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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 August 2022</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Allen Stevenson Interim Chief Officer</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>SWSCSP/03/2022/AH</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Andrina Hunter Service Manager Planning and Performance</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>716125</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Refugee Resettlement and Wider Dispersal in Inverclyde</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

1.1  For Decision  For Information/Noting

- 1.2 Inverclyde has worked in partnership with the Home Office and other partners to successfully deliver a range of resettlement schemes within Inverclyde and to date there are 71 families being supported within Inverclyde. A local hotel is being utilised by the Scottish Government for 11 Ukrainian families through the Super Sponsor Scheme and proposals for locally matching them into local hosts and/or homes is underway.
- 1.3 In addition to the Holiday Inn contingency hotel, the Home Office has commenced wider asylum dispersal and Inverclyde partners are working with Mears Housing (Home Office contractor) to ensure all proposed private properties are suitable for use.
- 1.4 A partnership approach to all resettlement and asylum work is underway with a range of local and national partners involved.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Social Work and Social Care Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the ongoing work and future plans for refugee resettlement and wider dispersal within Inverclyde.

**Allen Stevenson**  
**Interim Chief Officer**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

### **Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Schemes**

3.1 Since 2014, Inverclyde has participated in a number of refugee resettlement schemes and currently support the following families:

- 17 Afghan families- 85 individuals (under two Afghan schemes)
- 32 Syrian families- 138 individuals (under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme)
- 7 Sudanese families- 25 individuals (under the Vulnerable Children's Scheme)

Further families are due to arrive into Inverclyde over the coming year.

3.2 The National Transfer Scheme for UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) Scheme has resulted in 5 young people being supported. Cycle 9 of National Transfer Scheme has yet to be announced however Inverclyde will be expected to take one young person from Scotland's quota of 45.

### **3.3 Ukrainian Resettlement**

In response to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, 2022 the Scottish Government has participated in the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and the Ukrainian Super Sponsor Scheme (Warm Scottish Welcome).

3.4 To date 15 Ukrainian families 29 individuals (under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme) are currently residing with host families or in temporary accommodation across Inverclyde. There have been a number of Expressions of Interest from hosts across Inverclyde who have had all required checks undertaken. To date these hosts are awaiting Ukrainian individuals and families to be matched by the Scottish Government/ CoSLA.

3.5 Under the Super Sponsor Scheme (Warm Scottish Welcome) Ukrainians have been able to apply for a visa naming the Scottish Government as their sponsor. To date over 5000 Ukrainians have arrived through this scheme with many more still to arrive. The Super Sponsor Scheme has been temporarily halted.

3.6 Many of the recent arrivals are being accommodated in hotels across Scotland. Locally the Scottish Government has commissioned the Gin House Hotel in Greenock to provide accommodation. Currently there are 11 family groups (41 individuals) accommodated within the hotel.

3.7 All hotel residents have had health assessments undertaken and registered with a GP and access to other health services as required. Initial £200 monetary payments have been made and the Advice Team have been supporting the Integration Team to ensure applications for Universal Credit and a range of other appropriate benefits have been made. The majority of families have settled in well and Your Voice Community Connectors have been in touch to help familiarise the residents with the local community.

3.8 As previously noted the Scottish Government and CoSLA have commenced a national matching process however due to the time lag with this, approval from the Scottish government is being sought to commence local matching. However initial scoping work indicates that there would be limited matches due to the number of family groups that have been sent to the hotel vs the majority of those on the cleared hosts' lists only offering smaller accommodation options e.g. single rooms in a house and some hosts' offers will not be

available to August / September. There may also be other options to match families to local accommodation already offered to the SG or via RSLs. It is also important that we get any local matching right so that it is sustained or we will then see these hosting relationships breaking down and this will then put pressure on the LA to find other contingency and / or accommodation solutions.

3.9 The UK Government opened up a safe route for unaccompanied Ukrainian children as an extension of Homes for Ukraine. The UK guidance does not sufficiently cover the Scottish legal context for such arrangements therefore Scottish guidance is being prepared along with proposals to support Local Authorities to meet the additional demands. It is estimated that around 80 young people will potentially be placed in Scotland.

### 3.10 **Asylum Contingency Hotel**

The Holiday Inn Express is currently being utilised by the Home Office as a Contingency hotel with 71 single males accommodated on a full board basis. Health assessments have been undertaken for all men on arrival and YourVoice 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisation are linking the men into local activities.

### 3.11 **Asylum Wider Dispersal**

As reported previously the Home Office has advised they intend to widen dispersal across the UK including Scotland for people seeking asylum whilst awaiting their decision. Plans for a regional based approach are developing and Phase One of this will involve the local authorities surrounding Glasgow (including Inverclyde) being utilised for wider dispersal.

To date there are approx. 5050 asylum seekers in Glasgow accommodated within 2400 properties supported by Mears Housing (the Home office contractor). Early indications of future numbers across Scotland are that they should equate to 8.1% of the UK asylum seeking population therefore it's likely the Scottish numbers will increase, however CoSLA is still waiting for the Home Office to give an indication of proposed numbers for Scotland. It is hoped that this will be imminent, with a 4 week consultation on the proposed numbers to follow. For each new 'bed' leased through the dispersal programme, the local authority will receive £3,500.

3.12 Inverclyde is now replicating Glasgow's Housing Procurement protocol which involves Mears Housing identifying private properties they wish to consider utilising for wider dispersal, and appropriate checks being undertaken by the local partners to identify the suitability of these properties; landlord registration; police concerns and the proximity to education and availability of services.

3.13 If an asylum seeker receives a positive outcome of their asylum application they have 4 weeks to move on from their Mears property. If they receive a negative decision, they have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and this may place additional pressure on the local authority to support on a short term basis. Since Covid, no Home Office negative decisions have been issued and further update from the Home Office regarding this is awaited.

## 4.0 **CAPACITY**

4.1 To cope with the increasing refugee numbers, the New Scots Integration Team is increasing in capacity to include a new team leader, additional Integration workers; a Child and Family worker and finance/administration support. Each of the refugee resettlement schemes receive different funding allocations with additional education resources being allocated through the Ukraine schemes.

4.2 Your Voice and a range of local and national 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations are supporting both the refugees and the people seeking asylum to ensure they are linked locally into activities and the community. The Scottish Refugee Council is looking to deploy additional resource to Inverclyde to support the Ukrainian community.

## 5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)	X		
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People's Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

## 5.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

## 5.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal risks. This is a factual report for noting.

## 5.4 Human Resources

There are no Human resources issues.

## 5.5 Strategic

The Refugee resettlement schemes will impact positively on the Population theme of the LOIP

## 6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Nil

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 Nil