

# Economic Prosperity Scrutiny Committee

12<sup>th</sup> July 2022

## Refugee and Asylum Seeker Programmes Update



# Introduction

- The Council have a range of responsibilities across a number of refugee and Asylum Seeker dispersal programmes
- All programmes are different and each needs to be managed and responded to in different ways
- The Council manages its responses to the refugee and asylum seeker programmes through its Vulnerable Groups Team based in Housing Services



# Meet the Team

Karen Dunn – Housing Manager



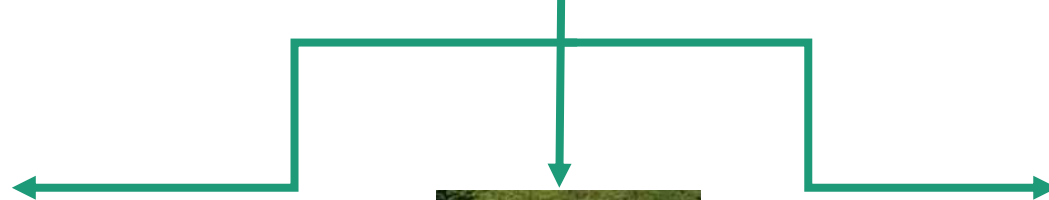
Billy Broad – Housing Officer



Hema Malik – Resettlement Officer



Kim Short – Housing Officer



# Current programmes

- Ukrainian programmes - for those fleeing War
  - 2 Schemes in operation
    - Family Reunion
    - Homes for Ukraine
- Afghanistan resettlement programmes - families and individuals displaced by war
  - 2 schemes in operation
    - Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
    - Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
  - Estimated that over 12,500 Afghan refugees remain in hotels across the
- Asylum Seekers – those arriving via illegal routes into the Country
  - There is a UK wide Dispersal Programme that is led by the Home Office and managed by regional contract providers, for the North East it is Mears
  - The programme is under national review and is in consultation presently
  - In the NE and Humber area there are over 3000 still in hotels



# Ukrainian programmes

## Family Reunion scheme

- This is a family led arrangement
- Families are expected to fund and look after family members
- No direct impact on Council...unless there is a relationship breakdown



## Homes for Ukraine

- [Homes for Ukraine: sponsor guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-sponsor-guidance)
- [Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils)
  - Member briefing issued 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022
  - Local Authority role – Portal management, DBS (now Enhanced for all), safeguarding interventions, Pre and post arrival checks, Accommodation checks, Multi Agency response (Education, Health, GP, job centre Plus), funding and payments, welfare checks, re-matching process, homelessness duty, ESOL, VCS connectivity
  - Sponsors – Thank you payment of £350 pm for up to 12 months, provision of appropriate and compliant accommodation





# Data – Homes for Ukraine in Sunderland

Data set	08/07/2022
Expressions of interest	721
Number of Hosts	80
Number of Matches	186
Number of arrivals (Total)	91
Number of single adults arrived (Female)	52
Number of single adults arrived (Male)	3
Number of children arrived	36
Number of Families arrived (Adult with children)	24
Number of rematches	1
Number of outstanding DBS (Over 7 days)	0
Number of Safeguarding interventions	7
Number of host breakdowns	7
Number of Homeless presentations	6



# Homes for Ukraine – Challenges & Case Studies

- Single Parent with Autistic son was matched with single disabled male, in one bedroom bungalow. Male paid for flights in alleged exchange for free care as he didn't want to pay Social Services for care package. Ukraine family was intercepted by staff at Newcastle Airport, taken to hotel. After a lot of support and partnership working, they have their own tenancy, have benefits sorted and child into special education
- Single female evicted on a weekend by her sponsors (very vulnerable young 19-year-old), placed out of hours by resettlement team, now moved into supported accommodation with Changing Lives. Team continue to support and looking now for alternative accommodation
- Single 18-year-old female matched with a single male (team already investigating this) when police informed us that he was an RSO, male told Police the match was with a 34-year-old male, which was untrue, Police and team worked together to intercept the match. Home Office informed and they are now investigating situation, 18 year female matched with another family



# Afghanistan Resettlement Programmes



- Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- Afghanistan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)
- Sunderland participate in both schemes
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/operation-warm-welcome-underway-to-support-afghan-arrivals-in-the-uk>
- ARAP is aimed at current and former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life.
- They are offered priority relocation to the UK
- 5,000 Afghan's arrived under ARAP.
- This number is in addition to the 20,000 expected under ACRS
- Sunderland control the properties that we pledge to the scheme
- Home Office ideally want larger properties, but they will consider anything
- Funding is in place to support process of resettlement and the Council will play a significant role in this process
- Due to refusal policy lots of Afghans remain in hotels, this policy is under review and will change future accommodation matches





# Asylum Seeker Dispersal Programme

- Home Office led and managed via a contract with Mears
- Limited involvement with Local Authority
- Over 70 hotels nationally being used for Asylum Seekers
- Over 3000 Asylum Seekers in hotels in the NE and the Humber region
- One hotel in use in Sunderland
- Mainly single men but there are also a high number of unaccompanied children
- Channel crossings have seen up to 1000 arrivals a day over summer months
- Nationality and Borders Act 2022
- Rwanda – New Government approach
- Government consulting on new approach to Dispersal
  - All Local Authorities in future must take part in Dispersal Programme



# Asylum Seeker Dispersal Programme

## Current data in Sunderland

- Cluster Limit - 1359
- Total Asylum Seekers – 480
- % of cluster limit – 35%
- Males – 323
- Females – 157
- Singles – 261
- Families - 64



# Questions

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