



COSLA Migration, Population & Diversity Team: Business Plan 2024/25

COSLA (the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities) is a membership organisation that represents the interests of local authorities in Scotland. COSLA's Migration, Population and Diversity (MPD) Team pursues a varied and wide-ranging agenda to address key issues relating to migration and ethnic minority groups in Scotland. The team has responsibility for a broad range of policy issues including work relating to asylum seekers, refugees and current resettlement programmes, the UK Immigration system, population and demographic change and Gypsy/Traveller communities in Scotland. In addition, the team hosts Scotland's Strategic Migration Partnership (SMP), a function funded by the Home Office to provide coordination across the UK's various humanitarian programmes.

More details about our work can be found on our team website at <http://www.migrationscotland.org.uk>. This has recently been updated and relaunched as a means of providing more accessible information on our policy work, as well as various resources for partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors who support migrants in Scotland. We are also on X at [@migrationscot](https://twitter.com/migrationscot).

Governance and oversight of our work is provided by means of [COSLA's political structures](#). These consist of Convention, Leaders' Meetings and Policy Boards and ensure that our activities are directed by the priorities of our member councils. Convention provides strategic oversight to the work of the organisation and consists of representatives from all member councils and political groups represented within Scottish Local Government. Leaders is COSLA's main decision-making body comprising the Leaders of each of our 32 member councils. It meets at least eight times per year. There are four thematic Policy Boards composed of elected members from every member council. These allow the core work of COSLA to be progressed through policy debate and exploration and each meets six times per year.

This business plan sets out our agreed outcomes, objectives and activities for 2024/25. The team is in receipt of funding from the Home Office, DLUHC, the Scottish Government and the European Commission to deliver on this work.

COSLA MPD Team Outcomes for 2024/25

The work of the MPD Team is underpinned by the overarching vision and priorities of COSLA as set out in the [COSLA Plan 2022 – 2027](#). The role of COSLA is to help councils build better and more equal local communities, and to do that we seek to empower local decision making and enable councils to do what works locally. More specifically, the Plan has a focus on supporting the most vulnerable in our communities by: driving the system changes needed to realise the human rights of all those living in our communities; proactively shaping and delivering programmes which support people who are seeking sanctuary in the UK; and working to address the risks of exclusion and destitution faced by migrants.

We have also taken into account the [National Performance Framework \(NPF\)](#), reflecting COSLA's ongoing commitment to work with Scottish Government and other partners towards delivering on agreed national outcomes. We seek to hold an overview of the issues affecting the most vulnerable communities and liaise across other COSLA teams to ensure consideration and inclusion in all relevant policy areas.

To that end, the outcomes that we are working towards in 2024/25 are as follows:

- 1. We are influencing policy and legislation relating to migration and demographic change**
- 2. We are proactively shaping and delivering programmes which support people who are seeking sanctuary in the UK**
- 3. We are working to address the risks of exclusion, exploitation and destitution faced by migrants**
- 4. We are supporting and driving system changes that realise the rights of migrants and minority ethnic communities**

Outcome 1: We are influencing policy and legislation relating to migration and demographic change

Policy Theme	Objective	Activity
UK and Scottish Policy and Legislation	There is political and strategic oversight of programmes (Outcomes 2-4) and emerging migration policy issues within the Scottish context.	Papers taken through COSLA's political structures (Convention, Leaders, and Boards) as a means of keeping Local Government politicians apprised of key migration issues and allowing them to develop appropriate evidence-based policy positions, which will be fed back to UK and Scottish Government. Appropriate governance arrangements are established and maintained with Scottish and UK Government's, and key programme partners, to ensure the interests of local government in Scotland are represented across current programmes (Outcomes 2-4).
	Agencies are able to work together effectively in order to address challenges and maximise opportunities in relation to migration	Short life working groups / troubleshooting meetings set up to tackle emerging issues on an ad hoc basis to ensure issues are dealt with quickly and efficiently by relevant partners and other experts
	The interests of Scottish Local Government in terms of migration are represented in policy development at a UK and Scottish Government level	Ensure political engagement between UK Government, Scottish Government and COSLA on reserved/devolved approaches to migration, through regular political and ministerial meetings
		Work closely with officers in Scottish Government and UK Government to consider/align the strategic policy implications of changes and pending changes in immigration policy and legislation (with a particular focus on the impacts of the Illegal Migration Act 2023 on local authorities).
	Immigration policy is increasingly evidence based and reflects particular Scottish needs; the UK and Scottish Government recognise the different impacts of migration in particular localities / regions / nations and develop policy accordingly	Provide committee evidence, briefings and other approaches that highlight the impact of the immigration system on Scottish Local Government
		Ensure involvement in any wider engagement events relating to the immigration system and use these opportunities to clearly set out the implications for Scottish Local Government
		Work with local authorities and wider stakeholders to explore ways to mitigate the impact of end of free movement and the introduction of the new points-based immigration system.

