

West Yorkshire Sub Regional Migration Group Meeting

Wednesday 9 December 2020,

14:00 - 16:00

AGENDA

- | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Welcome, introductions and apologies | Chair | |
| 2. Minutes of the last meeting – 11 June 2020 | Chair | Attached |
| 3. Matters arising | Chair | Verbal |
| Discussion Items | | |
| 4. EU & EUSS | | |
| • Guest speaker: James Boyes | Home Office | Verbal |
| • For information: EU & EUSS update | MY | Attached |
| 5. Asylum | | |
| • Guest speaker: Mani Hayer, Operations Manager, Reed in Partnership | Reed in Partnership | Presentation/
Verbal |
| • Migrant Help | Migrant Help | Attached |
| • Home Office | Home Office | Attached/ Verbal |
| • Mears | Mears | Attached |
| • Statistics and recent developments | MY | Attached |
| 6. Resettlement and UASC | MY | Attached |
| 7. Integration and cohesion | | |
| • Refugee Integration Yorkshire & Humber (RIYH) | MY | Attached |
| • Modern slavery and exploitation | MY | Attached |
| 8. Other updates | | |
| • For information: Latest Policy update | MY | Attached |
| 9. Any other business | Chair | |

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 9 March 2021,
14:00 – 16:00**

MINUTES OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE SUB REGIONAL MIGRATION GROUP MEETING THAT TOOK PLACE ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2020

Attendees

Adam Attack	Migration Yorkshire
Cllr Debra Coupar	Leeds
Vicky Ledwidge	Migration Yorkshire
Bash Uppal	Leeds
Cllr Audrey Smith	Calderdale Council
Kerry Murphy	Wakefield
Marsela Hoxha	Migrant Help
Hiron Miah	Bradford
Ian Day	Bradford
Kate Smith	WomenCentre Kirklees
Nicki Batley	Mears
Duncan Wells	Refugee Council Leeds
Sarah Mitchell	Kirklees
Becky Hellewell	St Augustine's Calderdale
Jonathan Kingham	Home Office
Adam Smith	Home Office
Natja Thorbjornsen	Bradford Rape Crisis
Pat McCusker	MESMAC Wakefield

Apologies

Cllr Maureen Cummings	Wakefield
Sarah Richardson	Calderdale
Tahira Iqbal	Calderdale
Ally Swadling	PAFRAS Leeds
Beverley Adams	West Yorkshire Police

1. Welcome Introductions and Apologies

The chair welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting – 11 June 2020

The minutes were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

The actions to have housing, modern slavery and an update from Reed in Partnership on the agenda for this meeting have been postponed. Migration Yorkshire will add these to the agenda of future meetings.

4. Asylum Updates

Members were asked to note the update provided by Migration Yorkshire. From the update Vicky Ledwidge highlighted:

- The latest Home Office statistics for asylum and resettlement were published on 27 August 2020, showing data up to the end June 2020.
- The number of asylum application in the UK to the end of the year ending June 2020 is still lower than that in June 2016.
- The top 5 countries of origin were Iran, Albania, Iraq, Eritrea and Pakistan.
- The UK has also seen an increase in Iranian nationals applying for asylum since the year ending June 2018 (2,432), corresponding with the growth in arrivals on small boats in the English Channel, but the latest numbers for Iranians are below the peak in year ending June 2016.
- At the end of June 2020, the number of asylum seekers in the UK in receipt of support under Section 95 was similar to the previous year.
- The number of S95 dispersed clients in West Yorkshire as at June 2020 was 3,402.
- Migration Yorkshire continues to work with local authorities, the Home Office, Migrant Help and Mears to support engagement with the asylum support contracts. The current focus is the response to Covid-19.
- The publishing of the National Audit Offices review of the asylum accommodation and support contracts.
- The Home Affairs Select Committee published a report on the Home Office's response to COVID-19 in asylum accommodation and immigration detention.
- In response to media attention on the use of hotels as asylum accommodation, the Home Office published a statement on the use of hotels.
- The Home Office confirmed to stakeholders that its Assisted Voluntary Returns service is now re-open as of 13 July, 2020.

Home Office

Members were asked to note the update provided by the Home Office Asylum Operations team. Additionally, Adam Smith highlighted:

- That recovery from Covid-19 is ongoing.
- It has been hard to progress cases during the restrictions that have been imposed. To help with this, satellite screening centres have been introduced, including Waterside Court in Leeds.

- These temporary screening centres have meant the service users do not have to travel to Croydon in order to make their asylum claim.
- Resuming interviews is essential to getting the asylum system running again. These are being undertaken via video conferences. Ways to increase capacity are being explored.
- Some face to face interviews are being carried out in Covid secure ways. These will be increased gradually keeping to public health guidelines.

Jonathan Kingham provided a verbal update:

- The statistics provided don't reflect the pressure that the region and the country are currently under in terms of asylum accommodation.
- The rate of outgoing service users is not meeting the rate in intake.
- Discontinuations are not happening quickly enough to create bed spaces. The Home Office are working to see if these services users may be eligible for other support.
- This quarter has seen the largest growth in intake and has mostly been from S95 and S4 service users.
- The increased demand for accommodation has now seen the opening of 2 new contingency accommodation sites in military barracks.
- The Home Office is trying to reduce the use of contingency accommodation as they are not part of the long term asylum accommodation model.
- Nationally and regionally, more dispersal accommodation is being procured.
- Cessation of support for positive decisions began in August and the Home Office and Mears are trying to manage this appropriately with local authorities.
- The Home Office is aware that there has been a 'glitch' in local authorities receiving discontinuation notices from Mears and this is being looked in to.
- Negative cessations are also beginning, but there have been none in West Yorkshire yet.
- Where possible, further eligible criteria under S4 is being sought to keep service users in support. If this criteria cannot be found then service users are expected to access the voluntary returns service. However, it takes a long time to get to this point as appeals can be made before a service user becomes ARE.
- The Home Office is aware of the increase in the right wing activity being directed towards contingency accommodation nationally and are addressing it. Locally the Home Office are working with Mears to inform service users about hate crime, reporting and their safety.

- Services users being moved out of hotels first tend to be single females, single males and those who have been there longest.

Mears

A written report from Mears will be circulated after the meeting.

Nicki Batley gave a verbal update:

- Urban House has now reopened with additional precautions to help prevent spread of Covid. The changes have been made in collaboration with Public Health Wakefield.
- Inductions for service users arriving at contingency accommodation is robust and similar to the induction for Urban House.
- Nicki has been asked to work with student police offices in West Yorkshire Police; introducing them to service users and building better relationships and understanding for both parties.
- Mears are working with local authorities on positive moves.
- Procurement of new dispersal accommodation is hard but Mears are working with local authorities as much as possible.

Migrant Help

Members were asked to note the update provided by Migrant Help covering national progress, a regional update and an update from Reed. From the updates, Marsela Hoxha highlighted:

- In terms of Urban House, a presence has been maintained in the office throughout this period.
- There is a planned phased return of Migrant Help staff from the 14 September 2020, in line with the office now being Covid-19 compliant.
- Return to the office will allow the resumption of face to face meetings with service users in a safe way.
- The challenges for Migrant Help staff has been trying to get hold of service users who have been in contingency accommodation. They have been working closely with Mears staff to arrange phone calls and to have the correct contact information.
- Mobile phones were purchased and distributed to the different hotels, via Mears staff (RWM), for any SU's without a phone. The phones are borrowed by SU's for the completion of the ASF1 and induction briefing.
- Service Users have been contacting Migrant Help directly on the Q&A mobile phone (WhatsApp) or forwarding emails via the Wakefield email inbox (or via RWM).

Migration
Yorkshire

- The FRC are continuing to answer calls in under 1 minute with the average wait for August, 32 seconds.
- However the average wait time for EAGL is under 10 minutes, which is not meeting the KPI.
- The outreach service continues to support vulnerable service users by telephone during the pandemic.
- Welfare calls are being tailored to meet the needs of service users.
- Migrant Help have received their highest volume of referrals in August to date.
- The outreach inbox (outreach@migranthelpuk.org) inbox continues to be up to date.
- As the first discontinuations have now begun in England, move on providers will be offering advice on how to claim universal credit whilst advising service users the Home Office will contact them directly to notify them when the discontinuation process has started.
- Move on providers offer advice on how to claim universal credit whilst advising service users the Home Office will contact them directly to notify them when the discontinuation process has started.
- Move on providers also confirm they will be in touch again when they are notified the discontinuation process has started, to provide further guidance with housing.
- If no contact is made concerning move on, then contact the FRC.

Discussion

The chair invited questions from the group around the updates provided.

Braford raised some issues and concerns being voiced by the VCS in the area:

- A lack of cash access for those service users in contingency accommodation.
- Completing ASF1 applications in hotels is a lengthy process and service users are struggling to complete them.
- Concern over negative cessations restarting in the current situation of additional local restrictions.
- The support for those service users who are having to reclaim under S4 support now that travel restrictions are being lifted.
- Local authorities needed more information on negative cases.

Jonathan Kingham responded:

- In terms of cash for service users in contingency accommodation, there are no plans to provide cash.

They are being provided with full board which covers all essential living needs.

- Jonathan agreed that the ASF1 form as a printout is long, however, if completing the application online, it is much simpler. If the service user is providing new evidence of criteria to remain on S4 then the full application does not need to be completed.
- For negative move on, the negative move on team will be sending out further communications. However, for those on S4 who are now able to travel, their cases can be reviewed to find other criteria. Those who are still unable to travel (due to Covid or other reasons) will remain on S4 support. In regards to information on specific individuals being provided to local authorities, this is unlikely unless the local authority can provide a GDPR compliant reason for having this information.

Concern was raised about how service users would be able to access accurate, up to date information on Covid-19 and local services from initial accommodation, contingency accommodation, and dispersed accommodation. Within DA, there is a lack of access to online information and services which is worrying as new local lockdown measures come into force. However it was noted that the support and information in Urban House has been much appreciated.

Nick Batley replied that Mears local welfare managers arrange for the right information to be in properties when service users are dispersed so that they can access GPs and VCS services locally. Mears are also looking at updating the welcome packs which are provided to help bridge the gap between services users and the VCS.

Jonathan Kingham added that the induction process when service users are dispersed is designed to address this too.

Members continued to raise concerns over digital exclusion. Without provision of data or phones then it is very difficult for service users to access up to date information, and services which are being delivered remotely (both VCS and health).

It was noted that it is not in anyone's remit to provide technology for service users.

It was agreed that Mears, with Migration Yorkshire's support, would provide a breakdown of the process of support provided for service users moving in to DA as soon as possible.

Contingency accommodation information was also raised by members. When contingency accommodation was initially stood up, local authorities were told it was a 3 month time line, however this is clearly no longer the case. Despite local

Mears/ Migration
Yorkshire

authorities receiving information on service user turn over, there is no information on the 'churn'. Overall numbers don't give a picture of how long some services users have been in contingency accommodation and this is raising concerns over mental health.

The Home Office agreed that some service users have been in contingency accommodation for too long and not and that the 3 month timeline was no longer realistic. This type of accommodation is not appropriate for long term occupancy, but procurement of DA is proving difficult.

Duncan Wells also raised the issue of the provision of cash to services users in Leeds, echoing Hiron's concerns for Bradford. Despite the full board, services users still need to purchase clothes and credit. By leaving service users in a cashless situation, they become exposed to vulnerability and difficult situations.

Duncan also raised the fact that the Refugee Council have come across a few cases in Yorkshire and Humber of service users claiming to be under 18. This has led to Refugee Council having to alert local social services to arrange age assessments which is adding more pressure to services. Have the Home Office and Mears been aware of this?

Jonathan replied that there is always an age assessment process for those claiming to be under 18 before they are dispersed. If a Merton compliant assessment finds the young person to be over 18 then they are dispersed as an adult. Service users can challenge this decision but in the local authority they are dispersed to.

Kate Smith raised issues around the pressures being felt by the VCS in Kirklees. There is currently an extremely high demand for OISC advice and there is not the capacity to provide it. The VCS are trying to provide support in hotels, but again have a limited capacity and resources. There is a serious concern that upcoming evictions will put even greater pressure on the VCS and a further pause in the evictions would be a sensible option. Additionally, there are concerns over the reopening of Urban House with the current restrictions.

Jonathan Kingham replied, recognising the concerns raised by Kate and the VCS in Kirklees. In terms of the evictions, Jonathan repeated that the negative move ons do take time to happen and that there is work to try and keep service users on S4 where possible. This means that there should not be a sudden influx of services users leaving support with NRPF.

In regards to Urban House, Jonathan emphasised that the centre is re-opening based on guidance and work with Public Health Wakefield.

Pat McCusker raised concerns from the VCS in Wakefield. The VCS are concerned about the numbers being housed in Urban House, but do welcome some of the other measures that have been introduced. The main apprehension for residents will be around self-isolation and what support is in place for service users to do this when needed. This has been feedback from residents who were there during the first outbreak.

There are 3 concrete asks from the VCS in regards to Urban House:

1. TVs available in rooms- this will help occupy time and helps mental health while service users are having to isolate. It also helps with conforming to guidelines.
2. Regular, structured access for VCS staff in Urban House – there is a need for service users to have the opportunity to talk to non Mears or Migrant Help staff.
3. Covid safe ways to get resources in to Urban House such as toys and clothing.

It was asked that the Home Office, Mears and Migrant Help respond to these asks with the help of Migration Yorkshire by the next meeting.

Home Office/
Mears/ Migrant
Help/ MY

Cllr Smith added that the VCS are there to add value to services and not act as a substitute for what should be in place.

5. Resettlement and UASC

Members were asked to note the update.

From the report Vicky Ledwidge highlighted:

- That the new UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) was supposed to begin on 1 April 2020, but due to Covid-19 there have been no arrivals under the scheme as yet.
- The Children and Families Wellbeing Project is ongoing, with the evaluation of the project now available.
- Migration Yorkshire and partner organisations SOLACE and Refugee Council therapeutic Services are planning a virtual event on the 21 Oct 2020 to show the impact of the project and provide Skills Share workshops. A save the date notification will go out shortly.
- Migration Yorkshire have worked with Legal Aid Solicitors and Refugee Council to develop a regional co-ordination project to support each individual and family to make their ILR application after the initial 5 years.
- The region has responded well to the UASC crises in Kent so far, but more placements are needed.

- The consultation for the new model for the National Transfer scheme for young people is currently underway.

