A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a red flower in her hair and a black top with white floral patterns, is looking at a wall. The wall is covered with colorful star-shaped notes in shades of green, pink, yellow, and red. Some of the notes have handwritten text, including "Very good!", "It has been a great day for me & my family. Thanks to Scottish Refugee Council.", and "bargain". There are also some blue signs with text like "High street prices, cut to", "12 for 12 months", "counts", "rg.u", "nus", "ext", and "DISCOU".

# THEY GIVE ME COURAGE

## EVALUATION REPORT OF SCOTTISH REFUGEE COUNCIL'S FAMILY KEYWORK SERVICE

Helen Baillot  
Jackie Tolland  
Esther Muchena

March 2016



# Contents

INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	03
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	05
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	10
<b>1. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>13</b>
1.1 Ongoing service user involvement.....	14
1.2 Formal evaluation .....	14
1.3 Limitations of evaluation methodology.....	17
<b>2. CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1 Children's rights and welfare.....	20
2.2 Life in the UK asylum process.....	21
2.3 Frameworks for understanding.....	24
<b>3. SERVICE OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>27</b>
3.1 Funding.....	28
3.2 Staffing .....	29
3.3 Service model .....	31
3.4 Moving on from advice.....	32
<b>4. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW .....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.1 Gender .....	35
4.2 Children .....	36
4.3 Nationality .....	37
4.4 Complex needs .....	38
4.5 Children's needs .....	39
4.6 Summary .....	39
<b>5. PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE DELIVERY.....</b>	<b>41</b>
5.1 Keywork.....	42
5.2 A holistic, family centred approach .....	43
5.3 Early intervention.....	45
5.4 More responsive and flexible services .....	47
5.5 Findings .....	51
<b>6. RIGHTS AND OPTIONS.....</b>	<b>53</b>
6.1 Actively involved in assessment, planning & review .....	54
6.2 Children live in safe, secure & suitable home environment.....	58
6.3 More aware of the benefits to which they're entitled .....	60
6.4 Findings .....	62
<b>7. ACCESS TO SERVICES.....</b>	<b>64</b>
7.1 Guided in their learning.....	66
7.2 Access health care/additional support when needed.....	69
7.3 Findings .....	71
<b>8. FAMILY LIFE .....</b>	<b>73</b>
8.1 Improved parenting skills.....	74
8.2 Actively involved within family, social network, school & community.....	75
8.3 Children are safe at home.....	80
8.4 Findings .....	82
<b>9. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>88</b>

# Introduction & Acknowledgements

Scottish Refugee Council has been providing advice, information and advocacy services to asylum seekers and refugees for thirty years. Whilst the nature and format of these services has evolved in that period, the organisation's central ethos, of working with refugees to build a better future in Scotland, has remained largely unchanged.

At the service frontline, as well as at policy level, there has been increasing recognition that children and their families have specific needs that must be taken into account. While the development of Scottish Guardianship Service, in partnership with Aberlour Childcare Trust, has confirmed that building services specific to the needs of young people can positively impact upon their experiences of the asylum process (Crawley & Kohli, 2013); there is growing recognition that another group of children, those who arrive with their families, are largely invisible within current UK asylum processes, and that services know little about their needs and experiences.

In an attempt to overcome these gaps in knowledge, since December 2013, Scottish Refugee Council's Family Keywork Service has been providing advice, advocacy and support to families seeking asylum in Scotland. The service is currently unique within Scotland and the UK<sup>1</sup>. Piloting this service has provided an opportunity to test services around asylum seeking families in line with Scotland's National Performance Framework and the nationwide approach to children's wellbeing, Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

In this report, we explore the impact that the evolving service model has had on families seeking asylum and the services who work with them. Our hope is that the data collected will contribute towards a better understanding of the needs of asylum seeking families in Scotland and will inform the development of future services that seek to meet those needs.

The evaluation has been conducted in partnership with Parent Network Scotland, whose staff have provided invaluable insights into the parenting and family life elements of the project's work. Parent Network Scotland was established in Scotland 25 years ago, and works through a network of trained parent facilitators to run courses tailored to meet the needs of today's parents. Since 2012 Parent Network Scotland has received Strategic Partner Funding from the Scottish Government, enabling the organisation to expand its range of programmes and to increase the number of communities within which they deliver these services. More details of Parent Network Scotland's parenting programmes can be found at appendix i.

Scottish Refugee Council staff, volunteers and students have also contributed greatly to the evaluation. Particular mention is due to Joe Brady, Head of Protection and Integration who oversaw the initial stages of the evaluation design; Esther Muchena, who as Development and Service Manager has managed the evaluation process; Grant McPhail who conducted the individual interviews referenced in the report and gave generously of his time to co-facilitate service beneficiary focus groups; and Gerard Platt who contributed to the case file review process. Above all, we are grateful to the women, men and children who were willing to share their experiences of using the service with the evaluation team.

<sup>1</sup> The only previous project of this nature was run as a pilot by Refugee Action from 2010 -12, and has not thus far been replicated elsewhere in the UK.



# Executive Summary

Family Keywork Service is a Public Social Partnership (PSP) project, delivered with Glasgow City Council, NHS and until March 2015, alongside Money Matters Govan. The service provides advice, advocacy and social integration support to families seeking asylum in Scotland who have at least one child in their household aged 8 or under; as well as to pregnant women.

This report shares data from case files held on Scottish Refugee Council's Joint Client Database system (JCDB) as well as from various service user involvement and evaluation activities including focus groups and interviews.

The service model has enabled work with asylum seeking families to be mapped to the Scottish Government's Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) framework. Thus our report focuses primarily on the impact of the service as measured with reference to the SHANARRI outcome signifiers, as outlined opposite:

REPORT CHAPTER	SHANARRI Wellbeing Indicators	SHANARRI Outcome Signifier
<b>CHAPTER SIX Rights and Options</b>	Respected, Included	Children are actively involved in assessment, planning and review processes affecting them.
	Safe, Included	Children live in well-maintained, safe and secure home environment suitable for their size and needs.
	Included	Families are more aware of the benefits to which they are entitled.
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN Access to Services</b>	Achieving, Active	Families and children are supported and guided in their learning.
	Healthy	The child, young person & family access health care when needed.
	Healthy	The child, young person & family receive additional support and care when they need it.
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT Family Life</b>	Safe, Respected	Children feel safe at home.
	Nurtured, Healthy, Safe, Included	Improvement in parenting skills.
	Nurtured, Healthy, Safe, Responsible	Children are actively involved within his or her family, social network, school and community.
<b>CHAPTER NINE</b>	Healthy, Active	Parents have increased resilience.

Here we provide an overview of our key findings. A more detailed summary of these findings can be found at the end of each chapter.

### SERVICE USER OVERVIEW

From December 2013 until December 2015, 155 families benefited from the Family Keywork Service. This represents 213 adults and 258 children, of whom 227 were aged 8 and under.

63% of families were single parent families, of whom 96% were headed by women. Of the two parent families, 62% were headed by men.

Largest nationality groups were: Chinese (30%); Nigerian (19%); Pakistani (11%); Libyan (6%) and Gambian (5%).

74 households (48%) presented with one or more complex needs above and beyond their uncertain immigration status, of which 19 households (12% of total) were assessed as having a combination of complex needs at their first contact with the service.

The service model developed by Family Keywork Service has largely met the expectations outlined in the service's original logic model and provides a template for good practice when working with asylum-seeking families.

### SERVICE MODEL

**Keyword:** Families have benefited from a named keyworker, with whom they have been able to build a relationship of trust. This has increased families' confidence and facilitated disclosure of past and current concerns. The keywork relationship has been central to the success of the other elements of the service model outlined below.

**Holistic & family-centred:** Keyworkers have used a holistic model of assessment to ensure that the needs and concerns of all family members are taken into account. Families have been involved in developing their own support plans and feel empowered by this. External stakeholders recognise and appreciate the holistic nature of the keywork service.

**Early intervention:** Changes to the external environment have been a barrier to engaging as early as possible with families. Nonetheless, the service model has enabled preventative work with families around health and wellbeing, child protection and social isolation.

**Influencing services:** Family Keywork Service is respected by partners and has built productive working relationships with key service providers. As a result, some services have amended their working practices to ensure that asylum-seeking families are not excluded from accessing them.

Participation in the One Glasgow framework has enabled Family Keywork Service to engage with services working with families across the city.

**Capacity:** Volunteers and social work placement students have added **806 days of additional capacity** to the work of the core team and have enabled key activities such as days out, service user involvement and outreach.

The location of the service within a specialist refugee agency has enabled families to benefit from advice and support which encompasses the specific needs and experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. This has been particularly important in work around families' rights and options, which although crucial to integration, are by definition limited for families who have not yet been granted some form of leave to remain.

### RIGHTS & OPTIONS

**Asylum:** Family Keywork Service has developed a range of key interventions designed around the asylum process. In practice, the most significant of these has been the **pre-substantive briefing**. This briefing has successfully increased families' preparedness for their substantive interview without duplicating work done elsewhere.

**Accommodation: 71% of case files reviewed recorded incidents where families complained of unsuitable asylum accommodation.** Due to limited access to advocacy services in the city, Family Keywork Service has taken on an increasing role in reporting accommodation problems.

Family Keywork Service has engaged with the Home Office and accommodation providers at strategic and operational levels to raise and resolve these issues.

**Financial support:** Family Keywork Service has played a key role facilitating access to support for families with complex immigration histories, many of whom are headed by women who have fled situations of gender-related abuse.

For families who are in receipt of asylum support, Family Keywork Service has worked closely with other services to alleviate the impact of living in poverty upon children and their parents.

From its inception, Family Keywork Service has sought to link families to mainstream services, and to ensure that universal rights, such as children's rights to an education, are realised in the Scottish context.

### ACCESS TO SERVICES

**Education:** Parents and children place a high value on educational opportunities and perceive that these have a very positive impact on their children's wellbeing.

Family Keywork Service has ensured that families are able to find and access suitable pre-school and school provision for their children; and has enabled children to benefit from free school clothing and meals. This last measure is crucial for families who have very limited income and might otherwise be unable to equip their child for school.

Family Keywork Service has assisted parents to access their own learning opportunities, to the benefit of the whole family.

**Health:** There are few barriers to primary care health services for families living in Glasgow.

Family Keywork Service has successfully developed a tailored package of support for pregnant women which links in with other voluntary and statutory services in the city.

Adult family members consistently evoke low-level or subclinical mental health difficulties, most often linked to uncertainty about their asylum status. Engagement with Family Keywork Service has a positive impact on parents' mental wellbeing.

In the realm of family life, effective partnership working has been particularly critical to the success of the project. Family Keywork Service have developed innovative partnerships with statutory services and specialist voluntary sector providers such as Parent Network Scotland, Woodcraft Folk and Mellow Parenting. There is evidence of mutual learning and development occurring in all organisations as a result.

### FAMILY LIFE

**Improved parenting skills:** Practical assistance from Family Keywork Service with housing and financial problems has enabled parents to focus on positive parenting skills.

Family Keywork Service has developed working relationships with a range of agencies to harness specialist parenting skills knowledge. Parents who have attended parenting classes as a result evaluate these highly.

**Involved in family, school and community:** Outreach working has enabled children to access community activities and facilities. This has reduced social isolation, positively impacted upon children's development and contributes to the building of social bridges within communities.

Days out organised by the service have expanded families' access to city-wide public spaces; and have enabled parents and children to build social bonds with other families seeking asylum. Service beneficiaries told us that this has had a positive impact on their lives.

**Child protection:** Where child protection concerns have been identified, keyworkers have played an important role in sharing concerns; supporting families through child protection processes; and acting as culturally competent brokers to shape appropriate responses which prioritise child safety.

An over-arching finding of the evaluation was the positive impact that Family Keywork Service has had on families' feelings of confidence and courage when faced with the complexities and stresses of the asylum process. This supports the view that the keywork service has successfully promoted resilience and independent agency amongst service beneficiaries.

### RESILIENCE

During evaluation activities, families regularly told us that they felt significantly more confident in dealing with problems due to the assistance they had received from Family Keywork Service.

Improved confidence is linked to concepts of resilience, self-agency and hope, all of which are central to the various frameworks of good practice which have inspired the Family Keywork Service Model.

## KEY AREAS OF CONCERN

Our evaluation has also allowed for key concerns facing asylum-seeking families to be identified. These are summarised below, with more detail provided at the relevant pages within the full report.

- **Delays to asylum decision-making (see pages 51-55):** despite Home Office continuing to maintain a target of six months from asylum claim to final decision, our data support the evidence from the Home Office's own statistics that there are significant delays to initial asylum decision-making processes. For the families for whom full data was available (n=61), **the average time from claiming asylum to substantive interview was 191 days.**

This leaves families and children in situations of uncertainty which have been demonstrated to have a negative impact upon parental mental health and upon children's wellbeing.

- **Quality of asylum accommodation (see pages 55-57):** Our data indicate that a high proportion of asylum-seeking families report problems with their accommodation, some of which can be detrimental to children's health and wellbeing e.g. Insect infestation, dampness, anti-social behaviour. Of particular concern are regulations which allow families to share accommodation, raising child protection concerns.

Families report that they struggle to raise problems with accommodation with the provider; and that they feel that the accommodation provider currently operating in Glasgow (Orchard and Shipman) does not take complaints seriously

unless they are pursued by keyworkers or other support workers. The families we spoke too raised serious concerns about attitude and ethos amongst Orchard and Shipman staff.

- **Health (see pages 67-69):** Many of the adults we spoke to described feelings of stress, anxiety, isolation, sadness and fear. These were consistently linked to the uncertainties of the asylum process. While it is impossible to correlate these with instances of medically diagnosed mental health problems; it was clear to the evaluation team that, had support not been available from Family Keywork Service, these concerns might have gone un-reported and in the long term impeded families' abilities to cope in their new lives.
- **Social isolation (see pages 73-77):** the days out and outreach activities provided by Family Keywork Service have been crucial to reducing social isolation and loneliness. Parents were particularly keen that children who are not yet at school be able to meet with and play with other children. Without the interventions offered by Family Keywork Service, it would appear that families might still feel unable to avail themselves of public spaces and facilities and that some families, particularly where there are additional needs such as poor parental mental health, might suffer from increasing social isolation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Service providers offering support to families seeking asylum

#### Service model

- 1.1 to adopt a collaborative model of work which seeks to be 'family-centred' rather than professionally centred.
- 1.2 to ensure that they adopt a 'whole family' approach which takes into account the needs of all family members, not just heads of household.
- 1.3 to continue to ensure smooth onwards referrals to specialist integration services for families who are granted refugee status or other forms of leave to remain.
- 1.4 to integrate poverty alleviation measures into their own service delivery to asylum-seeking families (e.g. providing assistance with travelling costs) and to continue to work in partnership to provide key items to families including toys, baby equipment and gifts at Christmas and other festivals.
- 1.5 to continue to develop creative ways of service delivery (e.g. days out, social events) which promote access to services but also social bonds between families who are in similar situations.
- 1.6 to consider ways in which future services could build upon concepts of resilience to incorporate peer development and education into service delivery.

- 1.7 to continue to draw upon and locate their work within existing good practice frameworks across relevant domains: children's welfare (e.g. GIRFEC, One Glasgow); family support (e.g. West Lothian model); and the experiences of refugee families (e.g. Holistic Integration Service, Third Country Nationals Project, EVASP).
- 1.8 to build operational and strategic links with appropriate women's and refugee women's projects in recognition of the predominance of female heads of household in refugee families.
- 1.9 to systematically use post-substantive interview checklists to 'troubleshoot' procedural failings at substantive interview that might affect the outcome of families' claims.

#### Evaluation

- 1.10 to ensure that structured evaluation activities are integrated into service delivery from the earliest possible stage.
- 1.11 to integrate a longitudinal element into future evaluations in order to 're-visit' families to assess the durability of positive impacts on outcomes for children.
- 1.12 to recognise that staff training and capacity building around reporting and data gathering is essential in order that full use can be made of the data stored in case recording tools.

## 2. Funders

- 2.1 to recognise a keywork model as the 'gold standard' in services where building productive and empowering relationships of trust is central.
- 2.2 to recognise the ways in which effective deployment of volunteers and placement students, when combined with sufficient resources to support them, not only increases service capacity but can meet other goals such as positively influencing external service provision.
- 2.3 to recognise and address the reduction in available advocacy and face to face advice services for asylum claimants in Scotland since the change in Home Office asylum advice contracts.
- 2.4 to fund family support services for families with children up to the age of 18 years old.

## 3. Home Office

- 3.1 to recognise the negative impact upon families of unnecessarily prolonged asylum processes and to seek to mitigate this whenever possible, for example through provision of regular updates on case progress to families whose claims have been pending for over six months.
- 3.2 to address barriers to Section 98 support, including over-zealous tests of destitution, which can leave families with children and pregnant women destitute and reliant on support from Social Work Services.

- 3.3 to urgently review their decision to reduce financial support for asylum-seeking children by £16 per week.
- 3.4 to engage with stakeholder feedback around procedural and other difficulties encountered by families during substantive interviews and seek to improve the customer experience of these interviews.

## 4 SERCO and Orchard and Shipman

- 4.1 to urgently act to address reports of the poor quality of asylum accommodation and customer service offered to families, particularly where this has implications for children's wellbeing.
- 4.2 to agree a dedicated escalation route, in partnership with statutory and voluntary service providers, for the resolution of accommodation problems where child protection concerns have been raised.

## 5. Wider stakeholders

- 5.1 to recognise the primacy of access to early years education for asylum seeking children and to seek to facilitate this wherever possible.
- 5.2 to recognise the positive impact that access to learning for parents can have on children's wellbeing, particularly with regards to ESOL provision.

- 5.3 Health visitors, midwives and other health professionals to continue to work in partnership with family support services in order that a fully holistic package of support can be provided to pregnant woman who are in the asylum process.
- 5.4 to recognise and support the positive impact upon mental health that the support of a keyworker can have for families who are navigating the asylum system.
- 5.5 to continue to work together to explore the synergy between refugee-specific projects and tools for positive parenting such as those developed by Parent Network Scotland
- 5.6 Social Work Services, accommodation providers, voluntary sector partners and service providers to continue to work together to identify, manage and where necessary report child protection concerns in a way which is both collaborative and culturally competent.
- 5.7 to adopt a model of rights-based collaborative advocacy which recognises families' strengths and resilience rather than focusing uniquely on areas of vulnerability.
- 5.8 legal representatives and other asylum stakeholders to recognise the value of preparing claimants adequately for their substantive interview, including information on procedural rights and entitlements.

# Evaluation Methodology

1

## 1. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The current report is based primarily upon data collected as part of the formal project evaluation process which ran from May to December 2015. However, we have also benefited from the insights provided by service user feedback and interviews, conducted largely by project volunteers, throughout the lifespan of this project. This has been invaluable to supplement and guide our evaluation activities.

We provide details of the various sources of our evaluation data below, and finish by outlining some of the limitations of the current methodology.

### 1.1 Ongoing service user involvement

Although the initial project plan indicated that evaluation would be ongoing and integrated into the work of the project, unresolved negotiations with Glasgow City Council meant that an external evaluator was only identified in the second year of the project.

This gap in formal evaluation was partially filled by the project team, who built into their service delivery elements of service user involvement and feedback. These include:

- notes from final review sessions with service beneficiaries, including standardised self-assessment scales relating to resilience and wellbeing.
- individual interviews conducted by service volunteers.
- feedback from events such as coffee mornings, parenting sessions and family days out.

- service user involvement groups
- ongoing internal and external monitoring and review, for example case studies
- information sharing events with external stakeholders – for example Glasgow City Council Early Years establishments (17th September 2014); and Glasgow City Council Social Work Services Children & Families workers (30th April 2015).

Feedback from these ongoing evaluation activities shaped the service throughout its operation. For example, families who attended a taster parenting workshop run by Parent Network Scotland in December 2014 spoke of their desire to make social connections with other families seeking asylum. This led to project staff building a series of family days out into the additional activities offered by the service (for more details see chapter eight).

Service beneficiary feedback also enabled the team to ensure that the needs of particular communities were taken into account. After meeting with five Chinese families in June 2014, staff organised an information session with Ricefield, a Chinese community organisation, in August 2014, to facilitate and promote mutual cultural understanding.

### 1.2 Formal evaluation

The current evaluation team comprises Helen Baillot, External Evaluator; Jackie Tolland, Chief Executive of Parent Network Scotland; and Esther Muchena, Development and Service Manager, Scottish Refugee Council. This team first met in May 2015 to discuss and agree the evaluation structure. As per the service's current reporting requirements, the team identified

relevant SHANARRI outcome signifiers as a benchmark for the evaluation process<sup>2</sup>.

Having agreed on the purpose and structure of the evaluation, the team then used mixed methods to gather evidence relating to the project's impact. These are summarised opposite.

Below we provide brief details of the principal methods of data collection.

### 1.2.1 Focus group discussions

Focus groups were selected as the appropriate methodology to gather service beneficiary feedback as our aim was to elicit a broad range of views of using the service, and we felt that these would emerge more naturally during a group discussion than in one-to-one interviews.

