

Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound
Philanthropy Supported Options Initiative:
Evaluation of Phase One

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Authorship and acknowledgements

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Executive summary

Introduction to the Supported Options Initiative

The Supported Options Initiative is one element of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Social Justice programme, delivered in partnership with Unbound Philanthropy (*the Foundations*). The first phase of the Initiative ran for two years from 2012. Its strategic goal was to 'support and encourage migrant, youth and advice organisations to better understand, respond to and reach out to young and child migrants with irregular immigration status, and capture and share learning to improve practice and policy'. In addition, three priority outcomes were specified:

- Better advice services to young migrants through holistic approaches to their advice, support and information needs (legal and social)
- Improved provision of online information and support to young migrants
- Increased understanding of the issues facing young people leaving the UK, forcibly or voluntarily, and piloting options to better support them.

The context of the Supported Options Initiative

The focus of the Supported Options Initiative was work with 'child and young irregular migrants': children and young people up to the age of 30 in the UK, independently or with family, including those who:

- Were born in the UK to parents without regularised immigration status
- Have overstayed visas or otherwise violated visa conditions
- Have a rejected asylum claim but remain in the UK
- Cannot be removed from the UK because they are stateless
- Are 'sans papiers'¹ (e.g. whose papers were taken or destroyed by an employer)
- Entered avoiding immigration inspection or using false documents (wittingly or unwittingly).²

The lives of young irregular migrants are filled with acute and steady hardship – whatever form that irregularity takes. The definition of the term 'irregular' has many facets, and given that this is a 'hidden' population, estimates of numbers of children with irregular migration status vary.³

Research in the UK⁴ as well as in Europe⁵ indicates that there are several elements that contribute to young irregular migrants' sense of precarious living. First, in the choices that

¹ See Bloch, A., Sigona, N., Zetter, R. (2014) [Sans Papiers: The Social and Economic Lives of Undocumented Migrants](#), Pluto Press.

² From Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy, *Supported Options Fund for Young People with Irregular Immigration Status: Evaluation Brief*, 2011. See also Institute for Public Policy Research (2006) *Irregular Migration in the UK, an ippr FactFile*, the original source of these categorisations.

³ Sigona and Hughes (2012) estimate that 120,000 irregular migrants are living in the UK, of whom 60,000–65,000 were UK-born. See Sigona, N. and Hughes, V. (2012) *No Way Out, No Way In: Irregular migrant children and families in the UK*. Oxford: University of Oxford.

⁴ See Bloch, A., Sigona, N. and Zetter, R. (2014) [Sans Papiers: The Social and Economic Lives of Young Undocumented Migrants](#), Pluto Press.

they face about their degrees of visibility, along with how they should respond to risks of exposure and subsequent threats of deportation. Second, allied to these choices, they can feel atomised, being part of social networks that are profoundly unstable. Third, in relation to organisational responses, there are severe limitations in accessing financial assistance, health care, adequate housing, educational and employment opportunities and social care for young irregular migrants. Fourth, and perhaps most powerfully, there is confusion and clamour in response to questions of whether they – as irregular migrant children – should be cared for as children or controlled as migrants, as evidenced by the conflicting laws and policies that we outline in this report.

As the losses mount up for irregular migrant children, being able to lead an ordinary life becomes extraordinarily difficult. In comparison to other vulnerable groups of citizen children, and in the absence of secure immigration status, they face destitution through a lack of entitlement to support. In their everyday lives, they struggle to secure the basics of everyday life – food, clothes, shoes, outings, transport costs and phone credits. They face a future that is uncertain, where routes to regularisation are unclear to them. They risk homelessness, the possibility of exploitation and persistent psychological pressure.

These risks are further compounded at a time when, in the UK, both generic provision for children and young people, and specialist migrant support across both the public and voluntary sectors have come under intense pressure and, in some cases, have disappeared. Generic provision for children and young people is under pressure from: public expenditure cuts to services (especially youth services); reductions in welfare spending pushing up the number of young people seeking help; and pressure from cuts and rising need on public sector housing, social services, voluntary sector advice and homelessness providers.⁶

Specialist migrant support services face all of the pressures listed above but, in addition, they have also been significantly affected by a highly volatile and hostile external environment that remains in a state of flux. Changes to laws, policies and funding⁷ have made it harder to fund legal representation and have led to a reduction in the overall number of solicitors available to take on this work, compounding well-known concerns about the quality of legal representation on immigration issues.

Overview of the Supported Options Initiative

The Initiative emerged from a development phase during which the Foundations sought to establish a thorough understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of being an irregular migrant child or young person. Specifically, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation had commissioned and published *No right to dream*, a study about the lives of undocumented migrants;⁸ they canvassed opinion across organisations working with irregular migrant children; and they

⁵ Senovilla Hernández, D. (2013) *Unaccompanied Children Lacking Protection in Europe*. PUCAFREU Project Final Comparative Report.

⁶ See, for example, Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2013) *Hitting the Poorest Places Hardest: the local and regional impact of welfare reform*, Sheffield Hallam University; or NCVO (2013) *April 2013 Welfare Reforms and what they mean for Voluntary Organisations*, London: NCVO.

⁷ The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act came into force in April 2013. For more background see, for example, Coram Children's Legal Centre (2013) *Growing up in a hostile environment: The rights of undocumented migrant children in the UK*. London: CCLC

⁸ Bloch, A., Sigona, N. and Zetter, R. (2009) *No right to dream: The social and economic lives of young undocumented migrants in Britain*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

approached Unbound Philanthropy about delivering the Initiative in partnership. The latter would draw upon expertise in the field, including experience in the US.

Together, the Foundations assembled a blend of grant-making, commissioning and convening around the Initiative's strategic goal. This combination of interventions enabled the Foundations to be responsive, opportunistic and flexible in the context of the uncertain and hostile environment described above; and to take an exploratory and developmental approach to the work.

- **Grant-making:** At the outset, six grants were made to voluntary sector organisations ('grantholders') to provide advice, support and information to children and young people with irregular immigration status. Three further grants were later made to support young people facing return to Afghanistan and to pursue routes to citizenship in ways uncovered through policy work, also commissioned as part of the Initiative.
- **Commissioning:** The Foundations commissioned research, policy work and training around: the potential application of social media and digital technology to this field; policy research and evidence collection to address regularisation/citizenship; and microfinance as an approach to financing the legal costs of regularisation.
- **Convening:** Throughout the Initiative, the Foundations hosted learning community meetings for all grantholders to share progress and tackle issues arising from their work. The Foundations also convened wider audiences (including grantholders) to consider alternative approaches and ideas about furthering the interests of child and young irregular migrants in line with the aims of the Initiative.

Key learning from the evaluation

We highlight below key learning from the evaluation in relation to:

- Distinctive features of direct work with child and young irregular migrants
- Outcomes of direct work with child and young irregular migrants
- Lessons for future work in this area.

Distinctive features of direct work with child and young irregular migrants

The six grantholders funded through phase one of the Initiative provided a range of services and activities, including:

- One-off information and advice delivered in multiple, local, social welfare and legal advice settings to maximise reach
- Legal advice, advocacy and representation delivered holistically, alongside wider welfare and support
- Peer support through group work, facilitated by experienced youth workers with immigration advice training and experience
- Information and awareness-raising about rights and entitlements for legal and welfare professionals.

We identified seven distinctive features of the work carried out. Taken together, these features begin to describe the conditions, attitudes and approaches required to reach and support child and irregular young migrants.

Feature 1: A combination of approaches is needed to reach young people

How to be safely visible was a dilemma facing both young people and the organisations that wanted to advise and support them. Grantholders were attuned to this issue and used a combination of four approaches in order to be flexible and responsive to different kinds of need: maintaining a stable presence in mainstream (i.e. non-immigration) settings; an enhanced word of mouth reputation resulting from the relationships of trust they built with young people and local community groups; generating referrals and being signposted by professionals as a result of the reliable relationships they built with them; and visible written materials distributed widely and discreetly.

Feature 2: Working across sector, professional and organisational boundaries is essential

Young people often find themselves falling between services that work in silos and lack awareness of their particular needs. Grantholders drew in people, groups and organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors (including health practitioners, social housing providers and social services) to help young people. Grantholders then became the 'interface' between a young person and the multiple organisations with which they needed to engage.

Feature 3: It takes time to build trust with young people and this needs resourcing

All the grantholders emphasised how long it can take to build trust with a young person. It also takes a considerable amount of time to build trust and credibility with professionals working in the places and spaces where young people go. The Initiative funding made it possible to incorporate this careful and patient approach into project and staff roles; organisations also benefitted from having a prominent and long-standing presence in their local community.

Feature 4: Flexible and responsive communication with young people

Young people commented on the difference between the way the Initiative projects communicated with them, as opposed to other organisations with which they had been in touch. Popular features included text messaging because it was cheap; and being able to ring a direct line or mobile and get straight through to the person they wanted to contact.

Feature 5: Practitioners who are willing and able to travel, as one way to be '*on their side and by their side*'

Grantholders said it was significant that practitioners including legal services were willing and able to travel to meet young people and families with young children at home or nearby, or in facilities where they felt comfortable such as schools and children's centres, and to accompany them to meetings and appointments. In a minority of projects, this extended to accompanying young people to explore local facilities and amenities. This practice helped to build trust and confidence among young people who faced complex legal cases and were fearful of being detained.

Feature 6: Persistence

In the face of a client group that is sometimes disengaged from their advisers, and confronted by a system where repeated 'failure' was ingrained, the ability and willingness to persist was key. An absolutely critical feature of these grantholders was a tenacious, yet sensitive, pursuit of the facts and the law in order to understand the precise nature of each young person's rights and entitlements, and to make the best possible decisions with them about how those were pursued.

Feature 7: Taking a holistic approach

Grantholders made significant changes to their practice in order to work more holistically. For example, legal practitioners with different areas of expertise (e.g. housing, immigration, education) had begun to work on cases in pairs and teams according to the young person's needs. Addressing welfare requirements had also become a legitimate part of their work.

Outcomes of direct work with child and young irregular migrants

Our evaluation confirmed that direct work of value and importance took place with child and young irregular migrants, contributing to five key outcomes.

Outcome 1: Obtaining legal representation

Grantholders secured legal representation for their clients by finding lawyers willing to offer *pro bono* advice and representation; through legal aid; and by using Supported Options funding to cover some or all of the costs. The importance of the quality of legal representation was highlighted. A considerable amount of time was spent correcting misinformation that young people had been given about their legal rights and entitlements, and addressing their misapprehensions or fears about challenging legal decisions or poor practice.

Outcome 2: Alleviating destitution

Destitute young people presented with extremely complex legal cases; they had no money to pay transport costs for attending immigration and related meetings and interviews to address their case. Both the young people and the project workers reported that a lack of food and shelter and the attendant difficulties with keeping track of clothes and personal possessions made concentrating on their complex and worrying legal position very difficult. Grantholders provided, or found elsewhere, emergency money, food, clothing and assistance with travel costs for young people. Having found ways to tackle a young person's immediate crisis, projects then worked on legal challenges or the local policy decisions that had left a young person destitute, so that their long-term prospects could be improved.

Outcome 3: Securing emergency accommodation

Young people who were homeless or at immediate risk of becoming homeless (e.g. as a result of eviction or relationship breakdown) were found suitable emergency or supported accommodation after coming into contact with Supported Options projects. Young people already living in unsuitable or poor-quality accommodation were also assisted.

Outcome 4: Navigating barriers to education

Some of the young people that approached Supported Options projects had only discovered that they were undocumented when, at age 16, they applied for further education. The projects supported young people to negotiate with further education colleges and advised them about their status. They also supported child and young irregular migrants to address other barriers to their education.

Outcome 5: Building social networks

Building young people's social networks was a critical feature of this Initiative. Grantholders organised social, leisure and other activities (e.g. trips and sports) for child and young irregular migrants. They also identified local facilities, amenities and activities for young people to join and where they could renew or take up personal interests (e.g. library, dance classes, a dressmaking course), as well as connecting their clients into networks of young people facing similar immigration issues.

Lessons for future work in this area

Building on the synthesis and analysis of our evaluation findings, we can highlight three lessons for future work in this area, both for the Foundations and other funders and practitioners active or interested in work with child and young irregular migrants.

Lesson 1: The importance of balancing short-term and longer-term work

It was difficult for grantholders to think about the longer term, because they were dealing with meeting urgent needs in the short or medium term, including crisis interventions around basic needs for food and shelter, and removal from immediate risk of harm. Whereas projects have been able to shelter young people, they have at times not been able to root them. And sustenance has been provided in the short, rather than longer term. In the current operating environment for work with child and young irregular migrants, this is perhaps inevitable.

Some grantholders raised concerns about the long-term impact of their work and whether or not it would bring about any sustained change in the young person's life, because many young people are 'on a cliff edge' of support which will be removed when they reach the age of 21.

Expectations around the impact of work with child and young irregular migrants needs to be realistic and proportionate to what is possible within a broader context of hostility, change and turbulence.

Lesson 2: The benefits of high engagement funding

The Foundations' approach to this Initiative has been consistent with a number of hallmarks of high engagement funding⁹, in particular: flexible grants management; funding plus;

⁹ Cairns, B. and Buckley, E. (2012) *New ways of giving by UK trusts and foundations: High engagement funding*. Paper presented to the ISTR Conference, Siena, Italy.

familiarity with the field; sustained support from a key individual (the Initiative Coordinator). Interviewees highlighted the tangible benefits of the multiple strands of the Initiative.

For example, the Foundations:

- Spotted and addressed critical issues as they emerged with a blend of new grants and commissioned research and policy work, including: new grants to support increased citizenship registration; and policy research into routes to regularisation
- Supported exploration of new approaches and made timely decisions to abandon approaches that do not work.
- Introduced new and sometimes inspirational ideas through the organisation of events, invited speakers and disseminated materials online, including: training about Article 8 for non-legal practitioners; and convening stakeholders around youth movements in the U.S.
- Supported the cross-pollination of ideas and practices between the six grantholders and other elements of the Initiative.

This highlights the critical importance of flexibility and imagination when funding work that is complex and unpredictable.

Concluding remarks: progress against Initiative outcomes

Outcome One: Better advice services to young migrants through 'holistic' approaches to their advice, support and information needs

Much was achieved against this outcome, with young people receiving support for their wider welfare and social needs, as well as their immigration needs, delivered by people and organisations with a finely tuned grasp of what it means to have irregular immigration status. The latter percolated across all aspects of professional and organisational practice in ways that young people particularly appreciated and which were enabled by the Supported Options funding.

