



The Scottish  
Government

# Education and Schooling for Asylum-Seeking Refugee Students in Scotland: An Exploratory Study

Education



# **EDUCATION AND SCHOOLING FOR ASYLUM SEEKING AND REFUGEE STUDENTS IN SCOTLAND**

## **AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

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The views expressed in the report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Scottish Government or any other organisation(s) by which the author(s) is/are employed.

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\* Since the preparation of this report the Scottish Executive has been renamed the Scottish Government, but references to the old name are retained in the body of the report.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. Introduction

This study was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Schools Directorate to take stock of issues relating to the education of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils. The aims of the research were to:

- provide an overview of the current education provision for asylum-seeking and refugee children in primary and secondary settings; and
- identify what might constitute ‘best practice’ within the context of Scottish education for the integration of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils into schools.

The study was undertaken by the Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU), Institute of Education, University of London, in collaboration with the Scottish Refugee Council and Children in Scotland. The study commenced on 20 June 2005 and the main fieldwork element was conducted over a seven-month period. The study comprised:

- (a) a background survey of Scottish Education Authorities* – which explored types of data collected, specific policies for, and streams of funding available in relation to specific pupil groups such as bilingual learners, mid-term-arrivals and asylum-seeking and refugee children; and
- (b) empirical study in two Scottish cities, and in two selected local education authorities in England* – comprising research in schools, interviews with children and young people, and interviews with parents. Two primary and two secondary schools in each of the Scottish cities, and one primary and one secondary school in each of the selected local education authorities in England were chosen for case study, on the basis of their reputation for good practice. The Head or a senior teacher was interviewed in all of these schools.

A total of 28 asylum-seeking/refugee students, aged from 7-18 years (22 of whom were drawn from case study schools in Scotland, and six from a college of further education in one of the Scottish cities), and 14 parents were also interviewed for the study. Interviewees came from Turkey and middle eastern countries; south and central Asian countries; and from African countries, and represented major refugee community groups in Scotland.

In an extension to the study, the Scottish Executive requested further information relating to strategic approaches to supporting asylum-seeking and refugee pupils by the two Scottish Education Authorities. Interviews with two officers in each authority were conducted for this purpose in November 2006 and January 2007 respectively.

## **2. Bilingual learners, student diversity and Scottish Education Authorities**

Responses were received from just 14 of the 32 education authorities (44%) by the close of the survey. The survey sought to ascertain what structures education authorities had in place that could be harnessed to respond to the needs of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils, if required. Five authorities indicated collecting information on asylum-seeking or refugee status of pupils; 13 gathered data on bilingual learners, and 12 on a range of additional support needs. Six authorities collected data on unplanned admissions, and in one other this data was collected by schools but not held centrally.

In relation to policies and support structures, 11 authorities reported having either specific policies towards bilingual learners, or related policies that were part of wider policy such as on additional support needs. Additionally, 13 authorities indicated having structures, such as a dedicated post, for supporting bilingual learners. Most authorities reported having either specific policies toward vulnerable children, or that this area was part of wider policy or guidance; 7 indicated having policies relating to new arrivals. Few authorities (4) had specific policies relating to asylum-seeking and refugee children, perhaps reflecting the fact that in many authorities few, if any, asylum-seeking or refugee pupils are known to be in their schools. Most respondents indicated having anti-racist and anti-bullying policies.

In terms of funding, 7 authorities reported specific funding to support bilingual learners, and 2 others noted the possibility of drawing on wider funding to support this work if the need arose. Few authorities had specific funding available to support new arrivals (3), and refugee children (3). An additional 6 respondents indicated the possibility of drawing on wider funding for supporting new arrivals, and an additional 5 respondents for supporting refugee children, if required, again perhaps reflecting the fact that in many authorities few, if any, asylum-seeking or refugee pupils are known to be in their schools. Anti-racist and anti-bullying work was supported by more authorities, either with specific funding or as part of wider funding streams, but around a third of responding authorities did not indicate having recourse to such funding.

