



Annual Report 2008/ 2009



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Introduction

The aim of this report is to summarise the work of the Routes Project over the past twelve months. We will reflect on the presenting needs of newly arrived families in 2008/2009 and how our work has resolved outstanding issues. We will examine our working practice and seek to determine ways in which we can build on good practice or adapt our methods, in order to correctly meet the presenting needs of children, young people and families.

We will assess the work that has been undertaken on various levels and in various settings, such as:

- Grassroots working
- Partnership Building
- Challenging Mainstream Services



International New Arrivals in Manchester

Manchester is a city that is historically rich in diversity and continues to welcome people from all over the world. Many individuals voluntarily choose to live in Manchester, such as students or migrant workers and others, such as asylum seekers are forced to live here. Over the past few years, we have observed changes in migration patterns, which are reflective of political and economic influences throughout the world.

Over the past twelve months, migration to Manchester has continued, and we are witnessing the emergence of new communities and the growth of others. The demographic make up of the city supports the notion of cosmopolitanism, which can allow new arrivals to integrate with ease.

The Routes Project actively encourages integration and community cohesion through engaging with newly arrived families and ensuring that individuals and families access services and take advantage of the opportunities on offer.

Families arriving in Manchester have different reasons for choosing to live in a specific district, in some cases to join an existing community, in others for economic reasons, proximity to a university or placed by the Home Office or Housing Department. Key demographic features of each district include:

NORTH WEST

Historically very diverse.
Many families from South East Asia joining long established communities;
Growing numbers of economic migrants, e.g. Polish.
Popular with International Students studying at local Universities.
Increasing number of Roma Travellers living in North West Manchester, mainly from Latvia and Czech Republic.

NORTH EAST

Migration to this district is comparatively low however:
Increasing numbers of economic migrants from Europe and Africa.
Many asylum-seeking families are dispersed to North East Manchester by the Home Office and live in areas such as Abbey Hey, Openshaw and Clayton.

CENTRAL WEST

Historically very diverse.
Many families from South East Asia joining long established communities.
Significant numbers of refugee families and migrant families of Somali origin joining a well established Somali community.
High number of students settling in Central West in areas such as Fallowfield and Whalley Range.

CENTRAL EAST

Very diverse; including asylum seeking families dispersed to areas such as Ardwick and Gorton North.
Long established South East Asian community in Longsight.
Increasing numbers of Roma Travellers, typically from Romania settling in Levenshulme and Longsight.

SOUTH

Families from South East Asia joining well established communities.
Significant numbers of overseas students studying at Manchester Universities.

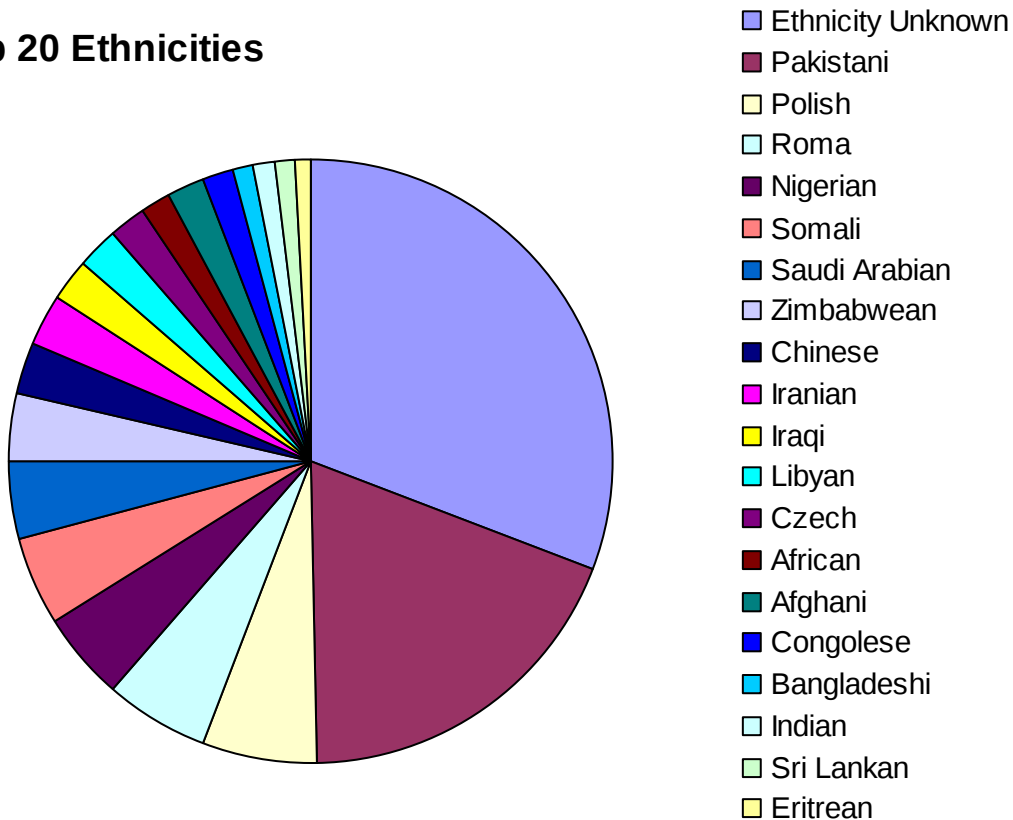
WYTHENSHAW

Becoming increasingly diverse due to availability of houses and dispersal of asylum seeking families by the Home Office.
Significant numbers of EU migrant workers, predominantly from Poland.

Where are families coming from?

