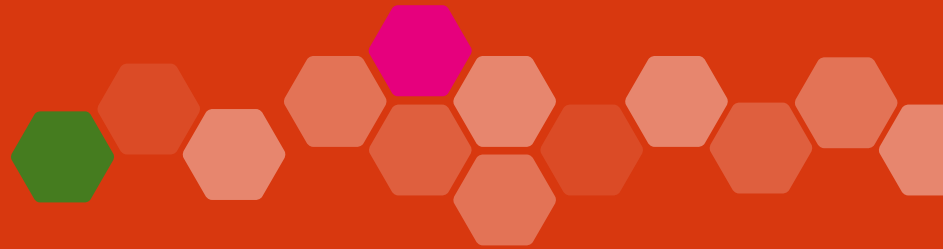# Evaluation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022

People, Communities and Places

social
research

Evaluation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022

This report was commissioned by Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council and the UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through the Languages and the Arts at the University of Glasgow.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Acronyms/Abbreviations used in the report

AMIF   Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund

COSLA   Convention of Scottish Local Authorities

ESOL   English for Speakers of Other Languages

GP   General Practitioner

LA   Local Authority

NSRIDP   New Scots Refugee Integration Development Project

SRC   Scottish Refugee Council

SMART   Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Executive summary

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aims to support refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland's communities. There has been a New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in place since 2014, developed by the Scottish Government, COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and a range of other partners across the public, third and academic sectors. The 2018-2022 New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aimed to provide a framework for those working towards refugee integration to assist them to make the best use of resources and expertise that are available across Scotland. It sets out a vision for a welcoming Scotland where refugees and people seeking asylum are able to rebuild their lives and integrate into society from the day they arrive in Scotland.

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 committed to working towards achieving four broad outcomes:

1. Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections.

2. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.

3. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.

4. Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.

To understand what the Strategy has achieved, and to aid the development of the third iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2023-2027), the Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council, commissioned ScotCen and Matter of Focus to undertake an evaluation of the 2018-2022 Strategy. The overall aim of the evaluation was to gain a fuller understanding of what works in relation to refugee integration in Scotland. The objectives of the evaluation were to assess how the Strategy has been implemented, the progress made towards achieving its intended outcomes and what learning could be used to inform future policy and practice.

For the evaluation, ScotCen and Matter of Focus conducted a mixed method study consisting of:

- Two Theory of Change workshops with partners involved in developing and implementing the Strategy.

- Interviews with 30 stakeholders from local authorities, partner organisations, academics, and third sector organisations. This included members of various structures associated with the implementation of the Strategy, including six 'themed' groups which are responsible for identifying actions that would make progress to achieving the Strategy's four outcomes.

- An online survey of stakeholder organisations (n=250).

- Interviews with 21 refugees and people seeking asylum.
- A series of self-evaluation workshops with 12 projects from across Scotland funded through the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

Findings

Understanding, awareness and reach of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The evaluation sought to understand whether the intended reach of the Strategy had been achieved.

Stakeholders who engaged with the Strategy appreciated the message of welcoming refugees and people seeking asylum, the focus on partnership working and that the values of the Strategy aligned with those of their own organisations.

Reach of the Strategy was limited. There was low awareness of the Strategy beyond those working in relevant governmental/policy circles or in refugee and asylum support organisations. A common view was that extending the reach of the next iteration of the Strategy would help increase awareness of refugees and people seeking asylum and the issues they face, and promote better understanding among host communities as well as a wider set of service providers and government departments.

To increase awareness and engagement with the next iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, stakeholders of all types would like to see a wider range of organisations and individuals involved in the development and implementation of the Strategy. These included refugees and people seeking asylum, host communities and the wider public, in addition to local and national government and third sector and community organisations.

Implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The evaluation sought to understand how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had been implemented and what had worked well and been challenging.

The Strategy had been used in a range of ways. These included using the Strategy to: inform the development of new, or improve existing, programmes of work; seek funding for new and existing integration work; and initiate new collaborations and partnership working.

The majority of stakeholders reported that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had a 'very positive' or 'positive' impact on the work of their organisation. Data from the interviews and survey with stakeholders highlighted key factors that helped the implementation of the Strategy or made it more challenging.

Factors that helped implementation of the Strategy:

- AMIF funding and the partnerships developed through New Scots themed groups helped build new connections and networking opportunities between local authorities, third sector organisations, community groups, and the Strategy's partners. This facilitated better information sharing and enhanced

the support offered to refuges and people seeking asylum through signposting to sources of support.

- The positive messaging of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy motivated people to work collaboratively to implement the Strategy.

- Commitment and resilience of staff in the sector drove forward implementation of the Strategy in light of a lack of long-term funding attached to the Strategy's implementation.

- The adaptability and relevance of the Strategy in the face of a frequently changing UK policy landscape and new resettlement programmes.

Factors that made implementation of the Strategy challenging:

- The COVID-19 pandemic reduced individuals' and organisations' capacity to achieve the Strategy's outcomes as staff and resources were diverted elsewhere. The pandemic was also felt to have contributed to staff burnout across the sector, which impacted on the wider workings of the New Scots groups.

- Lack of funding, for staffing both within government and across the sector, and other resources associated with the Strategy meant implementation was often reliant on the goodwill and dedication of individuals and organisations driving work forward.

- Tensions between the UK Government's policy agenda and 'hostile environment' which were perceived as being at odds with the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's approach.

- Siloed working within Scottish Government departments which led to wider policies not reflecting the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum.

- Lack of, and inconsistent access to, funding for the provision of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and other services.

- Low awareness of the Strategy among the public, refugees and people seeking asylum, as well as among organisations working with these groups and across some government departments.

- Impact of the Ukrainian resettlement programme on staff resources in organisations supporting refugees and the need to adapt to a new resettlement programme with its own rights and entitlements.

Progress made towards achieving intended outcomes

The evaluation sought to understand what progress has been made towards achieving the intended outcomes of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, and the extent to which progress is sustainable.

Outcome 1: **Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections.**
Research participants expressed varied views on the extent to which this outcome had been met. While the majority (65%) of survey respondents indicated that this

outcome had been very or quite successfully achieved, fewer agreed that as a result of the Strategy 'refugees and asylum seekers feel more welcome in Scotland' (51%), and that 'Scotland's communities are safer for refugees and asylum seekers' (44%).

Similarly mixed views were expressed by interviewees. Some refugees and people seeking asylum had received a very warm welcome in Scotland and viewed it as their home. Others told us of much more challenging experiences, for example, racist abuse, feeling isolated and struggling to meet people or learn English.

Factors which contributed to refugees and people seeking asylum living in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities:

- Having opportunities to build strong connections and relationships with other refugees and people seeking asylum as well as those from host communities and staff from support organisations.

- Support from AMIF-funded projects and others working with refugees and people seeking asylum, helped people to feel welcome in their communities through local integration activities and engaging with a wide range of services.

- Intensive support being provided when first arriving in Scotland. In some local authorities support was provided to those on resettlement programmes by dedicated local authority support workers. Others received support from local authority workers and a wide range of third sector and community organisations.

- Opportunities for employment and volunteering were critical to supporting mental health, language development, sense of belonging and being able to build diverse relationships and connections.

Factors which acted as barriers to refugees and people seeking asylum living in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities:

- Experiences of racism and feelings of isolation and exclusion in local communities due to a lack of cultural understanding.

- Time spent in the asylum process led to people feeling less welcome in Scotland and feeling particularly isolated, unwelcome and unsafe.

- Other barriers that are more related to the other three outcomes and include: language barriers, difficulties accessing transport and appropriate housing, and restricted access to employment and educational opportunities.

Outcome 2: Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.
Views on whether refugees and people seeking asylum understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives were varied and point to the need for further work in this area.

Just over half of stakeholders responding to the survey (53%) said this outcome had been successfully achieved. A higher percentage (59%) either 'strongly agreed'

or 'agreed' that 'the Strategy had supported increased awareness among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights and entitlements'. Additionally, stakeholder interviewees, refugees and people seeking asylum, survey respondents and AMIF-funded projects highlighted factors that helped achieve this outcome and factors that made it more challenging.

Factors which contributed to refugees and people seeking asylum understanding and exercising their rights, responsibilities and entitlements:

- Receiving support from local authorities, third sector support organisations and community groups in a wide range of areas, including: the asylum process; housing; welfare; employment; and education.

- The provision of translated information and interpreters enabled refugees and asylum seekers to access legal aid, welfare/social security support, employment support, housing support and volunteering opportunities.

Factors which acted as barriers to refugees and people seeking asylum understanding and exercising their rights, responsibilities and entitlements:

- Lack of clear, appropriate and accessible information on rights and entitlements of refugees and particularly people seeking asylum.

- Language barriers, limited access to translated materials and interpreters, and digital exclusion made it harder for refugees and people seeking asylum to access information on their rights and entitlements.

- For those within the asylum process, a lack of information made it harder to navigate the application and its decision making process.

- Not being able to work limited progress towards this outcome. Reasons for this included:

- people seeking asylum not having the right to work.

- organisations not recognising prior learning among those refugees with professional qualifications or experience from their previous employment.

- limited English-language skills resulting in refugees reporting difficulties in finding employment and being rejected for positions they would otherwise have been qualified for.

- caring responsibilities or ill health made finding flexible work challenging.

Outcome 3: Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.
The majority of survey respondents agreed that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy encouraged broader involvement of people and organisations across Scotland (66%); supported refugee integration through improved collaboration between organisations (65%); and supported better coordinated services that met refugee and asylum seeker needs more effectively (57%).

Through interviews with stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum as well as workshops with AMIF-funded projects, enablers and barriers to accessing support services were discussed.

Factors which contributed to refugees and people seeking asylum to access well-coordinated services:

- AMIF-funded projects supported and enabled refugees and people seeking asylum to access statutory services, ESOL support, childcare, food and mental health support, as well as free transport and digital inclusion.

- The AMIF funding enabled organisations to expand their work to serve new areas and new populations of refugees and people seeking asylum, and to address gaps in service provision.

- The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy helped create an environment that encouraged partnership working and fostered new relationships and connections. This was facilitated by the development of the theme groups connected to the Strategy.

- The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy increased awareness of the issues facing refugees and people seeking asylum leading to more consistent and improved joined up working between different organisations involved in its implementation.

Barriers to refugees and people seeking asylum being able to access well-coordinated services:

- Gaps in ESOL provision, particularly college-based courses.

- Variations in the provision of services and support across different local authority areas impacted on the ability of refugees and people seeking asylum to access statutory services.

- Cost of transport and availability of reliable transport links made accessing services challenging.

- Lack of access to accommodation that met the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum, particularly those housed in hotels.

Outcome 4: Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.
The fourth outcome of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was considered to have been the least well achieved across both the survey and interview findings. Fewer than half (44%) of survey respondents said this had been successfully addressed, although 61% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' or that 'the Strategy has taken into account the lived experiences of refugees'.

Factors which contributed to policy, strategic planning and legislation being informed by the rights needs and aspirations of refugees and people seeking asylum:

- Stakeholders emphasised the importance of having a Strategy which promotes a positive message of integration, with Scotland being a welcoming place for refugees and people seeking asylum.

- Although it was felt that the Strategy's aim for refugees and people seeking asylum to feel welcome from day one has not yet been achieved, the Strategy was viewed as an important means to support this aim in the future.

Factors which acted as barriers to policy, strategic planning and legislation being informed by the rights needs and aspirations of refugees and people seeking asylum:

- The fact that asylum and refugee policy is reserved to the UK Government was said to make integration work more difficult in Scotland. Despite this, it was felt there was more that could be done within the remit of devolved policy to promote integration and better support the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, with devolved powers the Scottish Government can improve the quality and availability of ESOL provision across Scotland, extend free bus passes to refugees and people seeking asylum, and take action to tackle racism and isolation.

- Lack of funding to develop and implement the Strategy, as well as longer-term funding for those organisations and projects working directly with refugees and people seeking asylum, was a clear barrier. It was viewed as a challenge to change people's attitudes and promote community cohesion without longer-term funding.

Variation across groups

Refugees' and asylum seekers' experiences were influenced by the level and accessibility of support (local authority, third sector and community support) available in their area. There was evidence of variations in support in different local authority areas, but further research is required to fully assess the extent, and reasons for, these variations.

There was also evidence that those who entered Scotland via refugee resettlement programmes tended to have more positive experiences of integration within their local community than people seeking asylum, who expressed high levels of anxiety and isolation in trying to navigate the asylum process. Those entering Scotland via refugee resettlement programmes are entitled to more dedicated support, have more rights on arrival in the UK, and do not have to undergo the uncertainties of the asylum process – all of which may support more positive experiences. Further research would be required to fully understand the reasons for these different experiences.

The contribution of the Strategy to achieving integration outcomes

The fact that Scotland has a refugee integration Strategy was warmly welcomed by those who were aware of it. It was felt to have led to greater collaboration and coordination between local authorities, the third sector and partners. However, measuring the direct impact of the Strategy was often difficult. While progress towards the outcomes was acknowledged, some stakeholders were ambivalent as to whether these outcomes would have happened without the Strategy. This was due to the close alignment of their organisations' values with those of the Strategy and existing partnership working between organisations. Research participants also found it difficult to link an overarching Strategy with every activity or initiative

happening at a local or project level. Nevertheless, stakeholders said that having a refugee integration Strategy supported by the Scottish Government set a vision for Scotland to work towards collectively.

Recommendations for the development of the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The findings from this research show that further work is still needed to ensure that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's outcomes are achieved. Various issues worth considering in the development of the next iteration were raised by stakeholder interviewees and survey respondents.

- Additional funding and resourcing to be an intrinsic part of the implementation of the Strategy;

- Continued and longer-term funding of organisations and projects working to support refugee integration to enable equitable access and service provision in different geographical areas, and for those entering Scotland through different settlement pathways;

- If necessary, underpinning the Strategy with legislation to ensure that the rights and entitlements of refugees and people seeking asylum are fully supported in Scotland;

- The need to support greater awareness of, and wider engagement with, the Strategy across the Scottish Government, refugees and people seeking asylum, third sector organisations, community groups and among the general public across all areas of Scotland;

- Consideration of how the Scottish Government can better use its devolved powers to support refugees and people seeking asylum to begin to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive;

- A focus on measurable outcomes, with a monitoring and evaluation structure implemented from the outset, as the third Strategy is developed and rolled out;

- As integration is very much a two-way process, work must also be conducted with host communities in order that refugees and people seeking asylum feel as welcomed and accepted as possible.

1. Introduction

There has been a New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in place since 2014, developed by the Scottish Government, COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and a range of other partners across the public, third and academic sectors. The Strategy aims to provide a framework for those working towards refugee integration to assist them to make the best use of resources and expertise that are available across Scotland. It sets out a vision for a welcoming Scotland where refugees and people seeking asylum are able to rebuild their lives and integrate into society from the day they arrive in Scotland.

To understand what the Strategy has achieved between 2018-2022, and to aid the development of the third iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2023-2027), the Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA, the Scottish Refugee Council and University of Glasgow, commissioned an evaluation of the 2018-2022 Strategy. The overall aim of the evaluation was to gain a fuller understanding of what works in relation to refugee integration in Scotland. The objectives of the evaluation were to assess how the Strategy has been implemented, the progress made towards achieving its intended outcomes and what learning could be used to inform future policy and practice. The evaluation forms part of the New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project (NSRIDP), a two-year (2020-2022) EU-funded programme aimed at understanding, documenting and expanding the impact and reach of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2018-2022). The programme is supported by the European Commission's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and involves a partnership between the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Scottish Refugee Council and the UNESCO Chair at the University of Glasgow.

1.1. Refugees and people seeking asylum

A refugee is someone who has left a country to escape violence, war or persecution and has had their status as a refugee recognised under the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Refugees have full access to the same social and economic rights as UK citizens, including medical treatment, education, benefits, housing and employment.

A person seeking asylum is someone who has asked a government to recognise their refugee status and is waiting to hear the outcome of their application. The UK is a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention and therefore must consider applications for asylum made in the UK by a person who claims to be fleeing persecution[1]. People seeking asylum are not entitled to most welfare benefits in the UK and are, in most cases, banned from working. They can access support in the form of housing and basic living expenses while in the UK through the Home Office. This is known as 'Asylum support'[2].

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[1] [Refugees and asylum seekers - GOV.SCOT (www.gov.scot)](www.gov.scot)

[2] Asylum support: What you'll get - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

People seeking asylum who are granted refugee status are classed into one of two groups. A refugee is classed as Group 1 if they:

- came to the UK directly from a country or territory where their life or freedom was threatened

- made their claim for asylum without delay

- have entered or have stayed in the UK illegally and the authorities have accepted their reason for doing so

A refugee who doesn't satisfy these conditions is classed as a Group 2 refugee.

If a refugee falls in Group 1 they may be given permission to stay in the UK for a minimum of 5 years in what is known as 'refugee permission to stay'. The exact amount of time depends on how their application has been assessed. After 5 years, they can then apply to settle in the UK. If a refugee falls in Group 2 they may be given permission to stay in the UK for a minimum of 30 months. This is known as 'temporary refugee permission to stay'. The exact amount of time depends on how their application has been assessed. After 10 years they can apply to settle in the UK under long residency rules[3].

1.2. Policy background

Asylum policy is reserved to the UK Government under Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998[4]. As a result, the UK Government has control over arrangements for the accommodation and financial support of people seeking asylum, as well as the assessment of asylum claims. However, health, education, legal services and housing services (excluding asylum accommodation), which are essential to supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, are devolved and therefore the responsibility of the Scottish Government and local authorities. Scotland's New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aims to support refugees and people seeking asylum to integrate from the day of their arrival.

Since the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act[5,] a proportion of the people seeking asylum in the UK have been dispersed to Scotland while waiting for a decision on their asylum application. The UK policy of dispersal has been criticised for selecting accommodation based on availability as opposed to where existing social networks and kinship are in place, which can contribute to social exclusion and isolation[6]. The available accommodation is often concentrated in already deprived communities leading to additional barriers to integration[7].

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[3] Claim asylum in the UK - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[4] Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998 - (www.legislation.gov.uk)

[5] 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act - (www.legislation.gov.uk)

[6] (Robinson et al. 2003). The integration and onward migration of refugees in Scotland: a review of the evidence

[7] (Anie et al. 2005), found in The integration and onward migration of refugees in Scotland: a review of the evidence

For over two decades, Glasgow was the primary[8] local authority area in Scotland where people seeking asylum were housed, with approximately 10% of the UK's dispersed asylum population accommodated there[9]. In April 2022, the UK Government announced plans for a policy of full asylum dispersal, under which it was assumed that asylum accommodation could be procured in any local authority in the UK. Widening of asylum dispersal is now beginning in areas outwith Glasgow.

Since 2015, the UK Government has launched multiple refugee resettlement schemes. These include: the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) (2015-2020); the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) (2016-2020); the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) (2021- present); the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) (pathways 1, 2 and 3; 2022– present) in early 2022; the Scottish Government's Super Sponsor scheme alongside the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme (2022-present); the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) (2021- present); and the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) (2021- present). See Box 1 for further details.

In addition to these resettlement schemes, there have always been 'spontaneous arrivals' of people seeking asylum and UASC throughout Scotland. However, as noted in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in 2018, the majority of refugees living in Scotland at that point had arrived through the asylum system rather than through these resettlement programmes. The implementation of these refugee resettlement schemes in Scotland has been led by local authorities in partnership with local statutory and third sectors. Resettlement schemes (e.g. Vulnerable Persons/Children's Resettlement Scheme) allow for a more person-focused resettlement approach.

There are currently around 5,000 people seeking asylum, who are living in Scotland. The exact number changes all the time, as people come into and exit the asylum system, but has been around 5,000 for several years. There is no data on the number of refugees living in Scotland. Once people are granted refugee status, they are free to live where they choose in the UK like anyone else in the community, and there is no data collection in the general population that identifies people as refugees. Despite the number of people who have arrived from Ukraine, it will still be the case that the majority of refugees in Scotland have come through the asylum system, as asylum dispersal has been in place in Scotland for over 20 years.

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[8] In November 2021 the Home Office opened a number of hotels for people seeking asylum to live in, named contingency accommodation. A small number were outside of Glasgow and housing approximately 400 people seeking asylum. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children have been placed across the whole of Scotland prior this.

[9] New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 - GOV.SCOT - (www.gov.scot)

Box 1.1: UK resettlement schemes

Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)
The Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) was launched in 2014 and expanded in 2015 to help resettle 20,000 refugees from the conflict in Syria by 2020. This was the first time that all local authorities in Scotland began to receive resettled refugees. According to the Home Office September 2022 report, Scotland received approximately 16% of the 20,319 Syrian refugees who were resettled in the UK under this scheme.

Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS)
The Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) was launched in 2016 to support refugee children from the Middle East and North Africa region. The scheme's aim was to resettle 3,000 'at-risk' refugee children. Scotland received approximately 13.6% of the 1,838 refugee children who arrived in the UK under this scheme.

Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
The UK Government introduced the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) in April 2021, offering relocation to eligible Afghan citizens who had worked with or for the UK government in Afghanistan in "exposed or meaningful roles". As of November 2022, over 11,600 people had been relocated from Afghanistan to the UK as part of the scheme.

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) was formally opened in early 2022 to help resettle vulnerable people and those that have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan. It consists of three pathways. The UK Government stated that the scheme would resettle more than 5,000 people in the first year and up to 20,000 over the coming years. Data published in the Immigration System Statistics release show a total of 21,365 individuals under the Afghan ARAP and ACRS pathway 1 schemes. This number differs from the total number of arrivals following the evacuation from Afghanistan, as not all those evacuated required resettlement (for example British citizens or those with settled status). The total number of arrivals up to the end of December is around 24,500.

Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme
The Ukraine Super Sponsor scheme was introduced by the Scottish Government alongside the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme in March 2022 to provide sanctuary to those fleeing Ukraine. As of 14 March 2023, there had been a total of 45,126 confirmed applications (of which 85% were sponsored by Scottish Government), 38,183 visas issued (of which 85% were sponsored by Scottish Government) and 23,778 arrivals (of which 81% are sponsored by Scottish Government) with a Scottish Sponsor.

UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)
The start of the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) began in 2021 and was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The scheme states that the UK will continue to "offer a safe and legal route to vulnerable refugees". Progress has subsequently been slow due to focus on Afghanistan and Ukraine.

National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)
The National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) began in 2021 to allow for the safe transfer of unaccompanied children from one local authority to another.

1.3. Support for refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland

In recent years Scotland's local authorities, with support from COSLA, have played an enhanced role in delivering humanitarian protection programmes and facilitating refugee integration through participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS)[1], Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS)[2], UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)[3] and more recently the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)[4], Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)[5] and the National Transfer Scheme (NTS)[6] for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) as well as providing services for people within asylum accommodation as part of the move to a 'full dispersal' model introduced in 2022. In addition to meeting their statutory provisions, such as providing education, social care, social services and health care, there have been significant developments over recent years to operational practice and service delivery within and across local authorities with a wide range of expertise having been developed among staff.

1.4. New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aims to support refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland's communities. There has been a New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in place since 2014, developed in partnership between the Scottish Government, COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and a range of other partners across the public, third and academic sectors. The second, and latest, Strategy (2018-2022) was informed by engagement with 2,000 people through a number of events, including over 700 people with a refugee or asylum seeker background [10]. Key challenges raised by stakeholders in this engagement analysis were reflected in the six themes of the latest Strategy: employability and welfare rights, housing, language, education, needs of people seeking asylum and communities, culture and social connections. The engagement process also raised challenges in relation to poverty and destitution among refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland. The 2018-2022 Strategy aimed to provide a framework for those working towards refugee integration to assist them to make the best use of the resources and expertise that are available across Scotland.

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[1] Syrian vulnerable person resettlement programme fact sheet - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[2] Vulnerable Persons and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes Factsheet, March 2021 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[3] Resettlement (publishing.service.gov.uk)

[4] Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement (accessible version) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[5] Afghanistan resettlement and immigration policy statement (accessible version) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

[6] National UASC dispersal protocol v0.4 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

10 New Scots refugee integration Strategy 2018 to 2022: engagement analysis - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

The 2018-2022 Strategy was underpinned by five principles[11]:

1. Integration from day one
2. A rights-based approach
3. Inclusive communities
4. Refugee involvement
5. Partnership and collaboration.

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy sets out a vision for a welcoming Scotland where refugees and people seeking asylum[12] are able to rebuild their lives and integrate into society from the day they arrive in Scotland. The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 committed to working towards achieving four broad outcomes:

1. Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections
2. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives
3. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs
4. Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.

1.5. Implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

There is no single definition of integration, and what constitutes successful integration is a contested topic in wider academic literature[13]. In the development of the first and second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategies, the partnership recognised that integration is a two-way process, where all communities and individuals can play a role in ensuring welcome and supporting integration. Ager and Strang identified 10 core domains (Figure 1.1) of integration categorised into four overall themes.

The domains of employment, housing, education and health represent the context in which integration can take place, and areas of attainment that are widely recognised as critical for integration.

The social connections theme acknowledges the importance of relationships in supporting integration, with the domains referring to different kinds of relationships that can contribute to integration.

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[11] New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 - GOV.SCOT (www.gov.scot)

[12] This includes people who have been granted refugee status or another form of humanitarian protection; people seeking asylum; and those whose application for asylum has been refused, but who remain in Scotland.

[13] Castles, S., & Miller, M. (2003). The age of migration. International population movements in the modern world (3rd ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Facilitators are key factors that facilitate integration – such as language or cultural knowledge and expertise, or feelings of personal safety.

The rights and citizenship of refugees and other migrants are foundational to achievement in all the other domains. This framework was used to underpin the development and implementation of the first New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and the 2018-2022 Strategy[14].

Figure 1.1: Ager and Strang's Indicators of Integration (2004)
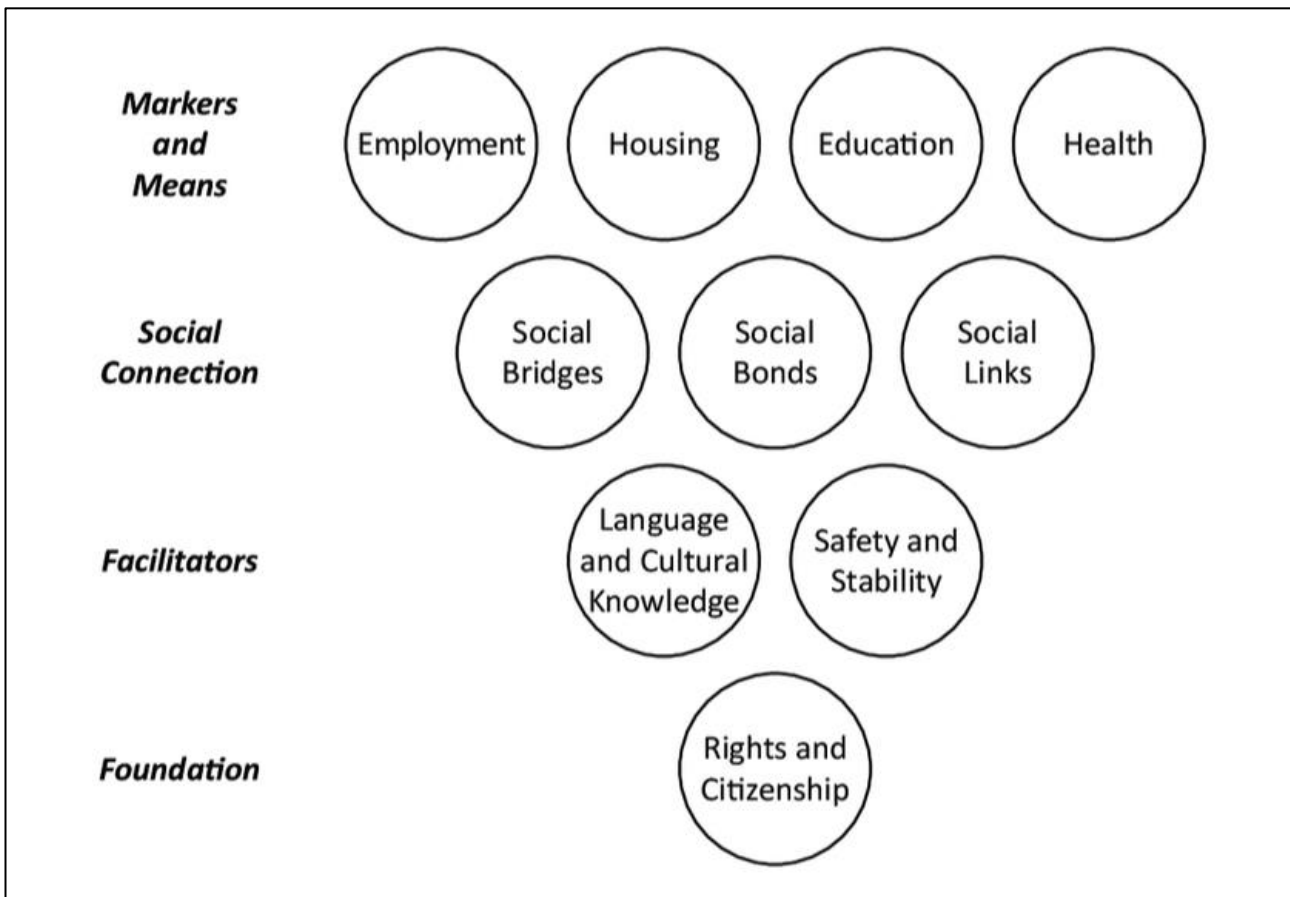
A group structure was put in place to guide the implementation of the Strategy's (2018-2022) objectives and actions. The New Scots Core Group is responsible for monitoring and reviewing progress of the Strategy's outcomes, coordinating the work of a number of 'theme groups'. The Core Group is composed of 25 members from 12 organisations. These organisation are: Scottish Government, COSLA, University of Glasgow, Scottish Refugee Council, Red Cross, Mental Health Foundation, Strathclyde University, DWP, Bridges Programmes, Police Scotland, Glasgow ESOL, and Creative Scotland.. The Core Group was independently chaired by Professor Alison Phipps of the University of Glasgow. An overarching steering group supported the core group, helping to explore and decide upon the

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[14] Ager A, Strang A. (2004) Indicators of Integration: Final Report, Home Office Development and Practice Report 28, London Home Office. The Home Office published an updated framework for Indicators of Integration in 2019, which is available here: Home Office Indicators of Integration framework 2019 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

core group's agenda. A Leadership Board, which included the relevant Scottish Government Minister, COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, the Chief Executive of Scottish Refugee Council and the independent Chair of the Core Group, was established to oversee the direction of the Strategy and ensure a collaborative approach.

In addition to the core group, six themed groups are responsible for identifying actions that would make progress to achieving the Strategy's four outcomes. Group members comprise representatives from a range of organisations including local authorities, academics, third sector and community-based organisations with an interest in supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, and organisations relevant to the themed group (e.g. employers, ESOL providers, housing providers). The six themed groups, and member organisations are outlined in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.1: Organisational membership of New Scots themed groups

Themed Group	Group members
Housing	Scottish Government, Glasgow City Council, Mears Housing, Migrant Help UK, Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF), British Red Cross, Wheatley Group, North Ayrshire Council
Health and wellbeing	Scottish Refugee Council, Mental Health Foundation, Glasgow HSCP (NHS GGC), North Ayrshire City Council, University of Strathclyde
Employability and welfare rights	Bridges Programmes, Department for Work and Pensions, Business Gateway, Stirling Council, Glasgow Clyde College
Education and language[15]	Strathclyde University, Glasgow ESOL, University of Glasgow, Workers' Educational Association (WEA) Scotland
Needs of people seeking asylum	Scottish Government, Police Scotland, Glasgow City Council, Mears Housing, Migrant Help UK
Communities, culture and social connections	Citizens Theatre, Scottish Refugee Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Scottish Faith Action for Refugees, Scottish Community Development Centre

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[15] There was just one group (Education) during the first Strategy. Following the engagement to develop the second Strategy, a separate language group was established, due to the importance of language that came through in the feedback. However, during the implementation of the second Strategy, the Education and Language groups merged back into one as they shared common interests and involved many of the same partners.StrategyStrategy

1.5.1. Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)

In 2020, the Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA, the Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) and the UNESCO Chair in Refugee Integration through Language and the Arts at the University of Glasgow secured funding from the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to expand and evaluate the impact and reach of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and develop international good practice. As part of this, in August 2021, 56 organisations were awarded grants totalling £2.8 million to build upon and widen the reach of successful integration approaches and disseminate positive outcomes. Where gaps had been identified through the experience of implementing the first New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, funding was available to support innovation in projects which pilot or test new initiatives[16,17].

Funding was structured around eight themes, drawing on the experience of the New Scots themed groups[18]: language, health, employability, digital inclusion, communities, arts, housing and legal. Funded projects were implemented between September 2021 and November 2022. A full list of the funded projects is available in Appendix A.

1.6. Evaluation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

As part of the same EU-funded project, and to aid the development of the third New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2023-2027), the New Scots partnership commissioned an evaluation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-22 alongside a range of other research outputs intended to further understanding of refugee integration in Scotland. The rationale for the commission was to evaluate the existing New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and approach, including to assess progress towards achieving the Strategy outcomes, objectives and actions. ScotCen was selected via open tender to undertake the evaluation, and contracted in October 2021. Matter of Focus was subcontracted by ScotCen to deliver elements of the evaluation. This report outlines the main findings from the evaluation.

