

New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities

2014 - 2017

Final Report



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

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“We are living in times of unprecedented displacement driven by conflict and persecution.

The New Scots strategy provides an excellent example of how to effectively integrate some of the world’s most vulnerable and allow them to give back to the society that has so warmly welcomed them. It provides a holistic approach to integration and recognises the critical importance of not differentiating entitlements based on the manner in which refugees arrive in the country. The leadership shown through this approach, particularly in a time when we see asylum space shrinking in other parts of the world, is highly commended by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).”

Gonzalo Vargas Llosa,
UNHCR Representative to the UK.

Ministerial Foreword

Three years ago, this landmark strategy - New Scots - set out to support refugees and asylum seekers to settle and make their homes in our communities. Since then, many organisations have worked together to ensure access to all the support and services refugees and asylum seekers need to begin to rebuild their lives and become active members of communities across Scotland.

This report tells the story of New Scots. It highlights the innovation and the sharing of experience and expertise, which have been fundamental to making progress. It also acknowledges the challenges that remain.

Since the New Scots strategy was published, war and instability have forced the movement of people on a scale not seen since World War 2. Scotland has a long history of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers, and people all over Scotland were quick to respond to the growing humanitarian crisis. The New Scots strategy placed Scotland in a strong position to act and welcome refugees fleeing conflict and persecution into communities all over Scotland.

The Scottish Government is clear that we have international obligations to recognise refugees and offer protection. However, we also have a moral duty to welcome and support refugees. By definition, refugees have had to leave their homes to seek safety elsewhere. They have not chosen to relocate, but have been forced to move to escape violence, persecution, war or conflict.

Through the years across Scotland, refugee communities have brought their skills, culture, language and food. Over successive generations refugees have contributed to Scotland, helping to create the proud, successful and diverse country we are today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Alison Strang, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), the Scottish Refugee Council and all of the partners who have contributed to New Scots. I also extend my particular appreciation to all of the refugees and asylum seekers who have engaged throughout the process. Whether you accessed a service, participated in a project or spoke at a New Scots conference - you added your voice, shared valuable first-hand experience and helped shape New Scots.

I want Scotland to be a place of welcome and safety where refugees can rebuild their lives. Integration is a long-term process, and there are a number of continuing challenges facing refugees living in Scotland. New Scots has made a great start. It has established a framework recognised as being innovative and progressive, but there is still much to do in an environment of continuing global change.

We will build on the work and experience of New Scots; and continue to support refugees and asylum seekers to become part of our communities from day one.

Angela Constance MSP

Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities



Dr Alison Strang, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Global Health and Development, Queen Margaret University

Chair of the Core Group

The New Scots strategy has attracted considerable attention from a national and international audience including ECRE (European Council for Refugees and Exiles); NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) and WHO (World Health Organisation). Scotland is recognised as one of the few refugee receiving countries to make active and sustained investment in addressing the needs for integration amongst refugees and the communities in which they live.

Set up by the Scottish Government, COSLA and Scottish Refugee Council, the New Scots strategy has been characterised by collaboration.

A community of policy and practice based on a holistic understanding of refugee integration and shared values has emerged. These relationships of trust contributed significantly to the swift and robust response to welcoming new refugees across the country through the Syrian Resettlement Programme in 2015.

New Scots has sought to promote broad engagement including the voices of refugees, service providers and policy makers across the sectors. Inevitably success in achieving this high ambition has been mixed. Despite limited resources, in many areas high levels of commitment have delivered significant change. Refugees have made a very important contribution, often at great personal inconvenience and effort. However, we have seen that community groups struggle to maintain consistent engagement without organisational support. Refugees have shared their views the Holistic Integration Service,¹ community consultations and New Scots annual conferences.

Scottish integration policy needs to extend its reach and relevance where refugees are now living, often in small numbers, across the whole country. Lessons learned in different parts of Scotland should be shared and appropriate local approaches supported. If integration is really seen as a two-way process then there needs to be effective engagement with refugees and asylum seekers, and also with settled community members and local voluntary sector organisations. How can future policy be more transparent and accountable to communities themselves as well as practitioners, policy makers and funders?

As we begin to prepare for a new phase of refugee integration policy in Scotland I would like to thank the very many individuals who have contributed out of personal commitment as well as a public role to supporting refugee integration through the New Scots strategy. The success of the strategy owes a huge debt especially to those who have taken on leadership of the thematic groups and the members of the core group. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to be part of such a great team!



1 *Insights into Integration Pathways. New Scots and the Holistic Integration Service.* Strang, Baillot & Mignard, June 2015. http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0255/HIS_Year_2_R.pdf

Councilor Harry McGuigan, Spokesperson for Community Health and Wellbeing, COSLA

COSLA was delighted to work with the Scottish Government and Scottish Refugee Council in 2013 to develop the New Scots strategy. This built upon our strong track record of working in partnership to make Scotland a more welcoming place for migrants. It also demonstrated COSLA's vision of developing a democracy where local people have more say; where different needs are met with different solutions; and where new ideas can flourish.

This reports sets out the progress that has been made in three years in improving the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. In 2013 we could never have anticipated the overwhelming response of Scottish local authorities to the resettlement of Syrian refugees and how this would change the challenge of refugee integration. We now have refugees living in communities across Scotland and the New Scots strategy has provided an invaluable framework for those in areas new to hosting refugees.

There are still a great many opportunities for further partnership work and we look forward to contributing to the development of a new partnership strategy which is truly Scotland-wide. Local authorities across Scotland are committed to supporting refugees to build a new life here. COSLA and local government will continue to be at the heart of taking this important agenda forward.



John Wilkes, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council

As Scotland's refugee charity, Scottish Refugee Council has been honoured to work closely with the Scottish Government, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and many other public, third-sector and community organisations to build a Scotland where refugees are supported from the the first day they arrive. Working with many partners, significant progress has been made towards ensuring refugees can achieve their full potential in Scotland and be active New Scots in their new communities.

The global humanitarian crisis facing refugees has tragically worsened over the last three years. This is reflected in the number of refugees arriving in Scotland. Scotland has proudly led the way in resettling Syrian refugees under the UK Government's programme and there are now small refugee communities in most parts of Scotland. It has been heartening to see so many individual Scots and new groups emerge to pledge their support to help.

Whilst these major developments have delayed or changed some of the planned actions in this strategy, I am pleased that the vision, outcomes and partnerships developed as part of New Scots helped to shape Scotland's response to the crisis and the work of local authorities.

Looking ahead, it is essential that we guarantee that all refugees arriving here whether as asylum seekers or resettled refugees, are able to understand and access their rights to ensure Scotland remains a beacon for successful refugee integration.



New Scots Background and Context

Who is a refugee?

The UK is a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) and the supporting 1967 Protocol.

Article 1(A) of the 1951 Convention defines a refugee as a person who:

Owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

According to international law, everyone who satisfies this definition is a refugee. The Refugee Convention does not prescribe a specific mechanism through which states should determine refugee status. The recognition of refugee status is declaratory, not constitutive. That is to say a person does not become a refugee because they are recognised; rather, they are recognised because they are a refugee.

Article 14 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights states that everybody is entitled to seek and enjoy asylum. In the UK, asylum is reserved to the UK Government under Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998.² The Home Office consider applications for recognition as a refugee and determine whether the Refugee Convention definition is satisfied. A person who has not yet received a decision on their request for refugee status is referred to as an asylum seeker.

States have recognised that a number of people who do not fall within the scope of the Convention may nevertheless be in need of protection. This kind of protection is known as 'complementary protection'. People seeking protection in the UK may also be granted protection under Article 3 and Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights and afforded immigration leave.

The Strategy

In 2013, *New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities*³ was developed through partnership as a three year strategy, by the Scottish Government, COSLA, and the Scottish Refugee Council; working with many organisations across all sectors supporting refugees.

Vision

For a Scotland where refugees are able to build a new life from the day they arrive and to realise their full potential with the support of mainstream services; and where they become active members of our communities with strong social relationships.

The scope of the New Scots strategy covers people seeking asylum, those recognised as refugees and those with another protection status. The strategy uses the term refugee to refer to anyone supported by the strategy; a distinction is only made where there is a technical or legal imperative in relation to the rights of each group or where failing to do so could obscure the meaning of the text. Although asylum is a reserved matter, the services which are essential to support refugees to integrate into our communities, including health care, housing and education, are devolved.

Purpose and Development

The purpose of the New Scots strategy was to coordinate the efforts of all organisations involved in supporting refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland in order to make Scotland a welcoming place to people seeking protection from persecution and human rights abuses. The strategy aimed to make the most of the resources available by promoting partnership approaches, joined-up working and early intervention where possible. The action plans within the strategy were developed in partnership with all of the key agencies. They were grounded in refugees' experiences of life in Scotland and in consultation with refugee community groups in order to ensure that refugees' needs and aspirations were central to the plans. The delivery of the strategy and monitoring of progress have also been undertaken in partnership.

“We see integration as being a two-way process that involves positive change in both the individuals and the host communities and which leads to cohesive, multi-cultural communities.”

New Scots definition of integration



Development was based around research which reviewed refugee integration in Scotland, identifying barriers to successful integration and opportunities to achieve better outcomes for asylum seekers and refugees.⁴ Ager and Strang's 'Indicators of Integration' were used to consider Scotland's progress towards integrating refugees and also as a means of identifying gaps in provision.⁵

Engagement and Implementation

New Scots was developed and implemented through collaborative partnership and involved a broad group of stakeholders, including refugees who were able to provide their valuable insight and experience. New Scots set out a clear framework for work to support refugees and asylum seekers. It has been available for anyone to use as a reference or to adapt for their work within a Scottish context.

The structure of New Scots thematic groups enabled key organisations and groups who had been involved in the development of the strategy to continue to work together to implement it. New Scots also aimed to continue wider engagement throughout implementation. Many of the organisations which have been directly involved in the work of New Scots thematic groups are either directly involved in supporting refugees or have links to refugee groups. These links help New Scots partners to remain aware of issues affecting refugees.

Thematic groups included representatives of relevant agencies, organisations and refugee groups. The work of these groups to implement the strategy is the focus of the six theme related chapters of this report. Thematic group chairs also attended a core group, chaired by Dr Alison Strang, which coordinated strategy implementation.

Two conferences were held, one in January 2015 and a second in November 2016. Each conference attracted over 150 delegates from across a wide range of stakeholders, including individual refugees. Each conference was not only an opportunity to inform people about the work of New Scots but to engage them in helping to shape the strategy during implementation.

Refugee representative organisations, particularly the Refugee Women's Strategy Group (RWSG) as well as individual refugees have engaged with New Scots implementation, ensuring that the strategy continues to focus on priorities for refugees. New Scots partners are grateful to everyone who has taken the time to share their experience and expertise.

4 Mulvey, G (2013) *In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland Final Report*, Scottish Refugee Council http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/5790/final_report.pdf

5 Ager & Strang (2008) *Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework*; *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2008) 21 (2): 166-191, see: <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/21/2/166/1621262/Understanding-Integration-A-Conceptual-Framework> and <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110218135832/http://rds.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/04/dpr28.pdf>

Context

When New Scots was developed in 2013 figures showed around 2,400 asylum seekers in Scotland.⁶ During 2015 and 2016 there was an increase in applications for asylum in the UK,⁷ predominantly due to events in the Middle East and North Africa. According to Home Office statistics, in December 2016 there were 3,350 asylum seekers in Scotland.⁸

It is difficult to ascertain precisely how many people who have been granted some form of refugee status or humanitarian protection in the UK have chosen to make their home in Scotland. A person with refugee status can decide where in the country they live and just like anyone else will be influenced by a number of factors, including their individual housing options, employment prospects and links to family, friends and community.

The vast majority of asylum seekers in Scotland have been living in Glasgow throughout the New Scots timeframe, as this has been the only asylum dispersal area in Scotland. Consequently Glasgow has been a substantial focus for the work of New Scots. In 2015 Scotland committed to respond to the increasing humanitarian crisis and receive a fair and proportionate share of Syrian refugees. Nearly all Scottish local authorities have now received refugees under the Syrian Resettlement Programme. A number have also provided homes for unaccompanied child refugees. The response to the refugee crisis has made New Scots truly national in scope as refugees now live in communities across Scotland. Good practice established in Glasgow is helping to inform work to support refugees across Scotland.

Increasing Humanitarian Crisis

New Scots was developed prior to the impact of the increasing humanitarian crisis due to the war in Syria. By the end of 2015, 65.3 million people were forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, general violence or human rights violations. This was an increase of 5.8 million in a single year. UNHCR estimated that 12.4 million people were newly displaced in 2015. More than half of all refugees were from just three countries: Syria (4.9 million), Afghanistan (2.7 million) and Somalia (1.1 million).⁹

During the second half of 2015, the number of refugees arriving in Europe by sea dramatically increased. Over 1 million people arrived in Europe by sea in 2015, over four times the 216,000 who arrived by sea in 2014. In addition, thousands of people died or were reported missing during dangerous sea crossings.¹⁰

6 Home Office statistics - August 2013

7 See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-statistics-quarterly-release>

8 Statistic for asylum seekers in receipt of Section 95 support only. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/asylum#data-tables>

9 UNHCR - Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2015 - <http://www.unhcr.org/uk/statistics/unhcrstats/576408cd7/unhcr-global-trends-2015.html>

10 UNHCR - Mediterranean data - <http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean>

On 4 September 2015, the First Minister held a Refugee Summit to consider how Scotland could play a full role in response to the humanitarian crisis. The Summit brought together Scottish politicians from both national and local government; opposition leaders; representatives of aid agencies, humanitarian organisations and faith groups; as well as refugees. A Refugee Taskforce was established to coordinate Scotland's practical response to the crisis.

On 7 September 2015 the Prime Minister announced that the UK would resettle up to 20,000 Syrian refugees living in countries bordering Syria by 2020 through its Syrian Resettlement Programme. Scotland was quick to respond as people across the country sought ways to demonstrate their support for refugees. Events were held to show solidarity with refugees and local groups were established to coordinate donations for refugees abroad or support the welcome of refugees into communities. On 12 September 2015, thousands of people attended candlelight vigils across Scotland to send a message of support for Syrian refugees and all refugees who have died, fled their homes and lost their families as a result of war. Events were held in Glasgow's George Square, Edinburgh, Dundee, Shetland, Orkney and many other towns and cities.

Scottish local authorities also showed remarkable leadership to respond to the humanitarian crisis. Within weeks of the UK Government's announcement of the expansion of the Syrian Resettlement Programme, all 32 of Scotland's local authorities had committed to supporting the efforts to offer a place of safety in Scotland. On 17 November 2015, the first charter flight bringing Syrian refugees to the UK under the Resettlement Programme landed in Glasgow. Within a year Scotland had welcomed over 1,200 Syrian refugees to communities across 29 local authorities, many of which had no previous experience of resettling refugees.

