

## **The Mayor's Migrant & Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP)**

14.00 -16.00

27 July 2020

### **Attendance**

Hannah Boylan, GLA (Chair)  
Mark Winterburn, GLA  
Tom Rahilly, GLA  
Silvia Perin, GLA  
Ayham Alsuleman, GLA  
Bella Kosmala  
Ramiye Thavabalasingam, GLA  
George Hanoun, GLA  
Moushami Aktar, MOPAC  
Lisa Doyle, Refugee Council  
Michael Boyle, ELATT  
Barbara Drodowicz, East European Resource Centre  
Leticia Ishibashi, Focus on Labour Exploitation (FLEX)  
James Banks, London Funders  
Mihai Calin Bica, Roma Support Group  
Mulat Haregot, Evelyn Oldfield Unit  
Anna Yassin, Glass Door  
Zrinka Bralo, Migrants Organise  
Sugirthakala Gobiratnam, Middlesex Tamil Academy  
Marcela Benedetti, LAWRS  
Mahlea Babjak, Migrants Rights Network  
Nadia O'Mara, Liberty  
Nafisah Graham-Brown, ELATT

### **1 Welcome & Minutes**

1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting were **agreed**.

1.2 Mark updated that Rita raised the feedback from MRAP regarding the Windrush Lessons Learned Review with the Home Office at the last London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) meeting.

### **2 Update from London Asylum Group**

2.1 Lisa provided an update on the London Asylum Group (LAG). Lisa updated that at the last LAG meeting in June the COVID-19 response was discussed, including existing concerns around the use of hotels to accommodate people seeking asylum, which has become more acute since lockdown measures were put in place. Lisa highlighted the importance of getting people the services and support they need, especially in light of the recent stabbings by an individual seeking asylum accommodated in hotel in Glasgow.

2.2 Lisa highlighted that the Home Office policy to pause evictions from asylum accommodation came to an end on 30 June, with many people now unsure of when they will need to leave their accommodation. There are concerns across various service providers about the impact of having a large volume of evictions taking place in a short timeframe on their services.

2.3 Mark noted that there are a large number of people staying in hotel accommodation that has been procured at short notice in haste, and there are concerns from some civil society organisations about poor standards at these hotels.

2.4 Mark explained that that Reed in Partnership signpost newly recognised refugees to other services during the 28 day move on period. They have developed a form to enable them to register civil society support in this system, to enable relevant signposting to core. This form has been shared with MRAP previously but Reed in Partnership are looking to update their systems and have stressed that returning the form can be accompanied by a conversation to ensure the relationship works for the individual civil society organisation.

2.5 Members raised the following points:

- Whether it is possible for newly recognised refugees to get in touch with Reed in Partnership if they haven't had contact. Mark noted that there is a specific email address to contact for this.
- That Reed in Partnership's remit is limited primarily to signposting, and does not include advocacy on behalf of individual service users, for example.

**Action:** Members to share any concerns about poor standards at hotels (both specific cases and practices in place) with Mark and Lisa so that these can be raised with the Home Office.

**Action:** Mark to share stakeholder template for Reed in Partnership's referral mechanism and their contact details.

**Action:** Members to get in touch with Reed in Partnership if they are interested in being part of their referral mechanism and share details of this opportunity with their networks.

**Action:** Mark to share Reed in Partnership's contact details for getting newly recognised refugees back in touch with them ([Positive.Moveon@reed.co.uk](mailto:Positive.Moveon@reed.co.uk)).

### 3 Update from Homeless Migrants Advisory Panel

3.1 Anna provided an update on the Homeless Migrants Advisory Panel (HMAP). The terms of reference set out that this is an expert group to advise the work of the Life Off The Streets Taskforce, the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) and the GLA's internal teams on issues related to street homelessness among non-UK nationals in London. The This group will link to the Migrant and Refugee Advisory Panel (MRAP) through a Lead Member who will be part of both panels.

3.2 HMAP is currently focused on the move-on of non-UK nationals from GLA hotels, which is dependent on MHCLG funding. Casework is being conducted while people are in the hotels, including on the EU Settlement Scheme and other immigration advice, as well as other issues. Hannah noted that HMAP are meeting regularly, given the speed at which this work is moving currently.