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[16] https://www.gov.scot/news/integrating-new-scots/

[17] More information about the funding call for NSRIDP can be found here: Guidance for applicants - New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project: guidance - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

[18] Offer of grant - New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project: guidance - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

2. Methodology

2.1. Research aims and objectives

The overall aim of the evaluation was to gain a fuller understanding of what works in relation to refugee integration in Scotland, focusing on the implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy as the focal point for coordinated action. The objectives of the evaluation were to assess:

- **The processes** through which the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 has been implemented
- The progress made towards achieving its intended **outcomes**
- What **learning** could be used to inform future policy and practice.

Linked to these aims were a number of research questions which are outlined in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Evaluation research questions

Process
Research questions: 1. What is working well/not well in how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is being implemented? Does this vary between groups/areas?   2. What contextual factors influence implementation?   3. What are the factors that block successful implementation, and what factors enhance it?   4. Has the intended reach been achieved?
Outcomes
Research questions: 5. What can we learn about the progress that has been made towards achieving the four New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes? How does this vary across different groups/areas?   6. To what extent do the observed results and the perspectives of service users, staff and stakeholders suggest the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy contributed to outcomes (whether improved, worsened or unchanged)?   7. How sustainable are these changes?   8. What unintended changes (positive or negative) has the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy made?
Learning
Research questions   9. What lessons learned and recommendations for future practice can be drawn from the experiences of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to date?   10. What elements of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy are working well, and what elements are working less well?   11. What aspects of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy could be adapted or developed based on the insights from this work?   12. To what extent has the absence of a structured funding arrangement impacted the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and implementation, and how would the continuation of this policy impact future practice and implementation?   13. How have the outcomes of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy benefited from the partnership approach to policy and implementation?

2.2. Research design

To address the research aims and objectives, ScotCen and Matter of Focus conducted a collaborative mixed method study. The adoption of a mixed method design enabled data triangulation to strengthen the overall evaluation findings and provided both breadth and depth of scope.

The study consisted of five key strands which are outlined below, along with the lead organisation for each component:

1. Two Theory of Change workshops with partners involved in developing and implementing the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 (Matter of Focus)

2. Interviews with 30 stakeholders involved in developing and implementing the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 (ScotCen)

3. An online survey of stakeholder organisations (ScotCen)

4. Qualitative interviews with 21 refugees and people seeking asylum (ScotCen)

5. Self-evaluation workshops with 12 AMIF-funded projects (Matter of Focus)

ScotCen were responsible for conducting the survey; the interviews with individuals working in the field of integration; and the interviews with refugees and people seeking asylum. Matter of Focus led the Theory of Change workshops with New Scots partners and the self-evaluation workshops with funded projects. These utilised specialist evaluation software (OutNav) developed by Matter of Focus to help organisations evaluate their progress against specific outcomes.

Each of the elements of the overall research design is explored in more detail in the subsequent sections.

2.2.1. Theory of Change workshops

At the beginning of the project, two online workshops were held with New Scots partners involved in developing and implementing the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022 . These workshops were led by Matter of Focus and chaired by the UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration, Professor Alison Phipps of the University of Glasgow. The workshops aimed to work in a participatory way with members from the Scottish Government and the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and core groups to refresh the Theory of Change for the Strategy. This included an assessment by the group of the context for delivery using a tool developed by the Scottish Government, the Individual, Social, Material model (ISM) [19]. This model takes an approach to mapping context designed for policy makers and practitioners whose work ultimately aims at engaging people and influencing their behaviours in order to deliver improved outcomes.

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[19] Darnton, A. and Horne, J (2013) 'Influencing behaviours – moving beyond the individual: ISM user guide', Scottish Government website [online] Available from: https://www.gov.scot/publications/influencing-behaviours-moving-beyond-individual-user-guide-ism-tool/.

The first workshop was held on 19 January 2022. It included participants from the Scottish Government, COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council, and other key organisations involved in the development and implementation of the Strategy. The second workshop was held on 7 February 2022.

These workshops helped develop a new Theory of Change for the Strategy (see Appendices C and D). This helped to explicitly set out how this group saw the actions which had been taken to implement the Strategy have contributed to its outcomes of the Strategy as a whole. The Theory of Change work was requested by the New Scots Core Group to help shape initial thinking about the next phase of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. The resulting Theory of Change was shared with the funded groups so that they could explicitly link their work to the outcomes as expressed in this Theory of Change. The data gathered during the workshops also informed the development of the stakeholder interview topic guide in terms of both contextual factors and the Theory of Change itself.

2.2.2. Stakeholder interviews

In order to explore the development, implementation and impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, ScotCen conducted interviews with a range of stakeholders working in the field of integration (n=30). The term stakeholder is used throughout the report to refer to the individuals from academia, government, local authorities, third sector and community groups who responded to the survey or participated in an interview.

Recruitment and sampling
The Scottish Government drafted a list of organisations and individuals involved in the development and implementation of the current Strategy and its previous iteration. Using contact details supplied by the Scottish Government, ScotCen sent email invitations to a selection of contacts inviting them to participate in an interview. The Scottish Government was not informed who was invited to, or subsequently participated in, an interview.

Having initially focused on organisations and individuals involved in Strategy development, stakeholder recruitment was expanded in June 2022 to include a selection of representatives from other organisations working directly with refugees and people seeking asylum, including some projects that had received AMIF funding. This allowed the research team to explore their views on the Strategy and their experiences as organisations working directly with refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland.

Conducting the research
The stakeholder interview topic guide was developed in February/March 2022 in consultation with the Scottish Government and members of the New Scots Strategy Core Group. Two topic guides were developed for the in-depth interviews with key stakeholder organisations: one for core and thematic group members and one for non-group members. The content of the topic guides consisted of a wide range of questions relating to the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2018-2022), including:

- Understanding and awareness of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (2018-2022)
- Involvement in the development of the latest version of the Strategy
    - Experiences of collaboration
    - Aspects that have worked well/been more challenging

- Involvement and experiences within the core and/or theme group
    - Key aims and activities
    - Experiences of collaboration
    - Aspects that have worked well/been more challenging
    - Contribution to the group

- Own organisation's work and influence on refugee integration in Scotland
    - Possible impact of the Strategy on organisation's work
    - Alignment of the Strategy's values with organisation

- Knowledge and awareness of the Strategy amongst organisations and individuals working in the field
- Implementation of the Strategy
    - Key factors enabling and hindering the Strategy's implementation
    - Suggested improvements for the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

- Outcomes of the Strategy
    - Progress achieved towards these outcomes
    - Key barriers and challenges to these outcomes
    - Potential impact of the Strategy on refugee integration in Scotland
    - Impact of reserved policy making on implementation of the Strategy

- Informing the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
    - Lessons learned
    - Potential improvements to the Strategy
    - Gaps in the current Strategy.

All interviews were conducted by a member of the ScotCen research team, either by telephone or video call using Microsoft Teams. Interviews took place between 1st April and 1st August 2022 and took between 48 minutes and an hour and 52 minutes to complete.

Participant demographics
In total, 27 individual and paired interviews were conducted with 30 stakeholders. Representatives of core and theme groups, including New Scots partner agency representatives, were interviewed. In addition, interviews were conducted with

representatives from both AMIF and non-AMIF-funded organisations that work directly with refugees and people seeking asylum.

Interviewees were based throughout Scotland, although a larger proportion were from Glasgow, reflecting the fact that many projects and organisations working with refugees and people seeking asylum are based in Glasgow.

The types of organisations represented included: Scottish Government; UK Government and Scottish Government bodies; statutory services; local authorities; education providers; members of Health and Social Care Partnerships; faith organisations; housing providers, and a variety of third sector organisations and arts organisations.

Staff interviewed included a mixture of those in senior management positions (including those in partner organisations) responsible for high level Strategy and those who delivered support to refugees and people seeking asylum on the ground.While participants from a wide range of organisations participated in an interview, despite several invitations issued, only one person from a local authority agreed to be interviewed. It is important to note that the research period coincided with the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict and the subsequent implementation of the Ukraine resettlement scheme, which placed significant unforeseen new requirements on local authorities, and which may have reduced the ability of local authority representatives to engage with this research. Nevertheless, a separate research project with local authorities was commissioned by the partnership and undertaken in parallel with this research, and this will provide additional insights into the experiences of local authorities.

Analysis
All transcripts were imported into and coded using NVivo 12, a software package which aids qualitative data analysis. Analysis involved a number of stages. Firstly, the key topics and issues which emerged from the research objectives and the data were identified through familiarisation with transcripts by at least two members of the ScotCen research team. A draft analytical framework was developed and agreed by the research team, set up in NVivo and piloted by two researchers on a few transcripts. The analytical framework was then refined after discussion and agreement within the wider project team. Once the analytical framework was finalised, each transcript was coded so that all the data relating to a particular theme could be viewed together.

Through reviewing the coded data, the full range of views and attitudes described by respondents were systematically mapped, and the accounts of different respondents, or groups of respondents, compared and contrasted.

ScotCen's approach to qualitative analysis is designed to minimise bias in the interpretation of data. Multiple researchers across the team were involved in the analytical process (from reviewing transcripts, to framework development and coding), ensuring inter-rater reliability and validity to the conclusions. Regular analytical meetings were held by the team in order that any suggested modifications to the analytical framework were agreed by all of the researchers. All analysis and interpretation was checked by senior members of the team and a designated Quality Director.

2.2.3. Stakeholder organisations survey

Interviews with stakeholders were complemented by an online survey of a wider group of representatives of stakeholder organisations. The survey explored the views of those involved in activities which support the integration of refugees and people seeking asylum.

Recruitment and sampling
The Scottish Government, COSLA and SRC sent email invitiations, including a link to the survey, to a list of key contacts on behalf of ScotCen. The aim was to distribute the survey to as wide a range of organisations working with refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland as possible, drawing on SRC's database of organisations working in the sector, and ensuring distribution to key contacts in every Scottish local authority. Initially 718 invitations were sent to contacts of SRC (n=177), COSLA (n=250), GRAMNET and UNESCO RILA (n=80) and Scottish Government (n=211). All those invited to participate were asked to share with relevant contacts both within and outwith their organisations. Two reminders were sent by partner organisations to the same list of contacts. As the invitation email may have been forwarded on by organisations and individuals to other colleagues working in the area, it is not possible to know how many people or organisations received the survey invitation, or what the response rate might have been.

Conducting the research
A draft of the survey questions was agreed with the Scottish Government and New Scots partners (Appendix B). The online survey was developed using BUILD software. The online survey was live between 6th June 2022 and 15th August 2022. Responses to the online survey were only accessible by ScotCen researchers.

Analysis
The surveys were downloaded and transferred to SPSS, a quantitative data analysis package. The data were analysed using descriptive analysis, with frequencies and cross-tabulations conducted. As it was not a representative sample, it was not possible to conduct testing of statistical significance. Responses to the open-ended questions were analysed thematically. A coding framework outlining the key themes within the responses was designed through immersion in the data. Each response was then coded with the key themes written up under a series of headings.

The analysis presented in this report is based on 250 participants: 176 respondents who completed all questions and 74 respondents who partially responded (this included all respondents who answered beyond Question 8 which asked them about their awareness of the Strategy). An additional 79 respondents partially responded but did not answer beyond Question 8 so were excluded from the analysis. A further 232 respondents clicked on the survey but did not answer any questions.

Participant demographics
Table 2.2 shows the range of organisations that were represented in the survey. About one-third of respondents said they were from third sector organisations, with a similar proportion saying that they represented a local authority (see Table 2.2).

Sixteen per cent chose community organisation, while just under one in ten said their organisation was an education provider.

Table 2.2: Survey respondents by organisational type

	N	**%**
Third sector organisation	86	34.4
Local authority	83	33.2
Community organisation	40	16.0
Education provider (school/college/university)	24	9.6
Faith and belief organisation/group	11	4.4
Scottish Government/agency	6	2.4
Answering in individual capacity/not associated with an organisation	6	2.4
NHS/Healthcare provider	3	1.2
Private sector organisation	2	0.8
UK Government/agency	1	0.4
Other (please write in)	16	6.4

NB: Base N= 250, percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one option could be chosen.

Written responses from the 16 respondents who selected 'other' included: charities, community interest companies, Health and Social Care Partnerships, museums, third sector partnerships and voluntary organisations.

The number of paid staff in respondents' organisations varied (see Table 2.3). This was used as a proxy for organisational size to assess the diversity of the sample. The sample was predominantly made up of organisations with paid members of staff (90%). Half the sample reported that their organisation had more than 50 paid staff (42%), reflecting the number of responses from large organisations such as local authorities, or between 21 and 50 staff (8%). Around 10% of the individuals who responded were based in organisations run entirely by volunteers.

Table 2.3: Number of paid staff in respondents' organisations

	N	**%**
0 – my organisation is run entirely by volunteers	26	10.4
1-5 paid staff	30	12.0
6-10 paid staff	25	10.0
11-20 paid staff	33	13.2
21-50 paid staff	19	7.6
More than 50 paid staff	106	42.4
N/A	11*	4.4
Total	250	100.0

*includes local authorities; education providers, community/third sector organisations, and respondents answering in an individual capacity

More than a quarter (26%) of respondents said their organisation worked across the whole of Scotland. There were survey responses from organisations working in each of Scotland's 32 local authorities, though a larger proportion worked in Glasgow City than in other local authorities (23%), reflecting the history of refugee and asylum seeker resettlement and dispersal in Scotland. Nineteen responses (8%) represented organisations covering the whole of the UK, and 12 (5%) covered international areas.

Table 2.4: Areas covered by survey respondent organisations

	Frequency	%
Whole of Scotland	65	26
Glasgow City	58	23.2
UK wide	19	7.6
Perth and Kinross	18	7.2
City of Edinburgh	17	6.8
International/Outside UK	12	4.8
Inverclyde	13	5.2
Dundee City	12	4.8
Renfrewshire	12	4.8
Aberdeen City	11	4.4
North Lanarkshire	11	4.4
Stirling	10	4
Clackmannanshire	10	4
East Renfrewshire	10	4
Falkirk	10	4
North Ayrshire	9	3.6
South Ayrshire	9	3.6
West Dunbartonshire	10	4
Aberdeenshire	9	3.6
Angus	8	3.2
East Dunbartonshire	9	3.6
Fife	9	3.6
Midlothian	8	3.2
Argyll and Bute	7	2.8
East Lothian	7	2.8
South Lanarkshire	7	2.8
Dumfries and Galloway	6	2.4
East Ayrshire	5	2
Highland	6	2.4
Scottish Borders	5	2
Moray	5	2
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	<5	<2
West Lothian	<5	<2
Orkney Islands	<5	<2
Shetland Islands	<5	<2
N/A	2	0.8

NB: Base N= 250, percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one option could be chosen.

Almost half of respondents (48%) said their organisation worked mainly in urban areas, while 41% said they undertook significant work in both rural and urban areas. Only 16 respondents said that they worked mainly in rural areas.

Table 2.5 shows that the majority of respondents said they worked with refugees (83%) and people seeking asylum (71%). Between 40% and 50% of respondents said their organisation worked with refugee-receiving communities; migrants other than refugees and people seeking asylum; the general public; unaccompanied asylum-seeking children; and others from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Table 2.5: Groups that survey respondent organisations work with

	N	%
Refugees	208	83.2
Asylum seekers	177	70.8
Refugee-receiving communities	124	49.6
Migrants other than refugees and asylum seekers	124	49.6
The general public	123	49.2
Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children	112	44.8
Others from disadvantaged backgrounds	101	40.4
Others based on their protected characteristics	66	26.4
People from a particular ethnic group	48	19.2
People from a particular faith group	37	14.8
N/A	4*	1.6

NB: Base N= 250, percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one option could be chosen.
*Mainly those who responded in an individual capacity/not associated with an organisation.

The activities that respondents' organisations were involved in relating to the integration of refugees and people seeking asylum varied (see Table 2.6). The most-frequently cited activities were community integration and social connections (79%), health and wellbeing (72%) and language support (68%). The least-frequently selected activities still encompassed over one-third of the organisations' work, including housing provision and support (43%), welfare benefits and rights (42%) and legal rights and citizenship (34%). The majority of organisations worked across a range of thematic areas with 87% reporting they were involved in more than one type of activity related to integration. More than a third (37%) selected between two and five thematic areas; 31% selected between six and nine; and 18% selected all ten options.

Table 2.6: Activities related to integration that survey respondent organisations are involved in

	N	%
Community integration and social connections	184	79.3
Health and wellbeing	167	72.0
Language support	159	68.5
Education	144	62.1
Employability/ entrepreneurship	126	54.3
Digital inclusion	124	53.4
Arts, culture and sport	111	47.8
Housing provision and support	99	42.7
Welfare benefits and rights	98	42.2
Legal rights and citizenship	79	34.1
N/A	3	1.3

NB: Base N= 250, percentages do not add up to 100 as more than one option could be chosen.

While individuals from a wide range of organisations participated in the survey, it is important to note that those who responded to the survey were self-selecting and may not represent the views of everyone working in the sector.

2.2.4. Refugees and asylum seeker interviews

To ensure that the evaluation would reflect the views and lived experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum living in Scotland, interviews were conducted with 21 individuals from a range of different backgrounds now living in Scotland. We considered a range of methodological approaches, including focus groups, for this research with refugees and people seeking asylum. However, given the potentially sensitive nature of some of the discussions, it was felt the most appropriate method would be individual interviews to allow interviewees to feel more comfortable in discussing their experiences and to explore these in some depth.

Recruitment and sampling

To ensure that a breadth of experience was represented in the research, ScotCen sought to recruit a diverse range of refugees and people seeking asylum in terms of age, gender, nationality, geographic location, programme (whether they had sought asylum or had arrived through a resettlement scheme) and length of residence in Scotland.

Recruitment was facilitated through support organisations for refugees and people seeking asylum across Scotland. This approach was chosen to facilitate engagement from refugees and people seeking asylum living in different geographic areas and to ensure participants were receiving the invitation via a trusted organisation. Organisations which shared information about the research were reassured that the focus of the research was the individuals' experiences since arriving in Scotland and any support received, not specifically about the support received from their organisation. Organisations were encouraged to share information about the research widely amongst their membership and networks.

Information regarding the research (information sheet, privacy notice and invitation email) was produced by ScotCen and shared by organisations with refugees and people seeking asylum in contact with these organisations. These materials were translated into Ukrainian, Arabic, Pashto, and Dari, to allow for greater inclusivity during recruitment. Organisations requested materials to be translated into languages that were relevant to the individuals they were in contact with.

The invitation to participate in the research included contact details for the ScotCen research team. This enabled those wishing to participate in the research to express their interest with the research team directly. Alternatively, individuals could also express their interest to the support organisations, who would then organise an interview on their behalf. Once an individual expressed interest, a member of the research team made contact via email or telephone to complete a small number of screening questions. Screening questions asked about the individual's age, gender, nationality, and length of residence in Scotland. Participants were also asked about whether a translator would be needed to fully participate in an interview. Participants were selected for interviews based on the sampling criteria agreed at project inception and invited to choose a date and time for their interview. Participants were given the option of a face-to-face, telephone or video interview.

Conducting the research
The interview topic guides were developed in August 2022 in consultation with the Scottish Government and members of the Strategy Core Group. The interviews explored individuals':

- Experiences of living in Scotland, from arrival to present day, exploring any changes that have occurred and the impact of these changes;

- Experiences of accessing support, from when they had first arrived in Scotland to the present day, including what the support was, who offered it, and the impact of the support;

- Views on improvements to support for refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland;

- View on improvements to make New Scots feel more welcome in Scotland.

All interviews were conducted either in person, by telephone or video call using MS Teams or Zoom at times and dates which met with the preferences of participants. Interviews took place bewtween 13th September and 13th October 2022 and took between 25 minutes and an hour and 20 minutes to complete. Eight participants were provided with an interpreter to aid participation in the interview.

With the consent of participants, all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for ease of analysis. Verbal consent was recorded at the start of each interview. After completing an interview, participants received a £30 Love2Shop e-voucher as a one-off thank you gift for their time and for sharing their experiences.

Participant demographics
In total, 21 refugees and people seeking asylum were interviewed. Sixteen refugees and people seeking asylum self-described as female and five as male. Participants were aged between 22 and 72 years. Participants had travelled to the UK from seven different countries, and included participants with Syrian, Ukrainian, Algerian, South African, Ugandan, Nigerian, and Pakistan nationality. Over one half (n=12) of participants were Syrian.

Twelve participants were refugees and nine were people seeking asylum. Their length of residence in Scotland ranged from 2 months to 49 years. Participants lived in both rural (seven participants) and urban areas (14 participants) across six local authorities in Scotland. Four of the 12 refugees were in paid employment with the remaining either unemployed, volunteering, retired or in full-time or part-time education. Six of the nine people seeking asylum were volunteering at the time of interview.

While the research engaged with a diverse range of participants, it is not representative of all refugees and people seeking asylum. All participants self-selected to participate in the research. Furthermore, as participants were informed about the research via third party organisations, the research did not reach refugees and people seeking asylum who were not in receipt of any engagement or support from such organisations. The purpose of qualitative research is to present a broad range of views and perspectives rather than to be fully representative of a particular group. It was not possible within the scope of this research to speak to

refugees and people seeking asylum in all parts of Scotland, or from all refugee communities.

Analysis

Analysis was undertaken in the same way as for the stakeholder interviews, as outlined in Section 2.2.2.

2.2.5. AMIF-funded projects

Over a series of four workshops, Matter of Focus worked with 12 of the 56 projects which had received AMIF funding. The purpose of the workshops was to enable the projects to develop and set out a Theory of Change in an outcome map which would demonstrate how their projects were contributing to achieving the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes. This work was informed by an approach based on contribution analysis[20] which aims to understand the difference that any initiative, policy, programme or project makes. It explores how the actions of an initiative contribute to making a difference, alongside other factors. In this approach, theories of change, at Strategy, programme or project level are mapped against the headings outlined in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: The Matter of Focus approach
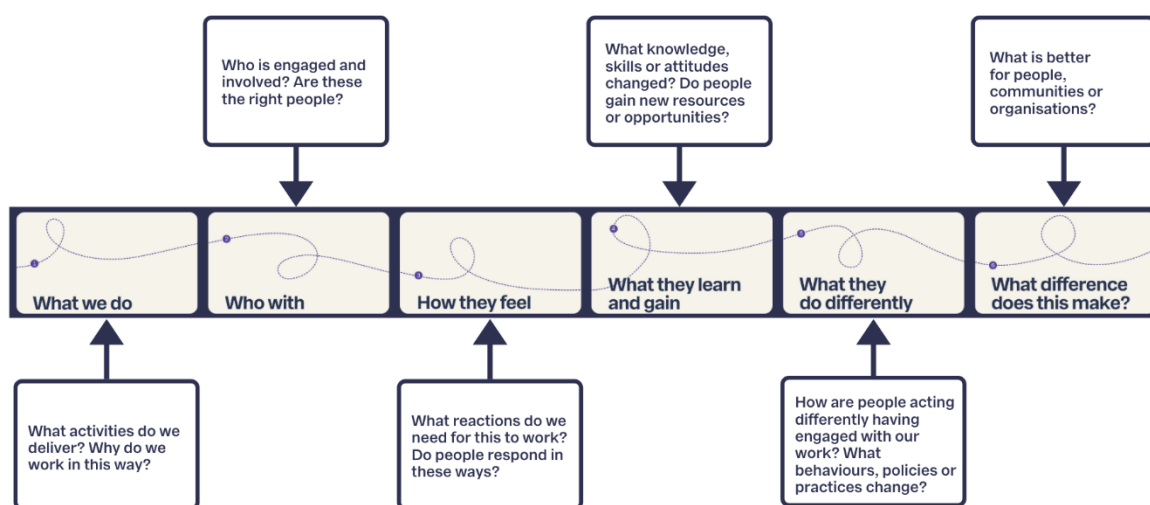
Recruitment and sampling

A pool of AMIF-funded projects were selected by the New Scots project partnership using criteria listed below to ensure as wide and equally weighted a cohort of projects as possible. Of the 20 projects invited by the New Scots project partners to take part in a purposive sample, 12 chose to do so, in two cohorts.

The purposive sampling of the projects was based on the following criteria:

- Region (including a Glasgow cluster as well as others more widely spread across Scotland)

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[20] Mayne, J. (2008) 'Contribution analysis: An approach to exploring cause and effect', *The Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC) Initiative*, pp. 1-4.

- Project topic
- Whether the project was designed to support innovation or widen good practice in refugee integration work
- Size of project (based on grant size)
- Project target group (who the project was working with), ensuring ethnic and gender diversity would be reflected across the invited projects.

ScotCen provided an initial list of 28 projects which represented diversity in terms project topic, target group and geographic spread. This was used as a starting point for the New Scots project partners to develop a list that would balance the criteria outlined above. Project Officers from the New Scots partner organisations were asked to review the proposed list, flag projects where they were aware that capacity to participate was low, and suggest replacements where necessary. A pragmatic approach was taken to inviting projects based on the selection criteria, by replacing them with others if they did not respond or were unable to take part.

Conducting the research
Matter of Focus held six sessions with the projects, taking them through a process to understand how, when and under what circumstances their work contributed to the outcomes they were funded for. This approach is informed by an understanding of complex systems theory: that on their own the projects don't cause change, they contribute to better outcomes for people through complex and sometimes unpredictable processes, influenced by the relevant context[21]. The sessions were:

1.   Context and success story workshop
Considering the importance of contextual factors and sharing success stories of working with New Scots to help understand what is important when delivering work with refugees and people seeking asylum.

2.   Outcome mapping workshop
Participatory outcome mapping to understand and link activities to project outcomes, and refining of each project's Theory of Change.

3.   OutNav orientation workshop
Training session in using OutNav cloud-based software used by Matter of Focus to underpin their approach to outcome monitoring and evaluation. The software provides a platform to manage outcome evaluation – a single place to hold theories of change and for collecting, collating and analysing data against them.

4.   Data audit workshop
Supporting projects to develop a Strategy for data gathering and analysis and adding content to OutNav.

5.   Collective Analysis (3 rounds)
Supported projects to analyse and illustrate their progress towards outcomes.

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[21] Morton and Cook (2022) How do you know if you are making a difference? A practical handbook for public service organisations, Policy Press, Bristol

6. Learning event
Exploring projects' learning about contributing to outcomes and about the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.

The agreement for working together and the questions that were explored during the learning event can be found in Appendices E and F respectively.

Participant demographics
Twelve AMIF-funded projects participated in the workshops. In total 20 projects were invited to take part in this aspect of the evaluation. Eight projects that had initially agreed subsequently decided not to take part. While the research team did not explore why this was the case, it was clear that during the time period of the reseach and the workshops, organisations working in the sector were experiencing very high workload and demand due to the developing Ukraine situation, and this probably had an impact on their capacity to participate in this process.

Table 2.7 below gives a typology of the 12 projects that participated in this work by sector and location. Support with outcome mapping and evaluation was taken up by more organisations from the third sector. All organisations were invited to send two people to attend the workshops. Four organisations attended with two people, while eight attended with one person. All of those who participated in the workshops were paid staff, including those with responsibility for managing projects. No-one receiving support from the funded projects attended the workshops.

Table 2.7: AMIF-funded projects that participated in the workshops

Organisation and/or Project Name	Organisation Sector	Location
Argyll and Bute Council - Sawa	Local Authority	Argyll and Bute
City of Edinburgh Council	Local Authority	Edinburgh
Glasgow Life – Adult Learners	Local Authority	Glasgow
Govan Community Project	Third Sector	Glasgow
Grampian Regional Equality Council - New Scots Active Citizens	Third Sector	Grampian
Ignite Theatre	Third Sector	Glasgow
Licketyspit – Porridge and Play Hubs	Third Sector	Glasgow
Media Education	Third Sector	Edinburgh
Midlothian Council New Scots Project	Local Authority	Midlothian
Outside the Box	Third Sector	Glasgow
Pollokshields Development Agency	Third Sector	Glasgow
Refuweegee – Digital Inclusion	Third Sector	Glasgow
West of Scotland Regional Equality Council – Community Integration Project	Third Sector	West of Scotland (multi area)

Analysis

Analysis was conducted across the AMIF-funded project outcome maps and data (Appendix G). Reports were pulled from the OutNav system for each of the 12 projects.These were then analysed using a thematic approach to understand:

1. What strategic outcomes in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy are projects contributing to?

2. What types of activity are projects delivering in relation to the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes?

3. Are the projects reaching the beneficiaries they expected to?

4. What difference is this work making to beneficiaries?

5. What are projects learning about working with New Scots? What are the barriers and enablers in delivering this work?

The findings from this review were presented back to the projects in the learning session. Additional data from projects about their perceived impact were gathered at this event. Data gathered during the workshops and the learning event have been incorporated within this report.

2.3. Research ethics

NatCen's Research Ethics Committee (REC) provided ethical scrutiny of this project. The REC processes are consistent with the requirements of the Social Research Association and the Government Social Research Unit Professional Guidance. The REC consists of researchers and Senior NatCen Staff who critically review all projects to ensure they meet our ethical standards. An application was made for a Stage 2 full review (involving a REC meeting) in January 2021 and ethical approval was granted in February 2021. The ethics application covered conducting all aspects of the evaluation (including the work undertaken by Matter of Focus), from recruitment and fieldwork, through to analysis and reporting. It covered how the research team would handle data, ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and process for any disclosures of harm.

Recruitment

To recruit the organisational stakeholders for interview, a list of the contact details of individuals and organisations involved in the development and implementation of the Strategy was provided by the Scottish Government via a secure File Transfer Protocol (FTP) link. This was then stored in a secure folder on ScotCen's servers which could only be accessed by the project team. ScotCen emailed invitations to a selection of these contacts inviting them to participate in an interview. Individuals were selected to represent a range of different organisations working in different parts of Scotland. Stakeholder recruitment was expanded in June 2022 to include a selection of representatives from other organisations working directly with refugees and people seeking asylum, including some projects which had received AMIF funding. These representatives were identified through interviews with other stakeholders. The names of individuals and organisations who participated were

not shared with the Scottish Government or anyone outwith the project team in order to maintain confidentiality.

For the survey of stakeholder individuals and organisations, invitations were emailed by the Scottish Government, COSLA, SRC and University of Glasgow and included a link to the survey. The information collected as part of the survey related only to organisational demographics. No personal data were collected relating to individuals. Although survey respondents were invited to indicate the name of their organisation in their responses, this information was not used as part of the analysis and no information that could identify respondents was shared with the Scottish Government.

Refugees and people seeking asylum were recruited via AMIF-funded projects and other organisations who were asked to share information about the research (an information sheet, privacy notice and invitation email) with the people they worked with. This information included contact details for the research team so those interested in participating in an interview could contacted the research team directly. All materials were translated on request.

Refugees and people seeking asylum either contacted ScotCen directly to express an interest in taking part, or were invited to do so through a trusted organisation (for example, in cases where interpreters and translated materials were required for participation). Each volunteer was asked to complete a screening questionnaire which asked about their name, age, gender, address, country of origin, interpreter requirements and any other needs they might have to be able to participate. Screening questions could also be translated on request so individuals could respond in their first language. This information was collected to ensure a wide spread of participants took part. No personal information was shared directly with the Scottish Government and no information was used in the report which could identifiy indivduals or might link specific funded projects with participants. All refugees and people seeking asylum who took part were offered a £30 Love2Shop voucher as a thank you for offering their time.

Informed consent

Everyone invited to take part in an interview received an information sheet outlining the purpose of the research, details of the organisations conducting and funding the research, and what participation would entail. Participants were informed of the voluntary nature of the research, and of their rights to withdraw at any point without consequence. It was explained that all data collected were confidential and that no individuals or organisations would be named in the final report in order to preserve anonymity. A privacy notice was provided to all participants detailing the legal basis for data collection and processing, what data were collected, how they were handled, stored and deleted. Researchers provided a verbal summary of this at the start of the interview, before participants were asked if they were happy to proceed and happy to be recorded. Participants then provided verbal consent at the start of the recording. The same processes were followed when interviewing with the assistance of interpreters.

Conducting the research

All interviews were conducted by trained researchers with experience of conducting interviews with vulnerable groups and who were enrolled in Disclosure Scotland's PVG scheme. Before fieldwork began, all interviewers participated in a briefing, which discussed issues that might be raised during interviews. Researchers were briefed to be alert to any signs of distress or reticence on the part of participants, and to take appropriate action (e.g., divert conversation to a new topic, pause the interview or stop it completely depending on the needs of the participant).

Refugees and people seeking asylum were asked if they had any requirements to help them participate in an interview. For example, they were offered to have someone accompany them to the interview, either to assist with interpretation or as a form of support. They could also choose the time of interview (including evenings and weekends) to suit them, and to help with childcare requirements. Participants were offered the choice of whether to participate in an in-person interview, online interview or over the telephone, with the intention of reducing barriers to participation for those without internet access.