## **3. Studying and living in Scotland: experiences of asylum-seeking and refugee students and families in two cities**

The two cities where the study was located present very different profiles in relation to people seeking asylum and refugees. City 2 has had a longer history of hosting these communities, but at the time of the study just 32 asylum-seeking and 33 refugee children were known to be enrolled in the city's schools. By contrast City 1 has the contract under the UK Government's dispersal programme to receive asylum seekers and so, since 2000, has seen large numbers of asylum-seeking families housed in the city, where previously few refugees had resided. Thus in 2005, 1,507 asylum-seeking and 397 refugee children were known to be enrolled in the city's schools. At school level this meant that while around 100 asylum-seeking and refugee children might be enrolled in a secondary school in City 1, just three might be found in a similar-sized school in City 2. Indeed, some schools in City 1 had changed almost

overnight from being mono-cultural and mono-lingual to being multi-cultural and multi-lingual, mainly as a result of dispersal policies. In terms of cultural diversity more broadly, both cities had a higher proportion of minority ethnic communities than the average for Scotland (2%) at the 2001 census, but considerably lower than the UK average of 7.9%. The experiences of children and young people and parents in the two cities must therefore be understood in this context.

### *3.1 Experiences in City 1*

In City 1, case study schools, for the most part, have played a positive part in the lives of their students, but overall, life in City 1 for asylum-seeking and refugee children and their families provided a range of experiences, from the very positive to the very negative. One secondary school, in particular, had been very successful in inclusive practice, evidenced by the achievements of a number of its asylum-seeking/refugee students; and a primary school had successfully supported parents in becoming involved with their children's education.

In general, schools had been welcoming and provided support with settling pupils in. The 'buddy' system was experienced as helpful for both primary- and secondary-age students, easing settling-in and helping with making friends. The support provided by schools to students new to English was appreciated by students and parents alike, and most young people reported being able to cope with the school curriculum once they had a sufficient grasp of English. The provision of interpreters in all schools as required, was appreciated by parents, but complaints were made about letters from schools routinely arriving in English only, creating difficulties for them.

Career issues presented problems for young people, however. As a result of UK government policy, access to further and higher education is restricted, a major difficulty being that asylum-seeking students are often required to pay overseas fees, and bursaries are not available to them. The Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education (SFC) will however, waive fees for a full- or part-time ESOL (English as a second or other language) course, or other part-time, advanced or non-advanced course. People seeking asylum are also eligible to apply for support from the hardship fund for help with travel and study costs. This funding is available to individuals seeking asylum, or the spouse, civil partner, or child of a person seeking asylum living in Scotland.

The issue of friendships was explored in interviews: schools had recognised the importance of friendships for children's well-being, which in turn impacted on educational success, and various clubs had been organised to encourage socialising. However, an indication of need for more work in this area was an ethnic group being excluded from play by other pupils, reported in one school. Unaccompanied minors at a college of further education all confirmed having friends at the college. However, danger on the streets, reported by a number of students, especially in deprived areas, seems to have negatively impacted on asylum-seeking and refugee children's lives outside the school, which could in turn have implications for their educational progress.

Racism and bullying, within and outside the school, was discussed with interviewees. All case study schools had anti-racist and anti-bullying policies, and many young people reported their schools taking a stern stance on bullying. However, interviews indicate that action taken against bullies was not always effective.

Racism was a particular problem, and interview evidence indicates that some of this, and verbal abuse in particular, goes unreported, for fear of worsening the situation. Racist attacks are experienced more frequently outside the school, especially in one deprived area. Unaccompanied minors reported high levels of racist abuse on a regular basis in the city centre and on public transport. However, racist abuse of asylum-seeking and refugee communities does not seem to be restricted to indigenous White Scots, and appears to be multi-faceted. The study found evidence of inter-ethnic racist bullying between different groups; intra-faith racist bullying between different ethnic groups; and inter-faith bullying of minority-faith groups of asylum-seeking young people by majority-faith asylum-seeking young people.

### ***3.2 Experiences in City 2***

Asylum-seeking and refugee students form a very small minority of the population in schools in this city. Interview data suggest that students are made to feel welcome in schools and receive the support of their teachers. Peer support with settling in and learning was appreciated by interviewees. Students new to English received special support with learning the language, and reported being able to cope with the curriculum when language skills had been acquired. Career issues did not raise concerns: secondary-age students interviewed had gained leave to remain, and under UK Home Office policy they would be treated as home students in relation to access to higher and further education and employment.

