

February 2008

Communicating important information to new local residents

Globalisation and changing patterns of migration present us with new challenges. In recent years much of the migration to the UK has been to areas which have not previously experienced migration. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion set out ways in which areas like these could go about building cohesion and integrating new and existing communities. One of the things the Commission suggested was packs of information for new arrivals to aid their integration into the community.

Across the country, a number of local authorities and migrant or refugee support organisations already produce information packs for new residents, recognising that while it is always difficult to settle in a new area, it can be doubly difficult to settle in a new country. We now want to build on these local innovations to ensure that these information packs help promote integration between new and settled communities.

In particular we want to see these packs used to:

- Set out clearly the responsibilities that come with living in the UK as well as practical information about how to access services
- Give a clear sense of national values not just local amenities
- Communicate the unwritten rules of behaviour that are so important to enable new communities to integrate with existing ones.

We have worked with IDeA to produce web-based guidance on how to produce an information pack for new migrants. This guidance includes a model pack showing the sort of information that can be included. This is based on work done in Cambridgeshire to examine existing information packs. The model is therefore based on existing practice and includes practical advice about both rights and responsibilities in the UK. The guidance is available at: www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=5961509

This is a developing area, so we may be able to improve on current practice. We and IDeA will therefore be interested in feedback on this guidance and to see new and innovative examples of locally produced information packs.

The key principles for an effective information pack

There are six key things to consider in pulling together a successful information pack.

1. Tailor the pack to local needs

Every authority should take from the model what it thinks will be useful and add to it where it sees gaps, can make improvements or sees local circumstances which need to be catered for. This leaflet is about packs for new migrants, but it could be a pack made available to each new person who moves to the area, whether they have moved from the next county or the next country. It could even be used for young adults or in schools to help them learn about rights and responsibilities.

2. Use the opportunity to get across key local messages

Producing an information pack is an opportunity to get across some key messages about local campaigns such as volunteering or keeping streets clean; or to tell new residents about some of the features of your local area of which you are proud. You may wish to ask a local VIP or celebrity to write an introduction to the pack to get some of these messages across.

3. Ensure that you have balanced rights with responsibilities

Some information packs have been produced for refugees by refugee organisations. These quite rightly have focussed on refugees' rights in the UK as people who have not chosen to come here, but have been forced to leave their own country and may have suffered personal loss or injury. Information packs aimed at people who have chosen to come here need a stronger emphasis on people's responsibilities in the UK as well as telling them about their rights.

In drawing up an information pack you should think about not only what new residents will need to know, but about what existing residents will want them to know about the way people live together in the area.

From the Fenland information pack for new migrants

People may act differently from what you expect in your own country.

These are some of the things that can cause problems in the local community.

- **putting out the rubbish** – your council can tell you which bins to use and when the rubbish is collected, and they will supply recycling bags
- **noise** – people can complain to the council about noise and other nuisance
- **queuing** – it is usual to join the back of a queue, don't push in, it can make people angry
- **footpaths** – don't block the paths, if you need to group together find an area with plenty of space
- **parking** – can cause problems in busy streets or where a number of cars are owned by one household
- **drinking and smoking in public** – can cause offence and is banned in most areas from summer 2007

Our **laws** may be different too

- weapons, including knives, cannot be carried
- alcohol cannot be bought by under 18 year olds
- no drugs can be carried except those prescribed by a doctor
- sexual consent may be given only by over 16 year olds
- the police have stop and search powers
- stealing may lead to arrest and deportation
- driving and owning a car has strict laws

4. Give a sense of British values

One way to emphasise responsibilities is to give a sense of shared British values and use this to bring out the link between meeting our responsibilities to society in return for having rights in that society.

The rights and responsibilities of being a British citizen are not straightforward, and we want to involve everyone in that debate. But we already know, from the Citizenship survey, that people feel most strongly that it should be the responsibility of all people living in the UK to:

- obey and respect the law
- raise children properly
- treat others with fairness and respect
- behave responsibly
- respect and preserve the environment
- help and protect the family
- behave morally and ethically
- treat all races equally
- work to provide for oneself
- help others
- vote in elections.