Minimising harm

Discussing integration, particularly with refugees and people seeking asylum, is sensitive. Care was taken to try and minimise distress and manage any difficult dynamics to minimise the harm of the research on participants. For example, the researchers working with refugees and people seeking asylum emphasised with the interviewees that the focus of the research was on their experiences of living in Scotland. Participants were not asked about their past histories and potentially traumatising experiences.

The research materials for all evaluation activities were developed in consultation with and agreed by the Scottish Government and partners. Care was taken to ensure that the questions minimised distress and were non-judgmental. All interviews were conducted by a member of the core research team who are well trained and highly experienced in conducting qualitative research involving sensitive topics. Interviewers were trained in ScotCen's organisational safeguarding procedures and knew how to apply these in the event of any safeguarding concern arising during the research.

Participants were offered the choice to take part in a telephone, video (via Teams or Zoom) or in an in person interview at a time which suited them. While it can be hard to pick up non-verbal communication over the telephone, researchers used the introduction to build rapport and put participants at ease before starting the interview. If participants become upset during an interview, they were offered the chance to pause the interview or stop. It was explained to participants before the start of an interview that they could choose to end their involvement at any time and that they could choose not to respond to any questions if they felt uncomfortable.

Transfer of data and storage of data

All data transferred between the Scottish Government and ScotCen was shared using a secure FTP link. All data, including transcripts of interviews, were stored in secure folders accessible only to named members of the research team. All

transcripts are saved with a numerical file name and no data which might identify a participant is contained within the file.

Matter of Focus work with the funded projects

The ethical approach taken by Matter of Focus in their work with AMIF-funded projects is outlined in Appendix E. All projects were asked to agree to a confidentiality statement for any information and insights shared in the group sessions.

2.4 Strengths and limitations of the evaluation

There were a number of strengths and limitations associated with the research.

2.4.1. Limitations of the evaluation

- The second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is ambitious and overarching in its nature and scope. As a consequence, even those with the most knowledge of the Strategy were not always able to equate perceived impacts or developments related to the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum with the Strategy itself. With such a wide-ranging Strategy, and with regular on-going work in the field of refugee integration, this is to be expected. The evaluation has sought to identify, where possible, impacts that can be linked to the Strategy.

- The lack of long-term data collection by the partners involved to monitor the implementation of the Strategy or progress towards outcomes means there was little large scale or objective data for the evaluators to draw on. As a result, the ability of this evaluation to evaluate the level of progress towards the Strategy outcomes is limited, although the data have given helpful insights into areas where progress appears to have been made and areas where it has been more difficult.

- As a result of the mode of recruitment for the survey, it was not possible to ensure or ascertain whether the responding organisations constitute a representative sample of refugee stakeholder organisations. A large number of recipients appeared to access but did not complete the survey. There is also a possibility of duplicate responses. However, 250 respondents completed the majority of the survey, with 176 fully complete responses. It is possible, though, that there was a bias in response towards those who had more knowledge of or were more engaged with the Strategy.

- Due to budget, there was a limit on the number of interviews which could be conducted with refugees and people seeking asylum in terms of how they have experienced integration. Therefore, we cannot draw conclusions or comparisons about how well integration is working in different geographical areas or with particular groups of refugees or people seeking asylum.

- The mode of qualitative recruitment may have introduced some bias into the sample of refugees and people seeking asylum, since only interviewees who were in contact with or receiving services from support organisations were contacted via the recruitment process. As a result, we did not reach any

refugees and people seeking asylum who had not received support from organisations. However, the focus of the interviews was to explore the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum since arriving in Scotland up until the time of the interview. This enabled the research to explore individuals' experiences at times when they had not receive support. The interviews also explored any support received from any source, not just the support they received from the organisation who informed them about the research.

The work with the AMIF-funded projects also encountered a number of limitations:

- All AMIF-funded projects were required to develop monitoring and evaluation reports under the terms of their funding and as required by the Scottish Government and the European Union funder. Although the intention was for the work with Matter of Focus to complement and support the eventual project reporting it was challenging to engage the projects in an additional process of self-evaluation because their capacity was limited. This was made more challenging by the evaluation being delayed which resulted in the work with Matter of Focus starting once projects had already begun reporting to the Scottish Government, rather than at the start of their funding as previously planned. Both issues impacted on the overall number of projects who opted to participate in the self-evaluation support offered by Matter of Focus.

2.4.2. Strengths of the evaluation

- In order to evaluate the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy effectively, the evaluation team sought to understand the views and experiences of as wide as possible a range of involved stakeholders, including organisations working directly with refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland, AMIF-funded projects, and crucially people seeking asylum and refugees themselves. As such the evaluation included the insights of all the key informant groups.

- The data gathered as part of this research were extremely rich and provide greater insight into the experiences of refugees, people seeking asylum and those working to support and improve the integration of refugees and people seeking asylum. As with any qualitative data, the purpose was to provide a breadth of experience rather than quantify the experiences. Therefore, the in-depth interview data are unable to demonstrate how prevalent these views are across Scotland, and cannot be generalised to all refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland or those working in this sector.

- Refugees and people seeking asylum were recruited with the support of organisations who provide services to these groups. This approach allowed us to work with a diverse group of refugees and people seeking asylum, and to explore key local issues for those in different areas. It also allowed us to draw upon the expertise of those working in the projects which helped to minimise any harm caused by overburdening participants with research requests and setting up interviews.

3. Findings

This chapter outlines the findings from all elements of the evaluation thematically. The first section (3.1) focuses on participants' experiences and views of the development of the 2018-2022 New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Participants' awareness, understanding and perceived relevance of the Strategy to their own work is discussed next (3.2). Participants' experiences of using the Strategy and their views on factors that helped and hindered implementation of the Strategy follow (3.3) before progress towards meeting the Strategy outcomes is discussed (3.4). The chapter concludes with a look at what learning can be drawn from the implementation of the 2018-2022 New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to inform the development and implementation of the next iteration of the Strategy.

3.1. Developing the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Drawing data from the stakeholder survey and stakeholder interviews, this section addresses the following research questions:

- Has the intended reach [of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy] been achieved?

- How have the outcomes of New Scots [Refugee Integration Strategy] benefited from the partnership approach to policy and implementation?

About half of the stakeholders who were interviewed reported that they had been involved in some way in the development of the first New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, the second iteration of the Strategy or both. It should also be noted that a few respondents who said that they had not been involved in Strategy development indicated that predecessors in their organisations did play a role.

The stakeholders stated that they had been involved in the development of the Strategy in a range of ways. Those who had been most actively engaged reported involvement in the development and drafting of one or both iterations of the Strategy, chairing groups that fed into the Strategy as well as leading or taking part in conferences, seminars and engagement sessions that also informed its development. Other ways in which stakeholders were involved included offering feedback to a thematic group or at an engagement session, and ascertaining the views of those with lived experience to ensure that refugees and people seeking asylum themselves informed Strategy development. Stakeholders were also involved in other work, such as the development of an ESOL Strategy.

Stakeholders' views around the extent to which voices of refugees and people seeking asylum had been captured in the development of the Strategy were mixed. Some argued that the voices of refugees and people seeking asylum were missing from the Strategy. Others felt that the Strategy (particularly the engagement process in its early days) had allowed refugees and people seeking asylum to feel listened to and empowered.

One common theme expressed, especially by those with more active involvement in the Strategy, was that the development of both iterations of the New Scots

Refugee Integration Strategy relied very much on the goodwill of stakeholder organisations with very little, if any, funding available to support the process of Strategy development. Individuals would have liked to have had their time and expenses paid for, to ensure that Strategy development activities could be acknowledged as integral to their work, rather than something organisations had to self-fund to be part of.

> "One of the things about New Scots 1 and New Scots 2 is it has been done on an absolute shoestring and is entirely based on voluntary work. The only people with paid time to work with this are the two civil servants in Scottish Government. Everybody else was doing this, it's in the interests of their organisations to be able to put some of their staff time into it, but right down to paying expenses to get to meetings, you pay it out of your personal pocket, or you ask your employer if you can claim." (Stakeholder interviewee)

3.2. Awareness and understanding of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The following section includes data from the stakeholder survey and interviews, and applies to the following research questions:

- Has the intended reach [of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy] been achieved?

- How have the outcomes of New Scots benefited from the partnership approach to policy and implementation?

This section covers participants' awareness and understanding of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Drawing on data from both the stakeholder survey and interviews with stakeholder organisations, it explores how participants became aware of the Strategy and their views of what the Strategy aimed to achieve.

3.2.1. Awareness of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The online survey asked stakeholders about their awareness of the Strategy (see Table 3.1). The majority of respondents reported that they were aware of the Strategy or had used it in some way. More than a third (37%) could be said to have high awareness of the Strategy, having either helped develop it (10%) or frequently referred to it (27%). Almost half (47%) had medium awareness and said they had read at least some of the Strategy. In contrast, 15% could be said to have low awareness, stating that they knew the Strategy existed but had not read it (11%) or that they were not aware of it (5%).

Table 3.1: Awareness of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

	N	%
High awareness of the Strategy		
I helped to develop the Strategy	25	10.0
I frequently refer to the Strategy	67	26.8
Medium awareness of the Strategy		
I have read at least some of the Strategy	118	47.2
Low awareness of the Strategy		
I know the Strategy exists but I haven't read it	28	11.2
I am not aware of the Strategy	12	4.8
Total	250	100

Analysis found little correlation between respondents' type of organisation and their levels of awareness.

The stakeholder interviewees reported varying levels of awareness of the content of the second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. This is not surprising in that those interviewed included those who had had a role in developing the second Strategy (and indeed its first iteration), those who were members of the thematic groups, as well as those who had drawn on aspects of the Strategy only, for example, when making a funding application. Similarly, when asked how well known the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was more widely, the consensus was that those who worked in the relevant governmental and policy circles were aware of it, whereas organisations with a specific interest (e.g., language) might be aware only of elements relevant to that issue. It was also perceived that those working on smaller-scale initiatives, refugees and people seeking asylum and the general public would have little if any knowledge and awareness of the Strategy, but that arguably this was not important as long as initiatives and work with refugees reflected its broad aims.

> "I think the people working in the field are aware of the Strategy and are aware of the term New Scots, I don't think it's a commonly understood phrase in the general public." (Stakeholder interviewee)

3.2.2. Relevance of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Survey participants were asked about the relevance of each of the four outcomes which the Strategy sets out to achieve to the work of their organisation. The four Strategy outcomes were:

1. Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections.

2. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.

3. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.

4. Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspiration

The majority of respondents reported that each of the four outcomes was 'very relevant' or 'quite relevant', but the proportions varied by outcome (see Table 3.2). More than 90% of respondents said Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 were 'very' or 'quite relevant'. Although 85% said Outcome 4 was at least 'quite relevant', 11% of respondents thought that it was not very or not at all relevant to the work of their organisation.

Table 3.2: Relevance of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to the work of stakeholder organisations

	Very relevant		Quite relevant		Not very relevant		Not at all relevant		Don't know/ NA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Outcome 1: 'Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections'	199	84.7	25	10.6	3	1.3	2	0.9	6	2.5
Outcome 2: 'Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.'	167	71.4	50	21.4	9	3.8	3	1.3	5	2.1
Outcome 3: 'Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.'	176	75.2	43	18.4	6	2.6	2	0.9	7	3.0
Outcome 4: 'Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.'	141	60.3	59	25.2	21	9.0	4	1.7	9	3.9

N=235 (outcome 1); N=234 (outcomes 2 to 4)

The extent to which respondents felt that the Strategy's outcomes were relevant to their organisation varied depending on respondents' existing level of awareness of the Strategy. In relation to all four outcomes, higher proportions of those with high or medium levels of awareness (that is, they had helped develop the Strategy, had frequently referred to it, or had read at least some of it) perceived the Strategy's outcomes to be quite or very relevant. This is most evident with regards to Outcome 4: 91% of those with high awareness viewed this as relevant, compared with 71% of those with low awareness.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed with a series of statements relating to the profile and relevance of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (see Figure 3.1). Responses to the first three statements were positive, with the majority agreeing that the Strategy has promoted good practice in supporting refugee integration (74%); has helped raise the profile of refugee integration work in Scotland (68%); and that it has remained relevant in the context of changing refugee populations (60%). Responses to the fourth statement ("the Strategy has remained relevant in the context of changing UK Government policy")

were not as positive, though 45% agreed overall. It is notable that a significant percentage of respondents (between 11% and 22%) answered either "don't know" or "not applicable" to each of the statements.

Figure 3.1: Perceptions on the profile and relevance of the NS Strategy (n=187)
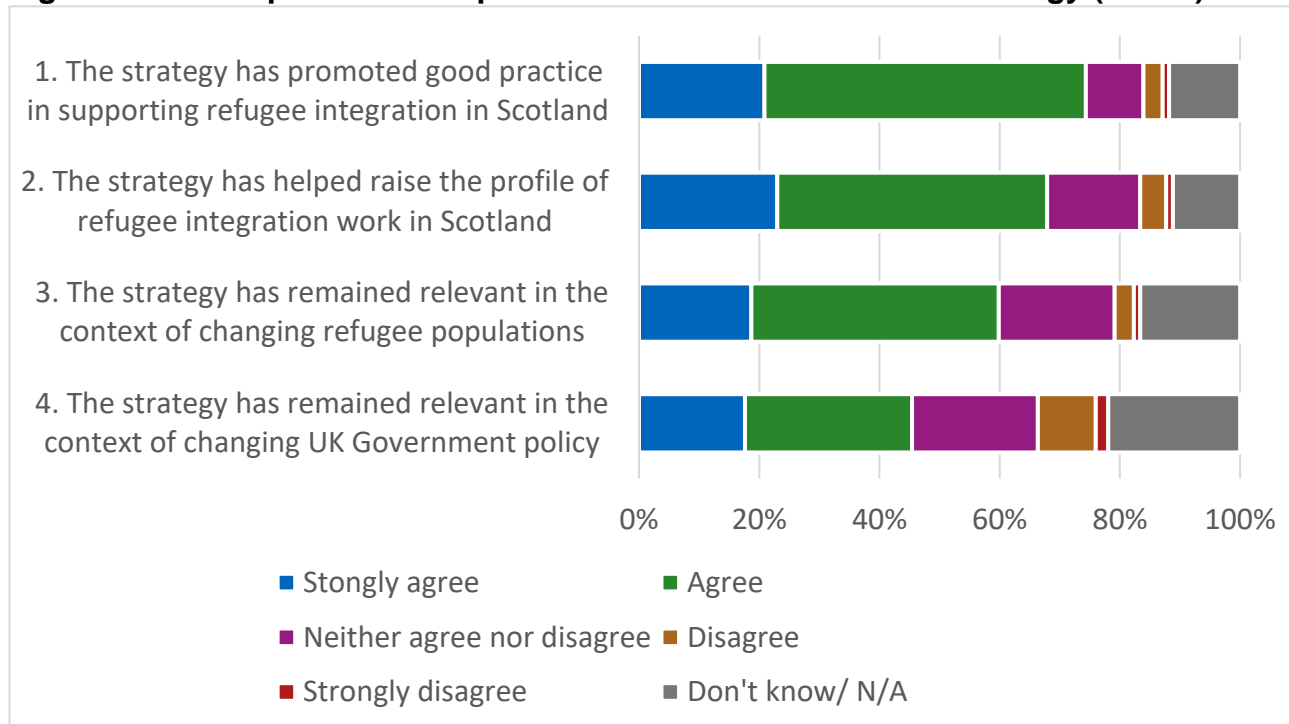
Survey respondents' perceptions of the profile and relevance of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy varied depending on their awareness of the Strategy. The highest levels of agreement that the Strategy helped raise the profile of refugee integration work in Scotland and remained relevant in the context of changing refugee populations and UK government policy, came from respondents with high awareness of the Strategy. Levels of disagreement and 'don't know'/'not applicable' responses were highest among those with low awareness of the Strategy.

3.2.3. Understanding of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

In the interviews, stakeholders were asked about their understanding and awareness of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and what it set out to achieve. As might be expected, given their varying levels of awareness of the Strategy cited above, the stakeholders reported a range of knowledge and understanding of the Strategy from the highly detailed to a very broad concept of its scope and aims.

Stakeholders from a wide range of organisations described the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy as being an overarching framework, an aspirational statement and a progressive, holistic document which aimed to address every aspect of refugee and asylum seeker integration in Scotland. It was also stressed that the Strategy embraced the principle of partnership working, and intended to involve and engage with refugees, and those working with refugees, actively, being deliberately collaborative in its nature.

"My understanding is that it is a national Strategy to promote, foster, encourage the integration of refugees and asylum seekers from day one to help people who arrive here to rebuild their lives and it has a holistic approach affecting every area of people's lives who arrive here and…I guess it's a tool to be used by organisations to help them think holistically about integration." (Stakeholder interviewee)

"It's a policy framework that organisations and institutions and individuals can kind of look to as a guiding framework for how we conduct our work to ensure that it does include refugees and that it does, the kinds of projects that we do support integration and it's kind of something that we can use to hold other institutions to account…it's a set of shared values which I think are pretty good actually and I think that most people at least who work in the sector would agree with". (Stakeholder interviewee)

It was also emphasised that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was a 'welcoming' document, and aimed to embrace refugees and people seeking asylum by making it explicit that they were new Scots as soon as they entered the country. This was viewed as differentiating the Strategy from UK governmental policy in the same area, though it was also added that the lack of Scottish governmental control over the policy area undermined this to some extent.

"Now there are arguments around whether we have the resource to provide what it wants, whether in reality you have the resource to provide what a policy states, sometimes it can be disparate but the intention is there and the intention is clear cut from the day you arrive which I think is something that ought to be celebrated." (Stakeholder interviewee)

The current New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was seen to have developed from the first Strategy, though it was broader in nature and crucially was viewed as moving beyond the central belt of Scotland in its scope. As a result of the Syrian resettlement programme, the second Strategy was perceived as addressing the integration of refugees across other areas of Scotland, including rural and island communities. During the development of the second Strategy, stakeholders worked to facilitate and improve community engagement across Scotland. This was accomplished through network building and providing funding to a range of community groups and local authorities, to contribute to the development and implementation of the second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.

Other stakeholders expressed a more limited knowledge of the Strategy. This could relate to being part of a thematic group and only having knowledge of the aspects of the Strategy that related to the activities of the group, or a result of representing organisations with a specific interest (e.g., housing, education or language) and being aware of elements of the Strategy that were relevant to these issues. However, awareness and knowledge of the Strategy were said to have increased for organisations when they sought funding for their work with refugees and people seeking asylum. AMIF funding was frequently mentioned in this regard, though other funding applications were also cited. When these applications were made, the Strategy was reviewed and referred to in the application documents.

Finally, stakeholders in more strategic roles, not as directly involved in project delivery, argued that a widespread understanding and knowledge of the Strategy was not necessary, particularly for those working with refugees 'at the ground level' in local communities or among refugees and people seeking asylum themselves. Indeed, stakeholders reported that some initiatives had pre-dated both variants of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, and continued to conduct good work even if knowledge of the Strategy was minimal within the implementing organisations. Where these initiatives used principles underpinned or endorsed by the Strategy, with or without a thorough understanding of the Strategy, stakeholders were comfortable with such an approach.

3.3. Implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Through the analysis of data from the stakeholder survey, stakeholder interviews and the Matter of Focus workshops with AMIF-funded projects, the following research questions were addressed:

- What is working well/not well in how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is being implemented? Does this vary between groups/areas?

- What contextual factors influence implementation?

- What are the factors that block successful implementation, and what factors enhance it?

- Has the intended reach been achieved?

- What elements of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy are working well, and what elements are working less well?

- To what extent has the absence of a structured funding arrangement impacted the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and implementation, and how would the continuation of this policy impact future practice and implementation?

- How have the outcomes of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy benefited from the partnership approach to policy and implementation?

This section covers participants' views on the implemention of the second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. This includes survey respondents' and stakeholder interviewees' views on what worked well and helped to progress the aims of the Strategy, as well as a discussion of those aspects which were perceived to be more challenging and hindered progress. First, it considers how the Strategy was used by stakeholders.

3.3.1 Use of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy by stakeholders

A series of questions in the survey related to how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had been used by stakeholders and the extent to which the Strategy had impacted on the work of organisations.

The majority of respondents (72%) said that the overall impact of the Strategy on the work of their organisation had been either 'very' or 'quite positive' (only 2% said

that it had a negative impact) (see Table 3.3). In addition, 86% of those with high awareness of the Strategy reported that its impact on the work of their organisation had been favourable.

Table 3.3: Perceptions of the overall impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy on organisations

What has been the overall impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy on the work of your organisation?	N	%
Very positive impact	32	18.2
Quite positive impact	95	54.0
Neither positive nor negative impact	32	18.2
Quite negative impact	1	0.6
Very negative impact	2	1.1
Don't know	9	5.1
N/A	5	2.8
Total	176	100

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree') with a series of statements which related to how the Strategy had influenced the work of their organisation. The extent to which the Strategy was perceived to have influenced the work of organisations varied (see Figure 3.2).

The highest levels of agreement from respondents were in relation to statement 1, "The New Scots Strategy has helped my organisation to develop our focus in relation to refugee integration", with which 62% agreed. More than half of respondents agreed the Strategy had influenced their organisation in developing integration programmes or projects (57%); that it helped their organisation to develop new partnerships/relationships with other organisations working on refugee integration (56%); that it had influenced their organisation to make improvements to their existing programmes/areas of work (56%); and that it had helped their organisation to achieve its aims in supporting refugee integration (53%).

Agreement was lower in relation to the last three statements illustrated in Figure 3.2. Fewer than half (48%) agreed that the Strategy made it easier for their organisation to coordinate their work with other organisations, while 48% agreed that the Strategy had helped their organisation to access new/additional funding for refugee integration work. A third (33%) agreed that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had enabled their organisation to influence policy on refugee integration in Scotland. Almost a fifth disagreed with these last two statements.

Agreement with all eight statements was highest for those with high levels of awareness of the Strategy. Between 9% and 15% selected 'don't know' or 'not applicable' in response to these statements. This was linked with low levels of awareness of the Strategy.

Figure 3.2: Extent to which respondents agreed with statements on how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy has been used by their organisation (N=225 for statements 1, 2, 4, 6; N=216 for statement 3, 7; N=215 for statement 5, 8)
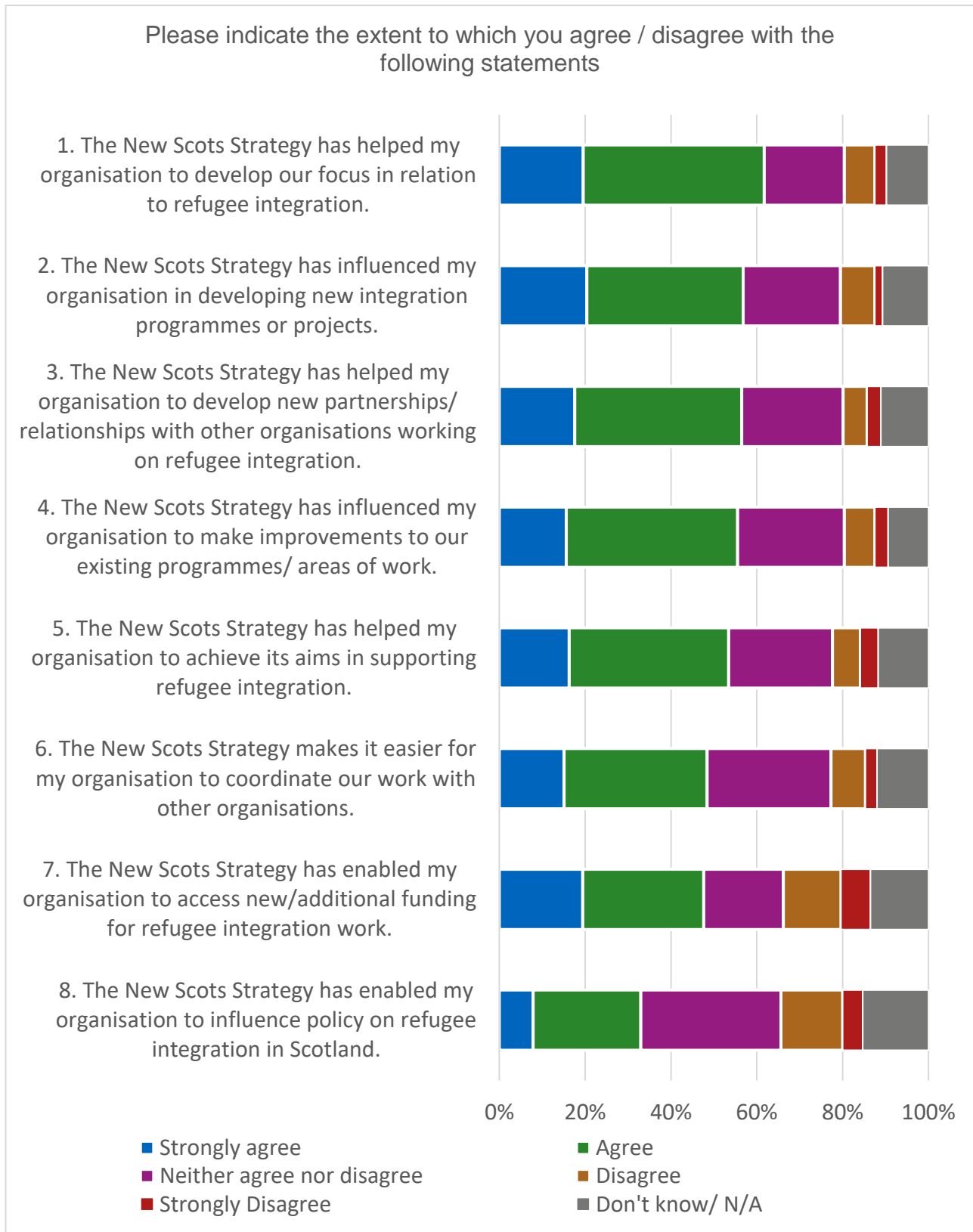
Survey and interview data provided further examples as to how stakeholders and their organisations used the Strategy in their work.

Partnerships and messaging

Stakeholders identified the ways in which they had used the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to better understand the partnerships surrounding refugee integration and the work of other organisations. Stakeholders noted the Strategy had helped to build or strengthen these partnerships as it facilitated better coordination. For example, they thought this came about as a result of understanding the roles and responsibilities of different organisations involved in the theme groups, as well as giving stakeholders the opportunity to share their learning and concerns within their local areas. Stakeholders and survey respondents also mentioned that the Strategy inspired them to network with others more comprehensively, by providing opportunties to build new links with organisations and individuals and further develop existing ones.

> "We have been encouraged to make better links with other organisations working to the same objectives." (Survey respondent)

> "It has created a network within Scotland who are looking at different ways to support asylum seekers through each part of their journey." (Survey respondent)

> "Well I think it's definitely facilitated more joined up support because before having [an] effective Strategy, different groups doing their own thing, Local Authorities doing their own thing and if you're a refugee or a local community where something good happens to be happening then you benefit from it but you could be in a complete blackhole where nothing is happening and you're still dealing with the situation. So I think it's definitely moved us in a positive direction from that point of view and I think it has also raised awareness at government level" (Stakeholder interviewee)

Relationships developed through the themed groups were viewed very positively. A group member talked of how important it was to be able to "see the value and strength" of the different organisations they worked with in their group, while another noted their theme group had resulted in a sharing of ideas and better relationships and connections between organisations.

Stakeholders emphasised that the Strategy was helpful in promoting a welcoming atmosphere for refugees and people seeking asylum, setting a precedent to help them settle in Scotland and build their lives from day one in the country.

> "The Strategy also provides reassurance to refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland about their position in this country. This reassurance is vital for people who are building new lives after experiencing very difficult and often traumatic circumstances. As part of our work to support people, we can refer to the Strategy when we are exploring their rights and responsibilities in Scotland to better inform them." (Survey respondent)

Funding opportunities

Stakeholders from third sector organisations and local authorities stated that it was helpful to refer to the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy when making funding applications for service provision (e.g., training, ESOL, staffing) to ensure their work reflected policy objectives. Funding was sought from the Scottish Government and

other funding sources. Some stakeholders had received funding for work directly related to the themes outlined by the Strategy. Some interviewees had prepared joint funding bids with other organisations involved in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy theme groups, while other stakeholders had referenced the Strategy as support in their applications for other types of funding.

> "So we used it [the Strategy] to frame a lot of what we did. It's helpful in terms of funding, because you had something tangible that you could point towards and say, 'Look, this is, we're working within this larger framework, a strategic framework with clear priorities. This is one that we can help to meet, and here's how.' So, it was helpful in that way but also, helpful as a guide, I suppose." (Stakeholder interviewee)

A framework for integration
It was common for stakeholders to refer to the benefits of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in providing a common framework, or 'starting point', to inform the development of their organisation's work. This allowed staff within organisations to consider the use of their services by refugees and people seeking asylum and possible reasons behind the lack of uptake. The Strategy was said to have raised cultural and social awareness and enabled stakeholders to take action within their organisations to make their services more accessible to refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, provision of child care, interpreters and prayer rooms can help with the uptake of services. Stakeholders said they also used the Strategy to determine how their organisations would best align with the Strategy's themes to identify where the work of their organisation could add value, and potential avenues for work that contributes to multiple themes outlined in the Strategy.

> "I think the Strategy gave our work a framework, an idea and thoughts around where and how we could fit in as an organisation within that umbrella, so I think that the direction, the processes, the areas of work that we chose to work on was motivated I suppose by the Strategy." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Interviewees also reported that they had used the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to inform their signposting to organisations that worked in other areas, for example, in terms of mapping their engagement work with stakeholders. This helped organisations develop a better understanding both of the population they serve and of other organisations working in the area.

Stakeholders from local authorities and AMIF-funded projects said they had used the Strategy to guide and frame their work with refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, using the Strategy as a resource for those newly in post in an organisation so they could better understand what they were hoping to achieve. It was added that their organisations had developed their work around the key concepts provided by the Strategy to help them connect the work they were doing to national policy.

> "New Scots 2 gave me that [framework]; without that, I would've really struggled to know where to start. I had the notions, I had the concepts; I didn't have the structure and the framework. So for me, New Scots 2 has been really, really important to be able to connect what we do in

[organisation/location] into what's happening at Scottish Government level as well." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Reasons for not using the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

In both the survey and the interviews, there were respondents who said they made little to no use of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Written responses to an open-ended question[22] from survey respondents who had not used the Strategy showed that this was often due to not having been aware of it. This included organisations with a direct remit to support refugees and people seeking asylum and organisations with a wider remit. Other common responses to the open-ended question included not having the capacity to utilise the Strategy due to being a small/newly-formed group or lacking the resources to do so, and believing the Strategy to be irrelevant to their particular work or current focus. Some respondents thought that the Strategy was unnecessary for them as it was similar to work they were already carrying out while others said they had not used the Strategy because they thought there was no support in implementing the Strategy.

> "With a wide remit, our work to support refugee integration is a very, very small part of our work. I don't believe the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is well known across my organisation and this has had an impact on how well it can inform organisational work. Greater national focus and publicising of the Strategy may improve that." (Survey respondent)

> "We were aware of the broad principles but as far as I am aware there was no help available to third sector organisation[s] on how they could implement and what support would be available. The document seemed to set out aspirations but was lacking in any detail of how these would be achieved practically." (Survey respondent)

In the survey, respondents were also asked to "briefly summarise how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy has been helpful to your organisation in its work to support the integration of refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland between 2018 and 2022?" They were given an open-text box to write in. In response to this question, a number of survey respondents from local authorities, third sector organisations and statutory bodies explicitly said that the Strategy had not been helpful to their organisation or work. Several noted simply, "it hasn't", without providing an explanation. Others were more expansive in their responses for example stating that they thought the Strategy was too vague and lacked strategic coordination to help inform their work. While the Strategy provided a vision for integration, stakeholders said it did not provide details on how this vision could be achieved and what organisations could do to achieve this vision.

> "It has helped shape the direction of some of my personal work programme but not the wider organisation work programme. I don't believe the work within the New Scots action plans are well co-ordinated, organised or monitored enough to have the impact they were intended to. The work has often felt a

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[22] Question 12: If your organisation has NOT used the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in its work, please explain why?

little unclear and this has limited how and where I (and my organisation) am able to contribute and support it best." (Survey respondent)

Stakeholder interviewees noted that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had not influenced the focus of their organisations' work, largely because they had already been working along those lines due to the Strategy's intended outcomes being aligned with their organisation's own aims and objectives. While the Strategy did not influence the focus of their work, some noted that the Strategy had helped to validate their work and helped stakeholders to see how their work was contributing to national policy.

> "The Strategy, I mean it's helpful to look at that diagram from time to time but I think we think along the same lines as that Strategy in a way. The Strategy has been more of a confirming thing and actually yeah it does help to make us realise again that we don't have that lead role in ESOL and employment but maybe there are things we can do just to support it in some way." (Stakeholder interviewee)

There were also stakeholder interviewees with more conflicting views on how the work of their organisations aligned with the Strategy's aims. In these cases, the Strategy was considered as more of a resource rather than a prescriptive guide.

