

NATIONAL MAPPING OF MIGRATION, REFUGEE, AND ASYLUM WORK IN AND FROM THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

**JOLANTA STANKEVICIUTE, JENNY ROSSITER, ELIZABETH PAULHUS,
FRANCIS DAVIS**

ISBN:

About the Authors

Jolanta Stankeviciute is Research Associate of the Centre for the Study of Faith in Society at the Von Hugel Institute. A graduate of Cambridge and Kaunas universities and a former Fulbright scholar, she has published in economics, migration, policy and education studies.

Jenny Rossiter is a researcher with the Von Hugel Institute and an associate of at University College London. Her research has focused on social inclusion and community participation.

Elizabeth Paulhus is a researcher with the Centre for the Study of Faith in Society at the Von Hugel Institute and a scholar of the International Young Leaders Network (www.iyln.com). A graduate of Boston College and a former Fulbright scholar, from 2008 she will be undertaking graduate studies at the the Heller School of Public Policy at Brandeis University.

Francis Davis OP (L) is co-Director of the Centre for the Study of Faith in Society at the Von Hugel Institute and lectures in social enterprise and community development at the University of Cambridge. His publications have been focused on migration, voluntary sector governance and public policy.

Acknowledgements

Timothy Radcliffe OP has recently commented that Caritas Internationalis is one of “the jewels in the crown of the Church” and so it has been a privilege for our Centre to work, in different ways, with SCIAF, CAFOD, Cordaid, Caritas Moldova and Caritas Europa in the last year.

We are particularly grateful to the board of Caritas Social Action for asking us to undertake the present research and for arranging for funding from CAFOD and the

Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales. Phillipa Gitlin has been a superb lead on this project while Bishop William Kenney has been an outstanding chair of our reference group.

In Cambridge we must pay tribute to Frances Abao who assisted ably with the telephone surveys and to Dr Judith Bunbury who arranged for Frances to come and work with us around her studies at St Edmund's. We greatly appreciate the input of so many Religious Orders and parish clergy to our study but special mention for support in recent times deserves to go to Fr Anthony Pateman and Sr Anne Thompson DJ whose encouragement and friendship is greatly appreciated.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Section One: Scope, Aims and Methodology

- 1.1 Background and Scope of the Study
- 1.2 Definition of Terms: Migrant, Refugee, Asylum Seeker
- 1.3 Research Questions
- 1.4 Methodology

Section Two: Broader Context and Church's Response

- 2.1 Migrant, Asylum and Refugee Population Distribution across the UK
- 2.2 Overview of Church's Contribution

Section Three: Key Needs and the Ways of Response

- 3. Catholic Agencies' Contribution
- 4. Parishes and Religious Orders - Structured Support
 - 4.1 Care for Most Vulnerable - Refugees and Asylum Seekers
 - 4.2 Responding to Economic Migrants' Needs
- 5. Less Structured Support
 - 5.1 Refugees and Asylum Seekers
 - 5.2 Economic Migrants
 - 5.3 Involvement in Ecumenical and Secular Projects
- 6. Church's Involvement in Advocacy
- 7. Looking up to the Church for Guidance and Support

Section Four: Conclusion and Recommendations

Appendix 1: Good Practice Examples

Appendix 2: The Map of Good Practice Examples of Church's Care for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants

Bibliography

Introduction

Section One: Scope, Aims and Methodology

1.1 Background and Scope of the Study

The needs of migrants and other itinerant people are increasingly at the forefront of the expressed social needs identified at local, Diocesan and national level in recent times: For example, in Westminster and Southwark first steps have been taken to respond to these needs through the work of Bishops Pat Lynch and Alan Hopes and the Department of Pastoral Affairs; in East Anglia seasonal migration is transforming the life of some parishes; in Portsmouth a Diocesan advisory group on migrant needs and communities has been established to build on examples of pastoral practice at the parochial level; in Nottingham Catholic schools have been key-brokers in developing closer links between Polish and indigenous communities; while in Birmingham the Archbishop and Auxiliaries have given strong support to the development of a citizens' organising body and the "Strangers Into Citizens" campaign. In these and other ways the Dioceses of England and Wales are seeking to respond to the universal Church's concerns and the pastoral priorities laid out in *Erga Migrantes* and other Church teaching.

Caritas Social Action (CSA) was aware of new talk, deeds and aspirations but wanted to plan its future work in this area of concern on a more "scientific" basis. Before this study began, CSA expected to find that the Church nationally was undertaking a huge amount of work to support newcomers to this country be they economic migrants or asylum seekers and refugees.

Mapping the Church's contribution in this area has been aimed at helping:

- (i) the Church to quantify how substantial is the care and support it is offering;
- (ii) the Church to learn from the best examples of such care at the local and Diocesan level
- (iii) Caritas Social Action to tailor the support that it could offer to its members throughout the country;
- (iv) Caritas Social Action to share best practice and insights from its work with colleagues at CBCEW, COMECE and Caritas Europa to help them develop their pastoral and advocacy perspectives in this area of concern.

1.2 Research Questions and Methodology

CSA's main concern was **to quantify, assess and understand the scope and nature of formal Catholic agencies working in this field**. This was the primary focus of the study with the researchers concentrating on CSA member agencies and those Catholic charities and **Religious Orders** not yet in membership. The data was collected using questionnaires developed specifically for the Agencies and Religious Orders as well as telephone interviews.

Since CSA was aware of a number of projects at the parochial level, the study also attempted to capture as many **examples of good practice locally as possible**. This goal was pursued by:

- (i) The researchers contacting every Dean in England and Wales using a phone interview to find out:
 - Do they have parishes in their Deanery facing special challenges as a result of migration /refugee/asylum issues;
 - Are any of them undertaking particular apostolates of note.
- (ii) Conducting in-depth phone interviews with Parish Priests, members of Religious Orders, diocesan representatives and other individuals suggested by the Deans.

We have also written to a number of partners in the Catholic community and wider society with whom the Von Hügel Institute is in contact, asking them to inform us of any projects known to them or held in their national networks or databases. In this way we have been able to build up a series of good practice examples from across the country illustrating what parishes or organisations can do. We have summarised all initiatives that we were able to discover in the ‘map’ showing Church’s contribution to caring and supporting for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

A Note on the Research Process

Our aim was to contact every formal Catholic agency, religious order and dean in England and Wales. We have achieved this aim in the case of agencies and orders. Each of the 28 CSA agencies and over 300 members of the Conference of Religious received the questionnaire at least twice with several reminders to those who were not able to return it by the first deadline. In the case of Deans it proved to be more problematic. Although we did manage to speak to 95% of all Deans across 22 Dioceses, regrettably it proved to be impossible to reach the remaining few after multiple phone calls, voice messages and emails. This was also the case with a few individuals in the second stage of the study. We recognise the limitations this puts on our findings. However, we hope the map serves as a good indicator of the Church’s response and that we have captured most of the *structured* projects in this area. In total, we have interviewed 444 people: 215 Deans, 160 Parish Priests, and 69 members of Religious Orders and lay people. In three Dioceses, we were directed by the Justice and Peace Commissions straight to the parishes, which they thought could be involved in this work.

1.3 Definition of Terms: Migrant, Refugee, Asylum Seeker¹

The media’s presentational blurring of the key terms of ‘migrant’, ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘refugee’ is often confusing in the arena of the parish or pastoral affairs. By using these words interchangeably ‘particular needs, risk being forced into inappropriate general frameworks of action’ (2) The process of discernment, for local churches, is not helped

¹ From Davis, F. (Ed) (2008) Faith and Globalisation – Catholic Perspectives, Matthew James Publishing (forthcoming).

either by the fact that the *Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples* takes an equally broad view and also includes seafarers, truck drivers and international students – among others – within its remit.

According to European law, those who come to work in the UK from the accession countries, such as Lithuania and Poland, are not deemed to be ‘migrants’ at all even if this is the shorthand by which they are most commonly referred in the UK. As European citizens, where agreed, these workers have the legal right to live and work throughout the EU and as such are judged by the European Commission to be ‘mobile labour’. In European law ‘migrants’ are those who enter the EU from other geographical regions such as Africa, Asia and South America.

By contrast a ‘refugee’ is legally, according to the 1951 United Nations Convention, an individual who:

‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country.’

‘Asylum seekers’ may become refugees but, in a legal context in the UK, a person is a refugee only when the Home Office has accepted their asylum claim. While someone is waiting for a decision on their claim, s/he is called an ‘asylum seeker’. S/he can claim about 70 per cent of certain permitted social benefits but if their application is rejected they will automatically cease to be able to do so irrespective of the merits of their case. If lawyers, funded by legal aid, lose the majority of their cases while defending asylum seekers, they too face penalties and are likely to have legal aid support withdrawn from all categories of legal work undertaken in their practice. Indeed, in South Wales this regulation caused solicitors’ practices to withdraw from the defence of asylum seekers altogether. It seems in turn that this has reduced the number of legally defined ‘refugees’ in the region. (3)

This extra parliamentary refinement of the legal system is a key reason why attention to particular terms is essential. For example, in the course of previous research undertaken by the Von Hügel Institute several local Catholic groups have advanced the ‘moral superiority’ of refugees over asylum seekers and migrants without attending to the non-legislative manipulation of these categories in some quarters. ‘Refugee’, ‘asylum seeker’ and ‘migrant’ are without doubt legal categories. Many would argue, though, that they are by no means pastorally or morally distinct. Given the vagaries of legal dispositions – and the exclusion of some ‘social groups’ from the definitions of ‘refugee’ status – the people stranded between the three legal categories can have much in common as well as separate needs and challenges. This external and bureaucratic blurring of words partly explains the insistence of several Cardinals that those without legal status or papers should be termed ‘irregular’ rather than ‘illegal’. It also partly explains why conversations in parish Pastoral Councils can become fractious as words with seemingly shared meanings are used at cross purposes.

Moreover it often comes as a shock to local parishes to discover the extent to which the Church has taken a powerfully pro-refugee stand and has also very often unconditionally defended the rights of economic migrants. In 2006 Pope Benedict exhorted the Irish Bishops to embrace the needs of migrants during their *Ad Limina* visit and in 2007 he

expressed concerns for the position of families separated by the migration process. Pope John Paul II championed the 'right' of poor people to migrate in search of a living and then the Church's obligation to provide their 'rite' in a liturgical sense in their new country of domicile. More strikingly still, in 2006 Cardinal Mahoney of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (US) went so far as to tell President George Bush that he would instruct his parish clergy and his social services staff to disobey a proposed new law that would have made it a criminal offence to provide care to an individual subsequently judged to be 'irregularly' in the country.

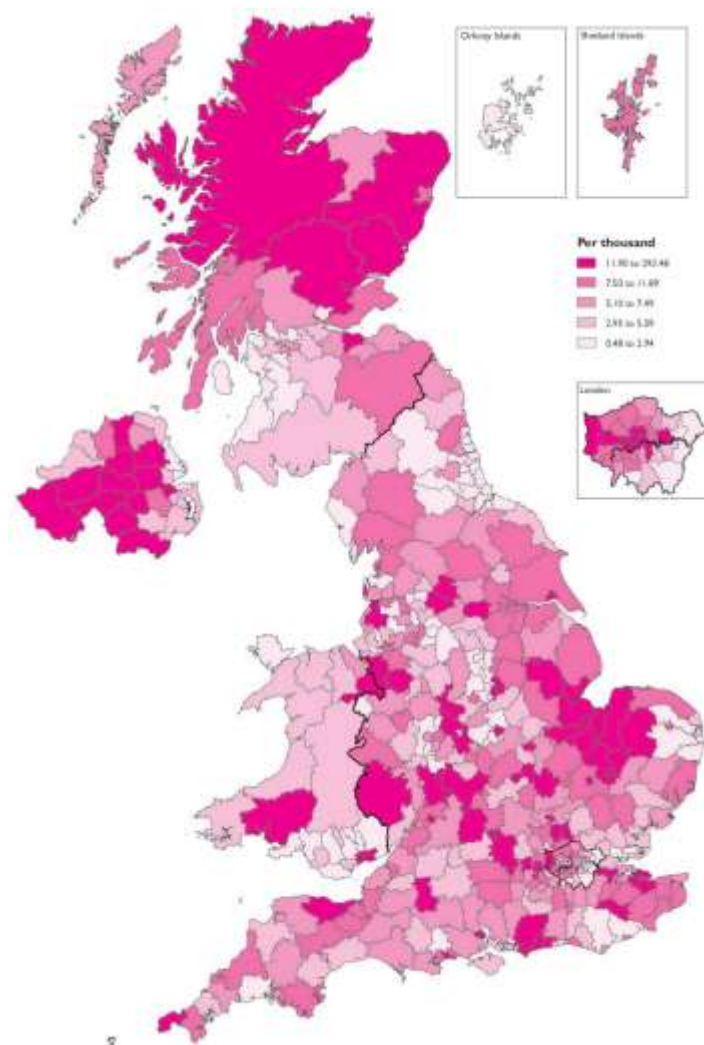
Section Two: Broader Context and Church's Response

2.1 Migrant, Asylum and Refugee Population Distribution across the UK

Although getting precise numbers of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the UK proved to be a challenge even for the government, we used the best available data to get a picture of their presence in various regions in order to be able to match it against the level of Church's response.

2.1.1 Local Authority Statistics on Migrant Workers from Accession Countries

We would like to start with migrant workers from the Accession countries, not only because of their recent influx but also due to the fact that most of them come from the Catholic countries and thus are likely to regard the Church as the first port of call. The 2006 figures based on local authority districts show that the A8 population has spread widely across the United Kingdom, with hardly any part of the country remaining untouched (see Map 1). However, ratio penetrations are especially high in the East of England, particularly the Fens and North Norfolk, and in scattered concentrations across the Midlands, South Wales and the South East.



**Map 1: Population Density of A8 Migrants in Local Authorities
(National Statistics, Autumn 2007)**

These statistics reflect only those migrants registered under the Home Office’s Worker Registration Scheme (WRS), and do not apply to self-employed migrants from the new Accession countries. Furthermore, the data includes only those who registered when they took up employment. Therefore these figures should be interpreted as showing the minimum number of migrants from the A8 countries in the UK.

Derived from the above source, the table below shows the ten local authorities with the densest population of A8 citizens, as well as the Diocese under which they fall.

Table 1. Local Authorities and Dioceses with the Densest Population of A8 Citizens

<u>Local Authority</u>	<u>Diocese</u>	<u>Numbers</u>	<u>A8 citizens per 1000 population</u>
City of London	Westminster	2,700	293.5
Boston	Nottingham	5,643	97.3
Westminster	Westminster	15,021	61.5
Northampton	Northampton	10,279	52.7
South Holland	Nottingham	4,018	49.5
Peterborough	East Anglia	7,110	44.5
Fenland	East Anglia	3,441	39.5
E. Cambridgeshire	East Anglia	3,072	39.1
Herefordshire	Cardiff	6,755	37.8
Dungannon	(Northern Ireland)	1,871	36.9
Total for UK		508,487	8.4

Note: the data on A8 citizens relates to where they work, rather than where they live. Therefore, the City of London figure is slightly inflated.

The above data suggests that the dioceses of Westminster, East Anglia, Nottingham and Cardiff have the greatest concentration of migrant workers from the A8 countries. In addition, the market town of Northampton has particularly high numbers of migrant workers.

The data below, taken from the UK Border and Immigration Agency’s ‘Accession Monitoring Report May 2004-December 2007 (A8 Countries)’, indicates the number of workers per region who registered in 2007 under the WRS (Table 2). In this report, regions are based on the applicant’s employer postcode, where supplied. They are defined according to the Post Office’s Postal Address Book regions, so differ slightly from the UK Government Office Regions.

Table 2. The Number of Registered Migrant Workers per Region, 2007

	Anglia	Midlands	London	North East	Central	North West	South West	South East	Wales	Total
Q1	6,785	6,885	5,440	5,015	5,025	4,835	4,405	3,220	1,580	50,305
Q2	7,245	7,165	4,950	5,075	4,890	5,120	5,515	3,445	1,480	52,295

Q3	8,320	7,910	5,495	6,180	5,195	5,785	5,065	3,550	1,460	57,040
Q4	6,895	7,215	4,965	5,265	4,175	4,920	3,980	2,575	1,420	47,330
Total	29,250	29,175	20,850	21,535	19,285	20,665	18,965	12,790	5,940	206,965

Again, the largest numbers of migrant workers from Accession countries are concentrated in East Anglia and the Midlands, with significant populations in other regions as well.

Polish workers account for 64.4 per cent (327,538) of all A8 citizens in the UK, and also represent at least 90 per cent of the A8 population in the top ten local authorities (National Statistics 2007). The Polish are particularly dominant in the industrial North East, much of Wales and parts of the South West (excluding Western Cornwall). Lithuanians are the second largest national A8 group. In Castle Morpeth (Northumberland) they account for nine out of ten in the A8 population. Concentrations of Lithuanian workers can also be found in the London Borough of Newham, Kings Lynn and the Fenland. Slovaks are the third largest group and are the majority of the A8 population in South Oxfordshire. All three groups come from predominantly Catholic countries.

According to the same source, on average 10.9 per cent of all registered A8 nationals work in agriculture. This sector is highly concentrated in East Cambridgeshire (East Anglia) and Herefordshire (Cardiff).

Our own findings from the current study confirm the widely accepted view that most of the migrant workers are employed in low-paid jobs. Those from 'Eastern Europe' tend to work in hospitality, fruit and flower picking, food factories, construction, menial jobs, supermarkets, airports, and holiday resorts. The predominant view among the clergy seems to be that many East European migrants came to the UK for a short-term to earn money and return home. This results in them living in 'frugal' conditions, especially as they are remitting significant amounts of money to their families back home. On the other hand, those with children attending local schools seem to be settling down.

Filipinos and Indians (especially those from Kerala) mostly work in health care and nursing homes. They tend to be more established, although the difference between the two sectors is significant in terms of working conditions and job security – it is not unusual for Filipinos working as carers to fail to get a renewal of their work permit and be forced to leave the UK, taking their families with them.

Finally, some of our interviewees mentioned 'irregular' migrants in their congregations, albeit due to the high sensitivity of this issue we are not able to offer any numbers, not only to protect the confidentiality of these people, but also because the Priests themselves follow the policy of caring for everyone without asking questions.

2.1.2 Awareness of Migrant Workers in Dioceses

In the course of our research, we asked interviewees to identify, to the best of their ability, the countries of origin of those present in their parishes and in the wider area. Below is a table listing the self-reported information by diocese regarding those coming from the A10 countries (those countries gaining accession to the EU in 2004 and 2007, *indicated in grey*) and from other parts of the world. When an interviewee responded too broadly (i.e.

Eastern Europeans), we did not mark this in the table. It is also important to note that the tick marks below simply indicate the information provided to us in the course of the interviews, and are not to be read as the definitive demographic portrait.

Table 3. Nationalities of Migrant Workers by Diocese

	Czech Republic	Estonia	Hungary	Latvia	Lithuania	Poland	Slovakia	Slovenia	Bulgaria	Romania	India (Goa)	India (Kerala)	Philippines	Portugal	Russia	Ukraine
Arundel & Brighton	✓					✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Birmingham				✓	✓	✓	✓					✓				
Brentwood	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓							✓			
Cardiff	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clifton						✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
East Anglia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓		
Hallam						✓						✓	✓			
Hexham & Newcastle						✓						✓	✓			
Lancaster					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓			
Leeds	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Liverpool	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	
Menevia			✓		✓	✓	✓					✓	✓			
Middlesbrough	✓				✓	✓	✓									
Northampton					✓	✓				✓		✓	✓			
Nottingham	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Plymouth	✓				✓	✓						✓	✓	✓		
Portsmouth	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓		
Salford			✓		✓	✓						✓	✓			
Shrewsbury						✓						✓	✓			
Southwark	✓					✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		
Westminster	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Wrexham						✓						✓	✓			

Among the A10 nations, Poland, Lithuania, and Slovakia were mentioned with the greatest frequency. Of the other migrant groups mentioned by interviewees, Filipinos and Keralan Indians were the most frequent. Their numbers appear to be evenly distributed throughout the dioceses. While this finding can be interpreted as reflecting clergy's contact with predominantly Catholic migrants, it coincides with the WRS figures in the case of A10 countries.

Interviewees in the dioceses of East Anglia, Nottingham, Westminster, Leeds and Cardiff highlighted the greatest diversity, although we have no numbers (nor did our interviewees for objective reasons) to demonstrate that high diversity reflects larger numbers, and vice versa. On the other hand, we tried to supplement this data with the number of deaneries in each Diocese that acknowledged the presence of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. We will come back to this finding at the end of the chapter.

2.1.3 Statistics on Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Mapping asylum seekers and refugees in the United Kingdom remains an imprecise science. At the end of each quarter, the Home Office publishes updated asylum statistics, although most of the data is national, rather than regional. For example, in 2007, 23,430 applications for asylum were made, with 21,660 initial decisions. Of these, 3,540 were granted refugee status while 15,915 claims were initially refused.

Once a claim is accepted and an individual receives refugee status, he or she can move to other towns and other regions of the UK without notifying anyone. The West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy put out by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham highlights the problem that then arises of trying to have accurate figures in each region. “Estimates from key regional bodies suggest that there are... between 13,000 and 76,530 refugees in the region.” Local authorities and councils trying to assist refugees cannot plan with such discrepant numbers.

The only published data that shows numbers of asylum seekers by region relates to those receiving asylum support, whether dispersal accommodation or subsistence-only support. The following regional data as of December 2007 gives some sense of where asylum seekers are located throughout England and Wales, although it is important to note that several groups are not included in these figures. Those asylum seekers whose claims have been denied and unaccompanied asylum seeking children supported by local authorities (around 5,000 in March 2007) are excluded from these figures.

Table 4. Recipients of Asylum Support, by Region

Region	Dispersal Accommodation	Subsistence-only Support	Total
North East	3,335	45	3380
North West	6,715	560	7275
Yorkshire and the Humber	7,095	325	7420
East Midlands	2,135	330	2465
West Midlands	5,475	475	5950
East of England	350	295	645
Greater London	1,275	6150	7425
South East	430	435	865
South West	1,010	95	1105
ENGLAND	27,820	8705	36525
WALES	2,205	65	2270
Data Source: Home Office, Asylum Statistics, Q4 2007.			

Based on the government's statistics which break the regional information into local authorities, we were able to determine the approximate number of asylum seekers receiving asylum support in each of the 22 Roman Catholic dioceses of England and Wales.

Table 5. Recipients of Asylum Support, by Diocese

Diocese	Accom	Subs	Total	Diocese	Accom	Subs	Total
Birmingham	5475	435	5910	Middlesbrough	1055	15	1070
Salford	4670	360	5030	Clifton	655	55	710
Westminster	820	3315	4135	Menevia	685	15	700
Leeds	3755	190	3945	Shrewsbury	450	40	490
Hallam	2840	100	2940	Portsmouth	380	75	455
Hexham/Newcastle	2740	25	2765	Plymouth	355	75	430
Nottingham	2170	245	2415	East Anglia	270	35	305
Brentwood	300	1455	1755	Northampton	55	225	280
Liverpool	1590	150	1740	Arundel & Brighton	55	75	130
Southwark	215	1475	1690	Wrexham	35	0	35
Cardiff	1490	35	1525	Lancaster	0	0	0

Derived from Home Office Asylum Statistics, Q4 2007.

These figures only represent those cases receiving governmental asylum support. Another 1,440 asylum seekers were provided with initial accommodation, although we were unable to divide this national figure into either regions or dioceses. Plus, some 1,455 asylum seekers were held in detention, as of 29 December 2007.

Table 6. Asylum seekers recorded as being in detention, by place of detention

Centre	Diocese	Asylum Seekers
Oakington Reception Centre	East Anglia	250
Dover Immigration Removal Centre	Southwark	195
Colnbrook Long Term	Northampton	175
Yarl's Wood	Northampton	210
Harmondsworth	Northampton	190
(Dungavel)	(Scotland)	(120)
Haslar	Portsmouth	85
Lindholme	Hallam	80
Tinsley House	Birmingham	60
Campsfield House	Westminster	70
Colnbrook Short Term	Northampton	15

Data Source: Home Office, Asylum Statistics. Q4, 2007.

As the government, to the best of our knowledge, cannot say for certain how many failed asylum seekers choose to remain in the United Kingdom rather than be repatriated, the total number of asylum seekers in the country is likely to be much higher. The only statistic we could find relating to failed asylum seekers pertained to those who receive Section 4 support². In 2007, an additional 9,140 individuals were in receipt of these provisions, although no regional breakdown was readily available.

Although 12,525 people were removed from the UK in 2007 after their claims were refused³, many more have avoided repatriation/deportation. These individuals are not reflected in any statistic and have, to all intents and purposes, fallen off the radar screen. Based on the interviews we conducted, it appears that many of these 'hidden' individuals are concentrated in London, the South East, Birmingham, the North West and the North East. It is this group of people who are most likely to be destitute and who rely on the services of friends, the churches and the voluntary sector.

2.1.4 Awareness of Asylum Seekers/Refugees in Dioceses

According to the Refugee Council, the top 10 asylum producing nations for the United Kingdom are Afghanistan, China, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Zimbabwe. In table 6, these nations are highlighted in grey.

In the course of our research, we asked interviewees to identify, again to the best of their ability, the countries of origin of those with whom they worked or met in their parishes.