In the past 12 months, the Routes Project has supported families from over 70 different countries. The table below reflects the diversity of families settling in Manchester:

Top 20 Ethnicities

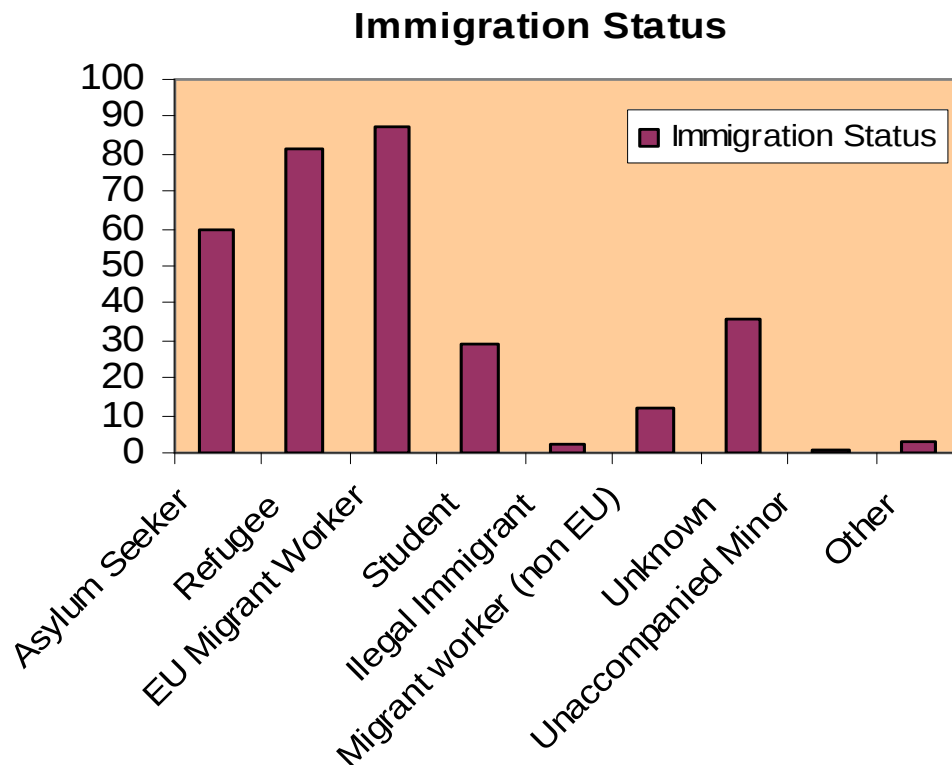


Families arrive in Manchester from every corner of the world and bring an eclectic wealth of language, customs and culture. The Routes Project welcomes diversity and families benefit greatly from a multilingual and diverse team.

We ensure that children, young people and families are engaged with the project by developing trusting and supportive relationships. We seek to involve families and ensure that they understand and participate in their action plans. The Routes Project will provide an interpreter if required.

Immigration Status

As stated previously, the reasons for families migrating to Manchester differ greatly, often according to the circumstances in their home country, educational aspirations or job opportunities.



(Statistics taken from monthly supervision with Family Support Workers)

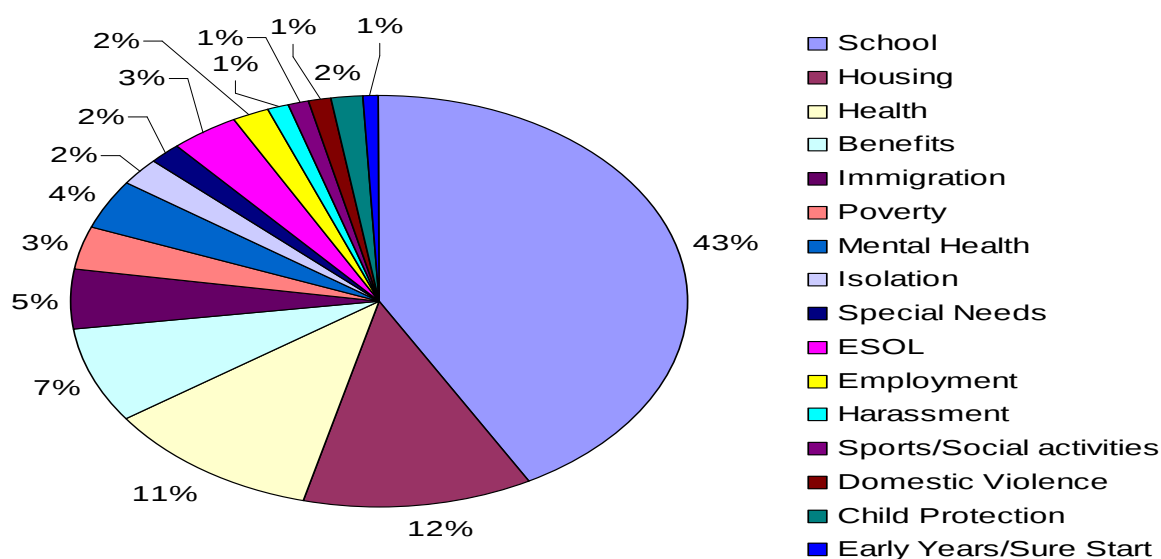
Presenting Needs for Newly Arrived Families

Families arriving from abroad are faced with a multitude of issues, such as claiming asylum, facing homelessness, domestic violence or obtaining school places. Through our assessments, we are able to determine the level of presenting needs for service users and develop appropriate action plans to address these needs and resolve issues.

