

About this report

This report sets out the findings from an independent evaluation of phase two of the Supported Options Initiative (SOI).

The Initiative, which has been designed, led and funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) and Unbound Philanthropy (Unbound), aims to

"support and encourage migrant, youth and advice organisations to better understand, respond and reach out to young people and children with irregular immigration status, and capture and share learning to improve practice and policy."

This evaluation report aims to describe the evolution of what has been a complex programme of work, make an assessment of its impact against its objectives, and draw out the learning for the two funders, participants and other interested parties. The report focuses on phase two of the Initiative (from July 2014-January 2017), but includes some discussion of earlier phases of work in order to tell a more complete story about the Initiative as a whole.

The evaluation team would like to thank the funders and participants for kindly giving up their time to talk to us about their work. We hope this report will prove useful in supporting future work in this area.

Links to the outputs, research and films mentioned in this report can be found at www.supportedoptions.org and at www.phf.org.uk





All photos in this report are reproduced with the kind permission of Len Grant, author of the *Life without Papers* blog, commissioned by Paul Hamlyn Foundation as part of Supported Options.

Structure of this report

03

SECTION 1

describes the evolution, overall aims and structure of the Initiative, provides an overview of the work undertaken in phase one and the context for this, and highlights key learning from the evaluation of this phase.

39

SECTION 4

focuses in on the direct support (legal and social) that Initiative participants have provided to children, young people and families, and outlines the scope and scale of this activity, key achievements, challenges and learning.

88

SECTION 7

focuses in on ways of working on the Initiative as a whole, and explores key achievements, challenges and learning.

18

SECTION 2

describes the evolution and aims of phase two, provides an overview of the work undertaken, outlines the purpose of and activities involved in the evaluation, and highlights changes in the operating context in this phase.

56

SECTION 5

provides some case studies of individual young people who have been supported in phase two that explain more about young people's circumstances and the ways in which participants have helped them.

106

SECTION 8

summarises Initiative achievements against objectives and sets out some suggestions for the future development of work in this area.

29

SECTION 3

describes the types of young people who have been supported in phase two, and outlines their experiences and the challenges they face.

69

SECTION 6

focuses in on the work participants have done to share learning from the Initiative with practitioners and policy makers, and outlines the scope and scale of this activity, key achievements, challenges and learning.

117

APPENDIX ONE

sets out a timeline summarising the evolution of the scoping phase and phase one.

120

APPENDIX TWO

summarises findings from the "No Right to Dream" research commissioned under Supported Options.

123

APPENDIX THREE

captures some learning from the evaluation to guide future quantitative data collection in this area.

127

APPENDIX FOUR

provides references for literature cited in this report.

"The first time we told our story we all cried, because it was something we had bottled up for such a long time. For years, our friends never knew, other than our families and maybe a few family friends that were really close. No-one else knew about the situation. So the first time you actually say it out loud, it's a knock back in a sense, you're so overwhelmed with emotion. But because we do it consistently, it doesn't mean it doesn't hurt, but you learn to say it more confidently...It takes a lot of work to get there."

Young person consulted as part of the evaluation



SECTION 1 describes the evolution, overall aims and structure of the Initiative, provides an overview of the work undertaken in phase one and the context for this, and highlights key learning from the evaluation of this phase.

What is meant by 'irregular status'?

Various terms have been used to refer to the immigration status of young people SOI set out to support, including: "illegal", "irregular" and "undocumented".

For much of the Initiative's duration, funders and participants favoured the term "undocumented", however "irregular" is now preferred since many of the people SOI has supported have had some kind of (often temporary) permission to remain in the UK. Arguably, any simple term is likely to obscure the diversity of people in this situation, and the varied routes into and out of it. As one SOI participant explains (CCLC, 2016), these routes "can be summarised as:

- 1. Entering the UK unlawfully and never acquiring any form of regular immigration status (some...may have never come to the attention of the authorities and others may have made an application to regularise their status but had this refused);
- 2. Coming to the UK on a visa (for example, as a visitor or student or as a dependent of a student) and remaining in the UK beyond the date at which that leave expires (individuals in this situation are often referred to as 'overstayers');
- **3.** Making an asylum claim which is unsuccessful and exhausting all possible appeals (often known as 'appeal rights exhausted'); and
- **4.** Being born in the UK to parents with irregular immigration status (a child born in the UK does not automatically acquire British citizenship).

Research suggests that "overstaying" is the most frequent route into irregular immigration status in the UK (Migration Observatory, 2011). It is important to note that some people included in the cohort of "irregular" migrants may actually be British, but lack the documentation to prove this (they are "sans papiers").

How many young people are affected?

As the Migration Observatory (2011) highlight, "Irregular migration is by definition not recorded" and so "eludes statistical coverage".

Few systematic attempts have been made to investigate the numbers of people with irregular immigration status in the UK. Three studies are frequently cited in the literature as providing the most robust estimates:

- Woodbridge (2005) used a "residual" method, subtracting an estimate of the legally-residing foreign-born population from the number of foreign-born people identified in the Census. The difference (or "residual") is an estimate of the number of people with irregular status at a specific point in time. This method gave an estimate for 2001 of 310,000-570,000, with a central estimate of 430,000.
- Gordon et al. (2009) updated Woodbridge's figures to the end of 2007 to reflect an increase in people who had entered illegally, whose asylum claim had been refused, those who had overstayed visas, and the regularisation of migrants from EU accession (A8) countries from 1st May 2004. This provided a figure of 417,000 -863,000, with a central estimate of 618,000. Crucially, the study estimated that minors make up 25% of the irregular migrant population, with an estimated 85,000 children born in the UK to parents with irregular status (figures range from 44,000-144,000).
- Sigona and Hughes (2012) produced a slightly reduced estimate of 120,000 under 18s as at end of March 2011 (0.9 per cent of the UK's under 18 population), of whom they estimate 60-65,000 were UK-born. These figures reflect estimates of the impact of a review of the backlog of 500,000 unresolved asylum and non-asylum cases by the UK Border Agency.

Where do young people come from?

Research suggests that migration into the UK has long been dominated by people from countries geographically close to the UK (especially Ireland) and from the Commonwealth, facilitated by economic ties, kinship networks and an affinity with the language and culture.

Since the 1990s, immigration from the "old" Commonwealth (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa) and from some "EU 15" countries has gradually been replaced with that from the "new" Commonwealth countries (especially India) and, from 2004 on, from the "EU A8" countries (Migration Observatory, 2014).

There is little robust data on countries of origin for foreign-born people with irregular immigration status in the UK. One study from a few years ago suggested the most prevalent countries might be: Jamaica, Nigeria, Pakistan, China, Turkey and India. However this data is based on people in detention so may not reflect the wider population, especially those from countries like Australia, Canada and the US who may be less easily identifiable and therefore less likely to be detained (Vollmer, 2008).

Context - growing concerns about migration

Immigration into the UK increased substantially in the decade from 1997-2006 driven by economic opportunities as the UK opened itself up to the global economy, colonial and network ties within migrant communities, and the impact of migration policies (Migration Observatory, 2014). Net annual migration fluctuated between 2006 and 2012, when the first phase of SOI began. It then rose steadily to a peak of +336,000 in the last quarter of 2014/first quarter of 2015 and plateaued, with figures for the year to June 2016 (one week after the Brexit referendum) of +335,000 (ONS, 2016). Recent figures to end of September 2016 suggest annual net migration has since dropped to +273,000 (ONS, 2017), with a statistically significant increase in emigration of migrants from EU A8 countries and decrease in immigration to study in the UK.

Increasing rates of migration over the past twenty years have been accompanied by growing public concern and, in response, governments have introduced a large amount of new policy and legislation. Since 2010, immigration policy has been officially driven by an aim to reduce "legal" net migration to "the tens of thousands" (Migration Observatory, 2014).

As part of these efforts, particular attention has been given to irregular migration, which is thought to be especially unpopular with the public. The last two governments have continued the approach, begun under previous administrations, of introducing increasingly restrictive measures to align the housing, welfare, health, and legal aid systems to create a "hostile environment", with the aim of discouraging people with irregular immigration status from coming to the UK and from staying here (CCLC, 2013).

Nevertheless, some commentators have argued that there is a "lack of empirical evidence demonstrating that access to services plays a determinant role in attracting migrants to the UK" (CCLC, 2013) or that cutting off services and support necessarily encourages return. As the forced removal of everyone with irregular immigration status is "an impossible task" (Sigona and Hughes, 2012), this leaves a growing group of people living in the UK in an ever-more vulnerable position.

Context - children & young people with irregular status

The UK is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes a range of civil, economic, political and social rights that extend beyond the rights enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (EHRC). Article 3.1 of the Convention also contains an overarching provision to ensure that in "all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration." The UK originally insisted on a reservation to the UNCRC relating to migrant children subject to immigration control. However this was subsequently lifted.

The UNCRC is partially incorporated into UK law through the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 and the "Every Child Matters" (ECM) national framework. Section 11 of the 2004 Act introduced a duty on all state agencies to have regard for the welfare of children. Local authorities have a primary responsibility for child welfare and safeguarding, working alongside families and other agencies. Under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, local authorities also have a general duty to promote the welfare of children "in need" in their area (Sigona and Hughes 2012).

Under UK law, refugee and migrant children currently have the same entitlements as citizen children to compulsory education, primary healthcare and rights set out in the 1989 and 2004 Acts. However, these are not always upheld in practice (CCLC, 2013). Research suggests entitlements are subject to "differing interpretations and local circumstances that may ultimately result in the exclusion of a significant number of irregular migrant children" (Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

Timely action is required to ensure that children's status is resolved, since "becoming an adult brings the full weight of irregular status, marking a critical transition from a relatively protected status as a child to one of loss of control over one's own future" (Sigona and Hughes, 2012). A focus on youth is also important since some children will turn 18 without regularising their status. Lack of status impacts on critical entitlements for young people (such as access to higher education as a home student), and there remain some avenues open to regularise status for those aged 18-25.

Why focus on this issue?

Children with "irregular" status have been said to be "in a position of triple vulnerability: as children, above all; as migrants; and finally...as undocumented migrants" (PICUM, 2008). Children and young people in this situation have also been said to be the group "most at risk of exceptional poverty and destitution" in the UK (CCLC, 2013).

There has been widespread confusion in policy terms about whether young people with irregular immigration status should be protected as children or controlled as migrants. "This tension fundamentally shapes the everyday lives of irregular migrant children in Britain and the experiences of front-line service providers in the fulfilment of their duties" (Sigona and Hughes, 2012. See also Skehan et al. 2017).

Yet while there has been increased interest in irregular migration in Western Europe and the US in recent years, driven by a perception of rising numbers of migrants resident without permission, there has been little sustained focus on the particular experiences of children and young people (Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

Where children's experience has been given attention by researchers and support providers, the focus has tended to be on unaccompanied or separated children claiming asylum or protection after being trafficked, even though "most irregular migrant children are under 12 and live with their parents or close relatives." (Sigona and Hughes, 2012). Separated young people who are not in the asylum system, as well as other groups of young people, have largely been ignored (Skehan et al, 2017).

The tendency to focus on extreme vulnerability on the one hand and criminal, "illegal" behaviour on the other has obscured the diversity of young people's experience and the way in which the structure of the immigration system, the policy and legal framework and the practice of service providers shapes young people's experiences (Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

Funders' interest in the issue & in joint working

Despite the importance of the issue of children and young people with irregular immigration status, at the time the Supported Options Initiative was first developed, there was little understanding of, or interest in it, on the part of most third sector funders and service providers. More often than not the issue was considered "politically toxic" and too difficult to handle. However, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound Philanthropy have what is now a long-standing commitment to the issue of irregular migration and undocumented young people in the UK, reflecting their organisations' mission and goals.



For PHF, interest in this topic links to commitments to promote social justice, and to improve the lives of young people, protect their rights, and ensure their safe transition to adulthood. Migration and integration were not core priorities for PHF at the start of SOI. Collaboration with Unbound, an "expert partner funder", helped "de-risk" what was a challenging funding space in terms of money, strategy and reputation. Largely as a result of what has been learnt and achieved through Supported Options, "improving support for young people who migrate and strengthening integration so that communities can live well together" is now one of six priorities in PHF's current (2015) UK strategy, with delivery supported through the new Shared Ground Fund.

TINEOFIND

For Unbound, ensuring migrants and refugees are treated with respect and can integrate into their new communities is core to their mission. Back in 2008-09. Unbound were one of very few organisations in the UK interested in the issue of undocumented migrants and committed to finding ways to promote regularisation of their status. Unbound had experience funding work on this issue in the UK, as well as extensive experience in the US. For Unbound, collaboration with PHF on Supported Options offered an opportunity to expand its UK programme, especially from 2012 on. SOI is now a key way in which, in the UK, Unbound meets the second of three priorities in its current strategic plan (2014-2018) on migrant integration.

Evolution of the initiative - scoping phase

PHF's interest in this topic began in 2007, when one of the Foundation's advisors was asked to carry out some initial investigations on behalf of the PHF Board. This led to a team of researchers from City University and the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford being commissioned to carry out a pioneering study into the first-hand experiences of undocumented young people. The team's report, No Right to Dream, was published in December 2009. (See Appendix two).

The then PHF Head of Social Justice also began conversations with Unbound's UK Programme Director to explore common interests in refugee and immigration issues (including children in detention and refugee youth development, as well as the situation for undocumented young people), and to explore possible ways of working together.

In Autumn 2010, PHF's Board decided to proceed with a Special Initiative on undocumented young people, in collaboration with Unbound, agreed some provisional aims and committed an initial tranche of funding. In the Spring of 2011, the Initiative Coordinator was appointed, initially on a short-term basis, to consult children and young people's organisations, legal experts and partners in the migration sector (including via a round table event to share ideas and solicit feedback), and to work up the Initiative in more detail.

As a result of deliberations with partners and senior staff at both funders, it was decided that SOI should focus on accurately identifying and understanding the problem, providing advice and support to young people, and supporting organisations working with this cohort. While there was an interest in systems change, it was not yet clear what solutions might be needed and were likely to be feasible. However, funding participant organisations with policy functions meant the capacity to influence the environment was there, when it was clear what might be needed.

It was decided SOI would support children and young people up to the age of 30, in line with PHF's approach to funding youth organisations (although in practice most have been younger). While it was initially decided not to fund projects that specifically focused on young people from EEA countries, projects were free to support individual young people from these countries as part of an "open offer".

Evolution of the initiative - why a special initiative?

Supported Options was conceived as a PHF Special Initiative in recognition of the complexity of the issues facing organisations grappling with the issue of irregular youth migration, and the fact that the work was unlikely to be funded by others. Status as a Special Initiative meant that Supported Options benefitted from longer timescales, a more substantial budget, a leadership structure that allowed a greater depth of engagement with participating organisations, and a stronger focus on learning than might otherwise have been the case. For PHF, in particular, SOI has been an important "case study for engaged grant-making", and for exploring some of the advantages and challenges of working in this way.

The Initiative's aims have been tackled through a mix of grant-making (supporting organisations expert in this area to pursue work they consider to be of value), commissioning (allowing the funders to respond to issues raised by grantees or highlighted in their work, and to take a leading role in instigating new work where they perceive there to be a need), and convening (creating spaces and opportunities for funders and participants to share insights, reflect on common problems and explore opportunities for new work in line with Initiative objectives).

The Initiative continues to be coordinated by the consultant who originally scoped it, working on a part-time basis and reporting to a programme group of senior staff from PHF and Unbound.

Governance arrangements have developed and changed during the life of the Initiative. An initial steering group that helped select the first set of grantees was replaced by a reference group with an independent chair. By the end of phase one, governance lay with PHF's Social Justice Committee and Unbound's trustees. At PHF, the Initiative is now overseen by the new Migration and Integration Panel, comprising a mix of PHF staff and trustees.

Over time, there has been more contact between senior staff and leaders at both funders, as they have sought to align grant-making and wider strategic efforts to meet shared Initiative goals.

Evolution of the initiative - phase one

The Initiative was designed initially to run from July 2012-July 2014 with specific aims to:

- Provide better advice services for young people through holistic approaches to their advice, support and information needs (both legal and social)
- Improve provision of online information and support to young people
- Increase understanding of the issues facing young people leaving the UK, forcibly or voluntarily, and pilot options to better support them.

Following an open call for applications, the funders received more than 50 proposals. Six organisations were awarded grants at the start of phase 1, with a focus on providing legal advice as a "gateway need" that unlocked other support. In addition, the funders commissioned:

- Len Grant to write an award-winning blog, Life Without Papers, which explored the experiences of young people with irregular status, as part of an attempt to reframe the conversation about this group
- On Road Media to host an inquiry ("Undoc camp") into the potential use of social media and digital technology to improve support services for young people with irregular status, as part of a commitment to deploying bold and creative approaches to this work

- Nadine Finch, of Garden Court
 Chambers, to write a paper on routes
 to regularisation for people without
 legal status in the UK, and
- Various explorations into the potential use of microfinance as an option for meeting the costs associated with regularisation.

Three more organisations received grants later in phase 1 for work on return (which required careful scoping first because of nervousness about the issue in the sector), citizenship registration (a route identified through Nadine's Finch's research), and on online information and support (shaped by discussions at "Undoc camp").

For the funders, this "broad start" enabled them to listen to the field, explore the issues and begin to identify possible solutions.

Activity by participant - phase one



Legal advice (immigration and nationality), casework, advocacy and group-based support for young people. Training for range of professionals. Compilation of case studies and other insights to inform policy work, including lobbying by TCS colleagues. Exploration of options for policy change with Islington Law Centre.



Outreach legal advice (immigration and nationality) for young people and families, and help to access legal representation and other services, as part of Migrant Children's Project. Wide range of training for professionals and policy and advocacy work, drawing on insight from advice work.



Legal advice and representation (immigration, nationality) for young people to register as British citizens, via project hosted at Ealing Law Centre. Advice and training for professionals. Litigation and various influencing activities.



Legal advice (immigration and nationality) and casework to help young people and families access a range of support services. Group-based peer support and leadership training for young people, via Brighter Futures group. Production of a range of materials about the experiences of being undocumented and the practical support that can make a difference.



Holistic legal advice, representation and advocacy (immigration, nationality, community care, housing, education etc) for separated young people, via PROTECT project at Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit. Awareness-raising and training for wide range of professionals. Litigation & wide range of policy and campaigning work.



Prototyping of Path to Papers website, designed to raise awareness of rights and entitlements and help young people access specialist legal advice, in collaboration with other SOI participants.



Holistic legal advice (immigration, nationality, health, education) for young people and families. Help to access services and assistance with destitution and basic needs. Information and advice about voluntary return. Testing new approaches to reaching young people via social media. Range of influencing activities with local policy-makers and support organisations.



Outreach legal advice and representation (immigration, nationality, community care etc) for young people and help to "connect" to informal community support, via Young Migrants' Rights project. Awareness-raising with voluntary sector groups and professionals. Research on migrant health and other influencing activities with local policy-makers and support organisations.



Support & access to legal advice and other services for Appeals Right Exhausted asylum-seeking children from Afghanistan facing forced removal to Kabul.

Context for phase one - changes to legal aid & welfare

On 1st April 2013, the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LAPSO) 2012 came into effect, taking the vast majority of immigration cases "out of scope". This means there is no longer entitlement to free legal advice and representation in immigration-related cases, except those involving asylum and protection claims, asylum support, challenges to immigration detention, or trafficking or domestic violence.

Even before LAPSO, cuts to legal aid rates had made it increasingly difficult for lawyers to do a thorough job for their clients, and numerous legal aid immigration providers and departments in law firms had closed (CCLC, 2012). In taking almost all immigration cases out of scope, LAPSO means many more people "including those who are most vulnerable, are no longer able to access justice" at all (CCLC, 2016).

This change has been particularly problematic for people with irregular immigration status, coming at a time when making immigration claims has become more difficult and complex. Changes to the Immigration Rules in 2012 abolished

what were previously relatively swift routes to indefinite leave (permanent status), creating a new ten-year route to settlement, even after establishing long residence. This has greatly increased the numbers of people with temporary leave, forced to reapply every 30 months for 10 years before they can settle, with no access to free secondary healthcare, further and higher education as a "home student", or welfare in the meantime.

In addition to these changes, cuts in funding to public and third sector organisations contributed to a highly challenging environment for beneficiaries and participating organisations in phase one. Cuts to services and support meant that a "traditionally hidden population" has been "forced into the light" as "friends, family or organisations in the VCS can no longer support them". Cuts have also led service providers to redefine their priorities producing "a new hierarchy of deserving and undeserving beneficiaries" (Sigona and Hughes, 2012), in which undocumented young people are often not prioritised.

Phase one - overview of achievements

The Institute of Voluntary Action Research (IVAR, 2015), who were commissioned to evaluate phase one of Supported Options, found that these dramatic changes in the operating context had had a big impact on the Initiative – exacerbating need, restricting options for support outside of SOI, and increasing financial and other pressures on participating organisations (sometimes making it harder for staff to focus on innovation).

