NAVIGATING THE MAZE:

REFUGEE ROUTES

TO HOUSING, SUPPORT AND

SETTLEMENT IN SCOTLAND

Final report

Gina Netto and Anne Fraser
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<tr>
<td>AAGHA</td>
<td>Access Apna Ghar Housing Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIA</td>
<td>Borders and Immigration Agency</td>
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<td>BME</td>
<td>Black and Minority Ethnic</td>
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<td>CBL</td>
<td>Choice Based Lettings</td>
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<td>CHR</td>
<td>Common Housing Register</td>
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<td>CTC</td>
<td>Child Tax Credit</td>
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<td>CIH</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Housing</td>
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<td>CS</td>
<td>Communities Scotland</td>
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<td>DRS</td>
<td>Development and Regeneration Services</td>
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<td>GASSP</td>
<td>Glasgow Asylum Seekers Support Project</td>
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<td>GCC</td>
<td>Glasgow City Council</td>
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<td>GHA</td>
<td>Glasgow Housing Association</td>
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<td>GHP</td>
<td>Glasgow Homelessness Partnership</td>
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<td>HAC</td>
<td>Hamish Allen Centre</td>
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<td>HO</td>
<td>Home Office</td>
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<td>HTF</td>
<td>Homelessness Task Force</td>
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<td>ILR</td>
<td>Indefinite Leave to Remain</td>
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<td>IS</td>
<td>Income Support</td>
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<td>JSA</td>
<td>Job Seekers Allowance</td>
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<td>LHO</td>
<td>Local Housing Organisations</td>
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<td>LHS</td>
<td>Local Housing Strategy</td>
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<td>NAM</td>
<td>New Asylum Model</td>
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<td>NASS</td>
<td>National Asylum Support Services</td>
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<td>NRT</td>
<td>Neighbourhood Relations Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAiH</td>
<td>Positive Action in Housing</td>
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<td>RCO</td>
<td>Refugee Community Organisation</td>
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<td>RSL</td>
<td>Registered Social Landlords</td>
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<td>RST</td>
<td>Refugee Support Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRC</td>
<td>Scottish Refugee Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>TFF</td>
<td>Temporary Furnished Flat</td>
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<td>SAMH</td>
<td>Scottish Association of Mental Health</td>
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<td>SRIF</td>
<td>Scottish Refugee Integration Forum</td>
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<td>SST</td>
<td>Scottish Secure Tenancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUNRISE</td>
<td>Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Service</td>
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<td>WSRF</td>
<td>West of Scotland Refugee Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men’s Christian Association</td>
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INTRODUCTION

Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and Access Apna Ghar Housing Association (AAGHA) jointly commissioned Heriot Watt University and the Market Specialists to carry out this research study into the routes negotiated by refugees in accessing accommodation and support.

SRC is an independent charity dedicated to providing advice, information and assistance to asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland. The organisation also provides specialist services in areas such as housing and welfare, family reunion, women’s issues, community development, the media and the arts. SRC play a leading role in policy development and campaign on refugee issues to ensure that Scotland plays a full role in meeting the UK’s legal and humanitarian obligations under the 1951 United Nations Convention on Refugees. The SRC Housing Team provides information, advice and advocacy services to refugees, concerning their rights and options to housing. In addition, it seeks to promote the integration and settlement of refugees in Scotland by working with housing providers to develop best practice in the provision of housing and ensuring that refugees’ needs are addressed and met. The Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Service (SUNRISE) team is a key refugee integration delivery scheme funded by the UK Government. Under the scheme, each new refugee is offered a caseworker to manage the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status and produce a Personal Integration Plan covering longer-term integration objectives. The caseworker signposts refugees on a number of matters: housing, welfare, health and child education needs, employment and training.

AAGHA is a bespoke provider (on a very small scale) for members of the BME and refugee communities and has a particular interest in evaluating the experience of its service users. AAGHA procures stock via a capital investment programme offered by GCC, to further its Local Housing Strategy and its recognition of a bespoke programme to address the unmet needs of refugees and BME communities, in accessing affordable social housing. As the Association is not registered by Communities Scotland, it directs title to the stock, to partner Registered Housing Associations (RSLs) under a service level agreement and provides tenancy establishment and housing support to the clients which it selects. Hence AAGHA is not the landlord but a provider of inter-linked services (procurement, tenant selection, settlement and housing support). One of AAGHA’s main aims in commissioning this research is to assess relative satisfaction levels of its clients with its early approaches to refugee housing, in terms of location for procurement and one-stop tenancy establishment and housing support, against the satisfaction levels other refugees living in permanent accommodation. Consequently, part of this study will compare the satisfaction levels of AAGHA clients and ‘Other refugees’ with their current accommodation and the level of support received.

The housing circumstances of asylum-seekers and refugees have been significantly influenced by increasingly restrictive immigration legislation and national immigration policy in the UK that have curtailed the welfare benefits and housing options available to asylum-seekers. However, there have also been major advances in homelessness policies and legislation in Scotland, following from the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force (HTF), established by the Scottish Executive in 1999. The Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF) Action Plan and the Scottish Government’s official guidance on homelessness recognizes the specific circumstances of refugees and their potential vulnerability to homelessness.
In Glasgow, there have been marked changes in the housing environment. These have included Glasgow City Council’s stock transfer to Glasgow Housing Association; Glasgow Housing Associations’ large-scale demolition programme; a new and significantly different ‘dispersal’ contract between GCC, Borders and Immigration Agency (BIA) Scotland, YMCA and the Angel Group; Homeless Section 5 referrals and the extended duties of Registered Social Landlords regarding homelessness and the requirement to promote equality and diversity.

The policy and legislative changes in immigration and homelessness, combined with the significant changes in the housing sector in Glasgow may all have had an impact on refugees’ housing experiences. The current study is thus viewed as timely in terms of examining refugee routes to housing, settlement and support and informing the policy, planning and delivery of housing and support providers in Glasgow. Additionally, the study has important implications in relation to informing homelessness and immigration policy and the creation of an enabling environment for the integration of asylum-seekers and refugees in Scotland.
A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

The terms ‘asylum seekers’ and ‘refugees’ are used to refer to the different immigration status of two categories of migrants. Asylum-seekers are those who have arrived in the UK and are awaiting a decision on their claim for asylum. They are not entitled to permanent housing or full welfare benefits and do not have permission to work.

Under the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), Article 1A, a refugee is a person who has

‘a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his (sic) nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country, or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 1996, p. 16)

A person is recognized as a refugee when the government of the new country decides that he or she meets the definition provided above. As a signatory to the Convention, the UK is required to make social welfare available to those who are recognized as refugees on the same basis as its own citizens. Refugees now have Temporary Leave to Remain (replacing Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)) in the UK and a right to work, claim benefits, apply for social housing and access the full range of other public services, including education, health and social care.

In this report, the terms ‘asylum-seekers’ and ‘refugees’ are used in the awareness that the entitlements of both groups to social housing in the UK differ. However, it would not be possible to consider the housing circumstances of refugees, without reference to their circumstances as asylum-seeker, particularly immediately before and soon after they received a positive decision on their asylum application. Further, the term ‘refugee’ is used to refer to those who have recently achieved refugee status and/or are not yet part of established BME communities in Scotland.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Scottish Refugee Council and Access Apna Ghar commissioned Heriot Watt University and the Market Specialists to carry out a study investigating the housing experiences of refugees. The main findings of the study are:

- Newly recognised refugees generally faced considerable difficulties in gaining access to appropriate accommodation in Glasgow, partly due to a shortage of accommodation in areas perceived to be safe and the lack of appropriately sized accommodation.
- Refugees have two main means of accessing social housing: through the ‘homelessness route’ and through directly applying to individual RSLs. Many refugees felt that access to independent and culturally sensitive information and advice was needed to enable them to fully understand their housing rights and options, and the processes for seeking accommodation.
- Fear and actual experience of racial harassment is a major concern among refugees, highlighting the need for harassment to be tackled effectively by housing providers.
- There is an ongoing need for the impartial, specialist service that SRC Housing Team provides to help refugees navigate the housing system, particularly in the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status.
- There is concern that a significant proportion of newly recognised refugees who had formerly stayed in YMCA and the Angel are ‘falling through the net’ of accommodation and support at the transition stage from NASS support and accommodation to mainstream benefits and housing.
- The shortage of appropriate permanent accommodation has contributed to prolonged stay in temporary accommodation and rooflessness for some individuals. There is a need for improved temporary accommodation for refugees, including single young men.
- A considerable level of unmet needs for support were identified among refugee tenants who had moved into permanent accommodation. There is a need for expanded models of tenancy support for refugees across the city, to help meet refugees support needs, including preparation for entry into the labour market.
- A major contributory factor to the invisibility of refugee and other BME tenants in RSLs in Scotland is the lack of ethnically disaggregated data relating to applicants and lets published by Communities Scotland. On the basis of such data, RSLs which are behind in progressing racial equality can be encouraged to make greater efforts in this direction.
- AAGHA clients reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their accommodation, the number of rooms, their landlord and particularly their area than other tenants. This might partly be due to AAGHA’s strategy in procuring stock in areas that refugees perceive to be safe.
- There is a lack of mechanisms for assessing refugee tenant satisfaction and encouraging refugee participation in the decision-making processes of RSLs.
- The housing, support and settlement of refugees in Scotland needs to be considered at a strategic level, involving the Scottish Government, to ensure an enabling environment for refugees.

Background
There have been significant reductions in the support provided to asylum-seekers through increasingly restrictive changes in asylum and immigration policy and legislation. Glasgow is
one of the main sites for the involuntary dispersal of asylum-seekers in the UK and the only
dispersal site in Scotland. Asylum and immigration are reserved matters, responsibility for
which resides under the Westminster government. However, the Scottish Government has
responsibility for integration and social inclusion and key policy areas, including housing, for
asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. Refugees have the same entitlements as all other UK
citizens to housing and other public services in Scotland. The research was jointly
commissioned by Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and Access Apna Ghar (AAGHA).

Gaining access to permanent accommodation

Newly recognised refugees face considerable difficulties in gaining access to appropriate
accommodation in Glasgow, partly due to a shortage of accommodation in areas perceived to
be safe and the lack of appropriately sized accommodation. This has to be viewed within the
context of the transfer of stock from Glasgow City Council (GCC) to GHA (Glasgow Housing
Association) and a major ongoing clearance programme. Refugees have two main means of
accessing housing: through a Section 5 referral, ‘the homelessness route’ or through applying
to individual Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Many newly recognised refugees were not
clear of the role of the Refugee Support Team, GCC’s specialist homelessness casework team
for refugees, and felt that more information and advice was needed to enable them to fully
understand their housing rights and options, and the processes for seeking accommodation.
Further, the delay of the introduction of the Common Housing Register (CHR) in Glasgow has
contributed to the difficulties faced by refugees and other vulnerable individuals in requiring
them to apply to individual RSLs to increase their housing options instead of filling in a
common application form for the RSLs in the city.

The New Asylum Model appears to have reduced delays in asylum claim decisions and
ensured the prompt communication of information to newly recognised refugees through SRC’s
Sunrise project. This team exists to provide integrated casework with other internal teams, such
as the Housing and Welfare team and Family Reunion service so that immediate and future
housing needs can be effectively scoped out.

There are three main Borders and Immigration Agency (BIA) Scotland contractors, the
Glasgow Asylum-Seeker Support Project (GASSP) which accommodates the majority of
asylum-seekers, the YMCA and the Angel Group. To some considerable extent, it would
appear that measures taken to prevent rooflessness when NASS support comes to an end by
enabling individuals living in GASSP accommodation to sign up to temporary accommodation
while they are awaiting an offer of permanent accommodation are working. However, the
transition stage from asylum-seeker to refugee status was commonly reported to be stressful,
underscoring the continued need for an impartial, specialist advocacy and befriending system
to help refugees navigate the housing system and access welfare benefits.

Due to difficulties arising from contractual arrangements between BIA, YMCA and the Angel
Group, and the difficulties of liaising with Glasgow City Council’s Refugee Support Team
(RST) within a short period of time, a significant proportion of refugees are ‘falling through
the net’ of accommodation and support, highlighting the need for urgent review of the
arrangements.

The shortage of appropriate permanent accommodation has contributed to the ‘siltling up’ of
temporary accommodation and prolonged stay in temporary accommodation for some refugee
tenants. This has led to considerable uncertainty and anxiety among the individuals concerned
and difficulties in finding employment and settling down. Further, many individuals
complained of the unsuitability of temporary accommodation due to over-crowding, poor conditions and vulnerability to racial harassment. These difficulties are compounded by the limited availability of NASS accommodation in preferred areas, thus inhibiting community cohesion and integration. In some cases, the lack of appropriate temporary accommodation had contributed to rooflessness.

A major contributory factor to the invisibility of refugees and other BME tenants in the social rented sector is the lack of ethnically disaggregated data relating to applicants and lets in the information published by Communities Scotland. In the absence of such data, it is not possible to ascertain the extent to which individual RSLs are playing their part in promoting racial equality and supporting refugee access to the social rented sector.

Move on support
There was a considerable level of unmet needs for support among refugees who had gained access to permanent accommodation. This included the need for support with furnishing their accommodation, connecting and using utilities, countering fuel poverty and managing debt, including rent arrears. Other support needs were assistance with applying for a range of welfare benefits as well as pursuing educational and training courses and preparing for employment.

There is a need to consider specialised and expanded models of tenancy sustainment for refugees across the city. Such models of tenancy support might also prepare refugees for entry into the labour market.

Fear of racial harassment
One of the recurrent themes of the study was fear of, and actual experiences of racial harassment. This played a significant role in refugees’ choice of temporary and permanent accommodation, and in some instances resulted in a change in accommodation, enforced stay with friends or rooflessness. Experiences of harassment were common among both children and adults and ranged from verbal or physical abuse and damage to property. Despite the existence of well-established policies and protocols of RSLs, many refugees felt that they were not adequately supported when they were subjected to harassment.

Tenant satisfaction and participation
Refugee tenants who were AAGHA clients reported significantly higher levels of satisfaction with their accommodation than other tenants with their accommodation, the number of rooms and particularly, their area. This might partly be due to AAGHA’s strategy of procuring stock in desirable areas perceived to be safe and primarily dominated by owner-occupation, the home-based nature of the support provided and the access to affordable furniture through the Council’s Essential Furniture Grant.

There is a lack of mechanisms for assessing refugee tenant satisfaction and encouraging refugee participation in decision-making processes of RSLs, for example, through representation on the management committees among the housing providers interviewed.

Future housing aspirations
About a third of the refugees interviewed reported that they were ‘very likely’ to continue staying in their current accommodation ‘a year from now’, while a third reported that they were ‘not sure.’ Reasons for the former included many positive responses related to high satisfaction levels. However, others explained that they were unlikely to move due to lack of access to alternative accommodation. About two thirds of those interviewed reported that they were
'very likely' to continue to remain in the city, offering many positive reasons which revealed an appreciation for the city and its people, despite the difficulties experienced in gaining and securing permanent accommodation. However, others expressed an attraction towards London, towards existing networks, families and friends.

Need for a strategic approach
The extent to which the housing needs of refugees are met cannot be divorced by the extent to which refugees are viewed as making a valuable contribution to Scottish society. In the devolved context, this is related to the extent to which Scotland is willing to acknowledge the multi-cultural nature of its population and actively support the social inclusion and integration of refugees. There is a need for a strategic forum, involving the Scottish Government, to consider issues related to the housing, support and settlement of refugees.

About the study
The research involved individual interviews with thirty two refugees, fifteen of whom were AAGHA clients, and 17 of whom were identified by SRC (13) and Positive Action in Housing (PAiH) (4). Further information was also gathered from two focus groups with 14 individuals currently living in temporary accommodation, one held at SRC and the other at PAiH. Individual interviews were also organised with five RSLs, AAGHA, SRC and the RST. In addition, a focus group discussion was organised with members of the West of Scotland Refugee Forum (WSRF) Housing and Welfare Group.
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

1. Immigration and Asylum Acts and UK Immigration Policy

Several commentators have observed that since 1990, the UK Government has become increasingly restrictive in its immigration policies (Farland and Walsh, 1995; Kaye, 1995). Since 1990, there have been six substantive pieces of immigration legislation. One trend in this legislation has been to systematically restrict welfare and housing entitlements and the options available to asylum-seekers on their arrival in Britain (Phillips, 2006). One of the most significant changes to housing and support provision for asylum seekers, resulted from the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. The Act provided for the centralisation of support mechanisms for asylum-seekers under the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) of the Home Office, which came into operation in 2000. NASS negotiated housing provision through a network of regional consortia, who secure contracts with local authorities, private landlords and housing associations. While some asylum seekers choose not to apply for NASS accommodation and/or support, many others have no choice but to take the accommodation offered to them by NASS. A ‘no-choice’ dispersal policy was also introduced to reduce pressure on London and the South-East and to move asylum-seekers to other parts of the UK, including Scotland, where the demand for housing is lower. Glasgow City Council (GCC) was the only local authority in Scotland to sign a contract with NASS from April 2000 to provide housing for asylum-seekers. As a result, Scotland received significant numbers of asylum-seekers, the vast majority of whom were dispersed to Glasgow, primarily to areas of low demand and social deprivation.

Further changes in the form of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 increased control over the asylum-seeking process through the introduction of accommodation and removal centres and the introduction of Section 55, which prohibits support for asylum-seekers who fail to make their claim as soon as ‘reasonably practicable’ after their arrival in the UK. Although Section 55 has been successfully challenged and the Home Office has been forced to accept a less restrictive approach to this clause, concerns about destitution and homelessness within the asylum process remain (Phillips, 2006). Under the same Act, family members of refugees are prohibited ‘recourse to public funds.’ As Phillips (2006) points out, this inhibits access to social housing for reunited families through the homelessness route, raises concerns about affordability and constrains access to appropriate family accommodation.

Restrictions have also been placed on those who have been granted refugee status. For example, Section 11 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc.) Act 2004 restricted the right of refugees to apply for local authority housing except in areas to which they were dispersed in England and Wales. The same Act also removed refugees’ entitlements to receive backdated support payments for the time they spent in the asylum process and instead proposed ‘integration loans’ to assist in their integration.

Controlling our borders: making migration work for Britain (Home Office, 2005) set out the Government’s five year strategy for asylum and immigration. This was followed up by the

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1 See section 4.2 for the situation in Scotland
2 Asylum-seekers receive 70% of basic income support. Upon being granted refugee status they were previously entitled to claim the remaining 30%.
3 These were introduced on 11th June 2007.
setting up of the New Asylum Model (NAM) to speed up the asylum process in the shortest possible time, with a dedicated person taking responsibility for each claim from the beginning to the outcome of their claim. The Home Office has also recently set up a new executive agency, the Borders Immigration Agency (BIA) to manage immigration control in the UK. The Border and Immigration Agency is a new executive agency of the Home Office. The Home Office Integration Matters document recognises housing as one of the key indicators of integration. This, combined with the then Scottish Executive’s Integration Action Plans, provide a policy framework for the inclusion of refugees in economic, social and cultural spheres.

2. Asylum-seekers and refugees in the UK

There has been a significant fall in the number of asylum applications over the last five years (Home Office, 2007). According to Home Office Asylum Statistics, a total of 22,750 applications for asylum were received in 2006/07. 20,710 initial decisions were made in 2006/07. Of these, 12% of initial decisions were granted asylum, 10% were granted Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave to remain and 78% were refused. In the first quarter of 2007, 6005 initial decisions were made. Of these, 15% were granted asylum, 10% Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave and 75% refused.

In the first quarter of 2007, the number of applications for asylum support was 4,575. 70% (3195) of these applications were for accommodation and subsistence support while 21% (970) were for subsistence only with the remaining 9% deemed invalid or unknown. The highest numbers of asylum-seekers in dispersed accommodation were in Yorkshire and the Humber (21%), North West (18%), West Midlands (15%), Scotland (14%) and North East (9%). Glasgow was one of the five local authorities with the highest number of asylum-seekers in dispersal accommodation, along with Leeds, Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle. At the end of March 2007, the number of asylum seekers supported in NASS accommodation in Glasgow was 5,075, while the number of asylum-seekers in receipt of subsistence only support from NASS was 70 in Edinburgh and 55 in Glasgow.

In terms of timeliness of decisions, 76% of applications in 2005/06 had initial decisions made and served within two months, while 74% of applications received in 2005/06 had a final decision up to and including appeal within 6 months. While the speeding up of the asylum process under NAM has reduced periods of uncertainty for new arrivals, it also means that newly recognised refugees typically will have had only a short time to become familiar with the housing and welfare system in the UK, their housing options, sources of advice and assistance and their eligibility for benefits. This highlights the importance of access to good quality advice and assistance for asylum-seekers and refugees, including in relation to access to social housing.

