

# Community Integration Assessment

*Story of  
Window on  
Tool Kit for  
Community Integration*

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## Acronyms

<b>AR</b>	Asylum Route
<b>AS</b>	Asylum Seeker
<b>CI</b>	Community Integration
<b>CSH</b>	Community Stakeholder
<b>CW</b>	Case Worker
<b>FG</b>	Focus Groups
<b>HO</b>	Home Office
<b>JC</b>	Job Centre

<b>LCC</b>	Lancashire County Council
<b>LIF</b>	Local Integration Fund
<b>PD</b>	Protracted Displacement
<b>R</b>	Refugee
<b>RA</b>	Refugee Action
<b>SRP</b>	Syrian Resettlement Programme

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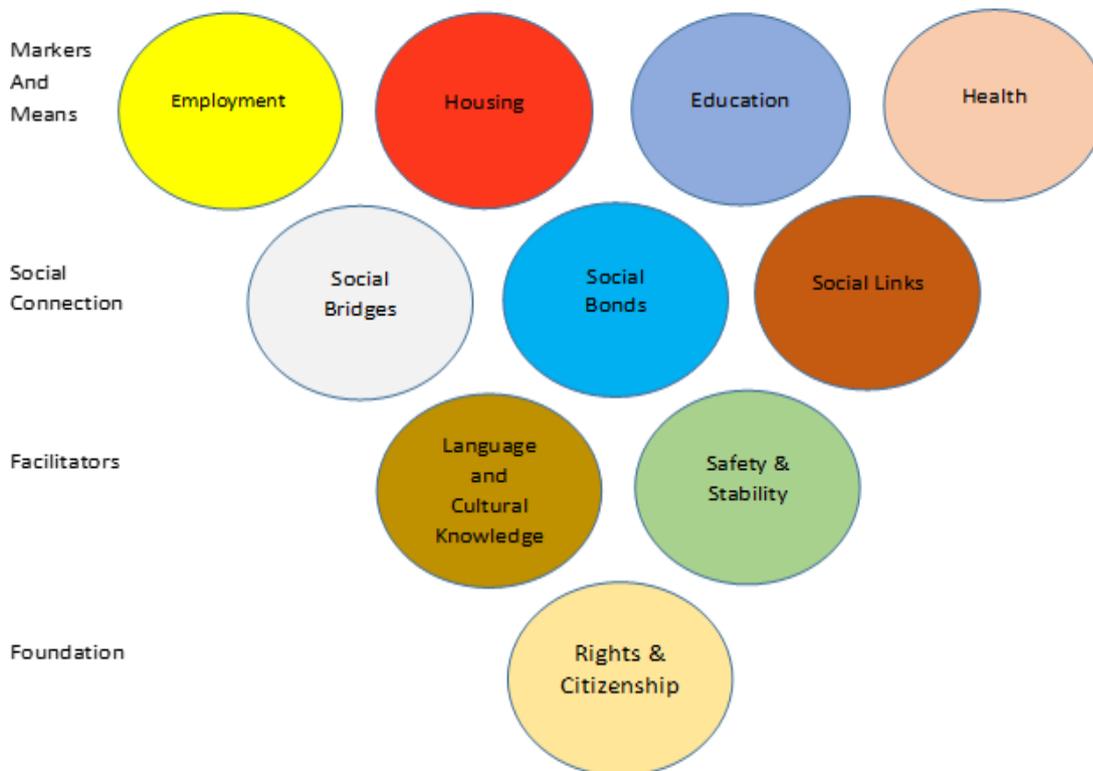
## Executive Summary

### 1.0 Style/ Purpose of Report: story, window and toolkit

#### Aim/ Purpose

- Whilst the brief for the needs assessment was for a particular aspect of integration, ‘community integration’ turned out to be very broad to the point of being interpreted as a general evaluation of/ needs assessment for successful resettlement as a whole
- Refugee voices and feelings are prioritised in this report
- Integration is described as a ‘chaotic concept’ or an ‘umbrella term’; it is possible to see how it refers to issues of institutional access, functional or structural integration right through to feeling at home
- Ager and Strang’s (2008) conceptual framework defining core domains of integration is widely used to understand different domains and relationships between domains of integration. This is used within the report and is reproduced below with definitions provided.

Ager and Strang’s (2008) conceptual framework defining core domains of integration is reproduced below with brief definitions of different domains. Colour coding has been added as the framework is drawn on in the report and colour coding provides easier identification of domains.



**Definition of selected terms:**

**Social Bridges:** to do with relationships between refugees and host society/ community. Early understanding of this used a race-relations framework whereas more recent work uses the language of social inclusion. It is about avoiding exclusion, polarisation through participation, mixing, involvement, friendliness.

**Social bonds:** to do with connection with 'like-ethnic groups', family connections, linguistic and cultural connections, refugee community organisations (RCO) which provide, amongst other things, social and cultural activities to value and maintain customs identity

**Social links:** this refers to the connection between individuals and structures of the state, such as government services, recognising that gaining equal access often requires additional effort from refugees and wider community. It is widely recognised as a 'major task in supporting integration', particularly identifying systemic factors (beyond control of individuals) that inhibit this equality of opportunity/ outcome.

**Safety & Stability:** This refers to senses of safety, lack of hostility (safety) and ability of refugees to remain in a house/ neighbourhood for a reasonable period of time (stability)

**Citizenship & Rights:** This is about the rights & responsibilities of refugees and therefore also the responsibilities of institutional and other actors to uphold the rights of refugees; that integration requires that refugees have the same rights as people they are living amongst and this makes a difference to how refugees are perceived. This domain is regarded as foundational because it is seen as providing the basis 'for full and equal engagement within society' (Ager & Strang 2008: 177) and it is central to Government policy understandings of integration as: *'the process that takes place when refugees are empowered to achieve their full potential as members of British society, to contribute to the community, and become fully able to exercise the rights and responsibilities their share with other residents'* (Home Office 2005 in Ager & Strang 2008: 175). It can refer to legal and cultural/ social issues, from recognition of refugees' legal rights to reside in the UK and access services on the same terms as other citizens to subscription to/ conformity with 'British values' of democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect for/ tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs or those without faith.

- Other writers have identified *types of* integration such as social integration, political integration, economic integration and overall integration
- Integration has also been understood as a process and it is said that this perspective shifts attention from top-down policy interventions, integration almost as a medicine that can be taken, to highlight the agency of refugees and the many factors that may influence their integration
- It has been said that the social domain of integration has been neglected in preference to functional, structural and institutional domains
- It has been commented that integration policy trend is towards assimilation: the idea of integration involving conformity to and desire for sameness over valuing and celebration of diversity, multiculturalism
- Community integration was approached broadly to leave room for stakeholders to define it
- 4 main fieldwork activities were planned to carry out this community integration needs assessment

## 2.0 Methods

- The approach taken to the community integration needs assessment can be described as semi-structured, qualitative, with participatory elements
- 94 refugees over the age of 18 (42 women, 52 men) participated in Focus Groups and Interviews
- Focus Groups and interviews proceeded through 3 main themes and an A-C-B problem solving approach: A – Life now, B – Aspirations/ hopes for future community integration, c - Needs/ how to achieve that community integration
- Focus Groups and interviews were analysed according to those 3 themes but also from a more ethnographic point of view to notice trends and patterns in interaction between refugees

- CW interviews were conducted in all areas but not with all CW, to elicit another perspective on community integration but these could easily be perceived as an exploration of how effective their role had been with community integration appearing to stand for/ as a measure of how well resettlement had gone, overall
- The Community Stakeholder Survey was completed by 41 organisations across Lancashire (19.5% response rate). This section includes a basic directory of those organisations highlighting those currently uninvolved but willing to be involved.
- The localities are represented by a range of statistics for easy comparison giving rise to the notion that they represent 7 different realities for resettlement and community integration. It emerged from the research that the following characteristics made material and wider differences to R's experience of community integration: % BME population but moreover how mixed the population was in any neighbourhood; prior experience of R resettlement; size of place/ overall population; economic vitality of an area; geographic location and transport links; general degree of awareness and network of sympathetic organisations in area; quality of housing stock and types of tenure available through SRP; VS activity in particular areas of work offering groups, activities and community volunteers; pro-activeness of library as safe public place/ venue for activities

### **3.0 Refugee & Case Worker Evaluations of current community integration: a base line**

- Two areas stood out as those in which R generally felt more positive about their current level and quality of community integration. Generally the current level and quality of community integration was described as low – medium by R with significant negativity and hopelessness in some areas
- Community integration did not have one definition among R and could refer to many different spheres of life
- R evaluations of community integration implicated experiences of life in Syria and place of PD
- R evaluations of community integration drew on observations of community life and society around them in UK (what is 'normal'/ possible)
- There was notable comment of positive integration between R in two areas (social bonds)
- CW gave generally low-medium evaluations of current community integration, contrasting with hopes/ expectations of greater community integration and recognising that it had not generally been a priority in the CW role or that there had not been capacity to focus on it

### **3.1 Community Integration: different language/ common meaning among stakeholders?**

- A variety of facets/ indicators of community integration were identified by CW
- Comparison of R, CW and CSH talk of and definitions of CI revealed it had highly multifaceted meaning. Whilst different stakeholders emphasised different areas within those many facets, this pointed to the need to understand CI as broader than just social integration. Many of the facets/ domains appear in Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptual framework, but significant additional elements were: independence/ control/ 'agency'; upward social mobility; and that it was highly variable depending on family/ individual and locality.
- Different emphases within definitions of CI pointed to the conclusion that for R, CI was clearly a way that overall CI or resettlement could be judged or measured, whereas CW, CSH and SRP as a programme tended to emphasise social and legal integration as types to which community integration was most closely aligned.
- There was common emphasis among CW, CSH and SRP on R *engaging with, taking up, joining in with*, suggesting that there was a tendency for CI to be interpreted as a one-way process of R integrating with

an already existing 'community', rather than a two-way process. This suggested that there was potentially an unstated but standard or *normative* notion of CI and one which was potentially unrealistic, i.e. what kind of/ quality of community life is available in some localities for R to be involved with?

