

# New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

2018 - 2022



## Year One Progress Report



Scottish Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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This is the first progress report for Scotland's second New Scots refugee integration strategy. The strategy was published in January 2018 and runs to 2022.

The strategy is available online: [www.gov.scot/newscotsstrategy](http://www.gov.scot/newscotsstrategy)

A summary of the strategy is available and has also been translated into Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Kurdish Sorani and Tigrinya:  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy-2018-2022-summary/pages/14/>

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**Aileen Campbell MSP**  
**Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government**

Scotland has a long history of welcoming asylum seekers and refugees from all over the world and the Scottish Government is committed to making Scotland a place where refugees and asylum seekers are able to find safety in our communities from day one of arrival.

I would like to thank all those who have contributed to and engaged with the New Scots refugee integration strategy in its first year for their hard work and dedication. I am delighted that, through the collaborative approach of the New Scots refugee integration strategy, positive changes are already being seen. There is more work to be done, but the Scottish Government will continue to support people to rebuild their lives and to fulfil their potential.



**Councillor Kelly Parry**  
**Spokesperson for COSLA Community and Wellbeing Board**

COSLA continues to be fully supportive of the New Scots strategy and the partnership working that has continued over the first year of the strategy's implementation.

I am delighted that there is a commitment from all those who are involved to find ways of working together that support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland.

Local authorities across Scotland are committed to supporting refugees to build a new life here.

COSLA and local government will continue to be at the heart of taking this important agenda forward with our partners.



**Sabir Zazai**  
**Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council**

I am very pleased to endorse the first year of Scotland's national refugee integration strategy.

It is positive to see the key achievements set out in the report towards a shared vision of refugee integration in Scotland.

I know that beyond these highlights, strong and committed partnerships across government, local government, the voluntary sector and communities are now in place to take forward further action as well as respond to future developments.

Scottish Refugee Council remains committed to strengthen these partnerships to make sure Scotland provides a warm welcome and helps refugees realise their potential to the benefit of all.

## Alison Phipps, Chair of the New Scots Core Group

### UNESCO Chair: Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts, University of Glasgow

In my work, as UNESCO Chair for Refugee Integration through Languages and the Arts at the University of Glasgow, I meet groups of people working to integrate all over the world. Good integration looks similar across the world. It's not camps; it's not aid; it's people living in flourishing communities where everyone can contribute and everyone feels their own social and cultural security is held by frameworks of human rights and by human connections.

In Scotland, the New Scots refugee integration strategy 2018 – 2022 is clear that integration is the work of everyone. In this respect, Scotland's New Scots strategy is pioneering. There is, at the end of this first year, a good deal to celebrate. The establishment of a group to provide and consider evidence of progress in integration is key. Great strides are being made in new areas, with funding to both Scottish Refugee Council and to the British Red Cross for integration work and family reunion. There is integration activity in local authorities across the country, many of which have been relatively new to this work and have learned greatly from experience in community development.

Importantly, communities of New Scots themselves have led integration support, often translating, accompanying and being alongside new arrivals, and generously sharing their own understandings and journeys into integration themselves. Much of this was celebrated at the Gathering in 2018, and we see new leaders emerging in many contexts alongside a wealth of cultural work. This comes together annually in Refugee Festival Scotland, but is a steady presence throughout the year.

Integration is not easy work in many domains of life, as it involves combatting inequalities and legacies of injustice. This work is particularly important where asylum seekers and refugees are concerned because great harm has been done and protection is needed from persecution. We still have a long way to go, and tough challenges, many of which are out of the decision making remit of devolved powers in Scotland. The UK Government's policies of a hostile environment have a detrimental effect on integration and in 2018 this was clearly evidenced in the public concern about housing and the threat of evictions.

In building vibrant, inclusive, tolerant communities in Scotland; where all are valued, including those who have come to us seeking protection, there is much to keep us occupied. We need to encourage inclusion in business and enterprise, recognition of qualifications and skills, as well as the sharing of languages and cultures. We must also continue to prioritise the voices of experts by experience in the asylum and refugee system, the deeper listening to stories of integration, and ensuring the wisdom and knowledge of all is included in the planning and work.



# Context

This report of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018 – 2022 provides a summary of progress made during the first year of implementation. It focuses on work which has taken place and highlights where action is being informed by the lived experience of refugees, asylum seekers and communities. It does not provide a comprehensive overview of progress for all actions in the strategy.

Over the course of the multi-year strategy, actions will be prioritised by New Scots partners, informed by their direct work and engagement with refugees, asylum seekers and communities. As such, how and when actions are taken forward will vary, depending on the priorities identified and opportunities to make progress.

The strategy is designed to be dynamic and to be able to respond to changing circumstances. This means that new actions may be introduced during the course of the strategy. In this first year, focus has been on the actions contained in the strategy, which were developed following engagement in 2017.

