

Reflecting asylum in London's communities

monitoring London's press coverage of refugees and asylum seekers:
an analysis of press reporting January – February 2005

conducted by **the ICAR public images partnership**
for
the Mayor of London

Foreword by Ken Livingstone, Mayor of London

I am pleased to publish this independent report showing broadly good practice on asylum coverage by London's press.

London is built on immigration. People fleeing persecution are among the newcomers from abroad whose skills and energies help to fuel its economic and social life. It is my aim not only to prevent harassment of asylum seekers and refugees in London through discouraging a context of unbalanced, inaccurate and negative asylum coverage in the press; I also aim more positively to welcome and include asylum seekers and refugees fully into the life of our city. This independent report *Reflecting Asylum in London's Communities* contributes to our knowledge of that process.

In 2004 I published its parent report *Media Image, Community Impact*. This told us that negative reporting about asylum in the national press can - through increased community tensions - affect levels of harassment of asylum seekers and refugees. It also suggested that London's press at local level might have a better record of asylum coverage. This 2005 report confirms that it does, being closer to the communities in which integration matters to people.

Both studies have been carried out by the independent Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK (ICAR) now based at City University, London. Comparing their results points to more positive and community sensitive press reporting of asylum issues at London than at national level - across the 2005 sample of the capital's local, regional, faith and Black, Asian and minority ethnic press - that is, among the papers read by most Londoners.

Of course research on this scale provides something of a snapshot. Press coverage in the four-week period studied here - in January/ February 2005 - reflects specific current events and factors such as one political party's announcement of policy proposals on asylum, and the aftermath of the tsunami of late December 2004. Even so, looking at its overall performance, London's local press shows in this study a refreshing realism and balance, with little appetite for the scaremongering or scapegoating about asylum found in some national papers.

An important outcome of the report is a model of good practice based on the reporting of London's press. I commend this to the press as a whole to show what balanced and accurate coverage of asylum issues means. Let London's own press be an example of good practice throughout the UK. By fairly reflecting asylum in London's communities we can create a positive context for the social inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers in our great city.



Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London

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Summary and recommendations

Summary

The nature of reporting of asylum issues by some sections of the press has caused widespread concern in recent years. Recent research and opinion polls have begun to investigate the nature of the link between the way asylum and refugee stories are reported in the media, and hostile public opinion and community tension. In October 2003, following a number of complaints, the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) issued Guidance Notes for newspaper editors on reporting asylum/ refugee issues.

This study was commissioned by the Mayor of London in order to understand better the nature of reporting in London's newspapers. The way in which London's newspapers report asylum issues has the potential to influence the attitudes of Londoners towards asylum seekers and refugees and thereby to influence community relations.

The research is based on monitoring coverage of asylum and refugees in a cross section of newspapers read by Londoners. Newspaper articles are assessed to determine their accuracy, balance and focus of content and to see how far they represent good practice in reporting of these issues, defined by this report as: accurate and balanced reporting which demonstrates community-sensitive journalism and promotes information-based debate that reflects London's experience.

The report concludes that the sample of London newspaper articles contains many examples of good practice and there is evidence that London's press is more community sensitive, fairer and more sympathetic to asylum seekers and refugees than the national press. Coverage in general is accurate, balanced, wide-ranging and likely to promote an informed debate.

The report findings enable the development of a **good practice model** of reporting of asylum, made up of the following elements:

- use of accurate terminology
- avoidance of discrimination, harassment, invasion of privacy or inappropriate reporting of children
- use of measured language and balanced discussion
- use of balanced, wide-ranging sources, including asylum-seekers and refugees
- provision of legal, political and international context, linking international, national and local issues while giving a London perspective
- appreciation of diversity
- reporting local contribution of asylum seekers/refugees and community support for them
- not responding to controversial political debates by reporting in a manner likely to inflame public opinion.

The report findings also identify that coverage could be further improved if following were adhered to:

- use only of accurate and well-sourced statistics
- not implying that asylum seekers are involved in criminal activity without evidence to suggest this is the case; reporting evidence of asylum seekers as victims of crime eg harassment
- exercising greater caution when publishing letters which may give rise to unfounded fear and hostility of refugees and asylum seekers. Editors' notes could be added where such letters use inaccurate facts and terminology or make unsubstantiated allegations.

This report recognises the conflict of rights at the heart of this issue: the rights of a democratic society to freedom of speech, particularly those of the press, and the rights of groups, in this case asylum seekers and refugees, to live free from harassment. While supporting freedom of the press, it aims to highlight the differences between reporting which encourages rational debate about refugee and asylum issues and reporting likely to encourage public fear of and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees.

Recommendations

This research explores and confirms the indications of the *Media Image, Community Impact*¹ report that London's press shows more balanced and accurate reporting of asylum issues than much of the national press. The following recommendations should therefore be seen as supplementary to those in that report, but related specifically to London's press as studied here.

ICAR recommends that the GLA continues to celebrate the contribution of the London press to supporting good community relations through its provision of balanced and accurate information about refugees and asylum seekers.

ICAR recommends that the GLA considers in its engagement with London stakeholders how to take forward the following proposals to address challenges identified in this research:

1. The promotion of the standards set by the London press to stakeholders in the fields of journalism and public policy at national, EU and international levels.
2. The discussion with both editors and the PCC of the central role that balanced reporting plays in promoting good community relations and how far the concept of balance can be incorporated into editorial standards.
3. The use of the good practice model identified by this report for reporting of asylum and of ways to further improve coverage. See summary above for details.
4. The potential extension of existing non-discrimination provisions, for example, in the Editors' Code of Practice, to cover asylum seekers.
5. To encourage the provision of accurate, balanced and referenced information to London's press on asylum issues, with particular emphasis on:
 - correct terminology
 - relevant legal and policy documents
 - individuals and organisations with expertise in asylum, especially refugee community organisations and individual refugees and asylum seekers willing to speak to the press.

The ICAR public images partnership

The Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK (ICAR), formerly at King's College London, now at City University, is an independent information centre that exists to promote understanding of asylum and refugees in the UK and to encourage information-based debate and policy-making. The ICAR public images partnership is a partnership of agencies and individuals with expertise in understanding the impact of images of asylum seekers and refugees on public attitudes and community relations. The research is conducted by Kate Smart, academic direction is provided by Dr. Roger Grimshaw, Centre for Crime and Justice Studies at King's College, London, the project is co-ordinated by Beth Crosland and Dr Christopher McDowell at ICAR and research assistance is provided by Laura Quick and Sonja Zivak.

Accessing the report and executive summary

A longer summary of findings is published separately in the Executive Summary: ISBN 0-9547024-6-8. This report and the Executive Summary can be accessed from the websites of:

the Mayor of London: www.london.gov.uk
ICAR: www.icar.org.uk.

¹ ICAR, Media Image, Community Impact, 2004

1 Introduction

Outline of contents:

- Introduction
- Definitions of terms used in this report
- A focus on London
- Aims and objectives of the monitoring exercise
- Key questions answered by this report
- Findings of previous research
- Community relations in the context of diversity – London’s unique experience
- About the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) framework

□ Introduction

London is the UK’s most diverse city and is home to the largest and most established refugee communities in the UK, as well as many newly arrived asylum seekers. Community cohesion and refugee integration are national government priorities and have been the subject of recent policy development. The way in which London’s newspapers report asylum issues has the potential to influence the attitudes of Londoners towards asylum seekers and refugees and thereby to influence community relations. Recent research and opinion polls have begun to investigate the nature of the link between the way asylum and refugee stories are reported in the media and hostile public opinion and community tension. Most notably, the *Media Image, Community Impact* research study commissioned by the Greater London Authority (GLA), and carried out by a team led by the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR), examined perceptions of reporting in two areas of London with significant populations of asylum seekers/refugees, in relation to a sample of national and local newspapers, and concluded that:

‘some press coverage is unbalanced and inaccurate in ways that are likely to increase tension.’²

Similarly, media monitoring published by Article 19 in 2003 found that:

‘Media reporting of the asylum issue is characterised by the inaccurate and provocative use of language to describe those entering the country to seek asylum.’³

The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) has stated its belief in:

‘the danger that inaccurate, misleading or distorted reporting may generate an atmosphere of fear and hostility that is not borne out by the facts’⁴

and in 2003 included this statement in their Guidance Notes on refugees and asylum seekers.⁵

² ICAR, *Media Image, Community Impact*, 2004, Executive Summary, <http://www.icar.org.uk/proj/mici.html>, page 1

³ S Buchanan, B Grillo-Simpson, and T Threadgold, *What’s The Story? Media representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK*, 2003

⁴ See past adjudications on the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) website <http://www.pcc.org.uk/reports/all.asp>

⁵ See PCC, *Guidance Notes on refugees and asylum seekers*, 2003, http://www.pcc.org.uk/reports/edit_detail.asp?id=20

In the 2001 report *Community Cohesion*, the independent review team commissioned by the Home Office found that:

‘there is an urgent need to promote community cohesion, based on a greater knowledge of, contact between, and respect for, the various cultures that now make Great Britain such a rich and diverse nation.’

and reported that:

‘we did not solicit views about the role of the press and media and were therefore surprised to find that they were criticised in all but one case.’

This led to the recommendation that:

‘discussions (should) be held with a range of regional newspaper editors (and media representatives) to establish a voluntary code of guidance... on all aspects of community cohesion.’⁶

In 2003 Stonewall published the results of an opinion poll: *Profiles of prejudice. The nature of prejudice in England*. In this poll 50 per cent of those questioned said asylum seekers and refugees are the people most likely to experience prejudice and discrimination in England and that those who express this prejudice are more likely to identify themselves as readers of the *Daily Mail/Mail on Sunday* (44 per cent), and as readers of *The Sun/News of the World* (43 per cent). Londoners were the least prejudiced when regional variations were considered. The report found that

‘the media are a strong influence on people who feel less positive towards refugees/asylum seekers.’

and that 40 per cent of them are influenced by newspapers. It concluded that no other prejudice is as influenced by newspapers as this one.⁷

The UK government defines a cohesive community as one where:

‘there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities

the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued

those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities

strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.’⁸

Newspaper reporting on asylum which supports community cohesion might be expected to reflect these points: to emphasise where applicable the similarities rather than the differences between asylum seekers/refugees and local people, and show them involved in joint activities or as having joint concerns; to appreciate diversity and note the contributions made by asylum seekers and refugees to

⁶ Home Office, *Community Cohesion: A report of the independent review team*, 2003, pages 10 and 45, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/keydocs.html>

⁷ Stonewall, *Profiles of prejudice. The nature of prejudice in England: in-depth analysis of findings*, 2003, http://www.stonewall.org.uk/citizenship_21/information_centre/multiple_discrimination/prejudice/index.html

⁸ Home Office *Community Cohesion* website, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/>

London's communities; and to accurately explain how the rights of asylum seekers and refugees do not mean that they receive preferential treatment.

This report, like the *Media Image, Community Impact* study, is:

'...rooted in issues where competing rights are present – on the one hand the rights of a democratic society to freedom of speech and freedom of the press and on the other, the rights of asylum seekers and refugees to freedom from harassment.'⁹

This report, while supporting freedom of the press, aims to highlight the differences between reporting which encourages rational debate about refugee and asylum issues and reporting likely to encourage public fear of and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees. This report promotes the idea of good practice in reporting asylum, defined as

'accurate and balanced reporting which demonstrates community-sensitive journalism and promotes information-based debate that reflects London's experience.'

□ **Definitions of accuracy, balance, discrimination and community sensitive reporting**

- **Accuracy** is difficult to assess without carrying out background investigations into information used in articles. This was beyond the scope of this research project. Therefore for the purposes of this research accuracy is considered to be indicated by use of identifiable sources and by the presentation of factual information in a manner that promotes information-based debate, clearly distinguishing fact, opinion and conjecture. This definition does not prejudice the duty of journalists to protect sensitive human sources.
- **Balance** is indicated by the presentation of alternative points of view, contextual information, the use of a range of sources, and by the avoidance of extreme language or exaggeration, disproportionate headlines and/or distorted images.
- **Discrimination** is defined in terms of race, ethnicity, religion and nationality in the Editors' Code of Practice.¹⁰ This report examines discriminatory practices by assessing how far people from backgrounds of varying race, ethnicity, religion and nationality are subjects of a particular type of reporting and how the press responds to local hostility or racist activity directed at asylum seekers and refugees. It is also sensitive to instances of hostile reporting which would be considered discriminatory except that they refer to refugees and/or asylum seekers rather than a race, ethnicity, religion or nationality.
- The concept of '**community sensitive**' reporting is central to this report's understanding of good practice in reporting asylum; it incorporates and adds to the definitions of accuracy, balance and non-discrimination detailed above. Community sensitive reporting means that significant importance is given to considering the impact of reporting on local people and communities – specifically that care is taken not to promote unfounded fear of and misunderstanding between different sectors of the local community but instead an appreciation of diversity and information-based debate. It does not mean that refugee communities should receive special treatment by the press.

⁹ ICAR, *Media Image, Community Impact*, 2004, page 11

¹⁰ Code of Practice Committee, *Editors Code of Practice*, 2005, <http://www.pcc.org.uk/cop/cop.asp>

□ **A focus on London**

The GLA shares the concerns about the evidence of hostile reporting of asylum issues and its harmful effects as detailed above. The GLA is committed to promoting good community relations within London and is interested in effective integration of refugees into London's communities.

In interviews conducted for the *Media Image, Community Impact* report, editors of London newspapers saw themselves as close to and reflective of their communities, understanding the dangers of stirring up tension. They described themselves as:

'closer to their readers and more sensitive to the things they do than the national newspapers are'¹¹

While the GLA is encouraged by indications that London's press is more balanced than the national press, and that Londoners are less hostile towards asylum seekers and refugees than the public as a whole, it is committed to identifying how far problems exist.

In the foreword to *Media Image, Community Impact* the Mayor describes the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in London:

'Instead of feeling welcome many feel threatened and face daily harassment and persecution. Refugee community groups and other agencies working in this field have consistently linked this to intensive and largely hostile reporting of asylum issues by the media. I have shared their concerns.'¹²

This report is the first to monitor London's reporting on asylum issues separate from other UK papers. Monitoring how asylum is reported by London's papers, and recognising examples of good practice, is an important step in achieving good community relations and refugee integration in London. This report provides the results of a media monitoring exercise conducted using a representative sample of London's regional, local, and minority ethnic/faith press over four weeks in January and February 2005. The other studies cited above (and reviewed in more detail below) looked at a mixture of national and regional or local papers. This one exclusively focuses on London-based media and their reflection of the life lived by communities in the capital.

□ **Aims and objectives of the monitoring exercise**

In the light of the findings of the *Media Image, Community Impact* study and other previous work on the potential impact of press reporting upon attitudes within communities, the central aim of this report is to use similar monitoring methods to examine the accuracy, balance and focus of content of the London press and to identify good practice in London's reporting of asylum.

This includes the following objectives:

- **to map reporting of asylum in the London local, regional, minority ethnic and faith press**

The report provides a detailed picture of the type and frequency of reports, what events papers consider newsworthy, how information is sourced and presented to the reader, what visual images are used, what letters are received and how complaints/corrections are published.

¹¹ ICAR, *ibid*, page 50

¹² ICAR, *ibid*, page 5

- **to analyse London's reporting of asylum in the context of community relations**

Through content analysis of the newspaper sample, the report identifies how sensitively London's newspapers report on asylum, and reflect the diverse communities they serve, given concerns about the impact of reporting on community relations. The report looks at how far there is evidence of inaccurate, unbalanced and inflammatory reporting which is likely to generate unfounded fear of and hostility towards refugees and asylum seekers among readers, and so lead to an increase in community tension, as outlined in the findings of the *Media Image, Community Impact* report. Attention is given to issues such as whether reports relentlessly repeat hostile epithets and emotive phrases, refer to numbers in vague terms, concentrate on stories linking asylum seekers and refugees with crime, and portray asylum seekers and refugees as receiving preferential treatment or being responsible for local deprivation and shortage. Comparison is made with the results of the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample, to identify how far the approach of London's newspapers to reporting asylum differs from the broader sample of mixed national and local papers.

- **to monitor compliance with the PCC guidance notes and the Editors' Code of Practice and assess the adequacy of the PCC framework**

Since the research for the *Media Image, Community Impact* report was conducted, the PCC has issued guidance notes on press reporting of refugees and asylum seekers,¹³ stressing the importance of accurate terminology and reminding editors to avoid reporting which generates unfounded fear and hostility. This document is supplementary to the code of practice agreed by newspaper editors, which lays down requirements to ensure reporting standards.

