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Governance and the Local Integration of Migrants and Europe's Refugees

Displaced Migration and Labour Market Governance in Scotland: Challenges and Opportunities

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Executive Summary

1. Labour market conditions in the UK create significant barriers for refugees seeking employment. These include: ethnic and racialised penalties, barriers related to immigration controls, barriers related to employers' perceptions of these controls and the effects of the 'hostile environment'. As a result, refugees are more likely to be unemployed or under-employed than a British citizen. GLIMER Stakeholders reported the same trends in Scotland.

2. Access to the labour market for displaced migrants in Scotland is governed by the UK's devolved settlement. Though the Scottish Government is unable to intervene in labour market issues related to immigration status, it has scope to intervene in educational aspects of employability support (such as skills development, some academic training and English Language provision). As a result of its 'from day one' integration policy, these services are available to both asylum seekers and refugees, a distinction from other parts of the UK.

3. GLIMER Research identifies three key areas impacting labour market access for refugees in Scotland: (1) employability training and skills development (2) enterprise and entrepreneurship and (3) employer training and engagement.

4. Provision for employability training and skills development is the most comprehensively developed of these areas, spanning the third, public and Further Education sectors. However, stakeholders in the third sector reported limited resources, which resulted in insufficient provision for demand.

    i. Stakeholders reported that there were additional barriers for refugee women wishing to access employability services, but a total absence of specialised services for refugee women.

    ii. Resettlement teams in remote and rural areas reported difficulties in accessing organisations with refugee employability specialisms, the large majority of which are based in Glasgow.

5. Enterprise and entrepreneurship is an emerging area of policy interest in Scotland. However, GLIMER Research urges caution against viewing the use of enterprise services as a panacea for the adverse employability conditions for refugees.

    i. Stakeholders involved in the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, particularly those in remote and rural areas, reported that enterprise pathways had potential to (a) fill gaps in the local labour market (b) provide careers in environments where local employability options may be limited. However, stakeholders cautioned against a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to enterprise in Resettlement areas, and stressed the need for policy that recognised local conditions.

    ii. GLIMER Research finds that existing public Enterprise and Entrepreneurship services are inconsistent in their support for refugees. Stakeholders reported that successful refugee enterprises had been developed in collaboration with Business Gateway; however, they also reported that the success of this collaboration had been the result of dedicated local actors, rather a nationally-supported strategy.

iii. At the time of research, local Business Gateway representatives only offered 'mainstreamed' enterprise support, with some local authorities insisting on a 'no-interpretation' policy and 'high growth' financing caveats. This meant that specific barriers faced by refugees, including those related to finance and English language competence, were not actively being addressed.

6. GLIMER Research found that engagement with employers was the least developed of the labour market support areas. It suggests that though employability services provide much-needed support to refugees, labour market barriers will not be addressed unless employers actively engage with contributory conditions and practices in their own organisations.

   i. The third sector has sought to engage private sector employers. Activities have involved (a) employer training programmes to address indirect barriers to refugee recruitment and retention and (b) brokering programmes between third sector organisations and private sector employers.

   ii. Successful brokering programmes have resulted in refugee employment in multinational, national and local businesses in urban and rural areas in Scotland. However, stakeholders noted, their successes were constrained by the limited capacity of their organisations and would strongly benefit from Scottish Government support.

7. English language competency has frequently been cited as a barrier to the labour market for refugees. In Scotland, service providers have taken two divergent approaches to this issue:

   i. Some English language programmes have been tailored to specific employability sectors. These have provided refugees with practical language tools, especially in highly specialised sectors. However, stakeholders reported that as these programmes required participants to have an accredited ESOL qualification, barriers to access remained.

   ii. In some Resettlement areas, Resettlement teams had worked with employers to remove overly restrictive English language requirements. Resettlement teams argued that (a) some vocations did not require accredited English skills and that (b) refugees learned English more effectively 'on the job'. One Resettlement team credited the removal of such stringent English language requirements with their unprecedented employability rate of 80%.

Findings and Recommendations Matrix

		Finding	Recommendation
	1	Support for refugee employability services in Scotland is matched neither by support for refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship, nor by support for employer engagement and development. An over-emphasis on refugee employability does not address structural barriers to the labour market, for which employers and policymakers are responsible.	*New Scots* policymakers should consider expanding labour market policies regarding refugees to promote informed, active support for refugee enterprise *and* employer engagement. Policies and services related to 'mainstreamed' employability, enterprise and labour market equalities should actively consider refugee-specific provisions. Such as tailoring access to immigration status, factoring in obstacles of geography to access provision, and addressing language needs directly.
	2	With their capacity for close partnership working, there is potential for smaller and rural local authorities to provide high levels of support to Resettled refugees. However, there is also evidence of a two-tier geography of displacement across Scotland (i.e. more intensive support outside Glasgow, but more services available in Glasgow).	Service providers should consider how to more comprehensively support refugee populations and Resettlement teams located outside the Central Belt. However, as this is likely to have resourcing implications in an already pressurised context, national and local government should explore options for supporting this work.
	3	Successes in refugee employment and enterprise, and in employer engagement have been the result of intensive local activity, and often are reliant upon the dedication of a few individuals rather than national policy or infrastructure. As a result, support mechanisms are inconsistent and often precarious.	The development of a national approach towards labour market access for refugees that ensures local employability and labour market services are informed about and supported on issues related to displaced migration. Enhanced training and support for local authority officers to ensure labour market approaches that are tailored to and appropriate for local labour market conditions.
	4	Labour market conditions create structural barriers to refugee employment. Recent work (Kone et al 2019) maps UK-wide labour market conditions for refugees; however, Scotland-specific information, disaggregated by immigration, gender and location is not available.	An information gathering and analysis exercise across third sector employability and JobCentre Plus services may provide insight into specific refugee labour market dynamics in Scotland.

Employability	5	Emphasis in *New Scots* is placed upon developing refugees' employability and skills, a service that is almost unanimously provided by the third sector in Scotland. However, despite demand, there are very limited specialist refugee employment services in Scotland. Existing services are over-subscribed and subject to time-limited funding. Funding streams are especially vulnerable in a post-Brexit environment.	For refugee employability services to be effective, efficient and sustainable, resourcing from the Scottish Government should be increased. This extra resourcing is required to support specific, publicly-sponsored services for refugee women. JobCentre Plus funders might consider the long-term potential of funding support for refugees 'far from the labour market' rather than the short-termism of supporting only those already labour market ready. Third sector service providers already working with private sector employers on brokering programmes might consider seeking resourcing and partnership for refugee employability initiatives.
	6	Access to available employability services has a gendered dynamic. Stakeholders reported (a) inconsistent childcare provision (b) childcare provision only for women-specific services. These conditions perpetuated gendered expectations that women fulfil caring duties, and prevented women from fully accessing services.	
	7	Labour market conditions impose additional barriers to employment on refugee women. Stakeholders reported that there were benefits to providing employability programmes specifically tailored to the needs of refugee women; however, at the time of research, the only existing service had closed down due to lack of resources, and no future services were anticipated.	
	8	Funding for employability services was frequently contingent on demonstrable 'employment' results. Service providers reported that refugees had an increased likelihood of being 'far from the labour market'; however, there was very little funding for employability support that would not immediately or directly result in employment.	
Enterprise and Entrepreneurship	9	Business Gateway enterprise and entrepreneurship support is inconsistent across localities. 'Mainstreamed' Business Gateway services in many areas do not actively address labour market barriers for refugees.	Revisions to local Business Gateway approaches to supporting refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship should be reconsidered, this includes providing interpretation services where needed in order not to actively discriminate against potential refugee entrepreneurs. Scotland-wide policy to address specific labour market barriers for refugees should be revised and this approach standardised across local BG branches as part of the National Service Specification. Business Gateway policy within CoSLA would benefit from increased engagement with the Strategic Migration Partnership team so that it can better consider the impact of enterprise policies on refugee clients.
	10	Though BG receives SG funding, BG operates through local authorities, creating an indirect governance infrastructure, and disconnect between (a) the practices of BG officers and (b) Business Gateway policymakers and (c) SG policies.	

	11	Mainstream financing options for potential refugee entrepreneurs are very limited. They require (a) credit history (b) potential for high growth (c) evidence of leave to remain that covers loan repayment periods. Due to immigration controls, refugees are unable to meet these criteria. Whilst there is potential for refugees to draw on alternative sources of funding, information about this is limited and underexplored in Scotland.	Public financing institutions, such as Scottish Enterprise (via Business Gateway) and the Scottish Investment Bank might consider options for small-scale loans, and revised terms of repayments for refugee clients. Institutions might look to organisations elsewhere in the UK which successfully provide finance to refugee businesses (see p.34 of this report) Scottish Government to consider developing a nationally-accessible database of potential enterprise funding.
	12	Successes in developing refugee enterprises have been the result of (a) dedicated local support (b) tailored approaches to local labour market conditions and (c) a willingness to revisit approaches to English language requirements	Adopting the so-called 'Bute approach' to refugee enterprise, local authorities should consider their English language strategy alongside a focus on business development. Any future, nationally-supported enterprise initiatives should advocate for a flexible approach to English language provision that does not necessarily rely on accreditation pathways.
Employer engagement	13	Organisations and employers that do not actively consider labour market conditions for refugees are likely to perpetuate barriers to recruitment and retention. Barriers include: interview practices that are inappropriate for refugees, over-reliance on online recruitment resources, or inappropriate English language expectations.	Stakeholders reported that employer engagement brokering programmes would benefit from Scottish Government supporting or facilitating such initiatives. The development of publicly available information that details the mechanisms and potential benefits of employing refugees, to counter existing information that emphasises only potential penalties.
	14	The 'hostile environment' is likely to deter employers and organisations from employing refugees. This is particularly the case for small businesses, or businesses in Resettlement areas with little experience of employing refugees.	
	15	There is substantial interest from private sector employers in recruiting refugees. At the time of research links between refugees and employers were facilitated by the third sector and some Resettlement teams, which either brokered relationships after being approached by business, or actively sought out business connections.	

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1. Findings and Recommendations Matrix

1.1 GLIMER WP5: Labour market access for displaced migrants

Employment is one of Ager and Strang's (2004) key indicators of integration. Supported alongside other categories of integration – access to housing, healthcare, and education – displaced migrants' access to the labour market is a key holistic and social element of their integration experiences. The opportunity to work provides financial stability and sustainability, professional development, the development of community networks, and links to positive health and mental health outcomes (Strang et al., 2015, Kone et al., 2019).

Despite the social and socioeconomic benefits of displaced migrants' access to the labour market, policy development in the UK has tended instead to frame the issue as a struggle between the potential economic benefits of displaced migrants' employment *to the state*, and a concern that having immediate access to the labour market may act as a 'pull factor' in displaced migrants' decision to 'choose' the UK as a destination (Bloch, 2008, Mayblin 2016). Over the last two decades, policymakers in the UK have taken a conservative approach to both issues. First, framing labour market integration as a way through which refugees 'repay' their debt to the state, the UK Government has orientated declining integration support and resourcing towards refugees achieving employment. Second, it has sought to restrict labour market access for displaced migrants, (1) banning asylum seekers from accessing the labour market since 2002 and (2) creating the 'hostile environment' which has established an environment of fear amongst employers over immigration controls.

State-led restrictions have been challenged and countered by third and some public sector bodies, with some successes. However, whilst the impacts of restrictive and hostile labour market policies upon displaced migrants are relatively well-documented, the role of 'the local' in the governance of labour market access is under-narrativised. This is especially the case in Scotland, where the devolved settlement allows for policy divergence in the areas of employability training and business development, and where the third and civic sector has actively informed policy creation.

Within this context, however, there are also gaps. Despite a clearly devolved competence, the area of refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship has had fragmented and uneven support. Meanwhile, the task of developing *employer* attitudes to refugee recruitment appears to largely have fallen to the third sector. With a focus on Scotland, this report therefore considers the role of 'the local' in governance of displaced migrants' labour market experiences, and identifies gaps and opportunities in both policy and practice.

1.2 Labour market access for displaced migrants in Scotland

Labour market access for displaced migrants in Scotland is characterised by the reserved and devolved dynamics between the Scottish and UK Governments. Whilst the UK Government reserves powers over immigration controls, powers over (1) employability, skills and training and (2) business development are devolved to the Scottish Government. Though the Home Office therefore has power over *who* can access the labour market, Scottish Government has influence over *how* this happens.

This takes places in a labour market environment distinct to that in the rest of the UK. After decades of outward net migration, Scotland has experienced population growth for the last decade (GCPH 2019). It also has an aging population and a declining population of working age (McQuaid and Webb, 2018, p. 23). As a result, the Scottish Government has pursued policies which encourage inward migration, and sought to develop programmes that retain migrant populations after their arrival (Stewart and Shaffer, 2015). The Scottish Government's stated support for displaced migrants is grounded in humanitarian concerns [DGV03 Interview]; however, as its integration strategy (*New Scots* 2018-2022) identifies access to the labour market as a key factor in displaced migrants' integration experiences in Scotland, Scottish Government interests (a) with workforce and labour market development and (b) holistic integration of displaced migrants converge.

