

Bury Community Support Group for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

Minutes 18/1/19

Present

Sue Arnall (chair) sue@arnall.co.uk

Adele Adjetey (Serco) Adele.Adjetey@serco.com

[Wayne Roberts \(Serco\)](#)

Les and Kathleen Johnson

Barrington Reeves (Bury VCFA - networking)

Neil Gibson (Bury VCFA – funding & grants)

Chris Richards (Eagle's Wing)

Carole Martin, (Secretary, RSG) carolemartin19@gmail.com

[Roxy Kausar \(Learning Curve\)](#)

Apologies

Tony Cummings, (Office of Ivan Lewis), Dave Bevitt (CAB), Kat Pursall (CAB), Deborah Sandercock, Christine Maksymowsky (Council)

Introductions – we were pleased to welcome Barrington and Neil from Bury VCFA, and Roxy from Learning Curve.

Bus pass/lack of school places issues still the same – no movement. No reply from Paul Delbridge-Smith from either our group's letter or the email version. Discussion re different solutions. It was clear that this was a Bury-wide strategic problem.

***Barrington** will find out Council strategy re this and feed back to us.

Adele corrected any impression she may have given about Serco moving families to be nearer their allocated schools. She said Serco cannot do this.

Serco transition service – Move-on for those given the right to stay. Adele reported that there is movement on this although it isn't yet in operation. Reed, subcontracted by Migrant Help, will be delivering this service via telephone call centre in Dover. Documents in 10 languages are being produced. AIRE (Advice, Issues Reporting, & Eligibility) is involved. (Adele/Wayne: I'm sorry this is vague – I didn't really catch the ins and outs of this. Also, I am trying to keep it simple - mostly minuting events that are facts, not suppositions or vague things in the pipeline. Please could you correct or add to this to make more sense?)

The group pointed out that a telephone service is not good practice for clients whose English may be poor or non-existent. In addition, the practice of requiring client and helper to be in the same place on the phone together over what may be a long period of time (because of delays in getting through to call centres, or ring-backs) makes helping a client extremely

difficult, as many helping services are run by volunteers for only a few hours.

Serco recognises these inadequacies, but this method is to be imposed by the Home Office and everyone has to live with it. It will be phased in between March – November this year.

*Wayne will give us more details at the next meeting.

The SERCO pilot using a call centre instead of calling direct to Housing Officers – Wayne reports that Eagle's Wing (Sue and Chris) were the only service complaining about difficulties in getting through as well as the general issues described above.

*Wayne will look again at this, but again stated that the Home Office is determined to use this method.

Roxy (Learning Curve) described her service and focused on ESOL as the most useful offer for our clientele. Her ESOL classes are City and Guilds accredited. Learning Curve recruits qualified tutors and funds them, and venues, via ADAB. Asylum seekers must have an ARC card to qualify, and have been in the UK for 6 months. For refugees, funding starts from Entry level 1. Roxy can start courses (minimum 12 learners) at any time and works 6 hours a week with learners, up to 40 weeks.

Next meetings:

9.15 for 9.30 start, finish 11am

8th March 2019

3rd May 2019