Nevertheless, IVAR found that much of value had been achieved in phase one, including:

Outcome 1:

Better advice services - IVAR observed that participants had helped young people obtain legal representation, secure emergency accommodation, navigate barriers to education, and build social networks. They concluded that this work, undertaken by highly skilled organisations, would most likely not have been possible without SOI funding. Participation in the Initiative helped organisations to develop more nuanced and effective approaches to supporting young people.

Outcome 2:

Online information and support for young people - here IVAR concluded that SOI had supported some useful experimentation (via "Undoc camp" for example), however this had not "really landed" by the end of phase one. They suggested the on-going SWARM Path to Papers project offered further opportunities to develop this strand of work into phase two.

Outcome 3:

Increasing understanding of return – here IVAR concluded the Initiative had helped to surface a difficult issue and draw much-needed attention to it.

Phase one - overview of learning

In relation to direct support for young people, IVAR found that it was vital for participating organisations to find ways to enable young people to be safely visible (eg through having a stable presence in mainstream services. building relationships with community organisations and establishing word of mouth recommendations from trusted friends). Success also involved working in new ways with partners (eg lawyers working side-by-side with youth workers), being more flexible in how support was delivered (eg meeting young people where they wanted to meet, and attending appointments with them), and demonstrating persistence (eg leaving files open for young clients who frequently disappeared for periods of time, before reappearing). In the face of huge need and overwhelming demand for support, IVAR found that it was extremely challenging for participants to balance short-term. crisis-focused support with longer-term help for young people.

In relation to Initiative-wide ways of working. IVAR argued the Initiative demonstrated many of the benefits of "high-engagement funding" (Cairns and Buckley, 2012), supporting participants to identify and address common challenges, and introducing them to inspiring, new ideas. However, it also suggested that more could be done to cross-pollinate ideas between projects, cautioned that participants and funders had slightly different appetites for and perspectives on longer-term policy change (that needed to be addressed if opportunities were to maximised), and argued that core funding might be required to support some participants to work more effectively in this space. The evaluators also drew attention to the power dynamic inherent in any funding relationship, and encouraged further reflection on whether the Initiative was an "invited space" or one that was genuinely "co-produced" with participants.



SECTION 2 describes the evolution and aims of phase two, provides an overview of the work undertaken, outlines the purpose of and activities involved in the evaluation, and highlights changes in the operating context in this phase

SUPPORTED OPTIONS INITIATIVE - PHASE TWO

Evolution of the Initiative – phase two

In the Autumn of 2013, PHF and Unbound made a decision to proceed with a second phase of Supported Options to run from July 2014-July 2016, with specific aims to:

- Increase the registration of UK-born children, who support organisations argue "belong in the UK" and "know no other home" (CCLC, 2016)
- Improve support to young people through capacity building of leading organisations, and
- Understand the experiences of young people and share this with practitioners and policy makers.

If the primary focus of phase one was on listening to the field and exploring the issues, for Initiative leaders this phase was about increasing the numbers of young people supported to regularise their status, raising the visibility of the issue, and funding some practical solutions.

As in phase one, the funders decided explicitly not to fund service delivery alone (since this would be unsustainable once funding ended), nor to fund only specialist organisations (since this would limit the work's reach, and a broader approach was felt to be important to meet children and young people's holistic support needs).

There was no open call for grants during this phase. Rather, new grants were invited following scoping work by the funders. After negotiation with the organisations that took part in phase one, the funders agreed to continue to fund all nine organisations in phase two, with efforts more closely aligned to phase two objectives. It was recognised that participants had focused largely on crisis cases in phase one. The shift to preventative work, and the specific focus on registration, informed many of the grant decisions made in phase two, and explains decisions not to maintain funding for casework where this didn't contribute to these objectives (eg funding for RMC's outreach support was channelled into building their skills and capacity to register young people).

During the course of phase two, four new organisations were also funded to pursue work on youth organising, and to explore local authority and voluntary sector support for destitute migrant families and young people. In some cases, organisations received multiple grants for related strands of work in this phase.

Evolution of the Initiative – phase two (2)

While in phase one, Unbound's funding contribution was fairly limited (amounting to around 10% of total funds), during the course of phase two this grew to around 50%, as more funds were aligned to support shared Initiative goals. In total in phase two, the funders made grants to the value of £1,231,201 (£801,201 from PHF and £430,000 from Unbound).

PHF and Unbound also continued to jointly fund central coordination of the Initiative, as well as convening, commissioning, sharing and learning activities, and evaluation. In total in phase two, the funders spent a further £262,689 on these support costs*.

Phase two activity - existing participants



Continuation of legal advice (immigration and nationality), casework, advocacy and group-based support for young people. Training for Independent Reviewing Officers and social workers (with CCLC). Film on challenges faced by young migrants. Research on impact of legal aid cuts on separated children in immigration cases (with ILC).



Continuation of outreach (immigration and nationality) for young people and families and help to access legal representation and other services through Migrant Children's Project. New probono advice project to help children register as British citizens, in Legal Practice Unit. Wide range of training and influencing work, including shared policy platform for SOI.



Continuation from phase 1 of legal advice and representation (immigration, nationality) for young people to register as British citizens, via project at Ealing Law Centre (then Asylum Aid). Advice and training for professionals. Litigation and wide range of influencing activities.



Continuation of legal advice (immigration, nationality) and casework to young people and families access support services. Group-based peer support and leadership training for young people, via Brighter Futures group. Guidance and awareness-raising for practitioners. Film on good solicitor practice. Support for young people to have their voices heard in policy debates.



Continuation of holistic legal advice, representation and advocacy (immigration, nationality, community care, housing, education etc) for separated young people, via PROTECT project at Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit. Awareness-raising and training for wide range of professionals. Litigation and wide range of influencing and campaigning work.



Development and testing of Path to Papers website, including assessment tool for people who may be eligible for regularisation and signposting to specialist support. Awareness-raising with range of professionals. Collaboration with Coventry (now Central England) to signpost clients to advice.



Continuation of holistic legal advice (immigration, nationality, health, education) for young people and families, including failed asylum-seekers. Help to access services and assistance with destitution and basic needs. Range of influencing activities with local policy-makers and support organisations.



Continuation of outreach legal advice and representation (immigration, nationality, community care etc) for young people and support to "connect" to informal community support, via Young Migrants' Rights project. New project to register young people as British citizens '(Coventry, now Central England, only). Awareness-raising with VCS groups & professionals. Litigation and range of influencing.



Continuation of support and access to legal advice and other services for Appeal Rights Exhausted former asylum-seeking children from Afghanistan facing forced removal to Kabul. New piece of research monitoring outcomes for young people post-return. Dissemination & influencing activities.

Phase two activity - new participants



Research, influencing & strategic litigation on local authority policy & practice in relation to supporting destitute migrant families with No Recourse to Public Funds. Awareness-raising & training for other professionals.





Leadership training & support to become campaigners for change on the issue of student fees & finance through Let Us Learn group. Involvement in training & awareness activities aimed at schools, higher education institutions and the wider world. Discussions with universities to create new scholarships & fee waivers for young people without settled status. Advice and casework for a wider network of young people.

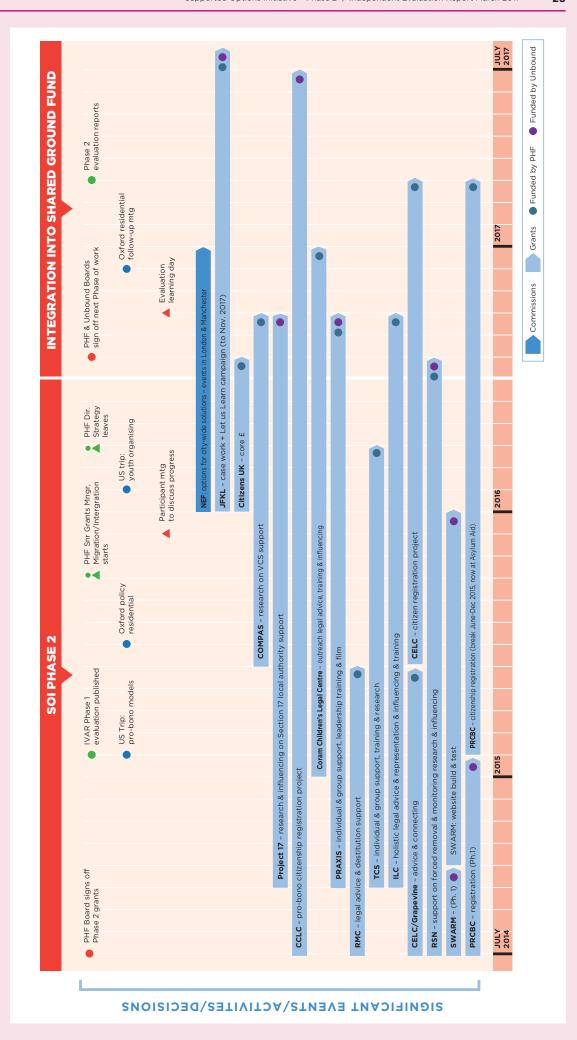


Research on voluntary & community sector support for destitute migrant families with No Recourse to Public Funds. Wide range of dissemination & influencing activities.



A "bridging grant" to cover the work of Citizens UK's Stand Up Stand Out youth-led movement from January-July 2016, before a new PHF grant for core organising and youth activism work was negotiated. The group supports young people's campaigning activities, including many young people without settled status in the UK. Included community organising training for young leaders and support for various campaigns.

Evolution of the Initiative phase two



Evaluation of phase two - aims & caveats

The evaluation team began work on the evaluation of phase two in November 2015.

The aims of this phase of the evaluation were to:

- Describe/summarise the situations of undocumented children, young people and families and the barriers they experience to leading full lives, and how the Initiative has worked and evolved and the challenges involved in the work
- Assess the Initiative's success in meeting it's objectives in this phase, and
- Draw out the learning for funders, participants and other interested parties.

Although phase two was originally designed to finish in the Summer of 2016, several of the grants that have been awarded ran to later in 2016, and some into 2017. In order to capture the learning from some of this on-going work, the evaluation explores activities and outcomes to end of January 31st 2017. Our focus has been on exploring achievements and learning at the level of the Initiative as a whole; participating organisations have submitted their own reports to funders which provide more detailed information about progress against individual plans.

As we began work on the evaluation midway through phase two, it was not possible to capture an accurate baseline. We have also had to take a pragmatic approach to collecting and analysing quantitative data on activities and outcomes, as this activity was well underway when we started work and was being carried out in different ways by different projects.

Because of the staggered timescales for grants and the cumulative nature of the work, it has sometimes been tricky to disentangle achievements and learning in phase two from that of phase one. In a few cases, it has also been tricky to separate out the impact of SOI-funded activity from activity funded by other organisations. For example, SOI case work seems to have influenced training and policy work funded by other organisations or by participants themselves, while case work funded by others has influenced SOI-funded policy and influencing activities.

Evaluation of phase two - activities & approach

We began work in late 2015 by holding a series of discussions with the Coordinator and PHF and Unbound staff to explore the Initiative's aims and history. We then visited each participating organisation in the Spring of 2016 to explore project plans and early progress. These discussions and visits informed the design of a template to collect some common quantitative data on activity and outcomes from all projects. We carried out an interim analysis of this data (to end of March 2016) to inform a paper for both funders' Boards in the Summer of 2016.

We revisited or held phone conferences with each project as their work came to an end, to explore achievements and learning. We also updated the quantitative data to reflect final activity and outcomes. In addition to these core activities, we:

- Conducted focus group discussions with two groups of young people involved with Just for Kids Law's Let Us Learn campaign group and Praxis' Brighter Futures group
- Attended several training days and launch events run by individual participants
- Designed and facilitated a learning day for all SOI participants towards the end of phase two to explore major points of shared learning

- Held various discussions with the Initiative Coordinator and senior staff at PHF and Unbound to explore on-going progress and learning
- Developed a series of case studies to explore individual young people's experience and the impact of the support they have received from participants.

In the Summer of 2016, the Boards of PHF and Unbound took a decision to continue their work to support children and young people with irregular immigration status. However, rather than continuing as a PHF Special Initiative, Supported Options is being integrated into PHF's new migration and integration programme to allow connections to be made with this wider range of activity. Funding of £500K a year for three years will be ring-fenced for this work, with on-going commitment on the part of of both funders to collaboration and central coordination. At the time of writing, several new grants were being negotiated with participants to support on-going work.

Context for phase two - immigration acts & legal aid

Two new pieces of legislation have been passed in the past few years, which have reinforced the "hostile environment" for people with irregular status, presenting further challenges for Supported Options beneficiaries and participants in phase two:

- The Immigration Act 2014 received royal assent on 14 May 2014, just before phase two of SOI began, and aimed to make the UK "the least attractive destination for illegal immigrants" (Home Office, 2013). The Act introduced changes to make it easier to: identify people with irregular status (by extending search and investigation powers); remove them (by cutting appeal rights, introducing a "deport now appeal later" regime for foreign nationals with criminal records, and restricting bail); and make it harder for them to live in the UK (by requiring private landlords to check the immigration status of their tenants, prohibiting banks from opening current accounts for those unlawfully resident here, and introducing powers to check the immigration status of driving licence applicants). It also included new measures to require people with timelimited leave to make a contribution to the NHS (the "health surcharge").
- The Immigration Act 2016, which received royal assent on 12th May, builds on the 2014 Act and aims to "make it harder for people to settle in the UK when they have no right to do so" (Home Office, 2016). It introduced powers to enable landlords to evict "illegal" migrants more quickly, banks to freeze their accounts, and for their driving licenses to be seized. It restricts the support given to people whose asylum claims are rejected, extends the "deport now, appeal later" regime, and introduces a range of new measures to deny this group access to the labour market.

During phase two, the government also tried to introduce a new residence test for civil legal aid. This would have removed legal aid entirely for most people who had not been lawfully resident in the UK for 12 months. However, proposals were rejected by the Supreme Court following a challenge by the Public Law Project (Law Gazette, 2016. See the later section of this report on influencing law and policy).

Context for phase twoausterity

In addition to changes to legal aid, law and policy, the continuing impact of cuts in funding to public and third sector organisations has contributed to a challenging environment for beneficiaries and participants in phase two of Supported Options.

A recent study focusing on the period 2010-2015 found that while in the early years of the austerity programme local councils were able to find savings from back office services, cuts had now reached a "tipping point', with a "marked shift to reductions in frontline services". While on average councils in England have faced cuts of 27 per cent between 2010/11 - 2015/16 in real terms, authorities in deprived areas (where people new to the country tend to cluster) have suffered disproportionately, leaving those areas least able to cope with the withdrawal of services bearing the brunt of service reductions. The authors suggest that although Government may have hoped voluntary sector organisations would fill the gaps left in council services, most of these organsiations were facing similar funding and staffing pressures (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2015).

Context for phase two - Brexit and the migration crisis

On 23rd June 2016, 52% of the UK population who voted in the EU referendum opted to leave. Immigration was the deciding issue for these people (Ipsos Mori, 2016). Some research has suggested that the migration crisis, and the movement of 1 million people into Europe during 2015, may have exacerbated anti-immigration feeling, even though the UK is outside of the Schengen passport-free travel agreement (Wadsworth et al., 2016). Some news reports indicate that there has been a uplift in hate crime following the referendum, which may affect migrants with regular and irregular status alike in the months and years to come (Guardian, Sept 2016).

It is not yet clear what impact leaving the EU will have on migration to and from the UK, though immigration will clearly be a central issue in the negotiations (HM Government, 2017). Future migration flows will depend on what migration policies emerge and their effects (Migration Observatory, 2016). The Prime Minister's announcement that the UK will leave the European single market (BBC, 2017) suggests the UK may be free to impose selection criteria on EU citizens similar to those imposed on non-EU citizens, however broader changes to the immigration system may also be forthcoming. Migration will also be shaped by wider economic trends as a result of leaving.

It is also not clear how Brexit will impact on the UK's commitment to human rights, since the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is an international treaty, distinct from the EU Treaties, and partially incorporated into UK law through the Human Rights Act 1998. Withdrawal from the ECHR will be complicated by the fact that that it has constitutional status in the devolved nations, and played a key role in peace process in Northern Ireland.

Although deeply concerned about these changes, Supported Options participants felt the Brexit referendum offered some opportunities as well as threats. They felt this seismic change could be a chance to engage support services, policy-makers and the public in a conversation about children and young people with irregular immigration status, as part of wider debates about eligibility and entitlement for EU citizens.



SECTION 3
describes the
types of young
people who have
been supported
in phase two and
outlines their
experiences and
the challenges
they face

Types of young people supported

SOI participants who have provided direct support to children and young people have collected data on beneficiaries in slightly different ways, making it harder to aggregate across projects. However, the data below gives an indication of the types of young people who have been supported in both phases.

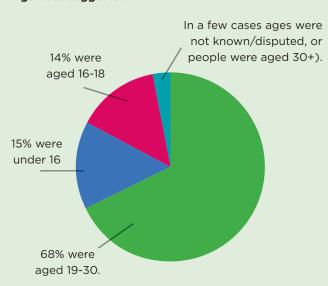
In phase one

IVAR identified that projects had worked with **874 young people**. (An additional 550 family members were supported by Praxis and Coram).

Nigeria, Afghanistan and India were the top countries of origin. Large numbers of young people also came from Iraq, Ghana, Iran, Jamaica. (This excludes RSN's project, which worked just with Afghan boys and young men).

Girls and young women made up 53% of the cohort.

Age data suggested:



This data relates to 596 people.

Family status varied greatly.

On presenting to the projects, **83% were in UK** without legal permission, 11% had some (often temporary) permission, 3% were EEA nationals. The status of 3% was unknown.

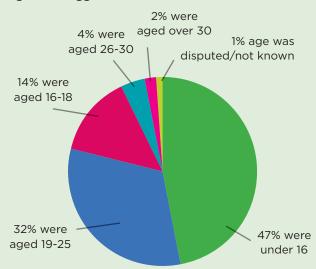
In phase two

We found that projects had worked with **1815 young people**. (An additional set of family members were supported by Coram, Praxis and RMC).

Afghanistan, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Jamaica, China, India and Pakistan were the top countries of origin mentioned by participants in phase two.

Girls and young women made up 57% of the cohort for which we have demographic data.

Age data suggests:



Family status varied but data suggests 18% were unaccompanied/separated.

On presenting to the projects: 56% were in the UK without legal permission, 44% had some form of legal permission.

Young people & their experiences - a diverse group

Evidence gathered for the evaluation of phase two confirms that young people with irregular immigration status are a hugely diverse group, facing a wide range of challenges.

This diversity reflects the different routes into and out of irregular status (see Appendix two), as well as the specific cohorts projects have chosen to work with. For example:

- Islington's PROTECT project has tended to work with separated young people, while Coram Children's Legal Centre has worked predominantly with family units (often single mothers with young children).
- Refugee Support Network has worked exclusively with former asylum-seeking children from Afghanistan facing forced removal to Kabul, while other other projects have supported young people from different backgrounds on a wide range of issues.

Anecdotally, there seems to be a wide spectrum of vulnerability. We have, for example, been told by some participants about highly vulnerable, separated, young people who have been trading sex as a means of meeting basic needs. At the same time, we have been struck by the tremendous resilience and drive of other young people, including those we have met during the course of the evaluation.

We do not have the data to create robust profiles of young people and their circumstances. However, the next page sets out some common scenarios that young people supported by participants have found themselves in. These are fictionalised, composite stories based on conversations we have had with participant organisations. Some full case studies of particular young people who have been supported through the Initiative are included in Section 5.

Young people & their experiences - a diverse cohort

Young person with no immediate hope of resolution

"I was brought here by my mother when I was 14. I'm now 19. I want to regularise my status but I've been told I can't do anything about it right now. I have to wait. My whole life's completely on hold."

Young person refused registration after caution

"I'm 15 and was born in the UK, but my parents didn't know about registration when I was young. I recently put in an application but this was refused because I got a caution last year and they said my character was no good."

Young person escaping persecution/ abuse at home

"I'm 20 and moved from Rwanda because I was pressurised into getting involved in military activities there. It was awful, but I'm just so grateful I managed to escape here".

Young person blocked from accessing student finance

"I was born here and only found out I wasn't a British Citizen when I applied for student finance. It was such a shock! Now I feel my career path is blocked and I can't progress like all my friends."

Young person trafficked into the UK

"I was brought here by my 'auntie' and made to work in her house for 16 hours a day. She wouldn't let me go to school. I spoke to a lawyer in the past about this, but they didn't seem to be that interested in what I said."

Appeal Rights Exhausted asylumseeking young person

"I arrived in the UK from Afghanistan at 15 and was taken into care. Now I'm turning 18, I'm facing removal to Kabul, a place I've never even visited before. If someone had looked into my asylum case properly years ago, I might not be in this situation now."

Young person facing destitution

"I'm 22 and came here when I was three.

My mum never tried to sort out my status
and she left me anyway and I grew up in care.
I recently lost my job, but I can't get benefits.
I've got a young son and we just don't have
any money for advice or application fees."

