



# Interim Report 6.2

## Pathway Mapping

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'New Scots Integration – A Pathway to Social and  
Economic Inclusion' ABM<sub>3</sub> Project.

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## Introduction

This document summarises initial findings from discussions with six WEA beginner and elementary learners. Five people took part in social connection discussions with Queen Margaret University research team in person on the 29th March 2022, one learner took part in a later online discussion. Interim Report 6.1 focuses on learner feedback about their English classes with WEA. This report explores the wider pathways to social and economic inclusion that emerged in discussions.

The six participants all had different nationalities and linguistic backgrounds. Only one of the participants was a woman. Five participants were living alone at the time of the interviews, one was living with his wife and extended family including children and grandchildren. We use the term ‘living alone’ rather than ‘single’, as our discussions revealed that three of the participants were married but their spouses and in two cases, dependent children, were still overseas.

Professional interpreters were provided for three of the discussions. For the remaining three, language support was provided by bilingual members of the research team. Participants who attended the in-person workshop were provided with travel expenses and refreshments. Each person was asked to identify the people or organisations that had been important to their lives in Scotland. When all possible connections had been noted, participants were asked to tell us which had been most important. After the discussion, each participant was given an individual link to the online Social Connections Questionnaire. Interpreters provided language support to enable participants to fill this in. The six maps generated through the online survey are included in the appendix to this report.

## Individual pathways

An individual pathways map is presented for each participant, accompanied by a short narrative that summarises the key connections they identified. Each is presented as a stand-alone vignette to illustrate the differences in individuals’ experiences and connections. Wherever possible we have retained the words used by participants to describe different connections. In some cases, they were no longer sure of the exact name of organisations or people.

The key for interpreting the pathways maps is:

- Red = statutory provision.
- Purple = connector services that enable access to wider rights/services, including AMIF partners.
- Yellow = connections relating primarily to social inclusion.
- Blue = connections relating primarily to economic inclusion.
- Green stars = means and markers outcomes (housing / education / employment / health).
- Dotted lines = connections people would like to have but have not yet been able to make.

Individual social connections maps produced by the online survey tool are included in the appendix. These and other data, including survey responses and previous workshops, will be analysed together to develop the findings of our final project report in December 2022.

