

**Public Library services for refugees and  
asylum-seekers:**

**the results of the “Words without Frontiers” survey**

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**The Network: tackling social exclusion in libraries,  
museums, archives and galleries  
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## **1. Introduction**

This survey was conducted during the latter part of 2001 and the start of 2002, as part of the developmental work for the DCMS/Wolfson project, "Words without Frontiers".

A survey form was sent to every public library authority in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales – 108 (52%) were returned.

Some authorities wished to remain anonymous, and their responses are quoted as "English authority 1" etc. Where possible, the actual words used in the replies have been used in our summary.

From the results, it is clear that some public libraries are providing excellent levels of service (although none felt that they were really on top of this area of work), some are beginning to find out what was needed in their communities, and some are barely providing a service at all.

We hope that this work will now kick-start an urgent review of provision, and will lead to exploration of ways of raising additional funding and the development of services for refugees and asylum-seekers.

## **2. Background**

### **2.1 Do you have refugees and/or asylum-seekers in your authority's area?**

Sixty-two authorities have refugees and/or asylum-seekers in their authority's area, forty-six none, and one reported "none yet".

### **2.2 Do you have estimates of numbers (either by languages spoken or by countries of origin)?**

#### **2.2.1 Who has the numbers?**

Of the 62 authorities that replied, 21 had no idea of numbers. Three have figures by countries of origin but didn't give them, and two are working towards it.

Numbers known range from 3 to 11,500. Some authorities have a clear breakdown either of languages spoken or of countries of origin. Others have only a rough idea.

#### **2.2.2 Numbers breakdown taken from figures given**

- Four authorities have less than 10 people
- Four have less than 100

- Two have between 200-299
- Six have between 300 – 400 (Hammersmith & Fulham has 426 adults of which 56 are unaccompanied children (16-18 year-olds))
- Two have between 500-550; one has 650
- Three have between 800 and 1,000
- Six have between 1,000 and 2,000; 1 has 2,500; 2 have 4,000
- One has between 5,000-6,000
- Glasgow has approx. 6-7,000. This community is likely to rise in numbers as many asylum-seekers are receiving positive decisions on leave to remain, and, of these, the majority are choosing to stay in Glasgow
- Greenwich has 11,500.
- Kent say that it is difficult to give exact numbers, being a county of entry, and one that is no longer used for dispersal, new arrivals to Kent mostly leave within a few days of claiming asylum. The only exception to this generally is the under-18s (unaccompanied minors), and there are approx. 1,000 in Kent at present.

### 2.2.3 Details

**Blackburn with Darwen:** approx. 300 in total – the Borough’s Asylum Seeker Support Team keep statistics, but these are confidential

**Bristol:** 800-1,000 asylum-seekers. Dominant groups from Somalia, Somaliland, Kosovan Albanians, Iraqis, Iranians, Afghans (and people from all over Africa). 41 different asylum languages spoken in Bristol

**Camden:** 1,322

**Coventry:** languages/countries of origin include Kurdish, Somali, Iranian, Bosnian, Tamil

**Croydon:** est. 5,000-6,000

**Derby:** the latest figures we have are May 2001, at which time there were est. 350 asylum-seekers – this will exclude any Afghans arriving since September 2001, for whom the City Council appears to have no figures

**Dudley:** 230 (mostly from Eastern Europe)

**Durham:** max of 350 families/individuals

**English authority 3:** No, but just small numbers

**English authority 8:** We know that 40 homes are occupied by asylum-seekers

**English authority 9:** 27 supported by the County Council (14 Kosovans, 1 Iraqi, 4 Afghans, 1 Chinese, 1 Turkish, 1 Kenyan, 1 Burundi)

**English authority 12:** 200 initially (mainly from Afghanistan and Iraq)

**English authority 13:** “schools home language survey”

**English authority 15:** Main countries of origin are: Iraq, Iran, Zimbabwe, Congo, Albania, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Pakistan, Somalia, Sierra Leone<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The following is a list of all the countries of origin of people seeking asylum in English authority 15: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Congo, Congo Democratic Republic, Eritrea, India, Iran, Iraq, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Kosovo,

**Essex:** c40 in contact directly or indirectly with library service, mainly Albanian and Turkish

**Glasgow:** approx. 6-7,000 asylum-seekers and refugees<sup>2</sup>. There are large numbers of people from Afghanistan, Iran, Kurds from Iraq and Turkey, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Africa (e.g. Rwanda, Zaire, Ivory Coast, Kenya), Albania, Croatia, Kosovo, Russia.

**Greenwich:** 11,500

**Hammersmith & Fulham:** 426 adults; 362 families (at least one parent + one child); 56 unaccompanied children (16-18 year-olds)

**Hertfordshire:** no. Main nationalities are: Bosnian, Iranian, Kosovan, Croatian, Russian, Ukrainian, Albanian, Serbian, Romanian, Kurdish

**Kent:** difficult to give exact numbers, being a county of entry, and one that is no longer used for dispersal, new arrivals to Kent mostly leave within a few days of claiming asylum. The only exception to this generally is the under-18s (unaccompanied minors), and there are approx. 1,000 in Kent at present. Largest numbers of those arriving and/or staying are: Afghans, Albanians, Kurds (mainly Iraqi), Czechs. Other smaller groups from: Iran, Angola, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Eritrea and Zimbabwe.

**Kingston upon Hull:** approx. 1,500

**Kirklees:** not readily available

**Lambeth:** No<sup>3</sup>.

**Lancashire:** c500 (countries of origin include Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Russia, Romania, Somalia, Czechoslovakia, Kosovo)

**Liverpool:** 2,500

**Luton:** c1,500 (from 27 countries, the main areas being Kosovo, Albania, the Congo and Sudan)

**Merton:** since the Home Office decentralisation, it is very difficult to get accurate figures from other agencies. However, there are 96 languages spoken in Merton's schools.

**Newcastle upon Tyne:** est. 4,000

**Northamptonshire:** Kosovo 387, Somalia 185, Romania 82, Rwanda 26, Burundi 30, Kenya 53, Moldova 25, Yugoslavia 24, Albania 22 + others from 18 countries (less than 20 asylum-seekers from each)

**North Tyneside:** approx. 650

**Nottingham City:** approx. 1,424

**Poole:** only info so far is 3 families (1 Kosovan, 1 Azerbaijani, 1 Iranian). No more expected.

**Portsmouth:** c400

**Rotherham:** 550 (Afghans, Iranians, Iraqis, Albanians, Chileans)

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Lebanon, Libya, Malawi, Maldives, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Romania, Rwanda, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, Zimbabwe

<sup>2</sup> "This community is likely to rise in numbers as many asylum-seekers are receiving positive decisions on leave to remain, and, of these, the majority are choosing to stay in Glasgow."

<sup>3</sup> "The Refugee Council in Lambeth is the national centre where refugees/asylum-seekers register after they've arrived at the ports. They are then 'housed' in temporary accommodation, until they are dispatched to various areas in the country. Refugee Council unable to supply even approximate numbers because they deal with so many on a daily basis, and cannot keep track of Lambeth's refugee/asylum-seekers community."

**St Helen's:** 4 in last 2 years (1 Kosovan – spoke Kosovan + 5 other languages; 1 Turkish – spoke Turkish; 2 Chinese – spoke Chinese, and placed very temporarily)

**Sandwell:** 1595 asylum-seekers registered on Sandwell database (male: 1006; female: 378)

**Sheffield:** c1,993

**Solihull:** 60+ in Aug 2001 (from Iran, Kosovo, Sudan, Palestine, Israel, Zimbabwe)

**Stoke on Trent:** some indication that up to 300 refugees came into the city some months ago. Languages/countries of origin are many and varied – Kurdish, Turks, Afghans, Bulgarians, Ukrainians, Hong Kong

**Swansea:** no official figures, as asylum-seekers have been placed in private accommodation, not local authority

**Tower Hamlets:** 61 Somalia, 39 Turkey, 28 Bangladesh, 81 others

**Wakefield:** 336<sup>4</sup>

**Waltham Forest:** c4,000 (est. numbers: 2,000 Somalis, 400 Tamils, 200-500 Turkish/Kurdish, 300-400 Ghana/Zaire, 100+ Yugoslavs, 80 Angolans)

**Warwickshire:** at the present time, we are carrying out a scooping exercise and should have numbers, languages spoken and countries of origin in the New Year

**West Berkshire:** 9 males aged 14-17

**Windsor & Maidenhead:** according to Social Services, 3 adults (2 from Pakistan, 1 from Albania)

**Wolverhampton:** est. 1,000 (from Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa, Albania, Sri Lanka)

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## 2.3 What are the main languages spoken by the refugees or asylum-seekers in your authority?

