

DRAFT

APPENDIX A

Ref No.

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

Proposal name	Resettlement Support service for Refugees		
Directorate	Children's Services		
Service	Money Home Job (MHJ)		
Responsible Officer	Vicki Mann		
Proposal planning start	June 2022	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	01/12/22

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Policy	Yes	New
	Procedure	Yes	New
	Guidance		
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Customers	
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	Commissioned	
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>Walsall Council is commissioning a Resettlement Support service for Refugees across the borough. The service specification is split across 3 Lots:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Lot 1 – United Kingdom Resettlement scheme (UKRS) - 1st December 2022 until 30th November 2025 with the option to extend for up to a further 24 months b) Lot 2 – Homes for Ukraine - 1st December 2022 until 30th November 2023 with the option to extend for up to a further 24 months c) Lot 3 – Afghan Resettlement Scheme - 1st December 2022 until 30th November 2024 with the option to extend up to a further 24 months <p>The MHJ service has successfully delivered the Afghan Resettlement Programme and historically delivered the Voluntary Persons Resettlement scheme (VPRS) for Syrians in partnership with the current Provider. The more recent Homes for Ukraine programme, unlike historic resettlement programmes is reliant on the good will of communities to act as sponsors and local authorities to take the role of ensuring safeguarding and safety checks are conducted and has meant a wider council response being led by Money Home Job.</p>		

As a service we want to:

- Deliver better value and more informed service delivery
- Capture the needs and aspiration of customers and have services which are service user led
- Work collaboratively with external stakeholders and third sector agencies
- Deliver resilient communities which are independent and integrated in their neighbourhoods.

Commissioning of a resettlement scheme would enable us to do this.

The Commissioning of this scheme will also help with;

- The shifts in central government policies, for example where quick mobilisation, or a client's complexity may need an innovative response. The Ukraine situation has provided a clear example of the need for this support, to be flexible, and able to redirect resources to most urgent need, and access additional resources at speed.
- The 13 households currently living in temporary accommodation. The Provider will be required to work directly with these households to help facilitate and enable move on to secure accommodation. This may include working with households accessing the private rented sector, through property searches, visits to property viewings and discussing housing options regularly.
- It is also possible that during the contract, there will be a potential need to support a further 12 individuals to complete the Council's 'up to 120' pledge. It is noted the support for those who have already arrived and are in accommodation will not require any property 'pre arrival' stage work, and these service users will require support only. The Provider will need to have positive links with the Afghan community and community organisations where appropriate. (Lot 3)

3 Who is the proposal likely to affect?

People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
All	No	d) It is recognised due to the diversity of the service users through the different resettlement routes that needs, aspiration and cultural requirements may differ. Prospective Providers have the option to bid for 1 or more services detailed in the appendices covering Lots 1 to 3 of the specification. The vast majority of the services are the same for all lots as detailed in the main body of the specification, and then Providers needs to check any additional requirements per individual Lot as detailed in Appendices 1 to 3. Providers are required to complete the questions relating to the generic service requirement and then complete the specialist question linked to Lots 1, 2 or 3. This means Providers bidding for more than 1 service will complete one set of generic service questions and then the specialist
Specific group/s	Refugee / Asylum Seekers	
Council employees		
Other (identify)	e)	

		f)	service question relating to Lots 1 to 3 as required.
4 Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.			
<p>Walsall Council is a local authority within the Black Country area in the West Midlands. The council facilities a resident population of just over 280,000 and has many opportunities and challenges. A former industrial town, it has a 24% black minority and ethnic profile (census 2011) and has a clear distinction with the more affluent east of the borough in comparison to the more deprived west. The Corporate Plan, in line with other delivery strategies details work with key strategic stakeholder, plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the Council's strategic vision is achieved for those living, visiting and working in Walsall.</p> <p>Data from the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership for quarter 4 of 2020/21 for Walsall shows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 469 Asylum seeker Placements for Accommodation and subsistence • 1 individual settled through the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) • 24 individuals settled through the UKRS scheme (4 of these were formally a community sponsor application) • 23,840 European Union Settlement Scheme applications received from Walsall data as of December 2021. <p>Protected Characteristics – Homes for Ukraine (HFU) Scheme</p> <p>Total of 50</p> <p>Age There are 31 adults aged over 18 (62%), 10 (20%) Children aged 6-18 and 9 (18%) children aged 0-5.</p> <p>Disability 5 with extensive health needs</p>			

Race, Religion or Belief
All are Caucasian, Ukrainian nationality.

