29th October 2013.

Migrant Rights to Healthcare Public Meeting:

The event was well attended with about 65 people there. For example there were lots of people from charities and also a group of women from Rotherham who were affected by what is taking place.

We had a panel of speakers. Mike Nutt from Mulberry Practice, Ruth Grove-White, Policy Director from Migrants Rights Network, Colm Mullaney from the Transcultural Mental Health Team and Nacera Harkarti SYMAAG executive member and member of Development and Empowerment for Women’s Advancement Project and Why Refugee Women.

Ruth Grove White really gave us the insight for people to understand what’s taking place and how it’ll affect people and who. She knew exactly what she was talking about. Colm Mullaney spoke well about how it’d affect people he dealt with if this Bill was passed.

Nacera spoke about her experience of the NHS and how the Bill would affect her and other women that she knew. One of the main things she said was that she wouldn’t know where to go to if these changes took place.

We had a lot of people from the audience asking questions so they could take answers back to people they worked with. For example, people from health organisations in the voluntary sector were asking what will GP’s do? Would some of the changes mean important services stop and people lose jobs? One councillor who came was horrified with the idea of the Bill. This led to them helping SYMAAG, Northern Refugee Centre and City of Sanctuary to get a private meeting with Nick Clegg. This was to get clarity from the Deputy Prime Minister about the Health Bill and its affect on migrants.

The group from Rotherham said they were glad they came. They didn’t know about the Bill and yet they were already experiencing some of these things. For example, one woman spoke about a health service checking her status before they treated her baby.

We want to get even more people involved – particularly migrants. We want to support them to know how these decisions will affect their lives.

Author– Violet Dickinson.

SYMAAG Executive Member and chair of Development Empowerment and Women’s Advancement Project (DEWA)