² 'Support under Section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 is provided in the form of accommodation and vouchers to cover the cost of food and other basic essential items. Individuals are generally eligible for Section 4 support if their asylum application has been finally determined as refused, but they are destitute and there are reasons that temporarily prevent them from leaving the United Kingdom.' (Home Office, Asylum Statistics, Q4 2007).

³ Office of National Statistics, 2007.

Table 7. Nationalities of Asylum Seekers and Refugees by Diocese

	Afghanistan	China	DRC	Eritrea	Iran	Iraq	Nigeria	Pakistan	Somalia	Zimbabwe	Angola	Cameroon	East Timor	Ethiopia	Ghana	Kenya	Rwanda	Sierra Leone	Sri Lanka	Sudan	Tibet	Uganda	
Arundel & Brighton	✓					✓	✓								✓				✓				
Birmingham	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓		✓	✓	✓			
Brentwood		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓							
Cardiff					✓	✓																	
Clifton					✓	✓				✓			✓				✓					✓	
East Anglia			✓				✓			✓	✓		✓										
Hallam			✓	✓	✓		✓			✓		✓		✓		✓							
Hexham & Newcastle		✓			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓							✓	✓				
Lancaster																							
Leeds				✓				✓	✓	✓			✓						✓				
Liverpool	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓
Menevia							✓	✓															
Middlesbrough			✓			✓									✓					✓			✓
Northampton		✓					✓	✓	✓											✓			
Nottingham							✓		✓	✓		✓				✓				✓			✓
Plymouth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					✓				
Portsmouth				✓			✓			✓					✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
Salford		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓					✓						
Shrewsbury																							
Southwark	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓			✓				✓	✓
Westminster		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Wrexham																							

It is important to note several points about the above table. Some projects deliberately do not ask the nationality of their clients, whereas others keep more detailed statistics of their service users. The table, therefore, is a rough indication of the range of people that agencies and parishes are encountering in any one diocese.

2.1.5 The Picture at the Deanery Level

Trying to get a fuller picture about the numbers of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees across regions we looked at the number of deaneries in each Diocese that acknowledged their significant presence, even if some of them did not regard it as a major challenge. Our interviews with Deans suggest that in the majority of Dioceses more than half of the Deaneries are faced with this situation, while no Diocese is unaffected (Table 8). Certainly the intensity of the ‘presence’ varies from a few hundred to several thousand, but in this case ‘significant presence’ means more than a few newcomers in the area, often reflected in the offering of special pastoral provision.

Table 8. Deaneries with Significant Presence of Migrants and/ or Refugees/ Asylum Seekers

Diocese	Deaneries with significant presence of migrant groups⁴
A&B	4 out of 9
Birmingham	14 out of 17
Brentwood	10 out of 12*
Cardiff	5 out of 7
Clifton	11 out of 13
East Anglia	5 out of 8
Hallam	4 out of 5
Hexham/ Newcastle	11 out of 16
Lancaster	5 out of 9
Leeds	14 out of 42**
Liverpool	13 out of 17
Menevia	3 out of 6
Middlesbrough	5 out of 9
Northampton	6 out of 8
Nottingham	8 out of 10
Plymouth	3 out of 4
Portsmouth	15 out of 24
Salford	8 out of 12
Shrewsbury	2 out of 4
Southwark	16 out of 20*
Westminster	15 out of 19
Wrexham	4 out of 6

* Based on interviews with diocesan representatives

** Based on interviews with parishes

Overall our findings seem to coincide with government statistics⁵ in terms of both the Dioceses most affected and the fact that hardly any area of the UK is untouched by migration, even if in both cases statistical picture is incomplete due to the very nature of migration. This phenomenon has affected all Dioceses to different degrees and has presented new challenges of how to welcome and care for these newcomers, as well as raised the question whether the situation calls for response at the institutional level.

2.2 Overview of Church's Contribution

Although the exact statistics on the numbers of migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees leaves something to be desired, there is no doubt the numbers are significant.

⁴ Based on the number of Deaneries we were able to get a response from.

⁵ And supplement them, because in addition to A10 nationals our interviewees mentioned groups from other parts of the world, especially the Philippines and the Kerala region of India.

According to the latest studies, over 600,000 A2 and A8 nationals are resident in the UK, with Polish Nationals dominating the migrant population. In places like Slough, Peterborough, Crewe and Southampton they number in the thousands. Also, they have penetrated many additional parts of the UK along with other nationalities, both from A10 countries and other parts of the world. Furthermore, many of these recent arrivals often face the harsh reality of low paid jobs, exploitation, cramped living conditions and social isolation caused by language difficulties and long unsociable work shifts.⁶ More significantly still, most of these people are members of our Church, even if they may find it difficult to join the Eucharist on a regular basis for different reasons – some of them mentioned above. Nevertheless the proportion of migrants⁷ in the congregations we surveyed varies from 10 to 75 per cent, and we heard of a few parishes that welcomed over 90 nationalities representing every continent. Furthermore, even those who do not attend Mass on a regular basis, as we discovered, do appreciate help offered by the Church – be it welcoming centres, ‘explaining the country’, language classes or a life-saving support for homeless and unemployed.

Before discussing specific projects and initiatives in later chapters, we are presenting a map showing Church’s initiatives in the area of care for migrants that we were able to discover in the course of this study (Appendix 2). It is based on our findings from interviews with clergy and other people involved and the questionnaires filled in by the Catholic agencies and Religious Orders.

At this point, it should be noted that the number of deans that could provide us with a definite response about the situation in their deanery in terms of migration is a finding in itself. Out of 215 Deans that we interviewed, 21 could not provide an immediate answer. At the same time, in some cases our study seems to have prompted action: several Deans declared they would discuss the question at the next deanery meeting, and some of them got back to us with the clearer view of the situation. Furthermore, at least three Deans asked us whether we could suggest any specific migrant related issues to discuss in their forthcoming meetings. Finally, several deaneries had already discussed the issue in their meetings prior to the beginning of our study. We believe this is an important way of response in its own right, as several of the Priests we interviewed stressed the importance of awareness at the deanery level and sharing of ideas and good practices.

A number of deaneries, for example in Westminster, Southwark, Brentwood, Birmingham, East Anglia, indicated that most of their parishes have become highly mixed due the influx of migrants, and the response to this is often provided in informal ways with Priests, parishioners and Religious helping on an individual basis. As time and resource limitations made it impossible to contact every parish, some of this informal help across dioceses may not be reflected in our map.

⁶ Our previous study, ‘The Ground of Justice’ (Von Hügel Institute, 2007), outlines these difficulties in much greater detail. Available on <http://www.vhi.org.uk>

⁷ For the sake of brevity, we will be using the general term ‘migrants’ when referring to economic migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, unless the context makes the distinction important.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

According to the government statistics, even if incomplete, the Dioceses with the greatest number of asylum seekers and refugees include Birmingham, Salford, Westminster, Leeds, Hallam, Hexham & Newcastle, Nottingham, with significant numbers present in Brentwood, Liverpool, Southwark and Cardiff. In most of these Dioceses some form of structured response is present, with Diocesan J&P Commissions and Agencies playing an important role in initiating or contributing to specific projects (Appendix 2). In Birmingham, Nottingham and Hallam, the Catholic Church is an important partner in the ecumenical initiatives, RESTORE and 'City of Sanctuary'. In Leeds, Salford, Hexham & Newcastle and Hallam the Dioceses are involved in caring for asylum seekers and refugees by providing housing, premises or partial funding and via major projects like REVIVE. (For a more detailed description see chapter 4.1). In Westminster, care is provided by Notre Dame Refugee Centre, Cardinal Hume Centre and other projects. In Liverpool, one of the parishes was instrumental in helping to develop Asylum Link Merseyside, while the Archdiocese itself financially support the Support Asylum Seekers Fund.

In other Dioceses, a more common way of response is by offering informal help and via members of Religious Orders and parishioners volunteering with projects or groups set up by other Churches or secular voluntary organisations as well as parishes donating funds and material goods for such projects.

However, overall our initial hypothesis that the Church's support for asylum seekers and refugees is more visible than in the case of economic migrants, both in terms of structured and informal help, has been confirmed.

Economic Migrants

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, according to the available statistics, Westminster, East Anglia, Nottingham, Northampton, and Cardiff are the Dioceses with the highest concentration of migrant workers.

In terms of response, Westminster Diocese seems to have the highest number of structured projects, which is not unexpected due to its specific location, access to resources and 'special' status as a Diocese. In addition to parish level projects, the response is provided on the Diocesan level by implementing a number of specific measures to respond to the needs presented by migration. Also, a number of agencies such as The Passage and Cardinal Hume Centre are operating in the Diocese. Over 20 parishes of the Diocese are involved in TELCO advocating the rights of migrant workers and a number are active in the 'Strangers into Citizens' campaign calling for amnesty for undocumented migrants. Overall though when compared to the assets and congregation size of the Diocese this is not a huge response even if it is a welcome one.

The other four most affected Dioceses - East Anglia, Nottingham, Northampton and Cardiff – are also offering some help for migrant workers, though in most cases it is provided by parishes, priests, parishioners and religious on informal basis. Some exceptions include a Community Cohesion Centre in Wisbech (East Anglia) and EU-funded language classes in Boston (Nottingham). In these dioceses and overall the

Catholic Church's work in response to migrants' needs is often done by joining forces and working in partnership with other Churches and wider community, for example, Unions, Churches Together, Faith Forums and local authorities.

Overall, our impression is that while care for economic migrants in most Dioceses is present, it is mostly unstructured, often taking place through networking and on an ad hoc basis. While we recognise that it may be of no lesser significance in terms of changing individuals' lives, in some Dioceses more could be done to respond to a significant influx of migrants using the great potential of goodwill and resources available in the Church. Not least in response to 'significant presence' of migrant groups in most Dioceses highlighted in Table 8.

In institutional terms, we found that the most systematic help both to migrants and refugees/ asylum seekers, in terms of funding and human resources involved, is provided at the agency, diocesan and order level, with parishes and members of religious communities often helping in more informal ways, either on ad hoc basis or relying on volunteers and donations. This is not unexpected, given the differences in resources and institutional capacity of these two groups. In this respect, our findings relate to those of our other recent study looking into the welfare service provision by the Church of England.⁸

Religious Orders' Contribution

The contribution of religious, working with all newcomers will be highlighted in relevant sections of this report. However, we thought that it would be worth commenting separately on their contribution.

Each religious order has a particular charism or apostolate that guides its spirituality and work. Many orders in England and Wales have an explicit mission to work for justice, particularly for the poor and marginalised in society. Below are a few examples.

- **Congregation of the Holy Spirit:** "The people we choose to be with are often struggling to survive from one day to the next. They are downhearted and diminished in spirit, forgotten or abandoned by civil and government institutions, and suffering injustice."
- **Franciscan Friars of the Renewal:** "To serve the materially poor, most especially the destitute and homeless. Every member of the community is to be personally and directly involved in "hands on" work with the poor."
- **Society of the Holy Child Jesus:** "Trust and reverence for individual dignity and God's loving mercy for the human family and for all creation mark our lives and our work wherever we are."
- **Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul:** "Our 'cloister is the streets of the city' and we work with individuals, families and other groups of people, of all nationalities"

⁸ Davis F. et al (2008) *Moral, But No Compass: Government, Church and the Future of Welfare*, Matthew James Publishing 2008.

and beliefs, who are in need, disadvantaged, or marginalised - offering support, affirmation and practical help.”

- **Sisters of the Cross and Passion:** “Outreach to the suffering and those who are poor, physically, spiritually and financially”.

These brief statements exemplify the spirit that motivates members of religious orders in England and Wales to engage in service in the communities. At the present time, the most marginalised are often migrants, refugees and especially asylum seekers. Therefore, male and female religious can often be found working with these populations, following the charisma or apostolate of their own order as well as the Gospel call.

It must be acknowledged that many religious, particularly the women, volunteer ‘anonymously’ with other voluntary bodies, and so make their contributions under the radar and unrecognised. However their contributions should not be underestimated as they are providing many key resources, especially for asylum seekers and refugees.

In the course of our research, we asked the Conference of Religious in England and Wales to send a questionnaire to over 300 members, asking them to indicate whether their order/congregation/society provided support or services to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Unfortunately, the response rate was only 6 per cent, which most probably only confirms the decentralised manner of the work of many religious – or the lack of central awareness of some local work? We learned about a number of them from our interviews with deans, parish priests and lay Catholics rather than from questionnaires.

Male and female religious serve as chaplains in immigration reception and removal centres providing pastoral help, teach English classes, translate or interpret documents, and befriend those who have no one else to turn to. They network with other churches and organisations in order to refer people to those who can assist. They offer food and shelter, along with counselling and legal advice, either on their own or while volunteering with large organisations involving significant numbers of other volunteers and adequate funding.

Some male and female religious work or volunteer within existing organisations, Catholic or otherwise. The Sisters of Notre Dame and a Daughter of Providence assist the Marists at the Notre Dame Refugee Centre in Leicester Square. A Daughter of Jesus is an active member of Kent Refugee Support group, while a Daughter of Charity, a Carmelite, La Sainte Union Sister, and Sisters of Mercy volunteer time at St Wilfrid's Centre in Sheffield. The Passionist Sisters and the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus network with and support the Medaille Trust, a charity that works with women and children who have been freed from sex-trafficking.

Many religious orders maintain good connections with parish and diocesan Justice and Peace groups, which can provide them with support in the work they are undertaking. In Southwark, the diocesan J&P Coordinator is herself a religious sister, Sr Pat Trussell, who organises events for migrants and asylum seekers in the Diocese and who has introduced the theme of migrants onto the agenda of the J&P Commission meetings. Strong contacts also exist with many other organisations such as New Link, the Migrant Helpline, the Refugee Council, London Citizens, and Strangers in Citizens.

Section Three: Key Needs and the Ways of Response

3. Catholic Agencies' Contribution

Caritas Social Action Network consists of 28 Catholic agencies in England and Wales who provide a wide range of social care at different levels (national, regional, diocesan, local). Questionnaires were emailed to the chief executive of each agency, asking them a series of questions about their activity in the area of migration. 18 responses were received from 17 agencies, as the Father Hudson's Society has two separate projects falling under its umbrella (Brushstrokes and Hope Family Project).

The data in the table below was compiled from the seventeen survey responses in order to provide a brief profile of each agency, its work and institutional capacity in terms of financial and human resources. The financial information (gross income and net assets) was obtained from the latest annual reports found on either the Charity Commission's website or the website of the agency itself.

Table 9. Profile of Responding CSAN Member Agencies

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Services</i>	<i>Migration related target groups</i>	<i>% Work Directed at M, R, AS</i>	<i>Statutory Funding</i>	<i>Gross Income (£)</i>	<i>Net Assets (£)</i>	<i>Staff</i>	<i>Volunteers</i>
Brentwood Catholic Children's Society*	Diocesan: Brentwood		None	N/A		591,968	580,638	13.7 FTE	
Brushstrokes	Local: Smethwick/Sandwell	ESOL; outreach/befriending; distribution of resources including food, clothing and household equipment	Refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, ethnic minorities	50-75	Yes	110,859		6	13
Cardinal Hume Centre	Regional: London	Advice, support, education and training and residential services	Refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, ethnic minorities	25-50	Yes	1,799,568	2,638,285	43	26
Catholic Care	Diocesan: Leeds	Mental health - long term; older people community work; learning disability housing long term; adoption, school social work; community development;	Refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, ethnic minorities	25 or less	No	3,941,411	5,496,907	150	20
Catholic Caring Services*	Diocesan: Lancaster	Adoption, foster care, residential child care, children's day care, Sure Start. Day, domiciliary care and supported living for people with learning disabilities. Ex-offender resettlement. Community projects work with youth, elderly.	None	N/A	No	4,260,888	720,563	175	200
Catholic Children's Society (Arundel & Brighton, Portsmouth and Southwark)*	Diocesan: Arundel & Brighton, Portsmouth, Southwark	Adoption and foster care to children in care; day nurseries and community projects; schools counselling; residential and day care to adults with learning disabilities	Some community projects have high % of ethnic minorities	N/A	No	4,549,000	6,933,000	150: 90 FTE	Few
Catholic Children's Society*	Diocesan: Shrewsbury		None	N/A		815,102	318,669	21	
Catholic Welfare Societies, Salford	Diocesan: Salford		Asylum seekers, economic migrants	25 or less	No	418,067	543,041	21	120
DePaul Trust	National	Accommodation with support, training, volunteering opportunities, family mediation, prison resettlement work to	Refugees, asylum seekers	25 or less	Yes	6,691,000	4,182,000	180	300

Agency	Scope	Services	Migration related target groups	% Work Directed at M, R, AS	Statutory Funding	Gross Income (£)	Net Assets (£)	Staff	Volunteers
		young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless							
Families are Best (CCS Nottingham)*	Regional: East Midlands	Adoption, School social work, Bereavement counselling for children	None	N/A	No	1,532,935	2,493,197		
Families for Children Trust*	Regional: Southwest	Adoption	Ethnic minorities	N/A	No	840,548	334,355	24	20
Hope Family Project	Local: the Heath Town area of Wolverhampton	Support in the home to families; advocacy; parenting, behaviour management; play and learn group; groups for children and young people that address bullying, peer pressure, drug and alcohol abuse, gang culture.	Refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, ethnic minorities	25-50	No	146,475		7	6
Jesuit Refugee Service	National	Befriending; referral into other agencies/legal representatives; hardship funds; accompaniment to appointments; meeting space; voucher exchange; social visits	Refugees, asylum seekers	100	No	280,000		9	40
Nugent Care	Diocesan: Liverpool (+ some national residential projects)	Schools, nurseries, children's homes, adult homes, older persons homes, and a wide range of community services, including supported living. An adoption agency.	Refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, ethnic minorities	25 or less	No	20,031,000	14,139,000	850	600
St David's Children Society*	Diocesan: Cardiff, Wrexham, Menevia	Full range of adoption services to children and families.	None	N/A	No	376,554	230,976	9 + 3 self-employed	1
St Francis' Children's Society*	Diocesan: Northampton	Recruitment and preparation of families/individuals for adoption. Anancy Black Families Initiative: recruitment of prospective adopters from BME community for BME children. Young people's groups. Open Door - Birth Relatives Counselling. Birth Families Support Services. Nutcracker.	Ethnic minorities	N/A	No	688,141	1,146,268	20	many
St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society*	Regional: West of Scotland	Adoption - families and children	None	N/A	No				
The Passage	Regional: Central London	Multi-disciplinary day services; hostel accommodation; supported flats for rough sleepers and insecurely housed people with complex needs	Refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, ethnic minorities	25-50	No	111,388	3,304,589	90	200

CSAN Agencies Not Involved in Migration Work

The nine agencies marked with an * in the above table currently do not offer services to migrants, refugees, and/or asylum seekers. It is worth noting that all nine agencies focus the majority of attention on children; four explicitly deal only with adoption. Three of the remaining five agencies provide counselling services as well, while Catholic Caring Services in Lancaster also offers adult and community services, and Catholic Children's Society in Shrewsbury engages in community development/organising. While migrants are not the key users of these agencies' services, following on the heels of the 2006 Equality Act, those Catholic agencies that had focused entirely on adoption are now facing pressure either to close or to reinvent themselves before the end of 2008. Possibly in relation to this, the responses from the survey indicate that three children's agencies have expressed an interest in developing new provisions for migrants, refugees or asylum seekers.

Two agencies indicated that these possible new activities will remain in line with their current focus on children. St Francis' Children's Society in Milton Keynes has not discussed the needs of these groups at the board or at senior management level, but is currently "trying to open conversations with the Roman Catholic Polish communities regarding raising enquiries from prospective adoptive parents". Catholic Children's Society (Arundel & Brighton, Portsmouth and Southwark) said, "it is an area of work we would consider where it involves children". Both St David's Children Society and Catholic Children's Society (A & B) have had discussions at either the level of senior management or a sub-committee and have determined that they will possibly begin work with these target groups in the future, but neither gave more details what that might be.

Five agencies indicated that they had no plans at the moment to begin offering services to migrants, refugees or asylum seekers. Both the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society and Catholic Caring Services had discussed these groups at the top levels of the organisation, but had decided not to offer services. Catholic Caring Services thought that there was no evident demand from these groups, even if their services are of a broader nature: "needs in the Lancaster Diocese have not been evident and enquiry through the clergy has not met with any intelligence or referrals... but our trawl has been inadequate".

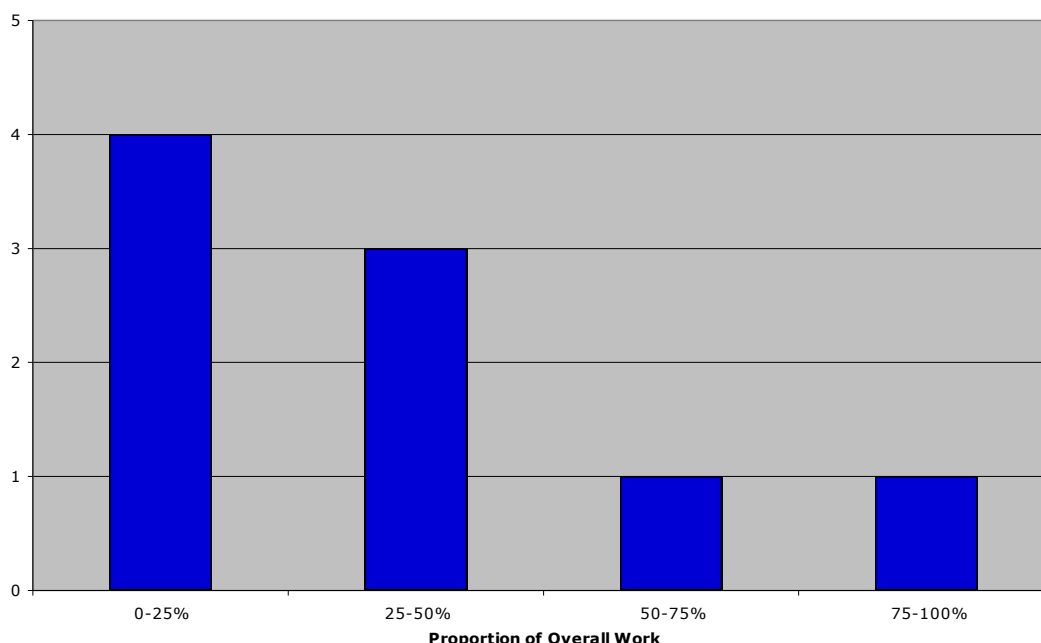
Of the other three agencies, Families for Children Trust and St Margaret's Children and Family Care both stated that their reason for not serving these groups is that they are adoption agencies. Families Are Best indicated that there are no members of the aforementioned groups among the clients they serve, and that there are no future plans to engage in such work, even though their current services include school social work.

CSAN agencies working with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers

Key target groups

Of the 18 survey respondents, 9 indicated that they offer some type of care or service to migrants, refugees and/or asylum seekers. However, the time and resources spent serving these groups varied a great deal from agency to agency.

Chart 1. Proportion of Work Done by the Responding Agencies with Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers



Two agencies (Brushstrokes and Jesuit Refugee Service) reported that over 50% of the overall work is directed at these groups, with JRS working exclusively with refugees and displaced persons. As the preceding chart indicates, these agencies are the exception to the rule in this sample.

Some of the agencies, such as the Passage and the Cardinal Hume Centre, have adapted their founding work (e.g. providing shelter to the homeless or rough sleepers) to include migrants, refugees or asylum seekers as needs have arisen.

The majority of the surveyed agencies spend most of their time and effort working with the more vulnerable group - asylum seekers - rather than economic migrants or even refugees. Many of the asylum seekers and refugees who are being helped come from Africa (Somalia, Congo, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Chad), although a number are also from different Middle Eastern nations (Iran, Iraq, Jordan). Seven agencies also reported helping economic migrants from Poland and the other Accession countries.

Services Provided

In terms of the services provided for migrants, refugees and/or asylum seekers by members of Caritas Social Action Network, those focusing on the most basic human needs - food, assistance in finding affordable housing, shelter, pastoral help, befriending and counselling - are the most frequently occurring. Eight out of nine agencies refer their 'clients' to other relevant organisations that can meet their specific needs more effectively. This reflects a good extent of networking both among the Catholic agencies and with ecumenical and secular organisations. A handful of the agencies assist with employment advice, while two homeless shelters in London (Cardinal Hume Centre and The Passage) offer some medical care.

Table 10. Services Provided by the Responding Agencies to Migrant Groups

Food	1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9	Medical care	2, 9
Referrals to other relevant agencies	1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9	Legal advice	1
Housing assistance	1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9	Voucher exchanges	7
Pastoral help	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	Social/Learning activities	1
Befriending	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	Education advice	1
Shelter	2, 3, 4, 5, 9	Childcare crèche	1
Counselling	1, 4, 6, 8, 9	Stay and Play	1
Language classes	1, 2, 6, 9	Training	5
Translation/ Interpretation	1, 4, 7, 9	Outreach onto street	9
Employment advice or access	2, 8, 9	General advice via CAB	1

1=Brushstrokes, 2=Cardinal Hume, 3=Catholic Care Leeds, 4=Catholic Welfare, 5=DePaul Trust, 6=Hope Family, 7=Jesuit Refugee Service, 8=Nugent Care, 9=The Passage

The findings suggest that the agencies are diverse in offering a range of services to the target groups, not limited to just food and shelter. It is worth noting that Brushstrokes, with an annual income of only £111,000, six members of staff and 13 volunteers, offers 14 different services. This is a substantial response to the level of need, in an area of the Diocese of Birmingham with a high number of asylum seekers.

