Review of Asylum Seekers and Illegal Immigration

Report of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee

December 2002
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page Nos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chairman’s Report</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction by the Chairman of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee, Councillor Trevor Bamfield.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Research Report</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information supplied by the Council's Community Liaison Officer, Malcolm Bowler.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Inquiry Reports</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence submitted during the course of the review by interested parties.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Issues Report</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary of the issues considered by the Committee in determining its recommendations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Audit Report</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Review of the overview process by the Council's Audit and Performance Unit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recommendations of the Council.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Appendices</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional published material relating to the review.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Please note: The information contained in the Inquiry Reports reflects the views of particular organisations and individuals. Dover District Council does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of information supplied by these parties.*
Section 1: Chairman's Report

An Introduction to the Review by the Chairman of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee, Councillor Trevor Bamfield
Chairman's Report

1.1 **Introduction**

1.1.1 Dover is a major gateway to the UK which welcomes many thousands of visitors each year. However, since the mid 1990s a new trend has emerged with an increase in the number of asylum seekers using Dover as a port of entry. This has had a major impact upon the local community and whilst a great deal of good work was already being done, it was felt that a thorough review of current arrangements should be undertaken by the Council in order to identify the relevant facts and suggest a way forward.

1.2 **Scope of the Review**

1.2.1 This Review was included in the Work Programme of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee for the Council year 2002/03. A Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/ Illegal Immigration), chaired by Councillor Frederick Scales, was set up to research the main issues and assisted in identifying the terms of reference for the Review which were adopted by the main Committee. Those terms of reference were as follows:

1. To investigate equality of access for local residents and asylum seekers to local services.
2. To determine the cost to the local community of supporting asylum seekers.
3. To assess the effect on the local community of asylum seekers.

1.3 **Methodology**

1.3.1 Following the adoption of terms of reference, the Sub-Committee sought to engage local residents and interested parties by providing information on the Council's Review using press releases, the Council's website and the Council's newsletter which is delivered to every household in the District. In addition, a number of "key" parties and organisations were contacted directly.

1.3.2 Evidence was gathered from a number of witnesses at two special meetings of the Sub-Committee. These meetings focused upon local issues and involved the following parties:

- Malcolm Bowler, Community Liaison Officer, Dover District Council
- Gill Casebourne, Chair of the Kent Refugee Action Network
- Aileen Christodolou, Community Liaison Officer, Thanet District Council
- Reverend Dr Michael Hinton, Christians Together in Dover
- Philippa Johnson, representative of residents of East Cliff and Athol Terrace
- Keith Langsford, representative of Priory Forum
- Brian Lear, Director of Community Services, Thanet District Council
- Annie Ledger, Chief Executive, Migrant Helpline
- Dr Peter Le feuvre, General Practitioner, Dover Health Centre
- Annet Lukkien, Support Worker, Kent Refugee Action Network
- Commander Donald Shrub, representative of residents of East Cliff and Athol Terrace
• Christine Waterman, Head of Community, Leisure & Cultural Services, Dover District Council

1.3.3 The evidence received was used by the main Committee to develop a framework to question key parties involved in this issue at a local, regional and national level. At a special meeting of the Committee evidence was received from the following:

• Nadeem Aziz, Managing Director, Dover District Council
• Councillor Mrs Janet Birkett, Portfolio Holder for Community
• Mary Blanche, Head of Asylum Seekers and Refugee Service Unit, KCC Social Services
• Ian Craig, Assistant Director, KCC Education
• Mrs Linda Golightly, Chief Environmental Health Officer, Dover District Council
• Nigel Hewitt, District Manager, Asylum Seekers and Refugee Service Unit, KCC Social Services
• John Hughes, Inspector, Immigration Service
• Annie Ledger, Chief Executive, Migrant Helpline
• Inspector Paul Ludwig, South East Kent Police Crime Reduction Unit
• Gwyn Prosser, Member of Parliament for Dover and Deal

1.3.4 A paper on the main issues arising from the Review was then prepared by the Advisory Officer, Tony Stickels, the Council's Chief Housing Officer which assisted the Committee to conduct its final analysis and develop recommendations to the Council.

1.4 Comments

1.4.1 The Committee has sought to achieve a balanced approach by considering the views of all relevant parties. Its proposals encompass a range of measures which aim:

(a) to reflect the views of people living in the local community
(b) to review the quality of accommodation, and education and health care services to asylum seekers.
(c) to develop the Council's role in promoting integration
(d) to seek external funding for community facilities within the District
(e) to improve communications between appropriate agencies
(f) to seek additional support from Central Government.

1.4.2 I consider that this has been an extremely worthwhile Review and I would commend to the Council, the final recommendations of the Committee, as set out at pages 87-88.

1.4.3 I also wish to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the Review and, in particular, to acknowledge the work undertaken by Members of the Committee and the Officers who have supported the Review, namely Tony Stickels, Chief Housing Officer, Malcolm Bowler, Community Liaison Officer, David Blackburn, Democratic Services Manager, and Angela Taylor, Committees & Scrutiny Officer.

Signed: ____________________________________  Dated: 23 December 2002
Councillor T A Bamfield
Chairman of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity & Access Committee
Section 2: Research Report

A research paper containing background information on asylum seekers and illegal immigration prepared by the District Council's Community Liaison Officer, Malcolm Bowler
2.1 Immigration Through Dover

2.1.1 The arrival of asylum seekers through Dover is not a new phenomenon and the town has a long and proud history of welcoming asylum seekers to this country. The first significant groups of refugees to arrive here were the Protestant Flemish and Walloons who were seeking refuge from persecution by the Catholics in the 1560’s, followed a century later by the French Huguenots. In the First World War many Belgian civilians fled to Dover, as did Jewish refugees two decades later, with thousands remaining in the District.

2.2 Recent History

2.2.1 However, more recent immigration has been of a different nature and has presented a challenge for the people of Dover. The origins of the current flow of asylum seekers began in 1997, following changes in benefit entitlement and other contributory factors, including a television programme in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, which promoted the UK as a land of opportunity. The programme seems to have influenced the Roma communities in those countries and large numbers of single adults and families came to these shores claiming persecution in their homeland and seeking asylum.

2.2.2 In addition to the Roma asylum seekers who began to establish themselves in the area and form their own communities, the conflict in the Balkans also resulted in a further wave of asylum seekers, mostly from Kosovo and Albania.

2.3 Support by Local Authorities

2.3.1 Support for asylum seekers was initially provided through local authorities, and under the Homelessness legislation DDC was responsible for securing short term accommodation for families arriving at the ‘Port of Entry’.

2.3.2 Single men and those arriving ‘In Country’ were supported through KCC Social Services Asylum Team, which had a similar role in securing accommodation, either in privately rented or bed and breakfast accommodation in the Town. Because of the large numbers of arrivals it became increasingly difficult to find suitable accommodation, despite an initiative by the LGA to bring about a voluntary scheme of national dispersal.

2.3.3 The costs to KCC for the period 1996-2001 were £80 million, which were recouped via grants from Central Government. Between 1996 and 2000 Dover District Council was responsible for B&B accommodation at a cost of £350,000, which was not covered by grants.

2.4 Asylum Act 2000

2.4.1 Two main developments proved to be the catalyst for implementation of the Asylum Act 2000.
2.4.2 Firstly, the strain on local authorities in finding accommodation was becoming an increasing problem. B&B provision had become exhausted and private landlords were reluctant to take asylum seekers. Some of those who did were failing to maintain standards and contravened Environmental Health regulations.

2.4.3 Secondly, community tensions were running high and a serious incident at a local fairground in the Summer of 1999 highlighted the need for dispersal from the South East. The Asylum Act led to the formation of NASS (National Asylum Support Service), which provided welfare support and made arrangements for all new arrivals to be dispersed to other parts of the UK. Migrant Helpline act as the local agent for NASS and the Home Office. Previous applicants remaining under the old system were entitled to remain in Dover pending decision on their application, with local authorities continuing to pay benefits where necessary. The new arrangements do not apply to unaccompanied minors, who continue to be supported by Social Services.

2.5 The Continuing Story

2.5.1 The past two or three years have shown an increase in asylum seekers from other parts of the world, notably Kurds from Northern Iraq, and Afghans, reflecting the instability and turbulence in those countries. Because of the difficulties and dangers of returning, many are given Refugee Status (‘Leave to Remain’) soon after arriving. Although new arrivals are now routinely dispersed, there are in Dover a significant number of individuals and families, perhaps three or four hundred, who came here prior to the new arrangements. Those with refugee status are beginning to settle into the community, accessing training and employment, and finding accommodation, away from the Town Centre on outlying estates. Important skills have been identified, including teaching, medicine and technical. Their children have settled well into a number of local schools, mixing with their peers. Two Iranian boys at Astor School, arriving in this country less than three years ago, have this year received their GCSE results, with exceptionally high grades, including A* in a number of subjects.

2.6 Unaccompanied Minors

2.6.1 In addition to single adults and families there are a number of asylum seekers who fall into the category of unaccompanied minors. These young people, under 18 years of age and predominantly male, are supported by Social Services. Those housed in Dover are young men aged between sixteen and eighteen years of age who remain here for assessment, including age assessment, pending subsequent dispersal to other areas, mostly within the county. Currently there are between 150 and 200 unaccompanied minors in Dover who remain here on average for three months. They are housed with three separate providers in Folkestone Road, monitored by the Finding Your Feet Outreach Team, which act as agents for the KCC Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service Unit.

2.7 Community Safety And Raising Awareness

2.7.1 The need to keep asylum seekers occupied and involved within the community has been vital in preventing tensions from developing. The "Devries Project" is one of a number of initiatives set up to address this need. This project, initially set up by DDC and funded by Social Services, has been aimed at unaccompanied minors in Dover, offering a range of activities from English classes, leisure activities and talks by local representatives as part of an induction package. Positive ways forward have included regular multi-agency working, raising awareness through exhibitions, the "Friendship Project" in schools, multi-cultural festivals, highlighting individual skills and profiles,
use of the media, conferences and presentations to schools, colleges and a number of other organisations.

2.8 **Spotlight on Dover**

2.8.1 Despite the many efforts to raise awareness locally, there is still a feeling in Dover that little has been done to relieve the pressure on the town. Dover continues to be in the spotlight, with regular media attention being focussed on the asylum seeker issue. Although most new arrivals are dispersed, they do live here for a short time, being usually about a week to ten days, in emergency accommodation during the induction process. Therefore, that is a continual visible presence of asylum seekers in the town and it is this perception and the popular misconception that they are in receipt of benefits from local authority funding which is of concern to many local people.

2.9 **Accommodation Providers**

2.9.1 With the exception of unaccompanied minors and those adults and families only requesting a support package, all new arrivals stay in emergency accommodation with providers in Dover, Margate or Ashford. Since 1 October 2002, Migrant Helpline has implemented, in agreement with NASS, new contracts for block booking of accommodation for new arrivals in Dover. All new arrivals are now housed in the East Cliff area, with 100 bed spaces at the Cliff Court Hotel, 70 spaces at the Gordon House Hotel and 30 spaces at the East Cliffe Hotel. Additional capacity has been made available with providers in Ashford and Margate, and Migrant Helpline are not now placing new arrivals in Folkestone Road. Despite assurances there have been a number of concerns expressed by local residents in the East Cliff community. The District Council is working together with the community, Migrant Helpline, local providers and other agencies to alleviate fears and diffuse any potential tensions.

2.9.2 Statistics outlining cases referred to Migrant Helpline on a month by month basis, daily average together with a daily update are shown in Appendix A.

2.10 **Ongoing Problems**

2.10.1 Many of the Roma who arrived here prior to the dispersal arrangements and who have chosen to remain in Dover have failed to integrate within the community. Complaints of noise and general anti-social behaviour particularly involving this group continue to be made. There is also a significant trend involving Roma people travelling from the Czech Republic on a travel document and claiming asylum on arrival. Many already have friends or families in the Town and are either claiming support without accommodation or are returning to Dover after being dispersed, causing overcrowding and neighbourhood problems. On one occasion in August 2002, Migrant Helpline exceeded their contractual arrangements because of the large number of new arrivals (mostly Roma families) and NASS agreed to implement contingency plans, necessitating immediate dispersal to other destinations in the Country.

2.11 **The Continuing Problem – How Do We Deal With It?**

2.11.1 It should be recognised that the Refugee and Asylum Seeker problem is not simply a local issue, or even a national one. Global movements of people require governments throughout the world to attempt to find ways of working together to resolve tensions and develop long term strategies.
2.11.2 At a local level there are a number of ways in which the District has and should continue to work to help resolve the problems. These include the following:

(a) Identifying, and where necessary, pre-empting discord and community tensions.

(b) Ensuring a continuing dialogue with other agencies and sharing information.

(c) Working towards social inclusion and promoting greater understanding through awareness raising.

(d) Integration, both in the short and longer term.
Appendix A
Statistics Provided by Migrant Helpline

Number of Case Referrals

Migrant Helpline Number of Cases Referred (Per Month)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>864</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>1290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1084</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>1497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>1251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>1074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1402</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>1107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1457</td>
<td>1157</td>
<td>947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1727</td>
<td>1097</td>
<td>1210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1644</td>
<td>1136</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1255</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
<td>1152</td>
<td>1366</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>1396</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td>884</td>
<td>1227</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Individuals

Migrant Helpline Number Of People Referred (Per Month)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>1126</td>
<td>1426</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>1234</td>
<td>1774</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1306</td>
<td>1380</td>
<td>1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1492</td>
<td>1325</td>
<td>1607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1843</td>
<td>1563</td>
<td>1251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1852</td>
<td>1547</td>
<td>1478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2128</td>
<td>1520</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2087</td>
<td>1216</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1601</td>
<td>1172</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>1499</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>1543</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1142</td>
<td>1339</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Referrals May – July 2002 were split in the following proportions:

Dover 1836 (48%)
Margate 1262 (33%)
Ashford 726 (19%)

Nationalities Referred. These figure are for the year to date (Apr – Sep 2002).

The average length of stay for the year to date (April – September 2002) was:

Families: 8.14 days
Singles: 8.17 days
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrant Helpline</th>
<th>Total Units/Beds Available</th>
<th>Total Occupied</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cliffe Court</td>
<td>100 Beds</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Cliffe</td>
<td>30 Beds</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gordon House Hotel</td>
<td>70 Beds</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millbank</td>
<td>140 Beds</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nayland Rock</td>
<td>200 Beds</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Contracted</strong></td>
<td><strong>540 Beds</strong></td>
<td><strong>526</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spot Bookings</td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Accommodation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>650</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Section 3: Inquiry Reports

*Evidence submitted during the course of the review to the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee and the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry Report</th>
<th>Name and Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 1</td>
<td>Malcolm Bowler, Community Liaison Officer, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 2</td>
<td>Brian Lear, Director of Community Services and Aileen Christodoulou, Community Liaison Officer, Thanet District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 3</td>
<td>Christine Waterman, Head of Community, Leisure and Cultural Services, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 4</td>
<td>Commander Donald Shrubbe OBE, representing the residents of East Cliff and Athol Terrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 5</td>
<td>Philippa Johnson, representing the residents of East Cliff and Athol Terrace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 6</td>
<td>Keith Langsford, representing the Priory Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 7</td>
<td>The Reverend Dr Michael Hinton, representing Christians Together in Dover</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 8</td>
<td>Gill Casebourne, Chairman, Kent Refugee Action Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 9</td>
<td>Councillor Mrs Marian Munt, Councillor for the Priory Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 10</td>
<td>Councillor Keith Sansum, Councillor for the Priory Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 11</td>
<td>Councillor Nigel Collor, Councillor for the Castle Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 12</td>
<td>Councillor Dean Watson, Councillor for the Castle Ward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 13</td>
<td>Mrs Annie Ledger, Chief Executive, Migrant Helpline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 14</td>
<td>Dr Peter Le feuve, Dover Health Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 15</td>
<td>Malcolm Bowler, Community Liaison Officer, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 16</td>
<td>Malcolm Bowler, Community Liaison Officer, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 17</td>
<td>Linda Golightly, Chief Environmental Health Officer, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 18</td>
<td>Nadeem Aziz, Managing Director and Tim Flisher, Development Control Manager, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 19</td>
<td>Tony Stickels, Chief Housing Officer, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 20</td>
<td>Tony Stickels, Chief Housing Officer, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 21</td>
<td>Ian Craig, Assistant Director of Education, Kent County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 22</td>
<td>Inspector Paul Ludwig, South East Kent Police Crime Reduction Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 23</td>
<td>Nigel Hewitt, District Manager and Mary Blanche, Head of the Asylum Seekers and Refugee Service Unit of Kent County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 24</td>
<td>Mrs Annie Ledger, Chief Executive, Migrant Helpline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 25</td>
<td>John Hughes, Inspector of Immigration, Immigration Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 26</td>
<td>Gwyn Prosser Member of Parliament for Dover and Deal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 27</td>
<td>Councillor Mrs J A Birkett, Portfolio Holder for Community, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 28</td>
<td>Councillor Mrs J A Birkett, Portfolio Holder for Community responding on behalf of Councillor K Mills, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 29</td>
<td>Myra Jarvis, Induction Centre Project Manager, Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 30</td>
<td>Ian Craig, Assistant Director of Education, Kent County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inquiry Report 31</td>
<td>Nadeem Aziz, Managing Director, Dover District Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inquiry Report 1

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Malcolm Bowler, Community Liaison Officer
Dover District Council

Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 2.00 pm

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.1.1 Malcolm Bowler, the District Council's Community Liaison Officer identified that the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, defined a refugee as a person who has a well founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; is outside the country they belong to or normally reside in; and is unable or unwilling to return home for fear of persecution.

3.1.2 Dover's long history of welcoming asylum seekers to this country was highlighted. However, in recent years the number of asylum seekers had presented a challenge to the local community. Primarily since 1997, asylum seekers had been Czech, Slovakian, Bosnians, Kosovans, Albanians and Kurds predominantly Iraqis, Iranians and Somalis. There was a general misconception that the number of applications was rising year on year however, it had remained fairly stable since 1999.

3.1.3 A number of bodies/organisations had responsibilities towards refugees and asylum seekers including Migrant Helpline, Kent County Council, Dover District Council, the NHS, Police, providers of hotels and guest houses, voluntary organisations and the Immigration Service.

3.1.4 Migrant Helpline was a Government funded agency working under the direction of NASS which aimed "to provide relief for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in distress". Whilst in 1998 the organisation had a staff of six persons, currently it had 200 employees throughout Kent and Sussex. Migrant Helpline gave assistance with education, English tuition, access to legal advice, housing and other welfare matters. In 2001, Migrant Helpline assisted over 1,200 asylum seekers.

3.1.5 Kent County Council Social Services Asylum Team was responsible for longer term residents awaiting decision and all unaccompanied minors in the County. The Local Education Authority had placed 295 children in full time education in East Kent and 32 children were currently awaiting places. Kent Adult Education Service offered courses, funded by the Learning and Skills Council.

3.1.6 With the introduction of the Asylum Act 2000, the District Council had relinquished responsibility for providing accommodation for newly arrived asylum seekers and NASS had taken over this function. Consequently it was no longer funded from Council Tax. The District Council still had an important role to play in understanding the needs of asylum seekers, the fears of local residents and bringing communities
together for example, through the Friendship and Devries Projects\(^1\). The District Council had also provided assistance with Council housing in cases where refugees became eligible for social housing.

3.1.7 The NHS provided health care but in East Kent there were only 2 GP’s with responsibility for Primary Care for refugees and asylum seekers. Approximately 400-450 long term refugees were registered with the practice at Dover which was served by a single GP\(^2\). The majority of conditions treated were viral/respiratory infections, skin infections and injuries, and psychological problems. Health screening of new arrivals was undertaken and this was funded by NASS. It was not compulsory but take up was in the region of 80% of new arrivals. Contrary to some reports, there had been no cases of tuberculosis.

3.1.8 Kent Police had participated in a multi-agency approach which aimed to diffuse community tension. Each Police area had a Community Liaison Officer\(^3\) with specific responsibility for asylum seekers and racial awareness. It was emphasised that the vast majority of asylum seekers were law abiding but there were some unlawful practices which the Police dealt with as appropriate.

3.1.9 Local providers of accommodation were responsible to Migrant Helpline in respect of emergency accommodation and to KCC in respect of unaccompanied minors. The accommodation was mostly in a single ward of Dover centred upon three bed and breakfast homes at East Cliff.

3.1.10 Various voluntary organisations assisted asylum seekers and/or refugees. They were accountable to the providers of funding for their actions with ultimate responsibility resting with the Home Office.

3.1.11 There were three distinct categories of asylum seekers and refugees in Dover:

(a) Those who arrived prior to April 2000 and had chosen to remain in Dover. They lived and worked in the local community. Some had refugee status but many had been refused asylum and were awaiting appeal or deportation.

(b) Those awaiting dispersal.

There were between 200 and 250 people awaiting dispersal at any one time in Dover who were housed in a small area close to the Port, where they stayed on average for two weeks. This had caused unrest in this particular ward whilst easing tensions in another part of the town where they had been housed previously.

(c) Unaccompanied minors.

There were, on average, 160 unaccompanied minors aged between 16 and 18 living in accommodation on Folkestone Road at Dover supported by KCC. A further 2,000 minors which were mostly resident inside Kent were supported by the County Council.

