


EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT – RESETTLEMENT SUPPORT**SECTION ONE: INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROPOSAL**

Author(s): This is the person completing the EIA template.	Kate Lattimore	Department and service:	Strategic Co-operative Commissioning	Date of assessment:	5 th March 2024
Lead Officer: Please note that a Head of Service, Service Director, or Strategic Director must approve the EIA.	Emma Crowther, Interim Head of Commissioning	Signature:		Approval date:	14 th March 2024
Overview:	<p>This EIA has been carried out to check that full consideration is being given to the impact of awarding a contract for a Resettlement Support service, currently delivered as Refugee Integration and Support Service, on people with protected characteristics under Equality Law.</p> <p>Plymouth has a long and proud history of accepting and settling refugees and asylum seekers (RAS), this is reflected via a commitment in the City Plan to equality and diversity and to promote cohesion to meet our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. Plymouth was designated a 'dispersal city' for asylum seekers under the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. There are approximately 350 asylum seekers living in Home Office commissioned dispersal accommodation at any one time. Once an asylum seeker receives a positive decision on their status to remain in the UK they are entitled to rent and can access other statutory housing assistance. Many of these refugees choose to remain in Plymouth. To further our commitment Plymouth has participated in several Home Office managed resettlement schemes enabling a safe passage for many of the most vulnerable people fleeing conflict and persecution. These include the Syrian Vulnerable Person's Scheme (SVPRS), Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS), Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, (ARAP) Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Homes for Ukraine (H4U).</p> <p>In terms of demographics, most recently, 75% of referrals come from 6 countries – Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria, Sudan, and Iraq. 80% are male, 69% single, 75% are between ages 25 – 44. Data analysis suggests that around 80 people per year choose to remain in the city and will require intense support with accessing housing, benefits, and employment at the point of receiving a positive decision. Support can last anywhere between 6 months to 2 years depending on need.</p>				

	<p>More detailed information about the protected characteristics of services users will be collected through the course of service provision and considered as part of the contract management process.</p> <p>The Council is required to re-commission the service. We are commissioning a new service that will help service users meet their aspirations and feel socially included, build on their on their assets, skills, and attributes to enable them to participate and contribute fully to society. Specific outcomes will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved access to housing and maximization of incomes via welfare benefits; • Improved English language acquisition via assistance with accessing ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and achieving accredited qualifications; • Increased self-sufficiency via employment and community integration; • Improved positive health and wellbeing outcomes; <p>The service will be a recognised partnership that is able to contribute towards improved community cohesion within the City and Support other organisations to become more culturally aware and competent when supporting people from refugee communities, offering expertise to help ensure they are accessible and culturally sensitive towards the needs of this cohort including professional advocacy for those people that may have experienced discrimination.</p>
Decision required:	<p>To award a contract to PATH led Plymouth Resettlement Partnership at a value of £2,200,000 for 4 years, with options to extend for 3 years and 2 years (4+3+2), following a tender process. The contract will commence on 1st May 2024.</p>

SECTION TWO: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL

Potential external impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact service users, communities, or residents with protected characteristics?	Yes		No	X
Potential internal impacts: Does the proposal have the potential to negatively impact Plymouth City Council employees?	Yes		No	X
Is a full Equality Impact Assessment required? (if you have answered yes to either of the questions above then a full impact assessment is required, and you must complete section three)	Yes		No	X

If you do not agree that a full equality impact assessment is required, please set out your justification for why not.

The justification is that as summarised in the overview, some of the key aims of the service will be to ensure that people with protected characteristics in particular around race and religion are provided with support interventions that will empower them to feel more confident in settling into their new hometown. The service will be particularly culturally sensitive to the needs of women who may come from countries within Africa and the Middle East, providing them with support and opportunities in single sex spaces where appropriate. Service requirements include initiatives that help to foster better understanding between different communities, aiming for better cohesion and mutual respect, and understanding reducing racial tensions.

The test is does the decision to award the contract

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people, and
- Encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The test is passed on all three criteria.

- The service minimises the disadvantages suffered by Asylum Seekers and Refugees who share the protected characteristics of Race and Religion.

It aims to meet the needs of service users where they are different e.g., language and integration

It aims to enable service users to participate and contribute fully to society.

In reaching this decision we considered relevant case law including *Kaur and Shah) v London Borough of Ealing [2008]*. We believe this the case is not fully relevant in the circumstances because although the service is through a single provider arrangement, this was already the case, and the service continues to meet the specialist need of the target group i.e. Refugee and Asylum Seekers. We note the expectation of community consultation and believe this is met by the active and supported involvement of relevant community representatives in codesign and contract award phases of the procurement activity.

The evidence recorded below relates to the wider community, the specific evidence we considered in relation to relevant services users is summarised in the Resettlement Support Service Business Case. More detailed information about the protected characteristics of services users will be collected through the course of service provision and considered as part of the contract management process.

