

Appendix A

Resettlement

2025- 2027



Introduction

Our ambition is for Aberdeen to be “a place where all people can prosper regardless of their background.” At the heart of this, is a commitment to tackling poverty and inequality and supporting the city’s people, including New Scots, to live healthy lives.

Through an understanding of the needs of those who settle in the city, as well as the services and interventions that are provided, the Council’s suite of strategies and plans aims to identify the things that will bring most benefit to people and commit to evidence based and effective future actions.

The focus for our strategies and plans is on improving outcomes across five themes of the social determinants of health:

- Education & Lifelong Learning
- Economic Stability
- Communities & Housing
- Neighbourhood & Environment
- Health & Social Care

New Scots

‘New Scots’ is an inclusive term and refers to people living in Scotland who have been forcibly displaced or are making a claim that they have a well-founded fear of persecution. The term ‘New Scots’ includes people who have been granted refugee status or another form of humanitarian protection, and their dependents; people seeking asylum and people seeking protection because of displacement, exploitation or political persecution; as well as those whose application for asylum has been refused, but who remain in Scotland.

Note: The report does not apply to Unaccompanied Asylum- Seeking Children (UASC) who have arrived either through the National Transfer Scheme or been a spontaneous arrival via the adult asylum system nor those who present with no recourse to public funds due, for example, to expired visas. It also does not apply to international students.

The population of New Scots

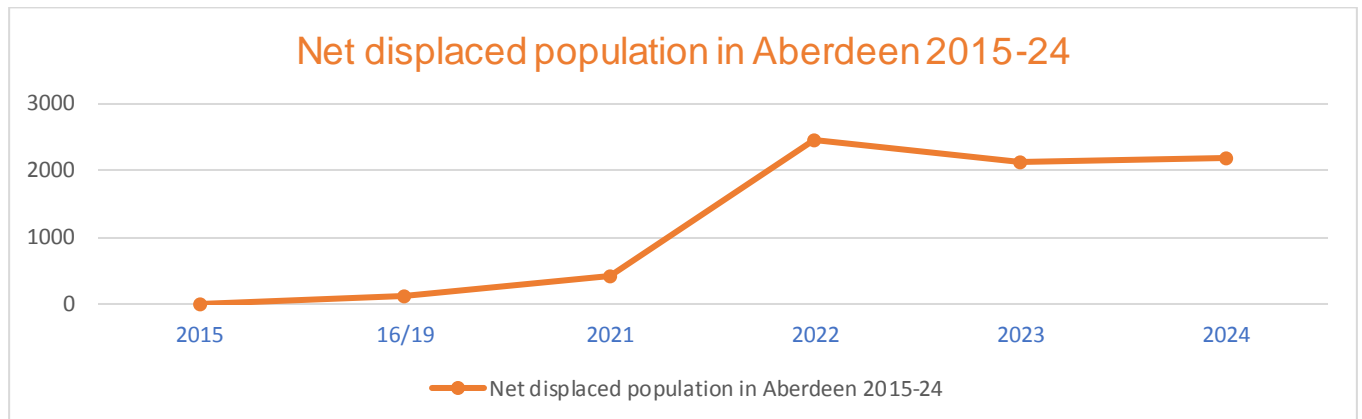
The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR, 2023) reported that in 2023, more than 117 million people worldwide fled their homes due to conflict, persecution and human rights violations, which was an increase of 9 million compared to the previous year.

The UK Home Office reported in the year ending September 2024:

- 89,250 grants of leave were offered via safe and legal (humanitarian) routes to come to, or remain in, the UK and,
- 99,790 asylum applications were made. The number of people claiming asylum has more than doubled since year ending September 2021.

Along with other Local Authorities across the UK, Aberdeen has strived to meet the challenges presented by the rapid influx of displaced people seeking support and refuge and is currently

home to over 2,000 displaced people, having witnessed a ten-fold increase in arrivals over the last 3 years.



Source: HO and SG Funding/Quarter returns.

This increase in migration should be viewed against the backdrop of falling population levels within the City, declining birth rates and an aging population as well as continuing reductions to public services leading to critical pressures, particularly in relation to housing supply, an increase in homelessness presentations, lack of school places and the provision of primary care and mental health services. New Scots, who are successfully supported to thrive in our city, could greatly aid the local economy and enable Aberdonians to continue to benefit from a culturally diverse society.

We are fully committed to supporting the UK's programmes, both from a humanitarian perspective as well as recognizing the economic and diversity benefits New Scots bring to Aberdeen. Our commitment is illustrated by our participation in the following:



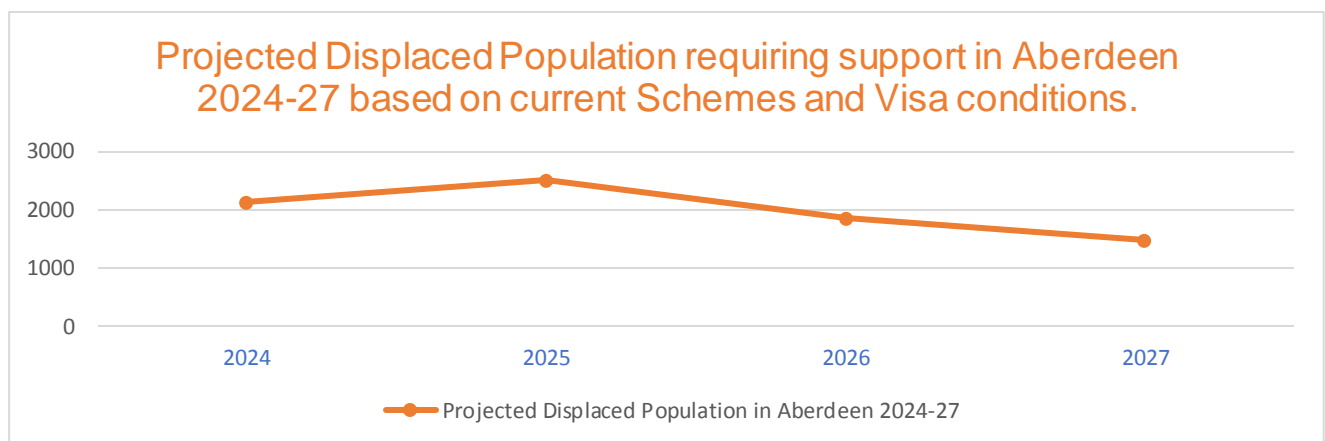
In addition, support is offered to Asylum Refugees who are those who have received a positive asylum decision and gain the same rights and entitlements as refugees, including recourse to public funds. There has been an acceleration in decision-making over the last 6 months and this is expected to continue at pace.