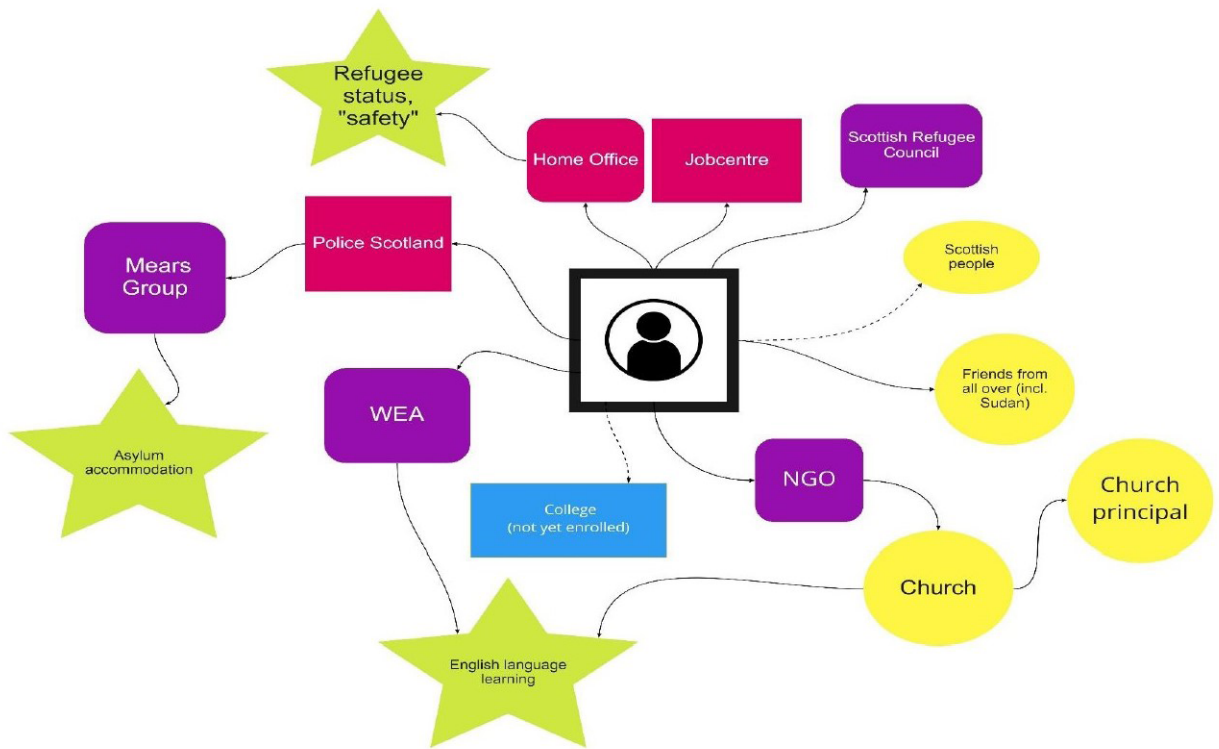


Figure 1: Participant one, pathways map

## Participant one (man, living alone)

Participant one identified several agencies that had helped him, principal among them being the Home Office who, in his words, had provided him with ‘safety’ by accepting his asylum claim. He mentioned assistance after his grant of status from both Scottish Refugee Council and the Job Centre Plus but did not give specific details of the types of help these organisations had provided. However, he spoke positively of all the assistance he had received whilst in Scotland, from formal and informal contacts, explaining that:

*I can eat, I have a roof over my head, and I have clothes and they make you feel respected, like a living human being. Other than that, I don't really need much else.*

He spoke in detail about the importance of his friends. They were people he described as being from ‘all over’ including some from his country of origin. These friends were important not necessarily in terms of practical assistance but, in his words:

*more kind of moral or emotional support, or social. Sometimes we go for a walk, sometimes we go for a play around [football] or something.*

His view of the process of integration resonated with previous work that places integration as a step-by-step process. He did want to seek employment but, for the moment, saw gaining skills in English as the crucial domain he was seeking to develop at present:

*Language is the key to all kinds of success...of course I'm going to work, but ... it's still English first...*

While he felt that Scottish people were helpful and nice, he had not yet developed strong relationships with them because of the language. However, getting in touch with Scottish people was a key goal once he had built confidence in English. In this regard, the participant spoke highly of the WEA class (see Interim Report 6.1) and also of English classes offered by two different churches where he had made friends and been able to access English language learning opportunities.