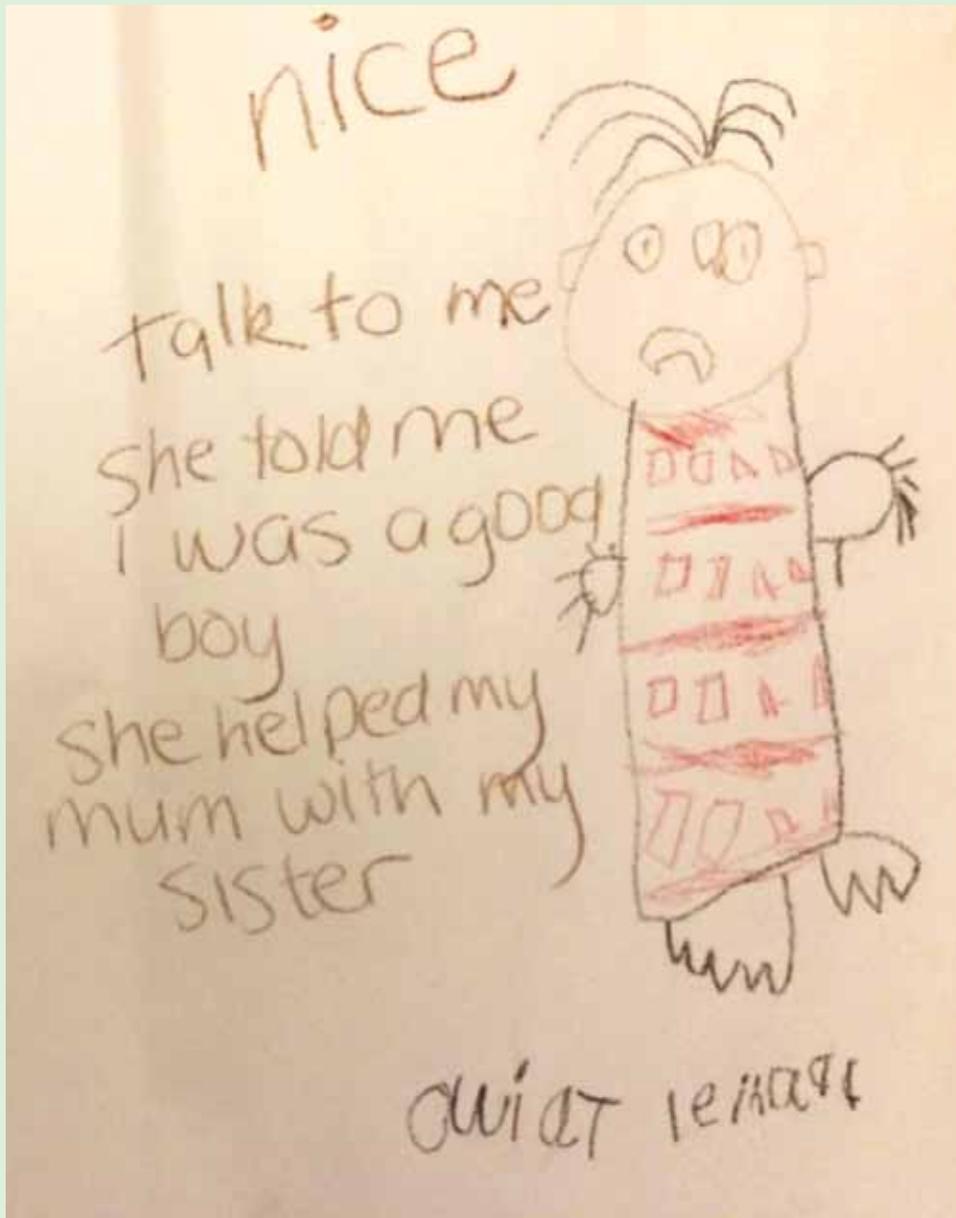
For groups one and three, sampling was random. Using a list of beneficiaries who had accessed the service since 1st January 2015, the evaluation team phoned every third head of household to ask if they would be interested in attending a group discussion. The sample was limited by date in order to ensure that families with recent experience of receiving the service would attend.

Focus group two was designed to elicit views on the service's impact on family life. The evaluation team felt it was most appropriate that this group be facilitated by a specialist agency and arranged for facilitators from Parent Network Scotland to do so. In order to ensure a sufficient relationship of trust with the facilitators, a purposive sample of families who had previously attended a Parent Network Scotland taster session was invited.

**Table One – Summary of Evaluation Methods**

METHOD	DETAILS
Staff and volunteer interviews	Semi-structured interviews and group discussion with staff, volunteers and students from the project <b>(participants n=7)</b>
Thematic service beneficiary focus group discussions	Focus Group 1: Rights & options Focus Group 2: Family Life Focus Group 3: Access to services <b>(adult participants n= 18, child participants n=26)</b>
Case file review	Independent review of a random sample of cases stored on Joint Client Database where beneficiaries had completed service <b>(n= 38 of 103 cases – 37% of completed case files)</b>
Stakeholder interviews	Semi-structured interviews conducted with key partner agencies from the statutory, voluntary and private sectors <b>(n=7)</b>
Beneficiary questionnaires	Questionnaires completed by participants prior to focus group discussions (n=10) and during a short-life questionnaire exercise with current service users <b>(n= 5)</b>
Literature Review	Review of relevant literature
Review of existing evaluation materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quarterly reports to funders</li> <li>transcripts of individual service user interviews <b>(n=3)</b></li> <li>report from YWCA Empowering Women workshops</li> <li>notes from service user involvement groups</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> The SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included) set of outcome signifiers are a national set of measures which aim to measure outcomes for young people of interventions made under the GIRFEC framework. GIRFEC is Scotland's national approach to improving outcomes through public services that support the wellbeing of children and young people.  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>



A breakdown of the focus group attendees by gender, nationality and family composition is provided in appendix ii. When compared to the nationality breakdown for all service beneficiaries using the service (see section 4.3), Nigerian households (8 families = 44% of attendees) are over-represented whilst those from China (2 families = 11% of attendees) and Pakistan (1 family = 5% of attendees) are under-represented. This may reflect general patterns of engagement with the service (see chapter 4) but limits somewhat the applicability of focus group feedback. Case file review has been used where necessary to redress this balance. In all cases, parents were encouraged to bring their partners and children to the group discussions. Children were provided with age appropriate activities and toys; and where their ages permitted, social work students engaged them in constructive craft activities which elicited their views on either Scottish Refugee Council services or another service of relevance to them.

Focus group participants were provided with a thank you shopping voucher and all travel expenses were reimbursed.

### 1.2.2 Stakeholder interviews

We identified with the assistance of the Service Manager, eight key agencies whose input should be sought. Of these, all but one agreed to be interviewed by the lead evaluator. The agencies whose views are represented in this report include specialist asylum service providers (n=2); voluntary sector partners (n=1); immigration advisers (n=1); and statutory services from health (n=1), social work (n=1) and Glasgow City Council Community and Safety Services (n=1). The Home Office were approached but were unwilling to be interviewed for the evaluation.

Interviews were conducted by telephone following a semi-structured format agreed in advance by the evaluation team. Notes were taken contemporaneously by the interviewer, and the transcripts were then analysed in order to identify key themes for inclusion in the report.

### 1.2.3 Staff and volunteer interviews

The three paid staff members who have been involved in the project since it began in December 2013 were interviewed individually by the principal evaluator using a semi-structured format. Notes were taken and analysed in the same manner as for stakeholder interviews.

Four volunteers and two social work students identified by the Service Manager as having made a significant contribution to the project, were invited to participate in a focus group discussion. Two volunteers and one student were able to attend. Questionnaires were sent by email to the remainder of the volunteers and students. One questionnaire was completed and returned, by a volunteer.

### 1.2.4 Case file review

The Service Manager provided the evaluation team with a list of the 103 case files for beneficiaries deemed to have 'completed' the service. 'Completed' in this context was defined as beneficiaries who had undertaken a final review session with their keyworker before exiting the service.

The principal evaluator drew up a standard spreadsheet of information to extract from these files, held on the organisation's

casework management system, the Joint Client Database. With the assistance of two volunteers, reviews were undertaken on a random sample of the 103 files, resulting in 38 full file reviews.

It is important to note that while the case files stored on the case management system were an invaluable source of qualitative data, the reporting functionality of the casework management system has not been fully utilised during this project as no budget had been identified to enable this. This means that it has been harder to extract quantitative data on all cases.

**For future services of this nature, staff training and capacity building around reporting and data gathering, including investment in coding and report building at organisational level, would be essential in order that full use can be made of the case recording dataset.**

### 1.3 Limitations of evaluation methodology

The post hoc nature of the formal evaluation process has inevitably limited the scope of the current evaluation.

While the project team undertook a multitude of service user involvement and feedback activities throughout the service delivery period, there was no central evaluation structure in place to frame this. Evaluation activities, rather than being integrated into the daily work of the team, were undertaken as separate exercises, with the concomitant impact on resources.

In particular, we found that engaging service beneficiaries in focus groups, where they had not previously met or worked together, was less productive than if consistent service user involvement groups had been formed at an earlier stage of the project. This would have

allowed group members to build relationships with each other and the evaluators, creating a more enabling atmosphere in which peoples' views and input could have been sought simultaneous to their pathway through the service.

We recommend that for future services, an evaluation structure and programme of activities be identified in the earliest stages of the project, and that appropriate resources are allocated in order that opportunities for the project to become a 'learning environment' can be optimised.

# Context

# 2

## 2. CONTEXT

Family Keywork Service has focused since its inception on the wellbeing and rights of children and their parents. Therefore, in this section we will situate the work of the service within a children's rights framework and establish, from the literature, the extent to which these rights are actualised for families who enter the asylum process in the UK.

We will subsequently identify models of good practice specific to work with refugees that have informed the development of the Family Keywork Service. In particular, we make reference to the New Scots 'Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities' Strategy<sup>3</sup>, which in 2013 identified the need for a keywork service in order that families could begin to integrate from the first days of their arrival in Scotland.

### 2.1 Children's rights and welfare

*"In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."*

Article 3(1) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child makes clear that the rights it confers are applicable to all children, regardless of their immigration status. Thus, since the UK removed its derogation from the Convention in 2008, children seeking asylum have in theory benefited from the same full range of rights as any other child living

in the UK. While much of the focus of work around children's rights has focused on the needs of separated children (see for example Pobjoy, 2011), this is equally true for children who are living with one or both parents.

As well as the key provision cited above, the children's rights protected by the UNCRC include the right to an education (Article 28); the right to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development (Article 27); the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health (Article 24); and the right to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts (Article 31).

Ensuring children are able to enjoy these rights to fullest extent possible has formed the bedrock of much of the work of Family Keywork Service.

Public bodies, as Article 3 makes clear, have since 2008 been responsible for ensuring that their actions do not simply avoid infringing, but actively promote this series of rights, for asylum seeking children as for any other child resident in the UK. In response to this legal obligation, the Home Office issued guidance – Every Child Matters - in November 2009 on the agency's role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (Home Office, 2009).

Similarly, at Scottish level, it is now widely accepted that the provisions of the national Getting It Right For Every Child framework apply in equal measure to children seeking asylum. This rights-based approach, which focuses on improving outcomes for vulnerable children through integrated service delivery and early intervention, has been highly influential in the design and delivery of Family Keywork Service.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2013/12/4581>

Finally, at local level, in Glasgow where most asylum-seeking families are housed in Scotland, the One Glasgow framework offers guidance for work with children aged 0-8. This approach recognises the importance of early intervention approaches to identify and tackle obstacles to children's full and positive development in the early years.

Despite this raft of legal and policy measures, there remains an inherent tension within statutory approaches to the rights of asylum-seeking children. For while as children, public bodies may recognise that their rights and welfare must be paramount, as asylum-seekers, these children have to live within highly restrictive structures.

This tension between the competing demands of child protection and welfare; and immigration control; has been widely criticised as undermining the actualisation of the children's rights listed above (for example, Crawley, 2011). We shall explore some of the restrictions placed upon children's lives due to their status as asylum claimants below.

## 2.2 Life in the UK asylum process

Parents and children who claim asylum in the UK, but have not yet received a final decision on their asylum case, are, like all other asylum seekers, debarred from accessing public funds and will not typically be given permission to work. However, if a family can demonstrate that they are destitute and require financial support and accommodation, they can apply to the Home Office for support under Sections 98 and 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act (2000). Accommodation is provided on a 'no-choice' basis in one of the UK local authority 'dispersal' areas, of which Glasgow

continues to be the only one in Scotland. Financial support has since August 2015 been set at a standard rate of £36.95 per person, money which is collected in its entirety by the nominated head of household. At the time of writing, families who are refused asylum remain in receipt of section 95 support. However there is provision within the Asylum Support Regulations for this support to be withdrawn, and the Government's consultation on asylum support reforms proposes to make more use of revised version of these powers in future (Gower, 2015). This policy intention appears to have already filtered through to families, creating additional worries for those whose cases are still under consideration:

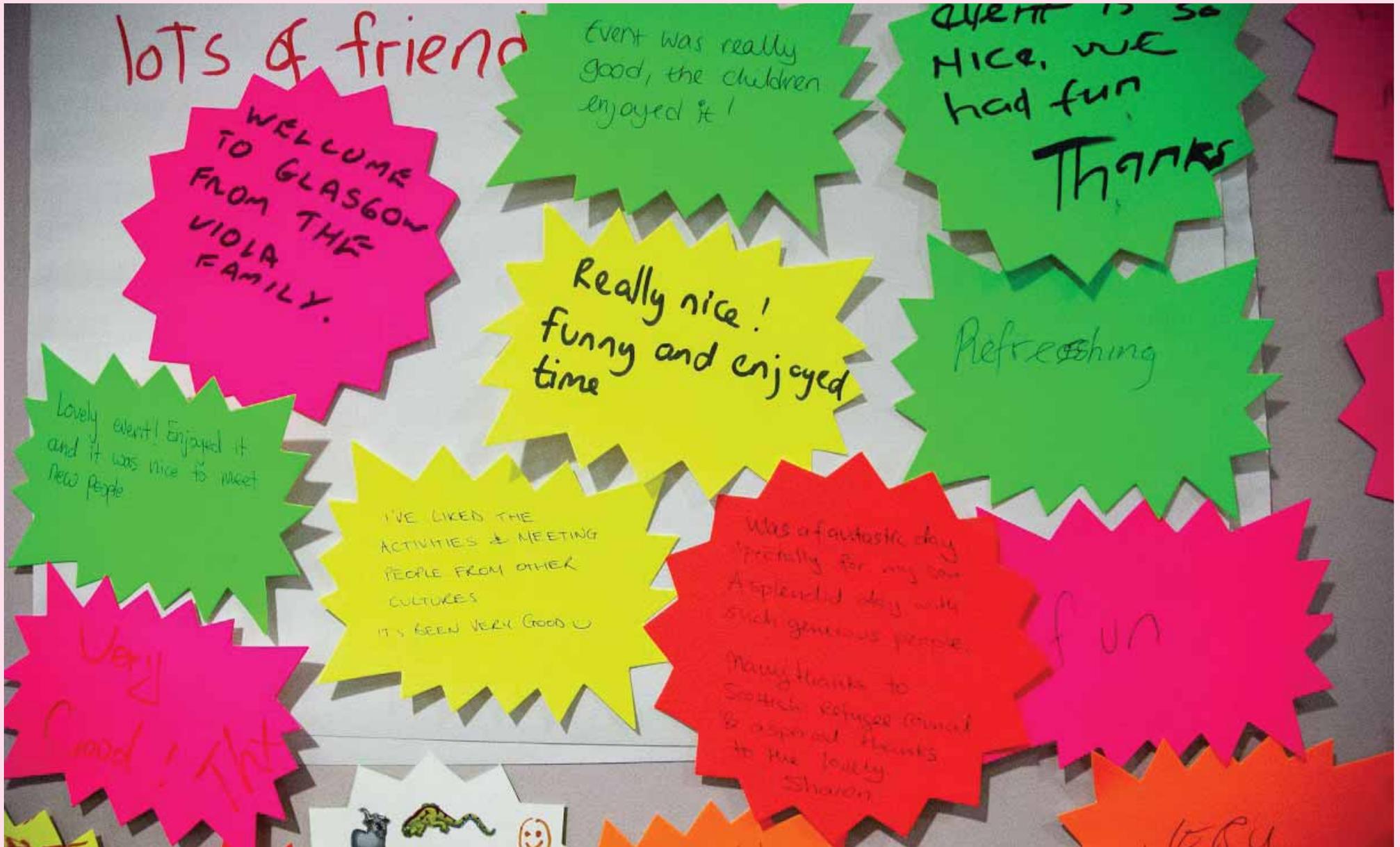
***"All those thoughts come into your mind, are they going to stop your support, you'll have to come out of the house, what next?"***

Focus Group 1 participant

In their totality, these measures are clearly far more restrictive than those applied to children with resident status in the UK, and the available literature highlights the negative impact that these limitations have upon children's wellbeing. In 2008, a report commissioned by Barnardos reported that:

***"These children ... are living in families which have experienced trauma, loss and displacement. Some of them face racial harassment in the UK. They live in temporary accommodation with no say about where they live or how long they will stay in an area, and no control over the conditions in which they have to live. Asylum seekers are invariably very poor and live below the minimum benefits levels other households would receive."***

(Reacroft 2008 p.6)



Some of the very serious problems noted in this report may have been exacerbated in recent years. Accommodation standards for families, as for single asylum claimants, still represent a major area of concern (Glen & Lindsay, 2014). In August 2015 the government introduced amended asylum support regulations which reduced the financial support provided to parents for each of their children by £16 per child per week, a move criticised as ‘plunging children deeper into poverty’ (Refugee Action quoted in Gower, 2015). And despite the high hopes invested in the New Asylum Model, the Home Office’s own statistics once again bear witness to increasing delays in decision-making, delays previously criticised by Barnardos as creating an environment of ‘crippling uncertainty’ that affected families seeking asylum:

**Table Two – Delays in initial asylum decision-making**

YEAR	Total number of asylum decisions pending initial decision for more than six months
2012	5,870
2013	8,481
2014	11,629

Source: Home Office<sup>4</sup>

The impact upon children and families’ mental and physical wellbeing of living as ‘asylum seekers’ has been well-documented by professionals outside the asylum sector:

***“...many of the social workers felt that the uncertainties surrounding people’s immigration status often caused anxieties, depression and a sense of isolation and disconnection from their social surroundings... Some of***

***the social workers acknowledged and recognized that many of the children growing up under such conditions of parental depression, anxiety and uncertainty were unlikely to be thriving and rediscovering their childhood. Instead the children and their families are faced with a continuing sense of dislocation, isolation, fragmentation and fear of the unknown.”***

(Okitipki & Aymer, 2003 p.218)

***“...the number of current life stressors was linked to children’s levels of depression. In particular, severe financial difficulties and insecure asylum status were related to greater depressive symptoms in refugee children.”***

(Ehnholt & Yule, 2006 p.1198)

In the Scottish context, this was confirmed by the findings of Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education report in 2007, which noted that:

***“Being part of a family seeking asylum often affected children’s emotional and mental health. They worried about the future and had limited opportunities to appropriately share past or current experiences with others”***

(HMIE 2007, p.6)

Despite this, service interventions in the asylum process specifically designed for families remain scarce. Social work has provided relatively fertile ground for reflection upon working with asylum-seeking families. However, this has tended to focus only on families who come into contact with social work through care and child protection mechanisms (see for example Lewig, 2009; Okitipki, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-january-to-march-2015-data-tables>

A family keywork pilot undertaken in Liverpool from 2010 to 2012 by Refugee Action provided some initial, and positive, indications as to the results of a keywork approach whose interventions mirror crucial points in the asylum process (Hutton, 2012). However, this project has not been continued and crucially, no follow up studies appear to have been conducted to assess whether or not the project resulted in lasting gains for beneficiaries.

In the Scottish context, the advice and advocacy available to asylum-seeking families has become increasingly restricted since the move in April 2014 from a 'one stop shop' model of face to face advice, information and advocacy to a phoneline-based, advice and signposting only service. This has meant that the Family Keywork Service has had an ever more crucial role to play in assisting families to realise their (limited) rights.

Having explored the children's rights framework which contextualises the work of the Family Keywork Service, we shall examine some refugee-specific models of good practice in more depth below.

## 2.3 Frameworks for understanding

While in terms of children's rights and development, the team have drawn upon existing frameworks such as those identified above, in particular GIRFEC; the location of the service within a specialist refugee agency has meant that the team have equally been able to draw upon models of good practice specific to refugees and asylum seekers. Three key approaches are outlined below. Under each heading, we provide details of the concrete ways in which these approaches have been integrated into the work of Family Keywork Service.

## Refugee integration

Central to understandings of the process of refugee integration has been Ager and Strang's Indicators of Integration framework (Ager & Strang, 2004). Since 2012, Scottish Refugee Council's Holistic Integration Service has, in partnership with the Workers' Educational Association, Bridges Programmes, Glasgow Clyde College and British Red Cross, been putting these principles into practice through delivery of a twelve month programme of advice, advocacy and support for newly granted refugees (for evaluation of this work, see Strang et al, 2014, 2015).

