‘Rebuilding after Displacement: Identifying the Needs of Displaced Communities from the Perspective of the Built Environment’

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Abstract

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)'s submission on the inadequacies of policies imposed by certain international initiatives, strongly confirms the need to focus on built environment programmes when rebuilding displaced communities. This chapter identifies the needs of internationally displaced communities in the United Kingdom (UK) within the past decade (2009 to 2019), in the context of the Built Environment. This will assist in their progress towards successful resettlement and integration. The chapter is based on the findings of qualitative analysis of interviews with experts working with the displaced in the UK. The interviewees were from different groups responsible for managing different aspects of the refugee experience. Research results reveal that the UK Government's standards vary across the range of different categories of displaced persons. This creates a deprived group within the displaced communities with numerous needs. Some of these are built environment-related needs that should be met to enable successful integration into the UK.

Keywords: Built Environment (BE); Displaced Communities (DC); Integration; Resettlement; UK

Paper type: Research paper

Introduction

In recent times, the world has witnessed an increase in mass displacement of communities from one geographical area to another, due to the rise in armed conflicts and natural disasters caused by climate change. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) highlights that there is a dearth of built environment policies within international initiatives to help resettlement of displaced communities (UNHCR, 2018). Thus, there is a need to include a mission of rebuilding communities after displacement with particular focus on the built environment. In the 1951 Refugee Convention (UNHCR, 2010) the rights of the displaced were ratified by 145 States including the United Kingdom (UK). This included the obligation to protect refugees within their borders, in accordance with the terms of the convention, and ensure their resettlement and integration.

While the UK has hosted many immigrants during its history, it has supplied even more migrants to the world, only registering a higher net number of arrivals from the mid-1980s (DEMIG, 2015). These included asylum seekers with a well-founded fear of persecution, and it was beholden on the country to be responsible for their welfare in line with their international commitments. Asylum seekers are those people who have left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum and protection, but whose application is yet to be concluded. Currently, most of these people are settled in London and the South-East by the government's dispersal programme. There is then a period of waiting for them until a decision has been made concerning their asylum claims. Those whose claims have been successful become refugees, a legal recognition of their status. Until such time, however, the lives of asylum seekers appear on hold in the UK, as they are not permitted to work, study, or volunteer until their claim has been granted (Mahamed, 2016; Mayblin and James, 2019).

Resettlement and Integration of the Displaced Communities in the UK

Resettlement of a displaced person in the UK depends on the path through which the displaced person enters the country. This study identifies and concurs with Mahamed (2016) that there are two routes (Figure 1) to becoming refugees in the UK; the Resettlement Channel and the Asylum Channel. The key difference in the application process is the origin of the request, either external, before arriving in the UK (resettlement) or on arrival in the UK (asylum). This research observes this as a significant factor, with implications for the current experience of both types of displaced persons.

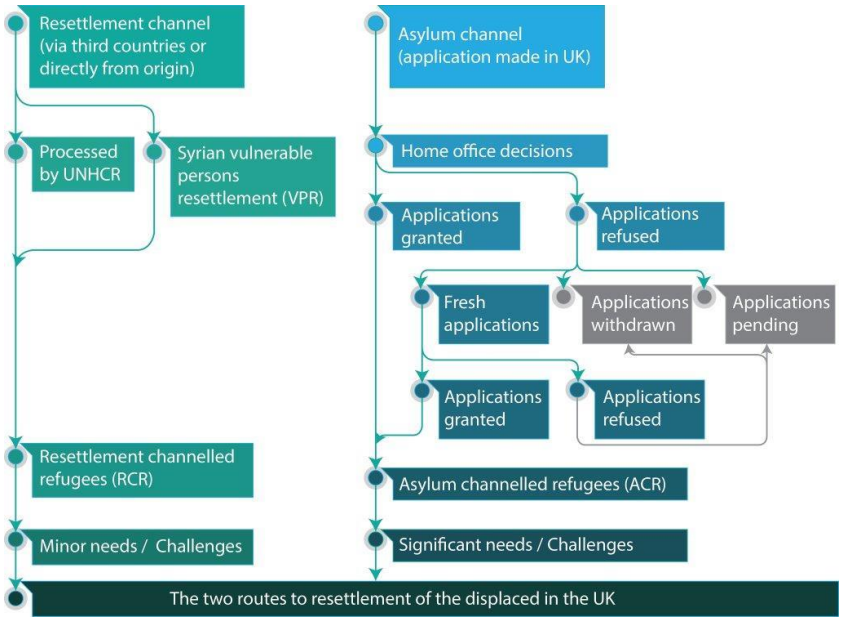

Figure 1 – The Two Routes to Resettlement of Displaced Persons in the UK

Notwithstanding the route chosen there is a desire for integration of displaced persons with their host communities. Integration, enabling the displaced person to live harmoniously with their host communities, is considered a two-way process, thereby placing demands on both the incoming and host communities (ECRE, 2005). In the year 2000, the UK's Labour government established an integration policy which expressed a wish to make refugees aware of the provisions available to them; assist them in gaining access to these provisions, such as housing, employment, and English Language services; enable them to realise their potential as equal members of the society; and motivate them for community participation (Broadhead and Spencer, 2020). Yet two decades, and various changes of government, since this policy, there remain some attendant barriers to resettlement with most displaced persons in dire need of fundamental daily provision (Mayblin and James, 2019; Fitzpatrick et al., 2016). Moreover, more recent work (Hamza 2021) notes that scholars question the success of such policy in the face of these challenges, and highlights the trauma faced by displaced persons and the perception of them as either a threat, burden, or both, by the host population. This chapter in identifying the extent of the needs of displaced persons, and the experience of all parties engaged in the provision of those needs, advances the debate on the success of policy initiatives and where redress may be made.

Methodology

Data collection utilised both primary and secondary sources of data. Initially, secondary data collection, comprising of a broad literature review of existing publications, was undertaken. This was conducted using both searches of the Scopus database using relevant keywords to identify academic literature and more general web-based and citation searches for government publications, and publications of both national and international organisations. This provided an in-depth understanding of what is known and unknown about resettling the displaced and allowed for coding and thematic analysis in accordance with established techniques (Miles and Huberman 1994; Saldana 2013). The identification of themes assisted in structuring the primary sources of data collection.

Primary sources of data collection utilized the qualitative approach drawn from the constructivist paradigm (Allen 1994). Primary data collection was carried out using semi-structured interviews where participants were asked to respond to open-ended questions. This offered opportunity to examine how they interpreted the question and allowed them to be expansive with their provision of information. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, a rational and effective method when wanting information-rich data (Patton 1990). The sampling focused on people in organisations that work with displaced communities because it is not only difficult in the UK to approach groups of displaced persons directly, but it may also be undesirable to subject them to additional interviews given their experiences and psychological status. Interviews were transcribed and the findings again analysed, coded and themes identified.

