



BRITISH  
ACADEMY

*for the humanities and social sciences*

---

“If you could do  
one thing...”  
Local actions to  
promote social  
integration

**Interim Report: Findings from the Call for  
Evidence, August 2017**

By Dr Madeleine Mosse



# “If you could do one thing...” Local actions to promote social integration

Interim Report: Findings from the Call for Evidence, August 2017

## Overview of evidence collected

**45 responses** to the Call for Evidence were received:

- **14 from Local Authorities:** Bedford Borough Council; Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council; London City Council; Leeds City Council; Carmarthenshire County Council; Cambridge City Council; City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council; Plymouth City Council; London Borough of Bexley; Sutton London Borough Council; Swansea City Council, Manchester City Council, Coventry City Council, London Borough of Tower Hamlets
- **22 from Third Sector organisations**, of which **3** were national, **18** were local or regional, and **1** was a national funding body
- **10 from academics**

## Summary



**45 responses** to the Call for Evidence received, alongside findings from **five key informant** interviews.

**Six “Key Themes”** identified:

1. Language Learning
2. Understanding how Systems and Processes Work
3. Children & Young People
4. Building Trust in Local Communities and Overcoming Grievances
5. Women & Girls
6. Employment & Training

From these findings **criteria for Case Studies** has been proposed.

## Introduction:

The British Academy is examining successful integration projects from around the UK; drawing lessons from clear evidence about methods which are proven to improve integration and result in long term cohesion in our society. We believe this work is well timed, coming as it does at a stage when the global population is shifting and Europe is witnessing changing migration patterns.

This call for evidence supported the development of research and case studies, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, on the integration experiences of recently arrived migrants, with a particular focus on young people – how do their early interventions experiences impact long-term integration? Are there examples of innovative best practice at the local level which can highlight?

The case studies accompany a collection of essays, which will draw on the expertise and experience of academics and practitioners to suggest interventions which might be implemented at a local level by local councils, businesses or voluntary sector organisations to promote integration. These contributions will cover integration issues both of long-standing communities, as well as those facing newly-arrived migrants including refugees, undocumented migrants and children.

## Key Findings:

The data led to **150 new leads** to local interventions, with a good spread across England and Wales. However, Scotland and Northern Ireland remained under-represented, and required additional research.

Six major themes were identified from the data, representing needs, issues and types of interventions in local communities. These are as follows:

### 1. English language

Overwhelmingly, respondents identified English language as a primary “key” or a significant “barrier” to the social integration of newly arrived migrants. For example, of 46 C4E submissions, 30 emphasized the importance of English language learning. The following responses are typical:

**i** The need for English Language training:

*“In our experience, learning English is key to integration (obvious, but true!), because this represents the passport to education, employment, improved social relations etc.”* – **The Harbour Project, Swindon**

*“In our opinion the biggest barrier to integration is English language skills.”* – **Daisy Khera, The Women’s Help Centre, Birmingham**

*“Teaching of ESOL [is an] absolutely essential first step on the road to integration.”* – **Bruce Macgregor, Ipswich Community Media**



Need for more funding for ESOL was echoed across submissions, as was the lack of a consistent or effective strategy for funding and delivering English language training. Lack of English Language skills amongst migrants was also identified as placing a burden on public and third sector services:



*“Poor English language skills [place] real pressure on Council and voluntary agency resources” – Godwin Enyori, Bradford City Council*

Many submissions gave examples of how English language provisions have a positive impact far beyond simply learning the language, and are used to help migrants understand about British life, culture and values. English provisions also provide opportunities to connect people to services, provide advice and support, and build trust with the community through local volunteer English teachers, for example.

## **2. Understanding “how things work” and accessing public services**

The second common theme in the Call for Evidence data (which is linked to the first) was the need to connect newly arrived migrants with public services and to help new arrivals “understand how things work”. Not surprisingly, this theme encompasses a lot of different issues – from understanding how to enrol your child in school, to understanding the importance of insuring a vehicle (and therefore not breaking the law), to knowing your way around a city, understanding rubbish collection system, and registering to vote.



