

New Scots National Conference Report

11 November 2022

Glasgow Royal
Concert Hall



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Background



The New Scots National Conference took place on Friday 11 November 2022 at the Royal Concert Hall in Glasgow.

Aims of the event

- Celebrate projects supporting refugee integration across Scotland
- Highlight impacts, successes and challenges of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy and Delivery Project
- Help shape the next New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy in 2023

Summary of Speeches

Welcome and input by Leadership Board of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.

Angus Robertson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture, Scottish Government (video message)

I am delighted to be able to speak to you today as part of the New Scots National Conference. Thanks to everyone involved in making this event possible including our partners at COSLA, Scottish Refugee Council and the University of Glasgow. The speakers joining us today. And, of course, to all of you for giving your time to be here.

I am sorry not to be joining you in person and look forward to future opportunities to do so; as we continue our significant and important work to support the integration of New Scots into our shared communities. The past few years have been incredibly challenging for people across Scotland and around the world. There have been significant impacts due to the Covid-19 pandemic and there are economic challenges affecting households, businesses and services. Over the past eighteen months news headlines have also been filled with stories of people being dramatically and forcibly displaced from their homes and arriving to seek safety in Scotland. First from Afghanistan and then from Ukraine. Many of you who are here today have been heavily involved in responding to both of these situations. I would like to thank you for your efforts. I continue to be impressed by how individuals, communities and organisations across Scotland have adapted and innovated to provide a place of safety to those most in need.

Scotland is committed to supporting refugees, asylum seekers and our communities through the pioneering and collaborative approach of the New Scots refugee integration strategy. Our first New Scots strategy was published in 2014. Since then, Scotland has supported refugee resettlement in all 32 of our local authorities under UK Syrian resettlement programmes. Utilising this experience, our response and support for people arriving in Scotland from Afghanistan and Ukraine has been informed by our New Scots approach and this will continue as we develop arrangements further to respond to what has been an enormous crisis across all of Europe.

Our New Scots approach has always been clear that integration should begin from day one. That has been the ideal, and we must continue to strive to achieve this despite the many obstacles in our way through the differing approaches put in place by the UK Government. We also recognise the additional challenges and restrictions which apply when someone is in the UK asylum system.

People seeking asylum should be able to access essential support and services they need. We in Scotland will continue to work in partnership to improve that access where we can, and will also continue to challenge the UK Government to improve the UK asylum system.

This year's New Scots Conference brings together stakeholders from all over Scotland and serves as an important opportunity to celebrate the impacts and successes of the New Scots refugee integration strategy. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the work being done by the organisations and funded projects through the New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project. This year's conference also serves as an opportunity to begin to shape the focus of the next New Scots strategy, which is due to be launched in 2023. In August 2021, we announced the award of £2.8 million funding to refugee projects which support New Scots to settle in their new communities by promoting employability, education, health, and social and cultural connections. These grants were provided under the New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project, utilising EU funding.

People's lived experience shaped the current strategy and has been instrumental in the success of the New Scots Project. We are working with our partners to ensure that the next New Scots strategy continues to be shaped by refugees and people seeking asylum, as well as those supporting them. Scotland has a long history of welcoming people of all nationalities and faiths, including those seeking refuge and safety from war and persecution. We recognise the contribution that refugees make. Over successive generations, refugees have helped make Scotland the strong, successful and diverse country it is today.

New Scots are assets to our communities: sharing their culture, building businesses, working in our public services, volunteering their skills and making friendships.

Through the current New Scots Strategy, we committed to:

- Supporting integration into our communities from day one
- Working in partnership to provide people with the safety and security they need as they begin to rebuild their lives; and
- Developing opportunities for everyone to be able to build, share and use their skills as members of our communities.

This commitment will continue to be central as we refresh the New Scots strategy. We have seen success and improvement through New Scots.

We also recognise that there continue to be improvements to be made and significant challenges. These include the UK Government's New Plan for Immigration and the Nationality and Borders Act, which place our reputation as a country of welcome and refuge at serious risk. We hope that the next New Scots Strategy will serve as a positive example of refugee integration, both in the UK and to many countries around the world.

I would like to thank you all for the important work you have done in support of the current strategy. And for your engagement at today's conference which serves as a celebration of this hard work and dedication. I hope you that you all enjoy today's event. I also hope we can continue to build on the successes of the current New Scots strategy. I look forward to future engagement opportunities with refugees, people seeking asylum and communities as we work together to refresh the New Scots strategy and ensure that Scotland continues to be at the forefront of refugee integration.



Cllr Maureen Chalmers, COSLA Spokesperson
for Community Wellbeing

I am here today, on behalf of CoSLA, to help celebrate the New Scots integration strategy. Looking around this room, though, I don't see a strategy. I see people working together to create resilient communities in localities across Scotland. And this is my message: the work of integration isn't an abstract strategy. It is hard, hopeful work done in specific places. Helping refugees and asylum seekers integrate into communities across Scotland makes those places stronger. How we do that—in each of those diverse places—has to grow from the people and services already available in that place. It also has to respond to the needs of New Scots arriving into that place: overcoming the language barrier to getting a driving licence is key to employment and growing strong social networks in rural areas; while, in our university cities, buddy systems and peer support networks within student housing connect young New Scots to other students who—just like them—are building their own new networks.

Our goal is integration: creating appropriate and dignified opportunities for refugees and asylum seekers to weave themselves into the fabric of local communities, and through this weaving of new threads into local patterns, to improve that fabric: to make each community stronger, more vibrant, and more resilient.

