

Controlling Migration Fund evaluation

Project-level evaluation report

Lead LA: Bradford Metropolitan District Authority

Project name: Local Authority Asylum Support Officer (LAASLO) pilot project



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Executive Summary

This project-level evaluation report presents the key findings relating to the delivery and outcomes for the LAASLO pilot project led by Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

Project overview and objectives

Bradford Metropolitan District Council (MDC) received a grant of £100,000 from the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) for the LAASLO pilot to fund two Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers (LAASLO). The pilot took place across 19 local authority areas, and the overarching aim was to ensure the smooth transition of new refugees from government-supported accommodation into mainstream society during their 28-day 'move on' period and help facilitate the return of failed asylum seekers. The Bradford pilot specifically aimed to meet two core objectives: to prevent homelessness and destitution amongst newly-granted refugees and to help beneficiaries integrate into the wider community.

Ipsos MORI undertook an evaluation of the Bradford LAASLO pilot project between January 2019 and February 2020. A theory-based approach was taken to the evaluation, with the aim of reviewing and testing the outputs and outcomes intended through the project activities.¹ Evaluation activities included a scoping phase to identify project activities and objectives. The fieldwork consisted of qualitative interviews with project staff, key stakeholders, and beneficiaries. The evaluation also analysed quarterly monitoring information collected by the local authority in order to quantify progress towards core outcomes.

Progress towards intended outcomes

Progress towards intended CMF-level intermediate and longer-term outcomes is summarised in table 1.1 below. There was evidence that the project contributed to some degree towards all six CMF outcomes it was working towards. The sixth outcome, related to increased beneficiary understanding of British culture and social norms, made less progress than the others as the project did not conduct its own community sessions as originally planned. There were also two unintended outcomes that the project made progress towards.

¹ Theory-based approaches to evaluation use an explicit theory of change to draw conclusions about whether and how an intervention contributed to observed results. For more information, see: <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/centre-excellence-evaluation/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html>

Summary of project CMF outcomes

Outcome group	Intended Outcome	Assessment of progress made by February 2020
Local authority and partners	Intermediate outcome 1: acquired expertise and structures in place to deal with local issues	The project has made some progress in acquiring expertise and structures within the local authority to deal with local issues, particularly in relation to housing. This was due to the LAASLOs having strong local and policy area knowledge. There are gaps in acquired expertise around integration, due to project activities being less focussed on this so far.
	Intermediate outcome 2: improved signposting and referral services	The pilot established this outcome by having the LAASLOs as a consistent and local authority-based point of contact for beneficiaries. LAASLOs were also able to establish reciprocal signposting and referrals with other agencies by co-running drop-in centres.
	Intermediate outcome 3: increased co-ordination and co-operation between agencies	Linked to the above, the pilot project has made progress towards achieving this outcome. Improved signposting helped strengthen co-ordination and cooperation between agencies involved with this beneficiary group.
Migrants	Intermediate outcome 1: Housing issues identified and resolved for target service users	There is evidence that the project has contributed towards supporting more newly recognised refugees into accommodation. Ensuring accommodation was suitable for individual needs was a challenge for the project due to limited temporary and permanent housing stock, as was managing expectations over the availability, location and standard of housing stock.

Outcome group	Intended Outcome	Assessment of progress made by February 2020
	Intermediate outcome 2: Access to labour market skills, training and accreditations and Intermediate outcome 3: access to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision	The project has made some progress towards helping beneficiaries with employability, and there were examples where LAASLOs had directly supported individuals with training, educational or ESOL courses.
	Intermediate outcome 4: Increased understanding and access to public services	The evidence suggests that the project contributed to supporting beneficiaries accessing benefits and that some beneficiaries were supported to access health services and school places where needed. However, some project beneficiaries mentioned not being aware that this support was available, suggesting some inconsistency in the support provided.
	Intermediate outcome 5: increased understanding of British culture and social norms	The evidence suggests this outcome was addressed for some beneficiaries, particularly by connecting them to local organisations and networks. Nevertheless, there was evidence that not all beneficiaries benefited from this support.

Based on the contribution of the project towards the outcomes above, there is evidence to suggest the project is likely to contribute towards the CMF longer-term outcomes of decreasing homelessness and destitution in the future. Where beneficiaries were supported to access wider support services, and if this access is sustained and leads to beneficiaries receiving support, the project is likely to contribute to increased wellbeing and, where support accessed leads to employment or volunteering, increased contribution to society. However, the project was less successful in increasing participants' understanding of British culture and social norms (specifically as LAASLOs were unable to run the intended 'citizenship training'). Provided the LAASLO project continues to deliver, the project is also expected to contribute to reduced costs on public services (as a result of fewer newly recognised refugees presenting as homeless) and improved integrated working with the council and delivery partners.

What works?

The LAASLOs in Bradford had strong knowledge and expertise suitable to the role. This was in terms of knowledge of the local area, public services and the communities that reside within it, but also of the housing and benefits policy area. This meant the team were able to mobilise the project quickly, reach the target audience and were able to efficiently link them into the relevant services they required in order to secure accommodation.

The LAASLO role being based within the local authority was key to the success of the project. LAASLOs were able to quickly mobilise housing arrangements to prevent homelessness, and to fast-track beneficiaries through to the housing team if they were at risk of becoming homeless.

Local authority staff applied their expertise to establish better structures to support beneficiaries. The LAASLO acted as a lynchpin between the beneficiary and the wide network of voluntary sector support services, which improved coordination of local refugee services.

While LAASLOs did support beneficiaries to integrate into their local community, the project was unable to establish planned activities related to integration, such as running its own workshops or community events. Project staff recognised the importance of integration for beneficiaries in sustaining a settled livelihood. However, LAASLOs have high caseloads and are primarily focussed on the short-term needs (such as housing and benefits). It is therefore likely to take longer to establish these activities and require more staff resource to the project.

A cost benefit analysis of monetizable project outcomes (related to housing interventions reducing the public service cost of homelessness and improved health and wellbeing resultant from homelessness) estimates that every £1 of CMF funding returned on average £1.42 of monetizable economic benefit to society. Based on monitoring information and secondary data it is estimated that without the intervention there would have been a net increase of 60 individuals falling into homelessness (a proportion of which rough sleeping and a proportion in sheltered accommodation).

For whom

The improved coordination between the local authority and voluntary support services benefited both parties. Referrals were made into the LAASLO project through voluntary organisations, and vice versa when necessary. Shared drop-in centres worked well, and voluntary organisations reported the usefulness of having the LAASLOs attend to cover specific policy area expertise such as housing legislation for those “moving on”.

The tailored approach to supporting beneficiaries worked well. Individuals had varying levels of needs, and knowledge of processes. For example, some beneficiaries needed intense support with comprehension of English and materials they received in English, i.e. filling in forms, while others had good levels of English or highly skilled qualifications and sought support to move into an appropriate career pathway.

The project has primarily worked with newly recognised refugees, not those at the pre-decision stage as this was outside of the planned scope of work.

In what circumstances?

A large pre-existing network of voluntary support services providing ongoing support to refugee communities operate in the Bradford area. This allowed beneficiaries to feel supported with practical day-to-day requirements, and to feel part of the local community.

LAASLO support worked well if the beneficiaries were engaged at an early stage within the 28-day window they have to “move-on”. Project staff reported that due to issues with delays to referrals from asylum support providers, they sometimes only had a few days to work with beneficiaries and ensure they would avoid becoming homeless. This would lead to more utilisation of temporary accommodation. Project staff felt that an extended window for newly recognised refugees would be beneficial to the efficiency of the project, and to achieving sustainable outcomes such as permanent housing, and doing further work such as integration.

1 Introduction

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), at the time of this evaluation, known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government commissioned Ipsos MORI alongside the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford to conduct an independent evaluation of the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) in May 2018. Launched in November 2016, the Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) aims to help local authorities across England develop and deliver activities to mitigate the perceived negative impacts of recent and unexpected migration on communities in their area. DLUHC provided funding to local authorities to deliver projects that aim to address local service pressures, tailored to their context and needs. While the primary emphasis is on relieving pressure on public services in a way that delivers benefits to the established resident population, the fund also seeks to support wider community cohesion and the integration of recent migrants. Interventions can also focus on gaining a greater understanding of the local migration data landscape where there is currently a lack of accurate local data.

Project-level evaluations of 14 CMF-funded projects were conducted as part of the CMF evaluation. The project-level evaluations aim to assess the effectiveness of various project approaches in delivering against their local-level objectives and those of the wider fund.² They seek to build an understanding of what works, for whom and in what context to relieve pressure on local services due to recent or unexpected migration. This project-level evaluation report presents the key findings relating to the delivery and outcomes for the Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officer (LAASLO) pilot project led by Bradford Metropolitan District Council (MDC).

The area context

While the number of international arrivals to Bradford fell between 2017 and 2018, the city remains an area with relatively high numbers of migrants compared to other areas in the Yorkshire & Humber region.³ The top five countries of origin for migrant arrivals who registered for a national insurance number in Bradford in 2018 are Pakistan (671), Romania (353), Poland (346), India (341) and Slovakia (200).⁴ Bradford has also been an asylum-dispersal area since 1999⁵ and accommodated 900 asylum-seekers in National Asylum Support Service (NASS) accommodation at the start of April 2019.⁶ While the Home Office aims to consider asylum claims “without unnecessary delay”,⁷ some asylum seekers (including more complex cases) may wait a number of years before obtaining a decision on their claim. A negative decision would necessitate an appeal or arrangements

² An overall Theory of Change, created during the scoping stage, outlines the intermediate and longer-term fund outcomes (see Appendix 2).

³ Migration Yorkshire, 2019, Bradford Migration Profile, available online:

<https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/userfiles/attachments/pages/664/bradfordImp-oct2019.pdf>

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Temporary “National Asylum Support Service” (NASS) accommodation is available to people seeking asylum in the UK who don’t have anywhere else to live (and are considered destitute), while they await a decision on their asylum claim from the Home Office. Asylum seekers are first housed in initial accommodation while their claim is processed. Once their claim has been processed, most destitute asylum seekers are moved to asylum dispersal accommodation in “asylum dispersal areas” across the UK.

⁶ Migration Yorkshire, 2019, Bradford Migration Profile, available online:

<https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/userfiles/attachments/pages/664/bradfordImp-oct2019.pdf>

⁷ Hansard (2019) Asylum: written question 5076, available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2019-10-24/5076/>

to leave the UK, while a positive decision could include a grant of refugee status or another form of “leave to remain” (permission to stay in the UK). Data collected by the local authority indicates that there had been a rise in positive decisions (asylum seekers granted refugee status or other form of “leave to remain”) over the past year. Data on asylum seekers’ nationalities in Bradford is not available, but the top five countries of origin for asylum seekers in Yorkshire and Humber are Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, Albania and Sudan.⁸

Homelessness was identified as a growing problem in Bradford by the local authority. Staff identified individuals who had recently been granted refugee status as representing a high risk of homelessness. In part, this is because once they receive a positive decision on their asylum claim, refugees who are housed in NASS accommodation are required to leave their accommodation within 28 days (“move-on” period). The local authority identified a number of barriers faced by many refugees in accessing accommodation once they had received a positive decision, which resulted in them presenting to Council homelessness services in the city.⁹ This mirrors a wider national trend identified by a parliamentary briefing on homelessness amongst refugees, compiled by several VCS organisations.¹⁰ The briefing notes also discussed how newly recognised refugees have been unable to save money due to the low financial support received as asylum seekers and not being allowed to work, meaning private rented housing is generally unaffordable. The briefing also states that refugees face delays accessing benefits, further increasing the risk of homelessness. Through delivering the project, staff also identified single people as a group requiring special attention due to a heightened risk of becoming homeless or destitute, due to having less available support under the Housing legislation.¹¹ Similarly, individuals arriving in the UK through family reunion (a process to reunite refugees with family members living abroad) were included among the project’s support priorities. This is because it can be difficult to find appropriate housing when a single individual is housed in accommodation that is unable to accommodate additional family members. These challenges often resulted in disrupted living circumstances, including refugees moving around different temporary accommodation and possibly having to move children to different schools.

The local authority and external stakeholders working for a VCS organisation and a health facility supporting refugees also identified that integration into wider society could be difficult for newly granted refugees. While some had lived in the UK for a long time, and therefore may feel settled in Bradford, according to the local authority many experienced isolation and struggled to take part in wider community activities. Local authority staff also felt that some refugees would benefit from increased understanding of British and local culture and social norms.

Refugees were also identified by local authority staff as a group that often experience high levels of stress and were likely to have experienced trauma and suffer from mental health

⁸ <https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/userfiles/attachments/pages/664/bradfordlmp-oct2019.pdf>

⁹ According to the Bradford District Homelessness planning, this group were amongst those identified at higher risk of homelessness, see: <https://bradford.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s27432/Bradford%20Homelessness%20and%20Rough%20Sleeping%20Strategy.pdf>
Homelessness amongst Refugees Briefing for Debate, July 2018, see: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Homelessness_amongst_Refugees_-_parliamentary_briefing_FINAL.pdf

¹⁰ Homelessness amongst Refugees Briefing for Debate, July 2018, see: https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Homelessness_amongst_Refugees_-_parliamentary_briefing_FINAL.pdf

¹¹ Local authorities have a statutory duty under housing legislation to provide accommodation to applicants that are homeless and in Priority Need. Priority Need is defined in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as: pregnant women and households with dependent children; anyone who has lost their accommodation in an emergency; being vulnerable due to old age, or particular disabilities or illnesses; fleeing domestic violence

issues as a result of their experiences, therefore requiring specialist mental health care. Mental health support is a key aspect of refugee support in the UK (and internationally), with the Refugee Council reporting that refugees are five times more likely to have mental health needs than the UK population.¹²

Anecdotally, project staff felt that many asylum-seekers and refugees did not wish to remain in Bradford long-term, preferring to move to larger cities such as London to find employment. Project staff felt this presented a barrier to asylum seekers and refugees integrating into the local area. Staff cited examples where refugees would leave the city and then return destitute or homeless. As a result, the local authority identified a need to support newly recognised refugees to integrate into the local community, find employment or advance their skills. The local authority also hoped this would boost the local economy and increase social mixing between refugees and other resident communities.

The CMF-funded project

Bradford MDC received £100,000 CMF funding in 2018 for the LAASLO pilot project. This was to fund two full time LAASLO positions within the council for one year. As part of the requirements of the funding, the council committed to match-fund the roles for a second year. The LAASLO project's stated aim is to "facilitate the smooth transition of new refugees from government-supported accommodation into mainstream society during their 28-day 'move on' period and help facilitate the return of failed asylum seekers".¹³

The target demographic for the LAASLO project in Bradford was individuals who had received a positive decision on their asylum claim and therefore refugee status and permission to remain in the UK. It was assumed that supporting this group would be the focus of the project and that support for asylum seekers who received a negative decision would require a separate service (for example, legal advice about repatriation or appealing the decision).

Within the target client group, the project identified the following priority individuals:

- Those with physical or mental health issues, or learning disabilities;
- Those with other vulnerabilities such as pregnancy, financial difficulties or suffering from past traumatic experiences; and
- Those with limited English language skills and low education levels.

The Bradford pilot project planned to recruit two full-time liaison officers (LAASLOs) based within the local authority. LAASLOs aimed to provide one-to-one support to newly granted refugees with the "move-on" process from asylum dispersal accommodation to new accommodation,¹⁴ and their wider integration into the local community. The project aimed to recruit LAASLOs with relevant skills and experience to support this population, such as

¹² Mental health support for refugees and asylum seekers, Refugee Council, see: <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-support-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers/#:~:text=Here%20in%20the%20UK%2C%20refugees,ones%20left%20behind%20or%20missing>

¹³ UK Government, Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officer job description, see:

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/171123%20LAASLO%20job%20description_FINAL.pdf

¹⁴ The term move-on is often used to refer to the process whereby a newly granted refugee must leave NASS accommodation and find somewhere else within 28 days.

knowledge of the housing market and the ability to speak in common languages spoken by refugees in Bradford.

Project staff acknowledged that Bradford had a strong existing network of voluntary organisations supporting refugees. However, staff considered this network to be difficult to navigate and therefore the LAASLO role was needed to link organisations together and ensure refugees were signposted and made aware of the available support.

Prior to the introduction of the LAASLO project in Bradford, the Refugee Education Training Advice Service (RETAS), a third sector organisation, provided wraparound support to refugees including help during the move-on process, referring to services, education, employment and training. However, a LAASLO project delivery staff member noted that this service only offered support for 28 days, which did not allow sufficient time to support a Universal Credit or child benefit through to payment, and included no support with housing. With the introduction of the LAASLO project, RETAS shifted its focus to supporting refugees in Leeds rather than Bradford. There are also a number of other voluntary and community sector (VCS) support services that work with this beneficiary group in Bradford, including the British Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

The project aimed to establish two core delivery strands:

1. **One-to-one casework with refugees:** LAASLOs aimed to engage refugees immediately after being granted leave to remain in the UK (either refugee status or another form of immigration status) and provide tailored support dependent on their needs. Within this, there were several types of activities that LAASLOs intended to carry out, depending on their individual needs (outlined below). It was envisaged that the support provided to each beneficiary would continue for up to three months once refugees were in temporary or permanent accommodation.
 - **Support for refugees to secure housing:** The LAASLO role was intended to act as a liaison between newly recognised refugees and the Council's Housing Options service and Private Rented Options Service, as well as helping them apply to housing associations and private letting agencies/ private landlords. LAASLOs aimed to help beneficiaries find appropriate housing for when their NASS-provided accommodation ended after 28 days, thereby reducing instances of homelessness. Ideally, LAASLOs would support beneficiaries to secure permanent accommodation, however, LAASLOs also intended to ensure that where a service user was entitled, they approached the Housing Options service to obtain temporary accommodation under the Housing legislation.
 - **Providing support to refugees to access benefits and develop skills for employment:** LAASLOs aimed to help refugees understand and access financial services. This included helping refugees set up a bank account and apply for Universal Credit. This support also related to support to access housing, as this was usually contingent on refugees having an active bank account and funds from Universal Credit in order to pay a rental deposit and set up rent payments. Beyond this, LAASLOs offered support to access wider benefits (such as Personal Independence Payments (PIP) or child benefit). Additionally, LAASLOs aimed to provide support and advice on relevant training, qualifications, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses or accessing paid employment.

