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## **Second conference held in Ipswich 13 – 15 June 2016**

Theme: How the public and voluntary sector work in partnership to improve migrant integration.

### **Introduction**

On June 13-15, the ELAINE conference was arranged in the county town of Suffolk, Ipswich, England. The purpose of this conference was the exchange of good examples and “best practices” in dealing with the contemporary challenge of integration in five different European countries – Sweden, Denmark, Great Britain, The Netherlands and Spain. The conference is the second out of five conferences to be arranged, as part of a project funded by the Europe for Citizens programme. The theme of this particular conference was how the public sector works in partnership with the voluntary sector on migrant integration.

Over 90 participants from a variety of local, regional, national and international organizations from the public, private and voluntary sector attended the second day of the conference.

Despite being a year in the planning, the timing of the conference presented some challenges as it fell within what is known as ‘electoral purdah’ being ten days before the UK’s EU referendum. This meant that those working in local government were constrained as to what they were able to cover.

### **Conference day 1 – Ipswich Town Hall – 13 June 2016**

Welcome to EU delegates and ‘orientation’ activities facilitated by:

- Clare Hedges, Immigration Lawyer, Birketts Solicitors, Cambridge
- Phaniel Mutumburi, Chief Officer, Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality
- Patrick Ramazani, Fresh Beginnings, Colchester, Essex
- Rebecca Crerar, Suffolk Refugee Support, Ipswich
- Gosia Strona & Louise Gooch from the host organisation, the Regional Strategic Migration Partnership for the East of England, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Each group of delegates from Sweden, Denmark, Spain and the Netherlands were split up and rotated around these three themes:

- The migration of EU free movement workers
- The way that the UK recruits highly skilled workers from beyond the EU
- The way in which the UK works with asylum seekers and refugees.



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The aim of this session was to encourage discussion about migration at its broadest – that while people may move for different reasons, they still present with similar needs e.g. the need to acquire a good standard of spoken and written English to be able to participate fully in the job market.

Some of the learning:

- The UK's points based system to recruit high skilled migrants from outside is not a common model – other countries reported a 'green card' system, enabling people to move in order to look for work rather than having to have a firm job offer.
- That the EU free movement workers from the Roma community who have moved to Suffolk with Spanish as their second language came from the Galicia region of Spain, where our Spanish delegates are from.
- That many of the refugee resettlement activities provided by the voluntary sector in the UK are provided by formal resettlement programmes by the statutory sector in Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands.
- In common with the UK, Spain sees inward migration from the Spanish-speaking diaspora, meaning that new arrivals arrive having some knowledge of the language, resulting in more informal and less intensive language learning.

## Conference day 1 – Ipswich Town Hall – 13 June 2016

### Opening address from Louise Gooch from host organisation and Councillor Hamil Clarke

**Councillor Hamil Clarke** is a founding member and trustee of the Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE), and a founding member of Suffolk Refugee Support.

Louise set the scene with a look at the UK's long migration history, and the contribution from refugees, Commonwealth and EU migrants to civic life in Ipswich. However, despite this long experience of welcoming new migrant communities, the UK still has much to learn.

Councillor Hamil Clarke was able to speak about his journey as a Commonwealth economic migrant from the Caribbean, his professional dreams and how the Commonwealth communities had to provide mutual support to be able to thrive in the UK. At that time, rented houses would not be open to 'Irish, Blacks or dogs'. Establishing the Race Equality Council in Ipswich enabled them to challenge these discriminatory practices. However, ISCRE will be 40 next year – why is it still relevant to migrant communities today? Today, they have a discrimination legal adviser who challenges breaches under the Equality Act, fighting for people who experience unfair employment practices or have unequal access to public services.



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Louise then put forward the following definition of integration:

Integration touches on institutions that promote development and growth within society, including **early childhood care; elementary, postsecondary, and adult education; workforce development; health care; provision of government services to communities with linguistic diversity;** and more.

Successful integration builds communities that are stronger economically and more inclusive socially and culturally.

The subsequent presentations were designed to showcase good practice within the East of England which are making contributions to achieving integration as defined above.

### **Allison Coleman – Suffolk County Council’s contribution to and outputs from the Forum for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants (FRASAM)**

See Allison’s presentation on the way that FRASAM works and the services which have been developed under its umbrella (Migrant Help drop-in advice service and Supplementary Schools) saved via this link:

<http://smp.eelga.gov.uk/documents/elaine/uk%20conf%20presentations/suffolk%20county%20council%20frsam.pdf>

Other Multi-Agency Forum representatives / chairs from other parts of the East of England (Peterborough, Norwich and Essex) made themselves known to delegates so all of them were available for questions in break out / networking times.

