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Governance and the Local Integration  
of Migrants and Europe's Refugees

# Gender and Displaced Migration Governance in Scotland

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## Executive Summary

1. Displacement – the condition experienced by people seeking asylum and refuge from persecution – is a gendered phenomenon. This means that gender norms and gendered systems play a role in determining who is vulnerable to displacement and how they are vulnerable. To treat displacement as a gendered phenomenon is to consider how gender norms impact the experiences of displaced people of all genders. However, it is recognised that people in categories outwith the gender norm, including women, trans, queer and non-binary people are especially vulnerable to conditions of displacement.
2. Integration – the process through which asylum seekers and refugees are supported by public and third sector providers to access services and opportunities related to social citizenship – is also a gendered condition. The gendering of integration begins at the stage at which a claim for asylum or refuge is lodged, determines access to services and support, and influences opportunities for education, employment and citizenship.
3. Despite gender informed approaches to policy and practice in Scotland, there is evidence that gender inequalities are insufficiently addressed across categories associated with the successful ‘integration’ of asylum seekers and refugees, including accommodation, language provision and labour market access. GLIMER findings are as follows:
4. Housing and Accommodation
  - a. The no-choice basis through which Dispersal housing is allocated leaves women and girls experiencing domestic sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) vulnerable to further abuse, or at risk of homelessness and exploitation should they leave.
  - b. The category of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) compounds the risk of homelessness and exploitation for displaced women as it restricts their access to women’s refuges.
  - c. Gendered perceptions of vulnerability impact the extent to which resources are available to support displaced men experiencing homelessness or destitution.
  - d. Housing administrators were sympathetic to but unfamiliar with the specific housing needs of displaced trans migrants.
  - e. ‘Clustering’ accommodation practices, used by housing practitioners to ensure that Dispersed, asylum seeking women are not isolated from others in their communities, inadvertently place women at risk of exploitation by organised groups who identify and target ‘clustered’ areas.
5. ESOL Provision
  - a. Gendered classroom dynamics may adversely impact refugee women’s opportunity to learn English. Refugee women’s groups reported that women were more likely to access, progress and feel safe in language classes if they had access to gender-segregated provision.
  - b. ESOL classes which covered issues related to women’s health, maternity and domestic lives were infrequent and under-resourced
  - c. The benefits of gender-segregated ESOL courses were disputed by ESOL providers, who cited capacity and resourcing barriers to gender-based ESOL. Some providers also argued against gender-segregated ESOL on ideological grounds.
  - d. Displaced women often face a ‘double’ childcare barrier to ESOL access



- e. Interpreting situations create potential for gendered exploitation and violence to which women are particularly vulnerable.
6. Labour Market
- a) Refugee women in employment are frequently under-employed, or placed in positions unlikely to lead to career progression
  - b) Women-specific employment services for displaced migrants in Scotland are almost non-existent and chronically under-resourced
  - c) Displaced women from cultures with conservative gender norms were likely to face double gendered barriers to the labour market: (1) from domestic environments and (2) from discriminatory employer attitudes
  - d) Despite stakeholders reporting a track record of refugee women setting up their own businesses, enterprise and entrepreneurship services are gender blind
7. Gendered approaches to integration services in Scotland exist on a spectrum: 'gender blind', gender-specialist and gender-mainstreamed. The extent to which gender is actively considered as part of service provision correlates to access, representation and safety.
- a. Gender-specialist and gender-mainstreamed approaches had a demonstrable track record of improving access to services, support and opportunities for displaced women
  - b. Calls for gender-mainstreamed approaches to housing, ESOL and employment were often too quickly dismissed by service providers and failed to consider the merits or reasons under-pinning the requests.
  - c. Under-resourcing for public and third sector organisations which provide services for displaced migrants is a barrier to gender-mainstreamed approaches.
  - d. Gender-mainstreamed approaches were only successful if they also considered the intersections of race and the legal status to displaced women's experiences in Scotland.
8. Though the Scottish Government has used the opportunities of devolution to develop a markedly more progressive policy approach to gender dynamics than that of the UK Government, (a) restrictions in the devolved/reserved architecture and (b) an absence of intersectional thinking on matters relating to displacement, race and gender has left gendered inequalities experienced by displaced migrants in Scotland under-addressed.
9. In the current political context, there is opportunity in Scotland to build on *New Scots* and create a distinctive gender-mainstreamed approach to 'integration' policy for asylum seekers and refugees.



## Findings and Recommendations Matrix

		Finding	Recommendation
Accommodation	1	<p>a) The no-choice basis through which Dispersal housing is allocated leaves women and girls experiencing domestic sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) vulnerable to further abuse, or at risk of homelessness and exploitation should they leave.</p> <p>b) The category of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) compounds the risk of homelessness and exploitation for displaced women as it restricts their access to women's refuges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity in Women's Refuges for homeless asylum seeking women, or displaced women with NRPF. Scottish Government to support collaborative work between anti-destitution networks and gender-equality organisations.</li> <li>• Ensure the work of the Scottish Government's HARSAG group includes specialist consideration of the intersections of gender, displaced migration and NRPF.</li> <li>• Investigate and clarify the full extent of Local Authorities' powers under the devolved framework to offer emergency accommodation to displaced migrants at risk of SGBV. Consider how the work of HARSAG can contribute to this.</li> </ul>
	2	'Clustering' accommodation practices, used by housing practitioners to ensure that Dispersed, asylum seeking women are not isolated from others in their communities, may inadvertently place women at risk of exploitation by organised groups who identify and target 'clustered' areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Home Office/ Mears/ Migrant Help to track and act upon reports of targeted, housing-based exploitation through developing partnerships between local housing administrators and displaced women's groups</li> </ul>
ESOL Provision	3	<p>a) Gendered classroom dynamics may adversely impact refugee women's opportunity to learn English. Refugee women's groups reported that women were more likely to access, progress and feel safe in language classes if they had access to gender-segregated provision.</p> <p>b) ESOL classes which covered issues related to women's health, maternity and domestic lives were infrequent and under-resourced</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Scots Evidence Group to work with partners to conduct further research on the impact of a gender-differentiated approach to ESOL provision.</li> <li>• New Scots to broker small, pilot collaborations between ESOL providers and displaced women's groups to provide 'safe' ESOL spaces for displaced women.</li> </ul>



	4	Displaced women often face a 'double' childcare barrier to ESOL access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Further Education and Local Authority ESOL providers to be encouraged to explore routes to additional funding to allow for the provision of childcare as standard.</li> <li>FE and LA ESOL Providers to explore new ways of working to accommodate childcare needs, such as remote working, or allowing children into class.</li> </ul>
	5	Interpreting situations create potential for gendered exploitation and violence to which women are particularly vulnerable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Scots to review interpreting standards and good practice informed by work with specialist displaced women's groups.</li> </ul>
Labour Market Access	6	<p>(a) In Scotland, refugee women in employment are frequently under-employed, or placed in positions unlikely to lead to career progression</p> <p>(b) Displaced women from cultures with conservative gender norms were likely to face double gendered barriers to the labour market: (1) from domestic environments and (2) from discriminatory employer attitudes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Third sector and DWP to build on existing public/private sector relationships and encourage gender-based positive action when working with private sector employers on refugee employment schemes.</li> <li>Close the Gap initiative to develop a specialist research and policy stream about race, displacement and gender in the labour market</li> </ul>
	7	In Scotland, women-specific employment services for displaced migrants are almost non-existent and chronically under-resourced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand and scale-up existing third sector initiatives designed to support BAME and displaced women to access the labour market</li> </ul>
	8	Despite stakeholders reporting a track record of refugee women setting up their own businesses, enterprise and entrepreneurship services are gender blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scottish Government to urgently amend entrepreneurship and enterprise policy to include a gender-aware approach.</li> </ul>
Policy and Governance	9	Calls for gender-mainstreamed approaches to housing, ESOL and employment were often too quickly dismissed by service providers and failed to consider the merits or reasons under-pinning the requests.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Scots to actively articulate gender recommendations for devolved policy areas.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government to develop specialist knowledge in the Equalities Unit of the intersection of gender, border controls and race. Scottish Government to encourage cross-unit collaboration between New Scots and Equalities.</li> <li>• Third sector women's and gender specialists to work with existing BAME and displaced women's groups to expand racialised and bordered knowledge of policy areas, and to offer collaboration and capacity building in established policy areas.</li> </ul>
10	Under-resourcing for public and third sector organisations which provide services for displaced migrants is a barrier to gender-mainstreamed approaches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish Government to robustly support existing schemes developed by displaced women's groups to support policy engagement and political participation</li> </ul>

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## I. Introduction

### I.1 Gender and displaced migration in Scotland: intersections and gaps

Though it is an influential factor in pre- and post-migration experiences of displacement, gender is often 'neglected' (Crawley and Lewis 2018) or treated as a 'vector of discrimination' (Engender 2015, p.3) in approaches to the 'integration' of asylum seekers and refugees. In fact, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that (1) experiences of displaced migration, (2) immigration systems and (3) integration pathways are themselves gendered and that this is a key factor in displaced migrants' immigration and 'integration' prospects.

'Gender' is a term used to refer to the idea that characteristics such as 'masculine' or 'feminine' are neither binaries, nor biologically determined, but instead are social constructs that are not inherently tied to sex, are performed, and can be negotiated across time, place, culture and environment (Butler, 1997). The interpretation of the relationship between sex and gender creates gendered social relations and gendered systems. In many societies, including in the UK, understandings of the relationship between sex and gender as fixed and binary have broadly been seen as normative, creating an environment in which (a) the gender-binary (b) gender-normativity and (c) gender-normative masculinity are placed at the top of social hierarchies. What this means in practice is that social systems have operated as hetero-gendered, hetero-normative patriarchies, in which people who occupy the gender norm (cis-gendered, 'masculine' men) have habitually been given more access to power, resources and opportunity, whilst people who do not occupy the gender norm (women, trans people, non-binary people and gender/sex non-conformists) have been directly and indirectly, systematically prevented from accessing them. In the context of displaced migration, gender fashions relations between displaced migrants, influences their domestic and public relationships, is likely to be a factor in acts of persecution that cause them to seek asylum, features – largely in absentia – in international instruments for the protection of refugees, shapes national immigration systems, and influences 'integration' experiences and dynamics.

Though each of these factors are likely to influence the others, this report is particularly interested in the impact of gender on the latter two of this list – on immigration controls, and 'integration' dynamics. Research in the UK has documented how the process of seeking asylum is itself shaped by gender-blind and gender-discriminatory immigration controls. Baillot and Cowan (2012) find that, already operating in a 'culture of disbelief', immigration officials are likely to doubt the credibility of asylum seeking women, especially if they disclose experiences of gender-based violence, such as rape. For processes designed to assess the credibility of their claim, women, non-binary and LGBTQI people are often forced to recount traumatic experiences of gender-based violence, reveal highly personal information about their bodies or sexuality, and are subject to degrading demands for 'proof' of their claims (Clayton et al 2017). Meanwhile, Griffiths (2015) documents how the UK immigration system has built-in processes of emasculation, designed to manage asylum seeking men otherwise perceived as hypermasculine 'threats'.

Once an asylum claim has been submitted, gendered inequalities persist in 'integration' environments. In a context where 67% of 'main applicants' are men (Baillot and Connelly 2018), asylum seeking women experiencing domestic violence face the restrictive provisions of the Dispersal accommodation system should they attempt to leave, raising their vulnerability to destitution, exploitation or further violence. Women brought to the UK on spousal visas, or in coerced marriages face similar prospects (Charsley 2012). In a report that analyses the impact of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) across 'integration' categories, including health, accommodation, employment and





education, Phillimore et al (2018, p.4) argue that experiences of SGBV before or during migration, are likely to adversely impact 'integration' experiences, whilst gender-discriminatory 'integration' practices are likely to exacerbate SGBV-related trauma, hampering "survivors' attempts to resettle and integrate into a new life through a number of distal impacts on and proximal impacts of integration, and embedded within these structural inequalities'.

