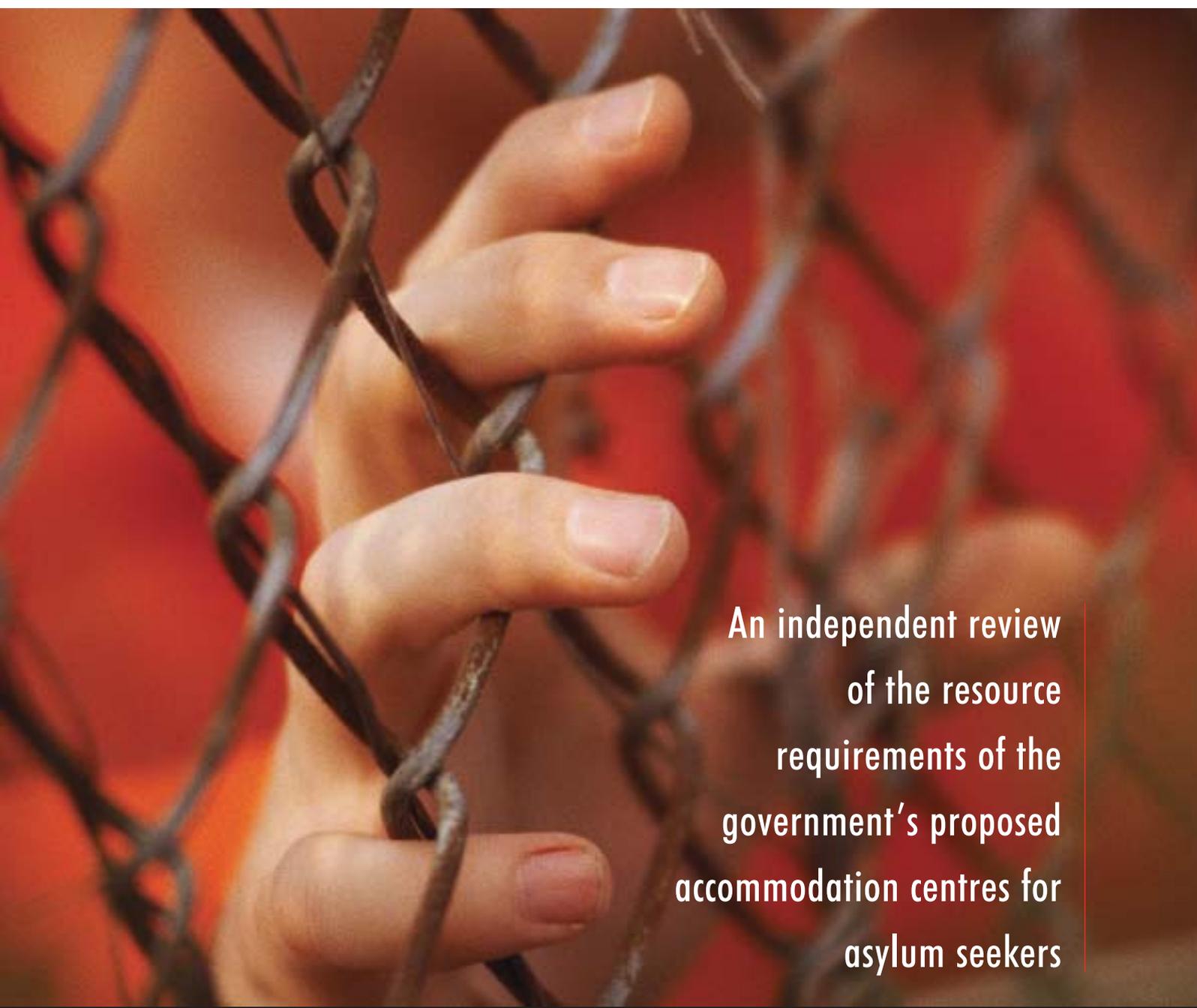


# ASYLUM CITY



An independent review  
of the resource  
requirements of the  
government's proposed  
accommodation centres for  
asylum seekers

Published by The Asylum Coalition

**D**on't legislate to **D**iscriminate

This report was commissioned by the members of the Asylum Coalition and researched and written by the New Policy Institute (NPI), an independent think tank.

