**MIGRANT HELP**

**MONTHLY UPDATE – OCTOBER 2021**

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| FRC UPDATE |
| * Our First Response Centre had a positive month in September with average wait time reducing, number of calls being answered increasing daily and a number of additional staff going live on the phones to support our clients.
* The team have a number of new staff completing training currently who will be moving live on the phones over the coming days and weeks to further support our efforts. We have also provided additional training to existing staff over the past month on call handling, resilience and safeguarding to ensure all of our clients are supported with their queries and concerns.
* Staff are returning to the office; this enables us to monitor and assist with improving productivity and performance while supporting staff following the more challenging calls.
* We are monitoring the demand on our helpline and where additional resource is needed. Further recruitment is taking place to ensure the team can continue to improve, meet demand and provide a quality service to those needing our support.
* A further review is taking place on guidance and information available to staff to ensure we can provide the advice needed, manage expectations and signpost accurately to support with queries that fall outside of our control.
* There are additional methods available to contact our teams outside of the helpline. We are currently working on guidance and information to share on our website, with partner agencies and clients on Webchat, Raise an Issue and our Service User Portal. If you would like us to attend any meetings with your teams or strategic groups to talk through these options and how they work, please do get in touch with us and we can arrange this with you.

**Trends:*** Trends continue to remain consistent, with a number of clients calling with regards to ARC cards, dispersals and payment issues. We highlight trends with the Home Office and Asylum Support to ensure solutions are found and additional advice shared with the teams and of course our clients.
* Unfortunately, the issuing and requesting of ARCs falls outside of Migrant Helps control, we can only direct to the gov.uk tool. We have flagged concerns raised in this area with the Home Office who have advised that if an email address is added onto the online ARC request, they will respond if there is any reason an ARC cannot be issued.
* We have also been advised that some ARC issues relate to client addresses not being updated and matching on their system. Whenever a client moves to a new address (even if asylum support accommodation), they must update their address with the Home Office through their legal representative, the gov.uk website or reporting centre. This will then ensure the address on the ARC request matches Home Office systems and allows for the card to be issued, if eligible. I hope this helps but we have queried any other reasons why ARCs are not being received and will continue to follow up where we can, updating you all too.
* We continue to follow up and escalate dispersals however we do not have any timescales and do not receive information when these have been arranged. If a client has specific reasons why dispersal needs to take place or has specific accommodation requirements, we can pass on supporting documentation and requests on to the Asylum Support team for consideration.
* We are working closely with the ASPEN team and Asylum Payment provider to understand trends and processes that need to be followed for resolution of new emerging issues being experienced.
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| EAGL UPDATE |
| * After a difficult start with recruitment, we have now filled our existing vacancies and are working closely with our resourcing team to ensure our new starters are with us quickly. We have had three starters join us in the last month and have a further eight scheduled to join over the coming days/weeks.
* As with the FRC, we are monitoring any increases in demand on our services to ensure changes are made to allow performance to continue to improve.
* The wellbeing of our staff and clients is vitally important to Migrant Help. We acknowledge the need for additional peer and management support through these challenging times. We have more staff returning to the office, allowing us to provide additional coaching and assistance, to complete additional monitoring and to improve individual performance, benefitting both the staff and our clients.
* We have recruited a Training and Recruitment lead for the team who is focusing on providing quality induction training for all new staff. They will also be creating additional tools and conducting further training to support existing staff to ensure the quality of support provided is high. On top of training, they are supporting with recruitment and ensuring any further vacancies are filled quickly.

**Trends:*** **S98 requests** We have seen an increase to the number of people requiring S98 accommodation. We are assisting with applications, asking for reconsiderations where required and supporting clients to provide documents to ensure a successful application on day 1.
* **S4 requests** have also been increasing, we are discussing eligibility and the supporting evidence required to ensure that the Home Office have all of the required information to make a positive decision on the application.
* **Back payments for pre-dispersal payments** Following a number of recent dispersals, we are being contacted to request back payments on this support, particularly for those who were in IA and had been granted support last year. The Home Office have confirmed that these back payments are reviewed and letters issued automatically once a client has successfully been dispersed. We do not unfortunately have a time frame for how long these take.

