

Strategic Plan

2020—
2023

scottish
refugee
council



Welcome

Welcome to Scottish Refugee Council's Strategic Plan for 2020 to 2023. This plan sets out our vision for Scotland as a place where all people seeking refugee protection are welcome, have their rights and dignity respected and are able to achieve their full potential as they rebuild their lives here.

This plan describes our strategic priorities over the next three years and what we will do to achieve these. Our plan is influenced by the external context in which we work, the challenges and opportunities this context presents and the views of our many valued partners and those we serve in our work.

There will be many challenges and uncertainties for people seeking protection in Scotland over the next three years. But at Scottish Refugee Council we undertake to meet these challenges with resilience, courage, creativity and compassion.

In this plan we use the term 'refugee' to include people and their dependents who:

- Seek asylum
- Are recognised as refugees under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention
- Are granted protection or leave to remain
- Are resettled refugees
- Are programme evacuees



Our values and mission

Our vision is for a Scotland in which all people seeking refugee protection are welcome. We work to build a society where people of all ages are protected, find safety and support, have their human rights and dignity respected and are able to achieve their full potential.

Our values

Respect and dignity

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with respect, dignity and empathy. We respect our people and invest in our staff and volunteers to help them realise their potential.

Empowering and enabling

We value people's lived experiences and we seek to empower people to access and exercise their rights, and enable them to participate fully in their new homes and communities.

Courageous and resilient

We are an independent charity committed to upholding refugees' human rights. We are courageous and resilient when advocating for refugee rights.

Creative and transparent

We aim for excellence and best quality in everything we do, valuing transparency, creativity, participation and learning.

What people say

To help us define our priorities for the next three years, we spoke to and listened to refugee community organisations and community leaders across Scotland, as well as funders, policy-makers and other refugee sector charities. Their insights and responses helped shape this plan.

People told us:

“Scottish Refugee Council is a welcoming organisation which is trusted by refugee communities”

“Scottish Refugee Council provides good services to refugees and involves them in their work”

“Scottish Refugee Council could work more with communities outside Glasgow”

“Involve refugee communities more actively in your decision making and advocacy”

“Understand people's diversity, for example the different needs of resettled or destitute refugees and asylum seekers and LGBTI people”

“Work more with the private sector”

“We want access to education (learning English, access to FE and HE courses, education about rights and the asylum system)”

“We want to live in good quality and secure housing”

“We want to improve our employability or set up businesses”

“The asylum system needs to be based on values of dignity and respect”

“We want refugee community organisations to feel welcomed and supported”

“We want to have a voice in your work”

*We want to
have a voice
in your work*

*Understand
people's diversity*

*We want access
to education*

2020—2023 our priorities

People told us that what we have been doing over recent years is important, ambitious and must continue.

But there are some parts of our work where we will increase emphasis over the next 3 years:

- We will grow our role to support refugees and communities across Scotland and outwith Glasgow, based on learning from recent projects.
- We will increase the engagement of refugees in our work, including in leadership and governance roles, to ensure refugee experience is at the heart of everything we do.
- We will seek to build deeper partnerships with the private sector so that refugees have access to the labour market, are able to start businesses and use their skills to thrive in their new homes.
- We will focus on building the well-being of our people (staff and volunteers) especially promoting equality and diversity, and ensure our values are lived in all our work internally and externally.
- We will listen and make space to learn from refugees, our own experience, our partners and funders so we can continue to improve what we do and how we do it.



Our plan

Upholding rights, Influencing Policy and Collaboration.

Upholding Rights

We will provide services which empower people to further their rights and to achieve their ambitions. *We will:*

- Help all refugees access their rights
- Make sure separated unaccompanied children and young people are able to access their rights
- Help destitute asylum seekers get back onto the asylum support system
- Challenge any gaps in current support or service delivery for people seeking protection

Influencing Policy

We will champion the rights of refugees and advocate for fair and just policies and practice, making sure those seeking protection have a platform and are heard. *We will:*

- Improve the protection, welfare and integration of people seeking asylum
- Ensure refugee rights are not diminished
- Influence policymakers in Scotland and the UK to achieve positive change
- Improve the protection, welfare and integration of all refugees in Scotland