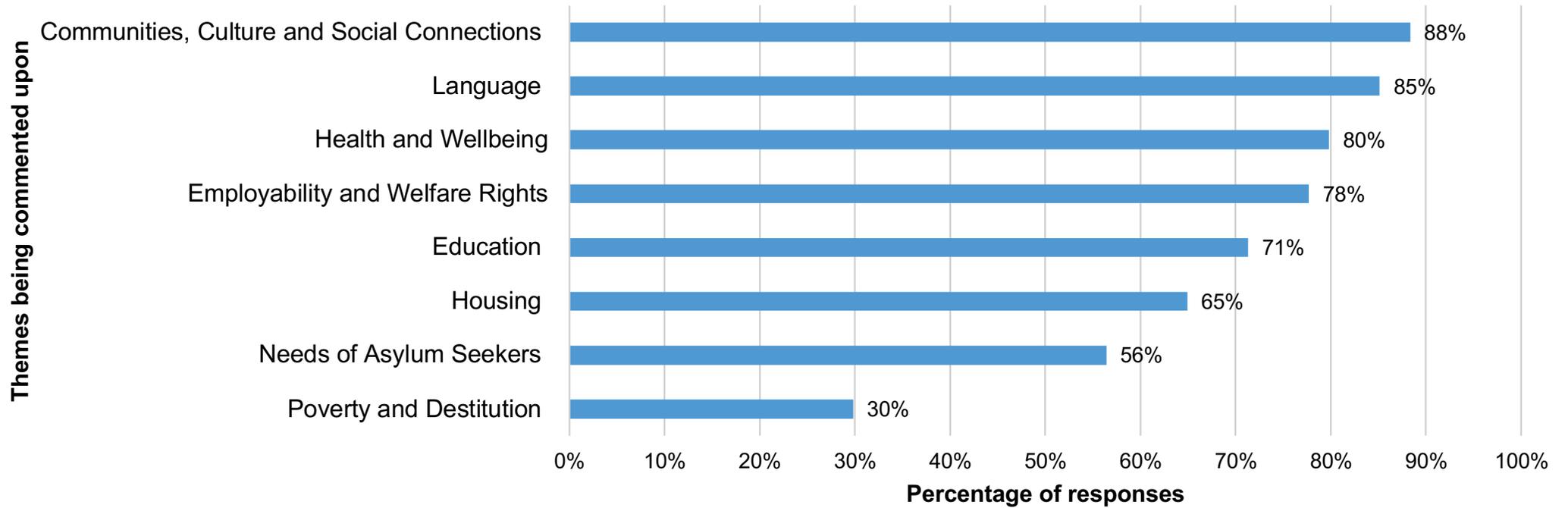
This report sets out what has happened in year one of the strategy under each of the New Scots outcomes:

1. Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections.
2. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.
3. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.
4. Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.

The New Scots engagement which took place in 2017 saw over 2,000 people participate, including 700 refugees and asylum seekers. This report has been structured in recognition of the themes participants raised as being most significant for supporting integration.

Key messages which were received through the engagement are set out as ‘you said’ under the relevant New Scots outcome. Work which has taken place in response is then set out as ‘we did’.

### Key themes highlighted in response to the New Scots engagement in 2017



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/publications/news-scots-2-engagement-analysis-new-scots-refugee-integration-strategy/pages/2/>

# Key Achievements in Year One

The first year of the New Scots refugee integration strategy 2018 – 2022 has seen significant work to respond to arising issues, as well as progressing actions set out in the strategy. Work across the strategy, to coordinate the efforts of organisations and community groups supporting refugees and asylum seekers, has supported key achievements, as well as enabling coordinated responses when needed.

In early 2018, there were numerous reports from asylum seeking students that they were being prevented from accessing courses, or continuing their studies, because of changes to immigration bail, which allowed study restrictions to be applied as part of bail conditions. Following discussion to identify the issue and significant lobbying, Home Office guidelines have been reissued clarifying that study restrictions should not routinely be applied to asylum seekers. The Home Office has also clarified this with local colleges and universities.

In July 2018, the asylum accommodation contractor in Glasgow announced plans to begin evicting people who had been refused asylum and had their asylum support from the Home Office terminated. A number of New Scots partners were involved in the Glasgow City Council Taskforce on Asylum, which was established in response. A significant amount of work has been undertaken by partners to ensure that those facing eviction were receiving the support and advocacy they needed, as well as ensuring that the process and legal positions of organisations involved were fully understood. There has also been an improvement in data sharing amongst service providers. The Taskforce reported in February 2019.<sup>2</sup>

The New Scots strategy recognises the importance of language for integration, not just learning English, but supporting and valuing bilingualism. A new online learning module to help teachers and other education staff to improve their professional knowledge and confidence in supporting bilingual learners was developed and launched in August 2018. The module was developed by Education Scotland, SCILT<sup>3</sup> and Glasgow City Council. This is the first in a series of online learning resources for people working with bilingual children.

