

LMP Strategy Group Action Notes

Date: Thursday 19th January 2023

Time: 10.00-12.00

Venue: LASSN, 22-23 Blayds Yard, Leeds LS1 4AD

Karen welcomed partners to the strategy group and reviewed previous action notes. Partners agreed that themed articles, based on the LMP strategy group meeting themes, will be published on the Leeds Migration Partnership (LMP) blog.

Action: Leeds City Council (LCC) staff will create specialist posts for the LMP blog about; legal advice, the cost-of-living crisis and modern-day slavery.

Key Item: Modern Day Slavery

Gary Craig, a professor of social justice, introduced the modern day slavery discussion by sharing an overview of slavery from the transatlantic slave trade, through to the introduction of the [League of Nations 1926 Slavery Convention](#). In 2010, the UK introduced an annual anti-slavery day (18th October) and in 2015, the government passed the [Modern Slavery Act 2015](#).

Despite laws being introduced to protect people from becoming victims of slavery, there are currently over 13,000 victims of slavery in the UK, being supported through the [National Referral Mechanism](#) (the vast majority are British nationals). [Walk Free](#), an international human rights group, suggest the actual number of slavery victims within the UK is approximately 136,000.

Key challenges:

- Section 45 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 indicates victims of modern-day slavery will not be prosecuted for offences they have been forced to do. The books [The Modern Slavery Agenda](#) and [Child Slavery Now](#) shares case studies of people who have been sent to prison. In some cases, they are deported to find their families have been murdered or they are re-trafficked to pay off their debt.
- The [Independant Anti-Slavery Commissioner](#) monitors modern slavery sector activity and developments. However, this post has been vacant since April 2022. The government are passing a modern-day slavery bill through parliament, while there is no Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.
- The ministerial responsibility for modern day slavery is under the safeguarding minister and the immigration minister (creating a conflict of interest).

Group Exercise

Gary Graig asked partners to complete an exercise giving examples of what would be some of the signs that we as services could see to help us identify *if* a service user is *possibly* being trafficked:

- Reluctance to talk
- Always accompanied
- Place of employment
- No identification
- Living conditions e.g. overcrowded
- Elements of their life/story not adding up
- Withdrawn
- Physical injuries
- Poor health
- Passivity
- Unexplained finances
- Fragility/emotional
- Contradictions

Action: LMP partners suggested to campaign against the upcoming bill that will infringe upon modern day slavery victims' rights and protections.

Action: To keep up to date with law, policy, practice and research, partners can email Gary Craig to request to be part of the Modern Slavery Research Consortium: gary.craig@galtres8.co.uk

The Leeds Modern Slavery Strategy 2020-2023

Nicola Stewart, Leeds City Council's Service Improvement Advisor, within the Safer Stronger Communities Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse team, shared the strategy (linked below) and the city's partnership approach on the modern-day slavery agenda.

The Safer Stronger Communities Team facilitate the Modern Slavery Board, working with the police and third sector partners such as Palm Cove to; **Pursue, Prevent, Protect** and **Prepare** against modern slavery. This is reflected within the [Anti-slavery and human trafficking statement](#).

Partners asked how to support victims of modern slavery, inline with the national referral mechanism, and asked what training and resources are available to raise awareness.

Action: Modern Day Slavery will be discussed as the key theme of the next strategy group meeting. Palm Cove will be invited to attend.

Action: LCC will create a Modern-Day Slavery post for the LMP blog with links to resources.

Action: The partnership will consider who would be able to represent LMP at the modern slavery board in the next meeting.

Action: Third sector organisation leads are to consider signing up to the [Police Partnership Intelligence Portal](#) to share intelligence. A step by step guide on how to use the portal will be added to the LMP blog.

