

Annual update on migration activity in Leeds

Date: 19 October 2022

Report of: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Report to: Executive Board

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief summary

Leeds has a **long standing commitment** to supporting people who are seeking asylum and are refugees and is dedicated to being a **City of Sanctuary**. During the past 12 months, global events have had a significant impact at national, regional and local level where people have arrived under a number of **government programmes** to seek sanctuary. The UK national policy gives different groups in the UK different rights and entitlements. As a city, Leeds has responded to **policy changes and emerging situations at a rapid pace**.

This report provides an update on the city's response, as a welcoming and compassionate city, in partnership with all sectors, to respond to migration issues.

Appendix 1 provides information on **key migration population trends** and the response to the **national policy changes and changes to immigration rules** including the approach in place to support EU citizens living in Leeds; the Nationality and Borders Act 2022; a new bespoke visa route for Hong Kong British National Overseas; Afghan Resettlement; national asylum contract and asylum dispersal; Ukraine (Homes for Ukraine scheme, Ukraine Family Visa scheme and Ukraine Extension scheme); activities across the council in relation to supporting new and emerging communities, and continued engagement.

Recommendations

- a) Executive Board is asked to note the contents of this annual update on migration report and the full overview and insight in Appendix 1, and endorse the approach adopted within our [Migration in Leeds Strategy.pdf](#) attached at Appendix 2.
- b) Executive Board is asked to note the responsibility of the Director of Communities, Housing and Environment for leading this work through the Council's Safer Stronger Communities programme.
- c) Executive Board is asked to note the responsibility of the Chief Officer for Safer, Stronger Communities in leading the work of the Leeds Strategic Migration Board which oversees delivery on the strategic, coordinated and inclusive approach to migration in Leeds and the work of the council's migration and resettlement team to provide strategic and operational direction for the city.

- d) Executive Board is asked to note the intention to provide a further annual report in 2023 on migration activity in Leeds.

What is this report about?

- 1 Migration is an ongoing agenda in the modern, globalised world and for a diverse city such as Leeds, with a long history of migration. Over the past two years, considerable changes to national policy have, and continue to impact locally on the council, wider services, service users and the citizens of Leeds.
- 2 This report provides Executive Board members with an update on aspects including national policy changes, the delivery of migration activity in Leeds and an overview of progress made against the migration work that follows on from the 20 October 2021 Executive Board report where the recommendation to receive a further update on progress in 2022 was approved.
- 3 The work carried out under Leeds City Council's migration programme and under the strategic, coordinated, and inclusive approach to migration helps the city to achieve its ambition of being a welcoming and compassionate city. It underpins the work highlighted in the Best City Ambition 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 Safer Stronger Communities Leeds Plan 2021-2024 to be the best city in the UK with the best community safety partnership and services, 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.
- 4 This work taking place is significant to understand and address the needs of migrants in Leeds, and how we can best manage the **competing demands for resources as we respond to major emergencies as a result of international conflict and national policy**. Leeds is part of a national movement to build a culture of welcome for people seeking sanctuary in the UK and has a local branch of the City of Sanctuary movement. Leeds continues to be open and welcoming and strives to protect and provide support to those people who are most vulnerable through partnership working with public and third sector organisations. There are a growing number of anchor organisations that have joined the sanctuary movement such as Universities of Sanctuary, Theatre of Sanctuary, College of Sanctuary and Schools of Sanctuary. The council is undertaking work in applying for a **Council of Sanctuary award** to become a member of the City of Sanctuary local authority network. This is a long-term commitment and would be renewed every three years.
- 5 National policy changes require considerable expertise, knowledge, experience and capacity from the council's migration and resettlement team, and wider services to ensure policy is implemented at a local level. We are experiencing some changes enacted at short notice and with little or no consultation with the council. We continue to deliver schemes created at a national level whilst receiving ongoing guidance to help us develop local processes to implement and deliver the schemes.
- 6 **Recent migration trends** highlight the following:
 - a) National Insurance number registration data highlights that in 2021 there were 2,070 new arrivals to Leeds from a total of **70 countries** with a slightly **higher percentage of female** than male.
 - b) Arrivals to Leeds decreased in 2021 as 48% fewer people arrived compared to 2020.
 - c) Across the UK, immigration decreased by 45%.
 - d) The overall number of new **migrant workers arriving in Leeds decreased** by over 1,900 to 2,070 in 2021.
 - e) The greatest change in individual nationalities compared to 2020 has been an increase of 447 arrivals from India.

