

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

TO: Social Work Committee	Subject: Immigration & Asylum Act, 1999
FROM: Jim Dickie Director of Social Work	
DATE OF COMMITTEE: 7th March, 2000	
REPORT AUTHOR: Kevin McGown, Travelling Persons Liaison Officer	
REF: JD/JN/KMcG/HS	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of the present position in relation to the Immigration & Asylum Act, 1999.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Immigration and Asylum Act, 1999 will take effect from 1st April, 2000. North Lanarkshire Council are members of the Scottish Consortium whose role is to manage the commissioning and provision of accommodation for asylum seekers dispersed to Scotland under the provisions of the Act and to develop substantial settlement arrangements for those whose application for asylum is approved and who remain in this country.

David Comley, Director of Housing, Glasgow City Council has agreed to lead the consortium

3. IMPLEMENTATION IN SCOTLAND - ISSUES

- 3.1 Discussions are ongoing between the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Scottish Executive (SE) regarding the implementation of the Act in Scotland. This has to be within the framework of the United Kingdom (UK) legislation. Latest indications from the Scottish Consortia are that the new dispersal arrangements may affect Scotland anytime from 1st April, 2000 onwards. However, little progress has been made in respect of other issues pertaining to the new regime, in particular:

- asylum seekers receiving vouchers instead of cash;
- from 1st April, 2000, Scottish Councils will be reimbursed by the Home Office (not the Scottish Executive as at present). The new asylum seekers support rate has still to be ratified by the Home Secretary and is expected to be at a lower rate than the previous one.

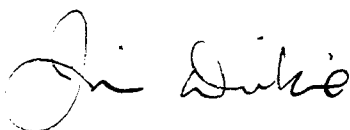
4. CURRENT POSITION IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE

- 4.1 At present there are fifteen asylum seekers in North Lanarkshire being sustained under Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act, 1968. Under the terms of the Special Grant for Asylum Seekers Assistance, North Lanarkshire Council can reclaim any payments made from the Scottish Executive. The level set for individual asylum seekers is currently £165.00 per week. All payments made by North Lanarkshire Council comply with these arrangements. All those receiving support before 1st April, 2000 will continue to be supported in the above way until their case is concluded or they are transferred to the new scheme.
- 4.2 At present interdepartmental discussions are taking place in relation to the provision of services for asylum seekers. North Lanarkshire Council, as yet, have not been advised of the number of asylum seekers they will be asked to take under the dispersal arrangements contained in the Act.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Committee is asked to -

- agree that this report should be remitted to the Housing & Property Services Committee for information,
- note the contents of this report.



**JIM DICKIE,
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WORK
17TH FEBRUARY, 2000.**

(For further information contact Kevin McGown, Travelling Persons Liaison Officer - Telephone 01698 332041)