

Welcome

The recent Government announcements as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review signal the start of challenging and difficult times for local authorities and their partners. Reductions to the local government grant of around 28% over 4 years will clearly lead to changes in services and how they are delivered. A 20% reduction to the UK Border Agency's budget will also inevitably impact on how asylum and migration are managed.

Budget reductions are always a challenge. At the Partnership we're already planning how we will deliver our services on a reduced resource next year. But cuts to budgets, whilst difficult, can also drive innovation and creativity in terms of how we work. The example of the Roma project shows how we can work with local authorities and others to identify and access resources to support new areas of work.

In terms of any future asylum contract too, we know we need to think differently about what and how we deliver to ensure that we have a sustainable model – that delivers for central government and for this region.

New European project on Roma

The Regional Migration Partnership has recently been successful in securing European Union funding to lead a major Europe wide project to look at how local authorities from the UK and further afield meet the needs of newly arrived Roma migrants.

This project will look at some of the challenges that this group brings and how these challenges can be addressed. The project will be called 'Roma SOURCE' (Sharing of Understanding Rights and Citizenship in Europe).

In addition to ourselves, the project also involves partners from Italy, Hungary, Greece, Bulgaria and Spain, as well as a research strand which will be led by Salford University. It will look at issues including children, employment and health. Roma are a relatively new group in the UK, who present significant challenges for service providers and host communities.

This project emerged in some ways from our Migration Impacts Fund work, as many of our local areas identified as a key priority some of the challenges that this group can bring. In particular, local authorities in the region identified issues

around safeguarding children, exploitative employment practices and impact on communities.

This project provides an opportunity to work with colleagues from elsewhere in Europe, areas where Roma are from and have traditionally settled, to share knowledge, skills and expertise that will both benefit Roma and also lessen the impacts on the local communities that they have moved to.

Moving into a period where resources will be tighter, this is a really strong example of how local authorities and others can work together to attract resources to deal with the issues that they face at a local level.

Roma SOURCE will start in April 2011 and run for 2 years. For more information, contact John Donegan at the Partnership on 0113 3952448.

Policy and research

At our consultation event in August 2010, around 40 representatives from organisations across Yorkshire and Humber found out more details about the Government's intention to limit non-EU immigration.

The event gave the independent advisors on this issue - the Migration Advisory Committee - an understanding of people's views in this region, particularly examples of how migration has benefited local communities. The discussions also contributed

to the response we submitted on this issue.

Recent policy changes include language tests for students and spouses, and we're anticipating more developments over the next few months that will impact upon migrant services locally. These include the recent consultation on the NHS White Paper 'Equity and Excellence', UK Border Agency measures to speed up the asylum system, and the review of the student route of the Points Based System.

Asylum seeker accommodation contract

Local authorities have been coming together recently to agree a submission to extend current asylum accommodation contracts, in the short term – and to think through what the model for delivering asylum services might look like in the longer term. It's clear that local authorities remain strongly committed to ensuring we sustain a quality service for our clients and stakeholders.

The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in October will be a key factor. Once the outcome of this review is known in detail, the UK Border Agency will be able to provide a clearer picture as to the financial impact this will have on all of the Home Office's asylum seeker accommodation contracts across the UK.

And finally...

Staff news Our congratulations and good wishes go to Sally Harwood (Operations Team), who has had a baby daughter called Elsa – both are doing well.

Website news Average use of the website for the period July-September 2010 was over 1,235 visits and 5,575 page views per month. There's a new section about migration trends in Yorkshire and Humber at: www.migrationyorkshire.org.uk/statistics

Integration and RIES

The Refugee and Employment Service (RIES) has completed its changes following funding reductions. RIES continues to provide initial Advice and Support and an element of Employment support. RIES has supported over 1,500 refugees over the last 18 months.

The Refugee Integration Programme, funded by Yorkshire Forward for 3 years, has come to an end. The Partnership will continue to coordinate refugee integration on a smaller scale. You can find papers from the Refugee Integration Event 2010, and other information from the Refugee Integration Programme, on our website.

Migration

The early ending of Migration Impacts Fund (MIF) funding has raised the issue of how the Partnership can best support work on economic migration in Yorkshire and Humber.

Members of the MIF network have expressed a clear desire to continue to meet to share experience, learning and practice in this area.

We therefore intend to continue the current network as a semi-formal 'community of practice' and will continue to provide workshops and other opportunities for learning.

Please contact us if you'd like a copy of the text of this bulletin in large print.

