



# **LEARNING INSIGHT**

## ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In December 2004, the Welsh Assembly Government issued their annual remit letter to ELWa asking for continued commitment to the reform of post-16 learning across Wales. This was to ensure that all residents in Wales are equipped with the right skills to become active citizens and to be able to contribute effectively to the labour market. In its final year before merger with the Welsh Assembly Government, ELWa is keen to deliver its £544 million budget based on informed strategic decisions in order to achieve its objectives. To do this, ELWa needs a thorough understanding of their target groups.

This paper is one in a series of Learning Insights into specific populations within Wales, which are seen to be of strategic importance within ELWa's delivery remit. The target groups for this Insight are asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. This group is extremely diverse, not only culturally and religiously, but also in terms of social class, gender and age.

Immigration and asylum are topics that are currently of great interest both politically and in the British media. Since New Labour came to power in 1997 there have been 3 Acts of Parliament regarding immigration: the Asylum and Immigration Act (1999); the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act (2002); and the Asylum and Immigration Act (2004).

In terms of this research the most important change took place in July 2002 when the Government withdrew the concession which allowed asylum seekers to apply for permission to work, if they had been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for six months or more. This has not only had consequences for employment of asylum seekers but also for accessing vocational training. Therefore ELWa are limited in what education and training they can offer asylum seekers.

## 2. KEY FINDINGS

This section looks to detail the key findings that can be found within this learning insight. The points contained here provide a clear indication of the core themes to be covered.

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled their home country and sought refugee status in another, possibly because of war or human rights abuses. In the UK, a person is a refugee only when their claim for asylum has been accepted by the Home Office. While a person is waiting for a decision on their claim, s/he is called an asylum seeker. Refugee Status is awarded to people recognised as refugees by the Home Office because they meet the definition of refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

There are four NASS (National Asylum Support Service) dispersal areas in Wales; Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, and Wrexham. Figures from the Home Office indicate that there are currently 2,353 asylum seekers dispersed by NASS in Wales, and according to the Welsh Refugee Council in Cardiff, just over 10,000 refugees. Refugees and asylum seekers make up less than 0.5% of the Welsh population. The following countries are the top ten countries of origin for asylum seekers in Wales: Pakistan; Somalia; Iran; Iraq; Turkey; Sudan; the Democratic Republic of Congo; Algeria; Afghanistan; Israel/Palestine.

There is a lack of research into the skills and qualifications held by asylum seekers and refugees, and therefore it is not possible to establish exactly where resources for education are needed. Until this is carried out, ELWa will not be able to fully assess the needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

The main educational provision for asylum seekers consists of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). However, refugees have the same entitlements to education and learning as British citizens, even though they may need extra support depending on how long they have been in Wales, and depending on their educational background, understanding of English, as well as emotional support requirements.

There are no exact numbers for the amount of asylum seekers that access ESOL classes; this is a direct result of not having individual student records. Without having individual student records, there is no way of knowing if the same student enrolled on several courses at the same time. The figures that do exist are the enrolment figures for ESOL; however, they will not provide an accurate figure of how many people are accessing ESOL since it is possible for students to enrol on several courses at once.

Based on both primary and secondary research the need for more ESOL classes in Wales was identified. Providers are not able to plan provision according to demand, but rather in

accordance with funding and teaching accommodation. There are a number of factors that point to an increase in demand for ESOL, such as the need for Level 3 ESOL in order to meet the citizenship language requirements, as well as more EU nationals working in Wales, and being in need of ESOL learning.

Statistics for refugees accessing education are not available, since they are not required to provide this information when enrolling on further or higher education courses. Refugees have the same rights as British citizens when it comes to accessing education in the UK, they may however have a greater need for support services such as counselling, and English language classes.

ELWa is committed to ensuring everyone in Wales has the generic skills needed by employers for a sustainable and competitive economy. Of particular relevance to this Learning Insight, some key actions for asylum seekers and refugees are:

- It is important that learning provision, such as ESOL, meets the needs of the increasing demand.
- Research is carried out into the skills and qualifications held by refugees in Wales. Skills research of refugees will enable ELWa to distinguish what areas need to be addressed in order to enable refugees to find work at a level of their education, and participate fully in Welsh society.
- ELWa would benefit from working actively with other service providers for asylum seekers and refugees in order to find a common way of accessing information about organisations, funding and services.

### 3. CURRENT SITUATION

This chapter of the report looks to understand the current situation in regard to: definitions of asylum seekers and refugees, as well as their entitlements to education and training; demographics; qualifications and the need for re-training; the current training and education infrastructure; ESOL; participation in education and training; and finally the skills need for asylum seekers and refugees and the gap in skills supply.

#### 3.1 Definition of Asylum Seekers and Refugees

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled their home country and sought refugee status in another, possibly because of war or human rights abuses. Under Section 2 Part 18 of the Asylum and Immigration Act (2004), the term 'asylum seeker' includes people who claim that their removal will breach Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights that prohibits torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

A refugee is a person 'who is forced to flee their own country, who escapes to another country and is given refugee status by the government there. To qualify for refugee status, the person has to prove that they cannot return for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion' (1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees).

In the UK, a person is a refugee only when their claim for asylum has been accepted by the Home Office. While a person is waiting for a decision on their claim, s/he is called an asylum seeker. Refugee Status is awarded to people recognised as refugees by the Home Office because they meet the definition of refugee under the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

After full consideration of an asylum seeker's case, there may be one of three outcomes;

- **Indefinite Leave to Remain** - a person with refugee status is given Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK. This does not confer on them the status of British Citizen. To get a British citizenship the person has to complete a citizenship course which culminates in a citizenship ceremony.
- **Humanitarian Protection** - was introduced on 1st April 2003 and partly replaced the policy of Exceptional Leave to Remain. Humanitarian Protection is granted to those who do not meet the strict definition of refugee but who have international protection

needs. It is granted for up to 3 years. Towards the end of this period, leave holders have the opportunity to apply for further leave.

- **Discretionary Leave** - was introduced on 1st April 2003 and partly replaced the policy of Exceptional Leave to Remain. Discretionary Leave is granted to those who do not have international protection needs but have other reasons for needing to stay in the UK, for example, strong compassionate grounds. It is granted for up to a 3 year period. Towards the end of this period, leave holders have the opportunity to apply for further leave.

