



**NRPF Network Steering Group  
16<sup>th</sup> July 2009  
Islington Town Hall, London**

**Present:**

Olvia Fellas (Chair)  
 Rosemary Muffit (Newcastle CC)  
 Bill Davies – Manchester CC  
 Simon Wadsworth – Croydon Council  
 Janice Grant – Kent CC  
 Ted Brown – Bradford MBC  
 Henry St Clair Miller – Islington Council  
 Ian Beattie – LGA  
 Lorraine Ayensu – Bristol CC  
 Carey Baff – Birmingham CC  
 Jonathan Price – NRPF Network (Minutes)

**Apologies:**

Peter Olnier – Birmingham CC  
 Sheila Ross – Leicester CC  
 Lynda Lawrence – Sandwell MBC

Notes	Action points
<p><b>1. Introductions and Apologies</b>            Peter, Sheila and Lynda sent their apologies.</p>	
<p><b>2. Minutes and Matters Arising</b>            Olvia and Ian sent a number of letters to Lin Homer on behalf of the NRPF Network and the LGA on a number of NRPF policy concerns. The UKBA are supportive of Network activities but will not provide funding for NRPF cases supported by local authorities. They hope to resolve NRPF cases, partly through Local Immigration Teams (LITs). They are supportive of the NRPF Connect project.</p>	
<p><b>3. Communications Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A8/A2 conference in Cardiff</li> </ul> <p>Conference was held on 8<sup>th</sup> July. 75 delegates attended event. 140 expressed interest in attending the event – more than expected. Feedback was generally positive, but delegates complained about the venue being cramped, noisy and hot.</p> <p>Jonathan suggested that the next conference looks at where we are at with</p>	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ADASS/ADCS</b> Jonathan, Olivia and Janice met with the co-chair of the ADASS/ADCS Asylum Taskforce to discuss the relationship of the Asylum Taskforce and the NRPF Network and how to put adult's issues on the agenda. NRPF to be raised as issue to the ADASS Executive; Jonathan to prepare briefing for this.</li> <li>• <b>Communications Strategy</b> As discussed in the last meeting, Jonathan is to develop a communications strategy to outline how we can work with organisations in the field and share knowledge and information. Jonathan to circulate communications strategy for SG comments.</li> <li>• <b>Membership data</b> Ted questioned whether we could charge organisations for being members of the Network. Olivia said that this may be something we need to consider in the future if we are unable to secure funds to support the network.</li> </ul> <p>Carey wondered whether there would be a possibility of having a two-tiered membership – for local authorities and voluntary sector organisations. Jonathan said this would be quite difficult to enforce. Olivia added that the purpose of the Network was to involve all stakeholders involved in supporting NRPF clients, whilst remaining a representative body for local authorities.</p> <p>Currently, membership is 1289 and divided into regions as follows: London (34%); West Midlands (13%); Yorkshire and Humberside (10.5%); East of England (8%); South East (8%); Wales (8%); East Midlands (6.5%); North West (6%); South West (4%); North East (1%); and Scotland (1%).</p> <p>Membership levels in different regions shows we need to do more to publicise our work in the North East and Scotland.</p> <p>Membership is divided into sectors as follows: local authorities (60.5%); voluntary sector (29%); NHS (4%); Police (3.5%); central government (1.5%); other (1.5%).</p>	<p><b>JP to circulate comms strategy</b></p>
<p><b>4. IVU DV proposals (and letter to minister)</b> No Recourse voluntary sector campaign group have rejected IVU proposals and they are currently sitting with ministers. NRPF Network originally said they would trial the scheme. We have not been kept informed of developments with the proposals and will draft a letter to ministers asking them how they will proceed. Jonathan will draft and circulate for comments.</p>	<p><b>JP to draft letter and circulate</b></p>
<p><b>5. National Asylum Stakeholder Operational Forum</b> NASOF has been established as a subgroup of NASF (National Asylum Stakeholder Forum) as a partnership of organisations addressing operational issues in supporting asylum seekers, which Olivia will sit on. Olivia is currently the only local authority representative and highlighted this as an issue.</p> <p>Carey wondered how you would get other authorities involved and how you could make it representative. Olivia suggested that they target LA representatives in key dispersal areas.</p>	

**6. Department of Health Ordinary Residence Consultation Submission**  
 Rosemary said that NRPF hadn't been covered at all in the guidance, which was an important omission.

Jonathan agreed and summarised the main points covered in this consultation response: lack of acknowledgement of NRPF as group supported under s21 NAA and associated disputes over ordinary residence. Importance of Sch 3 in determining assessments and impact on support provided. Worries over how healthcare rulings are said to impact on social services ordinary residence decisions. Worries over blanket statements in regards to FACs – not applicable to NRPF cases. Jonathan to circulate response.

