

New Scots: Integrating Refugees in Scotland's Communities

2014 - 2017







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Ministerial Foreword

Scotland has had a long history of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers from all over the world, which we celebrate. The contribution of our refugee communities over successive generations has helped make Scotland the proud, successful and diverse country it is today. Indeed it is our very diversity that makes us stronger and more competitive as a nation.

Although immigration and asylum are currently reserved to the UK Government in Westminster, we have always been clear that people who seek asylum in Scotland should be welcomed, supported and integrated into our communities from day one, with access to the health and education services they need. In an independent Scotland, we will go further and end inhumane practices such as dawn raids and enable asylum seekers to work while waiting for a decision on their application. As we have made clear in our vision for an independent Scotland, we want to establish a progressive nation, which provides a place of safety and fair, sensible and humane policies on immigration and asylum.

I would like to thank the many organisations who work tirelessly to support refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. Many of these organisations, led by the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish Refugee Council, have worked in partnership with the Scottish Government to develop this strategy and will be crucial to its implementation.

I would also like to recognise the contribution of members of the refugee and asylum seeker community who have provided first-hand experience of the asylum process: their views are at the heart of this strategy.

The Scottish Government maintains its strong ambition for equality in Scotland – for a society in which social justice, equality and human rights are at its heart, where advances are made by building on the assets of **all** of its people and communities. We want to ensure that everyone – no matter their race, religion, cultural background or any other personal characteristic – is given an equal opportunity to succeed in Scotland.

We recognise that all partners have an important role to play if we are to make meaningful and measurable improvements to the lives of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland over the next three years and beyond, and we are committed to working together to ensure that the implementation of the strategy delivers our ambitious outcomes.

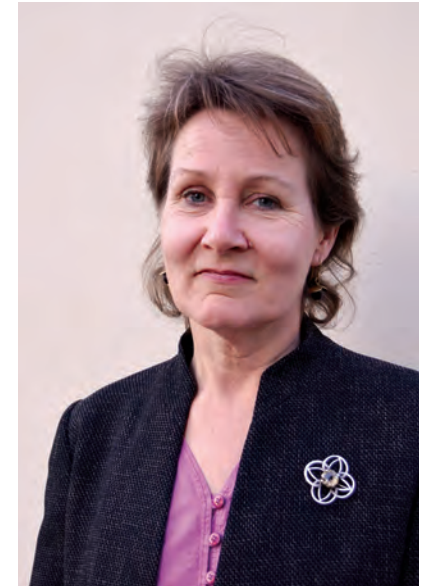
HUMZA YOUSAF MSP

Minister for External Affairs and International Development



Dr Alison Strang, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for International Health and Development, Queen Margaret University Chair of the Core Group

This review process has been undertaken during a period of significant change for Scottish communities, for refugees and asylum seekers within those communities and for those working to support integration. Many of those welcomed as refugees continue to live in Scotland seeking to develop full and active roles in society. At the same time, new refugees continue to arrive and seek asylum. Over the years, refugee policy and practice in Scotland has recognised that the heart of integration is a two-way process of forming connections between people, and that those connections start to be formed from arrival. Scottish communities and services have become known for their commitment to supporting effective settling and integration. However, increasing pressure on services, changes to the housing contract for asylum seekers, changes in UK Benefits arrangements and consideration of constitutional change all create new challenges.



COSLA, the Scottish Refugee Council and the Scottish Government have brought together a core group of refugee community representatives and key sector stakeholders to lead the review and steer the participatory consultation process. This group has been characterised by remarkable energy and commitment in building partnership to engage very honestly with identification of the challenges and constructive problem solving. As a result existing relationships have been strengthened and new ones formed. This strategy document identifies priority issues, outlines concrete actions – each backed up by a commitment to deliver from the key stakeholders. Moreover, the core group members have committed to ensure the effective delivery of the plan and to continue to provide leadership in the policy and practice of refugee integration.

It has been a pleasure to chair the group and I have great confidence that the delivery and on-going effectiveness of refugee integration policy in Scotland will be greatly strengthened by the leadership that these partnerships will provide.

Cllr Jean Jones, Chair of COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership

COSLA's Strategic Migration Partnership has a track record of working together with other agencies to help make Scotland a more welcoming place for migrants. We welcomed the opportunity to apply this partnership approach to the development of a new strategy that brought together all the key agencies working to support refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland, including refugee community organisations.

The result of this work is an exciting new partnership strategy that will help to better co-ordinate efforts to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed into Scotland's communities. From my own council's experience of welcoming refugees, resettled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to North Lanarkshire, I know how refugees and asylum seekers really can and do enrich our communities.



John Wilkes, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council

As the leading refugee charity in Scotland, the Scottish Refugee Council has been delighted to work in partnership with the Scottish Government, COSLA and many other organisations in developing this new strategy to support the integration of refugees in Scotland from day one of their arrival. Refugees are at the heart of our work and we are pleased that the experiences and aspirations of refugees in Scotland have been at the focus of this strategy. Our vision is for a Scotland in which all people seeking refugee protection are welcome and where they are protected, find safety and support, have their human rights and dignity respected and are able to achieve their full potential in their new communities. Working in partnership to deliver the actions in this strategy over the next three years takes us a big step closer to achieving this goal.





Photo by: Iman Tajik

Introduction

Vision

The vision behind this strategy is for a Scotland where refugees are able to build a new life from the day they arrive in Scotland 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.

Purpose

The purpose of this strategy is to co-ordinate 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 also aims to make the most of the resources that are available for this task by promoting partnership approaches, joined-up working and early intervention where possible. The action plans within this strategy have been developed in partnership with all of the key agencies. They are grounded in refugees' experiences of life in Scotland and in consultation with refugee community groups in order to ensure that refugees' needs and aspirations are central to the plans. The delivery and monitoring of progress will also be undertaken in partnership.

Background

The UK Government's programme of dispersing people seeking asylum across the UK, introduced in the 1999 Immigration Act, resulted in increased numbers of people seeking asylum arriving in Scotland. Since the beginning of asylum dispersal the Scottish Government has been committed to welcoming refugees and supporting them to play a full part in society and to want to continue their lives in Scotland. As well as our legal and moral duty to provide protection to people fleeing persecution, Scotland also recognises the contribution that refugees can make by enriching our cultural diversity, expanding the world view of our children and bringing new languages, skills and experience. Scotland also has an ageing population that relies in part on inward migration to maintain its population targets – targets that are vital for economic growth and wellbeing. For all of these reasons it is important that refugees and asylum seekers are made to feel welcome in our country and that they are encouraged to stay once they have received their status.

In 2002 the Scottish Government convened the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF)¹ in order to aid the integration of refugees and asylum seekers into our communities. The Forum brought together a wide range of agencies and developed an action plan that covered the range of services and issues that were important to integration. The Forum had a very positive impact upon the way in which agencies in Scotland responded to refugees and asylum seekers.

1 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/Refugees-asylum/integration>

It is more than five years since the SRIF last met and much has changed since then both in terms of the situation of refugees in Scotland and the wider political and economic context. It is timely to revisit refugee integration at this point for a number of reasons including:

- The current economic context which necessitates looking at how agencies meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and considering if services could be better co-ordinated in order to make best use of limited resources;
- The new arrangements for the provision of asylum accommodation from 2012, whereby one private sector provider is now responsible for provision;
- The recognition that the UK Government's programme of Welfare Reform was likely to have an impact upon the experiences of refugees;
- The National Asylum Stakeholder Forum had convened a working group to look at refugee integration at a UK level. However, since many of the issues that impact upon integration are devolved, there is scope to undertake work that is complementary to this group;
- The Scottish Refugee Council's longitudinal research into refugee integration² published in 2012 provided a useful and topical source of evidence about the experience of refugees in Scotland; and
- The people of Scotland will vote in an independence referendum in 2014. It is important to consider what impact potential constitutional changes could have on refugee and asylum seeker integration in Scotland in the future.

Since 2007 the Scottish Government has moved away from the SRIF-type model of large-scale, government-led strategy development and has instead focused on partnership-based, outcome-focused initiatives. This strategy will support refugee integration through a partnership developed by COSLA, the Scottish Refugee Council and the Scottish Government and bring together other relevant agencies in the field and representatives of community organisations. In the current economic context it is unrealistic to expect that this type of initiative will lead to significant new resources being allocated to refugee integration. The focus will instead be on making best use of the resources and expertise that are available.

2 Mulvey, G. (2013) In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland Final report, Scottish Refugee Council

A New Partnership Strategy for Refugee Integration

The aim of this strategy is to support and enable refugees and asylum seekers to rebuild their lives in Scotland and make a full contribution to society. The strategy aims to provide a clear framework for all those working towards refugee integration in Scotland and assist in co-ordinating the work of the Scottish Government and its partner organisations to maximise impact and resources.

The strategy has been developed in partnership with the wide range of agencies that are working to support refugees in Scotland. The core group that oversaw the process agreed the following definition of integration:

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.

The process focused upon supporting refugees and asylum seekers to:

- Build a new life in Scotland and realise their potential;
- Access mainstream services, employment and training; and
- Develop social relations to support their integration.

The outcomes and action plans set out within the document have been developed in partnership with the wide range of agencies involved in supporting refugees in Scotland. We hope they will provide a framework for ongoing collective work to make Scotland a more welcoming place for new refugees.

Who are the Beneficiaries?

The beneficiaries of this strategy are intended to be Scotland's refugees, the communities that host them, and wider Scottish society. The latest results from the 2011 Census in Scotland³ show that Scotland has its highest ever population of 5,295,403. The figures also show that Scotland is becoming more ethnically diverse with an increased number of people being born outside of the UK. The minority ethnic population in Scotland has doubled since 2001 from 2% to 4%. At the same time, Scotland has an ageing population that relies in part on inward migration to maintain its population targets – targets that are important for economic growth and wellbeing. It is important that refugees and asylum seekers are made to feel welcome in our country and that they are encouraged to stay once they have received their status.