Scotland's response to the humanitarian crisis has made refugee integration truly national in scale as for the first time refugees are living all over Scotland. Refugees continue to arrive. Local welcome groups, volunteers and third sector organisations continue to support refugees across Scotland in a variety of ways including befriending, creating opportunities for English conversation practice and inviting refugees to community events.

Syria Vigil in George Square, Glasgow, September 2015
Photo by Angela Catlin



New Scots provided a strong base for Scotland's response to the humanitarian crisis. The Refugee Taskforce was able to build on the networks and relationships established for the strategy; as well as bringing in new organisations who could help with broader refugee integration in the future. The New Scots thematic groups were already engaged in work to support refugee integration and were aware of barriers and potential issues. As the Syrian Resettlement Programme is now well established, the Taskforce is no longer meeting. However, in the event of a change which required national action, the Scottish Government would invite Taskforce members to reconvene.

The Taskforce established two subgroups: the Accommodating Refugees group and the Integration Forum. The Accommodating Refugees subgroup completed its work to address capacity of Scotland's housing services in February 2016 and its members are now represented within the New Scots Housing group. The Integration Forum focused on the longer term support needed to enable refugees to settle into communities. The Integration Forum continues to meet to enable the sharing of knowledge and expertise across a wide spectrum of organisations working to support refugees in Scotland.

The resources required to respond to the humanitarian crisis put pressure on New Scots partners during 2015 which has impacted on some intended outcomes of New Scots. The humanitarian crisis has not ended and Scotland continues to respond, but as practical arrangements have become established across Scotland partners have sought to bring the learning from the response back into New Scots for the benefit of all refugees.

Case Study

Aberdeenshire Syrian Refugee Response

In Scotland, few local authorities outwith Glasgow had experience of refugees or resettlement prior to October 2015. To support local authorities' response, COSLA worked with all 32 councils to help coordinate their efforts with the UK Government, Scottish Government and other key partners across the public and third sector.

Following the announcement of the Syrian Resettlement Programme, Councillors in Aberdeenshire voted to resettle 50 Syrian refugee families. As part of the response it was decided to second a Community Learning and Development (CLD) manager to coordinate the resettlement programme. This decision to embed community development from the start was driven by recognition of the importance of finding a balance between prioritising and addressing refugees' needs, often in crisis situations, and maintaining a longer term vision of wider resettlement and integration goals. The ethics of resettlement and community development align in the importance of tackling exclusion and developing strong communities.

“Refugee resettlement is brutal. It’s not an end product but a small step in a long and arduous journey of survival for families. ...

Our purpose must be to ensure that we nurture the vulnerable to become empowered and work to ensure that our New Scots’ families are equipped with the support, knowledge and opportunities they need to thrive and build individual and community capacities in Scotland.”

**Katie MacLean, Syrian Resettlement Coordinator,
Aberdeenshire Council**



Local frameworks for resettlement were established, including the formation of a Public Sector Strategic Group and Aberdeenshire Partner Refugee Group (PRG). Partners agreed that building individual and group capacities with the Syrians would be an essential element of the resettlement programme, complementing the more traditional building blocks based on housing, health and benefits support. Partners with a resettlement offer were invited to contribute outcomes and actions to a local ‘*Syrian New Scots’ Integration Plan*¹¹.’

“I could not believe the resettlement team’s beautiful smiles. The care and support received from all was far beyond my expectations... We feel as though Aberdeenshire is home.”

Bassel Aldaya, New Scot from Damascus, Syria

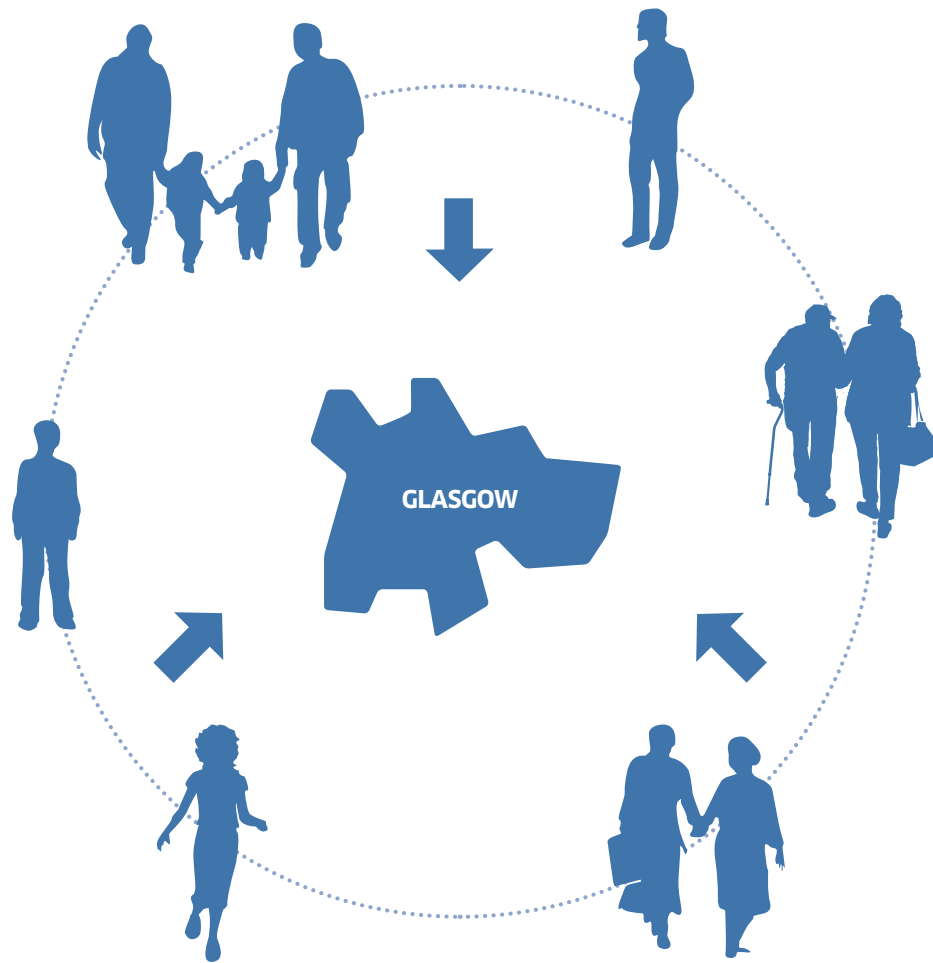
“In my opinion, the Aberdeenshire Syrian New Scots’ Partnership has been one of the best examples of partnership in action I have ever experienced.”

Ritchie Johnson, Director of Business Services, Aberdeenshire Council

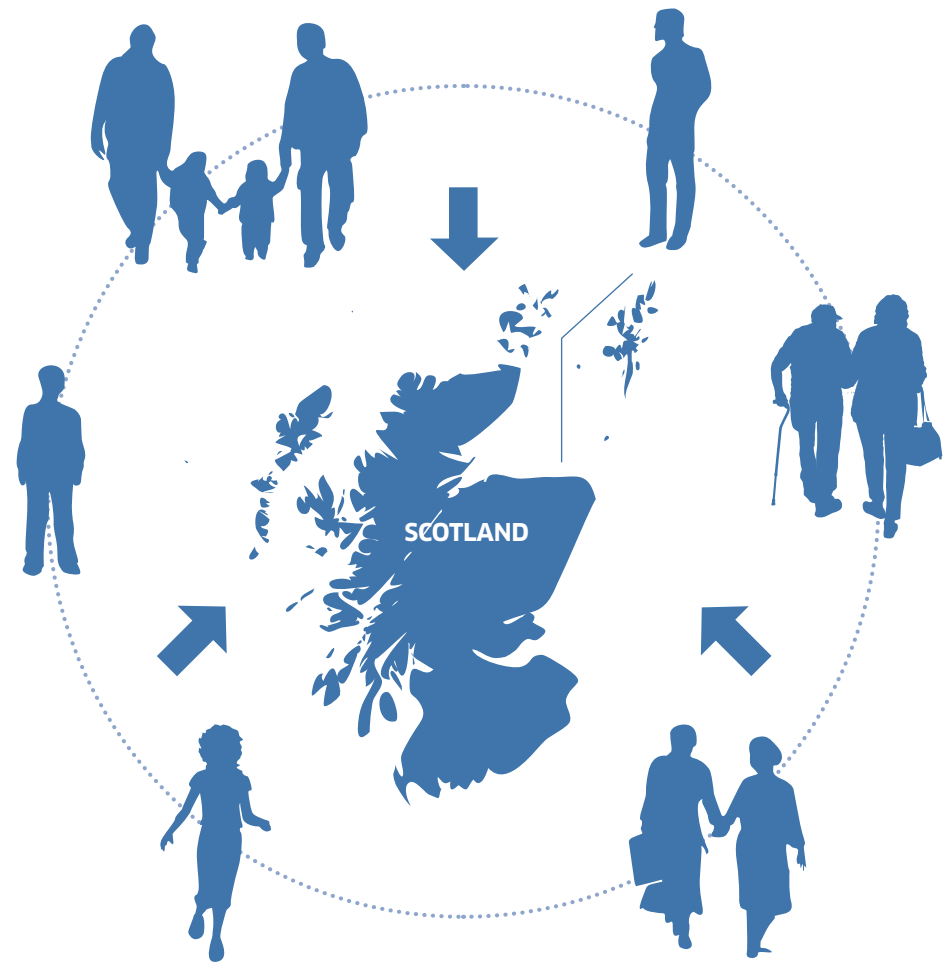
Aberdeenshire looked to New Scot’s clear aspirations and framework for supporting refugees to inform the local integration plan. The Aberdeenshire Integration Plan would become the basis of partner actions, evaluation and improvement planning over the next year. In the first 12 months, Aberdeenshire welcomed 18 families, consisting of 70 people in total.



Before October 2015 Asylum seekers arrive to Glasgow Most refugees live in Glasgow



After October 2015 Refugees arrive to communities across Scotland



A holistic approach

The New Scots strategy is for all refugees and asylum seekers, no matter how they arrived in Scotland. The New Scots approach has always been to enable all refugees and asylum seekers to integrate into the communities from day one of arrival and not just when refugee status is granted.

The humanitarian crisis has highlighted how the difference in response risks the creation of a two-tier system as Syrian refugees arriving under the Resettlement Programme arrived with entitlement to a coordinated support package not afforded to fellow refugees who have been granted refugee status through the asylum system. The holistic approach in Scotland of integration from day one aims to limit the effects of a two-tier system as far as it is possible to do so.

New Scots has encouraged innovative approaches to be piloted and projects to consider new ways of engaging refugees and service providers in work which aims to make improvements. Such work has indicated real benefits for those participating directly and it is hoped will also contribute to long-term integration and the development of more resilient communities.



Case Study

Refugee Peer Education for Health and Wellbeing

Service providers across Glasgow recognise the challenge of promoting health and wellbeing amongst the asylum seeking and refugee population.

The Refugee Peer Education pilot project was developed in collaboration between NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGCC), North East Sector Health Improvement team, and the Integration Service at Scottish Refugee Council. The programme set out to establish and test an innovative model of health promotion through peer education. Promoting actions for good health by refugees and asylum seekers for refugees and asylum seekers, with community empowerment as a core value of the project.

“I enjoyed being able to deliver peer education sessions, seeing the progress of the project and feeling like being an important part of this progress. Learning how to organise and deliver peer education sessions in a fun and interactive way. Being able to do things like hill walking, climbing and other activities with the peer groups makes me happy. My English, self-confidence and network circle got bigger and bigger throughout this project.”

Layla, Iranian refugee

“I wish this project never had to finish, as I believe more people could have benefited from this.”

Layla, Iranian refugee

Layla, an Iranian refugee who arrived in Scotland in 2014 volunteered as a peer educator with Farsi speaking asylum seekers and refugees for 10 months, while her asylum claim was being processed. She promoted the project, recruited and trained peer groups, facilitated the groups and worked as part of the groups to create and implement their collective action plan, to improve their health and wellbeing.

Layla was recognised as a refugee, by UK Visa and Immigration a year after claiming asylum, while she was volunteering on the project. As part of building her life in Scotland she is now pursuing a course in Social Care and working to support herself while studying full time.

Name has been changed.



New legislation and strategies

In addition to the specific actions associated with New Scots, there are a number of other strategies, action plans and pieces of legislation which will support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. During the timeframe of the New Scots strategy these have included:

Race Equality Framework for Scotland 2016-2030¹² – sets out the Scottish Government’s approach to promoting race equality and tackling racism. The Framework is based on priorities, needs and experiences of Scotland’s minority ethnic communities, with expertise contributed by the public and voluntary sectors and academia.

Scottish National Action Plan for Human Rights (SNAP)¹³ – a roadmap for the progressive realisation of international human rights standards in Scotland. Operational from December 2013 to 2017.

Welcoming our learners: Scotland’s English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy 2015-2020¹⁴ – a refresh of the 2007 adult ESOL strategy for Scotland, setting a strategic direction for ESOL. The priority for high-quality ESOL provision remains and its significance is reflected in the New Scots strategy.

Equally Safe: Scotland’s strategy for preventing and eradicating violence against women and girls¹⁵ – launched in March 2016. The strategy includes early commitments to deliver specific, practical improvements to services, as well as, a phased approach to work towards long-term societal changes.

Scottish Housing Joint Delivery Plan¹⁶ – identifies priority actions that representatives from across the housing sector have agreed need a specific focus to ensure the strategic objectives set out in Homes Fit for the 21st Century¹⁷ and subsequent Scottish Government strategies are able to be delivered in relation to housing.

Housing Options Guidance¹⁸ – sets out how local authorities should look to help people with a housing issue, including but not restricted to homelessness.

12 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/03/4084>

13 See: <http://www.snaprights.info/>

14 See: <https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/ESOLStrategy2015to2020.pdf>

15 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00498256.pdf>

16 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00477306.pdf>

17 See: <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/340696/0112970.pdf>

18 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00494940.pdf>

Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Scotland) Act 2015¹⁹ – introduced a single offence for all kinds of trafficking for the first time, consolidating and strengthening existing law. The Act gives courts new powers and measures to prevent and punish trafficking. The Act also provided clear rights to adult victims as well as guardianship of children who have been or are at risk of being trafficked, where no one in the UK holds parental rights and responsibilities.

Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015²⁰ – helps to empower community bodies through the ownership or control of land and buildings, and by strengthening their voices in decisions about public services. The Act placed Community Planning Partnerships on a statutory footing and imposed duties on them, including to involve community bodies at all stages of community planning, and a specific focus on tackling inequalities. The Act also provides avenues for community groups to request participation and promotes community capacity building.

