

Data Management and Analysis Group

Data Sources on Refugees and Asylum Seekers

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Introduction

This DMAG Briefing summarises a range of data sources that may be useful in estimating populations of refugees and asylum seekers.

Over the last decade or so the migrant population in the UK, and within London in particular, has grown noticeably in comparison to the 1970s and 1980s. One aspect of this has been refugees and asylum seekers.

Consequently there are current requirements for reliable estimates of the scale, composition and distribution of London's refugee and asylum seeker population. These requirements have emanated from the GLA, UK government departments, EU bodies, London boroughs, other statutory bodies including the NHS, and voluntary agencies.

Over the same period UK asylum legislation has changed several times and this has contributed to more complex movements of refugees and asylum seekers. There are currently three different methods of supporting refugees and asylum seekers, depending on how and when a person applied for asylum:

- (i) support and/or accommodation from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS);
- (ii) welfare benefits (income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit);
- (iii) support and accommodation from local authority social services departments.

In the UK there is no single or centralised information source based on individual records, such as an identity card system, which could be used to provide all the demographic data necessary for estimating the breakdown of refugee and asylum seeker populations. Hence it has been necessary to investigate a variety of possible information sources to determine what existing demographic data might be available.

As a result of the changes in delivery of support and the number and disparity of possible information sources, estimating refugee and asylum populations is likely to be a complex task. Previous attempts and data sources have been investigated and the main references reviewed are listed in Section 10. This Briefing compiles the data sources from these references, giving updated relevance where possible, and suggests areas for further or new exploration.

1. Central Government

1.1 Home Office

1.1.1 National Asylum Seeker Statistics

(i) The Home Office publishes figures on the number of asylum seekers entering the UK, by country of origin. The figures are broken down by applications received, those who are granted refugee status or Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR) status (from 1st April 2003 ELR was replaced by Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave status), and those whose applications are refused. This information is in the form of quarterly (Q4 2001 to Q3 2003) and annual (1997 to 2002) publications on asylum statistics. Historical monthly publications from October 1998 to July 2001 are also available. These are accessible on their website at: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html>

Limitations: Most of the published data is at national level only.
There is not much breakdown by gender and age.

(ii) Asylum seekers should remain in touch with the Home Office for progress on their applications. If this address data is held, and in accessible form, it could give current or most recent location and country of origin.

Limitations: Requires input from Home Office.

1.2 Department of Work and Pensions

1.2.1 Income Support Data

(i) Port-of-entry asylum seekers applying up to April 2000 and those granted refugee or ELR status are entitled to income support. Benefit Offices collect data on all people claiming income support. The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) used to provide annual ward level numbers of people by category. In the categories available refugees and asylum seekers used to fall under "Other". Anecdotal evidence from one office was that a considerable number within this "Other" category were refugees or asylum seekers. These enquiries were made in 1999, and some form of data may still be provided.

In the late 1990's DWP performed an analysis on numbers of refugees from a 5% sample of forms. It may be possible to repeat and develop this.

Limitations: Would apply only to pre-2000 Port-of-entry asylum seekers and some refugees.
The "Other" category also contains non-refugees/asylum seekers.

(ii) Port-of-entry asylum seekers applying up to April 2000 were entitled to income support under a special category known as "Urgent Case Payments" (UCP). Other claimants, such as those who lost their national insurance numbers, could have been included in this category, but it was the opinion of a benefit office employee that the great majority of people in the UCP category were in fact asylum seekers. However, the UCP files were mixed up with many different files, so it would have been very time-consuming for Benefits Agencies to sort through them.

At the time, the Benefits Agency Central Data Unit in Leeds was in fact able to provide figures for asylum seekers receiving income support, but these would have been per Benefits Agency District and not per borough.

These enquiries were made in 1998, and more structured and appropriate data could now be available.

Limitations: Would apply only to pre-2000 Port-of-entry asylum seekers.
Geography was based on Benefits Agency District, not borough.

1.2.2 Housing Benefit Data

Port-of-entry asylum seekers who applied up to April 2000 and those granted refugee or ELR status are entitled to housing benefit. It used to be the case that files in Housing Benefit offices did not distinguish between asylum seekers or those granted refugee or ELR status and other claimants, so this approach was not viable. Current computerised information processes used by at least three London Local Authorities do not hold an indicator that could enable categorisation of refugees and asylum seekers, so this approach still appears not viable.

