WELFARE NEEDS OF AFGHAN COMMUNITIES IN HARROW
A community based research project

Dr Elena Vacchelli and Neil Kaye
Aims of the project

• To investigate the impact of the current economic crisis and welfare restructuring on Afghani communities in the London borough of Harrow

• To identify advice and welfare needs and gaps in service provision

• To inform local policy makers, service providers and the community sector on priorities and development needs
Methods

• A review and analysis of official statistics other data sources

• A survey of service users and other members of the Afghan communities, carried out by community researchers especially trained by Middlesex University

• Additional focus groups with Afghani youth and Afghani women

• Additional in-depth interviews with individuals and key informants
Graph 1: Afghan born nationals in the UK

Afghan Population Spread in the UK 2009

Source: Statistics provided to Sophie Jones by the Home Office Migration Statistics Unit, 2010 (Jones, 2010)
STATISTICAL PROFILE OF AFGHANS IN HARROW (by socio-economic conditions)

1. Belmont
2. Canons
3. Edgware
4. Greenhill
5. Harrow on the Hill
6. Harrow Weald
7. Hatch End
8. Headstone North
9. Headstone South
10. Kenton East
11. Kenton West
12. Marlborough
13. Pinner
14. Pinner South
15. Queensbury
16. Rayners Lane
17. Roxbourne
18. Roxeth
19. Stanmore Park
20. Wealdstone
21. West Harrow

Source: Department of Communities and Local Government, Indices of Deprivation 2010
### Long-Term International Migration inflows (rate per 1,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Average (England)</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrow</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: ONS Population Estimates Unit, 2011*
Harrow International Migration inflows, Flag 4 and NINo Registrations, 2001-2012

Source: ONS Population Estimates Unit, DWP, NHS, 2012
Quantitative survey

Survey questions (49) included:

• Demographic data
• Socio-economic conditions and changes after 2009
• Welfare and other community services with a focus on how these could be improved
• Housing, living conditions and other areas of concern in the community
## Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Number of children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married / with partner</td>
<td>One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed / separated / divorced</td>
<td>Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Quantitative Survey

### Languages and Educational Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spoken languages</th>
<th>First language</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dari Persian</td>
<td>Dari Persian</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pashto</td>
<td>Pashto</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian (Other)</td>
<td>Persian (Other)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of English</th>
<th>Educational level</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None / almost none</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic / Survival</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
<td>University / College</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocational / Professional</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## QUANTITATIVE SURVEY
### Migration status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When arrived in UK</th>
<th>Current status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Since 2000</td>
<td>46 British citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-1999</td>
<td>19 Indefinite leave to remain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before 1990</td>
<td>0 Asylum seeker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born here</td>
<td>2 Refugee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                 | Other                        | 9  |
### Current main activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current main activity</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>If you are unemployed, have you ever been employed in this country?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife / Househusband</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUANTITATIVE SURVEY
Perceived changes in the Afghan community in Harrow over the last 3 years
QUANTITATIVE SURVEY
Perceived changes in everyday life in the last 3 years

- Employment/Work
- Your income
- Household income
- Household standard of living
- Leisure/entertainment/holiday
- Stress/Mental health

Legend:
- Much better
- Better
- Same
- Worse
- Much worse
Critical areas of difficulty

- Housing/rent
- Utility bills
- Transport/travel
- Groceries
- Other
Benefits used by members of household

- Attendance Allowance: 1.6%
- Child Tax Credit: 40.3%
- ESA: 3.2%
- Income Support: 22.6%
- Carer's Allowance: 3.2%
- Council Tax Benefit: 37.1%
- Housing Benefit: 59.7%
- Working tax credit: 14.5%
- Child Benefit: 37.1%
- Disability Living Allowance: 0.0%
- Jobseeker's Allowance: 14.5%
- Other: 4.8%
Public services used in the last three years

- Doctor (GP)
- Hospital / A&E
- Library
- University / college
- Jobcentre
- School for your children
- Public housing
- Language class
- Translation / interpreting services
- Social services
- Children’s centre
- Legal advice
- Other advice services
- Youth centre
- Other
Usage of community services in the last 3 years

- English classes: 40.0%
- Housing advice: 36.0%
- Health advice: 32.0%
- Children’s education: 30.0%
- Welfare advice: 28.0%
- Immigration advice: 25.0%
- Employment advice: 23.0%
- Other: 20.0%
- Interpreting: 15.0%
- Training: 12.0%
- Legal advice: 10.0%
- Signposting: 5.0%
- Childcare: 3.0%
- Other advice: 2.0%
FOCUS GROUP Afghan Women

Feeling part of the British society
Unemployment
Language
Housing

Lack of education and training
Mental health issues
Difficult access to health care
Immigration issues

Family conflicts
Safety in the neighbourhood
Getting support from the council
FOCUS GROUP Afghan youth

- Gang involvement
- Mental health
- Need to tailor communication about existing services to the specific needs and communication style of the Afghan youth in Harrow
INTERVIEWS WITH KEY INFORMANTS

(i) Team manager of the unaccompanied asylum seekers children team and leaving care team for Harrow

(ii) Enhancing achievement service leader

(iii) Psychiatric nurse

(iv) Substance misuse commissioner in Harrow

(v) Customer service operation manager in Job Centre in Harrow
Issues specific to the Afghan community in Harrow

- Afghan women: poor education
- Unaccompanied minors tend to be male
- Assessing age of unaccompanied minors
- Trauma and mental health
- Use of drugs and alcohol
- Involvement in gangs
- Challenges in working in a cooperative manner
Services that the Afghan community uses more

- Community organisations
- Job Centre
- GP share care
- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Mental health services
- Services for people whose asylum application is rejected
Barriers to access to services

- Language
- Cultural barriers
- Suspicion around authority
- Requirements for treatment
- Stigma related to mental health
Gaps in service provision

- Women tend not to access services
- Need for more resources on arrival
- Overcoming isolation
- Mentoring programme training for keeping kids away from gang culture
- Targeted information for foster families
- Doctors who can speak Afghan languages
- More mentoring, more role models form their own community
- Gaps in employability skills
Recommendations (1)

• High quality and bespoke advice in addressing welfare needs, such as housing, health and immigration advice and English language courses currently provided by community services

• Collaborative strategies to counter-balance the effects of reduced funding:
  - Develop Afghan community organisations
  - Providing coordination among local providers of welfare advice
Recommendations (2)

- ESOL
- Training and skill development
- Narrowing gap in attainment
- Raising human rights awareness
- Communication and initiative against crime targeted to youth
- Increase cohesion of Afghan communities in Harrow