

Taking Stock and Facing the Future

The infrastructure and resources of the UK migration and refugee sector

May 2020



Migration Exchange

at  Global Dialogue

About Migration Exchange

Migration Exchange is an informal network of independent funders, established in 2010. We aim to improve the lives of people who migrate, and receiving communities in the UK, by informing public debate on migration and supporting welcoming communities. We do this through commissioning research to inform funders and key partners to act on shared concerns; supporting coordination and building capacity in the sector, and aligning grants to enable activity to take place at scale or increase the potential for success.

Migration Exchange is not a grant making programme. Decisions on funding applications are made by individual foundations. Grant seekers should approach foundations separately and consult the funding criteria and guidelines for each foundation.

Migration Exchange is hosted by UK charity Global Dialogue, and supported by contributions from funders including: Barrow Cadbury Trust, Comic Relief, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, Migration Foundation, Oak Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Trust for London and Unbound Philanthropy.

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to all the organisations that shared their data with us for this research, and to everyone who gave up their time to be interviewed. This report would not have been possible without your contributions and we hope that you find it useful in your work.

We would also like to thank all those who commented on the report brief, or otherwise contributed to the report design or development, including the Migration Exchange management committee – Alex Sutton (Paul Hamlyn Foundation), Ayesha Saran (Barrow Cadbury Trust), Michael Pitchford (Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust), and Will Somerville (Unbound Philanthropy). Thank you to Paul Hamlyn Foundation for funding this research.

The report was commissioned by Migration Exchange and written by Ruth Grove-White and Mike Kaye, with additional research by Dylan Fotoohi.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as the positions of any of the funding organisations or Migration Exchange as a whole. For more information on Migration Exchange, visit: <https://global-dialogue.org/programmes/migration-exchange>

The executive summary of this report can be found at:

<https://global-dialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Migration-Exchange-Taking-Stock-and-Facing-the-Future-Executive-Summary-Final-WEB-1.pdf>

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Foreword

This review was commissioned to mark a decade of shared focus on migration and public attitudes among a group of trusts and foundations in the UK. We planned to publish in July 2020. Our ambition was to inform conversations about how we work together across boundaries of geography, role and approach with the purpose of improving our collective capacity to achieve social change.

In March 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic impacted every aspect of our lives and society. It has accelerated the need for action to address exclusion and marginalisation, and to dismantle barriers to equality and justice. It has highlighted the need for collective responses to include **everyone** in strategies to stay safe and recover from this crisis, regardless of immigration status.

People around the UK have already responded with urgency, humanity and creativity. Charities are finding new ways to support people's daily needs and push for action on wider issues. But there are fundamental challenges ahead. We have decided to release this review now in order to provide a baseline for understanding the existing infrastructure and resources in this sector. We hope that it will provide a helpful context for action on the current crisis and future recovery, and a baseline for assessing the situation after this pandemic.

The data for this report is the most comprehensive assessment of this sector ever conducted. We are grateful to all those who contributed, and to the authors. The interviews and data were collected before the pandemic hit, so do not reflect the experience of how people have worked together during this period. We know that this field will be buffeted by the economic and social shocks. But many of the insights and reflections will remain relevant. They suggest that leaders of charities and funders within this small but resilient sector share an appetite to work together, to build on strengths and address gaps and weaknesses. By focusing on how we face the future together, we can build trust and collaborate, be agile in our responses, and connect to common values for the benefit of all.

**Sarah Cutler and Dylan Fotoohi,
Migration Exchange**

May 2020

1

Introduction and methodology

This report was commissioned by the funder network Migration Exchange to review the infrastructure and resources of UK organisations working on migration and refugee issues, with a focus on their capacity to achieve social change.¹

The research was carried out between November 2019 and March 2020 and includes new information from:

- A detailed analysis of official data for charities registered in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to map the incomes and geographical distribution of charities working on UK migration and refugee issues in 2020.
- 130 surveys which were completed by NGOs and which provide details of their resource, key activities and views on the strengths and weaknesses of the sector in 2020. These findings were supplemented by in-depth interviews with 26 CEOs.
- 16 surveys which were completed by key trusts and foundations supporting work on migration and refugee issues in the UK and which gives an overview of their grant portfolios and the current funding landscape. These findings were supplemented by in-depth interviews with eleven funders.²

This report can broadly be divided into three parts. It begins with a brief summary (chapter 2) of some of the significant developments and trends affecting migration and refugee issues in the UK over the last decade.

The second section (chapters 3–4) provides a profile of the sector at the start of 2020, drawing on the primary research outlined above, and considers its strengths and weaknesses.

The third section (chapters 5–7) looks forward and reflects on the challenges and opportunities organisations are likely to face over the coming years. It also considers the ways in which both NGOs and funders could strengthen the work they do and maximise their impact.

We hope that this report will be a useful resource for those already working with or on UK migration and refugee issues and will feed into wider planning for the coming period. For those who are new to the sector, we hope that it will be a helpful introduction to its work and help to identify where future contributions can be made.

1 The term 'migrant and refugee' is used as shorthand to include asylum seekers and all other migrants in the wider immigration system.

2 Full details of the research methodology, including data analysis and sampling strategy, can be found in Appendix A of this report.

2

Background: Recent UK migration and refugee trends

The UK has a long history of immigration and refugee protection. In 2020, an estimated 14% of the UK population was born overseas.³ An increasingly complex immigration system has been accompanied by the growth of a diverse not-for-profit sector that has supported and advocated on behalf of new arrivals.

Over the last decade, immigration and asylum issues have continued to attract intense public and political scrutiny. Key developments since 2010 comprise the backdrop for today's support and advocacy work on migration and refugee issues, including:

- **Policies affecting the movement of people from outside the European Union to the UK.** People coming to the UK from outside the EU ('non-EU nationals') make up the majority of the foreign-born population in the UK.⁴ Since 2010, new government policies have increasingly restricted immigration from countries outside the EU in order to reduce net migration levels, introducing tighter rules on family migration, economic migration and international students.⁵ Immigration fees have been substantially increased, including a new annual surcharge to contribute towards the National Health Service (NHS). Although these measures seem to have had a limited impact on migration levels (in 2019, non-EU migration levels were at their highest levels since 2004),⁶ they have had significant wider implications for many individuals and communities living in the UK.
- **The rise and fall of movement of European Union citizens to the UK.** In 2004 and 2007 respectively, the UK opened its labour markets to the nationals of recent EU Accession countries. As a result, immigration of EU nationals to the UK rose significantly, peaking in 2016. Debate about the impacts of EU immigration played a key role in the UK's referendum on membership of the EU in 2016. Following the decision to leave the EU, the number of European nationals coming to the UK has steadily fallen.⁷ Following the Brexit transition period, it is likely that new arrivals from the EU will need to meet the same requirements as non-EU nationals within a revised post-Brexit immigration system.⁸
- **Policies affecting people seeking asylum in the UK.** The backlog in the Home Office's asylum caseload has increased significantly over the last

3 Migrants in the UK: An Overview. 4 October 2019. Migration Observatory. Available at: www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migrants-in-the-uk-an-overview

4 Ibid.

5 These policies had a common goal of achieving a 'net migration target', first established by the then Prime Minister David Cameron in 2010. The policy aimed to reduce the difference between numbers of people immigrating to the UK and numbers emigrating, from the hundreds of thousands to the 'tens of thousands'.

6 ONS Migration Statistics Quarterly report, February 2020. Available at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/migrationstatisticsquarterlyreport/february2020

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

decade. The number of people waiting for an initial decision has increased from 5,978 in 2010 to 40,018 by the end of 2019.⁹ The impact of these delays has been intensified by the low levels of financial support provided to people seeking asylum (just over £5 a day to meet their essential needs beyond accommodation and utilities), cuts in support levels for children, and regulations which prevent them from working. In 2016, new legislation was passed that removes appeal rights for people who are refused housing and/or support while awaiting the outcome of their asylum claim. On the positive side, the UK has resettled over 21,000 people to the UK since 2014 under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.¹⁰

- **Tougher immigration enforcement measures.** Since 2010, local level enforcement measures have been extended in order to create a 'hostile environment' for people without secure immigration status in the UK. This has included new measures to reduce access to private rentals, driving licenses and bank accounts, and the contentious 2013 'go home vans' initiative by the Home Office.¹¹ Further measures were introduced in the 2016 Immigration Act, including limiting Local Authority service provision to some groups of people (those with 'no recourse to public funds' NRPF), and extending the 'deport first, appeal later' principle so that people could be removed while the outcome of an immigration appeal was still pending. These policies have not resulted in an increase in levels of detention or removals from the UK,¹² but have caused widespread race discrimination. The 'Windrush' scandal, in which people who had lived and worked in the UK most or all of their lives were unable to access healthcare or benefits, lost their jobs, and were detained and deported, has further increased the pressure on politicians and policy-makers to change approach.¹³
- **Cuts to public services linked to wider austerity measures.** Between 2010 and 2020, national public spending cuts resulted in significant reductions in legal aid, provision of English language support (ESOL), and local authority services. New charges for access to UK community healthcare services

9 Home Office, Immigration statistics, year ending December 2019. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-december-2019/list-of-tables

10 Home Office, Asylum and resettlement datasets, February 2020. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets

11 The 'go home vans' were part of a Home Office advertising campaign in 2013 which aimed to encourage people without regular immigration status to return to their country of origin. Vans bearing this slogan were driven around six ethnically diverse London boroughs, generating widespread controversy.

12 Migration Observatory, *Immigration Detention in the UK*, 29 May 2019. Available at: www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-detention-in-the-uk

13 'Windrush generation' refers to the 600,000 Commonwealth citizens who arrived in the UK between 1948 and 1973 with indefinite leave to remain, many of whom were given no documentation to prove their legal status. The Home Office estimated in 2019 that at least 83 individuals from this group had been wrongly removed from the UK since 2002.

entered into force in 2017. These developments have affected many people without permanent residence or British citizenship, increasing the pressures on frontline charities and community organisations.

- **Shifting public opinion.** Public opinion surveys have recorded immigration as being of high concern to a majority of the British public since the 1960s. However, research indicates that the salience of this issue has declined significantly since the EU referendum in 2016.¹⁴ Recent analysis of public opinion suggests that the majority of the British public are 'balancers' on immigration – worried about the pressures it may bring, but aware of its potential social and economic benefits.¹⁵

In 2020, the UK stands on the cusp of Brexit, a new immigration system and a redefined position on the global stage. The impacts of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic for people in the immigration system are still unfolding but have already devastated vulnerable communities across the UK. The long-term shockwaves from this event, and the wider political and economic turbulence it will generate, will present major challenges for the UK's migration and refugee sector over the coming period.

¹⁴ *UK Public Opinion toward Immigration: Overall Attitudes and Level of Concern*, Migration Observatory, 20 January 2020. Available at: www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/uk-public-opinion-toward-immigration-overall-attitudes-and-level-of-concern

¹⁵ Sunder Katwala, et.al., *The Reset Moment: Immigration in the New Parliament*, British Future and the Policy Institute, Kings College London, March 2020.

3

Profiling the UK migration and refugee sector in 2020

3.1

Charities working on migration and refugee issues

Detailed analysis of official data for charities registered in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland identified 972 charities which include some form of work relating to migration and refugees under their charitable remit.¹⁶

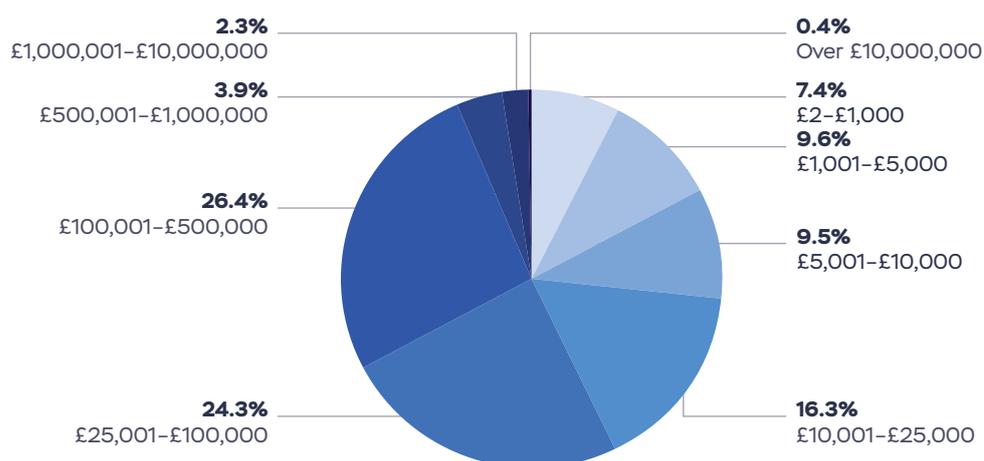
This group was then filtered to select only those charities which primarily or exclusively work on migration and refugee issues in the UK and have a budget of at least £2 per annum. This provided a list of 571 registered charities that are focused on migration and refugees in the UK and have a minimum level of resource to do so. We refer to this group as the 'UK migration and refugee core charitable sector' and it has a combined income of approximately £117 million per annum.¹⁷

Income profile of the UK migration and refugee core charitable sector

Just over two thirds of charities in the core charitable sector (67%) have an income of under £100,001 per annum. This includes around a quarter with an annual income of between £25,001 and £100,000 per annum, and 43% with an income between £2 and £25,000.

A further third are medium-sized organisations with an annual income of between £100,000 per annum and £1 million.¹⁸ Just under 3% of organisations in the core charitable sector have an annual income of over £1 million.

Core charities: income per annum



¹⁶ Previous research carried out in 2016 estimated the number of charities working with refugees and asylum seekers in England to be around 930. See Jennifer Shea, Plum Lomax and Russell Hargrave, *Solutions for Sanctuary: A Review of the Refugee and Asylum Charity Sector*, New Philanthropy Capital (NPC), June 2016. Available at: www.thinknpc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Solutions-for-sanctuary_Overview-of-refugee-and-asylum-seeker-sector_June-20161.pdf

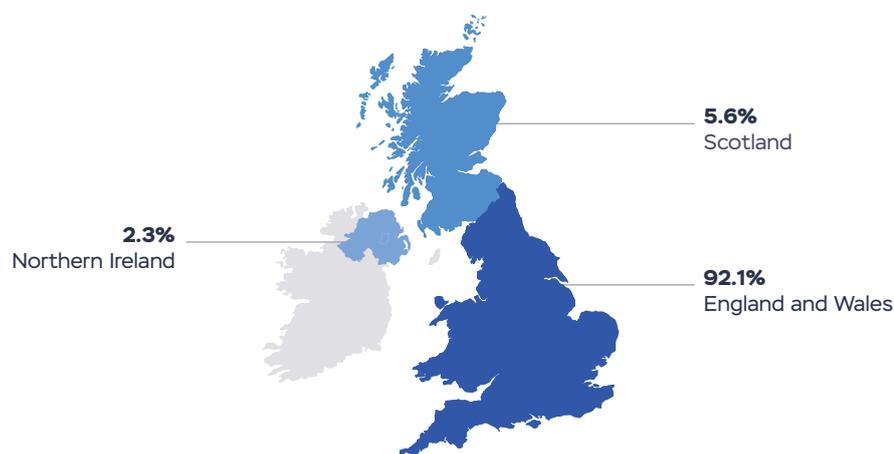
¹⁷ For further details on the methodology, including key search terms used, see Appendix A.

¹⁸ Based on NCVO income band typography: Available at: <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/profile/size-and-scope>

Geographical location of the UK migration and refugee core charitable sector

The majority of charities (92%) are registered in England and Wales. Detailed analysis of the 188 charities with incomes over £100,000 per annum found that just over half are registered outside London and have a local, regional or national (Northern Ireland, Scotland or Welsh) focus for their work.