However, in a UK context, gender and integration dynamics remain under-researched. In the scholarship that exists, concerns primarily and necessarily focus on urgent issues such as the immediate and long-term effects of sexual and gender-based violence on displaced women's access to 'integration' categories. However, this focus leaves consideration of gendered systems, gendered social relations and their impact on 'integration' under-studied and under-evidenced. Displaced migrants' 'integration' prospects are shaped by a complex intersection of 'internal' gender norms, 'external' gender norms, immigration controls, 'integration' policies and structural racism. Meanwhile, support, resourcing and service provision are shaped by governments' approaches both to displaced migration *and* gender, and also to citizenship and race. These in turn are not just shaped by their approaches, but also by their governance, a factor made additionally complex in Scotland by the UK's reserved/devolved architecture (Vickers 2011). In short, there is limited understanding of how gendered systems cross-sect approaches to, and the structures underpinning, the 'integration' of asylum seekers and refugees. This report seeks to examine this gap and its material effects on the lives of displaced migrants, within the Scottish context.

## 1.2 Research gaps and questions

In this report, we therefore ask and address the following:

- To what extent does the reserved/devolved settlement impact gendered service provision for asylum seekers and refugees?
- To what extent does the hierarchy of immigration statuses and immigration pathways have gendered impacts?
- How do policies and legislation relating to both gender and displaced migration interact in the Scottish context? With what effects?
- To what extent do asylum seekers and refugees encounter gendered barriers to accommodation, language provision or labour market access in Scotland?
- To what extent do service providers' own gender approaches influence service design?
- What interventions or programmes have been most effective in tackling gendered, displaced inequalities?

## 1.3 Methods and data collection

This report is based on qualitative research carried out throughout the duration of the GLIMER Project, between November 2017 and March 2020. The GLIMER Scotland team has sought to take a gender mainstreaming approach to all our research themes, and therefore has foregrounded issues relating to gender governance in Scotland in our previous enquiries into (1) accommodation, regeneration and urban exclusion, (2) language education and (3) labour market dynamics and displaced migration. In this report, we consolidate and analyse findings on gender from stakeholders across these themes, and add them to additional qualitative fieldwork conducted specifically for this workpackage.



Participant type	Location	No. of groups / departments	No. of participants
Local authority	Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverclyde Aberdeenshire, Argyll and Bute	7	7
Scottish Government	Glasgow and Edinburgh	4	4
UK Government	Glasgow	1	2
Non-Governmental Bodies	Glasgow and Edinburgh	2	3
ALEOs	Glasgow	4	4
Education providers	Greater Glasgow	3	4
Academic	Edinburgh	2	2
Third Sector Organisations	Glasgow	16	23
Women's Groups	Glasgow and Edinburgh	6	11
Displaced Women's Groups	Glasgow	3	8
Trans Groups		0*	0*

\* Stakeholders were approached but did not respond to participation requests

*Table 1: Interviewee organisations and locations*

As a result, this report is informed by a total of 68 qualitative interviews with 46 stakeholders from central, devolved and local government, the third sector and community groups. Of these stakeholders, 6 represented organisations with specialisms in gender (11 interviews), and of these, 3 specialised in the gender dynamics of displaced migration (8 interviews). Many others represented organisations with initiatives dedicated to addressing gender dynamics in their specialist area.

Throughout our research, our work has been informed by ethnographic and mixed methods, including policy analysis, semi-structured interviews and participant observation. For this workpackage, participants have been selected from a cross-section of public and third sector organisations involved in policy and service provision related to gender and displaced migration in Scotland. Informed consent was gained for all fieldwork undertaken, and the identifying details of individual participants have been removed from this report.

The majority of fieldwork for this report took place in Central and Greater Glasgow, the only site of Dispersal in Scotland. However, the report also draws on fieldwork taken from Resettlement sites elsewhere in Scotland, including Edinburgh, Argyll and Bute and Aberdeenshire. This allowed for a comparison between urban and rural dynamics, as well as consideration of Dispersal and Resettlement trends in sites across Scotland.



## 2. Gender and Displaced Migration Infrastructure

### 2.1 The 1951 Convention and gender

The realisation of a 'gendered approach' to displaced migration has been hard fought in both international and national contexts, and remains a source of contention. The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is arguably a gender-blind instrument. Although it defines a refugee as a person forced to flee *his* country as a result of 'a well-founded fear of being persecuted on the grounds of race, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion', it does not include gender as a defining factor in persecution. In the early years of the Convention, Simon-Butler and McSherry (2019, p.18) note that a woman's refugee status was seen primarily as derivative of a claim made by a male relative. Though there is scope in the Convention for gender minorities to make a gender-based claim for asylum by identifying as a 'member of a particular social group', this does not provide a formal route for international protections for gender-led claims (Crawley, 2001; Cowen et al. 2011, p.3). Women's groups and gender campaigners have long argued for gender-specific protections in international refugee instruments because systems of displaced migration (a) exert specific forms of gender-based violence and discrimination and (b) displaced gendered-minorities are likely to be made vulnerable by displaced environments. For instance, in displaced migration contexts, sexual and gender based violence are likely to be originating factors in the need of women and girls to seek asylum (Ward 2017). In displacement, women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation, trafficking, slavery or coerced migration (Phillimore et al 2018). In domestic partnerships, displacement may leave a woman more vulnerable to, or unable to leave a violent spouse, as they are more likely to be a 'main applicant' or 'cultural mediator'. Gender also is a factor in displaced experiences of other gender groups. For instance, Dolan (2015) has argued that the vulnerability of displaced men to conscription and military violence must also be seen as gender-based violence.

Since the ratification of the 1951 Convention, the UNHCR has sought to better develop its provisions for gender-based violence in displacement, issuing policy in 1990 and guidelines in 1991 relating to protections for refugee women (Martin 2010). However, across UN instruments, violence and inequality related to gender are still often treated as arising from environmental rather than systemic factors. Moves to broaden gender approaches have been met with resistance both from signatories with conservative gender norms, and from women's rights activists who fear that widening approaches to gender and displacement will dilute hard-won concessions for the needs of women and girls. The treatment of gender in international instruments relating to displaced migration remains a source of contention (see Dolan 2015 and Ward 2017).

### 2.2 Gender and displaced migration architecture in the UK

International instruments relating to displaced migration therefore do not give a particularly strong steer on how signatory states should make gendered provisions for asylum seekers and refugees. These decisions are instead left to individual states to establish (the extent of their) gendered approaches to displaced migration. In the UK, provisions fall into two distinct policy and legislative areas: immigration and equalities, and subsequently realised through the reserved/devolved settlement between Westminster, and the devolved national administrations, including the Scottish Government.





On the former, powers over immigration controls are reserved to Westminster, which means that the designation of immigration status, and decisions about displaced migrants' access to state support are retained by the UK Government. The UK Government also has power to create an integration strategy for areas over which it has reserved powers. Despite the publication of a Green Paper in 2018, the UK Government currently has no formal integration strategy for reserved areas or England. The Green Paper (UK Government 2018b) does not give in-depth consideration to the gender dynamics of integration, apart from (1) to note that 'gender inequality in minority communities' (ibid, p.11) and 'gender segregation' (ibid, p.27) are likely to mean that displaced women are 'often held back' from accessing integration opportunities and (2) transgender displaced migrants are likely to face a 'double barrier' to integration (ibid, p.56). Where the Green Paper places responsibility for gender (in)equality with migrant communities rather than government, documentation elsewhere indicates that Government policy produces gender inequality for displaced migrants. Though the Home Office has published detailed guidelines that recognise that displaced migrants may experience 'gender issues' whilst in the asylum system (UK Government 2018a), research across the UK Government's immigration estate, including the asylum application process, the Dispersal system and immigration detention centres documents how the UK Government's approach to displaced migration at best produces gendered inequalities, and at worst enables sexual and gender-based violence (Lousley and Coupe 2017; Williams 2019). Meanwhile, the UK Government's 'hostile environment' policy, which has exported responsibility for immigration controls to local public and private-sector stakeholders, has fostered the very 'culture of disbelief' which so disproportionately affects asylum seeking women (see above).

The UK Government's approach to gender and displaced migration is not only shaped by its powers over immigration, but also by its approach to equalities. In the UK legislative architecture, responsibility for Equalities legislation largely remains reserved. However, as some aspects of Equalities legislation engage devolved issues, there is some scope for devolved divergence, as we discuss further below. The UK's legislative approach to gender is in part subject to international responsibilities. The UK is a signatory of UN instruments relating to gender, including the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), an instrument which places responsibility on signatories to take measures to reach minimal standards for women's rights (Engender 2017). The UK has also, for the duration of its membership of the European Union, been subject to EU approaches to gender equality (Van der Vleuten 2007), despite strong opposition to certain directives (Guerrina and Murphy 2016). It has sought to fulfil (and resist) its international obligations through the Equalities Act 2010, which legislates for equality of provision for nine protected characteristics, of which gender is one. Considered 'field-leading' at the time of its creation, the Equalities Act 2010 brought together seven UK Acts and two EU Directives into one piece of legislation (McLaughlin 2007). Following decades of organising and pressure from feminist, women's, gender-equality and race-equality groups (Johnson Ross 2018), the Act emphasises equality duties as 'positive' actions, a contrast to previous legislation in which equality was framed as a 'negative', or passive duty (McLaughlin 2007).

However, in comparison to some international instruments, the Act falls short. Unlike the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the Act identifies limited characteristics that can be considered as 'protected' (Hepple 2010, p.16). Though it covers 'gender reassignment', 'sex' and 'sexual orientation', it does not cover 'gender identities'. It also only partly deals with multiple and intersectional discriminations, provided that they fall within the protected characteristics, and do not exceed more than two categories. Hepple (2010, p.16) explains: 'the provision only allows a combination of two claims of direct discrimination, and a claim of direct and indirect discrimination cannot be combined. So if a disabled woman is denied flexible working and she alleges indirect





discrimination on grounds of sex and direct discrimination because of disability, she will not be able to combine these in a single claim where it is unclear which of them caused the unfavourable treatment'. Though the Equalities Act 2010 therefore places active duties on stakeholders working with displaced migrants, there are potential gaps in its protections for people outside the gender norm. There are also additional gaps in its protections for displaced migrants, who are likely to have multiple characteristics that lead to discrimination, including those not considered to be 'protected'.

Provisions for gender equality have been scaled back by consecutive Conservative UK Governments. The Women's National Commission was disbanded in 2010, leaving no public sector capacity for pan-UK collaboration. In England, Government resourcing for feminist, women's and gender organisations has been significantly diminished [Interview with GOI]. As a policy issue, women's rights and gender equality has systematically been demoted. The departments with shared responsibility for Women and Equalities are currently the Government Equalities Office, a non-ministerial government agency, and the Department for International Trade, a Ministerial Department with a reduced equalities remit. In the meantime, leading Westminster politicians have expressed openly sexist, misogynist, racist and anti-migrant attitudes (Mason and Sherwood 2016), whilst the current Prime Minister has a published track record of misogynist, racist views (BBC 2019, Forrest 2019). In 2013, the UN women's rights committee (CEDAW) expressed concern about the UK's scaled back gender 'machinery' and warned that unless a broad range of actions were undertaken, 'women's rights would be breached' (Engender 2015, p.9). This situation remained in CEDAW's 2017 review of the UK (Engender 2017).

### 2.3 Gender and displaced migration architecture in Scotland

The devolution of certain powers to the Scottish Government allows for some scope for divergence from UK Government approaches to both displaced migration and gender. As we have documented elsewhere (Meer et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2020), although powers over immigration are reserved, the Scottish Government is able to make provision for displaced migrants in areas over which it has devolved capacity. This includes the areas of education, training, business development and healthcare, for which the Scottish Government has made distinctive provision for asylum seekers and refugees. In contrast to England, where asylum seekers are not permitted to access education or employability training until they gain refugee status, the Scottish Government permits access 'from day one', as part of its *New Scots* integration strategy (Scottish Government, 2018b). Though gender is not mainstreamed across these policy areas, access 'from day one' has potential to alleviate conditions of isolation and the under-development of skills, which later disproportionately impact displaced women (see Section 3 below). It also in theory addresses gender-discriminatory barriers to public services commonly experienced by displaced women, such as ante- and post-natal healthcare (Da Lomba and Murray 2014). However, though *New Scots*' acknowledges the discriminatory effects of gendered violence, the impacts of displacement *as a gendered system* are under-realised in the Strategy. 'Gender' itself is mentioned only six times in passing in the Strategy document, to acknowledge (a) the Strategy's national and international equalities duties (Scottish Government 2018b, p.21, p.28) (b) the influence of gender-based violence on the experiences of displaced women and girls (ibid, p.16, p.87) and (c) the influence of gender in the experiences of LGBTQI asylum seekers and refugees (ibid, p.16, p.17). In a Strategy that deals in detail with other categories of 'integration' (such as housing, healthcare, education and so on), consideration of the complexity that gendered dynamics bring to these topics is noticeably lacking. Similar critiques might also be made about how the Strategy deals with racialised inequality, and how it intersects with 'integration' categories (including gender). We return to this topic in Section 4.



