

Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Form

A) General Information

Name of service, function, policy (or other) being assessed

Strategic approach to refugees and asylum seekers

Directorate or organisation responsible (and service, if it is a policy)

Adults and Wellbeing

Date of assessment

2nd November 2017

Names and/or job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Amy Whiles, Refugee and Asylum Seeker Coordinator

Accountable person

Martin Samuels, Director Adults and Wellbeing

B) Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes:

The council was originally approached by the Home Office in 2015 to ask Herefordshire to become a dispersal area for the general asylum scheme. Further to ongoing communications over the past two years government is now seeking commitments from councils with increasing urgency and will be pressing Herefordshire for a commitment.

Herefordshire's original commitment to the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS) was to resettle 60 individuals. This pledge was fulfilled with the final family arriving in June 2017. The Home Office is asking councils who have fulfilled their

pledge to make a further commitment. The scheme appears to have gone well to date with no significant issues or pressures. The first Syrian families to arrive are nearing the end of their first year of orientation and support from Refugee Action and the council is finalising plans for more limited support for year's two and beyond.

If a further pledge to resettle refugees and / or become an asylum dispersal area is made this will impact on the resident population, including refugee families already resettled in Herefordshire under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVRPS), and any potential future refugees and asylum seekers, which may include people with any one of the protected characteristics.

The most common characteristics likely to be impacted on are in relation to race, religion or belief and disability.

C) Context - describe, in summary;

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| <p>The number of people and/or providers that may be affected by the proposal.</p> | <p>There are 60 refugees resettled in Herefordshire under the SVRPS. This included adults and children with a variety of impairments relating to their physical and mental wellbeing.</p> <p>A further commitment to refugee resettlement could see this increase by 40-60 further refugees.</p> <p>If ministerial powers are used to bring asylum dispersal to Herefordshire then there could in theory be up to 1 asylum seeker per 200 populations. The council are considering voluntarily participating so these numbers could be limited, initially to around 40 asylum seekers, and the demographic of the asylum population dispersed to Herefordshire influenced, initially to around 40 asylum seekers.</p> |
| <p>What are the values of the contract(s) affected by the proposal? (If appropriate).</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>What are the geographical locations of those that might be affected by the proposal?</p> | <p>It is likely that any further resettled refugees and / or asylum seekers would be accommodated in Hereford city or the immediate surrounding area.</p> |

D) Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

- a. Herefordshire Council's Adult Wellbeing Directorate
- b. Health services (e.g. CCG, Wye Valley Healthcare Trust, 2gether Trust)
- c. Refugee families
- d. Asylum seekers
- e. Police

E) What are the anticipated impacts of the proposal?

Positive impacts

Further refugee families could be supported in their integration by the established Syrian refugee families to develop their independence so that they have the skills and information required to live independently in the UK by the end of the 5th year of their resettlement.

The Home Office provides the local authority and health with funding to provide services for resettled refugees on government resettlement schemes.

The local communities are enriched by a more diverse population.

Negative impacts

Pressures on the housing market. The housing for refugee families would be sort from the private rental market. Housing for asylum dispersal would be sourced by the governments COMPASS contract provider G4S.

There is no funding associated to asylum dispersal as there is no direct impact on services. However, there may be indirect impact / pressures on policing, health, education and community resources.

F) With regard to the stakeholders identified and the diversity groups set out below;

| | <i>Is there any potential for (positive or negative) differential impact?</i> | <i>Could this lead to adverse impact and if so what?</i> | <i>Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason?</i> | <i>Please detail what measures or changes you will put in place to remedy any identified adverse impact.</i> |
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| Age | No | No. The strategic approach should not adversely affect people of different ages, refugees and asylum seekers could be of any age. | N/A | N/A |
| Disability | <p>Yes. The individual needs of any refugees resettled under the SVPRS will be considered before accepting a case allocation, for example whether there is suitable housing and capacity in the health system for any specialist health issues.</p> <p>Asylum seekers may have a disability or health need, but the council will not be directly involved in individual dispersal placements.</p> | <p>Yes. Some cases may not be accepted under the SVPRS if it is not deemed that suitable housing and services are available.</p> <p>Yes. There may be pressures on health and social care services if asylum seekers have any needs.</p> | <p>Yes. The council would not be fulfilling the requirements of the SVPRS if the individual needs of the refugees could not be met, for example wheelchair accessible accommodation, specialist health care not available in Herefordshire requiring long journeys to see specialists.</p> | <p>Any costs associated with adapting properties, social care needs and meeting health needs of those resettled under the SVPRS can be reimbursed through Home Office funding.</p> <p>By voluntarily participating in the asylum dispersal scheme the council will be able to inform the types of cases allocated to Herefordshire.</p> |

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| Race | Yes. The local demographics in Herefordshire evidence that 6% of the population describe themselves as not White British. Any refugees or asylum seekers will be part of a minority ethnic group. | Yes. Being part of a minority race category makes the refugees and asylum seekers more vulnerable to racial abuse or discrimination. | N/A | <p>Any issues or concerns will be highlighted to police and community cohesion colleagues as appropriate.</p> <p>The orientation and support service for refugees will support the families to appropriately respond to any racial abuse or discrimination they may face.</p> <p>Asylum seekers allocated are a case worker by the COMPASS contract provider (G4S in West Midlands), although it is understood that case worker support / interaction is minimal. The faith and community sectors are keen to support asylum seekers, although there is no funding to support this.</p> |
| Religion/ Belief / Non Belief | Yes. The refugee and asylum seeker schemes would encompass a range of people from different religious and political | Yes. Whilst quantitative data is not available it is believed that the Muslim families are in a minority religious category and are therefore more | N/A | <p>Any issues or concerns will be highlighted to police and community cohesion colleagues as appropriate.</p> <p>The orientation and support</p> |

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| | backgrounds. Those resettled under the SVPRS have to date been predominantly of Muslim faith. The Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children have come with a broader ethnic, political and religious background. The opportunity to meet the religious needs, for example places of worship and specialist food provision is limited in Herefordshire. | vulnerable to religious abuse or discrimination. | | service for refugees will support the families to appropriately respond to any religious abuse or discrimination they may face. Asylum seekers allocated are a case worker by the COMPASS contract provider (G4S in West Midlands), although it is understood that case worker support / interaction is minimal. The faith and community sectors are keen to support asylum seekers, although there is no funding to support this. |
| Gender | <i>No data available to allow analysis</i> | | | |
| Sexual Orientation | <i>No data available to allow analysis</i> | | | |
| Pregnancy / maternity | <i>No data available to allow analysis</i> | | | |
| Marital Status | <i>No data available to allow analysis</i> | | | |
| Gender Reassignment | <i>No data available to allow analysis</i> | | | |

G) Consultation

Please summarise the consultation(s) undertaken with stakeholders regarding this proposal

None

H) Additional information and / or research

Include here any references or other sources of data that you have used to inform this assessment.

Are there any gaps in your evidence or conclusions that make it difficult for you to quantify the potential adverse impact(s) of this proposal? If yes, please list them here

If you have identified gaps in your evidence or conclusions, how will you explore the proposal in greater depth? Or, if no further action is required, please explain why.

Information and research used:

- LGA Resettling refugees: support after the first year guide
- Facts and figures Herefordshire