---

\(^1\) Further information on the Friendship and Devries Projects is given at paragraphs 3.15.3 – 3.15.9.

\(^2\) A further explanation of the service is given at paragraphs 3.14.1 – 3.14.3.

\(^3\) The role of the Community Liaison Officer is explained at paragraph 3.22.2.
3.1.12 Large groups of young people congregated in parts of Dover with little to occupy them. The Devries Project had been set up by DDC to provide a structured programme of classes and activities. This project was partly an induction process preparing minors for possible citizenship. The "Finding Your Feet Project" employed an Outreach Team to work with local boys living on Folkestone Road.

3.1.13 Since April 2000, NASS had been responsible for dispersing asylum seekers and whilst the overall number of asylum seekers in the town was static, there was a continuous throughput of people. Improvements had been seen through the introduction of a compulsory HMO registration scheme in Dover to control standards of temporary accommodation. Local authorities were also seeking to achieve long term integration through local schooling, local activities and subject to entitlement, local social housing.

3.1.14 Local reaction to asylum seekers had been negative initially, but slowly this view was changing and was particularly positive amongst younger people as a result of increased integration in local schools.

3.1.15 DDC's role in local communities was complemented by a great deal of work done by other organisations such as local churches, the YMCA, Kent Refugee Action Network, Migrant Helpline etc. DDC had held seminars such as "Myths and Misconceptions", produced booklets, launched the Friendship Project and worked with some of the local press to highlight positive images of asylum seekers.

3.1.16 Problems still existed regarding:

(a) Failings with the system of dispersal.
(b) Relations between Central Government (through its agency NASS) and local authorities.
(c) Reactive changes to legislation.
(d) Asylum seekers returning to Dover after dispersal.
(e) Tensions within local communities.
(f) Poor statistical records of the number of asylum seekers.

3.1.17 It was identified that the multi-agency approach to dealing with asylum seekers and refugees within Dover was successful. However, DDC did not have a long term strategy in place as a basis for promoting multi-cultural integration within the town. A multi-cultural centre for all members of the local community, such as existed in Margate (Thanet District) would assist the process of integration. Another factor which had to be considered was the expansion of the EU in 2004 which could lead to larger numbers of people arriving from the Czech Republic. Therefore, whilst DDC and other agencies had done a great deal of work in recent years there was still much to be done in the future.
Inquiry Report 2

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Brian Lear, Director of Community Services and Aileen Christodoulou, Community Liaison Officer, Thanet District Council

Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 2.00 pm

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.2.1 Brian Lear, Director of Community Services identified that because of the type of accommodation that was available in Thanet, a large number of high dependency people moved in and out of the District. This had led to tensions in local communities.

3.2.2 The Council had developed a number of initiatives to address this situation. Community meetings had been hosted by Thanet District Council with local residents and local Councillors where clear advice was given to the public on what the Council could, and could not do. A Resource Centre (one-stop shop) had been set up at Margate and whilst this was used mainly by asylum seekers and refugees, it was available for use by all persons who were in need. The one-stop shop project had received special one-off funding from the EU and had also attracted SRB funding. Initially, the project had gained unwarranted attention in the form of National Front marches through the town. However, it had helped subsequently with the process of integration. A total of 21 agencies delivered services from the Centre which was situated in the centre of the town.

3.2.3 Community tensions often arose out of false assumptions by local residents that certain people were asylum seekers when, in fact, they were not. Ongoing problems existed and it was seen as being important that the District Council was pro-active in its approach. Migrant Helpline and KCC were commended on their support and willingness to respond to issues identified by Thanet District Council.

3.2.4 Parts of Thanet had become multi-racial in a short space of time for example, the western end of the Cliftonville ward, where once popular guest houses provided accommodation for multiple occupation which landlords had been eager to exploit. Such areas attracted a high transient community, consisting of many groups/individuals not only of asylum seekers. Changes to the local population had the potential to be upsetting to elderly people but in a recent survey, asylum seekers had come a long way down the list of factors which led local people to be dissatisfied with life in Thanet.

3.2.5 Thanet District Council had produced a series of articles in the Council newsletter to deal with misconceptions about asylum seekers. It had also challenged a faction of the local press which was producing damaging reports, to meet and discuss the issues and this had led to some positive articles in subsequent editions of those
newspapers. Radio Thanet had also been used to develop a more positive image of asylum seekers.

3.2.6 Overall, there had to be an acceptance that this was going to be a long term issue for Councils and other agencies to deal with, which could not simply be dealt with by short term solutions.
Inquiry Report 3

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Christine Waterman, Head of Community, Leisure and Cultural Services, Dover District Council

Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 2.00 pm

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.3.1 Christine Waterman, Head of Community, Leisure and Cultural Services at Dover District Council reported that DDC had established a new division which would bring together within the same team, the Crime Reduction Officer, Community Liaison Officer, the Children's Fund Co-ordinator and SRB as well as the existing sport and Recreation, Tourism and Arts and Museum services. Overall there would be the same amount of resources available but a better combination of those resources should ensure more effective service delivery.

3.3.2 The District Council had pursued integration through non-confrontational activities such as arts, leisure and sports. There had been the "Fleeting Visions" exhibition at Dover Museum which had been supported by South East Arts. Contributions had come from refugee children and their classmates from schools in Dover. The theme of the exhibition had been "don't judge anybody until you've heard their story". A second exhibition "Why" had included artwork from local asylum seekers which provided brutal images of life in their native countries. The feedback received was that it had changed the perceptions of members of the public who had visited the exhibition. A third exhibition "Sanctum" had provided a series of portraits by asylum seekers and refugees in Kent, which highlighted the stories of particular individuals.

3.3.3 In addition to the arts, the Devries Project had been highly successful in encouraging participation in sport, there had been a football tournament involving asylum seekers and representatives of local organisations which had been organised by the Council's Community Liaison Officer and facilities were provided at the leisure centre for young people to play basketball. It was identified that there was a large number of sources of funding for these projects for example, the Diana, Princess of Wales Fund which had a specific grant theme of "Refugees and Asylum Seekers".

3.3.4 Other towns across the country were receiving asylum seekers and adopting different approaches to dealing with this issue. It was identified that DDC could take advantage of best practice developed elsewhere with a view to identifying further initiatives which might be developed. The creation of a strategy for refugees and asylum seekers was advocated as it would provide a more "joined up" approach to this issue rather than the Council continuing to rely upon the efforts and enthusiasm of individual officers.
Summary of Evidence

3.4.1 Commander Donald Shrubb representing the residents of East Cliff and Athol Terrace identified that the three main causes of concern to local people were:

(a) What was happening at East Cliff.
(b) That it appeared to be illegal as it had by-passed proper planning procedures. 
(c) That the "autocratic" decision making could, and probably would, be perpetuated leading to enlargement of the "training estate" and consequently, further degradation of the quality of life of local residents.

3.4.2 East Cliff and Athol Terrace was a conservation area with about 140 residents. Many of the buildings were listed, including it was understood, the buildings making up the new training estate which had been formed. They were situated at one end of the street and were the first sight of the UK for travellers arriving by ferry. Three hotels which were open to the public until recently and two other units had been converted into the training centre with accommodation for short term trainees. They had ceased to be hotels in the normal sense of the word. Mr Shrubb suggested that the trainees did not choose to be there and had no other accommodation address. In fact, a nightly curfew was imposed on the inmates. The complex had effectively become a hostel whose purpose was that of a training centre rather than three hotels. All questions about the "hotels" were dealt with by Migrant Helpline which ran them as one entity. The establishment of a training centre within the local community had introduced many changes to the area, both in terms of the impact on the visual amenity and the effect on the character of the area. For example, bunk beds were visible from outside of the premises, washing was hung at the windows and there were groups of young men congregating in the street with nothing to occupy them.

3.4.3 Mr Shrubb questioned the legality of this complex and suggested that the 1994 amendment to the 1987 Planning Act removed hostels from the C1 class of use which now included only hotels and guest houses. Any change of use from a hotel required planning permission. Copies of letters exchanged between Mr Shrubb and the Council were submitted in which an undertaking was given by the Council that the matter would be investigated. However, it was understood that the Council had

---

4 For further information on planning procedure please see paragraph 3.17.2.
been unable to gain access to the premises and on contacting Migrant Helpline had been informed that the estate buildings were still hotels.

3.4.4 Further correspondence was referred to which had been exchanged with the Managing Director of the District Council on this matter and Mr Shrubb had concluded from this correspondence that "Migrant Helpline was making all the decisions". If the normal planning process was observed all parties could express their concerns and any decision challenged through the Courts/taken up with appropriate Government Departments. If the decision was taken to allow the complex then this decision would have been taken by the District's democratically elected representatives who were accountable to the electorate. It appeared to Mr Shrubb that "all decisions were being made by an unaccountable body who were neither publicly responsible nor trained as civil servants to enact government policy".

3.4.5 Several meetings had been held to attempt to resolve the concerns of local residents. However, they had failed to achieve a positive outcome and the responses given by the various agencies represented at the meetings seemed to indicate that no attempt was being made to consult with the residents nor to integrate the training complex into the local community. Mr Shrubb suggested that local residents had been treated "with contempt and dissemblance". Initially local residents had been informed that no decisions had been taken although some of the properties were bought by people who were housing asylum seekers in Priory Ward. Then local residents were informed that no tendering process had taken place for this lucrative government contract and the decisions were simply based on proximity to Migrant Helpline. They were further informed that no consultation could take place until the plans had been approved by NASS. DDC and the local MP appeared to have been notified a considerable period of time after the key decisions had been taken. Finally, local residents were informed that Migrant Helpline had considered their views but was proceeding with its proposals regardless of local concerns.

3.4.6 The residents believed that their elected representatives should be party to any decisions of this magnitude especially when the legality of actions by non-accountable bodies was in question. They did not trust the current arrangements and would be more optimistic about the future, if they believed that DDC, through the legal planning process, was in control.

5 The Managing Director's response to the concerns raised by Commander Donald Shrubb are detailed at paragraph 3.18.1.
6 The issue of tendering for contracts to provide accommodation is explored at paragraphs 3.13.5 and 3.29.3.
Summary of Evidence

3.5.1 Phillippa Johnson representing the residents of East Cliff and Athol Terrace echoed the comments made by Commander Shrubb and suggested that it appeared to local residents that "Dover District Council had handed over its powers to Migrant Helpline". She cited the consultation paper on the Housing Act 1996, identifying that Section 3(a) stipulated that they should be categorised as Homes in Multiple Occupation whether they were hotels, hostels or similar accommodation. If the accommodation was registered as an HMO, the Council would have powers in respect of inspection of toilet facilities, fire safety measures, occupancy levels etc. Whilst Migrant Helpline did not agree the accommodation required registration as an HMO, the District Council should act to ensure that they were registered.

3.5.2 There were serious concerns about the use of accommodation in East Cliff with windows being used as bed restraints, leading to unfavourable conclusions about the adequacy of fire safety measures. Cosmetic changes had been made to the appearance of buildings but this did not inspire confidence amongst local people that they were well managed.

3.5.3 It appeared that local people had no voice and were "ignored by Migrant Helpline". Proposals appeared to be kept secret on the basis that they were part of long term strategies for dealing with long term problems. The decision making and accountability of Migrant Helpline was questioned. It's annual budget was in the region of £13 million and it had 200 employees (compared to DDC which had a budget of approximately £15 million and 500 employees). A considerable proportion of its funding was for emergency accommodation, channelled to five providers – three in Dover, one in Ashford and one in Margate. It was alleged that there was no competitive arrangement to ensure value for money and that the accommodation providers were selected because Migrant Helpline "preferred working with them". In summary, Migrant Helpline seemed to be a powerful and well funded organisation which seemed to be less than professional in its approach. Local residents sought urgent action from DDC to demonstrate that it had not lost all control of the current situation in Dover.
Inquiry Report 6

Name of Person Giving Evidence:  Keith Langsford representing the Priory Forum

Date and Time of Evidence:  Thursday 21 November 2002 at 2.00 pm

Source of Information:  Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.6.1  Mr Keith Langsford identified that whilst he was representing the Priory Forum, some of the views expressed at the meeting would inevitably be personal and not necessarily the views of all Members of the Forum.

3.6.2  The process adopted for selecting the Folkestone Road area of the Priory Ward for providing accommodation and in particular the expertise of the Council's Housing Division in taking this decision (given the findings of the Best Value Inspectorate concerning its performance) was questioned. Generally, there appeared to be poor communications between DDC, Migrant Helpline and the County Council and no consultation over the original decision "with asylum seekers appearing on local streets overnight". Decisions appeared to have been taken by "stealth" rather than open decision making. The change of use of the basement of 89 Folkestone Road arising from the relocation of Migrant Helpline was also cause for concern, particularly the level of consultation that had been carried out and if the relevant planning procedures had been followed with regard to changing the use of the building which was currently a "dwellinghouse". The efforts of the Council's Community Liaison Officer were praised. However there was concern over the lack of understanding amongst local children and their "learning the sometimes intolerant attitudes of those closest to them".

3.6.3  Priory Ward was identified as being an area of social deprivation and it was disappointing to note that whilst it had been predicted that the presence of asylum seekers could attract external funding which would stimulate regeneration of this part of Dover, in practice this had failed to materialise. The process of integration had begun with some of the early asylum seekers having taken up employment but inevitably there had been some instances of anti-social behaviour. A particular problem which needed to be addressed was the question of what would happen to the former care homes etc allocated to asylum seekers on Folkestone Road after the accommodation was no longer used for that purpose.

3.6.4  Mr Langsford appealed to the Sub-Committee that the review of asylum seekers should be constructive in seeking the best way forward for all parties and should not be conducted in a political manner. He supported the preparation of a strategy focusing upon the problems inherent on Folkestone Road and also identified the need for a Community Centre to begin the process of regeneration within the Priory Ward.
Summary of Evidence

3.7.1 The Reverend Dr Michael Hinton representing Christians Together in Dover (CTID) identified that the organisation’s policy was:

(a) To encourage a sympathetic and creative community response to the challenges presented by asylum seekers.
(b) To set an example of a sympathetic and creative response, with the aims both of helping the asylum seekers themselves and of enriching local life.

3.7.2 Local churches wished to influence public opinion positively because of powerful images operating in the opposite direction. The Reverend had used his column in the Dover Express on occasions to address this issue.

3.7.3 The Support Group was based on St Columba’s United Reformed Church and had provided friendship, practical support and activities, especially for the young, throughout its history. As part of its contribution to the local commemoration of the Millennium, it had organised the provision of a Community Youth Worker, Ms Rebecca Meredith. As part of her work, she ran youth activities at the YMCA which attracted the children of asylum seekers amongst others.

3.7.4 The Reverend John Churcher exercised a ministry of education and reconciliation in Dover between September 2001 and July 2002. His function was to explain asylum seekers to the local community and “English ways” to asylum seekers. A Committee of CTID under the leadership of the Reverend David Ridley was, at present, implementing a scheme entitled "Everywhere 2 Everywhere" which gave Christians from overseas support and hospitality from local Christians so that they could work with asylum seekers. A Coptic nun, Sister Georgia, was engaged in this ministry and Mr Ahmed Shah, a Christian from Afghanistan had just arrived in the area, and would shortly take over from her.

3.7.5 Local Christians had used their access to the media to speak positively about asylum seekers and to seek to undo the harm done by hostile public opinion and by the destructive editorial policies of some sections of the press. Christians had formed personal friendships with some of the families who had spent a considerable amount of time in the local area. As a result of these friendships, they had been able to give families practical help, and make them feel that there were British people who wished them well. Some individual Christians had an active part in the work of Migrant Helpline, especially in the early days before its recent expansion. They had also
been involved with the Kent Refugee Action Network and in providing support for detainees at the Removals Centre.

3.7.6 It was identified that Christians Together in Dover recognised the strain which the arrival of asylum seekers had placed upon the local community, but nonetheless deplored the hostility and negativity shown by some local people. CTID looked to DDC, which had done much good work in a difficult situation, to treat asylum seekers with humanity and understanding. Should such a response involve some unreimbursed Council expenditure, the burden should be accepted as part of the cost of being a civilised society.
Inquiry Report 8

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Gill Casebourne representing the Kent Refugee Action Network

Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 2.00 pm

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.8.1 Gill Casebourne, Chairman of the Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN) indicated that the Network had operated as a charity for 2½ years. It had one part-time Office Manager (paid post) and two officers handling the Mentoring Project (funded by the Home Office) but primarily it operated through the efforts of unpaid volunteers. KRAN had a small office in Dover but was a "Kent wide" organisation.

3.8.2 At the outset, it was emphasised that KRAN had every sympathy for the hardship suffered by local residents over the past 5/6 years. However, there was a major issue to be addressed in terms of the lack of public information or indeed misinformation, supplied about asylum seekers. KRAN was committed to dealing with this problem and emphasising the positive contribution which could be made by asylum seekers in society.

3.8.3 An example of poor public information was the common misconception that detainees at the Removals Centre had been refused refugee status and were going back to their country of origin. In fact, many detainees were only part of the way through the process and could subsequently be granted bail and allowed refugee status. Hence, they should be regarded neither as illegal immigrants nor criminals. Visitors to the Centre had told harrowing stories of the detainees particularly in terms of their morale and state of mental health. Recently there had been a suicide attempt.

3.8.4 There needed to be a public education programme and it was suggested it was a "dereliction of duty of national politicians" that this had not happened.

3.8.5 KRAN was committed to achieving "community peace and harmony" within Dover and one of its highest priorities was to focus upon young people so that they were occupied rather than standing on street corners with nothing to do.

3.8.6 Locally, KRAN had supported the "Friendship Project" in partnership with a number of other agencies/organisations and had been active particularly in circulating information packs to local schools. Additional funding had been secured through the Children's Fund to compile and distribute new packs in the summer of 2002.

3.8.7 KRAN had published its own publicity materials and had used both the local and national media to promote its own role and to highlight issues relating to asylum

7 A list of the contents of the pack and details of the Friendship Project are attached in Appendix A.
Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration

3.8.8 Usually when KRN\textsuperscript{8} attended a meeting at the invitation of local groups/organisations they encountered a certain amount of hostility. However, when presented with an accurate picture of the objectives and activities of KRN, people seemed genuinely grateful for the information provided and some were won over by the positive views put forward of asylum seekers and refugees. It was KRN’s perception that local attitudes were changing to a certain extent.

3.8.9 Local community initiatives included a multi-cultural festival which, in its first year had been held at Pencester Gardens and in its second and third years, at the Market Square. This had been highly successful with music, dancing, food, market stalls etc and it was hoped that it could be continued in future years.

3.8.10 There was a need to be aware of what asylum seekers and refugees could offer the community for example:

- Funding for asylum seekers could also help local people.
- Young asylum seekers could be a big asset in local schools providing a different perspective on issues and translating theory into practical experience.
- On overcoming the trauma of relocation, they would gain in confidence and skills and set up their own businesses.
- The UK had an ageing population and needed young people to supplement the existing workforce.

3.8.11 Annet Lukkien, a Support Worker for KRN provided details of the Mentoring Project which assisted refugees. It recognised that they were a valuable human resource but that uncertainty over the future and unfamiliarity with their surroundings made integration difficult. They often worked in low paid jobs and encountered many barriers including language, cultural awareness etc. The Mentoring Project aimed to enable them to receive a proper education and to realise their full potential. It recognised that there must be an investment on a one to one basis, in order to achieve progress and define their role within society.

3.8.12 It was clarified that people were classed as illegal immigrants up to the time they requested asylum. On being transported covertly, they were totally dependant upon the traffickers and often did not know which country they were being taken to or the process for seeking asylum. A high proportion (in the region of 50\%) were successful in obtaining full refugee status. Contrary to common belief it was not that the UK was a "soft touch" that attracted asylum seekers as they often received lower benefits than in other countries and 30\% less than the basic level of income support.

\textsuperscript{8} Copies of some of the publicity material distributed by KRN are attached at Appendix B.
for UK residents. Rather it was the attraction of an English speaking country where often, there were members of the family already resident.

3.8.13 Practical suggestions for improvements to existing arrangements were:

- A system of work permits (green cards) to allow short stays whilst problems were allowed to settle in their native countries.

- Additional funding for resources through the EU to finance a community facility such as that provided by Thanet District Council in Margate.

- Links with colleagues in France dealing with similar problems to identify good working practices.
Inquiry Report 9

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Councillor Mrs Marian Munt
Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 5.30 pm
Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.9.1 Councillor Mrs Munt representing the Priory Ward summarised the recent history of asylum seekers in the Ward stating that the number of asylum seekers had first begun to increase in 1997/98. It was suggested that problems occurring in the Priory ward had been as a result of misunderstandings or a lack of local knowledge and a local team of Council officers, the Police, Ward Councillors and members of the community had been formed to help deal with the situation.

3.9.2 The position had improved greatly with the appointment of a Community Liaison Officer. Direct help had been provided to problem areas and practical measures introduced such as translations on health leaflets and explanations of local customs. These now formed the basis of the induction scheme. Undoubtedly, media coverage had made a serious impact on local perception of the issue. One rumour created after media coverage was that asylum seekers were buying large amounts of goods from Argos and Marks & Spencer. This was actually crews from the ships and not asylum seekers as was reported in the press. Another rumour had been that asylum seekers were receiving new shoes every time they played football. What actually had happened was that Kent County Council had bought a number of training shoes and when they came to play football they would put on the size that fitted them best and these were returned after the match and put in plastic bags. Therefore, it appeared that they had new shoes every time. Gradually a relationship had been built up with NASS and Migrant Helpline and this had been invaluable. Meetings had been held monthly with KCC but no real help had been received.