A research project has identified evidence relating to asylum and refugee integration from a range of academic and other sources. This will help to inform the work of the New Scots strategy.

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2 <https://glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44501&p=0>

3 Scotland's National Centre for Languages

# New Scots Principles Guide Work across The Strategy

## ***Integration from Day One***

This is the key principle of the New Scots strategy: that all refugees and asylum seekers should be supported to integrate into communities from day one of arrival.

## ***A Rights Based Approach***

The New Scots strategy aims to empower people to know about their rights and understand how to exercise them. Across the New Scots themes, actions are taking place to understand rights and entitlements and to make this information accessible for refugees, asylum seekers and people who are working to support them.

An example of New Scots supporting understanding of rights and promotion of a rights based approach is engagement with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to support research for their report: *'Access to healthcare for people seeking and refused asylum in Great Britain: a review of evidence.'*<sup>4</sup> Although a UK level report with limited engagement in Scotland, the New Scots Health and Wellbeing theme facilitated involvement of asylum seekers as participants in the research and attended a session with EHRC to help develop and inform the recommendations that formed part of the report. All refugees and asylum seekers living in Scotland are entitled to access healthcare.

## ***Refugee Involvement***

Over 700 refugees and asylum seekers took the time to share their lived experience and offer their views to help shape the New Scots strategy. A number of approaches are continuing to provide opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to shape and inform the strategy's implementation. This includes:

- the direct involvement of refugees and asylum seekers in theme groups;
- refugees took part in a roundtable discussion at the first New Scots Leadership Board on 20 June 2018;

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4 <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-121-people-seeking-asylum-access-to-healthcare-evidence-review.pdf>

- involvement in the planning and delivery of the first New Scots Community Gathering event in April 2018;
- the Health and Wellbeing theme is connected with Mental Health Foundation work to help build capacity and provide training for refugees and asylum seekers to become volunteers and take forward local action around mental health and wellbeing; and
- the British Red Cross launched the Voices Network in Scotland in November 2018. This will provide a supported route for people with lived experience to share this with New Scots partners and help to inform the delivery of the strategy.

## ***Inclusive Communities***

In 2018, the theme of Refugee Festival Scotland was 'A Festival for Everyone'. Over thirty refugee community groups took part in the festival – sharing music, poetry, stories and celebration from the Highlands to the Borders.

In September 2018, the Scottish Community Development Centre published the 'Widening the Welcome' report,<sup>5</sup> which highlighted good practices and recommendations for improving local communities' welcome and involvement in supporting refugee integration.

## ***Partnership and Collaboration***

Partnership and collaboration are at the heart of the New Scots strategy. It would not be possible to deliver the actions of the strategy without the commitment of partners across public services, government, third sector and communities. The strategy is led in partnership by the Scottish Government, COSLA and the Scottish Refugee Council.

In April 2018, Oxfam, Amnesty Scotland, Refuweegee, Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees, and the Scottish Refugee Council worked together to run a national conference for community, faith-based and refugee-led organisations to share expertise and best practice, and support capacity building. This was the first New Scots Community Gathering event.

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5 <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5943c23a440243c1fa28585f/t/5bfc12cf8985839163cf1beb/1543246554344/Widening+the+Welcome+++September+2018.pdf>

# Progress Against Outcomes

## 1. Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections.

### ***You Said***

That social isolation can be a key issue and that refugees and asylum seekers would like to have more opportunities to meet and build relationships with Scottish people in their local communities. You said that the Scottish public should be “active partners in the integration process” by getting involved in befriending schemes, community events and skills and knowledge sharing with refugees. You highlighted that this would help to build stronger communities and enhance language skills.

### ***We Did***

In January 2019, Scottish Refugee Council began mapping all community and voluntary sector groups across Scotland working to support refugees build social connections. To date 97 groups have been mapped. An online map of community groups and their activities will be created allowing people to engage with activities in the local area.

### ***You Said***

That sport, culture, arts, leisure and community activities create positive ways for refugees and asylum seekers to make social connections, contribute and feel part of the community.

### ***We Did***

Over 10,000 people took part in over ninety arts, culture, community and information events as part of Refugee Festival Scotland 2018. Events took place across Scotland, with over a third organised by refugee-led organisations and community groups working directly with refugees locally. Over half of the events and projects were created with, for and by young people, as part of the Scottish Government’s Year of Young People.

