New Scots 2 - Engagement analysis of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 to 2022

EQUALITY AND WELFARE

social
research

News Scots 2 – Engagement analysis of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 to 2022

Clare Hammond

Associate Director

Rocket Science UK Ltd

June 2018

Contents

Executive summary

Introduction

Between May and November 2017, the Scottish Government ran an engagement process to inform Scotland's second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (New Scots 2). Its aim was to gather views from a wide range of stakeholders, including refugees and asylum seekers.

The Scottish Government developed, in partnership with COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council, an engagement facilitation guide, enabling community groups and organisations to arrange their own engagement events. The engagement asked three broad and open-ended questions about what issues regarding refugee integration in Scotland are important to respondents now, what changes they want to see by 2020, and what they, their community or organisation can contribute to that change.

The aim of this report is to present an analysis of the whole range of views expressed by the 94 submitted responses to the engagement. While the questions did not ask specifically about the seven themes of the New Scots Strategy, the issues raised by the responses were well captured by the seven New Scots themes: each New Scots theme was commented upon by at least every second response, and four out of seven New Scots themes were commented upon by a large majority of responses.

The key messages from the responses are detailed below.

Needs of asylum seekers

Most responses made comments in relation to the needs of asylum seekers, ranging from concerns about the length of the asylum process, the current process for dispersal and the restrictions for asylym seekers to work. Most of these issues raised, however, concern matters reserved to the UK Government.

Employability and Welfare Rights

Many responses highlighted the perceived barriers to employment that refugees face, ranging from their low English language skills to a lack of recognition of their prior qualifications. This was important to responses as they highlighted refugees and asylum seekers' desire to work.

Housing

The majority of responses emphasised the fact that housing is an important topic for refugees and asylum seekers, particularly the quality and location of housing/accomodation.

Education

The majority of responses made comments about the educational offers for refugees and asylum seekers and emphasised the importance of quick access to nursery provision as well as school, college and higher education.

Language

A large majority of responses highlighted the importance of "language" in the integration process of refugees and asylum seekers, ranging from having quick access to ESOL classes, to interpreters and provision of information in their first language.

Health and Wellbeing

A large majority of responses raised points in relation to the health needs of refugees and asylum seekers (particularly concerns around mental health and trauma) and the importance for them to have a quick access to health services.

Communities, Culture and Social Connections

Considering the social isolation that some refugees and asylum seekers experience, a large majority of responses emphasised the importance for refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into their local communities, understand Scottish culture and build social connections.

Poverty and Destitution

In addition to points raised in relation to any of the seven New Scots themes, many responses drew attention to the poverty and destitution that refugees and asylum seekers, particularly refused asylum seekers, can experience.

Other issues

A number of other issues were raised which were either beyond the scope of the New Scots strategy or did not directly relate to a single New Scots theme - these issues included:

- The importance of family reunion for refugees and asylum seekers
- The level of racism and discrimination experienced by refugees and asylum seekers
- The suggestion that refugees and asylum seekers should be provided with discounted or free travel passes
- The perception of a "two-tier" system, i.e. the perceived difference in service provision for refugees who have come to Scotland through the Syrian Resettlement Programme and those who came via a different route and are going through the asylum system
- The importance of further service development for refugees and asylum seekers, ranging from staff training to service integration
- The way in which particular population groups, ranging from female asylum seekers to LGBTI asylum seekers, are affected by particular sets of issues.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Between May and November 2017, the Scottish Government ran an engagement process to inform Scotland's second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (New Scots 2). Its aim was to gather views from a wide range of stakeholders, including refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, initial engagement took place at the "Scotland Welcomes Refugees" conference, held in November 2016.

The Scottish Government developed an engagement facilitation guide, in partnership with COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council. This enabled community groups and organisations to arrange their own engagement events. This allowed discussion and group feedback in a setting that was familiar and accessible to the respondents. 94 engagement events were held across Scotland.

The engagement asked broad and open-ended questions, ensuring that participants were able to raise the issues that were most important to them. The questions were:

- Thinking about refugee integration in Scotland, what issues are important to you now?
- What changes do you want to see by 2020 and why?
- What can you, your community or your organisation do to contribute to that change?
- Any final comments?

Rocket Science UK Ltd was commissioned by the Scottish Government to analyse the engagement responses and report on the findings.

Background to New Scots 2

Scotland's New Scots approach aims to support refugees, asylum seekers[1] and the communities they settle in.

The development of New Scots 2 follows on from the three-year strategy "New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities" that was launched in December 2013. Recognising significant changes in Scotland affecting refugee integration since the first strategy, the planning of New Scots 2 started in late 2016. This included engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and New Scots partners during the "Scotland Welcomes Refugees" conference in November 2016.

The new strategy - "New Scots: refugee integration strategy 2018 to 2022" - was published in January 2018. Its vision is for a "welcoming Scotland where refugees and asylum seekers are able to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive". There are five principles underlying New Scots 2:

- Integration from Day One
- A rights based approach
- Refugee involvement
- Inclusive communities
- Partnership and collaboration.

In addition, New Scots 2 set the following four outcomes:

- Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections.

- Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.

- Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.

- Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.[2]

---

[1] The 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it."

An asylum seeker, or person seeking asylum, is someone who has applied to be recognised as a refugee.

[2] Scottish Government (2018), New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 – 2022. Accessed at: http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0053/00530097.pdf.

These four outcomes will be achieved through the work of seven groups that cover the seven themes of New Scots 2:

- Needs of Asylum Seekers
- Employability and Welfare Rights
- Housing
- Education
- Language
- Health and Wellbeing
- Communities, Culture and Social Connections.

The findings of this engagement analysis will inform the work of the different theme groups. New Scots 2 can only cover the aspects of refugee integration that are devolved to the Scottish Government and cannot directly address issues which are outside the scope of the Scottish Government, Scottish local authorities and other Scottish organisations.

However, in analysing the responses to the engagement, we have covered all the issues being raised, regardless of whether they fall under reserved or devolved powers.

Methodology

This section outlines the methodology of the research, analysis and reporting process.

Rocket Science was sent the 92 responses that were submitted through Citizenspace in an Excel format. The notes from the 2016 conference were also provided in an Excel format. The remaining organisational response was provided in a pdf format. All responses were uploaded onto NVivo for analysis.

NVivo is a qualitative analysis programme enabling the coding of responses into categories and sub-categories ("nodes" and "sub-nodes"). After reviewing 27 responses, a coding framework – outlining the different categories to which responses could be coded – was developed and agreed with the Scottish Government. All submitted responses were coded using this framework. Once all the responses had been coded, the coding framework was further refined, establishing precise categories as the basis for the reporting stage.

The engagement asked three questions (see the beginning of Chapter 1), the responses to which formed the basis of the analysis. However, respondents often raised similar points across all questions, so the analysis did not follow a strict question by question approach. Instead, the responses were coded in relation to the analytical categories of the coding framework, accounting for the fact that particular categories cut across answers to different questions. Hence, the analysis builds on the answers to the three engagement questions but is not constrained by them.

In analysing the responses, account was taken of the broad range of opinions expressed, while still providing viewpoints with the necessary level of detail. When interpreting the findings of this report, however, it is important to consider that the views gathered in an open engagement analysis cannot be regarded as representative of the population as a whole.

When discussing the prevalence of certain views across different engagement responses, the following terms are used to indicate the proportion of engagement responses that raised this point:

- "Few" means between 5 and 9%
- "Some" means between 10 and 19%
- "Many" means between 20 and 49%
- "Most" or "majority" means 50 to 74%
- "Large majority" or "broad agreement" means 75 to 89%
- "Consensus" means 90% or more.

In this report, the whole range of views expressed by responses is explored. The report does not provide any recommendations about how to respond to the findings of the engagement analysis. The viewpoints expressed in this report were submitted in the engagement responses and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Scottish Government, COSLA, the Scottish Refugee Council, or other New Scots partners.

Report structure

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 outlines the profile of those who responded to the engagement, including the dates of the engagement events and the demographic characteristics of attendants to the events
- Chapter 3 presents the needs of asylum seekers
- Chapter 4 describes the views on asylum seekers' employability and welfare rights
- Chapter 5 describes the housing issues being faced by refugees and asylum seekers
- Chapter 6 describes the education issues being faced by refugees and asylum seekers
- Chapter 7 describes the language issues being faced by refugees and asylum seekers
- Chapter 8 describes the health and wellbeing issues being faced by refugees and asylum seekers
- Chapter 9 presents the views on the impact on and implication for communities, culture and social connections
- Chapter 10 Sets out the views on the risks of poverty and destitution

- Chapter 11 presents the other issues which were raised
- The appendix sets out the list of organisations that contributed to the engagement.

Chapter 2 Profile of responses

This chapter sets out an analysis of those who participated in the engagement. Alongside the main engagement questions, respondents were asked to provide the location and date of their event, as well as information about the demographic make-up of participants. This included the presence of participants with protected characteristics, the types of services present, total number of participants, and the name of the event's host organisation. This chapter is an analysis of this information.

2.1 Total participation and events

A total of 94 sources were included in the engagement analysis. The majority of sources were responses which captured discussion during one-off engagement events. However, some chose to hold more than one event, while others chose to supplement their answers with previous research and surveys. Of the total of the 94 sources considered in this analysis:

- Six were "organisational responses", meaning no event was held, and no participation figures were available. This includes a non-standard organisational response that did not answer the questions.

- One response was from an individual who had carried out interviews with refugees and asylum seekers over the phone.

- Seven responses were based on two engagement events.

- 80 responses were based on a single engagement event; this includes the 2016 conference.

At least 701 refugees and asylum seekers were present during engagement events. The actual number is likely to be significantly higher since numerous responses did not specify the exact number of refugees and/or asylum seekers present during these events.

The total number of participants recorded was 2,046. The actual figure is also likely to be higher as six responses did not provide information about the number of contributors.

