## OPENING DOORS

training modules

### training module 7: basic support

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[Refer to chapter 5 of the CIH/JRF guide]

### What is meant by basic support

Basic support includes meeting the immediate needs of a refugee or new migrant for help related to their accommodation, housing costs and other support aimed at ‘getting them started’ in the UK.

Such basic support can be (but is not necessarily) delivered by housing agencies directly, eg as part of Supporting People services. It is also the subject of the Sunrise programme for new refugees, described below. And, in many cases, people look for and receive such support from MRCOs and other voluntary organisations.

### Types of basic support that may be offered

Examples of the kinds of support that might be needed are given on pp 55-60 of the guide. They are:

■ setting up and running the home
■ paying for the home, applying for benefits, handling paperwork
■ help with language problems
■ access to schools and services for children
■ meeting disabled people’s needs
■ access to legal and immigration advice.

Of course, as pointed out in module 3, many categories of migrant are not entitled to benefits and their access to other services may also be restricted.

### Aims of support services

The objectives of basic support services and ways of delivering them are covered on pp 47-49 of the CIH/JRF guide. Although this relates principally to refugees, the principles apply more generally – with the strong proviso that support needs will vary enormously, and for refugees there is the added dimension of possible support needs related to their past experiences.
How needs are assessed

Ways of developing a ‘support plan’ for an individual or household are set out on pp 49-54 of the guide, based on the approach used by Refugee Housing Association. Other bodies will have different approaches. The Sunrise approach is different and is described below.

The Sunrise programme

The Sunrise programme is intended to meet the immediate support needs of refugees, from the ‘point of decision’. It is being piloted currently, and the aim is to roll it out nationally (but a timetable has not yet been announced). When this happens, the aim is to provide up to 20 hours of intensive casework support to refugees over 12 months. Support will be concentrated in the early stages following the ‘point of decision’ and will be based on a ‘personal integration plan’. The casework will be supplemented by support from volunteers.

Caseworkers will ‘signpost’ clients to other services (eg housing) to meet their wider needs.

Sunrise pilots

Four Sunrise pilots started in October 2005 and are still running:

- West London & Croydon – service provided by Refugee Arrivals Project with Migrant Helpline as a major partner
- Leeds & Sheffield - by a partnership of the city councils supported by Refugee Housing Association and Refugee Council
- Manchester - by Refugee Action (and MRCOs)
- Scotland - by the Scottish Refugee Council.

Limitations of Sunrise

Hact, CIH and other organisations have expressed concern that, while welcome, Sunrise should not be seen as the full ‘answer’ to refugee support needs. While some refugees may require only the limited support envisaged, others will continue to have more significant support needs. And of course the programme is limited to accepted refugees and does not apply to other categories of migrant.

Refugee Integration Loans

During 2007 the Home Office is planning to introduce a loan system, linked to the ‘personal integration plan’, which will enable refugees to borrow money to ‘get started’ with more permanent accommodation or in other ways.

It is not yet clear what the detailed arrangements for the loans will be, but information will be put on the ‘refugee integration’ section of the IND website (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/lawandpolicy/).

Potential for associations to provide support

Associations may want to consider how they could be involved in support services, either directly or with other partners. Even if they do not engage in direct support work, they may be able to work with MRCOs to identify unmet support needs.

Examples of HA involvement in providing support are in chapter 5 of the CIH/JRF guide.
Follow up to training module 7

√ do we already have expertise in providing this kind of support?

√ do we want to develop it, and if so how?

√ can we work in partnership with other bodies to scope support needs?

√ can we consider this issue with local MRCOs?

The *Opening Doors* programme is supported by a Housing Corporation Innovation and Good Practice grant.