6. EU and EU Settlement Scheme

Members were asked to note the update

7. Integration and cohesion

Members were asked to note the update.

On the Refugee Integration Service Adam Atack highlighted:

- The Refugee Integration Service (RIS) is still running but the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis have meant, as for many other services, that the service is now being provided on a remote basis, via telephone advice.

Vicky Ledwidge highlighted:

- That the connecting Opportunities project is accepting referrals and the current funding is still due to end 30 June 2021 and so the priority is to explore options to secure future funding to extend the project further.
- A new 5 year contract for provision of support to modern slavery victims was awarded to the Salvation Army, the current contract holder.
- Modern slavery statistics for January to March show a 14% fall in referrals to the NRM compared with the previous quarter, thought to be due to COVID related restrictions. However, the numbers are still a third higher than this time last year, continuing a general upward trend.

8. Policy update

Members were asked to note the policy update provided by Migration Yorkshire.

Sarah Botterill, Migration Yorkshire
23 September 2020

EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME

For information:

Members are asked to note the report.

EU Nationals

1. The [Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination \(EU Withdrawal\) Act 2020](#) ending free movement from 1st January 2021 has now been passed into the UK law. (Source: Parliament)
2. The rights of EEA nationals and their family members who have not yet applied to the scheme during the grace period are governed by the [Citizens' Rights \(Application Deadline and Temporary Protection\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#). The regulations only protect the rights of some EEA nationals, namely those who have been exercising the relevant EU treaty rights by the end of the transition period. Those who are not covered by the regulations will be treated as unlawful residents until they are granted status under the scheme. (Source: gov.uk)
3. EU nationals can continue to use [ID cards to travel to the UK](#) only until the end of September 2021, except for the holders of pre-settled or settled status, who can continue using it until 2025. (Sources: Home Office)
4. A briefing from Migration Observatory focuses on [migration of EU nationals to and from the UK](#). It finds that the EU migration reduced 'substantially' after the EU referendum in 2016, but EU nationals still account for approximately 5% of the UK population and around 8% of the UK workers. (Source: Migration Observatory)

EU Settlement Scheme

5. Latest EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) statistics show:
 - 4.26 million applications have been submitted to the scheme since it opened to the public in March 2019. The latest monthly statistics show that close to 200,000 applications in [October 2020](#), continuing the upwards trend after the dip in April.
 - The latest statistics at local authority level (up to September 2020) show over 212,000 applications were made in Yorkshire and the Humber.
 - The top nationalities of applicants in our region remain roughly the same – Polish (29%), Romanian (16%), Slovak (8%), Italian (6%) and Lithuania (5%). However, whilst Polish is the top nationality in most of the LAs, Romanian continues to top in Barnsley and Slovak – in Sheffield and Rotherham.

- Grants of settled status have been decreasing each month, falling to approximately 42% in October 2020. Nationally, 55% of applicants have been given settled status, 42% pre-settled and 3% had other outcomes, whilst in Y&H 58% have been granted settled status, 39% pre-settled, with 3% receiving other outcomes.
 - Since February, there has been a noticeable increase in other outcomes, including refusals on eligibility grounds. Just over 22,000 applications have been refused so far. (Source: Home Office)
6. The Home Office announced [a list of grantees](#) funded to support vulnerable groups to apply to the EUSS. A share of £4.5 million was given to 72 organisations, including Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS). From our region, the grant was awarded to four local authorities (Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Sheffield) and voluntary organisations (Nova/MJ Languages in Wakefield, Clifton Learning Partnership in Rotherham, Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre, St. Vincent in Leeds and Bradford). They are funded from 1st October until 31st March 2021. (Source: Home Office).
 7. After months of delay, the EUSS [policy equality statement](#) was published. The document indicates that the scheme might discriminate against various groups with protected characteristics but discrimination is justifiable. (Source: Home Office).
 8. A government released outcomes of the [survey conducted with local authorities on looked after children and care leavers](#) eligible to apply to the scheme. The survey identified 3,220 eligible children and young people, a much lower number than it was initially estimated. As of 30th October, 46% of eligible children applied to the scheme, with nearly two-thirds granted status. (Source: Home Office).
 9. Updated EUSS caseworker guidance includes information on the extended validity period of identity documents introduced in response to the COVID-19 by some EU countries, including Romania. Expired documents should be treated as valid, enabling some EU nationals struggling to renew their national ID documents to apply to the scheme. (Source: Home Office).
 10. Further guidance for EUSS applicants affected by illness or [travel restrictions due to Covid-19](#) is expected to be published shortly. (Source: Parliament).
 11. The Care Provider Alliance has suggested approaches care providers can take to support social care staff and service users, including working with local authorities to identify and make applications for vulnerable adults. The Home Office's [bespoke guidance for those assisting adults with care and support needs](#) is in development. (Sources: Care Provider Alliance and Home Office).
 12. A briefing on the EU Settlement Scheme outlining steps [housing associations](#) can take to support their EU residents and employees has been published by the National Housing Federation. (Source: National Housing Federation).
 13. The University of Liverpool was approached by the Home Office to produce tailored [EUSS information for children](#), including FAQs and downloadable leaflets. (Source: University of Liverpool).
 14. Unlock has produced an [information sheet](#) and [one page summary](#) for EUSS applicants with a criminal record. (Source: Unlock).

Experiences of specific groups applying under the EUSS

15. Recent publications include:

- A report by the Migration Observatory identifying groups most likely to [miss out on securing status under the EU Settlement Scheme](#). It categorises 5 vulnerable groups: those who may not be aware that the scheme exists or that it is applicable to them; those who are already socially excluded; those facing difficulties accessing and understanding the application process; those lacking evidence of their eligibility; and those failing to convert pre-settled status into settled status. (Source: Migration Observatory).
- A study on [low-skilled EU migrants](#) found that only half of respondents were aware of the EUSS and the need to apply. It also revealed that majority of low-skilled migrants want to stay in the UK post-Brexit, but many are still struggling with English, despite living in the UK for over 10 years. (Source: Social Market Foundation).
- A briefing from Age UK explores the [barriers older people face when applying to the EUSS](#) with digital exclusion at the forefront. (Source: Age UK).
- The Roma Support Group produced a [summary of the main issues experienced by Roma communities](#) in relation to the scheme for a recent event they held with APPG for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, at which Sheffield Council presented their approach to supporting their local Roma community. (Source: Roma Support Group).
- The University of Liverpool has produced two [briefings on children and EUSS](#), exploring access to the EUSS scheme and UK citizenship by Roma children. (Source: University of Liverpool).
- The Public Law Project has examined [digital immigration status](#) and reported on a range of potentially problematic aspects identified, some of which “ultimately risk discriminatory and otherwise harmful effects”. (Source: Public Law Project).

Ewa Jamroz
Migration Yorkshire
November 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 4B**WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:
DECEMBER 2020****EU SETTLEMENT SCHEME – TAKE UP IN Y&H****LA numbers up to 30 September 2020**Uptake of the scheme in Y&H vs. estimated EU population¹

Local Authority	Estimated EU residents	Current number of applications	Percentage	Remaining (estimate)
Barnsley	12000	9210	77%	2790
Bradford	26000	26050	100%	-50
Calderdale	7000	3950	56%	3050
Craven	Not Available	730	Not Available	Not Available
Doncaster	14000	17420	124%	-3420
East Riding of Yorkshire	9000	6420	71%	2580
Hambleton	2000	1170	59%	830
Harrogate	3000	4430	148%	-1430
Kingston upon Hull, City of	20000	19490	97%	510
Kirklees	13000	10360	80%	2640
Leeds	32000	42360	132%	-10360
North East Lincolnshire	5000	4880	98%	120
North Lincolnshire	6000	8880	148%	-2880
Richmondshire	2000	330	17%	1670
Rotherham	8000	7080	89%	920
Ryedale	2000	1110	56%	890
Scarborough	2000	3050	153%	-1050
Selby	4000	2320	58%	1680
Sheffield	22000	21330	97%	670
Wakefield	12000	15140	126%	-3140
York	6000	6650	111%	-650

¹ There are key differences between the ONS's population estimates of EU nationals and data from EUSS; the two sets of data are not comparable as they relate to different groups. For more details, please read the ONS note <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/noteonthedifferencebetweenonspopulationestimatesbynationalityandhomeofficeeuropeanunionsettlementscheme/eussstatistics/2020-02-24>

Top nationalities in Y&H

Polish (29%), Romanian (16%), Slovak (8%), Italian (6%) and Lithuania (5%). However, whilst Polish is the top nationality in most of the LAs, Romanian continues to top in Barnsley and Slovak – in Sheffield and Rotherham.

Barnsley	Bradford	Calderdale	Craven
Romania (39%)	Poland (24%)	Poland (36%)	Poland (31%)
Poland (33%)	Slovakia (23%)	Czech Republic (15%)	Hungary (16%)
Latvia (9%)	Italy (8%)	Slovakia (10%)	Portugal (9%)
Lithuania (4%)	Latvia (7%)	Romania (8%)	Romania (9%)
Portugal (3%)	Romania (7%)	Italy (5%)	Italy and Germany (5%)

Doncaster	East Riding	Hambleton	Harrogate
Poland (35%)	Poland (28%)	Poland (43%)	Poland (32%)
Romania (33%)	Latvia (21%)	Romania (10%)	Romania (11%)
Latvia (6%)	Romania (11%)	Latvia (8%)	Hungary (9%)
Slovakia (6%)	Lithuania (7%)	Netherlands (5%)	Spain (6%)
Lithuania (4%)	Bulgaria (7%)	Slovakia and Germany (5%)	Italy and Latvia (5%)

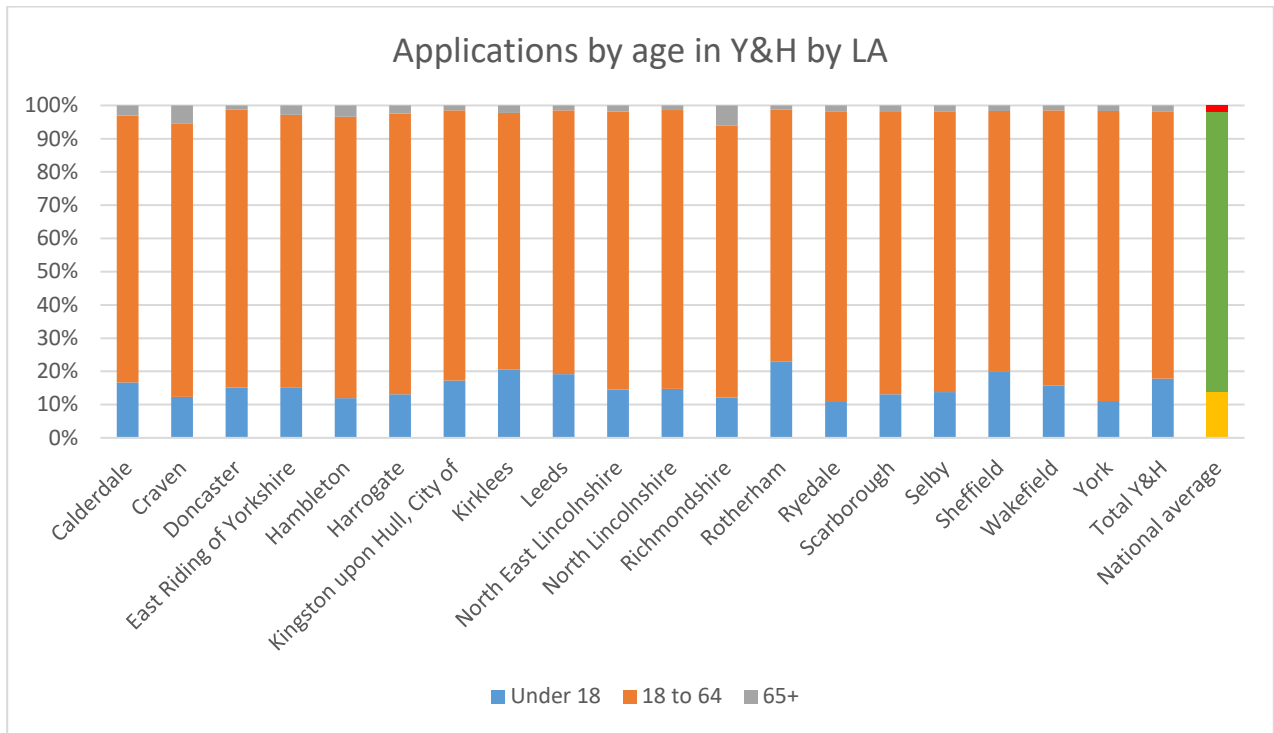
Hull	Kirklees	Leeds	NE Lincolnshire
Poland (40%)	Poland (31%)	Poland (20%)	Poland (33%)
Romania (20%)	Romania (14%)	Romania (15%)	Romania (27%)
Latvia (10%)	Italy (10%)	Italy (10%)	Latvia (13%)
Lithuania (9%)	Hungary (and Non-EU) (7%)	Portugal (9%)	Bulgaria (7%)
Italy (4%)	Spain (6%)	Spain (6%)	Lithuania (6%)

North Lincolnshire	Richmondshire	Rotherham	Ryedale
Poland (35%)	Poland (41%)	Slovakia (31%)	Poland (35%)
Romania (23%)	Germany (22%)	Poland (18%)	Romania (26%)
Lithuania (18%)	Romania (11%)	Romania (12%)	Bulgaria (7%)
Portugal (9%)	Netherlands (7%)	Lithuania (9%)	Latvia (6%)
Latvia (3%)	Latvia (7%)	Czech Republic (6%)	Hungary (5%)

Scarborough	Selby	Sheffield	Wakefield	York
Poland (37%)	Poland (57%)	Slovakia (22%)	Poland (51%)	Poland (24%)
Romania (34%)	Romania (12%)	Poland (14%)	Latvia (9%)	Italy (13%)
Latvia (5%)	Bulgaria (6%)	Romania (12%)	Romania (7%)	Romania (11%)
Bulgaria (4%)	Italy (4%)	Italy (7%)	Lithuania (6%)	Spain (8%)
Italy (4%)	Latvia (4%)	Spain (5%)	Spain (4%)	Germany (5%)