### 2.3.1 Distribution of languages

- Thirty-three library services have Farsi speakers
- 31 library services have Albanian speakers
- 21 library services have Arabic speakers
- 19 library services have Kurdish speakers

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<sup>4</sup> Total = 336, located within Wakefield as:

Area	Number	Languages
Knottingley	10	Romanian
Pontefract	60	Polish, Farsi, Albanian, Kurdish
Hemsworth	15	Albanian, Kurdish
South Kirkby	8	Albanian
Normanton	15	Albanian, Kurdish
Ossett	20	Farsi, Turkish
Horbury	8	Romanian, Turkish
Wakefield	200	Farsi, Turkish, Albanian, Kurdish, Arabic

- 15 library services have French speakers
- 15 library services have Somali speakers
- 13 library services have Turkish speakers
- 11 library services have Russian speakers
- 10 library services have Urdu speakers
- 9 library services have Pushto speakers
- 9 library services have Tamil speakers
- 7 library services have Czech speakers
- 7 library services have Serbo-Croat speakers
- 5 library services have Daric speakers
- 5 library services have Kosovan speakers
- 5 library services have Portuguese speakers
- 5 library services have Spanish speakers
- 4 library services have Croatian speakers
- 4 library services have Romanian speakers
- 3 library services have Afghani speakers
- 3 library services have Bengali speakers
- 3 library services have Chinese speakers
- 3 library services have Polish speakers
- 2 library services have Azerbaijani speakers
- 2 library services have Bosnian speakers
- 2 library services have Iraqi speakers
- 2 library services have Kurdish – Sorani speakers
- 2 library services have Serbian speakers
- 2 library services have Vietnamese speakers

The following languages are spoken in one library authority area only:

- |                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| • Amharic                 | • Kurdish – Komanci |
| • Armenian                | • Lithuanian        |
| • Cantonese               | • Mandarin          |
| • Dutch                   | • Nepalese          |
| • Estonian                | • Punjabi           |
| • Ethiopian               | • Shona             |
| • Hindi                   | • Slovak            |
| • Hukka                   | • Swahili           |
| • Hungarian               | • Tigrinyan         |
| • Italian                 | • Yoruba            |
| • Kosovan/Albanian        | • Zulu              |
| • Kurdish – Arabic script |                     |

### 2.3.2 Languages spoken arranged by Authority

- **Barnsley:** varied
- **Bexley:** [see footnote against first entry for Bexley]
- **Birmingham:** Arabic, Pushto, Farsi, Somali, Albanian, Kurdish
- **Blackburn with Darwen:** Afghani, Iranian [Farsi], Iraqi
- **Bristol:** Somali



- **Camden:** French, Spanish, Somali, Polish, Albanian, Farsi, Tigrinyan, Russian
- **CIP:** Albanian, Czech, Ethiopian, Kosovan, Persian/Farsi, Tamil, Somali
- **Cornwall:** Iranian [Farsi], Turkish, Afghan
- **Coventry:** Kurdish, Farsi
- **Croydon:** Albanian, French, Urdu, Tamil
- **Derby:** Albanian, Serbo-Croat
- **Dudley:** Russian
- **Durham:** Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic, Farsi, Urdu, Tamil
- **English authority 1:** Farsi
- **English authority 3:** Somali
- **English authority 8:** Kurdish
- **English authority 9:** Albanian, with a little demand for Farsi, Arabic and Turkish
- **English authority 10:** Serbian, Albanian, Croatian
- **English authority 11:** don't know
- **English authority 12:** Dari (Farsi), Pushto, Kurdish – Sorani
- **English authority 13:** Arabic, Serbo-Croat, Albanian, Turkish, Tamil, Somali, Farsi, Urdu, Bengali
- **English authority 14:** central and eastern European languages, Middle Eastern languages
- **English authority 15:** Kurdish, Arabic
- **Essex:** Albanian, Turkish
- **Glasgow:** Farsi, Kurdish (Sorani and Komanci), Pushto, Dari, Turkish, Arabic, Tamil, Russian, Albanian, French, Portuguese, Urdu, Hindi
- **Gloucestershire:** Balkan languages (Croatian, Slavic, Russian, Romanian), Chinese, Indic languages
- **Greenwich:** Somali, Arabic, Turkish, Tamil, Urdu, Kurdish, Pushto, French, Russian, Farsi, Bosnian, Lithuanian, Albanian, Czech, Nepalese
- **Hammersmith & Fulham:** Polish, Amharic, Albanian, Farsi, French, Spanish, Somali
- **Havering:** Albanian, Serbo-Croat
- **Hertfordshire:** Albanian, Serbo-Croat, Turkish
- **Kensington & Chelsea:** Arabic, Somali, Serbo-Croat
- **Kent:** Albanian, Russian, Czech, Farsi/Dari, Vietnamese, Yoruba, Serbo-Croat, Estonian, Bengali, Urdu, Pushto, Kurdish in Arabic script, Romanian, Shona, Somali, Slovak, Italian, Portuguese, French, Spanish.
- **Kingston upon Hull:** Kurdish, Turkish, Farsi, Albanian, Iraqi
- **Kirklees:** Kurdish, Urdu, Farsi
- **Lambeth:** 150+ languages spoken in Borough. Portuguese, French, Spanish, Albanian, Farsi, Somali, Polish, Czech, Vietnamese, Azerbaijani, various African languages (e.g. from Angola), various Asian languages (Indian Sub-Continent)

- **Lancashire:** Albanian, Arabic, Armenian, Daric, Farsi, Kurdish, Pushto, Russian
- **Liverpool:** Arabic, Farsi, French
- **Luton:** Albanian, French
- **Merton:** Albanian, Bosnian, Somali, Tamil
- **Newcastle upon Tyne:** Farsi, Kurdish, Turkish, Serbian, Croatian, Russian, Arabic, Czech, Albanian, Pushto, Portuguese, French [last two from Africa]
- **Northamptonshire:** Albanian, Croatian, Somali, Swahili, Arabic, Romanian, Hungarian, Serbo-Croat
- **North Tyneside:** Albanian, Farsi, Russian, Czech
- **Nottingham City:** Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Czech, Farsi, French, Kurdish, Russian, Turkish, Urdu, Zulu
- **Oldham:** Arabic, Persian [Farsi], Kosovan, French
- **Poole:** Kosovan, Azerbaijani, Iranian [Farsi]
- **Portsmouth:** Kurdish, Farsi, Afghani, Kosovan/Albanian, Arabic
- **Rotherham:** Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, Albanian
- **St Helen's:** numbers very small – no patterns [see above]
- **Sandwell:** Albanian, Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, Romanian, Russian, Kosovan
- **Sheffield:** Somali, Arabic, Kurdish, Albanian, Urdu, Punjabi, Pushto, Dutch, Farsi (Fershi), Bengali, Mandarin, Cantonese, Hukka, French
- **Solihull:** Farsi, Kurdish, Arabic
- **Stoke on Trent:** Kurdish
- **Suffolk:** Albanian, Farsi, Kurdish, Turkish
- **Swansea:** don't know
- **Wakefield:** Albanian, Farsi, Kurdish, Turkish
- **Waltham Forest:** Somali, Tamil, Turkish, Kurdish
- **Warwickshire:** Arabic, Chinese, Tamil, Farsi, various Balkan/East European languages
- **Welsh authority 2:** Not known
- **West Berkshire:** Kosovan, Albanian, [Afghan – not sure what language]
- **Wolverhampton:** Kurdish, Pushto, Dari, Farsi, Arabic, Albanian, Urdu, French

### **3. Library services**

#### **3.1 Library Authorities that have refugees/asylum-seekers have either not answered this section or provide no special services.**

Nine library authorities have either not answered this section or provide no special services.

### **3.2 What library services do you provide for refugees and asylum-seekers?**

Fifty-three authorities answered this question

#### **3.2.1 Entitlement to use the service**

Fourteen say that refugees and asylum seekers are entitled to and/or encouraged to use all library services. In three of these cases, this applies once a permanent address or ID is given.

