

Working to Rebuild Lives

A preliminary report towards
a refugee employment strategy

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Foreword

Around 36% of refugees are unemployed, which is around six times the national average. Many refugees have skills that our labour market needs but they require some initial support, especially in English, in order to start work and participate fully in society.

This document outlines work underway in Jobcentre Plus, the Home Office, the Department for Education and Skills and in the voluntary sector, to tackle refugee unemployment.

I and Ministerial colleagues in the Home Office and DfES are very grateful for the Employability Forum's contribution to the document and for the agreement of the National Refugee Integration Forum's employment subgroup to monitor the work outlined in it. This joint approach, involving Government and the voluntary sector, will mean that we can work towards a refugee employment strategy that has the support of all partners.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Des Browne', written over a horizontal line.

Des Browne MP
Minister of State for Work
Department for Work and Pensions

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Government recognises that employment is a key factor in the integration of refugees as full and equal citizens. Employment support for refugees is therefore an important part of the Government's national refugee integration agenda. This document begins to take a strategic look at ways in which Government, the voluntary sector and employers can work more effectively together to help more refugees into work. It identifies work currently underway and where more needs to be done; it is the first stage towards the production in spring 2004 of an employment strategy to increase the number of refugees in jobs. This will contribute to the Government's agenda for refugee integration; increase economic growth and productivity; help contribute to the Government's Public Service Agreement employment targets (specifically those for increasing the employment rate in disadvantaged areas and of ethnic minorities) and promote community cohesion.
- 1.2 Unemployment among refugees of working age is unacceptably high; at around 36% it is around six times the national average. That statistic masks much higher rates among certain groups. The result is not only hardship and exclusion for refugees and their families, but tragic and avoidable waste of talent and resources for the UK as a whole. Many refugees have much needed skills to offer and, like British citizens, have the right and responsibility to seek useful and rewarding work while they are in this country.
- 1.3 This document aims to:
 - identify facts and key issues around refugees' labour market position;
 - provide a rationale for targeting help specifically for this group;
 - identify ways to better make better use of existing resources; identify options for additional targeted employment help;
 - design interventions which are fair to all refugees and do not prejudice them (or any subset of them) or other groups;
 - establish timeframe and mechanism for the measures to be introduced and evaluated, to inform a strategy for provision from 2004.
- 1.4 Employment support for refugees is an important part of the Government's national refugee integration agenda. Since mid-2000, the Home Office has been developing measures to help refugees to integrate into UK society, recognising the social and economic benefits of a settled migrant population. In November 2000, the Home Office set out its strategy for refugee integration in the document "Full and Equal Citizens: a strategy for the integration of refugees into the United Kingdom". It introduced funding to help refugee community organisations and the voluntary sector provide support and advice on, for example, language tuition, education, training and employment.

- 1.5 The Home Office established the National Refugee Integration Forum (NRIF) in 2001, now chaired by Beverley Hughes, Home Office Minister for Citizenship, Immigration and Community Cohesion. The Forum is supported by subgroups that address different strands, such as accommodation, health, education and employment. The subgroup on Adult Education, Training and Employment is chaired and managed by Employability Forum and has representatives from across local and national government (including DWP), colleges, employers and refugee organisations. Annex 1 outlines the work of the National Refugee Integration Forum and the employment subgroup.
- 1.6 The NRIF employment subgroup advises on national policy. Inevitably there will be regional variation in response and delivery, according to differences in the size of the refugee population within each region. The Audit Commission estimates that at least 85% of all asylum seekers and refugees who arrive in UK remain in London. The London Skills Commission is taking forward a number of initiatives outlined in the London Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA), published in October 2002, which includes the development of a flagship programme to examine the feasibility of a basic and higher-level skills programme and job brokerage service for refugees. The programme will examine the quantity and relevance of local provision. The findings of the London programme and the outcomes from the national developments outlined in this document will be mutually shared.
- 1.7 The determination of an asylum claim does not take into account the economic potential of the applicant in the way, for instance, that the work permit system does. However, employers generally do not make any useful distinction between forced and unforced migrants, provided that the jobseeker has permission to work and the necessary skills and experience to do the job. Migrants, defined as those born outside the UK, make up 8% of the total UK population and almost 10% of the working age population – 4.8 million in total, including 3.6 million of working age. Refugees make up a small fraction of the overall migrant workforce. The strategy for refugee integration and employment will be implemented within DWP's wider work around managed migration, outlined in Annex 2.

2. Analysis of Issues

Who are refugees?

- 2.1 Firstly, we need to be clear about definitions. **Asylum seekers** are those who have made a claim for asylum but whose case has not been decided. They are supported financially by the Home Office and are not allowed to work. (Though the Home Office aims to decide all claims within six months, some asylum seekers have spent longer in the system and may have a protected right to work or receive Income Support). In July 2002 the concession on employment, which allowed asylum seekers awaiting an initial decision to apply for permission to work, was withdrawn.
- 2.2 Those who receive a positive decision on their asylum claim are known as **refugees**; under current policies they are granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in UK. Refugees have full employment rights, may claim benefit and are eligible for programmes. Some people whose asylum claim is not successful may nevertheless be granted leave to remain on the basis of their protection needs. A new system, introduced on 1 April 2003, provides Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave, in most cases for 3 years. Those in receipt of either status have access to mainstream benefits and employment support.
- 2.3 Around 25% of asylum seekers receive exceptional or indefinite leave to remain each year. In 2002, just under 42,000 asylum seekers received positive decisions; that figure includes those successful following appeal. There is no national total of refugees in the UK but there are probably upwards of 350,000, the majority of whom are in London.

What do we know of refugee unemployment?

- 2.4 Estimates about levels of refugee unemployment vary, but all research has shown that they experience high levels of unemployment and under-employment, in spite of the fact that many arrive in the UK with good qualifications and previous work experience in their countries of origin.
- 2.5 The national average for refugee unemployment is around 36% but small-scale local studies have revealed higher percentages among specific refugee communities. Where refugees are working, it is frequently at levels well below their capability – a high proportion of refugees have technical or professional level qualifications. For so many refugees to be unemployed, or under-employed, is a waste of human resource and is socially divisive since work helps people to integrate into the community and, in the case of refugees, helps them to settle and rebuild their lives.
- 2.6 As a group, refugees are known to face disadvantage in the labour market but they are a diverse group and the causes of disadvantage differ between individuals, often compounded by issues relating to gender and age. Some have been denied education in their home country, are illiterate in their own language and have very poor employability skills. Others are highly qualified with professional level skills and may have learned English to a high level before arriving in the

UK. The disadvantages for this second group include difficulties in establishing the transferability of their skills and qualifications to the UK labour market, which for many means a continuum of unskilled work and unemployment.

