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| REDACTED **WEST YORKSHIRE SRMG:**  **OCTOBER 2024** | Logo - Migration Yorkshire |

**REDACTED MINUTES OF THE WEST YORKSHIRE SUB REGIONAL MIGRATION GROUP MEETING THAT TOOK PLACE ON 25 OCTOBER 2024**

**Attendees**

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| Cllr Venner (Chair) | Leeds City Council |
| Bev Adams | West Yorkshire Police |
| Adam Atack | Migration Yorkshire |
| Katie Brownlow | Migrant Help |
| Michael Crowe | Migration Yorkshire |
| Dick Davies | Wakefield City of Sanctuary |
| Ben Foord | Migration Yorkshire |
| Kirsten Fussing | Calderdale Council |
| Becky Hellewell | St Augustine’s Centre |
| Sophie Hepworth | Mears |
| Sally Johnson | Home Office |
| Ebonie Kenifeck | Mears |
| Tabana Khalid | Wakefield Council |
| Annie Lancashire | Migration Yorkshire |
| Mahmood Mohammed | Bradford Council |
| Susan Morley | Red Cross |
| Vicky Mulhern | Migration Yorkshire |
| Isabel Nicholson | Calderdale Council |
| Simon Poor | Home Office |
| Sam Powell | Leeds City Council |
| Nadeem Siddique | Leeds City Council |
| Ally Swadling | PAFRAS |
| Cllr Wilton | Wakefield Council |

**Apologies**

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| Azizzum Akhtar | REMA |
| Noreen Akhtar | Bradford Council |
| Kathryn Ashworth | Solace |
| Colette Beatson | Kirklees Council |
| Pria Bhabra | Leeds City Council |
| Mary Brandon | Asylum Matters |
| Dave Brown | Migration Yorkshire |
| Cllr Cummings | Wakefield Council |
| Bill Dennis | Independent |
| Michelle Dunne | Wakefield Council |
| Cllr Durrans | Calderdale Council |
| Kevin Finnegan | Home Office |
| Emma Fitzpatrick | Mears |
| Sophie Ford | Home Office |
| Cllr Hussain | Bradford Council |
| Edmore Hute | Red Cross |
| Gary Jeffers | Home Office |
| Beth Kirby | West Yorkshire ICB |
| Hiron Miah | Bradford Council |
| Cllr Pinnock | Kirklees Council |
| Jade Raybould | Mears |
| Sarah Richardson | Calderdale Council |
| Sara Robinson | St Augustine’s Centre |
| Christina Simpkin | Third Sector Leaders |
| Sarah Sturdy | Home Office |
| Jakub Szukaj | Migrant Help |
| Sophie Tong | Migration Yorkshire |
| Robin Tuddenham | Calderdale Council |
| Tesfay Waldemichael | Migrant Help |

