**WM Migration Network RightsThematic Meeting**

**25th January 2024 (09:30 - 10:30)**

**Chair: Amanda Beattie**

1. **Introductions**

AH welcomed all to the meeting and introduced Amanda as new Chair. Amanda thanked DP for all her work in the role and looked forward to developing links with the network over the next twelve months. She has recently completed a project around refugee housing and is currently applying for funding to support a wider multi-disciplinary piece to develop housing solutions. AB emphasised the collaborative nature of the group and welcomed any discussion outside of the meeting to support building networks.

All attendees introduced themselves and their work.

1. **Previous Actions**

There were no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

1. **Migration Policy and Practice Sector Assessment**

AH gave a presentation on the findings from the latest Sector Assessment produced by Migration Policy and Practice. It was informed by a series of focus groups held across the region in spring and summer 2023 and were a mix of group discussions and one-to-one interviews. AH thanked organisations, including those in this meeting, who had facilitated these events.

The findings were grouped into four thematic areas, aligned with the meeting structure that make up the Migration Network. The report can be found at this link - [SECTOR ASSESSMENTS – Migration Policy and Practice](https://migrationpolicy.org.uk/sector-assessment/).

AB asked about further dissemination of the report. AH stated that the intent was to utilise connections through all networks in order to amplify the issues raised and also to develop responses where possible as the assessment and wider migration network will lose effectiveness if no outcomes are produced.

AB offered to link with colleagues at Aston University, particularly the Centre for Public Health, the Knowledge Exchange and Sanctuary Group in order to facilitate discussion.

**ACTION : AB to progress links with colleagues at Aston University.**

ST indicated that many of the findings correlate with those from their work, particularly around access to healthcare, social isolation and the value individuals gain from participation in community groups. The need for more place-based community mental health support as opposed to clinical talking therapy was also highlighted. AH also talked about the work being conducted in the Communities Thematic group around social integration, with a survey being circulated around networks to develop a baseline assessment of needs and activities.

PL highlighted the links to issues raised in other parts of the voluntary sector. The lack of awareness of support was particularly impacted on EU nationals who did not apply to the settled status scheme. A lack of integration caused the lack of awareness which left many without status and the consequent impacts on lives.

DP talked about the lack of access to specialist advice due to the lack of legal aid and whether the group should advocate for this. It is difficult at a local level but remains a huge issue, particularly due to government policy. KM agreed that this was one of the key areas and required more capacity. DP talked about collaboration with local authorities around the provision of legal advice and how this can be improved, particularly around childrens and social services. It was in the interest of local authorities to support this as a way of getting individuals out of care and able to build their own lives.

KM talked about CELC’s work in Covenry supporting local authorities which is leading to better outcomes for clients as an example of best practice.

PL mentioned the lack of in person walk-in services that were more effective than online and remote contact, particularly for those with language difficulties. ST is currently writing a report around access to services which will be released in a few weeks.

AB highlighted that Aston University has a new PhD student working in conjunction with RMC investigating the collaboration between local authorities and third sector groups. If the group would be interested, they can present to a future meeting.

**ACTION - Group to invite PhD student to join and present to the group**

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

The proposal is currently being developed, and a more detailed update will be given at the next meeting.

1. **Any Other Business**

There remains an open invitation for any organisations who would like to present on their current work and challenges at future meetings.

MP is to release a new briefing for the Better Pathways project at Brushtrokes which looks at those with NRPF. The latest briefing covers families and children with special educational needs. MP offered to share at next meeting.

**ACTION - Brushstrokes to present on latest Better Pathways briefing at next meeting.**

KM gave an update on a legal challenge recently brought around the domestic violence concession. A discrimination challenge was brought on behalf of someone with pre-settled status. The Home Office have agreed to amend the policy by mid-May and an update will be given then. It potentially will allow greater access to a wider population.

**Next meeting- Thursday 7th March at 10am**