### **About the New Policy Institute**

The NPI's mission is to advance the cause of social justice in a market economy. The NPI's funding is project-based, from charitable foundations, private companies, trade unions, voluntary sector organisations and public sector bodies. Most of NPI's work is concerned with policy analysis and development.

One major focus of interest is social inequality, in all of its various manifestations. The NPI is, for example, widely recognised as leading experts on the problems of poverty and social exclusion and their website [www.poverty.org.uk](http://www.poverty.org.uk) provides the most authoritative UK site for statistics on this subject.

Another major strand of the NPI's work is the performance of 'essential' services – from utilities and finance to education – and how government should seek to influence the outcomes that result from the decisions of what are now mainly private sector providers of such services. A third focus is on the labour market, and its interaction with the tax, benefits and education systems.

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## FOREWORD

*How a country treats those who turn to it in times of need says much about its history, its values and its people. The history, values and people of this nation reveal that we have traditionally treated refugees with dignity and kindness and stood by our international obligations.*

*Yet, our government now appears ready to turn its back on this tradition. Britain now stands on the threshold of setting up a parallel universe, one created to ensure that asylum seekers remain separated from our society.*

*For my Union, together with the other members of the Asylum Coalition, the proposals to establish vast detention centres for asylum seekers and locate them in far flung rural areas, are not only an affront to justice and our international obligations – they are also being implemented without full and proper consideration of the economic and social consequences.*

*We have therefore commissioned this independent review of the government's plans – carried out by the New Policy Institute – of the resources required to sustain these isolated detention units. This briefing is by no means an in-depth analysis. To cost a city, for that is the comparator for the services need to be provided, is difficult enough but to cost these centres on the basis of the scant information permitted into the public domain, even at this advanced stage in their development, is near impossible.*

*This assessment attempts to provide some benchmarks for the minimum level of selected facilities required in the planned detention centres. We take as our start point the Audit Commission's advice on the services required by refugees, but we also look wider drawing from the government's own standards, such as those for NHS care and education provision. As this paper shows, far too many questions about the operation and sustainability of these centres remain unanswered.*

*For instance, how can a nation with a shortage of public servants find the additional nurses, chiropodists, dentists and social workers needed to support at least four but as many as 15 detention centres? Will a GP be available 24 hours a day and a female doctor on hand for female patients? And if the promise to stop asylum seekers from 'wandering around' local villages is to be met, will there be a shop in each centre? Will it sell clothes, toys, toiletries or the many other things we take for granted? Will each centre have a church or a mosque – has any thought been given to how these centres will be able to provide for the spiritual needs of their residents? If the residents are to be kept fully occupied, what will they be doing? Even prisoners in open prison can expect 40 hours of activity each week. These are but a few of the questions that spring to mind.*

*But in perhaps the most graphic example of discrimination inherent in this policy, the children of asylum seekers are to be barred from mainstream schools and educated apart from the children of this country. What message does that send out about the value we place on these children, about how we wish society to view refugees?*

*The justification for these centres is that asylum seekers are "swamping" schools and surgeries but that is morally repugnant and intellectually confusing set in the context of a policy of camps that will require even greater resources and cost many times more than arguing the case for investment in and better management of dispersal.*

*For the people of this country, it must be bewildering to observe the government pursue foreign and military objectives in relation to Iraq that, if fulfilled, will create many thousands of displaced people, yet pursue a domestic policy of deterrence and discrimination towards refugees. Equally bewildering is that the delivery of a core public policy will pass into private sector provision – funded by the taxpayers – when the facilities to support asylum seekers already exist within our towns and cities. Yes, they need funding and yes, they need managing but it makes more sense to commit to this than to duplicate the facilities altogether.*

