

Integration Programme? Integration Strategy?

No national or local integration programme
(not voluntary or compulsory)

BUT

- Citizenship now requires a language and culture test
- National government is now piloting a personal integration programme
- Birmingham City Council also produced Integration Strategy with partners

Birmingham Integration Strategy

Governance/Collaborative Framework

1. Integration Strategy Group

15 Members including representatives from City Council and partners:-

Health Service

Police

Refugee Council

Learning and Skills Council

Job Centre Plus

Home Office

Birmingham Integration Strategy

Governance/Collaborative Framework

2. Network Meeting

Frontline workers from any
agency

Attendance 20-40.

Action in Birmingham to facilitate settlement

- 10-20 Projects working exclusively or primarily on refugee integration/settlement. (Euros 5,000 - 250,000)
- 50-100 Refugee Community Organisations. Only a few have funding to employ staff or to run own premises.

Wardlow Road Centre

- Multi agency advice to individuals on housing, benefits, employment, training and health
- Facilities (office and meeting space), support and training for Refugee Community Organisations.

Managed and part funded by the City Council

Community Integration Partnership

A voluntary project working with Refugee women in Birmingham.

- Advice and Guidance for employment.
- Language tuition
- Some skills training e.g IT, Childcare.

Funding from European Refugee Fund (ERF)
and Home Office.

Trellis

Project aimed at improving access to employment for refugees and other migrants.

- Working to improve response of the government agency that pays benefit and helps job search (Job Centre Plus).
- Working with individual refugees.
- Working with employers

Funded by Central Government "Invest to Save Budget" for 3 years.

North West Birmingham Refugee Housing Partnership

Improving access to housing for
refugees.

- Mutual awareness raising for refugee organisations and housing providers.
- Capacity building for refugee organisation.
- Development work with providers.

Funded by European Refugee Fund via
Housing Association Charitable Trust.

ASPIRE

EQUAL funded project gives funding to small initiatives in

- Arts - awareness raising
- English language courses
- Volunteering
- Capacity building for Refugee Community Organisations

ESF funding

Hot news about a **new** national refugee integration strategy

New proposals suggest sweeping up all government funding and **contracting** for a national programme under 4 themes:

- Personal integration plans
- Employment support for professionals
- Mentoring
- Support for Refugee Community Organisations

Support for and working with Refugee Community Organisations

Support for community organisations is a constant theme in discussions about working with migrants. Because

- They can provide insight into a community's needs for service providers and strategists providing two way communication
- They can provide social support and advice in mother tongue
- They can support integration by helping maintain cultural and religious traditions

Support for and working with Refugee Community Organisations

BUT

- There has been no funding strategy
- Difficult to evaluate which emerging organisation merits investment

SO

- We separate support from funding
- Build capacity in governance and business

Conclusion

Integration strategies need to reflect

- Difficulties over housing
- Difficulties over acquiring English
- Other barriers to labour market
- Difficulties in communicating needs generally because of language and culture.
- Negative attitudes or lack of awareness amongst citizens and service providers.