- **Creating a referral network to other services:** In order to support refugees in other areas of their lives where LAASLOs may lack the expertise to provide direct support, it was envisaged that LAASLOs would refer refugees to other local services, as required. In this capacity, LAASLOs were expected to develop and strengthen networks, including with: Housing Options; the Jobcentre; and local VCS organisations. LAASLOs also planned to provide refugees with advice on, and referrals to, physical and mental health services. The project expected to monitor and track individual cases and the support and advice beneficiaries received.
 - **Providing support for families:** The LAASLO role extended to supporting families as a unit and children within families where appropriate. This could include support to the whole family when members are reunited from abroad. One particular area often necessary for family reunion cases is supporting applications for school places for children coming into the country.
2. **Community events & ad hoc drop-in sessions:** The project also planned for LAASLOs to run community events and drop-ins. These activities aimed to aid refugees' integration into the wider community and reduce isolation. Due to limited resourcing and capacity, the project did not run any community events during the evaluation period. Instead, LAASLOs attended events run by other local organisations that operated drop-ins for refugees in the city (such the British Red Cross). By having a presence at these events, LAASLOs aimed to signpost refugees to support and initiate referrals into the LAASLO project.

Project objectives

Project objectives were identified following a review of project documentation and a consultation between the Ipsos MORI Relationship Manager and LAASLO pilot project staff. Following the consultation, the Ipsos MORI Relation Manager developed a logic model, which was reviewed and agreed with project staff (see figure 1.1).¹⁵ The logic model outlines planned activities and outputs and how these relate to project and CMF fund-level outcomes.¹⁶ How the project aimed to contribute to CMF intermediate outcomes is outlined below (including longer-term CMF outcomes where contribution of the project towards these outcomes was expected or seen within the evaluation time frame).

The LAASLO pilot project in Bradford had two core objectives: to prevent **homelessness and destitution** amongst newly-granted refugees and to help these beneficiaries **integrate into the wider community**. The Bradford project did not specifically aim to work directly with asylum seekers at the pre-decision stage for the pilot.

Through the planned project activities and outputs, the LAASLO project aimed to contribute towards the following **CMF intermediate outcomes for the local authority:**

- **Acquired expertise and structures in place to deal with local issues:** Through LAASLOs working closely with refugees and relevant support organisations in the

¹⁵ A logic model is a diagrammatic representation of a project which depicts the various stages required in a project that are expected to lead to the desired outcomes. The logic model in turn is used to inform the evaluation approach; specifically, what needs to be measured to determine whether outcomes are being met, and how.

¹⁶ CMF fund-level outcomes are outlined in the Theory of Change in Appendix 2.

city, the local authority intended to acquire expertise around the issues that newly granted refugees faced and develop best practice on how to address these issues.

In addition, the project planned to accrue expertise through recruiting staff to the LAASLO role with existing local or issue-related expertise that they could apply to the project (i.e. previous experience of dealing with housing issues for a different beneficiary group, or pre-established links to the local migrant communities).

- **Improved signposting and referral services and improved coordination between agencies:** The project aimed for LAASLOs to act as a single point of contact in the local authority for newly granted refugees. Through this, the project aimed to ensure beneficiaries were linked into various available services, resulting in a more cohesive network across delivery partners and improved signposting services.
- The project also aimed to enhance signposting creating a referral network to other services and monitoring the support to which LAASLOs refer beneficiaries. In addition, through LAASLOs attending drop-in clinics run by VCS organisations, the project intended to improve referrals and signposting into the project itself, strengthening coordination between delivery partners through stronger lines of communication and better data sharing.
- Linked to the above CMF outcomes, the project aimed to contribute to the project level outcome of **increased integrated working within the local authority and delivery partners**. The LAASLO pilot was intended to provide learnings about the “liaison officer” model that could potentially be applied to other support services and beneficiary groups within the local authority. The project hoped this would lead to wider learnings for service transformation across local authority services.

Project activities and outputs also aimed to contribute towards the following intermediate CMF fund-level outcomes for migrants (newly recognised refugees):

- **Housing issues resolved:** LAASLOs aimed to contribute to this outcome through supporting newly granted refugees to access appropriate housing. It was recognised by the local authority from the outset that there were challenges and limitations to this outcome due to the low availability of certain types of housing in the city (particularly social housing) and groups who were at a heightened risk of becoming homeless or destitute, due to not being deemed Priority Need under housing legislation.
- **Access to labour market skills, training and accreditations and access to ESOL provision:** It was expected that LAASLOs would support beneficiaries to access further skills and/ or training to help them into employment where necessary, and to access ESOL provision in the city where required.
- **Increased civic society participation:** The project planned to increase civic society participation of newly recognised refugees through LAASLOs organising community events.
- **Increased physical and mental well-being:** The project intended for the short-term support provided by the LAASLO role (including support with housing,

accessing benefits and advice and referrals to access health and wellbeing services) would lead to longer-term improvements in beneficiaries' physical and mental wellbeing.

- **Increased understanding of British culture and social norms and successful social mixing (between refugees and wider communities):** Linked to the increased civic society participation above, through the community events the project intended to support refugees to understand British culture and social norms. In the longer term, the project hoped this would lead to increased social mixing between beneficiaries and the wider community (although project staff recognised that this was contingent on several other factors that could increase animosity towards refugees, such as media portrayal of refugees).

Linked to the above, the project planned to contribute towards the following **project-level outcomes:**

- **Supported refugees have an increased knowledge of the immediate and wider support available to them:** An outcome based on the support given by LAASLOs to ensure refugees correctly claimed entitled benefits and were linked in to other agencies who could provide services, to ensure they got any financial and social support required. This project level outcome was developed as project staff identified it as a key element of the immediate support provided to refugees. This outcome was to linked to another CMF migrant outcome, increased understanding and access to public services.
- **More refugees are contributing members of society in Bradford:** Through supporting refugees to access housing and develop skills for employment, in the longer-term the project hoped to inspire refugees to remain in Bradford and become part of the local community, contributing to society in the process.

Figure 1.1: LAASLO logic model

Context

- Bradford Metropolitan District Council applied to run a pilot project to support newly granted refugees with moving out asylum accommodation and integrating into local communities
- Bradford has a high number of migrants, as an asylum dispersal area and therefore many refugees that need some form of support into housing and with integration
- There are a number of voluntary community sector organisations supporting refugees, but before the pilot LAASLO project there was no such formal support provided the local authority

Issue

- Those with newly granted refugee status are at risk of homelessness, particularly those not in priority need who are not entitled to a home.
- Homelessness and destitution can lead to longer term impacts on health and refugee's status in society.
- Refugees don't have the first point of contact they need to access housing, benefits, paying bills etc.
- Bradford is not deemed a desirable place to live and refugees often fare worse elsewhere.
- Family reunions can cause instability for individual refugees who need to support them.
- Refugees who feel isolated are less likely to integrate into the wider community.

Risks and assumptions

Risks

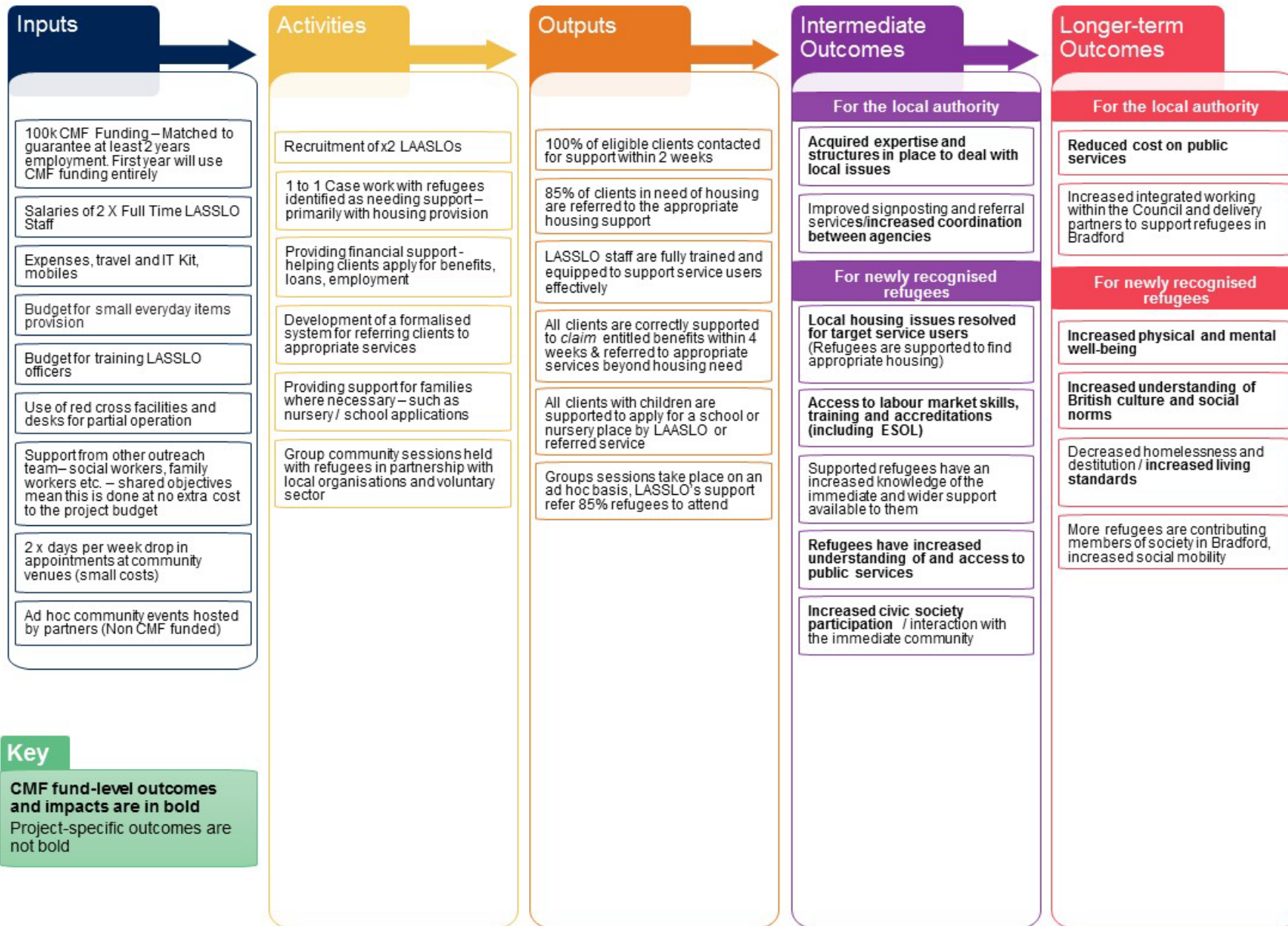
- Only 2 carefully selected LAASLO's based on skillset means difficult to replace if one leaves or is ill
- Low engagement or interest in the project amongst refugees, such as unwillingness to attend community sessions or drop ins
- Language / communications barriers may make it difficult to collect data on the beneficiaries

Assumptions

- There is a need for this support, and the provision will be sufficient to meet the needs of refugees
- The LAASLOs will operate as part of the support landscape for refugees in Bradford, creating a synergy which achieves better outcomes for service users for the available funds.
- Operations will work on the basis that the project will be sustainable long term

Impact

- **Reduced costs to public services providing temporary accommodation / welfare provision**
- Refugees have a greater desire to live and be part of local communities in Bradford
- Support model & integrated working provides wider learnings for service transformation and strategy across the council services
- **Successful social mixing amongst refugees and wider communities**



2 Methodology

This section outlines the methodology for the project-level evaluation of the LAASLO project.

Overview of evaluation approach

A theory-based approach was taken for the project-level evaluations, which focused on reviewing and testing the outputs and outcomes within the project's logic model.¹⁷ The suitability of different approaches was explored in an evaluation scoping phase. The possibility of implementing experimental evaluation designs, including Randomised Control Trials (RCTs), was explored and deemed not feasible at a fund level due to the broad range of projects that have been funded across different regions and local contexts – this would have needed to have been built into the programme design from the outset.

The feasibility of identifying local-level control groups was also explored during individual project consultations. This was deemed not feasible to establish as all newly recognised refugees were eligible for the project, and would have been contacted by the LAASLOs if possible, leaving very few individuals that would qualify for the counterfactual group. Those who would qualify would have been likely to either be those who the project had not been able to contact at all or unwilling to engage in the support (and were therefore considered not be representative of the overall group (as well as unlikely to respond to requests to take part in evaluation activities). It was also considered potentially unethical to involve individuals who were not being supported as they might have been living in challenging circumstances without LAASLO help. Refugees in other locations were not considered comparable, due to different support landscapes and local context (such as levels of migration). One option explored was to administer a questionnaire at drop-in events aimed at different migrant groups, however, due to challenges outlined below the questionnaire was not administered.

Project-level outcomes were “mapped” onto relevant CMF-fund level outcomes contained in the overall fund-level Theory of Change. The evaluation approach was designed in consultation with project staff, including the development of an evaluation framework. The evaluation relied primarily on qualitative approaches. A quantitative questionnaire was designed and planned to be administered to beneficiaries. However, this was not possible due to logistical challenges (outlined in more detail below).

Further information on the methodological approach is contained in Appendix 1. See Appendix 2 for the CMF fund-level Theory of Change and Appendix 3 for a selection of the qualitative and quantitative¹⁸ research tools.

¹⁷ Theory-based approaches to evaluation use an explicit theory of change to draw conclusions about whether and how an intervention contributed to observed results. For more information, see: <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/centre-excellence-evaluation/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html>

¹⁸ A quantitative questionnaire was designed, but was not used as part of the evaluation as the fieldwork was not feasible

Qualitative data collection

The main primary data collection method was qualitative in-depth interviews. There were three research audiences interviewed: project staff, stakeholders (including delivery partners), and beneficiaries. Recruitment was facilitated by project staff.

- **Project staff and stakeholder interviews:** Eight depth interviews were conducted with staff and stakeholders. Three qualitative interviews took part with project staff, who also then suggested key partners and stakeholders to interview, based on their relationship with the project. Interviews were undertaken either face-to-face or via the telephone, dependent on which suited the participant.
- **Beneficiary interviews:** Eight depth interviews were undertaken with project beneficiaries. The recruitment of beneficiaries was first discussed between the Relationship Manager and LAASLO project staff, considering the need to recruit a range of participants that broadly reflected the demographic make-up and circumstances of service-users. All those selected to take part in an interview were first approached by a LAASLO officer to ensure they were willing to do an interview. Once the sample frame was selected, Ipsos MORI contacted beneficiaries to arrange face-to-face interviews, at a place most convenient for the participant (usually at home).

Quantitative data collection

A questionnaire was designed by Ipsos MORI with input from LAASLO project staff for use with beneficiaries, to explore short and some longer-term outcomes from casework and community events (see Appendix 3). The survey used emoticons as a way of overcoming language and literacy barriers, which project staff considered would present a barrier to understanding for many beneficiaries.

The questionnaire was piloted at a VCS drop-in session in September 2019 however it was not administered for several reasons. One of the limitations was the breadth of languages spoken or read by beneficiaries. With many unable to read English, distributing a questionnaire in English may have led to a response sample that was not reflective of the beneficiary group, and there was insufficient budget to translate it into numerous different languages. Project staff also felt beneficiaries would require support to fill it in, however if delivery staff had supported them there was a concern that it would affect the independence of the answers. Furthermore, partner organisations (VCS organisations supporting the beneficiaries) were not prepared to support with distributing the questionnaires and supporting beneficiaries to respond to them. Finally, a volunteer from a partner organisation offered their support with implementing the questionnaire, but due to logistical barriers, the project was unable to arrange for project beneficiaries to all be in the same place at the same time.

Secondary data and monitoring information

Ipsos MORI also used monitoring data collected by the local authority as supporting evidence in the evaluation. The local authority submitted quarterly monitoring forms to DLUHC covering some of the key outcomes relating to the project, including:¹⁹

- the number of beneficiaries supported into housing (temporary and permanent);
- the number of beneficiaries supported with benefits, bank accounts, bills and payments;
- the number of beneficiaries supported with training, education, ESOL & employment.

The local authority also provided data collated at an overall level (the total numbers from the start of the project in October 2018, to end of Q4 2019), which was provided together with data from 2017/18 (the year before the project started) to allow for a comparison of primary delivery support. This data was provided near the end of the evaluation to ensure the comparison was as up to date as possible, and included support provided up to Q4 2019.

Separately, the local authority provided an anonymised dataset showing some more detailed outcomes (such as support into employment, or ESOL) against each individual case file. This data set contained a serial number only, and no personal data.

Value for money assessment

Based on the available data on quantifiable and monetizable outcomes, the LAASLO pilot project was selected for a CBA. Perceptions of project costs and benefits were also explored through qualitative consultations with staff and delivery partners. Where it was not possible to quantify monetizable outcomes, secondary data on potential monetizable benefits was considered.