Updates on [Priorities](#)

Housing

- After a previous LMP Operations group, Jon Beech agreed to ask the Leeds City Council housing department to deliver an information session about how to access housing and manage landlords not meeting their contractual responsibilities. The Local Authority Asylum Seeking Liaison Officer (LAASLO) responded very positively, and suggested colleagues who may be best placed to respond. Sam Powell stated the next Leeds Strategic Migration Board meeting has connected with Leeds City Council's Private Rented Sector team and Leeds Housing Options, to propose they share an update with the LMP operations group.
- Mears are not providing welcome packs, containing local information, to asylum seekers staying in Leeds hotels and impacts on the wider third sector. This has been raised with Mears and with Migration Yorkshire.
- We have heard some seeking asylum are without gas or electricity, for days at a time, because the pre-payment meter within the Mears property has run out.

Action: Sam Powell to follow up with Housing colleagues to arrange an information briefing for the LMP operations group.

Action: LMP are considering taking strategic litigation action against Mears for breach of their contract. LMP will collate evidence when Mears breach their contractual responsibility and will raise concerns with the council to see what they are doing in this regard.

Safety and Inclusion

- Leeds Refugee Forum recently facilitated a meeting, with representatives from Leeds City Council's Safer Stronger Communities in attendance, to address community tensions arising within some community groups.

Health

- Following the Leeds Migrant Health Board (LMHB) meeting, Leeds Refugee Forum received additional money to be used for the hardship fund. The next LMHB meeting will focus on communications.

- During the LMHB meeting, Bevan Healthcare admitted they have gaps in knowledge around services supporting migrant groups in Leeds. Sam Powell flagged up at the meeting opportunities for the city to support important directories such as helpinleeds.com, to aid service navigation.
- Solace have picked up a few referrals from the asylum hotels and are delivering a group in Oulton. Another group session will be delivered over 4 weeks at Manor House from Monday, 23rd January, for the hotel residents (each week will have a different focus, such as sleep, managing anxiety, connecting with other groups etc.) The first cohort will be for English, Farsi and Urdu Speakers, the then second 4 weeks will be for English Arabic and Urdu speakers. **To book a place** call Solace and ask to speak to Sarah Middleton, Shamim Aktar or Ruth Cooke.

Legal Advice and Representation

- Accessing legal aid is heading into more crisis than it was 6 months, since 2 firms in Leeds have handed back their legal aid contracts.

Cost of Living

- The [Household Support Fund](#) has been extended up to the 31st March 2023.
- The [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) are raising concern nationally that utility companies are switching people to pre-payment metres without entering their property, if they have a smart meter (there is a recent post on LMP blog relating to this).
- The Third Sector Partnership have agreed a [Third Sector Cost of Living Position Statement](#) and wrote a letter to the Chancellor. A lot of organisations within the city signed the letter.

Action: Leeds will include the letter sent to the Chancellor within a specialised LMP blog post about cost of living.

Asylum Hotel Support

Many partners are finding they receive a lot of requests for support from people seeking asylum residing in hotels and they cannot offer support due to capacity, other organisations are involved in the delivery of support within the asylum hotels.

Action: Asylum Hotel Support will be added to the next LMP strategy group agenda, to consider how to share existing support arrangements for asylum hotels and consider whether applying for funding as a consortium would improve small organisation's capacity to support asylum seekers in hotels.

National, Regional and Local Updates

Leeds Strategic Migration Board (LSMB)

- The Leeds Strategic Migration Board will be discussing key housing concerns and the cost of living crisis at the next meeting on 31st January 2023.

Any Other Business

The next meeting theme is Modern Day Slavery, as a follow up from this meeting.

Future meeting dates for 2023:

Meeting	Date	Venue
LMP Strategy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 20th April 2023 (10am-12pm) • Thursday 13th July 2023 (10am-12pm) • Thursday 12th October 2023 (10am-12pm) • Thursday 11th January 2024 (10am-12pm) 	tbc
LMP Operational Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monday 6th March 2023 (10am-12pm) • Monday 5th June 2023 (10am-12pm) • Monday 4th September 2023 (10am-12pm) • Monday 11th December 2023 (10am-12pm) 	Leeds Refugee Forum One Community Centre, LS9 7SG
Leeds Strategic Migration Board (LSMB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday 31st January 2023 2pm-4pm • Tuesday 18th April 2023 2-4pm • Tuesday 18th July 2023 2-4pm • Tuesday 10th October 2023 2pm-4pm 	Microsoft Teams