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| OUTREACH UPDATE |

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| It has been another busy month for our Outreach service and we have assisted on average 90 service users a week. We are seeing service users face to face as well as providing Outreach support by telephone and we tailor the support provided to each service user’s needs. *Here is an example of how our Outreach team can support you and the service users you assist;* Our Outreach Team assisted a third-party organisation who contacted us to confirm a planned move was scheduled for a vulnerable service user, they were worried for the service user’s wellbeing if this move was to go ahead.Our Outreach team managed to obtain the relevant information to support the concerns, shared this with our close links at the Home Office and managed to get urgent confirmation from the Home Office that the move was not going to go ahead. *Here is the feedback we received from the third party;*‘I am so very grateful to you for listening to our concerns and following this up. I think you have prevented serious consequences for the service user. This is marvellous news!’**Trends:*** We have assisted service users with IA referrals and COC maternity payment / COC requests to move.
* Over the last month our team have found some service users have needed further specialised signposting so they can receive further targeted support after our team have assisted with Asylum Support related matters.
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| MOVE ON NATIONAL UPDATE |
| We continue to assist a high number of service users with positive move on support and have made successful contact with the majority of service users. Of those we spoke to, most did accept our offer of Move on support. Our Move on Providers are working hard on keeping referral pathways and further signposting information up to date. We are keen to speak to you to find out any extra information that may be relevant to your area or hear any concerns that you have. All three of our Move on providers will attend meetings in the areas they cover and I am sure you know most of them well. Reed in Partnership have the largest area to cover with England and Scotland. They now have Vanya Leslie as their Integration Manager and Vanya will help arrange or improve referral pathways and discuss any queries relating to this. Welsh Refugee Council and Bryson Intercultural have ensured referral pathways set up for Wales and Northern Ireland.Nicola Davies is the lead for national Move on Services for Migrant Help, if you would like to arrange or request she attends a more specific move on meeting please let Nicola know. Nicola would be keen to hear from you at Nicola.Davies@migranthelpuk.org **Trends:*** We have been able to get through to the majority of service users with our initial contact attempts.
* We have received a few reports of discontinuation letters not being received and we are able to help look into this so please make us aware at positivemoveon@migranthelpuk.org so we can ensure this doesn’t have an impact on the service user and request reinstatement if necessary.
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| SERVICE COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK UPDATE |

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| Nicola Davies and Sophia Nasreisfahany are currently working on a Commissioning Framework Q&A session, the event will include;* An overview of our framework, what it covers and how we can help you.
* What you will need to join us and how to apply.
* A demo of what working on our framework would look like, and the training and support you could expect.
* A chance for you to ask us lots of questions and provide any feedback on what you have seen.

We are really keen to work with as many organisations nationally as possible and are trying to target some areas for face-to-face support. However, if you are willing to assist us with telephone cases or would like to be involved, we would be thrilled if you would join us a the session.We are provisionally looking at the 25th of November for this event, more details will follow soon but if you are interested please could email Nicola.Davies@migranthelpuk.org to say you would like to be sent more information on the event, Nicola will then be in contact with you. **Trends:*** We have sent a good number of ASF1s via our Commissioned Framework over the last month.
* We have seen a reduction in the number of Positive Move on cases sent via our framework, our Move on partners - Reed in Partnership, Welsh Refugee Council and Bryson haven’t needed to refer anyone back to Migrant Help for additional assistance.
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| SU EXPERIENCE FEEDBACK AND UPDATE |
| * The responses to our surveys continue to be positive with the majority of clients reporting to be satisfied with the services and support provided by Migrant Help.
* Our new surveys, which focus on the Migrant Help services, went live on 01/10/2021. We will be reviewing the first months data in November, taking forward any area for improvement while also highlighting successes.
* We have an additional staff member joining the team to support with the analysis of the responses received to ensure we are making changes to benefit our clients.
* The links to the surveys, which are translated into the top 11 languages, can be found on our self-service portal (under downloadable forms). Please do share these with your clients. The more responses we receive, the more insight we have into the challenges faced by our clients that we can use to drive continuous improvement.
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| ANY OTHER UPDATES |
| **UPDATE FROM NAPIER*** There has been a lot of positive energy displayed at site over the last few weeks. Service users at Napier participated in workshops to make lanterns for the Walk With Amal events in Folkestone and Dover. Shuttle buses were arranged for the service users to also attend the event and walk alongside Amal in Folkestone. Several Migrant Help staff also attended the walk in Dover. It was an uplifting scene to have voluntary sector staff, our service users and the locals all attend and support this great event.
* On the agenda in the Migrant Help office is the recruitment and addition of a Client Adviser, who we hope to welcome very soon. Usual trends for enquiries continue to be requests for new inductees to receive ARCs, ASPENs and S95 letters.

**REGIONAL UPDATE*** Across our eight regional offices, the focus this month has been on supporting new arrivals into the Asylum system, completing an initial induction and the Asylum Support Form (ASF). In September we completed more ASFs than in any previous month under AIRE at around 3,300.
* The other main priority for the team has been ASPEN cards, most of which are for SUs in contingency accommodation providing them with the £8 weekly payment. We continue to work closely with the AASC providers who are arranging and facilitating communication channels with the Service Users in the contingency sites.
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| **GLOSSARY** |
| **AASC** Accommodation Provider**ARC** Application Registration Card**ASF1** Asylum Support Application Form**COC** Change of Circumstances**EAGL** Eligibility, Advice and Guidance Line**ECP** Emergency Cash Payment**FRC** First Response Centre |
| **CONTACTS** |

**Commissioning Framework Q&A** Nicola.Davies@migranthelpuk.org

**Discontinuation letter queries** positivemoveon@migranthelpuk.org

**EAGL/FRC** Daisy.noble@migranthelpuk.org

**Move On Services** Nicola.Davies@migranthelpuk.org