

# ASYLUM CONTINGENCY HOTELS



Hayley Verrico



# Asylum Seeker Programme

- Hayley Verrico-Project Sponsor
- Anna Carey – Community Co-Ordinator – Weston College
- Kay Eccles – Head of Housing Solutions (supporting)
- Access to Home Office database
- Safeguarding Manager allocated to receive safeguarding concerns
- Safeguarding policies agreed
- Referral processes to Children’s services agreed
- Engaging with VANS and Partnership Services Co-Ordinator at Bristol Refugee & Asylum Seeker Partnership (BRASP) sixteen local organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers
- Visit to the premises conducted

# Overview

- 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022, the Home Office announced that all LA's will be expected to be asylum dispersal areas, this is in an attempt to have a fairer distribution of asylum seekers
- This programme is separate to the Ukrainian resettlement scheme and is purely for asylum seekers waiting for their asylum claim to be considered. The obligation arises from the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) and the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act
- Most have entered the UK in small boats and crafts and the sharp increase in crossings and the pandemic have led to 37,000 destitute migrants who are currently being accommodated in hotels. The increase has in part occurred because the pandemic prevented the Government from removing people from the UK
- LA's will not be expected to accommodate asylum seekers beyond 0.5% of their population, equating to one asylum seeker per 200 local residents
- Currently 400 asylum seekers being accommodated in North Somerset
- Meant to be a temporary measure, no information yet on how long they will operate
- No LA funding for the hotels, administration or services commissioned to support the asylum seekers
- Little grounds on which to object though councils have raised legal challenges-unsuccessful
- Concerns have been made to the home office

# North Somerset

## Overview

- The Home Office have commissioned 5 hotels, overflow accommodation also commissioned in WSM
- Request not to proactively advertise the use of the hotel
- Weekly meetings - AWP, mental health provider, Public Health, CCG, Safeguarding Lead, Environmental Health, Children's services, VCS
- Community Cohesion Group established
- Out of Hours and Police aware
- Ample communal indoor and outdoor space and shared dining areas, rooms for activities, private meetings
- Full board and culturally appropriate meals provided
- Asylum seekers can apply for an £8 week living expenses allowance
- Mobile phones can be provided for individual calls
- Registration with local GP's has been arranged, funded by CCG
- Translation services are provided by Clear Voice and Language Line

# North Somerset

## Overview

- Asylum seekers are not detained but security staff at the site 24/7
- Any person not returning to the hotel is the responsibility of the Home Office
- Legal advice to asylum seekers provided by Migrant Help
- No Recourse to Public Funding (Immigration Act 1972)
- Asylum seekers cannot seek paid employment
- Physical health, mental health problems including mental health safeguarding, care of a child, meeting care needs can be met
- Risk assessments completed by Home Office
- Age assessments completed during in processing but ability to challenge once accommodated in a hotel
- Disability assessments completed in processing
- Asylum seekers can request a move to a more suitable location (application to the Home Office)

# Weekly Multi Agency Partnership Meetings

- Safeguarding
- Minors/Children/Education
- Health concerns/outbreaks
- Security
- Health & Safety
- Community cohesion/CVS engagement
- Public Health Issues
- Availability of interpreters
- Cultural needs
- Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker Partnership (BRASP) engaging with VANS



# Priorities

- English language classes/activities
- Access to health care
- Age assessments/children's placements
- Isolation related to families/expectant mothers
- Mobilising voluntary & community sector
- Sourcing long term funding to for administration, other items including dentistry, transport, voluntary & community sector
- Managing communications with members of the public
- Understand and manage any potential Public Health Issues
- Sourcing dispersal accommodation approx 150 housing units