

# Meeting of the CPG on Migration

**Topic:** Poverty & Migration

**Date:** Tuesday 8th of October 2024

**Location:** Committee Room 4 with the option to join remotely

**MSP attendance:**

Paul Sweeney MSP

Bob Doris MSP

Mark Ruskell MSP

**Non-MSP attendance:**

The VOICES Network- British Red Cross

FOSS, Friends of Scottish Settlers

Initiative group Ukrainian Displaced People

Maryhill Integration Network

Mentor from The Wise Group

University of Edinburgh

Scottish Detainee Visitors

Refugees For Justice

University of Stirling

Freedom from Torture

University of the West of Scotland

Govan Community Project

GLADAN

Outside the box

University of the West of Scotland

University of glasgow

ARTconnects

Freedom From Torture - Scotland

Justice & Peace Scotland

Forth Valley Welcome

Office of Maggie Chapman MSP

## Discussions

### **1. Paul Pearson, Sekou Ouatarra, Ishmail Yambasu | Poverty Alliance**

Paul Pearson from the Poverty Alliance provided an overview of poverty issues in Scotland, focusing on the significant challenges faced by individuals navigating the asylum system, who are at heightened risk of poverty. He introduced the Rights and Action Project, an equality and human rights initiative, which aims to address the broad impacts of poverty on people's lives. Paul discussed the Minimum Income Guarantee, a financial threshold that would ensure people do not fall below a basic income level and emphasised that this should also be applied to migrants.

Sekou Ouatarra from the Community Research Team highlighted the challenges asylum seekers face as "outsiders" in the host country, including limited employment opportunities, language barriers, and social isolation. He discussed how bureaucratic obstacles, like complex applications and lengthy processing times, make integration difficult and stressful, particularly for those unfamiliar with the immigration system. Ishmail Yambasu also spoke about the importance of providing free bus travel for asylum seekers to support their mobility and integration.

### **2. David Kelly | Community Transport Association**

David Kelly from the Community Transport Association discussed the role of community transport in addressing unmet transportation needs through locally-driven solutions. He emphasised the importance of community ownership in making transport accessible and responsive to diverse needs.

David shared insights from focus group research and interviews with stakeholders, highlighting specific challenges: elderly individuals forced to choose between heating and eating, women experiencing racism and fearing violence, and issues around inaccessibility and limited information. He stressed that racism in public transport is unacceptable and pointed out the critical transport gap in the New Scots Strategy.

### **3. General Discussion**

The discussion highlighted several critical issues related to migrant poverty. Participants pointed out that poverty and social exclusion are shaped by government decisions rather than fate, with many calling for free bus passes to support integration and reduce isolation. Despite having refugee status, some still face homelessness and destitution, while period poverty remains a degrading health concern for many women in the system. Speakers noted that people in rural areas, especially elderly individuals, struggle with transportation, often having to choose between heating and eating. Calls were

made to engage MSPs more directly in addressing these inequalities, and greater parity in integration plans amongst asylum seekers.

## Action Points

- AGM in next meeting
- Circulate presentations along with next minutes
- Reach out to rural MSPs to attend the CPG

## Links Shared

[Challenge Poverty Week - The Poverty Alliance](#)

['Education is supposed to be free for all' - Research briefing - The Poverty Alliance](#)

[Research: 'The life of Glasgow pigeons is more certain' - The Poverty Alliance](#)