Plymouth is designated as a 'dispersal city' for asylum seekers. There are approximately 350 asylum seekers living in Home Office commissioned dispersal accommodation at any one time. Around half of those seeking asylum and dispersed to the city are eventually granted refugee status, at which point they are entitled to rent and can access other statutory housing assistance.

In terms of demographics, most recently, 75% of referrals come from 6 countries – Iran, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Syria, Sudan, and Iraq. 80% are male, 69% single, 75% are between ages 25 – 44. Data analysis suggests that around 80 people per year choose to remain in the city and will require intense

support with accessing housing, benefits, and employment at the point of receiving a positive decision. Support can last anywhere between 6 months to 2 years depending on need.

SECTION THREE: FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Protected characteristics (Equality Act, 2010)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and consultation feedback)	Adverse impact	Mitigation activities	Timescale and responsible department
Age	<p>All data is from the 2011 Census except for age and sex which has been updated with 2021 data. Data will be updated with the 2021 Census data as it becomes available.</p> <p>Plymouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16.4 per cent of people in Plymouth are children aged under 15. • 65.1 per cent are adults aged 15 to 64. • 18.5 percent are adults aged 65 and over. • 2.4 percent of the resident population are 85 and over. <p>Southwest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.9 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14, 61.8 per cent are aged 15 to 64. • 22.3 per cent are aged 65 and over. <p>England</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.4 per cent of people are aged 0 to 14. • 64.2 per cent of people are aged 15 to 64. 	N/A	N/A	N/A

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18.4 per cent of people are aged 65 and over. <p>(2021 Census)</p>			
<p>Care experienced individuals</p> <p>(Note that as per the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care recommendations, Plymouth City Council is treating care experience as though it is a protected characteristic).</p>	<p>It is estimated that 26 per cent of the homeless population in the UK have care experience. In Plymouth there are currently 7 per cent of care leavers open to the service (6 per cent aged 18-20 and 12 per cent of those aged 21+) who are in unsuitable accommodation.</p> <p>The Care Review reported that 41 per cent of 19–21-year-old care leavers are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) compared to 12 per cent of all other young people in the same age group.</p> <p>In Plymouth there are currently 50 per cent of care leavers aged 18-21 Not in Education Training or Employment (54 per cent of all those care leavers aged 18-24 who are open to the service).</p> <p>There are currently 195 care leavers aged 18 to 20 (statutory service) and 58 aged 21 to 24 (extended offer). There are more care leavers aged 21 to 24 who could return for support from services if they wished to.</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<p>Disability</p>	<p>9.4 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited ‘a lot’ because of a physical or mental health problem.</p> <p>12.2 per cent of residents in Plymouth have their activities limited ‘a little’ because of a physical or mental health problem (2021 Census)</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A

Gender reassignment	0.5 per cent of residents in Plymouth have a gender identity that is different from their sex registered at birth. 0.1 per cent of residents identify as a trans man, 0.1 per cent identify as non-binary and, 0.1 per cent identify as a trans woman (2021 Census).	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership	40.1 per cent of residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership. 10 per cent are divorced, 6 percent are widowed, with 2.5 per cent are separated but still married. 0.49 per cent of residents are, or were, married or in a civil partnership of the same sex. 0.06 per cent of residents are in a civil partnership with the opposite sex (2021 Census).	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	The total fertility rate (TFR) for England was 1.62 children per woman in 2021. The total fertility rate (TFR) for Plymouth in 2021 was 1.5.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Race	In 2021, 94.9 per cent of Plymouth's population identified their ethnicity as White, 2.3 per cent as Asian and 1.1 per cent as Black (2021 Census) People with a mixed ethnic background comprised 1.8 per cent of the population. 1 per cent of the population use a different term to describe their ethnicity (2021 Census) 92.7 per cent of residents speak English as their main language. 2021 Census data shows that after English, Polish, Romanian, Chinese,	N/A	N/A	N/A

	Portuguese, and Arabic are the most spoken languages in Plymouth (2021 Census).			
Religion or belief	48.9 per cent of the Plymouth population stated they had no religion. 42.5 per cent of the population identified as Christian (2021 Census). Those who identified as Muslim account for 1.3 per cent of Plymouth's population while Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish or Sikh combined totalled less than 1 per cent (2021 Census).	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sex	51 per cent of our population are women and 49 per cent are men (2021 Census).	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation	88.95 per cent of residents aged 16 years and over in Plymouth describe their sexual orientation as straight or heterosexual. 2.06 per cent describe their sexuality as bisexual, 1.97 per cent of people describe their sexual orientation as gay or lesbian. 0.42 per cent of residents describe their sexual orientation using a different term (2021 Census).	N/A	N/A	N/A