Around this room there are people from every corner of Scotland, and the projects that we are celebrating here reflect that geographic diversity.

Since 2015, every single local authority across Scotland has committed to welcoming refugees; this year, every single local authority has welcomed Ukrainians; and as the Home Office in Westminster has changed its priorities around asylum seekers, every single one of the 32 local authorities across Scotland has clearly stated they are ready to offer a warm welcome and support.

If our goal is integration, how we achieve that depends on local partnerships, local skills, and the particular qualities of specific Scottish places. It is the local authorities that provide education, social services, nature reserves and allotments, and all the other nourishment that keeps a community well. In partnership with third sector organisations, they respond to a huge range of needs and challenges that emerge within each place. It is those partnerships that actually create the possibility of New Scots families weaving themselves into the social fabric of a place.

Today, we are here to learn. I have said that integration happens locally, and it does, but today is a chance for you to connect with other projects across Scotland. Around this room there is an enormous variety of locally-led collaborations, and in just a few minutes we will be introduced to some of these initiatives.

It's also an opportunity to hear the first reports from the formal research projects sponsored by the New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project, including work done by IPPR that focusses on how local authorities best support the integration of New Scots into their communities.



But today is also a chance to begin thinking about the next New Scots strategy, and how we can strengthen our capacity at the local level and the national level to welcome New Scots.

Integration is about weaving new threads into existing fabrics and so strengthening them; but those threads are never completely cut. As a result of New Scots integrating into communities across Scotland, all those communities have new connections worldwide. We know, too, that as a result of environmental change and other long-term pressures, there will be more crises, and more waves of migration, though we cannot anticipate where or when they will arise. That is why this work that we are doing now is so very important: with the help of the New Scots who have already come here, we are creating diverse, connected, resilient communities that will thrive as Scotland evolves.

Sabir Zazai, Chief Executive, Scottish Refugee Council

Thank you, Alison, I'm delighted to follow the Cabinet Secretary and Maureen and join with them in welcoming you all to this New Scots National Conference. Today is a long-awaited and much-needed opportunity to come together. It is an important moment to celebrate and reflect on the progress of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy. And it is basecamp at the start of our collective thinking towards the next New Scots strategy next year.

I was a relatively new 'New Scot' when the current strategy was launched. I had recently arrived to Glasgow from Coventry to take up my role at Scottish Refugee Council. I remember being so inspired by the commitment, creativity and labour of the people and organisations I first met. All of them working towards the New Scots strategy vision of a welcoming Scotland. A Scotland where refugees and people seeking asylum are able to rebuild their lives from the day they arrive.

That view has only strengthened and deepened over time. On a daily basis I have the privilege of witnessing the efforts of the rich tapestry of people from right across this country working for a compassionate and fair Scotland.

- Third sector organisations large and small
- Activists, lawyers and academics
- Local authority officers and civil servants
- Communities, individuals and refugees themselves

We see the strength of that in this room today. But it goes way beyond these walls.

Despite the many challenges we have all faced in achieving the New Scots vision, it is vital that we take time to celebrate our achievements. I want to thank you all for the work that you do as individuals and organisations. Collaboration and partnership are core principles of the New Scots strategy. Over the last two years the New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery Project, through EU funding, has allowed Scottish Refugee Council, COSLA, Glasgow University and the Scottish Government to collaborate on supporting 53 integration projects across Scotland, many of which have been partnerships between local authorities and third sector.

I am delighted that Scottish Refugee Council was able to build on this and collaborate with the National Lottery Community Fund to support an additional 13 projects. And last week we were pleased to announce the second stage of this partnership. A fund co-designed by refugees for refugee community organisations, smaller charities and not for profit groups that are often underfunded. Many of these groups play a lifeline and often unsung role in supporting New Scots. Much of which we saw during the Covid pandemic.

The New Scots Refugee Integration Delivery collaboration has also given time, space and resource to collaborate on taking stock of the effectiveness and impact of the strategy and critique our understanding of integration. It is essential that we understand what is working well and what needs to be done better. I look forward to hearing with interest the work of ScotCen, IPPR and the team at Glasgow University.

The Cabinet Secretary mentioned ‘the many obstacles put in our way through the differing approaches put in place by the UK Government.’ I want to be more forthright in my closing remarks. For a long time now, we’ve witnessed a sustained attack on the right to seek asylum in the UK. Hand in hand with this has been the UK Government’s wilful neglect of the asylum system itself, which has been allowed to fall into a state of utter chaos and crisis. When people are not able to move on through the asylum system to a new stage of life, to find some security and solid ground under their feet, the impact is massive.

It’s obscene to deliberately hold so many people in this state of acute anxiety and prolonged, enforced poverty. It is a system which creates profits for private companies and shunts responsibilities and costs onto local areas frustrating our attempts to welcome, support and integrate refugees into our communities. The UK Government’s approach has led to a fractured protection system with disparate refugee schemes in operation across Scotland.

