



Minutes of Regional Hub Meeting: West Yorkshire and Humberside

Thursday 14th February 2019, 1 – 4.15pm

Attendees:

Anne Forbes (New Inquiry Member (Associate) / St Monica's Housing)
Neal Heard (Abigail Housing Leeds – Housing Manager)
Ian Summerskill (Abigail Housing Leeds – Housing Support Worker)
Jess Piggott (Abigail Housing Leeds – Social Work Student)
Amanda Church-Michael (Abigail Housing Bradford – Destitution Project Coordinator)
Andrew Rathbone (WYDAN – Trustee)
Vicky Ledwidge (Migration Yorkshire - Integration & Partnerships Officer)
Will Sutcliffe (BEACON & ABIGAIL Housing Board Member)
Gillian Tober – (WYDAN - Night Shelter steering group)
Jon Beech (LASSN –Director)
Jo Carter (LASSN – Grace Hosting Volunteers Manager)
Sam Baka (British Red Cross – Bradford)
Bernard Thurlow (St Monica's – Trustee)
Mary Halsey (WYDAN – Board Member)
Dave Paterson (Leeds Homeless Forum?)
Angus McNab (Hope Housing)
Jane Fowden (DASH – Board Member)
Mary Brandon (Asylum Matters – Yorkshire & Humberside Campaigns Manager)
Paul Catterall (NACCOM – Network Development Coordinator)
Lucy Smith (NACCOM - Communications and Advocacy Worker)
Angela Stapley (NACCOM – Grants and Admin Officer)
Khami Miraf (Migrant Help – NE, Yorks. & Humberside Community Liaison Officer)
Sheelagh Pickles (St Monica's)
John Atherton (DASH - Chair of Trustees)
Brian Hamil (Wakefield City of Sanctuary)
John McLaughlin (St Monica's)
Pat Brown (St Monica's)
Audrey Smith (St Augustine's – Housing Project Coordinator)

Apologies: Paul Gower, Bashir Siraj, John Hebden, Helen Syrop, Katy Armitstead, Ruth Davany, Dick Davies, Michael Brown

NACCOM Updates (from Paul, Lucy, Angela)

Network Development

Contact Paul Catterall paul@naccom.org.uk or Dave Smith dave@naccom.org.uk

- The network development role was explained and the general regional split of Paul overseeing Scotland, North East, East, London and South East. Dave overseeing Wales,

Northern Ireland and West of England. Paul and Dave have different strengths which are complementary and work together.

- Later in the year we will be launching a Housing Toolkit to assist members. Paul is leading on this. If you are interested in being involved in developing the content please contact Paul.
- Looking at asylum dispersal patterns and need for accommodation particularly for NRPF and whether or not there are members in that area to meet the need. This will help us to focus our resources in developing the network.
- Paul & Dave are here to help with an aspect of project development so either contact them directly or jointly via development@nacom.org.uk

Communications

Contact Lucy Smith comms@nacom.org.uk

- Please note email is our primary way of communicating with members about news and stories so we'd encourage you to sign up to the mailing lists below:
- **Weekly/monthly members mailing list** sign up (for members to choose monthly and/or weekly updates, which include a round-up of the forum discussions): <http://eepurl.com/c-u2BL>
- **Advocacy action group** sign up: <http://eepurl.com/dlRKjT> for members wanting to connect with actions around our advocacy work on refugee homelessness, Section4 delays and other issues.
- **General newsletter** (ie. for non-members): <http://eepurl.com/c-ErFn>
- Ask Lucy (comms@nacom.org.uk) if you want more log ins for the members area forum (which allows questions to be tabled and advice to be given) and the members Library, and please get in touch if you don't know your log in or want extra support.
- Got stories that you want/are happy to share on the website including job vacancies and news from your projects? Want to write a guest blog? Email Lucy – we'd love to hear from you - comms@nacom.org.uk

Advocacy work at the moment

Contact Lucy Smith comms@nacom.org.uk

- Lucy is working on evidence gathering, lobbying on key issues, storytelling and raising issues important to our members.
- Our annual survey is coming out in late spring to complete and it greatly helps us with advocacy work as we learn from patterns and use it to create a national voice about our sector.
- We are working on making the survey as user friendly as possible.
- You can view a summary of the Annual Survey 2018 findings here: https://nacom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2-Page-Bulletin-A4_2018-12-12.pdf
- We have recently asked members to contribute any stories they may be able to share on Section 4 delays.

