

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

<b>Proposal name</b>	Community Sponsorship		
<b>Directorate</b>	Childrens Services		
<b>Service</b>	Money Home Job		
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Vicki Mann		
<b>Proposal planning start</b>	01/12/2020	<b>Proposal start date (due or actual date)</b>	01/04/2021

<b>1</b>	<b>What is the purpose of the proposal?</b>	<b>Yes / No</b>	<b>New / revision</b>
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy	Yes	New
	Procedure	Yes	
	Guidance	Yes	
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Yes	
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?		
	Other - give details		
<b>2</b>	<b>What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?</b>		
	<p>In September 2015 the UK government pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection through their Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS). In July 2017, the government further expanded the scope of the scheme to include other refugees who have fled the conflict in Syria but do not have Syrian nationality. The VPRS accounted for over three-quarters (4,030) of those resettled in the UK in year ending March 2020. As at September 2020, the council has welcomed all 20 Syrian individuals as part of the councils pledge in 2016. After a competitive procurement process, the Refugee and Migrant Centre was commissioned to deliver support services to these 20 individuals. The individuals have successfully integrated into communities and have accessed further education and some have entered the job market. Walsall has also housed 1 individual as at September 2020 through the Voluntary Child Resettlement Scheme (VCRS).</p> <p>The aim is to assist the most vulnerable refugees and with the support of the community enable them to learn English, apply for benefits and work and register with GP's. The expectation is that the community-led approach will lead to positive</p>		

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wmsmp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Migration-Statistics-Briefing-1.pdf> Accessed 27/01/21

integration outcomes for refugees and communities. Establishing positive engagement and collaborative working relationships with local authorities is essential for community groups. The Community Sponsorship group will identify a property and provide support for resettlement.

The council plays a key role for those settling through this scheme and also supports and plays an important enablement role with the Community Sponsor Group. The key role of the council include:

- Assisting the community group in ensuring their safeguarding measures are fit for purpose, and include any relevant local level changes. The community sponsor will be asked to submit their safeguarding policy to your Safeguarding team to comment on. Should the Safeguarding Team be unable, to do this, it will be checked by the Home Office
- Play a role as a first point of call for the services on offer for newly arrived families
- Approve the family arriving into the area
- Submit claims to the Home Office for funds for education for children and young people and for ESOL for adults.
- write a letter of consent to the Home Office for the Community Sponsorship Group to submit alongside their application
- view the property for the family they will be supporting and conduct inspection to ensure the property is suitable

### 3 Who is the proposal likely to affect?

People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
All	No	The policy will affect various community groups wishing to partake in the Community Sponsorship Scheme.
Specific group/s	Yes	
Council employees		
Other (identify)		

### 4 Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.

A refugee is a person who has been accepted by the UK government as a refugee under the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees 1951. There are no restrictions on a refugee being employed in any type of job, having full access to public services, receiving housing support, and generally enjoying the same entitlements, and subject to the same conditions, for access to services or to higher education as UK citizens.

Women and children have been particularly affected. Antenatal care entitlement checks and charging put women at increased risk of pregnancy-associated complications; care was frequently received late and women received fewer antenatal appointments than the minimum standards for England (Shortall et al., 2015). Among migrants, Black African women had a mortality rate four times that of White women in the UK (Cantwell et al., 2011). Charging undocumented migrant children for secondary healthcare potentially prevents health professionals from identifying child protection and safeguarding concerns (The

Children's Society, 2015).

The Migration Observatory (University of Oxford) found:

- People who originally came to the UK to seek asylum made up an estimated 0.6% of the UK population in 2019.
- COVID-19 has had a major impact on asylum seeking and refugee resettlement in the UK.
- On 30 June 2020, around 56,000 people were awaiting an outcome on their asylum claim.
- The distribution of asylum seekers and resettled refugees is highly uneven across the UK.
- In 2019, the top five most common countries of nationality of people seeking asylum in the UK were Iran, Albania, Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- Of all refugees resettled in the UK from January 2010 to May 2020, around 70% were Syrian nationals.
- Of the roughly 29,500 refugees resettled in the UK from 1 January 2010 to 30 June 2020 under the country's four resettlement schemes, 75% were nationals of Middle Eastern countries, and 18% were nationals of sub-Saharan African countries.
- In 2019, the UK ranked 6th among the EU-28 in the absolute number of people to whom it granted asylum-related protection (excluding resettled refugees).
- In 2019, around 7,500 people were issued with a refugee family reunion visa, and around 2,500 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children were granted asylum or other leave.

Potential tenants could fall into the majority of the protected characteristics. However it is not the council that sources the property, but the community group that agrees to the sponsorship that sources the property. Therefore the property will not be taken out of social housing stock, meaning little or no impact to any homeless applicants.