3. Housing policy, advice and provision for refugees in Scotland

Asylum and immigration are reserved matters, responsibility for which resides under the Westminster government. However, the Scottish Government has responsibility for integration and social inclusion and is responsible for the provision of housing, health, education, legal aid and police protection for asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. Refugees have the same
entitlements as all other UK citizens to housing and other public services in Scotland (more details are provided in Section 7).

In Scotland, policies and action plans to enable the successful integration of refugees were led by the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF), established in 2002 in partnership with the then Scottish Executive and in consultation with the wider public and voluntary sector interests. The SRIF, chaired by the then Minister of Social Justice, Margaret Curran, developed 57 action plans in six policy areas, including housing, which corresponded to Scottish Executive departments as well as cross-cutting areas, such as translation and interpreting (SRIF, 2003).

Two years later, a snapshot of progress made in relation to these action plans was documented in SRIF (2005). This report noted that a number of changes recommended by the Forum, including in relation to housing, had been met. Some of the legislative and policy changes are detailed in Section 4. The intended impact of the changes recommended was that the needs of refugees should be routinely considered, along with the needs of others, and that refugees should have the same options and opportunities as others. The report also noted that Communities Scotland and the then Scottish Executive had produced a model ‘Welcome Pack’ to assist local authorities with providing information to refugees to find a suitable home for themselves and their families. Another sign of progress observed was the provision of funding to SRC Housing Team to provide advice and assistance to refugees and information, advice and training to partner agencies, including Refugee Community Organisations.

Research recommended by the SRIF into the housing and support needs of refugees and intended to produce a model service specification outlining how these needs can be met had also been commissioned by the then Scottish Executive (Bell Associates, 2006). Among the main findings of the research were:

- The need for a multi-agency approach in meeting the multiple needs relating to the current and future housing of refugees
- High levels of racial harassment experienced by refugees and their need for accommodation in decent and appropriate homes where they would be safe from harassment
- The need for accessible and culturally appropriate advice and information from the initial stages of accessing housing through to move-in and the process of integration.

The SRIF anticipated that a year after publication, an assessment would be made of the extent to which the service specification had been met, along with an assessment of service provision across various parts of Scotland.

### 4. Homelessness legislation and the prevention of homelessness among refugees

Local authorities have had a longstanding obligation to prevent as well as respond to homelessness, both in law and good practice guidance. Since the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1997, authorities have had an obligation to assist people who are imminently threatened with homelessness (and classed ‘in priority need’). The then Scottish Executive increased the official emphasis on homelessness, setting up the Homelessness Task Force (HTF) in 1999.

The HTF reviewed the causes and nature of homelessness in Scotland, examined current practice in homelessness and made wide-ranging recommendations on how homelessness can
be prevented or tackled effectively. This led to the broadening of homelessness prevention policy to encompass the full range of people at risk of homelessness. Consequential legislative changes were carried through in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003. A key requirement of local authorities under the 2001 Act was to develop homelessness strategies to set out plans for preventing and alleviating homelessness in local authorities’ area.

Former asylum-seekers who have been granted refugee status or Exceptional Leave (now Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave) to remain in the UK may be at risk of becoming homeless as a result of having to leave NASS accommodation and will be eligible for homelessness assistance. Consistent with the recommendations of the SRIF, s.193 of the Code of Guidance on Homelessness highlights that this group might be vulnerable as a result of experiencing persecution or severe hardship in their country of origin. Housing authorities are also advised to carefully consider the possibility that clients from this group may be additionally vulnerable due to other factors.

Further reform of homelessness legislation is incorporated within the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003, which envisages broadening local authority responsibilities towards homeless households; in particular, through the abolition of the ‘priority need’ test. This includes the target that, by 2012, all people who are unintentionally homeless will be entitled to a permanent home (the 2012 target). The 2012 target involves increasing homeless people's rights to housing by removing bureaucratic distinctions between different 'categories' of homeless people and acknowledging that all homeless people, including newly recognized refugees, both families and single people, require sustainable accommodation.

**4.1 Section 5 referrals**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 places a statutory duty on Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to provide accommodation to homeless people when requested to do so by a local authority, including through Section 5 referrals. A Chartered Institute Housing (CIH) examination of the extent to which Section 5 referrals were used by local authorities and the extent to which RSLs received Section 5 referrals found that overall, these are used to the benefit of the local authority, RSLs and the referred applicant (CIH, 2005). The study found that many local authorities had developed protocols with RSLs for Section 5 referrals. The CIH and the Scottish Federation of Housing (SFHA) have sought to encourage RSLs to accommodate refugees, including through producing good practice guides (CIH, 2005; SFHA, 2003).

**Table 1.1 Number of lets to homeless people over the past year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GHA</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Other RSLs</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>2003/04</td>
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<td>84.7</td>
<td>303</td>
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<td>1976</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004/05</td>
<td>1497</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>487</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/06</td>
<td>1514</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>2199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(extracted from GCC, Report by Director of Social Work Services, 2006a)

Table 1 shows that a total of 2199 houses were permanently allocated to homeless households within the city in 2005/06, an increase from 1984 for 2004/05. During 2005/6, there has been
an increase in 17 lets by GHA and an increase of 198 lets by other RSLs in the city compared to 2004/5. These figures show that while there has been an increase in the number of lets, there is in fact a reduction in the proportion of GHA lets to homeless households, and a slight increase in the proportion of lets by other RSLs. These figures need to be viewed in the context of a shortfall of provision of permanent housing to homeless households by GCC of 3,401 in 2006. This indicates a requirement for a significant increase in the provision of permanent housing to homeless households, and an urgent need for all RSLs (including those in inner city areas of BME concentration), to make greater efforts to assist the Council in discharging its statutory duty to homeless households. Indeed, a review of 19 inspections since 2003, of RSLs operating in Glasgow, found that

‘issues to do with access to housing, including observance of allocation policies, transparency of letting, equal opportunities etc., were the most prominent cause of criticism.’ (GCC, 2008)

Although such criticisms were made of only 13 of the RSLs, the review suggests that similar issues were likely to apply to most of the 60 or so RSLs which were not inspected in this period, thus underscoring the serious nature of the problem.

4.2 Local connection and Scotland

Under the 1987 Housing Act, local authorities have the power to refer an applicant who is assessed as being in priority need and unintentionally homeless to another local authority in Scotland. Local connection is defined in section 27(1) of the 1987 Act as a connection which a person has with the area:

- Because he or she is or was in the past normally resident in it, and this residence was of his or her own choice
- Because he or she is employed in it

Section 11 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004 amended the local connection provisions in English Housing Law (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 but not the Scotland Act). Broadly, Section 11 provides for asylum-seekers to automatically establish a local connection with the last area in which they were provided accommodation under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act (i.e. NASS accommodation). Subsequently, if an asylum-seeker is given leave to remain in the UK and makes a homeless application in a different area and they do not have a local connection there for any of the above reasons, the local authority can refer that person back to the area of dispersal. This has the effect of reducing refugees’ ability to present as homeless to UK local authorities outside of Scotland and constrains their housing options, leading refugee organisations to argue for legislative reform to allow refugees from Scotland to move to areas of choice within the UK.

5. The Housing Environment in Glasgow

In Glasgow, the focus of the empirical work of this study, there have been a number of dramatic changes in the housing environment, not least of which has been the transfer of housing stock of Glasgow City Council (GCC) to the Glasgow Housing Association Ltd (GHA), a registered social landlord established to take over the stock through a large-scale voluntary transfer in 2003. A local network of Local Housing Organisations (LHO) across the city provide local management services. GHA is tasked with implementing a major investment
programme to upgrade the housing stock inherited from GCC and a demolition programme is currently (July 2007) ongoing, including in areas where asylum-seekers are currently being supported by NASS.

Although GCC no longer owns housing stock and its Housing Services Department has ceased to exist, it still retains responsibility for strategic development of housing provision across all tenures within Glasgow. The Housing Investment Division of GCC Development and Regeneration Services (DRS), established in 2003 following stock transfer, has responsibility for the Local Housing Strategy, Housing Policy, Regeneration and Grants. The Council is also now responsible for managing Development Funding (previously managed by Communities Scotland). Glasgow’s Local Housing Strategy 2003 – 2008 recognises the limited availability of social rented houses of the right size and type in or close to areas of traditional settlement for Black and minority ethnic (BME) households, due to the sale of a large proportion of council stock through Right-to-Buy. Indeed, the same recognition has been instrumental to AAGHA’s strategy in selecting properties which are purchased on the open market, in high amenity inner-city and in predominantly owner-occupied areas. This has been supported by a Capital programme agreement for procurement between the DRS, AAGHA and its partner agencies, Link, Yorkhill and Sanctuary Scotland Housing Associations.

The Local Housing Strategy also acknowledges the need to ensure equal access to housing and to overcome possible barriers, such as the common use of many languages by asylum-seekers and refugees in Glasgow. The need for appropriate training for staff to enable them to respond to the needs of their diverse clients, provide appropriate information and respond effectively to harassment is also acknowledged. GCC has a responsibility under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to provide housing advice and information to people living in the Glasgow area.

6. The role of the Glasgow Asylum Seeker Project and the Refugee Support Team

The Glasgow Asylum Seeker Support Project (GASSP) was set up and coordinated by GCC to ensure that asylum seekers were able to access basic services. These include accommodation of a safe and suitable standard, GP services and access to education for children. GASSP also provides new arrivals with a welcome pack which contains information about the city. YMCA and the Angel Group provide temporary accommodation to asylum seekers through contractual arrangements with BIA Scotland.

The Refugee Support Team (RST) was set up within GCC as a specialist homelessness team in 2002 to work with nine other community casework teams. The main source of referrals for the team is the GASSP. The team carries out homelessness assessments for newly recognised refugees, and taking into account area preferences, size and type of accommodation needed and preferred and potential support needs, makes Section 5 referrals to an RSL, which if accepted, leads to a permanent offer of housing for the individual. Joint working arrangements between the RST and GHA are guided by a New Homelessness Duty Protocol: Statement of Best Practice in Joint Working between Glasgow City Council and Glasgow Housing Association (No. 11) which aims to provide a sound basis for the two organisations in relation to homelessness prevention and alleviation and the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities within the City. Other working arrangements which have been formalised are section 5 Homeless Protocols between the Council and many RSLs in the City. Referrals from the RST can be made anywhere within Glasgow. On accepting a Section 5 referral, RSLs have
six to eight weeks to find accommodation. Under homelessness legislation, refugees are entitled to two offers of accommodation deemed to be suitable

7. RSLs and the Promotion of Equality and Diversity

As the housing regulator in Scotland and a public body, Communities Scotland (CS) has a statutory duty to promote equality as a regular part of all regulation and inspection work. The organisation published its first thematic study on equalities within the housing sector in 2002 (CS, 2002), assessing the performance of landlords in this area. The results of the study were mixed. While some landlords were working hard at ensuring that their services were equally accessible to all and understood the need to ensure that their organisations reflected the communities they served, others ‘had to work a lot harder’ to meet the regulatory bodies’ expectations (CS, 2002).

In a follow-up study in 2006, Communities Scotland examined progress landlords had made in meeting challenges since 2002. The study showed that while some landlords had made good progress in meeting the challenges, others reported that

‘they lacked the resources and in some cases, the capacity to deal effectively with the full range of challenges.’ (CS, 2006: iii)

Among the findings of the survey carried out as part of this study were that social landlords and local authorities need:

- To ensure that staff have a better understanding of what an equalities commitment actually means in practice
- Good equalities information about existing tenants
- To establish clear objectives and targets for all service areas to drive and demonstrate continuous improvement
- To provide information and deliver services that respond to the diverse requirements of service users through a planned rather than reactive approach
- To establish mechanisms which collect information for measuring organisational achievements against objectives and targets, and identify the outcome of its systems and services (CS, 2006)

In the same study (CS, 2006), housing providers reported that they needed help with:

- Consulting ‘hard to reach’ groups
- Recruiting and building the capacity of governing body members
- Cultural sensitivity in communication, use of language and methods of engagement
- Better understanding of issues that affect the whole sector and use of benchmarks for good practice
- Appropriate and meaningful targets in each of the areas
- Systems to monitor and evaluate performance
- Learning from what others in the sector were doing (Communities Scotland, 2006).

These findings provide some insight into the extent to which social landlords are equipped to deal with the specific challenges and requirements of equalities issues, and are of relevance in considering the extent to which they are able to meet the housing needs of refugees, the focus of this study.
GHA’s Asylum seeker and refugee policy 2005 provides the policy framework for the organisation and Local Housing Organisations (LHOs) in addressing the needs of both asylum seekers and refugees. This states that GHA is committed to

‘a multi-agency approach to addressing those needs and developing strategies for the provision of housing and integration of refugees.’ (GHA, 2005: 4)

As the organisation which accommodates the vast majority of asylum-seekers through contractual arrangements with BIA Scotland and GCC, the extent to which GHA policy is translated in its action plans to promote equality and diversity, including in the re-provisioning of stock accompanying its clearance programme, is obviously crucial to ensuring that the housing needs of both asylum-seekers and refugees are met.

8. Other agencies providing services to refugees

It is important to differentiate between the wide range of other agencies which provide services to refugees. These include voluntary sector agencies that are funded to provide advice and information or make referrals, such as SRC Housing team and PAiH. Guidance for these agencies is developed by Home Point within Communities Scotland, which works to improve the standard of information and advice provision in Scotland. Home Point has developed the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers to provide a quality assurance framework for providers of advice and information.

In contrast, agencies such as Unity and Loretto Care are commissioned by the GCC to provide housing support. Housing support is defined under Regulation 3 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Housing Support Services) Regulations 2002, which outlines a wide range of prescribed housing support services including general counselling and support; assistance with the maintenance of the security and safety of the dwelling; the use of domestic equipment and appliances; arranging minor repairs and servicing of domestic equipment and appliances; providing life skills training and assisting with personal budgeting and debt counselling.

The unique interlinked services of stock procurement, tenant selection, settlement and housing support provided by AAGHA have already been mentioned in the Introduction to this report. These are supported by service level agreements with its partner RSLs, Yorkhill, Link and Sanctuary Scotland Housing Associations.

9. Ethnic Monitoring

In order to ensure that an equitable service is provided to social housing applicants from all sections of the community, local authorities, RSLs and lead organisations such as Communities Scotland have consistently been reminded of the need to ethnically monitor applicants, lets and waiting times (Netto et al, 2003a and b, 2004). In addition, Blackaby and Chahal (2004) suggest monitoring of various aspects of homelessness service provision, including:

- A breakdown of people seeking advice and information, compared with a breakdown of people living in the local area
• A comparison of the ethnic origin of people applying as homeless, accepted as homeless and accommodated in various types of housing – hostels, bed and breakfast and permanent accommodation
• A comparison between the various ethnic groups of the length of time homeless people spend in temporary accommodation

Although refugees cannot easily be differentiated from other BME applicants in ethnically disaggregated data, such data does at least provide some indication of the accessibility of social housing to them. At a seminar attended by social housing providers, voluntary sector agencies, representatives from GCC and the Scottish Executive in Glasgow, Netto et al (2004) documented a consensus on the need for ethnic monitoring to be part of public reporting on who is making use of housing services across all communities and the outcomes of such services. Lead organisations identified as playing a role in encouraging ethnic monitoring included the then Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland (through regulation and inspection of services and the reporting back of local authorities and RSLs on these). Following from the seminar, HomePoint noted that all services implementing the Scottish National Standards for Housing Information and Advice Services are required to:

‘undertake a regular exercise to determine the profile of their local community and any special needs that may exist (Standard 2.3)’ and that

‘recording of service-wide activity and service use should include gender, race and disability’ (Standard 7.7)

and that the two are matched to ensure supply matches local need. It is worth noting that from data that is available for 2005/06, in 40 of the 64 LHOs which made lets in 2005/06, there were none to BME applicants (Local Housing Strategy review, May 2006).

10. Structure of the report

The remainder of the report is divided into five chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the research aims and methods employed in the study. Chapters 3 to 6 are thematically organised to compare and contrast the perspectives of the refugees interviewed with those of housing and support providers. Chapter 3 considers issues related to gaining access to accommodation, including temporary accommodation. Chapter 4 considers experiences of living in temporary accommodation and homelessness. In Chapter 5, issues relating to the need for move in support among newly recognized refugees are discussed. In Chapter 6, levels of satisfaction among refugees are considered, along with other related issues such as tenant participation. Finally, Chapter 7 brings together the main findings discussed in previous chapters and presents a summary of the main recommendations.
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODS

1. Research Aims

The current study is designed to inform and influence the understanding of key stakeholders, including the Scottish Government and Communities Scotland, of the experiences of refugees in gaining access to accommodation and support, either in temporary or permanent accommodation. Within this overarching aim, the study has a number of specific objectives:

- To document the current housing experiences and issues facing refugees in Glasgow, including quality of housing advice, access to adequate housing information, referrals, choice of tenure and housing support
- To identify areas of concern, common issues, gaps in access to adequate housing information and models of good practice
- To examine satisfaction with housing and the housing support services which accompany this, comparing and contrasting the satisfaction levels of AAGHA clients with those of other refugee tenants.

2. Methods

2.1 Literature review

Recent policy reports and research relating to the housing experiences of asylum-seekers and refugees were reviewed (Robinson, 2006; Barclay et al, 2003) The lead author of the report also drew on her previous experience of research conducted for then Scottish Executive which examined homelessness in BME communities, including among refugees (Netto et al, 2004; 2006) and homelessness prevention initiatives (Pawson et al, 2007a). The report also drew on research which evaluated homelessness prevention initiatives for the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Pawson et al, forthcoming) and associated good practice (Pawson et al) and more focused work on tenancy sustainment (Pawson et al, 2006b).

2.2 Interviews with housing providers

5 interviews were undertaken with the following housing providers: Yorkhill Housing Association, Link Housing Association, Queens Cross Housing Association, Govan Housing Association, and New Shaws and New Gorbals LHOs. Yorkhill and Link were selected since they were partner associations of AAGHA, with refugee tenants in the stock procured by AAGHA. The other RSL and LHOs were selected as operating in areas with high numbers of NASS accommodation in GHA stock and hence likely to have experiences of the permanent housing of refugees, either by referral or through waiting lists. Apart from AAGHA clients, the refugees interviewed had no specific association with the RSLs interviewed. The interview with the Community Inclusion Coordinator at Govan HA included others from the local community.

The areas covered in the interviews with housing providers included:
• The extent to which ethnically disaggregated data is available on offers, lets and refusals and the extent to which targets have been set for these areas
• Experience of any common difficulties encountered in letting accommodation to refugees
• Evidence of the extent to which tenancies let to refugees have been sustained
• Any specific initiatives which have increased the housing support available to refugees to enable them to sustain their tenancies
• Measures taken to deal with complaints of racial harassment and any evidence of effectiveness in dealing with such complaints
• The extent to which tenants, including refugees are involved in decision-making processes of the housing providers

Appendix 1 provides details of the topic guide used for housing providers.

2.3 Experiences of other service providers
The research obtained the views of providers of advice and information to asylum-seekers and refugees as well as providers of housing support (see Chapter 1, Section 8). Individual interviews were conducted with key individuals from the Refugee Support Team, the Housing Team and Sunrise Project at SRC, AAGHA and PAiH to obtain the views of key agencies providing advice and assistance. This was supplemented by a focus group discussion which involved representatives from YMCA, SRC’s Housing Team and SUNRISE project, AAGHA, GASSP, GHA, Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs, Social work, Community Infosource and PAiH. Appendix 4 provides details of the topic guide used for providers of advice and information as well as providers of support. The areas covered included:

• Access to service providers, including referral mechanisms to and from other service providers
• The extent, type and nature of service provided
• Gaps and mismatches in services

2.4 Interviews and focus group discussions with refugees
32 refugees were individually interviewed. Of these fifteen were AAGHA clients, twelve were identified by SRC and four by Positive Action in Housing (PAiH). Two focus group discussions were also organised to elicit the experiences of refugees who were living in temporary accommodation. One of these, consisting of nine refugees and two interpreters was organised with the support of SRC. The other, consisting of five refugees, was organised with the support of PAiH. Interpreters facilitated communication with individuals who were not fluent in English.

To encourage participation in the research and to help ensure that the interviews were carried out in a non-exploitative manner, £20 was paid to each participant. Some interviews were held in the premises of SRC and PAiH while others were held in the homes of the participants. One of the focus group discussions was organised at SRC while the other was held at PAiH.

In order to maximise consistency of approach and ensure high quality data between the two consultants, the first four interviews were used to pilot the topic guide and undertaken by the two consultants working together. Following this, the process and outcomes of the interviews were reviewed by the researchers and the topic guide refined and adapted. Interviews almost invariably involved participants in recalling painful and difficult experiences. Since many
Refugees were reluctant to have their interviews tape-recorded, both consultants took extensive
notes of these interviews.