Box 1: Scotland labour market profile

- The Scottish labour market has historically been defined by a range of industries and resources, from industry-intensive sectors (such as mining, steel working and boat building) in the Central Belt, to the Oil and Gas industry in the North East, to agricultural and fishing specialisms in remote and rural areas.
- However, a recent report suggests that Scotland's labour market profile is increasingly moving away from industry and towards services and professions (McQuaid and Webb, 2018, p. 22).
- Employment rates are slightly below UK-wide average, with 77.4% of the population as economically active compared to a 78.3% UK-wide.[1]
- A higher percentage of men (78.0%) are in employment than women (70.3%). Men have higher employment rates across all local authorities apart from Highland.[2]
- Unemployment rates are slightly below UK-wide average, measured at a record low in February 2019 at 3.5% (compared to 4% across the UK)[3]
- Urban areas, including Glasgow, report lower employment rates and higher unemployment rates than their rural counterparts.

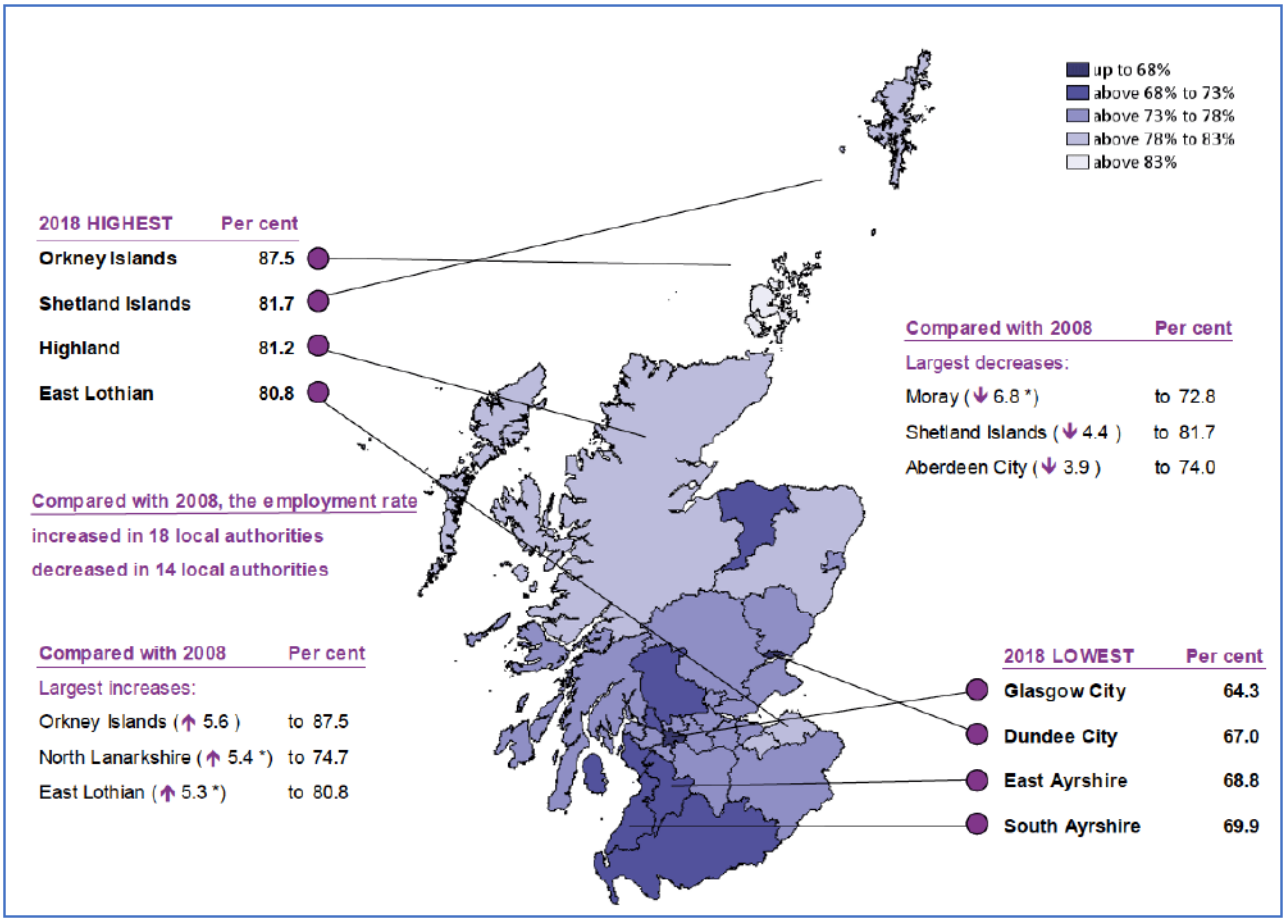


Figure 1: Employment rates in Scotland by region. Source: Scottish Government 2019b[4]

1:https://www.gov.scot/publications/regional-employment-patterns-scotland-statistics-annual-population-survey-2018/pages/3/
2: ibid
3: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-47283214
4:https://www.gov.scot/publications/regional-employment-patterns-scotland-statistics-annual-population-survey-2018/pages/3/

The development of employability resources for displaced migrants has occurred in parallel with the increase in such populations arriving in Scotland over the last two decades. Support has progressed from services that provided simple referrals to refugees for mainstream employability support services to specialist programmes which provide in-house employability training and 'integrated' support (see Section 2). Scottish Government resourcing for displaced migrants' access to the labour market is channelled through a variety of government departments (see *Figure 5*). ESOL provision also contains an employability requirement (Meer et al 2019b). In Glasgow, there is a robust displaced migration support sector which includes one specialist employability organisation, and several organisations with significant experience and employability specialisms. Third sector and academic research has documented successes and prevailing gaps in existing employability training and skills development (Strang et al., 2016, 2018). What is less well documented is how the governance of employability training and skills development impacts their provision in Scotland. Section 3 gives this consideration.

What is also under-documented is the extent to which displaced migrants have access to other aspects of the labour market. Recent scholarship by Mwaura (2018, 2019) and others (Bikorimana et al., 2019) has highlighted significant activity in migrant enterprise and entrepreneurship. In Scotland, cases of successful refugee enterprise have gained media attention,[1] however, governance and policy development relating specifically to refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship is considerably under-developed. Section 4 discusses this situation. The development of *employer* attitudes to the recruitment and retention of refugees is also a current gap in labour market provision for displaced migrants in Scotland, which, despite substantial interest from stakeholders, is non-existent in current policy approaches. We give attention to this in Section 5.

Finally, the introduction of the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Programme in 2015 has resulted in the placement of refugees in all 32 local authorities across Scotland. The settlement of refugee populations in areas outside Glasgow, most with little experience of hosting displaced migrants, and many in remote and rural areas, presents distinct challenges for labour market access which are under-mapped. We discuss the experiences of two remote and rural Resettlement areas throughout our Sections.

1.3 Displaced migration labour market profile

Although people with refugee status have the same labour market access rights as UK citizens, there is substantial evidence that refugees face additional barriers to the labour market. There are a variety of factors that contribute to these conditions. Access to the UK labour market remains unequal. People with protected characteristics, including ethnic minorities, women and disabled people are more likely to encounter barriers and UK-wide, there is a gap of 12 percentage points between Black and Ethnic Minority and white workers, despite Black and Ethnic Minority workers being more likely to be over-qualified for their position (UK Government, 2018, p. 6). There is a similar gap in Scotland of 10% (64% BME compared to 74% white) (UK Government, 2019). The gap widens for Black (17.7%) and South Asian women (20.5%), who face both gendered and racialised barriers to work, and experience considerably higher rates of unemployment than white women (6.8%) (APPG on Race and Ethnicity, 2013, p. 4). Recent research by COMPAS found that displaced migrants are 'substantially more likely to select'

[1] https://www.scotsman.com/news-2-15012/syrian-refugees-open-bakery-on-isle-of-bute-1-4758463

ethnic minority categories in population surveys (Kone et al 2019).[2] It is therefore highly likely that the majority of displaced migrants in the UK face ethnic and racialised penalties and barriers to labour market access in the UK.

Displaced migrants are also likely to experience labour market barriers and penalties related directly (a) to their immigration status and (b) immigration experiences. Barriers to labour market entry facing refugees in the UK include restrictive language requirements, issues in skills or qualifications recognition and employer perceptions of refugees (UNHCR 2019). For example, the move away from indefinite leave to remain to a refugee status that lasts only 5 years has proven problematic because it can make employers unwilling to take on refugees, especially in roles that require training. Displaced migrants may also experience barriers to the labour market because of cultural unfamiliarity with job market norms, or because of a lack of community networks and support (EEPO 2016, Caló *et al* 2019).

Box 2: COMPAS profiles of 'asylum migrant' labour market characteristics

Recently published research by COMPAS (Kone et al., 2019) maps labour market profiles and barriers for asylum migrants in the UK.*

- Asylum migrants are 'less likely to be in employment than the UK-born and other migrant groups. The employment rate among asylum migrants is 51%, compared with 73% for the UK-born' (Kone et al., 2019: 2).
- 'Asylum migrants who are employees earn less and work fewer hours than the UK- born and other migrants. Asylum migrants earn an average of £9 per hour and £284 per week. […] On average, 55% less per week than the UK-born and 38% less per hour (excludes those in self-employment) and work 4 fewer hours' (Kone et al., 2019: 2).
- Male asylum seekers are over-represented in the labour market. 54% of asylum migrants are male, but 60% of asylum migrants are in employment. (Kone et al., 2019: 18).
- There is a concentration of asylum migrants in 44-54 age range, concentrated in low to middle education brackets (Kone et al., 2019: 18).
- 'The gap in employment rates is smaller for cohorts of asylum migrants who have been longer in the UK, but it takes time for it to narrow. For instance, the gap remains present – albeit smaller – even after more than 25 years of residence in the country' (Kone et al., 2019: 2).

* This research maps the experiences of displaced migrants who have sought asylum and therefore does not include Resettlement refugees. The data refers to UK-wide profiles.

[2] The most common category selected by displaced migrants is 'other ethnicity" category (46%). The second most common ethnicity group among the asylum migrant group is Black African or Black Caribbean (34%). The third most common ethnicity group is White (11%) (Kone et al., 2019: 18).

1.4 Data collection and methods

This report is based on qualitative research carried out between March and July 2019. We conducted interviews with 18 individuals who worked in the areas of (a) employability support and skills training and (b) business development relating to displaced migration in Scotland. Participants were selected across the spectrum of labour market governance in Scotland, and included representatives from central, devolved and local government, non-governmental bodies, third sector organisations, and public sector employers. Using ethnographic and mixed methods, we also conducted participant observation at events related to displaced migrants' access to the labour market in Scotland. Informed consent was gained for all fieldwork undertaken.

Table 1: Work package interviewee organisations and locations

Participant type	Location	Number of participants
Central Government	Glasgow	2
Devolved Government	Glasgow	3
Local Government	Glasgow	3
	Aberdeenshire	1
	Argyll and Bute	1
Non-governmental bodies	Glasgow	2
Third sector organisations	Glasgow	6
Total		18

Whilst the majority of fieldwork took place in the urban site of Glasgow, two rural sites – Argyll and Bute and Aberdeenshire – were also included within the research. This allowed for a comparison between urban and rural employability provision, as well as consideration of Resettlement labour market dynamics in sites across Scotland.

Figure 2: WP5 Scotland fieldwork sites

2. Labour Market and Displaced Migration: Policy and Context

2.1 Displaced migration and labour market access in the UK

The UK Government has restricted the access of asylum seekers to the labour market since the Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 (Bloch, 2008, p. 22). This follows earlier restrictions on housing (1993) and welfare support, including Job Seekers allowance (1996) (Bloch and Schuster, 2002, p. 401), all of which were seen by the UK Government as 'pull factors' (Mayblin 2016, Waite 2017).