Refugee Move On

Contact Lucy Smith comms@nacom.org.uk

- There is a need for coordinated responses to demonstrate that 28 days is not long enough for refugees to move on without being at risk of homelessness and destitution. We are working with members, Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officers (LAASLOs), strategic migration partnerships and others to understand better what impact government policies are having at a local and individual level and push for change. We'll be producing a follow up report to [Mind The Gap](#) later this spring so if you want to help with case studies and stories please get in touch. If refugees are willing to speak out about their experiences please let Lucy know as I can offer direct support or do interviews with people if appropriate.
- If you've not already seen it, The Red Cross produced a report in Dec 2018 on move on- [Still an Ordeal](#).
- The issue was raised yesterday in Parliament by Lord Shipley: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2019-02-14/debates/5B2E1218-8EBF-4C81-AB17-5ABB0A2174EC/ImmigrationProcedures>.
- General info on LAASLOs -<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/19-million-funding-for-councils-to-boost-integration> and further details issued this month by the government on the integrated communities strategy that LAASLOs fall within- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778045/Integrated_Communities_Strategy_Govt_Action_Plan.pdf

Section 4 delays

Contact Lucy Smith comms@nacom.org.uk

- We are working to improve access to asylum support and undertake research on this subject, and are planning a joint report on the issue with Refugee Action in the summer. Read our recent blog on the research by Scottish members and partner agencies on delays with S4- <https://nacom.org.uk/research-by-scottish-agencies-highlights-major-problems-in-section-4-support-process/> and if you want to be involved get in touch.

Lift the Ban

You can join the coalition by emailing: lifttheban@asylummatters.org

- This is a campaign headed up by Refugee Action and Asylum Matters focussing on the right to work for people seeking asylum after 6 months of waiting for a decision and not limited to the shortage occupation list. To find out more see here: <http://lifttheban.co.uk/>

General Admin Update

Contact Angela Stapley angela@nacom.org.uk

- Membership Certificates and Forum log in reminder cards were posted out in December 2018, please let Angela know if you did not receive one.
- Invoices for membership fees 2019-20 will be coming out in March.
- Guardian Grant – a reminder that Progress Reports were due 5 February (if you received your grant in July 2018), please ask Angela if you have any questions about this.

Upcoming NACCOM Events – dates for your diary

April / May 2019

- To assist with the development of skills and ideas for funding accommodation and support services for those facing destitution, and to launch our upcoming Toolkit on Funding, NACCOM is hosting two ‘**Funding Your Project**’ events this spring. These one day events will feature workshops on different funding techniques and approaches alongside key note speeches from funders and more. The events will be held in **Leeds** on **Monday 29th April** and **London** on **Tuesday 14th May** (it’s the same structure for each event, just in different locations). There will be 4 workshops based around: community fundraising, DIY guide to impact measuring, grant funders and using social media to generate funds. Links to event pages: [Funding Your Project Leeds](#) and [Funding Your Project London](#). Members get a discounted rate of £20 per ticket (non-members £40).

July 2019

- We are currently organising a Hosting Convention/Celebration, this will be in London on **Saturday 13th July** – more details coming soon!