The average number of people participating in the engagement events was 22[3], but the number of participants per event varied considerably, ranging from 1 to 170 people. However, 30% of responses reported between 1 and 10 participants contributing overall, another 34%, between 11 and 20 participants[4]. Three responses reported over 100 participants at their events[5].

Figure 1 – The number of participants represented per response

64% of responses were based on engagements with between 1 and 20 participants
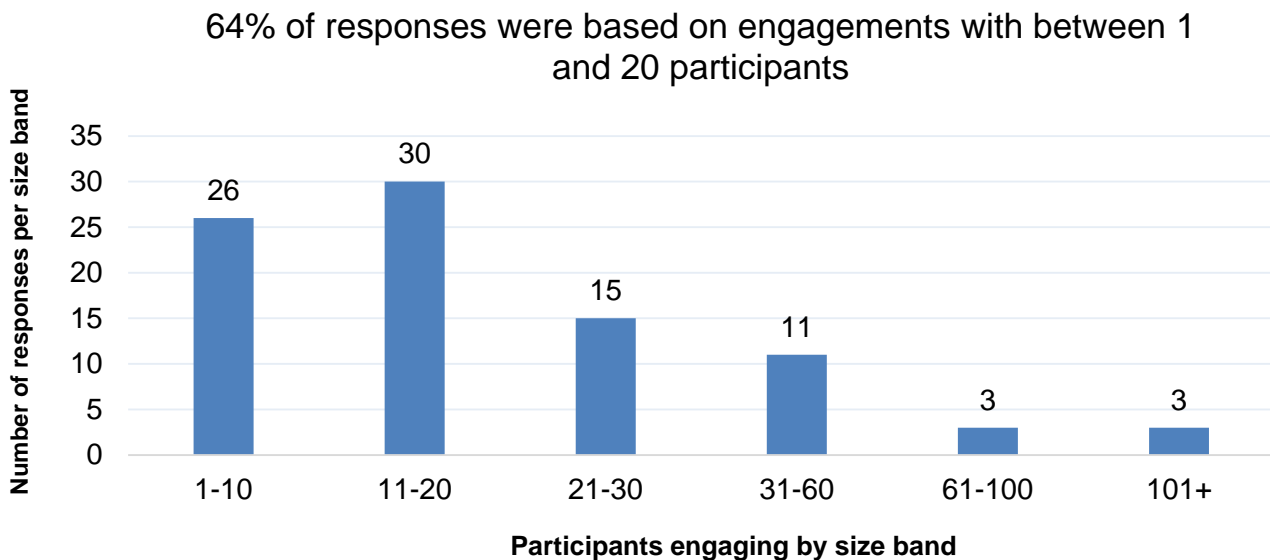
2.2 Geographical distribution of events

Figure 2 overleaf shows that responses were clustered around the central belt of Scotland, particularly around Glasgow and Edinburgh. This reflects the clustering of services relating to refugees and asylum seekers in these areas, and the size of the refugee and asylum seeker populations in the central belt. However, a number of responses did come from outwith this region, including in Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen and Inverness.

The number of participants contributing to a response did not appear to follow any particular pattern, with differently sized events and responses distributed across Scotland. One of the largest engagment events was hosted by the Scottish Refugee Council in Inverurie, outwith the central belt.

---

[3] This figure has been calculated by dividing the total number of engagement events held, by the total recorded participant numbers. It does not include the organisational responses as these did not have participant numbers or host events.

[4] The term "responses", rather than "engagement events", is used here because some responses stated that they held multiple events, but not how many were at each. Thus size bands are only known for responses not engagement events. Organisational responses were included and represented as "N/A" for size band.

[5] The three responses with over 100 participants all stated that they held only one event, thus it is possible to report for *events* rather than responses.

Figure 2 - Map of Scotland displaying the distribution of responses, colour coded by size band of participants contributing [Source: Rocket Science analysis of Scottish Government data and use of Google Fusion tables]
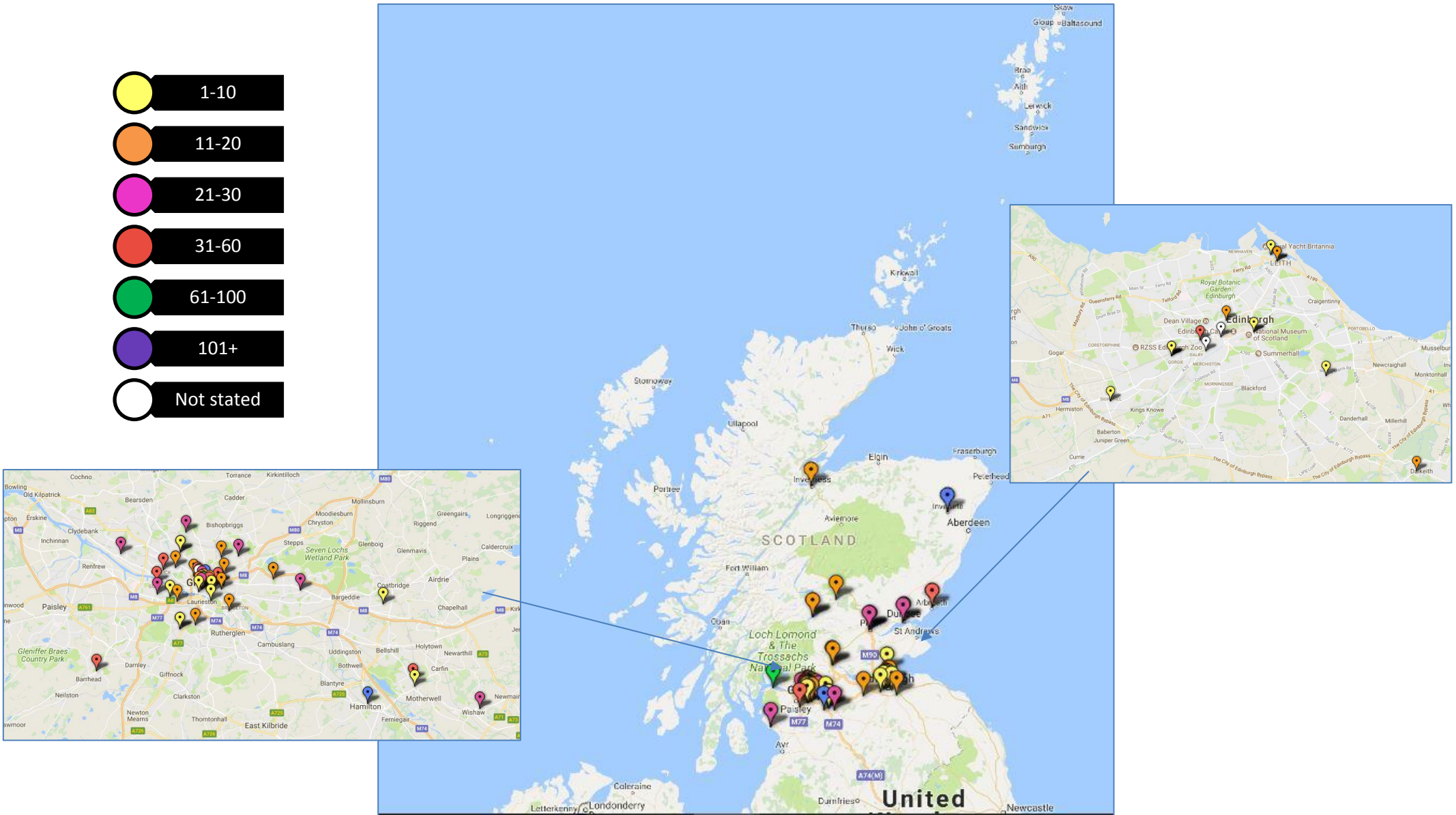
2.3 Event period

Engagement events took place during the engagement period outlined by the Scottish Government (June to September 2017), with over 80% hosted in August or September 2017. Events shown outwith this period were either pilot engagement events/responses, or correspond to the initial conference in December 2016.

Figure 3 – The timing during which the events took place

82% of engagement events took place between August and September 2017
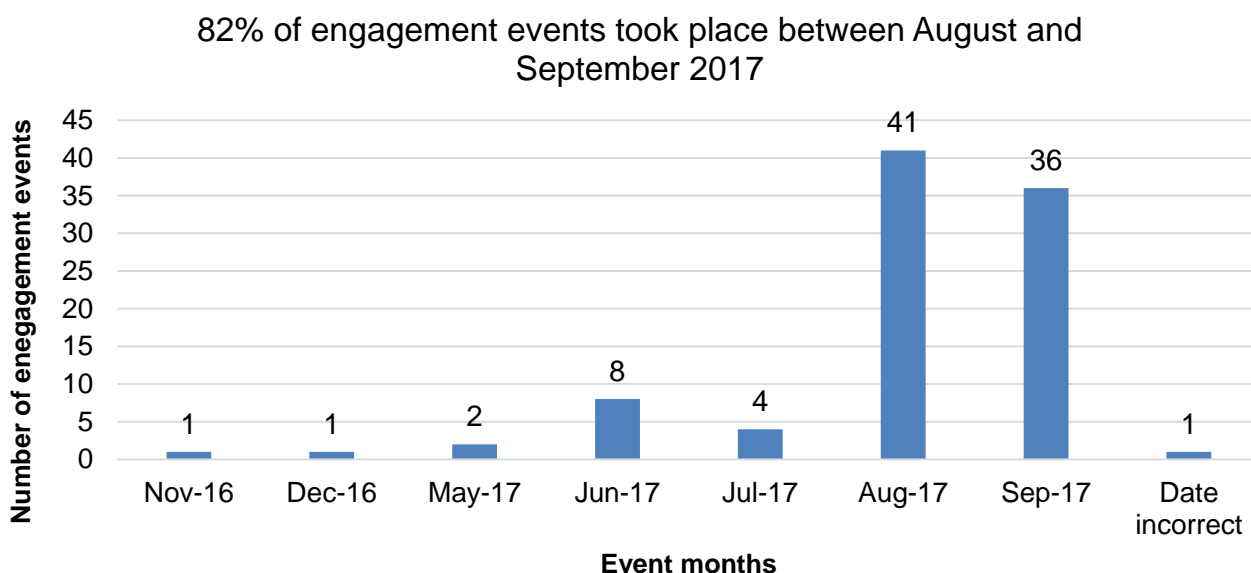
2.4 Demographic profile of events and types of service present

Most responses specified who were at each event against a range of different categories. Almost all events had people with a number of different characteristics present, and included variations in age, gender and profession. This allows a description of the profile of people contributing to responses, but it is not possible to provide precise numbers of particular groups, as this was not provided consistently across responses.