Institutional Capacity

Financial resources

Admittedly, one of the factors preventing some agencies from expanding their work to include migrants, refugees and asylum seekers is lack of financial resources: “core funding is a critical factor in the development of new streams of service provision... if start-up funding were available that would be a possibility” (St David’s Children’s Society). This difficulty is not unexpected for agencies with a few staff and small budgets. However, there might be some potential for such an expansion in the case of Nugent Care (with an income of £20 million), the DePaul Trust (£6.7 million) and even perhaps Cardinal Hume Centre.

With income ranging from £110,000 to £20 million, the agencies working with these groups received funding from a wide range of sources. (Note: The Passage did not complete this section of the survey).

Table 11. Key Sources of Funding

Voluntary Donations	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8	Big Lottery Fund	1
Primary Care Trusts	1, 3, 8	Father Hudson's Society	1, 6
Local Authority	1, 3, 4, 5	Diocese	4
Housing Corporation	3	Community Fund	6
Housing Benefit	2, 3, 5	Other trusts	6
Fees	8	Children in Need	6
Grants	1, 4	Society of Jesus	7

1=Brushstrokes, 2=Cardinal Hume, 3=Catholic Care Leeds, 4=Catholic Welfare, 5=DePaul Trust, 6=Hope Family, 7=Jesuit Refugee Service, 8=Nugent Care, 9=The Passage

None of the agencies working with migrants, refugees or asylum seekers reported receiving any funding from the Department for Work and Pensions, legacies or events.

Jesuit Refugee Service and Nugent Care are anomalies in terms of funding, as both rely almost completely on one source. The Society of Jesus funds 80-85% of JRS' work a year, while fees comprise 98% of Nugent Care's income.

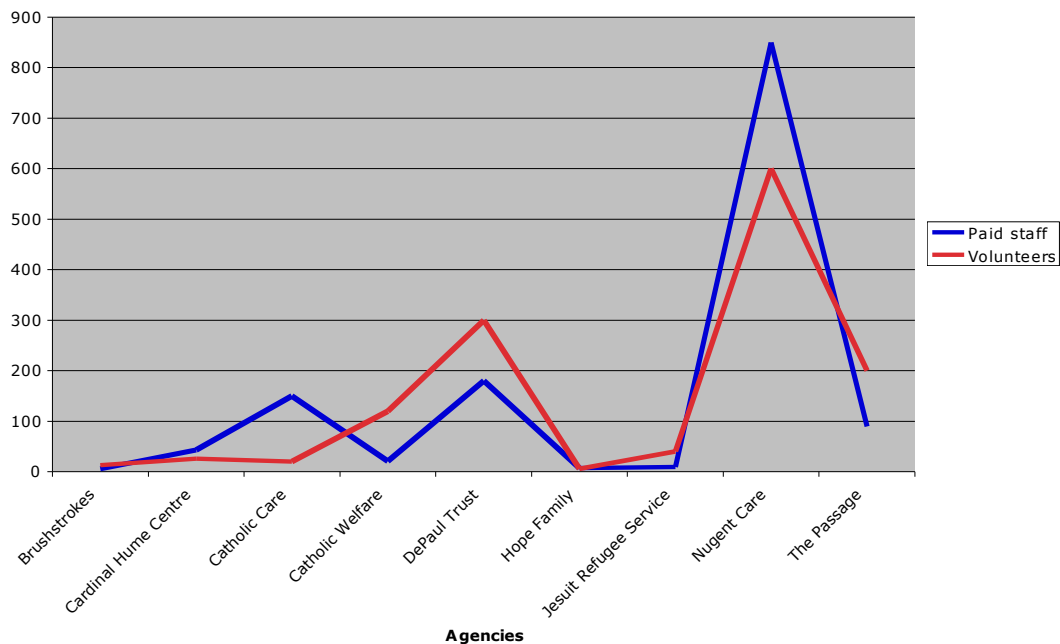
Although the majority of agencies receive voluntary donations, this source of funding on average brings in a relatively small amount of income. Besides the Cardinal Hume Centre, which obtains 50% of its income from voluntary donations, the other 6 agencies' intake ranges from 0.5% to 20%. Another small source of funding is primary care trusts, with Brushstrokes, Catholic Care Leeds and Nugent Care receiving up to 10% of their income from this particular source.

Three of the agencies that receive funding from local authorities have only a moderate reliance on this source (23-40%). Catholic Care Leeds relied heavily on the local authority for support, as this source of funding comprised 70% of its income. Two of the agencies that are exploring the possibility of expanding into work with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers also receive the majority of their income from local authorities. For St David's this source accounts for 90%, while for St Francis' it is 60%. Funding from grants contributes roughly 15-20% of the total income for the four agencies that have applied for funding from this front. As in the case of the local authorities, there is a possibility that additional funding could come from these two sources with improved fundraising and publicity or through assistance with finding and writing grants.

Human Resources

The agencies working with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers rely on both paid staff and volunteers to achieve their stated mission and aims. Despite paid staff overall outnumbering volunteers 1399 to 1325, five of the 9 agencies reported having more volunteers than paid staff. Brushstrokes, Cardinal Hume Centre, Hope Family and Jesuit Refugee Service were fairly balanced, but the remaining five agencies leaned heavily in one direction or the other (see chart below).

Chart 2. The Number of Paid Staff and Volunteers



As mentioned in the previous section, the resources spent by each agency for work with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers vary. When the total number of staff and the total number of volunteers are compared to those reported by the agencies as working with the migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, some interesting patterns arise. The entire staff and volunteers at Brushstrokes, Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Cardinal Hume Centre were reported as working with these groups. This should come as no surprise considering that the former two spend over 50% of their time with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers (with JRS solely working with these populations). The mission and work of the Cardinal Hume Centre would also not distinguish between these populations and other homeless who come to the centre, so staff and volunteers would naturally work with everyone.

However, despite the large numbers of staff and volunteers, both the DePaul Trust and Nugent Care dedicate very small numbers to work with migrants, refugees and asylum seekers: 2 and 4 respectively at the DePaul Trust employing 180 staff and 300 volunteers, 8 and 3 respectively at Nugent Care with a total of 850 staff and 600 volunteers.

Chart 3. The Total Number of Staff and the Number Working with Migrant Groups

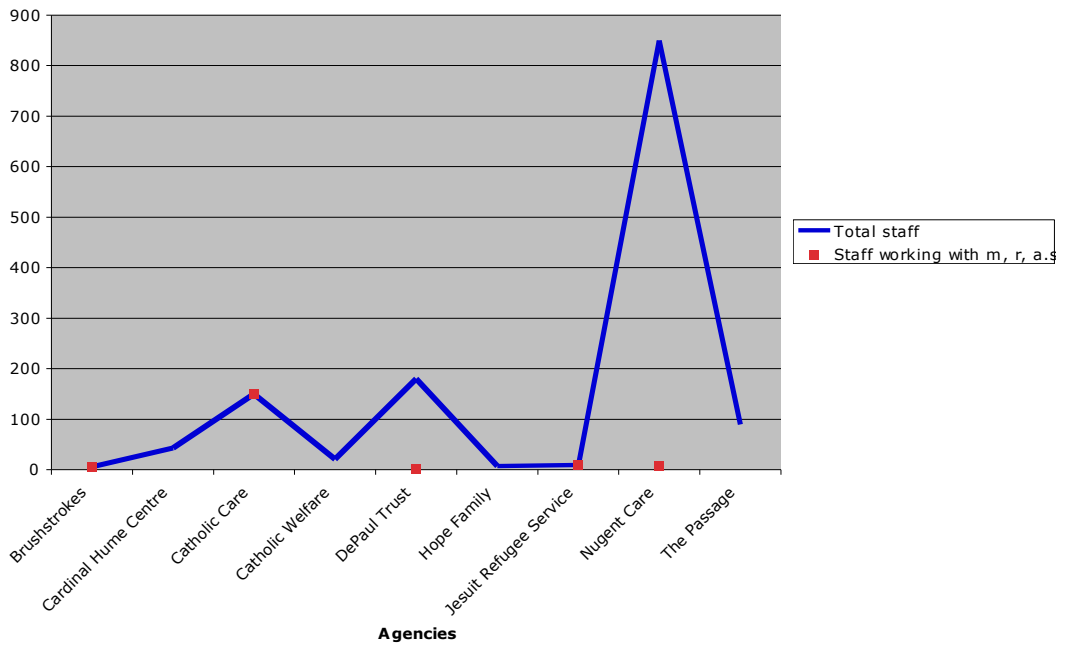
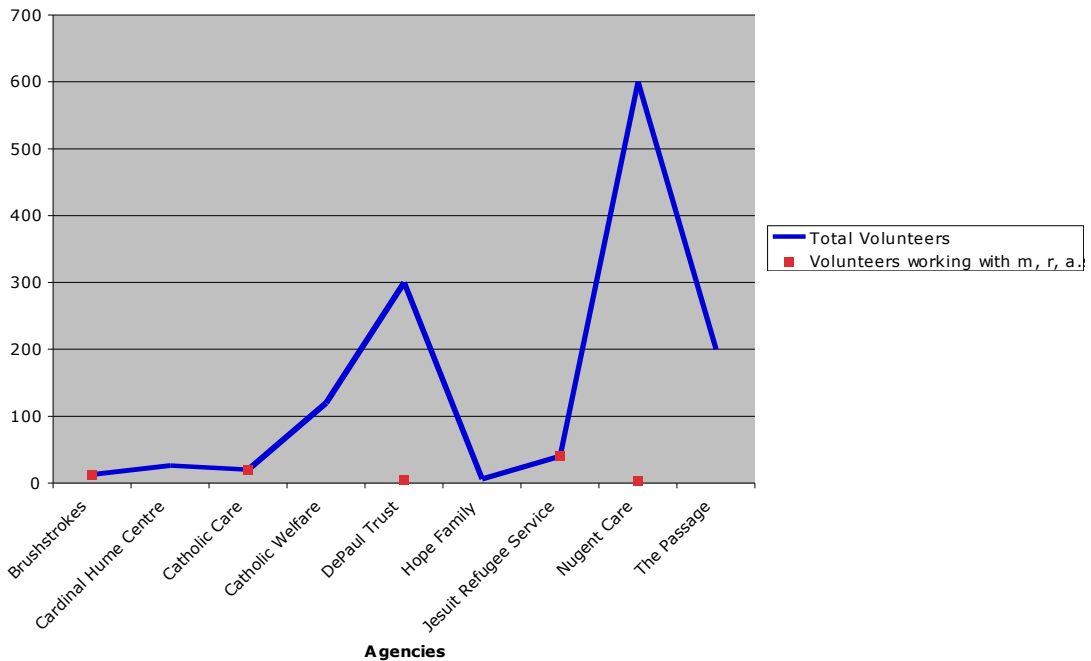


Chart 4. The Total Number of Volunteers and the Number Working with Migrant Groups



The agencies surveyed recruited volunteers from a wide range of sources. Local parishes and Religious Orders were frequently mentioned, which reflects our findings that it is not unusual for parishes and orders to contribute to work in this area through their individual members volunteering elsewhere rather than setting up their own projects. Word of mouth and volunteer bureaux were also used frequently, as were agency websites and newsletters, local branches of Voluntary Action, the press, refugee communities, and general advertising.

Networking

As we mentioned before, to address the limitations of institutional capacity, most of the surveyed agencies work closely with other organisations that share in this care and service of migrants, refugees or asylum seekers. 8 of the 9 agencies network with at least four different relevant organisations in order to prevent efforts from being duplicated and to refer people to them when particular expertise is required on issues ranging from legal advice to finding affordable housing. The vast majority of these partner organisations highlighted by the agencies focus upon asylum seekers and refugees.

Table 11. Examples of Some Organisations Networked with CSAN Agencies

Christian	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vincentian Millennium Partnership • National Justice & Peace Network • CBCEW's Refugee Advisor • London Churches Refugee Forum • Churches Refugee Network • Housing Justice • Enabling Christians in Serving Refugees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Recourse to Public Funds Network • Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees • Compass Counselling Service • Homeless Link • Business in the Community • Still Human Still Here

CSAN members also report working with local authorities (in one case, with the LA's Asylum Seeker support team), many of which help not only with funding but also with expertise.

Difficulties experienced

Those agencies working with migrants, refugees and/or asylum seekers were asked to indicate any difficulties or problems they were experiencing in this work. The most frequently mentioned problem was lack of financial resources, followed by lack of support from partner and service agencies (Table 12).

Table 12. Difficulties Experienced by Agencies in their Work with Migrant Groups

Lack of financial resources	1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9	Lack of supportive government policy at local and national level	2
Lack of support from partner and service agencies (local authorities, NHS, GPs, schools, Job Centre Plus)	4, 8, 9	The seekers' unofficial status and their inability to apply for support from the government	3
Lack of human resources	4, 7	Lack of expertise	4, 6
Housing destitute asylum seekers and EU migrants	1	Lack of involvement in relevant networks	4
1=Brushstrokes, 2=Cardinal Hume, 3=Catholic Care Leeds, 4=Catholic Welfare, 5=DePaul Trust, 6=Hope Family, 7=Jesuit Refugee Service, 8=Nugent Care, 9=The Passage			

In terms of 'lack of support', Nugent Care quite specifically stated where the trouble lay: "We have particular difficulties accessing support from the Benefits agency, the Colleges of Further Education, Gas, Electric, Utility companies, counselling and a wide range of statutory and community services." Interestingly, both agencies who indicated this difficulty (Nugent Care and Catholic Welfare) spend less than 25% of their time working with migrant groups. Catholic Welfare also felt there was insufficient involvement in relevant networks, and reported having the most problems in their work among the nine agencies.

None of the agencies indicated negative feedback from the Catholic community, and the DePaul Trust experienced no problems or difficulties at the moment, according to its survey responses.

Expectations of CSA

Finally, we asked the agencies working with migrant groups to suggest how Caritas Social Action could help them in this work.

Almost half expressed an interest in CSA involving itself more heavily in advocacy and lobbying the government:

- 'Policy work to influence draconian government policy; contribute to a fact-based public policy campaign on the truth and not myth of migration.'
- 'Lobbying & campaigning for better rights for refugees & for asylum seekers - particularly for detainees.'
- 'Lobby government for human rights for migrants as they enter the country and more realistic treatment of refugees with leave to remain.'
- 'We would also like to be in partnership with a national organisation to voice our concerns about government policies which mitigate against these vulnerable groups' rights, argue for social justice and promote national cohesion in the context of social action by Catholic communities.'

Some agencies called on CSA to devote more effort to raising awareness.

- 'Tell the real stories of the problems faced by asylum seekers in their own countries and again when they arrive in this country to dispel some of the myths and stories wrongly reported in the media.'
- 'Make the needs and wishes of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers better known, understood and supported.'
- 'Could help by enabling us to promote our service within the Catholic community to welcome and support the stranger and help raise awareness of Father Hudson's work in this area.'

There were also several calls for CSA to engage in some fact-finding work to gain a better picture of those who are in need and of the services currently provided/ examples of good practices.

- ‘Identify and quantify the types of refugees etc and the scale of the problem. Identify local authority duties and gaps in services. Help us identify a Catholic strategy we can all support.’
- ‘A Caritas Forum.’
- ‘Regional conference in the North (Leeds and Manchester) to learn of resources. Access through Caritas International to originating countries for information and support in the work. Opportunity to network and share good practice/issues.’

Despite two-thirds of the agencies flagging lack of financial resources as a difficulty or problem that they face in their work with migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, none saw this as the responsibility of CSA to rectify. The same applied to the lack of human resources or expertise.

Conclusion

While the work with migrant groups of some CSAN agencies is commendable, it could be argued that a number of others have not yet used their full potential to respond to the new challenges presented by migration. Meanwhile, the contributions expected of CSA by its members primarily concern political impact, advocacy and networking. When cross referenced with the parochial contribution by region it would seem that we have not discovered migration to be a high priority in terms of resources and volunteering time invested.

To illustrate the work undertaken in this area by two related agencies, we are presenting an example of good practice below.

Two Community Projects in the Archdiocese of Birmingham

In 1985 the Sisters of the Infant Jesus began living and working in Heath Town, Wolverhampton, with some lay companions and became known as the Hope Community. The mission of this project was to seek out the most vulnerable and isolated people in the community, and to provide them with support in their homes. Initially contact was made with individuals by door knocking. Then as Hope’s networks grew, key neighbourhood leaders became involved and introduced the sisters to those most in need. Often this meant individuals who could not, or did not want to, leave their home for whatever reason, including asylum seekers and refugees.

In the early nineties Father Hudson’s Society (FHS), the social care agency of the Archdiocese of Birmingham was looking to move into the wider community. As the Sisters wanted to employ staff and needed help with policies and procedure, amongst other things, they partnered with FHS in 1994.

Over time, those in the community who had been served began to assume more responsibility in running the project and the Hope Family Project was officially opened in October 1999. Sr Margaret Walsh, who had been managing the project, decided that Hope was well on its way and that it was time to begin somewhere else.

The local parish priest has become very involved in the Project and is a member of the management committee. Sr. Margaret comes back to Hope once a week.

In 1998 at the invitation of St Philip Neri Parish, Smethwick, Sr Margaret relocated and set out to fulfil the mission of living in solidarity with the most hidden and deprived individuals and families in the neighbourhood and to uncover and develop their gifts and potential. This would enhance not only their

self-esteem, but also the life of the Smethwick community. This project, called Brushstrokes, is a three-way partnership between the Sisters of the Infant Jesus, FHS and the local parish of St Philip Neri.

Originally it was believed that the Asian community was the most in need of attention. But as the door knocking progressed, a different picture emerged. Sandwell, which borders directly on Smethwick, was one of the government's designated dispersal areas for asylum seekers. During home visitations, the needs being presented by these asylum seekers and by refugees who had stayed in the area were immense, both physically and emotionally. Every person in the database is visited at least 3 times each year by staff accompanied by volunteers. More regular visits are paid to those who have the greatest needs and are the most vulnerable, which includes asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

In 2003, after much fundraising, St Philip's Centre was opened to provide additional services beyond the home visitations and outreach. Two months after the official opening, the Centre was burnt down in an act of arson. However, the work continued from Sr. Margaret's home, and a much improved parish centre opened in August 2004. This has enabled Brushstrokes to provide activities on a much larger scale. Food, clothing, support and some ESOL still take place in the homes, but now advice services (i.e. parenting), help into work, IT, housing surgeries, and ESOL are offered as centre-based services. People from 20 different nationalities come to the centre where they find a safe and relaxed environment. Some individuals are identified through referrals from other agencies, some through the outreach services, and some through word of mouth. Each week approximately 80 people come for the ESOL classes, with another 20-30 coming for general help.

Brushstrokes currently employs 6 staff: an administrator, a family support worker who hopes to do more with the schools, an ESOL provision coordinator, an outreach coordinator, the services of a health trainer, and the project manager. Volunteers assist the staff in many ways, whether in learning assistance/ESOL (7-8), in home visitations (5-6) or in sorting and distributing clothing.

Teresa Clements, project manager, said that they are always looking to expand Brushstrokes. However, as funding shifts from grants to service level agreements and primary care trusts, greater pressure to meet quality assurance marks is placed on projects such as this from local governments. The new financial regimes often demand results before payment is made and the monitoring process is complex. The key areas for this year focus on quality over quantity, with the primary goal of gaining accreditation for the informal learning (i.e. ESOL) that is held at St Philip's Centre.

4. Parishes and Religious Orders – Structured Support

As we mentioned before, the Church's help to migrant groups ranges from structured projects to more informal approaches. On the one hand, there are projects with regular activities, paid staff, volunteers and funding, and on the other informal initiatives involving individual Catholics taking part in broader ecumenical and secular activities or providing help on an as needed basis. In addition to addressing social and economic needs, an important part of the Church's care for migrants is its involvement in advocacy and campaigning on behalf of the destitute asylum seekers, those who are being exploited or are in the country 'irregularly'.

In this section, we are focusing on the structured support to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants provided either by parishes or Religious communities, in some cases with Diocesan involvement. By 'structured' we mean those where the Church plays a key role either by initiating the project or contributing through funding/ property or by staff/ significant number of volunteers. Another criterion we used was regularity of the activities and the number of people helped by the project.

4.1 Care for the Most Vulnerable - Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Over the last decade the Church has had to respond to a fresh challenge - the refugees, asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers who have increasingly become the "new destitute". Government policy is to use a carrot and stick approach. Failed asylum seekers lose most of their housing and welfare benefits entitlements and are often reliant on the churches and voluntary sector organisations for basic support. De facto, destitution is being used as a tool of government policy. Some parishes and members of Religious Orders have responded to these policies with a mixture of practical help and campaigns for a more just and humane policy. Nearly all those interviewed volunteered the view that asylum seekers should be allowed to work.

Many of our respondents said that asylum seekers were less visible in their parishes than migrant workers. This is because many asylum seekers, especially those who have failed in their applications will keep a low profile to avoid, amongst other things, deportation. In the last quarter of 2007 (National Office for Statistics) the top five applicant nationalities for asylum were Iraqi, Iranian, Afghani, Eritrean and Zimbabwean. Apart from some Eritreans and Zimbabweans, most new asylum seekers will have no natural connection with the Catholic Church or other Christian institutions. This contrasts with experience in the past, when there were larger numbers of asylum seekers from African countries who might have had links to the Catholic Church. In general, the change in the profile of asylum seekers means that churches and parishioners have to be far more proactive in reaching out with help and support for people who are often close to destitution.

Asylum seekers often need immediate and urgent short term help in the form of food, shelter and legal help. Once people have obtained refugee status or indefinite leave to remain their needs are more long term and include English language lessons, help to integrate into their local community and permanent accommodation and work.

Across all Dioceses we identified 21 structured projects supporting asylum seekers and refugees. Out of these 13 are drop in/ advice centres run by the Church or its groups (including 6 under the same umbrella in Hexham & Newcastle) some of which offer long-term social support and advocacy, one diocesan project provides housing for asylum seekers, two SVP groups help with

practical needs and advocacy, one diocese provides regular financial support to Asylum Seekers Support Fund, three parishes provide premises for secular projects, and one religious community provides food delivery. A brief overview of these projects in terms of the extent of their reach, human and financial resources is presented in the table below.

Table 13. Projects Supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees across Dioceses

Project	Project initiator	Funding (amount and sources)	Number of staff/volunteers	Number of people helped	Premises
REVIVE project (Salford)	Diocese and Congregation of the Holy Spirit	£85,000; Congregation of the Holy Spirit (core funders), the Tudor Trust, the Church Urban Fund and Catholic parishes	3 staff, 8 volunteers and 5 social work placement students	55 / week and 30 casework asylum seekers	Parish (run by the Congregation of the Holy Spirit)
Liverpool Archdiocese Lenten Appeal	Archdiocese	For the last three years the Archdiocese donated Lenten Alms to Support Asylum Seekers (SAS) Fund: £19,000, £20,000 and £25,000 respectively	N/A		N/A
Asylum Seeker and Refugee Project – 6 drop in centres (Hexham & Newcastle)	Diocese	£331,000 (in the last 7 years): 25% from Catholic Charitable Trusts, 65% from other charitable trusts, 4.5% from Newcastle city council, 2% from Catholic Women’s League, 2% from Religious Orders, the rest – donations	1.5 staff, 30 volunteers	120/ week	Parishes
Abigail Housing set up by JCP (Leeds Diocese)	Diocese	£20,000 from local and national charitable trusts and the Church Urban Funds; £2,500 via Bishop’s Lenten appeal to parishes	2 part-time staff, 2 volunteers	20 AS currently provided with accommodation	The Diocese provides a house in Bradford
Harmony House, Dagenham (Brentwood)	Religious Community	Approximately 24% of funding from The Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary	30 staff, 4 volunteers	About 170 asylum seekers attend various classes 70 children, including those of asylum seekers and refugees, attend Childhood Centre	Purpose built premises provided by sisters of the Sacred Heart

Notre Dame Refugee Centre in London (Westminster)	Parish/ Religious Community	£135,000 (2007): £41,000 from Notre Dame de France Church and 10-15% of the rest from Religious Orders and other Catholic sources	3 part-time staff, 25 volunteers	60-70/day, 2 days a week	Parish
Poitiers food delivery project in Southampton (Portsmouth Diocese)	Religious community	£1,000/ month by SMM; also parishes and school donations	3 staff, 8 volunteers	1,200 meals to 160 people every week with a further 140 meals to 22 destitute asylum seekers once a month	Poitiers Centre
St Wilfred's Day Centre (Hallam)	Parish	£250,000 p.a., through fundraising	100 volunteers	50-80/ day	Provided by Hallam Caring Services
St Nicholas of Tolentino in Bristol (Clifton): Parish ministry and drop in centre by Bristol Refugee Rights	Parish (parish ministry) Bristol Refugee Rights and the parish (drop in centre)	Parish funds; donations from SVP conferences. None from Catholic sources	Over 30 parishioners (volunteers) and a Daughter of Charity 3 parishioners and a Daughter of Charity volunteer	 100/week	Parish Parish
Drop in centre at Blessed Sacrament parish in Leicester (Nottingham)	Parish	Parish	15-20 volunteers	100/ day, once a week (asylum seekers and migrants)	Parish hall
SVP Conference in St Leonards (Arundel and Brighton)	SVP members	85% from Catholic sources	9 volunteers	70 asylum seekers and migrants last year (755 visits)	Primary Care Trust, Baptist church
Furniture supply project in Halifax area (Leeds)	SVP members	Occasional small grants and donations	10 volunteers	50 asylum seekers a year	N/A
Asylum Link in Merseyside and Pre and Post Natal Support Group (Liverpool)	Asylum Link with parish	Tudor Trust, Lloyds Bank and other trusts; Liverpool Diocese (annually via Lenten appeal to SAS Fund); food donations from Nugent Care, some support from SVP conferences	6 staff, 48 volunteers including a Notre Dame sister (Asylum Link)	160/ day, 5days a week; 450 pregnant women helped so far	Premises provided by St Anne's and St Bernard's

Solihull Welcome drop-in centre (Birmingham)	Parish/ Religious Sister	Churches Together in Central Solihull, St Alphege (C of E) church, Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness, Restore, donations	50 volunteers from 14 churches	20-40 / week	St Augustine's parish hall in Solihull
St Vincent's Support Centre, Leeds (Similar centres are being set up in Newcastle and London)	SVP	Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network, various charitable trusts, other funds and sources	14 staff, 30 volunteers	hardship payments to 18 asylum seekers, about 12 attend ESOL classes 5 times a week, a number are helped with advice, clothing etc	
Homeless drop-in project, St Francis of Assisi in Stratford (Brentwood)	Parish	Parish contributions	Up to 10 volunteers	10 or more per day	Parish hall

Some of the projects may have both asylum seekers/ refugees and destitute migrants among their 'clients', although their key focus is on the former. Harmony House project is open both to these groups and to the wider community.