This report aims to assess London's reporting of asylum issues in the light of the guidance notes' directions on using accurate terminology. The report also aims to assess how far London's reporting of asylum complies with the more general requirements in the code of practice for accuracy (ie not just in relation to terminology) and with other aspects of the code of practice, specifically clauses on discrimination, privacy, harassment and reporting of children. It also seeks to identify reporting which is of concern because it is insensitive to community dynamics, even though it complies with the PCC's framework of the code and guidance notes, and by so doing it comments on the adequacy of the PCC framework. For example, there is no requirement in the Editors' Code for balance in reporting, and asylum seekers and refugees are not explicitly covered by the discrimination clause of the code. The report looks at whether such limitations have implications for the type of reporting in this sample.

- **to identify good practice and ways of promoting it**

Drawing on the sample of articles from the London regional, local and minority ethnic/faith press, the report identifies accurate and balanced reporting which demonstrates responsible, community-sensitive journalism and promotes information-based debate that reflects London's experience. It explains how such examples may contribute to good community relations. The report makes recommendations about how to promote the models of good practice identified in the monitoring exercise.

¹³ PCC, Guidance Notes on refugees and asylum seekers, 2003

□ **Key questions answered by this report:**

- How far does London's press promote informed debate through accurate and balanced reporting?
- How community-sensitive is reporting of asylum in London's press? Does coverage take into account London's diversity; does it promote or hinder good community relations; is it likely that reporting engenders unfounded fear or hostility of refugees and asylum seekers?
- How accountable is London's press to the communities it represents, for example, through publishing letters with opposing views, correcting errors in reporting and adhering to the PCC framework?
- How does reporting in London differ from reporting nationally?
- How adequate is the PCC framework in the context of reporting asylum in London?
- What might be the impact of this sample of reporting?
- How far does London's press represent good practice in reporting asylum and what good practice models does it offer?

□ **Findings of previous research**

There is a substantial and growing body of research on the UK media's approach to reporting asylum issues. It is not possible to review this literature comprehensively within the scope of this project.¹⁴ The following are the most current studies of relevance to this project.

1. ICAR: *Media Image, Community Impact, 2004*

This research, which was commissioned by the GLA, monitored a selection of national, local and minority ethnic newspapers to investigate the hypothesis that:

'Newspapers often present images of asylum seekers and refugees that contain language, photographs, and graphics likely to give rise to feelings of fear of and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees among their readers. This effect is compounded by inaccurate and unbalanced reporting.'

The research did this by examining: sources cited in articles, choice of photographs, cartoons and other graphics, use of words and phrasing, and presentation of numbers relating both to numbers of refugees and asylum seekers and costs of the asylum system.

To investigate further how far a link can be made between media images and community tension, the study included harassment monitoring, focus groups and interviews with editors, refugee communities, and local representatives such as local authorities and the police. In doing so it not only identified the types of reporting likely to promote unfounded fear and hostility, it also recorded the views of Londoners on the impact of inaccurate and unbalanced reporting, and found that diversity awareness, and understanding the extent to which asylum seekers and refugees have access to resources in comparison to local people, are two of the key factors affecting how far the media influences community tension.¹⁵

¹⁴ See ICAR, *Media Image, Community Impact, 2004*, chapter 7, for a more comprehensive summary of existing research

¹⁵ ICAR, *ibid*, page 97

Key findings¹⁶

- 'The study found clear evidence of negative, unbalanced and inaccurate reporting likely to promote fear and tension within communities across London. There was most evidence of this in the national press that reported on asylum issues far more frequently than either the local or black and minority ethnic press.
- The main parties dominated the political sources quoted in news stories. In contrast, there was little reference to legal instruments or to organisations working on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees.
- The portrayal of allegedly overwhelming but unspecified influxes of asylum seekers from abroad was likely to bring apprehension to readers' minds while the frequent reporting of criminality among asylum seekers and refugees was likely to induce fear.
- Hostile attitudes to asylum seekers and refugees and attacks on them are most likely when hostile media images coincide with local experiences of deprivation and competition for services in short supply locally eg health and housing.
- The police and local government are alert and anxious about possible community unrest and harassment of asylum seekers and refugees following negative, hostile and inflammatory press coverage and there is evidence that their policies have adapted to minimise the impact.
- Refugees and asylum seekers who have been victims of harassment and representatives of refugee communities feel strongly that the press presents hostile images of asylum seekers and refugees, that this is in itself a form of harassment and that it increases the likelihood of local harassment of individual asylum seekers and refugees.'

Recommendations

- 'That the GLA press for more accurate, balanced, and referenced information about asylum seekers and refugees in London to be made widely available. This should be in a variety of formats and be available to the media and all sectors of the community.
- That the GLA find ways of providing accurate, balanced and referenced information about asylum seekers and refugees in particular for young people in London, in appropriate and innovative formats. This will help to counteract the misinformed views that they often hold. This information should answer the questions that young people ask about asylum seekers as well as challenging the misconceptions they hold.
- That the Home Office commission a study that will promote better understanding of the involvement of asylum seekers in crime and the criminal justice system. This research suggests that some media coverage associates asylum seekers with illegal and criminal activities in a manner which is inaccurate and unbalanced. The lack of data on asylum and crime makes it difficult to sustain a complaint about this in spite of the fact that police sources claim that asylum seekers are relatively unlikely to be involved in crime and more likely to be victims of crime.
- That the GLA discuss with refugee support agencies how they might be able to provide information which takes into account both media deadlines and media interest in real life stories, in order to encourage the balanced use of sources in media coverage of asylum issues and asylum seekers.
- The GLA should take practical steps to facilitate greater accuracy on reporting of asylum issues in London by providing assistance to journalists seeking reliable sources of information. To this end, it is recommended that the GLA set up an independent fact checking facility for the media's reports on London as soon as possible.
- The report also recommends that the Mayor of London discuss the main findings of this report with the proprietors of national newspapers which regularly write unbalanced and inaccurate reports about asylum policy, asylum seekers and refugees.

¹⁶ ICAR, *ibid*, Executive Summary

- That the GLA welcomes coverage of asylum issues by local media that is generally more balanced than that of some of the national media, and shows greater concern about the effect on their local community.
- That the GLA should work with London's local community leaders, especially those responsible for community relations and safety, to develop more effective strategies for discussing with the local, London-regional and national press their concerns about links between media coverage and local community tension.'

2. National media monitoring on reporting of asylum (ongoing): commissioned by the Home Office National Refugee Integration Forum

The ICAR public images partnership in conjunction with the MediaWise Refugees, Asylum Seekers and the Media Project (RAM) and the Refugee Council is currently undertaking research commissioned by the Positive Images subgroup of the Home Office National Refugee Integration Forum. The research is using the same methodology as this report to monitor reporting of asylum in 50 newspapers – a range of national, regional and minority ethnic/faith papers. This report will also include detailed investigations of articles that appear to flout the Editors' Code of Practice and the PCC Guidance Notes and follow up interviews with editors to investigate their approach to reporting of these issues and ask for their views on the PCC framework. The research period concluded in Summer 2005 and is due for publication in spring 2006.

3. Article 19: *What's the Story? Media representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK 2003*¹⁷This research analysed articles from seven national and regional papers over a 12-week period using a coding system similar to that used in the *Media Image, Community Impact* report. It also analysed television broadcasts and interviewed asylum seekers and refugees.

Key findings

- 'Media reporting of the asylum issue is characterised by the inaccurate and provocative use of language to describe those entering the country to seek asylum. Fifty one different labels were identified as making reference to individuals seeking refuge in Britain and included meaningless and derogatory terms such as 'illegal refugee' and 'asylum cheat'.
- The asylum debate focuses overwhelmingly on the number of people entering the country to claim asylum, but the numbers which are presented in print and broadcast reports are frequently unsourced, exaggerated or inadequately explained. Contextual analysis of the relevance and meaning of official statistics is missing from the debate.
- Images used to accompany print and broadcast reports on the issue of asylum are dominated by the stereotype of the 'threatening young male'. Women and children are rarely seen and stock images of groups of men trying to break into Britain are used repeatedly.
- News and feature articles on asylum rely heavily on politicians, official figures and the police as sources of information and explanation. Individual asylum seekers and refugees are only quoted when they themselves are the subject of a report and rarely contribute directly to the policy debate.'

Key recommendations

- 'Politicians and government officials should take the lead in using accurate terminology when speaking about asylum and immigration policy and in setting a tone for the debate which reflects the fact that on average every year an estimated 40-50 per cent of those who apply for asylum in Britain are judged to have legitimate grounds for remaining in the UK, either as Convention status refugees or as persons in need of humanitarian protection.

¹⁷ S Buchanan, B Grillo-Simpson, and T Threadgold, *What's The Story? Media representation of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, 2003*, page 9

- Reporters, sub-editors and editors should be aware of the correct use of terminology in the asylum and immigration debate. They should avoid inventing labels which are essentially meaningless, and also distinguish between economic migrants and refugees.
- Refugee organisations should develop a glossary of correct legal definitions with clear explanations of their meaning and the context in which they should be used.
- The media should take care to source all statistics and explain the origin of numbers which are quoted without a verifiable source.
- The media should place reportage of numbers of refugees and asylum seekers in context, both historical and in relation to the arrival and recognition rates of asylum seekers and refugees in other countries.
- The media should seek to portray asylum seekers and refugees in less stereotypical ways, in particular by including more images of women and children in their reports.
- Acknowledging the challenges they face, refugee organisations should explore ways in which they can offer the media alternative and more representative images.
- Refugees and asylum seekers should be asked for their opinion on policy issues and given the opportunity to make a greater contribution to the debate. This requires journalists to seek them out as sources on a broader range of issues and for refugee organisations to be (even more) prepared to facilitate exchange between the media and refugees.
- The media should find opportunities to present refugees as individuals whose stories are worth telling, rather than merely examples of a generic 'problem.'

4. Research into reporting of asylum in the Scottish press (on-going)

Oxfam, in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University, is conducting research into reporting of asylum in Scottish papers. Further information can be gained from the Oxfam Poverty Programme and website: www.oxfamgb.org/ukpp.

□ **Community relations in the context of diversity – London’s unique experience**

This section reviews population data for London and for the rest of the UK and provides a brief comparative analysis. It includes data on

- London’s diversity in terms of ethnicity and religion
- numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in London.

London’s diversity in terms of ethnicity and religion

London is the most cosmopolitan part of the UK, home to a wider range of nationalities and ethnic groups than any other UK city.

Table 1 Ethnicity¹⁸

Ethnic group	Percentage of people in England	Percentage of people in Greater London	Percentage of people in inner London	Percentage of people in outer London
White British	87.0	59.8	50.5	65.5
Irish	1.3	3.1	3.4	2.9
White other	2.7	8.3	11.8	6.1
Indian	2.1	6.1	3.1	8.0
Pakistani	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.3
Bangladeshi	0.6	2.0	1.6	2.3
Asian other	0.5	1.9	1.3	2.2
Black Caribbean	1.1	4.8	6.9	3.5
Black African	1.0	5.3	8.3	3.4
Black other	0.2	0.8	1.3	0.6
Mixed ethnic groups	1.3	3.2	3.9	2.7
Chinese	0.5	1.1	1.4	0.9
Other groups	0.4	1.6	2.0	1.3

¹⁸ GLA, Mapping diversity in London, 2003, 2001 census results

Table 2 Religion¹⁹

	Percentage of people in England and Wales	Percentage of people in London	Percentage of people in inner London	Percentage of people in outer London
Christian	71.75	58.23	54.57	60.62
Buddhist	0.28	0.76	1.00	0.61
Hindu	1.06	4.07	1.90	5.44
Jewish	0.50	2.09	1.78	2.28
Muslim	2.97	8.46	11.67	6.45
Sikh	0.63	1.45	0.51	2.04
Other	0.29	0.51	0.44	0.55
None	14.81	15.76	18.34	14.15
Not stated	7.71	8.66	9.79	7.95

Tables 1 and 2 above show that while the make up of ethnic and faith groups in inner and outer London is different, the difference between them is far smaller than the difference between London and the rest of England/England and Wales. For example, 40 per cent of Londoners are not White British, compared to 13 per cent of those in England. It should be noted that London's diversity is even greater than shown in table 1 for which Census categories do not identify certain communities e.g. Somali, Turkish, Kurdish.

Numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in London

Obtaining accurate data on the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK has always been difficult. To some extent data on numbers of asylum seekers has been easier to obtain since the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was set up in April 2000 under the management of the Home Office. With some exceptions, NASS either provides accommodation and support for asylum seekers outside of London or a support only option if applicants are able to secure their own accommodation within London or elsewhere. NASS produces statistics on the numbers of asylum seekers who have accessed its support.

However, despite the establishment of NASS, for a number of reasons accurate statistics on the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK remain difficult to come by.²⁰ One of the reasons is that not all asylum seekers decide to access support from the agency - and refugees, by virtue of their status, fall outside its remit. Additionally, there are various systems of alternative support that can be accessed by asylum seekers if they meet certain criteria, meaning that NASS does not have responsibility for them.

In London the situation is particularly complicated because the capital has always attracted a large number of asylum seekers. Prior to the introduction of NASS and dispersal arrangements, asylum

¹⁹ National Statistics, Census 2001 National Report, Key statistics, Ethnicity and religion, 2005, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=395>

²⁰ For more information see for example ICAR Statistics about asylum seekers in the UK, 2005, <http://www.icar.org.uk/pdf/st008.pdf>

seekers accessed support via either the mainstream benefits system or social services. During the transition period between these systems and NASS, a number of overlapping support arrangements were in operation, and this makes the collection of data on asylum seekers difficult. It is also thought that many refugees move to London when they gain status, but there is no way of verifying exactly how many.

However, some attempts to size London's asylum seeking and refugee population have been made and this section reviews these.

Before 2000, when dispersal began, it is estimated that 85 per cent of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK were living in London. Based on asylum application figures for the 15 years up to 2001, and assuming that half of those who claim asylum go on to leave the UK, the GLA has estimated that in 2001 there were in London 364,000 migrants who were either asylum seekers, those granted refugee or other humanitarian status or those who had remained in the UK after their application for asylum had been rejected.²¹ This number will have increased considerably in the last few years.

Since dispersal, the balance between London and other regions has changed. Currently, numbers of asylum seekers in London compared to those in the rest of the UK who receive support from the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) (around 70 per cent of current asylum seekers) are as follows:

Table 3 Asylum applicants supported by NASS as at December 2003²²

UK	80,125
England only	71,515
Greater London	24,920

These figures show that well over one third of NASS-supported asylum seekers in England are in London.

The following information on additional groups of asylum seekers resident in London at the end of September 2004 has been collated by the GLA:²³

Individuals supported by London boroughs under the interim arrangements	18,475
Households supported by London boroughs under homelessness legislation	1,448
Unaccompanied asylum seeking young people supported by London boroughs	3,810

This suggests that in total there are roughly 50,000 government-supported asylum seekers in London.

Less information is available on the location of those who do not receive NASS support, or support under interim, Housing Act or Children Act regulations, those with UN Refugee status or other humanitarian status, those whose application is rejected or those who are supported by community care legislation.

Census data for 2001 gives an indication of the country of birth of the UK population. For some of the countries listed it is likely that a high proportion of individuals are asylum seekers or refugees. The next table shows results for five countries of origin known to produce refugees.

²¹ GLA, Europe Land of Asylum: Research Report, 2004, Chapter 4.2, <http://www.europelandofasylum.net/>

²² Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate at the Home Office, Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2003 HOSB 11/04, 2003, <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html>

²³ Sources (2005): GLA Homelessness monthly returns; and the London Asylum Seekers Consortium, as cited in Into the Labyrinth

Table 4 Information from census tables showing place of birth²⁴

Country of birth	Number in England	Number in London	Number in inner London	Number in outer London
Somalia	42,548	33,831	16,037	17,794
Sri Lanka	66,330	49,932	10,492	39,440
Former Yugoslavia	45,997	25,237	12,800	12,437
Iraq	29,927	17,294	6,627	10,665
Iran	40,187	20,398	8,065	12,333
Totals for above countries	224,989	146,692	54,021	92,669
Population totals	42,968,596	5,231,701	1,834,957	3,396,744

About two thirds of those originating in five refugee-producing countries are in London, with one third living elsewhere in England. For those in London, in proportion to the population as a whole, slightly more of those originating from these five countries are in inner London. Compared to those born in the UK, these nationalities represent one in every 190 residents of England, one in 35 Londoners, one in 34 of those in inner London and one in 37 of those in outer London.

□ **About the Press Complaints Commission framework**

The Press Complaints Commission (PCC) is a mechanism for self-regulation by the press. It investigates cases brought by members of the public who have complaints about newspapers and aims to reach resolutions in a 'fast, free and fair' manner. It intends to be accessible to all and there is no requirement for individuals to be represented by a solicitor. The PCC publishes information in a range of languages.