Scenario Planning

The number of displaced households making Aberdeen their home is projected to increase by circa 20% over the next 12 months due to the National Dispersal Accommodation Plan V2 which will increase the number of dispersed bedspaces in the city, asylum decisions and United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme and Afghan arrivals. There is also the possibility of an upturn in Ukrainian arrivals due to visa changes which require residency in the UK as a prerequisite for extending current visas for a further 18 months.

Beyond 2025, a shift in population numbers requiring support is anticipated, dependent on whether the Homes for Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme is further extended or not. There are 2 potential population scenarios:

Scenario 1: No extensions to the Ukrainian Schemes



This population scenario assumes:

- No further extensions are granted for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and those currently here will be required to leave based on their visa expiration date. Current expiration dates commence late 2026.
- New arrivals via the Homes for Ukraine schemes continue at current levels.
- Increased demand from the arrival of Afghan households and a shift towards assisting those on United Nations Refugee Agency programmes, namely Afghan and Syrian households.
- Increased demand from Asylum Refugees due to accelerated decision making, continued growth in the asylum-seeker population and a marked shift in focus from Contingency Hotels (CA) to asylum -seekers being based in dispersed accommodation.

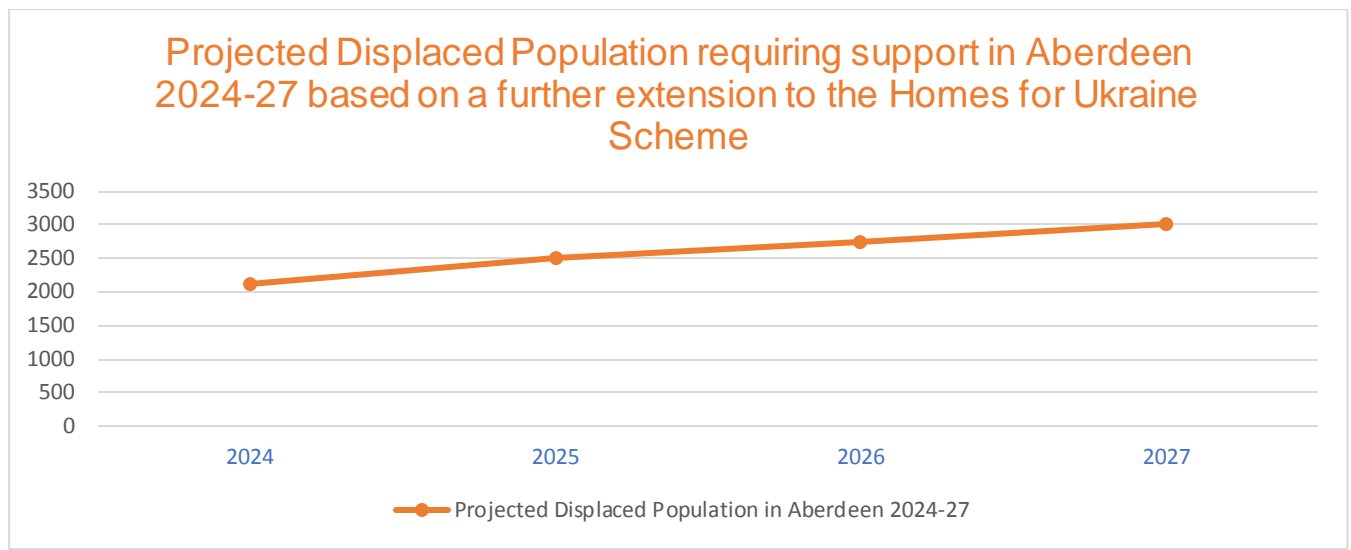
- No further migration related to civil war, international conflict, climate, economic change or natural disasters.

The likely impact on services will be:

- A reduction in pressure on public services due to the gradual reduction in numbers and capacity being realised, for example, GP/Dentist de-registrations, English for Speakers of other Languages class availability.
- Direct integration support from the Resettlement Team to those on Homes for Ukraine visas will continue to reduce, as capacity within the community increases and as Ukraine Extension visas expire.
- Ukraine Long Term Housing Fund properties and mainstream properties will be released back to general stock over a 3-year period, helping to address housing challenges, and particularly the use of temporary accommodation.
- Those arriving via asylum, Afghan and United Nations Refugee Agency resettlement programmes will require very high levels of multi-service support.
- Direct support will still be required for those Ukrainian households who arrived from 2024 onwards and those who have ongoing needs.



Scenario 2: Further extension to the Ukrainian Schemes



This population scenario assumes:

- The UK Government announces further provision to those on Homes for Ukraine visas beyond the current Extension Scheme and that approximately 95% of Ukrainians currently living in Aberdeen will stay here.
- New arrivals via the Homes for Ukraine schemes continue at current levels.
- Increased demand from the arrival of Afghan households and a shift towards assisting those on United Nations Refugee Agency programmes.
- Increased demand from Asylum Refugees due to accelerated decision making, continued growth in the asylum-seeker population and a marked shift in focus from Contingency Hotels (CA) to asylum -seekers being based in dispersed accommodation.
- No further migration related to civil war, international conflict, climate, economic change or natural disasters.

The likely impact on services will be:

- Additional pressure on public services due to an increase in numbers, but no corresponding increase in service capacity.
- It is anticipated that Ukrainians settled in the city will remain in their current home, school, GP Practice and place of work and whilst services will continue to be required, no increase in demand from that specific population is expected.
- The return to the general housing stock of the 500 ULTHF properties and the 120 properties provided out with the ULTHF Scheme will be delayed. This means that the potential for the properties to be used to alleviate housing pressures and costs elsewhere

in the system, particularly the use of temporary accommodation, will not happen when expected.

- Demand for services such as English for Speakers of other Languages will need to be further prioritised to ensure those with the greatest need, receive a service.
- There will be an increase in households requiring very high levels of multi-service support arriving via Afghan and United Nation Refugee Agency resettlement programmes.

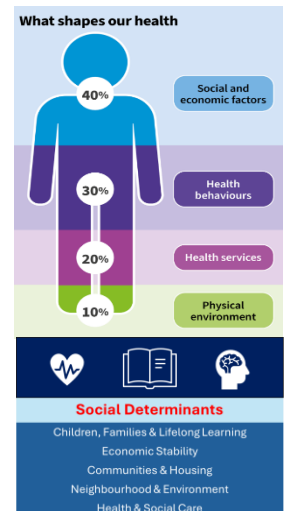
Irrespective of scenario, there is a need to ensure that we do all we can to support New Scots to settle and flourish in our city.



The Social Determinants of Health

The social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence long term outcomes. They are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life.

The social determinants have an important influence on health inequities - the unfair and avoidable differences in outcomes seen across our city. By considering the social determinants fully, we hope to better address the health gradient and ensure that Aberdeen City is “a place where all people can prosper regardless of their background.”