Outcome Two: Improved provision of online information and support to young migrants

In relation to this second outcome, the Foundations supported some experimentation and exploration of the subject, which has probably created a few ripples, where individual (migrant and technology) practitioners have learned from the experience.

Outcome Three: Increased understanding of the issues facing young people leaving the UK, forcibly or voluntarily, and piloting options for better supporting them

The Initiative has helped draw attention to the issue of 'return'. The Foundations can be seen to have made a contribution to the migration sector by surfacing an issue that many organisations supporting child and young irregular migrants find profoundly difficult and complex.

Part One: Introduction

Section 1: The Supported Options Initiative

1.1 Introduction to the Supported Options Initiative

The Supported Options Initiative is one element of Paul Hamlyn Foundation’s Social Justice programme, delivered in partnership with Unbound Philanthropy (*the Foundations*). The first phase of the Initiative ran for two years from 2012. Its strategic goal was to ‘*support and encourage migrant, youth and advice organisations to better understand, respond to and reach out to young and child migrants with irregular immigration status, and capture and share learning to improve practice and policy*’. In addition, three priority outcomes were specified:

1. Better advice services for young migrants through holistic approaches to their advice, support and information needs (legal and social)
2. Improved provision of online information and support to young migrants
3. Increased understanding of the issues facing young people leaving the UK, forcibly or voluntarily, and piloting options for better supporting them.

1.2 The context of the Supported Options Initiative

In the context of the Supported Options Initiative we use ‘child and young irregular migrants’ to refer to children and young people up to the age of 30 in the UK independently or with family, including those who:

- Were born in the UK to parents without regularised immigration status
- Have overstayed visas or otherwise violated visa conditions
- Have a rejected asylum claim, but remain in the UK
- Cannot be removed from the UK because they are stateless
- Are ‘*sans papiers*’¹⁰ (e.g. whose papers were taken or destroyed by an employer)
- Entered avoiding immigration inspection or using false documents (wittingly or unwittingly).¹¹

The lives of young irregular migrants are filled with acute and steady hardship, whatever forms that irregularity takes, and however many children are counted as irregular migrants in the UK. The definition of the term ‘irregular’ has many facets, and given that this is a ‘hidden’ population, estimates of numbers of children with irregular migration status vary.¹²

¹⁰ See Bloch, A., Sigona, N., Zetter, R. (2014) *Sans Papiers: The Social and Economic Lives of Undocumented Migrants*, Pluto Press.

¹¹ From Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy, *Supported Options Fund for Young People with Irregular Immigration Status: Evaluation Brief*, 2011. See also Institute for Public Policy Research (2006) *Irregular Migration in the UK, an ippr FactFile*, the original source of these categorisations.

¹² Sigona and Hughes (2012) estimate that 120,000 young irregular migrants are living in the UK, of whom 60,000–65,000 were UK-born. See Sigona, N. and Hughes, V. (2012) *No Way Out, No Way In: Irregular migrant children and families in the UK*. Oxford: University of Oxford.

Research in the UK¹³ as well as in Europe¹⁴ indicates that there are several elements that contribute to young irregular migrants' sense of precarious living. First, in the choices that they face about their degrees of visibility, along with how they should respond to risks of exposure and subsequent threats of deportation. Second, allied to these choices, they can feel atomised, being part of social networks that are profoundly unstable. Third, in relation to organisational responses, there are severe limitations in accessing financial assistance, health care, adequate housing, educational and employment opportunities and social care for young irregular migrants. Fourth, and perhaps most powerfully, there is confusion and clamour in response to questions of whether they, as irregular migrant children, should be cared for as children or controlled as migrants, as evidenced by the constricting laws and policies that we outline in this report.

As the losses mount up for irregular migrant children, being able to lead an ordinary life becomes extraordinarily difficult. In comparison to other vulnerable groups of citizen children, and in the absence of secure immigration status, they face destitution through lack of entitlements to support. In their everyday lives they struggle to secure the basics of everyday life – food, clothes, shoes, outings, transport costs and phone credits. They face a future that is uncertain, where the routes to regularisation are unclear to them. They risk homelessness, the possibilities of exploitation and persistent psychological pressures.

These risks are further compounded at a time when, in the UK, both generic provision for children and young people and specialist migrant support across both the public and voluntary sectors have come under intense pressure and, in some cases, have disappeared. Generic provision for children and young people is under pressure from: public expenditure cuts to services (especially youth services); reductions in welfare spending pushing up the number of young people seeking help; and pressure from cuts and rising need on public sector housing, social services, voluntary sector advice and homelessness providers.¹⁵

Specialist migrant support services face all of the pressures listed above but, in addition, they have also been significantly affected by a highly volatile and hostile external environment that remains in a state of flux. Changes to laws, policies and funding¹⁶ have made it harder to fund legal representation, and have led to a reduction in the overall number of solicitors available to take on this work. This compounds well known concerns about the quality of legal representation on immigration issues. The impact of irregularity at such times emerges across personal, local, regional and national contexts, and therefore across the social, welfare and legal domains that these children and young people have to navigate. Lack of secure immigration status has an impact on entitlements to welfare support. It also leaks into children and young people's management of social supports. It generates planning blight. Fear, anger, mistrust, anxiety and hostility resonate across the domains.

¹³ See Bloch, A., Sigona, N. and Zetter, R. (2014) *Sans Papiers: The Social and Economic Lives of Young Undocumented Migrants*, Pluto Press.

¹⁴ Senovilla Hernández, D. (2013) *Unaccompanied Children Lacking Protection in Europe*. PUCAFREU Project Final Comparative Report.

¹⁵ See, for example, Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2013) *Hitting the Poorest Places Hardest: the local and regional impact of welfare reform*, Sheffield Hallam University; or NCVO (2013) *April 2013 Welfare Reforms and what they mean for Voluntary Organisations*, London: NCVO.

¹⁶ The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act came into force in April 2013. For more background see, for example, Coram Children's Legal Centre (2013) *Growing up in a hostile environment: The rights of undocumented migrant children in the UK*. London: CCLC

It is this territory and the lived experiences across it that the Foundations wanted to address, by supporting services that would assist young irregular migrants not to '*frequently fall between the cracks in the architecture of legal protection.*'¹⁷ There is a range of routes into being undocumented and there is likely to be some variation in the severity and impact of this status on young people depending on the route they have taken, as well as their access to support and other resources once they become undocumented.

1.3 Overview of the Supported Options Initiative

The Initiative emerged from a development phase during which the Foundations sought to establish a thorough understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of being an irregular migrant child or young person. Specifically, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation had commissioned and published *No right to dream*, a study about the lives of undocumented migrants;¹⁸ they canvassed opinion across organisations working with irregular migrant children; and they approached Unbound Philanthropy about delivering the Initiative in partnership. The latter would draw in expertise in the field, including experience in the U.S.

Together, the Foundations assembled a blend of grantmaking, commissioning and convening around the strategic goal, as specified above. This combination of interventions enabled the Foundations to be responsive, opportunistic and flexible in the context of the uncertain and hostile environment described above; and to take an exploratory and developmental approach to the work.

- **Grantmaking:** At the outset, six grants were made to voluntary sector organisations (following an open call) to provide advice, support and information to children and young people with irregular immigration status. Three further grants were later made to support young people facing return to Afghanistan and to pursue routes to citizenship in ways uncovered through policy work (also commissioned as part of the Initiative). The funders made a deliberate choice to support a range of organisations and activities (rather than, say, only funding law centres) in order to learn about different approaches. Grantholders' appetite for collaboration with others was another factor in the funders' decision to support them.
- **Commissioning:** The Foundations commissioned research, policy work and training around: the potential application of social media and digital technology to this field; policy research and evidence collection to address regularisation/citizenship; and microfinance as an approach to financing the legal costs of regularisation.
- **Convening:** Throughout the Initiative, the Foundations hosted learning community meetings of all grantholders to share progress and tackle issues arising from their work. The Foundations also convened wider audiences (including grantholders) to consider alternative approaches and ideas about furthering the interests of child and young irregular migrants in line with the aims of the Initiative.

The Initiative was coordinated by a part-time consultant (the Initiative Coordinator) with experience of the migrant sector and contracted to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. A project

¹⁷ Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (2013) *Children First and Foremost: a guide to realising the rights of children and families in an irregular migration situation*. Brussels: PICUM.

¹⁸ Bloch, A., Sigona, N. and Zetter, R. (2009) *No right to dream: The social and economic lives of young undocumented migrants in Britain*. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

management team comprising senior staff members from the Foundations and the Initiative Coordinator had oversight of the Initiative. Previously, governance had been provided by a steering group (which helped select grantees); later a reference group with an independent chair. At the end of Phase One, governance lay with the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's Social Justice Committee and Unbound Philanthropy's trustees.

Section 2: The evaluation

2.1 Aims of the evaluation

The Foundations commissioned the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) to evaluate the Initiative in its first phase. They wanted an evaluation that would be responsive to the Initiative's developmental nature and meet three aims:

Aim One: Assess the impact of the overall *Initiative* and outcomes of individual strands against the Initiative's strategic goal and priority outcomes and against individual projects' outcomes.

Aim Two: Identify lessons learned from the Initiative, including: the role and contribution of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation/Unbound Philanthropy partnership; the value and experience of an Initiative approach to support this kind of work; and the benefits and drawbacks of the different approaches taken by individual projects.

Aim Three: Generate knowledge that will inform any recommendations the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy choose to share with the wider migrant, youth and advice sectors on how to effectively support young people with irregular status.

2.2 Evaluation

The nature of the evaluation work in Phase One was shaped by the developmental and exploratory nature of the work initiated by the Foundations and by the policy context in which it took place. Three key points need to be made.

First, the shape of the Supported Options Initiative was emergent and this was reflected in the iterative nature of the evaluation processes designed to support the development of the Initiative. The Foundations were responsible for assessing performance against grants awarded.

Second, some decisions had to be made in order to bring a degree of order to the evaluation work. This meant leaving some work outside the scope of the evaluation (e.g. Len Grant's blog *Life without papers*). Other elements of the initiative (e.g. the inquiry into potential for social media and digital technology to improve support to young people- Undoc Camp¹⁹) were taken into account in the early stages of fieldwork. Evaluators participated and observed events and conducted interviews with key people, but over time these became less important to the initiative and, consequently, are reported on only in brief here.

¹⁹ See: <http://www.supportedoptions.org/undoc-camp/>

Third, grantholders were preoccupied with responding to and deciding how to work within major policy change at the time of phase one. The Foundations and IVAR accepted that this would mean fewer opportunities to raise evaluation questions with grantholders during their learning community meetings (because much of this time was taken up with addressing pressing policy issues); there would be no space to discuss interim evaluation findings with them; and less pressure to comply with requests for quantitative data about their clients.

IVAR worked collaboratively with the Foundations and grantholders to collect and analyse mainly qualitative data about their perceptions of progress, challenges and critical issues faced in delivering the Initiative. A modest amount of quantitative data about grantholders' clients was collected, analysed and is reported here.

Our evaluation fieldwork comprised six distinct elements:

- A review of 24 documents, including: grantholders' reports to the funders; management and governance papers prepared by the Initiative Coordinator; research and policy papers; and films created by young people
- Facilitation and observation of eight learning community meetings of Initiative grantholders and other events around commissioned work
- 20 site visits to grantholders (at three stages of Phase One), comprising interviews and meetings with delivery teams
- A review of 57 case studies and interviews with young people engaged by the Initiative
- Collection and analysis of client records (quantitative data supplied by grantholders)
- 10 interviews with funders and stakeholders at interim and final report stages in phase one.

We presented and discussed findings with the Foundations at three stages:

- At the end of the development phase (October 2012)
- At the end of the first year (September 2013)
- As the Foundations began to consider a second phase (March 2014).²⁰

2.3 This report

Part Two of this report sets out our key findings about the work carried out by grantholders and the Foundations; the benefits and achievements of this work; and the challenges faced in delivering it. In Part Three, we summarise our conclusions.

We refer to those who took part in the evaluation as 'grantholders' or 'participants'. Their views are presented anonymously and are illustrated with quotations (indicated in italics). Where appropriate, we indicate if opinions were expressed by a particular group of participants. Given that this was a qualitative rather than a quantitative study, we do not indicate the number of people holding any particular point of view.

²⁰ IVAR (October 2012) *Evaluation of Supported Options Initiative: Feedback on development phase*; IVAR (September 2013) *Evaluation of Supported Options Initiative: Interim report*; IVAR (March 2014) *Evaluation of Supported Options Initiative: Progress report*.

2.4 Use of terms

We sometimes use the term 'undocumented' where this has been used deliberately by a participant or where we are citing other literature or research.

We use 'client' to refer to the individual young people that the grantholders engaged with, noting that some projects favoured other terms that better reflected the emphasis that they place on empowerment in their work (e.g. participant). Occasionally we use the term 'case' in order to distinguish between a single legal 'case' and the fact that more than one individual may benefit from that case, because they are the parent, child or sibling of the child or young person being advised or represented. Some projects provided advice directly to parents.

Part Two: Key findings

In Part Two, Sections 3 to 6, we focus on the key findings from our evaluation. We begin in Section 3 by considering the work of six grantholders before moving on to explore other work initiated by the Foundations in Section 4. In Section 5 we address the question of benefits and achievements before, in Section 6, identifying a number of challenges.

Section 3: The work carried out by six grantholders

In this section, we briefly introduce the work carried out by the following six grantholders, whose grants (awarded at the outset of the Initiative) were focused on the provision of *'better advice services to young migrants through holistic approaches to their advice, support and information needs'* (Priority outcome 1):

- Coram Children's Legal Centre ('Coram CLC')
- Young Migrants' Rights, Coventry Law Centre ('CLC')
- PROTECT, Islington Law Centre ('PROTECT')
- Right to Dream, Praxis Community Projects ('Praxis')
- Refugee and Migrant Centre ('RMC')
- The Children's Society ('TCS').

We present some basic information about the young people they reached and supported. We then summarise the various activities developed and delivered over the lifetime of the Initiative, including the number of young people with whom each grantholder had contact.

The findings presented here are based on data collected through the following elements of our fieldwork, as described in Part One of this report:

- 20 site visits to grantholders, including management and frontline staff
- 57 client case studies and interviews with young people
- 12 grantholder reports to the Foundations
- 2 films and a report produced by a self-advocacy group, Brighter Futures.