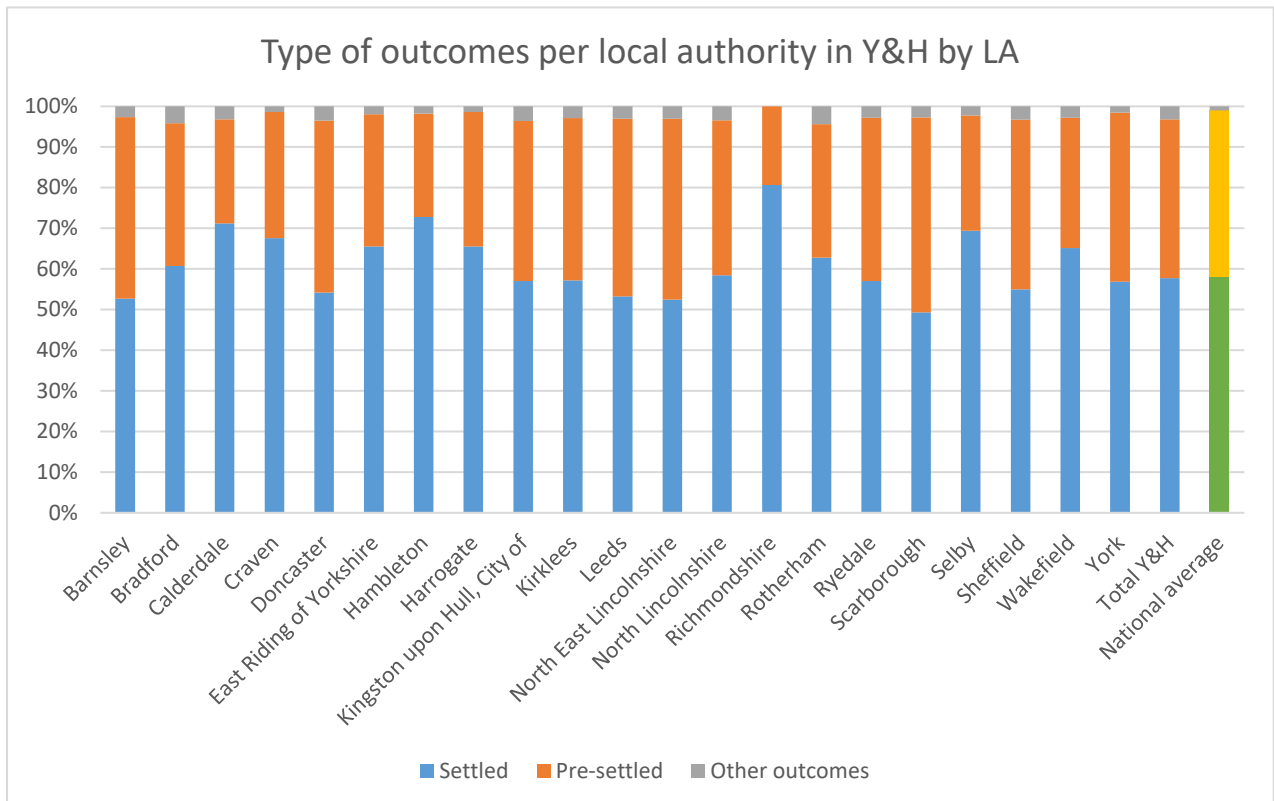
Ages of applicants in Y&H

- Rate of applications from children continue to be higher in Y&H than nationally with U18s accounting for 18% of applications, compared to 14% nationally; in some LAs, such as Rotherham, Bradford, Kirklees and Sheffield, this rate is much higher – 20-23%;
- Older applicants age 65+ account for 2% of applications in Y&H, same as nationally, though some counties in North Yorkshire (Richmondshire and Craven) have much higher take up from this group – 5-7%;



Outcomes in Y&H

- In our region, rate of **settled status** is in line with the national average – 59%, while pre-settled is lower – 39% and other outcomes are higher – 2%; nationally, for the same period, it was 58% settled, 41% pre-settled and 1% other outcomes;
- However, there are some huge differences locally – Richmondshire, Hambleton and Calderdale’s rate of settled status is 71% or more, while Scarborough and NE Lincolnshire is 49% and 52% respectively.



MIGRANT HELP

Monthly Update – December 2020

FRC PROGRESS

- The average wait time for the FRC has unfortunately remained high through November but progress has been made for recruitment and rotas to help us to manage the challenging arrival patterns more effectively.
- We have seen increases in calls around support for those granted S95 and S4 (2) in IA, dispersals and continue to see trends around ARCs, HC2s and phone confiscations which unfortunately we have limited information on. Details of the processes and who to contact for the queries that fall outside of AIRE can be found in our latest newsletter
- Volumes throughout the week remain high but Mondays continue to be our most challenging day for call volumes and arrival patterns.

EAGL PROGRESS

- The volumes through November have remained high and as a result the average wait time has increased as well. We have reviewed and continue to review our forecasts, the patterns and trends to ensure that we can respond to these quickly and effectively.
- A number of changes have been made within the team to enable us to manage these as effectively as possible including changes to rotas and shift patterns to ensure we have resource available for our busier periods.
- We continue to recruit to increase our head count and are hoping to have most new starters in by the end of 2020.
- The nature of the calls over recent weeks/months have been a challenge with increased safeguarding cases and calls from disgruntled clients. The average call length has remained high as the team ensure that these calls are handled appropriately and that all bases are covered to ensure the client is safe and supported. Refresher training is taking place over the coming weeks and months to further enable the team to confidently handle such calls. The Managers within the team are working hard to equally ensure that the team are supported as these calls impact the advisers as well and with home working we want to ensure time is taken to offer guidance and time out to talk cases through.

OUTREACH UPDATE

- Our outreach service continues to support our vulnerable service users during the pandemic.
- Our team has gone from actioning a previous weekly average of new referrals of around 50 referrals a week to an average of 90 referrals a week during November.
- We offer outreach for asylum support or move on services to the most vulnerable service users. We also provide welfare calls to service users who are feeling isolated, suffer with mental health problems or are a victims of domestic violence. We tailor the frequency of our welfare calls to suit the need of the service user.
- Our outreach@migranthelpuk.org inbox continues to be monitored and is up to date.
- We welcome referrals to outreach@migranthelpuk.org for vulnerable service users who need extra support.

MOVE ON – NATIONAL UPDATE

- Our Positive Move on Service is now back to offering full move on support when requested by the Home Office.
- We can ask for reinstatement for any issues with BRP or discontinuation not received. To request reinstatement for BRP or discontinuation issues please email positivemoveon@migranhelpuk.org
- Our move on providers have been working hard to ensure the information for housing signposting / referral pathways are up to date, if you would like to discuss this and check the information in your area please contact Nicola.Davies@migranhelpuk.org
- We are waiting for further guidance from the Home Office on Negative Move on. We are not currently assisting with Negative Move on cases.

UPDATE ON WORKING WITH OUR SUBCONTRACTORS

- Our move on providers are ensuring they are up to date with the most recent changes. Our providers along with ourselves will be engaging in meetings with SMPs, local authorities and LAASLOs to keep everyone up to date on our service.

SERVICE COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK UPDATE

We have 5 organisations who have signed our framework agreement and are ready to undertake work on our framework.

- Harbour Project – who cover Swindon,
- Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum – who cover Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Essex and Norfolk,
- New Routes – who cover Norwich
- CHAWREC – who cover Cheshire, Halton Runcorn and Warrington.
- Wirral Change – who cover Wirral.

We have been in contact with other organisations who applied to join our framework to offer guidance and support for the next steps.

If anyone has any queries on the commissioning framework please contact Nicola Davies who will be able to assist further.

FEEDBACK/SU EXPERIENCE UPDATE

- The new surveys can be found on our website <https://www.migranhelpuk.org/as-feedback>
- A new page within our SU Portal is currently being put in place which will be dedicated to the translated forms for ease of location. All surveys have been translated into the top 10 languages as well as Spanish. Posters have been circulated and will be displayed in our offices. The clients can work their way through the survey providing feedback on services they have used under AIRE including in IA, Move On (Positive and Negative) and Issue Reporting.
- We have received a number of responses so far and are working through these to ensure the feedback is being fed into our Continuous Improvement meetings.
- Our teams continue to signpost clients to these links and will encourage them to provide feedback so that we can further improve the service.
- Despite performance for the teams taking a step backwards we are still receiving calls to express gratitude for all we have done which is great to see and really helps the team.

AGENDA ITEM: 5B

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:
DECEMBER 2020



MIGRANT HELP

NEYH REGIONAL UPDATE

November 2020

- We have maintained a presence in the offices throughout this period and have continued to deliver services. Staff are now working as part of 50% home/office rota and rotate weekly.
- The office is Covid-19 compliant and we are making face to face appointments for SUs in UH where necessary including printing and scanning documents for clients. However, most client correspondence is being done over the phone.
- We continue to work with Mears in hotels, where we have regular and daily contact with SU's to complete ASF1's and briefings as they arrive. The contact is done in varied ways, through the RWM, or contacting clients directly within the hotel rooms, as well as via Service Users contact numbers.
- Mobile phones were purchased and distributed to the different hotels, via Mears staff (RWM), for any SU's without a phone. The phones are borrowed by SU's for the completion of the ASF1 and induction briefing.
- Question and Answer sessions have continued for all IA SU's which includes both in core IA and contingency accommodation/ hotels. The Freephone went live on 15th Oct and all contingency sites have been sent all the relevant info to display and inform SUs. They can also email us on our regional inbox and also via RWMs.
- Q&A questions and queries are varied and include: - issues about food in hotels, requests for clothing, PIQ, requests for solicitors, ESOL, asylum support appeals, linking/joining family members placed in other regions on asylum support, etc.
- We continue to allocate ASPEN cards to SU's being dispersed.
- Migrant Help handbooks will be taken to hotel IA so that they are available for clients on arrival.
- We continue to refer cases to the Health team, where health issues are identified, as well as assisting SU's with safeguarding or vulnerable cases, and working closely with Mears to share information as appropriate.
- We continue to make welfare calls for service users where there is concerns due to vulnerability or safeguarding
- We are liaising with voluntary sector organisation that support SUs with asylum support appeals to establish referral processes. Any organisations that offers assistance with asylum support appeals and are happy for us to make referrals, please contact Khami.
- Feedback / SU experience - The new surveys can be found on our website <https://www.migranthehelpuk.org/as-feedback>. All surveys have been translated into the top 10 languages as well as Spanish. The clients can work their way through the survey providing feedback on services they have used under AIRE including in IA, Move On (Positive and Negative) and Issue Reporting.

Regional managers details are:

Kristian.Hirscher@migranthehelpuk.org

Community Liaison Co-ordinators details are:

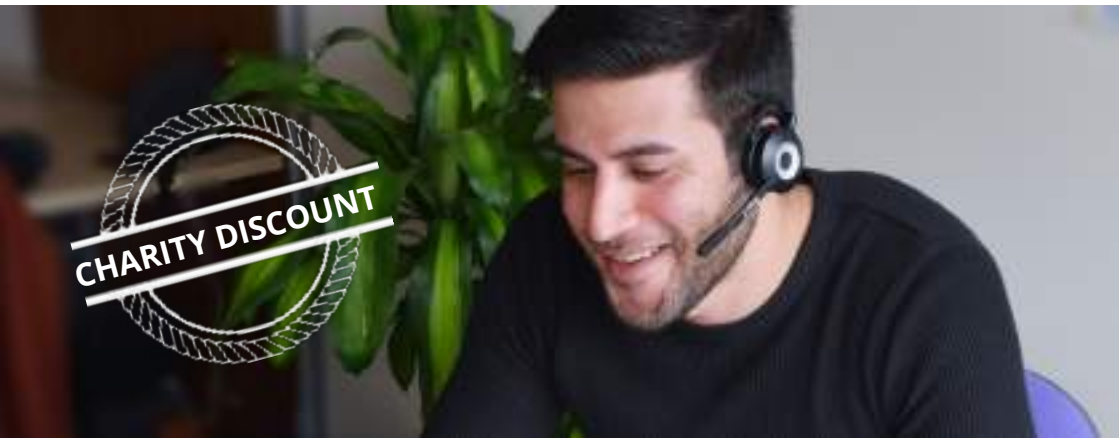
khami.miraf@migranthehelpuk.org

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 - Only pay for what you use
 - Charged by the minute
 - No set up fees
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 - Available to pre-book if required
-

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Write to us:
Clear Voice Interpreters and
Translation
Charlton House, Dour Street
Dover, Kent, CT16 1AT

clearvoice.org.uk

Clear Voice Interpreting
Services
Kemp House 160, City Road
London, EC1V 2NX

contact

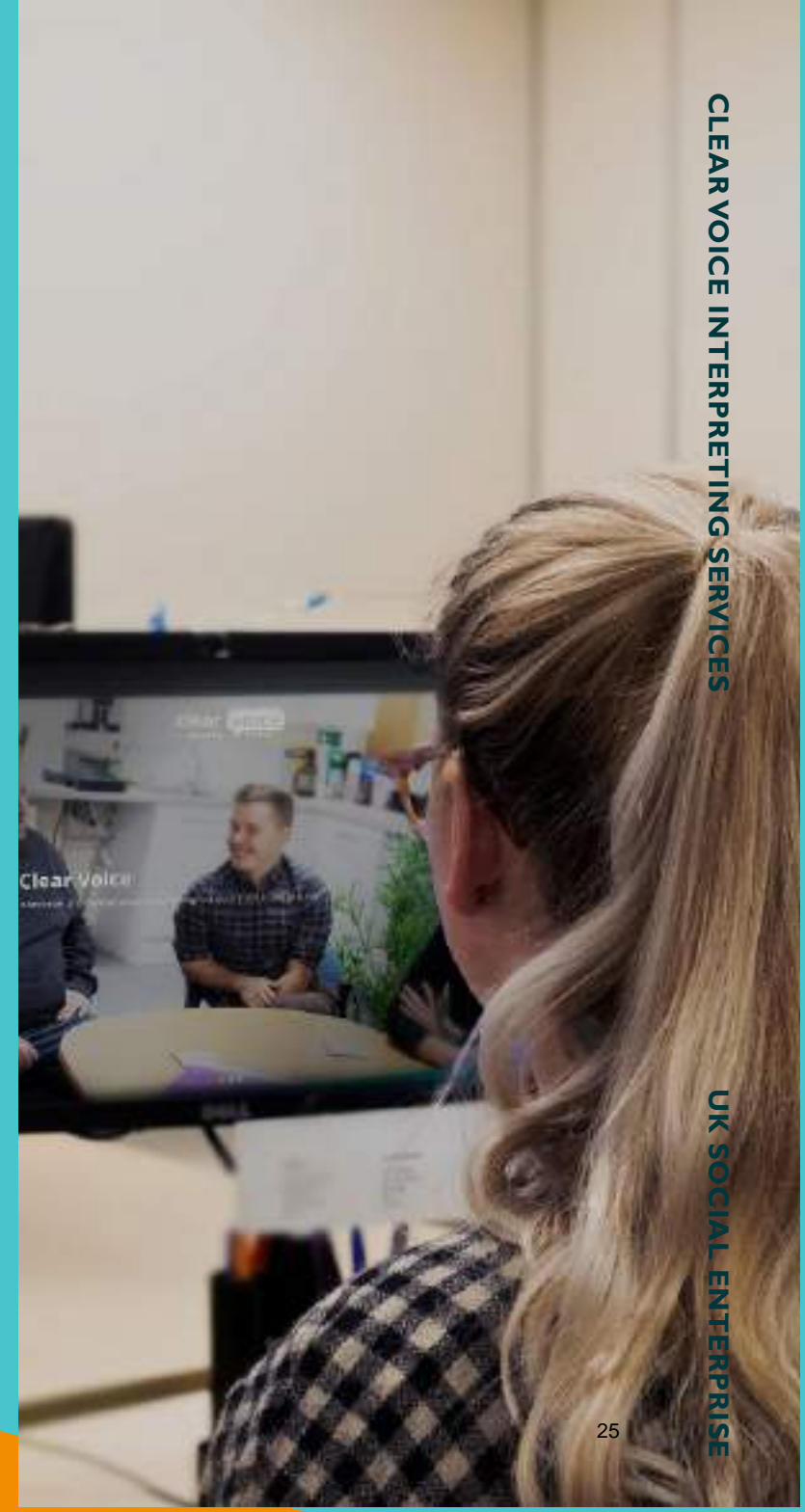
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clear voice
interpreting services



CLEAR VOICE INTERPRETING SERVICES

UK SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

about.