Education and Lifelong Learning

Many displaced people arriving through United Nations Refugee Agency programmes and asylum routes have not had the benefit of a comprehensive formal education. Entry into manual and skill-based work for men is often at a relatively young age and at the expense of secondary or higher education. Female family members are at a particular disadvantage with many only experiencing some level of primary-level education and as a result struggle with literacy in their own language. There are some exceptions to this.

The health and development needs of children in their early years can be affected by a lack of screening programmes and interventions which can impact on their global development. Prior to resettlement, families often live in multi-generational homes – arriving in the UK as an isolated nuclear family and assuming full childcare responsibility within a country which places higher responsibility on parents can be challenging.

A lack of English language and literacy skills amongst parents can impact on their child's education. Consolidation of basic literacy and numeracy skills are reliant on parents engaging in homework and activities outside of the classroom. Children and young people immersed in a school environment can quickly exceed their parent's literacy abilities and in turn become a facilitator, aiding the parents in interactions with services. Parents may not have a full grasp on the expectations of our schooling system, and this impacts attendance and consequently attainment.

If a child enters UK education at secondary school level without prior English language skills, they may struggle to reach sufficient attainment level for exam purposes and leave the establishment without qualifications or practical English.

As a Partnership we will:

- Engage English as an Additional Language Services and the Adult Learning Team to ensure services develop a planned response to newly arriving New Scots (Delivery Plan Task 9b).
- Ensure a whole family support approach is taken (Delivery Plan Task 11b)
- Establish a referral route and programme to offer enhanced transition support for young people transitioning between primary and secondary provision or leaving education (Delivery Plan Task 19a).
- Continue with plans to increase PEEP provision (parenting support) to help enrich language environments prior to children entering Education (Delivery Plan Task 19c)
- Improve our understanding and need for English for Speakers of Other Languages provision. Explore how the third sector contributes to adult learning opportunities (Delivery Plan Task 13a)
- Reduce the barriers felt in New Scot communities in accessing online services and resources by increasing availability of IT literacy courses (Delivery Plan Task 13b)
- Review current English for Speakers of Other Languages provision and review for 2025/26 (Delivery Plan Task 14a)
- Engage in a summer family learning programmes to continue ESOL provision to adults with childcare responsibilities and provide opportunities for children to engage in English language rich environments outside of school to help consolidate learning out with term time.(Delivery Plan Task 19d)

Economic Stability

The UK economic environment and job market is very different for those who arrive through United Nations Refugee Agency programmes and asylum programmes.

Syrian households generally come with trade- based skills or have been business owners themselves and struggle to transition to the UK workplace where there are comprehensive regulatory tax and legal structures around employment. Consequently, most have a continued dependence on benefits. Afghan men come with a higher level of education but struggle to find similar work, as their criteria for entry is generally based on their connections to the UK Government, most often as military interpreters and they are unable to join the UK armed forces. Women generally support the running of the home and childcare.

Asylum-seekers right to work is restricted whilst their claim is being assessed. Lack of funding prevents any work-based activities being provided whilst they are resident in Contingency Accommodation, meaning they are unprepared for work when they receive a decision and Home Office support ends. This increases the risk of exploitation from unscrupulous business owners who can offer immediate, but often unregulated work.

Ukrainian people are more likely to secure employment (particularly women) largely due to their English language skills and transferable skills. Notwithstanding this, there is a tendency of under-utilising skills, with many under-employed, often on the cusp of entitlements to reductions and awards associated with low-paid work.

For all groups, having their qualifications recognised in a UK equivalent is challenging and time-consuming.

As a Partnership we will:

- Review our budgeting support and ensure resources are available, accurate and accessible through content and language (Delivery Plan Task 1g).
- Consider options for the financial stability of full-time students who are not eligible for Universal Credit support or employability services due to being enrolled in classes (Delivery Plan Task 1h).
- Utilise a cost-effective programme of service provision, events and skill building opportunities to support New Scots access paid employment, addressing barriers with both services users and local employers (Delivery Plan Task 12).
- Engage partners in discussion to address and build resource around exploitation in the city, to raise awareness of the impact and consequences (Delivery Plan Task 12b).
- Develop opportunities for supported volunteering opportunities by engaging organisations that support volunteering to ensure these are accessible and adapted where necessary to support New Scot engagement (Delivery Plan Task 12d)

Communities and Housing

Resettled families can face isolation on arrival to the UK. Such isolation can be reinforced by language barriers and varying cultural perceptions of appropriate interactions. The opportunity to build social connections is critical to support integration into local communities but there can be comfort in engaging mainly with others who share the same language and culture. This can restrict chances to make friends and to benefit from the exchange of regular information which generally supports assimilation to UK culture. Equally, host communities and services should be actively supported to foster integration through shared community events, the celebration of cultures and positive neighbourliness.

Having a safe and suitable place to live is at the core of integration. Being able to provide this within the context of a housing shortage has led to a range of housing options being utilised for settled accommodation beyond initial transitional arrangements, including Host Sponsorship, procured Ministry of Defence properties, private-sector tenancies, Aberdeen City Council and other social rented sector providers and procured Home Office properties. The mismatch between available housing stock and the size of accommodation affects the resettled population, along with others on the mainstream waiting list. There is a shortage of single person accommodation as well as a need for larger properties to house Syrian and Afghan families.

As a Partnership we will:

- Proactively encourage (two-way) community and cultural integration and wellbeing (Delivery Plan Task 15).
- Create an inclusive and capacity building approach which respects and engages the voices of the community in the delivery of services (Delivery Plan Task 16).
- Our domestic/resident communities feel listened to and play an active role in supporting our resettlement ambitions (Delivery Plan Task 17)
- Work with community partners and services to support intercultural integration by celebrating the nationalities and cultures in Aberdeen, through media and events (Delivery Plan Task 18)
- Work with Education and Communities, Learning and Development to support children and young people transitioning to life in Scotland and enable opportunities for cultural celebrations with peers (Delivery Plan Task 19)
- Support the Hosting process for Guests and Hosts (Delivery Plan 2a,2b)
- Continue to support other Local Authorities with offers of Ukrainian Long Term Housing Fund surplus properties on a time-limited basis (Delivery Task 2c, 4a)
- Carefully consider requests for further resettlement based on local capacity (Delivery Task 2f, 2g, 2h).
- Work with housing colleagues to support the transition of Ukraine Long Term Housing Fund properties to mainstream stock (Delivery Plan 2j).
- Support long-term housing solutions for displaced households in insecure accommodation (Delivery Plan 3d,4b,6b,22a)



Neighbourhood and Environment

Those who have been displaced through war have had their lives disrupted and are often affected by trauma and fear. Consequently, households report that it is important for them to have a sense of belonging in the place where they stay, that they feel safe and that it should be a place they can relate to and have some influence over what happens there.

