

Dear colleague,

The new Home Office and Local Government Chief Executive Group met for a preparatory meeting on 17 December at the LGA. Co-chaired by local government and the Home Office, it was agreed that the Group will look to achieve a new way working between local and central government and ultimately the new accommodation and support providers.

The Group will focus on four key areas, underpinned by a set of principles of joint working, and will deliver a set of key actions which focus on improving outcomes for asylum seekers and the communities in which they reside. The Group agreed to focus on key issues in asylum dispersal but with the ambition that the Group be an ongoing source of dialogue at a senior level on issues across asylum and resettlement across the UK.

The Group will meet quarterly with a focus on tangible outcomes, with members of the group to update local leaders on progress on the areas below:

1. Engagement and oversight
2. Data and information
3. Equity and influence
4. Funding

This will be underpinned by the terms of reference of the Group (attached) and key principles and priorities below which reflect the above:

Key Principles

- A commitment to a joint partnership for national oversight of asylum dispersal
- A commitment to data and information sharing on asylum dispersal
- A commitment to a fair and equitable asylum dispersal system in the UK. This will require redistribution across regions, an agreement to operate within the 1:200 cluster limit and an allocation process that is cognisant of local intelligence relating to deprivation and cohesion in particular
- A commitment to strengthen the role of local and regional partnerships in jointly delivering wider dispersal in their regions
- A recognition that redistribution will not be achieved on day one of the new contract but through a commitment to develop a steady pathway with set milestones
- A commitment to independently review the costs, pressures and social impact of asylum dispersal in the UK

Key priorities

To deliver for the next meeting

- a draft 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the Home Office and Local Government founded upon the principles of joint working outlined above early in the New Year, alongside key timelines for joint actions

- a scope for a jointly commissioned review into the costs, pressures and social impact of the asylum system across the UK
- how to achieve better information sharing between local authorities, the Home Office and contractors, building on the sharing of the signed contracts
- a joint definition of equity and oversight to inform the group's role both in oversight and supporting the redistribution of asylum dispersal across the UK
- further clarity on the links with providers, regional structures, governance and contract management arrangements, with nominations to be agreed by the Group to the latter

The notes from the meeting and a 'next steps' document setting out ambitions for future work is attached for further reference.

Please do contact Sally.Burlington@local.gov.uk, Head of Policy at the LGA if you have any queries or comments.

Yours sincerely etc.