2016 London Mayoral candidates to ask them to commit to establishing an equivalent of the Offices for Citizenship and Integration, that was already known in cities in the US. After his election, Mayor Sadiq Khan agreed and created a new post of Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement (Renaisi, 2022), a position which is now called Deputy Mayor for Communities and Social Justice. A group of philanthropic funders then responded to the Mayor's leadership by launching CII, "which has since distributed over £1 million to support the Mayor's commitment to making social integration a core priority for his administration." (Renaisi, 2022)

A further reason why leadership of this kind matters is that the potential of seconded advisors can only be fully unleashed if local leaders help place them strategically within the decision-making processes of local authorities. Often there is no natural home for integration within local authorities' structures. Committed local leaders, like Khan, however, can establish a home for integration activities. For example, the Renaisi (2022) report highlights that "As a foundational element of the creation of the [GLA] Social Integration Team and Social Integration Strategy, the CII was seen as 'deeply catalytic' when it came to raising the profile of issues around social integration and making these a priority." Other reports also mention the importance of the placement of the advisors, e.g. Thorton (2020). In the RAMP Bristol case, it appears to have been important that the advisors were placed within the Mayor's personal office, which allowed them to bring different departments together to ensure delivery (RAMP Project, 2021b). Similarly, one of the achievements of Inclusive Cities, according to RAMP Project (2021b) is that it has been successful at the "Development of local leadership, including raising the salience of integration and inclusion locally, reframing policy questions and embedding inclusion within the strategic planning of participating local authorities."



Two: Learning from original interviews

In addition to reviewing existing evaluations of local initiatives, our research team also spoke directly with local stakeholders working in immigration and integration in Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol and Sheffield. Our goal was to encourage interviewees to build further on what we had learnt from earlier evaluations and helped us to identify several key factors that stakeholders believed have enabled initiatives to make a meaningful difference to the lives of people in their local communities with experience of the migration system. The themes which emerged were resonant of those detected in the earlier evaluations, including: strategic engagement and coordination; cultural leadership; lived experience; and different types of resourcing.

This section presents an original overview of the evidence provided by these interviewees. It is worth noting, of course, that strategies to build on the foundation of this success might be sharply different if the contrast between national and local policy environments was to be ended and replaced by a closer integration of national and local efforts.

Strategy and coordination

Stakeholders in all four locations described how what we have called the decoupled policy environment made *strategic behaviour* by local leaders, seconded advisors and other key delivery agents critical to success, echoing what we had learnt from published material. However, even despite consensus on the importance of taking strategic action at the local level, interviewees also noted that operating strategically remained challenging.

One stakeholder explained:

What has been difficult, I would say, part of the challenge, has occurred even when you've got political buy-in from the mayor. Turning that, translating that, into practical change within a local government is quite difficult. And I say that as someone who has had one foot in the Council and with the kind of clear mandate to try and drive some of that change. One of the things that we did was try was help with City Council to develop a refugee and asylum seeker inclusion strategy. But developing that document and getting it through the Council structures was a bit of a nightmare. It was really hard.

Despite these challenges, some stakeholders did describe strategic success. There were different components to success, but stakeholders spoke

specifically about having a strategy that they did not have to create from scratch and that allowed them to understand integration challenges across a range of substantive issues prior to taking action. In other words, knowledge of what had worked elsewhere was crucial for success. One stakeholder explained:

We mirrored the framework of the New Scot Strategy...I checked with them first, it was like you know, why recreate the wheel? This is a good framework. We've tweaked it since, but at the beginning we used the four overarching aims and the different thematic groups... And we had a migrant voice group as well. We use that strategy to pull all of the strands of migration work together.

However, sharp strategy alone is not sufficient for local success. Indeed, even once a strategy is in place, the structure of government institutions in the four local areas included in the research made it difficult to implement the strategy without a plan for coordination across different parts of local government. One stakeholder with experience working within city government explained:

It's a very bureaucratic complex thing ... What you found was there were operational bits of the Council that were working, interfacing with a refugees and or asylum seekers, but they didn't necessarily talk to the other operational bits of the Council that did that, and they weren't very well plugged into any kind of central system, and they were often pretty overstretched in terms of what they were doing on the frontline and therefore didn't really have very much capacity or headspace for strategic thinking or partnership working. I remember lots of quite frustrating conversations.

One remedy to these co-ordination difficulties related to the creation of single focal points for services for people with specific immigration statuses. One stakeholder described an initiative in Liverpool:

What Liverpool has done over the last few years is to provide a really brilliant infrastructure for working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. And within the city and to an extent wider in the city region, and that particularly when it comes to advocacy, it has performed a really valuable function. They have a very well-funded and run multi-agency forum regularly where representatives of the Council, representatives of civil society locally and representatives of the accommodation providers [all interact].