This work has been crucial to the ongoing development of the New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities Strategy, developed in 2013 through collaboration of the Scottish Government, COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council, Queen Margaret University and Refugee Community Organisations. This strategy has in turn been the cornerstone of the Family Keywork Service. Development of a key work service is explicitly noted as one of the actions required to ensure that:

***"Asylum seekers arriving in Scotland are supported to fully understand their rights and entitlements, are able to access services and legal support and as a result receive the support they require during the asylum process."***

New Scots 2014-17 Action Plan

This commitment supports the principle, consistently upheld by the Scottish Government, that integration should begin from day one of asylum claimants' arrival in Scotland. Family Keywork Service then, at both strategic and operational levels, can be situated from the outset in a framework of integration work.

#### Elements integrated into Family Keywork Service model:

- Rights-based approach to work on the asylum and asylum support processes.
- Recognition of the importance of means and markers and the need to facilitate access to these services – particularly education, housing and health.
- Interventions to facilitate improved social connections.

#### Enhancing Vulnerable Asylum Seekers Protection (EVASP)

A second influential framework for understanding the work of Family Keywork Service is the Enhancing Vulnerable Asylum Seekers Protection (EVASP) model (Papadopoulos et al, 2010). Developed during an international project from 2009-10, the framework seeks to explore what service providers mean by 'vulnerability' as applied to asylum seekers. Key to the model is a recognition that while some asylum seekers may be vulnerable in some areas of their lives (for example, due to ill health, disability or lack of rights); they may exhibit resilience and effective coping strategies in other areas:

*"... we refer to a person, a family or a community as resilient if they withstand pressures and do not alter their basic values, skills or abilities... Despite being exposed to the most devastating nature of the events, not everybody is crushed by them. In fact, the majority of individuals do not require professional attention because a great deal of their healthy functioning remains intact and unaffected by the devastation ... It is indeed remarkable to see the dignity and resilience of the human spirit triumphing over the most appalling conditions of degradation, helplessness, humiliation, actual injury and loss"*

(Papadopoulos, 2007 p.308)

The model therefore avoids labelling all asylum seekers as being inherently vulnerable or incapable, an approach criticised for undermining the agency of individuals who seek protection under international law (for example, Rainbird, 2011).

#### Elements integrated into Family Keywork Service model:

- Inclusion of 'resilience' categories in initial holistic assessment – families identified as resilient, guidance, complex or critical after holistic assessment of need and potential vulnerability.
- Development of family support plan, covering key areas identified under EVASP framework.

## Guardianship

Finally, since 2009 Scotland has been the site of the unique Scottish Guardianship Service, a partnership project between Scottish Refugee Council and Aberlour Childcare Trust which provides an independent guardian to every separated child who claims asylum or has been trafficked to Scotland.

While focused on the needs of separated children rather than those who arrive with adult carers, insights from the project have provided additional structure to the work of Family Keywork Service. In particular, the Guardianship model underlines the value of having a dedicated worker to enable children and their families to navigate asylum processes.

### Elements integrated into Family Keywork Service model:

- Relationship-building – the importance of having a single point of contact who can encourage full disclosure of past experiences and current concerns; and where necessary co-ordinate service provision for families and children.
- Engagement with asylum processes – a professional who can act as an ‘asylum guide’ to assist engagement with complex administrative process.

## Summary

Family Keywork Service operates within a complex legislative and policy framework. While the service has built upon models of good practice which recognise and value children’s rights; in reality, beneficiaries’ rights and their ability to access them are restricted by their status as asylum claimants.

Family Keywork Service is well placed to integrate specialist frameworks developed in refugee reception settings into more general children’s welfare provisions, due to its location within a specialist refugee agency with well-established experience of working with this client group.

However, this knowledge and learning has placed a double responsibility upon the service. Whilst recognising and addressing, to the extent possible, the needs of this service user group, it has been equally vital not to perpetuate a vulnerability discourse which serves, in the long term, to disempower and further marginalise the women, men and children for whom the service has been designed. Over subsequent pages, we will assess the extent to which the Family Keywork Service has balanced these sometimes contradictory demands.

# Service Overview

3

### 3. SERVICE OVERVIEW

Having identified areas of good practice which are relevant to services seeing to work with asylum seeking families, we will now provide an overview of the funding, staffing and service delivery models for Family Keywork Service, before making some initial reflections as to the differences between this model and previous models of advice work undertaken by Scottish Refugee Council.

#### 3.1 Funding

The Family Keywork Service was funded from October 2013 to March 2015 through the Scottish Government Early Years Family Support Public Sector Partnership Project Fund. Funding was later secured to extend the duration of the project by one year. The current project is due to end in March 2016.

The service is a Public Social Partnership, initially between Scottish Refugee Council, Glasgow City Council, NHS and Money Matters, Govan. Although Scottish Refugee Council was in partnership with Money Matters, the projects had different specialist areas of advice and were offered to different client groups. Money Matters provided in-work benefits advice (Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit) to all BME communities living in Glasgow, regardless of immigration status. Family Keywork Service have provided a holistic package of support, which has been offered only to families who:

- have recently made, and have a currently outstanding claim for asylum

And

- Who have at least one child aged 8 or under in their household (including pregnant women)

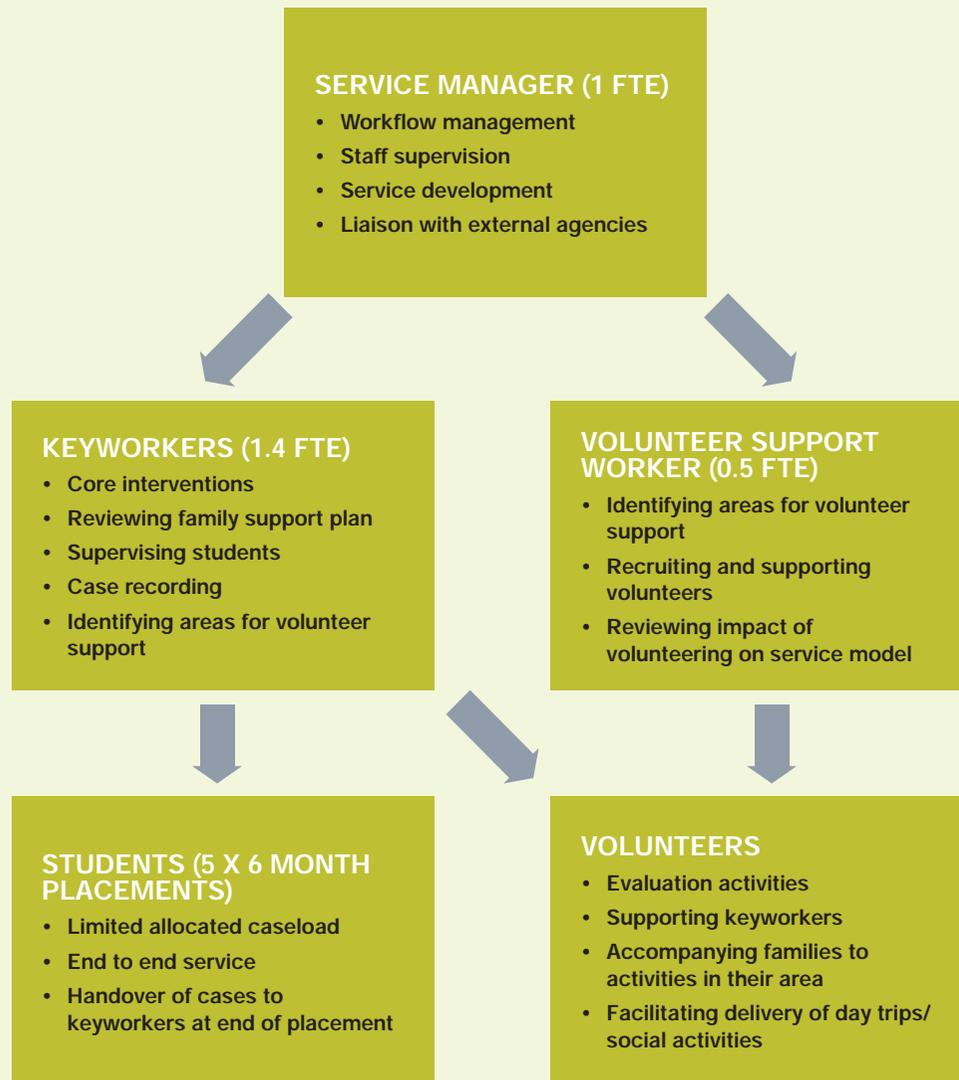
The partnership with Money Matters did not continue beyond the initial pilot period (December 2013 to March 2015) however both organisations agreed that their period of working together had been 'beneficial for both organisations in terms of experience and information exchange'<sup>5</sup>.

The service offered to families was designed to be of six months duration. This timescale equates to the Home Office's targets for registering, assessing and completing decision-making (initial decision and appeal) on asylum claims under the New Asylum Model introduced in 2007. In practice, these timescales are rarely adhered to by the Home Office, and so many of the families exited the service before receiving a final decision on their asylum claim. We explore the impact of this in later chapters.

<sup>5</sup> Scottish Refugee Council quarterly report to Scottish Government, March 2015

### 3.2 Staffing

The service's staffing structure is outlined below:



The inclusion of volunteers and social work students within the staffing structure has been crucial in order to add value to the service, and increase the team's capacity to support families.

Since the project began, **663** volunteer sessions (one session = half working day) have been delivered, with volunteers enabling many of the additional activities – days out, social events, accompanying to local services – highlighted in subsequent chapters.

Five social work students from higher education institutions in the West of Scotland have completed placements within the project. This equates to approximately **475 days of additional keyword capacity**. Following their induction period, students carry a caseload of up to eight families whilst working with the project.

This commitment to supporting social work placements has not only increased the service's capacity to offer support to families but is part of a wider strategy whereby trainee social workers are exposed to and understand the needs of asylum seekers, and can then cascade these through current places of study and future workplaces. These placements in turn allow Scottish Refugee Council staff to learn from social work approaches, which contributes to the development of a learning organisation. The student who participated in the evaluation process confirmed that she had taken learning from her time with the project into the workplace:

*"I remember fighting with social workers, arguing with them trying to get assistance for families and it's this 'no recourse to public funds' but actually under the law children are entitled to this assistance and that's a point I've now kept and taken forward and had to use but I think if it wasn't for the keyworkers making that point a lot of the families wouldn't get some of help they need."*

Student 1



### 3.3 Service model

With the staffing complement as outlined above, the service model which has emerged over the period of service delivery comprises four principal elements:

- Development of a collaborative family support plan, reviewed at regular intervals.

Family Support Plans cover key areas of life including education, health and social connections; and are agreed and reviewed with all family members.

- Key intervention points structured around the main stages in asylum process.

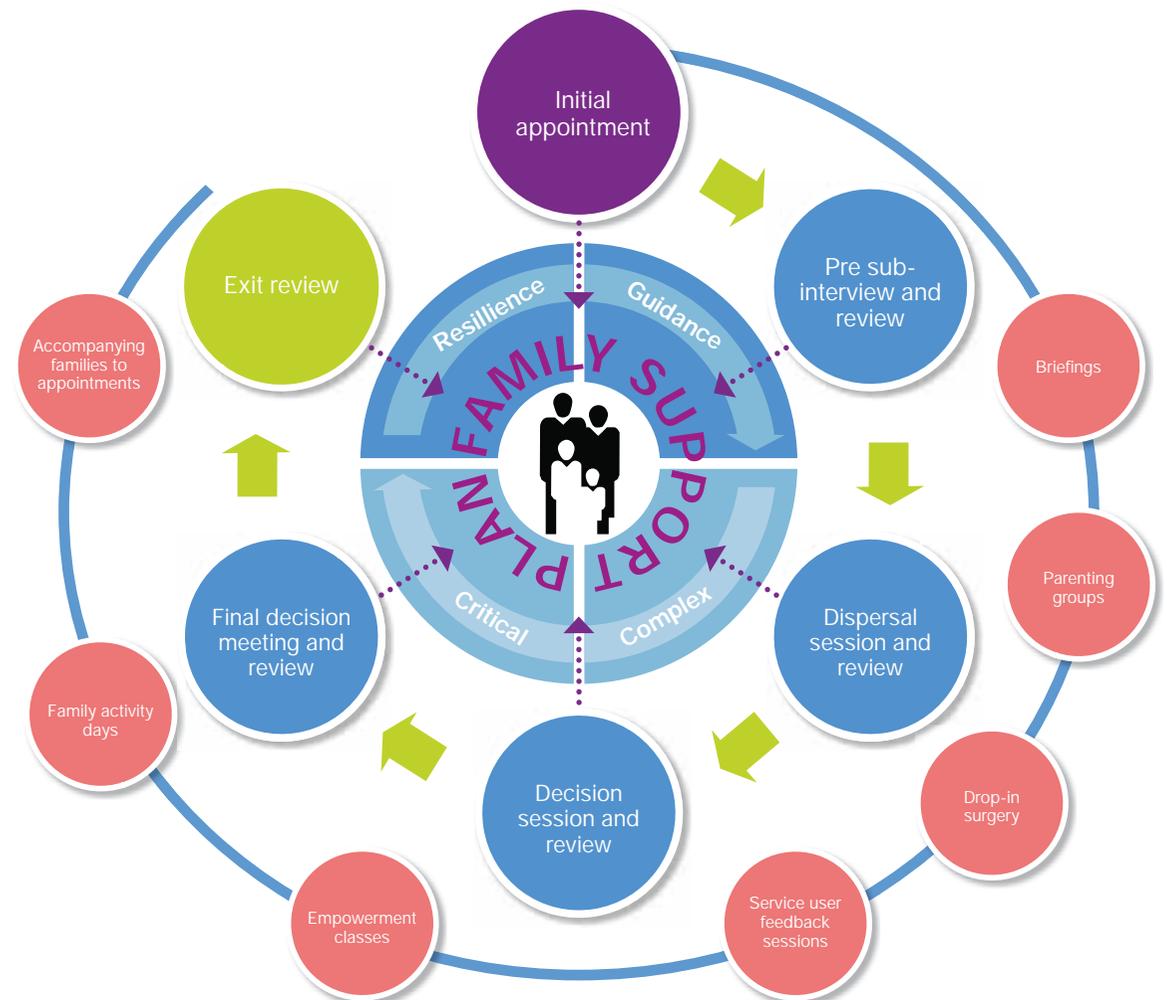
These interventions have in practice been reduced in number due to structural delays in Home Office procedures.

- Outreach activities including family days out

Activities, often facilitated by students and volunteers, which aim to build social bonds and bridges for families living in the community.

- Unplanned contact from families at times of crisis or concern for example, due to unresolved accommodation problems or after the refusal of their asylum claim.

### Family Keywork Service Delivery



We explore, in chapter four, the principles which have underpinned this model and the ways in which they have been put into practice.

### 3.4 Moving on from advice?

Much of the frontline experience which informed the development of the model was gained during the fourteen year period when Scottish Refugee Council delivered the One Stop and Induction Service models of work under Home Office contracts. These contracts were transferred in April 2014 to a new provider, Asylum Help.

While these services in particular may have been the furnace from which the Family Keywork Service was born, it is crucial to note that the services differ significantly in conception and delivery. In the table below, we provide some initial observations of these key differences.

Thus, while the One Stop Shop can best be conceptualised as having been a high volume, demand-driven, crisis intervention service, with intensive one-to-one casework delivered only to people with additional vulnerabilities or experiencing complex problems; Family Keywork Service aims to provide more intensive, holistic support on a planned basis to a smaller number of service beneficiaries. This change in focus has been deliberate, and as we shall explore in future chapters, has ensured that the service avoids overlap with the (limited) advice provision now in place in Scotland under the new advice contract, which, it is important to note, now specifically excludes advocacy on behalf of asylum seekers.

**Table Three – Comparative service provision**

	ONE STOP SHOP	FAMILY KEYWORK SERVICE
<b>Workload management</b>	Non-allocated casework – dependent on adviser availability.  'Standby' or crisis presentations and problem-focused appointments.	Named, consistent keyworker.  Planned review sessions and key intervention points.
<b>Principal focus</b>	Resolution of arising problems (reactive)	Ongoing assessment aimed at early identification and intervention.
<b>Principal 'client'</b>	Main applicant for asylum/asylum support.	Whole family including dependent adults and children.
<b>Holder of specialist knowledge</b>	Adviser	Family
<b>Model of work</b>	Professional-focused	Family-centred.
<b>Principal location of work</b>	Office-based.	Office-based Outreach.
<b>Principal areas of work</b>	Asylum support and accommodation. Access to legal advice. Access to health services. Service development and capacity building.	Access to local community services. Family life. Social connections. Preparation for Home Office interviews. Asylum support and accommodation. Access to legal advice. Access to health services.

# Statistical Overview

4

#### 4. STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we provide an overview of the profile of families who have benefited from Family Keywork Service in the period December 2013 to December 2015. All statistics, unless otherwise specified, have been extracted from a service spreadsheet maintained by the Service Manager.

Since it began operation in December 2013 and until October 2015, **155** families have benefited from Family Keywork Service. This represents **213** adults (heads of household and dependants) and **258** children (under 18) of whom **227** were aged 8 and under.

Although the service was designed to be offered for a six month period, levels and duration of engagement have been variable.

Families who were granted leave to remain during the six month period were immediately referred on to Scottish Refugee Council's Holistic Integration Service, with Family Keywork then closing the case. Holistic Integration Service is a partnership project led by Scottish Refugee Council which offers new refugees a twelve-month period of advice and support to build and achieve a Personal Integration Plan covering areas such as housing, education, employment, health and social connections (for more information, see Strang et al, 2015).

Other families have continued to access the service beyond the original six month period, in times of crisis or where they have successfully lodged fresh claims for asylum where intervention and advice may be necessary in order to ensure they have sufficient access to justice.

**Anna and her family had a complex immigration history. Having made a claim for asylum with the help of Scottish Refugee Council services, they benefited from a six month period of engagement with Family Keywork Service. Keyworkers enabled Anna's daughter to access a nursery place, supported her during pregnancy and advocated for the family when they experienced problems in their Home Office accommodation. In addition Anna attended several outreach activities including a group session on parenting and a coffee morning. When Anna exited the service, she had still not had her substantive asylum interview. She accessed the service again when this interview resulted in her asylum case being refused, at which point she sought clarification on the next steps she and her husband should be considering.**

Case file reviews indicate that engagement with the service has been generally high, with only two families recorded as having refused the service within the first year. Some staff and volunteers spoke anecdotally of differing levels of engagement according to family composition and/or nationality, with single parent families headed by women, and service beneficiaries from West Africa, perceived as being particularly keen to engage with the various activities offered by the service. There has been no way to verify this from case file data, but this is reflected in the composition of our focus groups, as noted at section 1.2 above.

The profile of the families who have accessed the service is as follows.

#### 4.1 Gender

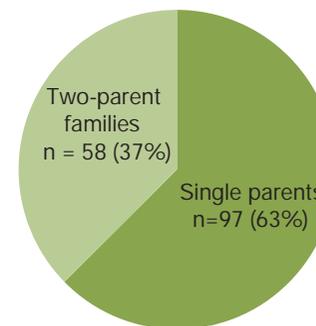
As the charts opposite demonstrate, the majority of households who have accessed the Family Keywork Service have been single parent families with women heads of household (n=93). This said, a significant number of 'two-parent' families have benefited from the service, and here the majority of heads of households have been men (n=36 households).

Importantly, the service is premised on a 'whole family' approach. Staff encourage all members of the household to engage with the service, not just the main applicant for asylum or asylum support. This has been important to counter a tendency already noted amongst asylum professionals to focus on the needs and experiences of (predominantly male) heads of household in two-parent families, to the detriment of dependent women (see for example, Asylum Aid Charter for the Rights of Women Seeking Asylum<sup>6</sup>).