Core charities: country registered



While these core charities are an important component of the sector – particularly in relation to the resources they have at their disposal – they are only part of a wider ecosystem of organisations that make up the wider sector. These include:

- **Other registered charities** which do not have migration and refugees issues as the primary focus of their work, but do dedicate resources to working on issues that affect them (for example, Oxfam, Save the Children, British Red Cross), as well as charities that work exclusively on migration and/or refugee issues, but have an income of less than £2 per annum.
- **A cross section of civil society organisations** that are not charities but work on migration and refugee issues either exclusively (for example, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Migration Observatory) or as part of their broader remit (for example, Citizens Advice Bureaux, law centres, faith networks, trades unions).
- **Community and voluntary organisations** which provide critical support to people who are migrants and refugees, but often operate on minimal budgets. This group is likely to run to thousands of organisations, but it is difficult to estimate the total number as many are not registered and there is no simple way to identify them.¹⁹

¹⁹ Research commissioned by Voice for Change in 2013 estimated the number of Black and Minority Ethnic community and voluntary sector organisations (the second biggest priority for whom was migration/asylum issues) working in England to number between 15,300 and 17,460, only 200 of which were registered charities. Reported in *Funding for BAME VCOs Report*, Voice for Change, July 2015. Available at: <https://baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Funding-for-BAME-VCOs-Report-July-2015-V4CE-II.pdf>

3.2

Data from the survey of NGOs

An online survey was sent to the chief executives (CEOs) of 277 organisations to obtain a profile of key organisations working in the sector. Just under half of those sent the survey were from the core charitable sector and the rest were from the wider sector. The breakdown of the cohort of organisations that were sent the survey is as follows:

- 135 registered charities in the UK with a primary or exclusive focus on UK migration or refugee issues, and an income of over £100,000 per annum;
- 87 small and medium-sized UK charities and voluntary/community organisations;
- 24 organisations that work exclusively on UK migration or refugee issues but are not charities;
- 31 organisations which do not work exclusively on migration or refugee issues but are key allies for the sector.

While we recognise that a wide range of extremely valuable voluntary and informal activity takes place across the UK in support of people who are migrants and refugees, we have weighted the above sample towards organisations with larger incomes so that we can obtain data regarding how the majority of available financial resources are being allocated. However, wherever possible we have sought to ensure the cohort reflects the broader sector by selecting a representative sample of organisations in terms of income, their geographic location in the UK and the focus of work.²⁰

A total of 130 organisations completed the survey between January and first week of March 2020, giving the survey a 47% response rate (see Appendix B for details). However, the response rate from small and medium sized charities was low (22%), which probably reflects their more limited capacity to engage with non-essential work, and this further weighted the sample towards larger organisations. Although this is a representative sample of the 'key players' within the sector, the findings should be treated as indicative rather than comprehensive.

Income, staff and capacity

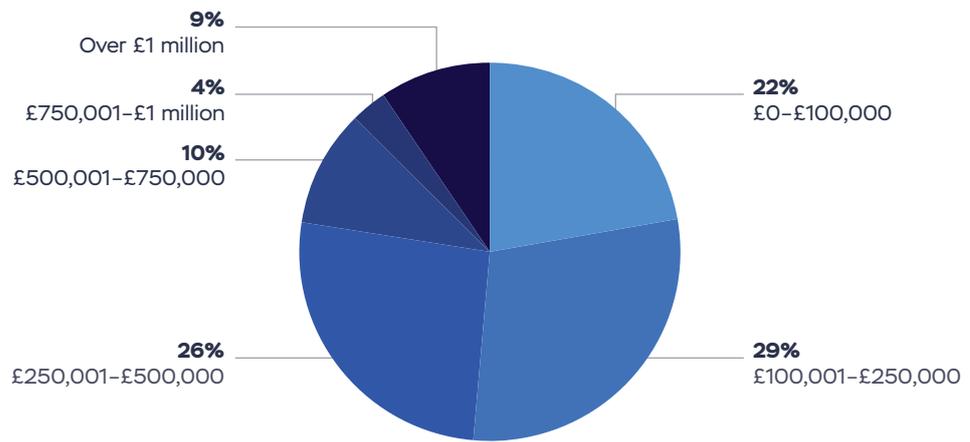
Nearly a quarter of the NGOs surveyed had an annual income below £100,001 and just over half had an income under £250,001. The 130 respondents had a combined income of approximately £77 million per annum.

By way of comparison, a survey of 92 organisations from the environmental sector which was carried out in 2017 recorded that they had a combined environmental-related income of over £1 billion.²¹

²⁰ See Appendix A for further details on the methodology.

²¹ Florence Miller et al., *What the Green Groups Said: Insights from the UK Environmental Sector*, Environmental Funders Network, 2017, page 3.

Income profile of survey respondents



A quarter of organisations that responded do not work exclusively on migration or refugee issues in the UK but are still important stakeholders in the sector (for example, British Red Cross, the Children’s Society, Doctors of the World, Citizens UK, Liberty, Amnesty International). The information collected from these organisations for this research (income, staff, etc.) only relates to the work they do on the migration and refugee agenda in the UK and thereby gives a more accurate picture of the total resources available in the sector.

It should be noted that half of these organisations dedicate less than third of their resources to working on UK migrant or refugee issues and 22% allocate just 10% or less. Consequently, for most of these NGOs, working on migration and refugee issues is not the primary focus of their work and for some it may not even be a significant component of their core activities. However, if their priorities were to change and this element of their work was dropped or reduced this would have important implications for the sector as a whole, both in terms of service provision and advocacy capacity.

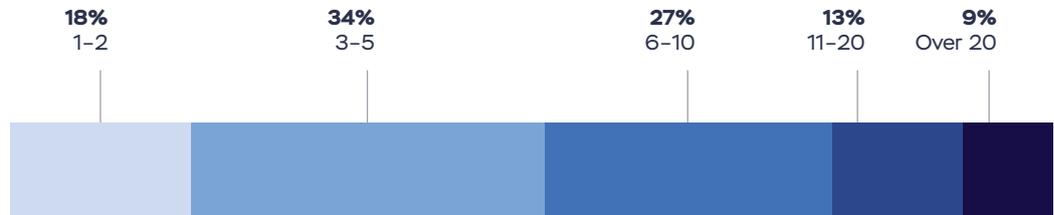
More than half of the NGOs surveyed have between one and five full-time staff members, with 18% operating with just one or two full time employees. Staff turnover, illness, or changes in the external environment (for example, a fall in their income or increased demand due to the closure of another service provider) have a disproportionate impact on the workloads of these smaller organisations.

Number of volunteers



Most organisations in the sector utilise the support of considerable numbers of volunteers as part of their day to day work. More than two thirds of respondents have more than ten active, regular volunteers and 38% have more than 40. Only 16 organisations (13%) stated that they did not use volunteers at all. This indicates an average ratio of volunteers to staff of about three to one and suggests that many organisations rely on volunteers to deliver key aspects of their work.

Number of full-time staff equivalent²²

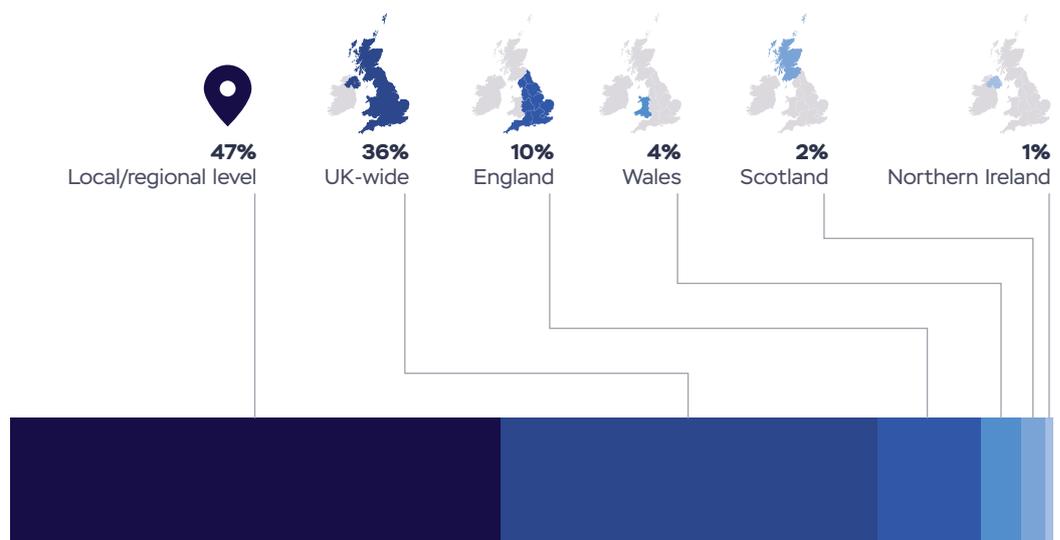


Geographic focus of work

Just under half the organisations that responded stated that they work at a local or regional level. However, nearly a third of these (19) work locally in London and the South East and the majority of organisations that focus their work at a UK level or just in England are also based in or around London.

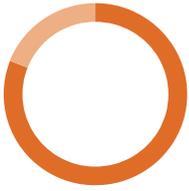
This is consistent with the data cited above from the core charitable sector and indicates that the geographic distribution of resources in the sector is heavily weighted towards the South East. Organisations which are based in and around London further benefit from increased access to networking opportunities and decision makers in Westminster.

Focus of UK migration and refugee work



²² Not all NGOs answered every question in the survey, and consequently the number of respondents does not always total 130. Percentages quoted are for the number of respondents that replied to each question.

Activities and resource allocation



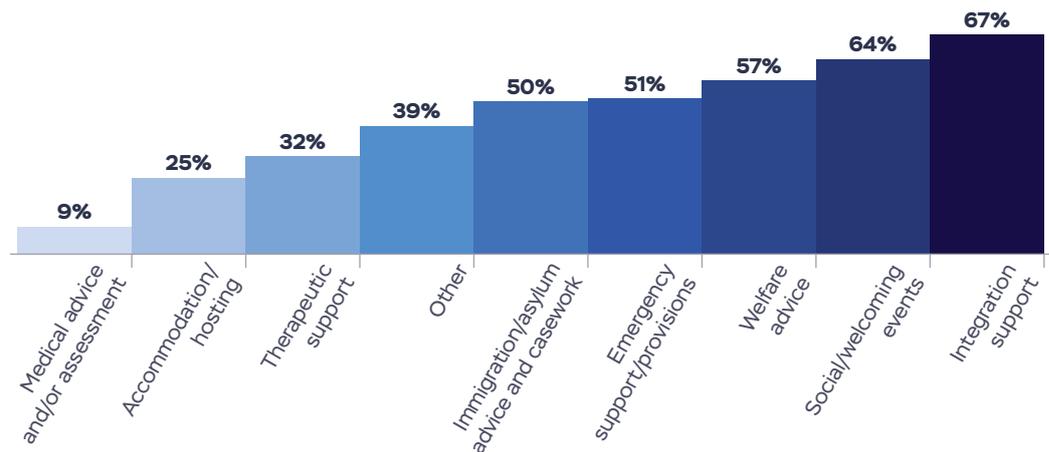
81% of NGO respondents provide direct services to people who are migrants and refugees

There is a significantly higher number of organisations working with, or on behalf of, people seeking asylum and refugees in the UK than focused on people in other parts of the immigration system. A third of respondents exclusively work with people who are seeking asylum and refugees, while just seven percent only work with people in the wider UK immigration system. Nearly half of survey respondents (46%) stated that they work with anyone in the immigration system, but it is not possible to draw any conclusions about what proportion of their work is dedicated to each group.

Looking at the type of work that the organisations undertake, 85% of those surveyed provide direct services. This is the core component of most NGOs' work, with nearly half (46%) allocating more than 80% of their resources to service delivery and two thirds dedicating more than 60% of their resources to this area of work.

In addition, most NGOs typically deliver multiple types of services, with more than two thirds of respondents providing integration support and more than half organising social and welcoming events, offering welfare advice and providing emergency support.

Types of services provided by NGO survey respondents



Similarly, 80% of organisations engage in activities which aim to influence policy, practice or public opinion. However, this area of work is poorly resourced in comparison to service delivery, with half of respondents spending ten percent or less of their resources on these activities and just 14 organisations (11%) allocating more than half of their resources to this work.



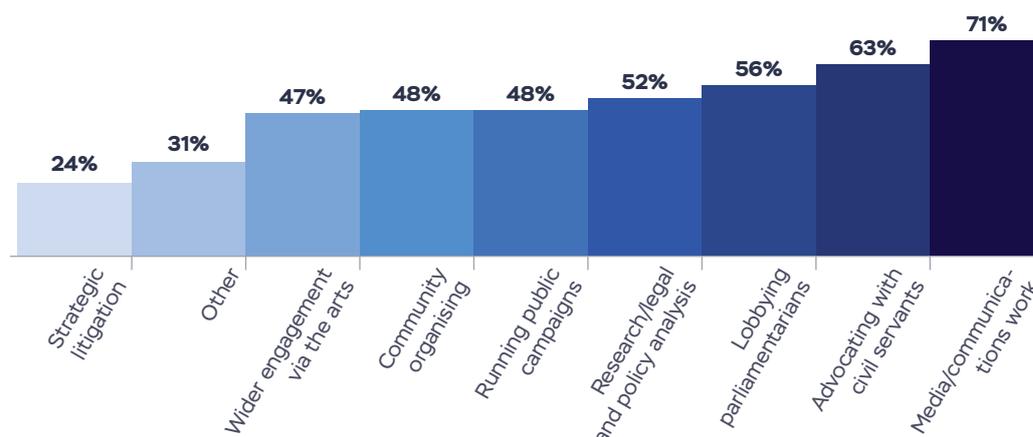
47% have less than one full-time equivalent staff member to deliver their influencing work

The lack of advocacy capacity across the sector is even more starkly illustrated by the fact that just under half of the respondents (47%) have less than one full-time equivalent staff member to deliver their influencing work.

Furthermore, the limited resources that are available are thinly spread over many different forms of influencing work, with more than half stating they are involved in media and communications work, advocating with civil servants, lobbying parliamentarians and research work. The high numbers reporting media and communications work probably reflects the fact that most organisations

have a social media presence through which they undertake public facing communications work, rather than that they regularly engage with journalists.

Types of influencing work by NGO survey respondents



Most of the influencing work that is taking place is focused at the UK level (55%) with around a fifth of organisations engaged in advocacy at the local level and nine percent focused on both the regional and the country level.

Nearly two thirds of organisations (62%) spent ten percent or less of their time on providing resources or wider support to other organisations in the sector and only six respondents (five percent) spent more than half of their time on these activities.

Financial resilience

The core sector has a large number of well-established organisations, with 90% of respondents being at least six years old and nearly three quarters (73%) being over 11 years old. These organisations have built up their expertise and their organisations over long periods. This is generally reflected in their incomes, with nearly half of respondents (49%) having an annual income over £250,000.

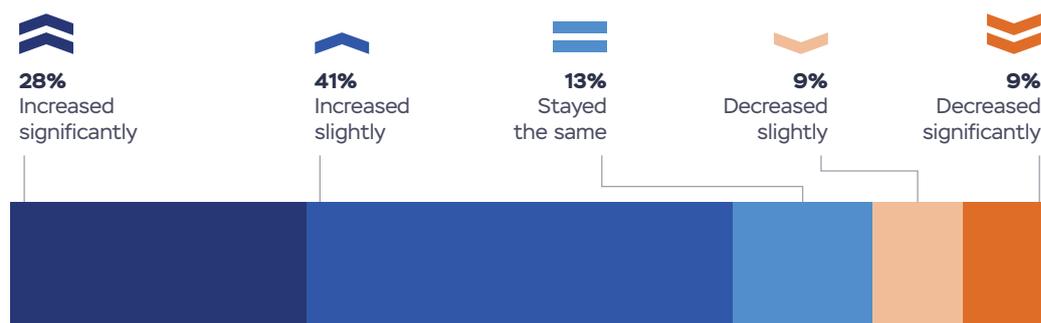
Most of these organisations have proved that they are able to adapt and survive during periods of significant economic and political change. For example, the fallout from the 2007–08 financial crash saw the implementation of austerity measures by successive Governments between 2010 and 2019 which cut tens of millions of pounds from public spending. During this period, the Home Office closed services (for example, the Cedars project); delivered more projects directly (for example, bringing the voluntary returns programme in-house); and reduced expenditure on contracted services by awarding them to private contractors that made cheaper tenders (for example, Serco and Group 4).