Clear Voice Interpreting Services is an award-winning, professional high quality service that specialises in telephone interpreting and face-to-face appointments.

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We are a social enterprise. Therefore 100% of our profits go to our parent charity, Migrant Help, which supports asylum seekers, refugees and victims of human trafficking and slavery.

So, not only would you be using a professional and well-established company, you would also be increasing your social responsibility by using an ethical service. You could also choose to promote your business' contribution to the charity sector.

Call or email us today for more information or to open an account:

Rachael Tew
Sales and Partnership Manager
01304 806790
Rachael.Tew@clearvoice.org.uk

Shelby James
Partnership Coordinator
01304 806719
Shelby.James@clearvoice.org.uk



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Face-to-Face Bookings

Sometimes a telephone call just won't do the job, and you need someone there in person to interpret. Clear Voice has a large pool of professional interpreters across the whole of the UK.

Face to face appointments can be pre-booked.



Translations

Clear Voice offers translation services at very competitive prices and quick turnaround times. Large or small documents, transcription of audio files, websites and transcreation, we can help with it all.



AGENDA ITEM: 5D

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:
DECEMBER 2020

9th Dec 2020

AASC Report

West Yorkshire Sub Regional Meeting

Nicki.Batley@mearshousing.co.uk
MEARS HOUSING MANAGEMENT

Satisfaction Surveys

A new service user satisfaction survey was introduced at the beginning of October for all service users in dispersed accommodation. The Initial Accommodation Survey will be released early 2021.

This survey is a useful tool for us to understand what service users think about the service we deliver and their experiences. The feedback allows us to focus on any trends that arise from feedback, making improvements wherever possible.

The results for October were collated, these were good with an overall satisfaction of **78%**. Mears are currently reviewing and analysing the results to identify any areas of improvement.

IA - Urban House

Following the implementation of the Covid-19 Outbreak Management Plan, Urban House reopened and commenced accommodating service users to initial accommodation space in Wakefield as of Tuesday 15th September.

Urban House currently accommodates **197 service users** (as of end October) and will be at full capacity at 270 service users, in line with Public Health guidance.

IA - Contingency Accommodation/Hotel Update

Date	Hotel	Number of Children	Number of families	Number of family SUs	Number of Single people	Total
30/11/2020	Metro Inn Huddersfield	0	0	0	25	25
30/11/2020	The Rock Halifax	0	1	2	20	22
30/11/2020	Mercure Parkway Leeds	0	0	0	118	118
30/11/2020	Mercure Leeds City Centre	0	0	0	54	54
30/11/2020	Holiday Inn Express Leeds	0	0	0	76	76
30/11/2020	Cedar Court Wakefield	0	0	0	148	148
30/11/2020	The Bradford Hotel	2	3	6	116	122

As of 30th November 2020, **566** service users are accommodated in IA contingency sites across West Yorkshire. **1190** service users accommodated in contingency IA across NEYH overall.

Each hotel has the following control measures in place as a minimum:

- A 24-hour security team is present at each hotel
- A minimum of one full-time Mears Resident Welfare Manager
- All service users receive a full induction upon arrival
- All service users are issued with Covid-19 guidance in a language they understand
- Key control guidance such as social distancing implemented
- Hand sanitising stations have been made available in communal areas within the hotels
- A daily welfare check of each service user is undertaken.
- Introduction of a 'a meaningful conversations log'
- Face coverings provided
- Continued health pathway and signposting



Dispersed Accommodation

The number of Service Users housed in dispersal accommodation across the West Yorkshire region is set out below. The table details the number of Section 95 and Section 4 Service users housed in the relevant authorities as of the month **Oct 2020**.

Area	Actual Numbers S95	Actual Numbers S4
Bradford	1052	78
Calderdale	368	9
Kirklees	697	49
Leeds	842	92
Wakefield	61	9

Discontinuations

Figures to follow.



Property Compliance – Oct 2020

Category 1 Maintenance Issues

Maintenance Issues Received:	107
Not Resolved in within the Response Time	0

October has been another solid month in response to Category 1 repairs. No missed targets. The issues reported remain mainly electrical problems, leaks, door/windows and key issues.

Category 2 Maintenance Issues

Maintenance Issues Received:	1119
Not Resolved in within the Response Time	0

Fully compliant with Category 2 repairs for October. Of the 1119 jobs raised, 48% have been raised by AIRE, 47% of which related to heating and/or hot water issues.

Category 3 Maintenance Issues

Maintenance Issues Received:	401
Not Resolved in within the Response Time	0

The Home Office agreed to pause non-health & safety critical repairs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, until the 1st November 2020.

Gas servicing completed in month – 178

EPIR's completed in month - 137

Complaints Resolution - Oct 2020

Complaint(s) Received:	32
No. Complaint(s) Not Resolved in 5 Working Days:	0

Mears received 32 complaints in October. All were acknowledged within 24 hours and resolved/closed with actions within 5 days.



Operational updates:

Safeguarding

- The Safeguarding Level 2 training will be completed by all frontline staff by the end of 2020
- Mears have implemented an additional stand-alone Mental Health training module
- Incident Management and Safeguarding training module is due to be rolled out to staff covering identification, management and reporting of incidents and safeguarding issues within the service user population

Mobile Working

Mears are introducing a new mobile working solution to the teams that are out and about each day. The new mobile working solution will allow access to real time information from Veco, including SU details, all relevant linked case information, ASB details, vulnerability flags and safeguarding records. A full property history can be accessed showing all repairs as well as listing historical inspections that have been completed. Notes can be added directly into the system which will update Veco automatically.

Staff Training

We are committed to ensure all Mears colleagues receive the relevant training for their roles. The journey starts with the AASC Mears Colleague Induction which explains the contract and covers the mandatory elements such as Safeguarding and Health & Safety. Mears also train each colleague in:

- **Conflict and De-Escalation**
eLearning element with the main training being run in a classroom environment with COVID 19 measures in place. These courses are currently scheduled from December onwards.
- **Basic First Aid**
Emergency Basic First Aid course which is run by St Johns Ambulance or one of its partners.
- **Incident Reporting eLearning**
Incident Management and Safeguarding training module. This covers identification, management and reporting of incidents and safeguarding issues within the service user population.
- **HO Counter Terrorism Training**
This training is mandatory for all staff. The Home Office Counter Terrorism Team will deliver specific training which is relevant to this contract. Training sessions will be via Teams and will be a rolling schedule starting again in the New Year.

Service user website

To assist our service users and provide relevant and up to date information, we are developing a dedicated website which will be fully inclusive. We are just testing functionality for audio as well as the language translation feature. Much more on this to come later next year.

Hate Crime – VECO reporting

An additional category has been placed onto VECO which allows us to capture closer details following alleged reports of Hate Crime. Through the Partnership Manager role, we will now be able to utilise this information collaborating further with local Police, PREVENT and Hate Crime campaigns to empower service users and offer targeted approaches. VECO now captures:

- Hate Crime - Physical attacks
- Hate Crime - Threat of attack
- Hate Crime - Verbal abuse or insults



Positive Engagement and Social Inclusion

Mears continues to engage with local authorities and key representatives from the voluntary and community sector during the COVID-19 emergency. Below is a summary of some of the VCS and service user engagement within West Yorkshire over the last month or so:

Wakefield

- Cedar Court Hotel launches a service user accessible fitness area
- **National Hate Crime Awareness Week** - Hate Crime Awareness session delivered at IA contingency site on 15th October
- Refugee Council – Health Access Refugee Project – delivered via Zoom
- Regular liaison with the West Yorkshire Police and NPT crews locally to track intel
- Partnership Manager led service user Focus Groups across IA Overflow sites
- Partnership Manager increased on site presence in hotels
- Refugee Council committed to re-introducing onsite support WC 1st Dec

Bradford

- PREVENT team from West Yorkshire Police and Partnership Manager Nicki Batley deliver weekly ‘get to know us’ session in IA contingency
- **National Hate Crime Awareness Week** - Hate Crime Awareness session delivered at IA contingency site on 15th October
- Anti-Rumour and Critical Thinking Campaign implemented
- In partnership with Bevan Health and Wellbeing, deliver activity packs to Service Users to aid with their wellbeing during National Lockdown

Leeds

- **National Hate Crime Awareness Week** - Hate Crime Awareness session delivered at Holiday Inn IA contingency site 15th October
- Local Ward Councillors hold Zoom session with Partnership Manager and Resident Welfare Manager to meet Mercure Hotel Service Users
- In partnership with Bevan Health and Wellbeing, deliver activity packs to Service Users to aid with their wellbeing during National Lockdown
- Bevan Health and Wellbeing deliver on site wellbeing sessions to the Service Users at the Holiday Inn Leeds and Mercure Otley Road

Kirklees

- HMO Covid-19 focus for Dispersal Accommodation, cascading Kirklees Council packs to service users in HMOs
- DASH and TSL VCS in reach support to IA contingency continues

West Yorkshire Overall

Focus Groups

Within the region, service users focus groups have been held at each of the 7 initial accommodation contingency location. Urban House next focus group planned to be held 3rd December co-hosted by Nicki Batley, Partnership Manager for Mears and VCS Representative for Wakefield, Pat McCusker – MESMAC.

National Customer Service week – Partnership Manager Nicki Batley goes ‘back to the floor’ working with Mears repairs and maintenance colleagues for the day to turn a void property around for service user and her 2 young children in Bradford.



ASYLUM

For information and discussion:

Members are asked to note the report.

Statistics

1. The latest Home Office statistics for asylum and resettlement were published on 26 November 2020, showing data up to the end September 2020. The full datasets are publicly available and can be viewed [here](#).
2. There were 31,752 asylum applications (main applicants only) in the UK in the year ending September 2020, lower than the recent peak in year ending September 2016 (36,546), although that figure will have been impacted by the measures taken in response to COVID-19 since March 2020:
 - The top 5 countries of origin were Iran, Albania, Iraq, Eritrea and Sudan.
 - In the year ending September 2020, there were 15,733 initial decisions made on asylum applications, and around half (49%) of these were grants of asylum, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave (such as discretionary leave or UASC leave), similar to the previous year (48%).
 - The UK offered protection, in the form of asylum, humanitarian protection, alternative forms of leave and resettlement, to 12,984 people (including dependants) in the year ending September 2020, 33% lower than the previous year, The fall in people granted in the latest year is due to fewer initial decisions following an application to the UK, as well as the pause to resettlement activity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The number of grants of protection and alternative forms of leave in the year ending September 2020 included:

- 8,908 grants of asylum, down 23% compared with the previous year, with the top nationalities that received grants being Iranian (1,699), Eritrean (1,063), Sudanese (1,056), and Afghan (682) nationals; all these nationalities saw falls in grants in the latest year
- 1,183 grants of humanitarian protection, up 8% – over half of these (56%) were granted to Libyan nationals, also a notable increase in grants awarded to El Salvadorian nationals (160 up from 18), following an increase in applications since year ending December 2018
- 733 grants of alternative forms of leave following an application for asylum, down 38.

3. Key points from this asylum accommodation data for the last 12 months are:
 - At the end of September 2020, 46,520 asylum seekers in the UK were in receipt of support under Section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, a 5% increase on the previous year (44,156).
 - Of these, 42,389 (91%) were in receipt of both accommodation and subsistence, and 4,131 (9%) in receipt of subsistence only. More than four fifths (83%) were located in England, with smaller supported populations in Scotland (9%), Wales (6%) and Northern Ireland (2%).
4. The number of S95 dispersed clients in West Yorkshire as at September 2020 was 3,342. Please note, this data only includes those on Section 95, so therefore won't include the majority of those in temporary or alternative initial accommodation.