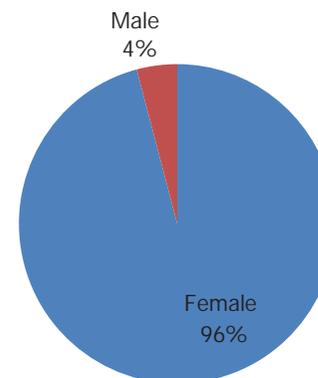
Given the high proportion of women heads of household, the service's role in improving confidence and outcomes for women applicants is an area which is ripe for further development in future. As one stakeholder remarked:

*"... in my experience it's just so difficult for women to come out and be the one going forward and requesting certain things, taking that initiative, that can be cultural or lack of education or opportunities, it's all so daunting...there's a whole host of arguably pre-existing vulnerabilities that are there either because of that woman's particular experiences*

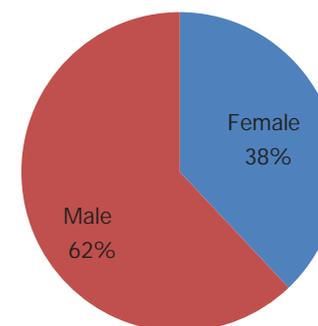
#### Family Composition



#### Heads of household – single parent



#### Heads of household – two-parent families



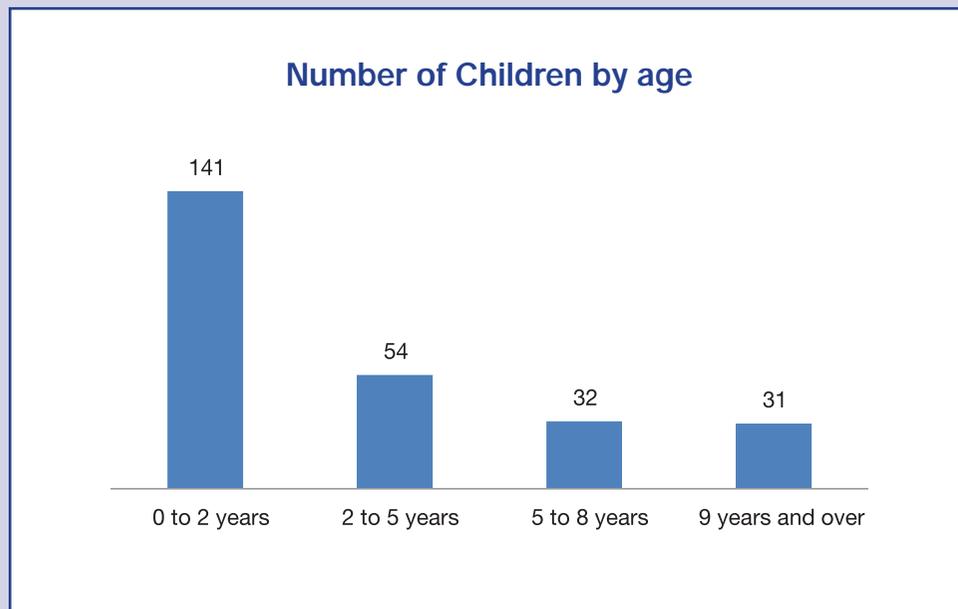
<sup>6</sup> <http://www.asylumaid.org.uk/charter-for-the-rights-of-women-seeking-asylum/>

*or because of her country or upbringing that nearly always means that she requires an advocate.”*

Legal Stakeholder

This said, and although single parent families headed by men represent only a small minority of the total families, the particular needs of this group would merit further exploration in any future service. Two of the four fathers involved in the service spoke specifically of the difficulties of parenting as a single man, and three of the fathers were sole parenting at least one child aged two or under; with one father in sole charge of his five-month old baby.

## 4.2 Children



The table opposite shows the number of children (total **n=258**) who accessed the service from December 2013 until November 2015. This data includes babies born during the time of service provision. Case records indicate that keyworkers assisted 53 pregnant women, and with only live births recorded during this time, we have therefore added these babies to the totals for number of children aged under 2.

The project's main focus was in assisting children from 0-8, **227** of whom accessed the service. However the **31** children aged 9 and over who accessed the service were also assisted as required in their areas of need. Some staff even suggested that children of this age were more aware of their asylum status and of the pressures on the family and so were potentially just as in need of a service as their younger siblings. This chimes with recent research emerging from support services for reunited refugee families, which highlights the particular barriers to integration faced by young people aged 16-18 (Marsden & Harris, 2015).

This could be an area of service development to explore in the future:

*“ I would say that all families should be assigned a key worker but I would include all families, not just those with under 8s – teenagers can be just as challenging and they need to get early interventions as well sometimes, they are sometimes much more aware of the differences in their status and relating to their peers.”*

Staff member 3

From the data gathered during the evaluation period, engaging with children and their needs has generated a range of family-centred activities including :

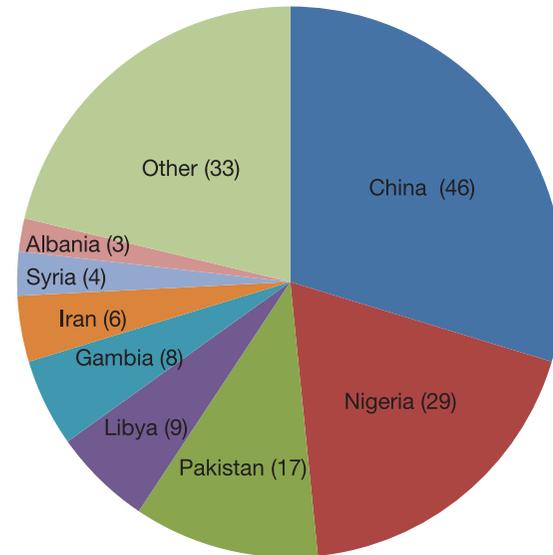
- Organising family days out to places of interest with facilities for children and young people
- Assisting individual service users to access community play facilities in local areas
- Engaging children in evaluation and feedback wherever possible
- Ensuring that discussions about family life, parenting and access to children’s services are built into every service user review session

Mrs. Fula was referred to Family Keywork Service by a voluntary sector organisation who felt she needed additional support as she and her seven-year old son were victims of trafficking. She presented as being social isolated and withdrawn.

Although her son quickly accessed school, Mrs. Fula expressed concern about finding activities for him during the school holidays. The team encouraged them to attend a service away day and a Family Keywork Service volunteer later supported Mrs. Fula and her son to access a local soft play facility. They spent the afternoon there, and Mrs. Fula’s son said that he had really enjoyed the day and was more confident about returning to school as he would have something to talk about with his classmates. Mrs. Fula indicated that she was likely to return to the facility with her son as she now felt confident about finding and using it.

### 4.3 Nationality

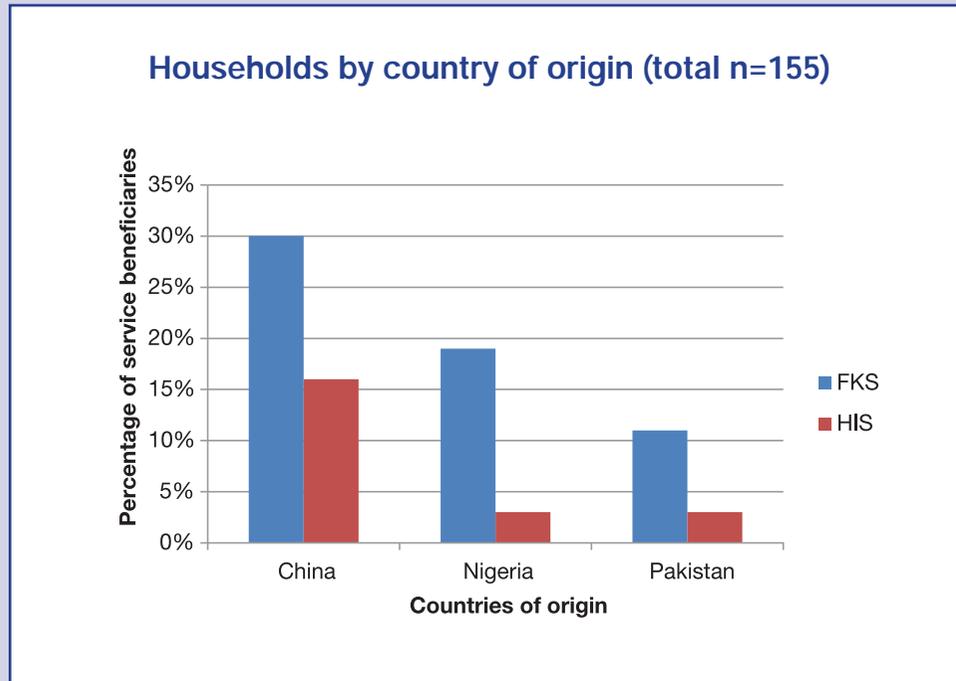
Households by country of origin (total n=155)



While this mirrors to some extent the general asylum intake to Scotland during the same period, a comparison with data emerging from the Holistic Integration Service is instructive with regards to some of the specific challenges faced by Family Keywork Service.

Holistic Integration Service data tends to reflect overall asylum recognition rates, as the service is only offered to applicants who are granted some form of leave to remain. If we take as a benchmark the HIS Year Two Report, the countries of origin who have the highest asylum recognition rates – Eritrea, Sudan, Iran,

Syria – represent only small numbers of Family Keywork service users. Similarly, as we demonstrate in the chart below, the top three countries of origin for Family Keywork Service beneficiaries – China, Nigeria, and Pakistan – appear to be under-represented in terms of asylum recognition (Strang et al, 2015 p.17).



The attendant implications for service delivery are borne out by case file review data which indicates that many of the families who have benefited from the service have been refused asylum – which may mean that their involvement with asylum procedures lasts well beyond the service engagement time of six months.

#### 4.4 Complex needs

Of the 155 households who received a service, notes taken from the service user database indicate that, without accounting for pregnancies, 74 households (48%) presented with one or more complex needs (including pregnancy) above and beyond their uncertain immigration status.

These included previous experiences of trafficking (n=16); disclosure of mental health problems (n=14); survivors of sexual violence (n=13); survivors of domestic abuse (n=9); disclosure of physical health problems (n=8); survivors of female genital mutilation (n=8) and survivors of torture (n=4).

When combined with the large proportion of women who either were pregnant at first presentation or became pregnant during their time with the service (n=53), we begin to discern the complexity of many of the cases dealt with by keyworkers.

**19 households (12.3%) assisted by Family Keywork Service were assessed as having a combination of the needs noted above during their initial contact with the service**, and these often evolved over time, particularly during the pre and post-natal periods for women who were pregnant.

Mr. Farhad, his wife Mrs. Asif and their children were dispersed to Glasgow by the Home Office. Mrs. Asif was pregnant at the time of dispersal. During their initial appointment with Family Keywork, Mr. Farhad explained that he suffered from memory loss and sleeplessness due to his past experiences. He and his wife, who is a survivor of sexual violence, had been referred for psychiatric support by the Asylum Health Bridging Team. In addition, his children were experiencing a range of physical health problems.

Their keyworker assisted the family to access health services for the children; to obtain toys and baby equipment and access children's activities in their area; to prepare for their Home Office interview and to add their new baby to their Home Office support. However further intervention has been necessary beyond the six month service period as Mr. Farhad and Mrs. Asif's health has deteriorated following refusal of their asylum claim.

#### 4.5 Children's needs

Eight of the disclosures of complex needs were specific to the children of the family. These ranged from concerns about a daughter being at future risk of FGM (n=3); to a parent's concerns about his son's development and behaviour.

##### Child-specific needs identified at initial appointment

(none of risks identified were from primary carer)

Risk of FGM (if returned to home country)	3
Child development	2
Physical health	1
Injuries due to past abuse	1
Child protection	1

As these concern only disclosures made during families' initial appointments with the service, all of these are likely to be under-reported, with further disclosures emerging as families engaged with the service (reference to literature on disclosure). Where risks involving children were identified initially or at later dates, our review of case files indicates that close partnership working with social work and health enabled concerns to be reported and managed in a way that followed child protection guidelines and promoted positive parenting. We shall explore the interventions adopted in later chapters.

#### 4.6 Summary

- During the year ending 31st March 2015, the service exceeded its original service delivery targets.
- The needs of children are systematically identified and addressed during holistic assessment of the family as a whole. The keywork approach enables keyworkers to work in partnership with families to identify strengths and involve families in coming up with solutions.
- As anticipated, although some families present as being highly resilient with no additional health or other needs apart from the support required to navigate the asylum process; others have complex and multiple needs linked to their past experiences of persecution. These may evolve over time as families receive positive or negative decisions on their asylum claims.
- The nationality profile of people accessing the service, when compared with data from HIS, indicates that asylum recognition rates may be relatively low amongst this service user group. This has implications for the duration and type of service

delivery required : if asylum is refused, case file review indicates that families will continue to need sustained interventions beyond the six month service period.

- The majority of families who have benefited from this service have female heads of household, many of whom have survived gendered forms of abuse and persecution. The possibilities for future synergy in further developing the project in tandem with Scottish Refugee Council's recognised work with women refugees (Women's Project) should be recognised and developed, as this service offers a unique access point to the views and experiences of a frequently marginalised group of asylum claimants.

# Principles of Service Delivery

5

## 5. PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Having provided an overview of the service's structures and workflow, we will now explore in more depth the key principles which underpin the model of service delivery. Through the evaluation process, four such principles have become apparent:

- Keywork – allocating a consistent worker to each family
- A holistic and collaborative approach – a whole family approach taking into account the multilevel and changing needs of families and involving families in this
- Early intervention – identifying need as soon as possible, and putting in place appropriate interventions
- Service development – influencing external services in order to ensure that they take the needs of asylum seeking families into account.

Below we make some initial reflections upon each of these principles in turn, before summarising the differences between the Family Keywork Service model and previous models of advice work undertaken by Scottish Refugee Council.

### 5.1 Keywork

As the name of the project would suggest, the first key principle of service delivery is that of keywork – ensuring that each family has a consistent worker. It would appear that this has been implemented as planned.

Every attendee at our three focus group discussions was able, without requiring any additional input, to identify their keyworker by name. Moreover, the appreciation and trust placed in keyworkers were recurrent themes throughout discussions. When asked about how their keyworker had made them feel during their first appointment with them, service beneficiaries used words such as 'comfortable', 'confident', 'happy', and 'calm'. Others went further, with one participant stating:

***"I love [keyworker's ] smile, the first thing you see is her smile, it feels like she's seeing a friend, not a stranger, that is how I feel when I see her first, she gives me that first smile, she's very nice ..."***

Focus group 1 participant

From a beneficiary standpoint, there were strong indications that a keywork relationship encourages disclosure of information. In the context of work with asylum claimants, such early disclosure is important not just to the effective identification of need; but to asylum claimants' ability to successfully present their cases to the Home Office (see for example Baillot et al, 2012):

***"It was a good experience working with the Family Keywork Service, discussing issues and seeking guidance face to face, with someone who was working with you 100%... I don't talk openly with anyone, except with a dedicated keyworker, but I can talk openly, and seek guidance."***

Beneficiary 4 case file

***"I think it is the way she started talking to me. They were talking to me like someone who already knew me you know."***

***So I found myself like, I can open up to this person, because I am feeling comfortable, the way she talks to me”***

Individual interviewee 2

Of course, building strong relationships with keyworkers is not without potential drawbacks. Some staff reflected that families could be unwilling to engage with other workers if problems arose during while a keyworker was on leave. This was seen a problematic especially where students, whose placements last six months, left the service, necessitating re-allocation of the case to another staff member.

Moreover, keywork is not a means unto itself. Rather it is a tool which, when implemented effectively, enables a holistic and collaborative approach:

**“Taking time to build trusting relationships, with a consistent point of contact can be really valuable. Considering the needs of each family as a whole also helps to tailor support effectively. Together, they help to provide a safe and accessible environment that allows families to choose.”**

Big Lottery<sup>7</sup>

Family Keywork Service frontline staff were quick to identify that a keywork model had been essential to the realisation of other key principles such as early intervention and collaborative working:

***“you have to ... be able to listen to a whole list of a person’s issues and prioritise ... you have to be understanding on that, be led by the needs of the person ... you might go into an appointment with a list of what you’re going to achieve but it has to be led by the family because if they can’t trust you, then a holistic plan is never going to work... ”***

Staff Member 2

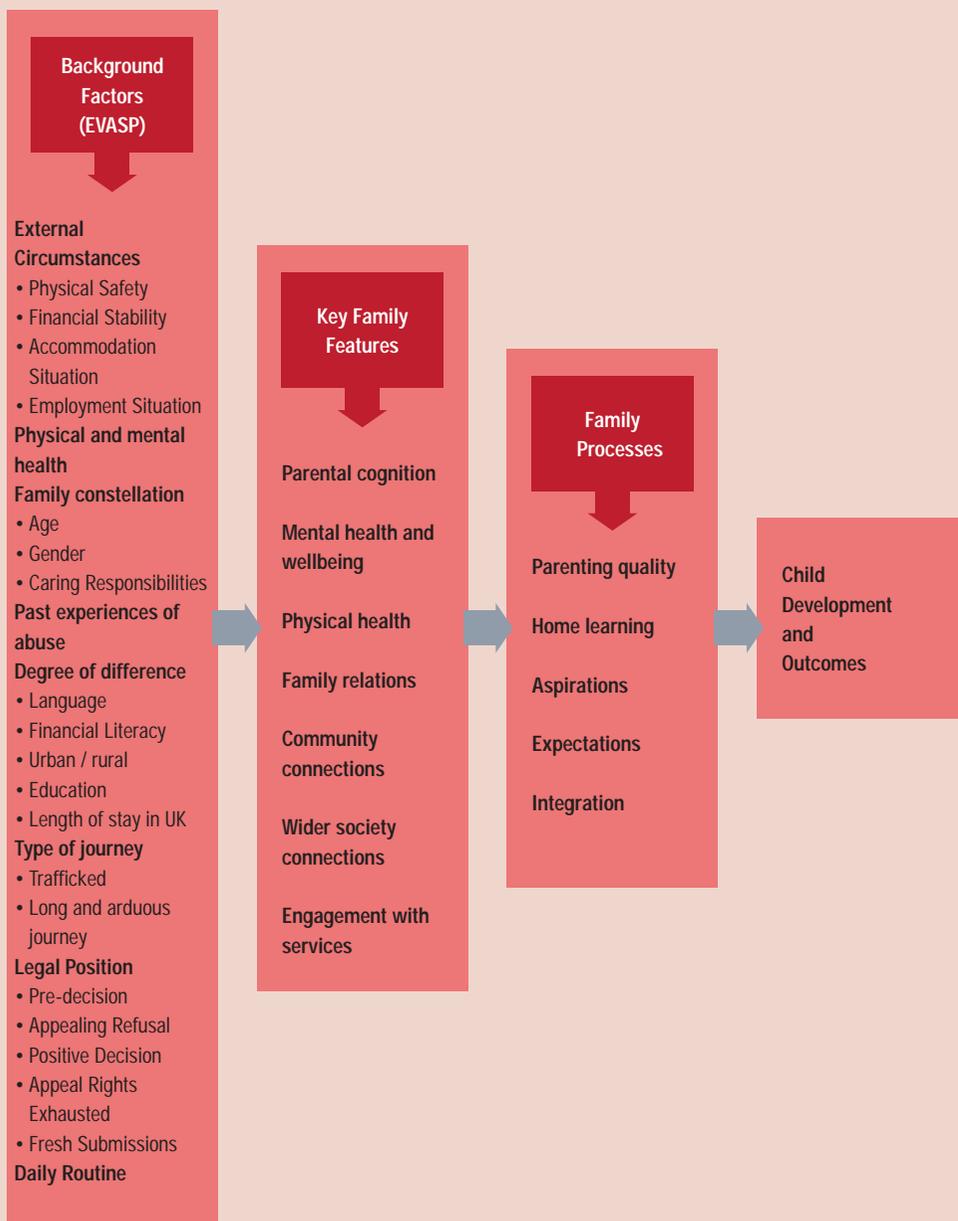
Below we explore the extent to which Family Keywork Service has managed to combine their focus on keywork with a collaborative approach to their work with families.

## 5.2 A holistic, family-centred approach

A holistic approach to work with families is complex at any time. But given the multi-layered nature of the needs of asylum-seeking families – as families, as migrants adapting to a new culture, as survivors of human rights abuses, and as asylum claimants navigating the UK asylum process; the need for a detailed model for assessment and identification of need is paramount.

The EVASP model detailed in Chapter Two above has been the primary tool used by the service to ensure that families’ needs are assessed and taken into account. Ten of the key areas for assessment of vulnerability identified by EVASP have been integrated into the Family Keywork Service delivery model, and supplemented with assessment tools inspired by wider children’s rights’ frameworks:

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/research/children-young-people-and-families/children-and-families>



Discussions around these areas of potential vulnerability and resilience are designed to enable keyworkers and families to make a joint support plan which will help the family to establish their needs and their areas of strength, articulate personal goals, identify and explore options and actions necessary to achieve the goals. Standardised self-assessment tools located within the team's casework management system allow families and keyworkers to review this assessment at regular points during the service.

One benefit of this holistic approach has been its emphasis on the inclusion not just of heads of household but of their dependants. As one previous beneficiary who is now accessing the Holistic Integration Service noted:

*"... Scottish Refugee Council when they accept you and open the door for you they don't do it for me personal, the best thing is that they respect my children, they open it for my children as well, they look after the children as well without any upsetting or annoying or the children, they respect for all the family, not just the one person..."*

HIS service user Interview (referring to Family Keywork Service)

The feedback gathered from children too indicates that they have felt both included in and appreciative of the service:

*"thank you for helping mummy with everything, I really appreciate it"*

Beneficiary 27 case file – feedback from daughter, aged 6

Our interviews with stakeholders indicate that the holistic nature of the service's work has also garnered recognition from outside Scottish Refugee Council :

*“I really think it’s almost all encompassing they’re so aware of peoples’ needs they’re so appropriate in their response, I think it’s absolutely an invaluable service”*

Social Work stakeholder 1

*“I think they spend much more time with them and the service is much more individualised, individual family needs from initial assessment of that family and therefore it is probably more appropriate to the individual family than our general service...”*

Asylum Stakeholder 1

The extent to which the Family Keywork Service approach has been truly collaborative was more difficult to establish. The work of establishing collaborative relationships with service beneficiaries was ruefully deemed to be vital but ‘intangible’ by several members of staff.

