

Accessing Settlement-Related Services

Goal one: Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy

Introduction

Migrants and refugees arrive in New Zealand expecting to make a new life for themselves and their families and to contribute economically and socially to New Zealand society. When first settling in a new country, new arrivals will require information to help them meet the needs that are central to their own and their family's wellbeing. These include finding somewhere to live, finding a job, gaining confidence in English, accessing education and health services.

Different aspects of settlement may occur at different rates for individuals and their families, depending on the particular barriers and opportunities they may encounter. People from similar cultural and language backgrounds to New Zealand are likely only to require information and advice on how to access relevant services to support their initial settlement and can find their own way around relatively similar systems. The information they need is available through existing generic services, pre-migration and on-arrival packs and social support networks such as friends, family, faith and other community based networks they are part of.

However, migrants from diverse language and cultural backgrounds, particularly those with limited English and a lack of familiarity with New Zealand systems and structures, face greater barriers to accessing information, advice and the services they require to meet their initial settlement needs¹. Some migrants from vastly different backgrounds, such as those from rural and/or subsistence living environments, will require additional support to adjust and settle in New Zealand.

For refugees, there is little time to prepare for life in New Zealand pre-arrival. Many have experienced loss and multiple sources of stress as a result of their 'refugee' experience (including war and other factors associated with forced migration) and language difficulties; culture shock; racism; unemployment and financial difficulties; health problems; changes to family structure and roles; and different or limited education. Many come from vastly different environments and some may not have experienced civil society. With these higher and more complex needs, refugees require intensive support over a longer period time to appropriately access and use settlement-related services and adjust to life in New Zealand.

Pacific migrants currently make up 14 percent of the Auckland region's population and have a longstanding history of migration. The challenges they face in accessing information, advice and services delivered in a

¹ Since 1991, approximately 70 percent of residency approvals have been granted to people with cultural and language backgrounds from destinations outside traditional source countries including the United Kingdom, Australia and Northern and Western Europe.

language and culturally responsive way and targeted to meet their initial settlement needs are addressed in the *Pacific Peoples and Settlement* chapter.

This chapter focuses on what is needed to support refugees and other migrants from diverse language and cultural backgrounds who require assistance to access and use the range of services required to achieve their settlement goals and expectations. It considers barriers and challenges identified by migrants, refugees and other stakeholders; describes the current government and community response to information and advice provision, and makes suggestions for improving accessibility and uptake of services by a wider range of communities through improved co-ordination and planning.

Barriers and challenges: what migrants, refugees and other stakeholders said

Information and advice

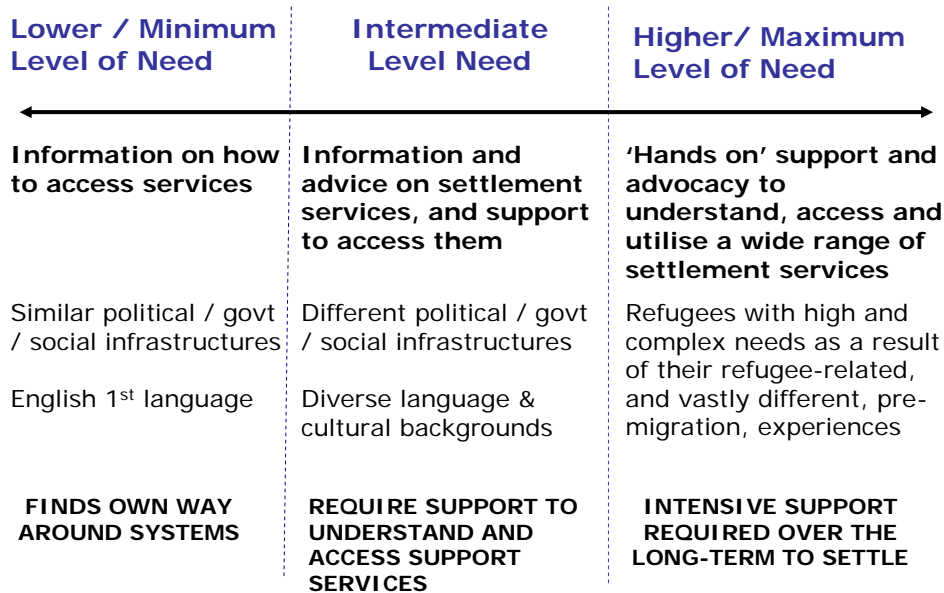
There was a general perception amongst migrant and refugee communities from diverse language and cultural backgrounds that settlement information and advice could be difficult to obtain. In particular, they identified an ongoing lack of access to information and advice about how to access services to support their initial settlement. They identified the following challenges, which were considered to be heightened for refugees:

- difficulty accessing information and advice due to language barriers and / or the location of service providers;
- a failure on the part of some service providers to recognise that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, where migrants and refugees are bundled together, does not address the different range and complexity of settlement needs within and between migrant and refugee communities;
- new arrivals who have difficulty obtaining information and advice often rely upon help from more established members of their ethnic community, who try to respond but do not necessarily have up-to-date information;
- a lack of support for migrants and refugees to plan, as individuals, how they are realistically going to achieve their range of inter-related settlement goals and a lack of clarity about the nature and level of support they can expect;
- a lack of co-ordination and collaboration between providers of mainstream and specialist services that support initial settlement. This results in conflicting advice, fragmentation and gaps and overlaps in service provision as well as agency competition for resources.

The most significant challenges arise from the impacts of a lack of accessibility and awareness about information and advice services, weak links between these services and migrant and refugee communities, gaps and overlaps in services and the lack of co-ordinated and tailored settlement planning for individual migrants and refugees. Stakeholders made the following proposals to address these issues:

- the need for a single point of contact for both migrants and refugees to obtain information, advice and, where necessary, support to appropriately access mainstream services available to all New Zealanders to address their initial settlement needs².
- addressing accessibility issues is not just about location. It is about the provision of information, advice and services in cultural and language appropriate ways, to the necessary degree of intensity, for as long as is required. The diagram below represents stakeholders views on the different levels of support required within, and between, migrant and refugee communities to access settlement related services.

Settlement Support Continuum



² The services required do not necessarily need to be co-located, rather the information and advice providers need to know what mainstream services area available and how they can be accessed.

- established migrant and refugee community members can assist providers of information and advice to be responsive to their community members' needs. If providers strengthen their links with established migrant and refugee communities they could help to build both provider and community capacity in the following ways:
 - -gain community input to enhance provider responsiveness in service delivery;
 - -increase community awareness of settlement support available and their uptake of services provided.

Coordination to address service gaps and overlaps

Where mainstream agency services are not providing services that meet the specific needs of migrants and refugees in a timely and appropriate way, *service creep* can occur. This happens when migrants and refugees, who are unable to get the services they need from mainstream providers, turn to other local community agencies and groups to help them. If these agencies and groups do not have links to mainstream agencies where they can refer migrants and refugees directly, they spend considerable time trying to access these services on behalf of the migrant or refugee client.

In some instances, information and advice providers may try to fill the gaps in mainstream services by turning to providing the service (such as teaching English, or finding work opportunities) themselves. This creates longer-term challenges in that it does not encourage mainstream agencies to be more responsive. It can also reduce the ability of the local community agency or group to adequately carry out and resource their core business because they are spreading themselves too thinly.

To address the issue of service creep and support a co-ordinated approach, mainstream agencies providing the range services that support settlement need to:

- be clear about their own and other agencies' roles and responsibilities for supporting migrants and refugees to achieve their personal settlement goals;
- ensure their services are responsive to the needs of migrants and refugees, and accessible to them. Refer to the other individual chapters for more information on how this might be achieved in specific settlement areas;
- build relationships with information and advice providers to ensure they are aware of:

- o the services mainstream agencies provide;
- o how migrants and refugees are assisted to access mainstream services.

Individual, tailored, settlement planning for life in New Zealand

Many inter-related issues impact on good settlement, and migrants and refugees believe their adjustment to life in New Zealand would be assisted through individual settlement plans that capture the goals they set themselves to feel settled in New Zealand³. Individual settlement plans could be tailored to reflect individual needs⁴ and include the following:

- confirming the personal outcome for settling in New Zealand, and the strengths an individual brings to settling here;
- identification of realistic and achievable personal goals (e.g. getting a job, accessing training, learning English) to help each individual person attain their settlement outcome;
- clear documentation of the actions and services required to support the achievement of these goals.

As migrants' and refugees' individual settlement needs will change over time, their identified need for a lead agency to provide a single and consistent point of contact to work with individuals could assist them to develop and review their individual settlement plans, as well as to link them to the services they require to achieve their goals.

It is important to recognise that refugees with high and complex needs are likely to require skilled assessment followed by intensive professional and case management support for much longer periods (often for at least two years) to be able to achieve their settlement goals and function independently in society.

Government and community responses

Information and advice

General, local information and advice that can support settlement is provided directly through councils in the Auckland region and through the Citizens Advice service, supported by funding from their local councils.

³ It should be noted that not all migrants and refugees will require or desire this type of support and the matter of choice should rest with individuals

⁴ Whilst settlement plans are individualised, some community members will wish to engage other family members in the development of their personal plans so that aspirations are jointly determined.