Twelve interviewees (identified as UK INT followed by their number in the interviewing stage) were drawn from six different types of organisations: National Government, Local Authorities, Voluntary Organisations/NGOs (International), Voluntary Organisations/NGOs (Local), Academia, and Displaced Persons Representatives. Some of the organisations co-operate with each other towards outcomes, for example voluntary organisations work with local authorities, which are ultimately funded by the national government. Hence an interviewee might be recognised as a stakeholder with more than one organisation (Figure 2). Of the twelve interviewees, seven are described as working with voluntary organisations (6 local and 1 international). Six interviewees work with local authorities, four of them being included in the national government category as well due to the funding of their activities, with the other two also belonging to the voluntary organisation category. Two interviewees are purely focused on research work, while two more are displaced persons themselves and additionally work with voluntary organisations.

Figure 2 – Organisations Within Which Interviewees are a Stakeholder

The interviewees were acknowledged as working with effectively three (although officially four) different types of displaced persons. Initial asylum seekers arriving in the UK are one group. Those who have been processed through the resettlement channel a second, and the third is those persons who have been in the asylum channel (which includes unaccompanied asylum-seeking children). Five of the interviewees (UK INT 1, 3, 7, 9, and 12), work with all these different types of displaced persons, while another three (UK INT 2, 4, and 5) work with three of them (Figure 3). Two further interviewees (UK INT 10 and 11) are dedicated to working with the resettlement group, while the final two (UK INT 6 and 8) work with internally displaced persons. This latter type of displaced person lies beyond the scope of this research, but awareness of which provides interviewees with an understanding of community needs.

Consequently, these two interviewees were retained for their specialist knowledge, and perspective they offered to what is a collective group with highly robust information about the state of displaced persons in the UK.

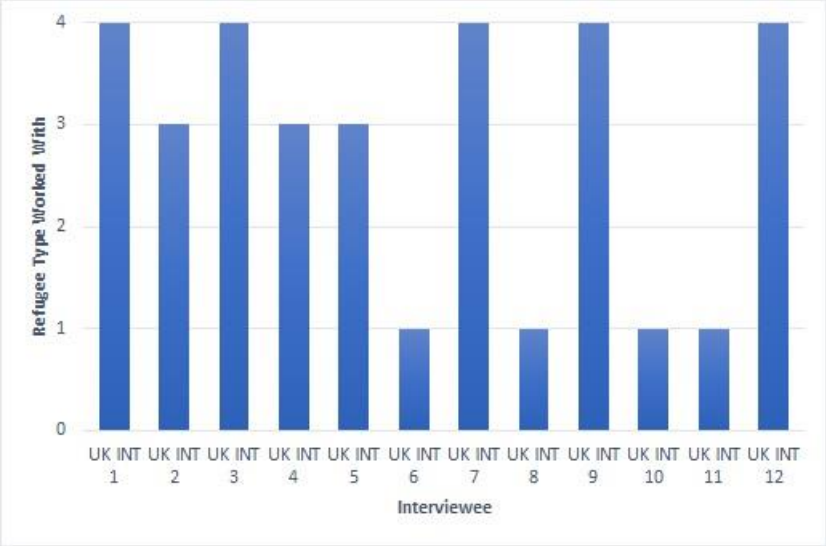

Figure 3 – The Number of Refugee Types that Interviewees Work With

Literature Review

The review of literature identified both overarching themes that are relevant to consideration of all the needs of displaced communities (and indeed their hosts), and more specific requirements in terms of aspects of the built environment. There are four factors that are of particular importance when seeking to successfully resettle and integrate displaced persons: the individuality of the integration process; the two-way effort needed for integration; viewing integration initiatives from a long-term perspective; and that efforts towards the collection of data relating to integration are increased. There are a "plethora of challenges" that "resettlement and integration of a displaced population into a new society faces" (Hamza 2021, p1), and these four factors have been found to act across the range of needs, whether they be housing, health, economic, or socio-cultural requirements. Typifying this interconnectivity of requirements is the seemingly single issue of housing that Jayakody et al. (2022, p368) demonstrate as being of significantly broader import, the home being at once "social centre for family and friends, a source of pride and cultural identity and a resource that commands both political and economic importance".

Recognising the individuality of displaced peoples' experience is essential for positive integration (Baxter 2018; UNHCR Bureau for Europe 2013). Integration processes and activities towards successful integration in the host community work best when they include personal motivation and ambition (Baxter 2018; Fandrich et al. 2013). Moreover, consultation with displaced persons as to the services they would find of benefit and involvement of them in the design of such services bolsters self-reliance, dignity, and social interaction (Coley et al. 2019; Fandrich et al. 2013; Robila 2018; UNHCR 2013). However, the reality may be that such considerations are sacrificed to the needs of the host community, such as with the placement of displaced persons on vocational training courses that will have a positive impact on the labour market in their newly arrived at country, rather than reflecting their own best-suited and desired employment (Chaloff 2006).

This imbalance benefits neither host nor displaced community, the literature highlighting the need for involvement of both in successful integration (Coley et al 2019; Corcoran 2006; Fandrich et al. 2013; Froy 2006). Acceptance by the existing population must be matched by adaptation by the incoming group to create a mutually advantageous position. One community should not be favoured over the other, and the implication of this is that in the same manner that it is advisable for displaced persons to be consulted about the integration process (Coley et al. 2019; Fandrich et al. 2013; Robila 2018; UNHCR 2013) similarly should the receiving population have chance to discuss the potential impacts upon them. This is a position encountered repeatedly within the literature, particularly regarding readying the host community for the arrival of displaced persons (Araya et al. 2019; Fandrich et al. 2013).

That there needs to be longer-term strategising on resettlement of displaced persons (Coley et al. 2019; Fandrich et al. 2013; Froy 2006) is clearly a point to be remembered when considering the interview responses in this study; whether sufficient time has elapsed for the interviewee to have experienced different outcomes, and if consideration has been given to such time-scales. Coley et al. (2019) note the need for patience in forging networks among the newly changed communities, but pressures exist in society for short-term measures to alleviate problems, or perceived issues. Allied to this is the need for more research and data. It may be self-serving for researchers to call for more research, yet it provides the means to greater understanding of longer-term trends and encouraging positive outcomes from resettlement.

