

### **Immigrant integration into British society**

The ongoing Unity out of Diversity research project, based at the University of Manchester, is exploring how immigrant integration is perceived and understood in different sectors of society, including public policy, the academic sector and amongst the general public. It aims to gather research evidence and stimulate the public and policy debate as well as identify effective indicators of integration.

**'Integration' is connected with ideas of community, mixing of different races and cultures, acceptance of diversity, but also conforming to British society. Speaking English emerges as an important part of integration in all groups.**

### **Should public policy promote 'integration'?**

Some new arrivals access employment, accommodation and any services they need without delay and begin to build new social networks. However, some migrant groups, as a result, have low labour market participation rates and, for instance, disproportionately poor housing and health (Gidley and Jayaweera 2010). There is no consensus, however, on the reasons why this is the case. Public concern about migration can reflect a perception that some migrants are unwilling **'to integrate'**: to learn English, for instance, or mix socially with people from outside of their immediate community. Those working with migrants, however, emphasise the barriers to participation that they can face.

### **Integration policy in the UK**

There is no national policy framework on integration. There are integration policies relating to one category of migrant refugees, and to those applying for settlement and UK citizenship. Responsibility for migrants is dispersed across Whitehall. No single department takes a lead role. The UK Border Agency (UKBA) within the Home Office is responsible for refugee integration and for settlement and Citizenship policy. The Department for Communities and Local Government leads on community cohesion while the Government Equality Office leads on discrimination.

### **REFUGEE COUNCIL – “SUPPORTING AND EMPOWERING REFUGEES.”**



The Refugee

Council's **Holistic Integration Service**

supports newly recognised refugees to make the challenging first steps towards resettlement.

Having been denied access to public funds and services during the asylum process, newly recognised refugees need to address some immediate essential issues, for example:

- Obtaining the necessary Identify and immigration documentation (**Asylum related issues**)
- Accessing a source of income or interim financial support (**Financial Stability issues**)
- Addressing any physical and mental health problems (**Health and Wellbeing issues**)
- Finding somewhere stable and secure to live (**Access to settled housing issues**)
- Making steps towards securing employment and financial independence (**Access to training/education and employment issues**)

### **HOWEVER**

Refugees will face higher levels of poverty, unemployment and destitution because government cuts will prevent people from integrating into British society, according to a study by the Scottish Refugee Council has found that refugees remain one of the most marginalised groups.

Funding by the UK Border Agency (UKBA) that helps refugees integrate into British society will end and that these provisions across the UK could be badly affected.

**The report has found that only 13% of refugees were in full employment and that less than 1% of those in work earned more than £15,000 a year.**

"Language services could also be affected at a time when the government is demanding that immigrants learn English in order to integrate. In a controversial speech in April the Prime Minister David Cameron said that immigrants unable to speak English or unwilling to integrate have created a "kind of discomfort and disjointedness" that has disrupted communities across Britain."

A source states: **"Integration is highly important and vital for refugees, and we need to be encouraged to integrate by education or working or volunteering or social activities ... Having said that, integration is also important to the British people because we all live together ... ie Britons also need to be encouraged to integrate with us."**



**"More than 120 leading economists, among them former government, UN and World Bank officials, have lambasted the UK government's response to the refugee crisis, calling it seriously inadequate, morally unacceptable and economically wrong."**



According to an open letter addressed to David Cameron, the UK **“can do far more”** and these economists are calling on the government to take a **“fair and proportionate share of refugees, both those already within the EU and those still outside it.”**

They are also calling for **safe and legal routes** to and within the EU, including the UK, and **“fair and thorough procedures to determine eligibility for international protection wherever it is sought.”**

**David Cameron’s government has agreed to take up to 20,000 Syrian refugees over five years, from the camps on the borders of the war-torn country. More than 1,000 have arrived so far.**



**Britain has always been ready and willing to welcome refugees in times of crisis**

Offering sanctuary to those in need of refuge is a proud British tradition. We're good at it, we always have been.

This site has been set up to help Civil Society groups and members of the public to coordinate their activities and act together to show that the country is #ReadyAndWilling and that this is a place which says clearly

**#refugeeswelcome**

There are organisations like **#refugeeswelcome** who try and find private housing in the UK for refugees. Their website states:

This website shows that people are trying to help refugees even if as a country we have no set policy on how to cope in such a crisis. With 727 landlords offering properties, 620 local campaigns started and 1,403,691 people who stand with **#refugeeswelcome**, it is clear we are starting to answer the call for help.