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Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study



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Glossary

Acronym	Definition
ACE	Achieving Change through Employment
ALW/AOC	Adult Learning Wales/ Adult Learning Wales/Addysg Oedolion Cymru
CfW	Communities for Work
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board
CSCS	Construction Skills Certificate Scheme
CQFW	Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
DPIA	Displaced People in Action
ENRD	European Network for Rural Development
ESF	European Social Fund
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
EYST	The Ethnic Youth Support Team
EU	European Union
JCP	Jobcentre Plus
LA	Local Authority
LAG	Local Action Group
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NHS	National Health Service
RDP	Rural Development Programme
RSPs	Regional Skills Partnerships
SPOC	Single Point of Contact
SVPRS	Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme
WARD	Wales Asylum Seeker and Refugee Doctors
WG	Welsh Government
WGRC	Welsh Government Rural Communities
WLGA	Welsh Local Government Association
WRC	Welsh Refugee Council
UK	United Kingdom

1. Introduction

Asylum seekers and refugees

- 1.1 The right to claim asylum is enshrined in international law¹. It protects those fleeing from persecution. An “asylum seeker” is someone who has applied for asylum and is awaiting a decision on whether they will be granted refugee status, or leave to remain in the UK, for humanitarian or other reasons (Asylum Aid, n.d.)².
- 1.2 Since the mid-1990s, UK government policy has drawn a sharp distinction between asylum seekers and refugees, with policy interventions to support employment and integration and the right to work, restricted to refugees (Mulvey, 2011). As a result, asylum seekers are not usually allowed to work while their claim is being considered³.
- 1.3 Employment is seen as a vital part of integration and promoting individual well-being for refugees⁴. It is also seen as a vital part of strategies to promote social cohesion in the communities in which refugees live (see e.g. Ager and Strang, 2008; Bloch, 2004; Johnson et al., 2004; Archer et al., 2005).
- 1.4 Refugees and those granted leave to remain in the UK are entitled to work, and often very keen to work, and many have skills, qualifications and work experience (in their country of origin). However, rates of unemployment and under-employment are high (Crawley and Crimes 2009; European Commission and OECD, 2016; Johnson et al., 2004).
- 1.5 This study covers asylum seekers, refugees and others with leave to remain in the UK, such as those granted humanitarian protection. Because most asylum seekers are not permitted to work, when describing employment, the report usually only focuses upon the experiences of refugees, and in the interests of

¹ Most notably, the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.

² [Asylum Aid](#)

³ Asylum seekers are not entitled to work unless they have waited for over 12 months for a decision, and they are not considered responsible for the delay in decision-making. In this case, they can apply to the UK Border Agency for permission to work in occupations on the UK's official shortage occupation list.

⁴ For example, employment can contribute to reducing poverty and vulnerability, increasing self-esteem, improving language skills and strengthening social networks (Johnson et al., 2004).

simplicity, we use the term “refugees” as shorthand for all those with leave to remain and work in the UK.

Support for asylum seekers and refugees

- 1.6 Over the last two decades, as the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers have increased⁵, the entitlements of asylum seekers and provision to support employment for refugees has been cut (Mulvey, 2011).
- 1.7 Asylum seekers can apply to the UK Border Agency for financial support (£37.75 per person per week) and/or accommodation while they are waiting for a decision on their claim. Accommodation is provided on a no-choice basis.
- 1.8 Refugees and those granted leave to remain in the UK are entitled to work, to access employment support services and to claim welfare benefits, but lose their financial support from the UK Border Agency and accommodation 28 days after being granted status. This is described as the “move on” period and can be a very challenging time, given the speed at which asylum support is withdrawn and the need to, for example, register for benefits and find new accommodation.
- 1.9 Support is usually withdrawn from those refused asylum and they are expected to leave the UK⁶. However, those who can demonstrate that they are likely to become destitute in 14 days, and that they are taking reasonable steps to leave the UK, can apply to the Home Office for hardship support⁷ (NAfW, 2017). There is also limited short-term support available for those whose asylum claim has been refused (and who have exhausted their appeal rights), who can demonstrate that there is a reason why they cannot leave the UK (Home Office, n.d.⁸).

The numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK

- 1.10 Although the overwhelming majority of refugees remain close to areas of conflict, increasing numbers have sought asylum in Europe (UNHCR, 2017). The number of asylum applications in the UK increased sharply in the early

⁵ Asylum applications peaked in 2002 at 84,132 before falling to 17,916 in 2010. By 2016 this had risen to 30,747 (Hawkins, 2018).

⁶ They typically have “no recourse to public funds”, and are not eligible for housing or welfare benefits and can be denied support from LAs (NAfW, 2017).

⁷ This includes accommodation and £35.39 per week on an Azure payment card (rather than cash) for food, clothing and toiletries (called “section 4 support”).

⁸ [Home Office](#)

1990s and again in the late 1990s, following conflict in countries like Afghanistan, the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia⁹, Sri Lanka and Somalia and political repression in countries such as Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Zimbabwe (Castles et al., 2003)¹⁰. The number of people claiming asylum in the UK peaked in 2002, and while they have declined since, they remain much higher than the numbers in the late 1990s. The range of countries and regions affected by conflict and political repression, with very differing histories and cultures, contributes to the diversity of refugee populations in the UK.

- 1.11 Not all those claiming asylum are granted permission to stay as a refugee, or for humanitarian or other reasons. The proportion of people successfully claiming asylum in the UK has been on an uneven, but generally upward trend since the early 2000s. In the last three years for which statistics are published around 40% to 55%¹¹ of asylum claims to the UK were successful, and led to either an asylum grant or other grant (Hawkins, 2018).

Asylum seekers and refugees in Wales

- 1.12 The number of asylum seekers and refugees in Wales was low until 2001, when Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham were designated as “dispersal areas” to accommodate asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their claim (Crawley, 2013). By 2012, there were around 1,300 asylum seekers living in Wales (Crawley and Crimes, 2009) and by 2017, there were over 2,800 asylum seekers, nearly all of whom were in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham¹².
- 1.13 The exact number of refugees currently living in Wales is not actually known¹³, but is estimated to be around 10,000 (Robinson, 2006 cited in Crawley and Crimes, 2009). The majority of these are thought to be in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham.

⁹ The number of asylum applications in Europe coincided with the wars in Croatia and Bosnia in 1991-93 and the war in Kosovo in 1998-99 (Crawley, 2013). The majority of refugees remain close to areas of conflict, but increasing numbers travel to Europe ([UNHCR, 2017](#)).

¹⁰ [IPPR States of Conflict: The causes of forced migration to the EU](#)

¹¹ This was calculated as a percentage of final outcomes of asylum applications (e.g. granted or refused) as a percentage of known outcomes.

¹² Indicative data comes from Home Office figures on asylum seekers in receipt of Section 95 support. [Home Office Immigration Statistics April-June 2017 Asylum, Vol. 4, Table 16](#)

¹³ Refugees are not differentiated in administrative data sets and, with few exceptions, are not identifiable in national surveys (including the census). Given the lack of data, inferences have been drawn from small scale studies (such as Crawley and Crimes 2009; Robinson, 2006).

The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

- 1.14 In September 2015, the UK committed itself to resettling 20,000 refugees from the conflict in Syria by 2020, through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS). The SVPRS is delivered through a partnership between:
- the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR); responsible for identifying “the most vulnerable” refugees;
 - the Home Office, responsible for matching of refugees to offers of accommodation and support in the UK;
 - the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) responsible for the relocation of refugees to the UK; and
 - Local Authorities (LAs), who are responsible for refugees’ reception, accommodation and initial support.
- 1.15 Participating LAs are assigned £8,520 per refugee (for the first 12 months), with funding tapered over the subsequent four years. The funding is intended to enable LAs to provide “intensive support to refugees on arrival”, including support to find accommodation, school places, open bank accounts, and register for benefits and medical treatment and ESOL provision¹⁴. This support is often described as “very much the gold standard”, and is considered much better than that provided to refugees granted asylum via other routes. (Bolt, 2018).
- 1.16 Because all 22 Welsh LAs are participating in the SVPRS, it is changing the dispersal of refugees in Wales, and means that, for example, rural areas like Powys and Ceredigion are now hosting refugees. Nevertheless, the number of those resettled under the SVPRS remain relatively small (1,072 refugees had been resettled in Wales under the VPRS by March 2019 compared to other refugee groups in Wales¹⁵.

¹⁴ In August 2017, the Home Office required LAs to provide a minimum of eight hours per week of English language tuition for 12 months, or until the refugee reached proficiency at ESOL Level three (Bolt, 2018).

¹⁵ These are the figures for all [Home Office Immigration Statistics Mar 2019 Asylum, Vol. 4, Table 20](#).

Welsh Government Policy

- 1.17 Although powers relating to asylum and immigration are not devolved¹⁶, the Welsh Government is responsible for a range of devolved services in areas like housing, health, education social services and community cohesion, which have a significant impact upon the experiences and integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales (NAfW, 2017).
- 1.18 The Welsh Government is committed to a more fair, equitable and sustainable Wales under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Equality Act 2010. Policy and support toward refugees has been developed through:
- The Refugee Inclusion Strategy (2012) and the Refugee and Asylum Seeker delivery plan (2017);
 - Specific initiatives such as the Wales Syrian Refugee Taskforce, and the proposed Restart project; and
 - Sectoral policies, most notably the Community Cohesion National Development Plan and policies in employment and education (such as ESOL provision).

The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan

- 1.19 The current Refugee and Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan (WG, 2016a) follows the principles of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in: “taking a long-term and preventative approach and involvement to ensure policies and services remain responsive to localised need” and is aligned with the Strategic Equality Plan (*ibid*, p.4). It sets out the government’s priorities for asylum seekers and refugees and identifies employment as a key area for action, including strengthening advice on employment and self-employment and training to help refugees find work.
- 1.20 The current plan has been criticised by some for failing to set out more concrete actions or ‘SMART’ outcomes, for not allocating resources, and for limited scope and impact (NAfW, 2017). In response, in spring 2018, the Welsh Government

¹⁶ Decisions by the Westminster government, for example around financial support and immigration policy, impact upon policy and support for refugees and asylum seekers in Wales.

issued a new Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan for consultation (WG, 2018a).

Support for the Voluntary Sector

1.21 There are a number of funding streams supporting voluntary sector provision; these include:

- the Equality and Inclusion Grant (2015-17), funding organisations such as the Welsh Refugee Council (WRC), Trinity Centre and the South East Wales Refugee Women Support Programme, to increase the skills and confidence of refugees and asylum seekers and improve their access to volunteering and employment opportunities (WG, 2016b);
- the Welsh Government's Homelessness and Rooflessness Grant, which funds the WRC's Move On project to provide support, advice and guidance in the four dispersal areas for those granted refugee status or leave to remain;
- the Asylum Rights Programme funding the WRC, the Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST), Bawso, Asylum Justice, Tros Gynnal Plant, Displaced People in Action (DPIA) and City of Sanctuary;
- the Wales Deanery's funding of Wales Asylum Seeker and Refugee Doctors' (WARD) project, delivered by DPIA, which supports doctors and dentists who are asylum seekers or refugees, to revalidate their qualifications and prepare for English language tests.

The Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan

1.22 The Programme for Government (WG, 2016b) outlines the vision of building: “a united and connected society, where everyone is respected and valued”. In support of this, the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan (CCNDP) identifies: “increased evidence and awareness on immigration and supporting the inclusion of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants” as one of its key outcomes. It includes action to improve understanding of local migration patterns and their implications and support of LAs through implementation of the SVPRS

and Afghan Relocation Scheme¹⁷ and Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators (WG, 2016b).

Employability Policy

- 1.23 Increasing skills is: “a strong lever for tackling poverty and strengthening the creation of jobs and growth” (WG, 2014a; 2014b). Given concerns about poor work, policy has evolved and Welsh Government and DWP policy is now focused upon sustainable employment (Newton, n.d.). The Programme for Government includes a commitment to further reshape employability support, through the development of a new Employability Programme (WG, 2018b).
- 1.24 To deliver this commitment, in March 2018, the Welsh Government published a cross-Government employability plan that set out its vision for making Wales a full-employment, high-tech, high-wage economy¹⁸.
- 1.25 The Plan makes a commitment to help everyone achieve their full potential through meaningful employment, regardless of their ability, background, gender or ethnicity. The plan also makes it clear to employers that they have a responsibility to nurture, train and sustain their employees to ensure that the future of the Welsh workforce is a stable and forceful one.
- 1.26 It outlines two key components for future employability support in Wales; these are the Working Wales – advisory service and a new employability programme designed to meet individuals’ needs.
- 1.27 Working Wales was launched in May 2019 and will deliver a national entry point to employability support. It will be delivered by Careers Wales as a national service of advice and guidance and provide direct referral to the future employability programme when it is introduced and sign post to other provision, including CfW and Parents and Childcare Employment (PaCE). It will simplify access, tailor advice and interventions to meet the needs of individuals, and join up available support to help people reduce and overcome barriers to getting into work.

¹⁷ The last referrals made under the scheme were in 2016.

¹⁸ [Welsh Government Employability Plan 2018](#)

- 1.28 The new employability programme will be designed to support people of all ages to overcome barriers to achieve and maintain good quality, sustainable employment.

The Wales Rural Development Programme

- 1.29 The Welsh Government Rural Communities Development Programme 2014-2020 (WG: RDP) supports activities which contribute to: "achieving a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities including the creation and maintenance of employment¹⁹." Working through the LEADER community development approach, LEADER Local Action Groups (LAG) have responsibility for identifying actions that will foster development in their area. As we outline in section 7, the European Network for Rural Development has highlighted its potential contribution to the integration of refugees (ENRD, 2016).

Aims and objectives of the study

- 1.30 As outlined in the specification for this study:

This study will have three main objectives; firstly, to understand the ambitions of refugee populations, secondly to understand what it would take for refugees to achieve these ambitions and the barriers to their achievement and finally to understand how support for refugees could be developed to help them achieve these aims. This study should develop a practical action plan which identifies feasible activities that could be delivered under the WGRC-RDP 2014-2020 and other forms of skills, employability and enterprise support.

- 1.31 The objectives are to (i) investigate the ambitions, aspirations and skills of refugee populations:

- What kind of work would refugees like to do, including sector, occupation, self-employment and voluntary work?
- What skills/work experience do refugees bring with them?

¹⁹ Other objectives are "fostering the competitiveness of agriculture", and "ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources, and climate action".

- What are refugee's attitudes to learning and skills development? What, if any, learning would they like to do and why?
- How do these ambitions and aspirations vary according to the characteristics of refugees? In particular gender, socio-economic background, location in Wales, country of origin, SVPRS/non-SVPRS, and length of time in the UK

(ii) Understand what refugees need, to achieve their ambitions and aspirations:

- To what extent are refugees able to find work and learning opportunities in general? What barriers do they face?
- to what extent are refugees able to find work that matches their skills and ambitions? What barriers do they face? This should include consideration of progression within work.
- what role do the attitudes and practices of employers play in enabling/preventing refugees from finding appropriate work opportunities?
- how do refugees' ambitions compare to labour market opportunities in Wales?
- to what extent do refugees need to develop "generic" or "employability" skills to find work in Wales?
- what are the skills demands and entry points in industries where refugees have an interest in working? Do refugees seeking work in these industries face any particular barriers?
- what are the challenges for refugees who wish to pursue self-employment?
- do needs and barriers vary according to refugee characteristics (e.g. gender, socio-economic background, location in Wales, country of origin and SVPRS/non-SVPRS, length of time in the UK)?

(iii) investigate how current support enables refugees to meet their ambitions and aspirations and identify areas in which support could be improved or developed:

- map the employment and skills-related support available to refugees, including support specifically tailored to refugees and general support that refugees may access;
- assess the knowledge refugees have of these services, and their perceptions of these services;
- collect examples of best practice in developing the employment prospects of refugees from Wales and elsewhere;
- identify gaps or weaknesses in current provision and variations in the quality of provision across different groups (e.g. gender, socio-economic background, location in Wales, country of origin and SVPRS/non-SVPRS, length of time in the UK);
- identify ways in which support could be developed or improved through the WGRC RDP 2014-20 and other avenues; this should include:
 - identifying actions that could be taken over specified timescales, lead responsibilities, partners and estimates on costs;
 - identifying specific needs/provision for women;
- identify local organisations across the private, public and third sectors that could be active partners in the activities delivered.

1.1. The focus of the study was on refugees with leave to remain in the UK and those coming to Wales via the SVPRS. In addition, it was specified that: “where possible the study should also include asylum seekers”; and that while the study will include refugees from across Wales: “there is a particular interest in the experiences of refugees outside of urban Local Authorities”.

2. Approach and Methodology

Approach

2.1 This was a mixed methods study, integrating a range of methods to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The methods used were:

- A systematic literature review;
- Interviews and discussions with stakeholders; and
- A survey of refugees and asylum seekers

2.2 The data and initial analysis were presented and discussed at a workshop bringing together former refugees and representatives from the Welsh Government, the WSMP, LAs and the voluntary sector.

Literature review

2.3 The literature review aimed to systematically search selected sources²⁰ to identify research evidence of, for example, refugees' aspirations and their experiences of un/employment and the barriers they face, and evaluative evidence of the effectiveness of different interventions, such as ESOL provision and volunteering and training, aimed at supporting refugees to find work. In total, around 100 items were included. Full details on the search strategy, sift and review and inclusion criteria are outlined in the Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study: Literature Review.

Stakeholder engagement

2.4 54 stakeholders from the Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), LAs, the Home Office, the DWP, the three Regional Skills Partnerships (RSPs), Business Wales; voluntary sector organisations working with or supporting refugees, such as the WRC, DPIA, EYST, Oxfam Cymru, the Red Cross and SOVA, two employer bodies (Education Wales and Social Care Wales)²¹ covering areas which refugees and asylum seekers aspired to work in, and colleges and universities, were interviewed.

²⁰ These were: Google ; Google Scholar; [JSTOR](#); [The Campbell Collaboration](#); and the [Evidence for Policy and Practice Information \(EPPI\) Centre](#).

²¹ Efforts to engage with a third sector, the construction industry, were not successful.

- 2.5 Two workshops were held to discuss emerging findings and shape the recommendations. The first was held with eight refugees who had worked on the study as community researchers, and the second included two community researchers and 16 other stakeholders from the Welsh Government, The Home Office, WLGA, LAs, colleges, universities and the voluntary sector.
- 2.6 The predominantly qualitative data generated by interviews and workshops was subject to a thematic analysis to identify, describe, analyse and interpret the key patterns (themes) within the data (Bryman, 2012).

Survey of refugees and asylum seekers in Wales

- 2.7 As outlined in the introduction, refugee populations in Wales are diverse and there is a lack of data on the size and characteristics of the population, and no sampling frame, which means that a random probability sample²² was not possible. Therefore, quotas were used to develop a sample that, as far as possible, represented key characteristics of the population relevant to the aims and objectives of the study. (Mortimer, 2017; Bryman, 2012)²³. Due to this, the claims made in this report cannot be said to be necessarily representative of the broader refugee and asylum seeker population in Wales.
- 2.8 The key characteristics identified as relevant to the study aims and objectives were:
- gender, as the employment aspirations, barriers and needs of men and women may be very different;
 - routes of entry, given evidence of differing levels of support and needs for those coming via traditional asylum routes and those coming via the SVPRS²⁴;
 - region of origin, which may, for example, influence pre-migration experiences such as education, language skills and employment

²² A random probability sample represents the gold standard in surveys and involves randomly selecting each participant included in the survey (Bryman, 2012).

²³ Quota samples are a type of non-probability sample, which defines categories and the number of people to be included in each category (which become the quotas), in order to produce a sample which represents the population (*ibid.*).

²⁴ There is evidence that support for those resettled under the SVPRS may be better than those coming via traditional asylum routes, but that those resettled under the SVPRS are likely to be a more vulnerable group, with potentially greater needs and fewer resources. There is also evidence that suggests that a lengthy asylum process can be de-skilling.

experiences, and post-migration experiences such as access to social networks. The four regions that were chosen to reflect key regions from which large numbers of refugees had fled over the last five years were: the Middle East; North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa (Hawkins, 2018);

- age, as whilst most migrants to the UK are younger, older refugees may find the adjustment to a new culture and employment markets more challenging (Bloch, 2002);
- place, as the experiences of refugees (e.g. access to social networks, services, and the response of communities) may differ markedly, just as access to employment and training opportunities in urban, peri-urban and rural areas of different sizes and levels of socio-economic development, will also differ. The infrastructure in place to support refugees was also expected to be stronger in traditional dispersal areas (i.e. Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham) compared to rural areas; and
- access to support services, as the employment -related aspirations and needs of those accessing services may be quite different to those who are not accessing services, as they are either more marginalised/socially excluded, or, possibly, so well integrated that they no longer need these services (*ibid.*).

- 2.9 In response, as outlined in table 1, non-proportional quotas, defining a minimum size for each quota (but no maximum size) were set for three key groups of refugees and asylum seekers: those accessing services, expected to be the largest group; those not accessing services, expected to be a smaller, hard to reach group, and those resettled under the SVPRS.

Table 1. Key groups to be sampled

	Refugees and asylum seekers accessing services	Refugees and asylum seekers not accessing services	Refugees resettled under the SVPRS
Sample size	200-250	30-50	50-70
Age	Min 20% over 35	Min 20% over 35	Non applied
Gender	Min 33% Male/Female	Min 33% Male/Female	Min 33% Male/Female
Location in Wales	At least 10% will be drawn from each LA in the study (i.e. Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Wrexham)	At least 10% will be drawn from each LA in the study (i.e. Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Wrexham)	At least 10% will be drawn from each LA in the study (i.e. Cardiff, Newport, Wrexham ²⁵ and four rural LAs)
Region of origin	10% from each region selected for inclusion in the study	No quota set due to difficulties identifying who would be in this group.	Not applicable (region of origin is defined by the scheme (i.e. the Syrian region))
Length of time in the UK	Min 25% three years or more	No quota set due to difficulties identifying who would be in this group.	No quota set, as the scheme was only established in 2015

2.10 The decision to use non-proportional quotas²⁶ was a pragmatic one, intended to provide a degree of flexibility in recruiting interviewees, given uncertainties about the numbers, distribution and willingness of different groups of refugees and asylum seekers to participate in the study. It was also intended to ensure that, as far as possible, the survey could include as many people who wanted to

²⁵ Swansea is not included, to avoid duplicating the USW/WRC study.

²⁶ In this case, given the absence of data about the “population”, it is likely that the quotas set were non-proportional; that is to say, the proportions of people in each quota may not reflect the proportions in the whole population.

contribute as possible (if maximum quotas had been set, once filled, no further interviews would be undertaken with this group). The approach helped ensure that the characteristics and experiences of key groups were represented in the sample. However, the use of non-proportional quota samples, coupled with the uncertainty about the whole population, limits external validity.