3.3 Members raised the following points:

- Whether there are any plans for those who have left the UK but plan to return. Anna suggested this is discussed outside of this meeting.

- Concerns around hidden homelessness, as well as people becoming homeless and returning to homelessness. These issues are not currently covered in HMAP but it is important they are addressed as they will become an significant concerns once hotels stop running.
- The need for employment support for this group, and help setting up a bank account and getting a national insurance number.
- Whether those who have decided to leave hotel accommodation and return to the streets have been discussed at HMAP. There are concerns about data collection policies at some hotels, including GLA hotels, and this has put some people off from staying in these hotels.

**Action:** Hidden homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless to be agenda item at next HMAP meeting.

**Action:** Members to share any further suggestions for agenda items for HMAP with Hannah, Anna and the other lead members.

**Action:** Feedback and/or minutes from the next HMAP meeting to be shared with MRAP.

**Action:** Anna to look into concerns around data collection practices at some GLA hotels. Mike to share details of specific case referred to.

#### **4 Future Immigration System**

4.1 Hannah provided a summary of the Government's Immigration Bill. Hannah note that the Mayor has spoken out against the legislation, raising specific concerns around the sweeping powers given to the Home Secretary, the entrenchment of the hostile environment and the impact of the proposed version of the points-based system, particularly in the context of COVID-19. Whilst more details of the health and care visa have been provided, this still largely excludes social care workers. Hannah also highlighted that the GLA welcomed the Home Secretary's statement on the Windrush Lessons Learned Review but are disappointed that no immediate changes are being made, for example on the NHS health surcharge. These concerns are being raised directly with the Home Office through LSMP and other forums.

4.2 Nafisah updated on NATECLA's recent exploratory meeting with stakeholders to discuss the impact of the immigration bill for ESOL learners and to consider lobbying priorities. Attendees included the Association for Labour Providers, to provide an employer perspective. Nafisah is looking for clarification from the Government on two key points:

- What the language requirements set in the Bill mean for existing ESOL classes; and
- What this means for access to ESOL provision.

4.3 Members raised the following points on the Immigration Bill:

- A reliance on visas tied to one form of employment risks employer financial abuse.
- Concerns that civil society cannot prepare for the changes as it is unclear what they will look like in practice.
- Concerns around more people be subject to the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition and more people becoming more vulnerable.
- A need for clarity on pension rights, as well as education and children's rights.
- A need for clarity for people who may change immigration status, for example by gaining a qualification.

- Immigration will now need to be included in advice on welfare, housing, employment rights and relationship breakdown in civil society services for European communities in London, but there are concerns that mainstream advice providers will not be able to cope with this change.
- More needs to be done to ensure migrant communities feel able to access policing and the criminal justice system.
- Concerns around the new requirement of comprehensive sickness insurance (CSI) for naturalisation creating a barrier for those who have settled status through the EU Settlement Scheme, which does not require CSI, from becoming British citizens.
- The need for clarification on the immigration status of EU citizens who moved to the UK before their country of origin joined the EU.

4.4 It was also raised that the Domestic Abuse Bill recently passed but that migrant women's rights were not recognised in the bill. This, as well as the Immigration Bill, put migrant women in a more vulnerable position.

**Action:** Members to get in touch with Nafisah if they would like to attend the next NATECLA-organised meeting on the Immigration Bill.

**Action:** GLA to ask Home Office for clarification on whether EU citizens who moved to the UK before their home country joined the EU still need to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme.

**Action:** Members to share further thoughts and concerns about the Immigration Bill with Hannah and Mark.

## 5 London Recovery Board: Missions

5.1 Tom provided an update on the London Recovery Board, a partnership across London which includes the GLA, London boroughs, London Councils, civil society, business, and health services, among others. The focus of this board is to look at how London comes together for recovery after COVID-19, not only in terms of health, but also in tackling inequalities highlighted by the pandemic. The Government is not part of the partnership, but the Minister for London sits on these meetings. Tom noted that this board sits alongside the London Transition Board co-chaired by the Mayor and the Housing Secretary, which will come to an end at the end of 2020.