For the duration of their claim and subject to means-testing, asylum seekers are entitled to support from the UK Government, either in the form of subsistence and own accommodation, or in the form of Dispersal housing and a weekly allowance (Meer et al. 2019a). This support acknowledges that asylum seekers' labour market and welfare access is restricted, and is given in lieu of access to the welfare state. There are some exceptions to labour market restrictions for asylum seekers. Access to the labour market is granted if an asylum claim has not been processed within 12 months or more *and* they can fill a role on the *United Kingdom Shortage Occupation List* which includes jobs such as engineers, software development professionals, nurses and ballet dancers.[3] Asylum seekers are also not allowed to work in a self-employed capacity or set up their own business. The right to take up a job on the list also expires once the asylum claim has been finally determined i.e. when all appeal rights are exhausted. Asylum seekers are permitted to volunteer whilst their claim is being processed but this 'must not amount to engagement

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-k-shortage-occupation-list

as an employee or a worker and it is the responsibility of the individual and the organisation they are volunteering for to check that such activity does not mean they are working in breach of conditions' (Home Office 2019: 14). The UK has some of the most restrictive conditions in the whole of Europe in terms of access to the labour market, having opted out of the recast Reception Conditions Directive (2013), which reduced the maximum waiting time for permission to work for asylum seekers in the EU from twelve to nine months across Member States.

Box 3: Lift the Ban *campaign*

There have been calls for many years to lift the restrictions on asylum seekers being able to work while their claims are being assessed but successive UK governments have argued that extending asylum seekers' rights to work could encourage unfounded asylum claims and undermine the distinction between asylum and economic immigration categories (Gower 2016). In 2018, a coalition of NGOs, businesses and faith groups joined together to form *'Lift the Ban'* in order to lobby for change regarding asylum seekers ability to work.

Figure 3: Lift the Ban *postcards petitioning the Home Office to give asylum seekers' access to the labour market. Credit: Maryhill Integration Network 2018*

It is estimated by this campaigning group that the UK economy could gain £42.4m per year if the ban on working for asylum seekers was lifted as it would significantly reduce the costs of keeping people on asylum support as well as allowing people seeking asylum to contribute economically through consumer spending and paying tax. The Immigration White Paper (HM Government 2018: 78) also stated that 'the Government has committed to listening carefully to the complex arguments around permitting asylum seekers to work' but there are currently no firm indications that this policy will change in the near future. In Glasgow, an asylum taskforce led by the city council was set up in 2018, including representatives from the Home Office and the Scottish Refugee Council, which produced a report recommending that asylum seekers be allowed to work in the city (Christie 2019). The idea is that Glasgow would act as a pilot study for the rest of the UK but there has been no indication from the Home Office that this plan will be approved.

Those with refugee status in the UK have the same access to the labour market as UK citizens. They also have the same welfare entitlements as UK citizens, which includes jobseeking and employment support, under the new Universal Credit system.[4] Refugees' access to the labour market and welfare support lasts for the duration of their 5-year Leave to Remain status. At the end of this period, to be able to remain in the UK and retain access to the labour market, refugees are obliged to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) at a cost of £2,398.[5]

Access to the labour market for refugees works differently according to their arrival pathway. Once they receive notice of their successful asylum application, new Dispersal-pathway refugees have 28 days to vacate their Dispersal accommodation (Meer et al., 2019a). During this period, if they require housing and welfare support, they are also expected to apply for benefits, and begin searching for employment. Resettlement-pathway refugees, on the other hand, are supported by local authorities to make welfare support applications on arrival. Local authorities are also resourced to procure training and development which supports refugees to access the labour market. This has included the integration of ESOL classes with employability skills, or the development of sector-specific skills training (Meer et al., 2019b). Resettlement refugees are also obliged to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain before their 5-year period comes to an end, but the Home Office has agreed to waive their application fees.

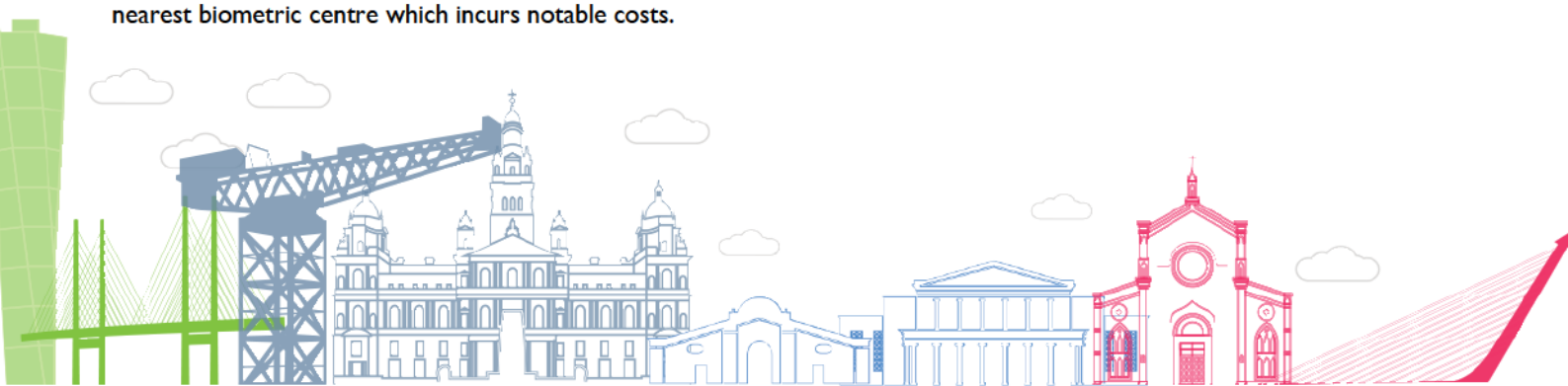
2.2 Devolution, displaced migration and labour market access

Displaced migrants' access to the labour market is positioned at a point of tension in the devolved settlement of government, where access to the labour market in terms of immigration status remains reserved to central UK Government, but with powers over employability, skills development and business development devolved to the Scottish Government. This means that though Scottish Government has powers over key areas of labour market support and development (workforce training, sector development, enterprise development), it (1) cannot adjudicate on immigration restrictions to the labour market or (2) autonomously mobilise immigration in response to labour market needs. The UK Government currently recognises key differences in Scotland's labour market needs (see Section 2.3 below) in its Scotland-only *Shortage Occupation List,* which lists additional occupations of which Scotland is in need, largely highly skilled, medical positions. However, the Scottish Government has argued that the Shortage Occupation List needs to be made more flexible and that they should have a more specific role in commissioning and determining what occupations are in shortage in Scotland. In its most recent response to the *Migration Advisory Committee Call for Evidence* on the Shortage Occupation Lists, it provided evidence of shortages in several sectors of the Scottish economy and argues for a differentiated approach for Scotland (Scottish Government 2019).

It is worth stressing, of course, that labour market restrictions for asylum seekers are mirrored by parallel restrictions for housing access and access to welfare support. If the former restriction were lifted whilst the latter remained in place, asylum seekers would be left in precarious and unequal living conditions: eligible to pay taxes but ineligible for social support. Having access to the labour market must also mean having access to welfare support (public housing and welfare credits). As asylum seekers do not have recourse to public funds, they could be faced

[4] As of 2016, income-tested jobseeking welfare support has come under Universal Credit, a credit system which includes housing, jobseekers support income-tested employment support, and various tax credits. People who have been previously employed and made National Insurance contributions may also be eligible for 'New-Style' Jobseekers Allowance, which is paid separately to Universal Credit at £73.10 every two weeks for 6 months.

[5] For resettled refugees there is no fee but those applying for ILR are required to access legal advice and travel to their nearest biometric centre which incurs notable costs.



with a scenario where (should the ban be lifted) they could access the labour market, but not be able to access any public services that are associated with it. Though the devolution settlement means that the Scottish Government is unable to overturn asylum barriers to the labour market, it is able to diverge from UK Government approaches in matters connected to its devolved powers. One of the areas in which it is able to do this in through 'integration policy', which in Scotland is seen to begin 'from day one' (Scottish Government, 2018). Though asylum seekers in Scotland continue to be unable to access the labour market, unlike in England, they are able to access initiatives related to education and skills, including ESOL courses and employability skills development programmes.

Box 4: Navigating the labour market and displaced migration devolved policy environment

The policy environment for displaced migrants' labour market access is complex.

Policy developments – either in the area of employability, or in the area of enterprise – are driven by Scotland-wide policy objectives, informed by the Scottish Government's *Economic Strategy,* which aims for **'Inclusive Growth',** that 'combines increased prosperity with greater equity; that creates opportunities for all and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity fairly'.[2]

Labour market development policies must therefore be in line with the Scottish Government's *Fair Work Action Plan,* as set out in its *Economic Strategy, Economic Action Plan, National Performance Framework,* and *Labour Market Strategy.*[3] Sub-policies of *Fair Work* include:

- The Gender Pay Gap Action Plan[4]
- The Disability Employment Delivery Plan
- The Future Skills Action Plan

Labour market development also has a duty to consider other areas of equalities. Frameworks of relevance to displaced migration include *New Scots* and the *Race Equality Framework,* both of which contain policy directives on labour market access:

- *New Scots* (2018; emphasis added) states that:
  'Evidence shows that if people are able to integrate early, particularly **into education and work,** they make positive contributions in communities and economically. [… Our] framework recognises the whole person and the impact which interdependent factors can have on how a person feels, their health and wellbeing and their opportunity to participate in society and **pursue their ambitions.'**[5]

- The *Race Equality Framework* places a duty on public sector bodies to:
  'Identify and promote practice that works in reducing employment inequalities, discrimination and barriers for minority ethnic people, including in career paths, recruitment, progression and retention'[6]

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[1] https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-economic-strategy/pages/2/
[2] https://www.gov.scot/publications/equality-statement-scottish-draft-budget-2017-18/pages/4/
[3] https://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/fair-work/purpose/
[4] https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-women-gender-pay-gap-action-plan/
[5] https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022/pages/3/
[6] https://www.gov.scot/publications/race-equality-framework-scotland-2016-2030/pages/13/

2.3 Government infrastructure and labour market access for displaced migrants

Existing government infrastructure related to labour market access for displaced migrants covers both reserved and devolved government, and remains fairly disaggregated. Alongside powers over immigration and labour market access, the UK Government retains powers over issues relating to welfare provision (see *Figure 5* below), including job-seeking support and disability support (Personal Independence Payment).[6] Displaced migrants with refugee status have access to all strands of UK welfare support. Access to job-seeking support is overseen by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and administrated locally by JobCentre Plus, which (a) assesses claimants' fitness to work, (b) monitors claimants' jobseeking activities (c) provides employability programmes and (d) provides routes into work. The UK Government also has policy and funding competences over the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme. The UK Government provides direct funding for the VPRS to participating local authorities, one of the conditions for which is that they provide employability training and support to refugees on the Scheme.

Local authorities also receive funding and policy directives from Scottish Government, which are both directly and indirectly channelled into labour market access support for displaced migrants. Scottish Government provides funding for local authorities to support Community Learning and Development (CLD), which includes ESOL support and ESOL for employment training. ESOL classes, sector-specific training, and ESOL for employability is also provided by Further Education institutions (colleges), which are funded by the Scottish Government through the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). Further Education institutions may also be involved in Community Learning and Development programmes through Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). Alternative routes to employability and skills development are available as Modern Apprenticeships, supported by Skills Development Scotland, and employability training, supported by Fair Start Scotland, both of which receive Scottish Government funding. Elsewhere, Scottish Government also channels funds through local authorities to Business Gateway, an Arms Length External Organisation (ALEO), overseen by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA), which works in local authority areas to provide advice, training and some financial support to business start-ups, including those created by refugees. Scottish Government also supports various partner organisations involved in supporting displaced migrants' labour market access, including the Scottish Refugee Council.

[6] Jobseekers allowance is now included in Universal Credit. PIP is not included in Universal Credit and is paid to clients independently.