Methodological strengths

- **The breadth of qualitative data collected across three key groups** – staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries. This allowed for checks and balances in the evaluation, ensuring that evidence of outcomes could be verified (or not) across different perspectives, and triangulated where possible;
- **The availability of up-to-date and detailed monitoring data** for the lifespan of the project. Given the project had been running for over a year, data was available for hundreds of case files, including data on outcomes.

¹⁹ Full list of quarterly MI requirements in Appendix 1

Methodological limitations

- **Participant self-selection bias:** participants were asked if they were happy to take part in an interview. Certain types of beneficiary (such as those in a more stable situation) may be more inclined to take part, therefore not giving the full picture of this beneficiary group;
- **Inability to collect survey data** on a wider sample of beneficiaries, meaning evidence of outcomes could only be judged qualitatively, or using monitoring data collected by the project. While qualitative evidence allows for an in-depth and nuanced assessment of outcomes, the evidence is collected amongst a small number of people only, and therefore must be caveated as such;
- It was a challenge to ensure **different characteristics were represented** in the research, particularly in trying to reach those who could not speak English – a group that face very different challenges in participating in the project. Due to data sharing restrictions Ipsos MORI could not share contact details for recruitment with a third party such as an interpretation agency. To get around this, Ipsos MORI approached internal colleagues who spoke the relevant languages to make the first contact and arrange the interview, before using an interpreter for the interview itself.
- It is difficult to judge attribution of the project due to the **lack of a counterfactual** such as a control group. Some baseline data on housing support given to refugees before the project was available, however, this did not cover all project outcomes.

Analysis and synthesis

Secondary data and monitoring data shared by the project was analysed to extract key findings related to achievement of outputs and outcomes.

Interview notes were systematically inputted into an analysis grid for each research encounter, allowing for more in-depth analysis of findings. There was one grid for each type of audience consulted. The grids followed the structure of the topic guide enabling the identification of relevant quotes for each element of the outcomes and process evaluation. A thematic analysis approach was implemented in order to identify, analyse and interpret patterns of meaning (or "themes") within the qualitative data, which allowed the evaluation to explore similarities and differences in perceptions, views, experiences and behaviours. Once all data had been inputted, evidence for each outcome and key delivery themes was brought together in a second analysis matrix to triangulate the evidence and assess its robustness.

Quotes in this report are verbatim and are used to illustrate and highlight key points and common themes. Quotes that contain personal information have been anonymised.

3 Key findings: delivery

Introduction

This section reports on the key findings from the evaluation in relation to how the LAASLO project was delivered. It begins with an assessment of progress made towards the intended outputs set out in the project logic model. This is followed by discussion of the success factors and challenges that were found to have impacted on project delivery and the achievement of outputs.

Was the project delivered as intended?

Table 3.1 summarises the target outputs determined at the start of the evaluation process, the actual output at the point of assessment and a determination of whether it was achieved or not.²⁰ It should be noted that this evaluation was undertaken mid-way through the project, so findings should be interpreted accordingly.

Overall the project has gone some way to achieving its intended outputs, although the community session strand has not been achieved, due to an inability to resource this. The focus instead has been on ensuring the majority of beneficiaries are contacted and aware of the support available, and where appropriate supported into accommodation.

Table 3.1: Achievement of project outputs

Target output	Output achieved	Completion measure
100% of eligible clients contacted within two weeks of a decision on their asylum claim	Evidence from the monitoring data provided by the local authority indicates that c.90-95% (equivalent to approximately 537 to 567) ²¹ of beneficiaries were contacted within two weeks (even if not engaging with support). However, evidence from the qualitative evaluation activities showed that LAASLOs identified some beneficiaries through outreach activities (such as drop-ins and events run by other organisations) which may indicate that not all newly recognised refugees were made aware of the LAASLO role when granted leave to remain.	Achieved
85% of clients in need of housing are referred to	Monitoring data provided did not provide clear evidence towards this output. Available information shows that 71% of beneficiaries were in permanent	Achieved

²⁰ The completion measure is a subjective assessment by Ipsos MORI based on the extent to which the project has achieved its intended outputs – scored as follows: inconclusive; not achieved; partially achieved; achieved; exceeded. See Appendix 1 for further details.

²¹ The project provided these percentages but did not have whole numbers due to a gap in information at the start of the AIRE contract

<p>appropriate housing support</p>	<p>housing (429 out of 602 individuals supported) and seven percent were in temporary housing (41 individuals)</p> <p>49% (296) of the clients received another type of housing support (e.g. initial advice, but had gone on to find housing themselves). Crucially, only two supported beneficiaries were recorded as homeless, suggesting that the output was achieved.</p>	
<p>LAASLO staff are fully equipped and trained to support service users</p>	<p>Qualitative evidence from external stakeholders and beneficiaries exemplify that LAASLOs were equipped with the necessary expertise to fulfil their role. They also attended several training courses, such as a DWP course run on Universal Credit and safeguarding training.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>All clients are correctly supported to claim entitled benefits within 4 weeks</p>	<p>Project monitoring data shows that 86% of claimants were assisted to claim appropriate benefits (representing 277 claimants out of 318 potential claimants).</p> <p>In qualitative evidence collected with beneficiaries, there was strong evidence that LAASLOs were supporting with benefits, particularly Universal Credit.</p>	<p>Partially achieved</p>
<p>All clients with children are supported to apply for a school or nursery place where relevant</p>	<p>It was evident in the qualitative interviews that this support was rarely needed as many beneficiaries with children had already been placed in school by the Education Service of the local authority before LAASLO support. There is evidence in project monitoring information of LAASLOs providing support to 14 children to access school placements, this represented all the children requiring this support according to delivery staff.</p>	<p>Achieved</p>
<p>LAASLOs refer 85% of beneficiaries to attend community events / drop ins on an ad hoc basis</p>	<p>Due to a lack of capacity, the project did not conduct any group sessions within the evaluation timeframe.</p> <p>There is some evidence from the monitoring information and qualitative interviews that LAASLOs referred beneficiaries to events run by other organisations (overall figures are not available due to double counting between different aspects of community support). Vulnerable beneficiaries were accompanied to the first meeting by LAASLOs who would follow up to ensure they were able to continue accessing services.</p>	<p>Partially achieved</p>

What worked in delivering the project?

There were three key elements that were found to facilitate project delivery:

- (1) LAASLOs' connection to beneficiary communities, improving engagement with the project;
- (2) Strong support networks in place from wider organisations, which facilitated project delivery and recruitment; and
- (3) The skills and experience of project staff, which enabled them to mobilise housing solutions

(1) LAASLOs' existing links to the beneficiary communities

Project staff reported that having existing links to target beneficiary communities aided the delivery of the project by driving recruitment of beneficiaries and their continued engagement with the project.

LAASLO staff described building awareness of the project among beneficiaries through working in the community. This included visiting faith institutions, local migrant support groups, or areas they knew asylum seekers were housed, to introduce themselves and explain how the project could support them. LAASLO staff felt that this had raised awareness of the support on offer and, as a result, local people were now sharing this information with other community members, resulting in more people turning up to be seen by the LAASLO project.

"Word of mouth is what you need to contact these people. I began to get a lot of walk-ins, a massive group of people...referrals through VCS, DWP, they would refer to us. [LAASLO] got a lot of people from where she had worked previously, lots of different referral sources, several from the churches." Delivery staff, interview

Delivery staff reported that while the Post Grant Appointment Service (PGAS)²² pilot initiative was operating, the DWP officer would forward newly recognised refugees' details to the LAASLOs. Once this pilot ended, work coaches only signposted those who were having particular issues with a benefit claim.

One member of the delivery team had lived experience of being a refugee and could communicate in some of the primary languages of the target beneficiaries. Delivery staff saw this as crucial to the undertaking of the project, as language barriers were identified as a key barrier by the local authority to newly recognised refugees accessing services in a timely manner. For example, the LAASLO was able to communicate and explain forms that newly granted refugees must fill in order to access bank accounts, claim Universal Credit and pay bills. Delivery staff also attributed these connections to the networks established by one LAASLO through previous employment, which acted as a source of referrals into the project

²² This was piloted by the Home Office to help newly-recognised refugees overcome barriers in making a first appointment to apply for benefits at the Job Centre by liaising between and making the appointment with the DWP on the refugee's behalf

Several beneficiaries also reported greater confidence and understanding of services and systems that they needed to navigate thanks to the LAASLO's ability to go through it with them.

(2) Strong support networks in place from wider organisations

It was widely reported that the strong existing support network of different organisations in Bradford enabled LAASLOs to deliver on their core project objectives. These networks also supported project delivery. While the project did not run drop-ins or community events, some stakeholders felt that LAASLOs attending existing events and drop-ins was more effective. For example, LAASLOs were able to attend drop-in centres run by VCS organisations including the Salvation Army and the British Red Cross. These organisations were already supporting the beneficiary group with specific services such as help with food, furniture, or wellbeing. Some VCS organisations felt that they were better placed than LAASLOs to provide these types of practical support. Therefore, a joined-up approach to the drop-in worked better, with LAASLOs focusing on housing needs rather than trying to develop a more holistic model to support.

Delivery partners (particularly those working in VCS) felt that the LAASLO role worked best when available at their own drop-ins to provide support for those who needed help with move-on or a specific problem such as their Universal Credit account. LAASLOs attending drop-ins also aided referrals into the LAASLO project, as refugees sometimes turned up to VCS held events before receiving support from the local authority.

"We have a very busy service, and we have limited capacity and we are encouraging colleagues from the council [LAASLOs] to help. Sometimes we get one of them [LAASLOs] to find who is only coming for move-on... so they're not waiting for me to screen them. [It stops refugees] waiting long hours to be seen." Stakeholder (VCS representative) interview

(3) The skills and experience of project staff

Project staff and wider stakeholders felt the relevant skills and experience of the LAASLOs enabled them to identify and secure suitable housing for project beneficiaries within 28-days, thereby avoiding newly recognised refugees becoming homeless. Examples of this include:

- LAASLO's previous experience working in the housing sector enabled them to build relationships with housing providers and think of creative solutions to secure accommodation for refugees. Staff and stakeholders saw this as important due to Bradford MDC not having council housing stock.
- Project staff also worked with private landlords to convince them to take on refugees who did not have the necessary paperwork (such as proof of address or financial arrangements). Staff felt that without the support, refugees would have struggled to source such accommodation themselves.
- One of the LAASLOs had lived experience of being an asylum-seeker and refugee in the UK, and could apply their own experience to ensuring beneficiaries had the necessary services in place, and reported building rapport with beneficiaries that could often be hard to reach.

Furthermore, LAASLOs put a triage system in place to “flag” cases that were towards the end of the 28-day window given to leave asylum accommodation (and could be at risk of homelessness) to the local authority Housing Options team. Where such cases were flagged, this ensured they were given special provision for housing if they were due to become homeless, often a six month assured shorthold tenancy. This was considered particularly important for single refugees without children who may not have automatically qualified for temporary housing.

“I think we have been really effective – we have a system that we can refer clients on the Housing Options team and we can give the details and can say that they will be homeless on such a date who will then get the priority [for accommodation].” Delivery staff, interview

What were the challenges to delivering the project?

There were four main challenges to project delivery:

- (1) Initial confusion over the remit of the LAASLO role;
- (2) Challenges identifying and recruiting target beneficiaries,
- (3) The 28-window to source accommodation before refugees are at risk of becoming homeless; and
- (4) Reduced capacity of staff and resource limitations due to long-term staff illness.

(1) Confusion over the remit of the LAASLO role

Before the LAASLO project was established, a local charity (RETAS) was providing similar support to refugees (as outlined in chapter 1). At first, some stakeholders saw the LAASLO project as disrupting this work. One external stakeholder who supported the target beneficiary group was critical of the project being delivered by the local authority, as they felt RETAS were better placed to address the issues faced by refugees, as they were established, with existing relationships and skilled staff.

“RETAS were doing the job, and in my opinion doing it a lot better. Their workers all had lived experience [of being refugees], they had language skills, they were a lot more visible and they had a lot more credibility.” Wider stakeholder, interview

However, delivery staff reported that RETAS had not offered support with access to housing, indicating that they could have lacked the housing expertise and understanding of local authority services held by the LAASLO project delivery staff. Some stakeholders also reported communication issues surrounding the remit of the LAASLO role and how this differed from the support provided by RETAS, in relation to ensuring support was not duplicated. It is worth noting, however, that these challenges were deemed to be more of an issue at the start of the project, and that roles were better established following clear communication between agencies in establishing the LAASLO role in Bradford in the absence of RETAS, who moved services primarily to deliver the LAASLO project in Leeds. For example, the LAASLOs subsequently held several meetings with partner organisations in order to set clear boundaries and ways they could collaborate (such as joint drop-in sessions).

Another stakeholder felt that the LAASLO project set out to do too much initially due to confusion around the remit of their role, and that it would have been better to be more focused on housing and benefit support, as opposed to a full one-to-one casework approach.

“It is a much needed service... but the way it would work best would be if it worked in collaboration and that a pathway is holistic but not necessarily delivered by one organisation, I see it as specifically as around housing and benefits and doing that stuff really well. At the beginning I had the impression that it wanted to be everything but it’s almost impossible, I’d be worried that the demand is quite overwhelming, it’s better to do a couple of things.” Wider stakeholder, interview

Delivery staff felt that the projects support beyond housing and benefit support was important but acknowledged that there could have been greater clarity on their remit.

(2) Challenges identifying and recruiting target beneficiaries

A challenge for the project was identifying and engaging beneficiaries, particularly given the target output of contacting all newly recognised refugees. Due to the 28-day window staff had to support beneficiaries to find housing before becoming homeless, staff aimed to contact all those eligible for support following a decision on their asylum claim within two weeks. Project staff reported that this was made more difficult following a change to the organisation responsible for providing the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility Assistance (AIRE)²³ contract – a form of support to asylum seekers and newly recognised refugees - which occurred in early 2019. As a result, project staff no longer automatically received information about newly recognised refugees and staff reported that communication with the organisation was more difficult. Staff reported that this made it more difficult to identify and recruit beneficiaries who would need support in a timely manner. This had a knock-on effect, causing delays providing support to open a bank account or apply for benefits (which beneficiaries needed in order to pay rent). Some beneficiaries also reported that support was not available once they were granted refugee status and that they were not made aware of LAASLOs at this time (while suggesting that this would have been helpful), which could reflect the impact of this change.

“I would really like that once people got their status that there should be someone initiating with you and asking if you need help with anything... straight after getting your status it seems like there is no one with you... and then you have scream out to find people to find help.” Project beneficiary, interview

(3) The 28-day window to source accommodation

Both delivery staff and partner stakeholders stated that the 28-day period for newly granted refugees to identify housing before they had to leave their NASS accommodation was a major challenge in delivering project activities. They saw this as problematic because, as above, newly recognised refugees could not always be engaged immediately, while some were not aware that they had 28-days before eviction. As a result, staff reported sometimes having just eight or nine days to find accommodation for beneficiaries.

²³ From early 2019 the contract for providing asylum housing support changed from G4S to Mears Group, while Migrant Help ran the new AIRE service. For further info see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-asylum-accommodation-contracts-awarded>

Both staff and stakeholders felt that the project would have benefited from more time to work with beneficiaries, in order to identify appropriate housing solutions. However, this would not be possible without greater resource, a change in Home Office policy to extend the time refugees have to move out of NASS accommodation, or a change in project scope (as the original remit of the LAASLOs in Bradford agreed in the bid was to work with those who have received a positive decision on their asylum claim, rather than those awaiting a decision). Stakeholders suggested a slightly longer period would allow LAASLOs to source more suitable longer-term housing and less reliance on temporary accommodation, which was expensive and unsettling for beneficiaries. One stakeholder also felt the project would benefit from providing beneficiaries with a longer period of support (beyond three months) in order to focus on the longer-term integration and support needs of refugees. However, delivery staff reported that they had consistently said that support should not be cut off at three months if beneficiaries continued to require their support. Indeed, some beneficiaries had been supported for up to a year. This suggests that the stakeholder may have not been aware of these cases.

"I think the LAASLO project is time limited and integration happens very slowly, you need to remove the essential barriers and education before you can move on to the next barrier, so I think it is about building things incrementally, helping someone establishing security, establish what happens next – that's when [the support] starts to fall away." Wider stakeholder, interview

This 28-day period to identify housing was seen as a particular issue for more complex cases, such as vulnerable beneficiaries with difficult personal circumstances, including those suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), or with a disability, because they were more likely to have specific requirements that couldn't be met in this time. For example, the length of time to receive relevant benefits for those with disabilities could take longer than 28 days and meant beneficiaries could not afford to pay rent upfront. While other beneficiaries could be supported into temporary accommodation, for some vulnerable beneficiaries many available forms of temporary housing were not suited to their needs.

(4) Reduced capacity of staff and resource limitations

During the project, one LAASLO was unable to work due to long-term illness. This reduced capacity and some expertise was lost. Staff reported that this had a knock-on effect in the type of work the project could undertake and resulted in more focus on the core objectives of support (around housing and preventing destitution) as opposed to the integration aspect of the project. Staff reported that the reduced capacity meant it was not possible to set up and run community events and acknowledged that less work had been undertaken in the integration strand as a result.

"We have been focussed on the original brief – prevent homelessness and destitution, we've not had breathing space on more development work – but that is coming on stream now, we're [planning on] getting more staff in." Delivery staff, interview

4 Key findings: Outcomes

This section reports on the key findings from the evaluation in relation to progress made by the LAASLO project towards its intended outcomes. It begins with an assessment of progress made towards each of the intermediate outcomes set out in the project logic model. Where expected during the project timeframe, evidence towards expected longer-term outcomes are also considered. This is followed by discussion of the factors that were found to have contributed to the achievement of project outcomes.