The Editors' Code of Practice

Central to the work of the PCC is the Editors' Code of Practice. It is drawn up and agreed by newspaper editors and then ratified by the independent PCC.

The following explanation of the code is given on the PCC website:

'All members of the press have a duty to maintain the highest professional standards. This Code sets the benchmark for those ethical standards, protecting both the rights of the individual and the public's right to know. It is the responsibility of editors and publishers to implement the Code and they should take care to ensure it is observed rigorously by all editorial staff and external contributors, including non-journalists, in printed and online versions of publications. A further sign of this commitment is that adherence to the industry's Code is written into the contracts of employment of the vast majority of editors in the country. Central to the work of the PCC and to the Code of Practice is the added protection it gives to particularly vulnerable groups of people. Editors should co-operate swiftly with the

²⁴GLA, Mapping Diversity in London, 2003, 2001 Census results pp 48-72.

PCC in the resolution of complaints. Any publication judged to have breached the Code must print the adjudication in full and with due prominence, including headline reference to the PCC.²⁵

Relevant sections of the code

The following aspects of the code have particular relevance to the issues discussed in this report.

'Clause 1 Accuracy

- i) The Press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information, including pictures.
- ii) A significant inaccuracy, misleading statement or distortion once recognised must be corrected, promptly and with due prominence, and – where appropriate – an apology published.
- iii) The Press, whilst free to be partisan, must distinguish clearly between comment, conjecture and fact.
- iv) A publication must report fairly and accurately the outcome of an action for defamation to which it has been a party, unless an agreed settlement states otherwise, or an agreed statement is published.

Clause 2 Opportunity to reply

A fair opportunity for reply to inaccuracies must be given when reasonably called for.

Clause 3 *Privacy

- i) Everyone is entitled to respect for his or her private and family life, home, health and correspondence, including digital communications. Editors will be expected to justify intrusions into any individual's private life without consent.
 - ii) It is unacceptable to photograph individuals in private places without their consent.
- Note – Private places are public or private property where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

Clause 4 *Harassment

- i) Journalists must not engage in intimidation, harassment or persistent pursuit.
- ii) They must not persist in questioning, telephoning, pursuing or photographing individuals once asked to desist; nor remain on their property when asked to leave and must not follow them.
- iii) Editors must ensure these principles are observed by those working for them and take care not to use non-compliant material from other sources.

Clause 6 *Children

- i) Young people should be free to complete their time at school without unnecessary intrusion.
- ii) A child under 16 must not be interviewed or photographed on issues involving their own or another child's welfare unless a custodial parent or similarly responsible adult consents.
- iii) Pupils must not be approached or photographed at school without the permission of the school authorities.
- iv) Minors must not be paid for material involving children's welfare, nor parents or guardians for material about their children or wards, unless it is clearly in the child's interest.
- v) Editors must not use the fame, notoriety or position of a parent or guardian as sole justification for publishing details of a child's private life.

Clause 12 Discrimination

- i) The press must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability.
- ii) Details of an individual's race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, physical or mental illness or disability must be avoided unless genuinely relevant to the story.

²⁵ PCC, Code of Practice (revised), 2004, <http://www.pcc.org.uk/cop/cop.asp>

The public interest There may be exceptions to the clauses marked * where they can be demonstrated to be in the public interest.

1. The public interest includes, but is not confined to:
 - i) Detecting or exposing crime or serious impropriety.
 - ii) Protecting public health and safety.
 - iii) Preventing the public from being misled by an action or statement of an individual or organisation.
2. There is a public interest in freedom of expression itself.
3. Whenever the public interest is invoked, the PCC will require editors to demonstrate fully how the public interest was served.
4. The PCC will consider the extent to which material is already in the public domain, or will become so.
5. In cases involving children under 16, editors must demonstrate an exceptional public interest to override the normally paramount interest of the child.'

The Editors' Codebook

The recently published *Editor's Codebook* gives additional information about readers' letters:

'the Code applies to all editorial staff ... and to contributed editorial material, such as agency copy – and readers' letters' ²⁶

The PCC guidance notes on refugees and asylum seekers

Guidance notes are issued by the PCC to give further advice to editors on aspects of the code and on issues that are causing systematic concern. They do not have the same status as the code in that they are drawn up by the PCC rather than by editors, but they are used as a reference in making adjudications on complaints. Guidance notes are not issued very often; at present there are 11. In October 2003 guidance notes were issued on reporting refugees and asylum seekers. Below are relevant excerpts from the guidance:

'Those breaches of the Code that have occurred ... appear largely to have arisen from misunderstandings about terminology.'

'... editors should ... take care to avoid misleading or distorted terminology. By way of example, as an "asylum seeker" is someone currently seeking refugee status or humanitarian protection, there can be no such thing in law as an "illegal asylum seeker". A "refugee" is someone who has fled their country in fear of their life, and may have been granted asylum under the 1951 Refugee Convention or someone who otherwise qualifies for Humanitarian Protection, Discretionary Leave or has been granted Exceptional Leave to Remain in the country. An asylum seeker can only become an "illegal immigrant" if he or she remains in the UK after having failed to respond to a removal notice.'

'pejorative or irrelevant reference to a person's race, religion, or nationality is already prohibited under Clause 13 (Discrimination) of the Code. Similarly, the Commission – in previous adjudications under Clause 1 (Accuracy) of the Code – has underlined the danger that inaccurate, misleading or distorted reporting may generate an atmosphere of fear and hostility that is not borne out by the facts.'²⁷

The guidance represents a significant step forward by the PCC in tackling inaccurate, unbalanced and inflammatory reporting of refugees and asylum seekers by UK newspapers, but there are concerns among those who work with refugees and asylum seekers that they are not consistently applied and do not go far enough.

²⁶ The Editors' Code of Practice Committee, *The Editors Codebook*, 2005, page 7

²⁷ PCC, *Guidance Notes on refugees and asylum seekers*, 2003

2 Methods

Outline of contents:

- Introduction
- Sampling: Newspaper sample
Selection of articles
- Grouping of London's boroughs into inner and outer London
- Timeline comparisons
- Content analysis

□ Introduction

This research project is based on data gathered by media monitoring – systematically collating and analysing newspaper articles from a sample over a fixed time period. The media monitoring framework used in this project has been developed to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the introduction. Content analysis has been used to identify sources, words, phrases, and images used and context is provided by a headline timetable to show the scale and frequency of reporting of asylum stories and a news event timeline to determine the issues considered newsworthy.

The media monitoring period for this research is four weeks from 10 January 2005 until 6 February 2005.

This section provides information on how newspapers were sampled and articles selected, how the timelines were constructed and how the content analysis was carried out.

□ Sampling: newspaper sample

This study is based on reporting in a sample of papers that are widely read in London. A total of 41 papers are included in the sample. Information influencing the choice of papers came mainly from the Newspaper Society, 'the voice of Britain's regional press,' www.newspapersoc.org.uk.

Three groups of London papers are included: London regional, London local and minority ethnic and faith papers. These three groups are described collectively in this report as London's press/papers.

London regional papers

Greater London is not only a capital city; it is also a UK region. As such the two newspapers which cover the whole of London are 'regional' newspapers. Both are included in the monitoring. The London regional papers are:

Evening Standard
The Metro

Minority ethnic and faith papers

In order to reflect papers read by London's diverse communities, eight minority ethnic and faith newspapers are included in the sample. The selection was based on circulation levels of those featured on the Newspaper Society website, and on advice from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) and the GLA about ensuring a range of widely read minority ethnic and faith papers.

The minority ethnic and faith papers are:

The Voice
New Nation
Eastern Eye
Asian Times
India Weekly
The Trumpet
The Jewish Chronicle
The Muslim News

London local papers

The sample of London papers is taken from the 75 London local papers listed on the Newspaper Society website. The papers listed serve almost all the boroughs of London but there are no papers listed for Westminster or City and they are not represented in the sample²⁸. For the remaining 31 boroughs, 31 local papers are included – as far as possible a paper containing the name of a London borough, eg the *Lewisham News Shopper* and the *Enfield Advertiser*. Where more than one paper exists which has the name of a borough in its title, the one with the highest circulation was chosen. It is reasonable to expect that each of these papers is read by residents of the borough which shares its name, although circulation is not determined by borough boundaries. Some papers have names with a connection to a borough but not the same name. For example, Lambeth is represented by the *Streatham, Clapham and West Norwood Post*, the *Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon Post* is chosen for Merton, and the *South London Press* is selected for Southwark. Newham and Tower Hamlets are covered by the *Stratford and Docklands Express* and *The Wharf*. Hillingdon is represented by the *Uxbridge Leader*. The result is a sample which represents all parts of London.

The majority of these papers are published by Trinity Mirror although other publishers are represented. These are Kent Messenger, Newsquest, New Journal Enterprises and Archant.

The London local papers in the sample are:

Barking and Dagenham Yellow Advertiser
Barnet Hendon Press
Bexley KM Extra
Brent and Wembley Leader Series
Bromley News Shopper Series
Camden New Journal
Croydon Guardian
Ealing Leader
Enfield Advertiser
Fulham Chronicle Series
Hackney Gazette
Haringey Advertiser
Harrow Times Series
Havering Yellow Advertiser
Hounslow Isleworth and Brentford Informer
Islington Gazette and Chronicle Series
Kensington Informer Series
Kingston and Richmond Guardian Group
Lewisham and Greenwich Mercury Group
Lewisham News Shopper Series
Mitcham Morden and Wimbledon Post
Redbridge Yellow Advertiser

²⁸ Local papers in Westminster and City do exist but details were not available on the Newspaper Society website.

Richmond and Twickenham Informer
 South London Press (Friday edition)
 Stratford and Docklands Express
 Streatham Clapham and West Norwood Post
 Sutton Guardian Series
 The Wharf
 Uxbridge Leader
 Waltham Forest Yellow Advertiser
 Wandsworth Guardian

Circulation by edition by publisher and newspaper, to the nearest thousand

The regional press have the highest circulation figures; *The Metro*, also being distributed free, has by far the largest circulation of the sample. Circulation for the local papers varies widely, as does pricing policy - some papers are both delivered free in that area and sold in shops; circulation varies widely - from 4,000 for the *Fulham Chronicle* to 124,000 for the *Richmond Guardian*. The average circulation figure for the London locals is 63,000. There is less variation among the minority ethnic/faith press, almost all of which is paid for - their average circulation is 33,000.

The figures indicate that the London local papers as a whole dominate the London newspaper market, but that the extent to which individual London local papers impact on London varies widely. By contrast, while the total circulation of London regional papers is less than that of the London local papers, individually the London regional papers are far more significant than any of the individual local papers. The minority ethnic/faith papers are a sizeable minority, although their circulation is not exclusively in London. Most of the local papers are published by Trinity Mirror, and most of the minority ethnic/faith press are published by Ethnic Media Group. Both of the London regional papers are published by Associated Newspapers.

Table 5 Circulation by publisher ²⁹

Group	Publisher	Newspaper	Circulation (thousands)
London regional	Associated Newspapers Ltd	Evening Standard	351
ditto	ditto	Metro	825
London local	Trinity Mirror	Barking and Dagenham Yellow Advertiser	21
		Barnet Hendon Press	111
		Brent and Wembley Leader	30
		Ealing Leader	74
		Enfield Advertiser	95
		Fulham Chronicle	4
		Haringey Advertiser	42
		Hounslow Informer	53
		Kensington Informer	97
		Greenwich Mercury	96
		Mitcham Morden and Wimbledon post	48
		Redbridge Yellow Advertiser	66
		Richmond and Twickenham Informer	56
		South London Press	29 (Friday edition)
		Streatham, Clapham and West Norwood Post	39

²⁹ Newspaper Society website, www.newspapersoc.org.uk. Associated Newspapers Ltd, Ethnic Media Group, Muslim News, Blackinbritain, Blacknet, Jewish Chronicle.

		The Wharf	33
		Waltham Forest Yellow Advertiser	50
		Uxbridge Leader	65
	Kent Messenger Ltd.	Kent Messenger	59
	Newsquest	Bromley News Shopper	98
		Harrow Times	74
		Croydon Guardian	108
		Richmond Guardian	124
		Lewisham News Shopper	101
		Sutton Guardian	108
		Wandsworth Guardian	59
	New Journal Enterprises	Camden New Journal	51
	Archant	Hackney Gazette	10
		Islington Gazette & Chronicle Series	13
		Stratford and Docklands Express	50
Minority ethnic/ faith	The Gleaner Voice Group	The Voice	Est. 57
	Ethnic Media Group	New Nation	23
		Eastern Eye	27
		Asian Times	22
		India Weekly	13
	The Jewish Chronicle Ltd	The Jewish Chronicle	35
	Muslim News Ltd	The Muslim News	60
	Trumpet Ventures	The Trumpet	26

Cost of the newspapers

The Metro is distributed entirely free. The other papers vary in price, and some local papers are both distributed free in a specific area and sold in shops. The minority ethnic/faith papers in the sample are almost all paid for. Overall prices vary from approximately 50p to £1.50 per copy.³⁰

Selection of articles

Articles within the sample of papers for the dates listed are selected for further analysis using the criteria that they contain the word 'refugee' and/or the word 'asylum' (can be 'asylum seeker' or 'asylum policy'). Spurious uses of these words are not included in the sample: 'I am a refugee from my teenage children', for example.

Articles that mention the words refugee and/or asylum but contain no reference to asylum seekers or refugees in the UK or to UK policy are logged but not examined further.

With the exception of the *Evening Standard*, the selection of articles is conducted by manually searching the papers for those containing the words refugee or asylum and for related visual images. These articles are then collated for further analysis.

The *Evening Standard* is available through the online database Nexis, <http://www.nexis.com/research>, and its articles are accessed in this way. As the database does not hold visual images these are collated by manually searching the paper.

³⁰ Based on costs charged to ICAR, which included delivery of newspapers. Further details on price are available from the Ethnic Media Group and Willings Press Guide; practice also varies on the ground.

□ Grouping London's boroughs into inner and outer London

This report focuses on London issues, defining London in terms of its 33 boroughs. Most of the information presented relates to London as a whole. Where there is sufficient data and significant differences emerge, information is also given about inner and outer London boroughs.

Table 6 Inner and outer London boroughs³¹

Inner London boroughs		Outer London boroughs	
Camden	Tower Hamlets	Barking and Dagenham	Havering
Hackney	Wandsworth	Barnet	Hillingdon
Hammersmith and Fulham	Westminster	Bexley	Hounslow
Haringey	City	Brent	Kingston upon Thames
Islington		Bromley	Merton
Kensington and Chelsea		Croydon	Redbridge
Lambeth		Ealing	Richmond upon Thames
Lewisham		Enfield	Sutton
Newham		Greenwich	Waltham Forest
Southwark		Harrow	

□ Timeline comparisons

There are two timelines – the headline timeline and the news event timeline. The headline timeline displays the headlines from the sample of articles in date order so that the frequency with which articles appear in each paper during the timeframe can be seen easily. It also provides information on strength and type of reporting and illustrates similarities and differences between the headlines used by three groups of papers – London regional, local and minority ethnic and faith papers. The news event timeline gives information on the key events occurring during the monitoring period. The purpose of this time line is to assess how far newspaper reporting reflects key events occurring in the field of asylum. The news events listed were selected from information available from three sources – the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Department news website, the Refugee Council news website and the BBC news website.

³¹ National Statistics, Focus on London, 2003, http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_compendia/FOL2003/00Prelims.pdf, page xvi

□ Content analysis

Content analysis is based on tried and tested methods commonly used in communication studies to identify key messages and how they are presented. An analysis is made of the content of each article. This includes recording their subject and scope, the type of issues raised and the language used, the sources of information that are named, and the type of visual images that occur. The issues highlighted in the content analysis are chosen for their relevance in achieving the aims of the research.

The content analysis used in this report is based on the scheme used in the *Media Image, Community Impact* report which aimed to identify the extent to which newspapers present inaccurate and unbalanced images of asylum seekers and refugees likely to give rise to unfounded fear and hostility. It has been extended to cover the following:

- to reflect issues raised by the Editors' Code of Practice, the recently issued PCC guidance notes on reporting refugees and asylum seekers and relevant adjudications of complaints
- to reflect the findings of the *Media Image, Community Impact* report about images of particular concern to London communities eg on crime and community safety, and on the effect of asylum on services and the economy
- to identify more fully examples of good practice in reporting of asylum stories, particularly reports on government policy and reports on relations between asylum seekers and refugees and the local communities in which they are living.