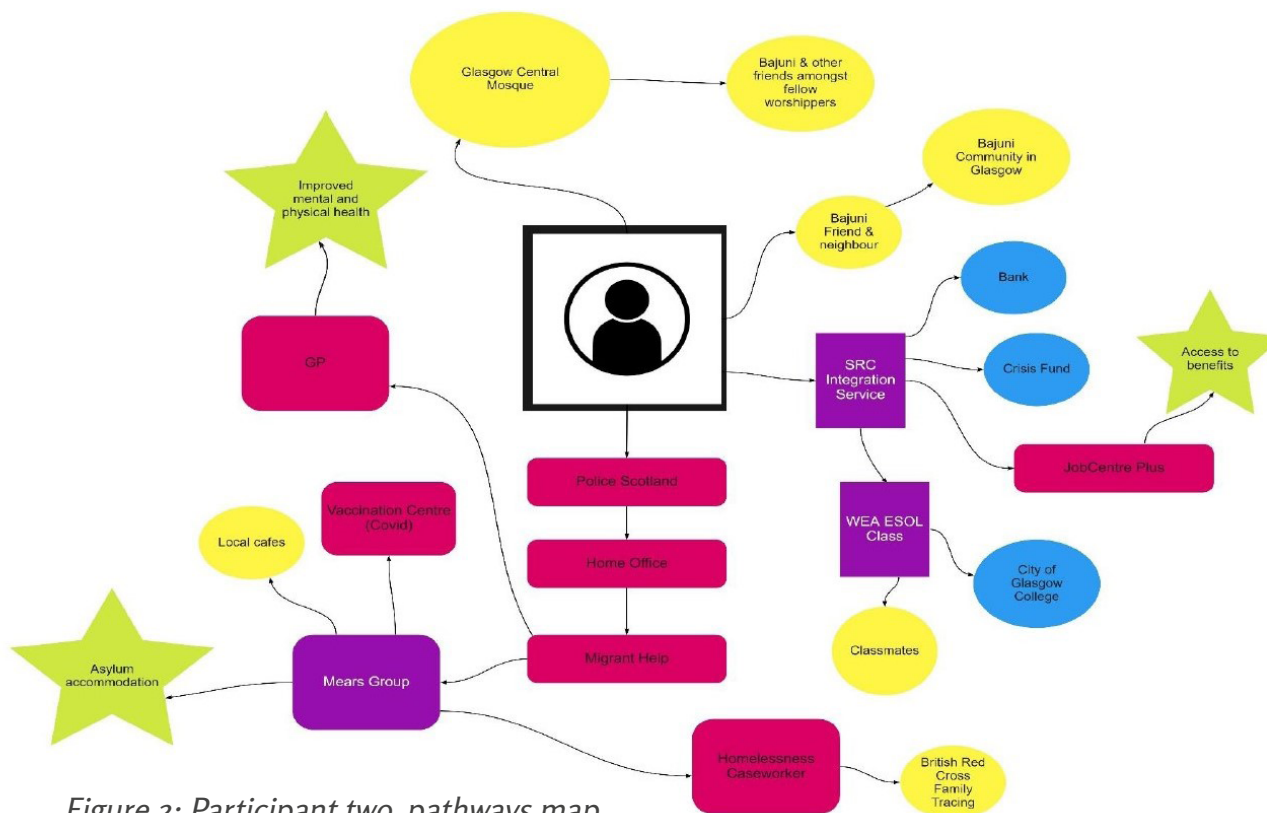


Figure 2: Participant two, pathways map

## Participant two (man, living alone)

Participant two was a middle-aged man who, although he was living alone in Glasgow, had a wife and children from whom he had been separated during his journey from his country. He disclosed this at the end of the interview, saying that his priority was to find and be reunited with his family members. Like participant one, he had very positive views of the statutory agencies involved in dealing with his asylum case and providing support during the asylum process. He described presenting to the Police in winter when he first arrived, and he gratitude for their help in linking him to the Home Office, who in turn arranged for Mears Group to provide him with temporary and then longer-term asylum accommodation that he deemed ‘good’ and ‘quite nice’. Support from Mears Group, the contracted private accommodation provider for the Home Office, was not limited to organising accommodation:

*He would take me from the flat, and introduce me into the community, places where I went for coffees, teas and meet other people... even during lockdowns he would come to my flat, pick me up, take me to the vaccination centre... he was very helpful.*

This contrasts with critiques by advocacy groups and the media of the support offered by Home Office accommodation contractors. While the participant’s comments referred to the positive contact he had had with a named staff member rather than generally across the organisation, he was one of four participants who identified Mears Group as a connection they trusted a lot (see individual connections maps in appendix).

Mears Group had also put the participant in touch with a local GP, who remained a key contact for him. Not only had the GP helped him to deal with mental and physical health conditions, he and the surgery staff seemed to have provided extensive, holistic support.

*When I came into the country I was [...] very much unwell...the doctor has given me medication and he's really so keen to make sure that I improve [...] he has helped me from along way to where I am now.*

The participant had had to move to another area when he left his asylum accommodation, but he was still travelling one hour to attend appointments and was actively seeking permanent housing near to the GP to be able to maintain contact.

After being granted leave to remain, the participant had received extensive help from Scottish Refugee Council, although due to Covid-19 lockdowns he had never met his adviser in person. Regardless, he spoke highly of them, explaining that they had helped with several practical issues including access to crisis fund monies, benefits and a bank account. More broadly, they had acted as a connector, explaining his rights and what he needed to do to access them:

*When I got the leave to remain, I really was kind of lost. I didn't know where to go. They were the ones who really matched me to every place that I needed to go to.*

In terms of social life, the participant had met some fellow worshippers at Glasgow's Central Mosque which he attended as a practising Muslim. However, the person he appeared closest to was another person from the Bajuni community who had been his neighbour in asylum accommodation. They were still in contact and through her, he had met other people from the same ethnic and linguistic background. Through these contacts he hoped, now that Covid-19 restrictions were lifting, to become part of the formal Bajuni community in Glasgow.

