

**Tracey Logan
Chief Executive**

Christina McKelvie MSP
Convener
T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Please

ask for:

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

E-Mail:

Date:

Tracey Logan

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7 March 2017

Dear Ms McKelvie

Calls for views on destitution and asylum in Scotland

I refer to your letter dated 31 January 2017 on the above topic. Responses are given below to each of your questions on behalf of Scottish Borders Council.

1. As a public service provider, what support are you able to provide to asylum seekers and what are the main barriers to providing support.

At present Scottish Borders Council is not supporting any asylum seekers. The Council's main focus is on the Syrian Refugee Scheme for Vulnerable Families. It is intended to resettle up to 10 Syrian refugee families under this scheme. Currently, four families comprising 8 adults, 2 young people and 9 children have been resettled in the Scottish Borders. The Council and its partners are looking to take in another two families within the next few months.

The experience of the work with the Syrian refugees indicates that there is currently a lack of capacity in the Scottish Borders in terms of networks, geography as a large rural area and the availability of foster families (in the case of unaccompanied asylum seeking children) to resettle asylum seekers. However, the Syrian refugee family resettlement scheme is helping the Council and its partners to understand these issues better. The Council is in early discussions with neighbouring local authorities on the possibility of a consortium approach to supporting asylum seekers.

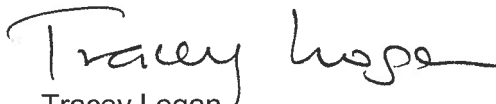
2. We'd also like to hear about how a person's need for support is assessed and what would make this assessment process easier, please make reference to any policies and procedures within your organisation.

The Council does not have the experience to answer this question in relation to asylum seekers. However, with the Syrian refugees a holistic approach has been taken in relation to assessing their needs and aspirations. Journey pathways involving a range of partners are being developed for each person relating particularly to learning English, vocational and employment opportunities.

3. If your area does not have experience of asylum seekers, it would be helpful to know what policies, guidance or procedures are in place or being developed to address support for asylum seekers.

As mentioned above, the Council and its partners have developed processes for supporting Syrian refugee families and it is envisaged these could be adapted to deal with asylum seekers if this is required. Also, the Council is in early discussions with neighbouring local authorities to discuss whether a consortium approach is a possibility for supporting asylum seekers.

Yours sincerely


Tracey Logan
Chief Executive