The issue of friendships was discussed, particularly in the context of young people from asylum-seeking/refugee backgrounds probably having few of their own number in schools from whom to draw support. All students reported having friends from different backgrounds, including White Scottish, from their schools. Racism and bullying, in and outside the school were discussed, and whilst schools did have anti-bullying and anti-racist policies, interview data suggests that more anti-bullying and anti-racist work needs to be undertaken by schools. Racist bullying outside the school was reported by one primary student; other interviewees did not report experiencing racism in their neighbourhoods.

### ***3.3 Overarching issues in supporting asylum-seeking and refugee pupils in the two cities***

A number of general issues concerning education and support for asylum-seeking and refugee students across the two cities were raised in the study. These included:

- the relative merits of mainstreaming versus withdrawal, including implications for forming friendships, and potential stigmatising effects of withdrawal
- schools not always having a sufficient understanding of refugee experience, sometimes leading to a child's difficulties with the curriculum or manifestations of aggression not being seen in this context
- some teachers perceived to have low expectations of asylum-seeking and refugee students
- a need for understanding that the stress of insecure immigration status of asylum-seeking families could negatively impact on their children's educational performance.

## **4. Beyond integration: good practice from study schools**

The study considered what might constitute 'best practice' in education for supporting asylum-seeking and refugee students. The concepts of 'integration' and 'inclusion' were examined, and it was posited that inclusive practice, where the school adapts to respond to the needs of its pupils, within a culture that celebrates diversity, was good practice.

A range of inclusive practice was found in study schools. These included practices that sought to:

- address the needs of the whole child (rather than just their educational needs) in the school's welcome
- address the concerns of parents, and include parents in their children's education
- address the child's English-language needs whilst not withdrawing him/her from mainstream education
- develop pupil support strategies that indicate high expectations of all pupils; and
- foster friendships among all pupils.

## 5. Conclusions

The concluding section summarised data from the project and highlighted areas for further action at different levels.

### *(i) The Scottish Executive and Education Authorities*

Survey results indicate a need for better support for wider policies relating to work with asylum-seeking and refugee pupils (*chapter 2*).

*It is recommended that:*

- on-going anti-bullying and anti-racist work is undertaken in schools and communities, more information provided about available resources, and adequate funding support provided to all authorities for this and for supporting different categories of vulnerable children
- on-going training in this area is provided for staff, and suitably resourced.

Case studies in schools in two cities suggest that schools may not be fully aware of how the refugee experience could impact on a child's educational performance (*sub-section 3.3*).

*It is recommended that:*

- further training and support be provided for teachers on helping asylum-seeking and refugee pupils in the classroom, in particular in relation to the behaviours and obstacles to learning resulting from past traumatic experiences, on an on-going basis.

The study identified many examples of inclusive practice in case study schools in Scotland and in England, including ethos, non-stigmatising support for students new to English, monitoring educational progress, fostering friendships and socialising among students, good home-school links, and developing and implementing strong anti-racist policies (*sub-section 4.3*).

*It is recommended that:*

- the Scottish Executive and Education Authorities ensure that such good practice is celebrated through workshops and training sessions, and is disseminated to and promoted in all schools, with easy access through web-based documents.

The study raised concerns with regard to further and higher education prospects for asylum-seeking students (*sub-section 4.1.1*).

*It is recommended that:*

- the Scottish Executive in association with the Scottish Funding Council for Further and Higher Education works to amend existing regulations to allow asylum-seeking young people access to higher education.

Study data indicate high levels of racism and racist bullying, mainly outside of schools, in particular in one city centre and in a socially deprived area, and some under-reporting of these for fear of repercussions (*sub-section 3.1*).

*In recognition of the negative impact racist abuse can have on pupils' educational experiences it is recommended that:*

- the Scottish Executive and local authorities work through and with various community organisations to build and foster better community relations.

*(ii) Schools*

The efforts made by schools in supporting asylum-seeking and refugee pupils was recognised in the study. However, in some schools certain areas were felt to require further action (*subsections 3.1, 3.2*).