Goldsmiths College research

- 2.7 A major issue for DWP in developing employment policy for refugees has been lack of appropriate employment data about them. Though it is clear that refugees need help with language, equivalence of qualifications, UK work experience and specific skills/IT knowledge, DWP has not known much about the extent of need, the skills that refugees arrive with, the type of work they seek, whether certain refugees find it more difficult than others to get work, or the ability of government provision to provide them with appropriate support.
- 2.8 In view of that, DWP commissioned Goldsmiths College in 2001 to research the barriers facing refugees in the labour market. The report "Refugees: Opportunities and barriers in employment and training" was published on 12 December 2002. The key findings are given in Annex 3.
- 2.9 The Goldsmiths College research exposed a very diverse range of education and literacy among their sample of 400. About 20% were not literate in their first language (although many of these were literate in a second language other than English) and 83% arrived in Britain with poor or no spoken English skills. Their experiences of work did not reflect their diverse range of skills; 40% had skills that they had not used in paid work in Britain.
- 2.10 29% of the sample were working at the time of the survey, compared with 60% of people from ethnic minority groups according to the Labour Force Survey (Summer 2001-Spring 2002 data); 25% of those working were in temporary jobs, compared with 6% of the working age population. 35% were working part-time (mostly because they could not find full-time work) compared with 23% of the working age population; 43% had been unemployed for over 6 months, compared with 21% of those who moved from unemployment into employment during the Spring quarter of 2002; the average hourly rate was £7.29 compared with a GB average of £11.74 (Source: New Earnings Survey 2002) and 11% were being paid less than the minimum wage. Half of those who were unemployed and seeking work had not heard of Jobcentre Plus programmes.
- 2.11 The Goldsmiths College research illustrated that the majority of those who had been employed before coming to the UK are now working in a limited number of occupations, such as catering, where they are unable to make use of their previous skills and experience. This research also confirms that many refugees have had formal education, training and experience of working in their own countries before arriving in the UK. 37% of those who were working (and 38% of those not working) said they had skills they were unable to use in paid jobs in Britain. The majority quoted Information Technology skills, but the list also included skills in commerce, education, arts, health and social care, trade, etc.

- 2.12 A small group (27) of those who were working were self-employed, almost half as translators or interpreters. The majority had been in Britain for over five years and men were far more likely to be self-employed than women. The United Kingdom has a dynamic and growing entrepreneurial community across the country with significant participation by all ethnic and cultural communities – established and newly arrived. The Government has in place support mechanisms for individuals who wish to set up in business and the major channel for providing this help is the Business Link organisation, which covers the entire country. Business Link is willing to explore ways of providing relevant support for refugees who wish to become self-employed or to set up in business.
- 2.13 The research recommends wide ranging improvement to the language and vocational training offered to refugees; closer working between community organisations and statutory providers in order to improve the flow and quality of communication; and a better response to individuals' needs and the delivery of services appropriate to identified subgroups. The research conclusions have been influential in shaping this document and DWP developments over the next year.

Skills Audits

- 2.14 There is little robust quantitative evidence on the skills and qualifications of refugees. The Home Office Immigration Research and Statistics Service (IRSS) are undertaking a skills audit to understand more about refugees' vocational and language skills, employment history and qualifications and how these relate in the UK context. It will be the largest ever skills audit of refugees undertaken in the UK. IRSS have sent questionnaires to those aged 18 years and over who were awarded Indefinite or Exceptional Leave to Remain between November 2002 and January 2003. Around 3,000 questionnaires were issued; the study expects to receive 1,500 back for analysis. The initial questionnaire was issued in English, with translations available in six other languages. The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) will code the responses to provide UK equivalents of overseas qualifications. Results will be available in summer 2003.
- 2.15 There have been a number of smaller scale, local and specific studies of refugee and asylum seeker skills, for instance NIACE's 2001 audit of asylum seekers' skills and qualifications. There have also been recent studies by the Eastern England Consortium for Asylum Seeker Support (EECASS); London North, Coventry and Devon and Somerset Learning and Skills Councils; and Plymouth City Council. Assessments of Somali community skills include "The Professional Capacity of Nationals from the Somali Regions in Britain" May 2002, commissioned by Refugee Action and International Organisation for Migration; and "Supporting the Somali Community in West London" analysed Somali skills levels in six West London boroughs. "Missed Opportunities: a skills audit of refugee women in London from the teaching, nursing and medical professions" commissioned by the Greater London Authority, was published in December 2002. Some employment and training providers have substantial databases on their refugee clients: Refugees into Jobs, based in Wembley, maintains a database of 2,400 service users, of whom 69% have educational backgrounds equivalent to NVO 1 or 2, with the remainder having higher qualifications, specifically doctors (10%); engineers (6%); and teachers (6%).

Dispersal and settlement patterns

- 2.16 Refugees may live where they choose. There are some difficulties, therefore, in determining the geographical areas in which refugees tend to settle. Nevertheless, the Home Office has information about the distribution of asylum seekers under the National Asylum Support Service's system, available on its website www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds. The Goldsmiths College research suggests that a significant number of refugees choose to remain in the area which they went to on arrival in UK, whether through dispersal or through joining family or friends. 68% of their sample had not moved. Of those who had, 43% had moved to London.
- 2.17 The refugee population is becoming increasingly scattered across the different regions where asylum seekers have been dispersed by NASS, but it is not yet possible to assess accurately the impact of the dispersal policy on the longer term settlement of those asylum seekers who receive positive decisions on their status. There is some evidence that Birmingham for example (and the West Midlands region as a whole) is becoming an increasingly important destination for refugee job seekers.