Limitations: Would apply only to pre-2000 Port-of-entry asylum seekers and some refugees.

1.3 Office for National Statistics (ONS)

1.3.1 Vital Registration Data

Vital registration forms record the country of birth of the mother in the event of a birth, and the country of birth of the deceased in the event of a death. This data could be used to derive the numbers of these events occurring to people from countries where there are refugee flows, such as Somalia.

Limitations: Would apply only to babies, some women (mothers) and mostly older people.

1.3.2 2001 Census, Country of Birth Data

The 2001 Census collected country of birth data from all residents (Question 7), and all write-in countries were coded individually. This information could be requested, in the form of specially-commissioned tables, in order to obtain country of birth figures for all migrants.

For example, *Haringey Health Report 2003* (Ref.1) refers to 2001 Census data having been used to identify that about 35,000 people living in Haringey were born in countries which have historically produced refugee and asylum seekers.

Limitations: Would identify all types of migrants, not just refugees and asylum seekers.

Some standard (Key Statistics) data has been released. Additional standard tables including detail on some important individual source countries (eg Congo, Somalia) have also been released. However, requirements for detail data on all required source countries would need specially-commissioned tables to be requested.

1.3.3 Mid-year population estimates/asylum seeker estimates

Each year ONS publish borough/district level mid-year population estimates and the components of change between years. The components of change figures include estimates of asylum seekers and visitor switchers.

Limitations: Latest components of change figures (for 2003) have not been released yet.

2. Local Government

2.1 Local Authority Social Services/Asylum Teams/Homeless Persons Units

2.1.1 Hammersmith & Fulham Social Services

Prior to implementation of the Interim Scheme as part of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1999, Local Authorities had a duty to support destitute in-country asylum seekers under the National Assistance Act 1948 and the Children Act 1989. Hammersmith & Fulham Social Services, on behalf of the Association of Directors of Social Services, compiled weekly figures on single adults and fortnightly figures on families, total number in families, and unaccompanied minors, supported in all London boroughs. Social Services Asylum Teams also provided information about the nationalities and area of residence of their asylum seekers.

In October 1999 this information collating service was integrated into the London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC) (see Section 2.1.2), which is led by the Association of London Government (ALG) and Westminster City Council.

Historical information collected up to October 1999 is believed to be held by Hammersmith & Fulham Social Services.

Limitations: Would apply only to National Assistance (in-country) asylum seekers and Children Act unaccompanied children.
Would apply only to the period up to October 1999.

2.1.2 London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC)

LASC was originally formed to facilitate the development of the asylum seekers Interim Scheme for London's Local Authorities, entailing the securing and monitoring of accommodation for asylum seekers outside London. Its activities also include support services, integration, central government lobbying, data collection and information provision.

LASC data is obtained directly from Local Authority asylum teams, child support teams and health teams. Most of the following information compiled by LASC is available on their website, <http://www.westminster.gov.uk/lasc/> :

(i) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and pre-April 2000 Interim Scheme Individuals (single adults, and children and adults in families):

The Interim Scheme arose from the Asylum & Immigration Act 1999, which placed a new duty on Local Authority social services departments to support destitute asylum seekers until April 2002, with local authorities being funded by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) for providing asylum seekers with accommodation and subsistence. This has been extended to April 2004.

Statistics on Unaccompanied Children and Interim Scheme Individuals are sent in to LASC on a fortnightly basis from all 33 London boroughs. This information is in the form of numbers of persons of several categories and families only, and is presented by LASC on a borough and weekly basis from October 1999.

(ii) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC):

LASC established an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) database in April 2001. This database contains more detailed information on this category of child, including number of persons, date of birth, gender, country of origin, nationality, and refugee status. UASC Data Resources System Reports are produced quarterly; access is restricted to member authorities but should be permitted to the GLA on request.

(iii) Housing Act households:

LASC also compiles information on the number of asylum seeking households placed by Social Services in temporary accommodation under the Housing Act. This data is originally collected by the Bed & Breakfast Information Exchange (BABIE) – see Section 7.