Asylum Support

5. Migration Yorkshire continues to work in partnership with the Home Office, contracted providers (Mears and Migrant Help) and local authorities, supporting local authority engagement regarding the asylum support contracts. Current issues remain focused on the response to COVID-19, tiered regional restrictions and the national lockdown.
6. Since the national lockdown in England from 2nd November 2020, the Home Office have confirmed that there will be no activity regarding negative cessations. The Home Office is working with providers to reinstate support for any negative cases where an existing discontinuation notice is in place, including those who have overstayed in their accommodation beyond the discontinuation date. The pause on activity on negative cessations will be in place at least until 2nd December 2020. Positive cases continue to be scheduled for cessation as there is no government restrictions on house moves. [Source: Home Office]
7. The High Court issued an order to the Home Office pausing all evictions of recipients of Section 4 support during the national lockdown. [Source: ASAP]
8. The Home Office have undertaken an audit of COVID-19 compliance in asylum support accommodation and have tendered out this review to a third party, Human Applications. Human Applications have engaged with SMPs, LAs and NGOs in sample areas across the country, including our region, with a view to providing best practice on how to respond to COVID-19 in asylum accommodation settings including IA, hotels and contingency sites. The findings of the review will be shared with local authorities. [Source: Home Office]
9. The Public Accounts Committee has published its report on the Home Office's response to COVID-19 in asylum accommodation. It criticises the use of hotels and the lack of engagement with stakeholders in their response to COVID-19. It makes a number of recommendations including to set out a clear plan to reduce the use of hotels as asylum accommodation. [Source: Parliament]
10. In response to rising asylum arrivals and limited availability of asylum accommodation, the Home Office has sought to find alternative accommodation settings to house asylum seekers and is currently utilising two

army barracks sites, in Kent and Wales, to accommodate single adult asylum seeking men. [Source: Home Office]

11. A parliamentary research briefing on the use of hotels as asylum accommodation reveals data such as that 9,500 asylum seekers in hotels nationally and over 1,000 in the NEYH region. [Sources: House of Commons Library]
12. Following a review of asylum support rates, the government has announced a new permanent weekly rate of £39.63. Additionally, the Home Office will also be providing £8 per week to service users accommodated with full-board support including in hotels, who are accepted as eligible for s95 or s4 support. This is to cover the costs of transport, toiletries and non-prescription medication. There will also be some backdated payments of £3 per week backdated to 27 March 2020 to cover costs of toiletries; and £4.70 per week backdated to 1 July or date granted support if its later, to cover transport costs. Backdated payments will be subject to reductions where the provider has already covered these costs. [Source: Home Office].

Asylum Operations

13. The Home Office has recently announced it is considering using third party organisations to carry out asylum interviews as a short-term measure to respond to increasing pressures. Existing contractors are being considered to provide this service. Home Office is currently undertaking a Proof of Concept process and engaging with stakeholders. [Source: Home Office]
14. In response to the recent national lockdown, Home Office has issued correspondence detailing its measures in response to COVID-19 and outlining that temporary regional intake sites for registering asylum claims locally will remain open. Asylum interviews including video conferencing and some face-to-face interviews continue to be carried out. [Source: Home Office]
15. The Home Office has also confirmed that immigration reporting facilities continue to operate during the national lockdown. Reporting centres are now considered COVID secure and face-to-face reporting for those already identified as requiring a return normal reporting arrangements continues despite the lockdown. [Source: Home Office]
16. The Chief Inspector of Prisons published a report on facilities used to accommodate those arriving via the Channel in small boats. The report describes conditions as dirty and cramped and that service users are unable to socially distance. The Inspector has also criticised the Home Office for not foreseeing a rise in people arriving this way and not adequately planning for where they would stay. The Home Office have subsequently published a response to the findings of the report [Sources: HM Inspectorate of Prisons, Home Office].

Stefan Robert
Migration Yorkshire
November 2020

RESETTLEMENT AND UASC

For information and discussion:

Members are asked to note the report.

RESETTLEMENT

Refugees Resettled under VPRS (Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme) and VCRS (Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme)

1. Since the programmes were announced in September 2015, there have been a total of 2,424 individuals resettled in Yorkshire & Humber up to March 2020. This is made up of 2,004 under the Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme and 420 under the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme.
2. The Home Office have announced (Nov 2020) that they wish to complete the VPRS pledge to bring 20,000 individuals into the UK. This means they need to bring in an additional 232 individuals. They intend to do this with LA's that are holding properties and have cases approved. Yorkshire and Humber have a number of LA's in this position and Migration Yorkshire are working with the Home Office, with the aim of seeing refugees arrive in Jan /Feb 2021.
3. Migration Yorkshire are working closely with these LA's to plan for arrival of a small number of families in Y&H in the New Year and ensure suitable support plans are in place for self-isolation on arrival.

New Post-2020 'UK Resettlement Scheme

4. Following the Home Office announcement in June 2019, the new UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) was due to start from 1st April 2020. This programme will see the current resettlement programmes – Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme, Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and Gateway Protection Programme merged into one.
5. No new information has been received about the start of this programme. This now appears to be more of a political decision rather than a Covid-19 restrictions issue. This is causing concern amongst statutory and voluntary sector support providers. Without confirmation of the new programme, funding, numbers and timescales, local authorities are not able to plan ahead and risk losing staffing and local expertise.
6. Migration Yorkshire continues to work with LA's, voluntary sector partners and the Home Office to plan for arrivals. Global partners UNHCR (providing aid and resettlement registration of refugees) and IOM (providing medical screening and travel arrangements) have re-started resettlement and we are keen to see the UK government fully resume their resettlement commitments and announce plans for coming years.

Children and Families Wellbeing Project

7. The Children and Families Wellbeing Project was developed in 2018 by Migration Yorkshire, local authorities and VCS in Y&H. It aims to address the complex trauma faced by some young resettled refugees which is having an impact on their family life, school attendance/ behaviour and ability to integrate. It has supported over 200 children and 100 families to date. It was jointly funded by individual local authorities in Y&H and match funded by the Home Office until March 2020. The project is managed by Migration Yorkshire and was delivered by three VCS organisations (SOLACE, Haven and Refugee Council).
8. Funding for the current year (2020-21) has been complicated by the delay in arrivals and while a substantial amount of the funding has been secured, the full budget of the project has not as yet been secured. The project is now being funded through local authority resettlement funds and some CCG's across Y&H.
9. The evaluation of the project is now available from Migration Yorkshire. The evaluation highlights the impact of the project, the need for this type of specialist support and has many case studies that make compelling reading. For a copy of the evaluation, please contact:
charlotte.cooke@migrationyorkshire.org.uk
10. Migration Yorkshire and partner organisations SOLACE and Refugee Council therapeutic Services ran a virtual event on the 21st Oct 2020 to show the impact of the project and provide Skills Share workshops. The event was recorded and Migration Yorkshire is looking at making available some elements in the near future, for those unable to make the main event.

Indefinite Leave to Remain

11. Refugees arrive with five years leave to remain. Each family has to apply for ILR (Indefinite Leave to Remain) at the five year point. Migration Yorkshire have worked with Legal Aid Solicitors and Refugee Council to develop a regional co-ordination project to support each individual and family to make the application. This is to ensure that resettled refugees do not find themselves without status (and the consequences of that) in our region.
12. The co-ordinator, Muhammad Nayyer (Refugee Council) has supported families to meet deadlines around applications and Legal Aid. Initial issues being worked through are eligibility for Legal Aid, changes to biometric registrations and backlogs and guidance from the HO regarding Covid-19 and changes to procedures. Should you require further information regarding the ILR process for resettled clients please contact Muhammad:
Muhammad.nayyer@refugeecouncil.org.uk

Raising Awareness and Refugee Voice

13. Migration Yorkshire commissioned 'An Invisible Man' Theatre Company to produce and tour a play, 'How to be Lucky', based upon the experiences of resettled refugees in Y&H. The play was seen by 20,000 people in schools, colleges, theatres and community centres before lockdown and received very positive feedback.

14. The theatre company are currently filming for a 'virtual performance and interactive school session'. This is to replace the live performances that were due to take place and hopefully be a resource for schools going forward. A version suitable for primary schools children has also been developed and available shortly.

UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC)

15. The latest locally collected data (30th June 2020) shows that there were 255 UASC looked after by Local Authorities in Yorkshire and Humber and 546 former-UASC care leavers supported.
16. UASC enter Yorkshire and Humber through three different routes – spontaneous arrivals, national transfers and VCRS (on hold since March because of Covid-19). The transfers under S67 (known as the 'Dubs amendment') were completed in May 2020.
17. Regional spontaneous arrivals have reduced in most areas, but there has been a significant increase in demand for national transfers as the numbers of UASC arriving in Kent and Portsmouth have soared.
18. In August, Kent County Council stopped accepting UASC referrals from the port, and the Home Office is having to make arrangements for young people to transfer directly from the port to other areas. In September, Portsmouth City Council followed suit because like Kent, they had been dealing with extremely high numbers of arrivals in recent months.
19. Since July 2020, 33 young people have transferred from Kent and Portsmouth to our region, to ten areas. 14 of these young people have come directly from the port to our region within one day of arriving in the UK. There are a remaining 7 placement offers from our region.
20. While we have had a good response to the crisis in Kent and Portsmouth in terms of offers, it is also worth noting that flexibility to accept different 'types' of referral, for instance referrals directly from the ports, different ages, gender and securing on-going support remains challenging.
21. The regional transfer rota was paused during lockdown. Recently we have needed to access the rota as Hull has been affected by increased UASC arrivals and hotel use for asylum seekers. We have encountered some resistance from local authorities about accepting UASC referrals according to the agreed in-region transfer protocol. We will continue to work with local authorities to find a collectively acceptable way of ensuring that some areas do not carry the bulk of responsibility for UASC in the region.
22. The use of hotels for adult asylum seekers around the region is leading to an increase in referrals to Children's Services for young people who dispute the age on their paperwork. Typically, they have been identified by immigration officers as likely to be aged 25+, therefore have not been age assessed in the entry area, however on arrival in our region have subsequently been accepted as their claimed age. We are aware of seven such cases so far, the youngest of whom is 15 years old.
23. The Home Office and DfE undertook a review of the National Transfer Scheme in September outlining a proposal for a national rota system for UASC referrals, managed regionally with voluntary participation from LAs (with the potential to mandate if necessary). Our region provided a response in addition to a number of local responses from different areas. We are

awaiting the outcome of the consultation, but given the current crisis, we understand the Home Office plan to expedite the process.

24. UASC Home Office asylum screening interviews are now being conducted at Waterside Court in Leeds again - by telephone and in person.
25. Migration Yorkshire continues to support the region in its work with UASC, providing advice, guidance and sharing best practice through regular meetings, and ensuring the region is represented on a national level. The level of engagement does vary across the 15 LAs and it can still be a challenge to engage with some LAs in our region regarding UASC. If you have any queries regarding supporting UASC in your LA area, please do contact Delphine Jacobs, the Migration Yorkshire UASC Regional Coordinator: Delphine.Jacobs@migrationyorkshire.org.uk.
26. Welcoming Young Refugees - regional project funded by the Controlling Migration Fund, to recruit new foster carers for UASC and support local authorities and the people working for them to provide high quality support to the young asylum seekers and refugees in their care. We are continuing to receive enquiries, So far the project has received 106 enquiries, 40 of which have been passed to local authorities for assessment. The project continues to offer training to social workers, managers, foster carers and support workers.
27. We are looking at options for continuing the WYR work after the current project ends in December 2020. We are holding 'a Welcoming Young Refugees project celebration event: Making a Difference: Welcoming Young Refugees into Your Home'. The event will run from 14:00 until 16:30 on Friday 11 December 2020, and aims to celebrate the end of our 'Making a Difference' campaign.

The event will be held online via **Zoom**. To join, please book via Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/making-a-difference-welcoming-young-refugees-into-your-home-tickets-129014165843>

Charlotte Cooke
Delphine Jacobs
Migration Yorkshire
December 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 7

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:
DECEMBER 2020



INTEGRATION AND COHESION

Refugee Integration Yorkshire and Humber

1. The Refugee Integration Service (RIS) is a service for the provision of advice and support to refugees who have been granted leave to remain in the UK within the last two years. It is presently provided within Barnsley, Calderdale, Doncaster, Hull and Rotherham in partnership with the local authority in each of those areas. The service is presently offered to those who have been granted refugee status, those who have been given humanitarian leave to remain and those unaccompanied asylum seekers who have been given leave to remain in the UK. The project is funded from the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) via the UK Responsible Authority (UKRA), an agency of the Home Office, and funding had been secured to the end of 2021.
2. Additional funding has now been secured from AMIF which means that:
 - a. The project is extended to the end of 2022
 - b. It will expand to include Bradford, Kirklees, North East Lincolnshire, Sheffield and Wakefield
 - c. Those people who have been awarded discretionary leave to remain with over 20 months will be eligible for support
 - d. Support will be extended to be provided for up to 6 months.
3. The Covid-19 crisis is still having an impact on the provision of the service as the majority of service providers are working from home. However, the service is still being offered and slowly, in most areas, there is some movement back to office working so that, where necessary, possible and appropriate, face to face advice and support can be offered.
4. As the rate of decision-making on asylum claims has fallen this has had an impact on the number of people who have been eligible for the service. The Home Office has expressed a desire to return to a business as usual model as soon as possible and the RIS service is ready and eager to support individuals and families as we hopefully move back to some semblance of normality.

Connecting Opportunities

5. Connecting Opportunities (CO) has remained open for business during the Covid-19 crisis, continuing to support participants and take on new referrals. Since March the project has been delivered remotely, with a brief period of face-to-face support in the summer.
6. All activities and contact is currently provided via telephone, WhatsApp and Zoom, with some partners using Google classroom for delivery of ESOL. One of the main challenges in the last few months has been to ensure that all

participants have access to IT equipment and internet, and have received sufficient IT training to enable them to access online learning and social activities. Those struggling to use IT are receiving one-to-one tutor support via phone and have their ESOL resources posted to them.

7. Up to the end of September, the project had supported nearly 1,200 participants. Of these, just over half are woman migrants, the majority of whom arrived to the UK to join families. This upwards trend in the rate of female participants has continued from the last quarter.
8. Since July, referrals have picked up and remain steady in all areas across Leeds City Region, including North Yorkshire. The top nationality for refugees continues to be Sudanese, whilst Pakistani is the most common nationality among other migrants. These two nationalities account for nearly a quarter of referrals for their respective migrant groups.
9. A recent participant survey highlighted the importance of the project during these challenging times, with 94 per cent of respondents being happy with the service provided and 88 percent willing to recommend it to family and friends. Regular contact with keyworkers and the provision of online classes were valued, especially by more isolated participants.
10. There was a reluctance to exit participants from the project at the start of the pandemic, but many are now starting to move on. The majority are exiting into job search and employment, mainly in warehouse and factory-related jobs, but also into hospitality and care work, with the remaining participants exiting into education, especially continuing with English language learning.
11. Current funding for the CO project is due to end on 30th June 2021. By February 2021 we expect to hear if the project will receive an extension of current Building Better Opportunities funding (up to 2023).

