

Report of: Director of Communities and Environment

Report to: Executive Board

Date: 21 October 2020

Subject: Annual update on the strategic approach to migration in Leeds

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- This report provides Executive Board members with an update on the delivery of **migration activity** in Leeds, giving an overview of progress made against existing and new migration work, and follows on from the 24 July 2019 Executive Board report where the recommendation to receive a further update on progress in 2020 was approved.
- Recent **migration trends information** is detailed under item 2.6. In summary, it highlights an overall increase of 4300 people (0.6%) new to Leeds since 2017. This increase is largely due to an increase in arrivals from non-accession countries. The level of **workers from non-accession countries arriving each year remains higher** than the accession group. The number of new migrant **workers from EU accession countries has decreased**. The gender split is equal: half of newcomers are men and half are women. The most common age groups for new arrivals to the city are in the 18-24 and 25-34 year olds.
- The **Leeds Strategic Migration Board** continues to provide governance for the city on migration, bringing together key partners to address issues and ensure support for the key migration programmes described in this report, as well as strengthening links to opportunities presented through the work with wider communities and in our priority neighbourhoods.
- A number of our projects in the city received **national funding** from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which are now either

complete or nearing completion. Details on these are provided in the main body of the report. They have contributed to delivery of citywide partnership priorities, activities and delivery of services to vulnerable migrant communities. Unfortunately, with the pandemic, some funded activities were paused and no further funding has been released in the current financial year.

- Over the last two years, the council has led on the development of an **ESOL strategy** for Leeds. This strategy has been consulted on and adopted by the Leeds Strategic Migration Board. This strategy will further be approved via the delegated decision process.
- In autumn 2019, the Home Office announced changes to **Asylum Dispersal** providers with the Mears Group being awarded the **new contract** to deliver the Yorkshire, Humber and North East region accommodation and Migrant Help were awarded the AIRE (Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility Assistance services) contract that supports the application processing activity. Recent data nationally has shown a significant increase in new arrivals to the UK claiming asylum and the need due to pausing of dispersal for further initial accommodation provision across the country using hotel sites including Leeds.
- Leeds is currently supporting 390 people under the **Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)**, including resettling of 38 young people. As this programme now reaches its 5th year we are expecting to see the first cohort moving on from the scheme and processes have been put in place nationally to allow them to make applications for 'indefinite leave to remain'.
- The **UK's future skills-based immigration system** is expected to be implemented in 20/21 and key changes are that this system is applicable for both EEA and non-EEA nationals. As with the current system for non-EEA applicants, most applicants must have a job offer at an appropriate skill level and speak English. There is a salary threshold recommendation of £30,000 that is to be applied.
- The **EU Settlement Scheme** was introduced in 2018 as part of the implementation of Brexit and the UK exiting from the EU and is soon to come to an end (June 2021). The Home Office recently released a further round of funding of £8 million for voluntary organisations and Local Authorities to apply to support vulnerable people apply to access the EU Settlement Scheme. Leeds City Council is awaiting the outcome of its submission.
- Whilst many services and projects have been **impacted by the pandemic**, the council and partners have continued to support all vulnerable communities' access services, including those that are **destitute and have no recourse to public funds**, in line with the national guidance ensuring everyone was provided with accommodation and support. Leeds has undertaken some pilot work and submitted a funding bid to MHCLG to support those impacted with provision of temporary accommodation.
- This report provides updates on contributions made by services to responding to Covid-19 throughout, and acknowledges that the impact of the pandemic is **disproportionately impacting on vulnerable households and migrant communities**.
- **Our migration strategy** for Leeds core principles focus on an approach that is strategic, coordinated and inclusive. This strategy sets out our long-term direction on

migration, which aims to ensure people who migrate to Leeds are able to establish their lives quickly and successfully.

- Our work in responding to the challenges faced by vulnerable migrant communities aligns with the **Council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities.**

2. Best Council Plan Implications

- The work carried out under the Leeds City Council's migration programme helps the city to achieve its ambition of being a welcoming and compassionate city. It underpins the work highlighted in the Best Council Plan 2020-2025 **'Tackling poverty and reducing inequalities with the city's Inclusive Growth, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Climate Emergency declaration as key drivers and locality working as a core principle'**. It supports the Stronger Communities Benefiting from a Strong City programme by focusing on the people who are new to Leeds, and ensuring that their interests and contributions are included in all aspects of city life. Our approach also supports collaborative partnerships across services to identify and address the key issues that create inequalities between our migrant population and the rest of the population of Leeds.

3. Resource Implications

- Our approach to migration in Leeds provides **opportunities to build upon, and create effective partnerships and responses to ever changing need and to target our work more effectively based on local intelligence and evidence.** The infrastructure established over the past few years has helped strengthen our response to emergencies such as the pandemic, supporting partners across the council and third sector.

Recommendations

- a) Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this update report on migration, on activity taking place and endorse the approach adopted within our migration strategy for Leeds.
- b) Executive Board is asked to note the responsibility of the Director of Communities and Environment and the Executive Member for Communities for leading this work through the Council's Stronger Communities Programme.
- c) To note the responsibility of the Chief Officer for Communities in leading the work of the Leeds Strategic Migration Board, and the Migration Team for providing strategic and operational direction for the city.
- d) To acknowledge the significant contributions made by services and partners to supporting vulnerable households and migrant communities that were disproportionately impacted by Covid 19.
- e) To receive a further annual update in 2021.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide Executive Board with a **comprehensive overview on migration activity that has been delivered across the city** over the past year, taking into account contributions in response to the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable migrant communities by the council during this pandemic.
- 1.2 To provide information on key **migration population trends**; national policy changes including the approach in place to support EU citizens living in Leeds; the new national asylum contract; and activities across the council in relation to supporting new and emerging communities.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Our vision is for Leeds to be the 'Best City' in the UK, one that is compassionate and caring with a strong economy, one that tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that exist. We want Leeds to be a city, which enables people to prosper, with equal opportunities and where everyone has a fair chance. A city with safe, strong and resilient communities, where people from all backgrounds are able to take part in all aspects of community life. A city that is varied, vibrant and proud.
- 2.2 Migrant communities are **valuable contributors to the city's economy, culture and diversity** and Leeds aspires to ensure people are **welcomed and supported**. Leeds has a long-held commitment to support asylum seekers and refugees and is dedicated to being a city of sanctuary.
- 2.3 The term '**migration**' covers a **whole range of communities** from economic migrants to those seeking asylum, fleeing war and persecution. Diversity in Leeds has continued to enrich the city with having 169 nationalities and over 104 languages spoken.
- 2.4 The Council recognises the challenges in ensuring fair access for all in the city and we continue to strive to **tackle inequalities** in a number of ways including through a strategic, coordinated and inclusive approach to migration **encouraged by the Executive Board**, to ensure that the voice of migrant communities is at the heart of the migration agenda in Leeds.
- 2.5 Migration is a key theme in the Council's approach to locality working and its work in priority neighbourhoods. Our focus in the Communities team is wide ranging from supporting universal activities that take place in all communities through to more targeted work in those areas where communities are perceived as being less engaged in the life of the city. The service plan incorporates a strategic approach to migration; tackling inequality, poverty and disadvantage; building community cohesion, community engagement and development; leading on Prevent and counter extremism and work with the Third Sector.
- 2.6 **Key migration trends in the last 12 months in Leeds.** The local population was estimated at 789,200 people in 2018, an increase of 4,300 people (0.6%) since 2017. Immigration levels have risen a little, according to three different measures (most recently shown from 2018-2019 according to DWP/National Insurance Number sources, but also between 2017-2018 according to the official immigration estimate and GP registrations from overseas, both supplied by the Office of National Statistics). In addition, there was an increase in the number of temporary migrants (short-term migration and international students) welcomed to the city in 2017 than in 2016. **Migration trends show increases in many of the larger nationality groups arriving into Leeds**, in particular, there have been a noticeable increases in arrivals

from Ghana, India and China. Romania, with almost 1200 arrivals in 2019, remains the top country of origin, with around 350 more arrivals than India (the next largest country of origin).