#### **3.2.2 Stock provision**

Twenty-two mention stock provision which ranges from a few titles in one particular language to a much wider provision.

- Nine authorities mentioned English as a Second Language materials, providing language courses in a variety of formats. Wakefield have English language/computer usage classes at 2 libraries
- Four authorities mentioned basic skills materials. Stoke on Trent find that facilities provided essentially for those with dyslexia are used by many refugees
- Eight authorities mentioned dual-language dictionaries. North Tyneside lend them. Sheffield mentioned that in the relevant libraries where dispersal occurs, they have concentrated on the purchase of bilingual dictionaries
- Four authorities mention that they provide dual-language books. Kirklees are currently purchasing dual-language books for children, and basic English texts for those studying for ESOL at Huddersfield Technical College

Other examples are:

“Some Somali material and in the past, have put together collections for other groups, e.g. Vietnamese” (Bristol)

“Albanian book collection in Central Library and one branch library  
Community language materials in Urdu and Tamil” (Croydon)

“Library materials: books and periodicals for adults and children in community languages and dual language formats; books, audio-visual and other multi-media for ESOL (e.g. Interactive Scotland CD-ROM)” (Glasgow)

“Videos/DVDs/spoken word in Chinese and Indic languages” (Gloucestershire)

“Ethnic Minority Library Service provides: books – fiction, non-fiction, dual language, books on cassette for adults and children, videos, CDs and audio-cassettes” (Greenwich)

“Ethnic Minority Service materials are lent through service points on request by individual users or tutors etc representing them. Static collections of materials can be made available to service points if demand warrants” (Kent)

“A large range of material in Urdu for both adults and children, which is part of our normal stock” (Kirklees)

“Children’s materials” (Lancashire)

“Book borrowing service, including collections of books in the first language of the refugees and asylum-seekers” (Liverpool)

“Small selection of novels in Albanian” (Luton)

“More recently, purchase of some reading material in Albanian and Farsi and additional material added to Russian fiction collection” (Nottingham City)

“Have allocated £1,000 from our multicultural budget for specific materials” (Sheffield)

“Provide materials in forty different languages” (Swansea)

“Have set up a collection of relevant resources at one of the branch libraries where at least 50% live” (Wolverhampton)

### **3.2.3 Information provision**

Three mention access to information, and Greenwich provide information packs, Wolverhampton are compiling a factsheet, and Kent are going to develop a directory of services.

### **3.2.4 Interlending**

Three mention an interlending service. Portsmouth say that, where they receive enquiries/requests, they try to borrow material; when they have sought to purchase, it has proved very difficult and time-consuming to identify sources of supply.

Stoke on Trent mentioned that they refer enquiries to the local Refugee Advice Centre.

### **3.2.5 Internet Access and IT Training**

- Free Internet access is offered at nine authorities, which is mostly used for Internet and email.
- Swansea mention free Internet access to trace missing families.
- Some just say there is access to the Internet but don't say whether there is a charge or not.
- Suffolk and Liverpool provide Internet tuition.
- Luton provide free access to Albanian newspapers.
- Kent are working with Adult Education using the recently-installed NOF computers for refugees on a course called "English for Employment".
- Croydon mention provision of non-English scripts and languages on e-mail PCs, which are free to use
- Northamptonshire provide free access to newspapers in community languages on Information Direct [computer gateway] and instructions in those languages on how to access them
- Lancashire provide a list of appropriate Internet sites which can be accessed through the People's Network
- Glasgow detail their ICT services : free Internet, giving access to on-line newspapers, refugee groups and advice, home country information, ICT community language dictionaries; free e-mail; multi-lingual word-processing is currently being installed in our Real Learning Centres
- Gloucestershire have developed a Website with GARAS, the Gloucestershire Association for Refugees and Asylum-seekers. One English Authority offers word-processing in Indic languages.
- Coventry will launch their word-processing facilities in minority languages in 2002.

### **3.2.6 Newspapers**

Ten authorities mention provision of appropriate newspapers.

### **3.2.7 Publicity in appropriate languages**

Five mention translations of library leaflets.

### **3.2.8 Procedures**

Several mention procedures. For example:

- One English Authority mentions that senior staff have the discretion to be understanding about lack of ID, etc.
- Hertfordshire have an adapted membership procedure based on liaison with refugee workers and concessionary status for those on low incomes.
- Kingston upon Hull offer free audio-visual loans and have no overdue charges on any materials.
- Lancashire have special arrangements for registration; concessions on some library charges.
- In Nottingham City, all refugees and asylum-seekers are exempt from library charges.
- CIP do not restrict people with no fixed address from borrowing materials
- In Suffolk, enquiry-desk staff are aware of difficult financial circumstances of refugees/asylum-seekers, and therefore do not pursue charges for lost books, etc.

### **3.2.9 Events in the library**

Eight authorities mention events in the library. They include:

- Glasgow LIL<sup>5</sup> has participated in a corporate Cultural and Leisure Services youth programme for the arts in the Shawbridge area, using Pollokshaws Library & Learning Centre as the main project base. They also reported organising a programme of multicultural open days between Feb-Mar 2002, developing their pilot programme from Mar 2001 using temporary initiative funding.
- Gloucestershire has displays of asylum-seeker children's work in the library.
- Kingston upon Hull hold dual-language poetry and music evenings.
- Merton work with Homestart Merton (a charity supporting parents with children under five) connecting refugee parents and children with books and information, college courses, etc.
- Stoke on Trent have run small-scale local history projects.

Three mention library tours:

- Croydon does special tours of Central Library for adults and children. They are shown how to join the library and the services available. They have a target of at least 6 tours per year as stated in their Annual Library Plan.
- English authority 12 provides introductory tours and talks which they carry out with assistance from staff at the local Refugee and Asylum-seeker Centre.
- Kent also run tours, as do Northamptonshire.

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<sup>5</sup> Libraries, Information and Learning.

### **3.2.10 Community Rooms**

- Durham Library has community rooms available for interviews/meetings.
- Solihull provide accommodation for groups. They also hold sessions in meeting rooms in the library.

### **3.1.11 Specific posts**

Several authorities mentioned specific posts, for example ethnic services librarians:

- Greenwich has an Ethnic Minority Library Service.
- Rotherham has an Ethnic Minority Home Delivery Service and is about to appoint a Cultural Awareness Officer who will have contact with these groups.

### **3.1.12 Other services**

- Greenwich provides events and activities.
- Kent offers work-experience placements for asylum-seekers and refugees (this has led to 2 being employed as casual staff).
- Stoke on Trent has a subscription to Language Line which helps communication.
- Birmingham have had a three-month research project looking at the library and information needs of refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Nottingham City have undertaken a survey of language and reading needs with refugees and asylum-seekers using their libraries.
- In Coventry in 2001, as part of their Positive Images Festival, the Central Library mounted a photographic exhibition produced by refugees.

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## **3.2 Does this include outreach? If so, please could you briefly describe?**

Thirty-three authorities provide outreach activities, and nineteen do not. These include visits to refugee/asylum-seekers groups, visits by refugee/asylum-seekers groups to the library, events in the library, classes in ESOL or literacy, and liaison with group leaders and others working with refugee/asylum-seekers.

### **3.2.1 Visits to refugee/asylum-seekers groups**

Nineteen authorities mentioned visits to refugee/asylum-seekers groups and/or people living in temporary accommodation for informal chats or to give talks about library provision or how to access information.

- Greenwich visit community organisations, e.g. GCRE Simba (many projects dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers are based there), participate in consultation processes, give talks, arrange displays/stalls and distribution of libraries' publicity material.
- In Lancashire, visits were also made to the reception centre where the Kosovan refugees were housed last year, to promote the consignment of appropriate library stock which was provided for those at the centre.
- In Merton, there are regular outreach visits with books and information to the South London Tamil Welfare Group.
- In Merton, there are also outreach visits connecting refugee parents and children with books and library information, information on local schools, etc.
- In Northamptonshire, the Bookstart worker is working with families at Pen Green Centre, Corby.

Several are planning outreach visits. For example:

- In Warwickshire, the Multicultural Librarian is slowly making contact with groups, and this may develop into outreach activity next year.
- In Lancashire, liaison has taken place with representatives from local support groups regarding visits to drop-in centres by library staff. Plans are currently underway to implement this.

