**Notes from the Leeds Migration Partnership - Operations Group Meeting**

**Monday 27th November 2017**

**Venue: One Community Centre**

 Attendees: see the attendance list.

**1.**       **Welcome, Introductions and apologies.**

Ali Mahmood welcomed everyone and explained the format for the meeting.

Agenda was agreed

Notes taken by Daniel Mundet (PATH Yorkshire).

**2.**       **Matters arising from previous minutes.**

No matters arising

**3.**       **Feedback from LMP Strategic Group**

Ruth Davany explained the work done in analysing the way the different groups operate and the resulting new strategy document that has been proposed. This document has been uploaded to the blog (<https://migrationpartnership.org.uk/> ).

This document identifies some clear objectives shared by the partnership. The ultimate objective is to ensure that the work done at strategy and operational levels complement each other. Participants to the meeting were asked about their expectations and about what would they like to get from the LMP Operational group. The following ideas were noted:

* Presentations about relevant services
* Networking opportunities
* Themed meetings. This could bring along different perspectives on the same issue.
* Linking with other networks. For instance, is the operational group a platform to channel views from the ground? If the answer is yes, we then need to have a good representation from the ground and/or case studies to discuss.

The ethos of the operations group is to share experiences and resources. There should be a dialogue with LCC to find out what they are going to do to resolve and address some of the issues that will be raised by the group. The group should be able to provide regular feedback to LCC on a number of issues.

It was agreed that a questionnaire would be written to gather more suggestions from this group. The list of ideas discussed at the meeting will be uploaded to the blog and participants will be able to continue providing feedback.

**4.**       **Regional updates**

Jon Beech presented the latest G4S figures for Leeds City Region. The figures showed an increase of 100 individuals.

**5.**       **Policy issues**

Community Health Programmes. It is still unclear whether some of the services are going to be chargeable. There is not a code of practice on these issues to provide guidelines.

It was agreed that for the next group meeting health issues will be discussed and possibly invite Health Watch.

The 3 health trusts operating in Leeds offer democratic governance processes open to everyone. It was suggested that this could be a practical thing to be used to lobby and make our views and voices be heard.

Safeguarding. New government policy on safeguarding has been published. There is a need for 1000 foster parents. Full policy document is available from [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-safeguarding-strategy-boosts-support-for-lone-child-migrants>)

Driving licence. West Yorkshire police will be piloting checks on driving licence validity. Although police are not allowed to stop and search they could still stop for other reasons. Concerns were expressed about police doing some racial profiling and thus be potentially damaging for the relationships with some communities. To clarify this issue it was agreed to invite the Police to a group meeting.

Banking. From January 2018 all banks are obliged to check current bank accounts to find out the legal status of account holders. The data will be checked against immigration data from the Home Office. Sam Powell will be sharing information on this issue.

**6.**       **Updates from members**

Homeless charter. They are running an awareness raising and fundraising campaign.

Children’s Society. There has been an increase in unaccompanied minors asylum seekers from Afghanistan. There is also not much support for over 19 year olds accessing support (ESOL...etc.).

Red Cross.

1. Family Reunion Project. Legal advice is also provided. There have been some changes and improvements in the International family tracing service. This might mean delays in the short term, but in the long-term service users will benefit from the changes.
2. Sunlight orientation group. This group is open to men and women (refugees and asylum seekers). Drop in service on Mondays and Wednesdays. They run a number of classes and activities.

West Yorkshire Destitution Asylum Network (WYDAN). They will have a meeting, open to everyone on the 13th of December 10:00- 12:00 at the Meeting Point.

Solace. From the 1st of December their new offices will be located at Oak House.

Hardship fund. The fund will be running from the first week of December and will be available until the end of March.

Winter Shelter Project. Churches, Synagogues and Housing Associations will provide accommodation for 1 week for destitute asylum seekers. WYDAN is currently recruiting volunteers to staff the Moortown Methodist Church shelter for 3 weeks. Shelter is for men only. Referrals come via PAFRAS, Red Cross and Migrant Help (Wakefield).

LASSN. Befriending project for 18+ only (due to safeguarding issues). They are in the process of taking referrals and are also organising a training session that will be open to everyone. This will be publicised in the blog. Their English at home project will be reopening in February.

* Transition guide. They will be organising two focus groups to consult refugees that have a basic level of English. The focus groups are planned for the 14th and 15th of December (from 14.00 - 16.00).
* Grace Hosting volunteers provide a hot meal and a safe place to sleep for people who have nowhere else to go. Guests may spend a few nights, a few weeks, or (in a few very particular circumstances) may go on to stay longer than this. They offer a much needed support to destitute refuges. They now need support for more nights.

Saint Vincent. They will be offering ESOL and craft activities over the Christmas period. Their Work Drop and Migrant Access will also be open during Christmas. They are currently looking for donations for Christmas toys and hampers and also for volunteers. St. Vincent will offer Christmas meals for business, as a way to raise money and also a different experience.

PATH Yorkshire. There are currently three projects relevant to the group:

* STEP project. To support the long term unemployed (more than 12 months) into a 6 months paid work placement in Third Sector Organisations. Referrals and also TSO organisations interested in offering a placement should contact PATH. All expenses will be covered and PATH will be providing 1-2-1 support to individuals throughout the placement.
* ESOL Classes. Talk English Project. Ongoing basic level ESOL classes across Leeds.
* Connecting Opportunities. Project to support refugees and new migrants to develop their skills and opportunities to find work and be part of the local community. There is support available for improving English, developing the skills needed to gain employment in the UK, feeling part of the community and increasing confidence and well-being.

Leeds Diocese. They offer support for volunteers. They can pass information about needs into their parishes.

Communities Team. LCC. They have met with G4S to discuss outstanding issues around accommodation in the city.

Touchstone. They are organising a Heart Conference, about the refugee journey. More info will be available in their blog.

Stop Hate UK. They are organising an event (in late February – early March) in Leeds about hate crime to identify best practices and also gaps. They would like to have hate crime as an agenda item for the group's next meeting.

Passion works. They work with small grass roots organisations to get their voices heard and strengthen them. They also offer a pay as you feel coaching support.

Connect for Health. They work with 14+. They cover the south and east of Leeds. They support more and more refugees. Their services are free of charge.

In Touch. Social Enterprise. Their aim is to offer social complimentary therapies for migrants and refugees.

PAFRAS. They are now OAS level 2 accredited and therefore can provide more in depth legal advice. They are piloting a clothing project with Saint Vincent.

Rainbow Hearts. They provide development work with volunteers to support women 18+ (asylum seekers and refugees).

Leeds Refugee Council. They have women and mens groups. Are doing awareness raising activities with universities and schools. They are also working with the police on how to work effectively with interpreters.

**Next meeting: Monday 19th March at 10.00. One Community Centre.**