Refugees and/or asylum seekers contributed to more than two thirds of responses (72%), with refugees or people with another form of humanitarian protection status[6] (68%) contributing more often than asylum seekers, who contributed to just over a third of responses (36%) (see Figure 4 overleaf).

---

[6] Some people may be granted humanitarian protection by the UK Government where they are found not to be a refugee under the Refugee Convention but nevertheless require protection. UK Government policy on humanitarian protection meets international obligations under EU law by providing protection reflecting the subsidiary protection provisions of the Qualification Directive (2004//83/EC).

Figure 4 – The number and percentage of responses involving refugees or persons with a protection status, and persons seeking asylum[7]

Refugees and/or asylum seekers contributed to the majority of responses

Participants categorised by protection status
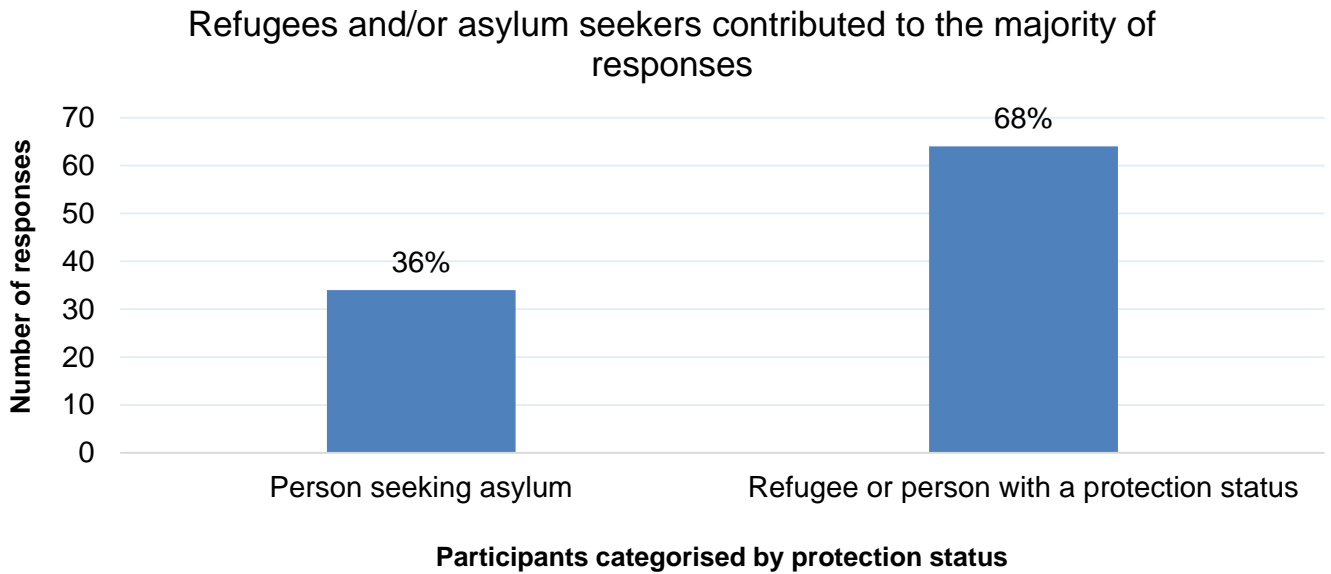
It was common for responses to include people of different ages and genders. Some engagement events/responses had a specific focus, such as young people or women, but most had a mixture of contributing voices.

Figure 5 – The percentage of responses where particular genders and age groups contributed[8]

Both men and women tended to contribute to each response. Almost half of responses included young people, and almost a quarter engaged those aged 65 and over


---
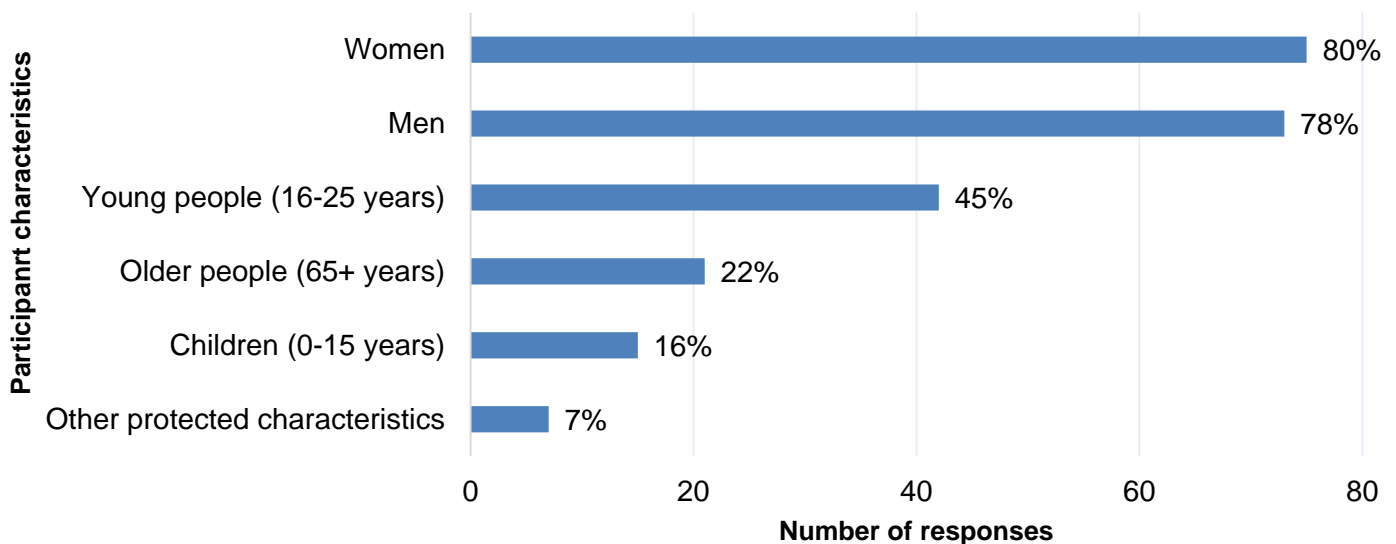
[7] As there were numerous responses to which both asylum seekers and refugees or person with a protection status contributed, the percentage numbers in Figure 4 do not add up to 100%.

[8] Since the responses were based on engagement events that were attended by participants with different demographic characteristics, the percentage numbers in Figure 5 do not add up to 100%.

The majority of responses had representatives from a number of different professional sectors contributing. The third sector was well represented, with 40% of responses including a charity employee or volunteer, and 24% stating that members of a voluntary group contributed. Almost a third of responses (31%) included members of the host community (members of the public who are not refugees or asylum seekers). Local authority representatives contributed to around a quarter of all responses (24%), and other public sector representatives contributed to 20%. 18% of people were classified as "Other", including organisational responses and academics.

Figure 6 – The percentage of events at which members of particular groups were present

