

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 27 February 2024

## Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Displaced People

Executive/routine  
Wards

### 1. Recommendations

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Committee is asked to:

- 1.1 note the range of support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people
- 1.2 note Edinburgh's existing commitment to resettling up to one hundred and fifty people per year under UK Government resettlement programmes subject to the availability of appropriate accommodation.

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## Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Displaced People

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report responds to the motion 'Employment Support for Refugees' as amended and agreed at Council on of 31 August 2023 and details the support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people in Edinburgh.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 In May 2015, the City of Edinburgh Council agreed to resettle twenty-five refugees in the first year of involvement in the UK Government's small-scale Syrian Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement scheme. In September 2015, the scheme was expanded to resettle twenty-thousand refugees over five years and the city committed to providing places for five hundred people (100 people per year) over that time.
- 3.2 In February 2022, Council agreed a revised commitment of between one hundred and one hundred and fifty people per year under UK Government resettlement schemes. This work has continued while the city has also responded to the humanitarian crisis resulting from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- 3.3 UNHCR identifies 36.4 million worldwide as refugees as of October 2023, less than 1% of whom are resettled every year.

### 4. Main report

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- 4.1 Edinburgh has supported delivery of UK Government resettlement schemes since 2015 when the Council agreed to engage with the Syrian Vulnerable People's Resettlement scheme. This built on previous city responses to humanitarian crises is Bosnia, Vietnam and stretching back through both world wars.
- 4.2 Since 2015 Edinburgh has:
- resettled 602 people under the Syrian Resettlement and subsequent UK Resettlement schemes (2015 – present)

- supported four community groups to resettle five households under the Community Sponsorship strand of resettlement (2017 – present)
- resettled 234 people under the UK Government’s Afghan relocation schemes (2021 – present)
- supported more than 11,000 Ukrainians to arrive through Edinburgh’s transport hubs of whom some 3,000 continue to live in the city (2022 – present)
- supported c.120 people with a refugee background who have arrived in Edinburgh outwith formal resettlement schemes

and currently:

- has supported 119 adults and 102 children with insecure immigration status and no recourse to public funds (NRPf) to date during this financial year
- supports 61 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- hosts 90 single male asylum seekers in two Edinburgh hotels managed by Mears Group (the Home Office’s asylum accommodation provider in Scotland).

#### 4.3 Support is coordinated by:

- the Refugee and Migration team within Children, Education and Justice services which works with households resettled under formal UK Government schemes, adults with no recourse to public funds and households with a refugee background arriving in Edinburgh outwith formal schemes
- the Ukraine Team within Housing, Homelessness and Fair work which works with Ukrainian displaced people
- a specialist Children and Family social work team which works with families with no recourse to public funds
- Children and Families practice teams and Throughcare and Aftercare which hold the remit for working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

4.4 The Council has no direct role with asylum seekers in the two Home Office procured hotels in Edinburgh. Support is coordinated by the Home Office’s accommodation provider in Scotland, Mears Group while people’s claims are being determined. At the point a claim is determined – positively or negatively – Mears refers hotel residents to the Council for support and advice in determining their next steps. Where people choose to remain in Edinburgh, the Refugee and Migration Team supports them as refugees with status or adults with NRPf as appropriate.

4.5 The specifics of support for resettled refugees is outlined in funding instructions issued by the UK Home Office. These instructions offer a framework for support which is consistent with the principles of the Scottish Government’s New Scots strategy and a template to which all support for refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people aspires albeit within different contexts of rights, eligibility and funding dependant on immigration status.

- 4.6 In return for funding provided by the Home Office, outlined in the Financial Impact section of this report, supporting authorities are expected to:
- liaise with the Home Office over arrival travel logistics and meet resettled households at their arrival airport
  - provide furnished accommodation provisioned with a culturally appropriate welcome pack of groceries
  - administer an initial cash allowance covering the period until benefit payments or any other source of income becomes available
  - provide interpreting services
  - provide ongoing casework including support for registration with health providers (GPs, dentists etc), schools, attending DWP appointments
  - support working age adults with access to employment services
  - arrange English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for adult learners including adult literacy classes where needed
  - deliver a programme of cultural integration activities.
- 4.7 Appendices 1 – 6 of this report describe the support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people in detail.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 Subject to further recommendation by Committee, work will continue as outlined in this report with amendments from time to time in light of changes to Government or Council policy and feedback from the communities we work with.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 Local authorities participating in UK and Afghan resettlement receive funding of £20,520 for each refugee resettled phased over three years for Afghan arrivals and five years for UKRS arrivals. This is supplemented by education funding of £2,250 for children aged 3 – 4 and £4,500 for children aged 5 – 18 on the day of arrival. Education funding is available for the first year following arrival only. These amounts remain the same as when the first Syrian scheme opened in 2015.
- 6.2 Different arrangements apply for people displaced from Ukraine and arriving in the UK under Homes for Ukraine/Scottish Super Sponsor schemes. Councils can claim £5,900 per new arrival (prior to 1 January 2023 this was £10,500) with an additional amount for education calculated centrally the UK Government. Local authorities also administer payments to hosts, currently £350 per month rising to £500 per month for any household hosted for more than twelve months. Local authorities bear the cost of administering these payments although the payments themselves can be reclaimed from the UK Government.

