|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| REDACTED**WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:****OCTOBER 2023** | Logo - Migration Yorkshire |

**REDACTED MINUTES OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE SUB REGIONAL MIGRATION GROUP MEETING THAT TOOK PLACE ON 12 OCTOBER 2023**

**Attendees**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Cllr Mary Harland (Chair) | Leeds Council |
| Sajida Ali | Migration Yorkshire |
| Kathryn Ashworth | Solace |
| Adam Atack | Migration Yorkshire |
| Pria Bhabra | Leeds Council |
| Cllr Maureen Cummings | Wakefield Council |
| Dick Davies | Wakefield Council |
| John Donaldson | Kirklees Council |
| Ben Foord | Migration Yorkshire |
| Jane Fowden | DASH |
| Kirsten Fussing | Calderdale Council |
| Simon Gallop | Home Office |
| Sophie Hepworth | Mears |
| Kathryn Howard | Kirklees Council |
| Billie Kemp | The Growth Company |
| Ebonie Kenifeck | Mears Housing |
| Tabana Khalid | Wakefield Council |
| Annie Lancashire | Migration Yorkshire |
| Kate Liddle | The Growth Company |
| Cllr Jenny Lynn | Calderdale Council |
| Liz Maddocks | Migration Yorkshire |
| Aidan Melville | Migration Yorkshire |
| Hiron Miah | Bradford Council |
| Susan Morley | Red Cross |
| Vicky Mulhern | Migration Yorkshire |
| Cllr Mussarat Pervaiz | Kirklees Council |
| Sara Robinson | St Augustine’s Centre |
| Sara Suheim | Calderdale Council |
| Tesfay Waldemichael | Migrant Help |
| David Walmsley | The Growth Company |
| Louise Williams | Bradford Council |