*The real problem is that asylum is now seen not as a justice and humanitarian issue but as a law and order matter. The question must be asked: does the Home Office, with its remit for law and order, and the preservation of homeland security, possess the ethos required to manage an issue of such international complexity? Asylum policy cannot be viewed through the narrow lens of domestic political concerns, so it is time to free the government from this political tension. Serious consideration must be given to establishing an independent Commission with responsibility for asylum matters such as that which serves Canada well.*

*On one thing we must be clear: these centres are not for accommodation, they are for detention. Founded on the socially repugnant policy of separating refugee children from society, these morally bankrupt edifices could become Labour's Greenham Common. They will be a constant reminder that this government has buried its commitment to social inclusion. This year, 2002, will mark the point when this country legislated in order to discriminate.*

Bill Morris

General Secretary, Transport and General Workers' Union  
September 2002

# ASYLUM SEEKERS: THE RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S PLANNED ACCOMMODATION CENTRES

## INTRODUCTION

In little more than one year from now, a series of mini-towns will begin to spring up across Britain. They will provide housing, food, legal services, health and education care. The many languages we have grown used to hearing on our streets will fill the air. Children will play and adults will be preoccupied with the every day matters of life.

Much as in any other village, town or city you may think. But not in one crucial respect: the residents of these places will be compelled to live there or risk destitution for themselves or their families. For, under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill 2002, these mini-towns will be established as accommodation centres and the residents will be asylum seekers.

This paper aims to provide some benchmarks for the minimum level of selected facilities that would be required in the accommodation centres planned for asylum seekers. It has been prepared by the New Policy Institute at the request of the Asylum Coalition.

The table below summarises where some of the major issues lie for each type of requirement. So, taking 'food' for example, it is clear that the accommodation centres will provide full-board accommodation but there may be issues about its quality; in contrast, while the need for secondary education is also clear, there are many serious questions about its shape and organisation.

The ticks in this table graphically reinforce the point that has been repeated throughout the analysis, namely how complicated it will be to organise even a minimum level of facilities in rural accommodation centres.

TYPE OF REQUIREMENT	MAJOR ISSUES TO DO WITH:				
	Whether provided	What provided	How much provided	How the provision is organised	Obtaining staff
Housing		✓			
Food			✓		
Subsistence (toiletries, clothing etc)		✓	✓	✓	
Health and social care	Primary care		✓	✓	✓
	Secondary care			✓	
Education	Primary age		✓	✓	
	Secondary age		✓	✓	✓
	Adult	✓	✓		
Legal services				✓	✓
Language support			✓		✓
Community support	✓				
Employment and training	✓				
Mobility/transport			✓		
Recreation		✓	✓		
Childcare	✓				
Access to financial services	✓				

## Government plans for accommodation centres

The government is currently in the process of setting up four accommodation centres for housing asylum seekers. These four centres are being introduced on a trial basis with an eventual goal of 12 to 15 centres. At least some of these centres will be located in rural areas.

Each centre will, at any one time, house around 750 people. They will stay there while their asylum application and any appeal is decided, which should take no longer than six months. The four centres will, in total, have the capacity to accommodate around 10% of all asylum seekers.

The government will choose who goes to the centres and those who refuse to go will lose all state support. Precise criteria for the government selections are not clear. It is, however, understood that both families and single people will be chosen and, if it were done in proportion to the overall asylum seeking population, would imply around 450 single adults and 300 people in families. It is also understood that they will be some attempt to group together people who have the same native language.

People placed in the centres will be allowed to come and go during the day but will have to sleep at the centre every night. The government has also told the relevant local communities that the centres will not be a 'burden' on the local community and that the asylum seekers will be 'too busy' to spend their time in the local villages. Thus, for example, the centres will provide full-board accommodation, healthcare, education and 'purposeful activity'. In effect, the aim is that the centres are largely self-sufficient.