Young woman abandoned by British partner

"My child was born here. Her father is British, but we're not really in contact anymore. He promised to provide the papers to prove that she's British, but now he's disappeared again and my lawyers says her birth certificate is no longer good enough evidence."

Mother & child homeless after relationship breakdown

"I came to the UK as a visitor, met someone from France and over-stayed. After my son was born, he became violent and we split up. My son is now registered and I have limited leave, but we have no support from the Council and are sleeping on friends' sofas."

Young people & their experiences: trends in phase two

In phase two, participating organisations report that young people are finding it increasingly difficult to access legal advice, as the lack of free support reaches crisis point. Only the most destitute are now able to access free advice. All participants providing advice and representation have reported overwhelming need that they cannot meet (though this has not been captured systematically).

Participants also report a big increase in the proportion of young people who have some kind of permission to remain in the UK. Data reviewed for the evaluation suggests this has increased from 11% in phase one to 44% in phase two, reflecting the direction of government policy to grant people time-limited leave.

Participants are seeing more young people and families in serious financial hardship, as it becomes increasingly common for time-limited leave to be granted with No Recourse to Public Funds (see below), local authorities are getting increasingly confident about rejecting applications for Section 17 support (see section 6), and cuts to voluntary services deepen. The situation for vulnerable, unaccompanied or separated young people seems particularly precarious (Skehan et al, 2017).

Financial hardship, coupled with significant increases in application fees (see below) means more young people are 'bouncing in and out of legal status'. While popular perceptions may be of "good migrants" who have status, and "bad migrants" who don't, participants emphasise that the reality is many people have had some form time-limited leave in the past, but can't now afford the higher fees to extend it, or have had poor quality legal advice that has jeopardised their case. Other people have struggled to keep up with frequent changes to the immigration and nationality system.

Participants have also told us they are seeing more people for whom there is no short or medium-term way of resolving their status under revised Immigration Rules on long-residence. This means a growing cohort of young people continue to exist "in limbo".

Young people & their experiences: NRPF

Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, a person has no recourse to public funds (NRPF) if they are subject to immigration control (NRPF Network). NRPF can be a condition attached to certain kinds of visas (eg student or spousal visas) or grants of leave (eg for the first five years for someone granted indefinite leave to remain as the adult dependent of a settled person). It also applies to anyone who does not have permission to be in the UK.

Public funds include: income-based jobseeker's allowance; income support; child tax credit; universal credit; working tax credit; social fund payments; child benefit; housing benefit; council tax benefit and reduction; severe disablement allowance; personal independence payment; carer's allowance; disability living allowance; and local authority housing and homelessness assistance (HM Government, 2014).

A person with NRPF can seek assistance with accommodation and subsistence from their social services department under care and children's legislation if they become destitute, as these are not public funds. They may be eligible for support if they: have a child in need or are a pregnant or nursing mother in need; are a young person who has been looked after by the local authority; or are a vulnerable adult with need for care and support.

Local authorities should conduct a human rights assessment to ensure that they do not breach a person's human rights or EU Treaty rights by refusing to provide support under care and children's legislation (NRPF Network).

Young people & their experiences: rising fees

Application fees for Home Office applications increase each year; in 2015-2016 fees for some kinds of application rose by 25%. In 2016, application fees for limited leave to remain were £811, and for indefinite leave £1,875 (CCLC, 2016).

SOI participants have expressed concerns that these figures far exceed the cost to the Home Office of processing applications. Coming on top of the new "health surcharge" of £200 per person per year of leave granted, participants fear this will leave many people with irregular status with little choice but to continue in their current precarious state.

Although fee waivers are available, changes to the guidance in April 2015 restricted the types of applications for and the circumstances in which waivers are granted. The threshold for destitution that people need to demonstrate is now extremely high. Applying for a waiver is also considered to be risky, as if rejected, an application would be considered invalid for non-payment. Some Supported Options participants have argued that changes to the guidance on fee waivers are particularly detrimental for children making applications in their own right, since the whole family unit now needs to qualify for a waiver for it to be granted to any member (CCLC, 2016).

Fees for citizenship applications have increased in the past year. As of March 2016, the fee was £936, well above the cost of registering the child, which the Home Office estimates at £272 (CCLC, 2016). Participants are particularly concerned about this, since under Section 1(4) of the British Nationality Act 1981 children who meet the criteria have an entitlement in law to be registered.

The Ministry of Justice also attempted to increase Immigration and Asylum Tribunal fees in 2016, in some instances by 500% (CCLC, 2016). Proposed fee increases came on top of restrictions to the types of cases that can be appealed under the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts. However, plans were dropped following strong opposition in a public consultation on the issue and the department has promised a more extensive review of fees (Guardian, Nov 2016).

Young people & their experiences: families under strain

While Supported Options originally set out to help young people, over time it has supported more and more families, often with young children, confirming the intergenerational nature of irregular migration. In phase two, participants have observed that families are coming under increasing strain, faced with difficult decisions about whose immigration or citizenship application to prioritise in a context in which household finances will not stretch to supporting everyone's claim. A few projects cite instances of parents deliberately cutting off financial support to their children, in the hope that destitution will strengthen their child's case to stay in the UK. Others report instances of families being split up when a family member is trapped outside the country, with the rise of out-of-country appeals.

"It's especially hard where family members are not in the same situation. Like my mum and my brother got their status last April and I didn't, and my mum was like 'let me send this back, I don't want it if we don't all get this'. I mean when you all come into the country together and they alienate you on purpose it's just really hard."

"I live with my mum and brother and they're settled, they have unlimited leave to remain, which is great. But it's like I'm the only one. I'm living at home and I think I could have to leave at any point. They try to understand, but I feel like an alien even in my own home."

"When my mum and brother got theirs, I didn't get mine, because I turned 18. So I only got mine last year. In the time I hadn't got it, my mum was like 'don't worry you're going to get it', but she could see I was really depressed. It was just bringing me down."

Young people & their experiences: common experiences

Experience in phase two also confirms some themes previously identified in the literature on this topic, which seem to affect many young people with irregular status, regardless of their particular background or circumstances.

Young people feel their life is in limbo and report frustration born of prolonged periods of uncertainty, in which it is not possible to take steps to build a more secure future and to realise their dreams (see also Sigona and Hughes 2012, Bloch et al. 2009).

Actual experience or fear of negative attitudes from others often leads young people to isolate themselves from friends and other potential support networks (see also CCLC, 2013). Young people we met as part of the evaluation described how, for example, they had to tell lies to explain why they couldn't go on school trips with their friends. Over time, they said they felt increasingly trapped in a "web of lies" until they ceased to remember what they had told to whom, and it was just easier to spend time alone (see below). Isolation has been identified by participants as a risk factor for abuse (Skehan et al, 2017).

Participants suggest young people's identity is at risk of being fundamentally harmed by their lack of status as, forced to continually repeat their story to professionals in order to seek help, they begin to conflate their identity with their "immigration story", losing sight of their own narrative, interests, and dreams. For those young people born in the UK, or with long-residence here, finding out about irregular status can come as a huge shock, as they have always self-identified as British and are on first glance indistinguishable by others from their documented peers (Skehan et al, 2017).

Some participants have worked with numerous young women who have experienced domestic violence. Their status as "irregular migrants" has been exploited by partners who take advantage of this power differential for their own ends (see also Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

Together with financial hardship, and restricted access to healthcare and support services, participants suggest these factors often lead to psychological distress, anxiety and depression (see also Amnesty International 2006, Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

Young people & their experiences: traps and webs

Conversations with participating organisations and young people suggest many young people with irregular status feel they are caught in a "trap" or a "web of challenges" - they can't progress with one aspect of their life, without progress on another (yet this second area is dependent on the first).



One particularly common trap highlighted by several participants is the fact that for destitute individuals or families there is a strong link between their immigration claim and their eligibility for social support. Without legal aid, and with little pro-bono advice available, many people are left unable to submit an immigration application or appeal a previous decision. But without an application in train, they are often unable to access support from their local authority, despite the fact that if they were receiving support, they might be eligible for assistance with their immigration issues, or be able to pay for advice themselves (CCLC, 2016). (See Adwoa's story in Section 5 for more details about how one young person was trapped in this cycle before accessing support through SOI).



"I remember when I was in school and there was a trip to Spain and I went home that day and said to my mum 'there's this trip' and at this point I had no idea, I thought, you know, that everything was fine and I could go, and she was like 'oh but you can't go', and she broke it down to me in wavs that I could understand. By the time I went back to school they were like 'oh are you ready for the trip' and everyone was so excited, but I was just like 'I have this family thing'. It gets to the point when it just starts piling up and you can't deal with it anymore. Instead, you just start thinking 'why don't I just let those people go' and, since it's your problem, take it on yourself. That was my solution anyway."

(Young person participating with Let us Learn).



SECTION 4 focuses in on the direct support that Initiative participants have provided to children, young people and families, and outlines the scope and scale of this activity, key achievements, challenges and **learning**

Direct support for young people & families: overview

In phase two, participants have provided a wide range of direct support to young people and, in some cases, to their families. Data suggests 1815 young people have received some kind of tailored legal or social support, either individually or as part of a group. In addition, we estimate that over **7545 people** have been reached by general awareness-raising activities, and many more have visited websites, viewed films and downloaded resources (see below). Data is less reliable for awareness-raising activity than for individual support since it has not been collected systematically by all participants.

awareness-raising

A wide range of activity to raise awareness of rights and entitlements, including workshops, drop-ins, letter mail outs etc.

This has reached 7545+ young people and family members. Plus: 6,379 visits to the Path to Papers website, 650+ views of Praxis' Know Your Rights film, 2000+ views of JFKL's Young, Gifted and Blocked YouTube film.

legal support

Help to access a lawyer or advice worker, provision of individual advice and representation, and help accessing funding to support case work.

The following numbers of young people have been helped: supported referral to a lawyer/advice worker 414; legal advice 758; legal representation 237 (at least 54 of which are phase 1 legacy cases).

other expert support

Support to cope with current situation and explore future options, help to access a wide range of other support services.

The following numbers of young people have been helped with:

health 183; housing 99; education 571; social services 184; basic needs 216; debt 7; support on voluntary return/forced removal 67.

peer support

Support to meet, share experiences and form supportive relationships with other young people in a similar situation.

The following numbers of young people have been helped to: access peer support 273; take part in leadership training as part of movement building activities 304.

Direct support: awareness-raising

In phase two, participants have continued to explore a wide range of ways to raise awareness of rights and entitlements among migrant communities. For example, Islington Law Centre has worked with local primary schools, the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens (PRCBC) has run workshops at a local health centre, and Coram Children's Legal Centre has run outreach clinics in children's centres.

This activity has been critical in building trust with communities and encouraging young people who might need support to come forward. It has also been a way of ensuring some level of awareness of rights and entitlements among a wider pool of people than could have been reached through (more time-intensive and expensive) individual advice and support. This activity has also helped build relationships with partner organisations whose goodwill and understanding of the issues is key to identifying and accessing young people and families who might need help.

Most participants reported poor levels of understanding of routes to regularisation among migrant and diaspora communities, and suggested there was potential to do far more to work with communities and informal community leaders to raise awareness. However they also cautioned that "a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing". For example, we were told that some families who had heard through word of mouth about the "seven year rule" had held off seeking help for their children as they didn't currently meet those criteria, even though seeking early advice would have been advantageous anyway.

Direct support: awareness-raising

Participants emphasised that it was essential for awareness-raising messages to be inclusive and not inadvertently suggest that the issue of irregular migration is one that affects certain migrant communities only. They also felt it was important to recognise that, for some young people, seeking help might require them to "peel away from other family or community members". Taking independent action like this is likely to be harder for young people from some communities than others.

Some participants felt it was important to have differentiated strategies to reach out to and raise awareness among different groups of people with irregular status, for example young women who might be "less easily visible" (for example, "sofa surfing" in someone's house in exchange for informal childcare). In their Young Migrants' Rights project, Coventry (now Central England) Law Centre and Grapevine found it helpful to run female-only groups to raise awareness among young women and to support them in making independent choices.

Some participants were cautious about carrying out further awareness-raising activity when they lacked the resources to support those who might come forward. However others felt it was important to make sure young people were aware of their rights and encourage them to think about their future, even if the resources were not currently available to support resolution of their case in the immediate term.

Although participants were keen to emphasise that there is no substitute for individual, tailored advice in supporting children and young people, SWARM'S Path to Papers website was being actively promoted by some projects as a way of reaching more people, providing tools to enable people to help themselves, and signposting people on to specialist support. Central England Law Centre (CELC), in particular, has been using the website to drive referrals to the Law Centre as part of its citizenship registration project. We understand the website will form part of the new Kids in Need of Defense UK pro-bono project, which has emerged from phase two, (see page 48).

Direct support: awarenessraising - registration

Registering a child as a British citizen is one of the best ways of regularising their status, since it's only citizenship that provides full protection under the law. Registration is also quicker and less expensive than other routes to settled status, which can involve paying thousands of pounds in fees for consecutive periods of time-limited leave. Timely registration is important as this reduces the likelihood of a child having got into trouble with the law and failing to meet "good character" criteria. Registering a child may also strengthen a parent's case to remain in the UK.

In phase two, three participants focused in particular on citizenship registration:
Coram Children's Legal Centre (pro-bono project) and Central England Law Centre (registration project) focused largely on "entitlement" cases (UK-born children who have lived in the UK for the first 10 years of life); and PRCBC focused largely on more complex "discretionary" cases. Islington has also worked on registration cases. (See Appendix two for more information about "routes to regularisation".)

Participants found that UK-born children and young people who might be eligible for citizenship were particularly difficult to locate and engage, since unlike more recent migrants, their families had "managed to carve out a life on the margins", were less likely to be in contact with migrant support services, were not easily identifiable by others as "foreign", and were often unwilling to "rock the boat" by seeking help. Young people and families were also often particularly wary of the Home Office and lawyers, having tried and failed to regularise their status in the past. Participants found cuts to voluntary services made awareness-raising more difficult. However, Central England Law Centre found engaging schools (via team/cluster meetings and sessions with learning mentors and teaching assistants) effective in locating families. Other projects found links with social services and other support organisations helpful in reaching eligible families.

Participants found especially low levels of awareness among communities (and professionals) of the fact that a child is not automatically British if they are born in the UK. CELC found materials produced by Let Us Learn really useful in helping parents and school staff to understand what life without settled status might be like and how it might get harder after the 2014 and 2016 Acts.

Direct support: legal support on status

In phase two, participants have provided a range of support to help young people to access tailored legal advice and representation to resolve their immigration status. Some participants have provided advice themselves, with a few providing full representation for their clients. Others have supported young people to access legal advice from other organisations (both from other Supported Options participants and organisations that are not part of the Initiative).

As highlighted earlier, participants have reported overwhelming demand for legal advice that they cannot meet with existing resources. It has been particularly difficult to find lawyers willing to provide full legal representation for young clients. Even where legal aid is still available, participants report that private sector lawyers are often over-loaded or reluctant to take on more complex cases. In this context, the fact that some participants (Central England and Islington Law Centres and PRCBC) have been able to take on cases and follow them through to their conclusion has been a clear strength of the Initiative.

Participants have identified numerous examples of poor professional practice, where previous lawyers and advice workers have missed important elements of a young person's case. We have heard, for example, of several instances in which a young person had a valid protection case that had not been picked up (see Amina's story in Section 5 for an example of this).

We also heard about a tendency on the part of some private sector solicitors to "keep clients in the dark" about their options or "sell false hope", where honesty about a young person's situation was key to helping them gain more control over their lives and to building trust with professionals.

Participants have also observed that young clients (and adults) have a tendency to "trust in solicitors from their own ethnic background", even when the skills and qualities of some of these professionals do not warrant this. The film made by the Brighter Futures group at Praxis to help young people find a trust-worthy lawyer is a valuable contribution to tackling this issue.

Direct support: legal support on status

Participants providing advice and representation have emphasised the complexity of many of the cases they have been dealing with, which require a wide knowledge of immigration, nationality, EU and international law to explore all possible avenues to support clients. Casework also requires patience, tenacity and sensitivity to uncover the full facts of a client's case.

Funding from Supported Options has enabled participants to operate in new, more flexible ways in order to get to the bottom of the issues and better support this group of clients. For example, CCLC's outreach project has held advice sessions in children's centres, reducing travel time and expense for clients and helping to ensure they feel more comfortable in familiar surroundings. Central England and Islington Law Centre's and PRCBC have met with young people at home, or in a range of youth or community settings. These more flexible ways of working have enabled lawyers and advice workers to build trust with young people and their families and explore their histories gradually, and in full. As IVAR noted in the evaluation of phase one, projects have also been able to leave cases open, so that young people who frequently disappear for a while, due to difficult personal circumstances, can pick up later where they left off.

Some projects have been exploring ways of reorganising their work to free up additional capacity to support young people. For example, one project is now offering initial advice sessions on the phone, to avoid those it knows it definitely can't help having to spend time and money travelling to a face to face appointment. Other participants are concerned that important facts may be missed on the phone and so have instead tried to hone their ability to ask the right questions in face to face interactions so they get to the heart of the matter as quickly as possible.

In their registration project, Central England Law Centre originally hoped that parents might be able to complete the application forms themselves, perhaps in a workshop, and so produced some "self help" packs to assist with this. However, given how much rides on the application and the challenges of evidencing ten years continuous residence, CELC found most parents were reluctant to fill in the forms themselves and wanted at least some assistance from a lawyer.

Legal support: Exceptional Case Funding

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LAPSO) 2012 did introduce an Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) regime designed to protect access to legal aid where it is required to prevent a breach of human rights or an EU treaty right. However, few applications were brought in phase one of Supported Options as support organisations felt the hurdles were too high and didn't want to take the risk of spending time on applications that were unlikely to be successful (CCLC, 2016).

A 2014 ruling that the guidance was too restrictive led to a few more cases being granted in the early stages of phase two (see section 6 for details about Islington Law Centre's involvement in this case). Coram Children's Legal Centre, in particular, invested time in applying for ECF, in the hope it would enable them to provide full representation, rather than just advice, to some of their clients. In phase two, Coram applied for ECF in 53 cases and were successful in 30. However, Coram found the situation stalled during 2016 after the Court of Appeal overturned the earlier ruling.

In addition to helping particular clients, applying for ECF is seen by participants as important in sending a signal to government that legal aid is still needed. Participants are concerned that cuts to legal aid and an overly restrictive ECF regime reduce access to justice. Some participants have also pointed out that if local authorities increasingly have to foot the bill for legal advice (at private rates) for the approximately 2500 unaccompanied migrant children, care leavers and children in families they support, this will result in a huge transfer of costs from the Ministry of Justice to local authorities (CCLC, 2013).

Legal support: Home Office decision-making

In phase two, participants have identified numerous examples of what they consider to be poor decision-making on the part of the Home Office. In ZH (Tanzania) v SSHD, the Supreme Court held that the "best interests" of a child affected by an immigration decision is a factor that must rank higher than any other (Coram, 2013). However, participants have cited numerous examples of where a child's best interests have not, in their professional opinion, been given appropriate weight and attention. Participants have also raised concerns about the way in which the Home Office has assessed whether a child is of "good character", one of the criteria for obtaining British citizenship under the British Nationality Act 1981 and for regularising status under the Immigration Rules (see Appendix two). We have been told, for example, about cases of young people who otherwise met the criteria to be registered as a British Citizens who have been refused after receiving a police caution. Participants have told us that most young people and professionals do not even attempt to challenge Home Office decisions as it never occurs to them that the Department might get a decision wrong.

Participants have also cited numerous examples of poor quality communication from the Home Office. Participants have suggested it is common to receive short, sometimes identical, refusal letters that do not engage with the evidence or legal arguments presented in a case. This seems to have been a particular issue with complex discretionary registration cases (see also Valdez, 2014). Participants are particularly concerned about this given the reduction in appeal rights introduced in recent legislation, and the rising costs of making an appeal where this is still possible.

As discussed elsewhere, even where leave is granted, this is now increasingly for short periods of time and no recourse to public funds, with long routes to settlement, leaving young people facing very uncertain futures.

Legal support: Pro-bono support models

In phase two, projects have continued to explore ways of levering in additional capacity to provide legal advice to children, young people and families. For example, the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens has deployed appropriately trained volunteers to support case work, and Coram Children's Legal Centre has begun to explore ways of deploying migrant advice workers to help "triage" cases in its outreach project.

This activity has been significantly scaled up in phase two with the funding of a new pro-bono citizenship registration project based at Coram Children's Legal Centre. This collaboration with two leading city law firms provides an important way of increasing capacity in the system to take on case work. (See Dede's story in Section 5 for more information).

In phase two, Initiative leaders have also facilitated contact between CCLC and other SOI participants, and Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), a US-based organisation that supports pro-bono partners at law firms, corporations and law schools to represent unaccompanied immigrant and refugee children in deportation proceedings. Learning from KIND in the US, and other pro-bono initiatives, has highlighted the need for strong branding and effective marketing to attract pro-bono lawyers to such schemes. It has also, crucially, demonstrated the importance of high quality supervision and support to give pro-bono lawyers the confidence and skills to take on cases and do a good job for their young clients. CCLC's pro-bono project has already trained over 100 lawyers as part of its project.