- R expressed: some concern and uncertainty as to whether there was an ideal of community integration that they were unaware of/ should be aware of; there was resistance among some R to having a notion of CI imposed on/ expected of them; R expressed frustration and uncertainty as to how to integrate in a society that appeared to be characterised by lack of availability/ willingness for social contact (lack of trust/ neighbours working all day)

## 4.0 Refugee voices and perspectives: life now, aspirations & needs

This section turns to the key substantive findings from the needs assessment based on the focus groups and interviews with R which were structured around three themes: A – life now, B – future community integration aspirations/ hopes and B – needs to achieve this. Prior to giving a window on A – Life now, section 4.1 highlights what emerged as consistently important across meetings with R, namely, the need to recognise difference within the group 'Syrian refugees' but that also this large group could be understood as made up of a variety of common perspectives or speaking positions. This can support understanding of the R and therefore tailor interventions and support accordingly.

### 4.1 Speaking positions/ perspectives

- R drew attention to the need to appreciate differences and diversity amongst them. This was perhaps in part as a response to being approached in groups. *'Your fingers are not the same, we have a saying in Arabic, we are not the same'* (F7). This can guard against over-generalisations by any stakeholders.
- The research revealed, nonetheless, shared and distinctive speaking positions/ perspectives or roles among R, useful for understanding priorities and experiences of the R and therefore supporting R in the most appropriate way. In order of dominance, distinctive speaking positions/ perspectives were: lifecycle and gender: as parents, grandparents, single young adults, single parent, children, siblings, wife, husband; Unemployed workers and business people; Potential students. Workers; sociable hosts; language learners; neighbours/ residents; tenants; welfare recipients; guests; civic participants; SRP participants/ CW clients; home-makers; refugees; people of Arab heritage; people observant of Islam; Consumers.
- These perspectives/ speaking positions revealed the R lives as multi-faceted, although the research revealed that in all but one area, speaking as parents and their lives as parents was dominant along with speaking as unemployed workers & business people. In one area issues of safety brought the R perspective as new neighbours and locality residents to the fore, over these other aspects of their lives.
- These speaking positions can help to identify specific types of support for community integration

### 4.2 A window on life now: key themes and issues

- This sections gives the reader a window on *life now* for the refugees who participated in the research in May/ June 2018
- 23 topics or themes could be identified in talk of current life along with general evaluations of how life felt
- General evaluations of life now – compared to general evaluations of CI – could be very positive or very negative with relatively few in between. These implicated comparisons, negative and positive, with life in PD and in Syria
- Life now was talked about in terms of: reflexive characterisations of the passage of time; experience of time; emotional states; daily life: continuity and challenge; (dis)comfort, (in)security and (un)familiarity

in places of resettlement; social connections and culture; contact with voluntary sector/ volunteers; state of language acquisition; independence/ control; SRP; work and voluntary work; life now as parents, for children; present (and) distant worries and being a 'refugee': recognition and stigmatisation.

- Key points to draw out from these themes include: evaluation of the present in terms of an expectation of process/ progress of resettlement; boredom and routine; a sense of vulnerability and isolation; repetitiveness of daily life and unfamiliar roles/ expectations for men/ older people compared to common Syrian family structures and life-course patterns; strong reactions to the place of resettlement in terms of safety, a sense of potential, welcome, difficulty getting to know neighbours, housing quality, size of place with awareness of how different resettlement areas could be not only within county but beyond. In terms of social contact, several FG highlighted their dependence on the CW for social contact in the absence of other connections, the value of integrating with other Syrians, the importance of parks as places to go, desire to integrate with majority white population but also comfort amongst women for having been placed in area where 'Islamic way' (dress, mosques) was visible. Contact with volunteers and VS was appreciated although experience of this was highly variable across the county with one provider's facilities seeming particularly privileged.
- There was common concern about the lack of progress with English acquisition, with questions as to whether it was their fault/ issues of how it was being taught and some R had applied for the SGR to afford private tutors which they felt positive about.
- Discomfort with level of dependence on CW and interpreters was widely expressed with a strong desire to be more independent and have more control over life and some dissatisfaction with not being able to meet self-identified needs. This was to the extent of feeling disabled or others talked of feeling lost, blind, like nursery children. As one lady said, *'as long as you need people you feel in a nightmare, the situation doesn't give you a sense of safety or peace of mind ... you feel like you've got no legs or hands – you're thinking but it's for nothing ...'* (F). There was vigorous rebuttal of the notion that R couldn't help themselves and it was contended that CW had, in some cases, wanted to keep R under their wing. Dependence on benefits was another source of discomfort re a desire to be independent/ have control
- There was common talk of being an SRP R: of expectations this had come with that had/ had not been met; of it being a slow path of resettlement and that 'resettlement' had suggested a means by which they would be supported to 'unpack' and continue their lives as before in an accelerated fashion; there was concern about the standard tapering of CW support where R felt they were not ready for this and a feeling in some cases that CW had not delivered on expectations/ promises. Finally there was common talk of being R families and that the programme needed to be more tailored to the needs of families.
- Very few of the R were in voluntary work placements and one R was in paid work across the research. Men talked of work almost as an existential need and its lack a great source of discomfort: an identity discomfort gap, whereas women spoke as unemployed workers & business people with a sense of potential and possibility – an identity comfort gap where they could imagine themselves working here but its lack wasn't totally unfamiliar. It was notable that several women talked of having been at school at the time they left Syria, whereas now they were married with children. Difficulties finding work were identified and experiences of voluntary work that had not necessarily helped them learn English or been in a relevant field
- Life as parents was common for: how the school day/ holidays structured their time; difficulty of finding no/ low cost things to do with children; dependence on parks for leisure; children's progress with making friends and learning English was talked of with pride but also unease for a sense of growing distance between parents/ children, linguistically and culturally. College aged children were mentioned as a source of anxiety for parents, for their lack of educational progress and opportunities for interaction with others.
- R talked of present (and) distant worries as dominating their thoughts, whether this was in terms of family in Syria/ elsewhere, poverty here in UK, inability to support extended family financially and desire for family reunion.
- Finally, R talked of generally not being stigmatised for being a R here in the UK (apart from children's experiences) (hostility seemed to be more to do with 'race' and religion) but that volunteers could

sometimes underestimate their needs as adults and focus on their refugee status as one needing help; there was a desire for their experience of forced displacement to be understood better and respected.

### 4.3 Future: Aspirations, hopes for community integration

- A significant number of refugees struggled to think about the future, feeling stuck in and hopeless about the present situation
- 3 overriding processes were desired alongside many specific desired outcomes or markers of community integration. These processes were: Recovery (a desire to recover time/ life lost/ make up for lost time); Continuity (desire to continue lives that had been abruptly interrupted); and Development (a desire, impatience and even desperation to take any opportunities offered to develop themselves in order to proceed with life and better themselves)
- R expressed that in order to feel/ be integrated they would have achieved/ have / feel /be / would ...
  - Have independence/ control*
  - 'normal life'*
  - Upward social mobility*
  - Be part of UK society*
  - Give back to society*
  - Well-being*
  - Stability*
  - Safety*
  - Employed*
  - Children engaged, successful and fulfilled in education and in terms of ambitions*
  - Have social contacts, friends/ people known in community/ socialise with neighbours*
  - Familiar/ comfortable with and in local and national culture and society*
  - Completed courses (on British culture/ vocational courses/ to validate qualifications/ complete interrupted education)*
  - Able to speak English for all purposes*
  - Changed housing (security of tenure/ quality/ type)*
  - Achieved family reunion and/ or be able to support family abroad*
  - Know the area/ other areas and feel confident going places*
  - Having driving licence/ car*

- These overriding process and particular aspirations needs are represented in the following table:

**Figure 13: Desired processes, general and specific markers and means of CI**

Aspirational markers of Community Integration In the future, to feel integrated, we would have achieved ..., have ..., feel ..., be ..., would ...	RECOVERY – CONTINUITY – DEVELOPMENT						
	Independence/ control	'Normal life'	Upward social mobility	Be part of UK society	Give back to society	Well-being	Stability
	Employed						
	Children engaged, successful and fulfilled in education and in terms of ambitions						
	Have social contacts (friends/ people known in community/ socialise with neighbours)						
	Moved to a different place (bigger/ multi-ethnic/ non-seasonal/ for work opportunities)						
	Familiar/ comfortable with and in local and national culture and society						
	Completed courses (on British culture/ vocational courses/ to validate qualifications/ complete interrupted education)						
	Able to speak English for all purposes						
	Changed housing (security of tenure/ quality/ type)						
	Achieved family reunion and/ or be able to support my family abroad						
	Know the area/ other areas/ feel confident going places						
	Have driving licence and car						

#### 4.4 Integration needs: how to achieve those indicators of community integration/ how to overcome obstacles

- Refugees identified 27 needs, some general and many overlapping
- General needs were: Help with moving on; empowerment, responsibility, support to feel brave and positive; to be listened to, cared for, understood and allowed to criticise, to understand integration expectations: with what and how?; to be/ feel welcomed
- Specific needs were: language acquisition support; guidance, facilitation, courses; CW and potential changes to their approach; good neighbours; as parents, for children; help finding jobs; activities that emphasise education over entertainment; new/ more people involved/ volunteers; help moving area; voluntary work; opportunities for social interaction/ groups; help to maintain culture; support with cultural adaptation; moving house help; financial support; help with family reunion; interpreters; and support with mobility
- These general and specific needs are represented in a table alongside the aspirations. Although they don't map directly onto each other, connections can be made between them
- Each of these broad markers had specific suggestions and interventions identified by R which are then transferred into the report's recommendations

Figure 13 below represents the aspirations and needs in one table, to offer the reader a sense of how those aspirations can be met. They do not tally or match up directly, but it is possible to see and make connections between the aspirations and needs. Again, within the table more general needs have been distinguished from more specific needs and have been colour coded, where applicable, in line with Ager and Strang's (2004) domains of integration.