Outwith its scope to diverge from UK approaches to immigration, the Scottish Government also has capacity to engage with issues of gender equality in areas over which it has devolved competences. Though it developed in a context in which attitudes to gender and sexuality had historically been punitively conservative (Davidson and Davis 2006), the Scottish Government is broadly recognised to have demonstrated a commitment to gender equality since the reinstatement of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 (Engender 2015). Informed from the beginning by active feminist and women's groups in Scotland, Scottish expenditure on matters related to gender equality has remained at a higher rate than in England and Wales (McLaughlin 2007, p.116). In addition, the Scottish Parliament has passed a series of Bills related to gendered inequalities, including legislation on Female Genital Mutilation (Scottish Government 2016), and on Domestic Violence (Scottish Government 2018a). The Scottish Government has also championed gender-responsive budgeting (Engender 2015, p.9), and developed initiatives to address the gender employment gap (Scottish Government 2019). The current First Minister takes an openly feminist approach to government, and heads the National Advisory Council on Women and Girls.



	Feature	Legislation	Governance dynamics	Governance	Pg.
<b>Governance</b>	UK-wide governance structures	Human Rights Act 1998  Equality Act 2010	<p>UK Government is responsible for engaging with women across the UK. The Women's National Commission was disbanded in 2010. Pan UK engagement work is now carried out only by the third sector</p> <p>The Equalities and Human Rights Commission is responsible for Equalities provisions. It is a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) with a remit for autonomous and independent assessment of equalities.</p> <p>The parent department of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission is the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.</p> <p>The UK Government is responsible for (gender) budgeting on reserved matters.</p>	Reserved / third sector	12
	UK/Scotland international governance structures	Human Rights Act 1998 / Equality Act 2010	<p>The Equalities and Human Rights Commission is not accountable to the Scottish Government or Parliament</p> <p>The Scottish Human Rights Commission (also an NHRI) is responsible for devolved human rights issues and is responsible to the Scottish Parliament</p>	Reserved / Devolved/ NGO	
	Scottish governance structures		<p>Equalities policy is handled by the Scottish Government's Equality Unit</p> <p>The Scottish Government hosts an Equality and Budgetary Advisory Group, which reports to the Department of Finance. The SG has produced an Annual Equality Statement, unique in the UK.</p> <p>The Scottish Women's Budget group is hosted by the SG and attended by devolved/third sector participants</p>	Devolved	15

			The Scottish Parliament hosts an Equal Opportunities Committee		
	Scottish Legislative Architecture	Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005 Equality Act 2010 Marriage and Civil Partnership (Scotland) Act 2014 Abusive Behaviour and Sexual Harm (Scotland) Act 2016	Scottish Government has Scotland-specific regulations that public bodies must publish regular equality impact assessments The development of parallel Scottish Bills on equal marriage and FGM. Divergence of Scottish legislation on domestic abuse	Reserved/ Devolved	13- 14
Policy	Gender quotas and temporary special measures		Under the Equality Act 2010, sex-based discrimination is prohibited so exemptions must be sought for positive discrimination mechanisms (i.e quotas). This applies to recruitment practices for private sector employers and political parties	Reserved	9
	Public Sector Equality Duty	Equality Act 2010	The PSED places responsibility on public bodies to reduce discrimination and promote equality of protected categories (including gender)  Scotland is responsible for regulations that apply to Scottish public bodies  Scottish Parliament is responsible for a Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland	Reserved / Devolved	11
	Caring provision and social security		Social services, including childcare is devolved to the Scottish Government. Social security (including welfare payments and various caring allowances) is reserved.  Childcare provisions remain contested by the Scottish Government	Reserved/ Devolved	22



Education, training and employability		Devolved to Scotland. The Scottish Government is responsible for funding equalities initiatives in Scotland, including core funding for Close the Gap and the Scottish Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering, and Technology.	Devolved	26
Violence against women		Devolved under criminal justice provisions and Scots Law. Immigration law remains reserved	Devolved	42

*Table 2: International/Reserved/Devolved Gender Governance Architecture in Scotland. Adapted from Engender (2015)*

However, Scottish Government approaches to gender are not without issues. Research by *Engender* highlights how despite high-profile advocacy for a gendered approach to all aspects of government, policies tackling ‘national issues have remained notably ‘ungendered’’. Instead, ‘gender is treated as a ‘vector of discrimination’ rather than a driving factor of inequalities faced by women and girls’ (Engender 2015, p.3). Stakeholders interviewed for this report also observed that until very recently, reference to ‘gender issues’ has been used as shorthand for ‘women’s issues’, resulting in a truncated analysis of how ‘gender’ impacts access to services and opportunities. In the meantime, though policy capacity for issues relating directly to gender is relatively well-developed, capacity for issues relating to how gender interacts and intersects with other topics is noticeably under-developed.



*Figure 1: Graffiti on the Clyde-side Expressway, Glasgow 2017. Credit: Hill (2017)*

In addition, though devolution has allowed space for the Scottish Government to develop a distinct ‘Scottish approach’ to gender-equality, this approach is constrained by the devolved/reserved settlement of powers, and can lead to complexity, fragmentation or partially-realised initiatives. For instance, the Scottish Government’s obligations to international gender-equality instruments stem from both reserved and devolved responsibilities. As the UK is a signatory of CEDAW, and as the UK Government retains statutory powers Scotland, the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament are bound by the UK’s international human rights obligations (Engender 2015, p.10). Due to the reserved/devolved settlement, both the UK and Scottish Governments have responsibility for realising international instruments in Scotland. For reserved matters, this is overseen by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Scotland which has responsibility to independently assess gender-equality activities in Scotland; however, the EHRC is not accountable to the Scottish Parliament or Government. The Scottish Equality and Human Rights Commission oversees gender-equality issues related to devolved matters. The SEHRC connects devolved issues to ‘the European Convention on Human Rights, CEDAW, and other treaties that provide for women’s social, political, and economic rights’ (Ibid). However, though it is bound to them through its membership of the UK, and is obliged to act upon devolved matters, the Scottish Government cannot as an independent entity ratify these treaties.



What this means in practice is that though there is potential for the Scottish Government to develop a ‘Scottish approach’, or respond ‘independently’ to CEDAW recommendations, this would apply only to devolved areas. In addition, though the Scottish Government has capacity to develop a gender equality approach in devolved areas, because equality law is reserved, it would only have capacity under Scots Law to enforce the *devolved* provision rather than the *gender* provision, as a stakeholder explained:

*The challenge for women’s rights is that equality law is reserved. So, women can be given rights in Scotland that are justiciable – able to be asserted in a court in Scotland – but they [...] can’t relate to equality [...] unless powers are transferred to enable them to do that, which is not impossible. But they also will only be able to relate to devolved matters. So for example, in social security where roughly 15% of the social security system by value has been devolved, rights could be afforded relating to that 15% but not to the rest of it.*

[GO1]

This is a dynamic currently being researched by gender policy organisations in Scotland, however, what is under-explored is how this already-messy dynamic would interact with other categories of (in)equality – including displaced migration.

In this example, a displaced migrant’s access to gender equality provisions in Scotland would be subject to the reserved/devolved settlement *and* the reserved governance of immigration powers. This would subsequently be disaggregated by the distinction in immigration status the UK Government makes between asylum seekers and refugees. Reserved immigration controls allow people with refugee status the same welfare, educational and employment rights as UK citizens. As a result, refugees would have access to gender provisions for the full devolved settlement of powers, though only the devolved element of these provisions could be enforced in Scots Law. Asylum seekers’ access would be considerably more restricted. As a result of having ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ (Meer et al., 2019a), asylum seekers would not be able to access devolved and gendered provisions in Scotland related to social security because the UK state removes their access to the social security system. As the devolved settlement allows for provision for asylum seekers in education, training and business development, there may be scope for asylum seekers to access gender justice by mobilising other areas of devolution *and* if that area of gender equality had been transferred to the Scottish justice system. Otherwise, Scots Law would have jurisdiction only if it related to the enforcement of a devolved category, and not gender equality or immigration (both of which are reserved).

## 2.4 Conclusions

Whilst the devolved settlement in Scotland gives scope for the Scottish Government to develop a divergent approach both to integration and gender policy from those elsewhere in the UK, the extent to which (a) existing policy instruments achieve this and (b) devolved policy can be transformed into law, is limited. The interaction of devolved and reserved powers within the areas of immigration and integration, and gender equality also presents a messy and complicated environment in which this might be achieved. In the following chapters, we map-out areas of integration with gender unequal effects, in which there is potential for a distinctive, gendered approach to integration to develop.





### 3. Displaced Migrants' Gendered Experiences of 'Integration' in Scotland

In previous reports (Meer et al., 2019a, 2019b, 2020), GLIMER Research found that the accessibility, effectiveness and impact of three categories related to the 'integration' of displaced migrants in Scotland – accommodation, language provision and labour market access – are impacted (1) by gaps, barriers and opportunities created by the devolved/reserved settlement (2) by immigration hierarchies created by UK Government distinctions between asylum seekers and refugees, and Dispersal and Resettlement pathways (3) by relationships between reserved or devolved and local government and (4) by the strength of local level expertise and networks. In broad terms, successes in support and provision had been achieved through intensive local-level work which actively considered the additional barriers to which displaced migrants are subject. Gaps and inequalities arose in cases in which displaced migration was inactively present or wholly absent from policy and provision, in which governance infrastructures disenfranchised local stakeholders, and in which expert stakeholders were under-resourced.

In this section, we argue that many of the inequalities arising from governance infrastructure and gaps in provision both have gendered consequences, and themselves are the results of active or inactive gendered approaches.

#### 3.1 Reception and accommodation

Accommodation provision for both Dispersal-pathway and Resettlement-pathway displaced migrants is informed by Equalities duties under the Equality Act 2010, resulting in an infrastructure that does not formally discriminate provision or support according to gender. Across the locations in which we worked, stakeholders involved in accommodation provision were aware both of their equalities duties, and of how issues relating to gender-based violence might influence housing needs and experiences for displaced migrants. This approach had broadly become normalised in housing approaches, and stakeholders reported that taking gendered dynamics and needs into account were part of their day-to-day activities. A stakeholder noted

*And, in relation to women and girls experiencing violence, I suppose we know about things like that [...] and] accommodate appropriately, but that's just in the view of meeting anybody's needs. There's nothing special we do in relation to housing.*

[LA01]

However, having noted this, the stakeholder also observed that when allocating housing, their officers tried to anticipate and be sensitive to the needs of new arrivals. For instance, the stakeholder noted that they were aware that single, displaced women were especially vulnerable to social and cultural isolation, and had sought to alleviate this by taking a 'clustering' approach for a group of newly-arrived, widowed women. The stakeholder commented:

*Most of them [...] didnae come wi' huge medical problems but they were at risk in the camps. And I think probably the thing that we done was we didnae allocate them a flat where they would be isolated away fae anybody. So we kept them where there was other Syrians but said to them, 'it's up to yourself'. And there was [groups of single women], we put them a' pretty near tae each other. So we were a bit sensitive in how we allocated the flat. We dae that a' the time anyway. When we get that list in [...] we dae sit down and go, 'right where are we gonnae put people, what are we gonnae dae here'? That school might no be able tae take they kids. So there is a bit a' thought put intae it.*

[LA01]





The stakeholder also sought to anticipate the caring needs of families with children, an approach which is also arguably gendered because childcare is often the responsibility of female family members (as we discuss further below).

However, although stakeholders were familiar with how issues such as domestic dynamics, or experience of SGBV impacted displaced migrants' housing experiences, GLIMER Research found that gendered inequalities persisted across accommodation systems and services in Scotland. Gendered characteristics of asylum seeker and refugee housing included:

1. Gendered dynamics of applying for asylum leave women experiencing domestic violence vulnerable either to continued violence or homelessness (Baillot and Connelly 2018).
2. Dispersal reception arrangements leave women vulnerable to exploitation immediately on arrival in Glasgow.

