

# MAYOR OF LONDON

## London Strategic Migration Partnership

**Chair: Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement**

9 December 2019

14.00 – 16.00

Committee Room 3, City Hall

### Chair

Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement

### Attendees

Councillor Muhammed Butt – London Councils  
Steve Kelly – RASI (standing in for Paul Morrison)  
Doug Flight – London Councils  
Lisa Doyle – Refugee Council (MRAP)  
Rita Dayoub – Doctors of the World (MRAP)  
Anna Miller – Doctors of the World (MRAP)  
Rita Dayoub, Doctors of the World (MRAP)  
Barbara Drozdowicz – East European Resource Centre (MRAP)  
Mike Boyle – East London Advanced Tech Training - ELATT (MRAP)  
Jackie Odunoye - London Housing Directors  
Steve Lakey - Clearsprings  
Anna Di Mascio - Migrant Help  
Vanya Leslie - Reed in Partnership  
Ian Lewis – City of London  
Annie Campbell - North Kensington Law Centre  
Grace Ashaye – LASC  
Jeremy Swain – MHCLG  
Annie Campbell – North Kensington Law Centre  
Spike Western – North Kensington Law Centre

### GLA staff

Hannah Boylan – Communities and Social Policy  
Mark Winterburn - Communities and Social Policy  
Theo Cadbury – Communities and Social Policy  
David Eastwood – Housing  
Ayham Alsuleman – Communities and Social Policy

### Apologies

Moushami Aktar - MOPAC  
Andrew Carter – ALDCS/ City of London

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## Agenda

### 1. Welcome

- 1.1. Debbie Weekes-Bernard welcomed attendees and minutes from the last meeting were **agreed**.

### 2. Non-UK National Rough Sleepers

- 2.1. Jeremy Swain provided an update on the suspension of derogation, outlining the changes that enable some EEA nationals sleeping rough to access homelessness provision. He described details of the new funding released to support EEA nationals through the Cold Weather Fund.
- 2.2. David Eastwood explained that a successful application has been put in by the GLA to increase the capacity of their work under the Cold Weather Fund. This includes funding to create more intense 'No Second Night Out' style provision in 'hot-spot' areas, with a focus on areas with high numbers of EEA Nationals and dedicated accommodation and support for EEA nationals. David also shared that any EEA nationals accessing this accommodation would as a first step include advice on the EU Settlement Scheme.
- 2.3. Barbara and Jackie raised concerns about the potential interaction of new programmes with immigration enforcement and asked what data sharing arrangements would be in place between the projects and the Home Office. David confirmed that the GLA had been clear that immigration enforcement is not a solution to rough sleeping, and has received assurances that no individual level data would be shared with the Home Office, and no immigration enforcement would arise from GLA work, and would not have submitted a bid to this funding . This information was shared with the London boroughs so that they could also ensure that before they submitted a bid they could also receive this confirmation.
- 2.4. Anna noted that Doctors of the World have started to deliver healthcare services to rough sleepers at night and that they will be able to share any evaluation of this work with members.
- 2.5. Members discussed some of the limitations of the suspension of derogation – support will last only 12 weeks, which is a short window for EEA nationals with complex needs to be supported out of rough sleeping. Jeremy emphasised that MHCLG was trying to demonstrate “proof of concept” through the suspension of derogation. In particular, MHCLG are trying to show that setting up services in one locality does not lead rough sleepers moving to that locality.
- 2.6. Cllr Butt noted the significant impact of NRPF policies on people rough sleeping.

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**Action: MHCLG to share data on the impact of the suspension of derogation when it is released.**

## **3. Refugee Resettlement**

- 3.1. Steve Kelly gave an overview of successes of refugee resettlement to date and the government's plans for the new global resettlement scheme. The Home Office are working with the GLA to engage with boroughs on their future commitment to this new scheme.
- 3.2. Ayham introduced himself and set out the future focus of his role – promoting the Community Sponsorship scheme, engaging with existing community groups, and working with local authorities to empower them to support Community Sponsorship. He also shared some of the work being done with local authorities around the new global resettlement scheme more generally.
- 3.3. Lisa welcomed Ayham's role at the GLA. Lisa also welcomed that Community sponsorship would be additional to the overall resettlement target set by Government. She is keen to see the GLA working on resettlement in general, rather than just community sponsorship, and noted scale of ambition in Lewisham around resettlement through the existing scheme .
- 3.4. Cllr Butt raised some of the concerns about the structural housing barriers to refugee resettlement in London, and how the funding needs to reflect this context to enable local authorities to provide the necessary support. Jackie expressed her desire to see data on which local authorities are supporting refugee resettlement.
- 3.5. Anna asked whether there was any evaluation of the existing schemes, and whether NGOs will be able to feed into this process. Steve confirmed there was an ongoing evaluation and that he would look into how civil society could be involved.

**Action: Home Office to confirm how civil society can input into evaluation of VPRS and other schemes, and how they can receive evaluation findings within their region.**

**Action: Future LSMP data presentations to include intelligence on refugee resettlement.**

## **4. Asylum Accommodation and Support (AASC)**

- 4.1. Steve Lakey provided an AASC service update:
  - At the moment asylum intake levels are very high. There are 500 bed spaces in Initial Accommodation (IA) in London – but there are around 700-800 people who currently require this accommodation. Hotels are being used as overspill accommodation.

