

**Report of Head of Equalities**

**Report to Director of Communities and Environment**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

**Subject: Resettlement Programme (UKRS) – Additional Numbers**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary**

**1. Main issues**

- In September 2015 the Government announced the UK would resettle 20,000 refugees from Syria by 2020 through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme in response to the refugee crisis. Leeds made a commitment to support 225 from the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and 36 from the Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme over two years. Leeds met its pledge by March 2020. However, Leeds did exceed its pledge slightly due to a number of Family Connection cases.
- The Home Office have been consulting with Local Authorities across the country on increasing commitment for a further 18 months. Confirmation has been given from the Home Office that Funding will remain the same which is a 5 year tariff of £20,520 per person arriving with a top up for children (first year only) of £2,250 for 3 – 4 year olds and £4,500 for children aged 5 – 18 years.
- Leeds confirmed its commitment to continue to support individuals through the newly named UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS). The proposal was to accept up to 60 individuals for resettlement in Leeds in 2020/21, however due to COVID-19 there were no arrivals in 2020 and we are now seeking approval to accept the 60 individuals from April 2021 – March 2022.

The programme in Leeds has well established arrangements in place with the Communities Team taking full responsibility for delivering the programme.

## **2. Best Council Plan Implications** (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The work set out in this report contributes to the Best Council Plan Priorities of Safe, Strong Communities. Leeds is a growing and richly diverse city, with people of different ages, backgrounds, cultures and beliefs living and working alongside each other. As a City of Sanctuary, we celebrate this diversity and want Leeds to be a welcoming city for all, where people get on with each other and feel part of their local neighbourhood.

## **3. Resource Implications**

- All of the work-taking place across the council to support families on resettlement are being undertaken from the resettlement budget, as the resettlement programme is externally funded there are no resource implications arising from this report
- Migrant communities are valuable contributors to the city's economy, culture and diversity and Leeds aspires to ensure people are welcomed and supported. Leeds has a long-held commitment to support asylum seekers and refugees and is dedicated to being a city of sanctuary.

## **Recommendations**

The Director of Communities & Environments is requested to approve the resettlement of 60 individuals in 2021/22 through the UKRS.

### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to give an update on resettlement to date in Leeds.
- 1.2 Gain approval for additional numbers.

### **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds has a long history of migration. The city, in common with many other UK cities, saw significant levels of migration following the end of World War 2. At this time migrants predominantly came from Commonwealth countries and in particular the Caribbean, South Asia and parts of Africa. These migrants arrived to work in industry as well as parts of the public sector where there were shortages of labour.
- 2.2 On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2014 the Home Secretary made a statement to Parliament outlining the Government's intention to relocate 500 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees, displaced to neighbouring countries by the ongoing conflict to the UK. This initiative was known as the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme and was introduced on a similar basis to the Gateway Protection Programme that has been running for the past 12 years. A separate Afghan Locally Engaged Staff Relocation Scheme was established as part of the UK's military draw down in Afghanistan in 2013.
- 2.3 After the announcement the Government asked Local Authorities to volunteer to participate in the Syrian relocation programme and Leeds City Council was one of

those authorities who did agree to participate, agreeing to take part in both Syrian and Afghan relocation schemes. Leeds City Council agreed to take 50 people initially under these two schemes

- 2.4 On the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015, David Cameron announced that the UK would take an additional 20,000 refugees over the course of the current parliament and would be looking for local authorities to volunteer to take refugees in their area. In anticipation of the need to respond quickly the Leader of the Council confirmed Leeds' commitment to support the refugee crisis in a press statement. On the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 a further press statement was issued confirming that Leeds had established a newly-formed task force of senior officers from key partners to discuss how the city could best support plans to accommodate more refugees affected by the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East.
- 2.5 The specific proposal was received from the Government and the task force recommended that Leeds should take up to 200 additional Syrian refugees over the course of two years. All partners involved believed this demonstrated Leeds' firm commitment to do all that it could to support the refugee crisis and considered it to be a manageable number in terms of finding appropriate accommodation and meeting other needs such as school places and health needs.
- 2.6 To date over 27,000 people have arrived across all resettlement schemes. More than 310 local authorities across the UK have been involved.

### **3.0 Main issues**

- 3.1 The Home Office have confirmed from 2021 the new resettlement scheme will consolidate the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and the Gateway Protection Programme into one global scheme known as UK Resettlement Scheme.
- 3.2 MCHLG have confirmed that from 2021 this means that:-  
UNHCR will continue to identify the most vulnerable refugees  
The new resettlement scheme will consolidate the VPRS, VCRS and Gateway Protection Programme into one global scheme  
5,000 refugees will be resettled in the first year  
Continued partnerships with Local Authorities whose role is crucial in resettlement  
The 5 year £20,520 tariff for each refugee (this is the same amount as we currently receive)  
Local Authorities will still get the adult ESOL supplement and education top up
- 3.3 A new process for emergency resettlement will also be developed.
- 3.4 The council has supported 348 individuals through the current resettlement programme from 2015/16 to 2019. 50 of these are known as trailblazers as they arrived in 2015.
- 3.5 70 people left the programme October to December 2020 followed by an additional 90 leaving February to November 2021 totalling 160 people which is a significant decrease in numbers on the resettlement programme.
- 3.6 The council are committed to supporting the UKRS and it is proposed that an additional 60 individuals are supported through this scheme in Leeds in 2021/22

### **4.0 Corporate considerations**

## **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 Consultation has taken place with organisations who deliver services to families on resettlement, 60 people has been agreed as a manageable figure.

## **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 Supporting the UKRS is a significant aspect of equality and cohesion and this will be carefully considered during the delivery of the project. Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken on specific pieces of work as required.

## **4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 The work set out in this report to take an additional figure of 60 would play a key role in achieving the Council's ambition to build a compassionate city. The overarching aim of the Best Council Plan is 'Tackling Poverty and Reducing Inequalities'. The work set out in this report support the Best City Priorities of:-

Safe, Strong Communities

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Child-Friendly City

Age-Friendly Leeds

Housing

Culture.

Climate Emergency

4.3.2 Council policies and priorities will always be considered and processes adopted by the Council in relation to our approach to be a best city for communities.

## **4.4 Climate Emergency**

A specific focus on this emergency aims to embed sustainability considerations into all aspects of the council's equality improvement work. As such, there are no implications for the climate emergency resulting from this report. However, for any gender equality improvement work that takes place individual services will address this as part of project planning work.

## **4.5 Resources, procurement and value for money**

4.5.1 The resettlement programme including all the services referred to in this report are being undertaken with no additional resource implications arising from this report due to the programme being externally funded.

4.5.2 Funding is provided for the UKRS by the Home Office and there will be no budget implications for the council. The 5 year £20,520 tariff for each refugee will be retained along with additional funds per child in the first year of arrival.

## **4.6 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.6.1 There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report.

#### **4.7 Risk management**

4.7.1 There are no specific risk management issues with this report.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

5.1 This report demonstrates how the council is working together, across directorate teams and with partners to ensure people on resettlement are accommodated and supported the best way possible.

#### **6.0 Recommendations**

6.1 The Director of Communities & Environments is requested to approve the resettlement of an additional 60 individuals in 2021/22 through the UKRS.

#### **7.0 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.