### **3.2 Entitlements – Work and Education**

In July 2002 the Government withdrew the concession which allowed asylum seekers to apply for permission to work, if they had been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for six months or more. This change of policy means that asylum seekers are no longer able to undertake vocational training until they are given a positive decision on their asylum case, regardless of how long they wait for a decision.

After a positive decision from the Home Office, permission to work is automatically granted with refugee status or exceptional leave to remain.

The main educational provision for asylum seekers, as well as refugees, is English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes. There are often low or no fees for ESOL.

Asylum seekers have access to Further Education and Higher Education, provided they meet entry requirements, as well as being able to fund their own education, i.e. pay the course fees and maintain themselves financially. Asylum Seekers are classed as overseas students and as such are required to pay overseas fees, resulting in extremely few asylum seekers being able to participate in Further and Higher Education.

### **3.3 Demographics**

The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) has four designated cluster areas for dispersal in Wales: Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham. Local authorities outside the cluster areas have little involvement with asylum seekers apart from unaccompanied asylum seeking children as well as a small number of asylum seekers staying with family or friends in the other local authority areas, and those who sought asylum prior to July 2001 who are still supported by local authority Social Services Departments. According to the Home Office, in June 2005, the following facts were accurate:

- Pakistan, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are amongst the top countries of origin for asylum seekers in Wales.
- There are 2,353 asylum seekers dispersed by NASS in Wales, and according to the Welsh Refugee Council in Cardiff, just over 10,000 refugees.
- Refugees and asylum seekers make up less than 0.5% of the Welsh population.
- There are just over 90 people who are on NASS subsistence only.
- Women represent some 30% of all asylum claims in Wales, and over 50% of all refugee households in Wales are headed by women.

However, figures vary from month to month and therefore it is not viable to be exact. The figures from the Home Office are for June 2005, and are shown in the tables on the following pages. Table 1 shows the number of asylum seekers that have been dispersed to Cardiff, Swansea, Newport or Wrexham, as well as their marital status. Table 2 illustrates the number of asylum seeking families and if they have a male or female as head, as well as what area they have been dispersed to. Table 3 shows the number of dependants in each dispersal area, and Table 4 shows the top ten countries of origin for asylum seekers in Wales, as well as what area they have been dispersed to. All tables show the number of asylum seekers housed in council accommodation, as well as those housed in accommodation by private providers, i.e. a registered social landlord or a private landlord that have been approved by NASS.

Table 1: Asylum Seekers Dispersed in Wales by Region

	<i>Cardiff City Council</i>	<i>Cardiff Private Providers</i>	<i>Wrexham Private Providers</i>	<i>Swansea City Council</i>	<i>Swansea Private Providers</i>	<i>Newport Private Providers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Single Male	81	72	17	4	81	72	<b>327</b>
Single Female	15	10	6	1	16	16	<b>64</b>
Total No. of People in Families with Male as Head	231	78	15	198	179	122	<b>823</b>
Total No. of People in Families with Female as Head	276	236	9	259	200	159	<b>1,139</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>476</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>2,353</b>

Source: Home Office Report R35B Dated 05/06/2005

Table 2: Number of Asylum Seeking Families Dispersed in Wales by Region

	<i>Cardiff City Council</i>	<i>Cardiff Private Providers</i>	<i>Wrexham Private Providers</i>	<i>Swansea City Council</i>	<i>Swansea Private Providers</i>	<i>Newport Private Providers</i>	<i>Total</i>
Total No of Families with Male as Head	55	18	3	47	41	26	<b>190</b>
Total No of Families with Female as Head	79	66	2	79	54	44	<b>324</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>514</b>

Source: Home Office Report R35B Dated 05/06/2005

Table 3: Number of Dependants

<i>Cardiff City Council</i>	373
<i>Cardiff Private Providers</i>	230
<i>Wrexham Private Providers</i>	19
<i>Swansea City Council</i>	331
<i>Swansea Private Providers</i>	284
<i>Newport Private Providers</i>	211
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,448</b>

Source: Home Office Report R35B Dated 05/06/2005

Table 4: Top Ten Countries of Origin for Asylum Seekers in Wales

Country	Cardiff City Council	Cardiff Private Providers	Wrexham Private Providers	Swansea City Council	Swansea Private Providers	Newport Private Providers	Total
Pakistan	98	41	3	121	52	47	<b>362</b>
Somalia	129	87	10	21	22	46	<b>315</b>
Iran	56	41	5	38	48	9	<b>197</b>
Iraq	44	32	4	12	32	29	<b>153</b>
Turkey		1	3	85	36	4	<b>129</b>
Sudan	20	15		8	18	44	<b>105</b>
Congo (Dem Rep)	19	20			40	25	<b>104</b>
Algeria	19	16	6	26	17	12	<b>96</b>
Afghanistan	27	12		19	14	24	<b>96</b>
Israel/Palestine	17	8	1	15	16	1	<b>58</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>1,615</b>

Source: Home Office Report R35B Dated 05/06/2005

NB The totals for the columns marked council and private providers are not the total number of asylum seekers in those areas, rather a total of the number of asylum seekers from the top ten countries of origin in Wales.

There are several factors that determine the number of asylum seekers in Wales. There is currently a global downward trend of people seeking asylum, which in turn affects the figures for the UK and Wales. The number of people seeking asylum depends on conflicts across the world, and as such it is difficult to estimate the expected numbers of asylum seekers being dispersed to Wales over the next years.

In addition to the above, the number of people seeking asylum in Wales also depends on the Home Office dispersal system, and the UK Asylum and Immigration policies. There have been more changes to asylum and immigration legislation in the past 10 years than there has been in the past 50 years. The Refugee Council in London argue that future legislation will make it more difficult to seek asylum, and will therefore result in fewer numbers of asylum seekers entering the UK.

To summarise the main political party's policies on asylum and immigration in Wales illustrates the likelihood of what the trends for asylum and immigration would be if they came to power. Britain currently has a Labour government and the Labour party's policy on asylum and immigration is 'a fair, fast and firm asylum and immigration system together with

controlled economic migration, fulfilling the needs of our economy. Britain has a valuable tradition of offering a safe haven to those genuinely fleeing persecution. We are proud of that tradition but we cannot tolerate abuse of our asylum system. To stop abuse, we have enhanced our border security and have taken action to tackle illegal working, people smuggling and trafficking” (Labour.org.uk).