Achieving quotas

- 2.11 Quotas for the non-SVPRS populations were filled by recruiting refugees and asylum seekers who were accessing support services, principally voluntary sector organisations like the WRC in Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham, Oasis and Trinity in Cardiff, the EYST in Swansea, and the Red Cross in Wrexham, with the generous ‘in kind’ support of support services who provided introductions to prospective participants and offered use of their premises in which to conduct interviews. Prospective interviewees were offered a £15 supermarket voucher, to recognise their time and contribution to the study. Interviews were undertaken by researchers from People and Work and a team of 16 community researchers, almost all of whom were refugees themselves, who spoke key regional languages such as Arabic, Farsi, Kiswahili, Kurdish, Tigrinya/Tigre and Urdu and who as ‘insiders’ had valuable links to refugee populations.
- 2.12 The combination of places people knew (such as the offices of support services) and were comfortable going to, the offer of a £15 supermarket voucher, and a mix of People and Work and community researchers, proved an effective way of engaging potential interviewees and almost all quotas were filled over the period of mid-April to early October 2018. A targeted approach was then taken to try to recruit more people from Sub-Saharan Africa, and who were employed, as these groups were under-represented in the sample. Further details on the quotas and how they were filled are outlined in the Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study: Survey Working Paper (Iqbal and Holtom, n.d.).
- 2.13 Quotas for the SVPRS population were filled by recruiting refugees with the support of LA SVPRS coordinators and voluntary sector organisations with support contracts for the SVPRS, such DPIA, EYST and the Red Cross. Given the desire to ensure a reasonable geographic spread across rural LAs in

particular, refugees were recruited from Anglesey, Carmarthen, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Monmouthshire, Neath, Port Talbot, Powys and the Vale of Glamorgan. It proved more difficult than anticipated to recruit refugees resettled under the SVPRS. In several cases, support services explained the research to refugees, but either no-one or very small numbers chose to meet community researchers to discuss the research and decide whether they would like to participate or not. As outlined in section 13, the final sample includes 48 Syrians resettled under the SVPRS in rural areas, which fell short of our target (n=50-70).

The Interview schedule and interviews

- 2.14 The interview schedule was composed of mainly closed questions, supported by show cards to prompt and structure responses (to aid data entry and a quantitative analysis of responses). A copy of the schedule is included in Appendix 1 and further details of its development and design are outlined in the Refugee Employment and Skills Support Study: Survey Working Paper (*ibid.*).
- 2.15 The English language interview schedule was then translated into three languages, where there was the most need. English language interviews were undertaken by People and Work researchers, and Arabic, Tigrinya/Tigre, and Farsi language interviews were undertaken by a team of 16 community researchers.

Data entry and analysis

- 2.16 A dataset was created to input the data from interviews carried out with refugees and asylum seekers. In a small number of instances there was missing data where questions had not been answered or mistakenly skipped over. This missing data was excluded from calculations of percentages for analysis and means the total sample size reported in some tables is smaller than the complete sample.

Strengths and limitations of the research

- 2.17 The validity of the data, in relation to the thematic findings, is likely to be high. The research is based upon a good range of qualitative and quantitative data drawn from different sources, enabling extensive triangulation of data and

methods. Findings have also been reviewed and endorsed by stakeholders through two workshops (outlined above).

- 2.18 However, the external validity of survey data is limited by the lack of a robust sampling frame, which makes it impossible to generalise from the survey sample with any precision about the characteristics of refugee and asylum seeker populations in Wales. In particular, as outlined above, it is not possible to generalise from the sample with precision about, for example, employment rates for refugee populations in Wales.

3. Refugees' and asylum seekers' aspirations

3.1 The aspirations people hold, and their willingness to consider alternatives, influence their prospects for finding employment. In addition, labour market demand and entry requirements differ for different professions/occupations, meaning some people's aspirations are much harder to achieve than others. In this section, we consider:

- the employment aspirations of those in work and those wanting to work (but not currently in work);
- the reasons people held particular aspirations and their willingness to consider alternatives; and
- attitudes to self-employment and to claiming welfare benefits.

Employment aspirations

3.2 Research reviewed for this study found that most refugees and asylum seekers are highly motivated, expect to work and dislike claiming benefits (Mayblin, 2014; The Refugee Council, 2005; Charlaff et al., 2004; Robinson and Segrott, 2002). Refugees and asylum seekers expect that finding work will increase their income, help their integration, and give them a sense of purpose and self-worth. Some studies also identified how refugees and asylum seekers want to work in order to contribute to society (see e.g. Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015; Robinson and Segrott, 2002).

3.3 Research reviewed for this study also found that most refugees hold high aspirations for employment, at least initially. Most would like to find work that matches their skills and experience (similar to the work they had done before migrating), although some are willing to accept work below their aspirations, skills and experience (see e.g. Charlaff et al., 2004; Bloch, 2004; Archer et al., 2005). There is evidence that refugees' aspirations often fade over time, as their expectation of attaining or realising their aspirations diminishes (Mulvey, 2013; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Bloch, 2004). Phillimore and Goodson (2006) report that: "many [refugees] become disenchanted and, after meeting multiple barriers or finding out about the cost of requalification, 'sought any job'."

- 3.4 In line with other studies, most of the refugees and asylum seekers interviewed for this study wanted to work, and wanted to do the same type of work they had done in their country of origin. As table 2 on page 41 illustrates, of the 264 people who had worked in their home country, almost two thirds (63%, n=165) said they wanted to do the same type of work in Wales/UK. As table 3 on page 43 illustrates, those in professional occupations or skilled trades were most likely to want to continue this in the UK. This may reflect higher levels of satisfaction and greater investment (e.g. in terms of commitment to study and qualifications) in these occupations.
- 3.5 The desire for most to continue in the same field/profession, meant that differences in the type of work refugees and asylum seekers had done in their home country were reflected in the type of work they wanted to do in the UK. It also meant (as table 3 illustrates) that not all held high aspirations. There were also gendered aspirations; for example, men were more interested in continuing careers in construction, manual and skilled trades and more women were interested in continuing teaching. As we outline in section 5, aspirations have an important impact on people's prospects for finding work.
- 3.6 There were some differences between refugees and asylum seekers; the proportion of refugees (70%, n=115) reporting they wanted to do the same type of work in the UK that they had done in their home country, was higher than that of asylum seekers (49%, n=50). It is not clear why this is the case. There were no marked gender differences in the number of people looking to do the same work in Wales/UK as they had done in their home country.

Willingness to consider alternatives

- 3.7 As outlined, whilst most refugees wanted to continue in their profession, many were unable to do so. Giving up aspirations was therefore associated with finding work, and examples were given of health care professionals, such as dentists, working in unskilled/semi-skilled jobs in food processing and warehouses. Three main reasons why refugees' and asylum seekers' employment aspirations decline have been identified:
- refugees' sense of agency (including their self-efficacy, self-worth and self-control) can decline when their aspirations and expectations cannot

- be achieved due to barriers, discussed in section 3 (see e.g. Psounios, 2011);
- pressure to enter employment can mean refugees are unwilling or feel unable to wait to pursue their aspirations, and instead accept under-unemployment. The reasons for this include financial pressure, including poverty/destitution and pressure to support family in the UK and overseas, and/or unemployment benefits conditions (see e.g. Moskal, 2013); and/or
 - refugees who are unwilling or feel unable to take the “risk” of retraining and pursuing their aspirations due, for example, to their age, the financial cost and/or difficulty of retraining. Archer et al. (2005) report on refugees’ descriptions of “lost time”, and being too old to start again.

- 3.8 Of the 264 people interviewed for this study who worked in their home country, over 80% (84%, n= 224) said they would be willing to do a different type of work in the UK/Wales. The proportion of refugees (88%) and asylum seekers (81%) reporting this, and the proportion of those who had not worked in the UK (78%, n=205) were all similar.
- 3.9 In some cases, when asked later in the interview what type of work they were looking for, refugees and, in particular, asylum seekers gave a different response; usually at a lower level than work they did in their home country²⁷, indicating this may be a “realistic” employment aspiration.

²⁷ Of those who wanted the same type of work that they had in their home country, and were not currently working in the UK (111), 27% (30) gave a different response in section C when asked what type of work they were looking for.

Table 2. Fields of work interviewees wanted to continue doing

Field	All (men and women)		Men		Women	
	No.*	%**	No.	%	No.	%
Construction, manual and skilled trades	25	15	25	24	0	0
Teaching	20	12	7	7	13	22
Self-employment	15	9	11	10	4	7
Catering	12	7	11	10	3	5
Health	11	7	5	5	6	10
IT and media	10	6	6	6	4	7
Agriculture	9	6	9	9	0	0
Hair and beauty	7	4	2	1	5	9
Transportation	7	4	6	6	1	2
Business, finance and banking	7	4	1	1	5	9
Communications and leisure	7	4	5	5	2	3
Textile and dressmaking	6	4	1	1	4	7
Care	5	3	0	0	5	9

Science and engineering	3	2	2	2	1	2
Cleaning	3	2	2	2	1	2
Sales	3	2	3	3	0	0
Service	3	2	2	2	1	2
Admin	3	2	1	1	2	3
Welfare	2	1	1	1	1	2
Factory and warehouse work	2	1	1	1	1	2
Security	1	1	1	1	0	0
Legal	1	1	1	1	0	0
Property	1	1	1	1	0	0
Retail	1	1	1	1	0	0
Architect	1	1	1	1	0	0
Armed forces	1	1	1	1	0	0

Total sample n=162

*n.b. Some participants referred to more than one type of work

**of those who wanted to continue doing the same type of work

Table 3. Levels of work interviewees wanted to continue doing

Level	All (men & women)		Men		Women	
	No.*	%**	No.	%	No.	%
1 Managers, directors and senior officials	20	12	14	13	5	9
2 Professional occupations	41	25	16	15	24	41
3 Associate professional and technical occupations	14	9	7	7	7	12
4 Administrative and secretarial occupations	6	4	4	4	2	3
5 Skilled trades occupations	47	29	39	37	7	12
6 Caring, leisure and other service occupations	16	10	5	5	11	19
7 Sales and customer service occupations	4	3	4	4	0	0
8 Process, plant and machine operatives	11	7	10	10	1	2
9 Elementary occupations	9	6	6	6	3	5

Total sample n=162

*nb. Some participants referred to more than one type of work

** percentage of those who wanted to continue doing the same type of work

The employment aspirations of those who were unemployed or economically inactive in the UK

- 3.10 Almost three quarters of the sample (72%, n=328) participants had not undertaken paid work in Wales or other UK nations. This included large numbers of refugees (n=144) and asylum seekers (n=184), who are not usually entitled to work²⁸.
- 3.11 As table 4 illustrates, there were differences in the aspirations of refugees and asylum seekers who had not worked in Wales (or other UK nations); for example:
- a higher proportion of refugees were interested in self-employment and teaching compared to asylum seekers;
 - a higher proportion of asylum seekers were interested in hair and beauty, retail, business, finance and banking than refugees; and
 - a higher proportion of asylum seekers were willing to do anything, or were unsure about what they wanted to do.
- 3.12 As table 4 also illustrates, there were differences in the aspirations of men and women who had not worked in Wales (or other UK nations); for example:
- there was a higher proportion of women interested in work in the health, hair and beauty, cleaning and most notably, care sectors, compared to men; and
 - a higher proportion of men were interested in self-employment, construction, manual and skilled trades, science and engineering and transportation sectors compared to women.

²⁸ 12 asylum seekers reported to either currently working (n=3) or having worked in the past in Wales/UK (n=9). Data is missing for the remaining participant.

Table 4. Employment aspirations of interviewees without Wales/UK work experience (field/sector of interest)

Field/sector	All		Male		Female		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.*	%**	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Any	37	13	16	12	19	12	17	13	20	12
Health	34	12	8	6	26	16	16	13	18	11
Care	31	11	1	1	30	19	13	8	18	11
Self-employment	27	9	19	14	8	5	18	14	9	5
Hair and beauty	24	8	3	2	21	13	8	6	15	9
Catering	19	7	11	8	8	5	9	7	10	6
Teaching	17	6	6	5	11	7	11	9	6	4
Construction, manual and skilled trades	17	6	17	13	0	0	7	5	10	6
Science and engineering	12	4	10	8	2	1	4	3	8	5
Retail	11	4	4	3	7	4	3	2	8	5
IT and media	10	3	3	2	7	4	5	4	5	3
Admin	8	3	3	2	5	3	1	1	5	3
Business, finance and banking	7	2	3	2	4	2	1	1	6	4
Transportation	7	2	6	5	1	1	5	4	2	1
Communications and leisure	5	2	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	2

Cleaning	5	2	0	0	5	3	2	2	3	2
Welfare	5	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	4	2
Service	4	1	3	2	1	1	2		2	1
Textile and dressmaking	4	1	1	1	3	2	1	1	3	2
Legal	4	1	1	1	3		0	0	4	2
Sales	3	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	3	2
Factory and warehouse work	3	1	3	2	0	0	3	2	0	0
Security	3	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	3	2
Protective service	2	1	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	1
Architect	2	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
Agriculture	1	0.3	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Volunteer work	1	0.3	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Not sure	10		6	5	3	2	1	1	9	5

Total sample n=290

*some participants referred to more than one type of work

**of those without Wales/UK work experience and/or were an asylum seeker. Not including those who did not state field of interest

Table 5. Employment aspirations of interviewees without Wales/UK work experience (by level)

Level	All		Male		Female		Refugee		AS	
	No.*	%**	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1 Managers, directors and senior officials	32	11	22	17	10	6	22	17	10	6
2 Professional occupations	75	26	30	23	45	28	31	24	44	26
3 Associate professional and technical occupations	13	5	5	4	8	5	5	4	8	5
4 Administrative and secretarial occupations	14	5	7	5	7	4	5	4	9	5
5 Skilled trades occupations	39	13	28	21	11	7	17	13	22	13
6 Caring, leisure and other service occupations	56	19	5	4	51	32	21	16	35	21
7 Sales and customer service occupations	15	5	5	4	10	6	5	4	10	6
8 Process, plant and machine operatives	7	2	5	4	2	1	4	3	3	2
9 Elementary occupations	16	6	9	7	7	4	7	5	9	5

Total sample n=290

*some participants referred to more than one type of work

Reasons given for holding aspirations

- 3.13 The desire to carry on in the same profession is rooted in a number of different factors, including job satisfaction and having the skills to do a job, and is not the only factor that shapes refugees' and asylum seekers' aspirations. As table 6 illustrates, the most common reason for participants wanting to do a particular type work was because they were interested in/enjoy this work (55%) and needed/wanted to earn money as a close second (53%).

Table 6. Reasons given for employment aspirations

Reason for this type of work	No.	%*
Interested in/enjoy this work	236	55
I needed/wanted to earn money	229	53
I have the skills for this work	173	40
I used to do this work	130	30
I wanted to make friends	118	28
I didn't want to claim benefits	95	22
Only work I could do/find	87	20
The hours suit me	74	17
Worried I would lose my benefits if I did not work	35	8

Total sample n=429

*excluding those who said they did not want to work in the future

Attitudes toward self-employment

- 3.14 Given barriers to employment, which we discuss in section 5, other research reviewed for this study found that some refugees turn to self-employment as a more viable alternative (Bloch, 2004). Amongst those refugees and asylum seekers interviewed for this study, half of those in work (50%, n=27) and around

40% (39%, n=106) of those not in work have considered self-employment. Interviews for this study and also previous research suggest that self-employment may be a positive choice where, for example, entrepreneurial refugees or asylum seekers who have run their own business in the past, are keen to apply those skills in Wales (CFE, 2018; Jones et al., 2012; Ensign and Robinson, 2011). Nevertheless, as we outline in section 5, a range of barriers linked, for example, to language skills or access to finance, can thwart the realisation of aspirations, even when refugees have entrepreneurial skills and experience.

Attitudes towards benefits

- 3.15 The survey identified that both refugees and asylum seekers expressed a strong work ethic. Most wanted to work and, as table 4 illustrates, around 20% of those interviewed identified not wanting to claim benefits as a reason for holding employment aspirations, and, as table 6 illustrates, wanting to earn money was a key reason why people held employment aspirations. A number of refugees and asylum seekers also expressed a desire to give something back and a dislike of the stigma they associated with claiming benefits. People's perception that they might be better off on benefits than working was also explored as a possible barrier (table 27). However, only a very small number of refugees and asylum seekers said this.
- 3.16 A small number of stakeholders from the voluntary sector challenged the findings from the survey, suggesting that many refugees, particularly those with families, were better off financially claiming benefits, rather than working. This was questioned by JCP staff, who suggested that welfare reforms, including the benefits cap, and the introduction of Universal Credit, meant that the perception that refugees could be better off on benefits, rather than working, was ill-founded. It was also suggested that some people might stop working in order to become eligible for financial support from the Red Cross for family reunifications²⁹, although, given the small number of awards made, this is unlikely to affect large numbers of people.

²⁹ The service is for people who have family reunion visas for their families to enter the UK and earn less than £240 a week, before tax and rent, or get means-tested benefits.

- 3.17 Some interviewees reported that restrictions on asylum seekers' right to work led many into the informal economy, and that even when they gained the right to work legally (and also became entitled to claim welfare benefits), they continued to work in the informal economy, and in some cases, did begin to claim benefits.
- 3.18 There is evidence in the literature reviewed of informal work, an issue we discuss further in section 6, but very little evidence of a preference for claiming benefits over work, with most research reviewed for this study finding that refugees have a strong desire to work (Mayblin, 2014; The Refugee Council, 2005 Charlaff et al., 2004; Robinson and Segrott, 2002). However, this is a difficult and sensitive issue to research. There is likely to be a social desirability bias in response to questions about attitudes towards claiming benefits (with a temptation to give the 'right' or socially acceptable answer). There is also an understandable reluctance to criticise the attitudes and behaviours of a very vulnerable and often stigmatised group.
- 3.19 The choices refugees make about work and claiming benefits are complex. While most want to work, and their motivations for wanting to work often go beyond financial gain (e.g. a desire for a sense of purpose and/or to contribute to society), that does not mean that all refugees are willing to take any job. Their job options are often limited and as we outlined earlier, many, for example, look for work that matches their skills, experience and aspirations, at least at first.
- 3.20 Moreover, as we outline in section 5 some of those interviewed did not feel ready to work due, for example, to poor physical or mental health or caring responsibilities. It is notable that a relatively large number of refugees, particularly those resettled under the SVPRS, were eligible for Employment Support Allowance (ESA), as they were judged to be ill or disabled, so not able to work at the current time. Unfortunately, it is not possible to disaggregate DWP data to identify the exact numbers, as the refugee "marker" in DWP databases is not used consistently.

4. Refugees' and asylum seekers' education and skills

4.1 Higher levels of education and skills, and in particular, English language skills, are associated with higher levels of employment and higher levels of pay (Bloch, 2004). In this section, we consider:

- refugees' and asylum seekers' English language skills;
- refugees' and asylum seekers' highest level of education before seeking asylum;
- evidence of de-skilling and disempowerment as a result of fleeing persecution, and of the resilience of refugees and asylum seekers; and
- refugees' and asylum seekers' participation in education and training in Wales.

English language skills

4.2 Both the research reviewed and stakeholders interviewed for this study consistently identified English language skills as the key skill people needed to find work in Wales (Bloch, 2002; Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003; Johnson et al., 2004; Schellekens, 2001; Crawley, 2013; Archer and Hollingworth, 2005). As tables 7 – 9 illustrate, there was considerable variation in people's fluency in speaking, reading and writing in English. Whilst at the time of the interviews some were fluent, many others had little or no English. On average, participants could speak, write, and read a "fair amount" of English.

Table 7. Spoken English skills

Spoken English	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fluent	83	18	49	19	34	17
Fair	140	31	80	32	60	31
Little	138	31	65	26	73	37
Few	64	14	46	18	18	9
None	25	6	14	6	11	6

Total sample n=450

Table 8. Written English skills

Written English*	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fluent	84	19	48	19	36	18
Fair	133	30	72	28	61	31
Little	119	26	67	26	52	27
Few	71	16	42	17	29	15
None	43	10	25	10	18	9

Total sample n=450

* The statements used were: I am **fluent** in English; I can speak a **fair** amount of English; I can only speak a **little** English; I can say just a **few** words; I can't speak English (emphasis added).

Table 9. Reading English skills

Reading English	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fluent	112	25	61	24	51	26
Fair	132	29	75	30	57	29
Little	108	24	57	22	51	26
Few	66	15	41	16	25	13
None	32	7	20	8	12	6

Total Sample n=450

- 4.3 Over time, it is likely that people's language skills will improve, although it cannot be assumed that all will become fluent in English. The language skills of those who had been living in the UK for less than three years (30% (n=70) spoke fair or fluent English) tended to be lower than those who had lived in the UK for three or more years (68% (n=145) spoke fair or fluent English). As was expected, language skills for those aged 24 and under tended to be greater than those aged 25 and over (qualitative research suggests language acquisition is swifter amongst younger people).

4.4 Although not measured by the survey, stakeholders interviewed for this study also highlighted how factors like accent and dialect, and knowledge of the specific vocabulary associated with a particular profession or occupation, also affected people's employment prospects.

Highest level of education before seeking asylum

- 4.5 As table 10 illustrates, there is considerable range in people's highest level of education before seeking asylum. This reflects the diversity of refugee populations and of people's lives before seeking asylum. The most common levels of education amongst those interviewed for this study were secondary school and higher education (each reported by 27% of the sample). It is important to note that the categories are cumulative and, for example, those with higher education will also (usually) have completed primary and secondary education, and sometimes, further education.
- 4.6 The proportion of refugees (67%) who had completed secondary education is somewhat lower than earlier studies in the UK, which have identified rates of around 75-80%. However, the proportion with no qualifications (10%) and higher levels qualifications (27%) are broadly in line with most other earlier studies included in the literature review (Holtom et al., n.d.).
- 4.7 As table 10 illustrates, there is also considerable variation across different groups; for example:
- secondary level education was the most common answer for males (28%) and those from North Africa (27%), whilst further education was the most common response for those from Sub-Saharan Africa (27%);
 - the North African sample had the highest number of those without education (20%) compared to all other groups, while the South Asian sample had the highest number of those with a higher level qualification (30%); and
 - overall, women tended to be more highly educated than the men; for example, 20% of women had a further or higher level education compared to 17% of men. Overall though, the differences between men and women were small.

4.8 Both stakeholders interviewed for this study and other research reviewed for this study highlight the difficulties many asylum seekers and refugees experience in having qualifications and skills acquired overseas recognised in the UK (Smyth and Kum, 2010). There were concerns that the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW) was not being more widely used to recognise prior learning (NAfW, 2017); that the decisions made through the National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) could be somewhat arbitrary, and could not be challenged and that, as we discuss in section 6, employers of ten discounted skills and experience acquired overseas. These all reduced the value of refugees and asylum seekers' qualifications and skills.