*If the following is not current practice, it is recommended that:*

- asylum-seeking and refugee pupils (and other pupils new to English) are provided further and continuing help with academic English in order to access the curriculum, even after they seem to have gained competence with social language
- mainstream teachers are provided training, and continue to be provided training where this is already in place, to help them support the development of academic language among asylum-seeking, refugee and other pupils new to English
- schools examine their practice on inclusion with vigilance, to ensure that particular ethnic groups within the school are not experiencing isolation
- policies on bullying and racism in schools are reviewed on a regular and on-going basis, and reinforced through assemblies and PSE
- schools provide additional and on-going staff training on bullying and racism, to make staff more able to spot signs and competent to deal with incidents
- schools should actively seek to share and learn from inclusive practice developed in other schools, as outlined in this report and elsewhere, to improve the support they provide to asylum-seeking and refugee pupils

# CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

People have sought asylum<sup>1</sup> in Scotland for many years, but with relatively few points of international arrival and therefore less opportunity for application for asylum at point of entry, the refugee population there has been different from that in England. A proportion of refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland until recently were students or former students of Scottish higher education establishments, some of whom had been caught mid-course by war or political changes in their home country (Closs et al, 2000). At that time around eighty percent of people seeking asylum in Scotland were reported to be men (Macaskill and Petrie, 2000). However, in 1999 just over 300 refugees from Kosova arrived in Scotland under the UK government's Humanitarian Evacuation Programme. They represented a cross-section of their society, and their arrival resulted in a dramatic rise in numbers and a change in the profile of people seeking asylum and refugees in Scotland. Since then, with the increased dispersal of people seeking asylum out of London and the south east of England under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, Scotland has received asylum seeking individuals and families from a range of sending countries.

There are no accurate demographic data on the number of asylum-seeking and refugee children in Scottish (or indeed any UK) schools, since disclosure of immigration status is voluntary, and known cases might be less than total numbers present. Estimates are often based on country of origin, home language, etc., and agencies' estimates may differ. Scottish Executive figures for 2005<sup>2</sup> (the year in which the main fieldwork was carried out) suggested this to be approximately 2,260 (in 2006, the approximate figure was 2,300<sup>3</sup>), whilst National Asylum Support Service (NASS) figures for 2004, based on the number of asylum-seeking and refugee children housed by them, suggest it to be around 3,500. Multiverse Consortium data indicate a city in Scotland to be one of only three UK cities outside of London with more than 2,000 asylum seeking/refugee pupils in its school population (Multiverse, 2004).

Research shows that refugee and asylum seeking children are a very diverse group, coming from a range of countries and social backgrounds. But they have some experiences in common, which are likely to affect them more than other groups of children:

- the experience of overwhelmingly traumatic events which may lead to a need for psychological interventions;
- being targeted for bullying, often of a racist nature, alongside isolation in school;

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<sup>1</sup> Refugee Council definition: 'In the UK, a person is a refugee only when their application for asylum has been accepted by the Home Office. When a person has lodged an asylum claim with the Immigration and Nationality Directorate at the Home Office and is waiting for a decision on their claim, s/he is called an 'asylum seeker'

([http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/asylumlaw/seeking\\_asylum.html](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/infocentre/asylumlaw/seeking_asylum.html))

<sup>2</sup> Pupils in Scotland 2005 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/02/28083932/0>

<sup>3</sup> Pupils in Scotland 2006 <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/02/27083941/0>

- the likelihood of having parents who are unemployed, living in temporary accommodation and thus economically disadvantaged;
- the likelihood of needing support in learning English; and
- the possibility of having to act as language brokers and advocates for parents who speak less English than they do.

(Candappa and Egharevba, 2000; Jones and Rutter, 1998; Rutter, 1994; Stead et al, 1999).

As a universalist service, the school is, in principle, well placed to play a pivotal role in helping asylum seeking/refugee children adjust to their new lives in the host country. For many refugee and asylum seeking children it may be the only statutory agency from which they derive support (Candappa and Egharevba, 2000), and recent research in Scotland has underlined the importance of the school for asylum seeking/refugee pupils (Macaskill and Petrie, 2000; Save the Children and Greater Glasgow Council, 2002).

