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Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP)

26 October 2020

Chair: Hannah Boylan

Attendees:

Lisa Doyle - Refugee Council
Rita Dayoub - Doctors of the World
Barbara Drozdowicz - EERC
Gisela Valle - LAWRS
Nafisah Graham -Brown - ELATT
Mihai Clain Bica -Roma Support Group
Eleanor Brown - Caras
Anna Yassin - Glasdoor
Anna Janczuk - Poles in need
Leticia Ishibashi - FLEX
Mahlea Babjak - Migrants' Rights Network
Maria Iglesias - Praxis
James Banks - London Funders
Tamara Flanagan – New Europeans
Zrinka Bralo - Migrants Organise
Claire Fletcher - UKLGIG
Nadia O'Mara - Liberty
Moud Goba – Micro Rainbow
Moushami Aktar - MOPAC
Bethan Lant - Praxis
Christopher Desira – Seraphus

GLA Staff:

George Hanoun
Lidia Estevez Picon
Bella Kosmala
Ayham Alsuleman
Ramiye Thavabalasingam
Mark Winterburn
Emilia Silvas
Karissa Singh

1. Welcome and Minutes

1.1 Hannah welcomed Moud, Leila, Claire, Bethan, Chris to their first meeting

1.2 Minutes from the last meeting were agreed.

1.3 Moushami Aktar gave an update on the Modern Slavery Partnership Board. Discussion included:

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- With MET police on making sure that we continue to push out the message about safe reporting and safe space to do so.
- On Section 45 review
 - Operation Report which reviews how organised crime groups infiltrate businesses
 - New Police and Crime Plan will be out next summer

2 Update from London Asylum Group (LAG)

2.1 Lisa gave an update from LAG, and highlighted areas of concerns.

- Hotel use has grown during the pandemic, across the country, and people staying there long periods.
- From Civil Society point of view the issues are: inconsistent levels of support in hotels. Migrant Help cannot get to all hotels and NGOs do not know where they are.
- Local authorities' concerns are that people are arriving at fairly short notice, with worries about the procurement process.
- Resumption of cessations of support for those with a negative decision are very worrying.

2.2 Mark noted that there is a plan to set up meetings to enable civil society groups involved in supporting people in hotels to engage with each other and the Home Office providers.

2.3 Lisa and Mark clarified that removals from the UK are happening. Lisa noted that the the Home Office have been promoting this fact on twitter.

2.4 Eleanor outlined concerns about lack of digital access for people seeking asylum. Mark noted the Home Office expects WIFI and digital access to be provided for service users in the hotels

3 Update from Homeless Migrants Advisory Panel (HMAP)

3.1 Lidia provided an update on the work of HMAP. She explained that the core activity is sharing information they have, and gaining feedback on their activities with people in hotels.

3.2 Lidia noted that EUSS and new immigration rules is a key issue for the group. HMAP members will be invited to sign a letter to raise concerns with the Home Office on this issue.

3.3 Anna Janczuk enquired about the mental health support for people in hotels. Lidia noted that mental health services are provided in GLA hotels and that if language barriers are an issues interpreters are used.

3.4 In response to a question from Mihai, Lidia noted that a pilot of support for Roma rough sleepers will start soon.

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4 Future immigration system and Brexit

- 4.1 Hannah provided an update on the Immigration Bill, which is currently passing through Parliament.
- 4.2 Mihai outlined how the Roma Support Group is working to lobby the government on Comprehensive Sickness Insurance requirements.
- 4.3 Chis desire explained the meaning of the most recent statistics on EUSS applications. He highlighted very low number of applications from over 65s and the concerning rise in number of cases refused as ineligible. Many of those refused as ineligible were in the system for a very long time before the refusal.
- 4.4 Barbara outlined the shift in Home Office policy on EUSS deadlines: after the end of this year, there is ambiguity on the right to reside for people who do not have settled/ pre-settled status through the EUSS. Barbara is trying to confirm from the Home Office how border force is going to police this. Ministers have also said that there will be no changes to rights and entitlement, but it's hard to see how this will actually be the case.

5 Access to healthcare

- 5.1 Rita outlined the Hands up for our Health campaign. The objective is to suspend NHS charging during the pandemic. More than 63 organisations have joined the campaign.
- 5.2 Flu jab is important during the campaign. Many migrants do not know about it and its unclear how PHE is getting accurate information out to people. Doctors of the World is developing a translated resource to support flu jab access.
- 5.3 Mark noted that at the last LSMP meeting there was a discussion highlighting the inadequate access to healthcare for people seeking asylum in hotels. There will be a Task and Finish Group set up to look at this issue specifically.
- 5.4 Hannah explained that she is hoping to highlight the ongoing need for translation as part of the recovery planning. She asked for feedback on whether there are gaps. Nafisah noted the importance of audience and video filers. Barbara noted the need for easy read materials.

Action: Members to email Hannah with further thoughts on translation of resources.

6 Windrush Lessons Learned Review: Update

- 6.1 Mark explained that the Home Secretary said that she accepted all the finding and recommendations of the Review, and a Comprehensive Improvement Plan will be published next month. He noted that the Home Office have committed to be more open to critique. The Home Office will carry out a review of the hostile environment, but details are currently unclear.

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6.2 Rita noted the need to keep up the pressure and accountability through LMSP meetings.

7 Digital access for learners and service users

7.1 Nafisah set out the challenges facing learners: not only do some learners struggle with access to devices, but they may lack digital skills.

7.2 Karissa explained that access to devices could be funded through the coronavirus response fund, and that there is some flexibility in the Adult Education Budget for this.

Action: Karissa to pick up a further conversation with Nafisah on budgets.

8 AOB

8.1 Anna Janczuk asked if anyone is aware of any COVID-19 information translated into Polish. Hannah said that there was a COVID-19 hub on the GLA website that should be helpful.

8.2 Bella flagged that the GLA are running a small grants programme to support work on enabling European Londoners to understand their rights – deadline for application Friday 30th October.

Action: Contact Bella for more information and/or application form.