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| REDACTED**WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:****OCTOBER 2022** |  |

**RESTRICTED MINUTES OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE SUB REGIONAL MIGRATION GROUP MEETING THAT TOOK PLACE ON 12 OCTOBER 2022**

**Attendees**

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| Cllr Mary Harland (Chair) | Leeds Council |
| Kate Auker | DASH |
| Iona Black | Migration Yorkshire |
| Cllr Maureen Cummings | Wakefield Council |
| Grzegorz Dyrak | Migrant Help |
| Emma Fitzpatrick | Mears |
| Ben Foord | Migration Yorkshire |
| Sophie Hepworth | Mears |
| Gillian Howe | Wakefield Council |
| Edmore Hute | Red Cross |
| Tahira Iqbal | Calderdale Council |
| Gary Jeffers | Home Office |
| Vicky Ledwidge | Migration Yorkshire |
| Cllr Jenny Lynn | Calderdale Council |
| Sarah Mitchell | Kirklees Council |
| Francesca Morton | Migration Yorkshire |
| Kerry Murphy | Wakefield Council |
| Cllr Carole Pattison | Kirklees Council |
| Sam Powell | Leeds City Council |
| Stefan Robert | Migration Yorkshire |
| Sara Robinson | St Augustine’s Centre |
| Sara Suheim | Calderdale Council |
| Ally Swadling | PAFRAS |
| Julia Vidal | Migration Yorkshire |
| Tesfay Waldemichael | Migrant Help |

**Apologies**

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| Beverley Adams | West Yorkshire Police |
| Naomi Adams | Home Office |
| Azizzum Akhtar | REMA |
| Adam Atack | Migration Yorkshire |
| Pria Bhabra | Leeds Council |
| Mary Brandon | Asylum Matters |
| Dave Brown | Migration Yorkshire |
| Michael Crowe | Migration Yorkshire |
| Ian Day | Bradford Council |
| Dick Davies | Wakefield Council |
| Kirsten Fussing | Calderdale Council |
| Rachel Goodall | Refugee Action |
| Charlotte Killeen | Leeds City Council |
| Laurence Larroche | St Augustine’s Centre |
| Hiron Miah | Bradford Council |
| Khami Miraf | Migrant Help |
| Susan Morley | Red Cross |
| Sarah Sturdy | Home Office |
| Pamela Taylor | Wakefield Council |