3.9.3 It was estimated that there were presently between 120 and 140 minors in the Folkestone Road area and there were also approximately 30 families in houses and flats awaiting appeals. In requesting that asylum seekers were dispersed throughout Dover the Ward Councillors had not been involved in specifying which wards they should be dispersed to.

3.9.4 It was identified that many asylum seekers were skilled workers and came from many professions for example, construction engineers, pilots, teachers and dentists and could make an extremely positive contribution to the local area. Councillor Mrs Munt estimated that 30% of her time as a Ward Councillor was spent on the issue of asylum seekers.

9 The precise number of unaccompanied minors in the Dover District is detailed at paragraph 3.23.3.
Inquiry Report 10

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Councillor Keith Sansum
Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 5.30 pm
Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.10.1 Councillor Sansum representing the Priory Ward stated that from the late 1990's a large number of asylum seekers had moved into the ward. The main reason given for this was that bed and breakfast accommodation was readily available. It was suggested that the accommodation was sub-standard and asylum seekers should have the same standard of accommodation as other tenants. Migrant Helpline had employed its own environmental health officers to inspect accommodation. Communication between Migrant Helpline, the local community and other agencies had improved but actions still appeared to be taken by Migrant Helpline without informing interested parties. There needed to be better communication and greater public awareness of what was happening. However, progress would only be achieved by seeking a positive way forward by all rather than blaming agencies for past mistakes.

3.10.2 With regard to unaccompanied minors, it was felt that the presence of large numbers of young people in groups was intimidating and this issue was of particular concern to the local community. Local and national papers had not always been helpful and they were still running stories from many years previously. The change of location of asylum seekers had come about as a result of the increased tension in the community. However this had only served to move the problem from the Priory ward to the Castle ward.

3.10.3 The voucher scheme had deterred people from seeking asylum in this country. The figures of asylum seekers did appear to have reduced during the years it had been in place and increased once it was discontinued.

3.10.4 When asked about the level of work undertaken as a Ward Councillor on the issue of asylum seekers and refugees Councillor Sansum stated that in previous years this would have taken up most of his time however, with improvements to the supply of information and communications his workload regarding this issue had reduced to a certain extent.

10 An explanation of the role of the officer is given at paragraph 3.24.4.
Inquiry Report 11

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Councillor Nigel Collor

Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 5.30 pm

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.11.1 Councillor Collor representing the Castle ward expressed concern that there had been no consultation over the move of asylum seekers from Priory Ward to East Cliff in the Castle Ward. He suggested that a representative of Migrant Helpline had confirmed that Migrant Helpline was fully aware of the political pressure to move asylum seekers from the Priory Ward. Neither of the Members for Castle Ward had known in advance of the proposal and suggested that they should have been supplied with this information as soon as the Leader of the Council had been informed.

3.11.2 It was suggested that issues relating to security should be considered in view of the number of persons currently seeking asylum in the UK.

3.11.3 He concluded by stating that the movement of asylum seekers to East Cliff was "wholly inappropriate as there were only 141 residents in East Cliff but 200 bed spaces for asylum seekers" and this had been done without proper consultation or communication over the proposals. It was also a matter of concern regarding the small size and location of East Cliff compared to the Folkestone Road area.
Inquiry Report 12

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Councillor Dean Watson
Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 5.30 pm
Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.12.1 Councillor Watson representing the Castle Ward identified that Councillor Collor had taken the lead on this within the Ward. East Cliff was a very small area and he considered that the problem had not just been moved across the town but had been made worse. He felt there was no adequate housing available in East Cliff and whilst asylum seekers were only there for 7-10 days, local people felt overwhelmed by their presence. In East Cliff there were no facilities other than a single phone box and a part-time shop and there was nothing for asylum seekers to do.

3.12.2 There was concern locally in East Cliff about the standard and condition of facilities used to accommodate asylum seekers. There needed to be a long term approach to improving facilities provided. However, the Council did not seem to have the power to solve the problem alone.

3.12.3 He supported the voucher system as the use of cash by asylum seekers "created anxiety" amongst local people. Reverting back to the voucher scheme would be a positive move.

3.12.4 There had not been "a single piece of information" from this Council or any other outside organisation about the relocation of asylum seekers. A letter was sent to the Council's Managing Director and he did reply however the enclosed information was never sent. It was felt that agencies needed to be more open about the issues and local people would then be better informed of the situation. Communications between the Council and local residents had been poor and was heavily reliant upon the efforts of Ward Councillors. It was suggested that improvements to the manner and frequency of communications by the Council and other agencies with local people should be pursued.

12.5 In concluding, Councillor Watson identified that asylum seekers would be part of the local community for a number of years to come and therefore, there must be a long term co-ordinated approach to deal with all the issues involved.
Summary of Evidence

3.13.1 Annie Ledger of Migrant Helpline stated that the organisation had a long history of working with asylum seekers. Migrant Helpline's aim was to provide a high quality impartial service and it worked very closely with other agencies such as the National Health Service, Social Services and local authorities. Since April 2000, Migrant Helpline had been funded by the Asylum Service to provide a one-stop service in reception areas. There was a reception office in the Eastern Docks which was open from 8.30 am until 11.00 pm seven days a week and there was also an office in Croydon. In addition, there were permanent one-stop shop offices situated in Folkestone Road, Dover, Brighton, Margate and Hastings. There was also a dedicated information team providing presentations to schools, the Immigration Service and other organisations. Migrant Helpline employed a number of refugees particularly for their language skills.

3.13.2 New arrivals fell into two categories, those that were seeking support only and those seeking support and accommodation comprising between 80-90% of asylum seekers. Migrant Helpline organises temporary accommodation in Ashford, Dover and Margate. There were 540 bed spaces in total, 200 of these being in Dover.

3.13.3 Asylum seekers appeared to be attracted to the UK as it was perceived as giving asylum seekers a fair opportunity to put their case forward and many already had families in the country. Of those arriving only 11-12% were single people and with regard to men, a greater proportion were in the age group of 25 plus than under 25 years of age.

3.13.4 The one-stop shop was set up to help residents who lived in the Folkestone Road area and was a different part of the organisation to the reception offices.

3.13.5 Migrant Helpline received approximately £3 million for operational costs but this did not include the cost of housing. Therefore, the total turnover was in the region of £10 million per annum. It was identified that Migrant Helpline worked to Home Office Unit guidelines and there were no specific requirements for tendering in respect of accommodation for asylum seekers.

3.13.6 There were contracts for accommodation but these were commercially sensitive documents which had been approved by NASS. It was noted that contracts detailed specific standards on accommodation. Regular audits of accommodation were undertaken, and these were supplemented by other spot checks. Inspection was of an HMO standard in terms of occupancy levels in bedrooms etc.
Inquiry Report 14

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Dr Peter Le feuvre, Dover Health Centre
Date and Time of Evidence: Thursday 21 November 2002 at 6.30 pm
Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration)

Summary of Evidence

3.14.1 Dr Le feuvre of Dover Health Centre suggested that refugees could be placed into three groups; firstly, newly arrived adults, secondly, unaccompanied minors and thirdly, long term residents. All three distinct groups received the same medical care. The service was provided by Dr Le feuvre working in Margate and Dover as a salaried GP supported by a colleague who worked five sessions a week, a nurse who worked two sessions per week and a part-time health visitor. The medical care of newly arrived adults was part-funded by the Home Office.

3.14.2 Screening was carried out in accordance with the East Kent Health Protocol and standards laid down by the British Thoracic Society. This consisted of a series of questions, looking for a BCG scar and a HEAF test to look for immunity to TB, as x-ray tests had proved not to be reliable. It was confirmed that people did arrive in the country with TB. In the four years he had been employed, examining approximately 30,000 people, there had only been one new case of TB. Before 1999 asylum seekers would have seen local GP's and Port Health would have been involved to a lesser extent when an Immigration Officer considered it was necessary for a new arrival to see a health visitor.

3.14.3 He concluded that it was only in recent months that every new arrival had been seen as a matter of routine. Dr Le feuvre estimated that he saw between 15-20 patients per day in Dover and two thirds of these were new arrivals. ¹¹

¹¹ Following a request for further information from the Committee, Dr Le feuvre subsequently confirmed that the Home Office has for the past six months, funded primary health care for new arrivals as part of a pilot project ending December 2002. Funding for the primary health care services provided for refugees was the responsibility of the local health care trust.
Summary of Evidence

3.15.1 At the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration) meeting on Thursday 21 November 2002, further information was requested on the Friendship and Devries projects. The information was incorporated within this report.

3.15.2 Dover District Council was involved in a number of initiatives concerning asylum seeker and refugee issues locally. These included two projects aimed at raising awareness and improving community liaison:

The Friendship Project

3.15.3 The Friendship Project aimed to raise cultural awareness and build bridges of friendship between young people, local and refugee children.

3.15.4 The project had been set up three years ago by Dover District Council with the idea of bringing together both local children and children of asylum seekers during the school holidays. These initiatives were successful in their objective and activities were as diverse as the making and flying of kites to disco competitions.

3.15.5 Since that time the Friendship Project had developed to involve a large number of external agencies, working together with three main strands:

- Raising awareness.
- Education.
- Needs assessment.

3.15.6 A pack for use in schools in the Dover District had been launched almost three years ago. Recent external funding had now given the opportunity to make the pack available to schools throughout Kent, and it would be re-launched in Dover in February and Margate in March 2003. There has also been considerable interest in the pack by schools and local authorities nationally.

The Devries Project

3.15.7 This was a project for unaccompanied minors temporarily living in Dover.

3.15.8 The project was set up by Dover District Council and Social Services in late 2001. It was known that there were large numbers of unaccompanied minors aged 16-17
years living in Dover and waiting assessment. These young men, with time on their hands during the day, were becoming increasingly bored and frustrated, and there was an urgent need to occupy their time and alleviate any possible local tensions. The Devries Project, funded by the Social Services, provided opportunities for future personal development, while at the same time addressing community relations. A structured programme of activities was devised to include English classes, art therapy, sports activities and guest speakers to discuss awareness of various topics, including cultural, ethical, legal, medical and educational issues.

3.15.9 It was estimated that more than 2,000 young men had benefited from the project during the past year. The project was about to be assimilated into the Finding Your Feet Outreach Team, who had responsibility under the direction of Social Services, the welfare of unaccompanied minors in the County.
Summary of Evidence

3.16.1 At the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration) meeting on Thursday 21 November 2002, further information was requested on integration. The information was incorporated within this report.

3.16.2 Dover District Council recognised the importance of integration within the community, and echoed the proposals contained within the Home Office document entitled ‘Full and equal citizens – A strategy for the integration of refugees into the United Kingdom’ directed at Local Authorities. The publication proposed that integration, following full refugee acceptance, based on access to a number of key areas. These were:

- **Education and Training** – from children in school, further and higher education, through to professional and vocational training and re-qualification.

- **Employment** – preventing social exclusion by ensuring that refugees had the opportunity to reach their full potential. This could be achieved in a number of ways, including the identification and transfer of skills where appropriate, language provision, an appreciation of the job market in the UK and encouraging employers to understand the rights to work of refugees.

- **Healthcare** – including the raising of awareness amongst health care professionals and ensuring access to adequate healthcare was available for those refugees with both physical and mental health needs.

- **Accommodation** – for those with refugee status to be offered equal access to accommodation and housing benefit support if appropriate, assistance with applications for social housing and/or homelessness priority.

- **Community Development** – developing community support in areas where refugees choose to live is vital. This involved working with statutory and voluntary organisations to raise awareness of particular issues facing refugees. This included the implementation of local strategies which met the particular needs of that area. Funding opportunities to community organisations were being made available for those working with the refugee community.
3.16.3 Dover District Council endorsed the above strategy and believed that this should provide the basis for discussion on a local strategy. Those important elements of education in schools and colleges, with a particular emphasis on Citizenship, were vital in the promotion of integration. Equally important was the need for increased training, skills development and employment, possibly through the development of partnerships. These partnerships could also provide the framework for the creation of a centralised Resource Centre, based on the model now successfully operating in Thanet.
Inquiry Report 17

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Linda Golightly, Chief Environmental Health Officer
Dover District Council
Date of Evidence: Tuesday 3 December 2002
Source of Information: Information requested at the meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illega Immigration) on Thursday 21 November 2002

Summary of Evidence

3.17.1 At the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration) meeting on Thursday 21 November 2002, further information was requested regarding planning and HMO Standards. The information was incorporated within this report.

3.17.2 The Housing Act 1985 may apply to premises providing the only form of accommodation for people. There was an issue currently unresolved legally as to whether use of premises in this way rendered them 'houses in multiple occupation' and thus eligible for registration under the existing Dover District Council's schemes.

3.17.3 There was a case currently pending under the Dover District Council (Houses in Multiple Occupation) Control Scheme 1999 involving asylum seeker accommodation which was expected to be heard in the Magistrates Court in February 2003. Until that case had been considered by the courts, further comment was not appropriate.
Inquiry Report 18

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Nadeem Aziz, Managing Director and Tim Flisher, Development Control Manager, Dover District Council

Date of Evidence: Tuesday 3 December 2002

Source of Information: Information requested at the meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration) on Thursday 21 November 2002

Summary of Evidence

3.18.1 Concerns were raised by Commander Donald Shrubb about planning permission. The Managing Director responded to these concerns on 30 October 2002, an extract of this letter is given below:

"The more local issues as to whether the Migrant Helpline proposals require planning permission or registration under the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation Registration Scheme, are more complex. The Council's initial view, based upon information supplied by Migrant Helpline, is that provided the stays are as short as anticipated, meals are taken in a communal dining room and the properties concerned retained their character as hotels and other people with homes elsewhere continue to use these hotels, then no material change of use requiring planning permission is likely to take place.

I believe part of one of these hotels is also going to be used for induction purposes. Provided the essential basis of the premises remains as a hotel for staying guests for relatively short periods, then again, I think it is unlikely that a material change of use would occur which would require planning permission. Hotels typically use their function rooms for training.

However, our Environmental Health Officers have been attempting to work with Migrant Helpline to register these properties under the registration scheme. Migrant Helpline do not agree that they require registration. The Council has legal action in process against a landlord on a similar case and the outcome from that may well affect how future discussions with Migrant Helpline proceed.

With reference to your concerns on health and safety matters, I can assure you that we are undertaking inspections of the premises concerned and will ensure that standards are met and action taken where necessary.

I have accordingly asked the Chief Environmental Health Officer and the Chief Planning Officer to consider your letter and the issues raised to see whether the Council's position in dealing with Migrant Helpline
needs to be changed. In the meantime, we will continue to work with all agencies concerned to manage the situation and Malcolm Bowler will keep you appraised of this work."

3.18.2 Further to this the Development Control Manager had submitted the following response to the concerns raised by of the Sub-Committee:

"I have received no further information and am not aware of any change since the Managing Director’s letter of 30 October. Neither have I received any further advice from Migrant Helpline.

Further investigations into the East Cliff properties and any remaining on Folkestone Road (also the subject of third party concern) will be undertaken as resources and other priorities allow."
Inquiry Report 19

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Tony Stickels, Chief Housing Officer
Dover District Council

Date of Evidence: Tuesday 3 December 2002

Source of Information: Information requested at the meeting of the Scrutiny (3) Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration) on Thursday 21 November 2002

Summary of Evidence

3.19.1 This briefing paper relates to plans to restrict NASS support to certain categories of asylum seeker under sections 55 and 57 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 and was prepared from information presented by NASS at a meeting on 22 November 2002. Home office staff present included:

Andrew Dent, Project Manager at NASS for the implementation of Sections 55 and 57 of the Act;
Peter Wales, Project Manager for Asylum Screening Unit at IND; and
Richard Honeyman, NASS Policy, Secretariat and Communications.

3.19.2 Sections 55 and 57 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 restrict access to NASS support to two categories of asylum seeker. Both sections come into force on the 8 January 2003.

3.19.3 Section 55 will remove eligibility to NASS support from asylum seekers who do not apply for asylum "as soon as is reasonably practicable" after arrival at port, in other words those who are currently referred to as 'in-country' applicants. If such people are unable to give a "good reason" for their delay in applying for asylum they will not be able to access NASS support (or any local authority support) and will be left destitute. There are four exceptions to this:

(a) families with dependent children;
(b) those with special care needs;
(c) those claiming asylum in-county following a significant change in circumstances in their country of origin (provided they make their asylum claim at the earliest possible opportunity following that change in circumstances);
(d) those who can show that they would otherwise suffer treatment contrary to Article 3 of European Convention on Human Rights (the right not to be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment).

3.19.4 Section 57 will remove access to NASS support from those who do not provide "a clear coherent account of how they came to the UK ... [and if they fail] ... to provide
complete or accurate information about [their] circumstances or fall to co-operate with further enquiries”. This provision covers both port and in-country applicants.

3.19.5 In the cases of both sections the onus will be on the asylum applicant to produce evidence to back up their claims.

3.19.6 Based on an analysis of the asylum applicant intake of the past 5 weeks, NASS estimate that approximately 100 people per day will be effected by the provisions.

Process

3.19.7 The decision whether to refuse the right to apply for NASS support will be taken following the initial Immigration screening interview. Following the interview, Immigration will refer relevant applicants to a NASS screening team which will be based in Croydon, who will take the final decision to refuse or agree access to the NASS application process. As well as seeing those presenting in person in Croydon, this team will take telephone referrals from Immigration in the regions. Currently, the precise criteria for refusal of the right to apply for NASS support have not been finalised. When decided, these will, however, be made publicly available.

3.19.8 Once the decision has been taken, a letter will be issued to the applicant confirming either that they are or are not eligible to apply for NASS support. Those who are will be directed to the relevant voluntary sector agency to go through the NASS application process. There are no appeal rights against the decision to deny access to the NASS application process.

3.19.9 There will be a separate process for postal applications. However, it will not be possible to access the NASS application process, including Emergency Accommodation, until the initial immigration screening has been done and a letter confirming that the individual is eligible to apply to NASS has been issued. Until that time the applicant will be effectively destitute.

Communication Strategy

3.19.10 The run up to the implementation of the sections will be accompanied by a 'communication strategy' to ensure that all relevant stakeholders, including potential asylum seekers are aware of the new arrangements. NASS are pursuing meetings with the voluntary sector refugee agencies as well as with local authority representatives (although it should be said that the meeting at which this information was given was organised at very short notice and consequently suffered from a limited local authority attendance). In addition there will be a targeted media campaign kicked off by a ministerial statement during the week beginning 25 November and a press release which will be aimed at representatives of foreign media based in the UK as well as media outlets abroad. Posters will be displayed in ports outlining the need for potential applicants to apply for asylum at the earliest opportunity otherwise NASS support will be denied.

Outcomes

3.19.11 The Home Office believe that the provisions will not effect ‘genuine’ asylum seekers and that, "It is likely that a greater proportion of asylum applications will be made on entry at ports". Currently, although the implementation of the provisions will be monitored on a day-to-day basis there are no plans to undertake a formal review of the provisions to see whether the denial of support to approximately 100 asylum seekers per day does in fact have its intended outcome.
Removal of Local Authority Discretion

3.19.12 Section 55 also prevents those who have been refused NASS support for the above reasons being given support by local authorities under the following provisions:

(a) Section 29(1)(b) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (c.26) (accommodation pending review),

(b) Section 188(3) or 204(4) of the Housing Act 1996 (c.52) (accommodation pending review or appeal), and

(c) Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 (c.22) (promotion of well being).

3.19.13 The same section of the NIA Act also places a duty on local authorities to notify the Home Office of the details of asylum seekers if they are proposing to provide support to them. Separate guidance will be issued regarding this notification process.

3.19.14 While local authorities would be acting unlawfully if they did choose to support an asylum seeker refused support under the new provisions, those present at the meeting were unable to outline the sanctions which would be used against local authorities if they chose to do so.
Inquiry Report 20

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Tony Stickels, Chief Housing Officer
Dover District Council

Date of Evidence: Tuesday 3 December 2002

Source of Information: Information requested at the meeting of the Scrutiny (3)
Sub-Committee (Asylum Seekers/Illegal Immigration) on Thursday 21 November 2002

Summary of Evidence

A press release from the Immigration and Nationality Directorate – UK Borders ‘Extended’ – Sangatte to close on 30 December was submitted and the text is detailed below.

3.20.1 “The UK border will effectively soon start on the other side of the English Channel, and Sangatte Red Cross Centre will close completely on 30 December, four months earlier than planned, the Home Secretary announced today.

3.20.2 The ground-breaking deal with the French government means that the UK will be able to stop illegal immigrants before they even set off for England, and thousands of illegal immigrants will no longer be able to use Sangatte as a staging post on their way to the UK.

3.20.3 Speaking after the latest in a series of meetings with his French counterpart, Nicolas Sarkozy, Mr Blunkett said:

“This agreement not only closes Sangatte by the end of the year, it will also shut off the routes used by illegal immigrants to get to the UK from France. It effectively pushes our border controls across the Channel to the French coast, where stronger controls and tighter security will mean we can prevent illegal immigrants getting to the UK in the first place.

“I am very pleased that the Sangatte centre will close for good on 30 December – four months earlier than originally planned. The centre has been a magnet for illegal immigrants over the past three years. Around 67,000 people have passed through it, and it has been a festering sore in Anglo-French relations. Its closure is a major achievement.