It involves a very detailed coding system which allows for a thorough analysis. The code can be added to as the analysis proceeds in order to reflect the content of articles. The main area for which this was necessary was to enable detailed coding of the opposition Conservative Party leader's policy announcements which occurred during the timeframe.

3. Monitoring results

Outline of contents:

- Timelines
- Information on type, scope and sources of articles
- Presentation of policy and statistics
- Presentation of effects on services, economy and other welfare issues
- Presentation of crime
- Presentation of perceptions of and interactions with asylum seekers and refugees
- Information on combinations of topics in articles
- Complaints
- Letters
- Visual images
- Issues covered by the PCC framework
- Summary of comparison between local, regional and minority ethnic/faith press
- Information by publisher/ownership
- Information on differences between inner and outer London
- Examples of articles
- Comparison to data from the *Media Image, Community Impact* study
- How might a different sample yield different results?

□ Timelines

Timeline of news events during monitoring period

Introduction

The purpose of this timeline is to see how far, and in what way, the newspapers report on key events occurring in the field of asylum. It enables comparison between those events which receive little attention and those which generate media interest, in some cases for weeks after the event took place.

How the news events of the monitoring period were identified

Apart from the information reported in the newspaper sample, information on the key news events occurring during the monitoring period was gained from the Home Office Immigration and Nationality Department news website, the Refugee Council news website and the BBC news website. The Home Office website gives information on the development of and government statements about asylum policy. The Refugee Council gives information of specific interest to refugee communities and supporting organisations. The BBC website is committed to reporting independent, impartial news.

As this report is concerned with reporting in London, the key news events listed here are those with national, international or London relevance. Events concerning other regions of the UK are not included.

News events for the period immediately preceding the press monitoring

A general election is expected to be called for May 2005. There is discussion about whether or not asylum will be a major election issue.

- 15 December 2004 David Blunkett resigns as Home Secretary. He is replaced by Charles Clarke and there is speculation about whether the tough line on asylum will continue.
- 16 December 2004 the Law Lords rule that holding nine men in prison indefinitely on suspicion of terrorism is unlawful under international human rights law. Some of the men had previously been granted asylum.
- 26 December 2004 a tsunami in the Indian Ocean creates a humanitarian crisis. Many asylum seekers and refugees in the UK have relatives in the region who are affected by the disaster.
- 29 December 2005 in his new year message the Prime Minister Tony Blair states that new proposals on asylum will be set out later in the new year.
- 6 January 2005 the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) facilitates the procedure by which Iraqis in the UK (including asylum seekers and refugees) can register to vote in the elections for Iraq's Transitional National Assembly due to take place 28-30 January 2005.

News events timeline for the monitoring period

The key events that occurred during the monitoring period are new restrictions and proposed new restrictions to the asylum system, Holocaust Memorial Day, the release of terror suspects and voting in Iraq. A pro-asylum demonstration also took place, a research report was published and a court case heard.

Table 7 News events

Week beginning 10.1.05		News event
	11.1.05	National Aids Trust and Sigma Research publish report on discrimination against those with HIV which criticises dispersal and other aspects of asylum policy.
Week beginning 17.1.05		
	17.1.05	Home Office announces tighter controls on immigrants wishing to marry in the UK from 1 February.
	18.1.05	Home Office announces that India will be added to list of 'safe countries'. Asylum seekers from safe countries who are rejected can only appeal after being removed from the UK.
	23.1.05	Conservative Party places advertisement in Sunday Telegraph calling for limits on immigration and asylum.
Week beginning 24.1.05		
	24.1.05	Conservative Party leader Michael Howard makes speech outlining wide-ranging proposals on asylum and immigration, including withdrawal from the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.
	26.1.05	A man who posed as a London doctor, including writing false medical reports on asylum seekers, is jailed.
	27.1.05	Holocaust Memorial Day. Sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.
	28 - 30.1.05	Iraqis in the UK, including asylum seekers and refugees, vote in Iraqi elections.
	29.1.05	Abu Rideh, who has refugee status, is released from detention under the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act.

	30.1.05	Asylum seeker 'C' is released from detention under the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act.
Week beginning 31.1.05		
	6.2.05	Prime Minister Tony Blair and Home Secretary Charles Clarke both signal policy announcements on asylum and immigration to be made on Monday 7 February.

Headline timeline

The headlines for the London regional papers – the only daily papers in the sample – show most clearly how three events occurring in the second half of January – the Conservative Party leader’s proposals for changing the asylum system, Holocaust Memorial Day, and the case of the ‘bogus doctor’ – dominated the news and led to an increase in articles which mention asylum or refugees. In particular, for the sample as a whole, the week beginning 24 January 2005 produced more than double the average number of articles than for the other three weeks. For the London-regional papers, that week produced four times the average number of articles than for the other three weeks. The headlines indicate a ‘delayed reaction’ among the minority ethnic/faith press (which are weekly/fortnightly papers) which produced more articles on the subject of the Conservative leader’s speech in the following week beginning 31 January 2005. The plight of tsunami victims and their relatives in the UK also features in the sample, particularly in the first week. Only the London regional press covers the release of terror suspects in the third week. Other events listed in the news events timeline get little or no coverage. The London local papers cover a range of local stories.

Note – a headline is only listed once where the same headline is shared between two articles (as on a letters page) or where the same headline appears twice on the same day in different papers which are part of the same newspaper group (this was not frequent).

Table 8 Headlines

	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
January 2005			
Week beginning 10.1.05 16 headlines	10 headlines	1 headline	5 headlines
10.1.05		IMMIGRATION UNIT RACIST, CLAIM STAFF	
11.1.05			
12.01.05	ASBOs SERVED ON FIVE REGULAR OFFENDERS		
13.01.05	THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS		
	WE ALL HAVE PROBLEMS		
	HALF TERM		
	PREMIERE STARS 100-YEAR-OLD WHO FLED HOLOCAUST		

	CALLS TO LET SAJ VISIT FAMILY AFTER WAVE DISASTER		
	MAJOR CIVIC EVENTS TO REMEMBER TSUNAMI VICTIMS		
14.1.05	ASYLUM OFFICER IN RACE ROW TRIBUNAL		THRILLED CARDIFF MUM GETS MBE
	TSUNAMI FAMILY WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?		I WILL GO AND GET MY NEPHEW
	THOUSANDS OF THANKS		STELLAR LINE UP FOR BOOK WEEK
			THE WOMEN WHO ARE SHAPING BRITISH LIFE
			LIBS WOMAN
15.1.05			
16.1.05			
Week beginning 17.1.05	9 headlines	9 headlines	2 headlines
20 headlines			
17.1.05			BRITAIN'S JUDICIAL SYSTEM IN THE DOCK
18.1.05		BOGUS DOCTOR IN £1.5M CON	
		MAD BAD DANGEROUS THE NEW ENOCH	
		CONMAN CAB DRIVER WHO BECAME BOGUS DOCTOR IN HARLEY ST	
		HARLEY STREET CONMAN STOLE MY IDENTITY TO MAKE £1.5 MILLION	
		THE SADDAM COUSIN BRITAIN GAVE ASYLUM TO IS 'FUNDING IRAQI TERROR'	
19.1.05	DISCRIMINATION REVISITED		
20.1.05	HOME OFFICE TO DEPORT TRAGIC SAJ TO SRI LANKA		
	MAKING STARS OF REFUGEES	MISS INTERPRETATION	
	LEARN FROM SURVIVORS	THE WEEPING MEADOW	
		THE £200M LABOUR DONOR, GORDON BROWN AND QUESTIONS THAT GO TO THE HEART OF NO 10	
21.1.05	BOGUS DOCTOR MADE £1.5M IN 5 YEARS	HOW DOCTORS AND LAWYERS ALL FELL FOR KING CON	REFUGEE'S DAUGHTER GETS PALACE APOLOGY

	BOGUS DOCTOR MADE £1.5M OVER FIVE YEARS OF DECEPTION		
	LEARN MORE ABOUT UK VISAS		
	MENTOR GROUP SEEKS HELPERS		
	LESSONS FROM HOLOCAUST		
22.1.05			
23.1.05			
Week beginning 24.1.05 46 headlines	10 headlines	30 headlines	6 headlines
24.1.05		WE CANNOT WIN ELECTION ADVISOR TELLS TORY LEADER	EQUALITY POLICY REVISED
		'WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN TORIES BUT YOU NEED SOMEONE WITH MORE CHARISMA THAN HOWARD'	
		THE FORGOTTEN VOICES	
		TURNING UP THE HEAT ON IMMIGRATION	
		FURIOUS HOWARD HITS BACK: WE'RE NOT EXPLOITING RACISM	
		LET LABOUR BEWARE HOWARD'S 'RACE CARD'	
		BRITON COULD BE TRIED HERE FOR TREASON OVER 'LINKS TO AL- ZARQAWI'	
25.1.05	WASTE OF TALENT?	HOWARD: ASYLUM PLANS NOT RACIST	
		EURO THREAT TO BLOCK HOWARD ASYLUM LIMITS	
		TORIES ELECTION SUPREMO RULED OUT ON POINTS	
		WE HAVE SIGNED AWAY ASYLUM RIGHTS	
26.1.05	SO NOW IT'S AN ELECTION ISSUE, TOO	BOGUS DOCTOR IS JAILED FOR 10 YEARS	
	BRINGING TSUNAMI FAMILIES TOGETHER	CLARKE ADMITS BELMARSH 12 WILL ALSO HAVE TO BE FREED	
	LABOUR BEWARE: VOTERS WEARY OF ASYLUM SEEKERS	SEX ATTACK ON OVERNIGHT COACH	

		DO MIGRANTS REALLY SCARE THE VOTERS WHO COUNT?	
27.1.05	COMMUNITY STARS GO TO NUMBER 10	WELCOME IMMIGRANTS	
	TIME MUST NOT WEAR AWAY THE MEMORIES	MATCH OF THE DAY	
	TAMIL SPEAKERS INVITED TO ATTEND ADVICE SESSIONS	KEEP THE IMMIGRANTS COMING	
	GROWING PRAISE FOR YOUNG GARDENERS	LEADERS CLASH IN IMMIGRATION ROW	
		BOGUS DOCTOR IN £1.5M CON JAILED	
		HOW THE GIRL FROM CHALKHILL CAME TO BE ONE NIGHT AWAY FROM OSCAR GLORY	
28.1.05	YOUNGSTERS OF COURAGE	THE WORLD REMEMBERS	ECONOMIST RETURNS TO REMOTE INDIAN VILLAGES
	ESCAPE FROM THE NAZIS	BRITISH CAMP X-RAY SUSPECT 'CONFESSED TO TRAINING WITH BIN LADEN'	IS THE CONSERVATIVE LEADER TAKING THE MICHAEL?
		POLL PROMPTS NEW TORY ATTACK ON ASYLUM	JEWISH TORIES BACK HOWARD'S QUOTA PLAN
		WEIGHING THE PROS AND CONS OF IMMIGRATION	HOWARD ACCUSED ON 'RACE-CARD' POLITICS
		IMMIGRATION COST 'IS £2BN A YEAR'	'SHAMEFUL' LINE ON IMMIGRATION
		TORIES IN NEW ATTACK ON ASYLUM AS POLL SHOWS STRATEGY IS PAYING OFF	
		I SPIED ON ABU TO BE FREE...	
		LABOUR'S INSULT TO HOWARD'S RELIGION	
		DON'T RISK OUR LIVES THROW OUT THESE MEN	
29.1.05			
30.1.05			
Week beginning 31.1.05	4 headlines	14 headlines	11 headlines
29 headlines			
31.1.05		TERRORIST SUSPECT TO BE SET FREE FROM BROADMOOR	RACE CARD RANTER

		COOK SLAMS BLAIR'S 'BLACK ARTS' TACTICS	HAS HOWARD FORGOTTEN HIS FOLKS ARE REFUGEES?
			TETTEH KOFI ON IMMIGRATION
			WHY HOWARD IS ALMOST RIGHT
			UNITED AGAINST TORY 'MORALITY'
			TO WED OR NOT TO WED
			SO THAT WILL MEAN FEWER AUSSIES COMING HERE THEN WILL IT MR HOWARD?
February 2005			
1.2.05		TERROR SUSPECT IS GRANTED BAIL	IMMIGRATION ISSUES
		ANOTHER TERROR SUSPECT IS FREED FROM BELMARSH	TORIES HARDEN STAND ON IMMIGRATION AND ASYLUM
2.2.05	GIVING YOUNG ASYLUM SEEKERS A VOICE	KILROY ATTACKS IMMIGRATION AS PARTY LAUNCHES	
		HOW NASTY CAN THEY GET?	
		SHINING EXAMPLE OF HOW TO PUT DIFFICULTIES ASIDE	
3.2.05	RADICAL JEWS IN THE VICTORIAN EAST END	KILROY-SILK TALKS TOUGH ON ASYLUM	TIPTON THREE SET FOR BIG-SCREEN DEBUT
	MY FAMILY WERE LUCKY TO DIE AT THE HANDS OF THE NAZIS	BLAIR KICKS OFF ELECTION	
4.2.05	10 YEARS JAIL FOR BOGUS GP	LABOUR UNVEILS ELECTION MOTTO	AJR HELPS
		11 HELD AFTER SWOOP BY IMMIGRATION OFFICERS AT NATIONAL GALLERY	
		GANGMASTER WHO RAN A £5M ASYLUM RACKET	
		VOTING ON IMMIGRATION	
		IMMIGRANTS' £200 CHARGE TO STAY IN UK	

□ **Information on type, scope and sources of articles**

Foreign news articles

Articles which contain the words asylum (seeker) or refugee but do not mention asylum seekers or refugees in the UK or UK policy were identified and logged but not analysed for content.

There are 37 articles which do not mention the UK, compared to 116 which do. Of the total 153 articles, a quarter are on foreign news. Nearly half of the foreign news articles relate to the tsunami.

Not recorded here are the many articles on immigration which do not specifically mention asylum (seekers) or refugees. It is worth noting that immigration issues – such as quotas for economic migrants – and particularly those commented upon by the Conservative Party leader, receive a significant amount of coverage during the monitoring period and generate a number of readers’ letters.

Table 9 Foreign news articles

Details of foreign news coverage	Total
Describes situation in country producing refugees, humanitarian refugees or displaced people with no reference to refugees in UK or UK asylum policy	5
Country breakdown:	
Palestine	3
Iraq	2
Describes situation in country hosting refugees, humanitarian refugees or displaced people other than the UK with no reference to refugees in the UK or UK asylum policy	5
Country breakdown:	
Germany	1
Canada	1
Australia	1
Nepal	1
America	1
South Africa	1
Describes situation in country affected by the tsunami, either producing or hosting refugees, humanitarian refugees or displaced people, with no reference to refugees in the UK or UK asylum policy	16

UK news articles

The total number of UK news articles is 116.

Table 10 Types of articles

In most cases, the articles are inside news stories. The local papers are least likely to write an editorial or comment column on asylum.

Type of article	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
Front page news	6	2	1	3
Inside news	76	22	43	11
Editorial or comment	12	1	6	5
Feature	9	4	2	3
Letter	13	8	3	2

Table 11 Topics covered – general

The content analysis methodology used in this report groups messages about asylum into six categories:

- policy
- referring to numbers
- effects on services, economy and other welfare issues
- crime
- detention
- perceptions of and interaction with asylum seekers and refugees.

Table 11 provides by group of paper the overall figures of articles in each category. It shows that: more local articles are about perceptions/interaction than about any other issue, most London regional and minority ethnic articles are about policy, the minority ethnic papers make no reference to crime in reports on asylum and that only the London regional papers mention detention. Apart from detention, crime is the least mentioned of the topics listed. All types of papers frequently use numbers in reports on asylum issues.

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
Total number articles	116	37	55	24
On policy	62	14	35	13
Referring to numbers	55	18	27	10
On effects on services, economy and other welfare issues	35	15	11	9
On crime	24	8	16	0
On detention	6	0	6	0
On perceptions of and interaction with asylum seekers and refugees	30	18	16	6

Table 12 Scope of articles

This section analyses articles according to whether they report stories which are local, national or international in scope. The table shows the following:

Local papers are far more likely to report stories which are purely local in scope and are the only group of papers to report stories linking international to local news. The London regional and minority ethnic/faith press mainly report national news. There is very little reportage of purely London stories. International issues are mentioned in just under a quarter of the stories. One article in a London regional paper – on the subject of an asylum seeker convicted of a crime – is a purely local story from an area outside London with no apparent London relevance.

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
Makes connection between local/regional and national issues only	20	8	11	1
Makes connection between national and international issues only	16	2	9	5
Makes connection between local/regional and international issues only	10	10	0	0
Makes connection between local/regional, national and international issues	10	3	4	3
Purely local story	17	13	3 of which 1 is local to an area outside of London	1
Purely regional story	1	0	1	0
Purely national story	42	1	27	14
Totals	116	37	55	24

Sources

Collating information on sources used provides valuable information about where stories originate and, as explained above, on accuracy and balance of reporting.

