

**Birmingham City of Sanctuary Policy Statement
2018-22**

Summary

The purpose of the City of Sanctuary policy statement is to set out Birmingham City Council's commitment to enabling Birmingham to be a "City of Sanctuary". A "City of Sanctuary" is a city which provides a welcoming place of safety for people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. The council also recognises that providing a welcoming place of safety needs to be more than just about how people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants arrive in and are welcomed but about how they settle and integrate in the city. Where this can be achieved there will also be benefits for all of Birmingham's citizens and communities.

Birmingham City Council's vision is for Birmingham to be a city of growth where every child, citizen and place matters, and this should apply equally to all of Birmingham's residents including new arrivals and migrant communities. This statement supports this vision and sets out the council's aims and commitments to supporting people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants for 2018-22. This sits alongside and with the council's priorities, outcomes and plan for 2018-22 to ensure that the approach taken to creating a City of Sanctuary is relevant and aligned to, as well as integrated within the council's existing commitments to the city, its stakeholders and communities.

Background

The City of Sanctuary movement started in 2005 with the mission to “work to build a culture of welcome, hospitality and inclusiveness right across every sphere and sector of society, so that wherever people seeking sanctuary go they will feel safe, find people who welcome them and understand why they are here, and have opportunities to be included in all activities”. Sheffield was the first city council to commit to becoming a City of Sanctuary in 2007 and many more have followed.

The City of Sanctuary movement in the UK should not be confused with the sanctuary city movement in the US, which is concerned with the enforcement of immigration legislation. The clear difference between the US and UK is that the US movement is about limiting cooperation between local and federal/central government, whilst the UK movement can assist better working relationships and joint working between local and central government in order to resettle people who are refugees. This can be seen in the pledges made by local government to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees across the UK, which in Birmingham was directly linked to adopting City of Sanctuary status.

In 2015 Birmingham City Council pledged its commitment to Birmingham being a City of Sanctuary and a welcoming place of safety for all, proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution. At the same time the council pledged to welcome 550 Syrian refugees via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This commitment was refreshed in 2017 with the adoption of a City of Sanctuary position statement, outlining a number of actions and initiatives the council was engaged in to help deliver this commitment. This policy statement is the next iteration of the council's commitment to being a City of Sanctuary.

The previous commitments to being a City of Sanctuary referred only to asylum seekers and refugees. However during the next four years the UK will be leaving the European Union, which will start to affect the perceived and actual status of migrants residing and working in, as well as visiting Birmingham. Therefore it is important to ensure that this statement is extended beyond people who are asylum seekers and refugees to also include people who are migrants to ensure that they also can feel that Birmingham is a welcoming place of safety, both during and after Brexit.

Definitions

This policy statement refers to people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants each of whom have different legal statuses in the UK and different reasons for coming to Birmingham.

Asylum Seekers are people who have claimed asylum under the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees on the ground that if he is returned to his country of origin they have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political belief or membership of a particular social group. They remain an asylum seeker during their application or an appeal against refusal of their application is pending. If their claims for asylum are successful they are granted refugee status.

Asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers have “No Recourse to Public Funds” (NRPF), restricting their access to certain welfare benefits and social housing. They are though entitled to access health services, though in some cases they may be charged for treatment in secondary care services. They are also unable to work and refused asylum seekers have no legal rights to remain in the UK. The current success rate for appeals for asylum claims (also known as a second asylum claim) is between 30 and 40% in Birmingham. Where appeals are unsuccessful people are given refused asylum seeker status.

It is difficult to estimate the numbers of asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers in Birmingham but we do know that there are approximately 1,600 asylum seekers claiming s.95 and s.4 (Immigration and Asylum Act 1999) support, subsistence and housing in the city.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) are children who enter the UK to claim asylum in their own right, and who are not accompanied by anyone who by law or custom would be responsible for their care. These children are accommodated by children’s services as children in care. Many of these children arrive in Birmingham after travelling through Europe. Some other asylum seeking children are in care having been brought to the UK under Section 67 Immigration Act 2016 (the ‘Dubs Amendment’, part of the Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme), or having left the care of family since initially coming to the UK to join extended family already settled in the UK (under Dublin III asylum regulations).

The ages of unaccompanied asylum seeking children are assessed according to national

guidance provided by the Home Office and case law. Where there is a need to assess a young person’s age, this is conducted by Local Authority social workers.