- 2.7 Different measures of immigration suggest that between 7,000 -12,800 **new long-term immigrants** (immigrants who are expected to stay more than a year) arrived in Leeds in 2018 (according to three sources: ONS estimates; DWP national insurance numbers; and GP registrations). The estimate from ONS is at the middle of this range, with GP registrations providing the top figure and DWP the lower figure. Only one data source (DWP) has published figures for 2019 – showing just over 8,200 new arrivals to Leeds.
- 2.8 **Net migration** to Leeds was around 4,100 in 2018 – an increase on the previous year's figure. ONS expects immigration to fall in future resulting in a lower net migration figure of around 900. This projection assumes no changes in policy or international conditions. Importantly, it does not incorporate anticipated changes relating to the UK leaving the EU. Around 3,700 short-term migrants visited Leeds in 2017 to work or study for up to 12 months, a small increase on the previous year. Three quarters of these short-term immigrants were short-term students with the remainder being short-term workers.
- 2.9 **The reasons for migration. Work** - The overall number of new migrant workers arriving in Leeds increased by almost 1,150 people to nearly 8,250 in 2019. This increase is due to an increase in arrivals from non-accession countries. The greatest change in individual nationalities compared to 2018 has been an increase of around 350 arrivals from Ghana.
- 2.10 The level of **workers from non-accession countries** arriving each year remains higher than the accession group with around 6,100 arriving in 2019, and increase of almost 1,450 on the previous year. This group is dominated by arrivals from India, Italy, Ghana and Spain.
- 2.11 The number of new migrant **workers from EU accession countries** fell to around 2,150 arrivals in 2019, around 250 fewer arrivals than in 2018. This group is predominantly composed of Romanian and Polish arrivals.
- 2.12 New arrivals to Leeds came from over 100 different countries of origin. EU nationals account for over three quarters of new arrivals. Romania remains the top country of origin overall with 1,173 arrivals in 2019. India remains in second place (832 arrivals), followed by Italy (481 arrivals), Ghana (447 arrivals) and Spain (402 arrivals). Arrivals from Poland continue to fall, and Poland no longer features in the top five nationalities arriving in Leeds in 2019.
- 2.13 The gender split is equal: half of newcomers are men and half are women. The most common age groups for arrivals is 18-24 and 25-34 years.
- 2.14 **Study** - There were just over 10,900 **international students** registered at a Higher Education institution in Leeds in the 2018-2019 academic year, an increase of almost 1,700 overseas students on the previous year. Over 80% came from outside the EU
- 2.15 Joint work continues with Leeds City Council and Migration Yorkshire to encourage improved data and intelligence from government departments. Migration Yorkshire is leading on conversations with data sharing with the Home Office.

- 2.16 The UK was put into **lockdown on 23 March 2020** in an unprecedented step to attempt to limit the spread of coronavirus. The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a new highly infectious disease. Older people and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are considered at more high risk. At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19, however many trials are taking place.
- 2.17 As a result of this pandemic, the Council and partners have had to change the way services are delivered to reduce face-to-face activity and move to digital and telephone provision. Throughout this report, we have referenced the approach taken on the wide range of migration work and the actions taken in response to COVID-19.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 **Leeds Strategic Migration Board** is our governance arrangement for the city. Over the past year, the board has focused on a number of key themes and received updates on progress being made in **delivery of migration activities**. The migrant health board has provided updates on health and wellbeing services, including impacts of NHS charging regulations and improvement activity to increase take up of immunisations. Services have provided updates on activity to support take up of EU Settlement Scheme including those that are in the 'looked after children' cohort. The Leeds Migration Partnership shared with the board their priorities. The board also received a report on research undertaken looking at impacts of poor housing on health. Safer Leeds provided information on the Leeds approach to hate crime and on impacts for migrant communities. Mears and Migrant Help during the last year took on new contracts with the Home Office and attended the board to share an overview of their work in supporting new asylum seekers with accommodation and processing their applications. The details from all of the above projects are provided in the report along with updates on the work of migration activity by services locally.
- 3.2 The Leeds Strategic Migration Board has supported the links between the key migration programmes described in this report and the opportunities presented through the work in priority neighbourhoods where the issues of migration can be felt more acutely from both migrant communities and settled communities. The board has shared good practice; lessons learned and encouraged development of key projects.
- 3.3 **Leeds Migrant Health Board**. This Board, which connects to the wider Leeds Strategic Migration Board and reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, has made progress on the action plan, with a number of particular achievements as follows.
- 3.4 **Response to 'The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 regulations**. A multi-agency workshop was held to help co-ordinate action in Leeds in response to these regulations, as a result of which all sectors of the Leeds healthcare system continue to work collaboratively to deliver a compassionate whole systems approach to minimise the adverse effects on communities in Leeds.
- 3.5 The Hospital Trusts have started to implement the Regulations, initially with those holding a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) and moving on to those with potential personal liability. It will provide more opportunity to inform vulnerable individuals of the changes and the support that is there to assist them.
- 3.6 'Safe Surgeries' training has been delivered to primary care staff, the objective being to reduce barriers for migrants seeking primary care and reduce future pressure and

costs, both on the individual and on secondary care. Once trained, practices commit to delivering an accessible and welcoming service to migrants (covers staff attitudes, processes and service free at point of delivery), including visible information to re-assure them of their universal entitlement to free primary healthcare, regardless of ability to pay.

3.7 Leeds Migrant Health Board partners have also developed a system where migrants, who are subject to charging, can obtain and present a formal letter from the Third sector, which entitles them to negotiate a manageable repayment plan.

3.8 **Infection Control** the Leeds Migrant Health Board has worked with partners to increase the identification and treatment of Latent TB by screening. They are using criteria of 16 to 35 years old who have lived, born or visited for 6 months the World Health Organisation high incidence countries and set a target to achieve a 'Year on year increase in the number of latent TB cases identified as a proportion of individuals tested.

3.9 The 2018 baseline measure of 536 individuals tested for latent TB, out of which 88 individuals were found to test positive (**a 16.4% success rate**) has been increased from April-Sept 2019 where 326 individuals were tested for latent TB, out of which 104 individuals were found to test positive (**a 32% success rate**). This indicates that to date, in the first two quarters of 2019 there was an upward trend in the success rate of identifying latent TB in newly arrived migrants.

3.10 Secondly, the Board aimed to achieve a year on year increase in the proportion of children receiving childhood vaccinations, including Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) in areas of high migrant population (Leeds 8 and 9). In 2018 the approximate uptake and baseline across this locality for both MMR 1 and MMR2, was 70%. The target improvement measure for 2019 was that 90% of children would be immunised for both MMR1 and MMR2. The following table shows the actual performance achieved on this measure using latest available data.

3.11 **Proportion of children immunised for MMR1 and MMR2 in lowest performing localities in Leeds (Q4 2018/2019)**

Locality	MMR1 %	MMR2 %
Burmantofts & Richmond Hill	96.40	92.80
Chapeltown	90.80	79.20
Harehills	90.40	78.40

3.12 This shows that all three lowest performing localities have met/exceeded the target set for MMR1 in this timeframe. However, Chapeltown and Harehills have not yet achieved the 90% uptake target for MMR2 for this period, although it is up from the baseline and showing improvement. These areas have a highly mobile population and high migration rates which means that children may have their first immunisation, but possibly moved out of the area by the time the second is due, so have only partial protection against the three components of the vaccination

3.13 **Health and Housing** Low income and poor living conditions in the UK have been documented among recent migrants – for example, poor nutrition, sub-standard and overcrowded housing in areas of deprivation, where many newly arrived migrants live (Robinson and Reeve 2006).

- 3.14 In 2018, migrants were almost three times more likely to be in private rented accommodation than the UK born. The largest growing housing sector in Leeds is the private rented sector, which also has the poorest quality housing in the city. It is a priority for Leeds City Council to regulate the quality of housing in the private rented sector, along with maximising the growth of affordable new homes.
- 3.15 The Leeds Migrant Health Board has completed a piece of insight research to identify migrants housing needs. It has also contributed to a consultation day run by NHS Leeds CCG to assess the needs of Syrian refugees. Both pieces of work are now being used to inform follow on activity.
- 3.16 **Improving mental health** Local studies in the UK and systematic reviews of studies across European countries have pointed to higher rates of depression and anxiety among asylum seekers and refugees, compared to the national population or other migrant categories (Raphaely and O'Moore 2010). The Leeds in Mind Mental Health Needs Assessment (2017) identifies people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities and Asylum Seekers as particularly prone to poor mental health. Particularly vulnerable sub groups within these are children and women who have suffered sexual and physical abuse.
- 3.17 As an initial response, the Leeds Migrant Health Board has improved monitoring arrangements to assess migrant access to Better Together, a frontline community health development initiative, which supports holistic health; Rainbow Hearts, a project designed to support female Asylum Seekers and One You Leeds, which offers healthy lifestyle support.
- 3.18 Whilst these initiatives are helpful in terms of improving general mental health support for migrants, more serious mental health issues in this community are also of concern
- 3.19 Stigma and reluctance to admit to poor mental health is a barrier for many migrants. Plans to develop more substantial and targeted work in alignment with the new Leeds Mental Health Strategy are supported at a strategic level, embedded into all relevant services and will ensure progress is sustainable. Although COVID-19 took precedence at the May 2020 Leeds Migrant Health Board meeting, a presentation of the Mental Health Strategy and detailed discussion of the contribution of the Leeds Migrant Health Board will take place as soon as possible in 2020.
- 3.20 **Controlling Migration Funded Activities.** The Controlling Migration Fund (CMF) was launched by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in November 2016 to help local authorities mitigate the impacts of recent migration on communities in their area. £100 million was available for local authorities across England. Successful bid applications funded through this programme in Leeds have now, either been completed, or are reaching the end of their contractual period (further details of projects below), with no further CMF funding having been released.
- 3.21 The **Migrant Access Project 'Plus' (MAPP)** was commissioned to Touchstone who have successfully delivered an initial two year contract and a further nine month extension up until 31 March 2020. This project aimed to improve access to services in key target wards with higher levels of new migrant communities and alleviate pressures on settled communities. Year one focused on improving access to health services in Armley and work with private landlords in Holbeck to improve housing conditions. A further three satellite areas were agreed in year two which were Little

London/Hyde Park, New Wortley and Beeston Hill with the theme of increasing community engagement. The extension funding was to allow further time to meet delivery targets in year 2 satellite areas.

