

DIMA
Humanitarian
Settlement

Discussion Paper

Community Support for Refugees

a component of

**THE INTEGRATED HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT
STRATEGY**

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Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWARD FROM THE MINISTER	3
SECTION 1 IHSS SERVICE MODEL	
1.1 The IHSS service model	4
1.2 IHSS outcomes	4
1.3 IHSS service principles	6
1.4 Volunteers and the IHSS service model	7
1.5 Integration of CSR in the IHSS service model	7
	7
SECTION 2 COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES	
2.1 Registration	8
2.2 Legal indemnity and insurance	8
2.3 Code of conduct	8
2.4 Character checks	8
2.5 Training and support	9
2.6 Service agreements	9
2.7 Referrals	10
2.8 Time period for CSR services	10
2.9 Accountability	10
2.10 Recognition	10
2.11 CSR advisory panel	11
	11
2.12 Evaluation	11
SECTION 3 ADDITIONAL SERVICES	12
SECTION 4 CONCLUSION	13
ATTACHMENT A	14

SECTION 1

INTEGRATED HUMANITARIAN SETTLEMENT STRATEGY SERVICE MODEL

1.1 The IHSS Service Model

A new service delivery model, under the Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Strategy (IHSS), has been developed to more effectively and efficiently deliver services to Humanitarian Program entrants.

The IHSS model recognises that entrants, on arrival in Australia, need:

- a. immediate temporary accommodation from the day of their arrival, followed by assistance to find longer-term accommodation;
- b. income support through Centrelink, access to Medicare, English language tuition and information and assistance on topics such as children's schooling, employment, and banking;
- c. a health assessment and referral to appropriate medical and psychology specialists;
- d. assistance in acquiring household items to establish a home; and
- e. support by people in the community.

1.2 IHSS outcomes

To ensure that the needs of humanitarian entrants are met, the IHSS service model focuses on the outcomes of the settlement services being provided. The services to meet the specific needs and the outcomes expected from service providers are given below:

- a. Service - *Initial Information and Orientation Assistance:*
Outcome - the entrant has the knowledge, skills and support to begin to build their life as part of the Australian community.
- b. Service - *Accommodation Support:*
Outcome - the entrant has stable, affordable and appropriate longer-term accommodation as soon as possible after their arrival in Australia.

- c. Service - *Household Formation Support.*
Outcome - the entrant has the basic material requirements to establish a household in Australia.
- d. Service - *Community Support for Refugees:*
Outcomes - the entrant has the knowledge, confidence and support to actively participate in the social, cultural and sporting life of the Australian community; and
- the community, at a local level, has an appreciation of the issues relating to Humanitarian Program entrants and generates support for their settlement and inclusion in the community.
- e. Service - *Early Health Assessment and Intervention:*
Outcome - the entrant is aware of their immediate physical and psychological health needs and has the skills, common knowledge and confidence to access the relevant health services, including torture and trauma counselling, in order to address current and on-going health needs.
- f. Service - *Proposers' Support:*
Outcome - proposers of Humanitarian Program entrants understand their obligations and are able to respond, to the best of their ability, to the needs of entrants.
- g. Service - *Service Providers' Support:*
Outcomes - the IHSS service providers are equipped to meet:
- (A) the service needs of eligible Humanitarian Program entrants in the initial stages of settlement; and
 - (B) their obligations as contracted service providers, employers, partners and tenants where relevant.
- Humanitarian Program entrants' settlement is expanded by the capacity of the voluntary sector to deliver services.

1.3 IHSS Service Principles

Service principles have been developed to ensure the needs of humanitarian entrants are met. As a result, all those providing services to humanitarian entrants – Government, commercial contractors, non-government

organisations and community volunteers – are required to conform with these principles.