Refugees are people fleeing armed conflict or persecution. They are so recognised precisely because it is too dangerous for them to return home, and they need sanctuary elsewhere. Refugees are defined and protected in international law via the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol as well as other legal texts, such as the 1969 OAU Refugee Convention. One of the most fundamental principles laid down in international law is that refugees should not be expelled or returned to situations where their life and freedom would be under threat.

In the UK refugees are people whose asylum claims have been granted and therefore are legally entitled to remain in the UK for a defined or indefinite period of time depending on their individual circumstances. They are also legally allowed to work, access welfare, housing and other public services. The numbers of refugees in Birmingham is not known and is difficult to estimate. However Birmingham has pledged to accommodate 550 Syrian refugees via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme between 2015 and 2020.

Migrants are people who choose to move not because of a direct threat of persecution or death, but mainly to improve their lives by finding work, or in some cases for education, family reunion, or other reasons. Unlike refugees who cannot safely return home, people who are migrants face no such impediment to return. If they choose to return home, they will continue to receive the protection of their government.

For individual governments, this distinction is important and countries deal with migrants under their own immigration laws and processes. There are a variety of visas, routes and reasons that migrants may use to live in the UK. This applies to migrants from inside and outside the EU and can include for work or for study, indefinitely or for a set period of time, for instance. Whilst there are many migrants who are in the UK legally, there are also some who do not have a legal right to be in the UK and are therefore excluded from welfare, housing and employment, for instance.

There are estimated to be 48,000 migrants living in Birmingham, many of whom have arrived from one of the 27 other EU member countries. There are though significant numbers of non-EU migrants who are living and working legally in the city.

Strategic context to migration in Birmingham

Migration is a new term for a concept, which is as old as the human race. Ever since the first homo sapiens left Africa, people have moved freely across land and sea in search of a new life and new beginnings. In the UK, our own history is rich with stories about the Romans, Saxons, Vikings and Normans, to name a few, coming to this island and settling, establishing new towns, cities, language and cultures. Migration is therefore an inherent part of our history, language, culture and society. It is also literally part of our DNA.

As our civilisation and society has developed so have terms such as migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, particularly over the last few centuries. The UK first became a destination for refugees in the 16th century, when Protestants were fleeing persecution in France. Ever since, England has provided a sanctuary for people forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. During the 20th century the UK provided a sanctuary to people fleeing the first and second world wars, Nazi Germany, civil wars in Spain and Yugoslavia, Soviet oppression in Eastern Europe, as well as a range of other wars, genocide events and conflict zones across the world.

Despite the advances the human civilisation continues to make, the world is becoming no safer for large parts of the human population. Conflict continues with people fleeing war and conflict zones particularly in the Middle East and Africa, and countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Yemen and Sudan, for instance. Genocide continues with people fleeing places such as Sudan and Rohingya. Religious intolerance and persecution continues with people fleeing places such as Nigeria, Pakistan and Somalia. People also continue to flee persecution from their governments in places like Eritrea, Iran and China. As long as the world remains unsafe for so many reasons and for so many people there will be a need for countries such as the UK to provide sanctuary to people claiming asylum, protection and refugee status.

In addition to humanitarian reasons there continues to also be a range of economic reasons why the UK has and continues to provide a home and sanctuary to migrants. The European Union and the movement of people across countries for employment and enterprise is one of a long line of activities and initiatives which have enabled and supported migrants to move to the UK for employment and enterprise. Since the 16th

century there are well evidenced examples of people from across Europe, Africa and Asia coming to the UK and making significant contributions to the UK's skills and industries. This has included textiles and silk, shipping, food and drink (including the introduction of curry to the UK and Birmingham), agriculture, construction, as well as a range of professional skills. In more recent years migrant skills and labour have become synonymous with the NHS, with nearly 40% of the UK's registered doctors earning their medical qualification outside Britain, whilst Caribbean born nurses were a critical part of the NHS' early workforce.

Beyond employment, migrants have been and continue to punch well above their weight in setting up new businesses. Migrant entrepreneurs, for example are responsible for the creation of 1 in 7 UK companies and businesses and for businesses which have created 14% of all British jobs. In Birmingham there are well known names across the food and drinks, recruitment, fashion, finance and retail industries which have been created by migrant entrepreneurs. An important factor is that the UK (and Birmingham) provides a platform and opportunities for people to apply their skills, determination and enthusiasm which might not be available to them in the economies and countries they have left. These are often skills and qualities not easily accessible or obtainable for the resident UK population.

