

Leeds Strategic Migration Board Meeting Minutes – 6 February 2024

Meeting Theme: Children Services and Illegal Migration Act consultation

Attendance

Service	Members	Attended	Apologies
Safer Stronger Communities	Paul Money (PM) – Chief Officer for Safer Stronger Communities (Chair)		✓
	Pria Bhabra (PB) - Migration Programme Manager (Coordinator)	✓	
	Nadeem Siddique (NS) – Head of Community Relations and Cohesion	✓	
	Samantha Powell (SP) - Third Sector and Migration Partnership Manager	✓	
	Cath Dearlove (CD) - Resettlement Programme Manager	✓	
	Katrina Tilbrook (KT) – Migration Project Officer (minutes)	✓	
Elected Members	Councillor Mary Harland – Executive Board Member for Communities	✓	
Customer Contact	Lee Hemsworth (LH) – Chief Officer for Community Hubs, Welfare and Business Support	✓	
Housing	Mark Ireland (MI) - Private Rented Sector Service Manager	✓	
	Philip Windle (PW) – Leeds Housing Options Manager		✓
Employment and Skills	Hannah Kirkham (HK) – Employment and Skills Senior Manager		✓
City Development	Dawn Hall (DH) – Executive Manager of Employment and Skills	✓	
Children and Families	Jonathan Nevill (JN) –Service Delivery Manager	✓	
	Jancis Andrew (JA) Head of Virtual School	✓	
Adults and Health	Sibi Hanif (SH) - Service Delivery Manager		✓
	Catherine Ward (CW) - Health Improvement Principal	✓	
	Anthony Cooke (AC) - Chief Officer Health Partnerships		
NHS Leeds CCG	Deborah McCartney (DM) - Head of Primary Care	✓	
DWP	Chris Joyce (CJ) - Leeds and Keighley Senior Operational Leader		✓
	Gemma Sharratt (GS) - Senior Partnership Manager	✓	
Migration Yorkshire	Adam Atask (AA) - Refugee Integration Service Manager	✓	
	Stefan Robert (SR) - Integration and Partnership Manager		✓
West Yorkshire Police	Lucy Leadbeater (LL) – Chief Inspector	✓	
	Nick Berry (NB)		✓
Leeds Migration Partnership	Karen Pearse (KP) – Director of PAFRAS Roger Nyantou (RN) – Director of RETAS	✓	✓

Migrant Help	Tesfay Waldemichael (TW) - Head of Regional Service	✓	
Mears	Sophie Hepworth (SH) Partnerships Manager – West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire		
Strategy and Resources	Mike Eakins (ME) - Head of Policy	✓	
	Luke Andrews – Intelligence and Policy Officer	✓	

Summary of Actions		
3.2	Action: Pria and Sam to explore the issue further and liaise with Piers at Leeds Housing Options who is developing resources.	PB/SP
3.4	Action: Nadeem confirmed that once all projects have been signed off a summary and description of each project and activity will be provided.	SP
4.2	Action: Pria and Sam to follow up with other stakeholders to review what might be provided and bring this back to a future meeting	PB/SP

1.0	Welcome and Introductions	
	Nadeem Siddique (Head of Community Relations and Cohesion) welcomed all to the meeting on behalf of Paul Money.	
2.0	Matters Arising and Previous Meeting Minutes (10th October 2023)	
	All actions from previous meeting have been completed and the outstanding item is an agenda item. Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record.	
3.0	National, Regional and Local Updates	
3.1	<p>Migration Yorkshire - national policy updates Adam Atack provided an update on the Illegal Migration Act, NRPF (No Recourse to Public Funds) Connect, Resettlement Schemes and AMIF funding.</p> <p>Illegal Migration Act 2023 Now in force although several regulations have not yet commenced, and the focus is principally upon the proposed use of Rwanda as a ‘safe third country’ under the Safety of Rwanda (Asylum and Immigration) Bill. This is at the committee stage within the House of Lords and is likely to move quite quickly through report and third reading stages, then back to the Commons for consideration of any amendments before Royal Assent. Challenge through the Courts is expected.</p> <p>The focus now is on those cases with an application date between 28 June 2022 and up to 7 March 2023. This amounts to 40,000 applications and their aim is to resolve these by spring 2024. We understand that plans for the next tranche to March 2023 and onwards are under consideration and will be shared in due course.</p> <p>Whilst the Streamlined Asylum Process was progressing the majority were receiving positive decisions; however, going forward the expectation is to see more negative decisions which will mean people having to appeal and ultimately, facing final negative decisions and no recourse to public funds.</p> <p>NRPF Connect NRPF Connect have created a new report looking at the impact of supporting people with NRPF to local authorities. It shows an increase to £77.6 million nationally and significantly around supporting adults with care needs.</p> <p>Further details here: NRPF Connect data report 2022 23 NRPF (nrpfnetwork.org.uk)</p>	