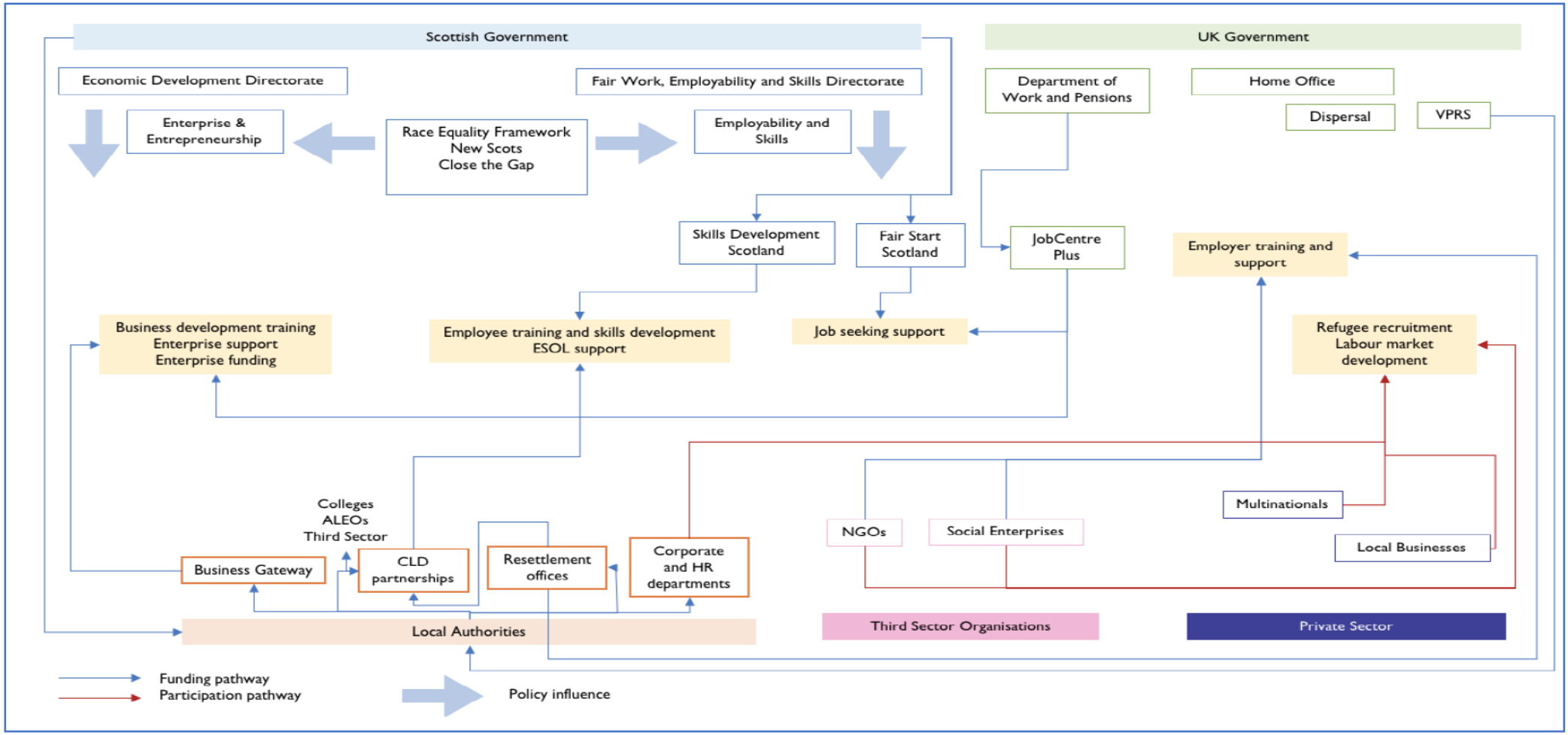

Figure 4: Funding and participation pathways related to displaced migration in Scotland

3. Employability, Skills Development and Training

3.1 Precedents

Over the last twenty years, a number of small initiatives have been trialled to help refugees into work, both in Scotland and across the UK more widely. At UK level, the first pilot project was the Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Services (SUNRISE) which started in 2005 and lasted for 3 years. This was run by the Refugee Council and a number of local authorities involved in Dispersal including Glasgow City Council.[7] The aim of the SUNRISE scheme was to provide support to refugees by assigning an individual caseworker after being granted leave to remain who would then offer advice on housing, employment, benefit and financial advice, access to English language tuition and information on family reunification (Stewart 2009). This was followed by the equally short-lived Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) that ran from 2008-2011 and offered a 12-month support program to refugees including an employment advice service, although research suggests that even this 'merely signpost[ed] to existing services, rather than providing specialist integration services' (Phillimore 2011).

In Scotland, RIES was followed by the Refugee Integration Service (RIS) that is operated by the Scottish Refugee Council and funded by the National Lottery (see below). Another key initiative was the Holistic Integration Service (HIS) that ran from 2013-2016 which was a partnership led by Scottish Refugee Council with the British Red Cross, Bridges Programmes, Glasgow Clyde College and Workers Educational Association Scotland offering up to twelve months support to people who had been granted Refugee Status, Humanitarian Protection, or Discretionary Leave to Remain following an asylum claim in Scotland. This linked into the first 'New Scots' integration strategy (2014-2017) and each person referred to this service received an initial employment, education and skills assessment and then a developed Employment Action Plan. The authors of the final report into HIS stated that '171 people – 9% of total service beneficiaries – were recorded as having obtained paid employment during the time that they accessed the service. The average time to first paid employment, amongst those who found work within the first 12 months, was 222 days from the date of grant of status' (Strang *et al* 2016: 63). HIS was not re-launched for the second iteration of 'New Scots' but RIS continues as one of the key services offered by the Scottish Refugee Council.

3.2 Current support

Displaced migrants in Scotland have access to a range of services linked to employability support. The RIS, led by the SRC, is a service that currently covers about 600 people per year and provides 12 months of assistance for people who have been granted leave to remain following an asylum claim. Alongside other areas such as language development and education, employability is one of the key areas of the 'personal integration planning process' that the organisation carries out with its clients. A dedicated employability support officer works with clients to develop an employability action plan with people who are deemed as 'work ready'. For those not at this stage, clients are set a clear employment goal so they can start progressing towards that objective. A key partner is the Bridges Programme (See box 5) which takes referrals from the SRC for those who have achieved National 3 language proficiency in English in at least speaking and listening. Bridges offer a tailored employability courses which includes

[7] In Glasgow, the SUNRISE programme was administered by the Scottish Refugee Council (Stewart 2009).

mentoring, mock interviews and even a work placement. One such course is the 3-week 'Equipped for the Future Course' which covers skills such as completing job applications, writing a CV, searching for jobs and practicing interviews and presentations. Bridges also operate a 'skills audit' which assists individuals to recognise which skills and experiences are of value on the UK labour market as well as a subsequent life skills course. Employability support programmes are also provided by a wide range of third sector organisations, especially in Glasgow. Not all of these are exclusively for displaced migrants, for example, Oxfam ran the future skills project that offered support and skills development to meet the particular needs of women who face many barriers to progress out of poverty. This included a range of training courses as well as a six-month supported volunteer placement in an Oxfam shop alongside professional mentoring, workshops and group work.

Another area of support comes in the form of ESOL courses, many of which have employability skills training built into the curriculum. At FE colleges, employability is a required component of all courses accredited by the SQA and those teaching ESOL must incorporate aspects that relate to the world of work into the classroom. Employability has also been a feature of many of the language courses offered to refugees who have been resettled as part of the VPRS. In both Argyll and Bute, and Aberdeenshire for example, ESOL for employability programmes have been developed. This includes skills for work, preparation for interviews, digital literacy skills and other transferable skills. The development of such vocational English courses has been trialled in a number of locations as well as pre-apprenticeship programs that allow refugees to learn the language and develop work experience at the same time. The Scottish Government also has a number of sponsored programmes for highly skilled migrants. Refugees Into Teaching in Scotland (RITeS) is a project which ran between 2004 and 2011 (Kum *et al*/2010) although there are currently no schemes to help refugees into the teaching profession.

Figure 5: BBC publicity following the 2017 launch of the new Scottish Refugee Doctors Programme. Credit: BBC 2017[8]

[8] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-41160013

Scotland has also benefitted from successive schemes designed to streamline the integration of refugees with medical skills into the NHS. The current *Refugee Doctors* scheme was launched by the Scottish Government in 2016 as the New Refugee Doctors Project in collaboration with the British Medical Association (BMA) and NHS in Scotland. This programme is run by NHS Education for Scotland (NES) and is designed to assist asylum seeking and refugee doctors to achieve registration with the General Medical Council (GMC) via the PLAB examinations in order to be in a position to compete for posts in the NHS in the UK. Those entering the programme first have their educational needs assessed and are then asked to sign a Learning Contract which highlights what is expected of them as a member of the Refugee Doctors' Programme. The project received further funding in 2017 and distinguishes itself from other refugee doctor programmes in the UK by offering placement and clinical attachments around understanding the structure, culture and ethics of NHS Scotland as well as giving doctors access to postgraduate study and dedicated support for learning English, post-registration and job hunting. The programme formally comes to an end when the participant has obtained GMC registration. Support leading to successful completion of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) Examination is also available to dentists and pharmacists.

Although asylum seekers are unable to access the labour market in the UK, in Scotland they are able to access integration training and education programmes, including those offered by The Bridges Programmes. Indeed, training for asylum seekers is important in order for them to be ready to face the world of work once a (hopefully positive) decision has been made on their application for refugee status. However, some forms of on the job training are of course not available to asylum seekers. This would be the case for Modern Apprenticeships as payment is involved. The majority of Glasgow-based stakeholders with whom we worked all provided support to asylum seekers related to employability and skills development, including ESOL courses, and skills-specific courses. A stakeholder noted:

> *The reason why we engage with asylum seekers, again, is to prepare them and create a lot of awareness, because again, if you got your paperwork tomorrow, where are you going to start from? So we try to encourage them to get themselves involved. And rightly, we also support them to get into volunteering.*
>
> [NGO4][9]

Volunteering represents the best way for asylum seekers to get work experience. In the best-case scenario, this will be in an area where they already have skills or qualifications. Asylum seekers can volunteer whilst their claim is considered without being granted permission to work and officially they are encouraged to seek volunteering opportunities for charities or public sector organisations. However, there are strict distinctions between volunteering and voluntary work and asylum seekers must be careful not to break the terms of their asylum application. According to Home Office rules, volunteering must not amount to engagement as an employee and there is a certain amount of uncertainty regarding this and organisations have been wary about taking on asylum seekers as volunteers for this reason.

[9] Interview codes are detailed in Appendix A

Box 5: Case study: The Bridges Programmes

The Bridges Programmes is the only specialist agency supporting the social, educational and economic integration of refugees and asylum seekers, as well as other migrants, who live in Glasgow. Founded in 2002 as a means to aid integration and develop skills for the workplace, it was originally piloted in the NHS and the construction industry. It now works directly with a range of employers and partners to help its clients into work if they are eligible or offer work shadowing and work experience placements for those who are not. It has been considered as an example of best practice in the UK and the rest of Europe (Martín *et al* 2016).

Bridges has been involved with a range of projects and has pioneered specialized training such as the Women's Empowerment Course. It has become the key partner for a range of initiatives such as RIS and HIS and aims to support the Scottish Government's Fair Work and employability agenda by working with employers and partners to ensure that their clients have the best possible support to help them into work, education or further training. These unpaid placements allow people to work with a Scottish company in a sector they either originally worked in or would like to move into in order to practice skills in a workplace setting.

3.3 Access to employability and labour market training: stakeholder perspectives

During interviews, stakeholder feedback on existing gaps in employability programmes and approaches highlighted a number of issues that are creating barriers for displaced migrants to enter the labour market. The following were the most prominent:

1. English language proficiency

English language proficiency was routinely cited by stakeholders as being the key barrier for refugees to access work and skills training (see also Tweed and Stacey 2018). Refugees' lack of English language was the predominant theme when discussing barriers to employment and the lack of specific conversational, work-based or sector-based ESOL classes was also cited. English language levels may also be a barrier to employability support. For instance, in order to access the services of The Bridges Programmes, clients must have achieved a certain level of English language proficiency, at least in speaking and listening. For example, the majority of those accessing RIS will not have the required level (national 3) and can therefore not be referred to Bridges. As a response to the need for sector specific ESOL, Bridges has helped to develop a number of vocational ESOL courses with colleges in Glasgow (see Box 5). This was pioneered with the social care sector in mind but has since branched out into other areas such as catering, barbering and warehousing.[10] As pointed out in our previous report on language training (Meer et al 2019b), many ESOL courses include employability skills and language for the workplace. However, many learners struggle to progress to the levels that are required by employers.

[10] At Glasgow Clyde College these courses are called 'ESOL transitions'.

In some local authorities, following feedback from Resettled families, Resettlement officers have taken drastic action to improve the relationship between English language proficiency and employability prospects. One local authority has actively removed classroom-based English-language accreditation requirements from their employability services and have instead worked with local employers to find work placements for refugee clients based on skills and career plan (rather than English proficiency). This approach has resulted in 80% of people eligible to work currently in education or the labour market, a percentage rate which is unprecedented.

2. Gaps in infrastructure that recognises skills and qualifications

Refugees with existing skills and qualifications should find the transition to the world of work easier but their qualifications are not always recognised and they are often unaware of the services of the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC). Furthermore, while NARIC can test academic qualifications, there is currently nothing to accredit non-academic qualifications which affects more displaced migrants. A report identified a number of gaps in terms of existing provision and 'a need to increase the visibility and accessibility of recognition services in Scotland' (Guest and Vecchia 2010: 40). A follow-up report (Sutherland and Kromydas 2016) also requested the Scottish Government to pilot such a service. The current New Scots strategy (2018-2022) makes specific reference to the lack of recognition of overseas qualifications, skills and learning or those who do not have the necessary documentary evidence of their previous learning and qualifications. Although specific objectives have not been set outlining how this problem can be overcome, the Scottish Government is now supporting a pilot project led by Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU), to set up Scotland's first migrant and refugee skills recognition and accreditation hub, which will focus on Glasgow.[11] However, a stakeholder noted, the challenge now facing practitioners was how to also develop a programme that would recognise refugees' informal skills which have not been or cannot be accredited. This issue was particularly important for employability because many refugees may have prior labour market experience (such as running their own small business) which may otherwise go unrecognised (see also point 6 below).