October 2019

- Our Annual Conference. Location: Leeds, dates approx. 7th and 14th

Update from Migration Yorkshire (MY) from Vicky Ledwidge

- Vicky’s briefing can be read here: [Regional Report on Migration Issues for WYDAN/NACCOM Hub Meeting 14 February 2019](#)
- Migration Yorkshire has 10 Local Authorities (LA) involved with asylum dispersal scheme.
- Every LA has a multi-agency group – members are encouraged to attend these as these help with best practice, share info etc, very useful for **funding bids** using up to date information on the website.
- Vicky ran through key points on the above handout: Net migration is rising, Gov announced 2 contracts – Asylum Accommodation has gone from G4S to Mears. Mears already has a foothold in some areas of the region. From midnight on Monday details of the contract went online and can be read. Expecting staff will be TUPE over so Members will likely deal with the same people. G4S have committed themselves to a smooth transfer.
- Migrant Help have secured the new AIR contract which includes Accommodation Reporting.
- MY had a successful meeting with CEO of Migrant Help: Mears very up for working with local groups, meet with orgs providing services.
- Immigration Health charges were doubled from Jan 2019.
- Contribution from Will Sutcliffe to say there is funding in the contract to improve the call handling – the good news is it should improve.
- 2 things to highlight – increase in hate crime figures is assumed occurred due to reporting mechanisms have improved. Second thing increase in national referral mechanism for reporting trafficking again possibly down to better reporting.

- LAASLOs (Local Authority Asylum Seeker Liaison Officers). MY has secured European money so every local authority in the region will have a LASSLO or equivalent. MY is doing a big piece of research with Salford Uni to gather info on 28 day move on period and the challenges faced. Urged members to submit info on this if ever asked for it, to help with lobbying.
- Stats from last page of briefing give a flavour of dispersal figures as of 31.10.18

Project Updates

Abigail Housing Leeds (Neal Heard). Provide accommodation for 68 people, all in houses from private LLs (some are Student Landlords that can't let their properties to Students). Over the last year increased number of exempt rents which means they get more income.

In Leeds it takes 2 years to secure social housing which increases demand on the private rented sector.

Highlights: review mission and vision, beginning to update website, talking to a Housing Association to potentially manage some flats, hopefully going from 68 to 70 bed spaces. HB claims/Universal credit are a nightmare particularly with family reunion.

Abigail Housing Bradford (Amanda Church-Michael). 5 properties including an empty vicarage and other houses on a pepper corn rent. 4 properties for male, 1 female. 15 male beds and 4 female. Over past year 33 housed. 26 the previous year. Problems with cases getting adjourned due to lack of interpreters has had an effect on move on. Plus Section 4 delays is causing delays in move on.

BEACON (Will Sutcliffe). 6 Hosts, 4 for men and 2 for women. Profile of referrals seem to have changed with more from people with less strong cases and these are being turned down as they have little to no chance of success. Paul mentioned that a hot discussion for topics in other hubs has been; do we put a time-limit on how long a person can be housed/hosted? There has been a drop in number of women being referred. Referrals come from Red Cross, PAFRAS.

DASH (Jane Fowden). Housing scheme currently has two houses housing 2 men and 2 women. Being in Huddersfield, it often feels quite isolated but they are reaching out to organisations around them to build effective partnerships. Not hosting at the moment but trying to work with Refugees at Home but tricky because they don't currently have any hosts in Huddersfield. Looking to campaign locally to find more hosts for Refugees at Home. Business planning and hoping to be able to recruit a manager soon.

Hope Housing (Angus McNab) 16 bed spaces in 7 houses across Bradford. 2 are nominated for destitute people. We work with all people including those with mental health issues and EU migrants. We currently have 5 destitute NRPF occupying bed spaces. We are in the process of trying to expand – A bid has been made to the Quaker Housing Trust for funds to buy houses outright. Looking at potential of building houses through links with Green Pastures and partnering with landlords. Also looking at container low cost housing.

LASSN (Jo Carter). Grace Hosting provides both long stay and emergency hosting services, last night it supported 4 but normally up to 11 individuals are hosted. Also supporting 13 people in longer stays – someone in 4.5 year. Important to ensure guest is clear about their length of stay in each provision – make sure an agreed plan in place for each individual. Focus on respite

from destitution, help with wellbeing. Early stages of a house for AS destitute men for 6 month stays. Fundraising – taking part in community fundraising, making sure active in different parts of Leeds. The referral route into Grace hosting is via a case worker within an approved referral organisation such as PAFRAS or Red Cross who are responsible for risk assessments and on-going support with the aim of achieving positive move on.

St Augustine's (Audrey Smith). Post funded by Council and set up to deal with refugee move on during the 28-day notice period. Also have a small hosting project – 5 hosts with 2 people hosted at the moment. Agree with Jo to show it as respite from destitution, rather than a longer-term solution. It remains to be seen whether the new local authority LASSLO will lead to a stopping of council funding for this post. The current post while funded to work with refugees has a remit to work with all who need support including NRPf asylum seekers.