<b>Figure 14: ASPIRATIONS: In the future, to feel integrated, we would have achieved ..., have ..., feel ..., be ..., would ...</b>								<b>NEEDS: To achieve this integration, we need ...</b>									
<b>General</b>				<b>Specific</b>				<b>General</b>				<b>Specific</b>					
<b>RECOVERY</b>	<b>CONTINUITY</b>	-	<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>'Normal Life'</b>	<b>Independence/ Control</b>	<b>Upward Social Mobility</b>	<b>Be part of UK society</b>	<b>Wellbeing</b>	<b>Stability</b>	<b>Safety</b>	Employed	<b>Help with moving on ...</b>	<b>Empowerment, responsibility support to feel brave and positive</b>	<b>To be listened to, cared for, understood and allowed to criticise</b>	<b>To understand integration expectations: with what and how?</b>	<b>To be/ feel welcomed</b>	Language acquisition support
											Children engaged, successful and fulfilled in education and in terms of ambitions						Guidance, facilitation, courses
											Have social contacts (friends, people known in community/ socialise with neighbours)						CW and potential changes to their approach
											Moved to a different place (bigger/ multi-ethnic/ non-seasonal/ for work opportunities)						Good neighbours
											Familiar/ comfortable with and in local and national culture and society						As parents, for children
											Completed courses (on British culture/ vocational courses/ to validate qualifications/ complete interrupted education)						Help finding jobs
											Able to speak English for all purposes						Activities
											Changed housing (security of tenure/ quality/ type)						New/ more people involved/ volunteers
											Achieved family reunion and/ or be able to support family abroad						Help moving area
											Know the area/ other areas/ feel confident going places						Voluntary work
Have driving licence/ car	Opportunities for social interaction/ groups	Help to maintain culture	Support with cultural adaptation	Moving house help	Financial support	Help with family reunion	Interpreters	Support with mobility									

**FIGURE 15: Expressed needs to achieve Community Integration outcomes**

NEED	Detail	Refugee words/ voices
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailored English lessons to literacy levels/ language acquisition levels and needs</li> <li>• Particular support for those who need intensive language to continue with profession</li> <li>• Focused English lessons around desired topics, e.g. starting own business, driving in the UK, working in the UK, parenting in the UK</li> <li>• Home tutors (potentially helping R to apply for SRG for this)</li> <li>• More English lessons per week – up to full-time if desired</li> <li>• Opportunities to practice ordinary conversations</li> <li>• Structured English tuition with clear sense of goals/ progression</li> <li>• Volunteers to have ESOL experience/ prioritise English language over practising/ learning Arabic!</li> <li>• Clarity over English levels assigned to in college</li> <li>• Sympathetic work placements to support language acquisition</li> <li>• Support/ empathy for difficulty focusing on studies amidst family demands/ other pressures</li> <li>• Particular support given to men with English language learning, recognising issues of pride/ stoicism/ fear of making mistakes</li> </ul>	<p><i>'language, language, language' (M)</i>  <i>'We're willing to try and communicate, compared to our husbands – they need more help' (F)</i>  <i>'Learn English quick, not slow as that gives me a feeling of hopelessness, I need to get on with it'</i>  <i>'Language is 99% of integration. The rest is how you are as a person, how accepting you are or how you deal with things' (F)</i>  <i>'College is good for becoming an engineers, but not for everyday conversation'</i>  <i>'ESOL is slow moving, we need jobs to help us' (M)</i>  <i>'ESOL was late starting, only six months ago' (F)</i>  <i>'It's chicken and egg – it all depends on the language; to do the work we need ability to speak, in order to learn the language we need to get out and integrate, do whatever you can' (M)</i>  <i>'It would be much easier to learn language if I was on my own' (M)</i></p>
<b>Help with moving on</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focused sessions about moving on with life</li> <li>• Someone to give us the lead, show us the way</li> <li>• Understanding of processes and possibilities for moving on with life – how to get jobs, start businesses, buy a house</li> <li>• Recognition of desire to invest in businesses</li> <li>• support processes of continuity and progression</li> <li>• not to waste any time: make use of time and feel that all time/ input has purpose</li> <li>• chances to do what you want</li> <li>• ability to cope with reduction in CW support</li> <li>• specific support with different aspects of life (work, parenting, housing, community/ neighbourhood social connections, education)</li> </ul>	<p><i>'we have a lot of problems, we cannot think about the future' (M)</i>  <i>We are blind, you tell me how the blind can walk, surely it requires someone to guide me' (M)</i>  <i>'Don't let us stay the same'</i>  <i>'We wouldn't count the first year, we couldn't benefit from help that year, it was too much ... after 2 years we know what questions we need to ask.. this is the time we are asking what we do not know.. and it's bad timing that support is being stopped' (M)</i>  <i>'We are starting from zero ... it feels like it will take 5 years just to start'</i>  <i>'I feel disabled ... I know the CW won't be with me for life, but it's impossible to do everything they do for me ...'</i>  <i>'we need someone to show us there is a difference, like you are in Britain, it's different, there's more you can do' (M)</i></p>
<b>Guidance, facilitation/ courses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• courses to understand the different way here</li> <li>• awareness raising courses</li> <li>• education about area, people</li> <li>• Don't want entertainment, want support, knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• Health and hygiene courses</li> <li>• driving theory courses</li> <li>• Understanding laws in the UK</li> <li>• Fast track to courses to get qualifications to validate skills</li> <li>• Education goals and plans</li> <li>• Courses on understanding education system in UK</li> <li>• Courses on self employment</li> </ul>	<p><i>'I'm like a baby, I don't have first steps' (M)</i>  <i>'We need more help than other citizens' (M)</i>  <i>'Here is all certificates, not skills' (M)</i>  <i>'Education will bring me confidence and safety' (F)</i>  <i>'I need education – once that is right, everything else open sup for you, nothing else' (F)</i>  <i>'In Syria we're used to getting on with our life, to work hard, have our life, our future... here we have seen we have to deal with so many things, take steps and everything is slowly, procedures basically and it's like they're not teaching us to fish basically, they're just teaching us to eat fish' (M)</i></p>

<b>CW and potential changes to their approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• more proactive initiative on part of CW</li> <li>• be pushed forward by CW</li> <li>• CW for longer</li> <li>• CW extended until better English (case by case basis)</li> <li>• CW to prioritise teaching/ guidance rather than <i>doing things for R</i></li> <li>• More visits from CW</li> <li>• More CW for number of families</li> <li>• Channels of communication between R and SRP central to be clear/ transparent</li> <li>• we need more than just the CW to support us</li> </ul>	<p><i>'Too much is expected of us at this point' (Cohort 1 M)</i></p> <p><i>'It was not a successful experience me coming to England because the CW just sat me on the side and did everything and I haven't learnt anything .. [the CW] just gets it done and I don't learn anything ... it was partly an inexperienced CW ... I want to know how to fish, teach me how to fish, that's better for me and my kids ... I don't want no fish or anybody feeding me. The feeling of safety is a lot more important than the feeling of being full ... this comes from control not being cradled' (F)</i></p> <p><i>'CW mustn't keep us under their wing! ... (M)I took initiative and this was criticised ...' (M)</i></p>
<b>Good neighbours</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• neighbours help more than language classes</li> <li>• sympathetic, supportive neighbours</li> </ul>	<p><i>'one person can make a lot of difference, we need more people to support us ...'</i></p>
<b>Empowerment, responsibility, support to feel brave To be positive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time-limited goal setting</li> <li>• teaching how to fish not to eat fish</li> <li>• understanding of Syrian culture amongst those working with us</li> <li>• support to accept making mistakes (especially men)</li> <li>• encouragement to give things a try and try again</li> </ul>	<p><i>'push us to learn faster, for Syrians to take care of themselves' (M)</i></p> <p><i>'Looking after is not helping' (M)</i></p> <p><i>'the first time of doing anything is scary but then it's easier the second time .. but many are scared to do the first time ..'</i></p>
<b>As parents, for children</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support to give our children answers in the new context when we don't always understand their questions!</li> <li>• After school and holiday activities</li> <li>• Support to enable children to access clubs (cost issues)</li> <li>• Education for teenagers needs to be prioritised</li> </ul>	<p><i>'we keep hearing about the rights of children, of women of men, but I haven't seen anything, nobody's doing anything, since we came here, my child has been asking to join a football club and nobody's helping us. They say you have to pay £60 a month which obviously we can't afford ... I live on a main road ... the back yard isn't much .. he's just inside the house constantly ...' (M)</i></p>
<b>Help finding jobs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• jobs which make use of experience, qualifications and suitable for age</li> <li>• jobs for mixing</li> <li>• jobs to feel existence</li> <li>• put into jobs</li> <li>• help transitioning from benefits to jobs</li> <li>• temporary jobs to save for long-term goals</li> <li>• voluntary work/ jobs to get work experience</li> <li>• help to open a business</li> <li>• a job that will invest in you</li> </ul>	
<b>Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and information not entertainment</li> <li>• Trips to places we can't go ourselves</li> <li>• Help with children's holidays</li> <li>• Activities to mix with English people</li> <li>• Trips to know British culture</li> <li>• Nature, historic places trips</li> <li>• Trips for men</li> <li>• Family trips</li> </ul>	<p><i>'we don't want activities for entertainment .. we come back miserable, they change nothing ...' (M)</i></p> <p><i>'The ladies' day was good – not to feel lonely, it's a big change not to have family around' (F)</i></p> <p><i>'Parties are good for mixing' (M)</i></p> <p><i>'Activities are good but don't prepare you for independence, to take care of your responsibilities, get on with life, they're just a distraction ...' (F)</i></p>
<b>To be listened to, cared for, understood and allowed to criticise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contact with people who have time and are willing to listen</li> <li>• contact with people who give you a sense that your life is important, that it matters</li> <li>• contact with people who are interested in us</li> <li>• understanding of where we have come from</li> </ul>	<p><i>'I feel like the person who calls during Ramadan and nobody hears him ...'</i></p> <p><i>'Need to feel important, to feel you have something to give'</i></p> <p><i>'...when I talk about the feeling of importance, I don't mean it in the extreme way of them needing to make a parade around me and glorifying me ... we have to be simple every day folks really .. but of course we can't live really without the feeling we're cared for and importance ..'</i></p>

