

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Subject:** PCC Support for the National Migration Programmes

**Report by:** James Hill, Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services & Sarah Daly, Director of Children & Families

**Report Authors:** Paddy May, Corporate Strategy Manager  
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Louise Hayworth, Business Support Officer

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision:** NO

**Full Council decision:** NO

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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 To provide an overview of the different schemes the Council is involved with that support asylum seekers and people resettling into the UK via government schemes. The report will also show how the different directorates of the Council are working together to support people coming to the UK and working with colleagues in the third sector to provide this support.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:**

- a) note the contents of this report
- b) place on record a note of thanks to all those involved in setting up and supporting the schemes referenced in this report. The early schemes required the local authority, and its partners, to set up schemes quickly often using existing resources and in the context of the additional demands arising from the pandemic. As the funding for the schemes has become certain, an officer team has been formed to work alongside mainstream services to administer and support the team
- c) agree that we should look to continue (where appropriate), for the full 12 months, our support for Ukrainian families that have left the Homes for Ukraine Scheme by moving into the private sector (see paragraph 3.2.4)



### 3. Background

3.1 There are a number of different schemes that the Council is involved with covering a number of different countries as well as more general asylum seekers. The details of these schemes are shown below. This report provides an update to the report that was taken to Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 called Portsmouth City Council support to asylum seekers and resettlement programmes. As well as providing an update on the schemes that the Council was already involved with at the time of the January 2022 report, it will also provide information on the new schemes that were set up following the start of the war in Ukraine and the new proposed dispersal scheme. It is worth noting that in total there are currently over 400 people under the various schemes living in Portsmouth and over the last five years we have also supported over 800 people through the different schemes including nearly 350 unaccompanied asylum seeking minors.

### 3.2 Support for those from Ukraine (Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family visa schemes)

3.2.1 In February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, and the UK government reacted to provide support and accommodation for those who left the country and needed accommodation in the UK. On 14 March 2022 the Secretary of State (SoS) for Department Levelling Up Housing Communities (DLUHC) asked local authorities to support the Homes for Ukraine scheme (HfU), which would provide visas, and leave to remain, to people from Ukraine who were coming to stay with a named host for at least six months. The scheme developed over subsequent weeks and the current details can be found at the government website [Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions)

3.2.2 Local authorities have been asked to deliver the scheme, and this comes in several parts, summarised as follows:

- Access the DLUHC IT system (Foundry) to identify Hosts in each area, and those that have been linked to a family. This also includes information on those that provided an Expression of Interest (EOI) to be a host but have not yet been matched.
- Perform safety checks on the property and safeguarding, including DBS for all adults in the host household.
- Support families as they arrive to link with hosts. The city council has done this through a contractual arrangement with EC Roberts, who provide case workers to support each family.
- Make an interim subsistence payment to guests of £200 per person.
- Coordinate the payment to the Hosts of the Thank You Payment of £350 per month.
- Provide education and social care support where required.



- Support in finding work. Guests can look for and start work without a National Insurance number if they can prove they can work in the UK. Guests can prove they have the right to work in the UK by showing their employer either their Biometric Residence Permit or their visa in their passport.
- Support those where the relationship between Host/Guest has broken down, or where the safety checks suggest that the property is unsafe. In these scenarios the city council, via the case worker, will help guests to understand their options and for them to make a suitable choice based upon that information.
- In addition, Welcome Points of entry, which includes Portsmouth International Port (PIP), are required to provide support for those that arrive and are transiting through to elsewhere in the UK and a small amount of additional funding was provided to PIP to allow this to happen

3.2.3 To enable this work to happen, DLUHC is providing funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. This funding is un-ringfenced, with a number of conditions attached, and will match the tariff offered under the first year of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), although the role of councils will be different. The government is also providing funding for councils to administer the optional 'thank you' payments at the £350 per sponsoring household per month rate. As of the 14<sup>th</sup> September 72 families (comprising 146 individuals) had settled in Portsmouth through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The Council has commissioned the EC Roberts Centre to provide the support to the families and they have identified case workers that are working with the Ukrainian guests.

