

Overview of North East Migration Partnership (NEMP)

Stockton Borough Council

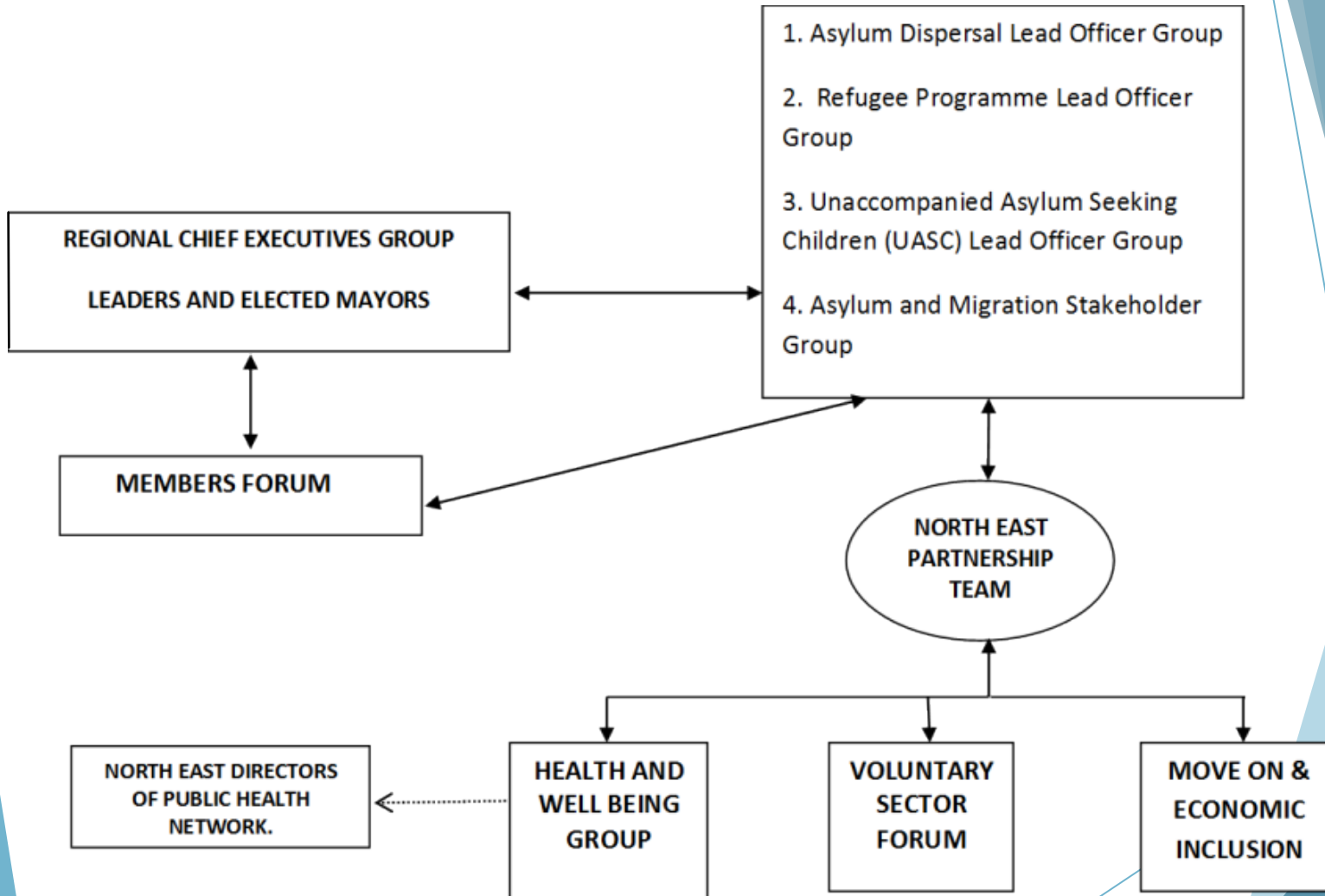
Place Select Committee

10 April 2017



North East
Migration Partnership

Our Structure



The emergence of the Partnership

- ▶ The NEMP was formed in January 2015
- ▶ As a result of extensive regional and national discussions regarding the rising asylum numbers in the region.
- ▶ Regional structure agreed early 2015 and revised as new programmes emerge.
- ▶ Work programme developed with all statutory and voluntary and community sector stakeholders to identify regional migration priorities.
- ▶ Annually reviewed and approved by NE C-Ex's alongside Leaders and Elected Mayors.
- ▶ Migration Lead Officers and Lead Members for each local authority were nominated by each LA in the region
- ▶ Steven Hume, Community Safety and Security Manager and Cllr Steve Nelson.

