

West Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Hub
Thursday 6th May 2021

Introduction: Katie welcomed and reminded everyone that NACCOM's Hubs are a space to share and develop best practice in all that we do to tackle migrant destitution.

Present:

Maeve Larkin – DASH Huddersfield
Phoebe Hendy – St Augustines Halifax
Julie Rodrigues - Hull
Dick Davies – Asylum Hosting Wakefield/Wakefield City of Sanctuary
Will Sutcliffe – BEACON, Bradford City of Sanctuary and Abigail Housing
Neil Heard – Refugee Project Abigail Housing Leeds
Helen Syrop – Hope Housing Bradford
Khami Miraf – Migrant Help
Ted Britain -WYDAN Leeds
Jenny Willson – LEDAS Leeds
Amanda Church Macfarlane- Abigail Housing Bradford
Bashir Siraj – Welcome House Hull
Han Catahan – Micro Rainbow Leeds
Angus Macnab – Hope Housing
Sally Brown – LEDAS Leeds
Andrew Rathbone WYDAN Leeds
Mary Halsey – Leeds Unity and Poverty Action
Jo Wilding – Legal Consultant
Lucy Smith – NACCOM Policy and Advocacy
Jessie Seal – NACCOM Policy and Research
Hannah Gurnham – NACCOM Communications
Paul Catterall – NACCOM Network Development
Katie Fawcett - NACCOM Network Development

Apologies:

Jo Carter and John Beech from LASSN Leeds
Karen Pearce from PAFRAS Leeds

Jo Wilding – Legal Consultant working with Refugee Action

Jo outlined the regional mapping of immigration advice that she has been doing for Refugee Action. In West Yorks and Humberside there are 19 providers (14 separate firms but 19 offices). 6 in Leeds, 1 in Halifax, 5 in Wakefield and 3 in Bradford. Despite the high number

of providers there were only 1400 “matter starts” (new case work) yet there were over 3200 asylum dispersals with s95 in 2020.

In addition to legal aid contracts there are 9 Orgs with OISC3 4 in Leeds & Bradford and 1 in Halifax. This represents a rich non legal aid sector but not an evenly distributed one.

Wakefield and Calderdale are poorly supplied or legal aid and non-legal aid.

Hull has 1 legal aid provider who made 99 matter starts in 2020. There are no OISC3 providers in East Yorks and nothing in North Yorks (excluding Teesside).

The general observation is that there are a lot of legal aid providers doing less and less due to poorly paid nature of this type of work.

Comment from Maeve in Huddersfield. With the high dispersal figures in the region using up all the limited legal aid provision there is little capacity for fresh claims!

Qu Phoebe in Halifax. Is it sensible to help people in temporary hotel accommodation find solicitors if they are likely to be moved elsewhere in the UK?

The general consensus was there might be less or zero availability in the new location so yes get them signed up.

Comment Julie in Hull – It is important to record how the lack of legal provision has an adverse effect on people.

Comment Dick in Wakefield – It is important to avoid unnecessary contact with solicitors as this eats up the time they have available to work on a case.

Jo – there is a real challenge of working to a fixed fee and then going into an hourly rate.

It was suggested that Refugee Actions asylum guides training would be helpful in equipping volunteers to help people on their journey and avoid wasting solicitor’s time.

Will from Bradford talked about BEACONS Mackenzie friends project where volunteers work along side someone with NRPF to help them do back ground research for their case thereby saving solicitors time.

Action: Katie to explore a possible thematic meeting on Asylum Guides & Mackenzie Friends and how the whole asylum legal system works (or doesn’t)

Helen Syrop – Hope Housing Bradford

General homeless charity working with the LA using next steps money.

Everyone in has provided accommodation for 80 people in B&B 40 are destitute including 7 who are seeking asylum. Working with BEACON to provide advice to those seeking asylum.

Hope have OISC1 registration allowing I.A.G on settled status to EEA nationals. The big question is what happens at the end of June when everyone is likely to be out? No clear plan as yet?

Hope also have a Grace Pod which provides safe emergency accommodation a route into accommodation. <http://amazinggracespaces.org/emergency-shelter-lm-mb/>. These are placed on a church grounds and the church provides a meal and cleans the pod ready for the next user. The pod can be used for a max of 3 nights while alternatives are evaluated.