During the 20th century the UK was a country with net emigration rather than net immigration until 1979. Ever since then net immigration has consistently exceeded net emigration. This period coincides with the UK becoming the fourth biggest economy in the world (now the fifth), which has in part been driven by the productivity and economic benefits of migration. The success story of the UK's economy has also provided a significant draw to people who are refugees and migrants from across the world.

In 2016 the total number of new refugees and migrants arriving in Birmingham was 15,409, which represents just 1.4% of the total Birmingham population. With 6,364 migrants, refugees and UK citizens leaving Birmingham in the same year the total net migration of 9,045 is a relatively modest number of people for a city the size of Birmingham to be absorbing within its communities and an existing migrant and refugee population of approximately 250,000 people (non-UK born residents). However, these figures are increasing year on year and within both the regional and national context Birmingham needs recognition that it is doing more than most other cities to welcome people who are asylum seekers,

refugees, EU and non-EU migrants. In the West Midlands only Coventry saw a bigger percentage increase in its population due to migration, whilst less than half of Local Authorities in the region and nationally are supporting the asylum and refugee support and resettlement schemes which Birmingham is signed up to.

It is difficult to determine the long-term trends concerning refugees and migration. As referenced, for nearly forty years now the UK has been a country with net immigration and there continues to be a need for people to seek asylum in the UK. A reasonable assumption can therefore be made that the UK and urban centres, such as Birmingham will continue to have net immigration for the foreseeable future. However, with the UK leaving the EU the profile of immigration is likely to change with the current government already signalling that EU and non-EU citizens may be subject to the same immigration controls. This may result in a reduction in the number of EU migrants arriving in the UK and Birmingham. Evidence clearly shows that migrants and migration have a positive impact on the UK's economy. It is reasonable to assume that any changes to immigration policy and controls will therefore favour those migrants who can have a positive and beneficial impact on the UK economy.

In terms of trends to asylum, as referenced the need for people to claim asylum in the UK is unlikely to change in terms of the volume. However the profile of this is very likely to change as current conflicts come to an end and new ones start-up. Likewise as governments and regimes change around the world, these are also likely to result in the need for some people to flee their home countries. One change which may happen though is how the UK receives asylum seekers. The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme has been deemed by many as a more effective and successful way of receiving and resettling refugees. A key element of the scheme is that the claims of asylum seekers are reviewed and decided on from their country of origin (in this case places like Syria and Lebanon). In the future the UK may adopt similar schemes and broaden this approach out to a broader range of asylum seekers.

The demands created by people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants on public services and communities, needs setting against the pressures Birmingham City Council and the city are already under from shrinking budgets and increasing demands on public services. Between 2010/11 and 2020/21 Birmingham City Council's budget will have reduced by £760 million as a result of cuts to its government grant. This means

less capacity and less people to deliver services. In addition, being the youngest city in Europe, whilst positive creates huge demands on services for children, young people, families and for education. Aligned to that there is a significant older people which is living longer and requiring increasingly more support and services from the social care and health system. Essentially there are limits to Birmingham's capacity to be able to successfully welcome, resettle and integrate migrant communities.

In addition, whilst the overall numbers of migrants and refugees arriving and living in the city are fairly modest compared to the overall population, the impact of migration on services and communities is not being felt evenly across the city. There are many parts of Birmingham which are untouched by the issue of migration, compared to several Wards and neighbourhoods which have become a particular focal point for new arrivals and communities. This is presenting several challenges to services and communities in those neighbourhoods, particular West Birmingham where this issue is particularly acute:

- Increasing pressures on schools due to additional demand for school places and a lack pupils who have English as a first language;
- Increasing pressures on NHS services due to additional GP registrations and demands on primary care services;
- Increasing pressures on housing, increasing the demand and costs of housing, particularly in the private rented sector and on social housing;
- Increasing demands on benefits and local unskilled jobs, particularly in the initial stages of resettlement and integration for people who are new migrants and refugees.

As a whole, this lack of even distribution of migrants and refugees across Birmingham is also not helpful to trying to create cohesive and integrated communities in the city. What we are seeing are divides in the city between those areas which are accommodating new languages, cultures and people with those areas where there has been little to no change for several decades. This is reflected in city's schools, neighbourhoods and high streets.