All children in Scotland have full rights to education. The *Education (Scotland) Act 1980*, as amended, states that all children, which by implication includes asylum-seeking and refugee children, are entitled to school education. Additionally, the *Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000* states that:

it shall be the duty of the authority to secure that the education is directed to the development of the personality, talents and mental and physical abilities of the child or young person to their fullest potential...

More recently, the *Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004*, which came into force while this study was underway, gives education authorities a duty to establish procedures for identifying and meeting additional support needs of every child for whose education they are responsible. Other key legislation includes the *Children (Scotland) Act 1995*, which requires local authorities to ensure that they have taken into account a child's racial, linguistic, cultural and religious identity within their service (including education) provision. Additionally, the *Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000* – which came into effect in Scotland in 2002, brings in a statutory duty for public authorities to promote racial equality.

However, research undertaken in 1999 suggested that 'the ability of Scottish local education authorities to meet refugee needs effectively and fairly remains to be seen' (Arshad et al, 1999). That research investigated, inter alia, whether education authorities had specific policy statements on refugees, and if any policies in operation at the time were seen as relevant for supporting refugee pupils. Their findings indicate that few schools had specific education policies on refugees. Some schools had Refugee Forums, though their individual compositions differed, from multi-agency to local government-level only. The value of multi-agency working in developing policy for refugees, suggested in an English study (Warren and Vincent, 1998), is relevant in this context.

Arshad et al's (1999) study further found that the ESL/EAL service played an important role in identifying or supporting refugee pupils and their teachers.

Evidence also suggested that authorities and schools seeking to embed multicultural/anti-racist education into their policy development and curriculum delivery were best placed to support refugees, even though some may not have had a diverse ethnic pupil population at the time. Factors that might 'nurture a caring school', such as the need to understand and empathise with the needs of pupils, including contextualising pupils' experiences in relation to previous experiences, are also highlighted in this research.

## **1.2 Research aims and objectives**

The study that is the subject of this report was commissioned by the Scottish Executive Schools Directorate to take stock of issues relating to the education of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils. The aims of the research were to:

- provide an overview of the current education provision for asylum seeking/refugee children, in primary and secondary settings
- identify what might constitute 'best practice' within the context of Scottish education for the integration of asylum seeking/refugee pupils into schools as successful learners and members of the school community.

Within these broad aims, the study had the following specific objectives:

- to ascertain whether and to what extent policy and practice in relation to asylum seeking and refugee children has changed in Scotland since research conducted in 1999 by the Scottish Centre for Research in Education - SCRE (Stead, Closs and Arshad, 1999)
- to review policies relating to asylum seeking and refugee pupils in two selected Scottish cities at education authority-level and in relation to selected primary and secondary schools in these education authorities
- to compare local policies and practice in the selected Scottish cities with those in two local education authorities (LEAs) in England, and selected schools in the four areas where recognised good practice has been developed
- to explore the educational experiences of asylum seeking and refugee pupils from a range of backgrounds at primary and secondary schools, and consider whether and how educational provision for such children has changed since the 1999 SCRE research (cited above)
- to investigate the kinds and levels of support needed, the barriers to successful learning and integration into schools, as well as solutions identified by case study schools selected on the basis of good practice
- to explore the views of parents/carers of asylum seeking/refugee children on the school experiences of these children
- to identify key issues relating to education and integration into schools for asylum seeking/refugee pupils in Scotland in conjunction with key stakeholders in the field.

The Scottish Executive subsequently requested further information relating to policy and practice towards asylum-seeking and refugee pupils developed in the Education Authorities where case studies were sited, to cover:

- strategic approaches to supporting asylum-seeking and refugee pupils
- policies in place to directly support asylum-seeking and refugee pupils and other policies that may be relevant to this group
- examples of good practice that have been developed in schools
- approaches to further developing relevant policies

### 1.3 Methodology

The research was undertaken by the Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU), Institute of Education, University of London, and directed by Mano Candappa. The study was implemented in collaboration with and strongly supported by Nick Putnam from the Scottish Refugee Council, and Jennifer Turpie and Natalie Morgan-Klein from Children in Scotland. Miriam Ahmad, Ben Balata, Rayenne Dekhinet, and Dogan Gocmen worked as bilingual researchers on the project, and conducted the majority of interviews with young people and parents. The main fieldwork element of the study commenced on 20 June 2005 and was conducted over a seven-month period. Two officers each from the two selected Scottish education authorities were subsequently interviewed for the extension study in November 2006 and January 2007 respectively.