<b>To feel existence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understanding of what we need</li> <li>• encouragement when we take initiative</li> <li>• recognition for condition of life/ past</li> <li>• understanding of different needs based on different backgrounds</li> <li>• recognition that we are not like other migrants</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<i>by importance I mean for them to see us as people who fled their countries, left their families back home, fled everything, came from war ... what are their needs, their hopes, what jobs would they want to do, that interest them instead of just being ... for example, if I want to buy my son a bicycle, I need to save for 3, 4 months .. why won't they help me find a job so that I can just get it for him ... we need .. people who are interested in us, supporting us and that support and that engagement makes you feel stronger, motivates you as well, for example, if I lose interest in my wife and children it won't be the same anymore or if my wife doesn't care, he will lose interest, he won't have that emotional connection anymore .. it's the same with this country. How am I going to like adapt and love where I am if I'm feeling that nobody cares' (M)</i>
<b>Understanding of integration expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Input to understanding how integration can happen</li> <li>• input to understand what I can integrate with</li> <li>• we need time</li> </ul>	<i>'How can I make my life here and what can I integrate with?'</i>
<b>New people involved Volunteers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for people other than / as well as the CW</li> <li>• peer support</li> <li>• volunteers</li> <li>• neighbours</li> <li>• sympathetic groups</li> <li>• help from established refugees</li> <li>• peer support</li> <li>• more volunteers involved</li> <li>• volunteers who help us to become independent</li> <li>• volunteers to help with English</li> <li>• volunteers just to see us</li> </ul>	<i>'Every organisation has given us hope that they will help us to learn but when it comes to working with us, it seems to go ..' 'It can't just be the CW' (M)</i>
<b>Voluntary work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary work in relevant fields</li> <li>• Voluntary work where language development is possible and valued</li> </ul>	<i>'almost like an English lesson at the same time' (M) 'We need to get work experience to get a job' (F) 'I'm willing to work for free' (M)</i>
<b>Opportunities for social interaction Groups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chances to mix</li> <li>• contact with community volunteers</li> <li>• activities to mix with English people</li> <li>• to meet, make friends</li> <li>• to learn English</li> <li>• to meet with foreigners who have been here for years, to learn from them</li> <li>• sympathetic social environments</li> </ul>	<i>'we want opportunities like the children to mix' (M) 'it doesn't help to be with Syrian families' (F)</i>
<b>Help to maintain culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• offer Syrian culture to others</li> </ul>	<i>'it's all we have left, we left our home, our country ...' F)</i>
<b>Support with cultural adaptation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• help to understand British/ English culture</li> <li>• courses on English society/ culture</li> <li>• opportunities to discuss how behaviour is interpreted in Syria/ UK ('haram' in Syria, acceptable in UK)</li> </ul>	<i>'we need help understanding unwritten rules of talking, acting ...everywhere has different ways of thinking' (F)</i>
<b>Moving house help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear processes for supporting moving house where unsuitable/ unsafe at the very least or just where desired/ chosen to suit family</li> </ul>	<i>'If I had wanted trouble I would have stayed in Syria .. we're worried about ourselves, our children' (M) 'I want to be happy inside, live in a place I'm happy with ..'</i>

<b>Financial support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support to cope with benefit cap/ cuts</li> <li>• support to open businesses</li> <li>• support with SRG applications</li> <li>• bus passes</li> <li>• for family reunion representation</li> </ul>	
<b>Help with family reunion/ transnational reality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attention given to why applications have not been resolved</li> <li>• financial support to family reunion representation</li> </ul>	<i>'we need help to fill up our time so that we don't worry about family back home' (M)</i>
<b>Interpreters</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• confident that we can have interpreters for appointments when we need them</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>	
<b>To be/ feel welcomed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to have welcome maintained by CW, council, voluntary sector</li> </ul>	
<b>Support with mobility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support with getting driving licences (theory test)</li> <li>• bus passes</li> </ul>	<i>'not to feel trapped ...' (M)</i> <i>'we need to get to other places, we don't find everything we need here ..' (F)</i>

## **5.0 Promoting and enabling community integration**

### **5.1 Common priorities among stakeholders for promoting CI?**

- Section 3 has shown that there was a shared multi-faceted understanding of community integration but with different emphases from different stakeholders. Whether this translated into shared priorities for promoting community integration was explored using data from R, CW, CSH and interview with the SRP Coordinator/ Project Officer
- It was found that all stakeholders thought that action in the following areas would support and promote CI: social mixing opportunities; addressing wider issues (hostile/ sympathetic context for refugees; education, courses, training, employment support, R family support, language acquisition
- Two or more stakeholders thought the following could support CI: local integration fund; key community roles; volunteering opportunities; valuing of Syrian culture; community volunteers and voluntary sector involvement; R and CW capacity consideration (time available for CI); understanding of R experience, R culture, desires and consequent needs; consistency of support and information provided by CW and other stakeholders such as JC/ VS; CW – R relationship reconsidered; recognition/ stigmatisation/ pity of refugees; safe places/ venues/ hubs; channels of communication between R and SRP; R (im)mobility; life-course/ gender specific support
- R alone talked of the importance of family reunion and financial support to CI
- CW alone talked of the importance of promoting solidarity between and common support for R and AS; and institutional learning and capacity building
- Within areas of shared concern there was particular emphasis on: community volunteers and VS involvement among CSH, showing they feel they have an important part to play; addressing wider issues of hostility/ sympathy among CW; and the R-CW relationship among CW

## **5.2 Factors within and/ or beyond control: capacity and resources**

### **5.2.1 Programme Structure & capacity**

- In terms of programme structure and capacity, particular limitations on the SRP room for manoeuvre appear to be: that it is a housing led policy, potentially insensitive to other dimensions of a locality; that potentially the programme does not have so many local authority pledges that any can be refused; that the SRP programme is evaluated nationally on a limited range of indicators to do with institutional/ functional and structural aspects of integration; Lancashire presents the programme with specific challenges around universal and equitable access to things like ESOL, which the central programme then needs to make-up through bespoke provision; the programme is based on locality-tied support, posing challenges to supporting R with moving areas.

### **5.2.2 The context(s): localities, communities and historical moment**

- The historical and geographical context(s) pose particular challenges to the SRP in terms of: more widespread anti-immigrant hostility coupled with prevalence of Islamophobia; particular locality histories in terms of migration and BME settlement with little connecting different areas
- CW identified resources and challenges of their particular localities. Resources differed particularly in terms of presence of BME populations and familiarity with refugee settlement with associated VS groups/ networks, CW venue and whether there were already things in place before the SRP refugees arrived. Resources in otherwise relatively unresourced areas, had come forward, such as the football

club in Fleetwood, the library in Skelmersdale, the mosque in Blackpool and small employers in Nelson and Burnley.

- In terms of challenges, frustration/ limitations were identified elsewhere in places without an easily accessible CW venue that there were few community centres or affordable public places to meet (e.g. cafes).
- Unexpected challenges were identified in areas of high BME population, that perceptions of and relationships between Syrian and South Asian residents as neighbours/ prospective employers/ employees, were not always straightforward
- Common challenges of lack of VS activity, volunteers, existence of or familiarity with BME/ religious diversity noted
- In one area the existence of unsupported AS population (dispersed AS) was seen as presenting challenge to CI in terms of crises that could arise in the AS population that could negatively affect perceptions of and relationships with R and AS
- Bonding between Syrian R in one area was identified as potentially inhibiting to CI but it was recognised also as a source of peer support and in the absence of a BME population
- The social and physical 'infrastructure' for resettlement was highly variable across localities
- There was common mention of quiet arrival of SRP R and that little or no community consultation had occurred, and views varied as to how possible or wise this would have been
- There was surprise/ serious concern about the appropriateness of more than one locality of resettlement from a variety of stakeholders and a feeling that other areas, with stronger/ more established 'infrastructures' for resettlement might have been able to accept more R

### **5.2.3 The Refugee Population**

- The refugee population for SRP is non-negotiable; the individuals and families are as they come and need to be worked with according to the skills, outlooks, needs they bring
- These are R families rather than individuals, sometimes nuclear families but sometimes extended families of 3 generations
- It was recognised by CW, R and as been recognised in other research, that individuals may find it easier to integrate than families and that families bring and have a host of needs that single AS may not have
- Research carried out by the University of Glasgow concluded, from a range of indicators, that the AS population, dominated by single men, tended to have a more 'get up and go' orientation which could lend itself positively to integration but that more RR say they are going to stay in the UK and that RR had a more positive outlook on social cohesion and relations than AR refugees
- One CW had noticed that SRP Syrians were significantly less integrated than AR Syrians and Sudanese VCRS were more integrated than SRP Syrians
- Potentially, but not backed up by research at this point, it is possible that the SRP population has had less experience of internal/ international migration prior to PD than AS; predominantly the research revealed experiences of long settled residence in one area prior to displacement to Lebanon/ Jordan.
- It was noted by one CW and picked up during the research, that potentially the SRP gives women more visibility as individuals, despite coming mainly in 2 parent family units, than might be achieved by women coming in family units through the AS route.

