

**Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board
27 September 2023**

Report Title:	National Asylum Policy Changes – Impact on Nottingham
Lead Board Member(s):	Lucy Hubber, Director of Public Health
Report author and contact details:	Amy Goulden amy.goulden@nottinghamcity.gov.uk
Other colleagues who have provided input:	East Midlands Migration Partnership, Homelessness Prevention, Community Safety.
Executive Summary:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National policy change in respect of asylum decisions • This will result in significant numbers being granted asylum by the end of 2023 • This will affect the whole UK, not just Nottingham • Exact numbers currently unknown • Local plans currently being developed 	
Recommendation(s):	
The Board is asked to note the concerns raised in the paper and the activity being undertaken to mitigate these at a local level.	

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy	
Aims and Priorities	How the recommendation(s) contribute to meeting the Aims and Priorities:
Aim 1: To increase healthy life expectancy in Nottingham through addressing the wider determinants of health and enabling people to make healthy decisions	The asylum seeker and refugee cohort has a wide range of health and wellbeing needs across all of the board priorities.
Aim 2: To reduce health inequalities by having a proportionately greater focus where change is most needed	
Priority 1: Smoking and Tobacco Control	
Priority 2: Eating and Moving for Good Health	

Priority 3: Severe Multiple Disadvantage	
Priority 4: Financial Wellbeing	
How mental health and wellbeing is being championed in line with the Board's aspiration to give equal value to mental and physical health:	
Mental health and trauma are significant concerns within this group, because refugees have fled war and conflict zones.	

List of background papers relied upon in writing this report (not including published documents or confidential or exempt information)	n/a
Published documents referred to in this report	n/a

On 23 February 2023, the Home Office introduced a new 'streamlined asylum processing' policy, where some people seeking asylum will have to complete a questionnaire instead of having an interview. This policy initially applied to adults from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen and was later expanded to include some claimants from Iraq, Iran and Sudan. The introduction of this policy followed an announcement by the Prime Minister in December 2022 that the intention was to clear the backlog of legacy asylum claims by the end of 2023.

At the end of June 2023 there were 175,457 individuals awaiting an initial decision on their claim, 44% higher than the equivalent figure from the previous year. This cohort is distributed across the UK in a range of accommodation. In Nottingham and the surrounding area asylum seekers are now most commonly housed in hotels.

The new policy will result in a large number of asylum claims being made across the UK by the end of the year. This will affect claimants housed in Nottingham and the broader East Midlands region. The exact numbers affected locally are unknown as the data provided by the Home Office does not allow accurate predictions to be made. Furthermore, it is not known what proportion of those given leave to remain will choose to stay in Nottingham nor how many individuals granted asylum (refugee status) will decide to move to the city. We also understand that due to the high numbers granted status on appeal many of those who receive a negative decision will put in an appeal.

The Home Office are taking steps to discontinue support in line with legislation, at the end of the relevant prescribed period, which they describe as follows:

- Where someone is given notice that their asylum claim has been granted, their appeal has been allowed or their asylum claim has been refused but they have been given leave to enter or remain, the prescribed period is 28 days.
- In all other cases, the prescribed period is 21 days.
- As per Regulation 22 of the Asylum Support Regulations, individuals will receive a 'notice to quit' support letter, which will be issued in writing at least 7 days before the individual's accommodation and support payments are due to end. Where an individual's 21- or 28-day period has passed, but they have not received their 7 days' notice, they will still receive the 7 days' notice period.

Unfortunately services and service users report that this window is frequently not adhered to, with some given only 7 days or less notice of eviction both locally and as reported in the media across the UK.

There is currently no legislative power to provide such support beyond the 21- or 28-day prescribed periods and there are no plans to change this. Individuals are encouraged to make their onward plans as soon as possible after receiving their decision, whether that is leaving the UK following a refusal, or taking steps to integrate in the UK following a grant.

While there is support is offered to newly recognised refugees during the 28-day 'Move-on' period, through Migrant Help or their partner organisations. This includes a phone call in the 28 days to explain to refugees how to access the labour market through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), providing advice on applying for Universal Credit and signposting to local authorities for assistance with housing.

Nationally 70% of claims are granted, with a further 43% granted on appeal. It is therefore reasonable to assume that significant numbers in the East Midlands will be granted asylum by the end of the year. Locally, this will create pressure on housing and other local services. A large proportion of claimants are single males who are unlikely to be owed a housing duty by the local authority, this will therefore create demand elsewhere, such as the charity sector, and will likely result in an increase in off and on street homelessness. A range of other health and wellbeing issues will also present amongst those granted asylum and this demand will need to be absorbed by local services.

The local authority will be made aware of the numbers expected in Nottingham within the next week and meetings with key partners will be taking place during September, with regular response meetings taking place through the remainder of 2023 and beyond with Housing and voluntary sector colleagues to mitigate these risks as much as possible given the timeframe and limited resources available.

NCC is a member of the East Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership and strong representations have also been made to East Midlands Councils and to the Home Office about this issue.