 

**St Martin’s Frontline Network Conference June 7th 2018**

**Summary factsheet and resource list for attendees of the “Supporting non-EEA migrant communities” workshop**

Scale of non-EEA Migrant Destitution:

Destitution amongst non-EEA migrants has been a prominent feature of the asylum system in the UK for many years. Policy changes from 2002 onwards have resulted in destitution for thousands of non-EEA migrants. Most of these people had made a claim for asylum and typically became destitute because of their claim being rejected - with the consequent cessation of any government support. The homelessness sector has witnessed the impact on the lives of these people and has sought to address the needs. This remains a constant challenge however, which is felt more acutely in larger metropolitan areas, and areas with a higher density of refugee housing.

EEA and non-EEA migrants make up a significant proportion of the rough sleeping and wider homeless population across Britain, but that there are significant gaps in data that are collected or published. For non-EEA migrants particularly, and for those outside the system who are classed as NRPF, there is a huge gap in reliable information regarding the scale of rough sleeping. The following information is available though:

* In 2016, the number of applications for asylum to the UK was 30,747. This represents a slight decrease on the previous year, while there has been significant increase in recent years (in 2012 there were 21,843 applications). It is not possible to report the numbers of asylum seekers and refugees who have experienced homelessness, though there is some relevant data relating to rough sleepers in London.
* Since 2014 there has been an increase in the number of rough sleepers in London whose last settled base was National Asylum Support Accommodation (NASS). This could include both newly recognised refugees and refused asylum seekers. According to CHAIN, in 2016/2017 3% of all rough sleepers recorded had their last accommodation base listed as NASS.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Undocumented migrants with NRPF are at high risk of destitution, but there are no publicly available data on how many refused asylum seekers are without national documents, or realistic means of obtaining any.

Key challenges:

Frontline staff are faced with a huge challenges when working with non-EEA destitute migrants:

* Many frontline homelessness services are ill equipped to provide the necessary support for destitute non-EEA nationals – such as OISC immigration advice, translation services, culturally sensitive spaces and accommodation for people without access to housing benefit etc.
* Inadequate legal advice following cuts to legal aid leads to asylum cases not being properly represented or advised upon, which can lead to negative decisions thus leading them to lose entitlements to rights, yet still unable to return home.
* Administrative delays in the Home Office system prevent destitute refused asylum seekers from accessing the support they are entitled to often for weeks or months at a time i.e. Section 98, Section 95 and Section 4.
* Once granted status it is common for non-EEA nationals to find themselves homeless as they have 28 days to leave the Home Office accommodation. This is not enough time to sign up for statutory benefits and source relevant accommodation.
* For non-EEA victims of trafficking who are leaving their allocated 45 days in a safe house, they are released without leave to remain and with NRPF.
* The process of renewing visas for non-EEA nationals and applying for settlement can be costly and complex, and when it goes wrong, people can quickly become destitute.

Practical Solutions:

* Good quality immigration advice is crucial for unlocking complex and complicated asylum and immigration cases. It is also important for providing impartial advice on options for returning home.
* Providing day to day subsistence and humanitarian support. Sourcing and referring to hardship funds to access destitution payments
* Provide realist and honest assessments of the limitations of support – manage expectations
* Working in partnership with OISC accredited immigration advice providers (e.g. Refugee Action, British Red Cross, Refugee Council, Praxis Community Projects, Street Legal etc)
* Support to pay for crucial non-immigration related documents such as I.D, birth certificates, evidence of length of stay.
* Supporting non-EEA destitute migrants into projects that provide non-housing benefit related accommodation services – such as that provided by No Accommodation Network (NACCOM).