Modern Slavery & Exploitation

12. There was a [23% fall in NRM referrals](#) (the National Referral Mechanism for assessment of potential victims of modern slavery) in Q2 2020 compared to Q1 and 5% down on the equivalent quarter last year. This is thought to be COVID related.
13. Faced with legal action the government reversed the policy of [removing cash support to people in the NRM](#) temporarily housed in hotels or Initial Accommodation. The [Anti-Slavery Commissioner's](#) annual report highlights the need for increased efforts to ensure survivors are supported to live independent lives. The Commissioner is concerned 'the system is still not doing enough' and her concerns are echoed in recent [Centre for Social Justice research](#) which consulted Leeds practitioners ([Leeds was a best practice pilot area](#)). (Sources: the Independent, Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Centre for Social Justice)
14. Other recent research has found that individuals charged with [cannabis cultivation](#) are often modern slavery victims but not always recognised as such. A Free Movement briefing summarises the current [support system for victims](#). (sources: University of Cambridge, Free Movement).
15. The impact of COVID-19 includes [care workers](#) at increased risk of modern slavery (due to factors such as increased reliance on unregulated agencies

and a shift to online recruitment) and an [increase in trafficking to the UK](#) as criminals look to exploit those hardest hit by the pandemic. Media coverage of exploitation and potential [modern slavery](#) in some [Leicester factories](#) emerged following an increase in COVID-19 infections in the city. The [Human Trafficking Foundation](#) has collated resources for organisations facing challenges due to the pandemic. (Sources: Nottingham University, Independent, BBC, the Guardian, Human Trafficking Foundation).

16. Local authorities in England and Wales with a budget of £36 million or more will now be required to publish [modern day slavery statements](#) on how they are preventing modern slavery in their supply chains - one of several measures announced in response to a consultation on transparency in supply chains. (Source: Gov.UK)

Adam Atack
Pip Tyler
Migration Yorkshire
December 2020

AGENDA ITEM: 8

WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:
DECEMBER 2020



STATISTICS, POLICY AND RESEARCH UPDATE

For Information:

Members are asked to note the updates on: UK migration trends, UK migration policy, specific migrant groups, cohesion and integration, and international news.

Summary

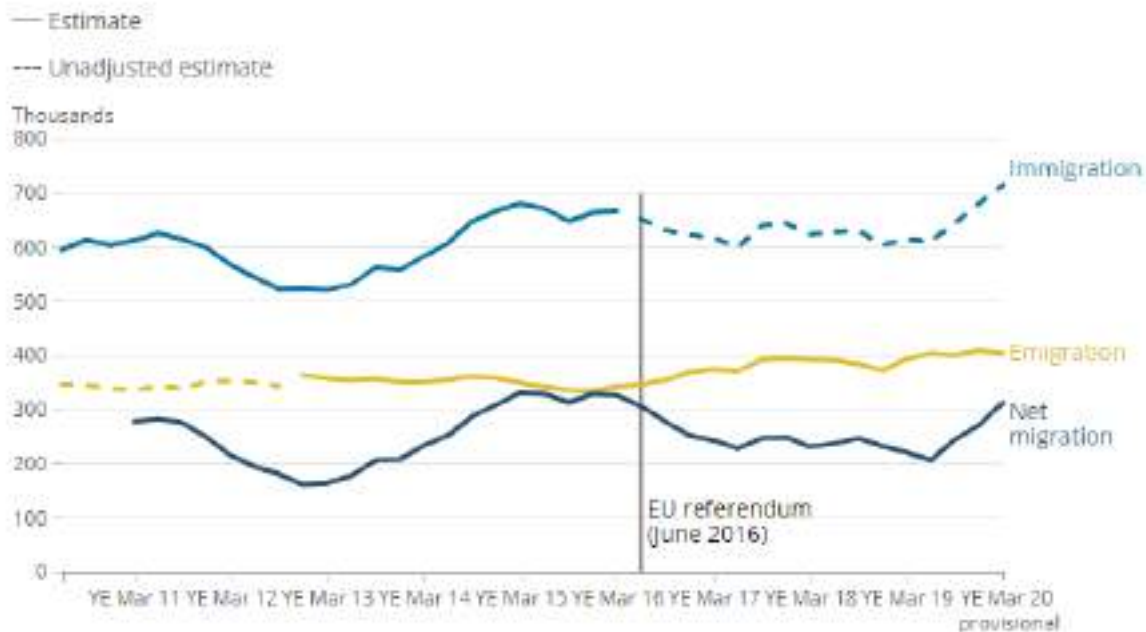
- UK net migration rose to 313,000 just before the national lockdown period, mainly attributed to non-EU migration for study reasons. Changes in trends since the Covid-19 outbreak has begun to emerge from Home Office data. (paras.1-4, 30)
- The House of Lords has proposed amendments to the Immigration Bill including on the Dubs amendment, EU children in care and asylum seekers' right to work. (para.7)
- The Migration Advisory Committee recommends adding senior care workers and certain other health occupations to the shortage occupation list. (para.9)
- Following rising numbers of people arriving to the UK in small boats over the summer, the Home Office came under fire for using the phrase 'activist lawyers'. (para.12)
- The Next Steps Accommodation Programme will fund councils to support vulnerable people during the pandemic, including EEA nationals and people with NRPF. (para.23)
- Data on council spending on supporting households with NRPF shows a 'small but significant' increase in households with EU applicants. (para.24)
- The Immigration Health Surcharge increase has been delayed several weeks. (para.25)
- Local authorities with a budget of £36 million+ will be required to publish statements on how they are preventing modern slavery in their supply chains. (para.36)
- The top country of origin for asylum seekers in the UK is Iran, while biggest changes are an increase in applicants from El Salvador (up 106%). (para.43)
- The use of hotels as asylum accommodation received widespread media coverage over the summer. The pause on asylum evictions now has been lifted. (paras.48, 50)
- The commitment to transfer 480 children from Europe under the Dubs amendment has been met. (para.53)
- Kent Council stopped accepting referrals to care for unaccompanied children; government has been looking for appropriate placements. (para.56)
- More usual arrival patterns across the Mediterranean and asylum applications in the EU have resumed. Recently a fire in Moria camp, Greece has been particularly devastating, and applications from Tunisian asylum seekers in particular are rising. (para.71)

UK migration trends

1. [National migration statistics](#) were most recently published in August. The components of long-term, net migration for the UK are as follows for the year March 2019-20, with the change over time shown in *Figure 1* below.

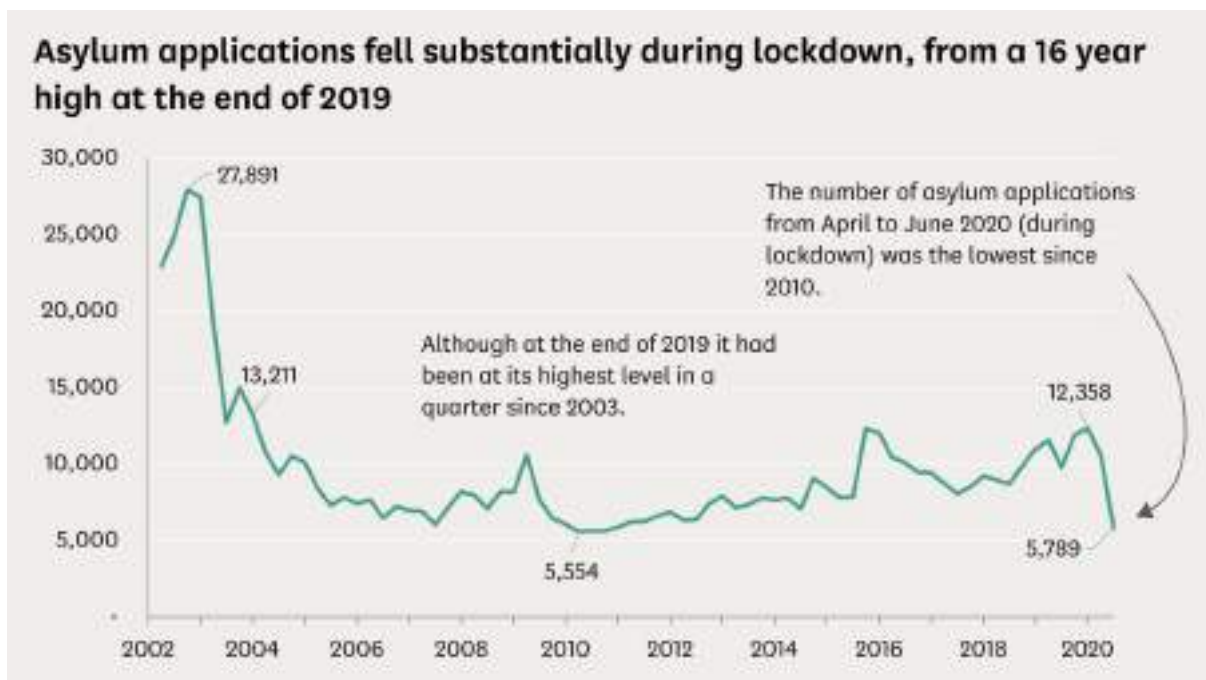
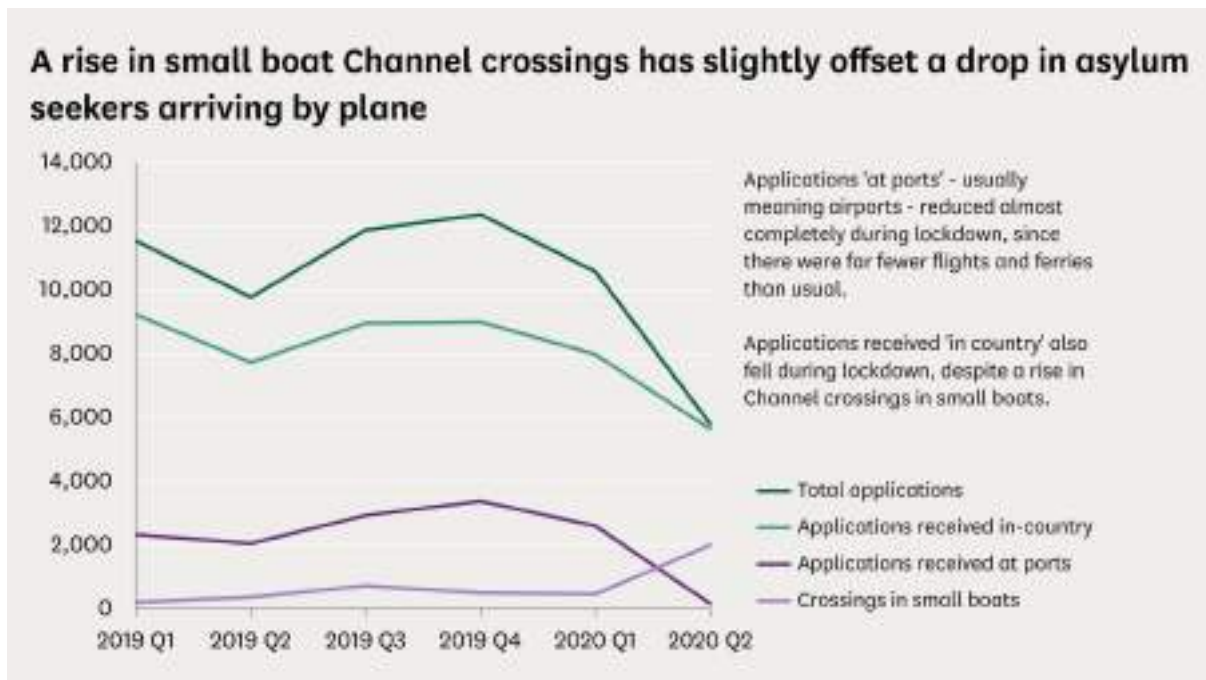
715,000	Immigration (up 34K from last quarter, up 101K from the year before)
403,000	Emigration (down 6K from last quarter, up 10K from the year before)
313,000	Net migration (up 42K from last quarter, up 92K from the year before)

Figure 1 Long term international migration to the UK June 2010 – March 2020
(Source: ONS 2020)



2. This most recent ONS data only really covers the *pre-lockdown* period. It shows that prior to the pandemic, migration to the UK was increasing following a period of stability. Net migration of EU citizens was fairly stable at 58,000 and non-EU migration was continuing to rise, reaching 316,000 (YE March 2020). The increase in immigration and net migration was mostly driven by non-EU nationals coming to study here, mainly from India and China.
3. The most recent [Home Office statistics](#) provide data to the end of June and thus shows some impact of lockdown; for example, at 144,938 the number of work-related visas was 22% lower than the previous year. (See the later sections on asylum seekers, children, and resettlement programmes for their respective national figures, and the later agenda items for EU Settlement Scheme data). The Home Office also released a [statistical report on the impact of Covid-19](#) on passenger arrivals more generally, which covers all types of arrivals to the UK including visitors and returning British nationals.
4. A [House of Commons analyst](#) shared charts following this official data release demonstrating the changes in asylum trends since lockdown. These are reproduced in *Figure 2* and show numbers of people arriving in small boats in the context of other asylum applications (based on BBC figures) and long term trends in asylum applications.

Figure 2: Some changes in quarterly asylum applications to the end of June 2020 (Source: Twitter/Home Office 2020)



5. A Migration Observatory paper on [migrant settlement in the UK](#) examining numbers, trends and rates of grants of indefinite leave to remain (ILR), confirmed that family migrants are most likely to settle in the UK permanently. Other research identified a 'brain drain' from the UK following the EU referendum as [skilled Brits are leaving the UK for mainland Europe](#). Migration from the UK to the EU increased by 30% in this period. Researchers have suggested that [migration might become a necessity](#) for countries with a predicted [decline in population](#), including the UK. (Sources: Migration Observatory, the Guardian, Channel 4, BBC).
6. The next set of national migration statistics will be released in November.