## The focus of this paper

The purpose of this paper is to examine what resources will be required to ensure that the accommodation centres are adequately equipped and staffed. The motivation for the analysis is that, thus far, the government has released virtually no information on this subject, on the grounds of confidentiality. To help ensure that the centres do actually provide adequate facilities, this note aims to provide some benchmarks against which government plans, once announced, can then be judged to identify areas of possible inadequacy.

In examining this issue, it is vital to understand that the change being proposed is not simply 'accommodation centres versus being housed in the community'. It is also about 'being in a rural setting versus being in an urban setting'. A simple example illustrates the point: if an asylum seeker wants to visit a mosque then, if they are in London or another major city, they will be able to do so whether they live in an accommodation centre or in the community; in contrast, if they are in a rural area then it is unlikely that they will be able to do so whether they live in an accommodation centre or in the community. Where possible, the analysis in this note distinguishes between these two dimensions of the proposed change.

Finally, the note in no way attempts to provide a comprehensive analysis of the resource requirements – such an exercise would be virtually impossible given the lack of information about government plans in the public realm. It also avoids simplistic statements of possible costs which we believe are often misleading because one does not know what is and is not included in the calculations – for example, whilst the Home Office apparently told The Guardian that the average costs of detaining an asylum seeker was £29,000 per year<sup>1</sup>, the Home Office's cost model puts the figure at £9,000 per year for adults and £18,000 per year for families<sup>2</sup>. Rather, the document provides a reflection on aspects that could be considered important.

<sup>1</sup> McFadyean, M, *Hard Labour*, The Guardian, 14 September 2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Asylum Seeker Support – Estimates Of Public Expenditure*, Home Office, undated but either 2000 or 2001.

## Types of facility and resource

The Audit Commission groups the needs of asylum seekers into the following broad headings<sup>3</sup>:

- 1 Housing and subsistence (toiletries, clothing, etc).
- 2 Health and social care.
- 3 Education.
- 4 Legal services.
- 5 Language support.
- 6 Community support.
- 7 Employment and training.
- 8 Welfare benefits.

The nature of the need for first five of these items seems similar whether people live in accommodation centres or in the community. For those living in accommodation centres, however, 'welfare benefits' are effectively being replaced by full-board accommodation plus 'purposeful activity' plus a small cash allowance. Community support presumably takes on a different form in the context of major accommodation centres in rural areas and employment and training may not directly applicable, as they only apply once the asylum seeker has been resident for six months. In this context, the material in this paper is organised around the first five headings, with the last also covering 'purposeful activity' and community support.

In addition to the above, the Countryside Agency's list of essential services for every rural community<sup>4</sup> – and an accommodation centre will be bigger than many villages – include:

- 1 Mobility/transport.
- 2 Food (e.g. supermarkets).
- 3 Recreation (e.g. libraries).
- 4 Childcare.
- 5 Access to financial services (banks, building societies and cashpoints).

In one way or another, at least the first three of these categories would also apply to asylum seekers living in rural areas.

## HOUSING AND SUBSISTENCE

### Needs

The need for furnished and full-board accommodation is obvious and fundamental. In addition to the housing itself, there will be requirements for maintenance, catering, administration and (presumably) security.

Less obviously, but equally important, is the need for essential 'subsistence' goods such as toiletries and clothing.

<sup>3</sup> *Another Country: Implementing Dispersal under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999*, Audit Commission, undated but either 2000 or 2001.

<sup>4</sup> *The State of the Countryside 2002, Chapter 3: Services and Lifestyle, Countryside Agency, 2002.*

## Required Resources

The accommodation centres will be privately-managed. During this research, we contacted a range of potential providers but (with one exception) none were willing to provide any information on the likely scale or cost of the required resources. We therefore turned to the Audit Commission<sup>5</sup> as our major source of information.