The total number of sources cited in the sample is 232. London local papers use 51 sources; London regional papers 116; and the minority ethnic and faith papers 65.

Further analysis of the sources reveals the following:

Most sources are political, with the Conservative Party leader quoted far more often than any other source. Local London papers tend to quote local rather than national politicians. All but one case where a legal document is quoted are in the London regional papers. As in the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample, court reports form a significant source of information. The minority ethnic/faith press is most likely to quote an organisation whose remit includes promoting rights of asylum seekers, refugees and/or ethnic minorities. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is only quoted once; the Refugee Council is never quoted. The local press is most likely to quote individual refugees/asylum seekers – suggesting a greater interest in individual stories. The London regional press is most likely to quote from another newspaper and from an opinion poll; there were no instances of local papers doing so. There are fewer examples of information presented without a source than in the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample.

Table 13 Sources – general

Sources	All papers
Labour politicians	19
Conservative politicians	37
Other politicians	9
London Assembly members	5
Asylum seekers/refugees	12
Agencies supportive of asylum seekers/refugees	27
Agencies critical of asylum seekers/refugees	0
Members of the public	14
Legislation	8
Judges, police, court reports, lawyers etc	29
Other officials – eg local authorities, government departments, teachers etc	10
This or another newspaper	20

Balance of sources

Approximately 20 per cent of articles use only political sources – this is most common in the London regional sample.

A minority of articles use asylum seekers/refugees as sources – this is particularly small in the minority ethnic/faith and London regional press and more common in the local London press.

Table 14 Articles only using political sources

All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
23	8	12	3

Table 15 Articles including asylum seekers/refugees as sources

All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
13	7	4	2

Table 16 Sources – detail

This table provides further detail on the sources used.

Sources cited	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
Prime Minister Tony Blair		3	1
Home Secretary Charles Clarke		4	2
Other government minister or spokesperson	Stephen Timms 1	Alan Milburn 4 Gordon Brown 1 (total 5)	Hazel Blear 1
Labour MP		Robin Cook 1	Diane Abbott 1
Labour councillor	Doug Taylor 1		
Conservative Leader Michael Howard	1	17	10

Shadow Home Secretary David Davis			
Other Conservative shadow minister or spokesperson		Lynton Crosby 2 Liam Fox 1 Andrew Mennear (candidate) 1 Shailesh Vara 1 (total 5)	Howard Leigh 1
Conservative MP		Charles Wardle 1	Anthony Sheen 1
Conservative councillor			Aba Dunner 1
Liberal Democrat Leader Charles Kennedy			3 1
Liberal Democrat Home Affairs Mark Oaten			
Other Liberal Democrat spokesperson	Baroness Sarah Ludford 1		
Liberal Democrat MP			Simon Hughes 1
Liberal Democrat councillor			
BNP politician			
Other party politician	George Galloway, Respect 1	Robert Kilroy-Silk, Veritas 2	
Politicians without party	Cllr Paul Sathianesan 1 Cllr David Williams 1 Cllr Steven Alambritis 1 Cllr Chris Best 1 (total 4)		
Ken Livingstone Mayor of London	2	2	
Member of London Assembly	Nicky Gavron 3		
Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002			1
UN Convention on Refugees		3	1
European Convention on Human Rights		1	
EU Qualification Directive		1	
Treason Act		1	

Court report	8	9	
Solicitor representing an asylum seeker/ refugee			
Prosecutor/ government lawyer	1	2	
Judge, magistrate, law lord	2	4	
Home Office official or statistics or other central government department (except NHS)	1	3	1
Local/ regional government official or statistics		2	
Police	2		
Doctor, NHS spokesperson or statistics		1	
EU Commission		2	
Refugee Council			
Refugee Action			
UNHCR or UN unspecified		1	
Amnesty International			
Liberty		1	1
Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)		1	2
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)			4
Immigration Advisory Service (IAS)			1
STAR (Student Action for Refugees)	1		
Runnymede Trust			1
Migration Watch UK			
Refugee Community Organisation	Myanmar/Burma Relief and Welfare Association 1	Association Jewish Refugees 1	Association Jewish Refugees 2

Jewish Board of Deputies		1	
Jewish Council of Racial Equality			1
Muslim Association of Britain			1
(NAAR)National Assembly Against Racism			1
Asylum seeker adult female			
Asylum seeker adult male	2	1	
Refugee adult female	1	1	2
Refugee adult male	3	2	
Member of the public, named	3	5	4
Member of the public, unnamed	1	1	
Child (not refugee) named	1		
Opinion of the paper	1		5
Opinion poll		5	1
Another newspaper		Telegraph 4 Mail 1 Express 1 Sun 1 Spectator 1 Guardian 1 Jewish Chronicle 1 (total 10)	Independent 1 Mirror 1 Financial Times 1 Express 1 (total 4)
Advertisement		2	
Author	2	1	
Actor/director/film-maker		1	1
Film	1	2	
(SIAC) Special Immigration Appeal Commission		1	
Census		1	
Rodney Hylton-Potts, winner of Vote for Me TV show		1	
The National Gallery		1	
Award-winning headteacher		1	

The Sunday Times Rich List		1	
Sephardic Studies Foundation		1	
The Law Society		1	
Highgate Institute Film Society	1		
The Football Foundation	1		
Brixton Boxer Danny Williams	1		
A chair of governors at a London school	1		
(REETA) Refugee Employment, Education, Training and Advice Partnership	1		
Warehouse Theatre Company	1		
Community worker			1
Chair Jewish Book Week			1
Rabbi Julia Neuberger			1
Jewish Human Rights Group CCJO – Renecassin			1
1990 Trust			1
Bill Morris former TGWU leader			2
Prince of Wales Private Secretary			1
Holocaust memorial centre			1
Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathon Sachs			1
'A Japanese philosopher'			1
Total number of sources cited	51	116	65
No source		2	

□ Presentation of policy and statistics

Discussion of the Conservative Party leader's proposals to reform the asylum system dominate the policy discussions in the articles, particularly in the London regional and minority ethnic/faith press. In particular his plans to withdraw from the 1951 UN Convention and to introduce an Australian-style quota system are widely reported. Apart from this, detention, deportation and treatment of terror suspects are the main reported policy concerns. An emerging theme from the policy discussions is the perceived need for measures to deter and remove asylum seekers whose cases are judged to be unfounded and who have been refused asylum, ie tougher border controls and removals policies, sometimes placed in the context of the threat of terrorism. In the London local papers, the rules preventing asylum seekers travelling outside the UK (in the context of the tsunami disaster) is the most commonly mentioned policy topic. It is interesting that even when a major change in national policy is proposed, the local papers continue to focus on local issues and give it almost no coverage.

Table 17 Policy topics discussed

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
GOVERNMENT POLICIES				
Asylum application figures	1		1	
Asylum costs	2		2	
Failed asylum seekers	1		1	
Detention policy or centres	4		4	
Deportation	4		4	
Citizenship	1			1
Mentoring	2	1		1
Family reunion	2	1	1	
Asylum system prevents travel outside UK	4	3		1
Visas	1	1		
New rules for marriage of immigrants	1			1
Labour election posters	2		2	
Policies regarding terror suspects	4		4	
Treason Act	1		1	
Wartime internment	2	1	1	
Use of informants	1		1	
'Aliens restrictions' (Aliens Act)	1	1		
OPPOSITION POLICIES				
Conservative Party proposals for reform of the asylum system	32	2	18	12
Conservative Party proposals for cutting numbers	5		2	3
Conservative Party proposals for withdrawing from the 1951 UN Convention	9		4	5
Conservative Party proposals for tighter border controls	1		1	
Conservative Party proposals for an Australian-style quota system	8		6	2
Conservative Party proposals for offshore processing of asylum claims	3	1	2	
Conservative Party proposals for deporting those who destroy their passports or who only claim asylum when challenged	1			1
Robert Kilroy-Silk's policies on asylum, including border controls	2		2	
EU agreements affecting UK asylum policy/qualification directive	5		4	1

Descriptions of policy

The most common view expressed on asylum policy by the papers is that asylum is an important election issue – with debate centring on whether the Conservative Party proposals are ‘fair, sensible’ or ‘shameful, obscene, putting lives at risk’. The London regional papers tend to report the first viewpoint while the minority ethnic/faith papers tend towards the latter, although when other coded points are taken into account the overall impression given is that the Conservative leader’s views may win votes but are extreme and not supported by the papers sampled. The papers largely resist the opportunity, presented by announcements by politicians of tough new proposals, to inflame public opinion by using emotive and fear-inducing language.

Table 18 Descriptions of policy

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
ON GOVERNMENT POLICY				
Government policy/system too lax	1		1	
System is collapsing, chaotic, out of control, in crisis	3		3	
Something must be done about asylum now	2		1	1
Government politicians have failed to keep control or fulfil responsibilities	5		5	
Government not understanding needs of local people or general public, policy disadvantages local people	2	1		1
Government is supportive of human rights/ 1951 UN Convention	1		1	
System disadvantages UK compared to other countries	1		1	
Alleged racism in Immigration and Nationality – Directorate	3	2	1	
An important election issue	10	1	7	2
Government not challenging Conservative leader, policy response not clear	2			2
Allows abuse of generosity	1		1	
No legal means of entering to seek asylum	1		1	
Mentoring effective, supported by community	1	1		
Tsunami is exceptional situation in which asylum seekers should have travel rights	2	2		
Government has lied	1		1	
Deport rather than detain terror suspects	1		1	
End mistreatment in detention	1		1	
ON OPPOSITION POLICIES				
Conservative Party proposals a vote winner	6	1	5	
Not a vote winner	4		3	1
A vote winner in areas without immigrants but not London	1		1	
Not interested in minority votes	1			1
Sign of political desperation, just aiming for votes	3		1	2
Hard line, extreme, anti-immigration, right wing	3	1	1	1
Illegal	4		3	1
Inflaming unfounded fears, emotive	3			3

Require renegotiation with Europe	2		2	
Put lives at risk, obscene, despicable, offensive, shameful, shocking	7		1	6
Racist, intended to keep out other cultures	2			2
Would earn Britain international condemnation	1		1	
Fair, sensible, should be supported	8		4	4
Unworkable, unrealistic, ill-informed, costly, unnecessary	4		3	1
Conservative leader 'nasty confidence trickster'	1		1	
EU agreements mean our country stolen from us	2		2	
Both Labour and Conservatives fudge numbers	1		1	

Presentation of statistics

The sample shows that more exact totals or estimates are used than generalised terms such as hundreds, millions, rising, falling. Numbers relating to crimes are the most commonly cited. Numbers of asylum seekers/refugees and other migrants, and costs, are regularly mentioned but there is a range of other issues relating to specific local events and issues. Only the London regional papers are concerned with the national cost of asylum. As already stated, the minority ethnic/faith press makes no reference to crime nor to the cost of asylum.

Table 19 Statistics (asylum seekers and refugees together)

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
In or coming to UK	2		1	3
In or coming to local area	1	1		
In or coming to London	1		1	
Cost nationally	4		4	
Cost locally	2	1	1	
Numbers accepted in another country	2	1	1	
Conservative Party proposed quota ceiling	2		1	1
Estimated population growth	1			1
Number of migrants	4		2	2
How far public over-estimate numbers of immigrants	1			1
Number failed asylum seekers who are not deported	1		1	
Opinion poll result	3		1	2
Number relating to a crime – eg cost, jail term	9	4	5	
Amount fundraised	2	2		
Refugees seeking work	1	1		
Numbers attending or helped to attend Holocaust memorial celebrations	2		1	1
Estimated wealth of individual	2		2	
Money donated by a refugee	1		1	
Relating to work carried out by a refugee				1
Employers willing to employ refugees	1	1		
Reports on asylum seekers written by bogus doctor	6	5	1	
Local people involved in mentoring scheme	1	1		
Number of children whose first language is not English, getting good school grades	1		1	
Relating to country of origin	4	2	1	1
Expression of gratitude – thousands of thanks	1	1		
Generalised term such as rising, falling	1	1		
Generalised term such as hundreds, millions	7	4	2	1
Totals, exact figures	22	7	11	4
Estimates	13	3	7	3

□ **Presentation of effects on services, economy, other welfare issues**

A broad range of subjects is discussed within this category – both critical of and supportive of the impact of asylum seekers and refugees. Criticism and support is reflected in all three groups of newspapers. The most common view is that they are skilled contributors to the economy, especially in the creative arts. Illegal working in the informal economy is the most common concern. Refugee community organisations and their work on services and welfare are not mentioned in the London regional press.

Table 20 Presentation of effects on services, economy and other welfare issues

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
Illegal working, cheap labour, cash in hand, black economy	4	2	2	
Better off than other groups/receiving preferential treatment compared with other British residents	1	1		
Strain on resources/linked to local deprivation and shortage	1		1	
Scrounger, sponger, fraudster	2			(both 2 discuss Conservative leader's proposals)
Overcrowding, unfit, squalid housing, homelessness	2	2		
Increasing housing shortage	1			1
Increasing pressure on health service	1			1
Health risk, bringing disease	1		1	
Children doing as well as or better than local children at school	1		1	
Children catching up at school despite initial language barriers	1		1	
Contributing or preparing to contribute to economy – educated, professional, skilled	8	3	1	4
Filling skills gap	2		2	
Unemployed but wanting to work	1			1
Achieving financial success (legally)	2		2	
Making large donations to political party	1		1	
Ordinary working people	3	2		1
Local authority encourages participation in its services	2	2		
Refugee community organisation meeting community needs	1			1
Refugee community organisations helping to promote inclusion in mainstream services	1	1		
Asylum seekers/refugees seeking to locate relatives in country of origin	1	1		
Asylum seekers/refugees seeking to travel to country of origin for a limited period	2	1		1
Asylum seekers/refugees seeking family reunion for relatives in country of origin	1	1		
Continuing political activity related to country of origin	1	1		

Asylum seekers/refugees contributing to creative arts eg either subject of or creator of theatre, film etc	7	2	2	3
Asylum seekers/refugees contributing to sport	2	2		
Asylum seeker/refugee or refugee community organisation win award	3	3		
School with asylum seeker/refugee pupils wins award	1		1	
Burden on public funds outweighed by contributions gained	1		1	
Requiring interpreters	1		1	
Asylum seeker/refugee contributing to non-refugee charities in UK	2		1	1

□ Presentation of crime

A range of crimes is mentioned by the papers but not repeatedly. Most are one-off reports of, for example, money laundering or 'sham' marriages. Harassment of asylum seekers and refugees is not covered in the sample, although wider research (eg Media Image, Community Impact, 2004) indicates that asylum seekers are much more likely to be associated with crime as victims of harassment than as perpetrators of crime. The report of the 'bogus doctor' who wrote false medical reports for asylum seekers could be interpreted either as asylum seekers being victims of or being complicit in crime. Most reported crimes have a local or London-wide relevance because they were perpetrated in London. One reported criminal incident is from another region with no apparent relevance to London.

Table 21 Presentation of crime

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
REFUGEES/ASYLUM SEEKERS PRESENTED AS CRIMINALS				
Criminal, violent	3		3	
Arrested, jailed, guilty	6	3	3	
Involved in smuggling/trafficking	2		2	
Complicit in use of forged documents	1		1	
Ticket touting	2	2		
Terrorism	2		2	
Drugs	1		1	
Money laundering	1		1	
Indecent assault			1	
Sham marriage	1	1		
Raided by police	1	1		
Raided by immigration	1		1	
A key policy area for government described as 'crime/asylum'	1		1	
Historical perspective – 100 years ago Jewish refugees were blamed for crimes	1	1		
REFUGEES/ASYLUM SEEKERS PRESENTED AS VICTIMS				
Asylum seeker fears for life after acting as informant regarding terrorist suspects	1		1	
Bogus doctor wrote fraudulent medical reports for asylum seekers	6	4	2	

□ **Presentation of perceptions of and interactions with asylum seekers and refugees**

Across all categories of messages coded, the perceptions/interactions recorded are overwhelmingly positive. The most common perceptions/interactions are:

- community helping asylum seekers/refugees to integrate/get involved in the community
- sympathy for experiences in country of origin/information given on international context
- having legal right to seek asylum/human rights to be safeguarded.

The evidence suggests that the comments reported by politicians on these issues are out of step with the views of Londoners reflected in this sample of newspapers.

The following is a list of some of the issues searched for in this category that did not appear:

- 'they are mainly groups of single men'
- local community protesting against asylum seekers/refugees
- local activity by right-wing groups.

