## Leeds Migration

# Partnership

**LMP Strategy Group – September 2018 action notes:**

* **Environment…… what’s happened since we last met?**

To set the context of the current environment we are all working in, Ruth provided an over of some of the key things that have happened since our last meeting in June:

* Local Authority leaders from Yorkshire and Humberside wrote a [joint letter](https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/system-for-housing-asylum-seekers-in-yorkshire-is-teetering-on-the-edge-says-council-leader-1-9309663) to Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, warning that the current procurement process for the new asylum accommodation contracts risks “catastrophic failure” after it was revealed over the summer that there were no successful bids for the contract in Yorkshire, as well as in the North East and Northern Ireland. As a result of this the Home Office will be visiting Leeds to speak to LA leaders
* Home Office Assisted Voluntary Return Team (AVR) set up outreach provision in London – no such provision available in Leeds
* Change of Foreign Secretary and use of emotive language in relation to the Chequers agreement
* Universities UK put forward a Parliamentary proposal for an improved post-study work offer for international students who have completed their study at a UK university, allowing these students to contribute their skills and expertise to their local communities. Improving post-study work is vital to meeting skills needs and maintaining the UK’s global competitiveness for international students. [Link](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Pages/parliamentary-briefing-post-study-work.aspx)
* Windrush – Home Office have begun a lessons learned exercise
* Home Office change to narrative from ‘creating hostile environments’ to ‘compliant environments’ – with some aspects of the Immigration Act being suspended
* Chief Inspector is investigating Home Office charges for such things as nationality applications. Critics claim that the high charges prevent children who are entitled to British nationality from taking up their rightful status
* **West Yorkshire Sub Regional Strategic Migration Group (RSMG) – overview**

Supported by Migration Yorkshire the West Yorkshire Sub Regional Strategic Migration Group assists the Strategic Migration Group (SMG) to provide a strategic leadership, advisory and coordination function in the region and provide a forum for senior representatives of LAs, Police, Health, Home Office, G4S and other key partners (including representatives from the voluntary sector) within sub regions.

Meetings take place every three months and core responsibilities include:

* Facilitating strategic debate on migration issues among partners
* Considering the benefits and impact of migration and identifying changes in migration patterns and developing joint strategies to respond to these
* Contributing to the development and implementation of local, regional and national migration policy
* Planning and taking action together – particularly when there are cross boundary migration issues
* Receiving and reviewing regular and detailed reports from G4S on the management of the COMPASS contract - including considering the potential impact in local communities of the management of this contract.
* Sharing examples of good practice within the sub-region for the benefit of the region as a whole
* Providing a forum where the views of voluntary groups and migrants themselves can be heard at a senior and more regional level

Baksho Uppal, Communities Team, represents Leeds City Council at the regional meetings and Jon Beech, LASSN and Service Manager, Red Cross have historically been members and fed appropriate information to the Leeds Migration Partnership and vice-versa. Attendees at the Leeds Migration Partnership Strategy Group (Sept 2018) agreed for Jon and Zeraslasie Shiker (Red Cross) to formally represent LMP.

Migration Yorkshire are currently reviewing and improving current arrangements across the regions.

One suggestion from LMP Strategy Group was to request documents shared at the RSMG are marked as ‘shareable’ or ‘not shareable’ – this would make it easier for attendees/members to know when they can share information with partners and when they cannot.

* **LMP Strategy Group Action Plan**

To help facilitate discussions about the LMP Strategy Group Action plan each priority area was introduced by sharing a casework example. This was followed by discussions that focussed on:

* Initial observations
* Identifying: examples of notable practice and issues raised
* Identifying key action points

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| **Priority: All migrants feel safe** |

**Domestic violence case:** Leeds Refugee Forum contacted by a female victim of domestic violence perpetrated by her husband. She arrived in the UK with her four children in 2015 through the family reunion programme run by the British Red Cross.

Experienced emotional and physical abuse from her husband, especially when he was drunk. He displayed controlling behaviour towards her: control over finances; not providing any money to feed herself or her children; denying her access to education; isolated – no friends and limited visits by a relative.

Following an incident that resulted in an injury her relative advised her to go to the police but thought this would be shameful if her parents and family heard about it and felt she couldn’t send her children’s dad to prison.

Last time she couldn’t bear the beating and called the police. At this point Children’s Services became involved and she contacted the Leeds Refugee Forum who were able to support her claim for benefits by the DWP Social Justice Team and getting support from the community.