Gender
There are 40 (80%) Females and 10(20%) males

Protected Characteristics - United Kingdom resettlement scheme (UKRS)

There are only 4 recorded so far;

2 males under 18, 1 female aged 30 -40 and one male aged 40-50

Protected Characteristics – Afghan resettlement schemes

115 individuals

54 Adults, 61 children

56 Females, 59 Males

Resettlement – Defining the Need

Refugee and asylum seeker resettlement programmes historically evoked both support and resistance from communities. As a generic guide to the selection, reception and resettlement of refugees, Ekholm et al (2005) identify three core areas in dealing with roles and responsibilities. The first component looks at the overall national accountability and reception of these groups. The key roles between central and local governments must be defined and communicated in an accessible and transparent way. Regular communication is also important, defining key roles and responsibilities must be accessible and available to all parties. The UNHCR convention states key categories refugee communities fall into including child sex exploitation, victims of modern slavery and those subject to legal and protection issues, which indicate by the nature of these categories the client groups has vulnerabilities. Robinson (2003) state clustering of refugees is largely successful as opposed to wider dispersal of communities which enable communities to network and build and share experiences.

Schneider (2021) states the resettlement refugee agenda often concentrates on one key aspect or stage and often single stakeholders are held to scrutiny for cross cutting objectives. Darrow (2015) further supports this view stating resettlement itself encompasses a wide array of factors such as integration, housing and social factors but literature in the field is under developed. In contrast, Robinson (1998) points to the lack of data and information detailing needs of refugees and asylums seekers. Many studies and research use both terms (refugee and asylum seeker) synonymously and can often prevent the development of action based learning, constructive feedback and low level evaluations of projects. Robinson and Colman (2000) study into the Bosnian resettlement assessed the settlement patterns and government directives of the Bosnian community. The study concluded the push from central government for settlement patterns showed considerable success especially with the location and stabilisation of communities away from the London area. However, in contrast Morrice et al (2021), stated regardless of government resettlement enforced patterns the main success factor is formed around the integration of individuals starting with the provision and take up English language courses. Whilst the need for English language provision is a

fundamental building block, the qualitative data showed the needs, levels of proficiency and learning types were amongst the biggest barrier to learning. This interlinks with integration factors but demonstrates generic policy can have negative impacts for communities especially with then accessing further learning, jobs and bridging the poverty gap. Another key area for consideration is the health and social care agenda. Clinton-Davis and Fassil (1992) state often the long term needs of refugees and asylum seekers span further than the short term emergency responses. The need to capacity build longer term prevention based solutions is paramount in order to ensure the longer term health and social care needs of communities are addressed. Indicators such as health are primarily a cross cutting theme which impact groups and organisations. Hale (1993) study of the integration of Vietnamese communities shows the need to ensure the alignment of statutory and non-statutory bodies as much of the community integration and welfare is led by third sector bodies. Whilst some literature in contrast, such as Robinson and Colman (2000) point towards the need for central government control, Hale (1993) shows the need for third sector alignment with these non-statutory bodies such as places of worship being the primary point of contact for new arrivals.

Whilst much of service delivery can be constructed around government policy. Duke et al (1999) literature review examined the access to services for new communities. Much of the literature demonstrated at a European level much of the policy was different in terms of deployment and emphasis, with some member states making experiences more attractive than others. As a result the expectations of migrants as a whole differed. As an impact the migrant groups such as refugees selected different countries for different purposes and were more likely for those that offered better standards of living to embrace family reunion applications. In comparison, Haycock (2022), examined the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement access in particular with regards to welfare reform. This benefit cap and 2 child limit being the key components of the welfare changes showed how a disproportionate impact in reality for communities resettled through the programme. Much of the impact has occurred upon entry with many being impacted by poverty at the start of their journey into the UK, therefore impacted child poverty, health and access to work.

The increasing pressure on resources in areas such as access to housing and opportunities for work has been a contentious topic in the UK. In many situations migrant groups will be housed in low demand housing due to cost and availability. Fahimi and Sutton (2008) study in Zimbabwe disputes much of the narrative and shows in some housing markets simply placing individuals in low demand housing does not allow for constructive housing solutions or cohesive communities therefore indicating a wider system response and longer term impact on poverty and communities.

A PESTLE and SWOT analysis has been used to help analyse the need and requirements for the resettlement restructure. CIM (2019) show the importance of using a PESTLE as a tool to understand some of the key macro level drivers which would affect an organisation and market. The details of a PESTLE can be incorporated into a SWOT, which can inform key opportunities and threats, Reiners et al (2019).

The PESTLE highlights some key drivers such as the recent introduction of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022, which sets out a new framework for asylum seekers and refugees accessing help in the UK. The powers introduced in the legislation circle around tightening the immigration systems as a whole including the fast tracking of applications and introducing thresholds around those committing criminal activities. The legislation has also paved the way for payments for local councils for asylum seekers which previously was not provided as with refugees. Although tariffs for new communities applying for citizenship post Brexit have not been introduced, third sector

funding and limited grant funding was previously provided to help support new communities such as through Controlling Migration Fund (CMF). The SWOT shows some key areas which could be incorporated as opportunities for the council such as aligning budgets, better third sector engagement and using more creative ways of working. The SWOT matrix tool provides a framework for matching environmental threat and opportunities to an organisations strengths and weaknesses. The matrix allows for strategies to be built to bridge gaps and enhance opportunities for delivery, Weitrich (1982). However, Ravanavar and Charantimath, (2012) state strategic direction formulation uses the SWOT matrix and stressed the importance of management being able to understand the actions and threats occurring externally.