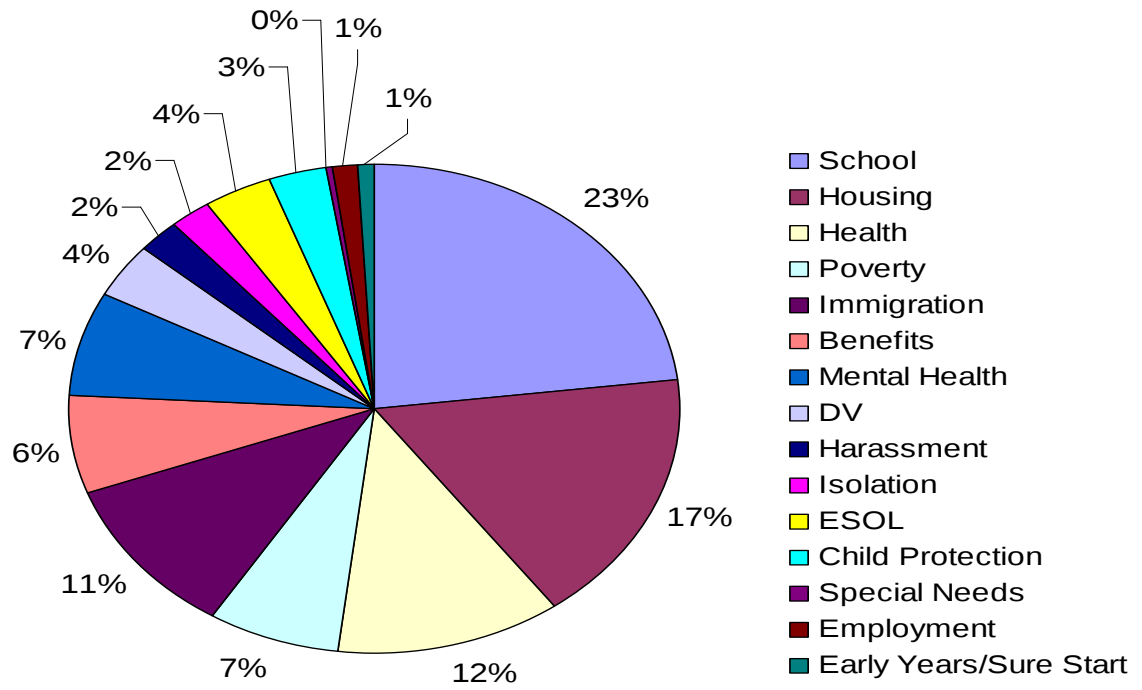
Education continues to be the top presenting need for children and families referred to the Routes Project. This may reflect our strong links with Education Services, as a significant proportion of our referrals come via the School Admissions Team. However, our knowledge of working with newly arrived families shows that education is often the main concern and many families view obtaining a school place for their child as the first step of settlement in a new area.

Other presenting issues may include: Health needs (often Mental health), Domestic Violence, Homelessness, Benefits, Immigration, Further Education etc. The tables below detail the issues affecting newly arrived families and takes a citywide and a district based perspective.