Areas covered in the interviews included:

- Experiences of accessing current accommodation, including difficulties encountered,
availability of information on housing options, possible sources of support and any
form of prejudice or discrimination experienced
- Previous housing history, including any experiences of rooflessness or destitution in the
UK, and staying with friends or relatives
- Routes into and out of homelessness/various strategies employed to deal with
difficulties
- Access to formal and informal sources of support at various stages of their routes into
accommodation
- Nature of formal and informal sources of support
(housing/information/financial/healthcare/social and emotional/work and related
opportunities)
- Ease of obtaining information and advice. If not easy, what made it difficult? Language
barriers/eligibility for support/long waiting period?
- Duration and usefulness of formal support and sensitivity to special needs relating to
gender, disability, cultural or religious background
- Extent of connectedness to refugee networks/faith groups/wider community
- Satisfaction with current accommodation and neighbourhood
- Aspirations for housing, including perceptions of the private rented sector, preferences
for staying in other locations in Glasgow

The topic guide used for individuals living in permanent accommodation can be found in
Appendix 2.

The focus group discussions with individuals living in temporary accommodation covered:

- Experiences of accessing temporary accommodation
- Advice and assistance with accessing permanent accommodation
- Impact of living in temporary accommodation on ability to settle in Scotland

Appendix 3 provides the topic guide used for individuals living in permanent accommodation.

2.5 Refugees participating in the research

In total, the research drew on the views and experiences of 46 refugees. 27 of them were male
and 19 female. The high number of singles in the sample was significantly influenced by the
inclusion of AAGHA clients (who, in its first project, were all single). This is evidenced by
Tables 2.1 and 2.2 in the Appendices which provide details relating to AAGHA clients and
other interviewees, respectively. The ages of the refugees in the sample ranged from 20 to 56.
Eight were currently employed while several others had enrolled in training or educational
courses. It is worth noting that seven of the eight employed were AAGHA clients. Table 2.3 in
the Appendix provides details of refugees who were living in temporary accommodation
during the fieldwork stage of the study.
In terms of country of origin, the largest group was from Somalia (11), followed by Iran (7). Others came from a wide range of countries on the African continent (Zimbabwe, Congo, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Erithrea and the Ivory Coast) as well as from Algeria, Bangladesh, Cameroon, China, Kosovo, Iran, Pakistan, Russia, Syria and Turkey. Their length of stay in the UK varied from 2 months to 7 years.

Of the 32 refugees living in permanent accommodation, 30 were living in RSLs. While not all could identify their landlords (and some erroneously identified AAGHA as a landlord), housing providers included GHA, Link, Sanctuary, Yorkhill, Govan, Gorbals, Southside, Cardonald, Queens Cross, Whiteinch and Scotstoun Housing Association and Millbank. Two refugees were living in private lets. The type of permanent accommodation refugees were living in is illustrated in Figure 2.1

**Figure 2.1 Type of permanent accommodation**

![Pie chart showing type of permanent accommodation]

19 lived in unfurnished accommodation, 6 in partly furnished accommodation and 6 in furnished accommodation.
CHAPTER 3: GAINING ACCESS TO PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION

In this chapter, we trace some of the main routes taken by refugees in gaining access to permanent accommodation, drawing on interviews with 32 refugees. While the interviews focused on their housing histories beginning from the point immediately before and after they had received positive decisions on their asylum application, it is worth pointing out that since their arrival in the UK, it was evident that many individuals had, through no choice of their own, already been through a tortuous immigration system for claiming asylum and support that had involved several changes in accommodation.

The individuals interviewed had mainly either arrived in Glasgow as asylum-seekers through the ‘no-choice’ dispersal arrangements organised by NASS or had voluntarily come to the city after they had received a positive decision on their asylum application. As discussed in Chapter 1, there are essentially two main routes by which refuges can access social housing in Glasgow, either as a Section 5 referral (the homelessness route) or through making applications to individuals RSLs in the city. However, in practice, individuals can be referred by friends or agencies to a number of agencies, which might in turn refer these individuals to the RST or assist them with making applications to RSLs in the city. Figure 3.1 illustrates some of the routes that individuals might take in accessing permanent accommodation after they have been dispersed to Glasgow.

1. Asylum-seekers dispersed to Glasgow

As discussed in Chapter 1, Glasgow Housing Association currently accommodates the bulk of asylum-seekers supported by NASS and dispersed to Glasgow through a contractual arrangement with Glasgow City Council. Of the 32 individuals who took part in individual interviews in our study, 27 had been dispersed to Glasgow. Of these individuals, 22 (81.4%) reported that they had stayed in previous NASS accommodation converted to GCC Temporary Furnished Flats (TFF), while looking for permanent accommodation.

A few individuals reported that they had had to move to other forms of temporary accommodation while they waited for permanent accommodation. Length of stay in temporary accommodation varied greatly, ranging from a minimum of less than 28 days to a maximum of two years, with 6 individuals reporting that they had stayed in temporary accommodation for more than a year.
Under the NAM arrangements that have replaced previous NASS models, significant reductions in waiting time have been reported, and decisions immediately communicated to newly recognised refugees through the Sunrise project, which would appear to be a marked improvement on the previous situation. The assignation of a case-worker to each individual under this model is also a step in the right direction as a means of facilitating continuity of support and information provision. While the speeding up of this stage of the process is to be welcomed, it does mean that individuals will have had very little time, typically four weeks, to familiarise themselves with housing and welfare systems and processes in the UK. Apart from dealing with the emotional and social issues associated with the asylum-seeking process, these individuals are faced with the loss of NASS benefits and the need to quickly move onto accessing mainstream benefits.
2. Refugees moving to Glasgow

Five individuals had of their own accord moved to Glasgow from other parts of the UK, namely Bristol, Coventry, Derby, Huddersfield and Manchester, after they had received a positive decision on their asylum application. There was considerable variation in the routes taken by these individuals but a recurrent theme through the interviews was the decision to move to Glasgow either due to difficulties in finding accommodation in the cities mentioned above and/or a perception that it would be easier to find employment and accommodation in Glasgow. At least three individuals also mentioned that they had decided to move to Scotland due to experiences of racial harassment and a perception that people in Glasgow would be more accepting of them. On arrival in Glasgow, two individuals had presented themselves as homeless at the Hamish Allen Centre (HAC) and then either stayed in hostel accommodation or with friends, two had contacted SRC who had helped them get temporary accommodation in YMCA and the last had stayed with friends. Figure 3.2 illustrates some routes by which refugees can access permanent accommodation after they have voluntarily arrived in Glasgow.

Figure 3.2 Routes to permanent accommodation for refugees arriving in Glasgow from other parts of the UK
3. Transition stage

The critical and stressful nature of the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status and the need for continuity in terms of information flow and support for newly recognised refugees has been noted in previous reports (Barclay et al, 2003; Netto et al, 2004; Wren, 2004; Phillips, 2006). Major gaps in knowledge and understanding of their position as newly recognised refugees were clearly evident, as well as the realisation that their new position placed considerable demands on them for which they were not equipped:

‘We were really unaware of the kind of support the UK government can offer, and the capacity they can work with us. It would be helpful in that (homeless) situation to know what we can draw on, what actions we can take...We didn’t know what kind of information to seek.’

‘As an asylum-seeker, NASS provide all support and do not teach independent living, while as soon as you are a refugee, you have to see to everything and there are so many things to do. It is very confusing.’

At least three individuals specifically commented on the difficulty of understanding important official letters from the Home Office, including the letter informing them of the outcome of their asylum application, indicating the need for clear communication of information at this stage, with support from interpreting agencies if necessary.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Section 6, agencies with key responsibilities for supporting asylum-seekers and refugees in accessing accommodation are the GASSP and the RST. Once asylum-seekers who are staying in GASSP flats are given leave to remain, the GASSP team offers the household the option of continuing to stay in the flat by converting the tenancy into a GCC TFF, which allows them to claim housing benefit. The household then awaits a homelessness assessment by GCC’s RST. The RST then makes Section 5 referrals to an RSL, which if accepted, leads to a permanent offer of housing for the individual. Households who are currently staying in GASSP accommodation in GHA properties and not sure they want to remain there can also stay in the flat and claim housing benefit by signing up to a temporary occupancy agreement, since GHA can substitute other vacant properties to maintain the number of properties agreed with NASS. The household can then discuss with the RST whether or not they want to be assessed as homeless in order to get an offer of permanent accommodation. This arrangement is not available to individuals living in other NASS accommodation provided by YMCA and the Angel Group, providers who have limited stock. The circumstances of these individuals are discussed below.

To some considerable extent, it would appear that measures taken to prevent rooflessness when NASS support comes to an end by enabling individuals staying in GASSP accommodation to sign up to temporary occupancy agreements while they are awaiting an offer of permanent accommodation are working. However, interviews with refugees revealed that this process is not fully understood, with some expressing the view that they appear to have little choice in this regard.

‘She just told me that I must sign an occupancy agreement or I would have to stay with friends, in a hostel or even sleep on the road.’
The same individual reported that she had been reluctant to stay in the same accommodation because her son had been harassed by other boys of his age, who had tried to burn his ear with a cigarette and sandwich him between the lift doors in the multi-storeyed block in which he had been staying, but this did not appeared to be understood by the worker in the statutory agency she was dealing with:

‘She said, ‘you people are just like children – you always want that ice-cream.’

Disturbing experiences of contact with key workers at this stage were also reported by other refugees:

‘A woman at [a statutory agency] said, ‘Why stay in Glasgow – you should go down to London. I was really upset and confused, so I just said, ‘I will do it on my own.’’

‘I was treated badly as if I was guilty. I was given no respect. She forced me to make up my mind within 1 to 2 days. She was very rough. She was trying to get me to sign a permanent agreement for a temporary high-rise flat. I asked where it was and realised it was where I had stayed and had been abused in a lift. I said never! The lady was not sympathetic.’

‘They told me I was homeless and I had to take what was offered…But I was not homeless by birth. It (the remark) was offensive and rude. But I was grateful for getting a house.’

For these individuals, advice from friends and other advice and information agencies such as SRC Housing Team was crucial in enabling them to identify other sources of support.

It was apparent that many individuals felt insecure and vulnerable at this stage, and it appeared that for many, the reassurance that they sought was not forthcoming:

‘When we became homeless, we were told anything could happen…We would have liked more information on how to avoid getting into horrible places. We didn’t know what would happen next, didn’t know what to expect. We would like to have been assured that we would get accommodation.’

Others felt that more information and support was needed to enable them to fully understand their situation and the processes for seeking accommodation through section 5 referrals as well as through individual applications to RSLs.

‘They need to explain what points you need to score to get houses. They need to explain things to stop people getting frustrated.

Yet others felt that they were not respectfully treated in the homelessness assessment process, making it difficult to eliminate possible racial prejudice on the part of at least some homelessness caseworkers.

Interviews with single men highlighted the particular difficulties they experienced in living in hostile hostel environments, often with lack of support from a caseworker:
‘People who are without priority stay in terrible places, (it is) not right not to give (them) a case-worker. People have (the) right to go everywhere in UK, (they) can contribute to this country, so why not (give them a caseworker?)’

Although Section 5 referrals are prioritised by homelessness legislation, SRC Housing Team accounts suggest that, in some cases, refugees have been helped to find accommodation through RSLs’ waiting list ahead of the homelessness route. This indicates that at least in some cases, there have been delays in homelessness assessment and Section 5 referrals. It was difficult to find evidence which either supported or disproved this in refugee accounts, since in many cases, individuals were not certain of which agency had helped them to find their accommodation. It was also clear that some individuals found the acronyms of SRC and RST confusing, possibly due to the use of ‘S’ and ‘R’ in both. Individuals sometimes referred to a ‘caseworker’ who had been instrumental in helping them find accommodation but it was not always clear whether this worker was from SRC or the RST and indeed, these findings might well reflect some degree of joint working between caseworkers at both agencies. This highlights the need for both agencies to more effectively communicate their distinct roles and responsibilities to refugees.

3.1 The position of refugees living in YMCA and the Angel Group

There was considerable concern amongst service providers over whether all refugees are gaining access to social housing through the homelessness route. It appears that due to shortages in temporary accommodation, asylum-seekers who are staying in the Angel Group and YMCA accommodation have to leave the accommodation 7 days after they get leave to remain and are expected to present as homeless on the day of their eviction. In many cases, it appears that it is not possible for a homelessness assessment to be carried out or even for a referral to be made to a temporary furnished flat on an emergency basis or, as a last resort for families, to the Hamish Allen Centre. Concerns were expressed relating to the length of notice to leave given by YMCA and the Angel Group, and the length of time before the individuals concerned were assessed and/or referred to other temporary accommodation by the RST. These factors were reported to contribute to a significant proportion of newly recognised refugees ‘falling through the net’ during a crucial and often difficult period, and potentially becoming roofless. This would suggest that there is a need for the Home Office to review its arrangements with independent service providers such as the Angel Group and YMCA to allow time for liaison with the RST and prevent homelessness.

Additionally, individuals who have to leave the Angel Group or YMCA for new temporary accommodation were also reported to have to move to a new Job Centre and in the process, lose their initial claim for JSA or IS, increasing the length of time without access to benefits. The move from YMCA to other temporary accommodation was also reported to be disruptive for school-going children. The position of individuals who have experienced homelessness after leaving YMCA and the Angel Group as well as due to other factors is discussed further in Chapter 4.

3.2 Referrals from the RST

Referrals from the RST for Section 5 referrals can be made to any RSL within Glasgow. If accepted, RSLs have six to eight weeks to find accommodation for a Section 5 homeless referral. GCC policy states that all homeless people are entitled to two offers of
accommodation deemed to be suitable, but in practice, there is some flexibility around this before refugees lose their priority status due to homelessness:

‘We do come and go because obviously some of the houses are poor, there’s a lot of décor required and so on...but we try to come and go as best we can. We try to work with the RST...help each other.’ (LHO)

Interviews with refugees suggest that many feel forced to accept the offers of permanent accommodation made to them due to the length of time they have already been in temporary accommodation, the uncertainty of when another offer might be made and the lack of certainty over whether a future offer might be more desirable. Another factor which pressured individuals into accepting offers of permanent accommodation that they did not feel were suitable was experience of racial harassment in their current accommodation. This included experience of verbal or physical abuse and perceived danger to life while living in hostels and multi-storeyed and other forms of temporary accommodation.

Box 3.1 Implications for policy and practice: Transition Stage

- The Home Office should, with key partners, continually monitor and review the implementation of NAM.
- Existing multi-agency working arrangements between BIA Scotland contractors, the RST and SRC’s SUNRISE and Housing and Welfare teams should continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure continuity of support at the point of decision
- The effectiveness of current protocols between the Home Office, the RST and the Angel Group and YMCA need to be monitored and reviewed to prevent homelessness, and possible rooflessness
- There is a need to consider alternative forms of temporary accommodation for single male refugees other than hostel accommodation and to ensure that adequate caseworker support is provided.

3.3 Access to housing advice, information and welfare support

Chapter 1 discussed the roles and responsibilities of a wide range of agencies, including the role of RSLs (Section 7), other agencies providing advice and information, and agencies providing housing support (Section 8). It is probably fair to report that while refugees cited a wide range of agencies as providing advice and information in terms of dealing with the transition from the end of NASS support and finding permanent accommodation, the distinct roles played by the individual agencies might not have been fully understood. The main agencies identified by refugees as providing advice and information were SRC, AAGHA, PAiH and the RST. Other sources of advice and information cited were social workers, Loretto Care, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the National Children’s Charity (NCH), teachers, a few RSLs and the Job Centre.

Drop-in services where refugees could meet with others who had been through a similar process were also reported to be useful for finding out about potential sources of information and support. While the role of friends at this time seemed mainly to sign post individuals to relevant agencies and provide social and emotional support, in some cases, they also provided accommodation and financial support.
Some individuals spoke highly of caseworkers who had been very helpful in enabling them to deal with the procedures for finding accommodation, including claiming housing benefit and informing them about their housing options and areas where other refugees had lived successfully. These included those based at the RST as well as SRC:

‘If (Name of worker) did not help, we don’t know what we would have done.’

‘I believed he helped me a lot because he knew I was suffering at the time. He was sending me to different housing associations...he was trying hard to get accommodation.’

‘I had good impression of (agency) from when I first arrived (in Glasgow). I was helpless. They gave me money to buy food so it was a great help at the time.’

In stark contrast to this, other individuals reported that finding sources of advice and information was not easy and involved significant time lapses:

‘There is little advice from anybody. There is no basic information on where to go to for help...People know that once they get leave to remain they need to look for a house but they don’t know the system, the areas, about the points, about how to write an application, so they have less success in getting a house.’

‘It’s a hectic and stressful time. You have to apply for Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance and there is no support for your child until you claim Child Benefit. It’s a long procedure’

Yet other individuals reported that although they had received some advice and information, their success in finding accommodation was largely due to their own efforts and persistence:

‘I feel like I have been left to get on with things. I have to do everything myself. I’ve got tired waiting for things, but it has made me stronger.’

‘I did a lot myself. I used to go to housing associations twice a week, as I was desperate to get a house... I made seven to eight applications in different housing associations. There is a very long queue. They were unable to say how long I would wait – they said it could be two to eight years’

(Agency) gave me addresses and telephone numbers, then they said I had enough English (to contact housing associations) but I didn’t. It stopped me from finding suitable housing.’

Supporting this, some individuals spoke of major gaps in knowledge and information provision that limited their ability to apply for appropriate accommodation:

‘I didn’t know there were other agencies apart from GHA’

‘If you walk into a housing association, what documents and information do they need?’
Refugees’ lack of knowledge of courses of action to take or choices that they could make was also highlighted by a housing support provider:

‘A lot of people… don’t seem to have had…housing advice about what their options are in Scotland. What their options are elsewhere…And it’s really important because somebody can be signing up to a Scottish secure tenancy, and then think, actually, this isn’t what I wanted.’

As has previously been highlighted as good practice (Scottish Refugee Integration Forum, 2003), some agencies felt that there was scope for asylum-seekers to be better prepared about their future housing options. Existing forms of guidance such as the ‘Welcome Pack’ produced by the GASSP were acknowledged to be helpful. Another example of good practice identified was the ‘Move On Pack’ currently being produced by SRC, GHA and Glasgow Homelessness Partnership (GHP) and translated into nine languages and widely disseminated to relevant agencies was also anticipated to help fill this gap. However, discussion with a wide range of service providers highlighted the need for both to be evaluated, along with GCC’s website and phone-line.

Refugees and service providers concurred in the need for a specialist impartial service to provide advice, information and advocacy to help refugees navigate the system, highlighting the continued need for existing services:

‘There are lots of places but people do not know where to go.’

‘We need better advice about where to go for advice, free or affordable clothes, furniture, other essentials’

‘People don’t know how to complain if they want to, so they are losing their rights.’

As an example of good practice and a means of addressing some of these needs, Link HA was currently developing an 18 month project to enhance the provision of advice and information to refugees and migrant workers by housing providers, which would involve refugees as volunteers to the project.

The need for impartial housing advice is likely to increase in importance given the imminent introduction of Choice-based lettings (CBL) among some RSLs, including GHA. The key features of this approach are that vacant properties are advertised and applicants are expected to actively bid for properties, rather than await allocation by an officer.

Asked what kind of information and advice they were looking for, refugees reported that they were in need of information and advice on a broad range of matters, including:

- Their housing rights
- Housing options in the social and private rented sector
- How to claim benefits they are entitled to
- Areas in which accommodation is available
- Areas where refugees are likely to be safe or free from racial harassment
- Sources of information and support
- Procedures for applying for accommodation
- Access to furniture in the form of furnished tenancies or furniture packages
This underscores the need for existing advice and information housing services, such as those provided by SRC, to continue to be supported. For many, getting appropriate accommodation and obtaining financial support were the first priorities:

‘The key was to get a house and a roof over my head. Benefits were also important as I had no money.’

However, it was not uncommon for individuals to report delays in claiming a range of benefits, including Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), Income Support (IS) and Child Tax Credit CTC, leading to financial difficulty for individuals and households. This highlights the need for greater continuity in welfare support and information provision and improved sign-posting of services, particularly for those who are not fluent speakers of English.

Information about the possibility of buying property in the future was also seen to be useful. Other individuals felt that they had to deal with broader issues, such as how to access educational and training courses, English improver courses and in other ways, equip themselves for employment:

‘I was looking for everything. How to get a job, how to live independently, how to move house.’