Discussion of more specific aspects of the built environment can be summarised within the categories of; housing, socio-cultural, social infrastructure, economic, and physical infrastructure needs. Housing provides a significant role in the success or otherwise of displaced communities in their new built environments. A potential source of conflict with existing communities (Haigh et al. 2016), housing is likely both the most valuable asset of a displaced person and their community and the worst impacted by a displacement event (Wijegunarathnaa et al. 2017). Not only is the physical structure left behind, but an individual's sense of place may be lost. Evolving over time, note Jayakody et al. (2021), housing moves from an immediate need for shelter in the aftermath of an event, to a place that meets social and emotional requirements, providing a base for economic activity and the hub for belonging and cohesion.

The theme of individuality in the process of integrating displaced persons is particularly relevant to discussions of socio-cultural needs, important in language (and proficiency in the host community language) (Coley et al. 2019) and opportunity to practice and exchange culture (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, 2019). Linked to housing there is a need to avoid segregation of populations and widespread mention of the value of mentors who can bridge the gap between host and incoming populations (Fenton 2006; Froy 2006; Nakeyar, Esses, & Reid 2018). Education plays a pivotal role in the development of integrated communities, not just for the influence it can have on language skills, but for numerous aspects of social infrastructure (Cassity and Gow 2005; Christie and Sidhu 2002; Taylor and Sidhu 2012). Similarly, the need for appropriate healthcare transcends different aspects of displaced persons' needs, whether it be physical or mental health considerations.

Finding employment is highly relevant to integration, both in terms of the economic and social benefit that work can provide, and perceptions within the wider community. This can, however, be challenging for displaced persons, with possibly unfamiliar language, the demand for existing skills, and the state of local job availability all relevant factors. Generally, there can be quite a disparity between the employment rate and earnings of displaced populations with that

of their hosts (Coley et al. 2019; Kone et al., 2019). Finally, physical infrastructure needs are typically already existent in developed countries, and do not need to be specifically provided in response to displacement. However, it is clear the extent to which access to such infrastructure relates to the previously discussed considerations of language, economic status, and social networks. The value of physical infrastructure lies not in the building works themselves but in the services they provide (Araya et al. 2019). Even in a society with a high level of physical infrastructure such as the UK, displaced persons can be marginalized, and potentially excluded by simple acts of not being able to afford transport fares or being resettled in isolated areas. These themes and aspects were used as reference points for the analysis of our interview responses.

Research Findings and Discussion

The research interview findings covered many topics and discussions, with identification of a wide range of needs and barriers to be overcome before the successful integration of displaced persons. This chapter focuses on these needs from the perspective of the built environment in the context of the existing literature.

Housing Provision

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) highlights the right of every human, displaced or not, to adequate housing. Within the UK, housing for displaced persons is provided through various channels; National Government working via local authorities; the displaced persons themselves, through friends and families they can live with; and voluntary organisations (Figure 4). The assistance offered by voluntary organisations in finding accommodation for displaced persons comes either through their private acts of charity, or through work in conjunction with local authorities. This would be in collaboration with housing associations and local authority social housing, who provide affordable housing to the general population (Evans 2003). And this is by no means the total extent of their assistance, as noted by one of our interviewees; “Yeah, yeah…The charity organisations, they do help…They are ready to facilitate people here in terms of many things. Not only the accommodation” (UK INT 9). A package known as Section 95 Support is available for asylum seekers during their immigration processing period. It was identified by one of our interviewees for the benefits it brings; “If you want housing, you should stay with the Home Office to have the package of housing, free legal aid and child support” (UK INT 2). Housing under this package is provided by government (under the National Asylum Support Service) through private contractors and sub-contractors which are supervised by the local authorities; “X is a private company that runs contracts for the government…they have the contract to provide housing for asylum seekers” (UK INT 7). In what appears to be a vital point, housing for resettlement channel refugees is pre-arranged before their arrival in the UK.

Housing Suitability

Six of the interviewees (UK INT 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, and 12) submit that housing provided for resettlement channel refugees is suitable; “Yeah, the conditions and standards are in a good condition” (UK INT 10). This is consistent with literature which acknowledges that housing for resettled refugees has quality assured (Daniel et al., 2010; Evans, 2013; Refugee Council, 2019). One respondent did contradict this claim arguing that there are still issues with some of the housing supplied to this group; “Yeah, even though there are conditions, we have standards for housing. So, there's a lot of

issues that we have, broken appliances, structural issues, heating. Sometimes it's in ventilation and lighting" (UK INT 11).

In terms of the size of house offered to resettlement channel refugee families interviewees talked in relatively positive terms about provision. One claimed that typically they receive larger houses, however others agreed that the size of housing allocated is dependent on the size of the family, as informed by the UNCHR who have made a comprehensive assessment of the potential refugee family and everything that pertains to them. This, it is suggested, is proportional; "If you are a single person, they give you one single bedroom, full flats…It depends on the size of the family" (UK INT 5); "Obviously everything is based on the family sizes. You wouldn't put, like you wouldn't put them in an overcrowded house. So, there is a list I think depending on the age or who is or what needs to be in the room" (UK INT 10). Additionally, the resettlement channel refugees benefit from what one interviewee described as government subsidising the rent; "The Home Office, they pay what's called a top up, so they will pay something like an average of an extra £100 a month towards rent because strangely they recognised that the housing benefit rate will not cover a decent house" (UK INT 7). The overall response to this pre-arranged, externally initiated, resettlement channel refugee housing is one of positivity.

Initial asylum seekers and asylum channel refugees appear to receive different treatment in relation to housing. Interviewees highlighted the distribution of these latter groups; "They are dispersed by government on a no-choice basis. No, they cannot choose" (UK INT 9); "They don't have any agency in choosing where they are going to live" (UK INT 10). This reflects findings elsewhere that non-resettlement channel refugees are sent anywhere there is available housing (Mahamed, 2016). Moreover, it appears that dispersed refugees are typically housed in deprived areas with multiple problems, and little or no experience of diverse communities, factors that can lead to social tension and racism towards the displaced persons (Jeffery 2010).

Interviewees expressed concerns about the condition of housing for these two groups (UK INT 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7); "So, one family with four children, they live just down here on the Quay, and they really hated the house. There were issues with the house, there were problems with the house" (UK INT 7). Some respondents claimed that some people do get good housing while others are not as lucky, that policies on the issue are "unpleasant and not pretty" (UK INT 2). Although there are housing standards to be satisfied by the government agencies it is felt that the standards are rarely met. Some asylum seekers houses are unfurnished and with no decorations, or in so poor condition as to receive public condemnation regarding their state.

Adaptive Housing for Disabled Persons and Children

Where adaptive housing is required by displaced persons, interviewees (UK INT 1, 3, 7, 10, 11 and 12) suggest it is forthcoming for resettlement channel refugees, and some of the initial asylum seekers (UK INT 7 and 9). In contrast it appears difficult to access by their asylum channel refugee counterparts, although as one interviewee suggests "If they're coming for resettlement in the UK and the individual who is travelling, or a member of the household, has a disability that requires specific accommodation, where possible that need will be met" (UK INT 1). Additionally, some occupiers can adapt their houses according to their needs with permission from their landlords; "So, they're able to amend it but, again, they'd have to talk to the landlord about what they require" (UK INT 3). However, again it seems less co-ordinated, and more a matter of positive circumstances than planning.

