

Pupils from migrant families

"We end up becoming translators, legal advisors, housing advisors and carers for the whole community."

Who is this chapter for?

- School staff
- School lead or staff interested in becoming/establishing a school lead within your school

This chapter will support schools to:

- understand the specific needs of young migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking young carers.
- Help young carers of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking families.

Synopsis

Young carers from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking families often face long waits to entry into school and sometimes do not get a place in school at all.

Once in education they often face additional issues specific to their caring role and family situation which can impact upon their well-being and achievements in education, as well as their transition into the school and the community.

Not only may young migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking people have the responsibility of caring for someone in their family, but they have the added impact of coping with this responsibility in a strange culture and unfamiliar surroundings and in a new language, alongside the stigma and unsettlement of being a refugee.

Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people are particularly vulnerable due to the physical and emotional disruption and trauma they may have experienced.

Barriers to learning

Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people who take on a caring role need support and understanding in managing these responsibilities and their education, because the additional burden of having to care for a family member who is mentally or physically unwell can be detrimental to their own integration into the school and community.

Young carers from migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking families can experience:

- racist bullying.
- loss of identity.



- loss of friends and family from the country they have come from.
- concerns about the future, such as fear of returning to the home country.
- lack of English skills and knowledge of systems, such as the education system.
- stresses in the family, such as poverty or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- disruption to education due to migration.

Child interpreters and translators

Following migration, children often acquire competence in the new language before their parents due to their young age, because of their integration in school or because they have been learning English in their home country. As a result, the role of interpreter or translator often falls to the child in situations. This can involve:

- asylum claims.
- dealing with health services, including medical information.
- dealing with social services, including assessments.
- school issues, during enrolment or parents' evening.
- benefits agencies.
- shops and local community.

Pupils can often be absent from school as they attend appointments with their parents to take on the role of interpreter and/or translator. Children should not be expected to interpret information that is inappropriate for their age or that the parent may want to be kept confidential and all services need to be aware of this. Therefore, when communicating with parents who do not speak English, it is good practice to provide confidential interpreting services such as Language Line at www.languageline.co.uk

For more information about children interpreting, accessing professional interpreters and using Language Line see the *Supporting refugee young carers and their families: A toolkit for ALL practitioners* at www.refugeetoolkit.org.uk

Rights and entitlements

Schools have a duty to monitor and assess how their policies affect minority ethnic pupils and parents.

To develop good practice for inclusivity, schools should actively promote equality of opportunity and ensure that newly-arrived pupils and families do not experience additional barriers that will impact on their progress and well-being.

Children from refugee and asylum seeking backgrounds have the same entitlement to education as all other children. Local authorities have a legal duty to ensure that education is available for all children of compulsory school age appropriate to their ability, aptitudes and any special educational needs (SEN) that they may have. This duty applies irrespective of a child's immigration status or rights of residence.



The Department of Children Schools and Families' guidance on *Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children* states that:

"The children of asylum seekers and refugees should have the same opportunity to access education as all other children. There is a broad recognition that teaching the children of asylum seekers and refugees can be both challenging and rewarding: newly arrived children from overseas need help to settle in and they can greatly enrich the school community."

For more information see:

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/asylumseekingandrefugeechildren/

Schools should also take into consideration the health needs of newly arrived children and young people:

"Newly arrived pupils and families from overseas may have health needs that need to be addressed. The physical and mental health of a family can have a significant influence on a pupil's capacity to learn and settle into a new school environment."

For more information about the rights and entitlements of overseas students and the general duties on schools to support their needs, see the Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency at www.qcda.gov.uk/7260.aspx

Other chapters to help you understand this topic

- 29 Access, support and involving parents with disabilities
- 33 Raising awareness amongst all pupils

Key resources

As well as the tools found in the above suggested chapters, the following resources are key.

→ Language Line

High quality and professional **telephone interpreting** and **translation services** to help communicate with your limited English speakers whether over the phone, in writing or in person.

www.languageline.co.uk

→ New Arrivals Excellence Programme: Guidance

Developed by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) this guidance works on the principle that all newly arrived bilingual learners have a right of access to the National Curriculum and that provision for newly arrived EAL learners is not separate but integrated into all subject areas.

www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/97335/

→ SHARED Futures

DVD and resource pack promoting the integration of refugee children and young people in school and the wider community.

www.sharedfutures.org.uk/index2.html



→ **Supporting refugee young carers and their families: A toolkit for ALL practitioners**

Developed by The Children's Society Family Health Inclusion Project and funded by the Department of Health this is a tool for all adult and children's services practitioners, education, health and other agencies in contact with refugee and asylum seeking families. Particularly those working with families affected by ill-health and disability and where there are young carers.

www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=200894163854.htm

→ **Supporting the education of asylum-seeking and refugee children**

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/ethnicminorities/raising_achievement/asylumseekingandrefugeechildren

→ **Teachernet**

www.teachernet.gov.uk