

MCDF Question & Answer

Farhad Neghipooran, Persian Cultural Association for the May 2009 meeting:

Equality or Inequality?

It is a real challenge for Refugee groups to survive and sustain. Shouldn't the Council feel responsible to the basic monthly rent of the voluntary/refugee community organisations in Derby, which are delivering services to the public?

If not, then what kind of relationship is there between the Council and these voluntary/refugee/community groups?

What about the survival and sustainability of these groups?

Response Katy Wing, Voluntary and Community Sector Partnerships Manager:

I can only partially answer the question, in that there will be an opportunity for voluntary and community groups to apply to the Community Grants Budget to support the needs of new and emerging communities during 2009/10 and this includes groups which support refugees. However, it must be acknowledged that there are currently insufficient funds available from the corporate grant funding budget to adequately meet the needs of refugees. As you know, grant funding allocations are ultimately political decisions.

We are aware that there are significant barriers for refugees in accessing statutory and other services, including language barriers, and that many refugees have experienced trauma, conflict and persecution and have a high level of need for support. I would say that support for refugees is a responsibility which is shared across Children and Young People's services, Adult Social Services, Housing, the Community Safety Partnership and NHS Derby City. I think it would be helpful to clarify the Council's statutory duties to support refugees, what is currently being done to discharge these responsibilities and how best to address shortfalls in support. I suggest a starting point would be to ask legal services for information about our statutory responsibilities with respect to refugees and then collate a response across departments about how they are currently supporting refugees and any gaps and issues that have been identified.

I think this would make for a more meaningful and constructive response than just focussing on why there isn't adequate grant funding for voluntary refugee groups.