
LEEDS

Yorkshire and Humberside

Recent population changes

Leeds has been defined as a 'place of continuous human movement and focus of migration' (Leeds Initiative BME Strategy Group, 2004). Its recorded history demonstrates that its growing size and prosperity was driven by migrant communities and their continuous movement, settlement, integration, impact and changing experience. Since the mid 1800's, migrants to Leeds have included different groups: Jewish, Irish, Italian, Baltic, Russian, southern and eastern European, south Asian, middle eastern, Caribbean, African, Muslim, Chinese, Vietnamese.

In more recent years there have been a number of changes. Given the presence of NASS accommodation and the increased speed in the asylum application process, Leeds has the highest number of refugees given status in the entire region (nearly 26%). Although the number of asylum seekers is decreasing, the number of destitute asylum seekers is seen as increasing. European enlargement in May 2004 saw a new influx of migrant workers with registrations for national insurance numbers from non British residents rising from 4,220 in 2002/03 to 7,190 in 2005/06. The majority of new arrivals are reported to be young, though given the increase in demand for language interpreting in the maternity departments, not necessarily single. Romany Gypsies and Irish Traveller communities are also thought to be increasing, despite the gaps in information.

Accurate statistics on the number of irregular migrants (both failed asylum seekers and unauthorised migrant workers) who are now destitute in Leeds, are unlikely to emerge due to the clandestine nature of the problem. For some non EU migrants, the denial of access to welfare and the legal right to work makes illegal work the only realistic option for survival. More than one informant reported the increase in legal and illegal Chinese workers, especially people from mainland China.

It was reported on more than one occasion that migrants face hostility and abuse from neighbours and find it difficult to move to more secure locations. Also the established Polish community (moved to Leeds after WW II) is facing racial harassments from local communities. According to a key informant, Gypsies and Travellers are also not 'tolerated'. It seems that there are no publicly known areas of land, which can be used for sites necessitating constant moving. There is a need for small sites with basic amenities for small periods as well as sites where families can spend the winter. Land with planning permission where families can settle permanently is urgently needed. Despite the recognition of Gypsies and Travellers as an ethnic minority Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, Gypsies and Travellers experience prejudice and racism, institutional racism as part of their daily lives.

A similar problem is faced by refugees and asylum-seekers. One informant reported that despite the number of asylum applications decreasing, the public believes that a large majority of the world's refugees and asylum seekers are in the city.

Statistics

Total population: 2001 (Census): 715,402; 2005 (Pop. Survey): 723,100

Non UK born: 2001 (Census):

Total: 47,550 (6.64%)	
Top ten countries:	
Pakistan	5,959
Ireland	5,692
India	5,323
Germany	2,618
Caribbean and West Indies (3)	1,832
Jamaica	1,364
South and Eastern Africa (1)	1,353
Bangladesh	1,333
Far East (2)	1,280
Kenya	1,138

Notes: (1) Other than Kenya, Somalia, South Africa, Zimbabwe; (2) Other than China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore; (3) Other than Jamaica

Source: Census 2001

Non 'white British' population: 2001 (Census): 77,530 (10.83%)

Registration for NINOs (national insurance numbers) from non British residents

2002/03	#
Total:	4,220
Top ten countries:	
Iraq	510
Zimbabwe	310
India	290
Pakistan	250
Philippines	250
Afghanistan	230
China Peoples Rep	210
Iran	120
Australia	100
Bangladesh	100

2005/06	#
Total:	7,190
Top ten countries:	
Poland	1,840
India	580
Rep of Lithuania	350
Pakistan	300
China Peoples Rep	260
Slovak Rep	230
Zimbabwe	200
South Africa	190
Nigeria	170
Rep of Latvia	160

Number of refugee status granted in 2005: 381 (Source: Home Office)

Asylum seekers receiving NASS support (June 2006)

