

# MAYOR OF LONDON

## London Strategic Migration Partnership, 11 June 2019

### Chair

Debbie Weekes-Bernard, LSMP Chair; Deputy Mayor for Social Integration, Social Mobility and Community Engagement

### Attendees

Councillor Muhammed Butt, London Councils

Paul Morrison, Home Office

Mark Winterburn, London Councils

Mahesh Nandha - MHCLG

Lisa Doyle, GLA Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel

Grace Ashaye, London Asylum Seekers Consortium

Ian Lewis – City of London, UASC Strategic Lead

Melissa Caslake - Director of Children's Services, Bi-borough, UASC lead for Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS)

Steve Lakey - Clearspings

Anna Di Mascio - Migrant Help

Jonathan Thomas, Social Market Foundation

### GLA Staff

Hannah Boylan, Communities and Social Policy

Shanthi Gunsekera, Communities and Social Policy

Ramiye Thavabalasingam, Communities and Social Policy

Moushami Aktar, MOPAC

### Apologies

Barbara Drozdowicz, GLA Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel

Jackie Odunoye, London Borough of Redbridge

### 1. Welcome

- 1.1 Debbie Weekes-Bernard welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the financial year and invited members to introduce themselves.
- 1.2 Hannah Boylan updated that following Rita Chadha's departure from LSMP, she will be finding a new Lead Member of the Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel.
- 1.3 Minutes from the previous meeting were **agreed**.

### 2. Life in the UK Test (Paul Morrison)

- 2.1 Paul Morrison updated on the review of the Life in the UK test at the Home Office. This review is still in its early stages, having recently recruited a team to lead the work. Paul highlighted that the English language requirement is of particular importance for the Home Secretary, and links with the Integrated Communities strategy and the upcoming ESOL strategy.
- 2.2 Paul Morrison suggested that Christian Armstrong, the Home Office lead for this work, could attend a future meeting to discuss the review in more depth.

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**2.3** Hannah Boylan provided feedback from the Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP), particularly highlighting the importance of engaging communities and migrant sector organisations in this work. MRAP could be a useful forum for this engagement.

**2.4** Other issues discussed included:

- the particular difficulties for young Londoners who have grown up in the UK being required to take the Life in the UK test despite their peers not having to.
- Disappointment that the Government has decided to focus on this aspect rather than reviewing the fees attached to applying for British citizenship, particularly for young people.
- The need to engage with local government on any review of citizenship, given their role in conducting Citizenship Ceremonies and in supporting individuals with the application process.
- The links between removing barriers to citizenship and improving integration.

## Actions

- Members to send any further comments on this issue to Hannah to pass onto the Home Office.
- Christian Armstrong and colleagues from the Home Office to attend future meeting to discuss citizenship in greater detail.

## 3. Immigration White Paper (Jonathan Thomas)

**2.4** Other issues discussed included:

**3.1** Hannah Boylan introduced Jonathan Thomas from Social Market Foundation, who are conducting research for the GLA on the Immigration White Paper.

**3.2** Jonathan Thomas set out the background to the white paper, including the Migration Advisory Committee's recommendations to Government as well as Brexit. He highlighted that often non-immigration policies have a greater impact than immigration policies.

**3.3** The Government broadly accepted all MAC recommendations with two caveats: they are extending the temporary regime to 2025 and are conducting a year of engagement, with particular focus on: visitor visa rules, tier 2 general salary threshold sponsor management system, duration and cooling-off period of the temporary route, and the Youth Mobility Scheme.

**3.4** Members raised the following points:

- There are challenges for immigration infrastructure in implementing some of these policies, particularly regarding temporary routes, and this may lead to an increasing number of people with insecure status.
- The UK public opinion on those with insecure status is one of the most negative in the world, which may present challenges for organisations supporting these migrants.
- There will be challenges for temporary migrants and local communities in terms of integration, exploitation and access to public funds.
- Businesses will need to undertake further admin work in order to hire temporary workers.
- The £30k income threshold will exclude many people from being able to come to the UK and this will impact particular services such as social work.

