



MOVING ON? INTEGRATION AND ONWARD MIGRATION OF DISPERSED REFUGEES IN THE UK

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Abstract

UK dispersal policy began in 2000, as a result of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. The rationale was to 'spread the burden' of housing asylum seekers across the UK and discourage long-term settlement in the South East. The impact of a policy regime that determines the geography of refugees' movements upon long term integration has been largely neglected. Instead, the majority of literature on UK dispersal has critiqued the policy as part of restrictive and deterrent UK asylum apparatus as well as identifying negative impacts upon individuals removed from kinship, social networks and community organisations which can result in onward migration. The paper aims to fill this knowledge gap by drawing upon analysis of quantitative data sources. The recently published Survey of New Refugees (2009) includes information on the long-term settlement of refugees in the UK. Additionally, data from the Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) is explored to provide insights into the mobility patterns of refugees in the UK. Given the linkages between refugee migration and long-term settlement, this research aims to reflect upon the operation of UK dispersal policy for nearly a decade in order to understand the connections between onward migration and refugee integration.