This had a major impact on sector organisations that had previously been delivering these services. For example, Home Office grant funding to Refugee Action fell from £19 million in 2014 to £1 million in 2016, primarily as a result

of the Government's decision to take over the running of the Choices Assisted Voluntary Return Programme.²³

Surprisingly, more than two thirds of respondents stated that their funding had either increased significantly or increased slightly over the last three years and only 22 organisations (18%) noted a decrease in funding. It should be noted that the experiences of organisations responding to the survey are likely to have been different from the wider sector, as smaller charities and voluntary/community organisations will have less resources to fundraise and are more likely to have seen their funding decrease over this period.

Changes in funding over the last three years



The two main reasons given by survey respondents for the recent increase in their incomes were a successful diversification of their funding base of trusts and foundations, and an increase in individual giving and donations. Smaller numbers also mentioned accessing funds linked to resettlement programmes and securing more rental income from their properties.

Those organisations reporting a decrease in income cited as the principle reasons: a fall in grants from trusts and foundations (existing grants ending or applications being unsuccessful); a reduction in local authority grants; and EU funding no longer being available.

Funders generally thought that the number of philanthropic actors supporting the sector had remained broadly unchanged over the last three years, with the involvement of new funders being offset by existing ones leaving. Despite this, they thought that funding had increased in this period due to a spike in public donations following the media coverage of the humanitarian crisis in 2015–16 and an increase in Government funding for specific work associated with the Syrian resettlement programme and integration support.

The length of time that most organisations in the sector have been operating, the size of their incomes and the increase in funding experienced by the majority of organisations in recent years, all suggest a reasonably high degree of financial stability amongst the core group of migration and refugee organisations. However, other data compiled from this research indicates underlying

²³ Jennifer Shea, et al., *Solutions for Sanctuary: An Overview of the Refugee and Asylum Charity Sector in the UK*, NPC, 2016, page 7.

vulnerabilities across the sector in terms of its financial resilience. In particular, it should be noted that:

Two thirds of the organisations surveyed only have reserves to sustain their activities for four months or less.

More than half of respondents (58%) received ten percent or less of their income from individuals (membership fees, donations, legacies or sales to the public).

Nearly half of the NGOs (46%) depend on grants from trusts and foundations for more than 70% of their income.

Unrestricted funding made up just ten percent or less of the total income of nearly a third (29%) of organisations and 20% or less for nearly half (44%).

Nearly a quarter of respondents (23%) ran a deficit in the last financial year.

Looking again at the recent survey of 92 environmental organisations as a comparator, income from individuals accounted for almost 60% of the income for these organisations, and grants from foundations provided just 7.1% of their total income.²⁴

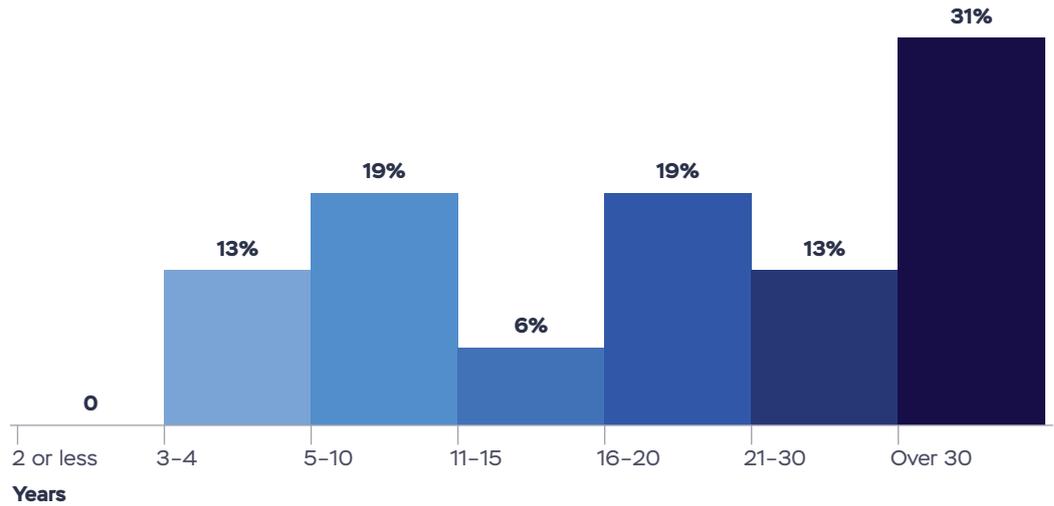
3.3 Data from the survey of funders

The profile of funders of UK migration and refugee work was primarily obtained through information provided in survey responses from 16 trusts and foundations (see Appendix B for further details). While there are other important funders which provide significant support to the sector's work, the group that completed the survey collectively invested around £23 million in work related to migration and refugee issues in the UK in the last financial year and represents a significant sample of the sector's key funders.

The majority of the funders that completed the survey are both experienced and committed to this area of work, as reflected in the fact that more than two thirds (69%) have been supporting projects on migration and refugee issues for more than a decade. Only two funders have started funding work in the sector in the last four years and none have done so in the last two years.

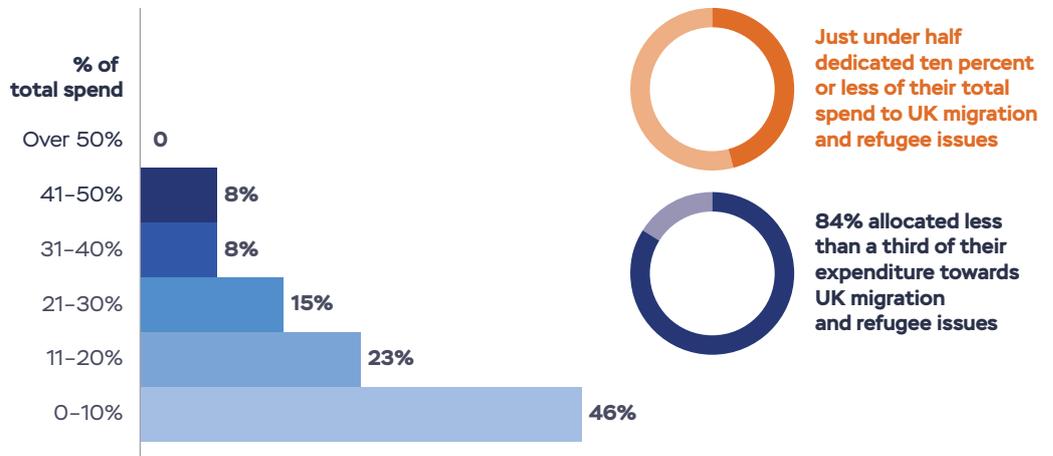
²⁴ Florence Miller et.al., *What the Green Groups Said: Insights from the UK Environmental Sector*, Environmental Funders Network, 2017, page 3.

For how long have foundations supported work on UK migration and refugee issues?



Only three responding organisations exclusively fund UK migration and refugee work. Of those that support work on other issues and/or in other countries, just under half dedicated ten percent or less of their total spend to UK migration and refugee issues in the last financial year and 84% allocated less than a third of their expenditure towards this area of work. In this respect, most of the key sector funders have a broad portfolio of interests and migration and refugee issues are not the primary focus of their work.

Proportion of total spend on UK migration and refugee work in the last financial year

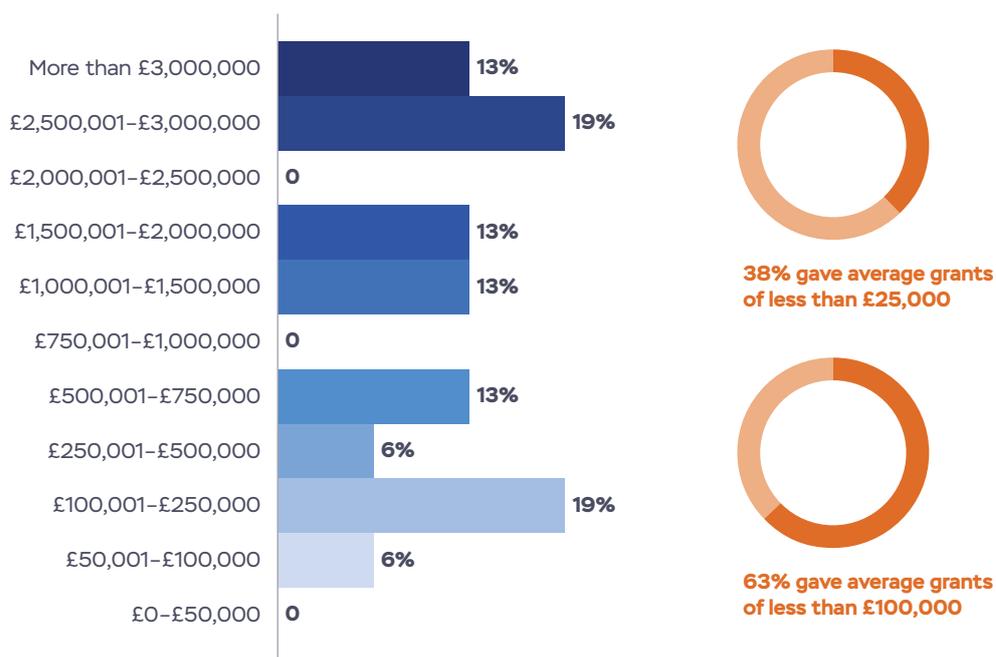


As indicated in the table below, there are a range of small, medium and large funders engaged in supporting migration and refugee work. For nearly half of our funder sample (44%), the total value of grants made in the last financial year was between £50,000–£750,000. For a quarter of respondents, it was between £50,000–£250,000.

The size of these grants was generally small with 38% (six respondents) giving average grants of less than £25,000 and 63% giving average grants of less than £100,000. Similarly, the number of grants made was generally small, with 38%

making ten grants or fewer in the last financial year and all but two making fewer than 31 grants in a year.

Total value of the grants made by funders to support UK migration and refugee work



The average grant length for 63% of respondents was between two and three years, although three respondents (19%) provided average grants of one year or less. Only one funder reported giving grants which had an average length of over three years.

Six funders (38%) did not provide any unrestricted grants to NGOs working on migration and refugee issues in the last financial year. While the other funders did provide unrestricted grants, the proportion of the total grants that were unrestricted varied considerably, ranging between 19% and 100% and averaging out at 50%.

All but two funders support projects anywhere in the UK and these generally encompass a range of activities related to migration and refugee work, including service delivery, legal representation, campaigning, community organising, communications work, research and strategic litigation. However, it is noteworthy that five of the funders did not fund any service delivery or advice work.

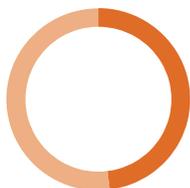
This information aligns with the two areas of work that NGO survey respondents most consistently identified as being particularly difficult to fund: accessing unrestricted grants (22 responses) and obtaining funding for the provision of advice and casework (20 responses). After these, the only issues that were highlighted as being hard to fund by a significant number of respondents were some types of influencing work (for example campaigning or lobbying) and grants to support those who are destitute or have no recourse to public funds.

4 Evaluating the health of the UK migration and refugee sector in 2020

4.1

Strengths of the sector

Service delivery



48% identified the provision of quality frontline services a key strength of the sector

Nearly half of NGO survey respondents (48%) identified the provision of quality frontline services and support to individuals in the UK migration and refugee system as a key strength of the sector. They underlined that these services met vital needs and were delivered in an efficient and flexible way.

However, NGOs acknowledged that support for individuals was not uniformly good as the capacity to provide some services (for example, legal advice, mental health and support for those with no recourse to public funds) and/or reach to some areas of the UK was quite limited. CEOs noted that more work needs to be done to fill these gaps and also to consider how the sector could provide a more holistic approach to dealing with the multiple problems that individuals face.

The sector is very patchy in terms of service delivery and skills. (...) There are places where there are a lot of organisations providing good services and then there are places where there is hardly anything or nothing at all.

Several CEOs highlighted the importance of funding service delivery as an activity that itself delivers social change by resolving people's problems and helping them realise their goals. It was also stressed that the data and case studies gathered from frontline services underpinned the advocacy work that sought to address the causes of why people need support in the first place.

Funders often don't like to fund casework, maybe because they feel it's just endless, but the casework is the evidence base for the policy work and strategic litigation which leads to systemic change.

There is a lack of interest in funding day to day service provision and yet it's crucial to the people we support on the ground and feeds directly into our advocacy and systems change work.

CEO interviewees underlined how services and other work with some cohorts of people in the immigration system is particularly under-resourced. This means that more vulnerable groups, like children and families seeking refugee status, tend to be prioritised and there is less support available for people encountering problems while in the UK to study or work.

The sector remains lop-sided with a lot more resource for asylum and refugee work rather than general migration issues.

Staff

An associated strength identified by numerous NGO respondents was the skills of the people working in the sector, who were described as expert, committed, hard-working and understanding.

The knowledge and professionalism of staff, as well as their willingness to work beyond what they are contracted to do, is considered a valuable resource for the sector. However, concerns were also raised about the stress that staff were under due to under-resourcing and the need to do more to retain staff, protect their welfare and avoid burnout.

In terms of service delivery, we find it difficult to say no when we know there is more and more need. People working in the sector are very passionate about what they do and are constantly trying to do more with less, but sometimes you have to say something cannot be done.

Influencing work

Effective influencing work was also felt by many respondents to be a strength of the sector. The three campaigns most frequently cited as having recently had a positive influence on policy, practice or public opinion related to the Windrush scandal, the right to work for people seeking asylum and for a time limit on immigration detention. Nearly half of the NGOs surveyed (47 respondents) picked one of these three campaigns when asked to highlight successes.

However, these campaigns are not isolated examples. Over the last decade, the sector has collectively secured a range of significant changes that have benefitted millions of people in the UK, as illustrated by the following examples:

The asylum legacy backlog Policy amendments made in 2009 to the guidance provided to caseworkers reviewing the case resolution (legacy) backlog of unresolved asylum claims led to tens of thousands of people being granted status to remain in the UK by the end of 2011.

Access to healthcare In August 2011, an amendment to the Health Act 2009 allowed people who had been refused asylum who receive some form of statutory support to access free in-patient hospital healthcare for the first time since 2004. A further policy change to the charging regulations in October 2012 allowed all people to access free HIV treatment, regardless of immigration status.

Statelessness determination procedure A route for the regularisation of stateless people was established for the first time in the UK in 2013.

Immigration detention In 2015, the detained fast-track was suspended after the Court of Appeal ruled the procedure structurally unfair and unlawful. In 2019, a Supreme Court ruling also found the Home Office falsely imprisoned many

people seeking asylum between 2014–17. By 2020, the number of people being held in detention was around a quarter less than in 2016 and the Government is currently funding a number of alternatives to detention pilots.

Access to higher education and student finance In 2015, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of Beaurish Tigere who challenged 2011 legislation which classed her as an overseas student, making her ineligible for student loans and liable for foreign student fees at university, despite the fact she had lived in the UK since she was six. This ruling resulted in changes in policy benefiting young people.

