

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

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Summary of key findings

Has UK dispersal policy been effective in encouraging refugees to remain in dispersal sites?

Longitudinal data recorded by the Home Office Survey of New Refugees (SNR) allows us to examine whether a refugee has moved town or city at 8 or 15 months after being granted status. Comparing refugees who have been dispersed and those who have not, we find that dispersed refugees are much more likely to move town or city in the first 8 months after grant of status but there is less difference between these two groups at 15 months. At 15 months after grant of status, some 34 per cent of dispersed refugees and 58 per cent of non-dispersed refugees have remained in the same town or city. Dispersed refugees are also more likely to move multiple times over the 8 and 15 month period. In terms of geography, so far we have examined Refugee Integration and Employment Service (RIES) data for dispersed refugees in Glasgow. This finds that 66 per cent of refugees remained in the city between 2008-2011. Furthermore, from this data there does appear to be evidence of a 'drift south' but the largest number of refugees recorded as having left Scotland have migrated to other parts of the UK. Only five per cent of the sample was recorded as moving to London.

What factors predict the onward migration of refugees?

In the data analysis of the Home Office Survey of New Refugees (SNR) several factors seem not to be important for predicting onward migration such as age, children and marital status. At both the 8 and 15 month survey we find that living in accommodation provided by the Home Office (i.e. dispersed refugees) increases the odds of migrating. When controlling for the impact of dispersal policy in the statistical models, several additional factors are also important in predicting the onward migration of refugees.

Gender is an important factor, with being male leading to an increased probability of moving in both time periods. Eritreans appear to have an increased probability of moving at 8 months, when compared to the other top nationality groups in the SNR. It appears that having qualifications before entering the UK lead to a significantly decreased probability of moving town/city at 8 months. A new refugee has increased odds of moving at 8 months if they read English very well but those who speak English poorly are more likely to move. This might be related to education levels but also accessing ESOL provision.

In terms of geography, a new refugee has increased odds of moving town or city at 8 months if they are located in other regions of the UK compared to London and South East. Furthermore, there are different levels of odds ratio for each of the regions (Wales and SW

as highest and Midlands/East England as lowest). Interestingly, there are reduced odds of moving for refugees living in Midlands/East England, Wales and SW and Scotland/NI at 15 months. Perhaps once refugees are living in these areas by choice, there are less levels of onward mobility.

In terms of social and cultural connections, it is interesting that whilst meeting relatives not in the household is associated with moves in the immediate period after being granted status (8 months), the role of national/ethnic groups are more important in the longer term (15 months). Finally, being limited by physical health leads to greater odds of migrating in the short term but emotional health is a greater predictor of migration in the long term (although this leads to decreased odds at 8 months, with the relationship changing over time).