



Minutes of South East Integration Network Meeting

Tuesday 8th June 2021 – Online

Present:	Anna Bambridge	Glasgow Southside Woodcraft Folk
	Kim Blyth	The Glad Café
	Chani Bond	Givin' it Laldie
	Ruth Cape	SEIN
	Naomi Clarke	The Sound Lab
	Seán-Michael Dempsey	Queen's Park Arena / Inhouse CIC
	Sabine Etchu	Women's Support Project
	Ruth Forsythe	Finn's Place
	Andrea Gillespie	The Hidden Gardens
	Godsal	Glendale Women's Café
	Leon Healy	Action for Children
	Nabilah Haq	Glendale Women's Café
	Chinyanta Kabaso	YCSA
	Karen Krawczyk	SEIN
	Katherine Midgley	Govanhill Baths Community Trust
	Angie Mwafulirwa	SEIN / Sharpen Her
	Amra Nazim	Govanhill Housing Association
	Nico Ndlovu	Siyakhuluma We Talk Podcast
	Reginald Oko-Flex Inya	Migrant Help UK
	Meghan O'Neill	Shelter Scotland
	Sohini Petrie	SEIN
	Yasmine Rahemtulla	G42 Mutual Aid
	Mahdi Saki	Safe in Scotland
	Alex Sarkisian	Glasgow Zine Library
	Jennifer Scott	The No.1 Befriending Agency
	Maureen Smith	Castlemilk Law Centre
	Jess Steele	SEIN
	Mark West	Glasgow Life

Apologies: Aastha Aryal (SEIN), Meg Camley (SEIN / Home Start Glasgow South), Susan Clark (The Dixon Community), Debbie Ferguson (SEIN), Grace Gracie (Families Outside), Vicky Kakos (The Wee Retreat), Penny Macleod (SEIN / The Well), Paddy McKenna (SEIN / Cassiltoun Housing Association), Jen O'Brien (Music Broth), Anne Strachan (Voluntary Sector Voice), & Margo Uprichard (The Space)

1. Welcome

Meeting chaired by Karen

2. Minutes of last meeting

Proposed by Godsal, seconded by Seán-Michael

3. Board Update

A reminder that there will be no network meeting in July

Advance notice - the SEIN Annual General Meeting will take place on the Tuesday 7th September. Please make a note in your diaries – it would be great to have as many of our members along to this as possible.

4. Staff Update

Fire in Pollokshields

We were so sorry to see the fire in Pollokshields last week and would like to give our thoughts to those affected by this. [There is a Crowdfunder to support people affected by the fire.](#)

Member Reviewing and Updating

We're reviewing & updating our membership so all current members need to renew. Ruth has sent out a renewal survey to the key contact for all of our members – so a reminder to those that this should be **completed by 16th June** (or let Ruth know if you can't complete this by then). The survey asks questions about various aspects of SEIN's work, so we'll use the responses that we receive to develop the network further. It might be the case that the person we have down as our key contact isn't the most engaged, so speak to your key contact (or ask Ruth who that is) if you'd like to feed in to this: ruthc@seinglasgow.org.uk

Coaching for Members

We're offering some free coaching sessions to our members – kindly offered by our board member Karen (Ruth will send an email with details).

Request for a Space in Govanhill

Shawlands Academy are looking for a space in Govanhill to hold a weekly session for Roma young people (not just at Shawlands Academy), alongside Skills Development Scotland.

Message from the organiser Lauran King:

I am the Developing the Young Workforce Coordinator at Shawlands Academy. Skills Development Scotland and I are currently trying to organise a drop-in service for our Roma young people to support them into positive destinations: work, training, further education etc. We are looking for a space that we could use in Govanhill. We would be looking for a space one day per week, probably for around three hours: maybe something like 11am-2pm, although we can be as flexible as possible. We would also be more than happy to help young people from the area even if they don't attend Shawlands (this includes YP who have already left school. Contact Lauran King: gw21kinglauranf@glow.ea.glasgow.sch.uk

LGBTQI+ Pride Month Blog Post

June is LGBTQI + Pride Month, and to celebrate this we are going to put a blog post up on our website highlighting the work our members do to create LGBTQI+

inclusive space, activities, and services, and why awareness around LGBTQI+ issues and experiences is so important in integration and diversity.

If you'd like to contribute to this blog, or have any questions, please get back to Jess by next Monday (14th). Jess can either arrange a chat with you, or a colleague, or send you some questions via email, whatever works best.

