



## Bristol Health & Wellbeing Board

Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Bristol	
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Report for Information	

### 1. Purpose of this Paper

To invite City Partners to contribute to the Welcoming Refugees and Asylum Seekers Action Plan

### 2. Executive Summary

The Mayor of Bristol pledged to promote Bristol as a City of Sanctuary and for Bristol to be a welcoming city with a clear strategy for supporting refugees. The Welcoming Refugees and Asylum Seekers Strategy is included as Appendix 1. The Refugee and Asylum Seekers Needs Assessment and Current Activities is included as Appendix 2.

The Strategy has four priorities, one of which is to *ensure a wide range of city partners (businesses, voluntary sector groups, universities, health and other agencies) work together to make Bristol a City of Sanctuary*. This report has been brought to the Health and Wellbeing Board to engage with partners who can contribute towards making Bristol a City of Sanctuary.

The Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership Board (RASP) will oversee the implementation of the strategy. Membership will consist of champions for key refugee and asylum seekers needs: Housing, Information, Advice and Guidance, Employment, Health, Young People, Destitution. Can the Health and Wellbeing Board nominate a representative to sit on the new Board who can champion health needs of asylum seekers and refugees in the city?

### **3. Key risks and Opportunities**

Welcoming refugees generally implies an initial investment, typically of public funds, which can longer term bring opportunities to the city:

- Higher-skilled refugees (and refugees' highly skilled children) can provide different and complementary skills to fill gaps in the labour market and enhance locals' productivity. A third of recent refugees in Sweden are graduates; more than two-thirds of those have skills which match graduate job vacancies.
- Enterprising refugees start businesses that create wealth, employ locals, make the economy more dynamic and adaptable, and boost international trade and investment. Sergey Brin, who arrived in the US as a child refugee from the Soviet Union, co-founded Google, now America's second most valuable company.
- People who have been uprooted from one culture and exposed to another tend to be more creative, while studies show that diverse groups outperform like-minded experts at problem solving.
- Ageing societies with a shrinking native working-age population can benefit from the arrival of younger refugees.
- Migrants in general tend to be net contributors to public finances; in Australia refugees become so after 12 years.
- Globally, remittances from migrants are three times the amount of development money from all the world's governments. Supporting refugees does indeed pay back to countries of origin improving global stability.

If the city 'does nothing' to welcome refugees then, at best, it is harder for refugees to benefit from networks and opportunities in the city. At worst, the risks of not welcoming refugees would be an increase in community tension, which may potentially lead to disorder or threaten the peace and stability of communities.

### **6. Implications (Financial and Legal if appropriate)**

N/A

### **7. Evidence informing this report.**

The evidence base is detailed in Appendix 2 : Bristol Asylum Seekers and Refugees Needs Assessment and Current Activities 2017

### **8. Conclusions**

Bristol is an international city that looks towards people and cultures beyond its boundaries. It is a diverse, creative, innovative and open city,

made up of communities from around 120 countries around the world who speak over 90 languages. The Welcoming Asylum Seekers and Refugees strategy and action plan will make a step-change in the co-ordination and development of the city's approach towards refugees and asylum seekers living in Bristol.

## **9. Recommendations**

The Health and Wellbeing Board partners are asked to consider

- What is your organisation's role in welcoming asylum seekers and refugees?
- How can your organisation provide more accessible job opportunities for refugees?
- How can your organisation contribute towards creating a safe city of sanctuary, towards greater understanding and towards greater economic and social inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees?
- Which HWB organisation is best placed to champion health needs on the Refugee and Asylum Seekers Partnership Board?

## **10. Appendices**

Appendix 1      Bristol Welcoming Asylum Seekers and Refugees Strategy and Action Plan 2017 - 2020

Appendix 2      Bristol Asylum Seekers and Refugees Needs Assessment and Current Activities 2017