

# MAYOR OF LONDON

## The Mayor's Migrant & Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP)

14.30 – 16.30

16 May 2019

Committee Room 1, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, SE1 2AA

### Attendance

Hannah Boylan, GLA (Chair)

Ramiye Thavabalasingam, GLA (notetaker)

Barbara Drozdowicz, EERC

Jennie Corbett, Doctors of the World UK

Amanuel Woldesus, Consonant

Enrique Saenz, AdviceUK

Sugirthakala Gobiratnam, Middlesex Tamil Academy

Harbi Farah, Islington Refugee Forum

Gracie Bradley, Liberty

Nafisah Graham-Brown, ELATT

Anna Janczuk, Poles in Need

Leticia Ishibashi, Focus on Labour Exploitation

Pete Target, CARAS

James Banks, London Funders

Bella Kosmala, GLA

Theodora Cadbury, GLA

Elisabeth Pop, GLA

### Apologies

Rita Chadha, Migrants Rights Network

Kahiye Alim, Council of Somali Organisation

Lucila Granada, LAWS

Mulat Haregot, Evelyn Oldfield

Fariha Bhatti, REAP

Zrinka Bralo, Migrants Organise

Vishal Misra, ILPA

Mihai Clain Bica, Roma Support Group

Minnie Rahman, JCWI

### Agenda

#### 1. Welcome and updates

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- 1.1 Hannah Boylan provided an update on the London Is Open campaign and thanked those who have helped with this work, including the bus tour which provided legal advice and guidance to EU Londoners and their families regarding Settled Status.
- 1.2 Hannah highlighted that the second round of the London Family Fund is now open to applications.
- 1.3 Hannah updated that City Hall has now allocated £50,000 in EU outreach microgrants and are engaging with the Government's fund as well. If there is interest from members, the GLA will look into convening a London groups meeting for grantees from the Government's fund.
- 1.4 Members discussed:
  - The fact that a third of Government grant receiving organisations are based in London, however many of these are small grants.
  - The need to wait until the projects have been officially launched before convening a London groups meeting.
  - That it would be useful to have a forum to share knowledge and challenges.

## 2. Minutes and Terms of Reference

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and approved, subject to section 2.4 being amended to also invite ClearSprings, the asylum accommodation provider for London, to a future meeting, in addition to the AIRE provider, Migrant Help.
- 2.2 Members requested that the minutes from the last London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) meeting are shared with MRAP members.
- 2.3 Hannah provided an update on the terms of reference and workplan for MRAP going forward and asked if any members with expert knowledge in the four broad themes of the work plan would like to help drive these actions forward.
- 2.4 Members suggested that there should be a greater focus on work around integration and communities by the panel, as well as at LSMP.

**Action:** Hannah Boylan to share LSMP minutes with members.

**Action:** Hannah Boylan to take forward some agenda items on integration for future MRAP and LSMP meetings.

## 3. ESOL

- 3.1 Theo Cadbury updated on the GLA's work on ESOL and asked members how the findings of the ESOL Plus pilot programmes (Childcare and Employers) should be shared. The information will be disseminated to the ESOL sector, but it may be useful for other organisations to have this information.
- 3.2 Members raised the following points:
  - The aim of sharing is important; if the findings are for organisations to consider adopting these models then an event showcasing these would be useful. If the findings are just for information, then a presentation to MRAP would be useful. Theo Cadbury highlighted that the intention is for this to be action-based, so an

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event to workshop ideas may be more useful but asked if organisations less directly involved would find something like that useful.

- There are particular concerns around zero-hour contract workers who find it difficult to attend ESOL classes due to changing work hours. These concerns reflect the learnings the ESOL Plus pilots, as there is not much suitable provision available for these people.
- There are also concerns around those adults with low educational attainment being unable to engage with ESOL due to the content of the classes. Members highlighted that this depends greatly on the quality of the provision, with evening and weekend classes often being of lower quality. Therefore, learning about best practice would be useful.
- The pilots also looked at softer measures such as social mixing, however providers find these factors difficult to measure.
- Disseminating the findings with employers will be more difficult; it would be useful to know if there are any forums or contacts members are able to share the findings with.
- The primary issue is for precarious workers as the structure of government funding of ESOL provision would not allow a person to not attend classes regularly.
- As a sector, ESOL providers do not come together to share best practice. It would be useful to bring people together to have these conversations. There are existing forums for this, but Theo Cadbury is happy to convene a forum around specific issues e.g. access (like the pilot programme) and opportunities (such as cross-sector collaborations with museums, theatres etc.).

3.3 Theo Cadbury discussed ideas for future pilot programmes, such as harnessing the use of volunteers in ESOL and enabling social integration for all participants. Members mentioned that a toolkit was presented on this previously; a lot of voluntary ESOL organisations wanted a national framework, and there is now a national consultation on this framework.