		Work closely with Scottish Government and the Expert Advisory Group on Migration to substantiate some of Scotland's key positions regarding a post-Brexit immigration system and explore potential flexibility within the system, such as a rural migration pilot.
		Ensure that Scottish local authorities' views are collated and articulated in UK Government and Scottish Government consultation processes (e.g. Migration Advisory Committee inquiries, consultation responses, roundtables, etc.) and are reflected in subsequent policy recommendations
		Collaborate with academic colleagues to evidence the economic, social and cultural impacts of immigration policy and disseminate as appropriate.
		Work with National Records of Scotland (NRS) and other partners to improve data and information on migration, and ensure good dissemination
Demography	Local authorities have a more strategic and cohesive response to addressing their demographic challenges, have a coherent voice on how population change affects them, and understand how to respond to population change.	<p>Work with Scottish Government and partners to support the delivery of relevant sections of the Population Strategy 'A Scotland for the Future: The opportunities and challenges of Scotland's changing population'.</p> <p>Support COSLA's political input into the decisions of the Population Ministerial Task Force</p> <p>Support the aim of the Population Ministerial Task Force through our membership of the Population and Migration Programme Board, and the Population Roundtable</p> <p>Work with individual local authorities (or groups of local authorities) to understand and articulate the impact population change is having for them. Support Local Government to identify solutions, share best practice and ensure a Local Government voice is fed in to all the relevant policy making structures.</p> <p>Coordinate Local Authority involvement in the Scottish Government Rural Attraction Pilot, Addressing Depopulation Action Plan, work on population growth, and other projects as shall arise.</p>

	Local authorities and their partners have a better understanding of how their population is constituted and are able to respond accordingly	Act as a convening and coordinating body to (i) help councils articulate their population journeys, (ii) spot commonalities and distinctions between councils, (iii) link councils' experiences to wider Scotland-wide policies and trends, and (iv) act as a go-between with key stakeholders (e.g., NRS, academia, etc.)
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Outcome 2: We are proactively shaping and delivering programmes which support people who are seeking sanctuary in the UK

Policy Theme	Objective	Activity
Humanitarian Protection Response: Relocation and Resettlement	Local authorities are well prepared to support the reception and ongoing integration of those resettled/relocated through the UK's humanitarian protection programmes, including UKRS, Afghan relocation and resettlement schemes, Ukraine relocation schemes and other humanitarian crises as they emerge.	Ongoing support of local authorities participating in resettlement and relocation programmes as required by both the programmes themselves and the councils involved
		Supporting local authorities to understand the different rights and entitlements under each resettlement and relocation scheme whilst encouraging parity across programmes by supporting arrivals under the principles of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy
		Supporting local authorities in their negotiations and commitments around refugee resettlement/relocation with Home Office, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Scottish Government and other agencies as required
		Where relevant, positively influence matching of cases to suitable potential resettlement areas with cognisance to local service provision and capacity as well as refugee need
		Enhancing the resilience and expertise across local authorities and COSLAs MPD team through regular learning and training opportunities to ensure sufficient capacity and support is available as and when crisis emerge
	All partners involved in resettlement are well placed to support the ongoing integration of people offered protection through the UK's resettlement/relocation schemes	Encourage shared learning and practice across areas and programmes, utilising appropriate methods and forums, e.g. through hosting online Knowledge Hubs; chairing and administering lead officers' meetings; and arranging meetings on key issues
		Develop more resources and evidence for officers and partners about the role of local authorities in delivering humanitarian protection programmes and facilitating refugee integration
	Local Government priorities are represented in the development of future policy on resettlement and relocation schemes	Work with the UK and Scottish Governments to influence the design of future humanitarian protection programmes to ensure they meet the needs of local authorities and their communities and achieve parity under the principles of New Scots