3. Improving Employment Support

NASS Support for asylum seekers

- 3.1 The Home Office's National Asylum Support Service (NASS) is responsible for asylum seekers; Annex 4 outlines the support they give.
- 3.2. The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 will, among other things, introduce a number of measures to better manage the support given to asylum seekers, including introducing induction and accommodation centres. These and other measures to be introduced by the legislation will ensure that NASS resources support those with genuine asylum claims in a clearly defined and managed way and that those without bona fide claims are identified quickly and removed. The Home Office's arrangements for dispersing asylum seekers away from London and the South East will continue. Accommodation Centres will be introduced on a trial basis as soon as possible, although precise timescales are dependent upon the planning process. The centres will provide a range of educational and other purposeful activities for all age groups, including ESOL and IT skills training, volunteering opportunities, sport and creative activities. The aim is that asylum seekers spend their time in the UK productively and are able to develop skills that will be useful either in the UK or if they are expected to return to their home country.
- 3.3 The vast majority of asylum decisions are made within 6 months – most recent Home Office figures show that 84% of asylum applicants will receive a decision within this time frame.
- 3.4 Asylum seekers are not permitted to work; this policy is intended to deter those who might be tempted to seek asylum in the UK for the purpose of finding employment. While it is the clear view of Government that economic migration is beneficial to the UK economy, a number of legal routes for economic migration (see Annex 2) exists for this purpose and further schemes are to be introduced. It is important that the integrity of the asylum system is not undermined by its use as an alternative route for economic migration.
- 3.5 Asylum seekers may attend further education classes and are encouraged to undertake voluntary activity, which the Home Office defines clearly to protect people from being exploited through unpaid work. The Home Office provides funding for a Purposeful Activities Scheme each summer to encourage asylum seekers to undertake voluntary activity in the communities in which they live. It is very difficult to estimate refugee and asylum seeker numbers involved in volunteering. Much voluntary activity takes place within the refugee communities and may often go unrecognised.
- 3.6 A new European Community initiative, EQUAL, is testing and promoting new ways to combat discrimination and inequalities in the labour market, both for those in work and for those seeking work. It includes specific action for asylum seekers (EQUAL Theme I), which includes those given temporary humanitarian protection. It provides matched funding for initiatives agreed by Development Partnerships (DPs) of key players from the public and private sector, non-governmental organisations, social partners and business. Three DPs (based in London, Liverpool and Glasgow) are currently developing measures to help asylum seekers with initial orientation

and transition to work for those given refugee status. They will begin in 2003 to identify areas of work for local and national mainstreaming. More information is available on the website www.equal.ecotec.co.uk.

Transition to refugee status

Bridging NASS and Jobcentre Plus support

- 3.7 On receipt of permission to remain, refugees have up to 28 days of continued financial support by NASS, during which time they must find alternative housing (if they are in NASS-funded accommodation) and register with Jobcentre Plus if they are unable to find work immediately. Once granted status, a refugee has to resolve a range of complex matters, the first of which is housing. The non-priority homeless will have to find accommodation in the private sector, often without money for a deposit, or will look for hostel accommodation for the single homeless. Once accommodated, they need to set up home, register with GPs, register children with schools, begin the complex task of arranging family reunion if they are able, etc. This is the pivotal moment for life in exile. What happens at this stage truncates or prolongs the settlement process. It is vital that services connect, are easily accessible and intelligible to all, allow the individual to make informed choices and map out their own route to employment.
- 3.8 Clearly, refugees need the greatest support at this stage, in the very early days after they receive a positive decision, when they lose the accommodation and financial support provided by NASS. Regional Consortia (Annex 4, paragraph 3) provide a key link in the chain between NASS and the local communities where asylum seekers have been dispersed. These consortia have started to develop local integration strategies to help with the "move on" stage once a positive decision has been granted and NASS support withdrawn. The employment component of these integration plans will involve a partnership of all the key local agencies – for example local authorities, further education colleges, jobcentres, employers and voluntary refugee community organisations.
- 3.9 The Goldsmiths College research indicates that many refugees rely on family and friends for information and advice regarding employment. While this informal system may help some into work, it severely limits choice and perpetuates a culture of low expectation and acceptance of low skilled work. To realise the potential of refugees, we need a formal system that encourages them into the wider help available through Jobcentre Plus and the voluntary sector, provides appropriate guidance about employment goals and offers the right support. The Regional Consortia's local integration planning will play a crucial role in that. Jobcentre Plus is looking at ways to bring new refugees into early programme support quickly after they receive status, by developing provision that refugees see as being of use to them. Jobcentre Plus is developing two pieces of work in London to offer new refugees (a) a route into employment support that addresses immediate needs around housing, etc; and (b) work-focused English language and labour market information within Work Based Learning for Adults. Annex 5 gives details.

Sharing Information

- 3.10 Providing relevant and quality information to help people with transition is an important element of any strategy for integration and employment. Crucially, it can be advisers' understanding of how and when to present information that can make the difference. People need help where they need to choose between options; only informed decision making leads to sustained choices which, in turn, helps people towards independence.
- 3.11 The Goldsmiths College research, among other things, recommended closer working between community organisations and statutory providers in order to improve the flow and quality of communication. Voluntary and community organisations play an important role in advising refugee jobseekers. Refugees are understandably nervous about the machinery of government since their experiences of the apparatus of the state and its officials may have been extremely negative in their own countries. Voluntary and community organisations are therefore perceived to be more approachable and relevant; their involvement is crucial in reaching the group. The dispersal programme has taken some of the focus away from London and led to the development of new community groups and partnerships in cities and towns that have not been traditional centres for refugees.
- 3.12 Currently, the Home Office provides some information to asylum seekers about rights and responsibilities whilst in UK. The development of the Induction Centres for asylum seekers will be integral to the enhanced provision of such information. Voluntary organisations such as the Refugee Council, the Red Cross and the National Information Forum have also published various leaflets with information about living in the UK.
- 3.13 There are significant differences between the information needs of asylum seekers and refugees. Clearly, refugees need information about access to the UK labour market and to Jobcentre Plus programmes for help to find work. Some of those obtaining refugee status may have already been in the UK some time. Some will have had permission to work when they were asylum seekers. Where they have worked, it is likely to have been in low paid unskilled work. Those who have not been able to work may have lost many of their previously held skills due to the length of unemployment. However long the individual has been in UK, and regardless of whether or not they have worked here, it is crucial that they receive clear messages about the expectation on them to find work (where they are able) and the support available to help them make the transition to appropriate employment.
- 3.14 The National Refugee Integration Forum and its employment subgroup have made clear that a formal publication needs to be included with the Home Office's 'permission to remain' letter. The subgroup is developing a booklet, "Welcome to UK", which will include essential information on National Insurance numbers and other forms of identity, the role of Jobcentre Plus, English language teaching, etc.
- 3.15 The need for more systematic provision of information has been discussed in the NRIF and the Home Office is now working with voluntary organisations to develop an effective strategy for communicating essential information at the time when the positive decision letter is being sent out.

