
SHEFFIELD

Yorkshire and Humberside

Recent population changes

Sheffield has a long tradition of refugee arrivals: Vietnamese and Chileans in the '70s and '80s, Kosovans in the '90s. After being designated an asylum dispersal area in 2001, new asylum seekers (who had hitherto lived in London and the south east and got accommodation and services there) were moved to Sheffield while waiting for their asylum application to be determined, and a considerable proportion of those granted refugee status chose to settle there. Larger groups included Somali, Iranian (Kurdish), Pakistani, and Yemeni. While the number of asylum applications is decreasing, the introduction of a new "local connection" requirement to homelessness legislation in 2004 meant that newly recognised refugees wishing to obtain housing under homelessness legislation acquired a "local connection" to the area to which they were dispersed, so many people who would have moved from the city have faced some pressure to remain. No information is currently available about failed asylum seekers, but according to voluntary sector informants the majority remain in the area where they have relatives.

The first Eastern European community in Sheffield were Polish ex-servicemen who came there after WW II. In the 1950s this community was joined by Hungarians. In the more recent past, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the accession of some eastern European states to the European Union in 2004 have resulted in an increase in the number of Poles and nationals of the Baltic States (especially Lithuanian) arriving in Sheffield. However, there is great concern among service providers about the reliability of the data available, since the new migrants are seen as very dynamic, and likely to leave the area if they find better job opportunities somewhere else. New migrants are not a homogenous group: there are predominantly young people from Poland and Baltic States, whilst from Czech and Slovak Republics there is also an increasing number of Romani families. Finally, many European Somali – Somali refugees with citizenship of their country of initial settlement, have moved to Sheffield, as well as to Leicester or Birmingham.

Statistics

Total population: 2001 (Census): 513,234; 2005 (Pop. Survey): 520,700

Non UK born: 2001 (Census)

Total: 32,604 (6.35%)

Top ten countries:

Pakistan	6.762
Jamaica	2.009
Ireland	1.996
Middle East (5)	1.920
India	1.744
Germany	1.464
Somalia	1.306
Bangladesh	1.018
Far East (2)	769
Malaysia	715

*Notes: (2) Other than China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore;
(5) Other than Cyprus, Iran, Iraq*

Source: Census 2001

Non 'white British' population: 2001 (Census): 55,506 (10.81%)

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

2002/03	#	2005/06	#
Total:	2,730	Total:	4,400
Top ten countries:		Top ten countries:	
Pakistan	290	Poland	600
Iraq	220	Slovak Rep	440
Zimbabwe	180	India	390
India	150	Pakistan	300
Somalia	150	China Peoples Rep	230
China Peoples Rep	140	Malaysia	190
Rep of Yemen	110	Rep of Lithuania	120
Iran	100	Iran	120
Philippines	80	Eritrea	120
Ghana	70	Zimbabwe	110

Number of refugee status granted in 2005: 240 (Source: Home Office)

Asylum seekers receiving NASS support (June 2006)

Dispersals	#	Subsistence only	#
Total:	970	Total:	65
Top 10 countries:		Top countries	
Somalia	100	Yemen	15
Iran	90	Somalia	10
Pakistan	90	Afghanistan	5
Yemen	80	Bangladesh	5
Zimbabwe	70	Congo	5
Congo D.R.	60	Eritrea	5
Eritrea	50		
Palestine	45		
Afghanistan	40		
Algeria	40		

Top ten industries of employment

April 2001	#	%
G. Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	36,962	16.9
D. Manufacturing	34,074	15.6
N. Health and social work	30,088	13.8
K. Real estate, renting and business activities	22,834	10.5
M. Education	20,841	9.5
F. Construction	15,787	7.2
I. Transport, storage and communications	12,778	5.8
L. Public administration and defence, social security	11,901	5.4
H. Hotels and restaurants	11,093	5.1
O. Other community, social and personal service activities	10,153	4.6

Source: National Statistics 2001

Labour Market

There is a high demand for migrant workers in the local food processing industry. Most are recruited in the country of origin and brought here by the employer who also provides accommodation. The majority of the positions are temporary, especially during the three or four months before Christmas or Easter. Some accommodation provided by employers has been the subject of a lot of criticism from different informants, especially in relation to hygiene and health and safety. Even this poor quality accommodation is lost after the contract expires, and workers are left alone. Many, especially those who come with families, face major destitution problems, since they are not then entitled to claim benefits. One informant reports begging by some Slovakian families in Tinsley.