In terms of funding, projects tend to be supported by Religious Orders and communities (at least in five cases), parishes, Catholic charities and groups or external funding from trusts, grants and fundraising activities. In the case of Asylum Link Merseyside, some funding for this secular project comes from Catholic sources. In terms of size of funding, the Church makes significant cash contributions to two projects – Revive and Harmony House – via Religious Orders as well as to the Support Asylum Seekers Fund via Archdiocese of Liverpool. SVP conferences contribute to some projects by occasional small donations, while most of the projects are funded by parishes themselves, with Notre Dame de France parish spending about £40,000 a year from its own sources.

On average, the projects are run by between 20 and 50 volunteers and benefit from about 50 to over 100 people a week, or in some cases up to 100 year when the support provided is more long term.

It should be noted that one other important form of support to asylum seekers and refugees on a regular basis is visiting detention centres and provision of pastoral care by priests and Religious serving as chaplains. We identified a number of instances of such support, however since it often involves individual priests, Religious or members of parishes volunteering their time we assigned them to 'less structured support' described in chapter 5.1.

Projects with Diocesan Involvement

We identified a number of projects supported by Dioceses and diocesan agencies through initial funding (Salford), human resources (Hexham & Newcastle), premises (Hallam), ongoing financial support (Liverpool) and property (Leeds). One striking example is presented below. (For others please see Appendix 1).

Six Drop in Centres (Hexham & Newcastle)

St Cuthbert's Care and the Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Justice and Peace Co-ordinating Council started a six-month pilot of the Asylum Seekers and Refugees Project about seven years ago. The project started with office space and a parish room for drop-in sessions for asylum seekers and refugees at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Benwell, Newcastle. Representatives from other organisations, such as the local Jobcentre, Victim Support, and various housing providers, were asked to come to the drop-in sessions to offer advice and support.

At the end of six months, the pilot project was deemed a success, and the Diocesan Justice and Peace Council decided to continue running the project. The project's full-time development worker, Michael McHugh, initially seconded by St Cuthbert's Care, transferred to the employment of the diocese under the management of Justice and Peace. All salary and running costs had to be raised by J&P from charitable organisations. Funding was sought and granted from organisations such as the Northern Rock Foundation, Lloyds TSB, the Mercy Sisters, Newcastle City Council and an anonymous Catholic charity. Donations from individuals and groups added to the funds raised.

Michael has travelled throughout the diocese speaking at Masses and inviting parishes to help asylum seekers by offering premises and/or volunteers. Currently six drop-ins are in operation offering weekly two-hour sessions: three in Newcastle, one in Gateshead and two in Stockton. Michael has also worked to raise community awareness about asylum seekers and refugees by giving talks and running workshops for schools and groups in collaboration with such agencies as the Asylum Seekers Unit in Newcastle.

Until recently, Michael was the project's only paid member of staff. Now a part-time paid worker, Mamour Turuk, has joined the project working exclusively at the original Benwell premises, which are now open five days a week. Assisted by volunteers, Mamour focuses on addressing the needs of "failed asylum seekers". Food bags, collected from 44 parishes, and a small sum of money, donated by parishes, schools, J&P groups and individuals, are given each week to these refused asylum seekers. Some 30 volunteers help at the drop-ins, reaching out to and welcoming asylum seekers from over 40 countries across four continents.

Projects Initiated by Parishes and Religious Communities

While dioceses initiated or contributed to the projects mentioned above, we found that most of the asylum seeker and refugee projects have been set up on grassroots level by parishes and Religious communities. Most of them provide drop in centres, although some involve more specific help outlined in the good practice examples (Appendix 1). These initiatives take advantage of the availability of church premises, volunteering time and in-kind support and donations from the Catholic community. Many of them, however, rely to a great extent on the parish or religious community resources and could do with additional funding.

St Nicolas of Tolentino Parish (Clifton)

St Nicholas parish in Bristol (Clifton) has been helping asylum seekers and refugees, many of whom are members of the congregation, for a number of years. Help ranges from providing money for food, rents, legal fees, course fees, and airfares for reuniting the families to liaising with solicitors, writing legal letters and accompanying asylum seekers to court. Also, for two hours each day, the parish distributes sandwiches to the street homeless, amongst whom are some destitute asylum seekers. About 30 parishioners are involved with the street homeless and many more in supporting the care, help and advocacy for asylum seekers.

Most of the funding for this work comes from the parish, with some support from a few other parishes and some individuals. St Nicholas also gets some donations from SVP conferences from all over the Diocese – last year they donated about £1,000 to this cause. Three years ago the parish received some financial support from external sources after it invoked the right of sanctuary for a young Rwandan woman, a genocide survivor, and its work became well known across the country.

Two years ago Bristol Refugee Rights approached St Nicholas, and the parish agreed to host this organisation's drop-in centre in its premises. Currently the centre is temporarily housed at a congregational church until alterations have been completed at St Nicholas. However the parish already provides an office for the project. The drop-in centre is open two days a week and offers pastoral care, legal advice, English, computer and crafts classes, health services, advocacy and general support to about 100 people a week. Out of the 50 or so volunteers working at the centre about three are from St Nicholas. A Daughter of Charity, Sr Liz Ferrie, is volunteering at the centre on the two days a week that it is open, spending the rest of the time on helping asylum seekers in the parish.

Most of the asylum seekers in the parish congregation are from Africa (although they have had Iranians and Kosovans and have never restricted their care and support to Catholics). A fair number of those who come to the drop-in centre are Iranian, Kurdish and one or two even from Tibet. Fr Richard McKay thinks the most important thing to do is to ensure that all of them feel they belong and know they are valued through simple friendship and by expressing the languages of the major groups during the liturgy every Sunday. In a society that wants to reject them, the parish recognises this is 'counter-cultural'.

Other parishes in Bristol are beginning to get involved in this work, following the example of St Nicholas. The Churches Council for Industry and Social Responsibility (an ecumenical partnership of church denominations in and around the Bristol and Swindon area), Refugee Action and Bristol Support for Asylum have been very supportive of Fr Richard, who has also tried to get to know the solicitors in his area, so he can turn to them for legal advice. He also knows local MPs and City Councillors who have often been very supportive. As he goes forward with work, he said the parish would like to establish a house for destitute asylum seekers, but would need major assistance in this project.

Sometimes the initiatives are developed by the existing parish organisations such as the SVP, the Legion of Mary and J&P groups. In these cases, the projects also rely on volunteers, donations and, not least importantly, access to networks in the local community. In addition, SVP Conferences benefit from their relationships with other SVP members across the country as well as with the wider Catholic community.

Conference of St Thomas of Canterbury, St Leonards on Sea (Arundel and Brighton)

Since 2003 the SVP Conference in St Leonards has provided services to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in the Borough of Hastings which is designated by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) as a 'dispersal area'. The asylum seekers accommodated in St Leonards over the past five years have reflected the major conflicts of the past decade ranging from Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq (mainly Kurds) to Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ivory Coast, Sudan (Darfur) and Eritrea. In earlier years those assigned to St Leonards at any one time numbered up to 250 single males. Recently there has been a transition to smaller numbers of families and single mothers.

The Conference currently consists of nine members (one of whom is not a Catholic) and is providing help for these vulnerable people in close collaboration with the Primary Care Trust and Migrant Helpline. Two weekly surgeries are run to which SVP members contribute by providing clothes (including school uniforms), transport costs to clinics and legal advisors and general pastoral support. Those who are given leave to remain (refugees) are also assisted with provision of free basic furniture and household appliances and finding employment. Two of the members who have teaching qualifications including ESOL certification have provided tuition. The Conference also channels food, clothes and toiletries to some failed asylum seekers.

In addition to practical help, the Conference is also engaged in the political campaigning which ranges from the lobbying at national level for a more just treatment of asylum seekers at all stages to particular cases. In this endeavour they are assisted by their good relations with the local MP who is also a lawyer and who ensured that submissions are considered by the relevant Minister. Specific successes include the removal of a tag from the ankle of a young Congolese asylum seeker, single mother, and a favourable judicial review in the High Court in which a failed asylum seeker was represented pro bono by a barrister supplied via the SVP network. Another success story is that of a destitute failed asylum seeker who was very ill, not least because of the way he was treated by the Borders and Immigration Directorate. The Conference successfully lobbied to have him maintained by the County Council under Section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

The last 12 months has witnessed a new challenge in the form of destitute migrants from the new Accession States. In one case, a Pole who had fled to Hastings after being mugged in London was found by the Sussex Police sleeping rough. He was referred to the SVP because he did not qualify for UK welfare benefits. The Conference provided him with emergency accommodation and then escorted him to A & E at the local hospital. It transpired that the assault had triggered a pulmonary embolism and but for the Conference's action, he would have died. After a spell of hospitalisation, the Conference raised the funds to get him back to his family in Poland.

85 per cent of the Conference's funds come from Catholic sources. Non-Catholic financial supporters include the Lewes Group in Support of Refugees and a Sussex property developer. Assistance in kind is provided by the Sussex branch of the Co-Workers of Mother Theresa of Calcutta and other local residents. The Diocesan SVP Council recently donated £200 to the Group in recognition of the 'Special Work' status of its services to immigrants. During the year ending March 2008, the group members made 755 visits to 70 asylum seekers, refugees and migrants (individuals and families).

We identified another pattern whereby projects are either initiated by the Catholic community and mobilise support from other churches and wider society, or are initiated by ecumenical and secular groups and later get significant support from Catholic parishes and clergy. One particular case was mentioned by most of our interviewees from Liverpool Diocese as a widely recognised good practice example involving a significant role played by one parish priest.

St Anne's and St Bernard's parishes (Liverpool)

Liverpool is one of the dispersal areas used by the Home Office for the first stage of the asylum seeking process. Fr Peter Morgan is in charge of two parishes in the city – St Anne's and St Bernard's. About seven years ago he offered the premises at St Anne's house to Asylum Link Merseyside to set up a drop-in centre for asylum seekers and refugees. The centre, open five days a week, offers advice on immigration and benefits, furniture and clothing, English and computer classes, cash grants, food and access to immigration solicitors. About 160 people attend it daily either to get help or to socialise. Asylum Link has set up a food stall in place of a confessional and provides food for about 40 people a week. A medical doctor Joseph O'Neill (who is a Catholic) arranges for medical students from the local university to visit the centre in order to get to know firsthand the needs and difficulties experienced by asylum seekers and refugees.

The origins of Asylum Link can be traced to Kensington Welcome, a group of concerned people of different faiths and none who came together at St John's Church around 1999 to provide drop in sessions once a week. Eventually the initiative developed into Asylum Link, while some of group members moved to Sheffield to get actively involved in the City of Sanctuary initiative. Sr Kathleen Ashurst (Sisters of Notre Dame), who is currently working at Asylum Link, was one of the active members of Kensington Welcome.

A few years ago, a social worker working for Asylum Link noticed a significant need for help among pregnant asylum seeking and refugee women. As a result, a new unique project has been initiated. It is called Merseyside Refugee and Asylum Seekers Pre and Post Natal Support Group and is funded by Tudor Trust. For this project Fr Peter offered premises at St Bernard's parish. Since the beginning, over two years ago, the project has helped about 450 women, mostly those who have been raped and whose asylum claims have been refused. It provides advocacy, support around pregnancy issues, a bag to go into hospital with basic provisions, form-filling help, referral to psychological services, support during the asylum process and attendance at court, clothes recycling for mothers and children, and a weekly session on a Friday afternoon for peer support which also gives children the opportunity to play together. Help is provided in collaboration with Liverpool Social Services, NHS Primary Trust and other relevant agencies. The project occasionally gets some small donations from local parishes and is supported by some Catholic volunteers.

Fr Peter himself is directly and actively involved in support for asylum seekers - he has offered temporary accommodation to a few women with babies in St Bernard's house. One of the asylum seekers he gave the shelter to and helped with asylum process, eventually got leave to remain, trained as a priest and is now working in one of the local parishes. Fr Peter has also met with the government officials several times to advocate changes in asylum seekers' questioning procedures.

For more good practice examples, please refer to Appendix 1.

4.2 Response to Economic Migrants' Needs

As previously mentioned, there are significant numbers of migrant workers in most deaneries, or at least parts of them; however the extent of Church's response to their needs varies in terms of systematic effort. Partly because only a proportion of the migrant population attend Mass, and partly because in some areas the Church still needs to find the way to respond: 'we had not gotten to the point yet where we recognised the need, although this is not to say we shouldn't be doing more' (a priest from Westminster Diocese). 'We would like to be of service to newcomers but not sure how', said a Dean in Northampton.

There is a feeling among some clergy that the Church should be more proactive. According to the clergy in Arundel and Brighton Diocese, for example, many East Europeans work in the care homes but they have not been approached. There is a similar feeling in Portsmouth Diocese: 'Problems are not presenting themselves, so perhaps the Church should be doing more outreach work'. Another priest from Westminster Diocese reiterated: 'in our deanery, migrants currently do not present a great challenge to the Church but they should – more should be done to respond to their needs'.

Sometimes befriending, welcoming and reaching out leads to discovering the very extent of the difficulties as many migrants are too proud (or shy) to ask for help, even if the need is dire. We have been told repeatedly that although some migrants do experience economic difficulties, e.g. with finding jobs or accommodation and supporting themselves financially, often they do not

approach the Church in search of help: ‘We are simply not aware of it [the need] because it is a sensitive matter, and they [migrants] do not ask for help.’

At the same time, in some parishes there is a perception that economically migrants tend to be ‘better off than back home’, presuming that they are not experiencing major needs. One parish priest in Portsmouth Diocese noted lack of willingness among local parishioners to help migrants as there is a feeling that ‘they are already getting enough support’ [from state]. According to him, this is something that Bishops’ Conference should draw indigenous Catholics’ attention to.

A Note on Sensitivity

We found that not only undocumented migrants, but also those from accession countries are sometimes reluctant at first to share information about their country of origin and the life they left behind. Sometimes this sensitivity comes from embarrassment about the level of poverty the countries are living in. Whether this is the case, or because it takes time to build trust between ‘irregular’ migrants and clergy, the best strategy according to one of the priests in Hallam Diocese is ‘Don’t ask too many questions, just walk with them until they feel ready to talk.’ A priest looking after migrant community in Portsmouth Diocese reiterated: ‘I see myself as a bridge, a container of conversation between different communities. Self-disclosure is a sacred thing which must be treated with respect. Once migrants start trusting me they tell all about racism and prejudice they are experiencing’. According to him, these are experienced even by second generation migrants with British passports, and for this and other reasons they should be regarded as migrants due to their still rather vulnerable position.

The Suffering and the Refuge

Although this was not the key focus of the study, from our interviews with clergy we learned about harsh working and living conditions and exploitation of many migrants. A more detailed account will be offered in chapter 5.2⁹, but the following quotation from one of the priests in Westminster Diocese depicts the overall situation quite well: ‘many of our Nigerian and Ghanaian parishioners are simply going about the business of trying to survive’.

A number of the deaneries are in agricultural areas, and those working on farms are especially susceptible to exploitation. Most of these foreign-born workers live in caravan accommodation on the farms and are paid cash in hand – in one area, this has even caused a shortage of £50 notes in circulation!

Poor language skills, long shifts, working in two or three jobs and transitory nature prevents many from becoming an integral part of the local Catholic community. Furthermore, having very little free time seems to prevent some migrants from taking advantage of support initiatives like drop-in centres and language classes. Nevertheless some migrants make sure they come to Mass even after a long day on the farm or a night shift at a hospital. According to a priest in Shrewsbury Diocese, even if they cannot make it on Sunday because of work commitments, many of the Polish migrant workers in particular will come to Mass during the week.

⁹ See also our previous study, ‘The Ground of Justice’, Von Hügel Institute, 2007.

Awakening to Respond?

A certain obligation and responsibility of care on the part of receiving community starts to be recognised: ‘the country asked for guest workers but got people, people with needs and hopes’. Failure to offer a helping hand and an open heart on the part of the Catholic communities sometimes results in these people – many coming from Catholic countries – being ‘poached by other Christian churches. It is often the evangelical churches that are very energetic in offering outreach and support, and, in words of one priest in Portsmouth Diocese, it is ‘sad that Catholic Church doesn’t do more’.

While the Church’s response varies across the country, the work of many priests, religious and lay members of the Catholic community should of course be commended. Often it tends to be ad hoc, informal or with regular activities on a small scale – for example, a priest running weekly ‘surgery’ or a parishioner teaching a few newcomers conversational English. We did however identify 18 structured projects, three of which focus on the language provision while six are advice and welcome centres. This is a much required response to the most pressing needs of migrants that are often emphasised by various sources and that we uncovered in our previous study (The Ground of Justice 2007). Three projects are various diocesan initiatives in the area of migration. Five further projects have a specialised mission: four homeless support projects are not targeted exclusively at migrants, although some migrants came to rely on them extensively, while Medaille Trust is helping trafficked women. In the area of emergency help to the homeless it is worth giving a special mention to a new pioneering project run by St John of God Brothers. It will focus on providing temporary accommodation and other services to the homeless migrants from accession countries, helping them to rebuild their lives.

An overview of the structured projects in this area is presented in the table below.

Table 14. Migrant Support Projects across Dioceses

	Project initiator	Funding (amount and sources)	Number of staff/volunteers	Number of people helped	Premises
Language classes for newcomers (Brentwood)	Diocese and RAMFEL	None	1 ESOL teacher provided by RAMFEL free of charge	Expected to have 10 adults at each centre; planned to expand to other schools and reach up to 140 beneficiaries	Three RC schools in Brentwood free of charge
Language teaching coordinator post for 6 months (Westminster Diocese)	Diocese	Not decided, Diocese	1 staff	N/A	Diocese
St John Southwell Fund	Diocese	Diocese	N/A		N/A
Migrants Task Group (Portsmouth)	Diocese	£6,000, Diocese	4 volunteers	N/A	N/A

Directory of pastoral and social services (Clifton)	Diocese	Self funding from advertising	Led by Tom Hoprwood, Diocesan Press Officer	N/A	N/A
St John of God Migrant Worker Project (hostel for the homeless) (Westminster)	St John of God Brothers, The Passage Day Centre and Poor Servants of the Mother of God	Refurbishment and start-up costs covered by Poor Servants of the Mother of God	N/A	40 beds	Property leased from the Poor Servants of the Mother of God
Welcome Centre, Jersey (Portsmouth)	Deanery	£250,000 on initial capital expenditure, from fundraising	One manager	2000 individuals attended language classes so far	Former school
Parasol (advice centre) in Accrington (Salford)	Parish	£12,000 per annum; 20% from parish, 80% from Diocese	1 part-time, 8 volunteers	About 300 per year	Parish hall
Parasol (advice centre) project in Holy Saviour Parish, Nelson (Salford)	Parish	Start- up money from Police	Starting now with help from Parasol in Accrington	N/A	Parish hall
Wisbech Community Cohesion Centre (East Anglia)	Parish	EEDA, Fenland Links, Lankelly Chase, Yong Lives, CoWA, fundraising	3 staff (1 from parish), 15-20 volunteers (almost all parishioners)	30-40 / week plus 20-30 attending weekly English classes	Premises leased from Diocese
Language classes in Boston (Nottingham)	Polish parishioner	EU	3 volunteers (local parishioners)	80/ week	Parish hall
St Ignatius in Stamford Hill – sandwich run and advice (Westminster)	Religious community	£4,000 annually, provided by the community	1 full-time and 1 part-time, varying numbers of volunteers	30/day are served food, about 15 helped regularly with advice etc	St Ignatius church
Brook Green parish – sandwich run and advice (Westminster)	Parish	Parish	5 volunteers	20-30/ day, five days a week; mostly migrants	Parish hall
Camden Town parish – food for homeless and emergency help (Westminster)	Parish	Parish	40 volunteers	70-80 / day (incl migrants and refugees), 4 days a week Many migrants at cold weather shelter	Parish hall for daily sandwiches; Anglican church rented for £3,000 for cold weather shelter

Open House homeless project, St Patrick's Soho Square (Westminster)	Parish	Parish	20 volunteers and 91 cooks	70-85 people per week, about 75% migrants	Parish hall
St Marie on the Sands homeless project in Southport (Liverpool)	Parish	Parish, local schools	20-30 volunteers	200/ week, 10-20% migrants	Parish hall
Franciscan Friars of Renewal in Bradford – food for homeless and emergency help (Leeds)	Religious community	Religious community, donations from schools and local businesses	Friars and volunteers	10% migrants	Friary
Medaille Trust	National remit supported by several religious orders	£250,000 per year per house; 99% comes from Catholic sources, mainly religious orders	36-40 staff and 10 volunteers (5 lay people and 5 religious)	40 women and their babies have been helped since 2007	The two houses were donated by a Catholic couple and by the Sisters of Charity

The majority of the projects focusing on economic migrants' needs are supported by donations from parishes, Religious Orders and fundraising. A few exceptions include Wisbech Community Cohesion Centre, mainly funded by EEDA (East of England Development Agency) and EU-funded language classes in Boston. Dioceses contribute financial resources in four cases, while in one case the Diocese of East Anglia leased premises for the Community Cohesion Centre. The Church contributes significant amounts of funding to three projects (Medaille Trust, St John Southwell Fund and St John of God project), mainly through Religious Orders.

In terms of human resources, the projects are mostly supported by volunteers, the numbers of which tend to be lower than in the case of asylum seeker and refugee projects. This trend also applies to the number of people helped.

Projects Initiated by Dioceses

Following the assessment of the currently offered language classes in parishes, Westminster Diocese is about to employ a language coordinator whose aim will be to set up new language teaching initiatives in collaboration with ethnic chaplaincies and members of Religious Orders. The Diocese has also set up **John Southwell Fund...**

Portsmouth Diocese has set up Migrants Task Group which will attempt to identify the needs of the migrant communities and to develop a structured response. Clifton Diocese has published a directory of social and pastoral services in Polish which has been distributed to all parishes in the Diocese.

These initiatives can be regarded as important first steps towards identifying the needs and providing response in an organised manner by taking a strategic view and allocating resources.

Projects Initiated by Religious Orders and Parishes

Drop in and Welcome Centres

On a grassroots level, parishes are responding with practical social action. As language barrier often means that migrants have difficulty accessing local services, a number of parishes have set up drop-in centres or started offering regular advice sessions. Three of these projects have received external funding.

The Parasol Project in Accrington (Salford Diocese)

Accrington in East Lancashire has a history of industrial manufacturing and 30 percent of work is in this sector. Labour shortages for low-skilled jobs in the local factories have attracted migrant workers to the town. Father Martin Saunders is the parish priest for St Joseph's in Accrington and in 2005 he noticed an increase in his congregation and made contact with the newcomers who were mainly from Poland.

Fr Martin learned that in January 2006, an employment agency recruited 200 Polish workers for an Accrington factory (Express Gifts) and housed them in private rented accommodation. Each worker had to pay £300 up front for the coach trip from Poland to Accrington and for access to a job. The workers had been promised 12 months' work but after 13 weeks the factory terminated contracts leaving 200 people unemployed and threatened with homelessness, but with no eligibility for welfare benefits. Many still owed the agency for travel to Britain. But the factory continued to recruit more workers from Poland, many of whom lost their jobs after 13 weeks. Some Polish workers were found sleeping rough and many sought help from St Joseph's Church.

The housing conditions were expensive and overcrowded – usually six Polish workers shared a two bedroom terraced house and were jointly charged £300 per week - rent levels that compare to London prices and are far above the average rents charged in Accrington. Learning of the rent levels and threats of evictions Fr Martin had a word with the landlord and in at least one case the tenants were subsequently threatened at knife point and told not to go to their priest again. The houses were in a poor state of repair, many had been condemned as unfit by the local authority and in one case the stairs had collapsed and the handrail was broken.