From the Welsh information pack for new migrants

Like you, we live in communities and we place a high value on people living together, working together, and getting along together. There are differences in culture, language and religion, we respect these differences and believe that they play a positive role in building a society where we can all live together.

5. Communicate the unwritten rules of behaviour

Responsibilities also mean much more than just paying taxes and obeying the law, responsibilities include following the unwritten rules of behaviour or norms in each area. The most likely cause of conflict between new and existing residents is over these unwritten rules (such as where to park your car and keeping your music down). Think about what the cause of this sort of conflict might be in your area. What do new residents need to know, and what will existing residents want them to know?

The Gateshead pack has addressed this important topic in a section called 'Local Customs and Behaviour'

You may see ways of behaviour which are new to you, and may be uncertain how to act. For example in Gateshead, and throughout the UK, if you are waiting to be served in a busy shop or office, you must stand in a queue, which is a line of people waiting in turn to be served. People generally feel that it is very bad manners to spit in the street. In the UK it is very important to arrive on time for all appointments. To arrive late can create a very bad impression, and can have serious consequences, for example losing your job (being sacked), losing your college place, losing your G.P (doctor), or losing your hospital appointment.

6. Translate in a targeted way that encourages learning of English

As our guidance translation makes clear, we believe translation needs to be targeted and evidence based; and provide a stepping stone to learning English. So we would expect areas to find out whether new migrants can speak English, only translate where they cannot and then make information packs bilingual or be clear about how people can learn English. Cornwall have been through this process and decided to produce their information pack just in English and three other languages.

You can view our translation guidance at:

www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/translationguidance

Here is an illustration of what an information pack might cover

What new migrants need to know about living in the United Kingdom

Our Common Values

As residents of the UK we are proud of many of the values we hold in common. These include

- Respect for the law
- Treating others with fairness and respect and all races equally
- Working to provide for oneself and paying tax
- Respecting and preserving our local environment

These values are not exclusive to the UK, but the way in which they are applied and the importance given to them are part of our sense of what makes this country unique. And these values are ones that we want to preserve and share with new arrivals.

With each of these values comes things new migrants will need to know

The law

- Their legal right to live in the UK, and the consequences if they disobey those rules
- The law about drugs, drinking and smoking and what might happen if you disobey those laws.
- The role of the police in enforcing the law and tackling crime
- The law about owning and driving a vehicle and travelling on public transport in the UK, and the consequences if you disobey those laws

Treating others with respect

- The strong legal framework we have in place to prevent discrimination and take action against those who incite hatred
- Our intolerance of racism
- The unwritten rules of behaviour, for example queuing and looking after your property

Working

- Whether they are legally entitled to work in the UK
- The law about worker registration
- The law about National Insurance numbers
- The law about paying tax
- The role of Jobcentre Plus
- The importance of speaking English to finding a job
- The minimum wage
- What to do if they think they are being unfairly treated by their employer

The environment

- Their responsibility for keeping their property clean and tidy
- Their responsibility for ensuring their rubbish is safely disposed of
- The Countryside Code

What new migrants need to know about living in their local town

Like anyone moving to a new area there are specific things new migrants will need to know about their new area to enable them to find work, look after their families, look after the local area and access local services. These include:

Finding work

- Where the local job centre is and how to use it
- Opportunities for people to improve their English and skills

Looking after your family

- What to do if they are sick or have an accident
- How the local school system works
- Where to get housing advice

Finding a home

- How to rent a home
- Paying Council Tax
- Where to get housing advice

Looking after the local area

- Waste collection and recycling arrangements
- What is expected of them in terms of looking after their local neighbourhood
- How to report local neighbourhood and environmental problems

Mixing with other people

- Details of cultural and leisure facilities
- The location of places of worship

Further information

Further copies of this leaflet are available via the Communities and Local Government website:

www.communities.gov.uk

If you require this document in an alternative format, please email alternativeformats@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Further copies of this leaflet are also available from

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