	<p>The report itself is here: NRPF Heading 1 (nrpfnetwork.org.uk)</p> <p>Resettlement ARAP and ACRS Nationally, ongoing relocation for eligible households under ARAP and ACRS resettlement schemes under pathway 3 with the Home Office and MOD providing full board accommodation before moving on to properties under the established resettlement model, with support of local authorities. Pathway 2 continues with local authorities leading.</p> <p>AMIF (European Migration Integration Fund (AMIF)) All European Asylum Migration Integration Fund (AMIF) funding has now ended bringing the Refugee Integration Service to an end. Leeds, like all other partner local authorities are continuing with the provision of refugee move on services within Leeds Housing Options.</p>	
3.2	<p>Leeds Migration Partnership (LMP)</p> <p>Karen Pearse, joint chair of LMP provided an update on the new 28-day rules, OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner) Advice Project and LMP/PAFRAS.</p> <p>28 Day move on rules impacting housing and homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment thresholds for priority need and housing benefit differ leading to instances where ABIGAIL are unable to house individuals who are in priority need but do not meet the housing threshold. • Increased numbers of those “moving on” was expected to lead to a corresponding increase in UC numbers but there is no evidence this is happening. • The policy of room sharing in hotels is being applied even where the hotels are part occupied and rooms are sufficient to provide for single occupancy <p>OISC Advice Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed to provide volunteer led OISC advice the project is doing well and providing support on BRP issues, Travel Documentation and Nationality and Citizenship <p>PAFRAS Increasing numbers of claim refusals are likely to lead to increasing number of appeals all of which require solicitor support and will create court backlog and delays. Individuals in this situation retain the right to get home office support whilst waiting for cases to be heard.</p> <p>LMP are focusing on supporting individuals back into the asylum system particularly where applications are withdrawn, and individuals have become destitute Discussion among those present confirmed that anecdotally:</p> <p>The gap between the number of refugees in the system and those seeking support could be a result of community support provision and access to good “move on” resources as used under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme would be beneficial.</p> <p>Action: Pria and Sam to explore the issue further and liaise with Piers at Leeds Housing Options who is developing resources.</p>	PB/SP
3.3	<p>City of Sanctuary @ Local Authority Network Award (Council of Sanctuary)</p> <p>Nadeem Siddique, Head of Community Relations and Cohesion, provided an update building on the work presented at the previous board by Jennifer Jennings.</p>	

	<p>The Local Authority Network Award under City of Sanctuary is being overseen by Councillor Harland and recognises support and practices across the council in ensuring a strong welcome is provided to people arriving in the area.</p> <p>Work is continuing to collate and map evidence of embedded practice which will feed into the quality mark submission and expectations are that a submission will be made in approximately 8 months' time marked with a celebration event.</p> <p>Next steps are to run a series of workshops with those with lived experience of arriving in Leeds to help support service delivery and practice. As and when the workshops have taken place - outcomes will be shared with the Board.</p> <p>Councillor Harland acknowledged all the work undertaken in the council to deliver this. Any follow-up questions/information can be provided by Pria and Sam</p>	
3.4	<p>Asylum Grant Funding</p> <p>Sam Powell, Third Sector and Migration Partnership Manager delivered an update on Leeds City Council funding a number of third sector projects funded through the Asylum Dispersal fund of £600K.</p> <p>The full fund has now been allocated to 23 organisations which will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the provision of legal advice at every level (although this is still far from being sufficient to meet need) • Move on Support • ESOL and Learning Skills • Travel costs to attend Health and Mental Health Services • Activities run to support those in the community and asylum hotels <p>Nadeem confirmed that once all projects have been signed off a summary and description of each project and activity will be provided.</p>	NS/SP
4.0	Key Theme: Illegal Migration Act 2023	
4.1	<p>UASCs are regarded in the same way as children removed from their parents and deemed as "Looked After". The difference with UASCs is that they have no parental or family member with parental responsibility in the country and the council is therefore mandated to provide care for them and act as their parent, Under S20 of the 1989 Children Act.</p> <p>Leeds is a large urban area with relatively high numbers of UASCs all of whom come to the city through one of three routes which include:</p> <p>National Transfer Scheme, which is the Home Office mandated route; Individuals are picked up at the port of entry – mainly from small boat coastal landings with the majority arriving in Kent. Kent Local Authority then disperses them to other LAs nationally. Leeds is part of the West Yorkshire rota signed up to receiving a proportion of cases with logistics managed through Migration Yorkshire. Leeds has a small team dedicated to offering wrap around care for our UASC's, however each young person will have a allocated social worker.</p> <p>Sporadic Arrivals Young people may turn up at random. Before the pandemic this was the main route into the UK.</p> <p>Hotel Referrals A significant number of young people have been discovered in hotels having been assessed as over 18, or potentially where decisions have been made to treat them as</p>	