We will take a community development approach to support this sense of belonging and integration into local neighbourhoods and will address New Scot specific community safety experiences such as Hate crime, trust in law enforcement and gender- based violence

As a Partnership we will:

- Complete an assessment of Community Needs to reflect the needs of New Scots and how they wish to interact with the neighbourhoods within which they live (Delivery Plan Task 1j)
- Complete a Community Development plan to engage communities in meaningful participation in established and bespoke activities to build social connections and community resilience (Delivery Plan Task 1k)
- Communities, Learning and Development to develop opportunities for individual and group community integration activities for referred New Scots focusing on:
 - Social isolation, empowerment, and personal achievement.
 - Contribution to community matters or service & policy development
 - Representatives from a range of genders engage in the provision and culturally sensitive sessions to encourage engagement (Development Plan Task 1n)
- To ensure representation of community voices in feedback to UK Government and Scottish Government policy and strategy consultations (Delivery Plan Task 20).
- Develop a service response to third party reporting opportunities to support New Scots to confidently report incidents of hate crime occurring in the city and build translated materials to ensure communities are aware of the meaning of hate crime and how they can report it (Delivery Plan Task 1p).
- Continue to build opportunities for Police Scotland to engage positively with New Scot communities (Delivery Plan 1q)
- Explore opportunities to raise awareness of the impact of gender-based violence or harassment with resettled and asylum communities (Delivery Plan Task 1r).

Health and Social Care

There are a range of challenges relating to the health and social care of displaced people. Access to primary health screening, vaccination programmes, dentistry and adult social care services may be limited in their home country and upon arrival require immediate action by local health teams to remedy. The trauma of war can have significant impacts on mental health and general wellbeing.

Those who have travelled long distances may present with chronic conditions which have been untreated for some time due to the lack of access to services during their journey. Whilst health needs are prioritised for all new arrivals, there are several challenges affecting the provision and take-up of care.

An overview was conducted by the Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen (HDRCA) to summarise the health and social care experiences among individuals seeking asylum in high-income countries. (L. Ho, December 2023). It revealed common barriers to care access, including language barriers, negative attitudes of care service providers, and geographical location and constant relocation. This work contributed to the evidence base used as part of the asylum seekers' health needs assessment conducted by NHS Grampian. The recent 'Health Needs Assessment: The health needs of asylum seekers living in communal accommodation in NHS Grampian' (C. Morrison, December 2024) highlighted that the shortage of professionally trained interpreters, especially those with culturally appropriate training can mean displaced people relying on friends and family members to interpret, leading to misunderstandings. Asylum seekers also raised concerns about disclosing medical information to health professionals for fear it may affect their asylum application.

GP appointments are scheduled for longer times to take account of the additional communication challenges. Health colleagues report a higher-than-average non-shows for appointments.

Across all displaced populations time must be taken to help understanding of how the health system works and the role of different health services and health professionals.

The transitional nature of resettlement can lead to movement across Local Authorities and countries, often disrupting healthcare and if to elsewhere in the UK, challenges in the transferring of medical records.

As a Partnership we will:

- Review our communications with expert colleagues to ensure they are appropriate and address the concerns raised both by Health colleagues and service-users (Delivery Plan Task 7d)
- In partnership with Health colleagues review the model of health provision (within available budgets) to better meet the needs of the displaced population. (Delivery Plan Task 7f)

Personas

Those who experience the most disadvantage, tend to experience challenges across a range of social determinants. It is important that our work takes account of the complexity faced by individuals and families across the city. The personas outlined below are illustrative of the needs faced by those who settle in the city.

Ali's story: Ali (21) came to Aberdeen in December of 2023 after fleeing his home in Syria. He did not want to participate in the war and felt that seeking asylum in a safe country was his only option. He stayed in a hotel in Aberdeen with other Asylum Seekers. This was a frustrating time, but he hoped he would be given refugee status and able to live in Aberdeen.

When Ali did get his positive decision, he moved into temporary housing through Aberdeen City Council and with the help of the Resettlement Team. He was then able to bid on housing and was eventually offered permanent accommodation which he moves into this week.

Ali did not attend school when he was younger, he helped his father with the family farming business. This was hard, physical work but he enjoyed it. Despite his lack of education and his age, Ali is a very articulate, personable young man and, amongst other life skills, back or budget and understand the value of money.

Ali did not speak any English when he came to the UK, but he taught himself while living in the hotel by speaking to the security guard and other members of staff and watching YouTube videos and Tik Tok. His English is very good, and he can hold conversations in most situations. He does not have many people to speak to in English and would like to practice more. He has the option to attend Language Cafes run by GREC, but feels he needs more structured learning to improve his English enough to find meaningful employment.

Motivations: Ali hopes to settle quickly in his new home and make connections within the community which will help him to improve his English. He also hopes to go on holiday when he saves enough money and has an interest in the world around him.

Goals: Ali hopes to settle quickly in his new home and make connections within the community which will help him to improve his English. He also hopes to go on holiday when he saves enough money and has an interest in the world around him.

Frustrations: Ali does not want to depend on benefits, he wants to work and earn and have the self-respect that comes with it. He is frustrated by the language barrier and the lack of support from the Job Centre as he attends each week by appointment, sometimes only for 5 minutes which really frustrates him as he either must walk there and back or, spend £5 on bus fares.



Victoria story: Victoria (81) lives in sheltered housing. She has a granddaughter who lives with family in Aberdeen and a grandson who is a student in the city and lives close to her. Victoria has a long-term health condition and visits her GP every month. She is on the waiting list for surgery. Surgery should take place this year. Victoria tries to go for a walk and for groceries, but it is difficult for her because of her medical issues. She takes medication which helps her to manage short walks. Victoria likes to cook at home and her family visit her there from time to time. She likes to have a clean home and enjoys doing her chores.

Victoria has a friend from within the sheltered block, but she works meaning Victoria doesn't meet with her often. She is very happy with the location of her home, as there is green space located not far from her house, and she enjoys the fresh air. Victoria tries to study English but finds it hard.

Motivation: As Victoria struggles to walk, she would like to have her surgery and be able to live a full life. She feels because she is sitting at home most of the time that she has gained extra weight, however at the same time she says she enjoys cooking so that could be why she's putting on weight. She would like to be able to learn English.

Goals:

- To have surgery to improve health condition
- To learn English
- To spend more time with family
- To stay in UK (if her granddaughter stays as well)
- To be able to spend more time outdoors and go for walks rather than just going out for groceries.

Frustrations: Victoria has doubts about her surgery because of her age. She is afraid that surgery could be difficult and dangerous for her. Doctors give her 95% of success but she is scared that if she dies her granddaughter won't be able to live without her. Also, she worries that following surgery she will not be able to move and walk and will need full-time care and support during her rehabilitation period.

Victoria doesn't know about her future plans. Her granddaughter wants to stay in UK and if she stays Mama will stay with her. However, her granddaughter still has a house back home in Ukraine and would like to return home at the end of the war. The uncertainty makes her feel unsure about the future.