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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 5 June 2024** |
| **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** | **Lebanon – update on current situation** |
| **4.1** | British Nationals and Dependants in Lebanon   * The government has provided ‘low confidence’ figures regarding the number of British nationals in Lebanon. We know that some have already left the country, and we expect others may choose to leave should the security situation deteriorate further. * The Habitual Residence Test (HRT) usually required for new arrivals to the UK, to enable access to benefits, housing and homeless support, has been waived for British nationals coming from certain countries, including Lebanon. * Many flights out of Lebanon were cancelled due to the insecure situation on the ground. The Home Office expect flights to resume in mid-November. * For the UKRS cohort, all but one case scheduled to come to Y&H has a flight confirmation date, although the situation is very fast moving and all is subject to change. * The Home Office has updated that there are only a small number of UKRS cases in Lebanon still awaiting a property match. * Any questions on resettlement can be sent to [MYresettlement@migrationyorkshire.org.uk](mailto:MYresettlement@migrationyorkshire.org.uk). |
| **5.0** | **Asylum Move On Liaison Officers - overview** |
| **5.1** | Adam Jones from the Home Office provided information on the roles and responsibilities of the Home Office AMLO team. The following points were noted.   * The work of the AMLO team follows on from that of the Home Office Liaison Officer (HOLO) team last year. * As of September 2024 the AMLO team stood up to take over support of HOLO ‘test for change’ sites and is due to take over all test for change sites by the end of 2024. Test for Change is still running in two London boroughs and the East and West Midlands. * AMLO is currently in 16 sites in Yorkshire and Humber and the team is working alongside VCS organisations currently supporting contingency accommodation sites. * The team is looking to expand and is actively recruiting and training new staff so that support can be provided in more areas. * The team provides move-on support for service users in contingency accommodation that have received a positive asylum decision. * Support includes assistance with corrections to Home Office notices and letters as required, removal of Home Office blockers preventing move-on, signposting to move-on support services and assisting with Universal Credit applications. * In the first instance the support to service users is signposting, but on a case-by-case basis support may be provided with completing forms. * A telephone triage system was trialled for dispersal accommodation, but uptake was limited due to language barriers. * The team is looking to extend its services to service users in dispersal accommodation and is piloting drop-in and virtual support to dispersal accommodation in North East England. * Multi-agency drop-in sessions will be established in 2025 with support from local authorities for service users in dispersal accommodation. * Local authorities would welcome individual conversations with the AMLO team to discuss ways of working together, as each authority operates slightly differently. Asylum leads at local authorities should be the primary contact for these discussions. * Migration Yorkshire has a bi-monthly regional move-on service forum and representatives from the AMLO team are welcome to attend. * There are reports of individuals within some family units receiving decisions, but others are not, and there is an issue of those family units being split up. The AMLO team will look to link in caseworkers to speed up the processing of cases for outstanding family members and look at securing accommodation for the whole family. Local AMLOs can be contacted with any instances of this. * There are similarities between the AMLO and Reed in Partnership outreach support projects but AMLO is aiming to complement existing services rather than duplicate them. * AMLO Yorkshire and Humber area leads:   + Daniel Hall - [Daniel.Hall6@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:Daniel.Hall6@homeoffice.gov.uk)   + Louis Raven - [Louis.Raven@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:Louis.Raven@homeoffice.gov.uk)   + Amy Welsh - [Amy.Welsh1@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:Amy.Welsh1@homeoffice.gov.uk) |
| **6.0** | **Migrant Help – update and overview of current issues** |
| **6.1** | Reed in Partnership   * The Reed in Partnership outreach team provides semi-independent advice and guidance, and connection with local services for those service users that receive a positive decision. * There is an initial telephone appointment for 30-45 minutes and follow up support by text message and email with bespoke advice. * The team remains in contact with service users throughout the 28 day move-on period. * Support includes making sure that decisions are processed correctly and applying for accommodation extensions when necessary, encouraging service users to apply for e-visas, help with navigating the benefits system, advice about setting up bank accounts, applying for accommodation and signposting to the Refugee Employability Programme. * The team has been meeting with local authorities and SMPs to discuss housing availability and access to local support. They will also be meeting with the Home Office AMLO team to explore ways of working together. * Further questions about the work of the Reed in Partnership outreach service can be sent to [daniel.dcruz@reed.com](mailto:daniel.dcruz@reed.com) * Details about AIRE positive move-on support can be found at Appendix 1. |