Barriers to accessing information and advice were reported to include:

- Discriminatory attitudes to homeless people in general
- Discriminatory attitudes to refugees and lack of knowledge and sensitivity of providers of their rights
- Lack of preparedness of asylum-seekers for dealing with the transition between the end of NASS support and access to permanent accommodation
- Lack of familiarity on the part of newly recognised refugees on sources of information and advice
- Lack of clear referral procedures between agencies

From the service provider perspective, it was evident that there was a need for better coordination of services to prevent duplication of services, such as assistance with form-filling and sign-posting to relevant agencies. Some degree of coordination seems to have arisen through joint work by caseworkers at the RST and key voluntary sector agencies but it seems apparent that more formalised protocols would ensure a more strategic approach to providing advice and information at this crucial stage.
Box 3.2 Implications for policy and practice: Access to Advice, Information and Welfare Support

- The uptake and usefulness of the ‘Welcome Pack’, ‘Move-on Pack’ and other existing forms of web-based and information provision should be evaluated and updated.
- There is scope for increased referral of refugees by the RST to independent sources of advice and information, such as SRC. The work of the RST should be supported by clear referral mechanisms to agencies whose primary role is to provide information and advice.
- There needs to be greater continuity of information and welfare provision, including JSA, IS and Child Tax Credit, in the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status.
- There is a need for access to impartial, specialist advice such as that provided by SRC’s Housing and Welfare Team and Sunrise to assist newly recognised refugees and those who have experienced prolonged stay in temporary accommodation or other unsuitable accommodation to access permanent accommodation. This need is likely to increase with the introduction of CBL in some RSLs in Glasgow.
- A strategic approach to information and advice provision should be taken to prevent duplication of effort among agencies and to enhance access to information and advice for refugees.

4. Refugee experiences of finding appropriate accommodation

Below some quantitative data relating to the difficulties experienced by refugees in finding accommodation are considered. However, it is important to interpret this data cautiously, given the complexity of the situation that refugees are faced with and their lack of knowledge of the system and their rights to housing. Since this was anticipated in the design of the research, some qualitative responses which sought to provide further insight into their initial response was also elicited. The data below also provides a useful insight into processes and situations that refugees have to deal with which might be considered ‘no problem’, a ‘minor problem’ and a ‘major problem’. This additional data supports the limitations of quantitative data and the value of a qualitative approach in dealing with potentially different frameworks of reference. In interpreting this data, it is worth bearing in mind that many of these individuals have already faced formidable challenges in their country of origin and in the process of claiming asylum in the UK.

4.1 Affordability of accommodation

Based on the results presented in Table 3.1 in the appendix and illustrated in Figure 3.3, affordability of accommodation does not appear to be an issue for the majority of the individuals interviewed. However, these responses were mainly made by individuals who were currently in receipt of housing benefit, some of whom were preparing for employment by going for English classes and educational or training courses. Individuals who wished to work immediately and who would be likely to lose their entitlement to housing benefit if they did so reported that it would be a ‘major problem’ to find affordable accommodation and seek employment. For instance, one individual who responded that affordability of accommodation was a ‘major problem’ reported that this had led him to choose an unfurnished flat where rent levels would be lower. Highlighting the problematic nature of interpreting what might be considered to be a ‘major’ or ‘minor’ problem, another individual who responded that finding affordable accommodation was a ‘minor problem’ explained that he received a bursary of £350 but with the rent at £250, he has a limited amount left to cover bills, food, clothes and books.
Other individuals reported that they had considered private rented accommodation due to lack of appropriate social housing but found that this was beyond their means, indicating that affordability of accommodation is a key issue.

**Figure 3.3 Finding affordable accommodation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Major problem</th>
<th>Minor problem</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>70%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.2 Area of accommodation**

The results presented in Table 3.2 in the appendix and illustrated in Figure 3.4 below indicate that more than half of the individuals interviewed found that obtaining accommodation in their area of choice was a major problem. This is supported by qualitative data, which illustrate that for many, safety from racial harassment is a key factor in considering housing options:

‘It was really, really difficult to get a place of your choice. You can get one in Sighthill or Govan quickly, but if it’s a good area, there is a very long queue.’

‘They killed a person in front. I was really afraid because I had two boys (aged 16 and 18 years old). I didn’t want them out in the dark…Once this happened, I wanted to go somewhere safe.’

‘I am very, very concerned about safe area…very important to me because you know Glasgow does not like some minority groups…the first offer is not the place I want, but my caseworker said if I refuse, it will take six months to get another offer and it can be any place, anywhere…and then, there can be no more offer, I am afraid for that, I can’t stay anymore in the hostel and I need a place to stay…To find accommodation is very hard here, most all of if we are single here.’

‘I can live in any house. Just the safety is all I need.’

Related to the importance of safety from racial harassment and elements of criminality associated with certain areas that figured prominently in these discussions, some refugees also mentioned the usefulness of information relating to the ethnic composition of the area:

‘It is good to know which areas are multicultural, rather than being in areas where there is only one culture.’

It was clear that for some individuals, the extent to which areas were ethnically mixed was positively associated with perceptions of safety and ease of settlement. Many refugees
expressed a preference to be accommodated in areas where there were other refugees, which they perceived to offer safer and more supportive living environments:

‘Make it easier for people to settle. Place refugees in clusters so that they can share problems.’

However, others expressed a preference not to be with others from the same cultural background:

‘Don’t assume that people want to stay close to people of their own culture. It’s better to mix and integrate. You learn English quicker and that is a key at the beginning.’

And others actually feared for their safety, should their identity be revealed to others from their country of origin. These varying preferences highlight the need for service providers to effectively consult with refugees on preferred areas, within the limitations of available stock.

Illustrating that concepts of ‘area’ might be differently interpreted from those which housing providers might apply, a few respondents spoke of problems with neighbours which had made them unhappy with their accommodation. It is perhaps worth mentioning the absence of other area-related issues such as proximity to places of worship and shops providing Halal food and other culturally specific requirements in these interviews, in contrast to housing providers’ views of other factors which were significant to refugees, namely, proximity to places of worship and for some Muslims, proximity to Halal shops. This suggests that for refugees, such factors were far less important than safety from harassment. In other respects, refugee preferences were reported to be indistinct from the majority population, including access to health care facilities, schools, transport links and proximity to places of work. As with other client groups, shared accommodation was reported to be unpopular.

**Figure 3.4 Finding accommodation in area of choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition of accommodation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major problem</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor problem</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.3 Condition of accommodation**

Figure 3.5 (based on Table 3.3 in the appendix) indicates that for half of the refugees interviewed, the condition of the flat was either a major or minor problem. Problems cited here included dampness, poor décor, faulty plumbing systems, lack of electrical supply and broken windows. The absence of furniture (‘no carpets, nothing at all’) was a major problem that many individuals had to deal with and is considered in further detail in Chapter 3. Again, an illustration that what might be considered a problem among refugee tenants might differ from the perceptions of other tenants, one individual reported that condition of accommodation was
'no problem’ but had changed the carpets and wall coverings. Other problems cited here such as the inappropriateness of multi-storeyed accommodation for children (to play safely) illustrate not only the lack of appropriate accommodation for some households, but that refugee tenants and housing providers might have different understandings of what is meant by the ‘condition’ of accommodation.

**Figure 3.5 Finding accommodation in appropriate condition**

4.4 **Size of accommodation**

Figure 3.6 (based on Table 3.4) illustrates that size of accommodation was a ‘major problem’ for a third of the individuals interviewed. This included a household in which four children (a mix of boys and girls) slept in one room. Two other individuals reported that they were currently living in over-crowded accommodation because they had applied for permanent accommodation before other family members had joined them in the UK and only been allocated accommodation on the basis of the current size of their household. Apart from the general shortage of larger accommodation in the social rented sector, this particular case highlights the difficulties of homelessness assessments that are based on the current size of the household, despite the imminent arrival of other members of the family in Glasgow due to refugees who have exercised their right to family reunion.

**Figure 3.6 Finding accommodation of adequate size**

It is perhaps worth reporting that the size of accommodation in which a twenty year old has been sharing with a ten year old sister for six months was viewed by the parent concerned to be
only a ‘minor problem.’ This indicates both the inadequacy of using quantitative data as the sole basis for estimating the scale of the lack of appropriately sized accommodation in Glasgow as well as the lack of responsiveness of housing providers to young people who are entitled to accommodation in their own right. A few individuals reported that although the number of rooms was adequate for their household, the size of the rooms was too small.

In sum, interviews with refugees revealed that many individuals felt that they had been forced to accept accommodation that they perceived to be less than suitable for a variety of reasons, of which lack of perceived safety from racial harassment was one of the main factors. Two individuals reported that they had been unable to decline offers of accommodation that were clearly not suitable for existing medical conditions. For instance, one individual reported daily bleeding from the ears as a result of living on the higher levels of a multi-storeyed block and another who reported that she had only one kidney and had also been offered permanent accommodation in a multi-storeyed block found going in and out of the accommodation especially difficult when the lift broke down. However, whilst acknowledging the difficulties experienced by these and other individuals, in the view of one refugee, there is also some scope for increasing awareness among refugees of the limited supply of social housing and their willingness to consider possibilities that might not have been their preferred option:

‘Refugees …need to accept that they should start living in permanent accommodation and progress from there. They have to recognise help offered by agencies.’

Asked if they had encountered discrimination in seeking appropriate accommodation, many individuals responded negatively and seemed to accept that the difficulties they faced in obtaining appropriate accommodation were at least partly a reflection of the shortage of social housing in Glasgow in areas which they would have preferred. However, some individuals clearly felt aggrieved by the process:

‘She didn’t talk very well to me, she didn’t accept (my situation) as housing need. She said a lot of words that is unacceptable…I think it is discrimination.’

One individual reported that he was not sure whether he had been discriminated against or not as he had not had replies to phone calls or housing applications. Another individual raised the possibility of discrimination in his failed attempts of getting employment after attending a number of interviews but not receiving any feedback from job applications, indicating not only the importance of equal treatment of refugees in recruitment processes but the close relationship between seeking employment and finding permanent accommodation.

5. Accommodating refugee preferences and needs

5.1 Sources of referrals for housing providers

Since housing providers surveyed did not hold statistics relating specifically to refugees, they were not able to ascertain the main source of lets to refugees or the percentage of refugee referrals from all referrals that were actually housed. However, informally two LHOs reported that the main routes through which refugees accessed social housing tended to be homelessness referrals and the clearance programme. Yorkhill HA reported that the main source of referrals for refugees was AAGHA while Link HA reported that this was PAiH, AAGHA and Section 5 referrals. Section 5 refugee referrals to housing providers come from every casework team in the city as well as the RST.
5.2 Constraints facing housing providers in accommodating refugee preferences

Although the numbers of asylum-seekers who are receiving positive decisions with leave to remain has fallen significantly in recent years, it is clearly evident from the interview data discussed above that severe constraints remain in terms of accommodating refugees needs and preferences with reference to house type, area preferences and adequate size. Housing providers reported that refugee preferences and needs are considered within the context of competing demands for the stock available such as the clearance programme, other Section 5 referrals and in the case of some providers, the allocation of a proportion of properties to a particular client group, such as elderly people:

‘Some people are realistic and some people, are you know, they are quite aspirational, and its not realistic in what we can achieve for them. So sometimes it’s a kind of reality lesson in what’s available in Glasgow.’

However, in the experience of at least one LHO, refugees are not as aspirational as other tenants and express a desire to live near established communities:

‘Prior to the clearance…we interviewed every tenant. And the vast majority of them are all aspirational and they are wanting the Manswood and Eastwood…but the refugees were wanting further down the street.’

Major factors which influenced housing providers’ ability to accommodate refugee preferences were:

- lack of larger accommodation
- the programme of clearances.
- the shortage of social housing in desirable areas
- the majority of homeless lets in multi-storeyed accommodation which were of variable quality and structure

5.2.1 Lack of larger accommodation

All housing and support providers interviewed reported an increasing demand for larger accommodation due to the changing demographics of the refugee community with an increasing number of family reunions, posing real challenges:

‘We have been round all the landlords and we’ve got some really large apartments, 6 or 7, I think we had. But we could fill that so many times over, so, we’ve actually got a number (of refugees staying in temporary accommodation) just now, that, you know, they just aren’t going anywhere…Anything above two bedroomed is getting more difficult, anything above three bedroomed is practically impossible to get hold of.’

In a couple of cases, service providers reported that families have been split into two houses due to lack of appropriately sized accommodation. In other cases, households were reported to have remained in temporary accommodation, again supported by refugee accounts. There was a consensus that there was a need for greater information sharing relating to asylum-seeker households (including size of household and any disabilities) between the Home Office, GHA, GCC and other support providers in order to plan for short, medium and long-term accommodation of refugees.
5.2.2 Lack of accommodation in perceived safe areas
While housing and support providers acknowledge concerns of racial harassment among refugees, their ability to place them in perceived safe areas appears to be limited. At least one provider raised a dilemma that arose out of an awareness among minority ethnic communities in general of the potential for racial harassment as well as local knowledge that this was more likely to occur in certain areas:

‘Do we not make an offer on that basis? [Housing estate] is an area where there is a low BME concentration...we don’t want to isolate people, ... but what if that is what is available?’

The same provider acknowledged that there was another area where people from minority ethnic communities were trying to move away from due to experiences of racial harassment. Given the limited availability of social housing, this raised issues of local management as well as the extent to which people are supported once they are rehoused and their ability to cope. In the words of one agency:

‘It’s really just a question of what support is there. Are they isolated? Do they know other people in their community? Do they have services about? Have they got services they are tied into? I find that if people do have support and other ties to a particular area, then, normally, it will be successful...I can’t guarantee that anyone who we have rehoused will not be completely, you know, target free. But what we do is, it’s a question of risk assessment. We have to look at the positives and what the person is like, what they are going to manage ...and the best solution for that particular family with what resources you have.’

5.2.3 Impact of the clearance programme
Since GHA gives a higher priority to clearance cases than homelessness cases, the extent to which asylum-seekers and refugees are residing in areas affected by the clearance programme has a significant impact on the future housing prospects of refugees. Where asylum-seekers and refugees are present in clearance areas, they are moved along with others to other accommodation either locally or outwith the area. Where they are under-represented in such areas, the allocation of housing to refugees by providers involved in the programme is likely to be disproportionately low. While data relating to asylum-seekers is available, it is difficult to track the movement of those who have obtained refugee status. It is thus not possible to ascertain the extent to which refugees will be able to benefit from involvement in this programme. Clearance re-housing policy would certainly provide some indication as to whether refugees are treated equitably and should be publicised to help ensure greater transparency.

5.2.4 Concerns about accommodating refugees on the part of housing providers
Asked whether they had any concerns about accommodating refugees, housing providers reported that generally, these had decreased dramatically since the arrival of asylum-seekers in the early stages of the dispersal programme. Training for staff (including that provided by the Scottish Refugee Council) on the current legislation, the rights of refugees and changes in Home Office policies and practices was reported to have helped in improving capacity in
dealing with refugees. Initial hostility from other tenants was also reported to have decreased, with increased understanding that refugees were not privileged in any way. A couple of providers attested to established links with community groups which help support refugees and other minority ethnic communities. The need to establish effective mechanisms to communicate with refugees was also highlighted, for instance, in relation to the potential for flooding in high rise flats due to cultural differences in bathing and washing habits.

**Box 3.3 Implications for policy and practice: Allocations**

- There continues to be a need for a sensitive lettings policy for refugee households which takes into account refugee fears of racial harassment; the inappropriateness of multi-storied accommodation for families with young children; special needs of some individuals due disability or medical conditions; the needs of households which are likely to expand due to imminent family reunions and pregnancies, and the extent to which asylum-seeker and refugee households benefit from inclusion in the clearance programme and transfer to new accommodation.
- The RST and housing providers need to consult with refugees on their preferences for areas, including whether they would like to be accommodated with other refugees or with others from their country of origin, or away from them.
- The RST should seek to ensure a spread of refugee referral acceptances amongst RSLs operating in medium and higher demand areas.
- New build accommodation should take account of the demand for larger accommodation among refugee households and the desirability for this to be located in perceived safe areas.

6. The role of public bodies in increasing refugee access to social housing

The slow progress of the CHR in Glasgow and consequently, the difficulties faced by refugees and other potential applicants in accessing housing through applying to a number of individual RSLs has already been discussed in Chapter 1. Our sample of housing providers interviewed varied in terms of the measures they took to actively promote their existence in general, and to BME groups and refugees in particular. Some maintained a community presence through local events, open days, organised activities and through advertising in publications and electronic mailing lists. Organisational newsletters were commonly used to communicate information to tenants and the wider community. There was some targeted activity of certain areas to refugees and other minority ethnic communities but this tended to be the exception rather than the norm. Combined with the delay in the introduction of the CHR, the lack of a targeted approach to publicise vacancies and lets by RSLs highlights the importance of the role played by advice and information agencies in assisting refugees with applications to individual RSLs.

6.1 Ethnic monitoring

Chapter 1, Section 3.2 emphasised the importance of ethnic monitoring of lets, applicants, waiting times and other aspects of service provision to ensure equality of access for all sections of the population. Earlier research based on information collected by the then Scottish Executive from local authorities in the financial year 2002/03 had found that generally Scottish Local Authorities had adapted well to the requirement to collect ethnicity data, with 92% of local authorities recording the ethnic origin details of homeless applicants (Netto et al, 2004). However, it is worth noting the major omission of ethnically disaggregated data relating to
applicants and lets in the statistics published by Communities Scotland based on RSL returns. The reasons for this are unclear but of concern given the importance of transparency in public reporting of applicants and lets, and the positive, enforceable duty placed on public organisations by the Race Relations Amendment (2001) Act to publish data relating to the effectiveness of their race equality schemes.

Our review of a sample of RSLs found that a few of them held ethnically disaggregated data related to housing applications and lets though not of waiting times, which was reported to be difficult to collect and of limited value, since it was not possible to tell from such data whether applicants had moved into other accommodation or not. The profile of housing applicants in terms of type and size of accommodation preferred is ethnically monitored and provided by GHA on a monthly basis for management LHOs. Although such data is undoubtedly valuable, the usefulness of such data could be substantially increased if more effort could be invested into collecting ethnicity data and reducing the high proportion of entries that are currently classified as ‘unknown.’

While ethnically disaggregated data relating to waiting times and lets is of value in indicating the extent to which the RSLs (and LHOs) are accessible to individuals from BME communities, it is not possible to fully discern the position of refugees from such data. Hence, it is not possible to ascertain the proportion of refugees who applied for accommodation out of the total number of applicants or the proportion of refugee tenants out of the total number of tenants. This is of concern given the difficulties faced by this client group in finding permanent accommodation as discussed above, and their potential vulnerability once they settle into permanent accommodation, which will be further discussed in Chapter 5. However, low numbers of people from BME communities among the lets of individual RSLs would indicate either low or no refugee tenants, while high numbers of people from these communities might indicate that it is likely that refugee households are also represented.

**Box 3.4 Implications for policy and practice: Increasing Refugee Access to the Social Rented Sector**

- There is a need to progress development of the CHR in Glasgow to increase access to the social rented sector by refugees and other vulnerable groups
- RSLs need to adopt a targeted approach in publicising vacancies and lets to refugee households as part of a wider strategy to increase their accessibility to BME communities
- Communities Scotland should publicise ethnically disaggregated data relating to applications and lets submitted by all RSLs
- RSLs should put into place more effective mechanisms to collect and review ethnically disaggregated data relating to applicants and lets.

### 6.2. Increasing refugee access to affordable housing: access to the private rented sector

Only two of the 32 refugees interviewed were living in the private rented sector. Both reported that they had felt forced to move into the private rented sector due to the lack of appropriate accommodation, despite the relative lack of security of tenure and higher levels of rent. As discussed earlier, a few other individuals interviewed reported that they had investigated options in the private rented sector and had been forced to rule them out due to levels of rent that would not be covered by housing benefit. These findings suggest that there is perhaps more scope for referrals to an existing rent deposit scheme to facilitate access to the private
rented sector for larger families or people who want to live in a particular area. While some of the factors underlying the reported low take-up of this scheme by refugees might be attributed to the desire for permanency afforded by social housing, the reasons underlying this merit closer examination and the potential for increasing access to private rented accommodation through these means, particularly for larger families, should be seriously considered. Rent deposit schemes have been found to be an effective means of increasing choice of affordable housing for homeless households and others on a low income both in Scotland and England (Pawson et al, forthcoming, 2007a). The value of access to rent deposit schemes in assisting refugees to move on has already been documented by the Scottish Refugee Council and Shelter (2001).

**Box 3.5 Implications for policy and practice: Increasing Refugee Access to Affordable Housing**

In addition to increasing access to the social rented sector, refugee access to other forms of affordable housing should be supported by facilitating access to the private rented sector through rent deposit schemes, where appropriate.
CHAPTER 4: EXPERIENCES OF LIVING IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION AND HOMELESSNESS

This chapter provides ‘snap-shots’ of the experiences of individuals living in temporary accommodation as well as other episodes of homelessness experienced by refugees. The former is based on data gathered through two focus group discussions with individuals living in temporary accommodation while the latter also draws on individual interviews with refugees who reported that they had experienced homelessness in the form of rooflessness or being forced to stay with friends or relatives due to the lack of any other option. It is worth adding that many individuals who were currently living in temporary accommodation had experienced homelessness in the sense of rooflessness or forced stay with friends before accessing temporary accommodation.