St Monica's (John McLaughlin). Has 2 houses, housing 10 women (1 in south Leeds for 6 destitute AS women, 1 in north Leeds for 4 destitute AS women). South Leeds property is let to them on a peppercorn rent from Leeds Catholic Diocese. North Leeds property is also let on peppercorn. Guests sign a contract for a 6 month stay which is occasionally extended depending on where things are at with the clients fresh claim. All volunteers, no staff costs. Work exclusively with PAFRAS and Red Cross who refer into the project. Plans for expansion in future.

Wakefield City of Sanctuary (Brian Hamil). Apologies from Dick he has flu. No accommodation scheme as yet but have members looking at the prospect of a house and hosting. Question raised about insurance: public liability for hosts – damage to property or injury to themselves – 2 separate things.

Migrant Help (Khami Miraf). Community Liaison role: areas covered NE and Yorkshire. New AIR contract has 2 additional new elements. Post decision support includes telephone support? Going to partnership with an organisation called REED – looking at English Language and employment. Connection to WYDAN – project is working well. Question from PC: NE and Teesside MH has offices rather than a phone line, are there any plans to roll that out nationally? A: The 2 staff on Teesside were originally TUPE'd over and they run the NE offices from NERS who used to deliver the One Stop service. Jon Q: any progress on the Aspen cards on improving the timing to get the cards loaded? A: this lays with the Home Office, people have contacted the HO about this and they have been inundated! Aim is that 99% of people have cards. Q: not the issue of having the cards, it's the topping up and managing of them. A: they thought everything was sorted but please continue to raise issues. MH are looking at the possibility of local partnerships with the voluntary sector to deliver services. MH have staff attending Red Cross drop ins in Bradford, Sheffield, Leeds, Rotherham and Doncaster.

Red Cross (Sam Baka). Presenting from West Yorkshire project in Leeds and Bradford. Run a drop in Tuesday and prearranged appointments on Friday. The main focus of the service is NRPf. Tuesday saw 45-60 people in casework sessions. Board client ran group, mostly focussing on failed asylum seekers. Finds it difficult to find emergency accommodation for them due to lack of availability particularly for clients with on the face of it weaker cases with limited chance of Move On. Refers to Hope Housing, Abigail Housing & Beacon in Bradford all of which have limited capacity. Good working relationship in terms of the move on, working

with Bradford Council. Most of time spent on asylum support applications and come across big delays with S4 and S95 delays. Red Cross reminds Home Office of rejection reasons as they feel they are not applying them correctly. **Action: Khami from MH to give referral links.**

Asylum Matters (Mary Brandon). Currently focusing on 5 keys areas: 1. right to work, 2. move on period, 3. campaigns for asylum support rates to be raised, 4. close eye on NHS charging and 5. asylum accommodation and contracts. Lift the Ban (to allow asylum seekers the right to work) has 162 organisations signed up (8 from Yorks and Humber) – urge members to sign up if they haven't already and spread the word to any organisations you may work with.

WYDAN (Gillian Tober). Opened all year round from 29 Oct 2018. Some hosts (churches and one Synagogue) offer for 1 week, most 2 weeks. Up to 10 destitute males accommodated per night. Each receives a weekly bus pass, pack lunch and can have laundry done. Host churches organise fundraising themselves which works well. Since 29 Oct they've helped 20 individuals. Average occupancy is 75% and increasing. The shelter is at capacity now with 10 men accessing per night. The project takes referrals from PAFRAS and Red Cross and in theory from Migrant Help but have had none so far this season.

Leeds Homeless Charter (Dave Paterson). Next meeting is on 24th March in Leeds all are welcome. Important to hear voices of people with lived experience - need to get people from migrant backgrounds at these events so that their collective voice can be heard and they can influence decision makers. **Action: Dave to send charter to NACCOM to share.** Dave raised the wider question of sharing resources and opportunities across the region for example there are 749 dispersed into Kirklees but limited resources so how can we refer people from Kirklees into Leeds projects and better share data across the network– Are there empty bed spaces that could be filled by clients from another location?

