

# Final Report

# Migrant destitution: Survey and consultation

Commissioned by the Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution

2017

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## 1) Introduction and acknowledgements

This report presents the findings of a targeted survey of the scale and nature of non-EEA<sup>1</sup> migrant destitution in three UK regions; London, Greater Manchester and the North East. The survey and consultation was commissioned on behalf of the Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution (SAMD), by Patrick Duce, Innovation and Good Practice Manager at Homeless Link and coordinator of SAMD. It was conducted from January to March 2017.

Organisations (hereafter referred to as stakeholders) working with destitute non-EEA migrants were invited to share their experience and views on destitution amongst this cohort. The aim of the survey is to inform the development of the work of the SAMD.

The survey findings and recommendations draw primarily upon feedback and views gathered from the stakeholders in each region. Additionally, the perspectives of 35 non-EEA migrants (hereafter referred to as service users) who were currently or had previously been destitute and with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) were included. These people were either interviewed directly by the survey team or by volunteer interviewers based in regional support projects.

The survey and consultation would not have been possible without the input and co-operation of all the contributing stakeholders and we are grateful to everyone who gave their time and shared their views in the consultation process. We are especially grateful to those contributors who are enduring or who have previously endured destitution in the UK. We hope that this report helps to give voice to their experiences and views, raises awareness of their needs and the impact of government policy on these often vulnerable individuals.

We are also especially grateful for the help of staff and volunteers at the Boaz Trust, Praxis, the Refugee Council, Connections at St Martins, Street Legal, Justice First and the Mary Thompson Fund for their help in either facilitating or completing consultations with destitute service users.

### Terms and definitions

The focus of the survey was destitute non-EEA migrants with NRPF.

- NRPF abbreviates 'No Recourse to Public Funds' and refers to individuals who are subject to immigration control and have no entitlement to welfare benefits or public housing.
- 'Destitute' for the purposes of the survey refers to individuals without their own primary place of residence and without the necessary funds to afford food and/or shelter.
- Most of the cohort were people who had at one point been in the asylum system. Many had their asylum claims refused and are referred to as Asylum Rights Exhausted (ARE).

## 2) Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution (SAMD) - an overview

The Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution (SAMD) is a network of organisations from the homelessness, refugee and migrant sectors who have come together to ensure that they work

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<sup>1</sup> European Economic Area

more effectively to tackle homelessness and destitution amongst migrant communities. The Alliance was set up in 2014 and operates across England. It aims to increase the number of bed spaces available to destitute non-EEA migrants with NRPF as well as providing routes out of destitution, including immigration advice and representation.

Members of the Alliance are national bodies including: Homeless Link (which hosts the Alliance); British Red Cross; Housing Justice; Migrant Rights Network; NACCOM (the No Accommodation Network); Refugee Action; Refugee Council; Praxis Community Projects.

The key aims of the Alliance are to:

- Increase supply of accommodation for people with NRPF
- Support front-line agencies and local partnerships
- Develop integrated pathways out of destitution
- Gather, share and use evidence of what works to inform service providers, funders, commissioners and policy makers

The Alliance has three key pilot areas (London, Greater Manchester and the North East) where it is focusing its work to develop pathways out of destitution for destitute migrants. Understanding the scale of migrant destitution and mapping existing services in these pilot areas is a key objective to support cross sector working.

### **3) Executive summary**

Destitution amongst non-EEA migrants has been a prominent feature of the asylum system in the UK for the last fifteen 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 voluntary sector has witnessed the impact on the lives of these people and has sought to address the needs.

Some organisations have developed to work solely with destitute clients, while other organisations have incorporated specific destitution services within their overall work with refugees, asylum seekers and other clients. The voluntary sector response to destitution involves a mixture of material help (food, clothing, money, Etc.), access to advice and in limited circumstances access to accommodation. It also includes research into the issue and advocacy for policy and practice changes - which is where this survey fits.