Akbarkhan: Akbarkhan and Sopha and their two children Rayda and Majid (who are pre-school aged) were successfully relocated to Aberdeen in Autumn 2024 via the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP). This Policy is for Afghan citizens who worked for or with the UK Government in Afghanistan. Prior to coming to Aberdeen, they spent eight months in Ministry of Defence serviced accommodation in England.

Akbarkhan suffers with chronic pain and has been assessed on the health journey for Universal Credit and found to be capable of work. Sopha is a full-time mother to the children. In Afghanistan she worked as a teacher. Majid attends nursery every afternoon from 1pm – 6pm.

Both Akbarkhan and Sopha have recently started attending English classes.

Motivation: The family's main motivation to come here was for safety. Akbarkhan had worked with British soldiers meaning the family were in danger from the Taliban. They were excited to come to the UK.

Goals

- The family want to learn English.
- Akbarkhan would like to find work around his existing health conditions and Sopha would like to resume her career as a teacher.
- They both wish for their children to have a good education and have good jobs in the future (such as a doctor).
- They would like to give back to the UK government in thanks for giving them an opportunity to be here by becoming fully integrated and having good jobs.

Frustrations: They are frustrated by Akbarkhan's health journey and by the Job Centre not understanding that he has chronic pain. He feels like the Job Centre Coach doesn't believe him.



Ittack: Ittack and his sister, Mariam fled Syria to Lebanon due to being persecuted by the government where they lived for 8 years. During this time, Ittack met his future wife Rosa, and the couple went on to have 3 daughters.

Living in Lebanon was difficult as Ittack was not allowed to work due to not being a Lebanese national. He worked in construction and any work had to be paid cash in hand, was paid at a low rate and sometimes not at all. Ittack was able to find other work with a Norwegian company. This work meant he had to enter parts of Beirut that were dangerous, and he was beaten several times.

Ittack was told by an aid worker to register with the UNHCR, but he was afraid to do this as he thought information may be shared with the Syrian government. The aid workers convinced him to register. He finally registered in 2014, and the family came to the UK ten years later. The family have no health issues.

Motivation: The family feel they have been given a second chance and are doing everything they can to integrate to their new life in Aberdeen.

Ittack feels it's his duty to work hard and provide for his family.

Goals

- Both would like to understand English better, but their conversational English is already at an intermediate level. Mariam reads and understands English better than she talks it.
- Attend college as soon as possible
- Ittack was working as an Electrician and wants to retrain to do the same here
- Ittack's aim is to financially support his family as soon as he can
- The big dream is a house with a garden

Frustrations: Ittack wants to fully provide for his family and doesn't want to have to rely on benefits



Baran's story: Baran recently moved into a bedsit property on his own after living in an Asylum hotel for 1 year. Baran's wife, Atifa is in Sudan, and they have no plans to reunite now as there are no visa centres open and travelling could be dangerous. Due to there being no internet in Sudan, they only manage to speak to each other around once a month. Baran is currently taking online English classes while he waits on English Language classes becoming available in the local college. In Sudan he has his mother, father, brother and sister.

Baran is currently still learning about his rights and responsibilities and requires support to manage his tenancy, finances and understanding the laws to keep himself safe and protected.

Motivation: Family is Baran's greatest motivation. He is highly motivated to build an independent life.

Goals

- Baran wants to build a better life for himself, his wife and hopefully for his future children.
- He wants to continue studying English online.
- He would prefer to study English at college.
- Baran wishes to become a car mechanic in Aberdeen as he was back home.
- He hopes to be independent and confident living in the UK.
- Baran wants to reunite with his family.
- Waiting times for English classes is the main frustration.



Moham and Leah's story: Moham came to Scotland via Northern Ireland in November 2021 after paying someone to arrange his trip here. Moham travelled without the rest of his family, who remained outside of the UK. Whilst living separated from his family, Moham was placed in Asylum accommodation in several different locations. After almost 2 years Moham received a positive decision and was able to make a Homeless application. He lived in a temporary flat provided by Aberdeen City Council until early 2024 and then received an offer of a one-bedroom Aberdeen Council tenancy. Moham settled into his new home whilst continuing to work in a local pizza shop.



While waiting for his permanent offer the family made an application for a Reunification Visa. The family entered the UK in spring 2024 and were able to begin family life once more although struggled with the lack of space; 3 beds had to be placed in the living room. Leah has recently become pregnant with the family's 5th child. The family applied via the mainstream list of housing in the Summer after approximately 3 months living at the one-bedroom property. They were allocated a property which is a 3-bedroom house with ample space for the family and a garden area. They are now settled into the local area; their children are at the local school, and they have access to the local GP practice.



Motivation: Moham and Leah would like to have a happy family life and continue to integrate in society so that they don't require any support for settling into life in the UK. Leah wants to make connections with other mums-to-be and build a circle of friendships around her baby.

Goals: The family wish to welcome a happy and healthy newborn in a few weeks' time and Moham is considering this employment prospects. Both want their children to succeed in school and integrate to life in Aberdeen. The family have said the main ambition in life is a bright and beautiful future for the children and happiness is their main goal.

Frustrations: Having to take on a one bed flat when the family visa was in progress and the stress of being so overcrowded for a period of time and the delays in receiving their benefits which made life very difficult. Learning the language to be able to manage more of the matters that arise independently.

Aisha's story: Aisha and her mother travelled to Lebanon from Syria, seeking sanctuary. They arrived in 2013 and lived there until the end of 2024. Aisha has completed only 9 years of schooling in her life. In Syria, she worked as a tailor and opened her own tailor shop near her home. She continued her work in Lebanon and hopes to continue this work in the UK in the future.

Aisha's mother, is 77 years old and has no formal education. After the death of her husband, Aisha became her primary caregiver.

The family moved to Aberdeen under the UKRS program and now lives in social housing in the city. They are still adjusting to life in the UK and continue to learn new things every day.

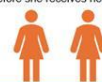
Motivation: The family's main motivation is to build a safe and healthy life in the UK. Aisha is caring for her mother, so it's important to her that her mum has everything she needs to feel happy. Aisha and her mother have already connected with two Syrian families, which has helped them feel less isolated in the city. Aisha is also looking for more community events and meetings to attend, hoping to meet new people. She is highly motivated to start English classes at college.

Goals: It is very important for the Aisha to learn the new language as quickly as possible because it will open many opportunities for her, both in communication and in finding a job. Her main goal is to learn English. She will soon start attending classes and feels motivated to begin.

Her other goal is to better adapt to life in a new city. It would be much more difficult for her and her mother without support to understand how different services and systems work, it's very challenging.

Aisha really wants care for her mother and to ensure she stays healthy and is happy as they both miss their home.