Resettlement programmes Between 2014 and 2020, the Government had resettled 21,100 people to the UK through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (2015), the Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme (2016) and over 220 unaccompanied children under the Dubs amendment (2016). Between October 2016 and the end of 2018, the UK resettled a further 549 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who had family in the UK from elsewhere in the EU in response to the clearance of camps around Calais. In 2019, the Government announced it will consolidate resettlement schemes after 2020, with the aim of resettling 5,000 refugees each year.

Refugee move-on issues Since January 2018, everyone being granted refugee status has had their National Insurance numbers automatically issued with their biometric residency card. This change ended long delays which made it difficult for people to transition from asylum support to mainstream support without becoming destitute.

Afghan interpreters In May 2018, Afghan interpreters who worked alongside British forces in Afghanistan were allowed to apply for settlement free of charge. In March 2019 the Home Office changed the rules to permit family members still in Afghanistan to join interpreters who had already relocated to the UK.

NHS data-sharing The data-sharing agreement between NHS Digital, the Department of Health and the Home Office which gave the Home Office access to confidential patient information was scrapped in November 2018 following a legal challenge.

EU Settlement Scheme Settled status for EU citizens in the UK was introduced on a unilateral basis, rather than through negotiations as part of the Withdrawal Bill, and the settled status fee of £65 was scrapped in January 2019 following campaigning by those affected.

Right to Rent In March 2019, a successful High Court challenge resulted in the Government’s right to rent scheme being declared unlawful and forced the Government to halt its plans to roll the scheme out in Wales.

People experiencing domestic abuse In July 2019, the Home Office issued improved guidance on how officials should respond to reports of domestic violence from people in the asylum process and committed to funding refuge spaces for asylum-seeking women.

Legal Aid for separated children In response to a judicial review, the Government reinstated legal aid for separated children for all non-asylum immigration matters in October 2019.

Entrepreneur training pilots for refugees In October 2019, the Home Office launched four pilots to encourage people recognised as refugees to start businesses in the UK.

Children's citizenship application fee In December 2019, the High Court found that the Home Office's £1,012 citizenship application fee for children was unlawful as it did not consider the best interests of the child.

The right to work for people seeking asylum In 2019, the campaign secured a change in the Labour Party's official policy and a commitment by the Government to review the existing policy.

Improvements in the quality of decision making on asylum applications

Grants of protection at the initial decision have risen from an average of 24% between 2000–2010 to an average of 38% between 2011–2019. Final grant rates (which take account of appeals) have similarly increased from an average of 38% between 2004–2010 to an average of 53% between 2011–2018.

Extending voting rights in Scotland In February 2020, legislation was passed in the Scottish Parliament to extend voting rights to all those with leave to remain, including those granted refugee status, so that they can take part in Scottish Parliament and local elections.

The Windrush scandal In 2018, and again in 2020, the Government apologised for its treatment of the Windrush generation. By 2020, 8,000 people had been granted new documents that prove their right to live in the UK. A scheme has also been set up to compensate people for the harm caused by their being wrongly classified as being in the UK illegally.

Given the above, it is perhaps surprising that only just over a quarter (27%) of NGOs thought that the sector was good at some type of advocacy work (policy work, campaigning, communications work or strategic litigation). In fact, a greater number of survey respondents (35%) considered these types of influencing work – with the exception of strategic litigation – to be areas for improvement.

This probably reflects the fact that there are aspects of each type of advocacy work that are done well and others which are not handled so effectively, as well as the fact that overall policy direction has remained negative or worsened. Consequently, those that saw communications as a strength referred to the sector's improved ability to respond to issues, engage the media and raise public awareness. Those that were critical of the sector's performance in this area stressed the weakness of its strategic communications work; its ineffectiveness in developing narratives which reach new audiences and a broader cross-section of the public; and its lack of relationships with opinion formers across a broad political spectrum, particularly on the centre right.

Similarly, evidencing problems, policy analysis and connections to policy makers were identified both as something the sector does well and something that needs to be improved by roughly the same number of respondents. Individuals who thought this was a weakness highlighted insufficient lobbying and research capacity, as well as a lack of detailed policy work to formulate policy asks – what one CEO referred to as a “chronic inability to identify and recommend solutions.”

While acknowledging the specific gaps and areas for improvement in the sector’s influencing work that survey respondents have identified, it is noteworthy that nearly ten percent of NGO survey respondents were of the opinion that there had not been any recent campaign successes. This may reflect a more general tendency in the sector to underestimate what has been achieved over the last decade, because it is constantly facing new challenges in relation to the erosion of rights and services.

Organisations that inspire

CEOs and funders who were interviewed for this research were asked whether there were any organisations, either in the sector or outside of it, which had recently inspired them through the success they had, the new approaches they used or by what they accomplished with limited resources. In response, interviewees identified a total of 59 organisations or initiatives from within the sector.

The fact that there are so many different NGOs that are considered either effective, efficient or innovative by their peers is undoubtedly a strength for the sector. In addition, these organisations span the spectrum of the different types of NGOs that work in the migrant and refugee field (for example, large and small, single issue and broad-based remit, radical and mainstream, national and local).

It is also worth noting that the organisations which were mentioned most times were not selected for a single quality or approach. It is also worth noting that the organisations which were mentioned most times were not selected for a single quality or approach. Key qualities admired by respondents were collaboration and leadership, use of strategic litigation, engagement with the media and links with directly impacted communities. Others received positive endorsement for their collaborative ethos, as reflected in their convening of sector organisations to jointly decide what issues to campaign on, and their development of projects which strengthen the sector and its campaigning work.

Interviewees that mentioned campaigns from outside the sector as being inspirational, identified their ability to bring a range of organisations which had different goals and/or tactics together under a shared vision as being particularly impressive (for example, campaigns on climate issues and their ability to unite around and promote the concept of ‘climate emergency’ and the campaign to get 0.7% of GDP allocated in law to overseas development aid).

4.2

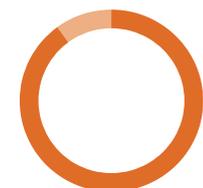
Weaknesses and gaps in the sector

Funders and CEOs broadly shared the same analysis of the sector's vulnerabilities. The weaknesses that they most commonly highlighted were insufficient coordination or collaboration; a lack of strategy; and insufficient involvement of people with lived experience. Additional issues that were raised more than once included under-resourcing and weak governance.

Coordination and collaboration

Over 90% of the 35 CEOs and funders interviewed for this research either agreed or agreed strongly with the proposition that "the sector must pool its collective resources more if it is going to achieve significant policy changes".

Insufficient proactive collaboration, cross-sector communications and information sharing were all repeatedly highlighted by interviewees as issues that impacted on the efficiency and effectiveness of the sector.



90% of CEOs agreed/strongly agreed with the proposition that "the sector must pool its collective resources more if it is going to achieve significant policy changes"

There is a lack of coordination, rivalry, a lack of clear asks and some duplication of organisations doing the same thing, especially in London.

Addressing these problems is partly a resource issue, as many organisations are focused on delivering their core services and either lack the time to meet with other organisations and pro-actively share information or do not prioritise this area of work. This means that NGOs may undertake their own research or introduce new services without being aware of what else has already been done or is being planned.

Lots of organisations are quite focused on what's going on in their local area and are not always that good at finding out what other organisations are doing and what's working in other places. We all expend resources reinventing the wheel because we don't have the networks to share that information. It feels there's quite a lot of duplication of understanding and that we're not good at sharing – we want to be, but we don't find the time.

While there are a substantial number of information sharing networks which link hundreds of organisations together (for example, the Asylum Support Advice Network, the No Accommodation Network (NACCOM), IMIX, Asylum Matters), most of these focus on a specialised area of interest (for example, asylum support, accommodation issues, communications). The absence of infrastructure for sector-wide coordination means that there is no one place or mailing list which can be used to share information. Consequently, individuals need to utilise several

different mailing lists or contact individual organisations directly if they want to ensure their communications reach all the relevant organisations.

While capacity is a barrier for some organisations to collaborate more, others may have reservations about sharing information and undertaking joint work because there is a lack of trust between them, or competition for resources. The need to attract and secure funds is considered by some CEOs to be an inhibitor of greater collaboration as it can encourage organisations to retain ownership of information and issues, or overstate their role in any successes, in order to boost their profile.

We are too often motivated by organisational priorities, brand and profile, which can preclude us from pooling our time, resources and skills to go after bigger change.

Too many organisations still demand that they lead when working with others, but collaboration is not about telling others what to do. The squeeze on funding and the hand to mouth existence, means organisations feel they need to show that they're leading in order to get money in, and it does work to some extent as funders do tend to give money to those with higher visibility.

If you go down to small and medium sized organisations the competition is even more fierce because the money is more critical and so they're always chasing the next year's funding, and this is unsustainable.

All of the above can lead to organisations focusing on organisational rather than broader change goals. This can be problematic as a failure to consult and coordinate around policy goals, campaign initiatives and messaging results in advocacy work being fragmented or even contradictory (for example, organisations running different campaigns simultaneously on the same issue or focusing their communications work on the economic benefits of migration to the exclusion of other aspects of people's lives and identity).

Even where NGOs have good working relationships and share the same concerns, it can still be challenging to get them behind a joint strategy which pools resources and skills. In these circumstances, agencies tend to focus on working with those organisations who are eager to collaborate and form smaller coalitions of the willing. One CEO reflected on why other organisations were sometimes reluctant to commit to joint advocacy work:

Maybe they felt the transaction costs of making joint decisions were too great or they were too far along with their own planning and campaigns, but this feels quite short-sighted because as a single organisation you will not be able to achieve more than if you act together. (...) The incentive to collaborate is often being driven by organisational priorities and too often there isn't a recognition of when to put these aside and work for the greater good.

The concerns raised above suggest that the sector is disjointed and adversarial, yet 94% of the NGOs surveyed also stated that they had collaborated with another organisation in the last year to try and influence policy, practice or public opinion.

In fact, NGO survey respondents adopted both positive and negative assessments of the state of sector's collaborative work, with 22% identifying partnership work as an area for improvement, while 16% considered it to be something the sector is good at. Funders similarly had different perspectives of the sector, with some describing it as "fragmented" and one considering it to be less competitive than other sectors and more willing to share and collaborate.

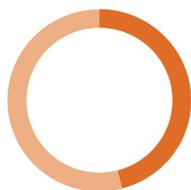
These mixed views are likely to reflect both variable experiences of collaboration and respondents assessing different aspects of the sector's ability to coordinate its activities. Those with positive views highlighted the coordinating work of organisations like Asylum Matters, NACCOM and Detention Forum and the existence of national coalitions which have effectively advanced advocacy goals (for example, Let them Work, Families Together, the Welsh Refugee Coalition).

They also drew attention to the fact that many campaigns had developed strategic partnerships with non-traditional allies, including on Windrush (for example, with different High Commissions and by linking to organisations working on issues of identity, citizenship and racial justice), and the Let them Work campaign (for example, CBI, Bright Blue, Ben and Jerry, the Adam Smith Institute).

Those who were critical of the sector's performance in this area noted that good examples of joint working were often at a local level or limited to specific thematic issues or campaigns. They considered coordination around service provision and between local and national work to be extremely patchy and saw huge scope for improvement in relation to both cross-sectoral strategic collaboration and joint working with organisations in other fields (for example, homelessness, health, equalities, human rights).

Random groups of people will meet on particular issues, but there is no clear cohesive connective tissue. We don't need command and control, but we do need a strategy and understanding of who is doing what and each other's future agendas.

Strategy



Nearly half of funder and CEO interviewees believe that the sector is not well prepared for 'shock' events

Nearly half (46%) of funder and CEO interviewees disagreed or disagreed strongly with the proposition that “the sector is generally well prepared for ‘shock’ events and is able to respond effectively to them.” This indicates that more priority needs to be given to improving coordination and strategic planning.

Indeed, several interviewees specifically highlighted a lack of detailed, proactive strategic planning as a significant weakness for the sector. They noted that most organisations were primarily reactive in the way they engage with issues, as illustrated by the way the sector had not collectively planned for a majority Conservative Government at the last election and has not developed a shared strategy as to how to engage with it. It was also noted that organisations had not properly prepared for a potential Labour victory and had no clear set of unified policy asks for how the UK immigration system should be reformed.

While there are good examples of effective planning and strategic thinking in relation to some campaigns, this normally involves a small cluster of organisations working towards a specific policy objective over a limited period of time and is not connected to a broader theory of change for the sector as a whole.

Some CEOs and funders reported concerns that there is insufficient appreciation of how different organisations can complement each other, particularly in relation to advocacy work.

Lots of organisations have different strengths – media skills, digital skills, policy understanding, engagement with young people, etc. We need to get to a point of thinking about how all these different skills and approaches can be deployed and aligned in a broad strategy.

Several interviewees considered that there is a “pragmatism deficit” on the part of some organisations. This can result in organisations not recognising that securing significant changes to policy or public opinion is an incremental process which may require a less confrontational approach in terms of engaging with decision makers or framing communications messages.

The sector often takes principled policy positions which are detached from the strategy to implement them. It’s good to have a couple of outlying organisations, but much of the sector is like that and that’s a challenge.

This issue was brought sharply into focus in comments relating to how the sector engages with the Home Office. Several CEOs felt that it was essential for some organisations to develop a more constructive relationship with the Home Office, build trust and relationships, and look for commonality of interest (for example,

where efficiency savings overlaps with concerns for procedural fairness). They noted that pointing out the problems in the system was a necessary, but insufficient precondition of change and that the sector had to be more engaged in coming up with policy proposals that will achieve transformational reforms and in implementing them.

I feel like we lack ambition and perhaps most fatally it's too comfortable for people to remain locked in an adversarial approach to the Home Office. This entrenched dynamic doesn't get us anywhere. Holding the Home Office to account is really important, but we overplay that role in place of coming up with problem solving. We're letting down our beneficiaries.

However, there was not unanimity in this view. One CEO believed that undertaking joint projects with the Home Office allowed the Government to co-opt charities and weakened the voice of the individual NGOs directly involved and the sector more broadly. However, while this CEO did not support undertaking joint projects with the Home Office, they were also clear that they would not campaign against these initiatives or say anything negative about them in public.

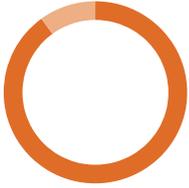
Where there is a sufficient level of trust between organisations, an agreed strategy for how they can support each other in achieving shared goals and good communication between them on an ongoing basis, then different advocacy approaches are not an obstacle to cooperation. Indeed, most effective influencing work mentioned by respondents to this research incorporates both pragmatic insiders and radical outsiders (for example, on detention reform, improving the quality of decision making, reinstating legal aid to children in non-asylum immigration cases).

While efforts at sector-wide strategic collaboration may have not been successful to date, this has not prevented people from trying to learn from past mistakes and progress this area of work, as reflected in the recent establishment of the Asylum Reform Initiative. This involves six agencies (Refugee Action, Refugee Council, Scottish Refugee Council, Red Cross, Freedom of Torture and Asylum Matters) that will work together, and with the wider sector, develop and implement a shared approach to influencing government asylum policy and practice. This model of working could foster greater cross-sector strategic planning over time.

While most interviewees' comments on strategy related to advocacy work, some of the same points are also pertinent to the way the sector works and plans together to collectively improve the quality and reach of the services it provides.

Inclusion of people with lived experience

More than 90% of funder and CEO interviewees either agreed or agreed strongly with the proposition that "the sector should work more 'with' and less 'on behalf' of people who are migrants and refugees."



90% agree that the sector should work more 'with' and less 'on behalf' of people who are migrants and refugees

Interviewees felt that organisations in the sector should involve people with lived experience of the immigration system in their work as a point of principle and underlined that this must be done in a meaningful and systematic way. There was concern that all too often people's personal experiences were only referred to as "case studies" or engaged when there was a demand to talk about their experience in a media interview or a public event.