The survey has taken a snap shot of destitution amongst non-EEA migrants in the three areas of London, Greater Manchester and the North East. This has involved exploring the extent and nature of destitution, including the impact on people who are destitute. It has also identified some of the support that is available to destitute non-EEA migrants. Dishearteningly, the survey findings echo much of the research that has gone before, with examples of needless want and suffering amongst a vulnerable client group whose lives are in limbo. It also highlights a dedicated but under-resourced voluntary sector trying to respond in an increasingly hostile environment for non-EEA migrants. The key findings are as follows:

## The scale and nature of destitution

- There has been an increase in the numbers of destitute non-EEA migrants, although not experienced by every organisation working in the three areas.
- There has been an increase in the complexity of the casework involved in addressing ways to find routes out of destitution for non-EEA migrants.
- A disturbing number of destitute non-EEA migrants have been destitute for a considerable length of time, in some cases several years. The average time amongst individuals consulted for the survey was over two years.
- Non-EEA migrants are experiencing destitution at every stage of the asylum process (pre-asylum claim, during the consideration period and the post-asylum claim period).
- Many non-EEA migrants experience periods of destitution between periods of having support.
- Destitution is leaving individuals open to labour and sexual exploitation.
- The physical and mental health of the non-EEA migrants experiencing destitution is being adversely affected.
- Some destitute non-EEA migrants have challenges with drug or alcohol addiction.
- There is a cohort of long-term destitute non-EEA migrants who display significant mental health problems, one aspect of which is anti-social behaviour. In this context, there are few statutory or voluntary sector organisations able or willing to respond to their specific needs.
- Many destitute non-EEA migrants move around to access support from a variety of sources at different times, often returning to organisations for repeat support after a gap of several months. In some instances, there may be a duplication of support provided.

## Support available

Most of the voluntary sector organisations supporting destitute non-EEA migrants have a huge amount of experience in doing so. This experience is coupled with considerable skill and dedication and often the services of the organisations are delivered by volunteers. Mostly, organisations offer a specific service for the client group (for example, food or hosting) and work in a complementary way with other destitution organisations in their area. There are however some significant challenges:

- The organisations lack capacity to respond to the volume and complexity of the need (for example, casework takes time and resources to follow-up).
- Organisations can see the value of sharing data about destitute non-EEA migrants in the area, but they lack the capacity or mechanism to do so in a coherent way (apart from in London where there is a database capturing some of the data<sup>2</sup>).
- Organisations have different criteria for who they will support, or different definitions of destitution. For example, some organisations provide the same material support to non-EEA migrants who are receiving Asylum Support as they do to those whose support has ended. Others have much tighter criteria and will only work with people with no access to any other resource. These variations militate against closer working across the sector.
- Many people believe that the core of the problem of destitution stems from the lack of access that asylum seekers have to good quality legal immigration advice. Cuts to legal aid provision

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<sup>2</sup> The CHAIN data (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) is a multi-agency database recording information about rough sleepers and the wider population in London commissioned by GLA and managed by St Mungo's).

enacted three years ago have exacerbated the problem and other research has highlighted the increasing challenges that asylum seekers face in this context. The voluntary sector is making efforts to address this gap but can only do so in a very partial way due to lack of resources.

- There is a cohort of refused asylum seekers who are unable or unwilling to return to their original country. This group makes up a significant proportion of long-term destitute non-EEA migrants. Several of the voluntary sector organisations working with this group struggle to engage with the concept or practicalities of a person returning to their country or a third country. The ending in 2015 of the Choices voluntary return scheme left a significant gap in services designed to inform people in this group.
- The two most recent Immigration Acts of 2014 and 2016 have explicitly sought to create a difficult environment for people that the government deems have no legal right to be in the UK. This includes people who have overstayed their visas and the measures introduced in these Acts have had an adverse impact on many destitute non-EEA migrants. For example, the so called 'right to rent' provisions that prohibit landlords from renting to certain categories of people are curtailing some options for destitute non-EEA migrants. Other sanctions from the 2016 Act are being introduced over the next two years, such as charges for health services and it is envisaged that these exacerbate the problems faced by destitute non-EEA migrants. One consequence of this is that it will continue to drive people further into the margins of society where they will be more vulnerable to exploitation and a deterioration in their health.
- Most provision for mainstream homeless and destitute people (who are not non-EEA migrants) is not designed for or accessible by non-EEA migrants. This includes much accommodation and housing provision, a key need amongst the destitute non-EEA migrant cohort.

## Conclusion

The impact of destitution amongst non-EEA migrants continues increasing in scale and in the toll of human suffering. There is an overwhelming image of people whose lives are being wasted in a limbo of destitution and uncertainty. The consequences of this benefit no one, certainly not the individuals affected or the communities in which they find themselves living. Some of the ways to alleviate the problem seem obvious, such as providing access to good advice, or granting people permission to work so that they get on with their lives and contribute more fully to the community. Other aspects are more nuanced, such as how to work with people who have no ostensible protection needs and could consider return, or people who have mental health and social problems.

The challenge for the members of SAMD is how best to use the collective efforts of the members of the alliance and the multitude of dedicated organisations on the ground to direct future research, advocacy and the promotion of good practice. The following recommendations suggest possible ways forward.