Collaboration

We will nurture relationships with public, private and community organisations for the greater benefit of the people we serve. **We will:**

- Support refugees to enter successful and meaningful employment and to realise their entrepreneurial talents
- Ensure refugees are welcomed and supported by knowledgeable and skilled communities
- Make sure communities are skilled and equipped to support refugees' welfare and integration
- Help refugee artists to express and share their skills and their work.
- Empower people with lived experience to have a voice and play a more active role in local decision making
- Ensure refugees are involved in all our work at all levels
- Share experiences and good practice and learn from others to continue to improve our work

Engaging Society

We will engage with the Scottish public to grow understanding, promote positive attitudes and build a welcoming environment for refugees in Scotland. **We will:**

- Support accurate reporting of refugee issues and normalising of refugee experiences in the media
- Grow understanding, promote positive attitudes and build a welcoming environment for refugees in Scotland
- Provide opportunities for supporters to take part in our work.

Robust and Healthy Organisation

We will:

- Support and develop staff, promote the well-being and dignity of our people and seek relevant organisational accreditation
- Make better use of new technology and continue to identify new ways of working
- Develop a culture of learning and evidence across the organisation
- Ensure governance, quality and compliance are robust
- Stabilise and diversify our income



The context we're working in

We live in increasingly uncertain times and this has an impact on our work.

Some of the issues affecting our choice of priorities include:

- Global growth in displacement worldwide. In 2018 70.8m people were forcibly displaced around the world, including 25.9m refugees.
- Ongoing dispersal of people seeking asylum to Glasgow, and continuing challenges in quality and consistency of support services. The future of the dispersal policy is unclear and there are serious issues with asylum accommodation.
- Covid-19. The pandemic is having a huge impact on how we deliver our work and on the wellbeing of the people we serve and support.
- Racism and structural inequality are built into the asylum system. As well as this, people tell us they experience racism in day-to-day life in Scotland.
- Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This scheme has been embraced by Scottish local authorities, with Syrian refugees now resettled and rebuilding their lives all across Scotland. The UK Government has announced its plans to resettle a further 5000 people annually post-2020.
- The Scottish Government's New Scots strategy is co-ordinating a cross-sector response to refugee integration. We are proud partners in the delivery of the strategy.
- Our political context is uncertain, with Brexit imminent and the potential for further constitutional change or a second Scottish independence referendum.
- Funding is insecure and like many charities, we largely rely on short-term project funding. There is increasing competition for resources, alongside increased demand for our services and expertise.



About us

Scottish Refugee Council – supporting refugees in Scotland since 1985.

We are an independent charity dedicated to supporting people in need of refugee protection.

The people we work with have fled horrific situations around the world and come from countries where conflict is rife and human rights abuses common. When people arrive in Scotland, a new journey begins. The UK's asylum system is tough and takes its toll on individuals and families. Settling into a foreign country and a whole new system can be extremely disorientating and challenging.

We are here for people at a difficult time in their lives.

Through our direct services we provide practical support, advice and a listening ear to help people rebuild their lives in a sustainable way. We work with communities and community groups to develop a collective voice and to help people settle and make new friends and connections. We speak out against an unjust asylum system and campaign for policy changes that make a positive difference to people's lives.

Our work to support people rebuilding their lives here unites us with a movement of people across Scotland and beyond who believe in the importance of solidarity with people forced to flee their homes.

We are proud to stand with people seeking protection and proud of the many ways Scotland's refugee communities have enriched Scottish culture and society.



Join us

Help us make Scotland a more welcoming place for people in need of protection.

Donate

To make a donation and help make a difference, visit:
www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/donate

Volunteer

You only need a few spare hours a week to make a difference. To find out more, email us at:
volunteering@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Fundraise

For more information about fundraising for Scottish Refugee Council or to talk over your ideas, email our Fundraising team at:
funding@scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk

Campaign

Visit: www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/working-for-change/campaigns-appeals/ to add your voice to our campaigns.

Membership

Become a member of Scottish Refugee Council and have a positive impact on refugee issues in Scotland. Not only can you support our work, you can have a say in what we do. Visit:
www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-member

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Scottish Refugee Council is an independent charity dedicated to providing support to people seeking sanctuary in Scotland.

We have been campaigning for refugee rights since 1985.

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