- 3.22 Those trained as Migrant Community Networkers under this project have been welcomed to the Councils wider Migrant Access Programme. In February 2020, the Councils MAP programme celebrated 10 years of a project that was initially funded for 18 months. During this time, over 200 Migrant Community Networkers have been officially trained and equipped with the skills and knowledge to support new migrants in better accessing services.
- 3.23 Touchstone collaborated with Voluntary Action Leeds to manage the finances of the 60 UChoose projects (participatory budgeting) that were successful; however, three have been postponed due to COVID-19. 268 people attended one of the UChoose voting events last year at Bridge Community Church and voted for 25 projects to fund. Over 1500 Leeds citizens have participated during this round and two spin-off new-year celebrations and six spin-off project extensions working with Leeds Community Foundation. There is extensive buddying on Uchoose projects, with 30 people actively engaged in the role. For example, the Armley walking group is now operating without MAPP input, and is attracting members who have had no engagement with Touchstone. Similarly, discussions at drop-ins reveal that MCNs are liaising with other migrants.
- 3.24 The MAP project is currently delivering a virtual weekly drop-in. Over the last 12 months, 34 services from the public and voluntary sector have provided training and consulted with 351 MCNs through the MAP drop-in.
- 3.25 Partners value MAP as a conduit to engage with new and settled communities by offering training and consultation, which resulted in the MAP facilitating 14 partner projects last year. Through two of these projects, the team supported eight community groups to deliver 9 community engagement events about Immunisations in partnership with Leeds Community Care Partnerships and Modern Slavery with Safer Leeds and Hope for Justice (5 have been postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis). MAP has supported a further eight community led projects through a round of funding. A women's group was set up in partnership with Public Health in a priority neighbourhood (Cliftons and Nowells) that saw women coming out of isolation and where further signposting to address concerns took place as well as participating in activities. Further sessions have been postponed due to COVID-19.
- 3.26 The Migrant Access Programme is a great example of an initiative that has enabled the council to work closely with Touchstone and other partners to support new migrants settle in the city. The success of such a model has been replicated in Wakefield, and enquiries from other cities in the UK have been received.
- 3.27 Over the past ten years, the project has expanded and grown and has seen many Migrant Community Networkers pursue their goals such as gaining employment, including success within the council; volunteering has helped to build confidence and capacity; many have chosen to develop their own community groups and/or supplementary schools. This project has helped bridge the gap between new and settled communities and services, building positive and trusting relationship.
- 3.28 A final independent evaluation report on MAPP has been completed by both the University of Leeds and Leeds Beckett. The report highlights that in aiming to improve integration between newcomers and the settled community, stakeholders cited the

training provision and use of positive stories as important elements in building cohesion.

- 3.29 **Online Welcome to Leeds websites.** Leeds City Council commissioned local charities Touchstone and Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network (LASSN) to develop The Leeds Transition guide and the New to Leeds online guides. These websites are now currently being brought in house, will go live early 2021 and will be maintained and updated within the Council. The guides provide people who have recently moved to Leeds from another country, with a wealth of important information on how to access a variety of services that are available in the city.
- 3.30 **The Leeds ESOL Strategy.** There is a wide range of English language provision in Leeds, from informal conversational clubs run by volunteers, to formal provision offered by the college. The landscape however is fragmented, complex and difficult to navigate; the lack of coordination is presenting key challenges for learners, providers and the city. The research project has recently been completed and highlights the needs, challenges, and opportunities around: existing provision; learner barriers; funding challenges; supply and demand mis-match; co-ordination; quality of teaching and learning resources; learner progression; building independence, resilience and inclusion and partnership working
- 3.31 The approach has been shaped collaboratively with ESOL providers, tutors and key stakeholders in the city. Our vision is for Leeds to have a comprehensive, well-coordinated, high quality ESOL/Learning English provision, which will enable all adult residents, for whom English is not a first language, to attain the English language skills to allow full participation in employment, career progression, further and higher education, access to services and community life. The Leeds approach is underpinned by 5 key priorities:
1. Improve availability and accessibility to ESOL provision;
 2. Develop provider co-produced ESOL progression pathway/s;
 3. Improve access to training, networking and resources available to tutors and volunteers;
 4. Improve pathways for ESOL learners into employment, vocational, further and higher education; and access to services;
 5. Establish and develop strong collaborative partnership working approaches.
- 3.32 These five priorities will be used to stimulate the combined efforts of services, organisations and activities across the city. At the heart of the approach is a cross sector multi-disciplinary collaboration, to respond to the complex ESOL landscape and address the challenges faced by learners and the sector.
- 3.33 **Language Hub.** The Language Hub project offers grants of up to £5000 with the aim of bringing new and settled communities together through activities to share their skills, build relationships and have opportunities to practice conversational English. The £200,000 grant scheme has funded 27 projects up to March 2020. 726 people have participated in the projects, which have begun delivery, so an average of 36 participants per activity.
- 3.34 Funded organisations report a **range of outcomes in relation to improved language** skills such as learning new vocabulary, increased confidence to ask questions and discuss views and opinions, and increased understanding of cultural aspects of the local area. Projects have also reported a **reduction in isolation of participants** with a desire to get more involved socially, improved communication

between new and settled communities, more connections with the wider services offered by the organisation and in the local area and the creation of new friendships often across ethnicities, nationalities and age groups, breaking down negative stereotypes and tensions. Many projects have reported **improved outcomes in health and wellbeing** with access to fresh produce and ideas to cook healthy and inexpensive meals, improvements in mental wellbeing and improved understanding of the value and significance of diversity. A number of projects have reported increases in people attending other activities such as film clubs and swimming, enrolling onto ESOL classes, and several participants gaining volunteering and work opportunities.

- 3.35 All projects have suspended face-to-face delivery due to COVID-19, but a number of projects are maintaining contact through phone calls, social media, online channels such as Zoom and printed materials issued by post. Several organisations in the Language Hub network are part of Leeds' volunteering effort to assist residents in need due to COVID-19. They provide invaluable evidence on the experiences of some of the most marginalised communities in the city.
- 3.36 Of the 25 projects delivered up to now, four projects are taking place in Priority Neighbourhoods: two in Cliftons and Nowells (gardening and cooking) and two in Lincoln Green (theatre and participatory filmmaking). Seventeen of the projects (68%) are in areas in the 10% most deprived nationally (IMD 2019) with five being in areas in the lowest 1%. Six projects are working specifically with women, and four provide opportunities for parents and children to learn together. 22 or 88% of projects are located in the areas of Leeds which experience above average levels of migration (evidenced by applications for National Insurance Numbers recorded during the period from 2011-12 to 2018-19). All applicants have demonstrated a need for activities, which benefit new and settled communities.
- 3.37 The majority of applications (17 in total) have come from community and voluntary sector organisations, with five applications from grassroots or organisations led by Migrant Community Networkers. Five applications involve partnerships between new and emerging groups and more established organisations.
- 3.38 **Community Connectors Project.** This project successfully recruited a Co-ordinator and five Community Connectors from diverse communities, all of whom had previous lived experience of being a new migrant to Leeds. This project was established to support new migrant households to connect with local services and existing communities with a focus on addressing concerns around housing, hate crime, community cohesion and health and wellbeing. By responding to these challenges, the aim was to help save costs to public services, unlock migrant capabilities, and increase capacity to promote a more integrated and socially cohesive society.
- 3.39 During a nine-month period August 2019 to April 2020, the project received 205 referrals (target was 100) of which 123 have been successfully resolved. Ongoing support is being providing to the remaining 82 open cases and support to services in dealing with complex issues, particularly in relation to immigration status and no recourse to public funds. As a result, this project is represented at the No Recourse to Public Funds Panel, which has successfully supported colleagues to make informed decisions.
- 3.40 The project undertook a two-week activity via the council's HUGO bus, taking it to five priority neighbourhoods offering free WI-FI and this was a huge selling point to local people who needed to apply for universal credit, bidding for properties and much

more. 103 of the above referrals were received during these two weeks and offered direct support to migrant communities who did not access services.