**5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).**

<b>Consultation Activity</b>			
<b>Type of engagement/consultation</b>	Internal Consultation on the proposal for Community Sponsorship	<b>Date</b>	01/21
<b>Who attended/participated?</b>	Adult Social Services, Childrens Services, Public health and Communities Directorates		
<b>Protected characteristics of participants</b>	A cross section of staff including those from different ethnic, age, gender, disability related groups.		
<b>Feedback</b> Added into cabinet report as part of consultation process.			
<b>Type of engagement/consultation</b>	External Consultation on the proposal for Community Sponsorship	<b>Date</b>	01/21
<b>Who attended/participated?</b>	Prospective Community Sponsor Group		
<b>Protected characteristics of participants</b>	A cross section of staff including those from an ethnic, group.		
<b>Feedback</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Community group were in support of the proposed scheme and process. This included the additional roles by the local authority such as offering housing inspections and liaising with the community sponsor throughout the first year. The community group were in support of the process in particular the use of the LA Tariffs and concluded they felt the scheme favoured the refugee community in terms of holistic support and integration.</li> </ul>			
<b>6 Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation</b>			
<p>Community Sponsorship was launched as an additional voluntary mechanism allowing for Home Office and local authority approved community groups to facilitate the sponsorship of a household taking on direct responsibility for a 12 month period of housing and support needs. Of those resettled under the VPRS and VCRS in the year ending September 2020, 104 refugees were resettled in the UK through the Community Sponsorship scheme, since the scheme began in July 2016, 449 refugees have been resettled by community sponsor groups.</p> <p>Walsall is also a voluntary asylum dispersal area with 461 individuals being helped as at September 2020 through the Home Office and their commissioned accommodation provider Serco and support provider Migrant Help.</p> <p>Using Community Sponsorship takes the pressure off the Local Authority and social</p>			

housing providers, this is due to the property being found within the Community Sponsorship group and not taking a property out of social housing stock. The Community Sponsorship Scheme helps to find a housing solution (*Case study 3, <https://resetuk.org/la-toolkit/case-studies>*)

Community Sponsorship brings together friends, faith groups, colleagues or neighbours. These sponsor groups deepen and broaden their social ties through the course of sponsorship, creating more resilient communities and boosting individual wellbeing. (*Case study 4, <https://resetuk.org/la-toolkit/case-studies>*)

**7 How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.**

Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes / No
Age	Positive	<p>United Nation’s data suggests At least 79.5 million people around the world have been forced to flee their homes. Among them are nearly 26 million refugees, around half of whom are under the age of 18.</p> <p>Those accessing the VPRS scheme internationally will likely be subject to rigorous checks and its likely many will be family units.</p>	N
Disability	Positive	<p>When assessing families the UN look at health and the need for healthcare as part of their criteria.</p> <p>Migrant groups in general are more likely to be affected by health inequalities. National research demonstrates refugees are at an increased risk of mental health problems and low subjective well-being.</p>	N
Gender reassignment	neutral	Those fleeing political and persecution due to their identities are amongst the groups considered under VPRS. There is no reason to consider	Y

			that the proposed actions would have a negative impact upon individuals with these protected characteristics. Data to be collected where possible.	
	Marriage and civil partnership	neutral	Many of those seeking help through the United Nations will include family units and it is likely these households are in a married/civil partnership.	Y
	Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	We do not have sufficiently robust data at this stage to do any meaningful analysis as social housing is allocated on the basis of overall housing need rather than this specific characteristic.  Families with children who will be deemed to be at risk of harm forms part of the UN's criteria for assistance.	Y
	Race	Positive	Those accessing the VPRS scheme will be from a Black and Minority Ethnic group.	Y
	Religion or belief	Positive	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known	Y
	Sex	Positive	Women and girls fleeing harassment are amongst the groups fleeing persecution.	Y
	Sexual orientation	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known.	Y
<b>8</b>	<b>Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.</b>			(Delete)

				one)
None that we are aware of.				<b>No</b>
<b>9 Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?</b>				
<b>A</b>	<b>No major change required</b>			
<b>B</b>	<b>Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality</b>			
<b>C</b>	<b>Continue despite possible adverse impact</b>			
<b>D</b>	<b>Stop and rethink your proposal</b>			
<b>Action and monitoring plan</b>				
<b>Action Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Outcome Date</b>	<b>Outcome</b>

<p><b>Monitor from</b></p> <p>01/04/21</p> <p>Then qtrly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the number of requests received from Community Sponsors</li> <li>• the number of successful/unsuccessful Community Sponsorship applicants</li> <li>• Collect data around protected characteristics of incoming households as defined by the Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• Details of the community sponsor in terms of type of organisation and community they service</li> <li>• Details of the community Sponsor property being used</li> </ul>	<p><b>MHJ</b></p>	<p><b>Qtrly</b></p>	<p>What outcomes have been achieved and service usage</p>

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail

### Contact us

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