The majority of new migrants are reported to be highly qualified with degrees especially in scientific subjects (engineering, physics, chemistry), but only a very small proportion find an adequate job, corresponding to their actual skills. Some are currently employed by local voluntary organisations to provide interpreting services, especially for health services. Similarly, many refugees are highly skilled and have worked in professional and technical sectors in their home countries, whilst others may have significant needs, including language support, and education and training. Both groups face exploitation and receive wages lower than the indigenous population. The unemployment rates for refugees are far higher than new migrants, but opportunities for volunteering have increased recently. There is a lack of support to move into employment and many are not aware of the options open to them. Improvements in the childcare support is essential for many women to access the labour market. Both groups need support when in work, especially regarding employee rights, the minimum wage and health and safety issues.

Many migrant workers move to other localities to find better jobs but still use the Sheffield area as a 'dormitory' because the accommodation there is cheaper.

Local activities and developments

The council and local community have coped in different ways with this increase in the migrant population. They have set up a number of initiatives and redirected their existing activities to promote the successful communication between new arrivals and local residents and improve access to services by new arrivals. 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 and employment and access services. Sheffield is one of the pilot areas for the period operating from October 2005 to September 2007. The major service provided is advice, in conjunction with the Northern Refugee Centre of Sheffield and the Refugee Support;
- **Gateway Protection Programme:** a partnership that under the auspices of UNHCR brings a modest number of refugees who urgently need help to the UK to start a new life. Sheffield was the first city in the UK to receive refugees under the programme, from areas of conflict in West Africa (Liberia and refugee camps in Ghana) in 2004 and Burma in 2005 and 2006. Nearly 70 people each year are settled in the city;
- **New Arrivals Project:** to enable newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers to access appropriate education, training and volunteering opportunities as soon as possible after their arrival and to work with education and training providers and other agencies to improve the quantity, quality, diversity and flexibility of the provision and opportunities available;

- **REACT** (Refugees Extending Awareness through Communication and Training), a project promoting positive images of refugees and asylum seekers and raising awareness of issues they face. They offer free training and awareness sessions to organisations such as schools, statutory and voluntary sector service providers, employers and community groups;

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;
- Lack of bridges: there is a good network between the service providers, but this network is missing between the services;
- Absence of ad hoc projects for migrant workers, absence of migrant communities both in the service provision and in the strategic partnership; whilst the refugee communities are very well represented;

Needs, gaps and priorities

Housing and Advice

- Shortage of housing: migrants are more affected, and they are also 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 accommodations) because they do not trust the system and fear the possible consequences. Poor access to and understanding of housing advice is often affected by the short period of stay in the area (because of the dynamic migrant population);
- Landlords may also be employers and accommodation is frequently tied to a particular employer;

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;
- It is difficult to keep people in class: many students leave courses before they end;
- Lack of provision over the long summer break is a particular concern;
- Cutting funding for ESOL classes will make the use of the service more difficult;
- Gap in the interpreting service in the request process: there is no front-office where people can drop-in and ask for help. The majority rely on relatives or friends.

Employment and Advice

- Highly skilled people are working in low profile positions because their English is poor or there is no connection between training centres and employment agencies;
- The majority of job training is related to low-profile positions (builders, drivers), people with higher skills struggle to match their abilities and expectations with existing opportunities;
- Need to refresh the policy on access to work. Some organisations are providing both training and English classes, but a link with local employers is missing;

- Need to work on immigration legal advice, and offer advice about rights and duties, wages, benefits and other services.

In general all the informants reported gaps related to funding. An increased budget would enable more staff to be employed and consequently better service provision. In all areas the services provided for women are very poor: There is a lack of organisations providing child care and crèches and this affects the real opportunity for women to work, study and volunteer. Finally, there is the need to enhance local integration: EU migrants are reported to be more culturally similar to the British population, whilst refugees are 'different' and for them it is difficult to understand British system. The limited housing provision and the relative pressure on public services have created misunderstandings and antagonism between the local population and new migrants and new migrants and established refugee communities. A key informant emphasised the role of local and national media on this issue. There is a necessity to enhance the public perception of the positive contribution of new arrivals (both refugees and migrant workers) and a reduction in prejudice against people who look 'different'. On the other hand, different informants reported good relationships between established migrants community and new arrivals from the some country (e.g., Poles).

Documents

- Meridien, (2006), **Community Profile: Eastern European**
- Meridien, (2006), **Community Profile: Kurdish**
- Owen McDowell, Asylum Team, Sheffield City Council, (2005) **SUNRISE: A New Start for Refugees**
- Pip Tyler, Khan Nahida (July 2006), **Funding for Refugee and Asylum Related Projects: Availability & Access**
- Sheffield Refugee Forum, (2005), **Sheffield's Refugee Integration Strategy 2005-2008**
- 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.yorkshirefutures.com/cb.aspx?page=AD027763-B3B2-4AD5-AA53-E518BDA2B383>)