There are unique issues for the different New Scots populations:

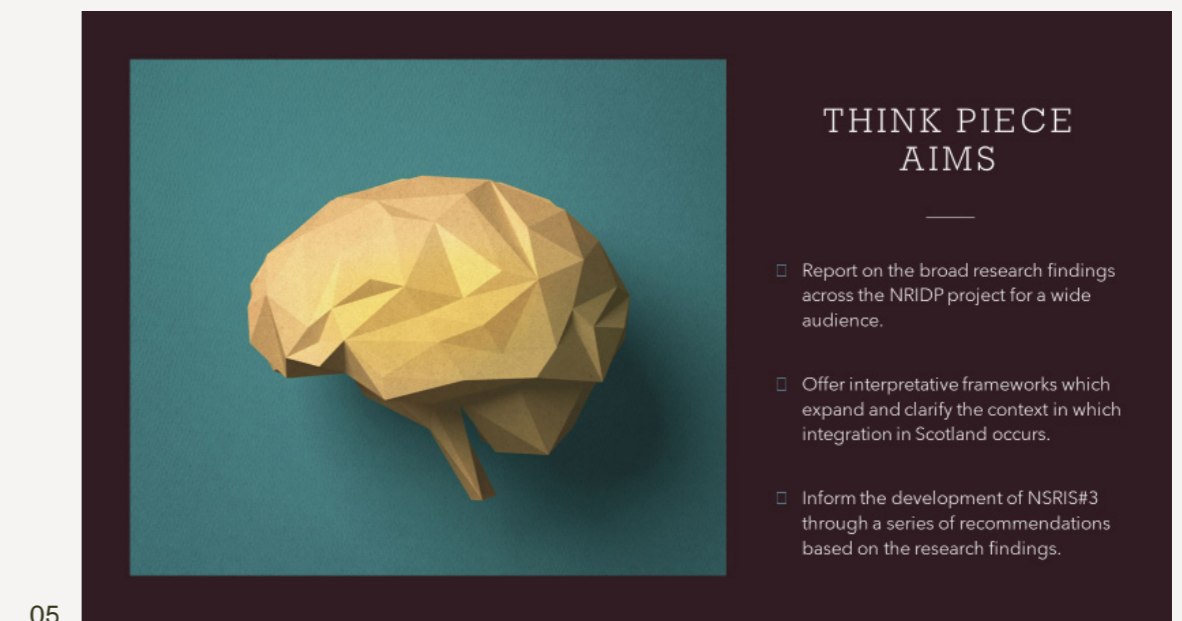
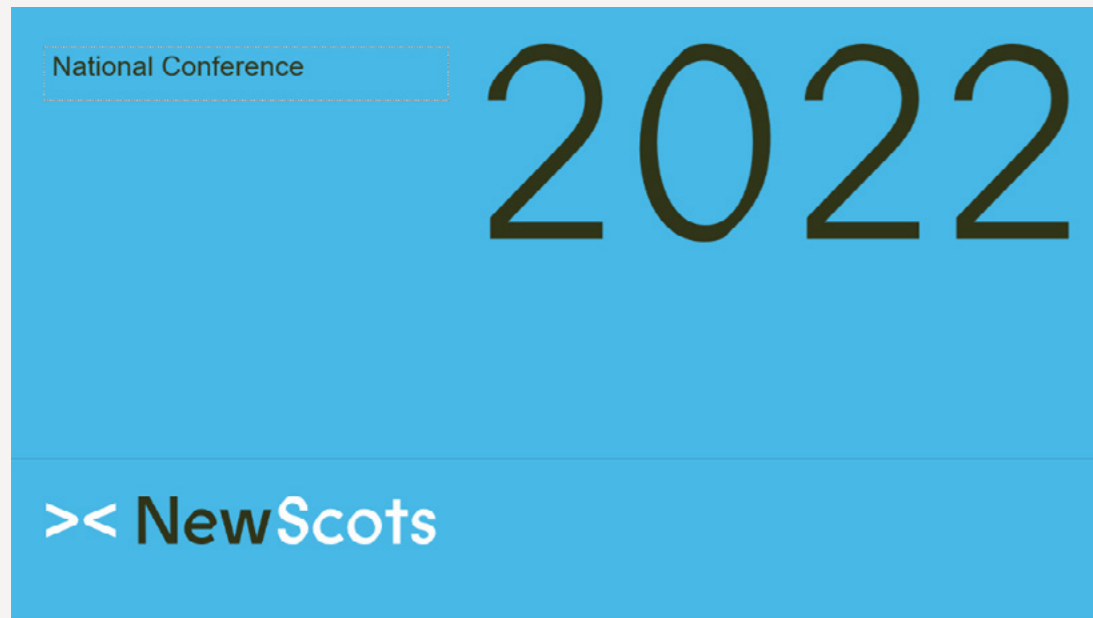
- Nearly 20,000 displaced from Ukraine
- Those evacuated from Afghanistan and living in hotels
- 5,500 people seeking asylum living in hotels and communities and imminent mandated dispersal;
- Nearly 500 unaccompanied children spread across every local authority in Scotland.

But there are common needs and aspirations amongst all. A desire to create a life in safety and the tools of language, education and jobs to do so. These are the challenges that New Scots face. Challenges we must find solutions to as we renew our efforts towards the New Scots strategy vision of a welcoming Scotland for refugees no matter the conflict they fled or the route they took to sanctuary.

And no matter what area of Scotland becomes their home. We can never allow refugees to be seen as a problem, but assets to our communities. And assets whose full potential is realised. They are assets to overcoming these challenges too and must be at the heart of finding solutions. Their voice must be heard. I look forward to collaborating with all of you today and beyond this conference as we celebrate and reflect on what we have achieved. And as we look towards renewing our collective vision of a welcoming Scotland. Thank you.

