

Report to: East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP)
Date: 28th April 2010
Title: Migration Action Group Update
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Purpose: To provide and update of the recent work undertaken by the Migrant Action Group

Project background

In November 2007 the Migrant Research Project Group (MRGP) was set up by the East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP). In 2009 this evolved into the Migration Action Group (MAG). Based on locally drawn evidence, MAG successfully put in a bid for the four-themed 'Empowering and Integrating Migrant Communities' project, from the Migration Impact Fund.

1. Theme 1 – Information and Advocacy

a) Recruit a county-wide Migrant Communities Project Officer¹

- The new Migrant Communities Project Officer is now in post. A database of relevant local and national Information, Advice and Guidance, has been compiled and handed over to ESCIS. The challenge now is to make this more accessible to migrant communities.
- The contract for external research into migrant community needs has been awarded. This will run from March to June 2010.
- Plans to make an East Sussex Welcome Pack are on hold until the research is completed.

b) Outreach work for Slovak and Czech Republic migrants

Outreach work is still on hold as Sompriti is no longer functioning. The outreach work will go to tender following the completion of the research into migrant community needs (July 2010).

2. Theme 2 – Housing: Migrants in East Sussex Coastal Towns Project

- A survey has been developed by Hastings Borough Council (HBC). It has been translated into 7 A10 languages including English and will shortly be available online and in paper form.
- The Migrant Communities Support Officer (MCSO) is shadowing Housing Options and Housing Renewal officers to investigate issues surrounding unlicensed Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) and tied accommodation. This will inform discussions for a partner group which will be set up by the end of March to work out the best way forward when dealing with these issues. This group will include Housing staff, representatives from Sussex Police and East Sussex Fire and Rescue, Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups working with migrants and the Gangmasters Licensing Authority.
- Presentations for VCS groups are being developed to raise awareness of tenants' rights and responsibilities and to promote agencies providing housing advice and services.
- The MCSO is investigating what other Local Authorities are doing in terms of producing information for Migrant Workers with a view to replicating it for partner organisations.

¹ The post title has been changed from Support Officer to Project Officer for clarification as this better reflects the role of the post.

- In April the MCSO will attend the Bexhill and Hastings Landlords association to publicise the project and look at ways of engaging with landlords.

3. Theme 3 – Training and Learning

a) Provision of flexible English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision in community settings

- From 8th March Dave Pine is the new project lead, based at South Coast College Hastings (SCCH). Discussions on provision, recruitment, and delivery of ESOL are now being planned with College partners and learner targets confirmed.
- Community partners in Hastings have been identified and 2 courses to start after Easter. The SCCH coordinator is liaising with VCS orgs, Children's Centres and schools to promote the project.
- A clearer, more robust budget is being drawn up, as well as details regarding tutor allocation and course content.

b) ESOL provision and employment

- Although this is planned for the second year of the project, the SCCH coordinator is hoping to provide ICT courses to engaged learners, including CV writing, as soon as possible.
- Need to plan for flexible, learner lead provision after first year. Need to liaise with other providers to join up provision and employment opportunities.

c) ESOL provision in family settings

Subject to references, the new ESOL coordinator, based in the English as an Additional Language Service (EALS) team in Children's Services, will be in post mid-April. When the ESOL coordinator is in post, families will be identified and signposted towards appropriate provision.

4. Theme 4 – Health

Migrant Health Advocates

Soft market research found three key points:

- Community interpreters welcomed the idea of training advocates as this is a role they are sometimes pulled into inappropriately.
- Migrant community members felt it was important that the migrant advocates were culturally aware and spoke the service user's language.
- Migrant community members considered it more important to have access to a range of advocates meeting different language and cultural needs than it was to have continuity in terms of the individual delivering the advocacy or a physical access point for the advocates.

The Migrant Health Advocates service will follow the model of the current interpreting and translation contract, managed by East Sussex County Council (ESCC). This allows a 'menu' of providers to deliver a service that is accessible to a range of agencies and at an agreed rate. ESCC have confirmed that coordination of the Migrant Health Advocates service can be added as an additional clause.

20 advocates will be trained, 10 on each side of the county. The service should be operational by September 2010.