3. Prevalence of informal labour 'development' opportunities that do not develop the clients

Employability training opportunities often encouraged asylum seekers and refugees to volunteer to gain work experience and skills. Whilst stakeholders noted the important role of volunteering, they also observed that displaced migrants often got placed in unskilled roles that did little do develop their employability potential for the sector in which they were interested. A stakeholder commented that for his clients, he took the following approach:

> *At the end of the day, volunteering should be a two-way thing, as much as I'm giving you, I'm getting something out of it. So what is it that you really want to do? If you are a painter, I wouldn't put you in a [charity] shop, you know, let me find you an opportunity where you can paint.*
>
> [NGO4]

[11] https://www.gcu.ac.uk/research/projectsearchresults/detail/index.php?pid=264854

Similarly, it was noted that a lot of training tended to focus on funnelling people into low paid and menial work irrespective of qualifications or the kinds of employment they had been in prior to leaving their home countries. In such work there are few prospects for progress or sustainability and the current system may put pressure on people to take up jobs that are not suitable in the long term.

4. Fragmented financial support for refugee women's employability programmes

Displaced migration makes women more vulnerable and many have undergone forms of trauma including gender-based violence. As one third sector stakeholder observed, 'many of the women are survivors of trauma which impacts not only on their physical health but also on their mental health. And that's a huge barrier because if somebody struggles to actually leave the house, you can't really ask them to go from that to being work ready' [NGO2 Interview]. Some refugee women may feel safer in women-only employability and other training environments. However, there were few women-only employability programmes, which received finite funding. The Future Skills Project run by Oxfam was a successful scheme that many saw as a model by providing an accessible training course in which transport and childcare costs were covered. Displaced female migrants could also interact with other white Scottish women who were part of the course. Funding was eventually pulled due to the knock on effect of the scandal in Haiti which led to a reduction in donor income for Oxfam. A stakeholder noted that this women-only Glasgow-based programme 'had really, really good outcomes', but 'they ran out of funding which was disappointing as that was the only thing we could refer [women] to' [NGO3 Interview].

5. Lack of childcare provision

Whilst many of the employability programmes endeavoured to provide childcare for attendees, childcare was neither guaranteed nor the norm. This had a strongly gendered impact because, as one stakeholder commented, '95% of our single parents are women' [NGO3 Interview], who were subsequently unable to attend training. Childcare was also more likely to be provided only on courses aimed at women, (a) reinforcing gendered stereotypes that childcare is a women-only responsibility and (b) placing pressure on women to provide childcare when their husbands or partners attended training (where no childcare was provided). Another stakeholder who specialised in offering training to women explained that:

Again and again the key thing was childcare. We offered childcare, in fact that's a major barrier for women accessing work which obviously that's not just specific to refugees and asylum seekers but it's a major barrier. And I think that was key, especially for an awful lot of refugee and asylum-seeking women, many of them, in my experience anyway, have got young children. And they are so isolated because they don't really understand how childcare works and they can't really access it.' [NGO2 Interview]

6. Dominant definitions of labour which exclude 'informal' and domestic forms of labour

The focus on 'employability' means that existing labour market support for asylum seekers and refugees is currently framed around the concept of formal labour – labour for which an employee has a contract for which they are financially rewarded. Informal types of labour, including (a) work undertaken prior to migration (b) community and (c) domestic work are under-recognised by existing programmes, with often strongly gendered implications. One

way stakeholders sought to address this issue was by taking an 'asset-based approach' to skills development, building on existing experience:

> *You know, we interview people […] and we ask about their experience. 'Well yeah I worked but it was back home so it doesn't count'. 'Yes it does, what did you do?' And that's when people come out with something like 'I was in the army and I was responsible for the logistics of two hundred soldiers!'. And, you know, they […] managed that, you've managed those tasks! Another typical example with refugee women and non-refugee women is, 'oh I've got no skills because I've been staying at home with my three kids'.*
>
> [NGO3]

7. Absence of information about how gender dynamics inform Resettled refugees' proximity to work

Stakeholders reported that engagement with employability training presented variously across genders and locations. In some places, Resettled refugee women had been considerably more engaged in employability training than men. In other locations, a more conservative approach to gender norms had more consistently seen men take on employability training and women take on domestic roles. Beyond their own research, Resettlement officers had little information about how gender norms in Resettled populations might interact with resettlement, culture, faith and ideas about work. Stakeholders reflected that a better understanding of how gender norms are acting in Resettled populations (i.e. links between masculinity and formal labour) might help identify further barriers or opportunities to support.

8. Over-emphasis on refugee employability, unsuitable to vulnerable populations

A key problem for both governmental agencies and third sector organisations that attempt to help refugees into the labour market is that many are simply not ready to start working. Preparing those who have come through the VPRS system is particularly challenging because, by definition, those who have come through the programme are deemed as vulnerable, as one employability caseworker explained:

> *The people they're choosing from the camps are mostly women with children, women and children and victims at risk of sexual violence, disabled people, those with learning difficulties and generally low skilled. These are the people who no matter what, wherever they're from, are going to be difficult to get into work.*
>
> [NGO5]

9. Lack of funding to support people 'far from the labour market'

Stakeholders reported that existing funding from UK Government and other sources fails to recognise that Resettled refugees may take time to access the labour market. They reported some success with programmes that targeted people 'far from the labour market', and provided information how to develop skills for the future. However, stakeholders noted, because employability funding is entirely results-driven, and because this type of

programme did not necessarily aim to immediately get people into employment, this type of programme was not eligible for existing support.

4. Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

Enterprise and entrepreneurship of migrant populations in Scotland is an area of emerging interest in scholarship (Mwaura. et al., 2018, Mwaura et al., 2019) and for policymakers. This status is not reflected in current policy approaches. For instance, whilst *New Scots* (2018) registers an interest in refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship, it does not indicate how the area could be better developed. In the meantime, though refugee enterprise is supported as part of 'mainstreamed' Scottish Government initiatives to develop enterprise and entrepreneurship in Scotland [DVG01 Interview]; at the time of research, there were no policies that sought to take positive action on barriers to enterprise encountered by refugees (discussed further below).

Despite the fact that just 4% of Scotland's population is BME, figures from Business Gateway (2019) show that 7% of its start-up customers are from a minority ethnic background. Despite such successes, recent research provides detailed analysis of the barriers and challenges faced by migrant and ethnic minority populations to enterprise and entrepreneurship (Mwaura. et al., 2018, Mwaura et al., 2019, Kone et al., 2019). The research emphasises that refugee populations face similar ethnic penalties and barriers to labour market participation as ethnic minority populations of other citizenship statuses. However, it also highlights some areas in which the immigration controls to which refugees are subject raise further barriers to enterprise and entrepreneurship. Below, we briefly review these factors before considering how (1) existing governance approaches impact refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship and (2) the VPRS has impacted refugee enterprise in Scotland, both of which are currently under-researched.

4.1 Current precedents in refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship in Scotland

In comparison to other employment pathways, in which refugee participation is lower than UK-born and other migrant populations, Dispersal-pathway refugees (21%) are significantly more likely to be in self-employment than UK-born and other migrants (14%), and of those who are self-employed, Dispersal-pathway refugees (24%) are more likely to run organisations with employees than UK-born employees (18%) (Kone et al., 2019: 3). The reasons for strong refugee representation in the enterprise and entrepreneurship areas of the labour market are various, and include individuals having prior experience in running their own business, and individuals having skills and experience that are suited to developing their own business in a UK context. However, there is also evidence to suggest that refugee populations more frequently access self-employment labour market routes because they encounter additional barriers to the labour market, including racial and ethnic discrimination and immigration restrictions which impact (a) their likely recruitment by employers and (b) career progression once employed (Adecco Group 2017, Eurofound 2016, Konle-Seidl and Bolits 2016). Though enterprise and entrepreneurship routes offer a way out of the restrictions of the employer-led labour market, self-employment and business start-ups are nevertheless precarious, with specific labour market barriers, high risks and potentially low income returns (Bikorimana et al., 2019, pp. 1-2). Work by Mwaura et al (2018: 9) indicates ethnic minority 'newcomers', including refugees, are especially vulnerable to precarious and discriminatory labour market conditions:

Notably, entrepreneurship rates among Indians and Chinese has declined overtime in line with increases in the proportion of these groups that has been born in the UK, has higher education, is better socially and culturally integrated and therefore more likely to secure paid employment that is more financially rewarding than self-employment.

Taking this evidence into account, Mwaura et al (2018: ibid) note:

> *that the Scottish Government takes caution not to regard enterprise as a panacea or misconstrue growth in [ethnic minority] enterprise participation as an indicator of general progress. Rather, the Scottish Government should seek to meticulously address inequalities and under-representation in all sections of the economy.*

GLIMER stakeholders identified several areas in which entrepreneurs of refugee backgrounds encounter barriers related to their immigration status. At the crux of many of these barriers was the sense that though there are public and private services in Scotland that are designed to aid business start-ups, and though they are in principle accessible to people of refugee backgrounds, their terms, conditions and requirements often meant that refugees were unable to use them. Areas in which indirect barriers to refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship were particularly prohibitive included:

a. Financing options

Public financing for prospective entrepreneurs in Scotland is provided through Scottish Enterprise, which offers some funding options, administered through local Business Gateway offices (discussed in detail below).[12] The Scottish Government is currently also in the process of developing a publicly-owned Scottish National Investment Bank. Private financing options include those offered by national and international financial institutions. However, stakeholders reported that these options tended to be inaccessible to refugee entrepreneurs because they were seen as 'high risk' on account of (a) having only recently arrived in the UK, a lack of credit history and (b) having an insufficient period of Leave to Remain to fulfil loan repayments. Mainstream financing options were therefore often inaccessible to refugees until they had successfully applied for *Indefinite* Leave to Remain – (a process they could begin only after their *Definite* Leave to Remain was expiring, a status which could last up to five years). If ILR was granted, even then, mainstream financing options were not necessarily straightforward as they required applicants to have (a) existing capital (b) credit history or (c) a demonstrable history of operations, expectations which, in combination, for the majority of refugee businesses were, a stakeholder commented, 'laughable' [NGB02].

b. Administrative support for prospective entrepreneurs

Refugees are also likely to encounter difficulties in applying for business start-up support on account of unfamiliarity with administrative requirements of entrepreneurship in Scotland. Potential entrepreneurs are required to submit a business plan, and to demonstrate a degree of financial literacy to be considered for funding. A stakeholder commented:

[12] Business Gateway is the Scottish Government-funded, Local Authority-accountable business support ALEO situated in each local authority (see Section 2)

> *So here, for anyone to set up a business, the first thing they ask you to do is have a business plan. When I was back home in my country, I didn't need a business plan. There are businesses [in other countries] that have thrived without a business plan, but equally, there's danger to that, because the moment the owner of that business gets a problem, that's it done.*
>
> [NGO4]

The same stakeholder noted that the development of a business plan not only requires knowledge of standard business practices, but also familiarity with Scottish planning regulations. Several third sector stakeholders provided business plan training to potential entrepreneurs, but also noted that the administrative requirements were often off-putting to potential clients.

Business planning support was available from the local representatives of Business Gateway, however, a stakeholder noted, this was often of little use to newly-arrived refugees because '[They] told us flat out that Business Gateway couldn't help [refugees with language requirements], because they [the local authority] don't provide things like interpretation – they have a policy of no interpretation' [NGO1 Interview]. Another stakeholder noted that though one of their main areas of focus was business development, they tended not to work with Business Gateway because:

> *their services don't suit this community – […] most of the business support that is available is 'high growth'. So they will give you support if they can really see the business has a lot of potential. […] But yet for a person, just imagine a person who has just come here, they don't have the network, they don't know the system, how do you expect them to have high growth? And again, that's the point of looking at the systems and processes, because you can't expect everyone to have high growth, you know, some people are not going to be that fast. Because doing business, sometimes it takes time, it takes time to pick up, it takes time to build those relationships, to build that trust and all that. But if from the word go you are expecting them to draw up a business plan, and you are expecting them to have high growth, straight away they are out. Most of the business support that is available in Scotland is focusing on high growth, and this community can't fit into that.*
>
> [NGO4]

The barriers described by the stakeholder above are the result of Scotland-wide Business Gateway policies, which set a broad agenda for how business start-ups are supported in Scotland. However, as Business Gateway services are delivered by local branches the way in which these policies were enacted in local authorities had a significant degree of variation (as we discuss shortly).