Stakeholders from displaced women's groups reported that when Dispersal buses arrived in Glasgow, they might be targeted by men who offered 'interpreting' services to solo, displaced women. A stakeholder commented:

*[For Dispersal] People, women arrive [in Glasgow] in coaches. They are met by different agencies, official agencies. They've got their own interpreters. Milling around are other interpreters who are approaching the women independently. They appear to know which women are arriving when which is interesting and nobody can understand what they're saying apart from maybe other interpreters who they may or may not know or may or may not care. But there isn't a system to ensure that women are safe when they're arriving. There isn't a system to ensure [...] that there's nobody there who's a sexual predator, nobody who's linked to traffickers, nobody who's linked to people smugglers. Nobody who's trying to find wives. And we flag that up and we say, you know, we, we could make this safer. But again you're stuck between the devolved and the not devolved.*

[RWG01]

Though NGOs and other service providers were on hand to support women in their reception arrangements, language barriers made women more vulnerable to claims by male 'interpreters'. Having made contact with the women at the point of their arrival, 'interpreters' were subsequently in positions of power, with knowledge of where the women were housed, and having positioned themselves as cultural and linguistic 'mediators' or gatekeepers. Stakeholders expressed concern that reception arrangements made Dispersed women extremely vulnerable to exploitation, and that those responsible for Dispersal housing – the Home Office, Mears and Migrant – needed to take action to address this.

3. Precarity of the Dispersal-pathway accommodation system, including destitution and homelessness, places displaced migrants at risk of gender-based violence and exploitation. This occurs across gendered identities.

Asylum seekers have access to Dispersal housing only for the duration for which their asylum claim is being assessed. Following a decision (positive or negative), they are no longer considered to have the right to Dispersal accommodation. If the decision is positive and they have received refugee status, they are obliged to find alternative accommodation within 28 days, a period critiqued as too short by refugee advocacy groups (All Party Parliamentary



Group on Refugees 2017). Should a new refugee have not found accommodation within the 28-day period, they are at risk of eviction and homelessness (see Meer et al 2019a for details). If an asylum seeker receives a negative decision, they are vulnerable to eviction. Furthermore, because they are considered to have 'no recourse to public funds', they are unable to access public housing, and are especially vulnerable to homelessness and destitution. Homelessness situations leave people of all genders vulnerable to SGBV; women and girls especially so.

4. 'No Recourse to Public Funds' leaves displaced women with extremely limited options for housing following domestic violence and/or destitution.

The designation of refused asylum seekers as having 'no recourse to public funds' further restricts asylum seeking women's access to women's refuges or shelters.

*If a woman is an asylum seeker and is going through domestic violence, there is no way they can go through the doors of Women's Aid much as, even if we really wanted to, but there's no way they can do that. Some places will have maybe two spaces in a refuge for people with no recourse to public funds, but that's not a lot because there are a lot of people experiencing that. And then we've got other Women's Aid organisations that are specific for BME women. So, of course, there'll be BME women but not asylum seeking. So already if a woman has got no recourse to public funds, they cannot go past that barrier.*

[RWG02]

Organisations such as Scottish Women's Aid provide sheltered accommodation for women who have either experienced SGBV, or are especially vulnerable to exploitation through homelessness. However, during our research, women's refuge stakeholders reported that they were limited in the accommodation they could offer to asylum seeking women because the terms of their public funding meant they were unable to offer housing to women with NRPF. In the eventuality that a local Women's Aid could offer shelter, provision was likely to be extremely restricted due to resourcing limitations.

5. Support for destitute displaced men is extremely limited, in part due to gender perceptions.

Stakeholders from the third sector reported a shortage in emergency and homelessness accommodation options for displaced men who had been evicted from Dispersal accommodation, or had fallen through the gaps of the 28-day 'Move On Period'. Although there was a Night Shelter for men, resources were extremely stretched and provision basic. Stakeholders involved in organising voluntary 'rooms for refugees' schemes reported that volunteers were less likely to wish to accommodate men. Stakeholders noted that 'perceptions of vulnerability' [Interview with NGO I] impacted provision for emergency accommodation for men, leaving them at risk of street homelessness and exploitation.

6. Specialist accommodation support for displaced trans migrants is under-developed.

Though stakeholders were largely cognisant of issues directly related to the needs of displaced women, they were less familiar with issues related to other gender identities.



Stakeholder: *[Accommodating transgender refugees...] that's kinda new tae us I suppose. But we've said, 'well we'll take them, we havenae got a problem wi' that. I think, they came tae us and Edinburgh so I think they were thinking, 'we'll go tae the city ones rather than the smaller local authorities which was fine. Edinburgh were the same as us, aye, but I think they've got a few flights coming in May. And they were wanting them urgently tae get here. So we've said right we'll, we'll step in.*

Interviewer: *So are there particular provisions you have to make for transgender people who come in?*

Stakeholder: *Well no, not in terms a' just accommodation. We'll look and see where we accommodate them and that will be a learning curve for us as well cause we've never really dealt wi' it before. And we just need to maybe find out what group's in the city. Dae they want tae link in or whatever? Or do we get a group tae link in wi' them? So that would be something we will be thinking about in dain' it.*

[LA01]

Despite campaign work from local trans-rights advocacy groups, accommodation providers were arguably under-informed about the specific housing needs of trans- asylum seekers and refugees.

7. Dispersal housing provider practices do not take into account gendered vulnerability, and sometimes actively disregard it.

Stakeholders who supported asylum seekers in Dispersal accommodation reported that (at the time of research), housing contractors, Serco, acted in ways that actively disregarded the gendered vulnerabilities of tenants.<sup>1</sup> One stakeholder from a displaced women's group reported that a male Serco employee had entered her house unannounced as she got out the shower [Interview with NGO3]. Other female stakeholders reported difficulties in communicating with male housing officers about safety and maintenance issues related to their housing (see also point 9). Stakeholders also reported that LGBTQI clients had reported issues with Dispersal accommodation providers placing them in shared housing with tenants who were actively trans- and/or homophobic [NGO4].

Dispersal housing providers were directly contracted by the UK Home Office to provide safe and habitable accommodation for asylum seekers. However, the unsafe, unsanitary discriminatory conditions overseen by Serco contributed to the UK Government's 'hostile environment' policy and actively placed gender minorities in positions of vulnerability risk.

8. This extends to the UK's detention estate.

The UK is the only country (currently) in the EU without a limit on immigration detention. There is one detention centre in Scotland (Dungavel), the governance of which is overseen by the UK Home Office. The Home Office detains displaced migrants (a) if their asylum case has been refused and (b) if they have committed a crime. Detention is used as a precursor to deportation; however, some inmates remain detained indefinitely. Though

<sup>1</sup> Serco ceased to hold the COMPASS contract in 2018. Mears is the current provider of Dispersal accommodation in Glasgow.





Dungavel has received better reports than other Immigration Removal Centres in the UK, accommodation provision has been critiqued as gender unequal. A stakeholder explained:

*[Dungavel] can accommodate up to 249 people. 235 spaces are for men and fourteen for women so there's an obvious gender dynamic there. And [...] the last report specifically criticised the women's accommodation both for the physicality of the place itself and because of its dormitories [provision for women]. [...] [Men] have more space. They have single, double and I think some four person rooms. [...] And they also highlighted the inevitable difficulties of housing a small number of women in a predominantly male environment [...] who then who aren't allowed out. And women who certainly have been through the asylum system have a high chance of having been subject to sexual violence at some time in their past. [One of our clients] described it as being like a chicken surrounded by dogs.*

[NGO2]

9. People outside the gender norm are at increased risk of trauma and mental health issues, and are less likely to be believed when reporting accommodation issues. A stakeholder gave an example:

*I know a woman who's got very severe mental health problems and trauma so there's problems with recall and therefore her ability to report what's happened and therefore her interpretation of what's happened. But, you know, I think there's probably some discrimination against women with some long term mental illnesses in terms of how they're believed as well. [...] So, you know, it's, it's a sort of double whammy.*

[RWG02]

10. The location and racialised neighbourhood dynamics of Dispersal accommodation often leave women feeling unsafe (see Meer et al 2019a; Hill et al [Forthcoming]).

11. In some locations, clustering accommodation practices leave women vulnerable to exploitation.

Stakeholders working with displaced migrant women reported that though 'clustering' accommodation practices had potential to reduce isolation amongst solo, displaced women, an unintended consequence of this policy was that it also groups single women into one location, making them an easy target for exploitation by male 'interpreters' or 'cultural mediators'. This was particularly an issue for Dispersal accommodation, which was overseen by Home Office subcontractors, who, stakeholders reported, were resistant to changing their housing strategies. For Dispersal accommodation, the situation was compounded by a breakdown of trust between tenants and housing providers. Though Resettlement clients were not immune from the risk of exploitation, the reception and accommodation infrastructure meant that they were (a) more likely to trust local authority teams to report issues (b) had established channels of communication and (c) were in environments in which Resettlement teams were closely involved with their welfare.

### 3.2 Language provision

The devolution of powers over education and training has meant that provision for English language support for adult displaced migrants is characterised by a distinctive 'Scottish approach'. Scotland's 'from day one' policy, as





laid out in *New Scots* (Scottish Government 2018b), means that refugees *and* asylum seekers have access to English language education, a resource not available to the former elsewhere in the UK. In Scotland, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is delivered by a range of public and third sector stakeholders, and is made available to people of all ages, genders and immigration statuses.

Access to English language education for displaced migrants is a cornerstone of ‘integration’ support for both holistic and utilitarian reasons (Meer et al 2019b). It (1) decreases the potential for displaced migrants’ isolation, with potential for positive social and mental health outcomes (2) increases displaced migrants’ access to core services, such as healthcare and social security, (3) facilitates displaced migrants’ access to tertiary education and (4) enhances employability prospects. English language education is a gendered issue in Scotland because (despite the efforts of many service providers) equality of access to services is not gender-equal, as we detail below. Broadly speaking, this disproportionately impacts displaced migrant women, and subsequently has long-term, snowballed implications for their access to other public services, education and employment. English language provision is also a gendered category because it puts the gender approaches of service providers in close contact with the gender approaches of service users and has the potential to create cultural clashes, which impede displaced migrants’ access to services.

The gendered characteristics of ESOL provision that we highlight below are shaped by local conditions at the time of research. As we worked with stakeholders across Scottish Resettlement locations, the specific dynamics of the Resettlement programme – i.e. that (at the time) it targeted ‘vulnerable’ Syrian populations, often from rural locations, and often with conservative gender norms – influenced stakeholders’ responses. In Glasgow, where stakeholders have experience of displaced migrants from a broader range of cultures, there was consensus that taking into account the potential for service users’ conservative gender norms influenced provision; however, stakeholders also emphasised the importance of not assuming that ‘all refugees’ have the same gender norms.

Issues highlighted by stakeholders across locations in Scotland include:

- I. Gendered classroom dynamics may adversely impact refugee women’s opportunity to learn English.

Stakeholders reported concerns that mixed ESOL classes had the potential to turn into environments in which conservative gender norms were reinscribed onto learning dynamics, inhibiting displaced women’s learning opportunities. A stakeholder commented:

*My experience generally is that the women become very quiet if there are men in the group, and particularly with their husbands. You know, I’ll ask the woman a question, she’ll look at the husband, the husband answers me, so it goes round that way, so it’s often better not to have them together. Just depends on the people, and I think the experience of the teachers [...]. You know, I’m generalising, but the men like to show off and the women become quite quiet, and you have to quieten the men down and encourage the women.*

[ED1]

Members of displaced women’s groups also expressed concern over mixed classroom dynamics. Women with experience of SGBV or with trauma noted that they would be uncomfortable sharing a table with men, or being asked to speak in front of men. In the early years of the Resettlement programme, and on the request of Resettled



populations, some local authority Resettlement teams had provided gender-segregated ESOL classes to address this issue.

2. Gender segregated language classes were undesirable and unsustainable for local Resettlement teams.

However, the provision of gender-segregated ESOL classes was resource-intensive, and often unsustainable for service providers operating on limited budgets. A few years into the Resettlement Scheme, the local authorities who had initially provided gender-segregated ESOL reported that they had ceased to do so:

*Also we...relented to the requests of our students to have separate male and female classes. And that was fine but then as things progressed and we were having beginners, intermediate and advanced ESOL, split between men and women, we had classes that were far too small. [...] So we got rid of gender segregated classes about a year ago. It was challenging in doing so, but I think we've kind of got over that now.*

[LA02]

Amongst stakeholders with whom we worked, very few provided ESOL classes on a gender-segregated basis. The few who did provide gender-segregated ESOL were women's groups who provided services in-house. We return to this point in Section 4.