Safety and Privacy

Safety of the displaced communities in their different neighbourhoods has been deemed a mixed experience across all groups; “I think there are good and bad parts in all neighbourhoods” (UK INT 1). Privacy might be an issue especially in shared accommodation, and rural areas where there might be just one new family in the host community could be isolating. One respondent, in what may be seen as quite a defensive message, asserted that resettled refugees and asylum seekers are very safe in their accommodation because the houses have met the housing standards set out by local government; “I would say, any housing the City Council is involved with for example by paying benefits or deposits or first month's rent, they will be very safe as well because of their exacting standards” (UK INT 7). However, not only have previous findings suggested these standards are not universally met, but the same interviewee (UK INT 7) noted that people from the same country are not placed together, so they do not form groups which might be a detriment to their sense of community and feeling of security in their new locations.

Affordability and Tenure

As housing is provided for by the government, friends and families or voluntary organisations, there is seemingly limited concern for housing affordability by displaced persons. Social housing provided by the local authorities through council houses and housing associations is affordable, particularly for asylum channel refugees who were noted as tending to be dispersed into less desirable areas that typically are supported by cheap rent rates; “They’ve been dispersing asylum seekers to the areas where rent is cheaper, so we don’t have many asylum seekers in the more expensive areas like Manchester or Stockport in terms of Greater Manchester” (UK INT 4). However, as numbers expand, affordable types of housing are not always easily accessible because of long waiting lists; “So, the waiting list for a council house or social housing in Lancaster is something” (UK INT 7). This forces the requirement to move to more expensive housing. In this situation displaced persons gravitate towards other people’s houses as lodgers or try and find shared housing where they can combine benefits to cover the housing cost. For resettlement channel refugees, affordability is also an element to be considered because there is a certain budget for housing sourced for them. The way this is negotiated is laid out by one interviewee (UK INT 10); *“O*bviously the way housing is, it's sourced. You will have obviously a certain budget and you won't go to a local authority with the most expensive housing because we know that the rent won't be covered”.

It was claimed by three respondents that everyone is supposed to be on a six-monthly introductory tenancy, following which their tenancy becomes secured. One of these interviewees said that only those who have access to housing through the local authorities and private housing have access to secured tenancy whereas those who are classed as lodgers in other people’s houses do not. However, a second respondent stated that the tenancy is secured between 6 to 12 months depending on the landlords, while the third contradicted this further in saying that it depends on the different local authorities because their rules differ. Consequently, there remains some confusion over the issue.

In summary, there appears a lot of disparity between housing provided for the different status displaced persons, with resettlement channel refugees seemingly experiencing the best examples of housing provision, and asylum

channel refugees finding their needs poorly responded to. Initial asylum seekers seem to be receiving of a more arbitrary outcome. This research suggests that there is some way to go before all displaced persons are being treated with equality and fairness in relation to housing. Moreover, while the physical need of housing may be met with simple provision of a dwelling, and individuality seems well-catered for in terms of family members and house size, there is little consideration of the social and emotional role of housing, and no discernible role for host community or displaced persons views when allocating displaced persons to an area. Cost and availability seem to be the main drivers in what are not perhaps longer-term solutions.

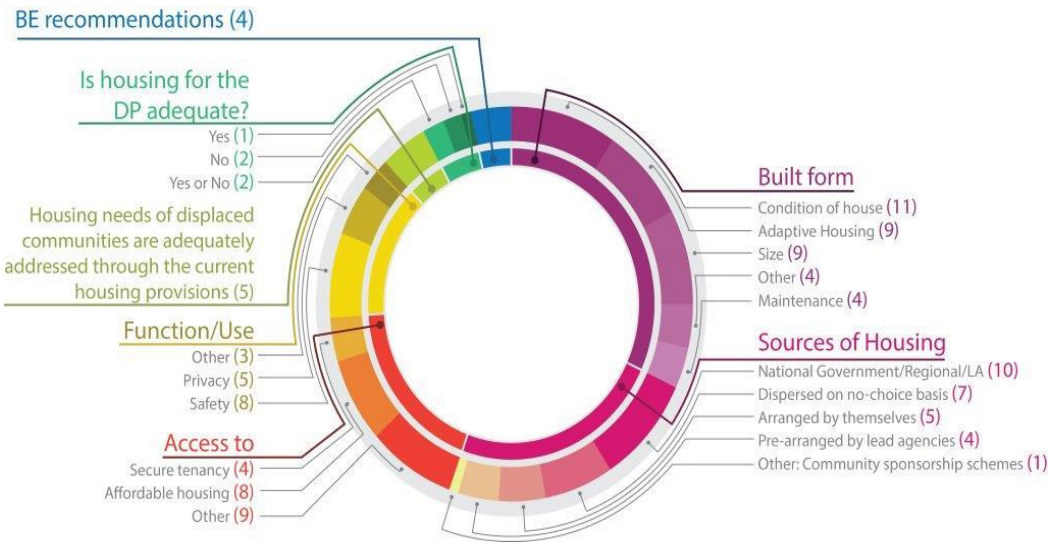

Figure 4 – Interviewee Responses to Housing Needs/Suitability of Displaced Persons

Socio-Cultural Needs

The socio-cultural needs of displaced persons in the UK, as identified by this research, are multi-faceted. While some are predicated on culture and religion, others are linked to safety, stability, emotional need, and social inclusivity (Figure 5). These are all features that are impacted by built environment considerations.

Language

This said, language is the most important area of socio-cultural concern, and integration is made more difficult in the absence of a common language. The displaced person simply needs to be able to communicate to access the support available to them. For which, in the UK, they need to learn the English language. This research found that all public bodies in the UK are supposed to provide interpretation for displaced persons. Some, such as the NHS, do, while others in allied provision such as dentistry, which can be a combination of both public (NHS) and private care, do not according to one interviewee (UK INT 7). Voluntary organisations can offer support by providing interpreters and the use of friends and families for interpretation is widespread, especially in health care settings. This is far from ideal, and sometimes not possible, so continued provision of information in languages other than English and the use of interpreters are major needs (Daniel et al., 2010). Sensitivity in dealing with the needs of the displaced person with

respect to English language and interpretation is required in certain cases, for example domestic violence. In such cases there is a need to match the gender of the victim with that of the interpreter for ease of communication. There additionally exists provision of lessons for as many displaced people as would want to learn the English Language for the first two years of their rehousing. In a sign that perhaps that provision, with its laudable long-term ambition, needs reinforcing, one interviewee highlights the challenge; “So, without English language, they won't be able to orientate themselves…In the beginning we provide them with bespoke lessons for the first two years and now we are trying to strengthen that provision with other sorts of projects and services” (UK INT 11).