Table 22 Presentation of perceptions of and interactions with asylum seekers and refugees

	All	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
Bogus	1		1	
A threat, a worry, to be feared (terror but not terrorism)	1			1
Swamping, risk to UK culture	1	1		
Scepticism about country of origin/believe safe and can return/send them home	1	1		
'Just like you and me'	3	2		1
Victims of asylum policy	1		1	
Are being or should be offered welcome, support, help	4	3		1
Having legal right to seek asylum/human rights to be safeguarded	6	2	1	3
Once recognised, having similar rights to UK citizens	1		1	
Sympathy for experiences in country of origin/information given on international context	7	6		1
Traumatised	2	1	1	
Local community supports asylum seekers/refugees	3	3		
Community benefiting from cultural diversity/celebration of diversity	4	1	2	1
Community helping asylum seekers/refugees to integrate/get involved in community activities	7	6		1
Fundraising in support of local asylum seekers/refugees	2	2		
Local concern/campaigning against unsuccessful asylum applicants planned or actual detention or deportation	3	1	2	

Local person travelling to country of origin to give assistance to families of asylum seekers/refugees in UK	1	1		
Asylum seekers/refugees feeling accepted in UK	1	1		
Asylum seekers/refugees expressing gratitude for support from community	2	2		
Refugee has an historically important story	1	1		
Refugee described as 'a moral example of humanitarianism under oppression'	1	1		
Refugee receives apology from Prince Charles' private secretary	1			1
Expressing concern at media attitudes to asylum	3		1	2
Nationally, are objects of public hostility, hatred	3		1	2
Public are angry about asylum (discussing comment by Alan Milburn)	2		2	
Abusing British generosity (discussing Conservative Party proposals)	2		1	1
Communities cannot absorb more (discussing Conservative Party proposals)	2		1	1
Alleged racism among IND staff	1		1	

□ Information on combinations of topics in articles

Where newspapers combine different topics within one article, the reader can receive powerful messages. The sample was examined for such a combination of topics as follows:

a) articles including more than one of the following emotive points

- inaccurate use of terminology
- system described as in chaos
- numbers referred to in vague terms – hundreds, millions etc
- scrounger
- burden on resources, including housing and health
- bringing disease
- receiving preferential treatment
- asylum seekers/refugees as perpetrators of crime
- swamping culture
- scepticism about conditions in country of origin.

Only two articles contain more than one of these emotive points – both are in London regional papers. One of these is a letter.

b) articles including more than one of the following points

- contributors to economy/society
- having legal right to seek asylum/human rights to be safeguarded
- sympathy for experiences in country of origin/information given on international context
- community benefiting from cultural diversity/diversity celebrated
- community helping asylum seekers/refugees to integrate, to get involved in community activities

Five articles carry more than one of these points. Two are in local London papers (of which one is a letter) and three in the minority ethnic/faith press.

□ **Complaints**

There are no reported complaints to newspapers in the sample about their reporting of asylum issues during the time period eg no letters of complaint are printed, no corrections made. One article refers to coverage in some national papers and states that 'Middle Englanders who have little experience of immigrants... can be frightened with clever, coded language'³²

□ **Letters**

Many of the letters in the sample spring directly from Michael Howard's announced plans for reform of the asylum system. Where hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees is expressed it is in relation to crime, health risks, preferential treatment and scepticism about the situation in the country of origin. The lessons of the Holocaust are discussed in letters on several occasions.

Two of the letters contain views which if applied to a particular race or ethnicity would be considered discriminatory because they attach a negative label to all asylum seekers/refugees. In the absence of an adequate term to describe such views they are referred to here as 'asylum-phobic'.

Where such letters are published there are no instances of editorial health warnings making clear where terminology is used inaccurately or where there is other factual inaccuracy.

Table 23 Letters

London regional			
Date	Is author named?	Sources cited	Points raised
27 January	yes		Number in UK or coming to UK Health risk
27 January	yes	Conservatives	Does not support Conservatives' view that communities cannot absorb asylum seekers/refugees
28 January	yes	Michael Howard	Supports Conservative leader's proposals Asylum seekers 'naturally' turn to crime, people trafficking and drugs (Incorrect terminology used – 'illegal asylum-seeking')

London local			
Date	Is author named?	Sources cited	Points raised
13 January	Yes	Refugees living locally: Asian, Vietnamese, Somali, East European, older and children	Just like you and me
14 January	No	Sri Lankan asylum seeker	Scepticism about situation in country of origin, 'go back home'

³² Evening Standard, Do migrants really scare the voters who count? 26 Jan 2005

14 January	Yes	Sri Lankan asylum seeker	Sympathy for experiences in country of origin Family reunion should not be prevented by bureaucracy
20 January	Yes – politician Nicky Gavron	The Mayor	Remember lessons of history on Holocaust Memorial Day
21 January	Yes – politician Nicky Gavron		Remember lessons of history on Holocaust Memorial Day (shorter version of same letter)
26 January	Yes	Michael Howard Labour Councillor Doug Taylor	Conservative leader's plans are a vote winner Asylum seekers get preferential treatment (services and housing) compared with other British residents
27 January	Yes – politician Nicky Gavron	The Mayor	Remember lessons of history on Holocaust Memorial Day (again a version of same letter)
27 January	Yes – politician Sarah Ludford		Remember lessons of history Human rights should be safeguarded Refugees face rising public hostility

Minority ethnic/ faith papers			
Date	Is author named?	Sources cited	Points raised
28 January	Yes	Michael Howard Express newspaper	Conservative leader's policies are shameful because they attack asylum seekers
31 January	Yes	Michael Howard 1951 UN Convention	Remember lessons of history 1951 UN Convention protects those fleeing persecution Most immigrants are white

□ Visual images

There are a total of 87 images in the sample. These are all photographs; there are no cartoons or other graphics.

Politicians are a common visual image although in this sample there are more photographs of refugees and asylum seekers than of politicians. Many of the photos of asylum seekers and refugees show them in a mixed group with local people. There are far more images of refugees and asylum seekers in normal settings eg domestic, professional, social than images of asylum seekers or refugees as criminals, although there are seven photographs of other criminals – some of these were arrested with asylum seekers or refugees and the rest are photographs of the ‘bogus doctor’ who wrote false medical reports for asylum seekers. The six photographs of individuals in their country of origin add background which helps the reader’s understanding of the international context.

More details of images are given in the appendix.

Table 24 Images, summary

Group	Number of photos	Sub group	Number of photos
Politicians	16	Politicians – Labour	2
		Politicians – Conservative	12
		Politicians – other party	1
		Politician – party unknown	1
Refugees and asylum seekers in normal settings	17	Refugees or asylum seekers	9
		Refugee with politician	1
		Mixed group of refugees/asylum seekers and local people	7
Refugees and asylum seekers – as criminals	4	Refugees or asylum seekers arrested or convicted of a crime	4
Supporters of asylum seekers and refugees	7	Supporters – agencies	2
		Supporters – local people	4
		High-profile supporters	1
Individuals in country producing refugees	6		6
Journalists	8		8
Other people – general	15	Group of immigrants (immigration status unknown)	1
		Wedding of BAME couple (immigration status unknown)	1
		Individuals marking Holocaust Memorial Day	4
		Individuals at memorial service for tsunami victims	1
		The Queen	1
		Benjamin Disraeli	1
		Sir Anthony Sher	1
		Guantanamo detainees	1
		Interpreter	1

		Smiling headmaster with group of pupils – mixed ethnicity (immigration status unknown)	1
		Crowd at carnival, mixed ethnicity (immigration status unknown)	1
		Doctor whose identity was stolen	1
Other people – criminals	7	Criminals – not refugees and asylum seekers	7
Buildings	6	Building – village destroyed by tsunami	1
		Building – synagogue	1
		Building – destroyed synagogue	1
		House of wealthy refugee businessman	1
		House of criminal asylum seeker	1
		House of bogus doctor	1
Other photographs	2	A symbolic picture in memory of the Holocaust	2

□ **Issues covered by the PCC framework**

The PCC Guidance Notes relate to correct use of terminology. Two instances of incorrect terminology are found in the sample. One of these examples includes the type of terminology explicitly listed as inaccurate in the guidance ie ‘illegal asylum seeking’. This is written by a member of the public in a letter published by a paper.

Table 25 Terminology

	London local	London regional	Minority ethnic/faith
Frequency of terms such as asylum seeker and refugee being used incorrectly	0	2	0
i) What incorrect terminology is used? What is the source of the incorrect terminology?		‘the 1951 Convention on asylum seekers’ Instead of the correct 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees No source other than the newspaper	
ii) What incorrect terminology is used? What is the source of the incorrect terminology?		‘illegal asylum seeking’ Letter from a named member of the public	

There is no evidence of invasion of privacy, harassment by journalists, or inappropriate reporting relating to children in the sample.

There is no evidence of discrimination against a particular race, ethnic group, nationality or religion.

In most cases, discussions attaching positive or negative values to asylum seekers or refugees do not mention race, ethnic group, nationality or religion. Where these dimensions are mentioned no pattern emerges of a particular group being targeted for criticism.

In table 26 identification of race, ethnicity, nationality and religion are cross-referenced with seven topics and attitudes presented in articles. This shows that most articles covering these topics and articles do not refer to these dimensions. Where reference is made, a range of groups is described. Refugees and asylum seekers from Sri Lanka and those who are Jewish are more likely to be referred to in articles describing/ sympathising with the situation in the country of origin. This is explained by the events occurring during the sample's time period – the response to the tsunami, and Holocaust Memorial Day.

Table 26 Discrimination

	Topic or attitude discussed in article, by race, religion and nationality			
		London local	London regional	Minority ethnic /faith
1	Skilled contributors to economy	3	1	4
	What race, religion, nationality mentioned	(Eastern European, Jewish) None x 2	Syrian, Jewish	None x 4
2	Illegal working, cheap labour, cash in hand, black economy	2	2	0
	What race, religion, nationality mentioned	Iranian x 2	(Brazilian, Ecuadorean, Nigerian) Ukrainian	
3	Arrested, jailed, guilty	3	2	0
	What race, religion, nationality mentioned	Iranian x 2 None	(Brazilian, Ecuadorean, Nigerian) Iraqi	
4	Suspected of or convicted of terrorism	0	3	0
	What race, religion, nationality mentioned		Iraqi Palestinian None	
5	Are being or should be offered welcome, support, help	3	0	1
	What race, religion, nationality mentioned	Cameroon Sri Lankan None		None
6	Sympathy for experience in country of origin, information given on international context	6	0	1
	What race, religion, nationality mentioned	German, Jewish Roma, Jewish None Sri Lankan x 3		None
7	Swamping, risk to UK culture, way of life	1	0	0
	What race, religion, nationality mentioned	(Eastern European, Jewish)		

□ **Summary of comparison between local, regional and minority ethnic/faith press**

The findings based on the sample suggest the following points of comparison:

Local

Local papers are most likely to report stories that are purely local in scope. They are less interested in reporting on asylum policy and the most commonly reported policy topic is the rules preventing asylum seekers travelling outside the UK, relating to the tsunami disaster. Where politicians are quoted, local papers tend to quote local rather than national politicians. The local press is more likely to quote refugees and asylum seekers than the other types of papers. They do not quote from opinion polls. The case of the 'bogus doctor' who wrote false medical reports for asylum seekers is the most common crime reported in the whole sample and appears most often in the local papers.

Regional

The regional papers are highly responsive to political news stories – many more articles on asylum appear in these papers in the week following the Conservative leader's announcement compared to in other weeks. They tend to report national rather than London-specific stories. The Conservative leader's proposals are given a mixed response, the view that they are 'fair, sensible' is widely reported but also the concern that they are 'unworkable'. Inflammatory reporting is largely avoided. In the regional papers there are two instances of combining separate emotive issues in a single article.

Only the regional papers cover stories on detention, and only the regional papers discuss the economic cost of asylum. Asylum seekers and refugees are presented as 'filling the skills gaps' but also as working illegally. The regional papers are most likely out of the sample to quote legal documents and are most likely to quote from opinion polls or reports in other newspapers. Two letters appear in one of the regional papers which could be considered 'asylum-phobic'.

Minority ethnic/faith

The minority ethnic/faith papers cover the Conservative leader's policy announcement, giving the views of Jewish refugees, and other refugee and immigrant groups. These papers are largely critical of the Conservative leader's proposals, reporting for example that they are 'shameful, offensive' and would 'put lives at risk'. These papers do not run stories on crime that refer to asylum seekers and refugees. They are most likely to present asylum seekers and refugees as skilled contributors to the economy. The minority ethnic and faith press is more likely than the other papers to quote an organisation representing asylum seekers, refugees or ethnic minorities as a source of information in an article.

□ **Information by publisher/ownership**

The data in this section relates to the London local papers as they are the only group of papers of which there are sufficient numbers in the sample to illustrate trends in terms of reporting by ownership criteria.

As explained in the methodology section, in selecting the newspaper sample the main concern was to ensure a sample of the highest circulation newspapers covering all of London's boroughs. It was considered less important that the sample should reflect a wide range of publishers. Using these criteria has resulted in the domination of one publisher – most of the papers, and thus of the articles, are published by Trinity Mirror. However, this accurately reflects Trinity Mirror's role as the largest publisher of local papers in London.

One of the publishers – Kent Messenger – published no articles on asylum during the monitoring period. Half of the Trinity Mirror articles in the sample are about impact on the economy/services and welfare. All of the New Journal Enterprises articles make reference to policy.

The most frequently occurring detailed topics found across the sample present a good opportunity to make comparisons by ownership criteria. All publishers make connections between local and international stories. Only Trinity Mirror has stories on illegal working or where asylum seekers/refugees are arrested, jailed or guilty. However this is balanced by stories on refugees/asylum seekers making a contribution to the economy, the community helping refugees/asylum seekers to integrate and giving information on the country of origin. New Journal Enterprises runs no stories on illegal working or arrested, jailed or guilty asylum seekers/refugees, but runs stories on all of the more positive topics.

Table 27 Information on general categories by ownership criteria (local papers only)

General categories mentioned	Trinity Mirror	Archant	Newsquest	New Journal Enterprises	Kent Messenger
Total number of articles	21	4	8	4	0
Policy	6	2	2	4	0
Impact on economy/ services and welfare issues	10	3	3	3	0
Crime	5	1	1	1	0
Perceptions of, interactions with	8	5	3	3	0

Table 28 Information on highest occurring specific topics by ownership criteria (local papers only)

Highest occurring specific topics	Trinity Mirror	Archant	Newsquest	New Journal Enterprises	Total
Makes local international connection	3	2	2	2	9
Sympathy expressed about situation in country of origin, international context given	1	3	0	3	7
Community helping asylum seekers and refugees to integrate/get involved in local activities	1	0	2	2	5
Contributing to the economy	2	0	0	1	3
Arrested, jailed	3	0	0	0	3
Illegal working	2	0	0	0	2

□ **Information on differences between inner and outer London**

Stories in inner London papers are more likely to be about perceptions of/interactions with asylum seekers and refugees, whereas stories in outer London papers are more likely to be about crime.

On more specific topics, as numbers are small, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions on the significance of the difference between these figures; however, it appears that inner London papers are more likely to make an international/local connection, to express concern for conditions in the country of origin or give international context, and show asylum seekers and refugees contributing to and being helped by the local community. On this evidence inner London papers would appear to show more appreciation of diversity and to be more sympathetic to asylum seekers and refugees. Ascertaining the reasons for this is beyond the scope of this research.

Table 29 Information on inner/outer London local papers by general categories

General categories mentioned	Inner London	Outer London
Total number of articles	20	17
Policy	9	5
Impact on economy/services and welfare issues	9	6
Crime	1	7
Perceptions of, interactions with	14	6

Table 30 Information on inner/outer London local papers by highest occurring specific topics

Highest occurring specific topics	Inner London	Outer London	Totals
Makes local international connection	7	3	10
Sympathy expressed about situation in country of origin, international context given	6	0	6
Community helping asylum seekers and refugees to integrate/get involved in local activities	4	2	6
Contributing to the economy	3	0	3
Arrested, jailed	0	3	3
Illegal working	0	2	2

□ Examples of articles

The following articles are selected for further analysis because of the interesting points they illustrate. There are more examples of good practice in the sample than it is possible to include here.

