Dear Ms McKelvie

Call for views on destitution, asylum and insecure immigration status in Scotland

I refer to your letter of 10 February and note below Aberdeenshire’s Council input to the questions posed.

As a public service provider, what support are you able to provide to asylum seekers and those with insecure immigration status. Also what are the main barriers to providing support in these circumstances?

There are very few asylum seekers and those with insecure immigration status in Aberdeenshire so demand is low and presents no issues or barriers at this point.

We'd also like to hear about how an asylum seeker or a person with insecure immigration status’ need for support is assessed and what would make this assessment process easier, please make reference to any policies and procedures within your organisation.

Not applicable

If your area does not have experience of asylum seekers or dealing with people with insecure immigration status, it would be helpful to know what training, policies, guidance or procedures are in place, or being developed, to address support should it need to be provided in the future.

In September 2015, Aberdeenshire Council committed to resettling up to 50 families via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons’ Relocation (VPR) Scheme. This was Aberdeenshire’s first experience of refugee resettlement and support. In November 2016, the public sector strategic group overseeing the Syrian VPR Scheme was refocused and renamed as the Aberdeenshire Refugee and Asylum Strategic Group. This group consists of key public services including NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, DWP and Aberdeenshire Council. Over the next six months this group will assess what policies, guidance and procedures are in place to address support for asylum seekers.

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Aberdeenshire Council is aware here have been discussions between the Scottish Government and the Home Office to increase the number of local authorities in Scotland involved in dispersal of asylum seekers, hence the desire to assess our current position and plan accordingly.

I hope this is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Business Services