The Audit Commission estimates the current average amount spent by local authorities outside London on meeting the basic housing and subsistence of asylum seekers to be:

- Housing: £80 per adult per week and £140 per family, equivalent to around £2.6 million per accommodation centre per year.
- Subsistence: £30 per adult per week and £80 per family, equivalent to around £1.1 million per accommodation centre per year.
- Administration: £15 per adult per week and £20 per family, equivalent to around £0.5 million per accommodation centre per year.

The calculations for subsistence assume that both the shops and asylum support organisations in the local area can be used to provide subsistence goods to asylum seekers. In an accommodation centre, the closest equivalent would be the local village shop. It is far from clear, however, that this is what is envisaged by the government, who have made various statements about asylum seekers not 'wandering around' the local villages. An alternative model, which would add to the cost, would be to provide the equivalent of a village shop actually within the accommodation centre itself.

Whichever model, there is the further complication that, whilst the average village shop will stock toiletries, it is very unlikely to stock clothing. Thus, the accommodation centre will either have to provide transport access to the nearest market town, or include such items in its own 'shops'.

In any event, the Countryside Agency's designation of adequate public transport as an essential service in every rural community would seem to imply that a minibus or equivalent service to the nearest market town will be a requirement for every accommodation centre.

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### Needs

Legislation states that all asylum seekers are entitled to free primary care medical services provided by the NHS and free access to all NHS accident & emergency, maternity and in-patient/out-patient services<sup>6</sup>. It is agreed that health services for asylum seekers should be of a similar range and quality to those available to the rest of the population and provided to the same standards.

The general consensus is that the scale of the basic physical health needs of asylum seekers are broadly similar to those of the rest of the population<sup>7</sup>. However, poor previous access to healthcare may mean that many conditions have been previously untreated; there are often particular problems of a specialist nature (e.g. TB and sickle cell anaemia); and many of the physical problems may be compounded by factors such as malnutrition and injuries related to traumatic experiences.

In addition, mental health is an area where asylum seekers typically require more resources than the rest of the population (because of high levels of psychological stress) and where cultural differences may mean that the obvious treatment methods for UK citizens may be inappropriate for the asylum seeker.

<sup>5</sup> *Halfway Home: An Analysis Of The Variation In The Cost Of Support Of Asylum Seekers*, Audit Commission, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> The Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill, Part 2.

<sup>7</sup> For example, see Burnett, BMJ, March 2001.

## Required Resources

The Department of Health has stated that “services will be provided in discrete, properly equipped and clean accommodation that ensures medical confidentiality. The delivery of services should be developed and implemented in line with relevant NHS standards. Services need to take account of any special need arising from ethnicity, disability, gender, age and religion”. Also “all healthcare staff must be appropriately trained and, where relevant, properly qualified and registered with the appropriate regulatory body to provide care to professional standards of practice”.<sup>8</sup>

Whilst it may be possible to provide access to secondary healthcare resources through standard NHS facilities (e.g. hospital inpatient/outpatient care), it is widely agreed that special arrangements need to be put in place for primary healthcare. These include:

- GPs and related support services, such that access is available to a primary care professional within 24 hours and to a primary care doctor within 48 hours.<sup>9</sup>
- Nursing services, which also covers a variety of specialist areas such as midwifery, sexual health and HIV/Aids.
- Multi-disciplinary mental health services, ranging from psychologists and psychiatrists to social workers and ‘listeners’.
- Ability to dispense pharmaceuticals.
- Access to other standard primary healthcare services, such as dentistry, physiotherapy, chiropody and opticians.

According to clinics working with a high number of asylum seekers<sup>10</sup>, primary healthcare provision on site would need to include a GP surgery, a nurse treatment room, a reception area and a place for dispensing pharmaceuticals. On average, GPs have around 1,800 patients. However, because of a much higher turnover of patients and an average appointment time which is double that of a normal visit, it is considered that each accommodation centre will require at least one full-time GP.

