

Homelessness and Migration Working Group Meeting

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 10am at LASSN offices, Malmarc House, Dewsbury Road

Present:

Jon Beech (LASSN)
 Mary Halsey (UPA)
 Dave Paterson (UPA)
 Janice Brown (UPA)
 Liz Knight (Simon on the Streets - Outreach Team Leader)
 Neal Heard (Abigail Housing)
 Daisy Vaughan (British Red Cross)
 Lucy Harvey (British Red Cross)
 Keeley (British Red Cross)
 Katie Fawcett (NACCOM)
 People with lived experience

Apologies:

Gillian Tober (LEDAS)
 Jennifer Willison (LEDAS)
 Anne Forbes (St. Monica's)
 Fidelis Chebe (Migrant Action)

		Action
1.	Welcome	
	Mary opened the meeting and welcomed all in attendance to the meeting. All present introduced themselves.	
2.	Actions from Last Meeting	
	Trauma services in Leeds – effects of trauma with homelessness, effects before getting to Leeds and the Asylum system. Mary contacted Rhiannon Davies, GP Appraiser and Katie, Mental Health Nurse at Bevan, and will meet to discuss services and gaps. Solace have long waiting lists for support. There needs to be awareness of what is available and the services. Jon stated the Public Health is doing work to help services become more trauma informed. Health, Social Care and beyond to help organisations.	Mary to meet with Bevan
	Activities – Safe spaces during the day - Please see link of daytime activities from Jon http://events.helpinleeds.com , which	Mary to send

	<p>then redirects to https://leedsevents.glideapp.io/. This includes training. This includes language groups, also dependent on the organisations keeping it up to date. All organisations must share information or let Leeds Migration Partnership know what is available.</p> <p>Priority Need - At present some individuals sofa surfing are not getting priority need. Is there a guidance by Leeds City Council on sofa surfing? What affects their decisions, and does this affect people's priority e.g. law, no power, do not have the duty. People being able to communicate the situation in housing assessment e.g. trauma affecting people in shared housing and not individual accommodation (payments, language used). Amber stated at the last meeting that there would be training around housing assessments. Mary to continue to have conversations with Amber. Neal stated people turning down shared accommodation and in certain areas. New accommodation turned down due to area e.g. negative press. Mary suggested a video of what questions will be asked in an assessment, so migrants know what to expect.</p> <p>Faith groups and accommodation - There has been contact with Churches in Leeds around providing accommodation e.g. Green Pastures – purchasing with a view to providing housing. People living with vulnerable people is another avenue being considered.</p> <p>LASSN – second house is now having repairs done. Eva House is a space for 4 men, staying for 6-9 months (Red Cross and PAFRAS referrals) e.g. support, mental health support, therapeutic environment, modelled on the previous one, dedicated volunteers. Previous residents to set up and lay the foundation. Investors purchased a house and let LASSN use it rent free (set up costs and £30,000 cost to run left to LASSN to raise funds). LASSN will share resources e.g. legal agreement etc.</p> <p>Leeds Homeless Charter - Mary stated the updated Charter is completed and organisations asked to sign up to it. Email Mary if you have not received the Leeds Homeless Charter document – maryhalseyupa@gmail.com.</p>	<p>activities app link on Homeless Charter mailing</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>People with Lived Experience Sharing</p>	
	<p>Person A At present living in shared accommodation. The cellar is currently damp and affecting her health. Anxiety and wellbeing affected</p>	