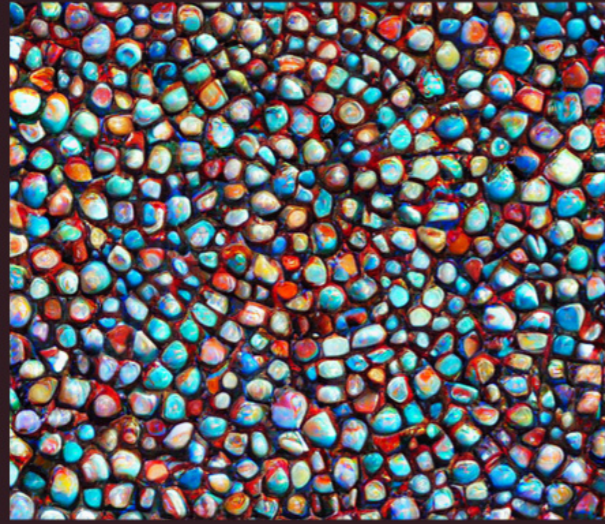


Presentations



INTEGRATION

- Recognises value beyond economic
- Delivers key services
- Is multi-directional
- Recognises need for restoration



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SOME KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Support and embed practices based on principles of intercultural communication and multilingual working
2. Support and embed practices based on principles of community development
3. Ensure clarity about responsibility and accountability

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WELCOME



- Feeling welcome is part of integration process
- Recognises emotional component
- Lived experiences
- Vulnerability

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INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

- Dynamic process involving many actors (not just two-way)
- Implies and requires reciprocal listening and learning even if difficult
- Multilingual working - beyond just ESOL
- Practices which generate and support dialogue are key to transformative processes

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PLACE

- Place is the where that influences what happens and how it happens.
- Place affects how policy is applied, but also provides the opportunities for putting policy into practice.
- Place is where everyday encounters occur. How can encounters lead to meaningful intercultural connections?



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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Iterative process of dialogue and learning
- Acknowledges complexity of communities, stories, expectations
- Trauma informed
- Considers needs and resources in creative ways

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ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Clarity regarding devolved / reserved powers
- Systems of accountability if agreements breached (e.g. housing provision)
- Ways of supporting and increasing communication within and across different sectors to share best practice & resources

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THANK YOU

- First edition of this report will be published in early December

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Evaluating the New Scots
Refugee Integration Strategy
and New Scots Delivery Project

Hannah Biggs
ScotCen

>< NewScots

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ScotCen
Social Research that works for society

Evaluating the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2018-2022

Research findings

11th November 2022



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Intended outcomes of the strategy

1. Refugees and asylum seekers live in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and are able to build diverse relationships and connections
2. Refugees and asylum seekers understand their rights, responsibilities and entitlements and are able to exercise them to pursue full and independent lives
3. Refugees and asylum seekers are able to access well-coordinated services, which recognise and meet their rights and needs
4. Policy, strategic planning and legislation, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and aspirations

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Methodology



Theory of Changes workshops

Two workshops with Matter of Focus February 2022



Evaluation support for a subset of funded projects

12 AMIF projects supported by Matter of Focus March to September 2022



Stakeholder interviews

30 stakeholders interviewed between 1 April and August 2022. Included policy makers, academics, third sector organisations



Survey of organisations, stakeholders and others

250 completed responses. Survey closed August 2022.



Qualitative interviews with refugees

21 refugees and asylum seekers interviewed between 13th September and 13th October 2022.

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Impact of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

1.

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Safe, welcoming and cohesive communities and relationships

What has helped	Barriers to success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local communities Local Authority engagement Support organisations Community groups Volunteering Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Racism Lack of cultural understanding Language Lack of transport Housing (areas of high deprivation, hotel) Barriers to employment Asylum process Funding for support

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Rights, responsibilities, entitlements and independent lives

What has helped	Barriers to success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support organisations / groups and Local Authorities providing info and help to navigate systems Word-of-mouth of rights and entitlements Employment Support with transport ESOL support Leave to remain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language barriers Lack of information on rights and entitlements Lack of funding for organisations to support refugees and asylum seekers Lack of support for asylum seekers Restrictions related to immigration status (work, education, welfare)

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Access well-coordinated services, which meet their rights and needs

What has helped	Barriers to success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative working AMIF funding Support organisations and community groups Local Authorities SRC regional coordinators Free transport College ESOL 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language barriers (lack of formal ESOL provision and interpreters) Lack of local service provision Cost / availability of transport Limited finances (e.g. travel) Housing (crowded, hotels) Covid-19 (digital inclusion)

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Policy/strategic planning/legislation informed by rights, needs and aspirations

What has helped	Barriers to success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy messages positively received AMIF funded projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of funding for implementation Siloed policy working Lack of legislative framework Reserved policy making (but more Scotland could be doing with devolved powers e.g. provision of information on rights and entitlements, language support, funding)

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The Next Strategy

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Development and implementation of the next strategy

- Wider engagement across Scotland
 - Refugees and asylum seekers (supported to engage)
 - General public (cultural understanding and tackling racism)
 - Organisations and groups
 - Scottish Government departments
- Greater focus on asylum seekers
- Actions linked to the strategy
- Flexibility to respond to changing landscape
- Underpinned by legislation
- Provision of funding
- Evaluation and learning

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Priorities for the next strategy

- Scotland-wide focus
- Greater focus on asylum seekers
- Language support (ESOL and translators)
- Housing
- Transport
- Employment, education and skills development
- Children, young people and families
- Financial support
- Mental health support
- Legal advice
- Digital connectivity

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Contact

Hannah Biggs
Research Director
E. hannah.biggs@scotcen.org.uk
Visit us online, scotcen.org.uk

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The role of local authorities in
refugee integration in Scotland

Casey Smith & Marley Morris
IPPR Scotland

>< **NewScots**

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Local authorities and refugee integration in Scotland

New Scots National
Conference, 11th November

The progressive
policy think tank

IPPR
Scotland

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Research aims

- › How do Scotland's 32 local authorities support the integration of refugees and asylum seekers?
- › Five key research questions:
 1. Understanding the current picture on the ground
 2. Identifying successes and challenges at the local authority level in supporting integration
 3. Comparing experiences of delivering support to refugees and asylum seekers across Scotland's diverse local authorities
 4. Exploring the impact of policy and legislation
 5. Looking ahead to the future

IPPR
Scotland

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Understanding the current picture

- › Refugee integration work has grown significantly since 2015 across Scotland.
- › Local authorities without long histories of migration settlement have rapidly developed services and support systems for new refugee communities.
- › Many are positive about the impact of New Scots strategy. However there are significant challenges facing local authorities.