- 3.41 The project has **succeeded targets** outlined in the bid and will continue to take referrals during the pandemic. This unprecedented period further highlights **the need for such an initiative** to contribute a package of support to those marginalised groups seeking safety, support and integration into society. This in turn benefits many council services by maximising the support. This project funded until August 2020 has now been extended until March 2021 as the need for support with complex cases continues to increase where aspects of housing, safety and health cross service boundaries.
- 3.42 **Local Authority Asylum Support Liaison Officer (LAASLO)** This initiative led by Leeds Housing Services provides support to asylum seekers who receive a positive decision from the Home Office to settle in the city. Leeds Housing Options are currently working closely with Mears (the new provider) to help meet future accommodation needs of approved asylum cases.
- 3.43 For those that have received positive decisions, their asylum cases are supported by LAASLO officers, however, the challenge of providing housing advice/support to people who have received a negative asylum decision is a significant one, not least because people will not be eligible for housing assistance/allocation. The work in partnership with key third sector organisations such as PAFRAS (Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers), RETAS (Refugee Education Training Advisory Services), the Migrant Access Project, Abigail House, Department of Work and Pensions link workers and the Red Cross are essential to ensure that people continue to feel supported.
- 3.44 From April 2018 to March 2020 LAASLO and the wider Leeds Housing Options Service has assessed 235 homeless assessments for families and individuals leaving Home Office accommodation. Following the 28 day period after a housing assessment:
- 32% secured private rented
 - 20% secured hostel or supported housing accommodation
 - 23% went to live with friends or family while they waited for social housing with a priority banding
 - 3% secured social housing
 - 15% contact was lost and therefore unable to inform them of their housing outcome
 - 5% are still being processed and are open cases.
- 3.45 With regard to where contact was lost with customers, they have always received in-depth advice around renting in the private sector and referrals have been made to suitable accommodation such as hostels. Individuals will have been given a priority award for social housing. Engagement with the Leeds Housing Options Service is done in such a way that customers are very much encouraged to return for support if at any time in the future they need it as part of the service's wider prevention ethos.
- 3.46 During COVID-19, the **Council has gone above and beyond to ensure that its citizens are safe at this time**. It has supported the Government in every way it can to achieve its objectives to cope with the crisis as a compassionate city.
- 3.47 The council has a particular duty to support the homeless and rough sleeping community at this time. The Government has instructed local government to

accommodate all rough sleepers and people living in hostels with inappropriate shared living spaces.

- 3.48 Leeds City Council have accommodated 208 people since the beginning of the pandemic. 132 of these individuals have, or are at imminent risk of rough sleeping. To meet demand the council have had to source additional accommodation, this has included five hotels, private accommodation providers and the re-opening of supported facilities. The accommodation range includes 1 and 2 bedroom hotel apartments, standard hotel rooms and private provision of varying size. All accommodation is of a high standard. Access to accommodation is not limited to daytime hours; access is available 24 hours per day.
- 3.49 Placements into the hotels has moved quickly, anyone identified as rough sleeping or at imminent risk of rough sleeping has been offered accommodation as have those individuals living in communal/hostel living spaces. In taking this approach, the Local Authority has accommodated persons who are destitute or have no recourse to public funds. This is due to many charitable organisations being unable to resource and safely accommodate persons in night shelters and communal facilities.
- 3.50 Everyone placed in emergency accommodation throughout the pandemic is being supported in a number of practical ways. Food is being delivered daily to include breakfast provisions, lunch and a hot evening meal. Hygiene packs and clothing is also being provided. The wellbeing of those customers placed has remained a priority and our primary focus alongside the accommodation offer.
- 3.51 It is the intention that the Council will respond to every placement made with appropriate exit strategy for individuals, which will meet their short, medium and longer-term accommodation needs.
- 3.52 **Victims of Modern Slavery.** Governance arrangement for modern slavery have been established and a Modern Slavery Strategic Board reports to the Safer Leeds Executive. This board is currently working on developing a Modern Slavery Strategy for the city alongside developing initiatives with partners such as MARAC style arrangements for victims and training offers. An internal council working group is being established to ensure all front line services are equipped to recognise and respond to the issue.
- 3.53 Leeds City Council received funding for a pilot to deliver support to 'Victims of Modern Slavery'. This project provides **pathways for those victims of modern slavery** leaving the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) with a Positive Conclusive Grounds decision. Leeds is one of six local authority areas elected to take part in a pilot along with Croydon, Derby, Birmingham, Nottingham, and Redbridge. The pilot has now been completed and is being evaluated by the Home Office. Leeds supported around 60 victims of modern slavery during the pilot, which exceeded the other five areas. This was due to a contract being established quickly with Palm Cove who were ready to support clients and are established specialists in this field. As well as submitting quarterly performance reports, Palm Cove have agreed to submit a more comprehensive report outlining their perception of existing gaps for victims of modern slavery.
- 3.54 Key themes arising from the pilot included the need for housing upon leaving the NRM and supporting victims to move towards independence. Other strands include disruption of perpetrator activities and developing community support. **Strong links and referral pathways between the council housing services and Palm Cove**

have been established. Work is ongoing with Adults & Health and the Children's Social Work Services to finalise internal pathways for victims of modern slavery.

- 3.55 **Domestic Violence.** The Safer Leeds Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Team is continuing its work with migrant community organisations to upskill frontline staff to support victims of domestic abuse, particularly those who have insecure immigration status and No Recourse to Public Funds. Organisations working to attain the Domestic Violence Quality Mark include Leeds Refugee Forum, Refugee Council, PATH Yorkshire and PAFRAS (Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers). Others to receive training include RETAS (Refugee Education and Training Advisory Service), British Red Cross and the Gypsy Roma Travellers Team. A training session was also delivered to Migrant Community Networkers of the Migrant Access Programme.
- 3.56 In addition, as part of the team's MHCLG funded work, training was delivered across West Yorkshire, in partnership with Rights of Women – a women's charity helping women navigate the legal system and providing advice on family, criminal and immigration law. Two training sessions were delivered by a lawyer on **supporting victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds**, supporting EEA Nationals experiencing violence and the EU Settlement Scheme. This was very well attended by professionals across Leeds and West Yorkshire.
- 3.57 Other MHCLG funded work across West Yorkshire involved training 206 practitioners across West Yorkshire on supporting victims of domestic abuse who have no recourse to public funds.
- 3.58 Following the development of the NRPF Toolkit for front line practitioners, a guidance document around Local Authority Duties for victims of abuse with NRPF is being developed. The guidance aims to enable organisations who are supporting migrant victims of domestic abuse who are subject to a NRPF condition and have children or those who have care and support needs to ensure appropriate support is offered in the form of accommodation and basic living costs.
- 3.59 **Honour Based Abuse (HBA).** An HBA Steering Group has been established under the auspices of the DVA Board to focus work to tackle HBA. The group is developing a toolkit and guidance and ensuring HBA is integrated into workforce development programmes. Additionally, a quality Assurance programmes has been set up to appraise how services have responded to individual cases of HBA and Forced Marriage.
- 3.60 During Covid-19, Safer Leeds Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Team responded to migrant communities through a number of different routes:
- 3.61 **Public Awareness Campaigns** – The team's current local social media based DV campaign, as well as a national DV campaign, reminds victims that help is still available during COVID-19 and encourages people to contact services for help. The campaign aims to reflect BAME communities in the materials so that messages are relatable. One element of the local campaign encourages people to look out for abuse in other families and it is anticipated that this might help cases come to the attention of support/protection services where language may be a barrier for the victims concerned. The next phase of the campaign will target venues such as pharmacies and supermarkets to disseminate DV messages. Materials will be produced in accessible formats, using images or infographics instead of text wherever

possible.

- 3.62 Specialist Services – for victims, difficulties accessing services is likely to be exacerbated by the current situation where opportunities to get help are limited. The council’s commissioned service - Leeds Domestic Violence Service - is continuing to support people via phone, email and a daily on-line chat facility. The 24/7 helpline is available to anyone and Language Line can be used. They have a diverse workforce with a variety of language skills. They are currently providing clients with information about COVID-19 in multiple languages. In terms of perpetrators from BAME communities, the offer is limited but Caring Dads are continuing to work with BAME men via phone and video call during this pandemic. There is an initial offer of 3 sessions with the view to more if needed. Men with email access can be sent material on-line. In addition, Caring Dads have created short, self-help clips available on YouTube, which can be shared with the BAME Men.
- 3.63 **Communities up Close.** This research project was led by Migration Yorkshire aimed to better equip local authorities to anticipate and address the impact of migration at a neighbourhood level by better understanding residents’ experiences of life in communities affected by migration, proactively anticipate and resolve issues and share what is working well.
- 3.64 The research in Leeds was conducted during March 2019 to January 2020 in the Harehills South area. As part of the **locality working agenda**, the local Communities team were a key stakeholder that linked the researchers to people living and working in this area contributing to the overview provided by this independent research.
- 3.65 The research explored how those living and working in Harehills South understand the community to have changed as a result of recent migration. The report has highlighted a breadth of experiences and perceptions in the area, showing both the resilience, passion and character of the neighbourhood alongside the challenges experienced by a community that is densely populated, deprived and which continues to draw new migrant communities in.
- 3.66 Conversations with twenty-three residents of Harehills highlight the perceptions of residents living in an incredibly diverse area that has been the landing pad for migrants over decades, and which has big challenges related to poverty, housing, employment, crime, littering, transience and cohesion.
- 3.67 There is much to celebrate in Harehills South, an area of Leeds that has its own unique and very strong, sense of identity. People are, by and large, proud of the area, and this report hopes to celebrate this, while also thinking of ways that Harehills South might be supported to weather the economic and social challenges and changes that it faces.
- 3.68 Migration Yorkshire is currently preparing a toolkit that can be used to replicate this research.
- 3.69 **Further Funding Opportunity.** £8 million to help vulnerable people apply to the EU Settlement Scheme has been released and is further referenced in 3.23.9 of this report.