*“The two biggest needs for the majority of new migrants are to learn to speak English and understand how our systems and processes work.” – Pria Bhabra, Leeds City Council*

Numerous examples of interventions that address this need were given, for example:



Examples of initiatives that promote understanding of systems and processes:

*“We run orientation tours for new arrivals...From time to time, we accompany our service users, especially if their English is poor, to job centre interviews, GP appointments etc.” – The Harbour Project, Swindon*

*“We do a variety of sessions to help people feel involved and have a say, we held a session last year with [a] speaker from electoral services to talk about how to vote and dates and why.” – Hikmat, Devon*

*“One successful community scheme I am aware of is in Cornwall where a PCSO acts as a community liaison officer with migrant workers. She informs them of their rights...and also of their responsibilities (for example to drive only insured vehicles.)” – Dr Sam Scott, University of Gloucestershire*



### 3. Children and young people

Issues pertinent to children and young people were addressed across submissions in different ways. Issues ranged from the need to integrate young children who did not speak English into nursery, to the role that older children often play in helping their parents to integrate, to bullying and complex child protection and safeguarding themes. The findings can be categorised as follows:

#### Pre-school children:

- The need for crèche facilities for parents to enable them to access services and opportunities;
- The reluctance of parents to enrol their children in pre-school out of concern for their wellbeing and because it breaks from cultural norms;
- The additional resources needed to integrate young children who do not speak English.

#### **i** The integration of Pre-school children



*“Mum expressed her fears of leaving Dalibor and said that she was afraid that: He might cry. He might not get used to the nursery. Staff might not look after him. [He] might struggle because he has always been with me at home.” – St Edmund’s Nursery School and Children’s Centre, Gillington, Bradford*

*Dalibor with his mum*

*“The crèche facility allows the women to concentrate on learning whilst assured that their children are being well cared for and also builds the English language and social skills of the young children in preparation for starting school.” – Ruth Gwilym Rasool, Red Cross South East Wales Refugee Women Support Programme*

#### Integration of school-aged children – in and out of school:

- Supporting migrant children to integrate within school, including tackling prejudice, English language skills, and low educational attainment;
- Creating opportunities for migrant children to integrate outside of school;
- The roles that teenagers take on to support their parents to integrate;
- The “generation gap” – whereby parents do not understand their children and their needs;
- Second and third generation young people still not fully integrated due to neighbourhood and school segregation.

#### **i** The need to address the integration of school-aged children

*“[It is] vitally important to work in partnership with the local schools in the most diverse areas. Recruiting community champions from those schools, providing additional activities for the children of migrant parents in after school clubs...” – Bruce Macgregor, Ipswich Community Media*



*“Acrimonious interactions between identity groups have been observed to be played out within the school, across the community the school serves, and in feeder schools. These circumstances leave children from all communities feeling threatened, confused and isolated.”* – **Dr Richard Slade on behalf of the Rubic Project, Sheffield**

*“It’s vitally important that parents’ integration keeps pace with their children’s integration in order not to have a wide cultural and generational gap.”* – **Daisy Khera, The Women’s Help Centre, Birmingham**

Examples of interventions that support the integration of children & young people are given here:

**i** Activities that promote the integration of school-aged Children

*“A holiday club (...) had migrant children attending along with British born children. Over the course of a week through play and activities natural interaction and friendships develop.”* – **Michael Reid, 611 Asylum & Refugee Support Work, Huddersfield**

*“Street Life Speaks Out works across communities. We have developed a community development training package delivered in local school(s) to 6th form students. This is a rolling training package that sees students mentoring students and helping to deliver the training.”* – **Street Life Representative – The Thornbury Centre’s Street Life Speaks Out is a multi-community social action project based in Bradford**

*“Our organisation gave one to one support and teaching in English, Maths, IT, life skills, exercise and wellbeing [to girls aged 14-16]. We helped them gain their confidence and encouraged them to interact with other students from different cultures and religions. Many of them were from countries with mono-cultures or had recently had civil wars. By working with these teenage girls we often helped their parents with child benefit applications, visa, housing, registering with GPs and job search”* – **Daisy Khera, The Women’s Help Centre, Birmingham, speaking about a scheme that ran for 10 years but has now sadly had its funding cut**