Of all sectors recorded, charity employees or volunteers were most frequently represented; business and private sector representatives were the least common
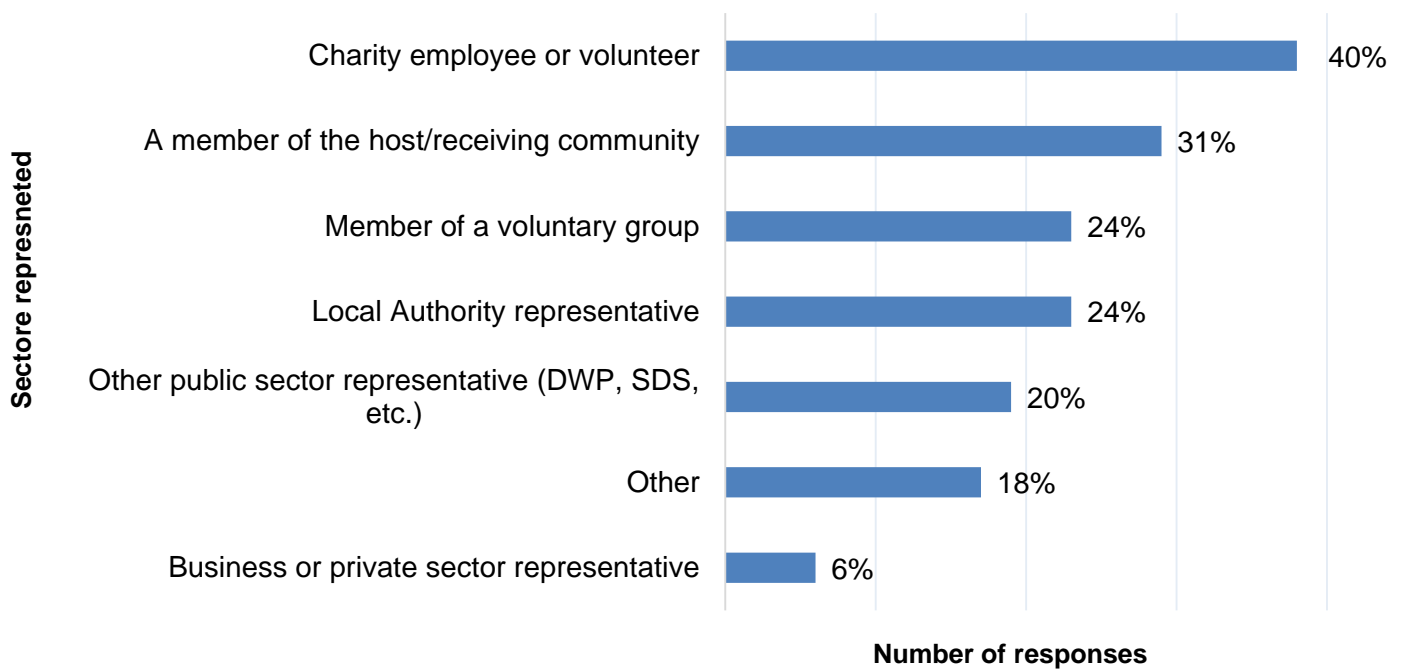
People representing organisations were asked to specify whether they currently worked directly with refugees, planned or coordinated services for refugees, or did not work with refugees yet. Nearly half of responses (47%) engaged at least one member of a frontline service working with refugees, and just over a third of responses (34%) included someone from a service that planned/coordinated refugee services. 7% of responses had services contributing that were not yet involved in working with refugees.
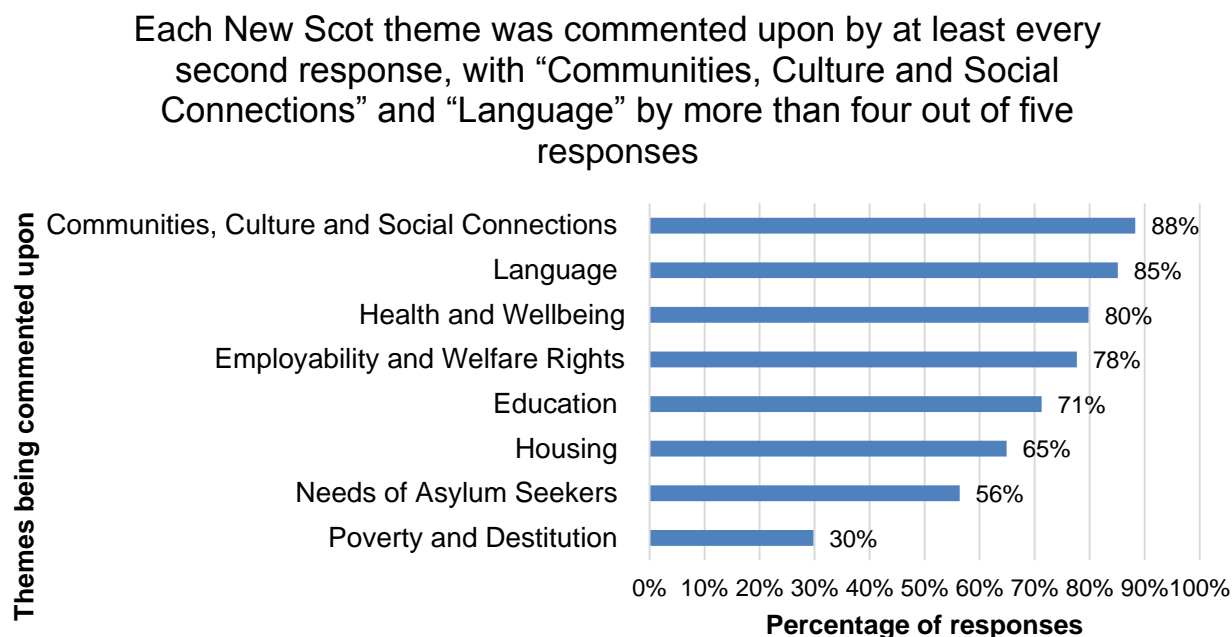
Figure 7 – The types of services present at events

Almost half of responses included services providing direct support to refugees
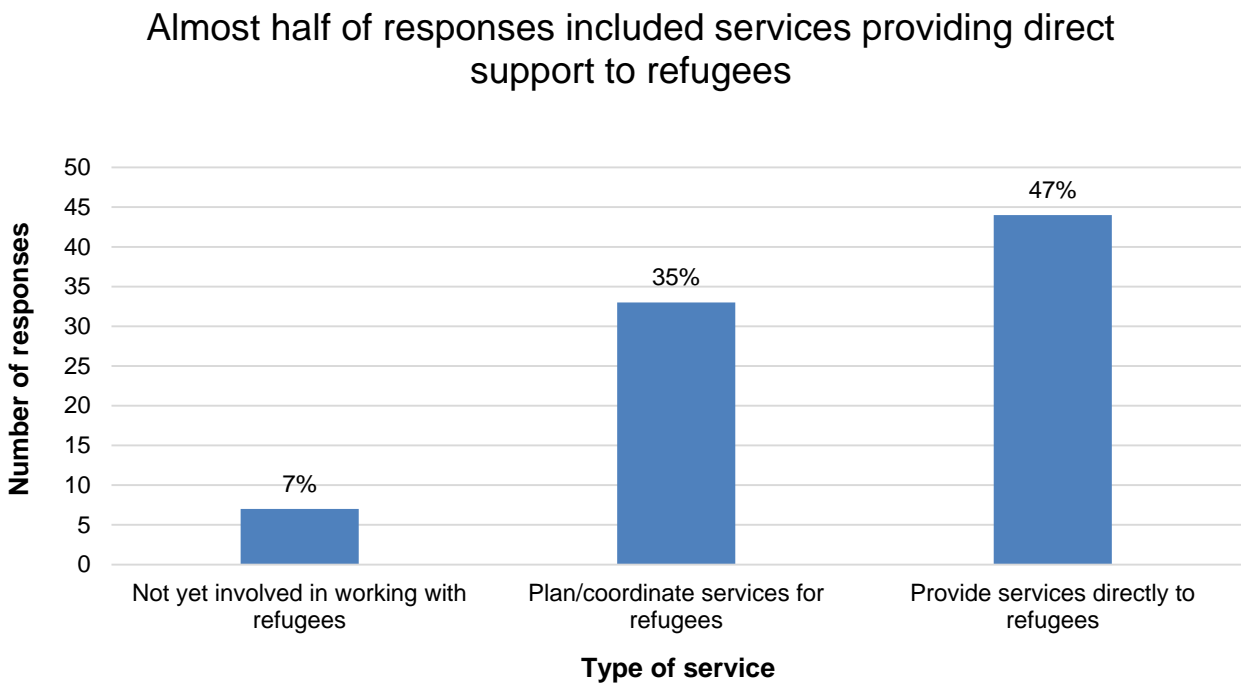
2.5 Overview of prevalence of the different New Scots themes among responses

Figure 8 provides an overview of the proportion of responses that commented on the different New Scot themes (ie issues that fall under the different New Scots themes) and the theme of poverty and destitution.

Figure 8 – The proportion of responses commenting on different themes

Each New Scot theme was commented upon by at least every second response, with "Communities, Culture and Social Connections" and "Language" by more than four out of five responses

Although the engagement did not ask specifically about the different New Scots themes, each New Scots theme was commented upon by at least every second response. This shows that the seven New Scots themes capture what is important to refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland.

The New Scots theme commented upon most often was Communities, Culture and Social Connections, with 88% of responses commenting on it. Three other New Scots themes were commented upon by a large majority of repsonses: Language (85%), Health and Wellbeing (80%) and Employability and Welfare Rights (78%).

The New Scots theme commented upon least often was Needs of Asylum Seekers, yet still more than half (56% of responses) raised points in relation to this. While this theme covers issues that affect asylum seekers only, all the other themes cover issues that affect both refugees and asylum seekers. As such, the slightly lower proportion of responses commenting specifically on the Needs of Asylum Seekers as compared to the other themes does not mean that responses considered the needs of asylum seekers to be less important than the other New Scots themes. Instead, it is likely to be a reflection of this theme focusing on a particular group (ie asylum seekers) as opposed to a particular issue (eg housing).

Many responses raised points in relation refugees and asylum seekers' experience of poverty and destitution.

Chapter 3 Needs of asylum seekers

This chapter covers the views in different responses about issues that are affecting asylum seekers only. However, it should be noted that the other chapters also contain issues that are of relevance to asylum seekers. Asylum is reserved to the UK Government, this includes asylum application decisions and the provision of asylum accommodation and asylum support. However, many of the essential services which support asylum seekers living in Scotland are devolved.

Most responses provided comments in relation to the needs of asylum seekers. The following points were raised:

- The asylum process
- The dispersal process
- Asylum seekers restricted from working
- Support and information about asylum seekers' rights and entitlements
- Financial support for asylum seekers
- Refused asylum seekers
- Preference for cash over cards or vouchers.

Each of these points is covered in more detail below.

3.1 The asylum process

Many responses made comments regarding the asylum claim process:

- Responses highlighted that it currently takes too long for asylum claims to be processed, and that decisions regarding asylum claims should be made faster. The difficulty of waiting for a decision during a pending asylum claim was emphasised, making it impossible for asylum seekers to plan for the future.
- Asylum seekers' fear of being detained was raised. It was suggested that there should be no more detention by 2020 and that community-based alternatives to detention centres should be established across Scotland.
- It was suggested that asylum seekers should be able to submit their asylum claims at regional offices in Scotland instead of Croydon or Liverpool.
- The 28-day "move-on" period during which newly recognised refugees still receive asylum support, as they transition to mainstream benefits or secure work, was regarded as too short as it potentially led refugees into destitution. Responses suggested that this period should be extended.

3.2 Asylum seekers restricted from working

Many responses raised issues about asylum seekers restriction from working, and emphasised that asylum seekers should have the right to work.

- They highlighted that asylum seekers want to contribute to society and the Scottish economy. Considering the high skill set of many asylum seekers, it was suggested that the current restrictions to work reduce the potential benefits to the Scottish economy.