In an attempt to better quantify this element of the keywork approach, the evaluation team used learning from non-refugee specific family support projects. This suggests that the extent to which a service takes a collaborative and family-centred approach can, to some extent, be understood by dividing the help-giving practices of staff into ‘relational’ and ‘participatory’ elements:

*“...relational helping behaviors are the foundations for recognizing and acknowledging people’s strengths, and using personal and family assets as a foundation for improving functioning. Participatory helping includes behavior that actively involves people in identifying desired goals and courses of action (Gutierrez et al., 1995; McWhirter, 1991), and which strengthen people’s existing capacities and enhance new skills in a deliberate, conscious manner (Gutierrez, 1995). The use of participatory practices in addition to relational*

*practices systematically lessens the helpgiver’s involvement in the intervention process so that helpreceivers become their own change agents.”*

(Dunst et al, 2002 p.222)

As a preliminary step towards improving our understandings of the service’s focus, we used a questionnaire based on this framework at the beginning of our first two focus groups. The questionnaire and full range of responses can be found at appendix ii. Our initial analysis indicates that project staff scored highly across both the ‘relational’ and ‘participatory’ elements of help-giving practices. While it would be impossible to draw concrete conclusions due to our small sample size, this would certainly provide initial indications of a positive move towards a family-centred and participatory model of work.

### 5.3 Early intervention

*“Early intervention is about taking action as soon as possible to tackle problems for children and families before they become more difficult to reverse... Because a child or family can experience an array of problems all at once, early intervention requires a multilevel, holistic approach... Early intervention is about working with children and families to help them. It is a collaborative approach to providing effective support.”*

Early Intervention Foundation

We have demonstrated above that the service delivery model proposed by Family Keywork Service is both holistic and collaborative. Here we will provide some initial views on the ways on the 'as soon as possible' and 'prevention' elements of an early intervention approach have been operationalised by Family Keywork Service.



In initial stages of the project, the 'early' of early intervention appears to have been interpreted literally – the project aimed to allocate a keyworker to every family seeking asylum within 24 hours of their arrival. This ambitious target has proven impossible to attain, largely due to the changes in the external environment summarised in section 3.1 above.

The effects of the change in service provision can be seen in the graph below, showing that the transition to the new asylum advice contractor as of April 2014 had a clear and negative effect on the speed with which referrals were made to the Family Keywork Service.

However, it is equally clear that this trend began to be reversed as Family Keywork Service responded to these changes in service provision. Arranging regular operational meetings and negotiating a standard referral protocol have reduced waiting times for initial contact with keyworkers, and appear to have built a generally positive working relationship with staff from the local office of the new asylum advice provider:

***“They have been taking every referral we make, we had agreed that we would refer every family with children from 0-8 including pregnant women and as far as I know we have not received any rejected referrals”***

Asylum stakeholder 1

We would suggest, moreover, that to focus solely on the timing of initial contacts with families is to misinterpret the meaning of early intervention. Early intervention refers to work undertaken to deal with potential problems which occur at any stage of a family's engagement with a service. As we have already seen, this is made possible not by simply meeting with families as soon as they enter the UK, but through the creation of a trusting environment where emerging concerns can be swiftly identified, shared, and managed. Examples drawn from the Cost Benefit Analysis compiled in partnership with Inspiring Scotland have shown that regardless of the timing of initial contact with families, Family Keywork Service has been able to play a preventive role in work with families whose circumstances are particularly complex:

### Cost benefit analysis case study

Helen is from Nigeria and was referred to Scottish Refugee Council by a friend in August 2014. Helen disclosed that she was a survivor of trafficking and she had fled from London to find safety for herself and her children. The keyworker referred Helen and her children to Social Services because they were destitute. Helen was assisted to claim asylum and access financial support and accommodation for herself and her children.

Helen's past experiences were affecting her psychologically and she was finding it hard to come to terms with what had happened to her and understand her feelings. Bonding with both her children was difficult and she often felt helpless and unsure of her parenting skills.

Her keyworker referred her to a range of services including Social Work, and TARA who linked her in with a psychologist. This began to improve her mental health. The keyworker helped her to understand her rights and entitlements and because of that she was able to address the safety issues in her accommodation. She also felt more confident and was better able to parent her children.

Further examples of work where Family Keywork Service interventions have ensured the identification and de-escalation of problems will be provided in the impact-focused chapters below.

### 5.4 More responsive and flexible services working together to meet the needs of asylum-seeking families

A crucial element of the original service design was a commitment to influence other service providers in order to improve mainstream service provision to families seeking asylum. As such, in this section we will primarily focus on data from our interviews with individual stakeholders, who were asked to reflect on their operational and strategic relationships with Family Keywork Service.

#### 5.4.1 Partnership working

Feedback on operational links with the service was overwhelmingly positive. With regards to the everyday work of making referrals to the service, and receiving referrals for support for service beneficiaries, none of the agency respondents identified any issues of concern.

Indeed, the staff team came in for particular praise. All of the agency representatives mentioned the names of staff members and/or managers explicitly, an indication that strong interpersonal as well as professional relationships have been built since the service began operation. The holistic, collaborative approach explored above was singled out for particular recognition:

***"...key members of that team want to get the best for the people using that service, so whether it's the information they provide or the services they get in or work with, they're dedicated, passionate [our colleague] had a thoroughly fantastic experience of working with the team and the women there."***

Voluntary sector stakeholder

***"...they have the welfare and support of service users and families at the heart of what they do"***

Asylum stakeholder 2

***"it's not just about getting someone in to fill in time, they do make sure they're getting the right things in for the women and that it's needs led, that really is evident"***

Voluntary Sector Stakeholder

However, it was clear that more prosaic professional qualities of promptness, availability and flexibility were also appreciated:

***“If they’re not about they’re always prompt in calling back and some situations in the past when we had to deal with something quite urgent they were always there to talk about that situation”***

GCSS stakeholder

***“We have a protocol agreement to refer every family...it’s been no problem at all. It’s the opposite, they encourage us and remind us to make referrals.”***

Asylum Stakeholder 1

***“there’s good communication, they’re happy to meet when we want to contact them about specific cases...”***

Asylum Stakeholder 2

***“Scottish Refugee Council always come to [multiagency case conferences] their input is always very valuable, they always take an active part in the meeting and will commit to providing services as part of the discussion”***

Social Work stakeholder

Finally, it is clear that good operational relationships have positively influenced partners’ own work with asylum seeking families. One voluntary sector partner described the value of working with service staff to pilot a learning module with a group of women:

***“we piloted one of our modules [with a group of Family Keyword Service beneficiaries] so the group there and the staff were really influential ...it really impacted on our***

***organisation as it allowed us to see what worked and what needed re-working so it helped to inform changes we thought we might have to make...”***

Voluntary sector stakeholder

Similarly, after delivering activity sessions for families and children (see section 7.3 below) Woodcraft Folk Glasgow ([www.woodcraft.org.uk](http://www.woodcraft.org.uk)) became aware of the potential barriers to families accessing their service independently. They have now agreed to waiver the fees for asylum seeking children and provide volunteer peer mentors for asylum seeking families, and leaflets in other languages.

#### 5.4.2 Understandings of the service’s aims

Respondents were asked what they understood to be the service’s aims. Six of our seven respondents linked the service’s aims explicitly or implicitly to orientation and integration, and appreciated in particular the service’s work on linking families and children to appropriate services and activities:

***“it’s about really helping people integrate”***

Social Work stakeholder

***“I know they do provide support for the children and try to make sure children are in school...I know that they provide support for the women as well in order to access classes like ESOL...”***

GCSS stakeholder

***“I believe it’s to assist with integration and cohesion and to help the families settle into their new lives in Scotland”***

Asylum stakeholder 2

***“...for example with pregnant women, making sure that they access the whole maternity service in good time...”***

Asylum Stakeholder 1

***“...to introduce them to the city they’re now living in and to provide emotional support and provide advice and information on ...other services in Glasgow...it’s also about ensuring that families are not isolated”***

Voluntary sector stakeholder

***“...they quite often need a bit of support a bit of help and assistance to access local services, whether that be statutory or voluntary services, finding out about what’s on in local area...”***

Health Stakeholder

There was however little mention by agency respondents of the service’s role in supporting service beneficiaries to engage with and understand the asylum process, although as we shall see in later chapters, this has consistently been highlighted by service beneficiaries and staff as a vital component of the service model. This implies that further development work is required to expand partners’ understandings of the full range and remit of Family Keywork Service.

### 5.4.3 Filling the gaps?

When asked to reflect upon the operational impact of working with Family Keywork Service, two themes emerged. The first was Family Keywork Service’s role in of completing other service provision – in other words, a view that, for families, Family Keywork Service has been able to ‘fill the gaps’ left by new asylum advice contracts and other changes to the external environment:

***“they’re the ones who are now keeping it together if you like...”***

SW stakeholder

***“...to my knowledge there is no advocacy for asylum seekers in Glasgow and the bottom line is...I know they will advocate for them...at least we know they will get some element of advocacy...”***

Asylum Stakeholder 1

***“... to give the families a kind of focal point some of that extra support and liaising and advocacy that they might not get from anywhere else because they’ll fall through other peoples’ remits... it redresses that gap.”***

Legal stakeholder

The second theme emerging from stakeholder interviews was that the Family Keywork Service actively enhances external service provision to families. This was seen as being relevant in terms of Family Keywork Service involvement in individual cases:

***“involvement with them would enhance any care plan both for children and adults, it certainly helps other services...”***

Social Work stakeholder

And, as two stakeholders noted, because Family Keywork have been able to take 'ownership' of wider integration and family issues, which in turn has enabled other professionals to focus their work more effectively:

***"for me it's a comforting thought to know that they are there and that they provide some amazing support for extremely vulnerably women...it's very reassuring for me as a worker, as my support for them will be slightly different, my aims are focused a bit better...having Family Keywork Service makes my job easier"***

GCSS stakeholder

***"Well from my perspective ... it's someone to go and see if they have issues that they don't need to burden their lawyer ... which means that in our legal appointments it's not being spent 45 mins on that, it allows us to focus on the law, to focus on our job ... where they're involved you deal far less with those other problems ..."***

Legal stakeholder

As a PSP, Family Keywork Service has actively engaged in new methods of cost benefit analysis with the support of Inspiring Scotland. These initial evaluation findings support the hypothesis that Family Keywork Service can and does enable other services to better focus and implement their own service aims, benefiting families and avoiding duplication of work. This may be particularly important as regards mental health (section 7.2); child protection (section 8.3) and parenting (section 8.1).

#### 5.4.4 Strategic influencing

The governance of the service has consisted of a two level structure to manage the project and its obligations under the funder's agreement: an Operational Management Group and Glasgow City Council PSP Governance Group. The service was delivered in line with One Glasgow approach and it fed into the reporting framework established by Glasgow Improving Futures framework .The latter group consisted of; Money Matters (until March 2015), Glasgow City Council, Action for Children, Stepping Stones for families, Children 1st, and Scottish Refugee Council. The regular meetings with these partners have enabled Family Keywork Service to highlight key areas of concern identified through contact with families, and to broker mutual training arrangements in order to increase service capacity to respond to these e.g. training provided to early years staff in Glasgow City Council establishments.

Quarterly reports show that the manager from Family Keywork Service contributes to a range of other strategic groups and meetings. These include regular meetings with the asylum accommodation provider (Orchard & Shipman), the Asylum Seeker Health Network, COSLA, SERCO, New Scots Working Groups and UK operational meetings with Migrant Help, the new asylum advice contract holder. While those stakeholder respondents who themselves attended such meetings (n=3) appreciated Family Keywork Service input, there were some indications that they would appreciate further information about the project:

***"...it would be good if they raised their profile a bit... if they were to publish more and let people know more about the work"***

Asylum stakeholder 2

*“...its services and what it does could be more out there ... [they] need to shout about it a bit more”*

Legal stakeholder

Few respondents could reference particular learning that they had been made aware of during the project's lifespan. Some respondents did not seem to be aware that this had been shared during the New Scots Integration Year 1 Impact Conference where the project's work and learning were profiled, and informed some specific and cross-cutting workshops.

When asked what data and learning would be useful for future services to provide, respondents' suggestions included:

- Data on the number of families accessing the service, their nationalities and household compositions.

Comparative study between families who have benefited from Family Keywork Service and those who have gone through the asylum process without the support of the service

- Exploration of the impact of parental mental health on children
- Understandings of how children settle into nurseries and schools
- Feedback from families on the benefits of the service.

While of course we would hope that the current evaluation report will provide much of the data requested by stakeholders, there is clearly an appetite for ongoing learning to be shared with partners. The structures required for continued gathering of and analysis of service level data should be built into future funding bids as a matter of priority if strategic influencing goals are to be met.

## 5.5 Findings

- Changes to external and internal services have fundamentally altered the environment in which Family Keywork Service operates. However, the service has been flexible and responsive to these changes, and has been able to build and re-build productive operational relationships with other key agencies working with families in Scotland.
- In this new environment, the target of ensuring that a keyworker makes first contact with a family within 24 hours of their asylum claim has proven unrealistic.
- The service has moved away from a traditional advice model and towards a more family-centred participatory approach, to which the strong relationship between keyworker and families has been central.
- The service has successfully implemented a holistic approach which includes all members of the family and is recognised by external partners as well as service beneficiaries.
- External operational partners recognise the quality of the Family Keywork Service's staff and work and feel that it positively impacts upon their own work.
- Family Keywork Service stands to play an even more important role as a focal point for service provision in the new advice and support environment.
- Participation in the One Glasgow framework has enabled Family Keywork Service to engage with, learn from and influence other services working with families in the city.
- Family Keywork Service can and does enable other services to

better focus and implement their own service aims, benefiting families and potentially avoiding duplication of work.

- Some stakeholders do not have a strong understanding of the role and remit of Family Keywork Service and would appreciate more opportunities to share the learning emerging from the project.

# Rights and Options

6

## 6. RIGHTS AND OPTIONS

In this and the subsequent chapters on project impact, we will base our findings primarily upon data gathered from service beneficiaries during a series of group discussions which were organised and facilitated as part of the evaluation process. We also make reference to individual interviews conducted by volunteer Grant McPhail as part of ongoing service user involvement activities.

At the beginning of the evaluation process, the evaluation team identified three broad areas of influence and impact which we hoped to interrogate further: rights and options, access to services and parenting and family life. Under each area, we agreed that the evaluation enquiry would be guided by the SHANARRI outcome signifiers currently used to report to the project's funders.

This chapter, and chapters seven and eight, will therefore provide an overview of the context for each broad evaluation area; then a presentation of our findings against each relevant outcome signifier.

### 6.1 Children and their families are actively involved in assessment, planning & review processes (asylum determination process)

In the previous chapter, we explored the ways in which the project itself has sought to develop a family-centred and collaborative model that takes account of and involves all family members, including children.

Here we move on from this internal analysis to examine the ways in which the work of the service has impacted upon families' ability

to actively engage with the asylum determination process. This process was chosen as the focus of our investigation due to its primacy in the lives of families who must navigate its structures (see Chapter 2).

#### 6.1.1 Key service interventions

Within the service model outlined above in section 3.3, three asylum-focused interventions were originally envisaged:

- Pre-substantive interview briefing
- Post-decision briefing
- Final decision briefing (for applicants whose case has gone to appeal)

However, our data substantiate the indications from Home Office statistics (see above) that processing times for asylum claims now far exceed the agency's six month target. **The average time between asylum claim and substantive interview for the 61 families for whom full data was available was 191 days.** This lies just outside Family Keywork's original service delivery period of six months.

These structural delays in the asylum process have prevented the team from consistently offering meaningful interventions built around later stages of the asylum process. As a result, the key intervention whose impact we shall assess below has been the pre-substantive interview briefing. This is not however to diminish the impact of work undertaken by the team to prepare families for all possible outcomes of their cases, which we will touch upon at the end of this section.

It is important to note that the pre-substantive briefing is an intervention primarily aimed at adult family members. This contrasts with the work explored in chapters seven and eight and reflects the current conduct of Home Office interviews. Interviewees are explicitly asked to make childcare arrangements for dependent children (although no support or information on finding appropriate childcare is provided). Staff and volunteers recounted several instances of families being turned away from their scheduled interviews if their children were present, as Home Office staff felt that their presence would interfere with the interview process.

The impact findings below therefore reflect primarily the experiences of adult members of the families. However, given that adult stress and uncertainty around asylum procedures can have a negative impact on children, the converse can be assumed to be true: that interventions which improve adults' engagement with and experiences of the asylum process will benefit their children, directly (through improved outcomes) or indirectly (through improved parental wellbeing).

### 6.1.2 Impact of pre-substantive briefing

Our review of the case files where pre-substantive briefings were recorded, indicates that these interventions have three key elements:

- Explaining claimants' procedural rights before, during and after the interview, for example:
  - the right to request that the interview be recorded
  - the right to request comfort breaks

- the right to request a specific gender of interviewer or interpreter
- the right to highlight any errors, via legal representatives, after interview notes are issued
- Exploring the practicalities of the experience
  - The interview can last all day
  - Claimants should bring refreshments
  - Claimants can be expected to answer a large quantity of factual questions about their claim
- Exploring and explaining general themes of full disclosure and the meaning of credibility

The totality of this work, and in particular the focus on rights, appears to have positively impacted upon families' feelings of confidence and preparedness for the interview ahead. The contemporaneous notes below, taken from a pre-substantive briefing logged on the casework management system, is representative of the cases reviewed by the evaluation team :

***“Ahmed wanted to recap on his substantive interview preparation ahead of his substantive interview tomorrow...we spoke again about early disclosure and credibility as well as the importance of preparing and making notes about the important points he wants to make sure to cover. We spoke about feeling confident to ask for breaks or to say if the interpreter is not interpreting everything. Ahmed felt prepared and he understood that he will have the opportunity to submit further information after the interview through his lawyer if he needs to.”***

Session notes, beneficiary 25

Focus group participants confirmed that their keyworker assisted them to understand the things they could expect from and request from the Home Office. This was recounted to us as being inseparable from the impact of the keyworkers' interventions upon men and women's states of mind before the interview:

***"He informed me that I could ask for the interview to be recorded, and told me that I needed to prepare well, that there is no second chance. He made me feel proud of myself and told me to tell the truth. He told me to have faith and confidence and broke everything down to my own level. No-one else helped me with this."***

Focus Group 3 Participant

***"I was actually scared but when [keyworker] called me to come and she told me what are the things they will ask me and it actually took a long time but since I got the advice I was calm."***

Focus Group 1 Participant

***"The pre-substantive session was helpful, and I feel more prepared for the substantive interview. Thanks to my keyworker I feel more prepared for possible outcomes of my case. Talking to my keyworker helped relieve stress."***

Beneficiary 24 case file

It appeared from our focus groups that keyworkers were careful to work in tandem with legal representatives, and so to complement rather than duplicate their work. This parallels the established good practice of the Scottish Guardianship Service (Crawley & Kholi, 2013). Indeed the legal stakeholder interviewed as part of our evaluation agreed that for a multitude of reasons, such preparatory

work may simply be overlooked or be beyond the capacity of legal providers:

***"...here we do a full appointment pre-Home Office interview, that's not funded by legal aid, ... for other clients who have private lawyers I doubt they'll be able to spend that hour... that's not through any fault but because the funding's not there, that's where the service would be very important in terms of prepping for substantive interview ...lawyers can really forget how daunting that is for each individual and it's the basics that are required in order to better prepare someone... that's most effective for the service user, not 'this is the legal argument I'll be running on your behalf' or nothing at all."***

Legal stakeholder

Many families confirmed that their keyworker had been the only source of this type of information:

***"The Family Keywork Service was very helpful. You gave advice, guidance, and explained how the legal process works better than my lawyer."***

Case file feedback

***"I only get my advice here, I don't get it from my solicitor."***

Focus Group 1 Participant

***"My solicitor helped me but less than Family Keywork Service and it was less detailed."***

Focus Group 3 Participant

External stakeholders confirmed that even where there was some

overlap, repeating and re-affirming good advice can have a positive impact:

***“if I do preparation for the Home Office interview with a woman and they do it with Family Keywork Service it won’t harm them it will be good, the process is so complicated that they have to hear it a couple of times” GCSS stakeholder***

***“...even if the explanation of the asylum process is repeated it doesn’t matter at all because probably the speed at which we give to in groups is not necessarily enough for the people who are already pretty confused with the whole process.”***

Asylum Stakeholder 1

### 6.1.3 Beyond the pre-substantive briefing

Having assisted families to prepare for interviews and helped them to understand and claim their rights, Family Keywork Service has also been instrumental in overcoming some of the procedural barriers that have been criticised as impeding women in particular from engaging with the substantive interview (see Asylum Aid Charter). A primary example is that families who were struggling to find informal childcare for their children during the interview were frequently assisted to get childcare via British Red Cross. This allowed parents to speak freely and avoided exposing children to potentially upsetting narratives of past abuse:

***“They helped me to get childcare for the interview. That meant I didn’t have to disclose information in front of my children. It would have been stressful and hectic if I had had to take my kids.”***

Focus Group 3 Participant

At strategic level, Family Keywork Service have been active in working on this issue with the Refugee Women’s Strategy Group. This has led to the agreement with the Home Office of a pilot project to provide childcare for substantive interviews in Glasgow beginning in 2016.