Another stakeholder similarly spoke of the importance of strategic coordination both within local government and between the local government institutions and other supporting bodies, such as those in civil society, as being a priority going forward:

That connection with my team is really strong, but that connection with the voluntary sector and all other parts of the Council is not so strong. So, there are tensions with, for example, housing, you know, accessing housing... But my team then acts as the boundary spanners, so to speak. So, we then will try to navigate the queries of the voluntary sector with those different parts of the system. I'm asking: how do we as a Council collaborate across organisational boundaries to improve refugee integration because we're really good as the team connecting outside, but what we're not great is those interorganizational connections... Because integration cuts across all those different areas that we hold... It's a bit haphazard and it shouldn't be.

Cultural leadership

Another factor that stakeholders identified was the way that prominent political leaders at a local level can help to create a culture that welcomes newcomers and publicly presents immigration and integration policy as an essential part of the means to creating a more generally equitable and inclusive community over the long-term. In interviews, stakeholders often mentioned that local leadership stands in contrast to national culture.

One stakeholder considered the role of narrative and culture when it comes to implementing successful policy in their local area following recent anti-immigrant violence in Northern England:

I think local authorities are just put in a situation where they see that there is divisiveness being created in their communities ... you can see it in the difference between what Steve Rotherham, the Liverpool city mayor said in the aftermath of the incident in Knowsley and what Braverman said in the aftermath of the incident in Knowsley... you know what I mean. Like, like this stuff matters. Language matters.

Another stakeholder explained how the leadership culture in the local area where he worked was a key contributing factor to policy success:

... it was kind of that community organising model ... a bit of organised community work up front and then local politicians who were supportive... Don't underestimate the role that those folks have in terms of creating a culture where this is not only OK but encouraged. And our current mayor has been very

supportive ... And I don't know what that really means in practice in terms of policies or budgeting or whatever. But what I do know is in terms of language and tone, the message from the Council is that this is still a city of sanctuary and we want this to be meaningful.

Lived experience

As in previous evaluations, other stakeholders also spoke actively about the importance of including the views of those with lived experience of the migration system as a resource for making local policies successful. This appears particularly crucial given that the specific challenges of those with vastly varied experiences of migration, either at an individual or community level, can often go unrecognised even by well-intentioned local leaders and bureaucracies.

One stakeholder described how services:

... don't reach out to our communities in the right way ... One organisation called me in as a consultant and they said 'we keep putting on these events and we can't seem to engage with ... communities'. And I said, well, your last event was in Ramadan on a Friday afternoon when it's prayer time, you've got food, it is during Ramadan and it's not walkable distance. Because a majority of migrants, won't have cars. They won't be able to drive. They won't be able to afford driving lessons... They don't have access to technology, they don't have Wi-Fi, there's digital poverty. How do they communicate?

Other stakeholders described how people with lived experience of the migration system and the challenge of integration can sometimes know what the "ingredients" are for successful policy and also that their experience (and others like them) can therefore be practically valuable in the policy process:

So back then in 2016 there had never been a social integration unit in the GLA before... What the GLA did was we put in four secondees from civil society. And two of those who were specifically about working on young people with insecure status, and one of those was a young person with insecure status herself ... And because the two of them were working in the GLA, what they were able to do was say, OK, you know the things that we need... the ingredients that will make it possible to make policy about this and of those things is a forum where he can talk directly to people with this experience.

Similarly, another put it:

And so it seems like maybe one of the things that here that is enabling is kind of identifying those people like with lived experience who are also the right fit for having these jobs or putting them in front of the political appointees. So that this communication and education task can actually take place.

Resource

Finally, although it may be least surprising, stakeholders also identified financial and other resources as critical to success. Stakeholders mentioned resources in different ways as key inputs into local policy success.

Some highlighted the presence of non-governmental resources as key catalysts for change within the local government system. In this case it is not financial resources alone, but how they are used strategically, that matters:

And then also you had charities that were able to do things like offer... a limited number of bed spaces over a period of time, which, to be honest on their own are slightly meaningless. I mean, it's better to have a bed space... but having a bed space for three months [alone] is not all that helpful. But having a bed space for three months, if we can also then fund a bit more capacity in the Law Centre to do more casework with that person to put in a fresh asylum claim. Suddenly that three-month bed space becomes crucial because you need that stability for that person and to be able to think about and deal with their claim, gather evidence for their submission... this adds up to more than the sum of its parts.