1. Experiences of living in temporary accommodation

Periods of stay in temporary accommodation ranged from a few months to six years, with one individual reporting that he was currently living in his car. The two discussions revealed depressingly similar issues. One of the dominant themes was recurrent experiences of racial harassment which had previously resulted in changes in accommodation and heavily influenced choices relating to future accommodation. Individuals currently living in previous NASS accommodation converted to GCC TFFs as well as those living in hostel accommodation also reported a fear of criminality and harassment, with one individual reporting that her son had been assaulted twice:

‘Young children are not kind to other people…maybe because we are black people. The children are afraid to go out.’

‘There is a drug dealer in the block, too many noises from people coming in all the time…very dangerous, very scared, very scared.’

‘The area is very dangerous…there is broken glass in many houses.’

Many of these individuals reported that although they had received offers of accommodation, these had been located in areas that they felt they could not accept (including areas where they were currently staying), due to the threat to personal safety and danger to their lives. In the words of three individuals:

‘I will not be alive to get another flat.’

‘So many times I told them, I am not looking for posh place, just safe place.’

‘Security is the main issue. If there is a bad attitude towards foreigners, I don’t want to stay there...In my current area, there is a lot of vandalism... Area is very important. I want to feel safe and secure in a good area.’

Others complained of over-crowding in their current accommodation. For instance, one married couple was sharing a one bedroom flat with a relative in one household and two teenagers (a boy and a girl) were sharing a single bedroom in another. Accommodation with two or more bedrooms in safe areas was reported to be very difficult to find, as was special
needs accommodation, which took into account needs related to disability or medical conditions. Others complained of poor living conditions such as draughts, lack of heating and dampness.

Considerable frustration and anxiety was expressed relating to uncertainty around the length of stay in temporary accommodation. Individuals reported that stay in temporary accommodation posed challenges to sending children to school and to pursuing educational courses or employment opportunities themselves. In addition to presenting practical difficulties, living in temporary accommodation also had a psychological impact on individuals:

‘It makes it difficult to find employment, if you are not happy, it is difficult to go for interviews.’

Other individuals complained of social isolation, relating fear to going out of their accommodation to their ability to form friendships with local people. Single men who were living in hostel accommodation after they had received a positive decision on their asylum application spoke of their hopelessness and despair in finding permanent accommodation, due to not being considered to be in priority need.

Several individuals reported that they had taken some measures to investigate options for moving into permanent accommodation other than the ‘homelessness route’, such as filling in application forms for other RSLs, with the support of agencies such as PAiH and SRC Housing Team. Others reported that they had investigated the possibility of private rented accommodation but found either that their benefits could not cover rent levels or that landlords did not wish to have tenants supported by benefits. Difficulties in claiming housing benefit were also reported. Yet others reported that they had tried to seek employment but could not find jobs which would cover the rent. Future employment prospects also influenced decision-making processes:

‘It has to be affordable for when I get a job.’

Asked what they felt would be helpful to them to move into permanent accommodation, issues related to supply were highlighted, including the need for new build with appropriately sized accommodation, reductions in waiting time or at least estimates of waiting time and help with finding employment and appropriate educational courses.

2. Experiences of homelessness

Although all refugees are recognized as homeless by legislation once they have received a positive decision on their asylum application and presented as homeless, as many as ten refugees also reported instances of homelessness in the sense of being forced to sleep rough or stay with friends due to lack of any other alternative accommodation. Periods of severe hardship were reported by individuals who had slept rough.

Others who had experienced homelessness included single young men who had stayed in hostel accommodation and found that they could no longer tolerate the situation:

‘It is difficult to get points for housing if you are a single man. I had to be in the hostel to get the points, but I could not stay longer as it was so bad.’
Individuals interviewed in this research concurred with those interviewed in earlier research (Netto et al, 2004) in reporting the hostility of the hostel environment, in which they were in close proximity with individuals who had issues with substance abuse and were a visible target for racial harassment. Many had used the place as simply a place to stay at night but even this proved to be too difficult for some individuals who left to stay with friends.

Danger to personal safety was also the precipitating factor for one individual who had left permanent accommodation when he realized that he resided near someone from his country of origin whom he perceived to be a threat to his safety in this country. This individual reported that although he had been offered hostel accommodation while new accommodation was found for him, he felt that he could not tolerate living in that environment either.

Others who had experienced homelessness included two individuals who had stayed in YMCA accommodation but who had to leave at short notice. They reported that since they had received no other offer of temporary accommodation, they had been forced to stay with friends. For the majority of the individuals concerned, routes out of homelessness was crucially dependent on friends or relatives who were able to identify sources of advice and information and support such as SRC Housing team and Sunrise project, PAiH and the RST to resume the process of applying for accommodation. For some of these individuals, lack of fluency in English posed an additional challenge to finding alternative accommodation.

**Box 4.1 Implications for policy and practice: Use of Temporary Accommodation and Homelessness Prevention**

- Prolonged stay in temporary accommodation should be reduced by increasing the supply of affordable, appropriate accommodation in safe areas.
- The supply of more appropriate forms of temporary accommodation needs to be considered. The use of hostels for refugees, including young men, should be avoided.
- There is an urgent need for the Home Office to review the arrangements for individuals living in YMCA and the Angel Group accommodation who have received a positive decision on their asylum application to prevent rooflessness.
- More preventative work needs to be undertaken on matching housing need and supply in advance of decision-making relating to the outcome of asylum applications to prevent homelessness.
- Homelessness should be prevented by providing continuity of independent and culturally sensitive information and advice at all stages of the asylum-seeking process and when asylum-seekers gain refugee status or exceptional leave to remain.
- There is a continued need for the Education and Employment service provided by SRC, including the Sunrise project.
CHAPTER 5: MEETING SUPPORT NEEDS

This chapter discusses the support needs of refugees who have moved into permanent accommodation by drawing on interviews with individual refugees. As discussed in Chapter 1, Section 8, it is important to differentiate between the wide range of agencies which provide services to refugees. These include the RST and the other eight community casework teams which carry out homelessness assessments and plan care/support packages to meet identified support needs. Where significant and complex needs are identified, the RST reports that it would liaise with social work colleagues. In other cases, support providers such as Loretto Care, Gowrie, Scottish Association of Mental Health (SAMH) and Unity are contracted by GCC through a tendering exercise to provide support for six weeks after move in. The nature of housing support provided covers a wide range of services as defined under Regulation 3 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Housing Support Services) Regulations 2002. These include general counselling and support; assistance with the maintenance of the security and safety of the dwelling; the use of domestic equipment and appliances; arranging minor repairs and servicing of domestic equipment and appliances; providing life skills training and assisting with personal budgeting and debt counselling.

Other agencies, such as SRC and PAiH are funded from a range of sources, including the then Scottish Executive and charitable trusts, to provide advice and information to refugees and also make referrals to other agencies, where appropriate. Advice and information agencies are guided by a quality framework developed by HomePoint, the Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers. Uniquely, AAGHA provides a range of linked services, including stock procurement, tenant selection, settlement and housing support and is tenuously funded through its stock procurement service level agreement with its partner RSLs and ad hoc funding of its annual deficits, currently by the Equalities Unit of the Scottish Government.

1 Sources of advice, information and support

The agencies most commonly cited by refugees as sources of support were SRC, AAGHA, the RST and the Job Centre. Other sources of support cited to a lesser extent were Positive Action in Housing, RSLs, Health care centres and teachers at colleges. Additionally, the following were each cited by at least one individual: SAMH, Loretto Care, Compass and churches. Satisfaction levels of the main agencies cited are discussed below, but caution should be exercised in interpreting this data since they relate to agencies which interviewees themselves identified as having provided support. Since the number of individuals who cited various agencies varied, it is not possible to compare the satisfaction levels of individuals with different agencies. However, the qualitative data discussed here does give some indication of aspects of the service which individuals found to be helpful as well as aspects which were less than helpful.

1.1 Satisfaction levels with the RST

Satisfaction levels with the RST were mixed. Of the 21 Individuals who cited the service as a source of information, two individuals reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the service while nine reported that they were ‘quite satisfied’ amounting to nearly half:

‘Caseworker was good …and could speak (language)."
Four individuals reported that they were ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied,’ while five individuals reported that they were ‘quite dissatisfied’ and one that she was ‘very dissatisfied’.

**Table 5.1 Satisfaction with the RST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction level</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite satisfied</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
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</table>

Aspects of the service perceived to be less than helpful were the need to make an appointment, which posed difficulties for individuals who were not fluent in English, the lack of contact with individuals, the length of waiting time involved, and in a few cases, what was perceived as a lack of respect.

‘If I had any questions, I had to make an appointment and it all took time. Their process took time.’

‘I never got to talk to anyone. Just filled in the application but I would have liked to discuss the application with someone.’

‘Their attitude could have been better. They said abruptly, ‘Do you want it (the house) or not?’

While some negative experiences of the service provided are inevitably related to lack of full understanding of the homelessness assessment and referral role of the RST, the pressurised housing market and the shortage of social housing in desirable areas, it appears that there is scope for the adoption of a more customer-friendly approach to individuals.

### 1.2 Satisfaction with SRC

Satisfaction levels with the Housing Team, Sunrise project, and other staff in SRC were high, with 22 individuals citing that they were receiving support from this agency. Table 5.2 shows that of these, more than two thirds (15 out of 22 or 68%) reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the service and six ‘quite satisfied’ (40%), with only individual reporting that she was ‘very dissatisfied’ with the service.

Some comments serve to illustrate aspects of the service which individuals found to be helpful, indicating that a respectful attitude and person-centred approach, the provision of timely information combined with sign-posting to relevant agencies and continuity of support were highly valued:

‘Kind staff. Respectful. A lot of staff have been a refugee so they can empathise with the situation.’
‘Lots of information and support. I went there from day one. They directed me where to go. I still call them if I have a problem. For example, my daughter needs to find a GP.’

‘I went to SRC just for the Sunrise Group. A few months ago I was really confused. I was worried about housing, benefits and childcare... A lady at Sunrise talked me through all the problems I might have. It was very helpful.

‘I am shy – sometimes I will get a friend to explain letters to me but if I use Sunrise, I don’t need to bother friends all the time.’

Table 5.2 Satisfaction with SRC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction level</th>
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<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>22</td>
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1.3 Satisfaction with the Job Centre

As reflected in Table 5.3, satisfaction levels with the Job Centre were mixed. Of the ten individuals who reported that they had used the service, one individual was ‘very satisfied’, three ‘quite satisfied’, three ‘neither satisfied nor dissatisfied’ and two ‘quite dissatisfied’ while one did not respond. The positive experience of one individual was related to several opportunities for placements and developing confidence, help with CV preparation and interview techniques which all proved to be very helpful. In contrast, another individual reported that more individualised support would have been beneficial, suggesting mixed levels of delivery on the ground:

‘All they were interested in was that you got a job and came off benefits. They didn’t care what job. They didn’t study my skills that much. They didn’t listen to what I wanted. We are starting life all over again, so you want to do something that you will like doing.’

Table 5.3 Satisfaction with the Job Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction level</th>
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<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite dissatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>
1.4 Satisfaction with AAGHA
Satisfaction levels with the services provided by AAGHA were very high, with nine individuals reporting that they were ‘very satisfied’ with the service and one ‘quite satisfied.’ Comments made by individuals generally related to the helpfulness and friendliness of the support worker:

‘(Name of worker) dealt with everything. When I moved in everything was there except a fridge and tv.’

‘She helped us with everything – with house, activities, work, and she is a very nice person.’

‘(Name of worker) is a really nice person. She gave me all the help I needed. She’s not just professional – she is really friendly, I could ask her anything.’

Table 5.4 Satisfaction with AAGHA

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction level</th>
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<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quite satisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
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1.5 Difficulties in accessing support
Difficulties in identifying sources of support were confirmed by both English-speaking and non-English speaking individuals who reported considerable difficulties in knowing where to go to for help:

‘There are a lot of places that help people like SRC. For example, the Citizens Advice Bureau. But nobody knows about it. If you have a problem you need to know where to turn to’

‘It was a lot easier for me because I speak English. I could even make calls by telephone. It would be a big problem for a non-English speaker. NASS does everything for you, then everything changes very quickly. It’s okay if you have English, but not if you don’t.’

Drop-in services such as those provided by SRC were reported to be particularly helpful for individuals who could not speak English fluently and had difficulty conversing or making appointments over the telephone. However, the service was not universally known among all the individuals interviewed in the initial stages of their arrival to Glasgow, suggesting that there is scope for SRC to more effectively publicise its services, taking into account language barriers which might inhibit access.
2 Move in and housing support
Following sign-up for the tenancy, the main form of support provided by tenants by housing providers is in the form of ‘settling in visits’ to all new tenants after an average of 6 weeks, followed by annual visits. Housing officers might offer some support and are trained to give advice and information but are not trained to provide any specialist support for refugees. Tenants who are identified as needing support in claiming housing benefit might be referred to welfare benefits advisers and those who need support with money management to a money management project. However, interviews with individual refugees evidenced cases of poverty and mounting debt which could potentially lead to rent arrears and eviction, indicating that many individuals could not readily access these services. For instance, two individuals who were interviewed reported arrears since they had been charged rent for the accommodation they had left as well as the one they were moving into. Other individuals reported encountering poor housing conditions such as dampness, lack of heating, broken windows and faulty plumbing.

Box 5.1 Implications for policy and practice: Moving On
- Homelessness casework procedures should be reviewed to ensure that the ‘sign-off point’ for newly housed (formerly homeless tenants) is appropriate, to ensure that the settling in process has been successfully completed.
- There is a need among housing providers to establish the support needs of refugees, along with other potentially vulnerable tenants. There is scope for incorporating specific requirements within ‘settling in’ visits to record the contacts made with refugee tenants, identify any specific needs and actions taken in response to these needs, and for this procedure to be monitored and evaluated. Work in this area is likely to be facilitated by joint working with the voluntary sector.
- GCC should inform RSLs of individual tenants who are receiving voluntary sector support packages and inform them when this support comes to an end.

2.1 Support with furnishing accommodation
Support with furnishing the accommodation was identified by refugees as one of the main forms of support they received (the other main form of support received was claiming benefits). In many cases, the amount received through community care grants had helped individuals to obtain at least basic furnishing such as carpets or white goods for unfurnished or partly furnished flats, which was often supplemented by buying cheap furniture locally. However, it was common for individuals to wait up to 6 weeks to obtaining these grants. Given that the majority of the individuals had, as asylum-seekers, live in furnished accommodation, completely bare flats were unfortunately, not a rare experience:

‘There was nothing, there were no carpets, nothing.’

‘Main difficulty is no furniture in the house…big problem at the moment.’

Adding to these difficulties, individuals experienced uncertainty over whether their application for community care grants would be successful and whether they should allocate limited resources to obtaining furniture independently. It was also reported that a local project that had helped refugees to furnish their apartments had unfortunately run out of funding. Many individuals regretfully reported that they realised that they had spent more than was necessary from their limited resources to furnish their flats due to lack of knowledge of where to go to obtain affordable furniture and furnishings:
‘I paid £560 for carpets but I could have paid £120.’

While furnished flats might be available for newly recognised refugees who choose to stay on in NASS accommodation through a business arrangement with GHA’s furnished flats section, GHA’s Asylum Seeker and Refugee policy recognises that it is important that refugees are aware of other permanent housing options. Rent levels for these flats are significantly higher and can lead to a poverty trap should individuals choose to seek employment and cease receiving benefits. Tenants have to maintain the furniture for at least 4 years, after which they are allowed to keep the furniture and given the option of getting a new package.

There is another route for accessing furniture through the homelessness referral by GCC, which enables RSLs (including GHA) to access essential furniture grants for ‘basic packages’ of carpets, curtains, beds and white goods. AAGHA too has used this extensively in the past years, to avoid the need for formidable service charges and the likelihood of a poverty trap, but its continuation in the current year (2007) is uncertain. However, apart from GHA (through its furnished flat sections), RSLs have been slow to take up the furniture grant. 242 grants were taken up by GHA and only 17 other grants were taken up - mainly by AAGHA - through the West of Scotland Housing Association Forum (GCC, 2006b)  There is clearly a need for supporting and facilitating access to furniture grants and local furniture recycling projects, and for making the terms of existing furniture packages more attractive and affordable to refugees.

Box 5.2 Implications for policy and practice: Increasing Access to Furniture

- The potential for expanding the furnished Lets scheme by making its terms more attractive should be investigated, so that all new tenants have the option of either a furnished package or furnished tenancy.
- Essential furniture grants should be continued as a means of enabling refugee tenants to furnish their homes affordably and RSLs encouraged to avail of the scheme in supporting their refugee tenants and other vulnerable groups.
- Engagement with local furniture recycling schemes and projects should be actively encouraged to enable refugee tenants to affordably furnish their homes.

2.2 Support with connecting and using utilities

The other area in which significant difficulties were experienced was in connecting and using utilities. Interviews revealed instances in which refugee tenants had experienced delay in getting connected to electricity, and indeed, one individual reported that even after she had initiated contact with the energy provider, only emergency electrical supply was established, which did not cover heating. Other individuals reported that they had had difficulty converting pre-paid utility systems into more affordable alternatives. The problems faced by these individuals were compounded by difficulties in contacting the landlord (exacerbated in some cases, by language differences) or the lack of responsiveness of repairs services or fuel providers Yet others reported that they had got into debt with electricity bills. The following comments highlight the specific need to counter fuel poverty and increase access to advocacy services for utilities services, as well as the more general need to be sensitive to ‘hidden needs’:

‘When someone’s come from a NASS flat and not paid any bills, they have no idea how much they are going to be spending in a week, in a month…that’s one real big
difficulty...they just don’t expect to pay that much for electricity. And some people can get themselves in real trouble with it, and really quite stressed.’ (Support provider)

‘People need to understand hidden needs. They (landlord) did not know that I had gone ten days without electricity (before she raised it). In order to help they really need to understand needs …Talk to refugees more about their needs and problems, their real needs. They (agencies) are not doing that enough.’

2.3 Support with mental health problems and other special needs
All the support providers interviewed were aware of significant gaps in support, among newly recognised refugees, including a disproportionately high number of individuals with mental health problems whose needs might not be assessed while they are awaiting the outcome of their asylum application. Some of the refugee tenants interviewed were clearly still coping with the trauma of forced migration, the asylum-seeking process and separation from family. It is recognised that newly recognised refugees need to be in a stable condition before they can make decisions about moving on:

‘What we find is that asylum-seekers don’t always get the services they need as asylum-seekers. So they may be entitled to aspects of care or health assessment and sometimes these community care assessments are not taking place at the right time…We find that people with considerable difficulties that sometimes that hasn’t been addressed and that’s something that we need to look at and make referrals’

There is some recognition within the RST that for many refugees, including those with mental health issues or physical disabilities, the support packages provided by agencies such as Loretto Care and commissioned by GCC over a period of six weeks after move into the temporary furnished flat, are insufficient and that there is a need to formalise on-going post-tenancy support. This highlights the importance of ensuring that support needs of refugees are identified and arrangements made for continuing support at the point of sign-off, including through the formalisation of adequate ongoing post-tenancy support and advocacy services, where appropriate. Other refugee tenants appeared to be isolated from informal social networks, and struggling to independently cope with their new circumstances. Many were struggling to get accustomed to their new environment as well as attend training or educational courses.

Box 5.3 Implications for policy and practice: Meeting Other Support Needs

- Attention should be given to increasing refugee access to advocacy services to counter fuel poverty.
- Housing providers should carefully monitor rent accounts of new refugee tenants and use early indications of rent arrears to put into place mechanisms for tenancy support and advice
- Housing providers should also consider supporting and encouraging links with providers of other support services such as mental health services and debt management.
2.4 Racial harassment

A major area of concern among refugees was the potential for racial harassment which unfortunately for many had arisen out of personal experiences of verbal or physical abuse to themselves of their children and damage to property. The severity of harassment experienced varied but a recurrent theme was not just the disturbance of peace or the annoyance of being subjected to anti-social behaviour but actual fear for their lives or those of their children. At least one housing provider acknowledged that racial harassment was a regular occurrence, mostly in the form of verbal aggression, and there was likely to be significant under-reporting:

‘Folks seem to expect this and will put up with this for a long time until it impacts on their kids.’