3.1 Introduction

We identified three domains within and across which grantholders were working, where children and young people are likely to require advice, support and advocacy:

- Legal
- Welfare
- Social networks.

These provide an organising framework for the activities developed and carried out by the six grantholders.

Grantholders were spread across the three domains. Each grantholder was located primarily in one domain, e.g. the PROTECT team at Islington Law Centre is located primarily in 'legal'. But importantly, as discussed below, each grantholder then attempted to link and bridge across the domains, depending on the trajectory of their operational and strategic work,

following the governing principle of thinking about young irregular migrants as leading lives that were influenced by pressures across all domains.

Below we provide descriptions of each grantholder's project.

Coram Children's Legal Centre

Organisation: Coram Children's Legal Centre is part of the Coram group, one of the country's oldest children's charities. The legal centre is well-known nationally for its child-rights approach to law and has a good track record on supporting migrant young people.

Aims: With Supported Options funding, the Centre aimed to provide legal advice to children, young people and parents with irregular immigration status in Greater London.

Practice: They achieved this by making contact with people with irregular immigration status through children's centres and delivering advice to them in the community (in children's centres and in their homes) before referring them on to specialist advice or representation.

Services: The project provided outreach legal advice and referral on to specialist immigration and other legal advisers and support. The project also directly provided legal representation in a small number of cases.

People: More than 270 clients received advice from the project. Because many of these clients were young parents with children the total number of individuals benefiting from the project's advice was more than 800. The majority of clients were young women and were aged between 19 and 30. But there was a significant minority of young men and of children and young people under 16.

Beyond service delivery: Information collected through this advice work was used to inform policy and advocacy work. The project also provided awareness and information training for more than 60 professionals about the needs and experiences of young people with irregular immigration status, and produced a series of factsheets.

Coventry Law Centre

Organisation: Coventry Law Centre is a nationally recognised law centre with a track record in testing new approaches for delivering advice. It exists to provide free legal advice and representation in immigration and wider welfare areas to the people of Coventry. With funding from the Supported Options Initiative, the law centre has developed a partnership with Grapevine, a community-based organisation that finds ways to involve community members in the lives of marginalised young people.

Aims: The idea was to marry the two organisations' expertise so that more young irregular migrants would have access to legal advice because it would be made visible and available where they go; and so that community members would become involved in the lives of these young people enabling them to tap into social support locally.

Practice: In addition to the legal expertise possessed within the law centre, this project was made possible through a blend of relationship building with places that young people frequent and organisations that they are in touch with; and then building a presence with youth workers spending time in those places and spaces, as well as discreetly distributing literature.

Services: 92 young people received legal advice on their immigration status, resulting in opening a case. 79 young people benefited from additional advice or support on wider issues that they were facing such as health, housing or education. Outreach workers also provided one-off advice to 180 young people.

People: Of the 92 young people that received legal advice on their immigration status resulting in opening a case, the majority were male; about half were aged 19 to 25 years and a third aged between 26 and 30. The proportion in the UK without legal permission was slightly lower than was the case across the Initiative as a whole. About one third of the young people were from Afghanistan.

Beyond service delivery: The project has contributed from their experience of working with young undocumented migrants to research being carried out by the Public Health Department of Coventry City Council into migrant health. The project was showcased through a Learning Lab event organised by the law centre.

Islington Law Centre

Organisation: Islington Law Centre is a leading law centre in England, with an excellent track record of working with marginalised young people to achieve positive change for individual clients and securing policy and practice change as a result of strategic legal and policy work.

Aims: The idea behind the project was to pilot a specialist, holistic legal service (in immigration, housing, education and social welfare law) for vulnerable and separated children and young people who are undocumented in the UK. Helping them to secure protection, access vital housing and social care provision and commence their journey out of their 'undocumented' status into one where they could rebuild their lives and start to fulfil their potential.

Practice: This new approach for the law centre was underpinned by close collaborative working between members of the team who met regularly formally and informally; a willingness to work across legal boundaries; and the resources for professionals to accompany clients to meetings, to take time to provide support and connect them to other welfare services.

Services: The project team provided legal advice, support and representation related to a young person's immigration, housing and education circumstances. In some cases, the team offered mediation rather than representation to resolve a legal issue.

People: The project provided specialist legal, advocacy and mediation services to 52 children and young people, the majority of whom were aged 16–18. The clients were roughly evenly split between male and female and, like the profile of the initiative as a whole, the majority were in the UK without legal permission.

Beyond service delivery: The project has used casework to inform strategic legal and policy work for changes in the policy and practice that will benefit child and young irregular migrants. The strategic legal and policy programme embedded within the project was able to identify and pursue a number of legal and policy challenges. PROTECT provided formal training (17 law centres in year one, 11 in year two) and second-tier advice to law centres and other organisations working in the child and/or migrant sectors. The team has also intervened to correct misinformation in the public and voluntary sectors about not being legally permitted to assist child and young irregular migrants.

Praxis Community Projects

Organisation: Praxis is a busy centre in East London visited by over 10,000 people each year. It provides advice and support to migrants and refugees from all over the world, as well as a welcoming meeting place for displaced communities.

Aims: This was a pilot project aimed at supporting undocumented young people, including those with

children, to make informed decisions, cope with crisis and plan their futures.

Practice: This project was built on the organisation's commitment and track record in facilitating peer support, as well as providing legal advice and support.

Services: The key elements of the project were: advice and casework for young people and their families on immigration and wider welfare, education and health issues; the development of a peer support group from the advice client base; a training programme for members of the peer support group that would reinforce mutual support and trusting relationships.

People: 228 individuals received information, advice and/or advocacy support to address their legal issues. Because some of those 228 individuals were part of families, the number of people benefiting from this advice was in excess of 300. The 228 young people were roughly evenly split between male and female clients; the majority were aged 19 to 30 although there was a significant number of young people under 18. The great majority were recorded as being in the UK without legal permission. 54 young people who were undocumented or whose status was insecure became a part of Brighter Futures, a self-advocacy group facilitated by the project.

Beyond service delivery: Staff have given presentations in the UK and at Eurochild conference in Milan and PICUM working group in Brussels about the issues facing young people and the ways that Praxis is working with young people to address them. The peer support group, Brighter Futures, has produced and disseminated a suite of materials in documents and on film about the experience of being undocumented and practical measures that can make a difference.

Refugee and Migrant Centre

Organisation: Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) is a community organisation based in Wolverhampton. It has a strong track record of providing community-based support to refugees and migrants in the Black Country and has excellent networks locally and nationally.

Aims: With Supported Options funding, RMC planned to provide holistic legal advice to young undocumented migrants covering their rights in relation to immigration, health and education; and to seek new ways to reach and work with young undocumented migrants that might be reluctant to seek help.

Practice: RMC built on its existing strong networks across the Black Country to build new links with other organisations where young people go and services that they are in touch with. The organisation also tested methods for reaching young people, abandoning those that were not fruitful (Tumblr, dedicated advice line) and continuing to develop those that showed promise (Twitter, Facebook, Sky, broadcast advice session on Kanshi Radio).

Services: Information and advice on rights and entitlements, referrals for short-term funding to relieve destitution, information and advice about voluntary return and reintegration assistance.

People: 181 children and young people received advice and support on immigration status or related welfare issues. Of those 181 clients, virtually all were aged 19 to 30 and were recorded as being in the UK without legal permission. Two thirds were male. An additional 225 young people were provided with information about assisted voluntary return; 55 young irregular migrants received financial assistance from Hope Destitution Fund.

Beyond service delivery: RMC has strong roots and an excellent reputation in the area for its work with migrants in the Black Country. These roots and reputation enable the organisation to continuously develop awareness and understanding of migrants' needs, including young undocumented migrants. This work is diffuse and perhaps slippery to capture, being continuous and often informal.

The Children's Society

Organisation: The Children's Society is a national charity, which directly supports over 50,000 children a year. This direct work is intended to inform their national research, policy work and campaigns.

Aims: The idea was to provide access to quality holistic advice and support for young undocumented migrants aged 13 to 21 in the Greater London area to improve their life chances.

Practice: The approach included a blend of one-to-one advice and support, with group activities that offer young people recreational and social opportunities designed to increase wellbeing and build connections between young people. The latter has also proven useful in strengthening trust between young people and project staff.

Services: The project provides direct advice and support to individual young people, both face-to-face and over the phone. The project also organised group activities, including residential in partnership with other organisations in touch with undocumented young people.

People: 48 young people received individual advice and support. 519 learned more about their rights and entitlements through group work. Of the young people that received advice and support, two-thirds were young men; there were roughly even numbers of 16–18 and 19–30 year olds; and virtually all were in the UK without legal permission.

Beyond service delivery: The project's day-to-day work includes advocating on behalf of their clients with social services for access to services. This is backed by awareness training with 113 local professionals. In relation to national policy and practice, the project contributed case studies and other intelligence to policy work including lobbying being undertaken by their Children's Society colleagues. Working with Islington Law Centre, and through this project, The Children's Society is exploring options for challenging policy in this area.

3.2 Grantholders' goals for the work

Within these three domains, every grantholder needed to continuously reflect and adapt their approach according to changes in multiple contexts: the young person's circumstances; their organisational circumstances (e.g. due to staff changes, funding cuts); local policy and practice; the overall national policy context; new legal judgments; and Home Office practice. However, despite the uncertain and unpredictable nature of their operating environment, our evaluation revealed that grantholders shared the following aspirations for the work that they carried out with funding from the Initiative:

- **To deliver holistic²¹ legal advice and representation** in cases where immigration advice and wider welfare needs (health, housing, safeguarding) were addressed together and where two imperatives are embedded in legal practice: that a young person felt safe (for disclosure of facts relevant to their case) and that their 'belonging' within social networks was documented (for the purposes of building Article 8 cases)²². Within this, grantholders were also committed to keeping cases

²¹ In this context, we understand a 'holistic approach' to mean practices that place the young person at the centre and assemble advice, support and representation around them, depending on their specific needs.

²² Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights provides a *Right to respect for private and family life*. This has been successfully used to build legal cases with young undocumented migrants.

open longer so that young people could cease and then resume contact with a project. They also made advice and representation available to young parents and to migrant communities that appeared unaware of, or lacked trust in, professional organisations.

- **To build and strengthen formal and informal networks** of support around child and irregular migrants, including peer support for self-help. Youth workers supported young people to identify and pursue personal goals in addition to regularising their status; the latter being something that may not be achieved.
- **To create an outreach presence** in places and spaces frequented by child and young irregular migrants, so they could be connected to legal advice and representation through trusted intermediaries (e.g. children's centre workers). This principle of incorporating outreach into legal advice and representation extended to conducting home visits, meeting young people in places where they felt safe and allowing staff more time to build relationships and to look beyond a young person's immigration problem.
- **To build organisational capacity** to '*do the extra stuff*' that young people required, including accompanying them to meetings, brokering relationships with other organisations and drawing on that experience to contribute to public and policy debate about the issues faced by young irregular migrants.

3.3 The young people with whom the six grantholders worked

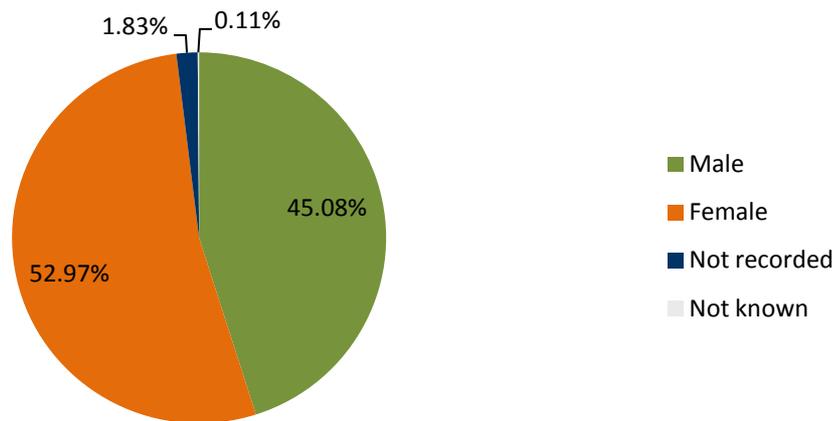
In this section we describe the young people that the six grantholders worked with to provide them with advice, support and advocacy. Below each chart showing aggregated data from across the Initiative, we describe the data that we have used. Each chart is slightly different because of the challenges we faced in aggregating data from across the grantholders, where different age and other categories had been used.

We are not in a position to comment on whether the profiles set out here match what the grantholders expected at the outset of the Initiative for two reasons. First, there is no reliable data on the projects' reflections about the aggregated compositions of the people they served. Second, at a national and European level, data on gender, age and country of origin of undocumented people is, at best, vague and patchy; this means it can't be used as a baseline for comparing what the projects came across.

3.3.1 Gender

Young people engaged by the projects were roughly evenly split between young men and young women. The slightly higher proportion of young women may be attributed to the high number of young parents with whom the projects worked.

Figure 3: Gender of individuals worked with during Phase One

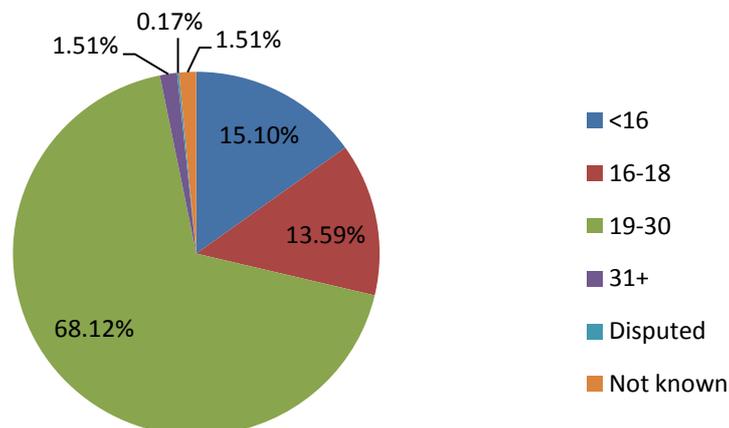


Note: Based on 874 individuals. Praxis and Coram CLC recorded the number of cases (included in this chart) and the total number of beneficiaries of a case where they worked with a whole family. If we included all beneficiaries, this would add more than 550 to the total number of individuals helped by projects.

3.3.2 Age

The majority of clients were aged between 19 and 30, but a significant minority were very young, with some aged below 16. The tiny number of young people over the age of 30 (the maximum target age for this project) were already being supported by the grantholder prior to receiving this grant.