Another stakeholder mentioned how institutional arrangements constrained resources:

Where local government has more control over the funding, there's more space for innovation and kind of systemic change on some of these things. So I mean, I think what the GLA have done, the right ESOL for example, is brilliant, really exciting and interesting, that kind of employer plus model...and we haven't been able to make that level of change, partly because I've been we've been operating in the Council context rather than that regional context where they have the budget.

The way that resources are administered also shapes whether local stakeholders have the autonomy to create and implement successful policy, which is especially important given the complexities of the decoupled policy environment. Stakeholders mentioned the use of immigration and integration strategy as a way of pooling resources and creating a budget with the flexibility to make and implement good policy. One stakeholder explained:

We pulled everything together under that strategy... So all of our resources, all of our income we pooled, did you see what you mean? So we've got our refugee resettlement income, our Afghan bridging hotels income, et cetera. And you know this income is ramping up, you know, in the sense that we were never funded. Local authorities were never funded for this work and they now have a budget.

Three: Recommendations for the future

Any serious attempt to investigate the conditions under which local initiatives aim to improve the life experiences and chances of those with experience of the migration system must also note that more sustained, rigorous impact evaluations of this kind of initiative in the UK remain remarkably rare in comparative context. The most insightful studies on the question of “What works to facilitate immigrant integration?” have been conducted in other countries in which researchers have easier access to fine-grained administrative or survey data to track integration over decades and in which policy changes and program rollouts have been conducive to rigorous impact evaluations. None of this is possible in the UK.

This means that although any effort to make recommendations for additional action in England must bear in mind that the evidence-base remains highly limited compared to other countries and far from desirable. Nonetheless, drawing on what we have learnt from the analysis of previous interventions and from the stakeholder interviews that we have conducted, it is possible to outline a series of recommendations both for immediate action and for the longer-term.

In our final chapter, therefore, we set those out in the hope that they can inform ongoing deliberations about the kinds of intervention that might be useful in the short term.

Immediate proposals

1. *Continual efforts should be made by those who design and conduct local initiatives to enhance the ability of diverse people with lived experience of the migration system and the challenges of integration to contribute to the development, execution and evaluation of all initiatives to enhance integration at a local level.*

Local stakeholders highlight that the inclusion of such perspectives is important both for getting the policy design right and to make policy implementation possible. For example, DLUHC (2022, p. 82) stresses that including people with lived experience was crucial for the success of several projects, particularly when it came to reaching populations that were otherwise too often ignored. It is also sometimes noted, however, that the ambition to reach out to those with lived experience is sometimes stated but not sufficiently followed-through.

Further efforts to enhance that participation could include: developing and supporting additional opportunities to mentor and support local leaders with a migrant background in advocacy and policy engagement; extending secondment schemes to people from a broader range of backgrounds, not just from established civil society organisations; developing training programmes for local civil servants in how to connect more effectively with those who might come from backgrounds sharply different to their own.

2. *Given how crucial local leadership appears to be for the success of local initiatives, investment should be made in local political leadership development to enhance the capacity of local leaders to speak effectively on issues concerning migration and integration in the face of continuing national hostility.*

Much of the evidence collected suggests that local political leadership is vital in establishing these initiatives, supporting them, motivating participation and standing up against potential objections from both within local government and from national government. Without strong cultural leadership it is unclear that much progress could be made, even with the goodwill and investment of resource from outside.

Despite the importance of this leadership, it is also notable that local political figures in England gain remarkably little support in developing their abilities. Neither of the main political parties invests significant time or effort in supporting them; there are few, if any, voluntary or philanthropically-supported initiatives which assist them to engage effectively with the media, national government, businesses or key local stakeholders; and there is no clear career structure or support for future planning for those at or near the top of local government. This absence compares poorly to the supports available to leaders in business, civil society and national politics and sits uncomfortably with the vital importance of their role.

In addition to funding support for those with lived experience, therefore, we recommend that philanthropic investors consider ways to support the vital leadership upon which their success depends. We also recommend for funders to work with on-going initiatives to identify further cities with emerging willing leaders who can commit to strategically place seconded advisors and buy into the strategy by committing to self-fund at least one advisor position after the funders’ contribution runs out.

3. *Given the on-going political controversy in this area and the decoupled political environment, co-ordination and information sharing between initiatives in a safe space is vital to effective future developments.*

It is clear from all the evidence surveyed above, that the co-ordination and systematic sharing of knowledge between initiatives in different parts of the country is an important determinant of success. We note, however, that there remains a sharp discrepancy between local authorities’ approaches to integration, and information continues to flow relatively poorly between those who are engaged in different initiatives in different places

One way in which this could be justified is if strategies to disseminate the benefits of an inclusive and active local integration policy (e.g. via built-in evaluations) are built into the policies themselves. Through initiatives like the Inclusive Cities, results of such evaluations outlining the benefits of local integration policies and initiatives for migrant and long-standing local communities could be communicated to enable the more effective sharing of knowledge.