The Conservative party outlined their view on asylum and immigration in their Welsh Conservatives Election Manifesto (2005) proposing “Australian style point system for work permits, Parliament to set annual immigration limit, UK to take fair share of refugees, 24-hour security at ports, and British border control police”.

The Liberal Democrats outlined the following points in their 2005 policy briefing on Asylum: establish an independent asylum agency, ensure the emphasis is placed on achieving high quality initial decisions on asylum applications, implement efficient expedited procedures to fast-track founded as well as unfounded claims, reduce dependence on benefits and housing and aid integration by allowing asylum seekers to work two months after their application date, ensuring that families with children are not held in Removal Centres intended for adult-only detention, and to carry out a major overhaul of NASS.

Plaid Cymru outlined the following in their Election Manifesto (2005) “We will not prey on people’s fears of an inefficient and under-resourced asylum system to win votes. Rather, we recognise the dignity of the human spirit and will seek the abolition of the present practice of keeping asylum seekers in prisons. There should be easy and emergency access for all requiring advice on immigration and asylum. Wales has accepted economic migrants from many other parts of the UK and Europe for many decades. We recognise that today many are being exploited as a way of circumventing the minimum wage and undercutting local workers. We would support a crackdown on this abuse”.

### **3.4 Qualifications and Re-Training**

Refugees and asylum seekers come to the UK from diverse cultural backgrounds and bring with them a wealth of knowledge, professional skills and experiences. However, all too often they are denied employment in the UK due to not having a qualification that is recognised in the UK, the relevant training, or simply the lack of work experience in this country.

There is a great need for asylum seekers’ and refugees’ qualifications to be recognised in the UK. At the moment UK NARIC (the National Recognition Information Centre), under contract

to DfES, offer advice on how overseas qualifications relate to UK qualifications. The service covers a wide range of countries, and can advise on the standing of international qualifications with UK professional bodies. NARIC's office is based in Cheltenham, however their services are available via NARIC's website.

RETAS (the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service) is a registered charitable organisation that offers information, advice and guidance on education, training and employment for refugees. Their offices are based in London and their services are free of charge, confidential, and available to adult (16+) asylum seekers, refugees, and those with indefinite, humanitarian and exceptional leave to remain status granted as a result of an application for asylum.

The aim of RETAS is to provide independent, impartial information, advice and guidance to help overcome difficulties in accessing education, training and employment, including professional re-qualification. Through their outreach service they have assisted marginalised refugee groups, including refugee women, refugees with disabilities, and young refugees in order to counter the social exclusions they face as some of the most underrepresented groups in the labour market.

According to the Welsh Refugee Council (June, 2005) no research has been carried out into the skills and qualifications held by asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. This should be a priority. Research like this has been carried out by the Refugee Council in London, specifically for the health professions. By mapping the qualifications and skills of people this will result in information that can provide ELWa with valuable knowledge regarding what re-training is needed in order for refugees to qualify to work in Wales, as well as being beneficial to the Welsh labour market.

For example the Welsh Refugee Council (June, 2005) estimated that there are approximately 200 refugee doctors currently living in Wales, with the majority being unemployed. Their skills and knowledge could be used to fill vacancies within the NHS in Wales. There are currently databases for refugee health professional that have been set up on a UK level, by the Refugee Council in London in conjunction with the British Medical Association for refugee doctors, as well as a database for refugee dentists by the Refugee Council and the British Dental Association, and a database for nurses set up by the Refugee Council in conjunction with the Royal College of Nursing. Services like these will enable both refugees and organisations, such as the NHS, to access details and receive information that could lead to qualified refugees finding employment, and contributing to the economy.

### **3.5 Current Training and Education Infrastructure**

ELWa is responsible for post 16 education in Wales, however, when considering education and training services for asylum seekers and refugees their educational background before the age of 16, is going to affect their post 16 education. Therefore an outline of entitlements to education up to the age of 16 is included in this section.

#### **3.5.1 Education to Age 16**

Immigration status makes no difference to educational entitlement up to the age of 16. All refugee and asylum-seeking children can use pre-school facilities and children aged 5 to 15 are required to go to school.

Schools and LEAs are obliged to offer school places in accordance with their published admissions arrangements, as well as providing education for all children resident in their area. However, schools can refuse to admit children for the following reasons:

- the school is already full
- the admissions policy of the school says that it prefers to take children who practice a certain religion
- the school is a grammar school, which selects children on the basis of ability
- the school is nearly full and preference is given to children who meet certain conditions. The conditions might include living near the school or having a brother or sister already in the school.

Asylum seeker and refugee children may benefit from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (EMAG), which is targeted at pupils learning English as an additional language (EAL) and ethnic minority pupils at risk of under achievement.

Local Education Authorities (LEAs) receive funding for asylum seekers in the same way as for other pupils on the school roll through the Standard Spending Assessment System. Protocols exist in each of the Welsh cluster areas to ensure that children are registered in schools and provided with necessary support (Refugee Council Online, 2005).

### **3.5.2 Post 16 Education**

Refugees and asylum seekers across the UK have access to further and higher education, as long as they meet the entrance requirements for the course, can pay the course fees and support themselves financially. Asylum seekers are not eligible for Student Support, Access Funds or Hardship Loans, and they have to pay overseas students fees. Exceptions can be made on some courses when the student has been living in the UK for three years or the college may make a concession for its own reasons. This has resulted in severe difficulties in participating in Further and Higher Education, even though they might want to.

People with refugee status, or exceptional leave to remain, are required to pay home student fees for further and higher education. Those with refugee status are automatically eligible for student support, but those with exceptional leave to remain have to have been living in the UK for three years before they qualify.

Refugees that have been registered unemployed for six months are eligible for government training schemes. Training schemes, according to age, include Modern Apprenticeships, Work Based Learning for Adults and the New Deal. Some colleges and organisations offer courses specifically for asylum seekers and refugees.

However, guidance from the Department for Education and Employment (June 2000) has clarified that this does not include asylum seekers who are supported by NASS, i.e. the majority of asylum seekers. This is because under the provisions of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999), asylum seekers are supported outside the benefits system, and eligibility for unemployment programmes depends on entitlement to unemployment benefits. Since asylum seekers supported by NASS are not eligible for benefits, they are not registered as unemployed and are therefore not entitled to government-funded employment programmes.