Organisations need to allow those with lived experience to lead on this work. Often people refer back to us when they want spokespeople and it can feel tokenistic, like we are being put out there as trophies.

There was a strong consensus that more needs to be done to systemically engage people with lived experience in the sector's work, including organisations developing proper strategies for actively involving people in planning and delivering influencing work and services, as well as ensuring people have the tools, resources and opportunities to lead change.

People need to be serious about developing not only employment pathways but also leadership tracks for people with lived experience, so they have a seat at the table and have relationships with Home Office on their own.

It was noted that this work requires proper investment to get it right and that there may be risks for individuals concerned in taking on advocacy roles, particularly if they have irregular or insecure immigration status. However, it was also stressed that successful engagement in this area of work could be transformative for the individuals involved and for the sector itself. Many of the successful campaigns highlighted above owed much to the fact that directly impacted communities and those with lived experience played key roles leading the advocacy work (for example, Windrush, access to student finance, detention reform).

Several interviewees felt that there is not a shared understanding about what people mean when they talk about lived experience and why it is important. For example, some organisations think about this in terms of engaging with people who use their services, while others are involved in building power and connections between communities in order to change systems. In addition, some CEOs with lived experience felt that others in the sector did not perceive them as such and that their experience of migration or being a refugee "did not count."

In this context, Baljeet Sandhu's definition of lived experience as "direct first-hand experience, past or present, of a social issue(s) and/or injustice(s)" and experts by experience as "Social change-makers who seek to use their lived experience to inform the work of social purpose organisations, to drive and lead social change,

and/or to drive their social impact work²⁵ may be useful in ensuring that there is a common starting point for discussions of this topic.

Both NGO and funder interviewees felt the UK migration and refugee sector is a long way behind other parts of civil society (HIV, mental health, disability) regarding its approach to the involvement of people with lived experience, and that greater priority needs to be given to this issue.

However, there were also some positive indications that things are moving in the right direction.

For example, 83% of NGO survey respondents stated that people using their services are directly involved in their design or delivery and 81% said that people with lived experience of the immigration system lead or significantly contribute to their organisation's influencing work.

Many of the examples provided by respondents suggest that their organisations are engaging in developing mechanisms to involve people with lived experience in their work in a meaningful way.

In addition, some respondents mentioned the recently established Leadership for Social Change programme for the migration and refugee sector as helping to address this issue. This initiative will support 100 people, of whom at least half will have lived experience of the immigration system, to go through a leadership development programme.

4.3 Funder engagement

Strategic approach

Strategic collaboration between trusts and foundations has increased in recent years through initiatives like Migration Exchange, Ariadne (a European network of 600 funders who support social change and human rights) and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion coalition (a forum bringing together 14 foundations to tackle inclusion issues).

Funders noted how networks like Migration Exchange enable funders to combine their resources; respond quickly to changes in the external environment; and support issues that are tangential to their portfolios. These networks can also facilitate skills and information sharing between trusts and foundations through meetings, webinars and online portals and allow them to increase their impact by aligning their funding strategies.

²⁵ Baljeet Sandhu, *Lived Experience Leadership*, Clore Social Leadership and the Knowledge Equity Initiative, July 2019.

NGOs in the UK migration and refugee sector generally consider the core group of funders to be informed, proactive and strategic in the way they work, reflecting the fact that nearly half of the funders surveyed for this research (44%) had been supporting migrant and refugee work for more than two decades. They also viewed the collaboration between funders as being a real strength:

More donors work together now, investing in issues rather than one detailed project which is quite encouraging.

There are a significant group of funders that are strategic and joined up in their approach and think about both short and long-term issues. They have supported initiatives to fill gaps (for example, British Future, increasing communications capacity through IMIX, etc.) and have goals around involvement of people with lived experience, base building, reach, etc.

By working together and pooling resources, funders have more capacity to address key issues affecting people who are subject to immigration control. For example, the Justice Together Initiative due to launch in 2020 will invest new funding in free, quality legal advice and coordinated advocacy work.²⁶

In addition, strategic funding has established and supported infrastructure organisations like IMIX, Asylum Matters, British Future, Migration Observatory and RAMP which facilitate joint working and address structural weaknesses in the sector (for example, strategic communications capacity, ability to connect local and national advocacy work, more resourcing of issues around migration).

There's been a lot of good funder-led initiatives, including investment in communications. IMIX is working really well and has helped to get people out of their bunkers and communicate better.

Several CEOs highly valued the discussions they had with funders around policy and strategy and some proposed that it would be beneficial if funders and NGOs spent more time developing a shared agenda and a joint vision.

Each funder has a plan, but when do we talk about what that plan is? We should be discussing strategies together – it should be there's nothing about us without us.

²⁶ For more information on the Justice Together Initiative see: www.thelegaleducationfoundation.org/articles/justice-together-initiative-to-support-people-to-access-justice-in-the-uk-immigration-system

Convening role

Funders play an important convening role in the sector. They bring NGOs together by organising networking events, issue-based discussions and workshops, as well as by facilitating links between individuals through email introductions and meetings. CEOs valued this function because it provides spaces where organisations can connect with each other and share intelligence, insights and their respective plans.

Funders are in a unique position to do this because of their overview of the work being done by organisations both in the migration and refugee sector and outside of it. In addition, few NGOs have the resources to convene meetings of this sort and without funder engagement many of them simply would not happen and opportunities for learning and more effective joint working would be lost.

Some funders are particularly good at facilitating connections in the sector, putting us in touch with other grantees and flagging up interesting initiatives and campaigns we might want to hear more about. Funders are well placed for this because they have that birds-eye view on the landscape and are in a better position to identify opportunities.

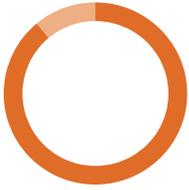
While there is a recognised power dynamic and associated risks with funders playing a convening role (for example, people only going because they are invited by funders), sector leaders generally felt there was sufficient openness and trust for this not to be a significant issue.

**The pros of funder engagement are their ability to convene organisations in the absence of a leader in the sector. (...)
Funders are seen as being neutral.**

(...) Using their slightly coercive power as a funder to get everyone in the room is useful and should continue.

Operational and resourcing issues

Six funders identified insufficient resources to meet demand as being a significant challenge. This has a direct impact on the number and length of grants they can provide, but it also has implications in terms of staff workloads and operational decisions. For example, funders noted that limited staff capacity made it difficult to respond to high numbers of applications and could result in more grants being given to larger organisations. They also highlighted that capacity issues made it hard to stay up to speed on developing issues, engage more with the sector and other funders, and play more of a facilitating role in connecting organisations.



89% of funders and CEOs agreed/strongly agreed that funders need to do more to enable NGOs to focus less on short-term goals and more on innovation and long-term strategies

Several funders thought that funding procedures need to be simplified so that they are more accessible, and less time is spent on applications and reporting. Some also thought that insufficient funding is directed at resolving the causes of vulnerability and need, and that internal restrictions within some trusts and foundations made it more difficult to support campaigning and advocacy work.

CEOs unsurprisingly had concerns that the level of funding available “does not go anywhere near to matching what we are up against” and stressed the need for more long-term and unrestricted funding. However, they were more likely to highlight difficulties in accessing funds for service provision and advice rather than advocacy work.

There was a strong consensus amongst funders and CEOs on the need to move away from short term planning, with 89% of interviewees either agreeing or agreeing strongly with the proposition that “funders need to do more to enable NGOs to focus less on short-term goals and more on innovation and long-term strategies.”

In general, CEOs highlighted positive operational developments in relation to the provision of grants and how projects are implemented and noted that funders had become more flexible and responsive.

Donors are generally more willing to trust organisations, less prescriptive and more willing to adjust funding than they were five years ago.

There’s more willingness to allow lead in time to get a project up and running. They recognise the difficulties involved (for example, recruiting staff) and there’s more patience from donors now for a slow start to a project, but more effective back end delivery, which is good. There’s more freedom for organisations to find their feet, try things out and be creative and therefore more effective delivery long-term.

A small number of funders and NGOs noted that organisations which consistently failed to deliver on their commitments and could not prove impact should not continue to receive funding.

One specific issue that was raised by two separate CEOs was that some NGOs name other organisations as partners in funding applications without informing them. When these applications are approved the grantee then approaches the ‘partner’ organisation for help in delivering the project, often without having any budget to pay them for their involvement. There is then a strong pressure on the ‘partner’ NGO to provide the support needed to make the project successful, both to ensure that the end users benefit and to protect its own reputation which has been linked to the project. This issue could be addressed by funders asking for a signed consent form from proposed project partners to be included

with applications which simply states that the named organisation has seen and approved the application.

Funder priorities and expectations

While CEOs and funders alike were positive about funders' strategic engagement with the migration and refugee sector, several NGOs were frustrated by what they considered to be frequent changes in funding priorities which left them unsure as to whether their core work is still valued. There was a perception that they need to keep reinventing and repackaging what their organisations do, even though the effectiveness of their work and the need for it have already been proven.

The constant need to search for something innovative can make the sector feel that what we're doing is not good enough, despite the need for it.

Some funders want you to create something new and different every time you apply, when the value of the work you do hasn't changed.

The current buzzwords are user involvement, experts by experience, system change, but all too often the Trusts rethink their priorities.

At the same time, CEOs did acknowledge that there is a balance to be struck and that it is positive to be challenged by funders to look for new ways of doing things as this helps to ensure that they do not become complacent. They also noted that there is a responsibility on NGOs to be clear about what they are trying to achieve and not simply chase funding opportunities when grant application guidelines are not aligned with their strategic goals.

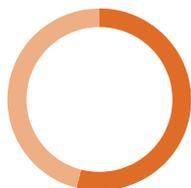
The other area of concern highlighted by several NGOs was around funder expectations of what level of change can be achieved and how this is evidenced. Some CEOs thought there was not an adequate appreciation of the constraints on their ability to deliver positive social change.

There is an expectation that we are able to achieve social change that sometimes is not anchored in the political reality. With some funders you feel you have to promise that you will deliver tangible policy outcomes and concrete social change, but which often cannot be achieved in three years.

I think there is an over-emphasis on the ability of the sector to reframe the issue. It doesn't have the kind of resources to impact the debate. NGOs are a voice in the migration debate, but far from the loudest one, with political and business voices dominating.

Expectations around monitoring of impact can be particularly challenging, particularly in relation to long-term impacts for individuals. These can be difficult to demonstrate – often we are moving people on to the next stage of a process and the long-term outcomes cannot be shown.

Funder reach and contacts



More than half of funders interviewed believed that trusts and foundations were too London focused in terms of their physical location

More than half of funders interviewed believed that trusts and foundations were too London focused in terms of their physical location, their grantees and their network of contacts, and that this impacted on their ability to identify and fund projects led by local and grassroots organisations in different parts of the UK.

Funders also thought that the London-centric nature of grant giving, and policy discussions resulted in a relative lack of diversity of opinion between funders and grantees. This in turn could limit their awareness of different perspectives regarding what the sector's priorities should be or how current problems and future threats could best be tackled.

This issue was also raised by some CEOs, who noted that funders tend to engage with an established network of interlocutors and that they might benefit from investing more time in reaching out to a broader range of NGOs, in particular grass roots and community organisations outside of the South East.

To some extent funders have their inner circle of the usual suspects – often the London based, bigger organisations – who they tend to go to for political analysis, discussion and insights into certain issues. I understand that they have built up trust with these organisations, but is this at the expense of engaging with others with different views?

5

Looking ahead: Priorities, challenges and opportunities

5.1

Priorities

In considering what key issues the sector should be preparing to work on over the next decade, the two priorities most frequently identified by NGOs were: securing systemic changes to the immigration system – including ending the hostile environment policies – and responding to the predicted rise in the number of people with no recourse to public funds that will result from the new immigration regulations.

Funders who were interviewed for this research also selected these issues as priorities, along with other macro concerns such as: a rise in populism and online anti-migrant sentiment which could undermine support for progressive policy reform; constitution reform including amendments to the Human Rights Act and the judicial review system which could shift power to the executive and make it more difficult to protect the rights of individuals; and an increase in migration and displacement caused by climate change.

Key issues the sector should be preparing to work on over the next decade (number of mentions)

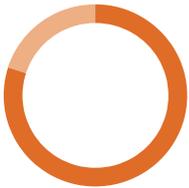
Systemic changes to the immigration system to make it fairer	26
Increases in those with NRPF, homelessness and destitution	21
Securing the right to work for people in the asylum process	20
Improving access to quality legal advice and representation	16
Stopping/reducing the use of immigration detention	15
Facilitating integration (for example, via ESOL, training and work)	14
Impact of Brexit and new regulations on a range of immigration routes	13
Positively engaging public opinion on migration and refugee issues	12
Family reunion	9
Procedures for regularising the people who are undocumented	8
Combating racism, intolerance, discrimination and hate crime	8
Displacement and migration caused by climate change	8
Mental health support	7
Access to healthcare	6
Quality of Home Office decision making	6
Immigration fees/costs (for example, citizenship applications)	5

As can be seen in the table above, NGOs also thought the sector should continue to work on the pursuit of long-standing advocacy goals (for example, on the right to work, detention and family reunion), as well as ongoing and emerging issues.

However, it was widely acknowledged that it would be extremely challenging to make progress on these concerns over the course of the current parliament.

5.2

External challenges: Government policy and the political environment



80% of CEO interviewees identified the current Government's policies on immigration and refugee protection as the key challenge the sector would face in the next five years

In interviews carried out prior to the coronavirus crisis, more than 80% of CEO interviewees identified the current Government's policies on immigration and refugee protection as the key challenge the sector would face in the next five years.

Interviewees also flagged that the introduction of a new, post-Brexit immigration system will affect the basis of many people's right to stay and live in the UK and involve wide-ranging changes to the existing legal framework (for example, ending the transition period for EU nationals, and extending the current points-based migration system to include future arrivals from the EU). These changes will result in millions of additional people being subject to immigration controls and is likely to lead to a significant increase in the population of people who are undocumented, who will lack routes for regularisation and be vulnerable to destitution and exploitation.

The Home Office is considering managing its increased workload from the new system through greater use of digital technology and the use of external subcontractors. The Home Office's track record of using contractors and technology to solve problems and improve systems is less than encouraging to date. In addition, increased use of digital technology, like facial recognition, as part of enforcement may produce more racially discriminatory outcomes.

The Government officially aims to introduce the new, post-Brexit immigration system in January 2021 (although this may now be subject to delay). The lack of detail available around the exact nature of the proposed changes and the extremely short timeline for drafting and implementing the new legislation mean that it will be hard to evaluate or prepare for the full impact of policy changes. Indeed, some of the data needed to be able to understand the implications of the new system may not be available (for example, because the Home Office has not previously monitored and recorded the relevant information).

In addition, the Government is planning amendments to the Human Rights Act and reforms to the judicial review system which could potentially further weaken legal protections for individuals in the immigration process.

In terms of the wider political environment, interviewees felt that the size of the Government's majority means that it will be difficult to challenge the proposed changes to the immigration system and even harder to secure progressive policy changes.

There will be less political space for us to push for our reforms and maybe the next five years will be about holding the line. In five years, if the asylum system looks the same, that might be what success looks like.

Several interviewees highlighted the degree to which the sector lacked contacts in the current Government, particularly as many of the Conservative MPs that they previously worked with had lost their seats in the last election, and expressed concern that it would be harder to get high-level meetings with members of the Government.

A lot of the sector has focused in recent years on policy positions based on the world as it should be and put their energy into trying to convince people who are already positively inclined towards our issue to take stronger policy positions and have neglected to build strong relationships with Conservative MPs.

