

# Equality Impact Assessment

Syrian Refugee – Vulnerable Person Relocation Scheme 2015



<b>Name of assessor</b>	<b>Alison Wilks</b>
<b>Strategic Management Lead</b>	<b>Rachel O'Reilly</b>
<b>Date of assessment</b>	<b>13 October 2015</b>
<b>Is this a new or existing function or policy?</b>	<b>New</b>

*Please note that guidance (revised in March 2014) for completing this template is available on the intranet. This template was also revised in March 2014.*

## **Section 1: Introduction and background** (see p.10 of the guidance)

**Please describe your service or function. This should include:**

- **The aims and scope**
- **The main beneficiaries or users**
- **The main equality, accessibility, social exclusion issues and barriers, and the 'protected characteristics'<sup>1</sup> they relate to (not all assessments will encounter issues relating to every protected characteristic)**

**If this EIA is part of a project it is important to focus on the service or policy the project aims to review or improve.**

The Vulnerable Person Relocation (VPR) scheme aims to provide a structured and phased programme of resettlement for the most vulnerable refugees living in camps on the borders of Syria.

Selection is based on the following criteria: 'women and girls at risk; survivors of violence and/or torture; refugees with legal and/or physical protection needs; refugees with medical needs or disabilities; children and adolescents at risk; persons at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity; and refugees with family links in resettlement countries'.

It is proposed that the Council participates in the scheme to resettle five refugee households per year for five years. The types of households to be assisted per year to be:

- two families with working age parent/parents *who are capable of work* and have one or two dependent children who are under 18 years old;
- one single adult female who has been subject to violence; and
- two single or couple households who are over 55.

The Council would need to meet the Home Office requirements of the Vulnerable Person Relocation scheme. This would involve meeting and greeting the refugee households; arranging translation services and self contained furnished accommodation with basic white goods; providing or commissioning services with appropriately trained staff to deliver casework plans of integration support that

<sup>1</sup> More information and definition of protected characteristics can be found [here](#)

include help with registering with GPs, schools, Job Centres; applying for Biometric Residence Permits; and accessing welfare benefits, banking services and English language courses. The work would be undertaken with the Surrey County Council and the voluntary and faith sectors.

**Now describe how this fits into the Council's Corporate Priorities, Sustainable Community Strategy or other local, regional or national plans and priorities.**

**PROSPERITY**

- **A vibrant local economy with thriving towns and villages**
  - The resettlement of refugee households in MVDC will add to the diversity of the area and the households will have the opportunity in the long term to contribute to the local economy through employment and voluntary work.

**COMMUNITY WELLBEING**

**Active communities and support for those who need it**

- **Improve opportunities for residents to live active lives.**
- **Promote community spirit, encourage individuals, families and communities to be support each other and help our neighbourhoods to be more resilient in times of need.**
  - Refugee households will need help and support to integrate within the local community and to improve their overall wellbeing. This presents opportunities across the local community to welcome and support refugee households and work closely together to promote community spirit.

**If you are not carrying out an equality impact assessment, briefly summarise reasons why you have reached this conclusion, the evidence for this and the nature of any stakeholder verification of your conclusion.**

n/a

**Section 2: Analysis and assessment** (see pp. 10-13 of the guidance)

Given available information, what is the actual or likely impact on minority, disadvantaged, vulnerable and socially excluded groups?

Indicate for each 'protected characteristics' whether there may be a positive impact, negative impact, a mixture of both or no impact.

Protected characteristics	Positive	Negative	No impact	Reason
Age	✓			MVDC's proposed preference for the size and characteristics of refugee households to be assisted per year over the five years of the VPR scheme includes families with one or two children under 18-years old; it also includes single or couple households who are over 55 years old
Disability	✓	✓		<b>Positive</b> -The VPR scheme aims to protect refugees with medical needs or disabilities <b>Negative</b> – It is possible that some homeless families (potentially including people with disabilities) living in either bed and breakfast accommodation or emergency accommodation waiting for a private rented home may not be moved on as quickly, as refugee households are resettled.
Gender reassignment	✓			The VPR scheme aims to protect refugees at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
Marriage and civil partnership			✓	
Pregnancy and maternity		✓		It is possible that some homeless families (including pregnant women and mothers of babies) living in either bed and breakfast accommodation or emergency accommodation waiting for a private rented home may not be moved on as quickly, as refugee households are resettled.

Race	✓			The VPR scheme is specifically for refugees from Syria
Religion or belief			✓	
Sex	✓			The VPR scheme aims to protect refugee women who are at risk and survivors of violence. MVDC's proposed preference for the size and characteristics of refugee households to be assisted per year over the five years of the VPR scheme includes one single adult female who has been subject to violence
Sexual orientation	✓			The VPR scheme aims to protect refugees at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
<b>Other aspects to consider</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>No impact</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Carers			✓	
Rural/urban issues			✓	
HR issues (how will staff with protected characteristics be affected?)			✓	

**What can be done to reduce the effects of any negative impacts? Where negative impact cannot be completely diminished, can this be justified, and is it lawful?**

The rehousing of some homeless families that the Council has a responsibility to and is looking to house in the private rented sector may be delayed as refugee families are accommodated and resettled. However, there will only be two refugee family households to be housed per year, (the other refugee households to be resettled are single people or couples) so the impact should be minimal.

**Where there are positive impacts, what changes have been or will be made? Who are the beneficiaries? How have they benefited?**

The Council would through the support plan for each refugee commission specialist services to meet their specific identified needs.

**Section 3: Evidence gathering and fact-finding** (see p.14 of the guidance)

**What evidence is available to support your views above? Please include:**

- A summary of the available evidence
- Identification of where there are gaps in the evidence (this may identify a need for more evidence in the action plan)
- What information is currently captured with respect to usage and take up of services.
- What the current situation is in relation to equality and diversity monitoring (where relevant)

Should the Council decide to participate in the scheme the accommodation and support services would need a three to four month planning and preparation stage to ensure the appropriate services are ready and coordinated and staff have received training.

**How have stakeholders been involved in this assessment? Who are they, and what is their view?**

Stakeholders have not been involved with this assessment. However, planning and preparation work would be undertaken with Surrey County Council, health and the voluntary and faith sectors.

**Recommendations**

**Please summarise the main recommendations arising from the assessment. NB If it is impossible to diminish negative impacts to an acceptable or even lawful level the recommendation should be that the proposal or the relevant part of it should not proceed.**

The Council would through the support plan for each refugee and commission specialist services to meet their specific identified needs.

**Section 4: Action Plan** (see pp.15-16 of the guidance)

Actions needed to implement the EIA recommendations

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Deadline for action</b>
<b>Support for specific identified needs</b>	<b>Commission appropriate services</b>	<b>The refugee will benefit from the support service and this will aid their integration with the local community and improve their overall wellbeing</b>	<b>Strategic Housing Manager</b>	<b>April 2016</b>

**Sign off**

<b>Who will be responsible for reviewing this EIA?</b>	Alison Wilks
<b>Review date(s) i.e. when will this EIA be reviewed – see p.9 of guidance</b>	April 2016
<b>Strategic Management Lead signed off</b>	Rachel O'Reilly

- Signed off electronic version to be kept in your team for review
- Electronic copy to be forwarded to the Policy and Performance Team for publishing