3.2.4 The payment of £10,500 for each guest is designed to provide the support needed for the first 12 months. Whilst the guests can stay with hosts for a full 12 months, hosts only have to commit to 6 months (with 2 months' notice). It is expected that many guest are likely to move to the private rented sector within the first 12 months. If they do, at this point they have officially left the programme. The Council is employing a Housing Sustainment Officer that will help support tenants in the private rented sector but they are unlikely to be providing the same level of support as the EC Roberts caseworker. Cabinet is being asked to agree that, where appropriate, we should provide the full caseworker support for the full 12 months (e.g. support to find employment etc.) whether or not people have officially left the programme. It is interesting to note that it was reported in the media that Lord Harrington (who used to be the Minister responsible for this scheme) has suggested that the thank-you payment should be doubled to reflect the cost of living increases so that fewer hosts cease supporting families,



- 3.2.5 In July 2022 the Government announced that they were extending the Homes for Ukraine Scheme to include children not accompanied by their parents. Initially any children considered were those that had applied through the HfU but were not able to come over because of their age, but this will be expanded to cover new unaccompanied children too. Whilst the unaccompanied Ukrainian children are part of the HfU scheme there are some differences. Firstly, they will not be allowed into the UK unless all the checks and assessments have been completed. This is to help ensure that they will be living safely in the UK. Secondly, they need explicit parental permission to travel and this check will be done in the Ukraine and their host has to be known to the family (except in exceptional circumstances) and finally the scheme is for three years or until they reach the age of 18. Due to the nature of the arrangement they will remain allocated to a social worker as Children in Need until they reach maturity. The Government have announced additional funding for each unaccompanied child if their arrangement breaks down, as this would require them to become children in care to the host local authority, but this would not meet the full costs resulting from a care arrangement. We are not aware of how many unaccompanied Ukrainian children will be coming to Portsmouth but there were two within the initial part of this policy.
- 3.2.6 In addition to the Homes for Ukraine visa route, Ukrainian families can also apply for a Family visa via The Home Office. This is for those who have family based in Portsmouth. There are no requirements on the local authority, other than those that statutorily exist for all immigrants, from the family visa scheme and no associated funding. However, the city council has supported all those as they initially arrive to ensure that they have the correct visa and are signposted to the relevant support.
- 3.3 The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) & the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)**
- 3.3.1 The ARAP scheme was announced in December 2020 and launched in April 2021. It was set up to help locally employed staff to relocate to the UK recognising that they faced specific risks if they stayed in Afghanistan. People who qualify for this scheme can apply for indefinite leave to remain. In August 2021 the Government also announced the ACRS. As described in the previous report, under Operation Pitting approximately 15,000 Afghans were evacuated during the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. This included people from both of these schemes.
- 3.3.2 The Council has leased 9 properties from the MOD which has supported 12 families through the ARAP scheme. In June 2022 the city Council and MOD agreed a further one-year extension to the leases on the first nine properties, and discussions continue on leasing a second set of nine properties, which will bring the total number of properties to 18. The conditions of the lease are these can only be used to provide interim accommodation for those on the ARAP scheme. This support is likely to be the basis of the pledge of resettlement



support we can offer in response to the Lord Harrington letter (see Appendix 1) who, when he was a Government Minister, asked authorities to pledge support to support the resettlement of Afghan migrants.

3.3.3 Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services (HNB) continue to lead discussions with the MOD to form a longer term relationship to use empty MOD properties (outside the wire) for temporary accommodation purposes.

### **3.4 Hong Kong British National Overseas (HKBNO)**

3.4.1 In January 2021 a new immigration route was opened which provided British National (Overseas) status holders from Hong Kong, and their dependents, a chance to come to the UK to live, study and work and ultimately to gain UK citizenship. Up to 5 million Hong Kong residents (there is no definitive view on the number) hold this status and therefore would be eligible to come to the UK. It is not clear how many people will take up this opportunity. However the HMG impact assessment suggested nationally that between 123k-150k status holders and their dependents will arrive in the first year and that between 258k-322k may arrive over the first 5 years. As of 30 June, PCC was not directly supporting anyone who has arrived in the UK under this scheme although we are aware that people from Hong Kong have been settling in the area.