### **Christine Abraham from Community Action Suffolk and Fran Bedding from Suffolk County Council – how the voluntary sector is developed and provided with relevant and timely funding advice**

See Christine’s presentation on how to help a small, informal voluntary group develop into a formally constituted organisation via this link:

<http://smp.eelga.gov.uk/documents/elaine/uk%20conf%20presentations/community%20action%20suffolk.pdf>

See Fran’s presentation about how Suffolk County Council works with the voluntary sector to support and advise organisations looking for funding opportunities:

<http://smp.eelga.gov.uk/documents/elaine/uk%20conf%20presentations/suffolk%20county%20council%20funding.pdf>

Reproduced below is the case study provided to show how this works in practice. The organisation cited, Phoebe, had sent one representative to the conference and was one of the places which some EU delegates would visit on 15 June.



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### Case Study from a BME/new migrant community group: **PHOEBE**

SCC have supported PHOEBE with a number of funding applications over time. Phoebe is a local charity based in Ipswich that offers specialist advice, advocacy, support and counselling services to victims of domestic violence, FGM, forced marriages and honour based violence. Most recently we have helped Phoebe to access an Awards for All grant of £10,000 to pay towards the following services until November 2016:

**FREEDOM PROGRAM:** a free course that will help approximately 350 women per year who have experienced domestic violence. The women will learn what controlling behaviour is and how to recognise warning signs of potential abuse whether it involves physical, psychological, sexual or financial harm. The women will also be given one to one counselling sessions by qualified professionals who will provide more specific advice regarding their particular situation.

**WELFARE ADVICE:** many of the individuals are effectively held captive in their homes and are further isolated by the language barrier. PHOEBE will support them practically with their housing applications; ensure that they receive their entitled welfare support and that all children are enrolled in education. They will also help them register with a health service and give advice regarding how the different services work in the UK. This will help safeguard them from isolation.

**ENGLISH CLASSES:** offered three days a week (both adult and mother/child classes) as well as one-to-one lessons with interpreters for those who need them. Also will organise a retreat for women and their children during which a number of activities will be arranged to strengthen their team-building and communication skills. They will also organise educational trips where they will learn more about British culture and society. These trips will give the women the opportunity to practice the English they learn in a real world setting and transferable skills so that they can seek out the services they need in future independently, thus helping them integrate better into society and find a job.

**LEGAL AND EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT:** this will provide one-to-one human rights, family law and immigration advice sessions with qualified lawyers, and will also help women prepare for employment and find volunteering opportunities.

**Delegates then took part in a short question and answer session.**



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### **Good practice case study presentations:**

#### **Gill Jones and Liz Prior - Healthwatch Suffolk Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Group**

Gill's presentation looked at the small grants scheme developed to use the skills of small, BME groups to inform Healthwatch's understanding of the health needs of new migrant communities and to build sustainable communication:

<http://smp.eelga.gov.uk/documents/elaine/uk%20conf%20presentations/healthwatch%20.pdf>

Liz focused on a case study - the Sickle Cell group which has been established from the Healthwatch group – to try to improve services for those living with Sickle Cell Disease. She outlined how underreported those with the disease are in Suffolk because service providers are only aware of and building services for the small number of sufferers who were born in the UK with the disease but not those who have arrived as new migrants. The group aims to raise awareness amongst health professionals of the stigma surrounding the disease, how sufferers might present and how best to respond to sickle cell crisis.

#### **Patrick Ramazani – Fresh Beginnings, Colchester**

Patrick talked about the origins of Fresh Beginnings and the different refugee groups that they have resettled in Colchester and Chelmsford. They are now working on the Government's Syrian Refugee Resettlement programme and he spoke about how this works in practice:

<http://smp.eelga.gov.uk/documents/elaine/uk%20conf%20presentations/fresh%20beginnings.pdf>

#### **Tonia Wilson and Angelika Bitca – Volunteering Matters, Ipswich**

Tonia and Angelika spoke about the work they had undertaken in partnership with Ipswich Borough Council on culturally competent parenting programmes:

<http://smp.eelga.gov.uk/documents/elaine/uk%20conf%20presentations/volunteering%20matters.pdf>

#### **Councillor Sophie Meudec – Ipswich Borough Councillor**

How the local council cascades funding to support voluntary groups which are working on migrant integration:

<http://smp.eelga.gov.uk/documents/elaine/uk%20conf%20presentations/councillor%20meudec%20community%20%20funding%20support.pdf>

Councillor Meudec also presented a case study on Suffolk Refugee Support, whose International Women's Group the EU delegates would visit on 15 June.



