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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Health and Social Care Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Louise Long Corporate Director, (Chief Officer) Inverclyde HSCP</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>SW/41/2017/AH</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Refugee Resettlement</b>		

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To update the Committee on the current involvement in the Afghan and Syrian refugee schemes and the positive resettlement programme within Inverclyde.
- 1.2 To update the Committee on the national discussions regarding involvement with other schemes including the Vulnerable Children's Scheme and the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children's Scheme (UASC) Scheme.

## **2.0 SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Inverclyde is participating in two refugee resettlement schemes and since 2014 has resettled 18 Afghan families and 11 Syrian families. Currently 19 families are living within Inverclyde, with resettlement support provided by the HSCP Refugee support team.
- 2.2 The families have had a positive experience with resettlement within Inverclyde and actively participate within the local community and many community activities.
- 2.3 Discussions are ongoing nationally regarding the Vulnerable Children's Scheme and the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children's Scheme (UASC) scheme with regard to legal and financial aspects.

## **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That the Committee acknowledges the progress of the HSCP's commitment to the existing refugee schemes and the success of the resettlement to date, and notes discussions are underway to continue future involvement and potential expansion in the resettlement programme.
- 3.2 That the Committee agrees that officers continue to be involved in national discussions with regard to the future Schemes and that further reports be submitted as and when appropriate.

**Louise Long**  
**Corporate Director (Chief Officer)**  
**Inverclyde Health and Social Care Partnership**

## 4.0 AFGHAN AND SYRIAN REFUGEE SCHEMES

- 4.1 Inverclyde Council Policy and Resources Committee initially committed to support the resettlement of 12 Afghan families and 10 Syrian families through participation in the Afghan Locally Engaged Staff Ex-Gratia Scheme and the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.
- 4.2 Since 2014, a total of 29 families have been resettled in Inverclyde (18 Afghan and 11 Syrian) through these resettlement schemes. There are currently 39 adults and 29 children in the area, with the children's ages ranging from 11 months to 15 years. 10 Afghan families have left the area, for a variety of reasons including access to a larger Afghan community, greater job opportunities and closer geographical access to a mosque, rather than a prayer room.
- 4.3 Both schemes come with a viable financial support package from the Home Office and this helps to ensure that families are supported to integrate into the local community and are able to access appropriate services. The funding has been used internally to support the integration of the families and to establish an HSCP Refugee Integration Team comprising a co-ordinator and two support workers.
- 4.4 In terms of health care, all refugees are allocated to a GP Practice through an NHSGGC central allocation team within 2 days of their arrival, with registration for dental services arranged by the local refugee support team. As a number of the refugees have been resettled through the Vulnerable Persons Scheme, ongoing health and care needs have been identified, with these individuals being supported by a range of appropriate HSCP services.
- 4.5 A multi-agency Migration Steering Group, chaired by the HSCP, was established to ensure a cohesive partnership approach was taken to ensuring the resettlement programmes have been delivered. The families have settled well to life in Inverclyde with all of the children attending nursery or school and all are integrating and adapting. Funding has been utilised to help further integration of the adults into the community by providing English language support delivered by the Council's Community Learning and Development Team and West College Scotland.
- 4.6 In order to help further cohesion within the community, volunteering opportunities for local people to work with the refugees and for the refugees to be able to access volunteering opportunities is being supported by the local Volunteer Centre.
- 4.7 The families have engaged well and most have taken the opportunities to participate in a range of community projects and events including:
  - Working with Your Voice to bring both the local community and the new Scots refugees together, including the "Bazaar" event, two Eid celebrations, befriending etc.
  - Families attending cook school to learn about different types of food and cooking and being able to work towards food hygiene qualifications.
  - Computer classes on a regular basis to help teach families how to deal with new technology, including internet, e-mails etc.
  - Group sessions with staff from Financial Fitness, iHeat and Greenock Morton providing money and energy advice and sports activities to refugee family members.
  - Group activities with the Forestry Commission, including visits to Finlaystone Country Park and Eid in the woods in Falkirk; further events are being planned.
- 4.8 As there has been such a positive outcome to the resettlement, plans for increasing the number of families within Inverclyde will be the subject of a future report to Inverclyde Council Policy and Resources Committee.

## **5.0 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC)**

- 5.1 Following recent changes in central Government policy, there are now two principal schemes to which the Home Office is asking local authorities to become involved.

The first is the National Dispersal Scheme which involves dispersing 1,000 UASC, mainly from Kent, to local authorities across the UK. These are children who have made their own way to the UK and require accommodation and support. There is currently no legal mechanism which would allow for the transfer of UASC from a local authority in England to a local authority in Scotland. This has been raised with central Government and a suitable amendment to legislation is currently under active consideration.

The second scheme is the Vulnerable Children's Dispersal Scheme involving children from the Middle East and North Africa who may be with their parents or other adult relatives or friends of the family.

- 5.2 The funding for the dispersal of UASC fails to meet the actual costs involved in supporting and accommodating these young people. However the Home Office has recently commenced a review of funding for 18/19 to resolve this.
- 5.3 In order to plan for the potential for a future UASC programme within Inverclyde, officers from HSCP Children and Families service and the Refugee Support team have started to scope suitable resettlement models. Inverclyde HSCP is committed to providing the same high standard of care to UASC children and young people as they do for any Looked After child therefore the same good practice models will be applied.
- 5.4 At present Inverclyde's children and family services are at capacity with no space in any of the children's units and at times require to commission services outwith the Authority in order to accommodate the existing numbers of looked after and accommodated children within Inverclyde. UASC children may present with a different set of vulnerabilities and challenges than are currently seen and this, along with the capacity issues, would suggest any additional children deemed as UASCs would require to be accommodated within a different model.
- 5.5 A number of potential models of support have been discussed both nationally and locally with involvement from representatives from the Care Inspectorate with benefits and risks for each model available. Any services delivered would require to be approved and regulated by the Care Inspectorate; however they have intimated that they are willing to support Councils as much as possible and will be as flexible as they can in their approach.
- 5.6 Contact has been made with all foster carers known to HSCP Children and Families to ask whether they would be prepared to consider involvement in placing UASC children. There are no suitable foster carers available at this time and it is unlikely that any will be identified in the near future.
- 5.7 HSCP officers will continue to be involved nationally regarding the UASC schemes with a view to potentially supporting these vulnerable young people within Inverclyde in the future. This will be subject to a future report to the Council's Policy and Resources Committee.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **Finance**

- 6.1 None at this stage.

#### Financial Implications:

One off Costs

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

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

## Legal

- 6.2 The Home Office have powers contained in the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 to force local authorities to become dispersal areas for asylum seekers. To date, these powers have never been used. There are now similar powers contained in the Immigration Act 2016 in relation to UASC, however these will need affirmative resolution from Scottish Ministers before being enacted. Changes will also be required to child care legislation to allow UASC to be moved from local authorities in England to Scotland.

## Human Resources

- 6.3 No impact at this stage.

## Equalities

- 6.4 None at this time.

## Repopulation

- 6.5 Any participation in the schemes outlined will have a positive impact on the repopulation of the area.

## 7.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 N/A

## 8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 There are no specific background papers.