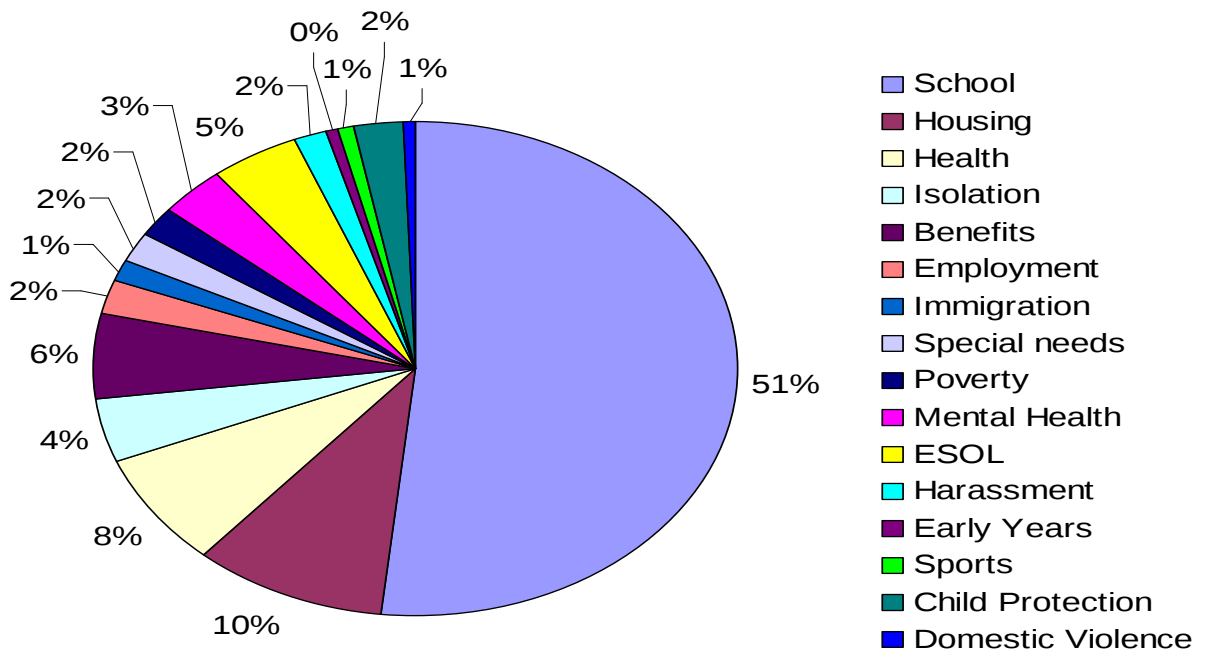
Summary of Issues: City Wide



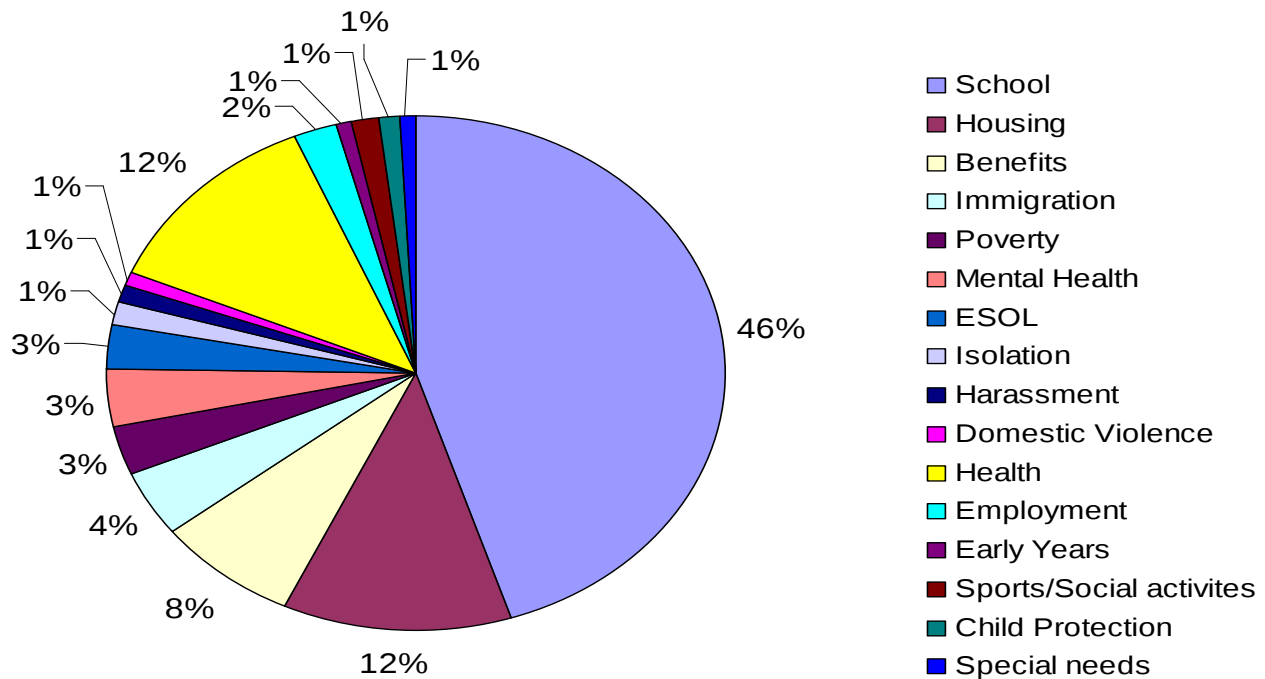
Summary of Issues: North East



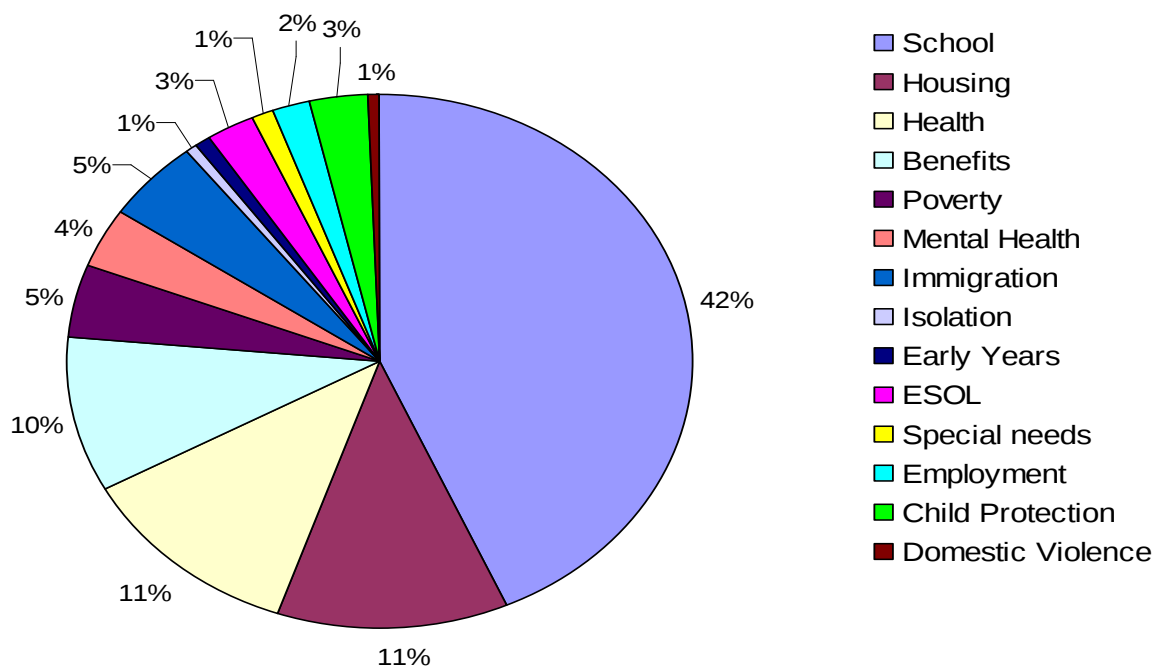
Summary of Issues: North West



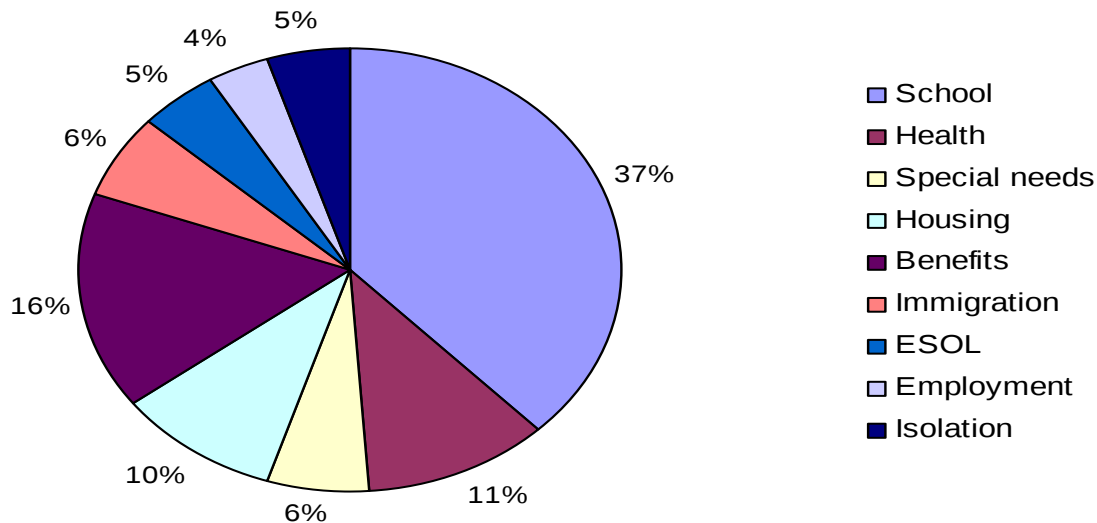
Summary of Issues: Central East



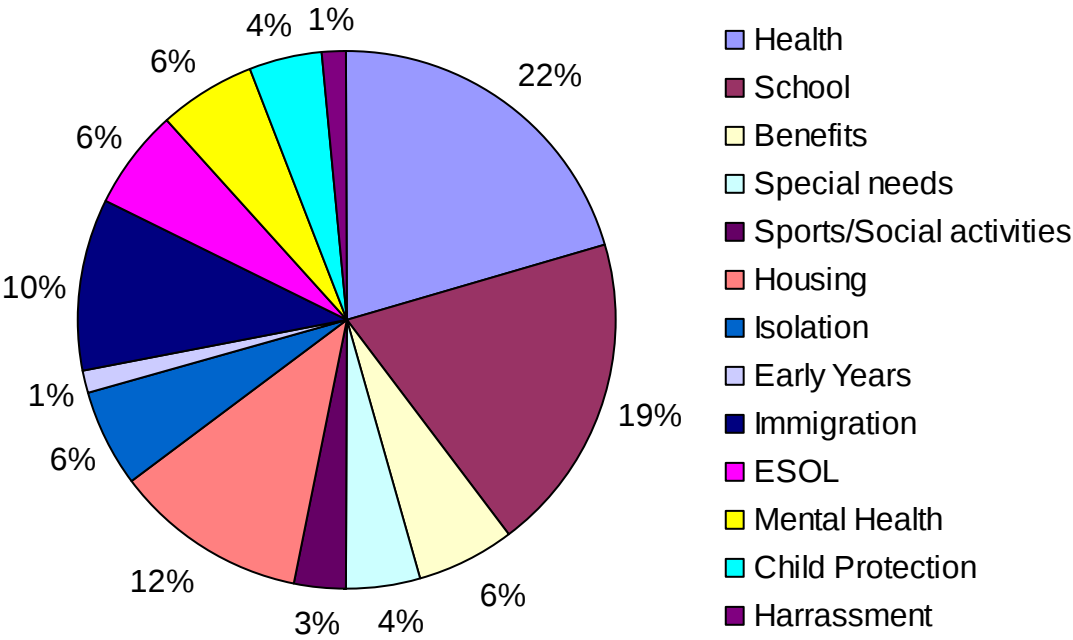
Summary of Issues: Central West



Summary of Issues: South