> "Well the thing is it does align with our organisation's aims and objectives but I guess there is a bit of a question of would we have the same aims and objectives even without the Strategy and actually I think we would probably work in a very similar way even without the Strategy… the specific outcomes are relatively vague so actually there's a lot of work that can fit under these outcomes and the targets aren't necessarily… there's no plan attached to them." (Stakeholder interviewee)

The activities of the New Scots groups

In the interviews, stakeholders who were members of the New Scots core or themed groups reflected on the types of activities their groups had undertaken between 2018 and 2022. Broad activities mentioned by group members included:

- Administering and distributing AMIF funding;
- Engaging with stakeholders;
- Lobbying policy makers and other groups to promote the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum (e.g. right to vote, hotel accommodation);
- Supporting refugees and people seeking asylum during the pandemic (e.g. addressing basic needs, providing digital devices);
- Developing action plans linked to the Strategy, including incorporating additional theme of digital support and inclusion;
- Exploring the provision of information and pathways (e.g. regarding the asylum process);
- Providing training and raising awareness amongst stakeholders on the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum;

- Coordinating joint funding bids between organisations represented in the groups.

Examples of specific activities undertaken by key groups, and cited in interviews with stakeholders, included:

- The Employability and Welfare group worked with employers and looked at the recognition of people's prior learning. They also sought to ensure refugees and people seeking asylum were accessing their rights and entitlements (e.g. benefits);

- The Health and Wellbeing group sought to ensure complaint procedures in relation to health services are understood by refugees, and produced an interpreters' policy;

- The Housing group developed welcome packs for refugees;

- The Education and Language group explored access to ESOL and responded to the ESOL consultation.

When asked to reflect on the types of activities undertaken within their group, it was notable that members often found it difficult to describe exactly what activities had been conducted, and the activities outlined by respondents did not always tally with those outlined in their group's published action plan. This finding suggests a need for adaptable action plans and improvement to communication between key groups.

The activities of the AMIF-funded projects
In order to make a contribution to the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes, AMIF-funded projects delivered a diverse range of interventions based on their own specialisms and local needs. There were projects that planned to focus on implementing innovative work to support integration, while other projects planned to use the funding to extend existing work, in some instances to new geographical areas, through outreach and accessibility adaptations. All funded projects were required to focus on at least one of the themes underpinned in the Strategy: housing; health and wellbeing; employment and welfare rights; education and language; needs of people seeking asylum; and communities, culture and social connections. Projects implemented a range of approaches in working with refugees and people seeking asylum to improve integration including: providing ESOL classes; using creative/arts-based techniques to enhance inclusion or provide information; mentoring; teaching digital literacy, and workshops for children and parents. In the group of 12 AMIF-funded projects that Matter of Focus engaged with, many were using creative and arts-based interventions which included a range of types of media such as film, photography and creative writing. Projects highlighted that a wide range of artistic and creative activities were both positive for engaging communities, especially when language is a barrier, and in enabling individuals to create channels for telling their stories as a therapeutic tool. Given that these projects were ongoing during the time of this evaluation, it was not possible fully evaluate the outcomes of their work. However, all funded projects will be providing evaluation reports to the funders, and key findings from these will be

developed into case studies and an overarching evaluation report for the AMIF-funded projects during 2023.

3.3.2. Factors enabling implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Stakeholders were asked in both the survey and the interviews to consider what had worked well in the implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, and what factors had enabled its implementation. AMIF-funded projects which worked with Matter of Focus were also asked to consider this. The key enablers identified included the role of partnership working, positive messaging and staff goodwill, funding, and adaptability and relevance of the Strategy.

Partnership working
The role of partnership working between organisations engaging with refugees and people seeking asylum was viewed as a key facilitating factor in implementing the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy by stakeholders in the survey and interviews. This included partnerships between government, local authorities, and the third sector as well as between different third sector organisations, community or faith groups.

> "It has a broad representation of organisations with differing interests in the field of asylum support. There are pockets of specialism around government frameworks which enable a greater understanding of legislation which benefits asylum seekers and refugees. There is a commitment to work collaboratively, regardless of politics." (Survey respondent)

Interviewees praised the involvement of lots of organisations all working to help refugees and people seeking asylum settle in Scotland. Working with a range of organisations was viewed as being helpful in spreading the word about the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and aiding communication with partners. Partnerships developed in the course of implementing the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy were also said to have enabled organisations to respond flexibly and quickly to challenges. This was deemed particularly useful during the lockdowns put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, and in response to critical incidents such as the case of the Glasgow hotel attack on the 26th June 2020[23]. Core and theme group members noted this allowed the groups to respond and mobilise to help people.

> "Every crisis brings new challenges but if you've got a framework within which you could set those challenges… [then] you've got some established ways of working that the Strategy has helped put in place. It makes the uniqueness of each individual crisis a bit easier to deal with." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Collaborative working was also viewed as integral to the successful work of the New Scots core and theme groups. Most participants focused on the longstanding relationships built up over many years of working together with the same organisations and individuals, highlighting the benefits of building connections and networking between organisations. Some of these relationships existed before

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[23] BBC: Man shot dead by police after stabbing in Glasgow hotel - BBC News

involvement in the Strategy, while others developed as a result of participating in a theme group. Stakeholders who were part of New Scots core and theme groups highlighted the importance of their relationships with other organisations in implementing the Strategy.

> "It's people's lives and it's all aspects of people's lives. So no one body, or no one organisation or government can actually support, address, work with all people's aspects, life aspects, so you need that partnership and you need that collaboration because if that doesn't happen whatever actions, it doesn't matter how much funding you put towards actions it will not work. So for me that is the most positive thing." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Clear communication and promotion were considered central to partnership working to deliver the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's outcomes. Stakeholder interviewees spoke of the benefits for refugees and people seeking asylum in terms of information sharing between different types of organisations. These benefits included developing clear lines of support for refugees and people seeking asylum, and improvements in signposting to other organisations.The core and themed groups were perceived as an important means of hearing about local and national developments and of communicating with the Scottish Government through what was a described as a "two-way flow of intelligence" gathering and sharing.

A related factor mentioned by survey respondents was the fact that the Strategy was viewed as relevant and widely applicable to any refugee group.

> "Being national in scope - helped to provide consistent messaging and a framework as a base for local authorities, organisations and communities developing integration support and services for the first time. Local authorities in particular have stepped up to support people through a variety of resettlement and displacement routes since the Strategy was developed and third sector support organisations have expanded their work into new areas or developed from grass roots. A clear vision and principles have helped to bring together organisations, services and communities to contribute to shared outcomes." (Survey respondent)

Linked to partnership working was the importance of working with people who had lived experience of being a refugee or of seeking asylum to develop AMIF-funded projects. For example, a survey respondent noted how working with refugees and people seeking asylum helped to shape the delivery of projects to ensure that the projects met the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum, both in terms of addressing issues relevant to them and making the projects accessible to them (e.g., providing child care, interpreters etc). The ability of those involved with implementing the Strategy to lobby relevant bodies and to ensure the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum are heard was also highlighted. Interviewees referred to the successful campaign to lobby UK and Scottish Governments to allow for the funding of laptops and wi-fi during lockdown.

Stakeholders referenced the importance of collaborative working with partner organisations, particularly the Scottish Refugee Council. It was felt they were vital to the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, allowing other organisations,

including those which received AMIF funding, to connect more to the Strategy, especially those who were not aware of it. Interviewees valued the involvement of academics in helping to generate a research base which enabled evidence-based strategic decision-making. The input of Scottish Government was also perceived positively, given the potential to link to other policy areas, supporting links to these, and the provision of a framework to look at the needs of refugees in relation to individual policy areas, such as health and housing.

Positive messaging of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
Stakeholder interviewees, survey respondents, and AMIF-funded projects highlighted the benefits of the positive messaging of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy of being welcoming and inclusive of refugees and people seeking asylum, often contrasting this with the perceived negative messaging of the UK Government in relation to refugees and people seeking asylum. They felt that framing refugee integration in a positive and welcoming way aided buy-in from stakeholders and their organisations as it reflected the values and commitment from their own organisations.

> "It's good to have principles based on being welcoming and inclusive, rather than the UK's 'hostile environment'." (Stakeholder interviewee)

The uniqueness of the Strategy within the UK context motivated those commited to the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum to get involved in implementing the Strategy, for example by being a member of one the New Scots themed groups. It was also felt that the infrastructure around the Strategy (e.g., the core and theme groups) helped to give refugee and asylum issues greater prominence than if it had been a single organisation working on their own to progress this agenda.

While the vision of the Strategy motivated organisations to be involved in implementing the Strategy, overall stakeholders said that progress towards achieving the Strategy aims was a result of the goodwill and determination of core and themed group members and other organisations. Individuals and organisations were commited to progressing integration and improving the lives of refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland, as a result of which they continued to work without dedicated funding, leaving some feeling burnt out.

More widely, the enthusiasm, resilience and commitment of the people engaged in the Strategy were viewed as key enablers of implementation. A stakeholder interviewee praised other stakeholders' resilience which, for example, enabled creative responses to challenges around digital inclusion and connectivity during the COVID-19 pandemic. A collegiate way of working was perceived to be particularly important in light of the fact there was no funding attached to the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. This meant people had to work together and use available resources, with the 'goodwill' of those working in roles supporting refugees and people seeking asylum frequently mentioned. An interviewee commented on the considerable achievements of the Strategy and those involvement in implementing it.

> "The Scottish government can find small amounts of money to publish a report or to host a conference, but it's not really funded, and the people who go along to it, the policy people from the corporate headquarters of national Scottish

organisations come along in their own time. So that sounds like a criticism of New Scots, which it isn't really. It's done what it's done on almost no budget and out of a spirit of multi-agency professional collegiality, and it's produced Strategy documents about what the key levers of integration are, and thematically across some of these key themes, like health, education, housing, work, welfare. That's been picked up on internationally and been commented on approvingly internationally. So to be realistic on what can you get for a three monthly meeting of people who are finding space in their own diaries to do it and it's something that's otherwise unfunded, actually, they probably punch way above their weight really, given the international recognition of New Scots. Certainly, those sentiments, I can clearly recall being uttered by the Scottish Refugee Council, by the Mental Health Foundation. Perhaps also the British Red Cross." (Stakeholder interviewee)

AMIF funding
In light of the lack of wider funding attached to the Strategy, the provision of the AMIF funding to local authorities, third sector organisations and community groups was seen as key to the successful implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. The AMIF-funded projects were said to have aided implementation through delivering work which captured learning in relation to refugee and asylum seeker integration. It was argued by stakeholders that through these projects, implementation of the Strategy was able to take place on the ground. The launch of the AMIF funding was perceived to have contributed to greater awareness of the issues facing refugees and people seeking asylum amongst organisations and groups that could play a role in integration. Similar points were made by survey respondents.

> "The widespread use of funding for smaller organisations across Scotland is very important. The variety of the projects supported is also very important including, for example, support into employment which is crucial for refugees." (Survey respondent)

There were, however, mixed views among stakeholders as to how well the AMIF projects had been promoted to organisations working with refugees and people seeking asylum. Some interviewees felt that greater recognition of the contribution of the AMIF projects would help improve the morale of those working in the sector. Some felt that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is better known because of the existence of the AMIF fund. Others expressed disappointment that the work of the AMIF projects had not received greater exposure, stating that this would have helped to expand the reach of the wider Strategy.

> "But there was also something that was kind of disappointing about this process which was that it didn't really feel like the projects that got funded were really celebrated that much and it wasn't like there was a lot of noise made about it and I kind of gathered that that was because a lot of people had got turned down, a lot of the kind of key refugee support organisations, so we felt a bit like well that is sad for them but like we've been funded by this for the first time and like that doesn't…it just felt like the politics of the kind of sector kind of got in the way of enough noise being made about it which in terms of

people being aware of the Strategy and saying that its making an impact in their communities is really important." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Adaptability and relevance

The ability to adapt the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to make it relevant to the changing contexts in which it might be implemented was another theme raised by stakeholders. Interviewees pointed to the ways in which individuals and organisations had adapted to the intake of new refugee groups (e.g. people from Ukraine), while others felt that these different resettlement schemes had themselves helped to raise awareness of the Strategy. The ability of the Strategy to respond to the changing environment was praised by some interviewees, for example, the decision to add digital inclusion into the Strategy in response to the impact of COVID-19. This was accomplished through lobbying for Scottish and UK Government grants by partners within the News Scots Refugee Intergration Strategy core group. Others noted that the flexibility of the Strategy helped ensure organisations were in a better place to respond when needed, for example in terms of adapting support needed for new groups of refugees, such as those who arrived from Ukraine.

> "I think the strength of New Scots 2 is, it feels like a live document, it feels like a live Strategy, it feels like something that isn't frightened to evolve or isn't frightened to say, 'It's maybe not right.' It's also not frightened to say it doesn't get it right all the time either. It doesn't feel like a tablet of stone, which is really helpful I think for those - like myself - who have only joined the refugee community [more recently]. But that framework was really important and me being able to watch the development of that and be able to reflect that in how we deliver here, just for that feeling of connectivity is really, really important, and not feel that we are adrift, that we're anchorless! Or that we can then be pulled in different directions. It's really important that we can still stay connected into what the rest of Scotland is doing." (Stakeholder interviewee)

3.3.3. Factors hindering implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Survey respondents and stakeholder interviewees highlighted a range of barriers to the successful implementation of the the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. It should be noted that a wide range of barriers were identified, and their impact on the successful implementation of the Strategy was viewed as being considerable. These included: the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; lack of funding to support the implementation of the Strategy; reserved policy making; governance of the Strategy; local government challenges; lack of access to services; lack of public awareness of the Strategy; limited engagement with those with lived experience; and the Ukraine war.

COVID-19

The impact of COVID-19 was frequently raised by AMIF-funded projects and stakeholders responding to the survey and in interviews. There was a perception that the pandemic and its associated lockdowns had reduced individuals' and organisations' abilities to achieve the Strategy's actions. This was because staff

and resources were diverted elsewhere, integration services were disrupted or suspended, or time was needed to adapt to remote and digital delivery. Lockdowns also meant that services could not deliver in-person support and not all refugees and people seeking asylum felt comfortable engaging digitally, either because of language barriers or confidence using digital technology. The pandemic caused distruption to services that support integration such as ESOL and employabilty support.

> "Half of the intended duration for implementation of the Strategy occurred during the COVID-pandemic, when services and resources at all levels were redirected and adjusted to respond to the crisis and recovery. There is a likelihood this alone will have posed a significant obstacle to fulfilling the outcomes of the Strategy." (Survey respondent)

Despite disruptions to integration services, there were stakeholders who highlighted how COVID-19 helped to address challenges for people seeking to access support in rural areas. For example, by switching services from face-to-face to online, some refugees and people seeking asylum were more likely to attend ESOL classes and access other support services.

> "We use language sometimes about hard-to-reach groups outwith [the] Central Belt, but it's not. It's hard-to-reach services, not hard-to-reach groups! So obviously the moving things online actually helped to some extent for a lot of rural communities, so for instance a lot of our clients were able to access things like, [support organisation] run some training which [rural area] clients were able to take part in, which we have never been able to do before because these women would never have been able to travel to Glasgow. […] They wouldn't have taken part. Because of being able to do it online, so actually COVID gave us quite a lot of opportunities in terms of being able to connect in, to be able to attend things - because they were online." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Among New Scots group members, it was felt that redeployment of Scottish Government staff to deal with the effect of the pandemic negatively impacted on the groups and the wider implementation of the second New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Government staff were not available to help support the implementation of the Strategy which put more pressure on other organisations to take the Strategy forward with limited government support.

> "COVID has kind of done for the Strategy in some respects because we've not really been meeting, people have been too busy and the Scottish Government, like every government, has put everything aside to deal with COVID and the Strategy has suffered as a result. People have been moved out of the departments they've been working in to concentrate on COVID and they've not necessarily been replaced, or they've been replaced by people who don't really know very much about the Strategy." (Stakeholder interviewee)

This, combined with the changing of group members brought on by factors such as staff "burnout" across the sector and redeployment of staff, was said to have led to some stakeholders becoming disengaged from the theme groups.

Stakeholders noted a rise in the number of people struggling in terms of poverty and mental health as a result of the pandemic, and the movement of people seeking asylum into hotels. This meant that some organisations were more stretched, with COVID-19 impacting their organisational capacity and ability to respond. A stakeholder commented that "refugee integration stopped for 18 months", while stakeholders tried to lobby UK Government to put provisions for people seeking asylum and refugees in place. Interviewees spoke of how the humanitarian response took precedence over the implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.

> "We have literally had to stop people starving to death within the asylum system. We've had to try and mitigate the epidemic that, and the misinformation, disinformation and fear, and we've had to try and do that by engaging with many of the local refugee groups, so that they will do translation, they will help mitigate some of the disinformation. We've also had to try and deal with the big issue that came up, which was digital inclusion, when everything went into lockdown, that wasn't an element of the Strategy. It wasn't a big element of anything other than the education strand. Now it's critical." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Stakeholder interviewees praised the response of organisations working with refugees and people seeking asylum, which quickly mobilised to provide more support. However, this impacted in multiple ways on the New Scots groups' focus and on their membership. Several themed groups had not met since before the COVID-19 pandemic, while some meetings had moved online. Some organisations and individuals were not able to engage with the groups as much as they would have liked due to these changing priorities.

> "That's the impression I got from the meetings that everything was kind of falling apart because of COVID and people just being totally overwhelmed with having to switch to online learning and I don't think this was anything…nothing to do with incompetence or lack of will, just logistics and everything being thrown into chaos." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Lack of funding
A perceived lack of funding or specific budget for staffing and other resources associated with the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was considered by many stakeholders as one of the most significant factors hindering its successful implementation. Stakeholders noted this meant that the Strategy's implementation was reliant on the goodwill of people working with refugees and people seeking asylum, their willingness to support the actions of the Strategy and their ability to make time for the work. This became increasingly challenging given the demands of COVID, the changing nature of the policy environment and different refugee crises. As a stakeholder commented, "It's all well and good to have a policy and Strategy without any cash behind it" but "goodwill only gets you so far". Another cautioned that the lack of resources attached to the Strategy limited the commitment of those working in the sector to deliver it.

> "I think for us I think there is a real challenge around there is no funding attached to the Strategy so what you're setting out are all nice to haves,

there's nothing in the Strategy that is about…that links to a statutory service in the way that it's a requirement that isn't already kind of underway. It's about trying to speed that work up I think is where the Strategy…the rest of it is based on goodwill and I think that has always been a massive problem with this Strategy." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Stakeholders also pointed to the impact of wider funding issues in terms of having insufficient infrastructure to support refugees and people seeking asylum (e.g., interpreters, ESOL provision, employment support etc.), particularly in those areas of Scotland which were new to receiving these groups. Some felt longer-term, consistent funding for integration support services was missing, resulting in projects being started but not having the potential to become embedded and thus sustainable. Rising costs in general were also a concern.

"Due to funding restrictions and lack of resources we have been unable to concentrate activities in the area." (Survey respondent)

"Lack of longer term funding for projects - short term funding enables work to start but not get embedded - funding is needed for longer periods of time, to really build the work and embed better practice and to build lasting partnerships and ways of working." (Survey respondent)

Reserved policy making
A common theme in the stakeholder interviews and survey, and the work with AMIF-funded projects, was the detrimental impact of refugee policy being reserved to the UK Government. Stakeholders highlighted the difficulties of working within the UK Government's policy agenda which was viewed as being at odds with the more supportive approach of the Scottish Government. It was felt that the UK Government's stance was a barrier, 'thwarting local attempts at establishing an environment of welcome'. Participants raised concerns relating to the fact that immigration is not a devolved matter and that therefore wider legislation and the Strategy do not relate to each other. Stakeholders expressed frustration that decision-making around asylum is a reserved matter, commenting that it limited the extent to which the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy has been able to make a difference.

"Policy and current government at Westminster will always be the biggest obstacle to Scotland's policies on most things, especially asylum and human rights." (Survey respondent)

Theme group members noted that while they had been able to make some progress around welfare in terms of making people aware of their rights and entitlements, the fact that people seeking asylum are unable to work meant they had not been able to make as much progress in terms of employability as they would have liked. An interviewee questioned whether it was possible within the current legislative context to support all elements of integration for people seeking asylum that would be expected from day one as set out in the Strategy (e.g. given that people seeking asylum do not have the right to work, to welfare benefits, or to mainstream housing).

> "I think those are probably the key challenges around asylum. It's the reserved nature of it and, as a by-product of that, the other structures and workstreams which are going on and taking up people's time." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Additionally, it was felt that the changing policy environment and the different resettlement schemes developed through the Home Office also limited implementation as a result of people's rights and entitlements varying depending on their entry routes.

> "I think the Strategy is really really challenged as well by…its not just asylum and what was at the time resettlement, we now have Afghan resettlement, Afghans in bridging hotels in Scotland, asylum seekers in bridging hotels in Scotland. The Hong Kong Nationals Scheme so all of these things are being developed at the Home Office, these bespoke different things with different rights and entitlements and different entry routes and the Strategy and the actors in Scotland are trying to make sense of all of this to say well everyone should be treated…every person coming to Scotland should be welcomed when you have a Home Office that are doing this thing of creating these bespoke programs and undermining the asylum system. So that is…that's what I think is really challenging for the Strategy." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Governance of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
A third key theme raised was barriers related to governance of the Strategy, its status and whether legislation would increase its impact.

The fact that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is not accompanied by a legislative framework was viewed as a hindrance by some stakeholders and AMIF-funded projects, as without a legislative framework they were unsure about its status and authority to command change. Without legislation, the Strategy was described as "toothless", as there was no legal requirement for the Scottish Government to take action to implement the Strategy. This was said to further impact on the ability to engage and motivate people in the theme groups as they questioned their authority to action change. While some stakeholders suggested that Scotland's policy framework is limited because of reserved policy making, others argued that there was more the Scottish Government could do to improve integration within devolved powers. Within the remit of devolved Scottish powers, stakeholders said Scottish Government bodies could do more in relation to improving ESOL provision, housing and promoting the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum. There were stakeholders who thought devolved powers were not being exercised fully, in part because, politically the government wanted to highlight the restrictions of UK Government policy. However, it is important to note that the Scottish Government is constrained in relation to making legislation on reserved matters.

> "Performatively, the fact that the First Minister says, 'We welcome refugees', performatively that there is a refugees' minister now, that all matters a lot. But there are things within the legislative framework that could be undertaken that are not being undertaken because these kinds of things get used as a lever, as I understand it, for saying we can't do this until we've got independence. That is a frustration in Scottish Government." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Despite the Strategy being a collaborative effort between partner agencies, some stakeholders perceived it as a Scottish Government initiative, particularly in terms of its management. A stakeholder expressed a view that the 'balance of power has changed' between the first and second Strategy. While they welcomed the increased role of COSLA and the Scottish Government in the second Strategy, they were concerned that this had been at the expense of third sector organisations.

> "I suppose my fear is that it's become more top down actually because it's now the Scottish Government that obviously is really backing it which is great because they're really supporting bringing in refugees, building the population and COSLA because they're supporting refugees around the country they've got contracts to do that and so existing services there's probably more of a balance of existing local authority services being more…a bigger part of the picture and third sector organisations being less of the picture." (Stakeholder interviewee)

The centralised model of governance was highlighted by some themed group members. There was a perception that any changes to the groups' action plans had to be agreed by the Minister. When action plans became outdated, this was felt to limit the progress of the groups[24].

> "And so I think one of the dangers with having an Action Plan that feels quite so tied, so we weren't allowed to change the actions because they would have to be approved by a Minister. But what that meant was you were then either tied to outdated actions or you were tied to an action that we wouldn't be able to do anything about and then there was all these people doing all this amazing work that never got reflected." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Stakeholders made reference to what they viewed as siloed departments at the Scottish Government, noting that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is not fully understood by or linked to Scottish Government departments other than those directly responsible for policy relating to refugees and people seeking asylum. Interviewees also pointed to a perceived lack of joined up thinking between government departments and different strategies. A frequently referenced example was the ESOL Strategy which had been subsumed into the Adult Learning Strategy.

> "As a result, ESOL is becoming much less important, is much less of a focus, just at the time actually when there needs to be massive[ly] more investment in it and that happened without even the courtesy of a notification to New Scots that that was happening. So that's what I mean it's not just that's there's not lip service, it's just to a lot of civil servants we just don't exist, and that's disappointing." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Some stakeholders perceived that there was too much bureaucracy associated with the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Interviewees commented on the number of civil servants working to implement the Strategy themes, suggesting the many layers of accountability is detrimental to those engaging with refugees

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[24] Ministers did not need to agree changes to the themed group action plans, however, the Core Group did.

directly. Similar comments were made in respect of the various groups tasked with the implementation of the Strategy.

> "There are too many structures, there is too much hierarchy that doesn't, to my view, deliver anything except extra bureaucracy." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Variation in local delivery approaches and geographic inequalities
Governance at a local level was another theme raised by AMIF-funded projects and stakeholders in the survey, interviews and Matter of Focus workshops. There were signs of a perceived misalignment between the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's high level policy setting and its actual delivery and implementation on the ground.

However, it was also noted that there is a degree of variation between local authorities in terms of how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy has been implemented and the support provided to refugees and people seeking asylum. Some suggested that greater levels of coordination could have been provided through COSLA but that resources did not allow for this.

Tensions between national and local implementation and impact were also raised by stakeholders. The perception was that there was a lack of coordination between the Scottish Government and local government, and between government bodies and third sector organisations and community groups. Interviewees decribed the shift between the first iteration of the Strategy – which was perceived to be focused on the Central Belt – and the second Strategy – which was viewed as seeking to be more national in its outlook. However there were some interviewees who felt the current Strategy was still too Glasgow-centric, and to a lesser extent centred on the Central Belt, in both its development and delivery. On the other hand there were others who felt that the Strategy did not draw enough on Glasgow's expertise of supporting New Scots.

> "Considering that Glasgow City has received more New Scots than anywhere else in Scotland over the entire piece, you would think that there would be more concerted effort to engage with the areas that had the most experience around working with New Scots and trying to support them […] Yeah I think maybe the New Scots Strategy doesn't pay enough attention to places and those experiences." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Similar concerns were expressed in relation to membership of the themed groups, which some felt were overly focused on organisations based in the Central Belt. In the survey, the limitations of geographical inequalities (with refugees and people seeking asylum primarily placed in deprived urban areas) was also highlighted, as was the need for additional support for more deprived areas, which may face additional challenges in integration. It was felt that the experiences of organisations supporting refugees in rural areas was missing.

> "It is still urban focused, and perhaps misses out the challenges and benefits for refugees resettled in rural areas. It also misses the strengths of rural programme and focuses on access to services." (Survey respondent)

Access to ESOL provision and other services
AMIF-funded projects, stakeholder interviewees and survey respondents also
outlined the ways that lack of access to services, especially ESOL provision,
hindered the implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. For
example, access to ESOL in some areas was limited partly by a lack of college-
based provision and partly in terms of its accessibility to refugees and people
seeking asylum (e.g., not being able to afford travel to access services or finding
online-only provision inaccessible).

> "I think language support is very necessary. Communication is a fundamental
> part of integration. There needs to be investment in ESOL, including tutor
> training, especially to develop skills in working with ESOL learners with no
> learning strategies and no literacy. Training of tutors to include a knowledge of
> CLD is necessary and ESOL tutors need better terms and conditions. I work
> with so many refugees who want to integrate and who want to work, but they
> are overlooked as their English is seen as 'not good enough'." (Survey
> respondent)

A perceived lack of ESOL provision was also frequently mentioned by interviewees
from across the themed groups. The provision of and access to language support
were seen as a key barrier by members of all the theme groups and a crosscutting
issue that was relevant to each. However, some noted that the structure of the
theme groups meant that language issues could be considered the responsibility of
the English and Language thematic group only rather than something which should
be addressed by all the theme groups.

> "I think there are some areas that were important but were then hived off to
> other themes. So as an example, one of the key areas for us is English
> speaking because all Health Services are provided in English right. So unless
> we deal with the English language issue we are not going to be able to bring
> parity across patient access and outcomes. But it was clear early on that the
> interpreting and language issues were being dealt with in a different group so
> we didn't go near that." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Stakeholders, AMIF-funded projects and refugees and people seeking asylum
themselves, mentioned other services they faced challenges accessing. This
included access to further and higher education, mental health services,
employment and enterprise opportunities, accommodation, childcare support,
internet connectivity, and faith-based services. Reasons services were challenging
to access included: a lack of local provision; long waiting lists; travel and cost of
access were prohibitive. Additionally, rules around eligibility meant some were
excluded on the basis of their immigration status. Staff shortages and a lack of
robust training within services were also thought to contribute to these difficulties.

**Awareness of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and refugees and
people seeking asylum**
A lack of public awareness regarding refugees, people seeking asylum and the
New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was identified as a further barrier to
implementation. Stakeholders felt this lack of awareness extended to organisations

and staff, particularly at the management, policy and funding levels, as opposed to the frontline staff working directly with refuges.

> "I don't believe the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is well known across my organisation and this has had an impact on how well it can inform organisational work. Greater national focus and publicising of the Strategy may improve that." (Survey respondent)

This lack of understanding included issues such as the length of time it may take for refugees to become integrated, the barriers to language learning, the extent of the impacts of the pandemic, and other challenges faced by refugees. Stakeholders also noted that refugees themselves were not fully informed of their rights, and the benefits and services available to them.

Further to this, participants said that the negative portrayal of refugees in the media contributed to an unwelcoming environment which hindered the Strategy, as this made it hard to 'maintain positive integration work in communities'. These media portrayals were seen by stakeholders to perpetuate myths about refugees and people seeking asylum and negative attitudes within host communities.

> "There's a lot of negative views about refugee and asylum seeker communities, there's a lot of myths about people faking it in a sense to come over and I think the reality is very very different and I think that the host communities there needs to be something to raise awareness around that so that host communities actually understand if you even compare it globally how many refugees the UK is taking for example and where are the refugees coming from and the way they're treated and that it's not a positive experience, the kind of houses they're living in." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Engaging refugees and people seeking asylum
Some participants said there was a lack of meaningful input into the the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy from both grassroots organisations and those with lived experience of being a refugee or of seeking asylum. This was said to hinder the Strategy's implementation in terms of its design, delivery and evaluation. Some described the adoption of a 'top-down approach' that was 'not fully engaging the voice of New Scots'. Engagement that did take place with refugees and people seeking asylum (e.g., engagement events during the development of the Strategy) was perceived to be limited. Participants said they would have liked to have seen greater involvement of refugees and people seeking asylum throughout the design and implementation of the Strategy, including (but not limited to), involvement in the core and themed groups.

> "Limited meaningful engagement of refugee representatives: e.g. no existing forums/structure within New Scots decision-making that provides meaningful advocacy and representation by and accountability to refugees. A New Scots advocacy group with representatives that sits alongside New Scots Core/theme groups perhaps." (Survey respondent)

The Ukraine war

Another major event, the Ukraine war, was highlighted as having had an impact on capacity and resources to implement the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy due to the need for involved organisations to divert their resources to support the sudden large-scale Ukrainian resettlement programme. AMIF-funded projects engaged in the Matter of Focus workshops said this led to increase demand and waiting lists for support. This was said to have contributed to staff burnout with organisations and individuals reportedly "overwhelmed" with workload.

> "The war in Ukraine which again was unforeseen at Strategy development, but has increased refugees and created tension with divided Westminster policies of welcome for some refugees but deportation for others." (Survey respondent)

Delivery of AMIF-funded projects

There were AMIF-funded projects which faced delays implementing their planned work. Reasons for delays included COVID restrictions and having to adapt to online delivery, disclosure checks for staff taking longer than expected, and the timing of planned work coinciding with dates of religious significance resulting in planned work being rescheduled. Projects also took longer to get started because of delays to funding and because they needed to make adjustments to their planned activity to ensure they met the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, adjusting delivery so it could be undertaken outside of regular working hours, making provision for childcare and ensuring delivery took into account cultural needs and sensitivities.

Projects also reflected that it was important for them to be clear about the scope of, and limits to, their work at the beginning, and what stage of a refugee's journey their work would be the best fit for. There were organisations which received AMIF-funding that had never worked with refugees and people seeking asylum before. Funded projects were at quite different stages of delivery with refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, if they were newly arrived in Scotland then priorities would likely focus on meeting basic needs. It was also important, however, to be flexible with project plans and to adapt to the changing needs and circumstances as projects found them. One project anticipated that their ESOL classes would focus on a higher level of language study but had to adapt their plans to accommodate need at entry level based on the priorities of those engaging.

However, AMIF-funded projects engaged in the Matter of Focus workshops reported that through delivery they gained a greater understanding of the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum, new approaches to delivering support, and developed new resources which they could use in the future (for example, trauma informed training).

3.4. Impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Drawing data from the stakeholder survey, stakeholder and refugee and people seeking asylum interviews and the Matter of Focus workshops, this section addresses the following research questions:

- What can we learn about the progress that has been made towards achieving the four New Scots outcomes? How does this vary across different groups/areas?

- To what extent do the observed results and the perspectives of service users, staff and stakeholders suggest the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy contributed to outcomes (whether improved, worsened or unchanged)?

- How sustainable are these changes?

- What unintended changes (positive or negative) has the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy made?

- What elements of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy are working well, and what elements are working less well?

- To what extent has the absence of a structured funding arrangement impacted the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and implementation, and how would the continuation of this policy impact future practice and implementation?