Two further aspects of the Family Keywork Service’s work around asylum procedures are of note. Firstly, the team have developed a post-interview de-briefing checklist. Although not completed in every case, this checklist can provide invaluable qualitative data on interviewees’ experiences at the Home Office:

***“Lisa found the interview very stressful and difficult. She said it lasted for about three hours. She said the interpreter was professional but they made her feel quite uncomfortable by being unfriendly.”***

Post-substantive checklist notes, Beneficiary case file 16

In the Refugee Action Family Keywork pilot, it was found that similar post-interview work could play a key role in helping families to identify failings in the conduct of the substantive interview which they would need to raise with their legal representative (Hutton, 2012). For both reasons, this area of work would merit further investigation in future.

Secondly, although many families were still waiting for their substantive interviews, keyworkers often started the delicate work of preparing families for all possible outcomes of their cases, positive and negative. Some of the families we spoke to expressed very negative views about the refusal rate for asylum claims, based on information within their own communities:

*“Because I think most people now, what they are doing now, even if you are going to the court, they still refuse you, so I think they are working together because they don’t want to give you [status] ...”*

Focus Group 1 Participant

Despite this, keyworkers appeared to have given some measure of hope to families through emphasising onwards appeal rights if an initial decision was negative:

*“He explained that if the decision was a refusal, it is not the end, there is the possibility of putting an appeal.”*

Focus Group 3 Participant

*“Even when you get a refusal it’s not the end of the line but you can still appeal, there’s still a chance for you.”*

Focus Group 1 Participant

*“She helped me to prepare for meetings such as my asylum interview. I was as informed as possible about the possible outcomes”*

Beneficiary case file 23

We will return to this pre-emptive preparatory work in our final chapter where we explore in more detail the impact that this has had on families’ resilience.

## 6.2 Children live in a safe, secure & suitable home environment

Assisting families to report problems in their accommodation, advocating for these to be resolved and making families aware

of their rights to safe and appropriate accommodation has increasingly become a major element of the service’s work:

*“...at the start there were no accommodation complaints on the scale that there is now, accommodation complain is a really big thing that have occurred over the last months or last year and become a bigger part of what we do...”*

Volunteer 1

This perception was supported by our review of the data. **27 of the 38 case files reviewed (71%) recorded incidents where families complained of unsuitable accommodation.** This has largely been on an unplanned basis, with families contacting their keyworker by phone or in person to report problems that they have been unable to resolve themselves.

### 6.2.1 Service interventions

Staff reflected that, despite the volume of work created, advising and advocating for families on these issues could help with the building of the keywork relationship:

*“[undertaking advice and advocacy on practical issues] helps to build up trust with families, they see I’m prepared to pick up phone and advocate for them, that helps relationship – they’re used to going to different agencies and asking for things to happen, trying to exercise their rights, but people tell them ‘it’s not my role’ etc. So even though it’s not my role, it helps build up trust, they see keyworker as someone they can trust and go to.”*

Staff member 3

Key interventions have included:

- Explaining the exact content of the accommodation contract and its requirements – including managing service user expectations
- Phoning, emailing and faxing accommodation provider to report and follow up problems
- Escalating problems to managers or to the Home Office as appropriate
- Enabling, if cases are not resolved, service users to contact appropriate elected representatives about the issues

### 6.2.2 Impact

Case files and feedback from beneficiaries indicate that, when faced with initial reports of problems in accommodation, keyworkers have adopted a rights-based approach, which has included printing out contract standards for beneficiaries and explaining specific provisions:

***“When [keyworker] was telling me I have rights in my flat when I had a problem with my flatmate, you have to do this you have to do this, maybe she does anything that you don’t like, you just call up...”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

This has included work to ensure that beneficiaries do not waste their time reporting problems that are outside the scope of the accommodation contract:

***“I was sharing before so I came here and they helped me, they took me to the top floor it was very difficult so I came [back]***

***here and they helped me to call the provider [regarding living in a top floor tenement flat] ...[my keyworker] told me is it better for me to manage for now and see what happens with my decision...”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

However service beneficiaries who had experienced problems in their accommodation consistently reported a feeling that their own reports had no effect, and that it was only when a caseworker became involved that they were acted upon. One beneficiary recounted a series of problems that she had reported herself to the accommodation provider. In every case, she felt that it was only when her keyworker had intervened that anything had been resolved, as in this example:

***“Even when we moved, we had problems with our kid’s bed. They brought a cot bed, and the cot bed, my child is too old for it. They told us they would bring it, it was on a Friday, we will bring it on Monday. Monday became a week, two weeks, three weeks, so it was my caseworker chasing them, that’s when they actually reacted.”***

Individual interviewee 2

Thus, many of the problems reported to the team resulted in keyworkers and other staff undertaking extensive advocacy and moving back to more traditional ‘casework’ advice. This was clearly welcomed by service beneficiaries:

***“they helped me with some problems in my accommodation, last time I was in trouble with electric and gas top-up, I contacted [my keyworker]and he contacted the accommodation provider, immediately the problem was resolved, so I am really happy with the service...”***

Focus Group 3 Participant

***“the most useful service I’ve got from here it to move house because my previous house had problems, with help from here I managed to move to a better accommodation”***

Focus Group 3 Participant

And was particularly important where the problems reported to the service related to children’s safety in the accommodation:

***“A lot of the time, people will discuss with us safety concerns for example a client who had a new born and was living in a one bed house with another family – mum, and two teenagers – in one house – a safeguarding concern-we raised it with HO safeguarding officer, initially raised with Orchard & Shipman who said it was not a problem, we referred to the Home Office who acknowledged the problem and moved them.”***

Staff member 3

On the other hand, it would seem to indicate that rights-based, collaborative advocacy, can only go so far when faced with institutional barriers, perceived or real:

***“I think that we don’t have any rights... even if you claim your rights, they don’t do it so you don’t have your rights...they don’t do it.”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

***“I think it is helpful, your voice is better than ours, they don’t believe us...”***

Beneficiary 22 case file

Additionally, the evidence emerging from this area of work continues to raise considerable concerns not just about the quality of accommodation provided to asylum seeking families but about

the customer service ethos of the current accommodation provider:

***“once you are in that house they are not ready to move you, if you really frustrate them they will move you to a shared house...they don’t care...”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

***“The way they look at asylum seekers is really bad, terrible...”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

At the very least this would imply that the accommodation provider will need to improve its corporate image amongst the asylum seekers it houses. As we noted in chapter five, the Family Keywork Service Manager works closely with representatives from the accommodation provider at strategic and operational levels. However, there is clearly an ongoing need for monitoring and review of processes and service delivery standards in this domain.

### **6.3 Children and families are more aware of the benefits to which they’re entitled**

While the need for intensive advocacy under this outcome indicator has been less than that noted above in relation to accommodation standards, Family Keywork Service has nonetheless adopted a mix of active and responsive interventions regarding poverty alleviation for the families who benefit from the service. These have included:

- responding to emergency presentations from families and pregnant women with complex migration histories who are destitute and homeless.
- briefing all beneficiaries at early stages of their engagement with the project on their entitlements to financial support.

- actively suggesting and referring to sources of cheap or free clothes and baby equipment for expectant mothers
- facilitating access to school clothing grants and free school meals

The impact of the service's interventions is explored sequentially below.

### 6.3.1 Initial access to asylum support: complex migration histories

Since the change to asylum advice contracts in April 2014, Family Keywork Service have increasingly adopted a role in working with families to enable their access to section 98 (initial accommodation & support) and section 95 support. These are typically families who have complex migration histories and many are headed by women who have fled situations of abuse, either due to trafficking or domestic abuse.

Largely staffed by volunteers, the service's work with such families, commonly known as 'new arrivals', has been considerable in volume. **23 of the 37 cases reviewed under our case file review were provided with substantial support, information and advocacy prior to a claim for asylum support being lodged.**

Of these cases, three heads of household were women who had been trafficked to the UK, three were victims of domestic abuse, and two were households who had escaped situations both of trafficking and domestic abuse.

13 of the people who presented in this way were referred to Glasgow City Council Homelessness Services for assistance with temporary accommodation under section 22 of the Children (Scotland) Act as they were homeless and destitute but were not

accepted by Home Office as requiring initial accommodation.

All families went on to access initial accommodation and then section 95 support, having been provided with advocacy and assistance to lodge claims for support, and in some cases, their claims for asylum by Scottish Refugee Council services.

Clearly, here the impact of the service's work was immediate and dramatic, and fostered in many cases a lasting trust in the service that was evoked by the beneficiaries we spoke to:

***"I felt so much better because the minute I left here [Family Keywork Service staff member] called a social worker and they took me to a hotel for two months, it was the pain I had then, it really helped me"***

Focus Group 1 Participant

***"That day I didn't think I have a life again but then she talked to me and I am so calm..."***

Focus Group 1 Participant

### 6.3.2 Alleviating poverty

Even for families who do not require initial assistance to access support, the service has played a role in alleviating the impact of living on limited financial support. This has included accessing items for children that families would otherwise have struggled to buy, something which had evidently impacted upon their daily lives:

***"Giving me toys as well because the money we take NASS support isn't much."***

Focus Group 1 Participant

***“Toys are brilliant it keeps them [my children] busy, they don’t disturb you if they’ve got toys”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

***“...my keyworker helped me to go there [Red Cross] and get toys and clothes and a double buggy when my second child was born...”***

Focus Group 3 Participant

Keyworkers have also ensured that correct section 95 support levels are being paid to families, especially after changes in circumstances such as the birth of a new baby. Several focus group participants commented on assistance received from the service to access maternity grants and indicated that they would otherwise have struggled to obtain this money:

***“...they actually helped me because they helped me to get the money because I wouldn’t have had the courage to phone the Home Office myself.”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

Work with pregnant women has involved ongoing partnership working with British Red Cross New Mum’s Project and Prolife, organisations who have been able to provide essential new baby items before and after the birth of new family members (for more details see section 7.2).

Finally, Family Keywork Service has undertaken significant work to ensure that families are aware of and can access their entitlements to free school clothing and meals, in order that children can successfully engage with early years provision in their local areas (see section 7.1 below). The totality of this work has been appreciated not just by adult family members but by children themselves:

***“You helped with money for my school uniform and I loved the toys at Christmas”***

Child’s feedback, service user involvement group session

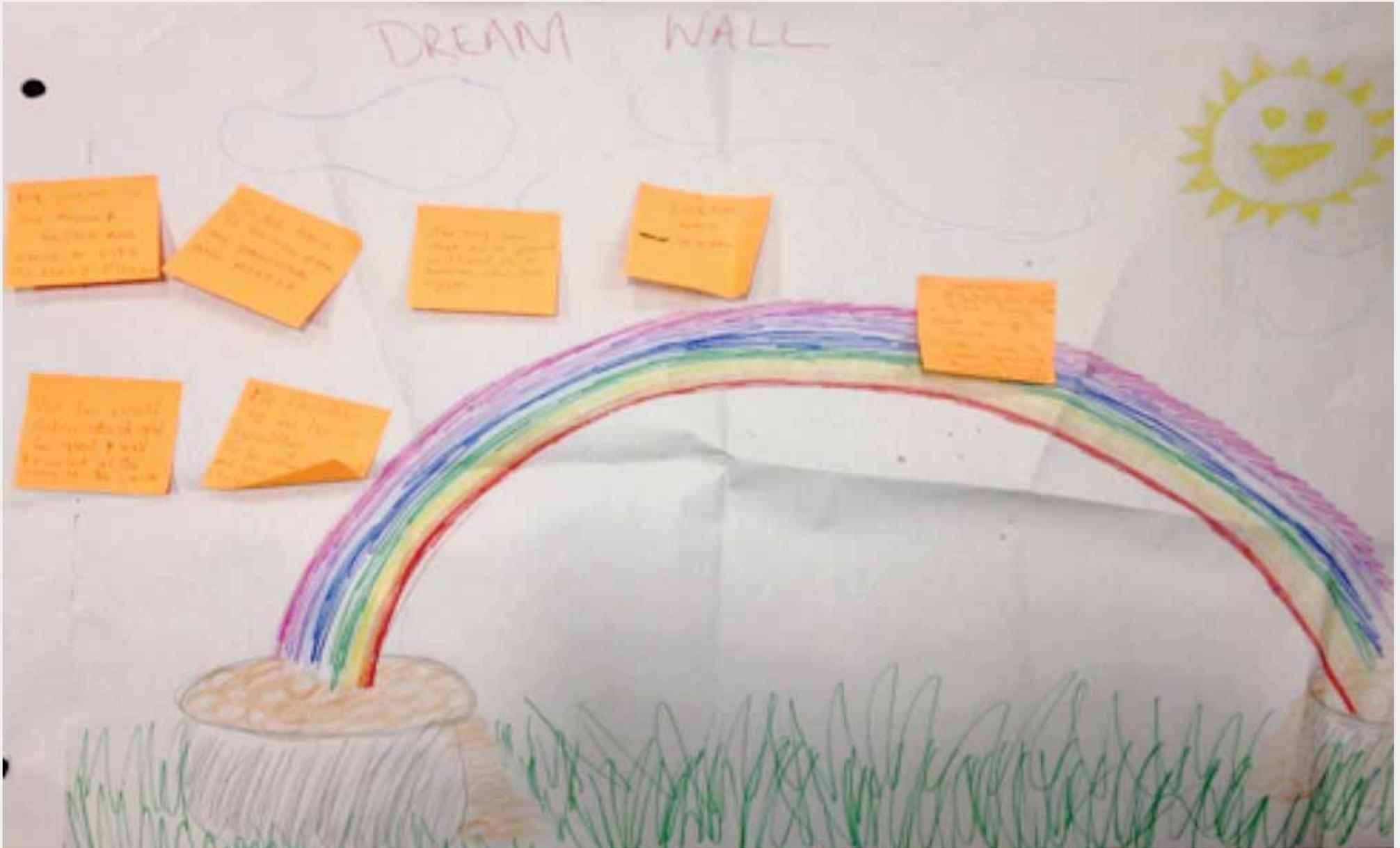
## 6.4 Findings

- The pre-substantive briefing has successfully increased beneficiary engagement with and preparedness for the asylum process.
- This briefing does not duplicate the work of other service providers and instead complements the work of immigration advisers and legal representatives.
- Work to prepare asylum claimants for their interviews alleviates stress and anxiety in parents. Research suggests that this positively impacts upon the wellbeing of their children.
- The service provides an effective advocacy service for asylum seeking families who report problems in their accommodation. Many of the accommodation problems reported directly affect children. The service has worked successfully with partners to address accommodation problems that impact on children’s wellbeing.
- Despite adopting a rights-based approach to this work, there continue to be institutional barriers which prevent asylum claimants from exercising their rights to safe and suitable accommodation without assistance.
- Family Keywork Service is a unique access point to asylum support for families who have complex migration histories and would otherwise be homeless and destitute.

- This work has a gendered focus as many families are headed by women who are escaping gender-based harms.
- Family Keywork Service has alleviated the impact upon children of living in low-income households, through practical support and work to maximise families' incomes.

# Rights and Options

7



## 7. ACCESS TO SERVICES

Access to services is one of the areas where the work of the Family Keywork Service can most fruitfully be mapped to the indicators of integration referenced in chapter two above.

In this chapter, we will examine the impact that the service has had on parents' and children's learning; and their ability to access health and additional care services when required.

### 7.1 Parents and children are guided in their learning.

***"I dream that I may work and that my child can go to school and be educated."***

***"I hope my kids doing well in school and have respect."***

Dream wall, focus group 2

***Int: Do you have any hopes for your daughter?***

***Res: Yes. For her to go to school, and grow up and be strong.***

Interviewee 2

#### 7.1.1 Early years education

Access to early years and primary education emerged as the key theme under access to services. Children may have experienced significant disruption to their education prior to arrival in the UK and be keen to resume schooling in order to avoid 'falling behind' (Marsden & Harris 2015, p. 77). Equally, school is an access point not only to education but to integration opportunities for children and their families:

***"School represents an opportunity to make friends, to learn English, to re-start their education, and to gain knowledge and experience of Scottish culture, all of which are key for integration [...] The benefits of school for re-establishing routines and for building new connections are not only important for children but for the whole family. This is especially the case when parents are struggling to re-establish daily routines and to connect with others in the city ... "***

(Marsden & Harris 2015, p. 80)

On a practical level, the increase in dispersal to areas beyond previous dispersal cluster areas, where schools were more 'geared up' to the arrival of asylum seeking children, was identified as another reason why overcoming barriers to education has been so important to families (Staff member 1).

Beneficiary group discussions indicated firstly that Family Keywork Service has played a vital role in enabling children to access early years education; and secondly that this has had a hugely positive impact on children and families. Many families linked interventions made by their keyworker to their child's ability to access and then thrive in an educational setting:

***"when my child was going to nursery I was not finding any place for him, [my keyworker] guided me very well go contact health visitor and to write a letter to nursery I did that process and was able to get a place for him in nursery.. I saw a great change in my son, it helped him to improve his speech and make friends..."***

Focus Group 3 Participant



***“My boy has started school thanks to [keyworker] and he is back to the boy I knew... I had no money and she got me money and showed me how to apply for grants to get him a uniform. My boy has changed back to himself”***

Focus Group 2 Participant

Indeed one participant stated that this was the most important impact that the service had had on her life:

***“What I benefited from working with [keyworker], I couldn’t say it’s little effort, but to me in my own life it’s a huge impact, so I was here for almost a year now and my kids were not going to proper school and [keyworker] helped me to get a nursery for my girl, and different organisations I was in because of [my keyworker], so I benefited a lot, thanks a lot.”***

Focus Group 3 Participant

The interventions required to facilitate this access varied in form and intensity. Beneficiaries and staff made frequent mention of the assistance provided by the service in completing and returning the necessary forms for children to obtain free school uniforms and meals. Given the very limited income of asylum seeking families, these practical steps were seen as vital to realising children’s educational rights:

***“the most helpful thing you did was helping with the school uniforms “***

Case file 31 feedback

Some beneficiaries also required concrete assistance in finding, selecting and registering with local schools:

***“I had gone round, looking for the school, I couldn’t get it... then I went to my caseworker and they gave me a list of schools and then pointed me to the nearest school...”***

Interviewee 1

***‘it helped my mum a lot to have someone to talk to. You helped her to know what to do about registering with school and you’ve helped our whole family”***

Child’s feedback, service user involvement group session

Other families required more intensive advocacy, particularly when children were moving home prior to or during their initial weeks in education:

***“...this worker tried her best to find a school for the children and she found schools for the children in [dispersal area] and soon after they had to move but that didn’t stop her from quickly finding a school for the children... and the woman is delighted with the school, the children are happy in school, but what started being very stressful basically it ended very well and the kids are doing amazingly in school, the school people speak very highly of them-that was an example of a worker who tried and tried everything under the sun for the woman...”***

GCSS stakeholder

## 7.1.2 Adult education

While the primary focus of Family Keywork Service interventions has been children’s educational opportunities, beneficiaries involved in the evaluation process did make mention of the work done by keyworkers to assist parents to access English and other learning.

***“...she guided me through that I can study, she gave me some leaflets from internet that I can apply and study”***

Focus Group 2 participant

***“...they called the library and I got a place to study computers...”***

Interviewee 1

***“...the team helped my husband to find English classes in the city centre”***

Focus Group 1 Participant

At group level, the service has worked closely with specialist providers to enable parents to benefit from modules such as ‘Empowering Pathways to Learning’, delivered to a group of women beneficiaries as part of an ongoing working relationship with YWCA. This series of workshops was evaluated highly by the women who attended, in terms both of the opportunities for learning and feelings of confidence and self-esteem:

### ***DID YOU ENJOY THE SESSIONS?***

<b>YES</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>0</b>
------------	----------	-----------	----------

If you ticked 'YES' can you please tell us what you enjoyed about it?

- Helped me be active and work on self esteem
- Know who you are as a woman being a leader, and being confident
- I perceived the information that I didn't know

Extract from YWCA Empowering Women Report February 2015

Feedback from this work also indicates that it provided a forum for women to explore their gender roles in their home countries and in the UK context, as mothers, family members and active members of a new society.

Finally, Family Keywork Service has enabled adult family members who identify personal goals linked to education to meet with specialist organisations such as Scottish Wider Access Project (SWAPwest). SWAPWest undertake individual student guidance meetings with women and men referred by Family Keywork Service; adopt a strength-based approach to identify possible courses or career development pathways; and provide people with the information they require to pursue these.

All of this work, whilst aimed at adult family members, is designed in cognisance of the very real positive impact that parental learning, especially when focused on English skills, can have on children. Where parents are not able to develop confidence in English, children can often find themselves in the uncomfortable position of "family advocate" in dealings with services and institutions, a role which can then undermine family structures and place unwarranted pressure on children in emotive or conflictual situations (see for example Lewig 2009, p.35).

## 7.2 The child, young person & family receive additional support and care when they need it.

The child, young person & family access health care when needed.

### 7.2.1 Physical health

There were few examples recounted to us during the evaluation of problems accessing mainstream health services. Since the establishment of the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Asylum Health Bridging Team in 2012, all asylum seekers arriving in Glasgow have automatically undergone basic health screening and been registered with a GP. In most of the cases reviewed by the evaluation team, the only assistance subsequently required by Family Keywork Service beneficiaries has been guidance or signposting to find their local GP surgery and, for beneficiaries who are not confident in English, assistance in completing registration forms or in changing GPs if they move area.