We'd love to hear from a wide range of organisations, so please get in touch if you're interested and want to share the work you're doing. Email jess@seinglasgow.org.uk

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller History Month

June is Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) History Month. This year we are celebrating by putting together a collection of resources, information, and links highlighting the past and present of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller culture and lived experience. [You can read this on our website.](#)

Volunteer Week

Last week was Volunteer Week, and several of our members submitted volunteer opportunities which can be [found on our Twitter](#). Thank you for those who did, and if you'd like to submit more volunteering opportunities for us to share, [please fill out our webform.](#)

Feedback

As ever, we would greatly appreciate your feedback about our network meetings so we can continue to develop and improve them. [Fill out the short feedback form here.](#)

5. Presentation and Discussion with Meghan O'Neill about the Freedom to Crawl Campaign

Meghan is a Community Organiser from Shelter Scotland. Shelter Scotland is part of The Roof Coalition who have launched the Freedom to Crawl Campaign, which is challenging the Mears Housing Mother and Baby Unit which opened at the start of 2021 to house asylum seeking pregnant women and their babies.

Presentation

In January 2021, 20+ expectant and new mothers seeking asylum were moved to a new Mother and Baby Unit in Glasgow run by Mears Housing. Many of these women were moved out of settled accommodation in communities into this unit, which is made up of cramped bedsits. Now, everyday life for these mothers and babies is confined to one small room, with the cot just steps away from the cooker and a window that barely opens.

The unit is not fit for purpose:

- Each bedsit is a tiny room which has to be used for everything; playing, cooking, sleeping, feeding, washing.

- There is nowhere in the room other than a cot that a baby/toddler can be left. This is because of the high number of safety hazards in the room.
- There is no space to store belongings, meaning these have to be scattered around the room, causing further safety hazards.
- There is no bath, or anything to hold onto in the shower, meaning women who have just given birth, particularly those who have had a C-section, are unable to wash for a few weeks after giving birth.
- There is no space in the room to put a baby bath.
- The entire community (women and children), have to share 4 washing machines between them, two of which are broken, meaning that currently women are unable to wash their babies' clothes when necessary.
- One of women is sleeping on the floor as the bed doesn't fit in the room.

At the heart of this campaign is the women themselves, who have expressed just how affected they are by this environment.

There has been outrage over the last six months that this unit exists, and a group of organisations (under the 'Roof Coalition' which includes Shelter Scotland, Community InfoSource, Govan Community Project, Amma Birth Companions, Refuweegee and others) have created the [Freedom to Crawl campaign](#).

This campaign is challenging Mears over a number of things including accountability on why they opened the unit in the first place, and why they have kept it open despite all the criticism. The campaign has a number of demands, including a commitment to stop moving women into the unit and to move women out of the unit, with the necessary support.

The campaign was launched on 27th May, and it has gained a lot of coverage so far; Patrick Harvey has raised it in First Minister's questions, and it has been featured by STV, the Ferret, & Good Morning Scotland. Mears have responded saying it's a purpose designed unit.

The Children's Commissioner has also got involved and written to Mears asking them to urgently review the unit & it's purpose.

See the [Freedom to Crawl website for details about how to support this campaign](#). You are encouraged to write to your MP and MSP (you will find template letters on the website). You can show your support publicly by using the [social media campaign pack](#). You are also invited to add your logo on the webpage to publically show your organisation's support for the campaign.

To find out more about the campaign, and how to get involved & support it, contact Meghan: meghan_oneill@shelter.org.uk

[Follow the campaign via Roof Coalition on Twitter.](#)

Discussion

Question: Are you mounting any legal challenge to this under human rights?

Answer: A lot of the mums have described feeling claustrophobic, particularly due to the restrictions around COVID. There is Scottish legislation which would class this as unsuitable accommodation, however there are less strict laws around housing for people seeking asylum.

Question: Given that Mears have said they have had approval for the unit from Glasgow City Council, what has the communication been with the Council?

Answer: In our campaign briefing that we are sending to MPs and MSPs, we are citing that this used to be a unit that housed single homeless young people, which was shut down and quoted by the Council as being unfit for purpose, so why have they approved it for mothers and babies? At this point we are trying to get MPs and MSPs to make as much noise as possible to Nicola Sturgeon and the Home Office.

6. **Breakout Groups**

The meeting split into break out groups.

7. **Updates**

The Sound Lab

We're a small grassroots charity who exist to provide free music tuition to marginalised groups. We are looking for trustees – a secretary, and treasurer (ideally with financial management experience). We have four meetings a year. If you know anyone who would be interested, please email Naomi. We are also looking for general volunteers to support the sessions (youth support, supporting the radio shows, comms and marketing)

Website: www.thesoundlab.org.uk. Email: thesoundlab@live.co.uk

The Hidden Gardens

Gardening volunteering opportunities are available at The Hidden Gardens, priority for those from G41 and G42. Weekend gardening is starting this weekend (Saturday 12th), two a month on Saturdays (1-3pm) Anyone interested tel: 07760 442832 or email andrea@thehiddengardens.org.uk

Volunteer-led guided tours for community groups or staff groups wanting to know more about the gardens – max 4 in a group. Email Andrea for bookings.