Hope have 41 housing units made up of a mix of house and ½ bed flats. They have 7 NRPF beds for destitute asylum seekers + a further 2 paid for.

One of the biggest challenges is that the council want move on outcomes which are not easy when working with NRPF asylum seekers while much easier with EU nationals.

Neil Heard – Refugee Project Abigail Housing Leeds

Provide refugee housing in Leeds. Having a big push on improving the standards of accommodation provided. Are losing a house and bring new stock into the project. Covid and its affect on residents mental health has been one of the biggest challenges. Helping people move on from Abigail's supported housing to council/HA property is also a challenge particularly due to the unfurnished nature on accommodation. Neil recommended Ref Actions experts by experience training which he said was excellent.

Dick Davies – Asylum Hosting Wakefield

Being supported by the council to develop a hosting scheme. Currently informal hosting is happening but these needs to be moved to a more formal oversight. Currently applying for CIO registration and will need to recruit a staff member to run the project. Host recruitment is also high on the agenda.

Jenny Willson – LEDAS LEEDS

Currently have 2 houses funded by Leeds Everyone in provision housing 8 men. LA help with rent is ending soon so challenge is funding the project going forward.

Amanda – Abigail Bradford.

13 accommodated, currently have 2 spaces and 4 new spaces coming due to a new house. Access to vaccines but problem with how links are sent as clients cannot always read and understand them.

Access to dental provision another major challenge.

Legal progress on cases has also slowed down during Covid reducing move on times.

Julie Rodrigues – All Nations Alliance Hull

Key issues are mental health and loneliness,

Access to council services due to Covid.

Evictions for people the LA felt they did not have responsibility for.

Bashir Siraj- Welcome House

Relatively new charity doing general support. Biggest challenge is getting a building made available in the city centre ready so it can function as a drop-in centre once Covid restrictions are lifted.

Han Catahan – Micro Rainbow

Funded by sponsors and grants. Have 13 properties in UK 3 for NRPF with 8 guests who are given £40 a week. The charities Leeds house for all migrants not just asylum seekers.

Main challenges are the limited spaces for new referrals and the limited move on options as LA's are not generally geared up to support refugees left alone LGBT+ refugees. Are making some refugee referrals to Refugees at Home.

Will Sutcliffe – BEACOM

The biggest challenge is planning for the challenge of negative referrals once cessations begin.

Beacon's <https://beaconbradford.org/projects/mckenzie-friends/>

Phoebe Hendy - St Augustines Centre

1 house with 3 people. Main challenge is finding long term solutions for people facing destitutions.

Local Authority have agreed to support people affected by cessations.

Local partnership came out evaluating previous work. We have an ending destitution group with memorandum of understanding. We want the voices of those with lived experience to be heard and meaningful which is a challenge.

We are meeting with the LA and HA's and other charities to see what role each can provide in providing a circle of support locally. Our aim is to be an area with No Destitution.

Maeve – DASH Huddersfield

Biggest challenges are access to vaccines and dental provision

There is a specialist Refugee GP practise in Huddersfield running 4 vaccination sessions a week. Challenge of reluctance to be vaccinated amongst clients.

Shortage of legal options a challenge and of people getting merits tested and dropped.

Internal capacity issues. New data system.

Clients making rash decisions regarding move on accommodation offers from council on getting a positive decision.

Ted Britain -WYDAN Leeds

Like LEDAS we received Leeds City money to set up houses for people taken in from Night Shelter to everybody in. Challenge of securing longer term funding as the Leeds City funding ended at end March

WYDAN was set up for emergency accommodation so our challenge is how do we provide emergency provision going forward when rotating shelters are still problematic due to Covid?

Khami Miraf - Migrant Help

Khami Miraf- can no longer complete the asylum support applications so need to find projects that we can sign post to? We recognise that there is likely to be a gap. Where orgs are open to support there is a challenge of finding those able to help with completing forms etc. British Red Cross have said they are happy to be signposted to. Big challenge of those refused accommodation within initial accommodation these are often more difficult cases such as those with apparent funds. Section 4 enquiries can be signposted to our Eagle Team based in Dover.