- How have the outcomes of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy benefited from the partnership approach to policy and implementation?

The stakeholder survey, stakeholder interviews, interviews with refugees and people seeking asylum, and the evaluation work with the AMIF-funded projects explored participants' views on the impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. This section covers participants' views on the progress made towards achieving the four outcomes of the Strategy, the sustainablility of any progress, and any unintended outcomes, where relevant. A number of cross-cutting themes are highlighted across each of the four Strategy outcomes. For example, the role of local authorities, third sector organisations and communitiy groups.

3.4.1. Overall impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

In the stakeholder survey, respondents were asked to consider how successfully each of the four outcomes of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy has currently been met (see Figure 3.3). Approximately two-thirds (65%) of respondents stated that Outcome 1: 'Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections', had been 'very successfully' or 'quite successfully' achieved. The perceived success of the other three outcomes was lower; 53%, 55% and 44% respectively agreed or strongly agreed that Outcome 2 (Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives), Outcome 3 (Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs) and Outcome 4 (Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations) had been 'very' or 'quite successfully' met, though these percentages exceeded those who reported that these outcomes had not been met successfully. For example, approximately one-third (31%) of respondents thought Outcome 4: 'Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an

impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations' had been 'not very' or 'not at all successfully' achieved, though it is worth noting that 24% of respondents said they were unable to give an answer to this question.

Figure 3.3: Perceptions on the degree to which the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy Outcomes have been achieved successfully (N=192 for Outcome 1, 2 and 3; 193 for Outcome 4)
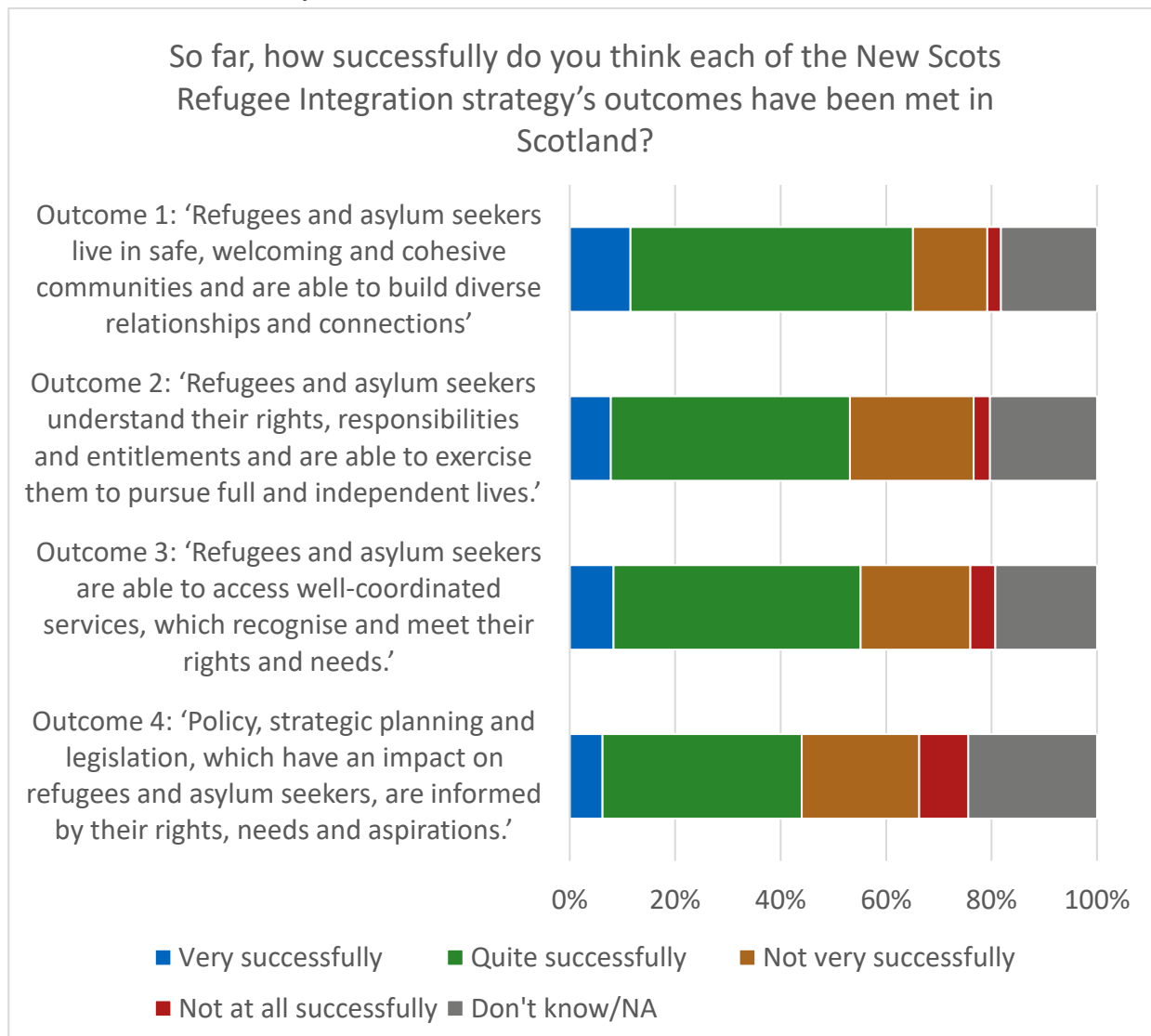
For all the outcomes, it is notable that the proportions who indicated they had either been 'not very' or 'not at all successfully' achieved were highest among those with high awareness of the Strategy, though again a higher percentage in the high awareness group agreed with the statements. For example, Table 3.4 shows that 48% agreed and 35% disagreed that Outcome 2, and 49% agreed and 35% disagreed that Outcome 4, had been successfully met in the high awareness group.

There were also mixed views in the qualitative interviews about the progress made towards achieving the four outcomes. Although stakeholder interviewees were broadly positive about the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and what it symbolised, they tended to find it harder to gauge the extent to which it had achieved its four outcomes. Some stakeholders suggested it was not for them to comment on how integrated refugees and people seeking asylum felt in Scotland,

or the extent to which the Strategy has impacted on their lives. The following sections explore the views of stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum in relation to each of the four outcomes of the Strategy, focusing on factors that have helped and hindered progress to achieving the outcomes.

Table 3.4: Perceptions of success in achieving two of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes by level of awareness of the Strategy

	High awareness %	Medium awareness %	Low awareness %	Total N
Outcome 2: 'Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.'				
Very successfully	10	7	4	8
Quite successfully	38	57	28	45
Not very successfully	34	19	8	23
Not at all successfully	1	6	-	3
Don't know	16-	12	48	18
N/A	1	-	12	2
N	77	90	25	192
Outcome 4: 'Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.'				
Very successfully	9	4	4	6
Quite successfully	40	42	15	38
Not very successfully	25	23	12	22
Not at all successfully	10	10	4	9
Don't know	14	20	54	22
N/A	1	-	12	2
N	77	90	26	193

3.4.2. Outcome 1: Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections

The survey asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements related to the the perceived impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes. Approximately half (51%) stated they 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that refugees and people seeking asylum feel more welcome in Scotland as a result of the Strategy, and that Scotland's communities are safer for refugees and people seeking asylum as a result of the Strategy (44%). While only a small proportion of survey respondents 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with these statements, 44% and 48% 'neither agreed nor disagreed' or said they could not answer the question.

Figure 3.4: Survey respondent agreement with statements relating to the impact of outcome 1 (N=183)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the New Scots Refugee Integration strategy?

Refugees and asylum seekers feel more welcome in Scotland as a result of the strategy

Scotland's communities are safer for refugees and asylum seekers as a result of the strategy

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Don't know/N/A
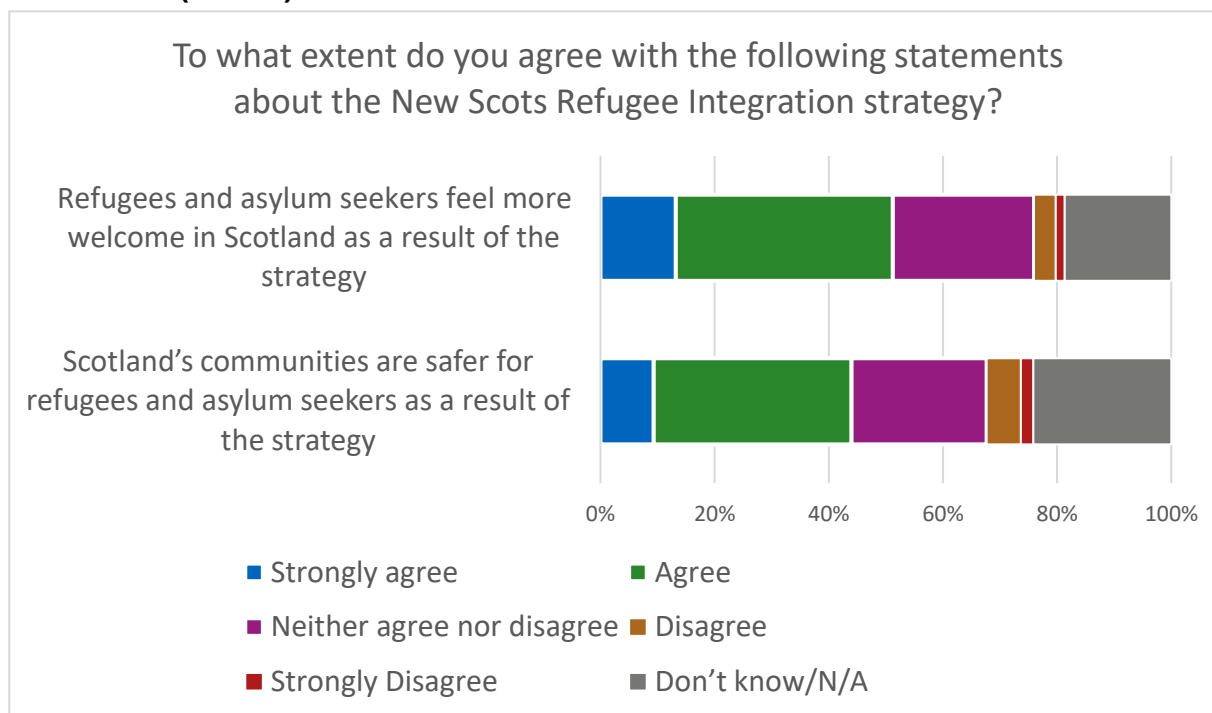
Factors that helped and hindered progress to achieving Outcome 1 were further explored in qualitative interviews with stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum and in the work carried out by Matter of Focus with AMIF-funded projects. These are discussed in detail below.

Factors that helped progress towards achieving Outcome 1

Welcoming communities

Refugees and people seeking asylum who said they had been made to feel welcome since arriving in Scotland, spoke about the role local communities and the local authority had played in making them feel this way. They spoke of the respect, warmth and generosity they had experienced during and since arrival. For example, a family who arrived with no possessions spoke of their 'shock' and delight at entering their new, fully furnished home, complete with a fridge stocked with culturally appropriate foods. Some of these items had been provided by the council, while others had been donated by members of the local community. These actions helped the family feel like they were entering a welcoming and cohesive community.

> "In [Name of country], our back home country, we lost everything, our furniture, our houses, our kitchen belongings, everything […] we came here only with some of our clothes. They [the council] provide us with the houses, they provide us with the furniture, they provide us with everything, thank god 100 times. […] These people [local community] where can I find people like this that treat me in this way. This is my family […] This is my new country, beautiful country." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

There were a number of other ways in which refugees and people seeking asylum were made to feel welcome and safe in their new communities. Refugees reported

that their local authority housing officers had introduced them to their new neighbours which meant they had someone to turn to for help if and when they needed it. Elsewhere, neighbours had introduced themselves or refugees and people seeking asylum had made friends in the local community through attending events in the community or engaging with local third sector organisations, groups and projects. Refugees and people seeking asylum provided several examples of ways in which members of their local community had provided ad hoc help and support. These included instances both of spontaneous provision of help and of help mediated through community organisations, examples of the former included providing help to get to know the local area, help with grocery shopping, picking children up from school, offers of clothing and the provision of contacts and friendship which provided opportunities to practise speaking English. Those living in some of the more rural areas spoke of how local volunteers (arranged either by the council or community groups) had taken them on days out to show them the local area. Local churches, mosques and other faith groups had also provided support within the community, through the use of cultural events, opportunities for meeting people and emotional support. People in the community were also praised for their patience in the face of any language barriers, for example, when buying things in shops. At the same time, some refugees and people seeking asylum highlighted their difficulties with the Scottish accent and the time it had taken them to adjust to this.

> "My neighbour, […] she was very welcoming, she would come and say hello to the kids, give them chocolate, anytime she needed helps she calls me, and I help her. […] Yes, everybody is welcoming, everybody, everybody was welcoming, willing to 'you are new here, you're welcome'." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

> "Everyone has been quite welcome, they've helped us out with finding the Halal shops, the places that we can go to, even the Scottish people themselves have helped us out so everyone is quite helpful with these kinds of things. Like our community, the Muslim community have helped with finding places. I would say the welcome is quite nice." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

The ways in which local authorities had helped refugees and people seeking asylum feel safe and welcome in the communities included both statutory actions, such as providing housing, help applying for benefits and other financial support, and supporting unaccompanied children seeking asylum. It also included non-statutory actions such as: arranging transport to their new accommodation; providing families with clothes, culturally appropriate food, bus passes and other essentials; and arranging opportunities for them to meet other refugees and people seeking asylum and members of their new communities. Both the council and third sector organisations had also provided access to interpreters. As a result of the way they had been treated by people in the local community and by local authorities, many of the refugees and asylum speakers we spoke to viewed Scotland with great affection, with many viewing Scotland as their home.

> "When we travel and come back to Edinburgh airport, you feel like you arrive at your homeland […] My husband and me, not just because of this meeting,

we say it is feeling in our hearts arriving in Glasgow. It's became our home. When you arrive at Glasgow, you feel, okay, 'that's it, I can sleep now'. Yes, so we love it a lot." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Local organisations and community groups
Local organisations and groups were said to have played an important role in helping refugees and people seeking asylum feel welcome and safe. Stakeholders pointed to the development work being undertaken by organisations (including AMIF-funded projects) and community groups with host communities to aid integration, highlighting progress made in Glasgow as an example of what can be achieved.

> "Glasgow was the first dispersal area and the bad stuff that got attracted to that as well, I think we've moved on in leaps and bounds on that as well and refugees within Scotland are seen as a positive area, like helping in terms of like different approaches and different backgrounds and what that's all about and I think that that's really welcoming and that's a really good thing as well so I think those are the really good outcomes that are around." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Refugees and people seeking asylum explicitly spoke of local third sector and community organisations that have made a significant contribution to them feeling safe and welcome in Scotland. A diverse range of organisations have been involved in this work, including those directly supporting refugees and people seeking asylum, and those with a wider remit such as those providing services for a wider target group. Between them, the refugees we interviewed had engaged with more than 20 different organisations since arriving here, including AMIF-funded projects. Some were involved with several different organisations, while others had engaged with just one or two. Overall, refugees and people seeking asylum heard about these organisations shortly after arriving in Scotland while living in Home Office accommodation, whereas others had heard about them after living in Scotland for some time. They had heard of these organisations through friends or acquaintances, or less typically had been referred by their support or housing officer, a GP or through their child's school.

The types of support they received from these third sector organisations and community groups included: provision of food, food bank vouchers, clothing (including school uniforms), children's toys, transport, digital devices, legal advice, and support to gain new skills and meet people. Some organisations and groups provided a range of different types of support while others offered a specifc type of support. The activities people reported that they were involved in through these organisations included preparing and eating meals with others both generally and during religious celebrations. They were also a key source of advice and information, mental health support, language classes, computing classes etc.

These organisations and groups were viewed as being critical for mental health support, to cultivating a sense of belonging, assisting with English language development and building connections with the local community. For women with young children, these groups and organisations were said to have been especially helpful in tackling isolation and helping them to meet new people. The groups were

also perceived to provide opportunities for children to socialise and play, and to allow people to share their experiences with other refugees and people seeking asylum, as well as meeting those in the wider community. Staff and volunteers being willing to help was important to ensuring refugees and people seeking asylum felt welcome.

> "She told me about the community, and she says, 'Come on, they have a creche and you can take cup of tea with the womans.' Yes, I went there, and they put my son in the creche and meet the people every Thursday. This is the first point change my life. I meet other people. […] They show me other communities to meet and it's like the beginning of the change. No, I need to go with my friends. I went everywhere and now I think [laughs] I don't need anyone to translate for me. I don't need anyone to take me to place. I'm going by myself! I can understand, I can talk!" (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

> "There's a lovely quote from a guy last night who said that the difference it makes for him is he feels like he has that family setting that he's been missing. […] So I think in a small way, a supportive community being generated that wasn't there before." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Attending these groups was also viewed as a way to learn about Scottish culture – both national and local. Refugees and people seeking asylum spoke of how they had been on day trips organised by some of the AMIF-funded projects, such as visits to museums and days out for children. In some local authorities, refugees on resettlement programmes also spoke of having been taken on day trips to local areas of interest. Such activities were seen as an enjoyable and educational experience. AMIF-funded projects also reflected that their work acted as a bridge or springboard to wider community connections, with refugees and people seeking asylum said to have built confidence through engaging in specialist services which had in turn enabled them to go on to engage with wider opportunities and mainstream services. This view was also shared by some of the refugees and women seeking asylum we interviewed. Having initially attended mother and baby groups at refugee support organisations, they went on to access foodbanks, pantries and language classes, with several going on to provide support to other refugees themselves.

References were also made to examples of refugees and people seeking asylum and members of local communities who had been able to share and learn from each other through integration activities, with burgeoning friendships reported between refugees and people seeking asylum and local community members. For example, a refugee living in a rural area reported regularly meeting with his new friends from the local community in a café having first met one of them at an event organised by the local authority. A willingness among local people to engage with refugees in their communities was key to this. Interviewees highlighted how members of their local community had gone above and beyond to make them feel welcome.

> "They [local community] all support and help the refugee and the new Scots to improve their English. A lot of Scottish friends, like retired, they are meeting in the café and drink coffee, just to speak conversation, make conversation. Also

if you are struggle with anything if you'll study, they can help you."
(Refugee/aslum seeker interviewee)

Employment and volunteering
Being able to access work[25] or volunteering opportunities was important for many aspects of integration for refugees and people seeking asylum, e.g., in terms of meeting people, developing language skills and having a sense of self worth. In relation to Outcome 1, employment and volunteering were found to help refugees and people seeking asylum feel welcome by enabling them to build diverse relationships and connections.

The majority of refugees and people seeking asylum interviewed had been involved in volunteering of some kind and, to a lesser extent, employment. Many of the interviewees were unable to work, either because they were not allowed as a person seeking asylum who did not yet have status, or because they were refugees with caring responsibilities or long-term health conditions. Other refugees noted the difficulty of finding employment as a result of their language skills, or due to a lack of suitable roles. A small number of refugees had found work in their professional field while others took on lower-skilled roles either due to language barriers or their qualifications not being transferable to Scotland.

Volunteering appeared to have an important supportive role to play in the integration of refugees and people seeking asylum. Some took up volunteer roles with AMIF-funded projects, other third sector organisations or faith groups. Examples of this included volunteering at their place of worship, in charity shops, community cafes, providing interpretation services for refugee and asylum support organisations, helping out at cultural events, or in schools, or at community based projects. Often refugees and people seeking asylum heard about these roles through word-of-mouth from other refugees and people seeking asylum, friends, housing officers, support workers or through their contacts with the Scottish Refugee Council. Some interviewees held multiple volunteering roles with a range of organisations.

A key theme raised by the refugees and people seeking asylum was how much they felt they had benefited from volunteering in terms of being able to do something they enjoyed, to counter boredom, to socialise, and to feel they were giving some back to the community. It was also a means to meet people both within their community and other refugees and people seeking asylum.

Both volunteering and employment were seen as a way to learn English and build confidence in speaking it. Interviewees also spoke of how volunteering had helped their mental health and reduced the isolating effects of not being able to have paid employment. However, it was pointed out that volunteering was not always possible due to the cost of transport, caring responsibilities or ill health.

"When I came here, the first advice they gave to me is like, if you want to improve your English, you have to work hard. Your work hard is not like for the study English, you have to be integrate with local community. I asked them

[25] People seeking asylum are not eligible to work in the UK. Only refugees are able to access employment. However, refugees and people seeking asylum can access volunteering opportunities.

how I can do that. Okay, you can go to volunteer with different jobs or different organisations, and that was a good opportunity for me. I go toward them, it was amazing. […] they all support and help the refugee and the New Scots to improve their English. A lot of Scottish friends, like retired, they are meeting in the café and drink coffee, just to speak conversation, make conversation. Also if you are struggle with anything if you'll study, they can help you." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

"I enjoy it [volunteering] because I learn new things. I learn new things and I make new friends there rather than staying at home and being lonely. So I gain some things from them especially with the community meals because their cooking is different from my home country meal. So I learn new things from them. (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Factors that hindered progress towards achieving Outcome 1

Racism and a lack of cultural understanding
As has been highlighted above, positive relationships with host communities are key to refugees and people seeking asylum feeling that they are part of safe and welcoming communities. However, perceptions were mixed among interviewees from AMIF-funded projects, statutory services and other organisations as to the extent to which host communities have made refugees and people seeking asylum feel safe and welcome. The Scottish Refugee Council's polling research26 on refugee integration in Scotland, which show increasing levels of empathy for refugees, were cited as evidence of positive attitudes towards refugees and people seeking asylum. The Scottish Refugee Festival was also viewed as a means of promoting integration.

While there was a general view among stakeholders that attitudes within local communities towards refugees and people seeking asylum had improved in recent years, stakeholders noted some challenging attitudes and approaches, even among organisations which seek to support refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, a community event designed to bring together local non-refugee families with refugees and people seeking asylum for a meal had not made any provisions for halal food. Stakeholder interviewees noted how this lack of cultural understanding could undo the well-meaning messages behind such an events.

AMIF-funded projects and stakeholders noted that the welcoming messaging of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, and the Scottish Government more widely, towards refugees and people seeking asylum was not always matched by the reality of the refugee experience. Stakeholders stated that racism continues to blight the lives of some refugees and people seeking asylum despite the political rhetoric. Some stakeholders highlighted that caution was needed in relation to the "myths about Scotland being different" in terms of its attitudes to refugees, for example, in comparison with England, otherwise further progress may not be made.

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26 See: https://scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Refugee-integration-public-attitudes-research-2020.pdf

"I mean there does seem to be better integration here, there doesn't seem to be the same hostility. But then that is kind of a dangerous discourse in itself because people do experience racism and do experience discrimination and it's a bit like being constantly gaslighted, like 'Scotland is different, refugees are welcome'. I think in general they are and there is better integration, but that overlooks individual experiences and I think we have to be careful even in the discourse in the actual Strategy […] to not gloss over the areas where refugees could be better integrated." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Despite positive examples of families who have become well integrated in their communities, other refugees and people seeking asylum shared more challenging experiences. Some, particularly those living in deprived areas of Glasgow, reported being made to feel unwelcome and unsafe in the areas they were housed. They reported experiencing unfriendly neighbours; attacks on property by neighbours; incidents of racist bullying at school; children who did not feel safe playing outside; and racism from bus drivers. Some people seeking asylum felt particularly unwelcome as a result of their immigration status and spoke of leading very isolated lives.

"I don't feel welcome, honestly, because people, how they look me and how they […] they look me as asylum seeker, because they know that I'm asylum seeker. They treat me like it's not your country, you have to go back to your country, this kind of - some people. Not all of them, because some people are very good to me, and I still remember them. As you know, everybody is not the same in every place. So some people, I had that experience, which was not good. Still now, I'm having these experiences every day, like when I go out and see different people. Some people give me a good expression. Some are not. So it's normal for me now." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

There were people seeking asylum who said that being treated like "outcasts" led them to disengage from attempts to integrate with the local community. For example, a person seeking asylum spoke of no longer trying to seek help if they were lost after so many people had 'just kept walking' and ignored them. Similar behaviour was evident among neighbours.

"Even when she sees me outside, she will pass me as if she didn't see me."(Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Refugees and people seeking asylum linked this to the fact that people tended to be housed in more deprived areas of Scotland with low levels of diversity 'that are not familiar with refugees'.

"They put us into a place where lots of problems were going on, so I couldn't, me and the children, feel safe, and they were scared. We couldn't go around and… We always try to say hello to people and feel we are part of the community, but we couldn't for many reasons, and we [were] attacked many times." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

The lack of ethnic diversity in some areas was highlighted, with refugees and people seeking asylum sharing how isolated they felt as the only black person or hijab-wearing woman in the area.

> "The only thing is I feel isolated really because I feel when you're kind of a different colour amidst other people, I feel isolated really. I feel isolated but the people are nice, depends on…everybody's not the same, some talk to you, some don't talk to you so I feel alone because I don't have much black people around where I live in my street, I'm the only black person there. Sometimes I feel isolated really." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

However, there were refugees and people seeking asylum who sought to distinguish between the behaviours of the wider population of Scots who were generally perceived to be very welcoming, and their experiences with individuals in their community who could sometimes be hostile. This contradiction was highlighted by a person seeking asylum who had experienced a neighbour throwing stones at their window and whose children no longer played in the local park due to racist incidents, but then went on to express appreciation for Scotland and Scottish people.

> "Living in Scotland is perfect for me. It's a beautiful place to live in. A beautiful place with culture. They have their culture in terms of food, in terms of language, in terms of dressing, in terms of education, but like I said before they are friendly. They are friendly. For me, Scottish people they are very nice". (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Asylum process

The extent to which refugees and people seeking asylum stated that they felt welcome in Scotland varied. This was sometimes linked to their refugee status with some differences discerned between those who had arrived as part of refugee resettlement programmes and those who were seeking asylum. Some of this related to the level of support provided by the local authority, with some Syrian and Ukrainian refugees having received intensive support from local authority staff and the wider local community. More generally, refugees who came through resettlement programmes tended to have more positive experiences in terms of receiving support to access GP services, help with employment, housing, education, socialising etc.

By contrast, people seeking asylum tended to feel less welcome as a result of their experiences within the asylum process. Not being able to access employment, full-time education, and the low levels of financial support they were entitled to were contributing factors. Stakeholders also highlighted the challenge of providing a welcome to people faced with navigating the 'hostile environment'. Furthermore, people seeking asylum had experiences where they could not access support because it was the responsibility of the Home Office. Many spoke of waiting years, or still waiting, to hear if they would be allowed to stay in Scotland. Being in limbo, in addition to not having the right to work or access other services (e.g., social care, full-time further and higher education), made it difficult for them to feel at home or to take steps to build their life in Scotland.

> "Recently, I got leave to remain, but I was in the asylum system nearly ten years. My typical day is like just waking up in the morning and leaving my children in nursery or school, and then after that, come back home and doing nothing for myself, but for my kids. Just staying in home and feeling like I'm

not… [pause] Which word I can use? Feeling like, I'm helpless, or maybe I can't do anything. Those ten years, I feel like, were - a big part of my life was ruined because of claiming asylum, because I was not able to work, I was not able to study even. I start studying in between those years, but because of my status, they asked me, 'You will not be able to carry on your study.' So that time, I was very, very depressed and feeling like there's nowhere to go and start your life as a normal person here in the UK." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Other barriers

There were a number of other barriers that impacted on the extent to which refugees and people seeking asylum reported living in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and were able to build diverse relationships and connections. These included: language barriers and being able to communicate and be understood; access to transport in terms of availability and cost; access to secure housing; and access to employment and volunteering opportunities. These are discussed in more details in the sections below regarding Outcomes 2 and 3.

3.4.3. Outcome 2: Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives

In the survey, 59% of respondents either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the New Scots Refugee Strategy Strategy had helped increase awareness among refugees and people seeking asylum of their rights and entitlements. Only 7% 'disagreed' or 'disagreed strongly' with this statement, however one-third (34%) neither agreed nor disagreed or could not answer the question.

Figure 3.5: Survey respondent agreement with statements relating to the impact of Outcome 2 (N=182)
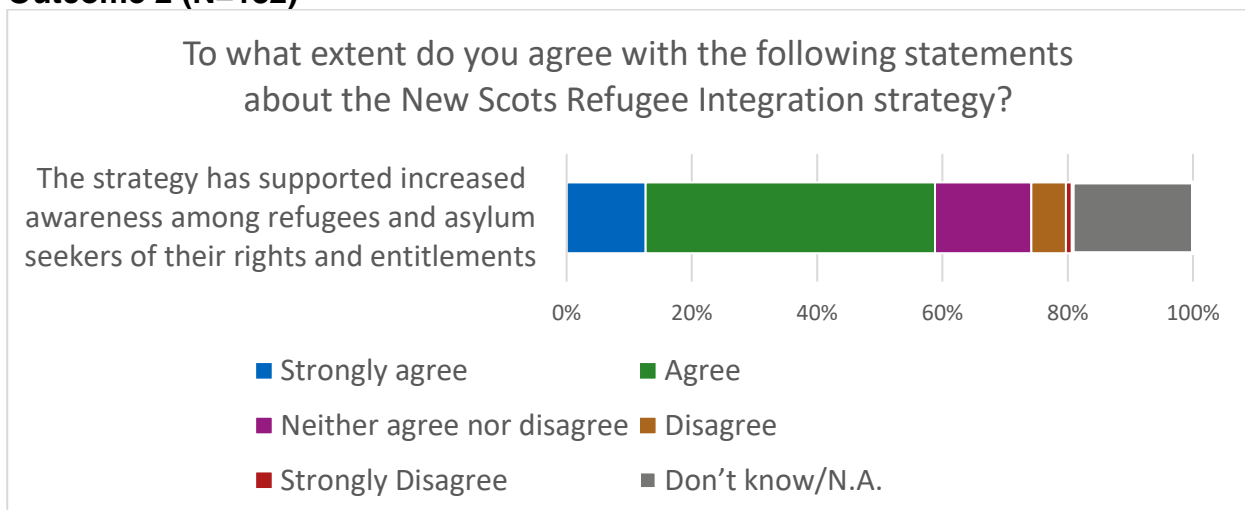
Stakeholders were unable to say as much about progress towards achieving this outcome at interview as they were in relation to the other three. Although several aspects were raised in relation to the understanding of rights and entitlements by refugees and people seeking asylum, interviewees acknowledged that the extent to which these could be directly attributed to the New Scots Refugee Integration

Strategy was more tangential. Instead, there was a more general feeling that the Strategy had contributed towards an environment for change.

As with Outcome 1, there were a range of views regarding the perceived success of Outcome 2. Factors that were perceived to have helped and mitigated against its progress in interviews with stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum, and discussion with AMIF-funded projects, are explored below.

Factors that helped progress towards achieving Outcome 2

Local authorities, local organisations and community groups
Local authorities, local organisations (including AMIF-funded projects) and community groups played a vital role in ensuring that refugees and people seeking asylum understood their rights, responsibilities and entitlements in a wide range of areas, including: the asylum process, housing, welfare, employment and education. They also helped refugees and people seeking asylum exercise their rights with the provision of interpreters, advocacy or ESOL support. Where they accessed information and support was dependent on the area in which they lived and what support was available. Some refugees and people seeking asylum said they were heavily supported by their local authority, while others accessed this information and support through third sector and community organisations and groups or through word-of-mouth from other refugees and people seeking asylum. AMIF-funded projects fed back that, as a result of their work, refugees and people seeking asylum were better able to independently access services and support once they had gained knowledge and an understanding of how services operated and what was available to meet their needs.

> "Like there was a [Council] worker, she helped me a lot, like whenever I had any forms I need to fill, anything like correspondence, its hard for me to understand. She would help me make applications and there's also like advisors to advise me with money and whenever I needed any support, they would like give me an appointment straightaway, like within 2 or 3 days. They were very very supportive so for me as a young man who wants to work and achieve." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

While stakeholders stated that some of the work undertaken around refugee integration would have happened regardless of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy (e.g. the Right to Vote campaign run by the SRC which aimed to register refugees to vote), examples were given of work that was directly influenced by the the Strategy. For example, one of the local authorities which received AMIF-funding designed a New Scots democracy project that aimed to ensure refugees were registered to vote. As part of the project they held hustings and informed people of the difference between local and national politics to assist them in the voting process. Furthermore, work was undertaken by one of the theme groups to progress skills recognition for refugees arriving with qualifications from other countries. While this work may have happened without the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, there was a view that the Strategy had provided more impetus to ensure greater integration of refugees and people seeking asylum. Programmes which aimed to recognise the prior learning of refugees and people seeking asylum were well-received.

<u>Language support</u>
Being able to access support with understanding and using English made a significant impact on whether refugees and people seeking asylum were able to understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and exercise them. Access to language support was key to integration. Refugees shared how they had struggled to find employment because of their limited English language skills. However, there were examples given of councils providing access to interpreters and the difference this made in terms of being able to complete job applications and other forms, and to access necessary support services.

Access to ESOL classes, translated information and interpreters were all cited by refugees and people seeking asylum as helping them to access a wide range of support including: legal aid, welfare/social security support, employment support, housing support and volunteering opportunties. Access to these sources of support helped refugees and people seeking asylum to pursue independent lives. Participants specifically mentioned that college ESOL classes helped them to secure well-paid employment in their field of expertise which helped them in building a life for themselves in Scotland.