Beyond the geographical issues within Birmingham are also the stories of missed opportunities and lost potential, with people who are migrants and refugees arriving in the city for a better life, safety and security are ending up in crisis, destitution and long-term unemployment.

This can be a difficult to exit with many people being stuck in a cycle of crisis and destitution for many years. There are several reasons for this:

- No Recourse to Public Funds – restricting applying asylum seekers and refused asylum seekers access to certain welfare benefits and social housing. A part of this problem is the lack of access people with have to good quality immigration advice, which can advise them on their rights and options.
- English language skills – a lack of ability to read, write and converse in English makes it harder for people to engage effectively with public services, access employment or to help with their children’s education.
- Public services - a lack of knowledge and understanding about the advice, support and services available to help people means that opportunities for prevention and early intervention can be missed affecting people’s longer-term health, domestic abuse and safety for instance.
- Advice and support – the same lack of knowledge and understanding about public services means that people miss opportunities to improve their housing, education, wellbeing and employment.
- Communities – being new to the city, people who are migrants and refugees are unlikely to have a natural network of family, friends and acquaintances who can provide advice and support, especially during difficult times.

The aspiration of enabling the city to be a “City of Sanctuary” is therefore one about ensuring that people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are enabled to fulfil their potential and contribute positively to the city’s culture, economy and social fabric. People arrive in Birmingham in search of a better life, to be able to live in safety and security with skills, assets and a determination which has often brought them thousands of miles to be in this city. The initial arrival and transition to living independently in Birmingham can be a risky and fragile one however, and one where hope and aspiration can easily be replaced by crisis and destitution. Evidence shows that where people who are migrants and refugees can start their new lives in Birmingham and the UK well, they can go onto live healthy, happy and fulfilling lives and make a significant contribution to the city’s neighbourhoods, communities, culture and economy. Where Birmingham’s stakeholders can get this approach right it will have a benefit for all of Birmingham’s citizens, not just those arriving in or newly arrived.

Birmingham City Council’s current activities, projects and initiatives which are working with and supporting people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants

Birmingham City Council is already engaged in a range of activities, which are supporting the aims of being a City of Sanctuary. Much of this is working with and supporting voluntary and community sector organisations and groups, across the city. This is across the breadth and depth of its roles and responsibilities covering education, safeguarding, housing and homelessness, adult education, community safety, community cohesion, employment and skills, procurement, libraries, advice, as well as neighbourhoods and communities.

- **Asylum Dispersal support and accommodation** – we are working with Serco, Migrant Help, the Home Office, West Midlands Police, NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups, as well as voluntary sector organisations to ensure that destitute asylum seekers are appropriately supported and accommodated in Birmingham. This includes advice and support, provided as people move in and move on from government provided accommodation in order to connect them to appropriate services, networks and communities. Our role is also to support compliance with regulations and local processes concerning housing and safeguarding.
- **Birmingham City of Sanctuary** - we work with Birmingham’s volunteer City of Sanctuary group, part of a national network sharing experience and ideas across the UK. The Birmingham group seeks to identify gaps in provision and encourages the diverse range of refugee and asylum support organisations in the city to work together. Raising awareness, positive stories of asylum and working with partners on national policy issues are also important. The focus so far has been on developing a vibrant Schools of Sanctuary network, mapping ESOL provision, and exploring the contribution of bodies such as libraries and universities to refugee support.
- **Birmingham Connecting Communities** - The project is aimed at connecting communities in Birmingham, to have a better understanding of different faiths and culture and providing a better start for Eastern European communities. The proposal has

been funded by MHCLG and aims to create strong, inclusive and resilient communities, where everyone is able to access the support and services they need and is able to exercise their right. This is through providing additional advice, support and navigation for migrant communities, as well as inter-community activities.

- **Birmingham Migration Forum** – we facilitate and chair a regular meeting and network of statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations and groups, which have a shared interest in migration and associated issues. The purpose of the Forum is to provide a shared space to share information, coordinate and influence activity across sectors and the city.
- **Community Cohesion Strategy** – we are working with city partners, faith, voluntary and community organisations and communities across Birmingham to tackle the drivers that prevent individuals, families and communities from reaching their full potential, including discrimination, isolation, poverty, segregation, or ambition to improve life chances. Community cohesion is an ongoing process and not a time-limited project, which means we will continuously review the impact of our decisions and resources as well as our relationships with and across communities to build a welcoming, fair and cohesive city for everyone.
- **Counter Extremism** – we work closely with communities and statutory organisations to build resistance to all forms of extremism, whether politically, religiously or racially motivated, including challenging those illegal cultural practices that harm the people of the city. The Counter Extremism Coordinator works specifically with asylum seeker, refugee and migrant communities across four themes – “building strength in diversity and social participation”; “targeted work with vulnerable communities and institutions”; “addressing extremist narrative”; “supporting activities”.
- **Cultural development** – we support a range of activities which enable local people to engage with and shape arts and culture on their doorsteps, empower future generations to develop their creativity and play an active part in the culture and heritage of the city, whilst supporting the growth and development of artists and companies working in this sector.