**Child protection and safeguarding:**

Several submissions pointed to complex child protection and safeguarding issues, spanning child sexual exploitation, crime, post-traumatic stress disorder, teenage pregnancy and other issues:

**i** Complex child protection and safeguarding issues highlighted

*“Newly arrived children, young people and adults are frequently traumatised, confused and scared, and can be subject to abuse. Significant numbers have experienced a dangerous and painful journey escaping from conflict and have lost contact with parents, family and friends.*



*Some of their interactions with adults during these journeys has been abusive, given them little reason to trust grown-ups.” – Dr Richard Slade on behalf of the Rubic Project, Sheffield*

*“Leeds is now supporting 46 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) under Section 20 of the Children Act 89.” – Pria Bhabra, Leeds City Council*

## Young people aged 18-30

Few submissions addressed our specific question about young people aged 18-30, presumably because they felt this was covered by other themes, such as employment and training. Two respondents however explicitly identified this as a gap:

### **i** Gaps in services for young people aged 18-30

*“Very little exists [for 18-30s] – it’s a postcode lottery. Even the investment in the Syrian VPRP is being spent inconsistently with little specialist help to access work. Other EU countries have national integration programmes with structured employability support. This is lacking.” – Professor Sin Yi Cheung, Cardiff University, and Professor Jenny Phillimore, Institute for Research into Superdiversity, University of Birmingham*

*For a successful integration, people in this age group need to feel they are included in society, I would recommend more of the following:*

- *English Speaking Other Language classes*
  - *More offers of “on-the-job” training, e.g. building, plastering, plumbing etc, something where English speaking is not needed as much but will develop through a more social approach to language learning.*
  - *More opportunities to mix with other people in society (not always children centres etc, as some do not have children and this can exclude other adults). Refugee Action may do more but for other EU migrants there doesn’t always appear to have these opportunities.*
- The Education Service for New Communities & Travellers (ESNCT), Bradford**

## 4. Building trust in local communities and tackling grievances

Many submissions emphasised the need to work with local communities to accept incoming migrants, overcome hostility and tackle grievances. For some, this was the most important issue. Examples were given where the mood in the local community had served as a barrier to integration:

### **i** The importance of building trust and overcoming grievances in local communities

*“The key issues to address regarding integration at the local level are managing inward migration and promoting social cohesion between new and settled communities, so all our residents feel a shared sense of belonging and have the motivation and ability to work together to do more for themselves.” – Sophie Keenleyside, London Borough of Bexley*



*“Some parents welcomed the opportunity to improve community cohesion. However, others were not happy about migrant and refugee people living in ‘their’ area and said this was a problem at their children’s school. One person consulted during project development said they should all be drowned.”* – **Dr Richard Slade on the Rubic project in Sheffield**

*“Integration is a two-way process that involves people who are established in their social community to involve others who are outside of that culture and to be welcoming.”* – **Daisy Khera, The Women’s Help Centre, Birmingham**

*‘Focussing on the white British population, educating them about what a refugee really is and providing them with volunteering opportunities in which they can work with refugees...’* – **Professor Sin Yi Cheung, Cardiff University, and Professor Jenny Phillimore, Institute for Research into Superdiversity, University of Birmingham on effective initiatives that promote integration**

*“Integration is a two-way process and it is important to acknowledge that even when migrants come to see their stay in the UK as relatively permanent (...) they may not feel welcome. A sense of being shut out and of being unwelcome certainly needs addressing”* – **Dr Sam Scott, University of Gloucestershire**

A number of reasons and examples were given to illustrate why incoming migrants were poorly accepted in local communities, for example:

- Competition over resources: people feel that there is not enough housing, employment and access to public services, therefore, migrants are as an unwelcome burden;
- A clash of cultural norms: some examples given were queuing, spitting in public and men not shaking hands with women;
- Prejudice and a lack of understanding, including leading to hate crime;
- It’s important to note that tensions can occur between the local settled community and incoming migrants, as well as between new communities in conflict.