Progress towards intended outcomes

The pilot LAASLO project in Bradford is now well-established and there is evidence of progress towards intended CMF outcomes. A particular success of the project was filling a gap in support to access accommodation for newly recognised refugees, demonstrated by the reduction in homelessness amongst this group, and the increased number being supported into permanent accommodation. This in turn has led to reduced destitution amongst refugees supported by the project. The work of LAASLO's in overcoming challenges related to accommodation has led to improved expertise and structures in place to the benefit of the local authority, including reduced costs related to emergency short-term homelessness housing provision.

However, the project had not yet achieved intended outcomes around refugee integration work. While the LAASLOs worked to improve signposting and referral processes with voluntary agencies that deliver integration services, project staff had not delivered community events or drop-ins independently, as initially planned. It was recognised by staff and key stakeholders that more needed to be done to help refugees integrate into the wider community.

CMF fund-level local authority outcomes

Intermediate outcome 1: Acquired expertise and structures in place to deal with local issues

Through the work of the LAASLOs, the project aimed to acquire expertise around the issues that newly granted refugees face and establish new structures and solutions for this beneficiary group. The project aimed to use the LAASLO model to pilot how a dedicated liaison worker could establish greater expertise within a local authority, with similar support having previously been handled by external organisations. There is some evidence across interviews with stakeholders and project staff, although this is anecdotal and for the majority are only from one time-point.²⁴ There are, however, some tangible examples (see below) from these interviews and those with beneficiaries that evidence the outcome.

²⁴ With the exception of the project lead who was interviewed at two time points.

Delivery staff reported that they attended several training courses which equipped them to prioritise beneficiaries' safety throughout the support process. This included online training on information security, training in Bradford MDC's approach to safeguarding, training on refugees' specific needs provided by community organisations (for example on LGBTQ+ refugee needs and wellbeing and health issues), Prevent training and a course on sex offences. Project staff also reported that they had acquired learning about how to direct refugees towards suitable resources and support, and acquired expertise to maximise benefits. Training courses attended included a course run by DWP on Universal Credit, where staff reported learning how to access backdated child benefit for beneficiaries. New referral systems were put in place to reduce the risk of homelessness and tailor support (see outcome 2 for more detail).

Staff also mentioned that the project had facilitated new learning and developed structures to deal with housing shortages. This included developing relationships with landlords, and with a private company who converted former student accommodation buildings into accommodation offered through the council's private sector lettings scheme as six month assured shorthold tenancies to help young single beneficiaries.

"A lot of those people, they don't know what they're doing, don't know what they're going... we link them to private centres, such as an old student village which was taken over by a private company which covers everything (rent, bills) for 60 pounds." Project staff, interview

One external stakeholder felt that RETAS (the organisation previously providing similar support to refugees in Bradford) had already established expertise around the types of activities LAASLOs were delivering. By bringing these services in-house, expertise was acquired by the local authority, however, this stakeholder felt this did not necessarily match RETAS' level of expertise. Delivery staff nonetheless reported that RETAS had only been available one day per week, did not offer housing support or offer a benefits advisor, and offered limited signposting to VCS organisations. Feedback from other stakeholders, particularly those who provided services to refugees and worked alongside the LAASLOs, was that delivery staff provided useful expertise on specific issues such as:

- Advising on different types of benefits that clients might be eligible for; and
- Providing a realistic assessment of housing options to help manage beneficiaries' expectations and assess priority beneficiaries for the project.

For example, one external stakeholder reported that the LAASLO project facilitated a focussed review of the housing stock available to different groups, therefore allowing both housing teams and beneficiaries to have more realistic expectations of how long a wait for housing might be, or the merits of sourcing a temporary solution. There were also instances where the LAASLOs' knowledge and expertise was considered to have helped upskill partner VCS organisations supporting the same beneficiary groups, who may not have previously been able to advise on complex systems such as housing options or Universal Credit.

In addition, one stakeholder felt that the LAASLO's **knowledge of the geographical area** and where specific services were based stood the project in good stead to provide advice to all beneficiaries living anywhere in Bradford.

"It was a fantastic role [the LAASLO] did actually, because she has got specialist knowledge, not just in Keighley but all of the Bradford metropolitan area." Wider stakeholder, interview

Both staff and stakeholders reported that more needed to be done to acquire relevant expertise and put structures in place in order to address the integration needs of beneficiaries. Due to the limited time LAASLOs worked with clients (up to three months in most cases), they were unable to organise specific activities that might increase their expertise in building integration. For example, staff mentioned they would have liked to have run 'Citizenship training' with some beneficiaries, aimed at helping them integrate into the "British way of life" and learn about British culture. This was identified as a gap in service provision for refugees, who often have different cultural customs, and therefore this expertise has not been developed. This impacts the other support offered by the LAASLOs as well as the impact of integration support on the wider community.

The evidence outlined above shows that the project has gone some way to achieving this outcome. Although feedback from some external stakeholders suggested that RETAS had already established expertise in the space, others praised the LAASLOs for having a good handle on local issues- particularly on housing solutions which was evident in examples given by staff and partner organisations. This distinguished them from the AIRE providers who lacked this strong knowledge and understanding of local issues. The LAASLO project also implemented new structures to improve the service provided. It is evident however that gaps remained in the expertise acquired, particularly with regard to integration. This is tied in with the fact the project was not able to deliver activities aimed at increasing integration (such as community events).

Intermediate outcome 2: Improved signposting and referral services and Intermediate outcome 3 improved coordination between agencies

The project aimed to improve signposting and referral services for target beneficiary groups through LAASLOs developing connections to wider agencies and establishing partnerships. Related to this, the project aimed to develop a referral network to other services and log each casefile and what support beneficiaries were signposted to. Available evidence of this outcome draws on data from qualitative interviews with staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Staff considered that making new links with local organisations and attending sessions run in the community was key to putting effective signposting systems in place. By attending drop-in centres run by other organisations that supported different migrant groups, the LAASLO's were able to identify newly-recognised refugees in need of support, and to refer those who need move-on assistance into the project. Some stakeholders also felt that a strength of the LAASLO role was that referrals and signposting between VCS organisations and the local authority were more reciprocal.

"[LAASLO] came in and if [refugees] wanted her expertise, once she took them on she would make an appointment as and when she needed to, away from the Wednesday lunch drop-in. She would take [their case] on with their ongoing needs." Wider stakeholder, interview

Staff highlighted how LAASLOs developed a new way of working to ensure beneficiaries were referred into appropriate services. As outlined above, the triage system made sure colleagues in the Housing Options team were aware of beneficiaries who were close to becoming homeless, ensuring they were given emergency accommodation if possible.

In addition, staff undertook an individual face-to-face needs assessment for each new case, to ensure that the support approach was tailored to beneficiaries' specific needs. This is further evidenced by a database produced by staff mapping need and outcomes for each case file. To meet these needs, staff would provide ongoing support over the phone or by appointment to facilitate access to specific services, and could signpost beneficiaries where necessary.

Evidence from beneficiaries provides mixed views regarding the effectiveness of signposting procedures. While some beneficiaries confirmed that the LAASLO had signposted them to different support on an ongoing basis, examples of this were limited. In some cases, this was because beneficiaries understood the LAASLO role as primarily providing direct assistance (such as help with form filling). Other beneficiaries considered LAASLOs to be busy and stated that they did not want to ask too much of them, and so did not raise issues that they needed support with. Some beneficiaries mentioned that they were unsure about where they would go to get help (such as to get involved in the community), suggesting some inconsistency to the level of signposting provided and possibly a need for LAASLOs to provide wider signposting to supported beneficiaries, regardless of the needs communicated.

Some stakeholders identified a need to strengthen signposting systems by working more collaboratively, through LAASLOs working more closely with the voluntary sector. One stakeholder suggested developing an overarching network of support across all organisations that shared similar goals and worked with the same client group, each taking responsibility for different needs.

The evidence outlined above is mixed as to how far the project contributed towards this outcome, although there are examples of good progress being made. Signposting appeared to work well where there was a clear understanding of roles, enabling effective collaboration between LAASLOs and external organisations and agencies. With this in place, there is evidence of this inspiring positive relationships and smooth referral systems. There is mixed evidence from the beneficiaries interviewed about whether referrals were made consistently and fully answered the support needs of all individuals.

CMF fund-level migrant outcomes

Intermediate outcome 1: Local housing issues identified and resolved for target service users

The project aimed to identify and address housing issues through supporting project beneficiaries (particularly single refugees who were not classed as Priority Need according to Housing legislation and therefore entitled to less support) as soon as they received a decision on their asylum claim to prepare them for accommodation and identify temporary and longer-term housing solutions within the 28-day period. This outcome also

links to the project level outcome of “refugees are supported to find appropriate housing”. Evidence towards these outcomes comes from qualitative interviews with project beneficiaries, delivery staff and stakeholders which took place during the project, and quantitative monitoring data.

A key way in which the LAASLOs supported project beneficiaries to find appropriate housing was through improving their understanding of the process of being housed and their housing rights as refugees. The LAASLO project provided newly recognised refugees with access to a specialist housing support team. LAASLOs gave housing advice to project beneficiaries, as well as at running drop-in sessions at refugee support organisations across the city. A wider stakeholder reported that before the project, refugees accessed housing advice and support from a range of organisations that did not necessarily have the time, expertise, or interpreter support. Delivery staff felt that by increasing project beneficiaries’ understanding of the housing system and ensured that most did not reject housing offers. Project beneficiaries also stated that they had not rejected an offer as they knew this would have risked leaving them homeless.

"She made me understand the process and I made a good decision at the right time. No one had guided me like this before. She was explaining the law and the rules that I have to follow and listen to... I now have a normal life, the children can come home and relax because of her guidance." Project beneficiary, depth interview

Managing project beneficiaries’ expectations was also an important part of the LAASLO’s role. This related to:

- The lack of suitable social housing in Bradford, meaning that the housing team was reliant on private landlords, who were less likely to offer suitable quality housing;
- In many cases, available housing was in areas far away from the initial NASS accommodation. This was particularly an issue where children were already settled in school;
- Managing expectations about the furnishings and appliances that were or were not provided (for example, no Wi-Fi provided). An internal stakeholder recognised that in some housing this was problematic. There appeared to be inconsistency in the approach, as some project beneficiaries mentioned being supported by LAASLOs to get furnishings whereas others did not receive this support.

"What we have done is get them an idea of the reality. It's not always easy and sometimes they have to take what is given, but they are housed and receive money and [are] looked after in lots of ways." Delivery staff, depth interview

The level of support that LAASLOs gave project beneficiaries during the 28-day window varied. Some project beneficiaries mentioned valuing the support received from LAASLOs, during what was a highly stressful time. One end beneficiary described how they spoke to the LAASLOs on the phone every day and were supported with moving and storing belongings.

"A reduction of worries. If you have people being like 'don't worry, you'll never be homeless' it is enough... it is very valuable, especially if you have children." Project beneficiary, depth interview

However, other project beneficiaries (including those with additional vulnerabilities) mentioned not receiving the same level of support and information during this period. As a result, some project beneficiaries mentioned not knowing whether they would become homeless once the 28-day move-on period ended, leading to high levels of stress. One project beneficiary mentioned finding several advertisements for private properties that they considered to be suitable and discussing them with the LAASLO. They reported that the LAASLO contacted the housing team to pay the deposit for the property, however, the properties fell through due to delays in responding. Delivery staff suggested that a potential reason for this delay was that under this direct letting scheme, the council inspects properties for safety issues before agreeing to pay rent in advance or a deposit. However, many landlords do not accept direct lets due to concerns about having properties inspected. The beneficiary eventually accepted a property found by the housing team, but considered this to be less suitable.

"The day we were supposed to vacate the [NASS] property, they were supposed to find us temporary accommodation. It was really difficult not knowing where we were going or knowing what was happening." Project beneficiary, depth interview

Project beneficiaries' understanding of the role and powers of LAASLOs also varied. For example, there was confusion among some about the relationship between the LAASLOs and the local authority housing team. This contributed to some project beneficiaries feeling ill-informed about the housing system and feeling less involved in the process of finding accommodation. It also meant they were unaware of support they may be entitled to from LAASLOs.

As outlined in section 3, the limited 28-day window to find accommodation meant that temporary accommodation was sometimes needed to prevent project beneficiaries becoming homeless. An additional challenge was that project beneficiaries sometimes lacked a "paper trail" (e.g. utility bills) which made applications for Universal Credit more difficult. Delays receiving benefits also meant that project beneficiaries were unable to view properties. One project beneficiary in this position was staying with a friend temporarily after leaving NASS accommodation (and therefore technically homeless), and at the time of the interview had been told by the LAASLO that there was no suitable accommodation. Delivery staff discussed how at times, private rented accommodation was unavailable and refuges were full, leaving beneficiaries without Priority Need reliant on sofa surfing.

Nevertheless, according to monitoring data, homelessness among project beneficiaries was low (two project beneficiaries were homeless when the monitoring information was collected). The number of homeless project beneficiaries in 2017/ 2018 was not available, however, monitoring information shows a six-fold increase in the number of households supported into permanent accommodation by Bradford Council during the project (20 households were supported into permanent housing before the project, and 141 households were supported into permanent accommodation during the project).^{25 26}

²⁵ Monitoring information shared with DLUHC, detailed in Appendix 1. Households refers to single and multiple person households. The monitoring data referenced throughout does not include figures from the first quarter of 2020 due to reporting timelines and the availability of monitoring data.

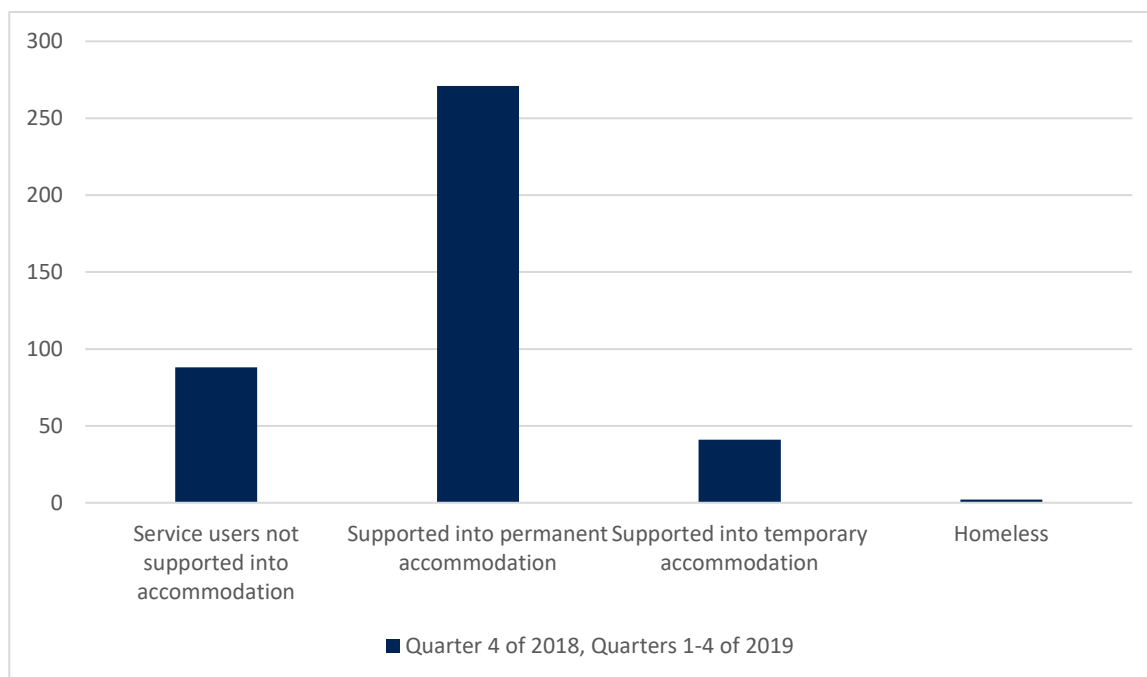
²⁶ The data from 2017/18 does not include those who were supported by RETAS into accommodation, meaning only data on support from Bradford Council can be compared

Delivery staff supported this, stating that without the project, homelessness and destitution would be higher.

Using alternative accommodation sources was an innovative way to avoid project beneficiaries becoming homeless. Delivery staff described how beneficiaries were placed in six month assured shorthold tenancies (through the council's private sector lettings scheme) with a private company who repurposed student accommodation, which was considered ideal for single refugees.

Monitoring data covering the last quarter of 2018 and the four quarters of 2019 showed that 76% (312)²⁷ of project beneficiaries were supported into accommodation. The majority of these were in permanent accommodation (271 representing 87%), which for most was their initial housing offer (174 representing 64% of those in permanent housing). This was considered preferable, as project beneficiaries who had moved several times found this stressful. In total, 13% (41) were in temporary accommodation.

Figure 4.1: Housing support indicators



Source: Monitoring information submitted to DLUHC

While project beneficiaries were grateful not to be homeless, housing was not always suitable, in part due to a lack of availability in Bradford. There was specific evidence of challenges identifying suitable temporary housing for beneficiaries with mobility and access needs, which had resulted in one beneficiary having to move property several times, causing additional disruption. Other issues mentioned by beneficiaries included cold and damp arising during the winter months.