Although there is increased awareness among housing providers of the need to effectively tackle racial incidents, which have been backed by protocols developed within a framework for tackling anti-social behaviour, there still appears to be serious gaps between policy and practice. For instance, some housing providers reported working to the standards set by the Multi-Agency Racial Incidents Monitoring (MARIM) group, while GHA’s Neighbourhood Relations Policy forms the policy framework within which LHOs address racial harassment and other forms of antisocial behaviour. The latter policy is supported by a toolkit developed by GHA, *LHO Procedures and referral manual: toolkit for dealing with anti-social behaviour* and outlines a staged, escalatory victim-centred process for dealing with complaints of racial harassment beginning with interviews with the victim and warnings to the perpetrator, and proceeding to further action and possible eviction in the event of further incidents of harassment. While rehousing procedures for refugees were reported by all housing providers to be no different from those for other tenants, complaints of racial harassment could potentially lead to a management transfer. It was noted that there was scope for the introduction of ‘fast track’ management transfers and for management transfers in general to be used more often as a means of supporting victims of harassment.

In stark contrast to the existence of clear protocols and policies, many refugee tenants reported that they had felt unsupported when they had experienced incidents of harassment. Incidents of harassment included rude gestures, verbal abuse, physical attacks, damage to property and attacks on children by other children. In some cases, this involved the use of weapons such as knifes and being trapped in lifts. In a few cases, individuals had been supported by a move to other property but in other cases, refugee tenants spoke of having made complaints to concierges or the police and not getting any feedback or indication that action had been taken.

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More broadly, refugee tenants who had experienced racial harassment felt that more work should be undertaken to alter societal attitudes towards asylum-seekers and refugees:

‘The general public should be more understanding of asylum-seekers and refugees. They should understand where we have come from and why.’

‘Educate children as to why asylum seekers and refugees are here so that they do not harass them.’

‘Improve welcome and avoid racism.’

‘Provide more assurance to refugees and be more accepting of them. Refugees are often well-educated and Scotland can benefit from them.’
Box 5.4 Implications for policy and practice: Tackling Racial Harassment

- RSLs should clearly communicate procedures for reporting racial incidents to asylum-seekers and refugees
- Housing providers should ensure that front-line staff and concierges are effectively trained and incentivised to respond to complaints of racial harassment and other anti-social behaviour.
- The potential for ‘fast track’ management transfers to be applied to support victims of racial harassment should be considered.
- Management transfers can be applied more frequently to inspire confidence among refugee applicants of social housing.

2.5 Entry into the labour market

Many refugees interviewed were interested in pursuing English improver courses and relevant educational and training courses to build on existing skills and/or acquire new ones. As discussed earlier, their experiences of Job Centre support varied from a person-centred approach towards attempting to match individual knowledge, skills and experiences to appropriate training and educational courses and preparing individuals for employment (for example, by offering assistance with putting together CVs) to cursory assessments of their abilities, indicating mixed delivery on the ground. There is clearly scope here for supporting refugees’ efforts to find employment through more specialised Job Centre support which will help them to widen their housing options and build a secure future.

In this context, it is worth noting the strikingly higher percentage of AAGHA clients who were employed (46.7%) compared to other refugees (5.8%) (see Chapter 1, Tables 1 and 2). This would suggest that the longer-term support provided by AAGHA, including assistance with employment, has had an impact in facilitating refugees’ entry into the labour market. Alternatively, an expanded model of tenancy sustainment which allows for person-centred support to help prepare and equip tenants to take up employment, when they have successfully completed the move-in process should be considered (Lomax and Netto, 2006). It is also worth noting that AAGHA’s Foyer scheme indicated greater experience among refugees in following up further education opportunities or immediately taking up employment than the offer of trades-based work experience.

Box 5.5 Implications for policy and practice: Support with Entry into the Labour Market

- Specialised Job Centre support should be considered to support refugees to build or acquire new skills which will prepare them for the labour market.
- Expanded models of tenancy sustainment which incorporate efforts to prepare refugees for entry into the labour market when they have successfully completed the moving on process should be considered.
2.6 Other support needs
A wide range of other support needs were identified, some of which were directly related to refugees’ ability to sustain their tenancies in the short-term, including:

- Need for increased support with money management, debt advice and welfare rights
- Lack of understanding of systems, including those relating to housing benefit, rent arrears and employment
- The need for sensitivity in responding to the situation of refugees who have been accommodated in close proximity to others with whom they might have been in conflict in their countries of origin
- Support in liaising with housing providers

Other needs were more general, affecting access to a wide range of services and refugees’ ability to prepare for employment, including:

- Need for effective communication and language support, including the need to distinguish between languages read and spoken by refugees
- Knowledge and orientation to the local area
- Difficulties in gaining access to further education and English classes
- Need for specialist Job Centre advice in addressing refugee issues

Interviews with refugees revealed one individual who had received some support from Loretto Care and others who had received some assistance from their landlord in connecting utilities or claiming benefits. A few others reported receiving a limited amount of language support, help with getting children into school and accessing health services. However, it was evident that many of the needs identified above were currently not being met, with individuals mostly being left to get on without support.

While SRC, PAiH and other agencies assist clients who contact them, these agencies do not provide services within the home for their clients, which limit the extent to which they can be helped. Highlighting the mismatch between the type of support available and the support needed, one support provider said:

“They (the majority of service providers) support from a desk in an office and they don’t go out anywhere. They can’t physically go out and see if there is a problem. If someone had a language problem and their, say washing machine broke down but you couldn’t understand how it was broken…There’s a huge amount (refugee tenants have) to learn.’

The notable exception to this is the service provided by AAGHA to the refugee tenants residing in the stock that the agency has procured for Yorkhill, Link and Sanctuary Scotland Housing Associations.

Although some housing providers notify concierges of refugees moving in, and possible language barriers among tenants, it appears that there are significant gaps in support after the move-in period which could pose a serious challenge for tenancy sustainment. There was some acknowledgement among housing providers that information and support needs might not be identified, unless refugees were pro-active in contacting landlords and articulating their needs, and that for some individuals, language differences might pose a barrier in doing so. There is scope for incorporating specific requirements within ‘settling in’ visits to record the contacts.
made in this way, including any specific needs which were identified and actions taken in response to these needs, and for this procedure to be monitored and evaluated.

There was some acknowledgement among service providers that the needs of this client group in terms of gaining access to essential services and integrating into the local community were not currently being met and that facilitating access to sources of local sources of support would be useful. Some of the sources of support cited by housing providers were the Gorbals Integration Network, Framework for Dialogue, the Peer Advocacy group in the Delphi Centre and events organised by SRC’s Community Development team.

Overall, the picture which emerges is one in which the level of support available to refugees, apart from those supported by AAGHA and for a limited period of time, by support providers commissioned by GCC, is piecemeal and fragmented. There was some awareness among support providers of the need for a more person-centred approach to assessment and post-tenancy support, beyond what was currently available and for closer liaison with housing providers. There is clearly scope here for the further development of specialist tenancy sustainment packages to meet their needs within the short, medium and long-term.

3. Relationship between housing and support providers

The West of Scotland Refugee Forum (WSRF) Housing and Welfare subgroup which consists of many agencies meets on a regular basis to consider how the needs of refugees might be met through improved joint working, information sharing and communication at an operational level. Section 5 homelessness protocols are in place between the RST and many RSLs in the city. While the original source of the referral is the RST, these might be implemented by any of the community casework teams. Yorkhill, Link and Sanctuary Scotland HAs have service level agreements with AAGHA, which provides a range of fixed-term tenancy support services to supplement the landlord role of the two associations. Positive Action in Housing has formalised nominations arrangements with a few housing associations which allow direct referrals to be made.

Some housing providers reported being in regular communication with a range of related organisations including Gorbals Integration Network, MARIM group, Tenants’ Organisations, PAiH and SRC. While the WSRF provides a forum for housing and support providers and other key agencies to share information and good practice at an operational level, there seems to be few, if any mechanisms, for coordinated and strategic planning of refugee housing at a strategic level. There was some recognition that good quality information about the presence of refugee needs and issues was essential for community profiling and neighbourhood planning. There was also a view that there was a greater role for support providers who were specialised in dealing with issues faced by refugees and who could operate across the city in place of the current provision of post-tenancy support by generic support providers that is allocated on a geographical basis.

Box 5.6 Implications for policy and practice: Expanded, Specialised Tenancy Support Packages

The potential for home-based tenancy sustainment services that are tailored to meet the complex needs of new refugees across the city should be more widely considered to potentially replace the current limited allocation of support packages along geographical lines.
4. Tenant participation

Since the housing providers have no mechanisms for identifying refugees among their tenants and are not clear of the proportion of their tenants who are refugees, there are real difficulties here in terms of encouraging tenant participation. There seemed to be no mechanisms for consulting with refugees except on an individual basis. Specific mechanisms for encouraging tenant participation among refugees, including in the development of their support plans, as is the case with AAGHA, appeared to be rare. The same agency reported that one of its clients was part of its management committee and that several had joined as stakeholders. Two housing providers reported that minority ethnic communities were represented on management committees, but this did not include refugees. In one organisation, tenant participation was encouraged by a dedicated tenant participation officer and increases in membership of the organisation were perceived to include refugees. In another, invitations are sent to all tenants to join the tenants’ forum but the extent to which this approach has been successful in recruiting refugee tenants was not known. More generally, the extent to which targeted approaches are employed to encourage refugee tenants to participate more actively in the running of RSLs (and LHOs), for instance, by translation into other languages, is not known.

As an example of good practice in terms of information provision to potential refugees, New Shaws reported that to keep its small Asylum community updated on the Clearance Programme taking place in Shawbridge Street, the organisation had worked with NASS and GCC South Area committee to produce a newsletter which was translated into ten different languages and delivered to every household. The same organisation reported that it translated newsletters in four languages identified as being the most widely spoken.

Box 5.7 Implications for policy and practice: Tenant Participation

There is scope for RSLs to consider means of encouraging refugee tenant participation through communicating information in the languages most commonly spoken and encouraging involvement in decision-making, for example, through representation on management committees.
Chapter 6: Tenant Satisfaction and Future Housing Aspirations

As discussed in the Introduction, one of the main aims of the research is to assess the relative satisfaction levels of AAGHA clients with its initial approaches to refugee housing, in terms of locations selected for stock procurement and one-stop tenancy establishment and housing support, against the satisfaction levels other refugees living in permanent accommodation. Consequently, this chapter compares the satisfaction of AAGHA clients, that is, refugees living in AAGHA procured and supported stock and against the satisfaction of ‘Others’ who are also currently living in permanent accommodation.

However, this chapter is of wider interest in providing an insight into the satisfaction levels of refugees with their accommodation and support, an area which is not only under-researched, but in which little information was forthcoming from housing providers. None of the five housing providers surveyed had any specific mechanisms for assessing levels of satisfaction among refugee tenants apart from the general tenant satisfaction survey, and it would be reasonable to assert that they are representative of social housing providers in Glasgow. This was even the case where the housing providers had stock in areas where refugees and BME communities formed a significant presence. As a consequence of this, it was not currently possible to ascertain whether levels of satisfaction of refugee tenants were any higher or lower than that of other tenants. There was some acknowledgement among housing providers that in general tenant satisfaction surveys, issues such as racial harassment would not be identified. On a more positive note, the use of more specific measures, such as focus groups, to elicit information from refugee tenants was considered by some providers to be feasible.

While the data should be interpreted cautiously given the small numbers in each category, the comparative analysis reveals significantly higher levels of satisfaction among AAGHA clients compared to Others, with their accommodation, the number of rooms, the neighbourhood and the landlord. It is perhaps worth noting, that to some extent, the higher levels of satisfaction might be attributed to AAGHA’s strategy of purchasing clusters of stock in areas into which BME communities are only beginning to move, and where they are mainly present as owner-occupiers. In contrast, the other refugees interviewed, referred to as ‘Others’ in this chapter, were mainly living in areas of lower demand and in social housing.

1. Satisfaction with current accommodation

Table 1 shows that almost twice as many ‘AAGHA clients’ reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ with their accommodation compared to ‘Others’. Further, the percentage of ‘AAGHA clients’ who reported that they were either ‘fairly dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ was slightly lower than the percentage of ‘Others’ who responded similarly. As might be expected, positive comments related to the proximity of the accommodation to amenities, quietness of the neighbourhood, and perceptions of safety:

‘A nice house, quiet, handy, safe, near to the shops.’

‘We have friends, nobody treats us badly.’

Conversely, factors which contributed to dissatisfaction included dampness of the property which had an impact on health, overcrowding, lack of adequate heating, lack of showers (and
difficulties for older people in getting in and out of baths) and surrounding areas which were dirty and poorly maintained:

*We are happy not to be on the streets, but it’s not big enough for 6 persons. It’s very cold, we wear coats in the house. One of my children is coughing, another child has water in his lungs and has to have a tube to remove it at the hospital, another is asthmatic. Its so cold.*’

Bed-sits were also viewed as inappropriate due to lack of privacy and space. One individual was also very unhappy about having to bear the burden of financial responsibility for shared accommodation due to a breakdown in sharing arrangements. Others complained of the high costs of electricity, which they had raised with fuel providers but which had not been satisfactorily resolved, and which were contributing to financial difficulties and increasing debt.

**Table 6.1 Satisfaction with current accommodation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AAGHA clients</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly dissatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. Number of rooms**

As Table 2 shows, four fifths of ‘AAGHA clients’ reported that the number of rooms was ‘about right’ compared to nearly two thirds of ‘Others.’ Reflecting the relatively small numbers of refugees in the sample who came from large households, the percentage of individuals who felt that they had ‘too few’ rooms was small. However, it is worth noting that more than twice as many individuals falling under the category of ‘Others’ reported that they had ‘too few’ rooms compared to ‘AAGHA clients’. It is also worth noting that among those who felt that the number of rooms was appropriate, there were those who felt that the size of the rooms was too small.
Table 6.2  Satisfaction with number of rooms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AAGHA clients</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too few</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About right</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Satisfaction with the neighbourhood

It is perhaps in this aspect that the satisfaction levels of ‘AAGHA clients’ differs most markedly from those of ‘Others.’ Table 3 shows that the percentage of ‘AAGHA clients’ who responded that they were ‘very satisfied’ was nearly four times higher than ‘Others.’ While it is worth noting that nearly half of ‘Others’ were ‘fairly satisfied’ with their neighbourhood, it is also important to note that the percentage of those who responded that they were either ‘fairly dissatisfied’ or ‘very dissatisfied’ with their neighbourhood was nearly five times higher among ‘Others’ than AAGHA clients.’ As discussed earlier, it is very likely that this is due, in no small measure, to AAGHA’s strategy of procuring stock on the open market, in high amenity inner city and in predominantly owner-occupied areas.

Table 6.3  Satisfaction with neighbourhood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>AAGHA clients</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly dissatisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reasons for satisfaction with the neighbourhood expressed by the individuals interviewed included good transport links and access to open spaces. Satisfaction was also expressed where incidents of racial harassment had been satisfactorily resolved.

Individuals who expressed dissatisfaction with their neighbourhood attributed their dissatisfaction to noisy or unruly neighbours or lack of acceptance of neighbours of their presence:

‘We have problems with neighbours who say it is not our place to be here. They tell us to go back. We get that a lot.’

‘A lot of people drink and come and kick at your door’
‘This block is noisy and I don’t feel safe. Nobody says ‘hello’ here. In (previous residence), people knocked on the door to see if I was okay, that makes you feel happy and confident.’

‘I don’t feel safe. It’s not a friendly area.’

‘When I was walking, they drop eggs from above, I don’t know if its racial harassment or not’.

Asked if they had experienced racial harassment in the area, many replied positively, extending this also to places of work and study, and while using public transport. A few individuals reported that they had raised the matter with the police or the concierge but had not been informed if any action had been taken. Others who had recently moved into their accommodation were clearly wary of being harassed:

‘I am still waiting to see if there is any trouble there… I am still afraid, there are no minorities.’

While some individuals expressed a wish to be in areas where there was a significant minority ethnic presence that they perceived to be safer than areas in which there were few or no people from a minority ethnic background, others were very clear that they did not want to be near individuals who were from their country of origin. In all cases, the reason given for this was a fear for their personal safety and a wish for anonymity. Yet others expressed a positive desire to form social relationships with others outside of their own communities, including with people from the majority population.

4. Satisfaction with the landlord

The percentage of ‘AAGHA clients’ who reported that they were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘quite satisfied’ with the RSL (66%) from whom AAGHA had procured stock from was higher than the satisfaction of ‘Others’ (53%) with their landlords. In some cases, it appeared that the AAGHA worker had played a valuable supportive role in liaising with the landlord. Factors which contributed to high satisfaction levels included being made to feel welcome and responding promptly to issues as they arose:

‘They are very kind, the way they received me. They are well organised and respond quickly to things I raise.’

Visits were also appreciated, with one individual suggesting that regular six monthly visits would be beneficial. Landlords’ understanding of difficulties in paying rent and willingness to be flexible in payment arrangements was also appreciated.

However, it was not uncommon to encounter individuals who did not know who their landlord was or who had had very little contact with the landlord. For some individuals, lack of fluency in English made it difficult to contact their landlord independently, reiterating the value of visits by the landlord on a regular basis. Yet others commented that although the landlord was easy to contact, it was not easy to get issues resolved. A common complaint was the lack of responsiveness of landlords to problems of varying degrees of severity, ranging from difficulties with connecting to utilities to problems with fixtures within the house or faulty lifts:
‘They don’t visit and don’t know what is wrong with the house…After 4 to 5 months, there is still no solution to the heating.’

‘The mirrors in the bathroom are risky… but the guy who came did not have a drill.’

‘I said to come to the house and hear it (noisy lift which prevents individual from sleeping) but nobody has done so. In some ways they appear very organised, in getting appointments, but they do not deal with the problem.’

Table 6.4  Satisfaction with landlord

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AAGHA</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly satisfied</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly dissatisfied</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Asked if they had any problems with housing benefit and whether it adequately covered rent, the majority of refugees responded that it did. However, the amount of benefit they were entitled to appeared to constrain their housing options to living in the social rented sector and in areas that they might not have chosen. A few individuals complained that they had had to pay rent for both their previous and current accommodation during the move-in period due to lack of knowledge of the system. Others expressed uncertainty and anxiety about whether or not they should be paying council tax. Yet others complained of financial pressure, which for some had been exacerbated by unknowingly running up high fuel charges:

‘It’s very hard. Debt is a big problem and rising. I now want to work to pay off. I don’t know what (to work at). I’ve been to job agency and supermarket but no reply in 3 or 4 weeks.’

Those who were pursuing educational courses also spoke of the difficulties of meeting living costs within the limits of the bursary they were receiving.

5. Future housing aspirations

Asked how likely it was that they would be continuing to stay in the current accommodation ‘a year from now’, about a third of the refugees interviewed reported that this was ‘very likely’ while the same proportion reported that they were ‘not sure.’ Table 5 presents the full breakdown of responses.
Table 6.5 Likelihood of staying in accommodation a year from now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly likely</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>34.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly unlikely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unlikely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Probed for underlying reasons for the response, it emerged that while for many, staying in their current accommodation was a positive choice for reasons already stated, for others it was due to lack of other affordable accommodation:

‘We have no where else to go.’

Others with children responded that it would be difficult to make a move. For at least one individual uncertainty about continuing to stay in the same accommodation was directly linked to uncertainty about how long she was entitled to benefits and whether when this came to an end, she would be able to get a job which would allow her to pay the rent for herself and her children:

‘I am so worried…if I get a job will I get enough money for us in the house? If I don’t get a job what will happen to me? Will they ask me to leave my house?’

The majority of those who anticipated that they were ‘very likely’ or ‘fairly likely’ to move reported that they were most likely to move into other RSL accommodation, although many indicated that in the longer-term, they aspired to home ownership.

Only one individual (who was currently working) reported that she was investigating possibilities for home ownership. Another individual who reported that she had been forced into the private rented sector due to lack of perceived safety in her former residence, reported that she would advise friends to stay in the social rented sector for as long as they could, since it was less likely that they would have to move.

6. Likelihood of staying in Glasgow

As Table 6 shows, just above two thirds of the individuals interviewed reported that they were ‘very likely’ to stay in Glasgow ‘a year from now’. Positive comments about the city included favourable comparisons with London:

‘I like Glasgow, a big city, but overall people are helpful and they accept foreigners.’
‘After 6 years I think I was born in Glasgow. Glasgow is my city, the city I belong to. Places, friends, I think I belong here.’

‘When I got refugee status, I was suffering, I hate myself...In Glasgow, my life has changed, I go to college, church, I am very happy.’

‘I like it here, it (Glasgow) feels safe. It’s not too big.’

‘It’s difficult to go to new places. I am used to Glasgow now. I prefer it to England.’

‘People are nicer here, its easy to get to college, easier to get a job, I believe I will get a good future here.’

However, for some individuals, other cities such as London, offered proximity to relatives and friends, which was especially important for those who were experiencing social isolation or racial harassment.

‘We are happy to look outside Glasgow – especially to avoid the children being harassed. We may try London, we think it might be easier there.’

In some cases, lack of social networks was exacerbated by ill health, which limited opportunities for interaction. A small minority had not ruled out the possibility that they might return to their country of origin in the future, when it was safe to do so.