The study comprised two separate but related parts:

- (a) a background survey of Scottish Education Authorities; and
  - (b) empirical study in two Scottish cities, and in two selected local education authorities in England.
- (a) *Background survey of Scottish Education Authorities:* This was designed to explore education policies used by authorities to support the learning of specific pupil groups such as bilingual learners (not solely asylum-seeking and refugee pupils), and intended to provide baseline data for future work in this area.

Prior to the survey, every Scottish Education Authority was contacted by SEED in July 2005 to inform them of the study, to invite their participation, and to ask for contact details of a named officer for the purposes of the survey. By the end of August 2005, 30 authorities had responded positively and provided the required contact details; the remaining two authorities did not respond. A short self-completion questionnaire was dispatched electronically by TCRU to all 32 authorities in November. The questionnaire sought to explore:

- types of data collected by authorities in relation to bilingual learners, additional support needs (other than specific educational needs), mid-term arrivals, and asylum-seeking and refugee children;
- whether authorities had specific policies for supporting the above groups, as well as on related issues of anti-racism and anti-bullying; and
- whether specific streams of funding were available to authorities to support work in the above areas.

Respondents had the option of completing the questionnaire on-line or in hard copy. Reminder letters were sent out electronically to non-respondents on 8 December, offering to extend the deadline for receipt for those requiring further time for completion. A further reminder was sent out to those requesting further time in January 2006.

- (b) *Empirical study in two Scottish cities, and in two selected local education authorities in England:* This part of the study focused on asylum-seeking and refugee children and young people, and its purpose was to investigate ‘good practice’, to determine how best to support these children so that they might be successful learners and members of the school community. Research in the Scottish cities was more in-depth to provide detailed data specific to the Scottish context, and to identify existing good practice in Scotland. Research in the English authorities was at policy level only, to give an overview of practice in other authorities with experience of working with asylum-seeking and refugee children, that could be relevant in further developing best practice in Scotland. The research comprised three elements:

- research in schools
- interviews with children and young people
- interviews with parents.

Research instruments were developed through consultation with a stakeholder group of key individuals and organisations working in the field of refugee education and support in Scotland, and through issues arising from the research literature.

Research in schools: Two primary and two secondary schools in each of the two Scottish authorities were selected for study, from a list of schools recommended as examples of good practice by the respective education authorities. Those selected included denominational and non-denominational schools in both cities; and in the dispersal city, also schools that had been multi-cultural prior to dispersal policies, and those that had been largely mono-cultural prior to that time, plus one school that had won awards for inclusive practice. One primary and one secondary school in each of two English local education authorities (LEAs) were also similarly selected for study. One of these was a metropolitan borough, and had high numbers of people seeking asylum and refugees, to ‘match’ City 1 in Scotland; the other was a county with very small numbers, to ‘match’ City 2 in Scotland. Schools in the English LEAs were also selected on the basis of positive practice towards asylum-seeking and refugee pupils, and chosen with the help of LEA officers responsible for support in this area.

In each of the study schools the Head and/or a senior teacher was interviewed and documentary evidence collected. Interviews with Heads/teachers were semi-structured, and covered the school’s history of having asylum-seeking and refugee pupils within its population; school policy and practice towards supporting these children’s needs; information gathered on these children and how their progress in the school is monitored; language issues in relation to

communication with the child and his/her family; extra-curricular provision within the school; staffing; and outside support available to the school, including from education authorities, for its work with asylum-seeking and refugee students.

Interviews with children and young people: A total of 28 asylum-seeking/refugee children and young people were interviewed for the study, 20 in City 1 and eight in City 2. Interviewees were drawn from study schools and from a College of Further Education, and interviews were held at the respective schools and college.