| **6.2** | Migrant Help   * Migrant Help is seeing month on month increases in demand for support with induction and asylum support applications. * The First Response Centre helpline received 90,000 calls in August with an average wait time of 39 seconds. The EAGL team responded to 16,000 calls in August and 1,700 webchats. * In August 3,600 service users were supported with induction and asylum support applications. The team working on S98 supported 1,200 applications in August and is prioritising the most vulnerable cases. * There is a regional office in Wakefield where service users can receive face to face support. * The outreach team focusses on support to vulnerable service users. Referrals are case assessed and potentially a face-to-face appointment is arranged. Support is a mix of direct Migrant Help provision and partners via the Commissioning Framework. * Third party referral email [outreach@migranthelpuk.org](mailto:outreach@migranthelpuk.org) – referral form to include an explanation of the need and vulnerability. * Migrant Help is currently supporting with Q&A drop-ins once a month in West Yorkshire at Dubrovnik Hotel, The Bradford Hotel, Cedar Court Hotel and Wool Merchant Hotel. Since August, 62 service users have been supported face-to-face in these hotels. * Migrant Help is happy to provide outreach support at other hotels, subject to receiving a risk assessment from the accommodation provider. * Migrant Help is not able to see all service users face to face, so it has been developing remote support. * A high volume of service users goes through the system every week. They are screened very quickly on arrival to the UK and are dispersed to regions soon after this, which puts pressure on local services. * Transport should be provided by Migrant Help to enable service users to get to substantive interviews, where the location of the interview is more than three miles away from their accommodation. Tickets for transport should be sent to service users with their interview invitation. * For service users in initial accommodation, applications for S95 support should be sent to the Home Office within five working days and for S4 support, within two working days. Migrant Help processing applications within these timescales but some delays can occur where Migrant Help struggles to make contact with service users.   + For specific instances where these timescales are not being met, details can be sent to Katie Brownlow for escalation with the relevant manager - [katie.brownlow@migranthelpuk.org](mailto:katie.brownlow@migranthelpuk.org) |
| **7.0** | **E-visas – discussion of current concerns and mitigation** |
| **7.1** | * All service users that are British nationals must transition from Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) to e-visa. This includes service users with Indefinite Leave to Remain. * Information about e-visas is available on the gov.uk and Migration Yorkshire websites. There is a list of organisations that can provide local-level support here [List of organisations - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evisa-community-support-for-vulnerable-people/list-of-organisations) * The Home Office is holding a local authority-only engagement call in week commencing 28 October 2024 and is setting up further engagement sessions for other organisations. * Migrant Help will be supporting vulnerable service users who may find it difficult to manage this process themselves and they are currently in the process of recruiting a new team to support with the delivery of this service. This is a completely separate team to Migrant Help AIRE services and can be reached at:   + Telephone: 07483 170100   + Email: [evisa@migranthelpuk.org](mailto:evisa@migranthelpuk.org) * Migrant Help requests local authorities to update their local partnership managers with details of local organisations that service users can be signposted to. * BRP support will be coming to an end soon and Migrant Help can no longer request reinstatements for BRP errors. Service users now need to log BRP errors through their UKVI accounts. * Reed is advising service users to act now and to retain their BRPs. Support is provided by Migrant Help and local services to help service users set up their online UKVI accounts. * There are reports of some regions not having access to local organisations that can support with e-visas, and the capacity of local organisations to provide support, varies by region. * There have been some issues reported with the transition to e-visas including problems with scanning BRPs and other documents so that they can be uploaded to the online portal. It may be possible to send the Home Office hard copy documents, but Migrant Help is awaiting confirmation of this. * There are concerns about digital inclusion and reaching service users that do not have access to the internet, particularly post-positive service users that require share codes. Some support is available locally on digital inclusion. * Migration Yorkshire is collating all issues where it is felt that there is not clear advice and guidance, so that these can be escalated with the Home Office. |
| **8.0** | **Co-production of community engagement plans based on threat, harm, risk and inequalities to migrant communities** |
| **8.1** | Bev Adams from West Yorkshire Police discussed co-production of community engagement plans and the following points were noted:   * West Yorkshire Police asked whether the template they have created for this community engagement plan would be something that service providers would be interested in helping them to develop and use with their communities. Migration Yorkshire is happy to have a further discussion about this. * Police staff sit down with community representatives to complete the plan and the most vulnerable communities are being prioritised. * West Yorkshire Police seeks to hear from various representatives from each community and develop the plans over time, including engaging them in the governance of the plans. * A separate piece of work is being done around Roma communities and there is an Eastern European engagement group that could be linked into this. |
| **9.0** | **Any other Business** |
| **9.1** | * VCS colleagues are seeing a pattern of the Home Office conducting brief substantive interviews of a maximum of two hours. Service users are told to provide brief answers at these interviews but are then receiving refusals for not providing enough information. * Sometimes service users are called back for further interviews or are asked to provide further evidence in support of their applications. * The Home Office does not accept further evidence that has not been translated into English before submission, but due to a lack of legal aid provision, service users cannot get the translations completed. |
| **9.2** | * The next VCS engagement day will be held in Leeds on 27 November and will be an opportunity for VCS colleagues only to network and discuss key issues. It would be helpful for those areas that do not currently have a nominated VCS rep to raise awareness of the event. [Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Day 2024 | Migration Yorkshire](https://www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/news/voluntary-and-community-sector-engagement-day-2024) |
| **9.3** | * Cllr Wilton from Wakefield Council gave thanks for everyone’s input into this meeting, which is the first sub-regional meeting he has attended since starting his new role as deputy portfolio holder for poverty and communities. |
| **10.0** | **Date of next meeting** |
| **10.1** | * 28 February 2025 |

Ben Foord, Migration Yorkshire

25 October 2024