²⁷ This is measured out of 412 beneficiaries as it does not include those who found their own housing or moved to another local authority

There were also issues with permanent accommodation arising from limited housing stock. Delivery staff and project beneficiaries described the challenges finding housing in a suitable area due to the lack of available housing generally. This was particularly challenging for families where children were already settled in schools. Some project beneficiaries reported that they were struggling to pay their bills, indicating that the rent combined with other living costs was too expensive (housing placements made by Housing Options had to pass an affordability test but this primarily focused on rent being fully covered by benefits). Wider stakeholders thought it was inappropriate for newly recognised refugees to be placed on the list for private housing, due to issues refugees would likely face in maintaining a tenancy if they had limited English and had never been subject to a UK tenancy agreement before. Wider stakeholders therefore thought the LAASLOs should have done more to place beneficiaries into temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation was identified that was more suitable. Project beneficiaries who were unhappy with the permanent accommodation provided felt they had to accept it to avoid homelessness.

The LAASLOs were also able to help project beneficiaries in dealing with landlords, for example, informing them of the landlord's responsibilities. However, not all project beneficiaries appeared to be aware that LAASLOs could help with this, or did not want to ask for this support as they were aware LAASLOs were busy. One project beneficiary benefited from having a landlord who showed understanding of their situation and offered additional support such as helping the tenant to set up their utilities. In turn, this would have saved the LAASLO's time.

There is strong evidence that the project has contributed towards supporting beneficiaries into accommodation. However, potentially more could have been done to ensure project beneficiaries felt fully supported throughout the process and understood the LAASLO's roles, as well as ensuring that accommodation was appropriate to the individual needs of beneficiaries.

Intermediate outcome 2 and 3: Access to labour market skills, training and accreditations and access to ESOL provision

The project aimed to support project beneficiaries access ESOL, skills and training, and identify suitable employment opportunities, in order to aid their economic integration and quality of life, and, in the longer term, reduce their reliance on benefits and enable them to contribute to the economy. They planned to do this by offering general advice and signposting project beneficiaries to specialist organisations. Evidence draws on monitoring information and qualitative interviews with project beneficiaries, delivery staff and stakeholders.

Amongst project beneficiaries, there was an **inconsistent understanding of the support LAASLOs could give in relation to finding employment, training, and education, and improving English skills.** Project beneficiaries who did not know their LAASLOs could support them with this were also unsure where else they could access this support. For others, these areas of support were not appropriate or relevant, as they considered finding housing to be a more urgent priority. For example, some beneficiaries did not feel ready to access employment, training, or further education. Barriers included needing to first improve their English language skills, underlying health conditions, or childcare responsibilities. One project beneficiary suffering from a mental health condition discussed

options for attending college and volunteering with the LAASLO, who encouraged the refugee to focus on their health for the time being.

"I'm worried that even if I want to go back to work, I'm not ready and in the right mental state and that will affect my performance." Project beneficiary, depth interview

Support to access ESOL was not required by all project beneficiaries. Some had been asylum seekers in the UK for many years, so learning English was not considered necessary, or was a low priority. Others had already been accessing ESOL support prior to receiving LAASLO support. **For those who were not accessing ESOL, LAASLOs assisted through signposting and referring project beneficiaries to available options.** This was either done through the Jobcentre when project beneficiaries were accessing Universal Credit or by directing them to Bradford College (which provided ESOL courses). However, signposting was not always tailored to project beneficiaries' specific needs: for example, one project beneficiary mentioned being unable to access classes due to mobility requirements.

"She gave us a letter that showed us where we could go to learn English. We went there but there were stairs and I couldn't climb the stairs, they said don't come here or you will fall and hurt yourself." Project beneficiary, depth interview

Monitoring data shows that 20 families, 30 individuals, and one couple were supported by the LAASLOs to **engage with employability support services** (predominantly encouraging beneficiaries to access Jobcentre employment support where relevant). Other project beneficiaries were not ready to access employment support but mentioned that they knew to access support through the Jobcentre once they felt ready to. Other organisations that project beneficiaries were signposted to for employment support included Refugee Action and employment advisors within the local authority.

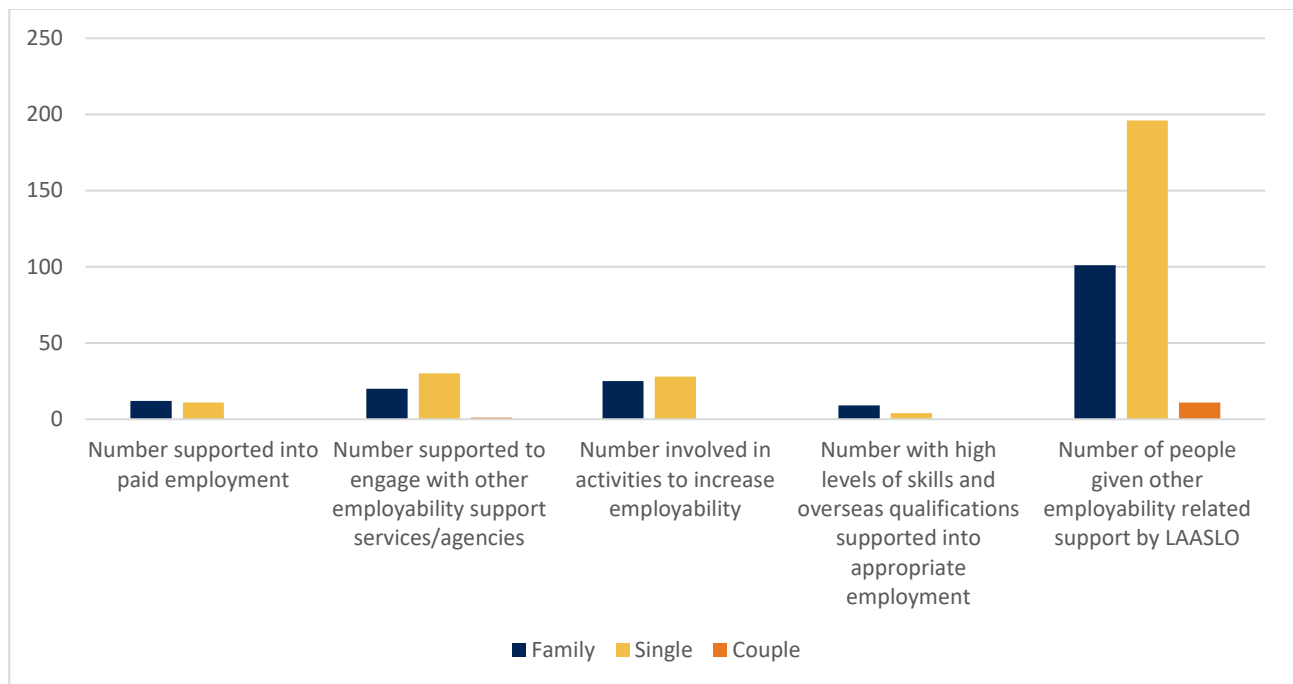
According to monitoring data, the LAASLOs supported a large number of project beneficiaries with employability related support (101 families, 196 individuals and 11 couples out of 602 project beneficiaries). This was offered through a specialist employment advisor for refugees, however, delivery staff acknowledged that at one point the post was vacant for three months. However, the interviews with project beneficiaries demonstrated that some were not accessing LAASLO support with employment and qualifications, nor were they accessing this support elsewhere, and they were not aware that the LAASLOs could provide support with this.

LAASLOs also signposted project beneficiaries to courses to gain employment-related qualifications from local colleges (e.g. for health and social care courses, childcare courses, apprenticeships) and helped beneficiaries with college course applications. Delivery staff reported that they encouraged project beneficiaries to volunteer, for example, in charity shops and at homeless shelters, in order to build experience and language skills. Project beneficiaries interviewed who were in voluntary roles had not necessarily gained these through the LAASLOs. In total, 25 families and 28 individuals were involved in activities to increase their employability according to monitoring data, which represents a minority of project beneficiaries.

The number of project beneficiaries supported by the LAASLOs to find paid employment was relatively low: 12 families and 11 individuals. An additional nine families and four individuals with high levels of skills and overseas qualifications were also supported into employment. Delivery staff reported that they were trying to ensure

employment was sustainable, but a barrier was qualifications that were not recognised in the UK. Delivery staff also reported that they had to prioritise their time on finding accommodation which left less time for employment support. Additionally, qualitative evidence from the project beneficiaries showed that some were not ready for employment, and others were accessing employment support through the Jobcentre (whether they were signposted by LAASLOs, by another organisation, or they found it independently).

Figure 4.2: Employability support indicators



Source: Monitoring information submitted to DLUHC

Intermediate outcome 4: increased understanding of and access to public services

The project aimed to increase project beneficiaries' understanding of and access to public services through offering advice and guidance, particularly in relation to benefits applications, access to healthcare and access to schools. In the longer-term, it was hoped that this would help project beneficiaries to become contributing members of society in Bradford and increase their social mobility. Evidence draws on monitoring information and qualitative interviews with project beneficiaries, delivery staff and stakeholders.

The most common public service that LAASLOS helped project beneficiaries access was welfare and benefits, in part because of its significance for accessing housing. All project beneficiaries interviewed mentioned receiving support from LAASLOs with Universal Credit applications. This support was essential; both delivery staff and project beneficiaries felt that they would have been unable to do the application independently due to limited English and IT literacy and the complexity of the application. Delivery staff described the process as time intensive, including assistance in setting up the claim, getting papers together, going to verification appointments, helping beneficiaries check the Universal Credit journal, ringing up the service centre, and dealing with incorrect deductions. Project beneficiaries valued the knowledge and skills of LAASLOs and felt they would have been unable to set up and manage their claim without this support.

"I can read and write English, but I don't always understand their terminology. What paperwork are they exactly asking for. It is her work and she knows exactly what the situation is." Project beneficiary

Project beneficiaries and delivery staff also described how the LAASLOs assisted access to other benefits, such as Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Pension Credits, child benefit, support for disabled children, and carers allowance. As part of this process, staff described helping project beneficiaries to understand how the system worked and what they were entitled to, in order to manage their expectations of what they could receive.

"Sometimes they have to take what's given. It's a shock for them. We talked to them about not staying on benefits." Delivery staff

Project beneficiaries described how the LAASLOs played an important role in helping them understand letters and forms, and continued to help with this once project beneficiaries had been housed. This was particularly valued by beneficiaries with low English language.

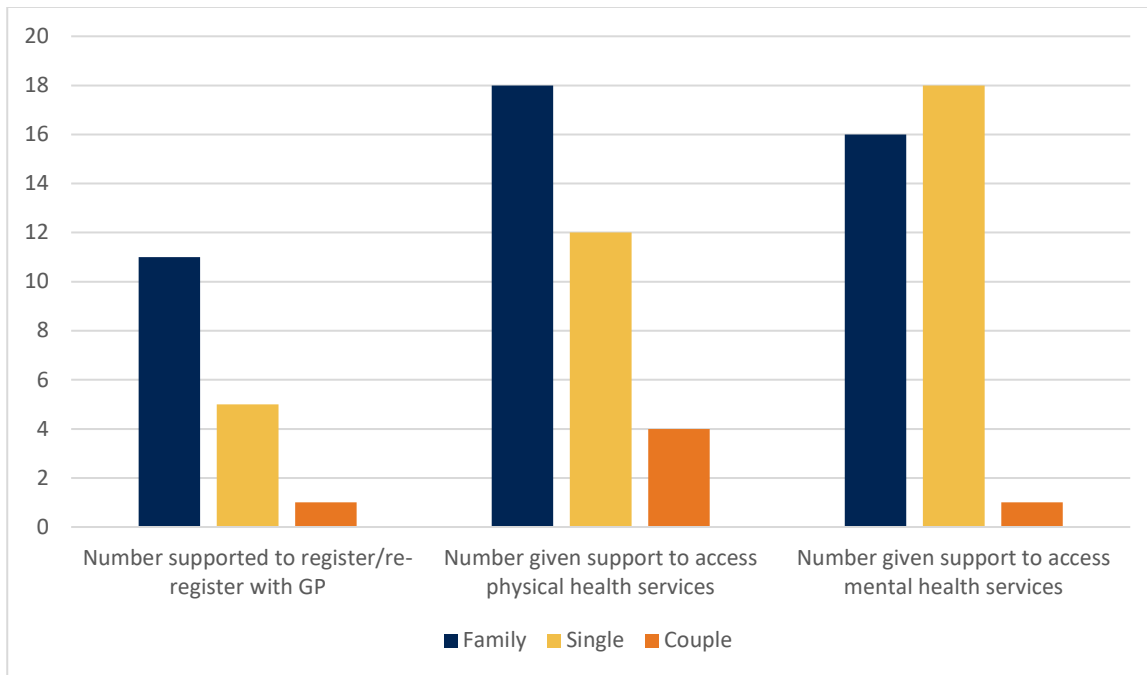
"[We met her] many times, whenever we got any letters or stuff, my husband doesn't speak good English either so she just gave us a number to call... she helped us a great deal." Project beneficiary

However, one project beneficiary felt they had not received enough support to access benefits. They reported that they were unable to access housing as their bank account had been blocked, but they did not know why, causing distress. Delivery staff stated that the bank had eventually reversed these blocks, stating that they were put in place due to new security checks.

Another role taken on by the LAASLOs was assisting project beneficiaries to access their local GP and encouraging them to move on from specific asylum-seeker GP services available in Bradford. Only a small number were supported to access a GP (11 families, five individuals and one couple). Delivery staff explained that many project beneficiaries were already registered with a GP before they accessed LAASLO services, meaning this support was not required. However, a small number of those interviewed did not recall being asked whether they were registered with a GP or dentist, or whether they had transferred to mainstream GP services.

Delivery staff also signposted project beneficiaries to physical health services (18 families, 12 individuals and four couples) and cited examples such as signposting to physiotherapy and help to access PIP assessments. **Delivery staff also helped project beneficiaries access community and NHS mental health support** including counselling. According to monitoring data, they supported 16 families, 18 individuals and one couple to access this support. One project beneficiary suffering from mental health issues had received counselling, but this had since ended and they were struggling to find additional support. Delivery staff recognised that further mental health support was needed for this beneficiary group more widely in Bradford. A potential barrier here is the likelihood of mental health issues arising later, once refugees were more settled (e.g. in permanent accommodation), and at the point where LAASLOs were less involved.

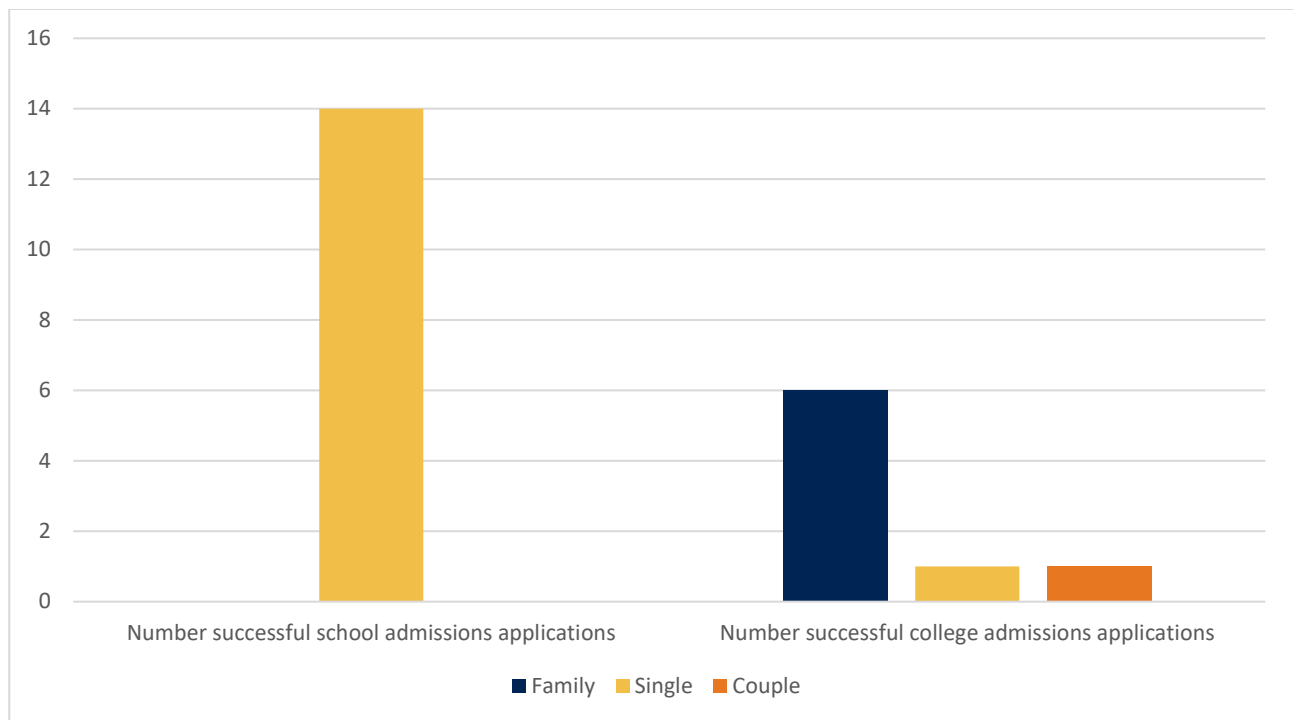
Figure 4.3: Healthcare indicators



Source: monitoring information submitted to DLUHC

The LAASLOs also **supported a small number of families to access or change schools for their children**. Delivery staff reported that there were very few instances where families being supported had a child without a school place. Family reunions could create a situation where school places were required for multiple children, and the LAASLOs supported all the children in these circumstances. LAASLOs drew on support from a council education service called New Communities and Travellers which supported international new arrival children to access education. In total, nine families with 14 children between them were helped to make a successful school application, and six families, one individual and one couple were helped to make a successful college application. See figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4: Education indicators



Source: Monitoring information submitted to DLUHC

As well as school applications (including Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools), LAASLOs supported beneficiaries to access school transport, free school meals and uniforms. One project beneficiary reported that the LAASLO had provided them with emotional reassurance when they were concerned about their child’s needs, demonstrating the importance of emotional as well as practical support. However, there was again inconsistency as another family described how they had not received support when trying to move their child to a different school.