- f) The level of workers from non-EU countries arriving each year remains higher than the EU group with 1,345 arriving in 2021, a decrease of around 1,466 on the previous year. This group is dominated by arrivals from India and Nigeria.
- g) The number of new migrant workers from EU countries fell to 718 arrivals in 2021, 456 fewer arrivals than in 2020. This group is predominantly composed of Romanian arrivals.
- h) There were 13,180 international students registered at a Higher Education institution in Leeds in the 2020-2021 academic year, an **increase of 400 overseas students** compared with the previous year. 84% came from outside the EU.
- i) Published Home Office figures show that at the end of June 2022, 1,297 people seeking asylum were being supported in Leeds while awaiting a decision on their asylum claim. The publication of NINO data has been suspended since June 2021, therefore the figures under migration and work above, are essentially based on half a year due to the disruption to these statistics in 2020 as a result of Covid 19.
- 7 The **Leeds Strategic Migration Board** continues to provide governance and direction 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. During the past year the board has focused on **reviewing its membership, refreshing our strategic priorities, and updating the migration strategy**. This involved one to one consultation with all members to understand how this board has helped partners to shape their service or assisted to influence or deliver key objectives and priorities.
- 8 The **Leeds Migrant Health Board** chaired by Public Health continues to report into the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board and Strategic Migration Board. Following a hybrid workshop with partners in April 2022, the board has developed 3 new priorities:
- **Access for all** - learn from lived experience and work to shape services and strategies
 - **Communication** (in its broadest sense interpretation, translations, accessible information, and involvement in ESOL and learning English agenda in Leeds)
 - **Work and Austerity** (including a workforce equipped to respond to new and emerging communities / strong link to the austerity and poverty agenda)
- 9 The **Leeds Migration Partnership** is led by the **migrant third sector** and supported 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**. The partnership agreed that the previously agreed priorities of health, housing, learning and employment and safety and inclusion, were still relevant, but a couple of other major priorities were raised – access to **legal advice** and the **Nationality and Borders Act 2022** and associated implications.
- 10 The **Community Champions** programme received funding to continue until March 2023. Across the programme 174 community champions have been engaged, over 80 champions registered in 2022 delivering over 71 activities and events.
- 11 The **Cultural Food Hub** transitioned toward a sustainable delivery model as part of the existing food infrastructure in Leeds and the emerging Community Care Hub models. A recent allocation of funding has aided ongoing support and delivery to address need.
- 12 The council is currently in the process of applying for the **City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network Award**. Leeds City Council is in a favourable position to apply for this award as it prides itself on being a compassionate city that welcomes refugees and asylum seekers.
- 13 The **Leeds Migrant Access Programme** is now in its twelfth year helping new and settled communities strengthen their resilience, by increasing their awareness and understanding of how to access support services and facilitate opportunities for new and settled communities to have a voice, and to be able to influence change within services.

- 14 Positive conversations have taken place with Employment and Skills to explore connecting the **ESOL strategy** and ESOL sector with the wider skills agenda in the city, and with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority as they begin to deliver the Adult Education Budget.
- 15 Leeds continues to celebrate cultural diversity and the many benefits that migrant communities bring to the city. **Events** such as Leeds Refugee Week have been taking place annually in Leeds since 2006. **The annual West Indian Carnival and the Black Music Festival** returned after a 2-year hiatus caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 16 The **Communities of Interest Network** evaluation report has led to the exploration of future working arrangements with Integrated Care Systems structures.
- 17 The strategic, coordinated and inclusive approach to migration requires a **citywide response involving cross council and with a range of stakeholders**, on housing, work, finance, health and wellbeing, education and language, advocacy, advice and legal, safety, belonging and support networks, basic needs (food, shelter, money).
- 18 The best current indication of **destitution** numbers may be explained from the number of destitute service users who access destitution case work. Two key organisations are **British Red Cross and PAFRAS** (Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) who support destitute people through casework. In the year September 2021 to September 2022 both organisations supported a total of 734 people seeking asylum in Leeds, either to prevent destitution, or to find safe and sustainable routes out of destitution.
- 19 The council's **No Recourse to Public Funds** panel saw increased numbers of cases during the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit. However, throughout 2022 the number of families supported has decreased.
- 20 The introduction of the **Domestic Abuse Act** in April 2021 placed a duty on Leeds City Council to provide support in safe accommodation for victims of DVA and their children. Over the last year, Leeds has been giving effect to this duty by allocating £1.8 million in 21/22 and a further £1.8 million in 22/23 New Burdens Funding to a range of projects to support victims and children across the city.
- 21 Home Office **National Referral Mechanism** (NRM) data for 2021 shows that after UK nationals, Albanian and Vietnamese are the most common nationalities of potential victims referred to the NRM. Albanian nationals now account for 20% of all NRM referrals, compared with 15% in 2020, and Vietnamese nationals for 8%, compared with 6% in the previous year.
- 22 The Leeds Modern Slavery Board continues to deliver on the **Leeds Modern Slavery Strategy 2020-23** which is aligned to the national '4 Ps' strategy: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare.
- 23 The council's **Gypsy Roma Travellers** (GRT) Team make an active contribution in supporting Roma families in partnership through weekly drop-in and home visits. The team has strong relationships with schools, children centres, and school clusters in order to bridge the gaps to universal services. The team continue to support St Vincent's immigration service for late EUSS applicants.
- 24 Migration is a key theme in the council's approach to **locality working** and it's work in priority neighbourhoods. The **council's community centre portfolio** provides one of many examples of partnership working, as facilities and meeting spaces are provided for a wide range of community groups and support organisations.
- 25 The **Nationality and Borders Bill** completed its passage through parliament, receiving Royal Assent on 27 April 2022. **The Nationality and Borders Act 2022** puts some of the proposals under the New Plan for Immigration into new legislation. The Act aims to implement three key