(iv) LASC Data obtained from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS):

Since November 2000 LASC has been compiling information supplied by NASS on asylum seekers claiming Subsistence Only support in London. This information is in terms of numbers of persons only and is presented on a borough and monthly basis from November 2000.

Limitations: The data reflects current caseloads, not total populations;
 it covers only those in contact with social service departments;
 it does not include country of origin (except the UASC database).

2.1.3 “Vulnerable” Port-of-entry Asylum Seekers

Port-of-entry asylum seekers who applied up to April 2000 are entitled to housing benefit and income support. Local Authority Homeless Persons Units (HPUs) organise temporary accommodation for “vulnerable” port-of-entry asylum seekers (families with children, single parents, pregnant women, those with severe health problems, those aged over 60). Although a large proportion of the figures produced by the HPUs should be a subset of the port-of-entry asylum seekers Health Form (Port 102/3/4 form) figures (see Section 3.4.1), the HPU data would also include long term asylum seekers who arrived prior to April 1997, when the Health Form figures commenced. To avoid double-counting the Health Form and HPU figures could be used as alternative and corroborative sources.

Limitations: Would apply to a sub-set of pre-April 2000 Port-of-entry asylum seekers only.

3. National Health Service

3.1 Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)

3.1.1 GP Registrations

Asylum seekers who have formally applied for asylum are fully entitled to NHS primary and secondary care services available to normal UK residents for as long as their application (including appeals) is under consideration. Persons granted refugee or ELR status maintain these entitlements.

Some of the references reviewed suggested that new registrations with GPs, over recent years, have included information on previous country of residence. However, there is currently no requirement on NHS GPs to see official documentation when registering an asylum seeker in local clinics or surgeries. Proof of address can be obtained from a Home Office letter, or bill or similar document addressed to the asylum applicant. Asylum seekers' HC2 certificates can be used to establish eligibility for free NHS services from a dentist or an optician. However, the *Haringey Health Report 2003* (Ref.1) states that the majority of refugee and asylum seekers seen in primary care in Haringey are Kurdish, Kosovan or Somali, and that most of these patients are under the age of 40 years. Furthermore, some practices in Haringey are stated as seeing refugees and asylum seekers from as many as 50 countries. This could be anecdotal or suggest that clinics or surgeries may in fact be recording some form of information regarding legal status and country of origin or ethnicity.

Recording of ethnicity of patients in both primary care and secondary care is required in order to comply with the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. In actuality evidence from the Department of Health's Hospital Episode Statistics indicates that the collection of ethnicity data in secondary care is substantially incomplete, and this is also likely to be the case in primary care records (see Section 3.2.2).

Currently the new General Medical Services (new GMS) contract governing new payment structures for delivery of primary care is in the process of implementation. It is believed that some aspects of performance are related to ethnicity and that this should greatly improve recording of ethnicity in the future.

Limitations: Would apply only to those who register.
 In the past coding by GPs/PCTs was inconsistent, but may be standardised now.
 Completion of data recording on ethnicity may be variable depending on GP/PCT.
 Data may be difficult to access due to confidentiality issues.
 Records would include many but not all asylum seekers.

3.1.2 Patient Held Record for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

This scheme, based on the child development record or "Red Book" used in England, arose two or three years ago and its' development was encouraged by the Department of Health (described in *Meeting the Health Needs of Refugee and Asylum Seekers in the UK – an information and resource pack for health workers*, Ref.2 - Section 4.8). The record was to be in triplicate, one copy to remain with the client as a hand held record, another

to be kept by the Health Support Team and the third to be kept by the GP and primary care team.

Department of Health guidelines are that this record should be initiated as an "initial health assessment" just after arrival, normally to take place at an induction centre. (<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/TemporaryContent3/fs/en>).

The adult Patient Held Record is a potential source of useful demographic information as it contains the following data items: NASS number, family name, country of origin, date of birth, sex, language, religion and accommodation (e.g. induction centre, dispersal address, address changes). The Children's Patient Held Record collects similar basic demographic information, with the addition of ethnic origin.