These principles are:

- (i) Humanitarian Program entrants are individuals who have the inherent right to respect for their human worth and dignity;
- (ii) Humanitarian Program entrants are able to exercise choice;
- (iii) Humanitarian Program entrants are informed and involved in decision-making;
- (iv) Services are designed and administered so as to promote Humanitarian program entrants' competence and to discourage dependency;
- (v) The health and well-being of Humanitarian Program entrants are protected;
- (vi) The best interests of children are taken into account;
- (vii) The least intrusive and the least disruptive option which offers the highest degree of stability and certainty is selected;
- (viii) Traditional, cultural and religious values are respected;
- (ix) Services and decisions are ethical and Humanitarian Program entrants are not exploited;
- (x) Services promote participation of Humanitarian Program entrants in the wider community and their understanding of legal obligations;
- (xi) Organisations providing services are accountable to those who use their services and the Commonwealth; and
- (xii) Humanitarian entrants are enabled to access services in a coordinated way which minimises gaps and duplication between services received.

1.4 Volunteers and the IHSS service model

The important contribution of individual volunteers and voluntary community organisations in the settlement of Humanitarian Program entrants is an integral part of the IHSS service model.

The service specifications for each of the service types require contractors to accommodate the interests of volunteers and voluntary community

organisations in delivering services. However, the contractor will be responsible for achieving the outcomes of their service.

Volunteers and voluntary community organisations are able to choose how they will provide services to humanitarian entrants in the IHSS service model. These include:

- (i) Registering as a Community Support for Refugees (CSR) group; and/or
- (ii) Working with IHSS contractors to participate in the delivery of services;

Contractors will be required to provide regular reports to the Department on the level of involvement of individual volunteers and voluntary community organisations.

1.5 Integration of CSR in the IHSS service model

Ensuring community support for refugees is crucial in the successful long-term settlement of humanitarian entrants. This support, through community based volunteers, has therefore been identified as a separate service type within the IHSS service model.

Whilst CSR is a separate service type within the IHSS service model, and CSR groups will be responsible for the achievement of CSR outcomes, it is not intended that CSR groups work in isolation from other components of the model. Examples of how CSR groups could integrate with the IHSS service model are at Attachment A.

The contractor/s for Initial Information and Orientation Assistance will assess the needs of Humanitarian entrants after arrival in Australia and refer the entrants to other IHSS service providers, including CSR groups.

For discussion

How can voluntary groups assist in providing humanitarian entrants support to actively participate in the Australian community, in a manner that allows choice and encourages non-dependency?

How can we measure the Community Support for Refugees outcomes?

SECTION 2 COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES

2.1 Registration

Voluntary community organisations who wish to participate in the Community Support for Refugees will need to register with the Service Providers Support contractor. The initial registration will be with DIMA.

The registration of CSR groups will enable such groups to be assisted in their support for refugees while enabling activities and outcomes to be reported.

For discussion

How should the CSR registration process work?

What guidelines should apply for the registration process?

2.2 Training and Support for CSR groups

The Service Providers Support contractor is required to enhance Humanitarian Program entrants' settlement by expanding the capacity of the voluntary sector to deliver services. This will be achieved through the contractor assisting in co-ordinating with contractors the services CSR groups can offer. This function will range from participating in the recruitment and registration of CSR groups, through to skills recognition and development, negotiating service delivery partnerships and assistance in organisational management and reporting.

Registered CSR groups will be paid \$100 per household unit assisted to cover the cost of out-of-pocket expenses. The Service Providers Support contractor will have the responsibility of paying this money within 30 days of arrival in Australia of humanitarian entrants referred to the CSR group. CSR groups will not be required to provide evidence of expenditure of this money.

2.3 CSR service agreements

A CSR service agreement could

- (i) specify how each CSR group will achieve the CSR outcomes;
and
- (ii) the training and support required by the CSR group to achieve the CSR outcomes.

The service agreement would be negotiated with DIMA in conjunction with the Service Providers Support contractor.

For discussion

How can the outcomes for CSR be most effectively set out in a service agreement?