priorities for the government described and summarised in Appendix 1.

- 26 **73,320 EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)** applications have been made in Leeds from August 2018 to June 2022 which is the highest in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The top 3 nationalities were from Romania, Poland and Italy. A total of 70,220 EUSS cases were concluded for Leeds up until June 2022. Whilst the deadline has now passed, there remain people who still need to apply to the scheme. Since 1st July, 2021 the Home Office has been accepting late EUSS applications (for those who were residing in the UK by the 31st December 2020). St Vincent's Centre in Leeds is a key organisation funded by the Home Office to provide support.
- 27 **Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) HKBNO** have been settling in some areas of Leeds since the new visa route was open for HKBNO in January 2021. Local ward members have attended events at local churches which have been well attended and enquiries have been passed to the council's Migration team to respond and support. Leeds City Council continues dialogue with Migration Yorkshire in supporting Hong Kong British National (Overseas) residents in Leeds.
- 28 The **UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)** has been supporting Afghan refugees at a hotel following a mass evacuation by the UK Government in early 2021. Support has been provided in partnership with key services across the city. From July 2021 to August 2022 Leeds have accommodated 204 people (42 families), of which 158 people (34 families) are people who have moved out of the hotel. All the families are part of the Afghanistan Assistance and Relocation Policy (ARAP) who have been working alongside The British Forces in Afghanistan and are classed as Locally Engaged Staff (LES) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). The team continue to support Syrian and other refugees under the UKRS.
- 29 In the years 2020/21/22 the number of sporadic **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)** arrivals reduced, primarily due to the impact of the pandemic. However, in 2022 we have seen a steady rise in those numbers. Further to this, the number of UASC's that have arrived via the local hotels has steadily increased.
- 30 The current **Asylum Dispersal** procurement process is under review by the Home Office and being discussed by local authorities in the region. The aim of this review is to reduce the number of hotels being used to accommodate people seeking asylum, and this which will have an impact on Leeds. These discussions are currently taking place and are being led by Migration Yorkshire.
- 31 The Nationality and Borders Act legislates the use of **offshore processing** for asylum claims. This involves relocating asylum claimants to a third country who will take responsibility for processing their asylum claim. The government agreed its first **Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda**, who will be responsible for processing some asylum claims. Pending the outcome of a court hearing, this may impact on some asylum seekers facing removal to Rwanda as well as on local communities.
- 32 Public Health commissioned the council's Migration team to conduct an exercise into the health and wellbeing needs of people seeking asylum residing in hotels in Leeds. This work is now completed, and an evaluation report is currently being prepared.
- 33 In March 2022, in response to Russia's invasion of **Ukraine**, the UK government launched new immigration routes for Ukrainians fleeing the conflict to come to the UK and concessions for those already in the UK to extend their stay. These new routes are collectively known as the Ukraine Scheme. The Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are responsible for supporting the **Homes for Ukraine Scheme** and have asked Local Authorities to deliver this and provide data to councils in order to do so. As of September 2022, there are 368 sponsors matched with over 800 Ukrainian refugees of which almost 600 have arrived to

Leeds.