- The importance of work for asylum seekers' self-worth and self-confidence was highlighted. More generally, being able to work was seen as enabling integration.

3.3 The dispersal process

Many responses commented on the dispersal process through which asylum seekers are distributed throughout the UK. Currently, Glasgow is the only asylum dispersal area in Scotland.

- More generally, the need for "building community cohesion in dispersal areas" was emphasised. There was a perception that dispersal areas were often in deprived neighbourhoods. More generally, it was felt that asylum seekers were subject to racism in some of the dispersal areas. Responses highlighted the need to engage with communities before, during and after asylum seekers are dispersed to these areas.

- It was also suggested that the dispersal should be more widespread.

- Responses highlighted the need for asylum seekers to be required to move less often. Staying in one area for longer would allow asylum seekers to get to know the area better, build lasting connections and, as such, enhance their integration process.

- These points were also raised by three responses from engagement events outside Glasgow.

3.4 Support and information about asylum seekers' rights and entitlements

Some responses included the need for asylum seekers to be better informed about their rights and entitlements. This includes more accessible information:

- About the asylum process, and who does what during the process.

- The kind of services – ranging from health, education to employability services – that asylum seekers can access.

3.5 Financial support for asylum seekers

Some responses raised issues in relation to the financial support provided to asylum seekers. It was suggested that the £37.75 weekly allowance provided by the National Asylum Suport Service (NASS) is not enough to meet a person's basic needs such as transport, food and clothing.

3.6 Refused asylum seekers

A few responses raised points in relation to refused asylum seekers, including:

- The need to acknowledge refused asylum seekers in New Scots 2.
- The danger of becoming destitute because of losing the financial and accommodation support provided by the Home Office.

3.7 Preference for cash over cards or vouchers

A few responses highlighted a preference for asylum seekers to receive their benefits as cash as opposed to a card (the ASPEN card):

- Experiences were recalled where asylum seekers felt embarrassed about paying with their ASPEN card in a shop, since this revealed that they were asylum seekers and this could lead to stigmatisation.
- Furthermore, it was felt that Section 4 claimants (refused, destitute asylum seekers that applied for temporary support under the Section 4 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1999) should equally be able to withdraw cash with their ASPEN card. Not being able to withdraw cash was regarded as significantly limiting their ability to integrate as, for example, they would be unable to buy bus tickets. One participant put it the following way: "People need cash to self-manage, not cards that limit what they can buy."
- One response noted that giving vouchers to refugees and asylum seekers is inappropriate as it limits what can be bought and they can expire.

Chapter 4 Employability and Welfare Rights

A large majority of responses raised points in relation to the New Scots 2 theme of "Employability and Welfare Rights". The following points were raised:

- Barriers to employment

- Limited employment opportunities

- Benefits

- Access to further education and training opportunities

- More support on the pathway to employment.

Each of these points will be explored in further detail below.

4.1 Barriers to employment

Asylum seekers are restricted from working while their application is being considered (except in limited specific circumstances.) Many responses outlined a number of potential barriers to work that refugees face:

- Responses highlighted the need for better mechanisms to be put in place to help employers recognise the prior experience and qualifications of refugees.

- As a result of a lack of conversion courses through which refugees could get their previous qualifications recognised, they face the risk of being employed in lower skilled employment.

- It was highlighted that refugees' level of English often acts as a barrier to employment. Considering this, responses highlighted the possibility of combining language learning with skills development – an issue further explored in Chapter 6.

- Considering the points above, it was felt that recruitment procedures should adapt to the specific circumstances refugees find themselves in, including their broken employment histories and language skills. For example, it was felt that the English language requirements for jobs involving manual labour are too high, and that skills should be assessed through practical exams instead of using interviews in English. In addition, asking for evidence of prior qualifications or past academic achievements was regarded as insensitive, considering the circumstances in which many asylum seekers and refugees had fled from conflict.

4.2 Limited employment opportunities

Many responses raised the point that refugees are curently faced with limited employment opportunities and that they should be able to access more and better employment:

- Responses raised the importance of skilled employment being accessible for refugees. They highlighted that refugees often end up doing unskilled labour due to a lack of available opportunities. Refugees want to apply their skill-set and work in the fields in which they are trained.

- Responses suggested that employers could have a quota to employ a certain number of refugees and/or people with a minority ethnic background.

- It was felt that the regulations of how working affects benefits should be applied more flexibly for refugees taking into account their specific circumstances.

- It was furthermore highlighted that the destitution situation in which some asylum seekers and refugees find themselves meant that they were more vulnerable to illegal practices or exploitative employment to cover their basic needs.

4.3 Benefits

Many responses raised issues about welfare benefits:

- Responses felt that the value of Jobseekers Allowance that unemployed refugees receive is not enough to meet their basic needs. In a similar vein, it was highlighted that refugees require further financial support to pay their bills.

- It was felt that current benefit processes take too long and that they should be more streamlined, ensuring that refugees get quicker access to benefits.

- Responses suggested that the welfare and benefit system is difficult to understand for refugees, and that they should receive further advice and information about how to navigate the benefits system. This is an issue further explored in Chapter 8. In addition, responses highlighted that many refugees were not clear about how their benefits are affected if they start working.

- It was felt that the current processes at the Jobcentre are too stringent considering refugees' life circumstances and their level of English. It was suggested that there should be separate processes for refugees at the Jobcentre.

4.4 Access to further education and training opportunities

Most responses highlighted that refugees and asylum seekers would like to be able to have access to more further education and training opportunities, including:

- Vocational training and/or apprenticeships in different careers. It was emphasised that the number of apprenticeships should be expanded, especially for people who are older.

- Internships, work experience, work shadowing and employee-led mentoring schemes so that asylum seekers and refugees can develop their skills and learn about the local labour market.

- Volunteering was seen as an opportunity to facilitate language learning and integration, and for asylum seekers to use their skills. More generally, volunteering was considered to be leading refugees and asylum seekers onto the pathway to employment. It was emphasised that refugees and asylum seekers should be given early access to such opportunities.

4.5 More support on the pathway to employment

Many responses raised the point that refugees would like to have more support on their pathway to employment:

- It was suggested that refugees don't necessarily know where to look for jobs and that they would like to have more guidance on how and where to find work.

- It was highlighted that refugees should receive more employability advice such as CV writing workshops and interview training. In addition, responses emphasised the need for refugees to be provided with a better understanding of current labour market demand and the skills needed to apply for these jobs. It was also suggested that university career services could be extended to refugees.

- Responses suggested that refugees should receive more support about how to set up their own business.

Chapter 5 Housing

The majority of responses raised points about the housing of refugees and asylum seekers, including:

- Adequate housing supply

- Housing maintenance and communication

- Location of housing

- Preparing host communities

- Quality and appropriateness of housing.

Each of these points is explored in more detail below.

5.1 Adequate housing supply

Some responses included comments about the current housing stock for refugees and asylum seekers:

- It was felt that the current accommodation supply for asylum seekers is insufficient

- It was suggested that accommodation for asylum seekers should be provided more quickly

- Responses suggested a number of ways of increasing the housing supply for both refugees and asylum seekers – ranging from using empty properties to a stronger involvement of the private rental sector.

5.2 Communication with housing providers

Some responses covered points about communication with housing providers:

- Responses recalled that some asylum seekers have had positive experiences with their housing officer who was responsive and helped them in dealing with maintenance issues

- Other responses, however, highlighted that some refugees and asylum seekers don't know who to approach if they experience problems with their housing and so they find it difficult to get problems with their housing resolved.

- Responses indicated that refugees and asylum seekers would like to have more information about their housing rights and entitlements.

5.3 Location of housing

Many responses made comments about where refugees and asylum seekers are housed:

- Responses noted that many asylum seekers are housed far away from the city centre. As a result, asylum seekers may struggle to get access to resources (e.g. halal food), facilities (e.g. places of worship) and services (e.g. both statutory and third sector services) that are essential for their integration process. Being accommodated far away from the city centre was regarded as particularly problematic given that asylum seekers' weekly allowance of £37.75 is insufficient to afford local transport – a point covered in more detail in Chapter 11.

- This was paired with a perception that asylum seekers are often housed in deprived communities in Glasgow. Considering the host communities' own levels of high deprivation, it was felt that they would be more likely to be hostile towards asylum seekers. Responses recalled incidences of asylum seekers having been exposed to drug use, crime and burglaries in their local areas. In this context, the importance for asylum seekers to be housed in "safe and secure accommodation" was highlighted. The importance of feeling safe in their neighbourhood was raised by two women-only groups at different consultation events.

- Considering all the points above, responses also indicated that refugees and asylum seekers would like to have a choice of where to live.

- It was also highlighted that refugees and asylum seekers should be accommodated in mixed communities to prevent ghettoization.

5.4 Preparing host communities and neighbourhoods

Some responses emphasised the need to better prepare the host communities (i.e. the neighbourhoods in which refugees and asylum seekers will be housed), for the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers. It was felt that raising awareness of refugees' and asylum seekers' difficult circumstances, and the reasons why they had to leave their home countries, has the potential to make the host communities more accommodating and welcoming towards refugees and asylum seekers – a point further explored in Chapter 9. In this vein, one response highlighted the need to "address the impression that asylum seekers and refugees get better provision, e.g. housing, than local communities".

5.5 Quality and appropriateness of housing

Many responses made comments about the quality and appropriateness of housing for refugees and asylum seekers:

- Responses raised concerns about the standards of housing for refugees and asylum seekers, and emphasised the importance of accommodating them in good quality housing.

- There was a particular concern about the lack of adequate housing for large families, who often end up being accommodated in housing too small for their families. They then have to wait a long time for suitable accommodation.

- It was suggested that refugee families should be provided with basic furniture when they move into permanent accommodation.

