



SHARE

Building a resettlement network for European municipalities, cities and regions www.resettlement.eu

THE SHARE PROJECT

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With a worldwide membership, staff and operations and working with migrants and refugees in more than 40 countries, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) serves and protects uprooted people – refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants – regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.

Since its creation in 1951, ICMC has identified and accompanied one million refugees for resettlement and provides expertise through the ICMC-UNHCR Resettlement Deployment Scheme.

SHARE Network National Briefing: the UK

1. Governance

The United Kingdom is a unitary state governed by an elected national Parliament. Devolved parliamentary authorities in both Wales and Scotland - established in 1998 and 1999, respectively - have a range of legislative powers in domestic policy areas, whilst the majority of external policy responsibility remains with the national Parliament. Elections for the national Parliament, Scottish and Welsh Assemblies take place every 5 years, and the next election is due to take place in June 2015.



Scotland is divided into 32 unitary authorities ('Councils'), and Wales into 22 single-tier 'principal areas'. The pattern of local government in England is more varied, with a number of different types of elected authorities in operation, as below:

county level	6 metropolitan counties	27 non-metropolitan counties	56 unitary authorities	Greater London
district level	36 metropolitan districts	201 non-metropolitan districts		32 London boroughs City of London
parish level	civil parishes	civil parishes	civil parishes	

Broadly speaking, UK local authorities are responsible for a wide range of functions and services within their localities, including:

- Social services
- Education (5-16 years)
- Housing (including housing-related social welfare)
- Planning
- Transport

Healthcare is provided via 10 regional Strategic Health Authorities, directly responsible to the central Department of Health. National regulation and resourcing of Further Education (post-16 – including language tuition) resourcing is the responsibility of the central Skills Funding Agency.

From the early 1990s, England was subdivided into 9 regions within which corresponding, unelected Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies delivered a range of national government policies and Programmes. In 2010, the current UK government announced the abolition of these regional structures and the transfer of some economic development responsibilities to 38 new Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs), collaborative local authority structures covering far smaller areas without reference to regional boundaries.

The Greater London Authority (GLA), established in 2000, is the only elected strategic regional authority in England. Since 2009, local authorities have been able to create indirectly elected combined authorities. The first of these is the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), a formal association of the 10 metropolitan boroughs that comprise Greater Manchester established in April 2011. Prior to the GMCA's formation, the 10 local authorities had voluntarily collaborated on strategic and policy issues via the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA). The GMCA has now assumed responsibility for regional economic development, transport and regeneration,



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whilst AGMA continues to lead local authority collaboration on areas such as housing, health and environmental services.

2. Migration – an overview

In 2013, approximately 532,000 people migrated to the UK, a slight increase on 2012 although broadly consistent with levels of immigration to the country since 2004. 46% of these were from outside the EU, 39% were EU nationals and the remaining 15% were British citizens born abroad or returning to the UK after a prolonged absence.

Migration for the stated purpose of formal study made up the largest single category of migrants (41%). Migration for work, a category that includes both those coming 'for a definite job' and 'to look for work', constituted 41% of all arrivals. Numbers of family migrants to the UK have not fluctuated substantially since 1991, but due to increases in migration in other categories have decreased as an overall percentage of all migration (12.4% in 2013).

During 2013, the UK received 29,875 applications for asylum, constituting just under 5.6% of total migration. The most common countries of origin of asylum applicants were Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Syria and Albania. In the same year, 34% of initial asylum decisions granted some form of leave to remain in the UK as the result of an asylum claim – 33.5% of these decisions granted Convention refugee status, and the remainder discretionary leave on humanitarian grounds. In the UK, refugees are granted 5 years limited leave to remain.

During 2009-13 the UK resettled 2950 refugees, constituting 0.55% of total immigration to the country during this period.

3. Policy – Asylum, Integration & Citizenship

• Asylum

The UK Border Agency (UKBA), an agency of the central government department the Home Office, is responsible for refugee status determination in the UK and for arranging accommodation and subsistence support for those asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute (including those who have been refused asylum and are awaiting removal from the UK). Asylum seekers are unable to take up employment in the UK.