### **3.6 ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages**

The Consultation Paper on the Integration of Recognised Refugees in the UK (Home Office, 1999) states that language is the key to integration and that 'identification of the different language needs of individuals, groups or age ranges will help in planning responses to actual needs'. In a broader European perspective, the provision of adequate language training is regarded as one of the touchstones of effective integration policy (European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 2000).

Full economic and social participation of refugees in Wales depends in part on their knowledge and understanding of the English language. It is therefore crucial for the integration of refugees into local labour markets and communities in Wales, that the provision of ESOL is appropriate.

There are a number of issues that need to be taken into account in order to make sure there is adequate ESOL provision across Wales.

The shortage of ESOL classes, as well as waiting lists is causing a problem for asylum seekers and refugees wanting to access courses. There is a high demand for ESOL provision, and the main constraints are availability of funding and teaching accommodation. This means that the providers planning of ESOL is driven by available funding and allocation rather than by local needs. However, regional variations in ESOL provision suggest that local strategies, rather than general models, may be more appropriate in meeting the new demands for ESOL.

KPMG's Review of ESOL (2005) reports an expected growth in demand for ESOL over the next three years as a result of the requirement in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, which states that those wishing to settle in the UK have to take a citizenship test with a language component. During the summer of 2004 it was confirmed that individuals should be able to demonstrate English language skills at ESOL Entry Level 3 or higher. According to the Parade ESOL service in Cardiff most ESOL students in Cardiff (the biggest dispersal area in Wales) are at Entry Level 1.

Co-ordination between ESOL providers and Refugee Community Organisations (RCO's) is beneficial in the respect that it results in sharing information and expertise, as well as being able to contact some of the more 'hard-to-reach' communities. E.g. organising outreach classes together with RCO's would result in more people being able to access ESOL.

In order to promote integration for asylum seekers and refugees into Welsh society, the Parade ESOL Service in Cardiff has combined ESOL learning with learning into areas such as Health, Education and the Police, as well as cultural projects of visiting art galleries and museums. Projects such as these enable: work with other organisations in the community; learning for asylum seekers and refugees about the way of life and culture in Wales; and most importantly promote integration.

Classes like the ones above are extremely important for promoting integration; however, there is a desperate need for ESOL combined with IT, since this is classed as a basic skill in today's society. There is also a need for refugees to achieve the level of English required to

gain entry to the Welsh labour market, and this is hindered by a lack of English for professional or vocational development, such as short-term professional development courses. This is something that needs to be taken into consideration when allocating funding for ESOL.

Another aspect that ESOL providers need to take into account is the differences between and within refugee groups in terms of; age; gender; social class and educational background; and how these might affect the capacity of an individual to access ESOL provision. For example, women may be prevented from attending classes because of childcare responsibilities. Offering classes at more 'child friendly' times or offering free or low-cost crèche facilities would be beneficial, this should be taken into consideration when funding of ESOL is allocated.

The lack of literacy in asylum seekers' and refugees' own language can be a problem when accessing ESOL classes. This could be remedied in part by recruiting more bilingual ESOL teachers. Alternatively, ESOL classes could be better tailored to suit the needs of illiterate people and semi-literate people.

The KPMG Review of ESOL (2005) has identified a number of recommendations that need to be considered in order to manage growth, mix and targeting of ESOL provision.

- The diverse nature and needs of ESOL provision is reflected in regional and local plans. It may be necessary to include statements of priority groups within these in order to be able to manage current demand.
- In areas of high demand for ESOL, there needs to be a consideration for ESOL needs, including any specific skills shortages that need to be addressed.
- An assessment needs to be made of the likely demand created by the citizenship requirement, which can be reflected in local, regional and national plans.
- In order to inform ongoing planning it would be beneficial to undertake research to quantify likely demand from both the introduction of the citizenship language requirements and learners from the new EU countries. In addition, this should identify the average starting level of learners who wish to gain citizenship in order that required learning can be quantified and costed.

- Dispersal policy affects ESOL funding and planning arrangements. The lack of information about the numbers and basic demographics of asylum seekers arriving in their local area causes problems when planning or securing appropriate budgets. In addition to this, the high mobility of both asylum seeker and refugee groups can mean that student numbers change throughout the course. This makes conventional course evaluation problematic, in terms of retention and examination results. These factors need to be taken into consideration by funding bodies.

### **3.7 Participation in Education and Training**

As mentioned above ESOL classes are the only means of education that asylum seekers can access, when taking immigration policies and funding into consideration. Therefore this section will focus mainly on the numbers of ESOL students and the provision of ESOL in Wales.

Figures for refugees accessing and participating in education and training are not available since refugees have the same rights as British citizens in regard to accessing education in the UK. It is therefore not possible to distinguish if students are refugees, as this piece of information is not required when enrolling on further or higher education courses. There are figures for ethnic minority groups participating in education. It would, however, be wrong to present those figures here since they would present a flawed depiction, as all people of ethnic minority origin are not refugees.

#### **3.7.1 ESOL figures**

Table 5 below, illustrates the number of learners on ESOL courses in Wales by college, figures 6, 7, and 8 show FE ESOL students by ELWa region and gender, ESOL students by ethnicity, and ESOL students by age group respectively. There is no data on what percentage of ESOL students are asylum seekers and refugees, and since ESOL classes are available for all people who do not master the English language, e.g. EU citizens who are working and living in Wales, it can not be assumed that all students are asylum seekers or refugees.

Table 5: Number of Learners on ESOL Courses

	Barry	Bridgend	Sir Gar	Ceredigion	Deeside	Glan Hafren	Gorseinon	Gwent	Harlech/ Wea North	Llandrillo	Llysfasi	Merion Dwyfor	Menai	Merthyr Tydel	Neath Port Talbot	Pembroke	Morgannwg	Powys	St. Davids	Swansea	Wcoth	Wea South	Yale	Ymca	Ystrad Mynach	TOTAL
2000/01 final figures from ISR	779	167	99	41	38	831	0	285	22	90	0	0	23	22	0	53	47	0	0	463	0	42	153	0	0	<b>3,155</b>
2001/02 final figures from ISR	1,015	194	160	44	12	1,357	0	261	0	118	0	0	64	43	0	60	19	12	0	551	0	68	211	0	30	<b>4,219</b>
2002/03 final figures from ISR	1,124	285	111	24	0	1,451	45	351	40	127	574	12	91	75	24	77	12	4	0	504	0	148	282	0	36	<b>5,397</b>

Source: Individualised Student Record (ISR) ELWa

Note: Prior to 2002/03 Coleg Morgannwg is taken as the sum of Aberdare College and Pontypridd College.