Influencing policy could become even more challenging if migration and refugee issues become eclipsed by other issues. For example, the reverberations from the coronavirus crisis or the consequences of climate change may well dominate the political agenda to such an extent that the impact of the Government's immigration reforms receive little public or parliamentary scrutiny and discussions on changes to procedures relating to family migration, asylum or judicial reviews are marginalised.

Conversely, it would also be harder to promote progressive policy changes if the number of people coming to the UK rises significantly and there is a resurgence of calls for tougher immigration policies and a clampdown on asylum routes and legal migration routes.

More generally, nationalist, protectionist and anti-migrant political movements have continued to have a strong influence on migration policies globally, including in the US and Europe. This has been reflected in the introduction of more restrictive admissions policies; heightened eligibility criteria; more use of short-term work visas; and increased monitoring and enforcement mechanisms, including more outsourcing of immigration controls.

While the public remains focused on immigration, governments will continue to take a strong stance on migration, particularly where it is perceived to negatively impact on local workers, leading to the introduction or extension of further restrictive immigration policies.²⁷

²⁷ Fragomen, *Worldwide Immigration Trends Report 2019*, Fragomen, 2019, page 30.

The December 2020 deadline set by the Government for concluding a trade deal with the EU could mean that Brexit once again becomes a headline issue towards the end of the year. This could possibly fuel a further rise in populism, intolerance and discrimination. Interviewees were concerned that after leaving the EU, the UK could become a more inward-looking society and a less welcoming nation in which it is difficult to maintain broad support for values relating to equality, protection and compassion.

An external challenge is how polarised we are as a society. We can't just tell people to move on. Increased visibility and noise from far right and far left is not helpful to our cause and we don't really have a response. (...) We need to quickly mature to think about how to respond to this new public narrative.

One challenge that was not raised by NGOs or funders, but which has been discussed in other sectors is how civil society can maintain the trust and support of the public following a series of damaging media stories in recent years which have caused reputational damage to the charity sector. These include coverage of misconduct, bullying and sexual harassment issues; poor governance and financial management; aggressive fundraising tactics and excessive pay for CEOs.

When viewed against the backdrop of other threats to effective civil society engagement with the public and decision makers (for example, the Lobbying Act, the disparaging of the role of experts by some sectors of society), it is essential that charities maintain public trust and confidence and that people feel proud to support their work.

Due to the timing of the research, we were not able to ask respondents about the impacts of the 2020 coronavirus pandemic directly. However, it is certain that this will generate major challenges for the sector over the foreseeable future and is likely to over-shadow some of the concerns raised in our January 2020 survey. In order to comply with social distancing requirements, many frontline services and advice agencies will have had to reduce (or close altogether) their services in March 2020. Some charities will have had to furlough staff in order to receive financial support from the government and will be unable to rely on the contribution of volunteers. This will have reduced the capacity of the sector to provide services to communities, whilst responding to pressing new advocacy challenges around the treatment of migrants and refugees within this context.

It is likely that the immediate implications of the pandemic for many migrant and refugee communities will include new mental and physical health issues, job losses and economic hardship, increased housing problems and destitution/homelessness, and complications around immigration status. In the medium and long-term, the pandemic could result in a new set of policy changes on the pretext of disease control that make life more difficult for some people in the UK immigration or asylum systems. These could include tighter border controls,

and/or intensified in-country surveillance in connection with wider public health measures.

The economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic is also likely to generate a whole new set of challenges which will impact on people subject to immigration control. The level of public borrowing and debt already undertaken by March 2020 is greater than that accrued after the 2007–08 financial crash, which saw public sector debt treble to reach some £1,500 billion by 2015. This happened despite the implementation of nearly a decade of deep austerity measures by successive UK governments. It is worth highlighting some of the consequences of those austerity measures for the sector:

- The Home Office's average annual budget between 2011 and 2020 was 16% less than it was in 2010 and it is still 12.1% less in 2020 than it was in 2010.²⁸ This has led to resourcing issues which have contributed to increased backlogs, a high turnover of staff, inadequate training and poor decision-making.
- Government departments sought to reduce expenditure by cutting entitlements to services. For example, in 2013, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act restricted the availability of publicly funded legal advice, including for non-asylum immigration claims. As a consequence, the number of OISC regulated immigration advice services fell by 46% between 2012 and 2016 and applications for non-asylum immigration legal aid fell by 82% in the same period.²⁹
- Government departments sought to generate income to offset budget deficits. For example, the fees charged by the Home Office for a variety of immigration applications increased by at least 45% between 2013 and 2017 and an application for Indefinite Leave to Remain increased by 119%.³⁰ Similarly, the Department of Health introduced an annual health surcharge for people without permanent status in 2015 at a cost of £200 a year, then doubled it to £400 in 2018 and has recently announced a further increase to £624 a year to come into effect from October 2020.

It is likely that the economic consequence of the coronavirus pandemic will lead the Government to contemplate similar types of options over the next decade, particularly if, as is likely, the cost of borrowing increases. Even before the coronavirus pandemic, interviewees were concerned about further increases in the fees levied on immigration applications (for example, for leave to remain) and that the Government might introduce a two-tier asylum system in which differential support and leave to remain would be provided depending on the person's route of entry.

²⁸ www.bbc.com/news/business-50317451

²⁹ Helen Connolly, et.al. *Cut Off from Justice*, The Children's Society and the University of Bedfordshire, August 2017, page 7.

³⁰ Ibid, page 7.

5.3

Internal challenges: Capacity and sustainability issues for the sector

Following the Brexit transition period, millions more people are likely to be subject to immigration controls in the UK. If only a small percentage of them encounter problems and are unable to regularise their status this will significantly increase the workload of many organisation in the sector, particularly as those who are undocumented and have no recourse to public funds will often have complex needs and require more time and support to identify what has gone wrong and sort out their problems.

The economic impact of the coronavirus and Brexit, combined with the significant increase in public borrowing the Government has already committed to, mean that it is likely that funding for public services will continue to operate with inadequate resources or may even face further cuts. This will put further pressure on the sector's front-line services as they try to bridge gaps in statutory provision.

Furthermore, it seems likely that the sector will have to meet any increase in demand without additional funding. Indeed, some funders expressed a view that funding for work with on migration and refugee issues would slowly decline over the coming years and that this process might be accelerated if more generalist funders changed priorities (for example, to address poverty and inequality issues arising from the impact of the coronavirus).

In this context, many organisations may find it difficult to sustain their existing levels of income, let alone find additional resources to increase capacity and ensure that needs are met, and staff are properly supported.

Several interviewees already felt that more time needed to be put into ensuring that staff have manageable workloads, particularly as many are highly motivated and may take on too much work and/or be reluctant to take time off.

The main challenge is organisational sustainability both financial and in terms of staff retention, in the sense of ensuring that people are able to sustain their workloads and health in what is an extremely challenging sector.

There is a high intensity that exists in every project, we are trying to bring quality up and bring risks down, and we need to try and ensure a reasonable level of support for staff so they stay well – this is not just about workload, but also the nature of the work as day in and day out we're engaging with people who experienced horrific things and this has an impact on our staff as well. As a sector, a lot of people suddenly drop away because they burn out.

How do we protect ourselves from total burnout, because it is becoming a serious issue. Digital communication and the constant demand for people's time and attention mean that staff feel they are never doing enough.

Ensuring that organisations are sustainable, compliant (for example, with data protection, financial conduct and safeguarding regulations) and protect the welfare of staff are key management functions, but both CEOs and funders considered that leadership is area in which the sector needed to improve its performance.

I really worry about quality of leadership in parts of the sector when compared with other areas of civil society.

Leadership, leadership, leadership. The sector is mainly run from the heart by passionate people who want to do good. Some of them have lived experienced, but they all work from their heart, depending on a few grants rather than building a sustainable business model.

There is also a tendency to confuse commitment and very strong beliefs with leadership and in my book, they are not the same.

Concerns over leadership also extended to the board level. More than two thirds of funder and CEO interviewees either agreed or agreed strongly with the proposition that “most NGOs in the sector would benefit from diversifying the skills base of their boards and facilitating greater contact between trustees and staff.”

5.4 Opportunities

There is a contradiction between the increased restrictions being placed on labour migration globally and the needs of most developed economies which face shortages across the labour market. The need for people who migrate for work is likely to increase, particularly in countries with ageing populations and declining birth rates, like the UK. For example, in 2019 one in five GPs in the UK qualified elsewhere and 18% of nurses are non-British. It is predicted that the current NHS staff shortage of 100,000 could reach 250,000 in the next decade.³¹

Demand for people to move for jobs could become even more acute if more people choose to stay in their own countries because of increased opportunities

³¹ Kerrie Holloway, et.al., *Public Narratives and Attitudes Towards Refugees and Other Migrants*, ODI, November 2019, page 4.

and higher wages, or because immigration has become less attractive due to the restrictive labour migration policies and hostile attitudes.

There is already some increased competition for attracting workers to migrate, with a minority of countries seeking to attract more people to fill shortages and gain competitive advantages. For example, the UAE and Saudi Arabia have expanded long-term residency programmes and Japan – where one in five of the population is 70 or older – has provided new visa categories and opportunities for people to move for mid-level skilled jobs, while reducing enforcement activities.³²

Several respondents highlighted that if these trends continue there could be an increase in voices calling for more progressive immigration policies, particularly in the private and business sectors. It could also lead to a change in attitudes towards people who migrate, with their contributions being more valued and policies being adjusted to make immigration more attractive.

It is too early to say what the impact of the coronavirus will have on attitudes and policies relating to migration. However, the reliance on the advice of medical experts in formulating the Government's response to the pandemic and the upsurge in voluntary and community activity to support vulnerable people in our communities could be a reset moment for how UK society responds to issues like poverty and exclusion, as well as the importance it gives to professional expertise and charitable work.

There has been a shift in public attitudes in the UK in recent years which could provide the political space for a less polarised discussion around what a fair and efficient immigration should look like:

- The number of people describing immigration as being negative on balance has fallen from two-thirds in 2011 to one-third in 2020;
- Most people (56%) are neither positive nor negative about immigration;
- Immigration dropped to ninth place as an issue people described as very important in their 2019 vote, although 41% of people still choose it;
- 63% of people think the UK needs an effective, fair and humane asylum system so that it can uphold its responsibility to offer refugee protection to those who need it.³³

Interviewees suggested this may reflect a feeling that concerns around immigration have been listened to and addressed, as well as a growing recognition of the value of immigration. The reduced salience of the issue offers an opportunity for the Government to move away from unrealistic and unfulfilled promises which have had a deeply corrosive impact on public confidence and work with other stakeholders to restore public trust in the immigration system.

³² Fragomen, *Worldwide Immigration Trends Report 2019*, Fragomen, 2019, pages 22 and 30.

³³ Sunder Katwala, et.al., *The Reset Moment: Immigration in the New Parliament*, British Future and the Policy Institute, Kings College London, March 2020.

With the Government still aiming to introduce new immigration procedures in January 2021, the Home Office will be operating under severe time and resource constraints to get the system up and running. In this context, respondents suggested there may be opportunities to engage and influence on both big picture policy issues and discreet areas of concern (for example, family reunion), particularly if the Home Office considers that the sector is providing valuable support in helping to create a system that works fairly and efficiently.

The external context brings challenges and opportunities because there will be so much change in relation to migration policy. The bandwidth of the Government is going to be pretty limited because they have so much to do, and not just the Home Office but across the whole of the Government.

There has been a lot of discussion in the sector in recent years around the need to build a movement to support people who migrate to, or seek protection in, the UK. However, a movement must involve people outside our existing constituencies and necessitates building bridges to other campaigns and finding common cause with them. Several issues were identified by interviewees as offering opportunities to link with other sectors in advocacy and awareness raising work, including:

- Migration and climate justice activism;
- Fighting discrimination, on-line abuse and hate crimes;
- Integration, inclusion and social cohesion agendas;
- Challenging social polarisation, racism, inequality and poverty;
- Promoting justice issues (for example, protecting the integrity of the judicial review process or ensuring that the use of automated decision-making systems and facial recognition software does not undermine civil liberties).

6

Maximising impact

6.1

How could the sector strengthen its impact?

There was a high degree of agreement amongst both CEO and funder interviewees regarding what skills and activities needed to be better resourced to strengthen the sector and make it more effective in delivering social change. Broadly speaking, they fall into three interconnected areas: leadership, collaboration and influencing work.

Leadership

Management and leadership skills, particularly at senior management level, were repeatedly highlighted by both CEOs and funders as something that needs to be improved. Organisations cannot thrive by simply trying to do more with less as demand increases or by following the same theories of change irrespective of shifts in the social and political landscape. Leadership may be key to survival for many organisations in the coming year (for example, should they try to do less work better; pilot digital solutions like open source technology to make efficiency saving; consider other funding models like becoming a social enterprise).

First and foremost is leadership, and not necessarily just at the very top but throughout organisations. Quite a lot of organisations in our sector started because individuals were motivated by compassion and wanted to try and address a need, but they are not necessarily well equipped to lead an organisation. It's extremely challenging to transition from grassroots service delivery to building a bit of infrastructure to sustain their own organisation and work in partnership with others. Small organisations need to have the capacity to be able to think longer-term. So much of this comes down to leadership and capacity building.

It is noteworthy that three of the organisations which were most frequently described by funders and CEOs as inspirational have all had a change in leadership in the last few years. This issue was highlighted by several interviewees in explaining their choice, with reference to how getting the right person for the job had transformed the organisation and allowed it to fulfil its potential.

Several interviewees welcomed the Leadership for Social Change Initiative and particularly its focus on supporting people with lived experience to take on leadership roles. However, many still felt that opportunities for the development of management and leadership skills in the migrant and refugee sector are extremely limited, especially considering how important these roles are in maximising an organisation's efficiency and effectiveness.

Increasingly I feel that leadership is so important to impact, but there is not a lot of resource in sector to develop leadership.

By way of comparison, one interviewee referenced an Open Society Foundation initiative which identifies around 15 promising human rights CEOs who they then fund and bring together to explore leadership and transitional development issues. The programme also includes a leadership network that convenes once a year to discuss issues of concern and provides CEOs an opportunity to work with and learn from a peer group.

It was suggested that developing a migration and refugee network which allows CEOs to come together to share experiences, problem solve or consider issues like staff wellbeing or the involvement of people with lived experience in their organisations is likely to benefit individual organisations and the sector as a whole. Building links with CEOs from outside the sector and engaging with them regularly could further inspire sector leaders and help them to develop in their jobs.

It would be helpful if we could create a knowledge pool and have forums where we can bring different leaders together, away from the cycles of preparing for meetings and speeches, where we can get together in a structured way and learn from one another.

It was highlighted that nurturing and developing leadership in organisations should not just be focused on CEOs. Trustees and staff in other management positions are all part of the governance structure of charities and need to be supported to perform their roles to the best of their capacity.

NGOs indicated that some work may also be needed to shift organisational culture away from promoting and safeguarding the interests of the charity itself and towards the promotion of issues which may best deliver sectoral goals. If priorities are recalibrated in this way, it should help to facilitate joint working by increasing NGOs' willingness to relinquish ownership of projects/issues; delegate leadership to others; and liaise with other agencies on how they could coordinate, share or merge some of the work they do.

We need to ensure that we remain focused on working to secure better outcomes for refugees and not better outcomes for our organisations.

A strong sector allows leaderships to happen and it doesn't have to be leadership from biggest charity.

Communications and collaboration

Around two thirds of CEOs and funders thought that more dedicated resourcing of mechanisms for information sharing and collaboration is needed to increase the sector's impact.

It's particularly hard to deliver high quality social services and promote social change at the same time. It should be possible, but they don't always feel very compatible. (...) We all know we need to be working more together and be more collaborative, but it's difficult to do this when you are moving from one crisis to another.