We are also supporting an arts and culture programme for Syrian refugees included in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

- **Employment and Skills programmes** – we are actively engaged in developing pathways for people who are migrants and refugees with leave to stay and the right to work in the UK into a number of different programmes. This includes the “Youth Promise Plus”, “Progression Pathways for Adults” and “Skills for Growth”. We are also working with employers through the Birmingham Business Charter to improve awareness of and access to migrant communities.
- **ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)** – we deliver an ESOL curriculum, which is designed to improve citizens’ English language and literacy skills to promote social cohesion, to develop learners’ independent living skills and improve access to educational and work opportunities. Our “ESOL for Work” pre-employment programme combines English language tutoring with IT skills and the skills that people need to find and keep jobs. In 2017-18 we delivered ESOL classes to 1,486 learners at 12 centres across Birmingham.
- **Initial Accommodation Centres** – Birmingham is home to one of the region’s two sites (East and West Midlands), which provide temporary accommodation for newly arrived destitute asylum seekers. This is for a period of up to 21 days before being re-housed in housing located across the region whilst asylum claims are reviewed. As part of this we have a role in ensuring that accommodation complies with regulations, support provided complies with safeguarding requirements and that children and young people are able to access education.
- **Libraries of Sanctuary** – we are currently working with Friends of Stirchley Library and King’s Heath Action for Refugees (KHAR) towards piloting Stirchley Library as a Library of Sanctuary, which will support recent migrants to become part of the local community.
- **Lift the Ban** – we have become the first council in the West Midlands to join the Lift The Ban coalition calling for a change in government policy which would provide asylum seekers the right to work, whilst their claim for asylum is considered.

- **MiFriendly Cities Project** – we are working with ten partners, including Coventry and Wolverhampton City Council's to deliver a range of activities across employment, health and active citizenship which can create welcoming communities and integration opportunities for people who are migrants and refugees new to Birmingham. The project aims to also benefit the wider community through unlocking talents and skills from within refugee and migrant communities.
- **Modern Slavery** – we are one of six local authorities (alongside Leeds, Derby, Croydon, Redbridge and Nottingham) who have received funding to put in a place a Pathway for Survivors exiting the National Referral Mechanism. The Pathway will provide a range of wrap-around services for survivors based on a strength-based trauma model with built-in packages of support around emotional resilience, advocacy and human rights, housing, education, training and employment. The pilot is due to end June 2019, although there will be an option to extend this if required.
- **Prevent** – Birmingham is identified as a priority area for the Prevent programme. We oversee a multi-agency programme of activity linked to reducing individuals vulnerability to radicalisation and extremism. This includes oversight and coordination of the multi-agency Channel Panel, which provides support and interventions for vulnerable individuals, and providing training and awareness for communities and civil society organisations including safeguarding for people who are asylum seekers and refugees fleeing conflict zones as well as awareness and support around hate crime.
- **Preventing Crisis; Enabling Integration** – the Council has been awarded funding to work with partners including the Refugee & Migrant Centre, Community Law Centre and Asirt to improve and increase access to immigration, asylum and community advice. This is specially to help to prevent crisis and introduce new arrivals to communities and local services. The project has been funded by MHCLG and will provide training and a phone-line for organisations supporting asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, more capacity for advice and casework, as well as information which can welcome people to the city.
- **Rogue Landlords Project** – migrants are especially likely to live in poor quality accommodation due to a reliance on housing migrants in the private rented sector (PRS), and are often unwilling or unable to approach local authorities for help when there are problems with their housing situation. The council's Rogue Landlords Project, funded by MHCLG's Controlling Migration Fund, works with partners and local communities across the city to improve the supply and quality of housing in the private rented sector (PRS) by tackling irresponsible 'rogue' landlords, informing tenants of their rights and responsibilities and supporting individuals in high risk circumstances. This helps to improve health and social care outcomes for migrants, as well as reducing pressure on key services such as adult social care, homelessness services, and advice services.
- **Safeguarding Adults Board** – BSAB is committed to listening to the voice of the citizens of Birmingham, ensuring that, wherever possible, safeguarding responsibilities are delivered in a way that empowers our communities and individual citizens. Our ultimate aim is to build a city free from harm and neglect, where our most vulnerable citizens, including migrants, are safe. Moving forward, our focus is on developing effective preventative and early interventions strategies that minimise the risk of abuse and neglect by establishing safer communities for people with care and support needs. This includes areas that specifically affect migrants such as unregulated housing and the impact of social isolation.
- **Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme** – we are committed to receiving, resettling and supporting the integration of 550 Syrian refugees from 2015 until 2024. This includes receiving refugees until 2020 and providing range of support and opportunities for refugees and communities across housing, welfare, education, arts, culture, health, active citizenship and communities over a five year period for person and household.
- **Third Sector Immigration Advice Strategy** – we have worked with the Destitution Steering Group to develop a third sector immigration advice and strategy which can to provide a clear consistent pathway to support all people subject to immigration control. We are continuing to work with voluntary sector partners to implement the strategy including