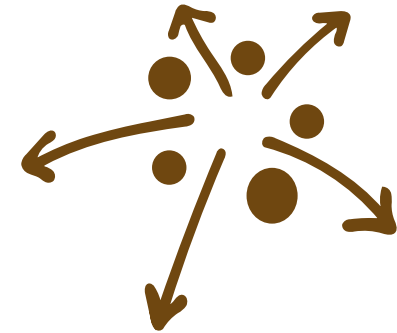
Hate Crime Review – In January 2017, the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs announced an independent review of hate crime legislation, which will consider whether current laws are appropriate and consistent; if hate crime legislation needs simplified, rationalised or harmonised; and if new categories of hate crime need to be created for characteristics not currently legislated for, such as age and gender. The Independent Advisory Group on Hate Crime, Prejudice and Community Cohesion recommended consideration of refugees and asylum seekers as one of these categories in their 2016 report.²¹

19 See: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/12/enacted>

20 See: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/pdfs/asp_20150006_en.pdf

21 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0050/00506074.pdf>

Needs of Dispersed Asylum Seekers



Key Achievements:

- The New Scots Asylum Dispersal thematic group secured commitment from a wide range of partners to meet regularly and seek to address challenges.
- The development of an Asylum Seeker Journey document mapped the services and support an asylum seeker needs to access during the application process. This identified pressure points in the current system to help inform action.
- Work has continued throughout New Scots to collate best practice from both Glasgow and the UK as a whole, to inform the work of partners.

Policy Context

Asylum and immigration matters are reserved to the UK Government and are handled by the Home Office. The majority of people who apply for asylum in the UK arrive with few possessions. A minority have sufficient means to support themselves while their claim for protection is assessed.

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 sets out a duty for the Home Office to provide asylum seekers with financial support and housing if they have nowhere else to stay while their claim is assessed. The 1999 Act established a system of asylum dispersal whereby asylum seekers are housed in different parts of the UK on a no-choice basis. The original intention of this policy was to ease pressure on housing in the South East of England, where the majority of asylum seekers arrive to the UK.

To date Glasgow has been the only asylum dispersal area in Scotland, although a small number of people who do not require housing live in other local authority areas across Scotland while their asylum claims are being processed. Services in Glasgow have adapted well to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers with specialist services and expertise developing. Glasgow has also benefited from increased cultural diversity and more stable demographics.

In the past, Glasgow City Council, along with two partner organisations, provided accommodation for asylum seekers in the city. In 2012 the Home Office granted contracts to three private sector companies to provide accommodation and associated services across the UK. The contract for Scotland and Northern Ireland was awarded to Serco, an international service company, which in turn subcontracted property services to Orchard and Shipman. This subcontracting arrangement ceased in December 2016. The contract allows for accommodation to be provided in Scotland, not just in Glasgow. However Serco is required to consult with COSLA as Scotland's Strategic Migration Partnership and relevant local authorities about any proposed widening of dispersal to new areas. Ultimate authority over where asylum seekers are to be accommodated lies with the Home Secretary.

Although asylum policy is reserved to the UK Government (including accommodation arrangements, financial support and assessment of claims for asylum), the Scottish Government has taken the position that integration should begin from day one and not just when refugee status is granted. Devolved policy and services should therefore support asylum seekers as far as possible, as well as refugees, to integrate into our communities. This approach also reflects the Scottish Government's wider commitment to promote equality of opportunity and social justice for everyone living in Scotland.

Strategy Outcomes

In 2014 the New Scots strategy set out three outcomes for Asylum Dispersal:

1. The integration needs of asylum seekers are met as far as possible throughout the asylum process and as a result they are welcomed into Scotland's communities.
2. Asylum seekers arriving in Scotland are supported to fully understand their rights and entitlements, access services and legal support and, as a result receive the support that they require during the asylum process.
3. The long-term strategic planning of the dispersal of asylum seekers in Scotland is informed by the needs of asylum seekers and local communities leading to an increase in integration.

Photo by: Angela Catlin



1. Meeting integration needs and welcoming asylum seekers

The inclusion of an Asylum Dispersal thematic group within New Scots demonstrated recognition of the particular challenges facing asylum seekers and enabled the group to tackle issues that would not otherwise be addressed if a narrower definition of refugee applied to the strategy.

The diverse representation of the group has importantly included organisations directly involved in providing Home Office contracted support (Serco and Migrant Help) as well as statutory service providers and third sector organisations which specialise in advocacy or support services for asylum seekers. One of the key successes of the group has been the commitment shown by a wide range of partners to both attend the quarterly meetings and take on various tasks that have been agreed.

A particular focus of the group's work has been undertaking an exercise to map the asylum seeker journey. This has been a useful means of identifying pressure points in the current system and has included consideration of the referral process between the accommodation provider and key service providers to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to direct asylum seekers to the support and services they need. Anecdotal evidence gathered by the Refugee Womens' Strategy Group would suggest that asylum accommodation standards and services have improved somewhat over the later part of 2016 and it is hoped that the work of the group has played a part in this regard.

Case Study

Asylum Journey Mapping

The asylum process is complex. Asylum seekers are often adapting to an unfamiliar country with a different culture, rules and public services to their home country. They may not speak English. They may have had to leave their home in a hurry. They may have experienced violence, persecution or trauma. They may have lost family and friends and could be separated from everyone they know.

There are many different sources of support and information for people seeking asylum and a variety of agencies and services are involved at different stages of the process. Changes to Home Office advice and support contracts in 2014 have given rise to particular pressure points.

The Asylum Dispersal Thematic Group decided to map the legal and support journey for someone seeking asylum in Scotland. To highlight the different agencies and services involved and identify the pressure points for men, women and young children in the process.

This task proved challenging. There are many variables and complexities in the asylum process and support which is available (or not available) to different people depending on their circumstances. The mapping was led by the Scottish Refugee Council and Migrant Help, with contribution from all agencies and community organisations represented on the group.

A comprehensive document has now been developed. The group will not only use this to address some of the key pressure points identified, but also to share learning and experience from Glasgow with other areas considering asylum dispersal in the future.



2. Asylum seekers understand their rights and entitlement and can access services and support

A review of the information provided to new asylum seekers when they arrive in Scotland was undertaken, informed by the expertise of organisations involved in supporting asylum seekers. The thematic group then focused on providing input to both Orchard and Shipman and Migrant Help as those organisations sought to develop new guidance documents, including welcome packs. Further to this input, Orchard and Shipman launched a new welcome pack in Autumn 2016. This is now available in a number of languages other than English, which has been welcomed by the group.²²

In 2016, a Guide to Scots Law²³ was produced by HND Legal Services students at New College Lanarkshire, in collaboration with Police Scotland and the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS). The guide has been made available in 11 languages and is being provided to newly arrived asylum seekers as well as refugees. See case study in the Communities and Social Connections Chapter for more details.

Appropriate legal representation is important for anyone applying for asylum. Expertise in asylum and immigration law practice in the context of Scots law has developed in a number of law firms, particularly in the Glasgow area. Anyone requiring representation for a case at the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal can access legal aid support in the form of 'Assistance by Way of Representation' (ABWOR). In most cases only a means test is applied and applications from asylum seekers will be passed on merits.

The Legal Services Agency has established a Women and Young Persons' Department to focus on four specialist projects to improve the lives of women, children and young people in Scotland affected by violence, with a particular focus on refugees. Through a combination of policy, research, training and providing advice the department works to raise awareness and provide a practitioner and legal insight into issues such as human trafficking, violence against women, mental health and issues affecting refugee children. The Legal Services Agency has been working collaboratively, at a local, national and international level in order to achieve outcomes.²⁴

The Asylum Dispersal thematic group has maintained an active interest in the Family Keywork Pilot²⁵ and the Peer Education Model²⁶ of support for refugees and asylum seekers. Both of these projects aim to improve the quality of information and services received by asylum seekers as they navigate the complexities of the asylum system and life in the UK more generally. The Peer Educator Model is a means of enhancing asylum seekers' knowledge and understanding of entitlements and services by building skills capacity for peers – other refugees or asylum seekers with first-hand experience - to provide support and advice on accessing services and navigating processes.

22 Following changes in the contracting arrangements for the provision of asylum accommodation in December 2016, Serco will continue to provide welcome information to newly arrived asylum seekers and will update the previous welcome pack to reflect these changes.

23 The Guide to Scots Law can be downloaded from COPFS website: <http://www.copfs.gov.uk/in-your-community/in-your-community>

24 See: <http://www.lsa.org.uk/lisa.php?id=37&n=1>

25 Baillot, H, Tollard, J. and Muchena, E. (2016) They give me courage: evaluation of Scottish Refugee Council's Family Keywork Service, Scottish Refugee Council: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0712/Family_Keywork_Service_Report_2016.pdf

26 Strang (2015) Refugee Peer Education for Health and Well-being Evaluation Report See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/9691/Peer_Education_Evaluation_Report_FINAL.pdf

Case Study

Family Keywork Service

The asylum system is complex and challenging for everyone. Families have particular rights and face specific challenges. There are also particular barriers for pregnant women, parents and children, whose different needs and experiences can go unrecognised.

The asylum process often focuses on the 'main applicant'. 70 to 80% of main applicants are men but 60 to 70% of dependents are women and girls. Entitlements for dependents often stem from the main applicant and the rights and support needs of other family members, including children, can be overlooked.

To address this, Scottish Refugee Council developed a holistic support service model for families. The Family Keywork Service provides information, advice, advocacy and social integration support to families with young children in Scotland.

A named keyworker is allocated to each family and a holistic needs assessment is carried out using a 'whole

family approach' to take account of the needs of all family members. The service model takes an early intervention approach and is situated in the Scottish Government's *Getting it Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) framework, guided by SHANARRI wellbeing indicators.

As well as building confidence and resilience within individual families, the service also seeks to develop partnerships and influence mainstream services to better meet the needs of asylum seeking families.

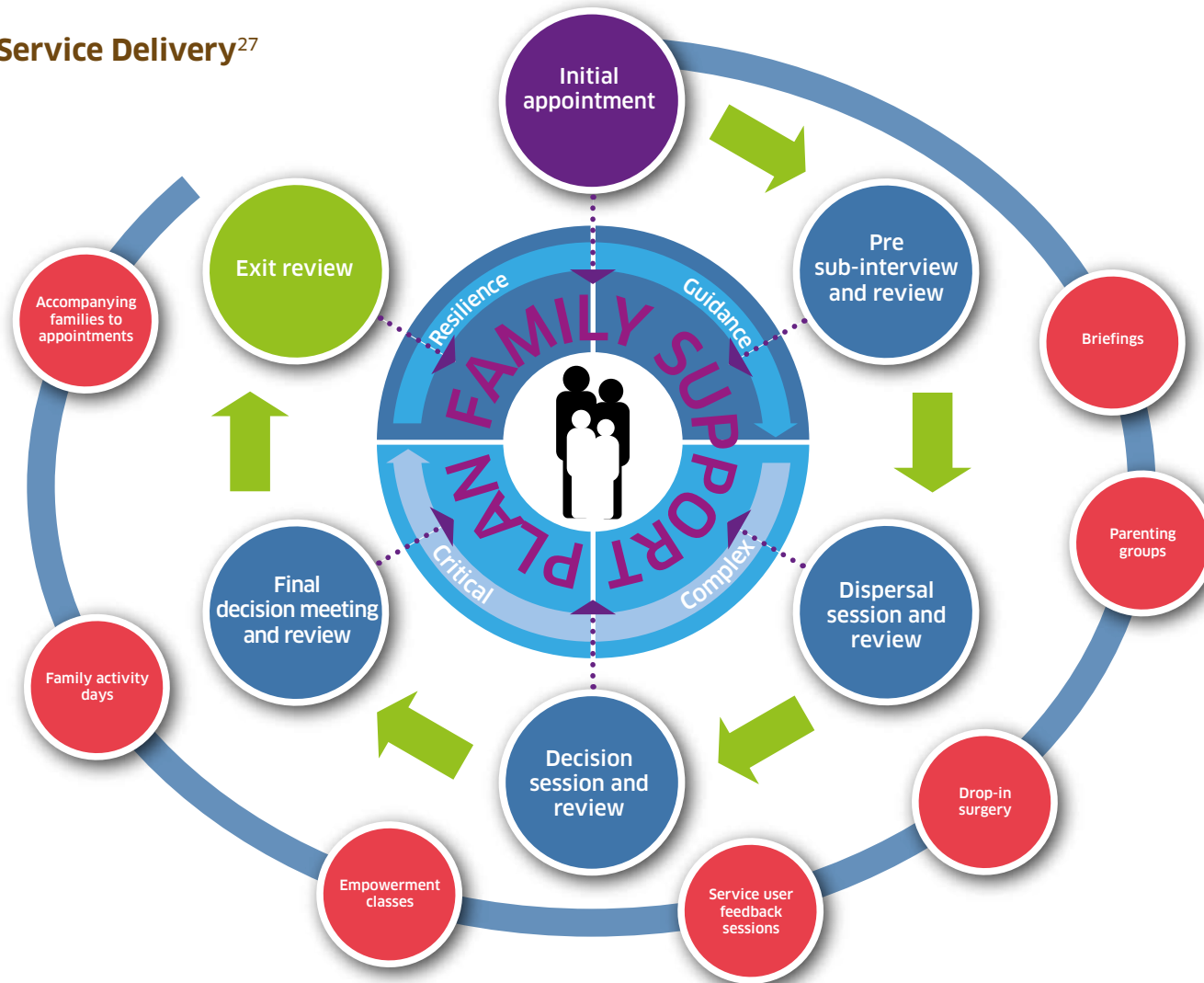
”It was a good experience working with the Family Keywork Service, discussing issues and seeking guidance face to face, with someone who was working with you 100%... I don't talk openly with anyone, except a dedicated keyworker, but I can talk openly and seek guidance.”

Family Keywork Service user



Case Study

Family Keywork Service Delivery²⁷



3. Long term strategic planning of asylum dispersal in Scotland

Throughout the New Scots timeframe the Asylum Dispersal thematic group has sought to identify examples of good practice and lessons that have been learned from experience across Scotland and the UK, to improve future practice. A directory of good practice is being developed to support dispersal, not only in Glasgow but in any new dispersal areas that may open up in future.

The thematic group is prepared to provide support to any new dispersal areas. This would include work with local authorities and their community planning partners, asylum seekers and receiving communities to ensure that all are appropriately informed and integration needs are met.

The group has also sought to provide input to the Home Office as they develop a new model of asylum support and accommodation which is expected to be introduced when the current contracts end in 2019. A discussion session that considered the current system and what changes colleagues would wish to see going forward took place in December 2016 and it is hoped that this will provide a baseline for future work in this regard.

