



Committee Report

PURPOSE: Final Decision Report

KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION: Key decision over £500k spend/save & impacts more than 2 wards

COMMITTEE: Adult Social Care Committee

DATE: 02 September 2024

TITLE: Delegated decision on the number of refugee families resettled annually in Bristol until March 2027

Ward(s): All

Officer presenting the report: Francesca Wickens **Job title:** Interim Head of Service – Refugee Resettlement and Asylum Seekers

Committee Chair: Councillor Lorraine Francis

Executive Director lead: Hugh Evans: Executive Director for Adult and Communities

Proposal origin: BCC Staff

Purpose of Report:

1. That the Committee for Adult Social Care approves the proposal to resettle 30 refugee families in Bristol each year until March 2027 – 15 families via the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and 15 families via the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), funded by the Home Office and supported by Bristol City Council's (BCC) Resettlement Team.
2. That by approving the resettlement of 30 refugee families each year in Bristol until March 2027, the Committee also approves the receipt of Home Office funding over £0.5 million each year for the Resettlement Team to provide wrap-around support for these families.

Evidence Base / Options to consider:

This report is to request Committee to approve the decision to resettle 30 refugee families in Bristol each year until March 2027. Resettlement of refugees will be funded by the Home Office and supported by BCC's Resettlement Team for specific time periods, dependent on the relevant framework of each scheme (further detail below).

Any refugees resettled via the UK government's Community Sponsorship Scheme¹ and/or Afghan refugee

¹ [HM Government Community Sponsorship Guidance for Local Authorities](#)

families resettled in Bristol from Home Office serviced apartments² would not be in addition to this request to resettle 30 refugee families each year in Bristol until March 2027, but rather would be included within this figure of 30 families annually.

Bristol recently renewed its status as a City of Sanctuary, an accreditation it has maintained since 2011. As part of this status, Bristol ascribes to City of Sanctuary's core values, including '[welcoming] and [respecting] people from all backgrounds, [placing] the highest value on diversity, and [being] committed to equality.'

Since 2016, Bristol's Resettlement Team have resettled 895 refugees locally from three national schemes:

- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS): 403
- Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS): 443
- UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS): 49

N.B. The above numbers are in addition to 1046 Ukrainian guests via the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

This proposal is to resettle 15 families via the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and 15 families via the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS).

Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

The ACRS opened in January 2022 and is one of the UK's most ambitious resettlement schemes. It is designed to support those who have assisted UK efforts in Afghanistan, represented UK values, and those with particular vulnerabilities³. People eligible for this scheme come through three referral pathways:

- Evacuation through the UK Government's Operation Pitting
- Referrals from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- At-risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni

Refugees resettled via ACRS will receive wrap-around support from BCC's Resettlement team through funding from the Home Office for a three-year period:

- £20,520 per person per year, so £61,560 per person for the full three-year period
- Based on an approximate resettled refugee family size of four and a maximum of 15 families per year, the total per year would be £1,231,200.

UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)

The UKRS replaced the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) and the Gateway Programme, which welcomed over 20,000 people to UK.

The UKRS is accessible to refugees who have been assessed for resettlement by UNHCR against resettlement submission categories, including survivors of torture and/or violence, those with legal, physical protection, and medical needs, women and girls at risk, family reunification, and others at serious risk⁴.

Refugees resettled via UKRS will receive wrap-around support from BCC's Resettlement Team through

² [Bridging accommodation exit and interim accommodation provision for the ACRS and ARAP: policy guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

³ [FACTSHEET: ACRS and other routes – Home Office in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](https://blog.gov.uk)

⁴ [Resettlement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

funding from the Home Office for a five-year period:

- £20,520 per person per year, so £102,600 per person for the full five-year period
- Based on an approximate resettled refugee family size of four and a maximum of 15 families per year, the approximate maximum total per year would be £1,231,200.