Frustrations: They are generally satisfied with everything, but the financial situation complicates things. Currently, Aisha is the only one receiving benefits. Her mother is waiting for Pension Credit payments, but it may take months before she receives her first payment, so for now they live on Aisha's Universal Credit and try not to spend a lot of money, focusing on saving. The language barrier is a big problem for them both.



Lilia's story Lilia resides in a flat, with her two sons. Nearby, Lilia's parents, co-habit with her younger sister. Lilia's grandfather also has a separate bungalow, located near the rest of the family. All continue to take a keen interest in activity in their homeland (Ukraine).

Lilia's father, was diagnosed with a terminal illness in early 2024. He has lost a considerable amount of weight over the last year and his mental well-being has suffered. He cannot work due to his health; his wife works as a part-time receptionist and their youngest daughter is a student.

Lilia's grandfather is a wheelchair user, both inside and outside the home. He lives with Osteoporosis and visual impairment, resulting in chronic pain and limited mobility. His inability to communicate in English and limited mobility has limited his opportunities for social interaction out with the family unit. To ensure his safety and well-being, the family take turns staying with him and rarely leave him unattended.

Given her multiple caregiving responsibilities, Lilia is under a considerable amount of stress. As a new mother, she faces significant emotional and practical demands. Additionally, Lilia plays a crucial role in supporting her mother, who relies heavily on her for emotional support. Lilia is the only member of the family who can speak English therefore the family all turn to her in times of need.

Motivation: Lilia wants her dad to beat cancer and live a full and happy life. She wants her grandfather to be pain free and maintain as much independence as possible. She wants to be the best mother she can for her 2 sons and wants to ensure her children live a normal life despite the upset, trauma, turmoil and chaos they are going through at home. She is determined to ensure her children do not miss out on opportunities in life to prosper. Lilia primary focus, priority and motivation in life is to do anything and everything for her whole family.

Goals: To have all family members able to continue to live within close proximity of one another.

Frustrations: NHS waiting times for oncology - Lilia feels as though the healthcare in Ukraine may have been better due to no waiting times for treatment however a single chemotherapy treatment in Ukraine costs approximately £4000 which they cannot afford.



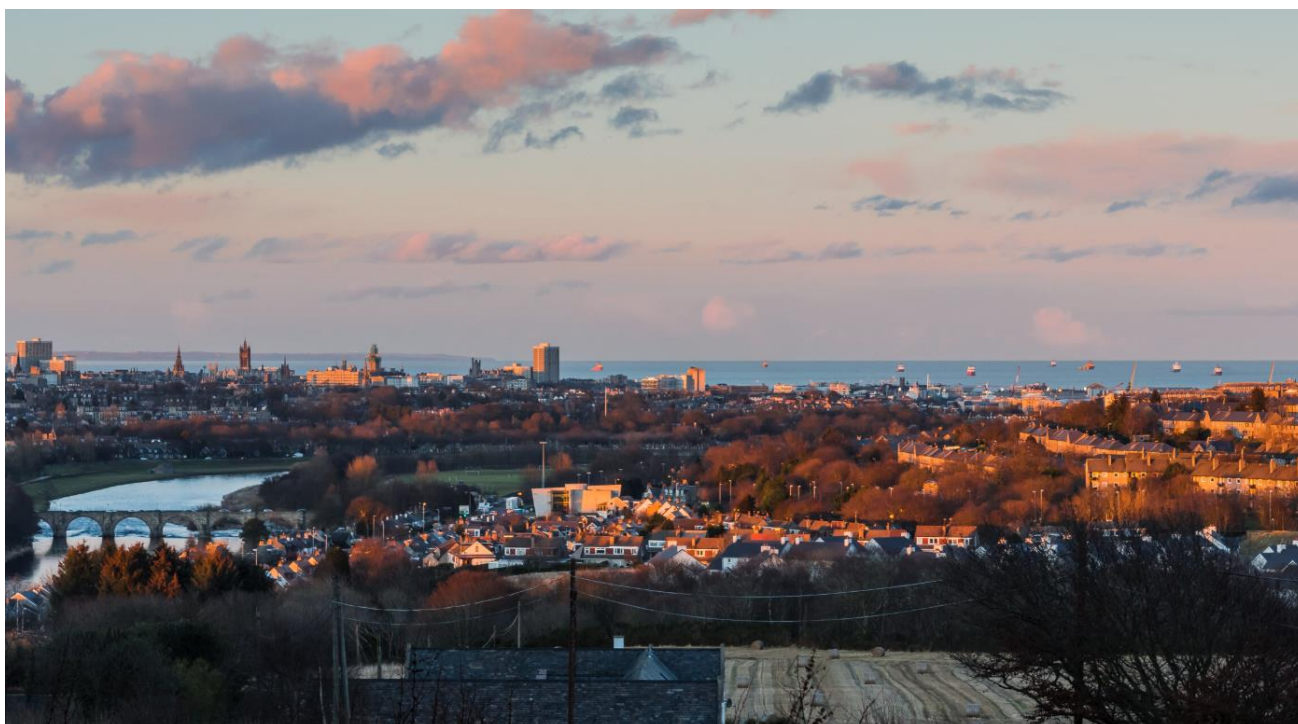
Mahmood's story: Mahmood (30), came to Aberdeen in summer of 2024 as an Asylum Seeker, having left his native Syria due to the war. He believes he would have been tortured and ultimately killed. His family also fled, he does not know where they are. He has been living in hotel accommodation in Aberdeen for under a year. When he was in his hometown he worked in farming. He did attend school but only in his earlier years, but he has taught himself English since he arrived in Scotland. Although Mahmood has been in the hotel for some months and his situation is uncertain, he is optimistic.

Motivation: Mahmood wants to settle in Aberdeen if he gets refugee status as he really likes it in the city. He enjoys talking about his future. He hopes to improve his English – he already has learned some, he wants to find work and he wants to make friends.

Goals: Mahmood wants to find employment, improve his English and make friends.

Frustrations: Mahmood has found that some of the staff at the hotel will not tell him their name when he has asked and hide their name badge. Also, one or two of the staff do not like to help, if he asks a question, they dismiss him or make him feel that he is interrupting them. He feels that he doesn't get respect even though he is always polite and appreciative. He has no family in Aberdeen, and he does not know where his family are. He has no home, no money, no job. The treatment makes him feel very sad and depressed.

The food in the hotel is not always very good. He is grateful for the accommodation, but Mahmood feels that the staff can be selective about dealing with issues which arise. The same is felt by some of the other guests too and again, although Mahmood says they are all grateful for the support, they feel that their time in asylum accommodation could be better.



Analysis of Need

Analysis of level of needs across resettlement cohorts, drawn from Outcome Star assessments and reviews and consideration of the personas, consistently shows that within the current resettlement population, those who identify with the highest level of integration needs are within the Afghan, Syrian and Asylum Refugee communities.