- 34 Leeds City Council was asked to stand up a **Welcome Point at Leeds Bradford Airport** (LBA) On 17 August 2022, Lord Harrington, the then, Minister for Refugees wrote to the council following a review of welcome points and this resulted in Leeds Bradford Airport no longer included in the new list of Tier 1 and Tier 2 ports and therefore no additional grant funding at this time.
- 35 The council receives a **£10,500 tariff per Ukrainian refugee** who has arrived in Leeds pending the outcome of successful checks laid out by DLUHC. Further details can be found in Appendix 1. This funding supports the council to work in partnership with several key services to deliver the scheme in Leeds. In addition, all those arriving under the scheme receive a one-off payment of £200 each (including children). The aim of this is to support the guests during the period of applying for and receiving universal credit. These funds are included within the £10,500 tariff.
- 36 Separate funding is provided by DLUHC for monthly thank you payments of £350 to sponsors on completion of the required checks.
- 37 In response to the above requirements, Leeds City Council established the Leeds Ukraine Strategic group, chaired by the Chief Officer for Safer Stronger Communities and with representation of senior officers across the statutory sector.
- 38 In March 2022 Leeds City Council announced details of a major fundraising appeal [Leeds Together for Ukraine - JustGiving](#) and the council has partnered with Leeds Community Foundation [Leeds Together for Ukraine Fund | Leeds Community Foundation \(leedscf.org.uk\)](#) to deliver a funding programme for the benefit of community organisations to support the arrival and hosting of Ukrainian and other refugees in Leeds.
- 39 The Homes for Ukraine team at Leeds City Council are working closely with the Association of Ukrainians of Great Britain to establish local pathways of support for employment, housing, education, welfare support, translation, and interpretation and much more.
- 40 Guidance states that hosting guests should be for a minimum of 6 months. Leeds City Council has written a letter with advice and information for sponsors and guests living in Leeds so that both sponsor and guests can make informed decisions on options available post 6-month arrangements. Both documents have been translated into Ukrainian and Russian and circulated.
- 41 The Homes for Ukraine team have established a process for rematching guests during the event of a relationship breakdown, failed housing or failed safeguarding checks.
- 42 **Leeds Asylum Seeker Support Network** has been commissioned by the council to deliver a series of support groups using a community development approach to enable shared learning and peer support to hosts to develop positive relationships.
- 43 The first **Intercultural Cities Network** (ICC) steering group meeting was organised and took place in November 2021, chaired by the Executive Board Member for Communities. The visit of the **Council of Europe to Leeds** had previously been delayed and postponed several times due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the two-day visit finally took place on 29th and 30th June 2022. The visit was an opportunity for the Council of Europe delegates to meet a wide range of senior and operational council staff, politicians, and partners. The council is currently awaiting a report by the Council of Europe that will influence our next steps and future work.
- 44 The Migration team continue to work in partnership with services to support them on migration related issues. This year, several training sessions on migration have been developed, adapted, and delivered to services across the council and many more requests have been made to the team.

45 The team also work closely with Migration Yorkshire who provide two free sessions annually, one of which is for elected members which was well attended. A further two sessions are being planned in the winter.

What impact will this proposal have?

46 Work under the **migration agenda falls within the public sector equality duty** which states: 'A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share it.'

47 Equality Act 2010, c.15 Part 11, Para 149(1) [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/362222/Equality_Act_2010_guidance_-_GOV.UK.pdf)
(www.gov.uk)

48 Improving the approach to migration in Leeds is one of the **council's Equality Improvement Priorities** and as such is reported on annually. Migration also has implications for community cohesion and several of the characteristics protected by law.

49 This report is an annual update with no decisions required and therefore it is not necessary to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

50 **Our strategic, coordinated and inclusive approach to migration in Leeds builds upon our Best City Ambition.** This approach aims to ensure people who migrate to Leeds are able to establish their lives quickly and successfully. We continue to work with partners on our strategic direction on migration as we continue to respond to changes in law, government schemes and the impact of global events.

51 To achieve the above, requires a partnership approach with stakeholders across the city and is implicit in the three pillars of the Best City Ambition.

52 The strategic approach to migration contributes to achieving the outcomes of the **health and wellbeing** pillar and has a key focus on investing to ensure better and more equal access to essential services in health and learning, developed with and accessible for every community across Leeds.

53 There is an established **Migrant Health Board** that is accountable to the Health and Wellbeing board, it aligns closely to the Leeds Strategic Migration Board and works closely with the Leeds Migration Partnership (migrant third sector). It focuses on reducing health inequalities for our migrant population and is working on three agreed priorities which are: Access for all – to learn from lived experience and work to shape services and strategies; communication – interpretation, translation, accessible information and involvement with ESOL and learning English agenda in Leeds; Work and austerity – including a workforce equipped to respond to new and emerging communities/strong links to the austerity and poverty agenda.