> "It's very good for me. I told you, I need the courses to build and develop my language because in grammar, I'm so bad in grammar. The course is, it help me. Help me to develop myself and improve my language." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Factors that hindered progress towards achieving Outcome 2

<u>Language and communication barriers</u>
Language and communication barriers were a problem for both refugees and people seeking asylum trying to understand and exercise their rights, responsibilities and entitlements. Not having access to clear and accessible information was especially challenging for those seeking asylum who shared how difficult they found navigating the asylum process. People seeking asylum spoke of feeling 'left in the dark' about the process, how long it would take and the support available to them.

The challenges to access information in an accessible format did not only relate to the asylum process. Both refugees and people seeking asylum noted the lack of clear information on their different rights and entitlements and how they could access them. This was often a result of a reliance among those organisations providing information on refugees and people seeking asylum being able to speak and understand English adequately. They perceived that the information available was not accessible or easily understood, especially for those with lower levels of English language skills. Not being able to speak English well was perceived as a barrier to accessing help from any agency concerning their rights and entitlements, including third sector and community support organisations. Refugees and people seeking asylum noted that while lots of help was available from these organisations, if you are unable to speak English it is hard to know how to seek assistance.

> "You know this simple process was very hard for someone who doesn't speak English. I managed to go and ask for it but I know so many people they cannot even speak English so they cannot go and ask what they want. I wasn't speaking English very well, but I went to so many friends only to translate because without this help, they cannot get the help they need. (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Interviewees called for improved, easy to understand, information translated into a range of languages to help refugees and people seeking asylum better understand the process and their rights and entitlements. In response to the challenges they experienced accessing information on their rights, responsibilities and entitlements, some people seeking asylum were involved in developing materials based on their own experiences within the asylum system to support those who were new to the system. This was funded by the AMIF funding attached to the Strategy.

Finally, refugees and people seeking asylum noted the difficulty of accessing information on their rights and entitlements which is primarily available in digital and online formats. For some people seeking asylum, this made navigating the asylum process harder, as they were not used to accessing this sort of information in this way, and often did not always have data or access to the internet.

> "All my friends who arrived they suffer. They cannot find places, no one helps, they just say go to the website, so they keep asking people here and there to help them to write email or to apply because its complicated. You cannot just go on online, you know, we came from countries where there is nothing online and suddenly you come here, and everyone asks you to go online and do things and we are not able to do it. (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Welfare entitlements
Refugees and people seeking asylum reported that more work is needed to raise awareness of their welfare rights and entitlements, highlighting a lack of clarity in some of the information provided. Interviewees spoke of the difficulty of understanding rules around welfare as they apply to people in different refugee and asylum situations. They described the challenge of navigating the benefits system and understanding what they were and were not entitled to.

One person seeking asylum highlighted the inadequacy of the support available to them from the Home Office. Not allowed to work as a result of their immigration status, they relied on asylum support of £45 per week. They often spoke of not having enough money to live off, the difficulties of managing their budget and the ways in which this impacted on their mental health. People seeking asylum with families often spoke of how they were unable to meet the needs of their children, for example, in terms of providing clothing, accessing transport and extra-curricular activities.

> "The kids always ask, like, our friends kids' parents go to work. 'Why dad is not going to work, why you are not working?' And whenever they ask for the things which they see with other kids, so we were not able to provide them because we don't have enough money. We have just the money which Home Office give us. So it was really hard for us as an asylum seeker." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

The people seeking asylum we interviewed stated they had been told they were ineligible for the Sure Start Grant which would have helped with, for example, the provision of school uniforms. Instead, parents spoke of having to source second-hand uniforms, which was viewed as being demoralising. Interviewees also relied on food bank vouchers and community pantries for help with food. Others spoke of being given clothes and toys from various third sector organisations, including AMIF-funded projects.

Support to access and understand the rights of refugee and peole seeking asylum was also insufficient at times. Support workers were a key source of information on welfare entitlements, yet they, and other members of staff of statutory services, sometimes lacked the information that people needed. For example, some refugees reported they had missed out on benefits because they, or their support workers, had not known of their eligibility, exacerbating their experiences of poverty.

> "My support worker was in holiday and I was like lost. I didn't find, I can't go anywhere, I don't who to ask, and so last, like, three month, we don't have food, we don't have anything. I have to ask my friend, and my friend told me you have to wait for your support worker [to come back]. They didn't know, they didn't have any information or how they can help." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Barriers to employment and education
Stakeholders identified a need among refugees and people seeking asylum to better understand their employment rights. Rules about when and how they could work, and in what ways, also caused frustration for refugees and people seeking asylum.

All of the refugees and people seeking asylum interviewed aspired to work. People seeing asylum spoke of the great sense of satisfaction they derived from work and how negatively they were affected by not being entitled to undertake paid employment. They spoke of the boredom they experienced as a result and the challenge of keeping busy.

Some refugees said they were also unable to work, either as a result of caring responsibilities or ill health. The more significant issue was their English language skills. In some cases, this prevented them from finding any employment. For example, a refugee spoke of their disappointment that their lack of English disallowed them from working in a supermarket. Another said:

> "…when I came here for the first time, it's everything changed, like 180 degree! No work, I can't drive, I can't go out, I can't, why? Because my language, because the first time when I been here…I can't speak English, at all." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

For other refugees, language barriers meant that they had to take work in roles that did not match their experience and qualifications. Often interviewees had been employed in professional roles before arriving in Scotland. Of the refugees we interviewed just one was employed in a role which matched their previous occupation. The remainder spoke of their disappointment at having to find work that was unrelated to their previous occupation and did not match their qualifications. As

a result the work they found was much lower paid than if they were working in their occupation.

> "[In] my country I was [an academic]. So here I cannot have the same position because it's very hard and this is disappointing for me because I was so desperate to come back to classes and teach and things like this. So yeah, it makes me worry that I cannot be a teacher again. It will be hard as finance is not good. I cannot support my family by myself with this salary." (Refugee interviewee)

Not having their prior qualifications recognised was a key barrier for refugees to be able to enter into employment that reflected their previous skills and experience, in some cases requiring qualified refugees to undertake retraining programmes.

> "I think the most difficult thing was my qualifications weren't recognised. I needed to requalify myself again, and this was really disappointing for me, but you cannot change the system." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Refugees highlighted the costs associated with having to obtain further qualifications as a result of their existing qualifications not being recognised. Among both refugees and people seeking asylum, the cost of tuition fees was considered prohibitive, particularly as they would be charged international student fees. A refugee wanted to go to university to obtain a professional degree allowing them to work in the same role as in their home country but could not afford the fees. Similarly, a person seeking asylum had been offered a university place but could not afford tuition.

People seeking asylum noted they were faced with greater restrictions on accessing education due to restrictions on the types of courses they could receive funding to study. Free tuition is available only for people seeking asylum who are studying a full-time or part-time ESOL course or part-time advanced or non-advanced further education courses[27]. A person seeking asylum described their distress at being told they were ineligible for college funding having already begun their course.

> "Interview done, induction done, and after that, [the teacher's] saying, 'No, we are sorry. Because it's a full-time course, you are not able to, because of your status.' So it was really - we cry, cry. We were begging for - we ask our teacher that, please, do a part-time course because we really need to - because we feel that we start our different - little bit different life from that asylum and from that - all that mental stress, but no one help. Maybe they can't help us. They are not able to maybe help us. So that was really very hard. Few months, I was in that depression. I feel that, no, this is not fair." (Asylum seeker interviewee)

Refugees and people seeking asylum also discussed a lack of information and support in knowing what their rights and entitlements were and how to access these. A person seeking asylum spoke of the difficulty of not knowing how her

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[27] Scottish Funding Council (2015)
http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Funding_Streams_Student_Support/Support_for_Asylum_Seekers_in_Further_Higher_Education.pdf

daughter, who was nearing the end of secondary school, might go about applying to university, and who to ask.

> "The only support I needed from the high school, to guide us. If you are an asylum seeker, they must show us the route. I'm not saying they must spoon feed us, but show us the route to take for application. My daughter, she's doing whatever the other students are doing, and those who are having papers, so it's different. If there's someone in her school, they say, 'No, asylum seekers, your route is this. Take this route,' because I know most of the things, we don't qualify. My daughter, she doesn't qualify, but where to go, we don't know. That's the most difficult part. (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Rights and entitlements related to immigration status

There were important differences between the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum that we interviewed in terms of being able to exercise their rights and entitlements to pursue full and meaningful lives. Refugees who came to Scotland as part of the Syrian and Ukrainian refugee resettlement programmes tended to report more positive experiences since arriving in Scotland than those who came as people seeking asylum. This was largely related to the differences in rights and entitlements of each group, with refugees entitled to work and to access a range of benefits, that people seeking asylum were ineligible for. Examples included people seeking asylum not being able to access some welfare benefits (e.g. Best Start grants), and restrictions on employment and education. Interviewees who were seeking asylum also highlighted the ways in which delays around the processing of their asylum applications negatively impacted on their experiences. The length of the process means that people seeking asylum face very long delays to be able to access certain rights or entitlements, with ongoing impacts on their ability to become more integrated.

> "Your life is stuck, you are just at this pause and you have restriction to certain things you want to do, they say 'no you are an asylum seeker you cannot access this. You are not eligible', even when you go to school they say you are ineligible to bursary. We went there…just like that…so we are not accessing… you have a restriction to your level of education. I think those are the main things really and to move to speed up the process rather than keeping you at this one position forever." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

People seeking asylum reported experiencing anxiety and stress when waiting for updates and information on their asylum status from the Home Office. Respondents spoke of being strict with their children for fear of them getting into trouble and jeopardising their application. Others were fearful of being deported by the Home Office, with some mentioning concerns about being deported to Rwanda.

> "I will tell [children], 'You know what? You are an asylum seeker. If something happens, you are going to ruin your chance of getting papers'. Everything you must do, you have that concern as an asylum seeker, because now you are scared if you come, police come, you know. It's like you're going to spoil, you ruin everything." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

People seeking asylum arriving in Scotland were not aware of the types of support available to them and found it very challenging to adjust to their circumstances and

navigate the system. Those who had been in the asylum process for a longer time were keen to pass on their knowledge to other people seeking asylum who were newer to the process.

> "I don't know if there is a word for it, but you stay in the dark for a very long time, and it was shocking for me because I already know the process. I had someone telling me that this is completely normal. I had no language barrier and I still found it overwhelming, so I can only imagine how it would be for people who really don't know the place, who have - who just get told bare-minimum information, through no fault of anybody but from - as the process goes and the language barrier. I can just imagine that it's 100 times more isolating for other people because you don't have friends." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Other barriers

There were a number of other factors that influenced the extent to which refugees and people seeking asylum understood their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and were able to exercise these rights. For example, the availability and funding for organisations and local authorities to provide information and support, with stakeholders noting that in some local authorities there was a lack of funding for the provision of specialist legal advice on people's status and entitlements. A lack of training for local authorities and third sector organisations around the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum was also highlighted. Finally, there were stakeholders who thought information was not always reaching the people it should, and that refugees and people seeking asylum did not understand how they could input into decision-making processes that affected them. For example, this included decisions related to their rights and entitlements.

3.4.4. Outcome 3: Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs

In the stakeholder survey, approximately two-thirds of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 'encouraged broader involvement of people and organisations across Scotland in the welcoming of refugees/asylum seekers' (66%) and 'supported refugee integration through improved collaboration between organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers' (65%). A majority (57%) agreed that the Strategy had 'supported better coordinated services that meet refugee and asylum seeker needs more effectively', while 50% agreed that the Strategy has 'supported more effective use of funding to support refugee and asylum seeker integration'. Disagreement with these statements ranged from 3% to 11%.

Figure 3.6: Perceptions of the impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy on organisations and services (N=177)
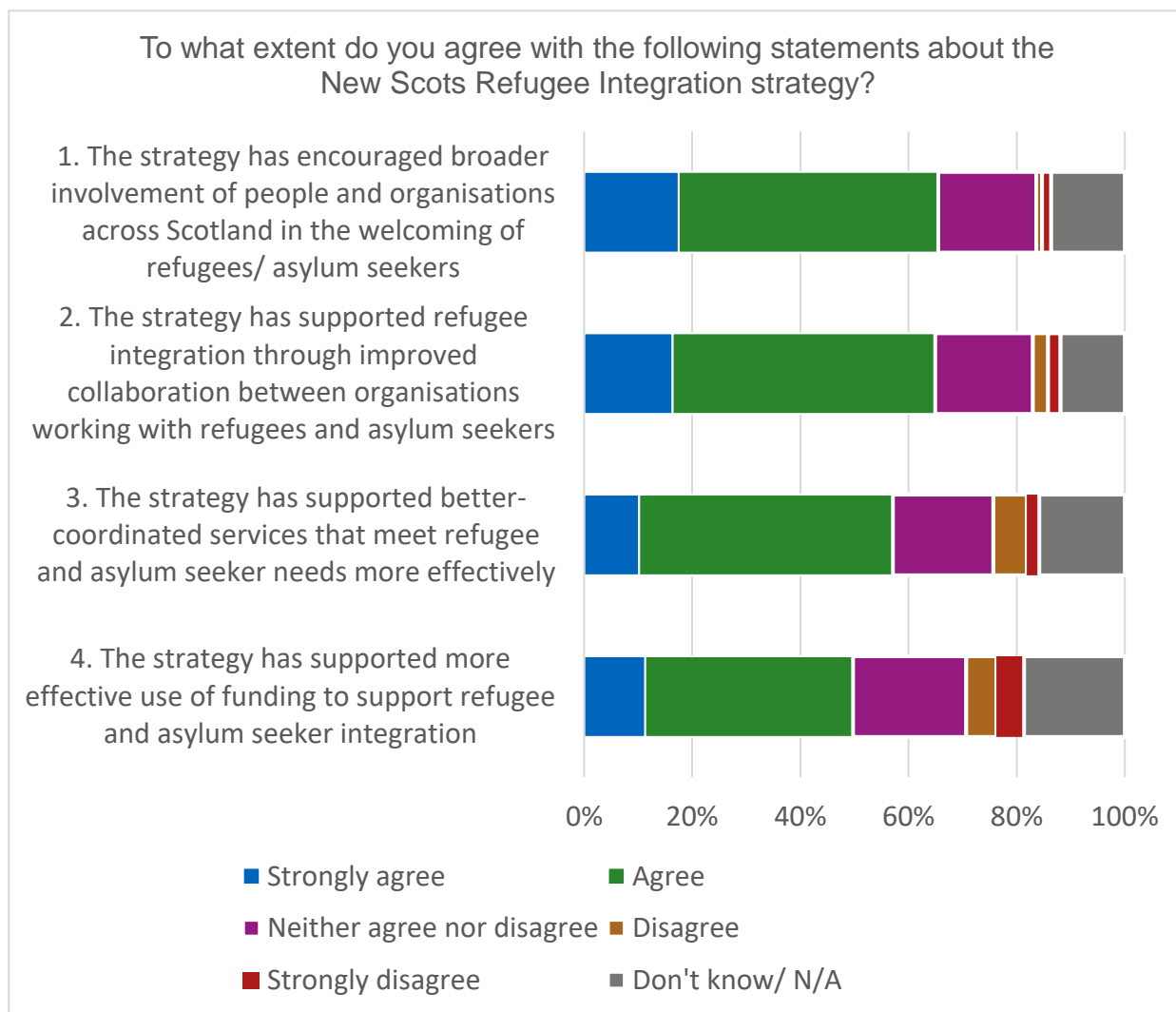
There was much discussion in the stakeholder, refugee and asylum interviews, and in the work carried out with AMIF-funded projects, about the extent to which refugees and people seeking asylum are able to access well-coordinated services which recognise their rights and needs. To enable further progress to be made in achieving Outcome 3, factors that were perceived to have helped refugees and people seeking asylum access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs were identifed. Factors that acted as a barrier, or limited progress, in achieving this outcome were also identified. These are discussed in detail below.

Factors that helped progress towards achieving Outcome 3

<u>Local authority and third sector support</u>
There were a number of factors identified that helped refugees and people seeking asylum access well-coordinated services. Many of these were facilitated either by local authorities (which have a statutory role to provide certain types of support such as housing) or third sector organisations.

Refugees on resettlement programmes highlighted the intensive support they had received from council staff (support workers, housing officers, social workers etc) to find employment (e.g., JobCentre interpreters, assistance with forms and correspondence), in providing money advice, accessing benefits, helping to equip homes, interpreting official documents, registering with GPs, dentists, schools and with health visitors. This assistance was viewed as invaluable in helping them settle in and access all the services they needed.

> "They [council] help with the daily tasks. Sometimes, they check the post and explain to them what is in the post, different letters, if there is a meeting in the school. If there is something in the house that needs to be fixed, they contact the ones who are responsible for that. Basically, everything [we] encounter in life, because [we] don't know the system here and how things work, plus the barrier of the English language. When there is, for example, a report from the hospital, they explain the report." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Refugees praised the personal touches they had received from service providers in their local authority and from third sector organisations, such as filling a refugee's fridge with Middle Eastern food for their arrival, or showing people around the local amenities. Consistency was also important, in terms of being able to build a relationship with specific members of council support staff over an extended period. Interpretation services were highly valued as was support in completing applications (for benefits, word, college, etc.). Other ways in which local authorities and third sector organisations helped refugees and people seeking asylum access services included providing:

- ESOL support, either via colleges or local community organisations or volunteers
- Free bus passes to minimise the financial burden for refugees and people seeking asylum travelling to services
- Funding for laptops/tablets, internet access to enable people to access information or attend meetings online
- Childcare, creche or activities for children
- Clothing (including school uniforms) and toys for children
- Reimbursement for expenses
- Free meals and food bank vouchers
- Mental health support.

Collaborative working
Increased collaborative working amongst statutory and third sector organisations was perceived to have enabled refugees and people seeking asylum to access well-coordinated services. Overall, there was a view amongst stakeholders that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had helped to create an environment that encouraged partnership working between the Scottish Government, local authorities and third sector organisations and the fostering of new relationships and

connections. As previously mentioned, the formation of the New Scots theme groups contributed to this.

AMIF-funded projects highlighted that as a result of receiving funding to deliver their work they had greater staff capacity which enabled them to work more effectively in partnership and build stronger links with other organisations in their community. This in turn enabled projects to gain greater awareness and understanding of what others were doing to support refugees and people seeking asylum. Projects stated that AMIF-funding led to them being more effective and efficient in supporting individuals to meet their needs.

> "This funding has given us the opportunity to do this outreach model which I think has been really interesting and like building the relationships elsewhere and also seeing the positives and the challenges, like working with that particular partner organisation. […] For the rest of our casework we have a bit of a tighter remit but actually because the member of staff [funded by AMIF funding] is there once a week doing appointments she has more time and can just be a bit broader and so actually her casework is - ticks more integration boxes I suppose. And she spends more time helping people access integration activities than we are able to do in the rest of the casework […] I think that having this funding has meant that that's been possible." (Stakeholder interviewee)

AMIF funding was also perceived to have encouraged and facilitated organisations to build links with new partners. While there were challenges experienced in working with new organisations (e.g., a lack of cultural understanding among staff which resulted in project delivery being inappropriate for participants. For example, in terms of the provision of halal food), on the whole these new partnerships were welcomed. These new relationships and networks were viewed as a means of building refugee integration as they enabled organisations to better signpost refugees and people seeking asylum to other sources of support. Collectively, this meant organisations were able to provide a wider range of support and services for refugees and people seeking asylum.

> "I think, what it has really done is it's networked all the organisations. There are so many organisations, particularly in Glasgow, who are doing small pockets of work, and I think it has created a central network around this Strategy. Whether people agree or disagree with the minor details of it, or how - the implementation of it, but actually, it's created a living, breathing network, which allows for faster responses when crisis emerges." (Stakeholder interviewee)

AMIF funding

Stakeholders said that AMIF funding had a positive impact on the provision of services for refugees and people seeking asylum. Those who represented organisations that had received AMIF funding shared that the funding had enabled their organisation to expand their work to serve new areas, new populations of refugees and people seeking asylum, and to address gaps in provision. The SRC, in particular, was praised for using the fund to contribute towards the implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy by supporting

individuals to understand their rights and entitlements, access services and help them to make progress with employment and education. SRC also undertook a mapping exercise to map local groups across Scotland which stakeholders found very valuable.

More broadly, AMIF-funded projects helped refugees and people seeking asylum to arrange school placements, engage with health visitors, register with GPs and dentists and find legal support.

> "I wasn't aware of the services that I could go to, they [third sector organisations] would know the organisations that I could go to so they would help us with these services. Basically, they would be there at every single step that we take and support us. Like schools, colleges, helping with everything basically, registration." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Evidence from AMIF-funded projects suggested that for refugees and people seeking asylum to engage meaningfully with support services it is important to foster an environment in which they feel welcome, supported, included, and safe. In the Matter of Focus workshops, AMIF-funded projects recounted that some of the work to achieve this included practical support such as ensuring interpreters were available, that barriers relating to childcare and transport were addressed, and more broadly that there was a good level of cultural competence amongst staff delivering work. Projects also raised the importance of ensuring that refugees and people seeking asylum were involved in service design.

> "Always start with supporting the voices of those seeking sanctuary to express what they feel and need, rather than providing what you think they want. Might seem obvious, but is often a repeated mistake." (AMIF-funded project workshop participant)

The fact that trauma is a common experience of refugees and people seeking asylum was an important contextual factor underpinning the work the AMIF projects delivered. One project raised the importance of developing an in-depth understanding of trauma and ensuring that projects are trauma-informed in how they deliver support.

Another key theme around engagement was that refugees and people seeking asylum needed to feel that services were useful and relevant to them, and that they felt a sense of motivation and excitement to be engaged. Individuals and families faced barriers to accessing services due to difficulties with transport, childcare, the demands of family life and the strong impact of poor wellbeing. It was felt that to overcome these barriers required not only practical support, but for refugees and people seeking asylum to feel the investment of their time and energy would be worthwhile.

<u>Increased understanding of the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum</u>
Stakeholders thought that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy increased awareness of the issues facing refugees and people seeking asylum which led to more consistent and improved joined up working between statutory services, the third sector and others at a local level. There were stakeholders who also reported that the Strategy had led to a greater awareness of the needs of refugees and

people seeking asylum within the Scottish Government which resulted in improvement in the provision of services for refugees and people seeking asylum.

> "Well I think it's definitely facilitated more joined up support because before having effective Strategy, different groups doing their own thing, Local Authorities doing their own thing and if you're a refugee or a local community where something good happens to be happening then you benefit from it, but you could be in a complete blackhole where nothing is happening and you're still dealing with the situation. So I think it's definitely moved us in a positive direction from that point of view and I think it has also raised awareness at government level." (Stakeholder interviewee)

> "I think the biggest thing is that people have a better understanding across all partnerships, across all 32 Local Authority areas, of the needs of asylum seekers and refugees that they didn't have before. I include in that the police, the health partners, third sector partners, education establishments. And you wouldn't necessarily say that's because of New Scots, but I think it gives people that basis of, you know, if you're new to refugee integration, you've come from, I don't know, drilling for oil or something and you come into refugee integration, you have a document that says, 'this is what we aspire to in Scotland, this is our overall vision of what we want and these are our outcomes that we're hoping to achieve', just giving people that basis…" (Stakeholder interviewee)

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was said to provide a framework for organisations working with refugees and people seeking asylum. Stakeholders noted how public services have engaged with the Strategy and were able to draw upon the expertise developed in and around Glasgow through the second iteration of the Strategy. It was felt this allowed other local authorities to use the Strategy to plan their services and support when resettling refugees for the first time.

> "I think, as I say, it does provide that framework for all of the organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers. For the public services, those services have all been engaged in New Scots [Refugee Integration Strategy] and the expertise has been developed from Glasgow, but actually it's also the expertise from Glasgow that has largely, initially at any rate and even into the second Strategy has driven what's in that Strategy. As I say, I know that local authorities who are resettling refugees used New Scots to plan their services and support. So I think it has been pretty integral to how we approach the work." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Despite some perceived progress at local authority level in terms of how the Strategy had supported greater consistency in service provision, there was nonetheless a sense that statutory services still have some way to go before they fully meet the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, a stakeholder referred to the "postcode lottery" faced by refugees and people seeking asylum in accessing ESOL classes, in that provision varied by local authority area. Another stakeholder recalled an incident of racial discrimination within a statutory service. They argued, however, that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was vital to addressing issues such as this and bringing about change.

"I think that strategies like this one and others that are around, they are a necessity. They've got to be there. They're a part of the jigsaw and if you can generate enough conversation around them, then they do inform practice that ends up being a bit more joined up." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Factors that hindered progress towards achieving Outcome 3

ESOL provision and access

While all of the refugees and people seeking asylum interviewed said that they had received at least some support with learning English, those who came to Scotland as part of refugee resettlement programmes had primarily been offered ESOL lessons by their local authorities that were community-based and largely delivered by volunteers, rather than delivered more formally through colleges. It was not always clear why English classes were delivered in this way, though in some cases it appeared to be as a result of location, with no colleges close by. Stakeholders also mentioned long waiting lists for college ESOL classes. There was a concern among both survey respondents and stakeholder interviewees that the Scottish Government's merging of the ESOL Strategy with the Adult Learning Strategy[28] had reduced the visibility of ESOL provision. There was a sense that combining it into a larger Strategy had diluted the importance of ESOL.

"The New Scots Strategy heralds language as a standalone element that's integral to settlement. Why would you then amalgamate an ESOL Strategy back into an Adult Learning Strategy and effectively dilute the last, well, what? - 7, 8, 9 years of policy that we've already had?" (Stakeholder interviewee)

Refugees noted that these community-led ESOL classes were often made up of people from predominantly the same country. While this provided an opportunity to meet other refugees and people seeking asylum, it also meant people often spoke in their own language rather than communicating in English. Those who had experienced both community and college-based ESOL delivery expressed a preference for college delivery as the learning was more structured and the primary language spoken was English. Ultimately they thought this allowed their English language skills to develop more quickly and at a level that helped them to find employment in their specialist field.

"But when I went to the college it was different because they had like people from all different nationalities, from Eastern Europe and from other countries who all have to communicate in English. So that really…I found that really helpful." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

In the interviews with stakeholders and with refugees and people seeking asylum, it was noted that accessing ESOL provision, particularly in colleges, could be challenging. Some refugees in resettlement programmes noted that they had been promised formal ESOL classes but were instead offered community-based classes led by volunteers. Others highlighted the issue of long college waiting lists. These views were shared by survey respondents and stakeholder interviewees, including local authority and education representatives, among others.

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[28] Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland 2022-2027 (www.gov.scot)

> "The need is astronomical, there is so much unmet need, there are so many people who cannot access language classes for example, sitting on waiting lists for years, they slip through the system, can't get into college places, all that kind of stuff which is actually what this Strategy lays out, you want to have those progression routes that people go through and have those opportunities at employment for example." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Refugees and people seeking asylum reported varying views with regards to the mode of delivery for ESOL lessons. Some found it easier to attend classes online since COVID restrictions were brought in as it was easier to arrange caring responsibilities and volunteering around this. Others found the online lessons difficult to access as a result of health issues or caring responsibilities, with several having not taken part since they went online.

Refugees whose local authority support was due to end as a result of the length of time they had been in Scotland were also interviewed. They were worried as to how they might cope in terms of language once their English classes stopped. For example, they were concerned that it would be difficult to make applications for leave to remain and pass their citizenship tests without a good grasp of English.

> "So again this is another issue. In terms of English classes as far as I'm aware after the 5 years it's going to stop. So you can imagine the apprehension, the stress of learning English, at the same time just to be a citizen in the UK you need to go through an assessment or exam you know, so again the assessment for English as well, so I don't know how can I manage this one I don't really know." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Variance in local provision
There were stakeholders who thought that the area that refugees and people seeking asylum lived in impacted on their ability to access well-coordinated services. There was a view that because Glasgow had a history of migration and dispersal, refugees and people seeking asylum living in Glasgow would be able to draw on support from previous generations of refugees and people seeking asylum and that a wider range of organisational sources of support would be available. It was expressed that a lack of experience could present challenges for areas of Scotland without a history of refugee resettlement, for example, in terms of organisations' understanding of different cultures and languages.

> "[…] it seems by sending these groups of asylum seekers outside of Glasgow, basically, this is creating further inequalities for them, so they are more disadvantaged than they would be if they were in Glasgow. I think obviously, that doesn't support any integration or inclusion whatsoever." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Provision of services and support did differ across different local authority areas, and the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum of accessing statutory services (including GPs, school placements, health visitors, dentists etc) therefore varied in terms of the degree of support received from the local authority. However, the area's history of providing support to refugees and people seeking asylum was not always the determining factor. Overall, refugees who arrived as part of refugee resettlement programmes appeared to have received considerable levels of support

from their local authority. This was particularly the case for those who were dispersed to areas which were new to supporting refugees. Refugees placed in more rural areas spoke of working with dedicated local authority staff who were tasked with focusing on their needs and assisted them in accessing services. Refugees and people seeking asylum who lived in cities tended to receive assistance in accessing services from third sector and community organisations. For example, people seeking asylum said they were put in touch with the relevant services through organisations they met while placed in hotels. However, there were also refugees and people seeking asylum who reported receiving no assistance with accessing services, having to rely on themselves. This was particularly the case for people seeking asylum, who spoke of the challenge of navigating these systems without support when they arrived.

> "You know what I feel honestly, when you are a refugee, they just say okay you can do it by yourself, bye-bye! It's like this, they leave people alone, they thought we can manage ourselves". (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

In local authorities where significant levels of support had been provided to arrivals through refugee resettlement programmes, there were concerns about how refugees would manage once this support ceased at the end of five years.

Access to transport

Travel difficulties were another key barrier to refugees and people seeking asylum being able to access joined up services; this was raised by both AMIF-funded projects, stakeholders and refugees and people seeking asylum. Stakeholders commented that refugees and people seeking asylum were often placed in deprived areas by the Home Office, where access to transport was essential for travel to appointments or shops. However, stakeholder, refugee and people seeking asylum interviewees reported that the cost of a car or public transport such as bus travel, was often prohibitive and this impacted on their ability to access services. Cost was exacerbated if mutiple transport connections were required to access relevant services. Refugees and people seeking asylum noted that to access ESOL classes/local colleges, mosques or services such as the job centre, they would need to take two or three buses. For some interviewees, the time it would take to reach colleges/local amenities would be too long, and the costs of doing so prohibitively expensive. This was most accute in rural areas, but was relevant to those in urban areas too. In addition, the reliability of transport was a barrier to accessing services. Buses being late resulting in missed connections, or not turning up at all, were mentioned.

> "We just pray in home, in Ramadan. The holy month of Ramadan. Man needs to go to mosque, but we can't because of how far we are. […] I need to change two buses, and then coming back, like, three, four hours in travel because bus services are - it's nightmare as well, so it was really hard for us to - they move us in those areas where there is no mosques, there is not any of these kind of groups where we can involve ourself." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Similarly, accessing AMIF-funded projects and volunteering roles could also be restricted due to the cost of travel. The cost of transport was particularly challenging

for people seeking asylum who are not eligible for benefits in addition to their Home Office funding. It was noted that the provision of free bus passes for school children in Scotland had made a difference, and interviewees called for this to be extended to refugees and people seeking asylum.

> "Now once you remove that money from the £40 there's almost nothing left for the transportation and anything […] the people like asylum seekers, they should help us with concessionary card because we buy transportation all the time. We buy £5. It's expensive you know. They should help us with the transport. They should give us concessionary cards, so not just only people that are 60-years-old or young Scots. So just for people in the asylum who are struggling." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Housing issues

AMIF-funded projects and stakeholders thought that refugees and people seeking asylum did not always have access to accommodation that met their needs, particularly those living in hotels. The types of housing and accommodation provided to refugees and people seeking asylum were seen as limiting integration in communities, especially the use of hotel accommodation, which also carried the threat of individuals being moved with little notice to unfamiliar areas. Those housed in the community were viewed as more integrated because they are able to build a life in a community and more easily access local services.

> "They have community flats, they have neighbours. They can jump on a bus to come to us. They're near shops and everything that they need, whereas - and that really helps people to integrate, but with this new practice of housing people in hotels or housing them in different cities that don't have a lot of experience and places like [AMIF project] to support them, that's putting up barriers to people being integrated." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Interviewees' experiences of housing were sometimes difficult. Their accommodation was reported as causing fear and loneliness, because of the lack of contact with neighbours and the deprived areas they were living in. They also admitted not going out at night due to fear.

> "We must sign daily at the Home Office, so we'd go there, quickly sign and when we are coming back we'd be checking to be sure nobody is under the staircase. It was so lonely." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Experiences of hotel accommodation were mixed. Some pointed to the sense of community with other refugees and people seeking asylum, while others highlighted the difficulties of having no cooking facilities or space for children to play.

Among those housed in flats and houses in the community, experiences varied. Some of those placed in areas which were relatively new to refugee support had very positive experiences. They spoke of close relationships with their housing officers and of all their housing needs being met. Elsewhere, refugees and people seeking asylum shared experiences of their housing needs not being addressed. They lived in cramped environments, with little space for their children and had been on waiting lists for new homes for some time. Some refugees and people seeking asylum had requested to be moved to new accommodation. Those that

were able to move experienced long waiting times for new accommodation. Others were denied new housing.