Refugee Festival Scotland 2018 also gave young people an opportunity to be directly involved in promoting the Festival. The posters and branding were designed by young refugees who have been supported by the Scottish Guardianship Service in partnership with Ricotta Studios, and the Festival website was created by refugees studying programming through Code Your Future.

### ***You Said***

That the Scottish public should be more aware of the needs and experience of refugees and asylum seekers and that the way the media portrays refugees and asylum seekers can have a negative impact on public perception, which influences the way people respond or interact with refugees and asylum seekers.

### ***We Did***

Scottish Refugee Council, the National Union of Journalists and the British Red Cross organised an awards ceremony in June 2018 during Refugee Festival Scotland 2018 to celebrate and promote excellence in media reporting on refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland.

### ***You Said***

Refugees and asylum seekers need to feel safe and secure living in Scotland, and that action is needed to prevent racism and discrimination.

### ***We Did***

In June 2017, the Scottish Government published a programme of work to tackle hate crime and build community cohesion. An Action Group, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government, has been established to take this work forward.

In September 2018, the Scottish Government, in partnership with Police Scotland, launched a national hate crime campaign to encourage witnesses to report incidents. The campaign encourages anyone who has experienced or witnessed a hate crime to report it to Police Scotland by dialling 999 in emergencies or 101 in non-emergencies. Alternatively, reports can be made online by completing Police Scotland's online hate crime reporting form.

Anyone who does not feel comfortable reporting a hate crime directly to Police Scotland can use third-party reporting to do so. There are third-party reporting centres across Scotland,<sup>6</sup> ranging from housing associations to victim support offices and voluntary groups, where specially trained staff will provide support and assistance in submitting a report to Police Scotland on behalf of a victim or witness.

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6 <http://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/hate-crime-and-third-party-reporting/third-party-reporting-centres>

### **You Said**

That there should be more support for community organisations that work with refugees and asylum seekers at the grassroots level, including funding, skills training and organisational development.

### **We Did**

Scottish Refugee Council and Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees have secured resources to create a network of community and voluntary organisations supporting refugees in local communities across Scotland. The New Scots Connect Network launched in February 2019. Organisations engaging with the network will be offered training, expertise, opportunities to access funding and opportunities to engage with each other through a digital network.

### **You Said**

That children should be able to maintain their first language and that there should be support to encourage and value multilingualism, emphasising that maintaining one's mother tongue does not hinder English language acquisition.

### **We Did**

Education Scotland, SCILT and Glasgow City Council jointly developed an initial online module to support bilingual learners in the school sector.<sup>7</sup> This has been available since August 2018.

The module is an introduction to supporting bilingual learners, aimed primarily at class or subject teachers who would like to improve their professional knowledge in this area, as well as others who work with EAL (English as an Additional Language) learners, including students. In the first six months the module has been completed by 61 people. Of these:

- sixty work or study in Scotland, and one in the rest of the UK; and
- 25 are class/subject teachers, 14 are EAL specialists, five are students and 17 have other occupations.

Before starting the module, 87% rated their confidence in supporting EAL learners as low, and 43% rated their knowledge of how to support EAL learners as low. By the end of module survey, this had changed, with 87% reporting a high rating for their knowledge, and 62% a high rating for their confidence supporting EAL learners.

77% of people who completed the module are interested in continuing to another module. Funding is currently being sought to develop more modules.

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7 <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/supportingbilingualism/>

**You Said**

We need to combine language learning with skills development to support pathways to employment.

**We Did**

Colleges in Glasgow have developed and delivered ESOL transition courses to enable refugees to work in specific sectors to support employment focused language development, or to gain specific qualifications to enable access to further education.

## **2. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives.**

### ***You Said***

There is a need for refugees and asylum seekers to be better informed about health services and their rights and entitlements to gain access to these.

### ***We Did***

The Health and Wellbeing theme group worked with NHS24 to improve patient information available on the NHS Inform website<sup>8</sup> relating to access to healthcare for refugees and asylum seekers. This included highlighting challenges to accessing this information, particularly due to the lack of translated information available, and providing formal feedback on the information available as this was developed.

### ***You Said***

There is a need for asylum seekers to be better informed about their rights and entitlements, particularly about the asylum process, including who does what during the process as well as the kind of services that asylum seekers can access, ranging from health and education to employability services.

