

**Table - Principles for Asylum Dispersal**

This table accompanies the briefing ‘Principles for Asylum Dispersal’ published by [Asylum Matters](#) and [NACCOM](#). Published 06/02/2023

<b>Principles for Asylum Dispersal</b>	
<b>1. Safe and good quality accommodation within communities</b>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asylum dispersal should provide people seeking asylum with safe accommodation within communities that are equipped with the resources to support them.</li> <li>At present, local authorities have little power over the location and quality of accommodation, as it is procured by private bodies with asylum accommodation and support contracts. Property standards for dispersal accommodation should be managed and monitored in the same way as other types of accommodation, and akin to the <a href="#">Decent Homes Standard</a>, with local authorities being sufficiently resourced to inspect and ensure good quality accommodation is provided and maintained.</li> <li>Refugee Action have developed a series of <a href="#">principles</a> to establish what asylum accommodation should look like.</li> <li>Refugees for Justice have proposed <a href="#">an alternative model</a> of asylum dispersal where local authorities, and not contracted providers, are funded to deliver asylum accommodation in Scotland via local integration plans.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Adequate legal aid advice</b>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The availability of professional immigration advice and Legal Aid advice for all people seeking asylum should be a primary consideration in new dispersal areas. People housed in dispersal accommodation should be able to access legal advice services conveniently and independently, including free legal advice and representation (e.g.: Legal Aid) if required.</li> <li>If required, there should be investment in regional hubs of expertise to ensure that all people in the asylum system have access to advice. The Home Office should also work with the Ministry of Justice and Legal Aid Agencies to increase matter starts if required.</li> </ul>

<p><b>3. Properly funded and engaged voluntary sector</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current asylum support system places significant pressure on the charity and voluntary sector to deliver a safety net for people seeking asylum. Migrant Help is contracted by the Government to provide advice and guidance but this is purely over the phone and does not address all support issues and requirements of people seeking asylum.</li> <li>• The voluntary sector should be recognised as a key stakeholder in delivering local support and should be sufficiently resourced by local authorities to meet service demand.</li> <li>• The voluntary sector should be involved early in the establishment of new dispersal areas to assess potential need and capacity to meet it, and subsequently be properly resourced to meet expected demand.</li> <li>• Local authorities should consider employing dedicated staff to manage liaison between local government, the Home Office, and the voluntary sector. Some local authorities current employ Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers (LAASLOs) to work closely with local statutory and voluntary sector organisations, and find the best available provision for people seeking asylum in their area, among other responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Consultation with local communities and people within the asylum system</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any consultation process enacted as part of the development of a new dispersal area should properly engage people with lived experience of the system, as well as voluntary sector organisations.</li> <li>• When assessing the accessibility of services, places of worship, and support agencies, the limitations of the current asylum support payments of £45per week should be considered.</li> <li>• New dispersal areas should have a plan for community cohesion, with clearly established expectations both for those seeking asylum and those in wider communities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Information sharing</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All relevant bodies, including local authorities and the voluntary sector, should receive sufficient prior notification of the number of people being dispersed and the areas they will be moved into.</li> <li>• Information sharing between the Home Office, accommodation providers, Migrant Help, local authorities, Strategic Migration Partnerships (SMPs), and the voluntary sector, should be improved to ensure that people are able to access support that they require and are entitled to.</li> </ul>

<p><b>6. Integration from day one</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● People within the asylum system should be fully briefed on when and where they are due to be moved at any point in the process, as well as supported when evicted from Home Office accommodation.</li> <li>● Investment should be made in signposting and local information services to help new arrivals to navigate local systems and services.</li> <li>● Information and support should be provided to the person about their local area. This may include how to register with a GP, how to access school places, where to go for help, what they can expect in their accommodation, and how to complain or raise concerns if required.</li> <li>● The Home Office should facilitate health and welfare screenings when a person first enters the asylum support system to ensure that any dispersal accommodation provided meets people’s specific needs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Trauma-informed mental health support and tailored healthcare systems</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Home Office should work with local health services to map out local healthcare provision in dispersal areas and ensure everyone receiving asylum support is supported to register with a GP, and to access specialist healthcare where needed, in particular trauma-focused mental health support.</li> <li>● Since asylum-seeking women are at higher risk of developing complications during pregnancy, any dispersal area should have maternity services that have a good understanding of the maternity needs of this group so women have access to the specialist care they may need.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Safeguarding framework</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Since many people accessing the asylum system experience mental health issues, there should be a collective safeguarding framework between housing providers, Migrant Help, the Home Office, local authorities and voluntary sector agencies where risks and issues are addressed proactively.</li> </ul>
<p><b>9. ESOL provision</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● English as a Second Language (ESOL) provision should be available from day one.</li> <li>● Mapping of ESOL providers in the region should be carried out to ensure there is appropriate provision at all levels, from beginners to International English Language Testing System (IELTS).</li> </ul>

<p><b>10. Public transport concessions</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport costs are often prohibitive when living on asylum support, and should be an area of consideration, especially in areas further from major cities where services, support, places of worship and shops are located.</li> <li>• To solve this, accommodation providers could provide transport such as shuttle buses, or the relevant authority could provide free or reduced cost public transport for people seeking asylum, as was <a href="#">recently piloted</a> in Wales.</li> </ul>
<p><b>11. Move on support</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move on opportunities for people leaving the asylum system should be well understood. Initially around access to affordable permanent housing and ensuring local authorities act in advance of the day of eviction from Home Office accommodation, and later on around access to training and employment.</li> <li>• Migrant Help does provide some support with this through their partner Reed in Partnership, but funded voluntary sector organisations providing local knowledge and advice on a face to face basis is key to ensure people are well supported.</li> <li>• Extending the move on period to at least 56 days (in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act) alongside improvements to support, would increase the likelihood of successful move on - so no refugees face homelessness and destitution after leaving asylum accommodation.</li> <li>• More detailed recommendations for ensuring that no refugees face homelessness and destitution after leaving asylum accommodation can be found in the NACCOM 'Mind the Gap' reports published in <a href="#">2018</a> and <a href="#">2019</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>12. Move on accommodation</b></p>	<p><b>Expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To facilitate successful move on and integration among newly granted refugees, the availability of temporary accommodation and affordable move on accommodation should be strategically managed by local authorities. This will help to assess existing and future demand and mitigate the risk of homelessness amongst people leaving the asylum system.</li> <li>• In any new dispersal area, a mapping exercise should be conducted to understand the move on housing options for refugees and expected need for temporary provision.</li> </ul>



asylum matters

If you have any further questions or would like additional information on anything above, get in touch with us:

- Asylum Matters - [info@asylummatters.org](mailto:info@asylummatters.org)
- NACCOM - [info@naccom.org.uk](mailto:info@naccom.org.uk)