Table 10. Highest level of education before seeking asylum for different groups

Highest level of education	All		Refugees		Asylum Seekers		Male		Female		North		Middle		SSA		South Asia	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Higher	122	27	69	27	53	27	56	25	62	28	26	26	62	29	6	16	17	30
Further	61	14	33	13	28	15	26	12	35	16	5	5	30	14	10	27	10	18
Secondary	112	25	69	27	43	22	62	28	50	23	27	27	53	25	4	11	13	23
Primary	100	22	60	23	40	20	51	23	47	22	24	24	45	21	12	33	9	16
None	55	12	26	10	29	15	29	13	25	11	20	20	22	10	5	14	8	14

Total sample n=450

Evidence of de-skilling, disempowerment and resilience

- 4.9 As outlined in section 3, there is evidence from previous research that time spent fleeing persecution can be “lost” time, during which skills diminish. As can be seen in table 11, half of all asylum seekers (n=48) were worried they had lost their skills, compared to 41% (n=64) of refugees. However, the impact of this upon people’s confidence was less clear cut and asylum seekers were almost as confident as refugees (72% compared to 74%) that they could do the same type of work in the UK that they did in their home country.
- 4.10 Further analysis identified that the length of time taken to gain status since leaving one’s country had little impact on whether people felt that they had lost their skills: Table 11 illustrates that figures were very similar for those who spent less than a year (42%, n=14), one to two years (39%, n=16) and three or more years (42%, n=34) seeking asylum before arriving in the UK. However, the length of time living in the UK does have an impact, in that the longer time spent living here increases the feeling that skills have been lost: 38% (n=51) of those who had been in the UK less than three years reported they had lost skills, compared to 52% (n=58) of those who had been in the UK for three or more years.
- 4.11 Moreover, as table 12 illustrates, the longer it took people to reach the UK, the lower their levels of confidence in gaining employment in the same field they previously worked in; confidence in gaining work in the same field was highest amongst those for whom it had taken less than a year (87%, n=32), falling for those for whom it took one to two years (77%). n=33) and three or more years (64%, n=32) seeking asylum before arriving in the UK.
- 4.12 More positively, interviews with refugees, asylum seekers and stakeholders from support services highlighted the resilience of many refugees and asylum seekers. As we discuss in section 9, the optimism and positivity of many, despite the often huge challenges they had faced and often continued to face, was striking. There were also scattered examples of the skills that people had acquired whilst fleeing persecution, most notably language skills.

Table 11. De-skilling (loss of skills) and length of time fleeing persecution and length of time in the UK

Lost skills	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers		<1 years*		1-2 years*		3+ years*		<3 years in UK		3 years + in UK		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Yes	112	44	64	41	48	50	14	42	16	39	34	42	51	38	58	52
Not sure	24	10	17	11	7	7	4	12	5	12	8	10	14	10	10	10	9
No	113	45	74	47	39	40	15	46	20	49	39	48	69	51	42	38	
NA	4	2	1	1	3	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	

Total sample n=253

* since leaving home country and gaining status

Table 12. De-skilling (loss of confidence) and length of time fleeing persecution and length of time in the UK

Still confident	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers		<1 years*		1-2 years*		3+ years*		<3 years in UK		3 years + in UK		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Yes	187	73	120	74	67	72	32	87	33	77	32	64	102	75	81	72
Not sure	32	13	22	14	10	11	4	11	5	12	9	18	18	13	13	12	
No	28	11	16	9	12	13	1	3	4	9	6	12	12	9	15	13	
NA	8	3	4	3	4	4	0	0	1	2	3	6	4	3	4	4	

Total sample n=255

* since leaving home country and gaining status

Participation in education or training in Wales/the UK

- 4.13 As table 13 illustrates, ESOL was by far the most common type of education/training that had been undertaken in Wales (or other UK nations), with 65% (n=295) reported having done this. The proportion reporting having undertaken other types of education and training in Wales, such as college (20%, n=92), university (10%, n=45) and community courses (10%, n=44) was much lower

Table 13. Participation in education and training in Wales

Type of education/ training	No.	%
ESOL	295	65
College	92	20
University	45	10
Community course	44	10
School	31	7
Total sample n=454		

- 4.14 As outlined in section 4, despite having high aspirations and wanting to continue learning, some refugees chose to take up poor work rather than continuing with ESOL or other types of education and training. Stakeholders contributing to this study also suggested that some refugees do not have the resources they need to achieve their aspirations (e.g. to be able to invest in training or unpaid internships); and that some asylum seekers and refugees struggled to learn English, becoming disillusioned and disengaging from ESOL provision.
- 4.15 In the survey, people who were not undertaking education or training or did not plan to do so in the future, were asked why they were not or did not plan to do so. As table 14 illustrates, those interviewed pointed to a lack of interest or relevance, and barriers to learning such as childcare/caring responsibilities (14%, n=16) or ill-health (8%, n=9) as more important barriers ³⁰.

³⁰ Other reasons include: 11% (n=13) not interested or don't enjoy learning, 12% (n=14) have no need or think it is not useful, 3% (n=3) said it would take too long, 1% (n=1) expect to return to their home country, 2% (2) said they couldn't meet the entry requirements, 3% (n=3) said they didn't feel confident, 2% (2) also said they felt too old or that learning was "just for kids".

Table 14. Reasons for participation in education and training in Wales

Type of education/ training	No.	%
Childcare/caring responsibilities	16	14
Physical/mental health	9	8
Looking for/working (so no time),	9	8
Cost of education/training	7	6
No suitable education or training courses locally	6	5
Total sample n=114		

- 4.16 These findings are broadly consistent with research reviewed for this study which highlights the range of barriers refugees and asylum seekers face in relation to education and training. Many of these barriers are similar to the barriers they face in relation to employment, which we discuss in section 5, such as unmet basic needs, difficulties with travel or childcare, restricted entitlements (e.g. limited rights to access education, funding and/or remission of fees), poor English language skills, unfamiliarity with the UK education and training system, isolation and a lack of social support, and failures of education and training institutions to meet their needs (Doyle and O'Toole, 2013). As a consequence, some refugees may not want to take the "risk" of education and training, preferring instead to seek employment first (Archer et al., 2005). This may help explain why participation in education and training, other than ESOL, is so low.
- 4.17 As table 15 illustrates, the most common reason for participation in education/training was to help them in day to day life, closely followed by helping them to find work (48%).

Table 15. Motivation for participation in education and training in Wales

Reason for participation in education/ training	No.	%
To help me in day to day life	228	50
To help me find work	219	48
I enjoy or want to learn	194	43
To help me integrate	180	40
Something to do	75	17
To help me earn more money	85	13

Total sample n=454

- 4.18 As table 16 illustrates, ESOL was still the most common type (43%) of education/training that participants planned in the future but more also had intentions to do other types of education/training. Most participants hoped their intended education/training would above all help them find work (55%). However, asylum seekers gave/chose fewer reasons for choosing to undertake education/training than refugees.

Table 16. Intention to participate in education or training in the future

Type of education/ training (future)	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
ESOL	197	43	118	46	79	40
University	141	31	78	30	63	32
College	125	28	62	24	63	32
Community course	48	11	33	13	15	8
School	22	5	8	3	14	7

Total sample

n=454

Table 17. Motivations to participate in education or training in the future

Reason for participation in education/ training (future)	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
To help me find work	227	50	141	55	86	44
To help me in day to day life	202	45	124	48	78	40
I enjoy or want to learn	174	38	114	44	60	31
To help me integrate	155	34	99	39	56	28
To help me earn more money	125	28	73	28	52	26
Something to do	70	15	44	17	26	13

Total sample n=454

Volunteering or work experience

- 4.19 Stakeholders highlighted the value of volunteering and, in particular, work experience as a way to, for example, develop English language and work-related skills, but also pointed out the constraints refugees and asylum seekers faced; for example:
- weak English language skills limit refugees' and asylum seekers' volunteering options, and many of those interviewed who were volunteering were doing so in charity or faith organisations, often supporting other refugees and asylum seekers. Whilst considered valuable, this may limit the range of skills and experience gained. In contrast, very few had undertaken work experience or work placements³¹;
 - asylum seekers cannot volunteer with a private business and cannot benefit from time credits; and
 - refugees wishing to claim work -related benefits such as Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) must ensure that volunteering does not conflict with their commitments to be actively looking for work and to be able to go to a job interview at 48 hours' notice.

³¹ Others have also noted the importance of having more volunteering opportunities and specific training, not exclusively for refugees but in a mixed environment.

- 4.20 It was also observed by stakeholders that while asylum seekers would often volunteer to contribute, develop skills and give some focus and purpose to their lives while they waited for a decision on their asylum application, some refugees prioritised looking for paid work over volunteering. This prioritisation was felt by stakeholders to be misplaced, as volunteering was considered a key way in which refugees could develop skills and experience that could help them find work.
- 4.21 These barriers are reflected in the survey findings. As table 18 illustrates, over half of those interviewed for this study (55%, n=185) had no volunteering or work experience. Refugees were more likely to have done volunteering or work experience than asylum seekers, but the differences were small, and refugees may have volunteered as asylum seekers, before gaining refugee status.

Table 18. Participation in volunteering or work experience placements in Wales

Volunteering or work experience	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	185	45	108	46	77	42
No	230	55	125	54	105	58

Total n=415

- 4.22 The sample currently low levels of participation in work experience and work placements was identified by stakeholders as a key area for action. However, as we outline in section 7, employment support services are reluctant to put refugees forward for work experience or work placements until they are judged “work ready” with, for example, good English language skills.

5. Employment experiences: Can refugees and asylum seekers achieve their aspirations?

5.1 As outlined in the introduction and also section 13, research reviewed for this study found that rates of employment for refugees are much lower than the general population. In this section we consider:

- rates of employment;
- the characteristics of those in paid work;
- experiences of looking for work, including the approaches taken;
- barriers to employment;
- self-employment; and
- work in the informal economy.

Employment rates

5.2 Of those entitled to work and of working age (n=252), over 40% (44%, n=112) of those interviewed were currently in paid work or had worked in Wales in the past. This is comparable to other studies in the UK, which have identified employment rates of between 20-50%, with most reporting rates of around 30-35% (Bloch, 2002; Charlaff et al., 2004; Crawley and Crimes, 2009; Ameen et al., 2007; Cebulla et al., 2010; Ipsos Mori, 2010; Mulvey, 2013; European Commission and OECD, 2016). The main outlier is a labour force survey (LFS) which identifies an employment rate of 50%, which is much higher than the others studies reviewed (European Commission and OECD, 2016)³².

The characteristics of those in paid work

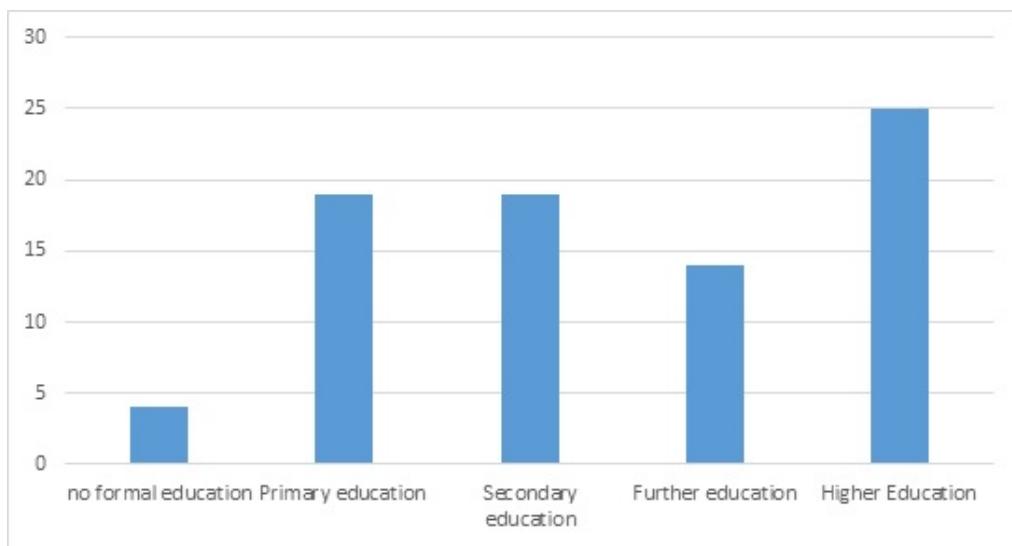
5.3 The survey sub-sample of people who were working, or who had worked in the past, was relatively small. This constrains the scope to draw conclusions from the sample about the characteristics of those in work, and we therefore consider the findings from this sub-sample in relation to other evidence. subject to this

³² The difference may reflect differences in methodology, as the LFS covers the whole population (unlike other studies, it was not specifically targeted at refugees and is conducted only in English). Therefore, it is likely that it included more refugees who were settled in the UK, and had had time to develop their language skills and find work and were confident in responding to official surveys (Holtom et al., n.d.).

important caveat, current employment in Wales or the UK (within this survey sample) was associated with the following characteristics:

- gender, with men making up 73% (n=59) of the sub-sample of people entitled to work and currently in paid work, compared to women, 27%, (n=22) of those entitled to work and currently in paid work;
- time in the UK, with those who have been in the UK more than three years accounting for almost three quarters (72%, n=58) of those entitled to work who were currently in paid work, compared to those who had been in the UK for less than three years (27%, n=22);
- levels of education, with higher rates of employment amongst those with higher levels of education in their home country. As figure 1 illustrates, of those entitled to work who were currently in paid work: 5% (n=4) had no formal education in their home country, 23% (n=19) had primary education, 23% (n=19) had secondary education, 17% (n=14) had completed further education, 31% (n=25) had completed higher education;
- English language skills: of those entitled to work who were currently in paid work: 32% (n=26) are fluent in English, 36% (n=29) speak a fair amount, 19% (n=15) speak a little, 12% (n=10) can say a few words. There is no-one in the sample who cannot speak English and is also currently in work.

Figure 1. The highest level of education in their home country, of those in work



- 5.4 Research reviewed for this study (Holtom et al., n.d.) and interviews with stakeholders identify in particular the importance of English language skills and, to a lesser degree, gendered roles and levels of education (discussed in section 4) as key factors that influence employment.
- 5.5 Gender is important because perceptions about women's roles can limit women's opportunities and because barriers such as childcare and transport (e.g. to get to childcare and then to education or employment) can affect women more than men, particularly where their social networks are weak. Conversely, men face pressure to work and provide for their families. There is also evidence from both interviews and the research reviewed for this study, of the ways in which exile can result in the redefinition of gender roles, with women finding greater freedom to pursue education, training and/or employment in the UK compared to their country of origin (Freedman, 2015).
- 5.6 Evidence from the literature reviewed highlights the impact of time spent in the UK and how employment rates tend to rise over time as, for example, refugees acquire language skills and become more integrated (European Commission and OECD, 2016).
- 5.7 Other research has identified higher employment rates amongst young people (see e.g. Bloch, 2004). However, amongst those interviewed for this study, there was little difference in terms of age: 53% (n=43) of those entitled to work, who were in work, were aged 16-35 and 47% (n=38) were aged 35-64.

5.8 Interestingly, there was little link between having worked in their home country and being in paid work in the UK. Only 12% (n=31) of those eligible to work in the UK have done so in their home country. This may reflect the numbers of young people who were still in education in their home country before seeking asylum (and therefore not working).

Differences in employment rates for different ethnic groups

5.9 As noted earlier, there were also regional differences in employment rates³³: 58% (n=47) of those entitled to work, who were in work, were from the Middle East, and 25% were from North Africa (n=20). Very small numbers were from Sub-Saharan Africa (n=4), South Asia (n=1) and other regions such as Central Africa and Europe (n=9). In part this reflects the differing proportions of refugees from different regions in the sample. However, as table 19 illustrates, there are marked differences in the proportion of people of working age who are entitled to work, from each region, who were currently in work. The sample size is too small to enable the extent to which region is an independent variable to be assessed. It may, for example, be differences in education level and languages associated with different regions that is driving the observed differences.

Table 19. The proportion of people of working age, who are entitled to work, from each region, who were in paid work

Region	No. entitled to work and of working age	No. in paid work	% in paid work
Middle East	156	47	30%
North Africa	70	20	29%
South Asia	6	1	17%
Sub-Saharan Africa	6	4	67%
Other	14	9	64%

³³ The survey did not collect detailed data on people's ethnic identities, and regions are used as a crude proxy for different ethnic groups.

The type and quality of paid work in Wales

- 5.10 As outlined above, finding employment often requires refugees to lower their aspirations and accept more poorly paid and lower skilled work than they would like and have previously done. As a consequence, underemployment is common across refugee populations, with people working at a level below their levels of education, skills and also their aspirations (Mulvey, 2013; Bloch, 2002; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Archer et al., 2005; Schellekens, 2001). This is also a common feature of migrant research (see e.g. Anderson et al., 2006). The reasons for under-employment are complex. In part, it is likely to be linked to language skills, which can prevent people using their other skills and talents to the full, in the workplace. However, it is also likely to be linked to other factors like weakness in labour markets, employer attitudes and weakness in refugees' job search strategies.
- 5.11 As table 20 illustrates, the majority of those interviewed for this study who were in work were in sectors associated with unskilled and semi-skilled work. Factory and warehouse work were the most commonly reported occupations amongst those who have legally worked in the UK, with 25% saying they did this, followed by 17% working in the catering industry.
- 5.12 Despite the low level of work, refugees and the small number of asylum seekers who were entitled to work were generally grateful to be working (given the difficulties they had encountered in finding work). As we outline in section 9, employment was associated with higher levels of wellbeing and, when asked to give a score out of ten regarding their job satisfaction most (modal) (19%) gave a score of 8/10. 6.8 was the average (mean) answer.

Table 20. Sectors in which people currently in paid work or who had done paid work in the UK, were employed

Field	No.*	%
Factory and warehouse work	27	25
Catering	18	17
Service industry	11	10
Retail	10	9
Transportation	8	7
Construction, manual and skilled trades	7	6
Welfare	6	6
Care	5	5
Cleaning	5	5
Admin	5	5
IT and media	4	4
Hair and beauty	4	4
Self-employment	3	3
Science and engineering	3	3
Communications and leisure	2	2
Security	1	1
Business, finance and banking	1	1

Total sample n=109

*the total is higher than the total sample number as some people have worked or work in more than one field

- 5.13 Other measures of the quality of work, such as having regular hours and a contract, indicated that many had insecure work; for example, of those currently in paid work:
- 60% (n=42) reported that their work was regular compared to 40% (n=28) who said their work was not regular; and
 - 54% (n=37) reported that they had a work contract compared to 46% (n=32) who said they did not.
- 5.14 As table 21 illustrates, the most common working hours were 31-40 hours a week. A small number of people also stated that, although the number of hours they were telling us was the official number, they were often doing more.

Table 21. Interviewees' number of hours worked per week of those with past or present work experience in the UK

No. of hours	No.	%
0-10	4	5
11-20	22	30
21-30	12	16
31-40	24	33
41-50	5	7
51-60	2	3
61-70	2	3
Variable	2	3
Total sample n=73		

- 5.15 As table 22 illustrates, levels of pay were generally low – and much lower than the current median weekly wage in Wales (£509)³⁴ – with almost 90% (n=70) of people (who provided detail on their levels of pay) reporting a weekly income below £400 week. The most common (modal) income was £200-£399 a week, which accounted for 35% (n=27) of the sample (who provided detail on their levels of pay).
- 5.16 Stakeholders interviewed for this study also suggested that earnings from self-employment were often very low.

³⁴ [Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings](#)

Table 22. Amount earned per week of those with past or present work experience in the UK

Level of pay	No.	%
Less than £100 a week	17	17
£100-£200 a week	25	25
£200-£399 a week	27	27
£400-£599 a week	8	8
Over £600 a week	1	1
Don't know/rather not say	23	23

Total sample n=101

- 5.17 Low pay levels were reflected in responses to the questions on whether people felt they were paid enough to support themselves and their family: 48% (n=48) said yes, and 52% (n=53) said they were not paid enough to support themselves and their family.
- 5.18 More positively, almost three quarters of those in paid work (72% (n=47) said they expected to progress in their work, compared to 28% (n=18) who reported that they did not expect to progress. Their optimism may not be realised. Examples were given by stakeholders interviewed, of individuals who had progressed, but these were not common. Research with economic migrants (as distinct from refugees) finds that over time, many are able to progress, using poorly paid and skilled work as a stepping stone to more highly paid and skilled work, as they gain skills and experience. This does not feature in the refugee literature. It is not clear if this is because this is an under-researched area, or if there are other structural and personal barriers that hinder progression for refugees. (Holtom et al., n.d.).
- 5.19 As table 23 illustrates, amongst those who had worked in Wales in the past, but were not currently working, the most common reason for participants stopping work was because they lost their job, or it ended (24%).

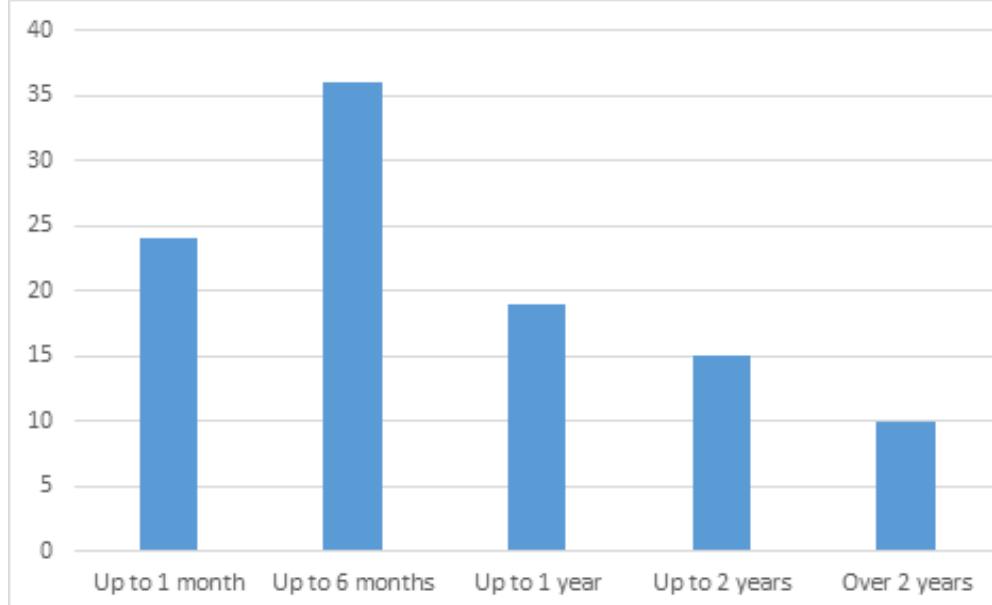
Table 23. Reasons why those who had worked in the past in Wales/UK, stopped working

Reasons for stopping work	No.	%
Lost job/job ended (e.g. made redundant, company closed)	11	24
My circumstances changed (e.g. caring responsibilities)	8	17
Moved to a different area	8	17
Pay was too low	4	9
Journey/travel to work was too difficult/costly/complicated	4	9
Not happy/comfortable with work	4	9
Wanted a better/different job	4	9
Job did not match my skills or experience	3	7
Total sample n=46		

Experiences of looking for and finding work in Wales

- 5.20 Amongst those interviewed, there was a strong desire to work; for example, over 90% (91%, n=297) of those who were not currently in paid work said they wanted to work in the future. As outlined in section 3, this was supported by most stakeholders, although some suggested that the desire to work could be conditional, and that in the absence of opportunities, some preferred to claim benefits rather than to accept poorly paid low skilled work.
- 5.21 As figure 2 illustrates, many people in work found work relatively swiftly and the most common length of time taken to find work was 6 months (35%). Nevertheless, over 40% (n=44) took up to a year or more to find work.