3.4 Theo Cadbury updated on the Integrated Communities Action Plan, which highlighted the need for more local coordination of ESOL; some London boroughs are now using single point of contacts approaches. The GLA will be convening meetings with all of these boroughs – any members engaged with this work should let Theo know and she will include you in later meetings.

3.5 Guidance on local coordination has been published. This is primarily targeted at local authorities, but members are invited to take a look at the advice.

3.6 Members suggested ESOL is considered in the Mayor's policy on social prescribing. Members are aware of some GP practices referring people to ESOL providers.

3.7 Members provided examples of local authorities providing immigration advice, housing advice, job centres, ESOL classes and IT classes all in one location for standalone events. Other organisations ran ESOL classes alongside other services e.g. drop in sessions or youth clubs.

3.8 Members highlighted the importance of sharing best practice with smaller organisations, who may not necessarily identify themselves as part of the ESOL sector but would benefit from this information. It would be helpful to map out networks of smaller providers and to ensure these organisations take part in the national framework consultation.

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**Action:** Theo Cadbury to arrange forum for ESOL providers to discuss access to ESOL and less traditional practices and share best practice.

**Action:** Nafisah Graham-Brown/Theo Cadbury to share link to national framework consultation with members.

**Action:** Members to let Theo Cadbury know if they would like to get involved in the forums discussing the national framework.

## 4. Hostile Environment

4.1 Bella Kosmala updated that the 'Welcome' strand of the GLA's Citizenship and Integration Initiative will now focus on the Hostile Environment. Research is being commissioned to understand how public sector workers in London are affected by hostile environment policies e.g. if their professional duties are at odds with hostile environment policies and how people work around policies to still provide the service.

4.2 Members discussed:

- That the research into policing in particular will be useful, as it links well with Focus on Labour Exploitation's research on how the hostile environment is pushing victims of trafficking into detention.
- That it would be interesting to look at DWP and job centres, particularly looking at the impact of the Hostile Environment on entitlement decisions.
- That it would be useful to map out what research on the Hostile Environment is already available.
- That given the size of the public sector, this research will not be comprehensive but will hopefully be in depth.
- That it would be useful to interview both frontline and senior staff as sometimes policies are not followed through by frontline staff.
- That it would be interesting to see public sector officials' views on how the Hostile Environment affects their views on the public sector duty on safeguarding.

**Action:** Bella Kosmala to look into inviting Focus on Labour Exploitation to the advisory group for the Hostile Environment research.

**Action:** Members to share any research into the hostile environment from their organisations with Bella Kosmala.

**Action:** Bella Kosmala to discuss this research again at a future meeting.

## 5. Immigration White Paper

5.1 Hannah Boylan updated that an immigration consultant will be working with the GLA to help inform the City Hall's response to the Immigration White Paper.

5.2 High level reflections on the white paper from members included:

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- The cooling off period for temporary migrant visas should be scrapped, as there is a vulnerability issue for those who stay and therefore become undocumented
- The inability to bring families to the UK puts women at a particular disadvantage
- There needs to be a route to permanent settlement and recourse to public funds
- There are practical concerns for both the temporary migrants and hosting communities around the quality of housing
- There is a missed opportunity by not including a statement on legal aid, data protection, nationality fees etc. in the white paper
- The white paper should link with the Integration Communities strategy

## 6. AOB

- 6.1 On the EU Londoners Hub, members highlighted difficulties in having their organisations' events uploaded onto the webpage.
- 6.2 Bella Kosmala discussed the Europe in London event planned for September, which will be a celebration of European Culture.
- 6.3 Members highlighted that Refugee Week is 17-23 June.
- 6.4 Nafisah Graham-Brown highlighted the need for the further education sector to be prepared for knowing if EU migrants are eligible for further education places post-Brexit, as government guidance is unclear.
- 6.5 Nafisah Graham-Brown also raised concerns about the Government's action plan suggesting that language requirements for British citizenship are strengthened.
- 6.6 Anna Janczuk highlighted an upcoming event, Sounds Like Women, which is a new initiative against domestic violence against women. The event will include performances from singers from around the world and will see women gathering and connecting through music.
- 6.7 Amanuel Woldesus updated on the Mayor's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Advisory Group, where the London Economic Strategy, the Local Industrial Strategy and ESOL were discussed. A lot of the work of this group link with MRAP's priorities. MRAP attendance of the EDI Advisory Group's meetings will be rotated; any members interested in attending the EDI Advisory Group's next meeting on hate crime and skills on 21 May should let Hannah Boylan know.
- 6.8 Hannah Boylan highlighted that the Home Office initiative, the Rough Sleeping Service, should engage with the migrant sector. Members agreed they are happy to convene to share the migrant sector perspective on this issue.

**Action:** Hannah Boylan to seek clarity from the Home Office on plans to review the Citizenship process, including language requirements.

The date of the next meeting will be: 23 July 2019