Table 6.6 Likelihood of staying in Glasgow for a year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>22 68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly likely</td>
<td>3 9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>2 6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly unlikely</td>
<td>1 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unlikely</td>
<td>1 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>3 9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>32 100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 Information about housing options

Asked what information would be useful to them in considering future housing options many did not provide an answer, stating that it was too early to consider this. However, others who were more established in their tenancies reiterated their aspiration for home ownership. Achievement of this goal was linked to greater fluency in English, successful completion of educational courses and entry into the labour market. Information about mortgages, shared ownership, whether it was possible to buy housing association property and areas in which it would be safe to stay were all identified as being useful.

Some individuals reported that they had already been seeking employment related to existing skills and (professional) qualifications but had encountered difficulties in doing so, which raised issues of possible discrimination. One individual complained that although he was already working, he had found it difficult to obtain a mortgage, highlighting the critical role of
gatekeepers to owner occupied housing – solicitors, estate agents, building societies and banks amongst others – and the possibility that there is scope for discriminatory decisions to be made in the financing of house purchase:

‘I work, I earn, I pay tax but the bank doesn’t want to help me.’

In contrast, following her participation in the research, another interviewee had recently taken up owner-occupation following family reunion and the birth of her child.

Box 6.1 Implications for policy and practice: tenant satisfaction and future housing aspirations

- Communities Scotland should encourage RSLs, particularly those among which BME communities are under-represented, to consider measures to increase refugee access to the social rented sector.
- RSLs should consider means of assessing levels of satisfaction among refugee tenants to supplement the information obtained through general tenant satisfaction surveys.
- In the longer-term, housing support providers should consider increasing housing options for refugee tenants who have successfully gained employment by assisting them with house purchase, where appropriate.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter draws together the findings of previous chapters and concludes with a summary of recommendations for key stakeholders. The accommodation of refugees in Scotland takes place within a context of increasingly restrictive immigration policies which have resulted in considerable reduction of support for asylum-seekers, and which is at odds with increasing official emphasis on homelessness prevention and progressive changes in homelessness legislation. In Glasgow, one of the main dispersal sites for asylum-seekers in the UK and the only dispersal site for asylum-seekers in Scotland, newly recognized refugees are faced with a shortage of social housing in perceived safe areas, a severe lack of temporary accommodation and a major clearance programme. These difficulties are in part a reflection of significant areas of social deprivation. However, efforts to meet the housing, support and settlement of refugees cannot be divorced from consideration of wider issues, such as the extent to which refugees are recognized as playing a valuable role in a multi-cultural society. In the devolved context of Scotland, such issues are inextricably linked to the weight given to respecting and valuing minority rights, including the extent to which the official emphasis on homelessness prevention and efforts to meet the 2012 target to enable all people who are unintentionally homeless to a permanent home are inclusive of refugees.

1. Gaining access to permanent accommodation

There continue to be challenges for service providers in accommodating refugees and significant periods of waiting time for the individuals concerned in temporary accommodation. Further, the changing demographics of the refugee population, involving growing families and (future) family reunions, pose difficulties for service providers in finding appropriate accommodation for larger families. While GCC’s recognition of the shortage of larger accommodation for BME communities, including refugees, in its Local Housing Strategy is welcomed, it is clearly important to consider the location of new build to support community cohesion and the integration of refugees.

While this study did not set out to review the effectiveness of the NAM system of supporting asylum-seekers, there appear to have been significant reductions in waiting time, and prompt communication of decisions to newly recognised refugees through the Sunrise project, which would appear to be a marked improvement on the previous situation. The assignation of case-workers to each individual under this model also appears to have facilitated continuity of support and information provision, including in the tracking of asylum applications. While the speeding up of this stage of the process is to be welcomed, it does mean that individuals will have had very little time, typically four weeks, to familiarise themselves with housing and welfare systems and processes in the UK. Apart from dealing with the emotional and social issues associated with the asylum-seeking process, these individuals are faced with the loss of NASS benefits and the need to quickly move onto accessing mainstream benefits. It is obviously important that the Borders and Immigration Agency fully monitor and review the implementation of this model.

This study concurs with previous research in documenting the critical and stressful nature of the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status. To some considerable extent, it would appear that measures taken to prevent rooflessness when NASS support comes to an end by enabling individuals staying in GASSP accommodation to sign up to temporary occupancy agreements while they are awaiting an offer of permanent accommodation are working.
However, interviews with refugees revealed that this process is not fully understood, with some expressing the view that they appear to have little choice in this regard. Many individuals were unclear of the delineation of role and responsibilities of GCC’s RST and service providers such as SRC and AAGHA. It was apparent that many individuals felt insecure and vulnerable at this stage, and it appeared that key agencies either did not or could not remove their uncertainty. Many refugees felt that more information and support was needed to enable them to fully understand their situation and the processes for seeking accommodation through section 5 referrals as well as through the waiting list of individual RSLs. Yet others felt that they were not respectfully treated in the homelessness assessment process, making it difficult to eliminate possible racial prejudice on the part of at least some homelessness caseworkers. The slow progress of developing the CHR in Glasgow has undoubtedly contributed to the difficulties faced by refugees in requiring them to apply to individual RSLs rather than filling in a single application to explore other options for housing, in addition to the ‘homelessness route’.

The particular difficulties of those individuals who had stayed in YMCA or the Angel Group accommodation, who were reported to be ‘falling through the net’ at the point when they leave this accommodation at short notice were also noted, highlighting the urgent need for the Home Office to review its arrangements with these independent contractors. Interviews and focus group discussions with single men highlighted the particular difficulties they experienced in living in hostile hostel environments, often with lack of support from a caseworker.

Delays in claiming a range of benefits were also evidenced, including Job Seekers Allowance and Child Tax Credit, highlighting the need both for greater continuity in welfare support and information provision and improved sign-posting of services, especially for those who are not fluent speakers of English. Support providers involved in the research also highlighted the need to evaluate and update existing sources of information and advice. The crucial need for an impartial, specialist advocacy and befriending service to enable refugees to navigate the system was highlighted, the need for which is likely to increase with the introduction of CBL which requires applicants of social housing to take a more pro-active approach.

The difficulties faced by refugees in finding appropriate permanent accommodation in an area which they perceive to be safe emerges as one of the most noteworthy findings of this study. A major area of concern among refugees was the potential for racial harassment, stemming from personal experiences of verbal or physical abuse to themselves or their children and damage to property. The severity of harassment experienced varied but a recurrent theme was not just the disturbance of peace or the annoyance of being subjected to anti-social behaviour but the threat of violence and danger to their lives. Although there is increased awareness among housing providers of the need to effectively tackle racial incidents, which have been backed by protocols developed within a framework for tackling anti-social behaviour, there still appears to be serious gaps between policy and practice. Refugee tenants spoke of having made complaints to concierges or the police and not getting any feedback or indication that action had been taken. In addition to specific action to tackle racial harassment, many refugees felt that more educational work should be undertaken to alter societal attitudes towards asylum-seekers and refugees and to raise public awareness of their considerable potential to contribute to Scottish society.

Many refugees expressed a preference to be accommodated in areas where there were other refugees, which they perceived to offer safer and more supportive living environments. However, others expressed a preference not to be with others from the same cultural background, and a few individuals actually feared for their safety, should their identity be
revealed to others from their country of origin. These varying preferences highlight the need for service providers to effectively consult with refugees on preferred areas, within the limitations of available stock. Interviews with refugees suggested that many individuals had felt that they had no choice but to accept offers of permanent accommodation. For some, this had meant not only living in areas that they would not have opted for, but also living in overcrowded or poor housing conditions.

2. Stay in temporary accommodation and homelessness

Shortage of appropriate permanent accommodation has contributed to prolonged stay in temporary accommodation for some individuals, contributing to frustration and anxiety at their inability to settle in Glasgow and difficulties in pursuing educational and training courses and employment. In many cases, temporary accommodation was inappropriate, which is clearly illustrated by the finding that only one of 27 individuals who had the option of staying on in the accommodation chose to do so. For others, fear of racial harassment, poor living conditions and the multi-storeyed nature of the accommodation were factors that deterred them from choosing this option. Indeed, lack of safety from racial harassment or criminality rendered certain individuals homeless in the sense of being roofless when they felt that they could no longer continue to live in temporary or permanent accommodation. For such individuals, the support of friends and agencies such as SRC and PaiH was crucial in enabling them to access other temporary or permanent accommodation.

3. Meeting support needs

The research also revealed a considerable level of unmet needs for support among refugees who had moved into permanent accommodation. This included having to cope with completely unfurnished or partially furnished flats while awaiting the outcome of community care grants. Other individuals complained of poor housing conditions such as dampness, lack of heating, broken windows, faulty plumbing and lack of connection to electrical supply. The problems faced by these individuals were compounded by difficulties in contacting the landlord (exacerbated in some cases, by language differences) or the lack of responsiveness of repairs services or fuel providers. Yet others were coping with fuel poverty and increasing debt and in need of increased support with money management, debt advice and welfare rights. A few individuals had also experienced difficulty with claiming housing benefit and dealing with rent arrears, exacerbated by lack of familiarity with the system and the institutional barriers within the DWP and Customs and Revenue. Many were trying to adjust to their new environment as well as attend training or educational courses.

Other refugees were clearly still coping with the trauma of forced migration, the asylum-seeking process and separation from family, with some individuals facing significant mental health problems. Yet others appeared to be isolated from informal social networks, highlighting the need for better sign-posting to Refugee Community Organisations and other agencies There was some awareness among support providers of the need for a more person-centred approach to post-tenancy support, beyond what was currently available and for closer liaison with housing providers. ‘Settling in’ visits by housing officers were also viewed as offering a means of identifying possible support needs and taking appropriate action, for instance, by facilitating access to external sources of support, and reviewing whether such action had met these needs.
Many refugees interviewed were interested in pursuing English improver courses and relevant educational and training courses to build on existing skills and/or acquire new ones. Their experiences of Job Centre support varied from a person-centred approach towards attempting to match individual knowledge, skills and experiences to appropriate training and educational courses and preparing individuals for employment (for example, by offering assistance with putting together CVs) to cursory assessments of their abilities, indicating mixed delivery on the ground. There is clearly scope here for supporting refugees efforts to find employment through more specialised Job Centre support which will help them to widen their housing options and build a secure future. Alternatively, an expanded model of tenancy sustainment which allows for person-centred support to help prepare and equip tenants to take up employment, when they have successfully completed the move-in process should be seriously considered.

4. Tenant satisfaction and participation

Another aspect of the study worth noting is the significantly higher satisfaction levels of AAGHA clients compared to ‘Others’ with their accommodation, the number of rooms, their landlord and particularly, their area. Factors which contributed to the higher satisfaction rate of AAGHA clients with their area compared to ‘Others’ might well be linked to AAGHA’s strategy of procuring stock in areas were people from BME communities were represented in relatively small numbers and which were primarily dominated by owner-occupation. Other contributory factors included perceptions of safety in the neighbourhood, good housing conditions and clean surroundings and the support of the project worker. Access to the Essential Homeless Furniture Scheme which helped AAGHA clients furnish their homes and establish their tenancies might also have contributed to higher satisfaction levels. These findings are significant given the lack of mechanisms among housing providers for assessing levels of satisfaction among refugee tenants.

A major contributory factor which contributes to the invisibility of refugee tenants in Scottish RSLs is the lack of ethnically disaggregated data relating to applicants and lets in the statistics published by Communities Scotland. Although it is not possible to ascertain the exact proportion of refugees from the data submitted by individual RSLs, low numbers of people from BME communities would indicate that refugees are either non-existent or present only in very small numbers among such tenants. On the basis of such data, RSLs which are behind in progressing racial equality can be encouraged to make greater efforts in this direction.

While none of the housing providers interviewed were able to identify refugee tenant participation at management committee level, BME representation in management committees was reported in some RSLs and examples of good practice in communicating with refugee tenants which were already in practice or being developed were in evidence.

5. Future housing options

About a third of the refugees interviewed reported that they were ‘very likely’ to continue staying in their current accommodation ‘a year from now’ while a third reported that they were ‘not sure.’ Reasons given for the former included many positive responses relating to high satisfaction levels as well as lack of access to alternative accommodation. Asked how likely it was that they would stay in Glasgow ‘a year from now’ about two thirds reported that it was
'very likely.' Many positive reasons were offered to explain this answer, revealing an appreciation for the city and its people, despite the unhappiness expressed about potential and actual experiences of racial harassment. However, among others, a pull towards London towards existing social networks and family and friends was also apparent, suggesting some secondary migration.

While many refugees living in permanent accommodation felt that it was too early to consider other housing options, established tenants expressed a desire for information related to home ownership. This included information about mortgages, shared ownership, entitlement to buy RSL property and safe areas in which to buy other property. The issue of the critical role played by gatekeepers to owner-occupied housing, such as estate agents, building societies and banks and the potential for discriminatory decisions to be made in the financing of house purchase was also identified. The findings relating to severely constrained housing choice in the social rented sector also suggest that there may be scope for supporting refugees (including those with larger families) to access the private rented sector, for instance, through rent deposit schemes which have proven to be an effective means of increasing affordable housing for homeless households and others on a low income, should be systematically explored. The willingness of refugees to avail of such schemes is supported by those who expressed an interest in this but felt that current levels of housing benefit would not cover rent levels.
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Scottish Government should, with key partners including SRC, AAGHA and GCC, consider the setting up of a strategic forum to review the housing, support and settlement needs of refugees based on the findings of this report. This forum should:
   - Consider the changing policy, administrative and practice context in Scotland since the work of the SRIF
   - Be informed by the work of the WSRF Housing and Welfare Sub Group
   - Ensure that independent projects providing information, advice and advocacy on housing and welfare rights issues for refugees continue to be supported

2. In order to ease the process of transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status, the Border and Immigration Agency should ensure that the implementation of NAM is continually kept under review and monitored. This is to ensure efficient tracking of asylum applications and continuity of support to individuals who will typically move through the system within a period of a few weeks and will have had little time to familiarise themselves with essential services and sources of support.

3. The Home Office should, with key partners, ease the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status by ensuring that:
   - Existing multi-agency working arrangements between BIA contractors, the RST and the Sunrise team are monitored and reviewed to ensure continuity of support at the point of decision
   - Current arrangements with the Angel Group and YMCA are monitored and reviewed to prevent homelessness, and possible rooflessness
   - More preventative work is undertaken on matching housing need and supply in advance of decision-making relating to the outcome of asylum applications to prevent homelessness. Such work would be beneficial in informing local housing strategies and regeneration and development plans for the social rented sector, including the planning of larger accommodation.

4. Communities Scotland should encourage RSLs to widen access to the social rented sector by:
   - Reviewing and publicising ethnically disaggregated data relating to applicants and lets and encouraging individual RSLs to increase the proportion of their tenancies occupied by refugees and other individuals from BME communities, as appropriate
   - Considering entering into arrangements with AAGHA or other support packages to increase access to the social rented sector among refugee tenants and ensure tenancy sustainment

5. In carrying out homelessness assessments, the RST and all homeless casework teams, including HAC, should:
   - Ensure that their work is supported by clear referral mechanisms to agencies whose primary role is to provide independent information and advice, such as SRC’s Housing Team
   - Ensure that all staff are trained of the need for sensitivity to refugee households’ fear of racial harassment
• Consider how the needs of households which are likely to expand due to family reunions might be accommodated within review of the homeless process
• Consider the extent to which alternatives to multi-storied accommodation for families with young children and individuals with disabilities or medical conditions can be found
• Consult with refugees on their preferences for areas, including whether they would like to be accommodated with other refugees, with others from their country of origin, or away from them and demonstrate understanding of these and other area-related preferences, such as proximity to social networks and places of worship
• Review the appropriate ‘sign off’ point for newly housed refugee tenants to ensure successful completion of the settling in process and real commitment to tenancy sustainment, by joint working with voluntary organisations to provide support, as appropriate
• Ensure that housing staff are aware of support provision available for refugees (particularly in relation to mental health)
• Ensure that housing staff are aware of any voluntary sector support packages for individual tenants and when this comes to an end

6. In order to increase access to appropriate, permanent accommodation for refugee households and help ensure that tenancies are sustained, GCC and housing providers should:
• Ensure that new build takes account of the demand for larger accommodation among refugee households and is located in areas which refugees perceive to be safe for them
• Progress development of the CHR in Glasgow to increase access to the social rented sector by refugees and other vulnerable groups
• Develop nomination processes with relevant agencies, similar to that in place between SRC and AAGHA and the Saffron project run by Southside Housing Association

7. There is a clear need for a strategic and coordinated approach to the provision of advice and information to prevent duplication of effort among agencies and enhance access to information and advice for refugees. This should take into account the need for:
• Impartial, specialist advice to assist newly recognised refugees in accessing permanent accommodation, which is likely to increase with the introduction of CBL in some RSLs, in Glasgow.
• An independent advocacy service for refugees in accessing related housing support, including with fuel poverty and benefits
• Greater continuity of information and welfare provision, including Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Child Tax Credit, in the transition from asylum-seeker to refugee status
• The uptake and usefulness of the ‘Welcome Pack’ and Move-on pack and other existing forms of web-based and information provision to be evaluated and updated

8. Working with key partners, GCC and other housing providers should:
• Ensure that prolonged stay in temporary accommodation is reduced by increasing the supply of affordable, appropriate accommodation in safe areas
• Increase the supply of appropriate forms of temporary accommodation, taking into account family size, medical conditions and disabilities
• Avoid the use of hostels for refugees, including young men
9. In order to increase access to social rented housing for refugees, RSLs should:
   • Adopt a targeted approach in publicising vacancies and lets to refugee households as part of a wider strategy to increase their accessibility to BME communities
   • Put into place more effective mechanisms to collect and review ethnically disaggregated data relating to applicants and lets, and take appropriate action, to ensure that the composition of their tenants is reflective of the multi-ethnic composition of Scotland

10. In order to ensure that refugee tenancies are successfully established, GCC and other housing providers should consider:
   • The potential for home-based tenancy sustainment services, that are tailored to meet the complex needs of new refugees across the city to replace the current limited allocation of support packages along geographical lines
   • The commissioning of expanded models of tenancy sustainment which incorporate efforts to prepare refugees for entry into the labour market when they have successfully completed the moving on process

11. In order to ensure that refugees have access to furnished accommodation:
   • GCC should work with RSLs and other partner agencies, including AAGHA, to ensure continued access to the Essential Furniture Grant scheme
   • RSLs should consider the potential for expanding the furnished Lets scheme by making its terms more attractive and ensure that all new tenants have access to a furniture package.

12. In order to ensure that the support needs of refugee tenants are met, RSLs should:
   • Incorporate specific requirements within ‘settling in’ visits to record the contacts made with refugee tenants, identify any specific needs and actions taken in response to these needs, and monitor and evaluate this procedure
   • Carefully monitor rent accounts of new refugee tenants and use early indications of rent arrears to put into place mechanisms for tenancy support and advice
   • Consider supporting and encouraging links with providers of other support services such as mental health services and debt management.

13. To tackle racial harassment effectively, RSLs should:
   • Clearly communicate procedures for reporting racial incidents to asylum-seekers and refugees
   • Ensure that front-line staff and concierges are effectively trained and incentivised to respond to complaints of racial harassment and other anti-social behaviour
   • Increase the potential for ‘fast track’ management transfers to be applied to support victims of racial harassment.
   • Apply management transfers more frequently to inspire confidence among refugee applicants of social housing.

14. In order to counter fuel poverty and ensure that refugee tenancies are sustained, the refugee network should consider increased access to specialist advocacy services.
15. In order to assess levels of satisfaction among refugees and encourage tenant participation, RSLs should supplement the information obtained through general tenant satisfaction surveys by other means, such as focus groups, to elicit refugee views.

16. In order to support and encourage tenant participation, RSLs should:
   • Disseminate information in the languages most commonly spoken by their tenants
   • Encourage and support refugee involvement in decision-making, including by representation in management committees

17. To support refugees with entry into the labour market, the Job Centre should consider specialised Job Centre support to enable them to build or acquire new skills which will prepare them for the labour market.