Continuing Challenges

The thematic group recognises that it has struggled to evidence the impact that its work has had on asylum seekers. As such, work is ongoing to consider indicators that might illustrate whether or not asylum seekers have experienced improved outcomes. Further work is also required to foster more meaningful involvement from asylum seekers and refugees. Some progress has been made in this regard, and refugee representatives have welcomed more facilitative styles of chairing of formal meetings which have offered more space for them to contribute to discussions.

The Refugee Womens' Strategy Group (RWSG) has continued to raise concerns about destitute women at the end of the asylum process, who are at particular risk of exploitation and for whom homeless shelters in Glasgow are unsuitable. While refused asylum seeking women, and men, have no recourse to public funds, the RWSG has called for this particular issue to be addressed so that these vulnerable women are no longer at risk.

At an operational level, a lack of budget and personnel resource in the organisations represented on the group has meant that activities are heavily reliant on the good will of individuals. Additional pressures associated with the Syrian Resettlement Programme have exacerbated these challenges.



Employability and Welfare Rights



Key Achievements:

- Holistic Integration Service, a partnership which supported 1,885 refugees. Funded by Big Lottery Scotland and led by Scottish Refugee Council with Bridges Programme, British Red Cross, Glasgow Clyde College and Workers' Educational Association Scotland.
- Refugee customer journey mapping for resettled Syrian refugees. Scottish Refugee Council and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) also co-developed and co-delivered a training masterclass to Jobcentre staff on the how to apply the Claimant Commitment to refugees.
- Revisiting the 2010 Scoping Study on recognition of refugees' and migrants' prior learning and qualifications.

Policy Context

There is strong evidence that employment is good for physical and mental health and well-being of individuals.²⁸ Employment can not only provide income to help support an individual and their family but also provide social links, a sense of purpose and inclusion within a community. Employment also benefits wider society through the harnessing of individual skills to provide services and products, as well as contributing to the economy. For refugees, employment can be a route out of poverty and an important part of integrating into their local community.

The Scottish Government, DWP and Scottish local authorities all aim to support employability of adults and young people. This includes a commitment to support refugees. The Scottish Government also supports a range of enterprise initiatives, including social enterprise.

²⁸ Waddell & Burton: Is Work Good for Your Health and Well-being?: 2006; Black: Working for a healthier tomorrow: 2008, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-work-and-health-in-britain>

Refugees and asylum seekers have the right to volunteer, though only refugees currently have the right to work.²⁹ Refugees also face particular challenges in accessing employment, including: recognition of existing skills and experience; evidence of qualifications; understanding of the local jobs market and industry or professional requirements; gaps in employment or education; and English language skills.

'Working for Growth'³⁰ (Scotland's employability framework) set out aims to improve skills development, learning and employability for people, while also supporting employers to find the skilled employees they need to grow their business. Employability is also a key priority in many Single Outcome Agreements in recognition of the important role of local government (and partners in Local Employability Partnerships) in employability strategy and implementation.

Employment and support to enter employment are reserved to the UK Government. During the timeframe of New Scots, and following the Scottish referendum on Independence in 2014, agreement was reached to devolve some contracted employment support powers to Scotland, although the role and function of Jobcentre Plus remains reserved. The implementation of UK policies, such as the Claimant Commitment, digitalisation and conditionality to learn English, impact on refugees' long term integration in Scotland, and these matters will not be impacted positively by devolution as they remain reserved matters. Devolved employment support will commence in April 2017 with a transitional year. From April 2018, refugees in receipt of benefits will have early access to devolved employment support. Participation in devolved employment programmes will be wholly voluntary.

During the timeframe of New Scots it was also agreed that certain social security powers would be devolved. The Scottish Government has been clear that new social security powers will be guided by principles of fairness, dignity and respect. In response to the independent analysis of the social security consultation, which ran for three months in 2016,³¹ the Scottish Government also committed to a rights based approach as the cornerstone of the vision for a new system. The Scottish Government continues to work with key organisations in order to achieve this.

29 In very limited circumstances asylum seekers can apply for the right to work, see: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/support/employment/>

30 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00402275.pdf>

31 See: <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/social-security/social-security-in-scotland/>

Climbing the Cobbler, Arrochar
Photo: Scottish Refugee Council



Strategy Outcomes

In 2014 the New Scots strategy set out three outcomes for Employment and Welfare:

1. Refugees to be better supported to move on from asylum support within the 28-day move-on period by ensuring benefits are in place when asylum support ends.
2. Refugees to be supported to fully understand their rights to welfare support, the labour market and volunteering employability opportunities and as a result, are increasingly able to access these opportunities.
3. Refugees to access services designed to support entrepreneurialism and an increased proportion use their skills to contribute to Scotland's economy and society.

1. Refugee Move-On Period

People who have applied for recognition as a refugee in the UK may receive asylum support if they are eligible. People who have been recognised as refugees are entitled to access mainstream benefits, as appropriate for their circumstances on the same basis as UK nationals. A 28-day period is allowed for newly recognised refugees to move-on from their asylum accommodation and support. This means that by the end of the 28 days they are expected to have found their own accommodation and applied for mainstream benefits or gained employment.

Evidence was gathered by Scottish Refugee Council³² to examine the scale of issues and the impact this had on other services. The DWP shared claimant journeys for key benefits including Employment Support Allowance, Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). The thematic group concluded that information about how to claim benefits and the processes involved needs to be available for asylum seekers to prepare for the move-on period.

32 Rights, Resilience and Refugee Integration in Scotland, New Scots and the Holistic Integration Service, June 2016. http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1142/Full_Integration_Report_June_2016.pdf

The implementation of Universal Credit poses a further risk due to the increase in processing times for new claims but the roll out has not progressed as quickly as expected. DWP worked with the Scottish Refugee Council to improve processing times of JSA, Income Support and Employment Support Allowance for newly-recognised refugees. As part of this work, new guidance for DWP staff on processing new claims for refugees was developed. A workshop was facilitated by DWP and brought together the Home Office, DWP, and Scottish Refugee Council to review all steps in processing a benefit claim and to identify areas for improvement. As demonstrated by the evaluation of the Holistic Integration Service, one of the main barriers for processing benefit claims of new refugees has been the allocation of National Insurance numbers.

As part of the programme to resettle Syrian refugees, DWP and the Home Office agreed on an information sharing process which enabled DWP to develop an efficient and successful model for processing benefits, which will inform processes to be developed for all new refugees. DWP continues to work with the Home Office to resolve challenges with allocation of National Insurance numbers which are required to enable claims to be processed and prevent destitution of newly recognised refugees.

Case Study

DWP Resettlement Work

In September 2015, the UK Government committed to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees to the UK by the year 2020. Refugees arriving under the Syrian Resettlement Programme are entitled to work and access benefits. To support this commitment in Scotland the DWP appointed a Scottish Refugee Coordinator to work across all Directorates.

The aim was to ensure that Syrian refugees were able to access benefits and Job Centre Plus services as quickly as possible. This would enable them to settle into their new communities and start to rebuild their lives.

The Scottish Refugee Coordinator designed and developed a refugee customer journey. This was shared with Work Coaches to help them support refugees towards employment. Employment support training and awareness of the particular challenges facing newly resettled refugees was also made available to coaches.

The creation of the DWP Scottish Refugee Coordinator role enabled Syrian refugees to receive a streamlined service from arrival. They were able to access benefit support and begin to work toward fulfilling their employment ambitions.

The lessons learned through this dedicated work is now helping to inform the DWP approach to supporting newly recognised refugees and to further inform New Scots work.

In a single Scottish Jobcentre, where work coaches actively engaged with Syrian refugees, by the end of the first year of the resettlement programme:

- One refugee was self-employed
- Three were on a DWP training programme
- One was undertaking work experience
- Five were attending a Further Education college course one day per week in hairdressing
- One had started full time at college
- One was awaiting an application for full-time education



2. Refugees understand their rights and can access welfare and employment opportunities

New Scots development was informed by the existing expertise and work of partners. This included the Holistic Integration Service, led by Scottish Refugee Council in partnership with Bridges Programmes, British Red Cross, Glasgow Clyde College and Workers' Educational Association Scotland. The Service secured funding from BIG Lottery Scotland in October 2012 for a service to run over a three year period, starting in February 2013.

The Holistic Integration Service directly contributed to assisting refugees to integrate into Scotland's communities during the timeframe of New Scots. The Service took an empowerment and rights based approach to address the needs of new refugees in a person-centred approach, following the principles of: early intervention and prevention; recognising resilience and vulnerability; and pursuing sustainable outcomes for refugees.

The Holistic Integration Service final evaluation report³³ demonstrated that the service has impacted:

- Navigating DWP processes. 87% of the 516 claims for benefit made in the first three quarters of year three of the service were made with the assistance of the Scottish Refugee Council. Once refugees are in receipt of benefit payments, there is evidence that many refugees will continue to require some level of assistance to resolve problems that arise.
- Refugees learning about and understanding their rights
- Building refugees' confidence
- Guidance when navigating career and education options
- Demonstrating the importance of support in between fortnightly jobseekers' appointments at the Jobcentre Plus.

The Holistic Integration Service ended in June 2016 and the final research and evaluation report was published online.³⁴ Based on learning from the Service, BIG Lottery Scotland awarded new funding for Scottish Refugee Council to deliver a new Integration Service for two years.

33 *Rights, Resilience and Refugee Integration in Scotland* June 2016, see: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1142/Full_Integration_Report_June_2016.pdf

34 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1142/Full_Integration_Report_June_2016.pdf

Case Study

Holistic Integration Service

Coordinated, long-term planning for service provision to support refugees has always been challenging. The Holistic Integration Service was designed to build successful partnerships which would integrate data collection and shared analysis to help address these challenges.

Led by Scottish Refugee Council, the Service combined advice and advocacy (Scottish Refugee Council) with additional referral programmes including: enhanced support (British Red Cross); ESOL courses (Glasgow Clyde College and Workers Educational Association Scotland); and employability support (Bridges Programmes). The Service offered up to 12 months support to people who have been granted Refugee Status, Humanitarian Protection or Discretionary Leave to Remain following an asylum claim in Scotland. The whole service provision was based on a Personal Integration Plan developed by refugees with their Integration Adviser (Scottish Refugee Council) where they would set their goals and identify actions to achieve them. The plan included key integration areas: housing, social security, health, employment, education and social connections.

The Service sought to stream-line provision for refugee support and deliver a person-centred service with a focus on beneficiary rather than organisational needs. The diverse partners involved each brought their experience, individual ethos and different patterns of service provision. The Service approach enabled organisations to go beyond recording only advisor activity data to promote a social policy driven analysis of frontline work. This effectively operationalised the Indicators of Integration and utilised the lived experience of both refugees and the practitioners who assist them to improve support for refugees.

Over three years, 1,885 refugees engaged with the Holistic Integration Service:

- 73% were aged between 25 and 39
- 78% of households presented as single
- 74% of households were headed by men
- Country of origin included: Eritrea (30%), Sudan (21%), Iran (15%) and Syria (10%)



Scottish Refugee Council and DWP also worked together to deliver a masterclass for Jobcentre Plus staff on the Claimant Commitment for refugees in Jobcentres in Glasgow, North Lanarkshire and South Lanarkshire Offices. Twelve sessions were delivered in total to increase the understanding of refugees' experience and particularly the conflicting priorities which people who have recently had their refugee status recognised need to manage as they move-on from asylum support and accommodation. It is intended that the learning from these classes will continue to be included in ongoing quality and performance exercises for staff around the Claimant Commitment and be offered to new DWP Work Coaches.³⁵

A key issue identified by refugees when seeking employment in Scotland is the recognition of their skills and prior qualifications. In 2010, a scoping study on Support Mechanisms for the Recognition of the Skills, Learning and Qualifications of Migrant Workers and Refugees was published.³⁶ The Scottish Government commissioned the Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) at Glasgow University to revisit the scoping study. The recommendations are being considered by the Scottish Government.

English language skills are important to enable employment, and equally employment can help to develop language skills, particularly for professional language specific to certain roles or sectors. Access to English Language Requirement (ELR) provided to jobseekers led to improvement in English language proficiency for some, but DWP also identified a need for additional support for absolute beginners and those with low levels of literacy. ELR provision ended in June 2016. Since then DWP, Education Scotland and the Scottish Government have been continuing to discuss ways to improve on the previous process with an aim to meet the English language skill needs for refugees seeking employment. English language skills are also a focus of work for the Education thematic group.

3. Refugees can access entrepreneurial support

Refugees living in Scotland who have right to remain are entitled to access entrepreneurial support initiatives on the same basis as anyone legally residing in Scotland.

Scotland CAN DO affirms the Scottish Government's ambition to help Scotland become a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation: a CAN DO place for business. Partners in the initiative come from across the public, private and third sectors and offer a wide range of support for both new and existing entrepreneurs. It is recognised that to achieve sustainable economic growth and create opportunities for everyone in Scotland to flourish, there is a need for collaborative work to accelerate entrepreneurship and innovation across Scotland.³⁷

35 Work Coaches are front-line DWP staff based in Jobcentres. Their main role is to support claimants into work by challenging, motivating, providing personalised advice and using knowledge of local labour markets. This involves conducting work-focused interviews and agreeing tailored "Claimant Commitments".

36 See: <http://www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/SCQF%20migrant%20scoping%20study%20low%20res%20for%20website.pdf>

37 See: <http://www.cando.scot/>

Business Gateway offices across Scotland provide business support services and impartial advice to people starting or growing their business. Experienced business advisers and a range of free workshops and events across Scotland offer opportunities to develop skills and link in to networks.³⁸

New Scots recognised that refugees may face additional challenges or barriers which limit their opportunities to pursue their entrepreneurial ambition. For example, English language skills, recognition of previous skills or experience and knowledge of any required certification or standards for the type of business they are interested in running. Awareness of UK business practices, levels of demand for their product or service, local logistics and securing resources to enable start-up will also impact on the potential for success.

Specific work through New Scots to help tackle these additional challenges has not as yet been progressed. There are refugees who have successfully pursued their entrepreneurial goals, some of whom have engaged with mainstream support such as Business Gateway. However, enabling more refugees to access entrepreneurial support remains a challenge.

Broader Impact of New Scots on Employment and Welfare

Partnership working and discussions as part of the New Scots approach have led to improved understanding of employability and welfare issues for wider Scottish interests through increased communication particularly with DWP and the Home Office.

The New Scots Employability and Welfare thematic group is now represented on the National Delivery Group (NDG) and on the Third Sector Employability Forum (TSEF) for Scotland's employability framework 'Workforce Plus'.³⁹ This framework supports the development of local multi-agency employability partnerships within broader Community Planning Partnerships. Involvement in these groups enables challenges facing asylum seekers and refugees to be considered as part of wider approaches to employability.

Refugees' needs have been assessed for the development of the new Employment Support Programme that will be delivered by the Scottish Government from April 2018.