The Patient Held Record has been undertaken as a pilot scheme in some areas over the last two or three years, however it is currently by no means an up-and-running national system. Examples of organisations undertaking this pilot are Parkside Health Support Team in London, Sheffield, and Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham (stated in Ref.2), Luton Primary Care Trust (described in *Client Held Health Records For People Who Are Homeless Or Asylum Seekers*, Ref.3) and Suffolk Community Refugee Team. Of interest is that the Luton PCT forms include an NHS Number as an additional data item, and also a sheet for family members. If this format were to be implemented extensively it would facilitate the definition of complete families and reconciliation between NHS and NASS systems.

A major difficulty in utilising the Patient Held Record as a data source on refugees and asylum seekers if it were widely implemented is that it could be very difficult to gain access to information based on personal health records for reasons of confidentiality.

3.1.3 GP Registration-based Populations

Understanding the Population of Kensington and Chelsea (Ref.4) describes a recent analysis of the population pertaining to Kensington and Chelsea PCT on the basis of the following six criteria:

- Kensington & Chelsea resident population;
- Kensington & Chelsea registered population;
- Resident registered population;
- Resident Kensington & Chelsea registered population;
- Kensington & Chelsea inflows;
- Kensington & Chelsea outflows.

Registered population figures are available from the NHS Central Register (referred to in the past as the "Exeter" system), which compiles patient information from Family Health Services (FHS) registers. This is a national system that is accessible by PCTs and can provide a constantly updated snapshot of PCT residents who are registered with any GP. Also, a head count of inflows (patients living outside a given PCT but registered with a GP within it) is available on a quarterly basis. From these two data sources the registered population within a PCT can be derived.

If this type of analysis can be repeated on the basis of any existing or future data on previous country of residence or ethnicity, this may provide understanding of movement and accumulation of asylum seekers and refugees.

Limitations: Would apply only to those who register.
In the past coding by GPs/PCTs was inconsistent, but may be standardised now.
Completion of data recording, particularly on ethnicity, may be variable depending on GP/PCT.
Data may be difficult to access due to confidentiality issues.
Records would include many but not all asylum seekers.

3.1.4 Annual Health Reports

Haringey Health Report 2003 (Ref.1) has already been mentioned as an example of information referred to by Haringey Primary Care Trust (see Sections 1.3.2 and 3.1.1).

Improving Health 2003 (Ref.5) provides some basic information on numbers of asylum seekers in Harrow Primary Care Trust, which is in fact the same data as provided by the London Asylum Seekers Consortium (Section 2.1.1). It also states there were 1799 refugee children in Harrow in April 2003 according to Harrow Education Services data. A lack of direct information regarding country of origin is reported. However, Ref.5 also presents some information on languages used in interpreter sessions, which could be used as a possible means of inferring country of origin (see Section 4.3).

3.2 Department of Health

3.2.1 GP Relevant Populations and Resident Relevant Populations

This section is complementary to Section 3.1.1 and Section 3.1.3.

GP Relevant Populations and Resident Relevant Populations, by gender and five-year age band, of Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs) and Primary Care Organisations (PCOs), as at April 2002, are available on the Department of Health website, (www.doh.gov.uk/stats/population/index.htm). These figures are based on GP patient registration data extracted from Family Health Services (FHS) registers via the Exeter system, and constrained to ONS 2001 mid-year estimates based on the 2001 Census.

GP relevant data, including number of registered patients, at SHA and PCO level are also collected through the annual GP census every September and published the following March in the General and Personal Medical Services Statistics, also available at www.doh.gov.uk/public/gpcensus2001.htm (the website was last updated in February 2002 and the current figures are for September 2001).

Limitations: Would apply only to those who register.
In the past coding by GPs/PCOs was inconsistent, but may be standardised now.
Completion of data recording may be variable depending on GP/PCT.
Underlying data may be difficult to access due to confidentiality issues.
Underlying records would include many but not all asylum seekers.

3.2.2 Hospital Episode Statistics database (HES)

All hospital inpatient records should have an ethnic classification coding. In the past, East London & City Health Authority used this type of data to produce crude estimates of the Somali population in their area.

Limitations: To date, recording of ethnicity has varied greatly depending on hospital, and on average only 60-70% of hospital patient records indicate a defined ethnicity.
Refugees are only a small subset of wider ethnic groups.
Hospital admissions occur less often in younger people.