### **3.2.2 Visits by refugee/asylum seekers groups to the library**

Eleven mention visits to the library.

Other comments were:

- Croydon is working in partnership with the Croydon and Surrey Downs Health Authority's Homeless Health Team to provide sessions for homeless families (some of whom are refugees) in a branch library. Staff tell stories and provide craft activities for parents and children. The range of library services is explained.
- In Glasgow, the Greater Govan Refugee Steering Group presently holds its drop-in for asylum-seekers in Ibrox Library & Learning Centre.
- In Hertfordshire, Social Services and other agencies encourage asylum-seekers to join the local library to assist with language learning, education of children, and fill time.

### **3.2.3 Classes in ESOL or literacy**

Three authorities visit ESOL classes.



### **3.2.4 Liaison with group leaders and others working with refugees/asylum-seekers**

Eight mention liaison with group leaders and others working with refugees and asylum-seekers.

- In Glasgow, the Cultural Diversity Officer, or other LIL staff, regularly liaise with workers in the statutory and voluntary sector on asylum issues and local community initiatives.
- Gloucestershire links with GARAS [see above] and GLOSCET tutors who teach asylum-seekers Links with Social Services.
- In Hertfordshire, local staff have some contact with Asylum-seeker Teams in Social Services and staff running local accommodation for refugees/asylum-seekers.
- Luton have discussed some aspects of current provision with the Borough Council officer who has links with the asylum-seekers in the area.
- Sheffield have a Multicultural Information Officer who works with the City Council's Asylum Unit and with a Yemeni group who support Arabic-speaking refugees. Otherwise, their outreach is still limited.
- In Stoke on Trent, all work is carried out in conjunction with Stoke on Trent College.

### **3.2.5 Other Outreach activities**

- Barnsley provide a deposit collection.
- Birmingham use an Under-Fives' vehicle to visit refugee centres.
- Croydon are working on other ways of promoting literacy.
- Essex work in partnership with a WEA outreach worker in Harwich, who meets with refugees both off-site and on library premises for classes, orientation sessions, etc.
- Greenwich are responsible for provision in Belmarsh Prison Service and offers books and small-scale visits by Mobile Library.
- Hammersmith & Fulham run storytelling sessions at B&Bs and a local family project, and have a study Support Club (after school) for KS3/4 – this is a temporary project.
- Northamptonshire distribute of leaflets in community languages via the voucher collection days.
- Rotherham Ethnic Minority Home Delivery Service deliver to a range of groups, using a variety of stock (they are in dialogue with the Asylum-seekers Team about provision of services).

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## **3.3 Do you have any specific provision for under-16s?**

Twenty eight authorities said they had provision, 24 said they had none.

Provision includes stock (particularly dual-language), Bookstart and membership. One authority said that they had been advised that there would not be any under-16s among their refugees and asylum-seekers, and one says that most are adults.

### **3.3.1 Stock provision**

Nine mentioned stock provision:

- Durham have links with Special Educational Needs Services to develop stock as required.
- Gloucestershire provide Indic and Chinese junior fiction and non-fiction.
- Greenwich mentioned a music service.
- Kent mentioned that their Ethnic Minority Service provides some small quantities of materials in Albanian and Estonian (have had difficulty in getting hold of the materials).
- Nottingham City have purchased junior material for selected community libraries – including Arabic, Albanian and Turkish in dual-language and some picture books.
- Sheffield report that they already have material for children in the major languages (Urdu, Arabic, Chinese, Pushto).
- In Suffolk, they are buying children's books in Albanian and Farsi.

### **3.3.2 Dual-language**

Eleven authorities mention dual-language provision, several specifying picture books.

- In Kent, the DCMS/Wolfson project has funded 11 collections of dual-language children's materials and children's dictionaries.
- Lancashire say that consignments of children's materials in appropriate languages have been ordered where these were available, also basic children's books in English – a few without words, some in very basic English. Very few dual-language books are available in the languages required.

### **3.3.3 Bookstart**

Four mention Bookstart.

- Croydon has a special collection of baby books in community languages for Bookstart families, many of whom are refugees/asylum-seekers.
- In Sheffield, Bookstart workers in inner-city areas will work with new asylum-seekers with very young children.
- In Wakefield, their Bookstart Officer has given talks to some asylum-seekers.

### **3.3.4 Membership**

- Derby mentioned that the same membership processes are needed as for adult asylum-seekers, although Social Services staff may act as guarantors.
- In Luton, service provision will follow from the Social Inclusion Strategy. Joining the library is recognised as a problem, and it is accepted that children may not have a parent with them to sign for membership procedures. The new policy will allow other adult(s) or an older sibling to sign for under-16s.

### **3.3.5 Other service provision for under-16s**

- Barnsley's deposit collections include children's books.
- Birmingham use their Under-Fives' vehicle to visit refugees.
- Croydon have made a bid to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation for funding for a project with looked-after children. Some of the children in local authority care are refugees and would benefit if funding was provided for a reading champion.
- Glasgow have on-going programmes for children and schools in particular communities, which naturally include children from asylum-seeker and refugee communities. Their cross-sectoral arts programme at Pollokshaws was specifically for children aged 11-13 years
- Glasgow also have a successful bid for temporary funding for cultural diversity initiatives in 8 areas of the city. This includes funding for staff costs to recruit and train sessional bi-lingual storytellers whom we can use in work with children and parents, including those from asylum-seeker communities. This year, one of the storytellers recruited is Farsi-speaking, so we have been able to deliver more targeted activities for this community.
- In Kirklees, publicity is translated into community languages.
- In Lambeth, a Sure Start worker has links with refugee projects (e.g. Somali, Latin American and African and African-Caribbean groups).
- Wakefield are looking to organise a mother-and-baby class at one library, in conjunction with the local authority's Asylum Team.

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## **3.4 How have these services been funded?**

### **3.4.1 From mainstream provision**

Thirty-nine say from mainstream provision.

### **3.4.2 From special internal/external project funding**

Eight say from special internal/external project funding.

“Asked for extra funding from bookfund, which has been given”  
(English authority 12)

“Several avenues of funding have been explored but many are not open to statutory bodies. In addition, if some aspects of the proposed initiative are seen as core services, such as books or periodicals, some funders regard this as inappropriate for external funding and prefer new projects of an outreach nature. Internal Council funding has been accessed for our outreach programme through applications to the local Area Forum in 8 areas of the City” (Glasgow)

“Website” (Gloucestershire)

“Government funding for Sure Start” (Lambeth)

“Mostly from a small ‘special needs’ budget which provides funding for new initiatives in materials provision” (Lancashire)

“‘It pays to Learn’ project” (Liverpool)

“A small amount of funding has been given to us by the local Gujarati community in Nuneaton for a collection of the Koran in Arabic” (Warwickshire).

### **3.4.3 From a mixture of both**

Eight authorities say a mixture of both. Three have qualified it as follows:

- Kent – mainstream + Wolfson project – additional materials fund has been secured for 2002/3 and 2003/4.
- Northamptonshire – Bookstart plus mainstream funding.
- North Tyneside – library funds + a grant from ‘Widening Participation’ (Learning and Skills Council).

### **3.4.4 From other sources**

Three authorities reported:

“County-wide strategy group links a range of partners (including Arts, Libraries & Museums) so other sources are possible” (Durham)

“From e.g. interloans” (English authority 12)

“Other potential sources of funding are being investigated” (Lancashire)

### **3.5 Do you consider this provision successful in terms of provision of materials/resources?**

Forty authorities answered the question. Of these five just said “no” and seven just said “yes”. There was a number of comments suggesting that staff felt that services were not very satisfactory, partly successful, “OK so far” or “it is too early to say”.