“I pay tribute to Nicolas Sarkozy, who has taken decisive action to deal with illegal immigrants arriving in the Calais area since 5 November, when Sangatte closed to new arrivals. He has 1,000 gendarmes in the Calais area and has dealt with hundreds of illegal immigrants there. Six major trafficking gangs have been disrupted, and nearly 250 people smugglers arrested.
“Since our talks started, we have achieved vastly improved security at Frethun and Coquelles; UK immigration officers are working towards establishing whole new immigration controls at Calais; high-tech freight searching is rooting out illegal immigrants hidden in lorries travelling to the UK; the French authorities no longer tolerate illegal immigrants on the streets in Calais; and we have an agreement with the French and Belgians that will allow us to deploy immigration officers and detection equipment right along the European coast where needed. This is a breakthrough of enormous proportions and is a united front against the organised gangs who traffic human beings across Europe. The significance of what we are doing is clear.

“Today’s announcement also shows the importance of the radical reform measures in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, without which we would never have had secured this important deal with France and which were bitterly opposed throughout its Parliamentary journey.”

3.20.4 The full deal agreed between the French and UK Governments today is:

- the French Government will hand back the Sangatte centre to Eurotunnel on 30 December;
- high-tech freight searching of vehicles at Calais will be ramped up so that by Christmas, each and every vehicle travelling to England through Calais will be searched for clandestines;
- with the support of the French government, the UK will provide detection equipment for use at other French ports - initially at Cherbourg and Dunkirk. Along with our existing agreement with the Belgian government, this will effectively seal off French and Belgian ferry ports to clandestines and will protect the key section of the north European coast;
- both Governments will continue to work towards a formal legal agreement to enable UK immigration officers at Calais to operate full UK border controls;
- the UK Government will take responsibility for just under 1,000 Iraqi Kurds, who will be brought to the UK, not as asylum seekers, but on work visas;
- in addition, a number of Afghans (around 200 people) identified by the UNHCR as having strong family links to the UK will be admitted; and
- the French government will take responsibility for all the remaining residents of the Sangatte centre (around 300 people), those they are already housing elsewhere or have already deported (around 500). The French will also deal with any illegal immigrants who continue to turn up in the area (currently running at around 10 per week).

3.20.5 The Home Secretary said:

“We have struck a unique deal to close Sangatte once and for all. The French government has done an enormous amount to get us to this position, and the UK must also take some of the responsibility for solving this joint problem - clearly it is in our interest to stop the flow...
of illegal immigrants from France. After all, this is about people attempting to leave France to enter Britain, not the other way around.

“As part of the final closure deal we will take a fair proportion of those in and around Sangatte. They will not come here as asylum seekers, however, but on ‘work permits’, to contribute and pay taxes, rather than being dependent on support.

“I have made it clear repeatedly that there is a clear difference between economic migration routes and our asylum system, which is there to protect those fleeing persecution - it is not a way for people to come here simply because they want to work. We are opening up more and more ways for people to come and work here legally in ways which boost our economy. In addition we are looking at targeting economic migration routes in the countries and regions which either generate large numbers of unfounded asylum claims or through which large numbers transit on their way to the UK. This work will build on the measures already announced by myself and the Chancellor in the pre budget report. “

3.20.6 The wider deal with France, previously announced, includes:

- vastly improved security at Frethun and Coquelles to stop clandestine hiding on trains - including better fencing, security lighting and video surveillance, infrared barriers, alarm systems, plus more gendarmes and security personnel;
- UK immigration officers working closely with their French counterparts to check passengers at Calais to stop those without proper documents before they even set off for Britain;
- high-tech searching of vehicles at Calais to root out would-be clandestines hidden in vehicles before they leave France; and
- joint intelligence work to disrupt trafficking routes.

3.20.7 At a domestic level, both governments are tightening up their asylum systems. The French government is bringing in tough new immigration measures and is to deploy an additional 750 border police. The UK Government has brought in a raft of measures to tackle asylum abuse - including ending the ability of asylum seekers to work, ending support for those who apply late, introducing a list of safe countries from which asylum claims will be presumed to be unfounded and will have no right of appeal in the UK, and tackling illegal working. That process continued last week when new restrictions on the use of Exceptional Leave to Remain were confirmed.

3.20.8 The UK Government will continue to work with the French government to deal with the specific problems at the channel border, but will also work with other European governments, including Belgium and the Netherlands as a priority. Asylum is ultimately a European issue, which needs a European response.

Notes

3.20.9 Sangatte closed it doors to new entrants on 5 November 2002 (Home Office press notice 289/02).
3.20.10 The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act received Royal Assent on 8 November 2002 (Home Office press notice 294/02).

3.20.11 The Home Secretary announced the review of Exceptional Leave to Remove (ELR) on 7 November 2002 (Home Office press notice 267/02) and the outcome of that review was announced on 29 November 2002 (Home Office press notice 332/02).

3.20.12 Local (provisional) management figures show the impact of the agreement with France:

3.20.13 Frethun: There has been significant progress at Frethun freight yard in terms of security infrastructure and personnel. The 4km long and 3m high double fence around the site is now complete; 100 gendarmes have been posted to Frethun and the surrounding areas since August; and there are also around 35 SNCF security personnel patrolling the area. Following the improved security controls at Frethun, clandestine entrants arriving at Dollands Moor freight yard have fallen from nearly 400 in April to only seven in the first three weeks of November.

3.20.14 Freight searching at Calais: Since September the UK has lent the French authorities a heartbeat sensor to check freight at Calais, and a second sensor will be provided shortly. Two Passive Millimetric Wave Imagers have also been operating at the port since October. The Calais port authority will have the capability to search 100 per cent of road freight by Christmas.

3.20.15 UK immigration officers at Calais: UK immigration officers have been in place at Calais seaport since 20 August. To date they have refused boarding to 186 passengers. They assist their French counterparts as part of phased implementation of juxtaposed controls at Calais. They are there to assist in the detection of forged documents, not to make a decision about whether someone should be allowed to leave France for England. However, they will advise the French authorities as to whether the documents are likely to be accepted in the UK. The French and UK governments are discussing the terms of a bi-lateral agreement that will enable UK immigration officers to operate frontier control powers within a defined control zone in Calais and, where needed, at other French ports. These arrangements will also enable French officers to operate in Dover.

3.20.16 Eurostar: Since June 2001, the UK has been operating immigration controls at Eurostar stations in France which have significantly cut the numbers of passengers without proper documents arriving at Waterloo from 250 to a handful each week.

3.20.17 Coquelles: Eurotunnel has significantly increased security around its Coquelles depot. These measures have significantly reduced the number of illegal immigrants detected at Cheriton from 808 clandestine entrants in July 2001 to 70 so far this month."
Inquiry Report 21

Summary of Evidence

3.21.1 In response to a question by the Committee about what action had been taken in schools to promote integration and greater understanding, it was identified that this involved work with the Safe Schools Unit in schools across Dover and also, under the Disability Discrimination Act schools were required to establish a Race Equalities Policy. The Local Education Authority had supported this by producing guidance and training. This was being closely monitored.

3.21.2 A request for details of the average waiting time for places in schools was made and it was stated that places should be available to children immediately on application to a suitable school. However, some popular schools were full and parents might not be willing to accept places in others. If appeals were needed, this could take several weeks. If an admission was outstanding by more than one week, the case was taken up specifically by the District Schools Officer.

3.21.3 The resources available for adult education for asylum seekers were requested and the response given was that Kent Adult Education Service (KAES) received Home Office funding (currently until the end of February 2003) via the European Refugee Fund of £119.2k. These funds were used in centres and schools to support families to acquire skills in English. KAES had no further specific funding for Asylum Seekers support. However, KCC Arts and Libraries had a specifically funded project in the Dover area, 'Words Without Frontiers'.

12 Full details of this project are given at Appendix C.
3.22.1 Inspector Paul Ludwig answered questions on behalf of the Community Liaison Officer, PC Cronin.

3.22.2 There had not been any real impact on safety and security in the Dover District from the continued arrival of asylum seekers. The Community Liaison Officer worked with organisations such as the YMCA, Friendship Project, the Devries Project, Migrant Helpline, Kent County Council, Dover District Council and representatives in the local community to prevent tension rising. The Community Liaison Officer was responsible for reporting on any difficulties and dealing with "hate" crime. Many problems had been resolved through understanding the issues involved, communicating with people and formulating appropriate responses. The vast majority of the work undertaken was pre-emptive to stop possible problems developing into major issues.

3.22.3 The Inspector confirmed that there was an enforcement team in place to deal with any drug problems in the Priory Ward. However, there was no evidence to link drugs in Dover with the presence of asylum seekers. As well as the Community Liaison Officer, there was PC Kemp, who was a project officer for the Priory and St Radigunds Wards. The post of Community Liaison Officer had not been established directly as a result of the introduction of asylum seekers into the local community but was primarily dedicated to the issues surrounding asylum seekers in the community. There were no further Police resources allocated specifically to asylum seekers. The Priory Ward was focused upon by the Police and the Project Officer, PC Kent had been introduced for that reason. All crime was recorded on a computer system. Any issue that was believed to involve asylum seekers or racism, was tagged on the system for further investigation to consider whether any particular tensions were developing within the local community. It was his belief that there were more incidents of violence between asylum seekers than between asylum seekers and the local community.
Inquiry Report 23

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Nigel Hewitt, District Manager and Mary Blanche, Head of the Asylum Seekers and Refugee Service Unit of Kent County Council Social Services

Date of Evidence: Thursday 12 December 2002

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee

Summary of Evidence

3.23.1 Nigel Hewitt, District Manager, Kent County Council Social Services informed the Committee that unaccompanied minors in Dover were supported by the 'Finding Your Feet' outreach team. This team had a service level agreement with KCC and entered into agreements for the provision of accommodation. Key workers of the outreach team visited accommodation on a daily basis and reported problems if it was sub-standard in any way. In cases where there had been problems previously, steps had been taken to move unaccompanied minors to different accommodation. Asylum seekers were required to sign a "service contract" which was effectively a behavioural agreement relating to their conduct whilst in temporary accommodation. It was emphasised that they were not placed in permanent accommodation whilst in Dover.

3.23.2 There was important work to be done in providing a basic induction to asylum seekers which explained what was happening to them whilst in the UK. This was separate to the induction process operated by Migrant Helpline. Unaccompanied minors received a basic education and were encouraged to participate in arts and leisure projects. Assessments were undertaken by KCC, following which, they were moved to other parts of Kent and the UK. As part of the assessment process, their psychological care needs were considered and there was liaison with the Mental Health and Adolescent Team, as appropriate. However, it was noted that psychological problems were rarely encountered at an early stage, with trauma more likely to develop over a longer period.

3.23.3 Mary Blanche, Head of the Asylum Seekers and Refugee Service Unit, explained that KCC was seeking to move unaccompanied minors out of Dover. At any one time, there were between 40-120 minors within the town and at present there were 112 in bed and breakfast accommodation at Folkestone Road. A tendering process would commence shortly seeking other accommodation providers. Negotiations were due to be held with local authorities in the north west of England with a view to them taking responsibility for young asylum seekers. Interviews, in connection with this proposal, would be held with Manchester City Council in the week commencing 15 December 2002.
Inquiry Report 24

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Annie Ledger, Chief Executive, Migrant Helpline

Date of Evidence: Thursday 12 December 2002

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee

Summary of Evidence

3.24.1 Annie Ledger, Chief Executive of Migrant Helpline reported that consultation was carried out with local authorities if practices were changed. With regard to the introduction of new contracts for temporary accommodation in the East Cliff area, consultation had been carried out with Dover District Council who had raised no objection to the proposal and also with NASS, the Police and the local MP. Since January 2002 an induction programme had been piloted in the Folkestone Road and East Cliff areas. At Ashford it had been established that it was better to carry out the induction process at one centre and on that basis, a decision was taken to consolidate induction sites within Dover at East Cliff. This was achieved through using existing contracted and spot booked accommodation. This had reduced the contracted accommodation from 250 bed spaces to 200 bed spaces and spot bookings from 150 to 30. In turn, this had increased the capacity at Margate and Ashford. Migrant Helpline had attended meetings with residents including the Priory Residents’ Forum and representatives of East Cliff and acknowledged it was important to deal with the issues and concerns of the local community. NASS guidance stated that consultation must be carried out with local authorities who responded on behalf of local residents. The grant agreement between NASS and Migrant Helpline was a public document available for inspection on the Home Office website.

3.24.2 The accommodation used in Margate was a hotel and in Ashford it was a former residential care home. When accommodation was allocated for asylum seekers it was not segregated by nationality or ethnic group. However, clients were asked to place asylum seekers sensitively. Migrant Helpline did not believe it was necessary to separate ethnic groups on the basis that asylum seekers were accommodated locally for a short period of time being usually between one and two weeks. The incidents between ethnic groups had been rare, isolated incidents and in such circumstances the offenders had been moved.

3.24.3 Jobs had been created in the community arising from the presence of asylum seekers. For example, the accommodation providers engaged staff and Migrant Helpline employed staff to provide induction. Approximately 100 staff were employed by Migrant Helpline. An amount of £2.8 million was spent on operational costs in Kent, Sussex and Croydon. The total budget for the 2001/02 financial year was approximately £10 million, this included costs directly refundable by NASS.

3.24.4 The contract between Migrant Helpline and accommodation providers required that accommodation providers should be acquainted with all statutory requirements. This was reviewed by a specialist officer employed by Migrant Helpline who was
experienced in contract monitoring. Specific items that were examined included the local authority rates bill, gas and electricity certificates, the last local authority public health inspection if appropriate, fire certificates and the procedures for staff. Poor quality housing could become an issue for those asylum seekers who were given the right to live in the UK and became caught in the "poverty trap".

3.24.5 Whilst Migrant Helpline did not provide legal advice to asylum seekers, it did refer clients to specialist solicitors and the Refugee Centre. It also produced a fact sheet which highlighted what to look out for as there was some bad practice and Migrant Helpline wished asylum seekers to avoid this.

3.24.6 Migrant Helpline had not been asked to become involved in providing care for ex-residents of Sangatte and it was understood that arrangements had been made by the Government to house these people outside of the Dover District.

3.24.7 Migrant Helpline was concerned about the proposed changes in legislation to be enforced on 8 January 2003 particularly Section 55 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002\(^\text{12}\). This Section restricted the rights of support for asylum seekers with the onus being placed on asylum seekers to claim asylum, as soon as practicably possible, when reaching the UK. 50% of cases were currently classified as 'in-country' cases, including those asylum seekers found in service stations. With effect from 8 January 2003, these cases would go through a further process to determine whether they had claimed asylum as soon as practicably possible. This did not include families with dependents or special needs cases. The NASS team would then make a final decision within 24 hours. There was concern that those asylum seekers would not be able to access services during the waiting period and that those who did not meet the new criteria would not be supported. Currently Migrant Helpline was consulting the local MP and other voluntary organisations to make representations to Beverley Hughes MP who was the Government Minister concerned. It was confirmed that whilst there would be an increase in the number of people unable to access support, this would probably represent only a minority of cases. There was great concern for the frontline staff and individuals who would be affected.

3.24.8 Screening and healthcare of new arrivals in the District was the responsibility of the East Kent Coastal Primary Healthcare Trust and NASS. There had been two pilot projects in operation. The first was the health assessment scheme at Millbank, Ashford hosted by Shepway Primary Healthcare Trust. This had commenced operation in March 2002 and would run to January 2003. During November, two nurses had been placed at Cliff Court Hotel in the Dover District to treat any new arrivals with primary healthcare needs. These nurses saw on average 20 people per day. Screening for tuberculosis was funded by NASS. The scheme had begun in June and had been extended to January 2003. This service was provided by the Kent and Medway Health Infection Protection Unit and to date 2,465 people had been examined. This represented 85% of eligible asylum seekers. HEAF tests (in respect of TB) were carried out and depending upon the outcome cases were referred for appropriate healthcare. Any person presenting themselves, would be given a test regardless of whether there was evidence of BCG scar. No cases of TB had been detected during this pilot scheme\(^\text{13}\).

---

\(^{12}\) Further details of government proposals are attached at Appendix D.

\(^{13}\) Further information on healthcare provided by NASS is detailed in paragraph 3.29.2.
3.24.9 With regard to the question of contracts, it was stated that all contracts would have to be approved by the procurement section of NASS and prior to approval, it would have to be satisfied that local authorities had been consulted.
Inquiry Report 25

Name of Person Giving Evidence: John Hughes, Inspector of Immigration, Immigration Service
Date of Evidence: Thursday 12 December 2002
Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee

Summary of Evidence

3.25.1 John Hughes of the Immigration Service stated that the Sangatte refugee camp had provided accommodation for between 1,500-1,700 people, acting as a convenient staging post prior to entry to the UK via the Channel Tunnel. It was difficult to assess the overall impact of the closure of Sangatte. However it would make the main route of entry into the UK less easy to access, particularly following the introduction of new security measures at the Port of Dover, Calais and the Channel Tunnel. Questioning of asylum seekers by the Immigration Service had revealed that the majority had stayed at Sangatte before seeking entry into the UK. A more informed judgment concerning the impact of Sangatte's closure would be possible in 6-12 months time.

3.25.2 There were two main methods of passage into the UK: firstly, where asylum seekers presented themselves for asylum immediately on arrival at Dover and secondly, through clandestine entry, often aided by several networks of racketeers based near to Sangatte, following which they were either detected at the Port or picked up by the Police close to the M20. Difficulties existed regarding the categorisation of "port of entry" and "in-country" applicants. However, it was generally understood that if an individual had been transported into the country and had not stopped at Dover but had taken the first opportunity to claim asylum on disembarking from their mode of transport, they would be entitled to support.

3.25.3 There was an excellent working relationship between Kent Police and the Immigration Service and persons found by the Police inland were brought back to Dover for screening. There were different levels of screening ranging from those persons with no documentation to those with a passport and supporting papers. Where there was no documentation, it was virtually impossible to verify the identity of the individuals concerned particularly those fleeing regimes in Iran, Iraq etc. All new asylum applicants to the UK were finger printed and a database was being created by member states of the European Union. National security was an important issue and Immigration Officers received training on interview techniques including dealing with potential terrorists. There was a close working relationship with Special Branch which covered all points of entry to the UK. There was a movement towards intelligence based controls so that resources were not wasted, with close liaison with counterparts in France and Belgium. It was confirmed that whilst there had been some cases of interest referred by the Immigration Service for further investigation, no known terrorists had sought entry to the UK via Dover during the past six months.
3.25.4 "Juxtaposed" controls were being developed in conjunction with the French authorities which could lead to all immigration control being situated in Calais rather than in both Calais and Dover as at present. This would copy a similar initiative being operated in respect of the rail route from London Waterloo Station to Paris where all immigration controls were in Paris. The first phase of the project was being undertaken currently. It was a major project involving the Home Secretary (UK) and the Interior Minister (France). It also had major implications for the Dover Harbour Board as it could result in the transfer of between 200 and 300 staff to Calais. It was anticipated that the project would be completed within approximately 18 months with the new juxtaposed controls being introduced at that time.
Inquiry Report 26

Summary of Evidence

3.26.1 Gwyn Prosser MP stated that the Home Office statistics published for 2001 showed that 71,365 people had applied for asylum. During 2001, 119,015 decisions had been made “which could include applications received before 2001” and of these 11,180 had received asylum, 19,845 had been granted exceptional leave to remain and 87,990 had been refused. For the most recent quarter of 2002, 22,560 people had applied for asylum and during that period 20,415 decisions had been made, of these 2,080 had achieved refugee status, 4,540 had been granted exceptional leave to remain and 13,795 had been refused. The future removal of the right to exceptional leave to remain would impact on the number of refugees. It was suggested that the policy of removal was not very successful as the targets set for the previous year had been missed and the figures for the current year were not on target. There were several factors causing difficulty in removal; firstly there was the human factor where it was difficult to remove those families that had become part of the local community and society and secondly, there was difficulty in tracking those who failed tests, had sought jobs in the black economy and disappeared. The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 was aiming to address this problem and included a provision for an accommodation centre. This would give a more structured arrangement and would therefore give more control as all services would be provided on the same site. Cases could be fast-tracked and removing those who failed to gain asylum seeker status would become easier.

3.26.2 It was suggested that Sangatte had been set up originally by the Red Cross to meet humanitarian needs and originally to house families and groups. However, the situation had changed and now it was mostly filled with single people. There had been several serious disturbances and it was felt that it had become a focal point for asylum seekers and traffickers. These factors had made it difficult to support the presence of Sangatte. Mr Prosser had withdrawn his support when one of the disturbances resulted in a murder and since then he had pressed for closure. The Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 was passed with the agreement to close Sangatte and reduce the number of illegal entries. As a result of the agreement, a tolerated presence in France had been removed and former residents of Sangatte would now be processed as asylum seekers. The UK had taken a quarter of those at Sangatte, the other three quarters had remained in France to be processed and invited to seek asylum in that country.

3.26.3 The new legislation to be introduced in January 2003 would mainly affect those who were late claimants or who did not “declare at port”, which would be a relatively small number of people. Representations had been made to the Minister, Beverley Hughes MP, on how these people would be supported but no contingency plans had
been drawn up with voluntary organisations for dealing with potential problems. Discussions had been held between the local MP, Beverley Hughes MP, and David Blunkett's advisor and it had been identified that provided individuals had taken every reasonable opportunity to declare themselves as asylum seekers, then they would receive support. For example, if they were found on the M20 this would be accepted as an "at port" entry. It was confirmed that the primary aim of the legislation was to prevent trafficking.