38 See: <http://www.bgateway.com/>

39 See: <http://www.gov.scot/resource/doc/129285/0030791.pdf>

Refugees, including some who were employed in construction in Syria, visit the site of a new care home in West Dunbartonshire. Some are now studying for their Certificate of Site Safety as a first step to returning to construction work here in Scotland. West Dunbartonshire employability team organised the visit with building contractors Morgan Sindall.

Photo by Trish McCluskey



Continuing Challenges

Challenges continue to exist for people who are newly recognised as refugees in accessing their benefit entitlements. This is often associated with allocation of National Insurance numbers and accessibility of digital claims. DWP is continuing its efforts to improve processes and build links with the Home Office to increase coordination with other services and processes. The work of DWP as part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme has been recognised as highly beneficial to enabling refugees to settle and integrate quickly – it is hoped that this can be developed or extended to benefit all refugees.

Refugees have identified that recognition of skills gained from employment in their home country and lack of opportunities to gain work experience in Scotland limit their chances of securing employment. Work to increase DWP staff awareness of these challenges may help them to support job seekers' but it is recognised that refugees also need support to: articulate their skills and competencies within the UK labour market; build connections and networks; and gain work experience.

Volunteering can have similar benefits to employment by enabling people to build social connections within their community, provide a sense of purpose and an opportunity to contribute. Volunteering can also be a useful step towards employment as a means of developing networks as well as gaining skills and experience. Job Centre staff supporting claimants have fed back a clear need for the identification of volunteering opportunities; this would enable effective referrals. Strategic work to address this has been undertaken with Project Scotland, a charity which helps young people aged 16 to 30 to volunteer.⁴⁰ Further work will be necessary to identify pathways for all refugees who wish to access volunteering opportunities.

Housing



Key Achievements:

- Despite the speed and scale of the response to Syrian resettlement in Scotland, the use of temporary accommodation was largely avoided, enabling refugees to settle into suitable long-term accommodation as soon as they arrived.
- Recognition that the needs of refugees must be incorporated into housing options approaches across Scotland.
- Improvement of understanding of refugees' rights amongst housing practitioners across Scotland through training, awareness raising and the updated practitioners guide produced by Scottish Refugee Council.

Policy Context

Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the Home Office has a duty to provide asylum seekers with housing if they have nowhere else to stay while their claim is assessed; this is provided through regional accommodation contracts to asylum dispersal areas throughout the UK.

Once a person has received refugee status they have the same rights to access housing as anyone legally resident in Scotland.

Scotland's housing options approach means that, when a person approaches a local authority with a housing problem, they will be advised about their housing options in the widest sense and made aware of the choices available to them. This enables early intervention and explores all possible tenure options, including council housing, housing association housing and the private rented sector.

Social landlords have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to promote equal opportunities and to ensure that all people, including refugees, receive fair access to their housing and housing services.

Scotland has some of the most progressive homelessness legislation in Western Europe. Unlike elsewhere in the UK, in Scotland a refugee is not considered to have formed a local connection with the local authority area where they lived in dispersal accommodation. This makes it easier for newly recognised refugees in Scotland to seek homelessness assistance from any Scottish local authority. Priority need was abolished as part of Scotland's 2012 homelessness commitment, meaning that a new refugee, if homeless, can access assistance without having to demonstrate that they are particularly vulnerable. Housing benefit, administered by the local authority, provides the means for most new refugees to cover the cost of their new home.

As part of the Scotland's response to the refugee crisis, the Refugee Taskforce established the Accommodating Refugees Subgroup in late 2015. This subgroup had a specific focus of working to assess housing capacity support for the resettlement of refugees to Scotland. In May 2016, as resettlement had become established, this subgroup merged with the New Scots Housing Group. Since then the group has continued to meet with an ambition to widen the focus on housing issues for refugees from being Glasgow focused to Scotland wide as refugees are now living across Scotland.

Strategy Outcomes

In 2014 the New Scots strategy set out three outcomes for Housing:

1. Refugees are supported to fully understand the housing options available to them by a range of agencies, and as a result are able to make the best possible choice for them.
2. Suitable housing options are available to new refugees in Scotland.
3. New refugees are supported to move from asylum accommodation to a more permanent home during the 28-day period by agencies working together to ensure they are aware of their long-term options and are not left without somewhere to live.

1. Refugees understand their housing options and can make the best choice

Under Scotland's housing options approach, local authorities provide advice in the widest sense to make people aware of the choices they can make to find the best housing option for them. To ensure understanding of the particular challenges for refugees, Glasgow City Council invited the Scottish Refugee Council to input into their housing options training for community casework team and other housing associations. This learning is already being extended beyond Glasgow through links which have been developed with West of Scotland Housing Options Hub to open up referral pathways for refugees.

Awareness of the challenges facing refugees has also been raised through events and initiatives which have reached out to housing professionals in Scotland. Scottish Refugee Council has presented information at the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and Homeless Action Scotland conferences. Scottish Refugee Council and CIH have also provided training to housing options hubs across Scotland and through open courses which are due to continue. Housing Options Hubs will develop the Housing Options Toolkit, which is designed to enable frontline staff to attain the skills and knowledge necessary to deliver housing options advice, to include a section on refugees. To do this, in 2017 a working group including representatives of the Housing thematic group will agree content for a module on refugee issues and identify the work needed to ensure specialist advice is delivered on the front line.

2. Refugees are able to access suitable housing options

New referral pathways for refugees have opened up as stronger partnerships with Registered Social Landlords have developed. This improves the housing options available, providing refugees with more choice over where they live.

The launch of the Scottish Refugee Council Housing Practitioners' Guide⁴¹ was well attended by organisations from across Scotland and will be a useful tool for housing practitioners working in Scottish local authorities, housing associations and the third sector who are assisting the integration of asylum seekers or refugees. The Guide aims to help support housing practitioners to understand the needs and experience of asylum seekers and refugees to improve engagement with them.

The Syrian Resettlement Programme saw use of temporary furnished properties largely avoided, enabling the majority of families to move into secure, long-term accommodation on arrival. Local authorities participating in the scheme sourced a variety of types of accommodation from the public and private sector. This provided a wider pool of properties which allowed a quick response to requests from the Home Office regarding specific families in the programme, and also allowed local authorities to balance the needs of the existing community.

41 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1239/Housing_Practitioners_Guide_to_Integrating_Asylum_Seekers___Refugees.pdf

Case Study

Housing Practitioner Guide

In August 2016, Scottish Refugee Council published an updated *Housing Practitioner's Guide to Integrating Asylum Seekers & Refugees*.⁴² An original action of the New Scots strategy was to distribute the 2011 version of the guide to all local authorities in Scotland, but an update became necessary because of key developments in Scottish homelessness policy, changes in how asylum accommodation was provided and the growing number of refugees being resettled to local authorities across Scotland.

Scottish Refugee Council updated the guide with the support of the Scottish Government and the Chartered Institute of Housing. The new guide provides essential

“A safe, secure home is so fundamentally important for all of us but especially so for people who are new to Scotland and trying to navigate their way through complicated systems and may be recovering from torture, trauma and violent human rights abuses.”

Jamie Stewart, SRC Housing Development Officer

42

See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1239/Housing_Practitioners_Guide_to_Integrating_Asylum_Seekers_Refugees.pdf

“When people arrive in our country through difficult and dangerous circumstances, front line housing staff play a key role in helping them access the support and services they need... [the guide] will assist them in doing their best for the asylum seekers and refugees they are working with.”

Marian Reid, Deputy Director at CIH Scotland

information about people's rights and entitlements in relation to housing, homelessness and welfare benefits. It includes guidance and examples of good practice aimed at reducing homelessness among refugees, increasing housing options and improving tenancy sustainment. It also highlights refugees' strengths and the important contribution they can make to communities. The guide is relevant to those who come through the asylum route as well as resettled refugees.

The guide has been well received. The launch event in Glasgow was attended by housing practitioners from across Scotland. The guide will be updated regularly to reflect the ever changing environment facing asylum seekers and refugees.



3. Support to secure a home during the move-on period

A number of efforts to improve the experience of refugees during the 28 day move-on period have been tried over the lifetime of the New Scots strategy. However, outcomes have been limited by significant structural issues which are barriers to refugees accessing permanent housing quickly (these barriers are not unique to refugees and they share this experience with other people in a similar situation). For example, Glasgow City Council explored an option to work with private sector asylum accommodation providers to enable smooth access to the private rented sector, but this could not be rolled out for legal reasons.

In 2017 Glasgow City Council will pilot a new arrangement negotiated with Registered Social Landlords whereby new refugees will receive an offer from a Registered Social Landlord within the 28-day period. 2017 will also see the launch of a system developed by Glasgow City Council for early intervention through assertive housing options and early allocation of accommodation.

Continuing Challenges

According to the Scottish Refugee Council's Holistic Integration Service report⁴³, homelessness remains one of the main issues facing refugees. The report also highlights issues for refugees accessing temporary accommodation and considerable delays in obtaining permanent accommodation. There has been some positive work which is showing success, for example Scottish Refugee Council nomination agreements with 12 housing associations throughout Scotland which provide referral pathways for refugees. A Scottish Refugee Council Community Conference highlighted the importance of holistic advice and advocacy but also the important role of alternative sources of support such as peer support.

43 Scottish Refugee Council Holistic Integration Service Report, June 2016 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1142/Full_Integration_Report_June_2016.pdf

Case Study

North Lanarkshire Resettlement

North Lanarkshire Council committed to helping 180 Syrian refugees as part of the UK Government's Syrian Resettlement Programme. The first families arrived in November 2015.

To help the families settle into North Lanarkshire, a multidisciplinary team was set up with representatives from the Council, NHS, local housing associations and the voluntary sector. The team adopted the indicators of integration set out in New Scots as a framework. Each

”As well as the formal recognition this [CIH Team of the Year] award provides for the excellent work being carried out in North Lanarkshire, we've also received extremely positive responses from the refugees themselves and their experience of settling in to North Lanarkshire Communities. This is what makes everything we do worthwhile and allows us to be proud of the positive difference we're making to people's lives.”

Councillor Barry McCulloch, Convener of Housing & Social Work Services

family has a core support team which includes housing, social work and health professionals tasked with ensuring the refugees' wellbeing and support needs.

The core teams help families settle into their homes, assists with welfare advice, registering with health services and getting to know the local area. A team of volunteer befrienders also support the refugees in developing social connections.

The refugees are adapting well in their new surroundings. The children are thriving in school and the families are engaging with people and groups within their local communities.

One year after the first Syrian families arrived, the hard work in North Lanarkshire was recognised as the Syrian Resettlement Project Team received the Chartered Institute of Housing's 'Team of the Year' award.



Education



Key Achievements:

- Commitment to the actions from a broad group of partners has enabled improvements to progress. This particularly benefitted the co-production of guidance and information on entitlements to education and associated support.
- Events which brought education practitioners together with refugees or organisations with knowledge and expertise of refugee issues have improved awareness and helped address barriers identified by New Scots. For example, Bilingualism Does Matter workshops and Scotland, People, Languages Forum event.
- Local partnerships have worked to address unmet demand for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), particularly by working to improve understanding of demand through better data capture and linking providers.
- Refreshed ESOL Strategy for Scotland.

Policy Context

Education is devolved to the Scottish Government, and Scotland has its own distinctive qualifications.

Universal access to compulsory education is set out in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc Act 2000. All children and young people, including refugee and asylum seeking children, are entitled to access local nursery and school education in Scotland. Local authorities and schools are responsible for the provision of education within a broad, non-statutory framework called Curriculum for Excellence which aims to ensure all young people become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

The Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 (as amended) requires education authorities to identify, meet and keep under review the additional support needs of pupils for whose education they are responsible and to tailor provision according to their individual needs. The Act's Code of Practice specifically identifies English as an additional language as a potential additional support need.

Scotland's colleges play a key role in providing education and skills for those over the age of 16. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) waives fees for asylum seekers attending college and studying a full or part-time English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course or other part-time advanced or non-advanced course.⁴⁴ Refugees are entitled to access higher and further education on the same basis as anyone legally resident in Scotland.

The Adult ESOL Strategy 2007 established the framework within which Community Planning Partnerships are funded to provide ESOL. Further education colleges deliver the majority of ESOL provision in Scotland, with community learning supporting flexibility of provision. A refreshed ESOL Strategy: *Welcoming Our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015-2020*,⁴⁵ reaffirmed Scotland's commitment to high quality English language provision to enable participation and integration to Scottish life through work, study, family and local community.

Unlike the rest of the UK, eligible Scottish domiciled students studying full-time in Scotland are able to have tuition fees paid by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) if studying for a first degree or equivalent. This includes refugees who meet the residency criteria.

Interest in the work of the New Scots Education thematic group increased in light of the humanitarian crisis, as local authorities' awareness of services offering English language provision (ESOL) such as community learning and development increased. The New Scots group expanded to include representatives of the Higher Education sector, DWP and local authority areas.

Strategy Outcomes

In 2014 the New Scots strategy set out four outcomes for Education:

1. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to achieve the English Language skills they need to successfully integrate with Scotland's communities.
2. Refugees and asylum seekers access appropriate education opportunities and increase their qualifications/knowledge/experience as a result.

44 See: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/GUI_SFCGD082015_FeeWaivergrantpolicy201516/SFCGD082015_Fee_Waiver_Grant_Policy_2015-16_Flowchart_annex.pdf

45 See: <https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/ESOLStrategy2015to2020.pdf>

3. Refugees and asylum seekers are supported to use pre-existing qualifications and access appropriate employment/additional education opportunities as a result.
4. Scotland's linguistic diversity is promoted and as a result is valued, enabling refugees to contribute fully/effectively to Scottish society.

1. English language skills needed for successful integration

Glasgow ESOL providers have coordinated their efforts to establish a picture of overall demand for ESOL in Glasgow. This has not been achieved before. With a central database, providers can now work together to address the demand, and learners can identify provision suitable for their needs more quickly. It also aims to help address issues of multiple registrations to secure a place, which resulted in inflated waiting lists to access ESOL in some areas. Providers in other areas are now looking to replicate this model.

Education Scotland refreshed the national strategy for ESOL; *Welcoming Our Learners*.⁴⁶ Members of the refugee community took part in discussions held around Scotland as part of this refresh. Their views reinforced the need for delivery to be learner-centred and to have an effectively supported learner journey.

The Scottish Refugee Council's Holistic Integration Service included language support. The service reported on the difficulties in recognising small improvements in language because the system did not allow for this. In its second year, it reported that 64% of people who accessed the service were assessed at SCQF level 2 for ESOL – this included ESOL literacy level.⁴⁷ The development of the new SQA Preparation for Literacy unit in ESOL, has helped to overcome this issue by providing additional recognition of attainment as well as building on the existing suite of SQA ESOL qualifications.⁴⁸

The Scottish Government is funding *Sharing Lives Sharing Languages*, a peer education pilot, which aims to build connections between refugees and those whose first language is not English, and the host community, by developing a participative approach to language learning. The pilot, which utilises a peer education model, has launched in four areas: Aberdeenshire, Midlothian, Renfrewshire and Dundee. Learning from existing peer education and community-based initiatives are informing the pilot and development of this approach to language learning.