- 3.16 In addressing issues around the availability of employment information to refugees, Jobcentre Plus has agreed with the Home Office to co-produce a fact sheet about Jobcentre Plus support, translated into 17 languages, and to send it to individuals to whom they have given refugee status. Jobcentre Plus has also agreed to put advisers into accommodation centres to give benefit and employment advice to those awarded refugee status.
- 3.17 Jobcentre Plus advises its staff to build a multi-agency approach with other Government agencies, voluntary and private sectors and others to help individuals move from welfare into work. Jobcentre Plus is currently training staff on cultural awareness, discrimination and valuing diversity, which will supplement existing guidance on refugees.

National Insurance Numbers

- 3.18 It is common for refugees to experience considerable delays in receiving their National Insurance number (NINO), which can delay receipt of benefit as well as blocking opportunities to move quickly into legitimate work. DWP, the Inland Revenue and the Home Office have been exploring ways to align the NINO allocation process into the Home Office's processes for determining permission to remain, in order to speed the process up and help refugees move more quickly into employment. A clerical system will be introduced in the next reporting year and the three departments will continue to look at the possibility of introducing an IT solution in the future.
- 3.19 Proving identity for receipt of benefits can be difficult for those refugees who arrived without valid documentation. Refugees have to be allocated with a NINO in order to get benefits. The NASS35 form goes some way to proving identity but has to be supplemented with other checks. The NASS35 form shows the payments made to the individual during the asylum-seeking period. It is sent to the individual after the "permission to remain" letter; since many refugees vacate their accommodation quickly on receipt of refugee status, NASS35s do not always reach people. The payment of benefits can therefore be delayed since it makes identification more difficult. Benefits payment staff need the NASS35 to calculate Income Support arrears under the refugee back-payment scheme, since NASS payments are taken into account when calculating benefits. Jobcentre Plus has arrangements with NASS that allow duplicate NASS35s to be issued to claimants in such circumstances. There are also arrangements for claimants to receive clerically arranged interim payments provided they can prove their identity for a NINO to be allocated. Jobcentre Plus is monitoring the extent to which these arrangements help to speed the claim process.

Opening bank accounts

- 3.20 Banks are required by law to check the identity of new customers. Many refugees have reported difficulties with opening bank accounts, mostly due to difficulties in providing proof of identity and address. The introduction of basic accounts by banks as part of the introduction of universal banking may ease the situation, but refugees will still need to provide proof of who they are and where they live. Discussions are being held between the British Bankers Association and the Home Office about forms of documentation that might be acceptable to banks. The 'ARC card'

(Asylum Registration Card) is withdrawn at the point that status is determined and permission to work granted; there is a delay and a cost before the refugee can be issued with a Home Office travel document which would provide proof of identity. In the interim, banks may accept a letter from a "responsible person" as proof of identity; the Employability Forum's Policy Group has approached the Home Office about including the Home Office-funded asylum support provider in the list of acceptable "responsible persons" in cases where provider staff have known the individual during the period of the asylum claim.

- 3.21 From April 2003 the normal method of payment of benefits and pensions has been into a bank or building society account (including the Post Office card account). The changes which affect all customers, including refugees, will be phased in over 2 years. There are currently 3.5 million adults in the UK without a bank account. The universal banking services package (consisting of access to the banks' basic bank accounts at Post Office branches and the Post Office card account) mean that all those who genuinely want an account should be able to open one. This includes those who may have been refused accounts in the past because they were not able to provide proof of identity or address.

Interpreters and translators

- 3.22 All jobseekers need to be able to understand what Jobcentre Plus can offer them; those who have difficulty with English have to rely on interpreters or on translated material. Jobcentre Plus provides interpreter services for those who need them. Where people need help, Jobcentre Plus provides interpreters or uses Languageline, which is a telephone interpreting service. There are issues around the cost, availability and standards of local interpreter services; Jobcentre Plus offices do not have discrete budgets to pay for this support. Some have reported difficulties in determining the volume of help needed in order to plan costs, of finding the resource to pay and in ensuring that what they offer is of an appropriate standard. It seems sensible to engage members of the local community to help with interpreting; an option may be to give interpreter training to those with community language skills, for instance.
- 3.23 DWP will conduct an exercise during 2003-4 to establish the extent of need for interpreter support and translated material, the effectiveness and value of the current support on offer, the potential for wider involvement from the local community, the potential for Jobcentre Plus to provide its own in-house service and cost implications. The study will give a better idea about the investment needed and ways in which the community sector can be involved in provision.

Looking for work

- 3.24 The first source of help for all jobseekers, including refugees, is through the terms determined in their Jobseekers Agreement, which supports the payment of the Jobseekers Allowance (JSA). Since refugees are one of several groups known to face disadvantage in the labour market, not least due to language need, they may choose to join New Deal early. Advisers will encourage them to do so at the first claim stage in the work focussed interview. Those who do not take up those early opportunities will automatically become eligible for New Deal at 6 months for those aged 18-24 and at 18 months for those over 25 years. Partners of those on benefits, including those on Income Support, can access jobsearch help, advice or training and support from the Adviser Discretion Fund.
- 3.25 Refugees over the age of 25 years may also choose to join Work Based Learning for Adults (WBLA) before the usual qualifying period of 6 months unemployment, if they have an English language need. WBLA is not a sanctionable programme – participants attend full-time and receive training allowances, which are based on the Jobseekers Allowance with an additional premium payment.
- 3.26 Jobcentre Plus establishes a personal file for each client on their “Labour Market System” (LMS), that records personal information (age, gender, length of unemployment) along with a progress report of the activity they undertake to find work. Jobcentre Plus hopes to include a ‘marker’ for refugee status from April 2004, which will allow them to monitor the volume of refugees (albeit through voluntary identification) against other characteristics such as age, gender or ethnic group, participation and outcomes from programmes, length of unemployment and incidence of repeated periods of unemployment.

Better targeted employment help

- 3.27 Programmes should offer the following, within work-based packages, in order to help and attract refugees:
- help with spoken and written English and access to tuition in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
 - basic skills and basic employability training where needed;
 - help to understand how the UK labour market operates;
 - UK work experience, which most employers expect to see;
 - better information, advice and support about training, jobs and membership of professional organisations;
 - help to obtain UK equivalence of overseas qualifications, presented in a way that employers can understand;
 - clear permission to work documents.