Figure 4: Age of individuals worked with during Phase One



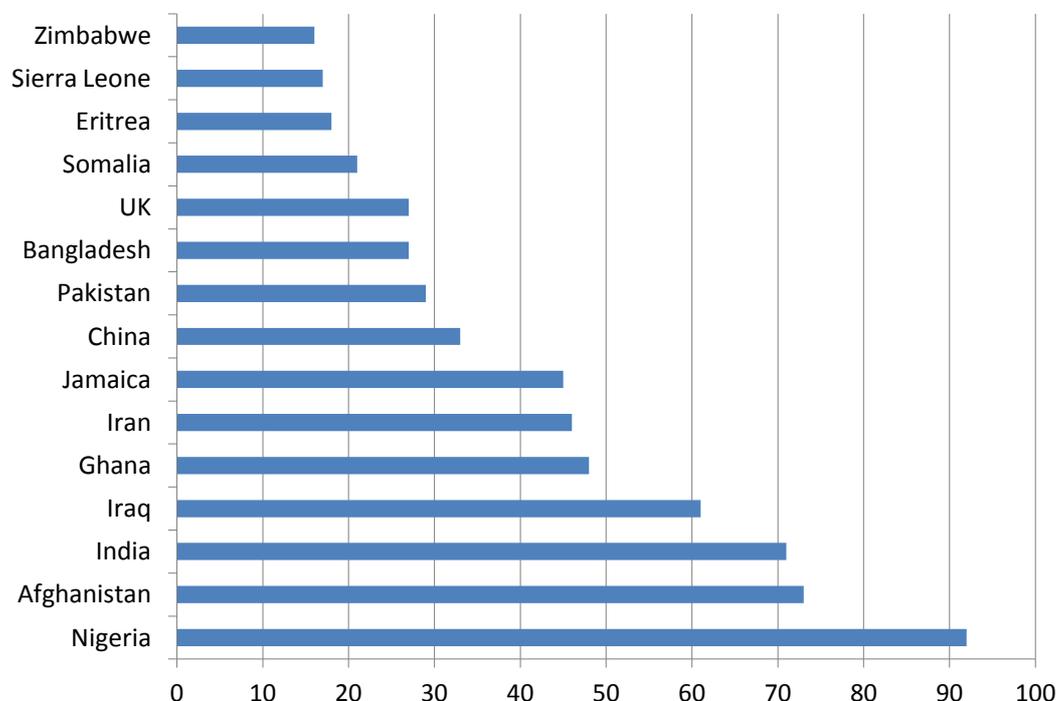
Note: Based on 596 individuals. We have excluded data collected from Coram CLC because the way age is recorded differs and the project mainly worked with whole families rather than individuals.

3.3.3 Country of origin

Figure 5 shows that the highest numbers of young people gave as their country of origin Nigeria, Afghanistan or India. These account for about a quarter of all the young people that

the grantholders worked with. These figures exclude the 59 Afghan males engaged by Refugee Support Network as part of a project specifically focused on return (see Section 6).

Figure 5: Top 15 countries of origin of individuals worked with during Phase One



Notes: At the outset, the Foundations made a decision to accept that grantholders would work with some European Economic Area (EEA) nationals, noting that they are subject to a different legal framework from the one affecting child and young irregular migrants. Most grantholders used 'country of origin' to describe this data.

3.3.4 Family status

We have been unable to create summary tables out of the data about family status because the data supplied by grantholders was too inconsistent to be meaningful when aggregated or disaggregated. Instead, we summarise what we have learned about the kinds of households with which the six grantholders work and then illustrate this with two examples.

Four of the grantholders (PROTECT, CLC, RMC, TCS) worked with clients who were mainly young people aged up to 30 living within a wider family or alone. Coram CLC worked predominantly with adults, including young adults, who were pregnant or had one child or more. Finally, Praxis had the most varied client group in this respect, with two-thirds being young parents.

Coram CLC: Of the 278 cases the project worked with (noting that most cases relate to one or more members of the same household), one in 10 were children and young people, while nine in 10 were adults who were pregnant or had one or more children.

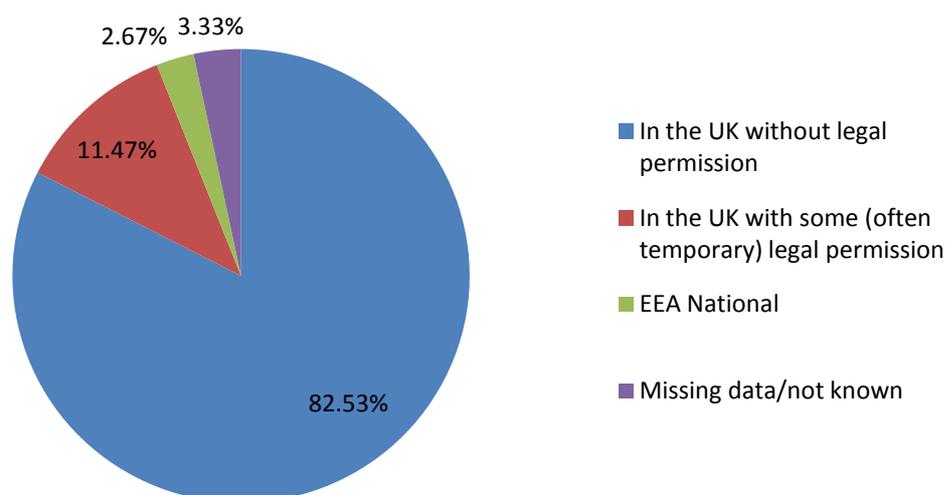
PROTECT worked with 49 children and young people, roughly evenly split between accompanied (20) and unaccompanied (23), with small numbers in other categories.

3.3.5 Immigration status

In this report, by clients' immigration status we mean their technical legal status at the time when they first contacted the project. Figure 6 shows that the majority of clients were *'in the UK without legal permission'*, e.g. having overstayed a visa or been refused asylum. A significant minority were *'in the UK with some form of legal permission'*, but often this permission was temporary because the young person's status was subject to further decisions by the Home Office which might remove that permission.

Within this snapshot, we also found that there were a wide variety of *'immigration issues'* that children and young people presented to the Supported Options Initiative grantholders. A third of young people's main recorded issue was that they had overstayed their visa; one-fifth had been refused asylum. Grantholders also told us they worked with clients facing family law issues, trafficking issues and young people who were born in the UK. Figure 6 concentrates on immigration status; see Appendix A for a table setting out the immigration issues reported to us.

Figure 6: Immigration status of young people at first contact with projects



Notes: *In the UK without legal permission* includes people who have overstayed a visa or have been refused asylum. *Missing data/not known* means that, for the purposes of compiling this figure, data is missing; it does not necessarily mean that the grantholder had not recorded information relevant to the particular case. Coram CLC supplied data for both Years 1 and 2, but only data for Year 2 could be reconciled with the categories in this figure.

3.4 Activities

Grantholders engaged in a variety of activities. The precise nature of support offered by each project varied and affected the number of young people with whom they were able to engage. While some grantholders worked with high numbers of children and young people offering them advice and information, others worked with comparatively fewer young people providing intensive, often long-term support including the provision or procurement of legal representation. For an overview of each project's work, see Table 1 on page 16

below. Below we describe how the projects made contact with young people and summarise the types of activities that they initiated.

3.4.1 Summary of how projects reached and made contact with young people

How to be safely visible was a dilemma facing both young people and the organisations that wanted to advise and support them. Grantholders were sensitive to this issue. For example, they avoided giving their project a name that made explicit their focus on irregular status and instead used a range of strategies to make themselves visible to young people.

We discerned four broad approaches to reaching and making contact with children and young people which we have summarised here. Grantholders used a combination of these in order to be flexible and responsive to different kinds of need. The project descriptions in Section 3.1 above include examples of these approaches.

'There is no set formula for how to engage with these families – it's just about establishing a stable presence. They can really lack confidence, so we focus on getting information out to where it's needed, doing home visits if we need to.'

Approach 1: Presence

Grantholders maintained a stable presence in mainstream settings (i.e. not immigration) such as youth clubs or children centres, as well as meeting people in cafés or at home where they would be comfortable.

Approach 2: Word of mouth

Grantholders reported significant numbers of young people getting in touch because they had heard about the service from *'someone in my children's home'*, *'someone I see at the park'* or *'someone I know and trust'*, such as a schoolteacher.

Approach 3: Networks

Grantholders built relationships with professionals in health and social welfare organisations across the public and voluntary sectors. This had paid off, with young people often referred or signposted to projects by the last worker they had seen (e.g. a Connexions adviser, a midwife) often at a point of such desperation that they were willing to try anything: *'Things had turned from bad to worse, I was worrying day and night.'*

Approach 4: Materials

Grantholders described distributing leaflets and materials *'by stealth'*²³ (e.g. on a table of food, on a post on the way into a youth club) where they could be collected discreetly. These materials enabled the projects to make themselves visible to young people, and to get their materials into the hands of the young people who might need them.

²³ See for example, leaflets on 'hot topics' produced by Young Migrant Rights here <http://covlaw.org.uk/YMR/leaflets.html>

3.4.2 Summary of grantholders' activities

In Table 1 below we set out grantholders' activities. They can be summarised as follows:

- One-off information and advice delivered in multiple, local, social welfare and legal advice settings to maximise reach
- Legal advice, advocacy and representation delivered holistically with attention paid to wider welfare and support
- Peer support through group work, facilitated by experienced youth workers with immigration advice training and experience
- Awareness-raising about rights and entitlements for legal and welfare professionals.

Table 1 Overview of six grantholders' work over two years with children, young people and the professionals that engage with them

Name of project	Project aims	Main client group	Overview of activity
The Children's Society	To provide access to quality holistic advice and support for young undocumented migrants aged 13–21 in the Greater London area to improve their life chances	Young people aged 13–21 in the Greater London area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48 young people received holistic advice and support through one-to-one case work • 519 young people took part in group work designed to raise awareness about rights and entitlements • 113 professionals took part in awareness training
Coram Children's Legal Centre	To provide legal advice and outreach to families through children's centres, schools and local organisations, maximising reach	Children, young people and parents with irregular immigration status living in the Greater London area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 278 cases (with over 800 beneficiaries) received immigration advice and support • 66 professionals took part in training to improve awareness and understanding of the issues and how to address them
Young Migrants' Rights, Coventry Law Centre	To provide legal advice and outreach to local migrant communities working through locally based community connectors	Children and young people up to 30 years with irregular immigration status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 92 young people received legal advice resulting in opening a case • 79 young people benefited from some form of additional advice/support via Grapevine and community connectors • 180 cases where outreach workers provided one-off advice
PROTECT, Islington Law Centre	To create a multi-disciplinary legal unit, provide a holistic legal service, along with a strategic legal and policy programme	Children and young people up to 30 years with irregular immigration status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52 cases received holistic legal advice and representation • 17 and 11 law centres respectively attended training sessions in years 1 and 2

Refugee and Migrant Centre	To provide legal advice and support on regularisation, entitlement and assisted voluntary return	Children and young people up to 30 years with irregular immigration status in the Black Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 181 children and young people received advice and support on immigration status or related welfare issues • 225 young people were provided with information about assisted voluntary return • 55 young irregular migrants received financial assistance from Hope Destitution Fund
Right to Dream, Praxis Community Projects	To provide advice and casework support, facilitated peer support, training, personal development and youth-led activities	Undocumented young people, including those with children, in London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 228 cases (with over 300 beneficiaries) have received information, advice and/or advocacy support • 54 young people who are undocumented (31) or whose status is insecure became a part of Brighter Futures, a self-advocacy group

Note: PROTECT supplied data to the evaluators for 49 cases. In their final report to the Foundations (supplied at a later date) three further cases were included, hence a total of 52.

3.5 Distinctive features of the work carried out by the six grantholders

Building on our findings (see Sections 3.1–3.4), we were able to identify six distinctive features of the work that the six grantholders carried out.

Feature 1: A combination of approaches is needed to reach young people

A common delivery challenge for grantholders was how to reach young people due to barriers of trust. In Section 3.4.1 we summarised how grantholders made contact with young people through: maintaining a stable presence in mainstream (i.e. non immigration) settings; word of mouth resulting from the relationships of trust they built with young people and local community groups; referrals and signposting by professionals as a result of the relationships they have built with them; and visible, written materials distributed widely.

While some young people felt, or were said to be, confident about approaching a project (often because it was already known to them through outreach or long-standing reputation), many others were described or described themselves as fearful, anxious and sometimes sceptical or hostile on account of their wider problems or worries and not having found help in other organisations that they had previously approached. Grantholders reported young people presenting for help with already complex legal cases who were also: afraid; without representation; homeless or at risk of homelessness; at risk of emotional or sexual abuse; mentally or physically unwell; and destitute. Their first impressions of the project could either encourage them or could put them off.

‘I was really scared, nervous. It is the first time in my life I’ve really had to deal with anything proper serious on my own, like for myself.’ (Young person)

‘I only came to see you [law centre] because my midwife had told me to go to you. I had been to so many places and no one had helped me and so I had given up. So when I first met you [immigration lawyer], I was so upset because I did not think she could help me. I was frustrated and rude to her. I wasn’t being very nice. She reassured me, more than anyone else. She didn’t turn me away because I was being horrible – she made me feel safe. She cared about me and what happened to me.’ (Young person)

Some young people commented on features of the projects that had (or had not) inspired trust and confidence. They emphasised the importance of responding quickly when a young person gets in touch; and of demonstrating trustworthiness through small acts of kindness, treating people well and not keeping them waiting.

Feature 2: Working across sector, professional and organisational boundaries is essential

Young people often find themselves falling between services that work in silos and lack awareness of their particular needs. Grantholders drew in people, groups and organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors to help young people. Grantholders then became the ‘interface’ between a young person and the multiple organisations with which they needed to engage. These included:

- **Health practitioners** in the public sector including GPs, community psychiatric nurses and psychiatrists, as well as health practitioners based in voluntary and community sector organisations, some of which specialise in supporting refugees.

- **Refugee organisations** such as the Refugee Council or Refugee Action and specialist organisations working with trafficked young people, women and girls, lesbians and gay men.
- **Social housing providers** (local authority and housing association), **statutory bodies** with a responsibility for securing accommodation (social services departments) and **voluntary sector accommodation providers**, mainly working with single and young single homeless people.
- **Social services authorities** with a responsibility for the welfare of children and looked-after young people; **organisations outside the public sector** that provide family support and immediate relief to people who are destitute.