The UK operates a national dispersal system for asylum seeker accommodation, within which private companies provide housing and support services, generally in areas of lower cost housing. Data on the numbers of asylum seekers currently living in this accommodation is not publicly available.

School attendance is compulsory for asylum-seeking children, and local authorities are responsible for providing asylum-seeking children with school places on the same basis as all other children present in the UK. Asylum-seeking families with children and individuals with particular care needs can access local authority social service support, and all individuals seeking asylum are entitled to access free primary and secondary healthcare. There is no statutory provision of activities for asylum seekers in the UK. Access to English language tuition for asylum seekers is restricted to those who have been awaiting an initial decision for more than 6 months, who must co-fund the course fees from their own resources.

• Resettlement

In 2004, the UK established an annual refugee resettlement quota programme known as the national Gateway Protection Programme. The annual quota is set by government Ministers, and UKBA conducts selection missions to supplement information provided by UNHCR. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) provides pre-departure orientation and transfer, and all



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resettled refugees receive indefinite leave to remain in the UK. The current annual quota is 750 persons.

UKBA requires local authority approval for resettlement prior to a programme beginning in a local area. Under the current phase of the Gateway Protection Programme, which runs from 2011-14, refugees are resettled to cities and towns in 2 UK regions – Yorkshire & Humberside (the cities of Bradford, Hull and Sheffield) and Greater Manchester (10 metropolitan boroughs - the majority of resettlement takes place in Bolton and Bury). The Home Office contracts 3 individual programmes covering these areas, as follows:

Programme location(s)	Partners & roles
Sheffield & Hull	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheffield City Council – housing (& lead agency) Hull City Council – housing Refugee Council (NGO) – integration support
Greater Manchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refugee Action (NGO) – integration support (& lead agency) Bolton & Bury local authorities – programme housing leads Remaining 8 local authorities (AGMA/GMCA) - housing
Bradford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horton Housing – housing & integration support Bradford City Council – strategic partner (no operational role)

Within the Greater Manchester region partnership, Refugee Action has made use of the legal structure provided by the AGMA to facilitate cooperation on housing by the 10 local authorities in the region. Programmes commissioned by the Home Office include a 12-month integration support programme for resettled refugees, including initial orientation, specialised advice and community development activities.

The Home Office convenes a biannual central Gateway Protection Programme Steering Group, with representation from all providers and relevant central government agencies (Department for Work & Pensions, Department of Education and Department of Health).

• Integration

Prior to June 2010, the Home Office was responsible for national integration policy affecting refugees. Refugee integration policy and priorities were set out in the 2009 national strategy document 'Moving on Together: the Government's recommitment to supporting refugees', and the Home Office commissioned a combination of local authorities and NGOs to deliver the national Refugee Integration & Employment Service (RIES).

Under the current UK government, the RIES service has not been extended past its initial term, although the Home Office continues to operate the national refugee integration loan scheme that provides new refugees with interest-free loans to assist with housing deposits, education/training or work equipment. From 2012, access to free English language tuition is set to be restricted to those in receipt of 'active' – meaning related to seeking work – welfare benefits. Those joining family members in the UK are unable to access free ESOL until they have been resident in the UK for one year.

To reflect the current government's broader conceptualisation of 'integration' as applicable to all migrant and minority communities resident in the UK - not solely refugees - responsibility for national integration policy has been transferred from the Home Office to the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG). DCLG published a new national integration strategy in early 2012 entitled 'Creating the conditions for a more integrated society'



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which sets out the government's approach to integrating communities through promoting social mobility and equality of opportunity .

- **Citizenship**

Broadly speaking, individuals who have been legally resident in the UK for 5 years can apply for naturalisation. Time spent in the UK whilst subject to immigration control - such as when seeking asylum – does not count toward the qualifying residency period. Children born in the UK to non-UK parents retain their parents' citizenship until such time as their parents become naturalised.

Applicants must demonstrate 'sufficient knowledge of life and language in the UK', either by passing the 'Life in the UK' citizenship test or obtaining an approved ESOL qualification with a citizenship element. All those newly granted UK citizenship are required to attend a citizenship ceremony run by the local authority of the area in which they live.

At April 2013, individual citizenship applications carried a fee of £874, those for married couples/civil partners £1550 and for children under 18 £673.



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