CCLC's project is now being integrated into Kids in Need of Defense UK, a new collaboration between KIND US, Central England and Islington Law Centres, and CCLC that has emerged from phase two. Funded by Microsoft, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound, Kids in Need of Defense UK aims to build a pro-bono movement with the capacity and scale to address the legal needs of children and young people with unresolved immigration status.

Direct support: other professional support

Participants in phase two have also continued to offer a wide range of other support (both legal and social) to help young people and families improve their immediate quality of life and plan for their future. Projects have, for example, helped young people to find emergency housing, deal with debts, access counselling and education services, and set up work experience and training.

This wider support has been critical because many young people are facing such hardship that they cannot begin to tackle their immigration status until this is resolved. As Home Office decision-making is often so protracted (a "marathon rather than a sprint"), on-going support of this nature is also required to sustain a young person while their case is in train. Some participants have found that being able to address these immediate needs is important in building trust and rapport with young people. As has been highlighted earlier, there is also a close link between having an immigration claim in the system and access to some types of social support and vice versa.

In working with young people, participants have emphasised that they have tried to adopt an "asset-based" approach, helping young people to identify and build on established strengths and to enhance their self-esteem and confidence. They emphasise that what moves a young person on "is different for everyone" – for one young person it might be that their immigration status is the only thing holding them back, while for another significant support might be required to help them get out of bed in the mornings and provide structure to their day.

Direct support: other professional support

Models for providing wider support of this kind have varied and include:

- Employment of case workers who provide one to one support for young people and help them navigate a complex and confusing range of services and support. This support has been invaluable for young people who sometimes feel they have no-one else on their side:
 - "X is my case worker...he's done a brilliant job...He really went out of his way to help me, saying whether they put obstacles in your way, at the end of the tunnel, there's always light. Every case worker who is assigned to a person they really help you to do whatever it takes." (Young person participating at Praxis).
- Working in new ways with colleagues in participants' own organisation.
 For example, Islington's PROTECT project has involved a "virtual team" of ILC lawyers with expertise in a range of areas of law (such as education and community care, as well as immigration and nationality) working together to meet young people's holistic legal needs and signpost them to other support.
- In some cases, support has also been delivered by several organisations working in collaboration. For example, lawyers from Central England Law Centre worked as part of a seamless team with Grapevine's "Connector" to provide both legal advice and help to connect to informal sources of community support. In the process, staff from CELC and Grapevine learnt a great deal about each others' specialism, such that lawyers were regularly "connecting" their clients to other participants and the "Connector" was able to signpost people who needed specialist legal support to the legal team.

All these models, in different ways, help to ensure that the full range of young people's support needs are met, and they are not continually "passed off" to other professionals outside of the organisation who they don't know or trust, or who have limited understanding of their needs.

Direct support: peer support & youth involvement

In phase two, participants have also progressed their thinking about and practice in relation to peer support. Peer support is seen as an important way of empowering young people, helping them to overcome the stigma often associated with irregular status, and to build their self esteem. Young people we consulted as part of the evaluation told us that being able to open up and share experiences with people in a similar situation has helped them to feel less alone and to see their personal experiences in a wider context.

Peer support approaches have varied. Several projects have run formal groups alongside one-to-one support (eg Praxis' Brighter Futures group), while others (eg Central England Law Centre and Grapevine) found more informal brokering has been successful. Praxis and JFKL Law have also developed "buddying" systems where young people accompany their peers to meetings and tribunals, which has proved valuable for both parties.

In phase two, more attention has been given to supporting young people to have their voices heard in service delivery and to get involved in awareness-raising activities (for example PRCBC has supported young people to become Ambassadors for the project). JFKL's Let Us Learn group and Citizens UK's Stand Up Stand Out group have taken this further still to support young people's development as leaders of a nascent movement to improve the lives of young people with irregular status, (see pages 81 and 84 for more details).

Central to Let Us Learn's brand of peer support and movement building has been helping young people to develop and narrate their "story of self". As highlighted earlier, many young people find that the narrow "immigration story" they have to repeat endlessly to different professionals starts to invade and dominate their identity. Young people involved in Let Us Learn are supported to connect to a richer, more authentic version of their identity and to narrate their story in a way that helps others to understand (see Akoni's story in Section 5 for more details).

Peer support of all types has been crucial in challenging straightforward notions of vulnerability and overcoming the traditional divide between providers and beneficiaries of support.

Direct support: peer support & youth involvement

Participants have emphasised that peer support has been particularly useful for young people for whom there is no immediate solution to their status. These young people can be especially vulnerable and peer support was seen as a way of keeping them as safe and positive as possible while they waited to become eligible under various regularisation routes. Several projects mentioned that they had referred young people to Praxis for group-based support when no other options were currently open to them.

Peer support and movement-building was also seen by staff and young people as providing a sense of direction and alternative learning opportunities for young people whose other options may be blocked (as well as potential for policy change, see Section 6).

Beyond immediate peer to peer support, some participants have tried to help young people tap into wider resources in host and diaspora communities. However, while participants felt there was real potential in this area, they emphasised it was important to acknowledge the complexities involved in harnessing such support.

Several participants, for example, found that young people did not always want to have contact with settled migrants from their community for fear of experiencing stigma as someone with irregular status or, in some cases, as a member of a minority group (see also Bloch et al, 2009). When Central England Law Centre and Grapevine tried to encourage a local migrant panel to take a leading role in supporting young people with irregular status, they found that despite initial interest, panel members often had other priorities (eg securing paid work or voluntary positions that might lead to employment opportunities). CELC and Grapevine concluded that paid professional posts were required to lead this agenda, orchestrate community support, and ensure the needs of young people with irregular immigration status received sufficient, focused attention.

The importance of peer supportyoung people's views

Young people involved in the **Brighter** Futures group at Praxis

"I'm not the sort of person to interact with people but when I saw how people were friendly and when I heard stories, or saw activities related to me and my life journey, it kind of pushed me to attend regularly."

"We did a conference together, we talked to almost 150 people and we told them how does it feel to be in our place, I mean undocumented... it made me realise that I can be really confident".

"We made a film about solicitors...
it made me realise I'm the kind of
person who if they see something
wrong, they speak up, especially
when that person can't stick up
for themselves, to show them that
whatever they are going through
they are not alone".

"I have support from friends now...
It helps your mental, physical
everything, because if you need
help, you just ask them. I didn't
have that before, so it's much
easier now."

Young people involved in the Let Us Learn campaign at JFKL

"I didn't find out that I was in this situation until just before I started my exams this year and it was quite like a shock... I feel like it's important to get the word out there and tell people about it".

"I think that the biggest thing is learning to own your own story and not being afraid to use it. I think many people, especially young people, sort of pretend... a lot of us tried to pretend but once you recognise that you as a individual are important, you can actually get up and do something."

"Coming to Let us Learn has made us realise that we're not alone.... I think we all feel like we have shared things with each other and it has created a family outside the family."

"Since we couldn't go to university, this has been the biggest learning experience...now we want to go to university, not just for a degree, but to carry on our education."

Direct support for young people: key outcomes

Some of the key outcomes from direct support work in phase two are set out below. Because of the length of time it takes to resolve many immigration cases, some outcomes relate to cases begun in phase one. It is important to note that while numbers of young people who have been registered as British citizens or helped to regularise their status in other ways as a result of legal support provided through SOI are limited, a large number of other people have received general information about their rights and entitlements and individual advice. Some of these people may well have gone on to regularise their status outside of SOI. In addition, many professionals have received training and support (see Section 6), which may have led to other young people being able to access legal support. The true impact of the Initiative in this phase is therefore likely to be significantly greater than these numbers suggest.

Positive outcomes - status

Young people born in the UK:

- Registration as a British citizen
 71 (including 6+ phase 1 legacy cases, 33+ cases pending)
- Other positive changes in status 3
 (2 young people accepted as
 British-born and 1 granted limited leave for 30 months).

Young people born outside the UK:

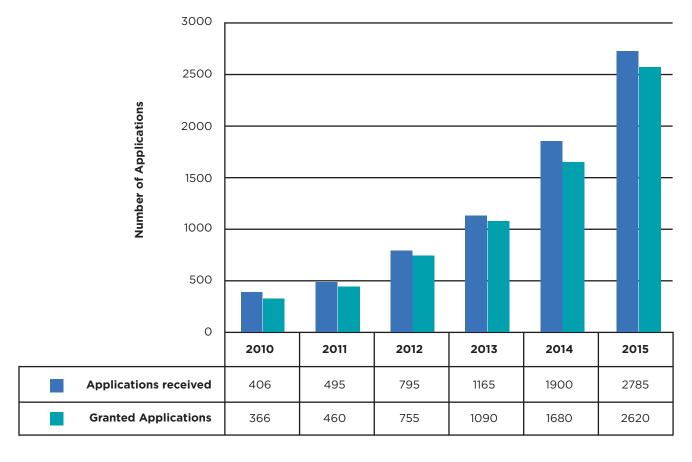
- Registrations 11
 (including 6+ phase 1 legacy cases, 5+ cases pending)
- Other changes in immigration status - 103 (including 23 grants of indefinite leave and 17 of refugee status/refugee leave extended. 44+ are phase 1 legacy cases)
- + 12 positive outcomes for family members.

Other positive (countable) outcomes

- Helped to enter (or re-enter) education through support with student finance/home fees/ bursaries - 207
- Helped to access work experience or volunteering - 77
- Helped with training 90
- NRPF conditions on leave lifted 20
- ECF funding granted 30

Registration: achievements in context

A response to a freedom of information request to UKBA indicated that in the ten years from January 2001-September 2011, 3726 UK-born children applied under Section 1 (4) of the British Nationality Act 1981 to register as British Citizens. Of those 3280 were registered (Signona and Hughes, 2012).



A response to a freedom of information request submitted by Unbound's evaluator during phase two of Supported Options indicates that in 2015, 2785 UK-born children applied and 2620 were registered as British citizens under this route.

The table above, produced by Unbound's evaluator, illustrates the trend in applications and grants over the six year period to 2015. It shows a big upswing in applications over the period in which Supported Options has been operating (phase one began in 2012). Although it is not possible to prove that Supported Options has contributed to this increase, it seems likely it has played an important part in attempts to make better use of this route to regularisation.

SECTION 5 provides some case studies of individual young people who have been supported in phase two that explain more about young people's circumstances and the ways in which participants have helped them

(Some details have been changed to protect young people's identities)

SUPPORTED OPTIONS INITIATIVE - PHASE TWO

Central England Law Centre and Grapevine: Amina's story (1)

The health visitor who supported Amina and her young child approached Coventry (now Central England) Law Centre (CELC) about her situation. Previous attempts to regularise her status had been unsuccessful and Amina was losing hope.

Born in Nigeria, the youngest child of a fourth wife, Amina's early life had been precarious. At 12 years old, she was sent to live with an "auntie" in the UK. She was forced to work long hours looking after the "auntie's" children and doing all the household cooking, cleaning and laundry. She was prevented from going to school and told to lie about her age if anyone asked. Eventually, when Amina was 19 years old, she managed to escape the household, with the help of another relative. She applied for leave to remain, but was refused. After so many years of being forced to lie about her circumstances, Amina found it hard to explain her story, and the private solicitor who had prepared her case lacked the experience to spot that she had in fact been a victim of domestic servitude.

SOI funding allowed CELC, and their partner organisation Grapevine, to take on Amina's case as part of their Young Migrants Rights (YMR) project and invest the time to explore her story properly. Staff from CELC and Grapevine established Amina's trust, supported her to reconnect with her talents and dreams, and helped her recognise her identity was richer and more rounded than the narrow immigration story she had repeated over and over to various professionals. As Amina began to develop a more authentic personal narrative, she gained confidence and began to open up.

The original idea for the YMR project was that CELC lawyers would help young people resolve their status and Grapevine's "Connector" would then help them to "connect" to informal sources of community support, to ease their integration. However, the partner organisations soon realised that Grapevine's support was needed earlier and on an on-going basis to sustain young people while their immigration case was in train.

Central England Law Centre and Grapevine: Amina's story (2)

Rather than working separately,

CELC and Grapevine formed a seamless team, with lawyers "connecting" young people to other participants and Grapevine's "Connector" developing her knowledge of the law such that she could spot immigration issues as they arose and help young people access specialist legal support from CELC.

In Amina's case, Grapevine's "Connector" helped her identify where to go to buy cheap and healthy food, allowing her Section 17 support to go a little further. The "Connector" also brokered volunteer support to help Amina improve her literacy. Despite being a fluent English speaker, after years of not being able to attend school, Amina struggled with every-day tasks, such as reading letters and filling in forms. Importantly, Grapevine also helped Amina to recognise that the coping strategies she had developed to deal with her difficult situation had given her skills that were of use to others. With Grapevine's support, Amina went on to become one of a group of voluntary "connectors", putting people in touch with others who might benefit from their support. One of the most engaged of this cohort of "connectors", Amina helped to found the Women of the World group, which supports women who have migrated in the City. She continues to help run the group even though the YMR project has now ended.

CELC filed an immigration application

for Amina citing Article 8 of the ECHR, her experience as a victim of trafficking, and the fact that she has now lived half her life in the UK. Before a decision came through, Amina fell pregnant again, and the Home Office granted her three months leave, with no explanation of why they had done this. When CELC applied for extension, this was refused. However, Amina has now been recognised as an historic victim of trafficking.

At the time of writing, Amina has just heard that the Home Office has granted her refugee status, so her long fight is over. Thanks to CELC's support she is also more aware of her rights and should be better able to deal with any future legal issues as they arise.

Refugee Support Network: Ehsan's story (1)

Ehsan arrived in the UK alone from Afghanistan when he was 15 years old, and claimed asylum. His application was refused, but he was given discretionary leave to remain (now limited leave as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child) as there were judged to be inadequate reception facilities to ensure his safe return. He was taken into the care of his local authority.

When he was 16, Ehsan's teacher contacted the Refugee Support Network (RSN) to find him an educational mentor to help him with his college work. Ehsan established a strong relationship with his mentor. He loved learning and was determined to get the most out of his college experience and the support he received from RSN. For a period, he was doing really well.

However, when Ehsan was 19, his mentor contacted colleagues at RSN working on the Supported Optionsfunded Youth on the Move (YotM) project, because they had become increasingly worried about him. Ehsan had applied for an extension to his discretionary leave just before his 18th birthday, but had been refused. After

a long, drawn-out appeals process, Ehsan had received a letter saying he had become Appeal Rights Exhausted, leaving him feeling extremely anxious and confused about his future. Having previously been so dedicated to and enthusiastic about his studies, Ehsan was finding it difficult to engage with his college work and was falling behind.

Ehsan, his mentor, and the YotM worker met together to discuss his situation. Ehsan told the YoTM worker that he had a solicitor, but he was really confused about the status of his case. The YoTM worker went with Ehsan to visit his solicitor. Although the solicitor had been trying to progress Ehsan's case, he had failed to communicate his actions and progress in terms that Ehsan could easily understand. The YoTM worker clarified with the solicitor that there was nothing more that could be done to progress Ehsan's case.

Refugee support network: Ehsan's story (2)

The YoTM worker helped Ehsan

to understand what was likely to happen to him from this point on, so he was less frightened and felt more in control. Shortly afterwards, Ehsan was detained by the immigration authorities. The YoTM worker visited Ehsan in detention to provide support and help him prepare himself psychologically for removal to Kabul.

In Kabul, RSN's monitoring officer met with Ehsan, as part of a related Supported Options-funded research project exploring what happens to young people after they are forcibly removed to Afghanistan (see section 6 for more details). Before this pioneering study, little robust evidence had been available on how young people's lives unfolded after return. Ehsan knew RSN was conducting a research project in Kabul, rather than offering a support service. However, he was keen to take part as he valued the help he had received in the UK and wanted to assist other young people facing the same situation.

Ehsan tried hard to establish a new life in Kabul, but found he was unable to do so. He still dreams of returning to the UK, as he has a strong network of support here, but he realises it may not be possible now.

Having fled Afghanistan a second time, Ehsan currently lives in Italy, where he is learning Italian and getting involved in community activity to support other young people who have migrated.

Coram Children's Legal Centre (Outreach): Adwoa's story (1)

Adwoa's nursery contacted Coram Children's Legal Centre (CCLC)'s advice line because they were worried about her. Adwoa and her young daughter were destitute, but their local authority had refused to help. Adwoa had told nursery workers she was desperate and contemplating suicide. The advice line solicitor suggested a number of children's charities, law centres and women's and equalities organisations for the nursery to contact, but none were willing or able to help. Adwoa was caught in a common trap: because she didn't have an immigration application pending it was extremely difficult for her to obtain destitution assistance from the local authority, but she couldn't pay for legal advice and application fees to regularise her status because she had no source of income.

The advice line solicitor decided to refer Adwoa to the outreach project run by CCLC's Migrant Children's Project. Although MCP's outreach work usually takes place in community centres, in this instance the outreach solicitor invited Adwoa to Coram's offices because it was a bit more peaceful and private.

Adwoa was distressed and found it difficult to talk about her case, so it helped that her nursery support worker was also able to attend and look after her daughter while Adwoa talked to the solicitor. Having told her story over and over Adwoa was cautious about telling it to yet another professional. The support worker helped to put Adwoa at ease and also highlight important aspects of the case that she might have forgotten to mention.

Adwoa had grown up in poverty in Nigeria. In 1997, aged 20, she came to the UK to visit a friend who was settled here, and had over-stayed. After some years living in the UK, Adwoa had formed a relationship with a German national. Her parents organised a proxy marriage ceremony for the couple in Nigeria, while they remained in the UK. Adwoa then made an application for a residence permit as the spouse of an EEA national, but this was refused. Shortly afterwards, Adwoa fell pregnant and during routine health screening found out she had a serious health condition. Her new husband promptly abandoned her.

Coram Children's Legal Centre (Outreach): Adwoa's story

After her accommodation was raided.

Adwoa came to the attention of the immigration authorities and was served with a removal decision. After unsuccessfully appealing the decision she left her accommodation. Pregnant, in poor health and without a home, Adwoa was extremely vulnerable. She formed a new relationship with a man who offered to help pay her rent and raise her child. But he also left her shortly afterwards, and she found herself homeless again. She managed to stay with a member of her Church for a while, but this was only a temporary solution.

As there is no longer any legal aid

for most immigration cases, and CCLC are funded to provide advice rather than full representation, the outreach solicitor applied to the Legal Aid Agency for Exceptional Case Funding (ECF). The solicitor argued that Adwoa needed representation as her case was complex, and without it the best interests of her child would not be adequately addressed. Adwoa does not yet meet the 20 years long-residence rule and her child will not be eligible for the seven-year route to regularisation or the 10-year entitlement route to registration for

some years. But as Adwoa no longer has access to any social support in Nigeria (her parents and siblings have died), CCLC argued it was likely she would face discrimination as a single mother with health problems, and that reintegrating back into Nigerian society would be fraught with difficulties.

Coram were successful in being granted ECF, allowing Adwoa to be referred to a legal aid firm, who are now preparing an application on her behalf. Coram's intervention also unlocked support from Adwoa's local authority under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. Adwoa and her daughter are now housed and have some help with subsistence. They are awaiting the outcome of their case.

Coram Children's Legal Centre (Pro-bono): Dede's story (1)

Dede was born in London in 2005 to parents who had come to the UK a few years earlier, from Ghana. In 2015, Dede's family sought help from Project 17, another Supported Options participant, as they were destitute. Social services were refusing to help as they said the family was not taking steps to regularise their status. However, Dede's family had put in an application to stay in the UK, but this had been refused, and without social services support they didn't have the funds to submit a new application. Project 17 referred the family to CCLC's pro-bono project as Dede was potentially entitled to register as a British Citizen under the British Nationality Act 1981.

Coram's pro-bono project (based in the Legal Practice Unit) focuses on three types of citizenship registration cases under the Act: section 1(3) cases involving a child born in the UK to parents who are now settled in the UK or who have become British citizens; section 1(4) cases involving a child born in the UK who has lived here for at least the first 10 years of their life; and section 4(G) cases involving a child born before 1st July 2006 to a British father and non-British mother who were not married (see Appendix two for more details).

In the early days of the pro-bono project, Coram had tried to help families with a wider range of immigration issues. However, this had proved impractical. So Project 17 put Dede's parents in touch with a firm of solicitors who agreed to look into their situation, while Coram worked on Dede's registration case.

The solicitors' firm wrote to the Home Office to ask them to consider granting the family leave to remain, even though they didn't have the funds to put in a new immigration application. Eventually, a letter arrived from the Home Office confirming that they were looking into the case, and this finally unlocked destitution support from social services. In the Summer of 2015, the whole family was granted limited leave to remain.

Coram Children's Legal Centre (Pro-bono): Dede's story (2)

In the meantime, commercial lawyers from DLA Piper who have been trained by Coram's pro-bono project took on Dede's citizenship registration case. Once her family had been granted limited leave, however, social services refused to help with the £936 fee for Dede's citizenship application. So the family had to spend another year saving up. When the family eventually managed to get the fees together, a senior lawyer from DLA Piper, working alongside a trainee, submitted Dede's section 1(4) application in June 2016. In August 2016 the family heard that this had been successful.