Figure 2. The length of time taken to find work



Total sample n=104

- 5.22 As table 24 illustrates, searching on the internet was the most common method of job searching for both those with experience of paid work in Wales/UK and those without. A key difference between both groups was that those with experience of paid work in Wales used family/friends and people they knew in the community to find work, while those who had never worked in Wales or the UK were more reliant, or expected to be more reliant, on the JCP to help them find work. Use of other employment support services was low. Support services are discussed further in section 7.

Table 24. Methods used to look for work, for those currently in paid work, or who had done paid work in Wales in the past, and those who had never worked in Wales

Method of job searching	Currently in work/ have worked in the past		Never worked	
	No.	%	No.	%
Searching on the internet	57	50	133	45
Registering with a job agency	25	22	69	23
Going to a job club	7	6	40	13
Newspaper	6	5	18	6
Talking to family and friends	48	43	101	34
Talking to people they know/ in their community	45	40	70	26
Using social media	16	14	42	14
The Jobcentre	22	19	127	43
An employment support project/organization (e.g. SOVA's ACE project or CfW)	11	10	46	15
A refugee support organization or service (e.g. WRC, DPIA, EYST or Trinity)	17	15	52	18
	Total sample n=113		Total sample n=297	

5.23 As table 25 illustrates, there was little difference in the ways that participants who were in paid work, or had done paid work in the past, and those who had not, felt they were helped to look for employment by employment support services or friends and family. Being told about jobs and opportunities and where to look for jobs were the most common responses for both groups. This

indicates that there was no simple solution or set of strategies that explained why some people were able to find work and others could not.

Table 25. Ways in which family or friends or employment support services helped those currently in paid work, or who had done paid work in Wales in the past, and those who had never worked in Wales, to look for work

How friends/family or support service helped/would help	Currently in work/have worked in Wales/UK the past		Never worked in Wales/UK	
	No.	%	No.	%
Telling me about jobs or opportunities	53	47	99	33
Telling me where to look for jobs	38	34	91	31
Help or advice applying (e.g. improving my cv)	29	26	89	30
Increasing my confidence	28	25	66	22
Help with application form/process, interview preparation	20	18	56	19
Helping me keep going and not give up	21	19	51	17
Training courses	12	11	46	15
Work placements/experience	9	8	30	10
They gave me help advice about my benefits	4	4	17	6
	Total sample n=113		Total sample n=297	

- 5.24 As table 26 illustrates, when asked what had helped them find work or start their own business, over half (53%, n=60) of those currently in paid work, attributed it to their own want or need to work. Fewer people attributed gaining employment to help from support services compared to the other listed factors.

Table 26. Reasons why those currently in paid work, or who had done paid work in Wales in the past, felt they found work

What helped get the job/start the business	No.	%
I really wanted to or needed to work	60	53
Help or advice from family or friends	38	34
I have the skills for this job	37	33
Help or advice from people in my community	33	29
I was confident that I could find a job	28	25
I knew the employer	23	20
Refugee support organisations	13	12
The Jobcentre	12	11
Employment projects or support services	7	6
Total sample n=113		

Barriers to employment

- 5.25 Both the literature reviewed and the stakeholders interviewed for this study identified a range of sometimes interconnected barriers to employment. They included refugees' and asylum seekers':
- rights, most notably restrictions on asylum seekers working;
 - challenging personal circumstances or situations, most notably limited access to transport, childcare responsibilities, poor living conditions, social isolation and social exclusion;
 - weakness in people's human, social and cultural capital, most notably weak English language skills, but also, for example, narrow social networks and limited "cultural competence"³⁵ (e.g. not understanding how to behave in the

³⁵ For example, research reviewed for this study also highlighted refugees' lack of cultural capital (Moskal, 2013) and in particular, their lack of understanding of workplace culture (Archer et al., 2005) and/or lack of UK work experience (Johnson et al., 2004) as barriers.

workplace or how utilities like gas and electricity are organised), which can make it difficult to live and work in the UK;

- weaknesses in refugees' and asylum seekers' job search strategies (e.g. not understanding how to successfully navigate increasingly complex job application processes and to effectively "sell themselves"³⁶);
- limited access to effective employment support services (e.g. due to weakness in services; low levels of awareness of services and/or mistrust of services); and
- limited employment opportunities and negative employer attitudes and behaviours, which we discuss in section 6.

5.26 Stakeholders consistently reported that weak English language skills were a key barrier for refugees, a finding which is consistent with the research reviewed for this study³⁷ (Bloch, 2002; Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003; Johnson et al., 2004; Schellekens, 2001; Crawley, 2013; Archer et al., 2005); and with this survey. As table 27 illustrates, language skills (or lack thereof) were reported as the most common barrier to gaining employment (46%) amongst the refugees and asylum seekers interviewed.

5.27 The majority of groups felt no/little experience of work in the UK was the second most common barrier. This reflects the difficulties many experienced in having overseas skills and experience recognised/valued by UK employers, which is discussed in section 6. However, for women (39%) and those who did not want to work (38%), childcare or caring responsibilities were the second most important factor (after English language skills). Interviews with stakeholders indicated that childcare could present multiple barriers, including cost, accessibility (particularly where people did not have access to private transport)

³⁶ It was reported by interviewees that application processes are becoming increasingly lengthy and demanding with, for example, even a ten week placement at one high street retailer involving an online application, followed by a telephone, and then a face- to- face interview and role play. Research reviewed for this study also identifies that refugees' understanding of the UK labour market and recruitment practices/process can be weak (Johnson et al., 2004). Often reliant upon word of mouth recommendations (Phillimore and Goodson, 2006), their job search strategies are often narrow (Spencer and Sanders, 2016).

³⁷ For example; drawing upon an analysis of employment rates amongst ethnic minority populations, Dustmann and Fabbri (2003) estimate that fluency in English increases employment probabilities by about 22 percent; Miranda and Zhu (2013) (cited in Wood and Wybrow 2015, p.10) identify that: "the native-immigrant wage gap in the UK attributable to having English as an additional language is about 26 percentage points for males and 22 percentage points for females and that non-native English speakers with a good command of English are three times more likely to work in higher professional jobs than those who struggle with English."

and cultural and emotional barriers, such as an unwillingness to leave children with people who were not well known.

Table 27. Barriers to employment identified by interviewees

Barriers	All		Men		Women		Aged 16-34		Aged 35+		Worked/working		Never worked		Don't want to work	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
My language skills	210	46	111	50	98	44	112	44	96	50	53	47	140	47	10	42
No/little experience of work in the UK	130	29	70	31	59	27	69	27	59	31	45	40	81	27	1	4
Childcare or caring responsibilities	110	24	23	10	87	39	55	22	53	28	18	16	78	26	9	38
Difficulties with transport/travel to work	97	21	42	19	55	25	52	21	43	22	27	24	65	22	1	4
No work available nearby, including feeling that there is no work available given my qualifications and/or experience	85	19	56	25	28	13	45	18	40	21	34	30	47	16	1	4
Lack of support or information, including not knowing how to find work/apply for jobs	76	17	43	19	33	15	40	16	35	18	20	18	53	18	1	4
No/low qualifications	76	17	36	16	40	18	47	19	28	15	17	15	54	18	3	13
Do not have good IT skills	69	15	41	18	28	13	32	13	36	19	10	9	56	19	2	8
The attitudes of employers/customers such as discrimination on the basis of my race, ethnicity or status (e.g. as a refugee)	65	14	29	13	36	16	29	11	34	18	19	17	42	14	1	4

Not understanding work or how people work and behave in the UK	59	13	36	16	23	10	34	13	25	13	17	15	40	14	1	4
My qualifications are not recognized	58	13	28	13	30	14	32	13	26	14	12	11	42	14	1	4
My physical or mental health	52	12	19	9	33	15	19	8	31	16	7	6	33	11	9	38
My age	38	8	20	9	18	8	9	4	28	15	8	7	24	8	6	25
No legal right	36	8	17	8	16	7	17	7	17	9	0	0	32	11	1	4
Not feeling ready to start looking for/working	32	7	14	6	18	8	23	9	9	5	5	4	26	9	0	0
Discrimination for another reason (e.g. because I am a man or woman or because of my age)	22	5	7	3	15	7	13	5	9	5	8	7	14	5	0	0
I am over-qualified	18	4	13	6	5	2	8	3	10	5	6	5	11	4	0	0
Pay too low/ believe I would be better off on benefits	12	3	7	3	5	2	8	3	4	2	6	5	4	1	1	4

Total sample n=454

Self-employment

- 5.28 As outlined in section 3, many refugee and asylum seekers are open to the idea of self-employment. Stakeholders interviewed for this study reported that refugees interested in self-employment often struggled, as they did not have access to the financial capital needed to build up a business. It was reported that some refugees were also worried about registering a business formally, because then they would have to pay tax and comply with rules and regulations, so they stayed in the informal economy, which we discuss below.
- 5.29 The research reviewed for this study suggests that many refugees who opt for self-employment turn to areas where barriers to entry are low, which often leads to hyper-competition; for example, Bagwell (2006, p.66) reports a tendency to establish in: “similar highly competitive business sectors [such as catering or retail³⁸] in which information and support from family and community networks was readily available”. Competition, coupled with a lack of awareness/knowledge of and/or trust or belief in the effectiveness of support services (Bagwell, 2006; Davidson et al., 2013) and barriers such as language, racism, not understanding UK economy/culture and access to finance (e.g. due to lack of ID and credit history), make it hard for enterprises to become financially viable or grow (Davidson et al., 2013).
- 5.30 Amongst those interviewed for this study a number of other barriers were identified in relation to self-employment. However, the number of people identifying these barriers was very small (less than ten), possibly because few of those interviewed were actively exploring self-employment as an option:
- not confident running or setting up a business (n=4);
 - not knowing how to start or run a business (n=4);
 - lack of money/ finance (n=4);
 - not having the skills needed to start or run a business (n=3);
 - too much competition (n=3);
 - not knowing enough about potential suppliers to my business (n=2).

³⁸ The two main areas that feature in the literature are catering (including “ethnic restaurants”) and retailing (particularly small scale, convenience retailing) (see e.g. Bagwell, 2006; Ram and Jones, 2008).

Work in the informal economy

- 5.31 Both stakeholders interviewed and the research reviewed for this study highlighted how some asylum seekers and refugees work illegally in the informal economy. Those without the legal right to work (i.e. most asylum seekers), are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and even forced labour by unscrupulous employers. Most studies conclude that refugees and asylum seekers are pushed into work in the "informal" economy by their exclusion from the "formal" economy (Fitzpatrick et al., 2015; Waite et al., 2013; Bloch and McKay, 2015) an assessment most stakeholders interviewed for this study agreed with. Some stakeholders also suggested that, having got into the informal economy, many asylum seekers were reluctant to, or found it difficult to, leave if and when they received status and the right to work legally in the UK.

6. Labour markets and employer attitudes

6.1 As we outline in section 5, a sizeable minority of refugees or asylum seekers identified a lack of jobs (19%, n=85) or racism or discrimination as barriers to work (14%, n=65). In this section we discuss evidence from interviews with stakeholders and the literature reviewed on:

- the overall strength of labour markets in Wales;
- the prospects for employment growth in different economic sectors;
- employer attitudes and practices; and
- employability skills.

The strength of labour markets

6.2 The Welsh labour market is reasonably buoyant. The overall unemployment rate for 16-64 year-olds in Wales has fallen since it hit a peak of 8.6% in 2011. In the year ending 31st March 2017 it stood at 4.5%, 0.4 percentage points lower than the UK unemployment rate. There are regional differences: South East Wales had the highest unemployment rate (4.9%) matching the UK rate, similar to South West Wales (4.8%) and markedly higher than rates in North Wales (3.8%) and Mid Wales (2.7%). Although high, it is worth noting that the unemployment rate for South East Wales has displayed the largest improvement over the last decade having hit a peak of 10.2% in 2013.

6.3 However, reductions in unemployment have not translated into reductions in poverty amongst working age adults, which has increased over the last ten years, suggesting that the Welsh economy is struggling to create enough jobs that offer sufficient pay and hours to take people out of poverty (Barnard, 2018). This reflects a number of factors, including structural weakness in the labour market; low levels of skills and productivity, and a rise in part-time working and self-employment (which are usually less well paid and offer fewer progression opportunities than full time work).

Employment growth in different sectors

6.4 There are marked differences in projected employment growth across different sectors. Regional Working Futures 2014-2024 results are based on a 22 industrial sector definition. In South East Wales, South West and Mid Wales,

and North Wales the sector with the largest projected increase in employment during this time is wholesale and retail trade, which has a projected increase of 10,000, 6,000, and 3,700 respectively for each region. This was the second largest sector of all in 2014, following health and social work which is also expected to rise by 2024 to a lesser extent of 3,600, 2,000, and 1,500 respectively. Proportionally, the largest increases are expected in the finance and insurance sector (19.6 percentage points) for South East Wales (WG, 2017a, b and c).

Social Care

- 6.5 As outlined in section 5, social care was one of the sectors in which relatively large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers aspired to work. The sector is projected to grow, with interviewees identifying that another 20,000 social care and early years jobs are expected to be required by 2030. Many of these jobs will be at qualifications level 2 and 3 (so high qualifications are not required) and the sector has historically struggled to recruit staff, due to perceptions of poor pay and conditions.
- 6.6 On paper this sector looks promising for refugees and asylum seekers looking for work. There is a commitment to improve pay, conditions and progression structures and, given LAs' role in commissioning (and often delivering) social care services, there may be opportunities to maximise social value by providing routes into employment and training for refugees. There may also be specific opportunities for speakers of world languages in urban centres with large and aging ethnic minority populations (for example, those suffering from dementia may revert to their first language). However, there are some potential barriers to entry for refugees, in particular:
- there are identity and suitability checks, most notably Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, which are likely to be more complicated for refugees and asylum seekers without long term residency in the UK;
 - although there are no language tests, applicants would need to pass the Wales Essential Skills Test (WEST)³⁹;

³⁹ It was noted that some employers currently support members of the indigenous Welsh population to pass the test.

- there is little experience of employing migrant workers in the sector (they currently make up 4-5% of the workforce); and
- recruitment across the sector is often very local, as there are over 1000 small providers.

Education

- 6.7 Education was another of the sectors in which relatively large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers aspired to work. However, unlike social care, there is currently no overall shortage of teachers, and gaps are specific (e.g. Welsh language, sciences, and some head teacher posts). There has been marked growth in the number of support staff, now almost 30,000 in Wales, and while there may be some specific opportunities, such as demand for Arabic-speaking teaching assistants, overall this is now a very competitive market. Therefore, this does not look a promising sector (in terms of demand and prospects for finding work) and there are a number of potential barriers to entry for refugees and asylum seekers who aspire to work in the sector:
- identity and suitability checks, most notably DBS checks, which are likely to be more complicated for refugees and asylum seekers without long term residency in the UK;
 - the annual fees payable to Education Wales to be a registered qualified teacher (£45) or teaching assistant (£15);
 - the qualifications required for teachers, and the limited entry routes (Initial Teacher Training, the Graduate Teacher Programme and PGCE FE); and
 - in some areas, a demand for Welsh language skills.

The construction industry

- 6.8 The third sector in which relatively large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers aspired to work, was the construction industry. The construction industry in Wales is projected to see the most significant average output growth of any region and devolved nation, with projected 14% growth in the infrastructure sector and average annual employment growth of 2.1%, 1.6 percentage points higher than the UK average (CITB, 2018). This is partly driven by skills shortages, rapid urbanization and an ageing construction workforce, in an industry where refugees and migrants may possess hard-to-find

qualifications and specialised technical skills. This being said, there are many potential barriers to good quality work for refugees:

- the state of labour markets means increasing numbers of workers in the sector are on short term contracts and migrant workers (as distinct from refugees) are disproportionately represented in this and have experienced higher rates of lay-offs than the indigenous population;
- many refugees are vulnerable and dependent on informal recruitment paths which increases the likelihood of illegal and exploitative practices, increasing the risk of workplace injuries and exposure to practices such as wage theft and wage-withholding; and
- there is reported to be a lack of formal access to workplace representation or recourse (Buckley et al., 2016).

6.9 In addition, interviewees for this study highlighted the problems some refugees encountered in passing the appropriate CITB health, safety and environment test for their occupation (tests which are usually done in English), and paying the £21 cost of the CITB test and the £36 cost of Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) cards⁴⁰. Although this is a cost that employment support services can help meet, they cannot directly help with the language requirements.

Employer attitudes and practices

6.10 Negative employer attitudes are highlighted in the literature reviewed, as a barrier to employment (Holtom, et al., n.d.) and there were examples given by stakeholders interviewed for this study. The negative attitudes include:

- racism and discrimination (e.g. on the grounds of ethnicity, colour, religion and/or language skills or accent);
- concerns and uncertainty about the legality and legal status of refugees and others with a right to remain and work in the UK (and the potential fines for employers who employ workers without legal rights to work in the UK)⁴¹

⁴⁰ CSCS Cards are required to prove that individuals working in the construction industry have the required training and qualifications for the type of work they are doing.

⁴¹ Crucially, although refugees have a right to work, the complexities of asylum and immigration policy are not always well understood by employers, who need to be clear whether people applying for work have permission to work in the UK or not. The UK government has produced a guide for employers (UK Border

- (Johnson et al., 2004; DWP, 2003). Some interviewees reported that employers were not recognising the Biometric Residence Permit, that there was reluctance to take on those without indefinite leave to remain and examples were given where those whose leave to remain was due to end soon were dismissed; and
- while there were isolated examples of employers, such as Starbucks, proactively recruiting small numbers of refugees, there was reported (by interviewees) to be widespread nervousness amongst employers about refugees' skills. In particular, there were concerns about English and, in North Wales, Welsh language skills and uncertainty about work experience gained overseas. This reflected employers' perceptions identified in the literature reviewed, of the additional work, cost or time required to take on, train and support a refugee (Archer et al., 2005).

Racism and discrimination

- 6.11 It is difficult to assess how significant racism and discrimination are. There is robust evidence of discrimination in recruitment (Wood et al., 2009) and it is felt to be a significant barrier for ethnic minorities in Wales (Holtom et al., 2013). However, as outlined in section 5, the evidence from the survey of racism and discrimination was more limited (14% identified it as a barrier – compared to, for example, barriers linked to language (46%) or a lack of work experience (29%) (see table 27) - and refugees and asylum seekers focused more upon their lack of skills, and difficulties having their skills and experience recognised.

Exploitation

- 6.12 As outlined in section 5, those without the legal right to work (i.e. most asylum seekers), are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, and even forced labour, by unscrupulous employers. As Waite et al. (2013, p.7) report: "in common with other irregular migrants, refused asylum seekers are likely to be working in highly insecure, temporary, difficult and often dangerous jobs in both the formal and informal labour markets." Although there was little evidence from the interviews of illegal work, possibly because of a reluctance amongst interviewees to disclose it, there was widespread evidence of poor work and

Agency, 2010) but this is intended to encourage employers to avoid illegal employment, rather than encouraging them to employ refugees (Johnson et al., 2004).

complaints about the working practices of some employers. This was also reported by stakeholders interviewed for the study.

Employability skills

- 6.13 RSPs have highlighted a range of generic work- related skills that employers expect employees to hold, often described as employability skills. These include basic literacy and numeracy, written and verbal communication skills (including for example the ability to write emails), reliability and a good work ethic. Stakeholder interviewees often observed that many refugees and asylum seekers had a strong work ethic, but might lack some of these other skills.

Language skills

- 6.14 As outlined in section 4, a lack of English language skills is considered a key barrier to employment for refugees. The experience of economic migrants, who are often able to find work despite weak English language skills, is therefore worth considering. Whilst weak English and, in some parts of Wales, Welsh language skills, can limit job opportunities, there are a range of jobs that do not require strong language skills; for example, in the tourism and hospitality industries, while good language skills are required for front of house roles, they are less important in back office roles. Examples were also given of migrants with poor English language skills working in the food processing and warehouse sectors. As one interviewee observed, in many of these type of jobs; “you’re not there to be spoken to, you’re there to do a piece of work”. The ability to understand and complete mandatory qualifications and health and safety requirements (in English) was often cited as a key barrier to this type of work. However, some examples were given of colleges delivering courses like food hygiene in modern European languages such as Polish (for migrant workers) or online in languages such as Arabic (for refugees).

Basic and soft skills

- 6.15 As outlined in section 4, the education and skills levels of refugees and asylum seekers vary markedly; for example, 12% of our sample had no formal education. As weak basic skills are likely to be barrier for some to finding work, access to basic skills training and support will be needed.

6.16 Soft skills such as the ability to communicate effectively and manage relationships are also important, and skills developed in overseas workplaces may not always be directly transferable. Interviewees for this study pointed to the “cultural clash” many refugees experienced in Welsh work places, which were often not culturally diverse, a problem which employers had not always anticipated. Therefore, access to work experience and work placements is likely to be important for some refugees and asylum seekers.

7. Employment Support Services

- 7.1 As section 5 illustrates, research reviewed for this study, the survey and interviews with stakeholders all highlight the range of barriers which can prevent or hinder refugees and asylum seekers from realising their aspirations. Despite this, use of employment services was lower than expected, for example:
- 19% of those in work and 43% of those looking for work identified using the JCP to help them find work;
 - 15% of those in work and 18% of those looking for work identified using refugee support organizations such as WRC, DPIA, EYST or Trinity); and
 - 10% of those in work and 15% of those looking for work identified using employment support project/organization such as SOVA's Achieving Change through Employment (ACE) project or CfW
- 7.2 Moreover, as section 5 outlines, the numbers of those in work, or who had worked in the past, who identified that the JCP (11%, n=12); refugee organisations (12%, n=13) or employment projects like CfW (6%, n=7) had helped them find work, was small, with most attributing their success in finding work to individual effort and determination. Moreover, when asked how they had helped, the main sources of help were information about job opportunities and how to apply, with few people reporting practical help from support services.
- 7.3 In this section we consider the qualitative evidence from interviewees on support provided by:
- employment support services like JCP and CfW;
 - support services for refugees and asylum seekers provided by voluntary sector organisations (including national and regional organisations like WRC, DPIA and EYST, local grassroots/community organisations and churches and faith-based organisations);
 - LA support services for refugees and asylum seekers, including that provided by Community Cohesion coordinators; and
 - LA support services for those resettled under the SVPRS.

Employment Support Services: Job Centre Plus

7.4 As outlined in section 5, there was an expectation, particularly amongst asylum seekers, that the JCP can and would help people find jobs. There were positive stories and examples of people who had moved into work with the support of JCP, however, in practice, relationships between refugees and JCP staff were often complex; there were a number of reasons for this:

- weak English language skills, which often hampered communication between refugees and JCP work coaches and which could lead to misunderstandings;
- low levels of literacy and weak IT skills, which could make it difficult for some refugees to use JCP systems, like “Find a Job”⁴² (formerly Universal JobMatch) and Universal Credit “journals”;
- misaligned expectations about what the Job Centre can and should do to help, and a lack of understanding of the system in the UK including, for example, how to claim benefits; and
- mistrust of government services and the conditions associated with welfare benefits.