Latest figures show that there are around 2,400 asylum seekers in Scotland.⁴ It is very difficult to ascertain precisely how many refugees have been granted some form of refugee status and remain in Scotland; the Scottish Refugee Council estimates that there could be as many as 20,000.⁵ The gender breakdown of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland is not fully understood. In the information provided by the Home Office only the gender of the main asylum applicant is given and other members of the family may arrive later through family reunion and are therefore hidden in the statistics. Approximately one-fifth of main applicants arrive as part of a family,⁶ and one-third of main applicants are female. There are also around 250 young people, aged under 18, seeking asylum who have recently arrived in Scotland unaccompanied by their parents or legal guardian.⁷

3 See: <http://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/en/>

4 Home Office – August 2013

5 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/5495/4087_SRC_Referendum_Report_V3.pdf

6 Scottish Refugee Council Scottish Induction Service figures

7 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/6798/Final_Report_2108.pdf

REFUGEES IN SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITIES

Education
Lives to Community

Community Facilities in Local Neighbourhoods

No many advice sleep ins

New asylum providers

creating more refuges

Central Gov. offer
be the first to set up
SARAH'S BUBBLE

THE CRISIS IN THE HOUSING STOCK

Migrant Hub

Local groups
cultural hubs

Local authority
no housing provider

INDUSTRIAL
LOGGERS
RESEARCH

KSL/HAS
more money
of GHS

Housing
Provision
more integrated
industrial
areas

Police involvement
in community groups

Raise awareness

Penitentiary
programme

Schools,
Sleights

Travel Expenses
is a big challenge
to reach these
places

Culture
Arts &
Sport

FEELING
SAFE

national
Police
responsibility
to local
needs

rentable housing
tenancy

of choice to
languages

more accessible / app.
volunteering roles

Therapeutic
Police

Local authority
commissioned
Police

Police Scotland?
Police Scotland?

Govt's
programmes

Using City's
"Cultural Offer"
Better

- libraries
- museums
- arts
- spots

How the Strategy was Developed

In developing this strategy, the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council undertook a programme of work designed to map current refugee integration activities in Scotland; to promote partnership working; and to identify and promote the adoption of practical solutions to address the integration needs of refugees and asylum seekers. The overall development of the strategy was supported by Dr Alison Strang of Queen Margaret University who provided expert guidance and chaired the core group which oversaw the process.

The work was carried out through a series of meetings which helped to develop a more strategic approach to supporting refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. Each meeting included representation from service providers, third sector organisations, local authorities, government directorates and refugees and asylum seekers who have provided their views on behalf of the community groups that they represent.⁸ Ager and Strang's 'Indicators of Integration'⁹ were used as a means of evaluating Scotland's progress towards integrating refugees and also as a means of identifying gaps in provision. Participants were encouraged to think about how their work cross-cuts across these domains. For example, an agency that exists to provide health services is likely to be active within the health domain, but may also be contributing to refugees' ability to find and keep employment, and to build social connections either deliberately or inadvertently.

Six one-off thematic meetings also took place between December 2012 and May 2013. These covered housing, health, education, employment and welfare, community and social connections (drawn from the indicators of integration framework), and the needs of newly arrived asylum seekers. Relevant agencies were invited to participate in each and these are listed in Annex A. The meetings used an interactive toolkit – KETSO¹⁰ – to explore what was working well in terms of refugee integration, what opportunities there were for further development and what challenges existed.

The output of each of these themed meetings was a series of outcomes that the group had identified could be delivered over a three-year period and action plans that would contribute towards achieving those outcomes. Groups also identified some goals, which were important priorities, but where there was structural impediment to their delivery, such as being outside the competence of Scottish public bodies, or requiring significant new investment – rendering them beyond the scope of this strategy.

8 Membership of the groups is included as Annex A.

9 Ager & Strang (2008) 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework' *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2008) 21 (2): 166-191

10 See: www.ketso.com



The Legal Context

The Refugee Convention

The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (Refugee Convention) supported by its 1967 Protocol¹¹ is the key legal document defining who a refugee is, establishing what her or his rights are and setting out the responsibilities of signatory states. Article 1(A) of the Refugee 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. Therefore, 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 refugees. The UK is a signatory party to both the Refugee Convention and Protocol.

The criteria for protection under the Refugee Convention are strict. States have recognised that a number of people who do not fall within its scope may nevertheless be in need of protection. Such 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.

Although international law does not distinguish between refugees and people seeking asylum, states often do so. An ‘asylum seeker’ is a person who has not yet received decision on their request for refugee status. Article 14 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights states that everybody is entitled to seek and enjoy asylum.

The scope of this strategy applies to people seeking asylum, those recognised as refugees and those with other protection statuses.

11 See: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49da0e466.html> The 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees removed temporal and geographical restrictions from the Refugee Convention.

International Human Rights Instruments

Refugees and people seeking asylum are entitled to the protections and safeguards set out in a wide variety of international human rights treaties. These rights are universal and apply to everyone. As a signatory to these treaties, the United Kingdom is required to giving full effect to the rights they define.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations in 1948. It proclaims the fundamental human rights to which all people are entitled. These are rights that belong to us all simply by virtue of our shared humanity. The UDHR provides the starting point for a range of further, more detailed human rights treaties. In particular, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights translate the rights initially proclaimed in the UDHR into more detailed obligations, which are binding in international law. Taken together, these three instruments constitute what is known as the International Bill of Human Rights. Further important United Nations treaties address other, more specific human rights challenges, including the need to combat race and gender discrimination, and promote the rights of children and of people with disabilities.

Action to proclaim and promote human rights has also been taken by other international organisations, including the Council of Europe. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is one of the best known. It not only defines human rights and fundamental freedoms, but establishes enforcement mechanisms, including an independent court. The United Kingdom was one of the first states to ratify the ECHR, in 1951. Its provisions are given direct effect in the law of Scotland through the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Scotland Act 1998. These enable anyone living in Scotland to take legal action in the Scottish courts to ensure that their human rights are not breached. Where necessary, such cases can be appealed to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The United Kingdom has undertaken to abide by the final ruling of the Court in all cases to which it is a party.

Further legal protections for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including in relation to wider equality matters, exist in European Union law. These are set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and in subject-specific Directives and other instruments.

In addition to the safeguards afforded to everyone by international human rights treaties, the international community has also developed a number of treaties which specifically address the situation of refugees and asylum seekers. Work by international bodies, most notably the United Nations, also seeks to address international humanitarian challenges, for example through action by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

This strategy takes a human rights based approach to refugee integration that reflects both the formal obligations outlined above and the long-standing commitment of successive Scottish Governments to addressing refugee and asylum matters on the basis of principles of decency, humanity and fairness. As a result, this strategy seeks to take proper account of all relevant human rights obligations, from protecting the right to life, to privacy or to a fair hearing, to the recognition of rights which relate to work, education, an adequate standard of living or the achievement of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

The Scottish Human Rights Commission is leading the development of a National Action Plan for Scotland on Human Rights.¹² That initiative has been welcomed and supported by the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council. There are clear synergies between both documents. This strategy represents one subject-specific contribution to realising the wider, shared vision of a Scotland in which we are all able to live with human dignity and where we can all enjoy our human rights and fundamental freedoms in full.

Devolved and Reserved - Scotland Act 1998

Asylum is a reserved matter under Schedule 5 of the Scotland Act 1998.¹³ In the Concordat between the Home Office and the Scottish Government,¹⁴ reserved and devolved competences are further explained:

Reserved matters (Annex B)

- The protection of borders and allied matters – including immigration and nationality, asylum, [...]

Devolved matters (Annex A)

- The police and fire services, including general fire safety
- Youth justice issues, including the system of children’s hearings and supervision requirements for young people
- Encouragement of equal opportunities

Joint working (Annex C)

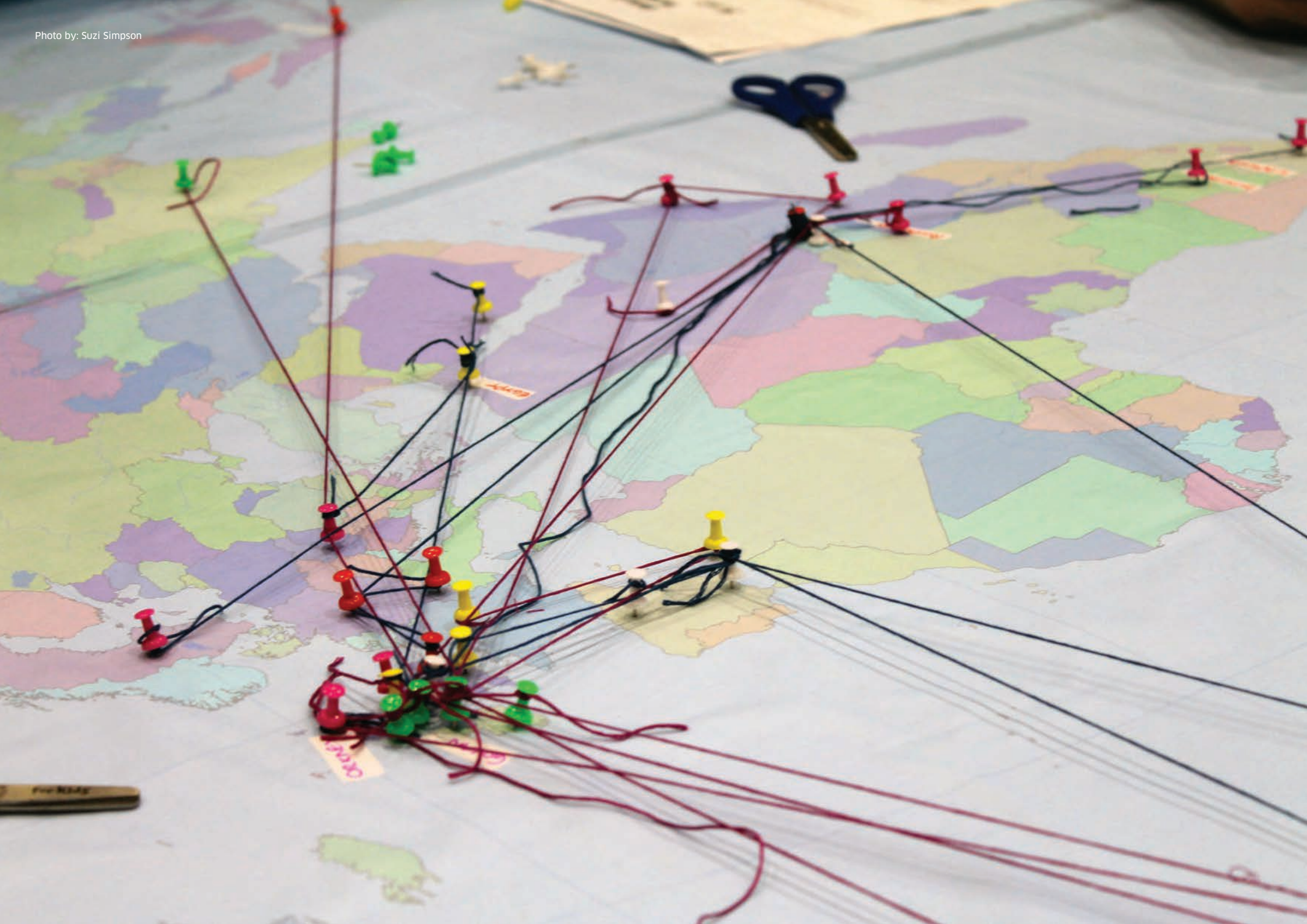
- [...] Arrangements for the dispersal of asylum seekers and the designation of reception zones

Many areas of social policy relating to the integration of people seeking asylum and refugees living in Scotland are however wholly devolved to the Scottish Parliament. These include education, interpreting and translation, policing, housing, health, the provision of legal aid and child protection.