- 6.3 To date, this funding has proven sufficient to cover all core staff, interpretation/ translation, accommodation (including void), equipment and furniture costs as well as the ESOL and cultural integration partnership described at appendix 2.
- 6.4 Edinburgh's resettlement programme is underpinned by a six-year rolling budget which includes a financial exit strategy in case the UK Government were to change policy and cease resettlement or alter the funding arrangements. Any significant financial future changes and their implications will be reported to committee outlining the change and its implications.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 All the groups covered in this report are at risk of socio-economic disadvantage through a range of factors that include unfamiliarity with language and culture, disrupted education and career development and physical or mental trauma associated with their status as a refugee. The goal of resettlement as a process, the specifics of which are outlined in the appendices to this report, is to mitigate these risks to the fullest extent possible and enable people to live full, independent lives.

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 Resettlement services seek to mitigate climate impacts arising from its activities in the following ways:
- encouraging use of public transport through supporting applications for bus passes for all eligible clients
  - providing a bus pass for resettled clients who would not otherwise be eligible lasting one year from their resettlement to Edinburgh
  - encouraging active travel through referrals to Bikes for Refugees and provision of walking tours of Edinburgh organised by colleagues in Lifelong Learning
  - organising ESOL classes in a range of central and community venues across the city
  - retaining options for flexible working to colleagues and virtual appointments to clients developed during the COVID pandemic where appropriate
  - referring newly arrived clients to the Welcoming Association's Climate Change project for home energy advice.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 Refugee resettlement is managed with regard to potential for impacts on good community relations. Refugees resettled have reported a small number of negative community experiences but these have been rare and generally linked to periods of broader community tension (eg international conflict or reported terrorist attacks). In evaluation data returned to the Home Office in December 2023, the overwhelming

majority of adults resettled (95%) report they either definitely agree (71.5%) or tend to agree (23.5%) that their local community is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together.

- 9.2 The city's current Housing emergency (text of the Council decision at its meeting of 2 November 2023 included at appendix 7) is a material risk in terms of resettlement operations. The risk to Council homelessness duties is particularly highlighted in appendix 5 (Ukraine response) together with current and planned mitigations and Council's. The risk is recorded in the Ukraine Programme's risk register and consistently highlighted to the Scottish Government in programme discussions.
- 9.3 There is currently a lack of strategic coherence between the different humanitarian responses leading to increasing competition between the different programmes for local service capacity and exacerbating key pre-existing pressures. COSLA is progressing work to highlight this lack of coherence to UK and Scottish Governments and seek better coordination. Since the start of this calendar year, two strategic groupings in which the Council participates – one at a pan-Scotland level (the Asylum Partnership Board), one UK-wide (the Afghan Resettlement Local Authority Network) – have amended their remits to cover all humanitarian schemes local authorities are engaging with. Both are helpful first steps toward ensuring demands are considered in the round.
- 9.4 At local level, following a one-day event in November 2023 facilitated by the Council in collaboration with EVOG and Hibernian Community Foundation reflecting on the last seven years' experience of resettlement in the city, work has started on development of an Edinburgh strategy for support to asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people. This development is being taken forward on a partnership basis with the aim of linking to the Scottish Government's New Scots strategy. When complete, the strategy will provide an operational framework for Edinburgh and facilitate services that are better coordinated and more resilient. The work is at an early stage but elected members will be updated as the work progresses.
- 9.5 This strategy development work builds on the existing city-level communication and coordination of the Edinburgh New Scots Steering Group. Facilitated by colleagues working for and with Scottish Faith Action for Refugees, the group is open to all organisations working with refugees, displaced people and asylum seekers in the city.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 [Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee, 5 May 2015, Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme](#)
- 10.2 [Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee, 22 September 2015, Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme](#)
- 10.3 [Policy and Sustainability Committee, 25 February 2020, Refugee Resettlement](#)

- 10.4 [Policy and Sustainability Committee, 10 June 2021, Petition for Consideration, Resettle Refugees and Asylum Seekers from the Aegean Camps in Edinburgh](#)
- 10. [City of Edinburgh Council, 26 August 2021, Motion: Welcoming Afghanistan Refugees](#)
- 10.3 [Policy and Sustainability Committee, 22 February 2022, Refugee Resettlement](#)
- 10. [City of Edinburgh Council, 17 March 2022, Motion: Russian Invasion of Ukraine](#)
- 10.4 [New Scots Strategy](#)
- 10.5 [NRPF Guidance for Scottish Local Authorities](#)

## **11. Appendices**

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- 11.1 Appendix 1: Resettlement Support
- 11.2 Appendix 2: ESOL and Cultural Education support
- 11.3 Appendix 3: Employability Support
- 11.4 Appendix 4: Education/Schools Support
- 11.5 Appendix 5: Ukraine Support
- 11.6 Appendix 6: No Recourse to Public Funds Support
- 11.7 Appendix 7: Motion to the City of Edinburgh Council by Cllr Meagher - Housing Emergency