The Home Office provides tariff funding for local authorities for the first year, including education and health funding, using the Official Development Assistance budget. For years beyond the first year of the scheme, tapered tariff funding is provided to local authorities, while education and health funding flows through the normal per capita funding routes.

BCC's Resettlement Team are set-up to, and experienced in, providing comprehensive support in resettling refugees in Bristol. The work of the team to date has contributed to a local infrastructure that helps BCC better support people affected by forced migration. Since BCC began resettling refugees in 2016, support for these families and individuals has been met within Home Office funding. The Resettlement Team are able to continue the delivery of the service annually for ongoing clients and new arrivals alike.

Wrap-around Support for Resettled Refugees

Through Home Office funding, related spending criteria for these schemes, and support from BCC's Resettlement team, refugees from both ACRS and UKRS schemes will receive wrap-around support such as:

- Allocated case workers from BCC's Resettlement Welcome Team (first year) and then Independence Team for the following two (ACRS) or four (UKRS) years, including welfare checks and support plans for those aged 18+
- Sourced accommodation in the private rented sector (paid through Home Office funding)
- Registration with GP, optician and dentist and The Haven refugee specialist primary care
- Support to open bank accounts, and support accessing required benefits
- Language/interpretation support and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes
- Coordination of school, nursery, or college places
- Access to employment support via the Refugee Employment Programme and volunteering opportunities
- Linking resettled refugees with local voluntary and community organisations to encourage networking, community, and integration

Risks and Mitigations:

1. **Impact on BCC's General Fund:** Although this proposal does not impact the General Fund within the three- (ACRS) or five-year (UKRS) period of support as funding is provided by the Home Office for each resettled refugee, BCC should note the risk that beyond these periods, funding from the Home Office will cease. This presents a potential impact on the General Fund regarding Housing in particular, where resettled refugees have not secured accommodation in the private rented sector beyond their schemes.
 - **Mitigation:** BCC's Resettlement Independence Team focuses on the 'move-on' phase after the ACRS and UKRS schemes come to an end, supporting people into employment and/or registering for relevant benefits. The Resettlement Team work closely with Housing Options to understand how to best source accommodation post-scheme, and to provide clear written and verbal briefings to refugees to manage expectations around housing options in Bristol and outside of

city. There is further work ongoing with Housing Options to scope more support in this area e.g., sourcing a pool of landlords offering tenancies at the LHA rate.

2. **Impact on local schools:** Increase in number of children and young people needing education places in Bristol.
 - **Mitigation:** Relatively low numbers of school places needed, and funding per pupil provided by the Home Office in three- (ACRS) and five-year (UKRS) period.

Options:

1. Approval of proposal to resettle 30 refugee families each year in Bristol until March 2027.
2. Approval to resettle a different number of refugee families each year in Bristol until March 2027.
3. Rejection of proposal to resettle 30 refugee families each year in Bristol until March 2027.

Officer Recommendations:

That the Committee for Adult Social Care:

1. Approves the proposal to resettle 30 refugee families in Bristol each year until March 2027 – 15 families via the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and 15 families via the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), funded by the Home Office and supported by Bristol City Council's (BCC) Resettlement Team as outlined in this report.
2. Authorises the Executive Director Adult and Communities in consultation with the Chair of the Adult Social Care Committee to accept and spend Home Office funding over £500k each year until March 2027 to provide wrap-around support for these families as outlined in this report

Corporate Strategy alignment:

1. **Children and Young People** – Resettled refugee children and young people will receive support from the Resettlement Welcome Team, linking in with Education to secure school places and relevant support, promoting the idea that Bristol is 'a city where every child belongs and every child gets the best start in life, whatever circumstances they were born into'.
2. **Economy and Skills** – Refugees resettled in Bristol will receive practical support around employment, volunteering, and financial management. This empowers their independence, contributing to 'inclusive and resilient communities' and the BCC pledge of 'equity of opportunity'.
3. **Health, Care and Wellbeing** – Support for resettled refugees with interpreters to sign up to GPs, undergo any necessary vaccinations, and support for mental and physical wellbeing in order to 'tackle health inequalities to help people stay healthier and happier throughout their lives'.
4. **Homes and Communities** – the Resettlement Welcome and Independence Teams will source accommodation in the private rented sector and undertake checks of these properties, funding rent for the three- (ACRS) or five-year (UKRS) duration via Home Office funding. This is in line with

‘inclusive neighbourhoods with fair access to decent, affordable homes’.