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| **1.0** | **Welcome, introductions and apologies** |
| **1.1** | The Chair welcomed attendees and introductions were made. |
| **2.0** | **Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 May 2022** |
| **2.1** | The minutes were agreed as an accurate record. |
| **3.0** | **Matters Arising** |
| **3.1** | The action log was reviewed and updated. |
| **4.0** | **Ukraine & Regional response – update and discussion**  |
| **4.1** | * The war in Ukraine has displaced 7.5 million Ukrainian refugees.
* The three arrival pathways to the UK are the Visa extension scheme, which has been extended; the family scheme; the Homes for Ukraine scheme. These pathways are not routes to resettlement but do allow service users to access work and payments.
* There have been 131,000 arrivals to the UK.
* In Yorkshire & Humber there have been 4,628 arrivals so far under Homes for Ukraine. 36% of these (1,664 service users) have been to West Yorkshire. There are also c. 2,000 applications pending for West Yorkshire. Leeds is the second highest recipient of applications in Yorkshire and Humber.
* Issues include breakdown in relationship between hosts and service users. The Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities is currently developing a rematching process.
* Migration Yorkshire is continuing to work towards formalising their regional role supporting local authorises to respond to migration under the Ukraine Scheme. Different partners have been involved in discussions; an outcome of this is Migration Yorkshire has partnered with RESET to offer training to support both new and existing hosts across the region. Other partnership options are being explored around cultural awareness training.
* The Refugee Integration Service, which provides move-on support was extended to include Ukrainian service users and is available until the end of 2022. Any funding arrangements to continue support into 2023 are yet to be confirmed.
* There is now a Ukraine Hub on the Migration Yorkshire website [Ukraine hub | Migration Yorkshire](https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/supporting-ukraine), which contains useful information and resources. Data dashboards are also periodically prepared and shared with partners. They can be found at the following link: [Statistics | Migration Yorkshire](https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/statistics)
* So far no information has been published about a process for moving service users from the Family scheme to Homes for Ukraine.
* Local authorities are not currently offering additional payments to hosts to support them with cost of living. Advice will be provided by DLUHC.
* The six month period is coming to an end and local authorities are being inundated with requests for housing support.
* Regarding hosts in more affluent areas, there is a lack of affordable housing to rent.
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| **5.0** | **Full dispersal update**  |
| **5.1** | * North Yorkshire, York, East Riding and North Lincolnshire are new dispersal areas in Yorkshire & Humber. Representatives from these local authorities have been invited to attend the Humber sub regional migration group meetings.
* A series of meetings have been scheduled with North Yorkshire to discuss asylum dispersal. The local authorities are going through structural change, whereby the district authorities are being formed into a single unitary authority.
* Home Office discussions with the new dispersal areas have been positive and procurement of dispersal accommodation has begun, although there are currently no live properties.
* Mears has recruited additional staff to support the new dispersal areas.
* Full dispersal is part of a national plan to end the use of contingency accommodation. Dispersal accommodation will now be procured throughout England, Scotland and Wales and use of contingency accommodation is expected to end at the end of 2023.
* It was suggested that Red Cross could offer peer support to VCS organisations in these new areas. North Yorkshire Council is keen to get VCS partners involved from the beginning.
* Migration Yorkshire is completing high level work on equity of dispersal.
* The impact on West Yorkshire of these new dispersal areas will be felt later in the process.
* Migration Yorkshire has now updated the cluster table to include all local authorities.
* The Home Office gave thanks for the support they are providing to the new dispersal areas in the region.
* It was noted that parish and town councils often deliver similar work as the VCS, which helps to support integration and community cohesion.
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| **6.0** | **Update on Urban House**  |
| **6.1** | * Wakefield Council will be visiting the site w/c 17 October.
* New staff have been appointed to customer service roles at Urban House.
* The building has a maximum capacity of 330 service users and accommodates a mix of families and singles.
* The length of stay for families is increasing but Mears is looking to procure more dispersal accommodation for families, and families are prioritised for dispersal.
* Data on school-aged children is being shared with the local authority to ensure they have access to education.
* Migrant Help and VCS organisations are supporting service users onsite.
* Complaints are being received from service users at the reception desk, mainly regarding length of stay.
* There is a dedicated health team onsite to carry out health screening and triage appointments.
* A VCS away day was held recently in Wakefield and there is a desire amongst those organisations to offer more support across all accommodation in Wakefield.
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| **7.0** | **How can local authorities, the VCS and other partners support the response to Gold incidents?** |
| **7.1** | * Local authorities and Migration Yorkshire are notified when a gold incident occurs within the asylum system in Yorkshire and Humber.
* It is important that other partners are informed appropriately, as required.
* Each incident requires its own unique response and the partners that need to be involved will vary from incident to incident.
* Mears would find it helpful to have clarity on the statutory obligations of partners.
* Service users may not be the direct responsibility of local authorities but the communities in which they live are, and certain gold incidents can have impacts on those communities.
* It was agreed that it is worthwhile exploring plans for a regional multi-agency response to gold incidents.
* Gold incidents relate to an individual service user but other incidents such as far-right activity can be included in this work.
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| **8.0** | **Any other Business** |
| **8.1** | * No suggestions were made for agenda items for this meeting. Attendees are asked to consider potential items of discussion for the next meeting.
* The following link can be used to give feedback to Migrant Help on their overall Service, initial accommodation support, dispersal accommodation / other support, issue reporting <https://ellis.custhelp.com/app/survey>
* Alternative channels that can be used to contact Migrant Help asylum services are [Webchat](https://email.migranthelpuk.org/75PU-9O1V-124U4Z-5R60G-1/c.aspx) [Raise an Issue](https://email.migranthelpuk.org/75PU-9O1V-124U4Z-5R60H-1/c.aspx) [Self-service portal](https://email.migranthelpuk.org/75PU-9O1V-124U4Z-5R60I-1/c.aspx)
* Service users should not receive a decision on their asylum application whilst in initial accommodation or contingency accommodation.
	+ If partners become aware of this happening, they can raise it with Migration Yorkshire to add to the issues log for escalation.
	+ Instances where it may occur are for service users with longer lengths of stay in initial accommodation or service users that have to be moved from dispersal accommodation back to initial accommodation, if there is an issue with the property that means the service user needs to be moved out temporarily.
* There is a need to look at what more can be done to support pre-2020 Act asylum claims and the length of time it is taking to decide those claims.
* VCS partners want to enhance their partnership working and there are opportunities to better their support offers if they can receive more notice of arrivals and more data. The Home Office is committed to working with partners.
* The Mears report including in the papers for this meeting referenced Humberside. Mears will review the content of their papers for the next meeting.
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|  | Date of next meeting: 2 February 2023, 2.00pm |

Ben Foord, Migration Yorkshire

13 October 2022