Barriers raised included:

* Isolation from family, friends and community
* Language barriers
* Lack of information for both the victim and people trying to provide support
* Fear of losing children

Observations

* Sadly, this is one example of many similar cases
* Highlights the importance of working together; sharing information with individuals and organisations for example – ensuring people know their rights and entitlements
* Service/organisational policy and practice is essential in relation to supporting and contact with individuals – for example: not just interacting with the husband in a family situation

Examples of support

* Womens Health Matters support **Rainbow Hearts** – a weekly group for women seeking asylum in Leeds. Women of all ages come together to give and receive emotional support from other women who have had similar experiences.

Health and social / support information sessions are offered around topics such as: self-care; well-being and healthy eating

* **Leeds Refugee Forum** – as part of work towards the Domestic Violence Quality Mark, are running a programme of training aimed at ten volunteers to develop their skills so they can become Support Contacts for people affected by domestic violence and abuse

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| **Priority: All migrants have somewhere to live** |

**Case:** a brief overview of activities in Leeds was provided by Unity in Poverty

* Homelessness picture in Leeds – rough sleeping has increased
* Selective licensing gives councils greater powers to deal with problem landlords and to help improve the way private rented houses are managed, making sure tenants can safe and comfortable homes. This is included in Leeds Homelessness Strategy and provides opportunities for landlords to improve standards
* Launched earlier this year the Leeds Homeless Charter brings together Council officials, agency workers, Christian charities, informal grass root groups and people with lived experience to help tackle homelessness more effectively. Have established three sub groups:
* Migration
* Mental health
* Grass root communities

Always looking for people with lived experience to be involved – contact Dave Paterson Davepaterson.upa@gmail.com

Migrant Access Project Networkers are interested in sharing their lived experience – contact Sam Powell Samantha.powell@leeds.gov.uk

Reminder: the next Homeless Charter Migration Sub Group is on Thursday 20th September at Oak House. Jon Beech currently co-chairing this, agreed RETAS and/or PAFRAS to represent LMP in the future given their area of expertise

**How does Leeds Migration Partnership help?**

Progress on actions within the LMP action plan:

* NACCOM (No Accommodation Network) are now linked in to West Yorkshire Destitute Asylum Network (WYDAN) and are presenting at a future meeting
* RETAS, PAFRAS and Unity in Poverty have delivered presentations at the Leeds Homelessness Forum to positively influence the Leeds Homelessness Strategy
* Focus groups have been held with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants with lived experiences of destitution and homelessness – to increase sharing of voice and experiences of migrants
* Dedicated representation from Housing Options at RETAS has led to improved working relationships

**News/ information**

* Leeds City Council has advocated action on the disparity between the 28 days ‘move on’ period for asylum seekers granted leave to remain and the extended duties on local authorities to prevent and relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants:
* Work to prevent homelessness if an applicant is expected to be homeless within 56 days or less.
* Work to relieve homelessness if an applicant is homeless. Local authorities have a duty to relieve homelessness for **all** eligible applicants over a period of 56 days, during which time the authority should take reasonable steps to help them find suitable accommodation for a minimum period of six months. There is no duty on authorities to actually provide the accommodation.
* Exempt rents – On the 9th August the Government announced that they were no longer going ahead with their plan to abolish exempt rents for supported housing. Rent for supported housing will continue to be paid through Housing Benefit rather than the introduction of a ring fenced grant which was due to come in place in April 2020. This should be good news for the continued provision of housing with support to refugees with leave to remain helping to prevent homelessness for this group.
* The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI), with the Residential Landlords Association (RLA) has won the right to judicially review the Home Office’s ‘right to rent’ scheme, arguing that the policy discriminates against non-UK nationals. RLA research found 42% of landlords are less likely to rent their property to someone who does not have a British passport due to fears of prosecution

Similar experiences shared with interactions with banks/building societies. For example: people who have joined Trusts/ Management Boards for Charitable Organisation, have been exposed to additional scrutiny by financial institutions in comparison to other members

* Universal Credit roll out programme – October 2018, Leeds

To support the roll out programme, 2 Staff from Housing Options have been seconded to the DWP Social Justice Team and 2 Staff from Leeds Housing Team working with DWP

* Safer Leeds launching two initiatives this autumn:

**Street Support Team** an integrated, multidisciplinary team approach which will use case a management system to ensure those people with the highest levels of need receive bespoke support and relevant safeguards and, where appropriate, enforcement. The team aims to reduce the numbers of those rough sleeping in Leeds city centre and tackle issues such as begging and anti-social behaviour among street users.