Questions raised by members

1. Referrals into Leeds from elsewhere in the region

- Problem of who provides the casework?
- Abigail Bradford referrals come from PAFRAS & Red Cross who do case work.
- Drawing people from outside of the area to have accommodation locally is a non starter if there is no affective case load support.
- Also it was felt that people get anxious to go out if they don't know the areas or city where they are offered emergency accommodation.
- St Monica's has a dedicated caseworker from PAFRAS.
- Dave comment: is it possible to get more people to Grace to free up spaces elsewhere. Grace usually provides 5 days emergency accommodation with a view to more and an emphasis on longer term now. Jon agrees this is something LASSN could do, look into.
- Suggestion from Jane to provide accommodation in one place and provide bus passes so client can access casework in other areas.
- Paul comments that a Member in Wolverhampton (Hope Into Action Backcountry) were being paid £1k per person to work intensively with EU unemployed with NRPF to house them and get them back work ready with up to date CVs etc so as to get them off the street homeless stats. Question raised from Vicky: Is this under statutory

duties or statutory powers? NRPF but do have right to work. See link for more details <https://nacom.org.uk/member-spotlight-hope-into-actions-pilot-project-to-get-migrant-workers-off-the-streets/>

2. Legal provision and impact on NRPF referrals

- It was generally felt that there were enough referral pathways in the region. There were some such as BA Chambers in Bradford that have capacity for legal aid.
- The problem is, people presenting for accommodation with weak or apparently weak cases. Or cases who have had poor previous advice and have cases full of errors which become increasingly difficult to resolve.
- Paul mentioned that Open Door NE was reluctant to refer to solicitors until there was a clearer picture on possible move on as a result of a fresh claim/fresh reps. To many solicitors simply open a file for which they are paid and initial fee and then sit and wait for the client to do something/find evidence etc.
- A better option is a good OISC 2 project that can look at the case and do some initial work before passing to a solicitor.
- PAFRAS are OISC level 2

3. Engagement with wider homeless services

- Covered already with Dave's point earlier.

4. Healthcare Charging

- Everyone has the right to health care
- People are being turned away as there is confusion around it amongst NHS health care providers.
- There is evidence of charging even if someone has an asylum case in progress because clinical services are told to charge if they are not sure!
- Jon: from Health and Wellbeing board sub group last week: they agree there is disparity but the focus is people coming here on holiday i.e. equivalent of E111. Second point, directors of public health and hospital trusts are currently talking with each other (geographically from Wakefield upwards north) there's strong alliances to think about the way they charge and they do not want people to be turned away. So the acknowledgement of the problem is there, it just needs to filter down to NHS managers and staff on the ground.
- Stockton and Middlesbrough have specialist asylum GP practices but there appears to be nothing similar in West Yorkshire & Humberside.

5. Online Fundraising

- Neal raised this and will attend the Funding Your Project Leeds for more information.

6. Universal Credit (including habitual residence test)

- Problems with UC process – i.e. asking asylum seekers to complete a habitual residence tests and attend up to 7 interviews in a week.
- Loans so that applicants can live whilst UC is processing but not possible without wife's NI number. Appointments for NI are 4 to 5 weeks waiting time which is too long. Without help from foodbanks, families would be lost.

- Paul asked about Migration Yorkshire as NE strategic migration partnership has an economic sub group that meets 4 times per year and is excellent. DWP and HMRC are there and go back to address issues raised at local Job Centres.
- UC problem: had a 6 month wait. Advised to make an appointment at Job Centre
- Potential overall solution: if someone gets Family Reunion, give them an NI number.
- Mary asked for these examples of problems to be fed to Asylum Matters to help with lobbying.
- Paul suggested making an appointment with local Job Centre managers to build a working relationship and hopefully help change attitude.

Other topics, not able to cover due to time:

- Family Reunion
- LAASLOs: what do we know? Are we engaging with existing LASSLO's?
- What would you like to see in a Housing Toolkit?
- HC1 application – support letters?

Date and time of next meeting to be confirmed but likely to be

Any questions, additions or amendments please contact me, thank you
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