

BRIEFING

Report for:

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel – 4 July 2022

Title:

Support for Afghan and Ukrainian Refugee Children

Sponsor:

Ann Graham

**Author:**

Bev Hendricks

Date:

4 July 2022

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report aims to provide an overview on the Council's support for refugee children & families in Haringey.

Afghan Resettlement

- 1.2 The Government has been running a scheme to relocate Afghan former LES (locally employed staff) to the UK since 2013, but due to the conflict in Afghanistan and consequent risk to LES, the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) was launched in April 2021. ARAP is open to LES who have worked for the British Embassy, alongside British forces over the past 20 years, and their families.
- 1.3 The Government also announced the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme, to provide sanctuary to those fleeing the country.
- 1.4 Under both these schemes, the Local Authority is expected to provide support to families to resettle in their area. The support includes accommodation, advice with benefits, securing employment, cash support and registering with GP and school places.
- 1.5 Afghan families settled in the Haringey area have been supported by staff from the Council. The families have been welcomed upon arrival and staff have undertaken follow up visits to support them with GP registration, support with school applications, benefits application and linking them with Job Centre and

Faith groups. The families have also been linked to Welcome Hubs to access support from within the local community.

- 1.6 The No Recourse Public Fund (NRPF) team within Children Social Care have undertaken needs assessment for all the families resettled in Haringey to consider their needs and support provisions where required. Children and their families have been provided necessary support like finances and referrals to access counselling support. NRPF team has undertaken assessments with four families (15 Children) resettled in the area.
- 1.7 Children Social Care recognized that families faced significant difficulties while fleeing their home country and the experience may have had an impact on the children. Social workers undertaking assessments spend time with children using direct work tools to identify potential trauma that children may have suffered. Therapeutic support has been provided where required.
- 1.8 Haringey has three Welcome Hubs where refugees, migrants and people seeking asylum can access face to face support without referrals or appointments. The Welcome Hubs operate as a drop in, and each individual Hub has multiple professionals and volunteers to ensure residents can be supported with their finances, health, education, employment, ESOL and community integration.

2. Homes for Ukraine Scheme

- 2.1 The Government announced the Homes for Ukraine scheme and Family Visa Scheme to support refugees fleeing war in Ukraine. Staff from the Council are supporting the refugees arriving from the Ukraine by working with our residents who have become sponsors, offering space in their homes, completing safeguarding checks/ assessments with sponsors, creating guidance documents for arriving Ukrainian residents. This support has extended to including:
 - guidance on life in our borough
 - practical advice on things like applying for a job or a school place,
 - offering resettlement support to families and individuals arriving from Ukraine through our Connected Communities service,
 - introducing newly arrived Ukrainians, and sponsor families, to our Welcome Hubs
 - administering payments to Ukrainian guests, and sponsor families.
- 2.2 Qualified staff in partnership with Housing, continue to carry out:
 - enhanced DBS checks
 - initial safeguarding checks through MASH
 - accommodation checks to ensure all children and their parent arrivals will be staying in safe and suitable accommodation.
- 2.3 Initial welfare check visits have been conducted by social workers and senior early help workers once families have arrived in the UK and moved in with their

hosts. As part of the involvement social workers are undertaking checks with partner agencies like Police, health and reviewing social service records to make sure there are no safeguarding issues. The social workers undertake direct work with the children to identify any potential trauma, ascertain family relationships. Social workers also speak to parents/carers to find out about any support that they would need around health, school registration, finances or employment search and provide information and advice. Social workers have also advocated for the families where the arrangements break down and the living conditions are no longer suitable to help identify suitable accommodation.

- 2.4 Social workers have also intervened where there was a need for some specific targeted intervention to be undertaken with guest/host family to address any potential safeguarding issues and to ensure that arrangement works smoothly.
- 2.5 All primary and secondary headteachers have received communication on how to register children arriving from Ukraine with their schools, following the usual admissions processes, as well as guidance on making MASH referrals for children and families who have not yet had contact with the Local Authority. School have also been given information on how to access support and guidance for children and families registering with them.
- 2.6 Families are being supported with making applications for school places. Schools have responded quickly to applications, with dozens of children having been offered places already, and many having started with warm welcomes from the school community.
- 2.7 Officers from Children Social Care and Connected Communities are providing mediation support to Ukrainian guests and their sponsors, where needed to prevent any breakdowns. Rematching process has also been started where the arrangements break down and the guests are no longer able to live with the initially identified sponsor.
- 2.8 Ukrainian Families have also been signed posted to the three Welcome Hubs.