

# Home Office and Local Government Chief Executive Group Asylum accommodation and support

## Terms of Reference

### Role and purpose

Its aims are to:

- Provide joint oversight of the new arrangements for the accommodation of dispersed asylum seekers at a national level as part of the new Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC), and advice on wider dispersal and asylum issues
- Offer a clear and ongoing conduit for discussion at a senior officer level between national government and local government representatives, based on the arrangements outlined below and on jointly agreed principles
- Focus on improved engagement, joint working and understanding between central and local government over time at a national level to support more balanced and effective partnership relationships between councils, the Home Office and AASC providers locally and regionally to ensure the new contracts deliver a good service and statutory duties to support asylum seekers are fulfilled
- Have full access to any data and information necessary to support local government's role in asylum accommodation and support, subject to mutually agreed data protection, commercial and legal grounds
- To achieve joint objectives of better outcomes for asylum seekers and the communities in which they are placed, develop and deliver a joint programme of activity which seeks to achieve significant and tangible progress on:
  - reviewing dispersal strategically on a national basis, working towards a more equitable, place-based approach to Home Office schemes.
  - addressing pressures in particular parts of the country via a more equitable distribution of asylum seekers and a joint approach to clusters and concentrations,
  - developing a greater shared understanding of the impacts on and resource implications for councils and local partners of their role in throughout the asylum process across the UK
  - discussing contingency arrangements based on the principle of flexibility, transparency and collaboration
- Ensure that any actions on joint priorities made nationally are agreed jointly, with early notification provided of any intended actions or decisions allowing for comment and change, based on the principles of transparency, co-design and co-production

## Arrangements

- The Home Office and Local Government Chief Executive Group ('The Group') consists of Home Office officials and representation covering all of the English regions, Wales and Scotland, with Chief Executives nominations received via the Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships.
- The Group will meet quarterly, with meetings to held outside the meeting cycle by agreement if necessary.
- If the nominated regional representative cannot attend, s/he will secure another Chief Executive from the region to represent the region as a substitute for that meeting.
- Attendees at the group will report back to Chief Executives in their region and in turn identify and share issues from the region at a strategic level at meetings.
- The Group is co-chaired by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Home Office.
- The Group will meet during the transition to the commencement of the new Asylum Accommodation and Support Contracts (AASC), at which point the terms of reference to the Group will be subject to review in case its current focus needs to change.
- Discussion and actions by the Group will feed into advice to Ministers and the LGA's Asylum Refugee and Migration Task Group. Issues can escalated to this political level if necessary.
- The discussion at the meeting will be constructive, open, honest and therefore subject to 'Chatham House' rules
- It will be a forum for reports from and an escalation point for other engagement and governance structures when key issues arise, such as from the Regional Joint Partnership Boards and its work be informed by discussion at other engagement and governance structures. It will also inform and feedback on formal contract governance at the AIRE/AASC Strategic Review Management Group.

*December 2018*