46 See: <https://www.education.gov.scot/Documents/ESOLStrategy2015to2020.pdf>

47 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/0255/HIS_Year_2_R.pdf

48 See: <http://www.sqa.org.uk/files/nu/UnitN2ESOLPrepforLiteracy.pdf>

Case Study

Developing A New ESOL qualification

As more refugees and asylum seekers arrived in Scotland it was recognised that the number of people at the very early stages of English learning, some with little or no literacy, was increasing. Existing Scottish Qualifications Authority National Qualifications in ESOL were proving very challenging for these learners.

SQA developed an additional ESOL Unit at National 2 level called “Preparation for Literacy” to provide an entry point in the learning journey. This new National 2 unit was made available for centres from January 2016. Previous SQA ESOL literacy learning and teaching materials can continue to be used to support learners at this level.

SQA now provides a comprehensive range of ESOL qualifications which meet the needs of ESOL learners from complete beginner to university entrance level. There are now three ESOL literacies units specifically designed for candidates who are not literate in English or have little or no literacy in their first language.

The seven units in the new National 2 support and recognise the achievements of candidates in schools, colleges and education training providers in the initial stages of learning English. This means that all ESOL learners can get accreditation for their learning. This is important to help support learners’ to transition to other education courses or employment.



2. Access to education opportunities

Working toward this outcome has required many different organisations to work collaboratively, to pool knowledge and experience. It has resulted in the production of a number of key documents including:

- A guide for refugee parents to understand the entitlements to education for children⁴⁹; developed with the involvement of the Refugee Women's Strategy Group.
- The development of financial support advice and guidance on access to further and higher education.

Partnership work is now beginning to take place focussing specifically on young asylum seekers and refugees.

New Scots highlighted the issue of access to education opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers. It was also identified that there was a need to increase understanding and awareness of entitlement to learning and education for providers. In Year 1 of New Scots, the Education thematic group started work to identify all of the barriers to accessing education and ways in which they could be addressed. Due to the complexities involved and the engagement of an increased number of agencies, this work has continued over the lifetime of New Scots. Partners identified the following as key barriers to access:

- Limited criteria to access Higher Education (for asylum seekers).
- ESOL access.
- Lack of recognition of prior learning qualification, skills and knowledge.
- Lack of knowledge in the education sector on eligibility for Student Support Funding.
- Timescales to receive funding awards through SAAS/Colleges.
- Confusion on the meaning of immigration status by education professionals leading to conflicting advice.
- Lack of information on progression routes.
- Lack of access to childcare.
- Barriers due to limited funding and policy gap.

49 See: <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/Documents/refugee-schools-guide.pdf>



This work is a starting point from which organisations can begin to address the barriers listed and partners have now made clear commitments to contribute. New Scots has provided an opportunity which did not exist previously; by bringing together partner organisations who are all able to contribute from their respective positions and identify how they could support work to tackle these barriers.

The Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council developed a guide on financial support for refugees and asylum seekers in further and higher education in Scotland.⁵⁰ The New Scots education thematic group commented on the guide during its development.

Amendments were made to existing legislation to clarify that any student who has been granted refugee status, humanitarian protection or another form of leave to remain is eligible to apply for student support in Scotland. This removed ambiguity for resettled Syrian refugees who arrived with humanitarian protection status, which will also benefit people arriving under future resettlement programmes.⁵¹

Universities across Scotland have recognised the potential of refugees and asylum seekers and taken steps to offer support to enable them to continue or take up studies in a variety of ways. Universities including Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian and Strathclyde have offered scholarship programmes, particularly for postgraduates or students whose studies have been interrupted. Universities Scotland, in collaboration with the Scottish Refugee Council and heads of admissions from a range of Scottish universities, has published *Guidance for Universities on Providing Asylum Seekers and Refugees with Access to Higher Education*.⁵²

3. Support to use existing qualifications to access employment or additional education

Employment and education are important for individual wellbeing and to enable people to make a contribution to wider society. Many refugees and asylum seekers arrive with existing skills, qualifications and experience but may face challenges in accessing employment or continuing education for a number of reasons, including recognition of their qualifications, proof of accreditation, gaps in education or employment and lack of experience working in the UK.⁵³

50 See: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Funding_Streams_Student_Support/Support_for_Asylum_Seekers_in_Further_Higher_Education.pdf

51 The regulations previously stated that eligible students who apply for asylum and are granted leave to remain are eligible for funding support. The Education (Student Support) (Miscellaneous Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2016 with regulations 5-10 making amendment to student support, came into force on August 1 2016. Regulations 1 and 11-13 amend eligibility for EMAs came into force on 31 March 2016.

52 See: <http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Guidance-on-Providing-Asylum-Seekers-and-Refugees-with-Access-to-Higher-Education-Nov-2016.pdf>

53 See: <https://publications.iom.int/books/recognition-qualifications-and-competences-migrants>

The thematic group explored the possibility of adapting the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Toolkit⁵⁴ to meet the needs of refugees. RPL focuses on recognition of learning gained from experience rather than formal learning, although the toolkit also encompasses previous formal, non-formal and informal learning. The conclusion of this exploratory work has been that specific organisations would need a bespoke adaptation of the toolkit to address the specific needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

As a result, the Scottish Government commissioned a review of the 2010 Scoping Study on Support Mechanisms for the Recognition of Skills, Learning and Qualifications for Migrant Workers and Refugees.⁵⁵ This work has predominantly taken place in the final year of New Scots and continues to attract interest, particularly as refugees settle across Scotland and local authorities look to support them in pursuing learning and employment opportunities. The TERU at Glasgow University reviewed the scoping study and the recommendations are being considered by the Scottish Government.

Initiatives have developed during New Scots which aim to support refugees with existing skills to retrain or obtain the necessary professional accreditations to use their skills in Scotland. Bridges Programmes has developed a new refugee doctors project in partnership with NHS Education for Scotland, the British Medical Association, Clyde College and City of Glasgow College to support refugees who were fully qualified doctors in their home country to achieve General Medical Council registration and a licence to practise medicine. The project supports refugee doctors as they retrain and begin careers working in the NHS. The Scottish Government is providing funding to support the project for 2017-18.⁵⁶

4. Recognised value of Scotland's linguistic diversity

The Scottish Government's 1+2 language policy in schools has potential to offer real benefits for refugee communities. Activities have been undertaken in relation to this policy, including a national language event and promoting refugee languages to 1+2 leads in local authorities.

An additional outcome which developed during New Scots work has been to support practitioners who are working with people who are bilingual. Bilingualism Does Matter seminars contributed to promoting Scotland's linguistic diversity. Practitioners, particularly school teachers, attended workshops to support them in working with bilingual pupils. This benefits not only refugee communities but also wider multi-lingual communities and is complimentary to the 1+2 language policy. There is potential to adopt this approach more widely and expand it to reach a wider cross section of frontline staff working with bilingual learners.

54 See: <http://scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/RPL-Toolkit-Updated-v2-FINAL-December-2010-with-updated-Framework.pdf>

55 See: <http://www.scqf.org.uk/content/files/SCQF%20migrant%20scoping%20study%20low%20res%20for%20website.pdf>

56 See: <http://www.scotlanddeanery.nhs.scot/trainee-information/careers/refugee-doctors-programme/>

Case Study

Bilingualism Does Matter

As Scotland has welcomed refugee families there has been an increase in the number of refugee children attending schools across the country. For many schools this is their first experience of children and young people who are developing bilingual speakers.

To help support teachers develop the skills they need to support bilingual children from refugee families the New Scots education theme group developed a seminar called 'Bilingualism Does Matter'. This partnership involving the University of Edinburgh, SCILT Scotland's Centre for Languages and Glasgow City Council's English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service prepared and delivered seminars using their organisation's existing expertise.

The seminars focused on how bilingualism develops, the advantages of being bilingual, the importance of using a

”The seminar helped with “understanding the research around bilingualism and development and learning classroom strategies when working with bilingual pupils in the classroom.”

Teacher

”The seminar provided “very important and useful information regarding bilingualism and helped me to understand how I can help my bilingual pupils using different ways to support them in the classroom.”

Teacher

person's first language (L1) for learning and practical strategies to use L1 in the classroom.

Seminars were delivered in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Inverness in October and November 2016. They provided a good opportunity for teachers to ask questions and discuss practice with experts and peers. The seminars were all oversubscribed. Those who were able to attend all felt that their needs were fully or partly met by the seminar.

Although developed for New Scots, the skills developed through the seminars will help support all bilingual learners.



Continuing Challenges

English language skills continue to be a priority for refugees to enable them to settle into communities, feel safe and confident accessing services and to pursue employment or education. The strategy has highlighted the continuing challenge of ensuring the right ESOL provision is there to meet the specific needs of learners, ranging from beginners to those requiring more specialised language support for professional work or further and higher education.

In Glasgow, where level of demand for ESOL is high, multiple enrolment points for ESOL provision have required duplication of effort for applicants. However a trial will pilot whether a central enrolment point could mitigate this and enable a coordinated approach to monitoring levels of demand for ESOL in an area with many providers. If this proves successful it could potentially be rolled out across Scotland. There are also funding barriers for refugees who wish to pursue further studies after studying ESOL at college due to a limit of three years of bursary support within a six year period.

Although there has been some progress, there is a lack of scholarships for asylum seekers and those that do exist sometimes have additional criteria restricting them further, for example to specific nationalities. Asylum seekers may also face issues undertaking course-based work placements due to their immigration status allowing volunteering but not work.

Health



Key Achievements:

- Scottish Government engagement in the Health thematic group has ensured national health strategies are informed by refugees' health needs where appropriate.
- Membership of the group widened to include health leads from local authorities resettling Syrian refugees, securing a Scottish wide input. This supported shared learning and an improved, joined up approach to health provision for refugees.
- A learning session was delivered to local authority lead officers working with newly arrived Syrian refugees. This session included sharing Glasgow's experience of working with asylum seekers and refugees from a health perspective, including both primary and secondary care as well as responses to mental health wellbeing.

Policy Context

The provision of health services is devolved to the Scottish Government which has directed NHS Scotland to provide health services to all refugees and asylum seekers, including people whose claim for asylum has been refused, on the same basis as anyone legally resident in Scotland.

The Scottish Government's '2020 Vision: Achieving Sustainable Quality in Scotland's Healthcare'⁵⁷ sets out the need for a healthcare system where we have integrated health and social care, a focus on prevention, anticipation, supported self-management and reduction in health inequalities.

Access to good quality health care is important for people who may arrive in Scotland with physical or mental health needs associated with the reasons they were forced to travel to the UK to claim asylum. This includes gender-based violence, sexual violence, torture and other degrading treatment. The experience of seeking asylum and the social isolation that can be an effect of the process, can exacerbate existing mental health problems or create new ones.⁵⁸

A range of specialist health care services have developed in Glasgow over the last 15 years to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, including: the Compass Mental Health Team – now the Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service (ANCHOR); the Bridging Team within Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board; and also voluntary sector services such as Freedom from Torture.

The Syrian Resettlement Programme includes specific vulnerability criteria for refugees accepted for resettlement. People arriving under the programme may have health needs which cannot be treated in the region, be particularly vulnerable or at risk and may have been victims of torture. Refugees' experiences raise the likelihood of associated mental health support needs. The national distribution of refugees across Scotland increases the importance of sharing learning and good practice across Scotland.

NHS Scotland and other agencies such as the Mental Health Foundation and Rape Crisis are working closely with the Scottish Refugee Council to identify opportunities to meet the health care needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Scottish Government is funding the Mental Health Foundation, in partnership with Freedom From Torture, to undertake the Musawa refugee rights and participation project, aimed at raising the visibility of refugees and refugee issues across mental health services.

Strategy Outcomes

In 2014 the New Scots strategy set out three outcomes for Health:

1. The planning and delivery of health services in Scotland is informed by the needs of asylum seekers and local communities leading to an increase in integration.
2. An understanding of refugee integration pathways is embedded in all health-related strategies leading to more person-centred services.
3. Refugees and asylum seekers are fully supported to fully understand their rights and entitlements. Service providers are increasingly aware of how to meet their needs. As a result refugee and asylum seeker health needs are better met.

58 Mulvey, G (2013) In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland Final Report, Scottish Refugee Council http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/5790/final_report.pdf

1. Planning and delivery of health services

Consistent engagement from the Scottish Government as part of the Health thematic group has improved opportunities for consideration of refugee issues as part of influencing wider health strategies in Scotland. For example, the Scottish Government's Mental Health Strategy involved consultation with a range of stakeholders. Scottish Refugee Council, Mental Health Foundation and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) Trauma Services, who are all part of the thematic group, were among those providing responses which highlighted the specific needs of refugees.

Scottish Refugee Council in partnership with Mental Health Foundation and funded by See Me, ran a project combining policy and community development to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination among refugee communities. A briefing paper, *Refugees, mental health and stigma in Scotland*,⁵⁹ was published and disseminated in August 2016. It aimed to provide policy makers and service providers with an overview of what we know about refugees' experience of mental health stigma and discrimination, and set out recommendations for how best to respond to the mental health needs of new refugee communities. The community development aspect of the project provided training to community activists on becoming Community Champions. Champions were supported to take action to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination in their own communities and to raise their concerns with decision makers.

59 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1369/Anti-stigma_briefing_FINAL.pdf

Case Study

Community Champion Training

Lubna has been living in Scotland for 14 years. Lubna became a refugee Community Champion after a friend gave her information about the project.

“It felt easy to express my experience though at first I was not sure if I could talk about what happened to me. But when I heard and saw the video clips it kind of motivated me to speak out without fear. I felt free.”

Lubna

The Community Champion project aimed to train people from the asylum seeking and refugee community to play a lead role in challenging mental health stigma and discrimination in their local communities. The training was delivered in partnership by the Mental Health Foundation and the Scottish Refugee Council, with funding from See Me.

The Community Champion training took place over 8 weeks. One of the aims of the training was to give Community Champions the confidence to speak about mental health and to share their awareness of issues which can impact their community. Following the training Lubna volunteered to be part of a discussion panel which followed the screening of a film called ‘Seeking Refuge’. 40 people, from a variety of backgrounds, attended the screening. Lubna contributed to discussions on the mental health impact of being a refugee.

“It was a real privilege to have Lubna present at the event.”