3.4.2 People that arrive under this scheme must show that they can adequately maintain and accommodate themselves in the UK for 6 months without recourse to public funds. HKBNO status holders that settle in the UK have a no recourse to public funds (NRPF) condition attached to their leave to remain in the UK. They will have permission to work and study and their children can access a state funded school. In cases of destitution (e.g. lack of adequate accommodation or means of achieving it) they can apply to have the NRPF removed.

### **3.5 Support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking minors (UAMs)**

3.5.1 In terms of unaccompanied children, Portsmouth has historically had a relatively high number of children that it is supporting. This reflects the fact that Portsmouth has the International Port with ferry links to France and Spain. Kent and East Sussex have historically had even high numbers of unaccompanied children due to the number making the short crossing across the channel in small boats. As at 15/08/2022 we have 43 unaccompanied minors currently in our care and over the past 5 years (16/08/2017 - 15/08/2022), we have had 339 unaccompanied minors who started to be 'looked after' (come into our care).

3.5.2 Unaccompanied children have historically placed a financial burden on a local authority although this was usually covered through grant payments. Then, and now, the much greater financial burden is when unaccompanied children become care leavers. Central Government had an initial target rate for accommodating unaccompanied children which is based on 0.07 of an areas child population. This formed the basis of the mandated transfer scheme although in August 2022 the target rate was increased to 0.1. With the previous



target our current number was over the previous expected rate and so Portsmouth was referring children into the National Transfer Scheme and was not required to take children through the scheme until such time as the number fell below 31. With the new target level Portsmouth will not be able to refer to the national scheme until we hit this new target level. A number of local authorities have made representation to be exempt from the scheme but to date no representation has been accepted, however one local authority is considering Judicial Review regarding the legality of the process. It is worth noting that Portsmouth may get more children presenting at the port or landside - especially as the weather deteriorates and this impacts on the number of small boat crossings to Kent and East Sussex.

### **3.6 Community Sponsorship**

3.6.1 Community Sponsorship is a scheme that sits alongside the UK Resettlement Scheme. Instead of the local authority, it is local community groups that offer refugees / asylum seekers support throughout their 1-2 years in the country. Such support includes securing accommodation and helping to access education, healthcare, language lessons, benefits, and employment. Local community groups. As of 30 June, Pompey Reset was supporting one family at a property in the city.

### **3.7 Dispersed accommodation**

3.7.1 Portsmouth has accommodated significant numbers of asylum seekers and refugees as part of the national dispersal scheme and is one of the largest contributors to the scheme in the Southeast. This is in line with Portsmouth declaring itself a City of Sanctuary in June 2019 so that it was a place of welcome and safety for any community or individual that is vulnerable or isolated. The city has supported over 450 asylum seeker households (as of June 2022) which is proportionally more than many other parts of the region. These are accommodated through Clearsprings Ready Homes until a decision on their asylum status is reached. Once that happens, individuals and families are able to settle permanently, either in Portsmouth or elsewhere.

3.7.2 The city council has historically not been involved in the arrival or placement of individuals, except when The Home Office may consult on individual properties as dispersal accommodation. However, access to services (health, education, council etc) is the same as for all residents.

### **3.8 Interim accommodation**

3.8.1 Until the change in the dispersal system The Home Office, through Clearsprings Ready Homes, directly provided interim accommodation for asylum seekers in a number of ways. In recent years this has included them agreeing direct arrangement with hotels for the use of accommodation on medium term basis.

3.8.2 In January 2022 the city council became aware that the Home Office intended to use The Royal Beach Hotel as an asylum seeker accommodation facility from



Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. This is not a site that has been chosen or being operated by the city council but it, NHS, Police, Fire, local third sector and others linked together in to provide support where needed. The facility holds up to 116 individuals.

### **3.9 Impacts for Portsmouth**

3.9.1 The city council must consider the impacts of all of the various asylum seeking and immigration schemes upon the systems and services within the city. The following paragraphs describe the potential impacts on education and housing but other services can be impacted too.

3.9.2 **Education.** Depending on the numbers that each school is likely to admit, we would ideally want to be able to provide support to these children who may well have language needs. This means they are likely to benefit from support from the EMAS team, and depending on their journey here, may also need support to meet social and emotional needs.