18. In the longer-term, housing advice and information agencies, including SRC should increase housing options for refugee tenants who have successfully gained employment:
   • By assisting them or referring them to appropriate agencies to assist with house purchase, where appropriate
   • By liaising with rent deposit schemes to facilitate access to these schemes for refugee tenants
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http://comunities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1500937


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Theresa Marshall, Team Leader, Refugee Support Team
Helen Fordyce, Team Leader, Housing and Welfare Team, Scottish Refugee Council
Wafa Shaheen, Sunrise Team Leader, Scottish Refugee Council
Dave Le Sage, Director, Access Apna Ghar
Kirsty Wichary, Project worker, Access Apna Ghar
Sraboni Bhattacharya, Project Manager, Positive Action in Housing
Elodie Mignard, Caseworker, Positive Action in Housing
APPENDICES

TABLES

Table 2.1: Background of AAGHA clients

<table>
<thead>
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S for single, C for couple

Table 2.2: Background of Other clients

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Table 2.3 Background of refugees living in Temporary Accommodation

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Table 2.4 Type of permanent accommodation refugees were living in

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<td>6 in block</td>
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<td>4 in block</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 high</td>
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Table 3.1 Finding affordable accommodation

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Table 3.2 Finding accommodation in area of choice

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Table 3.3 Finding accommodation in appropriate condition

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Table 3.4: Finding accommodation of adequate size

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<tr>
<td>No problem</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. TOPIC GUIDE FOR HOUSING PROVIDERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Does the organisation have race equality or equal opportunity policies?

ALLOCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2. Does the organisation have any policies/guidance/targets relating to the proportion of BME groups or refugees that are accommodated?

3. In what ways can refugees exercise choice over the accommodation they are allocated? How many offers of accommodation are made to them? To what extent can area preferences (e.g. informed by concerns about racial harassment) be accommodated?

4. How, if at all, do refugee housing preferences differ from:
   a. a) Tenants from other more established BME communities
   b. b) Other client groups housed by your organisation?

5. What is the profile of refugee housing applicants in terms of the type and size of accommodation preferred/required? How, if at all, does this differ from the ‘accommodation needs profile’ of other groups? If larger housing is in particularly short supply, is this a special problem for refugee households?

6. What is your organisation’s main source of lets to refugees?
   - Housing list applicants
   - Section 5 referrals
   - Other

7. Are section 5 referrals of refugees made to you via the refugee support team or from community casework teams?

8. Can you tell me the percentage of refugees from all referrals that you have housed?

9. What measures does your organisation take to encourage housing applications from members of BME communities/refugee groups?

10. How (if at all) do your rehousing procedures for refugees differ from those for other groups?

ETHNIC MONITORING

11. Is ethnicity data available for:
a. Waiting lists?
b. Waiting times?
c. Housing lets?
d. Evictions/abandonments?
e. Shared ownership?
If yes, is this information publicised? Can you please supply me with the data after the meeting?
If no, do you have any plans to carry out ethnic monitoring in these areas?

12. Do you have information relating to refugees for
   a. Waiting lists?
b. Waiting times?
c. Housing lets?
d. Evictions/abandonments?
e. Shared ownership?
If yes, is this information publicised? Can you please supply me with the data after the meeting?
If no, do you have any plans to carry out ethnic monitoring in these areas?

RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPPORT PROVIDERS

13. In dealing with refugees, is there a formal relationship:
   a. With RST? Social work department? How frequently do they establish a care package for refugees who are referred?
   b. With other support providers? SRC/PAIH/AAGHAR?
   c. Are there any protocols, service level agreements or contracts?
      If so, can I have a copy of this?

14. How does this work in practice? Are there any gaps or overlaps in support?

15. Do you make use of the Council’s Essential Furniture Grant?
   a. If yes, how satisfactory has this been in terms of waiting times for grant approval? Size of grant?
   b. If no, are you aware of how refugee families access furniture provision?

TENANCY SUSTAINMENT

16. Are you aware of any specific needs that refugees may have in sustaining their tenancies? Prompts:
   a. Need for support in understanding tenants’ rights and responsibilities?
   b. Need for support in claiming housing benefit?
   c. Need for support in money management?
   d. Need for support in responding to official letters?
   e. Need for support with literacy issues/language differences?
   f. Vulnerability to racial harassment?
       To what extent do these differ from the needs of more established BME tenants?

17. What measures have you taken to address these? How effective are these? Are you planning any further measures in the future?
18. What are your organisation’s service standards for responding to complaints of racial harassment? How effectively does the organisation perform against these targets? What, in practice, usually takes place in the process of investigating a claim of racial harassment? What are the possible outcomes and which usually result from such an investigation? To what extent does racial harassment affect refugee tenants as opposed to more long-established BME tenants?

19. Have any particular difficulties arisen in accommodating refugees? Prompts:
   a. Concerns about leave to remain status and eligibility for housing and other welfare benefits?
   b. Hostility from other tenants due to racial prejudice?
   c. Reluctance on the part of committee members to participate in nominations arrangements?
   d. Differences in lifestyle which lead to cultural/racial clashes with other tenants?

20. Is turn-over of refugee tenancies noticeably higher than other tenancies?

**TENANT PARTICIPATION**

21. To what extent do refugees play an active part in the running of the association? Are refugees (or BME tenants, more broadly) represented on the management committee?

22. In periodically reviewing the association’s policies of particular relevance to refugees (e.g. on racial harassment) how does the association elicit the views of refugee households?

**TENANT SATISFACTION**

23. What measures do you take to assess the satisfaction levels of refugee tenants with their accommodation? Do you believe these to be adequate? Yes/No Why/why not?

24. What information do you currently have on levels of satisfaction of refugees compared to other tenants?

**COMMUNICATION WITH PARTNER AGENCIES**

25. What mechanisms exist for consulting with refugee community organisations or with other agencies representing refugee interests?
2. TOPIC GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS IN PERMANENT ACCOMODATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Source of initial contact:
SRC  □
AAGHAR □
RST  □
PaiH □
Others (name) □

Gender: M/F

Age
Below 16 (please specify) □
16 - 20 □
21 - 25 □
26 - 30 □
31 - 35 □
36 - 40 □
41 – 45 □
46 – 50 □
51 – 55 □
56 – 60 □
Above 60 (please specify)

Single/Couple

If couple, number of children:
Number of other dependents living with them:
Number of other dependents not living with them:

If single:
    Staying on own □
    Sharing with others □

Country of origin:

Interpreter required: Yes/No
If yes, in what language?

Address (including postcode number):

Length of stay in Glasgow:

Length of stay in the UK:

In employment: Yes/No
Accommodation type
Multi-storey  □  4-in-block  □  Tenement  □  Other  □

Tenure (interviewer will need to explain):
RSL  □  Private-rented  □  Owner occupied  □
Other (please specify)  □

If RSL, name of landlord:________________________________

If rented:  Furnished  □  Unfurnished  □

PREVIOUS HOUSING HISTORY IMMEDIATELY BEFORE AND AFTER GETTING A POSITIVE DECISION TO REMAIN

1. Where were you staying while you were waiting on the outcome of your asylum application?
   Was this in Glasgow? Yes/No
   If YES, GO TO Q2
   If NO, where was this?
   GO TO Q6

2. Which provider of accommodation was this with?
   GASSP  □
   YMCA  □
   The Angel Group  □
   Temporary supported project  □
   With friends or relatives  □
   Other: please specify  □

3. When you got refugee status and your NASS support ended, what was your experience in terms of housing? Prompt: Did you
   a) Remain in the same accommodation as a temporary situation?  □ GO TO Q4
   b) Remain in the same accommodation as a permanent let?  □ GO TO Q7
   c) Move into other accommodation as a temporary situation?  □
       GO TO Q4
   d) Move into other accommodation as a permanent let?  □
       GO TO Q7
   e) Stay with relatives or friends?  □
       GO TO Q4

4. How long did you stay in this accommodation?
   a) Less than 28 days  □  GO TO Q5
   b) Between 28 days and 3 months  □  GO TO Q5
c) Between 3 to 6 months   □   GO TO Q5

5. Were you working at the time? Yes/No Were you staying in a furnished flat? If YES to both, did this create a difficulty with benefits you were receiving and the high rents of the temporary furnished flat? To what extent were you able to resolve this? GO TO Q8
   If NO to either, GO TO Q8

6. Why did you move to Glasgow? And with which provider of accommodation did you stay?
   a) HAC hostel   □
   b) Temporary supported project   □
   c) Private rented accommodation   □
   d) RSL flat   □
   e) With friends or relatives   □
   f) Other (please specify)   □
   GO TO Q8

7. Were you working at the time? Yes/No Were you staying in a furnished flat? If YES to BOTH, did this create a difficulty with benefits you were receiving and the high rents of the temporary furnished flat? To what extent were you able to resolve this? Are you still staying in the same permanent accommodation? Yes/No
   If YES, GO TO Q8
   If NO, why did you move? Where did you move to? If within Glasgow, prompt for both location and provider of accommodation. If more than one move, trace to current location and provider of accommodation. GO TO Q8

8. Since getting refugee status, have you ever been homeless in the sense that you had to stay with friends or sleep rough because you had no suitable accommodation? If YES, GO TO Q9. If NO, GO TO Q14.

EXPERIENCES OF HOMELESSNESS

9. What were the circumstances which led to you losing (or leaving) your previous accommodation? (Or, if more than one incident/period of homelessness: what were the circumstances which led to your last period of homelessness?)

10. How long were you homeless? (Or if more than one incident/period of homelessness, how long was your last period of homelessness?)

11. What kind of advice and assistance did you receive while you were homeless (e.g. help to find temporary or permanent accommodation)? Who provided this advice? If agency, try to establish which agency.

12. Was this advice and assistance adequate? How could it have been improved?
13. Could you or anyone else have done anything to prevent you from becoming homeless?

ACCESS TO ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE
14. When your NASS support ended, or when you first arrived in Glasgow, how easy was it to get advice and assistance? Prompt: Did you know where to go?

15. What were your main sources of advice and assistance for finding accommodation? Was this provided by agencies or friends or relatives? If provided by agencies, probe the nature of the agency/professional which provided this advice and assistance. Please tick more than one, if appropriate.
- RST
- SRC
- PaiH
- Social work
- RSL
- Other agency (please specify)
- Local community networks

16. What kind of advice and assistance were you seeking?
   Prompt: Information about affordability of rents? Information about safe areas? Information about proximity to others from the same cultural background?

17. What difficulties, if any, did you experience in finding your current accommodation?
   - Hard to find anywhere affordable
   - Hard to find a house in an acceptable area
   - Hard to find a house in adequate condition
   - Hard to find a house of adequate size

18. To what extent was the advice and assistance offered by agencies helpful in enabling you to overcome these difficulties?

19. Was your accommodation identified by the Refugee Support Team? Yes/No
If the accommodation was identified by the RST, was this the first, second or only offer of permanent accommodation?

20. In looking for housing, have you experienced any form of racial prejudice/discrimination? If yes, from whom? What actions revealed prejudice/discrimination on the part of the agency concerned? What was the effect on you?

ACCESS TO SUPPORT

21. What support did you get after moving into your current accommodation? And for each of these types of support, from which support provider?

Prompt:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of advice/assistance</th>
<th>Yes/No</th>
<th>If possible, name of provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advice on connecting utilities?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the property furnished?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was community care grant for furniture applied for?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with claiming benefits?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money management?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language support?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting children into school?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting information about the local area?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to health care</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to education/training courses</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with gaining employment</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and emotional support</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other support (please specify)</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Was it difficult to obtain any of this support? If so, what made it difficult? Language barriers? Lack of information? Long waiting period?
23. How useful was this support? Is there anything that could have been done better?
   Probe: Do you have special needs relating to disability, cultural or religious background
   that should have been considered?

24. Was there any type of support that you or your family did not get which would have
   helped you?

25. In relation to this support, did you at any stage, feel that you were being treated
differently (better or worse) than other people? Why do you say that? Why do you think
you were being treated differently?

26. Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the support from agencies that you are
   receiving?

   Agency 1: ______________________
   Very satisfied □
   Quite satisfied □
   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied □
   Quite dissatisfied □
   Very dissatisfied □
   Can you explain why this is so?

   Agency 2: ______________________
   Very satisfied □
   Quite satisfied □
   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied □
   Quite dissatisfied □
   Very dissatisfied □
   Can you explain why this is so?

   Agency 3: ______________________
   Very satisfied □
   Quite satisfied □
   Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied □
   Quite dissatisfied □
   Very dissatisfied □
   Can you explain why this is so?

27. Do you have a wider network of friends, family or relatives who give you support? If
   yes, what kind of support was this?

   Temporary accommodation □
   Interpreting and translating services □
   Financial support □
   Social and emotional support □
   Other support (please specify) □
SATISFACTION WITH CURRENT ACCOMMODATION

28. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your current accommodation?
   a) Very satisfied
   b) Fairly satisfied
   c) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   d) Fairly dissatisfied
   e) Very dissatisfied

   f) Can you tell me why? Prompt: Is there any furniture? Are you satisfied with the condition of the property?

29. Do you think the number of rooms you have in your home is:
   a) Too few
   b) Too many
   c) About right

30. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with this neighbourhood as a place to live?
   a) Very satisfied
   b) Fairly satisfied
   c) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   d) Fairly dissatisfied
   e) Very dissatisfied

   f) Can you tell me why? Prompts: Do you feel safe? Is it close to amenities/services/transport links/opportunities for education/training/others from the same community?
   g)

31. Do you know who the landlord is? Yes/No. If yes, GO to 32, If no, GO to Q35.

32. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the landlord?
   a) Very satisfied
   b) Fairly satisfied
   c) Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
   d) Fairly dissatisfied
   e) Very dissatisfied

   f) Can you explain the reason for this? Prompt, Is it easy to contact the landlord? Is it easy to communicate with the landlord? Does the landlord respond promptly to your requests? Have you had to use the repairs service? How effective has this been?

33. Are you on Housing Benefit? Yes/No If yes, does your housing benefit adequately cover the rent? Yes/No If not, what difficulties has this caused? What have you done to address these difficulties? To what extent has this been resolved?

34. Have you experienced racial harassment in your area or vicinity? Yes/No
If yes, did you report this to the landlord or the police? As far as you know, was any action taken? By whom?

FUTURE HOUSING ASPIRATIONS

36. How likely is it that you will be continuing to stay in this accommodation a year from now?
   - Very likely □
   - Fairly likely □
   - Not sure □
   - Fairly unlikely □
   - Very unlikely □

37. If likely to move, why is that? What problems are you currently facing with the current accommodation/location? What are the attractions about move-on accommodation/location?

38. If likely to move in the next 12 months, what kind of other accommodation will you be seeking?
   - Private rented □
   - Other RSL accommodation □
   - Owner occupation? (buying your home) □
   - Why?
   - In what city – or area within Glasgow?

39. How likely are you to stay in Glasgow for at least one year?
   - Very likely □
   - Fairly likely □
   - Not sure □
   - Fairly unlikely □
   - Very unlikely □

40. Why is it likely/unlikely that you will stay in Glasgow for at least one year?

41. Overall, what are the factors which you are most likely to take into account in seeking accommodation in a particular area? Prompts (tick more than one if relevant):
   - Safety from racial harassment? □
   - Proximity to shops and other amenities □
   - Proximity to others from the same country of origin □
   - Proximity to training or employment opportunities □
   - Other factors? □

42. What type of information would be useful to you in considering your future housing aspirations? Prompts:
   - Schemes which help people get private tenancies, e.g, through rent deposit schemes? Yes/No
   - Transferring to other accommodation with the same housing association? Yes/No
   - Applying for other housing association accommodation? Yes/No
OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF ROUTE INTO SETTLEMENT

43. Finally, I would like to invite you to ask you about your views on the processes for settling refugees into permanent accommodation and into their new community.

Prompts: Are there any aspects of the process which are helpful in enabling you to settle into your new community? Do you have any views on aspects of the systems, which if changed, would make it easier for refugees to settle in their new home and country? Are you aware of other refugees who had an easier time than you? If so, what do you think contributed to this?
APPENDIX 3: TOPIC GUIDE FOR REFUGEES LIVING IN TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Gender: Male/Female

Country of Origin:…………………………

Age: …………………………….

Number of months/years in the UK: ……………………………

Number of months/years since getting refugee status:…………………………

Current accommodation: Hostel □
                      Staying with a friend □
                      Other: please specify □

Number of months/years you have been staying in your current accommodation …………………………..

Have you lived in other forms of temporary accommodation? Yes/No

If yes, what was this? Hostel □
                      Staying with a friend? □
                      Other: please specify: □

Are you currently employed: Yes/No

Are you currently attending training or educational courses: Yes/No
Experience of accessing temporary accommodation

1. When you got your refugee status, what kind of advice and assistance did you get in terms of accessing your current accommodation? Prompts
   a. From whom was this?
   b. What was the nature of the advice you received? Information about safe areas/affordable property/currently available property/housing providers?
   c. Has this been helpful?
   d. If yes, what has been helpful about this?
   e. If no, what kind of advice would you have liked?

2. What do you like about where you are currently staying? Prompts:
   a. Condition of property?
   b. Proximity to support from services?
   c. Sensitivity to cultural/religious needs/dietary requirements?
   d. Proximity to informal support

3. What do you not like about where you are currently staying?
   a. Condition of property?
   b. Lack of access to support services?
   c. Lack of sensitivity to cultural/religious needs/dietary requirements?
   d. Threat of racial harassment/abuse?

4. While you are looking for permanent accommodation, do you have any alternatives to living here? If so, what are these? Would you consider any of these alternatives? If yes, why? If no, why not?

5. Have you experienced any other form of temporary accommodation since getting refugee status? If so, what was this? What are the circumstances which led you to move from this accommodation?

6. Have you ever been homeless in the sense of being forced to live on the street or with a friend?

Advice and assistance with accessing permanent accommodation

7. What kind of information, advice and assistance are you getting about accessing permanent accommodation?
   a. From whom was this?
   b. What was the nature of the advice you received? Information about safe areas/affordable property/currently available property/housing providers?
   c. Has this been helpful?
   d. If yes, what has been helpful about this
   e. If no, what kind of advice would you have liked?

8. What are the factors that you are considering in deciding on permanent accommodation?
   a. Affordability?
b. Safety of area from racial harassment?

c. Proximity to training courses/Places of work?/Others from the same background?

9. What are factors which have been helpful to you in looking for permanent accommodation?

10. What are the factors which have made it difficult for you to obtain permanent accommodation?

11. How has living in temporary accommodation affected your ability to settle in Scotland?: Prompts: In terms of your
   Ability to pursue further training courses or educational courses?
   Ability to gain employment?
   Ability to access health care?
   Ability to make new friends/get to know Scottish people?

12. What do you think can be done to facilitate the process of enabling refugees to settle into:
   a. Permanent accommodation?
   b. Their new community/country?
APPENDIX 4: TOPIC GUIDE FOR PROVIDERS OF ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

ACCESS TO SERVICES

1. What is the main route by which refugees reach SRC/AAGHA/RST? Is there any other route?

2. How effectively are the mechanisms for referral to (Agency) for refugees who have recently got leave to remain working? What are the main gaps in support? What can be done to improve this?

3. How are the needs of clients matched to the supply of housing? Does (AGENCY) carry out its own assessment of client needs? Does (Agency) have access to any other information about the needs of the client?

4. To what extent is it possible to enable refugees to meet their preferences for accommodation with respect to:
   a. Local area?
   b. Type (four in a block, tenement)?
   c. Size?

SERVICES PROVIDED

5. To what extent are the following services provided to refugees:
   a. Enabling them to furnish their apartments?
   b. Providing information about the use of utilities?
   c. Providing information about money management?
   d. Liaising with the landlord?
   e. Providing information about the local area?
   f. Enabling them to access essential services (including benefits, health and education services)?
   g. Responding effectively to incidents of racial harassment?
   h. Providing information about training courses and access to education?
   i. Providing information about employment opportunities?

6. To what extent are individuals assisted in
   a. Claiming housing benefit?
   b. Other benefits, such as job-seeker allowance?/working tax credit?/income support/child benefit?
   c. Accessing employment/education/training courses?
   d. Accessing health services?
   e. Placing children in schools?
   f. Increasing knowledge of the local area?

7. What are the main challenges and constraints in terms of preventing homelessness after individuals have moved in? Are there any gaps in support?

8. Do you have any protocols, service level agreements or contracts for providing advice and assistance to refugees with housing providers?
9. Are there any mismatches in service provision between what refugees need and what is provided? If so, what are these areas? Prompt: Language support? Disability? Mental health needs? Are the needs of large households adequately met?

10. What can be done to improve this?

11. Are there any plans for future development of services?

**FUTURE HOUSING ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS**

12. What kind of support, if any, is provided to refugees who wish to move from their current accommodation within Glasgow?

   a. If staying in RSL accommodation,
      to other accommodation within the same RSL,
      to other RSL accommodation or
      the private rented sector

   b. If staying in the private rented sector
      to other private rented accommodation
      to RSL accommodation

13. What kind of support, if any is provided to settled refugees who might be considering owner occupation?

14. What kind of support, if any, is provided to refugees who wish to leave Glasgow?

**OVERALL**

44. Finally, I would like to invite you to ask you about your views on the processes for settling refugees into permanent accommodation and into their new community.

   Prompts: Are there any aspects of the process which are helpful in enabling refugees to settle into their new community? Do you have any views on aspects of the systems, which if changed, would make it easier for refugees to settle in their new home and country?