Jonathan also said it was regrettable that we didn't know about the consultation sooner. Olivia highlighted the importance of sharing information when it comes to consultation responses and other policy issues.

**JP to circulate response.**

**7. NRPF Connect – Project with I&DeA funding**  
 Henry gave presentation on the NRPF Connect project and developments since the last meeting.

Henry outlined the key partners in the project – DWP, I&DeA, UKBA, Local authority advisory group.

He outlined the benefits of the system:

Efficiency savings

1. Reducing number of cases supported, ensuring eligible cases are resolved.
2. Increased resolution of cases in partnership with UKBA – CRD, enforcement and removal
3. Local authorities better able to resolve cases supported through improved case-working practices

Accountability

1. Knowing who is being supported and why and what the real costs are
2. Not losing sight of those who remain at risk in the UK – keeping children safe from harm, protection of vulnerable adults
3. Fraud prevention

Consistency of Practice

1. Standardising the way we work, learning from our experiences and holding that information
2. Making use of GC technologies
3. Upholding statutory duties

Informed Strategic Development

1. Capturing LA experiences, real figures, real numbers
2. Putting NRPF firmly on the UKBA's radar – particularly visa overstayers.

He outlined the technological elements of the database and how this relates to GCSx technology and finally considered timelines for the completion of activities and the tasks advisory group members need to complete:

1. Join up to the NRPF Connect Community
2. Find out your Council's level of Government Connect Compliance.
3. Provide comment on the standard data collection spreadsheet.
4. Assist in the development of system requirements and attend workshop with

**CB, TB, BD, HM to complete tasks**

<p>the UKBA. 5. Complete data collection spreadsheet once format and scope agreed.”</p> <p>Ted highlighted the political argument in favour of the database – that the database fills a gap where there has been so little strategic management of this issue. The UKBA should be driving this as we are providing information that makes their work easier. He also highlighted the technical difficulties as the only stumbling block.</p> <p>Janice questioned the data protection requirements of the database. Henry said that GCSx was the secure data sharing mechanism but will also make further enquiries in regards to this.</p> <p>Ian wondered whether he could use the spreadsheet to collate data from LAs to present to UKBA in relation to prioritising LA supported cases for CRD. Carey said that Birmingham had a spreadsheet and that she would send this to Jonathan. Jonathan said that we had developed contacts and spreadsheets as part of the costs and numbers exercise and would talk with Ian about how they could share resources to gather this data.</p> <p>Bill said that LAs may get tired of submitting data. Henry said that it was essential to capture only the necessary information to avoid fatigue and to ensure that the system is usable and that caseworkers/social workers can use the database to manage their cases, not only to record them.</p>	<p><b>HM to check</b></p> <p><b>CB to send info to JP. JP to discuss with IB regarding research.</b></p>
<p><b>8. Regional NRPF Networks Terms of Reference</b> Olvia highlighted the importance of establishing ToRs for the regional networks to summarise their aims, governance, membership and responsibilities, particularly how these relate to those of the national NRPF Network.</p> <p>Olvia to circulate potential ToRs for comments.</p>	<p><b>OF to circulate</b></p>
<p><b>9. Feedback from meeting with CRD</b> Ian and Olvia met with CRD representatives from the UKBA to explore the possibility of prioritising LA supported cases in the CRD. CRD agreed to consider the proposal and would report back in the near future. .</p> <p>The LGA Asylum, Refugee and Migration Taskgroup have requested that UKBA prioritise local authority supported cases in the next tranche of CRD.</p> <p>LGA Asylum Taskgroup and the ADCS are developing a proposal for an alternative model and funding for UASC Leaving Care support to submit to UKBA for their consideration.</p>	
<p><b>10. Regional Updates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North East Newcastle CC receiving some challenges to decisions based on Slough, where human rights arguments are being used. Also seeing an increase in visa overstayers.</li> <li>• North West Manchester CC numbers of single adults are reducing.</li> <li>• West Midlands</li> </ul>	

<p>Birmingham CC facing difficulties getting Section 4 accommodation for clients. JR received on 7-year rule application clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• London Simon Wadsworth has taken over from Bill Brittain as the regional chair. IOM presented to meeting and impact of economic downturn was discussed.</li> <li>• South East Proposal to SESPM put forward to develop regional network.</li> <li>• Yorkshire and Humberside Meetings going ahead regularly. Ted is now co-chairing meeting with Andrew Crowley at Rotherham. Ted doing outreach in the region to identify relevant persons from all 13 local authorities who should be represented at the meeting.</li> </ul> <p>Ted also mentioned a social care publication that might be useful to all. Ted will circulate a copy of the publication.</p>	<p><b>TB to circulate</b></p>
<p><b>11. AOB</b> None.</p>	
<p><b>12. Date of Next Meeting</b> Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, Manchester</p>	