### ***We Did***

New Scots partners have contributed to detailed examination of the asylum process and mapping of the process through the Glasgow City Council Taskforce on Asylum. This has enabled partners to have a more informed understanding of the complexity of the asylum process and some of the areas where more support and advocacy is required. Improved access to existing support has been put in place through referrals to third sector organisations and translation of information. A report by the Glasgow City Council Taskforce on Asylum was published in February 2019.<sup>9</sup>

Updated guidance for local authorities on the rights and entitlements of people who have No Recourse to Public Funds has been developed and was published in February 2019, with further support and training for local authority staff to support the guidance.<sup>10</sup>

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8 <https://www.nhsinform.scot/care-support-and-rights/health-rights/access/healthcare-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-and-overseas-visitors>

9 <https://glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44501&p=0>

10 <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/migrants-rights-entitlements/foreword>

### ***You Said***

That current benefit processes take too long and should be more streamlined, ensuring refugees get quicker access to benefits they are entitled to, particularly when they are newly recognised refugees during the 28 day move on period.

Refugees also need advice and information on how to navigate the benefits system.

### ***We Did***

A pilot programme to speed up registration for benefits was introduced by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Home Office. At the point of granting leave to remain, the Home Office identifies people who are likely to need to claim benefits to help support them and will contact the Jobcentre to make an appointment for them. DWP are currently carrying out a review of this process to see if there are any improvements that can be made to the programme and are inviting refugees who have been through this process to share their experience. The findings will be shared with the Home Office and the New Scots Employability and Welfare Group.

The introduction of the National Insurance number on the Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) has resulted in quicker access to benefits and speedier payments. In addition, working with the British Red Cross and the Scottish Refugee Council, DWP introduced a fast track process to access Child Tax Credits for refugees arriving through family reunion. This process has reduced the processing time for Child Tax Credits.

Scottish Refugee Council secured funding to provide advice, information and advocacy to newly recognised refugees. This is now in place up to the end of September 2020.

DWP funds universal support throughout Scotland. This service provides Digital and Budgeting support to anyone accessing Universal Credit.

### ***You Said***

Refugees would like more support on their pathway to employment.

### ***We Did***

Scottish Refugee Council have secured funding to provide employability support to 400 newly recognised refugees over two years.

The Scottish Chambers of Commerce has committed to work with its members to promote the positive contribution that refugees can make to business.

### **You Said**

Refugees and asylum seekers need clearer guidance about their rights and entitlements in relation to accessing education. In particular, there needs to be clarity of Home Office rules around entitlement to Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) to reduce barriers preventing asylum seekers from studying.

### **We Did**

In early 2018, prompted by reports from FE and HE asylum seeking students, the New Scots Education Group worked with other partners to identify the cause of issues that were preventing students from accessing courses or continuing their studies. Reports arose following the implementation of Immigration Bail 201, which replaced several forms of temporary leave in the UK, including for people seeking asylum and for people with temporary admission or leave associated with immigration. It allowed restrictions to be applied as part of bail conditions, including restrictions on studying.

Following discussion and lobbying, colleges and universities now have clear guidelines, which have corrected some misinformation that was resulting in students being rejected from courses. In particular, the Home Office was able to issue a clear statement, which has allowed barriers to study to be removed. Home Office guidance now states “there is nothing in the Immigration Rules to prevent asylum seekers studying. Therefore, anyone who claims asylum should not have a study condition applied to them.” A route to challenging erroneous application of study prohibitions for asylum seekers in Bail 201 letters has also been established. Universities Scotland has produced guidance for its members, which the New Scots Education Group is helping to inform, to take account of recent developments. Work will continue to engage with Colleges Scotland, the Glasgow Regional Board and the Scottish Funding Council on this and any similar issues that impact refugees and asylum seekers studying in Scotland.

### **You Said**

Asylum seekers and refugees should have access to information to understand their rights and entitlements in relation to housing.

### **We Did**

Through the work of the Glasgow City Council Taskforce on Asylum, a translated leaflet is being given to people who have received a negative decision on their asylum application about the support they can access. This includes the support and advocacy available to asylum seekers through third sector organisations and how to access legal advice and information about the Voluntary Returns Service.

Wheatley Group (a Registered Social Landlord – RSL) have developed their website to include a “Google translate” facility and have been engaging with refugees to understand their needs in relation to support to integrate and settle.

### **3. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs.**

#### ***You Said***

Accessing services, both statutory and local community based services, can be more difficult because of language barriers. There should be more structures in place to support language learning outwith formal language classes, including the ability to apply English in real life contexts.

#### ***We Did***

North Ayrshire Council sub-contract the Workers Educational Association (WEA) to deliver ESOL and employability services to refugees and migrants. As part of this, WEA delivered a pilot course in effective communication with speakers of other languages for frontline staff. The course aims to help increase frontline staff awareness of techniques when communicating with speakers of other languages, so that services can be accessed more easily. This pilot was based on online materials developed by WEA in Highland. The course was delivered in a number of locations in North Ayrshire, with 96 participants from public sector bodies and community groups.

#### ***You Said***

There is a need for interpreters to be available during medical appointments with GPs and specialist health services.