There was evidence that a more a holistic package of support has been required around pregnancy. With one-third (n=53) of the households accessing the service having a pregnant woman as a head or dependant member of the household, this has been a key area of work. In line with the holistic approach outlined in chapter four above, our review of case files and service user feedback suggests that the package of support developed takes into account family circumstances, women's physical and mental health; additional needs due to pregnancy or other factors; and practical requirements. Partnership working with statutory and voluntary sector partners has also assisted in the provision of appropriate support. In many cases, this has ensured that women feel able to prepare for and welcome new babies, as the case study below demonstrates:

Ms. Chen was 20 weeks pregnant when she and her young daughter first accessed Family Keywork Service for initial pre-asylum advice. She disclosed to her keyworker that she frequently felt upset due to having to navigate asylum processes on her own. As the birth drew near, Ms. Chen grew increasingly concerned about childcare for her daughter while she was in hospital with the new baby. Family Keywork Service agreed with her to make a referral to British Red Cross New Mum's Project for support. Ms. Chen's keyworker also contacted the hospital social worker to put in place respite foster care for Ms. Chen's daughter while her baby was being born. British Red Cross and Family Keywork Service assisted Ms. Chen to access charitable monies and baby equipment for her baby in advance of the birth. A doula was present at Ms. Chen's birth and at her final meeting with her keyworker, she presented in a positive and happy frame of mind

Similarly in the post-natal period, our data indicate that the service's interventions, combined with linking women to other resources, can have a considerable positive impact on new mothers:

*"We've seen mums with new babies tearing their hair out because they can't cope but with that wee bit of support., and keyworkers will put in other support for example phoning Health Visitors, then you can see the difference in them within a couple of weeks...they start to come in and start to say hello and respond to questions..."*

Staff member 1

## 7.2.2 Mental Health

The data gathered during the evaluation, from case files, focus groups and interviews, present persistent themes of poor, but primarily subclinical, mental health. This resonates with findings from the Holistic Integration Service (Strang et al, 2015). Focus group participants and interviewees described feeling "low", "stressed", "depressed", "sad" and "scared" at various junctures of their asylum journey. However gaps in data gathering and a lack of comparable external data mean that it has been impossible to link these to an exact prevalence of diagnosed mental health problems.

There are some indications that these feelings have been particularly prevalent during pregnancy or after the birth of a child, and are exacerbated when asylum status, housing or financial support are not felt to be secure. The vocabulary of 'struggle' was frequently invoked by beneficiaries to describe their feelings at such times:

*"Later [after birth of first child] I was alone and struggling because of my situation"*

Focus Group 2 participant

*"Let me say on the first hand I was struggling with my son."*

Interviewee 3

*"[I] struggled to cope in my new place as I didn't know anyone apart from my kids and partner"*

Focus Group 2 Participant

*"[prior to substantive interview] you feel depressed, all sorts of things..."*

Focus Group 1 Participant

Perhaps due to the personal nature of these health problems, there was little in depth discussion of access to health services during our focus group discussions. Case file review and individual interviews have yielded examples of liaison between the Family Keywork Service team and specialist services such as the COMPASS specialist mental health clinic<sup>8</sup>, Glasgow Rape Crisis Centre's Ruby Project<sup>9</sup> and the Trafficking Awareness Raising Alliance<sup>10</sup>, and in one case Social Work and Community Psychiatric Services. All of these agencies provide either psychological or psychosocial support to asylum claimants. However, the most striking finding on mental health was that participation in the service itself, above and beyond referrals to formal health care provision, appears to have positively impacted upon some of the 'subclinical' mental health problems described by beneficiaries.

***"It is helpful to talk, it helped me to cope with stress"***

Beneficiary 31 Case File

***"By talking with my keyworker about my problems it helped release them"***

Beneficiary 24 case file

***"During my journey all I knew was fear but [keyworker] kept encouraging me and showed me that men could be trusted...I needed that..."***

Focus Group 2 Participant

***"I've had some days when I'm so down, but when I speak to my caseworker, I feel better. As much as I'm not getting the answer I want to hear, I feel kind of settled."***

Interviewee 2

While we would not suggest that the Family Keywork Service should be used as a substitute for formal health services, particularly in the complex field of mental health, our evaluation data would seem to support the views of staff members who described seeing beneficiaries physically transformed at least in part due to having engaged with the service:

***"there are particular cases where we've had women enter the service who have been at a crisis or breaking point but six months down the line are different people. There was a woman who came into the service right at the beginning and I did an exit interview with her and I didn't recognise her that was the total physical transformation in her..."***

Volunteer 1

### 7.3 Findings

- Family Keywork Service's has played a key role in ensuring that pre-school and school-age children are able to access appropriate early years provision. This positively impacts upon children's development and wellbeing.
- For adult family members who wish to study, Family Keywork Service has acted as a reliable source of information and guidance about applying for ESOL or other courses.
- Family Keywork Service has undertaken some development work with other services to ensure that adults are informed and enabled to make choices about their education. This area could be further developed in future.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nhsggc.org.uk/your-health/health-services/compass/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.rapecrisiscentre-glasgow.co.uk/content/ruby-project/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.communitysafetyglasgow.org/what-we-do/supporting-victims-of-gender-based-violence/tara>

- Asylum seeking families are generally able to access mainstream healthcare services without the need for intensive intervention.
- Family Keywork Service have developed a holistic model of intervention when working with pregnant women which covers physical & mental health, practical requirements and support from mainstream and specialist services. This has involved productive partnership working with statutory and voluntary sector organisations.
- There is consistent evidence of 'subclinical' poor mental health amongst adult family members.
- Working with Family Keywork Service appears to have a positive impact upon mental wellbeing and may ensure that families do not require more formal or intrusive interventions from statutory services.

# Family Life

8

## 8. FAMILY LIFE

Our analysis in previous chapters has demonstrated the positive impact of Family Keywork Service upon families in relation to their experiences of the asylum process and their ability or otherwise to access mainstream services. Where effective, interventions in these domains are likely to have a positive impact upon family life and parenting. However, parenting offers particular challenges in and of itself.

Indeed, service providers have reported that it is after 'the dust settles' on immediate practical issues that families and service providers see the impact of the stress and anxiety of months, and sometimes years, of waiting for a grant of leave to remain (Parent Network Scotland, personal communication). Equally, getting used as a family to a new culture, a new way of thinking, a new way of being a family is a process which is likely to take longer than a six month service delivery period to achieve.

With this caveat in mind, in this section we will look in more detail at the impact of Family Keywork Service interventions which explicitly aimed to support good parenting. We will also examine in more detail some of the ways in which children's safety, above and beyond the suitability of their accommodation, has been prioritised by the Family Keywork Service team.

### 8.1 Improved parenting skills

While it is important not to assume that all asylum-seeking families will experience difficulties in parenting, the research we drew upon in Chapter 2 highlights just some of the additional difficulties faced by families from a refugee background. These can intersect with more general complexities of parenting in situations of migration

– for example navigating culturally constructed parameters of parenting – to undermine asylum claimants' confidence in their own parenting skills (Sims & Omaji, 2014).

As a result, Family Keywork Service have integrated discussions on parenting and family life into their work. Reflecting upon the challenges of discussing these potentially sensitive subjects of one staff member recognised the benefit of opening the topic up for conversation through using standard questions and tools with every family:

***"I was initially unsure how to introduce [parenting] but it does come up. Our progress review question which asks about parenting does a good job as it's a way to introduce the subject"***

Staff member 3

The same staff member described the ways in which some of the more practical interventions outlined in previous chapters have, almost as a by-product, enabled parents to focus on and build their parenting skills:

***"I think what we've tried to do is to give parents the tools they need to be better parents. It's partially because of our holistic model, people will come with accommodation and support problems and other problems that take up their time and they can't devote as much time to parenting as they would want. It's partially trying to take other issues off table, give them the time they need to focus on parenting."***

Staff member 3

This practical assistance, when combined with the service's positive impact on low level mental health problems (see 7.3

above) may have had a direct impact upon parenting:

*“I was married 6 years but when I came to the UK I was alone and pregnant. I had my baby and there was a problem with my baby I was really struggling with myself. It was hard for me I couldn’t cope I was depressed. I couldn’t cope. It was then I met [my keyworker] at Scottish Refugee Council. She started to help me with the baby. Emotionally I was down but now I am in a better place.”*

Focus Group 2 Participant

The service has actively sought to formalise its role in supporting good parenting through building partnerships with specialist organisations and engaging with respected models of parenting work. Staff attended training from Glasgow City Council in the Triple P programme of parenting interventions in 2013. In late 2014, parents themselves were subsequently able to benefit from a series of group sessions which equipped them with the tools developed by Triple P to deal positively with children’s behaviour. This was initially piloted with Mandarin speaking Chinese families who were the largest nationality group using the service at that time. Topics covered included hassle free shopping, dealing with disobedience, dealing with fighting and aggression and managing bedtime problems. All of the parents who attended these sessions (n=11) reported, in feedback gathered immediately afterwards, that they had benefitted from learning about how to cope with their children’s behaviour.

The team have now developed particularly close working relationships with Parent Network Scotland, who have facilitated Parenting Matters taster sessions for a total of 20 parents. Parents who have participated have uniformly agreed that this had helped them with their parenting and that they would benefit from

undertaking the full range of classes offered by the organisation. Parent Network Scotland and Scottish Refugee Council are now exploring options for future partnership working, including a commitment to create future leaders within asylum-seeking and refugee communities who can share their knowledge with other families.

At the time of writing, Family Keywork Service have also undertaken preliminary discussions around joint working with Mellow Parenting, a Scottish charity which promotes parent child relationships (<http://www.mellowparenting.org/>). The service has also been identified as a partner in a pilot parenting programme, Mending the Gap, developed with Durham University and Teeside Refugee Council. This strengths and solutions-based approach, with a focus on parenting, will involve staff, service beneficiaries and social work students to attempt to mend the gap that exists between health, social work and community based professions and refugees and migrants.

## **8.2 Actively involved within family, social network, school and community.**

Previous research has demonstrated that asylum seekers can be profoundly socially isolated, in ways which are not always apparent to observers (Strang & Quinn, 2014). Women may be particularly isolated, whether as single parents or as spouses (Marsden & Harris, 2015). While there may be a multitude of services available to asylum seekers, in their local areas as well as at city or national level, people may interact with very few organisations or groups. As one volunteer reflected:

*“Often families, particularly lone parent families, are very*

***isolated from the community and can spend all their time in their accommodation only leaving for official appointments. This is damaging to the children's development and the parents' mental health"***

Volunteer 4

Similarly, a staff member pointed out that even where families have some social networks, they may not feel confident enough to avail themselves of the various spaces and facilities in their host cities:

***"...a family might seem very engaged in going to appointments but they never go out of their local area, [day trips run by the service] have an impact on family's confidence and happiness to go to another part of the city...it's a change from what asylum seekers do all the time, which is nothing, people feel they don't have the entitlement to access public spaces"***

Staff member 2

Family Keywork Service have developed a series of non-office based interventions to try to counter this isolation. These have included group days out to promote access to local, child-friendly facilities; social events such as coffee mornings; and outreach services provided by volunteers who have accompanied parents and children on their first visits to local toddler groups, libraries and integration networks.

The overall impact of participation in these activities appears to have been twofold: families feel more able to access activities; and families, and especially children, have been able to make new friends who are in the same situation as them – something which in and of itself provides reassurance and impacts positively on family wellbeing. Each is investigated in more detail below.

### 8.2.1 Accessing community activities and facilities for children (social bridges)

Case file review, interviews and focus groups provided a huge range of examples of the types of local children's activities and facilities promoted by Family Keywork Service through this work. These have included Bounce and Rhyme sessions at local libraries; soft play centres; local integration networks; and parks and local tourist attractions like Loch Lomond. Where feedback was given about this element of the service, it was overwhelmingly positive, with some families additionally commenting on elements of cultural knowledge that they felt this aspect of the service had imparted to them:

***"The Keywork Service was very helpful, especially the event organised in the park. I felt more confident and had a better understanding about life in the UK after the event."***

Beneficiary 6 case file

***"[what was the most useful thing you have had from Family Keywork Service?] I used to go to a playgroup for my baby he organised it for me, I am happy with their service, everything about it..."***

Focus Group 3 Participant

***"The knowledge I've got ... it's actually getting to know everything around you, it's a different culture, and in the same time you try to mingle and get used to daily things that go on here so it's nice to have that knowledge and I got it from here, I wouldn't be able to get it even from internet, it won't be that experience coming from someone who knows it well."***

Focus Group 1 Participant

As the service has developed, Family Keywork Service have also brought in additional service providers to ensure that they can offer a range of activities which promote children's development across different areas of their lives. A recent partnership with Woodcraft Folk appears to have been particularly beneficial in this regard. This community organisation has been involved in arranging fun activities for families which have given children opportunities to be active and interact with other children.



Not only has this been beneficial for the children who have taken part in the activities, but Woodcraft's engagement with Family Keywork Service has influenced the organisation's own approach to work with asylum seeking families and so broadened access for current and future service beneficiaries.

In order to foster ongoing knowledge and confidence in finding and accessing local services, particularly during times when families have indicated that they struggle most to access suitable activities for their children such as during the school holidays, the Family Keywork Service team now produce a monthly newsletter highlighting activities and events for children in Glasgow which volunteers circulate to all service beneficiaries, past and present. A copy of the most recent newsletter can be found at appendix iii.

### 8.2.2 Building friendship (social bonds)

The second area in which the various interventions described above have had an impact has been in assisting asylum seeking families to form friendships (social bonds) with other people who may be in the same or similar situations to them. The importance of this sense of belonging and recognition was underlined by one interviewee when discussing meeting up with friends she had met through Family Keywork Service:

***"It's good to meet up and you actually know you're not alone. People who have never been in this situation, they don't get it, they don't understand it...when you have someone that's going through the same thing as you, there's a way you actually interact and understand each other. And even things maybe worrying you, you actually speak to someone and you realise you're not alone."***

Interviewee 2

The sense that participating in the activities provided by Family Keywork Service had helped to forge friendships was confirmed in the third focus group, perhaps because this was the only group who had met before during PNS taster session. Here, when women were asked about the tools that Family Keywork Service had provided them with to break down the barriers in their lives, two women referenced friendship as a key tool:

***“Provide a support network, gave me friends”***

***“Love and friendship”***

While one participant indicated that the keyworker visits were in themselves a form of social bond:

***“keyworkers visits-not as lonely as they visit us and make us feel human”***

A volunteer who has worked in particular with families from China, a group whom other staff perceived as being potentially harder to engage, confirmed that days out have played an important role in building social bonds for families:

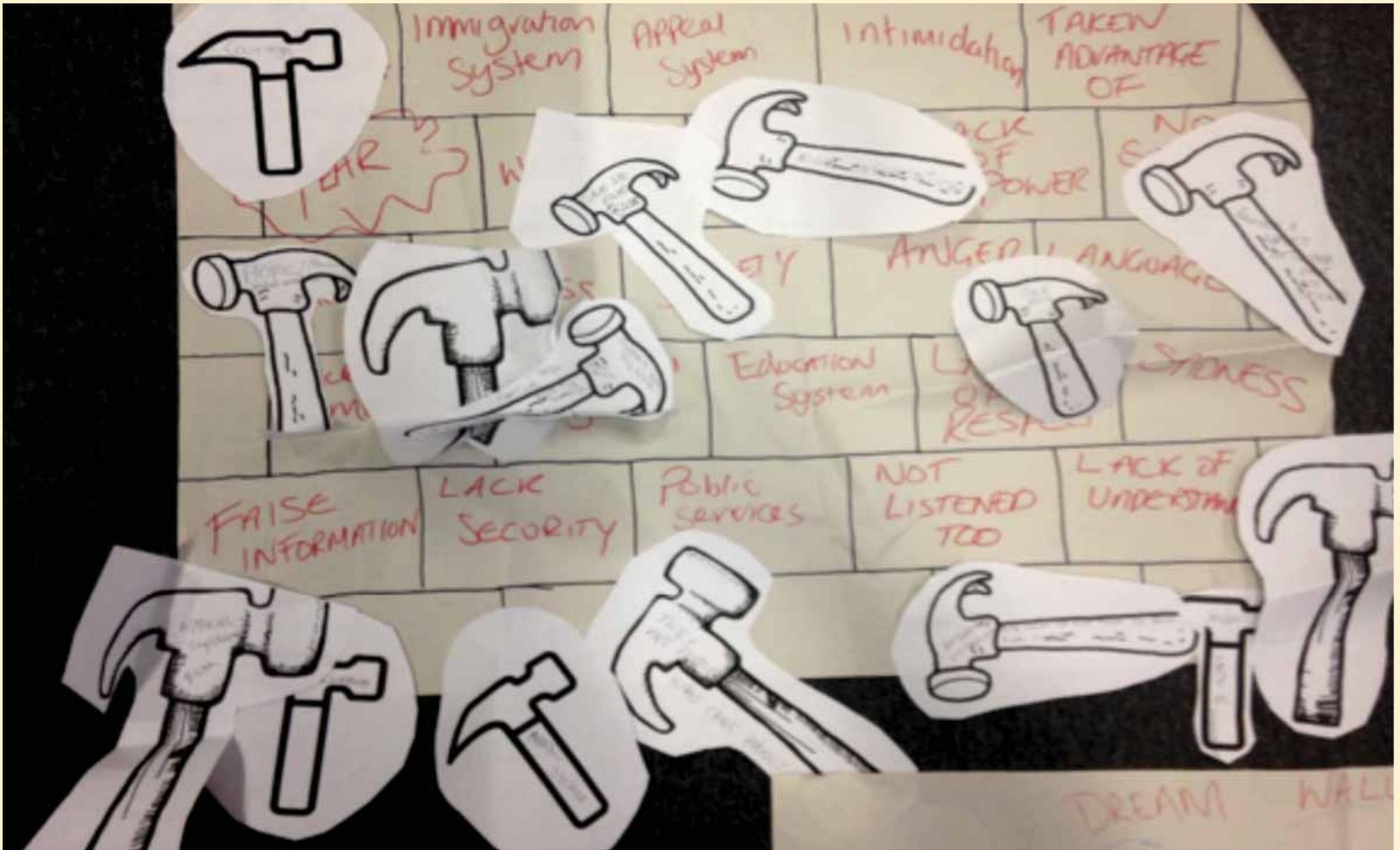
***“I talked to all the Chinese families, they all really enjoyed the day out because they sometimes stay home, they don’t know where to go, they fell alone, they don’t have any friends, every time there’s a day trip they ask if it is free, they’re happy to join the day trip and meet different people...”***

Volunteer 2

Clearly, this work again can only be viewed within the context of the wider holistic service. So while days out have functioned to promote integration and wellbeing, it is suggested that this has only been possible because beneficiaries have a pre-existing

relationship with their keyworker and with the service, have seen the benefit of it and trust the service enough to want to join day trips and other activities. Thus these become important add-ons to a core keywork service which focuses on rights, options and essential services.

Mary accessed the service for the first time when she was heavily pregnant and had just left her abusive husband. Six weeks after the birth of her baby, she was dispersed from Springburn where she had several friends. Mary raised concerns that she would be socially isolated in her new dispersal area. Her keyworker liaised with Mary’s health visitor and made a referral to BRC New Mum’s Project as well as to local children’s activities and community ESOL classes. Mary then attended the Family Keywork Service day out to Loch Lomond Shores and found it extremely useful as she was able to meet other women in the same situation as her. Meanwhile her keyworker continued to liaise with her accommodation provider about problems in her home and assisted Mary to prepare for her (delayed) substantive interview. Mary has now been granted leave to remain and is accessing Scottish Refugee Council’s Holistic Integration Service.



### 8.3 Children are safe at home

*“Factors contributing to child protection concerns which might benefit from more early intervention and prevention efforts include:*

- *Cultural differences in parenting style [...]*
- *Lack of family support, particularly for women who are sole parents or families where there are large numbers of children*
- *Challenges to traditional patriarchal family structures where the roles of men, women and children are clearly defined*
- *Lack of information and knowledge about acceptable family practices in Australia.”*

(Lewig 2009, p.12)

The study cited above is at pains to underline that refugee families are no more likely to come into contact with child protection services than any other group. However the factors outlined in this quote may come into play when families move to live in a new cultural context, and may be exacerbated by the stress of the asylum process itself. Thus, while in section 6.2 we reflected upon the service’s role in ensuring that children live in accommodation which is suitable for them, here we reflect upon the service’s role in identifying, reporting and working to resolve any child protection concerns. This is essential to the early intervention and prevention agenda promoted by GIRFEC and the One Glasgow framework.

Staff openly discussed this aspect of their role, and were clear that they would not shy away from making statutory referrals if required.

