


Leeds Strategic Migration Board 22nd June 2021 Meeting Summary

Meeting Theme: No Recourse to Public Funds

1.0	Welcome and Introductions
1.1	Paul Money welcomed all attendees and introduced himself to the board as the Chief Officer of the Safer Stronger Communities team. Paul announced he would be chairing this board going forward.
2.0	
Previous Meeting Minutes – 11th March 2021	
2.1	Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.
4.0	
Key Theme: No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF)	
4.1	<p>A partnership presentation was shared with the board providing a status review of services working with those who have NRPF (see presentation below):</p>  <p>Leeds Strategic Migration Board – 1</p> <p>The presentation highlights include:</p> <p>Third Sector:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leeds Migration Partnership (LMP) recognise the local authority have been crucial to helping those with NRPF to access food, emergency housing and health messages during the pandemic. However, upcoming policy changes are expected to impact the support the local authority offer those with NRPF. • The third sector offer a range of services to those with NRPF including legal advice, money, health, food, and accommodation support. • The sector is facing a financial challenge, and this is already impacting on service provisions. • There is no emergency shelter where the third sector can refer those with NRPF, this is due to bed spaces being full (only limited short term support is available). Two thirds of the bed spaces being used are expected to become unavailable by the end of October 2021. • The number of people with NRPF is expected to rise in coming months because of policy changes, and the sector is already struggling to meet the current demand and requires support. <p>Housing Options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leeds Housing Options (LHO) are an extremely busy service. They receive a homeless assessment request, on average, every 2 minutes. Throughout May 2020 – May 2021 they completed 7,789 homeless assessments. Of the 7,789 households assessed, only 238 did not qualify as homeless. The ban on evictions, during Covid-19, has been lifted and the service anticipate 17,000 section 21 evictions to be served. • Under the Housing Act (1996), people with NRPF are not eligible for homelessness assistance. LHO refer people to third sector services, where they can access emergency food assistance. • Due to the pandemic, LHO secured funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Public Health grants to

commission 2 third sector organisations to provide temporary accommodation to those with NRPF. Garforth House have 13 bed spaces across 2 houses and LEDAS are using 12 bed spaces in a hotel to support those with NRPF.

Children and Families Social Care NRPF Panel:

- 5 years ago, Children and Families Social Care set up a monthly NRPF panel to assess the eligibility of need for non-EU families with NRPF. Needs are assessed under section 17 of the Children's Act (1989).
- Social workers complete an assessment after receiving a referral and take the NRPF case to the panel.
- The panel, chaired by Jon Nevill, brings together colleagues from legal, housing, benefits, equality, and migration to review each case and offer social workers advice on how to support the family while their application is processed by the Home Office.
- Prior to the pandemic, the panel began to receive referrals for EU families (who have the right to live and work in the UK but do not have access to benefits). The local authority offers a flight to return home, to EU families with NRPF. Throughout the pandemic, more EU families have been referred to the panel as many struggled to access employment, but the local authority had to support these families as flights were stopped.
- The panel used to review an average of 10-12 cases each month. At each of the last 4 panels, over 20 NRPF cases were reviewed. The number of cases is expected to increase after the 30th June 2021 when the EU settlement grace period ends.
- Social care is evaluating the offer made to families with NRPF over the next 3 months, to try and reduce the financial impact on the council.

Adult Social Care (ASC):

- ASC review NRPF cases on an individual basis in partnership with legal and housing, to assess whether a person meets the threshold to access support under the Care Act (2014) and/or the Human rights Act (1998).
- Very few meet the threshold criteria to access support.

Questions/observations:

To plan next steps, is there any way of knowing how many more people are expected to have NRPF in the future?

- **Third sector response:** Leeds as a city is likely to attract people with NRPF. The number of people, not eligible for children or adult social care support, currently accessing third sector services (PAFRAS and British Red Cross) is approximately 250 each service. The sector is struggling to support the existing needs of those with NRPF and require help to support new people with NRPF.
- **Migration Yorkshire response:** the Home Office decision is unknown at the moment and the government proposals have not outlined a time frame. Currently anyone subject to immigration control has a NRPF condition.
- **Children and Families response:** The referrals to the NRPF panel have doubled since the pandemic and non-EU families are waiting longer for a decision to be made by the Home Office, which means families are supported for longer.
- **LMP** asked if it is possible to find out how many NRPF presentations have been shared with services? **Action:** Pria to email partners.

5.0	Local, Regional and National Updates
5.1	<p>Migration Yorkshire (MY)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative cessations were paused due to the pandemic. There was a brief lifting of the pause for those in receipt of section 95 support and negative cessations were paused again pending the outcome of a court case. The court case reached a settlement and the Home Office agreed to pause activity until after the 21st June. The Home Office are reviewing guidance based on Public Health England recommendations and plan to inform stakeholders when a date has been confirmed as to when cessations will resume. They may resume from the 19th July. • The voluntary returns service recently changed the re-integration support package offered to those voluntarily returning to their country of origin. Those returning to a 'developing' country, as classified by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, may be eligible to a payment of up to £3000, paid by a bank transfer. There was previously a system used to monitor how the money was being used but now the payment is a bank transfer, it is no longer possible to monitor how the money is spent. Action: Stefan to inform the board if information sessions are held on the voluntary returns service changes. <p>Questions/observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many people choose to return to their country of origin? Response: The Migration Observatory voluntary returns analysis can be accessed here. Government immigration statistics also provide this information.
5.2	<p>Leeds Migration Partnership (LMP)</p> <p>The LMP partnership has 3 work strands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LMP's strategy group meet every quarter to review progress against LMP's 4 priorities; health, safety and inclusion, housing, and employment and learning. • LMP's operations group have met every fortnight throughout the pandemic and the thematic meetings have started to focus on the LMP priorities. • The LMP blog is the communication tool used to share updates with the migrant third sector. • LMP partners co-ordinated a week of activities to celebrate Refugee Week from the 14th-20th of June.
Next meeting: Thursday 16 th September 2021 (2pm-4pm)	