Weak English language, IT and literacy Skills

7.5 JCP staff stressed that it was vital that their “customers”, such as refugees, understood what they needed to do and identified language as a key barrier to working effectively with refugees. They described how in many cases refugees either relied upon a friend or their children to help them, or phoned a friend who could translate for them, and/or used apps like Google Translate. This all poses risks in terms of mistranslation, misunderstandings and the sharing of sensitive personal information. Interestingly, the JCP’s own translation service, Big Word, was usually described as the “last resort”. There were suggestions that, for example, the “claimant commitment”⁴³ could be translated into another language, such as Arabic, but this ran counter to the expectation that English should be used.

⁴² Users can create an account to track their activity, create tailored job alerts and store CVs.

⁴³ The “commitment” outlines the steps the claimant intend to take each week to seek work and improve their prospects of finding work

Misaligned expectations

7.6 There was a widespread perception amongst asylum seekers in particular that, as the name implies, the JCP would find people a job. In contrast, JCP staff were clear that although they provided employment support, much of the responsibility for finding work rested with customers and that its capacity to meet people's expectations about support were constrained. Although on paper JCP has a strong employment support offer to refugees (see boxed text), the time staff can spend in supporting customers is limited. This can be compounded by linguistic barriers, a lack of expertise in working with refugees and mistrust amongst some refugees of government services, all of which can make it difficult to provide employment support effectively and efficiently.

Key features of the JCP's Employment Support Offer

- Work focused interviews and action planning
- Advice on job search, training and access to job clubs
- Advice on childcare
- Better off calculations and advice on in- work benefits
- Financial support to overcome barriers to employment, including the Flexible Support Fund to help individual benefit claimants move into and remain in work, Dynamic Purchasing to enable the commissioning of more expensive provision⁴⁴ and support for transport, such as travel cards, and childcare
- Referral to specialist services, including disability employment advisors
- Access to work trials, work experience and advice on volunteering.

7.7 In addition, JCP offices in rural areas (where Syrians have been resettled under the SVPRS) can face additional barriers. They have not traditionally worked with refugees, so have less expertise and experience to draw upon, and refugees in

⁴⁴ JCP's Dynamic Purchasing facility enables them to commission bespoke provision if needed if, for example, a JCP office or a cluster of offices identified a cohort with specific needs where there was no provision, a business case could be put forward.

these areas face barriers linked to rurality, which can be challenging for JCP staff to address. These barriers include difficulties accessing services and employment given the inadequacy and /or cost of public transport and childcare, the weakness of some local labour markets, and isolation and its impact on confidence and social networks (Williams and Doyle, 2016).

Work coaches' capacity and time

- 7.8 As outlined above, time was a key constraint upon JCP's capacity to meet refugees' expectations. Work coaches interviewed for this study described how they were limited to 20 or 30 minute time slots when they met refugees, although some noted that they could book slots back to back, to give them more time. Some work coaches reported that on some days they had 20-25 people to see, which meant they only had 10 minutes to see and talk to people and this increased the risk that "opportunities are missed" and "people slip through the net". Many described what they would like to do, if they had more time; for example, they could spend more time building relationships and exploring refugees' aspirations, needs and situations, helping and showing them how to use job search websites, signposting people to services and helping them access services, and contacting and working with employers on the refugees' behalf.
- 7.9 It was hoped that once Universal Credit was rolled out, JCP staff would have more time and greater autonomy to manage their diaries and that a more person-centred approach, that was less target driven, could be established. As one work coach described, once Universal Credit was established; "we can be flexible about how often and how long we see people for - some people need very little contact – we know what they are doing, where the jobs are, so we don't really need to see them", freeing up their time to focus upon those who need more support. However, it was also reported, in 2018 when the research was undertaken, that the transition to Universal Credit was causing challenges, as staff were, for example, withdrawn to attend training, increasing the pressure upon the remaining staff.

Signposting and partnership working

- 7.10 The limited time work coaches have is one reason why signposting to other services is a key part of their role. The refugee page in OneNote in JCP (which provides information about support services) was supplemented in some areas by local expertise and knowledge of providers in their area. Signposting was often considered to be most effective, when work coaches could signpost refugees to services co-located in JCP offices.
- 7.11 In some of the traditional dispersal areas such as Cardiff and Newport, LA services such as hubs⁴⁵ and organizations like the WRC work very closely with the JCP. As an example, JCP staff described ensuring that refugees were aware of Cardiff Councils' hubs and the WRC's Move On service⁴⁶, which helped deal with many of the legal and day-to-day difficulties that the JCP staff lacked the time and expertise to address. Examples were also given of close partnership working around individual refugees with, for example, WRC and hub staff helping refugees set up and maintain Universal Credit journals, particularly in the "move on period", when some refugees struggled to cope with the multiple demands upon their time and attention, as they looked for housing, registered with the JCP and opened bank accounts.
- 7.12 Partnership working between JCP and other services was generally described as good and improving. As one interviewee put it: "in the past people didn't want to work with JCP" but that this has now changed. Multi-agency meetings in areas like Newport were described as valuable in enabling information about different services to be shared, facilitating signposting and improving other services' understanding of and relationships with the JCP. As a consequence, as one JCP interviewee put it: "I feel like I've got a go to person for different problems...which I didn't have five or six years ago". JCP partnership managers were seen as playing a key role in building relationships. Similarly, as we

⁴⁵ The "hub" model in Cardiff was frequently praised, for bringing together a range of services and the support it offered, including help with CVs, interview techniques and applications and free courses like food hygiene and first aid.

⁴⁶ Voluntary sector representatives suggested that refugees and asylum seekers needed to be made aware of the support available to them, particularly transitional support when going from an asylum seeker to a refugee need to be improved. They argued for ongoing dialogue with those who deliver refugee support services, who understand the issues.

discuss below, partnership working around the SVPRS in rural areas was described as effective.

Mistrust and conditionality

- 7.13 Mistrust of government services features in the research reviewed for this study (Hynes, 2011; DWP, 2003). There was relatively little evidence in the interviews with refugees and asylum seekers of a generalised mistrust of government services. Indeed, as outlined in section 5, refugees, and in particular, asylum seekers expected JCP to help them find work. However, the conditions attached to welfare benefits complicated relationships with JCP (and created mistrust) and it was reported by some stakeholders that some refugees felt pressured to take low skilled work and were being unfairly sanctioned.
- 7.14 Suggestions that refugees were unfairly sanctioned were strongly rejected by JCP staff. It was noted that many refugees were initially classified as “vulnerable customers”⁴⁷ so were not subject to sanctions, and given “the benefit of the doubt” when they did not comply with commitments or agreements with JCP staff. It was also reported that the “claimant commitment” should be tailored to an individual’s need. So for example, where refugees were judged to be not work ready, there might not be any work related commitments, and agreements could focus upon overcoming barriers such as weak English language skills (e.g. regularly attending ESOL provision), housing or debt. It was also widely reported that rules were often relaxed for refugees provided they were “moving forward”. As one work coach put it: “I sanction very few people, for me it has to be the last resort” and others described how they took a “flexible” approach, particularly where there were language barriers, which increased the risk of misunderstandings, and how they “understood” the difficulties that refugees faced.
- 7.15 Nevertheless, JCP staff were clear that the DWP’s rules still applied to refugees. It was noted that, once refugees were no longer considered “vulnerable”, and were, for example, settled in housing, learning English and managing their money, the work coaches’ approach would change. So, if such a refugee had repeatedly not done something which had been agreed, then sanctioning would

⁴⁷ Complex needs plans describe the procedures to be taken with vulnerable customers.

be considered. It was also reported that when staff were on leave, and another work coach took up a case, if actions which had been agreed in a claimant's commitment were not followed up, there was a risk that the "natural thing" for the work coach taking up the case would be to recommend sanctions. The inflexibilities of the current system, and the expectation that, for example, claimants applied for 30 jobs a week, even if they were not job ready, were also discussed.

- 7.16 It was also observed that the period in which someone could continue looking for a particular job, before being required to consider other alternatives, was limited (13 weeks). So for example, after a period of time in which a refugee had been looking, without success, to find a job and continue their previous career in civil engineering, JCP staff would need to have more "robust conversations".

When are refugees work ready?

- 7.17 One of the key debates was when people should start looking for work. Many stakeholders from the voluntary sector were frustrated with what they felt were delays in encouraging and supporting refugees to apply for work, given the JCP's "English First" strategy. This was rebutted by JCP staff who consistently reported that refugees had to be "work ready" before they could and should be encouraged to apply for jobs. English language and employability skills were both highlighted. As outlined in section 6, some employers are nervous about the skills of refugees and as one work coach put it: "we put people forward when we think they are ready [and] if they are not work ready – it puts refugees and the employer in a difficult position".
- 7.18 It was also reported that JCP were only able to refer refugees to support services like CfW once their language skills had improved. As one work coach put it: "it's really difficult if they haven't got a certain level of English"; a finding which is consistent with the research reviewed for this study. This highlights how poor English language skills limit access to opportunities such as work placements (Mulvey, 2013; Johnson et al., 2004; Schellekens, 2001).
- 7.19 JCP no longer commissions ESOL provision (nor mandates attendance at ESOL provision), and is reliant upon other providers. As we discuss in section 8, ESOL provision is limited in many areas. The requirement for JSA claimants to be "actively seeking work", which can limit the numbers of hours ESOL provision

refugees can access each week to less than 16 hours, was also sometimes a barrier. Some JCP staff reported that where it is, they would “turn a blind eye” as they recognised the importance of English language skills, but this was not consistent across all staff.

Consistency and expertise of work coaches

- 7.20 Who you see in JCP was seen as important. It was observed that, like any large organization, the JCP has both excellent and mediocre staff. There were also reported to be differences in “style” and approach; for example, it was reported that some work coaches allow refugees to “just sign in and go”, while others require evidence of job searching and availability, sometimes at the expense of being able to learn or train.
- 7.21 We interviewed many dedicated and committed JCP staff, but staff were often aware of their limitations. It was observed that JCP has less experience in helping people into “professional” jobs, which, as section 3 illustrates, many refugees aspire to (in contrast JCP has much greater expertise in relation to unskilled and semi-skilled jobs). It was also observed that refugees make up only a small percentage of most of the JCPs’ customer base, which made it more difficult for staff to develop and maintain expertise with what is considered a very different client group (e.g. in term of language, culture and needs). As one work coach put it: “I am doing my best but I’m working as one person, I’m doing what I think is best for them.” The expertise of the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for refugees was seen as important, but variable, as much of their training was self-directed (undertaken at their own initiative)⁴⁸.
- 7.22 Given concerns about inconsistencies in approach and a lack of skills and experiences, it was suggested by interviewees that there ought to be:
- a network to share good practice across JCP;
 - more training for work coaches to give more of an insight into where people have come from, what differences/difficulties refugees face, how that might manifest itself in behaviour; and
 - a framework to increase consistency of practice across all JCP workers.

⁴⁸ Some centrally organised training for those working with Syrians resettled under the SVPRS was delivered as a conference call, as DWP was not able to release staff to attend training.

Targeted Employment Services (pg 119)

- 7.23 Research reviewed for this study highlights weaknesses in support from JCP (see e.g. House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee, 2016; Psinos, 2011) and the ways in which the additional barriers refugees face due to poor English language and IT skills can increase their risk of non-compliance (and being sanctioned) (Strang et al., 2015). This has led some to argue for more specialist support to ensure that refugees' needs and aspirations are understood and can be supported (see e.g. Psinos, 2011; Lindsey et al., 2010).
- 7.24 Targeted employment support services such as CfW and SOVA's ACE project have been established to help those with more complex barriers to employment than JCP can meet⁴⁹. Many refugees would fall into this category, although, as outlined in the introduction to this section, awareness and use of services like CfW and the ACE project was relatively low. In part this is likely to be because JCP will only refer refugees to CfW and ACE once their knowledge of English has improved. It was also noted that CfW's and ACE's targets for achieving job outcomes (as ESF funded projects) mean that they are not well placed to support people judged to be a long way from employability, particularly when they need to develop their language skills. However, where refugees have been referred to CfW and ACE, feedback has been generally positive, and the flexibility that CfW has to, for example, help fund Security Industry Authority (SIA) and CSCS cards for work in the security and construction industries respectively, was valued. More broadly, evaluation of CfW's and the ACE projects' "offer" confirms the "added value" they offer (Burrowes and Holtom, 2018; Bowen and Holtom, n.d.).

Business Wales

- 7.25 As we outline in section 3, some refugees have a strong entrepreneurial spirit and experience of running their own businesses, whilst others turn to self-employment because they have struggled to find employment. Language can be less of a barrier for product- driven businesses (in comparison to service- driven

⁴⁹ Other than CfW or SOVA ACE projects, there was very little reference to other employment support programmes or projects.

businesses) and self-employment may make it easier for refugees to fit work around school hours, when they have young children to care for.

- 7.26 Business Wales provides independent advice and support to people who want to start, run or expand a business in Wales. They can help people assess their skills, identify what they need to do to start a business, develop a business plan, identify finance and market their business. Moreover, unlike many other support services, Business Wales has access to a Participation Fund that enables it to cover the cost of translators and translation and also, for example, participants' travel expenses. This has enabled Business Wales to begin working with refugees earlier than many other support services, which (as outlined above) have had to wait until refugees' English language skills have improved.
- 7.27 Business Wales was reported to be particularly active in South West and Mid Wales, working with many of the Syrian refugees resettled there under the SVPRS, and was well regarded. Many of these refugees had not previously considered running their own business, and were encouraged to explore self-employment as an option, typically by exploring whether they could use existing skills to set up a business in Wales. It was reported that many of the Syrian refugees were surprised at the relative lack of bureaucracy and paperwork associated with setting up their own business; for example, unlike work in the construction industry, there is no requirement for people working on household maintenance to hold a CSCS card and the main legal requirement is to hold business insurance.
- 7.28 Lack of self-confidence and rurality were identified as the key barriers, and in West Wales in late 2018, only one refugee had "made the leap" and started their own business. It was noted that the local markets for goods and services in many rural areas are small and that some were reliant upon public transport. Access to Shariah-compliant finance and accessible premises were also identified as barriers, although several LAs were reported to have offered support, including offers of free premises.

The voluntary sector

- 7.29 As outlined in section 1, the Welsh Government funds a range of voluntary sector services and projects. In addition, there are a number of faith- based and grassroots groups providing support and services, running independently of

Welsh Government funding. Many of these services and projects are relatively small scale and limited in scope and area, with most centred upon the traditional dispersal areas, Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and, to a lesser degree, Wrexham. Moreover, as part of wider conditions of austerity, many voluntary sector services have received reduced funding from the Welsh Government and have reduced in size or shut down, reducing capacity and increasing the demands upon the remaining services and staff. Interviewees often spoke very highly about individuals rather than the services *per se*. This was indicative of both the commitment of those working in the sector, but also the fragility and thinness of services. It was also observed that while valued, many smaller community/grassroots organisations may have weak governance structures in place⁵⁰.

- 7.30 There was a desire across the voluntary sector to do more; however, services generally lacked the capacity, in terms of resources and expertise, to provide employment support. Across the board, voluntary sector staff acknowledged that, apart from key individuals, there was a lack of knowledge around accessing employment (where and how to apply for jobs) and/ or starting a business, and that even staff with this expertise were generally not funded to provide employment support.

Support through the SVPRS

- 7.31 In recognition of their vulnerability, those resettled under the SVPRS are entitled to enhanced support. There is a strong focus on matching refugee families to appropriate accommodation, which has been described as the largest challenge faced by refugees (Bolt, 2018) and an introduction to culture and living in the UK. LAs hosting those resettled under the scheme receive a total of £20,520 per refugee over five years. This is tapered, starting at £8,520 for the first year and declining each successive year, enabling ESOL and additional support to be provided for refugees. This includes primary accommodation and the allocation of support workers to help with school places, bank accounts and benefit formalities⁵¹ as well as medical treatment. Additional employment support

⁵⁰ It was reported that only well-funded organisations have professional governance.

⁵¹ For example, as one work coach described it: “the council arranges everything”: JCP gets information in advance so they can prepare, the council arranges for someone from housing to attend, also usually

schemes were also funded to help those on the scheme until March 2018, as well as to LAs to increase ESOL capacity, including removing barriers such as lack of childcare.

- 7.32 Research reviewed for this study (Bolt, 2018; National Audit Office, 2016) and interviewees were clear that those resettled under the SVPRS have an enhanced support service. Despite this, there were:
- some concerns that employment was “not a top priority” and that the additional support could create dependency;
 - difficulties in that the expectations of those refugees coming via SVPRS were “huge” and, while they were provided with additional support, they were often dispersed to rural areas, into less diverse communities with little history of receiving refugees, with fewer support services and networks than traditional dispersal areas; and
 - there is some evidence from other studies such as Hough (2018) that this group of refugees have weaker English language skills than other groups.

- 7.33 There was also a perception held by a number of interviewees that in general, those resettled under the SVPRS had lower levels of education. This may be because the SVPRS includes people who would not have the means/money to travel to the UK independently. This could be important because those who can travel independently might tend to be more highly educated, and therefore tend to be wealthier. However, there is insufficient data to verify either where those resettled under the SVPRS have lower levels of education or if this is the case, why this is so. The three-year qualitative longitudinal evaluation of the Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Child resettlement schemes currently being undertaken by Ipsos MORI (and commissioned by the Home Office), is likely to shed light on this.

Local Authority support

- 7.34 Community cohesion coordinators were active, particularly in the traditional dispersal areas. Their role included supporting planning with partners, developing information and data about migration and its impact on community

someone from the council attends the initial meeting, and housing benefit, Universal Credit, JSA or ESA claims are fast tracked.

cohesion and producing advice on this, using collaborative approaches and developing links with existing groups and forums to help with decision making, and identifying and mitigating community tensions (WG, 2016b). In addition, in Cardiff, a housing and employment project had been established, and across all LAs, existing services like housing, social services and, where established, community support hubs, were involved in the delivery of support to refugees and asylum seekers.

Support in rural areas

- 7.35 Supporting the integration of refugees into rural areas is seen as a potential “win-win” scenario. This reflects both the specific challenges that refugees in rural areas can face (such as a weaker support infrastructure), and the challenges some rural areas face as a result of demographic change and outward migration, which has depleted workforces and made it harder to sustain public services (ENRD, 2016; Jentsch, 2007). In response, as outlined in the introduction, the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD)⁵² has highlighted the ways in which EU rural development funds have been invested in projects to:
- change “the narrative” - increasing awareness and understanding between migrants and the communities they move to by, for example, creating places and spaces for migrants (such as refugees) to meet and interact with members of host communities;
 - supporting entry to the labour market by, for example, upskilling migrants, working with employers and supporting self-employment; and
 - co-ordinate action to support integration across range of domains, such as employment, housing and social life led, for example, by LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) (ENRD, 2016).
- 7.36 The support services outlined above, such as JCP and Business Wales, are key parts of the employment support infrastructure in rural areas, just as they are in

⁵² The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) links rural development stakeholders throughout the EU and aims to support Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) “by generating and sharing knowledge” and “facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.” (ENRD, 2016).

urban areas. There was interest in the scope for LEADER LAGs to complement and strengthen this⁵³, and develop support for refugees in rural areas, as the examples highlighted by the ENRD (briefly outlined above) suggest. This study identified some interest in the issue amongst LEADER LAGs, but limited evidence of activity in the rural areas where Syrians were resettled under the SVPRS such as Powys and West Wales. For example, in early 2018 a LEADER group in Neath Port Talbot was exploring a project put forward by the Minority Ethnic Achievement Support (MEAS) team based at Llangatwg School in Cadoxton, to support 10 refugee families relocated to Neath Port Talbot. However, the project did not go forward due to difficulties prioritising beneficiaries in rural wards (as few expected beneficiaries were in rural wards). An expression of interest was also put forward in Ceredigion from Hiraeth Hope Croeso Teifi for the project “Wlad hen fnadau Cartrefi i ti - Skills and Language sharing with Syrian refugees in Ceredigion”, but this was not taken forward.

⁵³ Support could for example be eligible under the Promoting social inclusion poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas Programme Focus Area (WG, 2019).

8. ESOL Provision

- 8.1 As we outline in section 4, most of those surveyed could speak, read and write a “fair amount” of English, and wanted to improve their language skills. 65% of those surveyed had used ESOL provision already and 43% intended to in the future.
- 8.2 Interviews with those working directly with refugees and asylum seekers in the public and voluntary sectors were clear that lack of English was the main barrier to refugees and asylum seekers gaining employment. More broadly, there was often a belief that, as one interviewee put it: “after language, comes everything”. In this section we consider:

- ESOL provision for refugees and asylum seekers in Wales;
- the challenge of learning a second language;
- the importance of language learning beyond the classroom; and
- barriers to accessing ESOL provision.

ESOL Provision

- 8.3 ESOL is delivered by a range of different organisations in the public, private and third sector, such as colleges, the University of South Wales, training providers such as Adult Learning Wales/Addysg Oedolion Cymru (ALW) and various voluntary sector organisations such as the WRC.

REACH

REACH, (the Regional ESOL Assessment Central Hub) is a pilot project delivered by Cardiff and Vale College (CaVC) and ALW/AOC. It operates as a central point of contact to address the significant ESOL waiting lists in Cardiff and as a means to increase strategic collaboration between providers. It aims to assess people’s ESOL needs, to place them in the most appropriate provision for them, and to support their progression.

Within three weeks of being assessed, learners are referred to mainstream provision, specially designed flexible roll on/roll off courses; or online learning courses. This means that learners are accessing provision quickly and not spending time on waiting lists. Learner progression is also tracked on a database. (Adapted from Welsh Government, 2018d).

8.4 Interviewees' views on the effectiveness of this ESOL provision were mixed. This is likely to reflect regional differences and differences in refugees and asylum seekers needs and expectations; for example:

- REACH (see boxed text) was consistently praised, and provision in Cardiff was generally felt to be better than other areas, although even here, gaps, weaknesses and waiting lists⁵⁴ were reported;
- there is a shortage of ESOL provision across Wales, particularly pre-entry provision (Williams, 2017) and provision is fragmented, with a patchwork of formal and informal provision which is not fully integrated, and which means many refugees and asylum seekers cannot access as many hours of ESOL each week as they want or need to progress; and
- the provision is not always felt to meet people's needs; for example:
 - some provision is sometimes felt to be too "academic" and there is reported to be a need for ESOL that can be used in everyday life and/or that is applicable to the work environment;
 - classes are often large and mixed, with learners with differing levels of ability and need, making personalised delivery difficult; and
 - there is little provision above level 2, which means that it may not provide a solid foundation for further or higher education or employment.

The challenge of learning another language

8.5 As section 4 illustrates, the education levels of refugees vary markedly. Those with no formal education and poor literacy can find it particularly difficult to learn a second language (Williams, 2017). It was also observed that learning languages is often easier for younger people. Research reviewed for this study also highlights the volume of learning required to reach levels required for further education and/or employment. One study identified that 1,765 hours of teaching are required to get to this level for a non-English speaker, although less is required for those who already have basic English language skills. Factors such as motivation, exposure to English outside the classroom (which we

⁵⁴ Most ESOL courses only have one entry point per year, meaning that people arriving after September have to wait months for the next intake (NaFW, 2017)

discuss below) and the frequency of learning are also important (Schellekens, 2001).