submitting a joint bid to the Controlling Migration Fund to assist its delivery.

- **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children** – Birmingham Children’s Trust has a dedicated Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children social work team. This offers a statutory response to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who arrive in Birmingham to seek asylum, and who are not accompanied by an adult responsible for their care. The team has also accommodated children who have come to the UK under the Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme, via the Dubs Amendment, under Dublin III family reunion, and via the National Transfer Scheme for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. Representatives for the service attend the UASC Professional Working Group with the Strategic Migration Partnership, and the team works in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations in the city.
- **USE-IT! Project** - the USE-IT! project unlocks potential in disadvantaged communities in west Birmingham by linking major capital developments to social and economic assets in the surrounding community. It also links the ideas and talents of local people with the needs of urban development projects, identifying qualification needs and matching job skills to demand, as well as supports social enterprise and community-rooted entrepreneurs, enabling people to develop their enterprise skills and trade their way out of poverty and social exclusion. So far the project has recruited over 150 people who are migrants and refugees with overseas medical qualifications who are now on a pathway to employment with the NHS, as well as building a network of over 120 social entrepreneurs.
- **West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership** – we host the partnership team on behalf of the region’s Local Authorities. In addition we are an active member of the partnership board, as well as several regional working groups covering Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, Asylum Dispersal, No Recourse to Public Funds, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children and Migrant Health Network, for instance.

Birmingham City Council’s aims and commitments to people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants

Birmingham City Council’s vision is for Birmingham to be a city of growth where every child, citizen and place matters. This vision needs to apply equally to everyone residing, working or arriving in Birmingham, including people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

In delivering this vision, the council is also committed to the achieving the following outcomes with and for all of its citizens and stakeholders - including people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants:

- Birmingham is an entrepreneurial city to learn, work and invest in;
- Birmingham is an aspirational city to grow up in;
- Birmingham is a fulfilling city to age well in;
- Birmingham is a great city to live in;
- Birmingham residents gain the maximum benefit from hosting the Commonwealth Games

This statement does not seek to provide preferential treatment to new arrivals to the city over existing residents and citizens in Birmingham. Instead it recognises that during an arrival, settlement and integration period asylum seekers, people who are refugees and migrants face many disadvantages compared to people already living in and working in the city. It also recognises that where resettlement and integration can be successfully achieved then everyone living in and working in the city can benefit through a stronger economy and stronger communities. Likewise, where this isn’t successful then this can create additional pressures on public services and communities.

The unique challenges and opportunities presented to Birmingham and the council by people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants need to be reflected in some specific aims to be able to achieve the council’s vision and outcomes for the city:

- Prevent crisis and destitution amongst new arrivals to Birmingham, including people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. In doing so prevent new demands on public services such as housing and social care, from emerging;
- Enable people who are refugees and migrants to be able to actively and

meaningfully participate in the city's economy through employment or enterprise;

- Enable all new arrivals to connect to and participate in social and community networks, both in the neighbourhoods in which they live and across the city;
- Enable people who are refugees and migrants to participate in their neighbourhoods as active citizens.