Cultural/Religious

Refugees are often people with specific cultural backgrounds, they may even have been fleeing persecution because of that background. Their ways of life can be different in terms of culture, religion, and language. In this situation, a process of mutual restructuring by both the refugee community and their host communities is imperative (Manz and Panayi, 2012). That everyone has a right to worship should be evident, but it appears that religion is not considered when relocating displaced people to their respective houses (UK INT 7). A lack of mosques in some areas poses a problem to Muslims, practicing Christians would similarly like to be housed close to churches where they can worship. The strength of this need is reflected in efforts to attend services: “If their denomination is not near, they are ready to travel miles to attend church…I have known people travelling 10, 20 miles to go to a church” (UK INT 5).

Allied to religious needs can be the importance and consequently availability of suitable food. Some people cannot eat meat that is not halal for example. As with the general observations of housing provision it was noted by our interviewees that the prospect of success with matching this requirement is greater with resettlement channel refugees than it is with initial asylum seekers and the asylum channel refugees.

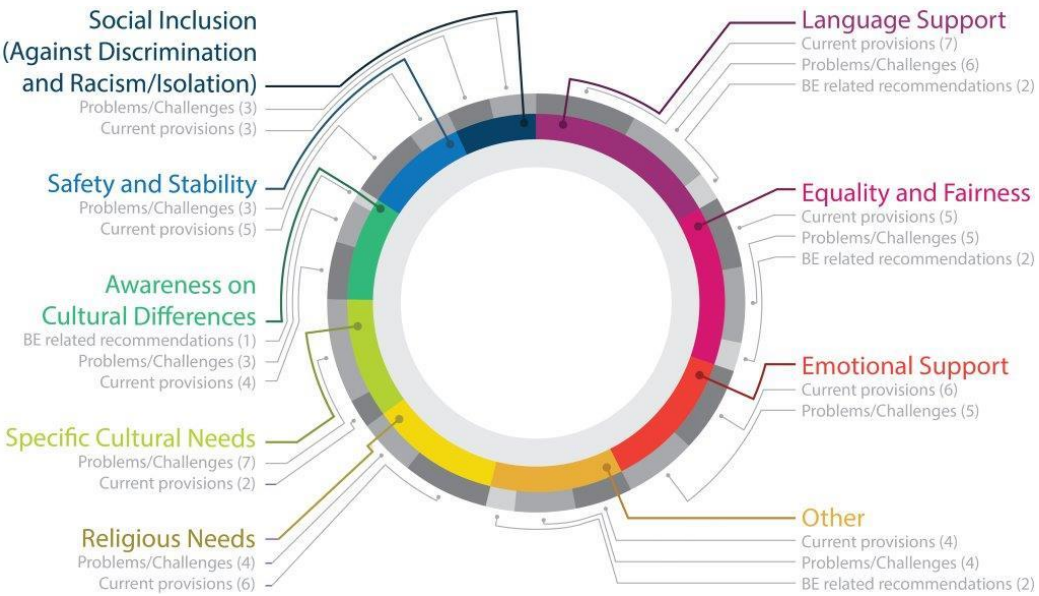

Figure 5 – Interviewee Responses to Socio-Cultural Needs of Displaced Persons

There are also gender-related socio-cultural needs. Some cultures do not permit women to speak in public or relate with men who are not their husbands or members of their families. This can impair the quality of support they receive (Hutchinson and Baqi-Aziz, 1994; Manz and Panayi, 2012), a suggestion supported by one of our interviewees; “Probably the Muslims as well, the culture does not really permit a family woman to be outspoken or to come out in the open. So probably when they have issues, they might not really be able to share if the caseworker is male” (UK INT 11).

Emotional Stability

This research acknowledges that some displaced persons may already be dealing with mental health challenges prior coming to the UK. This could increase, especially in the case of asylum seekers because of the stress and anxiety of waiting for the decision of the Home Office concerning their applications. Many displaced people have suffered, and are potentially still suffering, from the trauma of whatever made them flee or leave their habitual place of residence. There is little or no official provision for emotional support aside from a nominated caseworker, and voluntary organisations seek to fill the gap. Mind Matters is one such body, alongside the House of Tara, an organisation that runs a wellbeing drop-in centre for displaced persons, rendering services such as massage and sound healing. Our interviewees could only offer anecdotal evidence, yet the feeling was there are considerable welfare needs; “Some people already have mental health issues when they come. So, I think probably statistically I don't know among asylum seekers; I don't know if there's a higher rate, but a lot of people are depressed” (UK INT 7).

Awareness of Cultural Differences

Lack of cultural awareness and understanding of refugee concerns by support professionals and the limited provision of culturally appropriate services for refugees and asylum seekers are examples of cultural differences. Mind (2013) postulates that there is a need for basic equality and diversity of culture competency training. The Race Equality Cultural Awareness Programme (RECAP) is an in-depth training course aiming to improve cultural awareness among support workers, especially NHS staff. This is not solely focused on the host community. Training on social and cultural orientation is a requirement for displaced persons within 12 months of their arrival.

Social Inclusion

Although initiatives such as the training aim to assist social inclusion of displaced persons, exclusion remains a problem. This happens when displaced communities of asylum seekers and refugees are faced with a combination of difficulties such as unemployment, poor housing, a lack of skills, low incomes, discrimination, health concerns, and family breakdown. With exclusion from the outcomes and opportunities enjoyed by mainstream society (Zetter and Pearl, 2000), most displaced persons have experienced isolation, especially during the early phase of their transitioning into the UK. Some experience isolation only because they have very little money, while for others, the fear of violence occurring is very real, something particularly exacerbated in areas that are less diversified (UK INT 7 and 10). This can be compounded by adverse reactions from their host communities; “They are having a difficult enough time transitioning to life in the UK. The last thing they want to do is be on the public face of the newspaper” (UK INT 1). Hate crimes towards them from the host communities can sadly be a feature. One interviewee suggested that the incidence of hate crime, violence, racism, and discrimination have been given impetus by recent political events; “But

even more recently, because of Brexit, now the incidence of hate crime has increased dramatically in the UK' (UK INT 11).