Table 6: FE ESOL Students by ELWa Region and Gender – 2003/04

Gender	Number of students				Total
	North	Mid	South West	South East	
Male	888	70	580	1,587	<b>3,125</b>
Female	484	91	640	2,083	<b>3,298</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,372</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>1,220</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>6,423</b>

Source: LLWR 2003/04 ELWa

Table 7: ESOL Students by Ethnicity - 2003/04

Ethnicity	Number of students			% of total
	Male	Female	Total	
White	923	1,088	2,011	34.3%
Caribbean	3	5	8	0.1%
Black African	280	442	722	12.3%
Black Other	13	25	38	0.6%
Indian	24	115	139	2.4%
Pakistani	61	180	241	4.1%
Bangladeshi	153	147	300	5.1%
Chinese	142	226	368	6.3%
Other - Asian	418	427	845	14.4%
Mixed	31	37	68	0.0%
Other ethnic	451	292	743	12.7%
Information refused	311	61	372	6.4%
Not known	315	253	568	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,125</b>	<b>3,298</b>	<b>6,423</b>	

Source: LLWR 2003/04 ELWa

Note: The percentage is calculated against the total number of learners excluding those where the ethnic origin is not known

Table 8: ESOL Students by Age Group – 2003/04

Age Group	Number of students			% of total
	Male	Female	Total	
under 16	49	32	81	1.3%
16 - 18	441	246	687	10.9%
19 - 20	247	193	440	7.0%
21 - 24	584	630	1,214	19.2%
25 - 39	1,360	1,496	2,856	45.2%
40 - 59	347	582	929	14.7%
60+	42	70	112	1.8%
unknown	55	49	104	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,125</b>	<b>3,298</b>	<b>6,423</b>	

Source: LLWR 2003/04 ELWa

Note: The percentage is calculated against the total number of learners excluding those where the age is not known

### 3.7.2 Provision

According to the Parade ESOL service in Cardiff the bulk of provision for students in Cardiff is provided by the Parade. The Parade provide a large number of outreach classes in the Cardiff area: seven primary schools; eight community/leisure centres; two youth centres; two libraries; the Welsh Refugee Council offices; as well as one block of Housing Accommodation flats. They also run ESOL language support classes at Coleg Glan Hafren and at a secondary school in Cardiff. Other ESOL providers in Cardiff include; Coleg Glan Hafren, which has an ESOL Department for elementary to advanced students, however not for beginners. CSV (Community Service Volunteers) Training run ESOL classes for people on unemployment benefit, which means that asylum seekers can not access those classes as they are linked to Job Centre Plus/New Deal, however refugees can. WEA (Worker's Educational Association) run ESOL classes, at the South Riverside Community Centre in Cardiff. The Somali Women's Association on Neville Street in Cardiff run ESOL classes as part of their courses that are aimed solely at women.

In Swansea ESOL learning is provided by Swansea College at Kingsway Centre, and Llwyn y Bryn Campus, as well as outreach programmes at the Salvation Army in Swansea, and Hafod Community Centre. Workshops at all ESOL levels are run at a number of locations such as; Brynhafyd Primary School, Murryston College, the Chinese School and the Phoenix centre. There are specific classes for Women which are held at Brynmill Primary School, Terrace Road Primary School, and Hafod Community Centre.

In Newport ESOL learning is provided primarily by Coleg Gwent, as well as a small number of outreach classes. In Wrexham ESOL classes are provided at Yale College, where they offer ESOL for beginners, intermediate, improvers, as well as ESOL English for Academic Purposes, and ESOL Improve your English using Computers.

## 4. BARRIERS TO LEARNING

An understanding of the barriers to learning that face asylum seekers and refugees will enable ELWa to more clearly focus on methods by which asylum seekers and refugees will be able to access educational facilities, as well as highlight areas where there might be gaps in services.

Regarding categorising barriers to learning, the method used in this report is the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) model of Dispositional, Informational, Institutional, Situational barriers (1998, seen in nfer Basic Skills and Key Skills Final Report, 2003):

- **Dispositional** motivations, aspirations, past experience
- **Informational** a lack of appropriate information, no awareness of the services provided.
- **Institutional** immigration policies and traditional class room settings
- **Situational** cultural/religious reasons for not taking up learning, not enough time because of asylum application process, childcare problems, expenses such as transport etc.

Categorisation in this way provides a means where the issues facing asylum seekers and refugees in education can be approached. However, it should be noted that issues may cross over categories depending on where the analyst places responsibility. In this case dispositional barriers such as motivations and aspirations are in part a result of situational barriers, such as learning not being priority, even though it is understood to be important. If your basic needs are not fulfilled, e.g. food, shelter, and security it does not make sense to prioritise higher needs such as education. Therefore Maslow's hierarchy of needs should be taken into consideration, as it provides an explanation to why asylum seekers might not access education.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Without the basic needs at the base of the pyramid, such as food, shelter, and security, it is not possible to motivate oneself to achieve higher level needs such as self esteem needs, in this case education.

Source: Maslow (1954)

Maslow's theory argues that an individual needs to fulfil their basic needs before they can be motivated to fulfil their higher needs. The most basic needs are food, water and shelter - survival needs. As an asylum seeker these needs are provided by NASS, since asylum seekers do not have the right to work and therefore can not support themselves. However, applying for support is not always an easy process. E.g. NASS makes a decision on an applicant's eligibility for NASS support based on an application form which is quite long and only available in English. NASS also requires applicants to declare all cash, savings, income and assets, whether held in the UK or abroad, as well as an explanation of why, if these exist, they can not be accessed. Asylum seekers will not qualify for support if their funds meet essential living costs for 14 days. If you do qualify for NASS support, there are still difficulties such as, only getting £31.15 per week (single person aged between 18 - 25) or £39.34 per week (single person aged over 25), which needs to be used to cover all expenses, apart from housing (Refugee Council Online, 2005).

