
Report To:	Policy and Resources Committee	Date:	20th September 2016
Report By:	Brian Moore Corporate Director (Chief Officer) Inverclyde Health & Social Care Partnership	Report No:	SW/42/2016/AH
Contact Officer:	Andrina Hunter Service Manager HSCP	Contact No:	76125
Subject:	Migration		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Committee on the current involvement in the two refugee resettlement schemes; the requests from the Home Office for Inverclyde to participate in the dispersal of newly arrived adult asylum seekers; and the dispersal of unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Inverclyde is currently participating in two refugee resettlement schemes and have to date resettled 12 Afghan families and 6 Syrian families within Inverclyde, with a further Syrian family arriving in August.
- 2.2 The Home Office contacted all local authorities in Scotland to assist them in the discharge of their obligations with regard to the accommodation of those claiming asylum. Council staff met with officials from the Home Office and CoSLA on 4th May 2016 and advised that in principle Inverclyde would consider becoming an asylum dispersal area in the future subject to approval by the relevant Council committee.
- 2.3 Inverclyde Council have advised the Home Office that any involvement in the dispersal scheme would be predicated on the arrangement being directly between Serco (the Home Office contactor); the Council and Registered Social Landlords in Inverclyde, rather than involving Serco's subcontractor; Orchard and Shipman. This would include the procurement of accommodation; all support services; and assistance for those asylum seekers who receive a positive decision on their application with their options if they chose to remain in the area.
- 2.4 Requests have now been made to the Council through the Home Office to participate in three Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) schemes. This involves placing children from Kent; from refugee camps in countries surrounding Syria; and also from countries in Europe where children have already arrived.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To acknowledge the progress of the Council's commitment to the existing refugee schemes and the success of the scheme to date.
- 3.2 To support the request from the Home Office and recommendations from officers to extend participation in the two resettlement schemes and increase the number of families from 22 to 44 resettled within Inverclyde over the next four years.
- 3.3 To note the request from the Home Office to voluntarily become an asylum dispersal area and to consider the likely impact of any dispersal schemes on the local area and community. In the

event of Inverclyde agreeing to become a dispersal area, the initial numbers being accepted into the area would be in the region of 16 to 20.

- 3.4 To note proposals to continue dialogue with CoSLA and other local authorities to seek agreement for a Scottish wide response for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), involving the Scottish Government and national children's organisations.
- 3.5 That regular updates be provided to committee.

Brian Moore
Corporate Director, (Chief Officer)
Inverclyde HSCP

4.0 AFGHAN AND SYRIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT SCHEMES

- 4.1 Inverclyde Council had committed to support the resettlement of 12 Afghan families and 10 Syrian families through participation in the Afghan Locally Engaged Staff Ex-Gratia Scheme and the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
- 4.2 To date 18 families have been resettled within Inverclyde (12 Afghan families and 6 Syrian Families) with an additional Syrian family due in August 2016. There currently are 37 adults and 39 children ranging from 1 month to 13 years.
- 4.3 A “low key” approach to the resettlement has been taken and all families have settled well within Inverclyde with support provided by Council services and a range of partners. All the children are attending nursery or school and are integrating well.
- 4.4 A civic reception was held on 30th August 2016 to officially welcome the Syrian refugees to Inverclyde and fulfil their request to pass on their thanks to Inverclyde Council for supporting their resettlement.
- 4.5 Both schemes come with a viable financial support package to ensure families are supported to integrate into the locality and are able to access relevant services. This funding has been utilised to support this integration and in addition to start-up costs for accommodation for each family, it has been used to create an HSCP Refugee Integration team consisting of a Coordinator and two support workers; additional funding to education for EAL support; commissioned ESOL provision from the Council’s Community Learning Development Team and West College Scotland; and provision of a Volunteer/Volunteering project with Inverclyde Volunteer Centre.

