**WM Migration Network Rights Thematic Meeting**

**4th July 2023 (10:00 – 11:30)**

**Minutes**

**Chair: Danai Papachristopolou**

1. **Introductions**

DP welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that due to illness, the presentation and discussion led by BSWAID that had been scheduled would have to be rearranged to a later date.

Attendees introduced themselves at their work.

1. **Previous Activity and Actions**

The previous minutes were agreed as correct. The last meeting centred around refugee support and was led by a presentation from Refugee Action. Issues covered included the support for complex asylum applications and work to develop capacity in the sector. Referrals forms had previously been shared but can be recirculated if needed.

1. **Presentation from BSWAID**

The presentation will be rescheduled for a future meeting. DP and AH reiterated that there is an open opportunity for organisations to present at future meetings and helped to shape discussions for sector support. There is some availability for the rest of the year so anyone interested should get in touch.

1. **Discussion**

As there was a gap in the agenda, DP asked if anyone would like to raise any current issues. RA gave an input around two recent court cases that CELC had been involved with. Firstly, DV victims who apply for Univeral Credit and do not have a National Insurance number should not be denied access to an advanced payment. The second case was around issues where oveseas nationals who come to the country on spousal visas with a partner who is part of the EU Settled Status scheme. If the relationship breaks down then they are not eligible for public funds in the event of a relationship breakdown due to domestic violence. This is different to individuals in the UK on other routes. A challenge has been allowed at court and further developments are expected.

MS gave an input on the work of Fatima House who provide housing support to asylum seeking women at risk of destitution.

GB talked about the work of Servo LCT, providing specialist mental health support accommodation in Birmingham. They are keen to develop better referral pathways in the area as they have seen an increase in clients with challenging immigration situations as well as gaining greater awareness of specialist migration support that could be shared with their recovery workers.

There was a discussion about the needs of some cases and whether referrals would be an option. GC highlighted that the main issue was a lack of beds with many clients staying beyond the short term nature of the care due to a lack of move on services.

DP again highlighted the interconnected nature of all these issues, particularly around immigration support, where it was extremely difficult to provide meaningful and successful support if clients were not in a stable housing situation.

DP asked about the process of obtaining Sec. 4 support for those with mental health issues. BD stated that this was possible but required a level of medical evidence that could be provided if clients were receiving specialist support. It could also be used to evidence that clients are unable to travel. Although a number of clients are requesting to stay in Birmingham due to the care they are receiving, however the Home Office can move individuals regardless of circumstances. Legal challenges are required to stop this dispersal due to the evidence being provided of support networks and treatments available.

ST highlighted an issue around supporting policy change as current dispersal policy is quite restrictive and requires appointments with a medical professional to support refusal of travel rather than wider network and community support.

1. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be **Thursday 17th August** at **10am** and will be led with a presentation from Sarah Taal of Baobab Womens Project and a representative from the University of Birmingham around international partnerships to address gender based violence.

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