- Responses felt that it can be inappropriate for asylum seekers to be in shared accommodation, given that asylum seekers often come from different backgrounds and cultures. A specific example was that it can be difficult for LGBTI asylum seekers to be housed with another asylum seeker who may be homophobic. It was suggested that the specific needs of different asylum seekers should be taken into account in the provision of housing.

Chapter 6 Education

The majority of responses made comments about education for refugees and asylum seekers, including:

- Nursery provision
- School education
- College education
- Higher education
- Additional or specialised support
- Digital education.

Each of these points is explored in more detail below.

6.1 Nursery provision

A few responses emphasised the importance of nursery provision for children seeking asylum and children with a refugee background:

- Being in nursery allowed the children to interact regularly with native English speakers and therefore contributed to their English language acquisition.
- Having their children in nursery full-time would allow their parents to use this time for their own education, primarily language learning - a point covered further in Chapter 7.
- Responses included incidences of refugees and asylum seekers having had difficulties in registering their children in nurseries since they were unable to provide passports for their children.

6.2 School education

Many responses raised points about refugees and asylum seekers attending schools:

- It was suggested that schools should hire more staff who speak the first languages of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Responses proposed that the topics of "integration", "racism" and "equality" should be covered by the Scottish school curriculum. It was felt that schools and their curricula play, as one response put it, "a central role in incorporating real societal change in the longer term".
- Responses suggested that school teachers and other school staff should receive training about the specific issues facing refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, it was proposed that the training should also cover how to communicate effectively with children whose first language is not English. On the basis of this, they would be able to create inclusive learning environments for children with a refugee background.

- Responses indicated that it should be a priority for children arriving in Scotland to get a space in a local school as soon as possible.
- Considering that children with a refugee background are likely to have fragmented educational histories, it was suggested that the usual age bands of particular courses should be applied flexibly in the case of refugees and asylum seekers.

6.3 College education

Many responses made comments in relation to refugees and asylum seekers gaining access to college education:

- Responses felt that colleges needed to have a better understanding of the specific circumstances of refugees and asylum seekers and the issues they are facing. Building on this, it was felt that further and higher education institutions should, by 2020, have a policy in place on engaging with refugees and asylum seekers.
- Responses indicated that refugees and asylum seekers who already speak English at a high standard would like to have the opportunity to study subjects other than English (i.e. ESOL courses) at college.
- Responses considered that there are currently long waiting lists for college courses, and indicated that college courses need to expand in order to meet the demands of the refugee and asylum seeking population.

6.4 Higher education

Many responses raised points about refugees and asylum seekers gaining access to higher education:

- Responses suggested that asylum seekers should be entitled to tuition fee or living cost support from the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS).
- The cost of higher education was seen as a potential barrier to refugees gaining access to higher education.
- Responses suggested that universities should have a point of contact regarding their entry requirements and application procedures.
- It was proposed that universities should offer more pre-sessional academic programmes which refugees and asylum seekers could take, qualifying them to access particular university courses.
- One response suggested that there should be a pilot of an access policy allowing refugees and asylum seekers to try out any classes being offered in further or higher education.
- Another response suggested that there should be better linkages between further and higher education institutions to ease the transition of refugees and asylum seekers.

6.5 Additional or specialised support

Many responses suggested that refugees and asylum seekers should receive additional support while in education (regardless of the specific educational institution), including:

- Additional academic support, including the provision of homework clubs or mentoring programmes.
- Greater language support for students who are refugees or asylum seekers – an issue covered in more detail in Chapter 7.
- Refugees and asylum seekers need clearer guidance about their rights and entitlements in relation to education and how to apply for and enrol in different educational institutions. This was raised by four groups of young people at different engagement events.
- Refugees and asylum seekers should receive greater financial support for covering educational expenses such as college or university fees, school uniforms or laptops.
- There should be clear mechanisms in place for recognising the prior educational qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers, easing the transition into further or higher education.

6.6 Digital education

Some responses included comments about digital education. It was suggested that refugees and asylum seekers should receive IT and computer training. This was seen as particularly important in the context of Universal Credit applications needing to be made online, and the importance of the internet for job searching.

Chapter 7 Language

A large majority of responses covered points about "language", including:

- Language as a barrier to integration
- Access to interpreters
- Information provision in multiple languages
- Availability and accessibility of ESOL classes
- Language learning out with formal language classes
- Maintenance of first language.

Each of these points is covered in more detail below.

7.1 Low English language skills as a barrier to integration

Many responses highlighted that language (i.e. the low level of English language skills of many refugees and asylum seekers) poses a barrier to integration.

- It was suggested that it is difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to get to know local people due to the language barrier between them. It was noted that refugees and asylum seekers found it particularly difficult to understand Scottish accents.
- Accessing services, both statutory and third sector/community-based services, is rendered more difficult by the language barrier.
- More generally, language was considered to be, as one response put it, "the most important factor in integration".

7.2 Access to interpreters

Many responses emphasised the importance of having access to interpreters:

- Responses noted the need for interpreters to be available during medical appointments – a point further covered in Chapter 8.
- The importance of building capacity in interpreting was raised, including the need for interpreters to be available for different dialects, specific areas (e.g. health or legal) and to better link service providers with interpreting services across Scotland.
- It was also felt that there is a need to develop industry-wide quality standards for interpreters who work with refugees and asylum seekers.
- Related to this, it was suggested that more service providers should hire frontline staff who are fluent in the languages widely spoken by refugees and asylum seekers.

7.3 Information provision in multiple languages

Many responses emphasised the importance of providing refugees and asylum seekers with accessible information about their rights and the services they can use, including:

- Information leaflets, appointment letters and universal credit applications translated into languages widely spoken by refugees and asylum seekers.

- Providing refugees and asylum seekers with information about health services in multiple languages was particularly noted – a point covered in more detail in Chapter 8.

7.4 Availability and accessibility of ESOL classes

The majority of responses included comments about the availablity and accessibilty of ESOL classes, including:

- The importance of refugees and asylum seekers being guaranteed a place in an ESOL class.

- It was suggested that refugees and asylum seekers should be provided with more information on how and where to access ESOL classes. This was a point also raised by two groups of young people at different engagement events.

- Responses noted that there are currently long waiting lists for ESOL classes and that refugees and asylum seekers should be provided with quicker access to these classes upon their arrival in Scotland. Considering this, it was suggested that more funding for ESOL classes should be provided, with the goal of building capacity and reducing waiting times. One response also mentioned the opportunity of providing online ESOL learning during the waiting period.

- It was suggested that ESOL classes should be full-time in order to be more effective for refugees' and asylum seekers' English language acquisition.

- Responses noted that ESOL classes are currently more targeted at basic English. They emphasised the importance of offering more ESOL classes for refugees and asylum seekers who already have an advanced command of English.

- The possibility of linking language learning with employability was highlighted, for example through:
  o Linking ESOL students with local employability opportunities
  o Employers running language classes.

7.5 Language learning outside of formal language classes

Many responses suggested that there should be more structures in place to support language learning out with formal language classes. The suggestions included:

- The ability to apply English in real life contexts, for example through volunteering.

- To offer language learning opportunities in their local community, for example through language cafes.

- Two-way language exchanges, where refugees teach their first language to Scots and vice versa.

7.6 Maintenance of first language

A few responses highlighted the importance of refugees and asylum seekers, and particularly their children, maintaining their first language skills in order to maintain their cultural identity.

- It was emphasised that maintaining one's mother tongue does not hinder English language acquisition, and that multilingualism should be encouraged.

- It was suggested that the children of refugees and asylum seekers should be offered language classes in their first language.

Chapter 8 Health and Wellbeing

A large majority of responses raised points about the health and wellbeing of refugees and asylum seekers. The points covered were:

- Access to health services

- Trauma and mental health

- Communication in healthcare settings

- Better understanding by service providers of the health needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

Each of these points is covered in more detail below.

8.1 Access to health services

Many responses indicated that they would like refugees and asylum seekers to have improved access to health services.

- It was highlighted that refugees and asylum seekers should have quicker access to GPs. One response highlighted the need for female refugees and asylum seekers to have access to female GPs.

- Responses emphasised the need to shorten the currently perceived long waiting times for hospital and dental appointments as well as mental health services. One participant put it the following way: "We wait so long for help. Six months to a year. People can kill themselves in that time. They have no idea how bad the trauma is that we are dealing with." In addition, it was felt that the referral process for emergency care was slow.

- Responses suggested that refugees' and asylum seekers' travel costs to medical appointments should be provided.

8.2 Trauma and mental health

Many responses raised points about the trauma and mental health problems that many refugees and asylum seekers experience.

- Responses highlighted the mental health problems – such as anxiety and depression - of refugees and asylum seekers. They highlighted that many suffer from poor mental health due to their experiences of conflict and persecution in their home countries, the separation from their family, and/or the uncertainty about their future during the asylum process.

- It was also highlighted that the inability to work as an asylum seeker (see Chapter 3) and potentially poor and inadequate housing (see Chapter 5) can in addition have negative effects on the mental health of asylum seekers.

- Responses highlighted the importance of mental health service provision for refugees and asylum seekers, in terms of specialist services, third sector organisations that provide emotional support, and peer support. This was a point that was also raised by two women-only groups at different engagement events. Further comments about mental health services covered:
    - The need for all services in Scotland (i.e. services other than specialist mental health services) to become trauma-informed.
    - The possibility of mental health services being provided in languages widely spoken by refugees and asylum seekers was emphasised.
    - The importance of shortening the waiting times for mental health services.

8.3 Communication in healthcare settings

Many responses raised points about the importance of appropriate communcation with refugees and asylum seekers about healthcare.

- Responses highlighted the need for refugees and asylum seekers to be better informed about health services and their rights and entitlements to gain access to these. This included information on Scotland's healthcare system in general, how to access primary care and register with a GP, and their rights in relation to accessing health services. It was highlighted that refugees and asylum seekers should be informed about these aspects upon their arrival in Scotland – a point further covered in Chapter 9.