#### ***We Did***

Good practice from The Anchor (Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service) has been shared with the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Interpreting Staff Reference Group, in particular the use of the warning system within the Education Management Information System (EMIS), as a 'flag' to remind staff to book interpreters in advance of appointments. Work will continue to explore ways to share simple and effective changes to practice.

Links have been made to help inform the national interpreting and translating policy and guidance currently being developed for the NHS to highlight the needs of refugees and asylum seekers.

### **You Said**

There is a need for better understanding among service providers of the health needs of asylum seekers and refugees.

### **We Did**

The Health and Wellbeing Group welcomed the recent GP patient registration guidance on rights and entitlements of refugees and asylum seekers to primary care services. Work is now underway to ensure that this guidance is widely distributed and accessible. This includes developing a one page 'reference point' of the key points for GP receptionists.

Updated guidance for local authorities on the rights and entitlements of people who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) was launched in February 2019,<sup>11</sup> with further support and training for local authority staff to support the guidance. This includes information about the health and social care entitlements of people who have NRPF status.

### **You Said**

ESOL tutors, especially those working in communities, require training in how to work with 'ESOL Literacies learners'.

### **We Did**

To help support ESOL tutors and learners whose language level is pre-literacy, the Scottish Qualifications Authority has provided a Teacher Training unit titled "Teaching ESOL Literacies to Adults". Fifteen practitioners took part in the unit in 2018, with 13 successfully completing training.

### **You Said**

That regulations which set how working affects benefits should be applied more flexibly for refugees, taking account of their specific circumstances.

### **We Did**

DWP have carried out a series of presentations to organisations that support refugees to explain Universal Credit and how it operates, particularly when considering work opportunities.

Partnership working has also helped to identify local solutions to enable refugees to receive benefits they are entitled to and reduce the impact of technical processes, which could create barriers for refugees, particularly regarding their access to bank accounts.

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11 <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk/migrants-rights-entitlements/foreword>

## **You Said**

There need to be better mechanisms in place to help employers recognise the experience and qualifications of refugees.

## **We Did**

The Scottish Government is funding a recognition of prior learning, skills and qualifications for migrants and refugees pilot project. This aims to evidence and develop a sustainable model for a skill recognition and accreditation process in four key targeted sectors – social care, construction/engineering, IT and hospitality. It will also develop a live database for skills recognition information.

The programme has sought employer engagement and feedback, which is being used to shape the future of the project. The pilot finished in March 2019, and further findings from it will inform future work.

Bridges Programmes has purchased the NARIC<sup>12</sup> licence to support refugees to gain official recognition and comparison of international qualifications. Bridges Programmes will deliver this as a free service for the next two years and will then review this service.

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<sup>12</sup> UK NARIC is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. <http://naric.org.uk>

#### **4. Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations.**

##### ***You Said***

Refugees and asylum seekers should be given more opportunities to voice their concerns and share their lived experience with policy makers and statutory services to help inform practice, which supports integration and enables people to access the services they need.

##### ***We Did***

British Red Cross launched the Voices Network in Scotland in November 2018. Part of the AVAIL (Amplifying Voices of Asylum Seeker and Refugees for Integration and Life Skills) Project, the Voices Network brings together refugees and people seeking asylum who want to use their lived experience to help change minds (through media engagement), change policy (through advocacy and informing policy development) and change practice (through influencing and informing Red Cross strategy). The Network enables Voice Ambassadors (refugees and people seeking asylum), who want to share their lived experience, to help improve integration and support others.

The establishment of the Voices Network in Scotland will provide a supported route for people with lived experience to share this with New Scots partners and help to inform the delivery of the New Scots refugee integration strategy.

##### ***You Said***

That mental health service provision for refugees and asylum seekers is important, including the need for services to become trauma informed.

##### ***We Did***

The Health and Wellbeing Group responded to the consultation on the Scottish Psychological Trauma and Adversity Training Plan in January 2019. The focus of the consultation was a training plan intended for all sectors of the Scottish workforce to support people to be able to respond, within the context of their job, to support resilience and recovery in children and adults who are affected by trauma and adversity.

The Health and Wellbeing theme is connected with Mental Health Foundation work to help build capacity and provide training for refugees and asylum seekers to become volunteers and take forward local action around mental health and wellbeing. This work has been carried out in three local authority areas and will soon extend to six.

The Mental Health Network and VOX Scotland have committed to ensuring that refugees and asylum seekers are part of consultation on the review of Scotland's Mental Health Strategy. The Health and Wellbeing Group will help support this engagement.

New Scots partners have supported the Re-Define project,<sup>13</sup> which is undertaking research in Scotland on the effectiveness of an innovative Self-Help Plus intervention for preventing the onset of mental disorders in refugees and asylum seekers with psychological distress, who have settled in middle-income and high-income countries.