The Government recognises there have been barriers for migrants, refugees and their families accessing appropriate settlement-related information and advice that helps them to use mainstream services available to all New Zealanders (for example, housing, education and services for families). Overcoming these challenges is a key goal of the *New Zealand Settlement Strategy*.

The Department of Labour's Settlement Division is responsible for developing a cohesive and responsive approach to the provision of information and advice to migrants and refugees, both at pre-arrival and post-arrival stages. The Department does this off-shore through the provision of comprehensive publications and on-line information about living in New Zealand. Onshore, the Department provides funding to a range of organisations that provide refugees and migrants with information, advice and orientation to life in New Zealand. Some of these organisations employ migrant and refugee community members who offer bi-lingual, cultural and social support. Appendix 1 provides further information about the services the Department of Labour purchases in Auckland, including RMS Refugee Resettlement, the Auckland Regional Migrant Service and its multi-lingual information service provided jointly with Auckland City's Citizens Advice service, the Auckland Citizens Advice service Mandarin Line and the Chinese New Settlers Trust.

In addition, in 2004, the Government announced additional funding of \$11.7 million over four years, as part of the *New Zealand Settlement Strategy* Budget package, to improve the accessibility and appropriateness of information, advice and support provided in local areas where migrants and refugees settle, so as to address their initial settlement needs. This is being implemented through the Department of Labour's *Settlement Support New Zealand (SSNZ)* initiative, currently being rolled out across nineteen areas in New Zealand. The initiative will involve local and central government agencies, non-government agencies and migrant and refugee communities in these areas. Two Auckland councils are actively involved in supporting and leading two of the four initiatives in the Auckland region⁵. The initiative is intended to strengthen settlement support planning in local areas and thus improve the responsiveness and co-ordination of local mainstream and targeted services. It includes identifying (mapping) current service provision that supports settlement and any service gaps and overlaps. The Department of Labour plans to ensure that all of these local initiatives have access to multi-lingual support.

⁵ Waitakere City Council and North Shore City Council are the lead agencies in their areas; the Auckland Regional Migrant Service is the lead agency for Auckland City and Manukau City. The Department of Labour commenced funding the Auckland region initiatives in June 2005.

Agency co-ordination

At the national level, the Department of Labour has the lead role for co-ordinating and facilitating the implementation and development of the New Zealand Settlement Strategy on behalf of central government agencies. Reporting from local SSNZ initiatives, including the four in the Auckland region, will feed into the development of central agency planning for settlement support activities and further policy development through the New Zealand Settlement Strategy.

At the Auckland regional level, once accountability, reporting and review arrangements are established for the implementation phase of the Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy, it would be useful for individual agencies to have well-developed communication channels between their national, regional and local offices on settlement issues. There may also be collective benefits to establishing formal lines of communication between the Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy and the New Zealand Settlement Strategy.

Linking with migrants and refugees

Migrant and refugee communities are involved in developing and planning local *Settlement Support New Zealand* initiatives. At the regional level, suggested processes for involving migrants and refugees in policy and service delivery are outlined in the chapter *Involving Migrants and Refugees*. At the national level, the Department of Labour is responsible for co-ordinating a whole-of-government approach. This includes national consultation forums where migrant and refugee communities interface with government agencies, and provide feedback for the further development and implementation of interagency work programmes.

The way forward: *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy*

Goals to achieve well co-ordinated information and advice

The *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy*'s goals are that *migrants and refugees access appropriate information and advice to enable them to use services available to the wider community (for example, housing, education and services for families) by:*

- *improving the accessibility of information and advice services for the wide range of migrant and refugee communities;*
- *improving planning, systems and processes to ensure there is coordination between mainstream agencies who provide settlement-related services; and ensure they are responsive to the differing needs within migrant and refugee communities;*
- *strengthening relationships between providers of information and advice services and mainstream agencies, to ensure migrants and refugees are supported to access services that meet their settlement needs.*

Opportunities to improve access to settlement services

It is recommended that the longer-term work programmes for the *New Zealand Settlement Strategy* and the *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy* improve migrant and refugee access to settlement services by:

Improving community awareness and accessibility to information and advice services

- Information and advice providers strengthening links with migrant and refugee communities at the local level to:
 - enhance community awareness of information and advice services;
 - ensure greater accessibility and uptake of services by the wide range of migrant and refugee communities and build provider and community capacity.