5.2 Noting that there are also a number of cross-cutting priorities for this board (including health and equality and inclusion), Tom asked for members thoughts on the eight proposed missions for the board:

- Skills and employment
- Green new deal
- Digital connectivity and inclusion
- 15 minute cities
- A strong civil society
- A robust safety net, a good standard of living and the tools to thrive
- New deal for young people – the leaders of the future
- No one's health suffers because of who they are, where they live or if, how and where they work

5.3 Members raised the following points:

- Whether there will be any interaction between the new board and existing groups such as MRAP. Tom emphasised that the new board does not want to replicate work that is already happening, and there will be dialogue between the two groups, as well as a route for escalation.
- How the board will engage with communities who have been left out of previous engagement. Tom noted that a core objective of the engagement work is to ensure the board is hearing from groups of Londoners who are often less heard than others.
- Who represents civil society on the board. Mark shared the membership list with members. Tom noted that wider engagement work will help capture a diversity of views from civil society, and the civil society representative should be seeking the views of other civil society organisations.
- The importance of ensuring the proposals and strategies of this board leading to concrete action, and that there are sufficient resources for this work. Tom emphasised that there will be clear aims for short-, medium- and long-term delivery, and partner organisations including the GLA will all be planning their resources for this.
- The need to consider how the board will consult and whether the right representatives are included, e.g. from the homelessness sector and representation from BAME, refugee and migrant communities.
- The importance of identifying and mapping the concerns and needs of different communities in London to inform the work of the board.

**Action:** Members share with Hannah and Mark any specific communities for the London Recovery Board should engage with.

**Action:** Members to share any further thoughts on the London Recovery Board's missions with Tom, Hannah and Mark.

## 6 Modern Slavery & Labour Exploitation

6.1 Leticia provided an update on labour exploitation in the context of COVID-19 and the implications of the Leicester garment factory incidents. There are concerns around secure reporting, with the migrant workers in Leicester specifically mentioning their fear of reporting because of their fear of deportation. This is a widespread issue not unique to Leicester. Leticia suggested the Mayor advocates for the Metropolitan Police to implement frontline changes to their approach to labour exploitation cases by not focusing on immigration status.

6.2 On the new immigration system, Leticia noted two key issues:

- The EU Settlement Scheme won't capture everyone applicable, which will lead to a rise in people with insecure immigration status, and thus make them more vulnerable to labour exploitation; and
- Concerns around temporary migration schemes such as the seasonal workers pilot for agriculture, as these migrants face restrictions on changing sectors and have NRPF. These schemes are more likely to generate exploitative conditions, and where workers stay for shorter periods, they are more likely to have a lower understanding of their rights.

6.3 Leticia also highlighted that a new single enforcement body for employment rights in the UK is being set up, which will have a significant impact on UK labour law. This is an opportunity to advocate for better resourcing of inspectors, as well as for secure reporting, clear and more

straightforward systems for workers to access justice, and an increase in proactive inspections to identify abuses at an earlier stage.

6.4 Moushami noted that Anti-Slavery Commissioner has called for businesses to ensure their supply chains are free of modern slavery beyond Modern Slavery Statement. MOPAC are keen to see what more can be done in this work, for example through the Mayor's Good Work Standard.

6.5 Moushami noted that the Modern Slavery Board and Human Trafficking Foundation's modern slavery working group are running alongside each other. The board is looking to break down key performance data by borough, and MOPAC are working on the future of the board, which will reconvene at a later date. Hannah noted that there will be greater interaction between the Modern Slavery Board and LSMP so any concerns can be reflected directly.

6.6 Mark noted that there is a national referral mechanism for the UK to identify and support potential victims of modern slavery. The Modern Slavery Unit at the Home Office would like to have a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of the current programme.

**Action:** Moushami to feed back Leticia's asks to MOPAC.

**Action:** Moushami to update on the Deputy Mayor and Anti-Slavery Commissioner's meeting.

**Action:** Moushami to confirm when the new policing and crime strategy will be open for consultation.

**Action:** Modern Slavery Unit's national referral mechanism to be discussed at a meeting, and members interested in taking part to get in touch with Mark.

## 7 AOB

7.1 Hannah noted that there are currently a few spaces to fill on MRAP and Mark and Ayham are looking at the diversity of membership and would like to reach out to organisations that would be good to include on this panel.

**Action:** Mark to share minutes from LAG and HMAP to members who would like to receive them.

**Action:** Mark to contact members about other organisations who may be interested in sitting on MRAP.