Dede's mother was so delighted with the result that she came in to Coram Children's Legal Centre especially to thank staff for their help. Without Coram's support, Dede would not now be a British Citizen and it is unlikely the rest of the family would have been able to access legal advice to regularise their status. Dede's family hope that her new status will help when it comes to applying to extend their limited leave to remain.

Learning from Coram's project has informed plans for Kids in Need of Defense UK, a new pro-bono support service arising from Supported Options. This involves Coram Children's Legal Centre and Islington and Central England Law Centres, and is funded by Microsoft, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and Unbound (see page 48 for more details).

Just For Kids Law (Let Us Learn): Akoni's story (1)

Akoni was born in Kingston, Jamaica,

and has lived in the UK since he was 5 years old. In 2014, at the age of 18, Akoni was referred to Let Us Learn by the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens (PRCBC), another Supported Options-funded project that was assisting with his citizenship application.

Whilst at college, Akoni won a place at the University of London, but he knew that his immigration status meant he would be ineligible for student finance, and so would not be able to take up his place. Because of a change in the law in 2012, young people like Akoni, who were lawfully resident in the UK but had limited or discretionary leave to remain, were no longer eligible for student finance. They now required "settled" status to access student finance and home fees for university (see page 81 for more details).

Akoni joined the Let Us Learn

Campaign so he could meet other young people in a similar situation to himself who wanted to do something about this. He became a key member of the group of young people who supported the 2015 Supreme Court challenge to the student finance regulations, which resulted in more favourable arrangements for those in Akoni's situation.

When he first came to Let Us Learn.

Akoni was introverted and reluctant to open up about the challenges he had faced all his life. As a result of being undocumented, he had moved around a lot, which affected his ability to interact with his peers. He struggled to behave as others wanted him to, and became socially isolated. Intensive one-to-one conversations with the Let Us Learn project worker and activities like bowling, which enabled him to bond with the project worker in an informal setting, helped Akoni to open up about his challenges.

Just For Kids Law (Let Us Learn): Akoni's story (2)

Over time, the project worker developed a strong relationship with Akoni, which has been fundamental to his being able to talk more openly about his immigration status and the impact this has had on his life. Akoni went on to lead a small group of peers to develop their "story of self", which refers to the ability to narrate and "own" your story so that others may empathise with your situation.

Through Let Us Learn, Akoni has participated in a wide range of activities to develop his leadership skills and potential including various training events and the DREAMers Congress (an annual event where undocumented young people from all over America gather to network, participate in workshops, learn more about the movement and participate in national campaigns). Akoni was also involved in a three-day summer school campaign in Dublin, and in developing a new Let Us Learn film that showcases young, gifted and talented individuals who are blocked from accessing higher education.

As an active member of Let Us Learn.

Akoni participates in fortnightly meetings to discuss the campaign's strategy and actions. During team activities, Akoni continues to challenge himself by revealing a little more of who he is, what he has faced in the past, and his ambitions for the future.

In the space of a year, Akoni has become comfortable in drawing on his past experience of being undocumented to connect with and support others in similar situations. He is now a strong voice for the Let Us Learn movement, and a confident, outspoken campaigner. He has also become a British Citizen.

Praxis: Peter's story (1)

Peter, 23, was born in Zambia and came to the UK when he was 14, along with his mother and two younger siblings. He attended a local school and then college, gaining three A levels and receiving offers from three universities to study for a degree. Unfortunately, because of a lack of settled status, Peter was unable to take up a place at university. Instead, he completed a training course on working with young people with special needs. He hopes to go to university when he receives the required status.

Peter suffers from a serious and lifelong health condition, requiring specialist care on an on-going basis, and shortening life expectancy. He has suffered several crisis episodes, which were very painful and required hospitalisation. He is currently managing his symptoms with strong painkillers and other medication prescribed through his GP. As Peter is required to pay for his hospital treatment (and currently has outstanding debts for previous treatment), he has been unable to get the double hip operation that he needs to improve his mobility and general wellbeing.

Peter heard about Praxis through a friend and first made contact in December 2015, when he was homeless and living in a squat. He had previously sought help from his local authority and a number of other charities, however his lack of settled status meant that these organisations felt unable to help.

Praxis supported Peter in several important ways. His case worker found him some temporary accommodation, addressing his most urgent need; she also found him a legal aid solicitor who was successful in securing local authority housing support due to his poor health. Peter also joined Praxis' Brighter Futures Group, which has been an important source of peer support for him.

Futures group's weekly meetings and has been involved in a range of creative activities through them, including writing poetry for the *Brave New Voices* publication, recording original music with the

Peter looks forward to the Brighter

support of *Making Tracks*, and participating in organised trips, for example to the theatre.

Praxis: Peter's story (2)

For the first time, Peter has friends

in a similar situation to himself, and they have supported and encouraged him through the lengthy and stressful legal process involved in gaining settled status.

Peter feels that a lack of settled

status has affected many aspects of his life, including his mental and physical health, his friendships (many of his peers have now moved away to attend university), and his plans for the future. He also believes that young people in his situation tend to feel powerless and desperate, and are much more vulnerable to exploitation than other young people.

Peter's original application for settled status was submitted to the Home Office back in June 2011. In October 2016, Peter received discretionary leave to remain for 30 months, following an appeal of an earlier decision. Whilst Peter is pleased with this result, his local authority has now withdrawn its housing assistance (as Peter has no recourse to public funds) and he is again facing uncertainty about his accommodation. He is also concerned that if he fails to pay his hospital debts within the next 30 months, there is a strong possibility that he will not be granted any further leave to remain.

Peter remains hopeful despite these challenges. He wants to get the surgery he needs, study for a degree and lead a productive life.



SECTION 6 focuses in on the work participants have done to share learning from the Initiative with practitioners and policy makers, and outlines the scope and scale of this activity, key achievements, challenges and **learning**

Sharing learning and influencing law & policy: overview

In addition to providing direct support, participants have conducted a wide range of work to share their experience and expertise with other practitioners and to influence law and policy. It is difficult to quantify the full reach of this activity, as it has not always been recorded. However, we estimate around 1000 professionals have received training funded through SOI and a further 1300 have received training influenced by learning from it. It has not been possible to track the impact of all this activity, however, some illustrative examples are included in this section.

Sharing learning with other practitioners

This has included:

providing advice to other professionals, carrying out and disseminating research, producing awareness-raising films and guidance, sharing insights at conferences and other meetings.

990+ professionals trained

by seven SOI participants working individually or together. (Plus 1300 receiving training from Coram influenced by SOI). Plus, for example: 6700 London Citizens members presented to as part of lobbying for Deputy Mayor for Integration, Central England LinkedIn article read by 7000+ people.

Activity has reached:

social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers, lawyers/advice workers, staff at children's charities/ youth organisations, healthcare professionals, teachers, prison & housing sector staff.

Influencing law & policy

This has included:

involvement in strategic litigation, carrying out and disseminating research, sharing insights at conferences and other meetings, conducting media interviews, writing articles and blogs, responding to consultations, briefing MPs, and providing evidence to various committees and forums.

We estimate

that participants have been involved in around 30 strategic litigation cases. (See pages 82 and 83 for more details).

Activity has reached:

journalists, local councillors, MPs, Peers, civil servants, voluntary sector policy leads, and policymakers at various international organisations and institutions.

Sharing learning: other professionals

As lawyers' contact with the pool of young people who have irregular status will only ever be limited, other professionals who are in day-to-day contact with children and young people need to be alert to the issues in order to help signpost them to legal advice and other support.

Access to timely legal advice is critical, since it is easier to resolve a young person's case before they reach adulthood, and the (now very much tougher) rules on long-residence apply. Arguably boosting professionals' understanding of the issues is especially important at a time in which the UK Border Agency is increasingly expecting those working in public services (and others such as private landlords) to get involved in immigration-related tasks (Sigona and Hughes, 2012).

Mirroring the situation with parents and young people themselves, participants reported very little or poor understanding of the issues among other professionals, even those working in the immigration or migration sectors. Participants highlighted a number of widespread misunderstandings, for example that having no recourse to public funds means people cannot access any support at all or even that it is illegal for professionals to help them.

Participants observed little understanding of the range of young people with irregular status, their experience or options. It was common for professionals to think that asylum claims were the only route open to young people. While participants welcomed the widespread concern about the situation for Syrian child refugees, they were concerned that this was disproportionate to the need and risked reinforcing unhelpful divisions between "deserving" refugees and asylum-seekers and the "less deserving" rest.

Several participants observed that other professionals tend to "panic" when immigration comes up as an issue, and are keen to refer the person on as soon as possible. However, a few felt they were now having more sophisticated conversations with other professionals, suggesting that the last few years of investment in information sharing and training (much through Supported Options) is starting to have a positive impact.

Sharing learning: other professionals

Teachers and social workers have a particularly important role to play in spotting young people who may be undocumented and signposting them to specialist support and much of the sharing activity in phase two has targeted these groups. Engagement with teachers seems to be particularly important in identifying those British-born young people who may not be in contact with immigration and migrant advice services and are therefore harder to find (see page 43). Engagement with social workers (including Independent Reviewing Officers) is especially critical in relation to destitute migrant families and migrant children in care (see page 77).

While training has been hugely beneficial in enhancing professionals' understanding of the issues, participants again emphasised that "some knowledge can be a dangerous thing". While professionals need to be supported to identify young people and signpost them to specialist help, it is important they do not attempt to take action beyond their level of competence (since it is a criminal offence for those not qualified to provide advice to do so, and also because the law and policy changes so quickly in this area that knowledge is quickly out of date).

Participants have emphasised that it has been hugely beneficial to involve young people with personal experience of these issues in training sessions and in other events with professionals, and to draw on resources developed by them. Doing so has helped to bring the issues to life for participants (as well as providing important development opportunities for young people).

Some participants have begun to draw together key messages and learning into guidance for other professionals. For example, RSN has produced a new guide for practitioners supporting young Afghan care leavers facing forced return to Afghanistan (see pages 79 and 80). Participants felt there was scope for more engagement with professional bodies as well as individual professionals (building on, for example, The Children's Society's engagement with the Solicitors Regulation Authority on the issue of abuse of young people by advice workers (see page 92).

Sharing learning: professionals - feedback on training

Although it has not been possible to track the impact of all awareness-raising and capacity-building activity conducted in this phase, feedback on formal training courses funded by SOI has been very positive.

For example, during this phase, the Migrant Children's Project at Coram's Children's Legal Centre have run ten SOlfunded training courses on working with undocumented young people, attended by 208 people (these courses were run in partnership with The Children's Society until TCS's SOI funding came to an end). Of these people:

- 100% thought that the course fulfilled its stated aims and objectives
- 97% said the course would help them improve their practice
- 97% said they would discuss what they had learnt with managers/others in their organisation

For example, during this phase, Project 17 delivered SOI-funded training on supporting migrant families with No Recourse to Public Funds to 56 people from the Migrants Rights Network, Greenwich Migrant Hub and Kings College Hospital midwives. Of these people:

- 100% of participants rated the training as 'excellent' or 'very good'
- 96% said it would be useful for their work.

Sharing learning: voluntary & community sector

Participants reported poor understanding of the issues facing young people with irregular status among other organisations in the voluntary and community sector. For example, we heard instances of young people being asked to leave their accommodation when support organisations realised they did not have settled status.

Voluntary organisations were also often fearful of tackling the issues. This seems to have been a particular concern for larger organisations that are dependent on government contracts, and feared they might lose them if they got involved with such a "politically toxic issue". Several SOI participants mentioned that they had experienced concerns or resistance from within their own organisation in the early stages of this work, though this had been largely overcome with careful efforts to educate colleagues.

Participants highlighted that the support sector has largely evolved to meet needs of refugees and asylum seekers. The full diversity of the cohort of people with irregular status is not well-understood or catered for, especially among the wider children's and youth sectors. Even within the migrant advice sector, participants found "zero awareness" of the issues affecting UK-born young people who may be eligible to register as British citizens under the "ten year" route.

Some participants emphasised the need to build more effective partnerships with churches and faith organisations, since mainstream voluntary and organisations are not always trusted by migrant communities and people with irregular immigration status. Others felt that domestic violence charities were a priority for future engagement, given the numbers of young women they have supported who have experienced domestic violence (see page 37).

Sharing learning: voluntary & community sector

All participants reported misunderstandings on the part of many larger voluntary sector organisations about the capacity they had to deal with an ever-increasing stream of referrals: "we get people thinking we can fix everything, well-funded children's charities dumping cases on us, when they have big teams of lawyers, but they don't know what to do in these cases, or are not wanting to deal with this".

Poor understanding, fear and lack of capacity among mainstream children's charities and youth organisations may explain why Initiative leaders found it challenging to reach out to and sustain broader partnerships with these organisations in phase two. Among some participating organisations from these sectors, SOI funding does seem to have helped to establish work on undocumented children and young people as part of core activities, for example at Coram Children's Legal Centre (who have now received ten years' of funding under Supported Options).

However, in other cases, funding a project or specific stream of work on this topic does not seem to have influenced wider organisational policy or practice to the extent that the funders had originally hoped. With hindsight, the funders recognise that a more explicit influencing strategy might have been required to encourage organisations in the children's and youth sector to take learning from SOI on board. This might be something worth considering in more detail in the next phase of the work.

Sharing learning: COMPAS research on the VCS

In phase two, the Centre on Migration and Policy Studies (COMPAS) at the University of Oxford was funded to carry out a research study to explore voluntary sector support for destitute migrant children and their families. The study arose from earlier research into local authority responses to these families, which found that although the VCS can play an important safeguarding role, there were often significant gaps in their provision. The study involved research with faith, refugee and migrant organisations, homelessness and domestic violence charities, and children's and youth organisations in London, Birmingham and Nottingham.

The authors found that charities and faith groups were stepping in to provide destitute children and families with housing, food and clothing, and to help them access other services. However, they had insufficient capacity to meet growing demands for help, at a time when statutory and voluntary sector services were being cut. They found that much support is provided by small, local organisations, raising concerns about sustainability. They also found that certain groups of young people are particularly vulnerable to lack of capacity, in particular children whose parents have temporary leave to remain, are EU citizens or have irregular status, while children in the asylum system are relatively better served with support.

The study makes a number of recommendations to increase capacity and improve support for destitute children and families, including: building expertise within a wider range of organisations; encouraging charities to broaden their remit to help all destitute children; improving referral systems and encouraging more sharing of expertise across the sector; and producing a stronger evidence base on destitution to help target support to those most in need.

The team feel the experience of taking part in the research has greatly increased participants' understanding of the issues and confidence in tackling them in future. Their report has also been widely disseminated and discussed at numerous events (eg the Law Centres' Network Conference in Belfast in November 2016). The team recently met with the Bishop of Dorchester who plans to draw on findings to inform a new faith-based approach to migration in the Church.

Sharing learning & influencing policy: local authorities

Much sharing and influencing work in phase two has targeted local authorities, who have a key role to play in supporting destitute migrant families and migrant children in care. Project 17, for example, has researched local authority practice with respect to Section 17 support (see page 78). Coram Children's Legal Centre's has facilitated training for a number of local authorities, some jointly with The Children's Society.

Experience in this phase confirms previous findings that many local authorities don't understand their duties to support destitute families with no recourse to public funds. This is not helped by lack of statutory guidance, patchy scrutiny, uneven distribution of NRPF cases, and frequent changes to rules and regulations (see also NRPF Network 2011). Unlike for asylum-seekers and refugees, local authorities do not receive funds from central government for providing destitution support to families with NRPF. Some participants have highlighted that the costs are therefore falling disproportionately on councils, at a time when they are facing big funding cuts. In response, many local authorities have been actively trying to restrict access to support by imposing a "robust front door". Although statutory guidance makes provision for social workers to facilitate access to specialist legal advice where a child in care needs this, research conducted by SOI participants suggests that local authorities often lack a good understanding of the numbers of children in their care who may require immigration advice, and so are effectively operating in an "information vacuum" (CCLC, 2016). In addition, few authorities are willing to pay for legal advice for children in care, meaning many are turning 18 without their status being resolved (TCS, 2015, CCLC, 2013). While children in the care system are not charged a fee to make immigration applications, or to appeal a decision, this does not apply to care leavers, or to citizenship applications. SOI participants have found that this too can deter local authorities from taking action (CCLC, 2016).

Experience in phase two has also highlighted patchy and poor local authority practice in relation to human rights and age assessments (see pages 78 and 79 for more details).

Sharing learning & influencing law & policy: Project 17

Project 17 was funded to explore local authority support for destitute migrant children and families and to try to influence this through lobbying and strategic litigation. The project draws on Project 17's experience supporting migrant families through its advice line and advocacy service. (About 30% of Project 17s clients are foreign-born parents with NRPF caring for British children.)

Project 17 issued FOI requests to local authorities to explore how their practice compares to their policies on supporting families. They also researched practice in five local authorities in depth (Lewisham, Hackney, Southwark, Greenwich and Bexley). They found local authorities are often automatically refusing families Section 17 support if they do not have a valid immigration claim in train. They also identified several cases where authorities have threatened to take children into care when parents have tried to access support.

On the back of this, Project 17 took a case against Lewisham Council, which had introduced several additional criteria for accessing support that Project 17 argued had no basis in law and resulted in 88% of people being turned away without a human rights assessment.

Project 17 withdrew the action after Lewisham agreed to change their guidance. The challenge put a stop to plans for Lewisham's model to be rolled out to other London boroughs. Project 17 also took a case against Hackney Council, challenging the low rate of subsistence provided to families given support. Hackney settled out of court and agreed to raise the level of support for the family in question.

Rather than publishing its research on the five authorities, Project 17 have decided to go directly to each council to make a complaint about their actions towards specific clients. As local authorities are obliged to respond to complaints, Project 17 felt there was more chance of this strategy being effective. To date, Project 17 have helped twenty clients to complain about poor practice, including a "group complaint" against systemic problems in Haringey. So far three complaints have been upheld. They have also made complaints to the Information Commissioner's Office about the failure of several authorities to disclose information following Project 17's FOI requests.

Sharing learning & influencing law and policy: RSN

In phase two, the Refugee Support
Network was funded to carry out a project
to support former asylum-seeking children
from Afghanistan facing forced removal
to Kabul, and to research what happens
to them post-return. The Youth on the
Move project emerged from RSN's core
work providing educational mentoring
to young asylum-seekers and refugees.

All the young men supported through Youth on the Move came to the UK in their teens, as unaccompanied asylumseeking children, were given temporary leave, and taken into care (see Appendix two). When their leave expires (at 17.5), these young people can apply to stay in the UK. However, if their application and any subsequent appeal are refused (as is the case for many), they become Appeals Right Exhausted on turning 18, and face losing leaving care support and being forcibly removed. While there was a temporary stay on returns to Afghanistan for safety reasons from July 2015, this was over-turned in March 2016. Since 2007, 2,018 care leavers have been forcibly removed to Afghanistan (RSN, 2016).

RSN have provided a range of support for young people in the UK. As many had not been assisted to access legal advice while in care, RSN has helped them to find a solicitor to make a fresh claim (which then opens up educational opportunities and support from social services). They have also challenged local authorities where they had not conducted a human rights assessment when threatening to withdraw leaving care support. If appeals were unsuccessful, RSN supported young people to face up to and plan for return, manage their stress and to access specialist mental health services if needed (see Ehsan's story in Section 5 for more details).

As very little is known about what happens to young people who are forcibly returned to Afghanistan, RSN also carried out a pioneering research study tracking outcomes for 25 care leavers who were sent back. Young people met with RSN's researcher in Kabul on return and then every few months for 18 months.

Sharing learning & influencing law & policy: RSN

RSN found that all of the young people who were returned experienced a series of "interconnected difficulties" on return (RSN, 2016). Most young people's informal support networks had been fractured and diminished while they were in the UK. While a few had received institutional assistance, for example from the International Organisation for Migration, most faced significant barriers in accessing support.

Around half of the young people experienced serious security incidents, for example, being caught up in bomb blasts or suicide attacks. Particularly concerning, some young people suffered from discrimination and violence as a direct result of their status as a returnee (with local people fearing they had been Westernised, become a spy, or committed a criminal offence that warranted return). For most young people, education in the UK did not lead to further education options in Afghanistan. Financial pressures forced them into work, though for most finding sustainable employment was "almost impossible". The majority experienced a decline in mental and physical health, especially where return had interrupted care received in the UK. Young people struggled to see a positive future for themselves in Afghanistan and most felt leaving again was their only option.

RSN's research highlights a contradiction between the UK Government's ambition to improve care leaver outcomes and young people's experiences post-return. It also highlights how lack of timely support from social services while young people are in care can jeopardise their futures. RSN's research has been widely disseminated with policy-makers and practitioners. After RSN spoke at an event in Parliament, a peer raised a parliamentary question about forced return of former unaccompanied minors, requiring the Home Office to respond to the evidence in After Return. Findings also informed expert reports for two individual clients and for a group case. In the first case the young person was granted refugee status; the second case was postponed but RSN have been invited to give evidence at the hearing. While the Court of Appeal rejected the group case, the solicitors have commissioned RSN to write a report for use in individual cases.