- 3.28 We do not know the numbers affected by each of these issues, though difficulty with language and understanding labour market affect the majority. Difficulty with the English language affects a wider group than refugees. It has been estimated that at least 1 million people, and possibly as many as 1.5 million, lack the English skills required to function in employment.
- 3.29 It may be possible to address some of these issues through flexibility and more focused help within government funded programmes for long term unemployed adults, which refugees and people with ESOL needs may enter early. The New Deals should be able to provide much of that already. The Employment Green Paper "Towards Full Employment in a Modern Society", produced in March 2001, introduced the Government's intention to invest more to help the most severely disadvantaged in the labour market. Funding was subsequently secured to pilot measures between 2002-04 to bring more disadvantaged groups, including refugees, into early Jobcentre Plus support. Annex 5 outlines the proposal for refugees and also outlines the work planned over the next year to deliver ESOL in a more work focused context within WBLA.
- 3.30 The Goldsmiths College research reported that Jobcentre Plus advisers could be more proactive in encouraging jobseekers to take up ESOL provision where they clearly have a language need. Jobcentre Plus advisers are expected to do this, especially where it is clear that the individual will only find work if they improve their English.
- 3.31 The Government has a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to help 1.5 million people improve their basic skills by 2007. This target applies to people with literacy, numeracy and language (ESOL) skills assessed below Level 2, which is the equivalent of GCSE passes at A-C in English and/or mathematics. Jobcentre Plus has arrangements in place to (a) identify clients with literacy/numeracy needs; (b) have these needs assessed by an independent contractor; and (c) refer clients to appropriate provision.
- 3.32 An equivalent arrangement for those with ESOL needs is currently being developed. Jobcentre Plus is aiming to develop a model to (a) identify ESOL need among its clients, whether or not they are actively seeking work; (b) refer for assessment; and (c) offer full or part-time provision to match their needs. This model is being piloted by South Thames College in London. Under this model Jobcentre Plus offices will refer clients to the college for language assessment and to establish whether part-time or full-time provision would be most suitable. Clients on part-time provision (funded by DfES) will remain on benefit and will be on provision which either has a work focus for those actively seeking work or is set in a social context for those who are not able to participate in the labour market. Clients on full-time, work-focused provision will move to a training allowance. This pilot is being evaluated and will inform the future strategy for providing ESOL help to Jobcentre Plus clients.

Minority Ethnic Outreach

- 3.33 The Employment Green Paper announced that £15 million would be invested in a Minority Ethnic Outreach service, to strengthen the support available to jobless people in minority ethnic groups who need help to make the transition into employment. Of the 3.8 million minority ethnic adults of working age in Britain, approximately 75% live in five main conurbations, i.e: London, West Midlands, West Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, East Midlands. The service helps people regardless of whether or not they are on benefits and includes refugees and asylum seekers with permission to work. The service
- promotes the services of Jobcentre Plus or other labour market intermediaries;
 - promotes the skills and qualities of jobless clients to employers;
 - delivers specialist support and/or training to help people compete for jobs.
- 3.34 The service was introduced in April 2002 with around 50 providers contracted to deliver provision until March 2004. A small number have specifically targeted refugee populations; others are providing services to refugees as part of a broader target client group. The service will be evaluated over the next two years with the first report due in autumn 2004. The evaluation is not formally required to analyse the impact of the outreach on refugees, but preliminary findings have shown that some providers are seeing more refugees than they had anticipated. Despite its wider focus, the evaluation report may provide valuable lessons on outreach to refugees. As patterns of refugee dispersal emerge, consideration may be given to expanding minority ethnic outreach in a targeted way at communities with large numbers of refugees from particular ethnic groups.

Action Teams for Jobs

- 3.35 Action Teams for Jobs work with jobless people of working age who volunteer for help, live in nominated wards and have at least one of the barriers to work identified by DWP. This includes refugees. Teams offer individually tailored help to break down barriers to work, which may include help to find housing or pay transport costs as well as the more conventional provision of training and equipment. In areas with refugee populations, Teams work in partnership with local organisations to help them make the best use of their skills and experience and integrate them into the local labour market. Examples of this work include: training to NVQ2/3 childcare for single parent Somali women in Tower Hamlets to become childminders, meeting an acute local need for qualified Muslim childcare places, thereby allowing other women to work. Action Teams may also provide aftercare and support to those who have moved into employment to ensure that the transition to sustained employment is successful. Money has also been granted from the Action Teams Employment Projects Fund to support refugee centres outside local Action Team areas. Teams share good practice in this area through informal networks and annual conferences.

Refugees with higher level skills

- 3.36 Those who are the hardest to help are not just those with the poorest employability skills. Many refugees fail to become engaged within the labour market because their particular needs cannot be met easily through existing provision. That includes many refugees with higher level qualifications who need help to establish the transferability of their skills in order to escape a cycle of low level work and unemployment. For them, the answer may be flexibility within employment programmes to help with issues around transferability of qualifications and skills and access to appropriate language support.
- 3.37 Refugees with higher level skills report difficulties in determining the equivalence of overseas vocational qualifications. Employers, too, have identified that this can be a deterrent to recruiting refugees. The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) network collects information from participating nations on their education systems and qualifications and is able to provide some guidance about academic equivalence, but it does not extend significantly into vocational areas. Nonetheless, where it is able and for a fee, NARIC will provide a written statement of qualification equivalence. Jobcentre Plus advisers have an "Adviser Discretion Fund" (ADF), which they may use to clear obstacles to work for those on New Deal or unemployed for 6 months or more. ADF could be used to pay for the NARIC service where it would lead to specific job opportunities. Action Teams have the scope to offer this help for those living in their areas.
- 3.38 Adapting qualifications gained abroad to meet the requirements set by UK professions can be a complicated and lengthy process. It can depend on:
- English language competence against pre-determined standards;
 - labour market demand and the existence of special "adaptation" programmes for those with international qualifications;
 - the availability of certificates to verify qualifications;
 - the degree of professional regulation in the UK.
- 3.39 Getting early and correct advice on how to proceed is crucial. A number of voluntary organisations provide specialist advice and guidance for refugees with professional qualifications. Praxis has worked extensively with refugee nurses in London; the Refugee Assessment & Guidance Unit within North London University has developed effective programmes for refugee teachers; the Refugee Council and Refugee Education and Training Service have worked together to support refugee doctors. The Refugee Council and the British Medical Association have recently developed a database for refugee doctors living in the UK, which includes nearly 800 individuals with a wide range of skills including orthopaedic surgeons and paediatric specialists. A similar exercise is being developed for refugee nurses involving the Royal College of Nurses, Praxis and other relevant organisations.