- Responses suggested that all the information the NHS provides – ranging from information leaflets, letters about appointments, to screening tools – should be available in multiple languages.

- The need for interpreters to be available during medical appointments – particularly during GP appointments but also specialist and emergency services - was highlighted.

8.4 Better understanding by service providers of the health needs of asylum seekers and refugees

Some responses suggested that health service providers and frontline staff should be given more training about the specific health needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

- It was highlighted that health staff, particularly frontline staff, should be made aware of the rights and entitlements of refugees and asylum seekers to access health services. This was seen as important in ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers have a positive experience during their first point of contact with the Scottish healthcare system.

- Responses suggested that refugees' and asylum seekers' health records should be shared between different health service providers, considering that it can be difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to share personal information about their health with staff during their appointments.

Chapter 9 Communities, Culture and Social Connections

A large majority of responses raised points about the New Scot's theme of "Communities, Culture and Social Connections". The topics covered include:

- Awareness of Scotland's public about refugees and asylum seekers
- Social isolation
- Community engagement
- Support and funding for community organisations
- Provision of basic information about living in Scotland upon arrival
- Commitment to integrate by refugees and asylum seekers.

Each of these points will be explored in more detail below.

9.1 Awareness of Scotland's public about refugees and asylum seekers

Many responses highlighted that they would like members of the Scottish public to be more aware of refugees and asylum seekers:

- It was felt that the media often portrays refugees and asylum seekers negatively and that this has a negative impact on how the Scottish public perceives refugees and asylum seekers. In addition to this, it was noted that the Scottish public lacks an understanding of the needs and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers, and does not have a clear understanding of the difference between the two.

- Considering this, responses highlighted that the media should be encouraged to share more positive stories about refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. In addition, responses suggested the need to help the Scottish public appreciate who refugees and asylum seekers are. It was felt that knowing what refugees and asylum seekers' may have experienced in their home countries could render the public's attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers more positive and prevent racism and discrimination.

- It was suggested that the communities where refugees and asylum seekers are accommodated should be better informed about their arrival (see Chapter 5). Addressing community fears, and preparing them for the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers, was seen as ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed positively by the host communities.

- In answer to Question 3 of the engagement ("What can you, your community or your organisation do to contribute to that change?"), responses considered that spreading awareness about the issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers was a way of contributing to the change they want to see.

9.2 Social isolation

Many responses noted that social isolation is a key issue for refugees and asylum seekers. This was seen as resulting from:

- Refugees and asylum seekers being housed far away from the city centre (already discussed in Chapter 5) or in rural areas (discussed further in Chapter 11).

- Refugees and asylum seekers often being separated from their families and peers.

- Asylum seekers restricted from working (already discussed in Chapter 3) and therefore being prevented from meeting people through work.

- The lack of engagement with local communities (see 9.3 below).

9.3 Community engagement

The majority of responses emphasised the importance of community engagement for refugees' and asylum seekers' integration.

- It was highlighted that refugees and asylum seekers would like to have more opportunities to meet Scottish people in their local communities. This was a point also raised by two groups of young people at different engagement events.

- A wide variety of different community engagement events were proposed that would give refugees and asylum seekers the opportunity to meet and develop relationships with local Scottish people and, as such, enhance their language skills and the process of integration:
  o Befriending and mentoring schemes
  o Events held by different community groups, such as shared meals or dances, where members from different communities could come together
  o Knowledge and skills exchange events such as international language cafes or cultural exchange events.

- Such events were also seen as providing members of the Scottish public with the opportunity to be, as one response put it, "active partners in the integration process".

- The importance of arts, sports and other recreational activities as an important part of integration was emphasised. It was suggested that refugees and asylum seekers should be made aware of such opportunities in their local areas and get discounted or free entry into sports clubs, or free gym passes or cinema tickets. One response suggested the creation of an "integration football league". The importance of being able to engage in sports was raised by two groups of young people at different engagement events.

- In answer to Question 3 of the engagement ("What can you, your community or your organisation do to contribute to that change?"), many responses highlighted that the different types of community engagement are a way of contributing to the change they want to see. For members of the host community and refugees and asylum seekers to personally interact was seen as contributing to change on the ground.

9.4 Support and funding for community organisations

Many responses felt that there should be more support for community organisations that work with refugees and asylum seekers at the grassroots level, including:

- Organisational support for community organisations

- Funding to be provided on a longer-term basis

- Skills and training for frontline staff working with refugees and asylum seekers

- Support for refugees and asylum seekers to establish their own community groups.

9.5 Provision of basic information upon arrival about living in Scotland

The majority of responses suggested that, upon arrival in Scotland, refugees and asylum seekers should be provided with basic information about living in Scotland, including:

- Information about their local area, including available services and support structures, bus routes, as well as community events and amenities such as libraries, museums or parks.

- Refugees and asylum seekers want to know more about Scottish history, culture and customs. This could include organised visits to places that are significant to Scottish culture and history. Becoming aware of Scottish customs would help refugees and asylum to understand what one response called the "unwritten, unspoken 'rules' and expectation" of everyday life in Scotland.

- Information that would help refugees and asylum seekers to navigate the interaction with different services in Scotland, including information on:
  - Their rights and entitlement in relation to health, education, housing, and employment.
  - The role of different statutory services and how and where to access them.
  - Basic laws and regulations, for example, the legal age for a child to stay alone at home.
- It was emphasised that refugees and asylum seekers would benefit from a "one-stop shop" centre (a central place of support in their local community) or a handbook where they could be provided with the information outlined above.

9.6 Commitment to integrate by refugees and asylum seekers

In answer to Question 3 of the engagement ("What can you, your community or your organisation do to contribute to that change?"), many responses emphasised refugees' and asylum seekers' commitment to integrate into Scottish society. This included:

- Taking part in community events
- Helping their children to integrate
- Actively learning English
- Engage in volunteering and other employability activities
- To be an active citizen.

Chapter 10 Poverty and Destitution

Many responses made comments in relation to the poverty and destitution which some refugees and asylum seekers experience.

- The types of poverty raised were instances of refugees and asylum seekers struggling with food poverty and needing to go to a foodbank. It was noted that the weekly allowance of £37.75 for asylum seekers was not enough to cover their expenses for food. In addition to food poverty, responses included instances of refugees and asylum seekers becoming homeless.

- The 28-day "move-on" period during which newly recognised refugees still receive asylum support before they make the transition to mainstream benefits or secure work was regarded as too short. Considering that mainstream benefits may get delayed, this period was seen as bearing the risk of drawing newly recognised refugees into destitution.

- Similarly, refused asylum seekers and those with no recourse to public funds were seen as being at risk of destitution.

- Responses pointed out two effects of destitution:
  - People with no recourse to public funds may turn to criminal activities (such as stealing food) as the only immediate solution to their destitution.
  - More generally, destitution was seen, as one response put it, as "the enemy of integration" because people do not have the resources to successfully integrate.

- Responses highlighted the importance of a coordinated response to destitution. The Scottish Government's commitment to develop an anti-destitution strategy as a response to the findings of the Equalities and Human Rights Committee's report "Hidden Lives – New Beginnings: Destitution, asylum and insecure immigration status in Scotland" was welcomed.

Chapter 11 Other issues

In addition to comments which directly related to the New Scots themes (Chapter 3-9) or the Scottish Government's commitments to develop an anti-destitution strategy (Chapter 10), responses raised a number of other issues in their responses to the three questions. These issues included:

- Family reunion
- Travel documents
- Devolving powers
- Perceptions of the Home Office
- Racism and discrimination experienced by refugees and asylum seekers
- Transport
- Two-tier system
- Safe returns review
- Service development for refugees and asylum seekers
- Issues affecting particular population groups
- Comments about the engagement process and New Scots 2.

Each of these points is explored in more detail below.

11.1 Family reunion

Family reunion is a matter reserved to the UK Government. However, many responses raised how important family reunion is for refugees and asylum seekers. Their comments covered the following points:

- The point was raised that refugees and asylum seekers would like to be better informed about how to apply for family reunion.
- Responses suggested that the family reunion process should be made faster.

11.2 Travel documents

Issue of travel documents is a matter reserved to the UK Government. However, some responses noted that refugees and asylum seekers would like to be able to have permission to travel (i.e. have a valid travel document) so that they could visit family members outside of the UK. It was stressed that they would like to have more information on how to obtain such a travel document.

11.3 Devolving powers

A few responses highlighted that they would like immigration and asylum legislation to be devolved to the Scottish Government, and that the Scottish Government should use its devolved powers to better help refugees and asylum seekers.

11.4 Perceptions of the Home Office

Some responses included comments about the negative perception of the Home Office, including the perceptions that the Home Office has created a "hostile environment" towards refugees and aslyum seekers and that there is a "lack of consistency and transparency" in how the Home Office makes decisions on asylum claims.

11.5 Racism and discrimination experienced by refugees and asylum seekers

Many responses drew attention to the level of racism and descrimination that refugees and asylum seekers experience. Examples were given of refugees and asylum seekers having experienced racism and discrimination in workplaces, other institutions, their local communities and schools.

- In relation to this, responses highlighted the importance of the need to raise awareness among Scotland's public about refugees and asylum seekers (see Chapter 9.1).

- Considering the verbal and/or physical abuse that some refugees and asylum seekers have experienced, responses emphasised the importance of Police Scotland actively engaging and building trust with refugees and asylum seekers.

11.6 Transport

The majority of responses made comments about transport.

- Considering that refugees and asylum seekers are often accommodated further away from the city centre and local amenities and are therefore relying on public transport, it was suggested that they should receive discounted or free travel passes. This was seen to be particularly important for asylum seekers since their weekly allowance of £37.75 is not sufficient for spending money on transport, and for refused asylum seekers who do not have access to cash that is needed to pay for transport (see Chapter 3).