Influencing law & policy: the Let Us Learn campaign

In 2011, the Government removed "home fee status" and access to student finance from people with certain forms of leave. Unless a university decides to act otherwise, this left young people with discretionary or limited leave, who have been educated in the UK, unable to pursue their dreams (CCLC, 2016).

Just for Kids Law's Let Us Learn group intervened to challenge this decision, with support from lawyers from Coram Children's Legal Centre and Islington Law Centre, in R (on the application of Tigere) v Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills 2015, which went all the way to the Supreme Court. The Court concluded that a blanket ban preventing everyone without settled status from applying for student loans was disproportionate and could not be justified, an important victory potentially affecting many young people. However, the Court decided that a requirement for three years lawful residency would remain. Since the Tigere judgement came out further barriers have been created to young people accessing student support. In June 2016, the Education (Student Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 came into force, requiring those under 18 to have lived in the UK for seven years, and those 18 or over to have lived in the UK for half their life or 20 years (on top of the three years' lawful tests confirmed in Tigere).

The Let Us Learn group continues to campaign on this issue, engaging with schools to inform pupils and teachers about the potential block to young people's education if their status is not resolved early, liaising with universities to explore options for bursaries and scholarships for young people who don't yet meet the criteria for home fee status, and conducting outreach to provide support and companionship for young people affected by these issues.

Influencing law & policy: strategic litigation

In phase two, Supported Options participants have intervened in a number of strategic litigation cases, in some instances playing a lead role, in others providing witness statements or expert evidence, or supporting legal teams or witnesses in other ways. These cases have focused on a wide range of issues, including: interpretations of "best interests" and "good character" criteria: access to and the level of Section 17 support for destitute families; access to student finance; fee levels, Home Office "profit" on applications, and lack of fee waivers for families supported by their local authority in citizenship cases; the impact of "appeal first, deport later" provisions on children: legal aid for separated migrant children in immigration cases; and the workings of the Exceptional Case Funding regime.

In undertaking this work, participants have tried to emphasise the need for "durable", "long-term" solutions for children and young people. For example, Islington, who have done lots of litigation work in phase two, brought several strategic challenges against decisions to grant limited leave to remain when a client had submitted applications for indefinite leave. Islington have also emphasised the need for long-term solutions that enable young people to move forward in their lives in litigation on other topics.

Although there is still legal aid for judicial review, participants have emphasised that it is getting increasingly difficult to access, and there is no legal aid for pre-litigation research. In this context, funding from SOI has been especially helpful. Some participants have managed to lever in further resources by persuading private firms to take on cases on a pro-bono basis.

Participants have emphasised that numerous cases have settled before a full hearing, with positive results for the particular young person or family involved, but preventing a wider legal precedent from being set.

Influencing law & policy: strategic litigation examples

The following are examples of some of the strategic litigation cases participants have been involved in:

The Migrant Children's Project at CCLC drafted a witness statement for a case in which CCLC is intervening about the level of Section 17 local authority support for children in families with NRPF (CTM&U v Southwark 2014 & Mensah v Salford City Council 2014). Project 17 are also providing expert evidence to support the case.

The MCP at CCLC provided evidence in Central England Law Centre's challenge to citizenship fees for families supported under Section 17 (RW v SSHD), arguing payment of a fee and lack of fee waivers was often a block to registration, and to take up of a legal entitlement.

The Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit at Islington Law Centre provided evidence to support the Public Law Project's successful challenge to the government's plans to make eligibility for legal aid subject to a 'Residence Test' (see page 26).

Islington Law Centre represented the The Children's Society in strategic litigation challenging the lawfulness of the Lord Chancellor's refusal to bring back legal aid for separated migrant children with immigration cases.

Islington Law Centre supported the Office for the Children's Commissioner in a case about the forced removal of an undocumented family, including a vulnerable five year old "child in need" born in the UK, where the Home Office had failed to carry out a best interest assessment in respect of the child prior to removal (BF & RA v SSHD 2015). The Court found that the SSHD's safeguarding duty under s. 55 of the Border, Immigration and Asylum Act 2009 had been breached and ordered the immediate return of the family. Islington is supporting the child to secure his status to remain in the UK and has carried out lots of influencing activity on the back of this case.

Islington Law Centre also supported lawyers challenging access to legal aid in immigration cases in Gudanaviciene and Ors v Director of Legal Aid Casework 2014. The Courts found that the guidance on Exceptional Case Funding was unfair and unlawful. In June 2015 the Legal Aid Agency published new guidance which recognised that legal aid may still be available in some immigration cases (see page 46).

Influencing law & policy: other examples

The following are examples of other influencing activities participants have been involved in:

Several projects were involved in campaigning work during the passage of the 2016 Immigration Act. For example, PRCBC campaigned to remove registration fees for looked after children, and an end to Home Office "profit" on citizenship applications. Coram Children's Legal Centre briefed MPs at various stages of the Bill's passage through Parliament, and gave oral evidence to the Bill Committee. Islington law Centre carried out extensive policy and advocacy work to raise awareness of government plans to cut off leaving care support for young people who have turned 18 and are without immigration status. While much of this work did not yield significant results, it was important as an opportunity to raise awareness among key policy audiences.

Islington Law Centre provided expert legal advice and support to witnesses giving evidence to the Justice Select Committee investigating the impact of changes to civil legal aid under the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (LASPO). In their March 2015 report, the Committee raised specific concerns over the obstacles faced by separated and trafficked children in accessing legal assistance following LASPO and recommended that the Ministry of Justice review the "impact on children's rights of the legal aid changes".

Case workers at Central England Law Centre, lawyers at the Project for Registration of Children as British Citizens (PRCBC) and young people at JFKL's Let Us Learn group are jointly campaigning via Twitter about the importance of citizenship and the impact of rising fees for citizenship registration applications and other blocks to registration. CELC's twitter account, @YMigrantRights, now has 770+ followers. An article about registration written by one of CELC's case workers on LinkedIn has been read by more than 7000 people.

Youth leaders from Citizens UK's Stand Up Stand Out group, along with young people from JFKL's Let Us Learn group, supported the London Citizens Mayoral Assembly to lobby for a Deputy London Mayor of Citizenship and Integration. They presented their case in front of 6700 London Citizens members and other "VIPs". London now has a Deputy Mayor with this remit.

Influencing law & policy: overarching change strategy

Prior to SOI, there was little debate or consensus about policy solutions to tackle irregular migration, beyond the notion of an amnesty, which had been widely discredited as potentially encouraging more people to come to the UK and stay here when they do not have permission to do so. As has been highlighted earlier, rather than starting out with preconceived ideas about policy change, Initiative leaders funded organisations with policy functions to carry out direct support, with the expectation that this would shape policy work over time. They also made small research and policy commissions to support this activity.

Given the hostile environment, different organisational agendas and priorities, and the diversity of the cohort of children and young people affected, participants suggest it has been challenging to develop a coherent, overarching, influencing strategy. Communicating the issues in a way that raises awareness without reinforcing unhelpful or fallacious stereotypes has also been challenging. These will clearly be areas requiring on-going attention. Some participants would welcome media training to help them communicate more effectively. Others are keen to explore new ways of using data to make the case for early intervention to resolve young people's status.

In July 2015, Coram convened a residential session in Oxford involving a number of SOI participants and other experts to begin the process of developing a shared influencing platform and strategy. This emergent strategy centres on the notion of permanence, and shorter, lower-cost routes to settled status for children and young people. Participants argue that keeping young people in a perpetual state of "limbo" is at odds with emerging norms in domestic and international law and policy, which emphasise stability, security and continuity as preconditions for young people's development.

While options for influencing the national scene have been limited, participants have begun to explore ways to influence policy and services at a city or city-region level. Events run in London and Manchester with the support of the New Economics Foundation, as well as liaison with the Mayor's office in London, are promising new developments with clear potential for the future.

Influencing law & policy: CORAM's key 'policy asks'

A paper written by Coram Children's Legal Centre, informed by the residential session in July 2015, argues for 10 key policy changes to improve the situation for children, young people and families with irregular immigration status:

- A sensible approach to long-term residents, especially children and young people, should accompany measures to improve compliance in the immigration system.
- 2. Better Home Office decision-making on children and young people's long residence cases in line with established law and proper attention to children's "best interests".
- **3.** A shorter, less expensive route to permanent status for children and young people.
- **4. Fewer 'no recourse to public funds'** conditions on grants of leave.
- **5. Fee waivers** for children and young people's applications for indefinite leave to remain and citizenship applications.
- **6. Extension of exemptions from fees** for children in care to cover citizenship applications, and for care leavers.

- 7. An urgent review of children and young people's needs for legal services and reinstatement of legal aid for separated children's immigration cases.
- **8.** Home fee status and access to student finance for young people with certain types of time-limited leave.
- 9. Reconsideration of the policy on "good character" for children applying for registration as British citizens so that a child otherwise entitled to citizenship, whose best interests lie in continued residence in the UK, is not precluded from citizenship by that test.
- 10. Maximising opportunities through the new Deputy Mayor of London's Office of Citizenship and Integration to help more children supported or accommodated by London Boroughs to be registered as British citizens (CCLC, 2016).

The need for permanence: young people's views

Young people participating in Just for Kids Law's Let us Learn campaign

"Even now, I have status, but it's not permanent, and I still feel different, despite the fact that I can learn to drive and do normal things that I was never able to do before. I still know that I'm an outsider. It's a whole process that my friends never have to go through, getting status, the money that it all costs every two and a half years. And the strain of it too, knowing that I can't plan my life. I just have to take one day at a time because I don't know what will happen...it still makes me feel so anxious and different from other people."

"I remember that when I was young, before I got my leave to remain, my mum, the way she talked about it, like 'we need to get this and when it comes we'll be free'. That's how I saw it. I just assumed I would be entitled to everything that everyone else was entitled to. So I finally got it but I can't go to university... When I told my mum I couldn't go... she said at least you can work but I was thinking I don't care about the monetary gain, what value am I getting if I can't further myself academically? So even if I can work, there's a cap on what I can do."

"I remember in January, I got my stay in December, so in January I was able to go on a trip to Germany with my class. On our way back at the German airport, I was held there for about 45 minutes or an hour just trying to get through passport checks...When I finally got on the plane people were like 'oh finally!' I mean I was literally like the last person to get on the plane so they were like staring at me like 'oh, why was she there for so long?' Obviously I had to explain to them about what happened. But it makes you feel so on the spot. It's a horrible feeling."



SECTION 7 focuses on the
Initiative itself,
and explores
in more detail
ways of working,
key challenges,
achievements
and learning

Collaboration through SOI: 'high engagement funding'

In their evaluation of phase one of Supported Options, IVAR noted that the Initiative demonstrated many of the features of "high engagement" funding (Cairns and Buckley, 2012). These types of approaches, also commonly termed "grants plus" or "funder plus" models, have evolved from a realisation that funding alone does not always lead to desired results and that voluntary organisations often require additional support to operate effectively.

Cairns and Buckley argue that "high engagement funding" is typically guided by four key principles: interest in the whole grantee organisation; willingness to fund core costs; a partnership approach; and additional support from the funder.

The authors suggest that such approaches reflect a growing interest on the part of some foundations in moving from being "grant-makers" to becoming "change-makers", working alongside other voluntary organisations as "partners in the pursuit of change".

Drawing on the literature in this field, Cairns and Buckley suggest that the benefits of these types of funding models tend to include: improved access to specialist support for grantee organisations; enhanced security and sustainability of grantee organisations; and more productive working relationships with funders.

Some of the challenges the authors note include: the additional time that can be required to manage more intensive relationships; having to align the goals and interests of different parties; managing the tension between providing support yet not controlling activity; and achieving the right balance between standardised and more bespoke support for funded organisations.

Collaboration through SOI: overview

Overwhelmingly, participants described their experience of taking part in Supported Options in very positive terms. Experience in phase two seems to confirm the benefits of this type of approach to funding and collaboration.

Although some had experience in supporting children and young people with irregular status prior to SOI. involvement in the Initiative has enabled them to expand their activity and refine and strengthen their approach to their work. For those who were completely new to the topic, the Initiative has provided a safe and supportive environment in which they could develop their expertise. This seems to have been particularly important for front-line workers operating in organisations that lacked wider understanding or experience of the issues and where there may have been initial concerns about tackling them.

Being able to work alongside organisations with similar values and a sense of mission has been an important source of "moral support" at a time when the external environment has been so hostile. While some participants knew each other prior to SOI, as part of a "small, niche sector", participation seems to have deepened relationships and has in some cases led to or helped to cement new partnerships: "Some people we knew really well already, but others we didn't and it was great getting to know them."

Being part of the Initiative, and having the backing of the funders, was seen to give status to the work: "It really helps give your work credibility, having these Foundations behind you."

By supporting a critical mass of organisations with interest and expertise in the issue of irregular child migration, Supported Options has also helped to keep the issue on the agenda at a particularly difficult time.

Collaboration through SOI: capacity building - funding

Involvement in SOI seems to have been helpful in building the capacity of participating organisations and of the individuals involved in a number of different ways.

Funding has been invaluable, in particular (as has been mentioned before) to provide legal advice and representation, and to carry out pre-litigation research. In a context in which legal aid is not now available for the vast majority of immigration cases and in the absence of interest from many other funders, this contribution cannot be underestimated.

In its evaluation of phase one, IVAR suggested that the funders should consider providing core funding if they were wholly committed to the "high engagement" funding model. The provision of a "bridging" grant to Citizens UK and a grant to fund a senior communications post at JFKL are good examples of a more flexible approach to funding in this phase.

Collaboration through SOI: capacity building - learning

Information sharing and joint learning opportunities have also been extremely helpful in allowing participants to "see things in 3D", to "stand back from the daily grind and get an overview, put things into a broader frame". As one participant put it: "You can get stuck in what you're doing and seeing the wider context is really helpful." These opportunities seem to have been particularly valued by those organisations that were newer to the issues and lacked a policy function that could help them navigate the complex and fast-changing context in which they were operating.

Reflective sessions allowed participants to identify common problems and issues and work out how best to resolve them. For example, through discussion, participants identified that a number of young people being supported by different projects had suffered abuse and exploitation at the hands of private sector solicitors. Airing of this problem enabled the lawyers in the group to support youth workers to make complaints to the appropriate professional body.

These events also offered a safe space to discuss difficult issues, such as the issue of return. At the start of the SOI, some participants were concerned that the existence of RSN's Youth on the Move project might give the Government "an excuse" to return more young people to Afghanistan. Through discussion, RSN were able to clarify that their project was about helping young people to understand their options and prepare for return, and then tracking their outcomes post-return (rather than providing a support service in Kabul).

Information sharing and joint learning events, as well as project work itself, have also provided an opportunity for lawyers and advice workers to learn more about youth work, and youth workers to learn more about the law. This has enabled participants to develop a more rounded approach to their work: "It was like coming out of a straight jacket I never want to go back to" (SOI lawyer/advice worker).

Collaboration through SOI: capacity building - ideas

The Initiative has also exposed participants to new ideas and brokered new relationships of lasting benefit to their organisations: "One of the brilliant things is that you are exposed to things you wouldn't normally have known about".

For example, those participants who were involved in the July 2015 policy residential hosted by Coram to develop a shared influencing strategy found it hugely beneficial: "The event in Oxford was brilliant. It was really helpful in seeing the bigger picture and doing some 'blue skies' thinking. The US Dreamers were there and JFKL...There were really diverse skills in the room, on social movements, the law, political strategy...There is real value in this kind of forum...We all spend so much time fire-fighting and with the speed of change in the external environment, and the hostility, it's hard to keep your head above the parapet".

Those participants who had taken part in exchange trips to the US organised through SOI (to explore pro-bono support models and youth organising) also found these opportunities hugely inspiring and energising. The trips were a chance for those individuals who attended to step back from their day-to-day work and reflect on it from a new perspective. For the funders, the trips were a way of recognising particular individuals, supporting their creativity, and reinforcing the idea of funders and participants being on a shared learning journey.

Some participants have particularly valued Initiative leaders' attempts to broker contact with new potential funders. For example, several participants presented to Association of Charitable Foundation members at a meeting hosted at PHF. Although this has yet to yield very significant results, this funding brokerage role has been an important element of the Initiative and one that has been highly valued by participants.

Collaboration through SOI: facilitating factors

The expertise the joint PHF and Unbound funder team brought to the Initiative seems to have made it easier to spot issues, encourage meaningful collaboration, broker relationships and offer the right support at the right time. With wide expertise in law, academia and policy research, the voluntary sector, philanthropy and politics, the team have been able to add value to participants' work as well as to lead thinking and develop new avenues of work, where required. Unbound's input seems to have been particularly vital in relation to broader influencing and change work, where their extensive experience of the issues and networking abilities have proved invaluable. Initiative leaders at PHF also recognise that Unbound have often provided the impetus to experiment with new approaches and ways of doing things.

Style and approach has been also been important. We heard praise for Unbound's senior staff, whose energy and support projects found immensely motivating. There has been particular praise for the Initiative Coordinator who has combined expertise in the subject matter with highly effective strong relationship-building skills.

Her pivotal role was recognised by both participants and PHF and Unbound staff:

- "She is really personable, great at joining up the dots and matching people up...you really feel like she genuinely cares, but she also comes across as highly professional"
- "She's been really good at asking great questions and helping us approach things from a different perspective"
- "I think the way that she has managed the grant-making has been tremendous. She's done what we hoped for and more - she's really built new relationships with people from different professional backgrounds."

The Coordinator's strong working relationship with the new migration and integration team at PHF, and the Senior Grants Manager's collaborative style, seems to be helping to ensure that learning from SOI is shaping PHF's wider work in this area.

Collaboration through SOI: benefits of diversity

As has been highlighted in earlier sections of this report, Supported Options has continued to fund and support a wide range of different types of work in phase two, including: legal, social and peer support for young people and their families, training and awareness-raising activity aimed at other practitioners and professionals, and research, strategic litigation and policy work designed to influence the wider environment. This work has also targetted a very diverse group of young people in different situations, facing different challenges.

The funders hoped this diversity would facilitate wide exploration of the issues, while allowing some clear areas of focus to emerge over time. This does seem to have happened to a large extent with, for example, a growing focus on new models for providing legal advice (see page 48) and on supporting youth voice, participation and activism (see pages 51 and 52, and 81 and 84).

Funding different types of work has also allowed for cross-fertilisation between different streams of work. This can be seen within particular funded organisations. For example, Coram's outreach advice work has clearly informed its extensive training activities and helped to identify families to signpost to its pro-bono project; and The Children's Society's casework has clearly informed its training and policy influencing activities. It can can also be seen across different SOI participants. For example, Islington Law Centre and the Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens' legal expertise has informed Just for Kids Law's Let us Learn campaigning activity.

While recognising the diversity of the young people they have supported and the types of work they have conducted, participants felt that there was sufficient commonality for collaboration to be meaningful and helpful. They have described how working with a diverse cohort has allowed them "different entry points into the same set of issues", and helped them better understand the wider context in which they are all operating.

Collaboration through SOI: examples of joint working

Signposting/referrals

- Path to Papers website signposting people to Central England for advice
- TCS & Praxis referring to Islington Law Centre & CCLC for advice
- Islington & JFKL referring to Praxis, & RSN to TCS for group support
- CCLC referring to Project 17 for s.17

Sharing expertise

- Islington providing expert legal advice to several SOI participants
- PRCBC & Islington supporting JFKL's Let Us Learn group
- Several participants using CCLC's advice line

Tackling shared problems

 Various examples of participants sharing information, identifying & finding solutions to common problems – eg on the issue of young people who have been abused/exploited by advice workers

Joint research

- TCS & Praxis taking part in COMPAS research on VCS support for destitute migrant families
- Islington supporting TCS research on the impact of legal aid cuts on separated children

Joint training

- CCLC & PRCBC providing training on citizenship registration
- CCLC & TCS providing training for Independent Reviewing Officers

Litigation

- CCLC providing evidence in Central England's challenge to citizenship fees for families supported under s.17
- Islington supporting TCS in challenge about legal aid for separated migrant children with immigration cases.

Joint campaigning

- JFKL's Let Us Learn group and Citizens UK's SUSO group lobbying for Deputy London Mayor for Integration
- CCLC convening discussions on shared influencing strategy for SOI
- PRCBC Ambassadors linking with JFKL's Let Us Learn group

Organisational support

 CCLC, TCS & JFKL staff members acting as trustees on PRCBC Board

New ventures

 Central England, Islington, CCLC & both funders involved in developing new Kids in Need of Defense UK model

Collaboration: challenges - communications

As Cairns and Buckley point out, managing engaged funding relationships and keeping everyone up to date with developments requires on-going, extensive effort (Cairns and Buckley, 2012). Arguably this has been a particularly challenging task on Supported Options given the complex range of work undertaken and the fairly large group of (time-pressed) participants involved.

