

London Strategic Migration Partnership, September 2018

Chair

Matthew Ryder LSMP Chair: Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement

Attendees

Kate Carr, Home Office

Rebecca Collings, Home Office

Barbara Drozdowicz – GLA Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel

Lisa Doyle – GLA Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel

Mark Winterburn, London Councils

Melissa Caslake, London Directors of Children's Services

Mulat Haregot, GLA Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel

Catherine Houlcroft, NRPF Network

Grace Ashaye, LASC

Nicky Crouch, Westminster Council

GLA Staff

Hannah Boylan, Communities and Social Policy

Julia Slay, Communities and Social Policy

Rowchiel Plunkett, Communities and Social Policy

Apologies

Cllr Muhammed Butt, London Councils

Paul Morrison, Home Office

Jackie Odunoye, London Borough of Redbridge

Rita Chadha – GLA Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 Matthew Ryder welcomed attendees and invited all to introduce themselves

1.2 Minutes from previous meeting were **agreed**.

1.3 Hannah Boylan introduced LSMP draft workplan and the work progressed since last meeting, including:

- Arrangements for pan-London meeting on mental health of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- Arrangements for a consultation event on Windrush with Home Office and civil society organisations

2. Asylum Accommodation

2.1 Kate Carr provided an update on the current COMPASS contracts for Asylum Accommodation and Support which are due to expire in September 2019. The Home Office have

been through a long period of consultation with local authorities and partners about the shape of the new contracts.

- 2.2 An update could be expected between November and December on the named providers, once the ongoing tender process has been concluded. Kate referred the board to the Statement of Requirements for further information, noting that some details are commercially sensitive
- 2.3 Members raised the current concerns that boroughs and local services had with in developing a relationship with providers. Kate noted that better links with local authorities would be incentivised through the new contracts
- 2.4 Mark Winterburn raised that in the last three years, the number of asylum seekers in dispersal accommodation in London has more than quadrupled, with a focus in boroughs such as Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge. London has no previous experience of managing this type of large scale transition, and communication would be key.
- 2.5 Members agreed that a structured relationship in London, with regular updates to the LSMP and enhanced accountability for the contract providers was desirable.
- 2.6 Lisa Doyle raised that this required a broader set of communications, not just with boroughs but also with support services.
- 2.7 Other issues discussed included:
 - Initial accommodation in London doesn't have enough women only spaces
 - There is a need for providers to address concerns immediately, with local accountability
 - A number of lessons were learned from the previous contracts, including the need for consistence across the AIRE contract, the need for greater certainty about supply and demand, and the market attractiveness of the contract

Actions

- Share the Statement of Requirement with LSMP members (**Kate Carr**)
- Propose how to structure the ongoing relationship with providers (**Mark Winterburn/Hannah Boylan**)
- Explore the role for the Mayor in better enabling newly recognised refugees to access PRS (**Hannah/Lisa**)

3. European Londoners (Rebecca Collings, Catherine Houlcroft)

- 3.1 Catherine Houlcroft introduced the work of the NRPF Network, highlighting a number of issues that Government needed to provide greater clarity or support on, including:
 - Fees and accessibility of the scheme for vulnerable groups, that risk eligible people missing out of Settled Status
 - Clarity about access to benefits under Settled and Pre-Settled status amongst those who currently have NRPF

- The role of local authorities supporting vulnerable children and adults in their care, in addition to residents they support – including rough sleepers, and NRPF households
- Lack of awareness amongst residents

3.2 Barbara noted that vulnerable residents are already seeking advice. She also raised the issue of Universal Credit and the issues this has raised for EU residents.

3.3 Hannah updated on the Mayor's #LondonIsOpen campaign, EU Londoners Hub, and microgrants which intent to provide reassurance, guidance, and signposting to support services for vulnerable EU Londoners. Hannah also noted that the GLA had played a convening role for local authorities to engage directly with the Home office on Settled Status.

3.4 Rebecca provided an overview of the Settlement Scheme, highlighting how it has been made simple and straightforward with the needs of vulnerable users in mind. She noted that 100 new staff are being recruited to process applications and to staff a contact centre.

3.5 Members discussed the barrier that the proposed fee poses to particular vulnerable people, who may not be able to afford to access the scheme. The Mayor has called for Settled Status to be free, and more detailed evidence of particularly vulnerable groups has been submitted to the Home Office.

3.6 Rebecca noted that the Home Office would soon be launching a fund for civil society groups to help people to apply for Settled Status, the Home Office benefits from partnering with these organisation who have expertise and reach

Actions

- Hannah, Mark and Catherine to have a follow-up meeting with Rebecca to discuss the role of local authorities and the clarity they needed to prepare for Brexit (**Rebecca/Hannah**)
- The GLA would reconvene local authorities, and convene a meeting of civil society organisations with the Home Office to ensure that organisations providing support for vulnerable EU Londoners have up-to-date information (**Hannah**)

4. Intelligence Update (Ann Raymond)

4.1 Ann Raymond provided an update of the most recent data relating to migrants and refugees in London. Ann highlighted new data including information about the Windrush Generation and migrant rough sleepers.

5. Victims of violence with insecure status (Aisha Graham-Sharif)

- 5.1** Aisha Graham-Sharif provided an update on the work of the Victim's Commissioner to ensure that victims of domestic violence with insecure status are able to seek support and report their crime safely to the police.
- 5.2** Aisha outlined the recommendations that came out of a roundtable convened earlier this year, which formed part of a Mayoral letter to the Home Secretary. A follow-up meeting has been arranged with senior Home Office officials.
- 5.3** Catherine raised the issue of households with NRPF and agreed to feed in to Aisha's work outside of the meeting

6. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Melissa Caslake, Mark Winterburn)

- 6.1** Melissa Caslake introduced herself as the recently appointed UASC lead for the Association of London Directors of Children's Services. Melissa outlined the pressure on local authorities in support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children. Young people leaving care of ten find themselves ill-equipped for London life.
- 6.2** Melissa outlined the pressure that the National Transfer Scheme is under, highlighting that the arrangement was voluntary. Transfers were extremely slow, if they were able to happen at all.
- 6.3** Melissa outlined that alongside London Councils discussions were taking place about how to access the regional funding provided by the Home Office through Strategic Migration Partnerships to fund a UASC coordinator post.
- 6.4** Hannah agreed this role is crucial to take forward strategic conversations amongst boroughs, with other regions, and with the Home Office on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The GLA, London Councils, ALDCS and LASC had agreed a proposal for this post back in November 2018, and it is reassuring to see that this has now been refined and taken forward.
- 6.5** Members agreed an update at the next meeting would be necessary to ensure that issues related to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking children