

# MAYOR OF LONDON

## London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP)

1 June 2020

10.30 – 12.30

Microsoft Teams meeting

### **Chair**

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

### **Attendees**

Councillor Muhammed Butt – London Councils

Kate Carr – Home Office (Director of Resettlement, Asylum Support & Integration)

Kate Ridley-Moy – Home Office (Deputy Director of Windrush Lessons Learned Review Implementation)

Lucy Cartwright – Home Office (Resettlement, Asylum Support & Integration)

Lisa Doyle – Refugee Council (Migrants & Refugees Advisory Panel/MRAP)

Barbara Drozdowicz – East European Resource Centre (MRAP)

Rita Dayoub – Doctors of the World (MRAP)

Mike Boyle – East London Advanced Tech Training (MRAP)

Jackie Odunoye – London Housing Directors

Steven Lakey – Clearsprings

Ian Lewis – Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) Strategic Lead

Paul Wylie – The Mayor's Office for Policing And Crime (MOPAC)

Anastasia Mulenga – London Councils

Anna Di Mascio – Migrant Help

Grace Ashaye – London Asylum Seekers Consortium

Judith Dennis – Refugee Council

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

Hannah Boylan – Communities and Social Policy (CSP)

Mark Winterburn – CSP

Bella Kosmala – CSP

Rupinder Parhar – CSP

Ayham Alsuleman – CSP

Ramiye Thavabalasingam – CSP

Lidia Estevez Picon – CSP & Housing

David Eastwood – Housing

Vivienne Avery – City Intelligence Unit

Alice Major – City Intelligence Unit

Richard Cameron – City Intelligence Unit

### **Apologies**

Andrew Carter – Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS)/City of London

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## 1. Welcome

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

## 2. Disproportionality & COVID-19: Lockdown and Recovery

- 2.1. Debbie noted that the GLA has approved expenditure to commission an organisation to conduct a rapid evidence review around the impact on COVID-19 on different groups of Londoners.

- 2.2. Alice presented the Intelligence Team's initial findings on the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on migrant communities. Some of the findings included:
  - Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures show that after taking age into account, all non-white ethnicities had a higher chance of dying from COVID-19, even when results are adjusted to take into account other factors.
  - Occupations are an important factor due to close contact with other people – Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups are disproportionately represented in the occupations with the highest exposure to COVID-19. Black and Asian workers hold 37% of high exposure jobs, but make up just under 27% of the workforce.
  - GLA Economics analysis estimates that 1.1 million jobs in London are at risk due to COVID-19. 32% of these jobs are held by migrant groups
  - However, these figures do not mention 'informal' jobs. Survey of London shows Non-UK born Londoners were significantly more likely to be in insecure employment than UK-born Londoners, as well as suffering from higher food insecurity.
  - There are also currently gaps in the data regarding the physical/mental health outcomes and digital exclusion for migrants as a result of COVID-19.

- 2.3. Cllr Butt noted that London Councils are speaking with Professor Kevin Fenton, which has suggested that factors at play include overcrowding due to household composition and accessibility of healthcare (including for those with No Recourse to Public Funds [NRPF]). He also raised the issue of testing and tracing, and highlighted the importance of ensuring that, where it is happening in local communities, vulnerable people are able to access it and have confidence in the system.

- 2.4. Mark provided a summary of updates regarding the Home Office's recovery plan:
  - The Home Office suspended evictions from asylum accommodation until the end of June, although this means that pressure is building up in the system.
  - An increased number of asylum seekers are being accommodated in hotels (11 in London).

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- Partners have raised concerns about the mental health of this population, due to limited access to digital support and the fact that asylum seekers generally have a higher level of mental health needs than the general population.
  - The Home Office are collaborating with LSMP and partners to discuss what a phased recovery plan looks like – this will also be discussed at the next London Asylum Group meeting.
  - Lucy Cartwright also noted that the Home Office have locked down accommodation for asylum seekers and are continuing to procure accommodation across the UK even if requests have been refused.
- 2.5. Judith expressed concern that some local authorities appear not to be providing housing assistance to newly recognised refugees because the suspension of evictions means asylum seekers are sometimes not deemed by boroughs as at risk of homelessness. Mark noted that local authorities and partners are keen to work with this group as soon as possible.
- 2.6. Steven gave an update about asylum seekers, noting that those coming into initial accommodations are occupying single rooms to enable social distancing, and that telephone numbers and email addresses are being gathered to use for welfare checks. Mobile phones are being provided so that asylum seekers can call Migrant Help and/or seek assistance.
- 2.7. Debbie highlighted the ongoing work of the GLA on this issue, such as the publication, regular updating and translation of online guidance and the creation of the London Community Response Fund, which is currently on its second wave of funding.

**Action: Lucy to pass on concerns about asylum seekers not being able to access support due to no longer being deemed at risk of homelessness to the Home Office asylum team.**

## 3. Update from MOPAC: Domestic Violence and Modern Slavery

- 3.1. Paul gave an update about MOPAC's work on domestic violence and modern slavery:
- The Mayor committed a further £1.5 million to fund safe accommodation for women who have been forced to leave their homes during lockdown due to domestic violence. 63 adults and 27 children have been housed, and one third of this group are identified as having NRPF.
  - This accommodation is run by specialist providers. Boroughs remain responsible for them and MOPAC is providing additional capacity.
  - Paul highlighted that the London Modern Slavery Partnership Board (LMSPB) met last week. The LMSPB was created in 2017 and allows the Metropolitan Police to engage with civil society. A review of the function of the board means that the focus will be shifting to a range of more strategic functions including the gathering and commissioning of data research.