### **5.2.4 Programme approach to or philosophy of CI**

- The programme delivery has an emphasis on institutional aspects, functional aspects of integration (in terms of Ager and Strang (2008), Social links, Rights & citizenship, Housing, Health, Education (children's) Language part of Language and cultural familiarity but in terms of Castles et al's (2002) types of integration, the programme formal delivery tackles an aspect of social integration (language and desire to avoid housing segregation), Educational integration (children), health integration and legal integration (access to social services)

- Within the formal programme delivery, CI is secondary to institutional and functional integration and this was supported in CW interviews
- In as far as there was a programme approach to CI, this was described as a bottom-up traditional model, community and community-actor led rather than top-down, prescriptive or centrally organised although the balance of top-down/ bottom-up approach could be revisited whilst recognising that localities were different and would ask different skills/ knowledge of R
- It was articulated that absence of negative ‘background noise’ was an important factor, allowing spontaneous connections and friendships develop without prejudice and that it was desirable that the programme tackle this background element, depending on capacity
- The programme was described as having no ‘super golden bullet’ for CI

## 5.2.5 CW Skills, experience, knowledge, approach and ways of working

### General way of working/ approach

- CW are recruited from a variety of professional backgrounds,
- not all CW have experience of working with R and some with relatively little experience of working with BME/ religious diversity
- The intensity of the CW role with SRP was a common observation of novelty for those who had and hadn’t worked with R before
- CW described their approach with a number of terms: floating support, empowerment approach, scaffolding of learning approach, social work approach, human rights approach
- Where a human rights approach was prioritised, this was felt to be more appropriate than a social work approach in terms of understanding of R’s status and experiences
- There was common mention of wishing to promote independence among R, of ‘teaching a man to fish rather than feeding fish’ but challenges acknowledged across localities as to turning this desire/ policy into practice
- One CW had developed a PIPs to guide working with R which, significantly, included room to explore R’s prior experience/ circumstances
- Approach to boundaries between CW differed but there was recognition that it was an issue to be explored/ discussed, balancing roles/ relationships
- There was consensus that CW should be judged by how independent R have become rather than by how much they do *for* R
- Strategies and tactics for promoting independence were identified
- There was reasonable agreement that within the support provided it should be a needs-led service, depending on individuals/ families capacities and abilities
- There was strong recognition that the CW role was multifaceted and needed to work at different levels but the extent to which different facets of the role had been pursued, varied. In some areas specialisms had developed within a team. Institutional learning and ‘background noise’ (general climate) were 2 levels identified as needing attention
- There was frequent use of parenting analogies to describe working with R
- CW expressed that there was value in being in able to share experience/ learn from other CW which there had been little opportunity/ time for

### Status of CI within CW role

- In 3 areas CI was described either as one of several continuous elements of the CW role or a central part from the beginning
- In all but 2 areas, CI was talked about as secondary to primary needs of health in particular but also other functional needs. If it was recognised as important, there had not been capacity within the CW hours/ workload to give it stronger emphasis

- Various approaches were identified for addressing CI: prioritising economic participation within CW role; dividing CW role into distinct parts (day to day/ CI role); recommending that CW remain full time in second year with heightened emphasis on CI and employment; working with and through VS partners; inserting R into existing networks; making use of/ creating regular hub/ event to which R and other local residents could attend/ participate; signposting and taking R to events/ groups

## **Challenges / issues with facilitating CI**

- CW identified lack of capacity for CI given demands of everyday issues on CW time
- CW identified lack of ready resources (area/VS network/venue) to enable hitting the ground running: as one CW said, 'it's just me ... and I'm starting from scratch'
- Risk of CW burnout was identified if CI was addressed in addition to other aspects of the role
- CW expressed the value of learning from other areas as to CI approach, but this had mainly been done in an informal one – one capacity where time allowed/ out of personal interest
- CW expressed degrees of frustration/ surprise/ disappointment as to repetition/ slow progress in supporting R with basic independence such that there might be capacity for CI: in one area a CW questioned whether this was a sign of CW failure or R not putting in effort
- There was common concern that SRP support structure potentially fostered a degree of dependency that did not support CI through: a sense of entitlement, invitation cultivated prior to arrival through to the intensity of support offered compared to that offered to AS
- There were aspects of SRP management that were perceived to have made the CW more challenging, negatively affecting trust between R and CW and therefore impinging on working positively with R
- Lack of experience of working with/ unfamiliarity with R and relevant VS was mentioned; this experience had to be built on the job with the possibility that actions were taken that were questioned with hindsight, affecting capacity/ progress with CI

## **Perceptions of issues/ challenges in relation to the R population, in light of experience**

- Concern about a dependency culture among SRP R initiated by unrealistic expectations given prior to arrival
- In all but two areas, mention was made of communication and bonding between R as sometimes inhibiting CI in terms of lack of need/ communication between R being based on comparisons of how much CW did *for* refugees and these comparisons could extend to international resettlement areas
- The value of peer support among R was also mentioned
- Frustration was expressed with the extent to which R required or were happy for CW to do things for them
- CW identified mental health, trauma and culture shock/ difference as factors potentially at play in R's actions
- One CW made particular mention of R struggling to adapt to new culture of settlement where more open hospitable culture met a more privatised one (although R voices need to guard against this generalised characterisation)
- Frequent mention was made of either a) a heavy sense of responsibility for R's welfare and success of resettlement that was not always being realised, leading to a sense of personal culpability/ failure or b) a frustration that Rs considered it was the CW responsibility to facilitate this and therefore unduly attributing responsibility to the CW
- Particular difficulty was experienced by CW where R had no/ few other sources of support aside from the CW meaning that the CW bore the brunt and felt very responsible (cohort 1 and 2)
- There was mention of 'Arab culture' in terms of gender stratification, (divisions and hierarchies), hospitality and temperament (temperamental, anger-prone)

## 6.0 Conclusions & Recommendations

This section turns to identify key conclusions and recommendations arising from the community integration needs assessment.

### 6.1 The meaning and status of Community Integration in relation to resettlement & a multi-faceted model of Community Integration

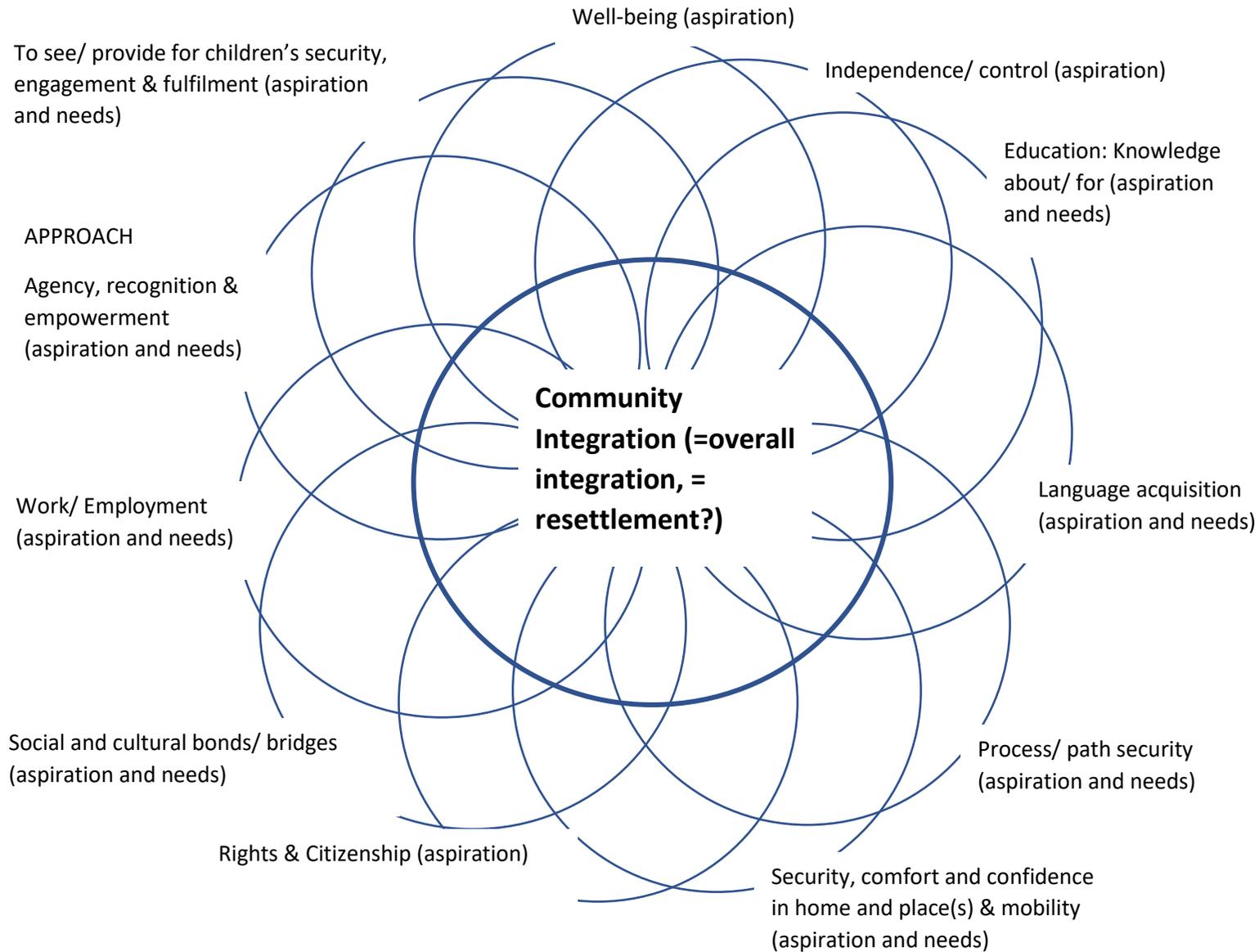
A focus on Community Integration appeared, not only to R but in some cases, to CW, to be equivalent to talking about resettlement as a whole. As such, the research could be perceived as an evaluation of the CW role or as an evaluation of how well resettlement had gone/ was going. Evidence has been presented to support the notion that understandings of community integration among stakeholders referred to more than narrow social aims or outcomes and there is value in acknowledging that for many stakeholders, community integration is a reasonable measure or marker for overall integration and the success of resettlement.