- 3.40 Jobcentre Plus's pilot refugee programme, described in Annex 5, will acknowledge the higher level skills of some of their participants and will be expected to offer appropriate advice about employment opportunities, where necessary using professional and voluntary sector organisations such as those mentioned above. The evaluation report will look at how useful the model is in helping all participants into work at an appropriate level; DWP is particularly interested to see whether the specialist service offered by the pilot provides a better response for those with higher level skills. Refugees present real opportunities for employers to engage people with valuable skills. The pilot's focus on helping refugees to make appropriate job choices based on an objective analysis of their skills, will complement the current work of Jobcentre Plus account managers to promote the benefits to employers of inclusive recruitment practices that widen their choice of job candidates, especially in sectors where recruitment is difficult.
- 3.41 Employability Forum has provided opportunities for employers to meet professionally qualified refugees and companies are beginning to see that refugees can be included within their wider policy on diversity. The CBI is represented on the NRIF employment subgroup and further meetings with employers are planned for 2003-04.
- 3.42 The Home Office are considering the feasibility of a cross-government longitudinal study of refugees and other UK migrants to examine the process of integration for these groups. The study would include the rate of progression at work; movement between work and benefits; and the extent to which refugees and other migrants progress to jobs commensurate with their previous experiences. It is intended that results from the first wave would be available in 2005.
- 3.43 Employers report concern about recruiting refugees due to their legal status to work in UK, their language & communication skills, the UK equivalence of their qualifications and the transferability of their skills. Employability Forum has held a series of meetings with major employers to review their concerns about employing refugees; many have reported considerable difficulties with understanding Home Office documentation on permission to work. Recent announcements on the Home Office crackdown on illegal working have added to employers' concerns. The complexities of asylum and immigration policy are not always well understood by employers, who need to be clear that people applying for work have permission to work in the UK or not. The Employability Forum has worked closely with the Home Office to make official documentation much clearer about individuals' permission to work. In addition, the pilot work outlined in Annex 5 will test the acceptability to employers of portfolios containing essential information about the individual, such as proof of status, work experience, NINO, assessment of language and other skills, etc.

4. Strategic aims

- 4.1 Refugees face a number of barriers to employment but are particularly disadvantaged by language difficulties and unfamiliarity with the UK labour market. The Goldsmiths College research shows that those who undertake education or training in UK are more likely to move into paid employment; that chances of finding work are affected by an individual's English language skills; and that too few seek Jobcentre Plus support to find work. The research also suggests that skills are being wasted because a higher proportion works in manual or semi-skilled work in UK than in their home countries.
- 4.2 It follows that we need to make it easier for people to move quickly into Jobcentre Plus support once they have received permission to remain if they need help to find work; and we should offer employment and training programmes with appropriate English language support if we want to increase refugees' chances of finding work. Refugees can have early access to the New Deal and Work Based Learning for Adults on grounds of labour market disadvantage and language need, but they need to be in the Jobcentre Plus system in order to access that specialist help and they need to be aware of the opportunities that are available to them in order to make informed choices. As with any group, they will only be encouraged to take part if they see that provision offers the help they need and if they know about it.
- 4.3 DWP's strategy will aim to reduce the unemployment rate of refugees; increase their participation on programmes; and provide them with a responsive quality service that equips them with the skills they need to get jobs. In order to achieve these goals, DWP will focus on ways to
 - (a) develop routes from NASS support to Jobcentre Plus provision, to encourage as many new refugees as possible into employment support that helps them with settlement, language, advice about the UK labour market and employment opportunities;
 - (b) ensure that appropriate work-focused ESOL is available;
 - (c) improve the ability of Jobcentre Plus to provide the right level of interpreter help for those who need it;
 - (d) improve the flow of information between the statutory and community sectors (nationally and locally) to help with planning provision; raising refugees' and agency staffs' awareness of issues and improving the delivery of local services;
 - (e) develop the role of Jobcentre Plus in promoting refugees (and other disadvantaged groups) to employers in order to increase the numbers into jobs;
 - (f) ensure the community and voluntary sectors have an appropriate role in shaping the developments for this group.

- 4.4 Since refugees are a heterogeneous group, we need to identify how far government and voluntary sector employment provision is able to meet the diverse needs of those who are unemployed; whether we can identify common issues which can be met through more targeted Jobcentre Plus provision and where government agencies and the voluntary sector can work better together to provide a more joined up response. This document outlines the work that Jobcentre Plus and others have started nationally to improve their support to refugees. Since some of these developments will be evaluated in 2003-04, DWP will produce a further document in 2004 to outline any implications for national delivery.

Financial Implications

- 4.5 The refugee pilot, outlined in Annex 5 will cost £300k in 2003/04 and £330k in 2004-05 (including evaluation). This will be funded from funds secured for hardest-to-help clients as part of Spending Review 2002. Decisions will be taken towards the end of 2003, in light of the pilot evaluation, about extending the activity for which we will need additional funding, and for which we may need to make a bid as part of Spending Review 2004.
- 4.6 The ESOL prototype is being resourced in 2003-04 from DWP's own development budget. Subject to the evaluation, the model will be available across Jobcentre Plus regions from 2004, to be delivered within regional funding allocations for providing employment programmes. The ESOL strategy, to be developed over the next year, will investigate the extent to which DfES and LSC funding can provide part-time work-focused ESOL for unemployed jobseekers, as an alternative to that offered full-time within employment programmes. Further work will be undertaken throughout 2003 to cost options beyond 2004 to determine additional funding requirements.

Next Steps

- 4.7 Annex 6 summarises the work identified in this document as being underway over the next year and when results will be known. The NRIF employment subgroup will facilitate discussion on these developments, and the development of the strategy, and will ensure that all key stakeholders are involved.

Annex 1

National Refugee Integration Forum and Employment Subgroup National Refugee Integration Forum

Terms of Reference

The National Refugee Integration Forum takes forward the implementation of the Government strategy “Full and Equal Citizens” to assist in the integration into UK society of those who have been granted indefinite or temporary leave to remain in the UK.

The Forum:

- monitors the implementation of the Home Office strategy, as it currently stands, by government departments, regional consortia and refugee agencies;
- offers views and guidance to government departments, regional consortia and refugee agencies on how the strategy might be developed and improved over time;
- considers the development of country and regional strategies in the cluster areas to where asylum seekers are dispersed;
- disseminates best practice from around the country;
- circulates resources information amongst the members of the group and considers how resources may be best utilised across different fields of work;
- plays a key role in promoting positive images of refugees as members of UK society;
- develops strategies to counter negative media images and to challenge racist views about refugees and asylum seekers.

The Forum is committed to ensuring that refugees themselves are able to participate directly. Membership includes representation from the Refugee Working Party and COTASS (Co-ordinators Training And Support Scheme) both of which are support and lobby organisations comprised uniquely of refugees.

The National Refugee Integration Forum meets quarterly, rotating meetings throughout the various consortia.