Other key initiatives and activities:

- 3.70 **Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) Outreach and Inclusion.** The council’s GRT Team make an active contribution in supporting Roma families through a number of

partnerships through weekly drop-in and home visits. They have strong relationships with schools and children centres and school clusters in order to bridge the gaps to universal services.

- 3.71 During COVID-19, the team have continued providing a service through a virtual drop-in and use of social media and are supporting 35 families per week. They have also, as a key partner contributed to Public Health England health messages and preventing myth sharing.
- 3.72 **Leeds Migration Partnership.** Leeds Migration Partnership (LMP) is led by the migrant third sector and facilitated by Leeds City Council. It brings together individuals, groups and organisations to meet, think and share information and ensure that the voices of migrants are heard and influence decision makers.
- 3.73 The partnership raises concerns and issues to influence change through three distinct areas. These are LMP information, which takes the form of a blog; LMP Operational Group – for people to share notable practice; and LMP Strategy Group that ensures the partnership has clear priorities and goals based on what is important to migrant groups.
- 3.74 LMP partners were active members in developing the strategic approach to migration for the city. LMP Strategy group used the themes within the approach to identify priorities that the partnership could deliver and these are Safety and inclusion; Housing; Health and Wellbeing; and Employment and Learning. Some key highlights of activities are below:
- 3.75 **Safety and Inclusion** included representation at key domestic violence forums, signing up to the Leeds Domestic Violence Quality Mark, which helps to identify and improve responding to victims of domestic violence, in turn ensuring appropriate and timely support is provided. Case studies are used to raise concerns and influence services for example, for victims of domestic violence with no recourse to public funds - work has started with Safer Leeds Partnership and West Yorkshire police to train Leeds Refugee Forum's staff to make the forum an official hate crime-reporting centre.
- 3.76 **Housing** included representation and involvement with the Leeds Homeless Charter; contributing to discussions to introduce selective licensing within Leeds, highlighting issues relating to the Home Office and Mears placing asylum seekers in temporary hotel accommodation. A number of partners were also able to provide some elements of support directly to people affected; contributed to the 'Welcome Pack' Mears use with new residents; migrants with no recourse to public funds are now included in the Homeless Forum action plan.
- 3.77 **Health and Wellbeing** included representation and involvement with the cities Health and Wellbeing Board, ensuring the experiences of people from migrant communities are included within decision-making and providing case studies to contribute to national campaigns such as influencing health care charges. They have initiated connections with Local Care Partnership lead to identify where LMP could add most value, influencing the Mental Health Strategy to ensure asylum seekers and refugees are considered within this; GP registration, shared health guidelines for working with asylum seekers and refugees, produced by a Lancashire trust with Director of Public Health.

3.78 **Employment and learning** the partnership is using case studies to demonstrate the complexity associated with people accessing work and learning opportunities; significant numbers of ESOL classes available across the city, partners share information about these on LMP blog and through MESH (Migrant English Support Hub).

3.79 **Information sharing** – statistics for using the LMP webpage and accessing the weekly blogs for the period **1May2019 – 30Apr2020**

- 16,000 users of LMP blog (up 43% on previous year)
- 100,000 page views (up 48% up 43% on previous year)
- 407 posts from across the city

The blog is still run entirely by volunteers, supported by £250 hosting costs from Leeds City Council each year.

3.80 There have been many opportunities and challenges in response to the COVID-19 pandemic for the migrant third sector and other partners. Many are able to provide some 'online' provision and contact by telephone by providing general support and checking in with clients and staff. Alongside have been providing immigration advice and completing applications; access to benefits and ESOL classes. All have been affected by availability of resources – for staff and service users for example the access to mobile phones; technology; data; Wi-Fi availability has been huge. 80 refurbished mobile phones were donated by the council and 10 laptops by Solidaritech.

3.81 As organisations have been affected, they have tapped into the council provision and partners are continuing with/introducing food parcels and hot meals. Some partners were able to apply for national and local funding to help respond to need during the current time, for example, partners have secured £4,000 in technology costs via 100% Digital and Police and Crime Commissioner which is allowing the distribution of more mobile phones, Wi-Fi dongles and data to asylum seekers. LMP are keen to be involved in the ongoing response to the pandemic and the recovery programme planning and delivery. The partnership has also supported Migration Yorkshire in setting up the **information Hub for migrant communities**. They host fortnightly meetings in an attempt to help people (via the blog) understand how to issue data to those without broadband, and conserve small amounts of data. They provide free Wi-Fi and hot meals to Garforth House, which is currently being used to rehouse destitute asylum seeking men. NRPf providers WYDAN (West Yorkshire Destitution Asylum Network) and LASSN (Leeds Asylum Support Seekers Network) maintained strong liaison with Temporary Accommodation Public Health team in the run up to the lockdown. NRPf providers, Leeds Community Homes, Abigail Housing have contacted the council for engagement around homeless (specially, NRPf and people experiencing DV) post lock-down.

3.82 **COVID-19 Helpline**. Leeds City Council has been working with Voluntary Action Leeds and local third sector organisations to provide **additional support** to ensure everyone is able to get the help they need. A coordinated approach to volunteering was introduced to deliver care to anyone in need across the city. Services from across the Communities and Environment directorate have developed systems needed to manage the calls received.

3.83 Volunteer Coordinator Hubs have been established for each ward across the city and are managed by third sector organisations. Colleagues and partners have worked

tremendously hard to **coordinate the referrals for help**, match them with volunteers and source the much needed food and prescriptions required by those who are self-isolating and those who are vulnerable and have no other means of getting these vital resources. The Communities team have and continue to support the hubs on a daily basis to overcome any issues arising.

- 3.84 A further need identified was for a culturally appropriate food package to meet the diverse needs of communities resident in Leeds. To address this need a process has been developed to add value to the existing COVID-19 food response. A central Cultural Food Hub has been established to respond to people with cultural food needs. Hamara is the organisation leading on this provision as well as operating as a Volunteering Hub.
- 3.85 **Communities of Interest Network.** This network has been developed to respond to COVID-19 by the council and Third Sector Leeds and a range of partners to understand the disproportionate or differential impact on inequality that is happening due to COVID-19. This includes starting to gather evidence of the impact on Communities of Interest some of which is evidence based and some is anecdotal. This mirrors work that is being undertaken by Public Health on wider health inequalities of COVID-19. This emerging evidence highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated social and economic inequalities and we need to understand further, what these impacts are on communities in Leeds. What it tells us so far mirrors national evidence and the local narrative that COVID-19 does have a disproportionate and differential impact based on where you live, your gender, your ethnicity and your job etc. For example, being unable to self-isolate due to insecure jobs and living in close proximity to each other.
- 3.86 Evidence gathered so far on the impact of COVID-19 on Communities of Interest is the experiential narrative from communities with evidence of real life stories. It also shows that there is overlap across many Communities of Interest and it is reflected in the ONS data published recently.
- 3.87 The community narrative reflects the diversity of the City. This builds on the fact that we **put people first**, and have a proud record of working together to deliver for everyone. This is not a comprehensive picture of all the differential and disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on inequality and the picture will continue to emerge during the recovery phase.
- 3.88 The work will continue to **build relationships** to help capture and sustain the best aspects of the joint response in Leeds over the longer term, to make a real difference for people and communities.
- 3.89 During this challenging time of COVID-19, it is essential to continue to ensure **accurate key messages** are circulated within our communities. The council Migration team produced a Languages in Leeds report to provide **evidence led recommendations of languages** to prioritise in COVID 19 communications response.
- 3.90 The councils Communications Team led a COVID-19 targeted Facebook advertising campaign to provide **'Stay home. Protect the NHS. Save lives'** translated messages into English, Arabic, Urdu, Romanian, Czech, Farsi, Slovak and Kurdish Sorani. This targeted digitally connected residents in the Harehills, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, Armley and Middleton Park wards with a 48,400 reach. Information was also made

available in a variety of formats to support wider services including West Yorkshire Police to support communications.