The evidence suggests that the project contributed to supporting beneficiaries accessing benefits and that some beneficiaries were supported to access health services and school places where needed. However, as with other outcomes, some project beneficiaries mentioned not being aware that this support was available, suggesting some inconsistency in the support provided. This suggests that the initial needs assessment may need to be more thorough, and project beneficiaries may benefit from being provided with clearer or more detailed information about the areas of support offered by LAASLOs. It also suggests that some improvements could be made to the LAASLOs’ outreach, to ensure they can support beneficiaries where it is needed.

Intermediate outcome 5: Increased civic society participation

The LAASLO project intended to support project beneficiaries to improve their understanding of British culture and norms and improve their social integration into their local community. This outcome also links to the project-level outcome of “increased interaction with the wider community”. The longer-term objective was to improve social mixing and integration into the community. Evidence on this outcome draws on monitoring information and qualitative interviews with project beneficiaries, delivery staff and

stakeholders. It is important to note that this outcome was not relevant for all project beneficiaries, as some had already been living in the UK for several years and had already built local networks and an understanding of living in the UK. Others had built local connections without needing the LAASLOs' support.

Delivery staff described **spending time providing project beneficiaries with information about living in the UK and their local community through informal conversations**. This included providing information about their rights, UK laws and customs, and raising their awareness of local facilities such as parks and libraries (including taking them to enrol at libraries). A key enabler was the LAASLOs' knowledge of the local area, communities, and facilities. Delivery staff reported that they provided project beneficiaries with some materials such as leaflets from West Yorkshire Police. One project beneficiary described learning from the LAASLO about a concessionary membership available at the local leisure centre, enabling them to take part, which they felt had contributed to improving their wellbeing (the Passport to Leisure discount scheme).

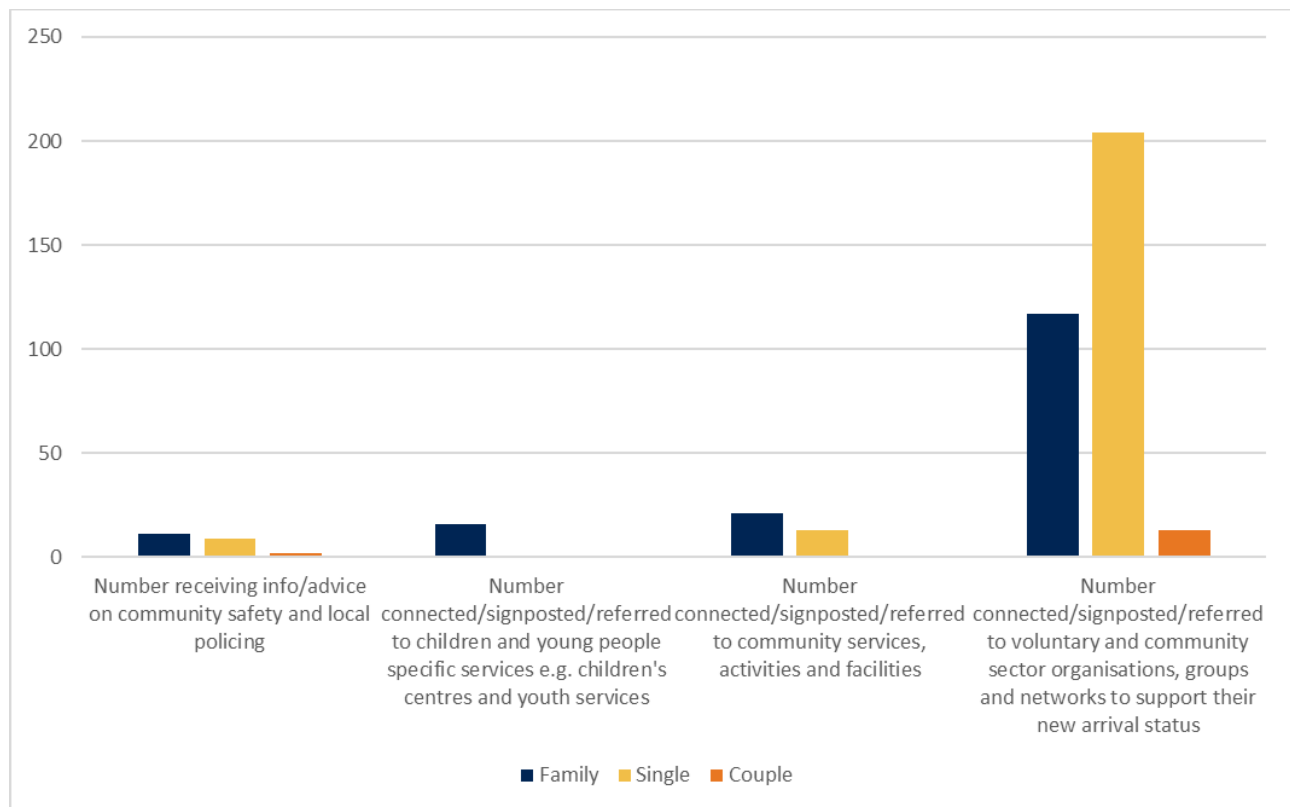
"She introduced me to this society and what is the real UK." Project beneficiary

Monitoring data indicates that a small number of project beneficiaries were also given information on community safety and local policing (11 families, nine individuals and two couples). Delivery staff reported that these low numbers may have been down to not all cases being recorded, but also because information on policing was generally given after an incident had taken place.

Delivery staff felt that access to citizenship training earlier on in the asylum process (such as once a claim had been made) would be helpful, rather than waiting until beneficiaries were granted leave to remain. This would give asylum seekers key information which they need as soon as they move to the UK.

Delivery staff noted that activities to build civic society participation involved linking project beneficiaries to relevant community organisations. This indicates that with more capacity, the LAASLOs could have done more to enable project beneficiaries' integration into the local community. Out of 602 project beneficiaries, monitoring information shows that 117 families, 204 individuals and 13 couples were linked to local organisations, groups and networks. An additional 21 families, 13 individuals and one couple were signposted to community services, facilities and activities, and 16 families and one individual were signposted to children/ young people's services. See figure 4.5 below.

Figure 4.5: Civic society participation indicators



Source: Monitoring information submitted to DLUHC

An organisation that project beneficiaries were directed to included Bradford Immigration and Asylum Seekers Support and Advice Network (BIASAN), which provided a safe environment where refugees could share their experiences. Monitoring information indicated that project beneficiaries were involved with Refugee Week in Bradford, where they developed a local weekly refugee radio program, aiding community integration through increasing their participation in local activities. A parent who cared for a disabled child was referred to a carer's resource centre which they described as offering the opportunity to meet others, signposting to additional financial support and suggestions for activities for their child. Delivery staff reported that they had good partnerships with a range of community organisations, through which project beneficiaries could access food parcels, clothes, household goods and bedding.

However, **some project beneficiaries reported that they had not been signposted to other organisations**, despite feeling socially isolated and keen to know what community services were available, suggesting some inconsistency in the project's approach. Other project beneficiaries reported that they were unable to afford travel or fit activities around childcare.

There was little evidence that the project had supported project beneficiaries to build relationships with their immediate community, likely due to the time this would take for each participant. One project beneficiary felt that living close to community members from the same background who spoke the same language helped them to integrate into the wider community. Another project beneficiary mentioned feeling

apprehensive about being judged based on their nationality, race, and language skills, which minimised the contact they had with neighbours. Some project beneficiaries felt that Bradford was closed, conservative, and not well integrated place to live. Consequently, several reported wanting to move to other parts of the country, although they were still engaged with the project.

The evidence above suggests that the project increased civic society participation for some beneficiaries, particularly by connecting project beneficiaries to local organisations and networks. Nevertheless, again there was evidence that not all beneficiaries benefited from this support. Support varied due to LAASLOs having limited time, the availability of community and refugee support organisations in the areas where project beneficiaries lived, and accessibility issues. The project also shared information with some project beneficiaries about life in the UK, which was perceived as valuable by both delivery staff and project beneficiaries. Integration into immediate neighbourhoods was an area where some beneficiaries highlighted they would value additional support due to wanting to build these relationships, however they were not clear on how the LAASLOs could have supported this.

Unintended outcomes

Mental wellbeing and stress relief

Some project beneficiaries described forming close relationships with the LAASLOs and trusting them as a key contact for support or in an emergency. During the 28-day period in which project beneficiaries had to leave the Home Office provided accommodation, project beneficiaries described having the LAASLOs by their side as providing relief during a stressful period. This improved mental wellbeing in the short term, although it continued to be a stressful period. Project beneficiaries who reported receiving less contact with LAASLOs described this period as highly stressful.

Expanded/strengthened network partners

While not initially identified as an intended outcome, delivery staff described building a range of partnerships across different sectors through the project. The lead had existing relationships within the council and in the voluntary sector, but closer working with partners further developed these relationships, as both sides were able to benefit from knowledge sharing. Partners included:

- The council's Housing Options team;
- Housing providers and private landlords who would rent to refugees and even offer some support;
- Banks – so that project beneficiaries could open a bank account;

- Local organisations that could offer additional support (e.g. the British Red Cross, Rape Crisis, the Salvation Army, women's groups, food banks);
- Local faith groups;
- Bradford College;
- DWP and Jobcentres; and
- The police.

A wider stakeholder at a local refugee support organisation described how they exchanged information with the LAASLOs on the support they were giving project beneficiaries, to avoid replicating work. The stakeholder and LAASLOs also exchanged advice based on their own expertise to ensure the refugees were given accurate and helpful support. Delivery staff also reported that these external relationships were valuable for filling gaps in their knowledge and experience, for instance, in relation to immigration issues when family reunions broke down. Another way in which the LAASLOs used these relationships was to attend drop-ins held by other agencies. Project staff described how this was an efficient way to enable LAASLOs to reach a wider range of refugees and save resources.

"We try as much as we can to work with people... everyone's in the same boat they can only do so much, but by pooling ourselves we can create more strengths." Delivery staff

A wider stakeholder felt that there were still improvements that could be made to LAASLOs' networks. They stated that the LAASLOs would have benefited from being present in some strategic partnerships (particularly related to destitution), however, they were unable to do so because of a lack of time or capacity (in part due to one of the LAASLOs being on sick leave for most of the project). There was also a desire for the LAASLO project to be clearer on its remit, echoing findings from some project beneficiaries.

Progress towards longer-term outcomes

This section gives an overview of whether projects activities are likely to contribute towards intended longer-term outcomes in the future. This is informed by the intended direction of travel as depicted in the project logic model (Figure 1.1) and is valid given the assumptions of the logic model are met.

The evidence presented above and in the next chapter indicates that the project made positive progress towards the longer-term outcome of **reduced costs on public services**, as a result of savings from reduced homelessness (outlined in more detail in Chapter 5).

The evidence outlined above shows contribution towards improved signposting and referrals. There was also evidence of effective collaboration between the LAASLOs and other council services through the triage system in place with colleagues in Housing Options. Therefore, this indicates positive progress towards the longer-term outcome **increased integrated working within the council and with delivery partners** to support refugees in Bradford. Stakeholders suggested that the relationships with external partners

could be further improved, for instance through developing a network to minimise duplication of work between organisations. These improvements would likely lead to greater integrated working in the longer-term.

Provided beneficiaries in temporary accommodation are supported into permanent housing and the support results in tenancies being sustained, the project is likely to contribute to **decreased homelessness and destitution** for beneficiaries in the longer-term. However, the limited availability of permanent accommodation may limit the ability of the project to sustain this outcome, or contribute to **increased living standards** in the longer-term.

The evidence towards increased understanding of and access to public services also suggests that this will lead to **increased wellbeing** for beneficiaries in the longer-term. In particular, delivery staff supported beneficiaries to access GP services and physical health services where required (which may lead to increased physical and mental health). However, a lack of mental health services for refugees in Bradford was identified as a barrier to improved mental health for refugees who required professional support.

The LAASLO project enabled some beneficiaries to participate more actively in their local community through connecting them to local organisations and networks. However, this support varied due to LAASLOs having limited capacity beyond supporting with immediate needs, and the limited availability of suitable local organisations to provide opportunities for participation. This impacts the extent to which beneficiaries could become **contributing members of society in Bradford**, or **increase their social mobility** in the longer-term. The monitoring information demonstrates that the LAASLOs supported a large number of beneficiaries to access employment related support. If this support leads to beneficiaries accessing employment, they may become more socially mobile and contribute financially to British society through taxes and decreased reliance on welfare.

There is limited evidence that the project will contribute **to increased understanding of British culture and social norms** in the longer-term, as delivery staff were unable to run 'Citizenship training'.

5 Value for money

Introduction

Cost-Benefit analysis (CBA) was conducted in order to assess value for money of the CMF funds granted to the Bradford LAASLO pilot project. The assessment weights the project's total economic costs against its monetizable social benefit. Data availability estimates were derived from the first five quarters of data, and where necessary figures have been extrapolated to the project's full duration (eight quarters).

The analysis used project data and secondary data to monetise the benefits accrued from actual delivery. As there was no control (counterfactual) group against which to assess the impact of the project, artificial baselines were constructed. Given the nature of the data used in the construction of the cost benefit and cost effectiveness models, the accuracy of results produced by the models should be interpreted with caution.²⁸

In addition to the cost-benefit analysis an additional secondary data search was undertaken to further inform the value for money assessment. This assessment is supplemented by perceptions regarding value for money gathered through qualitative consultations with staff, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

For more information on the methodological approach, see Chapter 2 and Appendix 1.

This assessment does not take into account non-monetizable benefits of project outcomes (such as acquired expertise of the local authority or increased civic society participation among beneficiaries) which are explored in Chapter 4.

Value for money assessment

Cost-benefit analysis

For the LAASLO pilot project, the social benefits are captured through two domains: cost savings through **housing interventions** reducing the public service cost of homelessness and **improved health and wellbeing** resultant from homelessness avoided. As such, the outcomes of interest were the **number of individuals that have been supported to secure permanent accommodation**. This outcome was selected on the basis that there is a logically sound and well-evidenced link between reductions in homelessness and monetizable social benefits.²⁹

Over the first five quarters of the project, 271 people were estimated to have been supported into permanent accommodation in Bradford. Secondary data suggests that in the absence of the programme, a proportion of these individuals would have fallen into

²⁸ The Maryland scientific methods scale scores methods for counterfactuals construction on a scale of one to five (with five representing the most robust method). Due to the use of measures of additionally in the construction of the counterfactual, the approach taken for this analysis cannot be attributed a score. Therefore, the accuracy of results produced by the models should be interpreted with a high degree of caution. For more information, see: https://whatworksgrowth.org/public/files/Methodology/Quick_Scoring_Guide.pdf

²⁹ The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA, formerly New Economy) Unit Cost Database, 2019.

homelessness.³⁰ Based on these sources it is estimated that without the intervention there would have been a net increase of 60 individuals falling into homelessness (a proportion of which rough sleeping and a proportion in sheltered accommodation).³¹

An evidence review from DLUHC³² provides estimates on the social cost associated with homelessness (rough sleeping and sheltered accommodation). These estimates have been inflated to 2020 prices to provide an estimate of £61 per rough sleeper per night and £12 per individual in sheltered accommodation per night. These costs include the impact on public services including health, mental health services and costs incurred by the criminal justice system as well as the mental health cost for the homeless individual.

Table 5.1 below summaries the monetised value of the estimated benefits resulting from the LASSLO project.

Table 5.1: Monetizable benefits from the LAASLO project

Benefit	Value
Public service cost saving from avoidance of homelessness	£138,324
Improved wellbeing resultant from avoidance of homelessness	£38,720
Total economic benefit from project delivery (over 5 Quarters)	£177,044

The costs associated with achieving the £177,044 economic benefit to society involved the salary, training and expenses of two full time LAASLOs on fixed term contracts (2 years) and IT kits and other necessary equipment, in addition to matched funding provided by the council. 5 quarters of attributable costs totalled an estimated £125,000.

Dividing the total benefits of project delivery over 5 quarters by the by 5 quarters of estimated costs derives a **cost-benefit ratio of 1.42**. This assessment suggests that **every £1 of CMF funding returned on average £1.42 of monetizable economic benefit to society**.

Although the estimated ratio of 1.42 infers that the projects measurable benefits outweighed its estimated costs over five quarters there are several key points that should be considered alongside this figure itself.

1. Only monetizable benefits have been included within the analysis of benefits:
Estimated benefits were assessed based on measured and monetizable outcomes.

³⁰ NACCOM, 2018, MIND THE GAP, Homelessness Amongst Newly Recognised Refugees, available online: https://naccom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NACCOM-Homelessness-Report_2018-05-20_EMAIL.pdf

³¹ Jesuit Refugee Services UK, 2018, Out in the cold: Homelessness among destitute refugees in London, available online: <https://www.capitalmass.org.uk/perch/resources/files/jrs-uk-out-in-the-cold-homelessness-among-destitute-refugees-in-london.pdf>

³² UK Government, 2012, Evidence review of the costs of homelessness, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/7596/2200485.pdf

Therefore, some direct and indirect social benefits may not have been captured through the CBA modelling (see secondary data section below for further discussion).