The low numbers of interviewees from City 2 as compared with City 1 is related to the difference in numbers of asylum-seeking and refugee pupils in their respective schools' population. A larger number of interviewees were male (19). This was a result of (a) fewer girls being found in the City 2 study schools; and (b) only one young woman from a group of unaccompanied minors at the College of Further Education self-selecting for interview. A breakdown of interviewees by age and gender can be found at Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Interviews with young people: breakdown by age and gender**

	Male	Female
Under 10 years	4	1
10-16 years	8	7
17-18 years	7	1
<i>Total</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>9</i>

Interviewees came from three broad geographical regions, and represent major refugee community groups in Scotland, as seen in Table 1.2 below.

**Table 1.2: Interviews with young people: breakdown by gender and sending regions**

	Male	Female
<i>City 1</i>		
Turkey and Middle Eastern countries	2	3
South and Central Asian countries	3	1
African countries	7	4
<i>City 2</i>		
Turkey and Middle Eastern countries	3	1
South and Central Asian countries	2	-
African countries	2	-
<i>Total</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>9</i>

Interviewees were given the option of being interviewed in English or in community languages, as preferred, and bilingual researchers who were native

speakers of Arabic, French, Kurdish, Turkish and Urdu were available for conducting interviews. A note on process relating to planning for and delivering this part of the research can be found at Annex B.

Data collection: All interviews were qualitative and semi-structured. Interviews with children and young people who were at school sought to explore (i) their first experiences of schooling in Scotland; (ii) their present school experiences, including access to the curriculum, ability to cope with homework, social and pastoral supports, and school actions against racism, bullying, homophobia, and in relation to equal opportunities; (iii) wider social issues that could impact on their education and schooling, such as responsibilities towards their homes and families, friendships and social networks, and racism or bullying experienced outside the school; and (iv) their hopes and concerns for the future. These issues were discussed with interviewees at a level appropriate to each individual’s age and understanding, and took about an hour on average. Interviews with young people who were not at school were less wide-ranging, and investigated (i) their educational careers up to the present, including access to English language supports; (ii) issues that could impact on their educational progress, such as social life and availability of social supports; and (iii) perceptions of their career and future prospects. These interviews took about 45 minutes on average.

Interviews with parents: Interviews were conducted with a total of 14 parents (ten individuals and two couples) in City 1 and City 2. Two parents resided in City 2, the rest (including the two couples) came from City 1. One parent and the two couples were interviewed individually, the rest in small groups of 2 to 3.

In recruiting parents for interview a multi-pronged approach was adopted, with invitations extended through study schools, the Scottish Refugee Council, and researchers’ personal contacts. However, the majority of responding parents were from one study school in City 1, which has developed strong links with parents as part of its approach to supporting asylum-seeking and refugee pupils. A breakdown of parent interviewees by gender and geographic region of origin is shown in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3: Interviews with parents by gender and sending region**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<i>City 1</i>		
Turkey and Middle Eastern countries	2	1
South and Central Asian countries	3	3
African countries	-	3
<i>City 2</i>		
Turkey and Middle Eastern countries	1	-
South and Central Asian countries	-	-
African countries	1	-
<i>Total</i>	7	7

Interviews with parents were semi-structured, and explored issues around, (i) the start of their children's schooling in Scotland; (ii) their children's educational progress and the home-school relations; and (iii) related factors such as racism and bullying. An interview with Somali parents in City 1 was conducted through an interpreter, two interviews in City 1 and one in City 2 were conducted in English, the rest were conducted directly by researchers in community languages. One parent interview was held at a study school, the rest at Scottish Refugee Council premises in each of the two cities. Parent interviews took about 45 minutes on average.

#### **1.4 Structure of the report**

The rest of this report is structured around the study data and related issues. *Chapter two* presents findings from the survey and discusses their implications; and *Chapter three* focuses on data from interviews with children and young people and parents, presented thematically, for each of the two Scottish cities. *Chapter four* explores policy and practice developed in the four case study authorities, and good practice developed in study schools that might inform service development. Data on the English authorities reflect their situation at the time of the initial fieldwork, whilst data on the Scottish authorities include information from the extension to the original study. Conclusions from the research are drawn in *Chapter five*. Three *Annexes* provide references, a note on preparing for and implementing interviews with students and parents, and useful contacts and resources, respectively.















































