Equality and Fairness

One interviewee felt displaced persons in the UK contend with racism and discrimination; "Well, like there's racism everywhere in this country, you can't pretend there isn't" (UK INT 10). Those seeking asylum are the most impacted as they experience discrimination from different angles, and they have no recourse to the resources available to refugees. Refugees dispersed across the host communities also face discrimination and racism in the workplace (Daniel et al., 2010; Evans, 2003; Harris, 2003). This can be a shock for displaced persons, most especially resettlement channel refugees, who have high expectations from the UK, only to discover that the process does not work as they believed and there might be some considerable time delays relating to the severity of their circumstances. When placed on waiting lists for months, they may think they are being treated unfairly because they are refugees, yet this is not so as the system applies to everyone including local people; "They are being treated fairly; refugees are being treated like other people on housing benefit" (UK INT 7).

This research identified responses that clarify that not all communities in the UK are racist or discriminatory towards displaced persons. Interviews highlighted that some are very welcoming, and help displaced people integrate and settle (UK INT 7, 9 and 10). There is evidence of two-way effort in community integration. Displaced persons should not assume that the UK is a hostile environment but should try and harness as much support as is available for them. They should feel free to speak with their caseworkers about whatever they might be going through because they are there to help (UK INT 10). However, as with issues surrounding housing it appears there is limited capacity within the system of resettlement to meet the individual socio-cultural needs of displaced persons.

Social Infrastructure Needs

Education

Approximately 45% of displaced persons already have qualifications before coming to the UK and these groups find it easier to get jobs, because, alongside their knowledge and skills, most can speak English to a satisfactory level (Chiswick and Miller, 2002; Daniel et al., 2010). However, they need to have their qualifications certified by the National Recognition Information Centre (NARIC) in the UK to get jobs commensurate to their level of qualification. As one interviewee relates; "It is requested to get statements from NARIC UK now in terms of… the official organisation in the UK accredited by the government to provide qualification equivalents" (UK INT 11). While this may be yet another process to endure, the more than half (Daniel et al., 2010) of displaced persons who do not have any qualifications are extra-disadvantaged especially when seeking employment because of their poor level of English ability. The provision of English language skills and 'English for Speakers of other Languages' (ESOL) training, basic numeracy, literacy, and IT skills was established for this purpose. However, there are concerns about the quality, appropriateness, and limited availability of the ESOL provision (Evans 2003). Children of displaced persons gain access to primary and secondary education quickly through the help of their support worker, voluntary organisations, and sometimes the NHS district nurse; "So, in terms of younger refugees and asylum seekers, or children of refugees and asylum seekers, they do get into school" (UK INT 7).

However, support is needed to access higher education in terms of understanding of language, culture, and the working environment, as evidenced by one of the interviewees (UK INT 10). Voluntary organisations mainly help in training people in these subjects. Furthermore, vocational training like NVQs; and training in different skills, are generally available to the different types of displaced persons as with any other UK citizen. Some voluntary organisations arrange certified courses from time to time such as Food Hygiene, Health, and Safety at Work, for those who can understand the English language to help them become self-reliant. Opportunities such as this will enhance the rate of integration of both refugees and asylum seekers. Yet barriers to education are many; childcare for women with young children, lack of sufficient time for study, health problems, long waiting times for application decisions, most courses being full time, non-UK qualifications not being accepted, problems with funding and illiteracy, and placing low or no value on education. Hence, refugees need extra help with psychological re-orientation to understand the importance of education in making their lives better, or indeed to gain control of their lives to become an asset to the UK. As was evident in the discussion of cultural differences, the importance of learning the English Language to integrate well into the UK is paramount.

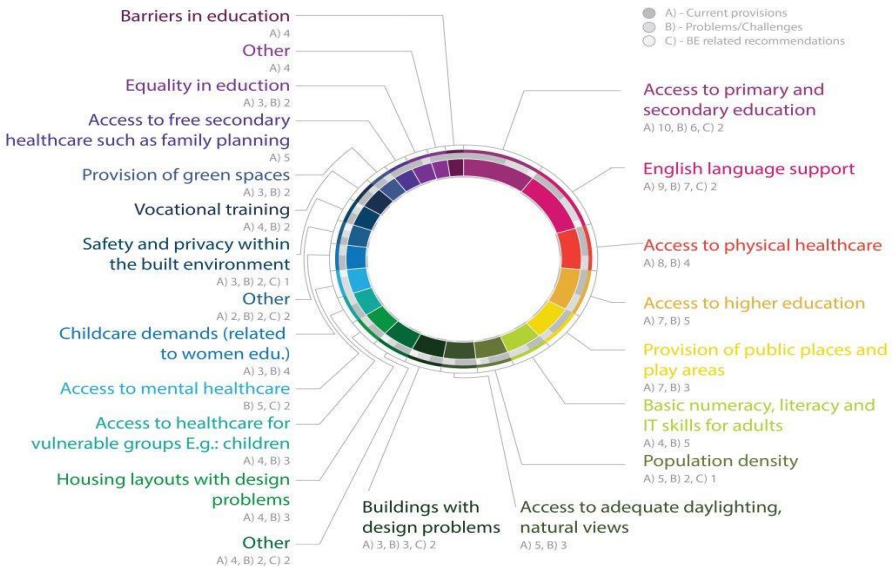

Figure 6 – Interviewee Responses to Social Infrastructure Needs of Displaced Persons

Health and Wellbeing

Refugees seem to have poorer mental health than the general UK population and these might have implications for integration (Mahamed, 2016). They have many worries ranging from; uncertainty about the decision on their claims, anxiety over being removed from the country, concern about family members back home, adapting to a different culture and language, experiences of negotiating the immigration system, poverty, and homelessness, and ensuring basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter (UK INT 7). It is a general belief that everyone should have access to a general practitioner and hospital care. Refugees are also eligible for mental healthcare as confirmed by an interviewee; “So, you would have the common anxiety disorders treatments like, you know, … therapies and … CBT for a few weeks or group therapy. You can access them just as any other UK resident can access them” (UK INT 10). Yet, as previously mentioned, some barriers such as language and issues with interpreters impede this access. Secondary healthcare is available in the UK, but it is not for free, it must be paid for. This applies to everyone in the

UK and not just asylum seekers or refugees, but clearly those who cannot work, or have limited funds, will be unable to use this.

Built Environment Factors that affect Health and Wellbeing of Displaced Persons

There are some aspects of the built environment that could have profound effects on the health and wellbeing of displaced communities. Buildings with design problems such as emissions from gas, exposure to pollutants, smoke from wood fire used for cooking or heating and tobacco all have harmful effects on the health of the inhabitants (Cooper, 2014; Hartig and Lawrence, 2003). Some houses are reported to have bad lighting conditions with just one translucent window, subsequently impairing the daylight. Because displaced persons may already be facing mental health challenges, inability to access natural daylight could also increase their stress and affect their wellbeing. Apartment buildings reduce social networking, leading to loneliness, and restrict children from playing outside the residential unit (Evans, 2003). The availability of public places and play areas is important because they are indicators of social wellbeing in both adults and children (Cooper, 2014; Janayi et al., 2018). This research's findings concur with this thought but note that provisions for these do exist in the UK; "I think people have access to libraries and public places. I mean, it is good for their health and wellbeing. There are no restrictions if they want to go to the public places" (UK INT 9).