13 See: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/46/contents>

14 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/175748/0049500.pdf>





Scotland's Policy Context

Scottish Government Statement on Asylum 2007

In August 2007 the Scottish Government published a Cabinet Memo¹⁵ stating that: "Asylum seekers must be treated fairly and humanely, particularly when children are involved." The memo further set out the Scottish Government's concerns in relation to forced removal, the detention of children in Dungavel Immigration Removal Centre and called on the UK Government to reinstate the right to work for asylum seekers.

15 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/News-Extras/asylum-issues>

Strategic Approach to Race Equality

The Scottish Government published their 2008–11 Race Equality Statement¹⁶ in December 2008, the main objective of which was to ensure that the Scottish Government and its stakeholders were addressing the key and pressing issues around race equality in Scotland at that time. The Statement was underpinned by the following aims:

- Improved opportunities;
- More responsive communities;
- Safer communities; and
- More active and vibrant communities.

However, the race equality landscape has changed since 2008. The legislative framework, the economic climate, the Scottish population demographic, and the political environment all look different now in comparison. The communities of interest are wide with both visible and invisible ethnic minority communities playing a part in Scottish society and their experiences informing the work to achieve race equality and to tackle racism.

16 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/18934/RaceEqualityStatement>

In the period to 2015 and beyond it is likely that the picture will change further. Therefore, the Scottish Government aims to explore how to meet the challenges and make the best of the opportunities. They will consider where energies should be focused in order to improve the outcomes for communities in Scotland; how they can drive forward to achieve equality and eliminate racism and how best to utilise the resources available both financial and human. The Scottish Government believe that it would be helpful to refresh our approach to race equality to provide a framework for activity.

Race equality will continue to be an integral part of the Scottish Government's work across the range of its policies and activities including those associated with prevention and early intervention. They would expect the discussion around the development of our future approach to include, amongst other matters; the mainstreaming of race equality, the barriers to employment, tackling hate crime and to take in to account the public sector equality duty outcomes published at the end of April 2013. They will commence work with stakeholders towards the end of 2013 to develop the approach to be taken and will publish an update by Spring 2014.

Public Sector Equality Duty

The work of this strategy all takes place within the context of the public sector equality duty, which came into force in April 2011 and which provides the Scottish Government with much stronger levers to deliver change across the public sector. The duty binds the Scottish Government and all other public bodies to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Promote equality of opportunity; and
- Promote good relations between people with different protected characteristics.

In Scotland, the specific duties go with the grain of public service reform – focusing on outcomes, linking to the functions of the authority, supporting good employment practice, supporting evidence-gathering on the needs and experience of different groups in society, and embedding reporting on equality within existing public reporting mechanisms. Public authorities across

Scotland published Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Reports in April 2013 (under the new duties) including employee information and the gender pay gap. This provides a real opportunity – embedded within legislation – to drive forward race equality and refugee integration, as well as equality for people with other protected characteristics, and to measure progress over time.

National Outcomes

The Scottish Government is working towards establishing a more equal and inclusive society in the future. Five strategic objectives and sixteen national outcomes have been developed in order to sharpen the focus of government, enable our priorities to be clearly understood and provide a clear structure for delivery for the following ten years.

This strategy contributes to four strategic objectives: ‘wealthier and fairer’; ‘smarter’; ‘healthier’ and ‘safer and stronger’.

Two of these national outcomes particularly associate with what the Scottish Government hopes to achieve with this strategy. They are as follows:

- Communities: We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others; and
- Inequalities: We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.

There is a commitment towards delivering these outcomes across the public sector in Scotland. Local government and their community planning partners use Single Outcome Agreements to set out how they will work towards improving outcomes for the local people in a way that reflects local circumstances and priorities, within the context of the national outcomes. By achieving these outcomes together, Scotland will become a better place to live and a more prosperous and successful country.

Public Sector Reform

Scotland is currently taking forward a programme of Public Sector Reform aimed at ensuring that our services are fit for the 21st century. This work has been influenced by the work of the Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services led by Dr Campbell Christie CBE,¹⁷ which published its report in 2011. This strategy has been influenced by Christie principles such as early intervention and preventative spend; mainstreaming of services (but protecting specialism where necessary), and developing services in consultation with the people who use them.

Resourcing Refugee Integration

The Home Office is responsible for providing accommodation and financial support to people claiming asylum.¹⁸ The Home Office also currently funds charitable organisations to provide orientation and independent advice services to assist people in the asylum process, including help to access asylum support, help to access health and education services and information and assistance in accessing legal representation.¹⁹ Upon recognition of their asylum claim, a refugee may apply for an integration loan from the Home Office.²⁰

Since 2001 the Scottish Government has invested over £13.5 million to aid the integration of refugees and people seeking asylum in Scotland. A wide range of projects have provided opportunities such as volunteering, work shadowing, English language classes and cultural activities aimed at integrating refugees and asylum seekers into their local communities. A number of public, voluntary, community and faith organisations play a significant role in supporting people seeking asylum and refugees to integrate into their new communities in Scotland.

17 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/06/27154527/0>

18 See: the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/33/contents>

19 See: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/asylum/helpandadvice/onestopservices/> Current advice services will end on 1 April 2014 and will be replaced by new services. For more information see: <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

20 See: http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/sitecontent/applicationforms/asylum/integrationloan_guide.pdf

In April 2013 the Scottish Government announced that it would fund the Scottish Guardianship Service after it was successfully piloted.²¹ Its primary aim is to improve the lives of separated children, including those who may have been the victims of child trafficking, who arrive alone in Scotland. Guardians are by the side of young people and on their side, ensuring that the young people have their voices heard and actively participate in all decisions affecting their futures and help to combat social isolation and improve their integration. The service is run in partnership by Aberlour Childcare Trust and the Scottish Refugee Council.

In 2012, the Scottish Refugee Council was successful in securing £2 million from the Big Lottery Fund Scotland, to deliver a new three-year Holistic Integration Service. This will ensure that up to 400 refugees each year are effectively supported to integrate into Scottish society and are able to exercise their rights and have their needs met. This service is based on Ager and Strang's 'Indicators of Integration' framework²² and provides one-to-one and group advice to people to help access services. This service is led by the Scottish Refugee Council working in partnership with the Bridges Programmes, the British Red Cross, Glasgow Clyde College and the Workers' Educational Association. The service and learning from the service will sit alongside this strategy.

21 See: http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/6798/Final_Report_2108.pdf

22 Ager & Strang (2008) 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework' *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2008) 21 (2): 166-191

Monitoring of Progress of the Actions and Outcomes Identified in the Strategy

The strategy will be taken forward over a three-year period in partnership between the agencies involved in its development. The core group which directed the development of the strategy will continue to meet to oversee the overall implementation. Each of the thematic action plans will be led by a champion (for example, COSLA will be the thematic group on the 'Needs of Dispersed Asylum Seekers') who will convene the identified stakeholders. Their role will be to implement the actions as well as develop specifying indicators and measurements. Data on how individual refugees are integrating from the Holistic Integration Service led by the Scottish Refugee Council²³ will also be used to inform each of the thematic groups.

The actions identified to deliver on each of the outcomes may be developed and changed as work progresses and as circumstances change. There will be regular reports on progress which will be disseminated widely.





Needs of Dispersed Asylum Seekers

Policy Context

The majority of people who flee their country and seek asylum in the UK arrive with few or no possessions and are destitute. They have no access to mainstream benefits. However, the Home Office has a statutory duty under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to provide destitute asylum seekers with financial support and housing if they have nowhere else to stay. The 1999 Act established a system whereby asylum seekers are housed in different parts of the UK on a no-choice basis whilst their claims for protection are being assessed. The original intention of this policy was to ease pressure on housing in the South East of England where the majority of asylum seekers were arriving in the UK. Glasgow has been home to between 2,000 - 6,500 people seeking asylum at any point since 2000, equating to approximately 10% of the UK's asylum seekers.

So far Glasgow has been the only area in Scotland to accommodate dispersed asylum seekers, although a small number of people in the asylum process who do not require housing live in different local authority areas across Scotland. Services in Glasgow have adapted well to the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and the city has benefited from increased cultural diversity and more stable demographics as a result of the new arrivals. Until recently, Glasgow City Council, along with two other organisations, provided the 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 is delivered by the international service company, Serco, in conjunction with their subcontractor, the property services company Orchard and Shipman. The contract allows for accommodation to be provided in Scotland, not just in Glasgow, although Serco is required to consult with COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership and relevant local authorities about the opening up of any new dispersal 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 (it has control over arrangements for the accommodation and financial support of asylum seekers, and the assessment of their claims for asylum), the Scottish Government has control over a range of issues that relate directly to the asylum process. Since the dispersal of asylum seekers to Scotland began, successive administrations at Holyrood have taken the position that integration should begin from the day an asylum seeker arrives in Scotland and devolved services should therefore be organised to deliver this. This approach is also reflective of the Scottish Government's wider commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and social justice for everyone living in Scotland.

Refugees' Experiences of Dispersal

The UK Government's policy of dispersing asylum seekers around the UK was initially met with opposition from campaigners who believed it would take people seeking asylum away from existing support networks in London. After some significant difficulties initially, Glasgow has responded well to the challenge of welcoming asylum seekers and relevant services, including integration networks and community organisations, are now well established. However, asylum seekers surveyed as part of the Scottish Refugee Council's research²⁴ still reported feelings of powerlessness and of their lives being put on hold while they waited for decisions on their asylum claims. The fact that they are not allowed to work during the asylum process was also seen as a problem by many. People surveyed said that it was important that they were able to access specialist services; that they were able to learn English; and that there were opportunities to interact with Scottish people and other asylum seekers. While experiences of racism were unfortunately not uncommon, most talked of their neighbourhoods in a positive way and in particular referred to local organisations and neighbours as important in making them feel at home. Nevertheless these positive developments require continuous work and it is clear that ongoing support at the neighbourhood level is crucial.