Participants recognised the tremendous effort that has gone into managing relationships and communicating programme aims and activities, and for the most part were very positive about how this has worked in practice. That said, a few people told us they were not aware of the full range of organisations involved and the breadth of their work. At the evaluation learning day some participants said they could see additional points of contact with other organisations' work now that they understood the full range of activity encompassed by the Initiative. While "pleased to be included in such an impressive array of work", they suggested they might have exploited these links earlier had they known more about them.

A couple of people also told us they were not sure if all of their PHF/Unbound grants were part of Supported Options or not.

Partly, this feedback may reflect the staggered timescales for grants awarded under SOI, with new organisations, streams of work and members of staff joining at different points. (It's important to note that this flexible, responsive approach to grant-making was recognised as a strength in other respects.)

Other participants felt it might have been helpful to have had more on-going notice of outputs produced by other projects that might be relevant to their work. One or two people felt that a stronger, underpinning IT platform for the work might have allowed participants to stay up to date with each others' work more easily and, potentially, facilitate the safe referral of clients between participating organisations as well.

Collaboration: challenges - diverse goals

Aligning the goals and interests of a range of different parties is another common challenge with high engagement funding. As highlighted elsewhere in this report, participants felt it was a strength of the Initiative to pursue a diverse range of work. For most participants, having broad Initiative-level objectives was also a plus point, since this meant they could "work towards similar objectives in a complementary way", allowing opportunities for collaboration to emerge and be acted on where the appetite existed.

A few participants, however, felt it might have been helpful to have set some more clearly defined or specific Initiative-wide objectives to pursue from the beginning. They felt that this might have brought even greater clarity and focus to the work, allowing collaboration to move beyond information-sharing and joint action in some specific areas, to genuine shared problem-solving across the piece.

Partly this difference of perspective seems to reflect varying levels of interest in and appetite for innovation and wider systems change, beyond individual project work. Some participants were clearly motivated by this. However, for others the opportunity to secure funding to continue much-needed direct support work that was increasingly under threat, or to pursue core, planned activities under a more supportive umbrella, may have been a more pressing priority.

It seems likely that there will continue to be a range of interests in and appetites for pursuing joint goals and wider solutions. Future work will therefore continue to require careful negotiation between various parties. In this context, the funders' approach of focusing on "where the energy is" and convening sub-groups of interested parties to take forward certain aspects of the work, seems sensible, so long as there continues to be concerted effort to try to ensure that the sum of the work in this area remains greater than the individual parts.

Collaboration: challenges - support

Developing ways of working and a support offer that works for all participants is another common challenge with highengagement funding.

A few of the participants that don't have their own policy functions and are not represented on key immigration forums told us they would have appreciated even more sharing of developments in the wider policy environment to help them situate their work in context. We understand that the Coordinator has plans for regular horizon-scanning sessions in the next phase of work and this seems like a very positive development to help address this issue.

We also heard from a couple of participants that they felt forums for shared learning and exchange on Supported Options worked better for front-line workers than for organisational leaders, who they argued had slightly different agendas and priorities. As funders have expressed some frustrations that project work has not always led to wider change within some participant organisations, and given the role of leaders in facilitating such change, this might be something worthy of further reflection in future.

Collaboration: challenges - power dynamics

Participants have been overwhelmingly positive about their experience of working with and alongside the funders on SOI. However, a few people have told us that they found the team quite tough and directive at various points on the programme. At the same time, Initiative leaders told us that on a few of the occasions when they had specifically tried to be less directive, this had not always yielded the results they expected. For example, during the course of the Initiative, the funders encouraged participants to put in new grant applications where they felt additional activity would support their core work. The funders saw this as an opportunity to encourage participants' creativity and give them more control over Initiative activity. However, on a few occasions when new grants were awarded and funders followed up on progress, they felt participants responded in a way that suggested the funding team were wanting them to do something they hadn't chosen to do themselves.

This perhaps just illustrates the engrained power-dynamics at play in funder/grantee relationships (however sensitively handled), and the challenge of implementing accountability systems (however light-touch) without undermining ownership.

The film work commissioned by the funders early on in phase two is another interesting example of issues of power and control. The Funders were keen to commission a series of films to help showcase the work participants were doing to support young people. However, the films were experienced by some participants as an additional demand that did not fit with their own plans and the project was eventually dropped. The creation of a more flexible media resource that participants could draw on as and when they needed it to support particular strands of work or campaigns they wanted to run themselves was found to be much more useful. The funders have learnt from this experience and in other work, for example the US exchange trips, have focused on brokering relationships, facilitating discussions and "planting ideas" that participants can pursue as they see fit. This approach seems to have been much more successful.

Collaboration: challenges - roles

As one person we spoke to said: "there's probably always a bit of tension between Foundation knows best and field knows best". Arguably, engaged funding relationships have greater potential for tension (as well as reward) as they involve more complex interactions between funders and grantees as relationships deepen. Engaged funding relationships may also necessitate funders adopting a range of different roles, at different moments in time, and the transition between them can sometimes be challenging for both sides. Below, we set out some possible aspects of the funder role in such programmes. Reflection on these within the funder team and with participants may prove helpful in negotiating roles in future.

In their report on phase one, IVAR raised the issue of whether SOI was a genuinely co-produced "space" or one into which participants had been "invited" (IVAR, 2015). Our sense is that the funders have done a great deal to equalise power-dynamics and create positive and productive working relationships on the Initiative. However, it may be worth reflecting further on whether those who have been funded through SOI (and who might be funded in future) are seen and view themselves as "grantees", "participants" or "co-creators" of insight, learning or change.

(Use of terminology may be instructive here: we have used the term "participants" in this report but have seen various terms being used elsewhere.) The fact that some participants did not know if they should continue to attend learning events once their grant had ended perhaps indicates a slight confusion about roles and expected contribution to the work as a whole (beyond that which was specifically funded). If participants are genuinely regarded as "co-creators" or "co-leaders" of work in this area, and shared learning is valued, then it seems appropriate for funders to contract explicitly for this with participants and, perhaps, to pay them for their time. While participants valued sharing and joint learning opportunities, and saw the benefits for their own work, some were concerned about the time involved and the impact this had on their day-to-day workload. Funding this time from the start would be one way of signalling the importance of this activity and ensuring the time was safeguarded.

Collaboration: challenges - sustainability

Sustainability of activity and impact is a central consideration in any funded programme. As phase two comes to an end, this seems to a mixed picture:

- Some projects have told us it will not be possible for them to continue their work with young people now their funding has ended. A few have told us they felt "ethically bound" to continue supporting vulnerable young people for a short while through their core funds, as they did not feel comfortable cutting off support completely. "It's not appropriate to build trust over a long time, and then just say goodbye to people when the funding ends". Some projects were hoping to "mainstream" support for young people with irregular status within on-going support programmes for young people who migrate and for refugees. While this seems like a positive development, it will obviously be important to ensure the specific issues facing young people with irregular status get sufficient attention.
- Other projects are currently negotiating grants for new work with PHF or UP, building on phase two activity. Project 17, for example, is being funded to develop a new joint model of support for families with NRPF, in collaboration with Southwark Law Centre.

- As highlighted earlier, Central England and Islington Law Centres and CCLC are involved in developing the new Kids in Need of Defense UK pro-bono model, which aims to significantly increase the numbers of young people registered as British Citizens in future. This is one of the best examples of how Supported Options will leave a lasting legacy.
- The numerous, very thorough and useful, reports, films and pieces of guidance produced in phase two should also help to ensure the work continues to have a positive impact.

The funders have told us that their "implicit model of sustainability" has been through relationships: "we've tried hard to bring in brilliant people, encouraging them so that when they think migrant they think undocumented young people". They recognise, however, that sustaining momentum for work begun in this phase, for example on a shared influencing platform, will also require an appropriate vehicle, leadership structure and most likely some on-going resource.

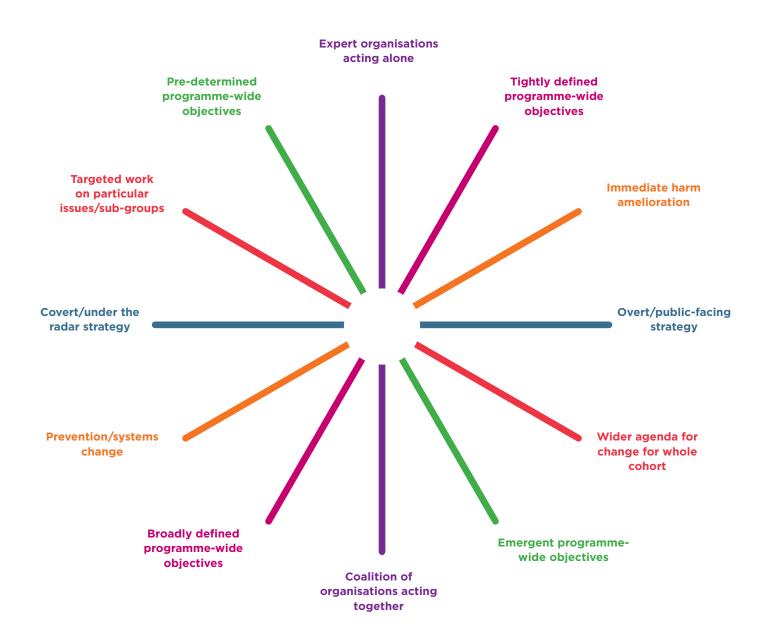
Collaboration: challenges - geography & governance

Funders and participants recognise that the Initiative's focus on London, and a small number of other locations in England, might be regarded as a possible limitation. However, this also made sense in other respects. While immigration and asylum policy are non-devolved and also apply to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, provision of services for children (including social services, health and education and housing) are devolved and differ significantly in each area (CCLC, 2013). While working in Wolverhampton, Coventry and Birmingham has allowed participants to explore the issues in different parts of England, it was felt that extending the focus of the Initiative to other UK countries may have introduced too many new variables at once. However, some participants are now exploring plans to expand their work to other parts of England and further afield. For example, RSN are exploring new pilot hubs in Oxford and Manchester, and Citizens UK plan to expand their youth work to Birmingham and Wales.

Other projects, such as Coram's advice line, are already national and further expansion will depend on new collaborations and funding. The Initiative leaders have also fostered a new collaboration with the Legal Services Agency in Glasgow. This relationship may offer the potential for further collaborative work in future.

Finally, and with hindsight, Initiative leaders questioned whether an external reference group of some kind might have been a helpful way of bringing additional perspectives to the work and avoiding any risk of "group-think". Although leaders worked hard to challenge each other, they were conscious that they have known each other for a long time now, and that fresh perspectives and a degree of external challenge might have been helpful. This may be an issue to reflect on in the next phase of the work.

Collaboration: some dilemmas to balance



Collaboration through SOI: some possible funder roles

Policeman



Ensuring accountability for spend, tracking compliance with programme rules and guidelines.

Judge



Assessing achievement against targets, defining what "good looks like".

Adventurer



Blazing a trail, pioneering new solutions, proving it can be done.

Guide



Mapping the route, leading the way, negotiating obstacles.

Conductor



Orchestrating action, coordinating efforts, ensuring totality is more than the sum of the parts.

Curator



Assembling work and resources, shaping interpretations, telling the story.

Gardener



Planting ideas, shaping the terrain, responding to conditions.

Coach



Clarifying goals, supporting reflection & learning, helping participants be the best they can be.

Fellow traveller





Sharing aspirations, learning together, offering and seeking support.



SECTION 8 summarises initiative achievements against objectives and sets out some suggestions for the future development of work in this area.

SUPPORTED OPTIONS INITIATIVE - PHASE TWO

Achievements against objectives: summary

The overall aims of SOI were to: "support and encourage migrant, youth and advice organisations to better understand, respond and reach out to young and child migrants with irregular immigration status, and capture and share learning to improve practice and policy". As objectives were broadly defined and leaders did not set numerical targets, the basis on which to make overall assessments about achievements is perhaps less clear than for some other programmes. However, the evidence we have gathered in phase two suggests that in this period a great deal has been achieved that contributes to these overall objectives.

As Initiative leaders anticipated, not all activity will be sustained once funding ends. However, the decision to invest in learning and sharing activities on a significant scale should help to ensure the work continues to influence policy and practice after the formal end of this phase of work. The investment in existing and new institutions will also ensure that the work has a lasting legacy. SOI has helped to build the capacity of an existing cohort of organisations whose members are well-positioned to continue to act as sector experts and ambassadors for these issues. Some participants, such as Coram Children's Legal Centre, have now benefitted from ten years' investment through Supported Options, firmly establishing work on undocumented children and young people as a part of their core activities.

The development of Kids in Need of Defense UK is evidence of how Initiative leaders have spotted a gap in provision, and worked alongside participants to create an entirely new institution that will help ensure a continuing focus on these issues into the future.

It is also important to emphasise that this is not the end of the journey. As noted in Section Two, both funders have taken a decision to continue their work on this topic, with Supported Options now integrated into PHF's Migration and Integration stream of work and funding ring-fenced within the Shared Ground Fund. In this next phase of work, there are opportunities to take account of learning from phase two and continue to shape and influence the wider programme of aligned and related work funded by both PHF and UP.



Achievements against objectives: registration

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase the registration of UK-born children

In phase two, 82 children and young people have been registered as British Citizens. Seventy one of these young people were born in the UK and 11 were born outside the UK.

In addition, a further 117 young people and family members have been helped to regularise their status in other ways in this phase. This includes 23 young people who have received indefinite leave to remain in the UK and 17 young people who have received refugees status or had refugee status extended with support from SOI.

In total 414 young people have been helped to access a lawyer in phase two, 758 have received legal advice and 237 have received legal representation.

More than 7545 young people and families have received some kind of general awareness-raising support on their rights and entitlements. It seems quite likely that some of these young people will have gone on to register as a British Citizens or regularise their status in some other way, with the help of a lawyer operating outside of SOI (where it will not have been possible to capture outcomes).

In addition, participants have continued to develop their understanding of the cohort of British-born (and other) young people who may be eligible for registration and to develop their expertise in using a route that was little understood before SOI began. They have shared this expertise widely with migrant communities and a range of professionals. The evaluation suggests that those British-born children and young people who are entitled to register under the "10 year" route may be even harder to locate and engage than newer migrants with irregular status, though the collaborations formed through phase one and, in particular, phase two should help facilitate future work in this area. The pro-bono advice service being developed through Kids in Need of Defense UK offers an exciting opportunity to significantly increase the numbers of young people registered as British Citizens in future.

Achievements against objectives: capacity building

OBJECTIVE 2:

Improve support to young people through capacity building of leading organisations

Although some participants already had considerable expertise in this area prior to the Initiative, both those with previous experience and those newer to the topic have continued to develop their understanding of the issues and their approach through phases one and two.

Participation in the Initiative has helped to build organisational capacity in a number of ways. Funding has been critically important in enabling participants to pursue work in this area, in particular to provide advice, take on cases and undertake pre-litigation research. Given cuts to legal aid, and the paucity of other funders interested in this work, it seems likely that much of this activity would not have happened without Supported Options. In addition to funding, the Initiative has provided opportunities for participants to share experiences and insights, identify common problems, and work together to develop solutions. Drawing on their convening power, the funders have also introduced participants to other experts, both in the UK and the US, who have provided fresh ideas and inspiration that have shaped the work in interesting ways.

After a "broad start", some particularly promising strands of work have emerged during phase two. In addition to the development of Kids in Need of Defense UK, the Initiative has helped to support a growing pool of youth leaders who are equipped to tell their own story, contribute to training, research and communications efforts, and to advocate for change.

Although not all activity will be sustained once funding ends, it seems to us that there is now greater consensus about the main blocks and barriers young people face and some emerging good practice about how best to support them.



Achievements against objectives: sharing

OBJECTIVE 3:

Understand young people's experiences and share this with practitioners and policy makers

In phase two, participants have conducted a wide range of work to share their experience and expertise with other professionals and to influence the law and policy environment. It has been difficult to quantify the full reach of this very extensive activity, but we estimate around 1000 people have received formal training funded by SOI and a further 1300 training influenced by learning from it. Participants have also contributed to around 30 strategic litigation cases.

Although it has not been possible to track the impact of all of this work, feedback from the training courses we have seen is extremely positive. Together, sharing activities have greatly increased the pool of people with some understanding of the issues facing children and young people with irregular status. They have also raised the profile of participating organisations as an expert resource that professionals can continue to draw on in future.

The numerous, very thorough and useful, reports and pieces of guidance produced in phase two should also help ensure the work continues to have a wide influence.

In an increasingly hostile environment, achieving policy change has been harder. However, participants have begun to develop a clearer set of policy "asks", centred around the notion of "permanence". If participants have the appetite, these could form the basis of a shared campaigning platform in future. The investment in youth leadership means there is a pool of talented young leaders with the capacity to front these initiatives. The current focus on exploring possibilities for change at local level is an interesting and promising development, which illustrates the Initiative's flexible and pragmatic approach to achieving change.



Suggestions for the future: objectives & impact

Under phase two, Supported Options has funded and supported a large and diverse range of work. Although some clearer areas of focus are starting to emerge, it seems likely that breadth and diversity will continue to be a feature of work in this area, given the multi-faceted nature of the challenges facing children and young people with irregular status.

In order to help communicate this work to external audiences, and to monitor its ongoing impact, it might be helpful for the funders to develop a Theory of Change document, setting out in a concise way the outcomes they hope to achieve, and how they anticipate the different strands of work they might fund (direct support, sharing and influencing activities etc) and the forms of collaborative working they might deploy, will lead to this change. While we appreciate it will always be necessary to negotiate with participants, and act flexibly in response to the external environment, we feel this would be a helpful "anchor" for the work.

For each major strand of work, it may also help to develop some clearer learning and change objectives and to begin to set some indicative targets to guide future funded work and reflection activities. For example, in relation to information-sharing, funders may now wish to set some objectives and targets to reach a certain number of primary school teachers and social workers through training activity (given their critical role in signposting young people to support).

We suggest the funders develop a set of core indicators that each funded organisation is expected to collect data against (where these are relevant to their work, and in addition to other data they wish to collect for their own purposes). Data can then be aggregated to form an overarching "dashboard" to help steer this work. The indicators we have used in the evaluation form a good basis for this. (See Appendix three for suggestions about how to take this further.)

These suggestions should help provide greater focus to any future external evaluation. They might also remove the need for a comprehensive study, allowing the funders, for example, to invite in external people to provide challenge around more specific strands of work. We welcome the fact that funders have begun to explore these issues.

Suggestions for the future: understanding lives

Experience in phase two has highlighted the important ways in which irregular status can affect partner relationships and dynamics within the family. Irregular status can fracture relationships and divide family units. The decisions taken by parents can have unintended intergenerational impacts on children and grandchildren. It might be instructive to explore these issues in more depth in the next phase of this work, to better understand how families experience them, and how best to support them to make choices.

Experience in phase two suggests that there may be some differences in the profile of UK-born children and young people with irregular status who may be eligible to register under Section 1(4) of the British Nationality Act, and others, and that different approaches may be required to reach and support this first group. The evaluation has highlighted some early learning from work conducted to date. However, it will clearly be important to continue to capture and share learning from Kids in Need of Defense UK and from other initiatives to build this knowledge base.

It might be interesting to follow up some of the children and young people who have been registered through the Initiative, or helped to regularise their status in other ways, to explore in more detail the impact this has had on their lives. There may be potential to explore more about the financial costs and benefits of timely regularisation. For example, case histories may reveal more about the costs associated with greater use of emergency services when people are locked out of mainstream support, and the benefits to the public purse if people can work legally or progress to higher paid employment following access to further and higher education.

Suggestions for the future: direct support

Participants have highlighted that there may be an on-going support need for some, more vulnerable, young people who are successful in achieving settled status. We have heard that after years of effort to change their situation, some young people experience a dip in their mental health and wellbeing post-settlement, perhaps because a central focus in their life has now gone, and they are faced with dealing with a host of other issues that had previously been on hold. The investment the Initiative has made in peer support and movement-building, where this continues, may offer a way of providing such support in a costeffective way. However, the funders may wish to explore if other activity would be beneficial as well. Some participants, most notably Central England Law Centre and Grapevine, have explored how young people can be connected to informal sources of community support as a way of helping them integrate (both pre and post settlement). It seems to us that more work of this kind might be needed in future for some groups of young people. Rather than focusing solely on migrant communities as a potential source of support, it might be worth exploring the capacity that resides within mainstream "host" communities to support young people too.

Although collaboration between different types of professionals and across organisational boundaries has been a successful feature of phase two, some participants have told us that joint working has been complicated by different confidentiality standards for lawyers and other support workers. It might be worth exploring this issue in more depth and perhaps developing some common protocols people can sign up to.

Participants have also highlighted that while lawyers are usually very good at technical supervision, they sometimes give less attention to psychological support for their teams. As this is clearly demanding and, at times, emotionally draining work, this may be an area where youth and children's charities, who can be good at supporting staff to manage boundaries and stress, could share their expertise to benefit their colleagues.