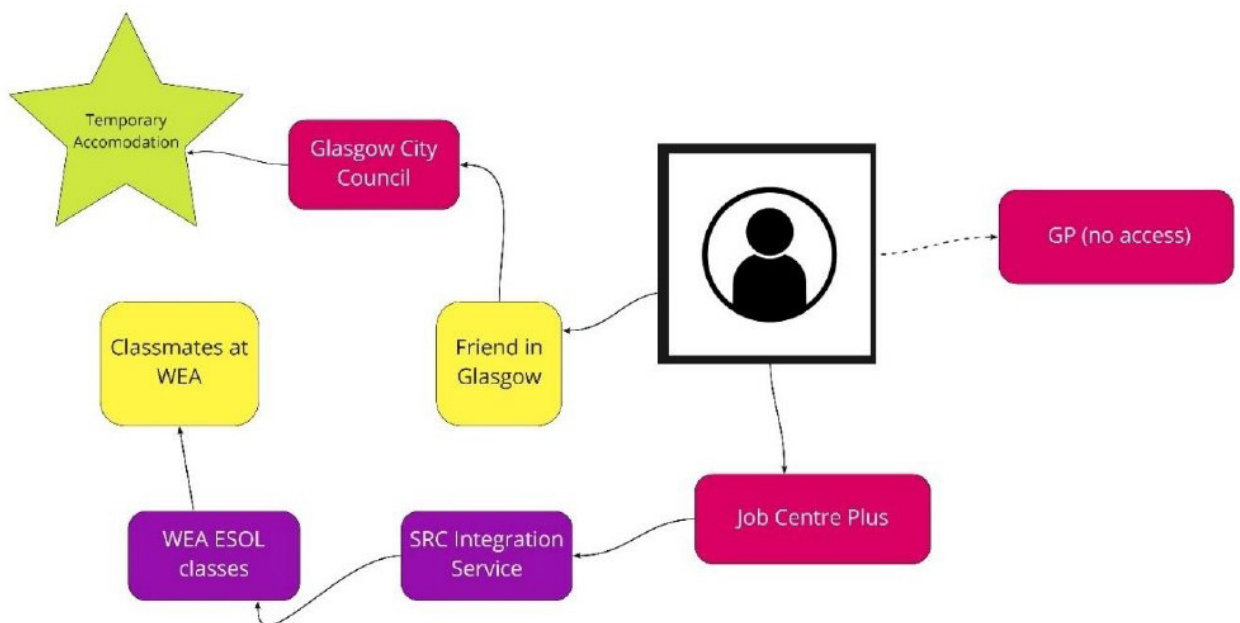


Figure 3: Participant three, pathways map

### Participant three (man, living alone)

Unlike the other participants, all of whom had either claimed asylum in Scotland or been sent to live in Glasgow under the asylum dispersal scheme, participant three had lived in Belfast initially and had only recently arrived in Glasgow having moved of his own accord after being granted leave to remain. As a result, he had noticeably fewer connections in Glasgow, as shown above and in his survey response (see appendix). While his motivation for moving was not discussed, he had a friend in Glasgow who, since his arrival, had helped him to navigate through some of the relevant statutory systems as shown in his pathways board. The connections he had managed to make had thus far proven helpful. He had approached Glasgow City Council who had provided him with temporary accommodation and had a caseworker at Scottish Refugee Council who in turn had helped him to access WEA ESOL classes. The classes themselves had enabled him to meet new people. However, he was still working to transfer his health file over from Belfast and was frustrated by delays in registering with a GP.

*I still don't have access to the GP. The Job Centre ...gave me a website link, I went there. I think I did the registration but I haven't heard back.*

His SRC Integration Adviser was also providing advice on this issue. Meanwhile, like participant two, he was focused on improving his English at the time of the interview, and whilst keen to work, recognised that language learning was his priority:

*In order to learn to get a job, I need to get my language right and then when I'll be done I can find the right job.*

He was disappointed to have only four hours of language class per week. He was using apps to practise at home but would ideally have had "four hours per day" to help him develop his skills and move forward. He was confident that the WEA class would soon provide a pathway to more ESOL provision at college.