The interview with SRP representatives conveyed a sense that much of CI was difficult to facilitate centrally and that it is a largely spontaneous, locally dependent and highly subjective dimension of the resettlement process. Notwithstanding the spontaneous, highly subjective and locally dependent elements, this assessment points to the value of a variety of shifts in programme practice that could significantly enhance CI.

Firstly, a re-negotiation of the meaning and status of CI in relation to resettlement programme approach and philosophy. In particular:

- A common expanded multi-faceted understanding of community integration be more formally adopted by SRP at policy level beyond a narrower alignment with 'social integration' (see visual model below)
- CI include a range of elements and indicators (that may be monitored) in combination
- That CI understood in this way be recognised as a reasonable and valid measure of overall integration and a valid measure of the progress and process of overall resettlement.
- This understanding of CI and recommendation of enhanced status challenges a) a narrow understanding of CI and b) any narrow evaluation of resettlement on the basis of functional/ institutional integration alone
- It is recommended that CI be accorded higher status at SRP programme level with a variety of implications for: areas of resettlement; community consultation and preparation; CW job specifications and recruitment; structure and schedule of support; balance of top-down/ bottom up programme structure; locality-based or locality-available specialist support to CW and R in relation to different facets of CI.
- As a multi-faceted and highly significant matter to R and their resettlement, that it be more formally recognised that different localities and providers offer highly variable 'infrastructures' for CI with consequences for the need for insertion of capacity, capacity building
- As a consequence of these recommendations, the programme approach/ philosophy and support structures (CW and schedule of support) can be seen to be of greater rather than lesser consequence than might have been initially considered
- A diagram is offered to give a visual representation of how community integration might be understood based on this needs assessment. Where Ager and Strang (2008) identify that education, health, employment and housing are 'markers' of and 'means' to integration, this model uses the terms employed in the research: 'aspirations' and 'needs'.

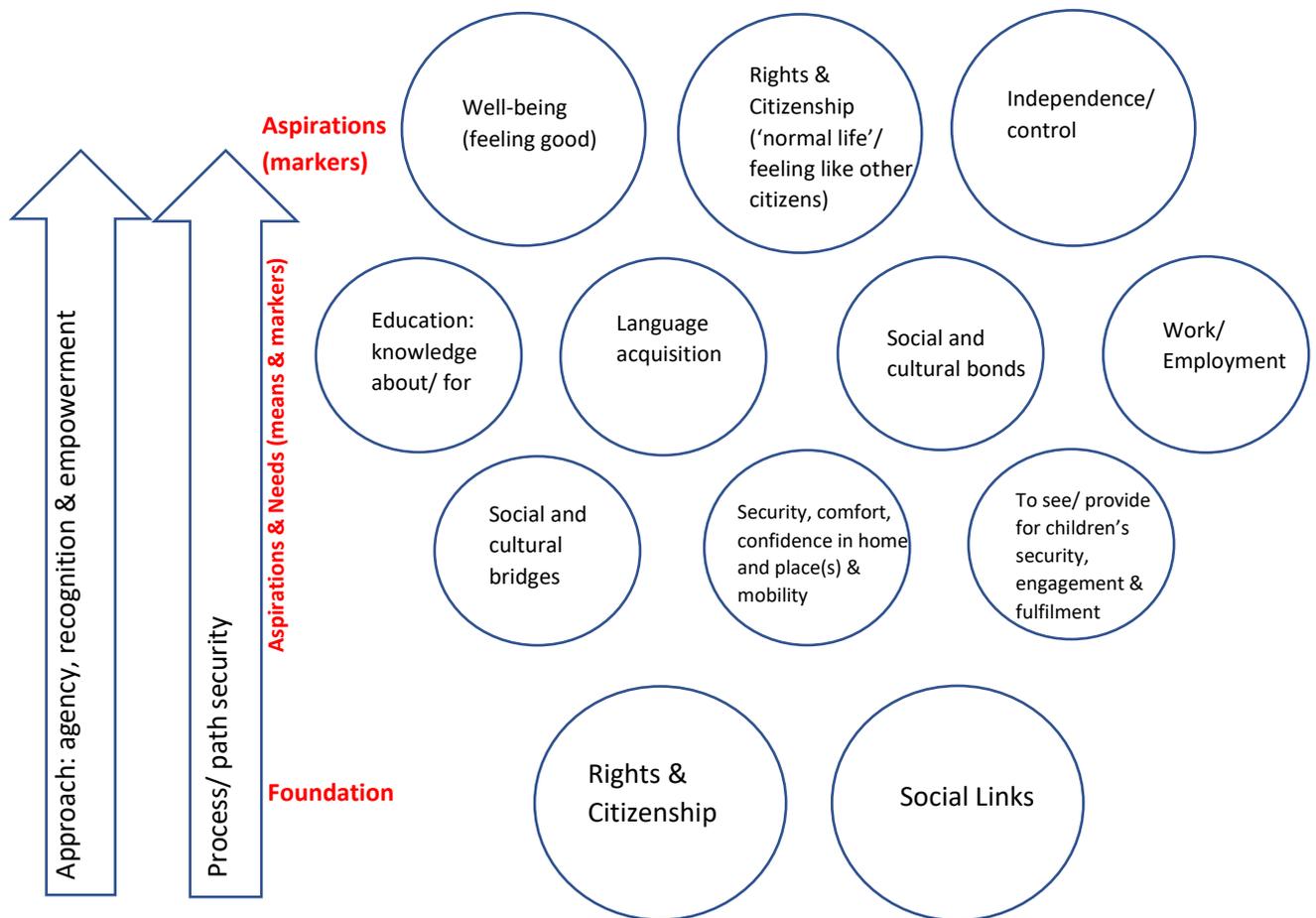
**Figure 20 A multi-faceted model of Community Integration**



## 6.1.2 Processes of integration and agents of integration

- A second diagram attempts to identify a hierarchy or order of elements within the multi-faceted model and how it might be understood as a process. Foundational elements, aspirations and needs and aspirations are separated and two key facilitating elements (approach and process/ path security) are distinguished and shown to be like keys to achieving CI.
- The model prioritises the needs and aspirations of refugees – what refugees identified as needing and aspiring to in terms of CI but supported by other stakeholders as shown in this assessment. Refugees are agents and subjects of CI but it is also possible to see how many other stakeholders are and can be involved in CI not only in the provision/ delivery of/ giving R access to services, but, moreover, through the ways in which R and stakeholders work together to achieve those things. Crucial to SRP and CW working is recognition of a desire for a sense of process/ path security and a way of working that prioritises R agency.

Figure 21



## 6.2 Issues for debate and (re)negotiation

The points above are headline recommendations. Below are issues that emerged as significant to CI as understood above, that could be focused on and negotiated at various levels of SRP delivery and among stakeholders.

### 6.2.1 Isolation versus independence or isolation *and* (in)dependence

Does the SRP intensive support avoid isolation common to AR refugees but somehow inhibit independence? At the same time, given CW capacity and infrastructures available in different localities, are there common experiences of isolation *and* dependence, whereby SRP refugees are not left to/ encouraged/ empowered to do some things alone but also find that there is not sufficient CW capacity to support them?

**Issue:** Is there a way of CW working/ approach that might more effectively avoid isolation *and* foster independence? Is it also a question of CW capacity in terms of hours/ people?

### 6.2.2 Responsibility versus control and independence

Does the responsibility that AR refugees can be left with nonetheless give AR refugees a measure of control and independence that can be lost in the SRP support structure?

**Issue:** can the CW way of working/ approach be adjusted to shift emphasis from a sense of responsibility *for* R to a responsibility *to enable R to do things for themselves*; to shift emphasis from the intensity of micro life facilitation to an intensity of work around empowerment, guidance, skills development for things themselves

### 6.2.3 Segregation/ Isolation

Whilst the SRP programme attempts to avoid over-clustering of R, this can give rise to feelings of cultural isolation.

**Issue:** rather than social bonds between R, peer support, as a source of negativity that does not foster CI, how can social bonds between R be built, resourced and supported to best foster confidence, empowerment, learning in relation to meeting primary needs and supporting moving on with life/ CI? Could R support groups in localities be forums for education, sharing experience, grafting, institutional learning so that these are both inwardly and outwardly facing?

### 6.2.4 'Give a man a fish ...': ways of working

The words of one lady resound through the fieldwork: *'I want to know how to fish ... teach me how to fish ... that's better for me and my kids. I don't want no fish or anybody feeding me .. the feeling of safety is a lot more important than the feeling of being full'* (F34). *Safety comes from control, I asked? To which this lady replied, 'yes .. not from being cradled'*. The needs R identified prioritised courses, facilitation, guidance, as important to their CI. For this R, safety from knowledge and education was what she identified as crucial to her future, rather than having someone do things for her without her understanding how it has been done.

**Issue:** can the CW way of working/ approach be adjusted to see all interventions and CW as learning

opportunities where the priority is not getting things done fast or measuring success of an intervention by how well/ efficiently a CW has used their practised skills but, rather, by what a R has learned and can do next time that they could not do before/ did not know before? This points to the value of a scaffolding approach to CW. In addition, can the CW role/ approach be reconsidered to credit CW for the ways in which R have been looked after or that there has been a desire to look after and protect R and yet, the ways in which this can potentially patronise and disable R and often backfire in blame for lack of progress by both parties to each other.

