

LMP Strategy Group Action Notes

Date: Thursday 20th April 2023

Time: 10.00-12.00

Venue: British Red Cross, Bradbury House, Unit 2 Armley Court, Armley Road, Leeds, LS12 2NB

Karen welcomed partners to the strategy group and reviewed previous actions. Articles, based on previous strategy group meeting themes, have been published on the Leeds Migration Partnership (LMP) blog.

Correction to the previous LMP strategy meeting 19th January 2023 action notes:

- **The following action as stated in the previous minutes has been corrected:** LMP discussed the possibility of 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.
- **The correction:** LMP are working on a motion for LCC to adopt a position against detention centres and partners including Asylum Matters, Solace and Abigail Housing recently met to progress this.

Key Item: Modern Day Slavery

Jordan Alexander from Palm Cove, and Nicola Stewart from the Safeguarding Team, Safer Stronger Communities, Leeds City Council facilitated the key item, providing an overview of Modern-Day Slavery, the approach in Leeds and the Leeds Modern Day Slavery strategy.

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 and the city's partnership approach on the modern-day slavery agenda.

LCC Safer Stronger Communities 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](#).

On the 18th October 2022 Leeds City Council launched the [Leeds Pledge to Tackle Modern Day Slavery](#). There are 5 sections – recognise, report, support, prevent and raise awareness.

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

Palm Cove Society

Jordan Alexander shared an overview of the work done by the Palm Cove Society, how they were established, and how they support trafficked persons referred through the National Referral Mechanism and explained that terminology has changed from Modern Day Slavery to **victim of slavery**, and Human Trafficking is now referred as **trafficking**.

- Palm Cove Society was founded in 2007 and became the first safehouse accommodation provider in the UK for survivors of modern slavery. Palm Cove now have 450 units in Yorkshire and an outreach programme, providing a variety of support which includes providing safe accommodation (a safehouse), alongside help to access services such as; legal advice, medical treatment, therapeutic counselling, social activities, housing, financial advice, and drug and alcohol rehabilitation.
- Palm Cove support people who have been referred through the **National Referral Mechanism (NRM)**. Referrals are made to the NRM by **first responders**. The full list of first responder organisations are available information [here](#). The Home office take 72 hours to decide whether to accept the National Referral Mechanism application. Victims of slavery are placed at least 20 miles away from their place of exploitation, this is known as a danger area.
- Modern slavery statistics:
There are over 135,000 victims of modern slavery in the UK.
 - 79% male
 - 82% 15-17 years of age
 - 6% Vietnamese
 - 15% Albanian
 - 34% British nationals
 - 31% across county lines
 - Statistics show that 20% students would do [squaring](#).
- Jordon shared the Missing Persons policy coming into effect in May 2023. West Yorkshire Police have been piloting the scheme for the last year.

Action: A number of questions were asked by LMP to seek clarification on the Missing Persons Police. Jordon is attending and event on the 25th May and will

update LMP further. LMP suggested a session at LMP Operations meeting to increase awareness and understanding including:

- What are the improvements?
- How will it be measured?
- How will it support the people concerned?

Jordon will look to explore this with the Immigration Absconders Team.

Asylum Questionnaire

Vicky Ledwidge from Migration Yorkshire explained that on the 23rd of February, the Home Office introduced a new 'Streamlined Asylum Process' (SAP) policy, where some people seeking asylum will have to complete a questionnaire instead of having an interview. This policy has been introduced to address the backlog of asylum cases.

There are 5 nationalities that are receiving the Questionnaire who are from **Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria and Yemen** as these countries have a high grant rate., SAP is just the beginning of addressing this backlog. The Home office have said that they are focusing on dispersed accommodation, and they haven't issued any time frames around the making of these decisions. There are 97,000 asylum applications in the backlog, and the Home Office have said they intend to clear this backlog by the end of this year.

Migration Yorkshire recently had a meeting with key voluntary and community organisations to look at what resources is needed to help people go through the streamlined asylum process; discussions included reference to:

- [Refugee Action](#) are developing resources.
- People are encouraged to seek legal advice. Care4Calais may be able to help people to get legal advice. Depending on the complexity of the case, they may get a caseworker, or they may get invited to group legal surgeries in London and Manchester. For more information you can email lottie@care4calais.org
- Vicky Ledwidge contact details are 01133787709
victoria.ledwidge@migrationyorkshire.org.uk

Discussion:

- PAFRAS and the Red Cross confirmed they had not seen the number of people with asylum questionnaires as expected.
- LMP asked Migration Yorkshire for clarification on the numbers of people seeking asylum in Leeds who would receive a questionnaire.
 - Vicky confirmed this data is restricted and therefore unable to share this number.
 - Samantha Powell, Third Sector and Migration Partnership Manager, LCC confirmed the Migration Team have specifically written to the

Home Office to request permission to share this information with the Migrant Third Sector, to aid organisations understanding of the local impact. Sam confirmed the Migration Team regularly asks the Home Office for these types of permissions around information sharing in the spirit of partnership working.