> "I told my housing officer that if it is possible for them to move us away from here because my children always cried, but the housing told us that we don't have any rights to reject any accommodation they give us. So that's why we have been here till now." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Some interviewees experienced poor living conditions, citing problems with damp, mould and the need for repairs. The speed with which these concerns were addressed by housing officers varied. Some stated that issues had been left unaddressed for a long time, whereas others said their housing officers had been very helpful, also assisting them with non-housing matters.

Muslim refugees and people seeking asylum noted that they were often placed a long way from any mosques, and that it could be difficult to find local shops which sold halal meat and other culturally appropriate foods. This was a greater concern for those living in more rural areas, though a few in these areas noted they were able to access all that they needed locally.

Finding housing was a difficulty for some refugees and people seeking asylum, who noted the reluctance of landlords to rent homes to those in receipt of benefits. Interviewees said they had lived with friends or family when they first arrived while they waited to find somewhere to live. This carried challenges in terms of living in cramped spaces with a lack of privacy. Some housing placements were problematic for those with disabilities. In some cases, they spoke of being placed in accommodation without appropriate access, such as having to deal with stairs, which amplified their experiences of isolation.

> "It was not cool because I was staying with someone who didn't have a place for me in their home because the council only like gives you a place that exactly fits your family, no extra people, so she was in that situation, and I had no place. It was on the third floor, and I struggle with stairs, so it was isolating because I didn't go out with them. I didn't do anything. I was at home most of the time. Yeah, the first period of time was not good." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Gaps in service provision for refugees and people seeking asylum

The intersectional experiences of being a refugee or person seeking asylum were also highlighted by AMIF-funded projects and stakeholders, particularly in terms of how this relates to poverty. In the workshops, AMIF-funded projects reflected that overall the levels of need amongst refugees and people seeking asylum who had arrived outside of planned settlement processes were extremely high, and projects were seeing increasing proportions of those who were destitute. Despite the diversity of nationalities and backgrounds, the needs and reasons for connecting with services were very similar. Projects also reflected that some of these same needs were emerging among families in the wider population in ways they had not seen before, due to cost of living pressures.

The fact that people with no recourse to public funds and no leave to remain are permitted to access health services but not social care in Scotland was seen as a

limitation, not just for refugees and people seeking asylum, but also for service providers.

> "[Services] don't really serve this population very well at all. They've obviously never come across it before and they don't adapt their own service to fit kind of thing […] I'm not saying that there's not good stuff out there. There is. It's just that quite a lot of the standard stuff just doesn't work for the New Scots." (Stakeholder interviewee)

> "But the reality is it is extremely hard to be one service that's providing for the needs of people independent of their status when other services cannot." (Stakeholder interviewee)

As previously mentioned, limited funding for statutory and third sector services had an impact on service provision for refugees and people seeking asylum. Funding affected the reach of services in terms of the number of people who could be supported, and the level of support that could be offered. There was an indication from stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum that access to services varied by geographic location. A lack of funding for ESOL was specifically mentioned by stakeholder interviews and survey respondents, access to which was thought to be particularly challenging for refugees and people seeking asylum in rural areas. Respondents would like to see further funding for college-based ESOL tutors and to expand the reach of ESOL across Scotland.

> "There is still a lack of funding to support the delivery of ESOL, particularly in rural areas. I feel the Strategy doesn't sufficiently take into account the specific needs of refugees and support agencies in rural areas." (Survey respondent)

> "I think language support is very necessary. Communication is a fundamental part of integration. There needs to be investment in ESOL, including tutor training, especially to develop skills in working with ESOL learners with no learning strategies and no literacy. Training of tutors to include a knowledge of CLD is necessary and ESOL tutors need better terms and conditions. I work with so many refugees who want to integrate and who want to work, but they are overlooked as their English is seen as 'not good enough'." (Survey respondent)

3.4.5. Outcome 4: Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations

In the stakeholder survey, 61% of respondents 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' that 'the Strategy has taken into account the lived experiences of refugees'. Only 5% 'disagreed' or 'disagreed strongly' with this statement, however 34% neither agreed nor disagreed or could not answer the statement.

Figure 3.7: Survey respondent agreement with statements relating to the impact of Outcome 4 (N=183)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the New Scots Refugee Integration strategy?

The strategy has taken into account the lived experiences of refugees

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Strongly agree   ■ Agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree
■ Disagree   ■ Strongly Disagree   ■ Don't know/N/A
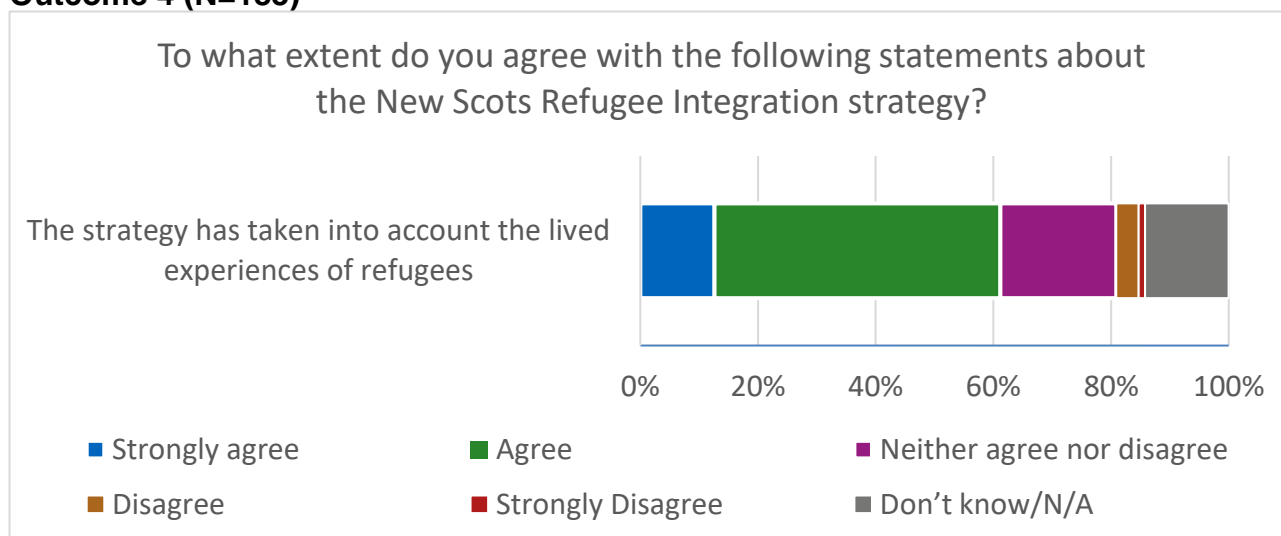
There were a range of views regarding the extent to which stakeholders thought policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and peple seeking asylum, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations. To enable further progress to be made in achieving Outcome 4, factors that were perceived to have helped and hindered progress were identifed through the qualitative interviews with stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum and in the work carried out with AMIF-funded projects. These are discussed in detail below.

Factors that helped progress towards achieving Outcome 4

Positive messaging of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
AMIF-funded projects and stakeholders emphasised that having a Strategy promoting a positive message of integration, with Scotland being a welcoming place for refugees and people seeking asylum, was important. It was viewed as framing political and cultural leadership for Scotland, illustrating a commitment from the Scottish Government to work alongside other organisations towards a shared goal. This was important to organisations who have been working on integration issues for a long time as they no longer felt they were operating in isolation. The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was also helpful to organisations and groups who were new to this area of work, as they were able to scrutinise the Strategy for guidance.

> "The fact that the government have set this up again demonstrates to people that the Scottish Government are committed to this issue and want to make this happen. I think that that's really positive too. It sends a positive message to all these organisations like the [Scottish] Refugee Council that have been working on these issues for so long. So I think that from that perspective there is this feeling of we're not alone, we're working towards something and we're taking collective action and we will therefore hopefully achieve collective results together." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Stakeholders referenced the Strategy's ambition that refugees and people seeking asylum should feel welcome from day one, and although it was felt that this had not yet been achieved, the Strategy was viewed as a potential means to achieve this in the future. Interviewees highlighted the willingness among institutions to work in partnership with others.

> "To embrace new communities into their projects and into their institutions […]That feels positive, because it feels like there is a willingness and an openness to work with and engage with people so that they do feel like they're at home here" (Stakeholder interviewee)

Stakeholders also stated that having a Scottish refugee integration Strategy helped to differentiate Scotland's approach from that of the UK Government, which was perceived to be more hostile. Stakeholders highlighted the positive recognition that the Strategy was said to have received both in Scotland and internationally. This contributed to a shared sense among stakeholders that integration is more successful in Scotland than the rest of the UK, although it was recognised that there is still considerable work required. Furthermore, interviewees who were familiar with, or had been involved in the development of the first New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, spoke of the progress that has been made, with one concluding: "I think there's quite a seismic shift in the culture about Scotland and reserved policymaking."

> "We meet quite often with colleagues from other parts of the UK and they will regularly say they are very envious of having a New Scots Strategy because they recognise that it gives people - it legitimises what they do for us in Scotland. They feel the lack of that - it feels more [hesitation] disconnected, broken up within England because they have their local government association where councils can come together. There's overarching documents for the Home Office but there is not necessarily that shared goal across public and third sector in the same way as we have in Scotland." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Factors that hindered progress towards achieving Outcome 4

Reserved policy making

Reserved policy making was viewed by stakeholders as a key limitation in terms of implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, both in terms of the workings of the core and themed groups, and more generally. This was perceived to have limited the impact of Outcome 4. Stakeholders spoke of their fears around the new Nationality and Borders Bill and the ways that this could impact on future refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland. Interviewees described feeling as if they were having to counteract UK Government policy in Scotland.

> "I think that fundamentally it does feel like the Home Office's approach and the Nationalities and Borders Act is diametrically opposed to the integration Strategy. So it's very difficult to see how good integration could be enabled while these policies are happening which mean that people are stuck in hotels, dispersed, sort of just moved around, can't put down links, I mean people can't

> even have continuity of support from a lawyer which you need for your case, let alone making friends with the wider community." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Although it was argued that the reserved policy made refugee integration more difficult in Scotland, there was a view that there was more within the powers of devolved policy which the Scottish Government could use to promote integration and support the rights, needs and aspirations of refugees and people seeking asylum. Some interviewees highlighted creative ways of working around policy restrictions, for example, exploring ways of introducing refugee-inclusive legislation such as changing clauses to promote further and higher education provision for refugees, or the SRC's campaign to extend the voting franchise to people seeking asylum. Stakeholders also highlighted more that could be done to ensure that refugees and people seeking asylum have access to high quality ESOL in their local areas, greater access to interpreters and translated information, particularly relating to their rights and entitlements and support to exercise these.

> "In terms of integration I think the Scottish Government does have quite a lot of devolved powers when it comes to education and healthcare etc and there's probably more that can be done." (Stakeholder interviewee)

> "I would say that the Scottish Government has kind of crowed a bit about how great a job it's doing compared to the rest of the UK but actually there's plenty of things they could be doing […] they could be doing more on ESOL, they could be doing more on employment, they could be doing more on coordinating across councils…" (Stakeholder interviewee)

Lack of funding
There was widespread disappointment expressed by all stakeholder groups that funding was not attached to the development and implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Funding to deliver both statutory and third sector support and services for refugees and people seeking asylum was perceived to be lacking. Local authority survey respondents highlighted the precarious nature of funding for services for refugees and people seeking asylum, and that it was insufficient to address growing need in light of recent resettlement programmes. They also highlighted insufficient funding for designated staff to work on the meeting needs of refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, staff in schools and staff delivering ESOL.

However, funding through AMIF was warmly welcomed by both the third sector and local authorities. All local authority and third sector stakeholders from AMIF projects said that the work they undertook would not have been possible without the funding they received. However, they, and stakeholders who were not associated with AMIF-funded projects, raised concerns about the short-term and one-off nature of the funding. It was noted that the short-term nature of the funding meant there was little opportunity to train staff and meet aims and objectives in the allotted time. Some stakeholders expressed concerns about the administration of the fund, noting that delays had impacted on the delivery of the projects and in some cases shortened the delivery period. This was particularly difficult when working with new partners where there was not the time available to build relationships and capacity. Without longer-term funding, it was said that it was a challenge to change people's

attitudes and promote community cohesion. Stakeholders from AMIF-funded projects were concerned about what would happen when the funding ended.

> "Well this project has over exceeded our expectations and we've over provided, we've done a lot more than we said we would […] we keep talking about integration and the importance of integration and that is not just pulling out and stopping. We've built this relationship of trust, we've built the infrastructure for integration to happen, so the continuation of it would be imperative I think. So we are hoping and looking to expect that there will be further funding coming out and we get asked for a lot of reporting on what we're doing." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Some projects had sought to build sustainability into the funded projects, for example, training others in order to embed programmes across a wider range of organisations and services. This option was not available to all, and those who took a more one-off approach noted that without further funding their projects would not continue.

> "It can take a bit of time to get it off the ground, and so if you've only got a year's funding, sometimes you're just getting a thing up and running and then it's like, 'Well, we can't do it any more.' That's so frustrating. Or maybe we can't get quite as much again, so we can only do part of it, or we can only do it once a week now." (Stakeholder interviewee)

> "What will happen going forward once the funding round is over? How can the work that has been started be sustained? And what will the purpose of a new Strategy be if there's no funding commitment? And I guess it's either for the Scottish Government to make a funding commitment or…because…I don't know but I suspect EU funding won't…now will really not be accessible anymore." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Siloed policy working

As outlined in section 3.3, siloed ways of working within the Scottish Government were perceived to have limited progress in relation to this outcome. There was a view that policy had been developed in areas that affect refugees and people seeking asylum (e.g. education, housing) without directly addressing their needs. Stakeholders thought that not enough action was being taken at a policy level to ensure that the outcomes of the Strategy were being met. Stakeholders would like to see greater cross-policy working within the Scottish Government and the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum considered in all relevant policy areas.

3.5. Learning for the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Through the analysis of data from the stakeholder survey, interviews with stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum and the Matter of Focus workshops, this section addresses the following research questions:

- To what extent do the observed results and the perspectives of service users, staff and stakeholders suggest the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy contributed to outcomes (whether improved, worsened or unchanged)?

- How sustainable are these changes?
- What lessons learned and recommendations for future practice can be drawn from the experiences of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to date?
- What elements of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy are working well, and what elements are working less well?
- What aspects of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy could be adapted or developed based on the insights from this work?
- To what extent has the absence of a structured funding arrangement impacted the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and implementation, and how would the continuation of this policy impact future practice and implementation?
- How have the outcomes of New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy benefited from the partnership approach to policy and implementation?

Stakeholder interviewees, survey respondents, refugees and people seeking asylum shared their thoughts on how the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy could be improved, and their priorities for the next version of the Strategy. Overall, ideas for the next Strategy related to challenges and barriers raised earlier in this report. These broadly fell into two categories: suggested improvements to the development and implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, and suggested ways to make services more accessible, refugees and people seeking asylum feel more welcome and to better understand their rights and entitlements.

3.5.1. The development and implementation of the next Strategy

The following key themes were identified which, if addressed, would improve the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's development and implementation.

Provision of funding

A lack of funding to support the implementation of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was a common concern in stakeholder interviews and survey responses and was perceived to have impeded progress to date. Therefore, to ensure that the implementation of the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is not dependent on 'goodwill', participants called for a budget to be assigned to support the implementation of the Strategy. It was felt that this would help gain 'buy-in' from stakeholder organisations from all sectors and enable activities to be taken forward.

Representatives of third sector and community organisations and groups that support refugees and people seeking asylum stated that funding was critical to enable them to continue their work, which some viewed as addressing gaps in state provision. Local authority respondents called for further funding to deliver services and support such as housing, ESOL and employability services for refugees and people seeking asylum. Funding for additional staff and training was also highlighted. Stakeholders from both statutory and third sector organisations noted the particular need for longer-term funding, which covers organisational running

costs (e.g. venue costs, utility bills etc) as well as staff time. Without longer-term funding, capacity to continue work throughout the next iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy would be uncertain for many organisations.

> "I think you need three things if you're going to make a difference: you need things to be funded, you need things to be legislated and you need to win over the hearts and minds of the public […] you need the three to work together. A public that's willing to listen, a government who's willing to fund and a government who's willing to put it into legislation so that nobody can slip out the net." (Stakeholder interviewee)

> "It kind of feels a bit strange, is that the fact that there is no specific money that's attached to the outcomes and to the Strategy […] I just think that they just need to put some money behind it and I think after AMIF there will be an expectation particularly from third sector organisations that the Scottish Government will put something behind it." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Underpinned by legislation
To help ensure the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy achieves its objectives, stakeholders called for the message underpinning it to be strengthened with Scottish legislation for refugee rights and entitlements. Stakeholders queried the authority and jurisdiction of the current iteration and suggested stronger governance is needed in future for it to have a greater impact.

> "I do think the policy piece needs to be embedded a lot more by Scottish Government policy, particularly in light of UK Government direction of travel and the proposals for the Act that will bring in differential treatment. So I think Scotland needs to legislate, bring in all these different rights and entitlements that are in guidance or in regulations, or just be of a very very solid base about integration policy towards refugees in Scotland and what their rights and entitlements are." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Wider engagement and awareness
A key theme identified in both the stakeholder survey and interviews was the need for engagement in the development and implementation of the Strategy and awareness of the Strategy across a wider range of groups.

Organisations and community groups
Stakeholders reported that they would like to see more organisations and groups, particularly those which are led by refugees and people seeking asylum, involved in the development and implementation of the next iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Interviewees noted the importance of involving organisations from across Scotland, representing different regions, both urban and rural locations, and different types of groups and communities.

Outreach events with organisations and groups that may use the new Strategy were perceived as one way to engage key groups and help them understand the role they could play in implementing it. Some stakeholders went further in suggesting coordinated local events where organisations come together to meet and explore how the next iteration could be implemented in their area and context.

The implementation of the current New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was overseen by a core group and a series of thematic groups made up of representatives from Scottish Government, local government, other public sector, third sector and private sector organisations. For the next Strategy, stakeholders called for wider representation of organisations and partners involved in developing and implementing the Strategy. One view was that the current structures do not reflect the number of partners involved in supporting New Scots. Expanding the group membership to include a wider range of organisations would, it was suggested, increase buy-in.

> "If we're setting outcomes for each of the subgroups and then the wider outcomes as well, then it has to be a wider process that people buy into and people agree that these are the outcomes that we want to work towards." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Refugees and people seeking asylum
Stakeholders thought that collaborating with and co-creating more elements of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy with those with lived experience of being a refugee or persons seeking asylum would help ensure that the right issues are focused upon and implemented in a way that will be most impactful.

> "We need to engage people for who policy are made [sic], so that [we understand what] is concerning them most." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Stakeholders argued that better representation of refugees and people seeking asylum in the development and implementation of the Strategy would ensure that the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy is truly experience-led and informed. It was suggested that care should be taken to ensure that these opportunities were accessible to individuals outside the Central Belt (particularly those in rural areas). For example, it was said that engagement activities should be delivered in an accessible format (e.g. in terms of language, paying for transport or childcare where required etc), to mitigate against excluding those who wish to participate.

> "I see it broadly, not just for New Scots, but a lot of the engagement forums that exist tend to attract educated, white professionals and retired professionals. That's because there's a requirement that you know how to navigate those sort of meetings, that you've got the ability and time to read the 40-page report and that you can come along to a meeting that's on a Tuesday afternoon every month and requires two hours of your time. So yes, I feel like engaging with New Scots and the population more broadly, you need to have more accessible meetings, more accessible ways for people to engage and tell you what they're thinking and share their experience. People need to feel valued for sharing that experience, as well." (Stakeholder interviewee)

General public
For integration to be successful, stakeholders thought the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy needs to include greater engagement with the general public. The Strategy advocates that integration is not one directional, and requires the public, and host communities to participate. They felt that only by actively engaging

with the public, particularly communities where refugees and people seeking asylum live, can this be achieved.

To increase awareness of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, stakeholders perceived that more engaging and accessible documents should be produced and promoted. There was a sense that the current Strategy was challenging to engage with due to its length and the language used. To make the next iteration engaging for all, it was proposed that documentation is translated into a number of languages.

In addition to more accessible documentation, stakeholders suggested delivering outreach engagement events to promote awareness and engagement with the Strategy. Some thought events should be targeted at the general public as part of a public awareness campaign to increase understanding of refugees and people seeking asylum, reduce stigma through the promotion of understanding and 'myth busting' and aim to bring about cultural change.

> "If you want a Strategy to be out there amongst the general public then you've got to broadcast it in all the different ways that you can and try and have some impact that's wider than just service delivery…If the public don't know about it, they can't hold services to account." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Outreach events, such as the Refugee Festival Scotland, were perceived as providing a platform to those involved in integration work and increasing awareness of the services available to support individuals and communities. Involving nurseries and schools was also seen as a crucial step in the integration process as they were seen as "the first place that this integration is happening".

The need for more engagement between refugees and people seeking asylum and the wider public was frequently highlighted in our interviews. Suggestions for this were focused on making sure community events were accessible to refugees and people seeking asylum and well as the wider community. Accessibility included providing communication about events in other languages, and ensuring transport was accessible and affordable to people so they could attend events.

In response to experiences of discrimination, racism and a lack of cultural understanding amongst refugees and people seeking asylum, some called for increased awareness-raising and training, targeted at a wider range of groups including the general public, local communities, and services across the public, private and third sectors. Refugees and people seeking asylum also stated that they would appreciate more opportunities to meet people in their local area. Interviewees spoke of the difficulty of trying to meet people in the community, with some suggesting that this could be made harder by some support organisations which only provide refugees and people seeking asylum the opportunity to mix with other refugees and people seeking asylum.

> "So I think, with any of the place, they need a little bit of awareness, they need a little bit of training that the people coming from different background, they have different needs, they have different priorities. So just a little bit. […] Then maybe people are more polite and more understanding, like what people's needs are." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

> "I see a lot of charities going into this with a good heart, like, 'Yes, we want to bring them together,' but you're still keeping them in their bubble. You're still putting them together with people like them who don't have anything to add to their experience, who have no knowledge yet. I think integration with people from here, from Scotland, to meet up with them and have a chat and just talk about things, is useful." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Scottish Government

As previously highlighted, there were stakeholders who thought progress towards achieving the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's aims and outcomes had been slowed by a lack of engagement across different departments and teams within the Scottish Government, which were viewed as working in policy areas not directly involving refugees and people seeking asylum. Therefore, it was suggested that the next iteration should be developed and implemented in collaboration with a range of Scottish Government departments to ensure it corresponds with other strategies and avoids conflict between them. It was felt that such an approach could lead to the integration of refugees and people seeking asylum (i.e. 'new Scots') becoming core to all policy areas, which would help progress the Strategy's aims.

Actions linked to the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Statutory and third sector stakeholders expressed a desire for the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to set out more measurable outcomes. There was a view that while the current Strategy successfully sets out its vision, how this would be achieved and assessed was not always clear. Furthermore, stakeholders thought that the next Strategy would benefit from specific actions being linked to the objectives set out in the Strategy. There were organisations which worked directly with refugees and people seeking asylum that said they struggled to see how to translate the stratgey objectives into actions. They called for actions in the next iteration to reflect their work undertaken in communities. It was also suggested that the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy should indicate who (e.g. government, local authorities, third sector organisation, communities) would be responsible for carrying out these actions.

> "The indicators in the current Strategy [are] quite a high level, they're more like a council/SRC level than the level we're at as an organisation." (Stakeholder interviewee)

However, there was also a view that any action plan needs to be able to adapt and respond if unforeseen issues emerge, as was the case with the COVID pandemic and the Ukrainian Resettlement Programme.

Closely linked to the measurement of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's outcomes, stakeholders also highlighted the need to implement a structure to evaluate the impact of the next Strategy from the outset. They also thought that learning should be ongoing and iterative in order that the Strategy can be adapted as work progresses. To enable a wider range of groups and organisations to make use of this learning, participants reported that they would like learning and achievements to be communicated and shared regularly. This would include updates on the work of the different New Scots groups (including core and themed groups) involved in progressing the Strategy and, for example, a quality

improvement framework for refugee resettlement work to establish what the standards and baselines should be for the public and third sector.

3.5.2. Priorities/focus for the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

Stakeholder interviewees, survey respondents, refugees and people seeking asylum shared what they thought the priorities for the next Strategy should be. Many of these were similar across all participant groups and are explored below. Participants noted that issues and themes needed to be seen intersectionally, with a greater ability to address specific issues for specific groups, rather than a more general and overarching approach. They also suggested ways to make services more accessible, in order that refugees and people seeking asylum feel more welcome, and better understand their rights and entitlements.

Scotland-wide focus

With refugees and people seeking asylum now being dispersed across Scotland, stakeholders called for the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to have a greater Scotland-wide focus. Stakeholders thought that local authorities that have only recently received refugees and people seeking asylum could learn from organisations in Glasgow. However, it was thought that different parts of Scotland may experience different challenges and require different support. For the next iteration it was suggested that learning should be captured from the experience of each local authority area. This should include learning from the refugees and people seeking asylum in each of these areas, particularly those living in areas where there is less ethnic diversity. Suggestions included the development of local variants of the Strategy, linked to the national Strategy, and that care should be taken to ensure that each local authority is supported to implement the Strategy at a local level. It was also acknowledged that different types and sizes of organisation and group may experience different challenges. Therefore, participants said that the next iteration should reflect this and ensure that support is available for all.

Greater focus on specific groups

People seeking asylum
Participants stated that they would like to see the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy more fully address the needs of people seeking asylum. There was a sense that the current iteration focused more on refugees than people seeking asylum and did not fully reflect the impact that different immigration routes and resettlement schemes have on the needs and challenges of individuals. Some stakeholders thought this could be due to asylum being a reserved policy issue, but believed there were still actions Scotland could progress using its devolved powers, for example, improved immigration advice, ESOL provision and other support services. Among the people seeking asylum we interviewed, several priorities were raised. These included a need for people seeking asylum to be given a faster response from the Home Office to their applications and a need for improved information and communication with regards to the asylum process and their entitlements. While responses to asylum applications are reserved to the Westminster Government, it was suggested that support services could offer more information about asylum processes and entitlements.

"Explain them the process, because they know how it will work. Some people don't know the asylum process. […] I see people are staying here for 12 years in asylum process and they have nowhere to go. They can't do anything. So it's a big, big part of their life, so if they claim asylum - so you have to answer them in a period of time. Not like years and years, they are waiting for the asylum case result. So yes, and also, more groups, more places." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

People seeking asylum struggled to find information on their rights and entitlements. When they reached out to both statutory and third sector organisations, these organisations did not always know where to signpost them. They also expressed a need for information, particularly legal advice, to be provided in their own language, or to be provided with access to intepreters where this was not possible, to make information more accessible. The provision of legal advice was noted by a stakeholder as representing a gap in the current New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, and one which is likely to become increasingly important in the future.

Children, young people and families
Stakeholders argued that the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy should take a more comprehensive approach to children, young people and families. This mainly related to the support of unaccompanied minors and enabling children's desires to be taken into consideration more easily. It was also mentioned that schools should be funded to support refugee children more fully, for example, in having the resources to recognise and maintain a child's first language. Refugees and people seeking asylum called for more groups to be available for their children to join, to help them "mix with other kids here, a place that can actually help children, talk to them, to let them know what they are feeling". They also highlighted the need to speed up the process to allocate children to a school so that they are not outwith formal education for long periods of time.

Addressing basic needs
Participants thought that the asylum process led to financial worries, isolation and poor mental health. Therefore, some felt the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy should look to address, or minimise, the negative impacts of the asylum process on individuals. It was said that this was not the sole responsibility of the UK Government, and there was more the Scottish Government could do within devolved powers to address this. For example, access to additional financial support in the form of free public transport. There was a view that if people are focused on meeting their basic needs they will not have the resources to be involved in activities, such as attending ESOL classes or parenting groups, that may help them to engage and feel part of a community.

"So people, when they're struggling to meet their basic needs, integration is low down on their list. And so whether that's any integration activities being completely accessible, food and travel provided." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Access to services

Language support
Given the importance of English language to access support, employment and integrate with communities more widely (see section 3.4), stakeholder interviewees, survey respondents, refugees and people seeking asylum said they would like to see an increased focus on English language provision in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Research participants thought ESOL support needed to improve across Scotland, ensuring all areas have equal access to good quality tuition and support. Refugees and people seeking asylum themselves expressed a desire for more formal ESOL learning opportunities to be made available to them, especially among those in more rural areas who tended to be offered informal English classes in the community. A related point was the need for additional support to be provided to refugees and people seeking asylum for whom English is a second language to help them access employment. One suggestion was to develop a way of helping people learn English while they are in employment, rather than being a condition of employment, to allow them to return to the trade/profession they held before coming to Scotland.

> "I think you just need some very clear things that you're going to achieve in the next Strategy and language does have to be one of them. There's absolutely no doubt that there needs to be some support around language acquisition or English acquisition and support there and better coordination across some of the activity as well." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Employment, education and skills development
A key barrier to integration for refugees was perceived to be access to employment that reflected their skills, training and experience. Stakeholders in both the survey and interviews proposed that employment, education and skills development should be a key focus for the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. It was suggested that this should include the involvement of both refugees and employers to create a system that supports refugees into meaningful work, also incorporating equality and inclusion training for employers. Refugees themselves highlighted the limited choice of work open to them due to employment restrictions as a result of qualifications not being recognised and language barriers. People seeking asylum shared their own challenging experiences with not having the right to work. They called for a greater range of roles to be available to them to ensure that those with qualifications from their home countries were able to continue to work in their preferred area, making more of a contribution in the process.

Housing
Housing was another issue that organisational stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum perceived required improvement to aid integration. Despite housing pressures across Scotland, stakeholder interviewees and survey respondents said the use of hotels as accommodation should be challenged and more power granted to local authorities to house people within the community, to aid socialisation and integration. Among refugees and people seeking asylum, several were on waiting lists for accommodation, hoping for more secure and less cramped accomodation.

Those who had lived in hotel accommodation also highlighted the difficulties of integrating with the community whilst living there.

<u>Transport</u>
Improving access to transport, both in terms of availability and cost, was highlighted as another priority for the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. Stakeholders, refugees and people seeking asylum stated that improved access to transport could promote inclusion and integration. Free bus travel for refugees and people seeking asylum provided by the Scottish Government was a suggested action for the next iteration – both for those living in urban areas and for those in rural areas who need to travel to towns to access services and support.

The role of third sector organisations and community groups
Third sector organisations and community groups play a crucial role in delivering parts of the mosaic of services that refugees and people seeking asylum access for support.

The considerable contribution made by both AMIF- and non AMIF-funded projects, groups and organisations was highlighted by both stakeholders and refugees and people seeking asylum, and there was a desire that this work should continue. The ability of these projects to help empower women who may find it harder to mix with host communities, and to promote wider community integration, was viewed as particularly important. Stakeholders called for an ongoing focus on activities and actions to improve community integration, while refugees and people seeking asylum highlighted the need for more support groups and better promotion of existing ones.

> "I think we need more groups and places […] like there's not much places they are doing this, but I think the groups… Like, doing those groups, then people feel integrated […] feel that there is a few areas where there are not any groups or any places where they can go and sit down and have a cup of tea, and share their problems or need help, they can ask for help […] Advertise they are welcoming refugees or asylum seekers for those groups." (Refugee/asylum seeker interviewee)

Stakeholders highlighted the role of faith and culture groups, such as arts organisations, in raising awareness of cultural differences and promoting understanding between host communities, refugees and people seeking asylum. This work also promoted understanding between different groups of refugees and people seeking asylum. A third sector organisational stakeholder stated that arts projects had the potential to promote integration across multiple themes highlighted in the Strategy. For example, they considered that arts projects can have a positive impact on health, language acquisition and social connections. Therefore, it was suggested that the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy should focus on how different themes in the Strategy overlap or can complement each other.

> "Early days of one of the [AMIF-funded arts project] there was a couple of Scottish families who would just only talk to each other you know? And then there was a few of the New Scots families that didn't speak much English and would talk to each other in Arabic and its only over time and maybe one week

one of the Scottish families doesn't come, so the other Scottish family has to talk to everybody else or whatever and us as facilitators being that social glue and working really hard to broker those relationships that you can start to kind of help people to bridge those gaps and build those very real friendships that can emerge." (Stakeholder interviewee)

"I would say maybe a focus on how some of the [Strategy] themes crosscut and overlap, because definitely, with things like the arts projects, they have such an impact on wellbeing, they have an impact on people's ability to learn language informally. Maybe have some of the culture, social connections things broken up a little bit. I would say culture could be on its own, in a way, because… Yeah. I feel like that could go more deeply, because I think that if you want integration, then you need that kind of emphasis on culture and creating those interesting spaces where that can be explored more deeply." (Stakeholder interviewee)

Other suggestions

Other suggested topics to focus on in the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy included the provision of mental health support for refugees, people seeking asylum, and those working closely with them, as mental health problems may act as a barrier to integration. Participants thought mental health support was important in recognition of the mental health challenges that navigating the asylum system as well as past trauma can cause, and how this can also negatively affect people working with refugees and people seeking asylum.

