RACE RELATIONS AND INTEGRATION

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Refugee Integration Strategy

Work will be ongoing on a wide range of actions, including those that will take longer to deliver

Key focus on:

- the development of resource hubs across council areas to provide support, advice and signposting for refugees and asylum seekers;
- Taking forward a skills and employment survey which seeks to know more about the skills, qualifications and employment experience of refugees and asylum seekers, including any barriers to employment;
- Ensuring regional immigration advice and information for asylum seekers and refugees; and
- Developing and enhancing communications.

Full Dispersal Funding

The estimated budget for 2025-26 is £3,656,250 and it is expected that TEO will receive £1.2million (subject to SPG agreement)

£1m for local councils

£200k for regional immigration advice

TEO will be speaking with Councils imminently regarding funding allocations and proposals.

MEDF

Funding for 31 organisations (1.098m p.a) extended into 25/26 to align with work to develop a new strategic approach to racial equality.

Work ongoing to look at beyond March 25

Funding for the Crisis
Fund 22-25 (182k p.a) has
also been committed for
25/26 and is delivered
through our Partnership
with British Red Cross.

Key work areas on race relations

Multi Agency Recovery Coordination Group

Development of New Strategic Approach to Racial Equality

Widened remit of the Strategic Planning Group and Tactical Delivery Group

Asylum Trends

- As per published Home Office statistics, at the end of June 2025, there were 2,535 supported asylum seekers here, of which:
 - 69% were based in Belfast;
 - 246 were accommodated in contingency hotels, across 4 Council areas (outside of Belfast);
 - 2,273 were living in initial or dispersal accommodation, across 7 Council areas (including Belfast); and
 - a further 16 were in receipt of subsistence support only.
- The total number at the end of June 2025 was similar to the number reported for the same point a year earlier however a 24% decrease from the peak at the end of June 2023 (3,348).
- 81% decrease in the total number of asylum seekers accommodated in contingency accommodation from the peak at the end of June 2023
- The most common nationalities among our supported asylum seeker population are Somalia (27%), followed by Syria (10%) and Eritrea (9%).