5.0 THE ASYLUM DISPERSAL SCHEME

- 5.1 The national dispersal policy for asylum seekers was introduced as a result of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and was intended to ease pressure on local authorities in the south east of England that had previously dealt with the vast majority of people seeking asylum in the UK.
- 5.2 The Home Office has the right to disperse asylum seekers across the UK as it sees fit however they are keen for local authorities to volunteer to support the programme. Given that Inverclyde is already participating in two refugee schemes and has developed local support systems, there a strong belief from the Home Office that the Council should participate in the asylum dispersal scheme.
- 5.3 A meeting took place on 4th May 2016 with officers from the Council; HSCP; CoSLA Migration team and the Home Office to discuss any future participation. Discussion included the positive benefits of dispersal for Inverclyde including the transformation of the demographic profile of the area, providing a young and growing population, and the boost to cultural diversity, creating a more cosmopolitan local authority. However, concerns were raised with the Home Office regarding the current procurement and service providers; potential numbers; the lack of funding available; potential impacts on the HSCP Homelessness Service and the process for asylum seekers whose application to remain in the UK is unsuccessful.
- 5.4 The Home Office has a contract with Serco to deliver the asylum dispersal scheme in Scotland. Serco subcontract to the property services group Orchard and Shipman, however due to concerns raised nationally, the Council have requested that Orchard and Shipman have no involvement in Inverclyde and that Serco would deal directly with local Registered Social Landlords. The Home Office has agreed to this and they would establish an Inverclyde Procurement Group to look at local proposals for accommodating in particular areas. The Home Office have already provided copies of the Statement of Requirements for accommodation providers along with the protocol from Glasgow City regarding the procurement of accommodation across the city.

- 5.5 The Home Office works on a dispersal ratio of one asylum seeker per 200 local authority population. This would mean that the maximum number of asylum seekers Inverclyde would be asked to house to be around 380. Agreement was reached with the Home Office that Inverclyde would require to start with a small cohort of asylum seekers (16-20) and only agree to an increase in numbers through time if involvement in the scheme proved to be a success.
- 5.6 The Home Office has confirmed that there is no funding to local authorities for participation in the asylum dispersal programme and that future funding through local authority block grants will reflect the increase in the local population. The block grant funding does not reflect the higher costs of services for these new citizens at the present time; however the services currently funded for the Afghan and Syrian refugees would be able to be utilised by the asylum seekers.
- 5.7 Approximately 45% of asylum seekers within the dispersal scheme receive a positive decision with right to remain within the UK. Asylum seekers receiving positive decisions on their asylum applications and deciding to remain in Inverclyde would have an impact internally on the HSCP Homelessness Service.
- 5.8 A major area of concern for the Council would be the predominance of single male asylum seekers currently entering the UK, which would be reflected in any dispersal programme. The ratio of singles to families is presently 80% to 20%.
- 5.9 The Council has expressed its concern over what would happen to those asylum seekers who have been refused status and are left with no accommodation and no financial support, particularly as UK Visas and Immigration do not have a good record in terms of removing failed asylum seekers.
- 5.10 As part of its response to dealing with potential failed asylum seekers, the Council would require as a matter of urgency, to develop policies and guidance to advise staff of what support, if any, is available, and what alternative sources might be considered.
- 5.11 This approach should also be extended to other categories of migrant, particularly in light of recent changes to social security legislation.