Feature 3: Time for building trust with young people and the places where they go is part of the project plan, part of the job

All the grantholders emphasised how long it can take to build trust with a young person: *'This kind of project takes time to build trust. Young people take time to open up and trust workers – they test you with questions and shock you to see if you will still be there.'* This was not news to grantholders, but the Initiative funding made it possible to build this into the project and the staff roles. What they learned in Phase One, however, was that it also takes a considerable amount of time to build trust and credibility with professionals working in places and spaces where young people go. Organisations that already had a prominent and long-standing local presence in their community (e.g. Praxis, RMC) may have had a head start in this respect.

Feature 4: Flexible and responsive communication with young people

Young people commented on the difference between the way projects communicated with them and other organisations with which they had been in touch. Particular features included text messaging because it was cheap; and being able to ring a direct line or mobile and get straight through to the person they wanted to contact.

'It was actions that made a difference. It was when we called and our calls were answered and when someone from your office called us that I started to think that you were different. First thing I noticed is that you don't keep me waiting for hours. 10–15 minutes wait is normal, but 1–2 hours is not right.' (Young person)

These features emerged as more important to young people than other kinds of social media or digital technology:

'We have a Facebook account and we do tweet, but young people generally want to phone and for you to pick up the phone yourself.'

Feature 5: Practitioners are willing and able to travel, as one way to be 'on their side and by their side'

Participants said it was significant that practitioners were willing and able to travel to meet young people in or near their accommodation, and to accompany them to meetings and appointments. In a minority of projects, this extended to accompanying young people to explore local facilities and amenities. This practice helped to build trust and confidence among young people who faced complex legal cases and were fearful of being detained.

'I felt more comfortable in court as you were there and so was [personal adviser]. When I went to court two years ago, I was by myself and I was a bit scared.' (Young person)

A project visited a pregnant young woman in her accommodation after she had been placed there by the local authority to check that it was suitable for her needs. The young woman really appreciated this.

'After two weeks [case worker] called me and she offered to come and see me at my flat. I was very impressed by that, because normally people ask you go and meet them at their office but I couldn't afford travelling. The fact she came to the house made a big difference because she saw I was living in poor conditions. When she contacted social services, I started seeing changes after just one week.' (Young person)

Feature 6: Persistence

In the face of a client group that is sometimes disengaged from their advisers, and confronted by a system where repeated 'failure' was ingrained, the ability and willingness to persist was key. An absolutely critical feature of these grantholders was a tenacious, yet sensitive, pursuit of the facts and the law in order to understand the precise nature of each young person's rights and entitlements, and to make the best possible decisions with them about how those were pursued.

'[Name] is one of the most vulnerable young people I have ever worked with. She found it incredibly hard to express her feelings and had huge issues around trust when she came into contact with the project. It took a lot of time to engage her with our service. She would often disengage entirely. Another lawyer would have closed her file due to lack of contact. We didn't give up on her.' (Practitioner)

Advisers handled daily dilemmas and puzzles because of the interdependence of different parts of the law as they affect child and young irregular migrants. One grantholder observed that the only way of working within and around restrictive government policies (legal aid cessation, fees, Home Office processes) was to look for areas where you could make gains (e.g. housing advice) and work on these. Within the restrictions that workers experienced, advice became funnelled, focusing on mining opportunities as they arose and avoiding barriers where change was unlikely. They calibrated their advances with care, although some found this frustrating, feeling that they were sometimes only dealing with symptoms, not causes.

'It is frustrating to have to advise some clients that there are few legal routes open to them, and inaction is sometimes the only "good" option. For example, someone with HIV positive status and a weak asylum claim who would certainly be returned if the Home Office focused on a new application. [It is] in her best interests to take no action.' (Practitioner)

These points are illustrated in the following example from a case handled by one of the grantholders.

Establishing that a young woman did have rights and entitlements after they had been withheld: This young woman was referred to the local authority homelessness team for support, but was turned away because she had problems with her immigration status and had no recourse to public funds. Following legal intervention from the project, it transpired that the local authority had incorrectly identified her undocumented status. Through investigations with the local community centre and her British family, the project learnt that the young woman had arrived into the UK as a small child and had been granted indefinite leave to enter the UK to join her elder sister. Although it was a confusing form of status in terms of rights and entitlements, the project team were able to set out the legal basis for the grant of status and the rights and entitlements that flowed from it. The local authority agreed that she was eligible for relevant support and the project assisted her in accessing benefits.

Section 4: Other work initiated by the Foundations

4.1 Introduction

So far, this report has concentrated mainly on work carried out through grants awarded from the outset as part of the Supported Options Initiative. We turn now to other work initiated by the Foundations, whether through grantmaking, commissioning or convening.

The findings presented here are based on data collected through: reviews of Initiative documents provided by the Coordinator; interviews with Initiative players operating at a national level; site visits to grantholders; and the proceedings of learning community meetings

The Foundations allocated a proportion of the Initiative's resources to be able to spot and respond to issues and opportunities affecting young people and the organisations that worked with them, and to experiment with alternative means of supporting young people.

Overall, this approach paid off and enabled the Initiative to flex with the large cuts brought about by policy changes it saw. Some of the work initiated by the Foundations was of direct benefit to the Initiative's aims by, for example, enhancing grantholders understanding of the law or enabling them to extend their work. We discuss these below. Other work initiated by the Foundations, was thought to have produced some indirect benefits (new relationships, exposure to new ideas) but had not produced the direct benefits envisaged. For example, the Foundations commissioned On Road Media to explore the potential of social media and digital technology to meet the advice needs of young people (Undoc Camp).

4.2 Five areas of work

In this section we have chosen to concentrate on five areas of the Initiative's work that the Initiative funders and grantholders appeared to value most and that also appeared to gain some traction within the migrant sector.

Area 1: Policy research into routes to regularisation

Nadine Finch, a barrister from Garden Court Chamber, was commissioned to carry out policy research into the routes to regularisation in response to discussions with grantholders about the shifting legal context. The research, which feeds into additional grants made by the

Initiative and is described above, was initially shared and discussed with grantholders during a Supported Options Initiative practitioner meeting in December 2012. It was published in April 2013.²⁴

Area 2: New grants to support increased citizenship registration

The Foundations made three grants to support increased citizenship registration. The issue of citizenship registration was identified by funders through the legal work commissioned by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as being one where the Foundations could have an impact and prevent worse, more expensive problems from occurring down the line. Grants were made to:

- Ealing Law Centre, for its project for the registration of British citizens
- TCS, to document the need for vulnerable children to have access to free legal representation on immigration matters
- SWARM, to develop prototype alternative routes for young people to access advice on regularisation and affordable micro finance for associated legal costs.

Ealing Law Centre: Project for the registration of children as British citizens (PRCBC)

Organisation: Ealing Law Centre provides free specialist legal advice and representation for those in need in the London Borough of Ealing and beyond.

Aims: To support the increase in the number of children and young adults who register as British citizens.

Practice: The project is hosted by Ealing Law Centre and is made possible through a small grant from Unbound Philanthropy and through the support of qualified volunteers.

Services: Monthly Saturday surgery slots for vulnerable children and young adults who are destitute or have very limited income and have complex cases; legal casework for vulnerable children and young adults.

Beyond service delivery: The project also trains others working with these children and young people; works to find ways to address the affordability of the application registration fee; and works to get the word out about the possibility of registration for eligible children and young adults.

The work is ongoing.

SWARM Partnership LLP

Organisation: This young organisation founded in 2013 exists to design, prototype and grow solutions to pressing social and environmental challenges including social justice.

Aims: To enable young undocumented migrants to access advice and affordable funding for the costs of getting citizenship.

Practice: The work has been divided into five stages: framing (including talking with experts); rapid prototyping; user feedback and refinement; pilot planning and business planning; prototype build and pilot delivery.

The work is ongoing.

²⁴ Finch, N. (2013) *Routes to regularisation for people without legal status in the UK*. Available online at www.phf.org.uk/news.asp?id=1921

Area 3: Training about Article 8 for non-legal practitioners

Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights provides a right to respect for private and family life.

The Foundations commissioned training from a legal practitioner after being made aware that:

- Article 8 would be of growing significance, given legal and immigration policy changes
- It was not well understood among practitioners, such as youth workers supporting these young people
- With training, these practitioners could be useful in helping gather the evidence needed to support cases being brought under Article 8.

Area 4: Convening stakeholders around youth movements in the U.S.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation hosted an evening with Carlos Saveedra about the DREAMers movement, which is *'an immigrant youth-led organisation who set out to organise and advocate for the dignity and fair treatment of immigrant youth and families, regardless of immigration status'*. The purpose of the event was to draw on learning from the U.S., particularly around young people self-organising and the strategic input of funders to this. Facilitated in part by the relationship with Unbound Philanthropy, which is a U.S. based funder, the event was attended by funders, practitioners and activists, including young people involved in Supported Options projects.²⁵

Area 5: Convening grantholders for mutual support and learning

The Foundations hosted six learning community meetings, where grantholders met to update one another about their work and the challenges they were facing as well and to share success. Grantholders reported feeling less isolated in their work and reassured that the difficulties they faced were not unusual. Initially, the meetings focused mainly on legal aid changes affecting grantholders and provided an opportunity to discuss likely and actual impact. A meeting where Nadine Finch presented and then discussed her work on routes to regularisation was highly valued by grantholders for being practically useful and relevant to their work.

²⁵ *Film: Carlos Saveedra* is published by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Barrow Cadbury Trust and available online at www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=1954 [Last downloaded 10 October 2014].

Section 5: Benefits and achievements

In this section we begin by setting out our key findings about outcomes for young people, before considering outcomes for the six grantholders, based on the evaluation data available to us. We conclude by highlighting two outcomes for policy and practice.

5.1 Outcomes for young people

Work of value and importance has taken place directly with child and young people irregular migrants. Based on our evaluation fieldwork, we can identify five outcomes for young people from the work carried out by the six grantholders:

- Obtaining legal representation
- Alleviating destitution
- Securing emergency accommodation
- Navigating barriers to education
- Building social networks.

Each of these is addressed in turn below. We note here that the evaluation does not report on grantholders' attention to children and young people's physical and mental health, although we have sufficient data to confidently state that projects made referrals and were attentive and considerate of clients' health issues.

Outcome 1: Obtaining legal representation

Grantholders explained that they had to work hard to secure legal representation to address young people's immigration problems, but they had managed to do so for most of their clients by using several strategies, including:

- Finding lawyers willing to offer *pro bono* advice and representation
- Legal aid
- Using Supported Options funding to cover some or all of the costs.

Table 2: Representation outcomes in five grant funded projects

Project	Representation outcomes
The Children's Society	Good quality representation was found for all 36 young people that needed it and all but one had been legally aided, pro bono or paid for by the local authority.
Young Migrants Rights (Coventry Law Centre and Grapevine)	55 cases were being fully funded by SOI (and not legally aided). Two cases had mixed funding: legal aid and SOI.
Coram Children's Legal Centre	30 cases out of 154 were referred to immigration solicitors (including pro bono, legal aid and private) with further referrals to other forms of legal and welfare support. The project also supported 14 clients to deal with an existing solicitor. CCLC's own Legal Practice Unit provided representation for 9 cases.
Right to Dream, Praxis Community Projects	Of the 228 cases, 79 cases received support with their immigration case. The project found pro bono immigration solicitors for 18 of these cases.
Protect (Islington Law Centre)	52 cases have received representation.

We understand that in Phase Two further work will be carried out to develop *pro bono* options and to think about alternative means of financing legal representation.

Grantholders also referred to the importance of the quality of legal representation. Within their legal advice and representation work, they said that they had spent a considerable amount of time correcting misinformation that young people had been given about their legal rights and entitlements, and addressing their misapprehensions or fears about challenging legal decisions or poor practice: *'I thought because I had no status I had no rights to complain about social services.'* (Young person)

The TCS team had reservations about the quality of work of a legal aid solicitor already engaged to represent a young client. Islington Law Centre examined the case and identified a number of avenues that could be explored, but there were insufficient grounds to merit changing solicitors for legal aid reasons. So the TCS case worker liaised with both the solicitor who was representing the young person and Islington Law Centre, who advised the case worker so that she could *'put pressure on the representatives to do the best job possible'*.

Another young person summarised the difference between previous experiences of representation and representation under the Supported Options Initiative:

'I was going through things with my previous solicitor, who was lying to me and saying that I was not eligible for legal aid. My previous lawyer didn't do anything for a year. The lawyer they [SOI project] found me helped me put in a fresh claim in just three months and my life changed completely. My new lawyer educated me in understanding everything about my case. I used to sign on every week, now I sign every two weeks and when I go and sign I am not scared like I used to be. I have always had problems with lawyers, I always felt uncomfortable and scared but now I feel like I can really open up with her. She always reminds me that she is working FOR me.' (Young person)

Outcome 2: Alleviating destitution

Destitute young people presented with extremely complex legal cases; they had no money to pay transport costs for attending immigration and related meetings or interviews to address their case. Both the young people and the project workers reported that a lack of food and shelter and the attendant difficulties with keeping track of clothes and personal possessions made concentrating on their complex and worrying legal position very difficult.

As a result, the projects sought to address urgent practical needs before being able to fully engage with the legal case. Supported Options projects provided, or found elsewhere, emergency money, food or clothing. Sources of such crisis support included The Buttle Trust, St Martins in the Fields in London and RMC's own Hope Destitution Fund.

'I couldn't do anything before. My life was nowhere. I had nowhere to live and sometimes I didn't have anything to eat. I don't have to worry about those things anymore.' (Young person)

The **Hope Destitution Fund** assists destitute asylum-seekers who are barred from *'recourse to public funds'*. Over two years, 55 young irregular migrants received financial assistance from the fund after being referred by the RMC. Financial support for successful applicants in 2013-14 was £40 every fortnight for a limited time period.

In the case of young people in detention, phone credit became an essential element of a project's emergency intervention, because it ensured that the young person continued to be in touch with them/their legal representative.

Travel costs were a major barrier for young people who needed to get around to attend appointments, seek help and, where available, travel to new opportunities. Projects were able to reimburse some travel costs, especially in an emergency, and connect young people to charities that could help them in the longer term. They also:

- Negotiated with Transport for London to waive fines and penalty fares
- Supported a young man to set up a free bike project for other young migrants
- Persuaded social services to pay for a young person's transport costs during their first week at college and to sign the relevant forms for another young woman to obtain an Oyster card.