2. Attention must be paid not just to the ratio itself, but to whom the benefits and costs are accruing: The benefits in this analysis accrue to a vulnerable minority population (newly recognised refugees). From a social perspective, the intervention is thus acting to reduce inequality, and such as may be preferred to alternative intervention with a marginally higher Cost-Benefit ratio, but where the benefits accrue to a less vulnerable population.

Secondary data analysis

In addition to the outcomes presented above, there is evidence that the project contributed to outcomes that were not possible to monetise in the cost-benefit analysis due to a lack of available data on beneficiary outcomes, but that have the potential to increase the economic benefit to society of the project interventions. Analysis of secondary data therefore provides wider context to the CBA presented above.

The available evidence outlined in chapter 4 suggests the project contributed towards **access to labour market skills, training and accreditations and access to ESOL provision**. While there was no evidence of the accreditations gained as a result of the project, secondary sources can provide estimates of the monetary benefits associated with various qualifications. The Manchester New Economic Unit cost database provides estimates for the annual fiscal and economic benefits of NVQ qualifications. For instance, a Level 2 NVQ is associated with £665 of annual fiscal and economic benefit per person per year while an NVQ Level 3 qualification is associated with £1,071 of annual fiscal and economic benefit per person per year.

Evidence surrounding the cost-benefit of ESOL provision in the UK is mixed. A 2013 study by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills found slight increases in employment rates and receipt of benefits following ESOL courses.³³ However, econometric analysis found no significant returns for individuals in terms of subsequent time in work, of earnings, or of reduced time on benefits, suggesting that the economic benefit of these courses was negligible. However, these findings may be mitigated by the fact that the benefits may take longer to achieve than the study period examined.

Another project outcome was the **increased physical and mental well-being amongst supported refugees**. Secondary data provides estimates of the Manchester New Economic Unit cost database provides estimates for the cost of improved children's well-being positive functioning relating to autonomy, control and aspirations of £3,500 which provides an indication of the scale of benefits associated with increases in mental well-being.

³³ Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2013, Evaluation of the Impact of Learning Below Level 2. Available online: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253585/bis-13-1261-evaluation-of-the-impact-of-learning-below-level-2.pdf

Qualitative assessment of project costs and benefits

In order to minimise costs and promote efficient use of funding, project staff sought to share costs with the wider department as far as possible, including sharing direct costs (such as venues where possible) and supporting beneficiaries to access wider funding (such as the Homelessness Prevention Fund to help beneficiaries buy furniture, Personal Independence Payments and backdated Child Benefit). The project operated under a set of standing orders implemented by Bradford MDC through which salaries and expenses were paid according to council-wide rules. It also allowed the project lead to monitor spending in real time. This suggests that running a project internally within a larger organisation promotes efficient use of money and financial oversight. A delivery staff member stated that the project was run in a cost-efficient manner, with the majority of expenditure covering salaries. Even when the project ran their own drop-in at one point in the project, these costs were very low as they rented a room from a VCS organisation. A key enabler to the project's delivery was their relationship with the Red Cross. The project paid the Red Cross a small grant to support co-working which was funded by the Council as part of the match funding.

Delivery staff maintained that the project would not have gone ahead without CMF funding. While prior to the LAASLO pilot a third sector organisation provided wraparound support to newly recognised refugees including help with the move-on process and referrals to services, the support was limited to 28 days and did not support refugees with housing. A delivery staff member felt that newly recognised refugees would have received uneven and inconsistent support from VCS organisations without the LAASLO project, leading to poor outcomes or refugees moving to other areas. In particular, newly recognised refugees who were not classified as Priority Need would have received limited support.

DLUHC funded the first year of the pilot with the second year match funded by Bradford Metropolitan District Council and will continue to operate until that funding ends. Beyond that, its future is dependent on funding which is unclear at this stage.

Some of the project's outcomes are likely to be sustainable beyond the project. Homelessness has been prevented through housing project beneficiaries in temporary and permanent accommodation. However, there is evidence that some project beneficiaries could face issues maintaining their tenancies, such as having issues affording their rent and bills. While some had received advice enabling them to deal with their landlord directly, without the LAASLOs offering additional support landlords may not be willing to keep the project beneficiaries as tenants if they experience rent arrears. For some project beneficiaries, signposting and referrals from the LAASLOs ensured they knew where to go for support. For others, they were still reliant on LAASLO support, and did not have support from other community organisations.

For project beneficiaries who had received help to access public services such as schools or Universal Credit or been offered employment related support, these outcomes are likely to have a lasting impact. Nevertheless, in the future they may require further guidance, particularly if they have limited English. If LAASLO support ended, they would have to ensure that all project beneficiaries received clear and relevant signposting to wider organisations that would be able to provide guidance and support.

"We have seen it with a number of people and families that they are moving on with their lives and [are] not trapped in a cycle of poverty." Delivery staff, depth interview

6 Conclusions and lessons learned

This final section provides summary conclusions and lessons learned from the evaluation. It includes a summary of overall progress made towards intended outputs and outcomes, highlighting key successes (i.e. areas where the project achieved / exceeded what was expected from the outset), as well as areas where the project fell short of what was expected. This is followed by discussion of the lessons learned from the project in terms of what works, for whom and in what circumstances, as well as consideration of the replicability and sustainability of project delivery and outcomes.

What works?

- The project offered **tailored support to newly recognised refugees which was important to meet project beneficiaries' specific needs** (such as those related to language ability and a lack of experience with UK systems). An essential part of this support was increasing project beneficiaries' understanding of processes, particularly those relating to finding housing. Having a specialist housing support team in one place made it easier for beneficiaries to access accurate important information, rather than relying on information from a range of different sources. Ensuring that project beneficiaries understood that they needed to accept offers of permanent housing also emerged as essential in preventing homelessness. The support provided by LAASLOs also helped to manage beneficiaries' expectations across a range of services, but particularly in relation to housing and benefits. In turn, this increased the likelihood that project beneficiaries would accept accommodation, be better prepared for life in the UK, and ensure that they had the information they needed.
- **The LAASLOs possessed relevant expertise which improved the quality of their support, the efficiency of their work, and engagement with the project**, including expertise relating to housing stock, welfare, knowledge of the local area, and local services, organisations and resources for refugees. One of the LAASLOs had connections to some of the beneficiary communities, and could also speak additional languages, which provided reassurance to those project beneficiaries and made interactions more efficient.
- **Being based within the local authority** enabled the LAASLOs to quickly mobilise housing arrangements to prevent homelessness, as they were able to fast-track beneficiaries with the housing team. Linked to this, the LAASLOs implemented a referral system which used triage to highlight which project beneficiaries were most at risk of homelessness.
- The project built **strong support networks** with local services, VCOs and other organisations. This aided project delivery and improved outcomes as the LAASLOs were able to exchange knowledge, share experience and refer project beneficiaries to other services and support.
- There was some evidence to suggest that a similar service already existed in Bradford, with the LAASLO role replacing an established non-profit organisation delivering support to target beneficiaries. The LAASLO role may therefore have

displaced some existing local knowledge, however this organisation did not provide support with accessing benefits and housing. While LAASLOs developed expertise and networks through the role, at the outset of the project there is evidence that some relationships were lacking and there was some confusion surrounding the LAASLO role. While Bradford Council was one of the organisation's funders, this does not mean that the LAASLO project represented a cost saving measure for the council as their funding may have contributed to other refugee and asylum seekers services such as supporting beneficiaries to access education and employment opportunities.

- Amongst project beneficiaries, there was **inconsistent understanding of the remit of the LAASLO role and support provided**. This could result in beneficiaries' needs not being addressed. Stakeholders also reported that there had been a lack of clarity on the LAASLOs role at the beginning of the project, suggesting the need for better clarity and communication. Evidence also showed variation in the support provided by LAASLOs to different project beneficiaries, resulting in some beneficiaries not receiving support in line with their needs. It was not clear what drove this inconsistency, but project beneficiaries not being clear on the remit of the LAASLO role, and therefore not requesting some forms of support, may have combined with time pressures on the LAASLOs, ultimately impacting the support beneficiaries received.
- **Time and resource constraints (in part due to staff illness) meant the project prioritised finding accommodation for project beneficiaries above all other activities**. There is therefore less evidence of outputs and outcomes relating to access to public services, support accessing employment and qualifications, and support with civic society participation. In addition, the fact that more time had to be spent supporting project beneficiaries in the 28-day window to prevent homelessness, meant LAASLOs were unable to support beneficiaries to address issues that tended to arise in the longer term, such as mental health and integration into the local community. LAASLOs were also not able to carry out the planned community events, impacting their attempts to improve integration. This was partly unanticipated (due to staff illness). Some stakeholders suggested that the remit of the role was too broad, affecting the quality of support.
- A key external barrier to the delivery of the project and achievement of outcomes was **the lack of social housing stock and suitable housing**, which made it more challenging to find permanent accommodation for project beneficiaries within the 28-day window. Limited housing options also led to dissatisfaction amongst project beneficiaries with the quality of housing they were given, families having to relocate from areas they were settled in, and project beneficiaries being placed in unsuitable properties (e.g. unaffordable for their budgets: while housing placements made by Housing Options had to pass an affordability test, this primarily focused on rent rather than other living costs).
- **The 28-day window which the LAASLOs had to house project beneficiaries** was a particular barrier, especially when combined with the lack of suitable housing. This was exacerbated by LAASLOs being unable to identify target beneficiaries as soon as they received a decision on their asylum claim, leaving less time to do Universal Credit applications and find housing. This was in part due to the change

in the Home Office contract for asylum seeker support and housing, meaning that LAASLOs did not receive automatic referrals for a period of time, although this was ultimately resolved. Finding accommodation within 28 days was especially challenging for vulnerable groups who may require adapted accommodation, such as those with disabilities.

For whom?

Newly recognised refugees were the main beneficiaries of the project. A key benefit of the project was preventing and reducing homelessness for this group, despite some issues with the suitability of housing identified. Beyond housing support, some project beneficiaries received more support than others, to an extent driven by beneficiaries not being clear on the LAASLO role and remit and not making their needs known to staff. An additional factor could have been language skills, as those without strong English often required more support. Another factor was project beneficiaries being unwilling to ask for support as they were concerned of “over burdening” LAASLOs. This indicates a need for improved communication to ensure project beneficiaries are aware of the different forms of support available, and for delivery staff to ensure those without strong English receive sufficient additional support. Nevertheless, the LAASLOs would not have had the time to provide additional or more intensive support to all project beneficiaries due to capacity issues.

The flexibility of the LAASLOs (including both telephone and face to face support) meant that support could be provided to those with mobility issues and language needs, broadening the range of beneficiaries reached.

In what circumstances?

The LAASLO project team were embedded within the council, enabling close relationships with housing teams. This strengthened their ability to find suitable accommodation for project beneficiaries.

- Having a strong relationship with the asylum support provider was key, as when this was unavailable it meant that potential beneficiaries could not be identified in a timely manner.
- Bradford has a range of wider support options, including community support, which facilitated referral and signposting and community integration.
- Building relationships with local landlords who were understanding of refugee tenants’ situation and needs was valuable to project beneficiaries, and allowed the LAASLOs to focus on finding accommodation for other project beneficiaries.

Could the project be replicated?

The project could be replicated in other local authorities for the following reasons:

- All refugees with a positive decision have similar needs and requirements for support that could be aided by a liaison officer within a local authority;
- Housing need and destitution amongst refugees is a nationwide problem that every local authority will have to contend with, and therefore learning from the pilot could be applied elsewhere; and
- It could work in other areas with large numbers of newly recognised refugees, or indeed other new arrivals who require similar support to integrate (such as resettled refugees).

However, there are some important aspects of the project that would contribute to how successful the replicability would be in other areas:

- **The number of other organisations carrying out similar services for this beneficiary group.** The pilot project in Bradford demonstrated there can be some confusion when organisations are already providing similar services, and other local authorities would need to ensure there were clear lines of distinction in its activities. Related to this, local authorities would need to ensure they are aware of and have relationships with a sufficient number of other services for the signposting and referral element of the role to work well.
- **LAASLOs with the right skills and experience need to be recruited.** A key benefit of the LAASLO role was having existing local knowledge, experience and skills (including language skills). Workers would need to have strong links to local migrant communities and good knowledge in working around different teams and systems.
- **There would need to be workable solutions to housing issues.** Project staff in Bradford reported that despite a lack of social housing, there was relatively good private housing provision for the LAASLOs to work with, albeit heavily reliant on positive relationships with private landlords and despite some issues with private housing. Local authorities would need to find similar ways to come up with solutions if they are to address the primary outcome of supporting beneficiaries into accommodation and preventing homelessness.

Could the project be scaled up?

The project could be scaled up to provide wider support to target beneficiaries beyond housing, such as integration in the wider community, and it was the intention of the local authority to do so. This would require greater resource, **for example by having more LAASLOs in place**, with each having a specific remit or activity to focus on.

Another way the project could be scaled up through more resource is by **widening the pool of beneficiaries they work with**. This could be done by working with individuals who have received a negative decision (providing legal advice on repatriation or appeals), or those still waiting for a decision. There is substantial qualitative evidence collected in the evaluation that indicates outcomes could be more easily achieved if LAASLOs had more time to work with clients. Scaling up the project to work with asylum seekers before they receive a decision could have benefits to project delivery, as it would help beneficiaries understand the process about what happens when they receive a decision at an earlier

stage, and it would give LAASLOs more time to think about possible accommodation options for the individual or family that receive positive decisions.

The delivery model would not lend itself to be scaled beyond a local authority level. The LAASLOs benefited from close working relationships within the local authority which may be more difficult to sustain with a regional remit. LAASLOs had good knowledge of local systems and were able to creatively problem-solve at a local level. This would be more difficult if working across a region.

7. Appendix 1: Methodology and technical note

Evaluation Methodology

Qualitative evidence

There were three research audiences interviewed: project staff, stakeholders (including delivery partners), and beneficiaries. All three audiences were identified through the project lead.

- Interviews with project staff and stakeholders took place either face-to-face or over the phone between November and December 2019.
- Beneficiary interviews took place face-to-face between November 2019 and January 2020.

Quantitative evidence

A questionnaire was designed by Ipsos MORI with input from LAASLO project staff for use with beneficiaries (see appendix 3).

The questionnaire was piloted. However, due to logistical and budgetary constraints, project staff were unable to administer the questionnaire.

Secondary data and monitoring information

Monitoring data was collected by the local authority quarterly to share with DLUHC. It included some key outcomes relating to the project:

- Total number of beneficiaries;
- Change in immigration status amongst project beneficiaries;
- The number of beneficiaries supported into temporary / permanent housing;
- The number of beneficiaries given housing related support;
- Number of people supported to open a bank account;
- Number of people supported to access benefits;
- Number of people supported into paid employment;
- Number of people supported to engage with other employability support services/agencies;
- Number of people in activities to increase employability (e.g. training, volunteering, work experience);

- Number of people with high levels of skills and overseas qualifications supported into appropriate employment and career pathways;
- Number of people given other employability related support by LAASLOs;
- Number of people receiving pre-entry level or entry level (1, 2 or 3) ESOL support;
- Number of people enrolled on accredited ESOL language courses at level 1 or 2;
- Number of people receiving other English language related support (particularly in informal settings);
- Number of people receiving or enrolled in IELTS tuition and support (particularly for high skilled individuals);
- Number of people supported to register or re-register with a GP;
- Number of people given support to access physical health services;
- Number of people given support to access mental health services;
- Number of successful school / college admissions applications made this quarter;
- Number of children and young people awaiting admissions decisions this quarter;
- Number of children and young people not in education and reasons e.g. due to SEN;
- Number of people receiving information and advice about local policing and community safety;
- Number of families connected to, sign-posted or referred to children and young people specific services such as children's centres and youth services;
- Number of people connected to, sign-posted or referred to community services, activities and facilities such as libraries, parks, community leisure centres, arts and cultural;
- Number of people connected to, sign-posted or referred to voluntary and community sector organisations, groups and networks to support their new arrivals status.

The local authority also provided key housing outcomes data from 2017/18 (the year before the project started) to allow for a comparison of primary delivery support. This data was provided near the end of the evaluation to ensure the comparison was as up to date as possible, and included support provided up to Q4 2019.

Separately, the local authority provided a dataset showing some more detailed outcomes (such as support into employment, or ESOL) against each individual case file. This data set contained a serial number only, and no personal data.

Value for money assessment

In order to assess the feasibility of a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) or cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) each of the 14 projects were assessed using the 8-step process below.

Based on this assessment, each project was triaged to one of three methodological groupings:

- 1. Cost benefit analysis (CBA):** Where data on quantitative and monetizable outcomes was available, a cost-benefit analysis was conducted;
- 2. Cost effectiveness analysis (CEA):** Where quantitative measures for outcome(s) existed, but no data (primary or secondary) was available to monetize the outcomes, cost effectiveness analysis was conducted; or
- 3. No feasibility for quantitative analysis:** Where there was no quantitative measure of outcomes available to the evaluation, neither cost benefit analysis nor cost effectiveness analysis could be conducted. In this case, a qualitative assessment of project costs and benefits was undertaken based on analysis of staff, stakeholder and beneficiary perceptions from qualitative consultations. Secondary data on potential monetizable benefits was also reviewed.

Eight step model for reviewing project outputs and outcomes

The process for conducting the cost-benefit analysis follows the 8 key steps outlined below.