Other lower needs that need to be fulfilled before an individual can be motivated to fulfil higher needs is the need for security, this encompasses having someone look out for you, in this case e.g. voluntary organisations such as the Welsh Refugee Council, as well as being able to rely on a system of law and order in society. Belonging needs refer to affiliation as part of a group with which you identify, e.g. a family or a social group. I.e. the need not to be an outcast, this is especially important to vulnerable groups in society, such as asylum seekers and refugees.

It is not until the basic needs mentioned above are met, that it is possible to try and aspire to higher needs such as self esteem, i.e. the need to achieve a level of competence or status that one feels is useful and deserving of respect in society. This is achieved by securing employment, or accessing education in order to find employment, and contribute to society.

By highlighting needs and motivations in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs this illustrates that dispositional barriers to education might not be solely down to the individual, but rather as a result of the social environment and circumstances the individual is living in.

#### **4.1 Dispositional**

Dispositional barriers to participating in learning cover issues such as motivations, aspirations and past experience of education. Dispositional barriers also includes cultural/religious reasons for not accessing and taking part in learning. Most people have some dispositional barriers to learning; therefore focused learning is constantly faced with competition from other activities.

Dispositional barriers for asylum seekers and refugees are not recorded to be the main issue when it comes to participating in learning. Asylum seekers and refugees do experience motivational barriers to learning; however, they are usually a result of not having the stability in life to enable them to focus on education. E.g. the whole process of applying for asylum takes over the person's life and can be very intrusive, to the extent that it can cause mental stress. Every person needs to prioritise certain things in life, and as an asylum seeker the main priority is trying to gain asylum in the host country, therefore accessing learning might take a second or third place in the list of priorities. The asylum application process can also be considered to be a situational barrier, in addition to being a dispositional barrier.

The aspiration of asylum seekers and refugees as a dispositional barrier to learning is not the main problem for ELWa. The majority of asylum seekers and refugees are keen to learn English, as well as access FE or HE courses to re-train or train, in order to gain access to the Welsh labour market (Refugee Council, *The Forbidden Workforce: Asylum seekers, the employment concession and access to the UK labour market*, 2005)

Past experience of education or lack of education can cause a barrier to learning. Asylum seekers are an extremely diverse group of people, they come from different countries, cultures and social classes, and therefore their past experience of education and learning is also very different. People who are professionals are already used to an educational setting, whereas a manual labourer, or a housewife, with little or no formal schooling will find it difficult to adapt to the learning environment of a formal class room. Past experience of education can also be seen as an institutional barrier, and as such it is covered in section 4.3, as well as in the section on dispositional barriers.

Cultural/religious reasons for not accessing learning seem to affect women more than men, specifically women who come from cultures where women commonly stay at home and take care of the house and the family, and where men are the providers who are employed and have an income; according to Aghaie (1998) this is common in traditional Islamic cultures. This can result in women not being able to access education as freely as men.

## **4.2 Informational**

Examples of informational barriers to learning include a lack of appropriate information and no awareness of services provided. There is a distinct lack of information for asylum seekers when they enter the country, and then get dispersed to different parts of the UK. The only form of initial information asylum seekers get is an information pack from their accommodation provider. There is, however, no requirement for what information should be provided, resulting in the amount of information differing between providers. Usually information packs will contain the

address and phone number to the Welsh Refugee Council; and then asylum seekers can turn to the WRC for additional advice on services and organisations that can offer help and support. The lack of structured information in the initial information packs from accommodation providers is an indirect barrier to accessing and taking part in education.

In regard to accessing information directly about educational services provided, reports by the Further Education Unit (FEU, 1994) and the Department for Employment and Education (DfEE, 2000) found that a lack of advice and guidance about ESOL is preventing asylum seekers and refugees from gaining access to courses, and in particular the right types of courses, and according to more recent research by KPMG (2005) this is an ongoing problem and is still a barrier today.

One way of combating informational barriers could be for education providers to utilize drop in centres, which are already set up in each cluster area as a result of an initiative by WLCRAS (the Welsh Local Authorities Consortium for Refugees and Asylum Seekers), as somewhere to promote and provide information about education and entitlements, as well as other information.

If asylum seekers are not helped to orientate themselves in an area and encouraged to benefit from the local community resources, they will remain isolated during their stay here, suffer ill health, and lack motivation. This can be seen as an overlap in dispositional and informational barriers, i.e. the informational barrier causes the dispositional barrier.

### **4.3 Institutional**

Institutional barriers for asylum seekers trying to access or participate in education are matters such as immigration policies. The effects of this has already been discussed in previous chapters, including what type of education asylum seekers can access, the fact that asylum seekers can not work, as well as budgetary constraints, i.e. NASS support not being substantial enough to pay for course fees, childcare and transport. These barriers can not be remedied by the educational service providers or ELWa, however it is important to be aware that they exist and will affect the education of asylum seekers.

The other institutional barrier facing some asylum seekers and refugees (i.e. people who are not used to the traditional learning process of formal teaching), is the type of formal learning that is commonly used for ESOL, as well as other FE and HE courses. Allender (1998) found that certain learner characteristics of refugees and asylum seekers have an impact on the pace and success of formal language learning, even though her research was carried out in Australia, it does have relevance for ESOL and education for asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. The characteristics that impact on the pace and success of formal language learning, according to Allender, were:

- no formal education
- limited formal education (i.e. less than seven years)
- no experience of formal learning as adults
- disrupted education due to war or other political crisis
- functional illiteracy in first language
- non-roman script background (e.g. Arabic, Russian, Chinese)
- elderly
- suffering severe effects of political torture and trauma
- cultural backgrounds and educational perspectives significantly different from those of Anglo-Australian culture (McPherson, 1997).

If the ESOL providers, funding permitting, could adapt learning methods to suit people who fall into the above categories it might prevent institutional barriers, making it easier for people to learn. There are several ways of making learning more accessible for people with special needs. Teaching methods that are designed to build confidence and promote success in the classroom will reduce learner anxiety. The kind of methodology needed is considerably more contextualised, multi-sensorial, as well as hands on, in comparison to that offered to learners without special needs. Careful consideration should be given to appropriate and clear visual aids, diagrams, and experiential learning.

Allender (1998) argues that learning methods for learners with limited first language literacy should focus on the learners' immediate personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, familiar topics, and concrete, real world materials rather than abstract and de-contextualised themes. Achren's (1991) analysis of learner responses to pedagogic practices which are common in language classes revealed that some activities assumed too much shared cultural knowledge. Using written work sheets, instead of reinforcing language and aiding comprehension, can confuse learners and become barriers to learning. Even simple drawings might not have the desired effect, if learners do not have the same cultural framework and life experiences (Hiffeldt, 1985; and Ramm, 1994).