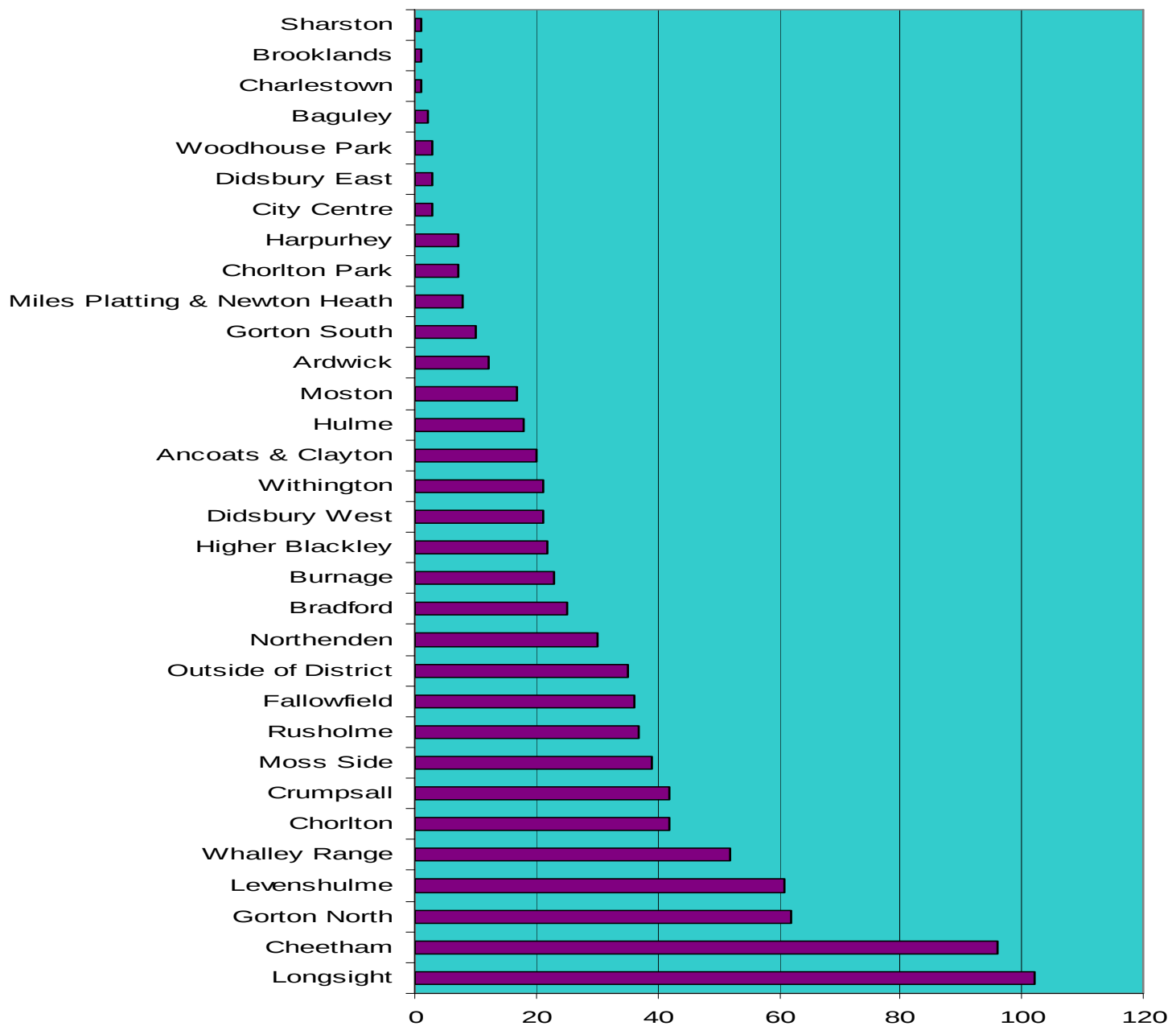


Summary of Issues: Wythenshawe



Where is the need?

The Routes Project is a citywide programme that provides support to families in all districts of Manchester. As stated previously, migration to Manchester is based on a number of reasons. The table below indicates where newly arrived families have settled in the past twelve months.