3. Gender segregated language classes were seen as more accessible by some women refugees.

Though gender-segregated ESOL classes were infrequently provided in Scotland, displaced women's groups expressed a preference for gender-segregated learning. Stakeholders noted that gender-segregated classrooms provided safe spaces for displaced women from cultures with conservative gender norms, because it created learning environments in which they did not have to defer to their male family members, and did not face objections from male family members for attending (some women reported that they were not allowed to attend ESOL if the class was gender mixed). Women-only ESOL provision created spaces in which women with experience of SGBV were not forced into close proximity with men. Women-only spaces also provided opportunities to learners to discuss issues that they may not feel comfortable talking about with men in the room. [Interview with RWG04].

4. Classes which covered issues related to women's health, maternity and domestic lives were infrequent and under-resourced.

Stakeholders reported that although many of the women with whom they worked were mothers and primary caregivers, there were very few classes that provided English-language support on these subjects. One local authority stakeholder noted that though the local authority provided antenatal and postnatal support for prospective and new parents, it was infrequently attended by displaced women 'because of the language barriers' [Interview with NGB01]. As a result, the stakeholder had arranged a series of informal antenatal ESOL classes specifically aimed at displaced women. Other local authorities had identified a similar gap, but had struggled to find resources to develop maternity or healthcare ESOL classes. One local authority had sought to address this informally, instead running women's activity groups and providing spaces at the end of the session for women to ask language related questions. For instance, the stakeholder recalled spending a raucous hour one evening





discussing with Resettled women all the Scots words for ‘vagina’, an opportunity usually unavailable in a mixed class [Interview with LA03].

5. Caregiving responsibilities were frequently seen as unnegotiably female, creating a double childcare barrier to ESOL provision for some displaced women.

Some displaced migrants with whom stakeholders worked came from cultures with gender norms that created barriers for women to access ESOL provision. This was especially the case in domestic environments where ‘domestic’ roles were gendered as female, and ‘public’ roles were gendered as male. This created situations where male family members objected to women attending ESOL classes, because it was not part of her gender role. This came to a head on the topic of childcare, where male family members objected to a female family member attending ESOL classes because she would be unable to provide childcare for the duration of the class. A stakeholder commented:

*Real, real challenge. Cause one a’ the first things was English classes, you need to get them ESOL classes. The guy, straight faced say tae me, ‘who’ll watch the children?’ I said, ‘whose children are they?’ ‘They’re hers’. ‘What are you no the father?’ ‘Yes’. ‘Well you watch them’. ‘No, no, you don’t understand, that’s not my job’. I said, ‘it’s certainly no ma job. So you watch them’. So you were getting some a’ the women wouldnae turn up. [...] So you say, ‘look, [its] really, really important. You signed a document before you came tae the UK to say that you and your wife would earn English and integrate and stuff like that. She’s no doing it’. ‘That’s because you’re no providing childcare’. ‘But you’re no working. You’re at home a’ day. How can you no watch the kids?’ And that’s what they say, ‘it’s no my job. It’s no my responsibility. That’s her job’.*

[LA04]

As the stakeholder’s comments demonstrate, this situation was especially exacerbated if there was no childcare provision by the service provider because a woman had no alternatives if her male family member refused to take on a childcare role.

Stakeholders across Resettlement and Dispersal pathways had sought to address the potential inequalities of domestic gender roles in various ways. Many had negotiated women’s access to ESOL by carefully leveraging existing domestic gender roles, as the stakeholder below explains:

*As service provider we need to be really careful about how we transfer and make assumptions about people’s gender role. And, you know, we often have that conversation, ‘yeah do you ask the dad to look after the kids?’ ‘Yes I do, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn’t’. Or [the women] are saying to us that the husband says she doesn’t need ESOL class, and the trick that works but not always is, ‘will your wife support their kids to do their homework? Is that her role?’ ‘Yes of course’. ‘She needs to learn English’. Sometimes it works but sometimes it’s, ‘oh it’s fine’.*

[ED2]



## 6. Childcare provision is inconsistent across ESOL providers across locations.

One of the ways in which service providers could actively address gendered caregiving barriers to ESOL classes was through the provision of childcare. However, GLIMER Research found that childcare provision for displaced migrants was inconsistent across Scotland. Stakeholders reported that in some cases, they were unable to provide childcare facilities because of resourcing issues. In these cases, stakeholders also reported that subcontracted ESOL course providers had banned women with children from their classrooms, creating a direct, gendered barrier to language acquisition:

*What they also said was if you're a woman with a child, you can't come to class any more because they're too disruptive and we've no money for creche. So we had a few meetings and discussed that and yeah one a' the things that we're trying to overcome with one a' the [voluntary] groups is to set up a [crèche] there in one of the other areas. And [in one case], the tutor is allowing women in with their children and just not telling his boss which is lovely. Wee bit a' direct action... but it's a real issue.*

[LA03]

Whilst direct, gendered barriers to childcare, such as those reported by the stakeholder above, adversely impacted displaced women who were part of a family unit, they were particularly hard on solo, displaced mothers who may have very limited options for alternative support. One stakeholder noted that as '95%' of their single parent learners were women [Interview with ED1], no-children or no-childcare policies were likely to have a disproportionately gendered impact.

Resourcing for childcare remained a point of contention across locations and service providers. Whilst the majority of college ESOL providers in Glasgow offered childcare facilities, this was not the case in other locations. Meanwhile, although there were resources available to local authorities from the Resettlement Scheme to develop childcare provision for Resettled refugees, this was limited in terms of amount, timescales and distribution, and childcare support was unevenly developed across locations (Meer et al 2019b). It also created a hierarchy of childcare resources according to immigration pathway, so that equivalent support was not available to asylum seekers and refugees arriving in Glasgow through the Dispersal pathway.

## 7. Interpreting situations create potential for gendered exploitation and violence.

The final issue related to the gendering of language support for displaced migrants in Scotland was raised specifically by women's organisations working with highly marginalised, Black and Minority Ethnic, displaced women. For the period for which they which they are learning English, displaced migrants may also need to access interpreting support in order to access services, and communicate with local authorities and housing providers. Displaced women have an increased likelihood of requiring interpreting support because of the gendered barriers to which they are subject for ESOL courses. Interpreting dynamics are spaces of potential violence for marginalised, displaced women. A stakeholder explained:

*[For displaced women], everything leads back to [the fact that] there is no way forward except through the use of interpreters. So even with your health visitor you can't get parenting support without using an interpreter. The interpreter is generally male, may be the wrong dialect or wrong language. May have no*





*buy-in whatsoever to an equalities or social justice human rights approach to the world. The interpreter may be sitting there and saying, 'I can't talk about women's matters' or, 'don't tell these white people our business, you're causing racism. You're a bad woman telling people, talking badly about your husband. You're not a good daughter', etcetera etcetera. The interpreter even is sometimes a sexual predator who's saying, 'yes I'll help you', but they want payment. So you've got very, very difficult issues.*

[Interview with RWG01]

As the stakeholder notes, interpreters occupy a position of power, in which they provide both language and cultural mediation. In a male (interpreter) / female (service user) interpreting dynamic, this dynamic and process of mediation is also gendered.

- i. Interpreters are likely to be men, in front of whom women may feel uncomfortable discussing the causes of their asylum application, or health-related issues
- ii. In the Scottish environment, interpreters of minority languages are highly likely to be part of the same community as the female service user, raising anonymity concerns.
- iii. In the Scottish environment, female speakers of minority languages are in danger of exploitation by male interpreters who present themselves as their 'cultural bridge', or only linguistic mediation option.
- iv. Male interpreters from the same or similar cultures as female service users may feel uncomfortable, or may be ideologically opposed to relating health-, gender-, or sexuality-related concerns, leading to women's issues remaining un-interpreted or misrepresented to service-providers, or entirely unrepresented.
- v. Male interpreters may misinform, threaten or exploit female service users for disclosing information.

Women's organisations had developed their own interpreting protocols, but often encountered issues with other service providers in the sector who disregarded requests for gender-mainstreamed interpreting approaches.

### 3.3 Labour market access

The gender dynamics of labour market access for displaced migrants are inflected with (a) immigration controls and immigration status (b) 'internal' and 'external' gender norms and (c) structural and organisational racism (see Meer et al 2020).

Gendered labour market access included the following:

1. Gender-blind approaches to ESOL provision, education and employability support disproportionately impede refugee women's access to and prospects in the labour market.
2. Under-resourcing or stretched capacity for women-specific language provision and education impeded refugee women from accessing the labour market. Without access to the level of language education often required by employers, displaced women were unable to access the elements of labour market access that could alleviate elements of gender inequality, as a stakeholder noted:



*We believe that if a woman can run a household you can [run a business]. [...] but in the mainstream there's a normal...structures that, that say you have to be able to speak English, a certain level of English to become employed so there's no way forward. [...] There's no real understanding that somebody who doesn't speak English may have masses of skills which you're, which you are not tapping in to. So, if we can employ women, we're also breaking the cycle of disadvantage. We're ensuring that those women aren't kind of victims or...a burden on their [...] welfare rights benefits. We're enabling them to become active citizens. And if they're earning money then they can keep themselves from domestic abuse because they become important as soon as they're bringing in money. They can make decisions which affect their and their children's lives.*

[RWG01]

3. Conservative domestic gender norms encouraged some displaced women to prioritise domestic roles over paid employment. Though some women were happy to fulfil these roles, others were not, but were likely to encounter opposition to accessing the labour market from male family members. Providing employability support therefore required careful negotiation of domestic gender dynamics, and the avoidance of paternalistic emphasis on labour market participation (see Section 4).
4. Displaced women's domestic skills are under-valued and under-recognised as a result of gendered perceptions of what constitutes 'labour' (see Meer et al 2020).
5. Conservative domestic gender norms placed refugee men under considerable pressure to (re)gain status as the family 'breadwinner'.

Stakeholders working with Resettled refugees reported that domestic gender norms created pressure for men to find paid employment and fulfil their role as the family 'provider'. Barriers to the labour market for displaced migrants (including language barriers, the hostile environment, structural and organisational racism) meant that men in some Resettlement areas struggled to find work, and those that did were sometimes under-employed. Stakeholders reported that the struggle of Resettled men to find employment left them 'disempowered and disenfranchised'. A stakeholder commented:

*[you can see it] on the men's faces that they are most desperate to work. [...] It reminds me a' men who lost their jobs in Ravenscraig and industry [...] after a lot a' the steel industry and the coal industries had shut down. [...] They talked about that whole sense of utter, utter [loss], and I still see that on [Syrian] faces of a lot.*

[LA03]

6. Conservative domestic gender norms exerted double pressure on families in which women worked and/or were breadwinners.

A stakeholder reported circumstances in which refugee women had gained employment in social enterprises whilst their husbands had remained unemployed. The stakeholder reported that the families in question were subject to double gendered social pressures: (1) experienced by the employed women, who were told they were not fulfilling



their domestic roles and (2) experienced by the men, who were told they were being emasculated by their wives [Interview with LA03].

7. Employed refugees were subject to gender-discriminatory employer attitudes.

A stakeholder reported circumstances in which a male refugee had been offered a full-time job, but asked to finish early in order to pick his son up from school so that his wife did not have to go out in the dark on her own in winter. The stakeholder reported that the employer promptly rescinded the man's job offer, and the man was left unemployed. In this example, the employer exhibited little understanding of racialised and gendered dynamics of public space, and punished the male refugee for trying to take seriously his wife's safety concerns.

8. Refugee women in employment are frequently under-employed, or placed in positions unlikely to lead to career progression.

Stakeholders from across locations in Scotland reported that though refugee women were able to find voluntary and employed positions, the type of labour offered frequently under-utilised their skills sets, had little to do with their career aspirations and sometimes compounded their social isolation.

*We had, for instance, lots of women doing lots of steaming clothes in the back rooms of charity shops. Nothing changes, their language doesn't necessarily develop. And it's that kind of, 'oh it's great we've got New Scots now' and helping here and helping there but people aren't actually engaging [with the issues].*

[LA03]

Other stakeholders reported that even within third sector organisations with refugee specialisms, employability prospects were limited, and refugee women faced barriers to career progression [Interview with RWG01].







