**HO/SMP weekly call 5.11.20**

·         Cessations – Home Office have paused all activity on negative cessations in England until they review their position. An update will be provided next week. Positive cessations continue to be scheduled.

·         AS Rate and allowances – HO to provide more details to SMPs on how they assessed AS rates and allowances for those in full board accommodation. ASPEN contract ends February 2020 - Home Office negotiating contract changes and this has an impact on how new AS rates and allowances can be issued. No timescale available for when SUs can expect to receive new allowances and backdated payments.

·         Home Office liaising with PHE to request translated COVID-19 guidance in more languages to meet needs of asylum seekers.

·         Home Office is working with service providers to improve responses to supporting pregnant asylum seekers and ensure support offered is more robust and meets contractual duties and SU needs.

·         HO undertaking internal piece of work regarding communication to SUs around COVID-19. This will feed into Human Applications review. First draft of HA report will be completed end of this week. Home Office have stated a desire for providers to give more regular assurances to SMPs/LAs on how and when they refresh their guidance materials for SUs.

**HO/SMP weekly call 29.10.2020**

·         Positive cessations - these remain unaffected by tier system and are ongoing in England.

·         Negative cessations – there’s still a pause in activity in Tier 3 areas and existing cases scheduled before restrictions to continue – the position may change as a result of ongoing legal challenges. Home Office currently scheduling cases for discontinuation  in Tier 1 and Tier 2 areas.

·         Home Office working on some correspondence to make position clear on cessations and will circulate via SMPs.

·         Home Office will complete a lessons learned review of the cessations work and LA engagement.

·         Contingency accommodation – Population remains static in recent weeks. Ministerial instruction remains to avoid use of hotels. Home Office to undertake some winter planning and will work with SMPs.

·         Home Office and providers will ensure pregnant women will be prioritise with full support with GP registration at all times as per AASC contractual duties.

·         Windrush Help Team are seeking engagement with LAs and SMPs and will look into best way to gather feedback.