Many different types of initiatives were cited that address this issue, for example:

- Creating “a shared sense of place” such as “One Cambridge – Fair for All” and “Celebrating Swansea Together”;
- Facilitating controversial discussions, so that local communities can air their grievances;
- Buddies schemes: where local people reach out to newcomers and teach them English, connect them with services, teach them about British life, etc. thus building mutual trust and relationships;
- Shared services: whereby people are taught new skills according to need rather than within community groups, to encourage social mixing (Newham was cited by a respondent as particularly good at this);
- Interfaith-led networks and activities, such as sports teams and cooking clubs;
- Work within schools to build understanding between pupils and parents.



**i** Initiatives that build trust and overcome grievances in local communities

*“Coventry’s new 10-year Cultural Strategy specifically aims to increase diversity in take up of cultural activities so that communities and individuals are empowered to celebrate and share their heritage, culture, abilities and identity and participate in the cultural life of the city.” –*  
**Surindar Nagra, Coventry City Council**

*“We have worked with the Local Area Office to defuse situations in the community between Roma and South Asian community members.” –*  
**Street Life, Bradford**

*“Syria Sir Gâr has held open meetings in areas where refugees are about to arrive. This allows members of the local community to ask about how the scheme works and to have their questions answered in a relatively informal setting...Syria Sir Gâr also organises social events for the local community, to which the Syrian families are invited. This helps to introduce the families to local people, and it is fun too!” –*  
**Matt Miller, Carmarthenshire County Council**

*“In our drop-ins (...) members of different refugee communities mix, socialise, learn English together, meet local volunteers and have themselves the opportunity to volunteer.” –*  
**Borderlands, Bristol**

*“We organise morning coffee/tea session: 2 days a week. We have established good relationship with the local community. We also invite local people to reduce the tension between refugee and local people” –*  
**Ileys Community Association, Smethwick, West Midlands**

*“The Syrian Bistro takes place twice a month in the evening and all are welcome. Volunteers from all walks of life volunteer not only to support the kitchen but to learn about the Syrian culture and traditional cuisine.” –*  
**Pria Bhabra, Leeds City Council**

## 5. Women & Girls

Many submissions focused in part or wholly on women’s issues. For example, of 45 submissions, 14 gave some space to this issue. Common themes were:

- The isolation of women caused by child-care needs, conservative faith and natural tendencies to only mix within ethnic/faith/family groups;
- The need for women to access services such as health care;
- The need to empower women to have their voices heard, within their own communities and in sometimes male dominated civic environments;
- The need to empower women to recognise abuse in the home and activities that help women overcome traumatic experiences;
- The importance of investing in women so that they can then help their children, for example with homework;
- Employability of women and access to opportunities.



**i** Examples of initiatives for women and girls

*“Refugee Women of Bristol [run] a wholly-member led drop-in for women only, with a crèche, drastically improving accessibility for women who are often excluded by their having child-care needs or because of their conservative faith (won’t mix with men).” – Borderlands, Bristol*

*“We have had more than 15 years’ experience in providing quality pre-employment support with NVQ 4 trained staff and bilingual support for job applications, CVs, universal jobmatch, confidence building, job search for mainly ethnic minority, unemployed women and recently migrant women from Eastern European countries.” – Daisy Khera, The Women’s Help Centre, Birmingham*

*“An ongoing programme of activity to support women from migrant and ethnic minority communities to engage with health, social and cultural services, including talks from health practitioners and visits to local museums.” – Jane Wilson, Cambridge City Council*

*“Foleshill Women’s Training deliver sessions for all women on women’s issues and women’s rights.” – Surindar Nagra, Coventry City Council*

*“In 2016, ten of the women on the programme who have sought refuge in the UK and settled in Newport stood up and shared their personal stories at the Hay Literary Festival in Hay-on-Wye.” – Ruth Gwilym Rasool, Red Cross South East Wales Refugee Women Support Programme*

## 6. Employment and Training:

Not surprisingly, employment and training was discussed across submissions (32 of 45 submissions gave some space to this issue). Employment was identified as a struggle for incoming migrants and refugees, who often find themselves working on the margins of the labour market, not able to make full use of qualifications or skills they have. It was noted that English language training, interning and volunteering opportunities (particularly for younger migrants) and employability training (help with CVs, skills workshops such as IT, etc.) help to overcome obstacles to employment and support empowerment. Some submissions mentioned schemes to support migrants to start a business. Many examples of interventions were given.