Figure 2: Recommendations made by a social enterprise's women's group for improving refugee and ethnic minority women's access to the labour market. Credit: Hill 2019

#### 9. Women-specific employment services are almost non-existent and chronically under-resourced.

There are no specialist organisations in Scotland dedicated to labour market access for refugee women. Though some third sector organisations with refugee specialisms ran gender-specific employability courses, these were time-limited, subject to significant resourcing pressures and had very limited capacity. The employability programme run by Oxfam to which local third sector organisations referred refugee women had been forced to close, after





high-profile members of the organisation had been investigated for the exploitation of vulnerable women in international disaster zones. Though the employees of the Glasgow-based branch of the organisation had nothing to do with the scandal, they were forced to withdraw the programme after the organisation experienced a significant drop in donations, and could no longer resource their work.

10. Despite stakeholders reporting a track record of refugee women setting up their own businesses, enterprise and entrepreneurship services are gender blind (see Meer et al 2020).



## 4. Gender-based Provision for Displaced Migrants in Scotland

The extent to which service providers and policymakers in Scotland took a gendered approach to their work presented on a spectrum. All service providers and policymakers with whom we spoke were what we might term 'gender-informed' – that is, they were aware of gendered inequalities and how they might impact displaced migrants' wellbeing or social connections. Across both the public and third sector, all service providers and policymakers were also committed to equality of provision across gender identities. How this worked in practice depended upon the type of policy or service in question. Across various Resettlement locations, for instance, local authorities had made efforts to ensure that they reached all members of a Resettled family. A stakeholder explained:

*We make sure there's an equality of opportunity, and that's, I think, really all we can do at this stage. I remember also speaking to colleagues elsewhere and some a' them saying, 'yeah we visit the houses and I've never seen the women', because she always stays in her room or the man puts her out. [...] And we learned from that very quickly, no, that we'd have to understand that this is a unit and this is for us all to work together on.*

[LA03]

However, whilst all policymakers and service providers were committed to equality of provision across gendered identities, how this was done and how (much) it worked was shaped by the extent to which gender was mainstreamed into services and policy. The impact of a gendered approach to service provision was also impacted by other social inequalities experienced by displaced migrants, especially racialised and socioeconomic inequalities. Whilst many of these practices were shaped by internal stakeholder approaches to gender and service provision, they were also shaped by the policy landscape of gender, race and displaced migration in Scotland, itself messy, inconsistent and unequal. In this section, we (1) map out the spectrum of gender approaches to displacement in Scotland (2) identify tensions in the dynamics of service provision and (3) link the former to findings to existing policy landscapes in Scotland.

### 4.1 Stakeholder approaches to gendered services

In interviews with stakeholders across the three 'integration' categories (accommodation, language provision and labour market access), GLIMER Research found that stakeholders' approach to gendered service provision fell into three categories, as follows:

#### 1. Services that remained 'gender blind'

'Gender blind' services can be characterised by an absence of consideration given to (a) gendered dynamics between service-providers and service-users, (b) gendered inequalities between service-users (c) the gendered consequences of service provision.

The majority of service providers with whom we worked did not take a gender-blind approach to displaced migration, however, gender-blindness was evident in some cases. For instance, when speaking to stakeholders responsible for government-led enterprise and entrepreneurship services, a stakeholder reported that an enterprise support scheme sought to provide *equivalent* support to all service users, so that there would be



'provision for a disabled woman refugee as much as for a white man' [Interview with DGV01]. Whilst this scheme sought to treat service users equally, it assumed (1) that the needs and positions of a 'disabled refugee woman' and a 'white man' are the same (2) that the needs and positions of a 'white man' are the norm. By remaining 'blind' to the gendered, racialised and disability differences between the two services users, the service provider operated services that did not necessarily fit the needs of refugee women, and which were often inaccessible from the start. A stakeholder from a displaced women's organisation noted that for there to be equality of access enterprise and employability opportunities, policymakers and service providers needed to actively build-in support for those experiencing inequality:

*Employability is a massive issue. [...] And what we say is that there are ways of setting social enterprise and employability and training routes and employability routes that have to be trauma aware, they have to provide childcare, they have to be gender specific so that women feel safe. And you have to look on the women as a resource, not as a problem. All those women, without exception, have got high aspirations, they've all got skills.*

[RWG01]

## 2. Policies and services that treated gendered inequalities seriously, but targeted gender as a separate or 'specialist' category

Many of the third sector refugee specialist stakeholders actively recognised the gendered dynamics of displaced migration, and the additional vulnerability of displaced migrants to gender-based violence. Though the large majority of these organisations retained a wide focus on issues related to displaced migration, many of them had taken measures within their organisations to develop gender specialisms, or gender sub-groups. Gender sub-groups provided (limited) resourcing and space for displaced women to socialise and strategise about issues that directly affected them. Spaces that were separate from the organisation's broad operations were welcomed by attendees because they provided (a) opportunities away from domestic or employment environments to organise on issues related to gender (b) opportunities away from male and/or white dominated environments to discuss issues arising in their lives and (c) women-focussed, peer support. A member of a displaced women's group explained:

*We started off as [a generalist asylum group] but because of certain cultures, women and men don't work together so, that's how [the women's group] was brought up, so that we can give women a voice in their own space, because the minute men are involved, women from other cultures just take a step back, because men are the ones that have to take lead. So, if you put women together they can just talk because there's no-one to lead them.*

*[...] So if men are involved women are not going to tell us about the issues they have. So what [the women's group] has done... it is kind of giving women the voice to say this is a totally different culture. If there is an issue in the house, you don't tell your men. You can automatically phone another women service with women that can help you. That's how it started.*

[RWG03]





Attachment to larger third sector organisations provided some resourcing stability for women's interest groups. However, it also presented difficulties related to autonomy and representation, particularly because within the parent organisation, the work of the women's group was likely to remain a 'specialist' issue, rather than be mainstreamed.

Transwomen were welcomed by all displaced women's groups with whom we spoke. During our research, we did not encounter any gender sub-groups that specialised in providing support to trans people.

### 3. Gender-mainstreamed approaches

A 'gender-mainstreamed' approach to displaced migration (a) prioritises the needs and experiences of gender minorities (b) foregrounds the gendered impact of services and policies and (c) views gender as the organising factor in experiences of inequality.

Examples of gender-mainstreamed approaches taken by Scottish service-providers to integration categories include:

- Women-only spaces for ESOL
- Women-only spaces for labour market access
- Women-only spaces for physical and mental health education
- Women-only spaces for socialising
- Women-led, community-based policy advocacy
- Displaced women 'community champions'
- Active community outreach work by public sector organisations
- Gender-mainstreamed interpreting policies
- Combatting Violence Against Women men's groups
- Provision of childcare for women-only services
- Provision of childcare for all services
- Signposting rights to and pathways for access to childcare

Despite the diversity of women-specific services provided by third sector organisations, services were extremely patchworked, uncoordinated and chronically under-resourced.

At the time of research, the two most active refugee-women-led groups in Scotland were under huge financial pressure. One had ceased operations, and the other was in an extremely precarious position. Other women-focussed ESOL and employability services had also ceased operations as a result of under-resourcing. Those who remained operational did so on very limited resources, and struggled to get a policy foothold.

We return to these issues below.

## 4.2 The gendered dynamics of service provision: race and paternalism

The extent to which stakeholders adopted gendered approaches to displaced migration, and the frameworks through which they applied these approaches shaped the types of services and spaces to which displaced women



had access. However, whilst stakeholders' gender approaches impacted the type of services on offer in Scotland, the gendered *dynamics* of service provision had an impact on the extent to which they were effective, holistic, ethical and achieved equalities objectives.

GLIMER Research identified several features of service provision in which gender dynamics between service providers and service users were not always equal. They included:

1. An over-representation of male service providers in areas in which refugee women may be especially vulnerable created accessibility issues

Women's groups raised concerns over the accessibility of services headed by, or predominantly delivered by men, as they had potential to act as barriers for vulnerable displaced women, especially those with experience of gender based violence, and/or mental health or trauma issues, or of gender-conservative cultures. Stakeholders noted that displaced women were less likely to access these services because they felt unsafe, that they would not be taken seriously, or that they would be actively discriminated against. Stakeholders reported that this was also the case for services dominated by white employees, for which some displaced women anticipated a doubled barrier to access that would be both gendered and racialised. [Interview with RWG04].

2. Service provider attitudes towards displaced migrants' gender-cultures deployed gendered, Orientalist stereotypes to describe displaced migrants' gender norms

Stakeholders took seriously their responsibilities to provide services that did not discriminate on the grounds of gender. In doing so, they often encountered different approaches to gender roles, including the conservative domestic attitudes documented in Section 3 above. Service providers reported that they were committed both to their 'equality' duties and to remaining respectful of cultural differences. However, stakeholders' representation of service users, particularly those of conservative Muslim backgrounds, sometimes drew on gendered and Orientalist tropes that represented Muslim women as 'oppressed', Muslim men as 'oppressors' and Syrian society as 'under-developed'. For instance, in conversation, stakeholders presented female, Muslim women as desiring Western 'freedoms'.

*As I say our view is that it's absolute equality. So, and we've had discussions wi' women who once they've been here a while are saying, 'I'm no living like this [laughs]. I see how Western women live. They don't put up wi' this shit. If I wanted a house on ma own would you get me one?' 'Absolutely, of course we would'. You know, cause we do go through legal issues, we do go through equality issues and issues about, you know, domestic violence and stuff.*

[LA04]

*How many are seeing a career at the end of [our employability services], I think that'll have to [be the result of] a cultural change in, or cultural shift in Syria where women, you know, if they're working at all...*

[LA02]



In the comments above, the issues with which the service users are dealing – i.e. supporting a refugee woman to move to her own accommodation following domestic vulnerability, or assisting a refugee woman to find employment – are important parts of providing equality of opportunity, and a gender-equal service. However, the way in which they frame these activities positions service providers as ‘more advanced’ and morally superior, and creates a discriminatory, gendered and racialised power dynamic.

3. There are inadequate training opportunities for or discussion about the role of race and gender in service provision for displaced migrants

Stakeholders were aware that the gendered dynamics between service providers and service users also involved inequalities of power and racialised assumptions. Service users, including some of those quoted above, acknowledged that a lack of experience of or outdated knowledge about gendered approaches to displaced migration had potential to impact the way in which they designed and executed services. However, when questioned about whether they had sought further advice or training, stakeholders reported a lack of knowledge about who to approach, inconsistent advice and no strong policy steer. We return to this topic below.

### 4.3 Representation and policy-making infrastructure

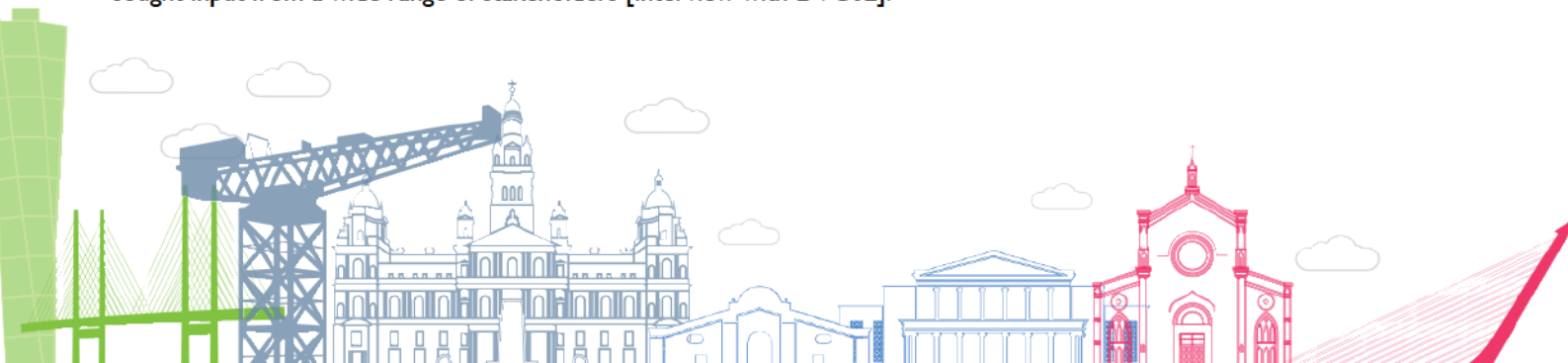
In interviews, stakeholders reported that political and policy leads from the Scottish Government both on topics related directly to gender (i.e. the feminist approach of the current First Minister, and the profile of Close the Gap) and on topics related to displaced migration (i.e. the pro-migration stance of the Scottish Government and *New Scots*) had been helpful in (a) providing direction for service-providers and (b) mainstreaming often under-recognised topics. However, stakeholders noted that the absence of a conjoined, coherent gendered policy approach to displaced migration in Scotland meant that key issues affecting people outside the gender norm were unacknowledged, unaddressed and chronically under-resourced (as also evidenced above).