Having found ways to tackle a young person's immediate crisis, projects then worked on legal challenges or the local policy decisions that had left a young person destitute, so that their long-term prospects could be improved. This included applying for welfare benefits or challenging their withdrawal, and challenging social services decisions.

Outcome 3: Securing emergency accommodation

Young people who were homeless or at immediate risk of becoming homeless (e.g. as a result of eviction or relationship breakdown) were found suitable emergency or supported accommodation after coming into contact with Supported Options projects. This also meant that they were removed from unsafe or risky situations where they were, or were at risk of being, subject to sexual exploitation or that they ceased relying on friends or family ('sofa surfing').

Young people already living in unsuitable or poor-quality accommodation were also assisted. Examples include contacting the local authority about an infestation; getting a young mum reinstated on Homefinders; and addressing relevant immigration issues in order for all family members to be accommodated in the same place.

Grantholders' legal interventions secured positive outcomes such as ensuring that a young person was housed by social services. But they were not always successful. One project reported failing to prevent an eviction but then managing to secure rehousing with support. Another was unable to reverse an eviction but held the local authority to account when, in the process of evicting the family, they failed to return the family's possessions (the son '*slept in my school uniform for a week*').

'I got help with my house, with sorting out my money with the council and then when I had mice and damp – so many things I got help with. When I told [the housing lawyer] about an issue she would straight away just contact them and resolve the issue with the council. I got a lot of help from all the team.' (Young person)

Most grantholders' strategies for addressing their clients' accommodation needs were to access existing emergency accommodation and to hold social services to their responsibilities. However, one grantholder's organisation had already negotiated a limited number of bed spaces in shared accommodation through a local social housing provider and

was interested in shifting to a more strategic overall approach to procuring emergency and affordable accommodation for their clients.

Praxis' Temporary Homes supports vulnerable homeless migrant individuals and families with immigration support needs and/or 'no recourse to public funds' from outside the European Union. Emergency accommodation is provided as a means to resolve immigration issues and thereby unlock housing pathways.²⁶

Outcome 4: Navigating barriers to education

Some of the young people that approached Supported Options projects had only discovered that they were undocumented when, at age 16, they applied for further education. The projects supported these young people to communicate with further education colleges about their circumstances and advised them about their status. They also supported child and young irregular migrants to address other barriers to their education, e.g.:

- Finding charities that would pay for reading glasses, school uniform, a laptop or other equipment to enable homework/coursework
- Connecting young people to a university bursary programme, helping them fill out UCAS forms, paying application costs to access university education
- Negotiating with schools and colleges to provide or reinstate school places, often successfully.

'The first thing was that [project worker] went with us to the immigration solicitor. Then she helped with getting a place at my old school, as when I went there by myself, they just told me they couldn't help me. Also, I had an interview at another school, and my mum and I were worried that they might call the Home Office. So [project worker] came with me and she talked to them. Also, she got me money for a school uniform as the school said I couldn't start if I didn't have it.' (Young person)

Outcome 5: Building social networks

Building young people's social networks was a critical feature of this Initiative, and below we discuss how the projects approached this through:

- Connecting young people to activities and local facilities or amenities
- Connecting young people to their peers and other youth networks
- Reconnecting young people to their family networks
- Making available opportunities for young people to find a voice.

Grantholders organised social, leisure and other activities (e.g. trips and sports) for child and young irregular migrants. They also identified local facilities, amenities and activities for young people to join and where they could renew or take up personal interests (e.g. library, dance classes, a dressmaking course), as well as connecting their clients into networks of young people facing similar immigration issues (e.g. Brighter Futures self-advocacy group, Refugee Youth, UK Lesbian and Gay Immigration Group).

²⁶ Read more about the Temporary Homes scheme online at www.praxis.org.uk/news-page-6.html#26 [Last accessed 18 October 2014]

'When I told [name of worker] everything, she told me about another group based on the fact that I've been trafficked from Nigeria and I suffered a lot. And we [worker and young person] both went there together to show me the place and meet the people.' (Young person)

'At the time I was coming to [project], I was waiting for a decision on my application to the Home Office concerning my status in the UK. I attended [self-advocacy group] once a week, where I got advice and support from the advisors and sometimes friends I have made there. This was really important as I had no one else to speak to about these issues, so it was good to get advice from people who were experienced in this and also people in the same situation.' (Young person)

Grantholders reported that young people often turned down such opportunities initially; yet they kept the door open in two important ways. First, by keeping the young person's case open, and second, by maintaining such opportunities until a young person wanted and felt able to take them up: *'We've seen where [dance] classes are on offer, but I am not ready, want to wait a little.'* (Young person)

For some young people, building networks also meant reconnecting them with family; possibly because they had been separated from them as a result of movement, but in many instances because they had been unable to find suitable accommodation in which to live together. Examples given by grantholders included: finding a way for two siblings to remain together; advocacy on behalf of a young person to have their care arrangements reviewed; or making representations to National Asylum Support Service to provide accommodation that was suitable for a whole family who had been forced to live apart.

CLC has trialled different ways to connect child and young irregular migrants to people and places locally in order to meet their welfare needs, connect to legal advice and representation and discover (or get back to) their personal interests. CLC understood their work connecting young people to people, groups and services as well as amenities locally as being about supporting survival where a positive legal outcome was unlikely, as well as supporting future plans. They talked about connecting young people to free food sources, help with clothes and emergency accommodation as being a part of giving them *'the information to survive'*. Of a woman and child who were street homeless, and now have a network, the project said: *'with the more robust circles of support we've already built, we don't have so much involvement [with them]'*.

5.2 Outcomes for organisations

Grantholders of the Supported Options Initiative were experienced practitioners with a track record in their area of expertise. This was a highly reflective and thoughtful cohort of grantholders who brought their experience (including well-informed policy positions) to bear on the Initiative's aims. As such, the Initiative built on the firm foundations of organisations that were already well respected among their sector peers and locally rooted to reach child and young irregular migrants who might not previously have accessed their services.

Grantholders identified ways in which they had further developed or refined their practice during Phase One of the Initiative. These can be considered in relation to:

- Organisational practice (holistic approach, outreach)
- Organisational strategy.

5.2.1 Organisational practice

Grantholders said that organisational practice had changed in important ways in relation to:

- Holistic approach
- Outreach work.

Holistic approach

Grantholders spent two years developing and refining a holistic approach to supporting child and young irregular migrants. By using the term holistic, we refer to practices that place the young person at the centre and assemble advice, support and representation around them, depending on their individual needs. Managers and practitioners at Islington Law Centre and CLC, in particular, said that they had made significant changes to their practice in order to work more holistically. For example, legal practitioners with different areas of expertise (e.g. housing, immigration, education) had begun to work on cases in pairs and teams according to the young person's needs, and addressing welfare requirements had become a legitimate part of their work.

'The niche is provision of holistic advice. It's really good because you can draw on all your knowledge to advise a client – as we're not under [legal] contract and we can refer them onto the necessary organisations and help push referrals through. We are able to mediate the process for them. There are challenges to this, though, as it is not easy to know about the full breadth of issues and you need to be clear where your boundaries are. We find it very helpful to have the family team next door to our office.' (Practitioner)

'It's a really great feeling working in this way. Previously, legal aid funding made work more like a machine, but now I can properly talk to people, ask them "What do you want?"' (Practitioner)

'Working in this way has made me a better lawyer, thinking more creatively and coming up with different legal solutions.' (Practitioner)

PROTECT is based at Islington Law Centre. The project's aim was *'to establish, develop and pilot a specialist holistic legal service model (in immigration, housing, education and social welfare law) for vulnerable and separated children and young people who are undocumented in the UK.'* The project team described the benefits of being able to *'turn off my litigation head'* and concentrate on assessing the legal and other interventions that would be in the best interests of each young person that they saw. This led to the project undertaking a wider variety of actions than might otherwise have been the case, ranging from strategic legal work, through mediation to advice against taking legal action altogether.

This way of working is being built into future funding bids by at least one grantholder and senior staff members are considering where else the approach might be applied internally.

Young Migrants Rights is delivered jointly by CLC and Grapevine and both organisations feel that their practice has been changed since they began developing and delivering this project together. Grapevine has discovered that their asset-based approach to supporting people with learning disabilities (by developing local networks of support that concentrate on what these young people bring rather than what they lack) can be

successfully applied to other groups whose needs and circumstances are complex. Since commencing work on this project, the organisation has changed its charitable objects so that in future they can work with anyone in need of care and assistance.

Outreach work

Grantholders said that outreach had proved useful and several had already begun to integrate this into their practice. For example, Coram CLC is planning to integrate the idea of maintaining a consistent presence in some community-based services such as children's centres.

Whilst outreach is a common feature of some welfare services, for some of the grantholders providing legal services in this way was new or unusual:

'We hadn't done outreach before and it's quite unusual to get lawyers out there.' (SOI project practitioner)

Grantholders also commented on the way they have to constantly reinvent their approach to outreach in order to respond to shifts in people, place and policy. For example:

- Making spaces and times available to women or girls only, to include women whose husbands are resistant to them going out alone or for girls who are uncomfortable in a mixed group.
- Keeping risk assessments under permanent review as new issues arise, e.g. deciding where to meet a trafficked young person who does not want to come to the project or maintaining contact with a young person at risk of domestic violence or abuse.

The role of children's centres in Coram's work: Coram CLC has *'received many referrals in the course of our outreach project from children's centre staff. From our experience, children's centre staff members tend to be well trusted within the local community and families often turn to them at a time of crisis. In addition, many families have come to our outreach sessions having seen our promotional material in the centre, or having heard about the service through friends. We offer frequent appointment slots in children's centres, as well as a number of drop-ins.'*²⁷

5.2.2 Organisational strategy

During the Initiative, all the grantholder organisations went through changes associated with the challenging policy and funding environment in which they work. In many respects, they were reacting to external pressures and change, but we also identified ways in which the grantholders were able to be proactive about how their organisation works. They felt that they had made progress in the following ways:

- Greater internal awareness and understanding of the needs and issues around working with child and young irregular migrants and why their organisation might need to engage with them.

²⁷ Coram Children's Legal Centre (2013) *Growing up in a hostile environment: The rights of undocumented migrant children in the UK*. London: CCLC. Available online at: www.childrenslegalcentre.com/userfiles/Hostile_Environment_Full_Report_Final.pdf [Last accessed 22 October 2014].

- Sharpened responses to issues arising from the needs of this group, e.g. Praxis staff felt that they had become *'more defined'* in their response to housing issues.
- Increased and deepened partnerships with public and voluntary sector organisations locally. Grantholders said that relationships often began through *'one-way'* referrals from the Supported Options project to another organisation. But, over time, some of these relationships had become *'two-way'*, with other organisations approaching the project about child and young irregular migrants.

5.3 Outcomes for policy and practice

At the outset of the Initiative, any time available for policy work centred on the complex and considerable changes to the legal system and how they would affect not only child and young irregular migrants, but immigrants and people seeking asylum generally. In order to advocate against these changes, grantholders assembled arguments and evidence about their implications,²⁸ and assessed how best to continue their work within the new legal systems. Most of this took place outside the Initiative, but two important points should not be overlooked. First, the learning community meetings that were convened by the Foundations provided a welcome additional space to continue conversations about the policy changes. Second, the Initiative funding contributed to grantholders being able to keep going during a time of policy and funding upheaval.

For foundations with aspirations to bring about systemic change, it can sometimes be challenging to accept that what they have achieved through their funding and support is simply to enable organisations to keep going while the system changes around them.²⁹ But that is what has happened here and its impact is not inconsiderable, despite being difficult to measure.

During the Initiative's second year, grantholders could see more clearly what the new national policy environment looked like and were able to develop new ways to function within it. While their wider work to try to influence government policy continued, grantholders' Supported Options work began to feature more activities designed to influence local public sector policy and practice. For example, more than 170 professionals attended awareness-raising training delivered by grantholders, while 17 and 11 law centres received training in the Initiative's first and second years respectively. And a small number of grantholders in possession of either strategic legal expertise or the resources to support complex legal challenges continued to pursue this work both through their Supported Options funding and through their organisations' wider work.³⁰

Overall, from across the Initiative we have identified the following range of influencing activity that had taken place by the end of Phase One. It should be noted that most grantholders were trying to oppose and influence government policy at the same time as looking for ways to operate within existing policy frameworks.

²⁸ For example, The Low Commission on the Future of Advice and Legal Support and to the Government's *Transforming legal aid: Delivering a more credible and efficient legal system*.

²⁹ See also Baker, L., Balgobin, E. and Hutton, C. (2014) *Evaluation of Right Here: a young people's mental health initiative of the Paul Hamlyn and Mental Health Foundations*. London: IVAR.

³⁰ Hutton, C. and Harris, J. (2014) *An Independent Evaluation of the Strategic Legal Fund for Vulnerable Young Migrants: Evaluation Report*, Trust for London, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, MigrationWork CIC.

5.3.1 Supporting and improving professional practice

- Increasing legal capability among non-legal workers in the voluntary and community sector, including youth workers, community wardens and food bank volunteers.
- Removing misinformation and misapprehensions about what is lawful among public and voluntary sector practitioners. This includes what they, as practitioners, are permitted to do to support child and young irregular migrants.
- Working to reposition immigration as a support need, mainly by working with education, homelessness/housing and leaving care providers.
- Finding ways to secure *pro bono* legal advice and representation by building relationships with law firms in the private sector and leveraging additional funding from charitable trusts and foundations, including the two foundations leading the Supported Options Initiative.
- Creating networks of volunteer support for child and young irregular migrants (e.g. Coventry connector schemes that assemble support around individual young people and volunteer befriending schemes at TCS) and lending support to individuals willing to create new services (e.g. someone who was willing to set up weekly English as a Second Language for women and a young man who wanted to create a bike project for young people without transport).

5.3.2 Strategic legal work

Initiating policy work and strategic legal work where grantholders anticipated the potential to influence a court judgment in favour of child and young irregular migrants and/or influence wider policy. This has included supplying case studies and policy information to their networks – including researchers, policy makers and lawyers working at a national level – to evidence the needs of child and young irregular migrants or to construct a legal challenge.