**i** Examples of initiatives that promote employment and training

*“Our volunteers routinely assist new refugees with setting up their online Universal Job Match account and assist with uploading CVs, applying for jobs and completing the journal sections so as to keep the work coach regularly updated. Through one of our trustees, we also have strong links with other local recruitment agencies, who regularly place refugees with the requisite skills in big corporations, such as B&Q and Honda.” – The Harbour Project, Swindon*

*“We worked with a group of South Asian women who wanted to develop their own plumbing business. INCOMMUNITIES provided some taster sessions for the women.” – Street Life, Bradford*



*“We host a careers advice surgery every other week, run by Ashley Community Housing, we piloted a course for newly entitled refugees, providing information about employment among other things, and Ashley Community Housing have also founded a sort of college for refugees, aiming to get them into work they want, rather than just getting them into any job, often wasting the skills and qualifications they have brought with them.” – Borderlands, Bristol*

*“Women’s Help Centre provides 8-week work experience opportunities to Job Centre Plus referred jobseekers, who are out of work and need practical experiences in administration, reception, gardening, as ESOL or IT mentors. We have helped young people from ethnic minorities with their CVs, college applications, job search and covering letters.” – Daisy Khera, The Women’s Help Centre, Birmingham*

*“Last year we ran a short course on ‘Setting up your own business’ many people have skills and great ideas but really struggle with the legal side of setting up, record keeping and hmrc, more regular courses and support is needed in this if funding was available.” – Hikmat, Devon*

## Other Key Themes

Other prominent themes identified across submissions were as follows:

1. Housing: difficulties in accessing adequate housing and in understanding one’s rights. Insecure housing arrangements and the negative impact this has on integration.
2. Empowerment, rights & opportunities: the need to empower migrants to have a voice and to play a part in shaping services. The importance of services that represent migrants and refugees and offer them help and advice.
3. The importance of volunteering: volunteering plays a central role in supporting the integration of newly arrived migrants, be it through local community volunteers or volunteer placements for newly arrived migrants.
4. Faith-based initiatives: the number of submissions that noted the positive role that faith-based organisations are playing in integration was striking.
5. The need for locally-led strategies: respondents emphasised that any integration strategies must be locally-led as all communities and contexts are unique and have different strengths and needs (a “one size fits all” approach must be avoided at all costs).
6. Funding: frustration over cuts to funding were echoed across submissions and local groups emphasised that they need more money to deliver services.
7. Networks and partnerships: Many groups spoke about positive local networks and partnerships that made their interventions a success. It was noted that good practice sharing nationally would also be beneficial.
8. The link between disadvantage and integration: poverty and destitution undermine effective integration.
9. Dovetailing with existing services: The point was raised that more could be done to adapt existing public services to promote more social mixing within them (such as provision of vocational training in mixed groups).



10. Residential segregation: how residential patterns shape integration was addressed, reflecting an already well documented phenomenon.

## Classifications & Criteria for the Case Studies

Based on the evidence, criteria were established against which to select case studies that reflect the needs identified by respondents and successful interventions already taking place. Case studies will prioritise interventions engaging young people, and may cover more than one of the following themes and types.

### Themes & Intervention Types

1. “Basic Assistance” interventions: English language learning & understanding how systems and processes work (including through “buddies” schemes).
2. Interventions focused on promoting local community acceptance, building trust and addressing grievances (e.g. a mediation project or a project where local people are working together towards common goals across communities).
3. A school integration initiative that helps integrate pupils within a school, addresses their specific needs and builds trust between parents.
4. A pre-school project that supports young children to integrate and provides support to their parents to integrate as part of this (e.g. the work in Girington, Bradford).
5. An age 18-30 project – that helps young people get ahead, recognising their specific needs, possibly focused on training and employment (such as apprenticeships), as well as confidence building and social mixing.
6. A women and girls project – that addresses specific needs (such as childcare), reduces isolation, and empowers women to access opportunities for themselves and their children.