Reason chosen	Valuing diversity
Headline, paper, type of article, date	<i>Tetteh Kofi on Immigration</i> New Nation, Comment 31.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	'I have no problem with the notion of wise caution. Every economy is limited in what it can comfortably provide to its citizens, so it is vital that our population is managed... But wise caution in these matters imperceptibly and easily transmutes into paranoid delusions. And these delusions are easily maintained when we as citizens enter collective denial of the realities that now poke us all in the eyes... The politicians need to stop pandering to the people's fear and collective denial of our disrespect for the lives of others. A native-born British life is worth no more or less than that of a Serb, a Czech, an Albanian or a Montenegrin (countries where most illegals were deported to)... Until we show them that actually we respect the otherness of people and understand that humans of all types are worthy of our recognition as human beings, they will continue to think that fear is the key. They will base decisions on immigration on what we fear – not the aspirations that make us all great and noble as human beings.'
Comment	This article recognises that asylum and immigration are issues on which public fears are easily aroused. It calls on readers to value diversity and show concern for those in life-threatening situations so that these values might be reflected by policymakers.

Reason chosen	Values diversity, acknowledgment of factors impacting on community tension, London specific
Headline, paper type of article, date	<i>Keep the immigrants coming</i> , Evening Standard, Comment 27.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	'London should not fool itself. It has always thrived on immigrants. It thrives on them now and it will thrive on them forever. All else is detail... It needs them not just because they do menial jobs Britons will not do and without which public and private services would collapse. It also needs them because immigrants tend to work harder, contributing more to the urban economy than they take from it ... High levels of immigration are not just a feature of booming cities, they are a cause. Fifteen of the 25 "richest Londoners" are from immigrant families ... In 1970 Tower Hamlets had one of the lowest black and Asian school populations in London. Within two

	decades it had one of the highest. Yet there were no riots. Fluid city neighbourhoods are astonishingly resilient to change ... the pressure today is on what sociologists term the “rough suburbs” of Barking, Enfield and Croydon. Here there is no migratory tradition. Settled communities understandably feel invaded. They deserve sympathy as much as those whom the tide of global political economy has washed on their shore. There is no way round this but through money ... A hospital whose emergency ward is a cross between a dosshouse and a citizen’s advice bureau needs resources beyond a simple per capita allocation ... London’s job is to maximise the contribution they make to its economy and social life, and minimise the associated stress with public resources. For stress there will be. It is the stress of urban success.’
Comment	This article seeks to give a response to the Conservative leader’s proposals that is appropriate to London’s experience. It stresses the contribution made by immigrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, to London. While generally supportive of immigration and diversity, it is realistic about the sources of community tension and suggests that changes in public sector policies can alleviate these without imposing more restrictions on asylum seekers and refugees.

Reason chosen	Using only political sources, lack of balance, emotive terms, unspecific sources for numbers
Headline, paper, type of article, date	<i>Immigrants’ £200 charge to stay in UK</i> , Evening Standard, News 4.2.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	‘Tony Blair is to launch an unprecedented immigration clampdown... General election chief Alan Milburn admitted Labour’s own private polling shows the public is “angry” at what it sees as abuse by migrants ... The number of overseas work permit holders rose from 25,000 in 1995 to 60,000 in 2000. Last year it soared to 145,000 as the UK struggled to fill its skills gap – and critics claim this figure is inflated many times over by the spouses and other relatives many entrants bring in... the Conservatives want to restrict the annual asylum figure ... They say 80 per cent of current applications turn out to be bogus ... the Prime Minister has himself repeatedly expressed concern at the low number of deportations ... Labour insiders admit failure to tackle asylum is one of the chief complaints of voters.’
Comment	This article repeatedly uses emotive terms – clampdown, angry, abuse, soared, inflated, bogus, failure, complaints. No source is given for the numbers cited and use of phrases like ‘this figure is inflated many times over’ constitutes presentation of numbers in a highly unspecific way. Although Labour and Conservative sources are cited, both make the same point – that further restrictions on asylum seekers are needed – so there is no balance of opinions. No sources are cited other than politicians (except a Labour opinion poll). It should be noted however that the Evening Standard produced a number of other articles on related issues in the four-week period which were more balanced and presented a wide range of sources.

Reason chosen	Balanced use of range of sources in political report.
Headline, paper, type of article, date	<i>Jewish Tories back Howard's quota plan</i> , News, The Jewish Chronicle, 28.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	Seven individuals give their response to the Conservative leader's proposals, eg: 'Supporters of Mr Howard included Barnet councillor Aba Dunner, who was a refugee from Nazi Germany. "I myself was a refugee subject to the restrictions in those days. My father came in on a special rabbi's visa but he could not bring his parents. I think what Michael is doing is being done very carefully" said Mr Dunner... Daniel Kingsley, co-chair of the Jewish human-rights group, CCJO-Renecassin, said: "It is shameful that Michael Howard is playing the immigration card ... In the week when we approach Holocaust Memorial Day it is shameful that a Jewish politician should be associated with such a dangerous policy."'
Comment	This article gives a balanced account of responses to the Conservative leader's proposals, allowing readers to consider both sides of the debate. It cites a range of sources, including Jewish politicians, organisations supportive of Jewish refugees and human rights, and a refugee. It is a good example of how the minority ethnic/faith press can bring a new perspective to a national issue.

Reason chosen	Unsourced and vague statistics
Headline, paper, type of article, date	<i>Furious Howard hits back: We're not exploiting racism</i> , Evening Standard, News, 24.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	This article has a sub-heading ' <i>Migrants: the facts</i> ' under which a list of points are made including: 'Britain takes 23 per cent of asylum seekers entering the EU – twice as many as France and more than Germany... Some claim 500,000 unfounded asylum seekers are living in the UK. Public concern about immigration has soared since the Nineties. Only one person in 20 saw it as the most important issue a decade ago but that has gone up to a third.'
Comment	When using a heading such as ' <i>Migrants: the facts</i> ' it is important that the information presented is accurate. The accuracy of the information presented is not clear because it is not sourced, the figures quoted are not exact and insufficient detail is given on the background to these figures. In particular, the phrase 'some claim 500,000 unfounded asylum seekers are living in the UK' does not clearly distinguish fact and opinion.

Reason chosen	Inaccurate terminology and 'asylum-phobic' attitudes
Headline, paper, type of article, date	<i>Weighing the pros and cons of immigration</i> , Letter, Metro 28.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	'he [Conservative leader] is against illegal asylum-seeking' 'Do you really want to allow people to enter this country illegally and naturally turn to crime, people-trafficking and drugs?'
Comment	'Illegal asylum seeker' is identified by the PCC as an inaccurate use of terminology This letter suggests that asylum seekers and migrants are 'naturally' criminal – such a description attached to a particular nationality or race would be deemed racist. In the absence of such a reference this is perhaps best seen as a form of xenophobia – 'asylum-phobia'. The paper offers no correction or challenge to the points made in the letter.

Reason chosen	'Asylum-phobic' attitudes unchallenged
Headline, paper, type of article, date	<i>Welcome immigrants</i> , letter, Metro 27.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	'Our country is over-populated and just does not have enough room to take in any more immigrants, whether they are asylum seekers or not... There are more than one million illegal immigrants in the UK and the only thing they have contributed to our country is TB'
Comment	Similar to the letter above, this suggests that asylum seekers/illegal migrants are generally carriers of disease. Such a comment attached to a particular race or nationality would be deemed racist. The paper offers no correction or challenge to the points made in the letter, although a letter from another member of the public challenging these views is published the next day.

Reason chosen	Uses situation of local asylum seeker to highlight difficulties in asylum policy. Gives international context, demonstrates local contribution and support
Headline, paper, date	<i>Calls to let Saj visit family after wave disaster</i> , News, Camden New Journal, 13.1.05 and <i>Home Office to deport tragic Saj to Sri Lanka</i> , News, Camden New Journal, 20.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	<p>'The Highgate shop keeper Saj Athambawa, who lost his fiancée and sister along with 35 other family members in Sri Lanka... Fled his war-torn village of Muthamanai three years ago to seek asylum in the UK and is able to live in this country – but is unable to go back until he is granted permanent asylum. Alan Walter from the Respect Coalition said: "the government should grant exceptional leave to asylum seekers in these situations. There has been a tremendous outpouring of support for victims which the government should reflect." Saj said: "I am grateful to the New Journal for raising awareness about my situation..." 13.1.05</p> <p>'Saj... was facing a legal battle to visit his village of Muthamanai, which has been devastated by the disaster. He is desperate to see his parents who are both still in hospital... He has raised more than £6,000 in donations from his customers for charities working with people in Sri Lanka... Now, Saj has been served with papers telling him that he must leave the country voluntarily – or face possible detention... Saj told the New Journal that he was shattered by the decision. He said: "I am so worried now that I can't sleep or eat... I left Sri Lanka because of the troubles there and now there is nothing left in my village. I am the only hope for my family – if I could stay here and work then I could try and help them.'" 20.1.05</p>
Comment	<p>The article gives the reader a good understanding of the difficulties faced by one particular asylum seeker and presents his story in a way likely to invoke sympathy. It shows him making a local contribution and receiving local support, a supporter is quoted and the newspaper is concerned about his case. Saj is quoted directly and so the reader receives information on his feelings in his own words. Information is given on the situation in his country of origin.</p> <p>The article grasps the difficulties faced by asylum seekers from countries affected by the tsunami – while they feel it is unsafe for them to return permanently, they would like permission to return temporarily to check on family members affected by the disaster. Contrast is made between public support for the tsunami victims and lack of measures to help asylum seekers in this situation. When Saj then hears that his appeal has been rejected his view that he could best help his family by remaining in the UK is clearly presented.</p> <p>Other articles about Saj are published, but they fall outside of the monitoring timeframe.</p>

Reason chosen	A human face, showing local contribution and local support
Headline, paper, type of article, date	<i>Growing praise for young gardeners</i> , News, Fulham and Hammersmith Chronicle 27.1.05
Relevant quotes and/or description	'Budding gardeners have been celebrating their success in a recent competition. Children from St. John's Wood Adventure Playground... and Salisbury World Refugee Centre overcame stiff competition to take third place in the Gardening Under Difficult Circumstances category in this year's Westminster in Bloom Competition.'
Comment	Refugees and local people are presented as working together on a joint project. They are presented as jointly making a local contribution – the article describes their garden, and local support is demonstrated in the decision to grant them an award. The title of the award – gardening in difficult circumstances – makes reference to the difficulties faced by refugees and asylum seekers and their struggle to overcome these.

□ Comparison to the Media Image, Community Impact study

The media monitoring coding system used in this report includes many additional topics not measured in the *Media Image, Community Impact* study. The table below compares topics which were measured in both studies and were identified in at least one of the sample articles in each study. All of the scores are lower for the London sample – this is partly because the overall sample is smaller and because there is less repetition of epithets by newspapers in the London articles. Articles in the London sample, particularly from the local papers, also tend to be shorter and less complex in the sense that they focus on one as opposed to several topics. As a consequence, this table is best analysed not by the number of times a topic occurs in each sample, but by comparing the difference in frequency between topics within each of the two samples.

Table 31 gives the frequency that four statements supportive of asylum seekers and refugees and four statements that are emotive or fear inducing appear in the samples.

The London sample is more likely to make one of the four supportive statements than one of the four emotive statements, whereas the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample of papers is far more likely to make one of the four emotive or fear-inducing statements as opposed to one of the four supportive statements.

There are more than four times as many photographs of asylum seekers and refugees in normal settings (eg domestic, professional, social) in the London sample as there are photographs of them as criminals (4:1). In the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample the ratio is 3:2 – for every three photographs in normal settings there are two photographs showing asylum seekers and refugees as criminals.

However, the ratio of leading politicians versus refugees/asylum seekers as sources is more than 4:1 for the London sample whereas it is less than 2:1 for the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample – so refugees are better represented as sources in the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample compared to leading politicians. This is surprising and may be because politicians dominated the news during the monitoring period covered by this report. Parliament was in recess during the monitoring period for *Media Image, Community Impact*.

In general the London sample is more balanced, less emotive, and more interested in making supportive statements about asylum seekers and refugees. The London sample is far more likely to use photographs of asylum seekers/refugees in normal settings. However, it is the *Media Image, Community Impact* sample which uses relatively more refugees and asylum seekers as sources.

Table 31 Comparison with *Media Image, Community Impact*

		London sample (116 articles)	<i>Media Image, Community Impact</i> sample (137 articles)
	In headline or text –		
Supportive statements	Having legal right to seek asylum, rights to be safeguarded	6	13
	Educated, professional, skilled contributors to economy, society	8	24
	Are being or should be offered welcome, support, help	4	12

	Refugee Community Organisations meeting community needs, promote inclusion in mainstream services	2	2
Total		20	51
Emotive, fear inducing statements	System is collapsing, chaotic, out of control, in crisis	3	27
	Illegal working, cash in hand,	4	22
	Scrounger, sponger, fraudster, robbing the system	2	35
	Arrested, jailed, guilty	6	49
Total		15	133
Photographs	Photograph of an asylum seeker or refugee (or a group) in domestic or professional or social context	17	16
	Photograph of an asylum seeker or refugee (or a group) convicted of a crime or being arrested	4	11
Sources	Source – Prime Minister, Tony Blair or Home Secretary (David Blunkett, Charles Clarke)	10	20
	Source – Conservative party leader (Iain Duncan Smith, Michael Howard) or Shadow Home Secretary (Oliver Letwin, David Davis)	28	11
	Source asylum seeker or refugee (male or female)	9	17

□ How might a different sample yield different results?

Media monitoring exercises, such as the one undertaken for this report, reflect the unpredictable news events of a given time period. This four-week time period is most notable for the radical package of policy proposals announced by the Conservative Party leader and for Holocaust Memorial Day. A sample time period without a similar policy announcement might reasonably be expected to include fewer articles discussing asylum policy, or to reflect political debate which is less focussed on one politician or party. For example, the Labour Party announced its own proposals the week following the end of the sample period. Without Holocaust Memorial Day fewer sympathetic articles about the experiences of individual refugees might be expected. More general international sympathy may have been engendered by the human impact of a tsunami in the Indian Ocean two weeks before the time period began. Absent during this period are any major events (eg local asylum support policies, disorder, major crime incidents) affecting only London or parts of London – which might have produced interesting information on how such events are perceived in different parts of London.

London has a large number of local newspapers, many of which are not included here. In particular, the construction of this sample means that local papers with a very small circulation, are not included. Equally, there are many minority ethnic papers that are not monitored. While the sample used here gives a good cross-section of papers with high readerships covering all parts of London, somewhat different results might arise from a different sample of newspapers.

4. Analysis of monitoring – mapping London’s reporting of asylum

The picture presented of reporting on asylum in London’s press by the media monitoring study is as follows:

Reports on asylum appear in London’s papers every day, and while most are on UK issues there is also an interest in international refugee issues and their links to domestic asylum stories. London papers respond to important related news events by increasing the number of articles written on asylum. The London regional papers are especially responsive to political events on asylum. In London papers, coverage linking asylum to crime is less common than discussions of policy, the effect on the economy, perceptions of and interactions between asylum seekers/refugees and host communities. Some of the articles in the local press make connections between local issues and the international context giving their readers good background information on asylum issues, while the London regional and minority ethnic/faith press are mainly concerned with national stories. Most sources are political (government or opposition representatives or documents), but the majority of articles do not rely exclusively on political sources for information on asylum seekers and refugees. The minority ethnic/faith press in particular cites many sources representing asylum seekers/refugees and other ethnic minorities. Asylum seekers and refugees are used as sources in a minority of articles but more in the local London papers than in the London regional or minority ethnic/faith press.

During the monitoring period the political debate is dominated by proposals announced by the Conservative opposition leader. Opposing views on these proposals feature in the articles and comment is made on their applicability to London. There is less coverage of political issues in the London local papers, and interest in politics is mainly provided as context to the story about individual asylum seekers or refugees. The minority ethnic/faith press is most critical of the Conservative Party proposals, although it gives a platform to opposing views. The London regional papers rely more on political sources to discuss policy issues, whereas the minority ethnic/faith press involves more non-governmental agencies. In general the articles sampled tend to avoid reporting controversial political debates in ways that might inflame public opinion.

Where numbers are cited, exact figures are given more often than generalised figures such as ‘hundreds’ or ‘millions’. A range of views is expressed on the impact of asylum seekers and refugees on the economy and services. Most common is the portrayal of asylum seekers/refugees as skilled contributors.

A range of crimes is reported where asylum seekers and refugees are involved; however most are one-off rather than repeated references. On the reporting of perceptions of and interactions with asylum seekers and refugees, almost all of the points raised are positive; stories are supportive of asylum seekers and refugees and their rights, and identify them as a welcome part of local communities. The reporting of crime, the impact on the economy and interactions with asylum seekers and refugees is not likely to invoke unfounded fear and hostility in readers. The policy discussions about lax border controls in the context of terrorist threats are more likely to produce a fearful reaction at the policy level; however the newspapers sampled generally report these discussions using measured language.