4.2 Governance gaps

The difficulties with Business Gateway that we note above can be related to its governance (see *Figure 7*). Though Business Gateway is funded by the Scottish Government, it operates at local level and its activities are accountable to local government, overseen by CoSLA. A stakeholder explained:

> *Business Gateway has overall control and governance of this within CoSLA, but on the ground it's delivered by the local authority, so, there's an overarching Business Gateway and then they, the local authorities, are funded to employ Business Gateway advisors within the local authority area.*
>
> [NGO1]

Whilst Business Gateway advisors deliver support to potential refugee entrepreneurs at local level, the lead on policy and delivery is taken by the Business Gateway National Unit located within CoSLA (informed by local authority advisor feedback), which, at the time of research, had not developed a brief on the specific needs of potential refugee entrepreneurs. Despite engagement with CoSLA's Strategic Migration Partnership team, there was not a clear policy lead from BG National Unit and the extent to which local authorities offered tailored support to potential refugee entrepreneurs varied considerably across Scotland. Good practice therefore relied on the initiative of individuals:

> *And the big challenge that all the VPRS leads have said is that the support on the ground from Business Gateway for the Syrian refugees is fairly patchy unless you get one random person who gets it, or is willing to just go a bit off left-field and say 'okay, we'll do this differently'.*
>
> [NGO1]

The unique positioning of the Business Gateway National Unit within CoSLA also allowed little scope for Scottish Government intervention. Though Scottish Government provided the funds for Business Gateway activities, because this support was channelled through local authorities, it was considered a local government issue. The infrastructure also meant that though it was possible for Scottish Government to consult with Business Gateway local offices, it was unable to have direct involvement in the development of local approaches to refugee entrepreneurship. This in part appeared to be symptomatic of broader issues between Business Gateway and Scottish Government alignment, which was described as having a 'lack of clarity' and 'disappointing' in a recent Scottish Parliament review (Economy Energy and Fair Work Committee, 2019, p. 2).

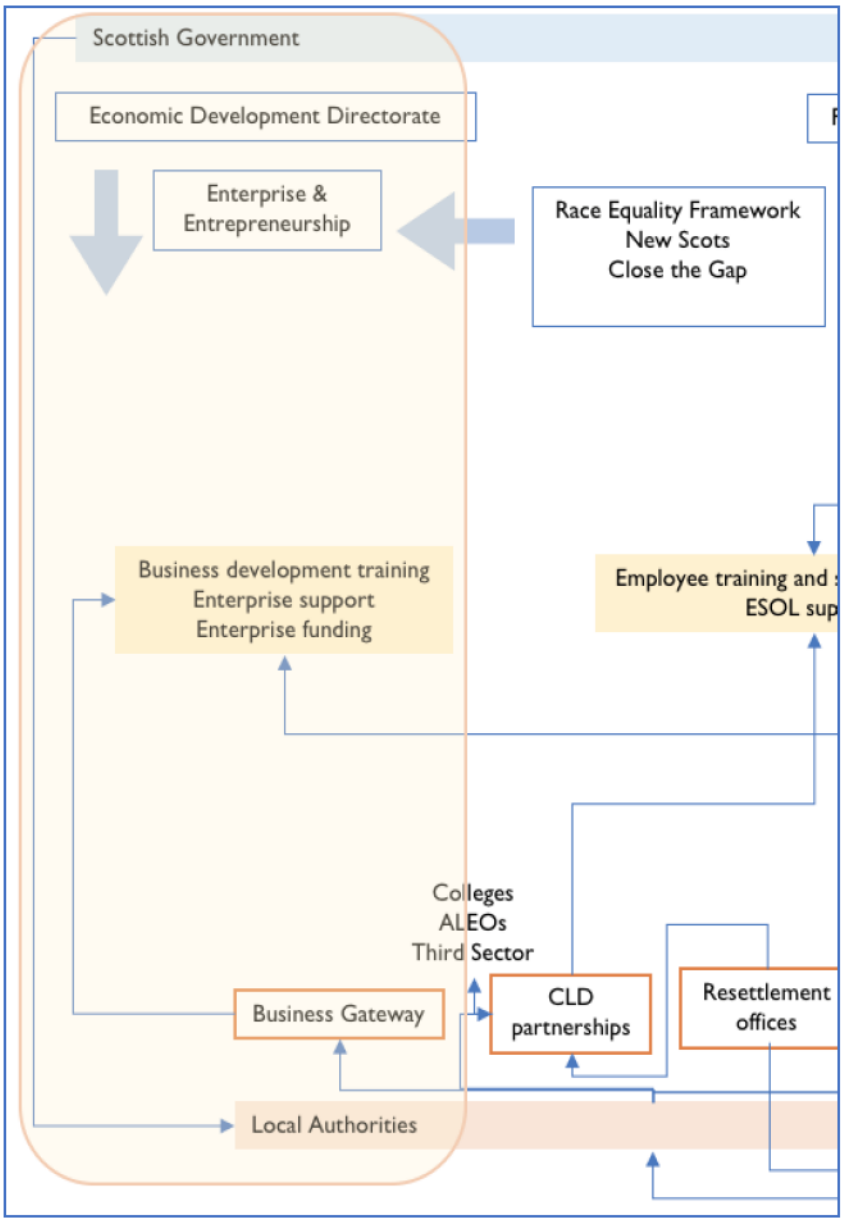

Figure 6: Snapshot of Business Gateway governance infrastructure

However, at the time of research, Scottish Government policymaking on refugee entrepreneurship was also underdeveloped. Policymakers described the Scottish Government's role in developing approaches to refugee entrepreneurship as 'not hands on', but 'providing a framework' and 'providing direction' [DGV01 fieldnotes] as informed by *New Scots* and the *Race Equality Framework*. However, policymakers acknowledged that in existing enterprise support systems there was 'not a lot of awareness about displaced migration' and that current precedents needed improvement [DGV01 fieldnotes]. At the time of research, policymakers had been involved in developing a 'single system approach' to entrepreneur and enterprise support,[13] which would provide a coordinated, single access point system for users. This approach sought to develop a system which would be able to provide support for all potential entrepreneurs, so that there would be as much 'provision for a disabled woman refugee as much as for a white man' [DGV01 fieldnotes]. What this approach does not take into account, however, are the additional barriers a 'disabled woman refugee' may face in accessing such a system, and the need for additional, specialist support to account for this. At the time of research, policymakers were beginning to work with third and public sector specialists on displaced migration, who were hopeful of developing policy approaches to better suit the circumstances of potential refugee entrepreneurs.

4.3 Developing refugee enterprise across Scotland

As detailed in Part 4.2, the 'mainstreaming' of enterprise and entrepreneurship support by national-level organisations created direct and indirect gaps in provision for refugees. In the three locations in which we worked, these gaps had been filled through intensive and refugee-orientated support work by local stakeholders. Noticeably,

[13] See: https://www.parliament.scot/S5_EconomyJobsFairWork/Inquiries/20190418-Scottish_Gov_Response.pdf

though stakeholders across all three sites expressed frustration with the lack of a national-level Business Gateway policy, they also reported successes when working with local Business Gateway offices and services. The way in which this occurred differed across locations.

In both locations which dealt exclusively with Resettled refugees (Argyll and Bute, and Aberdeenshire), local authority Resettlement teams were able to mobilise local knowledge and relationships to orientate services to refugees' employability and entrepreneurial needs. In Argyll and Bute, local authority Resettlement officers had worked with their local Business Gateway advisor, with whom they already had strong links, to create a 'person-centered' approach to their labour market support, 'triaging' different departments in the Council to identify funding sources, develop financial literacy and develop business plans. A stakeholder explained:

> *So we have a Business Gateway advisor and they are helping [refugee clients] develop their business plan, [to] check out the market, deal with issues. On top of all that, what we realised for the businesses is there's a whole lot of things that are done completely differently [to Syria], especially around registration, regulatory requirements and compliancy with legislation […]. Because we're the local authority, most of that regulation sits under us: Environmental Health's part of us, Planning's part of us, Building Control is part of us being a local authority. So therefore I was able to take all of those services in right at the start and […] thereafter to explain the process […]. So we did that a lot and it actually meant that when business plans […] were submitted, compliance and environmental health requirements were [also] being checked. And [the departments] they understood [the context] and they followed that through. So that was really helpful, and it is not often those regulatory type of services get that opportunity to do it that way. So that helped a lot. I mean, you know, it was [still] incredibly hard, don't get me wrong.*
>
> [LA04]

Figure 7: On the ferry from the mainland to Bute. Credit: Hill 2019

In Argyll and Bute, the local authority Resettlement team has had significant success in developing refugee businesses on the island of Bute. To date, resettled refugees on Bute have started several successful small businesses, including a patisserie, a takeaway and a barber shop. Businesses have made use of vacant shopfronts in the town of Rothesay and responded to gaps in the local market. The success of the Syrian businesses on Bute has been used as an example across the UK and within Scotland of a successful refugee entrepreneurship programme. The Resettlement team's work has been recommended in recent reviews on migrant enterprise in Scotland (Mwaura et al., 2019). During GLIMER fieldwork, Scottish Government enterprise policymakers noted that they intended to use the 'Bute model' to inform entrepreneurial support elsewhere.

In Aberdeenshire, the local authority Resettlement team had sought to work with local Business Gateway services, but had not had success at the time of research. However, engagement has improved with the recent arrival of an Arabic-speaking Business Gateway local advisor. Resettlement Officers have also sought to develop knowledge of barriers and opportunities related to refugee entrepreneurship within the Aberdeenshire Resettlement team. This involved identifying financing opportunities for prospective entrepreneurs, and identifying trends and gaps in the local market to understand what types of businesses had the best chance of success. To do this, officers had referred to work conducted in other remote or rural local authorities (including Argyll and Bute), however, an Aberdeenshire stakeholder commented,

> *I looked at some of the entrepreneurial work that'd happened elsewhere in Scotland but what I found was when we looked under the surface, that a lot of that was actually led by opportunity. And the opportunity was vacant shops and available funding. In Aberdeenshire there's neither. [In our town] there are no empty shops. It's still a fairly kind of affluent area so [in] the communities where New Scots are, there's nothing. There's literally nothing empty and when anything does come available it still goes at a fairly high price. So having a physical space isn't an option.*
>
> [LA02]

Unavailable retail space and high rentals meant that refugee entrepreneurs in Aberdeenshire were unlikely to have access to vacant shopfronts (as on Bute). As a result, the Resettlement team had started to explore entrepreneurship options which were less reliant on retail or production space, such as cottage industries. Stakeholders noted that the development of 'cottage industries' would encourage an asset-based approach to business and enable refugee families to make use of existing skills:

> *We can maybe look at [what] some of the families do have, we have quite a few tailors, dressmakers, designers, cooks, maybe not chefs but good cooks, so we can look around that kind of cottage industry development.*
>
> [LA02]

However, this form of business development came with its own risks, which required further investigation:

> *But again, that kind of development quite often comes from one partner working full time [elsewhere] and this other person developing the cottage industry. How do you do that from zero to enough hours? How might it impact your benefits? It is quite difficult, and we've got to be realistic about that as well.* [LA02]

Box 6: Alternative financing sources for refugee enterprises

- Micro financing options in the private sector such as *Grameen in the UK* which was started in 2014 in Glasgow. Inspired by the Grameen Foundation, first set up in Bangladesh by Nobel Laureate Muhammad Yunus (and Glasgow Caledonian University Chancellor) to provide access to finance to prospective business owners who would traditionally face barriers to mainstream financing (including people living in poverty, marginalised groups), *Grameen in the UK* sought to provide micro finance options to people who could not access funding elsewhere due to lack of credit or recognised qualifications. *Grameen in the UK* offered micro loans to business start-ups, starting at £1000 and progressing to £3000 if the loan was repaid. *Grameen* financed £1million of loans in Glasgow between 2014 and 2018,[1] before folding in 2018 after becoming insolvent due to unpaid loans.[2]

- Start-up support from the public sector through the New Enterprise Allowance, funded by the DWP and accessed through JobCentre Plus, and subject to welfare support eligibility. The Allowance offers support for subsistence and accommodation, and the possibility of limited start-up funding.[3]

- Small-scale financial support from the third sector through the London-based Restart Foundation initiative, which offers up to £10,000 in interest-free loans to refugees eligible for its scheme.[4]

- The mobilisation of in-country and transnational community support to raise start-up funds. A stakeholder commented:

> *A funding strategy is something we use often because [refugees] can get the money from their own families back home. Us refugees can't go back home. So what we are telling [refugees] is look to your social network. In our [experience] we have had people get the money from places like Norway, [...from] friends of the family. So we have people [who have] got money from outside the UK because there is no way they will get money from inside. [...] That funding, how we do it, again we ask them, if you have ten friends can you ask everyone to put [in] £200.*
>
> *[LA02]*

1: https://www.glasgowcityofscienceandinnovation.com/news/1065-grameen-in-the-uk-celebrates-1million-milestone-in-glasgow
2: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-business-46635722
3:https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/558779/nea-official-stats-background-information-note-june-2016.pdf
4: https://www.restartrefugeesupport.org/for-applicants

In the absence of a place-sensitive, national approach to refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship, Resettlement officers in Aberdeenshire expected to develop responses to these risks and challenges within their own team.