Learning beyond the classroom

- 8.6 A number of interviewees reported that the “best school is work”. There are examples of further education institutions working with employers to deliver ESOL in the workplace, however, these are not common. As the recent WSMP review from Williams (2017) identifies:

...vocational ESOL+ courses need to be available throughout Wales. It is clear that embedding ESOL within practical/ vocational training courses will be more effective for many of the beneficiaries than formal classes, both in terms of building on existing skills, providing refugees with a pathway to employment, and in terms of making the learning experience more relevant.

- 8.7 Other interviewees from LAs and the voluntary sector supported this, stressing the importance of dialogue with the private sector to look at provision of work-based ESOL for those who work unsocial hours and cannot access courses.
- 8.8 More broadly, interviewees stressed the importance of practising outside the classroom and the value of informal opportunities offered by friends and neighbours groups.

Barriers to accessing ESOL

- 8.9 As we outline in section 5, many of the barriers linked to people’s challenging circumstances or situations, like transport, childcare, unmet needs, cultural attitudes and norms (particularly around women’s roles), and weakness in human capital, such as low levels of literacy (discussed in section 4), which limit participation in the labour market, can also limit participation in education and training provision, such as ESOL.

9. Refugees' and asylum seekers' health and wellbeing

9.1 Research reviewed for this study highlights poor physical and/or mental health, often linked to the trauma of persecution, enforced flight and separation from family and friends, and difficulties integrating, as barriers to employment for some (Bloch, 2002; Archer et al., 2005; ASAP, 2011; Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2018). In this section we consider the mental and physical health of refugees and asylum seekers and their wellbeing.

Mental and Physical health

9.2 As we outline in section 4, relatively small numbers (n=52, 12% of the sample) of those interviewed identified their physical or mental health as a barrier to employment. However, it is likely that refugees and asylum seekers with poor or very poor physical or mental health were less likely to take part in the survey as they would be less likely to be out accessing services, so this is likely to be an underestimate. As we outline in section 3, there is evidence of sizeable numbers of refugees who were judged not currently fit to work due to illness or disability. Physical and/ or mental ill health is also one of the criteria used for the SVPRS and it is likely that health needs are higher amongst this particularly vulnerable group.

9.3 Stakeholders interviewed for this study noted the often vicious cycle of poor mental health and social exclusion that impacted on refugees and asylum seekers. Not only the trauma many carried from the process of leaving their home countries but also the impact of poor accommodation and the considerable length of time spent waiting for the asylum claim to be approved, contributed to de-skilling and the loss of confidence, discussed in section 3. In response, there were calls for greater funding for mental health services for refugees and asylum seekers and also support for integration.

Wellbeing

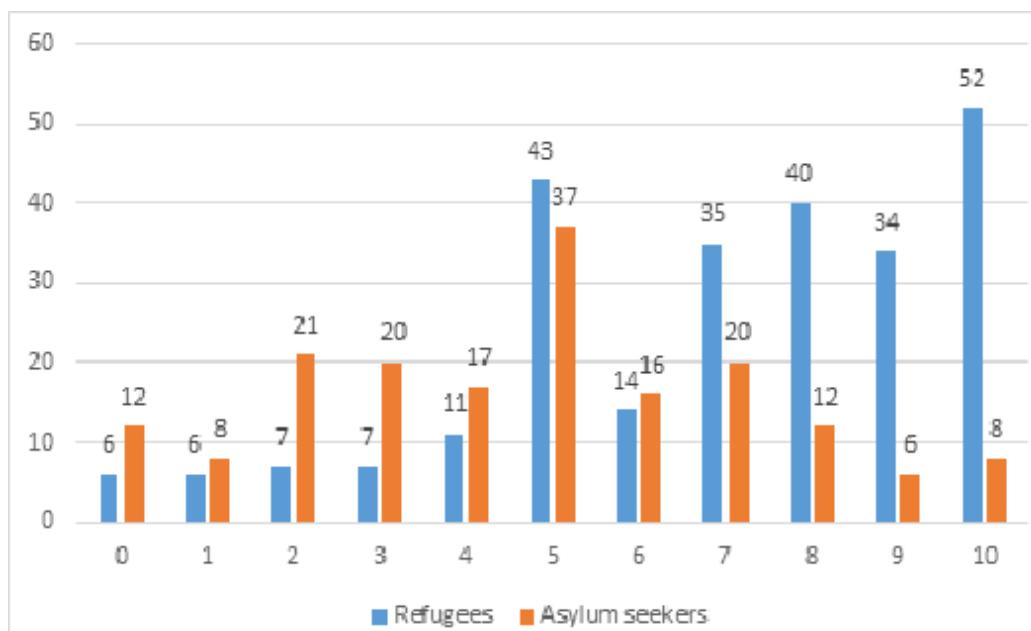
9.4 As part of the survey, interviewees were asked how happy they felt yesterday on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is “very low” and 10 is “very high”. As table 28 and figure 3 illustrate, on average refugees were happier (with a mean score of 6.9) with their day to day lives compared to asylum seekers (with a mean score of 4.6). Those currently in work (6.7) were also happier than those not in work

(5.8), and males (6.2) were happier than females (5.7). This is markedly lower than the average for the Welsh Population (7.7) (WG, 2018c).

Table 28. Wellbeing reported by different groups (numbers of responses)

Feel yesterday	All	Refugees	Asylum seekers	Currently in work	Not in work	Male	Female
0	18	6	12	1	17	11	7
1	14	6	8	2	12	7	7
2	28	7	21	2	26	10	17
3	27	7	20	3	24	11	16
4	28	11	17	5	23	13	15
5	80	43	37	17	63	35	43
6	30	14	16	7	23	16	13
7	55	35	20	8	47	29	26
8	52	40	12	11	41	25	27
9	40	34	6	14	26	24	15
10	60	52	8	12	48	34	24
Total sample	432	255	177	82	350	215	210
Mean	6.0	6.9	4.6	6.7	5.8	6.2	5.7

Figure 3. The distribution of wellbeing scores for the whole sample (number of responses)



- 9.5 Interviewees were also asked how optimistic they felt about the future, on a scale of 0-10, where 0 is “not at all” and 10 is “completely satisfied”. As table 29 illustrates, refugees and those currently working were also more optimistic about the future than other groups, both with means of 7.7. Asylum seekers were least optimistic with 5 being the most common score. They also had the highest percentage of participants who chose 0 (6%). In other words, they had no hope for the future. Interestingly the most common score for females was 10 considering they had the second lowest average score compared to other groups for day to day happiness.
- 9.6 Access to social, emotional and practical support is a key determinant of wellbeing and, as table 30 illustrates, 61% of participants said they had at least one person they could rely on. In addition, more refugees felt they had someone to rely on than asylum seekers (67% compared to 53%), as did those in work (65% compared to 60%) and females (69% compared to 53%- the biggest gap). Asylum seekers had the highest number of participants feeling that they did not have someone to rely on (45%).

Table 29. The optimism of different groups (numbers of responses)

Level of optimism	Total No.	Refugees	Asylum seekers	Currently in work	Not in work	Male	Female
0	12	2	10	0	12	6	6
1	10	3	7	1	9	2	8
2	12	2	10	0	12	2	10
3	12	4	8	1	11	4	7
4	9	3	6	2	7	3	6
5	56	21	35	3	53	26	29
6	28	15	13	5	23	13	15
7	57	35	22	18	39	30	25
8	86	65	21	25	61	53	33
9	57	41	16	13	44	38	18
10	71	55	16	12	59	32	37
Total sample	410	246	164	80	330	209	194
Mean	6.9	7.7	5.8	7.7	6.8	7.3	6.5

Table 30. The numbers of people reporting they had at least one person they could rely upon

	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers		In work		Not in work		Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	269	61	168	67	101	53	53	65	216	60	116	53	149	69
More or less	12	3	10	4	2	1	4	5	8	2	6	3	6	3
No	155	35	69	28	86	45	23	28	132	37	95	43	58	27
Don't know	6	1	3	1	3	2	2	2	4	1	3	1	3	1
Prefer not to say	1	0.2	1	0.4	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	1	0.5	0	0

Total sample n=443

Factors Affecting Wellbeing

- 9.7 Research reviewed for this study highlights the often high levels of ill-being experienced by refugees and asylum seekers as a result to their difficulties in integrating; for example, research by Cheung and Phillimore (2013) found that refugees with no social networks were least likely to be employed and more likely to have poorer health and this generally had a negative impact on integration. In addition, poor English language skills can make it hard to access and use services and increases refugees' exclusion from services and society. The combination of restricted entitlements and exclusion means many struggle to meet their basic needs, like housing. Their difficulties in satisfying their basic needs, in turn, make it difficult to search for or sustain employment (Stewart and Shaffer, 2015; Johnson et al., 2004).
- 9.8 Other factors that were felt by stakeholders to undermine refugees' and asylum seekers' wellbeing were:
- the stigma associated with media coverage of refugees and asylum seekers;
 - concerns about the quality of Home Office decision-making and the length of time asylum applications took; and
 - the loss of or decline in status many asylum seekers and refugees, in particular men, often experienced, as they lost their careers and roles as "breadwinner".
- 9.9 Interviewees in the survey were asked about their wellbeing. The asylum process and legal status were important and often cast a long shadow over people's lives while they waited, but many experiences of day to day life and the challenge of integration were also important factors. For refugees and asylum seekers in the survey, the key positives (in order of most common answers) were:
- spending time with and/or socializing with family and/or friends;
 - refugee status or confidence in gaining it, living or settling in the UK. In some cases, simply not being in their home country was enough. As one refugee put it: "people are very helpful, this country saved us, so we want to give back, like volunteering, helping people"; and

- finding, applying, looking forward to working or volunteering, or a family member doing so; for example, as one refugee put it: “I feel like my life is going to get better and currently I am working and studying as well”.

9.10 The key negatives (in order of most common answers) were:

- lack of refugee status and the sense of uncertainty or insecurity without having status and frustration of time wasted waiting that could be used more productively (working) (particularly for asylum seekers); for example, as one asylum seeker put it: “I feel like a dead man walking waiting for my papers”. This could also be linked to difficulties with family reunification, particularly while people waited for their claim to asylum to be decided upon⁵⁵;
- the struggle to find work, lack of opportunities, but also negative experiences of work, low pay, low skilled work (for refugees) and not being allowed to work (for asylum seekers); for example, as one refugee put it: “I get disappointed, wasting my time, not getting anywhere, need money, I keep changing my mind because I'm getting confused. This is the best time to start a job. I get mood swings, feel helpless”;
- poor mental or physical health (particularly for asylum seekers, but also for refugees), including feeling stressed at their circumstances and lack of control (a weak locus of control); for example, as one asylum seeker put it: “our whole fam[ily] is very depressed, we've got feelings we're living like a third class person- we can't eat properly, we can't travel properly, we can't dress properly”; and
- lack of financial and/or personal support (particularly for asylum seekers, but also for refugees), including feeling isolated/alone, having little or no financial benefits and struggling to get by or support their family.

Resilience

9.11 Despite the trauma of enforced exile and flight from persecution and the often multiple and complex barriers to integration they face, as we outline above, many refugees in particular remained remarkably optimistic about the future. This reflects the resilience that many stakeholders observed about this group.

⁵⁵ Reunification with a partner or child is not permitted until a decision has been made on a claim for asylum.

Equally, the research also shows that the current asylum system can undermine people's resilience by limiting their options, entitlements and sense of control over their future. This is a key reason why levels of wellbeing amongst asylum seekers are much lower than those amongst refugees.

10. What works and what might work? Evidence of effective and promising practice

10.1 In this section we discuss the evidence from the interviews with asylum seekers, refugees and other stakeholders and from the research reviewed for this study, which could inform potential improvements to employment support.

Evidence from refugees and asylum seekers

10.2 As table 31 illustrates, when asked what support they would like, refugees and asylum seekers interviewed for this study called for:

- more learning and skills provision, such as more training (64%) and volunteering (54%) opportunities; ESOL provision (43%) and work placements (42%);
- more advice and support, such as help with applications (42%) and information about job opportunities (40%); and
- to a lesser degree, help with day to day life such as housing (26%), advice about life in Wales (25%) and welfare benefits (22%).

Table 31. Responses to the question, do you think support for people like yourself looking for work, could be improved by....

	No.	%
More training	294	65
More volunteering	248	55
More ESOL	195	43
More work placements	193	43
More help improving my CV, help with application form/process, interview preparation	187	41
More information or advice about job opportunities	183	40
More personal support (e.g. encouragement and/or support to increase my confidence)	147	32
Help with housing	117	26
Help or advice about living in Wales	114	25
More help or advice about benefits	100	22
More specialist support to help professionals (such as scientists, engineers, teachers or doctors) qualify and work in the UK	96	21

Total sample n=454

Evidence from stakeholders

10.3 Stakeholders interviewed for this study called for a range of actions, including:

- extending rights of work to asylum seekers, in line with the Lift the Ban campaign (Refugee Action, 2018) to reduce de-skilling (see section 4) and improve asylum seekers' wellbeing (see section 9);
- improvements to employment support and training, including courses tailored to specific fields of work, so that refugees and asylum seekers know exactly what they need to do to gain employment or start a business;
- improvements to information, advice and support to help refugees and asylum seekers integrate, to both improve their wellbeing (see section 9) and ensure that they are able to look for work;
- access to high quality work experiences/placements, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities in a range of fields that allow refugees and asylum seekers to build up their experience and skills and practice their English;
- access to quality work opportunities beyond low skilled and low paid work, such as warehouse work where refugees are currently getting stuck;
- improvements to systems for the recognition of asylum seekers' and refugees' qualifications and skills, including use of the CQFW; and
- the development of more specialist services to help professionals find work. It was, for example observed that the WARD scheme was good, but limited to medical professionals.

Evidence from the literature review

- 10.4 As Table 32 outlines, a range of specific interventions to address the different type of barriers refugees and asylum seekers face have been proposed by other research studies.
- 10.5 Although, as table 32 illustrates, numerous examples of recommendations and interventions were identified in the literature reviewed, very few examples of robustly evaluated practice were identified. This is consistent with earlier studies

which have found that overall, there is a lack of evidence of the efficacy of different interventions (Johnson et al., 2004). Moreover, differences in context and need mean that best practices cannot be simply borrowed and assumed to be effective in new contexts. As Katseli (2004) highlights: “targeted immigration programmes, which were to meet specific market needs, proved relatively successful in northern industrial countries but were ineffective in southern Europe” (Katseli, 2004, cited in Jentsch et al., 2007).

Table 32. Examples of interventions

Type of barrier	Examples of proposed interventions / remedies	Examples of studies proposing this
Refugees' and asylum seekers' circumstances and rights	Extending the right to work for asylum seekers	Mayblin, 2014; Crawley, 2013; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006; Bloch, 2004.
Refugees' and asylum seekers' human, social and cultural capital	Extending and enhancing ESOL provision Support to have skills, qualifications and experience recognised Apprenticeships for refugees	NAfW, 2017; Johnson et al., 2004; Bloch, 2004. Basedow and Doyle, 2016. Richards and Gundel, 2017
	Volunteering and work placements	Johnson et al., 2004; Archer et al., 2005.
	Strengthening bridging social capital	Basedow and Doyle, 2016.

Refugees' and asylum seekers' job search strategies and access to effective employment support services	Specialist support for professionals, such as those developed to support medical professionals ⁵⁶ and engagement /support from professional bodies	Cross, 2016; Archer et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2004.
	Job coaches and improved information, advice and guidance (IAG) services	Arad, 2015; Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015.
Employment opportunities, employer attitudes and behaviours	Employer engagement ⁵⁷	Archer et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2004.
Self-employment.	Specialist support services for refugees	Davidson et al., 2013; Bagwell, 2006.

⁵⁶ For example, REACHE, a specialist support service for medical professionals, offers "holistic" support including help with regulations, English language skills, and work experience (Cross, 2016)

⁵⁷ For example, increasing awareness of the legal requirements when employing refugees.

Cross cutting themes

- 10.6 Previous research and evaluation focused upon support for refugees also highlights three cross-cutting themes that underpin the recommendations and proposed interventions:
- the need for more resources, given cuts in public provision; a gap which the voluntary sector has only partially filled (Walsh, 2016; Geddes, 2000);
 - the need for active engagement and outreach work, given often weak social networks, low levels of awareness of services and/or mistrust of state services, amongst refugee populations (Newman, 2010; Bagwell, 2006; Wren, 2004); and
 - the need for person- centred, flexible and holistic approaches, given the diversity, and in some cases complexity, of refugees' needs and circumstances (Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015; Archer et al., 2005; Johnson et al., 2004).

Resources

- 10.7 We discuss the strengths and weakness of employment support services and the impact of funding cuts and the fragmentation of policy responsibility in section 7. There are valued projects and pockets of expertise, but many services are fragile; there is a reliance upon individual initiative rather than a coherent strategic response, and support services are mainly centred in urban areas. There is a "two tier" system with differing levels of support for those coming via the SVPRS and those coming via traditional asylum routes, but those resettled in rural areas can still struggle to access support and ESOL provision. Looking beyond employment support services, there is a case for examining the cost effectiveness of more structured programmes to support integration (see examples below).

International Approaches to Integration

The employment of refugees in Denmark became a national strategy in 2015. One initiative which five municipalities chose to take part in was a Fast Track programme for asylum seekers to have access to the labour market while waiting for their claim decision. The programme lasts for eight weeks and gives asylum seekers a practical introduction to Danish culture, language, potential vocational training and internship and methods of job searching, among other things. An evaluation of the programme with a sample of participants after two years showed that 61% were self-sufficient.

Adapted from Ledstrup, M. and Larsen M, 2018 and Refugee Action, 2018

A key part of integration of refugees in Germany is through their "integration courses". This involves 600 hours of language instruction and 60 hours on German culture and politics. They also offer vocational language courses tailored to language used in an employment context. The government is also working to recognise job qualifications acquired in asylum seeker and refugee home countries. Results from a nationwide evaluation found that integration courses help to reinforce labour market orientation and attachment to Germany concluding that all groups of immigrants are offered systematic support (Emminghaus and Stern, 2006).

Adapted from Martín et al., 2016 and Burkert and Haas, 2014

Engagement and outreach work

- 10.8 As we outline in section 7, effective partnership working between voluntary sector organisations such as the WRC, DPIA, Oasis and EYST, and statutory services like JCP were seen as crucial in ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers were aware of and were supported to access statutory services. Whilst funding cuts meant that voluntary sector hubs had closed, where available, LA hubs in areas like Cardiff were seen as offering very valuable services and platforms for accessing a range of services.

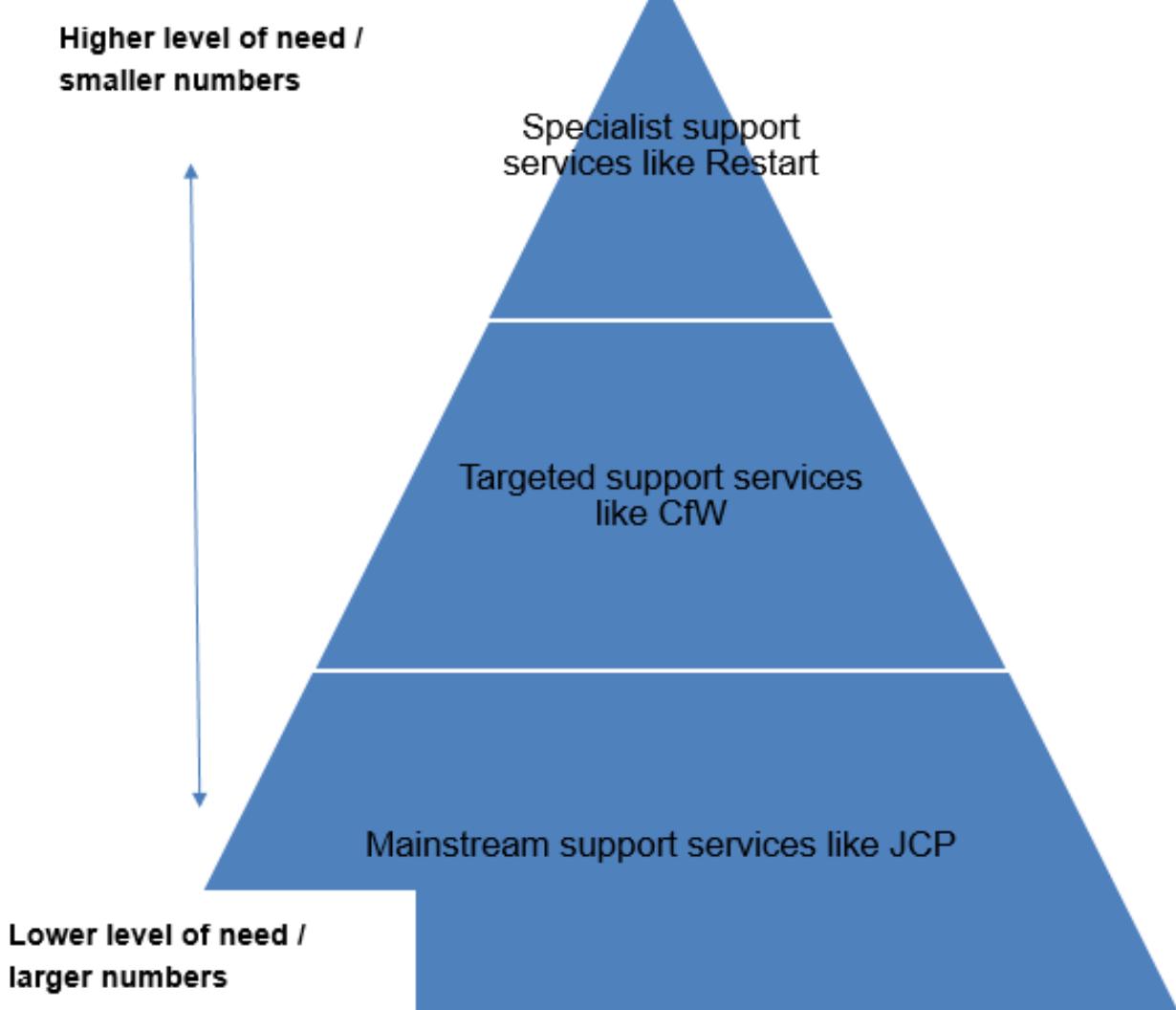
Person-centred services

- 10.9 Archer et al. (2005) report, because the: "situation for refugees is often very complicated", it: "is rarely addressed by a universal, 'one-size fits all' approach due to the multiplicity of factors impacting within different refugees'

experiences". Stakeholders interviewed for this study endorsed this. The responses to the survey for this study also highlight the importance of services that can respond to a range of needs and interests that are not specific to refugees, such as difficulties with childcare.

- 10.10 In order to maximise the efficiency and cost effectiveness of services, a tiered approach, illustrated by figure 4, incorporating mainstream, targeted and more specialist services, is likely to be needed. In this approach, lower level, less complex needs are met by mainstream services like JCP, and increasingly complex needs are met by more targeted services like CfW and specialist services/projects like Restart and WARD.