Individual settlement planning for life in New Zealand

- Scope proposals that support individuals with a range of pre-migration experiences to plan for their life in New Zealand and achieve their range of settlement goals through:
 - settlement plans tailored to help individuals achieve their personal settlement goals through clearly documented actions and services required to help them to achieve their settlement goals;
 - a lead agency/single point of contact responsible for working directly with individual migrants and refugees to provide appropriate assistance to develop and review personal plans, and provide support to access settlement related services as required.

Addressing the issue of service creep and supporting a co-ordinated approach

- *Improve responsiveness of, and co-ordination between, mainstream agencies to address the needs of migrants and refugees by:*
 - clarifying their own and other agencies' roles and responsibilities in supporting migrant and refugee settlement, noting the different needs within and between these communities;
 - identifying where there are gaps and overlaps in service provision to address the differing needs of migrants and refugees, and having relevant agencies work together to address them;
 - making provision to ensure a wide range of migrants and refugees, in particular those from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, can access mainstream services; (Refer to the individual chapters for opportunities to achieve this);
 - providing opportunities to share and learn from best practice identified at local, regional and national levels through relevant networks, and by establishing formal lines of communication between the *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy* and the *New Zealand Settlement Strategy*.
- *Strengthen relationships between mainstream services and information and advice providers to ensure:*
 - information and advice providers are aware of the services mainstream agencies provide and know how best to support migrants and refugees to access these services;
 - mainstream services are aware of the role of information and advice providers.

Appendix 1

Providers of Settlement-Related Information and Advice

Auckland Regional Migrant Service

The Auckland Regional Migrant Service (ARMS) Trust has a centre at Three Kings and a smaller office in Manukau City, co-located with the Work and Income branch. The Trust is funded by the Department of Labour to provide information and advice services that supports settlement across the Auckland region, and direct migrants and refugees to appropriate services. The Tertiary Education Commission funds the placement of two ESOL assessors at the centre. The multi-lingual telephone and face-to-face information service (also funded by the Department of Labour) based in the ARMS centre is provided by the Auckland City's Citizens Advice service in partnership with the ARMS Trust. It offers a specialist Citizens Advice service providing information, advice and referral services in 14 different languages. Its paid staff are fully trained Citizens Advice Bureaux advisors, many of whom have themselves experienced positive settlement through their work with the Citizens Advice service.

In addition, ARMS clients are able to access information, advice and workshops that focus on securing employment and accessing ESOL tuition. Higher-need migrants and refugees require a wider range of settlement services and/or support to enable them to access and utilise other services beyond the Auckland Regional Migrant Service.

The ARMS Trust also plays a key role in identifying service barriers and issues relevant to various migrant groups, and co-ordinates Auckland agencies to work collaboratively to address and improve these.

RMS Refugee Resettlement

RMS Refugee Resettlement is a national, non-government organisation funded by the Department of Labour to provide settlement support services to refugees in their first year in New Zealand. The agency works from a strengths-based model and uses three layers of support to assist refugees to achieve their own settlement goals, including:

- professional social workers to case manage and provide information and home-based services;
- cross-cultural workers who provide language and culturally appropriate service support; and
- trained volunteers who support refugees while they establish themselves in their new homes and communities.⁶

⁶ See Appendix 2 for more information on these roles.

RMS Refugee Resettlement also provides public education on refugees, such as a Workshop for Professionals, and advice to the Government on refugee issues.

RMS Refugee Settlement and ARMS have a mutual responsibility to ensure clear, seamless and effective settlement support for refugees, which involves working collaboratively between themselves and with other agencies.

Ethnic-specific services

Ethnic-specific service providers offer a range of social and other services that help their communities integrate and settle in Auckland. These include the Chinese New Settlers' Services Trust and the Mandarin line offered by the Auckland City's Citizens Advice Bureau, both of which are funded by the Department of Labour.

Appendix 2

RMS Refugee Resettlement Support Personnel

RMS Refugee Resettlement is contracted by the Department of Labour to provide settlement support services for UNHCR-mandated refugees whom New Zealand resettles. The agency uses three layers of support to assist refugees achieve their own settlement goals:

- professional social workers, who interview families at the Department's Mangere Refugee Reception Centre, help them to develop a settlement plan and take on-going responsibility for ensuring that the necessary links and referrals occur. Referrals are not time limited, and work with families may extend well into the settlement phase, depending on need.
- cross-cultural workers, who act as a bridge to the New Zealand environment. They interpret New Zealand language and culture to the refugee families as they settle in their new homes and, conversely, share information about the language and culture of the refugees to New Zealanders who are assisting them.
- community volunteers, who are trained and supported by a Training Co-ordinator and by the above staff. Volunteers are assigned in groups to a six-month 'buddy' contract with a refugee family, which involves specific tasks to ensure outcomes that establish families in their new homes and community. This role is based on a concept of community welcome.