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- Any boroughs with over 500 asylum seekers in dispersed accommodation will have no further procurement within them. Clearsprings is also keeping an eye on boroughs with 250-500 service users.
  - Steve hopes to fix the dispersed accommodation numbers in London at around 5,500, with new growth being focused in the South East of England.
  - A full redecorating programme is underway across the dispersed accommodation portfolio.
- 4.2. Jackie updated on the work that is being done with partners to improve processes in London. Progress is being made, but much more can be done to help newly recognised refugees in the move on period and to reduce pressure on local authority front-line services. Cllr Butt raised concerns about the disproportionate pressure being felt by some local areas and reiterated the need to look strategically at dispersal across London boroughs.
- 4.3. Annie expressed concerns about LGBT clients who find themselves stuck in unsuitable accommodation. Steve and Annie agreed to look into this offline.
- 4.4. Mark asked the LSMP members to approve the establishment of a new London Asylum Group to provide strategic and operation oversight of asylum dispersal in London. Steve Kelly noted that the Home Office has committed to provide senior officer representation in new asylum governance arrangements, such as the new Group. Mark suggested that it was important for the Group to:
- Maintain a strong link with LSMP meetings, which it should report to
  - Be supplied with all the data necessary to maintain an accurate understanding of asylum dispersal in London
  - Be ambitious in promoting social integration - considering issues like access to ESOL, volunteering etc, as well as meeting the basic needs of asylum seekers and newly recognised refugees
  - Have strong civil society representation, to reflect significant role civil society plays in supporting asylum seekers and newly recognised refugees in London
- 4.5. Lisa emphasised the importance of having civil society around the table and suggested that the type of organisations involved be broadened out. LSMP members approved the establishment of the London Asylum Group along these lines.
- 4.6. Members expressed their concerns about contingency hotel use in London. In particular, members were concerned about the level of support for service users in potentially isolated and inappropriate accommodation. Annie noted that Doctors of the World were worried about access to healthcare when asylum seekers are in hotels.

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- 4.7. Steve reassured members that the majority of those in hotels are overnight cases, with the most vulnerable brought back into core IA provision. Both Migrant Help and Clearsprings visiting every hotel on a daily basis, for about 5-6 hours a day. However, it was noted that the training for staff in hotels is minimal and it was agreed by all that hotel use should be minimised as quickly as feasibly possible.

**Action: Annie and Steve to follow up about LGBT accommodation.**

**Action: Mark to proceed with the establishment of the London Asylum Group along the lines outlined in the meeting.**

## 5. Grenfell – Survivors and Families of Victims

- 5.1. Mark outlined the context to the item. He detailed the letter that the Chair sent to the Home Office concerning issues raised by North Kensington Law Centre. He outlined the response from Dan Hobbs (the relevant Home Office Director) and noted that the Chair would be meeting with Dan Hobbs in the New Year about the concerns
- 5.2. Annie outlined the pro bono work that NKLC are carrying out with undocumented family members of victims and survivors of Grenfell. She noted there was an application of the hostile environment to these cases which seems wholly inappropriate. Even for those with Core Participant status with the Grenfell Inquiry, the 6 months' leave to remain under the Grenfell relatives' policy means that they cannot open bank account or rent a property.
- 5.3. Annie explained that the Grenfell Inquiry is going to last at least another 2 years. The current policy is therefore no longer fit for purpose. This is the moment for the policy to be revisited wholesale by the Home Office.
- 5.4. Anna raised concerns about access to healthcare for Grenfell victims and the inconsistent way in which they were being treated as eligible or exempt from charging.

**Action: The Chair to raise concerns around Grenfell Family members in a call with Dan Hobbs and ensure LSMP is kept abreast of any progress made.**

## 6. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

- 6.1. Ian Lewis outlined that a formal consultation process that would start in the New Year concerning the future of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). As it stands, no inter regional transfers are happening through the NTS. Mark emphasised the importance of civil society engaging with the National Transfer scheme consultation.

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- 6.2. Grace explained that numbers coming into the care for London boroughs varies month to month. LASC successfully bid into the Controlling Migration Fund for a health and welfare assessment tool – which they will be rolling out to local authorities to support with new arrivals in their borough. This was welcomed by LSMP members.
- 6.3. Cllr Butt raised the scale of the costs to boroughs in supporting care leavers. He welcomed the uplift in funding provided by the Home Office but emphasised that more needs to be done.

**Action: LSMP members to share the NTS consultation with their networks when it is published.**

## 7. AOB

- 7.1. Theo shared an update on ESOL Plus Arts, which will soon be opening to applications
- 7.2. Mike raised his concern about the potential for a tightening of access to citizenship through the English language requirement of the Life in the UK test, which was set out in the Integrated Communities Strategy. Mark provided an update on the conversation he had already and committed to reporting back when he had any further intelligence.
- 7.3. Vanya raised concerns about the 28 day move on period. Getting National Insurance Numbers and BRPs was providing challenge for clients.

**Action: Mark to explore how DWP colleagues can become more involved in LSMP work.**

**Action: Mark to report back when he has any further intelligence on reforms to the Life in the UK test.**