

## **London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) Board**

29 September 2022

14.00 – 16.00

Hybrid meeting – Committee Room 4, City Hall and Microsoft Teams

### **Chair**

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard, Deputy Mayor for Communities and Social Justice

### **Attendees**

Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor for Housing and Residential Development

Cllr Georgia Gould, Chair of London Councils

Dan Kennedy, London Housing Lead for Asylum and Migration

Kalyani McCarthy, London National Transfer Scheme Coordinator

Andrew Carter, Association of London Directors of Childrens Services

Ella Watson, London Councils

Clive Grimshaw, London Councils

Alison Griffin, London Councils

Tim Rymer, Home Office

Scott Dunning, Home Office

Mike Gallagher, Home Office

Andrew Kelly, Home Office

Mandy Bailey, Home Office

Steven Lakey, Clearsprings

Nic Jackson, Clearsprings

Catherine Doherty, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

Parwez Samnakay, DLUHC

Alastair Paton, DLUHC

Salud Murphy, DLUHC

Liz Maifredi, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Julie Billett, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

Michael Kemsley, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

Jane De Burgh, UKHSA

Gunveer Plahe, UKHSA

Juliet Halstead, Migrant Help

Reginald Oko-Flex Inya, Migrant Help

Anna Miller, Doctors of the World

Duncan Wells, Refugee Council

Anna Yassin, Glass Door

Phoebe Heneage, ELATT

Yvonne Bizayi, ELATT

### **Greater London Authority (GLA) staff**

Mark Winterburn, Communities and Social Policy (CSP)

Hannah Boylan, CSP

Siobhan Gosrani, CSP

George Hanoun, CSP

Eduardo Lopes, CSP

Marc Simo, CSP

Laila Aziz, CSP

Muhammad Abushiri, CSP

Khadijah Amani, CSP  
Veronica Tuffrey, City Intelligence  
James Bottomley, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)  
Merhawit Ghebre, Skills and Employment

## **Agenda**

### **1. Welcome and minutes**

- 1.1. Debbie Weekes-Bernard welcomed attendees and introduced new members to the group.
- 1.2. The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

### **2. London Asylum and Health Task and Finish Group: update**

- 2.1. Julie Billett gave an update on the work of the London Asylum and Health Task and Finish Group. Key points included:
  - The group has been meeting for six months and is splitting its work into four primary workstreams:
    1. Work around engaging with and understanding the lived experiences of those in the asylum system
    2. Work around data, including data-sharing at both an individual and statutory/agency level, and making London a leader in this area
    3. Work around access to health support, including equalising access to GP registration and assessments across London
    4. Work around sharing best practise, collaboration and learning, such as developing a resource hub for toolkits
  - Good progress is being made and the group is looking to link in with work being done at a national level on health and asylum, so as to avoid duplication.
  - Julie gave a summary of funding arrangements for health provision, noting that these are different for different schemes and populations: for example, there is separate resource in place to support proactive GP registration for Ukrainians, to that which is in place for those in contingency asylum accommodation.
  - Julie noted that this task and finish group is looking to create a general standard of what good care looks like, to ensure there is an equal picture across different schemes and populations.
- 2.2. Cllr Georgia Gould highlighted two issues affecting the Afghan population in particular: lack of access to interpreters, and lack of access to dentistry and optical care. Anna Miller reiterated Cllr Gould's point around interpreters, noting that current guidance for primary care providers about their obligation to provide an interpreter is too weak and ambiguous.

Julie Billett noted that these issues have been raised in the task and finish group as widespread issues in London for migrants and people seeking asylum, alongside access to mental health support, and added that colleagues are prioritising increasing access to existing services to meet these needs as opposed to setting up new services.

### **3. London Regional Asylum Planning and Development of a Place-Based Approach**

- 3.1. Debbie Weekes-Bernard noted that the Home Office is running a consultation on the future of the asylum accommodation system. As part of this, the Home Office is asking local government through Strategic Migration Partnerships to develop regional plans. Debbie highlighted that local authorities in London have broadly welcomed the collaborative and regionally-focused approach taken by the Home Office, and thanked colleagues involved in developing London's response, in particular Hannah Doody, Carolyn Downs, Dan Kennedy and Cllr Georgia Gould.
- 3.2. Cllr Georgia Gould gave a summary of London local government's approach and priorities. Key points included:
- There has been lots of work by London Councils in the last few months to bring boroughs together on a fair shares model and multi-factor approach to dispersal, taking into account (for example) housing pressures and the number of people seeking asylum in one place.
  - Cllr Gould highlighted some major ongoing concerns, such as that colleagues are still seeing placements happen in boroughs such as Hounslow that are facing the greatest pressures and are already exceeding limits put in place by government and the pan-London agreement.
  - Cllr Gould also flagged the availability of housing as a concern, noting that there is a lack of suitable family-sized homes in London and so colleagues are looking for the Home Office and DLUHC to support with acquisition of properties and work with boroughs to increase housing supply.
  - Overall, the pan-London agreement puts London in a good place, but with several outstanding challenges still to be resolved.
- 3.3. Alison Griffin expanded on the multi-factor model that has been devised with London boroughs, noting that it demonstrates the complexity and cumulative pressures many are currently facing. The model is based around three types of pressure, relating to: numbers of people seeking asylum, numbers of refugees/evacuees, and housing pressures in a local area. Under each pressure sits several weighted factors. Alison added that London Councils will be formally sharing the model with the Home Office, and that it will require updated data from the Home Office and DLUHC, and regular review, to ensure it is updated fairly.
- 3.4. Mark Winterburn gave an update, which included the following key points:
- There are a set of six principles which were circulated to the Board, which form the basis for London's response to the Place-Based Approach consultation by the Home Office. Alison Griffin noted that these principles have been welcomed by local government leaders as a fair reflection of London's values, highlighting that they must be integrated into the implementation of the fair shares approach.
  - Local government has been very clear throughout the consultation process that the next step is to include the voices of health partners, civil society partners and people seeking asylum and refugees, and that engagement with these groups is vital going forward.
  - Local government colleagues are very clear about the need for some focused work to be completed on housing standards, noting that this may require some financial commitment from the Home Office to enable Clearsprings to facilitate this.
- 3.5. In terms of next steps, Mark and Alison emphasised the need for strong governance to oversee the implementation of the London Regional Asylum Plan once it is agreed by all

partners, with Mark noting that colleagues have proposed a new oversight group to ensure successful delivery of the plan.

3.5. Alison Griffin welcomed the additional £3,500 per dispersed accommodation bedspace for local authorities but noted that there are concerns about how long-term this funding will be. Alison also reiterated that as well as boroughs, civil society and health partners also support people seeking asylum and so a holistic approach is key.

3.6. Tim Rymer and Andrew Kelly gave an update from the Home Office. Key points included:

- Solutions for current issues regarding data and data-sharing are being considered, but the Home Office is prioritising data and is planning long-term work to improve its systems and platforms. It is also looking for a Chief Executive to sponsor this work.
- The Home Office has been asked by ministers to continue to procure at pace, but it understands that there are significant pressures in particular areas and shares the objective of reducing the hotel population with local authorities.
- The Home Office is looking to analyse where its procurement plans align with those by its providers and local authorities.
- The Home Office welcomed the six principles put forward by London local government for the development of a place-based approach and would look to embed them in its approach.
- The Home Office has boosted capacity and so will be making more asylum decisions over the next few months. It is taking an end-to-end view so as to ensure people are moved through the system as quickly as possible.

3.7. Catherine Doherty noted that DLUHC has been working with the Home Office to streamline the resettlement system, particularly for the Afghan population, and is keen to work with all partners on the call to build towards a place-based approach.

#### **4. Meeting Cumulative Asylum and Refugee Housing Needs**

4.1. Dan Kennedy gave an overview of current pressures and housing needs for the Afghan and Ukrainian populations. Key points groups of need included:

- Additional bedspaces of dispersed accommodation to accommodate the asylum population.
- Homes for resettled Afghan households in order for London to meet its 'fair share'
- Homes for households to be accommodated via the Afghan Homelessness Borough List this Autumn/ Winter.
- Ukrainian households:
  - There were 475 households in London from the Homes for Ukraine or Ukraine Family Scheme to whom local authorities had a homeless prevention or relief duty, and 207 households in temporary accommodation.
  - About one quarter of hosts under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme are planning not to extend their arrangements beyond six months. Since there are 11,123 Ukrainians who have come to London via this scheme, this would imply that around 2,500 or more will require some form of housing assistance.

4.2. Alastair Paton from DLUHC on their response to the housing needs of Ukrainians. Key points included:

- Andrew Stephenson is the new Minister responsible for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and his role also includes responsibility for Afghan refugees. Ministers are reviewing the current direction of travel but the government remains absolutely steadfast in its support for Ukrainians.
- DLUHC is working with local authorities and Strategic Migration Partnerships (SMPs) to ensure guests remain supported on the Ukrainian schemes. DLUHC would like as many sponsors as possible to extend their arrangements beyond six months but does recognise the growing pressure on household finances, and so is conducting surveys and writing to sponsors to better understand their expectations, whilst also seeking to build the number of available new sponsors and facilitating rematching.
- DLUHC is conscious of the practical barriers limiting families' access to the private rented sector, and is liaising with the Residential Landlords Association to discuss solutions to this.

4.3. Barbara Drozdowicz asked if DLUHC has any funding for local authorities to support Ukrainian families which would extend beyond housing provision. Alastair Paton noted that the £10,500 funding for local authorities is not ringfenced and so can be used to fund other types of support such as ESOL provision.

4.4. Steven Lakey gave an update from Clearsprings on meeting asylum housing needs. Key points included:

- Clearsprings has continued to work across London to rebalance the asylum dispersal estate, and it is committed to embedding the six agreed principles for a place-based approach in London.
- Steven noted that there are currently not enough properties available to be procured at the required rate to match demand, and so Clearsprings is considering new models of supply such as modular type builds and other solutions such as working with local authorities to bring sites back onto the market.
- Clearsprings have produced a paper setting out possible options, with Steven noting that these could also be considered for other cohorts in addition to people seeking asylum, such as Ukrainian refugees.

**Action: Clearsprings to share the housing models options paper with Mark, to share with the LSMP Board.**

4.5. Cllr Georgia Gould welcomed the different solutions being considered by Clearsprings and highlighted the importance of providing wraparound support. Cllr Gould noted that, whilst more funding may be required to ensure this support is widely available, this is necessary in order to support people to build their lives successfully.

## **5. Development of London Interactive Intelligence Report**

5.1. Mark Winterburn gave an overview of the London Migration Data Hub. Key points included:

- The Hub will complement the work being done at a national level by the Home Office on data sharing and improving intelligence.

- The goals of the Hub are to facilitate a place-based approach by providing boroughs with a single platform to understand local pressures, to share data in a consistent way, to inform service funding and delivery, and to inform the strategic conversations of the LSMP Board.
- The Hub is currently a prototype. The key next step is to enter into protocols with data holders, so that data is shared in a timely and consistent way.

5.2. Veronica Tuffrey gave a presentation detailing how the London Migration Data Hub will work.

- Users must have permission to access the site which will be restricted to named individuals rather than institutions, and those who use the Hub are restricted in how they can share its data. The current proposal is to host the Hub on the London Datastore and enable password protection.
- As part of next steps, colleagues will think about expanding access to the Hub beyond statutory partners and LSMP Board members. Colleagues will also look to update the Hub once a month and incorporate longitudinal data in the long term.

5.3. Barbara highlighted that the data in the Hub would be useful to civil society partners. It is important that they are not excluded wherever possible.

**Action: GLA to consider how civil society partners might be included as users of the data dashboard balancing restrictions for sharing on some data-sets.**

## 6. AOB

6.1. Hannah Boylan highlighted that migrants are particularly vulnerable to the cost of living crisis, such as those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), and noted that the Mayor of London has published a social cost-benefit analysis on the removal of the NRPF condition for certain migrant groups and their family members. Hannah also raised the challenges that newly recognised refugees are facing in securing accommodation as a result of the short move-on period which could be exacerbated by increases in rent. Hannah also raised the challenges people seeking asylum were facing as a result of inflation compared to asylum support payments and asked whether this would be under review.

**Action: Home Office to provide an update on how cost of living and inflation are being considered for migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum.**