## Appendix 1 – Resettlement Support

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1. Each resettled household is allocated a Refugee Integration Co-ordinator (RIC) from within the Refugee and Migration Team (RMT) who will usually work with them throughout their period of support (five years for Syrian/UKRS schemes, three years for Afghan schemes). Over the first few weeks following arrival, the RIC will support family members to apply for benefits, register with a GP, open a bank account, register for school places and get to know their local neighbourhood.
2. Adults arriving under resettlement schemes have full entitlement to work and benefits from the day of arrival. The scheme provides for a resettlement grant of £50 per person per week until benefit or employment income starts. Households needing additional clothing are referred to the Edinburgh Clothing Store and/or Edinburgh City Mission's clothing bank.
3. Initial furnished accommodation is generally provided through the Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) although the MOD has released some surplus service accommodation for up to three years for use by Afghan households. In all cases, households are provisioned with food and household items sufficient to see them through their first week following arrival. The RMT then supports households to register with and bid for permanent housing through EdIndex. Each household receives a furnishing package funded through their resettlement scheme when they move from temporary PSL accommodation to their permanent tenancy.
4. All school age children are allocated places in Council schools where their learning is supported by the Council's English as an Additional Language service.
5. All adults are provided with a Lothian Buses pass for their first year following arrival to facilitate independence and become accustomed to using public transport. All eligible children and young people are supported to apply to the Young Person's Free Bus Travel Scheme.
6. In addition to day-to-day support, the RMT schedules monthly group sessions which offer information and discussion space on topics such as housing, legal rights and responsibilities, health service access, political rights and literacy and benefits.
7. Health issues are generally coordinated through families' GP however where it is identified that additional support is required to access health services or in relation to a particular health condition the RMT works with external partners including NHS Lothian's Minority Ethnic Health Improvement Service (MEHIS), the River's Centre (trauma counselling), BEMAS (disability).
8. Digital connectivity has been facilitated through liaison with external partners including the Edinburgh Remakery, Connecting Scotland, Princes Trust and Re-Act to ensure access for every household to laptops and/or tablets from arrival with computer skills classes offered by the Welcoming Association and the Salvation Army.



9. Additional to the core support offered through the Refugee and Migration Team, resettlement in Edinburgh has benefitted from the contribution of Edinburgh's third sector and wider civic society. Although not an exhaustive list, support has included:
- [Re-Act](#): provision of additional household items to families and particularly rucksacks containing age-appropriate items for all resettled children. Delivery of a men's mental health group in collaboration with Multi-Cultural Family Base
  - [The Edinburgh Clothing Store](#): clothing packs for new arrivals
  - Social events and cultural visits organised through the Edinburgh New Scots Steering Group and [Edinburgh City Mission](#): social events and cultural visits
  - Edinburgh New Scots Steering Group: discussion and coordination space for organisations contributing to refugee resettlement in Edinburgh
  - [The Welcoming Association](#) and Central Methodist Church: befrienders
  - [Multi-Cultural Family Base](#): providing additional support to children and families dealing with trauma through its Safe Haven Project and its men's mental health collaboration with Re-Act
  - [Bikes for Refugees](#): provision of bicycles, cycling equipment and training
  - [Edinburgh Remakery](#): provision of re-furbished laptops to refugee households
  - Big Hearts, Cricket Scotland, Spartans Community Football Academy: provision of sports-based activities
  - [C~urb PSL](#): provision of private sector leasing accommodation for newly arrived refugee households
  - George Heriot's: award of scholarships to children from refugee families

## Appendix 2 – ESOL/Cultural Integration Support

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1. English language teaching and cultural integration support is delivered through a public and third sector partnership. Council Lifelong Learning manages the programme which includes external activity recently re-procured and provided by the Welcoming Association and Saheliya.
2. In addition to managing the programme overall, Council Lifelong Learning undertakes the initial assessment of resettled people's language level and allocates places in appropriate level classes. Advanced English speakers and continuing learners are referred into Edinburgh College's mainstream provision.
3. To maximise convenience for learners, classes take place weekly in a range of venues. Across Resettlement and Ukrainian cohorts, face-to-face classes are currently held at Southbridge Resource Centre, St Brides, Carrickvale, Grassmarket, Leith Community Centre, Central Library, MacDonald Road Library, Royston/ Wardieburn Centre, Tollcross Community Centre and Oxgangs Library with a group for parents hosted by Tollcross Primary School. An additional six classes are delivered online each week.
4. Further initiatives delivered by Lifelong Learning include:
  - Family Learning: courses and events designed to promote families learning together and help parents find out more about how children learn and how they can support this learning. Courses help parents and children increase their confidence and improve their English through activities and talking supporting them to integrate in the communities and schools.
  - Family Learning Women's Support Group: ongoing weekly support group formed in response to requests for home tuition for prenatal and postnatal mothers. Enables women to come together and build supportive relationships with one another and provides an opportunity for the women to get out of the house and gain confidence on moving about during pregnancy or after their baby is born. Course focuses on everyday lives, providing a platform for learners to find out how the healthcare system works and signposts learners to other resources.
  - Sewing and English: sewing mixed with learning English offered to the Afghan and Syrian women in response to conversations with them around their interests and what they used to do before coming to the UK. Sewing sessions are delivered by Remode Collective and the Council's Family Learning tutor who facilitates the ESOL learning part of the session. Course considers learner needs such as dyslexia, physical disabilities and abilities, previous knowledge of sewing and the extent to which learners speak English. Throughout the sessions, all students are encouraged to talk in English and to help each other.
  - Music: a six-week music program for young people, featuring Ukrainian and Arabic speakers. This targeted program, with input from mainstream youth work teachers, yielded positive results, with three participants transitioning to the mainstream music provision – Totally Sound.