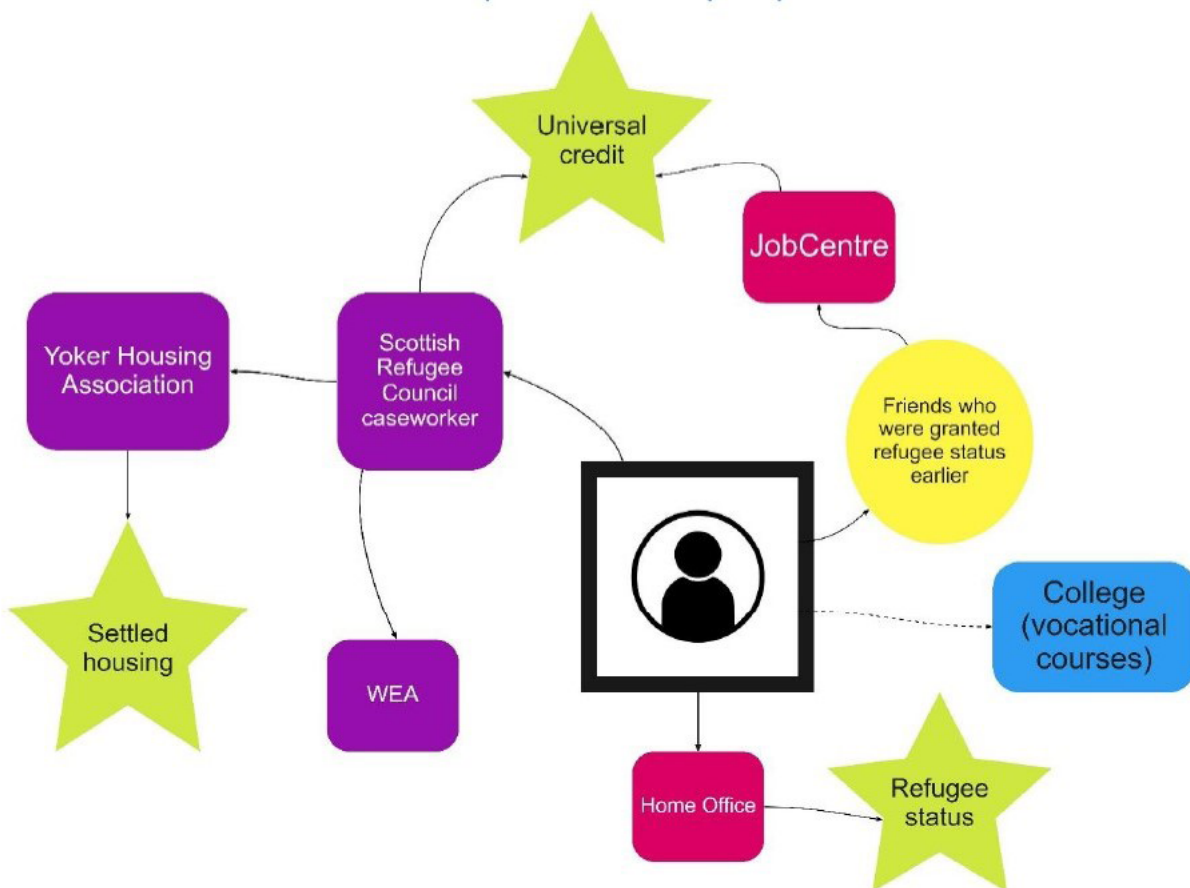


Figure 4: Participant four, pathways map

## Participant four (man, living alone)

Unlike the other participants, all of whom had either claimed asylum in Scotland or The fourth participant was the youngest person who took part in the discussions. Like participant two, although he was living alone in Glasgow, he had a wife who was still overseas. As someone who has been recognised as a refugee, he would not need to meet any income requirement to apply under refugee family reunion rules for her to join him<sup>1</sup>. He was clear however that he had in effect imposed upon himself conditions that would need to be met before he applied to bring her to Scotland.

*I have a wife in my country, I'm planning to bring her over here [...] the problem is I'm dependent on Universal Credit and if I bring her here to this country, she's going to be dependent on remittance as well. I don't want to do this kind of stuff. I want to work and study, make myself a little bit upgrade, and then by that time I can bring her here.*

He went on to explain that he felt frustrated and somewhat confused as his plan for 'upgrading' had involved working during the day and studying at night, but he was gradually realising that this would not be possible as he'd been unable to find any suitable courses that took place in the evening. Another source of frustration was the need to gain UK certificates not only for English but for skills he already had. He had previously worked in ceramics, decoration and painting in his country of origin and spoke of this as his passion. Although, as he explained, these practical skills should be transferable to the UK context, he had understood that he would need to go back through some training and certification before being able work in this area. The need to study English before being able to join any vocational courses – seemed to him needlessly bureaucratic given the nature of his work.

*My profession [...] doesn't need English language, it's more of practical things... my knowledge in English, I know it's not enough but for doing this kind of job [...] I don't think it's not enough, because I can do it, it's practical jobs.*

In terms of his current situation, the first organisation he spoke of was Scottish Refugee Council. His Integration Adviser had helped him to apply for Universal Credit, had referred him to a local Housing Association who were instrumental in finding settled accommodation, and had generally helped him to understand life in Scotland. Their help had been particularly important to him because *"I can't speak English and I can't communicate with anyone in English"*, therefore they had bridged the gaps in his linguistic and systems knowledge in the period after his grant of status. The Home Office had also played a role as *"[it was] life changing to get my papers"*; however, support since that time had largely been through SRC. The participant spoke too of the role played by his friends. Most shared his language, and he explained the ways in which collective knowledge was shared between them, something that had helped him find his way to the Job Centre where he had been able to apply for benefits and seek advice about education and employment.