		Continue to develop and shape policy through participation in research, evidence gathering and sharing good practice and expertise
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Dispersal and Support	Local authorities are well placed to support the reception and ongoing integration of UASC dispersed to Scotland or any spontaneous arrivals	Support local authorities participating in mandated National Transfer Scheme (NTS) rota as required by the UK Government. This includes administration of the rota, liaising with the LAs and the UK Government and managing relationship with partner agencies.
		Supporting local authorities in developing local structures and building capacity by managing online forums and chairing and administering the UASC Working Group meetings
		Continue to lobby on behalf of local authorities with the Home Office and Scottish Government to secure the funding required to support UASC and care leavers appropriately
	All partners involved in UASC support are well placed to contribute to the ongoing support and integration of UASC	Develop relationships with partners across Scotland to complement the work of local authorities to support UASC appropriately to meet their needs in different communities
	Local Government priorities are represented in the policy development of future programmes for UASC	Work with the UK and Scottish Government to influence the design of policies affecting UASC and support to ensure it meets the needs of local authorities and local communities
Asylum Dispersal	Work with local authorities and other statutory services and partners in Scotland to manage the impacts of dispersal on asylum seekers and local communities	Meaningful discussion and scrutiny of placement of asylum seekers takes place with partners, and any change is delivered in a manner that meets the needs of asylum seekers, local communities and the relevant stakeholder agencies
		Participate in and represent the needs of Local Government in the delivery structures for the AASC and AIRE contracts through political representation on the LGA Members Task Group

		Participate in and represent the needs of Local Government in the revised structures relating to the delivery of the AASC and AIRE contracts by supporting and providing officer representation on the Asylum and Resettlement Council Senior Engagement Group (ARCSEG) and any of its associated working groups as required, on the Asylum and Refugee Partnership Board, which oversees Asylum Full Dispersal, and the Delivery and Procurement Group, and any additional structures that are established, taking into consideration the impact on asylum seekers, local services and communities.
		Work with the Home Office, local authorities and the asylum accommodation providers to ensure that there is an appropriate response in relation to asylum seekers who have had an unsuccessful asylum claim and are no longer entitled to Home Office supported accommodation
	The future of asylum dispersal to Scotland is effectively planned and resourced	Through the ARCSEG and associated working groups, ensure that place-based approaches to the delivery of asylum dispersal are developed which equip local authorities with the necessary funding, data and governance structures to enable them to participate in the widening of dispersal
		Work with the Home Office, Accommodation Provider, Scottish Government, local authorities and other partners to effectively plan the use of contingency hotels and full dispersal in Scotland
		Support other statutory services and key agencies to have a clear understanding of the impact that dispersal is having on services and communities in order that they are able to plan services and respond accordingly
Ukraine	Local authorities are well prepared to support the reception and resettlement of Ukraine Displaced Persons in Scotland	Work with Scottish Government, local authorities, and professional associations to ensure political, strategic, and senior leadership support of Scottish Super Sponsor Scheme governance arrangements established to deliver the programme, Programme Board, Delivery Board and Stakeholder Reference Group.
		Work with UK Government, Scottish Government, Local Authorities and wider partners to support the development and implementation of operational guidance, strategy and policy re Homes for Ukraine and Scottish Super Sponsor schemes.
		Support local authorities to navigate a volatile and rapidly changing situation with reports, briefings and responses, for example, on finance/funding, housing/homelessness, welcome accommodation issues, matching processes, visa issues, etc.
		Support the operational viability of the Warm Scottish Welcome App and ensure the eco system meets the key priorities agreed at Delivery Board (security, safeguarding and accuracy of data).

		<p>Support SG Matching Support Team to roll out the Digital Matching Tool to local authorities. Ensure ongoing improvement of safeguarding processes and that issues are escalated via liaison with local authorities, Scottish Government and UK Government, and through the Ukraine Safeguarding Strategy Group.</p>
		<p>Participate in UK Government Homes for meetings on Ukraine (HfU) Operational and Safeguarding Working Group to support -Ukraine Schemes in Scotland and escalate any issues emerging.</p>
		<p>Contributing to the transition of the Ukraine Schemes in Scotland from an emergency response to a business as usual approach, taking into account wider migration, population and resettlement objectives of the third New Scots Strategy.</p>

Outcome 3: We are working to address the risks of exclusion, exploitation and destitution faced by migrants