In November 2018, Aberlour Childcare Trust, in partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service, began a three-year group-work programme to support the mental health needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking and trafficked young men. The programme will provide early intervention for young men, who are experiencing mental health challenges, with the aim of reducing the severity of their condition and building their resilience to develop coping strategies.

### ***You Said***

That there should be an extension to the 28 day move on period for newly recognised refugees, following a positive asylum decision.

### ***We Did***

Through consultations with the Home Office on the new Asylum Accommodation and Advice contracts, partners made strong representations to the UK Government that the move on period should be extended to 56 days, to reflect the time it takes to receive the appropriate welfare benefits. However, the UK Government has taken the decision that, at this stage, the move on period will not be extended beyond 28 days.

As asylum is a reserved matter, the final decision on the length of the move on period is made by the UK Government. New Scots partners will continue to lobby for this change in policy.

### ***You Said***

It is important that asylum seekers are housed in safe and secure accommodation. Also, that support and information needs to be available to asylum seekers.

### ***We Did***

The Needs of Asylum Seekers Group used their experience of supporting asylum seekers in Glasgow and the views expressed in the New Scots engagement, when contributing to Home Office consultation on the process to tender for new asylum accommodation and support contracts. In addition, the Scottish Refugee Council, COSLA and the Scottish Government attended meetings associated with planning for the new contracts to represent the needs and aspirations of people seeking asylum in Scotland.

As asylum is a reserved matter, the final decision on the asylum contracts is made by the UK Government. New Scots partners are working collaboratively with the successful bidders for the new contracts and remain committed to doing so.

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13 <http://re-defineproject.eu>

# Recognising Challenge

This report has focused on the achievements and progress made under Scotland's second New Scots refugee integration strategy during the first year of implementation.

It is important to also recognise that there are challenges to delivering the strategy.

## 1. Reserved Matters

Under current constitutional arrangements in the UK, asylum and immigration are matters reserved to the UK Government and handled by the Home Office. Other reserved matters include certain welfare benefits (e.g. Universal Credit and Job Seekers' Allowance), foreign policy and broadcasting.

The New Scots strategy cannot directly resolve issues that are outside the scope of the Scottish Government, Scottish local authorities and other Scottish organisations.

A key principle of the New Scots strategy is that integration starts from day one of arrival. In the current context, the strategy strives to support asylum seekers as far as possible, but there remain key areas of asylum and immigration policy that the strategy is not able to change and can only seek to influence. These include:

- asylum accommodation and support provision;
- asylum application processes, including the requirement to apply in Croydon and to travel to Liverpool to submit further evidence for appeals; asylum decision-making; and the time it takes for applications to be processed;
- the operation of Immigration Bail and associated restrictions, including how often reporting to the Home Office is required; permission to work and study; and any other specific conditions applied;
- immigration detention;
- the design, eligibility criteria and funding of refugee resettlement programmes; and
- rules and decisions on applications for leave to enter the UK (including for family reunion), leave to remain and citizenship.

The effect of these reserved matters on individuals and families, as they navigate the UK asylum system, has a direct impact on all other areas of integration.

## **2. Resources**

New Scots is built on principles of partnership and collaboration through which partners bring their skills, knowledge, experience and resource to enable collective progress to be made.

The Scottish Government has committed over £2.7 million from the equality budget to fund organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers over three years up to 2020. There is also a variety of other funding sources for projects, but this requires awareness of these sources and capacity to successfully apply for them.

The collaborative partnership which exists through New Scots provides a strong base for supporting actions and developing work to support refugees. Two New Scots partners have recently secured funding from the EU's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. This will bring new resources into the second year of implementation of New Scots, bolstering the actions that can be progressed.

## **3. Refugee and Community Voices**

The New Scots strategy was informed through the engagement of over 2,000 people, including over 700 refugees and asylum seekers. This makes it a strategy with refugee voices built into its structure. However, it is important that refugee and community voices continue to be involved as the strategy is implemented.

There are always challenges in enabling people directly affected by a policy to be involved in a meaningful way in its development and implementation. New Scots recognises challenges including:

- Refugees and community members will often not be able to attend meetings during standard working hours because they have their own work commitments. They also won't have a salary or resource to specifically support their engagement in the way that someone employed by an organisation which has agreed to be a partner in New Scots would have.
- Asylum seekers, refugees and communities will have other commitments that they have to prioritise. Asylum seekers in particular will need to attend appointments about their application, sometimes at relatively short notice.
- Asylum seekers are living with uncertainty every day, as they await a decision on their claim. This can make it difficult to plan or commit to any long-term activity. They should be supported to be involved if they wish and never feel pressured to do so.
- Refugees and asylum seekers can also find it difficult to engage with policy processes because of language barriers; understanding of processes; and awareness of the opportunity to engage. The location or formality of meetings can also be a daunting or intimidating prospect, which may put people off attending.