In one case a Polish woman was arrested for taking food from the supermarket Asda. Her husband had lost his job they were hungry and had a small baby to feed. The church intervened with a translated who explained the circumstances to the police who in turn asked Asda not to press charges. The supermarket manager dropped charges and was so affected by their story that he sent a food hamper to the family. In another documented case a worker ended up with a pay packet of £10 for a 72 hour week. This was the result of the employer making deductions at source. The church got trading standards involved who managed to get the direct debits cancelled.

In response to the employment and housing problems experienced by many of the Polish workers Fr Martin, with the help of a parishioner who speaks Polish, started to provide information and help. Firstly they produced information and a map of the local area indicating the church, doctor's surgery, the hospital and Citizen's Advice. Consequently they got a call from the Job Centre asking if they could reproduce the map and other information for their clients. The church developed more information and advice and volunteers explained employment rights and countered myths about the police force. The Polish workers started to use the church hall for meetings and set up a self-help group called Parasol (Polish for umbrella). Parasol now employs a part time worker (18 hours/week) who deals with translations of forms into Polish and advice on employment, housing and rights. She is one of the parishioners who initially

helped Fr Martin when the newcomers first arrived at St Joseph's. Parasol now has its own website and produces a fortnightly bulletin. ESOL classes are held on Saturdays for those who need to improve their English, the teacher is provided by Lancashire County Council. The police attend the Parasol meetings and regularly provide information and sort out problems. If neighbouring parish priests become aware of migrant workers' problems they refer them to Parasol, which is regarded as a deanery resource.

The Parasol project is 80 per cent funded with a grant from Salford Diocese, with the rest coming from the parish and some support from other parishes in the Deanery. The project has now been taken under the umbrella of Catholic Welfare Services of Salford Diocese, enabling them to use their charitable status. The project is about to expand - Parasol (Nelson) is being set up in the Holy Saviour Parish in Nelson with the help from Accrington parish and with start up money provided by the Police.

Projects Focusing on the Homeless

It is not unusual for homeless projects to receive significant numbers of migrants, even if their status is not always clear, as the policy is to help everyone without asking questions about their origin. Parishes in Westminster Diocese are especially active in this respect, reflecting high concentration of migrants who come to the capital in search of work and fall on hard times in a highly expensive city. These projects put a strain on the local resources as they are funded by parishes or religious communities with some donations coming from other parishes, schools and wider community. They are run almost exclusively by volunteers.

Migrant Support by Our Lady of Hal Parish, Camden Town (Westminster)

Four days a week, the parish offers a tea and sandwiches service to about 70-80 people, some of whom are ethnic migrants or refugees although there are no questions asked policy is applied. The project is run by 40 volunteers grouped in small teams.

The parish is also part of a seven church group that runs a rotating cold weather shelter for 14 weeks. Many young economic migrants used it this year. The parish does not have its own space to provide this every Sunday, so they rent out an Anglican hall across the road for £3,000. A team of people go out and check for rough sleepers and homeless, and they invite them back to the night shelter. Families of volunteers supply the food and cook an evening meal for everyone. There is also a social work service, so that everyone who comes to the shelter can get help. Parishioners are always there to talk with folks, and interpreters can be found if needed.

The commitment of the parishioners has been great as it takes about 12-14 people to stay the night in the shelter and another eight to prepare breakfast. As many as 12 families got involved in this work.

The parish also reaches out to about 30-40 families in need, some of whom are migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, and helps with school fees and uniforms. Schools and local doctors let the parish know when need arises.

Funds are always an issue. At the end of the year, the situation is usually tough, and there are special collections to help. Most parishioners are wonderfully generous, especially those who themselves are not very well off.

As we mentioned, one particular project targeting homeless migrants from accession countries is a pioneering initiative in terms of the scope and the holistic nature of the support it aims to provide.

St John of God Migrant Worker Project - a unique partnership to help homeless migrants lead independent lives¹⁰

The project was born out of our concern for the increasing numbers of A10 nationals coming to the UK to find work at the invitation of the British Government then find themselves, through misfortune or other reasons, sleeping on the streets of London with little or no support.

The partnership was formed following an article by Sister Ellen of The Passage highlighting the plight of A10 people seeking work but falling through the net, the positive response from the Saint John of God Brothers and the generosity of The Poor Servants of the Mother of God in offering the means to address the problem.

Initially The [St John of God] Brothers, in wanting to meet this unmet need, set up a team to carry out an in-depth study of the problem. The team met with many homeless care agencies within the London region and members of the Catholic Hierarchy concerned about the seriousness of this issue. It also talked to A10 people in day centres and heard about their needs at first hand. The Cardinal offered his support and backing to a proposal from the Order to take the initiative.

The Brothers approached the Poor Servants who generously agreed to provide premises for a hostel in central London. A working group was then set up with all the partner agencies, who worked intensely on developing a working model for the project. By offering this service, the partnership aims to offer a solution to some of those who have suffered misfortune and for whom there is no solution being offered from elsewhere.

Meeting an identifiable need

Most migrants come to Britain well prepared and able to find work here. The very small percentage who fall into homelessness in London are those the project is aimed at. A10 nationals have no access to statutory support services, welfare benefits or social housing and must pay to register for work.

The project will contribute to government strategies regarding rough sleeping and will help create safer streets for local communities. It is designed to help bridge the gap between sleeping rough and leading an independent life through finding a job. Those accommodated at the project must demonstrate the willingness to engage with support focused on becoming ready for life and work in Britain or returning to their place of origin. As well as the main partnership group of SJOG, PSMG and The Passage, the project will work with street outreach teams, day centres, available Polish resources, police teams, local councils, health professionals, potential employers and housing providers.

People will be introduced to the project through existing street teams. Those identified as able to benefit will be set an individual programme, with emphasis clearly on a sustainable exit point. Work and accommodation contacts are being established both in London and around the country. The Project will work on cultural induction, language skills and setting up practical appointments for the necessary services. Each person who engages with the project will have their own room in a shared five person flat, access to internet, educational and personal support. There will be no facilities for independent referrals from outside the partnership nor the option for the individual to become dormant in their progress. Fundraising is ongoing.

The Project aims to remain low profile as it is not in the interests of any of the three charities or potential service users to attract unwarranted attention that may lead to negative or inaccurate perceptions of its objectives. This is to ensure the most smooth and effective foundation and running of the project to the

¹⁰ Quoted from the official brief

benefit of those for whom it is intended.

For other good practice examples, please refer to Appendix 1.

To summarise, we found that Church's work in the area of migration is most often initiated at the grassroots level – by parishes and religious communities that are relying on their own resources to provide services. On the one hand, this is not unexpected as they are directly in touch with those in need on everyday basis. On the other, all our interviewees from these projects pointed out that this puts significant pressure on their resources, and that they could use more support in terms of both financial and human resources.

5. Parishes and Religious Orders – Less Structured Ways of Response

5.1 Refugees and Asylum Seekers

In the area of less structured help, we identified a number of cases where priests, parishioners and SVP groups are helping asylum seekers and refugees on an as needed basis, using their own resources and time. In addition, parishioners and Religious take part in detainee visitor groups, and priests and Religious serve as chaplains in detention/ removal centres

The informal one-to-one approach. Much of the support for asylum seekers and refugees comes from informal initiatives that are supported by funds generated by a parish. Often Catholic asylum seekers, or those who have a Catholic connection, see the parish priest as a safe “reference point” and someone they can approach in confidence with their problems. Many priests in areas where there is a concentration of people with “irregular” status provide assistance to individuals with paper work, appeal procedures and general support. When all else fails, some individual priests (and parishioners) have helped with accommodations, food and transport costs. As a priest in Middlesbrough put it: “It is important that priests serve as a mouthpiece for the asylum seekers, as they are often voiceless and powerless in front of the law. Church personnel offer a moral authority, confidence and comfort”.

City centre location The location of a church in the centre of a city sometimes means that a priest will have greater contact, on a one-to-one basis, with asylum seekers. Since 2000, for example, Fr Patrick Daly of SS Peter and Paul in the centre of Wolverhampton, has had considerable involvement with refugees and asylum seekers, many of whom come to him via word of mouth. He cooperates with an ecumenical body and liaises with the local authority. He also accompanies asylum seekers to court hearings and is in contact with solicitors over their cases. If difficult problems arise he turns to the local Refugee Council. Three Iranians whom he has befriended now often come to his house.

New migrants and cultural difference. In some deprived areas of the country where the influx of migrants and asylum seekers is a relatively new phenomenon, some priests seem to get less support from their parishioners than in areas that have a more multicultural background. In parts of the country where the growth of multiculturalism is a new thing, neither the local authority nor the church have coordinating structures to respond to these new developments. In such places, priests and laity from different parishes have combined their efforts to provide clothes and cash to support those who are destitute. It appears that priests working in already very multi-ethnic areas such as London tend to find it easier to mobilise support from their parishioners as well as develop informal initiatives into more structured projects. In such areas the voluntary and statutory sectors are also geared up to cope with the challenges of providing support for newcomers, so the opportunities for collaboration and networking are greater. A number of clergy across Dioceses are leading partners in such collaborative initiatives (we will come back to this in chapter 5.3)

Practical Help from Individual Priests, Parishioners and Religious

Fr Phil Sumner in Oldham has provided a wide range of support to asylum seekers both personally, through his parishioners and by working with other faith-based and secular agencies in his town.

Fr Phil Sumner, Oldham (Salford)

Fr Phil Sumner is the Parish Priest to St Mary's and St Patrick's (two churches, one parish and one priest). Over the past five years he has provided accommodation to 15 failed asylum seekers in the two presbyteries. At one time there were nine asylum seekers in seven rooms in the presbytery that was not used by Fr Phil. But this unsupervised situation led to the house becoming dirty and uncared for. When it became empty the property was cleaned and redecorated with money from the diocese. It will slowly be brought back into use for asylum seekers as need arises, but greater attention will be paid to its management and supervision.

Parishioners help by taking asylum seekers to appointments with lawyers, with translations and sometimes with cash. One parishioner provided a donation of £500 for legal support and another provided £1,000 to bring an asylum seeker's wife to the UK from Africa. In one case a man who had been deported back to Burkina Faso was not allowed into his native country and was sent back to the UK. He was then a destitute asylum seeker who had to report every day to an office in Salford. Fr Phil allowed him to stay in the Presbytery and gave him other support to make ends meet. Fr Phil speaks French so he also helps with translating legal evidence and interpreting at official meetings.

At St Mary's and St Patrick's there are three choirs - Filipino, African and Kerala. The African choir is made up predominantly of asylum seekers and also acts as a social network and self-help group. Members pass on useful information about legal help, housing and jobs.

Based on his experience, Fr Phil advocates taking advantage of services provided locally – in his case - the North West region. One recommendation he made was to share between church agencies Agreed Statements and temporary tenancy agreements that he has developed to give a legal framework to his work. When he provides accommodation for asylum seekers he asks them to sign an Agreed Statement that they will inform the authorities of their address. This, he hopes, makes his work legal and above board. But sometimes compromises are made when having to choose between leaving people on the street and providing them with accommodation that does not comply with all the Multi Occupied Housing Legislation. A debate is needed on this issue.

Fr Phil is involved with a range of organisations in Oldham and beyond that provide asylum seekers with housing assistance, legal support, language help, food and furniture. He is Chair of the Community Cohesion Advisory Group in Oldham. A Multi Agency Forum for asylum seekers was set up that includes representatives from the housing associations, the Council, the Primary Care Trust and the voluntary sector to address the needs of asylum seekers. A sub group of this forum is the Destitution Group, which meets in Fr Phil's Presbytery. Fr Phil also collaborates with Oldham Unity (Refugee Support), Revive and the Boaz Trust, the latter two serving a wider area.

We learned about up to a dozen other priests (but it could be more) who allow destitute asylum seekers to stay in church property rather than see them sleeping rough on the streets. There is no evidence that local parishioners object in principle to this and in most cases they are very supportive in providing food, clothing and money. For example, in a parish in South Wales some refugees are staying in a former housekeeper's house, and the parish collects clothes and furniture for them.

Other forms of informal support often entail offering friendship and practical help.

Fr Peter Keeling

Two years ago Fr Peter Keeling, a parish priest in Middlesbrough, decided to provide hot lunches on Saturdays where people could come for a chat with him and any parishioners who wished to volunteer. At the time of our interview four parishioners had joined six refugees and asylum seekers who had turned up – four of whom were from Iraq, and none of whom were Catholic. Fr Peter had initially appealed to the

parish for volunteers and now the initiative has a life of its own. He regards asylum seekers as his friends and feels that he is a “surrogate family” for some. Fr Keeling had also opened his home to an asylum seeker for 18 months (he has since received permission to stay), and now has another Iraqi asylum seeker living with him.

Fr Peter also liaises with the Methodist drop-in centre, even if there is no formal partnership between them. He visits the centre from time to time to get to know the people who utilise the service and mentions it at Mass every now and again. Some of his parishioners have gotten actively involved in the centre’s work as volunteers.

In some cases lay Catholics unite forces and provide help via parish Justice and Peace groups, or communities like Catholic Worker.

Norwich Justice and Peace Group at St John’s Cathedral

Norwich Justice and Peace Group at St John’s Cathedral (about 12 members) is supporting asylum seekers by helping them with the legal process, providing bail and housing and above all with friendship and personal attention. Since 1992 one member of the group alone has helped 5-6 people and provided bail for three asylum seekers. One of the asylum seekers is currently living in her house. Another member continues to give close support and practical help to an asylum seeker who was forced to flee to Eire.

Normally the group receives no financial support for this work and is using only contributions from members (currently about £200 in the account). One exception is an annual Boxing Day party (last year attended by 80 asylum seekers) which is supported by the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, the local authority and other interested parties. In collaboration with the local Amnesty International organisation, the group is now trying to get funding to set up a legal service for asylum seekers in Norwich as it has discovered that the available legal support in the city is currently very poor.

The group keeps in close contact with positive initiatives in Norwich on behalf of asylum seekers and immigrants. It has recently adopted a formal constitution and welcomes all newcomers who are prepared to accept the spirit of its work.

A Catholic Worker community in Oxford provides free board and lodging for three failed asylum seekers. Catholic Worker community in Hackney (Westminster) also provides accommodation for destitute asylum seekers in a house and a farm house. Community also runs a café, soup run and a drop in centre. Some east European migrants also take advantage of this service.

Visiting Detention / Removal Centres and Pastoral Support for Detainees

Immigration detention/removal centres are holding centres for foreign nationals waiting decisions on their asylum claims or waiting deportation following a failed application. Prior to 2002 there were two types of detention centre: the removal centre and the removal prison. The latter were much like prison facilities, with the aim being to impose restrictions on the movement of the detainees, so that the government could monitor their whereabouts whilst their claims are being processed. Indeed, some asylum seekers were and are actually held in prisons.

Since 2002, the government has been able to set up third type of centre for asylum seekers - the accommodation or reception centre. These new centres provide educative, health and leisure facilities and have advisory bodies to review their conditions. The reception centres aim to improve the management of the asylum system and to socialise and prepare immigrants for

acceptance into the wider community. Reception centres were introduced under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, and were part of a raft of measures designed to reform the asylum system in the UK. To date, only one reception centre is in operation, at Oakington near Cambridge. Part of the justification of the reception centre approach, described by the Home Office in 2001, was the need to improve dispersal of asylum seekers across the country, to take pressure off the South East and London, and to "help with the process of acceptance". Today, nine removal centres and one reception centre are in operation in the UK.

Parishioners from the dioceses of Arundel and Brighton, East Anglia, Portsmouth, Northampton, Southwark and Westminster are involved in visiting detainees in various centres - Yarl's Wood, Dover, Haslar, Tinsley House, Harmondsworth and Oakington.

As well as individual Catholics it is often members of Justice and Peace groups who join forces with secular and ecumenical detainee support groups to visit detainees on a regular basis. The support they are allowed to give is strictly befriending - they are unable to offer advice but can help liaise with lawyers who are dealing with cases and provide detainees with toiletries, phone cards and other practical help. Some visitor groups raise small funds to support this work while some rely mostly on their own resources. Chaplaincy teams have been set up at each centre to provide for the spiritual needs of all detainees, and several of the Catholic chaplains are from religious orders. In addition to pastoral provision, they also offer some practical help.

Ursuline Sisters, Dover

In Dover, Sr Dymphna, an Ursuline sister, along with a few parishioners, has been involved with refugees and asylum seekers since 1998, when together with the Rev Norman Setchell of the United Reformed Church she helped to set up a drop-in centre for immigrants in the town. Sr Dymphna is a volunteer with the Dover Detainee Visitor Group and also a trustee of the Group. Besides visiting the detainees in the Removal Centre, six or seven local Catholics help at the drop-in centre once a week, where they teach English, serve tea and biscuits and play games with the many young men who come for a break from their hostels. Sr Dymphna has visited and supported detainees from at least 24 countries. The Removal /Detainee Centre holds up to 316 detainees and the parish priest, aided by another religious and a parishioner are chaplains and help with the spiritual needs of the detainees.

Often there is a need for form filling and letter writing for migrant and refugee families and help with finding school places for the children. "Over the years we have made good friends with the asylum seekers and migrants. But I feel a lot more could be done by the Church!" says Sr Dymphna. She adds: "The removal centre can be very depressing. People are supposed to be held for a short time, but often it stretches into years. Through regular visits I have made friends, only to have my detainee whisked away without a chance to say goodbye. I have learnt so much about other countries and their cultures and benefited from the kindness and generosity demonstrated by these men we have locked away".

Sr Margaret Canny, also an Ursuline Sister, is one of the founding members of the Dover Detainees Visitor Group and has visited detainees from all over the world. She is also a member of the team of Catholic chaplains at the centre and takes part in multi-faith meetings. She previously worked in Ecuador and so speaks Spanish. She visits once a week and may telephone to check her detainee is well and she will also ring a solicitor if necessary. "We cannot get our detainees out of detention and I make this clear, but they seem to really appreciate someone who is just prepared to listen," says Sr Margaret.

A number of other Religious are serving as chaplains in other detention centres. For example, Sr Pat Robb (CJ) and one of the members of the Dominican Blackfriars community in Cambridge are

chaplains to the Oakington reception centre, and a member of one other religious order is a chaplain at Harmondsworth and Colnbrook detention centres.

Support for detainees has to be flexible and respond to needs as they arise. For example, in one parish in North London (Sacred Heart, Kilburn) a woman came to the church with two children looking for help. It turned out that the children's mother had been placed in a detention centre and the parish responded by giving money to the woman who was caring for the children in her stead.

For more good practice examples in this area please see Appendix 1.

5.2 Economic Migrants

As mentioned before, we found that in the case of economic migrants support and help very often tends to be provided on an informal basis, either by parish priest, by a few parishioners or Religious, volunteering their time without access to any funding or other resources. This kind of support is usually provided in the following areas.

Language Provision

Poor proficiency in English and difficulties with communicating and providing pastoral care in migrants' languages is an issue which has been frequently mentioned by priests we interviewed. It is not unusual to have migrant children with native and English skills translating both at school, for other children, and in church for parents. Poles, other East Europeans and Portuguese migrants are among those who need help with language the most, although in some cases it also applies to Malayalam speaking Indian, Tagalog speaking Filipino and French speaking African migrants.

In terms of language improvement, most of the surveyed parishes offer language classes by parishioners who volunteer and cover associated expenses from parish resources. These classes tend to be provided on informal basis without certification.

Patricia became involved with helping migrants 3 years ago when she first met a young Polish boy in the parish at Bridlington. As she had worked as a tutor, she invited this boy's father to learn English, and he in turn invited a Slovak friend to join. They met (and still meet) at her house for lessons, although now she is assisted by 3 volunteers from the SVP, one of who worked as a special needs teacher. Another one is a retired English teacher. They have ordered books from Amazon, and are now slightly more organised than when she first began. They only have about 3 students at a time, largely because her bungalow is too small for any more than that. Besides the English lessons, she and the other volunteers help to arrange things such as dental appointments, etc. Patricia has visited Poland twice to see the families that she and her SVP members have befriended.

St Mellitus parish in Finsbury Park (Westminster) mobilised six volunteers who teach weekly classes attended by about 12 people.

Some parishes contribute by paying the teachers or providing premises. In the Immaculate Conception parish in Stroud (Clifton), English lessons were organised with a local college, where a tutor taught once a week. However, after the college pulled out as the numbers were too small to justify continuing the classes, the parish took over funding this project and hired the same tutor to come back and continue privately. The Holy Rosary parish in Marylebone (Westminster) hosts

language classes for hotel workers organised by London Citizens, with about 20 migrants attending once a week.

Especially valuable is initiative of those parishioners who can draw on their contacts to access qualified help for this purpose. For example, in Stowmarket (East Anglia), one of the members of the Pastoral Council has initiated teaching English as a second language at a local school on Sunday afternoons.

When language provision 'in-house' is not feasible, some parishes refer migrants to outside help. For example, in Brixton Hill (Southwark Diocese), a parishioner rings different agencies and arranges classes for people who want to improve or start to learn English.

It is often ethnic communities that organise language classes for their members in collaboration with ethnic chaplaincies. For example, a large Brazilian community in London provides language classes at the two churches served by Brazilian chaplains - Our Lady in Willesden (two volunteers teach about 40 migrants twice a week) and St Anne's on Underwood Road (six volunteers teach about 30-40 people six days a week). Romanian community in London have organised language teaching at St Sebastian's parish in Kingsbury, where Romanian chaplain resides. Two short sessions taught by a volunteer and attended by about 25 people take place every Sunday morning before the Mass. Polish Jesuits based in Willesden Green (London) host English classes for Polish migrants.

Several religious orders, such as the Ursulines, have historically served the community through education in schools. This tradition has received a new focus in England and Wales today, namely teaching English to those who speak other languages.

Sr Thomasina O'Driscoll, Gwent, South Wales (Cardiff Diocese)

Sr Thomasina (Sisters of St Joseph of Annecy) is a retired teacher who was involved for some time as a voluntary helper teaching ESOL to refugees at the local adult education centre. Three years ago there was a sharp rise in the number of Eastern Europeans coming to All Saints Parish, Newport. Many of the migrants arriving had poor English language skills, and so were unable to get jobs for which they were otherwise qualified. Sr Thomasina decided to offer English classes and placed an advertisement in the church bulletin. At the beginning, only a handful of Polish, Slovaks and other East Europeans showed up. Now they regularly meet once a week in the parish hall for about 2.5 hours and learn grammar, conversation, comprehension and composition, as well as share news from home. She even has them read newspaper articles to learn about what is going on in their host country.

Despite the fact that many do not particularly need the classes anymore, they continue to come back simply because they want to and feel welcome in this place. For two and a half years, Sr Thomasina worked alone, but for the past six months another retired teacher has helped by offering a beginners' class for those newcomers who need rudimentary skills. According to Sr Thomasina, these classes not only help the immigrants with practical language skills, but also help to integrate the young people into the wider community through socialisation.

Other religious orders offering language classes to migrants, refugees and/or asylum seekers include the Daughters of Jesus, the Brentwood Ursulines, the Canonesses of the Holy Sepulchre (in Chelmsford prison), the Sisters of the Cross and Passion, and the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

It should be noted however that language classes often attract lower numbers of migrants than expected due to long tiring shifts, which leads to a vicious circle: in our previous study, we found

a direct correlation between proficiency in English and hourly pay which is in turn negatively correlated with the number of hours a person works per week (The Ground of Justice 2007). Improving the language however seems to be the most effective way out of this circle, not to mention that it could help migrants to fight exploitation and defend their working rights by accessing the relevant information and, for example, by joining the unions.

A few parishes emphasised the need to have access to representatives of various ethnic communities not only for liaison purposes but also to resort to their language skills. Some congregations are well organised in this respect. For instance, St Hugh's in Lincoln (Nottingham) has a list of people – mostly parishioners – who speak different languages and can help with interpreting. The list includes Polish, Hindu, Bulgarian, Portuguese, Italian, Russian, Tamil and other languages.

Language is often a barrier leading to migrants failing to access Catholic schools, either because they miss admission deadlines or are not aware of the availability of schools, especially on secondary level. To address this issue, in one parish, a bilingual Polish assistant was asked to translate an explanation of the fact that not all schools in England are Catholic, as they are in Poland for the local Catholic churches to include it in their parish newsletter. As another language-related issue is migrants' confusion about the churches in Britain, a parish in Middlesbrough has put up a notice in Polish confirming that this is indeed a Catholic church!

Advice and Guidance

Help on Individual Level

With exception of several drop in centres mentioned in the previous chapter, very often help of this kind is provided by several parishioners or clergy without major funding or formal structures. As one Dean summarised it, 'support given in smaller communities would often be informal, pastoral and sensitively handled'.

A parish in Menevia helps economic migrants, particularly the Romanians who have limited rights to work in England and Wales, to set up bank accounts, find cheap vehicles and/or accommodation as well as provides them with information about the local school. Brook Green parish in Westminster is helping migrants applying for UK citizenship, which entails countersigning the application as well as tutoring for citizenship test.

Our Lady of the Assumption parish in Rhyl (Wrexham) holds an informal weekly drop in session in the presbytery on Friday mornings where people are given advice and relevant help over the cup of tea. To develop this informal initiative further, the parish is in the process of setting up a drop in centre for migrants in collaboration with the local residents centre to address the most pressing needs such as jobs and language.