This was something of a self-perpetuating cycle. Despite efforts by the Scottish Government in recent rounds of policy development to engage with equalities sector organisations, and with ‘community’ representatives,<sup>2</sup> key expertise was often missing because under-resourcing meant that refugee groups with gender specialisms (1) did not have capacity for policy work (2) did not have a sufficient profile to be approached for engagement or (3) did not have resourcing to support their members to attend consultations.

1. Policy makers seeking to engage with refugee women’s groups do not actively account for the additional barriers associated with women’s experiences of displaced migration (i.e. that women are likely to be primary caregivers, have extremely limited social and socioeconomic support)

In the development of *New Scots*, policymakers had actively sought out the input of a refugee women’s group based in Glasgow. However, though the group initially engaged with the consultation process, the partnership encountered difficulties prior to the final development of the *New Scots* policy:

<sup>2</sup> This has been the case both for recent gender legislation, such as the Domestic Violence Act, which was developed in close partnership with women’s organisations in Scotland. It was also the case with the most recent iteration of *New Scots*, which sought input from a wide range of stakeholders [Interview with DVG02].





*So they came, interestingly until about nine months before the right sort of early 2017 at which point their funding stopped. And I think it probably included childcare and transport costs as well. So they didn't come any more.*

[DGV02]

One of the women's groups involved in the development of the *New Scots* strategy noted that for their members, childcare was a significant barrier for participation in the consultation activities, especially after they had exhausted their internal funding options and alternatives were not available from the Scottish Government.

*My personal opinion, [...] is that all [New Scots] partners are benefitting from [the women's group's] expertise. And so I think that fund should come centrally because if you [the Government] can't provide childcare you miss a woman who has an amazing experience and knowledge.*

[RWG02]

Refugee women's groups reported similar barriers for consultation work with high-profile women's groups.

*So I mean there is one agency who was really keen to have [the women's group] involved with some engagement work to inform policy. And it would have made a big difference, but the thing is all their engagement work was happening in Edinburgh at 2pm so it's school times. You know, and this is a feminist policy organisation and I appreciate that they've got reduced resources too but, are there other ways you could do that? [...] Ultimately, I appreciate sometimes these inputs are best done when women can share with other women and be part of that. But failing that is there like outreach they could do? The women[s group] just couldnae make it: the people who would have otherwise been free were like, 'well I've got childcare in the afternoon' or 'the time it takes me for travel to Edinburgh there and then come back [...] what do I do, in terms of dropping my child off to school when I've gotta take the train?'*

[RWG02]

2. Despite policymakers' efforts to engage with community expertise, women's groups often reported that their inclusion was tokenistic

A stakeholder from a displaced women's group recalled her own experience of being involved in policymaking:

*It is frustrating to be honest because you get invited along to things, yes. So pretty much that's a box ticked... [...] So basically we feel that we go along to these meetings, but you're just there as a body, nothing else. You know, we've got things [to say] and we believe that because we have the lived experience of the process we should be listened to. And [policymakers should] not only listen to what we say, [it] should be acted upon... [...] because I've sat in [policy] meetings [...] and there are all these professionals sitting there. Different professionals sitting there, talking about us as though they were the experts. But I believe we are the experts and we should be having some input into that. So [laughs] unfortunately the experience hasn't really been positive.*

[RWG02]



If they had been approached to participate in policymaking activities, members of displaced women's groups reported that they often felt that they had been included for altruistic or equality reasons rather than for their expertise. One stakeholder reported an event organiser directly telling her that she had been asked to speak solely to fulfil their 'diversity' criteria [Interview with RWG04]. Another stakeholder suggested:

*I think [policymakers] could do better to actually look at what they're missing, you know, by not doing this. It's not just, 'oh what should we do we do for people'. It's like, 'well what are you missing from this'. You're missing specialist knowledge, you know.*

[RWG02]

3. Policy-producing Black, and Ethnic Minority women's groups, and refugee women's groups are unrepresented in the Scottish policymaking sector.

Though there are Black and Ethnic Minority women's groups, and displaced women's groups providing community-level advocacy, none have regular access to the policy-making sector, or are seen as 'policy producing' by gender policymakers.

*So we have other organisations we could work with but their capacity to engage with the question of gender and women is very reduced and so we have unofficial discussions. Representatives from their organisations are brought into our pan women's sector conversations about cross cutting policy issues like the public sector equality duty, for example. [...] But they don't have enough capacity to engage on all the fronts we want them to [...] And they have funding and resource challenges that are, I'd say, greater than ours. There are not any, I think at the moment, non-grass roots organisations for women of colour in Scotland. So we engage with the outputs of a variety of organisations, but because they're not in the policy space, that becomes then a bit of a challenge.*

[GO1]

4. Black, and Ethnic Minority women's groups, and refugee women's groups reported extremely challenging resourcing issues which prevented them from developing capacity to engage in policy activities.

The only specialist displaced women's organisation who actively gender-mainstreamed their services, and who had successful, grassroots policy-producing programmes for displaced women reported that in the last 6 months, they had 80% of their funding slashed and was unsure whether they had a long-term future. [Interview with RWG01].

5. Despite seeking-out 'community' expertise, Scottish Government approaches rely on representational infrastructures from which Black and Ethnic Minority women's groups and refugee women's groups are systemically excluded.

A Scottish Government stakeholder explained in current community development infrastructure, gaps in Government efforts to engage with 'hard to reach' groups, such as displaced women's or Black and Ethnic Minority women's groups would likely be the result of corresponding gaps in local knowledge:



*I think that's a local level kind of issue. I think, because of the way the partners work, their work is informed by what they know of their local communities. So, and those local communities are whoever it is that present themselves to services looking to access provision. We all know that there are known unknowns but I think at this point we have to work with what we know is there.*

[DGV03]

Though the stakeholder acknowledged that there are 'known unknowns' who would likely fall between the gaps of community development infrastructure, they planned to initially focus their efforts on working with groups with some existing representational capital.

6. Scottish policymaking on both gender and displaced migration largely remained siloed, and did not actively take into account how gender, race and immigration status interact.

*I think the fact that the leadership on gender and women has not been reflected on race, [...] is one of the stumbling blocks in terms of policy making. And we've moved very quickly to describing or talking about intersectionality as a buzz word that has no content whatsoever. And I think that those conditions, coupled with even now the relatively marginal space for taking a gendered approach that's really got some gender analysis, means that the conversation quickly becomes very stuck in the mud.*

[GO1]

A stakeholder from a displaced women's group explained the potential gaps in this approach:

*There could be a lack of awareness of the specific challenges that refugee and asylum seeking women face. So, if policy is looking at meeting the needs of women in general, it will miss out what a refugee and asylum seeking woman has to come up against. Because there's a double layer there that generally women will face. And then a woman from a refugee background, that's like extra challenges. So, if those are not taken into consideration then that policy will not meet the needs of the women. For example, there might be language challenges which someone who's local to Glasgow will not have to face. So, if my language needs are not being met, if I'm maybe going along to a course, going along to a meeting, going to a hospital, stuff like that then that leaves me out, that excludes me because I'm not on the same level as everyone else. So, there's the second layer of challenges that women from refugee backgrounds will face that need to be put into consideration every time if they're going to meet their needs.*

[RWG02]

7. Despite collaborative policy development work, and an interest in gender-mainstreaming, the second iteration of *New Scots* does not provide a strong lead on matters relating to gender.

Both the first and second iterations of *New Scots* identify gender as category of inequality that interacts with displaced migrants' integration prospects. In the development of the second *New Scots* strategy, policymakers had actively sought input from gender-specialist organisations. Policymakers recognised that displaced, gender minorities may experience additional barriers across different integration categories, and therefore sought to facilitate a gendered approach to all areas of *New Scots*, as a stakeholder noted:





*[After New Scots 1] it still felt like there had been areas where it might have been useful to have taken a step back and thought is there an additional barrier to women being part of this or are there additional things that impact in gender terms around these things. And [with New Scots 2] that's where we're wanting to make sure that we don't miss that opportunity. So from a policy perspective we're [...] trying to build into the theme groups when they're considering actions: don't forget these particular groups where we've identified there can be additional barriers. Have you thought about whether there are barriers that you want to mitigate against when you're planning actions? So while it might not necessarily be [that] you must do a very women-focused project – because that is also sort of splitting them – it's instead going, 'well is there a factor that you've not considered? Or if that comes up, how are you going to mitigate that?'*

[DVG04]

Whilst it is encouraging that policymakers had sought to position a gender mainstreamed approach to integration as a cornerstone of *New Scots*, this arguably is not strongly communicated in the strategy document. Though gender inequality is acknowledged throughout the document as a disadvantaging factor in asylum seekers' and refugees' experiences, it is not a theme that is actively addressed in the detail of the strategy's core integration areas. Policymakers also appeared reluctant to support the idea of gender-differentiated integration activities, to prevent the impression that services were being 'split' or certain groups favoured over others. Throughout GLIMER Research, stakeholders reported that *New Scots* provided welcome support for and a sense of direction to the work that they were undertaking; however, they also noted that there was little in *New Scots* to guide them through the often complex gendered environments that they encountered in their day-to-day work. Though there is therefore potential in the *New Scots* infrastructure to develop an 'integrated' approach to gender inequality and integration, to-date it is under-developed.



## 5. Conclusions

The gendered dynamics of integration impact displaced gender minorities' access to social equality. Gendered immigration and integration systems have the capacity to adversely impact people with normative gender identities as well as gender minorities. Understanding gender as one of many 'technologies' that can be mobilised to control and regulate displaced migrants in the UK pulls the focus away from siloed discussions about gender oppression, and towards an expansive analysis of how gendered assumptions and gendered systems are mobilised to sustain structural inequality for asylum seekers and refugees from their point of arrival in the UK and their interaction with the immigration system, through to their access to integration services and support. This is not to say that the differences between the gendered violence and vulnerabilities encountered by specific gender minorities should be disregarded, nor that long-fought battles for the recognition of, for instance, displaced women's experiences, be dismissed, but rather that the inequalities exacted upon displaced, cisgender women, trans, non-binary and queer people should be analysed as part of the same gender-machinery.

In the UK, the immigration systems produce gender-discriminatory effects from the point of arrival, affecting displaced, gender minorities' claims for asylum and refuge, subsequent immigration prospects and access to basic amenities. The UK asylum system creates unsafe and precarious housing environments, to which all displaced migrants are subject, but to which gender minorities are particularly vulnerable. In the meantime, access to integration services, such as language education and employability training presents on a gender hierarchy, where displaced women are likely to face multiple barriers. Gender inequality within integration services is highly likely to have long-term, disadvantageous and accumulative effects on displaced women's and other gender minorities' prospects for 'integration', social connections, educational opportunity and labour market access. Addressing the gender inequalities embedded in integration approaches and services is key to combatting disadvantages experienced by displaced migrants.

GLIMER Research indicates that the risk and extent of gender inequality is exacerbated by the 'two-tier' immigration system created by the Dispersal and Resettlement programmes. The designation of asylum seekers as having No Recourse to Public Funds, and the no-choice, coercive infrastructure of the Dispersal Scheme systematically creates gender inequality, and leaves asylum seeker women, girls and other gender minorities at risk of homelessness, destitution and exploitation, should their allocated Dispersal accommodation become unsafe. In these circumstances, local authorities and publicly-funded, third sector women's refuges are restricted by the devolved/reserved settlement in the support that they can offer displaced women. Though stakeholders suggested that devolved powers on housing and action on homelessness may create scope for both local authorities and the Scottish Government to better support destitute, displaced women, stakeholders also noted there were political barriers to doing so. The Resettlement programme, overseen by the Home Office, but designed and delivered by participating local authorities, gives local stakeholders far more scope to develop localised approaches to refugee support, through which systemic gender inequality might be addressed. For instance, Resettlement teams have been closely involved in the reception and administration of Resettled refugees' housing, mitigating the dangers of unmanaged reception points and 'clustered' housing experienced in other immigration pathways (such as Dispersal). Resettlement has also allowed scope for refugee-led service design, initially resulting in gender-differentiated language education spaces in some localities, though these no longer take place.



