

SOUTH WEST REGION

STRATEGIC MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

STRATEGIC PLAN

2007/10

1. THE SOUTH WEST REGION MIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

- The South West has the largest land area of the English regions and is co-terminus with the areas covered by Government Office for the South West (GOSW) and the South West Regional Assembly(SWRA). It encompasses the counties of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset, Devon and Cornwall.
- Administratively it covers those County Councils and the nine existing Authorities, Plymouth, Torbay, Poole, Bournemouth, North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Swindon plus the three newly agreed unitaries of Exeter, Wiltshire and Cornwall.
- The Partnership was established in its present form in April 2004 to co-ordinate activities regarding the dispersal, accommodation and support of asylum seekers, unsuccessful asylum seekers and new refugees in the Region. The first meeting of the Executive Board was held on 3rd June 2004 and quarterly meetings have been held since that date.
- In March 2007 the terms of the Enabling Grant Agreement, EGA widened to include all migration issues. This Strategic Plan is written in the light of this change.
- This Plan relates only to the enabling activities engaged in by the Partnership, including the developing role under the terms of the new EGA relationships overseeing the Regional Strategic Co-ordination Board for Migration
- Membership of the Board is open to all local authorities, other statutory authorities, voluntary sector organisations and private sector organisations that are involved in supporting activities around the migration agenda in the South West Region.
- The Regional Strategic Board reports to the South West Local Government Association (SWLGA) and is supported by officers from the South West Regional Secretariat who also support the work of the SWLGA. The Board is currently chaired by Cllr Roger Hutchinson who is also the Chair of the SWLGA

2. OUR OVERALL AIM

The South West Regional Partnership has as its main aims:

- To provide a regional advisory, development and consultation function for partner organisations from the statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors for the co-ordination and provision of advice, support and services for migrants;
- To respond positively, effectively and with equity to Government policies regarding the support of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants in the South West Region;
- To adopt a multi-agency approach in meeting the diverse needs of asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants;
- To actively seek the views of all its stakeholders including refugee groups and organisations;
- To ensure its policies and strategies are led by the principles of best value and anti discriminatory practice.

3. OUR PARTNERS & OUR CUSTOMERS

Partners

We recognise that the Partnership cannot exist in isolation, and must work with many other stakeholders if we are to achieve our aims. Key partners are:

- The Border and Immigration Agency;
- Local Authorities across the region;
- Other statutory service providers across the region;
- The voluntary and community sector – both locally within the Region and nationally;
- Migrant and Refugee Community Organisations and Refugee support agencies;
- Accommodation providers (Astonbrook Housing and ClearSprings);
- Job Centre Plus;
- Regional CBI and TUC.

Customers

We also recognise that to achieve our aims successfully we must listen and react to our customers. We attempt to achieve this by building and maintaining a network of locality forum, which includes all those working with and directly representing the voice and views of asylum seekers and refugees and now wider migrants.

Our key customers are asylum seekers, unsuccessful asylum seekers, refugees who have recently received permission to remain and other migrants.

4. THE FRAMEWORK FOR OUR ACTIVITY

- Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Nationality & Asylum Act 2002
- Race Relations (Amendment Act) Act 2000
- National Assistance Act 1948
- NHS & Community Care Act 1990
- Children Act 1989
- Immigration & Asylum Act 1996
- Asylum & Immigration (Treatment of Claimants etc) Act 2004
- The Enabling Grant Agreement.
- Border and Immigration Agency (BIA) operational responsibilities.

5. THE SIZE OF OUR CURRENT BUSINESS

Asylum Seekers

There are currently about 1500 asylum seekers accommodated and supported in the region supported under the BIA dispersal scheme, by the local authorities, and Section 4 support. In the main these are concentrated on the 5 dispersal areas within the region. The new Target Contracts mean there will be two accommodation providers in the region, ClearSprings and Astonbrook Housing. The wraparound support is provided through a variety of means; Refugee Action who have a contract with BIA to provide a one stop service, other voluntary sector organisations, the accommodation providers through their BIA contracts

and the local authorities within the parameters of their statutory responsibility.

- The South West Region accommodates about 950 asylum seekers under the BIA dispersal scheme and 250 on a “subsistence only” basis;
- The region has a UASC population of 120.
- The region has a Section 4 population of 250.

Migrants

At present it is not possible to give accurate figures relating to the number of migrant workers in the region and one of the early challenges for the Partnership will be to undertake research, clarify this and work towards having robust statistical information that can be shared across the region.

6. KEY AIMS.

The Enabling Grant Agreement 2007 -10 requires the Lead Organisation to:

- Provide a regional, multi-agency Strategic Migration Partnership structure to deliver the requirements of the enabling role;
- Facilitate and promote the effective contact, co-ordination and partnership working between the Strategic Migration Partnership, local authorities, police, health authorities, employment and career services (including Job Centre Plus), Government Regional Offices, the regional CBI / Employers Forum, the Regional TUC, local and regional voluntary groups (including One Stop Service Providers), and the private sector (principally the BIA contracted accommodation providers) – working across localities and service providers.

We had the following Key Aims for the period 2006 - 2009:

2006 – 07

- To facilitate the development of proactive RSCBM;
- To work with the NASS Transition Team to manage the new Target Contracts.

2007 – 09

- To ensure that appropriate support services are developing in response to the New Asylum (NAM) process;
- to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Business Plan are achievable within available funding

2007 –10 Update

To accommodate the key changes in the Enabling Grant in broad terms we will:

- Review the current regional structures and change as necessary, to meet the expanded remit of the Partnership to cover “migration” within the region;
- Design structures to meet the needs of both the migrant workers and asylum seeker and refugee groups which will also reflect the changes within the Home Office and the new BIA;
- Ensure that the structures and workload are commensurate with available resources and we will be exploring avenues of additional funding.