### **Recommendations:**

The following recommendations identify a number of needs, issues and potential areas for collaboration that we feel could usefully be considered and taken forward by SAMD and stakeholder organisations in the regions. They draw upon findings, stakeholder feedback and key messages that were often similar or consistent across the three survey regions, though we appreciate that there will be some degree of variability both in relevance and feasibility across areas and networks.

1. Explore the feasibility of establishing more coherent and coordinated monitoring tools and practices in Greater Manchester and the North East. Possible options could include:
  - review and harmonisation of existing processes used by local projects and regional organisations;
  - development of a database similar to CHAIN (the Combined Homelessness and Information Network) that exists in London in other regions to establish the extent of destitution within this cohort;
  - undertaking a 'snap shot' survey such as that used by several members of the Leicester Voluntary Sector Forum in the past (this involved coordinated, targeted data collection for one month each year).
2. Support the development of stronger coordination amongst front line organisations for the purposes of lobbying and influencing government and local authority policy (and practice). This should be on a regional and national basis. Priority areas suggested by stakeholders and service users included:
  - Challenge Home Office policy and raising awareness of its impact.
  - Build on links with the Home Office with the aim of positively influencing policy development and impact (for example in the Asylum Support processes). As an alliance SAMD is well placed to do this with and on behalf of local projects with little time and few resources.
  - Grant temporary permission to work and access to support for refused asylum seekers - no one should be made destitute.
  - Increase access to safe and appropriate accommodation for non-EEA migrants with NRPF.
  - Avoid delays in access to Asylum Support for new applicants (leading to destitution) by improving the processes for contacting the Home Office when sorting out problems with support claims.
3. Promote and lobby for increased cooperation and engagement between local authorities, statutory and voluntary sector agencies and housing providers in order to ensure access to essential accommodation and beds for those suffering destitution.
4. Lobby for and improve access to good quality legal advice and general advice at all stages of the asylum process, especially for non-EEA migrants who are destitute. For many people whose asylum rights are exhausted, there is the possibility of making a fresh asylum claim and re-entering the asylum system and support mechanisms. Such claims are not straightforward and benefit from good legal advice. Other advice provision should include the capacity to undertake the casework and follow-up necessary to achieve successful outcomes for clients. It may also entail effective referral to other appropriate legal specialists.
5. Aim to provide or improve access to impartial, confidential, non-directive (trusted) advice and information on voluntary return to destitute non-EEA migrants who have exhausted other possibilities and may wish to consider returning to their original country (or a third country).
6. Explore and support ways of building and sharing knowledge in key areas of immigration policy amongst workers in front line organisations and in communities. This will reduce the risk and extent of avoidable destitution amongst non-EEA migrants. Models can be drawn from the

current work of Refugee Action's Frontline Immigration Advice Project in promoting good practice in this area of work.

7. Establish or build upon existing regional networks and forums that focus on destitution to enable better sharing of information, key data and good practice. One of the barriers to this happening is a lack of resources amongst stakeholders to perform this role. As a national project, SAMD might consider supporting organisations in accessing funds to help resource capacity to enable this to happen. This could include the development of web based tools for ease of participation.
8. Advocate for the better sharing of information between Accommodation Providers, Migrant Help, the Home Office and front line organisations on new arrivals to the region through the asylum dispersal system. This will help support organisations to ensure service users receive good and timely advice about entitlements and militate against people becoming destitute.
9. Similarly, advocate for and support better coordination between local authorities, accommodation providers, the Home Office and support organisations at the time a person in asylum dispersal accommodation receives an asylum decision. At this point service users are especially vulnerable to becoming destitute and timely interventions can help prevent this.
10. Develop or strengthen national and regional links with Registered Social Landlords (RSL), housing associations and homelessness organisations to raise awareness of destitution amongst this cohort and to promote ways in which the aforementioned can provide practical support, for example, by freeing up more bed spaces for destitute clients.
11. Explore needs and ways for targeted work with destitute people who suffer from mental health or behavioural problems, such as addiction to alcohol or drugs. This could involve exploring preventative actions and cost effective measures that would benefit the individuals and the communities in which they find themselves. Within the destitute cohort there are a proportion (approximately 10%) of people who can be described as having mental health problems. This group of people are more vulnerable and more likely to fall through gaps in state and voluntary sector provision. When they come into contact with the statutory services, such as health, social services and the police, it is often at a crisis point.
12. Consider collectively resourcing and supporting commissioned research into the financial costs and impact of destitution amongst non-EEA migrants to inform advocacy (possibly through SAMD). Most stakeholders are of a view that the long-term costs are far higher than the costs of measures that would see people avoid destitution.
13. Identify and share models of effective and innovative practice (and learning) within and across support organisations, housing providers, voluntary and statutory organisations in the three regions. There are several models of good practice aimed at tackling destitution that are being employed by support organisations in both the voluntary and statutory sector, for example access to emergency accommodation, mental health support and legal support. SAMD is well placed to promote and facilitate this approach.



