

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Community Connections



STAGE 1: WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED AND BY WHOM?

What is being assessed - including a brief description of aims and objectives?	<p>An Executive Decision to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree in principle that Plymouth City Council will resettle the dependent family members of the principal applicant resettled via the Afghan LES Ex-gratia scheme between 2014-2016. • Agree that Plymouth City Council will be able to support the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) by offering integration support if the Home Office provide interim accommodation in the city for a period of up to 12 months. Plymouth City Council would accept between 30-50 people if offering integration support only.
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Department and service	People, Community Connections
Date of assessment	11/07/2021

STAGE 2: EVIDENCE AND IMPACT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback)	Any adverse impact See guidance on how to make judgement	Actions	Timescale and who is responsible
Age	<p>Participating families will include children.</p> <p>Older participants are a possibility if they are identified as a dependent of the principal applicant employed as Afghan Locally employed Staff. This will be in exceptional cases only.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>All individuals relocated to the UK will have the opportunity to seek full citizenship and are likely to have enhanced life chances, with support for their social and medical care needs.</p> <p>Funding for English classes for adults has also allowed for</p>		

		childcare facilities to be available for pre-school age children to enable parents to attend English classes.		
Disability	<p>Whilst it is unlikely that Principal Applicant will have any physical health concerns it is possible that some may experience PTSD</p> <p>Dependents of Principal Applicants may have significant medical or social care needs and children may be assessed as having SEND needs after arrival in the UK.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>Some participants may require medical and social care. Children may have special needs that require support in mainstream schools. Additional costs for medical, educational and social care costs identified in the first year can be claimed over and above the standard tariff rate provided by the Scheme.</p>	<p>A partnership with health and social care colleagues will be established to assess all medical and social care needs in advance and which will then be met upon arrival.</p> <p>We do not anticipate any difficulty in meeting the needs of the dispersed families and are able to decline cases whose needs could not be met in Plymouth.</p> <p>Services have also been identified that can provide early intervention mental health support.</p>	
Religion or belief	<p>Afghanistan is a predominantly Muslim country, it is anticipated that the majority of those relocated will be Muslims</p> <p>Many in this population will be Muslim, however there are also a number of Christians and other religious minority groups in the region.</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Plymouth has a Muslim population from a range of diverse national backgrounds. There are two Mosques offering prayer and other facilities. There are also a number of shops with halal provision.</p> <p>There are numerous churches in Plymouth that have a congregation from a range of diverse national backgrounds.</p>	<p>We are seeking to address the potential for isolation and Islamophobia as part of wider Council strategy, including funding recently received via the Controlling Migration Fund and work undertaken by the Safer Plymouth Board. Many of the wider Refugee and Asylum Seeker support providers are also third party reporters for hate crime and can help support families and</p>	

		There is the potential for Refugees to feel isolated and to be the target of Islamophobia and other race related Hate crimes.	raise awareness of how to report incidents. The Refugee Integration Service is commissioned to provide refugee awareness training and community cohesion work. They will also link families with existing faith and cultural communities in Plymouth.	
Sex - including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	The decision has been made to resettle the spouses and dependent children of those already relocated to Plymouth under the previous Afghan LES Scheme. We may receive families, couples and singles. We will support families that arrive with recently born babies and mothers that become pregnant whilst in the UK.	No. Cultural practices may differ between countries of origin and the UK. These will be addressed through our integration work.		
Gender reassignment	Not known if participants will fall within this protected characteristic.	No. If participants fall within this category, existing support services will be made available		
Race	Afghan nationals will most likely identify their ethnicity as Asian Other.	No. The impact of the decision will be to give Afghan LES an opportunity to apply for citizenship and create a stable home in the UK. There is potential for refugees to feel isolated and to be the target of racism and hostility based on	We are seeking to address the potential for isolation and Islamophobia as part of wider COUNCIL strategy, including funding recently received via the Controlling Migration Fund and work undertaken by the Safer Communities Plymouth	

		current tension around immigration and security. Interpretation support and English classes will be provided.	Board. Many of the wider Refugee and Asylum Seeker support providers are also third party reporters for hate crime and can help support families and raise awareness of how to report incidents.	
Sexual orientation - including civil partnership	It is possible that participants may be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Questioning.	No. If participants fall within this category, existing support services will be made available.		

STAGE 3: ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FOLLOWING? IF SO, PLEASE RECORD ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

Local priorities	Implications	Timescale and who is responsible
Celebrate diversity and ensure that Plymouth is a welcoming city.	<p>Afghanistan is a predominantly Muslim country, it is anticipated that the majority of those relocated will be Muslims and will most likely identify their race as Asian Other.</p> <p>By taking the decision to participate in the Scheme the Council is remaining consistent with its values as Welcoming City and an area that celebrates and encourages people of different backgrounds, faiths and experiences.</p>	<p>The integration work we will be commissioning will ensure that families are supported and encouraged to engage positively with the wider community. Further projects undertaken by the Controlling Migration Fund will specifically look at improving community cohesion within neighbourhoods and across communities will further support this week.</p> <p>We will also seek to address any cultural norms of those arriving via the Scheme which may not be consistent with norms within the UK e.g. LGBTQ+ rights and right of women to work with peer to peer support networks.</p>

