How can service providers effectively gather information about the changes in legislation and impact, as well as the experiences, resources and needs of migrant communities to better anticipate and plan services?

There is a wealth of information available; the difficulty is being able to filter the information to that which is useful for you and your service. Below are some examples:

1. Join a web-based discussion groups where you can post questions such as "Where can I find a support group for a Bhutanese refugee I am working with in Bolton?", discuss healthcare issues and view updates on policy, community and projects (eg: http://www.migranthealthse.co.uk/forum/2, http://www.better-health.org.uk/forum.htm, http://www.medact.org/article_refugee.php?articleID=102, http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/asylum-seeker-and-refugee-health-care/?s)

2. Subscribe to a subject area/research library update service or newsletter which provides information about the findings of relevant studies and good practice examples (eg: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/signup/?WBCMODE=%2f, http://www.migrantsrights.org.uk/about/newsletter, http://www.necles.org.uk/gettinginvolved/migranthealth/)

3. Allocate a staff member to monitor relevant websites for briefings, good practice projects and developments ...and then (importantly!) report back at meetings (eg: http://www.hpa.org.uk/MigrantHealthGuide/, http://mighealth.net/uk/index.php/Main_Page, http://www.better-health.org.uk/, http://www.medact.org/ref_about_network.php, www.ilpa.org.uk, http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/policy, http://www.maternityaction.org.uk/index.html, http://socialworkpodcast.blogspot.com)

4. Attend migration forums. They are generally free to attend. (eg: http://www.partnershipdevelopmentproject.org.uk/html/multi-agency_forums.html, MARIM, Manchester: quarterly Multi Agency Forums, see: http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/200007/asylum_and_immigration/402/multi_agency_for_refugee_integration_in_manchester/1).

5. Talk informally to local community members through externally organised community events, demonstrate health checks or screening and discuss responses (eg: Refugee Week festivals: http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/, 'health days' organised through community organisations, non-statutory or statutory organisations)

6. Join boards, working groups or committees which can provide you with feedback about developments in the local area – and through which, you can share information about developments in your service. School groups are particularly useful in providing feedback about new migrants.

7. Organise lunchtime briefings by specific organisations (eg: migrant community organisations or support organisations, Medical Foundation: www.torturecare.org.uk/, George House Trust: www.ght.org.uk/ etc.) or by established teams (eg: nurse led specialist clinical teams, specialist health visitors or midwives etc.) to share information with your colleagues about their work, relevance to your service users and referral structures (if appropriate)

8. Develop a plan of work which include multi-agency or partnership approaches to strengthen understanding of local communities, share resources, share costs, and build trust (see: Toolkits: http://www.nationalcollege.org.uk/docinfo?id=76488&filename=multi-agency-team-toolkit.pdf, Setting up Multi-Agency services: a toolkit for practitioners http://www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/9013/CWDC_MAW_Practitioners_22-03-10_NAV.pdf, Building Better Partnerships: http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/Resources/Refugee%20Council/downloads/practice/advisers_info/Buildingbetterpartnerships2005.pdf

9. Develop specific outreach programmes which engage with the local community (for toolkits, see: http://www.letpn.co.uk/pdf-documents/lambeth-first-community-engagement-toolkit.pdf, http://www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/Involve/Home)

TS4SE
a not for profit co-operative