Subgroups of the Forum monitor the implementation of individual elements of the strategy and advise on how they might best be developed, drawing on a specialist knowledge of the areas concerned. The subgroups include members of the Forum and a wider group of people with specialist knowledge.

The Secretariat expects each of the subgroups to report twice yearly to the Forum. Home Office is due to publish a document in Spring 2003 – “*Full and Equal Citizens – The Way Ahead*” which will outline the progress made so far and will establish the future workplan.

NRIF subgroup on employment

Terms of Reference

The subgroup on Adult Education, Training and Employment addresses the specific issues which affect refugee employment and has identified the key issues which the integration strategy must target:

- Data Collection & Research – the subgroup monitors research projects which collect data on the skills and experience of refugee job-seekers. There has been no systematic collection of data on the education and experience of asylum seekers or refugees, but recent research by DWP and the Home Office and other researchers has provided a framework for policy makers.
- English Language – English for Speakers of Other Languages is an important element in the overall integration strategy and vital for the world of work. The subgroup is reviewing the current provision of ESOL through Further Education Colleges and other adult education programmes.
- Access to Adult Education and Training – the subgroup is concerned about the access for refugees (and asylum seekers with permission to work) to training in FE Colleges and on DWP programmes. Some specific difficulties have arisen following the withdrawal of the concession to work to asylum seekers who have not received an initial decision within 6 months.
- Permission to Work – refugee jobseekers experience resistance from employers who are not familiar with documents issued by the Home Office, which are not always clear whether an individual has permission to work.
- Employer Network – the level of awareness among employers about the availability of refugee skills and experience is generally low and the subgroup is exploring ways of promoting understanding among employers and professional bodies.

Members of the subgroup include representatives from:

Department for Work and Pensions
 Jobcentre Plus
 Department for Education and Skills
 Learning and Skills Council
 Home Office
 London Language & Literacy Unit
 City & Islington College
 Refugee Council
 Refugees into Jobs
 National Institute for Adult Continuing Education
 Education and Employment & Training Working Group
 Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR), King's College London
 Employability Forum

Annex 2

Managed Migration Schemes

Work Permit Model

Employment shortage areas are identified regularly by Home Office/Work Permits UK in consultation with other Government Departments. Employers with unfilled vacancies in these sectors can recruit from overseas and apply for work permits for these staff. Annual numbers each year are around 180k and rising.

The Working Holidaymakers Scheme (WHS)

WHS is a mobility scheme for young Commonwealth citizens to come to UK for two years. The original design allowed part-time work that was incidental to the cultural objectives; the age limit was 25 years; there was no maximum quota on numbers; and in 2000, 38,500 people came to the UK through WHS.

The scheme has recently been reviewed and a number of changes agreed. From this year, the age limit will increase to 30 years and there will be no restriction on working arrangements. The scheme will be more actively promoted to citizens of previously under-represented Commonwealth countries.

Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS)

SAWS offers short term seasonal work to non-EU nationals under 30 years. Operators undertake recruitment and management; they also arrange accommodation and cultural activities as well as placement with producers.

SAWS originally allowed six months of employment in the spring and summer months. A review has concluded that six months is unrealistic in the light of modern agricultural processes. It has therefore been extended to one year (maximum) from January 2004. Quota for 2003-4 has been increased to 25,000.

Sectoral Schemes

Sectoral schemes meet the needs of employers in sectors with recruitment difficulties. Two sectoral schemes will be introduced in Spring 2003 for the food processing industry and for jobs related to tourism. The schemes will use the Work Permit model and will allow 20,000 workers in each sector to be recruited.

A full evaluation of the schemes will be undertaken.

Annex 3

Goldsmiths College Research Recommendations

('Refugees' opportunities and barriers in employment and training',
Alice Bloch, Goldsmiths College)

Employment

- Jobcentre Plus could consider disseminating information about employment rights through refugee community organisations to ensure that there is awareness about basic entitlements such as the National Minimum Wage.
- Employers need more information about overseas qualifications and the legislation regarding the right to work for certain categories of forced migrant in order to tackle employer discrimination.
- Work placement opportunities would enable refugees to use their skills and experiences in the UK labour market to gain UK experience that can then be used as evidence of work experience on application forms and converted to paid work.
- Jobcentre Plus could disseminate information about statutory job search schemes through statutory, voluntary and community organisations that work with refugees to encourage take-up of provision.
- Jobcentre Plus staff could carry out employment and careers advice out-reach work including practical assistance with the application and interview process in refugee voluntary and community organisations. This will help to ensure that refugees can access advice and assistance in the appropriate community language.

English language, education and training

- English language proficiency of all students should be assessed prior to starting a course to ensure people are in the right class.
- Course providers need to work towards improving their awareness of the refugee experience and providing more student support as well as information about progression for refugee students.
- English language provision needs to be increased, by having more contact hours, longer courses and more courses.
- There should be some English language training that is job specific, so that job related technical language is learned, as well as some language training that is specific to the needs of job seekers.
- Course providers could employ English language teachers from refugee communities (this would be possible if refugee teachers who have trained and worked elsewhere are retrained to teach ESOL and ESL).
- Specialised training could be provided for refugees so that they can use their skills and qualifications in the UK labour market e.g. training bi-lingual teachers from refugee communities to teach ESOL and ESL.

- Provide childcare on English language and other training and education courses where needed, to ensure that refugee women are not excluded.

General recommendations

- Service providers in each locality need to provide co-ordinated services for refugees. This will require regular meetings between representatives of statutory, voluntary and community organisations to co-ordinate strategies for service provision.
- Statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations need to work more closely to share information. For example, organisations could work more effectively together to disseminate information in a number of different areas, such as transferring qualifications, the training courses that are available, the eligibility criteria for training courses and opportunities to train in conjunction with English language support.
- Statutory service providers need to consider the diverse backgrounds of refugees and provide services appropriate to subgroups especially by country of origin, sex and language proficiency.
- Language and training providers could usefully work towards developing closer links between themselves and employers.

Annex 4

NASS support for asylum seekers

The Government is fully committed to honouring its obligations under the United Nations Convention on Refugees 1951 and its 1967 protocol. All the signatory countries must provide a safe haven for those with a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality and membership of a particular social group or political opinion. Therefore the UK must support asylum seekers in need whilst their application for asylum is considered.

The support system therefore, meets obligations while at the same time deterring those who do not have a well-founded fear of persecution. The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) has been responsible for accommodating and supporting destitute asylum seekers and their dependants since 3rd April 2000. Since this date, once NASS has determined that an asylum seeker and any dependants are eligible for support, it will make arrangements for accommodation and/or essential living needs to be met. It is recognised that there is a general need to disperse asylum seekers away from London and the South East because it is the local authorities in these areas that carry a disproportionate burden.

