**WM Migration Network Rights Thematic Meeting**

**14th December 2023 (10:00 - 11:00)**

**Chair: Danai Papachristopolou**

1. **Introductions**

AH welcomed all to the meeting and introduced DP as Chair. All attendees introduced themselves and their work.

1. **Previous Actions**

There were no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

1. **Presentation from Birmingham and Solihull Women’s Aid**

AK and NH gave a presentation on the work of BSWAID. They provide services to women and children affected by domestic violence and abuse across Birmingham and Solihull. This includes specialist services tailored to individual circumstances. They operate a helpline, webchat and their early intervention hub providing walk-in support at a location in Birmingham with pathways into short and long-term support.

BSWAID also offers childrens support services and employs lead workers with dedicated case workers offering support and advocacy. AK talked about their work on housing options, offering secure emergency accommodation with one refuge dedicated for those 16-25 and can support those wishing to move to another area of the UK. They also offer sanctuary support for those wishing to stay in their homes with signposting to specialist solicitors and can also offer temporary accommodation when needed.

To support those with NRPF there are limited options especially due to inability to use temporary or supported accommodation and often being on spousal visas. Support can include most BSWAID hubs and refer to partners for immigration advice to regulate status. Some refuges can take those with NRPF and individuals can be referred.

BSWAID has been allocated a Supporting Migrant Victims Fund providing financial support for subsistence and accommodation to destitute victims of domestic violence. This includes a weekly payment and funding for accommodation. Those on spousal visas can be supported for 4 weeks and those on EUSS for 12.

PG highlighted the services and support provided by the Childrens Society for women and children and welcomed opportunities to signpost where needed.

LR asked about the SMVF and how long it was in place. AK stated that it was currently a pilot project but was for another three years.

SP asked if many clients presented with money and debt issues. AK confirmed that this was an increasing issue that created further vulnerabilities so it would be useful to connect and discuss options for support.

1. **Housing Research proposal from Aston University#**

AB gave an input on their forthcoming research bid looking at the state of refugee housing both at a local and national level. The Project looks at the policy around housing for migrants and the challenges and barriers experienced. It looks at the historical issues, the current situation around access (particularly minority and diaspora populations) then creating a plan for sustainable and accessibility housing that will be co-developed with a consultative committee involving those with lived experience. It was proposed to involve this group and partners in this process.

AH highlighted that AB would be taking over as Chair of the group in the New Year which offers a real opportunity to use the group to drive action in this area, whilst maintaining the current structure and direction of the meeting.

A current proposal and brief for the Project will be circulated to the group for any comments and involvement going forward.

1. **Any Other Business**

DP shared a new report highlighting the impact of the Regional Justice Network comprising RMC, Brushstrokes, Hope Projects and Citizens Advice Stoke. It looked to strengthen access to free legal advice and are inviting any organisations offering free advice to join future sessions.

AH thanked Danai on behalf of the group as she stepped down from chairing meetings.

**Next meeting- Thursday 25th January at 9:30**