In Glasgow, services and support for refugee enterprise were different again. In contrast to the two Resettlement areas, which take community development approaches to Resettlement, Glasgow takes a housing pathways approach (Meer et al 2019a). This means that Glasgow Resettlement officers secure housing and welfare support for Resettled refugees, but do not actively provide employment or business development support, instead directing refugees to existing support agencies in Glasgow. This has meant that once they have secured housing and welfare support, Resettlement-pathway refugees are required to access enterprise support through the same route as Dispersal-pathway refugees. With less local-authority-directed enterprise support, Glasgow-based Resettled refugees arguably face additional barriers to Resettled refugees elsewhere in Scotland, though this means that within Glasgow, they face equitable conditions to Dispersal-pathway refugees, who are offered no local government support. On the other hand, potential refugee entrepreneurs in Glasgow arguably also have the advantage of likely pre-existing community networks and support, which are vital to business development [NGB02 Interview]. They also have access to a city-based refugee employability support third sector network – the equivalent of which does not exist in other Resettlement locations, and which can be difficult to access for those outside the city.

However, despite the robustness of third sector employability support in Glasgow, there remained a gap in support for refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship. This had partly been filled by third sector organisations which specialised in supporting either displaced migrant or Black and Minority Ethnic business start-ups. It had also been addressed by he dedicated, long-term work of local Business Gateway officers who had made a concerted effort with very limited funding to identify barriers to refugee employment and find alternative routes to financing and administrative support for refugee businesses (see Box 6). As a result of their work, officers reported a string of business successes, including barbershops and hairdressers, restaurants and dry-cleaning businesses in Glasgow [NGB02 Interview]. However, one stakeholder noted, the development of this support and specialist work was not the result of Business Gateway's national agenda. Rather, it had occurred largely due to individual efforts with no structural contingency should an officer be unable to continue the work:

Stakeholder NGB02: *Building relationships, that's what makes me special. So, I build the relationship in order to make sure I'm always with any developments. […] Saturday and Sunday I can visit my customers, doesn't cost me anything. To me if I can make a difference then [it's worth it]. I know people who have been living on the 17th, 25th floor in the high rise flats. Today they have got [a] four bedroom detached house. That's my satisfaction. So I want to make sure in my lifetime to make a difference. That's a difference we need to make. I know the Government will come running after because of the success.*

Interviewer: *[…] so, to what extent is there any kind of backup system if you [stop]?*
Stakeholder NGB02: *If I lie down?*
Interviewer: *Yeah?*
Stakeholder NGB02: *Nothing will happen.*

4.4 Current gaps in supporting refugee enterprise

The pressure that the absence of structural, public sector support placed on public and third sector individuals was also echoed elsewhere. Asked in interview, how, with limited funding and significant time pressures, they managed to maintain their commitment to supporting refugee businesses, one third sector stakeholder replied, 'it's a big, big challenge. Your brain doesn't stop [laughs]. You never switch off, it's constant thinking, constant engagement' [NGO4]. Outside Glasgow, there was a sense that though local authorities had achieved some success with refugee enterprises, these had been driven by the hard work of local Resettlement teams rather than nationally-instigated action:

> *I think a few [refugee managed] shops across Scotland's not really a big enough pattern. It's a nice story [but] I think it's probably more been driven by individual [Resettlement officers] being bloody minded and getting things done than it being around anything that's coming out strategically [from government] or otherwise.*
>
> [LA02]

This systemic reliance on individuals or small teams to fill gaps in public provision for refugees can be understood as a symptom of a 'decentered' governance approach to the management of labour market integration for displaced migrants. This can be characterised as an approach in which government directly or indirectly outsources service provision to external stakeholders, whilst retaining control over policy creation (Meer et al 2019a). In Scotland, an absence of national-level approaches that directly address the barriers to and gaps in provision for refugee access to enterprise and entrepreneurship had placed significant pressure on the local government and third sector teams and individuals who had filled those gaps. In the meantime, though many of those individuals reported that they were in dialogue with policymakers to improve existing approaches, their own positions and activities remained precarious, subject to inconsistent funding and stretched resources.

Section 4 Recommendations

Suggestions for improving Scottish Government policy approaches include:

- The development of an enterprise and entrepreneurship policy that actively acknowledges and addresses barriers faced by refugees to business development and self-employment.
- The development of an enterprise and entrepreneurship support system that actively provides support to refugee entrepreneurs facing additional barriers from immigration controls.

Suggestions for addressing issues with modelling and further development of refugee enterprise include:

- The development of a multiscalar refugee enterprise and entrepreneurship support model that is responsive to local conditions, including local economies, urban/rural and Dispersal/Resettlement dynamics of displaced migration.
- Best-practice and policy development that addresses enterprise failures and challenges as well as championing successes.

Suggestions for addressing issues with Business Gateway include:

- Recognition of and investment in local Business Gateway support activities with a track record of success.
- Standardisation of Business Gateway support for refugee entrepreneurs as part of the National Service Specification.
- The development Business Gateway infrastructure to prevent the over-reliance of local offices on one individual who works on refugee enterprise development.
- Increased consultation and engagement between the National Unit and the Strategic Migration Partnership team within CoSLA.

5. Business and Employer Development

5.1 Current precedents in employer approaches to refugee recruitment

A focus on employability and skills training, and emerging interest in refugee enterprise has not been paralleled in Scotland by policy related to business and employer approaches to employing refugees.[14] As we discuss in previous sections, barriers to the labour market, including institutional racism, employer uncertainty over immigration status, precarity related to immigration status, English language levels and problems in recognising existing skills and qualifications mean that refugees experience higher levels of unemployment and underemployment than other demographic groups. These are issues recognised in *New Scots,* which notes that in the consultations that informed the policy:

> *Concerns were raised that employers' perceptions of refugees can limit opportunities and success for refugees in gaining employment. There is a lack of opportunities to gain experience in the UK, particularly through work placements and work shadowing, which could lead to paid employment or provide references for job applications.*
>
> (Scottish Government 2018: 36)

Though Scottish policy, therefore, briefly acknowledges that employers' approaches to recruitment, training and employment can impact refugees' access to the labour market, policy relating to the role of businesses and employers in refugee employment is underdeveloped. Moreover, as Section 3 discusses, whilst it is important to further develop refugee-orientated, sector specific training, this only addresses one side of the labour market relationship (potential employees but not potential employers). As we discuss below, if the labour market conditions and employer practices which create active barriers to refugee employment are not addressed alongside skills training and qualifications recognition, refugees will continue to face barriers to the labour market.

In Scotland, the gap in government-led support for employer development has been filled by (1) third sector brokerage programmes (2) local government brokerage activities (3) local and multinational business initiatives and (4) public sector employer initiatives.

5.2 Barriers to refugee employment: stakeholder perspectives

Stakeholders reported a range of issues and labour market features that impacted employers' relationships with prospective refugee employers. Some of these were influenced by external labour market factors; others were related to the internal cultures of employers and their approaches to addressing workplace inequality.

One of the features of the 'hostile environment' agenda that has been pursued by the UK government has been the shifting of responsibility for employee immigration status from the Home Office to employers. The Immigration and Asylum Act 2016 makes provision to criminalise employers for any employees of irregular immigration status.

[14] See Gibb (2018) for a discussion of employer development in a UK context.

It also places a duty on public sector employers to ensure that staff in customer facing roles speak fluent English.[15] Though neither of these policies specifically target refugees, they are likely to adversely impact them because (a) employers may be unfamiliar with what Leave to Remain means, (b) employers may be wary about what happens when Leave to Remain status requires renewal and (c) public sectors employers may be concerned that refugees' language levels are not of a sufficient level to fulfil the public-facing language criteria. The recent move by the UK Government away from Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and towards shorter Leave to Remain statuses for refugees may also mean that employers are less willing to 'invest' in refugees, particularly in roles that require additional training (Stewart and Mulvey 2014). Issues related to labour market immigration controls create employer uncertainty over recruiting refugees and were cited as a barrier by a number of stakeholders. A UK Government agency which had worked with employers on immigration issues commented:

> *one of the key things that came through from employers was the fear of employing people unless they were 100% sure of their status. So that's one area that needs to be… one barrier that needs to be broken down. […] They're unsure and it can be a very complex area.*
>
> [RGV01]

The stakeholder noted that the fear of being penalised for employing people with irregular immigration status was especially acute for small businesses without the resources to procure immigration advice and with little experience of employing people subject to immigration control. As a result, small businesses may be less likely to employ refugees:

> *What would it be like for a small employer if you've got somebody who's been granted leave to remain or somebody who's got no potential barriers at all? You know, who are you going to employ?*
>
> [RGV01]

This was an issue of particular concern to stakeholders in Resettlement areas outside Glasgow, where employers were (a) more likely to be small businesses with fewer resources for immigration advice (b) less likely to have experience in employing people subject to immigration controls and (c) unlikely to have experience of employing refugees, or be familiar with the implications of a fixed-term Leave to Remain status.

Whilst the impact of 'hostile environment' immigration controls on employers' approaches to refugee employment remained a concern, stakeholders also noted that employers' internal approaches to recruitment and workforce 'diversity' often failed to actively address the barriers to employment faced by refugees and other ethnic minority populations. By not actively addressing these barriers – by not, as one stakeholder put it, 'trying to break the habit' of predominantly employing people with racialised, gendered and citizenship privileges [NGO4 Interview] – employers passively participated in systems that perpetuated workforce inequality. One stakeholder noted that though employers in Scotland tended to be familiar with and supportive of equalities legislation and policy, there was less evidence of policy being put into practice.

[15] See: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2016/19/notes/division/3/index.htm

Now, again, if we are talking about diversity training, often most of the people will say 'yeah, yeah, yeah, we've done it, you know, the certificates are there, I just did an online exercise yesterday'. But when it comes to evidence, where is the [minority ethnic] workforce?

[NGO4]

This dynamic was particularly the case for barriers relating to ethnicity, which, the stakeholder noted, employers appeared to be less willing to talk about and address:

when it comes to diversity, it's the other areas, gender, disability and all that. Very few people talk about ethnicity in Scotland. Actually, if anything, people shy away from it, which is a big challenge.

[NGO4]

Figure 8: Recommendations made by a social enterprise's women's group for improving refugee and ethnic minority women's access to the labour market. Credit: Hill 2019

Other stakeholders observed that in addition to a laissez faire approach to racialised labour market barriers, employers had often not considered the impact of their workplace practices, including recruitment, on people with

experiences of displaced migration. Third sector stakeholders noted that this was especially apparent in employer approaches to the interview process. Issues included:

Figure 9: Digital Scotland advert for superfast internet connections in Glasgow City Chambers. Credit: Hill 2019

- Assumptions that prospective interviewees had access to online application forms.
- High expectations of English language ability that were disproportionate to the language requirements of the position.
- Questions in interview about personal background inappropriate for people with experience of displaced migration.
- Questions in interview about 'conflict management' inappropriate for people with experience of displaced migration.
- Differences in interviewee and employer understanding of interview 'culture'.

Third sector stakeholders reported that once these issues had been highlighted, employers were often willing to adapt their processes (discussed further below); however, whilst they remained in place, these conditions meant that refugees were less likely to be selected for interview, less likely to be successful in an interview environment and less likely to progress in an organisation once they were employed.

5.3 Developing business and employer approaches to refugee employment

Employers were prompted to actively recruit refugees to their workforce as a result of a variety of scenarios. In some cases, refugees were already being successfully recruited by large scale employers who had heavily invested in programmes that actively addressed inequalities in their workforce [LA03 Interview], including the under-representation of ethnic and racialised populations, and populations with experience of displaced migration. In other cases, employers had begun to recruit refugees after being approached by third sector or local government. In a number of other cases, however, employers had sought out third sector organisations to arrange a brokering arrangement in which they provided links to and support for potential employees and allowed employers to address their recruitment practices.

Employers were motivated to recruit refugees to their workforce and engage in these arrangements for a variety of reasons. Third sector organisations reported that a number of private sector partners cited reasons of corporate social responsibility, especially following the 2015 'crisis' in the Mediterranean. For some private sector employers, the publicity of the 'crisis' prompted them to develop programmes specifically orientated to refugee recruitment; others adapted existing programmes for other vulnerable groups at distance to the labour market (such as prison leavers). Public sector employers, already bound by equalities duties, found that the publicity of the 'crisis' prompted human resources officers to more actively pursue refugee recruitment options.