3.26.3 On a related matter, it was stated that there had been no moves to sign the Shengen agreement and the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 would be enforced. This hopefully would stop the "pull factor" and tighten up security. To put the situation in context, over the past five years there had been an increased number of asylum seekers in 1996, 1997 and 1998 into the Dover District area. In August 1999 it was close to being a crisis situation with social tensions running high locally. The Immigration and Nationality Act provided local authorities with the power to disperse asylum seekers. The number of asylum seekers moving into the Dover District was controlled and no new asylum seekers were accommodated in Dover, merely received, inducted and then dispersed. There were some asylum seekers who returned to Dover but they were either those with family in the District or those who related to Dover as their first experience of the UK.
Inquiry Report 27

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Councillor Mrs Janet Birkett, Portfolio Holder for Community, Dover District Council

Date of Evidence: Thursday 12 December 2002

Source of Information: Meeting of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee

Summary of Evidence

3.27.1 Councillor Mrs Birkett, Portfolio Holder for Community referred to the Court case currently pending relating to the Council's Houses in Multiple Occupation control scheme. She hoped that the Court's ruling would be decisive and should it find in favour of the Council, that the providers of asylum seeker accommodation and Migrant Helpline would co-operate with the Council in seeking registration of premises used to house asylum seekers. Equally, if the Court ruled against the requirement for HMO registration, DDC would accept that decision immediately.

3.27.2 There were difficulties with Council officers obtaining access to premises but the Council's Environmental Health Officers did conduct regular inspections of accommodation in the private rented housing sector. The Chief Environmental Health Officer added that the Council had broad powers of entry and could access premises for a legitimate purpose. If access was denied the Council could apply for an entry warrant at the Magistrates Court.

3.27.3 If conditions were unsatisfactory and not remedied by the management of the premises, action was taken by the Council for example, a landlord had been fined £16,000 plus costs in an action taken by the Council two years previously. The purpose of the HMO registration scheme was to ensure that properties used for housing people were managed properly and had the correct facilities. One third of accommodation in the private rented sector within the District was unfit for human habitation. Therefore, following risk assessments by the Council's officers, cases were prioritised with those posing the highest risk to the public being dealt with first.

3.27.4 In response to rumours about the possible use of the County Hotel for accommodating asylum seekers, it was identified that the Council was aware of the speculation and was taking steps to investigate this matter. It was confirmed that the Council had not been advised of such a proposal.

3.27.5 Irresponsible reporting by the local press was highlighted in covering stories about asylum seekers and it was suggested that this raised tensions within local communities and heightened the level of public concern.

3.27.6 The Portfolio Holder referred to advice supplied by the Development Control Manager about the change of use of premises. It was acknowledged that there was local concern about the use of guest houses and bed and breakfast accommodation to house asylum seekers. However, this might not be a material change such as to require planning permission and each case had to be carefully evaluated.
examined to determine its particular circumstances. A number of factors had to be taken into account to assess the degree to which the character of the use had changed. These included any change in the functioning of the business, for example, did it retain the appearance and trappings of a conventional operation, offering services to calling visitors and how it provided services to asylum seekers, for example, in what way they obtained their meals and other services and the extent to which these services were provided on a communal basis. In summary, it would be the circumstances of each individual case which would determine whether or not planning permission was necessary.

3.27.7 It was identified that the Council would visit each of the properties at East Cliff and Folkestone Road which had been the subject of letters of concern, to carry out proper assessments of their current operations. If it was concluded that planning permission was required, the owners would be invited to apply. If they failed to do so and the use continued, enforcement action would be considered. However, this would be justified only if clear and material harm was being caused to the amenity of local residents, the character of the area or some other planning issue. It was clarified that there was no specific local plan policy on accommodation for asylum seekers.

3.27.8 In respect to the Council’s commitment to promote racial equality and integration within the local community, it was indicated that the Council was fully committed to fulfilling the requirements of its Equal Opportunities Policy which stated:

"The Council is committed to:

- Opposing all forms of discrimination – direct and indirect. It will actively oppose discrimination carried out on the grounds of race, gender, gender reassignment, colour, ethnicity or national origin, nationality (including citizenship), religion ... (extract).

- Promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial and other groups."

The Policy identified the Council’s duties under relevant legislation and it was able to influence many areas of potential inequality, including policy making, service delivery, employment and partnership working. Appropriate responsibilities for implementation were allocated to Members, the Managing Director, Directors, managers and employees.

3.27.9 Different methods had been used to address these issues including the appointment of a Community Liaison Officer to help raise awareness locally, promotion of multi-agency project work, dealing with individual and community issues and helping to tackle discrimination. It had also been pro-active in the delivery of its housing services, supporting the integration of people with different ethnic backgrounds into local communities, ensuring that tenants were aware of their responsibilities under the Council’s conditions of tenancy through a specific policy to tackle racial harassment, ethnic monitoring of housing applications and the operation, as a partner, of a 24 hour racial incident hotline.

3.27.10 It was acknowledged that there was a need for a more integrated and co-ordinated approach to the monitoring of racial incidents, particularly between the Police and the Council supported by an overall strategy for the future. The Council had a
responsibility to take the lead on this matter and build upon the progress which had already been made.
Summary of Evidence

3.28.1 The Portfolio Holder for Community, Councillor Mrs Janet Birkett (responding on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration) identified that there were a number of potential sources of funding for community facilities including SRB, the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, European Funding and the Lottery Fund. Additional opportunities arose at particular times, for instance there had been two invitations from the Home Office to bid for European funding. The Council had submitted bids to establish a multi-cultural resource centre project similar to that operating in the Thanet District at Margate\(^{14}\), one of which was a joint bid in conjunction with KCC. Regrettably, both applications had been unsuccessful\(^{15}\) but the Kent Refugee Action Network had managed to obtain funding for a separate project.

3.28.2 There were several avenues of SRB funding dependent upon the geographical location of the project. The Dover SRB fund covered wards at Buckland, St Radigunds, Castle, Barton, Priory, Town and Pier, Tower Hamlets and Pineham (the Old Park area). SRB funding was available in the wards (within appropriate local authority areas) covered by the former East Kent Coalfield including Little Stour, Marshside, Barham Downs, Shepherdswell with Coldred, Ash, Sandwich, Worth, Woodnesborough with Staple, Noninstone, Eastry, North Deal, Middle Deal, Mongeham, Ringwould, St Margaret's, Cornilo, Eythorne, Aylesham and Mill Hill.

3.28.3 Applications could be made up to a maximum of £5,000 from the relevant area funds. However, up to the present time, only one application for a project concerning asylum seekers/refugees had been considered for SRB funding and this application had been unsuccessful. An application was being processed currently and it was expected to be presented to the SRB Panel early in the New Year. Both applications related to the Dover fund with no applications to date being received in respect of the coalfields area. Therefore, it had to be concluded that the presence of asylum seekers and refugees had not made a significant impact upon current SRB funding within the District.

---

\(^{14}\) Details of this project are attached at Appendix D.

\(^{15}\) Please see paragraphs 3.31.2 and 3.31.3.
Summary of Evidence

3.29.1 Provided below are the responses supplied by Myra Jarvis, Induction Centre Project Manager of the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Directorate in response to requests made for further information by the Committee in respect of what percentage of new arrivals were screened? Was it possible to screen all new arrivals? Were there sound arrangements in place for the treatment of conditions such as TB?

3.29.2 The response given was that there were two discrete health services used in Dover to provide for the health needs of new arrivals through Dover:

(a) Port Medical Inspector

All arrivals were seen by an Immigration Officer and could be referred to the Port Medical Inspector if:

- health or medical treatment was stated as a reason for coming to the United Kingdom;
- the person appeared not to be in good physical or mental health;
- the person was seeking leave to enter the UK for a period of more than 6 months.

(b) Induction Centre health screening

Following the Home Secretary’s announcement in October 2001 outlining the new asylum process, a pilot induction centre had opened in Dover in January 2002. In June 2002, the pilot was expanded to include health screening. The health screening pilot was commissioned by the Home Office to understand the usefulness and impact of a standardised health service for newly arrived asylum applicants. The service was provided by local Primary Care Trusts.

The Home Office contracted with Migrant Helpline to provide a ‘Reception Assistant’ function for new asylum applicants arriving through Dover. As part of this role, Migrant Helpline scheduled the voluntary health appointment with the local PCT. The appointment included:

- a TB screening examination;
• health assessment identifying the applicant’s medical history including vaccinations;

• identification of primary care needs, including treatment and/or referral as required.

Medical rooms were provided at each main accommodation site in Ashford, Margate and Dover. The service was voluntary but take up had been high. Currently the health assessment element of the service was only available for applicants resident in Ashford, and therefore covered approximately a third of applicants. The TB facility had capacity for all new asylum applicants to be screened and is available at all sites. By October, over 3000 applicants (greater than 80%) had been screened for TB, and no cases of TB had been detected.

3.29.3 The Committee had also asked who would authorise the movement of newly arrived asylum seekers from one location to another, as had recently happened in the Dover District with the relocation of newly arrived asylum seekers from the Folkestone Road area to East Cliff?

The response received was that Migrant Helpline was responsible for negotiating new accommodation contracts in Dover and the surrounding area. Accommodation contracts were held directly between Migrant Helpline and the accommodation provider. During the recent change in accommodation location from Folkestone Road to East Cliff, Migrant Helpline consulted Dover District Council and the local MP. The Home Office approved the accommodation contracts before signature. For the contract to be approved by the Home Office, value for money had to be demonstrated.

3.29.4 The Committee had questioned which other bodies/organisations were co-ordinated within the District on Asylum Seekers?

The response received was that Paul Tobin acted as Regional Manager in the Dover area on behalf of NASS and he had regular liaison with Kent Police and Kent County Council.

3.29.5 A further question was what were the procedures for clearing the contracts for temporary accommodation proposed by Migrant Helpline, does the process require competitive tendering?

The response referred the Committee to the answer provided at 3.29.3.
Inquiry Report 30

Name of Person Giving Evidence: Ian Craig, Assistant Director of Education, Kent County Council
Date of Evidence: Monday 16 December 2002
Source of Information: Further information requested at the meeting of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee

Summary of Evidence

3.30.1 In response to a request for further information about the response given at paragraph 3.21.3 it was identified that the figure of £119.2k was derived from the Home Office allocation of 195,363 Euros at a rate of 1 Euro = £0.6126 at the time. The budget heading shown of £106.6k was for the current financial year commencing April 2002 and so excluded monies for February and March 2002.

English Pathways ESOL Project (D051)

Total allocated £106.600

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Allocated</th>
<th>Spent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries</td>
<td>010</td>
<td>54700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessional</td>
<td>011</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APTC staff</td>
<td>040</td>
<td>19200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscriptions</td>
<td>060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>7200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSA</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>354</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>355</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td></td>
<td>13500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>43955.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.30.2 There was a gap in provision for pre-school children and the Project provided English classes to support them into school which was traumatic enough for most children. Kent Adult Education Service had a well established Family Learning provision that was combined with ESOL (English as a second language) to create an innovative approach. Mothers and their young children were learning English together.

3.30.3 The Project also supported integration in other ways and the South East Kent Refugee Information Sharing Group had been established. So far twenty two organisations had participated and already a few of the students had moved into the KRAN (Kent Refugee Action Network) mentoring system that was helping refugees into training and employment.
3.30.4 Finally, the school-aged children were being supported with summer holiday English classes and liaising with colleagues in schools with other support. This project could also benefit asylum seeker families.
Summary of Evidence

3.31.1 Two bids for community facilities had been submitted by the Council.

3.31.2 Bid 1: European Refugee Fund 2001

KCC Social Services had led and submitted two joint bids to the Home Office on behalf of the Kent Strategic Reference Group (Refugees and Asylum Seekers), described as “Conditions for Reception” and “Integration”. The two bids were linked but the District Council was only identified as a partner for the Integration Project, which also involved KCC, Shepway and Thanet District Councils, Kent Adult Education Service, Kent Refugee Action Network and Kent Police.

The aim of the Integration Project was to provide extra services, such as drop-in facilities, language training, cultural awareness and community liaison, covering asylum seekers arriving before April 2000, refugees and unaccompanied minors. The bid was for 50% of the identified costs (£327,353), and match funding had already been committed by partner organisations. The match funding element for the District Council was the Community Liaison Officer’s staffing cost. The bids were submitted in December 2000. Funding applications were oversubscribed and no specific reasons were given for being unsuccessful.

3.31.3 Bid 2: Home Office Challenge Fund for Integration 2001

The Dover District LRA Group had decided to respond to this funding opportunity, the first stage of which invited expressions of interest rather than detailed bids. A proposal was put forward based on the model of the Community Resource Centre operating at Thanet, seeking a set-up grant of £50,000, similar funding to that received from the European Fund by Thanet District Council. The expression of interest was submitted by the Director of Health and Housing, on behalf of the LRA Group, in April 2001. The reply from the Home Office stating that the bid was unsuccessful mentioned that 350 applications had been received. No individual reasons were given, but the most common reasons projects were not selected included:

The Project:

(a) targeted asylum seekers instead of, or as well as, refugees.
(b) offered less value in comparison with similar projects.
(c) would not add value to key areas of integration strategy.
(d) was too expensive given the limited nature of funds.
Section 4: Issues Report

A summary of the issues considered by the Committee in determining its recommendations
Issues Report

Arising from the analysis of evidence submitted, the following issues were identified:

4.1.1 Government Policy and Legislative Framework

- Changes in support for asylum seekers
  
  Sections 55 to 57 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 could have implications for asylum seekers and the local community restricting NASS support for certain categories of asylum seeker.

- Support from other authorities for unaccompanied minors
  
  KCC Social Services were seeking to move unaccompanied minors out of Dover which could reduce the number of unaccompanied minors in the town.

- Immigration Controls
  
  A proposal was being considered to change immigration controls involving the transfer of the Immigration Service from Dover to Calais to establish "juxtaposed" controls in France.

- Closure of Sangatte
  
  The recent closure of Sangatte could have an impact upon the level of immigration through Dover.

4.1.1 The Council's Role

- Integration and Raising Awareness
  
  A coherent Council strategy to promote racial equality and integration was needed.

- Planning and Environmental Health Issues
  
  Information was supplied by officers of the District Council about planning matters, the right of access to premises and an action being taken in Court in respect of the Council's "Houses in Multiple Occupation Scheme" but these issues could require further action.

- Multi-agency resource centre
  
  The creation of a multi-agency resource centre at Margate was recognised as being a positive initiative and a similar facility should be sought for Dover.

- Communications within the Local Authority
  
  There appeared to be scope for improving the supply of information, consultation and communication with Ward Councillors in respect of
decisions which could have an impact upon asylum seekers and local residents.

4.1.2 Asylum Seekers

- Recreational Facilities
  The involvement of asylum seekers in arts projects and recreational activities was noted but it was considered that further facilities were required which would benefit asylum seekers and also the community as a whole.

- Health Screening and Primary Healthcare
  There were concerns about funding and access to services following the receipt of evidence about health screening and primary healthcare from NASS, Migrant Helpline and the local GP.

- Education Services
  Education was highlighted during the review as being crucial to the process of integrating asylum seekers and refugees within communities.

4.1.3 The Local Community

- Providers of accommodation
  KCC Social Services were seeking to identify another provider of accommodation which could reduce the demand for accommodation in Dover.

- Planning and Environmental Health
  Representatives of East Cliff and Athol Terrace, and the Priory Forum had sought the assistance and if appropriate, the intervention of the Council regarding the "change of use" of premises being used to house asylum seekers, health and safety issues at these premises and the need for them to be registered as HMO's.

4.1.4 Further Issue identified by the Committee

- Removal of People from the UK
  The need to ensure that people were removed from the UK after their applications for asylum were rejected was highlighted.
Section 5: Audit Report

A report on the overview process by the Council’s Audit and Performance Unit
Audit Report

5.1.1 Process:

The Review undertaken is considered to have followed the recommended four-stage overview process, being briefly:

- Definition of the scope and methodology
- A research paper providing background information
- Documentation showing the extent of the investigation
- A final analysis

5.1.2 Rationale for the Review:

Although not directly linked to the Corporate Plan, the issue of Asylum Seekers and Illegal Immigrants has a high profile within the District. The local media regularly includes articles concerning the subject, and it is therefore considered appropriate that a review of the Councils activities in relation to the performance of its statutory duties was undertaken.

5.1.3 Stage 1:

The documentation clearly shows the objective of the review, the people involved and how consultees were chosen.

5.1.4 Stage 2:

Background information, including statistics to quantify the issue, was made available. The information included appropriate references to the local situation.

5.1.5 Stage 3:

The Investigation was performed mainly via a series of interviews with stakeholders working with asylum seekers and residents of the District whose lives have been directly affected by asylum seekers/immigrants. There is no comment to substantiate why the investigation was limited to interviews only, with, for example, no site visits.

5.1.6 Stage 4:

The record of the interviews raises a number of issues which the Council is in a position to influence, and these are adequately summarised in the "Issues Report" Section of the Documentation with the exception of the following:

- The matter raised by the residents of East Cliff relating to the numbers of asylum seekers/immigrants being greater that that of the residents.
- The suggestions made by the consultee in Inquiry Report 8 (point 13) (short stay work permits, links with colleagues in other countries).
5.1.7 Recommendations:

Recommendations made address the points raised in the Issues Section. However, although the report recognises that the closure of Sangatte will have an impact on immigration, there is no linked recommendation. Members may wish to address this.

Recommendation 2 is not substantiated within the findings, or in the issues arising.

5.1.8 Audit Conclusions:

The Review is considered to have followed the recommended four-stage overview process. However, the review may not have fully addressed the scope as detailed in Stage 1 – particularly relating to the cost to the local community of supporting asylum seekers. Although agencies have supplied some financial information this is not aggregated into one statement.
The Overview Process

Review of Items within Scrutiny Work Programmes

Stage 1

Methodology: How will the review be conducted?

A Sub-Committee will normally be formed by the main committee and will assist in identifying the following:

• What should be the terms of reference for the review?
• What support has been allocated to the review?
• Which person/organisations are to be involved in the review?
• What consultation should be undertaken with interested parties?

Stage 2

Research: What background information is necessary?

The Supporting Officer(s) will normally prepare a briefing paper on the topic for review identifying the following:

• What is the statutory position regarding the issue or service?
• What is the background history of this matter?
• How is the District Council involved and what are the key stakeholders?
• What are the options available and constraints in force?
Stage 3

Investigation: What views and/or approaches should be considered?

The Sub-Committee will normally assist the main committee in identifying the following:

- What should be the main areas for enquiry following the research of this issue?
- What further research is required?
- What process should be adopted by the committee to examine the areas of enquiry?
- Which parties should be invited to attend a meeting of the committee?

Stage 4

Final Analysis: How should this issue be progressed in the future?

The Main Committee will normally consider the views of interested parties identifying the following:

- What are the aspirations of the District regarding this issue or service?
- What are the strengths of current arrangements?
- What are the weaknesses of current arrangements?
- What recommendations for further action should be made to Cabinet and Council?
Section 6: Recommendations

Details of the recommendations of the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee approved by Council
Recommendations Approved and Adopted
by the Council on 8 January 2003

6.1.1 That the Council seeks the support of Central Government and NASS to resolve any difficulties with the application of Sections 55 and 57 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 in order to avoid persons being left destitute in Dover and the Council works with voluntary organisations locally to develop contingency plans to address any problems that may arise.

6.1.2 That Central Government be requested to take action to reduce the delay in the removal of people from the UK after their applications for asylum have been rejected.

6.1.3 That the Council seeks assurances from the Home Office that an effective immigration service will be maintained at Dover and not be compromised by the introduction of juxtaposed frontier controls in Calais.

6.1.4 That the good work being undertaken by the Council and other bodies to promote integration and racial equality be endorsed and the Council develops a racial equality scheme to meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended) through a new strategy for integration, the Council's existing equal opportunities policy and drawing upon best practice by other local authorities.

6.1.5 That the reasons why the previous bid for funding for a multi-agency resource centre was unsuccessful be investigated, the extent of Member consultation regarding this bid be reported to Cabinet, steps be taken to submit a further bid to establish a resource centre to support the needs of both asylum seekers and local residents and to investigate the possibility of using the Westmount site as a resource centre.

6.1.6 That the Council considers the outcome of legal action currently being undertaken in respect of the Council's "Houses in Multiple Occupation Registration Scheme" and subject to any limitations imposed by the Court ruling, the Council seeks to inspect premises which are used to accommodate asylum seekers and enforces planning and environmental health requirements consistently and rigorously, both in the interests of asylum seekers and local residents.

6.1.7 That Ward Councillors be informed of communications between the Council and other agencies/organisations about matters relating to asylum seekers and briefed before any decisions are taken or any commitments made on behalf of the Council.

6.1.8 That Migrant Helpline and other agencies be encouraged to seek to reduce the overall number of asylum seekers accommodated in the District of Dover and in particular in the East Cliff and Priory areas of the Town.

6.1.9 That the Council investigates the possibility of applying for SRB and other appropriate sources of funding, to provide recreational facilities within the District for asylum seekers and local residents.