# Continuing Commitment

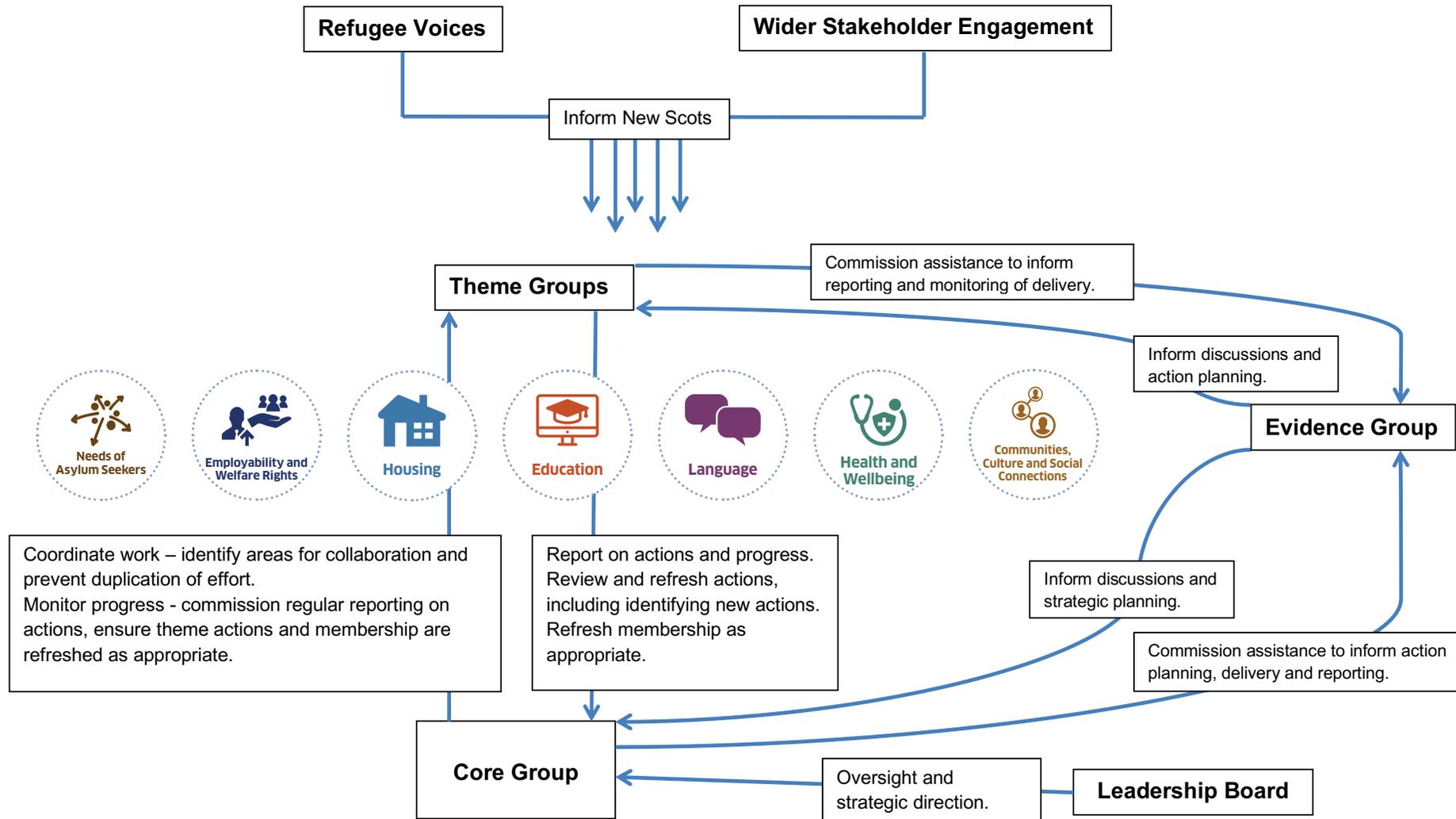
In year one, New Scots partners have made significant achievements, which support refugees and asylum seekers living in communities across Scotland. There is recognition of continuing challenges for the strategy. The principles of the New Scots approach have guided the achievements made and continue to set the framework, which will support future achievements and work to overcome these challenges.

New Scots partners remain committed to supporting refugees, asylum seekers and communities in Scotland by delivering the New Scots refugee integration strategy 2018 - 2022.

Through the New Scots approach, we will strive to achieve the vision “for a welcoming Scotland where refugees and asylum seekers are able to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive.”

# Annex A

## Structures which support delivery of the New Scots refugee integration strategy





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