We were moved by the fact that help often comes from the already overstretched clergy. In Newcastle Diocese, one priest himself helps migrants to find work, and accompanies them to mortgage related and other appointments so that they understand what they are getting themselves into. Some clergy in Plymouth Diocese help with individual cases, for example when migrant workers have a problem with papers. A priest in Southwark Diocese holds a weekly surgery where he tries to sort out the problems of those who have overstayed their visas and those who are in the country 'irregularly'. Another priest in the Diocese most weeks talks to someone who needs assistance with immigration issues.

Providing such help does put a significant pressure on the clergy. One of the priests in Westminster Diocese noted: ‘when you compare my job as a priest to that of a social worker, you can see why it is so daunting. A typical social worker has about six cases in his area, whereas I have 300 to care for, as well as the administrative and other work.’

It is not unusual for parish priests to advise migrants on how to enrol their children into Catholic schools. A priest in Menevia has put together a leaflet addressing these issues (and others, such as visa changes) and made it available to other parishes to post on their notice boards. Some clergy thought that ‘the schools need to be more aggressive in opening their doors and attracting migrants. Many Catholic migrants don’t know about RC schools, they think they are private. If children do not get into RC primary school they are very unlikely to get to a RC secondary school and to make their First Communion, and perhaps they will be lost for ever.’ (A priest from Southwark Diocese).

Networking and Referrals

We found in a few cases that either the parish priest or the deacon serves as a main contact point for migrants, directing them to relevant agencies and help. A striking example of such networking is Rev Peter Glanville, Deacon of St Mary’s Catholic Parish in Great Yarmouth. Being a Chaplain with the Industrial Mission he has extensive ecumenical relationships and contacts in industry and with the trade unions (including Bernard Matthews poultry factories). This enables him to help migrants he meets in the parish and elsewhere with a variety of social problems by referring them to relevant agencies and organisations. He has also drawn extensively on his network of contacts developed during his previous work as a journalist for the BBC. Another Deacon, who used to be part of the fire brigade and has extensive contacts in the community, refers migrants to jobs and helps with other practical needs (Nottingham Diocese). Sometimes referral is the only solution due to the language barrier – when Polish migrants approached the parish priest in Wembley Park (Westminster Diocese), he directed them to the Polish Jesuits located in the neighbouring area.

A number of clergy are engaged in actively liaising with various agencies, police, Citizens Advice Bureau, social and health services, benefits agencies and other parishes involved in helping migrants.

Befriending

Advice and help with practical everyday matters sometimes is a by-product of various parish groups. For example, in Brixton Hill parish of Southwark Diocese, women attending the Mother and Toddler group are helping a number of migrant women without English with their children’s homework, filling in various forms, shopping and practical information, for example how to get a bus pass. This often develops into a long-term relationship, with local women befriending these families to help them get settled before they move on to help another newcomer. In Brook Green parish (Westminster Diocese), the Legion of Mary members – many of whom are migrants themselves – visit new arrivals (not necessarily Catholics) of whom they learn through referrals, befriend them and ‘explain the country’.

Some parishes are waking up to the new reality and are in the process of starting groups aimed specifically at helping migrants:

In Our Lady and St James Parish (Wrexham Diocese) Verena Davis has been working to get together a team of representatives from various groups: the Catholic school (as 50% of children at the school are migrants), the welcoming team in the parish, the Polish community (300 estimated in Bangor) and the Filipino community. They do not plan on providing any social services, but rather see themselves as purely befrienders. She envisions that parishioners would volunteer to take people to appointments, to meet with them on a weekly basis, and to maybe direct them to agencies and other help when the need arose. There might also be a need for helping with language. She hopes that such a group could help to overcome isolation that many migrants feel when they arrive. There is also the hope that they could work closely with the numerous activities that the wider community engage in.

Befriending is the most common type of support from members of religious orders.

Sr Emilia Birck, a Brazilian Daughter of Divine Charity in Swaffham (East Anglia), works 12 hours a day, 7 days a week to help Portuguese-speaking migrants with both pastoral and social needs. Sr Emilia utilises her language abilities to translate the order of Mass and the readings into Portuguese and also to prepare migrants for the various sacraments. Most of the new arrivals have nothing when they come, so Sr Emilia provides them with clothes, furniture, pillows, duvets, etc. She provides for all, irrespective of their religion. When migrants are able to take time from their long shifts, she teaches them some basic English. If someone needs to go to the doctor, she often accompanies him or her on the trip to assist in whatever way she can.

Communities of Help

Some migrant populations take care of themselves either via more or less formal structures or through expression of solidarity and community spirit which is especially strong in Asian and African cultures. For example, in Stratford parish (Brentwood Diocese), a number of self-help groups that help newcomers from specific communities have been set up. Currently there are Nigerian, Ghanaian and Filipino groups and a new East European group is being established. They offer friendship and pool of information about housing and work. A Polish Association in Hull, set up with help by the local parish and the parish priest, is one of the best practice examples in this area¹¹. Ethnic Catholic Associations – Ghanaian, Nigerian and others – also act as a resource for help which is used by members of these ethnic groups (Our Lady of Wilsden, Westminster Diocese, various parishes in Southwark).

In Leeds, a Church-related Polish group is helping migrants with information on workers' rights. They are publishing a Polish newsletter which Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission is featuring on their website. St Mary of the Angels parish priest in Cardiff Diocese has arranged with three Polish parishioners to set up a 'helpline' for Polish migrants where they could call for advice / information and to talk about the 'abusive' work situations some of them are in.

The Sudanese community from Birmingham and beyond have formed links with the Catholic parish in Balsall Heath (St John and St Martin). The parish provides premises for community's weekly meetings attended by 60-100 people. Members of the community are involved in the Midlands Refugee Council. In 1998, in response to the man-made famine, they organised a charity called the Sudan Emergency Relief Fund to mobilise ten tons of relief materials for the famine-stricken areas in Southern Sudan.

¹¹ For a complete case study see www.ruralcommunities.org.uk

Maintaining a local focus, some ethnic self-help groups seem to lack collaboration and networking – for example, there are many Eritrean groups throughout England and Wales offering social support, but they are not networked in any way, leaving their work somewhat sporadic.

Help with Finding Jobs and Accommodation

The majority of the clergy we interviewed thought that most of the economic migrants are employed, with exception of some cases. For example, in Filipino and Kerala families it is often the wife who is the main breadwinner employed in health care, while some husbands struggle to find a job. A number of East European migrants, especially older men, also struggle to find employment and end up resorting to help from homeless projects.

Although this is not very common, a few parishes help migrants to find employment on case to case basis. The Newark parish in Nottingham Diocese, for example, provided a Polish man with a decorating job, so that he could send money to his family back in Poland. This was hugely appreciated by his daughter who keeps sending emails of gratitude. Some other parishes have employed migrants to do odd jobs around the church or provided financial support to those in temporary jobs.

Another way of helping is through Church's networking with the wider community. We have already mentioned drop in centres and clergy serving as networking hubs. This also applies to jobs and accommodation. To give another example, a parish priest in Carlisle (Lancaster Diocese) was able to help more than one migrant to get a job:

A local firm went bankrupt and 12 Polish workers were suddenly without work and had been unpaid for 3 months. They came to the parish priest asking for help, and he was able to put them in touch with an employment agency he knew. Within a week, all of them had jobs. Father believes it is this type of informal networking that seems to work best for now, as the Polish migrants naturally look to the Church for help and leadership.

Sometimes help comes from local Catholics through their involvement in relevant businesses. In a Middlesbrough parish, a parishioner runs a labour recruiting agency which has helped some migrant parishioners to find work. Serving as a trustworthy bridge with the local community, clergy are also approached by migrants for job references.

Finally, some parishes advertise migrants' labour and include information in various languages on jobs and accommodation as well as local services and channels of help in their parish newsletters, as it is done in Hatfield (Westminster).

In some cases, migrants are offered accommodation in premises owned by the Church or religious orders. For example, Scalabrini Fathers in London run two hostels, one of which is for women. It has 24 flats containing two rooms and a kitchen and is occupied mostly by Italian women who come to London to work and learn English. They stay in the hostel from 1 month up to a year.

Emergency Help

Help to the most vulnerable who are in need of clothes, food and financial support sometimes comes from parish SVP and J&P groups who support migrants in great difficulties. Some parishes provided loans for people to go back to their country for funerals or to get a separated family

member to the UK. Justice and Peace representatives from local parishes and a Catholic Worker Community in London are helping those in need in East London. We have already mentioned the example of Camden Town parish in London helping with school uniforms and fees.

A few priests stressed that in these situations providing help to vulnerable people should be balanced with not creating a dependency culture and not hurting people's dignity.

Whether employed or not, as one priest in Westminster Diocese put it, 'many migrants are highly vulnerable people who look up to Church for help. The level of begging in our area is huge. In addition to economic hardship, another painful issue is their irregular status.'

At the same time, migrants themselves make civic contribution to establishing social justice in their communities and the wider world. For example, St James's parish in Reading (Portsmouth Diocese) with 56 nationalities and over 50 per cent of the congregation with roots outside the UK is supporting two communities in Africa as well as two social welfare projects locally with migrants playing a leading role in this charitable activity. It is not unusual for more established migrants to volunteer in church projects helping the more vulnerable, like rough sleepers, from the indigenous population.

Awakening to the new times and new needs, many parishes and religious communities are responding to the needs of economic migrants in the ways that they find possible and appropriate to the situation. Networking and contacts with the local community are often an important resource for providing help.

5.3 Involvement in Ecumenical and Secular Projects

The Catholic Church is involved in a number of ecumenical and secular initiatives or projects, as some clergy and religious pointed out that 'it is best to join already existing ecumenical projects with substantial funding, facilities and manpower'. We identified parishes and Religious Orders that support projects set up by other organisations or churches by fundraising, donating food and other items, volunteering and providing premises. In some cases the Church participates in the ecumenical projects on the Diocesan level. In other instances, she joins forces with other churches and agencies to run specific projects as one of the partners.

It should be noted that we believe there to be even more ecumenical and secular initiatives providing support to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers where Catholics play an important role, especially by working as employees or volunteers, or by contributing donations. Also, individual Catholics were instrumental in setting up a number of such projects, some examples of which are mentioned below. (For details about all collaborative work please refer to the map).

Ecumenical Initiatives

The project presented below is one of the most well-known ecumenical asylum seeker support projects not only in Birmingham, but also nationally. It is backed by the Church on the diocesan

level and relies on significant funding from various trusts as well as Catholic Religious Orders and parishes.

Restore (Birmingham)

Restore is an example of an ecumenical initiative that has been successful in supporting asylum seekers and mobilising volunteers from across Birmingham. It enjoys the support of all the major church leaders in the city. Sr Darryll Candy (La Retraite) is treasurer of Restore and Archbishop Vincent Nichols is on the board of trustees of Birmingham Churches Together – the ecumenical body responsible for the project.

Restore was started in 1999, when churches in the Ladywood and Edgbaston area saw the need and were motivated to take action. Up to that point, most asylum seekers had been accommodated in London and the South East, but a new government policy of dispersal has led to a significant increase in new arrivals in Birmingham. Since October 2000, Restore has become a project of Birmingham Churches Together. Fr James Fleming from St Catherine's RC parish used to be one of the trustees but had to retire due to the pressure of parish work. The project coordinator, Jeremy Thompson says he gets a good response from Catholic churches but volunteers are not broken down into faith groups, so it is impossible to know the exact number of Catholics involved.

Restore's key activities are:

- *Befriending asylum seekers on a one-to-one basis. There are around 70 volunteers from all churches who are involved in this activity. Restore gets about 100 asylum seekers a year referred to them from various agencies across the city;*
- *Hosting social activities for families and adults, including holidays in the summer for families with children (about 150 individuals take part annually);*
- *Raising awareness within the host community, especially through the church network;*
- *Working together with other refugee agencies. Restore shares a building with a (secular) advice agency which can deal with legal problems;*
- *Advocating on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers.*

Restore also provides support and training to parish groups that wish to set up projects to help asylum seekers.

Until recently the funding for its work (£87,000 last year) came from Big Lottery fund but now it comes from a range of sources. Archbishop Nichols backed Restore's recent fund raising campaign which has managed to mobilise funds from the Quakers, Tudor Trust, Religious Orders and individual parishes. One Catholic parish in Birmingham Diocese has taken on Restore as its main fundraising activity.

Another ecumenical project is of a smaller scale, however it fills the gap in the area of so much needed welcoming and support to migrant workers. Moreover, it shows what can be done with relatively little resources and thus easily replicated elsewhere.

Let's Talk

The project is a partnership between Bridging Arts and the West Cornwall Faith Forum, and the Catholic Church is one of the participating faith groups.

The driving force behind the project was Susan Roberts from Bridging Arts and Rev Andrew Yates from the Anglican diocese of Truro. Susan Roberts is the daughter of a farmer and became aware that the local people knew nothing about migrants who picked their flowers, fruit and vegetable. "We live alongside

these workers, work the same land and often share the same faith,” said Rev Andrew Yates. “Churches would like to reach out to them and offer them hospitality.”

To help faith leaders and congregations, the West Cornwall Faith Forum has worked with growers, the workers and local residents to produce a free pack of printed resources, to encourage churches to stage an event or simply open their doors at agreed times for migrant workers to worship and get help. For example, on Saturday nights a church hall in Camborne is always open and provides access to computers, washing machines and a place to sit and chat. The workers live in caravans and there is just one washing machine for 500 workers on one site, so access to launderette facilities is highly appreciated.

The project provides an Introduction to Cornwall in various languages, and because the project sees Let’s Talk! as a two-way process, information sheets in English are also produced about the countries that the migrant workers come from. For example there is an introduction to Lithuania. Small postcards with welcoming phrases in various languages have been distributed, mainly through churches, around the area.

The project had produced a ‘How To’ leaflet for faith leaders and congregations with useful suggestions for staging welcoming evenings and providing facilities useful for migrant workers such as internet access. Also the leaflet contains information on how to involve businesses in supporting migrants. The first welcome evening in Falmouth was held at St Mary’s Catholic Church and was a great success.

Catholics often collaborate with local Churches Together partnerships, both on individual and institutional level.

KLARS (King’s Lynn Area Resettlement Support)

About eight years ago, Chris Lindley, a member of the Our Lady Catholic parish in King’s Lynn (East Anglia), sat down with an Anglican vicar to discuss possible ways of helping about 70 Russian speaking asylum seekers in the area. They decided to set up an informal support group through Churches Together in King’s Lynn which eventually gained a charitable status and started working independently as KLARS. Chris is now a chairman of KLARS, and all board members are Christians. KLARS provides advice and information for migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees in their own languages. As well as the multilingual website, there are five drop-in sessions every week, where newcomers can get information in English, Portuguese, Russian, Polish and Lithuanian. The project helps about 380 people a month with form filling, tax claims, advice, language classes etc. Over the winter, Chris Lindley wrote a leaflet ‘Migrant Workers in West Norfolk’ that was published by Churches Together in 7,000 copies. Its key aim was to raise awareness and reduce prejudice against migrants.

Secular Asylum and Refugee Projects

Many Catholics join existing secular projects, especially in parts of the country where they are numerically a small part of the community. In the Diocese of Plymouth, a number of parishes support the work of the Devon and Cornwall Refugee Support Council. They make a regular commitment to collect food for destitute asylum seekers which is distributed through DCRSC.

The Justice and Peace Commission in the Clifton Diocese is a corporate member of GARAS (Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) which was started through Church of England Social Responsibility arm. JPC raises money to give to GARAS each year. GARAS has also received financial support from Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish as well as from Our Lady of Lourdes in Newent.

As mentioned before, it is especially common for members of Religious Orders to volunteer with secular and ecumenical projects, very often without emphasising their membership in the Catholic community.

Sr Ruth (Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul) main work is with Asylum Justice, a totally volunteer-led organisation that provides free legal advice and representation to failed asylum seekers in Cardiff, Swansea and Newport. The premises used for this endeavour belong to the United Reform Church in Cardiff, the Quakers in Swansea, and until recently the Catholic Church and Salvation Army buildings housed the Newport service (now it moved to the Refugee Council).

Sr Ruth is also involved in developing a drop-in centre that provides a safe and comfortable space for asylum seekers and others to spend time. The centre is based in a room which has been provided by the Trinity Methodist Church. Local churches are collecting food and toiletries for the Red Cross, based in the same part of the building. She hopes that more partnering and coordinating can take place between the churches, the Red Cross and the local drop-in centre.

Together with two other concerned individuals, as an unconstituted group, they will soon make available a house for destitute asylum seekers. This venture is made possible by the generosity of the house owner, supported by the De Paul Trust but will be funded largely by local Churches of various denominations and managed by a small group.

Partnership with Local Authorities and Other Agencies

In some cases local authorities and other Churches see the Catholic Church as a valuable partner with access to large migrant groups. For example, the Holy Cross parish in Eastleigh has been contacted by the Borough Council about the premises for a drop-in centre for migrants as well as for people with mental health problems, including ethnic minorities.

Migrant Workers Support Network, which was recently set up in Leeds by Unite (formerly TGWU) to defend migrant workers' rights, has made contacts with Diocesan J&P Commissions in Leeds and Sheffield and hopes to collaborate with the Catholic Church as it develops its work. Currently, the Network's key partner in the Catholic community is the Polish community in Leeds.

Ryedale Together (Middlesbrough)

In 2004, Fr Tim Bywater's parish (St Leonard and Mary in Malton) noticed large numbers of single people under the age of 30 coming from Central and Eastern Europe for any work they could find, most of whom speak little English and have trouble accessing services in the district. He and others spoke to Ryedale District Council and to Ryedale Voluntary Action (RVA).

The Ryedale Together Forum has been meeting quarterly to discuss issues and access to services for black and minority ethnic groups in the Ryedale area. The group is comprised of representatives from agencies and organisations who have an interest in, or who can offer solutions to, some of the problems and issues being faced by minority ethnic groups in the district (Ryedale District Council, Ryedale Housing Association, Citizens Advice Bureau, Health Visitors and the Police).

Ryedale Together Forum sought funding for and employed a Polish Engagement Worker, working through RVA, to help to deal with some of the problems the Polish community were experiencing. Funding for this work was obtained from the District Council and County Council as well as from the Community Safety Partnership and the Churches Regional Commission for Yorkshire and the Humber.

Ewelina Rooke took up the post of Engagement Worker in January 2007. One of her first tasks, in response to a specific request from the Polish community, was to arrange Mass in Polish (with the Polish Chaplain from Hull) at Sts Leonard and Mary Church in Malton twice a month. Attendance varied between 15 and 60 people. There is a social event afterwards with tea and coffee, which enables the community to interact and helps Ewelina meet people and find out about their experiences and issues. Ewelina also helped agencies put together a "welcome pack" for Polish people, with advice on services and information on life in the UK and more specifically Ryedale, such as bin emptying days, registering for healthcare, or school information. She offers support where needed: help with understanding benefits, help with finding a flat, etc. She also partners with the schools with regard to Polish culture and traditions.

For more good practice examples, see Appendix 1.

A New Role for the Church?

While the work done by many priests, parishes and religious, either on their own or in partnership with other organisations, is truly commendable, more could be done by our Church on the institutional level both in terms of uncovering the needs of migrants and responding to them with the allocation of fresh resources, policies and know-how. This would indeed empower those members of the Catholic community who are aware of the need but expect help and guidance to be able to respond to it in the most effective ways, making the Church truly a home away from home.

Our witness gives us credibility, showing we care for them as people - regardless of their legal status they have rights as human beings. They should have freedom to work, freedom from violence and exploitation. What is needed in every diocese are one-stop information centres for all migrants as most migrants from Eastern Europe turn to the Church for help and protection. While there are numbers of refugee support projects, migrants need more help and information on such things as transport, schools and services. Churches should be like multiplex cinemas offering services, both pastoral and social, in different languages. The Church cannot divorce pastoral, social and advocacy work. (A priest from Southwark Diocese)

6. Church's Involvement in Advocacy

In addition to engaging in practical social action, the Church and its individual members are involved in advocacy, campaigning and lobbying MPs on behalf of asylum seekers and migrants.

Campaigning

National campaigns regarding asylum seekers rely on grass roots support including that of local churches.

The Living Ghosts campaign was set up by Church Action on Poverty and was launched in December 2005 with a statement by the Anglican Archbishop of York and 45 other bishops and church leaders, including nine Catholic Bishops. The group declared that “it is inhumane and unacceptable that some people seeking asylum are left homeless and destitute by government policies.”

The campaign has been successful in mobilising support at all levels across the churches. Its basic message is that failed asylum seekers should not be left destitute and should be given the right to work. More than 40 Catholic parishes have been involved in various initiatives instigated by the Living Ghosts campaign over the past two years. According to the Living Ghosts organiser, some SVP and J&P groups have been drawn to the campaign through the practical help they give asylum seekers. Many also believe that government policy needs to change in order to stop the destitution of failed asylum seekers. The dioceses of Hallam and Clifton have been particularly supportive of this campaign.

Church Leaders' Statement that Launched the Living Ghosts Campaign

“We believe that it is inhuman and unacceptable that some people seeking asylum are left homeless and destitute by government policies. Every city has people destitute or living on food parcels because they have no means of support. We support Church Action on Poverty's call to change the policies that make refused asylum seekers destitute. As a society we have international moral and legal responsibilities to welcome those fleeing adversity from other parts of the world and to provide social security. But the threat of destitution is being used as a way of pressuring refused asylum seekers to leave the country. There are many people seeking asylum who have their cases refused but have no safe route to return or whose travel documents cause logistical problems for removal. There are also many cases where people are unjustly refused asylum. All those within our borders - including people seeking asylum - should have the opportunity to help themselves and society through paid employment. Where this is not possible people seeking asylum, whatever their status, should be given the necessary rights to “food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services” (UN Declaration of Human Rights). Refused asylum seekers are still human, and deserve to be treated the same, as we would expect if we had to flee to another country. We should offer the respect to our neighbours that we expect ourselves. This is at the heart of the Christian faith, and of many other religions.

We therefore call on the Government to allow people seeking asylum to sustain themselves and contribute to wider society through paid work, and where this is not possible, to re-instate 'refused' asylum seekers' entitlement to benefits until such time as they may be removed.”

The Church has also spoken on behalf of migrants both on the diocesan and the parish level. To show support for migrants, the Church has celebrated two Masses presided over by the Cardinal

and bishops in Westminster Cathedral, followed by a joint march with London Citizens to support 'Strangers into Citizens' and 'Living Wage' campaigns.

Mgr John Armitage, Vicar General of Brentwood Diocese, is a founding leader of The East London Communities Organisation (TELCO) which is now part of the city-wide alliance of over 80 civil society groups that belong to London Citizens. Mgr Armitage has brought a number of parishes into active membership of this broader alliance which campaigns on a range of issues, including 'Living wage' and 'Strangers into Citizens' campaigns.

Support for these campaigns has spread to other dioceses across the country. Following the 'Strangers into Citizens' March in London, Rochdale parish in Salford Diocese organised a similar event with the march from the local school to the church followed by a Mass. The event, calling for the national law which would allow migrants to work, was attended by about eighty people and the Mayor.

At a Mass to which the Mayor and Local MP had been invited, a priest in the Southwark Diocese publicly called for an Amnesty locally and nationally. This appeal was greeted by spontaneous applause from the congregation. This same priest sends migrants in need to the local MP and to various offices of the local authority.

Responding to Exploitation

Sometimes the initiative on advocacy comes from ethnic chaplaincies and associations. For example, in Clifton, Menevia, Birmingham and other Dioceses, an area of enormous concern is Filipino migrants who work as nurses or care assistants and are viewed by employers as easily 'expendable' when something goes wrong. Besides carers often fail to have their work permits renewed and so are forced to leave the country with their families. A chaplain to the Filipino nursing community in the Birmingham Diocese brought the issue of their exploitation to the attention of the Deanery, which agreed that measures have to be taken. Another priest in Menevia has interceded on behalf of Filipino carers with the Home Office and has spoken to a local MP on their behalf. In Rhyl (Wrexham), the parish is engaged in a national campaign to stop the deportation of twenty parishioners back to the Philippines because they were affected by the change of rules of the Border and Immigration Department.

Another vulnerable group are migrants from Romania who recently joined the EU but whose citizens face restrictions on labour mobility. One of the Deans in Northampton Diocese has written to the local MP about the working restrictions placed on Romanians, expressing concern about their discrimination in getting jobs. We have already mentioned the successful advocacy efforts of the SVP Conference from St Leonards. These are just a few examples of the Church standing up for those who cannot defend themselves.

We heard numerous other anecdotes of migrants' exploitation across the country. In Bristol, for example, many Polish workers get employment through agencies that skim off the top - if a worker should be getting paid £10/hour, he or she only might see £7 of that or less. According to a priest in Middlesbrough, 'Poles are treated like cogs in the machine and have great insecurity at work as they can simply be uprooted and dismissed without pay'. Even being employed by Catholics does not seem to ensure justice - when approached by a parish priest, one of the parishioners employing a few Poles 'simply shrugged and said that both sides were benefiting from the partnership'. In Rhyl, parishioners are helping with food and other basic needs six Filipinos who came to work in care homes 50 hours a week. In addition to having to pay £7,000 to

the agency in Philippines, they must pay £350 a month rent to the employer. According to a number of clergy we interviewed, exploitation including long hours may be one of the reasons the parishes do not see more migrants at Mass.