The rest of the comments are below, reflecting issues about the range of material available, funding and marketing:

“There is an issue over availability of material in the relevant languages, the flexibility of budgets to take on new services, and the speed of enabling change. Also of finding funding.” (Birmingham)

“Very difficult to say. Ethnic Minority Adviser had great difficulty getting members of group to meet/discuss.” (Bristol)

“ESOL collection is well-used. Dual language readers need more promotion.” (Coventry)

“Not really. Doesn’t seem to be enough material available and is not readily accessible.” (English authority 1)

“We simply cannot find any Kurdish books, even though we are willing to buy or ‘hire.’” (English authority 8)

“Not wholly. Due to number of languages involved, time delay in identifying and receiving material, and lack of supplementary funding. Often difficulty in finding source of supply.” (English authority 15)

“Successful as far as it goes (project worker pleased with library support of her outreach, and a few refugees at Clacton enjoy Internet and e-mail access, and warm surroundings!).” (Essex)

“No – this sort of piecemeal provision can only offer a limited response to the issue. There is now a massive new demand for core materials and learning opportunities for ESOL, Adult Literacy, community language materials and multi-media resources for adults and children, in a wider range of languages than ever before. Aside from the problems of access to funding, many of these languages are difficult to source for loan or purchase, even before any questions on the quality and range of materials can be considered.” (Glasgow)

“Chinese material is very popular and well used. Indic language books and videos less popular – perhaps not matching needs of the community?” (Gloucestershire)

“Successful, but limited in terms of funding, space and staff.”  
(Greenwich)

“It is very patchy. Hard to resource suitable material, particularly in Albanian and ESOL language material that is not tutor-based. Many refugees want language cassettes, but have no recorder to play on.”  
(Hertfordshire)

“The DCMS/Wolfson funding has enabled us to target asylum-seekers in particular and expand the range of materials on offer, but I would wish to see extended funding to allow additional staffing and materials fund in our base budget so that we could adequately support the demands of both the established ethnic communities and the newer communities through the Ethnic Minority Library Service.” (Kent)

“Usage is quite high, especially the borrowing of audio-visual materials, but the resources and materials need to be increased.”  
(Kingston upon Hull)

“Could be greatly improved, but this is down to financial considerations. Currently difficult to alter this position, due to budget being deferred since July 2001.” (Lambeth)

“No – our experience has been that very little material is available in the required languages, especially English language learning texts in refugees’ own languages. Some refugees are well-educated professionals, and require higher-level professional texts which have been difficult to obtain. We therefore have insufficient resources.”  
(Lancashire)

“Limited by availability of books and other printed material in appropriate languages.” (Newcastle upon Tyne)

“No, lack of bookstock. Yes, provision of newspapers via Information Direct.” (Northamptonshire)

“Partially. We have had increased success as we have purchased additional dictionaries and English language-learning materials. There has been some difficulty in matching supply with demand, especially in the early stages of building up resources and identifying the requirements. We have ordered more material where a shortage has been identified.” (Nottingham City)

“Needs improvement.” (Sandwell)

“We think our provision is quite limited at the moment, but use of newspapers is successful.” (Sheffield)

“Overall comments were that people didn’t want materials in other languages. Very keen to learn English and use core services.” (Solihull)

“Reasonably.” (Stoke on Trent)

“Yet to be developed/assessed.” (Tower Hamlets)

“Some Albanian books in stock, and trying to borrow books in other languages.” (Wakefield)

### **3.6 Do you consider this provision successful in terms of take-up by the communities targeted?**

Thirty-nine authorities answered of which five say “no”; six say “yes”.

“It’s a start, but more work needs to be done.” (Birmingham)

“Minimal.” (Bristol)

“We could do with better take-up.” (Coventry)

“Albanian books received with enthusiasm.” (Croydon)

“Membership has increased from 5 to 45 in 12 months.” (Dudley)

“No. Although libraries where there are ESOL classes seem to be able to get them into the library, at least.” (English authority 1)

“Considering the lack of books, quite good. Many want to use the Internet.” (English authority 8)

“So far staff have told me that the refugees want books and tapes about learning English, and have not borrowed/asked for items in community languages.” (English authority 12)

“Partly.” (English authority 13)

“No real take-up as no ‘community’ to target, as refugees scattered in ones and twos across the borough. Often, do not stay more than a few weeks. Main priorities of most are housing, health and education at present. Using the library low on the list, but hopefully will rise given time.” (English authority 15)

“We have uncovered no figures for number or nationality of refugees, no body seems to be coordinating their placement and support.” (Essex)

“As we cannot really keep pace as we would wish with the new demands for languages ... and as our opportunities for consultation and contact are also limited by difficulties in accessing large-scale language support, it is reasonable to suppose that we are not reaching and maintaining service contact with as many people in the communities as could benefit from our services. We are beginning to develop ethnic monitoring of our service use, so, besides staff knowledge of their customers and language requests, we are beginning to build up a profile of customer use by the target communities.” (Glasgow)

“Successful, but limited in terms of funding, space and staff.”  
(Greenwich)

“Difficult to assess. Probably low in relation to potential take-up.”  
(Hertfordshire)

“The Wolfson project has worked very successfully with agencies that are working face-to-face with asylum-seekers, and this has given the project and the work of the Ethnic Minorities Service a higher profile with these groups. The guided tours of the library have increased membership and issues. Some groups, however, remain hard to reach. This includes those who have recently been given refugee status, as many of the agencies no longer have contact. If the project is able to continue past its present short-term funding, local voluntary groups who have been given funding for integration projects – such as befriending refugees – will be encouraged to develop closer links with the relevant libraries.” (Kent)

“We have not targeted any specific communities.” (Kingston upon Hull)

“No research done.” (Kirklees)

“Take-up by refugee community still somewhat patchy.” (Lambeth)

“Although some refugees have attempted to make use of the library on their own initiative, because we haven’t been able to provide them with much material that is relevant to their needs, there has consequently been a lack of take-up.” (Lancashire)

“The newspapers and Information Direct are well used.”  
(Northamptonshire)

“OK so far.” (North Tyneside)

“There has been a good take-up of dictionaries and language (English) learning material. We are in the early stages of acquiring reading material, and it is too early to make a judgement here.”  
(Nottingham City)



“Use by asylum-seekers in 1/2 libraries is high.” (Sandwell)

“All new asylum-seekers and refugees are provided with information on libraries in their welcome pack. One issue that has arisen is the need to amend our joining procedures to allow people access, who have limited identification. This will hopefully improve a standardised take-up.” (Sheffield)

“Still fairly early days at present.” (Solihull)

“Reasonably. Good relations established, and many have become regular library users.” (Stoke on Trent)

“Book loan and Internet use successful; Internet tuition has been adversely affected by recent events which have increased asylum-seekers’ desire to keep a low profile in the community.” (Suffolk)

“Yet to be developed/assessed.” (Tower Hamlets)

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### **3.7 How would you like to improve your services?**

51 library services answered this question. Common themes were consultation to identify needs, improving the marketing of the service, identifying potential sources of material, library events and outreach.

#### **3.7.1 Consultation to identify needs**

Eighteen authorities mentioned identifying needs, liaising with groups or consultation.

Examples are:

- Blackburn with Darwen are about to undertake a survey of asylum-seekers to ascertain their needs with regard to library provision. This will be undertaken in partnership with the Borough’s Asylum Seeker Support Team. When this is complete, they will know what asylum-seekers want from the library service and plan accordingly.
- Croydon plan to do more, such as visiting the Refugee Project to meet with people and discover what they want from the service.
- English authority 11 has specifically included asylum-seekers as a target group in their Social Inclusion Policy, but feel they cannot develop services satisfactorily without information on who/where/numbers.
- Havering are engaged in a process of consultation with Social Services and Housing as a means of identifying asylum-seekers, and are planning library services to this group.

- Solihull say that it is important to keep talking to asylum-seekers and Social Services/Housing staff who provide support services, to identify further needs.
- Swansea say that they cannot improve their services until they are officially told they have asylum-seekers in the area, and who/where they are.
- Tower Hamlets will review and provide a targeted service to refugees, drawing on best practice and initiatives developed elsewhere.

### **3.7.2 Sources of material**

Twenty-four authorities say they would like to improve their stock supply in some way.

- CIP mention co-operative sourcing of materials for both deposit collections in communities and for borrowing directly from libraries.
- Coventry would like to see a national lending scheme for languages such as Farsi, Kurdish, etc.
- English authority 14 said that the spread of languages and numbers involved make provision of first language materials in any quantity (to provide choice) problematical, so their limited budget is being supplemented by a sponsor, and this will be directed at learning English in the first instance.
- Essex would like to have resources available, which they can mobilise quickly – one of their difficulties is that, by the time they have provided the right resources to the right location, the people have moved/been moved on.
- Kent want to extend the range of materials and outreach further and embed it into the Ethnic Minority Service so that they can continue to provide a quality service for the established ethnic minority communities and be proactive towards providing services for any individual or ethnic communities that live, work or study in Kent.
- One authority also wanted to extend their purchase of videos in appropriate languages (although there are certification problems).