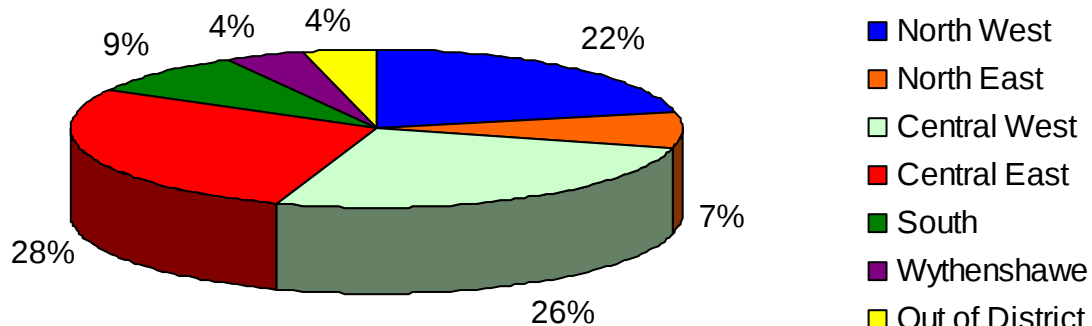


Longsight continues to be one of the most popular areas for new arrivals, along with Cheetham, Gorton North and Levenshulme.

The Routes Project regularly receives referrals from services or families outside of the City of Manchester. We are unable to work directly with these families; however, we ensure that they are signposted or referred to other appropriate services.

District Working

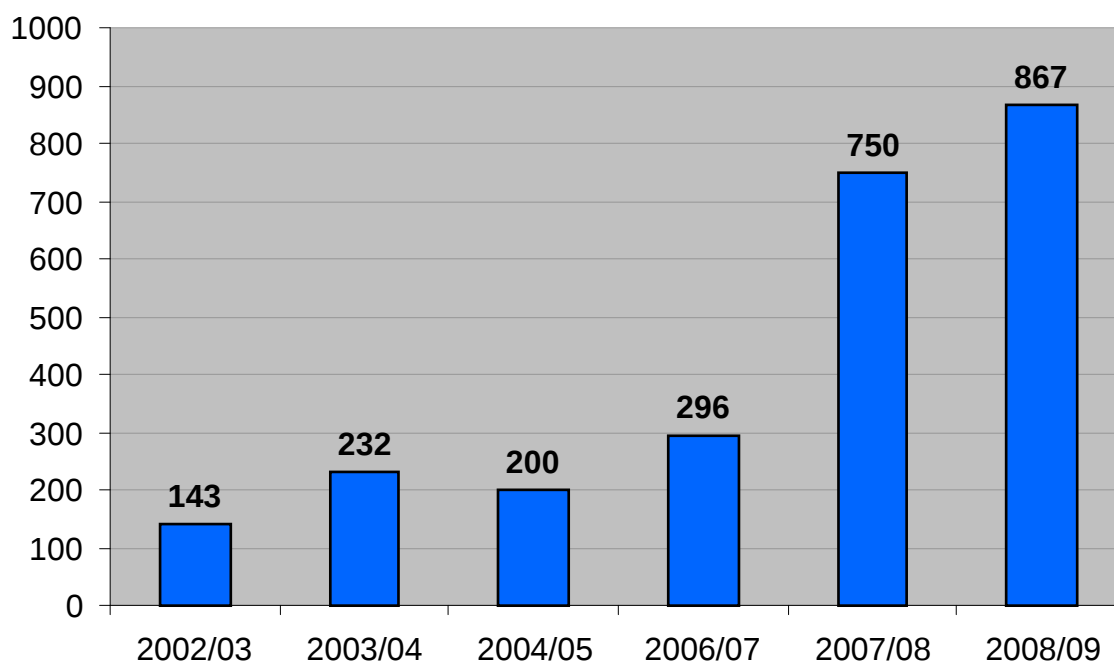
International new arrivals settling in Manchester tend to be highly mobile and therefore re-encounter the same problems accessing services after changing districts. The Routes Project helps to narrow the gap between district-based services and highlights the need for a smooth transition for children and families from one district to the next.



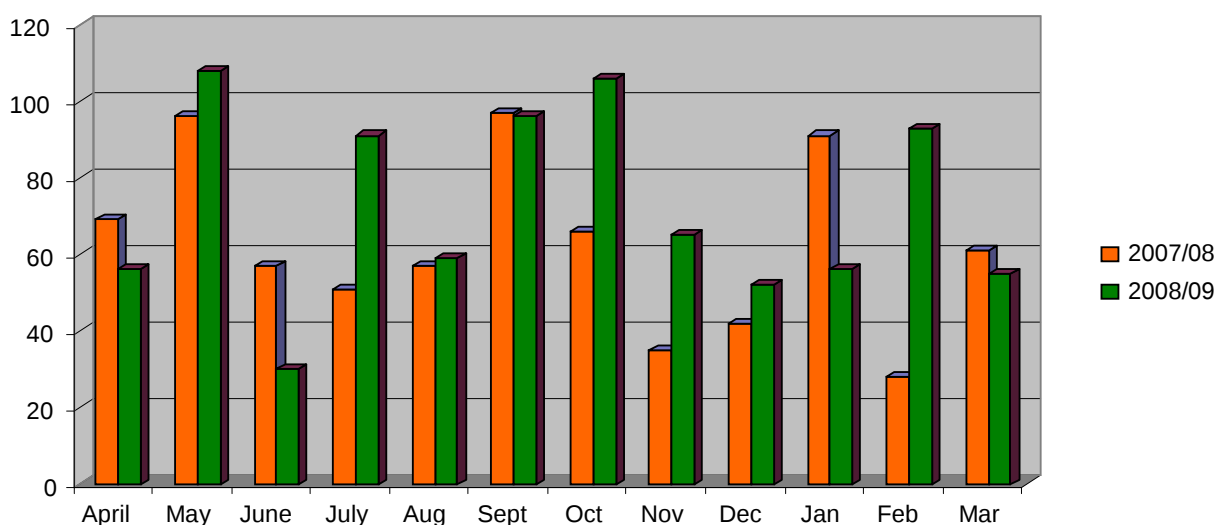
The Routes Project maintains a high knowledge base regarding services available within and across districts, in order to support and inform families in transition.