**Big Change Leeds** seeks to permanently change the way those who are homeless or rough sleeping are supported by those wishing to help. By asking people to donate items, time or money to an independent fund, rather than directly to those on the streets, Big Change aims to reduce the impact begging has on our streets and enable those in need to move away from street life.

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| **Priority: All migrants will have healthier lives** |

**Case:** Working together, linking people up to each other

Syrian resettlement worker raises concerns about access to services across Wakefield and Leeds with CEO of Leeds Community Healthcare, who in turn seeks advice from Jon at LASSN and LMP

Jon suggests:

* contacting Local Healthwatches in Leeds and Wakefield
* concerns communicated to CEO of Wakefield Mental Health Trust who also chairs West Yorks and Harrogate Health and Care partnership (all the trusts for W Yorkshire)
* contact with Migration Yorkshire

CEO of Leeds Community Healthcare connects Syrian resettlement worker to Healthwatch Rep WY & Harrogate Health and Care Partnership

CEO of Wakefield MH trust connects Syrian resettlement worker with: Wakefield Clinical Commissioning Group commissioner; Lead from Mental Health Trust at Urban House and Local Healthwatch

**News/ information**

**Migrant Health Board (**sub Group of Strategic Health and Well-being Board**)**- due to take place on 7th November 2pm  [LINK](https://migrationpartnership.org.uk/leeds-migrant-health-board-update-on-priorities/)

* Write-up of Health Charging Event [LINK](https://migrationpartnership.org.uk/ras-mental-health-network-17th-september-1300-1700/)
* Charging seems unlikely to happen in Lees for the foreseeable future
* Currently consulting on priorities [LINK](https://migrationpartnership.org.uk/leeds-migrant-health-board-update-on-priorities/)

**Healthwatch**

* Asking people/organisations to contact them if there are difficulties around GP registration

**Touchstone**

* [Mentally Healthy Leeds](https://www.touchstonesupport.org.uk/services/mentally-healthy-leeds/) - Mentally Healthy Leeds is focusing on asylum seekers and refugees. No further info available (yet)

**RAS (**Refugees and Asylum Seekers**) Mental Health Network** on 17th September - [LINK](https://migrationpartnership.org.uk/ras-mental-health-network-17th-september-1300-1700/)

* Being Led by Zoe Ward from Touchstone
* Jon Beech, LASSN, has suggested a common approach to Mental Health training or staff and volunteers

**Community Links**

* Running a subsidised course on Mental Health First Aid. For more information email: info@commlinks.co.uk
* **Update to LMP Operational Group**

Following items to be specifically shared with the Operational Group Monday 17th September:

* Domestic Violence and Abuse Quality Mark – Leeds Refugee Forum training programme and support
* Sharing examples of involving people with ‘lived experience’ eg. Co-Chairing the Homeless Charter Migration Sub Group
* Leeds Strategic Migration Board – next meeting Thursday 27th September – theme: Housing

If you wish to feed in/contribute to the discussion let Daniel Mundet Daniel.Mundet@pathyorkshire.co.uk Ruth Davany ruth@pafras.org.uk

* Homelessness Strategy and Homeless Charter
* Home Office meeting being held in Leeds to discuss accommodation contracts
* Refugee Week - feedback
* **Any other business**

**Communities Team, LCC** - migration roles

Recent changes have taken place within Communities with new appointments to roles and the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme moving from Migration Yorkshire to Communities Team:

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| Bash Uppal | Area Leader and Migration Lead |
| Pria Bhabra | Migration Programme Manager |
| Henriette Mahamane | Leeds Migration Support Coordinator |
| Jennifer Jennings | Migration Support Officer |
| Samantha Powell | ESOL Strategy Manager  |
| Hannah Jameson | Language Hub Coordinator   |
| Lelir Yeung  | Head of Equality – overseeing Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme  |
| Cath Dearlove | Resettlement Partnership Co-ordinator  |
| Pauline Ellis | Senior Policy and Performance Officer (Equality) – overseeing Leeds Migration Partnership |

**Whatsap** – a number of organisations use Whatsap as a communication method, however, need to be careful as how it is set up may inadvertently be breaching GDPR. Attendees agreed for Jon Beech to contact them to have further discussions

**Asylum Matters** – requested a Parliamentary Scrutiny into accommodation contracts

* **Future LMP Strategy Group meetings:**

No further meetings booked in for 2018

Meeting schedule to be booked for 2019 – will change the order so the Operational meeting will take place before the Strategy Group meeting