3.9.3 **Housing.** The ability for the city to help people to find accommodation and be supported to settle and thrive needs to be considered against the significant support historically given willingly, and the growing pressures that are faced in housing those who are from the city and/or we have statutory obligations to support. The city faces a significant disparity between supply and demand for housing, especially for rental accommodation in the city, both in the private and social housing market, and the city council is undertaking the significant work required to rebalance the system. Specifically, the city council must take into consideration the likelihood that, if a positive leave to remain is obtained, an unknown number of those families who have been temporarily accommodated in the city could approach Housing, Needs, Advice and Support (HNAS) with a homeless application and, subject to assessment, could be entitled to further temporary accommodation and/or social housing. This needs to be considered alongside the large numbers of families who are already on the social housing waiting list and need to move to different housing for medical or overcrowding reasons. The Portsmouth Housing register has over 2,000 families waiting for affordable housing and 146 households in temporary accommodation. A lack of move on accommodation means that placements in temporary accommodation can be for an average of 3-4 months.

### **3.10 Change to Home Office Dispersal Model**

3.10.1 On 13 April 2022, the Minister for Safe and Legal Migration at The Home Office announced that the asylum accommodation system is under enormous pressure, because of the significant and sustained increase in asylum intake over the last 12 months and the build-up of the population as a result of Covid-19 related measures, which is placing unsustainable pressure on a limited number of local authorities. This has resulted in over 25,000 asylum seekers being accommodated in temporary contingency accommodation, such as hotels.



- 3.10.2 The Home Office announced they were committed to working with local authorities to move to a fairer distribution of asylum seekers, with all being expected to participate in a new system to less expensive and more suitable dispersed accommodation.
- 3.10.3 There were three key elements to this work.
- To reduce and eliminate the use of hotels for asylum seekers by moving to a full dispersal model for asylum accommodation.
  - An informal consultation with local government to inform how this model will work within regions and nations.
  - Providing specific funding to recognise the existing contribution of local authorities and for new dispersed accommodation.
- 3.10.4 To recognise the existing contribution and longstanding support from local authorities, each local authority which was accommodating asylum seekers on 27 March 2022 receives a £250 one off payment per asylum seeker. In addition, a further £3,500 for each new dispersal bed space occupied, in both new and existing dispersal areas, between 28 March 2022 and 31 March 2023.
- 3.10.5 The Home Office have announced the regional allocations for the distribution of asylum seekers. The South-East needs to grow from the current 1,600 to 7,200 by December 2023. The percentage has to increase over the following years to reach the SE 14.4% share of the population by the end of the decade in line with the original 'change plan' agreed through the LGA in 2019. How this increased number will be reached is currently being discussed by authorities with this being led by the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration. A plan for the SE was submitted to the Home Office by this partnership.
- 3.11 Financial position in relation to the two major schemes PCC is running**
- 3.11.1 As detailed above the Council is successfully running 2 major Asylum Schemes which to date have shown a strong and proactive commitment to the Government's announcements to offer support to persons impacted by the situations in Afghan and Ukraine. These schemes are fully funded from the government grants and therefore do not require any additional council funding.
- 3.11.2 The schemes PCC is running are a) Afghan Resettlement scheme - 2021; b) Homes for Ukraine 2022; c) Ukraine VISA families 2022. Schemes (a-b) attract government grant funding. Total grant funding paid to PCC to date, and in arrears, is;
- Afghan Resettlement £345,000
  - Homes for Ukraine £717,500
  - Although scheme (c) is not directly funded in the same way, additional funding of £137,250 has been received through the Asylum Dispersal Scheme, which will be used to fund any costs that cannot be met through the Homes for Ukraine grant.