3.3 NHS Trusts

3.3.1 Hospital data

An NHS trust providing secondary care is responsible for establishing if a person is entitled to free treatment. All patients are subject to the same registration process regardless of their legal status or nationality. Hospital staff can ask certain questions about the patient's residence in the UK. If further confirmation is required, asylum applicants and those with refugee or ELR status can show their Home Office letter. Asylum applicants can also show their Application Registration Card (ARC). If these details are recorded they may provide further information on refugees and asylum seekers.

Limitations: Collection of information may vary greatly according to hospital.
Hospital admissions occur less often in younger people.

3.4 Medical Inspector Services at air and sea ports

3.4.1 Port-of-entry Asylum Seekers Health Forms (Port 101/2/3 forms)

Currently all UK ports of entry operate a Medical Inspector service whereby Immigration Officers can refer passengers, including asylum seekers, who are demonstrating the need for medical treatment or who request medical attention, to a Port Medical Inspector. Port Medical Inspectors pass permissible items of information to health service bodies, relevant demographic items being name, UK residence/ destination address, age and language. In England the health service body notified is usually the relevant Health Authority although a relevant PCT, NHS Trust, Special Health Authority or Public Health Laboratory Service Board may also be notified.

Although this process has been in place over a number of years, according to *Report on Refugee Populations in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham* (Ref.6) at some point in the past all port-of-entry asylum seekers should have been referred for health screening at port, and there would have been a health form for each family member. However, Department of Health guidelines for the Patient Held Record pilot scheme state that initial health screening for all asylum applicants, just after arrival, would normally take place at induction centres, not ports-of-entry (see Section 3.1.2). The process of health screening of asylum seekers on arrival may therefore be variable in practice and this may lead to inconsistencies in historical information.

Limitations: In the past not all terminals were computerised, so information was of a limited sample.
The health screening process may not include all port-of-entry asylum seekers.
Not all asylum seekers apply at port of entry, although the number has increased as regulations have changed.
Asylum seekers may not stay long at the address given.

4. Education

4.1 Schools Refugee Children Data

Refugees and Asylum Seekers: the Role of LEAs (Ref.7), published in November 2000, describes a survey of educational support to refugee and asylum seeker children in 58 Local Education Authorities (LEAs), 13 of which were in Greater London. At the time relatively few LEAs had had the opportunity to develop and issue policies relating to refugees and asylum seekers in response to changes in asylum legislation and the consequent dispersal of asylum seekers away from London and the South East.

LEAs were asked how the number of refugee and asylum seeker pupils had varied since 1998, and to estimate the total number of pupils of this category, and distribution between schools (sections 5 and 6 of Ref.7). In the case of Hammersmith & Fulham, three primary schools had almost 30% of pupils on roll as refugees and asylum seekers, alongside six primary schools with none.

Those support policies and procedures that were in existence at the time were not totally consistent across the country. Sandwell LEA proposed that its schools provide termly notification of refugee and asylum seeker pupils on roll (Appendix 6 of Ref.7), including information such as name, address, date of birth, start date, nationality, and language. Swansea LEA proposed recording of refugee and asylum seeker pupils on roll on a half-termly basis (Appendix 8 of Ref.7).

Although Ref. 7 does not present any detailed figures, it indicates the type of potentially good quality information of this refugee and asylum seeker subset that may have been available. However, it transpires that the collection of refugee and asylum seeker pupil data by LEAs along the lines described by Ref.7 has not been taken forward, and the proposals by Sandwell and Swansea have not gone ahead. Major influences on this outcome were LEAs' concerns that they did not regard it as their role to act on behalf of the Home Office regarding this issue.

Previously, government requirements for schools to collect information on children's legal status were planned in the mid-1990's but also failed to attract support from schools and the process ceased in 1997.

Nevertheless, as already mentioned in Section 3.1.4, *Improving Health 2003* (Ref.5) states there were 1799 refugee children in Harrow in April 2003 based on Harrow Education Services data. This suggests that some information on refugee and asylum seeker pupils is being obtained by education bodies.

Limitations: Information that may be available will relate to refugee and asylum seeker children only, from which particular populations would need to be estimated.