### **3.7.3 Improve marketing**

Seventeen mentioned promoting their services, for example, by providing leaflets in appropriate languages.

- Birmingham say they need to overcome perceived barriers that local libraries are for local people only.

- Bristol say they need to form better communication lines with groups, but library material is not seen as a priority – some groups are not used to working with the written word.
- Coventry need to prepare a leaflet advertising their ESOL collection.
- English authority 8 would like a quick and cheap way to translate leaflets, etc.
- Glasgow would like to produce quality translated information that can be regularly updated.
- Kingston upon Hull would like to be able to translate library literature.
- Kirklees would like to liaise with Huddersfield Technical College to bring students to the library for introductory sessions, how to use, etc.
- Lancashire need publicity material, translated into relevant languages.
- North Tyneside would like to produce leaflets explaining services in own languages.

#### **3.7.4 Staffing**

Three authorities mention staffing issues. Gloucestershire mentioned the need for training, Portsmouth mentioned a dedicated member of staff responsible for this area, and Stoke on Trent mentioned specific liaison staff.

#### **3.7.5 Outreach**

Six authorities mention outreach.

Examples are:

- Lancashire say that more outreach is needed (currently considering potential of engaging volunteers to help provide this).
- Merton say that, by mainstreaming outreach so that each library site is responsible for the communities immediately surrounding the library, they feel that they will increase their reach to the local population. In addition, the practice of keeping services to refugees and asylum-seekers the responsibility of a small group of people seems to increase marginalisation of library service provision. Thus, if a refugee or asylum-seeker comes into a library, it may not be felt to be the responsibility of that library to deal with the query. Mainstreaming puts services to refugees and asylum-seekers on a par with other services. This process has begun, but has a way to go – of course, it needs a strategic person in post to devise strategies and policies around this mainstreaming. This post has been advertised but is not yet filled.

### **3.7.6 Budgetary considerations**

Two mentioned the need for more funding. Lambeth would like to run projects with individual groups of refugees and asylum-seekers, but it is difficult to proceed in the current economic climate (this is something which will be investigated by the Development Manager, Social Inclusion).

### **3.7.7 Interpreters**

Two mentioned interpreters. Hertfordshire is investigating possible options to provide interpreters in libraries by appointment.

### **3.7.8 Other comments**

“Need to make people aware of what is available and how to make use of them. They would like libraries to be central information points for other services and would like libraries to be a cultural point to celebrate the contribution made to Birmingham by refugees and asylum-seekers.” (Birmingham)

“Clear, mainstreamed resourced access to interpreting and translation services at the point of need. Explore involving members of asylum-seeker communities as volunteers, or refugees as paid workers.” (Glasgow)

“More space” and “Extend services to neighbouring boroughs lacking the provision.” (Greenwich)

“Family Literacy sessions at the Library” and “Book-making workshops for parents.” (Hammersmith & Fulham)

“We are reassessing our ID requirements and joining arrangements to try to remove barriers.” (Hertfordshire)

“Continuation of the Wolfson project will ensure that the strong links being developed with agencies and individuals working with asylum-seekers and refugees in Kent are continued.” (Kent)

“Storytimes and work by Children’s Reading Development Librarians. Consider events that would bring people into the library.” (Kirklees)

“Homework Club relevant to needs of refugee children.” (Lancashire)

“Improvements in delivering services – employee workforce/asylum-seekers/refugees inclusion”, “More and better ESOL classes” and “Community safety improvements.” (Liverpool)

“Target children and families specifically” and “Exploit PC/Internet access when our NOF bid comes through.” (North Tyneside)

“In particular, we would like to organise tours and create introductory material in the relevant languages.” (Nottingham City)

“We have a long way to go in terms of speed of response.”  
(Portsmouth)

“They are in dialogue with the Asylum-seekers Team to develop a Website for asylum-seekers.” (Rotherham)

“Library drop-ins on a regular basis.” (Stoke on Trent)

“Integrate services into the mainstream.” (Warwickshire)

“The numbers of asylum-seekers in the area are so small that I doubt we would be able/expected to provide an effective service, especially when the few we do have in the area are transient.” (West Berkshire)

“By further involvement with the communities in order to develop services which are interactive i.e. the use of libraries as ‘one-stop’ information centres” and “Also, to allow other service-providers an opportunity to create partnerships with the Library Service.”  
(Wolverhampton)

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## **4. Community links**

Six Library authorities that have refugees/asylum-seekers have either not answered this section or provide no special services.

### **4.1 Do you consult refugees/asylum-seekers, for example for Best Value?**

Fifty-two Library authorities answered the question, and, of those, twelve say “no” without further comment (Derby comments that the numbers are so small, and the population so transient, it would not be practical).

Forty say “yes”, in many cases qualified by comments such as “to some extent” or “limited so far”.

Kensington & Chelsea, North Tyneside will be undertaking their Best Value Reviews in 2002/3. Several others are starting their Review and are likely to include refugees and asylum seekers. Several say they haven’t done so far, but might.

Wolverhampton is the only authority which reported that it has undertaken a Best Value Inspection and mentioned that the needs of refugees/asylum-seekers were highlighted.

Bexley say “Now as part of the Best Value review which is currently underway looking at our provision for refugees and asylum-seekers with a view to allocating resources and extending our services to this group in the next financial year 2002/3. This activity will also form part of the work plan which falls from the social inclusion policy, the development of which is again part of this year’s work plan. I am at present contacting colleagues in other Council departments to discover the extent of the refugee and asylum-seeking population in the borough and will begin to develop services accordingly.”

#### **4.1.1 Consult ethnic minority groups**

Bristol is consulting ethnic minority groups, but not necessarily refugees. Two other authorities are in the planning stages of consulting ethnic minority groups

#### **4.2.2 Consultation through liaison with service providers**

Five are either consulting through informal liaison with those who work on their behalf or are about to.

Other examples are:

“Are about to undertake a survey of asylum-seekers to ascertain their needs with regard to library provision. This will be undertaken in partnership with the Borough’s Asylum Seeker Support Team.”  
(Blackburn with Darwen)

“Best Value consultations via meetings with community groups, focus panels, etc – but may not include refugees. Also consulted staff in refugee info and advice centre regularly as to needs of refugees/asylum-seekers.” (English authority 12)

“Yes, eg last Dec, had consultation with the Somali group concerning their library needs. Arranged a meeting with the Director of the Somali Parents Network and other representatives of the Somali community.”  
(Greenwich)

“Not done any Best Value consultations, but the Wolfson project manager has consulted on literary and language needs; whether or not to purchase videos and music CDs in other languages; what could be achieved if further funding is found. We will be monitoring issues to guide the service in the future.” (Kent)

“Not directly, but via Social Services, Kirklees Refugees and Friends Together [KRAFT], and Women’s Space – who run drop-in/advice/social centres. We have recently been talking to them about what we can provide.” (Kirklees)

“The County Council has corporately developed a ‘Life in Lancashire’ focus group with some 2,700 members representing a broad cross-section of the community in Lancashire. Within the Library Service, consultation has been identified as one of a series of measures designed to move forward the agenda to improve and develop services to minority ethnic communities. It is proposed therefore to involve refugees and asylum-seekers in the consultation process through liaising with the drop-in centres.” (Lancashire)

“Yes, fairly regularly; identification of weaknesses in Council services and other partner services through such consultation. Participation in Housing/Race Strategy focus groups.” (Liverpool)

“Have consulted with individuals and with Refugee Action, and undertaken a language/reading need survey.” (Nottingham City)

#### **4.2.3 Other methods of consultation**

“Some took part in our annual CIPFA PLUS surveys.” (Cornwall)

“Not directly. Any views are passed on by the Housing Officer. We are wary of being yet another ‘official’, badgering them.” (English authority 8)

“Yes, but not as part of Best Value. Through Open Days, from the interpreters themselves.” (Glasgow)

“Have also sought information from outside the authority – from Kent CC.” (Nottinghamshire)

“Are working alongside the Asylum-seekers Team in seeking to achieve representation through the proposed Website.” (Rotherham)

“Not specifically, but indirectly as surveys are sent out to Council and community offices all around the City.” (Stoke on Trent)

“A rolling programme of customer consultation with minority groups has been instigated, and asylum-seekers form part of this initiative.” (Wakefield)

## **4.2 If not, how have you decided what services to offer?**

- 4.2.1 Twenty-nine answered and of these twelve said that the services offered are demand-led – the demand either being individual or groups’ representatives. Thirteen said that they work through refugee/asylum-seekers groups. For example, in Hertfordshire the service is based on contact with people who work with refugees/asylum-seekers, and what refugees ask for when they come

Two authorities said they would offer services when the community is located, and another two mentioned community-profiling or research data.