UK migration policy

Law, policy and borders

7. The [Immigration Bill](#) (Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill), ending free movement of EU citizens to the UK from 1 January 2021, is passing through the House of Lords. A [Lords Committee](#) was concerned that the Bill risks adding to the complexity of immigration law, and about the downgrading of aspects of immigration law from primary to secondary legislation, meaning less parliamentary scrutiny. The Lords has so far approved [five amendments](#) including the so-called [Dubs amendment](#), with Lord Dubs and others arguing for continued legal rights to family reunion and safe passage for unaccompanied children. Another amendment is to grant EU children in care settled status in the UK. Peers have also argued for the [right to work for asylum seekers](#). (Sources: UK Parliament, BBC, TheyWorkForYou, Evening Standard).
8. The Home Office published a further details statement on the new [points-based immigration system](#) to be launched in 2021. Notable additions include:
 - EU nationals arriving in the UK from the next year will have secure access to their immigration status online, as well as receiving written confirmation.
 - Right to rent checks will be available online.
 - A new '[graduate route](#)' for international students launching in summer 2021, allowing them to stay in the UK to work or seek work after graduating, without needing to be sponsored by an employer.

A [media campaign](#) aims to inform businesses about how recruitment from abroad will change from 1 January. (Sources: Home Office, Gov.UK).

9. The Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) published its [review of the Shortage Occupation List](#). Migrants recruited to work in occupations on the list will be subject to lower salary thresholds under the points-based system (this goes against the MAC's recommendation; it opposed lower thresholds, arguing for upward pressure on wages rather than relying on migrant workers). The MAC recommends adding [senior care workers and certain other health occupations](#) to the list. Lower paid care workers would not meet the salary threshold. [IPPR](#) warns a shortage of care workers will be exacerbated by Brexit, without funding to improve pay and conditions. [Free Movement](#) has a useful summary. (Sources: Gov.UK, Twitter, Free Movement).
10. Over the summer government ran a consultation on the [2025 Border Strategy](#) aimed at the 'border industry' to feed into a UK border strategy. (Source: Cabinet Office).
11. The [Home Office](#) responded to a critical [Home Affairs Select Committee report on coronavirus measures at the border](#), stating that all steps taken have been guided by science and public health. (Source: Home Office).

Small boat arrivals to the UK

12. There has been continued and intensified debate and media coverage about migrant Channel crossings, with record numbers of migrants arriving via this route. Over [400 migrants crossed the English Channel in a single day](#) in September. Government described boat crossings as 'illegal migration' (in [Parliament](#) and the [Home Office blog](#)). A [backlash](#) challenged officials' repeated use of the phrase '[activist lawyers](#)' in relation to forced removals being prevented due to legal challenges. (Sources: BBC, UK Parliament, Home Office, Evening Standard)

13. Earlier in the summer the Home Secretary appointed a '[Clandestine channel threat commander](#)' to lead on the response to small boat crossings and asked the Ministry of Defence for [support to intercept boats](#) and facilitate their return to France. A [Franco-British Operational Research Unit](#) will be established to prevent crossings. Some recent arrivals across the Channel have been [removed to EU countries](#) under the Dublin III Regulation. (Sources: Gov.UK, the Independent, UK Parliament)
14. The [Home Affairs Select Committee](#) launched an enquiry on channel crossings, migration and asylum seeking routes through the EU, a remit that includes young people arriving in Kent and the National Transfer Scheme. (Source: Parliament).
15. There was [criticism of some media coverage](#) on the grounds that live footage of migrants is dehumanising, scaremongering, and promotes racist narratives. Responses to negative media, with answers to FAQs and arguments for safe and legal routes to the UK have come from the [Guardian](#), the [Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants](#) and [UNHCR](#). (Sources: the Guardian, JCWI, twitter).

Visas and citizenship

16. People with [visas due to expire](#) before the end of October cannot have them extended if they are unable to return home due to the pandemic, but can apply for 'exceptional assurance' as short term protection from enforcement action. There have been calls for the [free visa extension scheme](#) for [migrants in certain healthcare roles](#) to be continued; it ended on 1 October. The government states there is no need to extend the scheme as workers can apply for the new [Health and Care visa](#), with lower fees and a quicker response time. An [international student route](#), which replaces Tier 4 visas under the existing points based system, has been introduced to attract the 'best and brightest students.' (Sources: Gov.uk, inews).
17. In response to a legal challenge, the [Home Office is suspending the use of visa algorithm software deemed racially discriminatory](#) by campaign groups. A digital streaming tool had been used to risk rate visa applications and respond according to these categorisations, thus prioritising certain applications. The system has been criticised for breaching the Equality Act 2010 as it assesses applications based on nationality. (Source: JCWI).
18. The Home Office has produced its first guidance related to immigration and nationality fees, detailing eligibility for [refunds](#) and [fee waivers](#) for exceptional circumstances. The nationality policy concerning naturalisation as a British citizen has been updated to include the [inability to return to the UK due to global pandemic](#) as the reason for an absence during the qualifying period. (Source: Home Office).
19. The government published a series of posters highlighting the importance of using [registered Immigration Advisers](#). A [man in Hull has recently been found guilty](#) of giving unlawful immigration advice. (Source: Gov.UK)
20. Successful applicants for [British citizenship are facing delays](#) obtaining their status due to a suspension of citizenship ceremonies during the pandemic. Although some local authorities are now offering in-person or virtual ceremonies, there are still concerns about delays, which can impact access to study, work, as well as children who would have otherwise obtained British citizenship by birth. Windrush cases are also affected. Also on citizenship, historians have called for changes to the history section in the [Life in the UK test](#) on the grounds that it is one-sided and misleading,

with British achievements celebrated while ignoring people who were enslaved and colonised. (Sources: the Independent, the Guardian).

The hostile/compliant environment

21. Ahead of a full report on its assessment of Home Office compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty when implementing immigration policies, the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) has indicated areas for improvement such as engagement with communities to make sure it fully understands the effects of its policies on ethnic minority and other protected groups. (Source: ECHR)
22. The Home Secretary promised ‘a [genuine cultural shift in the Home Office](#) in response to Windrush. This will include: mandatory training for staff on the history of migration and race in the UK; a more diverse workforce; making the Home Office more open to scrutiny; and a more compassionate approach. An [IPPR report](#) finds that hostile environment policies have failed to encourage undocumented migrants to leave the UK, whilst the negative impacts are seen ‘far beyond just the targeted individuals’, and suggests that the policy’s design pushes people into poverty, discriminates against those from minority backgrounds and negatively impacts those with legal status. (Sources: IPPR, the Guardian).
23. Following the ‘Everyone In’ initiative, the [Next Steps Accommodation Programme](#) aims to fund councils to continue to support vulnerable people during the pandemic, including [EEA nationals](#) and [people with NRPF conditions](#) (No Recourse to Public Funds). Many [migrants will miss out on the £500 Isolation Support Payment](#) for people self-isolating who are in receipt of benefits and who cannot work from home. Undocumented migrants and most people subject to immigration control, such as visa holders, are not eligible to claim benefits. Briefings on COVID-19 and NRPF have been published by [COMPAS](#) (with a local authority focus) and [Groundswell](#). (Sources: MHCLG, Free Movement, COMPAS, Groundswell).
24. A sharp [increase in applications to lift the NRPF condition](#) in Q2 is thought to relate to COVID-19 and a softening of policy following a [court defeat](#). The NRPF Network (which has launched a [new website](#)) has published data on [council spending on supporting households with NRPF](#) covering 66 councils supporting 2,450 households at the end of March 2020. It finds that working in partnership with the Home Office can save local authorities money. It also shows that over a quarter of non-EEA NRPF households have been supported by councils for an average of 5 years and 4 months due to unresolved immigration issues. There was a ‘small but significant’ increase in the share of households with a main applicant being an EU national or having an EU right to reside, from 9% of supported households in 2018/9 to 13% in 2019/20. From our region only Leeds and Bradford are covered by these statistics, but Sheffield is also part of the NRPF Network. (Sources: DPG Law, Home Office, NRPF network).
25. The [Immigration Health Surcharge](#) increase from £400 to £624 due on 1 October has been delayed to 27 October (at the time of writing). Students and those on Youth Mobility visas will pay a reduced rate of £470, while those on Health and Care visas are exempt – the [government decision on this in May](#) followed considerable pressure. The exemption was backdated to 31 March and the [reimbursement system](#) is now in place. There have been renewed [calls for migrants to be exempt more broadly from healthcare charging](#): Doctors of the World and others warn the current system could undermine the UK response to the COVID-19 second wave, with some migrants afraid to go to hospital due to fears of inability to pay ([COVID-19 treatment](#)

[is non-chargeable](#) but research has shown [migrants are not always aware](#) of this). (Sources: Free Movement, Gov.UK, BBC, Doctors of the World, Medact).

26. [Two migrants who have been subject to domestic abuse](#) gave evidence in the House of Lords, calling for the Domestic Abuse Bill to be amended to ensure greater legal protection for migrants who report abuse and need to be able to access support services regardless of immigration status. (Source: the Independent).
27. A briefing on the [irregular migrant population of the UK](#) criticises [recent estimates by Pew and the GLA](#) attempts to quantify the undocumented migrant population as unreliable. (Source: Migration Observatory)

Detention and deportation

28. The Home Office risks making immigration enforcement decisions based on 'anecdote, assumption and prejudice', 'has no idea' of what impact it achieves and 'does not understand the support people need to navigate its systems effectively' - the verdict of a critical [Public Accounts Committee report on the Immigration Enforcement department](#). It highlights a lack of diversity among people in senior roles, and warns about a lack of planning for returning people after Brexit. (Sources: UK Parliament, the [Guardian](#))
29. The Home Office resumed [asylum removals](#) following lockdown. Critics warned that with [no testing](#) this risks spreading COVID-19 to other European countries. The Prime Minister suggested that post-transition the UK could more easily [return asylum seekers to EU countries of entry](#); others disagree because [no replacement agreement for Dublin III](#) is yet negotiated. There is speculation the prime minister is concerned that the [Human Rights Act](#) makes it harder to deport asylum seekers and that he may try to opt out of aspects of the legislation following a Whitehall review. Meanwhile the Home Office has updated policy guidance on the [Dublin III Regulation](#), including a section on a 'responsible state', guidance on working with local authorities and updates on timescales for transfer requests. Campaigners continue to call for [safe legal routes](#). (Sources: the Independent, the Guardian, New European, Gov.UK, inews).
30. The Home Office published updated guidance on [staff handling deaths in detention centres](#). [Morton Hall](#) immigration detention centre in Lincolnshire is to close following critical inspection reports in recent years. Detainees will be moved gradually, via removal flights, bail hearings or other procedures. A UN report recommends states stop [outsourcing the operation of immigration detention facilities to private military and security companies](#). (Sources: Gov.UK, the Guardian, UN)
31. The High Court found the Home Office policy on accommodation for those on immigration bail, known as [Schedule 10 support](#), to be unlawful after a legal challenge demonstrated difficulties accessing support. The Home Office must now review its policy. (Source: Doughty Street Chambers)

Modern slavery

32. A [23% fall in NRM referrals](#) (the National Referral Mechanism for assessment of potential victims of modern slavery) in Q2 2020 compared to Q1 and 5% down on the equivalent quarter last year, is thought to be COVID related. Data on types of decisions has been made available for the first time.

33. After Exploitation asserts that [modern slavery data is routinely suppressed](#) by government. On the basis of FOI requests the report states that at least 373 confirmed and 2,580 potential modern slavery victims were detained over a three year period, data not otherwise publicly available. The report asks for regular data on detention, deportation, immigration outcomes, and support provided or denied. It also recommends a 'firewall' to prevent victims' data being shared with immigration enforcement. Local authorities are asked to record modern slavery concerns and support outcomes consistently. (Sources: Gov.UK, After Exploitation).
34. Faced with legal action the government reversed the policy of [removing cash support to people in the NRM](#) temporarily housed in hotels or Initial Accommodation. The [Anti-Slavery Commissioner](#)'s annual report highlights the need for increased efforts to ensure survivors are supported to live independent lives. She is concerned 'the system is still not doing enough.' Her concerns are echoed in recent [Centre for Social Justice research](#) which consulted Leeds practitioners ([Leeds was a best practice pilot area](#)). Other recent research has found that individuals charged with [cannabis cultivation](#) are often modern slavery victims but not always recognised as such. A Free Movement briefing summarises the current [support system for victims](#). (Sources: the Independent, Office of the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Centre for Social Justice, University of Cambridge, Free Movement).
35. The impact of COVID-19 includes [care workers](#) at increased risk of modern slavery (due to factors such as increased reliance on unregulated agencies and a shift to online recruitment) and an [increase in trafficking to the UK](#) as criminals look to exploit those hardest hit by the pandemic. Media coverage of exploitation and potential [modern slavery](#) in some [Leicester factories](#) emerged following an increase in COVID-19 infections in the city. The [Human Trafficking Foundation](#) has collated resources for organisations facing challenges due to the pandemic. (Sources: Nottingham University, Independent, BBC, the Guardian, Human Trafficking Foundation).
36. Local authorities in England and Wales with a budget of £36 million or more will be required to publish [modern day slavery statements](#) on how they are preventing modern slavery in their supply chains - one of several measures announced in response to a consultation on transparency in supply chains. (Source: Gov.UK)

Specific migrant groups

The Windrush generation

37. Amid continuing complaints with [Windrush compensation](#) the Home Office has been seeking to recruit an [independent adviser](#) to the scheme. It ran an [online engagement event](#) in Leeds in August to raise awareness of the compensation scheme and the work of the Windrush Taskforce. (Sources: the Guardian, Gov.UK).
38. The [Home Office responded](#) to the Windrush Lessons Learned Independent Review by Wendy Williams, with proposals to address the recommendations through a 'comprehensive improvement plan' although there is [scepticism about the prospects for change](#). (Sources: Home Office, the Guardian)

International students

39. New resources include two factsheets covering changes to the regulations for [EU](#) and [EEA and EFTA](#) students after the end of transition, while a podcast explains new [student visa rules](#). (Sources: Universities UK International and Free Movement)

40. A group of MPs, lecturers, students and trade unions called for suspension of the NRPF restrictions for [international students](#) after it was reported that they are experiencing hardship as a result of Covid-19. (Source: the Independent)
41. The Home Office will not review cases of [international students caught up in the English tests scandal back in 2014](#) despite indications that some were wrongly accused. (Source: the Independent)

EU nationals

42. EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) statistics are published on a monthly and quarterly basis, with the latest monthly data available for September 2020. To avoid duplication in these meeting papers, these statistics and related policy updates are provided in Agenda Item 12 but will be incorporated into the downloadable version of this policy update on the Migration Yorkshire website.