#### 4) Survey purpose, scope and methodology

This was a targeted survey and consultation process undertaken throughout January and March 2017. The budget available for the work allowed a total input of 16 consultancy days. The survey focus, scope and core questions were specified by SAMD and the completion methodology was jointly designed by the SAMD Coordinator with the consultancy team. The overall purpose in commissioning the survey was to help SAMD investigate the scale and nature of non-EEA migrant destitution, and to gather information and build understanding of the nature and causes of migrant destitution in London, Greater Manchester and the North East.

The findings and recommendations will be shared with SAMD partners, funders and local stakeholder organisations to help inform and strengthen future support for destitute non-EEA migrants. The terms of reference for the survey set out the following core questions to be addressed in each of the three regions:

- What is the scale of non-EEA migrant destitution?
- What is the average length of destitution and reasons for being destitute in the first place?
- Where are destitute migrants sleeping?
- What access to a) accommodation and b) immigration advice is currently available to destitute migrants? What are the reasons individuals access this support?
- How do destitute migrants experience homelessness and/or migrant services?
- How could services better meet the needs of these clients to prevent further destitution?
- How have the changes to legislation brought in by the Immigration Act effected services delivering accommodation and immigration advice to non-EEA destitute migrants?

In total 68 individual stakeholders fed into the survey including 35 people from non-EEA backgrounds who are or have been destitute in the past (see table below).

The majority of organisation based stakeholders were initially proposed by SAMD and were either:

- individuals and organisations with direct front line service experience of contact and support provision to destitute non-EEA migrants, or:
- individuals with relevant experience and insight through policy or similar roles.

Additional stakeholder organisations and individuals were added by the survey team as consultations progressed and suggestions for other contacts were received.

SAMD and the survey team were keen to invite and hear the experience and views of destitute people in each of the survey areas. We liaised with and were extremely grateful for the help of front line stakeholder organisations in each area, who either arranged and completed volunteer led interviews with current and former service users, or supported survey team members in completing interviews. In total 35 destitute, non-EEA migrants with NRPF or people who had previously experienced destitution contributed to the survey and consultations.

Participation of all stakeholders was voluntary and individuals were told that their feedback and contributions would be made anonymous and not specifically attributed to individuals either in discussion with SAMD or in the survey report.

A summary of stakeholder group participation is shown in the following table:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Stakeholder organisations</b>	<b>Service users</b>
North East	11	6
Greater Manchester	9	15
London	12	14
Organisation or name not stated (online survey)	1	0
Total	33	35

## Section one: Cross regional findings

*"Now most of the rough sleepers in London are not from UK – they are mainly EEA but others are non-EEA." (Stakeholder organisation, London)*

This section of the report summarises common themes in stakeholder responses to the core questions that were common across the three survey areas. Regionally specific comments and data are included in Section two of the report.

### 1) What is the scale of non-EEA migrant destitution?

Stakeholders in each of the three survey areas were invited to share data and comment on the scale of contact and project interaction over the past year with people from a non-EEA background who were destitute or had been in that period. Received data and comments on monitoring processes are included under the respective area headings later in this report and reflect the different approaches and challenges for projects in the three regions. However, there were a number of comments, issues and challenges relating to monitoring and measuring the scale of destitution amongst this group that were broadly common in all three areas. These are summarised below:

- We found that most of the stakeholder organisations that responded to our survey invitation, (especially in Greater Manchester and London) were working mainly or exclusively with destitute, end of process asylum seekers (and new refugees) and less so with other non-EEA migrant sub groups with NRPF. Their experiences and views, as expressed in consultations and summarised in this report, reflect this.
- Most stakeholders felt that the level of destitution amongst the migrant groups (and especially amongst refused asylum seekers) with whom they were working has increased over the past year and is likely to increase further due to measures in the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts. These measures include the clamp down on illegal working and the restriction on the right to rent for people with certain immigration categories. Furthermore, stakeholders felt that destitution amongst the non-EEA migrant group will increase when the Asylum Support aspects of the 2016 Immigration Act are implemented (expected later in 2017).
- The numbers of asylum-seekers in the UK has risen in recent years<sup>3</sup>- there was an approximately 30% increase over the period 2014 and 2015 (although 2016 has seen a 7% reduction). When people are refused asylum, they are not necessarily removed from the UK and often become destitute. Annually it is estimated that between 3000 and 4000 of people refused asylum remain in the UK.<sup>4</sup> This information is not centrally recorded so it is not clear how many of them become destitute or have contact with support organisations. However, it is understood by stakeholders that the bulk of destitute service users are within this category. Furthermore, the cumulative numbers of people in this category will be increasing each year.
- The number of people who have been destitute for over two years was higher than expected.