However, simply providing a GP would not be sufficient. For example, a female GP must be available for female patients<sup>11</sup> and there are obvious issues relating to how to achieve 24 hour cover. This example, and equivalent examples in education, is illustrative of how difficult it might be to provide a sufficient range of service without the costs increasing dramatically.

Furthermore, given that willing, suitable and ‘spare’ GPs are unlikely to be available locally, obtaining the services might become both difficult and costly<sup>12</sup>. This example, and equivalent examples in legal services, is illustrative of the potential difficulties in obtaining suitable personnel given the likely location of the centres.

The scale of the nursing requirement is open to debate but some other facilities with similar numbers of potential patients put the minimum requirement at six people<sup>13</sup>. Similarly, the scale of the mental health team requirement may range up to nine people<sup>14</sup>. It is noticeable that a recent letter from the Department of Health to one of the proposed accommodation centres comprises a set of questions on these subjects rather than answers<sup>15</sup>. In both cases, one of the major challenges is ensuring that the full range of specialisms is available, particularly given that the local primary healthcare team is unlikely to have substantial prior experience in all the subject areas.

Even if the other primary healthcare services can be considered standard, this ignores the important issue of interpretation services which take up a large proportion of the resources in clinics that currently

<sup>8</sup> Letter from the Department of Health to the Primary Care Trust in the area of one of the proposed accommodation centres, June 2002.

<sup>9</sup> Public Service Agreement (PSA) target, to be achieved by 2004 – accommodation centres are unlikely to be in operation before that date.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Dover-based PMS for newly-arrived asylum seekers run at a GP surgery; The Sanctuary Practice for asylum seekers and refugees in Hackney.

<sup>11</sup> Research commissioned by the Department of Health discusses the importance of female medical staff – female asylum seekers are far more co-operative and trusting when treated by female health care workers.

<sup>12</sup> For example, some Sure Start areas have found it difficult to obtain health resources unless they offer substantial incentives.

<sup>13</sup> HMP Acklington, a category C prison based in Northumberland, has an inmate population of around 750. Note, however, that this prison has been put on amber alert as its healthcare provision and more staff are now being recruited.

<sup>14</sup> For example, current proposals for a mental health team in Lambeth envisage 2 grade G staff, a linkworker a social worker, 2 clinical psychologists, a researcher, a manager and a volunteer co-ordinator at a total cost of £250,000 per annum.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, Department of Health.

work with asylum seekers<sup>16</sup>. The Department of Health has stated that mental health work in particular needs full-time interpreters<sup>17</sup> and the Kings Fund have stated that the NHS currently under-estimates such requirements<sup>18</sup>. This whole issue of interpreters is one which transcends all the services discussed in this document.

## EDUCATION

### Needs

Asylum seekers of school age are entitled to education and the government, partially in response to concerns about the implications (and possible illegality) of separate education for asylum seekers' dependants, has stated that the education provision in the accommodation centres will be the equivalent of that provided in mainstream schools.

Clearly, receiving an education equivalent to that provided in mainstream education would imply being taught a range of subjects, with children of different ages being taught subjects which reflected their age group. Given the relatively small numbers of children involved, say around 5 of each yearly age group, this clearly raises issues of logistics as the costs of providing separate classes for each age group would obviously be prohibitive. Any decision on resource requirements therefore critically depends on a judgement about the extent to which age groups can acceptably be combined into single classes, and this in turn may depend on the breadth of the subjects being taught. This is an example where lessons might be learnt from the experience of communities in local villages.

### Required Resources

Of the 750 people in an accommodation centre at any one time, a minimum of 100 are likely to be aged 18 or less.

DfES already recognises that children of asylum seekers require more resource than pupils on average because of their need for additional language tuition and to help them settle in. As a result, it provides local education authorities with up to £500 extra per year for each child.