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## **Afternoon workshops:**

**Planning Public Services for the whole community** – facilitator Councillor Sophie Meudec

### **Discussion points:**

The need for good data – up to date, reliable to help inform decisions on services. Issues highlighted by voluntary sector has to be backed by data to demonstrate a particular need to statutory agencies.

Healthwatch explained how they undertake regular user surveys to find out how service users feel about the way the health service works.

Concern that by asking the questions of service users you may raise their expectations and not be able to deliver in line with those expectations.

Swedish delegates advised that they have plenty of good data to draw on and know what they should be doing, for example, participation in sports by boys not born in Sweden is far lower than those born in Sweden. What they felt was their shortcoming was knowing what to do in response to this data. This is maybe an advantage of the UK's tradition of working with community groups is that we can approach them for guidance on an issue like this.

UK problem is that with frequent law changes, some migrant communities are not entitled to access some public services – public sector and advice sector struggle to keep up, making for inconsistent advice and unequal take up of services. People are told that they aren't eligible by public servants when they are – culture of declining a service to someone who is eligible rather than provide it to someone who may be ineligible.

Sweden – no public services are chargeable or ineligible to some or have to be paid for by some classes of migrants.

Spain – this is a hot topic that crops up in discussions at City Hall. For Spain, this is the case for the North African new arrivals who need to be able to use public services and are restricted.

Community engagement is essential. However, concerns from UK delegates about 'institutional amnesia' – public bodies engage, consult but then don't feedback outcomes. They then come back a year later to engage and consult again – leaving those being consulted frustrated 'didn't they listen? Didn't they hear what we said?' Result is consultation fatigue and reluctance to participate.

Another problem with UK is limited funding for projects, which deliver an improvement but funders aren't interested in continuation funding, so the project closes leaving beneficiaries worse off.

It feels also to UK delegates that the voluntary sector is where new services are devised as they are more alive to demographic changes – the public sector largely seems to rely on the census data (published every 10 years) and consults the voluntary sector for data and evidence of needs of new communities. A strong desire for better collaboration in this sphere.



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Swedish delegates observed that the roles we undertake in the voluntary sector are taken up by their public sector. But there is a lack of community engagement skills in public sector nor is there a real understanding of diversity.

Swedish delegates also reported that projects are established by long term agreements, meaning that they do endure and provide long term, sustainable support.

In the UK, where the public sector has recruited advisers from minority communities, they enjoy high levels of trust from migrant clients.

Spanish delegates talked about how the Mayor makes visits to community groups to learn about how they work. Councillor Meudec confirms that she does the same.

Urban v rural needs

Sometimes communities are hard to engage with. Police delegates from UK mentioned they organise events around community safety, rural crimes prevention, hate crime, antisocial behaviour and anti-radicalisation.

Interpreting needs to be offered however emphasis for more ESOL provisions

Integration through mother tongue **and** resettling language for key messages

In Denmark, municipality incorporates language in their service deliveries. Traumatized refugees have separate provisions by integrating mental health. Online language provisions, evening and weekend classes are also available.

Challenges in UK to public services, cuts and specialised services disappearing.

Evidence of needs not being collected or captured

Multi-agency approach in any planning of public services

All in UK voluntary sector chasing decreasing funding opportunities - EU reps stated municipality funds their work.

Monday to Friday working week, need to incorporate some activities / services at weekends.

Within communities identify champions, arrange multicultural events, faith groups play a crucial role in bringing this together.



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**Setting up new community groups for new migrant communities** - facilitator Carol Deslandes from Peterborough Community Voluntary Service (PCVS)

**Discussion points:**

Spanish delegate highlighted a project set up to tackle racial bullying in schools. It is delivered in partnership with regional government in order to be able to get the materials into the schools.

Example of a common interest group which was established out of a handball group.

The Quakers in Colchester recognised that they couldn't work alone in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, did their research and approached Fresh Beginnings to provide mutual support e.g. fund raising and recruiting befrienders.

Discussed difference between collaboration and partnership and agreed:

Collaboration is working together informally

Partnership happens when a collaboration arrangement is made more formal.

A conversation between people with a shared interest may be the seed of a community group, which exists without the need for a formal agreement.