- 3.91 Leeds City Council established a small task and finish group led by Public Health with the Interpreting and Translation Team, Communities Team, Migration Team, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Outreach & Inclusion Team, Communications Team to provide translated and audio materials in 11 different languages.
- 3.92 There are three different videos which focus on: *spot the signs, handwashing advice and essential advice for households with possible COVID 19 infection* were translated into Polish, Romanian, Urdu, Arabic, Czech, Punjabi, Tigrinya, Farsi, Slovak, Kurdish Sorani and Bengali. Launched in 15th April these videos have been watched 5,843 as of 13th May 2020. The videos playlist are available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLggQFjpTLgplq0r7-nFO9mT6j8Yk2vKBt>
- 3.93 **International Relations.** Leeds continues to be a beacon for best practice at an international level. This has become increasingly important during the COVID-19 crisis, when physical inward and outward study visits are no longer taking place, but online exchange of best practice has allowed us to raise our profile internationally whilst learning from other cities around the world.
- 3.94 **EUROCITIES.** Over the past few years, Leeds has developed relationships and shared good practice as members of EUROCITIES. **Leeds won the EUROCITIES award for cooperation for its work on Leeds 2023** – this is the second time Leeds has won a EUROCITIES award since it re-joined in 2016.
- 3.95 Last year EUROCITIES delegates visited Leeds as part of the Culture Forum in October 2019 to focus on celebrating diversity through innovative cultural partnerships. Services across the council came together to meet delegates and take part in tours of council and city services.
- 3.96 More recently Leeds became Chair of the newly created working Group – **Children and Young People.** With the Child Friendly Leeds initiative high on the top of the list of priorities for Leeds City Council and its strong track record of celebrating and empowering children and young people, the city is working with other cities across Europe. The first working group was due to take place in Leeds in April but has taken place over webinar due to COVID-19.
- 3.97 Leeds continues to represent at the Roma Inclusion Working Group and has successfully contributed towards activity in sharing good practice to address inequalities for Roma. The meeting in March was due to take place in Turin but was postponed due to COVID-19 and was rearranged as a webinar that took place in June.
- 3.98 **Intercultural Cities Network.** The council continues to perform its role as a strategic organisation through consultation and partnerships with institutions on an **international level.** More recently, following an invitation to join the Intercultural Cities Network, discussions between the Leader of the Council, Executive Member for Communities, Chief Officer Communities and the Council of Europe, the Leader of the Council subsequently approved our membership of the Intercultural Cities Network and signed the Statement of Intent to join it in June 2019. The Network is led by the Council of Europe and exiting the European Union does not affect the membership of the City of Leeds or indeed any other UK city. There are currently seven UK cities to join this network and the majority are from our region. Leeds has received an initial

analysis in August 2020 and a follow on visit by the Council of Europe will be organised in 2021.

- 3.99 **UK's future skills-based immigration system.** Details of the future points-based immigration system are set out in the Government's policy statement on [the UK's points-based immigration system](#), to be implemented in 2021. Key changes are that this system is applicable for both EEA and non-EEA nationals. As with the current system for non-EEA applicants, most applicants must have a job offer at an appropriate skill level and speak English. There is a salary threshold recommendation of £30,000 that is to be applied.
- 3.100 The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill 2020, or the Immigration Bill, was introduced to Parliament on 5 March 2020. The Bill puts an end to the EU's rules on free movement, which will make citizens from the EU, the EEA EFTA states of Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, and their family members, subject to UK immigration controls. The transition period ends on 31 December 2020 so EU nationals still have free movement rights in the UK until this date.
- 3.101 As part of this agreement, EU nationals and their non-EU family members can apply to the EU Settlement scheme. EU nationals, who have been residing in the UK before January 2021, are provided with an additional 6 months 'Grace Period' and this means they will have to apply to the scheme before June 2021.
- 3.102 At the end of the transition (31st December 2020), EU nationals will have to secure a new immigration status under the new Skills Based Immigration System and successful applicants will be issued a digital immigration status.
- 3.103 In relation to EU nationals residing in Leeds, previous data provided by the Home Office was 44 000. However, recent data provided by the Home Office, estimates the number of EU nationals at 32,000. It must be noted that the numbers only focus on EU nationals, and do not include non-EU family members who must equally apply to the scheme.
- 3.104 According to the latest Home Office data, over 38,800 applications to the EUSS were made in Leeds, which is the equivalent of 113% of the estimated EU population in Leeds. However, this figure includes non-EU family members, which were not, included in the Home Office data in terms of eligible people residing in Leeds. This means that the numbers of people eligible to the scheme are likely to be much higher than data suggests.
- 3.105 A partnership approach across council services has allowed the coordination of different aspects of the EUSS implementation in Leeds. This has included information and briefing sessions to internal and external partners such as Heads of schools network. This opportunity linked a school cluster with large numbers of EU national pupils with the Home Office who visited Leeds and delivered two briefing sessions for parents. These sessions were attended by over 350 parents.
- 3.106 Leeds City Council also provided grant funding (a total of £20,000) to six local organisations to carry out EUSS outreach activity. During the period October 2019 to April 2020 the following has taken place:
- **35 awareness sessions:** including schools, community centres, major businesses and Universities

- **20 door-knocking exercises:** targeting specific locations in Harehills, Armley and Beeston. 1,185 households were visited.
- **10 online drop in sessions:** over **30 residents** benefited one to one remote support due to COVID-19
- **Training for OISC** (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner): 13 volunteers took part in the OISC training; they are now able to provide support and immigration advice to communities. Volunteers who took part in the training spoke languages including Polish, French, Romanian, Italian and Dutch.
- **Social media campaigns:** several of the organisations funded completed online awareness communication on social media. For example, a video was made in Czech to provide key information on the scheme and signpost people to the community hubs. The video had over **600 views**.
- **Promotion:** Leeds City Council EUSS posters were placed in over 50 cultural shops in Armley, Beeston, Harehills and Chapeltown.
- **Joint events:** Two EUSS and Windrush events in partnership with the Home Office and the French General Consulate took place: This event was organised by the Migration team and targeted particularly two communities: German and French as the Home Office shared concerns over the particularly low number of applications from these two communities. Organisations funded by the council also supported the event. The event was **attended by over 100 residents**.
- Overall, over 1,200 people of 35 different nationalities were engaged as part of this project.

3.107 Two organisations in Leeds continue to deliver on line support to EU nationals. This has proved difficult with delays in Home Office responses as they temporarily closed the resolution centre phone line in response to Covid19 lockdown. This situation impacts on vulnerable families who lack ID documentation and understanding of the system, in turn impacting on the organisations who are currently unable to meet face to face.

3.108 There is further concern that only 510 elderly residents in Leeds have applied to the scheme (65+ years old). Local organisations have also shared some concerns regarding parents not understanding that the scheme is open on an individual basis and applications for children are not being made. Leeds also currently has the highest number of applications from non-EU family members and further applications are expected.

3.109 In May 2020, the Home Office released funding for a further £8 million to help vulnerable people apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Charities and local authorities across the UK were eligible to apply. Leeds City Council made a submission, however, was unsuccessful due to significant take up of EUSS in the city above the level of predicted population. We are awaiting formal notification of any funding that has been allocated to organisations in the city.

3.110 **Windrush** - a Commemoration Event took place in August 2019 hosted by Leeds Lord Mayor, Councillor Eileen Taylor. Over 120 people attended, including many elders from the Windrush community in Leeds. The event included speeches from a number of local people from the community who shared their own and their family's experiences and memories of being part of the Windrush generation, but also in attendance was a serving soldier who travelled on the Windrush ship. Cllr Taylor, the first black Lord Mayor of Leeds, shared her own experience of being a member of the Windrush community and memories of arriving in Leeds from Jamaica in the 1970s.

- 3.111 The Leeds Windrush Trail was launched by The Lord Mayor, in conjunction with the Civic Trust to commemorate and celebrate the contribution the Windrush Generation have made to the city of Leeds. Launched at the beginning of Black History Month in October 2019, the Windrush Trail included 14 temporary blue plaques placed across the City to highlight the history, events and people from the Windrush Generation who have shaped the city. The community was asked to nominate people and building they would like to see receive one of the temporary blue plaques. The plaques were decided by a steering group led by Councillor Taylor and included representatives from the community. Fourteen plaques were agreed that included (Councillor Eileen Taylor, Leeds General Infirmary, Errol James MBE, Leeds Railway Station, St Clair Morris, St James Hospital, Reverend Nelson, Annette Francis (nee Liburd), Reginald Centre, Alan Herbert, Diana Philip, Grantley Bovell, Veryl Harriott and James A Sadler).
- 3.112 As part of **National Windrush Day 2020**, the council, in partnership with Voluntary Action Leeds hosted an event on line, which was well attended, bringing people together to celebrate and share stories. A further engagement event on the Windrush Compensation Scheme took place in August 2020 with Home Office representatives present.
- 3.113 **Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS)** Leeds to date, is supporting 390 people on resettlement, this figure is made up of babies born here, transfers, Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) and families through VPRS.
- 3.114 Leeds fell short on meeting its pledge to accommodate a further 90 people in 2019/20, due to Covid and a flight being cancelled at the end of March. This meant that Leeds accommodated 85 of the additional 90 pledged.
- 3.115 Following consultation earlier this year with the Home Office, Leeds pledged to accept an additional 50–60 individuals between April 2020 to March 2021 under the new title - UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) and this new scheme is a consolidation of VPRS, VCRS and where Gateway funding remains the same.
- 3.116 **Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme** Leeds met its pledge in March 2019 by resettling 38 young people under the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme.
- 3.117 A process has been agreed for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and put in place to ensure all families on resettlement apply for ILR, and Refugee Council are taking the lead for this process. As the first families arrived in October 2015, they will be applying in the summer of 2020.
- 3.118 The Clinical Commissioning Group undertook a research project and followed up in a report. This report highlighted the **need for ongoing development of citywide health and wellbeing support for refugees on resettlement** and other displaced people settling in Leeds. The Clinical Commissioning Group has agreed to contribute towards funding resettlement activity with the proviso that the funding is spent on family wellbeing.
- 3.119 Leeds City Council Resettlement have funded a part time therapist post for SOLACE (a Leeds based charity that provides psychotherapy and support to survivors of persecution). In addition, this is also match funded with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Children's and Families Wellbeing Project for a further year.