#### **4.2.2 Other ways of deciding**

“Services are not targeted exclusively at refugees and have been developed gradually.” (Stoke on Trent)

“Advice from refugee organisations. Three-month research project into the library and information needs of refugees and asylum-seekers – the findings of this will help formulate policy.” (Birmingham)

“Home language stock needs are registered. Basic English guides are requested by asylum-seekers.” (Derby)

“Services the same as those offered to resident Asian community – books, recorded music, videos, newspapers and periodicals in eight languages – Urdu and Punjabi being the main ones.” (English authority 15)

“Aside from consultation opportunities, staff in community libraries request materials/information that is the result of customer request, or other communication between staff and asylum-seeker/refugee customers. Liaison with Education staff and the Educational Resource Service for schools on resource needs, so this also influences purchasing and planning.” (Glasgow)

“To date, liaison has taken place with staff from other departments of the County Council and the district councils who have been closely involved in providing essential services for refugees. Efforts have been made to provide materials based on profiles provided by these staff. A regional group was briefly set up (a Manchester initiative) to consider the potential for sharing knowledge and resources when the various library authorities in the North West were attempting to provide materials for the Kosovan refugees. Also, provision by other library authorities has been investigated.” (Lancashire)

“Along with information gained as above, have relied on expertise and knowledge of individual librarians.” (Nottingham City)

“Through the borough-wide Forum.” (Tower Hamlets)



### **4.3 Do you use interpreters, and, if so, where are they provided from and how is this funded?**

Fifty-one answered, and, of these, thirteen services use Language Line. Two authorities will work with local colleges, two use staff with appropriate languages, two have offers from volunteers and two say they can't afford interpreters. Twelve say an unqualified "no".

#### **4.3.2 Translation and interpretation services**

Thirteen use local authority translation and interpretation services.

"Hounslow has a translation and interpreting service (libraries have to pay for each piece of work done)." (CIP)

"These may be supplied by the City Council, although arrangements have to be made in advance." (Derby)

"They are available through the Council's Community Language Service. We have not needed to use them." (English authority 3)

"Have access to interpreting services, but have not used them yet." (Kensington & Chelsea)

"Have access to Medway Community Translating and Interpreting Service should we need to use interpreters. Funding within Wolfson project for interpreting. After this funding ceases, we would pay for any services from the Equal Opportunities budget." (Kent)

"Funded by library budget and in the main from Council's Community Language Unit." (Kirklees)

"Interpreters provided by City Council and paid for by the receiving service. Some library users act as informal interpreters. Some library staff assisted in accessing translation of appeals, housing issues, etc." (Liverpool)

"Not specifically, although the Borough Council does have translation/interpretation facilities we can call on." (Luton)

"Community Access and Language Services [CALs] provides interpreters via telephone or in person (and provides translation). This is a County Council service; Libraries are a core funder." (Northamptonshire)

"Access to Language Line. Portsmouth has a translation service." (Portsmouth)

“The Wakefield Interpretation and Translation Service [WITS] is used for Urdu translations, so could be used for other languages.”  
(Wakefield)

“The Borough has an interpreting, translation and transcription service; whenever the service is used, the department requiring the support is re-charged.” (Waltham Forest)

#### **4.3.3 Groups bring in own interpreter.**

Four authorities say that groups bring their own interpreter.  
For example:

“Glasgow have used interpreters from the Scottish Refugee Council for open day programmes in 2001 and 2002 for several reasons. As we do not have a defined budget for interpreting and translating, it has been necessary to identify funds for projects. This approach is suitable for programmed pieces of work, but is less appropriate for on-going access.” (Glasgow)

“Have only used an interpreter when we have worked in conjunction with the Asylum Seekers Association, and they supplied the interpreter.” (Kingston upon Hull)

“Use Language Line, funded from Libraries budget. Interpreters used at specific events, funded from a variety of external sources (e.g. Government Regeneration schemes; Sure Start; local authority depts). Interpreters can come from within asylum-seeker/refugee community or other agencies.” (Newcastle upon Tyne)

#### **4.3.4 Other comments/answers**

“No, except Study Support Club which was funded by NOF for 12 weeks.” (Hammersmith & Fulham)

“To date it has not been necessary for the library service to arrange for interpreters, as meetings have been arranged by other Council departments, who have also arranged for the necessary interpretation facility. It has not been easy however to find the interpreters required. Lancashire County Council has a corporate subscription to Language Line, which is a potentially useful interpretation facility in some circumstances. Library staff are receiving training in use of this facility. (further details on Language Line can be provided).” (Lancashire)

“Use our own staff, and have a list of approved translators. The Community Library Service will access Language Line as soon as possible this year.” (Rotherham)

“No, but we do have contacts who can help in extreme situations.”  
(Sheffield)

“Support group organised by Social Services and Housing have organised interpreters.” (Solihull)

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## **5. Sources of supply of library materials**

Whilst a few library authorities relied almost entirely on their mainstream suppliers (and a very small number could not find other sources of supply), the majority of authorities used specialist suppliers.

The list of these gathered from this survey has been combined with other lists to produce an information sheet which is available separately from The Network.

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## **6. Staff training**

Fifty authorities answered this question, of which thirty said they do no training in this area, and two say they will in the near future/it is at the planning stage.

In four authorities, staff awareness has been raised through memoranda and the sharing of information at staff meetings. Two others mentioned that there has been training about procedures (eg basic instructions for joining asylum-seekers, monitoring any losses resulting from relaxation of ID requirements for joining and acceptance of vouchers as payment for Internet provision).

Eighteen said they carry out staff training. Of these, three mentioned that core training included cultural awareness; one mentioned equalities training.

Some have general training courses where mention of refugees and asylum-seekers may be made, but the eleven below mentioned training specifically on refugees and asylum seekers.

Specific training mentioned included:

In Coventry from January 2002, as part of the induction course, all new staff will attend training sessions on cultural diversity and library provision. One of the sections will be on refugees and asylum-seekers – content: the refugee experience, local scene and library provision.

CIP have Refugee awareness training by the Refugee Employment Advice Centre.

Staff from Camden and from Hammersmith & Fulham have attended a SKILLS training course, 'Services for refugees and asylum-seekers'<sup>6</sup> very recently.

Glasgow currently has two kinds of training: briefing/question-and-answer sessions with the Education Co-ordinator of GASSP have been held with staff in 4 of the libraries that serve asylum-seeker/refugee communities, in their Wednesday training hour. Also all Cultural and Leisure Services (CLS) staff are required to attend a half-day course on cultural diversity/racial equality training, with senior managers having a full day and Heads of Service and above a two day course. This course now specifically includes reference to and a brief discussion of the context and facts on asylum-seekers in the city. Training is delivered by an external trainer and either a CLS professional trainer or one of the trained staff volunteers. A folder on services for asylum-seekers and refugees, to act as a complement to the Good Practice Guide, has been developed for each service point as a resource for information and referral.

In Kent all library staff based at the Detainee Centres have attended Cultural Awareness training during the last 2 years, relating directly to asylum-seekers and detainees.

Also in Kent, pilot training on asylum-seeker awareness was carried out in Folkestone Library in April 2002. Feedback was mixed, but it was used to plan the programme for 11 briefing sessions on the Wolfson project and asylum-seeker awareness to take place in June/July 2002.

In Kirklees, some staff recently attended a day school on social inclusion (including refugees and asylum-seekers) organised by the YLG.

In Northamptonshire there is local training in using CALS, carried out by library staff.

North Tyneside has one person who was briefed on the use of Language Line, and this was cascaded down; Suffolk also uses Language Line training.

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## **7. Are there any other comments you would like to add?**

Thirty-five services made comments.