If this £500 is added to the average current cost of around £2,100 per year for primary care pupils across the UK, this gives a total of £2,600 per year. Assuming around 30 pupils of primary school age at each centre, this equates to around £80,000 per year which, in turn, would be sufficient for 2-3 teachers (perhaps a generalist primary school teacher, an English language teacher and a learning support or special needs teacher). Resourcing at this level would imply that all 5-10-year-olds are taught in a single class, which may be neither educationally nor developmentally acceptable.

A similar calculation for children of secondary school age results in a figure of £3,700 per child which, assuming 50 such children, gives a total of around £160,000, or, say, 4 teachers. This would be sufficient for, say, two classes, one for 11-15-year olds and the other for 16-18-year olds, with the acceptability of this again questionable. Furthermore, given that teaching at a secondary level is clearly more subject-specific than teaching at a primary school level, such an arrangement would not be sufficient to provide provision equivalent to mainstream education, as stated by the government.

Finally, there is the issue of nursery education. All 4-year-olds in the UK have access to a free nursery place and, by the time that the accommodation centres come on stream, the same will be true for all 3-year-olds. Assuming – in line with government statements about equivalent educational provision – that the same applies to children of asylum seekers, and using similar calculations as before, with 10 such children, gives a total of £30,000, equivalent to, say, 1½ staff.

<sup>16</sup> For example, The Sanctuary Practice in Hackney uses Homerton Advisory Services which is funded by the NHS and which provides an interpreting service whereby the interpreters accompany asylum seekers to all their appointments.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Health document on the health needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

<sup>18</sup> Woodhead, D, *The Health and Well-Being of Asylum Seekers and Refugees*, Kings Fund, 2000.

## LEGAL SERVICES

Asylum seekers are, by definition, making a claim for protection under international law. The provision of legal advice and support is therefore a key priority for them and they will not have the income to pay for these services.

Whilst there are no publicly available statistics on the likely scale of the requirement, it is clearly considerable. For example, the government's Oakington detention centre for asylum seekers has 55 full-time advisers and another 20 staff supporting them.

Most agencies with expertise in this area agree that the legal services need to be provided on-site. But, as the Audit Commission has demonstrated<sup>19</sup>, most specialist asylum legal representatives are located in London and the south-east, and virtually all are in major towns, and none are in rural areas. Organising appropriate provision in the rural locations of the accommodation centres will therefore clearly be both logistically difficult and costly.

## 'PURPOSEFUL ACTIVITIES', INCLUDING LANGUAGE SUPPORT AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

### Needs

Of the 750 people in an accommodation centre at any one time, up to 650 are likely to be over 18 years of age. The obvious issue is what they are going to spend all their time doing.

The government's stated commitment to the provision of 'purposeful activities' in the accommodation centres goes hand-in-hand with their promise that the centres will not have an substantial impact on the local rural communities where they are located. But they appear to have said virtually nothing about either the shape or scale of these activities. This is a cause for considerable concern, particularly given that:

- There is no obvious track record on which to base provision, given that the issue does not really arise under the current arrangements for asylum seekers.
- Unless otherwise provided by the centres, the asylum seekers are unlikely to have any work, training or education to occupy their time.
- Unlike the rest of the population, asylum seekers will typically have virtually no money to buy goods, to travel or to use any facilities that are available in the area.
- The location of the centres in rural areas means that, unlike in London for example, there will be little by way of free things to see or recreational facilities to use.
- The likely focus of the media and other potential critics is likely to be on the tangible services provided by the centres, such as health and education, and/or the specialist services, such as legal provision.

The assumption must be that the residents will spend most of their time in the centres and the obvious issue that arises is what constitutes 'purposeful activities' such that they will be sufficient to occupy people who essentially have all day, every day to occupy.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, Audit Commission.