The PROTECT team, based at Islington Law Centre, has worked on strategic legal challenges as part of their work through the Supported Options Initiative, including:

- Acting in a judicial review challenge against the Secretary of State to restore welfare benefits for parents/sole carers of EU national children following the devastating fee regulations brought into force in November 2012.
- Acting in a Court of Appeal challenge against the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills fee regulations which bar migrant young people with limited leave to remain from continuing on to university, by failing to recognise them as home students and stopping access to loans and grants.
- Representing 10 children and young people in judicial reviews against the Secretary of State for failing to award them settled status in the UK, with the consequent impact of limited status on their futures and life chances.³¹

³¹ Islington Law Centre (2014) *End of term report Phase One Supported Options Initiative*

5.4 Three cross-cutting themes

We conclude this section about the benefits and achievements of the Initiative by noting three cross-cutting themes of grantholders' practical interventions that benefited the child and young irregular migrants that they came into contact with.

5.4.1 Safety

All grantholders wanted young people to be safe and made practical interventions to ensure that they had safe places to spend their time and to sleep, and to remove them from abusive or risky situations. But those advising and representing undocumented young people also needed young people to feel safe enough to disclose aspects of their lives that could be significant to their case (e.g. that they were gay, subject to or at risk of sexual exploitation, or had been trafficked).

A young man was being badly bullied by some other young men on his way to and from school, but because of his irregular immigration status he was afraid to report this to the police. The project liaised with the school to alert them to the problem and to discuss a way to resolve it. The school agreed for the young man to vary the time he arrived and left school in order to avoid seeing the people bullying him: *'Before, I was having problems with some boys who wanted to fight me but I couldn't go to the police, so we talked about what to tell the school and how to keep safe.'*

5.4.2 Belonging

For some young people the projects became a 'home' or a 'family', where they could meet other young people, socialise and get involved. Being in touch with these projects, young people said, made them feel loved and cared for and gave them a chance to experience something akin to ordinary life while they were waiting for decisions about their immigration status. Young people said projects were places where people were interested in their day-to-day life and cared about their future: *'You ask me questions about my life'*.

'[They] felt for me like my family, a family I never had before. They made me become involved and be a part of the project. I felt loved and cared for. They were always there for me; they kept asking me how I was doing, how my exams were going, if I needed extra help. I never had anybody who did this for me before. For the first time in my life I felt that there are people who care about me.' (Young person)

'It seems like I'm born here. I do everything here! Once you get in touch here, you don't want to leave. It's really nice, because they are not treating you like it is official figures, it's like a family. Whenever you come here, even without an appointment, you will find someone. Other than that, everything in my life is being held because of my immigration case, everything is being held. Just waiting.' (Young person)

View two films about the cost of waiting for an immigration decision made by self-advocacy group, Brighter Futures at www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=2191 [Last downloaded 10 October 2014]

5.4.3 Sustainable lives

The third of our cross-cutting themes is about giving young people back a life and a future; about them living sustainable lives *in the long term*. Some of the grantholders' interventions were explicitly focused on clients' medium and long-term prospects (e.g. building local connections and networks); and some interventions would later enable young people to navigate the immigration and welfare systems for themselves. Other interventions were aimed at preventing or alleviating crises or addressing a young person's immigration status. The projects had different expectations for duration of contact with their clients. Some of the projects did have clear end points, where they would exit from a relationship; others were designed to be much more holistic and work for longer periods with young people.

'If we were to withdraw now, she wouldn't sink.' (Practitioner)

'I want to work hard, I want to be independent, lead my own life and make my own life.' (Young person)³²

'I learned about the law, what I should do and what I shouldn't. That helps me to navigate myself. I got supported to go to social services and convince them to give my family accommodation and funds.' (Young person)

However, we found that grantholders were generally too taken up with their clients' immediate and short-term needs to be able to reach into the sustainability of their future lives. Indeed, some grantholders raised concerns about the long-term impact of their work and whether or not it would bring about any sustained change in the young person's life, because many young people are *'on a cliff edge'* of support which will be removed when they reach the age of 21.

'It's the hopelessness. You might be doing something now but am I doing anything long term? Where will they be in three, four, five years? You feel like you're doing good things [but] are we just prolonging something?' (Practitioner)

Section 6: Challenges

We have already noted that the work of the six grantholders took place within an operating environment characterised by uncertainty and unpredictability. Each organisation therefore found itself continuously adapting, both to external change and to the needs of young people themselves. Based on our synthesis and analysis of the data collected during Phase One, we can identify five key challenges that affected the Initiative:

- Legal, policy and funding context
- Safe visibility
- Return
- Public and voluntary sector attitudes
- Emotional support.

Each of these is considered below.

Challenge 1: Legal, policy and funding context

³² Quotation from *Films: The cost of waiting: Limbo life*, made by Brighter Futures (2013). Available to view online at www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=2191

The Supported Options Initiative was operating in a challenging context of service closures in the voluntary sector, major changes to the organisation and funding of legal advice, and representation;^{33,34} and welfare reform.³⁵ These changes were more wide-ranging than the Foundations and grantholders anticipated at the outset of the Initiative and, as such, affected what the Initiative could expect to achieve.

'We went into this with our eyes open but I have been taken aback by the extent of complexity and need.' (Funder)

'We are increasingly seeing more complex casework owing to the rapidly changing immigration regulatory environment, such as the granting of immigration status with no access to public funds. This is coupled with the reduction in key resources for immigration legal advice, with fewer solicitors willing or able to accept referrals.' (Grantholder)

It has not been possible to disentangle the precise effects of these changes on the Initiative, but both grantholders and the Foundations have weighed up what they could reasonably expect to achieve, given the effects of external change combined with some staff churn within the funded organisations. We return to this question in our conclusion.

'The new legal aid changes stamp very heavily on this Initiative. Some of the key achievements we've had, we couldn't have done [if those changes had already been introduced] ... The funder may need to lower their expectations about what can be achieved.' (Grantholder)

'... a really difficult set of challenges in terms of the political and policy framework: 10–15 significant policy and legal changes with huge implications for the work. Implications both for NGOs themselves and for the target group and, on top of that, poisonous and toxic politics. So, the question is, in the face of those challenges and those dynamic changes, what might we reasonably expect individual projects to achieve? And on top of all that we have to add the internal stuff: staff turnover and weak finances – inevitably that means that some projects haven't gripped internally.' (Funder)

Challenge 2: Safe visibility

An early challenge for all grantholders was to decide how to organise themselves so that young people would feel able to make themselves safely visible to them and, thus, access their services. Most projects had taken some time to decide whether or not to give their project a public name, and, if they did, whether or not to draw attention to the issue of legal status in the name. Common to all of the projects was the importance of designing services and working in a child/young person centred way. Participants thought that it was a good thing for the Foundations to be *'naming the issue'* centrally and nationally, but recognised that *'naming the issue'* at project level could create difficulties for young people and for organisations, including trustees, who perceived a risk to being publicly associated with child

³³ The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act came into force in April 2013.

³⁴ *Transforming Legal Aid: Delivering a more credible and efficient legal system* sets out the Government's proposals for further reform of legal aid in England and Wales. The consultation ran from 9 April 2013 to 4 June 2013.

³⁵ See, for example Beatty, C. and Fothergill, S. (2013) *Hitting the Poorest Places Hardest: the local and regional impact of welfare reform*, Sheffield Hallam University; or NCVO (2013) *April 2013 Welfare Reforms and what they mean for Voluntary Organisations*, London: NCVO.

and young irregular migrants: *'How do we raise the profile of the issue without raising the profile of the projects?'; 'How do we find a balance between safety and publicity?'*. Initiative staff and grantholders have continued to discuss and assess this delicate balancing act as each new opportunity to raise the profile of their work arises.

Challenge 3: Return

The Initiative's third priority outcome was *'Increased understanding of the issues facing young people leaving the UK, forcibly or voluntarily, and piloting options for better supporting them.'* In pursuit of this outcome, the Initiative Coordinator confirmed that the Foundations: sought to develop conversations about return with grantholders; funded a project working with young men being returned to Afghanistan; and looked into whether there were other projects related to return that the Foundations might wish to fund. The funders' rationale for engaging with return as part of the Initiative was not a value judgment about whether or not young people should return, but rather a pragmatic response to the fact that many young people *do return* and all young people *are expected to return* according to government policy. Yet, there is little independent, youth-focused targeted support available to them.

Some attitudes and opinions about return were highly charged, polarised and raised questions about the focus of the Initiative; often attitudes reflected practitioners' own professional and/or personal roots. Critically, many practitioners were concerned that some organisations (without legal expertise) might move prematurely to options for return before ensuring that all legal options had been exhausted. Three quotations from Supported Options practitioners illustrate the range of experience and opinion across the Initiative:

'I want to do everything possible to make sure that a claim is fairly considered and that they can remain in the UK.'

'It's at odds with how we see our role as advocates – it's their [young person's] agenda. We ask them "What do you want help with?"'

'It's not hard to have conversations about return if you are not from England. I think you maybe don't have preconceptions about "home" and "return".'

We found consensus about what *'better supported'* means in the context of return: fair legal process (includes quality advice and accurate information); entitlement to resources; being supported to think ahead to what it will be like to return and possibly to find links with communities/family; and building the young person's long-term capacity for whatever the future holds.

Grantholders who had expressed reservations about the Initiative engaging with return appeared to perceive it as being more valid when there were child safeguarding issues and/or where a young person had been detained, or asked for help with voluntary return.

Youth on the Move is a project led by Refugee Support Network

The project was funded under the Supported Options Initiative to pilot new ways of supporting young people in the UK who are facing return to Afghanistan, and to increase

access to education and employment opportunities in Kabul. The project provided pre-departure emotional support and practical advice about Kabul to 59 Afghan males. Most of them (51) were aged between 19–30, while eight were aged 16-18 years old. In their final report on this 12-month pilot, the project explained that a core part of their work was to help young people exhaust all legal routes to remain in the UK. They also note that *'All of these young people have been equipped with advice and information that makes their return to Afghanistan safer than it otherwise would have been. Please note that return to Afghanistan remains risky for the majority of young people – this information helps them to return "more safely".'*³⁶

Challenge 4: Public and voluntary sector attitudes

Grantholders said that there was a considerable amount of misinformation in circulation about the legal rights and entitlements of child and young irregular migrants as well as unreliable information (including official policy advice provided locally and nationally), which had misled some professionals about what they could and could not do to assist this group while remaining within the law. Where there is also a lack of awareness or sympathy with this group (and this was by no means always the case), the effects of misinformation were compounded. Some grantholders also commented on *'media hype'* about the Immigration Bill affecting frontline staff, such as college enrolment staff and GP receptionists. This had raised concerns about the impact of residency test and health care charges on medical treatment for child and young irregular migrants.

Examples include:

- Some grantholders reported that statutory housing providers were reluctant to engage about young people in unsuitable, inadequate or unsafe accommodation: *'They won't engage with support for those without recourse to public funds.'*
- Staff in a wide variety of public and voluntary sector organisations (e.g. children's centres, homelessness hostels) were said to have fears over engaging with anything *'to do with illegality'*.

Challenge 5: Emotional support

All those involved in the delivery of advice and support to child and young irregular migrants as part of this Initiative said that this work was emotionally challenging, in part because of the high volume of 'failed' attempts to secure representation and successful legal outcomes.

Several grantholders had support mechanisms in place for practitioners. Others did not. A first step appeared to be for an organisation's management and delivery staff to jointly recognise the particular emotional strain of this work on all of them and to collectively work out how this might be addressed. Other strategies included:

- Frontline staff needed support to set realistic expectations and appropriate boundaries around their work, while at the same time being permitted to work holistically with clients
- Team meetings, debriefs and informal catch-ups were all part of a strategy for handling the emotional challenges of the work at CLC, where staff also said that they openly discuss their personal strategies for self-care

³⁶ Refugee Support Network (2014) *Youth on the move*. Final report to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

- Co-location of staff teams undertaking similar work not only benefited their clients but also meant that staff teams, which were typically very small, were not isolated
- TCS has co-located all five New Londoners projects, which means that youth workers handling trafficking, destitution and irregular immigration status can support one another emotionally as well as practically
- External supervision had been integrated into the budgets and work of some organisations (see below).

TCS provides external supervision for all staff of New Londoners projects. These are group sessions that staff can bring their cases to. Each staff member can also request an individual session and there is evidence that both managers and frontline staff have taken up such opportunities. Managers do not attend group sessions. The sessions came about because one or two staff members wanted to talk more about their cases. Initially, TCS put external supervision in place as a one-off, but now it has been integrated into the organisation's practice and appears in budget lines for new projects. However, even if the supervision is budgeted, the manager points out that it can be hard to identify the right person at an affordable rate to provide the supervision. The external supervision is well used and this is thought to be because of the culture within the New Londoners team. Although people do not have to attend – it is an expectation without being a requirement – staff teams are told that releasing feelings is an important part of the job.

Part Three: Conclusions

In this final part of the report, we begin by returning to the aims of the evaluation and assessing the impact of the Supported Options Initiative. Next, we identify some lessons learned before concluding with a brief discussion of possible adaptations to the Initiative going forward.

Section 7: Assessment of impact

7.1 Introduction

The strategic goal of the Supported Options Initiative was *'to support and encourage migrant, youth and advice organisations to better understand, respond to and reach out to young and child migrants with irregular immigration status, and capture and share learning to improve practice and policy.'*

We have already noted that that the policy and practice environment in which the Initiative was conceived looked very different from the one in which the work supported through the Initiative was developed and carried out. The operating environment over the first two years of the Initiative was characterised by uncertainty and instability; this affected both practitioners and the young people they were trying to support.

However, despite this inauspicious context, the findings set out in Part Two of this report illustrate the breadth and depth of work that has been carried out through the Initiative. Although achieving real traction around policy influence remains elusive, direct work with young and child migrants with irregular immigration status appears to have made a material difference to their immediate and pressing needs.

7.2 Progress against Initiative outcomes

Outcome One: Better advice services to young migrants through 'holistic' approaches to their advice, support and information needs

Very good progress was made with this outcome.

Much was achieved against this outcome, with young people receiving support for their wider welfare and social needs as well as their immigration needs, delivered by people and organisations with a finely tuned grasp of what it means to have irregular immigration status. The latter percolated across all aspects of professional and organisational practice in ways that young people particularly appreciated (e.g. making time, being available over the phone, being respectful and kind) and which were enabled by the Supported Options funding which lent legitimacy to e.g. taking the time to travel to meetings with young people or visit them at home.

As well as delivering direct advice, support and advocacy to young people, grantholders also sought to build partnerships with other providers and to influence their practice. This work appeared to accelerate towards the end of Phase One and will need to be assessed in more depth in Phase Two.