The need for dedicated migrant-centric groups was discussed – borne out of limited language and not properly understanding how things work – what is the 'system' in the new country?

Faith groups can be the source of a community group – Oasis ESOL came from a church in the heart of the new migrant district in Ipswich recognising the need for them to provide more English classes for new migrants anxious to learn. However, vital to 'work with and not do for'.

A new group may be driven by one passionate and energetic person - how can the group become sustainable? Try to encourage the group to develop into a network – and try to work with different people from the network to encourage resilience, shared common purpose and shared ownership. Group gave example of one passionate and charismatic leader who became unwell, but was unable to give up control of the group because she hadn't developed a network.

Be careful not to rely too much on those self-appointed 'community leaders' as they may not speak for the whole community and can hold back wider community progress. This is especially important if the wider community is using the 'leader' as an informal interpreter – use professional interpreters from outside the area if you have concerns.

Money isn't always the answer – it brings with it pressure and the need to establish formal group arrangements, such as legal compliance and a board of trustees - pressure that an informal network may feel is unhelpful and unnecessary in pursuit of its aims. Grants may not always be the answer either – look to diversify income.

The value of working with young people in new migrant communities is that they often learn more quickly than their parents and can be the catalyst to stimulate change.



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An informal group may get built to address a particular issue at a particular time – and if it is successful may feel pressured into keeping going. The group recommended closing down groups once they have done the job that they set up to do.

Note of caution around setting up more community groups/charities, and advice to be clear about appropriate structures, including the new charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) - a legal entity designed for non-profit organisations in the UK.

Potential funders like to hear direct from migrants about their experiences, and it can lead more easily to giving (i.e. rather than hearing about their plight via a Migrant Support Organisation)

There is 'de-funding' (rather than 'defending') of the conventional broad-spectrum voluntary sector in the UK, so churches are stepping in. We're seeing the development of parallel welfare provision outside the state.

**Advice and advocacy services for new migrant communities** – facilitator Audrey Ludwig, Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE)

#### Discussion points:

1. Specific needs of migrants
  - language and provision of interpreting services (professionals, bilingual support workers, community interpreters, family members)
  - no knowledge of the existing system, cultural differences – awareness raising needed first
  - use of jargon by professionals (e.g. social workers, midwives, health visitors) makes understanding difficult (e.g. DV)
2. Specialist or general services
  - Specialist provision, but open door policy – safest solution to avoid being accused of discriminating against the indigenous population
  - ISCRE – 45% of their law advice clients are white British
  - Your expertise builds up if you provide specialist advice
  - Outreach services – popular in areas which do not have local provision
  - ISCRE – contact with 71 volunteer lawyers providing free pro bono advice but only 30 minutes at a time
3. Funding sources
  - Spain – state funding provided but not enough to satisfy the need
  - Holland – state funded and volunteer support
  - UK – Big Lottery, charitable trusts, European Social Fund, Local Enterprise Partnerships, local councils
4. Barriers to advice and advocacy
  - Support agencies are generally small organisations with no time and resources to do research or constantly apply for funding – long term funding would be more helpful



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### **Possible solutions:**

- sharing ideas of things that work well across organisations and countries
- exploring opportunities for partnership working
- building a network of pro bono solicitors who can help clients

**What are the barriers to civic participation for migrant communities and how can we remove them?** – facilitator Phanael Mutumburi from Ipswich and Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE)

### **Discussion points:**

Non participation can cause groups to be ostracised and left out of beneficial activity

Inclusion – everyone wants to feel part of the society – hearing your voice heard.

Community problem solving

Wellbeing – inclusion, feeling accepted, confidence and self-belief

Opportunity to utilise individual skills

Pushing yourself / taking the initiative – but introduction is difficult: “Am I going to be welcome?”

Multiple challenges like language and economics

Poor social mobility

Political / economic downturn – but need to address economic conditions for everyone including the indigenous poor population

Anti – radicalisation – people not feeling part of society / community

Immigrants frustrated by multiple barriers to using their skills

The media is a problem as well with its anti-immigration sentiment

Not being able to speak the language – literally, but also jargon.

Lack of information on clients’ past experiences (e.g. medicines/medical history) can hinder resettlement and ability to contribute to wider society.

Recognise that people are coming from places where there is rigging of elections/police brutality etc. and they do not want to have anything to do with the systems. Being aware that people can be afraid of the authorities. People come from places where authority is scary. So it is about changing mind-sets too.



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Barriers presented by employers who say that immigrants are only able to work if they have been in the country for a certain period of time.

