Miss Christina McKelvie, MSP  
Convener  
Equalities and Human Rights Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

Dear Ms McKelvie

Calls for Views on Destitution and Asylum in Scotland

Thank you for your letter of 31 January 2017. Following integration of health and social care, East Ayrshire Integration Joint Board has lead partnership responsibility for Primary Care services in Ayrshire and Arran. Our responses to the specific questions that the Committee would like input on are as below. This has been prepared in consultation with Housing Lead and Equalities Lead from East Ayrshire Council and the NHS Ayrshire & Arran Primary Care team.

As asylum seekers are entitled to access GP and hospital services the Board would aim to facilitate this by implementing a model of care which is best suited to the situation. This could potentially take the form of a local enhanced service for access to GP services if the asylum seekers are concentrated in one area or alternatively if the asylum seekers are located across the Board area then they would be entitled to register with a GP in that area and I understand that information sheets on how to register with a GP are provided to asylum seekers on entry to the UK in their own language where possible. The main barrier to securing a local enhanced service would be finding a GP practice to take on the provision of an additional service when GP practices are already stretched.

A person’s need for support in relation to health matters would be assessed by a GP who would then refer as required. As an organisation we have a commitment to equalities through our policies and procedures and have core values of “Safe, Caring and Respectful” although we do not currently have any policies or procedures specifically in relation to asylum seekers, they would get treated with respect through our mainstream policies.

The only experience NHS Ayrshire & Arran has in relation to asylum seekers was when a local hotel was identified as an emergency processing centre with 150 places.
As all of the asylum seekers were located in one place health care provision was provided within the centre via an Advanced Nurse Practitioner and a GP (from the police surgeon pool) with Out of Hours cover provided via NHS24.

This emergency processing centre operated over a three month period in 2015/16 although this was not without issues in relation to the care of the patients. The provider acknowledged the very high level of healthcare provided by NHS Ayrshire & Arran.

I hope this information is of help to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Eddie Fraser
Director