### 6.2.5 Gender: visibility and negotiations

Difference between the refugees and different speaking positions/ perspectives and roles has been highlighted and can help tailor interventions. This said, one of the key findings was that overall it could be said that amongst men there was something of an 'identity discomfort gap' whereas for women, overall, an 'identity comfort gap'. These terms try to capture the sense in which there was considerable discomfort/ unease in current circumstances stemming from differences between their life here in the UK and life in Syria/ place of PD: lack of work, inability to express self and speak for family, manage day to day affairs. Lack of work could be experienced as something of an existential crisis in identity. On the other hand, the identity comfort gap for women refers to the way in which women generally did not feel unease about how their lives were in relation to how they had been and moreover, how they could become. The unknown element was a source of possibility rather than unease.

**Issue:** the research contends that the SRP supports the visibility of gender issues through each individual having access to CW rather than this only being on a family unit basis and this might be followed through to recognise common needs among men and women. How might ESOL provision recognise and support that generally women felt that they experienced learning and practising English easier than men due to issues of pride, fear of failure. On the other hand, as individual recipients of CW support, there is a need to guard against gendered assumptions so that both men and women can feel supported, allowed, to go outside/ be outside culturally familiar gendered norms in terms of roles/ responsibilities.

### 6.2.6 Families/ individuals

The research has highlighted the significance to R of being parents: that these are refugee families and having dependent children in an unfamiliar setting where potentially children's language acquisition is progressing faster than one's own, is a common and sometimes troubling experience. On the other hand, CW need to be aware of a) how activities/ interventions may presume the make up of families as two-parent (in terms of child care availability/ focus of employment support with one adult), b) how the dominance of two parent heterosexual families can exclude those who are outside this/ wish to move away from this norm. All stakeholders need to be aware of these issues.

**Issue:** the research contends that some of the ways of working with R have potentially not recognised the challenges R experience as parents with dependent children but whose children may be appearing to gain independence faster than them. Family learning might be prioritised that is sensitive to this. The research also contends that some of the ways of working have potentially not recognised the dominant cultural norms within the Syrian R group which either put pressure on individual men and women to maintain marriages and gendered divisions/ hierarchies or exclude/ stigmatise those who wish to/ are outside of this norm. 'Family activities' and gender specific group activities may be highly uncomfortable experiences where they are premised on the notion of being husbands/ wives with

two parent families. Training to CW on life-course and family norms in Syria would be helpful along with education to R on 'family diversity' in the UK.

### **6.2.7 Speaking positions/ perspectives: REFUGEES**

Diversity within the group is highlighted, along with multiple speaking positions, but it is important that this diversity is pre-fixed by 'refugee'. This is not to stigmatise individuals with this label but rather to recognise the shared experience of forced displacement. In the context of a resettlement programme which R could feel that they had been given the chance to participate in or CW might feel that R had put themselves forward for, the fact remains that had it been possible to continue with livelihoods in Syria, these individuals and families would not be here in the UK. From the research, it was interesting to consider how CW might have been different had the R mainly come from highly skilled, highly educated, professional backgrounds rather than manual and crafts professions. As such, the researcher picked up an occasional tendency to regard these R as economic migrants with the resources of economic migrants, here for better economic opportunities, rather than as political migrants whose livelihoods had to be left due to denial of basic human rights and destruction of homes and businesses.

**Issue:** There was widespread gratitude expressed for basic safety and human rights experienced here in the UK among R, but equally an enormous feeling of loss, lack of choice and fatigue regarding the labours required to build up lives from scratch. It is imperative that CW are experienced in/ trained in understanding the situation of R vis-à-vis other migrants and the situation of R vis-à-vis other vulnerable groups in the UK, to appreciate how the R experience signals a particular type of deprivation and way of working. Potentially this might be a human rights approach, as identified in one area.

### **6.2.8 Equality, equity, inclusion and justice**

The research found that a common aim of CW was to enable R to access mainstream services like any other resident or citizen (social links). This was done on a one to one basis, supporting R to claim benefits, access health care, education etc. In some areas, however, it was noted that R experienced common barriers and CW might liaise directly with an institution to support institutional learning that could support R's access to that service. This is referred to as institutional learning/ capacity building within the report and it could be seen that a degree of strategic level of working was part of CW.

**Issue:** The research contends that the experience of R and CW supporting them, points to this strategic/ institutional learning level of work as important to the resettlement and CI of refugees but also as something that the R can contribute, through their experience, to wider experiences of inclusion amongst the population. Public institutions have an equality duty as laid out in the Equality Act 2010; that is, not only to avoid discrimination but to actively promote equality of and inclusion of protected groups. Institutions can learn on a case by case basis when needs are highlighted, but this additional move might be called institutional shifts, from equality, equity to inclusion or justice.

### **6.2.9 Children & Youth**

Unfortunately there were not resources to include younger refugees, particularly teenagers in this research. It was suggested by CW but also from the needs expressed by R that teenagers may be having a distinctive experience of CI that warrants exploration.

**Issue:** the research contends that R teenagers need to be heard or at the very least recognised as a distinctive cohort for any CI interventions. It is also recommended that family learning resources/ activities may be initiated to support parents and children together.

### **6.2.10 Drivers of resettlement policy: ‘Integration is about more than having a house!’ (M)**

Whilst integration involves housing of support sort and R expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of their particular house/ security of tenure, what was/ who was beyond the front door/ in the neighbourhood/ locality was prioritised over the particular house (except in extreme cases where R had had particularly prejudicial experiences within their home). In particular, good neighbours, a multi ethnic locality, safety from crime, places to go to for no/ lost cost (libraries, parks, CW venue), job opportunities, halal food, nearby schools for children.

**Issue:** The SRP is a housing led programme and the availability of housing drives and largely determines the county’s and specific localities’ participation in the resettlement programme. The research finds that CI requires a social and physical infrastructure that includes but goes beyond housing, to the point that it is not inconceivable as a result of this research, to consider that institutional housing solutions for limited periods of time would not be more prejudicial to CI than some of the private/ individualised housing solutions due to the absence of wider social and physical infrastructures supportive of CI. It is suggested that significant attention be paid to the existence of basic development of social and physical infrastructures in potential resettlement areas, to support CI. In some cases, the absence of these infrastructures are highly prejudicial to community integration and, if pursued, require particularly experienced CWs who/ which can add ready and practised value to R resettlement experience and community development issues in those localities.

## **6.0 Specific recommendations in relation to a multi-faceted notion of CI**

This final section identifies specific recommendations under the following headings:

- Resettlement process/ path security**
- Agency, recognition & empowerment**
- Language acquisition**
- Education: knowledge about/ for**
- To see/ provide for children’s security, engagement & fulfilment**
- Work/ Employment**
- Social and cultural bonds/ bridges**
- Security, comfort and confidence in home, place(s) & mobility**

These were the particular areas of need identified by refugees to support community integration and supported by other stakeholder views and experiences. Recommendations draw on R voices, CW and CSH input to the research and are represented below.

<b>Area of need &amp; recommendations</b>
<b>Resettlement Process/ path security</b>
-CW potentially for longer, depending on individual need/ capacity

- CW to work to transparent agreed framework and support schedule with R, potentially using a version of PIPS / Refugee Action model as guidance (see appendix): a basic county-wide template as basis for local variations based on local 'infrastructure' for resettlement (what's available/ can be made available)
- 2 year standard tapering of CW support to be reconsidered in light of individual case needs and recognition of multi-faceted role
- CW to be led by multi-faceted model of community integration, therefore multiple priorities from beginning with potential implications for CW hours/ capacity and partnership with VS
- Different potential pathways of resettlement to be identified that reflect refugees' priorities/ skills/ capacities
- CW to have opportunity to feedback and learn from one another to protect CW from burnout/ excessive sense of personal responsibility and personal improvisation which can give rise to accusations of inconsistency
- Potentially an anonymised feedback mechanism be developed to gather data/ evidence for county-wide and individual learning
- gender and life course specific recognition
- Balance of top-down/ bottom up resettlement support to be revisited with a view to at least increasing availability of centralised 'menu'/ catalogue of potential speakers/ workshop leaders to gatherings of R at county/ local level (e.g. established refugees/ issue/thematic speakers; skills and vocational certificate trainers and training courses; institutional representatives such as police, head teachers, local councillors willing to give presentations). This 'menu' could build on effective experiences/ good practice at local levels
- potential specialisms/ strengths amongst CW to be identified in years 3 – 5 to offer particular 'surgery' based support across the county to R and other CW
- Process/ path security to be recognised as way in which any/ many elements of CW can contribute to CI

#### **Agency, recognition & empowerment**

- CW to have had experience of working with R or training
- CW to receive basic/ refresher training in issues of cultural relativism vs universalism, assimilation vs integration
- CW approach/ way of working with R to be critically considered in light of evidence, to maximise empowerment, learning, R 'agency' for resettlement: emphasising scaffolding of learning, human rights emphasis over social deprivation. Promotion of problem-solving with R that begins with recognition of where R have come from and where they are now (in multiple senses). Potentially this could be a county-wide general approach as basis for local variations and adaptation but with core agreed elements and things to avoid
- time-limited and different element related goal setting with R
- CW to agree and to be supported at all levels that their efficacy be judged by how independent/ empowered R become rather than by how much R do: this consistency can protect CW from negative comparisons/ self-devaluation within role
- R to be given more frequent and different channels to communicate experience/ stories of resettlement/ suggestions for
- drawing on R experience(s) as resource for CW learning, SRP programme learning and peer support among R
- Gender and life course specific recognition
- Agency, recognition and empowerment to be recognised by CW as a way of working which can enable any/ many elements to contribute to community integration
- CW to be aware of the strategic levels relevant to their work around institutional practices/ attitudes and how issues at these levels might be addressed, drawing on good practice, to support appropriate recognition and inclusion of R (head teachers, schools, JC, Police, Primary and secondary health care)