The challenges of designing integration services that catered for (a) people of different genders and (b) people with conservative gender values were widely reported by stakeholders involved in language education and employability training. Organisations led by displaced women expressed a preference that women should have the option to attend gender-differentiated language and employability training because it (1) decreased the likelihood of domestic opposition to their attendance (2) enabled them to learn without having to perform gendered deference to male learners (3) provided a space in which they felt safe, and (4) provided a space in which they could discuss opinions and issues they felt unable to elsewhere. In contrast, stakeholders saw the provision of gender-differentiated classes as reneging on their own commitments to gender equality, and noted that resourcing constraints made them implausible. Service providers' approaches both to requests for gender-differentiated services and to displaced clients' conservative gender values at times were paternalistic and justified on the Orientalist grounds that their approach offered displaced women emancipation from a gender-oppressive background. With no national steer, either from *New Scots* or Scottish Government gender policies on the intersectional, gendered complexities of service provision for displaced migrants, the interaction of gender with integration policy tended to be worked-out at local level. In some circumstances, this had resulted in provision that actively and specifically targeted displaced women; however, these were outliers rather than the norm. Although in Glasgow, some organisations offered specific courses or training for displaced women, in Glasgow and across Scotland, displaced women's services were chronically under-resourced.

GLIMER Research maps how gender inequality is a driver of inequality in many areas that are integral to integration processes and services. Understanding how gender interacts with experiences of displacement, and how both gender and displacement interact with race is key to addressing disadvantage experienced by displaced migrants in Scotland. Treating 'integration' as a gendered process does not mean that one group is given 'more attention' than others; rather it means that approaches to integration consider how they produce gendered effects for displaced people of all genders, and that service providers and policymakers take proportional action to address them. In the current environment, this means that the needs of displaced, gender minorities, which are currently chronically and prohibitively under-resourced are better and more robustly supported.

In the current political context, in which the Scottish Government has shown feminist leadership, and in which *New Scots* supports the case for a progressive, two-way approach to integration, there is opportunity in Scotland to create a distinctive gender-mainstreamed approach to 'integration' policy for asylum seekers and refugees. Given the increased social inequality that is likely to result from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the disproportionate impact it is likely to have on displaced migrants, and especially displaced gender minorities, the case for developing a gender-mainstreamed approach in Scotland, and doing so now, is one which has considerable urgency.





## Postscript: The impact of COVID-19 on gender dynamics and displaced migration in Scotland

The research on which this report is based is drawn from fieldwork that concluded weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in Spring 2020. Whilst the findings of this report therefore reflect a pre-COVID environment, they nevertheless highlight issues related to gender inequality that have persisted throughout the pandemic, and continue to require the attention of policymakers and service providers. These include: gendered inequalities relating to language provision and labour market access, gendered inequalities arising from both domestic and service provision environments, the absence of asylum seeking and refugee women in policymaking infrastructure in Scotland, and the absence of specialised gender provision in Scottish integration and migration policies, including New Scots.

However, the challenges posed by COVID-19 have brought both additional challenges and changes to this landscape. COVID, and associated pandemic policies, such as lockdown and social distancing, have had disproportionate impact on racialised and ethnic minority populations,<sup>3</sup> increased the vulnerability of displaced migrants living in precarious housing or immigration conditions, and have resulted in gender equality setbacks for women in labour market and domestic spheres.<sup>4</sup> Refugee and asylum seeking women are at the intersection of these additional inequalities, which are being exacted upon them in addition to the already-established inequalities of pre-pandemic conditions.

Emerging research indicates that (a) restrictions directly related to pandemic control and (b) restrictions resulting from immigration policy decisions associated with the pandemic have increased the threat to refugee and asylum seeking women at risk of SGBV. A report from the Centre for Gender History at the University of Glasgow indicates that lockdown and social distancing policies exacerbate 'overcrowding, poverty and domestic violence, [and] advising female complainants to stay put, [... resulting in] homelessness as the only alternative to abusive living conditions' [p.2],<sup>5</sup> conditions which all also increase the risk of COVID. The report also notes that displaced women face:

*[the] heightened immediacy of the persisting difficulties endured by migrant women during the current crisis, such as being unable to access food banks, hardship funds and support networks as well as lack of foreign language resources [...] Additionally, with sometimes limited access to internet or phone credit such women struggle to seek help from non-governmental bodies often being left to destitution and homelessness. [...] During self-isolation such dangers become more immediate and the heightened pressure on resources renders these women virtually abandoned. Cut off from support networks, financial help and other resources during this crisis, migrant women have very little recourse to protect themselves from destitution and abuse.<sup>6</sup>*

Whilst refugee women are not prevented from accessing the labour market, gendered and bordered labour market inequalities have also been exacerbated by pandemic conditions, resulting in a higher likelihood that refugee women will experience labour market precarity, exploitation, and under-employment. Recent work by Mumtaz (2020)<sup>7</sup>

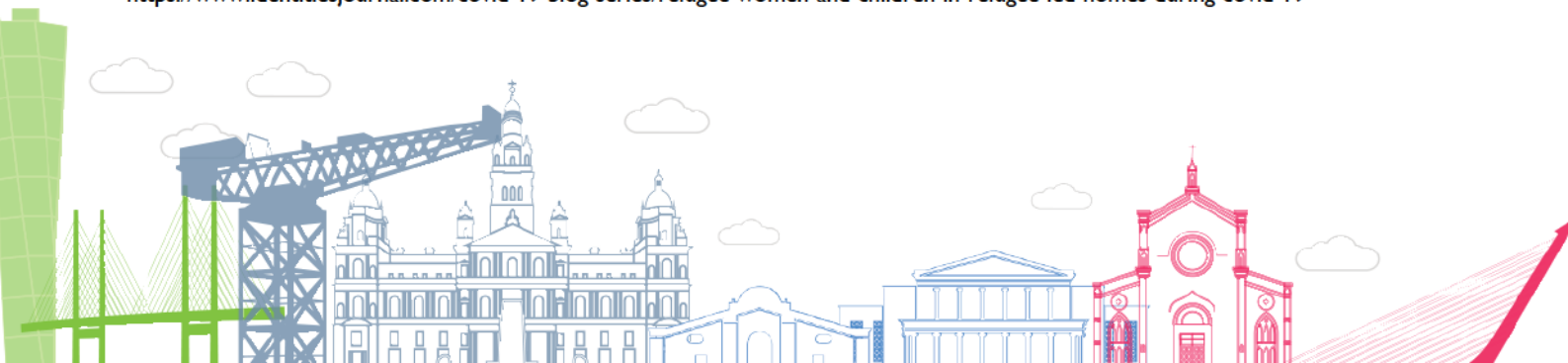
<sup>3</sup> <https://ghpu.sps.ed.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/14-May-SCOTLAND-COVID19-and-ethnic-minorities-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.identitiesjournal.com/covid-19-blog-series/refugee-women-and-children-in-refugee-led-homes-during-covid-19>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media\\_723111\\_smxx.pdf](https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_723111_smxx.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.identitiesjournal.com/covid-19-blog-series/refugee-women-and-children-in-refugee-led-homes-during-covid-19>



also indicates that as refugee women are likely to be employed in frontline industries such as healthcare, and food chain supply, they are at an increased risk of contracting COVID.

In Scotland, stakeholders reported significant challenges in service provision for asylum seekers and refugees throughout the pandemic. Ongoing Home Office policies related to the accommodation of asylum seekers with NRPF in hotels<sup>8</sup> has resulted in the erosion of mobility, rights and resources for one of the most vulnerable migrant groups.<sup>9</sup> Previous GLIMER research has highlighted how policies that support temporary accommodation practices are detrimental to women and girls, because they increase the likelihood of exploitation and the risk of SGBV.<sup>10</sup> Policies that rely on the accommodation of displaced migrants in hotels are also likely to exacerbate these threats, as well as the risk of infection.

Stakeholders have also reported that pandemic conditions have forced rapid and considerable changes to service provision. Lockdown and social distancing has resulted in many organisations moving to online services for activities such as ESOL provision, community activities and resettlement team 'visits'. In some local authority areas, such as Glasgow, access to online services has remained an issue, especially for displaced migrants who may not have access to a reliable internet connection. In other local authority areas, resettlement teams have been able to address the issue by securing funding to provide digital devices for each resettled family.

For the resettlement areas with internet accessibility, the move online has facilitated an increasingly gender-equal approach. One stakeholder noted that post-COVID online ESOL meant that:

*classes are no longer geographical, but clustered around ability and availability. This change has seen an increase in the numbers of women with young children attending. It's also seen an improvement in the quality of the learning - more intimate and person centred. Some older women (55+) are not engaging online but were not showing signs of language progression in ESOL classes previously.*

The stakeholder also reported improvements in the gender-dynamics of pastoral services for resettled refugees:

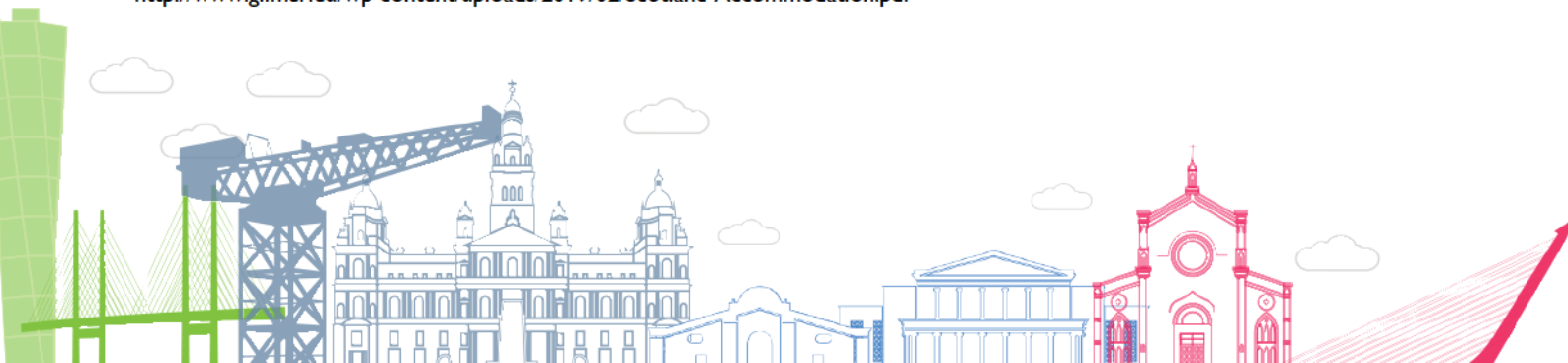
*Again, post Covid we do virtual visits now. [The] agreement is the whole family are present so they can all ask questions. This has changed the dynamic from the man being in control at home visits and the woman making coffee or moving around. We ask everyone to make their coffee and sit together. This has resulted in more women and young people expressing views and raising issues or just making conversation.*

However, whilst the move to online provision for some aspects of displaced services has opened up new possibilities for gender-equal service design, their longevity and sustainability remains wholly uncertain in ongoing pandemic conditions.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.glimer.eu/notes-on-hotel-detention-race-and-the-george-square-protests-in-glasgow/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.refugeewomenconnect.org.uk/news/home-affairs-select-committee-report-on-home-office-preparedness-for-covid-19-released-today>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.glimer.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Scotland-Accommodation.pdf>



## Appendix A

### Abbreviations and Acronyms

BAME - Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority

CEDAW - Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women

ECHR - European Convention on Human Rights

ESOL - English for Speakers of Other Languages

FGM - Female Genital Mutilation

GCC - Glasgow City Council

GLIMER - Governance and Local Integration of Migrants and Europe's Refugees

LGBTQI - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer and Intersex

NGB - Non-Governmental Body

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

PSED - Public Sector Equality Duty

SECHR - Scottish Equality and Human Rights Commission

SGBV - Sexual and Gender Based Violence

UNHRC - United Nations Human Rights Commission

### Interview Codes

Code	Stakeholder category
DGV	Devolved Government
ED	Educational Institution
LA	Local Authority
GO	Gender Organisation
NGB	Non-Government Body
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
RWG	Refugee Women's Groups





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