Asylum seekers

43. For the year ending June 2020, Home Office statistics show:
 - 32,423 asylum applications. Comparisons show most change compared to the previous quarter rather than the previous year. There were 5,789 asylum applicants (incl. dependants) for Q2 2020, almost half compared with the previous quarter (10,569) but not quite as big a gap compared to the same time the previous year (9,772).
 - The top 5 countries of origin were Iran, Albania, Iraq, Eritrea and Pakistan.
 - The biggest changes are an increase in applicants from El Salvador (up 106%), Yemen (up 93%), Namibia (up 60%) and stateless people (up 53%).
 - 53% of initial decisions on asylum applications were grants of asylum, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave such as discretionary leave or UASC leave, up from 44% the previous year.
 - 2,932 people had an appeal allowed following an initial refusal of asylum.

The House of Commons library also published its latest [asylum statistics briefing paper](#).

44. At the Conservative party conference, the Home Secretary [promised reforms to the UK asylum system](#) which would disadvantage those who come to the UK through illegal routes as well as limit opportunities to challenge decisions through legal appeals. Her speech has been [criticised](#) for disregarding International Law. Further, the Home Office is looking to [delegate asylum interviews](#) to private contractors. [Sources: Free Movement, the Guardian, the Independent]
45. The Independent Chief Inspector [ICIBI] issued a [call for evidence](#) for his next inspection concerning asylum casework covering issues such as the quality of interviews and asylum decisions, timescales and delays in processing claims. [Source: ICIBI]
46. The Immigration and Asylum Tribunal recognised for the first-time in UK law that someone with [mental health conditions or a disability](#) may be considered a member of particular social group in relation to the UN Refugee Convention definition of a refugee. [Source: Free Movement]
47. Several reports recently published include the following:

- Researchers at the University of Sussex say [asylum claims on the basis of gender identity or sexual orientation are more likely to be refused](#) owing to a ‘culture of disbelief’ held by decision-making authorities. One in three LGBT+ asylum claims are refused in the UK and EU. [Source: the Guardian]
 - [Refugee and asylum seeking women](#) have revealed struggles around access to food and toiletries during the pandemic. [Source: Refugee Women]
 - A report claims that allowing asylum seekers the [right to work](#) would save the government £97M per year. [Source: Lift the Ban]
48. The pause on asylum evictions in place since March 2020 was lifted for [those with positive decisions](#) on their asylum claim in August and in September for [those with negative decisions](#). [Source: the Independent]
49. The Home Affairs Committee report on the Home Office’s [response to COVID-19 in asylum accommodation](#) and detention states that asylum seekers have found it difficult to access COVID-19 testing; there was no provision of access to toiletries and cleaning products during the pandemic; and criticises housing providers’ management of service user moves, room sharing and the use of hotels. The Public Accounts Committee is undertaking an [inquiry into the AAST](#) [Asylum Accommodation and Support Transformation] programme, following the recent NAO review. [Sources: HASC, Parliament]
50. The use of hotels as asylum accommodation received widespread media coverage over the summer. Reports of [far right groups targeting hotels](#) housing asylum seekers through filming and posting videos online also made the news. The Home Office has since published a [statement on the use of hotels](#) explaining that alternative provision for asylum seekers ensured health guidelines are followed, while the House of Commons Library has published a more detailed [research briefing](#) on the use of hotels as asylum accommodation. [Sources: Independent, Home Office, House of Commons Library]
51. Home Office published its [AAST policy equality statement](#) for its asylum support and accommodation contracts rolled in September 2019, outlining duties under the Equality and Diversity Act 2010. [Source: Home Office]

Children and young people

52. A briefing on [children migrants in the UK](#) suggests there are over 1 million under 18s living in the UK without citizenship and at least 175,000 are in families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Other sources report thousands of [undocumented young people](#) who have grown up in the UK but remain undocumented and unable to access services. A recent court case highlighted difficulties local authorities face when regularising the immigration status of migrant children in care and why it might not always be appropriate to [apply for British Citizenship](#) for them. (Sources: Migration Observatory, The I, Free Movement)
53. The Home Office updated the factsheet on the [transfers of children under the ‘Dubs’ scheme](#) (s. 67) confirming the commitment to transfer 480 children from Europe has been met. The immigration minister has stated there is no capacity to accept more [unaccompanied children](#) from Europe but some [local authorities](#) have disputed this, offering to take more children if support is provided and safe and legal routes established. (Sources: Home Office, the Independent)

54. The [EU rejected a British proposal](#) for a system to reunite children seeking asylum with their families in the UK or Europe post-Brexit that would replace Dublin III. (Sources: Home Office and Guardian)
55. For the year ending June 2020, there were almost 2,900 asylum applications made in the UK by unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Claims from Iranian, Vietnamese and Afghan nationals accounted for 45% of all UASC applications. This compares to almost 3,500 for the year ending March 2020. (Source: Home Office)
56. After reports of the [record numbers](#) of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) arriving in Kent via inflatable boats, with some tragically [drowning](#) on the way, [Kent Council](#) stopped accepting any more referrals. With 589 UASC under their care, Kent said it had reached its capacity. Since then, government has been [holding young people at the local border control facility](#), while looking for appropriate placements. The move and its legality have been questioned by [Detention Action](#). The Home Office has published [guidance for a new team of social workers](#) embedded within the facility. (Sources: BBC, the Independent, Kent media Hub, MSN, Huffington Post, Home Office)
57. The Home Office was criticised for urging local authorities to [speed up the age assessment process](#) and offering financial support in legal challenges. Meanwhile, Great Manchester Immigration and Asylum Unit created [guides explaining the age assessment process](#) to young people. (Sources: the Guardian, GMIAU)

Refugees

58. In the year ending June 2020, 3,560 people were provided protection in the UK under resettlement schemes, mainly Syrian nationals granted under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. No resettlement took place in Q2 2020, so the usual table in this section showing regional breakdowns has not been included as it has not changed since the last SMG meeting. The Independent [reported](#) that pressure is on government to resume refugee resettlement after the programme was suspended in March due to coronavirus. [Sources: [Home Office](#), the Independent).
59. The Independent Chief Inspector published his [inspection of refugee family reunion applications](#). One notable finding is that many applicants were being forced to make difficult and dangerous journeys to visa application centres. [Source: ICIBI]

Cohesion and integration

60. As part of a coalition of organisations, [British Future](#) launched [Talk/together](#), a national conversation to explore what divides and what brings people together. There is an open survey, as well as online discussions, with some having taken place in Yorkshire. (Sources: British Future, Together)
61. Building on research and practice in Yorkshire and Humber, including the recent Communities up Close research report with IPPR on [neighbourhood change and migration](#), Migration Yorkshire submitted evidence to the APPG for Integration enquiry into [COVID-19 and social connection](#) which is focusing particularly on the roles of volunteering and business in integration. (Sources: Migration Yorkshire, APPG on Social Integration).
62. Two reports were published on cohesion issues (not specifically regarding migration):

- The [Hopeful Towns project](#) report considers how to prevent divisive narratives taking hold in towns facing challenges such as visible decline and uncertain industrial futures. The research suggests policies need to focus on resilience in the face of change and difference. Recently announced funding means 100 towns across England, including some in Yorkshire and Humber, will receive up to £1 million each to [boost regeneration](#). (Sources: Hope not Hate, Gov.UK).
 - '[The state of our social fabric](#)' describes 5 'threads' to help measure the strength of community: the strength of social relationships; the quality of civic institutions; the acceptance of positive social norms; the value of the local economy; and the levels of physical infrastructure. Findings suggest variations between local areas; for example the M62 corridor from Huddersfield to Grimsby has 'fraying social fabric', whereas London's rural commuter belt tends to have 'strong social fabric'. The report identifies a generational divide with young people feeling less connected to 'their community' or trust their neighbours. (Source: Onward).
63. Hope not Hate reported a trend of [teenage involvement in far right terrorism](#). The [Home Affairs Committee](#) also heard concerns about a [growing climate of extremism](#), with an increase in young people attracted to far-right views. The current economic situation combined with more time spent online and less contact with people who share different views such as at school or work, is providing fertile ground for radicalisation and hate crime. (Sources: Hope not Hate, Parliament, Independent).
64. Recent polls provide further insight into current cohesion issues in the UK:
- ICM polling found that [people feel less divided since COVID](#), although while 80% of people in the UK agree it is important to meet people from a different background to themselves, only 27% say they often get a chance to do this. In contrast, [Demos](#) polling suggests Covid-19 has caused deeper social ruptures than Brexit. [ONS data](#) indicates that people were more hopeful about the potential for social unity and a sense of community during the initial phase of the pandemic than they are now. (Sources: British Future, Demos, ONS).
 - The [Wellcome Trust](#) found people belonging to ethnic minorities are less likely to [trust government scientists and public health officials](#) during the pandemic, are more likely to be concerned about their health and finances, and find it difficult to follow restrictions. [IPPR](#) research found people in ethnic minorities are more likely to be in a precarious financial position as a result of COVID. (Sources: Wellcome Trust, Guardian, IPPR).
 - According to polling for the ITV programme '[Stephen Lawrence: has Britain changed?](#)', almost two thirds of the population think there is a 'fair amount' or 'great deal' of racism in the UK. Just over half of ethnic minority respondents said that racism had stayed the same or worsened during their lifetime. English [football's equality and inclusion organisation](#) has reported a recent rise in race hate and homophobic abuse. [British Future](#) reported that following the Black Lives Matters protests, 86% of companies polled agreed that businesses have a role in fighting racial inequality. Large organisations were more likely to have taken new action on diversity policies, and to have noticed more staff interest in diversity (Sources: Guardian, Kickitout, British Future).
 - Polling for [eu+me](#) indicates the pandemic has led to greater public support for EU nationals moving to the UK, with 63% agreeing we will need more EU citizens living and working here. However the latest [NatCen British Social](#)

[Attitudes Survey](#) indicates that two-thirds agree [EU citizens should have to apply to come to the UK](#) like those from outside the EU, and not benefit from free movement (although this is a fall from 74% supporting the end of free movement in 2016 after the referendum). 60% believed care workers should have priority compared with 18% feeling the same about bankers, responses at odds with the new point-based system's emphasis on 'skilled' workers. An Express article suggests [ethnic minorities voted for Brexit](#) because they resented EU migrants getting 'privileges' over non-EU migrants. (Sources: New European, National Centre for Social Research, the Guardian, Express).

65. A [UKRI](#) study found that [most UK students view Muslims positively](#) and that university life enables intercultural understanding, but that the government's counter terrorism strategy, Prevent, has reinforced negative stereotypes. (Sources: UK Research and Innovation, The Conversation).
66. Councillor Judith Blake commissioned an independent review into [statues in Leeds](#), to explore how to better portray the diversity of Leeds. (Source: Leeds City Council)
67. [Kirklees and Wakefield](#) successfully bid to the [ESOL for Integration Fund](#) to deliver accessible English language teaching, building on previously funded community-based English language programmes. (Source: Gov.UK).

International news

Outside the EU

68. The US House of Representatives passed the [No Ban](#) Bill to curtail Trump's restrictions on admitting people from certain countries - largely with Muslim majorities - into the US. However, the Bill still needs to be approved by Republican-led Senate. [Source: Arab News]
69. New migration to the US is becoming dominated by [migration from Asia rather than Latin America](#), particularly from China and India. Asian migrants are projected to become the largest immigrant group by 2025. [Source: Pew Research]
70. The [UN has called for the closure of all migrant detention centres in Libya](#), where approximately 3,000 people are held in immigration detention centres with poor conditions. [Source: Al Jazeera]

European Union

71. Different sources suggest how the pandemic, subsequent restrictions and lifting of restrictions have affected arrivals across the Mediterranean and asylum applications in the EU. [Asylum applications were significantly down in May](#), plummeting to 84% of pre-COVID levels, giving the opportunity to clear backlogs in pending cases. Migrant arrivals rose as most EU+ countries lifted containment measures – particularly at first [across land in SE Europe](#) mainly through North Macedonia and Serbia, although Mediterranean crossings have followed suit. (Sources: EASO, Reliefweb)
 - In the central Mediterranean, Italian [authorities reportedly ran out of room to quarantine new arrivals](#) in Lampedusa and arrivals from Tunisia in particular [continue to rise](#), attributed to Tunisia's serious economic crisis. Conflicts regarding responsibility for taking migrants from boats rescued in the Mediterranean resurfaced, particularly in relation to [Malta](#) and [Libya](#). Further,

UNHCR is calling for an urgent investigation following the [shooting of three migrants](#) disembarking a vessel intercepted by Libyan authorities. (Sources: UNHCR, Info Migrants, NY Times, EU Observer)

- In the eastern Mediterranean in Greece, a fire in [Moira refugee camp](#), led to over 13,000 people needing emergency shelters. Subsequently, [243 COVID-19 cases](#) were identified at a new temporary facility used to accommodate the refugees. Many [refused to enter the new facility](#) due to fears over conditions. In response to the crisis, Germany [agreed to take over 240 children and 1500 family members](#) from Greek Islands, promptly beginning relocations. [Sources: Ekathimerini, BBC, Euronews]
- In the western Mediterranean, the Spanish government [announced](#) that migrant arrivals in the Canary Islands were their highest in over a decade. In Gran Canaria reception centres are full and over 200 people have been forced to camp. [Source: El Pais]

72. UNHCR and the Danish Refugee Council have called on states to do more to protect migrants in a report illustrating extreme abuse and exploitation taking place during migrant [journeys from East and West Africa](#) to the North, focusing on Libya being unsafe for people to be returned to. [Source: UNHCR]
73. In France, [refugee resettlement resumed](#) with nearly 300 Syrian refugees recently arriving from Lebanon via charter flights. Meanwhile, the European Commission is considering abandoning [mandatory refugee quotas for member states](#) to address some states' reluctance to accept responsibility for migrant arrivals. States could be offered €10,000 for each adult they allow to stay, but no country would be obliged to do so. [Sources: IOM, the Guardian]
74. Two reports consider the impact of specific EU migration policies. The European Court of Auditors [launched a probe on the post-2015 migration return scheme](#), where irregular migrants are returned to their home country or a third country. Auditors established that fewer than 40% of migrants ordered to return do so. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles [published a report on the implementation of the Dublin III Regulation](#) during 2019/20. It claims that EU rules on allocation of responsibility are not working in practice, leading to increased costs for authorities and delays for asylum applicants. [Sources: EU Observer, ECRE]
75. [New academic research](#) examines policies and local practice in reception accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees across European cities, looking in particular at multi-sector alliances. [Source: Comparative Migration Studies]

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