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<sup>6</sup> This course was run by Kent Arts & Libraries and The Network.

## 7.1 Good practice

Seven authorities say that they will be very interested to see the results of the survey and would be interested in information about successful initiatives and models of good practice.

“This survey is a good initiative that should help to pool together information and good practice. I would welcome any publication or group that might be produced as a result of this project and would be willing to assist, if this would be useful.” (Glasgow)

“A more collective approach within the wider library world would be appreciated. Our research process was very much a mind-boggling experience which also included difficulties with finding relevant suppliers.” (Wolverhampton)

## 7.2 Stock-related

Six authorities made stock-related comments.

“Need to share information about suppliers of music, lists of popular material, etc.” (Coventry)

“Need to set up informal exchange schemes eg Coventry can loan Asian language material, and, in return, would appreciate Arabic, Farsi materials.” (Coventry)

“It would be useful if resources could be found for development of a national library current list of language holdings and capacity for/conditions for lending.” (Glasgow)

“The specialist requirements of this aspect of library services means that the research of languages and suppliers of these languages can be very time consuming. It also can mean a turnaround in policies and procedures currently being used in any authority, for example in Kent one of the difficulties we encountered was being able to buy from online stockists.” (Kent)

“It would be helpful to draw on the experience of other library authorities particularly in relation to sources of provision of appropriate materials and practices relating to registration and charging. Regional co-ordination could be helpful in order to make best use of resources – eg the potential for circulating and inter-lending material, providing that larger selections can be acquired. Previous experience was that so little material was available that it wasn't viable to circulate collections.” (Lancashire)

“It would be helpful if an organisation was set up to help libraries to select appropriate books in the refugee/asylum-seekers' languages

(such as CILLA which is used for Indic stock-buying).”  
(Northamptonshire)

“Want to learn more about suppliers who can offer book and spoken word (combination) packages.” (Nottingham City)

“The main need in this area is for better information on sources of appropriate material for purchase and for loan.” <sup>7</sup> (Portsmouth)

### **7.3 Difficulties in profiling**

Three mentioned difficulties in profiling.

“Are engaged in a consultation exercise with our Social Services and Housing Departments to gain reliable information about asylum-seekers/refugees. Early indications would indicate that there is only a very small number of asylum-seekers/refugees in this area: thus the Asylum Support Unit deals with 12 families in the Hornchurch, Upminster and Rainham areas, with other refugee families housed in neighbouring boroughs.” (Havering)

“Gathering the information about who is where, speaking what language, from what country and in what numbers is very difficult. However a statistical project due to be completed by the home office by the end of this year should assist in this. The project plans to identify those with refugee.” (Kent)

“Status, where they are from originally and what part of the country they are now living in.” (Kent)

“Limited amount of information available about who the groups are, their location, the language spoken and their numbers hinders our ability to respond to their needs if we have been able to identify what those needs are.” (Waltham Forest)

### **7.4 Staffing issues**

Four services mention staffing issues.

“Have just started a social inclusion team.” (Barnsley)

“Have Ethnic Minority Adviser post currently vacant, which means less work in this area at present.” (Bristol)

“Don’t feel they are doing enough and are anxious to try to gain additional funding, either from Arts & Libraries, or another source to expand the Ethnic Minority Service to encompass all ethnic minorities

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<sup>7</sup> We had a request for Tagalog, which was sourced from a supplier in US, identified via Amazon (but very slow).

(Including asylum seekers and travellers), rather than deal with all of this piecemeal. (Kent)

“The key to this is additional staffing, as one person cannot serve the whole county and the additional Wolfson funding has shown what can be achieved with an additional post and some additional materials fund.” (Kent)

## **7.5 Library Service groups**

“Locally we have a group within Libraries, which looks at library provision for refugees and asylum-seekers. This was set up in response to Refugee Week 2001, but has remained in order to coordinate services to refugees. It is made up of representatives from Lending and Reference Services, plus Children’s and Community Services.” (Birmingham)

“Are hoping to address some of the areas of which we are aware.” (Nottingham City)

## **7.6 Corporate groups**

“In Birmingham, there is a group which looks at the issue of refugees and asylum-seekers at a corporate level. This includes all Council departments, plus other relevant organisations. It is at present formulating a Corporate Policy.” (Birmingham)

“The Multicultural Librarian attends meetings of officers with responsibility for services for refugees and asylum-seekers, and keeps senior management informed.” (Coventry)

“Participate in a multi-agency asylum-seekers working group, made up of Council departments, voluntary sector, police, Race Equality, Job Centre, Health Service, Home Office reps.” (Dudley)

## **7.7 Liaison**

Two mentioned liaison.

“Information was obtained from Sandwell Health Authority – they do much outreach work with them.” (Sandwell)

“Since becoming part of the Refugee Forum, we are gaining more information to enable us to produce a more proactive rather than reactive strategy.” (Sheffield)

## **7.8 Low numbers**

Two mentioned low numbers.

“It is difficult to see how to answer some of these questions when the need for services to asylum-seekers is so small in the area. Having said that, we would be ill-prepared for a major influx of people who could benefit from library services.” (West Berkshire)

“At present, the numbers of asylum-seekers/refugees is so low that no specific provision is made.” (Windsor & Maidenhead)

## **7.8 In development**

Three mentioned that they are in the early stages of development.

“Are aware that there is potentially a lot more work to do and that we are in the early stages of developing our services.” (Nottingham City)

“Are aware of the growing needs in Sheffield as more refugees and asylum-seekers come to live in the city. Our budget is limited, but we are trying to respond.” (Sheffield)

“This is a developing field for us. The County Council as a whole is only just now developing a response, as this is an emerging situation.” (Warwickshire)

## **7.9 Promotion**

Two mentioned the value of promotion.

“Although our planning and provision is at quite an early stage, it is hoped to have something in place by Refugee Week in June, and to promote the service then. In the meantime, it is necessary to concentrate on improving our provision and on outreach, consultation and staff training.” (Lancashire)

“As well as trying to provide services in response to the expressed needs of asylum-seekers and refugees, we have worked in cooperation with other agencies in Newcastle to ensure all of the asylum-seekers and refugees have information about our services. We rely on our Council Asylum-seekers Unit to ensure that they deliver this information in an appropriate language.” (Newcastle upon Tyne)

## **7.10 Other comments**

“So far, services for refugees have a low priority in the authority’s plans, and therefore in the Library’s business plan. There is an authority policy on ethnic minority harassment, but not yet on providing services for ethnic minority language speakers.” (Comment made by one of our named respondents, which they would like to be kept anonymous)



“Potential bid has been made to Learning Skills Council for access to funding for refugees and asylum-seekers.” (Camden)

“Have discussed with Training Officer to initiate courses with either yourself or NEMLAC. Hopefully will be sending staff to NEMLAC’s courses + CSG course in May.” (English authority 1)

“Have a similar resourcing problem for foreign language speakers in our local HMP/YOI.” (Essex)

“Hope that, across CLS/Glasgow City Council – and perhaps in other areas of the country, the need to respond to the diverse needs of diverse communities will lead to more strategic and closer working partnerships that will develop sustainable ways of working for the future.” (Glasgow)

“You can see the Website at:  
[www.gloscc.gov.uk/comm/asylum/index.htm](http://www.gloscc.gov.uk/comm/asylum/index.htm)” (Gloucestershire)

“Development Managers, Social Inclusion and Lifelong Learning are looking for funding to arrange transport to Streatham Library for a group of Latin American refugees.” (Lambeth)

“Holocaust Memorial Day – Storyteller and Development Manager, Social Inclusion involved in a filming project. Aim to include interviews from all sectors of the community, including refugee and asylum-seeker communities.” (Lambeth)

“Social Inclusion Strategy to be produced in Dec 2002. This will investigate current provision, and will make recommendations for the future.” (Lambeth)

“Have learned from the experience of other library authorities with large numbers of asylum-seekers.” (Newcastle upon Tyne)

“Find that access to the Internet is very useful, especially for on-line newspapers and e-mail.” (Newcastle upon Tyne)

“There was no national network or central point which we could approach to find out ‘good practice’ in other authorities. We ended up ringing up obvious sources (e.g. Refugee Council) before getting the confidence to go ahead and do something. It took considerable amount of time to get anywhere!” (North Tyneside)

“More cross-sectional working would improve service to asylum-seekers.” (Wakefield)