UK example – Sudbury, small Suffolk town – the rural less diverse countryside is less welcoming, but the concept of the global village is real.

Young people can feel overlooked/dismissed, which can actually be a spur to undertake projects.

### **Possible solutions:**

Best Practice Sweden – (Rent a Swede) Meeting a Swedish person at the library and finding out all about the Swedish way of life and providing an opportunity to ask questions / Creating networks of local migrants / Difference between statutory and voluntary sector organisations – what are they seeking to achieve?

Volunteering– helps to integrate into a community e.g. by engaging with Police ‘specials’ (voluntary police officers in UK). Participating in the life of a community in order to improve conditions for others, or to help shape your community for the future. Being part of something.

Community self-empowerment often works through key proactive, motivated, resilient individuals - such as Hamil; Moe & Patrick - forming and/or shaping local groups and associations that have endured and grown, and gained the respect and buy-in of local service providers.

Collaboration is key to integration. Sweden has a national coordinator travelling around the municipalities ensuring that there are integration strategies in place and that radicalisation is avoided.

Partnerships can provide opportunities to try out different ways of working – for example, working in partnership with new migrant parents can help them understand the risks to their children – e.g. teenage daughters being invited to meet new people in local parks.

Personal support and mentoring are essential for new migrants and in various settings, including schools, as well as creating active citizens.

Peer-to-peer cultural mentoring is the ideal (e.g. UK’s Volunteering Matters ‘Respect’ project)

Voting - Joining groups - Displaying stickers or labels - Contributing to campaigns - Protesting - Running for political office

Resilience and empowering communities

Celebrate the contributions of migrants - importance of recognising the contribution migrants make, economically and culturally, and the skills that we should recognise and value them for. Also gives people a sense of their own value. Important contribution of supplementary schools to valuing and preserving cultural identity.

Existing communities need to open doors to new communities, be welcoming – there is nothing to be afraid of.



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Involve the immigrants in discussion – important to have involvement of the people about what they want.

People just want friends - create systems (platform) within which people can join befriending schemes.

Working with others to resolve a specific issue.

Sense of personal responsibility you feel to uphold your obligations as part of the community.

Promotion of language classes / mentoring.

Induction of new arrivals – especially refugees and educating them about their new community (Fresh Beginnings)

### **English language, skills and training** – Louise Humphries from Keystone Development Trust, Thetford

#### **Discussion points:**

Spanish language classes less useful in Galicia than the regional dialect, Galician, which is also understood across the border in Portugal. It is more important to speak this if you are looking to secure low skilled work – good levels of written and spoken Spanish are needed for higher skilled work.

Danish example – Thai women that marry Danish men do not get any social aid – therefore there is no obligation for them to learn Danish

Motivation to learn.

Different host countries have different requirements of migrants as to learning their language – e.g. in Denmark, migrants need to be seen to be seeking jobs and also need to learn the language. In the Netherlands, people get loans to learn the language which they pay back if they don't pass the language test. Classes are free in Spain.

Use of language classes to deliver 'covert' programmes can be successful (e.g. UK's Volunteering Matters 'Knowledge & Information Equals Choice') at 'tail-ending' information onto the end of ESOL classes, for example.

Children being taken out of school to interpret for parents – need to recognise the long term damage this does to their learning and skills acquisition.

There's still a need for community workers feeding info from local level to those with strategic roles.

Volatility of UK government funding for ESOL, with downward trend.



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### **Possible solutions:**

Could create online language courses for the well-educated to access.

Important to consider childcare facilities when creating services for women

Integrate and learn English – offer it with a trade

Older migrants can be motivated to attend ESOL by explaining if they can speak English they can communicate better with their grandchildren

Migrants/ Asylum seekers / Refugees are used to being involved in family businesses and self-employment. The majority want to continue working and developing businesses with family and friends – support these ambitions.

The host community has to feel resilient and secure economically in order to welcome migrants positively.

Clients have high expectations about work, and finding work that matches their qualifications is hard.

Make an 'Invest to save' argument – i.e. without grant funding for skills and language development, there could be increased demand for services and an increase in mental health issues caused by isolation and lack of quality support, meaning that public services would need to spend increasing amounts of money on interpreting services.

They struggle to adapt to British culture (and weather!) and overall wellbeing declines if people are not sufficiently integrated.

Social media should be used as an integration tool.

Need to simplify process for funding application processes (e.g. Healthwatch £10K for engaging BME & Diverse Groups).