Dispersals	#
Total:	1,720
Top 10 countries:	
Somalia	165
Iran	155
Congo Dem. Rep.	155
Eritrea	150
Pakistan	140
Zimbabwe	130
Angola	100
Afghanistan	70
Iraq	60
Ethiopia	50

Subsistence only	#
Total:	130
Top countries	
Zimbabwe	45
Afghanistan	10
Angola	10
Iran	10
China (Peop. Rep.)	5
Cameroon	5

Top ten industries of employment

April 2001	#	%
G. Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	55,394	17.2
D. Manufacturing	45,791	14.2
K. Real estate, renting and business activities	41,481	12.8
N. Health and social work	38,032	11.8
M. Education	27,475	8.5
J. Financial intermediation	21,047	6.5
I. Transport, storage and communications	20,931	6.5
F. Construction	20,491	6.3
H. Hotels and restaurants	15,659	4.9
O. Other community, social and personal service activities	15,469	4.8

Source: National Statistics 2001

Labour Market

Statistics suggest that over 50% of the asylum seekers in the region are of young working age, between 18 and 29 years old; a third are educated to degree level and many more have experience of work and experience of management and other skills. All the informants agree that skilled migrants and refugees could be used in sectors of the local paid labour market currently experiencing labour shortages. Many new migrants, mostly recruited in health and social care, have local networks before arriving in the area and already have a contract with local employers. They usually have good English, are educated and easily find a job. Polish workers are recruited by private agencies and take jobs English people do not want to do, such as night work and food processing..

However, there are important differences. On the one hand, skilled migrants, especially Polish, with good English and high degrees of education are recruited by private agencies and easily find jobs in health and social care. On the other, less skilled migrants are employed in food processing factories, for seasonal jobs (usually before Christmas).

Whilst the first group is reported to be more integrated and independent, the second group faces the major difficulties, since usually the employer also provides the accommodation. In the majority of cases, the end of the working contract coincides with the end of the letting contract. In both cases, exploitation and lower wages have been reported.

Local activities and developments

The council and local community have coped in different ways with this increase in migrant population. They have set up a number of initiatives and redirected their existing activities to promote successful communication between new arrivals and local residents and improving new arrivals' access to services. Some examples are:

- **SUNRISE** project – Strategic Update of National Refugee Integration Service. A new national scheme, currently developed as a pilot project. It involves case workers supporting new refugees to draw up a personal integration plan to help them obtain housing, employment and access services. Leeds is one of the pilot areas for the period from October 2005 to September 2007. The other city involved is Sheffield in a partnership involving the City Council and the Refugee Support..;
- **Accommodate** - the Refugee Housing Partnership Project aims to improve refugee access to decent housing. It develops and supports local partnerships,

mostly in areas of dispersal, which focus on improving the housing situations of refugees and which act as models of best practice to others. Greater mutual understanding will significantly contribute not only to better housing for refugees but also to inclusion and community safety. The Canopy project in Leeds offers refugees work, work experience and training in order to rehabilitate housing in a run down area of the city to provide homes for local residents;

- **Leeds GATE** (Gypsy and Traveller Exchange) and South Leeds Health for All to ensure that full time, permanent staff provide services for all Leeds Gypsies and Travellers;
- **Leeds Health Bus**, a first step towards medical care and support of Gypsies and Travellers;
- **Insight** programme: enables English teachers to visit and teach in conflict areas and come back with first hand experience of a country that is recovering from conflict. It also ensures that students can find out directly about the lives of other children and raise money to support them;
- **RETAS** (Refugee Education, Training and Advice Service of Education Action) which offers advice and guidance mainly to professional refugees also arranges for refugees living in the UK to talk in schools about their lives. It gives young people in the UK an opportunity to find out what it is like to be a refugee or an asylum seeker and breaks down some of the stereotypes associated with them.