Refugee communities in high-density areas are prone to infections especially in pregnant women and unborn children and overcrowding and noise have been found to result in psychological distress for the inhabitants (Cooper 2014). This research found no cases of overcrowding in housing provided for displaced persons when it was sourced based on certain standards. However, for shared accommodation, where asylum channel refugees live with friends and families, or combine their housing benefits together to rent a house, there can be a problem with noise and too many occupants. Additional feelings of being unsafe exist in such situations.

Economic Needs

Employment

Asylum seekers are not permitted to work, do voluntary work or training in the UK except those whose professions fall within identified areas of shortage in the UK and have not received a decision within twelve months (Mahamed, 2016; Mayblin, 2019). "If you've come here registered as an asylum seeker, and the home office….has not communicated with you for a period of up to 12 months. Technically…. You can apply for permission to work" (UK INT 12).

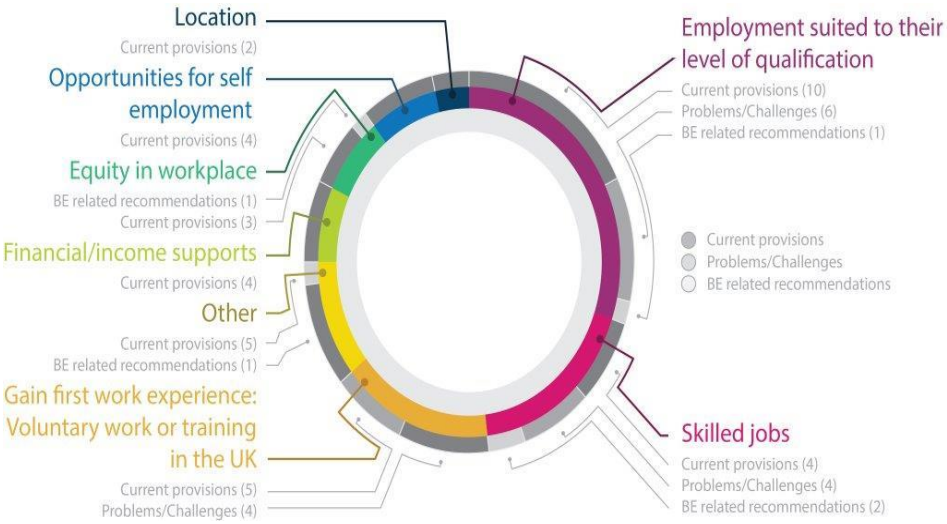

Figure 7 – Interviewee Responses on Employment Needs of Displaced Persons

Once established as refugees, displaced people can work in the UK because they have the same rights as British citizens. Most gain employment through informal workplace networking, via mouth-to-mouth sources. Again though, there are challenges in securing employment commensurate with their qualifications because of language barriers and the need for NARIC; “No, because if their qualification is not recognized….we have lawyers working in a factory, you know, and that is quite common’ (UK INT 10). Lack of such certification means they are required to take top-up courses and training. These are expensive and take a considerable time for completion, leaving them in low-skilled jobs with lower pay. In addition to these challenges, refugees can face the problem of racism and discrimination by employers. A government approach that actively promotes a hostile environment effectively turns the public services, employers, and landlords in the UK into immigration officers. Consequently, opportunities for self-employment are reportedly among the fastest avenues for refugees to gain access to the labour market in the UK. There are opportunities for refugees with realistic business plans and assisted through interest-free loans to set up their own businesses such as restaurants or tailor shops.

Financial/Income Supports available from the Government/Voluntary Organisations

In the UK, those who have equal rights with UK citizens receive financial support in terms of benefits for the unemployed and job seekers. On the other hand, asylum seekers are not eligible to claim such benefits, but are instead supported directly by the Home Office through the National Asylum Support System (NASS). This includes housing and a stipend of £5.39 per day, sometimes increased to £38 per week depending on age (Mahamed, 2016; Mayblin, and James, 2019). Subsequently, many asylum seekers are living in what can be classed as abject poverty, whereas they would have provided for themselves if gainfully employed (Bloch, 2002). The UK government needs to bear in mind its responsibility according to human rights law, to ensure that the asylum seekers and refugees are not left impoverished or destitute (Mayblin and James, 2019). In the light of this evidence, it perhaps needs to reconsider its stand and provide asylum seekers with access to the labour market so they can both help themselves and take the financial burden off the government and voluntary organisations. This seems more appropriate longer-term thinking that would give greater opportunity for meaningful involvement in the community while discouraging images of a host population indefinitely supporting displaced persons.

Physical Infrastructure Needs

All interviewees agree that physical infrastructure such as transportation, communication, water, sanitation, solid-waste and energy are readily available in the UK, but at a fee. This, displaced persons pay for themselves, just like any other UK residents, although they may receive a discount based on their income. Moreover, there is no fixed sum for this in the UK as provision of such services is regional and often through private organisations. Similarly, there are variations in local authority council tax rates that contribute towards service provision.

Figure 8 – Interviewee Responses to Physical Infrastructure Needs of Displaced Persons

Governance Needs

Research findings reveal that government policy relating to the resettlement scheme adequately addresses the needs of these refugees. However, for their counterparts, the asylum channel refugees and asylum seekers, their needs have been escalated by an increasing attitude of official hostility to their arrival. This has resulted in poverty, destitution, and social exclusion (Mayblin and James, 2019), which further impedes their integration. The paradox was noted by one of our interviewees; “Well, it's quite contradictory. You have quite the welcoming programme; welcoming and supportive and well-funded resettlement program. And then you have a hostile environment for Asylum Seekers” (UK INT 7). It is almost akin to state sponsored discrimination between the groups.

Communities with Special Needs

These include women, children/young people, the elderly and the disabled. They are the most vulnerable and their needs are many. Faced with extra needs with respect to immigration, adaptive housing, health, education, family, and social relationships issues, some, including children, have experienced detention. Women are exposed to gender-related persecution, domestic abuse and torture, female genital mutilation, forced persecution, and childcare issues (Bonnerjea, 1994; Burnett & Peel, 2001; Dransfield and Clark, 2018; Girma et al., 2014; Hek, 2005). Disabled asylum seekers can be highly deprived (Ward et al., 2008; Yeo, 2017) due to unsanitary accommodation without

disability adaptations; the disabled, being considered in some quarters as burdensome, are likely to experience negative effects on their mental health. There is recognition of this during the relocation of displaced people; “So, they’ve got extra needs and we sort of recognize that” (UK INT 10), yet actual provision may be in short supply; “You are not entitled to those provisions for disabled people” (UK INT 4).

