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**COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership**  
**SCOTTISH STRATEGIC CO-ORDINATION GROUP**  
**Operations Sub-Group**

The meeting was held on **Friday 6 July 2007 at 10am in COSLA's new Glasgow Office on Buchanan Street.**

**AGENDA**

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|--|-------------|
| 1. Welcome and apologies                           | 10.00-10.05 |
| 2. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising | 10.05-10.15 |
| 3. New Asylum Model update                         | 10.15-10.30 |

OPERATIONS MEETING 6 JULY 2007  
CoSLA STRATEGIC MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

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| 4. Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme | 10.30-10.40 |
| 5. Section 4 contracts transition                        | 10.40-10.50 |
| 6. Move-on issues for New Refugees                       | 10.50-11.15 |
| ▪ Accommodation  |             |
| ▪ Support  |             |
| 7. Lead Professional Model                               | 11.15-11.30 |
| 8. Childcare provision by BIA at Brand Street            | 11.30-11.50 |
| 9. AOCB  | 11.50-12.00 |
| 10. Next meeting:  |             |

### Minute of Meeting – 6 July 2007

1. **Present:** Martin McCallum (BIA), Margaret McDonald (GASSP), Shafiq Mohammad (YMCA), Joe Brady (SRC), Wafa Shaheen (SRC), Mhoraig Green (CSMP: chair & minutes), Ron Culley (CSMP), Karen Fagan (BIA), Catherine Grant (GCC), Anne McDonald (NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde)
2. **Apologies:** John Donaldson (GCC), Gary Sweeney (BIA), Colin Mitchell (BIA), Lesley Ann Ballantyne (GCC), Maria Walker (GCC), Lis Welsh (BIA), John Short (IOM), Derek Mitchell (CSMP).
3. **MG opened meeting by** welcoming members and updating them on developments in the Strategic Migration Partnership. These include a widened remit to include issues such as migration from the A8 and a new policy officer post which is currently being recruited for.

### Previous Minutes.

4. All members did not have copies of the minutes. Minutes of the previous Operations group and the April NAM group should be re-circulated. **Action MG.**

### New Asylum Model update

5. KF provided an update on the New Asylum Model and performance to date. The process is now to be referred as 'Asylum casework'.
6. KF reported that not many applicants had requested a case-owner of a specific gender, but all requests received had been accommodated. KF has had discussions with Croydon re this issue and asylum seekers may be informed of their right to request a case-owner of a specific gender by BIA in future. CG asked if UASCs were also able to request case-owners etc of a specific gender and KF indicated this was the case.
7. There was some discussion around the issue of Chinese nationals absconding. It was agreed that it would be useful for SRC and BIA to meet with other agencies working with Chinese community to discuss this. **Action: JB and KF to arrange to meet.**
8. There was also some discussion around the need for early notification of negative decisions from NAM so that people can be supported to access s4 support and make referrals to IOM. KF said she would be happy to share this information where possible.
9. There was some discussion around health screening in Glasgow. There was concern that people with health problems are having to travel to Liverpool for screening. The possibility of having screening provision in YMCA Glasgow was raised, and AM said that NHS Greater Glasgow would speak to YMCA about

providing a service from a room in YMCA. SM said YMCA welcomed discussion on this, but pointed out that while some people were now referred surgery in North Glasgow, they had a contractual obligation to refer people to A&E when required.

### **Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme**

10. MMcC pointed out that the enhanced VARRP package had ended and the reintegration package was now worth £1000. MMcC confirmed that an IOM representative was still coming to the reporting centre at Brand Street.
11. SM reported that YMCA was no longer providing the 'Options' project, which provided people with independent information on VARRP. This project had ended at end of May.