Figure 4. A tiered approach to meeting needs



- 10.11 As outlined in section 7, there are relatively few specialist support services for refugees and asylum seekers and those that remain have limited capacity to provide employment support. The proposed Restart project, outlined in section 1, was therefore welcomed by stakeholders interviewed for this study. Nevertheless, its capacity is limited (it aims to work with hundreds of refugees – a small fraction of the total refugee population) and challenges are likely to remain outside traditional dispersal areas (the project is targeted upon Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham). This highlights the need for targeted and mainstream services to help take up the strain of meeting needs.
- 10.12 Although there is unlikely to be the critical mass of people necessary to support the development of new specialist programmes like WARD for all professions, there is a strong case for developing additional informal specialist advice and support to help other professionals. This could be based upon the identification of mentors in different sectors willing and able to help refugees understand the demands and expectations and entry requirements of professions such as the media and veterinary practice.
- 10.13 Ensuring that services at each level are person- centred is a key challenge, as mainstream and targeted services typically have less expertise and experience working with refugees and asylum seekers. Action may therefore be required to make services more responsive, by, for example, providing translation services and changing staff training to address the specific needs and interests of refugees and asylum seekers. The use of Business Wales's Participation Fund (discussed in section 7) is a good example of how potential language barriers to accessing a targeted service (which is not specific to refugees), can be overcome. Specialist services like the proposed Restart project could also potentially play a support and advisory role to less targeted services by, for example, providing training and advice /consultancy around individual cases. This could include the project taking out an organisational subscription to NARIC (as the JCP in Northern Ireland has) to provide access to the system to determine the equivalency of overseas qualifications.

The potential limits of employment support

- 10.14 Jentsch et al. (2007) argue that while interventions to support refugee integration may increase employment, refugees may not be able to progress from poor work without some structural changes to labour markets. This is supported by research into economic migrants, which highlights how some sectors like care (Canagiano et al., 2009) and hospitality (Janta et al., 2011) are characterised by low wages, dominated by migrant workers and offer few opportunities for progression. This is consistent with the evidence from the survey; as section 5 outlines, most of those surveyed in work, were “stuck” in “poor work”. It also reflects wider debates about the structural weakness of the UK labour market (JRF, 2017).
- 10.15 Nevertheless, as we outline in section 6, this position was challenged by some interviewees for this study, who highlighted how sectors were changing and how, even in sectors like hospitality, there were a wide range of different employment opportunities. This highlights the importance of information, advice and guidance to help refugees looking for work, or stuck in poor work, to identify sectors where there are progression opportunities. Evidence from research with ethnic minorities in Wales (e.g. Holtom et al., 2013) and the UK (Wood and Wybron, 2015) also highlights the need for action to help refugees progress in work. This could link to action to support other disadvantaged groups in Wales to progress, and include:
- developing in-work mentoring opportunities and identifying “champions” responsible for encouraging progression and providing advice to all groups under-represented in senior positions;
 - raising awareness and simplifying access to internal progression and training opportunities (as processes can be opaque and poorly understood);
 - increasing unionisation of disadvantaged groups such as refugees; and
 - government or employer funding for work- based ESOL provision. This could include stressing the potential benefits for employers, such as improved retention and productivity (adapted from Wood and Wybron, 2015).

11. Conclusions and recommendations

The ambitions of refugee and asylum seeker populations

- 11.1 Most refugees and asylum seekers want to work and they want to find work that matches their interests, skills, experience and norms (most notably, gendered roles). The diversity of refugee populations, for example, in terms of previous occupation, means their ambitions are equally diverse.
- 11.2 Refugees' and asylum seekers' ambitions are not fixed. Around 80% of those surveyed were willing to consider alternatives and research finds that refugees' aspirations often fade over time, as their expectation of attaining or realising their ambitions diminishes. The "move on" period, when, for example, status as a refugee is granted, and access to entitlements changes, is frequently a pivotal moment for life in exile. At this point, when the right to work is granted, refugees' hopes and dreams can run up against the range of often complex barriers that threaten to thwart realisation of their aspirations. Weakness in support at this critical time can compound this, and this period often marks the inflection point at which aspirations begin to erode.

The skills and qualifications of refugee and asylum seeker populations

- 11.3 The diversity of refugee and asylum seeker populations means that their skills, including English language skills and other qualifications, are equally diverse. Some have a university education and strong English language skills, while others have no or little formal education and weak English language skills. Skills gained overseas can also be devalued when they are not recognised in Wales, or lost through lack of use (de-skilling).
- 11.4 Refugees' aspirations are often misaligned with their skills and employer expectations. Raising skills to match aspirations and employer aspirations is therefore important. Despite this, with the exception of ESOL provision, which roughly two thirds (65%) of those surveyed reported having done, rates of participation in other types of education and training in Wales, such as college (20%), university (10%) community provision (10% of those surveyed) or work experiences/work placements, were much lower. In part, this is likely to reflect the ways in which poor English language skills limit participation in other types of education and training. However, it also reflects other barriers such as financial

pressures, which can limit participation in education or training, and/or discourage people from deferring entry to employment in order to learn, and difficulties with transport and childcare. In addition, only half of those surveyed who were studying, or who intended to study, were doing so to help them find work, which suggests that some refugees and asylum seekers may be ambivalent or uncertain about the value of education and training for work.

The employment experiences of refugees

- 11.5 Rates of employment amongst refugee populations are much lower than the general population. Although difficult to quantify, a figure of around 30-40% appears a reasonable estimate, although this disguises differences in employment rates according to:
- gender as men tend to have higher employment rates than women;
 - skill level as those with higher skills and in particular, English language skills, are more likely to be in work; and
 - length of time in UK as those who have been in the UK longer are more likely to be in work.
- 11.6 Headline employment rates can also conceal high rates of poor work with many working below skill levels for low pay in temporary or insecure jobs. Refugees often work in sectors like warehousing, food processing or catering, where pay and conditions are poor, but where barriers to entry, such as employers' demands for English language skills and other qualifications, are also lower.
- 11.7 Unemployment and poor work hinder integration, can deny people their dignity and contribute to high levels of poverty and social exclusion and much poorer levels of well-being amongst refugees and, in particular, asylum seekers, compared to the general population.

Barriers to employment and progression in work

- 11.8 Refugees and asylum seekers are often “resourceful and creative” (SPIU, 2010) and this research identified examples of refugees overcoming barriers and realising their aspirations. However, no matter how resourceful, creative and determined they are, as this research illustrates, the scale and/or complexity of barriers can thwart their aspirations. Consequently, the examples given of

refugees who have realised their aspirations appear to be comparatively rare and often limited to sectors like IT where there were skill shortages.

- 11.9 For those with higher aspirations, misalignment between many refugees' aspirations, their skills and employer expectations, is a key barrier. It means that pathways to employment differ. For some, finding employment means adjusting their aspirations and accepting poorer work, and for others it means deferring entry to employment while they develop their language and employability skills.
- 11.10 However, even where refugees' aspirations are aligned with their skills and employers' expectations - which may include lowering aspirations, as many of those surveyed were willing to do - a range of barriers hinder or stop refugees from achieving their aspirations (most asylum seekers cannot work legally); these include:
 - barriers linked to enforced migration, such as difficulties gaining recognition for qualifications, skills and experience gained overseas and poor mental health;
 - employer attitudes, including racism and/or a reluctance amongst some employers to employ refugees;
 - weak understanding of pathways to employment; and
 - more generic barriers linked to refugees' circumstances, such as difficulties with transport and childcare.
- 11.11 The experiences of Syrians resettled in rural areas were different to other groups. They reported additional barriers linked to rurality, such as weaker labour markets, more limited public transport, greater isolation from co-ethnic groups and more limited support services; barriers only partly offset by the extra support they received through the SVPRS. However, their experiences also differed because of differences in their skills, most notably language skills, which could compound other types of barriers.

Support services

- 11.12 Despite the commitment of staff, support services and ESOL provision struggle to help people overcome many of the barriers they face. Most refugees, and in a small number of cases, asylum seekers, in work interviewed for this study credit

their success finding work to their own efforts, rather than support from services. This reflects a number of factors including:

- the legal restrictions on asylum seekers working in the UK;
- inadequate ESOL provision in many parts of Wales and the difficulties inherent in learning a second language;
- the limited time and support the JCP can offer and the ways in which weak English language skills can limit the support and opportunities asylum seekers and refugees can access; for example, they often cannot access targeted employment support services like CfW or work placements until they have developed their language skills; and
- cuts in funding for support services.

Recommendations for action

- 11.13 The evidence gathered for this study shows that there is no “silver bullet”. It indicates that an effective strategy should focus upon extending rights and aligning aspirations and skills with employer expectations, and addressing other barriers to work and progression in work. This requires co-ordinated action across a range of policy areas to strengthen:
- Integration, ESOL and training, to develop skills and ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are able to look for work;;
 - information advice and guidance and employment support to, for example, inform aspirations and job search strategies; and
 - employer engagement to, for example, change employers’ expectations and practice.
- 11.14 It will also require improvements in partnership working between services and monitoring and evaluation of policies and provision to support refugees and asylum seekers. In response, the study makes five overarching recommendations to improve access to employment and support.
- 11.15 **Recommendation 1: The Welsh Government should work to support integration from day one, as the Scottish Government has.** This should help reduce the amount of ‘lost time’ during which skills and wellbeing are negatively affected, improve public understanding and perception of refugees and asylum

seekers, and improve the wellbeing of asylum seekers and refugees. Action to support this should include the Welsh Government:

- Lobbying the UK government to reinstate asylum seekers' rights to work⁵⁸;
- Considering the case for developing short structured programmes to support integration, like those developed in other EU countries;
- maximising the use of existing resources to tackle language barriers. Business Wales's use of its Participation Fund is a good example of this;
- working with partners to ensure that frontline staff have an awareness and understanding of the needs of refugees and asylum seekers as part of their workforce development;
- working with LAs and bodies such as the Arts Council for Wales and Sports Wales to explore opportunities for outreach and engagement with refugees and asylum seekers; and
- actively identifying opportunities to highlight the contribution of refugees and asylum seekers such as events to mark World Refugee Day and supporting local refugee sponsorship groups.

11.16 Recommendation 2: The Welsh Government should strengthen education and training provision for refugees and asylum seekers. This should support integration and help refugees find better work, faster. Action to support this should include the Welsh Government:

- increasing investment in ESOL provision and working with LAs, colleges, employers and ESOL providers to extend and mainstream the good practice identified in the current ESOL Policy Statement;
- working with colleges to explore opportunities for the provision of training in basic qualifications like food hygiene and health and safety in key world languages, like Arabic, for those with weaker English language skills; and
- working with colleges and Regional Skills Partnerships to explore the development of training pathways into growth sectors like social care for those with stronger English Language skills.

⁵⁸ Asylum policy is reserved to the UK Government, which controls the assessment of claims for asylum and also accommodation and financial support of asylum seekers.

11.17 Recommendation 3: Welsh Government should strengthen support services for refugees and asylum seekers. There are a range of support services such as JCP, Careers Wales and a future employability programme. It is vital that these services are sensitive to the needs of refugees and that refugees are signposted to the support that is most relevant to their needs.

Action to support this should include the Welsh Government:

- working with services to strengthen collaboration to, for example, enable information and expertise to be shared;
- working with the DWP to ensure its support ‘offer’ meets the needs of refugees. This should include ensuring the sensitive and intelligent use of claimant commitments; that full use is made of the skills and expertise of JCP staff, and supporting the development of expertise within JCP offices; and
- Ensuring that the needs of refugees are mainstreamed into the design and operations of the future employability programme and Communities for Work, and that where appropriate, refugees are treated as a priority group for services.

11.18 Recommendation 4: The Welsh Government should improve employer engagement with refugees. It is vital that employers understand refugees’ rights to work, help support and encourage the employment of refugees and their progression in work. Action to support this should include the Welsh Government:

- working with the DWP to strengthen the role of JCP employment advisors;
- encouraging public bodies to support and promote employment and work placement opportunities for refugees; and
- ensuring that actions under the Employability Plan to underline the responsibility of employers to up-skill their workers, support their staff and provide fair work, include a focus upon refugees.

11.19 Recommendation 5: Improving data, evidence and governance. The current evidence base is weak, too little is known about the employment experiences of refugees and responsibility for action rests across multiple departments. Action to address this should include the Welsh Government:

- Ensuring that evaluations of key programmes consider support to refugees and, where applicable, asylum seekers;
- working with the DWP to explore opportunities to use JCPs labour market system to provide better data on experience of refugees;
- considering commissioning further research to explore progression of refugees in employment
- providing regular updates to Refugee and Asylum Seeker Operations Board; and
- exploring feasibility of establishing an “experts by experience” steering group.

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Annex A: The survey sample achieved

- 11.20 As outlined in section 1, both refugees and asylum seekers were included. Because very few asylum seekers can work, and given the study objectives, we treat asylum seekers⁵⁹ and refugees⁶⁰ as separate groups and, where relevant, highlight differences in the characteristics and responses from the two groups. In a similar way, when discussing the survey findings, we also consider differences in the responses of men and women, people from different regions and those people who were working or had worked in the UK and those who had not.

Sample size

- 11.21 A total of 454 refugees and asylum seekers were interviewed. This number was made up of:
- 257 refugees, making up 57% of the overall sample; and
 - 197 asylum seekers, making up 43% of the overall sample.

Place

- 11.22 As table 34 illustrates, the majority of the sample (89%) lived in the traditional dispersal areas (Cardiff, Newport, Swansea and Wrexham). This reflects the distribution of refugees and asylum seekers across Wales, who are concentrated in these areas. The others in the sample (n=48) were drawn from rural areas and were almost all refugees resettled under the SVPRS.

⁵⁹ In this study the term “asylum seeker” includes refused asylum seekers.

⁶⁰ In this study the term “refugee” is used to describe those with British citizenship, who had been granted “indefinite leave to remain”, “discretionary leave to remain”, “humanitarian protection”, or any other type of leave to remain.

Table 33. Location of interviewees (refugees and asylum seekers)

Location	No.	%
Traditional dispersal area	406	89
<i>Swansea</i>	190	42
<i>Newport</i>	108	24
<i>Cardiff</i>	96	21
<i>Wrexham</i>	12	3
Rural	48	11
<i>Powys</i>	11	2
<i>Gwynedd</i>	8	2
<i>Carmarthen</i>	6	1
<i>Conwy</i>	4	1
<i>Neath</i>	4	1
<i>Ceredigion</i>	4	1
<i>Monmouthshire</i>	4	1
<i>Anglesey</i>	3	1
<i>Port Talbot</i>	2	0.4
<i>Vale of Glamorgan</i>	1	0.2
<i>Denbighshire</i>	1	0.2
Total sample = 454		

Age

- 11.23 57% (n=254) of the sample were under 35 and 43% (n=193) were 35 and over. This probably reflects the Welsh refugee population, as many asylum seeker are under the age of 35⁶¹. As table 34 shows, the proportion of those aged over and under 35 was similar for both refugees and asylum seekers.

⁶¹ Over time, the age profile changes as, for example, asylum seekers gain status and settle in the UK (growing older).

Table 34. Age of interviewees

Age	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Under 35	254	57	136	54	118	61
35 and over	193	43	118	46	75	39

Total sample n=447

Gender

11.24 As table 35 illustrates, the sample consisted of a 50-50 gender split with 224 males and 223 females.

Table 35. Gender of interviewees

Gender	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	224	50	144	57	80	41
Female	223	50	110	43	113	59

Total sample n=447

Family

11.25 As table 36 shows, almost three quarters (64%, n=284) of the overall sample had family in Wales or the UK. A higher proportion of refugees (72%, n=181) had family in the UK compared to asylum seekers (54%, n=103).

Table 36. Interviewees with family in the UK

Family in the UK?	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	284	64	181	72	103	54
No	158	36	72	28	86	46

Total sample n=442

Region of origin

- 11.26 As table 37 shows, almost half the sample (47%) were originally from the Middle East, 23% were from North Africa, 13% were from South Asia, and 8% from Sub-Saharan Africa and the remainder (9%) were from other regions such as Europe and South America. The refugee sample was more heavily weighted toward the Middle East (61%) and North Africa (28%) while the asylum seeker sample had a less varied distribution, with small and almost even numbers of participants from the Middle East and South Asia.

Table 37. Region of origin for refugees and asylum seekers

Region	All		Refugees		Asylum seekers	
	No.	%	No	%	No.	%
Middle East	213	47	158	61	55	28
North Africa	103	23	71	28	32	16
South Asia	59	13	8	3	51	26
Sub-Saharan Africa	37	8	6	2	31	16
Other	40	9	14	5	26	13

Total sample n=452

Status

- 11.27 As table 38 illustrates, roughly 60% of the sample had leave to remain, and around 40% were seeking asylum.

Table 38. Interviewees' status

Status	No.	%
Granted refugee status	198	44
Asylum seekers	176	39
British citizen	24	5
Refused	21	5
Granted indefinite leave to remain	13	3
Other	10	2
Granted discretionary leave to remain	9	2
Granted humanitarian protection	3	1

Total sample n=454

Time spent fleeing persecution and time spent in the UK

- 11.28 Previous research suggests that time spent fleeing persecution can be “lost” time, during which skills are lost. Conversely, time spent in the UK can have a more mixed impact. Periods of enforced idleness, when asylum seekers cannot work, can lead to the loss of skills, but it can also offer opportunities to gain new skills and assets, most notably English language skills, and develop social networks (Archer and Hollingworth, 2005; Basedow and Doyle 2016; Crawley, 2013; Johnson et al., 2004).
- 11.29 As table 39 illustrates, the time between leaving their country and arriving in the UK varied considerably. The largest group (44%) was made up of those for whom it had taken three or more years.

Table 39. Refugees: time taken from leaving home country to securing status

Time taken from leaving home country to securing status	No.	%
Less than 1 year	45	23
1-2 years	63	33
3 or more years	86	44
Total sample n=194		

- 11.30 As table 40 illustrates, there was almost an equal split of refugees who have been in the UK for less than 3 years (51%), and those who had been in the UK for 3 or more years (49%).

Table 40. Refugees: length of time in the UK

Length of time in the UK	No.	%
Less than 3 years	129	51
3 or more years	122	49
Total sample n= 251		

- 11.31 As table 41 illustrates, asylum seekers who had been in the UK for 3 or more years made up almost half of the asylum seeker sample (47%); 23% had been in the UK for less than a year; 17% between 1-2 years and 13% between 2-3 years.

Table 41. Asylum seekers: length of time in the UK

Length of time in the UK	No.	%
Less than 1 year	45	23
1-2 years	33	17
2-3 years	25	13
3 or more years	90	47
Total sample n=193		

Annex B: Interview Schedule

Note: record (code) non-responses, prefer not to say etc., as “NA”

Please circle the answer e.g. Yes No NA

If necessary, circle more than one answer (e.g. if employed and self-employed)

Remember to ask with show cards, “is there anything else from the list”?

Please staple additional sheets (e.g. timeline) to the interview notes at the end of the interview.

Questions for interviewer (you) to complete

Name of interviewer (your name):

Date of interview:

Place: (where was the interview conducted? e.g. WRC Cardiff)

Interviewee recruited via a service (e.g. EYST, Oasis) or personal contact

Interviewee's gender: (Male Female)

Are you recording the interview: Yes No

Introduction

Can you please confirm that you have read the plain language information sheet and privacy notice? Yes

Do you have any questions?

Can you please confirm that you are happy to be interviewed? Yes

Have you been interviewed before for this study? No

In this interview I'm going to ask a series of questions about you and your experiences. For some of the questions I am going to show you a card so you choose the answer that best describes how you feel. Would you like me to read the cards out to you, or would you prefer to read them yourself? Thank you.

I would like to start by asking you a few questions about yourself and your experiences

1. Can you please tell me where you live?

[e.g. Butetown in Cardiff, Aberystwyth etc. Note we just need an area, we do not need a full address]

2. Have you lived anywhere else in the UK? Yes / No / NA

[If no, please go to Q3]

[If yes] Why did you move?

3. Do you mind if I ask, how old are you?

4. Do you have any family in Wales, like for example, a wife, or husband and children? Yes / No / NA

[If yes, please briefly write down details e.g. "wife and two children"]

5. Where are you originally from?

[this is a question about people's country of origin, their "homeland"]

6. [Show Card 1] What is your status now? [please choose/select only one answer]

Seeking asylum

Granted refugee status

Refused asylum seeker

Other e.g.

Granted humanitarian protection⁶²

Granted discretionary leave to remain⁶³

Granted indefinite leave to remain

British citizen

Other (please specify)

Not sure/prefer not to say.

7. [Create Timeline]

- **When did you leave [their country of origin - use answer from Q 5 e.g. Syria, Eritrea etc.]**
- **When did you arrive in the UK? [Record month and year of arrival. An estimate/approximate time is fine]**
- **When were you granted [using answer from Q 6 e.g. refugee status]? [record month and year. An estimate/approximate time is fine, record this on the timeline]**

⁶² Granted where an individual is found not to be a refugee under the Refugee Convention but they are nevertheless at risk of serious harm on return to their country of origin. HP can only be granted if the individual does not fall to be recognised as a refugee but requires protection nonetheless.

⁶³ Granted where individuals do not meet the requirements of the Immigration Rules, but there are nonetheless exceptional and/or compassionate reasons for allowing them to remain here.

Timeline

When did you leave your country of origin?

When did you arrive in the UK?

Time →

8. [IF granted status/leave/citizenship or refused **[Show card 2]** How did **[using answer from question Q 6 e.g. refugee status]** make you feel? [please choose/select all that apply. If only one chosen, ask did you feel anything else?]

Anxious or worried

Depressed

Excited

Happy

Relieved

Confused

Supported

Unsupported

Isolated

Abandoned

Given a fresh start

Other (please specify)

**9. On a scale of nought to ten, where nought is very low and ten is very high,
Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?**

Why?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----

10. On a scale of nought to ten, where nought is “not at all” and 10 is “completely satisfied” overall, how optimistic do you feel about the next twelve months? [If asked to explain what “optimistic” means you can say how hopeful do you feel about the future? Do you for example feel good things or bad things will happen to you in the next twelve months?]

Why?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N/A
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----	-----

11. Would you say that you have at least one person you can rely on when you have problems?

Yes / More or less / No / Don't know / Prefer not to say?

Now I would like to ask you about your experiences of education and work

12. [Show card 3] What was your highest level of education before you travelled to the UK?

show card, choose/select all that apply.

Check if they completed (e.g. school/college/university) or not.

Primary (basic school education)

e.g. primary/basic school certificate.

Secondary (advanced / high school education)

e.g. secondary school lower certificate

secondary school higher certificate (e.g. A levels).

Further (college based education, such as technical college or institute)

e.g. technical or college diploma/certificate.'