CEOs thought the sector needed more shared spaces in which organisations can address challenges together, look at the needs on the ground, share intelligence, identify goals, review theories of change, coordinate communications messages and develop joint strategies.

Although there is a strong and widespread desire to improve collaboration, respondents suggested that there is limited capacity to make this happen as significant resources are required to facilitate effective coordination (for example, arranging meetings, drawing up agendas, booking rooms, taking notes, facilitating discussion to reach consensus, circulating action points, ensuring commitments are taken forward).

We need to increase our collaboration and coordination. Unless you have dedicated capacity to develop joint work, it generally won't happen, and we miss the opportunity to increase our collective impact.

Several interviewees noted that funder support for infrastructure projects which both addressed skills gaps (for example, IMIX, British Future, the Migration Observatory) and/or provided dedicated coordinating capacity (for example, Asylum Matters, Detention Forum, NACCOM, Still Human Still Here) had increased joint working – both within and beyond the sector – and delivered more impactful advocacy work. The Asylum Reform Initiative was also highlighted as a new project which has great potential to add value in this area.

IMIX definitely filled a gap in the sector and helped us to respond to big events (for example, spikes in arrivals crossing the Channel, political moments). They act as a good coordinating, convening force and they helped us to think through our messaging, find hooks and flagged opportunities to secure media coverage. They also do all this with a very small team.

Bringing people in the sector together in forums for skills development or shared learning on issues like leadership, staff management and monitoring and evaluation have immediate benefits, but also help organisations to align their work and identify where they can collaborate more effectively together and reduce competition.

More than one CEO noted that it would be useful to bring people together for a workshop on the involvement of people with lived experience, to share learning, consider models of good practice and coordinate ongoing initiatives.

It is noteworthy that there is no sector-wide infrastructure for sharing information, plans or analysis. For example, in the development sector, BOND provides a coordinating structure (it administers forums, sets up meetings and training events, distributes information). It is worth considering if a similar body would be useful for the migration and refugee sector or whether different organisations or initiatives could take on any functions that are considered would add value.

It was felt that investing in different forms of cross-sector coordination are likely, over time, to deliver more:

- Coalition work across a range of issues and organisations;
- Joint initiatives (for example, responses to consultations, briefings for Bill amendments);
- Strategic engagement in which organisations with different skill sets utilise them collectively;
- Sophisticated communication work which incorporates both shared narratives (for example, the human stories and impact on people's lives) and divergent messages (for example, in relation to the reasons a policy is flawed and needs to change).

Building consensus and increasing cooperation is an incremental process, but improved communication should result in greater strategic planning across the sector, including organisations discussing closer alignment of their work and services not out of financial necessity, but rather as a way of better achieving the purposes for which they were established.

We could also look at mergers. It's not an easy conversation, but it is problematic that organisations and people are competing for funding and duplicating some services. At least we should be having conversations about what we could streamline, especially with online services and guidance, instead of all trying to be the 'go-to' organisation. Where we agree, we could promote each other.

One strong indicator of a shared vision is when you consider merging because you see there's better opportunity from working together.

Several interviewees highlighted that improved collaboration and partnership work would help increase the sector's ability to advance a progressive agenda, but it also needs to make meaningful connections with those working on other issues and in other professions (for example, homelessness, policing, health services, social services) if it wants to maximise its potential to promote social change.

Respondents highlighted that some organisations in the sector are already doing this. For example, Women for Refugee Women created the All Women Count platform which brought together a wide range of organisations under one umbrella to support refugee and migrant women, including Women's March London, Fawcett, Care International UK, Liberty, Oxfam and End Violence against Women.

Similarly, statutory services, commissioners, the voluntary sector and people with lived experience came together in Bristol in the Golden Key project to try and improve the system and outcomes for people caught in a cycle of exclusion and crisis. The project was not aimed specifically at people in the immigration system, but they do have the opportunity to access it.

There's an interesting collaborative project in Bristol, Golden Key, which links 20 different organisations – mostly not from refugee sector – who are all working with people with multiple complex needs and looking at how the system can be shifted to better support these people and secure them better long-term outcomes. It's interesting to see a large and varied group of organisations, including the statutory sector, come together in a city-wide initiative to try a different way of working.

Engaging with different social justice issues, funders and cross-sectoral bodies and working together with organisations that have different priorities could lead to a values shift affecting views on a whole range of issues (for example, social exclusion, environment, discrimination, gender).

Influencing work

NGOs and funders identified various gaps and weaknesses in the sector's advocacy work which need to be addressed if the sector is to maximise the impact of its influencing work.

Targeted and effective lobbying of decision makers

Respondents highlighted that the sector has very limited capacity for engaging with decision-makers. Several respondents highlighted that a way to increase the sector's impact in this regard would be to try and shift the emphasis of its lobbying work – and its advocacy work more generally – from being reactive to being

proactive. Responding to Government initiatives is often necessary but tends to have a marginal impact on policy once the Government has already announced its intentions.

We need to be thinking strategically about what we do. A lot of our political facing work is very reactive (for example, responding to Bills and considering what amendments we should be promoting).

It was felt that proactive advocacy that is structured around pre-planned activities and/or seeks to influence decision-making upstream are much more likely to deliver substantive policy changes and often for less investment of resources. This is especially true if proposals are consistent with existing political priorities (for example, the Government's agenda around social mobility, poverty reduction).

However, interviewees felt that both proactive and reactive work will be more likely to gain traction if the sector is able to broaden its contacts with decision makers, influencers and supporters across the political spectrum. Several respondents stated that the sector needs to build relationships with Government Ministers, special advisors and Conservative MPs and this needs to be supported by more work with the centre right media to ensure that constituents are supporting calls for more progressive immigration policies.

Effective engagement with Government will require some organisations to move from being critics of policy to being change-makers who identify the precise causes of systemic problems and then design and/or help to implement the policy changes required to address them.

We also need more activities working with rather than against government for change. I'm not saying we shouldn't speak out against government, but I feel there is polarisation and a vacuum and that not many organisations are prepared to step into the space to work with government to help them do things differently. There are significant reputational risks involved, but Government will need help if it's going to change.

Some organisations may need training or capacity building to do this work effectively as it generally requires a strong evidence base, policy expertise to identify workable solutions (which in some cases will be quite technical) and a good understanding of how the policy process and machinery of government works to identify the right people to engage with.

A solutions-based advocacy approach has resulted in or contributed to significant policy changes over the last decade including changes to the detention system, establishing a statelessness determination procedure, and improvements in Home Office decision making.

Part of this process is about finding effective methods and forums for engaging with Home Office officials to discuss policy solutions.

A more collaborative approach to working with officials to solve problems does not require organisations to stop public criticism of the Government. Indeed, some of the most successful campaigns highlighted by respondents combine strong public criticism with non-adversarial policy work with officials. For example, the campaigns for a time-limit on detention and the reinstatement of legal aid for children in immigration cases both pursued strategic litigation while maintaining an active dialogue with officials around policy solutions.

Improved communications and a broader support base

Winning greater public support will be a crucial part of accessing the political space to secure positive changes in policy and practice for migrants and refugees over the next decade. Respondents stated that to do this the sector needs to further increase its communications capacity and skills.

While it is unlikely that significant additional resource will be available for this work, there is potential to increase the impact of the work that is currently being undertaken to achieve cut through and connections with the public at large.

Interviewees highlighted that this could be achieved through greater use of strategic communications which lead with issues that are important to people's daily lives and raise concerns through the prism of shared values, rather than directly as an immigration issue per se (for example, through issues like family, reciprocity, trust, safety, pride, compassion, fairness, community, friendship).³⁴

The public's views on immigration are generally not grounded in personal experience and they are likely to respond positively where the sector can effectively communicate that the system is treating individuals in a way that does not align with what most people consider to be fair (for example, the Windrush generation, Gurkhas, EU nationals who have lived and worked in the UK for many years, Afghan interpreters, indefinite detention, individual deportation cases).

To better engage with those who have concerns over immigration, interviews and other research suggests that the sector's messaging should also seek to incorporate:

- Human voices and stories (for example, the impact on individual lives, people speaking directly about their experiences, etc.);
- A focus on commonality and reducing perceptions of difference or threat (for example, using 'we' and 'our', talking about what we all share and need etc.);
- Use of trusted/appropriate messengers (faith leaders, respected local individuals, people with lived experience, UK citizens, the Glasgow girls, etc.);
- A solution for the problem identified and the benefits of that solution.

³⁴ See Alice Sachrajda and Lena Baumgartner, *More Than Words*, Global Dialogue, 2019.

Respondents highlighted that the sector has improved the way it frames its campaigns to better engage the wider public (for example, Lift the Ban, Let us Learn, Families Together, etc.) and articulate a call for action. However, others felt there is still much more that could be done to move away from a negative, victimising narrative to one which promotes positivity both in terms of people's perceptions of people who migrate or seek refuge, and about wider society and their role in it.

The sector talks about wanting positive stories on migration, but they are much better at producing negative case studies. It's easier to find someone who has had a terrible time in the system than someone who's flourished and been successful.

There is also potential to make greater use of digital and social networks and the incorporation of more visual/non-verbal communication tools (for example, music, mood feelings and associations with shared emotions like love, laughter and hope).³⁵

The leave campaign also showed how to get your cause in front of people, harnessing digital, popular messaging and engaging people – we could definitely learn from that.

The ability of a visual image to connect to people's common humanity was clearly demonstrated by the public response to the image of a Syrian child, Aylan Kurdi, washed up on a beach in Europe in September 2015. This led to a shift in public attitudes towards refugees from Syria, the establishment of the Syrian resettlement scheme and a significant increase in public giving, as reflected in the record £2.6 million that was donated by 22,000 donors to the Guardian's December 2015 Christmas appeal.³⁶

If the sector can make better connections with a broader cross-section of the public through its communications work, then this could also provide an opportunity to increase its fundraising activities. Public fundraising (for example, direct marketing and crowdfunding) is a good measure of how much people care about an issue and most of the organisations surveyed for this research only received ten percent or less of their income from individual giving. There is therefore potential to align communications and fundraising work with the aim of increasing both public support and income from individuals. This would help reduce the sector's reliance on grants from trusts and foundations.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Jennifer Shea, et al., *Solutions for Sanctuary: An Overview of the Refugee and Asylum Charity Sector in the UK*, NPC, page 7.

Increased involvement of people with lived experience

Respondents felt that the sector can also improve its influencing work by increasing the involvement of people with lived experience in leading advocacy initiatives. This will help ensure that the goals that are selected are aligned with the issues which are of most concern to people who are directly impacted. Furthermore, several interviewees highlighted that advocacy work that is led by those directly affected is more likely to be convincing and resonate with the target audience, especially when there is a strong narrative around fairness.

Migrants and refugees need to lead on shaping and developing the work we're doing to make it more compelling and likely to be of direct benefit to the people we're trying to support.

We need to do more to bring in the voices of refugees, personal stories of courage and resilience, which help to build bridges across differences.

Those making decision on policy in Whitehall may have good intentions, but they haven't met a refugee in the last few years and have perceptions about how policies will work which are not based in the realities of front-line experience. Often the people who can make the difference are not in the room because they are overworked and don't have the time and resources to attend a meeting.

More local engagement and connectivity

There is significant potential to achieve social change by mobilising at the local level. Responses highlighted that communications work which is focused on local media outlets is much more likely to gain traction and obtain positive coverage of stories around integration, contribution and the communities coming together than at the national level.

Similarly, as decision-making is increasingly devolved (for example, to national parliaments, metro-mayors, police commissioners, clinical commissioning groups, etc.) it was felt that opportunities will arise to influence regional structures which can address problems that people are facing in different parts of the UK. There are already many examples of positive policy initiatives at a national level, including:

- In 2012, Northern Ireland established a crisis fund which supported 1,252 people in the immigration and refugee systems. In 2014, the Stormont Executive agreed to extend this to help those who are unable to access benefits or who have issues due to unemployment, family breakdown or domestic violence.
- In January 2018, the Scottish Government published its second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, 2018–22, which aims to create “a welcoming

Scotland, where people seeking protection from persecution and human rights abuses are able to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive.”

- In January 2019, the Welsh Government launched its Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan, as part of its proposal to make Wales a nation of sanctuary.

Similarly, civil society engagement with local authorities encouraged many to take resettled Syrian refugees and has also seen statutory and non-statutory services working together to plan and design resettlement programmes (for example, Coventry City Council).

However, several respondents noted that local organisations tend to have less capacity to undertake influencing work and will often need support so that they can contribute to local or national advocacy work. In this respect, further support for infrastructure organisations which unlock campaigning potential and connect local, regional and national advocacy work would help maximise impact. For example, Asylum Matters worked effectively with local partners to help achieve the following recent policy outcomes:

- Kirklees, Sheffield and Barnsley Councils introduced regulations to end room-sharing for unrelated adults;
- G4S ended the practice of continuous filming with body cameras in asylum accommodation centres;
- The Paragon Hotel in Birmingham ceased being used for asylum accommodation because of its extremely poor standards;
- The inappropriate “no-child” policy for parents who were reporting as a condition of their claim was dropped in Salford;
- The Greater Manchester Mayor agreed that people with no recourse to public funds will be included in his homelessness strategy;
- A destitution fund was established in Manchester for people with no recourse to public funds.

However, several interviewees stressed that there is still a need to invest more in organising at the community level, especially in areas where there is currently no work taking place, if the sector wants to be able to mobilise support in favour of progressive social policies. This could be particularly important in areas where migration issues are considered unpopular, but where there may be positive support for specific issues (for example, family reunion or move-on issues post grant of refugee status).

We need to resource more strong and local activities which contribute to broadening the political support base we have at the elite level.

Planned follow-up work

Another area of influencing work where there is scope to increase impact is in relation to ensuring that campaign advances and 'wins' are translated into actual improvements in policy or practice. Significant policy breakthroughs require sustained follow-up to ensure commitments are honoured and deliver the tangible benefits to migrants/refugees that were expected.

For example, the compensation scheme for the Windrush generation is expected to pay out between £200–570 million, but as of February 2020 just £62,000 had been paid and organisations are having to undertake a lot of work to make people aware of the fund and how to apply for the compensation that they are entitled to.

If follow-up work does not happen, then gains can be limited or eroded over time. For example, a lack of sustained advocacy has meant the statelessness determination procedure is not as effective as it should be, with long delays in decision-making and a recognition rate of only 5%.

Several respondents noted that it can be difficult for organisations to maintain focus on one issue when they have other pressing concerns to deal with and do not have the time or budget to devote to a problem that many perceive has been 'solved'. In this context, support from within their own organisations, other NGOs in the sector and funders to ensure that the pressure for change is not released could help to ensure that changes that appear to have been secured are realised in practice.

6.2 How could grant making be strengthened?

Half of the funders that completed the survey thought that grant making could be strengthened through the provision of more long-term and unrestricted, core grants. This view was shared by most CEOs who emphasised that having more unrestricted funding would enable them to be more responsive to needs and opportunities as they arose; give them greater flexibility to innovate and take reasonable levels of risk to test out new approaches; and facilitate better long-term planning (for example, in terms of institutional change, programme development).

A strong sector would have a higher level of core funding because that brings with it stability and flexibility.

They also stressed that short-term funding of between one and two years was a major issue for charities as it made it difficult to retain staff, particularly where there were gaps between the end of one grant and securing a new one. In

these circumstances, a lot of resources can be wasted in recruiting and training new employees.

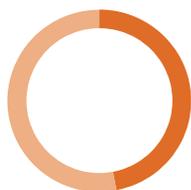
We need funders to understand that some outcomes are very long term and we need long-term funding to match those ambitions.

