

A strategy for the collection of this data needs to be produced and a decision made on the statistics and information we are hoping to capture from each region. All agreed that the data set needs to be simple and the Network needs to be clear on how the information will be used. The costs and numbers data will be used to facilitate discussions with central government regarding reimbursement of costs or resolution of cases.

All acknowledged that some local authorities may be unwilling to disclose sensitive information and it was agreed information could be anonymised. It was also agreed that the client summary form could be used by some local authorities to monitor who they are supporting and how much this is costing, however we do not require this information.

We agreed that the following fields were the essential areas:

- Numbers and costs
- Number of referrals received
- Nature of immigration status (i.e. managed migration or asylum)

Although there was also debate regarding including nationality, it was felt that this information could be misused.

Although communication will be through nominated lead contacts it was suggested that many Local Authorities do not have a dedicated team that can retrieve this information easily. Agreed that steering group members would act as regional contact points in trying to collate information.

Olvia is the contact person named on the form and will be co-ordinating responses.

- *OF to circulate draft of data collection template*

3. Independent Asylum Commission Public Hearings – Feedback

The Independent Asylum Commission (IAC) held an inquiry in Manchester on 17 October and Peter Olnier attended representing the NRPF Network. The inquiry was well attended, informative and focused on destitution including issues for Local Authorities. The conference was also recorded on Human Rights TV.

A press release was produced with valid key points being made. The NRPF Network was also mentioned in the press release.

Experiences and views were shared at the inquiry by people who have been through the asylum process with the question being raised of why people choose to remain in the UK, destitute rather than return to their country of origin.

Peter Olnier distributed the NRPF Network briefings and leaflets during his presentation.

4. Future funding for the NRPF Network

The BIA is considering the funding proposal and is looking at possible funding of £37,000 this year. Last year they contributed £39,050. Actual funding amount to be confirmed within next few weeks.

The Communications Officer position for the NRPF Network has been advertised and Olvia has received a few applications. This will likely go out to re-advertisement.

5. Suzelle Dickson, Home Office, Domestic and Sexual Violence Unit

Suzelle Dickson from the Home Office attended to hear from the steering group regarding main issues concerning women with NRPF fleeing domestic violence. Suzelle has requested information regarding:

- Issues around housing
- Estimated costs and number of cases
- Responsibility of support in lead up of application

- Domestic Violence – prosecution may hold up a decision
- Consistency and transparency of decision making
- Question of why women do not want to return to their Country of origin even if travel was paid for. (Could this be a question of shame/stigma after the break up of a relationship)
- Domestic Violence concession – women should be encouraged to apply
- Are there particular caseworkers working on an individual case?
- Burden on Local Authorities in large towns and cities this does not rest equally across the regions.

Suzelle stated that the BIA have confirmed that any woman who falls within MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference), her application for leave to remain under the Domestic Violence concession, will be fast tracked. Suzelle also stated that the Home Office are working with the Department of Works and Pensions and the BIA to look at solutions.

It has been noted that the lines of communication between Local Authorities and the BIA need to be more open and detailed.

As the Local Authorities are not the individual's legal representative this can cause problems with information sharing.

- **SD** to send factsheet to Olivia who will then circulate to the Steering group

6. Terms of Reference for Steering Group

The NRPF Network Steering group are to look at the terms of reference, these need to be clearer and maybe reduced to 6 key points of what the role of the group is.

- Sharing information;
- Sharing practice guidance;
- Training, Information and advice;
- Facilitating re-imburement of the costs of supporting people with NRPF;
- Achieving greater consistency between local authorities; and
- Working with government departments to raise the practical and policy issues.

7. Regional / local updates

7.1 Yorkshire and Humberside

A date has been set for the first Yorkshire and Humberside regional meeting and invites have been distributed to Adult and Children's Social Services. Representatives from the Counter Terrorism and the International Organisation for Migration are also attending. The meeting will take place at the regional BIA headquarters on 5th December 2007.

Leeds are also in the process of developing a team dedicated to NRPF.

7.2 London

The London regional meetings have become quite well established and the numbers continue to grow. The group have been exploring issues around subsistence rates and how these vary throughout London Borough's. The group are also looking at

- Terms of reference - completed
- Bench marking
- Consolidating best practice across London

The next meeting will take place on 20th November and a Community Cohesion Officer from the BIA will be attending to discuss the relationship between BIA and local authorities.

7.3 West Midlands

The West Midlands regional group are putting together an agenda for their next meeting on the 20th November. Focus will be on

- Costs
- Section 4 consultation

The group will feedback at next steering group meeting.

7.4 East of England

It has been noted that NRPF numbers in this region (Luton) are very high yet are all within Children's services and no dedicated team to deal with issues.

- **OF** to put Richard (Luton) in contact with the East of England regional group

7.4 South of England

NRPF is becoming more of an issue in this region and Kent are taking forward regional work. Region to identify correct people for meeting (maybe restrict to Local Authorities)

7.5 North West

The North West region have a sub regional group that have met on a few occasions, these meetings have now been restricted to Local Authorities.

The next meeting will take place in December or Early January and a lead Solicitor for Local Authorities will be invited. Other work, which needs progress, is the strategy.

8. Any other business

8.1 Working clients

Paul raised the question of terminating support for clients who are in work.

8.2 Joint Council

Joint Council briefing at Westminster meeting scheduled for 15th November re: unaccompanied care leavers and asylum seekers and the costs of supporting. Nine local authorities providing the joint council briefing. Mary/ Colin to provide feedback at next meeting.

8.3 Dates and locations of NRPF Network Steering Group meetings

Future meetings shall be organised in different regions to remain fair on the members who have to travel far.

The next meeting is to be held on 21st January 2008 at 12.30pm, Committee room 8, Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester M60 2LA.