	<p>due to housing condition e.g. lungs. She on the waiting list for accommodation in Leeds. Has viewed accommodation for Asylum Seekers, and it is in bad condition. Also, the affects that Council tax and bedroom tax will have on her in future.</p> <p>Person B At present living in a Guest House, and unable to share any more information.</p> <p>Person C He fled war and was homeless. People carry unpleasant experience until they die. The current situation with Ukrainian refugees was preventable. We should embrace them and look after them just like we would with our own. He has been unsettled for years as his mind is not comfortable. We should not be killing each other and fighting with wars and ammunition. He has shared about homelessness in the past. He challenged other voices speaking for peace and what is being done. Voices asking for justice, fairness and peace are not being heard. Even if you have not experienced, you should know e.g. you know if you touch fire it burns. There are better alternatives than killing each other. Stated about trauma e.g. going into crime, suicide, indoctrination. Solace to be asked to attend a future meeting.</p> <p>Person D Improving pathways for destitute asylum seekers. At present there is a struggle with housing e.g. different cultures, religion. It is difficult and affecting mental health. Every three years applying for Leave to Remain renewal and pay £2,600 with solicitor's fee £1,000 plus. This affects health and wellbeing, feeling stressed and depressed about it. There are utility bills to pay too. They are not eligible for legal aid. The Universal Credit is small and does not do anything for you through the struggling.</p> <p>All above were asked about trauma e.g. Ukraine. People want reassurance things are going to be ok. Counselling should be offered to people coming from a 'war torn' country. Wellbeing is affected and making sure the right people are hearing the stories is important.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the problems of retraumatizing people who share their difficult stories and how to avoid this, possibly by talking more generally about current situations and the values that we want to see in services and organisations.</p>	<p>Mary to invite Solace to a future meeting</p>
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	Everyone was thanked for their contributions.	
	Liz Knight - Simon on the Streets – EEA Migrants	
	Currently 2 houses supporting people until they obtain Settled Status. The process is taking a long time. Housing assessments do not move when status comes through as not being given Priority Need. Looking at privately rented accommodation that is limited. Waiting 2-3 years for Council accommodation. Dave stated emergency accommodation is in demand and moving people on is tough. COVID money ends March 2022. The people with no recourse to public funds do not have access to it and are not able to move on especially in temporary accommodation.	
	Neal Heard – Abigail Housing	
	Currently accommodating 70 refugees in shared/family housing in Leeds. Abigail Housing started offering housing 2008/2009 and have people living with them for 2-3 years. Support at beginning of tenancy, signposting to other services. During Pandemic lost Women's House and got another along with Men's House. Both good quality housing. Buying another house and working with another client group e.g. Refugee status and no recourse to public funds. People under 35 years old only eligible for shared housing. Smaller waiting list means you can help people quicker. Currently can rehouse refugee women who are homeless and ask agencies to get in touch. Unable to support people with complex issues. Jon raised about the Electronic Landlord checks required of Landlords when renting to refugees (using a share code through biometric permit with reference number/paperwork). Neal and Daisy were not aware of this. Jon to forward details to them. The link to be sent to all partnerships.	Jon to forward details of Electronic Landlord checks to Neal and Daisy
	Lucy and Keeley – Red Cross	
	Services working well together e.g. Grace Housing, Abigail, WYDAN – support in accommodation and referrals to solicitor for legal advice. The positive of providing shelter and people not being on the street as was the case end 2021.	
	Katie Fawcett - NACCOM	
	See Presentation Katie shared about the work being done with Unity in Poverty Action and NACCOM - the Memorandum of Understanding for services working with Asylum Seekers experiencing destitution in Leeds.	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities • Motivation – what can we do together, partnership, cross sector strategic collaboration, develop a regular empowering pathway, increase accommodation in Leeds, dedicated casework, lived experience, communicate what we are doing as a sector in Leeds. • End destitution • Principles - commitment, building trust, clarity, and transparency, empowering, respect and dignity, sharing, collaboration. <p>A Focus Group will be held on 23 March from 1.30-2.30pm. For people in these services and what key values they expect, experiences, how they can be help and aid pathway. Hopefully, to complete the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be signed up to.</p> <p>Jon stated LASSN, Abigail Housing and other partners to be held to account with the MOU. Also, how well they are doing and services providing to people who stay with them as a challenge to all organisations sharing experiences.</p>	
	Collecting Stats on Homelessness among Migrants	
	<p>Dave asked Lucinda to forward data. Neal can give numbers of Refugees that have joined the waiting list, housed, still on list, turned down accommodation e.g. found something else. Not sure about double counting. Liz on EEA migrants would be able to get data. Need a set framework. Neal said that NACCOM members complete a questionnaire and Katie stated this is being revamped. How is unmet needs data being captured? Palm Cove - National Referral mechanism e.g. trafficking, movement, negative discontinuation, accommodated and lose it.</p>	
	A.O.B.	
	<p>Dave raised about Flyer 'Worrying About Money'. Please email him for a copy – davepaterson.upa@gmail.com.</p> <p>LASSN Befriending on hold due to no volunteers.</p>	

The meeting ended at 11.52am