- It was emphasised that refugees and asylum seekers would like to have the opportunity to learn to drive as this would give them more independence. It was suggested that they should be able to complete driving lessons and tests in their first language. Driver licensing, including testing, is a reserved matter, handled by the DVLA.

11.7 Two-tier system

Asylum and resettlement are matters reserved to the UK Government. However, some responses made comments about what they call the "two-tier-system", that is, the perceived difference in service provision for those refugees who have come to Scotland through the Syrian Resettlement Programme and those who have come to the UK via a different route and undergo the asylum system. It was highlighted that there should be equity of support.

11.8 Safe returns review

Safe returns are part of the asylum system, which is a matter reserved to the UK Government. A few responses emphasised the lack of long-term security that refugees have due to the "safe returns review", i.e. the review five years after their refugee status is granted to assess whether they are able to stay in the UK or need to return to their home country.

11.9 Service development for refugees and asylum seekers

The majority of responses made comments in relation to service development for refugees and asylum seekers, including:

- The development of independent advocacy services that refugees and asylum seekers could turn to if they face a legal issue.

- It was emphasised that refugees and asylum seekers are not a homogenous group, i.e. that they come from different cultures, speak different languages, have left their countries for different reasons, and have different needs. This was seen as important to consider when designing services for refugees and asylum seekers.

- Responses suggested that staff across a variety of services and institutions – ranging from NHS services, housing services, counsellors, social workers, Home Office staff, Jobcentre staff, ESOL teachers, through to police, teachers and judges – should be better trained in how to engage with refugees and asylum seekers in a culturally-sensitive way. In addition, it was felt that they should be better trained to understand refugees' and asylum seekers' needs, and be aware of their rights and entitlements.

- Responses suggested that refugees and asylum seekers should themselves be more involved in developing services that target them by drawing on their lived experience. Another suggestion was for services to be co-designed between refugees and asylum seekers on the one hand, and the host communities on the other. More generally, it was felt that refugees and asylum seekers should be given more opportunities to voice their concerns with policy makers and statutory services.

- Responses emphasised that the work of different organisations and their services should be better integrated. This included:
  - o Stronger partnerships and coordination between statutory and third sector services (including community and volunteering organisations) and services working in different areas (e.g. housing or health). One response suggested the creation of a national database for all organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers that could enhance coordination between different services. Similarly, one response suggested the development of a service directory that would help different organisations to be more aware of other services and improve signposting between different organisations
  - o More generally, the important role of third sector organisations was highlighted, and it was suggested that the third sector should be more involved in the planning of services.

- The development of forums where learning and best practice can be shared between different organisations was recommended.

- In addition, responses suggested that the New Scots Strategy should be linked with other networks such as the Glasgow Integration Network or the Scottish Asylum Stakeholders Forum.

- Considering that under the Syrian Resettlement Programme, refugees have been accommodated outside Glasgow and that there are proposals to expand asylum dispersal beyond Glasgow, responses highlighted the need to fund and develop services outside Glasgow. This was seen to be important since specialist services – ranging from services for those who have experienced torture and sexual violence to immigration lawyers – are primarily located in Glasgow.

- In answer to Question 3 of the engagement ("What can you, your community or your organisation do to contribute to that change?"), the majority of responses highlighted service development as a means by which they can contribute to that change, including:
  - o Organisations to share their knowledge and better integrate with other services as outlined above.
  - o Raising awareness among and lobby members of parliament and local councillors about issues affecting refugees and asylum seekers.
  - o Refugees and asylum seekers to build up peer support and community networks, particularly supporting new arrivals and to facilitate emotional support and employability support by those who have moved on to college or work.

- o Organisations to develop resources, guidance material and standards/code of practice across a variety of sectors that engage with refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, it was highlighted that research organisations can provide evidenced-based information to inform policy.

11.10 Issues affecting particular population groups

Responses highlighted the fact that particular population groups face particular issues:

- Many responses suggested that **female refugees and asylum seekers** face particular issues, including:
  - o The need for pregnant women and single mothers to be housed appropriately (i.e. not in shared accommodation)
  - o The lack of affordable childcare: this was seen as a barrier for mothers accessing college and particularly ESOL courses, and as problematic when needing to go to appointments with the Home Office. This was a point raised by three women-only groups and one group consisting of 13 women and one man across different engagement events.
  - o Women's safety, including domestic violence and harassment experienced by women
  - o Social isolation among women because they are more likely to stay at home
  - o Accessing female GPs
  - o Gender discrimination in the labour market.
- One response thought that integration is more challenging for **refugees and asylum seekers who are older** as they may not be able to work, or may struggle more to learn English.
- Many responses highlighted the need for services to be developed for **young refugees and asylum seekers**. The particular issues faced by this group include:
  - o Bullying in school
  - o The disruption of their education through re-settling in Scotland, and potentially having to move multiple times as an asylum seeker
  - o Disputes about their age during the asylum claims
- The trauma of being separated from their families and the challenges of needing to live independently, particularly for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

- Some responses highlighted that **disabled refugees and asylum seekers** will need to be provided with appropriate housing and transport. In addition, it was highlighted that different cultural attitudes towards disabilities need to be taken into account when providing services for refugees and asylum seekers with special needs. In addition to this, many responses raised points about the trauma and mental health needs that many refugees and asylum seekers experience (see Chapter 8.2).

- One response highlighted that **LGBTI asylum seekers** face particular challenges during the asylum process (if their asylum claim is based on being persecuted for being LGBTI) since they are put under pressure to "prove" they are LGBTI, for example, by providing evidence that they are in a same-sex relationship. The response highlighted that there should be a "clear and transparent system for assessing the validity of claims that doesn't rely on prejudiced stereotypes". It was also suggested that caseworkers, lawyers and other frontline staff should receive "specific LGBTI asylum guidance and training that includes a strong focus on cultural awareness".

- A few suggested that refugees of the **Syrian Resettlement Programme who have been accommodated in rural areas** may struggle particularly to access culturally-appropriate resources (e.g. halal food), places of worship or specialist services that are centred around Glasgow (see 11.9), potentially leading to loneliness.

11.11 Comments about the engagement process and New Scots 2

Some responses commented on the New Scots engagement process and the New Scots 2 Strategy:

- It was felt that Question 2 of the engagement (i.e. "What changes do you want to see by 2020 and why?") was difficult to answer for asylum seekers themselves considering their insecure immigration status and uncertainty about the future.

- Similarly, it was stressed that Question 3 of the engagement ("What can you, your community or your organisation do to contribute to that change?") was difficult to answer for refugees and asylum seekers considering their lack of agency in bringing about change. In fact, in answer to Question 3, some responses suggested that refugees and asylum seekers do not feel they have the agency or power to contribute to any large-scale change.

- Other responses mentioned that those participating in the engagements welcomed the opportunity to be informed and to contribute to the discussion of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.

- One response raised the concern that the separation of the New Scots theme "Needs of Asylum Seekers" from the other New Scots themes may reinforce the two-tier nature of the provision for refugees and asylum seekers (see 11.7).

Appendix List of organisations that contributed to the engagement

These are the organisations that submitted a response to the engagement, some of whom have submitted multiple responses:

- AfricAlba
- Aberlour Child Care Trust
- African Community Network
- Afroscots United FC
- Asylum Seeker Housing Project
- Best Way Community Development
- Big Lottery Fund
- Bilingualism Matters at University of Edinburgh
- British Red Cross
- CA Network
- CAMASS (Cameroonian Association and Sympathisers in Scotland)
- Central and West Integration Network and Glasgow ESOL Forum
- Chartered Institute of Housing Scotland
- Church of Scotland
- Community Safety Team Midlothian
- Congolese Community Unit in Scotland
- COSLA - Syrian Resettlement Programme Officer Group
- Cranhill Development Trust
- Division of Occupational Psychology Scotland
- English as an Additional Language Service, Glasgow City Council
- East Renfrewshire Council
- English for Academic Study, University of Glasgow
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy Implementation Group
- Equality Network
- Fife Council ESOL, with support from The Ecology Centre
- Freedom from Torture Scotland
- Fresh Start North Lanarkshire
- Georgian Group

- Glasgow Afghan United
- Glasgow Museums
- Glasgow North West Framework for Dialogue Group
- Govan Community Project
- Highland Council
- Highland Perthshire Crossing Borders
- Home-Start Glasgow North
- Interfaith Glasgow
- Inverclyde HSCP, in collaboration with Your Voice Inverclyde
- Kurdish Women Community Group
- Law Society of Scotland
- LGBT Unity Scotland
- Mental Health Foundation
- NHS GGC Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service
- NHS GGC
- NHS GGC Homeless and Asylum Service
- NHS Health Scotland
- North East Framework for Dialogue Group
- North Lanarkshire Council Community Learning and Development
- Pamoja Events and Entertainment
- Perth and Kinross Council
- Perth Syrian Refugee Support Group
- Glasgow Integration Forum
- UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through Language and the Arts, University of Glasgow
- Refugee Survival Trust
- Rosemount Lifelong Learning
- Scottish Detainee Visitors
- Scottish EAL Co-ordinating Council (SEALCC)
- Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees
- Scottish Refugee Council
- SEStrans
- South Lanarkshire Council
- Stirling Citizens for Sanctuary

- Stirling Council
- Sudanese community in Glasgow
- Syrian Community Arbroath
- The City of Edinburgh Council
- The Hope Project Scotland
- The Muslim Women's Resource Centre, with Dundee City Council and Yusuf Youth Initiative
- The Welcoming
- Workers Education Association Scotland
- West Lothian Council

social
research

The views expressed in this report are those of the researcher and
do not necessarily represent those of the Scottish Government or
Scottish Ministers.

GSR
GOVERNMENT SOCIAL RESEARCH
Social Science in Government