It should also be highlighted that there was a notable gendered difference in responses to the study in several key areas. Significantly, the study showed women waiting longer than men for decisions on their asylum claim and women with children waiting even longer. Women also reported less optimism about the future, poorer health, greater isolation and less satisfaction with housing and neighbourhoods. This serves to underline the need to acknowledge in all aspects of the strategy that the experiences of men, women and children will be different, that women face particular barriers in the asylum process and that services need to be developed in response to this.

Areas for Development

The introduction of the new contract for asylum accommodation in 2012 means there is a need to ensure that individuals and families housed by the new provider are linked in with statutory and voluntary services and support networks in Glasgow, in order that they are able to quickly access services which support their active engagement with the asylum process, and which prevent them from being isolated in their new communities. In addition, in the context of diminishing resources for key partners across the public and voluntary sector, changes to the organisation of the Home Office, the new Asylum Operating Model and significant changes to the Home Office asylum advice contracts in 2014, it is important that due consideration is given to how the needs of asylum seekers are currently being met in Scotland.

There is also a need to think strategically about how and where asylum seekers can be accommodated in Scotland in future. In a Glasgow context, there is increasing pressure on the city's housing stock caused by a variety of factors, not least the current regeneration and demolition programmes being undertaken to improve its social housing stock. However, such challenges are not peculiar to Glasgow and there are broader housing pressures being faced across Scotland as a whole as a result of factors such as UK Government's Welfare Reforms, the continued growth of our population, a reduction in the average size of households, and a shortfall in terms of the number of homes currently being built across the country. That is not to say that the widening of dispersal outside of Glasgow should be seen as solely a housing issue; nor should challenges around housing be seen an impediment to giving serious consideration to the widening of dispersal. Rather, consideration is required as to the whole range of services and infrastructure that will need to be put in place to allow the successful integration of asylum seekers into new areas to become a reality. On the basis that many of the integration issues faced by asylum seekers are similar to those faced by refugees more generally, this section of the action plan focuses on the specific arrangements put in place for asylum seekers as they arrive in Scotland. However, the rest of the plan is also relevant.

Outcomes for Dispersed Asylum Seekers

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

Priority Outcomes Beyond the Scope of this Action Plan

The group identified the development of a human-rights based approach to the asylum system as an aspiration, with the gap between the rights of asylum seekers and the rights of citizens reduced or closed.



Photo by: Amy Conway

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>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</p> <p>Lead: COSLA</p> <p>Delivered through multi-agency strategic group</p>	<p>Strategic group established by COSLA to provide oversight of dispersal to Scotland. Group membership to include key public and voluntary sector bodies, community representatives (including refugee/asylum seeker representation) and accommodation providers</p> <p>Mapping of asylum seeker journeys from point of arrival to grant of status/removal from UK. Identification of needs with a particular focus on what is currently in place, what should be in place and the barriers to achieving this</p> <p>Development and agreement of action plan</p>	<p>Evaluation of progress and consideration of next steps</p> <p>Delivery of actions from agreed plan</p> <p>Application of learning in discussions around the widening of dispersal outwith Glasgow</p>	<p>Application of learning in new dispersal areas as necessary</p> <p>Further action determined by evaluation of progress and consideration of next steps</p>

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>2. Asylum seekers arriving in Scotland are supported to fully understand their rights and entitlements, are able to access services and legal support and as a result receive the support that they require during the asylum process</p> <p>Lead: COSLA</p> <p>Delivered through multi-agency strategic group</p>	<p>Strategic group review the information available to asylum seekers as part of the induction process</p> <p>Monitoring of the referral process between the accommodation provider and key service providers to identify and address gaps</p>	<p>Production of new accessible information as necessary, led by accommodation providers, in partnership with other agencies</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of the referral process, with amendment as required</p>	<p>Evaluation of progress and consideration of next steps</p>
	<p>Piloting of a key worker model by the Scottish Refugee Council & Glasgow City Council to provide support to asylum seeking families (funded by the Scottish Government)</p>	<p>Key worker pilot evaluated and learning disseminated</p>	

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>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</p> <p>Lead: COSLA</p> <p>Delivered through multi-agency strategic group</p>	<p>Consideration of best practice and lessons learnt (from experiences in Scotland and the rest of the UK)</p> <p>Consideration of opportunities and barriers associated with dispersal beyond Glasgow</p> <p>Development and agreement of action plan</p>	<p>Engagement with local authorities and other service providers outside of Glasgow regarding the possibility of widening dispersal</p> <p>If dispersal is to be widened, work with asylum seekers and receiving communities to ensure that they are appropriately informed and potential community cohesion issues are mitigated</p> <p>Dissemination of good practice and learning from Glasgow and the rest of the UK, and provision of support where necessary</p> <p>Delivery of other elements of the agreed action plan</p>	<p>Evaluation of progress and consideration of next steps</p>



Employability and Welfare Rights

Policy Context

Refugees and asylum seekers have the right to volunteer; currently only refugees have the right to work.²⁵ Employment and welfare are high on both the UK and Scottish Governments' agenda. The Scottish Government's longer-term focus is on people who need the most support to access the labour market and additionally a very strong emphasis on youth unemployment. These areas are informed by powers reserved to Westminster, e.g. Welfare Benefits. Universal Credit is currently being rolled out: the target for processing new claims is one month plus seven days. This poses a challenge for integration due to an increased risk of destitution when moving from asylum support to the mainstream benefit system. The strategy "Working for Growth" (Scotland's employability framework)²⁶ emphasises among a range of other issues the critical importance of cross-government working at UK, Scottish and local government levels. The strategy also highlights the need to integrate (more effectively) employability and economic development to deliver the growth in jobs required. The Scottish Government is also responsible for skills development and increasing attempts to align skills and employability agendas, and Post-16 educational reforms place strong weight on meeting employer needs and improving employability of individual learners.

Employability is also now 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. This not only includes employability services but also recognises the role of other services such as education, community learning and development, social care, planning and economic development functions.

Funding is provided for a range of interventions to support efforts to reduce unemployment. The Scottish Government supports a range of enterprise initiatives, including social enterprise. The Scottish Government is supporting this sector to inform the design and delivery of public services, help open private sector business opportunities to social enterprises and to demonstrate the wide-ranging social impacts of social enterprise in Scotland.

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

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



Refugees' Experience of Welfare and Employment

Work and volunteering help to overcome social isolation: they support language development and help build social networks, and in turn can increase wider employment options. This can have a beneficial impact upon wellbeing which therefore aids engagement in communities and society more generally. These all support integration and the lack of employment opportunities can have negative long-term consequences for refugees and for the host society.

Asylum seekers are prevented from accessing the labour market whilst going through the asylum process. This can lead to skills attrition and to a lack of understanding of the labour market which can differ significantly from their countries of origin.

Employment of refugees is low even for those with transferable skills and with good English language capabilities. The Scottish Refugee Council's research identified that employment for women was even lower than for men, and that for those who found employment, they are concentrated in a narrow range of relatively low skilled and low paid sectors of the economy, despite a wide range of skills and experiences. This is one factor, along with challenges faced in housing and other areas, which can create poverty traps for refugees. The current economic downturn has not altered the situation. Poverty should not be the ultimate destiny of refugees in Scotland but barriers to labour market access at present ensure this is the case for most. The work of the Refugee Women's Strategy Group has highlighted many of the additional barriers that women face on their journey to employment in Scotland.²⁷

Challenges such as the issuing of timely National Insurance numbers, exist during the 28-day move on period when status is received from the Home Office and the refugee moves from Home Office funded support to the mainstream benefits system. Statutory bodies need to work closely together to ensure that new refugees do not face immediate destitution. Grants of status for a maximum of five years may also impede labour market access.

Areas for Development

Refugees have a range of skills, experience and resilience which can be utilised. Their language skills can inform Scotland's position in a globalised market and their potential for entrepreneurialism can be harnessed. Structural and systems barriers exist for all refugees, and women and young men can be especially disadvantaged. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has a role in supporting refugees as a key target as part of work-related activity groups and supporting people with health issues. It is critical that refugees and stakeholders understand work capability and current and future processes to prepare for work, avoid sanctions and benefit from initiatives. Refugees and stakeholders need to develop a knowledge of volunteering, training and employability opportunities.

Employability and Welfare Outcomes

1. New refugees are 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 are supported to fully understand their rights to welfare support, the labour market and volunteering and employability opportunities and as a result are increasingly able to access these opportunities
3. Refugees access services designed to support entrepreneurialism and an increased proportion use their skills to contribute to Scotland's economy and society

Priority Outcomes Beyond the Scope of this Action Plan

The group identified that the right to work for people seeking asylum is an overriding priority in facilitating the effective integration of refugees.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>1. New refugees are supported to move on from asylum support within the 28-day ‘move on’ period by ensuring benefits are in place when asylum support ends</p> <p>Lead: COSLA</p> <p>Delivered through multi-agency working group</p> <p>(These actions are mirrored under the section on housing)</p>	<p>Working Group established by COSLA with remit to address ‘move-on’ issues faced by new refugees, including how they move from asylum support to mainstream provision</p> <p>Evidence collated about the scale of the ‘move-on’ issues and impact on other services by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glasgow City Council • Scottish Refugee Council • Refugee Survival Trust <p>Group membership to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Office • COMPASS contractor • Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) • Refugee Women’s Strategy Group • Scottish Refugee Policy Forum and other refugee community representatives • Glasgow City Council • Scottish Refugee Council <p>Development and agreement of action plan</p>	<p>Activities driven by the group’s action plan</p> <p>Before the working group is wrapped up, agreements drawn up between agencies to sustain developments and improvements achieved</p>	
	<p>DWP work with the Scottish Refugee Council to identify a pathfinder solution to the implementation of Universal Credit for newly-recognised refugees</p>		