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

5	Consultation Activity		
	Type of engagement/consultation	Face to face / telephone questionnaire	Date 2021
	Who attended/participated?	The majority of Afghan's that have resettled to the borough.	
	Protected characteristics of participants	All ages, genders, and disability related groups across a minority ethnic background.	
	Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial reception to Walsall needs to be phased with key information not loaded upon arrival or within the first few days • The area orientation by foot and public transport is helpful and helps with things like planning journeys and understanding the area • Service users want to access employment and training and want to take part in volunteering and work experience • Language can be a barrier for some service users so access to a good quality provision and networks with accredited English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Providers is important • Access to health services and information on the procedures is vital especially when navigating through the different services • Access to benefits and regular updates on rights and responsibilities such as driving laws and how housing systems work in different local authority areas • Many of our service users want to be able to maximise their potential and want to understand the processes and rules in the UK and integrate within communities. 		

Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation

- Performance will be monitored against the ability to meet the 5 key Outcomes (below), or any such additional outcomes as may be required by future central government Funding Instruction updated guidelines. Providers should note that the requirements included in this Specification are not an exhaustive list, and Providers will be expected to do what is necessary to help individuals achieve the outcomes:
- Gained Independence
- Improved Health and Wellbeing
- Attain academic / vocational qualifications / skills
- Achieved general orientation and integration
- Employment and income maximisation.

We will conduct customer surveys as well as monitoring to see that the above has been met.

The resettlement scheme should enhance the health and wellbeing of the cohort as opposed to not having a scheme;

- The Provider will support the individuals to access all appropriate health and social care services for their needs. It's been recognised that some of those needs may be complex, relating to experience of emotional and physical trauma and disability. It is not expected that the Provider will directly provide the health services but that they will signpost and link into existing specialist services.
- All individuals must have access and be supported with registering with a local General Practitioner (GP), dentist and pharmacy and screened for any health issues. This will include ensuring that individuals are aware of and signposted to all relevant vaccinations, screening, substance misuse services, mental health services, maternal health services and sexual health services.
- Families with children under 5 should be introduced to the local Children's center. This will provide access to universal drop in sessions, play opportunities and resources for families with young children and will assist with support that early education provision and health will provide. To help individuals improve their physical health and wellbeing as well reduce social isolation and further integration,

the Provider will assist individuals to access Health and Wellbeing services, which includes access to leisure services. Where other health and wellbeing need is identified i.e. the individual(s) i.e. wants to stop smoking, then referrals should be made to the appropriate public health lifestyles services.

- Each family must receive appropriate support for the family unit as a whole, including any necessary support for families that have been separated.
- The selected providers will consider language barriers, disability, cultural issues, mental health and provide innovative solutions to those that are more isolated and choose not to engage.

**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	Engagement and services for under 5's, engagement and enrolment in schools for school age children. Assistance with education, training an employment for other age groups. The selected providers will consider language barriers, disability, cultural / cohesion issues, mental health and provide innovative solutions to those that are more isolated and choose not to engage.	N
Disability	Positive	Positive effect on Mental health and general health and well being due to interaction and integration into the community as well as with/signposting to community groups for support with medical conditions / concerns.	N

7			Assistance with GP, hospitals and appointments and with language barrier.	
	Gender reassignment	Neutral	No impact on Gender Reassignment, However the support provider would be able to signpost to community organisations such as Birmingham LGBT+	N
	Marriage and civil partnership	Neutral	No impact on Marriage or Civil Partnerships, however many may be separated from their partners during resettlement.	N
	Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Assistance with Gp's, appointments, health visitors. Assistance/signposting to community groups as well, in order to mitigate social isolation – particularly regarding language barriers. The support provider will also be aware of different cultural attitudes to pregnancy/maternity	N
	Race	Neutral	No impact on race, however the support provider will have an awareness of cultural needs / cohesion.	N
	Religion or belief	Positive	Assistance to find local centres to pray.	N
	Sex	positive	The support provider will have an awareness that the majority of care for children, elderly and disabled family members falls upon female family members. Combined with resettlement and possible separation from partners, extra awareness of carers' isolation and need for signposting to support may be required in these cases.	N
	Sexual orientation	Positive	The support provider will have an awareness of cultural attitudes to LGBT+ individuals –	N

			signposting to relevant community or support organisations can have a positive impact.	

8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.		(Delete one) No
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?		
	A	No major change required	
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality	
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact	
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal	

Action and monitoring plan				
Action	Action	Responsibility	Outcome	Outcome
01/12/22	Monitor protected characteristics	MHJ	Quarterly	Quarterly feedback on outcome and throughput
01/12/22	Regular customer feedback and engagement	MHJ/Provider	Annual	At least annual feedback with service users

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Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail

Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.

Contact us

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