These are the fastest growing resettled communities and are also granted Right to Remain and so, most likely to settle and establish themselves in Aberdeen.

Whilst the resettled community requiring direct integration support from the Resettlement Service is projected to decrease by 2027 due to capacity building and/or departure of Ukrainian households, the proportion of those arriving with significant and enduring needs is significantly *increasing* and integration investment will be required across services, to prevent demand on statutory services. A Business Case will be developed to reflect the resources required.

It is imperative that our strategic efforts focus on minimising the risks and impact of a mismatch between levels of demand and capacity of services, through the provision of preventative integration services. This will require a whole system approach.

Vision

To align with the national New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy, Aberdeen's vision is

'for a city where refugees and people seeking asylum are able to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive'.

Successful integration can only be achieved through partnership working, and the purpose of this Delivery Programme is to co-ordinate the shared endeavours and efforts of services and organisations committed to working help those who settle in the city secure better long-term outcomes.

'Integration is key to effective and comprehensive migration-management approaches. Successful integration is essential for all stakeholders, not only in terms of the benefits gained from migration, but also for the well-being and prosperity of migrants and of society as a whole'.

(Integrated Communities Strategy, UKG)

This programme sets out the approach required to meet the needs of New Scots in the city for the next phase of resettlement in Aberdeen from 2025-27. Our approach is in keeping with the

national [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: 2024](#) and [New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy: Delivery Plan 2024-2026](#).

Our intention, over the lifetime of this programme is to ensure that a sustainable model of resettlement is established and that services are accessed through mainstream pathways once integration needs have been met.

Recognising the Challenges

Consideration of the social determinants of health and the various personas based on local needs have helped identify the key problems and action needed to deliver our vision:

Problem Statement – The number of displaced people projected to arrive and potentially settle in Aberdeen is increasing and it is those who have the highest level of needs who are proportionally likely to increase the most. There are few controls which can be applied by Aberdeen City Council to manage this inward migration and often there is no prior information provided about those arriving to plan to meet their needs. The displaced population is diverse, their needs vary and can often be complex requiring multi-service intervention.

Action Statement – As a Local Authority, Aberdeen City Council has been at the forefront of Scotland's response to welcoming displaced people. We now need to build on the learning from recent resettlement programmes to ensure that we are best equipped to support those most in need helping them to forge a positive future, whilst also focusing services on preventive action to harness the potential of those arriving, living in and contributing to our communities.

Our Approach

Our approach to service delivery is based on the following six principles in the New Scots Strategy:

- Integration from day one of arrival
- A right- based approach
- Restorative and trauma informed
- Involvement of people with lived experience of forced displacement
- Inclusive, intercultural communities
- Partnership and collaboration

Service Description

The Resettlement and Asylum Service provides trauma-informed and culturally aware support to displaced people arriving in the city to help them settle, integrate, and work towards achieving successful outcomes.

All households who arrive through a formal resettlement or humanitarian route i.e. via a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) facilitated or a UK Government (UKG) or Scottish Government (SG) programme and who have recourse to public funds are offered a service. A Resettlement Worker is attached to each family and their role is to ensure each person's needs are assessed using the Outcome Star Integration Assessment Tool and that services are in place and accessible, to support successful outcomes.

Support ranges from initial emergency provision to meet immediate needs in unplanned crisis situations, such as providing temporary accommodation and access to clothes, food and health services through to longer-term support focused on integration to help people rebuild their lives, through English language support, settled housing, education, employment support, the building of community networks and social connections and participation in democratic processes. Whilst broader resettlement information and advice is always available, direct household support concludes upon cessation of funding and once a family's needs are assessed as being met via the Outcome Star and they can ably navigate mainstream services.

Additional whole family support is commissioned from Children 1st and Action for Children. Referrals can be made to Children 1st via the Wellbeing Hubs to provide support around low level mental health and young people's needs whilst more intensive support for families affected by complex issues, including risk-taking behaviour and family breakdown, can be referred to the Priority Families Service who offer dedicated support for up to 12 months.



Applying the principles

Integration from day one of arrival

What does the evidence tell us?

Evidence shows that early integration into housing, education and work leads to better health, wellbeing and economic outcomes.

What will we do?

Those who choose to make Aberdeen their home will be supported to integrate into our local communities from the first day of arrival.

We will do this in several ways, for example, by working with Partners and local communities to prepare for planned household arrivals, providing settled rather than temporary housing whenever possible, identifying required school places and a Resettlement Worker making links with the family before they travel.

We will build on our direct entry process to ensure those arriving have a bespoke package of support available to them from their day of arrival.

A rights-based approach

What does the evidence tell us?

There is a strong evidence base showing that protecting human rights improves health outcomes.

What will we do?

We will ensure people can access information about their rights and entitlements, understand them and are empowered to exercise them, as well as having access to the services they need to participate in society and lead independent lives. The PANEL Principles (Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality) form the basis of this approach.

Restorative and trauma informed

What does the evidence tell us?

Successful integration of New Scots involves approaches that are restorative, and trauma informed.

What will we do?

We are committed to ensuring our staff are trained appropriately and exercise cultural intelligence, tenacity, patience and understanding to help displaced people realise their potential. In addition, we will work towards our Resettlement Workers being registered with and meeting the statutory requirements of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC).

Involvement of people with lived experience of forced displacement

What does the evidence tell us?

People with lived experience should be directly involved in decision-making processes regarding the integration of New Scots. There is strong evidence that when this happens, outcomes for those involved, are improved.

What will we do?

As our Aberdeen New Scots community has become established, so too have the opportunities for meaningful involvement of those with lived experience. For example, a Ukrainian Society was established in 2022 based at Rosemount Community Centre to create a strong and supportive community for Ukrainians living in the Northeast of Scotland. The Society's aim is to foster cultural exchange, promote Ukrainian heritage, and provide educational opportunities for all ages and it runs both a Ukrainian Hub and a Ukrainian School. The establishment of the Society not only provides invaluable support to the local Ukrainian community, but also a platform for service providers to co-learn and inform service design.

Inclusive, intercultural communities

What does the evidence tell us?

Integration is an intercultural process: it involves dialogue and mutual learning between the many different cultures which make up our society.

What will we do?

We will work hard to take as inclusive an approach as possible and celebrate our diverse local culture. We will do this by supporting partnership events and through learning, sharing histories and creating opportunities to bring cultures together. We will support access to English language enabling independence and self-sufficiency and work within our localities to create inclusive, welcoming communities.

Partnership and collaboration

What does the evidence tell us?

The needs of those we are supporting extend beyond the boundaries of one organisation.

What will we do?