- *The Home Office later confirmed Leeds City Council could not share the number of people seeking asylum in Leeds who would receive this asylum questionnaire.*
- The British Red Cross shared a briefing from Greater Manchester [Briefing: new Home Office plans to clear the backlog of children's asylum claims - GMIAU](#)

Updates on Priorities

Health

- The Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being refreshed and the Health Partnerships Team recently attended the Leeds Migrant Health Board (LMHB).
- The Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) are seeking feedback on the strategy.

Action: Sam Powell will contact HWBB and ask they contact Jon Beech and Karen Pearse to ensure LMP Health leads are given the opportunity to feed into the Leeds Wellbeing Strategy.

National, Regional and Local Updates

LMP Operations Group

- Refugee Community Organisation leaders have raised concerns for young people. There are activities on offer such as football, however, Leeds Refugee Forum feel specialist involvement is required to support the complex issues facing young people.

Action: Sam Powell to connect Ali Mahgoub with Beverly Yearwood, Safer, Stronger Communities, to plan how to address this raised concern.

Leeds Strategic Migration Board (LSMB)

Roger from RETAS summarised the 2 key themes discussed at the recent LSMB meeting: **work and money**, led by the Department for Work and Pension, and **involving people with lived experience**.

- LSMB are exploring how to involve people with lived experience on the board and some key discussions took place around the opportunities and challenges. A key question was clarifying what is meant by “lived experience”, this would be helpful to understand before we start exploring. The board talked about

what other organisations have done and considered the use of case studies which has been helpful previously. The board talked extensively about trust, and it was highlighted it would be good to discuss further with LMP to gain their insights. LSMB suggested a small working group will explore this further.

- Jon reflected on big employers who have a good record of employing people with lived experience, and how can they be helped to articulate their concerns.
- Francesca, the new partnership manager from DWP, discussed DWP support and engagement with the Afghan bridging hotels.
- Leeds Housing Options at Compton Centre are doing some weekly sessions to help people access housing and private rented support.

Migration Yorkshire Regional Update

- [Home for Ukraine Scheme](#) guidance has been updated.
- **National Age Assessment Board** was launched on the 31st March this year, but its only being piloted in two regions which is London and West Midlands. It will hopefully be rolled out nationally in due course.
- **Afghan bridging hotels** - Government has announced they are aiming to move people out of Afghan bridging hotels into long term accommodation.
- New [No Recourse to Public Funds Guidance](#) has come out to support local authorities and assessing adults.
- The Home Office have announced the **Afghan bridging hotels** are to close nationally by the end of the year, 8,000 people across the country. There will be a regional and communications are going out to all residents nationally next week giving them a 3 months' notice. They will be given 1 offer of a property. The Home Office have confirmed if this offer is refused, they will be given 56 days to be evicted. For the Refugee Council the contract came back in house into the council for Resettlement and on the 1st April there's a full team to support this and there is a drop in at the Ramgarhia Centre. The Home Office has given a national £35 million funding package to address housing pressures and temporary accommodation.
- **Hope Not Hate** have released their latest edition to the [State of Hate Report](#) that looks at far right extremism in the UK.
- **Illegal Migration Bill** is currently at the House of Lords and Migration Yorkshire are producing a briefing which will be online in the next couple of weeks.
- [Home Office fact sheet](#) was published by the government last week and includes explanations about the use of large military sites such as Catterick.
- Government have proposed secondary legislation to remove the need for **houses in multiple occupation licenses for asylum accommodation** which raises concerns. A lot of Housing Teams across the sector are seeking legal advice regarding what this means locally.
- The funding structure for **asylum** for this year has been announced. The Local Authority was given a one-off payment last year and that funding has been

repeated, last year it was £250pp which has been increased this year to £750pp for incurred bedspaces. This funding is anticipated to be received in quarter 1.

- **Migration Yorkshire Voluntary and Community Sector engagement day** is on the 6th of July and registration is open.

Any Other Business

The next meeting theme is to be confirmed.

Future meeting dates for 2023:

Meeting	Date	Venue
LMP Strategy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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 18th July 2023 2-4pm • Tuesday 10th October 2023 2pm-4pm 	Microsoft Teams