**Apologies**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Beverley Adams | West Yorkshire Police |
| Azizzum Akhtar | REMA |
| Cllr Noreen Akhtar | Bradford Council |
| Mary Brandon | Asylum Matters |
| Dave Brown | Migration Yorkshire |
| Bill Dennis | Kirklees voluntary sector MAG |
| Grzegorz Dyrak | Migrant Help |
| Emma Fitzpatrick | Mears |
| Juliet Halstead | Migrant Help |
| Becky Hellewell | St Augustine’s Centre |
| Edmore Hute | Red Cross |
| Abdul Jabar | Bradford Council |
| Gary Jeffers | Home Office |
| Beth Kirby | West Yorkshire ICB |
| Sarah Mitchell | Kirklees Council |
| Cllr Carole Pattison | Kirklees Council |
| Stefan Robert | Migration Yorkshire |
| Nadeem Siddique | Leeds Council |
| Teresa Snowden | Migrant Help |
| Sarah Sturdy | Home Office |
| Ally Swadling | PAFRAS |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 8 June 2023** |
| **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** | **Resettlement update** |
| **4.1** | * The Afghan bridging hotel estate across the UK has now closed, with the last bridging hotel in our region closing on 31/08/2023.
* Families were required to move on from bridging hotels in advance of this date. This was done through being matched to available properties through the Home Office matching process, identifying their own private rented sector properties, moving in with friends or family or entering the homelessness system.
* A small number of Afghan households continued to be supported in Home Office provided accommodation. This included two cohorts:
	+ Those pre-matched to local authority-sourced properties that were identified and accepted but not available for occupation. For these cases interim hotel accommodation has been provided until the property is ready (up to or before 31/12/2023). This is room only provision.
	+ Those with a pre-existing medical condition to whom having to move on from bridging accommodation would have been detrimental or who’s care is linked to a particular area. These cases were spot booked into hotel or self-contained accommodation on a full board basis.
* Both cohorts continue to get Home Office Liaison Officer Support.
* Hotel closures were completed in Yorkshire and Humber with no street homelessness and without significant impact on wider homelessness services, outside of areas with bridging hotels. This is due to the exceptional efforts and structured move-on plans put in place by local authorities and wrap around support providers (Refugee Council/Horton Housing) within bridging hotels.
* Any families who did enter the homelessness temporary accommodation as a direct result of bridging hotel closures, have now moved on to permanent accommodation due to the efforts of local authorities to help people resettle successfully.
* Families in settled accommodation that have moved with local authority approval will receive three years of integration support under the ARAP/ACRS Funding Instruction.
* If any agency becomes aware of families living in the region unsupported or who have not made themselves known to authorities, but are in need of support, please do not hesitate to reach out to Migration Yorkshire who can link you in with the relevant local authority resettlement lead to discuss whether it is possible or appropriate for integration support to be put in place for the household.
* Arrivals continue.
* Yorkshire and Humber continue to support the Afghan schemes and resettle families displaced in third countries through the ARAP scheme as well as the ACRS Pathway 2 and Pathway 3. Properties available for allocation are offered up to the Home Office via local authorities and Migration Yorkshire for allocation by the Home Office in line with their matching policies.
* Alongside this work Yorkshire and Humber continues to accept additional cases on the UKRS scheme, with more families accepted and pending arrival across the region since the papers were shared. This ongoing commitment of our regional stakeholders to resettlement across all schemes is acknowledged and appreciated.
* Bradford City Council have raised concerns with Minister Mercer about the interim hotel in the city regarding food provision. Local authority staff have also met with the Home Office to discuss this.
 |
| **5.0** | **Update on Regional refugee integration forum**  |
| **5.1** | * A presentation was delivered on the Regional refugee integration forum by Liz Maddocks from Migration Yorkshire.
* A copy of the slides is available at Annex 1.
* Attendees were invited to complete the Forum Action Plan template (Annex 2) and to share amongst their networks, share good practice, and contact Liz Maddocks directly for any further support or information.
 |
| **6.0** | **Cessations discussion - planning & best practice**  |
| **6.1** | * Following a ministerial directive, the Home Office are working to clear the asylum backlog by the end of 2023.
* Service users in receipt of a positive asylum decision should receive 28 days notice of the end of support from the date on their decision letter.
* Consideration should also be given to service users that receive a negative decision, those that are not supported by Mears and those that have their cases withdrawn.
* Local authorities are struggling to support service users and there are reports of street homelessness.
* Migration Yorkshire is working with local authorities to provide support.
* Dave Brown from Migration Yorkshire will be attending a national Strategic Migration Partnership meeting on issues around cessations. Migration Yorkshire will provide an update to local authorities in due course.
* There is a proposal for automation of the BRP system but the date of implementation of this is to be confirmed.
* It was noted that working relationships and collaboration amongst organisations in Yorkshire and Humber is strong and this is to be applauded.
* Not all service users will be able to be supported and some will experience homelessness and rough sleeping.
* The mental load placed on frontline staff is acknowledged.
 |
| **6.2** | * Migrant Help receives a list of service users with positive decisions at their first response centre, who then makes contact with those service users.
* Once the service user has accepted move-on support, they are referred to Reed in Partnership for support.
* Migrant Help refers service users to DWP for employment support, who then makes referrals to VCS organisations.
* There are a range of issues that Migrant Help is able to assist with including incorrect details on BRPs. These issues are escalated as necessary.
* Frequently asked questions are available on the Migrant Help website.
* There has been an increase in the number of service users that require support.
* There are concerns about the risk of destitution due to errors on BRPs and increasing pressure on local authority homelessness services.
 |
| **6.3** | A presentation was delivered by The Growth Company on the Refugee Employability Programme and the following points were noted.* The Refugee Employability Programme is funded by the Home office and is designed to support refugees in employability, ESOL and community integration.
* The programme will not replicate any support already being accessed, whilst embedding national standards and enabling regionally tailored support.​
* The programme will support 1,800 service users over a two-year period across the Yorkshire and Humber region, commencing this September.
* Each service user may engage for up to 18 months (and up to six months in work support).
* The programme offers two packages of support, either employability support or employability, ESOL and integration support.
* Support under the programme is offered by the Growth Company in West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire, and by Migrant Help in Humberside and North Yorkshire.
* At Migrant Help, all referrals for the programme are submitted through their website.
* The team is working with local authorities and VCSE sector partners to identify eligible participants and the programme went live on 4 September.
* A copy of the presentation slides is available at Annex 3.
 |
| **6.4** | * In Bradford, the local authority is concerned about the number of discons being received.
* The council is reviewing their internal staffing structure and the resources that will be required to support these service users.
* In terms of the availability of accommodation, the local authority will use some of the prevention grant to provide rent in advance to some service users. They are also speaking to landlords that may have available properties.
* The voluntary and community sector in Bradford is working to catch service users that may be missed by the system due to short-notice cessations and lack of accommodation.
 |
| **6.5** | * In Kirklees, the local authority is planning a meeting on housing forecasting and the number of discons.
* Capacity will be increased in the team that deals with post-decision work.
* The local authority is looking at how rough sleeping funding could be used.
* There are concerns about the reduced notice period that local authorities are receiving when being informed of new discons.
* The VCS in Kirklees is completing preparation work with service users to manage their expectations and potential hosting schemes are being explored.
* DASH has created a new role to support positive move-on and they may also consider hosting a project. The team is looking at housing models that could be utilised.
 |
| **6.6** | * Leeds City Council is looking at staffing, planning and collaboration with partner organisations. There are also conversations with other core cities to discuss models of best practice.
* The council has offered finance to the VCS to support service users that are seeking accommodation.
* The local authority has created a flyer that will be given to all service users to help manage their expectations and help them understand what they can do, including what they should do if they do not have a BRP card.
* The VCS is doing a lot of work on preparing service users for move-on and managing their expectations.
 |
| **6.7** | * Wakefield Council has increased staffing and now has an asylum manager, as well as a Refugee integration service casework officer.
* The council has a strong relationship with local VCS organisations.
* Wakefield VCS are not dealing with individual cases as they do not offer casework support.
 |
| **7.0** | **Any other Business** |
| **7.1** | * For new arrivals that have not had an initial screening interview, they will be invited to attend one. Migrant Help escalates these cases with UKVI.
* A question was asked about how service users can update their contact information that is held by the Home Office. If a service user is in the asylum system, this should automatically be updated. For service users in other accommodation, they are advised to update their information with assistance from a solicitor.
* The next meeting will be held in January and Migration Yorkshire will be asking attendees for suggestions of agenda items shortly after Christmas.
 |
| **8.0** | **Date of next meeting** |
| **8.1** | * Wednesday 31 January 2024
 |

Ben Foord, Migration Yorkshire

12 October 2023