Box 7: 'Waiting isn't Working': Ben and Jerry's and the asylum labour market ban

In 2018, multinational ice cream company, Ben and Jerry's, lent its weight to the *Lift the Ban* campaign, launching a series of publicity events, a 'waiting isn't working' campaign and a petition to the UK Government. The company cited its corporate values of equality and social justice as reasons for its participation in *Lift the Ban*[1]. It is the only private sector partner in a network of predominantly third sector actors.

Figure 10: Ben and Jerry's 'waiting isn't working' ice cream, in support of Lift the Ban campaign. Credit: Bustle 2018[2]

1: https://www.benjerry.co.uk/values/issues-we-care-about/waiting-isnt-working
2: https://www.bustle.com/p/where-to-get-free-ben-jerrys-in-the-uk-because-its-for-such-important-cause-13012328

Private sector employers did not only seek to employ refugee recruits for altruistic reasons. Several stakeholders stressed the strong business case for 'diversifying' a workforce and actively recruiting refugees. A third sector employability organisation noted that employers needed to respond to Scotland's changing ethnic demographics to better represent their cliental, commenting, 'if you're a customer facing business, you need your workforce to reflect your clients' [NGO5 Interview]. One local authority employer, which had attempted an overhaul of its recruitment practices and had actively sought to recruit people from ethnic and racialised minorities, including people with experience of displaced migration, argued that it had done so because it felt it had a public duty of representation. However, despite their ongoing recruitment programme, the stakeholder noted,

> *The workforce is not reflective of the [area] and the [area's] representation is changing. And as the provider of services in the [area] we should be reflective. […] And also our schools, we've got BME people going into our schools who don't see people like them standing in front of them. So how do we make sure that we can, from a generational point of view, what can we do just now to try and affect that generation that are just coming through?*
>
> [LA03]

Elsewhere, third sector refugee employability advocates noted the benefits of employing a workforce with international links and multilingual skills – assets also recognised by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (UK Government), which notes that refugees' skills can "assist business' expansion by sharing insights and connections to new international markets, suppliers and client relationships' (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2015, p. 3). A Glasgow-based, third sector stakeholder observed that refugees' multilingual skills should be of particular value to Glasgow's increasingly service-based industries:

> *[we explain to the employer], 'but, you know, people speak Arabic, Chinese, and if you were to get them in [you could avoid] having [telephone] calls with an interpreter, which is a nightmare'. And they were like, 'oh yeah that's true'. So even in [sectors] you don't necessarily see, refugees are bringing additional skills that maybe other groups of migrants would not have.*
>
> [NGO3]

Third sector organisations which brokered relationships with employers preferred this type of asset-orientated approach. As a result, a third sector stakeholder explained, when their organisation approached, or were approached by, employers about improving refugee recruitment, they sought to emphasise the business case for doing so:

> *And when people say, 'oh we need to work with employers', it's not to ask them [the employers] a favour. It is not to ask them a favour, it's, we've got a workforce, do you want it?' And it's a bit of a cold call but it's the reality.*
>
> [NGO3]

Table 2: Brokering matrix of employer relations, by location

	Multinational employer	National private employer	Local private employer	Public sector employer	Third sector employer	Local authority broker	Third sector broker
Urban location 1							
Rural location 1							
Rural location 2							

In Glasgow, there were several third sector organisations and social enterprises that had experience of brokering relationships with private and public sector employers. The approach was successful because stakeholders were visible and well-known for their work on employability and displaced migration and therefore approachable to employers. They also had experience of developing employer relationships, in some cases over decades, and supported recruitment initiatives by providing (a) sector-orientated skills development for potential refugee recruits and (b) specialised employer training (see Box 8). The integration of (1) refugee training (2) employer training and (3) the presence of a third sector specialist had resulted in a series of successful refugee recruitments across public and private sector employers: 'we don't', a third sector employability specialist commented, 'just prepare the client for the labour market, we prepare the labour market for the client. If you don't do that then there's not going to be a fit' [NGB05].

Box 8: Improving refugee access to the labour market: existing client and employer development processes

In Glasgow, third sector organisations had developed a series of processes to improve (a) refugee recruitment experiences (b) employer recruitment approaches and (c) refugee recruitment.

For refugee clients, these included:

- Sector specific skills training (see Section 3 above).
- Sector specific English language training (if required).
- CV advice and development.
- Labour market acculturation.
- Information sessions with potential employers.
- Mock interviews with employers.
- Internships and placements.

For potential employers, these included:

- Developing programmes which actively sought to recruit refugee and ethnic minority employees.
- Developing interview questions and approaches sensitive to the experiences of someone with a refugee background.
- Asking employers to consider their English language expectations and whether they were necessary for the position advertised (see also recommendations prepared by UNHCR, BITC, IOM, the Home Office and the DWP).[1]

For existing employers, these included:

- Developing programmes which actively sought to assist the progression of refugee and ethnic minority employees away from entry-level positions
- Developing internal English language classes, held within work hours.

1: (UNHCR et al 2019)

Outside Glasgow, developing employers and recruitment routes for Resettled refugees largely fell to Resettlement teams. Local authority Resettlement officers had had some success in brokering recruitment routes with employers. As local authority officers were familiar with their area's socioeconomic landscape, they were also familiar with the sectors in which vacancies were likely to be available, and employers who would be willing to recruit refugees. In Argyll and Bute, Resettlement officers had worked with employers in the agricultural, construction and care and boat-building sectors, reflecting Bute's agricultural, industrial and maritime industries. Arrangements tended to be fairly small scale (the recruitment of an individual or several refugees at a time) but set a precedent for future partnerships.[16]

In Aberdeenshire, Resettlement officers had worked closely with local employers to address barriers to recruitment (language, interview processes, immigration concerns), but with mixed successes. A Resettlement officer reflected:

> *And the problem was we didn't work enough with the [employers], because we've not got the right skills. So we've not got, [a specialist from] the Scottish Refugee Council [who] would get on the phone to an employer and have the conversation [with an employer] around, 'this is where we're at, this is what we need to be looking at. This is what we need. What can we maybe change? What are you prepared to shift on?' […] We don't have that skill level yet in employability that [the SRC] has, though [our] employability worker [has been] working her socks off.*
>
> [LA02]

More recently, a new initiative called 'No One Left Behind' has been launched to get refugees into work experience. But without the depth of support available in Glasgow, Resettlement officers found themselves on a steep learning curve. As a result, both Resettlement areas with whom GLIMER worked had started to develop Council-led refugee employment specialisms within their team, performing brokering roles with the local DWP office, the JobCentre, and potential employers. The majority of relationships brokered were with local employers, however, one Resettlement area reported having worked with the Scottish Refugee Council on a recruitment project led by a multinational with sites across Scotland.

5.4 Stakeholder recommendations for future employer development

Focus in both Scottish Government and UK Government approaches to 'integration' on the employability of refugees is not complimented by a similar focus on improving employer recruitment and retention practices for refugees. *New Scots* acknowledges that employer 'perceptions' of refugees can adversely impact refugees' employment prospects; however, as this section evidences, it is not simply employer 'perceptions', but racialised, bordered and gendered structural barriers both in the labour market and in the institutional cultures of employers that lead to the under-recruiting and under-retaining of refugees. The work of third sector stakeholders in Glasgow and local authority Resettlement teams in areas outside the city demonstrate that there is an appetite amongst employers across Scotland to employ refugees and improve their hiring practices.

[16] Equally, one Resettlement officer noted, unsuccessful refugee recruitment initiatives were seen as setting a negative precedent by some local employers.

Stakeholder recommendations to improve this part of the labour market for refugee access included asking the Scottish Government to consider a more active role in encouraging employer engagement on refugee recruitment and retention. A stakeholder commented:

> *I guess part of me feels that the Scottish Government do have a role in this, because if Scottish Government goes knocking on business doors, that's very different to lots of individual local authorities.*
>
> [NGO1]

In addition, that the Scottish Government consider long-term, reliable funding to support existing employer development programmes, especially as they were not offered elsewhere. Another stakeholder put this as follows:

> *So often we have to be very, very creative, but we can't fully depend on funding and the funding stream is quite frustrating, despite the fact that we've got results.*
>
> [NGO4]

This runs in parallel to the need for the third and public sectors to continue to develop cross-sector initiatives that engage employers, debunk language and immigration myths and disseminate guidance. This should also involve the development of specialist support for small and local businesses, especially for those in new Resettlement locations, drawing learning from successful initiatives elsewhere in the UK, such as STEP (Specialist Training in Employment Programme) and REN (Gibb 2018).

6. Conclusions

Despite devolution, it is clear that a UK level hostile environment to migration has material impacts in Scotland too, for example in outsourcing immigration restrictions to employers, perpetuating the practice of everyday bordering, and cultivating an atmosphere of uncertainty around the status of people subject to displaced migration immigration controls. Notwithstanding, and as our research highlights, the Scotland 'from day one' approach to integration means that asylum strategy is different in so far as Scottish approaches promise training and education to facilitate possible labour market transition in the medium and long term, subject to asylum application status progress. Equally apparent is how stakeholders, including the Scottish Government, are careful to work within these existing parameters. For example, while asylum seekers are unable to seek paid employment in the UK, they are able to volunteer, and stakeholders report examples of clients who have benefited from this in developing skills and training. Yet this is also fraught with challenges. Asylum seekers considering volunteering must carefully navigate the work they undertake, as the Home Office will refuse a claim if it considers an applicant to have participated in work during their application.

It is in this context that campaigns to 'lift the ban', as detailed in our discussion, need to be understood, and why the largest local authority in Scotland (Glasgow City Council), amongst others, has supported the campaign. It is something that recognises that despite the promise of 'integration from day one', asylum seekers in Scotland also suffer from structural barriers from day one which prevent labour market participation and become long-term impediments if not tackled at the outset. As one stakeholder described:

> *If you don't invest in the early stage, what's happening? What will happen, those people [refugees] will be demotivated. They won't be able to contribute to [society as] they want. And we will have frustration. And then what, why [that] is so bad, you are showing even to local people, showing how integration doesn't work because you believe those people can't contribute to the system. […] Yeah, so all this is a policy agenda driven, what we can call xenophobia for the public. But people don't want to say it. That's where there is a core issue. In Scotland thirteen local authorities have shrinking populations. How will they address this? We now need to think globally rather than locally.*
>
> [NGB02 Interview]

Presently, it is the third sector that picks up the large majority of employability, enterprise and employer training gaps in Scotland, the funding for which is precarious at best and likely to become more so if relevant EU funding is discontinued following Brexit. Added to this, the quality and availability of support is highly localised and largely dependent on the activities of local actors (public or third sector), something that has an obvious geographical character. For example, and with their capacity for close partnership working, there is potential for smaller and rural local authorities to provide high levels of support to Resettled refugees, as long as a one-size-fits-all approach is avoided. Conversely, there is also evidence of a two-tier geography of displacement across Scotland (i.e. more intensive support outside Glasgow, but more services available in Glasgow).

As such there appears to be an unsettled question between the Scottish Government approach and Local Authority ALEOs about the type of support available to those trying to access the labour market. In our findings, some organisations espoused the importance 'mainstreamed' services, which did not actively discriminate against who could access them. However, these approaches did not take into account the specific circumstances faced by refugees and therefore created indirect barriers to access. Within this environment, refugee women are likely to be most disadvantaged by approaches that do not actively take into account gendered, racialised and immigration barriers to labour market access; however, specialised services for refugee women across all areas of the labour market are almost entirely absent – a gap, GLIMER Research suggests, that urgently needs to be addressed.

This may reflect a divergence with the Scottish Government's over-emphasis on refugee employability, and eagerness to pursue enterprise solutions which has resulted in an under-emphasis on employer responsibilities and practices related to displaced migrants. In this approach, enterprise and entrepreneurship support is tailored towards supporting criteria which refugees cannot fulfil (i.e., people with access to capital, people with credit history, people with secure immigration statuses). Solutions for refugee enterprise have therefore largely been sought outside government provision.

Appendix A

Abbreviations

ALEO - Arms' Length External Organisation
BG - Business Gateway
BMA- British Medical Association
BME – Black and Minority Ethnic
CLD - Community Learning and Development
CoSLA – Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CPP - Community Planning Partnership
DWP - Department of Work and Pensions
ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE - Further Education
HIS - Holistic Integration Service
ILR - Indefinite Leave to Remain
NHS - National Health Service
PIP - Personal Independence Payment
RIES - Refugee Integration Employment Service
RITeS - Refugees Into Teaching in Scotland
RIS - Refugee Integration Service
SFC - Scottish Funding Council
SRC - Scottish Refugee Council
SQA - Scottish Qualifications Authority
SUNRISE - Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Services
VPRS - Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme

Interview Codes

Code	Stakeholder type
DGV	Devolved Government
LA	Local Authority
NGB	Non-Government Body
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
RGV	Reserved Government

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