4.2 Schools Ethnicity Data

From about 1994, ethnicity data at school level was collected by schools for the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). Collection was on an optional basis so the completion was poor and this data is not regarded as being of sufficient quality for analysis.

From 2002 collection of ethnicity data has become a mandatory requirement through the Pupil Level Annual Schools Census (PLASC). This information is incorporated into the National Pupil Dataset, from which extracts can normally be available in August-November for pupils on roll in the previous January. The ethnicity field contains extended categories, from which some refugee and asylum seeker groups may be identifiable. The GLA is allowed an extract of London pupils.

Limitations: This information would provide ethnicity rather than asylum seekers and refugees or country of origin.
It would relate to children only, from which particular populations would need to be estimated.

4.3 Schools Language Data

4.3.1 Schools/Local Education Authorities

Many schools have collected this data in recent years and sometimes it has been collated centrally and published by Local Education Authorities. However, collection has not been mandatory. For instance, Lambeth borough undertook an annual pupil survey which obtained detailed figures on ethnicity and the main languages spoken in primary and secondary schools. The number of children of school age and language spoken could be used to obtain an indicative measure of the number of adults of a particular population.

Some Local Education Authorities may publish summarised or selected information on languages in schools on a website. For example, Hounslow Language Service (<http://www.ealinhounslow.org.uk/refugee.htm>), in a section on Refugees and New Arrivals, gives numbers of languages spoken by new arrivals in Hounslow schools over the period September 2001 to July 2002, suggesting further information may be available. Further indications that this may be the case are suggested by refugee schoolchildren figures mentioned in a Primary Care Trust health report (see Sections 3.1.4 and 4.1).

After 2005 information on languages will be included in the National Pupil Dataset and will be available to the GLA by extract in the same way as ethnicity data (see Section 4.2).

Limitations: This information would provide languages rather than asylum seekers and refugees or country of origin.
It would relate to children only, from which particular populations would need to be estimated.

4.3.2 Multilingual Capital: The languages of London's schoolchildren and their relevance to economic, social and educational policies.

Multilingual Capital (Ref.8), published in 2000, was undertaken to compile data on the languages spoken by London's school children collected separately by Local Education Authorities in Greater London. The report included a chapter entitled "Using the schools language data to estimate the total number of speakers of London's top 40 languages". The methodology could be used with language information obtainable as described in Section 4.3.1. See also Section 7.1.2.

Note on language data:

Section 4.3 has focused on information regarding languages spoken by schoolchildren. However, information on languages used in interpreter sessions could be used as a means of inferring country of origin for all constituents of refugee and asylum seeker groups (see Section 3.1.4).

5. Charities and Refugee Organisations

5.1 Refugee Arrivals Project - Arrivals data

Refugee Arrivals Project (RAP) is an independent charity assisting newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers, directly after arrival at the 5 London airports (City, Gatwick, Heathrow, Luton and Stansted), and also referrals categorised as “ All other agencies”. Refugee Arrivals Project Annual Review 2003 is a report for the year ending 31 March 2003, available on their website at:

<http://www.refugee-arrivals.org.uk/html/5000/rap.pdf>

main website: <http://www.refugee-arrivals.org.uk/> .

A summary of statistics lists:

- persons by nationality;
- persons by gender and age group;
- number of NASS applications by single people and family categories;
- length of stay with RAP;
- number of singles and families by airport/agency of referral.

RAP arranges emergency accommodation for destitute clients, who are placed in West London (at a rate of 100 – 120 asylum seekers per week). The average wait before allocation of more permanent accommodation through the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) is 3 to 4 weeks. All NASS accommodation is outside London. Current RAP data, which seems reasonably comprehensive, may not impact directly on London as much as before NASS, but it may also not truly reflect numbers relevant to London as it does not account for anecdotal “drift back” to London. If more detailed and historical data is available from RAP (such as assignation of people to boroughs) this may help to understand and build historical models.

RAP also helps clients to get in touch with friends or family in the UK. If this information is collected and available it may also be useful.

Limitations: Applicable only to asylum seekers going through the project (about a third).

5.2 Refugee Council - Asylum Application Analyses

The Refugee Council publishes summary analyses of Home Office UK quarterly and annual asylum statistics on their website, <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk> . These analyses are at the UK level.