6.1.10 That as part of the contract for temporary accommodation with organisations such as Migrant Help, proprietors should be encouraged to provide adequate recreational facilities.
6.1.11 That Central Government be requested to reimburse primary care trusts for the cost of providing dedicated medical services to asylum seekers and refugees.

6.1.12 That the Council supports the introduction of mandatory health screening for asylum seekers and a system be introduced by which asylum seekers can be traced to ensure that they have received appropriate medical treatment subject to human rights implications if any.

6.1.13 That the Council recognises with concern that the "English as a Second Language" (ESOL) project funding ceases in February 2003 and requests that KCC Adult Education Service should receive direct grants from Central Government if further European funding is not forthcoming.

6.1.14 That the Council supports and welcomes the proposals of KCC to establish another provider of accommodation for unaccompanied minors outside the Dover District.

6.1.15 That the Council recognises the problems encountered by the tourism and retail sectors which have not been specifically investigated as part of this review and requests that these issues be incorporated within a further review to be undertaken by the Scrutiny (Transport, Opportunity and Access) Committee in approximately six months time, when it examines progress made regarding the recommendations approved and adopted by the Council (as part of the review consultation should be undertaken with representatives of the tourism and retail sectors).
Section 7: Appendices

Additional published material relating to the review is attached as follows:


Appendix B: Publicity Material of the Kent Refugee Action Network

Appendix C: 'Words Without Frontiers' Project Briefing Sheet.

Appendix D: Standard Note issued to Members of Parliament on support for asylum seekers


In addition correspondence was received from the following organisations and individuals which has assisted the review:

Christians Together in Dover
KRAN
Migrant Helpline
Mrs Pauline Clarke
Mr G Clubb
Reverend Dr Michael Hinton
Mr John Kemp
Dr Peter Lefeuvre
Mr Keith Langsford
Councillor Mrs J M Munt
Councillor K W Sansum
Mrs Christine Shrub
Commander Donald Shrub
Mr Roger S Walkden
Mr Mike Webb – Dover Town Centre Manager
The Friendship Project

CONTENTS
Primary School Pack

- Information about the Friendship Project
- Definition of a Refugee
- Teachers Resource Book
- Human Rights and Refugees – lesson plans
- Pack of news-clips
- Sample information booklet about schools for refugees (available in various languages)
- Czech & Slovak translations of useful words (courtesy of Guston School, Dover)
- Poster pack with wall captions
- Game: The Journey to Safety
- Story: Kalo Dant's first adventure
- Leaflet: - The Day The Asylum Seekers Came To School – by pupils of Guston School, Dover
- Leaflet for Roma children written by Roma children explaining school procedure
- Misc. leaflets
- Video – Carly – for children aged 5-8
- Video – To Be A Refugee – for the 8-12s
- Teachers notes for both videos
The Friendship Project

A project which aims to raise cultural awareness and build bridges of friendship between young people - local and asylum seeker children.

Current information

The Friendship Project, led by Health Promotion at Dover District Council, is going from strength to strength. It was originally conceived in the difficult summer of 1999 in order to start to begin to address tensions between Asylum-Seekers and the local population.

The focus was on working with a number of Asylum-Seeker children and also local children on a project that required mutual co-operation without the Asylum-Seekers needing a high level of English. They designed and made kites, flew them and had fun together.

At a time of negativity about Asylum-Seekers in the local media, and about Dover in the national media, the Friendship Project received a much-needed good press.

The next phase of the project was to produce a resource pack for schools to help teachers start to integrate Asylum-Seeker children into school. This was in response to desperate pleas by Head Teachers for such help. The pack was launched at a conference on January 30th 2001 and has been very well received by schools.

We have recently obtained substantial funding for the production of packs for schools and youth organisations in East Kent. The packs will be assembled by Refugee and local youths working alongside each other in the summer holidays.

This Council-led multi-agency project is currently going into a new phase of operation. The group, which includes members of all statutory agencies as well as voluntary organisations, has recently expanded of late to include two refugees.

We are also hoping to recruit local people who live in or around the Folkestone Road area who might be prepared to work with us to identify the main concerns of residents in the area.
The Awareness Raising team will be addressing some of the myths and misconceptions current in the community which help to fuel local tensions. They will also be presenting information about the circumstances from which some of the Refugees and Asylum-Seekers have fled, what they expect, what they can contribute etc.

It is emphasised that the aim of the project is not to proselytise on behalf of Refugees and Asylum-Seekers but rather to attempt to address the very real concerns of both the indigenous community and also Asylum-Seekers and Refugees.

For further information contact Penny Graham on extension 2213 (Tuesday and Wednesdays)

July 2002
The Friendship Project Pack

The Friendship Project Group is Dover District Council led, working with other agencies towards the integration of Refugee and Asylum-Seeker children into school.

In response to demand from Head Teachers the group has put together a pack for schools which consists of a wealth of useful resources for staff, including a teacher's resource book, posters, lesson plans and much more.

The pack was launched January 2001 at a conference day which included entertainment by Asylum Seeker musicians and dancers.

Packs are available for both Primary and Secondary schools and cost £25 plus £9 p&p.
Contact Penny Graham at Dover District Council on 01304 872213 or Ann Whitbourn at KRAIN 01304 201131.
LATEST SHOCK NEWS

ASYLUM SEEKERS MIGHT BE GOOD FOR DOVER!

More facts available from KRAN
kran@actionnetwork.freeserve.co.uk
INT REF KRAN - STATIONARY - SHOCK NEWS
LATEST NEWS SHOCK!

ASYLUM SEEKERS MIGHT ACTUALLY BE GOOD FOR DOVER!

- As a result of the asylum seekers’ presence in Dover, over 300 extra people are directly employed. This employment includes people working at Migrant Helpline, Hotels and Guest Houses, Social Services, Health and other support services. In view of Dover’s difficult employment situation, these people might otherwise have remained without jobs. Many others are indirectly employed as a result of the accommodation needs of asylum seekers, such as plumbers, electricians, builders, carpetlayers etc.

- Asylum Seekers have actually brought considerable money into Dover shops and businesses, previously through spending vouchers and now through the purchase of goods and services by the accommodation providers and support services responsible for newcomers for a few weeks before they are dispersed out of Kent. The total value of this new input into the Dover economy is very considerable.

- Many businesses in Dover might not have survived without the asylum seekers. The few guests coming to Dover were not previously enough to fill all the hotels (especially during the winter months) and many were failing before the arrival of asylum seekers in the area. But now with some hotels occupied providing the temporary accommodation it means that others are filled up by all the “passing trade”. It is noticeable that many of the hotels in Folkestone Road for example now look refurbished and painted up as they are doing good business and the area is beginning to look much smarter.

- Dover becomes a little more multicultural and multi-ethnic as some fully-recognised refugees will settle down permanently in the area. This may not be to everybody’s liking but in the long run it will be a positive development. There are already new music groups available to hire for functions and there may eventually be a greater variety of food outlets. The liveliness and interest provided by a varied population is certain to make Dover a more positive attraction for tourists to stay around.

A government report—“Migration: An Economic And Social Analysis” shows that asylum seekers are in fact an economic benefit to the economy in general, not a drain as most people presume. Historically every influx of refugees who have arrived in this country and stayed permanently have brought many benefits including frequently starting new businesses and providing much extra employment rather than taking jobs from local people.

- It takes time to get used to change and real problems have arisen from an unprepared new situation, but helping those who need to flee persecution and terror should be considered a privilege rather than a burden by those of us lucky enough to live in a democracy - especially when it is actually in the interests of local Dover residents, The local feeling by some against asylum-seekers is not shared by those whose jobs and livelihoods depend on their presence in Dover and the many more likely to benefit in the future.
JOIN THE MENTORING PROJECT
recruiting mentors and refugees now!

HELPING TO INTEGRATE REFUGEES IN THE COMMUNITY

Volunteer mentors and refugees receive free training, funding for expenses and ongoing support.

Funded by the Refugee Integration Challenge Fund
Farida, a doctor, has qualified to work in the UK thanks to the support of her mentor, Alice, a retired G.P.

Marek has set up his own business as a car mechanic with the help of Peter, a local entrepreneur.

Kuna gained a place at university and is completing his interrupted studies in Engineering supported by Mike, a teacher.

Leila, a mother of three, can now talk with the teachers at school about her children’s progress thanks to Rachel, another mother.

The Mentoring Project is an exciting new scheme for Kent which aims to help refugees develop their potential and facilitate their integration into the community. It is run by Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN) and funded by the Home Office Refugee Integration Challenge Fund.

Mentors are volunteers who work with individual refugees (mentees) on a one-to-one basis, empowering them to achieve their goals in the areas of education, training and employment. Mentees are refugees living locally, who have Leave to Remain in the UK.

KRAN matches the experience, skills and interests of mentors and mentees and offers training, funding for expenses and ongoing support.

Do you have

- experience of working in the UK?
- good communication and networking skills?
- about 5 hours per month to share with a newcomer to your community?

BECOME A MENTOR!

- enjoy using your knowledge to help others
- receive valuable training in mentoring
- meet people from a variety of backgrounds
- enhance your own career prospects
- get your travel and childcare costs paid

- Are you a refugee with Leave to Remain in the UK?
- Are you thinking about your future? Are you looking for a job? Do you want to go to College/University? Do you want to start your own business?

WE CAN FIND A FRIENDLY PERSON TO HELP YOU...

- make decisions about your future
- get information about education and training
- find work or set up your own business

And we pay your travel and childcare costs

This leaflet is available in other languages

JOIN THE MENTORING PROJECT NOW! CONTACT KRAN
2002 Multicultural Festival

Where?
DOVER Market Square

When?
SATURDAY JUNE 22nd
12.00 – 2.00

Features include:
- Music
- Exhibitions
- Drama / Mime

Dancers Art

Information

DON'T MISS OUT
Aim of the project:

- To increase access to library services for asylum seekers and refugees, especially in the east of the county.
- To enable staff in Kent’s Arts and libraries to feel more confident when dealing with this client group.
- To promote and highlight positive aspects of work with asylum seekers and refugees.
- To produce a "toolkit" that will enable the good practice developed to be rolled out across the Country to other library authorities.

Present outcomes:

- National research into library provision for asylum seekers and refugees.
- Approximately £35,000 worth of new stock including dual language children’s books, dictionaries, single language books, video’s, music CD’s, awareness raising books, easy readers, and material to help with learning English as a second language. The languages purchased so far include: Farsi/Dari, Pashto, Albanian, Czech, Russian, Slovak, Somali, Shona, Eritrean, Arabic, Chinese, Turkish, Tigrinya, Iraqi Kurdish (Sorani), Turkish Kurdish (Kurmanji) and several main European languages (including Italian, French and Portuguese).
- A major increase in the number of suppliers of the appropriate materials.
- The ability to buy stock online.
- A series of work experience placements. Two of these placements have led to the persons being employed in the libraries as casual members of staff.
- Guided tours of libraries. This has led directly to new members joining.
- A database of contacts numbering almost 300 that will in turn lead to a directory of services for or connected with asylum seekers and refugees.
- A series of 12 training seminars for Arts and Libraries staff across the county. (Over 110 staff has now had this training.)
- Storyteller training and events during refugee week.
- Other awareness raising events and exhibitions.
- An adult education course "English for Employment" using the new NOF funded PC’s with the refugees attending the course on a weekly basis.
• The main libraries leaflet is now available in French, Czech, Albanian and Farsi. It will soon be available in Arabic and Sorani. (Through the ethnic minorities service it is also available in Chinese, Gujarati and Bengali.)

• Joining procedures are currently being reviewed to make sure any marginalised groups are more easily able to access the services. Also we are currently aiming to extend the "corporate" membership currently available to playgroups to include other agencies.

• The "toolkit" designed as part of the project has been ordered by several other library authorities across the country and is currently being distributed.

• The "world on a label" sticker is being developed across the county to ensure everyone is able to easily identify the stock.

Future outcomes:

• Another £5,000 worth of stock is being purchased at present.

• An increase of the guided tours of the libraries.

• Additional training seminars, to be offered to other agencies or sectors of Kent County Council.

• Posters and leaflets stating "we can get books in different languages" in the relevant languages.

• A continuation and possible increase of the work experience placements.

• Closer links with organisations working with or on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees.

• An increased involvement of this client group with other library events and activities.

At this moment future funding of the project is being sought and is still a strong possibility. Also, strategies are being developed by the project manager with other senior managers in Arts and Libraries to ensure the sustainability of the work to some degree with or without further funding.

Sue Fordham
Wolfson Project Manager
October 2002

Deal Library
Broad Street
Deal
CT15 4ER
Telephone: (01304) 379290
Mobile: 07789 725362
Email: sue.fordham@kent.gov.uk

Asylum Seekers/illegal Immigration

Democratic Services
Support for Asylum Seekers

Standard Note: SN/HA/1909
Last updated: 26 July 2002
Author: Madeleine Shaw
Home Affairs

This note explains the current arrangements which exist to support asylum seekers while their claim is being determined. The proposals for reform in the White Paper Secure Borders Safe Haven and the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Bill are outlined.¹

Contents

A. The Current System
   1. Introduction 2
   2. The NASS System 2
   3. The transitional provisions 3
   4. Unaccompanied children 3

B. Asylum Seekers and Poverty 4

C. Support for asylum seekers in other countries 5

D. Proposals for Reform
   1. Overview 7
   2. Accommodation Centres 8
   3. Location of the proposed Accommodation Centres 10
   4. Reactions to the White Paper and the Bill 10

¹ For a full analysis of the provisions, please see the Library’s Research Paper 02/26

Standard Notes are compiled for the benefit of Members of Parliament and their personal staff. Authors are available to discuss the contents of these papers with Members and their staff but cannot advise others.
A. The Current System

1. Introduction

Multiple parallel systems currently exist for the provision of accommodation and support for asylum seekers. Which system applies in any given case is determined by factors such as where the person claimed asylum, when he claimed asylum, whether he is an unaccompanied child, and whether a initial decision has been made on his claim. An overview of each system is presented below.

Asylum seekers are not permitted to work pending the determination of their claim. Until recently, those who had been in the country for over 6 months could apply to the Home Office for permission to work under the employment concession. This concession has now been abolished.²

2. The NASS System

Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 came into force on 3 April 2002. It established a new system for the provision of welfare support to those seeking asylum in the UK. Before the 1999 Act was implemented, the Benefits Agency or local authorities provided support to asylum seekers.³

The system under the 1999 Act has three main features. Firstly, persons who claim asylum after 3 April 2002 are not entitled to claim mainstream non-contributory benefits including income-based jobseekers allowance, income support and housing benefit amongst others.⁴ Secondly, those asylum seekers who are granted full support are dispersed to approximately 70 areas outside London and the South East. Thirdly, until recently, the subsistence support had been provided in the form of vouchers with only a small cash element. However, since 8 April 2002, the widely criticised voucher system has been abolished and payments are made in cash.⁵

A new division within the Home Office was established by the 1999 Act to run the new support system – the National Asylum Support System (NASS). By October 2001, NASS was supporting nearly 53,000 asylum seekers and their dependants.⁶ An overview of how the NASS system works can be found in the recent report by the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (“NACAB”) entitled “Process Error.”⁷

---

² For further detail please see the Library’s standard note “Asylum seekers’ employment concession” which available from the parliamentary intranet.
³ And continues to do so in some cases. See below for discussion of the transitional provisions.
⁴ Sections 115(1) 115(2) and 115(9) of the 1999 Act.
⁵ HC Deb 11 April 2002 Col 572W
Further discussion on this topic can be found in the Library’s standard note entitled “Asylum: the review of the voucher system.” SN/HA/1131
⁷ Page 7 February 2002
To qualify for NASS support, applicants must demonstrate that they are “destitute.” In other words, they must have no means of supporting themselves. They may choose a package of furnished accommodation and subsistence support. Alternatively, they may choose to receive subsistence support only. Accommodation is offered on a no choice basis. This means that successful applicants must accept the accommodation offered, regardless of location, or receive subsistence support only.

The accommodation may be provided by a local authority, housing associations, or by private sector companies who are contracted to NASS. Where an asylum seeker is accommodated by NASS, the cost of all utilities and of Council Tax is met by the accommodation provider. On this basis (and also because the support package is intended to be of short duration only) the level of subsistence support is set at about 70 per cent of Basic Income Support rates. Currently, a single adult aged 25 or over receives £37.77 per week.\(^8\)

On 6 March 2000, Barbara Roche described the new scheme in the following terms:\(^9\)

> The Scheme is intended fully to meet the United Kingdom’s international obligations in relation to those who are genuinely fleeing persecution while, at the same time, deterring those who are seeking to evade immigration control by using the asylum process.

3. **The transitional provisions**

Those who claimed asylum prior to 3 April 2000, and whose claims have yet to be determined, continue to be supported by the system which was in place before the 1999 Act came into force. Some asylum seekers continue to be supported by the mainstream welfare benefits system. Others are supported by a local authority under the interim arrangements which were introduced by the Government in 1999.\(^10\) The interim arrangements were due to end on 1 April 2002. They have been extended until 5 April 2004 by the Asylum Support (Interim Provisions) Amendment Regulations 2002.\(^11\) The number of asylum seekers being dealt with under the old system is gradually decreasing because if their initial claim is rejected and an appeal is lodged, NASS becomes responsible for the provision of support.

4. **Unaccompanied children**

Unaccompanied children who are asylum seekers are supported by local authorities under the Children Act 1989, the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995. For children under 18, the local authority is able to claim grant funding from the

---

\(^8\) HC Deb 25 March 2002 Col 597W  
\(^9\) HC Deb 6 March 2000 Vol 345 Col 556W  
\(^11\) SI 2002/471
Home Office to meet the costs of support. Further information on unaccompanied asylum seeking children can be found in the Library's Standard Note on the subject.\textsuperscript{12}

B. Asylum Seekers and Poverty

In a joint report published in July 2002, Oxfam and the Refugee Council highlighted the extreme poverty that many asylum seekers face.\textsuperscript{13} The report was based on a study of evidence collected from 40 organisations working with asylum seekers in England and Scotland on the impact of the levels of support available.

The report welcomed the abolition of the voucher system which had been widely discredited as stigmatising asylum seekers, leaving them open to discrimination and racial abuse. However, they observed that:

\textit{...even with the cash payments, the level of support to asylum seekers is set so low, and the system set up to administer the payments is so badly designed and poorly run, that they are forced to live at unacceptable levels of poverty.}

They continued:

Asylum-seekers have barely enough money to buy food of a quantity and quality to maintain an adequate diet, and often experience poor health and hunger. They cannot buy enough clothes or shoes to keep warm or buy school uniforms. Many struggle to afford bus fares to attend important appointments, to stay in touch with friends and relatives, to send their children to school. Often, it is the most vulnerable who suffer from lack of additional support: parents worry for the health and well-being of their children. Mothers who are unable to breastfeed because they are HIV+ or have other forms of ill-health cannot afford to buy formula milk. Disabled asylum-seekers struggle to receive the extra help they need, or receive no additional help at all.

The support that asylum-seekers receive, in cash or in kind, does not equate to that received by UK residents claiming Income Support, which is generally recognised as the minimum level of income required to maintain an acceptable standard of living. The Income Support system is not simply a flat-rate payment, but is the gateway to a complex system of premium payments, passported benefits and emergency payments, all of which are designed to help poor people to meet additional essential costs. Premiums are payable for families with children, people with disability and the elderly. Social fund payments help to meet the cost of funerals, winter fuel or other emergencies. The Welfare Foods scheme provides milk tokens and vitamins in recognition of the needs of pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children. Asylum-seekers are not entitled to claim any of these additional benefits.

\textsuperscript{12} SN/HAl152

\textsuperscript{13} "Poverty and Asylum in the UK," Oxfam and the Refugee Council 2002
The situation is exacerbated by the fact that many asylum-seekers do not even receive the support to which they are entitled, or receive it late. Weekly allowances and occasional clothing allowances from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) fail to arrive, and when they contact NASS to find out why, can get no satisfactory response. Tight regulations and delays in payments mean that mothers often do not receive maternity payments until well after the birth of their baby. Inadequate regulation and inspection of property by NASS means that some accommodation providers do not fulfil their contracts to pay for utilities and provide adequate furniture and household equipment.

Based on the evidence provided in this study, we believe that asylum-seekers must be provided with a level of support that is equal to Income Support – even though we view Income Support in itself as insufficient to sustain a basic livelihood. We urge the Government to implement the following changes to the system of support for asylum-seekers as soon as possible.

The report then goes on to list the key recommendations of the organisations:

**Key Recommendations**

* The remit of the Social Security Advisory Committee should be expanded to include scrutiny of the standard of support to asylum-seekers. The Committee should be charged with the task of ensuring that the level of support to asylum-seekers, in cash or in kind, actually equates to the total of benefits available to recipients of Income Support. This will involve a realistic calculation of the value of in kind benefits such as the provision of utilities, as well as the provision of payments for additional, exceptional and emergency needs.

* The option for asylum-seekers to live with friends and relatives with support from NASS should be retained. The weekly allowance to these people should be up-rated to include a contribution towards the cost of utilities and Council Tax.

* Given the low level of support to which asylum seekers are entitled, those with particular needs (including pregnant women, families with young children, people with disabilities, victims of torture and the elderly) should have access to special needs provision and passported benefits (e.g. milk tokens, vitamins, maternity grants, pensioner premiums, and funeral grants) on the same terms as UK citizens.