North East Migration Partnership

- ▶ Consists of local authority, statutory agencies such as Police and voluntary and community (VCS) agencies
- ▶ Funded by the Home Office to broker connections into local authorities, Police and other partners.
- ▶ Our role is to coordinate all the asylum and refugee programmes and act as single point of contact for the Home Office in terms of:
 - ▶ Improving data, information and communication around migration issues
 - ▶ Seeking to inform policy and guidance on asylum and refugee issues.
 - ▶ Escalating issues from the statutory and voluntary sector in relation to barriers, trends in operational delivery and/or gaps in service/provision.
 - ▶ Sharing good practice from national network on Partnerships and regionally facilitating and enabling support for local authorities.
 - ▶ Joining up on a strategic level where it makes sense to e.g. training, service delivery and/or logistics for large refugee arrivals.



Some terminology

Asylum seeker

- ▶ Fleeing war and persecution, makes an asylum claim at the first point of contact (or in country) and awaits a decision from the Home Office
- ▶ Could be supported (Section 95 or Section 4) and dispersed across the country or unsupported i.e. helped with housing by family and friends
- ▶ No rights to work or access to benefits, or paid work; do have access to health care, housing and asylum support payments from Government

Refugee

- ▶ Receives a positive asylum claim decision from the Home Office and then has 'leave to remain', or similar status e.g. Humanitarian Protection
- ▶ Where an asylum application has been approved; support and housing ceases in 30 days and the refugee must find alternative housing.
- ▶ Ability to work, claim welfare benefits, travel etc.
- ▶ Where all appeal rights are exhausted and an application refused then they become unsupported by Government and rely on friends or family
- ▶ Often leave the area to be in larger towns and cities

Failed or destitute asylum seeker

- ▶ Where an asylum application has been refused and they have exhausted all rights of appeal; support and housing will cease in 30 days.
- ▶ No recourse to public funds - some can approach LA for support if adults with care needs.
- ▶ Encouraged to voluntarily return home if there is a safe route to return via Home Office, no longer have a lawful right to remain in the country; could face detention or deportation.

Economic Migrant

- ▶ A person who has left their country and seeks by lawful or unlawful means to find employment in another country

Background - Asylum Accommodation

- ▶ The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 directs that the Home Office has a statutory duty to accommodate destitute asylum seekers
- ▶ The Home Office discharges its statutory duty through six COMPASS contracts with three private sector providers: G4S, Serco and Clear Springs Ready Homes (map refers)
- ▶ In the North East; G4S are the primary contractor, though they do use a number of sub-contractors across their contract area, including Jomast in the North East
- ▶ In 2000 a national dispersal policy was introduced to address over concentration of asylum seekers in the South East and London



National Asylum Overview

- ▶ Asylum intake can be unpredictable, it is difficult to plan for the number of people that will need to be accommodated
- ▶ Over the last two years, due to global events, the number of asylum seekers and the number of asylum seekers requiring accommodation significantly increased
- ▶ This resulted in the use of contingency (hotel) accommodation, largely in the West Midlands and room sharing has been prevalent in some authorities
- ▶ Applications for asylum support increased from 13,026 in 2013 to 21,938 in 2015, dipping down to 18,674 in 2016
- ▶ The dispersed population grew from 20,687 in 2013 to 36,626 at the end of 2016
- ▶ National asylum figures have started to stabilise since end of 2016
- ▶ North East and North West regions; highest proportions per head of population
- ▶ NEMP seeking a more equitable distribution nationally raised at consultation events and national feedback to Ministers
- ▶ Home Office working nationally to open up new areas 'widen dispersal' - an additional 27 LA's recently started to take dispersals and work ongoing
- ▶ Government guidance cluster limit per head of population to ensure there are not large concentrations in any one area
- ▶ Set at 1:200 per head of population

Regional Asylum Overview

- ▶ NEMP seeking a more equitable distribution regionally - in early 2015 the asylum population in the Tees Valley was 60%
- ▶ NEMP worked regionally to support local authorities to start to take asylum numbers e.g. Northumberland and Darlington
- ▶ All North East local authorities to take part in asylum dispersal by end of 2017, Durham to agree a date
- ▶ Only region to secure agreement in principle to all LA's dispersing asylum seekers
- ▶ Progress made on north/south split ongoing, TV area has reduced by 10%
- ▶ Middlesbrough were well beyond cluster limit when the Partnership began work and Stockton were very close to it
- ▶ The Partnership applied pressure to see a reduction without impacting on those already in situ
- ▶ Dispersals were ceased in Middlesbrough (Jan 2016) and would occur on a replacement basis only process in Stockton
- ▶ Middlesbrough is now under cluster and Stockton has maintained its position well under cluster

Improving communication

- ▶ Regular policy ‘items of interest’ updates to our VCS network and/or training sessions, also involving Members
- ▶ Development of an e-newsletters, on national and regional issues
- ▶ Liaison with the Home Office on frontline blockages in Asylum system e.g. consistent trends of delayed emergency payments, NHS advice, tailored inspections
- ▶ Communication protocols developed with LA’s and G4S
- ▶ Asylum Accommodation Use Protocol; improving consultation with local authorities and Police on new homes for asylum use
- ▶ Clarifying the complaints, service requests process for asylum seekers communicating this is via G4S not sub contractors
- ▶ Managing media messages and responses to media events.
- ▶ Manage changes and expectations in services e.g. change in reporting regimes, asylum support