5. Funding to The Welcoming Association enables resettled people to access a further 11 community-based ESOL classes, informal conversation practice sessions and:
  - befriending: a one-to-one befriending service that links New Scots with local volunteers, aiming to boost confidence, enhance English conversation skills, and facilitate a smoother transition into their new lives in Edinburgh.
  - gardening at the Royal Botanic Garden: a weekly gathering to tend to The Welcoming's food-growing plot at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Participants maintain the garden, explore local and seasonal food, experiment with plant-based recipes, and enjoy quality outdoor time.
  - Scotland for newcomers: weekly visits to places of interest around Edinburgh, offering insights into Scotland's culture, geography, history, politics, and art.
  - cultural celebrations: regular involvement in or organisation of large-scale events for Nawroz, Eid, St Andrew's Day, and Burns Night as well as community events for climate change and the Refugee Festival.
  
6. Funding to Saheliya enables resettled women to access a further 3 weekly beginners' ESOL classes and integration into Saheliya's mainstream provision for more advanced learners in a women-only environment. Resettled women are also able to access the following Saheliya services:
  - weekly cultural integration workshops on a variety of topics and cultural celebrations under the theme of 'Life and Learning in Scotland' planned and delivered by ESOL Project Co-ordinator (PC) and supported by Language support workers
  - free crèche support for classes and cultural integration workshops
  - trips to places of interest such as historic and cultural sites and to attend community-wide events that promote learning and integration into the wider community
  - employability and well-being workshops
  - in-house complementary therapies and counselling.

## Appendix 3 – Employability Support

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### Resettled Households

1. Since 2016, the Refugee and Migration team has staged job fairs twice-yearly working with a range of employers and organisations including Fuse, Radisson Hotels, Edinburgh Leisure, Volunteer Edinburgh and Social Bite. Other initiatives have included:
  - Scottish Refugee Council employment schemes with Starbucks and Ikea
  - food hygiene courses in partnership with Cyrenians leading to a successful run of Syrian Supper clubs providing sessional employment and from which two clients have developed their own catering businesses
  - Skills Development Scotland (SDS) – bespoke course on rights of employees/responsibilities of employer developed and delivered to new arrivals
  - Skills Development Scotland Modern Apprentice scheme – bespoke course developed for young adults
  - bespoke workshops for young people with Princes Trust
  - Capital City partnership – job specific courses with guaranteed employer interview on successful course completion.

### Ukraine

2. The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) was instrumental in formulating a collective response to displaced Ukrainians forming a focused Ukrainian Employability group, meeting weekly to co-ordinate efforts. This included supporting arrivals through a triage of benefits advice and fast-tracked claims support from Department of Work and Pensions, wider welfare advice from The Advice Shop, and a warm welcome with the Edinburgh AUGB and supportive third sector services such as Maximise.
3. A dedicated Ukrainian Employability Co-ordinator post was established with weekly drop-in employability support sessions run at the Edinburgh AUGB and on MS Victoria in Leith. Employers from recruiting sectors were engaged with and short-term training programmes with guaranteed interviews put in place. Advice on qualifications conversation and recognition was offered by Skills Development Scotland to encourage access to higher paid sectors equivalent to the jobs many refugees held in the Ukraine.
4. More specific programmes were designed, including a partnership with Natwest and Code First Girls to offer 60 Ukrainian women training to become software engineers; and a skills programme with Balfour Beatty to fast track refugees into the construction industry with the correct tickets and onsite certificates.
5. The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) learnt from the work undertaken and used the allocation of Parental Employability Support funding to commission six family focused projects centred on refugees getting access to the support required. This was approved at the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee on 9 May 2023.

6. Further work is underway to develop more opportunities with wider partners to enable refugees to upskill, including with Mackenzie Wood and the project Talent Beyond Boundaries. Employability groups have also contributed to the national New Scots strategy refresh and the emerging local action plan response.
7. The Edinburgh Guarantee will have a dedicated referral resource to give long term support and referrals to all refugees and has a dedicated webinar to showcase employment opportunities.