We also note that currently few “safe spaces” exist to allow crucial people to discuss their strategies and share insights free from the glare of potentially negative publicity or national political challenge. We recommend, therefore, that philanthropic efforts focus on providing such opportunities, facilitating them and enabling key strategic learnings to be shared across the system.

4. *All future initiatives should include systematic impact evaluations measuring programme effects at the local level*

Systematic and outcome-oriented impact evaluations will help identify which local innovations “work”, because they help to decide which innovations could and should be scaled to other places, which innovations should remain a local solution, and which innovations should be abandoned in favour of alternatives. The fact that they remain so rare exacerbates difficulties generated by a policy environment where local actors often feel that they are acting in the absence of solid evidence or clear knowledge.

This recommendation also connects directly with our first. Systematic evaluation, that is, should prioritise and rely on the voice of immigrants and administrative data about them when evaluating programme effectiveness. Although policy stakeholders’ and experts’ perceptions of programme effectiveness can complement impact evaluation, they cannot substitute

the direct measurement of how integration outcomes among immigrants change in response to program participation.

This could be achieved by more frequently collaborating with academics that conduct impact evaluation in the integration policy space using research grants or international research-focused organisation dedicated to sponsoring impact evaluations, including EGAP: Evidence in Governance and Politics and IPL: Immigration Policy Lab. Collaboration of this kind reduces the burden to acquire or redirect additional resources away from programme implementation and leverages academic expertise to design and deliver informative impact evaluations. These collaborations to conduct impact evaluations can be embedded in learning partnerships between academics and policy stakeholders.

Contributions to longer-term change

In addition to these specific immediate calls for change, when developing the agenda for future initiatives, it could be useful for approaches locally to be informed ideas with a proven track record to facilitate effective integration in other parts of the world.

The established evidence in this regard is much clearer, and it relates to the following longer-term recommendations, which could be built into future local initiatives:

1. *Providing language learning programs to newly arrived immigrants without English language proficiency.*

There is a clear consensus in the literature that job-focused, high-quality, intensive language learning programs are among the most effective strategies to facilitate the long-term integration of immigrant workers (Hangartner, Sarvimäki and Spirig, 2021; OECD, 2016; Home Office, 2019). Language skills facilitate the integration of immigrants in several dimensions. They allow immigrants to find (better-paying) jobs, allow them to access education programs, navigate public services, and interact with other long-term residents. However, it is critical that such language learning programs are of sufficient quality and length to allow those participating to acquire sufficiently strong language skills. New devolution deals might further facilitate these developments.

2. *Providing counselling, mentoring, and assistance to newly arrived refugees. Programs that help match immigrants with potential employers facilitate longterm integration of immigrants* (Ott, 2013; Hangartner, Sarvimäki and Spirig, 2021; EMN, 2016).

The best available studies from Sweden and Finland suggest that dedicated support in job centres that help navigate existing training programs and that help facilitate a contact between potential employers and immigrants increases employment by about six percentage points (Joonas and Nekby, 2012; Åslund and Johansson, 2011; Sarvimäki and Hämäläinen, 2016). However, such programs can only be fruitful if sufficient training programs and jobs are available for newly arrived immigrants. Otherwise, the resources on such programs are better invested in, for example, expanding training programs.

3. *Facilitating the integration of immigrants by reducing discrimination.*

Research in different countries, including the UK, suggests that immigrants face persistent discrimination in market settings (e.g., in the housing and labour market), in interactions with street-level bureaucrats and public spaces (FRA, 2016; André and Dronkers, 2017). Reducing discrimination in these settings through prejudice reduction approaches aimed at, for example, employers, landlords, and staffers in public bodies will facilitate integration for all immigrant groups. Although the evidence on various prejudice reduction approaches remains mixed (Paluck et al., 2021), recent research suggests that, in particular, interpersonal conversations that involve perspective taking are promising approaches to reduce prejudices (Kalla and Broockman, 2020, 2023).