On occasion the Refugee Council also publishes the outcome of its own studies. Their report *Where are the Children?* (Ref.9) published in 2001 describes a mapping exercise on the numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children in the UK over the period September 2000 to March 2001. In addition to using data sources already mentioned in this Briefing (Home Office, Local Authorities, LASC) this study also used the council’s own database on unaccompanied minors referred to its Children’s Panel of Advisers. Appendix 4 of Ref.9 gives numbers of unaccompanied minors supported by UK Cities and London boroughs, as at 26th January 2001. Appendix 3 of Ref.9 gives a breakdown of

unaccompanied minors by nationality, but at UK level only. On-going information from the Children's Panel of Advisers, if collected, could be useful.

In April 1997 the Refugee Council published estimates of refugee children by borough and largest nationality groups in a report entitled *Section 11 and Refugees - a policy paper on how section 11 funding should be used to meet the educational needs of refugee children*.

Limitations: Asylum Application Analyses are based on data released by the Home Office.
Information on unaccompanied asylum-seeking children through the Children's Panel of Advisors is probably not up-dated regularly.

5.3 Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) - Community Group Caseloads

An approach described in *Report on Refugee Populations in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham* (Ref.6) involved a survey by questionnaire sent to local RCOs in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham. The questionnaire asked about the size of the refugee communities, their status (whether they consisted mainly of asylum seekers, those with refugee status or those with ELR status), and their general areas of residence. The response to the questionnaires was poor, but it was followed up by telephone enquiry asking the same questions and this resulted in a much better response. To avoid duplication the RCO estimates were not added to other figures but were used for comparison.

Limitations: Not all refugees and asylum seekers may be accounted for, and there may be some double-counting between different RCOs.
Figures may not be comparable between different areas.

Note on refugee organisations:

The number of regional and national organisations providing services for refugees and asylum seekers has increased greatly over the last few years due to the introduction of dispersal policies. The Refugee Council produced a directory named RADAR which lists over 1,100 such organisations in 2003; details of its availability are on their website (see Section 5.2). These organisations are a potential source of useful local level data. An example is the Kurdish Cultural Centre, who have their own website (<http://middleeast.com/com/kcc/projects.htm>) where casework statistics are summarised. This suggests that community size and other information may also be available, and tends to confirm the approach taken by Ref. 6 as described above.

6. Law Enforcement

6.1 Metropolitan Police Aliens' Office - Police Registrations

All people granted refugee or ELR status before 30th March 1998 and who were not nationals of the EU or the Commonwealth were required to register with the police. Anyone granted refugee or ELR status after that date, irrespective of their nationality, was excluded from registration requirements, but refugees and those with ELR status who arrived before this date were required to continue registration.

The records system of the Metropolitan Police Aliens' Office was manual up to around November 1998 and consisted of about 200,000 cards, therefore the refugee and ELR data was unavailable due lack of resources to extract the addresses. The records were due to be computerised around November 1998, therefore some information about non-EU/Commonwealth refugees and ELRs who arrived before 30th March 1998 may be available more easily now.

Limitations: Identifies only a sub-set of those granted refugee or ELR status.

7. Greater London Authority (GLA)

7.1 Previous Studies undertaken by London Research Centre (LRC)

7.1.1 Estimating Numbers of Refugees and Asylum Seekers In London

Estimating the Numbers of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in London (Ref.10) describes work undertaken in 1999 to estimate numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in London. The following results are presented:

Average weekly social services caseload by borough (broken down by families with children, single adults, and unaccompanied children);

Percentage of asylum seekers at Heathrow Terminal 3 going to London Health Authorities by country of origin;

Refugee Council estimates of refugee children in each London borough, with most common countries of origin;

Percentage of asylum seekers in each London borough (based on BABIE data, see Section 7.2);

Asylum seekers added to London borough totals in ONS 1997 mid-year estimates;

Comparison of estimates of percentages of total refugee communities in each London Health Authority (Heathrow Terminal 3, Social Services, BABIE, Refugee Council children, and ONS MYE sources);

Estimates of number of refugees having entered each London borough since 1983.