However, some informants emphasized the major limitations faced by many service providers

- Lack of financial support for the majority of voluntary organisations, affecting both the current activities and the planning or extension of new ones;
- Absence of ad hoc projects for migrant workers, and absence of migrant communities both in the service provision and in the strategic partnership; whilst the refugee communities are very well represented;
- Lack of information about how to access services;
- Local people's perception: there is a lot of misunderstanding, the majority think the new arrivals will steal their jobs and their benefits;

Needs, gaps and priorities

More than one informant emphasized the role of media and the necessity to elaborate a local media strategy to deal with local misconceptions about new migrants and refugees. Many highlighted the necessity of greater community cohesion and the development of an integration scheme.

Housing and Advice

- Shortage of housing: migrants are more affected, and they are more likely to experience bad housing conditions;
- Majority of private landlords do not want to deal with both migrants and refugees;
- Many migrants and refugees do not report bad housing conditions (both in private and public accommodation) because they do not trust the system and fear the possible consequences. Poor access to and use of housing advice is often affected by the short period of residence in the area (because the migrant population may move on to other areas quickly);
- Beyond concerns about standards and suitability of accommodation, homelessness remains an issue for forced migrants. In 2003 Leeds Council received a total of 337 applications from people who recorded the cause of their homelessness as being a refugee. Three factors are important:
 - the demand for social rented property in Leeds outstrips supply;

- for many of those who receive a positive asylum decision, the 28 day transition period allowed for individuals to leave NASS accommodation proves to be insufficient to secure new housing;
- new migrants are ignored in this process.

English Language Courses

- Provision for ESOL has increased in recent years, though barriers to access remain. Most provision is organised around a term timetable. This means that there are significant periods of the year when clients cannot gain access to classes.
- Cuts in funding for ESOL classes will make the use of the service more difficult;

Employment and Advice

- There is no linkage between training centres and employment agencies;
- Different studies promoted the use of volunteering as a first step into work, but there is the necessity to strengthen the link between voluntary and employment agencies;
- It is difficult to get an overseas degree recognised via NARIC (National Academic Recognition Centres), a database that provides the UK equivalents of overseas qualifications;

Health

- GP's provision for destitute people is very low. There is no obligation for a doctor to care for or see these people – it depends on their discretion;
- There is a need for a fixed single access point for health care for new arrivals in the city centre, so people in need of help could go there without travelling all around the city;
- Increase budget to be used in language and interpreting support for GPs;

Destitution

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust commissioned a research report and inquiry into destitution among failed asylum seekers in Leeds. The research report found many destitute people, often relying on community, family or NGO support, but also facing extensive problems of isolation, health and exploitation. The accompanying Inquiry, chaired by Kate Adie OBE, issued a report “calling for a policy in which asylum seekers can contribute to society rather than rely on precarious handouts. They say that current approaches on refused asylum seekers fail both the 'soft-hearted' and the 'get tough' brigades, leaving the Government with an invisible population of destitute people. The report calls for changes to ensure:

- that the asylum claims process keeps people in the system, and does not drive them from it
- that asylum seekers can contribute to host communities whenever possible rather than being a burden to them
- that all asylum seekers have access to the basic necessities of life.”

Documents

- Connecting Housing, **Get Connected newsletter**
(http://www.theridingsha.org.uk/images/Get%20Connected%202006_-_02_-_Feb.pdf)

- Leeds North East Primary Care Trust (2004) **Guidance for using Interpreting and Translation Services**
- Pip Tyler, Khan Nahida (July 2006), **Funding for Refugee and Asylum Related Projects: Availability & Access**
- Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, **Regional Integration Strategy 2003-2006**, (http://www.yhassembly.gov.uk/p_contentDocs/308_2.pdf)
- Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, **Asylum Newsletter**, (<http://www.refugeeaccess.info/default.asp?step=4&pid=25>)
- Yorkshire Futures, **Newsletter** (<http://www.yorkshrefutures.com/cb.aspx?page=AD027763-B3B2-4AD5-AA53-E518BDA2B383>)
- Hannah Lewis (2007) **Destitution in Leeds** Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust <http://www.jrct.org.uk/text.asp?section=0001000200030006>