adults. This is creating challenges and hotel staff are now practised in identifying these cases.

Support to UASCs

Social workers assist with linking people in with education, home office appointments and health need assessments.

Accommodation

Provision is wide-ranging and age related:

- Foster care is provided to all under 16s and those 16+ deemed vulnerable
- Semi-independent living arrangements apply to the majority of UASCs
- Supported lodging/rented rooms can be allocated for those <18 who are just outside the foster care thresholds

Ordinarily Care Leavers are supported to 25 years of age and the majority of UASCs who required support beyond 18 years is very low

Challenges

There are issues in relation to increasing numbers when capacity within Childrens Services is not keeping pace with those numbers. The current position in Leeds is the lack of appropriate accommodation and therefore, Childrens Services are required to purchase more expensive accommodation which greatly impacts on the council's financial challenge. However, this must be stressed that this is not necessarily due to the increasing numbers of UASC's but the increasing numbers of Children Looked After as a whole and the rising numbers of homelessness in the 16-25 population.

Whist many UASC individuals want to access education they often lack the necessary language requirements and there are insufficient language courses to meet this need. Healthcare assessments are also being affected by the increased numbers although this is more an issue of capacity in completing assessments than in the delivery of healthcare by providers.

Several comments/observations were made in response:

- Small boat crossings account for less than 40% of arrivals to the UK
- The room sharing policy in hotels is of significant safeguarding concern given the number of UASCs being identified once they arrive in Leeds
- Leeds City College is the only provider of ESOL within a supported college/pastoral environment and is full. Finding alternative pathways is extremely challenging as ESOL courses from other providers are very different.

The British Library are working with UASCs to map journeys which form part of an event at the Playhouse later in February/early March and the UASC football team continue to do well.

Useful resource: [Promoting education of looked after children](#)

4.2

Illegal Migration Act 2023

Pria Bhabra, Migration Programme Manager and Sam Powell, Third Sector and Migration Partnership Manager, delivered a presentation following consultation with partners on the impact of the Illegal Migration Act.



Illegal Migration
Act.pdf

Several comments/observations were made in response:

	<p>Leeds Housing Options would welcome the opportunity to work more closely with 3rd Sector Partners</p> <p>Move On Resources similar to those seen as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme could be very beneficial.</p> <p>Action: Pria and Sam to follow up with other stakeholders to review what might be provided and bring this back to a future meeting</p>	PB/SP
5	Afghan Schemes	
5.1	<p>Afghan Schemes: ARAP and ACRS</p> <p>Cath Dearlove, Resettlement Manager provided an update on all resettlement activity including ARAP, ACRS, VPRS and UKRS</p> <p>Activities continue to be planned for all families on all schemes. Following national policy changes, the Council will work in partnership with Mears, the Ministry Of Defence and the Home Office to procure properties for the ARAP cohort who are currently waiting to be accommodated. Once properties have been procured the resettlement team will be delivering the integration support. MEARS have currently identified 7 properties. We continue to work with Migration Yorkshire for more data to ascertain health needs, and all new arrivals will continue to be referred to York Street.</p>	
6.0	Forward Plan	
6.1	<p>Next meeting theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adults led by Sibi Hanif • To confirm second theme 	
7.0	Any Other Business	
7.1	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Deborah McCartney will be leaving the NHS and Nadeem thanked Deborah for all her contributions and work with the Board. She will be greatly missed and all those at the meeting wished her well with her future endeavours.</p>	
8	Close and Future Meetings	
	Nadeem thanked all for their contributions at the meeting.	