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- There will be challenges for local authorities if EU migrants have no recourse to public funds post-Brexit.
- The national debate on the white paper often focuses on the business perspective however it is important to use this partnership and other stakeholder groups to ensure the voices of those working on the ground also inform the Mayor's official response to the white paper.

## Actions

- Jonathan Thomas to engage with interested members to discuss the impact of the white paper on their work.
- Members to inform Hannah Boylan of any other organisations Jonathan Thomas should get in touch with as part of this research work.

## 4. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (Ian Lewis)

- 4.1** Ian Lewis updated on the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) and the pan-London rota. London is the only region which is over the 0.07% threshold for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and there continues to be difficulties in persuading other regions to participate in the NTS. The NTS is one of the workstreams of the UASC governance board, who have agreed to establish a working party on this issue.
- 4.2** Ian highlighted that following a financial review, the Government has now increased the rate for 16-17 year old children and legacy children, however the higher rate was not increased. This equates to roughly £10 million for London, which currently supports around one third of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. This funding increase is welcome but still short of the full cost of recovery.
- 4.3** Ian updated that the pan-London rota is still operating, primarily to relieve the numbers at Croydon. Some local authorities have increased their threshold to 0.08% however there are still some weeks where no boroughs are on the rota and Croydon consequently ends up taking in significantly more children.
- 4.4** Members raised the following points:
- It is important that the NTS and pan-London rota support children and young people to be moved quickly so they can settle in their new host borough.
  - The Government is running meetings to discuss the NTS and it was suggested these meetings are used to encourage other regions to take on more children.
  - Clearsprings run the UASC contract for Kent and are happy to be part of these discussions and provide further information on this work.
  - It would be useful for the Government to update on how the NTS sits with all other schemes such as Dubs.

## 5. Asylum Accommodation and Support (Steve Lakey, Anna Di Mascio)

- 5.1** Steve Lakey updated that ClearSprings are transitioning to their new contracts as the Asylum Accommodation provider in London. The transition was piloted in Swansea and coastal towns in the South of England and initial feedback suggests the transition is going well with no major issues. The introduction of the single point of contact at Migrant Help was a key part of the uplift.

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- 5.2** The remaining areas will be transitioning to the new contracts in the coming weeks, with asylum seekers in these areas being briefed on the new contracts. London is being left to the end of the transition period; the transition should be complete in mid-July.
- 5.3** Anna Di Mascio updated that the first response centre and outreach services are now live. Outreach services will be a combination of drop in sessions and one to one sessions for the most vulnerable. An adviser for London has been recruited.
- 5.4** Anna Di Mascio highlighted that the work Migrant Help are doing with Reed on enhanced move on support will be going live on 1 July. Reed will be managing support for those who receive a positive outcome for their asylum application, while Migrant Help will provide support for those who receive a negative outcome.
- 5.5** Anna Di Mascio also updated that Migrant Help have been awarded funding from the Home Office for the EU Settlement Scheme.
- 5.6** Members raised the following points:
- It was positive to hear about the progress on accommodation, however there are concerns around the enhanced move on support being provided by Reed, given that they are new to the sector. It would be helpful if Migrant Help with the support of the GLA could facilitate a conversation with Reed and civil society organisations.
  - The co-designing of services was a step in the right direction but going forward, further conversations at the local level across London would help support London councils in this work, e.g. through data sharing.

## Actions

- Paul Morrison to provide data and information on unsupported asylum seekers.
- Members to provide evidence/data on impact of unsupported asylum seekers on local authorities.

## 6. AOB

- 6.1** Paul Morrison suggested inviting colleagues from immigration enforcement to a future meeting covering No Recourse to Public Funds.

## Actions

- Hannah Boylan to set EU Settlement Scheme and No Recourse to Public Funds as future agenda items.