### **Asylum seekers and adults with no recourse to public funds**

8. People claiming asylum are not normally permitted to work while their claim is being considered. The Home Office may grant an asylum seeker permission to work where their claim has been outstanding for more than 12 months through no fault of their own. Work in such cases is restricted to employment on the shortage occupation list published by the Home Office and updated from time to time. If an asylum seeker's claim is subsequently refused and they have exhausted all appeal rights, permission to work comes to an end. Labour market access for asylum seekers who are successful in their asylum claim is unrestricted.
9. The position for people with NRPF is more complex with some but not all having the right to work depending on visa and status. Securing employment can therefore be a route out of NRPF-related destitution for some. Where someone with NRPF is identified as not in employment but having a right to work they are linked into one of the initiatives referenced in this appendix.
10. For those who do not have the right to work – asylum seekers or adults with no recourse to public funds – volunteering is open to them as an option and actively promoted through links with partner organisations such as Volunteer Edinburgh, the Welcoming Association and Project Scotland.

## Appendix 4 – Education/Schools Support

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### Context

1. All children and young people are entitled to education (UNCRC Article 28). For refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people, school plays an important part in enabling children to settle down and have a predictable routine which will gradually help them believe they are now safe.
2. The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Team (part of the Additional Support for Learning Service) provides universal and targeted support in primary and secondary schools and specialist provisions, and training and consultation in Early Years settings. EAL Teachers advise and support with all aspects of meeting the needs of developing bilingual learners, including refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people. The provision covers: transitions (new arrivals, nursery to P1, P7-S1 and post-16); learning, teaching and assessment; partnership with parents; and supporting wellbeing, inclusion and equality.
3. Over the past eight years, the number of refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people has increased: 2015 saw the beginning of the Syrian Resettlement Programme; in September 2021 we welcomed our first Afghan refugees. From April 2022 onwards, we worked with Social Work, the Dnipro Kids Charity and Edinburgh College to support a group of care-experienced children and young people from Ukraine. In August 2022, we set up a specific project to provide additional support for the unprecedented number of Ukrainian displaced children and families (see below). In addition to refugees arriving through UK and Scottish Government programmes, we continue to welcome refugees and asylum seekers who arrive outwith these programmes, including unaccompanied young people. See Table 1 for number of refugee and asylum-seeking children by language spoken 2020-23.

### Universal support

4. Training and guidance: building on generic training on trauma-informed practice, nurture approaches and EAL inclusive practice, the EAL Team offers specific training on working with refugees and asylum seekers. We also signpost to external training and resources by organisations such as the Bell Foundation, Refugee Education UK and the UK Trauma Council. In addition, we have developed specific guidance for Edinburgh schools on working with refugee children and families, covering areas such as enrolment, welcoming refugee new arrivals in class and whole-school approaches.
5. School placement and on-site provision: the EAL Team works with Senior Education Officers and the Refugee and Migration Team to find school places for refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people. In the autumn term 2021, we set up on-site learning in a hotel for a group of Afghan children and young people as it was uncertain how long they would be staying in Edinburgh and the location of the hotel did not allow for attendance at school. This group of families then moved out of Edinburgh, returning in January 2022 to central hotel accommodation in Edinburgh. The EAL

Team worked closely with the Refugee and Migration Team to support enrolment into their catchment schools and later supported further transitions when these families moved into longer-term accommodation.

6. Enrolment, transition and ongoing advice: EAL teachers support school leadership teams and teachers with enhanced enrolment and planning for refugee learners, taking account of individual factors such as previous experience of formal education, literacy in first language and possible trauma. This includes support and guidance for working with parents so that they can be fully involved in their child's education and the life of the school and wider community.

### **Targeted support**

7. Bilingual Support Assistants (BSAs) support learners in the early stages of English language acquisition to access the curriculum, support good home-school communication, support wellbeing and advise on cultural matters. Bilingual support is available in the following languages spoken by refugee learners and families: Arabic, Kurdish, Russian and Ukrainian. Beginner English language learners who start their education in secondary can attend a twice-weekly class in a small group setting. For older learners who have not previously acquired literacy in any language because of limited or interrupted education, we offer an individualised English literacy programme.
8. In addition, EAL Teachers work with Support for Learning Teachers, class teachers and other professionals to identify and plan support for refugee learners who have other Additional Support Needs, including complex needs.

### **Working with partners**

9. EAL Teachers work with a range of partner services to support refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people. Partners within the Council include the Refugee and Migration Team and CLD (Adult and Family Learning). Other partners include e.g. SDS (Skills Development Scotland), Edinburgh College, MCFB (MultiCultural Family Base) and The Welcoming Association.

### **Ukraine**

10. An EAL Teacher (Russian speaker) has been seconded since August 2022 to work alongside a Senior Education Officer to provide specific advice and support for Ukrainian children and families and for schools, especially those welcoming large numbers of Ukrainian children and families. This work has included:
11. Support for school placement:
  - setting up a centralised school placement system to manage the large number of requests for school places and provide a better experience for families

- working with colleagues in other local authorities to support families to find a new school when they moved out of Edinburgh, ensuring that support for vulnerable learners continued
- supporting families with moving school within the authority when they were rehoused
- supporting families to apply for P1 and S1 places, especially where there were difficulties because of their living situation, and working with the Transactions Team to resolve difficulties.