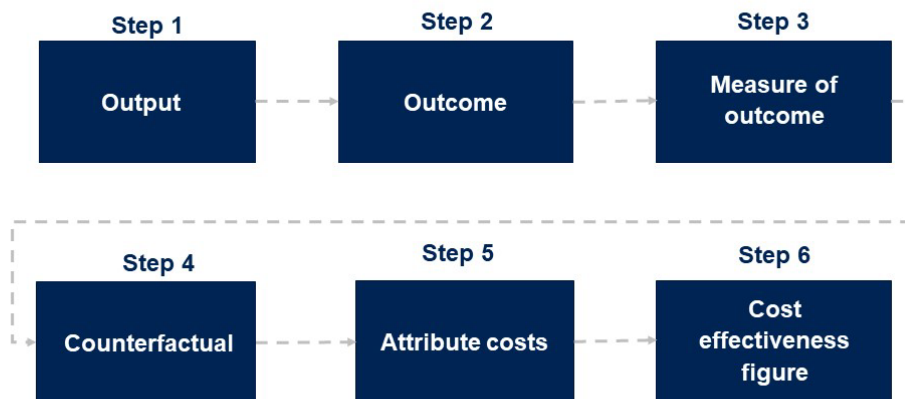
Cost-benefit analysis followed an eight-step process:

- 1. Identify the projects outputs** (e.g. number of individuals provided with housing support)
- 2. Identify the achieved projects outcomes** and the outcomes which are monetizable

3. **Identify monetary values for each outcome** from existing data sources
4. **Assign a counterfactual case for the outcomes** to estimate the number of outcomes achieved in the absence of the project; derived through primary information collection or secondary data analysis
5. **Monetize the outcomes** by multiplying the monetary value of each outcome by the number of additional outcomes achieved
6. **Estimate the persistence of the outcome** (i.e. is this a one-off benefit or ongoing, and how long does the benefit persist for into the future?)
7. **Calculate the total monetary benefits (cost savings)** by summing the total benefit for each outcome (including fiscal savings, public sector efficiency savings and public value benefits), accounting for any duplication of benefits across different categories.
8. **Compared the total estimated monetary benefits to the total costs** of the project, to estimate the estimated Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR).

Cost effectiveness analysis followed a six-step process, outlined below:

The process for conducting the cost-effectiveness analysis follows the six key steps outlined below.



1. Identify the projects outputs
2. Identify the achieved projects outcomes
3. Identify quantifiable values for each outcome
4. **Assign a counterfactual case for the outcomes** to estimate the number of outcomes achieved in the absence of the project. This is derived through primary information collection or secondary data analysis.

5. **Attribute costs** using a breakdown of the project costs. Costs that are related to the outcomes identified in Step 3 can be isolated and attributed to the relevant outcomes.
6. **Calculate the cost-effectiveness figure** of the project outcome, by dividing the outcome by the cost attributed to it to derive the cost per unit of that outcome.

Two models were developed using Excel. The CBA model calculated costs relative to the monetizable benefits. The CEA model calculated costs relative to the quantifiable outcomes achieved from each of the CMF interventions (without attempting to monetize these outcomes).

As there was no robust control (counterfactual) group against which to assess impact, artificial baselines were constructed. Where possible, input from project leads was used to inform the assessment of the counterfactual and in the cases that this was not available, conservative estimates were made. A hierarchy of counterfactual options are outlined below. Given the nature of the data used in the construction of the cost benefit and cost effectiveness models, the accuracy of results produced by the models should be interpreted with a high degree of caution.

Counterfactual development: hierarchy of counterfactual options

Counterfactual development

Assigning a counterfactual

In order to assess value for money for a project we must compare the project's outcomes against a baseline or counterfactual scenario. The aim of the counterfactual is to replicate--as close as possible-- the outcomes that would have been achieved in the absence of the project. A hierarchy of counterfactual options are presented below:

1. **Randomised, blinded control group.** Individuals are randomly assigned to two groups at the start of an intervention. This is the gold standard in trial design.
2. **Matched comparator group.** Individuals receiving the intervention are matched with non-participants, and the outcomes of participants and non-participants are compared. Matching methodologies include Propensity Score Matching. This aims to imitate, as far as possible, the random allocation of an RCT.
3. **Historical baseline.** Using the same outcomes over the period prior to the intervention to form a counterfactual case. However, this method does not control for temporal variation.
4. **Baseline proxied by secondary data.** Using published evidence such as researched measures of additionality, or other identified data points, to represent the baseline scenario.

Analysis / synthesis of findings

Secondary data and monitoring data shared by the project was analysed to extract key findings related to achievement of outputs and outcomes.

Interview notes were systematically inputted into an analysis grid for each research encounter, allowing for more in-depth analysis of findings. There was one grid for each type of audience consulted. The grids follow the structure of the topic guide enabling the

identification of relevant quotes for each element of the outcomes and process evaluation. A thematic analysis approach was implemented in order to identify, analyse and interpret patterns of meaning (or "themes") within the qualitative data, which allowed the evaluation to explore similarities and differences in perceptions, views, experiences and behaviours. Once all data had been inputted, evidence for each outcome and key delivery themes was brought together in a second analysis matrix to triangulate the evidence and assess its robustness.

Qualitative approaches explore the nuances and diversity of perceptions, views, experiences and behaviours, the factors which shape or underlie them, and the ideas and situations that can lead to change. In doing so, it provides insight into a range of perceptions, views, experiences and behaviours that, although not statistically representative, it nonetheless offers important insight into overarching themes.

Outputs achievement

Ipsos MORI undertook an assessment of the project's success in achieving its intended outputs based on consideration of the evaluation evidence generated. There are five measures that this assessment can take and that have been consistently applied throughout the individual project evaluations. These measures are based on the definitions below.

Table 7.1: Definitions of achievement measures

Achievement measure	Definition
Not achieved	The evidence indicates that the output has not been achieved
Partially achieved	There is some evidence to infer some of the output may have been achieved.
Partially achieved (on track)	The output has not been achieved at the time of the evaluation, however there is evidence to suggest that the output will be achieved within the time frame of the project.
Achieved	There is evidence to conclude that the output has been achieved.
Exceeded	This refers to output where monitoring information shows projects exceed their target outputs.
Inconclusive	There is not sufficient evidence to provide a robust assessment of progress towards project outputs.

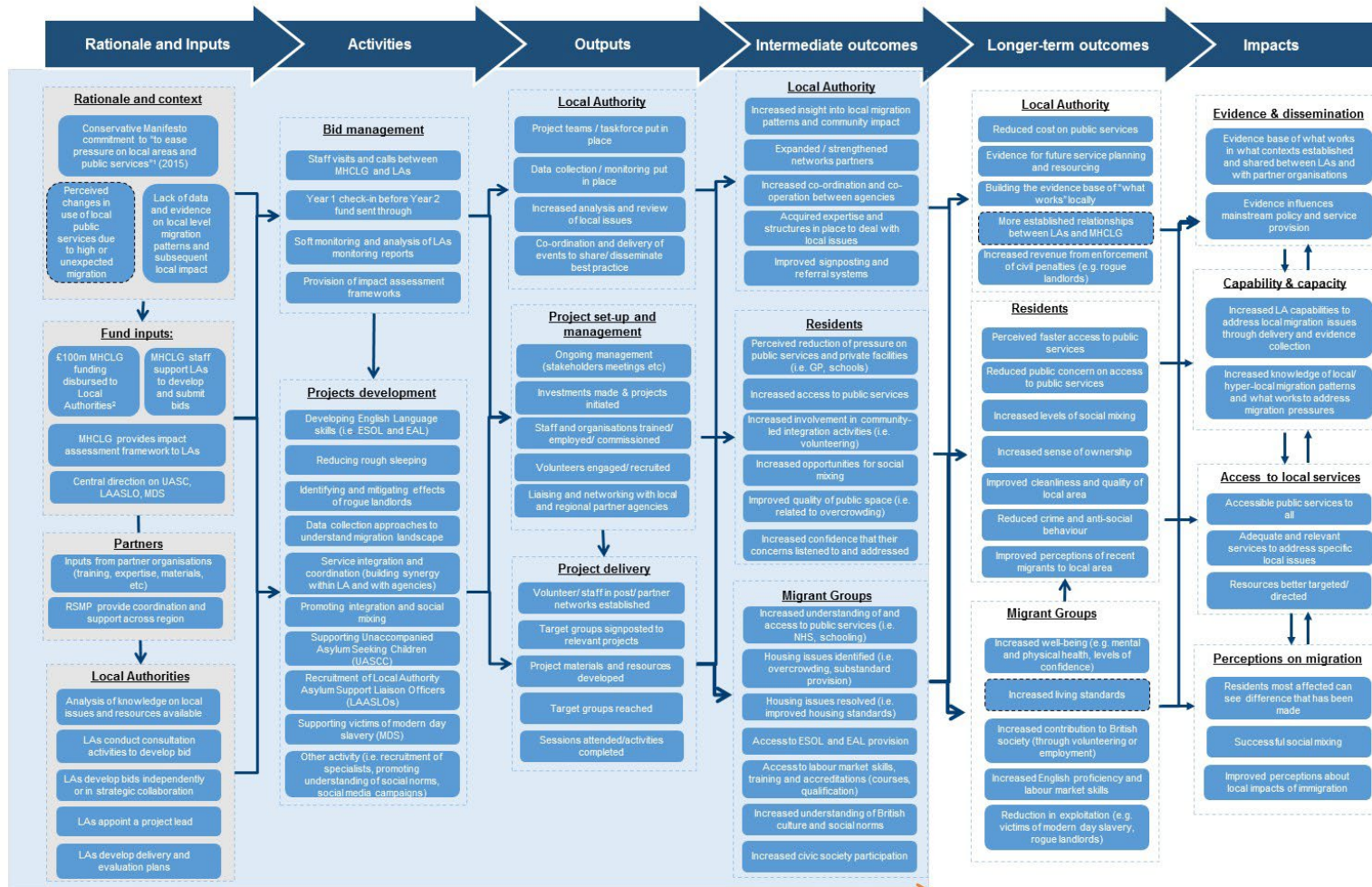
Project-level evaluation framework (as detailed in the evaluation plan)

Output / Outcome / Impact (from logic model)	Who will measure it?	When will it be measured?	Target	Data source			
				MI	Surveys with beneficiaries <i>Note where using the Questionnaire Toolkit.</i>	Interviews with beneficiaries	Interviews with project staff & delivery partners/ stakeholders
Outputs							
<i>100% of eligible clients contacted for support within 2 weeks</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>					
<i>X% of clients in need of housing are referred to the appropriate housing support</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>					
<i>No more than x refugees not in priority need end up homeless</i>	<i>Project</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>					
<i>All clients are correctly supported to claim entitled benefits within x weeks & referred to appropriate services beyond housing need</i>	<i>Project & Ipsos MORI</i>	<i>Events are run on an Ad-hoc basis, before and after sessions</i>					
<i>All service users with children are supported to apply for a school or nursery place by LAASLO or referred service</i>	<i>Project</i>						
Outcomes							
Migrants							
<i>Local housing issues resolved for target service users (Refugees are supported to find appropriate housing)</i>	<i>Project & Ipsos MORI</i>	<i>Ongoing monitoring information, evidence from qualitative interviews during the project</i>					
<i>Supported refugees have an increased knowledge of the immediate and wider support available to them</i>	<i>Project & Ipsos MORI</i>	<i>Ongoing monitoring, pre/post surveys, and during qual fieldwork period</i>					

<i>Refugees have increased understanding and access to public services</i>							
<i>Increased civic society participation</i>	Project and Ipsos MORI	Attendance at events, questionnaire after event, post-outcomes questionnaire, qual interviews					
<i>Access to labour market skills, training and accreditations</i>	Ipsos MORI	Qual fieldwork					
Local Authority							
<i>Acquired expertise and structures in place to deal with local issues</i>	Ipsos MORI	Qual fieldwork					
<i>Improved signposting and referral services</i>	Ipsos MORI	Qual fieldwork					

Appendix 2: CMF Overall Theory of Change

Controlling Migration Fund Overall fund-level Theory of Change



1. Conservative Manifesto <https://www.bond.org.uk/data/files/Blog/ConservativeManifesto2015.pdf#31>

2. An additional £40m is investing in direct enforcement action against people in the UK illegally and is not within the scope of this evaluation

CMF Evaluation Timeframe

----- Indirect Outcomes

Overall CMF logic model

Rationale is linked to activities and these are linked to outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Rationale

Context:

- There was a Conservative Manifesto Commitment to ease pressures on local areas and public services; There was a public perception that there were changes in the use of local public services due to high or unexpected migration; Local of data and evidence on local level migration patterns and subsequent local impacts.

Fund inputs:

- £100 million from MHCLG disbursed to Local Authorities; MHCLG staff support LAs to develop and submit bids; MHCLG provides impact assessment framework to LAs; Central direction on UASC, LAASLOs

Partners:

- Inputs from partner organisations (training, expertise and materials etc); RSMP provides coordination and support across the region.

Local Authorities:

- Analysis of knowledge on local issues and resources available; LAs conduct consultation activities to develop bid; LAs develop bid independently, or on strategic collaboration; LAs appoint a project lead; LAS develop delivery and evaluation plans.

Activities:

Bid management:

- Staff visits and calls between MHCLG and LAs; Year 1 check-ins before year 2 fund sent through; Monitoring and analysis of LAs monitoring reports; Provision of impact assessment frameworks

Project development:

- Developing English language skills (ESOL and EAL); Reducing rough sleeping; Identifying and mitigating the effects of rogue landlords; Data collection approaches to understand migration; Service integration and coordinating (building synergy within LA and with agencies); Promoting integration and social mixing; Supporting Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children; Recruiting local authority asylum support liaison officers; Supporting victims of modern day slavery; Other activities (recruitment of specialists, promoting social norms and social media campaigns)

Outputs

Local Authority:

- Project teams/ taskforces; data collection/ monitoring information; increased analysis and review of local issues; coordination and delivery of events to share and disseminate best practice

Project set up and management:

- Ongoing management; investments made and projects started; staff trained; volunteers engaged and recruitment; liaising and networking with local and regional agencies

Project delivery:

- Volunteers in post and networks of partners established; target groups sign posted to relevant projects; project materials and resources developed; target groups reached; sessions attended and activities completed.

Intermediate outcomes

Local authority:

- Increased insights into local migration patterns and community impacts; Expanded and strengthened network partners; increased coordination and cooperation between agencies; acquired expertise and structures in place to deal with local issues; improved sign posting and referral systems

Residents:

- Perceptions of reduced pressure on local public services; increased access to public services; increased involvement in community led integration activities; increased opportunities for social mixing; improved quality of public space; increased confidence that concerns are being listened to

Migrant groups:

- Increased understanding of and access to public services; housing issues identified; housing issues resolved; access to ESOL and EAL provision; access to labour market, skills and training, and accreditation; increased understanding of British culture and social norms, increased civic participation.

Long term outcomes:

Local Authority:

- Reduced cost of public services; evidence for future service planning and resourcing; building the evidence base of work works locally; increased revenue from enforcement of civil penalties

Residents:

- Perceived faster access to services; reduced public concern on access to public services; increased level of social mixing; increased sense of ownership; improved cleanliness and quality of local areas; reduced crime and anti-social behaviour; improved perceptions of recent migrants to local area.

Migrants groups:

- Increased well-being (mental health) levels of confidence; increased living standards; increased contributions to British Society; Increased English proficiency; Reduction in exploitation

Impacts:

Evidence and dissemination:

- Evidence base of what works in what contexts and shared between LAs and partners; evidence influence mainstream policies and service provision

Capability and capacity:

- Increased LA capabilities to address local migration issues through delivery of evidence collection; Increased knowledge of local hyper local migration patterns and what works to address migration pressures.

Access to local services:

Accessible public services to all; adequate and relevant services to address specific local issues; resources better targeted and directed

Perceptions on migration:

- Residents most affected can see difference that has been made; successful social mixing; improved perceptions of local impact of immigration.

Appendix 3: Research tools

CMF qualitative tools

Table 8.1: Qualitative tools for different participant groups

Participant	Research method	Outcomes measured
Delivery staff	Interview	All intermediate outcomes (outcomes 1 – 7).
Stakeholders	Interview	All intermediate outcomes (outcomes 1 – 7).
Project beneficiaries	Interview	Migrant intermediate outcomes (1, 2, 4, 6, 7)

11. Which of the following, if any, have you done in the last three months?

PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY:

- Volunteered (give/use your time to help others)
- Taken part in a training course
- Taken part in a sports club
- Taken part in a youth club or social club (e.g. played table tennis, a musical instrument, video games, painting)
- Taken part in a religious group (e.g. local church, local mosque)
- Met up with friends or family (e.g. to go on a walk, or meet up for a coffee)
- None
- Don't know/prefer not to say

12. My support officer supported me to participate in social or community activities (for example by providing information about activities).

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  | DON'T KNOW / PREFER NOT TO SAY |
| STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NOT SURE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

13. How many people did you speak with last week using English?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY

- 0 to 4 people
- 5 to 10 people
- 11 to 20 people
- 21 or more people
- Don't know/ prefer not to say

14. The help I received from my support officer (for example attending English language courses) helped me speak English better.

- | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  | DON'T KNOW / PREFER NOT TO SAY |
| STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NOT SURE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

15. In general, my life is better because of the help I received from my support officer.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  | DON'T KNOW / PREFER NOT TO SAY |
| STRONGLY AGREE | AGREE | NOT SURE | DISAGREE | STRONGLY DISAGREE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

16. How would you describe yourself...?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY:

- Male Female Other I would prefer not to say

Please add any other thoughts or comments about the support you have received in the box below, for example things that you liked, or things you did not like:

Thank you very much for your help!