Higher (university level education)

e.g. Associate degree

Bachelor's Degree (e.g. BA, Bsc)

Masters (e.g. MA/Msc)

PhD

Other/ not sure which level (please specify/describe)

13. Had you worked in [their country of origin, e.g. Syria, Eritrea etc.]?

Yes / No / NA

<p>[If YES to Q 13 (i.e. had worked in... e.g. Syria, Eritrea etc.)]</p> 	<p>[If No (i.e. had not worked in .e.g. Syria, Eritrea etc.) OR prefer not to say to Q 13]</p> 
<p>14a. What type of work did you do? For example, what were you responsible for doing? [record all main types of work]</p>	<p>14b. Were you looking for work [in your country of origin, e.g. Syria, Eritrea etc.] OR had you thought about what you would like to do, when, for example you finished your education?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p> <p>[If yes], what type of work were you looking for or interested in/thinking about?]</p> <p>[If No, go to page 10)</p>
<p>15a. Are you looking for this type of work in Wales/UK or would you like to do this type of work in Wales/UK?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p>	<p>And are you still looking for or interested in this type of work in Wales/UK?</p> <p>. Yes / No / NA</p>

<p>16a. Do you think you have lost skills because you have not been using them? For example, because you have not been able to continue working as a..... [use answer from Q. 14a e.g. doctor, electrician etc.]</p> <p>Yes Not sure No NA</p>	
<p>17a. Would you still be confident doing this type of work now?</p> <p>Yes Not sure No NA</p>	
<p>18a. Would you be willing to do a different type of work in the UK?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p>	<p>16b. Would you be willing to do a different type of work in the UK?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p>

Is there anything else that you think is important or that you would like to tell me about your education and work in..... [their home country e.g. Syria, Eritrea etc.]?

Now I would like to ask you some questions about working in Wales

**20. Are you currently in paid work in Wales? Yes / No / NA
[i.e. not volunteering]**

If , please go to section A, page 11

If no, please go to question 21



21. Have you done paid work in Wales in the past? Yes / No / NA

If yes, please go to section B, page 18

If no or NA, please go to section C, page 25

Section A. Questions for people who are currently employed (in paid work) in Wales (including self-employment)

22. Are you employed or self-employed (working for yourself/ running your own business)?

23. Roughly how long did it take you to find work or set up your business?

[Please **add this to the timeline** – e.g. when they started looking for work and when they found work]

24. What is your current job, work or business? For example, what were you responsible for doing? [only a brief description required]

Have you had any other jobs, work or businesses in Wales?

25. [Show card 4] Why do you work as [using answer from question 24 e.g. a cleaner, interpreter, advisor etc.]? [Show card, choose/select all that apply; if only one reason given check if any others apply]

I like this type of work, including

- I used to do this work
- interested in/enjoy this type of work
- I have the skills for this work
- the hours (e.g. times I start and finish, days I work) suit me

I wanted or needed to work, including:

- I needed to or wanted to earn money
- I didn't want to claim benefits
- I wanted to make friends

I did not have any or much choice

- only work I could do/find
- worried I would lose my benefits if I did not work

Other (please specify)

26. [Show card 5] **How did you look for work OR find out how to set up your own business?** [Show card, select all that apply; if only one reason given check if any others apply]

Looked for jobs myself, including:

- searching on the internet
- registering with a job agency
- going to a job club

I asked for help from people I know including:

- talking to family and friends
- talking to people they know/in their community
- using social media

I was helped by an organisation, including:

- the Job Centre
- an employment support project/organisation (e.g. SOVA's ACE project or Communities for Work);
- a refugee support organisation or service (e.g. WRC, DPIA, EYST or Trinity);

Other (please specify).

27. [If identified that family and friends or a support service helped them]

How did they help you? Show card 6, select all that apply:

They provided information or advice about job opportunities, including:

- telling me about jobs or opportunities
- telling me where to look for jobs

They helped me apply for jobs, including:

- help or advice applying (e.g. improving my CV)
- help with application form/process, interview preparation

They encouraged or supported me, including:

- increasing my confidence
- helping me keep going and not give up

They helped me develop my skills, including:

- training courses
- work placements/experience

They gave me help or advice about my benefits

Something else (please explain)

If employed 	If self-employed 
<p>26a. Did any of the following barriers make it difficult for you to find work or to keep working? [Show card 7, select all that apply:]</p> <p>My circumstances, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- childcare or caring responsibilities- difficulties with transport/travel to work;- my physical or mental health- not feeling ready to start looking for/working;- my age	<p>26b. Did any of the following barriers make it difficult for you to start your own business [Show card 8, select all that apply:]</p> <p>My circumstances, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- childcare or caring responsibilities- my physical or mental health- not feeling ready to start looking for/working;

<p>My skills, qualifications or experience such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no/little experience of work in the UK - no/low qualifications - my qualifications are not recognised - I'm over-qualified - my language skills - don't have good IT (computer) skills - not understanding work or how people work and behave in the UK <p>The attitudes or behaviour of others, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the attitudes of employers such as discrimination 7.1. on the basis of my race, ethnicity or status (e.g. as a refugee) - discrimination for another reason (e.g. because I am a man or woman or because of my age) <p>Lack of support or advice including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of support or information, including not knowing how to find work/apply for jobs; <p>No or few opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no work available nearby, including feeling that there is no work available given my qualifications and/or experience; 	<p>My skills, qualifications or experience such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no/little experience of work in the UK - my language skills - not having the skills needed to start or run a business - not confident running or setting up a business - not knowing how to start or run a business - knowing enough about potential suppliers to my business - not knowing enough about potential customers for my business <p>The attitudes or behaviour of others, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the attitudes of customers or suppliers such as discrimination on the basis of my race, ethnicity or status (e.g. as a refugee). <p>3. Lack of support or advice on how to start or run a business including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of money / finance - difficulties opening or using a bank account in Wales <p>No or few opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I would have preferred to find a job too much competition - earnings too low or believe I would be better off on benefits;
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - believe I would be better off on benefits; - Other (please specify) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other (please specify)
<p>27. Have you considered setting up your own business?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p>	
<p>28. [Show card 9] What helped you get your job / start your own business?</p> <p>[Show card, select all that apply]:</p> <p>Myself, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I really wanted to or needed to work - I was confident that I could find a job - I have the skills for this job <p>Help from people I know, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I knew the employer - help or advice from people in my community - help or advice from friends or family <p>Help from organisations or services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Job Centre - employment projects or support services - refugee support organisations <p>Something else (please explain)</p>	
<p>29. [Show card 10] Do you think support for people like yourself looking for work in Wales could be improved by [show card, select all that apply]</p> <p>more English language/ESOL courses/lessons/support</p> <p>more help to develop skills or gain experience including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training - volunteering 	

- work placements

more help or advice applying for work including:

- improving my CV, help with application form/process interview preparation
- more information or advice about job opportunities
- more help or advice about benefits
- more personal support (e.g. encouragement and/or support to increase my confidence)
- more specialist support to help professionals (such as scientists, engineers, teachers or doctors) qualify and work in the UK

more help with day to day life including:

help with housing

help or advice about living in Wales

- other (please specify)

30. [show card 11] Would you be willing to say how much you are paid/earn?

[Show Card, select one]

Less than £100 a week / less than £215 a month / less than £5,200 a year

£100 to £200 a week / 215 to £870 a month / £5,200 to £10,400 a year

; £200 to £399 a week / £870 to £1,729 a month / £10,400 to £20,799 a year

£400 to £599 a week / £1,730 to £2,599 a month / £20,800 to £31,099 a year

£600 to £799 a week / £2,600 to £3,459 a month / £31,100 to £41,499 a year

£800 or more a week / £3,460 or more a month / £41,500 or more a year

Don't know; rather not say

31. Are you paid / do you earn enough to support yourself and your family?

Yes / No / NA

32. Did you feel under pressure to take a job you did not want, so you could earn money to support yourself and family, rather than waiting until you could find the job you wanted?

Yes / No / NA

33. How many hours a week (including paid and unpaid overtime) do you usually work?

<p>34. Is the work regular? For example, do you usually work the same number of hours each week?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p>										
<p>35. Do you have a contract?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p> <p>[if yes] Is the work (or business) permanent, for example, will it end after a set period of time, such as 6 month or a year?</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p>										
<p>36. Do you expect to be able to progress in this work (or business)? For example, to take on more responsibilities or earn more money.</p> <p>Yes / No / NA</p>										
<p>37. On a scale of nought to 10, where nought is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”, overall, how satisfied are you with your job?</p>										
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	NA

Is there anything else you would like to tell about your experiences of working in Wales or looking for work in Wales or starting and running a business in Wales??

Please go to section E, Page 32 to continue the interview

Section B. Questions for people who are not currently employed (in paid work) in Wales (including self-employment) but who have worked in Wales in the past

22. **What type of work did you do?** For example, what were you responsible for doing? [only a brief description required] **[Add dates to timeline]**

23. **Were you employed or self-employed (working for yourself)?**

24. **Roughly how long did it take you to find work or set up your business?**
[Add dates to timeline]

25. **[Show card 4] Why did you work as [using answer from question 22 e.g. nurse, administrator, manager etc.]?** [Show card, select all that apply; if only one reason given, check if any others apply]

I liked this type of work, including:

- I used to do this work
- interested in/enjoy this type of work
- I have the skills for this work
- the hours (e.g. times I start and finish, days I work) suit me

I wanted or needed to work, including:

- I needed to or wanted to earn money
- I didn't want to claim benefits
- I wanted to make friends

I did not have any or much choice

- only work I could do/find
- worried I would lose my benefits if I did not work

Other (please specify)

26. [Show card 5] **How did you look for work OR find out how to set up your own business?** [Show card, select all that apply; if only one reason given check if any others apply]

Looked for jobs myself, including:

- searching on the internet
- registering with a job agency
- going to a job club

I asked for help from people I know including:

- talking to family and friends
- talking to people they know/in their community
- using social media

I was helped by an organisation, including:

- the Job Centre
- an employment support project/organisation (e.g. SOVA's ACE project or Communities for Work);
- a refugee support organisation or service (e.g. WRC, DPIA, EYST or Trinity);

Other (please specify).

27. [If interviewee identified that family and friends or support service helped them, show card 6] **How did they help you?** Show card, select all that apply:

They provided information or advice about job opportunities, including:

- telling me about jobs or opportunities
- telling me where to look for jobs

They helped me apply for jobs, including:

- help or advice applying (e.g. improving my CV)
- help with application form/process interview preparation

They encouraged or supported me, including:

- increasing my confidence
- helping me keep going and not give up

They helped me develop my skills, including:

- training courses
- work placements/experience

They gave me help or advice about my benefits

Something else (please explain]

If was employed 	If was self-employed 
<p>26a. Did any of the following barriers make it difficult for you to find work or to keep working? [Show card 7, select all that apply:</p> <p>My circumstances, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - childcare or caring responsibilities - difficulties with transport/travel to work; - my physical or mental health - not feeling ready to start looking for/working; - my age <p>My skills, qualifications or experience such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no/little experience of work in the UK - no/low qualifications, - My qualifications are not recognised - I'm over-qualified - my language skills 	<p>26b. Did any of the following barriers make it difficult for you to start your own business [Show card 8, select all that apply:</p> <p>My circumstances, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - childcare or caring responsibilities - my physical or mental health - not feeling ready to start looking for/working; - my age <p>My skills, qualifications or experience such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no/little experience of work in the UK - my language skills - not having the skills needed to start or run a business - not confident running or setting up a business

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - don't have good IT (computer) skills - not understanding work or how people work and behave in the UK <p>The attitudes or behaviour of others, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the attitudes of employers such as discrimination <p>7.4. on the basis of my race, ethnicity or status (e.g. as a refugee);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discrimination for another reason (e.g. because I am a man or woman or because of my age) <p>- Lack of support or advice including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of support or information, including not knowing how to find work/apply for jobs <p>No or few opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no work available nearby, including feeling that there is no work available given my qualifications and/or experience; - believe I would be better off on benefits <p>- other (please specify)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prefer not say / NA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not knowing how to start or run a business - not knowing enough about potential suppliers to my business - not knowing enough about potential customers for my business <p>The attitudes or behaviour of others, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the attitudes of customers or suppliers such as discrimination on the basis of my race, ethnicity or status (e.g. as a refugee). <p>6. Lack of support or advice on how to start or run a business including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of money / finance - difficulties opening or using a bank account in Wales - <p>No or few opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I would have preferred to find a job - too much competition - earnings too low or believe I would be better off on benefits - other (please specify)
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27. [Show card 9] What helped you get your job / start our own business?

[Show card, select all that apply:]

Myself, including:

- I really wanted to or needed to work
- I was confident that I could find a job
- I have the skills for this job

Help from people I know, including:

- I knew the employer
- help or advice from people in my community
- help or advice from friends or family

Help from organisations or services including:

- the Job Centre
- employment projects or support services
- refugee support organisations

Something else (please explain)

28. [show card 12] Why did you stop working? [Show card, select all that apply:]

- pay was too low
- journey/travel to work was difficult/costly/complicated
- not happy/comfortable with work
- job did not match my skills or experience
- wanted a different/better job
- my circumstances changed (e.g. caring responsibilities)
- moved to a new/different area)
- lost job / job ended (e.g. made redundant; company closed)
- other (please specify)

29. [Show card 10] Do you think support to help people like you looking for work in Wales could be improved by [show card, select all that apply]

more English language/ESOL courses/lessons/support

more help to develop skills or gain experience including:

- training
- volunteering
- work placements

more help or advice applying for work including:

- improving my CV, help with application form/process interview preparation
- more information or advice about job opportunities
- more help or advice about benefits
- more personal support (e.g. encouragement and/or support to increase my confidence)
- more specialist support to help professionals (such as scientists, engineers, teachers or doctors) qualify and work in the UK

more help with day to day life including:

help with housing

help or advice about living in Wales

-Another reason (please specify)

30. [Show card 11] Would you be willing to say how much you are paid/earn?

[Show Card, select one]

Less than £100 a week / less than £215 a month / less than £5,200 a year

£100 to £200 a week / 215 to £870 a month / £5,200 to £10,400 a year;

£200 to £399 a week / £870 to £1,729 a month / £10,400 to £20,799 a year

£400 to £599 a week / £1,730 to £2,599 a month / £20,800 to £31,099 a year

£600 to £799 a week / £2,600 to £3,459 a month / £31,100 to £41,499 a year

£800 or more a week / £3,460 or more a month / £41,500 or more a year

Don't know; rather not say

31. Were you paid / did you earn enough to support yourself and your family?

Yes / No / NA

32. On a scale of nought to 10, where nought is “not at all” and 10 is “completely”, overall, how satisfied were you with your job or business?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Is there anything else you would like to tell about your experiences of working in Wales or looking for work in Wales or starting and running a business in Wales?

Please go to section E, Page 32 to continue the interview

Section C. Questions for people who are not currently working and have not worked in Wales (including e.g. asylum seekers)

21. Would you like to work in Wales in the future? Yes / No / NA

[If yes, go to Q 22]

[If no or NA go to section D, page 30]

23. What type of work would you like to do in Wales OR

What type of business would you like to start?

**24. [Show card 4] Why would you like to work as [using answer from question 23 e.g. carpenter, administrator, translator etc.]? OR
Why would you like to start this type of business?**

[Show card, select all that apply)

I like this type of work, including:

- I used to do this work
- interested in/enjoy this type of work
- I have the skills for this work
- the hours (e.g. times I start and finish, days I work) suit me

I want or need to work, including:

- I need to or want to earn money
- I don't want to claim benefits
- I want to make friends (at work)

I don't feel I have any or much choice

- only work I think I could do/find
- worried I would lose my benefits if I did not work

25. Would you be willing to do a different type of work in the UK?

Yes / No / NA

**26. [Show card 5] How are you looking for work OR
How do you plan to look for work?**

[Show card, select all that apply)

Looking for jobs myself, including:

- searching on the internet
- registering with a job agency
- going to a job club

Asking for help from people I know including:

- talking to family and friends
- talking to people they know/in their community
- using social media

Help from an organisation, including:

- the Job Centre
- an employment support project/organisation (e.g. SOVA's ACE project or Communities for Work);
- a refugee support organisation or service (e.g. WRC, DPIA, EYST or Trinity);

Other (please specify).

27. [If response to Q 26 identified that people they know, Job Centre or a support service helped them show card 6] How did they help you? [Show card, select all that apply]:

They provided information or advice about job opportunities, including:

- telling me about jobs or opportunities
- telling me where to look for jobs

They helped me apply for jobs, including:

- help or advice applying (e.g. improving my CV
- help with application form/process interview preparation

They encouraged or supported me, including:

- increasing my confidence
- helping me keep going and not give up

They helped me develop my skills, including:

- training courses
- work placements/experience

They gave me help or advice about my benefits

Something else (please explain)

26a. Do you think that any of the following barriers will make it difficult for you to find work or to keep working? [show card 7, select all that apply:

My circumstances, such as:

- childcare or caring responsibilities
- difficulties with transport/travel to work
- my physical or mental health
- not feeling ready to start looking for/working
- my age

My skills, qualifications or experience such as:

- no/little experience of work in the UK
- no/low qualifications
- my qualifications are not recognised
- I'm over-qualified
- my language skills
- don't have good IT (computer) skills
- not understanding work or how people work and behave in the UK

The attitudes or behaviour of others, including:

- the attitudes of employers such as discrimination
- 7.7. on the basis of my race, ethnicity or status (e.g. as a refugee);
- discrimination for another reason (e.g. because I am a man or woman or because of my age)
- **Lack of support or advice** including: lack of support or information, including not knowing how to find work/apply for jobs

No or few opportunities including:

- no work available nearby, including feeling that there is no work available given my qualifications and/or experience
- believe I would be better off on benefits

- **other** (please specify)

prefer not say / NA

28. [Show card 10] Do you think support for people like yourself looking for work in Wales could be improved by [show card]

more English language/ESOL courses/lessons/support

more help to develop skills or gain experience including:

- training
- volunteering
- work placements

more help or advice applying for work including:

- improving my CV, help with application form/process interview preparation
- more information or advice about job opportunities
- more help or advice about benefits
- more personal support (e.g. encouragement and/or support to increase my confidence)
- more specialist support to help professionals (such as scientists, engineers, teachers or doctors) qualify and work in the UK

more help with day to day life including:

help with housing

help or advice about living in Wales

- **other** (please specify)

29. How confident are you that you will find work in the next twelve months?

- confident;
- not confident;
- not sure/don't know / NA

30. Have you considered setting up your own business?

Yes / No / NA

Is there anything else you would like to add about working in Wales or setting up your own business in Wales?

Please go to section E, page 32 to continue the interview

Section D. Questions for people who are not currently working and have not worked in Wales and who do not want to work in Wales

21. [show card 7] Can you please tell me a little more about why you don't want to work in Wales or feel unable to work in Wales? [select all that apply]

I don't have the legal right to work

My circumstances, such as:

- childcare or caring responsibilities
- my physical or mental health
- not feeling ready to start looking for/working
- my age

My skills, qualifications or experience such as:

- no/little experience of work in the UK
- no/low qualifications,
- my qualifications are not recognised
- I'm over-qualified
- my language skills
- don't have good IT (computer) skills
- not understanding work or how people work and behave in the UK

The attitudes or behaviour of others, including:

- the attitudes of employers such as discrimination
- 7.8. on the basis of my race, ethnicity or status (e.g. as a refugee)
- discrimination for another reason (e.g. because I am a man or woman or because of my age)

Lack of support or advice including:

- lack of support or information, including not knowing how to find work/apply for jobs

No or few opportunities including:

- no work available nearby, including feeling that there is no work available given my qualifications and/or experience

- believe I would be better off on benefits

Another reason

22. [Show card 10] Do you think any of the following suggestions would encourage or help people like you to look for work?

more **English language/ESOL courses/lessons/support**

more **help to develop skills or gain experience** including:

- training
- volunteering
- work placements

more **help or advice applying for work** including:

- improving my CV, help with application form/process interview preparation
- more information or advice about job opportunities
- more help or advice about benefits
- more personal support (e.g. encouragement and/or support to increase my confidence)
- more specialist support to help professionals (such as scientists, engineers, teachers or doctors) qualify and work in the UK

more **help with day to day life** including:

help with housing

help or advice about living in Wales

-Another reason (please specify)

Questions for All

E. Now I would like to ask you a few questions about education and training in Wales and your English language skills

38. **Have you undertaken any volunteering or work experience? If so what did this involve? [please add details to the timeline]**

39. **[Show card 13] Have you undertaken any education or training in Wales or the UK? [Show card, select all that apply: [please add details to the timeline and record if they have completed it or not]**

- ESOL or English language classes
- school (e.g. GCSEs or A-levels)
- college course such as apprenticeship/traineeship or A-level courses
- university course degree or access course
- community course
- other (please specify)

40a. If YES to Q39



why? [show card 14, select all that apply]

- to help me find work
- to help me earn more money
- to help me in day to day life
- to help me integrate
- I enjoy or want to learn
- something to do
- other (please specify)

40b. If NO to Q39, why?



[show card 15, select all that apply]

Not interested in it/not needed/not worthwhile including:

- not interested / don't like/don't enjoy it
- no need / not useful / not helpful to me
- would take too long
- expect to return to my home country

My circumstances, such as:

- childcare or caring responsibilities
- my physical or mental health
- not feeling ready to start learning
- looking for / working (so no time)

No suitable courses/opportunities,
including:

- no suitable education or training courses locally
- the cost of education or training

My skills or confidence, including:

- not able to (e.g. can't meet entry requirements)
- don't feel confident enough

Another reason (please explain)

40. Are you planning to do any more education or training in Wales or the UK

in the future? [Show card 13], select all that apply:

- ESOL or English language classes
- school (e.g. GCSEs or A-levels)
- college course such as apprenticeship/traineeship or A-level courses;
- university course degree or access course
- community course
- other (please specify)

<p>41a. If YES to Q40</p>  <p>why? [show card 14, select all that apply]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to help me find work - to help me earn more money - to help me in day to day life - to help me integrate - I enjoy or want to learn - something to do - other (please specify) 	<p>41b. If NO to Q40, why?</p>  <p>[show card 15, select all that apply]</p> <p>Not interested in it/not needed/not worthwhile including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not interested / don't like/don't enjoy it - no need / not useful / not helpful to me - would take too long - expect to return to my home country <p>My circumstances, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - childcare or caring responsibilities - my physical or mental health - not feeling ready to start learning - looking for / working (so no time) <p>No suitable courses/opportunities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no suitable education or training courses locally - the cost of education or training <p>My skills or confidence, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not able to (e.g. can't meet entry requirements) - don't feel confident enough - Another reason (please explain)
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41. [show card 16] Which of these best describes your ability in spoken English? [Show card, select one]

I am fluent in English	I can speak a fair amount of English	I can only speak a little English	I can say just a few words	I can't speak English	N/A
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42. [Show card 16] Which of these best describes your ability in written English? [Show card, select one]

I am fluent writing in English	I can write a fair amount of English	I can only write a little English	I can write just a few words	I can't write in English	N/A
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43. [Show card 16] Which of these best describes your ability in reading English? [Show card, select one]

I am fluent reading in English	I can read a fair amount of English	I can only read a little English	I can read just a few words	I can't read in English	N/A
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44. Do you think English language or ESOL provision is good enough?

Yes No Not sure / NA

Why?

I just have a few final questions now

45. Is there anything we have not talked about that you think is important about looking for work and working in Wales?

46. Do you have any questions you wanted to ask me?

47. Do you know of any other refugees or asylum seekers who might be interested in taking part in this study? [if yes, find out to contact them/ask them to pass on our contact details]

Thank you very much for your time

Have they been offered a supermarket voucher? Yes