Tai Chi on Tuesdays & Fridays 10am

Men's Group Tuesdays at 1pm, currently doing art activities, talk with SAMH.

The Hidden Gardens are open every day except on Monday.

G42 Mutual Aid

We are running an [Exchanging Skills event](#) (as part of Refugee Festival Scotland) on 17th June, looking at exchanging skills and resources.

We are holding a cinema night for older people and would like to consult older people about the event, please get in touch if you know anyone that would like to contribute: glasgowmutualaid@protonmail.com

Govanhill Baths

We are [triallying a six month social prescribing partnership](#) with Govanhill Community Links, this includes weekly events; walking on a Friday and gardening on a Saturday. We've also commissioned some distraction boxes for people who use self-harm as a coping mechanism. Social prescribing contact: hayden@govanhillbaths.com

[Common Ground event, trying to find common concerns for community development. Zoom 12th June](#)

Building work is underway on the Baths building, and leaflets are available to help people understand what is going on. Email katherine@govanhillbaths.com for these.

Highlighting the Glasgow Against Closures Campaign, trying to fight the closure of 59 community venues in Glasgow. [Find out more on Facebook](#) and support if you can.

Siyakhuluma We Talk Podcast

I run a [podcast on asylum seeker issues](#), and am always looking for contributors. I'm keen to hear service providers' stories. Get in touch with Nico if you'd like to be featured or contribute to the podcast.

I also run a stand-up comedy night, and there is one at the end of the month, everyone is welcome.

Contact Nico to find out more: nicondlovu119@gmail.com

Migrant Help UK

We are aware of the difficulties that the transition to the new asylum payment card has caused within the community, however the Home Office seems to be getting a hold of this. If anyone has difficulties with their Aspen card, please contact Migrant Help. In particular, if someone has a card that isn't working, please contact Migrant Help directly about this issue rather than requesting a new card.

[See full Migrant Help Updates here](#)

Email: reginald.okoflex@migranthehelpuk.org

Queen's Park Arena

We're planning our first block of activity onsite from 30th June – 11th July. This is a mixture of paid and free events, and we can arrange access for community groups. Get in if you'd like to discuss this.

We're looking for volunteers for the summer programme, and will cover expenses, training and food. If you or someone you know is interested you [can fill out this form](#).

Contact: kirsty@inhouse.scot or sean@inhouse.scot

Glasgow Zine Library

We've started to do some in-person events outside, and still doing online events.

[Make-nic zine making event is happening outside in several locations over summer.](#)

[Glasgow Zine Library full programme.](#)

Action for Children

We are actively recruiting referrals for our 'Positive Choices' programme. We work with young people for 4 weeks, helping them get a CV together, boosting their confidence, getting them interview practice, get them a customer service qualifications and much more. After the programme they are assigned a key worker that will help them get to their next destination (job, further training/education etc).

Contact: Leon.Healy@actionforchildren.org.uk

Glasgow Southside Woodcraft Folk

We run a group for children (3 different age groups (soon to be 4) toddlers – 15yrs). We're in Queen's Park every Wednesday evenings 5.30pm during term times. We welcome all young people, and it's free for anyone coming from a family who have experience of the asylum system (past or present).

We are also looking for volunteers for the groups, and admin roles (the whole group is volunteer run). Contact annabambridge@gmail.com

The No.1 Befriending Agency

We work with older people providing them with befriending matches (currently this is over the phone, hopefully we can go back to face to face soon). Volunteers phone up for an hour a week. We're also running zoom meetings, and we have found people making connections across them.

We have been branching out befriending to anyone who is isolated and lonely. We are reaching out to any adult (18+), and are looking for client referrals. We are also looking for volunteers from all backgrounds.

[Referral forms and guidelines for telephone and online befriending](#) (to move to face to face in the future). Contact: Jennifer@befriend.org.uk

Finn's Place

We will be starting [exercise classes inside this week.](#)

[We will be having a visit from the Heart Bus on the 31st of July](#) which is a tour bus from [the Heart Movement](#), an organisation that is trying to encourage people to explore mindfulness and listening skills.

We are looking into creating an ME peer-mentoring scheme for those who suffer from ME or chronic fatigue syndrome, if you know of anyone who would like to get involved as a mentor or mentee email: ruth@finnsplace.org

8. AOB

[A reminder that we have a newsletter information submission form on website](#), please use this for any updates and opportunities you'd like to share.

[Fill out the short feedback form here to give your feedback on this network meeting.](#)

9. Dates of Next Meetings

(No meeting in July)

Tuesday 10th August

Tuesday 7th September (AGM)