Resource list:

* ***Know Your Rights – A Guide for Migrants*** guide aims to help migrants understand their rights and how to assert them in 8 key areas of everyday life: banking, driving, education, employment, health, housing, social services, and the detention and deportation. [*https://migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2018/03/13/know-rights-guide-migrants/*](https://migrantsrights.org.uk/blog/2018/03/13/know-rights-guide-migrants/)
* ***Supporting people with no recourse to public funds*** guidance aims to provide information for frontline homelessness services and local authorities to help them identify which clients are NRPF and what their options might be, in order to develop a support offer.<https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/supporting-people-with-no-recourse-to-public-funds>
* ***Migrant Destitution Toolkit****:* offers practical support to improve pathways out of destitution for destitute migrants. <https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/national-projects/strategic-alliance-on-migrant-destitution/migrant-destitution-toolkit>
* ***The Right to Remain Toolkit*** is a guide to the UK immigration and asylum system. It gives an overview of the legal system and procedures, with detailed information on rights and options at key stages, and actions you can take in support of your claim, or to help someone else. <https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/>
* ***How to Improve Support for Destitute Migrants*** offers practical steps to address the issues facing destitute migrants and overcome obstacles to providing accommodation, services and support. It includes learning from existing projects, and legal advice. <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/how-improve-support-and-services-destitute-migrants>
* ***Models of accommodation and support for destitute migrants with NRPF*** <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Models-of-accommodation-and-support-for-migrants-with-NRPF.pdf>
* ***SAMD Destitution Consultation Report (2017)*** <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/SAMD%20Destitution%20Survey%20Summary%20Report%20June%202017.pdf>
* ***Practical guidance on working with refugees*** <https://www.homeless.org.uk/our-work/resources/practical-guidance-on-working-with-refugees>
* ***Models of immigration advice, advocacy and representation for destitute migrants, focusing on refused asylum seekers*** <https://www.homeless.org.uk/sites/default/files/site-attachments/Models%20of%20immigration%20advice%20FULL.pdf>

Summary of workshop feedback:

During the event this workshop was ran twice, with approx. ten frontline workers attending from a very broad range of services including outreach teams, day centres, local authorities, public health, trustees, development workers and staff working in family services. The workshop facilitator focused on facilitating a sharing key challenges and key good practice from working with “the individual”, “the frontline organisation” and “the system”.

Here is a summary of key points:

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| **KEY CHALLENGES OF A FRONTLINE WORKER** | | |
| **THE INDIVIDUAL** | **FRONTLINE ORGANISATION** | **THE SYSTEM** |
| Language barriers | Only org in the area supporting NRPF | Prejudice |
| Cultural incompetence | Targets Vs Clients Needs | Lack of funding for legal aid |
| Loneliness | Core costs | Inadequate housing provision |
| Pending immigration decisions | No formal advice or training | Groups not recognised by gov – Windrush etc |
| Fear of losing children | Resource Intensive cases | Poor Home Office decision making |
| Personal/vicarious trauma | Accessing legal aid | Hostile environment |
| Distrust of services | Criminal records of clients | Constant change – new Immigration acts every two years etc. |
| Financial abuse | We’re over run! | Lack access to public benefits |
| Lack of documents | Private funding of lawyers | Leave to remain with NRPF! |
| **KEY GOOD PRACTICE OF FRONTLINE WORKERS** | | |
| **THE INDIVIDUAL** | **FRONTLINE ORGANISATION** | **THE SYSTEM** |
| Offering a warm and welcome space | Working in partnerships with commercial law firms | Contacting local MPs |
| Signposting to appropriate services | Use websites like Eventbrite to find free training courses | Contacting the Mayoral Team – homelessness and integration |
| Not over promising | Trauma informed services | Feedback to local politicians and elected officials |
| Building trust | Acquire OISC status/training | Systems thinking analysis |
| Strengths Based Practice | Client steering group | Use the Equality Act |
| Listening | UCL Research Department have excellent training and policy events | Using the Care Act |
| Walking “with” people | Building links with MH and health services |  |
| Managing expectations | Accompaniment scheme for visits and meetings |  |

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1. Chain annual report 2016/17 <https://files.datapress.com/london/dataset/chain-reports/2017-06-30T09:03:07.84/Greater%20London%20full%202016-17.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)