4. *Advocate for a faster clearing of the backlog in asylum applications and a removal of the labour market ban affecting refugees.*

Existing evidence suggests that labour market bans and long waiting periods reduce employment prospects significantly even after the asylum application of applicants is granted and they are allowed to work (Hainmueller, Hangartner and Lawrence, 2016; Marbach, Hainmueller and Hangartner, 2018; Fasani, Frattini and Minale, 2021). Research suggests that putting refugees' lives on hold through lengthy waiting times and labour market

bans has severe negative consequences for refugees' mental health and reduces their subsequent ability and motivation to find jobs. Local leaders could play a major role in advocating for these developments.

5. *Advocate for a better and more sustainable approach to refugee accommodation after arrival.*

Instead of a haphazard dispersal of refugees after arrival, the government should take advantage of the potential synergies between, for example, refugees' skills and the local demand for such skills (Bansak et al., 2018). Several countries, including Switzerland, Canada and The Netherlands, have started to pilot programs to complement the day-to-day human decision-making about their dispersal with data-driven recommendations from an AI about the optimal allocation. In principle, the same technology could also be used to provide recommendations to economic immigrants about where to settle after arrival (see, for example Ferwerda et al., 2020). Regardless of how dispersal is organised, the government should ensure that there is fairness in dispersal and that local authorities have adequate funding to meet the increasing demand for public services.

6. *Advocate for a What Works Centre for Immigrant Integration or equivalent to allow for information gathering, analysis and dissemination.*

Given the limited evidence in the UK context, it would be supremely useful to have a centre which could function as a hub to compile best-practice guidelines for local and national programs to facilitate immigrant integration and to design and deliver complex impact evaluations based on administrative and survey data from across the government. Similar centres have proven to be effective in other policy spaces, e.g., Centre for Homelessness Impact.

Conclusion

The national political debate over immigration, integration and the opportunities available for people who have come through the migration system remains challenging. Nonetheless, opportunities remain open to local actors, ranging from metro mayors to local civil society partners, to make a substantial impact on the lives of those who live within their own communities.

In this report, we have drawn evidence both from existing evaluations of a range of local initiatives and from a series of original interviews with stakeholders in four cities, to attempt to identify the key determinants of success for these initiatives. Both the existing evaluations and the interviews have been clear that *local leadership* and *coordination* matters in giving energy and direction to these initiatives. They also make clear that channelling the insights of those with *real lived experience* can make a substantial difference to the impact of these initiatives. This, we believe, gives a clear set of priorities for those attempting further to deepen this work in the near term, as is likely to remain necessary whatever happens in the domain of national politics.



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APPENDIX

A description of the initiatives discussed in this report.

- Inclusive Cities: The Inclusive Cities programme is a knowledge exchange programme at the city level that aims to assist local authorities to take charge of integration and advance their strategies for incorporating newcomers at the community level, including “inclusive narratives to strengthen the newcomers’ sense of belonging” (Broadhead, 2020). The program is led by COMPAS (the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society) at the University of Oxford. Inclusive Cities currently supports 12 UK cities and their local partners to achieve a step-change in their approach towards the integration of newcomers in the city. The founder cities (2017-2019) were Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, Peterborough (no longer), London, Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Coventry, Newry, Mourne and Down, Newport and Sheffield. In phase 2 (2019–2023) another 9 regions in the UK (Centre on Migration, Policy, and Society, 2022c): Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton & Hove, Bristol, Coventry, Glasgow, Newport, Newry, Mourne and Down, and Sheffield. The goal is to develop action plans that help participating cities to promote integration and improve the living condition of immigrants, to facilitate peer learning and information/knowledge sharing among participating cities, and to conduct research on the impacts of policies and the potential points of breakthrough. The details of the action plans in the case studies locations can be summarised as below:

– Bristol:

- * Support the development of WeAreBristol campaign
- * Support the development of the Everyday Integration research project led by Bristol University
- * Support the One City Economy Board and the City Funds Economy Inclusion Priority Group to drive inclusive growth
- * Develop pathways to employment for refugees and asylum seekers
- * Support the development of the Bristol Model of NRPf support
- * Support the legacy of the VALUES project
- * Develop the Welcome Hubs to support Ukrainian refugee communities
- * Promote the COVID Race Equality Group
- * Provide legal advice for migrants in Bristol (Centre on Migration, Policy, and Society, 2022a)

– Sheffield:

- * Give voice to refugees and promote positive stories of local communities
- * Help Sheffield to become an anti-racist city
- * Help Sheffield to achieve Local Authority of Sanctuary status
- * Develop Welcome scheme for new arrivals
- * Support residents to deal with poverty and cost of living crisis
- * Grow Sheffield’s economy
- * Establish BeKindSheff
- * Support development of community hubs and emphasis Libraries as key neighborhood assets
- * Develop Compassionate Sheffield approach to promote compassion
- * Promote workforce diversity