25 out of 32 local authorities described impact of New Scots as either 'very' or 'somewhat' positive).

Housing, cost of living, and insufficient staffing are most pressing challenges facing local authorities



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Housing

Successes

- › Provision of housing in sought-after rural areas in Aberdeenshire allowing newly settled refugees to raise families in an area in which they feel safe and comfortable.

Challenges

- › Undersupply and overcrowding hotels
- › Lack of housing a barrier to full integration
- › Rural homes left vacant due to refusal policy
- › School capacity issues



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ESOL provision

Successes

- › Evidence of local authorities responding quickly to assess language capabilities and determine ESOL provision
- › Multi-disciplinary and collaborative ESOL learning with schools and colleges
- › Community-based ESOL learning

Challenges

- › Escalating demand
- › Infrequent classes barrier to making progress/learning
- › Mixed learning capabilities of participants in certain classes

"we're using the city as a learning resource for language learning." - ESOL provider in Dundee



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Models of resettlement

Successes

- › Success of established schemes (Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme), which were rolled out more slowly and had clearer instructions.
- › Partnership forums (council, NHS, police, etc) provide a platform to identify and solve problems.

Challenges

- › Covid reduced resettlement /integration activities
- › Ukraine resettlement capacity issues overwhelmed Homes for Ukraine and Super Sponsorship scheme. Ramifications for wider integration capacity



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Skills and employability

Successes

- › Some innovative practice to support refugees to access employment and to set up small businesses
 - › Partnership working in Western Isles – ESOL and re-training
 - › Dundee employability course
- › Resettlement teams with employability workers prevents resettlement workers becoming overwhelmed and leads to good outcomes for refugees

Challenges

- › Skills under-recognised and under-utilised
- › Vulnerable to informal, low-paid work
- › Language and childcare barriers hinder career and educational chances



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The importance of geography

Urban

- › Greater access to services and cultural venues; larger and more established third sector.
- › Perception among migrants of greater opportunity for employment and education.

Rural

- › Small towns/villages less access to services, transit difficulties, and small diaspora.
- › Evidence of more personalised provision and community-based support systems.

"Since I left Lebanon, I said I wanted to live in a 'shire'...[where it is] safer to raise children and a family" - refugee in Aberdeenshire



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Emerging principles for the next New Scots Strategy



The strategy should be ambitious and goal oriented. It should hold local authorities (and others) supporting refugee integration to account on their outcomes.



The strategy should be co-designed with meaningful input from refugees, asylum seekers, local authorities and service providers.



The New Scots Strategy needs to be integrated with Scotland's wider policy agenda, for instance, in tackling poverty and population challenges.



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"Since I'm in Scotland, I'm Scottish! As Scotland has given me safety and security, I would like to study, work and serve in Scotland.

If one day I came to know that there was peace and it was safe in Afghanistan, I would return to Afghanistan, I would return as I believe they need me." – refugee in Aberdeenshire



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Shaping the next New Scots
Refugee Integration Strategy

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>< NewScots

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1

What have been the main challenges in delivering your integration work?

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2

"Integration takes place locally" is a well-known expression in Germany.

What does this expression mean to you and in the context of New Scots integration?

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3

We are planning for engagement to take place to inform the development of the third New Scots strategy.

What would help you and your community to participate in this engagement?

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Analysis of Data from Tables

Below is a summary of responses by theme to Question 1: What have been the main challenges in delivering your integration work?

Method of gathering information

Facilitators were present at each table to facilitate dialogue, help record responses and guide conversations according to specific topics, identified as relevant by conference organisers based on previous communications with the projects present at the table. These topics were:

- Funding
- Wider policy problems
- Practical issues

- Multiple (large) refugee groups with different needs or different funding attached
- Communication issues
- Ensuring long-term engagement
- Partnership working
- Examples

Responses were recorded by groups participants and table facilitators, by writing them on flipchart sheets and post-it notes. 281 responses were then collected, entered into an excel document and coded according to the following main areas of thematic focus:

- Funding
- Education
- Employability / work
- Childcare
- Information / information sharing
- Skills / recognition
- Governance
- Staffing
- Spaces
- Cost of living
- Language
- ESOL
- Interpreting
- Mental Health
- Healthcare
- Transport
- Young people
- Training – trauma informed
- Digital / online
- Communication
- Housing and accommodation

Key themes observed

Key themes recurred in people's discussions of the challenges to their work of integration. These are discussed below, starting with those more frequently brought up.

It is important to note that many responses fell under multiple thematic areas, such as the following example is the following which addresses interconnected challenges spanning housing, health, education and spaces:

“Lack of join up between housing availability and health, school and place of worship availability”

Governance

There were 60 responses directly related to Governance. This term covers many aspects of work related to a variety of organisations involved in New Scots integration, from Scottish Government to COSLA to third sector actors. Challenges around Governance were often connected to lack of communication and information:

“Home Office - little communication / preparation for local authorities”

“Lack of understanding across departments around rights and entitlements”

“Asylum dispersal: now ad-hoc: no choice or knowledge of rights and entitlements”

This was exacerbated by uncertainty around accountability and devolved / reserved powers related to integration:

“Different standards experienced by different orgs. Need more frameworks of accountability that meets needs.”