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- 3.2. Cllr Butt raised his concerns about the pressure on local councils to provide immigration support to those who are being housed despite a lack of funding from central government to enable this.
- 3.3. Anna raised the challenges for clients on Section 95 support who are dependent on a perpetrator of domestic abuse in their current asylum claim. This was considered a barrier to rehousing and providing support for victims.

**Action: Judith to share the Home Office’s “Domestic abuse: responding to reports of domestic abuse from asylum seekers” document with Mark to circulate, and follow up with Migrant Help about this issue.**

## 4. Windrush Lessons Learned Review

- 4.1. Kate Ridley-Moy gave an update about the Home Office’s work in response to the Windrush Lessons Learned Review:
  - The review was written by Wendy Williams and published in March 2020.
  - A formal response by the Home Office will be published in September 2020.
  - Preparations for the response are currently taking place, and the importance of taking time to genuinely reflect on the review’s findings was stressed. Some response work is already underway such as providing compensation for victims.
  - The reflection process involves consulting with Wendy Williams and both internal and external stakeholders, and thoughts from attendees were welcomed.
  - The September response will focus on the broad themes as well as the specific recommendations set out in the review to that the lessons learned will apply across the whole of the Home Office.
- 4.2. Rita, representing MRAP collectively, expressed their concerns about what happens in the interim period between now and September, and their desire to see response work begin as soon as possible. It was noted that the lessons learned from Windrush also apply to many other communities in London. Urgent issues that were raised included:
  - Community exclusion from the COVID-19 public health response, which is a result of hostile environment regulations (as concluded by a recent Doctors of The World needs assessment).
    - For example, despite no charges for COVID-19 treatment, undocumented migrants who go to hospital to report COVID-19 symptoms are charged if they do not test positive for the disease, deterring people from seeking secondary care.
  - The situation for those who have NRPF or insecure status.
- 4.3. Rita asked for an update on the implementation of Recommendation 9 – that the Home Secretary should introduce a Migrants’ Commissioner. Kate Ridley-Moy

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responded that full information will be published in the September response and that recommendations 9, 10 and 20 are being considered together as they all relate to being open to scrutiny.

- 4.4. Rupinder noted that the Mayor's office is looking to expand work to enable people to access their rights, following up on the Windrush Justice Fund, and asked for clear evidence of the Home Office's commitment on this issue as soon as possible.
- 4.5. Cllr Butt highlighted the parallels between the tensions exposed by the Windrush scandal and the current global anti-racism movement following the police murder of George Floyd in the United States. He called for robust action and a concrete plan to be put in place to right the wrongs suffered by the Windrush generation and emphasised the need first and foremost for an admission of harm.
- 4.6. Debbie reminded attendees of the upcoming Windrush Day (22<sup>nd</sup> June) and expressed her desire for the Home Office to commemorate the event in some way. Kate Ridley-Moy responded that plans are currently in place for this.
- 4.7. Kate Ridley-Moy encouraged participants to get in touch with her for follow-up conversations from the meeting.

**Action: Kate Carr to pass on Rita's concern about undocumented migrants being charged for non-COVID symptoms.**

**Action: Kate Ridley-Moy discuss further with GLA officers issues for those with NRPF & with insecure status.**

**Action: Mark to circulate Kate Ridley-Moy's contact details after the meeting. LSMP members to be in touch with her for follow-up meetings.**

## 5. Borough and GLA support for rough sleepers

- 5.1. Jackie presented an overview of the London borough response to provide accommodation for rough sleepers in hotels. Her updates included:
  - 5,000 rough sleepers are currently accommodated in London. The vast majority of those who were rough sleeping at the beginning of lockdown are accommodated. There are 150 rough sleepers (the majority of whom are in central London) who still need support.
  - The GLA are accommodating 1300 people in hotels.
  - Jackie also highlighted NRPF cases: these make up about one third of those currently accommodated.
  - London boroughs are working with partners to obtain good information on those categorised as having NRPF as there is a wide range within this category, but questions remain about how they can be supported in the medium term.

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5.2. Cllr Butt outlined London Councils' four policy asks of the government regarding securing accommodation. These are:

- Sufficient funding for local authorities.
- The suspension of NRPF for a minimum of 12 months.
- Lifting the benefit cap.
- A phased lifting of lockdown measures to avoid a cliff edge when hotel accommodation returns to commercial uses.

5.3. Lidia and David provided a summary of the GLA's work to accommodate rough sleepers in hotels:

- More than half (3747) of rough sleepers being accommodated in GLA and borough hotels are non-UK nationals. In hotels booked by the GLA, 42% are EEA nationals and 27% are non-EEA nationals.
- The need for immigration advice and accommodation in the long term was reiterated – the GLA is consulting with providers on this issue but a lot of work is not possible due to lockdown restrictions.
- The lack of ID documents is constituting an issue for immigration and employment applications.
- David highlighted the need to put data behind policy advocacy.
- Lidia noted that the first meeting of the London Refugees Positive Move-On Group will take place on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June.

## 6. AOB

6.1. Rupinder noted the Home Office's announcement that the next set of funding for the EU Settlement Scheme is now open.

**Action: Mark to circulate information about EU Settlement Scheme funding to local authorities and voluntary organisations.**