Screening Event Organiser



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is recognised internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. Refugees living in Scotland may have left an FGM practising country to seek protection for them or their child from FGM, have particular health needs as a consequence of FGM, or remain at risk of FGM.⁶⁰ The Scottish Government is committed to working with partners to prevent and eradicate FGM and all other forms of violence against women under the guise of gender, culture or religion (so called Honour Based Violence).

The Scottish Government funded a collaborative research project between the Scottish Refugee Council and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine to inform work to address the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM) in a Scottish context. The project report, *Tackling FGM in Scotland: a Scottish model for intervention*⁶¹ was published in December 2014. It analysed existing data on communities potentially affected by FGM in Scotland and drew on examples of good practice from other EU countries to make recommendations for work with communities, the provision of services, prevention and protection. Following this work, the Scottish Government established a multi-agency FGM Short Life Working Group (SLWG), which supported the development of Scotland's National Action Plan to Prevent and Eradicate FGM⁶² published in February 2016. The plan sets out an agreed range of actions and associated activities to be taken forward by the Scottish Government and partners to prevent and ultimately eradicate FGM. A National Implementation Group is overseeing the implementation and monitoring of this plan.

A number of research projects explored the health needs of refugees and aimed to increase refugees' capacity to engage with health policy and forums in order to reduce barriers to access. For example, *What do you mean, I have a right to health?*⁶³ was a participatory action research project, funded by NHS Health Scotland and carried out in partnership by the Centre for Health Policy, University of Strathclyde, the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland, the Mental Health Foundation and Glasgow Homelessness Network. The health and human rights project examined what the right to health means to people who face inequalities and may struggle to access support. The research used a participatory approach, involving peer researchers from the communities which were a focus of the research, this included female asylum seekers and refugees.

These research projects have all provided a platform for the potential development of future projects that have refugees at their core.

60 UNHCR Guidance on Refugee Claims relating to FGM: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4a0c28492.html>

61 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/9061/FGM_Report_FINAL_A4portrait.pdf

62 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00493752.pdf>

63 See: http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/58209/1/Abdulkadir_etal_IPPI_2016_What_do_you_mean_I_have_a_right_to_health.pdf

2. Refugee integration pathways embedded in health-related strategies

NHSGGC have embedded asylum seeker and refugee services into core functions as part of mainstreaming equality actions and outcomes for 2016-20.⁶⁴ This includes a specific outcome that: “People who have migrated to our area, asylum seekers and refugees, know how to access acute services.” Work to achieve and measure this outcome includes improving the number of translated patient publications disseminated via services and voluntary sector organisations.

This progressive development has been shared with other health boards across Scotland as a best practice example. Health entitlement information produced by NHSGGC has also been shared with health boards across Scotland – making clear refugee and asylum seekers’ entitlement to access healthcare services. This has benefitted local authorities resettling refugees through the Syrian Resettlement Programme who have indicated that health boards’ work to ensure access to essential treatment has been an important part of the success of the programme.

3. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights and entitlements, and service providers are aware of how to meet their needs.

The research project referred to previously (*What do you mean, I have a right to health?*⁶⁵) provided an opportunity to gauge asylum seeking and refugee women’s understanding of their rights and entitlements in relation to healthcare. The research indicated great variation in the experience of participants. However, it also revealed positive accounts of accessing health services in Glasgow – particularly that initial information provided on arrival in the UK is good and that they were able to access a GP service quickly and without difficulties.

The Health Peer Education project funded by the NHSGGC Health Improvement Team and run by the Scottish Refugee Council has proven to be an innovative model of health promotion. It equips, mobilises and supports refugees as ‘Peers’, enabling them to share knowledge and understanding, and plan collective action to maintain healthy lifestyles. Refugees who volunteered to participate in the project received training and support to enable them to build capacity within peer groups to create collective action plans and implement them. Initiatives undertaken by groups included investigating how to access sports facilities, organising trips and encouraging wider participation in health activities.

This model has been valued across New Scots thematic groups as a best practice model for an asset-based delivery approach which increases social connections. The model has been piloted in four local authority areas in Scotland to support resettled refugees with practical English and to build social connections to their new community.

64 See: http://www.equalitiesinhealth.org/_literature_134841/A_Fairer_NHS_2016-2020

65 See: http://strathprints.strath.ac.uk/58209/1/Abdulkadir_etal_IPPI_2016_What_do_you_mean_I_have_a_right_to_health.pdf

Case Study

General Practice and Primary Care Seminar

General Practice and Primary Care at the University of Glasgow leads a programme of research focused on migrant health. They became aware that many GP practices in areas new to receiving refugees were not confident in caring for this population. A teaching event was organised in 2016, supported by the Scottish Government, to provide a broad overview of the care needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

80 people attended the event including 36 GPs, 3 Practice Nurses, 4 GP trainees and 7 Practice Managers. Attendees reported an increase in confidence caring for refugees from an average of 2.5 out of 5 at the beginning to 3.5 out of 5 by the end. A number of changes of practice which could be made were identified. Including, finding ways to increase the time available for refugee appointments and scheduling return appointments.

“What struck me was that all speakers were compassionate and they inspired me to look beyond the usual pressures I face in an ordinary session.”
GP

The importance of being aware of the likely experiences of patients on their journey to the UK, the impact of the asylum process once here and the different support agencies involved was highlighted by participants.

“Better understanding of what a patient will have experienced in terms of agencies involved.”
Locum GP

A number of participants said that they would take an altered approach to consultations for refugee patients, including taking more interest, feeling more confident in approach and exploring their attitudes toward these patients.

The training has already achieved tangible impacts, from increased use of community support services to the inclusion of a session on caring for asylum seekers and refugees in the compulsory Health Inequalities teaching provided by NHS Education for Scotland. Importantly, it has also prompted discussion regarding future training needs and how these might be best met.



Continuing Challenges

Refugees arriving in Scotland as part of the Syrian Resettlement Programme have had their health needs assessed prior to arrival, and matching to accommodation is influenced by access to necessary healthcare. This allows good planning of response including local health and social care.

This approach is welcomed, but highlights the lack of a systematic approach to providing health checks to other refugees, including those who enter the UK seeking asylum.

Communities and Social Connections



Key Achievements:

- Public attitudes toward refugees in Scotland have been upheld. The public have embraced campaigns to welcome refugees and community groups have sought opportunities to provide support.
- Community work with refugees by Police Scotland expanded across the country.
- The expansion of Refugee Festival Scotland has provided more opportunities to promote the culture and traditions of refugee communities and encourage engagement with wider society. The geographic reach of the festival and the number of organisations involved has also increased.

Policy Context

Communities are groups of people who are connected by something that they have in common. This may be defined by: geographical area; demographics like age, minority ethnic group, or disability; or shared experience, concerns or aspirations. Communities create potential for collective responses to challenges and opportunities, as well as support structures which facilitate integration and a sense of belonging which can improve community safety and cohesion.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015⁶⁶ strengthens the voices of communities in decisions that matter to them by improving the process of community planning and ensuring that local service providers work together more closely with communities to meet the needs of the people who use them. The Act placed Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) on a statutory footing and created new rights for community bodies as well as introducing new duties on public authorities.

66 See: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/pdfs/asp_20150006_en.pdf

The Scottish Government's vision is for every community in Scotland to be strong, resilient and supportive, enabling social inclusion and renewal, as well as fulfilling individual's aspirations and potential. Inclusive communities are at the core of the national outcomes framework, integrating this with related priorities in crime, health, education and employment. The Scottish Government's integration from day one approach includes refugees and asylum seekers within its vision of inclusive communities.

In 2009 Scotland's Community Empowerment Action Plan⁶⁷ set out a commitment to support communities to enable them to do things for themselves. Empowered communities can be more resilient and successful as they are able to tackle local challenges and collectively find solutions.

Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework describes how community connections are an important element of integration, as people experience integration through community issues.⁶⁸ These experiences include bonds (family and co-ethnic or co-national groups), bridges (links to other communities, such as neighbours or colleagues) and links (to services and public agencies).

Following the establishment of the Syrian Resettlement Programme the Scottish Government is funding the Scottish Community Development Centre to undertake the *Widening the Welcome* project to promote community development learning from the programme in Scotland.

Strategy Outcomes

In 2014 the New Scots strategy set out four outcomes for Communities:

1. Refugees are enabled to build social relationships and are involved and active in their local communities.
2. Refugees live in communities that are safe, cohesive and, as a result, are welcoming.
3. Refugees engage in cultural activities and Scottish cultural life reflects the diversity of Scotland.
4. Communities across Scotland have a better understanding of refugees and asylum seekers.

67 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/264771/0079288.pdf>

68 Ager & Strang (2008) 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework' *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2008) 21 (2): 166-91 see: <https://academic.oup.com/jrs/article/21/2/166/1621262/Understanding-Integration-A-Conceptual-Framework>

1. Refugees build social relationships and are active in local communities

Evidence from Scottish Refugee Council's Holistic Refugee Integration Service⁶⁹ suggests that whilst integration depends on building social connections, new refugees can be very isolated, lacking in close relationships and with poor knowledge of services or how to access them. The Service sought to support and empower 1,200 newly recognised refugees through personal integration plans and to develop links with public services. The final evaluation report showed that 1,885 people were supported by the service. In the final report of the Service, it was found that while people rate their social connectedness as low initially, there is usually demonstration of some improvement over time. However, factors including poor health or needing to move home may subsequently undermine a refugee's social connectedness.

Although data indicates generally high levels of social connectedness, there can be significant variation between refugees relations with family and friends and their feeling of connection to the local community or neighbourhood. For example, some refugees rated their social bonds very highly whilst continuing to feel that they do not 'belong' in their local area.

For some new refugees links with a community from their country of origin appears to be a deciding factor when making long-term plans. This can either act as an anchor, keeping them in Scotland, or a reason to move away because they perceive that they will have more community support (often linked with better employment prospects) elsewhere.

69 Scottish Refugee Council Holistic Integration Service Report, June 2016 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/1142/Full_Integration_Report_June_2016.pdf

In 2015, Scottish Refugee Council conducted a skills review of refugee community organisations. Over 120 external stakeholders, including representatives of 22 refugee community organisations, took part in the review to help reshape Scottish Refugee Council's support to refugee community organisations. The results of this work made the following recommendations which inform the Scottish Refugee Council community strategy:

- *Support the development of a collective voice* – representative structures which bring together different community organisations to work on common issues were identified as essential.
- *Provide long-term community development support to community organisations* – this would include both new and emerging groups, with a focus on working in partnership and sustainability.
- *Support links between refugee and receiving communities* - recognising that refugee communities have a key role to play in welcoming and supporting new arrivals and the need for neighbourhood-based work.
- *Provide policy support and updates* – to community organisations in order to help them to influence and campaign.
- *Equality and inclusion* – ensure that the needs of additionally marginalised groups, for example refugee women and young people, are considered and address barriers to participation.

Refugees can also lack knowledge and awareness of the role of their elected representatives or the democratic systems in the UK. The Scottish Refugee Council took the opportunity of increased political awareness in the run up to the 2014 independence referendum to run four political education events. 200 refugees and asylum seekers participated in the events to increase their understanding of the political process and electoral systems in Scotland and the UK. Clarity around entitlement to vote was provided and voter registration was promoted for those with entitlement.

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees recognises that offering hospitality to strangers is common across many different faith traditions. The project established a network of major faith groups in Scotland, coordinated by the Church of Scotland, with an aim to harness the outpouring of goodwill and desire to help support refugees expressed by many congregations across the country. It builds on common values to coordinate support within Scottish faith groups to welcome and work with refugees.

Case Study

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees

During 2015, public awareness of international refugee emergencies increased as a result of the increasing humanitarian crisis and better media reporting. Many faith and community groups felt motivated to get involved in practical action to help refugees, many for the first time.

In the autumn of 2015, Scotland's main Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Interfaith organisations agreed to form a new partnership project to coordinate and promote action in Scotland to support refugees and asylum seekers. Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees builds on the experience of faith-based humanitarian and integration projects, both at home and overseas.

” Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees has provided a one stop shop for information and advice about work that is being done to support refugees here in Scotland and around the world. Having a voice from the faith communities that speaks out on behalf of those of us involved in supporting a variety of initiatives is invaluable.

Through my personal experience of leading a small charity here in Moray I understand that the tragedy of the refugee crisis is not going away anytime soon. I am heartened by the support our work continues to receive from local people. And I also know from the Syrian families that have been resettled locally how important a warm welcome was to them when they first arrived. And I am delighted that our group was able to be an important part in that.”

Rev Shuna Dicks, Moray Supports Refugees



Case Study

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees provides a single point of contact for local and national faith groups, offering advice and support on refugee and asylum issues in an interfaith and intercultural context. The project has also been able to provide a place for engagement and sharing of information between faith groups and politicians, national and local government, voluntary groups and wider civil society.

In January 2017, Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees began an Edinburgh-based programme for refugees and anyone who is new to the city, based on a successful model run by Interfaith Glasgow. The *Edinburgh Weekend Club* aims to create space for friendships between people of different religions, cultures and nationalities to flourish. The project tackles social isolation, which can be particularly felt over weekends, to support integration and is also an opportunity to demonstrate the shared values of different faith traditions.

”The collaborative nature of the work of Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees is an important statement of solidarity with sisters and brothers across the world who are displaced by violence, war and oppression. With the ever-increasing and highly divisive ‘them and us’ rhetoric of recent times, they are an important embodiment of compassion, welcome and radical hospitality.”

Sally Foster-Fulton, Head of Christian Aid Scotland





2. Refugees live in safe, cohesive communities which are welcoming

Refugees have had to leave their homes because of persecution. This may have been by people who lived nearby and were part of the wider community. For others it may have been by authorities, including government officials, police or other law enforcement personnel in their country of origin. It is important that in Scotland they are able to feel safe in our communities and that they are supported to understand their rights and the role of authorities.

Police Scotland has a clear role in protecting the public and has long been engaged in activity to support safer communities. As part of this, Police Scotland has undertaken a number of initiatives specifically focused on engaging with refugees.

Glasgow Police Division's Safer Communities Department has worked to create opportunities for refugees to meet and engage with police, particularly in community and informal settings. Officers have delivered regular talks to ESOL classes provided through Glasgow Clyde College to explain the role of the police in Scotland, provide reassurance and raise awareness of the law. Good working links with Integration Networks⁷⁰ have also enabled police to provide information on hate crime and third-party reporting. This in turn has enabled the Networks and their partners to become third-party reporting centres and to raise awareness about third-party reporting with refugees and the wider community.

Police Scotland has expanded work to engage with refugees and to support communities which are new to receiving refugees as part of Scotland's response to the refugee crisis. Police Scotland has worked with local authorities to support the resettlement of refugees, including liaising with the local community, attending welcome meetings and meeting with newly arrived refugees to speak to them about the role of the police and how to contact them.

Activities have varied as they have been closely linked to the local community. For example, in West Dunbartonshire, community officers attend the Hub Community Centre in Clydebank which hosts a drop-in event for refugee families; enabling rapport to develop which combined with police patrols in the area has provided reassurance. In Rothesay, police officers and refugees organised a friendly football match, playing in mixed teams for the second half. In Perth, a group workshop was organised through Perth and Kinross Council and the Minority Communities Hub (MEAD) of Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Service at which Police Scotland delivered information about Scots law with the help of an Arabic Interpreter to around 20 refugees and their children.

⁷⁰ Glasgow's Integration Networks are groups of local agencies, community groups and volunteers who support a number of services and projects to promote integration between local people, asylum seekers, refugees and other communities in the area.

Friendly football match between Rothesay police officers and refugees.
Photo: Police Scotland



Case Study

A Guide to Scots Law

Police Scotland's Glasgow Division played a significant role in the establishment of the refugee group Uniting Nations in Scotland (UNIS) which includes members from a number of countries including Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, Iraq and Syria. Police Scotland regularly engage with UNIS and at one of their meetings refugees spoke of their lack of knowledge of the law in Scotland.

The Lord Advocate was invited to meet UNIS and he agreed that practical information on Scots Law should be made available to advise asylum seekers and refugees living in Scotland about the laws which affect their everyday lives.

”Many refugees and asylum seekers have come from regimes where there is no rule of law and little trust in authority. I want them to be able to live safe and peaceful lives here in Scotland.

To help them do that it is very important that we give them the information about how our laws work.”

Frank Mulholland QC, Former Lord Advocate

A Guide to Scots Law was developed as a collaborative project between Police Scotland, Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and HND Legal Services students from New College Lanarkshire. The guide was launched in March 2016 at the COPFS and Police Scotland conference on hate crime.

The guide provides practical advice on everyday rules and laws which is useful for anyone coming to live in Scotland for the first time. The booklet has been widely distributed to ensure it is available for refugees and asylum seekers when they arrive in Scotland.

The guide has been made available in 11 languages: English, Amharic (አማርኛ), Arabic (عربي), Farsi (فارسی), Lithuanian (Lietuvos), Oromo (oromoo), Polish (polski), Russian (русский), Simplified Chinese (简体中文), Tigrinya (ትግርኛ), Urdu (اردو).⁷¹



3. Refugees engage in cultural activities and Scotland's cultural life reflects diversity

Engagement in cultural activities promote health benefits, learning and skills, social connections and wellbeing.⁷² In Scotland, the Scottish Household Survey has provided consistent evidence that people who participate in culture and sport or attend cultural places or events are more likely to report that their health is good and they are satisfied with their life than those who do not participate.⁷³

Refugee Week Scotland has long been established as an annual opportunity for refugees and the communities in which they live to engage in cultural activities and to highlight the contribution that refugees make to Scottish society. Refugee Week takes place around World Refugee Day which is recognised on 20 June.

Over the timeframe of New Scots, Refugee Week has expanded to become Refugee Festival Scotland which is coordinated by the Scottish Refugee Council. The festival involves national arts organisations, small arts and cultural companies, communities and refugee-led community groups. In 2015 110 events took place in 10 local authority areas and in 2016 more than 140 events took place in 18 local authorities across Scotland.

A key strand of the festival is the Community Celebrations programme that comprises events and activities organised by refugee-led or community-based organisations. These activities provide a platform for sharing culture and heritage, reflecting the cultural diversity of Scotland with arts and food from countries such as Eritrea, Sudan, Syria, Congo, Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine and Iraq. In 2016, 33 community groups across Scotland were supported to organise events. Over 400 people were involved in organising the events which attracted over 3,300 people to attend.

Beyond Refugee Festival Scotland and in addition to actively engaging in cultural activity in their local community, refugees have been involved in a number of focused arts projects and activities. Refugees participated in national events such as the Year of Homecoming 2014, which saw several refugee groups receive Multicultural Homecoming Small Grants to support their activities. Also in 2014, refugees helped support the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, as host city volunteers.

72 Ruiz 2004 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/17002/0023718.pdf>

73 Leadbetter and O'Connor 2013 See: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0043/00430649.pdf>

In July 2016 Creative Scotland, the Scottish Government, the Federation of Scottish Theatre, and Scottish Refugee Council organised the one-day seminar *Art, Creativity and the Integration of Refugees*. The event brought together over 100 artists, refugee artists and arts organisations to share practice and experiences of refugee engagement and representation, audience development and co-production with refugees. The event focused on raising awareness within Scotland's arts and cultural sector of barriers to refugee engagement, opportunities to enable refugees to engage and how the sector can support refugee involvement as audience, participants and practitioners. During the seminar discussions it was highlighted that refugee artists are also keen to increase their awareness of the arts and culture sector in Scotland to enable them to pursue their creative activities and careers.

Following the arrival of refugees through the Syrian Resettlement Programme, a range of cultural events, such as local ceilidhs, have been organised to welcome and support Syrian refugees in communities across Scotland.

4. Communities have a better understanding of refugees and asylum seekers

Recognition of refugee status, the asylum system and the circumstances which can lead to someone needing to seek asylum are all complex. Refugees are people, each with their individual circumstances and experience. Communicating better public awareness and understanding of refugees to communities across Scotland is a core aspect of the work of organisations which advocate on behalf of refugees. Work to do this may be through the media, direct communication and in helping to support opportunities for communities to meet and share experiences with refugees.

Over the timeframe of New Scots a number of different initiatives have aimed to improve public understanding of refugees to foster better integration. This has included activities through Refugee Festival Scotland and the associated annual Media Awards, organised in partnership by the Scottish Refugee Council, the National Union of Journalists and the British Red Cross. The Media Awards aim to celebrate and reward fair and accurate reporting of refugees and refugee issues. COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership has also continued to support local politicians to promote accurate messages about refugees as part of providing local leadership.

In Scotland, the public response to the humanitarian crisis has been widely supportive and there have been clear demonstrations of solidarity and support through community events, donations and volunteering. Support for the resettlement of refugees in Scotland and positive messages about refugees have come from across political parties. New Scots partners, organisations which support refugees, the media and politicians recognise that this does not necessarily translate into universal acceptance of refugees by everyone.

In October 2016, the Scottish Refugee Council launched Cup of Tea with a Refugee,⁷⁴ a pilot multi-channel public attitudes campaign. The aim being to promote understanding and compassion for why refugees and asylum seekers are here; encourage

74 See: <http://www.cupofteawitharefugee.com>

Scottish people to be more welcoming and feel positive toward existing and new refugees; and to build a sense of Scottish pride in welcoming refugees into communities.

In September 2016, IPSOS Mori⁷⁵ published polling data on Scottish attitudes to the refugee crisis. A clear majority (60%) believed that Scotland responded well to the crisis, in contrast to 38% who think the UK responded well. Over half (57%) agreed with the statement “I am confident that most refugees who come to the UK will successfully integrate into their new society.” This was the highest figure amongst European countries polled in the research and 17% higher than responses for the UK as a whole.

Continuing Challenges

The Communities and Social Connections theme is very broad in scope, and different actions which can contribute involve a wide variety of stakeholders, some of whom may have a narrow focus on a specific project or activity. It was therefore initially agreed that instead of a thematic group being established, Police Scotland would lead on Community Safety and the Scottish Refugee Council would be the lead for arts, culture and social connections. Scottish Refugee Council would be responsible for coordinating activity, encouraging activity which supports this theme and involving different organisations as relevant to the actions.

Since the resettlement of refugees under the Syrian Resettlement Programme, the number of stakeholders with a locus in this thematic area has increased significantly. This includes all local authorities, local community and voluntary groups in areas new to refugee support and the many grassroots organisations which have been established. The fantastic level of interest in helping to support refugees has been a challenge for coordination and there is a continuing need to work to harness this opportunity for the benefit of all refugees and the communities they are settling into.

It will be important to improve mechanisms for developing and implementing activity. This could potentially include considering ways to support the use of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to better involve the voice of refugee communities in local decision making, an aspiration of this strategy which it has not been possible to achieve.

75 See: <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3787/Mixed-views-on-the-refugee-crisis-among-Scots.aspx>

Conclusion

The timeframe of New Scots has been set against a backdrop of changing politics and world events. Media reports have indicated changing political attitudes across a wide range of issues. The humanitarian crisis has increased awareness of refugees and also emphasised the complex challenges countries face due to international events which no single country can control or resolve.

In Scotland, there has been broad support for humanitarian action to help refugees and offer a place of safety. New Scots has not underestimated the challenges of successfully supporting refugees and the communities they settle in. Nor does it presume universal acceptance for refugees.

Integration is a long-term process. While it is important for early engagement to help support refugees to settle and meet their immediate needs, longer term support is also necessary for both refugees and the communities where they have made their home.

The needs and priorities of refugees will change as they begin to rebuild their lives. It may take time for the full effect of their trauma or experiences to have an impact. As people settle their priorities and aspirations may change, particularly as opportunities to pursue their ambitions and potential develop. It is important that they are able to access the services and support they need for their health and wellbeing as well as to enable them to fulfil their potential and become active members of their community.

New Scots partners recognise that a key achievement has been establishing the collaborative networks which form the basis of the thematic groups and enable sharing of experience, good practice and awareness more broadly as part of a coordinated approach.

The New Scots approach is ambitious and the three years of the strategy has seen some real progress in:

- Collating and sharing existing good practice to support refugees.
- Identifying barriers to access of the services and support refugees need and considering ways to improve processes to reduce these barriers.
- Raising awareness of refugees and understanding of their experiences.

Work across all six thematic groups has contributed to improving Scotland's approach to supporting refugees to integrate into our communities from day one. Specific work on immediate needs from health and welfare benefits to accommodation has made real progress in improving refugees initial experience of life in Scotland. ESOL continues to be a priority for refugees and a key focus of work for education and employability. Being able to communicate in English helps refugees to become more independent and improve opportunities for engagement in their local community. New Scots work has also aimed to instil long-term benefits by improving access to mainstream services and supporting refugees to pursue opportunities for education and employment. Innovative approaches like peer education have potential to reach beyond refugees directly involved and contribute to the development of more resilient communities.

There remain a number of significant challenges for refugees living in our communities. Commitment has already been made to develop a new strategy, building on the experience and progress of New Scots. The next strategy will seek opportunities to involve new partners, to expand to be truly national in scope and to improve engagement for refugees throughout the process. New Scots will continue in partnership to make Scotland a welcoming place to people seeking protection from persecution and human rights abuses.

Organisations directly involved in New Scots

Workers' Educational Association Scotland

Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service (ANCHOR) Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)

Aberdeenshire Council Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service

Skills Development Scotland NHS Health Scotland UK Visas and Immigration Glasgow ESOL Network Project

Immigration Law Practitioners Association Edinburgh College North Ayrshire Council

Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees British Red Cross Parkhead Housing Association

Freedom from Torture National Union of Students Health Improvement Scotland

Glasgow Games Organising Committee Glasgow Clyde College Skills Development Scotland Scottish Government

Scottish Funding Council COSLA Scotland's National Centre for Languages (SCILT) Wheatley Group

Scottish Refugee Policy Forum (SRPF) Migrant Help Glasgow City Council

GRAMnet/University of Glasgow Bridges Programmes Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) North Lanarkshire Council

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Glasgow Integration Network Forum

Scottish Community Development Centre Home Office Education Scotland Mental Health Foundation

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board (NHSGGC) Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations Police Scotland

Creative Scotland Refugee Women's Strategy Group (RWSG) Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS)

Glasgow Life National Union of Journalists Serco City of Edinburgh Council

Scottish Local Authorities Economic Development Group (SLAED) Scottish Federation of Housing Associations

Glossary of useful terms

Asylum seeker

An asylum seeker is someone who has lodged an application for international protection under the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention or Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights, and is awaiting a decision from the (UK) Government.

Asylum support

Asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute can apply for accommodation and/or subsistence support from the Home Office. Home Office accommodation is provided on a no-choice basis in a number of dispersal areas around the UK. Glasgow is currently the only dispersal area in Scotland. If an asylum seekers has additional care needs due to chronic illness or disability they may also be eligible for support from their local authority.

COMPASS

COMPASS is the name for a series of Home Office contracts for the provision of housing, support and transport to asylum seekers.

Dispersal

Dispersal is the process by which the Home Office moves an asylum seeker to accommodation while they wait for a decision on their asylum claim. They are first moved to initial accommodation while their application for asylum support is processed (usually 2-3 weeks). Once the application has been processed and approved they are moved to dispersal accommodation, usually within the same dispersal area.

Family reunion

Family reunion is the process enabling people granted refugee status or humanitarian protection to bring their spouse and dependent children to join them in the UK.

Humanitarian protection (HP)

Humanitarian protection is a form of immigration status. It is granted by the Home Office to a person who it decides has a need for international protection but who does not meet the criteria to be recognised as a refugee under the 1951 Refugee Convention. Status is awarded for 5 years. People with Humanitarian Protection are eligible to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain at the end of their 5 year grant of leave.

Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)

ILR is a form of immigration status granted by the Home Office. ILR is also called 'permanent residence' or 'settled status' as it gives permission to stay in the UK on a permanent basis.

Initial accommodation

Initial accommodation is provided to destitute asylum seekers while they wait for the outcome of their application for asylum support. (See also Dispersal)

Move-on period

When a person seeking asylum is granted leave to remain in the UK (refugee status, discretionary leave to remain or humanitarian protection) they are given 28 days' notice from the Home Office after which their asylum accommodation and financial support will come to an end. This is referred to as the 'move-on period'.

Refugee

A refugee is a person who 'owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'.

(United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention)

Refugee status

Refugee status is awarded to someone the Home Office recognises as a refugee as defined by the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. A person given refugee status is normally granted leave to remain in the UK for 5 years and at the end of that period can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR).

Resettlement

Resettlement is the process whereby refugees living outside their country of origin are moved to another country. In the UK, refugees arriving under resettlement programmes have their status granted prior to arrival. Housing is arranged and basic support is funded by the Home Office. Recent examples are the Syrian Resettlement Programme and the Gateway Protection Programme.

Torture

The most widely accepted definition of torture internationally is set out by Article 1 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT): <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CAT.aspx>

Trafficking (human trafficking)

The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Article 3 (a) defines Trafficking in Persons for the purpose of exploitation: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/19223?download=true>

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Unaccompanied asylum seeking children are children who have applied for asylum in their own right and are separated from both parents or previous/legal customary primary caregivers. Such children should be provided with services for looked after children by receiving local authorities and can be referred to the Scottish Guardianship Service.



Cameron from Iran
Self-employed in finance
and web design.



Peashang from Iraq
Interpreter in Glasgow.



Mehdi from Iran
Owns a food outlet in
Glasgow.



Angie
Masters student in Human
Rights Law.





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