#### **Language Acquisition**

- Variety of language acquisition pathways to be recognised and supported by SRP programme (college/ community based learning/ voluntary work based learning/ issue or skill focused language learning) to reflect different needs/ priorities amongst R
- ESOL tutors to have training in particular issues of linguistic distance between Arabic/ English
- Monitoring of ESOL provision/ gathering of data from R about ESOL
- Syrian Grant Fund application support for additional tutoring where requested (approved/ quality tutors to be recommended to R)
- CW to undergo basic ESOL training to support communication with R which maximises language acquisition through CW-R relationship

- Twilight family language learning sessions offered to support family communication, support for parents and provide after-school activities for children and families
- Volunteers to be celebrated and valued for their support to R; potentially centralised/ locally delivered volunteer training around 'supporting R with English acquisition'; 'horizontal & vertical relationships' (around charity/ pity/ victim driven help)

**Education: Knowledge about/ for**

- recognition of education as marker and means of Community Integration
- Reconsideration of top-down/ bottom up balance of UK society/ system/ cultural orientation along with consideration that this be available on a periodic basis rather than front-loaded only at beginning.
- Potentially a catalogue of workshops/ sessions might be developed from which CW/ R could select and bring to local level depending on interest/ need. R to be made aware of this so that element of choice/ control is increased and R can gather minimum of 10 people together to make a course viable. Courses/ workshops to be on anything from 'driving in the UK', 'living in an individualised/ consumer society', 'starting your own business/ working from home', amongst others.
- Core standard courses to be agreed between CW based on experience: session on multi-cultural Britain and British values to be one of these based on evidence gathered in this research. Potentially including Lancashire history/ localised versions to contextualise R's settlement vis-à-vis Britain's migration history.
- Education to be recognised as a significant source of resettlement process/ path security
- Education to be prioritised over entertainment in terms of county/ CW organised activities
- VS and educational institutions to be developed as partners in providing education for empowerment, confidence and development
- Focused support to teenagers, particularly those who have missed significant numbers of years of schooling, regarding educational pathways
- CW to make use of organisations such as CABx/ local advice agencies re budgeting on benefits, potentially developing referral relationships with such organisations to defer CW to mainstream/ VS services available
- credit and debit education for the UK context: gaining reputable credit and managing debt (different cultural and legal practices here to UK); being aware of 'loan sharks' etc
- CW to share good practice around institutional capacity building/ learning that they have undertaken to support institutions to meet needs and value contribution of R around equality duty/ valuing diversity. CW to have channel of communication to county level re wider social policy issues that might be effectively dealt with at county level, to avoid duplication in many localities & over work. Where a CW has particularly focused on this, building on this experience/ interest.

**To see/ provide for children's security, engagement & fulfilment**

- Strong recognition to R of being refugee parents within CW role – potentially training could be given around challenges for R parents
- Recognition within CW of different 'life-course' paths in Syria/ UK: issues of parental authority/ freedom/ (in)dependence
- Training/ resources to R regarding educational system/ pathways in the UK
- Workshops/ home resources/ support groups to R regarding parenting in the UK
- focused support to teenagers alone/ with parents regarding cultural adaptation, learning from one another
- support to R parents re: low/ no cost holiday activities
- setting up of a British/ Lancashire Syrian Youth Forum to give voice/ platform/ opportunity - ?in conjunction with Prince's Trust?
- Relationships with schools as community hubs/ key sites of CI/ partners to CI developed

**Work/ Employment**

- recognition of voluntary work/ work as significant means and marker of Community Integration overlapping with English language acquisition, social bridges, amongst other elements of CI
- Chambers of Commerce, Employment agencies, significant/ key local employers and volunteering organisations as key CSH to CW

- R to be given information/ training in employment rights and responsibilities, given R's potential vulnerability to exploitation but balancing this with info on the types of contracts commonly offered (zero hour/ anti-social hours/ shifts etc) in some types of work so that R can reasonably evaluate job terms
- R to hear from established refugees about employment pathways/ transitioning from benefits
- CW to include finding out about work histories/ aspirations and where appropriate providing basic career advice/ signposting to this regarding possibilities for/ challenges of continuing with past profession
- R to receive training in/ presentations about starting businesses: legal, financial, tax issues etc
- CW/ county level to invest time and resources in developing businesses of sanctuary status

#### **Social and cultural bonds/ bridges**

- recognition with CW role of value of cultural and family bonds to community integration (in relation to debates about negative bonding capital)
- recognition within CW role of R's transnational family/ community experience and status
- focused support to R regarding resolving family reunion cases (potentially finding pro bono legal support for this)
- CW to recognise and promote developing peer support model as a means of developing confidence/ learning/ grafting
- Where possible an element of locality community preparation/ consultation through key community stakeholders to offer possibility of sympathetic neighbours/ support within immediate neighbourhood
- locality preparation/ CW role to involve identifying other key sources of support (individuals, volunteers, organisations, institutions)
- consider promoting LIF for projects around social history in the making with the arrival of Syrian R in Lancashire (youth photography project – researcher to be in contact about a possibility in this regard)
- CW role to include volunteer recruitment/ enlistment through volunteering agencies/ colleges/ VFS to broaden support base beyond CW, identifying key needs with R (e.g. for supportive conversation practice, getting to know area, home visitors)
- SRP volunteers to be valued and invested in
- CW to have access to county held CSH data base/ use local knowledge/ Charity Commission beta search facility to identify potential CSH for activities, support, volunteering opportunities, safe places etc
- CW to prioritise locating/ creation of fora for R to mix with local people in supportive setting: e.g. around activities organised by VS, VFS venues, educational settings (compulsory schooling settings, FE/ HE), libraries
- CW to share good and innovative practice around creating learning and mixing hubs that are open to R, AS if relevant and to local people, e.g. weekly drop-in lunches modelled on ARC/ GL models and how these have been set up, run and funded
- CW to offer opportunities for R to/ value and encourage R, if enthusiastic, to speak about aspects of Syrian culture
- case studies to be written up on good practice and good experience: 'the good neighbour' and what difference this can make could be written up for a local newspaper; experience of R and local people of 'good neighbours' (for the elderly, R, new residents generally), obviously with appropriate consent, protections for anonymity etc.
- CW to review and guide R with social bonds/ bridges issues as part of PIPs
- County/ locality consideration of setting up befriending/ mentoring service
- consider setting up family connection scheme
- Engage local authority in developing community support
- make links with Amnesty, U3A, wellbeing focused groups, Rotary groups

#### **Security, comfort and confidence in home and place(s) & mobility**

- CW awareness of potential/ likely lack of confidence among refugees to get to know new locality alone; consider guided walks enlisting volunteers, local history society, community (group) leaders
- excite interest of any relevant groups (local history society/ FE/HE) regarding valuing Syrian refugee arrival as shaping local history; invite applications for LIF to create projects
- Preparation/ consultation regarding housing of R to take stock of areas of any anti-immigration group (e.g. EDL) activity and ASB hot spots and avoid these if possible
- CW to have enlisted support/ partnership with at least 2 organisations and 5 individuals in the locality to provide multiple points of reference/ anchors for refugees new to a locality
- CW to provide basic insight to partnership organisations regarding Syrian refugees, emphasising that sustained light engagement may be more important than strong welcome that dissipates/ is not followed up
- every attempt to source housing of comparable quality, security of tenure for R (a 'nested' theory of integration considers that integration radiates outwards from family/ home security to wider community – therefore, and based

on the evidence gathered from R about the negative effects of insecurity/ poor quality, this can be considered one important element, although immediate neighbourhood safety is equally important)

- Sanctuary landlords – float this idea to source landlord who can give reasonable assurance of long-term tenancies and reasonably quality housing, not out of profit motivation but to be involved in housing R
- consider involving the Gateway housing Association in Preston regarding any Housing solutions (?self build/ community self build?), vacancies within gateway properties
- clear county level guidelines and procedures for situations where R request to move house, recognising that there will be situations where, for whatever reason, R want to move (some element of choice/ agency needs to be accepted)
- Reconsideration of the strong disincentives/ lack of support to R should they want to move area within county; again, thresholds and criteria need to be decided to guide consistent decision making. Consider proposing to R that the ‘resettlement path/ process’ requires that, unless in an emergency, R will not receive support to move within the first year.
- strong consideration given to supporting R’s mobility to be able to get to know area/ other areas as opposed to feeling trapped in unfamiliar place: bus passes, support with driving theory test

### ***Future Methodology - recommendations***

- Focus groups and Interviews to be used in combination in future research that give particular sensitivity to issues of stigma and conformity
- Participatory methods to be used to a greater extent to involve R in problem solving, developing a sense of ownership and control over service planning and to develop positive peer support
- Consideration to be taken to accessing different age and gender and life course groups separately for the sense of common experience and identity that can arise
- Future research to include older youth, e.g. aged 14 – 18, whose situations were particularly mentioned but whose voices were absent in this research
- Further and more frequent opportunities given to R to share experience at County level in a structured formal way, to support R feeling heard and to support focus being maintained in particular pieces of research (rather than feeling that it is a rare opportunity to be heard about all aspects of life!)
- Footfall/ personal and qualitative research to be prioritised in working with Community Stakeholders (CSH) to gain as much insight and potential relationship/ partnership from any contact given how stretched the VS can be
- A formal structure of CW feedback to County level be instituted for SRP programme learning and CW debriefing/ support. CW expressed relief and value at having had opportunity to have their voice heard at County level.

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