Policy Theme	Objective	Activity
Tackling Migrant Destitution	Local Government provides leadership to drive the delivery of the Ending Destitution Together Strategy	Oversight of key governance arrangements with strategic partners to ensure ongoing delivery of actions within the Ending Destitution Together programme including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing the expert advisory group to ensure inclusion of lived, expert and practitioner experience in the review of the strategy; • establishing joint political oversight arrangements between COSLA and Scottish Government to review progress and emerging policy priorities; and • continuing the delivery leads forum to review progress towards actions in the strategy
		Working with Scottish Government on a review of the EDT strategy for 2024/25, secretariat support for working groups under governance arrangements and other relevant structures/activity as they arise.
		Joint production of annual progress reports on the Ending Destitution Together Strategy
		Working with third sector partners and stakeholders, including the Fair Way Scotland collective, to support implementation of the Ending Homelessness Together strategy and scope future pathways out of rough sleeping for people with NRPF.
		Working in partnership with legal experts including JustRight Scotland and IOM on commissioning, designing and delivering resources and training for local authority staff on migrants' rights and entitlements and local authority duties.
	Local authorities and COSLA are working in partnership to deliver actions in the Ending Destitution Strategy.	Reviewing evidence, progress and policy changes across the strategy to inform priorities for Local Government beyond 2024 in supporting destitute migrants.
		Management and oversight of the national NRPF Scotland Network for councils to support local authority practice, development and collaboration.
	Local authorities understand the implications of NRPF rules and insecure immigration status for people's rights and entitlements and their role in supporting people at risk of destitution	Manage, review and update COSLA's Migrants' Rights and Entitlements National Guidance for councils.
		Production and ongoing review of legacy resources for councils including a webinar on NRPF and routes of local authority support to reflect changing legislative landscape.
		Ongoing management and oversight of the IOM partnership to ensure that immigration advice remains accessible to vulnerable people with NRPF and LA officers across Scotland.

		Collating data and evidence on the scale and complexity of migrant destitution via COSLA NRPF survey to better understand the scale and complexity of migrant destitution across Scotland and influence policy and practice in this area.
		Supporting partnership actions on shared priorities with Scottish Government including planned work to improve public health outcomes for people with NRPF; developing access to crisis support including financial grants; supporting housing outcomes for women and children experiencing domestic abuse.
	Local Government is responding to and proactively influencing NRPF policy at a UK level	Engagement with the Home Office NRPF UK Stakeholder forum and work with Home Office Local Partnership Manager and Homelessness Teams
		Monitoring national policy developments and analysing impact on local authorities and migrants living in Scotland including the Nationality and Borders Act and the Illegal Migration Act
		Building engagement with UK partners including Local Government Association, Welsh Local Government Association and Greater London Authority to increase impact and influence.
Human Trafficking and Exploitation NOTE: This area of work is currently unfunded and therefore subject to revision	Work with Scottish Government, UK Government and key partners to support the role of local authorities in tackling trafficking and exploitation	Chair Action Area One (Identify victims and support them to safety and recovery) of Scotland's Trafficking and Exploitation Strategy Implementation Group and ensure the Local Government voice is embedded across all other Action Areas and strategic groups
		Maintain strategic alignment with specific work undertaken across the strategy's Action Areas, and enable partnership working and knowledge sharing with and between local authorities and key partners, including the Home Office and Police Scotland
		Ensure all partners involved in supporting child victims of trafficking are well placed and understand their roles and responsibilities. Support the Local Government response to child victims of trafficking within Child Protection procedures.
		Work with Glasgow City Council and the Home Office to maximise usefulness of outcome of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Devolution pilot
		Support local authorities to understand their duties, responsibilities and opportunities to tackle human trafficking and exploitation, including through the rollout of the Duty to Notify and Modern Slavery Statement

		Support the inclusions of local government's perspective in a refreshed national strategy, as shall arise.
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Outcome 4: We are supporting and driving system changes that realise the rights of migrants and minority ethnic communities