Overall, we consider that very good progress was made with this outcome, despite it being difficult for projects to focus on their clients' long-term needs because more immediate work (such as crisis intervention) took priority.

Outcome Two: Improved provision of online information and support to young migrants

Aspirations of Outcome Two have not been realised, but SWARM offers another chance.

The Initiative was designed in the hope that it would make two other contributions to the field. In relation to the second outcome, our assessment is that the Foundations supported some experimentation and exploration of the subject, which has probably created a few ripples where individual (migrant and technology) practitioners have learned from the experience; and the Initiative has contributed to some learning (for example through 'Innovation Labs') even if the hoped-for digital products did not materialise.

While the six main grantholders' grants were not for social media and digital technology (except RMC's, which had a social media strand), there was an expectation that they would engage with these media when thinking about ways to connect with young people. But the aspiration or expectation that engagement with the inquiry into potential for improved support via social media (Undoc Camp) could lead to the exploration of new approaches to problem solving within the grantholders' projects and more generally has not been realised. Individuals interviewed by the evaluators highlighted two contributory factors. First, without the provision of bespoke support to grantholders to integrate their learning into their organisation's practice, this was an unlikely prospect. Second, social media and technology practitioners who have the humility and patience required to fully grasp the needs of child and young irregular migrants are in the minority among their peers³⁷.

At the end of phase one, grantholders had concluded that text messaging, a mobile phone number and ensuring that young people could be put straight through to their advisers and solicitors was more important and relevant than the use of social media or digital technology.

Outcome Three: Increased understanding of the issues facing young people leaving the UK, forcibly or voluntarily, and piloting options for better supporting them

The Initiative has helped draw attention to the issue of 'return', and that has been welcome. But in doing so, it has raised questions about the nature of the Initiative and the role that grantholders can expect to play.

In relation to the third outcome, the Foundations have made a contribution to the field by surfacing an issue that many organisations supporting child and young irregular migrants find profoundly difficult and complex. In this report, we have tried to describe and explain some of that complexity.

The Initiative's work on return also raised a more general question about the nature of the Initiative and the role that grantholders play in its evolution. Initially, grantholders (as field experts) believed that they had been asked to join in developing the Initiative, but with the announcement of work around return with young Afghan men, the Foundations – in particular the Paul Hamlyn Foundation – appeared to move away from that approach. One

³⁷ Digital undoc is reported on film here <http://www.phf.org.uk/page.asp?id=1754>

way to think about this is to ask whether the Initiative is a shared space where funders and grantholders are co-creators or whether it is an invited space where grantholders are asked to contribute to an Initiative, which is clearly owned by the Foundations.³⁸ Future work by the Foundations may need to take account of internal and external pressures that may place constraints on their ability to work collaboratively with grantholders.

Section 8: Lessons learned

Having provided an overview of progress made against the priority outcomes for the Initiative, we now highlight four lessons learned from our evaluation.

Lesson 1: The importance of balancing short-term and longer-term work

In our discussion of benefits and achievements, we specified three cross-cutting themes within which positive outcomes had been secured with child and young irregular migrants: safety, belonging and sustainable lives. Our evaluation found that it was difficult for grantholders to think about the longer term because they were dealing with meeting urgent needs in the short or medium term, including crisis interventions around basic needs for food and shelter and removal from immediate risk of harm.

In the broader contexts of hostility, change and turbulence that the young people encounter on a day-to-day basis, the projects' ambitions of securing sustainable lives have been thwarted. Whereas projects have been able to shelter young people, they have at times not been able to root them. And sustenance has been provided in the short, rather than longer term.

We looked for evidence of long-term benefits, but the evidence is weak, although we note that, in some cases, the outcomes of legal representation remain unknown. Grantholders were handling heightened demand and complexity. They could not get to the future when the present was preoccupying their time, wits and energies. Grantholders were well aware of this tension in their work and certainly offered, as best they could, a coherent blend of short-, medium- and long-term solutions for their clients. But we observe here that it has been difficult to maintain coherence of approach in turbulent contexts.

Lesson 2: The benefits of high-engagement funding

The Foundations' approach to this Initiative has been consistent with a number of hallmarks of high-engagement funding.³⁹ In particular, we can highlight four features, each of which is discussed briefly below:

- Flexible grants management

³⁸ Gaventa describes three spaces for participation: 'closed spaces', where participants play a minor role in involvement; 'invited spaces', where people are invited to participate by various types of authority; and 'claimed spaces', which are created more autonomously by participants. This is part of Gaventa's 'power cube' demonstrating interrelated dimensions of levels, spaces, and forms of participation. Gaventa, J. (2006) 'Finding the Spaces for Change: A Power Analysis', *IDS Bulletin*, 27, 6. Sussex: Institute of Development Studies.

³⁹ Cairns, B. and Buckley, E. (2012) *New ways of giving by UK trusts and foundations: High engagement funding*. Paper presented to the ISTR Conference, Siena, Italy.

- Funding plus
- Familiarity with the field
- The role of the Initiative Coordinator.

First, a flexible approach to grants management. Participants made the following comments on the Paul Hamlyn Foundation's⁴⁰ approach to the management of their grants. For example, targets and activities set at the start of Phase One were revised down or adjusted when the effects of legal aid cuts became clearer. And the Foundations adopted a realistic and practical attitude in the face of grantholders who had experienced difficulties with staff turnover or were struggling with other internal organisational difficulties.

Second, the 'funding plus' elements of their work have been appropriate, timely and well calibrated to the strategic, as well as the operational, needs of grantholders with a generally well-judged balance between support and challenge.

Third, the Foundations' familiarity with the field, combined with their commitment to flexibility, allowed for both adaptation and innovation. Grantholders suggested that the Foundations had:

- Spotted and addressed critical issues as they have emerged with a blend of new grants and commissioned research and policy work
- Supported exploration of new approaches and supported timely decisions to abandon approaches that do not work
- Introduced new and sometimes inspirational ideas through the organisation of events, invited speakers and dissemination of materials online.

Fourth, the Initiative Coordinator made important contributions by, e.g. brokering connections between grantholders and other stakeholders.

Lesson 3: The challenges of high-engagement funding

Set alongside these benefits, one of the lessons from this and other Initiatives has been about the challenges of an engaged approach; in particular, the porous boundaries between working collaboratively with grantholders and simply interfering.

The Foundations wanted to challenge grantholders to think in ambitious and new ways, but they also wanted to support and practically assist them in the difficult day-to-day work that they had taken on. Our evaluation suggests that the Initiative does appear to have got the balance about right in Phase One.

'Having created an Initiative, it's not the Foundation's role to make organisations do something that they're not comfortable about. But it is right to make a space where organisations can be challenged in the right way in the interests of the end beneficiaries. And when you say that, everyone agrees.' (Funder)

'Having thinkers giving us a framework to know what the wider thinking is. It's more collaborative, [it's] different from a funder that wants to get involved and micro-manage you.' (Grantholder)

⁴⁰ In this report we have concentrated on evidence collected from six organisations whose grants were awarded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation when the Initiative began.

We should also note that there may be circumstances where the construct of an Initiative, and its very specific aims and outcomes, might be at odds with the field in terms of beneficiary need and organisational capabilities and priorities. For some organisations, progress in reaching and supporting child and young irregular migrants might be more easily accomplished through core funding than project funding, with its narrow set of prescribed aims and outcomes. If the commitment to flexibility is sincere, it ought to be possible to accommodate differentiated funding arrangements.

Lesson 4: The benefits of cross-pollination

There was wholehearted support and appreciation for being brought together as a group of grantholders for learning community meetings, to receive training or to address particular issues affecting their work. The appetite for this kind of cross-pollination of ideas and practices was present and over the course of Phase One, grantholders initiated new activities together (e.g. training and strategic legal work).

Section 9: Areas for adaptation

We conclude our report by discussing three possible areas for adaptation going forward.

9.1 The ‘advocacy’ role of the Foundations

Based on the evidence collected and reported in this evaluation,⁴¹ our view is that there may be divergent perspectives, prospects and demands for policy advocacy across the two Foundations, as well as across the grantholders themselves. Given the aspirations of both Foundations for collaboration at all levels of the initiative, and the importance of clear and shared expectations in any collaborative venture,⁴² it seems to us that there will be a need for a shared and explicit position around advocacy. The risk of not establishing a clear and common position is that different appetites for this aspect of the work might play out in ways that create difficulty, missed opportunities or disappointment. Responsibility for reaching and communicating consensus here rests, we would suggest, with the two Foundations.

9.2 The collaborative advantage of the Initiative

As Phase One of the Initiative drew to a close, grantholders asked themselves what the collaborative advantage of the Initiative might be in its second phase. Three specific points were raised in connection to possible modifications:

- First, all the grantholders are engaged in adjacent service delivery, policy and research work and networks. More could be done to realise the benefits of cross-pollination of grantholders’ related work.
- Second, one participant said, *‘We need to get the message across to government that making it hard just makes it harder; making life hard doesn’t mean people are more likely to go home.’* While another asked: *‘Is our role about managing within or*

⁴¹ See our interim evaluation report, where we where we noted that participants had suggested a policy role for the funders beyond what they were already doing. IVAR (September 2013) *Evaluation of Supported Options Initiative: Interim report*.

⁴² See, for example, IVAR (2011) *Thinking about collaboration*. London: IVAR.

transforming the frame? This raises serious questions about the Initiative's public profile and messages.

- Third, some grantholders wanted to see more of Unbound Philanthropy during the next phase of the Initiative, particularly in respect of advocacy in this field.

9.3 Approaches to reaching and supporting young and child migrants with irregular immigration status

By its nature and design, the Initiative has taken a view that wellbeing for child and young irregular migrants encompasses not only legal remedies, but also welfare solutions, and the regeneration of sustaining social networks.

The way grantholders have responded, based on the evidence available to us as evaluators, is to practise within a broad spectrum of service provision, making links and bridges between legal, welfare and social worlds that the young people navigate and live within. Yet these ways of working have had their limitations, given the acute and complex difficulties faced by the young people, compounded by a dominant need to pursue legal status, sparse resources in contexts of high demand and fluctuating legal and policy drivers.

Grantholders complemented this often crisis-driven work to address young people's immediate needs by, for example, raising awareness, knowledge and understanding of what it means to be undocumented, and identifying cases for strategic legal work. Looking ahead, it will continue to be important for organisations to have the capacity for both service delivery and awareness raising or strategic legal casework. The latter may be better supported by core funding rather than through programme funding.

Concluding remark

The first phase in the Supported Options Initiative was delivered during a period of considerable policy upheaval and service change. The contribution of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy to the continuation of critical services for undocumented children and young people has been significant. The fortitude and sustained efforts of the practitioners and projects they have supported is considerable.

Appendix A: Additional tables

In this Appendix we provide a full breakdown of data about the clients with whom the six grantholders worked.

Table A1: Gender of individuals worked with during Phase One

	RMC	PROTECT	Praxis	Coram CLC	CLC	TCS	Total
Male	125	25	90	53	67	34	394
Female	56	24	119	225	25	14	463
Not recorded	0	0	16	0	0	0	16
Not known	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	181	49	226	278	92	48	874

Note: Praxis and Coram CLC recorded the number of cases (included in this table) and the total number of beneficiaries of a case where they worked with a whole family. If we included all beneficiaries, this would add more than 550 to the total number of individuals helped by projects.

Table A2: Age of individuals worked with during Phase One

	RMC	PROTECT	Praxis	CLC	TCS	Total
<16	0	10	75	1	4	90
16–18	1	34	16	9	21	81
19–30	180	5	124	75	22	406
31+	0	0	3	6	0	9
Disputed	0	0	0	0	1	1
Not known	0	0	8	1	0	9
Total	181	49	226	92	48	596

Note: We have excluded data collected from Coram CLC, because the way age is recorded differs and the project mainly worked with whole families rather than individuals. See Table A5 for descriptions of the range of households with which Coram CLC worked.

Table A3: Top 15 countries of origin of individuals worked with during Phase One

	RMC	PROTECT	Praxis	Coram CLC	CLC	TCS	Total
Nigeria	8	7	49	25	3	0	92
Afghanistan	10	7	12	4	27	13	73
India	13	0	3	53	1	1	71
Iraq	47	0	1	1	12	0	61
Ghana	2	0	23	22	1	0	48
Iran	35	0	2	0	7	2	46
Jamaica	9	3	19	13	0	1	45
China	19	0	7	1	4	2	33
Pakistan	6	0	7	14	1	1	29
Bangladesh	0	4	21	0	0	2	27
UK	0	4	0	22	0	1	27
Somalia	1	2	0	15	2	1	21
Eritrea	2	1	6	2	5	2	18
Sierra Leone	0	0	8	5	0	4	17
Zimbabwe	9	1	2	1	3	0	16

Table A4: Profile of immigration status of young people at first contact with projects

Category	RMC	PROTECT	Praxis	Coram CLC	CLC	TCS	Total
In the UK without legal permission	179	38	213	93	51	45	619
In the UK with some (often temporary) legal permission		2	5	40	36	3	86
EEA national		1	1	18			20
Missing data/not known	2	8	7	3	5		25
Total	181	49	226	154	92	48	750

Notes: *In the UK without legal permission* includes people who have overstayed a visa or have been refused asylum. *Missing data/not known* means that, for the purposes of compiling this table, data is missing; it does not necessarily mean that the grantholder had not recorded information relevant to the particular case. Coram CLC supplied data for both Years 1 and 2, but only data for Year 2 could be reconciled with the categories in this table.

Table A5: Profile of immigration issues among young people at first contact with projects

Issue	Total	
Overstayer	269	
Refused asylum	183	
Some form of leave (time-limited)	68	
Illegal entry	56	
Undocumented	46	
Born in UK	38	
EEA national	35	
Asylum seeker	33	
Appeal rights exhausted	18	
Access to healthcare, welfare benefits, education	16	
Visa application query	14	
Family law issue	12	
Refused Article 8	11	
Trafficked	9	
Parent overstayed	7	
Revocation of indefinite leave to remain/deportation	4	
Fresh claims	4	
Entry clearance	4	
Naturalisation	3	
Indefinite leave to remain	2	
No ID/ID disputed	3	
Total	835	

Notes: Figures include data from Year One of Coram CLC (122 cases) but exclude 37 cases where no status or other immigration issue was recorded. Many of the young people will have fitted more than one of the categories in the table.