“Scottish Government vs UK Gov on whether integration is devolved”

People repeatedly spoke of the challenges brought by the resettlement of Ukrainian citizens: this has stretched resources within organisations and communities, and has highlighted disparities in governance of resettlement schemes for different groups of displaced people:

“Planned (VPRS) vs Unplanned (Ukraine)”

“Befriending project no parity across schemes e.g. free bus pass for Ukrainian vs Afghan - being left to Las”

“Lack of cohesion - Ukraine vs Asylum; Multiple discrete schemes; Reserved/ Devolved”

Many challenges of governance were linked to staffing issues, which have been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic and by funding concerns - another recurring theme.

Funding

50 responses directly touched on funding; of these 14 cross-related to other issues and areas such as staffing / funding, or education/funding.

A key challenge around funding was that there is not enough of it, and what funding there is to support the work of integration is affected by:

“Insecurity in funding”

“Lack of sustainability”

Funding structures and systems operate on a short-term basis. Repeated cycles of fundraising take away staff time which would otherwise go towards doing the work of integration; affect the continuity of partnerships; and mean that there is no way to guarantee sustainable continuation of projects:

“Funding - short term / funding gaps in time, doesn't allow continuation”

“Time constraints of funding - 1 year, just starting partnerships, how to continue”

“Funding sources - limited staff to apply; gaps in services; criteria; continuation of successful projects”

Communication and information appeared again as part of the challenges. Approaching funders and communicating with them was difficult because of excessively bureaucratic processes, unclear communications from funders, and lack of information about how to complete applications and reports. This again used up staff time and caused funding delays:

“Lack of clarity”

“Too complex and time consuming”

“The bureaucracy involved in applying for and claiming funds to support projects”

Key costs needed by organisations to support their integration projects were transport costs, childcare and education (in particular ESOL).



Education

40 responses related to education, with many cross-referenced themes including funding; information; language; health; housing; childcare.

The main challenge connected to education was lack of sustainable funding as discussed above:

“No resource for multicultural activities and education / someone in the community has been nominated as an informal teacher (need for formal education)”

“ESOL provision - going via college means limited funding for community groups”

“ESOL capacity lacking (not enough resources)”



Digital / online services were also closely connected to education. On one hand, the Covid pandemic led to courses moving online which facilitated access for many New Scots previously homebound due to health problems of caring responsibilities (especially women with young children). However, continuing with online/digital access has not benefitted everyone, and responses highlighted concerns about access to suitable wi-fi and devices:

“WiFi availability - rural connections; cost of top-ups”

“Overloaded connections affect performance - so can't hear/lose connection.”

“Having a device”

Challenges related to languages, culture and communication impacted on which New Scots could benefit from digital/online services:

“Understanding of how to use devices”

“Resources - understanding of English instructions and unfamiliar technology - impacts other rights and entitlement access”

“School work went online - parents [need] support to know how to use”

Education also closely connected to employability.

Employability

Responses indicated that integration work is severely challenged by the law banning asylum seekers from being able to work; this was perceived as directly in contrast to the “*integration from day 1*” intent stated by the Scottish Government’s New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy.

“Right to work from arrival!”

“Lift The Ban”

Related to this challenge are the difficulties in getting the existing skills of New Scots recognised. This causes frustration, negatively impacts mental health and leads to people becoming de-skilled while they wait for their asylum case to be decided:

“Allow people to continue their profession: support people to do what they want to do”

“Not being able to work in area of specialisation”

“Recognition of foreign qualifications”

Again, responses highlighted the different treatment reserved for people arriving from Ukraine:

“Transferrable skills / qualifications - contrast re Ukraine arrivals”

Health

Responses stated repeatedly that the health – in particular the mental health – of New Scots is negatively affected by obstacles in accessing education and employment; and by challenges related to housing. Health problems in turn affect participation in communities and are an obstacle to integration.

Services provided by the third sector to support the health of New Scots are hampered by funding challenges:

“Short term funding means no capacity to support people with lived experience to work in our orgs”

In order to be more accessible to New Scots, frontline NHS health services need to include more culturally appropriate communication; this included training staff to work in a trauma-informed way:

“Services not trauma informed”

Responses spoke of a lack of mental health support services, and a lack of information and communication on how to access what is available:

“Lack of mental health provision (relies on third sector) – inc. tailored / appropriate approach”

“Lack of information to accessing services”

Below is a summary of responses by theme to Question 2: 'Integration takes place locally' is a well-known expression in Germany. What does this expression mean to you and in the context of New Scots integration?

Method of gathering information

Facilitators were present at each table to facilitate dialogue, to help record responses and guide conversations according to specific questions. These were identified as relevant by conference organisers based on previous communications with the projects present at the table.

These questions were:

- How can local communities adapt to promote integration?
- What should local communities know when welcoming New Scots?
- In what ways do communities change through integration?
- How can the next strategy help enact multi-directional integration?
- How far does 'local' stretch?
- What organisations and places are included in the 'local'?

Responses were recorded by groups participants and table facilitators, by writing them on flipchart sheets and post-it notes. 150 responses were then collected, entered into an excel document and coded according to the following main areas of thematic focus:

- Governance
- Staffing
- Communication
- Employability
- Language / interpreters
- Housing / accommodation
- Mental health
- Skills / recognition
- Cultural awareness
- Events
- Funding
- Digital / online
- Information
- Networking

Key themes observed

Key themes recurred in people's discussions of the challenges to their work of integration. These are discussed below, starting with those more frequently brought up.

It is important to note that some responses fell under multiple thematic areas, with particular crossover between language, education, cultural awareness and communication.

Communication

24 responses were directly related to communication and showed a multifaceted interpretation of this word. Responses indicated a lack of communication from agencies with local communities:

"There needs to be more communication with local groups and communities. Joined up services and integrating local groups and communities helps with integration"

There is also a need for communication to happen between different groups and organisation at this local level:

"Organisations cooperating across the community"

Communication was described as needing to be a two-way process, much like the two-way understanding of integration in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy:

"Should be two-way - not expecting New Scots to change to local ways of doing things only"

It was seen as an essential element to integration at a local level, facilitating *"people coming together around a demanding common task."*

Closely linked were the responses related to language. This was understood to be essential to integration at all levels:

"Language is key"

A lack of interpreting services, and more in general the problems posed by language barriers, hinders integration and access to services:

"Lack of language support / interpreters in specific languages (e.g. Especially for health issues)"

Good communication leads to strengthened connections and helpful networking between actors at a local level, so that information is shared and used to support the work of integration:

"Introducing people to support networks, including own cultural, language, religious needs"

It is also important that information be given and shared in a timely way so that it can help find a

"Clear pathway - not retrospective"

Events

This thematic area linked 20 responses, indicating that events are a key element in facilitating integration taking place at a local community level:

“Local people get involved when it’s in their community”

“Creating spaces to meet each other”

“Creating opportunities to know each other – events”

“Everyday dignified integration is in communities”

“Centered on an interest (e.g. music) rather than delivering to a certain group”

“Projects including Scots as well as New Scots - breaking down barriers”

Events are also useful to strengthen relationships and knowledge exchange between organisations working to support new Scots integration:

“Highlight, celebrate partnership working”

Cultural awareness

Cultural awareness was a thematic area directly relevant to 19 responses and closely connected to many other points. It is an element without which integration at a local

level cannot be successful. Cultural awareness helps address challenges linked to racism and also helps to strengthen local communities by valuing their diversity.

“Recognising culture people have and values”

“Explore diversity within Communities”

“What is local understanding of culture?”

Cultural awareness also support the understanding of integration as a process which happens along many directions – as something that involves a variety of actors in communities which themselves change and take different directions.

“Multi-directional integration”

“Communities are not monolithic”



Governance

16 responses highlighted various aspects surrounding governance, with others closely linked to these aspects. Good local governance is needed for integration to happen sustainably. This involves collaboration and open communication:

“Collaboration to reduce duplication - quality over quantity”

“Organisations cooperating across the community”

Local communities need to be involved in policy making decisions, properly consulted in a way that is not top-down:

“Being involved in POLICY MAKING”

“Government top-down decisions don’t work for all - need intersection”

“Imposed integration - lack of local consultation”

“Top (SG etc.) down - Information and Communication”

Staffing issues recurred as a barrier to good governance and to the success of integration work. This is closely related to challenging funding systems. As a result, local people and groups have to fill the gaps and provide services often on a voluntary basis:

“Local groups have to fill gaps”

“Integration doesn’t happen in SRC office, happens in faith communities, community centres - how do we resource and promote right mindset?”

Housing / accommodation

The accommodation where New Scots are placed has a huge impact on how integration unfolds at a local community level. Temporary, hotel and cruise ship accommodation do not help create networks and relationships with receiving communities:

“Are we enabling people to play part in society? If in temporary accommodation, you’re waiting for the change to happen. Don’t set roots until change happens - in limbo.”

“Hotels, ships, detention centres - not good for integration”

“Hotels, cruise ships etc. are isolating”

Skills / recognition and employability

If New Scots are not allowed to work, and if it is difficult for their skills to be recognised, then they will not be able to fully participate in their new communities. These barriers to employability also affect self-esteem, and lead to poor mental health, which in turn prevents full participation in local activities.

“Should listen to New Scots - recognise skills, life experience - not assume”

“Recognise the individual - listen to the voices; local connections; skills people have could be matched better to where they are needed and supported into role based on skills and passion”

“Work and opportunities - to be part of the life of your communities”



Below is a summary of responses by theme to Question 3: We are planning for engagement to take place to inform the development of the third New Scots strategy. What would help you and your community to participate in this engagement?

Method of gathering information

Event based engagement was cited as key method either as separate events organised by communities, or building on existing activity / services such as ESOL lessons and community councils, or organising events for New Scots to attend in person or online:

“Enable refugees to run own event with focus on their own things (e.g. share culture) - as a community event”

“Town Hall events across all Las”

“Organising meetings at their premises”

“Another event like this conference for communities, could happen across Scotland”

Several cited mixed methods to give different opportunities for people to engage.

“Multi-model events, in-person / online; individual and in groups.”

“Give people different ways to engage - survey; go into community groups; run sessions like this; provide costs/recognition/incentive for people / organisations to run sessions.”

Funding

Delegates stated that this work has to be properly resourced including funding for community groups and consideration that time and expertise of those participating is compensated.

“Investment - cost given for community to do a consultation - allow each community to do own consultation”

“Participants engagement is valued i.e. reimbursed”

Barriers to participation

Childcare, transport costs and timing of events were all cited as potential issues that need to be resolved.

“INCLUSION (costs) - giving the practical support to ALLOW refugees & asylum seekers to get involved - childcare, travel costs.”

And the need for capacity and confidence building amongst refugees to give them skills, ability and confidence to speak about their experiences.