However they underlined that wherever possible they would do this in a way that positively includes parents and children. This was demonstrated in the example given by one of the individual interviewees interviewed during the team’s ongoing evaluation work. She acknowledged that at the beginning of her engagement with the service, she had struggled with parenting her elder son, and recognised that a child protection referral had been made by Family Keywork Service. However she considered this an acceptable element of the service that had been provided to her:

*“Because even then I was really struggling with my son, I think they [keyworker team] were one that told the social work about us. So the nurse started coming and started supporting us. That was the time they called a big meeting, she [keyworker] phoned me and told me there’s going to be a meeting. I knew there was going to be a lot of, I got there, there was such a lot of people (laughter) and I got there, I looked at them and they just smiled at me and told me don’t worry everything is going to be fine.”*

Interviewee 3

Another concrete example of the team reporting a concern to relevant agencies was recounted by a stakeholder. She noted that Family Keywork Service had identified and brought to the attention of the asylum accommodation provider that a child aged under 5, who was not known to the Home Office nor to other services, was now living with his parents in their accommodation. It was through the interventions made by Family Keywork Service to make other services aware of the child and his circumstances that appropriate referrals were able to be made to social work in order to ensure that the child’s safety was assessed as soon as possible. (Asylum stakeholder 2)

In a context where, as most respondents agreed, all services are under pressure, Family Keywork Service may stand to play an increasingly important role in this regard. The social work stakeholder we interviewed agreed that Family Keywork Service can and do provide “another set of eyes on a situation where if there are any concerns they can be passed on”. Case file review indicates that this is a responsibility that keyworkers take seriously, with many session notes including observations on service users’ mood, their children’s appearance and behaviour and any changes in these, both positive and negative:

***“Drop-in session (11th March) Mary seemed quite distant and down. I asked if there was anything wrong and if she was feeling ok to which she replied that she was ok. I will monitor this and pass on any further concerns to the relevant party.***

***Appointment (14th March) Mary appeared to be in good spirits, Aiden [baby son] was looking great and appears to be putting on weight and becoming more aware of his surroundings. He responded with smiles when I was speaking to him.”***

Excerpt from beneficiary 21 case file

Once again, staff and volunteers perceived that the service model of keywork itself is vital if the team are to play a useful role in safeguarding children. Firstly because keyworkers, having built a relationship with families, will be well placed to notice changes that would be cause for concern:

***“I have an awareness that a person can just be having a bad day...what’s happened is that through training and talking with the team and engaging with people we realise it’s an ongoing assessment, you build up a picture”***

Staff member 2

***“...the keyworkers are able to build up a relationship with families, they can empathise a lot more, they know the process, they can see it from start to finish”***

Volunteer 3

Secondly, because keyworkers’ experience of working with families under the often severe stress created by asylum processes, may be better able than other non-specialist organisations to identify and address stressors before situations become critical:

***“...a lot of the just coping families they become coping families through that intervention [by Family Keywork Service] so that Social Work don’t have to get involved and there’s a lot of circumstances where, because you’re alone in a system you don’t understand, you just don’t cope and you say things that would sound strange to a social worker, but you’re not a bad mother, you’re not neglecting [your children] but there are concerns...”***

Volunteer 1

Whether this work does, as several staff members suggested, have a directly beneficial impact on social work budgets in particular, would be a useful area of enquiry for future research in this area:

***“...so if [members of Family Keywork Service team] are going out and doing that bit of work around parenting classes or getting them out and about, nursery places, getting them into school or getting registered with GP’s...so by Family Keywork Service making sure all those needs are met, they’re keeping the child not only out of the child protection framework but out of the GIRFEC framework as well”***

Volunteer 3

Certainly, there are indications, as the case study below demonstrates, that keyworkers may be ideally placed to act as culturally competent 'brokers' in situations involving child protection concerns:

Shortly after the birth of her son, Mariam indicated to her keyworker that she planned to take him elsewhere in the UK in order that he be circumcised by a member of her community. Her keyworker discussed this at length with Mariam and explained that she would have to share this information with Mariam's health visitor due to concerns about the procedure being carried out outside a healthcare setting. Having made this referral, Mariam's keyworker continued to liaise with Mariam and her health visitor to assess the possible risks to Mariam's child. She also ensured that Mariam understood why concerns had been raised and how services were likely to respond. Mariam decided that she would place her baby on a GP waiting list and would not arrange a traditional circumcision.

## 8.4 Findings

- Family Keywork Service's role in dealing with practical problems has enabled parents to better focus on parenting skills.
- The team's role in addressing low level mental health concerns (as noted in section 6) has also had a positive impact upon parents' ability to parent with confidence.
- Family Keywork Service has actively sought to build new partnerships with a range of specialist agencies (Parent Network Scotland, Mellow Parenting) in order to enhance the parenting support they can provide to families.
- In-house work on parenting has been supplemented through the provision of formal parenting skills group sessions delivered in partnership with specialist organisations. Beneficiaries report that the parenting methods learnt have been helpful and effective.
- Future work with the Mending the Gap parenting programme offers an exciting opportunity to test innovative service user led approaches to parenting, as does the possibility of further engagement with PNS's model of peer support work.
- Family Keywork Service has recognised that asylum seeking families may be socially isolated and has used creative new methods of service delivery to address this. This has included significant work on assisting families to access local children's activities and services.
- Days out organised by the service have played a dual function in building cultural knowledge and confidence; and creating social bonds between families in similar situations.
- Family Keywork Service play an important role in identifying, addressing and where necessary reporting child protection concerns in order to keep children safe at home. Where appropriate, keyworkers have been able to play the role of 'cultural broker' to enable productive engagement with statutory services.
- All of the above has only been possible due to the benefits of a strong relationship of trust and respect built up through the keywork model of work.

# Conclusion

9

## 9. CONCLUSION

***“family keywork have changed my kids’ life and myself from day one and they make me understand my rights and help my children for a safe home and financial support and feel more confident, and to deal with everyday life stresses to cope, me and my children can’t say enough, thank you”***

Individual interviewee 3

In preceding chapters, we have seen much evidence of the very positive impact that Family Keywork Service has had on the families who have participated in the service. Moreover, the Family Keywork Service has been able to demonstrate that it is possible to combine good practice from a number of different sectors in order to support refugee families effectively.

A key example of this has been the success of using the SHANARRI outcome signifiers to map the work of the service. This is testament to the applicability of the GIRFEC model to work with refugee families. However, it is again important to underline that, as demonstrated in preceding chapters, the strong relationship between keywork staff and families has been crucial to the success of the approach.

It remains for us to trace out the story of one final theme that emerged strongly through the data, a theme which again draws together much of the cross-sectoral good practice mentioned previously. This is a theme of resilience, the ability of families to cope with problems as and when they arise, without necessarily having to access statutory or other supports.

As we saw in Chapter two, resilience is central to understandings of how to support and empower families in the early years and beyond. The GIRFEC and One Glasgow frameworks are premised

upon an empowering, rights-based approach to work with children, to which improving parents’ and children’s resilience is central.

Fostering resilience is equally key to good practice models of work with refugees. Indeed, the concept may be of central importance when working with a client group who have ‘victimhood’ imposed upon them by the requirements of proving persecution within the asylum process. This can blind professionals and help-givers to refugees’ strengths and undermine their attempts to integrate effectively into Scottish society.

Data emerging from Scottish Refugee Council’s Holistic Integration Service (Strang et al, 2015) has linked resilience to the concept of independent agency: the ability of service beneficiaries to resolve their own problems or to access the appropriate mainstream services that they need without assistance. Thus resilience is also fundamental to the development of sustainable solutions for families, whether asylum seekers or settled UK citizens.

In previous sections we have noted multiple examples of interventions undertaken by Family Keywork Service which can be analysed as contributing to increased resilience and independent agency. Despite this, measuring the extent of the impact of such activities on refugee families’ resilience is complex, not least because it is a fluid concept. Therefore, we have chosen in this final chapter to focus on the ways in which ‘resilience’ was expressed by families themselves.

Predominant amongst the case files we reviewed and in our focus group discussions was the word ‘confidence’. This was regularly used by service beneficiaries when asked how Family Keywork Service had helped or contributed to their lives. It resonated across all of the domains of the service’s work and appeared to stem as much from the supportive keywork approach adopted by workers

as from the concrete information and knowledge they imparted.

The impact of the service upon confidence is demonstrated by the picture opposite, taken after our first focus group discussion.

People in focus group one were asked to place the pink post-it notes somewhere on the confidence scale to denote how confident they had felt in dealing with any problems or issues when they very first accessed Family Keywork Service. Participants then placed the blue post-its to show how confident they felt now in dealing with problems themselves. The ways in which Family Keywork Service had contributed to this increase in confidence (confidence drivers) were noted alongside the confidence scale.

While this group discussion cannot be assumed to be representative of the client group as a whole, the theme of confidence recurred throughout the evaluation process, through case files, interviews and focus groups.

***“The Family Keywork Service has been very helpful, it gave me more confidence...It my improved my understanding about asylum, accommodation and everything ... Going to Court with me helped me feel more confident, I would recommend the family keywork service to a friend. I don't think it can be improved as I may need your help in the future.”***

Beneficiary case file 30

***“Before I met you I did not know anything, you really helped build my confidence, I didn't think asylum seekers had rights, you helped understand that and learn a lot. it really benefitted me a lot.”***

Beneficiary case file 38



Thus the story of resilience, as narrated to us by the families we met during our evaluation, was one of increased confidence, a belief in themselves, and also a story of courage. It may require great courage to traverse international boundaries to seek out protection in a new country and a new culture. Yet families clearly still sometimes required a trusted person who could support them to regain their hope and courage when faced with the multiple challenges of re-constructing meaningful lives in the shadow of an uncertain future. As one focus group participant told us:

***“Anytime I need something I call the Scottish Refugee Council and they help me. They always tell me what to do and give me the right information and tell me what to do. They give me courage.”***

This was confirmed by another woman who explained:

***“They hope they gave me, the first day I came here they made me feel that all hope is not lost.”***

Hope, courage and confidence may feel intangible. But as other models of developing good practice in the field of family support demonstrate<sup>11</sup>, these may after all be some of the most important and durable benefits provided to families who have accessed the Family Keywork Service to date.

<sup>11</sup> From presentation delivered as part of the ‘Celebrating Whole Family Support’ learning event organised by the Supporting Families Public Social Partnership and West Lothian Council’s Families Included Service.

# Bibliography

- Ager, A. & Strang, A. (2004) Indicators of Integration : final report (London: Home Office)
- Baillot, H., Cowan, S. & Munro, V. (2012) 'Hearing the right gaps: enabling and responding to disclosures of sexual violence within the UK asylum process' Social Legal Studies June 6 2012
- Crawley, Heaven and Kohli, Ravi S. (2013) She Endures With Me: Final Evaluation of the Scottish Guardianship Service Pilot (Glasgow: Scottish Refugee Council)
- Crawley, Heaven (2011) 'Asexual, Apolitical beings: the Interpretation of Children's Identities and Experiences in the UK Asylum System' Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 37(8), 1171-1184
- Da Lomba, S. & Murray, N. (2014) Women and Children First? Refused asylum seekers' access to and experiences of maternity care in Glasgow (Glasgow: Scottish Refugee Council & University of Strathclyde)
- Dunst, C., Boyd, K., Trivette, C. & Hamby, D. (2002) Family-Oriented Programs and Professional Helpgiving Practices Family Relations 2002 (51) pp.221-229
- Ehnholt, K. & Yule, W. (2006) 'Practitioner Review: Assessment and treatment of refugee children and adolescents who have experienced war-related trauma' Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 47:12 (2006), pp 1197-1210
- Glen, V. and Lindsay, K. (2014) The Extent and Impact of Asylum Accommodation Problems in Scotland (Glasgow: Scottish Refugee Council)
- Gower, M. (14th October 2015) House of Commons Briefing Paper number 1909 'Asylum Support': Accommodation and financial support for asylum seekers
- HM Inspectorate of Education (June 2007) Joint Inspection of Services for Asylum-Seeking Children in the Glasgow City Council Area
- Home Office (2009) Every Child Matters : Change for Children (London: Home Office)
- Hutton, C. (2012) Evaluation of Family Keyworker Pilot : Outcomes and Lessons Learned (Refugee Action)
- Lewig, K., Arney, F. & Salveron, M. (2009) The Working with Refugee Families Project (University of South Australia)
- Marsden, R. & Harris, C. (2015) 'We started life again' : integration experiences of refugee families reuniting in Glasgow (Glasgow: British Red Cross)
- Okitikpi T. & Aymer C. (2003) 'Social work with African refugee children and their families' Child & Family Social Work 2003;8(3) pp. 213-222.
- Papadopoulos, R. (2007) Refugees, trauma and adversity activated development European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling, 9 (3). pp. 301-312.
- Papadopoulos, R, Rashid, Y., Mahamed, Z. (2010) Enhancing Vulnerable Asylum Seekers' Protection UK Project Report 2009-10 (Centre for Trauma, Asylum & Refugees : University of Essex)
- Pobjoy, Jason (2013) 'A child rights framework for assessing the status of refugee children' in Singh, Juss and Harvey (eds) Contemporary Issues in Refugee Law (Edward Elgar)
- Rainbird, S. (2011) 'Asylum-seeker vulnerability – the official explanation of service providers and the emotive responses of asylum seekers' Community Development Journal 47(3) pp. 405-422
- Reacroft, J. (2008) Like Any Other Child: children and families in the asylum process (Ilford: Barnardos)
- Sims, M.R. & Omaji, A.K. (2014) 'Migration and Parenting : a pilot study Journal of Family Studies 5:1 pp. 84-96
- Strang, A., Baillot, H. & Mignard, E. (2015) Insights into Integration Pathways : New Scots and the Holistic Integration Service (Queen Margaret University & Scottish Refugee Council)
- Strang, A., Marsden, R. & Mignard, E. (2014) The Holistic Integration Service : Learning and Evaluation Year One 2013-14 (Queen Margaret University & Scottish Refugee Council)
- Strang, A. & Quinn, N. (2014) Integration or Isolation? Mapping social connections and wellbeing amongst refugees in Glasgow (Queen Margaret University & NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde)

# Appendices

		
Stage 1 Universal Parenting Classes and Workshops	Stage 2 “Parenting4All”	Stage 3 “ Parentlink Volunteer”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Parenting Matters – 8 weeks</b></li> </ul> <p><b>PARENTS TO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept ourselves and recognise we are doing the best we can</li> <li>• Explore our attitudes and behaviour as parents</li> <li>• Have more choice about how we behave</li> <li>• Encourage our children in what they do</li> <li>• Help our children to help themselves</li> <li>• Learn useful ways to confront unacceptable behaviour</li> <li>• Share our thoughts, feelings and needs</li> <li>• Look after ourselves and gain support from others</li> </ul> <p><b>CHILDREN TO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build their sense of self-worth and confidence</li> <li>• Learn to help themselves and find their own solutions</li> <li>• Develop their sense of responsibility</li> <li>• Learn to help others</li> <li>• Be open and honest about their feelings</li> <li>• Become aware of their own needs and those of others</li> </ul>	<p>Institute of Leadership and Management -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Development Award ( 4 days)</b></li> </ul> <p>Accredited through the Social Enterprise Academy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Building confidence when facilitating or working with parents</li> <li>✓ Linking needs, feelings and behaviours</li> <li>✓ Recognising and accepting the emotional content and context when working with parents</li> <li>✓ Involving parents and families in leadership, decision-making and change through learning</li> </ul> <p><b><u>For parents and professionals</u></b></p>	<p>Parent Network Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Certificate of Completion (4 days)</b></li> <li>• <b>Accredited by Kelvin College</b></li> </ul> <p>Experiential learning journey where participants are assigned a trainer who will support them through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Facilitation of Support Groups</li> <li>✓ Personal development</li> <li>✓ and building a portfolio of their personal experience</li> </ul> <p><b>Participants will be expected to spend a minimum 24 hours learning.</b></p>
Parent Network Scotland evidence based programmes alongside Family Lives Parents together programmes.	ILM ( Institute of Leadership and Management) Award accredited through Social Enterprise Academy, delivered by Parent Network Scotland	Certificate of Completion delivered by Parent Network Scotland Accredited by Kelvin College Glasgow
<b>Status : Parent Participant</b>	<b>Status : Parent Link Volunteer</b> <b>Skilled up to deliver parenting support groups in own community</b>	<b>Status: Parent link Volunteer(PNS)</b> <b>Skilled to support groups within organisations and communities</b>
Learning, Reflecting, Exploring self in relation to family dynamics	Building confidence, leadership skills, empowering	Further confidence, further leadership skills facilitation skills
Parent Network Scotland, 152 Bath Street, Glasgow, G2 4TB 0141 948 0022		

## Appendix ii - Focus group attendees

ADULT ATTENDEES BY GENDER		FAMILY COMPOSITION	
Female	16	Single parent (Mother)	13
Male	2	Single parent (Father)	0
Country of origin		Two-parent family (Female head of household)	2
Nigeria	8	Two-parent family (Male head of household)	3
Cameroon	2	CHILD ATTENDEES	
China	2	Age range	Number of children
Libya	2	0-2	12
Gambia	1	2-5	13
Kenya	1	Age 5 and over	1
Pakistan	1		
Uganda	1		

## Appendix iii – relational and participatory help-giving practices questionnaire

How do keywork staff work with and treat you?	Never	Very little	Some of the time	Most of the time	All of the time	Did not answer
Really listen to my concerns or requests			1	3	11	
See my child and family in a positive way			1	4	9	1
Provide me with the information I need to make good choices			3	3	9	
Try to help me when I ask for advice or help			1	2	12	
Try hard to understand my child and family's situation			2	3	8	1
Recognize my child and family's strengths			2	5	7	1
Help me be an active part of getting the things that I need				7	8	
Are flexible when my family's situation changes			3	5	7	2
Encourage me to get what I want for myself			2	3	10	
Are sensitive to my personal beliefs and culture			2	2	9	2
Support me to make my own decisions			1	3	10	1
Recognise the good things I do as a parent			2	3	10	

Scale adapted from presentation by C. Dunst (2010)

## FAMILY KEYWORK NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the February 2016 newsletter.  
Family Keywork Staff and Volunteers:  
Esther, Graeme, Rosanne, Gerry, Margaret, Grant, Jennifer, Anne Louise, Rhona and Katie

### SCHOOL FEBRUARY 2016 MID-TERM BREAK AND INSERVICE DAYS

Children will be on break from school on the following days

- 15<sup>th</sup> February
- 16<sup>th</sup> February
- 17<sup>th</sup> February (inservice day)

Fun and free activities to do

#### People's Palace

##### **'Folk Music Work-Shop'**

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February 1:30-3pm  
Free, Drop-in session, first come first served  
Come and try Folk Music with three of Glasgow's leading folk musicians. The instruments are provided. Play funny songs and finish with a mass jam!

##### *How to get there:*

First Bus services 18, 64 and 263 stop on London Road. Services 2, 40, 60, 61, 240 and 255 stop on Gallowgate. These services are within a couple of minutes' walk to the People's Palace.



#### Chinese New Year!

Chinese New Year is on Monday the 8<sup>th</sup> of February this year! This year is the year of the Monkey! Everyone and anyone from all over Glasgow can take part in celebrating. It is great fun and celebrations often include parades, dragon dances, firecrackers and music!



Any families can attend these activities:

On February 1<sup>st</sup> at *Glasgow Museum Resource Centre*  
Games, dragon building, lantern making and fortune telling sticks.

On February 14<sup>th</sup> at *Glasgow Museum Resource Centre*  
Celebrate 'Kung Hei Fat Choy' by taking part in calligraphy and making of Chinese lanterns. This event also includes traditional New Year ceremonies and rituals

##### *How to get to Glasgow Museum Resource Centre:*

Located in Nitshill, in the south side of the City, at the end of Woodhead Road. First Bus services 10 and 57 stop near the venue

Scottish Refugee Council is a charity registered in Scotland.  
Registered Charity: SC008639

*Are you interested in learning English in a FUN way?*

*Do you want to be able to speak to your children's teacher?*

*Do you want to be able to talk to your health visitor or GP confidently?*

There will be ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes run by the Scottish Refugee Council.

These classes will be run in a way which makes learning English FUN and enjoyable! It is also an opportunity to meet new people!

If you would like to take part... Please text your NAME and the word ESOL to **07803245969**

And find out more information and take part in this great opportunity

#### **Play @ Home Activity**



#### **DEN BUILDING**

##### **Equipment**

**Any suitable building materials such as sheets, blankets, pegs, tables, chairs, washing line, clothes airer**

**Gather suitable building materials – sheets and blankets, large cardboard boxes, clothes pegs (for fastening). Make use of home/ furniture to add structure, such as tables, chairs. Make your den cosy using cushions, pillows, etc.**

**Take some story books inside for quiet story time, or a small snack for a tea party. Take torches inside and see the patterns of light. This will help develop your child's imagination!**

**Remember: Show children the best way to enter the den. Leave a large enough doorway. Make sure that there is nothing heavy that can fall on to your child.**

Scottish Refugee Council, 5 Cadogan Square, (170 Blythswood Court), Glasgow G2 7PH. Tel: 0141 248 9799, Fax: 0141 343 2490.  
[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

Scottish Refugee Council is a charity registered in Scotland.  
Registered Charity: SC008639

Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity dedicated to providing advice and information to people who have fled horrific situations around the world.

In 2015 Scottish Refugee Council celebrates 30 years of working to ensure that all refugees in Scotland are treated fairly, with dignity and that their human rights are respected.

To find out more, please visit our website:  
[www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

Scottish Refugee Council  
5 Cadogan Square  
(170 Blythswood Court)  
Glasgow G2 7PH

T 0141 248 9799  
F 0141 243 2499  
E [info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk](mailto:info@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk)

 @scottishrefugeecouncil

 @scotrefcouncil

Scottish Charity Number: SC008639

scottish  
refugee  
council