SECTION FOUR: HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

Human Rights	Implications	Mitigation Actions	Timescale and responsible department
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	<p>The following articles of the Human Rights Act have relevance to the Refugee Support Service (RSS):</p> <p><u>Article 2 – right to life - everyone’s right to life shall be protected by law.</u></p> <p>The government has stated that they want to remove the incentive to attempt risky sea crossings of refugees and migrants.</p> <p><u>Article 3: Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment</u></p> <p>Asylum seekers and refugees will typically have experienced such treatment or at least have a well-founded fear that would if returned to their country of origin. Some service users will be awaiting decisions about their claims, and it is important that they are adequately supported whilst these decisions are made. In particular they must not be subjected to degrading treatment, and this will mean that service providers are equipped to recognise the potential for this in their dealings with this community.</p> <p><u>Article 8: Respect for your private and family life, home and correspondence</u></p> <p>Asylum seekers and refugees are increasingly arriving through safe</p>	<p>Commissioning this service promotes protection of the right to life.</p> <p>The commissioning process has sought to ensure that the provider has specialist knowledge and experience of providing support to Asylum Seekers and Refugees and that they are able to share this knowledge with other statutory and non-statutory partners with who they will be working.</p> <p>The commissioning team recognised the changing demographic and the need to provide appropriate services was explicitly set out in the ITT (Invitation to Tender). Providers were also asked to specifically evidence their awareness and understanding of this change.</p> <p>The commissioning team discussed the propensity for some service users to conform to cultural norms in their country of origin about the participation of women and people who identify as LGBTQ in society which might hamper or prevent their integration in UK society.</p> <p>This is a highly sensitive issue since these cultural norms may be well embedded and may be viewed by</p>	<p>Provisions to address the issues raised under these articles 2, 3, 8, 9 and Article 2 of the first protocol will be included in the contract based on those set out in the provider tender, method statements and the formal dialogue between commissioners and providers conducted within procurement rules.</p>
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	<p>routes as a result of Government schemes and interventions in conflict zones such as the middle east and Ukraine. This has led to a change in the demographic characteristics of the service users with an increased emphasis on the need to support the children and families that arrive through these routes.</p> <p><u>Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion</u></p> <p>Asylum seeker and refugee communities may have some strongly held beliefs that are incompatible with societal expectation in the UK, and they may associate these with an interpretation of a religious belief.</p> <p>To ensure that they can fully integrate into the UK there may need to be a level of challenge to these beliefs. It is important to recognise that Article 9 protects their right to wear religious clothing, the right to talk about their beliefs or take part in religious worship.</p> <p>As Public Authorities we cannot interfere with anyone’s right to hold or change their beliefs, but there are some situations in which we can interfere with their right to manifest or show their thoughts, belief, and religion.</p>	<p>service users as underpinned by religious belief, however they are incompatible with UK statutory expectations of equal treatment and interference is therefore lawful, justified, and provided it is applied with due regard to the rights of individuals, proportionate.</p> <p>The right to education service will work with the Council admissions team and the education, participation, and skills team to ensure that children are allocated places at school within a reasonable timeframe. The service will help support adults to access ESOL classes and may support the provision of a crèche facility and women’s only classes.</p>	
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	<p>This is only allowed where the authority can show that its action is lawful, necessary, and proportionate.</p> <p><u>Article 2 of the First Protocol:</u> <u>Right to education</u></p>		
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SECTION FIVE: OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Local priorities	Implications	Timescale and who is responsible
Celebrate diversity and ensure that Plymouth is a welcoming city.	Many people supported by the service will be from Middle Eastern and African countries so taking the decision to re commission this type of service the Council is remaining consistent with its values as a Welcoming City and an area that celebrates and encourages people of different backgrounds, faiths, and experiences.	The integration work we will be commissioning will ensure that families and individuals are supported and encouraged to engage positively with the wider community.
Pay equality for women, and staff with disabilities in our workforce.	Service will support women who may have childcare responsibilities which may impact their ability to enter the workplace in the short-term.	All commissioned services will be tested on their approach to equality and diversity as part of the procurement and ongoing contract monitoring.
Supporting our workforce through the implementation of Our People Strategy 2020 – 2024	N/A	N/A
Supporting victims of hate crime so they feel confident to report incidents, and working with, and through our partner	There is potential for individuals and families supported by the service to feel isolated and to be the target of racism and hostility based on current tension around immigration and security.	Service providers will be required to be third party reporters for hate crime and can help support families and raise awareness of how to report incidents.

organisations to achieve positive outcomes.		
Plymouth is a city where people from different backgrounds get along well.	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.	Service will help Council promote engagement with the local community, including the Arabic-speaking and Muslim communities as part of the wider Welcoming City, hate crime incidents and community cohesion work. Any tensions will be monitored and responded to as required.