Efficiency savings could also be made by funders not asking for multiple reports in one year or only doing so in exceptional cases (for example, where a project is high risk or having problems).

Similarly, most NGOs secure their income from multiple sources and monitoring and evaluation demands can be significant and vary a lot between one funder and another. If funders worked together to agree a shared framework for grant reports, or that a report to one funder could be used with another, this would reduce the administrative time needed to complete multiple reports in different formats for the same project.

Given that social change takes time and usually involve failures, learning, vision, persistence and luck, it may be appropriate to put more focus on progress towards building the infrastructure for change rather than specific policy outcomes when considering applications and evaluating impact.

Nearly half (47%) of funders who replied to the survey believed that grant making could be further strengthened through increasing funder collaboration via networks, strategic funding and pooled resources.



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Where funders can align their aspiration and resources it increases capacity and impact, as well as spreading risk. Pooled funds can also save NGOs time as applications for grants can be focused on one point rather than making multiple applications to various foundations.

It was felt by several respondents that improved coordination between funders would facilitate more opportunities for peer learning and sharing information and good practice. For example, many trusts fund the same NGOs and could share information around this with the potential for administrative savings and avoiding an over-concentration of resources in single organisations or geographic locations.

There is also considerable potential for funders to further facilitate cross-sectoral partnership work. The convening role that funders play in the sector is valued and should continue or, as suggested by some CEOs, be enhanced:

It would be good if funders could try to get some of the key organisations in a room together to really think through their strategy and approach and who's best placed to do what. Individuals would have to leave their egos at the door and allow other organisations to take the lead on some things. Funders could facilitate this by making some commitment to continue funding all NGOs in the same way, regardless of who takes the lead.

However, there is also the option of moving towards a shared forum model where funders and NGOs can meet to discuss issues of mutual benefit. Funders could hear more from experts on policy developments and frontline workers about what is happening on the ground, which would better inform their grant making. Equally, NGOs could learn more about funder priorities and examples they see of good practice and alternative approaches from both within and outside the sector. Such meetings could be convened on a locality basis to ensure that diverse voices are engaged across the sector. This type of engagement could contribute to NGOs and funders aligning their work better and developing joint strategies.

Similarly, funders, and particularly generalist funders, could play a much bigger role in linking migration and refugee organisations to other sectors for learning and collaboration. This might also encourage NGOs to support work which is linked, but not central to their charitable purposes (for example, around issues of inequality, hate crime or polarisation) and could lead to improved services, greater advocacy reach and even an increase in the resources available for this work, particularly where these intersect with existing priorities. It was suggested that there may also be scope for funders to act as convenors to help bridge the gap between NGOs, business and Government.

There may also be opportunities for funders to unlock more of the sector's capacity and skills by providing separate streams of funding for community led and grass roots organisations. Many of these NGOs are still building capacity and would benefit from dedicated funding, rather than having to compete with mainstream organisations for grants.

Several respondents mentioned the New Beginnings Fund as an example – this was supported by six funders and provided over £5 million for a pooled fund to increase the capacity of small and medium sized local groups working to promote social cohesion. A similar model for community organisations could have additional benefits in terms of reducing competition and fostering greater collaboration between organisations. Alternatively, grant making practices could encourage larger organisations to work directly with smaller community-based NGOs on joint applications relating to service delivery or influencing work.

There could be potential for funders to look more at asset based community development models in which the focus is on what is strong and working in communities and then support that model, rather a needs-based analysis (for example, are there some shared factors which enable some people to thrive?). Such an approach may help to unlock more potential at community level.³⁷

Finally, several NGOs noted the positive support they had received from funders in terms of accessing grants or pro-bono training so that they could address skills gaps or improve internal procedures. CEOs noted various areas of work where

37 Migrant and refugee community organisations play a crucial role offering cross-generational, life time support to their members across the UK and are a unique social integration agent, but often struggle to secure resources. See Dick Williams, *A Bridge to Life in the UK*, Refugee Council, October 2018.

their organisations would benefit from training to build capacity, including around accessing the right decision makers, fundraising, management, digital skills and improving organisational systems and structures.

Increasing funder plus initiatives like the Lloyds Bank Foundation's Enhance programme³⁸ could be an extremely cost-effective way of supporting organisations to become more sustainable and increase their impact. This could increase funding to priority areas (for example, leadership, governance, inclusion of people with lived experience, capacity building, movement building, strategic litigation), but in a targeted way which allows grant recipients to identify what kind of capacity building would be most valuable to their organisation at a specific time.

38 For more information see: www.lloydsbankfoundation.org.uk/we-develop/support-for-charities-to-develop

7

Recommendations

7.1

Proposals for NGOs to consider

There was a high degree of consensus amongst NGOs and funders regarding the skills and activities that need to be better resourced to strengthen the sector so that it can better achieve its strategic goals. These included:

Leadership

- Establishing a leadership network to share information, plans and look at how to solve problems together.
- Building a culture within NGOs which focuses less on protecting and promoting the interests of individual organisations and more on securing cross-sectoral goals which will be of the greatest benefit to migrants and refugees.
- Increasing the meaningful involvement of people with lived experience at all levels including governance, leadership, service provision, policy and advocacy work.
- Fostering a learning culture across organisations and sectors, so that models of good practice can be shared, and existing procedures improved.

Coordination and collaboration

- Working with other organisations to coordinate, streamline and/or merge services they run as a mechanism for both filling gaps in provision and as a way of meeting increased need with existing or reduced resources.
- Collaborating more with other NGOs, locally and nationally, to align advocacy work and undertake joint projects so that they can better achieve their strategic goals.
- Considering whether additional infrastructure to improve communication and joint-working is needed (for example, forums, sub-groups, sector wide list-serves, workshops and training events) and whether existing organisations or projects could take on these roles.
- Allocating a small increase in the resources dedicated to information sharing and joint work in both their annual and strategic plans.
- Making common cause with other sectors and professions around shared concerns, for example, racism, intolerance, exclusion, public trust in charities, judicial review reforms. This could shift values as well as deliver specific policy changes.

Influencing work

- Shifting the emphasis of advocacy work to proactive rather than reactive work and engaging policy issues upstream where the impact is usually greater.
- Working more with others to utilise the different influencing skills that each organisation has, as part of a cross-sectoral advocacy strategy.
- Being more solutions focused and finding ways to work effectively with the Government to identify and implement changes to policy and practice.
- Broadening contacts with conservative decision makers, influencers and supporters.
- Engaging the public better through greater use of strategic communications which lead with human stories and shared values and give greater emphasis to stories of shared experiences and contribution, as opposed to negative, victimising narratives.
- Building more grass-roots support and utilising opportunities to achieve changes in attitudes and policy at the local level, especially where decision-making powers have been devolved.

7.2 Proposals for funders to consider

There was also considerable agreement between funders and CEOs around the principal measures that trusts and foundations could take to strengthen grant making and increase the sector's effectiveness. These included:

- Providing more unrestricted and long-term grants.
- Increasing funder collaboration via networks, strategic funding and pooled resources.
- Increasing support for infrastructure projects that address structural weaknesses in the sector and facilitate joint-working.
- Developing their convening role, including by facilitating more cross-sectoral collaboration and links with other sectors, business and Government.
- Working more closely with NGOs in the sector to develop a shared vision and strategy.
- Increasing funder plus initiatives which support capacity building but are also tailored to recipient's specific needs and priorities.

- Investing in diversifying their network of contacts, so as to benefit from different perspectives and be able to reach new grantees around the UK.
- Simplifying grant application/reporting procedures.
- Considering how to unlock more of the potential of community and grass roots organisations, by providing dedicated funding streams; encouraging larger NGOs to partner with them in joint applications; and looking at more asset-based community development models.
- Continuing to support service delivery projects that are effective and needed, especially where they provide evidence that underpins advocacy work to achieve systemic change.

Appendix A: Research methodology

Desk research

Desk research was conducted to identify key developments over the last decade, with a particular focus on changes to migration and refugee policy and findings from the wider charitable sector relating to factors that contribute to achieving positive social change.

Review and analysis of UK registered charities

Detailed analysis of UK registered charities working on migration and/or refugee issues was carried out in January 2020, using data from the Charity Commission for England and Wales, the OSCR (Scottish Charity Regulator) and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland websites.

The research identified 972 charities as working on UK migration and refugee issues, both partially and exclusively. Charities were identified via a search of the databases which checked whether their registration documents included under their name, charitable objects or key activities any of the following key terms: 'asylum-seeker', 'migrant', 'immigrant', 'immigration', 'victims of trafficking', 'survivors of torture', 'unaccompanied children', and 'seeking sanctuary'.

This group was filtered via a detailed review of their work to exclude charities that: do not work primarily or exclusively migration and refugee issues; work overseas; and had not filed accounts with the Charity Commission within the past two year or had an income of less than £2 per annum. This provided us with a list of 571 charitable organisations which are dedicated to working with migrants and refugees in the UK and have some level of resource to do so.

Profiling key migrant and refugee organisations in the UK

In January 2020, a detailed online survey was sent to the chief executives of 277 organisations to obtain a profile of key organisations working in the sector (for example, staff, income, focus of their work, funding sources, etc.). The survey was sent to the following NGOs:

- 135 registered charities in the UK with a primary/exclusive focus on migration and refugee issues, and an income of over £100,000 per annum;
- 87 small and medium-sized UK charities and voluntary/community organisations;
- 24 organisations that work exclusively on UK migration and refugee issues but are not charities;
- 31 organisations which do not work exclusively on migration and refugee issues but are 'key allies' for the sector.

The above sample was weighted towards organisations with larger incomes so that the data collected would reflect where the majority of financial resources available in the sector are being allocated. However, we sought to ensure this cohort reflected the broader sector by selecting a representative sample of organisations in terms of income, geographic location and focus of work, wherever possible.

A total of 130 organisations completed the survey between January and March 2020, giving the survey a 47% response rate. However, the response rate from small and medium NGOs charities was low (22%) further weighting sample towards larger organisations. The 130 respondents have a combined income

of approximately £77 million per annum. Although this is a representative sample of the 'key players' within the sector, the findings should only be treated as indicative rather than comprehensive.

These findings were supplemented by a short, open on-line survey which aimed to widen the perspectives canvassed and provide an opportunity for front-line workers and all those working on migration and refugee issues to share their views on how to strengthen the sector and make it more effective. This survey was sent out in February 2020 via key list serves in the migration/refugee sector, and publicised on social media by the research team. A total of 40 responses were received by March 2020.

In addition, a series of in-depth interviews were carried out with 26 CEOs of migrant and refugee organisations to probe some of the issues from the survey in more detail (see below for details).

Profiling key funders of UK refugee and migration work

In January 2020, we sent a detailed survey to 29 key funders within Migration Exchange and its wider network of contacts to get an overview of the grant portfolios available and their perspectives on recent and future funding trends. A total of 16 responses were received by March 2020, giving a 55% response rate.

While the sample of funders is not comprehensive, it does cover a core group of trusts and foundations that provide more than £23 million a year in grants to the migrant and refugee sector and therefore is illustrative of the general funding landscape. The data from the surveys was supplemented with information from in-depth interviews with eleven funders carried out between February and March 2020.

Appendix B: Organisations that completed the NGO and funder surveys

NGOs

Abigail Housing

Action for Refugees in Lewisham

Action Foundation

African Community Advice North East

Amnesty International UK

Ashley Community Housing

ASSIST Sheffield

Asylum Justice

Asylum Matters

Asylum Research Centre (ARC) Foundation

Asylum Support Appeals Project

Asylum Welcome

Association of Visitors to Immigration Detention (AVID)

BEACON Bradford

Borderlands

Befriending Refugees and Asylum Seekers (BRASS)

British Future

Bristol Refugee Rights

British Red Cross

British Refugee Council

Brushstrokes Community Project

Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (CARAS)

Centre for African Entrepreneurship

The Children's Society

Chinese Information and Advice Centre

Citizens UK

City of Sanctuary UK

CLEAR Project Southampton

Coram Children's Legal Centre

Counterpoint Arts

Derby Refugee Advice Centre

Detention Action

Doctors of the World

East European Resource Centre

Enthum Foundation

Entraide (Mutual Aid)

European Network on Statelessness

Fatima House

Fife Migrants Forum

Focus on Labour Exploitation

Forth Valley Welcome

Freedom from Torture

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

Global Justice Now

Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit

Hackney Migrant Centre

Haringey Migrant Centre

Helen Bamber Foundation

HIMILO Social and Cultural Organisation

Hope Projects

HOST Nottingham	New Europeans
ILPA	New Routes Integration
IMIX	North of England Refugee Service
Independent Workers of Great Britain Union	Nottingham Arimathea Trust
Indo-American Refugee and Migrant Organisation	Oasis Cardiff
Integration Support Services	On Road Media
International Care Network	Open Door North East
IPPR	Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (PAFRAS)
Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants	Rainbow Haven/East Manchester Community Association
Jewish Council for Racial Equality	Refugee and Migrant Forum of East London (RAMFEL)
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants	Reading Refugee Support Group
Justice First	Refugee Action
JustRight Scotland	Refugee Radio
Kent Refugee Action Network	Refugee Support Group Devon
Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network	Refugee Support Network
Latin American Women's Rights Service	Refugee Women of Bristol
Leeds Swahili Cultural Community	Refugees at Home
Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network	Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP)
Liberty	Room to Heal
Maryhill Integration Network	Runnymede Trust
Maternity Action	Safe Passage International
Medical Justice Network	Samphire
Merseyside Refugee Support Network	Save the Children
Migrant Centre Northern Ireland	Scottish Refugee Council
Migrant Voice	Slough Immigration Aid Unit
Migrant Organise	Solace Surviving Exile and Persecution
Migration Observatory	South London Refugee Association
Migrant Training Company	Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group
Music in Detention	
NACCOM	

Student Action for Refugees (STAR)
Suffolk Refugee Support
Swansea Asylum Seeker Support
TGP Cymru/Tros Gynnal
The 3Million
The BACA Charity
The Boaz Trust
The Gap
The Refugee and Migrant Centre
Together with Migrant Children
UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group (UKLGIG)
Upbeat Communities
Voices in Exile
Warm Hut UK
We Belong
Welsh Refugee Council
West End Refugee Service (WERS)
Women for Refugee Women
Young Roots
(One organisation wished to remain anonymous)

Trusts and Foundations

AB Charitable Trust
Barrow Cadbury Trust
Bromley Trust
Comic Relief
Charitable Trust
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
International Human Rights Programme,
Oak Foundation
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust
Lloyds Foundation
Network for Social Change
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
Sigrid Rausing Trust
Social Change Initiative
Trust for London
(Two organisations wished to remain anonymous)

Appendix C: Individuals interviewed for the research

NGO Interviewees

James Afra, Citizens UK

Zrinka Bralo, Migrants Organise

Andrea Cleaver, Welsh Refugee Council

Nicole Francis, ILPA

Alex Fraser, Red Cross

Emma Ginn, Medical Justice

Stephen Hale, Refugee Action

Emma Harrison, IMIX

Nicholas Hatton, The3Million

Anita Hurrell, Coram

Sunder Katwala, British Future

Arten Llazari, Refugee and Migrant Centre

Fuad Mahamed, Ashley Community Housing

Dami Makinde, We Belong

Julian Prior, Action Foundation

Nazek Ramadan, Migrant Voice

Sonya Sceats, Freedom from Torture

Satbir Singh, JCWI

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Nina Spataru, Oak Foundation

Alex Sutton, Paul Hamlyn Foundation

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This research was commissioned by Migration Exchange in October 2019 and conducted by Mike Kaye and Ruth Grove White, with additional research by Dylan Fotoohi.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors, and should not be interpreted as the positions of any of the funding organisations or Migration Exchange as a whole.

Our thanks to all those who contributed to this review, and to Paul Hamlyn Foundation for funding it.

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