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>2. Refugees are supported to fully understand their rights to welfare support, the labour market and volunteering and employability opportunities and as a result, are increasingly able to access these opportunities</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>Skills Development Scotland</p> <p>Scottish Government</p> <p><small>28 The Holistic Integration Service is a partnership led by the Scottish Refugee Council with the Bridges Programmes, British Red Cross, Glasgow Clyde College and Workers' Educational Association, providing one-to-one and group advice, support and training to newly-recognised refugees.</small></p>	DWP works with the Scottish Refugee Council to ensure staff are trained to understand refugees' qualifications and transferable skills to assist refugees to be matched to suitable employment opportunities	Ongoing	Ongoing
	DWP to continue to fund accessible community English language courses (ESOL) to enable refugees to meet the requirement of their job seeker's agreement	Evaluation of impact of provision and decision about continuation	Ongoing
	DWP and the Scottish Refugee Council to work with Skills Development Scotland, local employability partnerships and other providers to promote the Employability Fund and other training opportunities	DWP pilot other employability approaches and partnership models between public bodies and the voluntary sector, e.g. health services recruiting bilingual refugees to assist in the delivery of public services	
	DWP and the Scottish Refugee Council establish links with the Scottish Employability Forum and the National Delivery Group to inform them of employability issues faced by refugees	Ongoing	Report back to the Scottish Employability Forum and the National Delivery Groups on progress
	The Holistic Integration ²⁸ Service provides employability support to newly-recognised refugees	Ongoing	Ongoing
	DWP and the Scottish Refugee Council map the provision of specialist welfare-to-work and skill development support to better enable refugees to access the services available to them	DWP and the Scottish Refugee Council engage with Employability Partnerships and other bodies to ensure employers understand skills, experience, qualification and right to work of refugees	

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
	DWP and the Scottish Refugee Council works with the volunteer, wider third sector and other stakeholders to increase the volunteer opportunities available for refugees	Ongoing	Ongoing
	The Scottish Government will work closely with national and local partners to ensure refugees are supported to overcome their barriers to employment and are given access to employability services	Evaluation of impact. Consider person-centred delivery and explore ways to enhance this at national and local levels	

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>3. Refugees access services designed to support entrepreneurialism and an increased proportion use their skills to contribute to Scotland's economy and society</p> <p>Lead:</p> <p>Scottish Government</p> <p>Supporting organisations:</p> <p>Social Enterprise Scotland</p> <p>CEiS (Just Enterprise)</p> <p>CEMVO Scotland</p> <p>Glasgow Social Enterprise Network</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>Chambers of Commerce</p> <p>Business Gateway, Scottish Enterprise</p> <p>Local Authority Development & Regeneration Services</p>	Stakeholders build upon existing mapping, identify enterprise activity and support	Enterprise agencies provide training for refugees in establishing businesses/social enterprise	Refugees and communities develop social enterprise activities
	Ensure existing social enterprise bodies are engaged with refugees and their communities	Refugees and communities link into existing provision by local authorities, regeneration services and business and commerce bodies	
	The Scottish Government and the Scottish Refugee Council explore and identify international micro-business models that are transferable to the Scottish context	The Scottish Government and key stakeholders develop international micro-business models that are transferable to the Scottish context	Pilot international micro-business models that are transferable to the Scottish context
	The Scottish Government and key stakeholders develop enterprise pathways for refugees to realise entrepreneurial skills and talents	Social enterprise bodies provide training in governance structures for social enterprise	



Housing

Policy Context

Housing is one of the basic building blocks of successful integration. Having stable housing is an important outcome for an individual or family, but it also creates a basis for achieving other positive integration outcomes. Under its regional asylum accommodation contracts, the Home Office provides accommodation to people seeking asylum in a number of areas across the UK including Glasgow (this may be extended to other parts of Scotland within the lifetime of this strategy). Scotland has some of the most progressive homelessness legislation in Western Europe, and once a person has received refugee status, they gain the same rights to access housing as a Scottish national. 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 and this makes it easier for new refugees to seek homelessness assistance from any local authority in Scotland. Priority need was abolished as part of Scotland's 2012 homelessness commitments, which means that unlike in other parts of the UK, 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.

Social landlords have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 and also under 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 is also moving towards a housing options approach, whereby 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 approach promotes early intervention and explores all possible tenure options, including council housing, housing association housing and the private rented sector.



Refugees' Experience of Housing

The Scottish Refugee Council's research²⁹ has indicated that 96% of refugees experience homelessness at some point after receiving status and there is evidence that many slip through the net and spend time 'sofa-surfing' and rough sleeping. This is the case for single men and women, but also for families, who can spend days sleeping in a hotel and returning to homelessness services each morning with their belongings to await allocation of temporary accommodation.³⁰ When refugees spoke about a 'good home' they were often more concerned about the proximity to things like friends and services rather than the house itself. Just over 50% of people said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their housing, but it may be that they are happier with the area they live in than their actual home. Indeed the majority of respondents in that research said that they wanted to move house because of the physical characteristics and conditions of the house. More women were dissatisfied with their housing than men, and women with children were even less satisfied. With 70% of new refugees being single and 73% aged under 35, the overwhelming demand for refugee accommodation is in smaller units. Choice and knowledge of the options available is an issue, with many saying that a basic knowledge of the social rented sector allied to lack of awareness of what various parts of the city have to offer, means that choices are often being made on the basis of a lack of complete knowledge. Overcrowding is an issue for some, especially those who have successfully reunited with family members. Many of the people surveyed aspired to own their own home, but most saw this as an impossible dream.³¹

29 Mulvey, G. (2013) *In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland Final report*, Scottish Refugee Council

30 Scottish Refugee Council Refugee Integration Service Data 2012-2013

31 Mulvey, G. (2013) *In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland Final report*, Scottish Refugee Council

Areas for Development

Scotland's housing system does create opportunities for refugees to find a home. It is important that new refugees are aware of the opportunities available to them and are supported to make a choice that suits their needs. This would include looking beyond what is available in Glasgow. We can work to achieve this by ensuring that the housing options approach is accessible to refugees.

There are also particular challenges at the point where a person is granted refugee status and has to move out of their asylum accommodation within 28 days. It is difficult to ensure that benefits have started within that timeframe, and the short window of opportunity to plan means that most refugees do not move smoothly from asylum accommodation to a longer-term solution. Welfare Reform will not resolve this issue, and could potentially make matters worse since the timescale for processing a Universal Credit claim is longer than 28 days. This strategy will bring together key stakeholders to work to improve what happens within this critical period to help ensure that asylum seekers can move smoothly from asylum accommodation to a more permanent home. This type of early intervention can help relieve pressure on the homelessness system, and reduce the amount of time people spend in temporary accommodation.

Housing Outcomes

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

Priority Outcomes Beyond the Scope of this Action Plan

The housing group felt that the 28-day 'move-on' period for new refugees from asylum support to mainstream support should be extended to ensure that people can make a smooth transition from asylum accommodation to a more permanent home. They also felt that refugees in Scotland would benefit from an increased supply of affordable housing across all tenures.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>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</p> <p>Leads: Scottish Government Glasgow City Council Scottish Refugee Council</p>	<p>Glasgow City Council to review outcomes of Glasgow Housing Options Pilot to inform better provision for refugees.</p> <p>The Scottish Refugee Council to develop links with West of Scotland Housing Options Hubs</p>	<p>Development of specialist advice for refugees within the housing options model (by the Scottish Refugee Council in partnership with Housing Options Hubs)</p>	<p>The Scottish Government to make information available on needs of refugees to all Housing Options Hubs (in partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council)</p>
	<p>The Scottish Government to encourage accreditation under the National Standards in Information & Advice in relation to Housing Options</p>		
	<p>Develop understanding of refugee pathways (for men, women and families) through housing options model</p>	<p>Production of information on housing options approach</p>	
	<p>Mutual training between the Scottish Refugee Council and housing providers regarding housing options and refugee issues including specific needs and experiences of men, women and families</p>	<p>Identify partners to provide a holistic approach to housing options</p>	<p>Awareness raising of housing options approach around wide range of agencies who are likely to advise refugees</p>

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>2. Refugees are able to access suitable housing options</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>COSLA</p> <p>Glasgow City Council</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p>	<p>Glasgow City Council to explore options relating to different types of accommodation in different sectors within the city to offer housing options to new refugees going through the homelessness route</p>	<p>Potential for scheme to be in place to support new refugees into private sector housing within Glasgow City Council</p>	
	<p>COSLA to distribute the Scottish Refugee Council's Housing Practitioners' Guide to all local authorities</p>	<p>Joint COSLA/Scottish Refugee Council seminar for all Scottish local authorities on housing rights of refugees</p>	
	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council continue to build referral arrangements with housing associations in Glasgow and beyond</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>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</p> <p>Lead: COSLA</p> <p>Delivered through multi-agency working group</p> <p>(These activities are mirrored under the Employability and Welfare Rights section)</p>	<p>Working Group established by COSLA with remit to address ‘move on’ issues faced by new refugees (taking account of potentially different issues faced by men, women and families) which impact upon their ability to access housing, and to find solutions</p> <p>Group membership to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Office • COMPASS contractor • DWP • Glasgow City Council • Scottish Refugee Council • Refugee Women’s Strategy Group • Scottish Refugee Policy Forum and other appropriate refugee community representatives <p>Evidence collated about the scale of the move-on issues and impact on other services by:</p> <p>Glasgow City Council Scottish Refugee Council Refugee Survival Trust</p> <p>Development and agreement of action plan</p>	<p>Activities driven by the group’s action plan</p> <p>Before the working group is wrapped up, agreements drawn up, between agencies to sustain developments and improvements achieved</p> <p>Activities driven by the group’s action plan</p>	



The Castle's walls hold the barges
the barges of the Tyne and Clyde Co.
Lambhill & H
Please show both and take care
Lambhill Station
In 1812, it was
point for both
on the Tyne
THE POWER
The house
in the Mary
and the

Photo by: Iman Tajik

Education

Policy Context

Education in Scotland is devolved to the Scottish Government, and Scotland has its own distinctive qualifications. Scottish education performs at consistently high standards by international comparison and underpinning this is a system of universal pre-school education. All children and young people, including refugee children, are entitled to local access to nursery and school education in Scotland. Universal access to compulsory education is set out in the Standards in Scotland's Schools Etc. Act 2000 which further stipulates that each child will be 'educated to their fullest potential', and the children of refugees and asylum seekers benefit from this. Education is devolved to local authorities and schools who deliver the non-statutory curriculum within a broad framework called **Curriculum for Excellence** which aims to ensure all young people become successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

For those beyond the age of compulsory schooling (sixteen), Scotland's colleges play a key role in providing education and skills. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) will waive the 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.³² Unlike in England where a person seeking asylum only becomes entitled to further education fee waivers if they are still waiting for a decision on their asylum claim or appeal six months after their arrival, asylum seekers in Scotland are entitled to fee waivers from day-one of their arrival to aid with their integration.³³

The Adult English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Strategy 2007 is the framework within which Community Planning Partnerships are funded to provide ESOL and it is further education colleges that deliver the bulk of ESOL provision in Scotland, with community learning also important in terms of its flexibility of provision. 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 and this is of benefit to refugees³⁴ who meet the residency criteria. Currently, this does not include people in the asylum process. There are furthermore a number of loans and bursaries available to eligible students for expenses such as childcare.