## Required Resources

A benchmark of 40 hours 'purposeful activity' per week is suggested. This equates to the average time of 'purposeful activity' provided for prisoners in open prisons. Although accommodation centres are not prisons, their relative isolation and the lack of funds available to their residents make their situation not dissimilar in some respects and thus 40 hours per week seems like a reasonable benchmark for the accommodation centres.

The possibilities include:

- **English language support.** Special language classes, such as English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) courses are commonly used to provide language tuition for asylum seekers. Such provision would meet the twin aims of providing a purposeful activity which was also useful to the individual. If, for example, each adult was to receive 5 hours tuition a week (a figure not dissimilar to conventional language courses), and 650 adults attended, then a total of 3,250 hours of tuition would be required each week. Assuming class sizes of 20, this would equate to 160 classes per week. Assuming a full-time teacher could provide around 20 lessons per week, this would equate to around 8 full-time teachers. Clearly, 5 hours tuition a week would only represent a small portion of the suggested benchmark of 40 hours of 'purposeful activity' per week.
- **Other adult education**, such as IT skills development. The Audit Commission has reported that language support courses are most useful if combined with other skills training. Using similar calculations to the above, 5 hours tuition on other adult education would require around 8 full-time teachers. If the people were also to spend time practising what they were learning, this would obviously require the appropriate books, computers, etc.
- **Utilisation of existing skills:** although many of the residents may not have much money, this does not mean that they do not have many skills. If methods could be found to utilise these skills, then this would both help to provide 'purposeful activity' and provide some money to the residents, at little or no cost to the centre.
- **Helping to run the centre:** similarly, some of the residents could potentially contribute on a voluntary basis to the running of the centre, to mutual benefit.

Clearly, however much 'purposeful activity' is organised, it will not be sufficient to fill the week. Rather, recreational activities will also be required. It is standard practice in most 'institutions' to provide a range of such facilities and the Countryside Agency considers access to recreational facilities in general, and libraries in particular, to be essential in every rural community<sup>20</sup>. The possibilities here include:

- **Televisions, radios etc:** a television and radio for each household in the centre would cost around £50,000 to purchase, with little by way of running costs.
- **Library facilities:** A well-stocked library is often a relatively cost effective means of providing people something to occupy their time. On average, UK public libraries stock approximately four books per member. If 500 people in a centre were to use the facility on a regular basis, the library would need to contain approximately 2000 books. The initial outlay on books might therefore be around £20,000. To manage a library of this size would presumably require a librarian and perhaps 2 support staff, at a cost of around £60,000 per year. Such a library could also provide newspapers, Internet access and music, as virtually all public libraries now do.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, Countryside Agency.

- **Gym/sports facilities:** As well as providing outdoor space for sports/leisure activities, supervised indoor provision could also be provided, perhaps a gym and a sports hall. Given that many of the residents are young men, the demand for such facilities is likely to be relatively high. A sports hall to provide facilities for approximately 20 people at a time and a gym catering for 50, operating 12 hours per day would enable between 500 and 600 people to spend an 1½ hours on supervised physical activities per day. Facilities of this type typically require around 8 staff to run and supervise, at an approximate cost of £120,000 per year.

The list above represents a bare minimum, such as may be found in a prison, rather than the range of facilities that could be considered the norm in non-criminal institutions. For example, it would also be standard practice in military establishments to provide extensive leisure facilities, from clubs to organised entertainment.

The final issue is perhaps the most problematic given the rural setting of the centres, namely that of essential cultural and social facilities. For example, regarding religious observance and pastoral care: it is not immediately evident how even de minimis facilities can be made available, particularly given the strong held and wide ranging beliefs likely to be held by many of the residents.

The more general issue here is that of community support, where the Audit Commission's checklist for required service provision includes "are there established refugee community groups in the areas?" and "is there support available to develop new community networks?". If both cases, the default answer for accommodation centres will be "no", as such groups and networks simply do not currently exist in rural areas, and arranging the equivalent will thus be a major challenge for the government.

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