<p>Pay equality for women, and staff with disabilities in our workforce.</p>	<p>Women arriving via the scheme may initially have low levels of English, which impacts their ability to go into skilled work. Many of the women arriving on the scheme will have child care responsibilities which may impact their ability to enter the workplace in the short-term.</p> <p>The Scheme will fund employment of Council staff and staff within commissioned services to deliver the scheme requirements.</p> <p>Across the UK, men earned 18.4 per cent more than women in April 2017. Among full-time employees, women tend to be paid less per hour than men, while the opposite is true for part-time employees. One reason for this is that factors affecting women's employment and earnings opportunities become more evident among women aged in their 30s and 40s. For example, time spent out of the workplace to care for children or elderly relatives could affect future earnings when a person returns to work. Similarly, the need to balance work with family commitments and the availability of flexible working practices may restrict employment options. A higher proportion of women work part-time than men, particularly from age 30 onwards. Another factor is that women are still more likely to work in lower-paid and lower-skilled jobs.</p>	<p>Plymouth City Council has reported a Gender Pay Gap of 2.6 per cent with a median pay gap of 3.3 per cent in favour of women. Staff employed to support the scheme will be paid according to local authority banded scales to ensure equal pay rates. All commissioned services funded by the Scheme will be required to sign our Equality and Diversity policy, including a commitment to equal pay between genders.</p> <p>Individuals arriving on the scheme will receive an Independent Advice and Guidance session on arrival to discuss future employment. This will include setting out rights and raising awareness of being an employee in the UK.</p>
<p>Supporting our workforce through the implementation of Our People Strategy 2020 – 2024</p>	<p>The Principal Applicants arriving via the Scheme will have been employed in Afghanistan by the Ministry of Defence and will have a unique and varied range of skills and experience. We are anticipating that English levels will be higher than some of the other migrants and refugees arriving into the city.</p> <p>There may be opportunities with the Council for people with existing skill set as well as potential to participate in future access programmes, including work experience, paid internships and graduate programme.</p>	<p>As an employer we have committed to signing the Race at Work charter and to create a vibrant employee equality, diversity and inclusivity group with regular seminars</p>
<p>Supporting victims of hate crime so they feel confident to report incidents, and working with, and through our partner organisations to achieve positive outcomes.</p>	<p>There is potential for individuals and families arriving via the Scheme to feel isolated and to be the target of racism and hostility based on current tension around immigration and security.</p> <p>Post the Brexit referendum neighbourhood surveys conducted indicate a decline in local community cohesion rates.</p>	<p>Many of the wider Refugee and Asylum Seeker support providers are third party reporters for hate crime and can help support families and raise awareness of how to report incidents. Scheme funding supports events such as respect Festival, International Women's Day and Hope Festival. The Diverse Communities Team at Devon and Cornwall Police will attend all of these events to educate families further.</p>

<p>Plymouth is a city where people from different backgrounds get along well.</p>	<p>Immigration is currently viewed negatively by a majority of UK residents (79%). Previously there has been significant public support for the relocation of foreign national civilians to the UK who have been employed by the Ministry of Defence and armed forces in recognition of the commitment and bravery shown often in challenging and dangerous situation.</p> <p>Post the Brexit referendum neighbourhood surveys conducted indicate a decline in local community cohesion rates.</p>	<p>Numbers involved in the scheme will be controlled and so the local impact is likely to be minimal.</p> <p>Proactively promoting the scheme may be inappropriate considering the vulnerability of participants. However, Plymouth City Council would embed reference to this group in wider myth busting work on Migrants, Asylum Seekers and Refugees.</p> <p>We will promote engagement with the local community, including the Arabic-speaking and Muslim communities as part of our wider Welcoming City, hate crime incidents and community cohesion work. Any tensions will be monitored and responded to as required.</p>
<p>Human rights Please refer to guidance</p>	<p>Article 2 – right to life - everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law.</p> <p>Article 3 of the HRA states that no-one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.</p> <p>Article 9 of the HRA protects Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion. This right includes freedom to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.</p> <p>Article 2 of the First Protocol: Right to education</p>	<p>The government has stated that one scheme aim is to remove the incentive to attempt risky crossings of the Eastern Mediterranean. Our participation promotes protection of the right to life.</p> <p>Scheme participants may have been subjected to torture. We will ensure that this is taken in account in health and social care assessments.</p> <p>Whilst this does not amount to a duty to make provision for someone to practice their faith we will have an early conversation with local places of worship about their ability to accommodate new worshipers and enable scheme participants to fully</p>

		<p>practise any religion or belief they hold in Plymouth.</p> <p>Right to education – all children arriving via the Scheme will be automatically entitled to mainstream education. We will work with the admissions team and the education, participation and skills team to ensure that children are allocated places at school within a reasonable timeframe. Places will be allocated with due regard to impact on the local area. Adults arriving on the scheme will be entitled to access ESOL classes and money provided by the Scheme will support the provision of a crèche facility and women’s only classes.</p>
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STAGE 4: PUBLICATION

Responsible Officer - Craig McArdle	Date	15/07/2021
Strategic Director, Service Director or Head of Service		