54 The strategic approach to migration contributes to the key elements of the **Inclusive Growth** pillar. Leeds is a vibrant city and enriched with people from all over the world with many skills and talents. There are many projects across the city supporting new migrants to establish their roots quickly so that individuals and families can prosper. The key elements that our approach on migration focuses under the Inclusive Growth pillar include:

- a) Best City for Health and Wellbeing - working in partnership with Public Health and Localities, and engagement with diverse and vulnerable communities;

- b) Putting employers and people at the centre of education and skills system – partnership approach to developing an ESOL strategy for Leeds; working together to create better jobs, tackling low pay and boosting productivity – collaborating with partners to secure work;
- c) Leeds as a digital city – working closely with partners to provide devices and connectivity to households without equipment.

55 UK mayors (London and Bristol) have warned on mass migration to cities in **climate crisis** following a [major report](#) launched during [UN Migration Week](#), in February 2022.

56 The London Mayor is chair of C40 Cities, a global network of almost 100 world leading cities dedicated to combating the climate crisis and the devastating human cost of forced and unmanaged migration to cities caused by the climate crisis. He states that ***cities need more funding and powers from national governments to urgently address the climate emergency at a local level.***

57 The climate emergency has potentially a greater impact on the migration agenda in Leeds in terms of the changes to migration flows caused by forced migration due to either weather-related hazards and associated impact on livelihoods leading to families becoming displaced, or the emergence of conflict in relation to scarce resources and food insecurity.

58 New migrants to the city who have arrived through government schemes often have little or no disposable income to even access public transport. They often travel by foot and many take opportunity to access bicycles through donations and schemes. This is one example of contributing to the zero-carbon pillar, however it can be argued that they experience hardship. Migrants can contribute towards a low carbon, greener future if we can remove obstacles and create incentives to harness potential to support our city ambition.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted? Yes No

59 The Leeds Strategic Migration Board includes membership from council and partner agencies and is the key vehicle for consultation, engagement and providing governance to migration activity. The board has representation from Leeds Migration Partnership strategy group who work with people with lived experience of migration and the challenges and opportunities. During the past 12 months, the board has **consulted with each service area represented at the board** including statutory services, migrant third sector and private sector to consult on the strategy to inform future direction and the boards forward plan.

60 Given the high profile of the migration agenda, there are a number of partnerships and strategic groups being set up locally and regionally to develop systems and processes to improve health access and outcomes.

61 The Homes for Ukraine scheme has given opportunity to residents across Leeds to open their homes for Ukrainian refugees. Hosts who are hosting Ukrainian refugees represent all wards of the city under this scheme.

What are the resource implications?

62 Our strategic, coordinated and inclusive approach to migration in Leeds provides opportunities to build upon and create **effective partnerships** and responses to ever **changing need**, as well as to target our work more effectively based on **local intelligence and evidence**.

63 The infrastructure established over the past few years continues to help **strengthen our response to emergencies** including the pandemic, supporting partners across the council and

third sector.

64 The rapidly **changing nature of migration**, added to **national policy changes** and **national requests**, requires a considerable amount of resource at a local level to respond as a compassionate city. For example, considerable investment and resource has been required to support refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

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

66 The UK government continues to make changes around immigration policy and it is important that we have routes into our newer communities to ensure they are able to settle in Leeds, and access services and communities. The work we undertake cross council, with statutory and third sector partners, ensures we can meet the needs of new communities and address gaps and challenges. However, increasing numbers of refugees and people seeking asylum to the city may impact on local services, increasing strain for already stretched services.

67 Leeds City Council has an established migration and resettlement team representing a diverse workforce and includes those with lived experience of migration. The team has substantial experience on migration matters and is a **key support to services across the city** and continues to prepare for change of circumstances arising in the near future. For example, the team has developed a rematching process to mitigate homelessness that could arise following the 6 month arrangement between hosts and Ukrainian refugees.

What are the legal implications?

68 There are legal implications arising as a result of national changes. These include the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 which has been discussed in Appendix 1. In addition, other immigration routes such as for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas), the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme and more recently, The Ukraine Scheme (Homes for Ukraine scheme, Family Visa scheme and Extension scheme) all have legal implications.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

69 Not applicable.

How will success be measured?

70 The Leeds Strategic Migration Board takes place on a quarterly basis where progress on the strategic, coordinated and inclusive approach to migration is reported against. An annual update report is presented to the council's Executive Board and progress against the Equality Improvement Priority on the approach to migration is reported annually to the Equality Improvement Board.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

71 The responsibility is with the council's Migration and Resettlement team, working alongside key council services and third sector partners.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Annual update on migration activity in Leeds 2022
- Appendix 2 – Migration in Leeds Strategy 2021 - 2025 document

Background papers

None