- 3.120 **The Resettlement Community Grant Fund** This fund is aimed at addressing isolation and assists with English language learning. Most recently, it has funded a 15-week Driving Theory course and a Family Summer Outings project.
- 3.121 A Theatre production called 'How to be Lucky' is about the life of a Syrian man who has moved to the UK. It has now been shown in 17 schools and colleges in Leeds and some schools have shown the play multiple times. All bookings, which were made for schools this summer, have had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. The Department of Work and Pensions have also been keen for their staff to see this play and have shared on two occasions in order to benefit staff understanding of this client group that they deliver a service to and provided positive feedback.
- 3.122 The Youth Group project 'Number One Youth Group' has grown from strength to strength with increasing numbers on a weekly basis. As well as discussions on topics such as knife crime and gangs, there have been many other activities throughout the year.
- 3.123 Discussions are currently taking place with Leeds City Council, Refugee Council and the Children Society to set up a girls group.
- 3.124 An agreement was made to fund a Boys Project, however, due to COVID-19; other methods of running this continue to take place, through making films. It is hoped that this, through a public relations exercise will support the understanding of the wider UK host community of Syrians and other refugees of the hardships and challenges they have faced. It is an opportunity to raise awareness of their journey.
- 3.125 Successful recruitment took place for a Family Liaison Officer and a Community Engagement Officer to join the team.
- 3.126 **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)** A Task Group led by colleagues in Children Services continues to bring together agencies from across the city to ensure UASC's needs are met. Leeds continues to participate in the National Transfer Scheme and leads in the region in terms of good practice. The scheme included young people moving to Leeds from London and the South East. Leeds has also welcomed young people who are part of the 'Dubs' scheme to offer sanctuary to unaccompanied young people who are in Europe and a small group of unaccompanied refugee children who have been rescued from Libya by UNHCR through the VCRS scheme.
- 3.127 At a recent regional UASC meeting the Home Office UASC transfer team, based in Croydon, joined the meeting by conference call and praised Leeds for their dedication in understanding the plight of the UASC situation in Libya and within Europe. The approach and responsiveness of Leeds Children's Service across the region was further acknowledged by the group and thanks was expressed regarding our offers of support and advice to colleagues in neighbouring authorities. Current figures show that Leeds is supporting 53 UASCs (compared to 63 in the previous year) under the age of 18 and this number has significantly reduced due to firstly, some are now over the age of 18 and secondly, the council would normally receive approximately 1 UASC a week, however due to 'closed borders' the numbers have significantly reduced. There are 123 care leavers (compared to 99 in the previous year) and this has considerably increased due to some turning 18 in the last few months.

- 3.128 In May 2019, Local Authorities received notification from the Home Office on them having concluded the USAC funding review and of changes to be implemented. The decision taken is to provide an uplift on rates currently paid at £71, £91, and £95 (all per USAC per night) to £114. These changes have now been implemented.
- 3.129 Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been no planned arrivals but the service has received two sporadic arrivals in the last three months. The numbers are significantly lower to previous arrivals. Support for UASCs has been positively received with a personal adviser who has been able to dedicate support during the pandemic.
- 3.130 **Asylum Dispersal Contract.** In January 2019 the government announced that the new asylum dispersal housing contract for the Yorkshire and Humber region had been awarded to Mears Group for 10 years (until 2029). A 'transition' period took place between the old and new contractual arrangements in both accommodation and support and advice to be able to implement the new contract. This transition period with G4S ended on 01 September 2019 at which point Mears became operational. The new contracts split the provision of accommodation from application support.
- 3.131 Migrant Help were awarded the contract for the Advice, Issue Reporting and Eligibility Assistance services (AIRE). This is a single integrated and national service for asylum seekers. All calls, no matter what the issue, will go to one single number to be assessed, where interpretation can be accessed. As well as providing support with the application process Migrant Help will pick up any problems with asylum accommodation, liaise with the accommodation provider (Mears) and address maintenance issues within agreed timeframes.
- 3.132 The numbers of asylum cases in Leeds has only slightly increased in the last year with approximately 850 individuals accommodated in the city. As application processing returns to normal the expectation is that we will see some fluctuations with new arrivals and people moving on having been granted refugee status.
- 3.133 Since September 2019, hotels in our region have been used on occasion, and this includes Leeds. The Home Office have had to take this measure due to the initial accommodation at Urban House in Wakefield being at capacity. Whilst in the hotels, asylum seekers have been supported by Mears as well as local support being provided by NHS, Leeds City Council - Adults and Public Health, Children's, Communities and the voluntary sector to ensure that safeguarding and our duties have been adhered to.
- 3.134 The Home Office have put in place a number of operational changes to the asylum process due to Covid-19. These measures include a pause in carrying out face-to-face substantive asylum interviews. Locally, Mears have provided an update on their support to service users in Leeds including regular contact, provision of mobile phones to those shielding or socially isolating, and messages of social distancing in relevant languages.
- 3.135 Leeds City Council is working closely with Mears to influence policy to better support our service users. A protocol has been produced to enable the accommodation provider, Mears to make informed decisions on any future procurement of properties for use under the asylum contract.
- 3.136 In February 2020, Leeds City Council responded to the National Audit Office study into asylum and accommodation support and highlighted the city's experience of

Mears contract delivery.

- 3.137 Migration Yorkshire continues to facilitate regular meetings between Mears, Migrant Help, the Home Office and local authorities across the region. These meetings aim to ensure the contracts are managed positively for partners, communities and asylum seekers across our region.
- 3.138 Regular engagement with Prevent has continued following incidents that have occurred across the world. Training has increased public confidence and provided better safeguarding within communities. Discussions are currently taking place on translation of key messages.
- 3.139 **Connecting Opportunities.** The project has been operating since July 2017, and currently funded until June 2021. The aim is to support vulnerable new migrants towards employment by improving their confidence, language, employability skills and supporting them to integrate into their communities.
- 3.140 Connecting Opportunities is funded by the European Social Fund and the National Community Fund. It works with ten voluntary sector organisations that specialise in working with migrants offering one to one keyworker, employment and mental health support, mentoring and befriending, English language classes and other skills training across the Leeds City Region (includes Leeds, Bradford, Wakefield, Calderdale and Kirklees, and parts of North Yorkshire (Craven, Harrogate, Selby and York). In Leeds, the project is being delivered by Path Yorkshire, The Children's Society, SOLACE, LASSN and Touchstone led by Migration Yorkshire (Leeds City Council).
- 3.141 Up to March 2020, in Leeds, the project has worked with 431 participants (38% total project participants). 66% are female; 39% are refugees, with the top three nationalities of refugees being Iranian, Sudanese and Eritrean; 61% other migrants, with the top three nationalities being Indian, Romanian and Pakistani. Referrals in Leeds onto the project have come from over 44 different agencies with 23% being self-referrals from individuals themselves.
- 3.142 In terms of provision accessed: 64% participants have accessed ESOL, 40% accessed mentoring and befriending, and 28% work placements/experience. Of those participants, that have exited the project; so far in Leeds up to 61% have exited either into jobs and/or into external training/education.
- 3.143 **Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) and LEYH** Migrant English Support Hub has been working in partnership with Migration Yorkshire to expand the work of the Learning English in Leeds (LEL) website across the region. The Learning English in Yorkshire and Humber (LEYH) website launched in September 2019. The funds for this project have been sustained from the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme led by Migration Yorkshire. The funding has also allowed the appointment development workers to work across the region and a Director for the charity is now in post. This development work has continued to benefit Leeds through additional capacity to map the current provision across the city.
- 3.144 The website plays an important role in supporting students to access classes and contributes to our understanding of citywide provision. MESH continues to work closely with the Council, linking this work and sharing intelligence on this agenda into the development of the ESOL strategy for the city. In future, MESH aims to work locally to increase accessibility to relevant resources, provide tutor networking events

to enable the sharing good practice, and increase the availability of self-access resources for learners

