

SECTION 1 - DO I NEED AN EIA?

DO I NEED AN EIA?

Name of policy/activity: Afghan Relocation Scheme

Please choose one of the following:

Is this a:

- New policy/activity? ✓
- Existing policy/activity?
- Budget proposal/change for this policy/activity?
- Pilot programme or project?

Decision

Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

A commitment to support the Afghan Relocation Scheme will engage Human Rights and Equality legislation on the grounds of ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment. It is important that due regard will be given to the need to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between groups who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Date of Decision:

If undertaking an EIA please continue onto the Section 2. If not, pass this signed form to the Equalities Officer.

Assessment undertaken by:

Director or Head of Service	
Lead Officer for developing the policy/activity	Carmen Gillies Senior Project Officer Health & Social Care Moray
Other people involved in the screening (this may be council staff, partners or others i.e. contractor or community)	Don Toonen, Equal Opportunities Officer, Moray Council

SECTION 2: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Brief description of the affected service

1. Describe what the service does:

Respond to a request from the UK Government, seeking the local authorities' support to participate in the accelerated relocation scheme to provide housing and other support to locally employed staff, who have been supporting the UK in Afghanistan.

2. Who are your main stakeholders?

- Afghan refugees

3. What changes as a result of the proposals? Is the service reduced or removed?

This is a new service

4. How will this affect your customers?

The service is aimed at supporting Afghan families/unaccompanied children who will be very vulnerable following events in Afghanistan over the last 20 years, exacerbated by events over the last months. They may or may not speak/understand English, they are likely to have been severely traumatised and may have psychological and/or physical support needs. Given the situation, they will have few or no possessions and will have to integrate into a society and culture that may be alien to them.

In Moray they will be settling in an area with a strong military presence and will have to adapt to a dominant presence of military aircraft.

If school children are among the refugees they will need to be supported with integration into the education system, likely with additional support regarding language and emotional/cultural resilience.

5. Please indicate if these apply to any of the protected characteristics

Protected groups	Positive impact	Negative impact
Race	√	√
Disability	√	
Carers (for elderly, disabled or minors)	√	
Sex	√	√
Pregnancy and maternity (including breastfeeding)	√	
Sexual orientation	√	√
Age (include children, young people, midlife and older people)	√	
Religion, and or belief	√	√
Gender reassignment	√	√

Inequalities arising from socio-economic differences	√	
Human Rights	<p>Article 3 – Freedom from Torture & Inhuman or Degrading Treatment</p> <p>Article 8 - Respect for your Private & Family Life, home and correspondence</p> <p>Article 14 - Protection from Discrimination on the grounds of disability</p> <p>Article 5 – Right to Liberty & Security</p> <p>Article 6 – Right to a fair trial</p> <p>https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/human-rights/human-rights-act</p> <p>Whether and when human rights are engaged or breached would be decided on a case by case basis depending on the circumstances of each individual case.</p>	

6. Evidence. What information have you used to make your assessment?

Performance data	
Internal consultation	Discussions with staff involved in Syrian Resettlement.
Consultation with affected groups	
Local statistics	
National statistics	UK Government statistics stating that it concerns around 1,000 Afghan locally employed staff and their families.
Other	COSLA briefings and information session.

7. Evidence gaps

Do you need additional information in order to complete the information in the previous questions?

There is no information, as yet, about numbers that will be allocated to Moray nor details of the persons involved.

8. Mitigating action

Can the impact of the proposed policy/activity be mitigated?

Please explain

Race/religion: Experience with the Syrian Resettlement has shown that there is a small but vociferous group of people who express ill feelings towards migrants and Muslims. The publicity around the arrival of Syrian families was an important element of containing this. FAQs were published on the Council's website. This can be adapted to the Afghan situation.

In addition, training given to the families assisted the families in integrating into their communities. The training covered child protection, equal opportunities legislation, cultural differences, access to medical services. The families were introduced to uniformed officers from Police Scotland to help them overcome their suspicions/fears of police and armed forces. A welcome pack was drawn up and translated, covering information about practical issues including access to medical services, housing, benefits, fire prevention.

Additional support is likely to be needed for those family members with limited command of English. This can be provided by face-to-face interpretation, written translation and support through the Council's EAL team.

Disability: It is likely that the arrivals will have suffered severe psychological trauma and/or physical injuries. Psychological trauma is likely to surface several months after their arrival. Support from psychological medical and social work services, educational psychology, occupational therapy might be needed.

Socio-economic inequalities: Arrivals are likely to have lost all/most of their possessions and income. If granted refugee status they will have a right to work as well as benefits but they are likely to need support in accessing these.

The support will need an integrated approach involving DWP, Fire and Rescue, Police Scotland, NHS Grampian, Education Services, Health and Social Care, Housing Services, Income Maximisation, Council Financial Services, Third Sector.

9. Justification

If nothing can be done to reduce the negative impact(s) but the proposed policy/activity must go ahead, what justification is there to continue with the change?

- The Afghan Relocation Scheme has been running since 2013, to support the relocation of locally employed staff to the UK, in recognition of the fact that they are at increased risk of intimidation/ assault, given that they have worked side by side with our armed forces and officials. The UK Government launched a new policy in April 2021 and have assessed that around 1000 Afghan locally employed staff and their families may be eligible to apply for 5 years 'Leave to enter the UK' with a pathway to resettlement thereafter. Those who qualify to relocate to the UK are not

expected to return to Afghanistan. After completing 5 years limited leave, they can apply for permanent residence in the UK, ensuring they can settle here permanently and continue to build their lives and future.

- The situation in Afghanistan presents a humanitarian crisis which needs accelerated support.

SECTION 3 CONCLUDING THE EIA

Concluding the EIA

1. No negative impacts on any of the protected groups were found.	
2. Some negative impacts have been identified. The impacts relate to:	
Reducing discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010	√
Promoting equality of opportunity	√
Fostering good relations	√
3. Negative impacts can be mitigated the proposals as outlined in question 8	√
4. The negative impacts cannot be fully mitigated but are justified as outlined in question 9.	
5. It is advised not to go ahead with the proposals.	

Decision

Set out the rationale for deciding whether or not to proceed with the proposed actions:

Date of Decision:

Sign off and authorisation:

Service	
Department	
Policy/activity subject to EIA	
We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: Position: Date:
Authorisation by head of service or director.	Name: Position: Date:
Please return this form to the Equal Opportunities Officer, Chief Executive's Office.	

