



## INFORMATION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	3 SEPTEMBER 2019	12
<b>UPDATE ON THE LANCASHIRE SYRIAN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME IN FYLDE 2019</b>			

### PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

#### SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

This report is an update on work undertaken in Fylde in partnership Lancashire Resettlement Programme, to deliver the local authorities commitment made in January 2017 (Environment, Health and Housing Committee) under the Lancashire Syrian Resettlement Programme and Vulnerable Children Resettlement Programme to accommodate 5 families in 2019/20.

In 2015 Government made a Commitment to the Syrian Refugee Programme (SRP) to accommodate 20,000 Syrian Refugee families whose claim for Asylum had been taken when outside of the UK, mainly in Syrian Refugee Camps over 5 years from 2015. Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) launched at the same time as the Syrian Refugee Programme to assist vulnerable children and their families displaced in the migrant crisis.

The Lancashire Chief Executives Group have considered two pledges in relation to the Syrian Resettlement Programme considered by each authority:

1. In January 2016: to resettle 500 Syrian Refugee families
2. In September 2016: to resettle 75 refugees (including children and their families) under the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Programme (VCRP)

#### SOURCE OF INFORMATION

[Lancashire County Council Syrian Resettlement Programme](#)

[Environment, Health and Housing Committee 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 Lancashire Syrian Refugee and Vulnerable Children and their Families Resettlement Programme](#)

[Environment, Health and Housing Committee 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018 Home Office Widening Dispersal Programme](#)

#### WHY IS THIS INFORMATION BEING GIVEN TO THE COMMITTEE?

Update on work undertaken to deliver on the commitment made.

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact: Kirstine Riding, Housing Services Manager 01253 658569

## **LANCASHIRE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME IN FYLDE 2019**

### **LANCASHIRE MODEL**

1. The model adopted in Lancashire means a certain degree of coordination and commissioning from Lancashire County Council (LCC) who are the lead Authority that engage directly with the Home Office and the North West Strategic Migration Partnership.
2. All associated funding is received in the first instance by LCC as the upper tier authority and district councils enter into an agreement with LCC regarding the sourced accommodation and resettlement services that are to be delivered or commissioned within their boroughs/districts.
3. As the Resettlement Programme in Lancashire has progressed since January 2016, the approach altered for resettlement services in 19/20 and Fylde benefitted from this change in approach.
4. Lancashire County Council appointed direct a resettlement case worker solely for the resettled families in Fylde. Previously local authorities had to appoint or commission resettlement case workers or organisations for the families within their area.
5. The resettlement case worker supports the families with initial orientation which includes transport, setting up bank accounts, claiming welfare benefits, knowledge of the local area and facilities available. The worker will also provide translation or access to translation services and arrange for the families to undertake English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) course. Support includes accessing education for children of school age and accessing healthcare services for example, registering with Doctors, Dentists and Health and Wellbeing Services.
6. LCC receive nominations of families direct from the Home Office that reflect the property sizes the local authority have been able to source. LCC then make allocations to each district authority to match the properties acquired for the program.

### **ACCOMMODATION**

7. With a dedicated staff resource funded by LCC of 6 hours per week, Fylde Council's role has been to source accommodation for the 5 families.
8. As part of the funding guide from the Home Office there is up to £30,000 budget available to each sourced property to carryout adaptations or approved works to the properties to meet the project standards. The funding available includes bond and rent in advance to secure the accommodation and furnishing costs.
9. The Home Office grant agreement with LCC requires under 'Provision of Accommodation', that;
  - a. The Recipient will arrange accommodation for arriving Refugees which,
  - b. Meets local authority standards, and
  - c. Will be available on their arrival, and
  - d. Is affordable and sustainable.
10. Accommodation needed to be furnished appropriately. The Funding could not be used to procure luxury items and should be used for food storage, cooking and washing facilities but should not include the provision of other white goods or brown goods, i.e. TV's, DVD players or any other electrical entertainment appliances.
11. In sourcing accommodation Fylde Council needed to ensure the properties were affordable and rental charges in line with Local Housing Allowance Rates (LHA).
12. A Funded Budget Increase was approved by the Chair of Finance and Democracy up to a maximum amount of £50,000 in May 2019 to allow preparation for the arrival of the families to commence without delay, with all of the funding being met by the government grant for this purpose.
13. Five, two 3 bedroom units and three two bedroom units have been sourced in Kirkham and St Annes from private sector landlords, the YMCA and Progress Housing. All properties were inspected under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations (HHSRS) a risk based assessment tool introduced by the Housing Act 2004, used to assess the risk (likelihood and severity) of a hazard in all residential housing, regardless of tenure, to the health and safety of occupants or visitors.

14. Furniture packs were provided by LCC and staff at Fylde Council and their friends volunteered to assemble the furniture for arrival.
15. To date £30,000 has been spent on accommodation sourced. This includes costs for rental charges to secure accommodation for arrival, rent in advance and rent bonds, property improvements (electrical rewire), loft insulation, carpeting and decoration.

#### **ARRIVAL OF THE SYRIAN REFUGEES**

16. To familiarise local authority staff and key stakeholders LCC delivered a bespoke Refugee Resettlement training ahead of the new arrivals in July 2019. The sessions were available to key stakeholders from all local authorities participating in the forthcoming charter, including casework support staff, Local Authority staff, representatives from DWP, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other public services, and to organisations from the third sector. The programme this year incorporated the skills, knowledge and experience that the Resettlement Programme in Lancashire has accrued over the past few years, and included sessions on employment, wellbeing and community integration.
17. The families arrived in the UK on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019 and were met by local authority staff and the resettlement support workers from LCC, at Liverpool John Lennon Airport.
18. The Fylde families were taken by coach to Wesham Community Centre for Syrian food and a welcome before being taken to their accommodation, by the case workers.
19. All properties were supplied with food parcels which would last the families for an initial period of 5 days.
20. Households needed to be registered for Council Tax purposes and signed up with utility companies and ensure that arrangements for payments were put in place (no pre-pay coin or card meter accounts).
21. Briefing on the accommodation and health and safety issues for all new arrivals including the provision of an emergency contact point were also required. The next working day Fylde staff visited families to support with the tenancy sign up process, how to work boilers and other electrical appliances, arranging utility suppliers and council tax registration. They also checked progress with on-going maintenance as required.
22. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 at the United Reformed Church, Amnesty International facilitated a welcome event and settled families from Blackpool Council's resettlement intake in 2018 provided the food.
23. Initially three families were able to go straight into their sourced accommodation and two families were placed in temporary accommodation, while final arrangements were being made for accommodation. One family is still in temporary accommodation and the tenancy is due to be signed on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

#### **ONGOING SUPPORT**

24. Fylde staff are still involved with the orientation work to assist the case worker and this will continue as and when required.
25. Fylde Council attend meetings with LCC Syrian Resettlement Programme and Lancashire Local Authorities to report on progress with the resettlement and respond to any issues reported.
26. The Housing Service will provide advice and assistance to the families when requested.