- 3.145 **Events** Leeds City Council and the Local Government Association hosted the 'Bridging Northern Communities Conference' in Leeds which aimed to develop a regionally led, locally reflective approach to the national challenges of cohesion, integration, prevent and counter extremism that is distinctive and resonant of working with communities in the North of England. This two-day event attracted colleagues from neighbouring regions and saw over 75 attend on the first day and over 85 on the second. Over the two days participants engaged in a series of focussed workshops on: Community Resilience – The Manchester Arena Attack; The Commission for Counter Extremism; Understanding and challenging far right and anti-minority narratives; Migration; Civil Society and Cohesion, and Women and Extremism: 'Misogyny the common thread'.
- 3.146 Leeds contributed to a Near Neighbours project called Real People Honest Talk: The Big Conversation in October 2019. Near Neighbours have created Real People, Honest Talk to bring people together to talk about the tough issues around how we live together well. Bishop Paul Slater (Anglican Diocese of Leeds) chaired the event. The format included presentations from grass roots and voluntary sector organisations who took part in discussions over the summer. Council services supported the links to people and services to support this event. Senior Managers from the council and partner organisations supported the presentations and took part as a panel.
- 3.147 **Introduction to Migration training** Leeds Communities Team commissions Migration Yorkshire to co-deliver a programme of training for practitioners in the Council and with partners, over the years, has benefitted understanding of migration generally and our role at a local level. Unfortunately, two sessions were cancelled due to COVID-19.
- 3.148 The Leeds **Migration Map** has now been updated and is available on the Leeds Observatory. It provides information on the diversity and spread of new and existing communities in Leeds at a local level as well as understanding of population changes and trends alongside wider contextual information to support the meeting of need for the diverse population of Leeds.
- 3.149 Our city, over the past few years has thrived upon opportunities, with many services and support available to all in the city. Over the past six months, **the pandemic has dramatically impacted on residents across the city**, intensifying mental wellbeing, isolation, and the rapidly changing government messages has caused much confusion.
- 3.150 The Migration Team, in partnership has led on a pilot initiative to establish arrangements for destitute people with no recourse to public funds putting in place guidance and engaging specialist external expertise directly supporting positive move on provision. The team have also provided targeted provision for BAME communities to ensure continuity through increase use of digital and translated materials through videos and messages.
- 3.151 Leeds City Council, in partnership with Voluntary Action Leeds, Forum Central and Healthwatch have been working closely with Communities of Interest, who are identified as groups of people who share an **identity**, for example, people with a learning disability, or those who share an **experience**, for example the homeless

community. The aim was to understand better any disproportionate or differential impact of Covid-19 across Leeds' Communities of Interest.

- 3.152 A number of challenges are faced by Communities of Interest such as navigating information and guidance; language barriers; access to essential provisions and services; social isolation and boredom; mental health – low level anxiety to crisis; abuse, domestic violence and safeguarding issues and concerns about restrictions being lifted. In addition, digital exclusion has led to communities and individuals having limited/no access to equipment and/or data thus exacerbated barriers to accessing information, support and social connection.
- 3.153 The wider work around this has allowed services to zoom in through the lens of COVID19 on issues that have **always been prevalent, but exacerbated** as a result of the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic is **felt by a disproportionate number of vulnerable migrant communities** particularly around **health** (further information and data is available via Public Health), domestic violence, access to support and provision, language barriers, immigration status and no recourse to public funds. There are disproportionate and differential impacts of the pandemic on the number of people from migrant communities applying for Universal Credit, and accessing services as a whole.
- 3.154 The council has provided **translated messages to communities** in Leeds and **our approach has been replicated** in other cities. In addition to the local hubs, a cultural food hub was set up that delivered cultural food and support alongside other hubs, virtual drop-ins were set up and continue to be delivered to ensure that messages are shared, referrals to relevant services are made and to ensure continued engagement through door knocking in partnership with services.
- 3.155 The council's Communities Migration Team continue to guide, develop and support services and partners to better meet the needs of vulnerable migrants communities of Leeds.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The Leeds Strategic Migration Board's membership includes council and partner agencies and is the key vehicle for consultation, engagement and providing governance to migration activity. The Board builds upon the processes that already exist across the council and with partners, aiming to embed best practice and maximise the benefits of engagement for all our citizens and communities.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The council's Equality Improvement Priorities for 2018 – 2022 have been produced to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010, to complement the 'Best City' ambition aimed at tackling inequalities: for Leeds to have a Strong Economy and to be a Compassionate City. These priorities provide focus to address issues of inequality, and are based on evidence of disproportionate outcomes that we are seeking to challenge and change.
- 4.2.2 It has become clearer that COVID-19 is disproportionately impacting on certain parts of society. Equality considerations have been integrated within our response to the

pandemic to ensure that the council and partners do not contribute to further disadvantages. As this is a shifting picture, we are learning all the time about emerging needs and responding to these.

- 4.2.3 Our work with communities has highlighted emerging inequalities for example, access to information. Although, we are unable to mitigate all the risks presented by COVID-19 we can continue to identify and address barriers to information and support. We will do this by ensuring equality considerations are integrated within all our decision-making and we should consider the equality impacts of recovery planning and implementation.
- 4.2.4 The outcomes of the Communities of Interest work will be embedded in to ongoing equality work and will explicitly inform the council's Equality Improvement Priorities

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The migration work takes into account equality and diversity as core components and a Migration Equality Improvement Priority was approved by Executive Board in July 2018 to improve the approach to migration in Leeds through improving access to services; changing attitudes and behaviours; increasing awareness and understanding; strengthening resilience and building capacity; and building and creating cooperative partnerships.
- 4.3.2 Our work in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic also supports the direction of work going forward to improve inequalities to achieve the Council's ambition to build a compassionate city, tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. The overarching aim of the Best Council Plan is 'Tackling Poverty and Reducing Inequalities'.
- 4.3.3 The recommendations in this report support the delivery of the Best Council Plan. Our focus has been on supporting communities, aiding integration and building more cohesive and resilient communities' whiles seeking to minimise any risks associated with changes to demography.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.4 There is no direct impact on the Climate Emergency arising from this update report.
- 4.3.5 Migration is however, one of the possible responses to a climate emergency. While this does not apply to current migration, we need to be prepared for potential future pressures.
- 4.3.6 This paper sets out the council wide approach to supporting our new and existing migrant communities as well as dealing with the pandemic crisis. Any direct impact on the Climate Emergency will be addressed by respective Directorates as part of their current and future migration work, which is outlined in the update report.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 Our approach to migration in Leeds provides opportunities to build upon, and create effective partnerships and responses to changing need and to target our work more effectively based on evidence. During COVID19, strong partnerships and connections has helped the city to very quickly develop and communicate a response to the most

marginalised and vulnerable communities in Leeds by maximising resources and expertise.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 Although, there are no legal implications or access to information issues within the work articulated in this paper there will be implications arising from national changes such as the UK's future skills-based immigration system following the EU Withdrawal Bill 2020. The present report is subject to call in.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 Having a coherent and strategic approach to migration supports the council to deliver its priorities and minimises any associated risks.

4.6.2 As the UK approaches withdrawal from the EU, it is important we have routes in to our newer communities, to enable information to be passed on about their legal status. The work we undertake with our migrant communities provides vital links both in to these communities and for them to share their concerns. Officers continue to keep information updated on national changes likely to impact on the citizens of Leeds.

4.6.3 The Covid19 crisis has helped to increase collaboration with communities and services. The council is trying to capture lessons and hold on to the positive changes beyond the crisis. Financial pressures, however might affect the council's ability to hold on to these changes.

5 Conclusions

5.1 This report provides an overview of the breadth of migration activity taking place in Leeds to meet the needs of new migrants, which in turn benefits all of the city's citizens. It reinforces Scrutiny Board's decision to endorse our strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration.

5.2 The city is responding to COVID-19 both strategically and operationally, and as we transition out of lockdown, we continue to maintain our focus on tackling poverty and inequality and supporting vulnerable groups.

5.3 Leeds prides itself on being a diversely rich and vibrant city that welcomes everyone. Contributing to this, in the past two years **Leeds has successfully attracted over £1.6 million of government funding for a number of migration projects**, helping people to settle in Leeds and alleviating pressures on services and communities where there are higher levels of new migrants. This external funding has enabled the council to establish robust arrangements to deliver the migration agenda hosted within the Communities Team.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this update report on migration, on activity taking place and endorse the approach adopted within our migration strategy for Leeds.

- 6.2 Executive Board is asked to note the responsibility of the Director of Communities and Environment and the Executive Member for Communities for leading this work through the Council's Stronger Communities Programme.
- 6.3 To note the responsibility of the Chief Officer for Communities in leading the work of the Leeds Strategic Migration Board, and the Migration Team for providing strategic and operational direction for the city.
- 6.4 To acknowledge the significant contributions made by services and partners to supporting vulnerable households and migrant communities that were disproportionately impacted by Covid 19.
- 6.5 To receive a further annual update in 2021.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

¹ Contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.