Policy Theme	Objective	Activity
Forced Migrants Integration	A third New Scots Strategy is in place reflecting the integration needs of refugees, displaced persons and people seeking asylum and the communities they are living in	Participation in the planning, development and writing of New Scots 3 and establishment of ongoing governance arrangements of the strategy.
		Local Government voice and experience of working with refugees, asylum seekers, displaced people and UASCs on integration is reflected in New Scots 3
		Support local authorities to provide opportunities to ensure that those with lived experience can contribute to the development and oversight of New Scots 3
	Local authorities and key partners are supported to ensure effective integration of refugees, displaced persons and people seeking asylum into local communities	Support the participation of local authorities and partners from across Scotland in the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy implementation
		Support the partnership and implementation framework of New Scots, participating in the New Scots governance structures, including ensuring the participation of the COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson in the Leadership Board
		Continue to develop and shape policy, research on integration and share best practice and expertise across local authorities and national and international partners
	Local Government supports innovation and good practice in integration	Working with local authorities to ensure innovation and learning from the delivery of resettlement and displaced persons programmes, placements of UASC and asylum seekers and integration work is captured and accessible to a wide variety of partners
	The provision of ESOL is better resourced and coordinated	Working with Scottish Government and New Scots partners, support local authorities to build capacity, commission and deliver formal and informal ESOL to refugees, displaced persons and people seeking asylum and capture and share best practice to ensure provision meets longer term integration, employment and self-sufficiency needs

		<p>Work with Scottish Government and New Scots partners to ensure that the learning from the implementation of the ESOL Strategy is reflected in the review of the CLD Strategy and the outcomes of this reflects the needs of refugees, , displaced persons and people seeking asylum</p>
		<p>Continue to engage with UK and Scottish Government to ensure any humanitarian protection programmes have appropriate ESOL funding and support built into any funding tariffs for LAs</p>
		<p>Work with Scottish Government and stakeholders to ensure that the funding model for ESOL adequately meets the needs of local authorities and learners</p>
Migrant Integration	Local authorities and key partners are supported to ensure migrants feel welcome, can participate in their local communities, and can access services	<p>Work with academic colleagues on the <i>EU Youth Transitions in the UK</i> research project. The project will document and understand EU migrant youth inequalities in education, work and civic life in the UK.</p>
Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Migration	The BN(O) visa route is managed successfully for both local authorities and Hongkongers, such that it is seen as a template for future integration	<p>Information and resources are developed and disseminated to local authorities, through the Welcome Hub and other outreach activity, to inform and update them on developments through the new visa route. Scottish Local Government's voice is effectively represented on decision-making groups including effective liaison with UK and Scottish Government.</p>
		<p>Use the learning and experience garnered from the Hong Kong cohort to better understand migrant destitution, build systems to mitigate it, and deepen our understanding of how migrants can contribute to the prosperity of Scotland's communities</p>
		<p>Building on our understanding of the cohort, through data analysis and community engagement, we will contribute to future integration work in an evidence-based manner</p>
		<p>Coordinating and commissioning projects and support to build Local Authority capacity and ensure Hongkongers are supported upon arrival.</p>
EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)	EEA citizens living in Scotland are valued and their right to settled status is realised	<p>Continue our work with the Home Office, Scottish Government and local authorities to identify and support vulnerable people to make late applications to the EU Settlement Scheme.</p>
		<p>Continue to work with IOM to provide assistance to local authorities supporting vulnerable people through late EUSS applications.</p>

		Work with International Monitoring Authority for the Citizens' Rights Agreements (IMA), UKG, SG, IOM and LAs to support IMA's call for evidence and survey reports.
Gypsy/Travellers	Local Government drives national leadership on tackling inequalities and embedding the rights of Gypsy/Travellers	Co-manage the development and delivery of the national action plan refresh 2024/2026 and support political governance.
		Support Gypsy/Traveller communities' participation in the implementation / delivery of the action plan refresh through engagement exercises and G/T Lead Officers' Group.
	Local Government understands the rights, entitlements and cultural needs of Gypsy/Traveller communities and works to tackle racism and discrimination	Develop and maintain resources to support elected members to understand and champion Gypsy/Traveller culture, the policy and legislative frameworks governing their rights, and relevant equality issues through hosting Local Leaders Network and developing new online resources.
	COSLA works with Scottish Government and partners to improve outcomes for Gypsy/Traveller communities and embed rights and entitlements within local services.	Work on priority actions to deliver more and better culturally appropriate accommodation for example by supporting evaluation and learning from the £20m project, contributing to future accommodation funding bids, act on the recommendations generated from the Negotiated Stopping Pilot, Support the design and delivery of policies to ensure inclusion and recognition of Gypsy/Travellers needs.