C. **Support for asylum seekers in other countries**

In its submission to the Special Standing Committee on the *Immigration and Asylum Bill*, the Refugee Council gave some figures for the value of allowances available to asylum seekers in other European countries:

**Memorandum from the Refugee Council**

---

1 UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND THE NEW SUPPORT SYSTEM

[...]

Furthermore, cash payments have not been an incentive to asylum seekers to make applications in the many other European countries which offer more generous reception facilities to asylum seekers than the UK. The following figures are weekly allowances paid to single adult asylum seekers out of which they are expected to pay for food, clothes, transport, toiletries, and other personal items. Housing is provided separately—most commonly through reception centres or state accommodation—unless stated otherwise:

Sweden: £32.29—Asylum seekers must take Swedish language classes and work placements to qualify for the allowance. They are allowed to work after four months.

Switzerland: £41.07—This is an average allowance in state accommodation in Bern. Allowances vary with asylum seekers receiving more if they help out in the centres, obey the rules, etc.

Germany: £41.10—This information relates to Berlin. Provision for asylum seekers varies from one land to another. Can be paid in cash or coupons.

Denmark: £45.77—Additional clothing allowance is available after 150 days.

Luxembourg: £48.00—After three months asylum seekers are also given a monthly travel card.

Norway: £51.70—Asylum seekers can also get temporary work permits if they have a job offer.

Finland: £53.47—Asylum seekers receive the same living allowance as Finnish nationals. Accommodation is provided free, normally in reception centres.

Ireland: £63.51—Medical cards also cover most medical expenses. A rent allowance is provided separately.

Belgium: £99.00—This is given to those who are not held in reception centres. It does not include accommodation, although a rent allowance is available in certain cases.

The UK's current support system is already harsher than most of its EU counterparts as all in-country applicants (roughly half the total number of applicants) and all those on appeal have no access to cash payments unless they are families with children. A single adult asylum seeker who has no other means of support and applies at port will receive £45.30 per week. As the above statistics illustrate, this is not generous by European standards.
D. Proposals for Reform

1. Overview

The White Paper, *Secure Borders Safe Haven*, contains the Government’s proposals for reform which are to be implemented by the *Nationality Immigration and Asylum Bill 2002*.\(^{15}\)

The Paper’s proposals for accommodating and supporting asylum seekers are put forward in the context of what it terms “a holistic approach to the handling of asylum seekers’ applications.”\(^{16}\) This approach will be implemented through the introduction of several different centres designed to handle each stage of the asylum process from induction to integration or removal, depending on the success of the claim. In order to understand the accommodation and support provisions of the paper and the *Nationality Immigration and Asylum Bill*, it is useful to consider, briefly, what the White Paper’s “holistic approach” entails.

**Induction centres** will initiate asylum seekers into the IND procedures. Information on where the person is to be dispersed to will be provided, as well as information on voluntary departure. An asylum seeker will remain in such a centre for 1 to 7 days. Each induction centre will house between 200 to 400 asylum seekers, and will provide full board. They will be located close to major asylum intake areas.\(^{17}\)

**Oakington Reception Centre** (which intends to determine initial entitlement to asylum within 7 to 10 days) will continue as a “key element within the Government’s overall strategy for processing asylum applications as speedily as possible.”\(^{18}\)

**Accommodation centres** are intended eventually to provide support and accommodation for all asylum seekers while their claim is being processed. They will be operated on a trial basis initially. Full board accommodation will be provided. The centres will offer facilities, for example for health care and education. This will include the education of the children of asylum seekers who will no longer have a right to mainstream education.\(^{19}\) Eventually, asylum seekers will only be entitled to support via the accommodation centres, and not subsistence-only support.\(^{20}\)

---

\(^{15}\) Cm 5387 *Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain.*
Available from: www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm53/5387/cm5387.pdf

\(^{16}\) Page 53

\(^{17}\) Page 53 Ibid.

\(^{18}\) Further explanation on Oakington Detention Centre, and the recent challenge to its legality can be found in Research Paper 02/26

\(^{19}\) Except in certain circumstances for Special Educational Needs children.

\(^{20}\) Page 55 *Secure Borders, Safe Haven*
Asylum seekers will be required to report at new reporting centres as an alternative to police stations, the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) centres, or accommodation centres which will also be used for this purpose.21

Detention centres will be renamed “removal centres.” Removal centres will complete the “holistic approach” so that those who are found not to be refugees can be detained in such centres until they are removed. The White Paper states that there will be a need to detain some people at other stages of the process apart from removal, and sets out the detention criteria.22

Those who are successful in their asylum claim will be able to avail themselves of the Government’s strategy for refugee integration which is explained in the White Paper.23

The proposal for Accommodation Centres will now be examined greater detail.

2. Accommodation Centres

In Secure Borders, Safe Haven, the Government introduces the idea of accommodation centres and explains how it intends the centres to work in practice.24 It proposes that, initially, 3,000 places would be available in the new centres to accommodate a proportion of new asylum seekers. Residents will stay at the centres for the whole period while their claim is processed, including during any appeal. At first, the centres will be operated on a trial basis.

The White Paper states that the centres will provide full-board accommodation. Services, including health care, education, interpretation and opportunities for “purposeful activities” will be provided for. “Purposeful activities” may include training in the English language and IT skills, and volunteering in the local community.

During the course of the trial, the Government intends to assess whether the provision of a broad range of facilities within the accommodation centres provides a more supportive environment for asylum seekers than under the current dispersal arrangements.25 It also wants to evaluate what effect the centres have on speeding up the processing of cases. The White Paper observes that accommodation centres are already widely used across Europe.

Initially, a proportion of new asylum seekers who are eligible for NASS support will be allocated places in the centres. Those who request support, and who are eligible for it will be

---

21 Page 58 Ibid.
22 Page 65 et seq. Ibid.
23 Page 70 Secure Borders, Safe Haven
24 Page 55 et seq.
25 For the Government's view on the current dispersal system, see the Home Office report of the voucher and dispersal schemes available from: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/voucher_dispersal_review.pdf
expected to accept the offer of a place. Those who refuse the offer will not be offered any
alternative form of support. According to the White Paper, once the new arrangements are up
and running, the option of receiving cash only support will no longer be available.

The White Paper lists a number of criteria which immigration staff will apply in deciding
whether to allocate a person a place in an accommodation centre. These include whether
there is a suitable place, what language is spoken by the applicant, what the family
circumstances of the applicant are and, initially, what port of entry a person came into.
Immigration staff will retain the discretion whether to allocate a person to a particular centre
if there are exceptional circumstances.

The White Paper states that asylum seekers will not be detained in accommodation centres,
and they will be allowed to receive visitors. However, they will be subject to a residence
requirement. They will be required to report regularly to ensure that they are continuing to
reside at the accommodation centre. The Paper states that those who do not comply with the
requirement may affect the outcome of their asylum claim where the non-compliance
damages their credibility.

The Government intends to provide access to legal advice at all accommodation centres. The
arrangements on each site will be decided and funded by the Legal Services Commission.

In evaluating the trial, the Government states that it will assess whether the centres facilitate
improvements in the asylum process. The White Paper makes some suggestions as to what
these improvements might be:26

- Closer contact between asylum seekers and the relevant authorities
- Reduced decision times by tighter management of the interview and decision
  making process
- Fewer opportunities for illegal working during the application process
- Minimal opportunities for financial or housing fraud
- Reduction in community tensions
- Facilitation of integration for those granted refugee status in the UK, and
  voluntary return packages for those who are refused.

While the trial of the accommodation centres takes place, those asylum seekers in need of
support who are not housed in the new centres will continue to be dispersed throughout the
UK under the existing NASS system. Asylum seekers who remain supported under the old
system (either by mainstream benefits or by local authority interim arrangements) will
continue to be supported in this way. David Blunkett confirmed in his announcement to the
House on 29 October 2001, that the multiple support systems would continue for some time
yet.27

26 Page 57
27 HC Deb 29'October 2001 Col 636
For a discussion on the detailed provisions of the *Nationality Immigration and Asylum Bill*, please see the Library’s Research paper on the Bill 02/26.

3. **Location of the proposed Accommodation Centres**

The location of the first accommodation centres were announced in a written PQ on 13\(^{th}\) May 2002: \(^{28}\)

**Mr. Luff**: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the proposed locations for the asylum accommodation centres. \([57069]\)

**Beverley Hughes**: We have submitted a planning notification at two sites, near Bicester in Oxfordshire and at RAF Newton in Nottinghamshire. We intend to submit a planning notification with regards to Throckmorton Airfield, in the hon Member’s Constituency, shortly. Further work is required on sites at AirWest Edinburgh, Sully Hospital (Glamorgan) and Hemswell Cliff (Lincolnshire) before a decision can be taken on whether to proceed to planning notifications.

Consultation with the relevant local authorities will continue, including public meetings.

In a Lords PQ on 17\(^{th}\) June 2002, Lord Filkin announced the criteria which the Government used to determine the locations of the proposed accommodation centres: \(^{29}\)

My Lords, the criteria are based on a number of factors. They include the availability of land, site capacity to cater for several hundred residents in either new build or converted accommodation and our policy to relieve the pressure on Kent and London.

4. **Reactions to the White Paper and the Bill**

The reactions of various interest groups to the proposals in the White Paper can be found in the Library’s Research paper 02/26 on the *Nationality Immigration and Asylum Bill*.

Much local opposition to the plans has been reported in the press. An article in the *Liverpool Daily Post* indicated that there would be local opposition to the building of an asylum centre in Liverpool. \(^{30}\) Business leaders are reported to have expressed their opposition to the proposed site. One representative of the business community is reported as saying. \(^{31}\)

\(^{28}\) HC Deb 13 May 2002 Col 795

\(^{29}\) HL Deb 17 June 2002 Col 486

\(^{30}\) Asylum Centre ‘will be bad for business’ Liverpool Daily Post, 15 April 2002

\(^{31}\) Ibíd.
The Government has been working with the local authority over the past six years on a successful programme for regenerating the area which would be jeopardised by the asylum centre.

The article goes on to report that the Government will be looking to select sites away from residential and regeneration areas following the fire at the Yarl’s Wood detention centre.

The Observer also reported that the plans to create “asylum villages” in the countryside had provoked “outrage amongst local residents, rural campaigners and asylum groups who believed that the centres would be more suited to urban locations:  

The most controversial scheme is planned for the Worcestershire village of Throckmorton where a disused RAF bomber base has been chosen by the Home Office. Local council officials believe that the self-contained centre for 750 people will be built between a landfill site for refuse and a burial site for more than 100,000 animals destroyed during the foot and mouth crisis. Locals say they are only just recovering from the crisis and they should not be expected to integrate hundred of refugees into their tiny Midlands farming community.

[...]

Asylum charities last night joined in condemning the plans: “Placing people in such isolated rural communities is at odds with the Government’s policy of integration and inclusion” said a spokeswoman for Refugee Action.

[...]

At the other sites around the country, campaigns have begun to fight the Government’s plans...

---

32 Asylum Centre Plans Spark Protest, The Observer, 10 February 2002
Mission Statement

To Assist in Facilitating Reception, Advice, Support Education and Employment Opportunities as Appropriate, to Anyone in Need of these Services in Thanet
The Centre was opened for business on 1st March 2001 after eight months of inter-agency meetings, working parties, searching for premises and getting funding into place.

The bulk of the set-up costs were provided by a grant from the European Union's Refugee Fund. The majority of the running costs since have been gathered from contributions made by the different statutory and voluntary organisations who deliver their services from the Centre. A small grant from the Single Regeneration Budget has made up the shortfall. With the progression of the Centre's activities it is envisaged that by the end of 2004 it will be self-sufficient. One of the Council's guiding principles in enabling the Centre to evolve and positively progress in a sustainable manner, was to facilitate ways to ensure that the "partners", who were responsible for delivering services, took "ownership" of the building, developing policies and services by way of its own committee of management and on appropriate occasions including a "users" group in this process.

The concept of the Centre was originally a "dream" of a handful of volunteers who banded together in Cliftonville about eight years ago to help people not so fortunate as themselves, and many of those who received help were asylum seekers and refugees.

In the summer of 2000, Thanet District Council appointed a Community Liaison Officer (CLO) and one of his tasks was to set up the Centre with a multi-agency approach. As previously mentioned meetings, working parties and the search for suitable premises began. To achieve this goal, the CLO was actively assisted by the Manager of the Thanet Action Team, the Manager of the "One Stop Service" of Migrant Helpline, the Curriculum Leader of Kent County Council Adult Education Service for English as an Additional Language, a Health Visitor from the NHS and the past Chair of Kent Refugee Support Group who was one of the group of volunteers who had the original "vision". Many other organisations gave help and are now in post in the Centre.

The Centre owes its existence to the hard work and dedication of all the agencies concerned, also to the forward thinking of Thanet District Council Members, their Director of Community Services, the support of the Council's Chief Executive, and to the Thanet Community Development Trust who were willing to take on the lease commitment for the Centre.

The Centre now boasts forty organisations with association to its cause and twenty-five of these play an active role in its day to day running.

Since opening the monthly number of "visitors" has risen from 728 in March 2001, peaking at 1,636 in October 2001, and now averaging just over 1,400 a month. Nearly 18,000 people have come to the Centre for advice, education and work related courses, support and assistance in going into employment since it opened.

The activities of the Centre are driven by a Committee of Management made up of a representative from each agency involved. The Chair is held by each agency in turn for approximately six months at a time and the inaugural period was held by the Manager of One-Stop Services, Migrant Helpline. The current Chair is the Deputy Manager of Thanet Action Team, who is about to hand over to the Chair of Kent Refugee Support Group. From
the start Thanet District Council’s Community Liaison Officer has held the post of Vice-Chairman. Although the operation is orchestrated by Thanet District Council, the Centre’s policy is determined by the Committee of Management. All media coverage is directed through Thanet District Council’s Press Office.

The remainder of the review is dedicated to the staff of the agencies involved, their work and some success stories from the users of the services provided.

It has been very pleasing that the activities of the Centre have expanded from more agencies coming “on board” to existing agencies expanding their operation.

The British Red Cross have extended their services to include Tracing and Messaging Services, a Therapeutic Care Service and hope to start a Skin Camouflage Service in the future.

Migrant Helpline have increased their staff of two Case Workers by appointing a Senior Case Worker and an Outreach Project Worker.

KCC Adult Education are running not only computer and ESOL classes, but now include intensive English classes in conjunction with Guidelines and funded by “Skills for Success” and who operate their “Skillsline” project from the Centre.

Thanet College has expanded their courses at the Centre to include more work-related courses.

Reception

On entering the building you are greeted by a “Reception Area” presided over by Frances who runs the building in relation to security and good housekeeping. She regulates the flow of appointments and in the main the vast numbers who use the “drop-in” facilities throughout the day. From time to time she is assisted by Adelina and Pat, two volunteers who dedicate their time to helping in the building generally caring for customers as well as the building.
Great importance has been put on the way people are received, many have problems, and are often disturbed and upset. It is hoped that when they leave the building the expectations for their future have risen. Thankfully there are many success stories to tell.

**Migrant Helpline**

This photograph shows three case workers and an interpreter from the Margate One-Stop Shop Service of Migrant Helpline. Helen is responsible for the day to day running of this very busy office, which at times has two or three interpreters available. The overall manager of this service is Bronwen Drake who has overall responsibility for all One Stop Operations in Kent and Sussex.

This department deals with all immigration matters and on very busy days can see up to 50% of the Centre’s callers.

Matters of welfare and housing are but a few of the problems confronting case workers to solve, but to mark their good work the service has been awarded the Community Legal Service's Quality Mark. Often the clients are traumatised and have nothing other than the clothes they stand up in. The case worker has to spend a long time sorting this type of client out and it needs a great deal of patience and resilience. This patience, resilience and good humour is also shown as much time is spent dealing with the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) and sadly, clients have experienced significant problems, mainly centred around delays in material support from NASS.

Only one client has left the Migrant Helpline Office in a rage, slamming the door, unfortunately he was later found to be suffering from mental problems. The Centre has continued to help this man.

This department has had so many success stories that it could fill this review document by itself.
Case Studies

A young Afghan unaccompanied minor came to the United Kingdom late in 1999, his family having suffered imprisonment and torture by the Taliban. After considerable work by Migrant Helpline involving not only the Home Office, solicitors and the local Member of Parliament, he received exceptional leave to remain. He has since successfully completed a finance and computer course hoping now, that he has become an adult, to go into partnership and start his own business.

A 30 year old Kurdish man, a talented flutist, came to the United Kingdom having fled the harsh Iraqi regime. Initially a timid man who needed a lot of assistance to settle in England, has since started an intensive music course at Canterbury College. His confidence has grown and he has given several interviews for the BBC’s current affairs programmes. He has made great efforts to improve his English and hopes to take up a music teaching post in the near future. He is always thankful for the assistance he has been given.

A 29 year old Iranian, who was very traumatised and fled the harsh conditions he had experienced, settled and has intergrated well into the local society. He even works an allotment in Westgate. This man was so grateful for the help he received at the One Stop Service, when the Centre first opened, he cleared the back garden of much rubbish and when asked why he wanted to work for no reward he replied that he wanted to give something back for all the help he had received.

Health Promotion

Health Promotion is the latest of the agencies to join the Centre. An outreach case worker is working with vulnerable young people who may be at risk from misusing drugs and to assess their health and social needs. It is a multi-agency approach also involving the police, local authority and the East Kent Primary Care Trust.

Thanet Beacon

Hold weekly “drop-in” sessions at the Centre to advise clients on matters of domestic violence. It is a multi-agency approach to the problem led by the police and ably supported by the health service practice nurses, health visitors and trained volunteers. Legal advice is given by solicitors. Due to the nature of this work, if further information is required please telephone The Domestic Violence Advice Line on 01843 299699 between 12 noon and 8 pm Monday to Friday.

Thanet Youth Music Action Zone

Thanet Youth Music Action Zone, in conjunction with a music company Rhythmix and Thanet District Council created a film project for children aged between eight and 18 years.
10 children attended the 10 week project. They planned, filmed, acted, edited and created their own music. The course finished with a showing of the film to an invited audience of parents, teachers from local primary and secondary schools, local councillors, members of parliament, refugee organisations and Brian Spencer-Smith, Youth Music Action Zone's Co-ordinator, who arranged funding for the film project. Each student received a certificate and a copy of the film on CD Rom or video upon completion of the course.

A further success story, which was an outcome of this course, saw “Selina”, a 15 year old Czech girl, awarded a recording test for her vocal and keyboard talents by a Maidstone based recording company “Project X”. The recording session will take place at the Centre.

Kent Refugee Support Group

A charity organisation which has operated in the Thanet area for eight years. However, about two years ago in recognition for their voluntary work the charity was awarded substantial funding over a three year period from the National Lottery. This enabled the Group to expand its operations which has its administration base at the Centre where the Project Co-ordinator and Administrative Officer can be found. It also has a Drop-in Advice Centre at 21 Arthur Road, Cliftonville. A lot of the Group’s work is centred around the problems encountered by the more long term asylum seeker and refugee and is carried out by volunteers supported by two part-time volunteer co-ordinators, an advice worker, and an outreach project worker. The Group’s many other activities include, educational support, clothing distribution, a weekly social evening, and women’s group meetings.

In recognition for their more formal work the Group has been awarded the Community Legal Services “Quality Mark” and authorisation from the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner to provide advice and other services.

Thanet Action Team

Formerly part of the Employment Service, but now part of the newly formed merger of the Employment Service and the Benefits Agency – known as Job Centre Plus. Thanet Action Team, under the leadership of its Manager, Mrs Lin Dykes, has and is playing one of the pivotal roles in reducing unemployment in the Thanet Area by breaking down barriers and focusing their help where it is needed the most. The Action Team operate from several locations in Thanet including one located at the Centre. Their assistance is centred around people who live in 10 electoral wards that from recently produced government unemployed statistics are deemed to have the highest unemployment.
Some of the help they can give:

- Fares to work or interviews.
- Training in skills relating to specific jobs.
- Clothing for interview.
- Work clothing and tools for jobs.
- Job search.
- Paying for initial childcare costs.
- Any other reasonable financial support relating to job entry.
- Coaching in interview techniques.
- "In Work" benefit calculations.
- Employer visits.
- Help when leaving benefit.

During their current Operational Year (October 2001 – October 2002) the Action Team are targeting jobless people from the following groups:-

- Ethnic minorities.
- Ex-offenders.
- Lone parents.
- People with a disability.
- Ex-regulars from H M Forces.
- Rough sleepers, including hostel/foyer sleepers.
- Refugees and asylum seekers.
- People whose first language is not English, Welsh or Gaelic.
- People lacking basic skills.
- People with serious/long established drug and alcohol problems.
- People with health problems.
- People who have left local authority care homes within the last three years.
- People who have been jobless for more than 12 months.
- People who are 50 years old or more.
- People who have completed New Deal 25+ participation and face the prospect of returning to benefit.

February 2002 saw the launch of Thanet Action Teams mobile unit which enables advisors to set up shop where no advisers have been before!

The Action Team has been so successful that in its current operational year (October 01 to October 02) it reached the Government set targets for the service in May 2002. This is the second year of operation. In the first year it helped 728 people into work, an amazing achievement.