Referrals

The Routes Project receives a high number of referrals from a variety of sources such as Health Professionals, schools, voluntary organisations and service users on a daily basis. From the conception of the Routes Project in 2002, referrals to the project have steadily increased year by year.

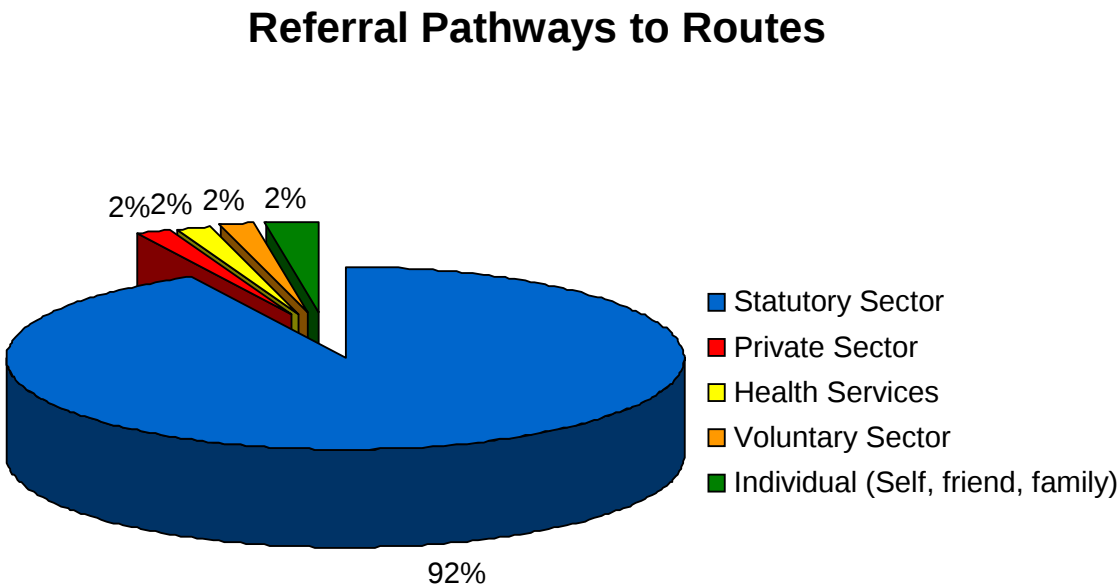


2008/2009 has witnessed a 16% increase on last year's figures.



The Routes Project actively promotes the service throughout Manchester, which enables organisations, both statutory and voluntary, and families to refer to the project quickly and with ease. Our links to key organisations allow us to reach families at the earliest opportunity thus preventing children escalating to a higher level on the Continuum of Need. By having a referral system with organisations such as Manchester School Admissions and the INA/ Traveller Team, we are able to ensure that children and families are accessing mainstream services including educational provision.

This year the Routes Project has received referrals from over 20 different sources. The table below indicates Referral pathways according to sector.



We recognize the need to establish new links with organisations from all sectors, in order to reach those most in need as soon as possible. In 2009/2010, we will expand on our success of partnership working as displayed with the Statutory Sector, and increase referral pathways from other sectors, including the third sector.

Partnership Working and Building Capacity

The Routes Project is a key agency in advocating for international new arrivals in Manchester. Due to our strength in establishing effective partnerships with mainstream providers and voluntary organisations, we are able to raise awareness of the needs of newly arrived children and families. Furthermore, we are in a position to influence services so as to provide more effective provisions through capacity building.

The Routes Project and INA/ Traveller Team

The Routes Project works closely with the INA/ Traveller Team to ensure that newly arrived children have access to appropriate educational provision. The partnership allows the sharing of expertise and allows children and families to receive support in a number of ways and in different settings, for example establishing language support in schools or completing home visits.

The Partnership works effectively and benefits newly arrived families by taking a coordinated family approach to ensure the needs of both children and parents/ carers are met.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Routes Project has been successful in establishing a multi- agency partnership which aims to track all newly arrived and traveller children missing from education. The partnership consists of the INA/ Traveller Team, CME officer and health professionals plus the Routes Project which coordinates the meeting on a regular basis. The Children Missing Education partnership helps safeguard vulnerable children and share good working practice.

Choice Work 2008

The Routes Project plays a key role in advocating for children and families in regards to accessing school places. 2008 has seen the Routes Project expand on a specific piece of work regarding education. Through 'Choice Work', our family support workers have provided specialised support and advice to parents/ carers with the Year 6- Year 7 school transition. During the transition period, many families encounter difficulties in deciding which schools to apply for, how to apply, when to apply and how to appeal. Many families newly arrived to the UK and Manchester have a great number of things to contemplate and act upon. Applying for schools may not be a priority for some families, and issues such as immigration, housing or benefits may take precedence. Through the support of Routes, families are able to bridge the gap between year 6 and year 7 schooling and make informed choices about their children's future.

Working with Marginalised communities

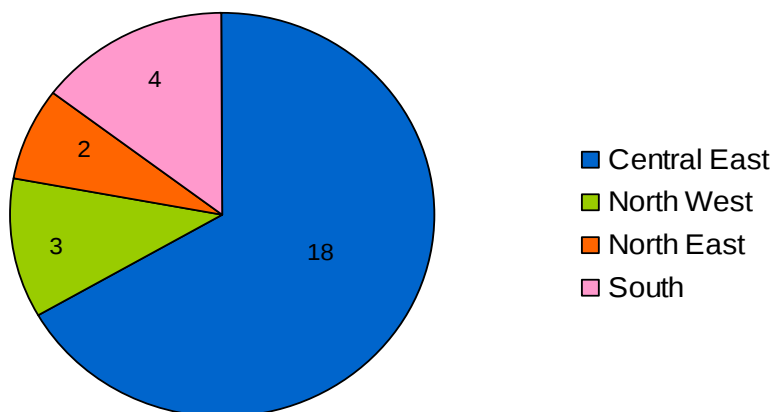
The Routes Project has played an instrumental role in working with the Roma community in East Manchester. Following the expansion of the European Union, many families from Romania and Bulgaria (A2) migrated to the UK, following their A8 counterparts. Due to accession restrictions placed on the A2 countries, many families are facing abject poverty whilst living in the UK. A high number of Roma families originating from Romania are living in overcrowded conditions, facing financial instability with the inability to purchase essential items such as food and clothing and contending with unemployment and limited access to public funds. The Routes Project has highlighted these issues within a multi agency arena and persistently sought to alleviate some of the problems that these families are facing. By working in partnership with key organisations in Manchester, we have been able to deliver employment and benefit advice sessions to a number of families, refer children and parents in need to health professionals and community organisations and encourage families to engage with local services such as schools.