Recognising the plight of many migrant workers, and not only 'irregular' ones, individual priests and parishioners as well as entire parishes come to the rescue and defence of those exploited by the employers. Sometimes help is provided spontaneously, after the parishes learn about individuals experiencing unfair pay or work and living conditions. In Sudbury parish (East Anglia Diocese), parishioners helped two migrant workers in 'slave labour' with accommodation and finding another job. Parishioners in Portsmouth Diocese tried to help Slovaks and other nationalities employed in nursing homes under terrible conditions.

After learning about the exploitative practices in one of the factories near London, the Lithuanian Chaplain, in collaboration with London Citizens and the media, played instrumental role in improving work and pay conditions for migrant workers.

However, the effectiveness of such help is often affected by fear of migrants to stand for themselves as this may lead to being 'punished' by the employers.

Fr Philip Scanlan's parish in Loughborough, and especially his fellow priest Fr Charles Sormany have done a lot to help migrants working in the city – Filipinos and Kerala Indians. These people have been brought to the country by their local agencies who, for a significant charge, promised them work in the NHS. However they ended up in home care and residential homes instead on a very low pay. Fr Charles and one parishioner, a Filipino migrant herself but married to a UK citizen, try to help these people to defend their rights by putting them in touch with Race Relations agency and unions, namely UNISON in London. However, Filipino migrants are afraid to fight for their rights because of fear to lose their jobs and work permits. As a result, rather few migrants turned up to a local rally, not least because they and their families were threatened by their agents in the UK and their business partners in their home countries. (Nottingham Diocese)

Raising Awareness

Another issue which clergy feel is important is 'conversion of people's minds and hearts'. As one of the Deans put it, 'one of the important roles Church could play is to use the opportunity to educate people about the misconceptions regarding migrants including current media hype about them overtaking local schools and hospitals'. This view very much reiterates the expectations of the Catholic community expressed by the Catholic agencies and members of Religious Orders.

Priests are in a special position with a captive audience on Sundays to clarify peoples' misunderstandings about asylum seekers and refugees. One priest in Middlesborough has asked several parishioners to speak about their experience as refugees or asylum seekers, their reasons for coming to the UK and how they find life here. These testimonies are poignant and eye-opening exercises for local people. It is also a way of breaking through the misconceptions and the prejudices that exist even within faith communities.

To bring migrants' needs to the attention of the Church, Westminster Diocese Justice and Peace Commission will hold a day for J & P groups attended by London Citizens and a Barking MP, among others. It also agreed to take on concern for migrants in its leaflets.

On a national level, National Justice and Peace Network is organising a conference on Church and Migration which will take place in summer 2009.

7. Looking for Guidance and Support from the Church

Having established the extent to which the Church is involved in care for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers on a parish level, we also felt it was important to ask what support could be provided by the Dioceses and the Church. Below are the key issues and trends which emerged.

Strategy and Vision

A number of priests called for a clear vision and ‘overarching strategy’ on how to respond to the new times:

A policy on migrants is needed: for example, how often they should be given a possibility to have Mass in native language, some guidelines on how to respond to their needs best, etc. Some joint agreement between all Bishops should be reached on the issue. (Nottingham)

There is no structure in the Church to turn to.

It would be wonderful if the institutional church could do more.

The clergy feel the need for collective response is high. One priest stressed that ‘*the focus of the Church must change as it is increasingly becoming a missionary Church, serving multifaceted and fluid congregations.*’

Encouragement and Practical Support

Clergy in a number of Dioceses pointed out that their Bishops had made explicit steps to stress the importance of the new challenges presented by migration and called upon churches to be better aware and more welcoming to migrants, asylum seekers and refugees (Birmingham, Clifton, East Anglia, Hexham & Newcastle, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Shrewsbury, Westminster). Portsmouth Diocese, Archdiocese of Birmingham and Leeds Diocese have printed leaflets or sent letters explaining to migrants the system of Catholic schools. Portsmouth Diocese has also encouraged parish priests to do blessing of the food on Holy Saturday for Polish communities. Clifton Diocese pledged to produce diocesan guidelines for welcoming and supporting migrants, refugees and asylum seekers by 2009.

At the same time, a number of clergy expressed the need for more practical help, for example with language, in terms of church material (Mass sheets, prayer books, Scripture, readings, information on ethnic chaplaincies, etc.) and welcoming signs, especially in rarer languages such as Tagalog, Malayalam. Another concern is the need for more information or signposting on issues around the law and housing and how it relates to migrants and refugees (Arundel & Brighton).

Some clergy had very specific ideas on the kind of support they expect from the Diocese. For example:

A list of priests with language skills and cultural knowledge of the new Catholic ethnic groups would be helpful. At times of death, illness and family crisis it would be good to get the services of a priest/lay person who had specific language and pastoral skills. It would also be useful to have a

calendar of important dates that were significant to migrant catholic communities. This would make new communities feel more welcome and integrated into parish life. (Arundel and Brighton).

Formation and Training

The priests we interviewed almost unanimously agreed about the lack of training and formation, both at the seminary level and on an ongoing basis. This is especially the case with languages, cultural differences, infrastructure of support for migrants, social ministries, relevant aspects of law, and the social sciences. For example, a priest from Menevia suggested a '101' course on traditions from other cultures and cultural differences.

One priest in Clifton Diocese pointed out the importance of preparation and ongoing formation for all clergy, regardless whether they are currently dealing with migration or not. Moreover, 'the most crucial place for preparation is in the handover process from one priest to another in a parish. Perhaps pastoral assistants should be trained to work with specific groups within parishes - taught language, etc.'

Raising Awareness and Building Knowledge

One of the key roles that the Church should play, we have been told by a few priests, is fighting prejudice against the newcomers to this country.

The Church should stand against racism, and preach the Gospel of inclusion. It is important to develop a real understanding that the enrichment of the Church by these people is crucial in a vibrant and healthy "Ecclesia". (East Anglia)

One of the important roles Church could play is to use the opportunity to educate people about the misconceptions regarding migrants including current media hype about them overtaking local schools and hospitals. (Westminster)

There is also a feeling that the Church should keep identifying key challenges presented by migration as well as the areas with significant presence of migrants. In relation to this, 'there is a great need for better awareness on Deanery level'.

Some Dioceses are making specific steps in this direction. Hexham and Newcastle diocese is looking to start research into the pastoral needs of the Filipino and South Indian populations living in the area. Special mention should go to the Diocese of Brentwood whose Commission for Justice and Social Responsibility was instrumental in helping the research team of the present study. Overall, the parishes and projects we interviewed in Brentwood emphasised excellent relationship with the Diocese and especially with its JSR Commission.

Networking and Best Practice Sharing

Many priests called for more networking, collaboration, learning and sharing good practices between parishes affected by migration:

It would be good for the Diocese to promote best practice sharing through training, awareness-raising and appreciation. (Hallam)

Meetings of all those working with migrants are crucial. It is essential to talk to each other, to share good practice and to engage in networking. (East Anglia)

It would be a good idea if members of the laity could be given some ideas of good practice on how to welcome newcomers. (Northampton)

Some deaneries are taking the initiative to encourage networking. For example, in Swansea (Menevia), a support group was set up on the deanery level with representatives from different parishes. It aims at enabling those parishes without a great deal of experience to learn from parishes like Holy Cross which provides practical help to asylum seekers and migrants. There is a core group of eight people, and 20 other people took part in a recent meeting, including representatives from Asylum Justice.

Capacity Issues

A few priests drew attention to the increasing demands on clergy due to the lack of vocations and to the fact that priests are overstretched already. In these circumstances, the importance of engaging lay people into liaising with different communities, including settled migrants themselves and people with language skills cannot be overestimated. Another issue is help with the living quarters:

When it comes to the Diocese, there is very little awareness of the strain on the parish clergy. I am on call all day, and the presbytery has become an extension of the church. (Westminster Diocese).

Despite feeling overwhelmed and in need of knowledge and ideas of how to respond more effectively to the new challenges facing the 'missionary Church', most of the clergy, religious and lay members of the Catholic Church are willing to do more: 'Are we doing enough? No. We could always do more. We should never be overly complacent.' All they need is vision, guidance, resources and goodwill.

Section Four: Conclusion and Recommendations

The Catholic Church has a reputation for being a centralised denomination. When it comes to social and pastoral responses, however, this is very often far from reality. There is much emphasis in the English Church on Diocesan autonomy, the independence of Religious Orders and the creation of multiple rather than strategic agencies.

This study reveals a wide ranging but incredibly patchy response: Migration impacts on every Diocese and more than half of all deaneries surveyed and yet it does not register on the vision or planning horizons of many. Asylum and refugee needs do take a higher profile but Church's concern is not always in direct proportion to the local presence of asylum seekers and refugees as revealed by mainstream figures.

It is worth noting that in the face of Irish community needs a call was made in the 1960s for a national agency for migration but such a request was turned down by the Bishops of UK and Ireland jointly.

However, the feedback above reads as a mission statement for the Church: The need for networking and conversation. The need for training. The need for advocacy and funding. Above all, the need for a strategy.

The word 'strategy' in the Church can provoke concerns as for some it suggests infringing on local autonomy. As our findings show, however, migration, asylum and refugee issues are not an 'add on' option as they run to the core of almost every Deanery. The task now will be for the Church to review its skills, assets and plans in the light of this research in order to respond anew to a need that will, by all accounts, only increase.

APPENDIX 1: Good Practice Examples

Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support – Structured Projects

Projects with Diocesan Involvement

Revive (Salford Diocese)

This project was set up to respond to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers at a diocesan level. All the priests in the diocese who were interviewed for this study seemed to be aware of this project and used it as a resource to which they could refer refugees and asylum seekers for help. Revive appears on the Diocesan web site as a resource for the area. The Diocese provided funding for the project in the early years, although now it has a more arm-length relationship with Revive.

Revive is a missionary project of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit - a religious order whose members work with refugees and the most vulnerable across the world. This project was set up in 2002 by a married couple, Peter and Anne-Marie Fell, who are lay members of this Congregation, in collaboration with the Diocese of Salford . The organisation's purpose is to offer long-term social support and advocacy to people seeking asylum in the UK, and also to those who have been granted refugee status or other forms of leave to remain in the UK

Revive takes referrals from clergy, health workers and others whose work brings them into contact with the most vulnerable asylum seekers or those who have been granted refugee status. The staff offer many kinds of practical and emotional support. They either act directly on their behalf or signpost them to other agencies as appropriate, especially in the field of legal advice and representation. Areas of Revive's direct work include: the asylum support system operated by the UK Border and Immigration Agency; access to healthcare; housing issues (particularly assisting with access to social housing for those granted leave to remain), with support and accommodation under Section 4 of the 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act for those single people who might otherwise be destitute following rejection of their asylum claims; and assistance in finding ESOL classes or further education courses.

Generally, support includes regular home visits plus any other contact that may be required, such as visits to GP surgeries and outpatients departments, or to legal representatives and to the UK Border and Immigration Agency centre in Salford.

Revive is also able to provide a certain degree of assistance in financial crises, such as in the case of non-payment of asylum support or alleviating temporary difficulties caused by the gap between the ending of asylum support and the commencement of employment or payment of benefits. Assistance is often given in cases where a person, granted refugee status, wishes to apply for visas in order for family members still residing in the refugee's country of origin to be reunited with their parents or spouses in the UK.

In conjunction with the British Red Cross, Revive operates a weekly drop-in which provides cash and food to single asylum seekers whose claims have been refused and whose asylum support has

been terminated. At the present time (January 2008) Revive is seeing over 50 such people per week. The project is also helping about 30 casework asylum seekers with specific problems.

The organisation has three paid staff and eight volunteers. Up to five social work students on placement from the local university also play a crucial role in providing some of the services. One volunteer provides awareness raising work for the parishes in the Diocese and in local schools and colleges.

Abigail Housing (Leeds Diocese JPC)

Leeds Diocese is looking after a number of asylum seekers and refugees via a charity they have established – Abigail Housing. The project was initiated by the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission 3 years ago. Shelagh Fawcett from JPC is the chair of the board of trustees which involves people from other churches as it developed into an ecumenical initiative. Abigail Housing now employs 2 part-time staff and 2 volunteers. It provides accommodation for 20 refugees and asylum seekers in five houses, one of which is a Diocesan property in Bradford. Three other houses are provided by private landlords and one by the housing association. Support either by Abigail's own staff or local other refugee and asylum agencies is available to all resident.

In addition to contributing by providing a property, the Diocese raised £2,500 via Bishop's Lenten appeal to parishes. So far Abigail has raised approx. £20,000 from local and national charitable trusts and the Church Urban Funds for the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds and the Diocese of Bradford. Local churches also contribute by giving food, clothing etc.,

Expansion of the project is dependent on securing further long term funding to employ existing staff on full time contracts and to recruit a project manager and admin support worker.

St Wilfrid's Day Centre (Hallam)

In Sheffield a drop-in day centre was established in 1991 by the parish priest of the Mother of God Church to support the homeless, vulnerable and socially excluded. Today the centre works within, but independently of, the Diocese, which provides the old Catholic church building free of charge. Amongst the clientele are asylum seekers, especially those who are destitute. The centre serves the wide urban area of Sheffield and beyond with a mixture of basic welfare services such as food and showers, as well as some educational assistance and access to computers and workshops. About 100 people, including many Catholics, volunteer at St Wilfrid's, and the centre has about 50-80 clients a day. It needs to raise about £250,000 a year to operate.

Projects Initiated by Parishes and Religious Communities

Notre Dame Refugee Centre (Westminster)

For the Marist Fathers, work with refugees and asylum seekers at Notre Dame de France parish in London arises naturally from their mission. Eleven years ago, the Marist priests and some members of the congregation who were themselves refugees initiated the Notre Dame Refugee Centre to welcome people into the community and to provide them with advice about the social system or to direct them to other organisations that could assist in ways that the parish could not.

The Centre's drop-in is open twice a week, offering a welcoming place and simple lunches for between 60 and 70 visitors each day. Four days a week, advice worker provides information and support on matters relating to immigration, benefits, housing and welfare. There is a weekly legal surgery, access to a counselling service and a health team. General assistance is provided with translation, form filling, telephoning, English lessons and access to the internet. As part of its work, the Centre directs individuals to other organisations where they can access specialised support, such as the Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture that specialises in trauma treatment and therapeutic help, or the Red Cross Tracing Service if they wish to trace relatives. Volunteers and staff are particularly aware of the vulnerability of destitute women, and all efforts are made to ensure they are not left homeless.

Since 70 per cent of the visitors are destitute asylum seekers without access to any benefits, the Centre's volunteers put together food parcels and distribute those as well as second-hand donated clothing. Many asylum seekers are highly dependent on the services of the Centre, with large numbers coming every Monday to collect a weekly food parcel and a hygiene package once a month. Bus fares are partially reimbursed to facilitate them reaching the Centre.

Many of the volunteers were, and continue to be, drawn from the French expatriate community. In the last couple of years the Centre has also managed to involve former and current refugees as volunteers. During the past year over 40 volunteers worked in the Centre with a core team of approximately 25 people (including one Daughter of Providence). There are currently three part-time employees: a manager, a drop-in centre co-ordinator and a qualified advice worker. The Centre carefully manages the resources it has, in order to guarantee a continued service to these very vulnerable people. A significant part of funding is drawn from the Notre Dame parish itself.

Blessed Sacrament parish, Leicester (Nottingham)

The parish runs a drop-in centre once a week attended by about 100 people including asylum seekers and migrants. The centre provides clothes, bedding, crockery, credit union, help in liaising with solicitors and referrals to relevant agencies. Moreover, the parish continuously raises funds for needy people – in the last 10 years it has generated about £110,000, 50 per cent of which was given to CAFOD the rest going to the local needs. Fr John Maloney, who is the Episcopal Vicar for Leicestershire, is actively involved in addressing the needs of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the city of Leicester – he is one of the leading members of the ecumenical Faith Forum. The Forum enables Fr John to refer people in need to relevant help through networking. For example, a family who had nowhere to stay was recently helped with accommodation. Last year, the parish received a government grant to employ an outreach worker for a year to reach out to new comers in the area, identify their needs and direct them to the relevant help.

With over 35 nationalities in its congregation, the parish has welcoming signs in different languages. Fr John, being Irish himself, tries to speak to every new face, invites them to join parish activities and makes sure they are publicly welcomed to the community. The parish occasionally organizes international Masses with the readings in different languages and music by different nationalities. For example, last Christmas the Carols were sung by Filipino, Kerala, Zimbabwean and Cameroonian choirs. The parish team is also very international: there is a priest from Nigeria working on his PhD and a priest from Korea doing Master's degree at local university. Fr John's key aspiration is for his parish to be an 'oasis in the desert' focusing on welcoming the stranger.

Poitiers Project by Missionaries of the Company of Mary (Portsmouth Diocese)

The Missionaries of the Company of Mary (Montfort Missionaries) provided accommodation and support for destitute asylum seekers at St Joseph's in Ashurst, Southampton (the home of the Missionaries in the South of England) during 1998-2005. They housed more than 160 men and women over a seven year period. An inspection by Home Office officials recorded that the accommodation and services offered at St Joseph's were the 'best' in the country. To 'meet further unmet need' the Missionaries simultaneously operated an outreach programme to male and female asylum seekers and refugees in the city of Southampton providing accommodation, basic provisions of food, clothing and furniture and support with language learning and asylum claims. A number of lay Catholics and religious were involved in providing this care.

In August 2007, building upon the experience gained through the support offered at St Joseph's refuge and in response to the new needs of failed asylum seekers/ illegal immigrants and destitute migrants from the new member states of Europe, the Missionaries of the Company of Mary began a 'food delivery' within Southampton. Its target groups include:

- Male and female Asylum Seekers in transition - those awaiting either a decision from the Home Office or a recalculation of financial support and those who for numerous reasons are now considered illegally present in the country. The Project is literally keeping men and women of both groups from destitution.
- Migrant workers from the A8 or A2 countries either on low incomes or now destitute and unable to access any support from government sponsored agencies or charities.

Today the project also helps groups other than those it was originally founded to serve:

- Men and women, who because of unresolved issues brought about by trauma in childhood or who have learning disabilities are unable to 'cope' without support.
- Men and women trying their best to care for their children but struggling to repay debt incurred whilst addicted to alcohol or illegal substances.
- Women in hiding, trying to rebuild their lives and the lives of their children after a period spent in prostitution or imprisonment in brothels or massage parlours in Southampton.

The number of men, women and children being served by the Poitiers Project increases each week. The Missionaries of the Company of Mary, their co-workers and volunteers are now providing 1,200 meals to 160 people every week with a further 140 meals to 22 destitute asylum seekers once a month (5,360 meals a month). The Missionaries operate this service from the Poitiers centre which is located within the poorest quarter of Southampton.

Finding enough food each week to feed all these people is an immense task. This Poitiers Project is supported by a number of Catholic parishes in Southampton and the local area, by some Catholic schools and various Catholic groups of men and women. Members of these communities are asked to bring a 'tin of food' each week and place it in the containers provided within their parish church or school foyer. Supplementing this support, the Missionaries of the Company of Mary donate a further £1,000 per month for food provision. At present, in addition to the Missionaries involved in the work, the project employs three members of staff and has a team of eight volunteers.

Solihull Welcome (Birmingham Diocese)

Sr Ruth Percival and Pauline Dean, a parishioner of St Augustine's in Solihull near Birmingham, were very concerned about the asylum seekers who passed the church on their way to Sandford House, the Midlands Enforcement Unit (MEU). Many wait for hours queuing in all weather to be interviewed by an official at the MEU. They spoke to some of the people queuing and started to befriend them and thought they should do more. They approached the parish priest Fr Dominic Kavanagh, who used to be chaplain at the Yarl's Wood detention centre, with the idea of setting up a drop-in centre in the church hall for those waiting in the MEU queue. He was sympathetic and agreed, and there is now a drop-in centre in the church hall offering tea, coffee, soup, toast and fruit and twice a week. They also provide dry food supplies for those who are in desperate need and second hand clothing.

Fr Kavanagh took the idea to a meeting of the Solihull Churches Together ecumenical organisations and they agreed to support the project. Within a month they had over 40 volunteers and now the number has stabilised at about 50. These volunteers come from all the local churches in Solihull including St Augustine's and provide help with food and clothing. One volunteer comes from the local Synagogue; she was evacuated to the UK in the WW2. They have between 20 and 40 asylum seekers attending the twice weekly drop-in centre, and some have become regulars. They promote the drop-in centre by distributing leaflets and chatting to the people queuing at the Enforcement Centre. Sr Ruth has been overwhelmed by the support they have received from the local churches. The Mother's Union, in the Anglican church in nearby Knowle, have a rota for volunteers and now they have included their husbands on the rota. Sometimes it is more culturally appropriate for men to talk to male asylum seekers. In 2007 the centre had over 1,500 people dropping in from more than 40 countries. The project gets a lot of support and training from Restore, a well-known local project set up by Birmingham Churches Together.

As a reminder of the uncertainty asylum seekers face Sr. Ruth said that "Last year, more than one thousand people passed our church but did not return to catch their bus back. They were detained, and some, subsequently deported. We find it very hard when one of our friends, our 'regulars', suddenly doesn't turn up one week. Have they been granted leave to remain? Have they been detained, deported, or have they quietly dropped into a river when no one was looking? We have little chance of knowing".

Migrant Support – Structured Projects

Projects Initiated by Religious Orders and Parishes

Community Cohesion Centre in Wisbech (East Anglia Diocese)

The Our Lady parish congregation of about 300 includes migrants from Poland, Portugal, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Slovakia, Bulgaria, India, Nigeria and South Africa with East Europeans dominating since EU enlargement. Migrants comprise about 25 per cent of the Sunday Mass attendance. Most of them work in agriculture and food processing factories.

The parish now hosts a Community Cohesion Centre for which it received significant funding from EEDA. To run the Centre it has established an independent trust and leased the premises from the Diocese for ten years. From April 2008, the Centre employs 3 members of staff helped

by about 20 volunteers (almost all from the parish). The services include English classes, help with filling in forms, interpreting, finding employment, and addressing housing problems and education/school problems.

The parish came up with the idea of the Centre about 2.5 years ago as they noticed the need for bringing the local and the newly arriving communities together and minimising friction which manifested itself in some local conflicts (for example there was a case of youngsters fighting with the newly arrived). As a result, the Centre is open to all, not only migrants, focusing on various needs and groups independently of their nationality and religion. Fr Doman notes the crucial importance of the Diocesan support in this project as it was the Diocese which agreed to provide the premises leased for ten years and to establish a trust to ensure project continuity independently of the changes in the clergy. The trust behind the project are thinking of long-term solutions focusing on the local community as a whole and acknowledging that some of the results will be intangible albeit no less important.

Welcome Centre in Jersey (Portsmouth Diocese)

The Island of Jersey has relied on migrant workers for the last 150 years. In the 19th century the land required the long term or seasonal work of country people from Brittany. These Bretons were the mainstay of the country parishes. It was a hardy existence, similar to what they knew at home until the effects of the common market brought prosperity to that region of France in the 1960s, at which time Breton migrants had ceased to come to Jersey.

The 19th century also saw an influx of Irish who were brought here to build the harbours and breakwaters, roads and other projects which needed intensive labour. Their focus of cultural and spiritual support was the Church of St Mary & St Peter in St Helier, as distinct from the French Church of St. Thomas'. After the Second World War many Italians came to find work here in hotels, restaurants and private homes. For the most part they prospered and flourished. Scottish and Irish also came and still come in considerable numbers.

From the 1960s, when the Bretons departed, Portuguese country people arrived from the Island of Madeira. They were skilled at working in limited spaces and on the steep hillsides of Jersey similar to their own Island experience. Their living conditions were very poor until the scandal of those who treated badly by some farmers became public knowledge.

While some of them still work on the land, many Portuguese graduated to work in hotels, shops and other parts of the service industry. Unfamiliar with democratic institutions, they have shown little interest in taking part in island politics and are not represented in either the Island States or local civil parishes. Unlike Irish migrants of the 19th century who had Irish priests to serve them and sustain their faith and cultural identity, the Portuguese have lacked that kind of pastoral and cultural leadership. Currently 23% of the prison population in Jersey are Portuguese, although their community only makes up 10% of the Island population.

Canon (now Mgr) Nicholas France was appointed Catholic Dean of Jersey in the autumn of 1999. His particular pastoral commission from his Bishop was to unite the French and English parishes in St Helier, the Island's only town. Within days of his arrival a Portuguese speaking Irish priest, who was chaplain to the Portuguese mass going community left the Island. Not having given advance notice of his departure, it fell to Canon France to take on, without any preparation or experience, the pastoral care of Jersey's Portuguese Catholics.

While sustaining a Sunday Mass in Portuguese, Canon France had to deal with very large numbers of Portuguese seeking Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation. This required training sufficient catechists who could teach the children English and speak to parents in their own language.

Canon France soon realised that the Catholic Church in Jersey needed to do more for the Portuguese people, who often saw themselves as second class citizens. The next year he started a Portuguese Pastoral Council and planned both a Centre for Migrants and a Chapel of Our Lady of Fatima. The latter project was only completed in 2007 when a chapel was restored in St. Thomas' Church, creating a suitable shrine for the existing statue of Our Lady of Fatima surrounded by new, traditional Portuguese tiles obtained from Lisbon. The aim was to provide a spiritual home for Portuguese people.