Ensuring geographical and population reach

Ensuring that the widest involvement by geography and different New Scots populations as well as the wider community was fully considered in planning was cited by a number of delegates.

“Mapping work is key”

“Map the groups across Scotland and ensure that they are being consulted”

“[...] all demographics are covered when co-producing”

“Go into hotels and have an open conversation – fear of authorities, fear of repercussions.”

“Go to places that are not as welcoming – communities, some people left out, could be won over”

“Consulting with others who wouldn't welcome refugees normally - what is your perspective?”

“Important that already engagement at local level so use what's there”

“Engage with Faith Groups as lots of links to Refugees / Asylum Seekers”

Some delegates stated the importance of ensuring particular equality populations were involved.

“More young people involved - more honest”

“Focus group work such as Women Only sessions”

“Reaching [people with] no-status”

Safe spaces and trauma informed approaches

Several delegates raised the importance that events were safe spaces and that care was given before, during and after events for participants.

“Support of refugees to participate not just at event but prep / post (trauma informed safe space)”

“How might we ensure refugees know this won't ‘get back’ to Home Office?”

“Offer follow-up support even months after trauma”

Consultation design

Ensuring that the widest involvement by geography and Some described exiting methods that could be adopted:

“Scottish Government had model of Fairer Scotland community consultation”

Several delegates raised the importance of New Scots being involved in the design of the engagement activity.

A few delegates noted that the scope of what was being consulted upon had to be clear.

“Manage expectations of what is within scope of change.”

“How to engage with UK Government - need to ‘test’ parameters of legislation.”

And that sufficient time, resource and capacity had to be given to the process.

“Lead in time - 3-6 months (from hearing have funds).”

Involvement of actors in the consultation process

Ensuring that the widest involvement by geography and Several suggested that those involved in the process had to properly equipped with knowledge.

“Provide training to civil servants e.g. and asylum seeker vs refugee”

“Ensuring government officials coming to engage know how to support the group they are consulting.”

Some suggested that engagement sessions could involve politicians.

“Need for higher representatives to be present in the conversation from Westminster / Home Office”

Language

Ensuring access to interpreters was commonly raised as was ensuring that language used in all communications was accessible – avoiding use of acronyms and policy-level language; using alternative means beyond written communication and translating material.

“Use friendly language (simple) and avoid acronyms”

“Questions need to be direct and easy to understand e.g. ‘How’s life going? What do you think of the future?’”

“Information to be translated and simplified. Other formats - video; audio; pictures to share on WhatsApp, TikTok”

“Think about complexity of documents - not requiring people to read in depth policy documents”

“Priority in people understanding strategy and why their participation is necessary. How does it impact people’s lives?”

Feedback and transparency

Many delegates stated the importance of transparency and that feedback had to be clear and that this should not be a one-off process.

“Share learning and ensure feedback is continuous and meaningful”



Summary of Feedback Data

Approximately 190 delegates from 71 different organisations attended the event.

All aspects of the conference were well received by delegates. 26 delegates gave written feedback. The speakers, research presentations, celebration of projects sessions were described as very informative or informative (92%-100%). 92% were very satisfied or satisfied with the table discussions.

“The event was very well organised. Thank you.”

“It was great to be able to these things in person again - good location.”

“An amazing day and superbly organised. Thank you very much for allowing me to take part.”

“I was so happy to be part of this nice event, our organisation appreciated what you doing for the new Scots and the refugees.”

“It was a successful event. Thank you so much for your contribution!”

“I would be good if future events could be somewhere like Stirling or Perth so that more people could travel there more easily from other parts of Scotland.”

“I like to say a big congratulations to Prof. Alison for job well done and to her staff – bravo.”



Organisations Attending

Africa Future	Faith in Community Scotland	Midlothian Council	Shared Futures
Al-Maktoum College of Higher Education / University of Dundee	Forth Valley Welcome	Moira Anderson Foundation	SOHTIS
AMIF UK Responsible Authority	Friends of Scottish Settlers (FOSS)	Music Broth	South Lanarkshire Council
Amma Birth Companions	Glasgow Afghan United	North Ayrshire Council	Stirling Council
Angus Council	Glasgow Clyde College	Open Aye	Supportive Communities
Argyll and Bute Council	Govan Community Project	Outside the Box	TCV The Conservation Volunteers
Barnardos	Govanhill Baths	Perth and Kinross Council	The Welcoming Association
British Red Cross	Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC)	Queen Margaret University	UNESCO RILA
City of Edinburgh Council	Inclusive Homework Club	Renfrewshire Council - West of Scotland UASC and Refugee Service	UNHCR
COSLA	Institute for Public Policy Research Scotland	Rosshall Academy, Glasgow City Council	University College of Applied Sciences
Central & West Integration Network (CWIN)	Interfaith Glasgow	Saheliya	University of Dundee
Department for Work & Pensions	IPPR	SAWA	University of Edinburgh
Dundee City Council	Islamic University of Gaza	ScotCen	University of Glasgow
Humanitarian Team	Jambo! Radio	Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees	VOICES Network -British Red Cross
East Dunbartonshire Council	Licketyspit	Scottish Government	West of Scotland Regional Equality Forum
Engage Renfrewshire	Licketyspit/Porridge & Play Cranhill hub	Scottish Refugee Council	Women's Support Project
Esolperth English Language Lessons	Maryhill Integration Network	ScrapAntics	Yemeni Scottish Foundation
	Mental Health Foundation	Serve2020	Youth Community Support Agency
		Sewing2gether All Nations	

Photography from the Day