32 See: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Circulars_SFC202010/SFC_20_2010_Guidance_-_Fee_Waiver_Policy_2010-11_11_Jun_2010_%7B215618280%7D.pdf

33 The Scottish Funding Council guidance refer to the definition of 'asylum seeker' in the Nationality and Immigration Act 2002 for the purposes of defining eligibility for fee waivers for full-time ESOL and part-time courses at colleges in Scotland http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/CircularsSFC2009/_guidance_fee_waiver_2009_10.pdf. For differences in policy, see: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0002/5956/A_lot_to_learn-Jan_13.pdf

34 Including their children and those with Humanitarian Protection and Discretionary Leave. See: http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/Circulars_SFC202010/SFC_20_2010_Guidance_-_Fee_Waiver_Policy_2010-11_11_Jun_2010_%7B215618280%7D.pdf



Refugees' Experience of Education

The Scottish Refugee Council's research³⁵ indicated that, amongst respondents with children there is high satisfaction with their school education (83% satisfied or very satisfied); indeed the one area of concern is that many felt that their children were not being pushed or tested enough. Refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland are a relatively highly educated group with figures comparable to the overall population.³⁶ A majority of adults solely accessed ESOL courses rather than other further education courses (174 of 262 respondents), and a large number spoke of two-year waits to access ESOL classes not being unusual. Experience of the Scottish Refugee Council suggests that current need for English language classes is greater at beginner level (Access 2 and 3).

English language learning is key to both education and employment opportunities. Confidence in speaking English was high amongst respondents with some 69% very confident or fairly confident, although here too, women reported lower confidence than men. Nevertheless, the need for information on educational opportunities and for English language support for general day-to-day communication as well as for labour market and educational access was highlighted. The Refugee Women's Strategy Group have highlighted difficulties for women in accessing ESOL classes due to lack of childcare or the timing of classes clashing with women having to collect children from school.³⁷ There was also a strong desire to have official recognition of skills and educational levels.

35 Mulvey, G. (2013) *In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland Final report*, Scottish Refugee Council

36 Ibid

37 Refugee Women's Strategy Group (2011) *The Struggle to Contribute: A report identifying the barriers encountered by refugee women on their journey to employment in Scotland*, Refugee Women's Strategy Group

Areas for Development

Education and community learning opportunities are consistent ways to ensure the empowerment and engagement of refugees enabling their successful integration into Scotland's communities and importantly ensuring their contributions, socially, culturally and economically are realised by those communities. Research and statistics do however show some disproportionate barriers to accessing some educational opportunities, including additional barriers for women, which require to be overcome. The action plan will therefore seek to provide clarity and promote the educational opportunities and entitlements available, improving coordination and overcoming gaps and barriers where these exist, such as work, to ensure prior learning and qualifications are recognised. There is also evidenced need for additional support to achieve the English language skills required for successful integration into Scotland's communities and to pass the UK citizenship test. The action plan will seek to address this in the context of the review of the Adult English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) Strategy and also by working to increase English as an Additional Language (EAL) support in schools. There are also opportunities within the Scottish Government's commitment to future language learning and teaching which aspires to all pupils learning a further two languages alongside their mother tongue. By improving links between the parents of bilingual pupils, ESOL learners and schools, greater access to a wealth of languages could be drawn upon to assist with this 1 + 2 model.

Education Outcomes

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
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

Priority Outcomes Beyond the Scope of this Action Plan

A child's equity of access to education, and in particular Higher Education and Educational Maintenance Allowance, should not be negatively impacted by their parents' immigration status.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>1. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to achieve the English Language skills they need to successfully integrate with Scotland's communities</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Scottish Government and Education Scotland</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>COSLA</p> <p>Community Planning Partnerships</p> <p>Scottish EAL Coordinating Council (SEALCC)</p> <p>Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)</p> <p>ESOL Providers</p>	Education group of key stakeholders established to monitor and progress actions across all four objectives in the plan		Education group to explore funding from the European Consolidated Fund for a project to further EAL and ESOL provision across Scotland within the context of the review of Adult ESOL Strategy
		Education Scotland review the Adult ESOL strategy with the significance of ESOL as a facilitator of integration and the needs of refugees in mind	
	SQA will raise awareness of ESOL qualifications within schools - expand access to these qualifications across Scotland		
		Community Planning Partnerships will encourage wider stakeholders in local ESOL Strategy Meetings	Ongoing
		Community Planning Partnerships to be encouraged to capture local impact of ESOL that is not funded by Scottish Government's additional funding	Ongoing
		Education Scotland will continue to ensure use of the ESOL initial assessment tool developed by Scottish Government is encouraged	Ongoing
		ESOL Providers and Education Scotland to ensure promotion of work experience opportunities built into ESOL provision	
	Monitoring of local access to ESOL provision and promotion of e-learning resources by Education Scotland	Ongoing	Ongoing

<p>2. Refugees and asylum seekers access appropriate education opportunities and increase their qualifications/ knowledge/ experience as a result</p>	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council to work with Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the Scottish Funding Council to publish guidance for careers advisors and admissions staff advising them of the entitlements of refugees and asylum seekers</p>	<p>Education Scotland resources to promote youth literacies are adapted for use with young refugees and asylum seekers</p> <p>New resources published by Education Scotland (and others) take into account the needs of refugees</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Leads: Scottish Government and Education Scotland Scottish Refugee Council COSLA</p>	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council and COSLA will work with Education Scotland to promote educational entitlements to nursery and school for refugees and asylum seekers</p>	<p>SQA will promote qualifications to remove barriers for refugees and asylum seekers such as their Certificate of Work Readiness</p>	
<p>Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) National Union of Students (NUS) Universities Scotland Scottish Funding Council (SFC)</p>	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council, NUS, Universities Scotland and SFC will explore known barriers to accessing Higher Education and full-time Further Education establishing whether these could be addressed</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
<p>Skills Development Scotland (SDS)</p>		<p>The Scottish Government and Education Scotland to identify how the needs of refugees are met within Curriculum for Excellence and disseminate good practice</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>_____</p> <p>38 See: http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk</p>	<p>Young refugees linked into targeted support provided by Skills Development Scotland for 16-19 year olds such as World of Work³⁸</p>		

<p>3. Refugees and asylum seekers are supported to use pre-existing qualifications and access appropriate employment/ additional education opportunities as a result</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Scottish Government</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>COSLA</p> <p>Community Planning Partnerships</p> <p>Education Scotland</p> <p>SQA</p> <p>SCQF Partnership</p> <p>Skills Development Scotland (SDS)</p>	<p>Scottish Government to revisit the Scoping Study on Support Mechanisms for the Recognition of Skills, Learning and Qualifications of Migrant Workers and Refugees</p> <p>Recognition of Prior Learning Toolkit developed by SCQF Partnership to be promoted to refugees and asylum seekers</p>	<p>Assess the need for Scottish resources(s) to promote recognition of migrant qualifications in light of the referendum</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
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<p>4. Scotland's linguistic diversity is promoted and as a result is valued, enabling refugees to contribute fully/effectively to Scottish society</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Scottish Government and Education Scotland</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>COSLA</p> <p>SQA</p> <p>Scottish EAL Coordinating Council (SEALCC)</p>	<p>Education Scotland and the SQA to work to raise awareness of community languages and how they are used within Scotland's communities</p>	<p>Education Scotland to promote to practitioners across the sectors the significance of valuing home language in terms of developing language acquisition skills</p>	
	<p>Census data and other data resources in schools to be explored to improve knowledge of refugee populations by COSLA and SEALCC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	
	<p>The Scottish Government to establish how the multi-lingual refugee community can benefit from the Scottish Government's 1+2 language strategy</p>	<p>The Scottish Government and Education Scotland will promote the needs and role of multi-lingual refugees in any new language strategies, including recognition that first language is not always English</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>The Scottish Government and Education Scotland to explore updated iteration of the valued resource - Learning in 2 (+) Languages (2005, Scottish Executive) in light of Curriculum for Excellence</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
		<p>Education Scotland and the SQA will promote the accreditation of community languages including the requisite teacher training</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>





Health

Policy Context

The Scottish Government's '2020 Vision: Achieving Sustainable Quality in Scotland's Healthcare' 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. The right to health provides a useful way to approach inequality in health by framing inequality as a human rights issue. The right to health encompasses not only the right to healthcare, but also to other determinants of health such as education, employment, income and housing. Good health is critical to integration because it enables greater social participation and engagement in activities like volunteering, employment and education.

The provision of health services is devolved to the Scottish Government, which has directed NHS Scotland to provide services to all refugees and asylum seekers, including people whose claims for asylum have been refused. Access to good quality health care is important to people who may arrive in Scotland with physical or mental health problems associated with the reasons why they were forced to travel to the UK and 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 result can exacerbate existing mental health problems, or create new ones.³⁹

A range of specialist health care services have developed in Glasgow to meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers including the Compass Mental Health Team, the Bridging Team within Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board and also voluntary sector services such as Freedom from Torture. Agencies such as the Mental Health Foundation and Rape Crisis are working closely with the Scottish Refugee Council and have identified opportunities to meet the needs of this group of people. As well as recognising refugees' vulnerability, scope exists for recognising resilience and an asset based approach, building upon positive health behaviours e.g. low levels of smoking, healthy diet, higher incidence of breast feeding etc. This has potential for informing health improvement agendas in Primary Care.

If dispersal is to be extended beyond Glasgow, serious consideration will have to be given to how health services can be made more accessible in other areas of Scotland.