- * Transform Cabinet model to Committee structures
- * Implement Youth Service Strategy to ensure inclusiveness for young people
- * Complete first phase of New Constellations process (Centre on Migration, Policy, and Society, 2022b)

– Liverpool:

- * Through the Inclusive Cities Programme, Liverpool has “developed the ‘Our Liverpool’ welcoming narrative for the city” (Liverpool City Council, 2019, 13)
- * “The programme has tried to support local government to leverage in new funds and match funding and has had some success in this (e.g. Liverpool)” (RAMP Project, 2021b)

- Citizenship and Integration Initiative (CII): London-based initiative (pooled fund) that aims to promote and support the integration of immigrants and refugees into society and is part of a broader effort to address issues related to migration, diversity, and social cohesion. CII is an initiative established by a group of philanthropic funders (Trust for London, Unbound Philanthropy, Paul Hamlyn Foundation) in 2016 and currently supported by these funders as well as the City Bridge Trust and the Pears Foundation. CII is a response to GLA’s intention to make social integration one of its priorities. At its core, it is based on a partnership model and funds “secondments to the Greater London Authority for people working in civil society organisations”⁴ with expertise around integration (Renaisi, 2022). More specifically, CII focuses on a number of key areas:

- Participation: encouraging active citizenship and increasing voter registration. This includes facilitating an inclusive, democratic, and representative public discourse. CII also created the information hub for European Londoners to help them navigate through Brexit; use public events and advertisements to build a campaign that welcomes Europeans into London as well as providing support to grassroots organisations.
- Equality: supporting young Londoners and Europeans to secure their legal rights. This includes helping young people with insecure status to obtain rights to residence and citizenship. For example, CII offered parents of children from two primary schools who have insecure status legal advice and organised the communities so that schools are more inclusive and developed the parents’ ability and confidence in creating social change. Lastly, during the COVID 19 outbreak, CII worked with different governmental and civil organisations to deliver public events to promote vaccines.
- Relationships: creating a welcoming environment for Londoners. This is achieved by conducting research and conversations to better understand hostile environments and building connections across the GLA. CII also improved migrants’ access to primary healthcare as well as ensuring their access to vaccine during the COVID 19 outbreak.

According to the Greater London Authority (2020) report, CII plays an important role in both making integration a priority within the GLA’s work and contributing to more inclusive policy making: “The [CII] initiative has pushed citizenship and integration further up the political agenda. It has also drawn drawing on the lived experiences of Londoners to allow City Hall a greater voice on complex issues.”

- RAMP Bristol: funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for the first three years, RAMP Bristol is an initiative to second two part-time Inclusion Advisors into the Mayor of Bristol’s Office to assist in making inclusion a central theme of the mayor’s administration. The initiative was launched in 2018 and funding until 2026 was secured by building RAMP secondee capacity into funding bids from sector organisations. The two inclusion advisors - David Barclay and Forward Maisokwadzo - have worked on inclusion at three levels: with the council; across the city; nationally and internationally. Renaisi, who were commissioned to evaluate RAMP Bristol in 2020, summarise their impact in the following way (Thorton, 2020):
- Capacity: secondment of advisors allowed for a greater focus on and engagement with Bristol’s inclusion agenda. They bring strategic thinking and expertise to the table that allows them to advance the inclusion agenda in various ways. For example, they would be able to think about and help develop strategies to deal with new challenges: “what does it mean practically to respond to Brexit and the immigration law changes that are coming?

And what do we need to do to respond?” (Thorton, 2020).

- Connections: secondment of advisors facilitated connections between groups (council departments, external stakeholders, organisations) working in the area of integration and inclusion. By participating in different initiatives, attending meetings, listening to different voices, taking lived experience into account by providing refugees and asylum seekers platforms to share their stories in the city council, assisting, disseminating information, providing input, being a point of contact with the council for the community sector, they increased “joined-up” and cohesive thinking among organisations in the space, and also worked with funders, e.g., the Bristol City Fund on best ways to support inclusion.
- Catalysis: secondment of advisors revitalised and drove forward existing initiatives (e.g., Refugee and Asylum Seeker strategy, Bristol Inclusive Cities project) and helped create new ones, e.g., “David and Forward have run several Windrush and settlement-related events and initiatives, in partnership with government agencies, which have provided support for those affected in Bristol.”
- Communication: contribution to local, national and international debate on integration and inclusion, with the aim to foster a positive and welcoming public discourse (including the We Are Bristol campaign). Of course, direct impact on contribution to debates is difficult to evaluate. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the Mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees has stressed in speeches, for

