Dear Ms McKelvie

CALL FOR VIEWS ON DESTITUTION, ASYLUM AND INSECURE IMMIGRATION STATUS IN SCOTLAND

I am writing in response to your letter of 10th February passed to me by Julie Murray, Chief Officer East Renfrewshire HSCP.

To date our only experience recently has been with the Syrian Refugees Resettlement Programme. A refugee is entitled to the same social and economic rights as any UK citizen. This includes access to medical treatment, education, housing and employment. Within East Renfrewshire we work closely with our local GPs, education and housing colleagues to ensure that appropriate arrangements are put in place as soon as families arrive locally. We have a named officer within the HSCP who links with other services to ensure that our approach is coordinated and families are offered additional support and guidance to settle locally.

We are working as part of the wider Council family and Community Planning Partnership to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are welcomed by our local communities. For example our council, jointly with Renfrewshire Council, organised a thought provoking holocaust memorial event led by our young people. This year the speaker was Amal Azzudin, a refugee from Somalia and best known as one of the "Glasgow Girls" - a group of seven school girls from Drumchapel High School who campaigned against dawn raids, detention and deportation of asylum seekers in Glasgow. She spoke eloquently about the contribution refugees and asylum seekers can make to local areas.

As an area which has not has significant experience of asylum seekers we can draw on the wider experience of colleagues in Glasgow through the NHSGGC family including the Asylum Health Bridging Team (AHBT) and Equality and Human Rights team. We are
aware that Scottish Government guidance supports the provision of full access to health, care and treatment for asylum seekers regardless of their stage in the asylum process. Within NHSGGC there is a GP allocation procedure which is based on address, GP list size and distance which is used for all asylum seekers and refugee allocation to GPs however the person can if they wish select their preferred GP practice and approach for registration.

Yours sincerely

Candy Millard
Head of Strategic Services