### **Section 4 contracts transition**

12. SM reported that the transition had happened smoothly from YMCA's point of view and had not affected the numbers they support. MMcC confirmed that all M&Q properties were transferring to Angel Group ownership unless there were exceptional circumstances. The majority of clients have been able to remain in their existing accommodation.
13. There was some discussion around ongoing issues with s4 support. JB raised the issue of the s4 team rejecting applications which did not include a full address because the applicant was homeless. MMcD said that GCC now aims to continue to accommodate individuals who have been sharing accommodation with their family but who have a separate claim - Gary Sweeney has been advised of this. The issue of pregnant mothers in s4 accommodation was also raised – this is an issue because the newborn child will be accommodated under s4. MMcC said there was a new team dealing with s4 applications in Dover and he was expecting feedback on how they were working. It was agreed that it may be useful to have s4 decision making regionalised.

### **Move-on issues for New Refugees – Accommodation & Support**

14. MMcD reported back on the work of the move-on group set up by a previous meeting. They have arranged with Brand Street to get early notification of positive decisions. From 25 June Brand Street email accommodation providers, health and education on the day a positive decision is served. SM reported that this allowed YMCA and other accommodation providers to make initial referrals to Refugee Support Team and a referral form has been developed. SM said that SUNRISE should then be able to pick up ongoing advocacy issues. SM said there would be 1-2 more meetings of the group where SUNRISE and other relevant stakeholders would be invited.
15. WS updated the group on the issues faced by SUNRISE clients. She welcomed the referral process, but pointed out that homelessness was a growing problem

amongst new refugees because of general lack of housing. JB pointed out that the lack of suitable housing was leading to vulnerable people being put into unsuitable housing and that many new refugees were being forced to leave Glasgow despite being integrated. WS said that although SUNRISE had a remit to support integration and help people into employment, her team is being forced to concentrate all their resources on housing and benefits advocacy. There was some discussion about how these issues could be resolved, focussing on issues around the NASS 35 backlog and the need to engage with DWP.

16. There was some discussion around the remit of the move-on group. It was established that while the original remit was for the accommodation provider to focus on developing a referral protocol there was now a pressing need to look at move-on issues more widely, including access to mainstream benefits. This need would be increased by the throughput from NAM and legacy case review.
17. It was agreed that CSMP would take the lead in making sure that a longer life move-on group is established to address the breadth of issues that new refugees are facing. SM pointed out that it would be important for this group to have clear terms of reference. **Action: MG to arrange meeting, draft terms of reference and circulate before meeting.**

#### **Lead Professional**

18. CM updated on the Lead Professional. There will be three posts – 2 qualified social workers and 1 unqualified worker. These posts have now been advertised within GCC and there is significant interest. They are likely to be filled by August. The posts will be focused on information gathering and preparing an objective report. All applicants are being advised that they will not be in a position to influence BIA decision making. Families will see the report before it is submitted to BIA and it was pointed out that this may raise confidentiality issues within families.
19. There was some discussion around the lead professional communications strategy. Positive and negative misconceptions about the posts are becoming widespread. Some members felt that there was a need to communicate publicly about the role before September.

#### **Childcare provision by BIA at Brand Street**

20. JB raised the issue of childcare provision by BIA at Brand Street, and pointed out that there was a particular need for newly arrived asylum seekers who do not have people in Glasgow they can trust to look after their children. KF said that people were advised not to bring children with them to appointments at Brand Street if possible, but acknowledged this may not always be possible. Lis Welsh (BIA) has been looking at the feasibility of providing childcare at Brand Street, and there have been discussions with YMCA Glasgow who run a childcare service. KF confirmed that BIA were considering the practicalities and cost of YMCA's proposal.

**Glasgow City Council strike action**

21. Under AOCB CG advised the members that GCC was entering a strike period and that this may affect residential staff involved in looking after UASC.

**HMiE report on Glasgow services for asylum seeking children**

22. JB raised the HMiE report on GCC services for children. He welcomed the report and said that he hoped there would be a formal action plan to respond to resource issues, strategic issues and funding. CG confirmed that GCC were looking into this.

**Next meeting**

23. The next meeting will be held on 3 August 2007, 10.00-12.00 at COSLA's Glasgow office.