In 2004, following extensive fundraising and a capital expenditure of over £250,000, the old school behinds St Thomas' Church was reopened by the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey as "The Welcome Centre" for Portuguese and other newcomers to Jersey. The centre has a manager. It provides a community café and place of meeting. There is an art gallery to celebrate through culture the Island's varied traditions, art bridging different languages. The Centre is also used by housing and social services as an advice centre for migrant families. The best use of the centre, as an aid to migrants, has been the English language classes that are provided at low cost, by the teachers of Highlands, the local college of further education. This has enabled over 2,000 people to develop or improve their English language abilities, allowing them to take better jobs. The Portuguese, some of whom have lived here for twenty or thirty years, have awoken to the need to learn English grammar and improve their writing skills.

By the time the centre opened, Polish migrants had started to come to Jersey and there are now about 5,000 of them compared to about 10,000 Portuguese. Although Polish country people have taken on farm work, others, with better education, have swiftly been welcomed into the service industry, the banks and international companies based in Jersey. This has caused some resentment from the Portuguese community who have often lacked the basic education that the Polish have enjoyed. Most of the funding for our projects past and future has come from donations made by individuals or trusts. There is no direct central support from the States of Jersey, other than a maintenance grant from Highlands College.

Currently the Deanery has two new objectives. The first is a project in consultation with other voluntary agencies to provide a Portuguese community worker in St Helier to encourage families to use what is on offer in terms of parenting classes, nursery provision etc. Also elderly people, often brought here by their children to look after the grandchildren, need to be freed and given an opportunity to meet one another. So often they are imprisoned by total lack of English and the poor accommodation which is so often the lot of migrants.

The second project is to extend the Welcome Centre in order to provide additional classrooms for those who are so eager to learn English and sometimes have to be turned away. Funding for this will once again be sought from non-church trusts that have been supportive in the past.

The migrant community in Jersey, which is so essential for its economy, needs to have advocates, as it rarely has a voice of its own. The Catholic Church in Jersey is known for speaking out in support of the migrants, especially about their housing conditions. It is not possible to buy a property until one has become fully qualified in Jersey, having been here over thirteen years. Currently there is no supervision for accommodation that is let to the unqualified or any form of rent control. Frequently families, most of whom only have one child, have to live in poor conditions paying very expensive and unfair rents. When asked by Canon France why they come

here instead of England where they could have better accommodation, one Portuguese person from Madeira said, “We feel safe on an island”. Certainly people feel the wages that can be earned here make up for other inconveniences. However long hours at work and poor housing conditions create social problems. The majority of those in prison are there for drug related offences.

The Polish community have been fortunate in having since 2006 a Polish priest of their own. He both works with the other clergy in the island for the whole community but has particular pastoral responsibility for the Polish Catholics, 10% of whom practise their faith on a regular basis, attending either of the two Sunday Masses, though large numbers come for marriage preparation and the paperwork involved. With the recent improvement in the Polish economy there has been some sign of a return to Poland by some who have lived here a few years.

St Ignatius in Stamford Hill (a Jesuit parish)

St. Ignatius has a highly transient population. It is estimated that about a third of the parish move on and arrive each year. Average Sunday Mass attendance is 1800 – 2000. Weekly ethnic Masses are attended by about 400 Latin Americans and 250 Poles. The latter are served by a Polish member of the Jesuit Community who has initiated a number of groups interested in the social welfare of the Polish migrant community.

The Jesuit Parish has a well established social outreach which has adapted to the changing landscape of Stamford Hill. Consequently, it works increasingly with migrants, refugees & asylum seekers. It responds to the needs of the migrant, as well as the settled community, on three levels:

- By offering emergency aid in the form of a daily distribution of sandwiches and tea, food parcels and help with some essential items and travel costs. A parish soup-run operating every Saturday evening organised and managed by volunteers in the parish. Roughly 30 people – mostly Polish – present themselves everyday for tea and sandwiches. Most of them have a high dependency on alcohol.
- Through the 'Social Outreach Office' which is open most days to offer information and signpost callers to relevant services and agencies, to assist with applications for work and benefits as well as medical services and education and to accompany those who speak little or no English. There are about 15 people who are dealt with on a regular basis.
- By engaging the parish in actively campaigning for change through the '*Strangers into Citizens*' campaign for long-term migrants. The parish is a member of TELCO, the eastern component of London Citizens, and organiser of this and other campaigns. The Social Outreach Office is managed by a member of the parish team who works in collaboration with a number of other agencies especially the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS UK), the Migrant Resource Centre and Praxis. It is also a member of HAVCO, the Haringey Association of Voluntary & Community Organisations.

The parish is currently reviewing its social outreach work and hopes to identify external sources of funding to consolidate and, hopefully, expand its work with both the settled and migrant community of Stamford Hill and the surrounding area.

Open House Homeless Project at St Patrick's (Westminster)

Open House project at St Patrick's church in Soho Square, central London, offers a hot home cooked meal on a Tuesday evening for the homeless, the majority of whom are migrants from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Slovakia.

The project is run by approximately 20 people - a mixture of a few parishioners and volunteers who serve and help to run the evening plus 91 cooks who provide the food on a rota basis. The evening keeps to the Catholic pattern beginning and ending in prayer but it is not obligatory for either guests or volunteers to be Catholic. The housekeeper and Evangelisation Assistant, who lead the evening, are paid employees of the parish.

At present the project is funded solely by donations, including the cooking for the evening each week. Volunteers provide the food and their services completely free of charge. The parish currently covers the costs of the Open House but were it to expand anymore then the parish finances alone would not be able to sustain it. Also when the Church's restoration works begin the project's costs will increase as it will be relocated.

Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, Bradford (Leeds)

This religious community came to Leeds from the Bronx, Ne

w York about two years ago, and opened a soup kitchen one year later that runs two days a week. The friars also provide sandwiches on a daily basis to the homeless, about 10% of whom are migrants from Eastern Europe or Africa. Many of the migrants who are homeless struggle with alcohol addiction, but do not want to go into rehab or return home because of pride and shame.

Lay volunteers from the area, most of whom are Catholics, help the friars in their work. According to Fr Emmanuel Mansford, this service is often spontaneous, but everything works well with the grace of God. They always receive food donations from the local community and from schools, especially at Harvest Festival time. A local butcher and dairy donate meat and milk, and a warehouse supplying hotels contributes fruit and vegetables.

The friars also offer other help on an as needed basis. For example, they paid a Slovakian family's rent for a month, and helped people who lost passports or needed a return ticket home. They also give haircuts to 'guests' at the friary. Unfortunately, the Friary cannot offer any shelter, but there are other churches in Bradford where facilities are provided for homeless people, including migrants, to stay overnight.

Medaille Trust

The UK is primarily a destination country for trafficking. Some people are brought directly to the UK and their exploitation commences only after arrival here, while others are brought in stages and exploited in transit countries before ultimately arriving in the UK. The majority of trafficked victims in the country are from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. Research carried out for the Home Office estimates that the number of women trafficked into the UK is between 4,000 and 10,000.

The Medaille Trust is a charity founded by Catholic nuns, brothers and priests with the aim of helping women, young men and children who have been freed from sex-trafficking, enabling them to regain their sense of dignity and self-worth. This is done by providing accommodation in two safe houses and offering opportunities for physical and psychological healing and rehabilitation. One of the two houses was provided by a Catholic couple and the other by a religious order but revenue funding of £30,000 per woman per year is needed by the project. Each house costs £250,000 per year to run as both properties are staffed 24 hours a day seven days a week.

The Medaille Trust has a close working relationship with the Police and the “Pentameter” national police operation, which was set up to tackle sex-trafficking. The Trust has been operational since July 2007, and since then have helped 40 women and their babies. Medaille also has a relationship with a women’s housing association as women move on to permanent accommodation after they have spent time in a safe house, though they maintain contact with the Trust.

All the trustees are Catholics and the majority of funding comes from Catholic groups and Religious Orders. The Medaille Trust runs conferences to keep their supporters in touch with what they do and how the funds are used. The Trust also raises awareness of the plight of those who are enslaved and exploited in the sex-trafficking industry.

Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Less Structured Support

Fr Jim Fleming, Colomban Missionary Fathers St Catherine’s Birmingham

Fr Jim Fleming has worked for 20 years in Pakistan and speaks Urdu and Punjabi which also enables him to understand and communicate with people from Iran and Afghanistan. Before becoming a parish priest at St Catherine’s he worked for Birmingham City Council as their Asylum Seeker Officer – a post he suggested should be created. He helped to set up Restore in Birmingham in 1999 when the first groups of Kosovans started to arrive in the city. While working as the Asylum Officer he had links with the Home Office, solicitors and landlords. Asylum seekers were often put in overcrowded, dilapidated and dangerous houses. He managed to get many of these properties condemned as unfit for human habitation by the local authority.

In 2005 three Colombans took over the parish of St Catherine. They told the parish that they would like to make a response to the problem of destitution that was being endured by failed asylum seekers. They wanted to open and equip a couple of rooms in the presbytery to accommodate 2 to 3 asylum seekers but they stated they would not go ahead with this initiative without the support of the parishioners. They wanted a pledge of ongoing support. This support was forthcoming and the parish has supported on an ongoing basis over 60 asylum seekers. The support comes in the form of food, furniture, household equipment and donations. Specific requests go out for donations in the parish bulletin, when food or other items are needed. The parish bulletin is also used to keep people informed and aware of the plight of asylum seekers. The J&P group in the parish keep the asylum issues on the agenda. There is also support for the Strangers into Citizens campaign in this and other parishes in Birmingham.

The asylum seekers are referred to St Catherine’s from three agencies: Brushstrokes, Restore and the Refugee Council. They stay for two weeks (in some exceptional cases longer). They live independently of the priests but are free to approach them if they need help or assistance. Most of

the asylum seekers that have been given hospitality have been single men and women, mainly Muslim.

Nearby there is a government Transit Hostel for asylum seekers, and often Muslims come to Mass – word has spread that they get a welcome and a cup of tea and biscuit after Mass. The church is very involved in welcoming strangers and newcomers. Every year, the parish holds a multicultural mass with up to 600 people attending from 30 countries. Fr Jim invites some of his Muslim friends who are invited to say some of the bidding prayers.

The most difficult problem Fr Jim has had to sort out is that of providing furniture to households when they have been granted refugee status. There is no SVP in his parish and he has found it a logistical nightmare to pick up and deliver furniture without a dedicated organisation for this function.

Sr Eileen Keating (Hallam)

For the past seventeen years, this sister of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary has lived in an area of high unemployment in Sheffield, seeking always to “do ordinary things in extraordinary ways”.

She works with more than 100 refugees and asylum seekers who come primarily from Africa (Ethiopia, the Congo, Zimbabwe, Angola). Sometimes Sr Eileen simply invites them to have tea and a chat with her in a safe space, namely her home. Sometimes individuals need more practical assistance, and she often brings people to the jobcentre or helps them fill out citizenship forms. If she did not assist them, those she serves would have to spend at least £50 at the solicitors.

Her home also serves as a collection point for donated furniture, which she then gives to those who are most in need. Through these seemingly small acts, she has gotten to know each individual and they trust her explicitly. Sr Eileen said that the greatest success for her is when someone says, “I’m glad you were here”.

Sr Kate Holmstrom, Yarl’s Wood Detention Centre

At Yarl’s Wood Removal Centre, Sr Kate Holmstrom, SHCJ has been part of the multi-faith team for the past three years, bringing with her the experience of working at the Notre Dame Refugee Centre in Leicester Square. The team tries to meet the varied spiritual needs of the detainees, whether through worship or devotions. This represents only a fraction of the work that Sr Kate and the other team members engage in, as they also make daily pastoral visits to detainees, which might mean anything from a request for prayers in the room at night or drying the desperate tears of those losing hope. The chaplains also help detainees to deal with the powerful emotions of anger, bitterness and hopelessness that they might have from being in the removal centre.

As a part of the team of 10 part-time or volunteer chaplains that cares for the 300-400 detainees, she works primarily with families and women. With her knowledge of French, Sr Kate spends most of her time working with the Francophone detainees from Africa. She said that although the facilities are good in the family unit (people are not locked in cells), the detainees are under tremendous stress and have no freedom at all. In a recent visit to a Sri Lankan family held there, the little daughter pointed to the grass outside the window and said, “Look at the rabbit. He comes everyday to eat the grass.” Sr Kate was struck by the fact that this little child could only look at

the world outside; she could not go outside to play. She said that families are also stressed, because they do not know when, where and how their detention will end.

Once every three weeks Sr Kate travels to the centre for a day and visits at other times if there is a special need. The Home Office pays her £12 an hour for the pastoral work that she does, and covers her travel expenses. She told us, “it is a great joy to be there pastorally, and to pray with them to revive their spirits. The job satisfaction is immense, but also stressful, as I can’t provide their freedom”. As a chaplain, she cannot give legal advice or offer direct assistance to cases, but can demonstrate to detainees that in her eyes they have worth.

Fr Paul Fleetwood, Tinsley House

Fr Paul Fleetwood is a Benedictine monk at Worth Abbey who serves as assistant chaplain at Tinsley House, an immigration removal centre near Gatwick Airport. He spends about four days a week there providing pastoral care and trying to connect detainees with outside agencies who can offer them practical support.

Each week he sees with people from all over the world. During January 2008 he worked with Afghanis and Iraqis, Sri Lankans and West Africans, as well as individuals from many other non-EU countries. Fr Paul’s work is not exclusively for Catholics or Christians, but encompasses those of all faiths or none. He receives a stipend from the company that administers the centre. Despite the pastoral work that he does and the networking that he utilises, he feels that there is still much room for growth and improvement. With regard to what further support could be provided by the church/or wider community, he mentioned the need for a bail hostel, where those without friends or family and those unable to access support from the Asylum Support Team (a government agency) could stay if their bail applications were successful.

He has varying degrees of contact with the Gatwick Detainee Welfare Group, the Association of Visitors to Detainees, London Churches Refugee Network and JRS. He occasionally has contact with the Refugee Council, Refugee Legal Centre and Brighton Voices in Exile.

Migrants – Less Structured Support

Rev Peter Glanville Deacon in Great Yarmouth

Around 2000, a significant number of asylum seekers were dispersed in the Great Yarmouth area by Westminster City Council. They were placed with no required planning or residential permissions in private hotels. Most of them were from Bosnia and other Balkan countries. It was the first place in Britain affected by the dispersal, and local community was not ready. ‘Norfolk can be a very racist place, caused by no real experience of migrancy’.

Around 2004, about 3,500 Portuguese arrived most of whom were single but also some family units. It was occasioned by the Bernard Matthews Company and other poultry factories which could not get local workers. They went to Portugal, East Timor and Eastern Europe to recruit them, and arranged the social infrastructure necessary for all necessary for an instant work force –

including registration, accommodation etc. Portuguese came very swiftly. The employers provided workers with social guarantees, housing and access to local schooling. The Portuguese were followed by workers from the Baltic States and then from other newly admitted countries to the EU.

This has changed the profile of St Mary's Catholic Parish in Great Yarmouth. Now out of a 250-300 Sunday Mass attendance in Peter's parish about 25-30 per cent of people are foreign nationals. These include Lithuanians, Hungarians, Poles, people from Balkan countries, Timor, Nigerians and Estonians in addition to a main base of Portuguese. In addition in the neighbouring parish of Gorleston, there are about 60 Kerala nurses in the area. Migrants are an integral part of the parish structure and hold both social and vernacular liturgical events in the church and hall. Two years ago, the church hall was used for a Lithuanian evening with about 200 people turning up to enjoy traditional food, music and a liturgy of welcome and blessing.

Peter's Catholic parish has changed in response to the immigration. According to him, migrants have had a renewing effect on the profile of the parish. This is largely welcomed by the original congregation, but with some suspicion and wariness from a small number of people – mainly the elderly. One of the challenges in this context is making Church material relative to foreign languages and traditions. Peter can celebrate Baptisms etc. largely in Portuguese, and the celebration of the liturgy of the word is often in Portuguese and Polish in addition to English. The ability of migrant groups to learn English swiftly outstrips these efforts however!

Most of the Portuguese migrants to Great Yarmouth, were born around 1975, during the left wing regime in Portugal which depressed religious observance and practice. However the Portuguese people do have an 'intrinsic spirituality' much evidenced by their devotion to "Nossa Senhora da Fatima". During this political period in Portugal, the sacraments were much discouraged, but since their arrival in the UK, many individuals and families are catching up. For example, last year there were about 25-30 baptisms in the parish with a common pattern illustrated by one young Portuguese family: The children aged 5 and 7 were baptised. Then one of the parents was not baptised, so he enrolled into RCIA. His two children attending local schools speak English, so they helped to teach their father who was eventually baptised. Later they also helped their mother to prepare for the first Communion. They were then welcomed by the parish community in a ceremony celebrating the sacraments as a family.

According to Peter, migrants are 'highly motivated to sort out their spiritual situation'. Peter is employed by NHS as a part of the ecumenical chaplaincy at the District Hospital. He is often called to the hospital to attend to migrants, sometimes in cases of trauma, miscarriages. It is not unusual for him to use his friends as interpreters in these situations. Also, being a Chaplain with the Industrial Mission he has extensive ecumenical relationships and contacts in industry and with the trade unions including Bernard Matthews. This enables him to help migrants he meets in the parish and elsewhere with a variety of social problems by referring them to relevant agencies and organisations and facilitating networking. He has also drawn extensively on his network of contacts developed during his previous work as a journalist for the BBC.

Migrants are becoming part of the local community in various ways. For example a Portuguese woman became a community police officer. On the other hand police officers spend time speaking to migrant audiences, about driving problems, and other subtleties of English law. Some migrants (mostly Portuguese) have been promoted to middle management positions. Two Portuguese people stood in elections for the local council. Poles have set up Internet cafes and estate agencies. There is a number of drop in centres in the city offering English classes arranged by local education initiatives.

Brook Green parish (Westminster)

Migrants' arrival has affected parish life in significant ways. Currently, out of 1,200 Sunday attendance, about 30 per cent are migrants. They come from West Africa, France, Colombia, Philippines, Congo and other countries.

One of the key ways the parish helps the most vulnerable is by distributing sandwiches seven days a week. Run by five volunteers and funded by the parish, this service is most extensively used by homeless migrants – Poles, Lithuanians, and an occasional Brazilian, among others.

Another important area is advocacy. Parish clergy write to MPs or Home Office officials on behalf of parishioners' family members held in detention or threatened with deportation. The parish can sometimes also point refugees to agencies that will give professional advice or other help. There may be some informal tutoring for the citizenship test. The clergy also countersign citizenship applications for migrant families that they know well.

Sometimes the parish can match newer arrivals with long established migrants from the same country, so that there can be a befriending and mentoring. The Legion of Mary is always willing to visit the new parishioners from abroad, and is itself cross-cultural: its members come from the Congo, France, Colombia and Britain. It can befriend the new arrivals and help to 'explain the country'. But the strongest force for integration is the two church primary schools in the parish, which effectively make one community out of many nations and quickly give English language skills.

Because of the many languages spoken in the parish, each Sunday leaflets with the readings are provided in six languages. From time to time the African choir from Notre Dame de France comes to lift the roof with its joyful singing – the church is always packed when this happens. The parish also hosts the Syrian Catholic (ie Iraqi) community which has an Arabic language Mass every Sunday at 1 pm and a social gathering afterwards. Brook Green parish has become a centre for Iraqi Catholics living in London, who also celebrate weddings and baptisms in the church.

Fr Terry points to the danger of stereotypes. Not all migrants are poor and struggling. And while some migrants have low skill levels, others have professional qualifications but no opportunity to use them; they have to settle for work at a lower grade. Finally, he worries that some migrants fall into the hands of various sects which tend to be 'communities of identity': for example, a Spanish-speaking group of Jehovah's Witnesses is a much tighter community than a parish with six different Masses on Sunday.

St Mary's in Boston (Nottingham)

It is believed there are about 30,000 Poles and significant numbers of Portuguese migrants in the area around Boston, Lincolnshire. To address the needs of the Polish migrants Fr Chris Hogan, the parish priest of St Mary's parish, invited a Polish priest to live at his presbytery. Fr Slavomir currently celebrates a weekly Sunday Mass attended by about 250 Polish migrants. During Lent, he is helped by two other Polish priests from Northamptonshire. There is also a monthly Mass for about 60-100 Kerala migrants while Filipinos are joining the regular English Mass, not least because it is not easy to get a Filipino priest.

When Polish migrants started arriving to the area a few years ago, the parish showed true hospitality and helped them in very specific and significant ways – with finding accommodation and furniture, getting jobs, filling in tax forms, advice etc. All churches in the area also engaged in a specific act of advocacy – they prevented the closure of local employment agencies which would have led to 60-70 migrants losing their jobs. As a result the agencies were allowed to stay open provided they complied with the regulations. The parish has worked closely with Rev David De Verny, an ecumenical chaplain who is actively engaged in supporting migrant communities in the area. An important initiative on the part of St Mary's parishioners was getting funding for English classes. They have been taught by volunteers from the parish and attended weekly by about 80 migrants.

As most migrants settled down by now, currently help is provided on as needed basis. As before, this is done mostly by parishioners who either work or have contacts with relevant agencies and businesses.

Fr Chris, who has come to the parish about 18 months ago, contributes to raising awareness about migrants' lives and the difficulties they encounter in a new country. He is often approached by the media, and recently took part in the six-week Radio Lincolnshire programme together with Fr Slavomir and several Polish community members.

Fr Chris believes it is important for migrants to have pastoral provision in their own language although he would eventually like to see a Universal Church. In pursuit of this aspiration, the parish had an Easter Vigil Mass in four languages – Latin, Polish, Malayalam and English – which was very well received. Stations of the Cross joined by the Polish and English congregation on Good Friday were also a great success. Fr Chris hopes the two communities will keep getting closer through such joint celebrations.

Involvement in Ecumenical and Secular Projects

City of Sanctuary and ASSIST (Sheffield)

In 2007, with the support of the City Council, Sheffield became the UK's first 'City of Sanctuary' for asylum seekers and refugees. A City of Sanctuary is a place that welcomes and includes asylum seekers and refugees, and enables them to contribute fully to the life of the city.

Sheffield's City of Sanctuary movement is supported by over 70 local organisations, including Hallam Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, Bishop John Rawstone, Sacred Heart (Hillsborough), Sisters of Our Lady of Sion, Our Lady and St Thomas outreach group, St Joseph and St Martin's Justice and Peace Group and the Catholic Chaplaincy at Hallam University.

Most asylum seekers come to Sheffield without any knowledge of the city or any contacts with people who live here. These organisations made a commitment to welcome these new arrivals and include them in their local activities. They do this in many different ways, including befriending, invitations to community social events, advertising services and activities to refugee communities, providing meeting space for their groups, and offering short or long term accommodation.

Leicester is also now a 'City of Sanctuary', and some local parishes and Catholics are actively involved in this movement.

Parishes across the city also support **Asylum Seeker Support Initiative Short Term (ASSIST)**. This is a small agency which was set up in 2003 and works to provide some support to destitute asylum seekers in and around Sheffield. ASSIST managed to provide support for about 70 people in 2006/07 out of the 1,000 or so asylum seekers reckoned to need help in the area. The organisation has a small core budget and relies on over 50 volunteers. Parishes that support ASSIST by fundraising and volunteering include Sacred Heart (Sheffield North Deanery) and Immaculate Conception (Rotherham Deanery).

Brighton Voices in Exile (A&B Diocese)

Brighton Voices was set up as a faith based organisation to provide emotional support and signposting services to asylum seekers. It has one paid worker, Mary Jane Burket, who is a Catholic. They have an office in the presbytery of St Mary Magdalene's RC parish church (rent free) and the next door community centre is used for meetings and as a drop in. The beneficiaries are called members and emphasis is put on the asylum seekers themselves running meetings and deciding on speakers. The members come from Africa, Middle East, Sudan, Ethiopia, Algeria, Iraq and Iran.

Overall the organisation helps about 150 people throughout the year but the numbers are fluid. It has 209 names on the data base, 30 members usually turn up to meetings and about 60 people per month receive food, clothing and toiletries. There are about 12 volunteers who act as case workers, advocates and helping asylum seekers to access services. Most of the volunteers come from local Catholic parishes. They have recently started an asylum seeker women's group that meets once a month at which about 12 women and 7 children attend, but they expect numbers to go up. The funding for this women's group – a grant of £2,000 - was provided by the Community of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Rottingdean (an Anglican Order of nuns). A grant from the Robertson Hall Trust, an Anglican Foundation, pays the salary of Mary Jane. Excluding Mary Jane's salary the overall budget is about £30,000, most of which comes from local donations and parishes. They receive only £1,500 a year from the Red Cross for food and essentials.

This is an ecumenical organisation but with a strong Catholic input in terms of funding, personnel and volunteers. The local parish priest is very supportive. Recently he allowed a room in the presbytery to be used as a medical surgery for a doctor from Medical Justice, an organisation that helps represent torture victims when their cases come to court. The doctor was examining asylum seekers to provide evidence to support their claims from leave to remain.

In the past Brighton Voices in Exile volunteers have received training from the Office of Social Concern at the A&B diocese. The organisation has an interfaith outlook and recently has received donations (food and cloths) from the Brighton and Hove Muslim Forum.

Bibliography