Refugees' Experience of Health

Refugees surveyed by the Scottish Refugee Council⁴⁰ felt they had a good understanding of the range of health services available to them, but some also demonstrated misunderstandings about appropriate use of services (using Accident and Emergency rather than contacting an out-of-hours GP service for example). Registration with GPs was high amongst refugees and asylum seekers in the study and experiences of accessing health services were good. Health is impacted by experiences in people's country of origin, and also by what happens to them once they arrive in Scotland. Research by London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Scottish Refugee Council has shown a very high prevalence of gender based violence among asylum seeking women in Scotland, linked to complex health and support needs.⁴¹ Mental health is a relevant factor in terms of health outcomes. Traumatic events associated with a refugee's flight and social isolation reported by many individuals in Glasgow lead to a higher risk of mental health problems. In turn, poor mental health can lead to poor physical health such as diabetes and cardiovascular problems. Evidence in the research⁴² suggests that the asylum process itself has a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing. However, there is also a gender issue around wellbeing with women in general, and women asylum seekers in particular, indicating considerably lower self-reported health and wellbeing outcomes than almost any other part of the Scottish population.

40 Mulvey, *ibid*

41 London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine & the Scottish Refugee Council (2009) *Asylum-seeking Women Violence and Health: Results from a Pilot Study in Scotland and Belgium*. Glasgow: London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the Scottish Refugee Council

42 Mulvey, *ibid*

Areas for Development

Refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland are able to access health services, and one focus of this action plan is to ensure that they understand their entitlements and are supported to access services that are appropriate to their needs. Facilitating access also involves ensuring that practitioners understand the rights and entitlements of refugees and asylum seekers. The other main focus is on working towards a model where health services are increasingly developed with the needs and experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in mind. Involving refugees and asylum seekers in public engagement is critical to ensure that access issues are understood, addressed and opportunities for health improvement are taken. Many refugees come from cultures where peer support is strong and this offers opportunities for self-management and collective advocacy. This fits well with existing moves across the NHS in Scotland to develop a more person-centred approach to care. To support this, the potential to conduct a holistic and gendered health needs assessment for refugees and asylum seekers will be explored. There are opportunities to inform the implementation of the Health and Social Care Integration and Mental Health strategies.

Health Outcomes

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 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

Priority Outcomes Beyond the Scope of this Action Plan

The group raised the aspiration that the measureable health outcomes of refugees and asylum seekers should be comparable to the general population. The outcomes below will go some way to delivering this, but there is a lack of comparative data to establish success

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>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</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board</p> <p>Mental Health Foundation</p> <p>Supporting organisation:</p> <p>NHS Health Scotland</p> <p>Health Improvement Scotland</p>	<p>Strategic group established by the Scottish Refugee Council with national and local agencies as well as representative community groups to ensure health and social care services (including mental health) can meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, and to capture and share learning and inform research priorities</p> <p>Development and agreement of a joint action plan</p>	<p>Ongoing strategic groups meet to ensure health services can meet the needs of refugees and asylum seekers, and to capture and share learning</p> <p>Learning disseminated to Health Boards outside of Glasgow by NHS Health Scotland as necessary</p>	Ongoing
	<p>Health Inequalities Impact Assessments are undertaken to ensure that new health policies take into consideration the needs of refugees and asylum seekers</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
	<p>Strategic group scopes opportunities for a gendered health needs assessment of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland so that provision can be increasingly needs led</p>	Activities dependent on year 1 outcomes	

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>2. An understanding of refugee integration pathways is embedded in all health-related strategies leading to more person-centred services</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>Supporting organisations:</p> <p>NHS Health Scotland</p> <p>Health Improvement Scotland</p>	<p>Joint working by the Scottish Refugee Council and Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board to develop and ensure public engagement and that services that are more responsive to needs, e.g. mental health and health improvement opportunities, following consultation with refugees</p> <p>Evaluate progress and capture learning</p>	<p>Ongoing joint work by the Scottish Refugee Council and Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board</p> <p>Support to health providers including health visitors and GPs to understand role in promoting community safety by alerting police to issues of concern</p> <p>Evaluation and dissemination of learning continues</p>	<p>Review and evaluation of services' responsiveness to needs, e.g. health improvement and mental health, by the Scottish Refugee Council and Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board involving consultation and engagement with representative refugee community groups</p>
	<p>If dispersal of asylum seekers is extended beyond Glasgow, NHS Health Scotland will support wider dissemination of learning with relevant health boards</p>	<p>Learning disseminated to Health Boards outside of Glasgow by NHS Health Scotland as necessary</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>3. Refugees and asylum seekers are 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</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>COSLA</p> <p>Strategic Group on the Needs of Dispersed Asylum Seekers</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board</p> <p>Supporting organisations:</p> <p>NHS Health Scotland</p> <p>Health Improvement Scotland</p>	<p>COSLA-led strategic group looking at dispersal to consider the information on health services provided to dispersed asylum seekers on arrival</p>	<p>Improved information for new arrivals developed and distributed</p>	
	<p>Key agencies and stakeholders such as the Scottish Refugee Council to disseminate information on health services to refugees and asylum seekers using their services</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>NHS Health Scotland to link into strategic group set up under this action plan on relevant policy and practice developments (such as human rights and mental health services, human trafficking, domestic violence, strategy refreshes)</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>



Communities and Social Connections

Policy Context

Communities are groups of people, connected by something that they have in common. Often communities are defined by the place where they live such as neighbourhood or town. However many people feel part of communities around common issues or circumstances such as disabled people, minority ethnic groups, young people or people with experience of the asylum system. Shared experiences, concerns and aspirations can enable the social connections which form the basis of communities. Often these communities of interest will have particular needs and priorities for public services and may wish to join together and organise over larger geographical areas such as town, local authority area, or country. Scotland's *Community Empowerment Action Plan* sets out a commitment to supporting this type of activity.⁴³ Communities create the potential for collective responses to challenges and opportunities, as well as facilitating integration and a sense of belonging.

Community connections are an important element in Ager and Strang's framework of integration.⁴⁴ Ager and Strang describe how people experience integration through community issues. These experiences include bonds (family and co-ethnic, co-national groups), bridges (links to other communities, such as neighbours), and links (to services and public agencies). Whilst the meaning of the term 'community' may sometimes be contested, it is clear that what happens within it has profound impacts upon how people experience integration.

People seeking asylum who have been dispersed to Scotland will have left behind communities and some will feel the loss of those communities more strongly than others. Indeed persecution within or associated with community membership may be their reason for leaving. It is important that those working with refugees in Scotland recognise this and support people to develop social connections suitable to their needs and aspirations. Scotland's institutions in policing, local government, health, schools, further and higher education and our local communities, voluntary organisations and faith groups – especially but not only in Glasgow – have welcomed, worked with, and endeavoured to do the maximum possible for refugees and asylum seekers.

43 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/264771/0079288.pdf>

44 Ager & Strang (2008) 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework' *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2008) 21 (2): 166-191



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 lives that express individuals' genuine aspirations. People thrive when they develop social bonds that overcome and prevent social isolation; when they reach out to develop connections and friendships across ethnicities, gender, and faith/beliefs. When these bonds and connections are successfully cultivated it leads to inclusive community identities that genuinely express the full diversity of a local area. So ideally, communities will not only be free of prejudice, discrimination, and hate crime and abuse; but will have also moved beyond tolerance and therefore reflect open, trusting, and mutually respectful relationships that condemn negative stereotyping and embrace local and national diversity. The Scottish Government places inclusive communities front and centre in its national outcomes framework, integrating this with related priorities in crime, health, and education and employment. Through its approach of integration from day one, the Scottish Government includes refugees and people seeking asylum within its vision of inclusive communities. The Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs statement on Culture and Heritage "Past, Present and Future"⁴⁵ also includes a welcome to people from all over the world to come, to inspire and to be inspired, to innovate and to create.

COSLA has also taken the position that refugees and other migrants bring a positive contribution to Scotland's communities. Its Strategic Migration Partnership has worked with local authorities across Scotland to develop strategies and services that help to ensure that their communities are welcome to newcomers. The importance of preparing existing communities for new arrivals learned when Glasgow City Council began to receive dispersed asylum seekers in 2000, was also applied to North Lanarkshire in 2006 and will be applied in any future dispersal areas. The Strategic Migration Partnership has also supported local politicians to promote positive messages and provide strong local leadership, something that research published by the University of Oxford in 2012 identified as being particularly important.⁴⁶

Police Scotland aims to raise visibility and confidence across communities, including amongst refugees and asylum seekers, as reflected through its equality outcomes, community engagement and public reassurance policies, as well as its prioritisation of violence against women. The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service continue to prosecute offences with hate crime dimensions including those aggravated against refugees of ethnic or faith minority status, or relating to sexual orientation.

Many of these policies and initiatives are underscored by progressive legislation, legal duties, and proposals in a range of areas, from hate crime, duties to promote equality and good relations; onto Community Planning Partnerships focused on local coordination and joined-up services; as well as assets-based approaches to community empowerment, engagement and development. The aim of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill is to support communities to achieve their own goals and

45 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Speeches/Culture-Heritage05062013> 05 June 2013

46 See: http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/Events/Events_2012/AMICALL_UK_report_Jan_2012_HJ.pdf

aspirations through taking independent action and by having their voices heard in the decisions that affect their area.⁴⁷

In December 2012 Oxford University published research concerning attitudes towards immigration across the UK.⁴⁸ The findings indicate that Scottish attitudes to immigration are amongst the most favourable of all parts of the UK. In particular, attitudes towards asylum in Scotland were more favourable than other parts of the UK. Data on public attitudes to asylum remains somewhat scant however and there is little against which to benchmark changes in attitudes.

Refugees' Experience of Social Connection and Communities

People living in Scottish communities – whether or not they are of refugee background – consistently report that what matters to them in their communities is that people in the local neighbourhood have good relationships with each other.^{49, 50} The attitudes of the local population have a big impact on how refugees view their lives here. Where locals are viewed as welcoming there is a higher likelihood of refugees wanting to stay in the area and feeling that their area is a good place to live. Refugees place great importance on feeling safe. Whilst refugees who have been in Scotland for a long time report that incidents of racist abuse have decreased over time, nevertheless it is clear that even low-level racism has a significant negative impact on the development of integrated relationships between refugees and others. Refugees' accounts demonstrate that their positive or negative experiences of Scottish society, from the very first day they arrive in Scotland and apply for asylum, have an impact on their integration.

A large proportion of refugees and asylum seekers have no family living in Scotland, and in the recent Scottish Refugee Council study a significant minority, just under a third of participants, reported that they only meet friends once every fortnight or less.⁵¹ The resulting social isolation exacerbates vulnerabilities to general health and mental health problems, limits access to services, the development of language skills and promotes dependency. Conversely, friendships were seen as developing in a number of venues such as churches and mosques, co-ethnic groups, voluntary work and 'activity groups'. Refugee Community Organisations are valued as a way of building connections, providing initial support and information about the asylum process and in some cases, neighbourhoods in the city. However, many refugees express frustration at the limited opportunity to make 'Scottish friends' and to share their own cultural heritage with wider society.