Khami Miraf - 07815692346/01304 806765 khami.miraf@migranthelpuk.org

NACCOM Updates

Comms Update- Hannah Gurham

We have a BBC appeal on World Homeless day. We are planning to do this around hosting and homelessness. We have a meeting for hosting projects on May 19th. Keen to hear from people with lived experience and for ideas on how money raised can be used. Watch this space via the Google Group. To find out more contact hannah@nacom.org.uk

Policy and Research Coordinator- Jessie Seal

Community research experts by experience research group to design and implement some of NACCOMs research. Want to find out more on peoples experience of Destitution and of sector accommodation including access to and exit from NACCOM projects. If you know people who might like to be involved, please get in touch. If you have a specific topic or issue that the group could research, please get in touch. We also have joint project with Homeless Link to work with 4 local authorities on building on lessons from Everybody in. Webinar on June 2nd. "Migrant Homelessness What's Next?"

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/webinar-crossroads-for-migrant-homelessness-where-from-here> jessie@nacom.org.uk

Policy and Advocacy – Lucy Smith

Today is the last day to respond to the Governments consultation on the new immigration plan

<https://nacom.org.uk/new-plan-for-immigration-consultation-we-are-deeply-concerned-about-both-the-consultation-process-and-impact-of-the-legislature/>

Our annual survey is a key way we capture network data. The survey focusses on people providing accommodation for people seeking asylum with NRPF. Shorted this year 35 questions. Please complete online or request if needed a word version. Will be sent out mid may.

We are holding some events with our data consultant David Waterfall to find out what you need help and support with in gathering data so you can best sell what you do to funder etc. 17th and 18th may two days. 30 min slots to organisations. Any question can be raised so please make use of this opportunity.

Later in May or early June we will be running some action learning sessions based on your data collection needs.

Cessations: ewe are troubled this is happening specifically during a pandemic when there is so much uncertainty. Capacity and uncertainty for NACCOM members responding to this is a key concern. <https://nacom.org.uk/evictions-from-asylum-accommodation-have-restarted-what-you-need-to-know/>

The first action for now is to speak to your local authority on the numbers affected. The HO says that Local Strategic Migration Partnerships but we know in some areas LA's are the source of data. Secondly look at who might be eligible for Sec4. Use ASAP who are a great resource to help apply for Sec4. ASAP are running a call on 17th May
Lasting it is helpful to hear what is happening with local councils. We will be running events late June on good practise in working with LA's

The recent Brighton Ruling confirmed that LA's have the power (can) to accommodate people with NRPF. Shelter have offered to write reaction protocol letters where you feel someone should be accommodated for public health reasons.

<https://blog.shelter.org.uk/2021/03/high-court-rules-councils-can-lawfully-accommodate-street-homeless-people-with-no-recourse-to-public-funds-will-the-government-now-provide-proper-guidance/>

HO Advice on roof sleeping affecting immigration status are now out. Councils can choose to ignore it. Please pass on any intelligence on what your LA plans to do locally.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/grounds-for-refusal-rough-sleeping?s=09>

For more info lucy@nacom.org.uk

Cessations

Operation Oak – Bradford a Piolet area. Fast track decisions people will be dispersed with 21 days' notice to new regions.

Mary Halsey – Leeds Unity and Poverty Action who coordinate the Leeds Homeless charter. We have an action group with a focus on migrant homelessness.

Working on a memorandum of understanding being developed with NACCOM members and Leeds City Council and other interested stakeholders.

We are keen to rethink the referral pathways when people present at the point of destitution.

Katie: Want to make the best use of accommodation available and ensure that responses are designed involving the voices of people with lived experience. We are keen to look carefully at the work done on EBY Experts by Experience - Refugee Action Good Practice

<https://www.ragp.org.uk/guidance/experts-by-experience/home>

Network Development Update:

Planning thematic meetings on the topic of Hosting projects and reopening and host recruitment, and case work models to assist move on and support to empower individuals with their case.

General NWD offer to help members and non-members develop ideas for accommodation projects including working with Housing Associations etc. We have produced Housing, Hosting and Fundraising Toolkits. See links. [HostingToolkit 2020](#) [Housing Toolkit 2019](#) [Funding Toolkit 2019](#)

Training – NACCOM are offering PTSD training workshops, mostly full now but if you are interested please contact Paul@nacom.org.uk