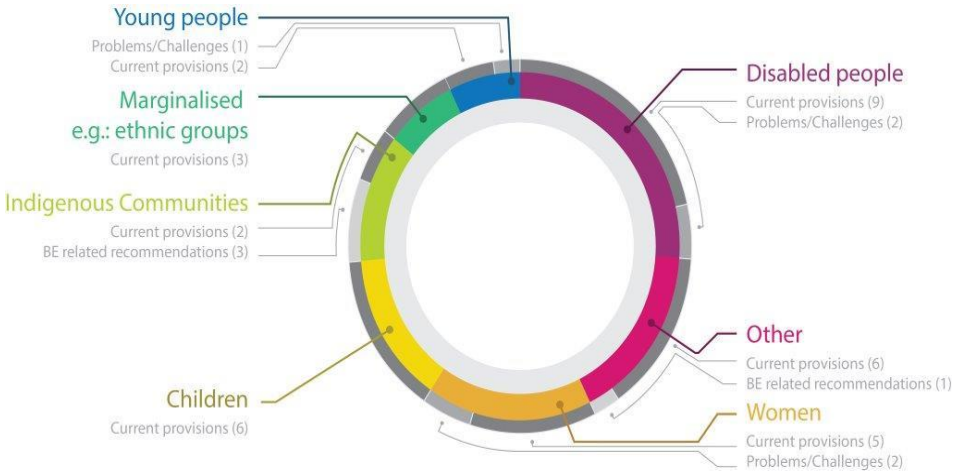

Figure 9 – Interviewee Responses to Communities with Special Needs Among Displaced Persons

Conclusion

This research submits that the UK accepts displaced persons into the system, and the country has enacted several policies to regulate the intake of the displaced. Review of the literature identified areas in which existing policy could be considered flawed, and provision for displaced persons capable of improvement. Desk-based research and primary data sources identified two different groups of refugees; those who come into the UK via the Resettlement Channel, and those that arrive via the Asylum Channel. The experience of each under the general themes of displacement and resettlement, and at a more specific level of built environment provision, appear to differ quite significantly. The UK has been continually accused by researchers, voluntary organisations, and some of the public of a double standard and high level of partiality and unfairness. The UK’s official support towards the resettlement channel refugees appears to be warm, welcoming, and fully funded, whereas the attitudes towards the asylum channel refugees and asylum seekers are said to be hostile, damaging, demoralising and only partially funded. Consequently, the asylum seekers and asylum channel refugees have greater needs. This has resulted in a lot of challenges for these disadvantaged groups in their integration. Not that everything has been perfect for resettlement channelled refugees either, there is clearly work to be done on improving the response for all.

In terms of the built environment, this chapter highlights the huge importance of built environment initiatives towards fulfilling the needs of the displaced communities. The built environment goes beyond housing and encompasses the space and facilities required to live. This requires us to perceive living as the way one exists and copes with the physical, social, economic, and psychological environments on a day-to-day basis, reflected in daily activities, values, interests, attitudes, and opinions, whether at home, work or leisure and as influenced by family, culture, and social class. The built environment is the space, which comprises structures, facilities and resources that accommodate and permit the individual to live a good and satisfactory life with a sense of wellbeing. Therefore, the built environment has

a role to play in meeting the needs of the displaced communities in the UK (Figure 10), ranging from; housing, socio-cultural, social infrastructural, economic, physical infrastructure, governance, and communities with special needs over and above those typical experienced by many.

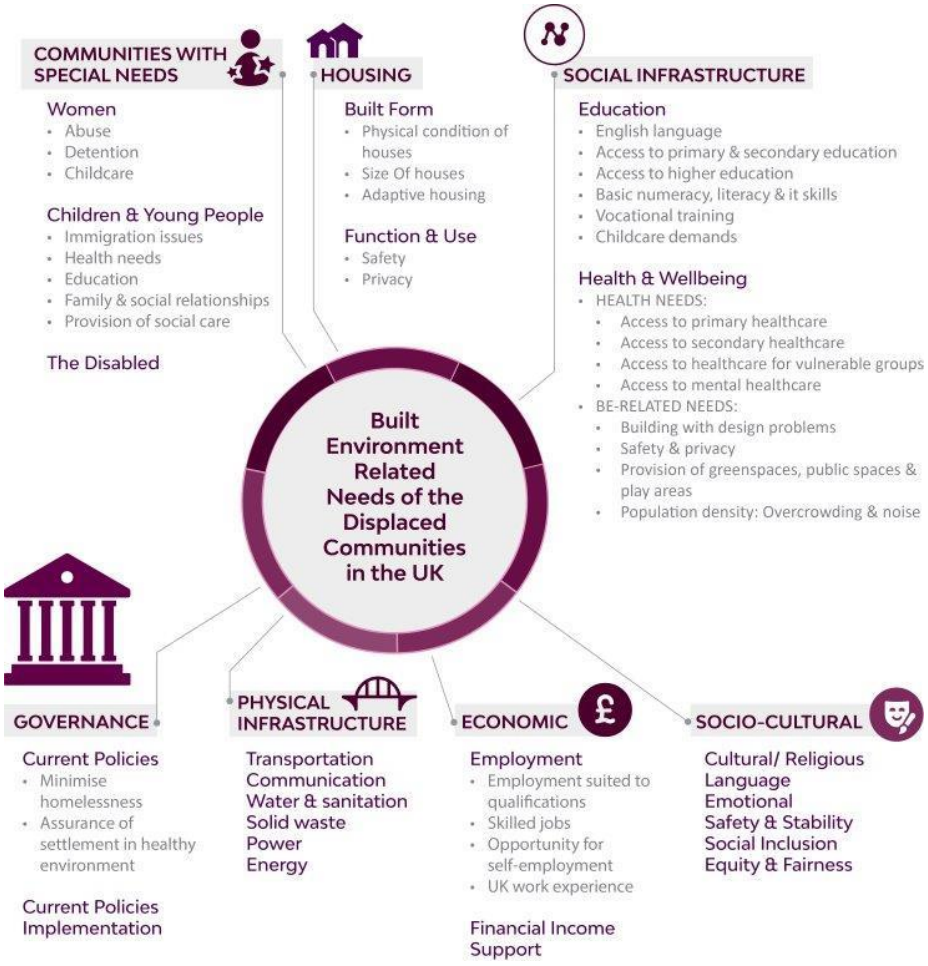

Figure 10 – Built Environment Related Needs of Displaced Communities in the UK

Acknowledgements

The REGARD project has been co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission. The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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