In delivering the vision and outcomes for Birmingham, as well as these more specific aims Birmingham City Council's commitments to people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, as well as migration as a whole are:

1. We will work with partners in Birmingham, particularly the voluntary and community sectors, to raise the awareness of and public interest in issues relating to migration, people who are asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, as well as new communities. This includes supporting activities such as Refugee Week, as well as raising the awareness of council officers and Members through briefings and training.
2. We will work towards ensuring that people who are migrants and refugees who are legally entitled to be in the UK and Birmingham have access to the same support and opportunities to participate in mainstream society and the economy as citizens already residing in Birmingham. This includes ensuring that people who are migrants and refugees are knowledgeable about their rights and confident about accessing public services, particularly concerning:
 - Community safety, including domestic abuse, modern day slavery and hate crime
 - Education and schooling
 - Employment, welfare and benefits
 - ESOL
 - Health
 - Private rented sector housing
3. We will ensure that the needs, skills and assets of people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants are reflected and included in mainstream council policies and strategies concerning:
 - Adult Education (including ESOL)
 - Advice and information
 - Children's Services
 - Cohesion

- Commonwealth Games
- Community centres and libraries
- Community safety, including domestic abuse, modern day slavery and hate crime
- Counter Extremism
- Education
- Employment and Enterprise
- Homelessness and Housing Options
- Housing Management
- Prevent
- Private Rented Sector Housing
- Procurement and social value
- Public Health
- Safeguarding

4. We will work with health partners to enable and ensure access for people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to health services. This is particularly concerning primary care services, advice and support to prevent the development of more acute, long term health conditions.
5. We will work with employment and enterprise partners to develop shared priorities, plans and pathways to enable people who are migrants and refugees to be able to access meaningful, long-term employment opportunities and careers. This is recognising the professional skills, personal attributes and other assets which many people who are migrants and refugees bring to Birmingham and the region and which might be particularly applied to areas such as health and the NHS, teaching and education for instance.
6. We will continue to host and facilitate the Birmingham Migration Forum, as well as other relevant partnerships in order to bring stakeholders together across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. This is in order to facilitate cross-sector communication, cooperation, collaboration and partnerships which can support the aims of this policy statement.
7. We will work with stakeholders to ensure they have a voice and are able to critique and provide ideas and solutions, which can continuously improve and develop the systems and services in place to work with and support people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.
8. We will be open and transparent in our plans and approaches for delivering and supporting resettlement schemes for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as the asylum dispersal process which operates in

Birmingham. This includes being open and transparent with our citizens, as well as involving stakeholders in influencing and shaping plans and delivery for the council's pledges to:

- Resettle 550 Syrian refugees via the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS);
 - Support the accommodation of destitute asylum seekers, under s.95 and s.4 of the Immigration Act via the Home Office "Compass Contract";
 - Resettle Unaccompanied Asylum Children (UASC) via the National Transfer Scheme;
 - Accommodate children arriving in Birmingham and included in the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme;
 - EU Settlement Scheme, as part of the UK's plans to leave the EU.
9. We will recognise the important role the voluntary and community sectors play in the city and work with them and statutory partners to develop the amount of resource and funding available in the city, which can:
- Prevent crisis and destitution
 - Provide accessible informal and formal opportunities for ESOL learning
 - Enable meaningful employment and participation in the city's economy
 - Enable engagement and connections to social and community networks
 - Enable active citizenship in the city and its neighbourhoods
10. We will work with other Local Authorities in the region via the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership and West Midlands Combined Authority, as well as other Cities of Sanctuary to develop common and consistent approaches to working with and supporting people who are asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This includes developing shared objectives and priorities which recognise both the challenges presented by migration to the region, as well as the skills and assets. Areas which are particularly relevant are mental health, employment, skills and enterprise, as well as regional policies towards the resettlement of people who are asylum seekers and refugees. It also includes actively contributing to regional working groups covering:
- Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme;
 - Asylum Dispersal;
 - No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF);
 - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC);
 - Migrant Health Network.
11. We will work with partners to identify national policy issues, where we can make collective representations to government to encourage and enable change. This is particularly where there are barriers and challenges being created which might impact on:
- Cohesion and communities
 - Crisis and destitution
 - Education and employment
 - ESOL
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Immigration status (of children, young people and adults)
12. We will review the delivery of these commitments on an annual basis, reporting progress through the appropriate council Scrutiny Committee and to the city's stakeholders as appropriate. This will be supported through the identification of named leads across each political portfolio, directorate and service area.