## 12. Pupils with significant Additional Support Needs

- Working with a small number of families, schools, Health and other partners to provide intensive support for children and young people who have significant or complex Additional Support Needs. This has included working on the MS Victoria, primary and secondary schools, in hospital and in alternative provisions such as Forest Schools
- Working with other practitioners to ensure appropriate support in mainstream, alternative or specialist provisions, including attending child planning meetings.

## 13. Family Support

- Supporting families with education-related questions
- Supporting families to understand support options and referral to appropriate services
- Intensive support for more vulnerable families, in collaboration with Barnardo's
- Working with People Know How to set up support for Ukrainian parents-carers to learn basic IT skills to enable them to communicate with schools and other services
- Supporting two-way communication between schools and more vulnerable families
- Visiting families onsite in hotels, providing reassurance, gathering detailed information about children's education needs, experience and possible trauma to help them get the best start possible in school

## 14. Collaboration with Ukraine Welcome Hub (UWH) staff and other Local Authorities

- Regular communication with the UWH team about housing to ensure timely school placement when families are moved to new accommodation
- Training for new staff at Welcome Hub - Working with refugees – a person centred approach
- Providing information to the UWH team on particularly vulnerable families to be prioritised for continuity (ie remaining in Edinburgh) when Ukrainian families were being moved out of the city
- Contact with colleagues in other local authorities to ensure smooth transitions and that learners remain in education
- Responding to requests from Welcome Hub staff for information and support with education-related questions.



## 15. Information and training

- Provided information sessions for Ukrainian families about the Scottish education system, including translated information
- Regular sharing of relevant information with schools and the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Team
- Training sessions for school staff from Ukraine (and other countries) who are new to Scotland
- Regular visits to the MS Victoria, with an open-door surgery
- Support for families' education-related questions during preparation for disembarkation from MS Victoria.

## 16. Attendance

- Information and support for families whose children have low attendance at school.
- Working with schools and families to facilitate attendance at online Ukrainian schools, sometimes involving an adjusted (Edinburgh) school timetable to support attendance at both schools.

## 17. ESOL / Adult Learning / SDS (Skills Development Scotland)

- Working with SDS (Skills Development Scotland) and young people to explore post-school options and help the young people understand and navigate the system
- Working with CLD - Adult & Family Learning to promote opportunities for young people and parents, including setting up an ESOL class for parents-carers in one school with a large number of Ukrainian learners.

## 18. Other

- Worked with George Watsons College to deliver weekly Health and Wellbeing Days for Ukrainian learners who either did not yet have a school placement or were struggling to settle in school (March to June 2023)
- Working with Media Education to select young people who would benefit from taking part in film-making projects
- Working with schools and charities to get donations such as clothes, books, scooters and Christmas presents for families.

**Table 1: Number of refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people, by language spoken, 2020 - 2023**

Language	Nov. 2020	Feb. 2022	Jan. 2023	Dec. 2023
<b>PRIMARY</b>				
Arabic	169	203	222	196
Kurdish	22	30	30	32
English	16	21	25	26
Polish	12	8	7	7
Turkish	5	7	7	9
Bengali	0	6	5	6
Dari	0	3	33	26
Farsi/Iranian/Persian	*	7	7	7
Pashto/Pashtu/Pushtu/Pushto	0	*	20	18
Russian	*	6	65	43
Romanian	*	*	7	5
Ukrainian	0	0	224	139
Yoruba	*	*	6	*
Other (less than 5 speakers, incl.*)	38	21	18	39
<b>Primary total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>312</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>553</b>
<b>SECONDARY</b>				
Arabic	110	130	145	156
Kurdish	13	15	19	24
English	11	13	20	12
Bengali	6	*	*	*
Polish	5	7	10	13
Turkish	5	6	11	9
Dari	0	0	20	16
Farsi/Iranian/Persian	*	*	*	*
Pashto/Pashtu/Pushtu/Pushto	0	0	28	18
Russian	*	*	64	48
Ukrainian	0	0	167	130
Other (less than 5 speakers, incl.*)	17	16	27	23
<b>Secondary total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>511</b>	<b>449</b>
<b>SPECIAL</b>				
Arabic	*	*	5	*
Other	*	*	6	8
<b>Special total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Total all sectors</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>1,198</b>	<b>1,014</b>

\*indicates fewer than 5 speakers

## Appendix 5 – Ukraine Support

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1. In March 2022, the Council established a project team to manage Edinburgh’s response to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and in early 2023, CLT agreed to formalise this support service for a minimum 18 – month period. The response has encompassed activity at international, national and local levels and involved the deployment of significant resource by the Council and partners across the public, private and third sectors. Action has focussed around:
  - coordination of and contribution to international aid to Ukraine and the displaced Ukrainian diaspora in neighbouring countries
  - support for Ukrainian Displaced People (UDPs) arriving through the Edinburgh Hub and into onward accommodation either in Edinburgh or other local authority areas across Scotland
  - support for UDPs living in Edinburgh in Scottish Government procured temporary accommodation and where in hosted accommodation to them and their hosts.
2. Work has been coordinated through a multi-agency oversight group chaired by the Ukraine Support Service Manager with representation from relevant Council services and partners in the statutory and third sectors.
3. One of the first actions in the city’s response, and at the request of the Scottish Government, was to set up a Welcome Hub for arrivals to Edinburgh. Originally envisaged as one of four equal Welcome Hubs across Scotland, Edinburgh quickly became the main arrival point for Scotland. With the support of RBS/Natwest, the Welcome Hub was established at Gogarburn House opening in early April 2022 before moving to a new facility at the Vega Building in July 2023
4. This welcome operation which is still ongoing fits within the following national and local context. Information correct as of data published November 2023:

National Context (data from UK Government):

  - 46,643 applications for Homes for Ukraine and Super Sponsor visas in Scotland
  - 39,194 visas issued
  - 25,891 arrived in the UK (although not necessarily to Scotland)
  - Over 3,000 people in temporary hotel accommodation across Scotland
  - 13,303 people with visas who could still travel through the Super Sponsor Scheme
  - Unknown numbers could still travel via Homes for Ukraine as this visa scheme remains open

Local Context (data held by the Council January 2024)

  - 11,084 people arrived through the Edinburgh Welcome Hub at Gogarburn.
  - Since the end of September 2022, arrival rates have slowed significantly, averaging around 30 - 40 people per week. We continue to have no advance intelligence, so arrival numbers and timing remain unpredictable.

- An estimated 1000 households known to be living in Edinburgh:
    - 224 households in hosted accommodation
    - 460 households in Scottish Government bridging accommodation
    - 30 households in Council Social Housing
    - Estimated 100 households in friends and family / privately matched accommodation
    - Estimated 100 -150 households in private / mid-market rental
    - 27 households in Council Temporary accommodation.
5. There is no comprehensive or robust data available on the number of Ukrainians now living in Scotland or Edinburgh. We consider the Edinburgh data to be an undercount and estimate the true number is in excess of 3,000 people.
  6. The lack of a clear long term national accommodation strategy present a substantial risk to the Council's homelessness duties if long term settled accommodation options are not identified within the City, City Region and Nationally. The Council have been clear with the Scottish Government, that until such time as a long-term national accommodation strategy is confirmed, the Scottish Government must continue to provide and fund short term accommodation options within the city and nationally. This accommodation would include continuation of hotels and apartments.
  7. In Spring 2023 the Scottish Government announced a Ukraine Long Term Resettlement Fund where Scottish Ministers approved up to £50 million that would be available as a capital grant to Local Authorities (LAs) and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Through this Fund, the Scottish Government was to work with LAs and RSLs to increase the number of homes available to support the longer-term resettlement of UDPs.
  8. The Council successfully submitted a £1.72m bid to bring 100 Void properties back into use through this fund, however subsequent bids for off the shelf new build opportunities have been unsuccessful through this fund and a further 44 units were purchased using alternative funding. Work is ongoing with Scottish Government officials to address this. There are 4 main agreed funding sources to support the Council's Ukraine response:
    - Warm Scottish Welcome Funding
    - Homes for Ukraine Local Authority UK Government Tariff Funding
    - UK Government Housing and Homelessness Prevention Fund
    - UK Government Department for Education Tariff Funding.
  9. The Ukraine Support service developed a 3-year budget profile using year 1 funding only as at that stage there was no guarantee of further funding in future years. This subsequently been confirmed at the announcement by the Scottish Government on the 2024/25 budget. Local Authorities were also informed that expected Warm Scottish Welcome Funding for 23/24 was also to be withdrawn.

## Appendix 6 – NRPF Support

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1. No recourse to public funds (NRPF) is a condition applied under the UK Immigration Rules. People who have NRPF are unable to access a defined list of funds which covers most mainstream social security benefits and are ineligible for an allocation of Council housing.
2. Having NRPF significantly increases the risk of someone falling into destitution. The Council has powers and duties under Social Work and Children’s legislation to support vulnerable people with NRPF; this support forms a vital last resort safety net.
3. Two specialist Council teams support people with NRPF, a family team based within Children’s Services and an adults’ team within Safer and Stronger Communities. To date, during financial year 2023/24, the Council has supported one hundred and nineteen households with NRPF: seventy-three single adults and forty-six adults with a further one hundred and two dependent children. Projected costs to the Council for this financial year are £1.8m.
4. Adults are assessed for support on the basis that:
  - they are taking active steps to regularise their residency status through an asylum or other appropriate visa application
  - they are destitute and have no means of supporting themselves financially
  - they have a community care need or characteristic that makes them additionally vulnerable (eg age, disability, previous victim of domestic or honour-based violence)
  - there is an active barrier to return to their country of origin either rights based (eg a live immigration application or potential for their human rights being compromised) or practical (eg lacking appropriate identification/travel documentation).
5. Support typically comprises a combination of:
  - a weekly allowance for living expenses of up to £65 weekly for single adults and £49.18 (current UK asylum rates) per person for families
  - accommodation: usually temporary bed and breakfast accommodation with associated cost, availability and quality challenges although both family and adults’ services can access a small number of Council/RSL properties with rent paid by the Council under relevant social work or children’s act legislation.
  - support to identify an appropriate route out of destitution including access to services such as legal advice, language learning, volunteering or means of returning voluntarily to country of origin.
6. NRPF cases can generally only be resolved through extensive coordination with the Home Office and a person’s legal representative. Decision-making timescales can be lengthy; current average is two and a half years. Home Office decisions are frequently challenged and the average masks significant outliers. Lack of legal capacity can also delay progression of cases significantly adding to Council support costs.