In order to make learning methods more appropriate to refugees and asylum seekers with special needs, learning sequences should begin with concrete experience and slowly build up to more complex and abstract concepts. Ramm (1994) has recommended the use of real objects to set a meaningful context, gradually replacing them with photos or realistic pictures, then substituting these with more abstract diagrams or graphics.

Herbert and McFeeter (1994) found that learners who had little or no previous experience of formal education have difficulties managing information input, organising learning material, following verbal and written instructions, and processing large chunks of new language. They do not appear to use information processing skills, used by people with higher levels of education. In fact, a study by Jackson (1994) found a strong relationship between the acquisition of learning skills and language-specific gains.

Learners with special needs, benefit from learning: study management; problem solving; memorizing; categorizing; the use of dictionaries; and the transfer of skills to other contexts. Teachers need to continually recycle language and skills, include physical activities, and make frequent changes of activities. Learner anxiety can be reduced by creating supportive relationships within the class, slowing the pace of instruction, putting the emphasis on receptive rather than productive skills, and downplaying the role and formality of assessments.

#### **4.4 Situational**

Situational barriers include issues such as not having enough time because of the asylum application process, past experiences (i.e. the reasons that made people come to the UK and apply for asylum), no or limited access to childcare, and expenses such as transport.

A situational barrier that links in with cultural traditions is women staying at home and taking care of housework and their families, this was highlighted in a research study carried out by the Parade ESOL service in Cardiff and Cardiff Council (2003) which found that childcare was the most cited reason for non-attendance and withdrawal from ESOL classes. Reasons for occasional non attendance featured child care as the second largest reason for not attending, after being ill. The research also found that a significantly higher percentage of women, in comparison to men, attended outreach classes. Outreach makes it easier for women, especially mothers, to access ESOL classes.

The impact that the asylum application process has on people has already been discussed earlier in this chapter, and was discussed in regard to Maslow's hierarchy of needs of what is going to be a priority for people. When people claim asylum it is because of a need to find safety in another country to their own, and as such the asylum application process can be said to be a need for safety, which according to Maslow is a greater priority than education. The process of applying for asylum can be extremely time consuming and occasionally emotional, and will therefore affect the time and effort spent on education.

Most asylum seekers and refugees arriving in Wales have experienced some form of trauma, and some are survivors of rape and torture. The long term effects of these damaging experiences often impact in varying ways on other aspects of their lives such as education, in regard to their confidence and self esteem as learners, as well as their motivation to learn. Difficult settlement, which may include financial problems, unemployment, children's adjustment to schooling, and experiences of racism and discrimination, inevitably affects learning of the host language. Research carried out by Allender (1998) found that traumatic past experience can cause psychological symptoms, such as memory impairment, short attention span, severe anxiety, and limited concentration, which can then override positive motivation and impede learning.

## 5. WAYS FORWARD

This section of the report will focus on what can be done in order to make education more accessible for asylum seekers and refugees. As has been illustrated in previous chapters asylum seekers and refugees are faced with a range of barriers to overcome in order to access education, and for refugees eventually employment. However, there are several things that can be done to enable asylum seekers and refugees easier access to education and employment.

- Setting up RETAS (the Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service, which is a charitable organisation) in Wales, funded partly by ELWa, would enable refugees to access information, advice and guidance on education, training and employment. RETAS currently have an office in London and provide independent, impartial information, as well as advice and guidance to help refugees overcome difficulties in accessing education, training and employment, including professional re-qualification. RETAS have previously organised outreach programmes for specifically marginalised refugee groups, such as women and young refugees. They receive their funding from the following sources: the European Social Fund, The European Refugee Fund, the Learning and Skills Council, the Home Office's Challenge Fund and Active Communities Unit, the London Development Agency, the Kings Fund, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, the Community Fund, Paddington Social and Community Fund, Lloyds TSB London, as well as other trusts and charities.
- Since there has been no research carried out into the skills and qualifications of refugees in Wales this is definitely something that needs to be addressed. Skills research of refugees will enable ELWa to distinguish what areas need to be addressed in order to enable refugees to find work at a level of their education, and participate fully in Welsh society.
- The refugee doctors' database; discussed in section 2.4 Qualifications and Re-training, is a project organised by the Refugee Council and the British Medical Association. They ask refugee doctors in the UK to send their details, in order to keep them on a database. They will use the information to send refugee doctors information they think will help them as they prepare to continue their medical careers in the UK. Many refugee doctors have found it very difficult to find information, pass exams for registration with the General Medical Council, and to get medical jobs in the UK. The database is set up in order to reach organisations who want to help refugee doctors continue their medical careers in the UK but do not have the information they need in order to do this. The refugee doctors database are able to provide information about; how many refugee doctors are in the UK, in which cities are they live, at what stage of their career are they,

and what help they need. The database is also used to send refugee doctors information which will help them continue their career in the UK, such as meetings for refugee doctors, study groups and new projects for refugee doctors in their local area. It can also be used to put refugee doctors in contact with other organisations, such as the Regional Postgraduate Deanery. The information on the database also provides statistics, for example on how many refugee doctors are in the UK, where they live and what stage of the registration process they have reached. These statistics will enable organisations to improve the services which they offer to refugee doctors. In addition the information is used to help individual refugee doctors by sending them information, and details of schemes which have been set up to help them. By setting up this service on a local level, solely for Wales, would enable refugee doctors in Wales to access the services needed to assist them in trying to find employment. Similar databases to the one described above have been set up by the Refugee Council in London for refugee dentists with the British Dental Association, and well as a database for refugee nurses with the Royal College of Nursing.

