

News from Peterborough City Council

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Peterborough City Council awarded £350,000 to tackle migration impact

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Peterborough City Council has been allocated £354,832 in extra government funds to support nine projects designed to tackle the impact of large-scale migration on local services in 2009/10.

A further £337,030 has been provisionally awarded for 2010/11 but this is subject to confirmation in the autumn. The money comes from a £70 million Migration Impacts Fund set up by the Department for Communities and Local Government. The 2009/10 allocation will be used to:

- Improve secondary school teaching among children from minority ethnic new arrival (MENA) groups;
- Employ more bilingual teaching assistants so that pupils from settled communities can be helped to improve their literacy skills;
- Expand English lessons for speakers of other languages and offer EU language training to frontline service staff;
- Prevent rough sleeping;
- Expand a scheme for licensing houses in multiple occupation;
- Promote recycling among residents in North, Central and Park Wards; provide three community development workers; and
- Provide 'outreach' information and advice about health, welfare and employment.

Councillor Peter Hiller, Peterborough City Council's cabinet member for neighbourhood, housing and community development, welcomed news of the funding allocation. He said: "Peterborough has absorbed a large number of migrant workers over recent years, especially from Portugal, Poland, Lithuania, and the Czech and Slovak Republics.

"Naturally, this has placed extra pressure on health, education and other public services so this additional funding will help tackle those issues.

"Residents in some parts of Peterborough have also expressed concern about houses being rented to groups of single migrant workers, so additional funds to expand our licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation will be very useful."

Peterborough's community cohesion manager Jawaid Khan added: "People who come to Peterborough to work are contributing to the local economy so it makes sense to help them become productive members of the community. For example, many new arrivals have valuable professional qualifications that could benefit local businesses and residents if they are helped to improve their English language skills.

"Helping children acquire a rapid understanding of the English language is also important in developing their ability to contribute to Peterborough's future workforce.

"Organisations in Peterborough have been very effective in responding to the sudden increase in new arrivals and we hope to share the benefits of our experience with other areas of Britain."

Peterborough's allocation from the Migration Impact Fund was among 31 successful bids totalling almost £3.5 million from across the East of England region out of a total of 63 applications with a total value of £6.5 million that were submitted.

- The Department for Communities and Local Government is also offering, subject to agreeing terms and conditions, £41,650 in the current year and a provisional award of £53,353 for 2010/11 to the Peterborough-based Poor African Refugee Community Association for the provision of English and citizenship lessons for speakers of other languages.

Ends.

Notes:

Peterborough City Council was the first local authority in the country to be authorised to launch a more stringent scheme for licensing houses in multiple occupation by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in March 2009. The scheme requires houses that are two or more storeys high and have three or more people making up two or more households to be licensed and includes house shares, room-lets and bed-sits. The new guidelines were initially enforced in the Millfield and New England areas, where there are above average cases of overcrowding, poor housing conditions, poor management and anti-social activities.