2.4 Referrals to CSR groups

The contractor for Initial Information and Orientation Assistance will undertake needs assessments of Humanitarian Program entrants and refer the entrants to CSR groups for community support, and other IHSS service providers as required.

2.5 Time period for CSR services

A timeframe for the provision of CSR support for humanitarian entrants is not prescribed. The IHSS service principles and outcomes are the factors that should guide the time period for CSR assistance.

2.6 Accountability

The process of resettling humanitarian entrants in Australia requires accountability for all those who have dealings with humanitarian entrants. As with other service providers, regular reports from CSR groups to DIMA will provide a mechanism for this accountability.

The Service Providers Support contractor will be responsible for providing guidance and support to CSR groups in compiling their reports.

For discussion

What information should be contained in CSR reports?

2.7 Legal Indemnity and Insurance

It is important that CSR groups and their members are protected legally in case of any actions being brought against the group. CSR groups also need to have insurance cover in case of accident or injury to themselves.

For discussion

What is the best way to ensure that CSR groups are legally indemnified in respect of their volunteer activities and have appropriate insurance cover in respect of themselves?

2.8 Code of Conduct for CSR groups

Given the diversity of individuals in voluntary groups who may provide support for humanitarian entrants, a Code of Conduct has been suggested as good practice.

For discussion

What features should a Code of Conduct cover?

2.9 Character checks

Humanitarian entrants, when they first arrive, may be vulnerable to those who seek to take advantage of their situation. It is therefore important that persons dealing with them do not fall into this category.

Character checks assist in ensuring this does not occur and provide humanitarian entrants with some assurance that they are receiving assistance in a safe and non-threatening environment.

For discussion

How can individuals who seek to take advantage of humanitarian entrants be prevented from doing so?

2.10 Recognition

It is important that volunteers are valued and are given recognition of their achievements in supporting Humanitarian entrants. DIMA would like to institute a recognition scheme for CSR groups.

For discussion

How can CSR groups be given recognition for their achievements?

2.11 CSR Advisory Panel

Feedback from community organisations to this discussion paper will aid in the development of guidelines for the CSR component of the IHSS service model. To ensure that these guidelines are practical and workable, DIMA is considering establishing a national CSR advisory panel.

This panel could consist of a representative from a CSR group in each State and Territory. The role of the panel would be to provide feedback to DIMA on the draft guidelines and any other operational aspects impacting on the CSR.

For discussion

Would a CSR advisory panel be a worthwhile initiative?

2.12 Evaluation

To ensure that the CSR is operating effectively both from the entrants' and the CSR groups perspective DIMA is also considering requesting the Service Providers Support contractor/s to establish a forum to discuss and review operations.

These forums would provide the opportunity for CSR groups to provide suggestions on ways of improving the CSR service to refugees and humanitarian entrants, as well as sharing experiences and best practices.

For discussion

Would this proposal be beneficial in the operation of the CSR?

SECTION 3 ADDITIONAL SERVICES

As well as participating in CSR, groups and their individual members and other volunteers are able to work directly with IHSS contracted service providers to assist in the delivery of services.

If required, the Service Providers Support contractor will assist CSR groups and their members to liaise with contracted service providers in relation to the provision of additional services.

The contractors are responsible for achieving the outcomes of each service type, as detailed at section 1.2, and will be required to report to DIMA on agreed performance indicators. These reports will include how they have accommodated the interests of volunteers in delivering services.

Volunteers providing assistance to contractors under IHSS are accountable to the particular contractor with whom they are working.

The contractor/s will be responsible for ensuring that volunteers have the appropriate legal indemnity and insurance cover.

The Service Providers Support contractor will be required to assist volunteers to access appropriate training and resources in order to enhance their capacity to meet the needs of entrants.

The IHSS contractors will be responsible for ensuring that volunteers assisting in the provision of their services have the appropriate training to enable them to assist in the delivery of services.

SECTION 4 CONCLUSION

The Australian community owes much to the efforts of volunteer groups who, over many years, have supported Humanitarian Program entrants to rebuild their lives in this country.