Suggestions for the future: sharing & influencing

It is clear from phase two that funders and participants face a significant challenge in boosting public, professional and policymakers' awareness and understanding of the cohort of children and young people with irregular status and the issues they face. Participants have done a lot to address this issue in this phase, but a further push to raise awareness among mainstream children's and youth charities and with social services would seem to be important priorities for future work.

In raising awareness of the diversity of the cohort, it is clearly important to avoid "reducing" young people to their immigration status or playing into unhelpful notions about who is "deserving" or "undeserving". As voluntary sector experts on these issues, it might be helpful to develop a clearer communications strategy, underpinned by some shared principles of ethical communication.

We appreciate the challenges involved in wider, strategic change work, not least that participants have different interests in and appetites for this, the external environment is constantly changing, and there are some tough choices to be made about pursuing a more "covert" or "overt" strategy given the perceived "toxicity" of the issue. However, there seems to be merit in continuing to explore areas of mutual interest where taking joint action could be beneficial, as well as the roles, structures and resources required to take change work forward in a coordinated fashion. Consideration of some of the Initiative-wide dilemmas set out in the previous section might prove helpful in doing this. While some funders can be slow to act, it seems likely that this work will require nimble action at times, of the kind illustrated by the two funders over recent months in their Calais relocation work.

Suggestions for the future: sharing & influencing

While participants have had some success in taking action against local authorities in phase two, it might be worth exploring what other strategies can be deployed in future, given the critically important role of local authorities in providing support to destitute families and to young people with irregular status who are in care. It would seem to make sense to adopt a multi-faceted approach which, alongside litigation, also includes less adversarial approaches such as networking with sympathetic chief executive, leaders and councillors, and lobbying and influencing through the Local Government Association, London Councils and other membership and professional bodies.

Given the importance of their role, it might also be worth considering if a group of interested social workers and teachers, or relevant professional groupings or bodies, should be more actively involved in future work on this topic.

The development of a group of young leaders has been a key success of phase two, and participants have highlighted how these young people's involvement in training and awareness-raising activities has added tremendous value. In future, it would be good to explore how young people can be more centrally involved in this work at every level including, potentially, in research, communications, and evaluation.

Suggestions for the future: funding & collaboration

Even though Supported Options will cease to exist as a Special Initiative, there seems to be great merit in continuing to invest in supporting funded organisations to share learning and engage in joint reflection. There seems to be particular value in those organisations with strong policy functions supporting those organisations that don't have this expertise to stay abreast of developments in the wider policy environment. We understand the Coordinator has plans to instigate regular horizon-scanning sessions, and this seems like a very positive development.

If the funders want to continue to promote this work as a shared endeavour between a collectivity of like-minded organisations, it might be worth reflecting further on the role and positioning of funded organisations (as "grantees", "participants", or "co-leaders"). It might also be worth thinking more about the kind of branding and identity this work requires (even if it is now integrated into the wider Shared Ground Fund). If the emphasis is on genuine co-production with participants, it might be worth including four or five paid days a year in each grant agreement to ensure time for information-sharing, learning and collaboration is safeguarded.

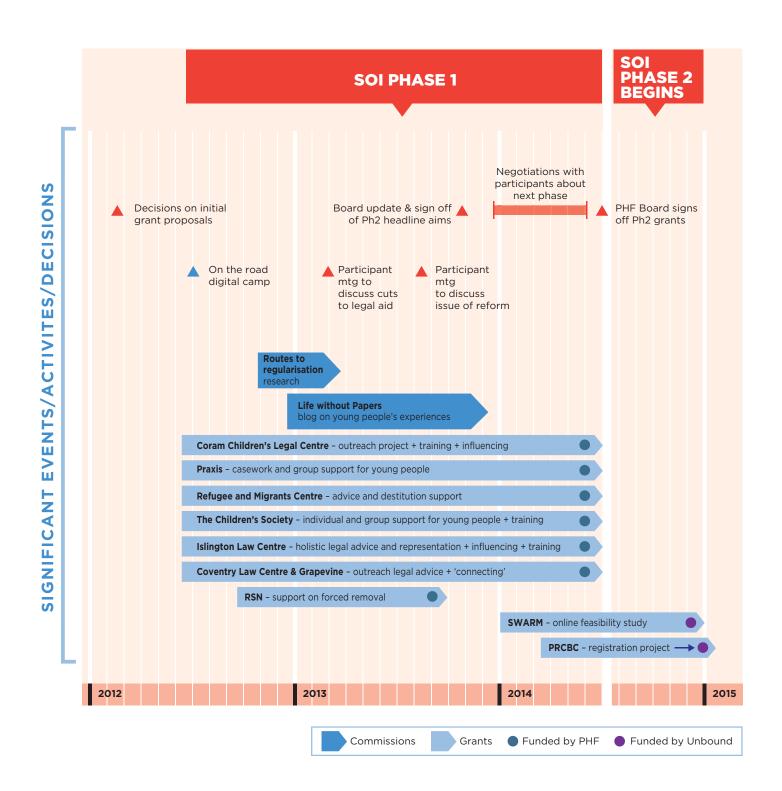
Several participants have mentioned the difficulties they experienced in closing down direct support work with vulnerable young people when funding has ended. In future, it would seem to be sensible to taper funding to allow work to be wound down in a more gradual manner. We understand the funders did try to negotiate such arrangements with participants and this was built into some grant agreements in this phase.

Given that participants have further developed their expertise in phase two, and are increasingly seen as an expert resource that other professionals can draw on, it would seem to make sense to consider how all phase two participants, not just those receiving funding in the next phase, can be supported to continue to act as ambassadors for this work in future.

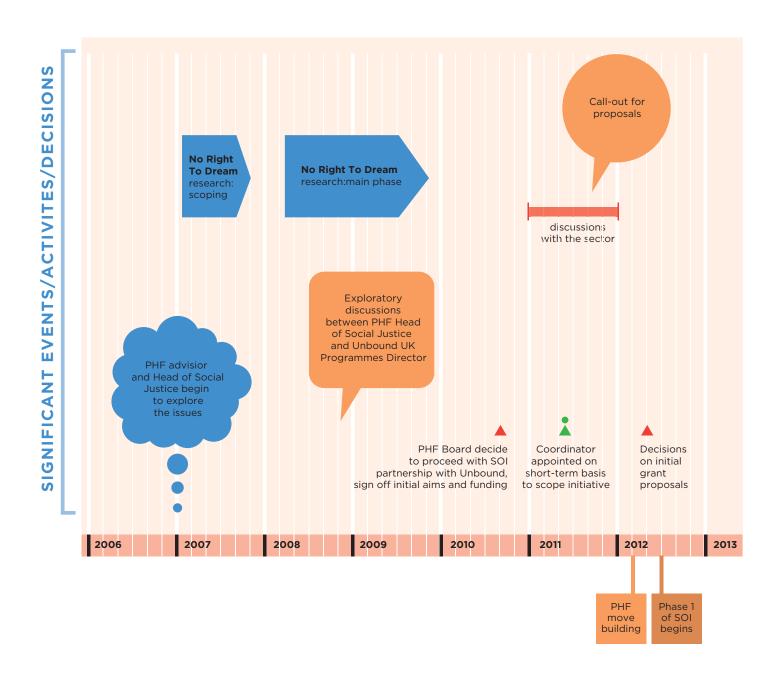
As part of phase two, Initiative leaders have taken steps to try to widen the pool of potential funders interested in this topic. Although this work has yet to bear significant fruit, it seems important that efforts should continue. It might be worth exploring if, in addition to financial support, other funders might be willing to grant access to their networks of funded organisations as potentially receptive voluntary sector audiences for future awareness-raising activity.

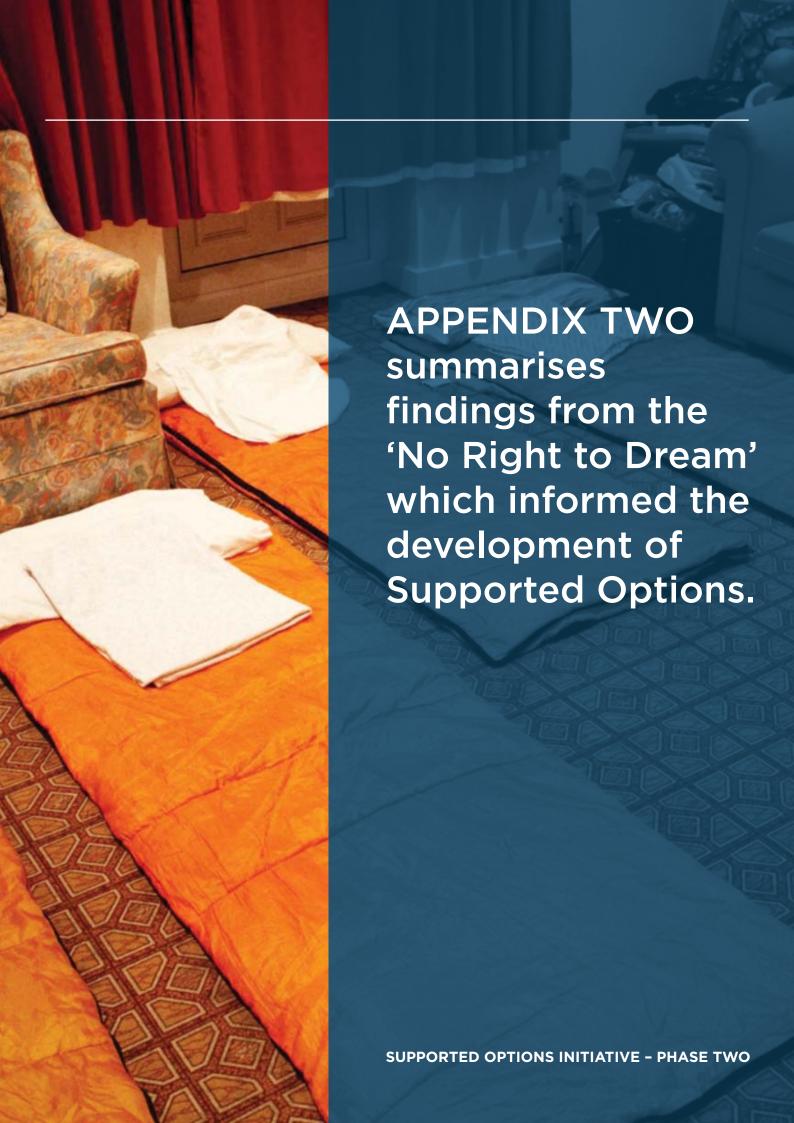


Evolution of the Initiative – Scoping



Evolution of the initiative – phase one





'No Right to Dream': headline findings

No Right to Dream (Bloch et al., 2009) explored the experiences of 75 young people from Brazil, China, Ukraine, Zimbabwe and (Kurds from) Turkey, aged 18-31 and living in London, the West Midlands and the North West of England.

The research took place at a time (2008-09) when the environment for migrants was getting tougher, with routes for migration closing for those from outside the EU without highly developed skills, raids on businesses employing undocumented people, and the the economic downturn beginning to bite.

The research found young people had varied motivations for coming to the UK, including: the political and economic situation in their home country, a perception of the human rights situation in the UK, a sense of adventure, friendship and family ties, and the attraction of learning English. In reality, most knew little about what life here would be like.

Experiences in the UK varied, depending on gender, ethnic group, country of origin, pre-migration experiences, and particular events and circumstances post-migration. However the authors found that: "Being undocumented has significant practical, social and economic impacts and permeates the everyday lives and decisions of young people...Being undocumented often creates a transitory and insecure identity....(It) invades personal and emotional space, which often leads to a shadow existence, a lack of self worth, a lack of trust in others and often the internalization of fear for migrants and families."

'No right to dream': headline findings

The research found that young people's everyday lives were blighted by poor quality, overcrowded accommodation, and fear of accessing healthcare and other essential services. Many young people reported being exploited at the hands of private sector landlords and unscrupulous lawyers.

Experience of work varied, but fear, exploitation, and low pay were common themes. Many young people were sending money home, or paying back smugglers, exacerbating hardship. Young people were often heavily dependent on informal social networks, mostly within the same country of origin, ethnic or language group to find work or to survive, although some preferred to remain isolated due to "fears of spies and infiltrators".

Most young people had little time or money for a social life. Many found their status separated them from friends who were legally resident here and some suffered racism and discrimination. The authors found "there was an ever-present sense of feeling trapped in a situation where marginality cannot be resolved and a future cannot be constructed". The stark choices facing young people were felt particularly acutely at key moments, such as reaching the age when friends were progressing to higher education, a period of serious illness, or the birth of a child.

Despite these challenges, the authors found young people developed a series of "adaption and adjustment strategies" and took pride in being able to survive in difficult circumstances. Most remained broadly positive about their choices and experiences in the UK and did not want or feel able to return to their country of origin, at least in the short-term.



APPENDIX THREE captures some learning from the evaluation to guide future quantitative data collection in this area



SUPPORTED OPTIONS INITIATIVE - PHASE TWO

Future collection of quantitative data - key learning

The Supported Options Initiative has involved multiple participants, conducting a wide range of different types of work, benefitting a diverse cohort of children, young people and families. This complexity has made it quite challenging to quantify activities and outcomes across the whole programme. Based on our experience of taking over the phase two evaluation, it would help to give early consideration to the following issues in any future evaluation of work on this topic:

- Identify the most important activities and outcomes to measure across the whole package of work. As data collection and analysis is timeconsuming, it won't be feasible or desirable to measure everything: rather there needs to be some prioritisation. Choices of what to measure in future should be guided by the evidence needs of key (internal and external) audiences for the work, the type of case/arguments funders and participants want to make about the value of this activity, and previous evidence or strong "hunches" about the types of work that might be most impactful.
- Ensure participants have a shared understanding of key definitions. If participants are to categorise and record activities and outcomes in the same way, it's important they interpret indicators in the same way. For example, where projects provide help with "basic needs", there should be a shared understanding of what this comprises.
- Distinguish between different types of indicators. It is likely that a mix of activity, process and outcome indicators will be useful, however it will important to distinguish between these. For example, projects may want to capture: the numbers of young people who they have helped to find a lawyer/ advice worker (an activity measure); the proportion of these young people whose case has actually been taken on by a lawyer/advice worker with their help (the outcome of that activity); and young people's experience of this support (their reflections on the process).

Future collection of quantitative data - key learning

Key learning (cont.):

- Avoid double counting on individual **projects.** Most projects funded under Supported Options have provided multiple types of support to young people. Projects therefore need to be clear about (i) the total number of individuals they have helped, and (ii) the number of young people provided with different types of support, in order to give an accurate sense of the scope and reach of their work. It is also possible that projects may have achieved more than one positive outcome for a particular young person (e.g. 30 months discretionary leave, followed by registration as a British citizen). Again it's important to be able to distinguish between the total number of young people who have benefitted from a change in status/ leave and the numbers of different types of status change/leave achieved.
- Avoid double counting between **projects.** A similar issue applies across projects, where it's possible that several projects may have supported the same young people. Some double counting of activities across projects might be unavoidable, without creating a laborious cross-project recording system where the young people are given some kind of identifying number. However, it should be possible to devise an arrangement for important outcomes such as changes to immigration status, and other "hard" outcomes such as access to higher education. Here, projects should only claim outcomes that relate directly to their own work. For example, if a project provides initial advice and then refers a young person on to another SOI-funded participant for legal representation, this second participant should claim the final outcome relating to a change in immigration status.
- Distinguish between outcomes for work begun in different phases.

 Because of the cumulative nature of the work and the length of time it takes to resolve some immigration cases, some of the outcomes in phase two relate to cases begun in the previous phase. It will be important to distinguish outcomes from new and on-going cases in future work.

Future collection of quantitative data - key learning

Key learning (cont.):

- Adopt a common approach to recording work with families.
 Several projects have worked with family units. While some have recorded family members they have supported, others do not seem to have done this consistently. It would be useful to agree a convention for recording assistance to families (distinguishing between family members directly supported and indirect beneficiaries) to avoid underestimating the impact of this work.
- It's unrealistic to expect projects to quantify all of the awareness raising and influencing activity they are involved in. As this activity has been so extensive, and much of it has been informal, it has not been possible to quantify all of it. In future, we recommend focusing on some key activities (eg facilitation of formal training, leading workshops on the topic etc) which are easier to measure. It might also be helpful to choose some specific audiences that are particularly important for the success of future work in this area (e.g. social workers, teachers) and focus evaluation efforts on quantifying the reach and impact of the work with these audiences. (It will be important to continue to distinguish between activity directly funded by SOI and that indirectly influenced by it.)

 Consider quantifying some of the key findings from this report.

This report has highlighted a number of key issues, such as overwhelming demand for advice that cannot be met with existing resources, and the negative impact of rising fees on children, young people and families with irregular immigration status. However, evidence to support these claims has been drawn largely from retrospective qualitative interviews with participants; these issues have not been captured systematically. In the next phase of work, Initiative leaders may wish to identify some key findings such as these to try to evidence in a more robust way.

Finally, in any future evaluation, we recommend initial project visits are followed by **one or more likely a series of workshops** for all participants to jointly identify and agree common indicators, definitions and data collection methods, given the complexities involved.



References to literature cited in this report

- **Amnesty International (2006):** Down and Out in London: The road to destitution for rejected asylum seekers
- **BBC (2016):** Migration crisis: Migration to Europe explained in seven charts, 4th March 2016
- **BBC (2017):** Brexit: UK to leave single market, says Theresa May, 17th January 2017
- 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
- Buzzfeed (2016): "How Britain Talked About Brexit", 9th December 2016, drawing on research by Dominic Rout, Ian Roberts, Diana Maynard, Mark Greenwood, and Kalina Bontcheva at the University of Sheffield
- 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
- Coram Children's Legal Centre (2012):

 Navigating the System: Advice provision for young refugees and migrants
- Coram Children's Legal Centre (2013): Growing Up in a Hostile Environment: the rights of undocumented migrant children in the UK
- Coram Children's Legal Centre (2016):

 Permanence for long-term resident children and young people (unpublished paper)
- **Finch, N. (2013):** Routes to regularisation for people without legal status in the UK, Paul Hamlyn Foundation

- **Guardian (Sept 2016):** "Lasting rise in hate crime after EU referendum, figures show", 7th September 2016
- **Guardian (Nov 2016):** "Ministry of Justice axes 500% rise in fees for immigration tribunals", 25th November 2016
- Gordon I., K. Scanlon, T. Travers, and C. Whitehead (2009): "Economic Impact on London and the UK of an Earned Regularisation of Irregular Migrants in the UK." GLA Economics, Greater London Authority, London School of Economics
- Ipsos Mori (2016): Political Monitor, June 2016
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2015):

 The Cost of the Cuts: the impact on local government and poorer communities
- **Law Gazette (2016):** Government defeated over legal aid residence test, 19th April, 2016
- **HM Government (2014):** Guidance, Public Funds, 17th February 2014
- **HM Government (2017):** The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union, Cm9417
- **Home Office (2013):** Immigration Bill: overview factsheet
- **Home Office (2016):** Guidance: Immigration Act: overview
- Institute of Voluntary Action Research
 (2015): Paul Hamlyn Foundation and
 Unbound Philanthropy Supported Options
 Initiative: Evaluation of Phase One

References to literature cited in this report

- **Migration Observatory (2011):** Irregular Migration in the UK: Definitions, Pathways and Scale, 11/07/2011 (written by Dr Bastian Vollmer)
- **Migration Observatory (2014):** Determinants of Migration to the UK
- **Migration Observatory (2016):** Project unclear: Uncertainty, Brexit and Migration, 10th March, 2016
- Office for National Statistics (Aug 2016):
 Parents country of birth, England and Wales
 2015, 25th August 2016
- Office for National Statistics (2016):
 Migration Statistics Quarterly Report:
 Dec 2016
- Office for National Statistics (2017):
 Migration Statistics Quarterly Report:
 Feb 2017
- **PICUM (2008):** Undocumented Children in Europe: Invisible Victims of Immigration Restrictions. Brussels, PICUM.
- Refugee Support Network (2016): After Return: Documenting the experiences of young people forceably removed to Afghanistan.
- **Sigona N. and Hughes V (2012):** No Way Out, No Way In: Irregular migrant children and families in the UK, University of Oxford
- Skehan A., Sandhu B., Payne L. and Wake Smith E. (2017): Precarious Citizenship: Unseen, Settled and Alone – The Legal Needs of 'Undocumented' Children and Young People in England and Wales, MiCLU.

- **The Children's Society (2015):** Cut Off From Justice: The impact of excluding separated migrant children from legal aid, July 2015
- **Valdez, S. (2014):** Systemic obstacles to children's registration as British citizens: Legal research report
- **Vollmer, B. (2008):** Undocumented Migration, Counting the Uncountable. Data and Trends across Europe, COMPAS for Clandestino project
- Wadsworth, J., Dhingra, S., Ottaviano G., Van Reenen (2016): Brexit and the Impact of Immigration on the UK, Centre for Economic Performance, LSE
- Woodbridge, J. (2005): "Sizing the Unauthorised (Illegal) Migrant Population in the United Kingdom in 2001." Online Report 29/05, Home Office