- 3.11.3 Grants are paid to the Council on an arrears basis at an amount of £10,500 per person in year 1. The Council has to evidence all costs incurred from the schemes. At the current time, costs incurred on running the schemes are well within the funding envelopes received and there is no unfunded corporate cost pressures on the Council so far in managing schemes.
- 3.11.4 The Council is tracking both direct costs and any additional support staff costs where they are displaced from their substantive posts to work on Asylum schemes. The nature of non-staff costs has included DBS checks, welcome payments, host family payments, translation costs, basic living essentials costs, bus passes and for Afghans MOD rental property costs. All such costs are a 'fair and reasonable' claim against grant received.
- 3.11.5 A reconciliation process will take place at the end of the financial year and where grant/s received exceeds costs incurred for guests and sponsors then a payback to DLUHC will be made. Because many of these schemes have developed quite quickly the guidance and the requirements are often received after the start of the schemes and evolve and develop.
- 3.11.6 Looking forward, the potential challenge with the rising cost of living, is that after the initial 6, or 12, month period host family/guest relationships may break-down and we may find more pressures on the Council to find asylum seekers / migrants alternative accommodations with the inherent cost and logistical challenges that can pose, given Temporary Accommodation pressures in the City.

### **3.12 Coordination across the city**

- 3.12.1 As part of the reaction to the Homes for Ukraine scheme, city council officers led the engagement with a range of partner organisations to ensure it was a holistic, whole city response. This includes the following.
- Multi-agency meeting of statutory organisations, such as Police, Fire, NHS and others. This ensures a joined-up approach and shared understanding of the issues. An additional outcome from this group has been data sharing agreements have been put in place to enable the GDPR compliant sharing of information.
  - Third sector and voluntary groups, including The Hive, PCOS, EC Roberts, Shaping Portsmouth, Citizens Advice and Parent Network. The aim of this was to explore ways that the third sector could support the work beyond that which the city council was providing. This group continues to meet monthly and there is a desire for this coordination to continue beyond Ukraine to encompass all asylum seeker issues.

### **3.13 Coordination within the Council**

- 3.13.1 With central government operating so many splintered schemes, it is important that there is strong co-ordination throughout the Council and with partners. With so many direct and indirect implications of supporting asylum seekers, or people resetting through Government programmes, the Council needs to make



sure that there is strong communication between the different directorates and partners.

- 3.13.2 To support this approach a senior officer co-ordinating group was identified to make sure that there is a whole council approach to responding to the different schemes and the implications of people settling in Portsmouth. This was initially coordinated by senior officers from HNB and the strategy unit and contains representatives from across the whole council. The operational lead for the Homes for Ukraine and ARAP scheme remains within HNB, and two 12-month fixed term dedicated resources are located with Housing Needs Advice and Support (HNAS). Strategic coordination is provided by Director for HNBS, Head of HNAS and Corporate Strategy Manager.
- 3.13.3 Further consideration will be given to the capacity of the current arrangements and a further dedicated role to coordinate the work.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the previous report to cabinet including an update to reflect the national Ukrainian schemes that have been set up and the new dispersal model. This information is all for noting. Cabinet are also being asked to agree that people under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme that leave the national programme should, where appropriate, still be supported by the EC Roberts Centre caseworkers.

#### **5. Integrated impact assessment**

- 5.1 No integrated impact assessment has been undertaken because the individual projects and key activities within the support offered would be subject to their own assessments.

#### **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 The legal implications are quite wide but not such as to be unique to PCC in that as the report outlines those placed or residing within the PCC administrative area will be able to access facilities based upon status, health, need and the usual triggering engagements. Those who are requiring assistance will be able to access under the Children Act (child in need etc), or the relevant Health Act legislation etc, the point being that once we have accepted the responsibility then we are assuming a competency and resource base to discharge that duty. So far as UAM's are concerned that is a situation that PCC has taken a position on in the recent past and as stated above will continue to do so dependent upon the influx and the ability for PCC to be able to manage a cohort that is by definition not settled.

#### **7. Director of Finance & Resources' comments**

As detailed in the report, the costs that are being incurred on running the schemes are well within the funding levels received and there are currently no unfunded cost pressures for the Council. In addition to the scheme's direct costs, the funding will be used to pay for staff who are seconded from their

substantive posts. The risk that, where host family and guest relationships breakdown, there may be a future need to find asylum seekers alternative accommodation, adding to Temporary Accommodation pressures in the City, will need to be carefully monitored and managed.

Signed by:

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James Hill  
Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods  
and Building Services

.....  
Sarah Daly  
Director of Children & Families

**Appendices:**

Appendix 1 - Letter from Lord Harrington asking authorities to pledge support to Afghan migrants..