4 See <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/issues/people/citizenship-integration-initiative/>.

example, to UNHCR in Geneva, the importance of integration at the city level: “The thing we’ve learned by providing a safe haven is that if you do it well, and if you put a good support structure around it, win the support of the population and business and local government, that actually becomes an asset for the city”.⁵

- City of Sanctuary. The City of Sanctuary movement started in 2005 with the mission to work to build a culture of welcome hospitality and inclusiveness right across every sphere and sector of society (RASM Review Team, 2020). Sheffield was the first city council to commit to becoming a City of Sanctuary in 2007 and many more have followed. The main goal is to assist better working relationships and joint working between local and central government to resettle people who are refugees. The focus so far has been on developing a vibrant Schools of Sanctuary network, mapping ESOL provision, and exploring the contribution of bodies such as libraries and universities to refugee support. Among its achievements in Sheffield, City of Sanctuary Sheffield (COSS) lists an increase in organisations that provide neighbourhoodbased services and facilities, “increasing partnership working between provider services” and an information platform⁶ (RASM Review Team, 2020, 5).

Sample of policies implemented by local governments

Here are a few policies (mostly drawing on the experience of our four case studies but also including some examples from other areas such as London) that have been implemented by local leaders:

- Our Liverpool: “In 2018, Liverpool City Council launched Our Liverpool, an effort to support local migrant-led initiatives and networks, while facilitating information sharing between the council and community groups that already promote welcoming practices across the city. The aim was to guide the council’s work on inclusion from the grassroots up.” (Welcoming International, 2022, 2) Our Liverpool is: “A multi-faceted approach to recent migration across Liverpool and four other city-region authorities. Activities aimed to support refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants to obtain mainstream benefits and housing, freeing up emergency accommodation; support migrants to access employment, easing pressure on Job Centres; and provide family learning support to enable migrant children to access education more readily. Across Liverpool, the project also aimed to tackle migrant rough sleeping, provide specialist educational support to migrant children to free up pressure on schools and provide ESOL to enable migrants to use services more effectively. The evaluation focused on the Community Development strand of the project.” (DLUHC, 2022, 24-25) For example, according

to DLUHC (2022, 90) “Face-to-face community engagement work: Through undertaking community engagement work in three target wards, Community Development Officers on the Our Liverpool project identified waste management issues (including littering and inappropriate waste disposal) as heightening tensions between recent migrants and longer-standing residents. Community Development Officers found that longer-standing residents frequently attributed these issues to more recent migrant arrivals and asylum-seekers. Investigating the issue further, Community Development Officers identified that recent migrant arrivals needed further information about appropriate waste management (such as how to recycle or order a recycling bin). As a result, the content of ESOL classes was changed to incorporate these issues. Beneficiaries interviewed said they had found the content useful and planned to apply the knowledge they had gained. Staff felt that in the longer-term, improved waste management practices among recent migrants would reduce concerns among wider residents about the impact of migrants. However, at the time of the evaluation it was too early to see any change in resident perceptions.”

- The London Mayor’s ESOL Plus programme (as part of London’s ‘All of Us’ approach to social integration): “The Mayor’s ESOL Plus programme runs pilot projects that seek to overcome barriers to Londoners learning English. It aims to maximise opportunities for collaboration

and innovation. The first round of this programme focused on learners with childcare needs (ESOL Plus Childcare) and those in low-paid work (ESOL Plus Employer Partnership). The successes of these projects have been clear. For example, one Bangladeshi woman had a two-month-old baby and another very young child to look after. This made it difficult for her to get to English classes.” (Greater London Authority, 2020) There are a range of other projects of the London Mayor in the integration space, e.g., the Young Londoners Forums, new Mayoral citizenship ceremonies.

- The Bristol Model, Bristol’s approach to NRPf, (developed by Bristol Refugee Rights and the RAMP project (BRR & RAMP, 2022)). “It’s a holistic and collaborative framework for bringing together services and support based on four key principles – design out destitution, informed and supported, included and involved and a safe place to stay. It builds on the insight and premise that when people have their basic needs catered for, they can then make progress in escaping NRPf-enforced destitution, either by finding new work or by changing their legal status. It also works on the principle that no single organisation or sector in the city can effectively support those with NRPf on their own.” (Renhard, 2023) “At the council we’re proud to have put the Model at the heart of our efforts to tackle rough sleeping, including our successful bid for funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative over the

next three years. This will secure some bed spaces for those with NRPf, caseworker capacity, access to legal advice from Bristol Law Centre and a specialist sub-group of our Rough Sleeping Partnership.” (Renhard, 2023).