The letters give a mixture of locally held views for and against asylum seekers and refugees and are the source of the most emotive views expressed in the sample.

The images – all photographs – are frequently of politicians but many show images of asylum seekers and refugees which are likely to support good community relations – for example refugees and asylum seekers are pictured in ordinary domestic, professional and social settings including with local people. Photographs of events in asylum seekers’/refugees’ countries of origin help the reader’s understanding of why people seek asylum.

With regard to the Editors' Code and the PCC guidance notes, there are two instances of inaccurate terminology. One of these is in a letter and involves the type of terminology explicitly listed as inaccurate in the guidance notes - 'illegal asylum seeking'. There were no apparent issues concerning harassment by journalists or invasion of privacy, or inappropriate reporting of children. There was no apparent discrimination against particular groups on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality or religion.

There is no evidence of papers 'scare-mongering' by publishing articles which combine a number of emotive or fear inducing issues – only two articles did this, one of which was a letter. There is more evidence of articles that include a number of positive or supportive comments about specific asylum seekers/refugees or the institution of asylum.

There is some indication of a split between inner and outer London papers in terms of the topics they choose to report, but there is insufficient data to give explanations for this. There is little difference between reporting in relation to ownership of newspapers.

The *Media Image, Community Impact* framework for media monitoring is effective in presenting a picture of reporting of asylum in London's press and in developing a model that details the elements of good practice in reporting of this issue. Comparison with the *Media Image, Community Impact* findings strongly indicates that reporting in London's papers is more sympathetic than in national papers. The London sample presents many examples of reporting likely to support good community relations and promote information-based debate about asylum. This reporting helps to identify what the key elements of good practice are in reporting asylum in London defined by this report as:

'Accurate and balanced reporting which demonstrates community-sensitive journalism and promotes information-based debate that reflects London's experience.'

A good practice model

The good practice model presented by London's press includes the following elements:

- use of accurate terminology
- avoidance of discrimination, harassment, invasion of privacy or inappropriate reporting of children
- use of measured language and balanced discussion
- use of balanced, wide-ranging sources, including asylum-seekers and refugees
- provision of legal, political and international context, linking international, national and local issues while giving a London perspective
- appreciation of diversity
- reporting the local contribution of asylum seekers and refugees, and community support for them
- not responding to controversial political debates by reporting in a manner likely to inflame public opinion.

The reporting in this sample shows appreciation for all these elements. Coverage could be improved further if attention was given to the following:

- use only of accurate and well-sourced statistics
- not implying asylum seekers/refugees are involved in criminal activity without evidence to suggest this is the case; reporting evidence of asylum seekers as victims of crime eg harassment
- exercising greater caution when publishing letters which may give rise to unfounded fear and hostility of refugees and asylum seekers. Editors' notes could be added where such letters use inaccurate facts and terminology or make unsubstantiated allegations.

5. Conclusions

This report begins with evidence from a range of organisations of mounting concern about hostile and emotive reporting of asylum in the UK press, and its effects on community relations. *The Media Image, Community Impact* report showed the potential for increased incidents of harassment against asylum seekers and refugees that may result from such reporting. This study has analysed 153 articles in 41 papers and shows that London's press bucks the trend. Its local papers, closest to local communities in London's boroughs, do not tend to comment on policy and are mainly concerned with positive local interactions between individual asylum seekers/refugees and host community members. The London regional and minority ethnic/faith papers discuss policy in the context of London's experience of diversity.

London's press is judged to represent 'good practice' in reporting of asylum because it sensitively handles controversial issues. Opposing views are given, helping to promote informed debate. There is no appetite for generically linking asylum seekers/refugees to crime, and concerns that asylum seekers are a burden or get preferential treatment are outweighed by belief in their contribution to London's economy and culture. Inflammatory, extreme and fear-inducing language is avoided and articles are well-sourced; a wide range of organisations and individuals is used as sources. There are nearly twice as many photographs of asylum seekers/refugees in a mixed group with local people as there are photographs of asylum seekers/refugees convicted of crimes.

This community sensitive approach is helpful to enabling refugee integration. The predominance of political sources supports the view that politicians are highly influential in how asylum is reported and an agreement among politicians to avoid inflammatory and inaccurate statements would help to promote sensitive reporting in more papers. The influence of national reporting on community relations in London, and the apparent failure by some national papers to reflect London's experience, remains a cause for concern.

The London newspapers reflect London's profile as a cosmopolitan city and the nature of their reporting supports good community relations. From the evidence in this sample, the ethnic and faith press, which could be considered to have a particularly important role in presenting the perspectives of London's diverse communities, carries out this function well.

The PCC has made an important contribution to promoting accurate reporting of asylum and reminding editors of the impact of inflammatory reporting. In general, the sample suggests that London's papers abide by the PCC framework, although some inaccurate use of terminology was found and the discrimination clause as it stands cannot protect against negative generalisations about asylum seekers and refugees unless specific reference is made to their race, ethnicity, religion or nationality. Questions about the press treatment of non-racially defined groups who originate from foreign countries appear to require further attention and might suggest the use of specific terms such as 'asylum-phobia'.

The *Media Image, Community Impact* study developed a media monitoring framework that successfully identified the types of reporting likely to evoke unfounded fear of and hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees. This study shows that the same approach can also successfully identify community sensitive reporting and enable the development of a good practice model for reporting of asylum – a model which is largely followed by the London press.

What was the context for this analysis of reporting?

These findings have been drawn from a range of London papers at a time when national and to some extent international events forcefully highlighted issues of asylum. Other periods might have contained different events that could have affected the distribution of topics or the tone of reporting. However, the very visible agenda of events created a context in which London's press was challenged to engage with issues that go right to the heart of debates about refugee protection and integration. For this reason the sampling period is seen as a fair, if short, test of the way the press responds to the issues of asylum.

How far does London's press promote informed debate through accurate/balanced reporting?

The approach taken by London's press in reporting asylum is largely accurate and balanced. Identifiable sources are usually used, and a range of sources is found in the sample, although it is dominated by national politicians. Opposing viewpoints are presented, reflecting the experience of Londoners.

How community-sensitive is reporting of asylum in London's press? Does coverage take into account London's diversity; does it promote or hinder good community relations; is it likely that reporting engenders unfounded fear or hostility of refugees and asylum seekers?

The sample would strongly suggest that London's press is highly community sensitive. Most of the articles sampled celebrate London's diversity and in general report positive local attitudes towards and interactions with asylum seekers and refugees. Extreme and inflammatory language, vague and generalised references, and scaremongering are avoided. The reporting supports good community relations by promoting a rational and well-informed debate on asylum and by not provoking unfounded fear and hostility.

How accountable is London's press to the communities it represents, eg through publishing letters with opposing views, correcting errors in reporting and reflecting the PCC framework?

London's press adheres to the PCC framework although a small number of instances were found where inaccurate terminology was used. There was no evidence of complaints, and no letters were published criticising the newspapers for their reporting of asylum. Letters were published giving opposing viewpoints on asylum, although in a small number of cases these included inaccurate terminology and unsubstantiated and inflammatory allegations.

How does reporting in London differ from reporting nationally?

When compared to a sample of national papers monitored using similar methodology in 2003, London papers appear to be more balanced, less emotive and more community sensitive when reporting on asylum. The accuracy of reporting in London's press can be seen by the use of verifiable sources and avoidance of vague and generalised terms. They show greater appreciation of diversity and are more likely to present asylum seekers and refugees as individuals making a contribution and receiving local support. This raises interesting questions about why the London approach to reporting these issues is not found more often in the national press.

How adequate is the PCC framework in the context of reporting asylum in London?

The PCC framework is useful in promoting good practice in reporting asylum, although it lacks a commitment to balanced reporting and its definition of discrimination is only useful in reporting asylum seekers and refugees if their race, ethnicity, religion or nationality is mentioned. How best to incorporate what is termed here 'asylum-phobia' into definitions of discrimination is the subject of ongoing debate. To reflect this in the guidance notes on refugees and asylum seekers would address a key concern with regard to reporting of asylum.

What might be the impact of this sample of reporting?

The London press articles sampled in this study are likely to give readers a picture of asylum seekers and refugees as individuals who largely contribute to and are supported by their local community. Although concerns remain about illegal working, crime and pressures on services, concern is expressed for the situation in their country of origin. The picture presented by the local papers is of asylum seekers and refugees as part of the local community which might be expected to allay community fears about them. The London regional and minority ethnic/faith press gives balanced reports of the political debate from a perspective that appreciates diversity, using measured language and identifiable sources. It does not exploit the potential for inflaming public opinion presented by proposed changes to asylum policy, but encourages readers to participate in informed debate.

How far does London's press demonstrate good practice in reporting of asylum?

London's press very much demonstrates good practice in reporting of asylum. This study has enabled the development of a good practice model in reporting of these issues.

□ **Appendix – Detail of images with titles (*not in date order*)**

Minority ethnic/faith papers

Subject of photograph	Title of photograph, if any
Supporter – smiling female community worker	Tireless Zakia Ahmed
Other – Sir Anthony Sher	Exciting new chapter: Sir Anthony Sher is one of the book week stars
Supporter – Rabbi Julia Neuberger	None
Journalist	Pope Fiction
Male asylum seeker	Distraught: dad Sinnathamby
Country of origin – male child	Alone: Son, Thanis just survived
Country of origin – group of children	Huge loss: thousands of children have been orphaned
Politician – Home Secretary Charles Clarke	Clarke: encourages belonging
Politician – Conservative leader	Howler: Michael Howard
Politician – Conservative leader	Hot water: Howard
Other – Wedding of BAME couple	None
Supporter – Habib Rahman, JCWI	Rahman: fears a culture of suspicion will be created
Politician – Conservative leader, on podium labelled ‘controlled immigration’	Tory leader Michael Howard: forcing asylum onto political agenda
Politician – Conservative leader	Howard: accused of playing into the hands of racists
Journalist	Colleen Harris
Supporter – Trevor Phillips, CRE	Phillips: blasted Howard
Journalist	Tetteh Kofi on immigration
Politician – Conservative leader	None
Supporters – Protest march mainly white families, banners say ‘no deportations’ ‘defend asylum seekers’	Protest: but not everyone wants more immigrants

London local

Subject of photograph	Title of photograph, if any
Male asylum seeker convicted of ticket touting	ASBOs: Gavin Elliott and Mahdi Gerd ³³
Other male convicted with him	As above
Smiling female refugee and her children	Thousands of thanks
Male asylum seeker	Two members of Saj Athambawa's family who are still missing after the tsunami and right, Saj
Country of origin – female group in country of origin	As above
Male asylum seeker	Family tragedy: Sinnathamby Ponniah lost 100 relatives
Other – the Queen	A golden year: Her Majesty the Queen visited Harrow in April to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the granting of Harrow's royal charter.
Other – memorial service for tsunami victims	The civic service outside East Ham town hall last Wednesday with Sir Robin Wales, Civic Ambassador Cllr Pat Holland, Cllr the Revd Quintin Peppiatt and pupils from Nelson, Langdon and Kingsford schools.
Politician – councillor with donations	Cllr Paul Sathianesan with piles of donated clothing and Anthony Alfred John Leonard who lost his mother, sisters and grandfather in the disaster
Male asylum seeker	As above
Smiling male group, mixed young refugees and local people, in football kit	Going for goal: Ajit Baines, Alex Mackay, Mohamed Abu Baker, Carlos Burdetti and Daniel Happi of Star FC.
Young winners of achievement awards, local people and asylum seekers	All smiles: Martha Nantale receives an award from East Enders actress Angela Wynter
As above	Poet: Gemma Kabadayi recites her poem
As above	Express yourself: young award winner and performer Dionne Reid
As above	As above
Elderly male refugee in London synagogue	Strength of faith: Walter Woyda regularly attends South London Liberal synagogue
Building – synagogue in Germany	Violation: the Reform Germeinden Synagogue before and after Kristallnacht
Building – same synagogue destroyed	As above
Country of origin – large family group (old photo)	Bygone days: the last photo of the Woyda family, in Germany, 1938. Bruno and Anni are at the back on the left; their two sons are at the front.
Country of origin – parents with children (old photo)	Joyful Times: the Woyda family in 1938. Anni and Bruno with Walter at the back, on the left, and his brother, Hans.
Country of origin – refugee as a young boy (old photo)	Young boy: Walter in 1938
Smiling children mixed group refugees and local people, holding paintings	Bloom time: Rivers Sothern, 6, Ashley Bayoumy, 8, Lufu Si, 7, Lola Hamilton, 6, and Olivia Carrier, 6.
Other – a rose against barbed wire (In memory of Holocaust)	None

³³ The same photo and caption were used in two different papers, which is why this appears twice in the list.

Male asylum seeker	None
Journalist	Paula Dady
Male asylum seeker convicted of ticket touting	ASBOs: Gavin Elliott and Mahdi Gerd
Other male also convicted	As above
Building – village destroyed by tsunami	Dr Ratna Pushparajah has been helping survivors of the tsunami disaster
Supporters – local supporter (doctor)	As above
Smiling mixed group of refugees and local people outside 10 Downing Street	VIPs: Beth Worrall and Mulat Tadesse, centre, were nominated by borough MP Iain Coleman
Politician – London Deputy Mayor Nicky Gavron	Holocaust memories: London Deputy Mayor Nicky Gavron
Other – Benjamin Disraeli (old photo)	Descendant: Benjamin Disraeli
Elderly male refugee	Ensuring we won't forget: Joseph Von Treuenburg kept his promise to keep alive the horror after the war
Group of Jewish immigrants (old photo)	Rudolf Rocker, with comrades

London regional

Subject of photograph	Title of photograph, if any
'Bogus doctor' who wrote false reports on asylum seekers	Web of lies: Barian Baluchi
'Bogus doctor' who wrote false reports on asylum seekers	Fraud: Barian Baluchi
Other – actor Steven Fry	Stephen Fry speaks at Westminster Service
Other – candles in the snow next to the word Auschwitz	Candles are lit at a German rail firm where Jews were deported to Auschwitz
Jewish male next to wall bearing names of dead	A man looks at a wall bearing names of Czech Jews who died
Elderly man weeping at Auschwitz	Survivor Iwan Stuglak cries on his visit to the camp
Group of elderly men in striped hats weeping at Holocaust memorial ceremony	Survivors show emotion at the service
Politician – Conservative leader	Under attack: Michael Howard
Politician – Conservative leader on podium labelled 'controlled immigration'	In control: Michael Howard
Politician – Conservative leader and David Davis	Debate: Michael Howard and the Shadow Home Secretary David Davis
Politician – Conservative leader	Michael Howard confronts the Prime Minister in the Commons yesterday
Asylum seeker convicted of crime	Caught: Andris Cerins, Lawrence Dell and Victor Solomka
Other – criminal	
Other – criminal	
Building – house of convicted asylum seeker	Solomka's house in King's Lynn Norfolk
Politician – Robert Kilroy Silk against slogan Veritas	Nothing but the 'truth': Robert Kilroy-Silk launching his right wing party at Westminster yesterday
Other – Guantanamo detainees	Guantanamo
Politician – Conservative leader, on podium saying 'controlled immigration'	Riposte: this is about an open debate Michael Howard said today
Other – crowd at carnival, mixed ethnicity	Metropolitan riches: London has always thrived on its immigrants and will continue to do so
Journalist	Simon Jenkins
Two elderly female refugees	Dedicated conservatives: Olly Gafson and her sister Melanie Arnold in Golders Green
Journalist	Gilligan on Monday
Other – female interpreter	Word perfect: Joanna Curtis mixes corporate with public – service work
Politician – Conservative leader on Labour poster	Subliminal Baggage: Labour's election poster, now withdrawn
Journalist	Anne McElvoy
Other – smiling headmaster with group of pupils – mixed ethnicity	Front runners: headmaster Robert McFarlane and his year five pupils at Berrymede are winners of an outstanding achievement award

Politician – Conservative leader on Labour poster	Controversy: Labour poster portraying Tory leader as a 'shylock' figure
'Bogus doctor'	Wealthy lifestyle: Barian Baluchi admitted 30 deception charges. He has changed his name 20 times since arriving in Britain.
Building – house of 'bogus doctor'	His Hampton home
Other – doctor whose identity was stolen	Identity stolen: Dr Abdul Doshoki
Wealthy male refugee, Labour Party donor, with Gordon Brown	Gordon Brown has close links with Cohen, who entertains some of London's most influential figures at his London home
Wealthy male refugee with wife	Gilded couple: Sir Ronald and Lady Cohen
Building – his house	
Refugee arrested for terrorism in Iraq	Caught: Mohammed Ali Abdul Razaq is suspected of laundering money for leader of Bigley kidnap gang