*We came from the same country and we speak the same language and we discuss about these things. Many of us are refugees so we discuss about this, and then we get information. They get information from me, I get information from them, and with that information I just do everything.*

Reciprocal information exchange through these informal contacts was another key stepping stone whilst navigating through different statutory systems and working towards his goals of work and reunion with his wife.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.uk/settlement-refugee-or-humanitarian-protection/family-reunion>



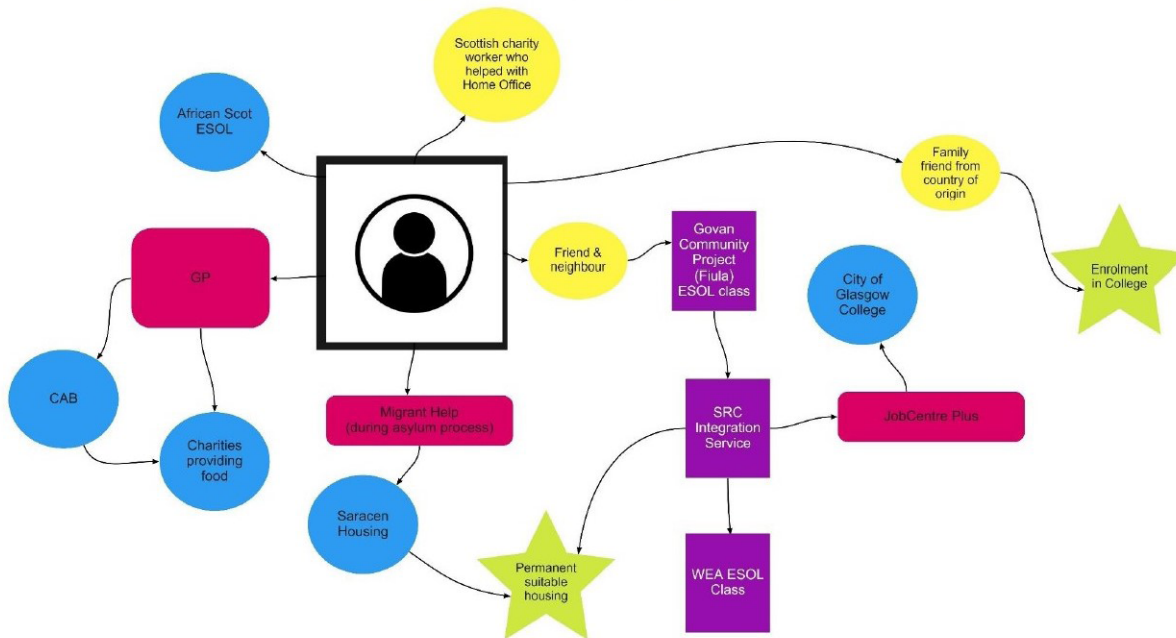


Figure 5: Participant five, pathways map

## Participant five (woman, living alone)

The fifth participant lived alone in Glasgow but spoke about maintaining contact with family back home, primarily her mother and her young niece, for whom she had cared since the age of three and who was “like my daughter”. This contact was important to her but an additional expense, as her mother lived in a rural area, and she could only call her using mobile phone credits. Like participant two, she was open about experiencing poor mental health. Echoing participant two, she had chosen her settled housing specifically so that she could live near to her GP practice:

*When I got my papers, Migrant Help referred me to an organisation that called me here and asked where I wanted to live and I said I wanted to stay near to my GP as my GP does a lot for me in terms of my health. She contacted Saracen Housing who provided housing near my GP and they found me the house.*

Her GP helped not only with this medical issue but had referred her to the Citizens Advice Bureau who in turn had referred her to charities who then helped her with food supplies. This included a charity called African Scot, where she had also been able to take part in community ESOL classes.

Scottish Refugee Council had also “played their role” in her route to settled housing. Her pathway to contact with Scottish Refugee Council began while she was still in the asylum process. Her neighbour from asylum accommodation, who was from Cameroon and shared the same language as her, introduced the participant to Govan Community Project. She contacted a French-speaking worker there who enrolled her in community ESOL classes. When the participant received her refugee status, this same GCP worker signposted her to the Scottish Refugee Council Integration Service. From that point onwards, Scottish Refugee Council provided a variety of assistance:

*They helped me to apply for Universal Credit and referred me to the school where Emma works (WEA) and they really helped me for housing as well.*