## Appendix 7 – Motion to the City of Edinburgh Council by Cllr Meagher – Housing Emergency

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At its meeting on 2 November 2023, the City of Edinburgh Council considered the above motion by Cllr Meagher. In response to the motion ([item 8.4 in the meeting agenda](#)) Council agreed:

- 1) To note the acute nature of Edinburgh’s homelessness crisis, with approximately 5000 households in temporary accommodation, the highest number in Scotland.
- 2) To note the severe shortage of social rented homes, with approximately 200 bids for each property advertised through Edindex and additional pressures for accessible and family homes.
- 3) To also note the impact the lack of accessible homes had on other service areas within the Council, including Health and Social Care.
- 4) To note the increasing pressure within the private rental sector, with the highest rental inflation in the United Kingdom at 13.7%.
- 5) To note additional pressures on the social and private rental sector from the increased demand in accommodating refugees from conflicts around the world, many of these conflicts becoming long term with refugees unable to return home and rightly seeking and being provided with permanent accommodation.
- 6) To note the increased demand from the removal of the local connection rules meaning that anyone in Scotland and, in certain circumstances, people elsewhere in the UK could present themselves as homeless in Edinburgh.
- 7) To note the pressures on the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sector, with RSLs report finding themselves unable to develop future housing due to the financial constraints of the rent cap and increasing interest rates, meaning that it was impossible for them to set out a rental business plan that would increase future rents in line with costs. This was despite the range of Council efforts to tackle structural pressures including, but not limited to:
  - a) The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
  - b) Development of an Affordable Housing Policy
  - c) Development of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan
  - d) Lobbying Scottish government for additional, and targeted, funding
- 8) To note the importance of collaborative working, and further note the importance of engaging with tenants’ organisations and third sector groups involved with homelessness support in order to take a human rights-based approach to future work.
- 9) To therefore, agree to declare a Housing Emergency; agreeing to work with, Council Officers, existing third sector partners, external organisations such as SHAPE, Shelter Scotland and Cyrenians and Health and Social Care partners, with the goal of establishing a Housing Emergency Action Plan to build on and consolidate existing actions.

- 10) To note that other RSL partners were experiencing difficulties, and to express concern at recent media reports that Harbour Homes (formerly Port of Leith Housing Association), which was a landlord of over 3,000 properties and partner of strategic importance, were halting new development and examining other ways to control costs due to rising costs and high rates of interest and inflation.
- 11) To invite contributions from Registered Social Landlords and the Planning directorate to participate, as well as any relevant input from the Planning Convener, Housing Convener, and members of both committees.
- 12) To request progress monitoring regarding the efficacy of the Housing Emergency Action Plan to come to the Housing, Homelessness, and Fair Work Committee through regular updates and agree that the structure and reporting schedule of this additional Plan would be discussed in a workshop environment with the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee to ensure that the Action Plan did not duplicate existing strategies or reporting.
- 13) To request that the council leader write to the First Minister, the Deputy First Minister, the housing minister, the Minister for Zero Carbon Buildings, Active Travel, and Tenants Rights and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, outlining the actions council was taking to address the housing emergency, and seek additional resources to help meet the severe challenges.
- 14) To also agree that, in writing to the First Minister, the Deputy First Minister, the housing minister, and the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, the Council Leader also ask that guaranteed resources be made available to accommodate the current unfunded consequences of UK / Scottish Government immigration and asylum policy and outline the need for a coherent partnership approach to be taken to manage humanitarian programmes going forward.
- 15) To agree as well as the actions outlined above to address some of the issues the Council also needed to address significant issues including the 41% drop in the affordable home construction pipeline recorded in the last year, the Council's decision to remove £1.3 billion of investment from the Council House building programme as part of the 2023-24 Council budget and the 10% increase in empty Council properties under the last year with nearly 1,500 Council homes still empty that could have been used to house residents in need.
- 16) To reaffirm that Edinburgh should be a safe and welcoming place for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- 17) To recognise that, owing to the climate crisis and war and conflict across the world, there would be an increase in the number of people seeking asylum, and that the UK had a moral duty to welcome people fleeing their homes.
- 18) To recognise that adequate resourcing needed to be in place within the Council to ensure that it could continue to support refugees and asylum seekers to find a safe home in the city.
- 19) To understand that UK and Scottish Government policy regarding refugees and asylum seekers would impact on the number of homeless presentations the Council

might experience, and that additional resources would be required to accommodate this.

- 20) To therefore, agree that the needs of refugees and asylum seekers must be integrated in the Action Plan.