6.0 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC)

- 6.1 There are now three different UASC schemes which the Home Office is asking local authorities to commit to supporting. The first involves 1,000 unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Kent County Council care who have made their own way to the UK and require to be accommodated. The second scheme is to support 3,000 UASC children currently in countries surrounding Syria and the third scheme is 3,000 children in camps within European countries.
- 6.2 The Home Office, in conjunction with the Department for Education and the Department for Communities and Local Government, has written to Scottish Council Leaders, via CoSLA, to seek voluntary involvement in the dispersal of these unaccompanied asylum seeking children, the majority of which are aged 16/17 and qualify to be looked after and accommodated.
- 6.3 Concerns have already been raised and outlined previously regarding the funding package available for UASC's not being of a suitable value to cover all costs associated with UASC requirements.
- 6.4 Inverclyde's children and family services at present require to commission services out with the Authority in order to accommodate the existing numbers of looked after and accommodated children within Inverclyde at present, and would therefore be concerned as to the capacity to appropriately meet the needs of an increasing number of vulnerable children who are likely to present with a different set of vulnerabilities.
- 6.5 A national UASC Dispersal Group has been established to try to develop a Scotland wide approach to this with involvement from local authorities; Scottish Government; the Care Inspectorate and input from Social Work Scotland.

- 6.6 Concerns have been raised with CoSLA that this UASC dispersal is being treated in a similar way as the current refugee programmes, and whilst there may be some similarities, there needs to be the recognition that it is a very different cohort of the refugee population-vulnerable young people, who will have a very specific set of needs requiring to be met.
- 6.7 A potential model of delivery maybe for partnerships between the local authorities; RSL's and 3rd sector organisations to deliver a supported living model of accommodation. If Inverclyde was to participate in the UASC schemes and use a supported accommodation model it is likely that maximum numbers would be 12 young people.

7.0 PROPOSALS

- 7.1 Officers recommend that Council approve the expansion of the current refugee schemes and seek approval from Committee for further involvement in both the Afghan and Syrian schemes to 44 families.
- 7.2 Officers will continue to examine the likely impact of Inverclyde becoming an asylum dispersal area and will work with national and local colleagues in the dispersal as appropriate.
- 7.3 Policies and guidance require to be developed to look at what support may be available for potential failed asylum seekers and that this should be developed to include other categories of migrant.
- 7.4 The current Inverclyde Refugee Resettlement Group will be renamed and extended to become the Inverclyde Migration Steering Group to discuss all aspects of refugee resettlement; asylum dispersal and UASC.
- 7.5 With regard to the UASC programme, officers from both Children and Families and the refugee resettlement team will continue to be involved in discussions nationally, and depending on the model agreed will consider future options.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

- 8.1 None at this stage.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

Legal

- 8.2 The Home Office have longstanding powers contained in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

to force local authorities to become dispersal areas for asylum seekers. To date, these powers have never been used. However, the Home Office have indicated that if they fail to receive sufficient offers of help from local authorities, the powers will be used. There are no such powers currently available in relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking children in Scotland. However, the Government have put powers in place in the Immigration Act 2016 which recently received Royal Assent in Parliament to force Local Authorities in England to receive dispersed refugee and asylum seeking children. Any such additional powers in Scotland would require the support of Scottish Ministers. The Immigration Act 2016 will be of particular interest to local authorities as it not only makes changes to immigration law and practice but also extends immigration control into other areas such as housing, social welfare and employment to tackle illegal immigration by making it harder to live and work in the UK without permission.

Human Resources

8.3 No impact at this stage.

Equalities

8.4 None at this time, although recognition will be given to the wider and associate equalities agenda.

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

	YES (see attached appendix)
√	NO - This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Repopulation

8.5 Any participation in either of the proposed dispersal schemes will have a positive impact on the repopulation of the area.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

9.1 Consultation has taken place with the Council's community planning partners through the multi-agency group which was established to oversee the integration of Afghan and Syrian refugees in the area. The group is being expanded and re-named to reflect its future role in relation to wider migration issues. Membership currently consists of staff from the Health and Social Care Partnership, Education Services, the Health Board, Police, Registered Social Landlords, Department of Work and Pensions Social Work, Skills Development Scotland, Community Learning and Development and the Council's Equalities Officer. Information regarding future potential developments, as outlined in the report, has been shared and discussed with the group. Feedback has been universally positive, reflecting the good work already ongoing in the area.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 There are no specific background papers.