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

Report to Portsmouth City Council Cabinet on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2022 - "Portsmouth City Council Support to Asylum Seekers and Resettlement Programmes" - [Portsmouth Support for Asylum Seekers.pdf](#)

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
Signed by:

## Letter from Lord Harrington re Pledges to Support Afghan Scheme



Lord Richard Harrington  
*Minister for Refugees*



Home Office and Department for Levelling  
Up, Housing and Communities  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

Email: PSRichardHarrington@levellingup.gov.uk

27 June 2022

Dear Chief Executive,

### Resettlement Pledges for 2022/23

I am writing with regards to the UK's commitment to Afghanistan. Since I became the Minister for Refugees earlier this year I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with many of you to discuss the Ukraine situation. I continue to be hugely grateful and impressed with the work, engagement and leadership Local Authorities have played in delivering the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as you also did with those fleeing from Syria and more recently, in welcoming Afghan families to the UK.

Earlier this month I laid out in Parliament that in line with the Government's standing commitment to resettle those fleeing Afghanistan, that we will shortly be opening new pathways to resettle more of the most vulnerable people to a safe life in the UK. We are all aware of the importance of settling and integrating those arriving under this scheme as quickly as possible and accordingly, we need to increase the number of pledges and offers of accommodation.

I am determined to move both existing and new arrivals out of bridging accommodation as quickly as possible to help people integrate most successfully into their new lives in the UK. As such, I am asking all councils to again help through bringing forward the most generous number of pledges possible for placements for the year ahead. In addition to our Afghan schemes, I am committed to resettling refugees under the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) and I also seek your support and pledges for UKRS. To register your pledges, I would be very grateful if you could contact your regional strategic migration partnership (details provided in the attached Annex) so we can ensure coordination at a regional level.

As you consider what you are able to pledge, I thought it might be helpful to give you a sense of the challenge over the coming year, issues I know that many councils are all too familiar with:

- There are c.12,000 Afghans in bridging hotels, with c.10,500 requiring accommodation. We require more than 2,000 additional properties to move these families out of bridging and into settled accommodation. With 68% of the population being larger families, we need over 500 4-bedroom houses. We welcome offers of closely co-located smaller properties, for larger families to be split where the makeup of the family allows.
- As of week commencing 13 June 2022, we have fewer than 100 properties available to us to match to families.
- Arrivals under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) are forecast to continue, at a rate of up to 500 per month.
- We expect 2,000 referrals from the UNHCR this year under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) pathway 2.
- We could see up to 1,500 arrivals under ACRS pathway 3.

The annex to this letter sets out some of the basic information about the schemes, including the grant funding packages, an indication of the accommodation and integration support needed and information about the matching process. More information is available from your strategic migration partnership.

I am acutely aware that this ask comes at a time when we are asking a lot of you in our support for Ukraine and at a time when the private rented sector is particularly challenging. I understand the pressures that this puts on you; the collective challenge for us is significant.

We have a number of initiatives underway to support with this challenge. We plan to make it easier for you to access the £25.5m Housing Costs fund, to help you meet the costs of housing. We are working with councils to develop the Find Your Own Accommodation Pathway (via the private rented sector) and have provided flexibility in our funding instructions, allowing councils to receive funding for families moving to properties in this way. We are reaching out to landlords, property developers and the wider private rented sector, including Rightmove, to encourage further offers of properties, either directly to local authorities or through our housing portal, which was set up to allow people to submit offers of housing support for people arriving from Afghanistan. We are also working with education establishments on the conversion of properties that we hope can be used as long-term accommodation for families.

I am keen to discuss other ways that we can collectively address this very real challenge. I hope to continue to speak to colleagues over the following weeks and months and always welcome any opportunity to discuss your thoughts and ideas. I would be grateful if you shared this letter with your local authority elected leaders.

Should you wish to speak with me directly, please do not hesitate to get in contact. I firmly believe that working together we can get there; the reward is seeing lives of thousands of people – mothers, fathers, children – transformed.

Yours sincerely,



*Richard*

Lord Harrington  
**Minister of State for Refugees**