This proposal also aligns with:

1. The core objectives of BCC’s Refugee and Asylum Seeker Inclusion Strategy⁵ that relate to meeting refugees’ basic needs, social and economic inclusion, integration and welcome.
2. City of Sanctuary’s⁶ core values and objectives: inclusivity, openness, participation, inspiration, and integrity.

City Benefits:

This proposal fits within the context of BCC’s Refugee and Asylum Seeker Inclusion Strategy, which states:

‘A LA on its own cannot guarantee that someone seeking sanctuary will be able to thrive in their new community. But we do have a corporate vision to “play a leading role in driving a city of hope and aspiration where everyone can share in its success”.

Making that real for refugees and asylum seekers requires the Council to play a number of key roles, which together form the overall objectives that we will seek to achieve through the implementation of this strategy. The level and nature of support that the Council can provide to people is often dependent on their legal status.’

Consultation Details:

1. Executive Directors’ Meeting
2. Adult Social Care
3. Resettlement Team
4. Finance
5. Housing
6. Education
7. Public Health

Background Documents:

- [HM Government Community Sponsorship Guidance for Local Authorities](#)
- [Bridging accommodation exit and interim accommodation provision for the ACRS and ARAP: policy guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Resettlement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Afghan citizens resettlement scheme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [FACTSHEET: ACRS and other routes – Home Office in the media \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Refugee and Asylum Seeker Inclusion Strategy](#)
- [About - City of Sanctuary UK](#)

⁵ [Refugee and Asylum Seeker Inclusion Strategy](#)

⁶ [About - City of Sanctuary UK](#)

Revenue Cost	£2.4m (£1.2m for UKRS and £1.2m for ACRS per annum)	Source of Revenue Funding	Grant Funding UKRS and ACRS
Capital Cost	£ n/a	Source of Capital Funding	
One off cost <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>		Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> If yes - existing or new saving? Choose an item. OR Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Professional comments section:

1. Finance Advice: This report seeks authority to resettle 30 refugee families, and to accept and spend the associated grant funding. The funding to the Council will be spent on procuring and providing services to offer support and will need to be met from within the grant allocations. It is anticipated that the Council could receive up to c£2.4m per annum depending on the number of people supported (£1.2 million for UKRS and £1.2 million based for ACRS (for 30 families)).

The risk to the general fund once government grant funding ceases, needs to be actively mitigated and appropriate support and move on arrangements facilitated, which ensure that these costs do not fall on the Council.

Finance Business Partner: Denise Hunt, 4 July 2024

2. Legal Advice: The recommendation to accept and spend grant funding does not raise any specific legal implications. The procurement process to spend the funding must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations/Procurement Act 2023 and the Councils own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor, 10 July 2024

3. Implications on IT: No implications on IT regarding this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect, 15 July 2024.

4. HR Advice: The report is seeking approval from the Committee to the proposal to resettle 30 refugee families in Bristol each year until March 2027 – 15 families via the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and 15 families via the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), and to accept the funding from the Home Office to provide support to the families. Bristol City Council already have a Resettlement Team set up who have experience in providing the support needed, therefore this report does not have any significant HR implications for our employees.

HR Partner: Lorna Laing, HR Business Partner – Adults and Communities, Children and Education – 15 July 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal

YES

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	YES
Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment	YES
Appendix D – Risk assessment –	NO
Appendix E – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix F – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix G – Options appraisal matrix	NO
Appendix H – Business case / financial analysis	NO