

## Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)



Name of proposal	Housing payments made under the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme and the Global Resettlement Scheme
Directorate and Service Area	Adult Care Syrian Resettlement Team
Name of Lead Officer	Anne James – Commissioning Manager Refugees

### Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

1.1 What is the proposal?
To resettle 15 refugee families a year from 2021. To date 77 refugee families have been resettled in Bristol and the data supplied relates to the families who have already arrived. It is anticipated the Global Resettlement Scheme will have similar demographics to the VPRS scheme.

### Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?
<u>Service usage</u> Gender – 48% of the resettled refugees are female and 52% are male Age – 48% of people are aged under 16, 16% are aged 16-25, 34% are aged 25-55 and 1% are aged over 55

Ethnicity of families – 100% of families supported are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.

70% are Syrian, 15% are African and 15% are other Middle Eastern

Sexual orientation – less than 1% of refugees say they are lesbian, gay or bisexual  
Disability - 48% of families have at least one disabled adult or child, 15% of people on the scheme are disabled

Faith – 93% of families are Muslim, 7% are Christian

#### Syrian Resettlement Team

There are only nine people in the team and so the numbers are too small to publish some equalities information. The staff team are diverse. Over two thirds of team are women, 40% of the staff team are Arabic or Kurdish speakers to benefit the service users who arrive in the UK with minimal English skills, a third of the team are disabled and a third of the team have personal experience of the refugee experience.

2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

No

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

The Home Office evaluate the scheme twice a year and all refugees complete evaluation forms, including children. Each family has a support worker and personal progress plan where they input into the design of their support. People on the scheme are peer volunteers for newly arriving families and they advocate on behalf of families when needed

### **Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?**

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

We have not identified any significant negative impact from this proposal; however an ongoing commitment to resettle 15 refugee families a year will require an increased provision of school places.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

Any additional pressure on school places can be mitigated through sufficiency planning, and a key commitment in our Corporate Strategy is to

‘improve educational outcomes and reduce educational inequality, whilst ensuring there are enough school places to meet demand and a transparent admissions process.’

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

Appendix 1 highlights the benefits in terms of health, education, employment and wellbeing.

In November 2020, the Commissioning Manager – Refugees spoke to 20 refugee families asking for feedback on the management of the scheme.

When asked what was best about the scheme people said,

- ‘Everything,’ ‘Freedom’, ‘safety’, ‘a future for the children’, ‘to have support from all sides’.

When asked what was the worst element for the scheme people said

- ‘nothing’, ‘COVID’, ‘waiting times with the NHS’ and their difficulties with finding work and learning English.
- Three people said leaving family members behind was hard, they didn’t realise their family couldn’t join them.

The use of third party organisations for the collection of rent and to make landlord payments ensures greater security for equalities groups who would find it hard to rent PRS properties without support.

- 1 The scheme pays for rental costs for whilst families apply for DLA or PIP (this can take up to one year, but tenants do repay the rental costs when PiP/DLA and back payments are awarded )
- 2 The scheme pays for home deposits in recognition that families arrive in the UK without any savings.
- 3 The scheme has a strong offer to landlords to minimise the risk of renting to refugees who cannot provide references from previous properties
- 4 The scheme provides properties for newly arrived refugees who are likely to be unemployed for up to two years whilst they improve their English, who are unable to compete for properties on the open PRS market
- 5 The scheme funds basic access improvements and has converted two properties into wheelchair accessible properties

<p>The scheme fully furnishes properties with a special focus on providing a warm welcome for children.</p>
<p><b>3.4 Does the proposal create any benefits for the wider community</b></p>
<p>The housing model supports the wider community by increasing the number of private rented accommodation on the market, the scheme offers refurbishment and repayment offers to bring some empty homes back into use – 5 properties have been brought back into use . The scheme works with volunteers who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donate toys, furniture and clothes</li> <li>• Provide English classes to adults</li> <li>• Provide homework support to refugees at secondary school</li> <li>• Are befrienders for refugees over the age of 18</li> <li>• Are walking buddies for refugees who are isolated by COVID</li> <li>• Join monthly social events and peace feasts</li> <li>• Support refugees to attend medical appointments</li> <li>• Help with orientation when people first arrive in the UK</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.5 Can the benefits be maximised? If so, how?</b></p>
<p>Syrian Resettlement team will expand on its volunteering opportunities in 2021. Learning from the enthusiasm of local people to volunteer for people who were shielding during the COVID lockdown, we believe there are many people who would like to volunteer to help a family resettle in Bristol and learn English. In the survey of families in November 2020, the families said learning English was their top priority.</p> <p>The Bristol Resettlement Scheme is one of the few local authorities in the South West which can accommodate families with 6-8 people. This is because Bristol uses the private rented sector whereas some other local authorities in the South West use social housing. The financial modelling which has been scrutinised by the Programme Board indicates that larger families are more financially beneficial than working with smaller families and so this does not provide a risk for the local scheme. However the PRS does not offer the long term tenancy security which many families would prefer.</p>

**Step 4: So what?**

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with

protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?
No. The proposal is to resettle at least 15 families a year. This recommendation is based on the experience of resettling 77 families in a four year period.
4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?
4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?
Refugee families are surveyed twice a year by the Home office and once a year by the Syrian Resettlement Team.

Service Director Sign-Off:	Equalities Officer Sign Off: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>
Date:	Date: 4/1/2020