7.1.2 Using Schools Language Data to Estimate Total Number of Speakers

“Using the schools language data to estimate the total number of speakers of London’s top 40 languages” was published as a chapter in *Multilingual Capital* (Ref.8) in 2000. It describes a study undertaken by Marian Storkey of LRC to examine the possibility of estimating the total numbers of speakers of all ages of each of the top 40 languages using schools data collected by Local Education Authorities in Greater London. The study addresses issues of data coverage and quality, the construction of age structures for the different language groups in order to estimate adult populations, and a method of estimating overall numbers. See also Section 4.3.2.

7.2 Bed and Breakfast Information Exchange (BABIE)

The Bed & Breakfast Information Exchange (BABIE) is a section of the Housing and Homelessness Unit in the Policy and Partnerships Directorate of the GLA. BABIE compiles data from London boroughs on the number of asylum seeking households placed in temporary accommodation. This data is broken down into two groups, households placed under the Housing Act 1996 and households supported by social services under interim arrangements. This information is used by the London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC) – see Section 2.1.2.

Limitations: This information represents only a sub-set of asylum seekers. Information is not collected by country of origin.

8. Accommodation

8.1 Accommodation figures - Housing Associations, Hostels, Council Housing

Another approach used in *Report on Refugee Populations in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham* (Ref.6) was to contact the managers of all the Housing Associations, Hostels and Council Housing in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham and request the figures on asylum seekers and those granted refugee or ELR status living in their accommodation. This was potentially useful as it would have covered port-of-entry and pre-April 2000 in-country national assistance asylum seekers, and those granted refugee or ELR status living in non-private accommodation. This approach was not successful because managers either declined to provide this information on confidentiality grounds or gave only very approximate figures.

However, as these sources potentially cover a variety of asylum seekers and refugees and ELRs living in non-private accommodation it may be worthwhile to see what the current response would be.

Limitations: Would omit all asylum seekers, refugees and ELRs living with friends, family or in private accommodation.

See also Section 7.2.

9. Surveys

9.1 Capture – Recapture Models

Capture-recapture models indirectly estimate sizes of populations by determining the number of persons that are common in two independent samples of the population under consideration. This methodology was originally used to estimate animal populations, and is particularly suited for evaluating “hidden” populations because it does not require each individual to be counted.

Simple capture-recapture models require that the principles of independence and homogeneity of capture are satisfied by both samples. An attempt to use this method is described in *Report on Refugee Populations in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham* (Ref.6). However, even at the geographical level of three boroughs, Ref.6 was unable to find two samples of refugees that satisfied these principles.

Complex capture-recapture models use multiple samples (three or more) in order to take account of dependency and heterogeneity of capture, and may therefore be able to estimate refugee populations at geographical levels such as borough.

Limitations: Difficulties of finding two samples that satisfy principles of simple models.
Complex models involve more sampling and greater mathematical complexity.

10. References

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http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/downloads/rc_reports/where_children.pdf
10. *Estimating the Numbers of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in London*. Marian Storkey and Martin Bardsley. Published as Chapter 2 of *Refugee health in London: key issues for public health*, Health of Londoners Project. June 1999.
11. *Improving the Health of Asylum Seekers in Northern & Yorkshire: A Report on Service Provision and Needs*. Ruth Wilson. Tandem Communications and Research. Northern & Yorkshire Public Health Observatory. July 2002.

12. Summary of other websites referred to in the text:

Home Office National Asylum Seeker Statistics:

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html>

London Asylum Seekers Consortium (LASC):

<http://www.westminster.gov.uk/lasc/>

Department of Health guidelines on Patient Held Records:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/TemporaryContent3/fs/en>

Department of Health GP Relevant Populations and Resident Relevant Populations:

www.doh.gov.uk/stats/population/index.htm

Department of Health GP relevant data:

www.doh.gov.uk/public/gpcensus2001.htm

Hounslow Language Service information on languages in schools:

<http://www.ealinhounslow.org.uk/refugee.htm>

Refugee Arrivals Project:

<http://www.refugee-arrivals.org.uk/>

The Refugee Council:

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk>

Kurdish Cultural Centre:

<http://middleeast.com/com/kcc/projects.htm>

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