Common Assessment Framework

The Routes Project has adopted the Common Assessment Framework with ease and enthusiasm. We recognise the benefits that this initiative holds for families with additional needs and how it helps to provide a coordinated response for children and families.

At present, the Routes Project is one of the leading agencies in Manchester in delivering the CAF to children, young people and families.

**Number of CAF's completed
2008/2009**



We are also actively involved in the implementation of the CAF within Manchester. Routes will continue championing the benefits of the CAF to both families and organisations and seek to share good practice.

Achieving our Outcomes

The Routes Project has strived to achieve the following outcomes for children, young people and families:

Improvements in the relationship/ attachment between children and parents/ carers

- 95% of families have accessed mainstream services between the period of April 2008 and March 2009. The remaining 5% failed to access services due to leaving the area or specific barriers such as dentists failing to provide interpreters.
- 100% families/ individuals who identified themselves as wishing to engage with leisure and community services such as local drop-ins, community groups, leisure centres were referred or signposted.
- Intervention with families involving tailored support, supported introductions have allowed individuals/ families to build positive relationships with services, which has helped to minimize stress.
- Families experiencing isolation have been referred or signposted to organisations and community groups such as Rainbow Haven, the Roby, and Refugee Action Wellbeing Project etc.

Improvements in family functioning so as to meet basic needs

- 95% have been signposted, referred or offered a supported introduction to services that ensure that the provision of basic care and needs are met.
- Through providing information to individuals and families, we have enabled families to make informed and independent decisions. For example, we provide families with information regarding local schools, which helps parents to make an informed choice with the needs of their child taking precedence.
- We have strived to ensure that families are living in a safe home environment, free from poverty by ensuring that families are aware of all their rights and entitlements and are not subject to issues such as: overcrowding, racial harassment and economic hardship.

Decreased levels of conflict within the family

- Through the provision of mainstream services and the assurance that basic needs are met, we are able to help safeguard families from severe discord. In circumstances where domestic violence occurs, we will ensure families and children are engaged with specialist services.

Increased parental confidence and self- esteem

- Through the provision of accessible information, individuals/ families are empowered to make independent decisions. We listen and value the views of children, young people and parents/ carers and support them to express their opinions and challenge services appropriately.
- Our work identifies and recognizes individual strengths and encourages people to follow their goals and aspirations. In the past 12 months, 100% of families/ individuals who were identified as requiring support with training, volunteering or employment were signposted, referred or offered supported introductions.

Reduction in parental isolation

- We strive to make communities and neighbourhoods more cohesive and integrative by supporting families to build positive relationships with neighbours and local community groups.
- We encourage families and individuals to become involved in local and citywide initiatives where skills and expertise can be shared and friendships and relationships can foster.

Greater parental involvement in their children's learning

- We actively encourage all parents/ carers to become more involved in their children's education. From initial contact with families, we ensure that parents/ carers have the knowledge and comprehension of all options available. Furthermore, we ensure that families have a complete understanding of the education systems and various

processes. For example, we have guided many families through the Appeal's process in the hope of obtaining a preferred school place.

Increased personal resilience for children

- In the past year, we have supported 1039 children into appropriate educational provision. Children and families have been supported and encouraged to obtain specialist support if required such as language assistance in the classroom.
- We have worked with a number of children who have required specialist support in order to improve mental health, anxiety or depression. A high number of CAF's have been completed with children who have displayed a heightened level of need in this area and appropriate actions have been identified, such as referrals to the Emotional Trauma Support Team.
- Support has been provided to children who wish to engage with community based projects and activities such as football, dancing and youth clubs. Confidence has been increased through the engagement with community services and friendships and relationships have fostered.

Improved behaviour for children

- Routes have strived to engage with children and young people in order to facilitate and strengthen their decision- making and levels of empowerment.
- Assessments completed by Routes, including the CAF have enabled children to positively engage with schools, statutory and voluntary services.

Improved relationships with school/ educators for children

- In the past year, 1039 children have been supported in accessing a school place. As previously highlighted, we have supported a high number of children who have been missing education for more than one month and identified appropriate actions to take in order to resolve the issue.
- Through the provision of a safe environment for parents and children to air their views, any issues that have arisen regarding school and the threat of poor attendance have been resolved sensitively and with full involvement from children and/or parents.

Outcomes have also been measured through Evaluation Interviews and Case Follow Up letters. Comments include:

"Since you have helped us everything is just going forwards, and we feel much more confident through your help. Thank you very much for that". Family from Afghanistan supported for 3 months.

"When something happened you know there is some help. I had plenty of assistance... My support worker was a wonderful person, always cheerful and ready to help". Family from Somalia supported for 17 months.

"Sebastian is so happy at school and is only not happy when he has to get up in the morning! He has made friends in school and they are such lovely children". Family from Poland supported for 2 months.

Conclusion

The Routes Project has had an interesting year with a great number of successes.

Our outreach work is essential to the settlement and integration of newly arrived families living in Manchester. By working holistically, we strive to engage all members of the family in decision-making processes to support empowerment of all individuals regardless of age, gender, race or disability.

Our eagerness to work with others, from all sectors, is an attribute to our commitment in working with newly arrived families who need a helping hand. We have strived to build and strengthen partnerships with an array of organisations in order to best meet the needs of international new arrivals. Through partnership working, we reinforce our capabilities in challenging inequalities and injustices and make significant headway in breaking down barriers and changing mainstream services for the benefits of all families living in Manchester.

We hope for all families, regardless of place of birth, to have equal access to opportunities in Manchester.

Over the next twelve months, the Routes Project will work towards expanding on our past achievements and strengthen our unique service further.