A major consideration in developing the new IHSS model and the CSR service was ensuring that as many Humanitarian Program entrants as possible could benefit from this community support. Another consideration was that volunteers have far more choice in the way they support new entrants.

Those people and organisations interested in assisting and supporting refugees have the opportunity to shape the CSR structure through their contribution to these discussions either in written submissions and/or during consultations that will be held on the basis of this discussion paper. The Government looks forward to your participation in this process.

ATTACHMENT A

EXAMPLES OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY CSR GROUPS

Scenario 1:

A CSR group, after considering their capacity and resources, decide that they can provide only the minimum services required of a CSR group. The CSR group has advised the IHSS contractors, through the registration process, of the services they are willing to provide and a profile of the entrants they wish to assist.

Contractor services to the entrants:

- The *Accommodation Support (AccSUP)* contractor provides temporary accommodation for entrants on arrival and assists in finding longer-term accommodation for entrants.
- The *Initial Information and Orientation Assistance (IIOA)* contractor undertakes a needs assessment of the entrants (either before and/or after arrival of the entrants) and determines whether or not CSR support is required and the level of any such support. If CSR support is required, the contractor will select an appropriate CSR group according to the stated preferences of the group. The contractor will consult with the group regarding their ability to assist the entrants.
- The IIOA contractor arranges appointments with Centrelink, Medicare and Jobs Network and takes entrants along to these offices and assists with the compilation of forms and explaining of these services.
- The IIOA contractor orients the entrants to the local environment, eg employment, takes them shopping explaining the commercial context, helps with enrolment of children into school, advises them where essential services are located; etc.
- The *Household Formation Support (HFS)* contractor provides the entrants with the basic material requirements to establish a household in Australia.

CSR services to the entrants:

- The CSR group arranges for the entrants to meet members of local community, social, sporting, religious, and other organisations in order for the entrants to develop a social network.
- The CSR group introduces entrants to local community services.

Scenario 2:

The CSR group, after considering their capacity and resources have decided that, in addition to the minimum services required of a CSR group, they could

assist contracted service providers with *Initial Information and Orientation Assistance* and *Household Formation Support*. The CSR group and the relevant IHSS contractors have agreed on how they will integrate their respective services.

Contractor services to the entrants:

- The *Accommodation Support (AccSUP)* contractor provides temporary accommodation for entrants on arrival and assists in finding longer-term accommodation for entrants.
- The *Initial Information and Orientation Assistance (IIOA)* contractor undertakes a needs assessment of the entrants (either before and/or after arrival of the entrants) and determines whether or not CSR support is required and the level of any such support. If CSR support is required, the contractor will select an appropriate CSR group according to the stated preferences of the group. The contractor will consult with the group regarding their ability to assist the entrants.

CSR Services to the entrants:

- The CSR group arranges for the entrants to meet members of local community, social, sporting, religious, and other organisations in order for the entrants to develop a social network.
- The CSR group introduces entrants to local community services.

Additional services to the entrants provided by CSR group

- The CSR group has indicated that in some cases they will be able to meet entrants at the airport. In other cases, the IIOA contractor will arrange for reception of entrants at the airport.
- The IIOA contractor arranges appointments with Centrelink, Medicare and Jobs Network. The CSR group takes entrants along to these offices and assists with the compilation of forms and explaining of these services.
- The CSR group orients the entrants to the local environment, eg employment, takes them shopping explaining the commercial context, helps enrolment of children into school, advises them where essential services (eg doctor, chemist, relevant churches, etc) are located; etc.
- The IIOA contractor liaises with the *Household Formation* contractor and arranges for an assessment to be undertaken by the contractor on the range of goods required by the entrants when they move into longer-term accommodation. The CSR group indicates that, through their resources, they are able to provide some items. The *Household Formation* contractor agrees on the provision and delivery of the goods. The entrants are involved in choosing the goods available.

Return to Website Announcement