She spoke warmly too of support from Migrant Help during her time on asylum support; and generally felt supported, stating that the organisations she was in touch with “always help”. As regards wider social networks, the participant spoke of the limits of lockdown, which had meant she had only two people outside formal organisations who

she considered as friends. One was the neighbour who brokered her contact with Govan Community Project; the other was a family friend from her country of origin whom she knew prior to living in Scotland. This person, who from discussions appeared to be well-established in Glasgow, had provided assistance when navigating through college enrolment became too complex:

*Universal Credit gave me the weblink [for college enrolment], I thought I had done it but didn't actually manage to enrol...I was upset so I called my family friend who lives in Glasgow [...] she went with me [to the college] and helped me to enrol.*

Finally, like other participants, learning English was a priority. She spoke highly of WEA provision and attended several community classes, explaining that *"I try to speak as many different places as possible to get used to the accent and learn more words"*. For her, building her English skills was, as for other participants, a critical stepping stone to achieve her employment goal of working in early years education. However, she spoke too of the practical need to understand and speak the language, explaining the difficulties of going to places like hospital and not being able to understand people when they spoke. As a result, her main aim at the time of the interview was *"to be able to speak and understand English well"*. Other goals would follow in time.

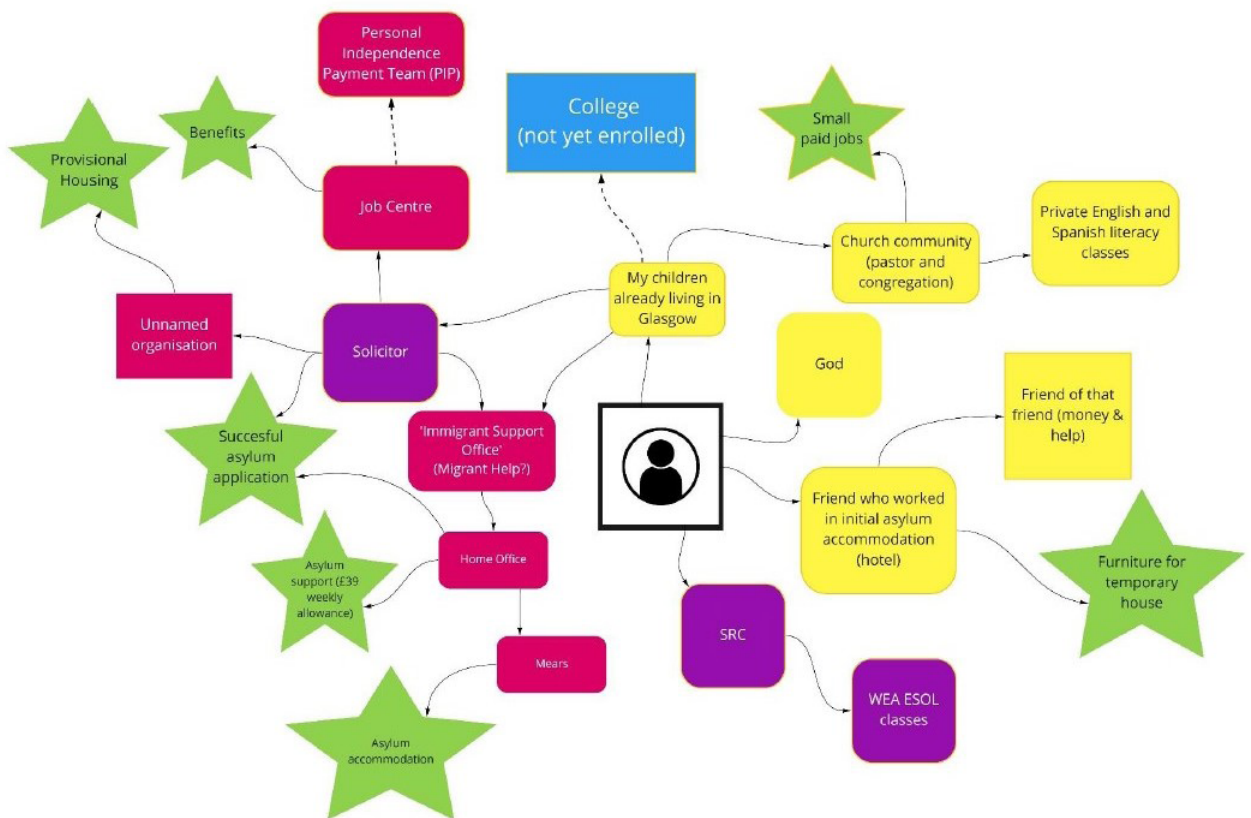


Figure 6: Participant six, pathways map

### Participant six (man, living with wife, children and grandchildren)

Participant six was the only person in this cohort who was living with family members in Glasgow. He had come to Glasgow to join his children, and they provided support and assistance in several ways. This included orienting him and his wife to the *"immigrant support office"* to get their asylum claim underway; helping them to join a Church community; finding them an immigration solicitor. However, this help had its limits due to his children's other commitments, and the participant's own desire to build independence. Gaining confidence in English was crucial to this, and WEA provision and ESOL classes through his church had already made a difference to him:

*When I just arrived I was very afraid of taking the bus or understand what I had to say in daily things and my sons helped me sometimes, but sometimes my son had to work and I had to do it on my own [...] I think the classes here [WEA] and the church classes have really helped me to gain confidence. I can still struggle and I make mistakes but people here are very kind, so they correct me but they don't make fun of me.*

Outside the family, informal contacts had played important roles at the beginning of the participant's time in Glasgow. Whilst living in temporary asylum accommodation in a hotel, he had made friends with a staff member who in turn contacted her friends to ask them to provide practical assistance including money and furniture to the participant and his wife. The Church community, including the pastor and other congregants, were an ongoing source of support, and the participant appreciated the sense that at church “we are all equal in that space”, contrasting this with a more stratified society in his country of origin. God was the participant's greatest source of emotional support, with faith and faith-related connections playing a prime role in the participant's life in Glasgow.

*It's important for us, God, and that's related to the church because emotionally they have been the biggest support and we trust God as well.*

Despite being well-connected and supported in Glasgow, the participant nonetheless was experiencing some barriers within systems. He spoke positively of assistance from the Job Centre, describing them as a contact that was “valuable economically”, however he was still waiting to hear about his application for Personal Independence Payment and was unsure when this would be approved. He was struggling too with college enrolment due to college capacity and uncertainty about how to get a place (see Interim Report 6.1). Even refugees with a variety of strong and trusted connections may not be able to fully access their rights after a grant of status. Finally, like many other participants, for him English learning was a step on the way to employment. The participant was nearing retirement age and had some physical health problems, but still hoped to be able to work in future. He had been paid for some odd jobs by his Church pastor but looked forward to being able to join the workforce once he felt his English was good enough.

*My next goal is trying to find employment. I'm a person that, I like to do things and keep myself busy...sometime where when I see people working in construction I want to approach them and say 'do you need a worker?' But then I think that my language is not good enough and here things work differently, but I would like to do more things...*

His explanation indicates that both lack of confidence in language and uncertainty about the ways the UK labour market works were barriers at this stage in his integration pathway.

## Conclusion

The *vignettes* presented above illustrate the importance of taking a person-centred approach to mapping social connections and their role in integration pathways. People's lives, circumstances and aspirations vary and their integration will take many forms, with different goals and priorities emerging over time. However, commonalities in discussions did emerge.

- **English language:** As might be expected from people in elementary and beginners' English classes, every participant spoke of the importance of learning English. This was for multiple reasons: to be able to meet Scottish people, to build confidence in everyday tasks, to be able to give as well as to receive help. However, for every participant, English was primarily perceived as being a key stepping stone in their pathway to paid employment.
- **Statutory services:** As explored in Interim Report 5, participants expressed relatively positive views about a number of statutory services. This included the Home Office and their accommodation subcontractor Mears Group who were seen to have provided a good service, not least because the Home Office had granted status and so safety to the participants. Three participants spoke about having significant mental and/or physical health problems. Two of them placed their GP as a central connection, whose support appeared to go above and beyond diagnosis and treatment and comprise a level of emotional and practical support that motivated both participants to choose settled housing specifically to be able to remain within the boundaries of that GP practice.
- **College provision:** the process for enrolling in college appeared to be causing difficulties for almost every participant. All were keen to proceed with more English language learning, but using website links to register for courses, and finding courses that met their own language requirements – for example, more vocational English – was providing difficult. Several other connections were helping with this, but the barriers did appear to be ongoing.
- **Informal contacts – friends / family / neighbours / community:** Every participant had at least one trusted friend in Glasgow, with some clearly feeling they were part of larger communities either by nationality group or by faith. These friends provided emotional support and were part of the fabric of participants' social lives. In several instances it was friends and family members who were more established in Scotland, rather than formal organisations, who brokered contact with key services or helped to resolve problems. However, some ambiguity in these relationships is suggested by the survey-generated connections maps, where 'non-Scottish friends' are trusted by only one of the five participants who had had recent contact with them.

The QMU Research Team will draw upon and expand these insights, and those gathered through previous research activities, when producing the final project research report.





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