NASS is committed to a full consultation process with the regional consortia, the groups responsible for overseeing delivery of support to refugees and asylum seekers, comprised of representatives from the local authorities in that particular region. NASS has identified the language groups that each cluster area can accommodate. NASS is of course demand-led and must provide accommodation for destitute asylum seekers and their families, changing world events dictate the numbers and nationalities of those who seek asylum and as such it is difficult to give a precise estimate of accommodation requirements.

Asylum seekers are dispersed to clusters that can accommodate their language group and have the relevant support services in place to meet their needs. NASS has also consulted with the consortia as to the number of asylum seekers that each cluster area can successfully accommodate, both from the integration angle and without causing/increasing racial tension in an area.

The NASS Regional Managers constantly monitor the integration process within their region and report any racial unrest or other issues that arise involving asylum seekers dispersed to their area. Where incidents of violence occur the local police view is sought as to the safety of a region for future dispersal, and the safety of asylum seekers is paramount in deciding whether to continue dispersal to sensitive areas. Warring factions are kept apart when dispersed to avoid any tension spilling over from their countries of origin.

The accommodation is chosen on the basis of suitability to house asylum seekers and their dependants within the cluster areas throughout the UK. The cluster areas are ideally based in towns and cities where suitable accommodation is available and where there is potential to provide a link with existing multi-cultural communities and to develop the support of local voluntary and community groups. NASS make the necessary travel arrangements for the asylum seekers and their dependants to travel to their allocated accommodation and for travel to certain interviews and hearings in connection with their case.

Both the public and private sector provide accommodation. Accommodation providers are contracted to provide various levels of support and service beyond the simple provision of accommodation. For example, they are required to supply advice on registering with statutory services such as schools

and GPs. NASS send details of asylum seekers and their children to the relevant health and local education authorities so that they are aware of new arrivals in their areas. The provision of support services is the core activity of the Regional Consortia within the United Kingdom. The main areas of need are provision of general advice and information, access to services via signposting, interpreting and translation facilities, legal advice and access to health and educational services.

The standard of accommodation used by NASS is subject to monitoring to ensure compliance with contracts, and contractors are required to facilitate access to support services, the latter being notified of dispersals to the area as they occur.

There is a twin track approach to monitoring performance of contractors:

- NASS have contract managers in place that are responsible for monitoring housing conditions.
- NASS have a performance monitoring team wholly dedicated to ensuring that contractual responsibilities are being met fully. This will include undertaking inspections of accommodation through either reacting to complaints made or through targeting accommodation either in certain areas or of a certain type, from time to time.

Annex 5

Jobcentre Plus pilots, 2003-04

1. We know that traditionally very few refugees take advantage of the early eligibility criteria for programmes. A 1999 study by the Refugee Council to attract refugees into early New Deal showed that they were reluctant to volunteer early for a programme with benefit sanctions for non-compliance, in case they were unable to complete the course due to language or other needs that the programme could not address. A study for DWP in the same year by Philida Schellekens, demonstrated that there was insufficient ESOL provision and that what existed was ineffective in helping people into jobs.
2. To address that, Jobcentre Plus is developing activity over the next year to test out discrete provision that
 - brings ‘new’ refugees quickly into Jobcentre Plus help and onto the right benefit if unemployed;
 - ensures refugees receive appropriate support with housing or other welfare help, which often has to be addressed before work can be discussed productively;
 - refers or provides work-focused ESOL and UK labour market knowledge and experience;
 - helps with the UK equivalence of overseas qualifications, support around proof of identity and help with official documentation.
3. Crucially, the provision will aim to bring people in quickly from the point at which they receive refugee status, to reduce the time they spend unemployed and unsupported by benefits. Two pieces of pilot activity will address these issues:

“The Refugee Pilot” – this will give immediate support to ‘new’ refugees through a Jobcentre Plus-contracted external provider; the provider will establish and manage a caseload of refugees and will oversee immediate accommodation and other welfare support, establish an employment plan based on work and language assessment, provide or refer to appropriate and immediate ESOL and employment help. The pilot will be delivered by 5E, in Haringey, London, from spring 2003. Clients will remain on benefits.

“The ESOL Prototype” – will look at how we can successfully deliver the new ESOL curriculum in a work context within Work Based Learning for Adults, for around 80 participants at South Thames College in London. The pilot will begin in spring 2003. It will offer 13 weeks of intensive qualification-based ESOL, vocational training and help to understand the UK labour market. It will target recently arrived refugees.

4. The pilots outlined above will indicate ideas that are worth pursuing further, in particular how best to provide the work focus. They will examine:
 - the volume and time devoted to ESOL learning;
 - how to deliver ESOL in a work context, alongside wider support to understand the UK labour market and acquire job skills;
 - the value of discrete provision for refugees;
 - whether clients can progress while on benefits or whether they should be supported by allowances.

5. These pilots will provide useful information about delivery and will provide qualitative evidence about what works for this client group, although they are not large enough in scale to provide quantitative measures of what works. DWP will examine how these and existing ESOL and other programmes, including the help that is being given to those arriving from Sangatte, can be exploited to improve our evidence base.

Annex 6

Summary of development activity throughout 2003-04

Paragraph by reference	Activity	Lead	Results
2.14	Home Office audit of refugee skills	Kate Hitchcock, Home Office	Summer 2003
3.14	Development of "Welcome to UK" pack for new refugees	Employability Forum	Autumn 2003
3.18	Work to align NINO and asylum databases in order to speed up ID checks for issue of NINOs.	Garry Gibson, DWP	Ongoing; the clerical model will be evaluated during 2003-04.
3.20	Preparation and issue of BBA-approved guidance to refugees about ID requirements for opening bank accounts.	Employability Forum	Autumn 2003
3.23	Study in 2003 to determine the scale and costs of optimum interpreter service in Jobcentres.	Stephanie Dickinson, DWP	Autumn 2003
3.26	Introduction of a Jobcentre Plus system to identify claimant refugee status.	Tricia White, DWP	April 2004
3.32	Development of DWP's strategy for providing ESOL.	Phil Morgan, DWP	April 2004
Annex 5	Development of (a) refugee routeway into WTW, and (b) ESOL prototype in WBLA.	Stephanie Dickinson, DWP	Evaluation reports available from Autumn 2003

Further copies of this document are available in hard copy from Jonathan Bailey, and on the DWP website.

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