47 See: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/engage/cer>

48 See: <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Public%20Opinion-Overall%20Attitudes%20and%20Level%20of%20Concern.pdf>

49 Ager & Strang (2008) 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework' *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2008) 21 (2): 166-191

50 Mulvey, G. (2013) *In Search of Normality: Refugee Integration in Scotland Final report*, Scottish Refugee Council

51 Ibid

Areas for Development

The existence of a range of social connections is core to integration and a cohesive society – in particular it is recognised that integration depends on the formation of close social ‘bonds’ to provide emotional support, relationships that ‘bridge’ between different groups, and ‘links’ to wider society to enable access to rights and the opportunity to participate.⁵² Refugees and asylum seekers are exceptionally isolated and need support to form new close friendships and family relationships. Relationships that bridge different groups are essential for cohesive communities and depend on a shared sense of safety and positive public attitudes. In order to realise the potential that refugees can bring to Scotland, support is needed to encourage refugees to contribute to the social, economic, political and cultural life of the country.

Outcomes for Communities and Social Connections

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

Priority Outcomes Beyond the Scope of this Action Plan

Refugee Community Organisations are able to access more sustainable funding and professional community development support to support the balanced development of the full range of social connections including bonds, bridges and links.

Service providers across all sectors share the goal of promoting the integration of refugees and asylum seekers through supporting their social connections.

52 Ager & Strang (2008) 'Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework' *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2008) 21 (2): 166-191

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>1. Refugees are enabled to build social relationships and are involved and active in their local communities</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>Scottish Government</p> <p>Community Planning Partnership</p> <p>COSLA</p> <p><small>53 The Scottish Refugee Council will work with voluntary, community, public sector and academic partner organisations to deliver these actions. These organisations have not been listed in detail.</small></p> <p><small>54 The Holistic Integration Service is a partnership led by the Scottish Refugee Council with the Bridges Programmes, British Red Cross, Glasgow Clyde College and Workers' Educational Association, providing one-to-one and group advice, support and training to newly-recognised refugees.</small></p>	<p>The Scottish Government will ensure that refugees benefit from national initiatives for equality and community empowerment</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
	<p>The Scottish Government, COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council to review census data and other data sources to improve knowledge of refugee populations in Scotland</p>		
	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council will work with partners and stakeholders⁵³ to map current community groups, faith groups and refugee community organisations in Scotland; availability of community development support; and assessment of gaps in support</p>	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council will work with stakeholders to examine the engagement of Refugee Community Organisations in local and national policy and planning structures and develop practical measures to support more effective engagement</p>	
	<p>The Holistic Integration Service⁵⁴ will provide information to newly recognised refugees on opportunities to engage in their communities</p>	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council will work with stakeholders including Glasgow City Council, Community Planning Partnerships and Refugee Community Organisations to address gaps identified and explore the development of partnership projects and subsequent funding bids to provide community development support</p>	
	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council will work with stakeholders to enable refugees and people seeking asylum to have their voices heard in the Scottish independence referendum debate and support voter registration for those eligible to vote</p>		
		<p>The Scottish Refugee Council will work with partners and stakeholders to map current befriending opportunities and identify how gaps may be filled</p>	

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>2. Refugees live in communities that are safe, cohesive and, as a result, are welcoming</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Equality and Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Police Scotland</p> <p>Scottish Government</p>	Good practice in working with refugees by public authorities – under their duty to foster good relations – is disseminated by the Equality and Human Rights Commission	The Equality and Human Rights Commission work to assess the role of schools in fostering good relations includes specific consideration of refugees	
	Police Scotland will ensure that any national and local forums/networks concerning refugee interests and issues are included in its National Equality and Diversity Stakeholder Database	Ongoing	Ongoing
	Police Scotland will include refugee interests and issues in its Community Engagement and Public Reassurance Strategy	Police Scotland will review and develop, in consultation with refugee organisations, guidance for police who come into contact with refugee communities and issues that affect them, including distinct issues for asylum seekers	Ongoing
	Police Scotland will ensure that customised training/development for those in ‘high-impact’ roles at the interface of Police-Community relations equips participants to be more cognisant of refugee communities and some of the particular issues affecting them	Police Scotland will keep under review training and development at all levels to ensure role-specific knowledge and understanding of refugee and asylum issues	Ongoing
	Police Scotland will continue to develop appropriate knowledge, skillsets, and sensitive communications around its gender-based violence priorities, such as human trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation	Ongoing	Ongoing
	Police Scotland will ensure that its recruitment drives include appropriate targeting of new refugee communities, as part of its strategy of building a workforce reflective of the diverse population of Scotland	Ongoing	Ongoing
	The Scottish Government will consider the needs and specific issues facing refugee and asylum seeking women into the development of its Violence Against Women Strategy		

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
<p>3. Refugees have opportunities to engage in cultural activities and Scottish cultural life reflects the diversity of Scotland</p> <p>Leads:</p> <p>Refugee Week Scotland Steering Group (which includes: British Red Cross; CAMASS (Cameroonian refugee community group); Citizens Theatre; Glasgow City Council Education Services; Glasgow Life; Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network (GRAMNET); Maryhill Integration Network; Tron Theatre; Voluntary Arts Scotland)</p> <p>Scottish Refugee Council</p> <p>Creative Scotland</p> <p>Sports Scotland</p> <p>Glasgow Life</p> <p>Commonwealth Games Organising Committee</p>	<p>Refugee Week 2014 is used as a platform for refugees and the communities in which they live to engage in cultural activities and to highlight the contribution that they make to Scottish society</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
	<p>The Scottish Government will consider the participation and inclusion of refugees within the development of Scottish Government-led national events, such as the Year of Homecoming 2014</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
	<p>The Scottish Refugee Council will work with key national cultural and sporting bodies, such as Creative Scotland to ensure they are accessible to refugees and asylum seekers and provide increased opportunities for refugees to participate</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
	<p>Glasgow Life will inform and enable refugees to participate in local cultural and sporting activities in their local communities</p>	Ongoing	Ongoing
	<p>The Commonwealth Games Organising Committee will ensure the participation of refugees within the development and delivery of the Commonwealth Games 2014. Voluntary and community organisations will promote opportunities</p>		

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
4. Communities across Scotland have a better understanding of refugees and asylum seekers	National and local politicians take a key role in promoting refugee integration and speaking accurately about asylum and refugees	Ongoing	Ongoing
Leads: Scottish Government COSLA British Red Cross National Union of Journalists Scottish Refugee Council	The Scottish Refugee Council will host an event to bring together voluntary, public, faith and community bodies to map good practice in relation to: community awareness raising, work with particular populations (for example, schools, universities, trade union members) and wider communication activities	Launch of report and implementation of recommendations	
	The work of accurate journalism and fair reporting on refugee issues continues to be recognised by the Refugee Week Scotland Media Awards organised by the British Red Cross, National Union of Journalists and the Scottish Refugee Council	Ongoing	Ongoing



ANNEX A: MEMBERSHIP OF GROUPS

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CORE GROUP

Association of Chief Police Officers Scotland (ACPOS)/Police Scotland from April 2013

COSLA

Department for Work and Pensions/Job Centre Plus

Edinburgh City Council

Glasgow City Council

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health Board

Home Office

Institute for International Health and Development, Queen Margaret University

Refugee Women's Strategy Group

Scottish Government (Equality Unit)

Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Refugee Policy Forum

MEMBERSHIP OF THEMATIC GROUPS

Health - Tuesday 4 December 2012

* Attended the goals development meeting on Wednesday 29 May 2013 only

COMPASS Mental Health

COSLA

Department of Work and Pensions

Edinburgh City Council

Mental Health Foundation

NHS Health Scotland*

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde

NHS Lothian's Minority Ethnic Health Improvement Service

Refugee Women's Strategy Group

Scottish Government (Equality Unit)

Scottish Government (Health Directorate)

Scottish Refugee Council

Education - Tuesday 22 January 2013

* Attended the goals development meeting on Wednesday 29 May 2013 only

Anniesland College (now Glasgow Clyde College)

Colleges Scotland

COSLA

Edinburgh City Council (Children and Families Department)

Edinburgh City Council - Welcoming Group

Edinburgh College

Education Scotland

Glasgow City Council

Glasgow University - Academic

Refugee Women's Strategy Group

Scottish Funding Council

Scottish Government (Equality Unit)

Scottish Refugee Council

Scottish Refugee Policy Forum*

Skills Development Scotland*

University of Strathclyde - Academic

WEA Scotland

Housing - Tuesday 5 February 2013

* Attended the goals development meeting on Thursday 30 May 2013 only

Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers

Chartered Institution of Housing

COSLA

Glasgow City Council

Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations

Glasgow Homeless Network

Glasgow Housing Association

Homeless Action Scotland*

Housing Options - West Hub

Refugee Women's Strategy Group

Scottish Council for Single Homeless

Scottish Government (Equality Unit)
Scottish Government (Housing)
Scottish Refugee Council*
Scottish Refugee Policy Forum

**Employability and Welfare Support –
Tuesday 19 March 2013**

African Caribbean Network
COSLA
Department for Work and Pensions
Easterhouse Citizens Advice Bureau
Refugee Survival Trust
Refugee Women’s Strategy Group
Scottish Government (Equality Unit)
Scottish Government (Employability)
Scottish Refugee Policy Forum
Scottish Refugee Council
STUC
Volunteer Glasgow

**Communities and Social Connections –
Tuesday 23 April 2013**

COSLA
Framework for Dialogue
Glasgow City Council
Glasgow Integration Network Forum
Glasgow Life
Scottish Community Development Centre and
Community Health Exchange
Scottish Government (Equality Unit)
Scottish Refugee Council
Scottish Refugee Policy Forum Refugee
Women’s Strategy Group
Volunteer Glasgow

**Needs of Dispersed Asylum Seekers –
Tuesday 21 May 2013**

British Red Cross
COSLA
English as an Additional Language Service
Framework for Dialogue Groups
Glasgow Integration Network Forum/Maryhill
Integration Network
Glasgow University
Home Office

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
Refugee Survival Trust
Refugee Women’s Strategy Group
Scottish Government (Equality Unit)
Scottish Refugee Council
Scottish Refugee Policy Forum
SERCO







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