- ELWa would benefit from working actively with other service providers for asylum seekers and refugees in order to find a common way of accessing information about organisations, funding and services. This could be done by working with the All Wales Refugee Policy Forum. The forum was set up in November 2003, it works to ensure a more strategic, co-ordinated and effective approach is taken to supporting the successful integration of refugees and asylum seekers on a national level across Wales. The Forum focuses its work on the following areas: accommodation and housing; community development, safety and justice; health and social services, employment and life long learning; children and young people; media/information and communication.
- NIACE (the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education - England and Wales) is currently running a very successful skills audit pilot project in the East Midlands which has helped many asylum seekers to access voluntary work and gain useful UK work experience (Refugee Council, March 2005). Such projects are needed to promote volunteering for asylum seekers and funding should be identified to ensure they are widely available.
- Schemes such as the one organised by Leicester City Council and Jobcentre Plus, applied to Welsh cities such as Cardiff, Swansea, and Newport, can enable refugee integration to the Welsh labour market, as well as Welsh society. Leicester City Council and Jobcentre Plus agreed to a formal recruitment target for refugees in order to demonstrate the city's commitment to establishing a workforce that reflects the wider community. The Refugee Employment Project (REP) formed part of the authority's Local Public Service agreement

with Government. It aimed to move over 180 refugees with support from Jobcentre Plus, into sustainable work over the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2002 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005. The city council supported its new refugee recruits with training and other assistance. The project was successful with more than 180 refugees in jobs. Jobcentre Plus supported REP with activities to help its advisers understand more about refugee issues. Jobcentre Plus in Leicester developed guidance to help its 'frontline' advisers welcome refugees and help them to understand arrangements for finding work (DWP, 2004).

- In regard to ESOL classes, more funding is needed. Currently providers' planning of ESOL is driven by available funding and allocation rather than by local needs. Additional funding is also needed as a result of the requirement in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, which states that those wishing to settle in the UK have to take a citizenship test with a language component, where they have to achieve Level 3. There is also a need for bilingual ESOL teachers because a large proportion of those now requiring ESOL seem to have very little knowledge of English. With the appropriate training, bilingual teachers could be recruited from within the refugee communities. By funding provision for more outreach programmes this would combat the issue of travel costs, which is a problem for refugees on low incomes and living a significant distance from ESOL providers.
- Connexions have produced a report titled Emerging Practice Working Together which outlines that all asylum seekers and refugees aged 13-19 are entitled to use the services offered by Connexions. They can provide practical advice and help with integration on matters such as education, social services, Jobseeker Plus, voluntary and community organisations. By utilizing services like the ones mentioned above would aid integration into the Welsh society and is not only beneficial to asylum seekers and refugees but to Welsh society as a whole.
- NIACE is currently leading an EQUAL Development Partnership (DP) – Progress GB. The partners include Ufi (Learn Direct), Birmingham University, Midland Refugee Council, Exeter Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and the NE Consortia for Asylum and Refugee Support. The DP intend to establish, implement and disseminate innovative approaches to support employers in overcoming skill shortages by promoting inclusive work practices and addressing the needs of refugee/migrant workers to develop and adapt their skills for the UK labour market through a range of lifelong learning opportunities. A similar partnership could be beneficial for refugees in Wales since the aim of the project is to address barriers in accessing employment for refugees and migrants. The purpose is to use a range of approaches to support employers overcome skill shortages, as well as

support refugees through learning in order to develop skills needed for the Welsh labour market.

## 6. CONCLUSION

ELWa is committed to ensuring everyone in Wales has the generic skills needed by employers for a sustainable and competitive economy. However when considering the needs of asylum seekers immigration policies will always be a contributing factor of what services asylum seekers can access. Due to the withdrawal of the concession which allowed asylum seekers to apply for permission to work, in July 2002, asylum seekers are now unable to secure employment, as well as not being able to access vocational training. As a result of this ELWa are limited in what education and training they can offer asylum seekers.

Asylum seekers and refugees are able to access further education and higher education, however, taking immigration policies and funding into consideration, ESOL classes are the only means of education that are freely accessible. Consequently the main educational provision for asylum seekers is ESOL. Learning the language of the host country is vital for integration into a new society, as it enables individuals to access education and employment, as well as providing a tool for enabling an understanding of the culture. It is therefore of importance that learning provision meets the needs of the changing demand for ESOL which is estimated as a result of the new citizenship language requirement.

There is a great need for asylum seekers' and refugees' qualifications to be recognised in Wales. It would therefore be beneficial for ELWa to assist and partly fund setting up organisations such as RETAS in Wales. There is also a void of research into skills and qualifications of refugees, carrying out research of this kind would enable ELWa to decide what areas need to be focused on so as to best utilise the skills already possessed by refugees.

In chapter 4, ways of enabling asylum seekers and refugees easier access to education and employment were outlined. It was recommended that ELWa would benefit from working actively with other service providers so as to find a common way of accessing information about organisations, funding and services that work with asylum seekers and refugees.

It is important to note that education is not always the first priority for asylum seekers, the reasons for this have been covered in previous chapters. However, put briefly it can be summarised as; if an individual does not have their basic needs fulfilled, such as food, shelter and security, they are not going to prioritise higher needs such as education. Even though ELWa are not involved in providing asylum seekers with basic needs there is still going to be a knock on effect on participation in education. There are certain aspects of this issue that ELWa can provide a remedy for. E.g. the main reason women stated for not attending ESOL classes was childcare, and the one of the main reasons for not attending ESOL classes for both men and women was

the cost of transport. By ELWa providing funding for additional outreach classes, as well as providing extra funding for childcare, this would prevent people from not attending at all, or dropping out of ESOL courses.

## 6.1 SWOT analysis

This section of the report will identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that face ELWa when dealing with the insight group made up of asylum seekers and refugees.

STRENGTHS:	WEAKNESSES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not just one specific client group, i.e. asylum seekers and refugees, since EU nationals also access ESOL classes.</li> <li>• Growing demand for ESOL as a result of the citizenship requirement, of mastering ESOL at level 3, creates opportunities for economies of scale.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough funding for ESOL demand.</li> <li>• Quality of management information, to identify support to asylum seekers</li> <li>• Understanding of the skills within the asylum seeker and refugee population.</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES:	THREATS:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ELWa's commitment to provide world class learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Addressing barriers to learning for asylum seekers and refugees could eventually have positive impact on the Welsh labour market</li> <li>• Skills within the refugee population could be used to help address skills gaps across Wales.</li> <li>• Existing network of organisations working to support and advise asylum seekers and refugees on their rights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immigration policies, such as potential restrictions on the amount of asylum seekers who are let into the country.</li> <li>• Job market is not perceived to offer opportunities to refugees, providing the motivation to learn.</li> <li>• Resources not available to prioritise specialised support for asylum seekers and refugees.</li> </ul>

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