Hi

Please see response from Stirling Council below:

If your area does not have experience of asylum seekers, it would be helpful to know what policies, guidance or procedures are in place or being developed to address support for asylum seekers.

Stirling isn’t a dispersal area as a result asylum seekers in the area are unlikely to receive section 95 NASS support, if they do it is likely to be subsistence only support only relying on family or friends for accommodation. As a result contact with the council is limited and initial contact typically comes through a family member living in council accommodation or through contact with social services or education. Stirling’s participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme makes it more likely that asylum seekers may host more asylum seekers in the future.

Coordination and leadership

Support for refugees and resettled families including asylum seekers is managed through the Refugee Taskforce which meets monthly. The remit of the taskforce is to coordinate support for refugees in the area including arrival planning for resettled refugees and responding the UASC proposals and asylum dispersal. The taskforce includes council representatives from relevant services including education, social work and community safety along with representatives from the NHS and Police Scotland.

The taskforce takes responsibility for coordinating the planning process for the welcome of new refugees as well as coordinating ongoing support and advice. Day-to-day support and integration is managed by the Support and Integration Officer under guidance of the Lead Officer for Syrian VPR.

The Support and Integration Officer is responsible for coordinating the support needs which are common to all migrants including refugees and asylum seekers. These include:
- Access to English language learning opportunities
- The need to feel welcome and receive information and orientation to life in the UK and Stirling
- Access to advice and practical support
- Support and information regarding access to services
- Opportunities to integrate with the local population
- The need to understand their responsibilities
- The need for social support from people from their own culture/language background.

Access to statutory services

Stirling Council ensures that asylum seekers are supported with settling into the community and are able to access local services on an equal footing. Through coordination of the taskforce local services are monitored to ensure that new arrivals are able to access services without imposing undue pressure on any one area. The NHS acts as the lead organisation and are involved in planning at all stages of the process.

Awareness raising and social cohesion

Social integration is encouraged through accessing the ESOL/employment pathway developed to support families resettled in Stirling through the VPR scheme. This offers learners of low levels of English intensive language, IT and life skills support in order to integrate in mainstream provision. It also offers the opportunity to undertake supported work placement and volunteering activities to prevent deskillling and to enable a smoother transition into the labour market once papers are granted.
All new arrivals are offered the opportunity to benchmark their level of English and are provided with advice and guidance based on this result. Those with levels of English too low to access mainstream services are offered language support through the Employability and Adult Learning team of Stirling Council under a bespoke programme developed to support arrivals under the Syrian VPR Scheme. On reaching National 4 ESOL learners transfer to mainstream provision provided by Forth Valley College.

The Community Fire Safety Department offer home visits for newly settled families and Police Scotland are made aware of any new arrivals along with noted vulnerabilities.

The Community Safety Partnership and voluntary sector promote social cohesion measures and assist in integration. Information is provided where possible in the language of the service user and the council is able to provide interpreting services when required using in-house resources or external services.

New arrivals are offered the opportunity to be referred to Stirling Citizen’s for Sanctuary, a local 3rd sector organisation who offer material support as well as the support of a local befriender if requested.

On refugee status and move-on accommodation
Stirling currently provides no section 95 accommodation support and as a result has very few requests for move-on accommodation. Asylum seekers can however request move-on housing in Stirling on the granting of refugee status. Requests are handled using standard processes.

Many thanks

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