- Manchester’s NRPf team: The team is located within the Adult Social Care department. “The Team has 5 members and uses a Case Management model. The NRPf team provides regular training and guidance to other teams and departments within the Local Authority, and has strong working relationships and established referral pathways to other parts of the Council. They also have partnership arrangements with other key agencies in the city (e.g. hospitals re discharge of people with NRPf). The Council has found that having a specialist NRPf team has saved significant amounts of money, cutting the cost of provision to people with NRPf from approximately £3m p/a to approx. £1.5m in five years. This is due to the ability of the team to find solutions for people with NRPf that can remove the need for LA-funded temporary accommodation and other forms of support. The Head of the NRPf Service has a strategic role regionally and nationally, representing the LA to Greater Manchester and regionally and actively participating in an Operational Working Group with the Home Office.” (BRR & RAMP, 2022)

Sample of projects proposed by local government and funded by the National Government

- Operation Warm Welcome (RAMP Project, 2022): “Operation Warm Welcome is being delivered through close working between the Home Office and Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).” (RAMP Project, 2022). It is aimed at the integration of Afghan refugees. It recommends to provide permanent housing; prioritize family reunion; provide English language education; ensure access to education and job training; Home Office working with Department of Education and Minister for Children to support child refugees and asylum seekers. The way it works is that: “Local authorities have received funding to support individuals for three years. The total funding was matched to that for the Syrian Resettlement Programme (VPRS) although not the length of time, which was five years for VPRS. In year one there will be integration funding for local authorities to support education, English language and health provision.” (RAMP Project, 2022).
- *Local Authority Asylum Seeker and Refugee Liaison Officer (LAASLO) programme*: “£1.7million [of the Controlling Migration Fund was used] to fund the first year of 35 Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers (LAASLOs) in 19 local authorities with high concentrations of supported asylum seekers.” (DLUHC, 2022, 18) The Greater Manchester Combined Authority, for

⁵ See <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/news/latest/2018/12/5c1a250f4/global-cities-lead-welcomingrefugees.html>.

⁶ See <https://asylumjourney.org.uk/>.

example, “received funding for 17 LAASLOs across the 10 Greater Manchester boroughs. 3 boroughs (Manchester, Oldham and Salford) were subsequently selected for inclusion in the evaluation.” (DLUHC, 2022, 26) The aim of the LAASLO project is to have local officers to provide support to asylum seekers who had been granted leave to remain in the UK and were required to vacate temporary asylum accommodation within 28 days. The project involved initial scoping and outreach efforts to engage with beneficiaries and establish referrals with asylum accommodation providers. This was followed by one-to-one assistance to individuals or families to help them secure housing after leaving asylum accommodation, access public services, acquire labour market skills and facilitate their integration (DLUHC, 2022). The achievements of the LAASLO project can be summarised as below:

- Improved coordination between agencies such as facilitating connection between local authority departments and local VCS organisations
- Improved access to labour market skills and ESOL training
- Supported refugees to find appropriate housing accommodations; reduced risk of homelessness
- Enhanced understanding of and access to public services

- Sheffield Community Investment Deal: “The community-based project aimed to respond to concerns from local people about the impacts of recent migration on public services and anti-social behaviour, through funding community development workers and on-the-ground education and enforcement officers; and providing information and better organised local services. The project also aimed to engage established and new communities through community development initiatives to improve their areas.” (DLUHC, 2022, 23)
- During the early phase of COVID, the Government introduced the ‘Everyone In’ initiative to address homelessness. Under this initiative, immigration-related eligibility criteria to access support for those experiencing homelessness were suspended (Stewart et al., 2023). According to Councilor Tom Renhard, Bristol Cabinet Member for Housing Delivery and Homes, to Bristol this “[...] briefly give us the chance to offer housing to everyone who needed it in the city.” (Renhard, 2023). The Liverpool City Council also reported: “that 33 of those placed in emergency accommodation were recorded as EEA Nationals who had not yet been awarded Settled Status/or had not applied for Settled Status. They stated they do not have any data to show their recourse status. A further 20 were non-EEA Nationals and they did not have any data to show their recourse status.” (RAMP Project, 2021a)

- Leeds’ Community Connector Project⁷: Recruited community connectors from diverse communities (who were previously new migrant in Leeds). They support new migrant households to connect with local services and existing communities with a focus on addressing concerns around housing, hate crime, community cohesion and health and wellbeing.

Contact Us

policylab@ucl.ac.uk
www.ucl.ac.uk/policylab
@UCLPolicyLab

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⁷ See <https://news.leeds.gov.uk/leeds-spotlight/community-connectors-project-mhclg-governmentfunded>

