**WM Migration Network Rights Thematic Meeting**

**7th March 2024 (10:00 – 11:00)**

**Chair: Amanda Beattie**

1. **Introductions**

AH welcomed all to the meeting in Amanda’s absence who would be joining the meeting slightly late.

All attendees introduced themselves and their work.

1. **Previous Actions**

There were no outstanding actions from previous meetings.

1. **Presentation from The Children’s Society**

PG gave an input on the work of the Children's Society and the services currently offered for refugees and migrants in the region. There are two main areas – Black Country Advocacy and Refugee and Migrant Services.

Black Country Advocacy is an independent confidential service commissioned by three local authorities – Sandwell, Wolverhampton and Walsall. It works with young people under 25 and the criteria for referrals is that individuals must be either in or leaving care or have a social worker. The advocacy services provides an independent person to help them express their wishes and views as well as understand their rights during relevant meetings with statutory bodies. Referrals are predominantly UK nationals but some work is done to support asylum seekers and refugees.

There are several projects support refugees and migrants, HEARTS offers a range of services for those up to the age of 25 including advocacy support for UASC in areas such as age assessments and liaising with social services. Support is also offered around practical support with housing, education and legal support where needed. Small funding is also available to support individuals to engage with social activities, for example purchasing equipment to participate.

Helping Further offers support and advice to families who are destitute or at risk of destitution due to their immigration status. There is a drop-in advice service every Tuesday in Birmingham. This provides free immigration advice and support with applications. An attached Project Worker also offers signposting to specialist services where needed.

The third Project is a Meet and Greet, offering stay and play sessions for families resident in the Brittania Hotel. This takes place every Friday afternoon.

The organization currently also offers a one-off voucher payment for those with NRPF that can be spent at ASDA. There is a limited amount available on a first come basis.

KM asked about current issues experienced around challenges for those with Section 17 support. PG stated there were ongoing issues around those experience domestic violence and would pass on contact details with their support worker dealing with families.

PL asked if there was much contact with EU national families? PG said that it was limited as most of their work was with refugees, but if individuals had children then they would likely be eligible for support and could attend a drop-in session to ascertain what support could be provided.

1. **Presentation from Brushstrokes on NRPF Research**

KB gave an update on the NRPF research project being undertaken by Brushstrokes. The main aim is listen to those with NRPF conditions and develop responses and pathways of support as well as raising awareness in the wider sector. There a four focus groups and an advisory group including those with direct experience that meets five times a year. The Project will release 4 briefing papers for frontline practitioners.

Two papers have been released – those with EU pre-settled status and families with NRPF and children with SEN. The latest covers adults with social care needs.

The key challenges identified included lack of awareness from Home Office staff and amongst individuals around what support is available, challenges when clients have no fixed address and statutory agencies passing responsibility.

At the end of the Project it is intended to produce a Charter and recommendations for best practice.

1. **Aston University Housing Research**

AB will give a full update at the next meeting but will circulate further details.

1. **Any Other Business**

No issues raised. AH highlighted that if any groups would like to present at a future meeting then this can be arranged.

**Next meeting- Thursday 18th April at 10am**