Improving information

- ▶ LA's receive monthly Home Office 'restricted data' on asylum numbers with country of origin, age, gender, family/singles to postcode sector level.
- ▶ G4S supply LA's with a quarterly property address list
- ▶ LA's encouraged to map and monitor these to feed into strategic discussions with G4S around areas where there is clustering or on new areas that could be opened up to address clustering
- ▶ G4S keen to meet with LA's to have strategic discussions on a quarterly basis
- ▶ Information should also feed into the process of LA's considering new property use for asylum purposes under the Asylum Accommodation Use Protocol
- ▶ Migration profiles provided to LA's using a databank developed with Migration Yorkshire, funding ceased and NEMP looking at alternatives
- ▶ Standing agenda item at Stakeholder meetings for Lead Officers to feedback on locality issues and anything from local Multi- Agency meetings
- ▶ Dedicated Website progressing to live in April 2017
- ▶ There are still things we need to do....



Key priorities - Asylum

- ▶ Asylum information presented in a more user friendly way to ward level on asylum dispersal
- ▶ Enables the LA to more readily to note changes in neighbourhoods, improve local mapping information and strategic discussions with G4S
- ▶ Review of local multi-agency group draft report for consultation end April 2017
- ▶ Continuing support for local authorities who want to address room sharing for unrelated asylum seekers
- ▶ Improving pre-arrival information - pilot in Middlesbrough
- ▶ Improving the transition from asylum to refugee status, learning lessons from Syrian Resettlement; pilot with DWP
- ▶ Input and support through to the launch of the new asylum contract and the role LA's will play
- ▶ Support on the implications of changes in the Immigration Act 2016

New Asylum Contract - timescales

(Home Office)

2016

2017

2018

2019

'Concept' phase is focussed around scoping, design and engagement but given the end date of Sept 2019 this work will be front loaded into remainder of 2016-early 2017

Approval of a preferred design option in June/July 2017

9 month procurement phase starting in August 2017

Award to the contract in September 2018 to allow at 12 month mobilisation period (learning lessons from transition from Target to COMPASS)

Fully operational in September 2019

Engagement will continue throughout and draw upon different partners at relevant stages

Syrian and Vulnerable Children's resettlement

UK plays a role in tackling international humanitarian crises through:

- **Humanitarian support and aid** directly to countries affected
- **Providing sanctuary** to vulnerable people fleeing conflict, violence and persecution through its various resettlement schemes
- 65 million people world wide displaced

The UK delivers a range of resettlement programmes

Our regions focused on:

Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) - commitment to resettle 20,000 people by 2020; and

Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme (VCRS) - commitment to resettle 3000 people from wider MENA by 2020 - looking for pledges from LA's of approx. 3 per LA



Progress to date - Nationally

- Come a very long way since David Cameron's initial announcement in Sept 2015
 - Over **20k pledges** now secured - still need to deliver!
 - **5700 Syrians** now resettled in the UK since 2014
 - Over **230 local authorities** signed up
 - Community Sponsorship launched
-
- £10m additional funding for ESOL
 - Vulnerable Children's Scheme launched
 - Announced status changes - Humanitarian protection to refugee status
 - Still a long way to go - priority now is delivery



The North East has made a strong contribution to Syrian resettlement

- Over 2000 pledges for the Syrian scheme
- 8 local authorities participating
- £8,520 pp in Yr1 to assist the LA to support
- Plus education and health costs
- 468 people welcomed to the region (Dec 16)
- Two regional charter flights
- Regular arrivals on scheduled flights and
- Piloted the regional delivery model
- Helped shape delivery in other regions
- Delivered the first fully regional charter
- Influenced policy on adaptations & voids
- Developed and piloted a Peer Mentoring project
- Will shortly pilot a Self Employment initiative with Home Office contracted partner
- Stockton initially not expected to support
- Place based approach to be taken on all programmes



-Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) -Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme

- ▶ Lord Dubs amendment to Immigration Act - 350 children
- ▶ Government cluster for local authorities having unaccompanied children more than 0.07% child population
- ▶ National Transfer Scheme (NTS) developed in July 2016
- ▶ Calais crisis saw an increase in unaccompanied children
- ▶ Partnership coordinating response and assistance from the region for NTS and Calais/Dubs (2 accommodated in NE)
- ▶ Success to build on - challenges due to the existing pressures from other migration programmes & looked after children
- ▶ Six authorities participating 2016/17 helping 24 children
- ▶ Recently received £9,500 per LA to assist them along with the tariff payment and potential to seek Controlling Migration Fund support
- ▶ HO stated Middlesbrough and Stockton need not participate initially
- ▶ Middlesbrough and Stockton to review participation
- ▶ Potential closure of Calais will mean alternative routes sought





Any Questions?

Contact details

Janine Hartley, North East Migration Partnership Manager

01642 729151

janine_hartley@middlesbrough.gov.uk / nemp@middlesbrough.gov.uk