**WM Migration Network Rights Thematic Meeting**

**13th April 2023 (10:00 – 11:30)**

**Minutes**

**Chair: Andy Hoole**

**Apologies**

Danai Papachristopolou – Refugee and Migrant Centre

1. **Introductions**

AH welcomed everyone to the meeting and would be chairing in Danai’s absence. As discussed at the previous meeting, we would be using a new format with each meeting based around a specific issue. The first part of would be led by a presentation from an organisation working on that issue followed by an open discussion on the issues raised. The second part of the meeting would allow groups to update on their current activity and any issues of note.

This meeting would be around housing support and Emily Goodyear from Shelter had offered to give an input.

1. **Previous Activity and Actions**

The previous minutes were agreed as correct. There were no outstanding actions.

1. **Presentation on Housing Issues**

EG spoke about current activity at Shelter and the three priority issues that they are working around.

1. Multiple Disadvantage

Particular priorities encountered include Domestic Violence, substance abuse, clients with learning disabilities and language barriers – particularly for those with NRPF conditions. Many of these will be experienced by migrants needing housing support.

Shelter are seeking to embed knowledge of processes and options across the wider sector with the aim of seeking systemic change. This is particularly focused on access to good quality housing and using lived experience to inform and improve the commissioning process.

1. Families

There is a drive to reduce homelessness for families and campaign for better quality permanent accommodation. It is estimated that around 6000 children in Birmingham are currently living in temporary accommodation. The situation is continually worsening due to the lack of available housing stock. The housing register for those awaiting a property now stands at over 23,000. In the last year 3000 were let, but these were mostly to older tenants. The biggest issue in the sector remains eviction from private sector accommodation.

In 2020, 250 families made homelessness applications, and in 2021 this had reached 450.

1. Private Rented Sector

Currently there is no register of properties so a massive need to collaborate and influence change. There is a lack of knowledge for clients around their rights so a need to raise awareness.

1. **Discussion**

Several questions were raised by attendees around signposting and awareness that would benefit their clients. CB highlighted that this shows the benefits of better collaborations and that we should discuss how best to take this forward and support the priorities mentioned. AH agreed that these issues were reflected in outreach work conducted with migrants in his work. Presentations would be circulated to those unable to attend and time set aside at the start of the next meeting for this discussion to continue.

**ACTION – AH to ensure discussion on housing support to be added to agenda for next meeting.**

1. **Current Priorities**

No other updates.

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be **Thursday 25th May** at **10am**. The themw will be around specalisat support ans will be led with a presentation from Isobel Abrams at Refugee Action.

AH reminded members that inputs from members are still welcome as part of the new structure. A sign-up form, with future dates can be found [**HERE**](https://f5rycfssgmn.typeform.com/to/SCAw8uXo)**.**

Meeting Closed