The importance of internet access for integration in terms of finding out about and accessing services and support, and making and maintaining connections, was also emphasised.

4. Discussion

Evaluating the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The objectives of the evaluation were to assess how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had been implemented, the progress made towards achieving its intended outcomes, and what learning could be used to inform future policy and practice. The four intended outcomes of the Strategy were:

1. Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections

2. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives

3. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs

4. Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.

Understanding, awareness and reach of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was generally well received by the stakeholders who had engaged with it. These included participants from local authorities, government, academic, third sector and community organisations and groups. Awareness of the Strategy did not vary by stakeholder type. They appreciated its message of welcoming refugees and people seeking asylum to Scotland and its focus on partnership working, values which aligned well with those of their organisations. The perceived relevance of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's outcomes to the work of the stakeholder organisations varied, with the first outcome 'Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections' reported as most relevant.

In terms of the Strategy's reach, there was a consensus that those who worked in relevant governmental and policy circles, and organisations working in the sector or focusing on a specific issue of particular relevance (e.g., language), were aware of it, but that awareness beyond this was more sporadic. Stakeholders perceived that extending the reach of the next iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy would have additional benefits in terms of increasing awareness and understanding of the issues faced by refugees and people seeking asylum, among host communities, service providers and government departments.

To increase awareness and engagement with the next iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, stakeholders would like to see a wider range of organisations and individuals involved in the development and implementation of the Strategy. These included refugees and people seeking asylum, host

communities and the wider public, in addition to local and national government and third sector and community organisations.

Implementation

The evaluation sought to understand how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had been implemented and what had worked well and been challenging in terms of its implementation.

The Strategy had been used in a range of ways. These included using the Strategy to:

- inform the development of new, or improve existing, programmes of work
- seek funding for new and existing integration work
- initiate new collaborations and partnership working.

The majority of stakeholder interviewees and survey respondents reported that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy had a 'very positive' or 'positive' impact on the work of their organisation and highlighted successful aspects of the implementation of the Strategy. The close relationships forged between local authorities, third sector organisations, community groups, and the New Scots partnership (SRC, COSLA, the Scottish Government and the University of Glasgow) were viewed as key facilitating factors in implementing the Strategy. Stakeholders particularly highlighted the benefits of building new connections and networking between organisations which facilitated better information sharing and enhanced the support offered to refugees and people seeking asylum by signposting to support they previously were unaware existed. The positive messaging of the Strategy along with the commitment and resilience of staff in the sector were considered critical in light of a lack of funding attached to its implementation. The AMIF project funding was particularly well received as a result. The adaptability and relevance of the Strategy in the face of a frequently changing UK policy landscape and new resettlement programmes were also recognised by some stakeholders.

However, there were aspects of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's implementation which it was reported had not worked as well. A key barrier to implementing the Strategy was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which was perceived to have reduced individuals' and organisations' abilities to achieve the Strategy's actions as staff and resources were diverted elsewhere. The pandemic was also felt to have contributed to staff burnout across the sector, which impacted on the success of the New Scots theme groups in implementing their programmes of work.

A perceived lack of funding or specific budget for staffing both within government and across the sector, and other resources associated with the Strategy was considered by many stakeholders as one of the most significant factors hindering its success. Without funding, the Strategy's implementation was said to be reliant on people's goodwill, their willingness to support the actions of the Strategy and their ability to make time for any associated work. To enable future iterations of the Strategy to be implemented effectively, stakeholders called for further funding for

local authorities, third sector organisations and community groups to deliver services and support to refugees and people seeking asylum. This might be challenging in the current economic climate and the Scottish Government and delivery partners will have to consider what funding is possible for the next iteration of the Strategy.

Stakeholders highlighted the difficulties of working within the UK Government's policy agenda which was viewed as being at odds with the more supportive approach of the Scottish Government. However, concerns were also expressed about the governance of the Strategy, with some viewing the lack of a Scottish legislative framework and siloed working within Scottish Government departments as barriers to effectively implementing the Strategy. Tensions between national and local implementation and impact were also evident, with a perceived lack of coordination between central and local government in Scotland, and between these governmental bodies and other groups. Stakeholders called for greater co-ordination between Scottish Government departments to ensure the rights and entitlements of refugees and people seeking asylum are considered across all policy areas.

Insufficient coverage of services appeared to result in a lack of, and inconsistent access to, ESOL provision and other services (such as education, mental health support, employment opportunities, housing, childcare support and internet connectivity), and these were also cited as barriers to implementation of the Strategy. It was not within the scope of the evaluation to map out the coverage and consistency or service provision across each local authority area. To garner this information, further research and consultation with organisations and communities across Scotland is required.

Low awareness of the Strategy among the public and refugees and people seeking asylum, and the Ukraine war (as a result of the redirecton of organisational resources towards new refugee resettlement programmes) were also said to have hindered implementation.

Progress made towards achieving intended outcomes

This evaluation sought to understand what progress has been made towards achieving the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes, and the extent to which progress is sustainable. Multiple strands of data collection and analysis have informed this evaluation. Across the research with stakeholders (survey and interviews), interviews with refugees and people seeking asylum, and the work with the AMIF-funded projects, a mixed picture was observed in terms of the extent to which the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's four outcomes were perceived to have been achieved.

It is important to note that the Strategy outcomes are ambitious and long-term in nature. Therefore, the work done to implement it in the last four years has contributed towards these outcomes rather than necessarily achieving them.

Furthermore, there are factors, such as global events, that are not directly in control of the Strategy partners or the Scottish Government that have an impact on the extent to which progress towards these outcomes can be made.

Outcome 1

Views on the extent to which refugees and people seeking asylum live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections varied. There were refugees and people seeking asylum who said that they had received a very warm welcome in Scotland and viewed it as their home. This was helped by the development of strong connections with those in the local community, and intensive support from some local authorities and a wide range of third sector and community organisations. Opportunities for employment and volunteering were also viewed as critical in terms of supporting mental health and English language development, cultivating a sense of belonging, and enabling refugees and people seeking asylum to build diverse relationships and connections with the local community.

However, the extent to which host communities were reported to have made refugees and people seeking asylum feel safe and welcome varied. Experiences of racism and a lack of cultural understanding led to situations of refugees and people seeking asylum feeling particularly isolated, unwelcome and unsafe. It is worth acknowledging that issues such as racism continue to blight society, widespread societal prejudice is still evident, and it is perhaps unrealistic to expect a strategy focused on integration to tackle such overarching issues in isolation. Language barriers, lack of or poor access to transport, housing, employment and volunteering opportunities also impacted on the extent to which refugees and people seeking asylum felt safe, welcome and able to build diverse relationships and connections. These were challenges experienced by refugees and people seeking asylum in both urban and rural areas. The fact that people seeking asylum are entitled to less support resulted in these challenges being experienced more acutely.

Outcome 2

Over half of survey respondents (53%) said that Outcome 2: 'refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives', had been successfully achieved. A majority (59%) also either 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that 'the Strategy had supported increase awareness among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights and entitlements'. Local authorities, organisations and community groups were described as playing a vital role in ensuring that refugees and people seeking asylum understood their rights, responsibilities and entitlements in a wide range of areas, including: the asylum process, housing, welfare, employment and education. Language support, in the form of ESOL classes, access to interpreters and translated information also played an important role. However, such support was not available to all, and there was evidence that the coverage and delivery of services varied in different areas. Refugees and people seeking asylum also experienced barriers to understanding and having their rights, responsibilities and entitlements recognised, with inconsistent access to ESOL, translated information and interpreters. Further work is required to fully understand how well services and support for refugees and people seeking asylum are delivered and coordinated in different local authority areas.

Refugees and people seeking asylum spoke of the difficulty of finding information on their rights and entitlements. Language and communication barriers, as well as the tendency for information to be available online (which some could not access due to a combination of a lack of internet access and poor IT skills), made it harder to access such information. A key limitation on progress towards this outcome was not being able to work or access education (either due to people seeking asylum not having the right to work or access some courses, or as a result of refugees' English-language skills, caring responsibilities or ill health which acted as barriers to work along with a lack of recognition of their prior learning). On the whole, refugees who arrived in Scotland as part of resettlement progammes were able to access comprehensive support in relation to understanding their rights. People seeking asylum, however, reported feeling that they lacked awareness and knowledge of the asylum process and experienced anxiety and stress awaiting the outcome of their applications to the Home Office. A lack of funding for statutory and third sector services and organisations to support refugees and people seeking asylum to understand and access their rights and entitlements also acted as a significant barrier to achieving this outcome. On the other hand, the provision and availability of dedicated and well-informed support staff, whether based in local authorities or the third sector, clearly facilitated the process of refugees' awareness of, and access to, support in relation to understanding their rights and entitlements.

Outcome 3

The extent to which stakeholder organisations and refugees and people seeking asylum themselves thought they were able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs varied. The majority of survey respondents were in agreement that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy encouraged broader involvement of people and organisations across Scotland, supported refugee integration through improved collaboration between organisations and supported better coordinated services that met the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum more effectively. Stakeholder organisations highlighted the important role of AMIF-funded projects in supporting access to services. This funding enabled organisations to expand their work to serve new areas, new populations of refugees and people seeking asylum, and to address gaps in provision. It also enabled additional staff capacity to build new partnerships and work collaboratively to provide support to refugees and people seeking asylum. The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was said to have helped to create an environment that encouraged partnership working and fostered new relationships and connections between organisations working on refugee integration. It was also argued that the Strategy increased awareness of the issues facing refugees and people seeking asylum, leading to more consistent and improved joined up working between statutory services, the third sector and others at a local level.

However, access to services was hindered by a number of factors including gaps in ESOL provision and access, particuarly in colleges, which impacted on the ability of refugees to find work and start to feel part of their communities. Additionally, provision of services and support differed across different local authority areas, and the experiences of accessing statutory services (including GPs, schools, health visitors, dentists etc) amongst refugees and people seeking asylum varied in terms

of the degree of support received from their local authority. Where this was observed to be working well, the range of support offered and its comprehensiveness in terms of linking up support from the council, with that of volunteer groups and refugee organisations was a key factor. The cost and availabilty of transport and the locations in which refugees and people seeking asylum were placed had important implications for their ability to access services and amenities. In both urban and rural areas, refugees and people seeking asylum were often housed in areas which required transport to access local shops, mosques, support organisations and schools. The cost of this was transport was considerable.

Housing was also considered to be a key barrier to progressing this outcome as refugees and people seeking asylum did not always have access to accommodation that met their needs, particularly those housed in hotels, but also those housed in the community. Similar themes were identified in a recent report by the University of Glasgow[29]. Stakeholders called for greater steps to be taken to address the housing crisis in Scotland to enable refugees and people seeking asylum to be placed within communities. These included using the next iteration of the Strategy to challenge the use of hotel accommodation.

Outcome 4

Of the four New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy outcomes, Outcome 4: 'Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations', was considered to have been least well achieved across both the survey and interview findings. Fewer than half (44%) of survey respondents said this had been successfully addressed, although 61% 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' or that 'the Strategy has taken into account the lived experiences of refugees'. Stakeholder interviewees and survey respondents emphasised the importance of having a Strategy which promotes a positive message of integration, with Scotland being a welcoming place for refugees and people seeking asylum. They referenced the Strategy's ambition that refugees and people seeking asylum should feel welcome from day one in the country, and although it was felt that this had not yet been achieved, the Strategy was viewed as a potential means to support this aim in the future.

A key perceived limitation to achieving this outcome was the fact that asylum is a reserved policy issue, with the UK government determining key policies affecting the rights and services available to refugees and people seeking asylum in all parts of the UK, including Scotland. However, while it was recognised that this made integration work more difficult in Scotland, it was also felt there was more within the powers of devolved policy which the Scottish Government could do to promote integration and better support the rights and needs of refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, by improving access to clear and comprehensive information about rights and entitlements (including translating materials and better access to interpreters) and increasing ESOL provision. Funding was thought to be critical to

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[29] Phipps, A. , Aldegheri, E. and Fisher, D. (2022) The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: a report on the local and international dimensions of integrating refugees in Scotland. Project Report. University of Glasgow.

this, and hence the short-term, one-off nature of dedicated funding programmes such as the AMIF funding was also highlighted as being problematic. Without longer-term funding from the Scottish Government or elsewhere?, it was said that it would be challenging to change people's attitudes and promote community cohesion. Finally, siloed ways of working within the Scottish Government were perceived to have limited progress in relation to this outcome as policy had been developed in areas that affect refugees and people seeking asylum (e.g. education, housing) without directly addressing their needs. Stakeholders would like to see greater cross-policy working within the Scottish Government with the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum considered in all relevant policy areas.

Variation across localities and groups

We found some evidence to suggest that the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum varied depending on the area they were located. This appeared to be influenced by the level of support (local authority, third sector and community support) available in a particular area and the accessibility of this support. Experiences were also influenced by whether individuals had arrived in Scotland as part of a refugee resettlement programme or as a person seeking asylum. Those who entered via refugee resettlement programmes had access to dedicated support through their local authority and tended to have more positive experiences of integration within their local community than people seeking asylum, who expressed high levels of anxiety and isolation in trying to navigate the asylum process, echoing the findings of Baroness Kennedy's recent [Asylum Inquiry](). As all but one of the refugees interviewed for this research who entered via a resettlement programme were from the same programme, it is difficult to make comparisons between the experiences of those in different resettlement programmes. Further research would be required to explore the experiences of those in different resettlement programmes.

Contribution of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to the outcomes

The fact that Scotland has a refugee integration Strategy was warmly welcomed by those who were aware of it. It was said to have led to greater collaboration and coordination between local authorities, the third sector and partners. However, measuring the direct impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy was often difficult. While progress towards the outcomes was acknowledged, some stakeholders were ambivalent as to whether such outcomes would have come about irrespective of the Strategy given how closely it aligned with organisations' values and the existing partnership working between organisations. Stakeholders also found it difficult to link an overarching Strategy with every activity or initiative happening at a local or project level. Nevertheless, the majority of stakeholders said that having a refugee integration Strategy supported by the Scottish Government and New Scots partners set a vision for Scotland to work towards collectively.

Recommendations to develop the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

The findings outlined by this research show that while progress has been made between 2018 and 2022, further work is needed to ensure that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's outcomes are achieved. It is important to acknowledge that the current Strategy's outcomes are primarily longer-term in nature. Therefore, it may be prudent to develop clear and measureable shorter- and medium-term outcomes to monitor progress of the new Strategy.

Broadly there was support for the Strategy to continue and a call for further funding to support implementation. There were several aspects which were considered critical to the Strategy's development and successful implementation, which are worth considering as its next iteration is developed. Research participants' recommendations included:

- Additional funding and resourcing for both statutory and third sector staffing and services to be an intrinsic part of the development and implementation of the Strategy to ensure there is sufficient capacity for implementation.

- Continued and longer-term funding for local authorities and other existing statutory services, third sector organisations and community projects working to support refugee integration. Further consultation with organisations and groups is required to identify and gaps in provision in each local authority area.

- Improve access to accessible information about the rights and entitlements of refugees and people seeking asylum. This includes providing information in a range of languages and access to interpreters. Improving the quality and provision of high-quality ESOL training is also required.

- Ensuring that key aspects of the Strategy, such as the rights and entitlements of refugees and people seeking asylum, are enshrined in Scots Law in order to protect and promote these rights in the future.

- Greater awareness of, and wider engagement with, the Strategy and issues faced by refugees and people seeking asylum across the Scottish Government, third sector organisations, community groups and among the general public across all areas of Scotland. It was suggested by stakeholders that this could be accomplished through outreach engagement events that allowed for more accessibility (e.g. transport, childcare) for refugees and people seeking asylum. To be more inclusive of refugees and people seeking asylum, the next iteration of the Strategy could also develop more accessible documents with simplified language and translated versions.

- Greater awareness raising and training targeted at a wider range of groups including the general public, local communities, and services across the public, private and third sectors to tackle stigma, racial discrimination and the lack of cultural understanding of different refugees and people seeking asylum.

- Whilst acknowledging the significant constraints of reserved aspects of refugee and asylum policy, greater consideration could be given to the devolved powers Scottish Government can leverage to better support refugees and people seeking asylum. For example, in terms of funding training and provision of ESOL to ensure refugees and people seeking asylum have access to high quality language support throughout Scotland. Investing in interpreters, translated materials and statutory and third sector staffing to improve accessibility of information on rights and entitlements of refugees and people seeking asylum is also to be encouraged.

- Address the practical challenges within different local authorities of implementing the Strategy and supporting integration. This requires consultation with local authorities as well as third sector organisations, community projects, and communities themselves to discuss any challenges in providing well co-ordinated support.

- A focus on measurable outcomes, with a monitoring and evaluation structure implemented from the outset, as the next Strategy is developed. This will help collect longer-term data on progress towards achieving the Strategy outcomes.

In terms of its priorities, participants highlighted the need for a Scotland-wide focus, with a greater focus on people seeking asylum and children, young people and families. It was also suggested that the next Strategy should focus on addressing basic needs such as access to financial support, adequate housing, free public transport and mental health support. Other priorities included increasing access to language support (particularly college-based ESOL provision), employment, education and skills development. It was reported that the contribution of the AMIF-funded projects and other organisations and community groups should be recognised and valued.

Future research

The evaluation aimed to achieve the best possible balance of input for the budget available. However, we acknowledge that this evaluation could only reach a limited number of refugees and people seeking asylum directly, given the cost and time involved in undertaking in-depth work with participants. It was also outwith the scope of this evaluation to map and assess integration work happening across local authorities in Scotland. There is a need for further ongoing direct research and engagement with refugees and people seeking asylum, reflecting the diversity of the refugee population in Scotland, and seeking to understand refugee experiences at different stages of their integration journey in Scotland. Similarly, as integration is a two-way process, future research should also consider seeking the views of other people living in host communities. It is important to note that this evaluation is just one contribution to a wider programme of funded research under the NSRIDP funding, including a comprehensive literature review and other direct work with refugees. These issues should be considered in the monitoring of the third iteration of the strategy.

5. Conclusions

There was consensus amongst research participants that the Strategy has made a positive impact overall, and has made considerable progress in relation to its main outcomes. Due to the complexity and multifactorial nature of the issues that are related to integration, it is to be expected that a number of difficulties and challenges were also cited. Chief among these were the lack of funding to support the implementation of the Strategy, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on implementation and the restrictions associated with asylum and immigration being a reserved policy matter. In such an environment, it also has to be acknowledged that it is far from straightforward to determine the influence of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy on all activities related to refugee integration, particularly those occurring at a local level.

It was noted by stakeholder interviewees and survey respondents that incremental progress in terms of refugee integration in Scotland has been made through each iteration of the the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy; the first Strategy predominantly focused on progressing integration work in Glasgow whereas the second Strategy encompassed integration work in other areas too. There is a clear willingness to continue this progress with the next iteration of the Strategy, due to be launched in early 2024. Stakeholder organisations, refugees and people seeking asylum, would like to see a greater focus in the next iteration of the Strategy on expanding integration progress across all areas of Scotland. To achieve this, existing integration work by local and national government and third sector and voluntary organisations with host communities and the general public, needs to be supported to continue, alongside the development of new work. There was a view that refugees, people seeking asylum, host communities and the general public have not been engaged sufficiently in the development and implementation of the Strategy. This engagement was perceived to be critical in ensuring that refugees and people seeking asylum are welcomed and supported in Scotland.

Whilst acknowledging that the Scottish Government does not have full control of all of the legislative and policy levers that affect decisions about integration policy, it was felt the next Strategy should focus on what more can be achieved within currently devolved powers. This would include focusing on improving investment in, and access to, consistent, coordinated and high quality services, support and information sources across all geographic and policy areas, such as ESOL support, housing, employment and education.

The third iteration of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy should take into consideration:

- Additional funding and resourcing to be an intrinsic part of the implementation of the Strategy

- Continued and longer-term funding of organisations and projects working to support refugee integration to enable equitable access and service provision in different geographical areas, and for those entering Scotland through different settlement pathways.

- If necessary, underpinning the Strategy with legislation to ensure that the rights and entitlements of refugees and people seeking asylum are fully supported in Scotland

- The need to support greater awareness of, and wider engagement with, the Strategy across the Scottish Government, refugees and people seeking asylum, third sector organisations, community groups and among the general public across all areas of Scotland. There should be further consideration of how the Scottish Government can better use its devolved powers to support refugees and people seeking asylum to begin to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive.

- A focus on measurable outcomes, with a monitoring and evaluation structure implemented from the outset, as the third Strategy is developed and rolled out.

Finally, it is worth acknowledging that the Strategy will not operate in a vacuum, and there are limitations to what it may be expected to achieve. It was emphasised that the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy rightly set a welcoming tone for refugees and people seeking asylum, yet experiences of racism were still cited. This does not mean that the current or third iteration of the Strategy would be wrong to be framed in such a way, more that wider society itself has a role in ensuring that its outcomes are met. It also makes clear that integration is very much a two-way process, and work must be conducted with host communities in order that refugees and people seeking asylum feel as welcomed and accepted as possible.

Appendix A List of NSRIDP-funded projects

Project Name	Lead Organisation	Theme
سوا Sawa	Argyll and Bute Council	Language
Active Citizens Class for Women	Grampian Regional Equality Council Ltd	Communities
Assessing the needs of the refugee community in Dundee accessing higher education	University of Dundee	Language
Building Roots Ayrshire	The Conservation Volunteers	Language
Building skills for construction certification	Dundee City Council	Employability
Caring and sharing: psycho-social support for refugees	Jasmine and Thistle	Health
Changing the Narrative	Media Education CIC	Communities
Childcare Future	Saheliya Steering Group	Employability
Common Ground	Centre For Contemporary Arts	Arts
Creative Writing Classes	Pollokshields Development Agency	Language
Cross Ethnic Back To Work Project	Cross Ethnic	Language
Digital Library	TinCat CIC	Digital Inclusion
Driving and Employability in remote rural Regions	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar	Language
Dumfries International Street Food Festival	Massive Outpouring of Love (MOOL) SCIO	Arts
East Glasgow Asylum Support Outreach	Govan Community Project	Legal
Enkula Refugee Health Project	Enkula Wellness Hub C.I.C	Health
Entrepreneur Through Creativity & Innovation	Turn Flicks	Digital Inclusion
ESOL for Employability	Midlothian Council	Language
ESOL: Beyond the classroom	East Lothian Works	Language
Faithful Welcome	Faith In Community (Scotland)	Communities
Family Art Club	Scrap Antics C.I.C	Arts

Project Name	Lead Organisation	Theme
Financial Accessibility and Inclusivity: Refugee Community in Scotland	Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education	Employability
Get New Scots Digital	Safe In Scotland	Digital Inclusion
Glasgow UASC co-housing Safeguarding project	Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership	Communities
Glasgow's Learning Refugee Language and Integration Project	Culture and Sport Glasgow	Language
Improving the mental health of young refugees and separated children in Edinburgh	City of Edinburgh Council	Health
In the Frames	Ignite Theatre	Arts
Initial Language Assessment and Advice for New Scots in Glasgow	City of Glasgow College	Language
Integrated communities - Employment and traning support	West Ofof Scotland Regional Equality Council	Employability
Moments of Freedom	Outside The Box Development Support Limited	Communities
Music Connects	Music Broth	Arts
New Scot Youth Educational Project	Glasgow Afghan United	Language
New Scots - Addressing Mental Health (AMH)	Youth Community Support Agency	Health
New Scots Digital Inclusion Project (DIP)	Grampian Regional Equality Council Ltd	Digital Inclusion
New Scots Get Connected (Get Connected)	Inverclyde Council	Language
Our Rights, Our Communities	Govanhill Baths Community Trust	Communities
Pen Pal Project	Renfrewshire Leisure Limited	Arts
Porridge & Play Castlemilk and Porridge & Play East End	Licketyspit Limited	Communities

Project Name	Lead Organisation	Theme
Refugee Community Integration Project (RCIP)	West Of Scotland Regional Equality Council	Arts
Resilient Communities	The Braveheart Association	Health
Salaam Weekend Club Project	Edinburgh City Mission	Arts
Serve 2020 – Reading and learning together	Glenburn Independent Baptist Church	Language
Serve2020 – Zoom Club… Zooming Out	Glenburn Independent Baptist Church	Arts
Settling in in Glasgow South	Castlemilk Baptist Church	Language
SIYAKHULUMA We Talk Podcast	Castlemilk Baptist Church	Communities
Staying connected	Refuweegee	Digital Inclusion
Supportive Communities Teens	Inverclyde Community Development Trust	Language
Teaching English as a foreign language at Sunday youth club.	The Spartans Community Football Academy	Language
The Welcoming '3Ds Project' (Digital Diversity and Development), project and	The Welcoming Association	Digital Inclusion
Transforming & Creating Employment Through Sports	Universal Football Club	Arts
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Peer Flat Mates project	Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership	Communities
Unity Sisters Mental Health Support Project	Unity Sisters	Health
Unknown Lives	World Spirit Theatre	Communities
West of Scotland Refugee Support Service	Renfrewshire Council	Health
Women and Asylum Seeker Housing Project (WASH)	Community Infosource	Housing
Young minds	Kurdish women Community Group	Communities

Appendix B Stakeholder survey

Introduction

ScotCen Social Research (an independent social research agency) has been commissioned by the Scottish Government to evaluate the implementation and impact of the New Scots refugee integration Strategy 2018-2022.

- This evaluation is funded by the EU Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and is being undertaken as part of the New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project, a partnership between Scottish Government, COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council and the University of Glasgow.

- Evaluation findings will be used to support the development of the third New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, from 2023 onwards.

- The evaluation findings will be published in 2023.

You are being invited to complete this survey because you are involved in activities which support the integration of refugees in some way. It may be appropriate for more than one person within your organisation to complete this survey – we are keen to hear as many different views and perspectives as possible.
We are keen to hear your views on what works in relation to refugee integration in Scotland, and to assess the implementation and impact of the New Scots refugee integration Strategy to date.

Although ScotCen is carrying out this research on behalf of the partner agencies we are completely independent. We have no particular agenda in doing this research other than finding out **your views**; we're here to listen to what you have to say.

The survey should take 15 minutes to complete. All your responses will be anonymised. Your individual responses will not be linked to your organisation or shared with Scottish Government, though the Scottish Government will have access to anonymised data.

If you are answering as an individual, there may be questions that are not relevant to you. Please answer as many questions as you can.

You can find out how your data will be handled here: privacy notice

Are you happy to give your consent to continue on this basis?

Yes

No

About the Strategy

New Scots: Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 to 2022

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aims to support refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland's communities. This includes people who have been granted refugee status or another form of humanitarian protection; people seeking asylum; and those whose application for asylum has been refused, but who remain in Scotland.

There are five principles which form the New Scots approach:

1) Integration From Day One

2) A Rights Based Approach

3) Refugee Involvement

4) Inclusive Communities

5) Partnership and Collaboration

Further information about the Strategy can be found here – (New Scots: refugee integration Strategy 2018 to 2022 - gov.scot)

About you and your organisation

1. **Does your work support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland?**
   Yes
   No
   N/A

2. **Please tell us the name of your organisation** [you do not need to answer this, but it is helpful to us if you are able to]

3. **What best describes your organisation?** [please tick all that apply]
   - Local authority
   - Third Sector organisation
   - NHS/healthcare provider
   - Education provider (School/College/University)
   - Community organisation
   - Faith and belief organisation/group
   - Private Sector organisation
   - Scottish Government/agency
   - UK Government/agency
   - Answering in an individual capacity/not associated with an organisation
   - Other (please write in)

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4. What area(s) does your organisation work in? [please choose all that apply]

- Whole of Scotland
- UK Wide
- International/Outside UK
- Aberdeen City
- Aberdeenshire
- Angus
- Argyll and Bute
- City of Edinburgh
- Clackmannanshire
- Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- Dumfries and Galloway
- Dundee City
- East Ayrshire
- East Dunbartonshire
- East Lothian
- East Renfrewshire
- Falkirk
- Fife
- Glasgow City
- Inverclyde
- Midlothian
- North Ayrshire
- North Lanarkshire
- Orkney Islands
- Perth and Kinross
- Renfrewshire
- Scottish Borders
- Shetland Islands
- South Ayrshire
- South Lanarkshire
- Stirling
- Highland
- Moray
- West Dunbartonshire
- West Lothian
- Do not wish to say
- N/A

5. Does your organisation work primarily in urban or rural areas?

- Mainly in urban areas
- Mainly in rural areas
- Mixed (significant work in both rural and urban areas)
- N/A

6. Who does your organisation work with? [please choose all that apply]

- Refugees
- Asylum seekers
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Refugee-receiving communities
- Migrants other than refugees and asylum seekers
- People from a particular faith group
- People from a particular ethnic group
- Others based on their protected characteristics (Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Sex)
- Others from disadvantaged backgrounds
- The general public
- N/A
- Others not mentioned [please write in]

7. How many paid staff work in your organisation?

- 0 – my organisation is run entirely by volunteers
- 1-5 paid staff
- 6-10 paid staff
- 11-20 paid staff
- 21-50 paid staff
- More than 50 paid staff
- N/A

Awareness of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

8. How would you describe the extent to which you are aware of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy?

- I helped to develop the Strategy
- I frequently refer to the Strategy
- I have read at least some of the Strategy
- I know the Strategy exists but I haven't read it
- I am not aware of the Strategy

The relevance of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy to your organisation

The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aims to support the development of inclusive and diverse communities in Scotland. It provides a framework for those working towards refugee integration.

9. The New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy aims to achieve four outcomes. How relevant is each of the following four outcomes to the work of your organisation?

	Very relevant	Quite relevant	Not very relevant	Not at all relevant	Don't know	N/A
Outcome 1: 'Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections'.						
Outcome 2: 'Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.'						
Outcome 3: 'Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.'						
Outcome 4: 'Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.'						

The work of your organisation

10. What types of activities relating to the integration of refugees and asylum seekers is your organisation involved in? [please tick all that apply]
- Housing provision and support
- Health and wellbeing
- Employability / entrepreneurship
- Welfare benefits and rights
- Legal rights and citizenship
- Education
- Language support
- Community integration and social connections
- Digital inclusion
- Arts, culture and sport
- N/A
- Other [please write in]

Influence of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy on your organisation

11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree / disagree with the following statements: (Scale of agreement from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, DK, N/A)

a) The New Scots Strategy has helped my organisation to develop our focus in relation to refugee integration
b) The New Scots Strategy has influenced my organisation in developing new integration programmes or projects
c) The New Scots Strategy has influenced my organisation to make improvements to our existing programmes/areas of work
d) The New Scots Strategy makes it easier for my organisation to coordinate our work with other organisations
e) The New Scots Strategy has helped my organisation to develop new partnerships/relationships with other organisations working on refugee integration
f) The New Scots Strategy has enabled my organisation to access new/additional funding for refugee integration work
g) The New Scots Strategy has enabled my organisation to influence policy on refugee integration in Scotland
h) The New Scots Strategy has helped my organisation to achieve its aims in supporting refugee integration

12. If your organisation has NOT used the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in its work, please explain why? [1000 character limit, c100-200 words]

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13. Briefly summarise how the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy has been helpful to your organisation in its work to support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland between 2018 and 2022? [1000 character limit, c100-200 words]

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Outcomes of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

14. So far, how successfully do you think each of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy's outcomes have been met in Scotland?

	Very successfully	Quite successfully	Not very successfully	Not successfully at all	Don't know	N/A
Outcome 1: 'Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections'.						
Outcome 2: 'Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.'						

Outcome 3: 'Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.'							
Outcome 4: 'Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.'							

15. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	N/A
The Strategy has helped raise the profile of refugee integration work in Scotland							
The Strategy has remained relevant in the context of changing refugee populations							
The Strategy has remained relevant in the context of changing UK Government policy							
The Strategy has taken into account the lived experiences of refugees							
The Strategy has supported refugee integration through							

improved collaboration between organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers			123				
The Strategy has supported better-coordinated services that meet refugee and asylum seeker needs more effectively							
The Strategy has supported increased awareness among refugees and asylum seekers of their rights and entitlements							
Refugees and asylum seekers feel more welcome in Scotland as a result of the Strategy							
Scotland's communities are safer for refugees and asylum seekers as a result of the Strategy							
The Strategy has encouraged broader involvement of people and organisations across Scotland in the welcoming of refugees/asylum seekers							
The Strategy has supported more effective use of funding to support refugee and asylum seeker integration							
The Strategy has promoted good practice in supporting refugee integration in Scotland							

16. What do you think have been the main factors that have helped the Strategy meet its outcomes in Scotland? [1000 character limit, c100-200 words]

17. What do you think have been the main barriers/obstacles to the Strategy meeting its outcomes in Scotland? [1000 character limit, c100-200 words]

18. What has been the overall impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy on the work of your organisation?
- Very positive impact
- Quite positive impact
- Neither positive nor negative impact
- Quite negative impact
- Very negative impact
- Don't know/ can't say
- N/A

19. Reflecting on the challenges that your organisation has faced since the publication of the last Strategy, what are the most important gaps or needs which you would like to see addressed in the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy? [1000 character limit, c100-200 words]

Thank you page
Thank you for taking the time to respond to our questions.
If you have any questions about the survey please contact
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