**Breaking down the barriers**

**Turkish Delight**

Ms X came to this country from Turkey. Her husband left her and their child. She despaired of ever finding work. Eventually she saw a job that suited her perfectly. She came to see us, delighted that she had got an interview but worried about the practicalities. We started by providing interview clothing and travel costs. She was offered the post but barriers remained. She wouldn't be paid for a month – we gave her an in work grant to cover her living expenses until payday. She couldn't afford child care costs – again, we covered the costs until she was paid. She's now been employed for three months and is very happy in her job.

*"The staff made me feel very welcome and I shall recommend them to anyone who needs their help"*

**Taxi!**

Another lone parent who had been on Income Support for quite some time approached us in August. She had a job offer to start work as a private hire driver. We agreed to fund her licence application. She received her licence in October but was then told she would have to go self employed as the company did not have a car for her to use. This meant that she was going to have to lease a car at the cost of £600 per month! She was prepared to do this if we
could provide some help with the council “plate” and road tax. She brought in proof of the lease arrangement and even parked the car outside to prove that it existed. We agreed the funding and she started work on the 23rd of November. In the first weekend of driving, she earned £250.

"I thought the service was very good. I like the one to one; it was very personal which is good. I will be using Thanet Action Team again if I need them”

Education

Academic and work related courses are held at the Centre most days. They include - English, Computer Studies, Intensive English, One to One English, Basic Food Hygiene, First Aid, Health and Safety and Safe Handling.

Crèche facilities are provided for some courses.

A number of providers run these courses and include KCC Adult Education, KCC Minority Communities Achievement Service and Thanet College. Financial, practical and advisory help is also given by “Skills for Success” Initiative, Canterbury Christchurch University College – Thanet Campus, Guidelines, East Kent ITeC Ltd, Hadlow College, Imperial College at Wye, Thanet Community Learning Forum, Kent Learning Partnership and Kent Guidance Consortium.

DHP (Southern) Limited

This company has the Government franchise for various funded self-employment schemes. It works closely with Thanet Action Team, The Prince’s Trust and NatWest Bank.

Some of the many success stories include:

➢ A 50-year-old male from Margate completed the DHP/Government programme and is now successfully trading as a self employed painter and decorator.

➢ A 20-year-old man from Broadstairs, having acquired funding from the Prince’s Trust and with the help of part-time work, is now trading as a ceramic artist.
A 50-year-old male from Ramsgate completed the programme and is now trading as a Jobbing Carpenter.

An over 50 year old female, having completed the programme, is now trading as an alternative therapist. Yet another example of the over 50s accessing the Government New Deal 50+ initiative.

A male loan parent completed the programme and is now trading as a freelance fitness instructor.

The Prince's Trust

The Prince’s Trust operate their Business Section (18 – 28 years) one day a week from the Centre.

Some of the success stories:-

A brother and sister team have started up their own removals and delivery business in Thanet with the support of the Prince’s Trust and Thanet Action Team.

The young couple, who came from the Czech Republic just over three years ago, received business planning and support from the Prince’s Trust and successfully applied for a business start-up loan. Added to this, they received financial assistance from the Employment Service Action Team to enable them to purchase essential work equipment.

oooooo

A young Margate woman has recently started out on the relaunch of her musical career with the help of the Prince’s Trust and the Employment Service Action Team.

10 years ago, with a very promising career ahead of her, she had to put her singing on hold. Due to both personal and health problems she had to step out of the limelight – which was particularly disappointing as she had just been featured in a BBC documentary.

She recently completed a course in popular music and now writes and produces her own work as well as undertaking live performances. Having received business support and a low interest start-up loan from the Prince’s Trust, plus additional help from the Action Team, she will shortly be performing both locally and in London.

oooooo

Thanet Mediation Service

A newly formed service in the Thanet area affiliated to the Kent County Branch of the Mediation Service. Since its launch a few months ago it has trained some very good volunteers and with the help of a strong management committee, dedicated co-ordinator, initially assisted by Canterbury’s co-ordinator, the service is building up a large case load. Works closely with the Police and Local Authority Housing and Environmental Services. Helps to resolve disputes, hopefully keeping them out of formal court proceedings and sometimes encountering “The Neighbours from Hell”.

w-Regeneration/h V/N
Guidelines

- Are you recently unemployed?
- Do you want a fresh start?
- Looking for a job?
- Seeking a change of career?

Guidelines is a Free Information, Advice and Guidance Service available to everyone over 18 whether in work, unemployed or simply looking for a change of direction.

They can offer you:

- An adviser who can help you make decisions on jobs or training.
- Information and guidance about careers and routes into them.
- Advice and information on sources of finance to support a return to training or work.
- Help with the preparation of CVs, application letters etc.

w-Regeneration/h VJN
If you are interested call GUIDELINES on FREEPHONE 0800 064 1280 or e-mail at guidelines.uk@yahoo.co.uk

You can be seen by appointment at the Centre where there is a free phone linked to our office, which is open Monday to Friday – 10 am – 4 pm.

**British Red Cross**

The British Red Cross holds an International Tracing & Message Clinic at the Multi Agency Resource Centre. The following are two enquiries that have been initiated at these clinics.

An Afghan met with us to ask us to try and trace his mother who used to live in Kabul. He thought that his father was being detained by the Taliban somewhere in Kandahar. He was very concerned that his parents’ safety could be jeopardised if it became known that he was trying to get in contact. He had been forced to leave Afghanistan because of his ethnicity.

On another occasion, a Serb went to the Clinic to ask if it would be possible to make enquiries about his friend, who is an Albanian. They had both lived in Prizren, but had to leave because their lives were in danger. Both these young men have been persecuted at different times, but wanted to remain in contact with each other, despite their different upbringings.

Enquiries are being made about both these cases through the International Red Cross to see if they can be reunited with the sought person.

**Inland Revenue & Benefits Agency (Now Job Centre Plus)**

Both agencies offer monthly “Help Desk” sessions at the Centre. Well received by the public and an example of the more regulated statutory agencies making themselves more accessible.

**Thanet Police**

The Police Community Liaison Officer holds a “clinic” at the Centre on a weekly basis which is a good chance for the public to discuss matters of concern with a police officer, usually in plain cloths, in informal (but confidential) surroundings other than at a Police Station.

People from ethnic minority groups are amongst the people who feel more comfortable with this arrangement.
Kent Education – Minority Communities Achievement Service

Through their work at the Multi Agency Resource Centre in Cecil Street they are able to support and prepare groups of young asylum seekers for entry to mainstream education. They attend familiarisation classes and are helped to complete the necessary paperwork.

During these classes it was noted that one child appeared to have particular problems with co-ordination. The teacher was able to alert the school and they are taking steps to support his particular needs. As a result he has found school a positive experience. Had their not been the opportunity to observe the child beforehand this might not have been the case.

The Centre has also been used for a series of meetings with families in order to explain the English education system, a school’s expectations of the parents and what the school hoped to offer the children. These meetings are designed to encourage the parents to support their children’s regular attendance at school.

It is very good to be able to talk to parents with an interpreter in a pleasant and calm atmosphere.

One very pleasing recent story to tell happened on the 27th June 2002, when Tuan, a sixteen year old unaccompanied minor from Vietnam came to the Centre and spoke to the CLO. Tuan told the Centre’s Manager that he had arrived in the United Kingdom two years ago with many problems and was helped enormously by everyone he encountered. He went on to say that he had just finished the last of his GCSE examinations, being a student at The Ramsgate School and that he wanted to do voluntary work at the Centre during the school summer holidays, to show his appreciation for the help he has received. Providing Tuan gains the necessary grades in his GCSE exams he hopes to attend a two-year ‘A’ Level course at Chatham House Grammar School or Dane Court Grammar School.

Agencies Associated with the Centre
Thanet District Council
Thanet Community Development Trust
Migrant Helpline
Job Centre + (Previously Employment Service) – Thanet Action Team
Job Centre + (Previously Benefits Agency)
Youth Music Action Zone
Thanet Mediation Service
Kent County Council
  County Social Services Asylum Seeker and Refugee Service Unit
  Education – Minority Communities Achievement Service
  Adult Education
  Adult Careers Guidance
  Education Welfare

w-Regeneration/v.JVN
Youth and Community
Breaking the Cycle Project
Kent Arts and Libraries – Wolfson Project and Community Librarian
Kent Refugee Support Group
Guidelines
The Prince’s Trust
Kent Community Housing Trust – “Finding Your Feet Project”
Kent County Constabulary
Thanet Domestic Violence Forum
The British Red Cross
DHP (Southern) Limited
Thanet Basic Skills Initiative
Canterbury Christ Church University College
Thanet College
Imperial College at Wye (University of London)
East Kent ITeC Limited
HMP Canterbury – “New Bridge Project” – Kent Probation Service
Inland Revenue
Hadlow College
National Asylum Support Service
Thanet Community Learning Forum
Kent Learning Partnership
Kent Guidance Consortium
East Kent Coastal Primary Care Trust
PALS – East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust
Goldsmiths College
Refugee Action

*Some of the Committee of Management in “full swing”*
In conclusion all the project aims and results have been achieved beyond expectation and the future is looking good with different projects and ideas being realised almost on a weekly basis.

The Centre has received delegations and enquiries from home and abroad. They include Denmark; Finland; Italy; Scotland; European Union monitoring agencies from Brussels; Bedfordshire; Dover; Liverpool; Maidstone; Nottinghamshire; Kent Public Service Agreement; General Municipal and Boilermakers’ Union and the Government funded, Improvement and Development Agency – Peer Review Group.

Inter-agency co-operation has been one of the keys to success and we have received help from many quarters for which the Committee are thankful. In the early stages of planning, helpful advice was given by the Refugee Council’s Brixton “One Stop Shop” staff.

The following few paragraphs have been dedicated to quotes from leading figures in the statutory and voluntary sectors:-

Richard Spoerry, County Manager, Public Service Agreement is quoted as saying –

“The work of the Centre is just what the Government and Kent County Council envisaged when partnerships deliver a coherent package aimed at reducing dependence, increasing employment and fulfilment; when they signed their Public Service Agreement in 2001.”

Migrant Helpline’s Chief Executive, Annie Ledger, is quoted as saying –

“I am very proud of what my staff have achieved and when “Investors in People” inspectors completed their assessment, they commented that all staff exude an enthusiasm for their work which would be the envy of many organisations.”

Mark Janaway, Operational Chief Inspector Thanet Police, when holding a staff briefing spoke of the Thanet Multi-Agency Resource Centre by stating –

“The Centre’s contribution and close co-operation between agencies including that of the Community Liaison Officers of the Local Authority and Thanet Police have assisted greatly in some very good work taking place amongst the refugee, asylum seeker and transient population of Thanet over a sustained period of time.”

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable George Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury’s Office when writing to the Centre regretted that due to a very busy diary the Archbishop could not attend the Centre in Refugee Week 2001. They expressed the Archbishop’s deep concern for the plight of asylum seekers and refugees as well as for those who seek to help them, endorsing all that is being done at the Centre, which is obviously providing for a real need to help what is a tragic situation for so many. The Archbishop sent his warmest good wishes to everyone concerned in this important and worthwhile initiative.
Councillor Ken Gregory, Cabinet Portfolio Holder when asked about the Thanet Multi Agency Resource Centre quoted –

"The Council is very proud to have been involved in the development of this Community Resource Centre. The Resource Centre was created to enhance community cohesion in Thanet and to provide an independent centre where support and guidance could be gained from statutory and voluntary organisations alike. It was intended to provide a One-Stop Shop for everyone in need. The criteria for help and assistance is need – nationality or ethnic origin are incidental.

We are very pleased that so many partners have been willing to take space within the Centre and deliver vitally important services to those in need in Thanet – both residents and those residing in Thanet for a limited time. The fact that the Resource Centre is not run by a statutory agency but by a partnership of those who deliver the services is something that we believed vital to ensure the ongoing independence and viability of the Centre. The Council takes particular pride in not only helping to form the Centre, but in enabling it to go forward as a true partnership where all members are involved in deciding future policy and direction.

I must also take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and effort of our Community Liaison Officer who has been instrumental in forming the Resource Centre. It was a brave decision by the Council at a time of severe financial constraints to part fund the post with the County Council but we have been splendidly repaid by the Centre."

Margate Station
Approximately 10 minutes walk.

Parking
There are pay & display parking bays in Cecil Street and Hawley Square and two pay and display multi-storey car parks in Mill Lane (follow black arrows) and Hawley Street (follow dashed arrows).

Thanet District Council
PO Box 9, Cecil Street
Margate, CT9 1XZ

Tel: 01843 577000
Fax: 01843 293836
Email: public.affairs@thanet.gov.uk
Web: www.thanet.gov.uk
THANET MULTI-AGENCY RESOURCE CENTRE
1 Cecil Street Margate Kent CT9 1NX
Telephone & Fax 01843 209607

RECEPTION Frances Emmett 01843 209607

THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL
PO Box 9 Cecil Street Margate Kent CT9 1XZ 01843 577000
Fax: 01843 290906 & 229385 DX 30555 (Margate)
Bill Mountain Centre Manager & Community Liaison Officer 01843 577604 &
209607 Mobile 07747 764475 e-mail bill.mountain@thanet.gov.uk
Brian Lear Director Community Services 01843 577009 Secretary 577010
Bob Spicer Community Services Manager 01843 577473
John Lewis Benefits Manager 01843 577301
Amber Christou Housing Liaison Officer 01843 577280

THANET COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
19-21 Harbour Street Ramsgate CT11 8HA 01843 599996 Fax 01843 585521
Peter Langford – Executive Director e-mail peter.langford@tcdc.org.uk

MIGRANT HELPLINE
Room 65 No.1 Control Building Eastern Docks Dover CT16 1JA
01304 203977 Fax: 01304 203995
Bronwen Drake One Stop Service Manager 01304 203977
OSS Margate 1 Cecil Street CT9 1NX
01843 292921 Fax: 01843 232085

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
Northgate House Northgate Canterbury CT1 1EZ
01227 594082 Fax: 01227 594085
Kevin Payne – Acting District Manager
Ramsgate Job Centre & TAT HQ161 High Street Ramsgate CT11 9RZ 01843 258258
Lin Bailey Thanet Action Team Manager 01843 258218 Fax: 258247
Thanet Action Team at 1 Cecil Street Margate CT9 1NX
01843 209703 & 224214 Fax: 01843 209705 Clients Enqs.Freephone 0800 0858683

BENEFITS AGENCY
Queens House Queen Street Ramsgate CT11 9EW 01843 258000
Mick Gaylor – Manager
Glenys Woodham – Customer Services 01227 596956

YOUTH MUSIC ACTION ZONE
Brian Spencer-Smith – Manager 01843 577612
Regeneration(Arts) for 8 to 18 year olds
C/O TDC

THANET MEDIATION SERVICE
1 Cecil Street Margate CT9 1NX 01843 294771
Locum Co-ordinator Clare Barton 01227 771283
KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

County Social Services Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service Unit
Invicta House G/F County Hall Maidstone Kent ME14 1XX
01622 694886 Fax: 01622 221700
Mary Blanche – Head of Service
Nigel Hewitt – District Manager
East Kent Team Manager – Peter Brown
Poltons Family Centre Vale View Road Dover CT17 9NP
01304 215004 Fax: 01304 205880
Thanet Team St Peters House Dane Valley Road Broadstairs CT10 3JJ
01843 860000
1 Cecil Street Office 01843 231602

Education: East Kent Refugee Education Team
1a Honeywood House Honeywood Road Whitfield Dover CT16 3EH
Thanet Outreach Teacher at 1 Cecil Street – Robert Taylor 01304 823600

Adult Education
The Margate Centre Hawley Square Margate CT9 1PF
01843 292013 & 290922
Rachel Mc Curry – Curriculum Leader E.A.L.
Bryan Ilett – Project Leader Phone/Fax 01843 291432
e-mail: bryan.ilett@kent.gov.uk

Adult Careers Guidance
Rutland House 28 St Georges Place Canterbury CT1 1UT
01227 456808
Pat Carmody – The Centres Careers Advisor – Appointments Only
Via 01227 456808

Education Welfare
Aberdeen House 68 Ellington Road Ramsgate CT11 9ST
01843 850799 Fax: 01843 599822
Romana Ghorbani – EWO

Youth & Community
Mick Price – Head of Service 01622 671411
Bill Butler – Y&C Officer Dover & Thanet 01304 375559
Area Youth Office “Linwood” Mill Road Deal CT14 9AG

Breaking the Cycle Project Co-ordinator Colette Baumbback 07786 191314
Y&C Dept. Key Training Services Quarterdeck Youth & Training Centre
Zion Place Margate CT9 1RP 01843 280070

KENT REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP
1 Cecil Street Margate Kent CT9 1NX 01843 225549
Charles Bourner – Co-ordinator Monique Petit – Administrator
Also at The Warren Court Hotel Arthur Road Cliftonville CT9 2EN
01843 280225 Chair – Katie Clapham
GUIDELINES
6 Cecil Square Margate CT9 1DD  01843 571922
also at 1 Cecil Street  Stephen Beech  Co-ordinator Ruth Gould

HEALTH
Mill Lane Surgery Mill House Mill Lane Margate CT9 1JU
01843 220881
Dr Peter Le Feuvre – East Kent Health Authority – AM only
Pru Wood Specialist Health Visitor Asylum Seeker Families EK NHS Trust
Also contactable at College Road Clinic Margate 01843 255189
and 1 Cecil Street Margate  07860 896259

THE PRINCES TRUST
Thanet Business Centre Victoria Road Margate CT9 1LN
01843 233414  Janette Beetham  Thanet Co-ordinator
Kent Area Manager – Ron Dunham 01622 694323
Room 355 Sessions House County Hall Maidstone

KENT COMMUNITY HOUSING TRUST
“Finding Your Feet” Project – Daniel Rodbard
“Downsview” Willesborough Road Kenington Ashford Kent TN24 9QP
01233 641583 & at 1 Cecil St 01843 231602 EK Manager Angela Gardiner
Canterbury Office about to open details to follow

KENT COUNTY CONSTABULARY
Police Station Fort Hill Margate Kent CT9 1HL
Police Community Liaison Officer – PC Peter Dake 01843 222007
Domestic Violence Officer WPC Helen Carpenter 01843 222028
Domestic Violence Office Secretary Sue Edwards

THANET DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FORUM
“Thanet Beacon” – Domestic Violence Support Services and
Helpline 01843 299699

THE BRITISH RED CROSS
Kent Branch – Anita Ross RGN Assistant Community Services Manager
2 Lower Chantry Lane Canterbury CT1 1UF Pager 01523 157730
01227 763900  Fax: 01227 766145
Branch H.Q. 25 College Road Maidstone ME15 6SX 01622 690011
Lisa Allen Community Services Manager
Kent Youth Service Manager – Stella Benton
Message & Tracing Service – Mandy Parris
Also at 1 Cecil Street Margate – ask Reception for details

DHP (Southern) LIMITED
1 Cecil Street Margate CT9 1NX 01843 298426
David Webster 07941 373017
Head Office 0208 301 6667
Has Government franchise for various funded self employment schemes
THANET BASIC SKILLS INITIATIVE
Jenny Gartland 01843 583553
Community Café 29 Kings Street Ramsgate CT11 8NP

CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Jenny Harrop – Project Officer – Centre for Enterprise & Business Development
Neville House 90-91 Northgate Canterbury Ct1 1BA 01227 826523 Fax: 780328
e-mail: j.harrop@cant.ac.uk Website: www.cant.uk/cebd
Thanet Campus: Northwood Road Broadstairs 01843 609100 Reception 609120
“Partnership with Purpose” Project – Sharon Smith 01843 609118

THANET COLLEGE
Linda Aldred – Community Education Development Officer
Cliftonville Learning & Resource Centre 34/35 Edgar Road Margate CT9 2EG
01843 280540

IMPERIAL COLLEGE AT WYE (University of London)
Wye Kent TN25 4HE 01233 812401 Short Course Administrator Sarah Harden
The CPD Department e-mail s.harden@ic.ac.uk

EAST KENT ITeC LIMITED
The Business Centre Complex Victoria Road Margate CT9 1RD
01843 233433 Fax: 01843 226307 Karen McChesney
e-mail: ekitec@ekitec.freeserve.co.uk

H.M.P. CANTERBURY
“New Bridge Project”
Ray Scott – Kent Probation Service – Foreign Nationals Liaison & Bail Officer
01227 762244 Ext. 435 Longport Canterbury Kent

NEW BRIDGE
27a Medway Street 0207 976 0767
London e-mail: new.bridge@ukgateway.net
SW1P 2PD Web Site: www.thenewbridge.org.uk
Denise Gillen 01305 772242 New Bridge volunteer at HMP The Verne Dorset

INLAND REVENUE
H.M. Inspectors of Taxes Capitol House Zion Place Margate 01227 864800
Manager Ms Goldie Cave 01843 222629
Business Support Team Crown Buildings Wellesley Road Ashford Kent TN24 8EF
01233 653672/653673 O.I.C. Alan Crow Sheila Sackett Business Advisor

HADLOW COLLEGE
Tonbridge Kent TN11 0AL 01732 850551

NATIONAL ASYLUM SUPPORT SERVICE
Nick Farey Regional Manager for South Central & South East 07799 343324
Quest House 11 Cross Road Croydon CR9 6EL www.homeoffice.gov.uk
e-mail Nick.Farey@nass64.freeserve.co.uk

List As At 09.11.01