We will take a collaborative approach with Partners to coordinate our work and are committed to creating a holistic approach to supporting our displaced communities. Aberdeen City Council is represented at national strategic oversight groups, such as the Asylum Partnership Board, Delivery and Procurement Group, Resettlement Local Authority Network and Resettlement Officer's Group and has a local collaborative framework: a Resettlement and Asylum Strategic Partnership Group, chaired by Aberdeen City Council meets six weekly and has oversight of strategic direction. An Asylum and Dispersal Group acts as a six- weekly forum to co-ordinate services for Community Planning partners, Home Office, Migrant Help and Cosla to oversee asylum and dispersal matters and a New Scots Third Sector Group co-ordinates the efforts of community, charity and voluntary sector organisations.

Alignment of Delivery Programme Outcomes with established Strategies and Plans

New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy(NSRIS) Outcome 1	New Scots live in safe, welcoming, inclusive communities, where everyone's dignity is respected and everyone is able to build diverse relationships and healthy intercultural bonds.	
Govt Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Home Office Asylum Accommodation Plan V.2. • Public Health Scotland's Strategic Plan: A Scotland where everybody thrives (2022-2025) • The Promise • Annual Policing Plan 24/25 	
Local Strategic Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Strategic Plan (2022- 2025) • LOIP (Stretch Outcome 12) • Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 (Service Provider EO2) • Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 (Education Authority EO2) • Council Delivery Plan (Finance/Housing/Corporate Landlord Cluster) 	
Delivery Programme Outcomes	1.	Our resettled population is equipped with the right resources, skills and resilience to feel safe and secure so that they and future generations can flourish and contribute to life in Aberdeen.
	2.	Ensure current and future housing needs of displaced people are identified and included in the Housing Needs Analysis.

	3.	Work with Mears and the Home Office to identify future dispersed asylum accommodation which meets the needs of the user group and maximises Funding Instruction income for ACC.
	4.	Maximise funding opportunities from UKG and SG to seek innovative long-term solutions to provide settled accommodation for displaced people.
	5.	Monitor resettlement and asylum numbers and report to Strategic Partnership Group, to manage risk of excessive resettlement.
	6.	In collaboration with Housing Providers across the city, ensure displaced households secure settled accommodation, avoiding where possible, the use of temporary accommodation.
NSRIS Outcome 2	New Scots are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.	
Govt Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Scotland's Strategic Plan: A Scotland where everybody thrives (2022-2025) The Promise 	
Local Strategic Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Strategic Plan (2022- 2025) LOIP Stretch Outcome 5 Community Empowerment Strategy 2023-26 Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 (Service Provider EO1) Whole Family Support Approach Children's Services Strategic Plan 2023-26 	
Delivery Programme Outcomes	7.	Undertake a review of the current/broader Resettlement and Asylum team structure to ensure it is sufficiently equipped and resilient to meet the integration needs of current and future resettled populations.
	8.	Implement recommendations from the Internal Audit 2024
	9.	In line with the No Wrong Door approach, undertake a review of existing information resources made available to displaced people and develop and co-produce reliable information about rights, options and services that can be accessed.
	10.	Support access to Home Office UKVI colleagues through the establishment of a regular presence at Marischal College.
	11.	Integration support is trauma-informed, takes a whole family approach, promotes independence and reduces reliance on targeted public services.
NSRIS Outcome 3	New Scots understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements in Scotland and are able to exercise these to pursue full and independent lives. New Scots can pursue their ambitions through education, employment, culture and leisure activities in diverse communities.	
Govt Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Poverty Scotland Act 2017 Scottish Government Right to Work Pilot Public Sector Equality Duty Annual Policing Plan 24/25 	

Local Strategic Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOIP Stretch Outcome 1 • LOIP Stretch Outcome 2 • LOIP Stretch Outcome 6 • Children's Services Plan/ Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-26
Delivery Programme Outcomes	12.	Ensure displaced people have access to bespoke economic and employment opportunities to enable them to thrive independently and reduce reliance on services.
	13.	Ensure displaced people have access to lifelong learning opportunities to improve their lives and pathways to independence.
	14.	Strive to ensure English language learning opportunities are available for every displaced person who settles in Aberdeen.
	15.	Proactively encourage (two-way) community and cultural integration and wellbeing.
NSRIS Outcome 4		Communities in Scotland understand integration interculturally and respect the diversity and strengths that New Scots bring.
Govt Programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Policing Programme 24/25
Local Strategic Plans		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOIP Stretch Outcome 8 • Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Strategic Plan (2022- 2025) • Community Learning and Development Plan
Delivery Programme Outcomes	16.	Create an inclusive and capacity building approach which respects and engages the voices of the community in the delivery of services.
	17.	Our resident communities feel listened to, and play an active role in supporting our resettlement ambitions.
	18.	Work with community partners and services to support intercultural integration by celebrating the nationalities and cultures in Aberdeen, through media and events.
	19.	(Work with Education and CLD to) support children and young people transitioning to life in Scotland and enable opportunities for cultural celebrations with peers.
NSRIS Outcome 5		Policy, strategic planning, and legislation, that have an impact on New Scots, are shaped through their participation and informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.
Govt Programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Standards of Community Engagement
Local Strategic Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOIP Stretch Outcome 16 • Community Empowerment Strategy 2023-26 • Grampian Engagement Standards • Equality Outcomes 2021-2025 (EO3)
Delivery Programme Outcomes	20.	To ensure representation of community voices in feedback to UKG and SG policy and strategy consultations.
	21.	Proactively engage with the resettled and asylum refugee population in the development of services which affect them
NSRIS Outcome 6		The principles of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy guide all future responses to crises that bring forced migrants to Scotland and seek to ensure all such migrants will be treated equitably.

Govt Programme		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Scotland's Strategic Plan: A Scotland where everybody thrives (2022-2025) National Standards of Community Engagement
Local Strategic Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LOIP Stretch Outcome 16 Aberdeen City Health & Social Care Strategic Plan (2022- 2025) NHS Grampian's Plan for the Future (2022-2028) Community Empowerment Strategy 2023-26 Grampian Engagement Standards Council Delivery Plan (Finance Cluster priority)
Delivery Programme Outcomes	22.	Contribute to a Scottish Government Review of Learning and Best Practice around humanitarian protection schemes including the response to the Afghanistan and Ukraine crises.
	23.	Ensure our services build on the learning and experience of successfully responding to emergency and planned humanitarian programmes and are resilient to meet the challenges of future demand by conducting a Lessons Learned exercise with Partners in Aberdeen. This needs to take account of the risk of excessive resettlement.
	24.	Participate in the UK Government review of cost to local authorities of participation in humanitarian protection schemes
	25.	Participate in the Home Office evaluation of the Asylum Transformation Programme (one of two Scottish LA/s).

Delivery Action Plan

The Delivery Action Plan sets out the operational actions we will take to deliver on our Delivery Plan outcomes and measures to evidence progress.

Progress will be monitored by the Strategic Partnership Group with progress reported to Committee and Community Planning Aberdeen Board on a yearly basis.