### Local Characteristics

To include:

- Areas with high immigration, such as the North East, North West, Lincolnshire or Slough;
- Areas experiencing immigration for the first time and where there have been few previous studies, for example, the South West, areas of Wales, or another rural community;
- Case studies in Wales, Scotland and possibly Northern Ireland;
- To include “hard to reach” members of communities, e.g. initiatives should not only work with the most receptive members of local communities or easy to reach members of migrant communities but should engage those who are least likely to participate in integration projects.

### Next steps

Potential case studies were collated in June, and shortlisted for selection dependent on initial site visits and interviews. A selection of 8 case studies was made in early July, with field work taking place over the summer. The case studies will be published in November 2017, alongside a collection of essays from a range of academic and practitioner experts.



### **About the project**

This project is chaired by Professor Anthony Heath CBE FBA, a leading expert on integration, inequality and ethnicity, and is being steered by a working group including academics from the University of Oxford, University College London (UCL), the University of Manchester and the University of Kent, as well as policy experts from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), the Local Government Association (LGA), the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace), and The Challenge Network.

### **Organisations and individuals who submitted evidence and information**

Shazia Awan, Manchester City Council

Elizabeth Bailey and Dr Emma Marsden, Department of Education, University of York

Professor Eileen Barker FBA, INFORM, LSE

Pria Bhabra, Leeds City Council

Jo Broadwood, Talk for a Change

Dr Gemma Catney, University of Liverpool

Dr Mike Chick, University of South Wales, and Iona Hannagan Lewis, Welsh Refugee Council

Helen Collins and Dr Patricia Harrison, Liverpool John Moores University

Simon Cribbens, London City Council

Anne Crisp, Newham ESOL Exchange

Dr Neli Demireva, Dr Wouter Zwysen, and Izabela Hutchins, Growth, Equal Opportunities, Migration and Markets (GEMM), University of Essex

Godwin Enyori, City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, including:

The Education Service for New Communities & Travellers (ESNCT)

St Edmunds Nursery and Children’s Centre, Girdlington

Street Life

Paul Fitzpatrick, Doncaster Conversation Club

Riaz Hassan, Swansea City Council

Meg Henry and Linda Cowie, The Linking Network

Dr Irena Hergottova, Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Harry Iles, Abergavenny Conversation Club

Sophie Keenleyside, London Borough of Bexley

Dr Laurence Lessard-Phillips, Institute for Research into Superdiversity, University of Birmingham and

Dr Silvia Galandini, Cathie Marsh Institute for Social Research, University of Manchester

Dr Celia Jenkins, Dr Umit Cetin, University of Westminster

Anna Kere, The Challenge Network

Sam Martin, Spice

Matt Miller, Carmarthenshire County Council

Kevin McKenzie, Plymouth City Council

Surindar Nagra and Helen Shankster, Coventry City Council

“If you could do one thing...” Local actions to promote social integration



Daniel Pearmain and Lucy Turner, People's Health Trust, including:

Bruce Macgregor, Ipswich Community Media

Ileys Community Association, Smethwick, West Midlands

Borderlands, Bristol

Michael Reid, 611 Asylum & Refugee Support Work, Huddersfield

Education Training Consortium Sussex

Hikmat Devon CIC

Daisy Khera, The Women's Help Centre, Birmingham

The Harbour Project, Swindon

Mick Pickard, North Wales Association for Multicultural Integration (NWAMI)

Chris Podszus, Fixers

Iqbal Raakin, London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Dr Sam Scott, University of Gloucestershire

Philip Simpkins, Chief Executive, Bedford Borough Council

Professor Sin Yi Cheung, Cardiff University, and Professor Jenny Phillimore, Institute for Research into Superdiversity, University of Birmingham

Dr Richard Slade on behalf of the Rubic Project, Sheffield

Jane Wilson, Cambridge City Council

Nathan Yeowell, Sutton London Borough Council

Ruth Gwilym Rasool and Cathrin Manning, Red Cross South East Wales Refugee Women Support Programme

**For more information, please contact:**

Jamiesha Majevadia

Public Policy Adviser

[j.majevadia@britac.ac.uk](mailto:j.majevadia@britac.ac.uk)

Website: <https://www.britac.ac.uk/>

Project: <https://www.britac.ac.uk/if-you-could-do-one-thing-local>

Social media: [http://twitter.com/britac\\_news](http://twitter.com/britac_news)