While most of the projects and organisations feeding into the consultation confirmed that they were monitoring numbers, types and levels of engagement with destitute service users, the extent to which they were able to easily and confidently extract data for non-EEA NRPF groups varied and was sometimes limited. Stakeholders in London have access to the CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) data - a multi-agency database recording information about rough sleepers

<sup>3</sup> Source is the Home Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/list-of-tables#asylum>

<sup>4</sup>Home Office statistics: Ibid

and the wider street population in London. The system, which is commissioned and funded by the Mayor of London and managed by St Mungo's, offers a detailed source of information about rough sleeping and breaks down figures so that the numbers who are non-EEA migrants can be established. However, it only captures the people who are being seen by the homelessness organisations contributing data, so is an underestimate. Stakeholders in all three areas consistently reported that the scale of destitution for this group of people is very difficult to establish accurately on either a regional or national level due to combinations of the following:

- some people who should have recourse to public funds have difficulty proving this and so become destitute (so it's not useful to simply look at those are NRPF and extrapolate figures in this way);
- some people don't know themselves what their status is so can't say;
- some projects and service providers don't routinely ask for or record immigration and entitlement details when interacting with homeless people;
- some non-EEA migrants with NRPF are destitute but are staying with friends or in exploitative arrangements and so are not street homeless or 'visible';
- some people don't want to report or share that they are destitute as they feel uncomfortable talking to the authorities. Indeed, many people in the survey target group try to avoid contact with organisations and authorities who they fear might report them to the Home Office as a way of reducing demand and pressure on their services.

Finally, stakeholder organisations in all three regions are often extremely (and increasingly) busy with time and capacity of both paid and volunteer team members frequently stretched. Whilst all respondents were clearly committed to monitoring and data collection as a vital component in project delivery and development, managers and team members have to be able to balance and incorporate processes and practice in the context of multiple roles and priorities. Most told us that they would ideally like to be able to contribute to and access accurate regional and national data on the scale and nature of destitution amongst the groups that they work with - but the tools, processes and arrangements for doing so would need to be carefully developed to ensure ease of use.

More specific feedback and data on the scale of destitution is also included in the regional summaries for London, Greater Manchester and the North East in Section two of the report.

## 2) Overview of the reasons and causes of destitution for non-EEA migrants

Stakeholders across the three regions identified a range of circumstances that can cause destitution amongst non-EEA migrants. Overall, the most common cause of destitution reported in the survey were refused asylum seekers (ARE - asylum rights exhausted with NRPF) and newly recognised refugees who are made destitute when forced to leave their asylum support accommodation. The full list of circumstances and events that can lead to migrant destitution is summarised below:

**People who have never claimed asylum but who are entitled to:** Stakeholder organisations shared examples of service users who had never made an asylum application due to not being aware of this option, not knowing how or where to claim asylum and due to lack of advice and support. This group can include: people who came to the UK many years ago illegally; those who are on a temporary visa; married couples who separate; and victims of trafficking.

**Poor/lack of legal advice:** Sometimes people don't get good legal advice or they submit an application themselves (or with the help of friends) and as a result their case is poorly presented. Many have trouble getting evidence together for a claim as this takes time even if they have a good case.

**People whose asylum claim has been refused but who may still be entitled to support:** Support organisations told us that significant numbers of destitute people who approach them have been refused but may still be entitled to support. For example, those who have received either no advice or poor advice may not understand their options (such as Section 4 support).

**Bureaucratic errors and delay in payments:** When people get status, it can take time for payments to come through and mistakes can cause delays. For example, **new asylum seekers waiting for asylum support (S95):** this can take 3-4 months especially for in-country applications – this is a long process with gathering and checking of evidence and documents.

**People trying to establish a fresh claim:** Again, this can take time and people can be destitute in the interim.

**Refused asylum seekers (Asylum Rights Exhausted - ARE):** People at the end of process with NRPF; this is the most commonly destitute and deported group.

**People waiting for voluntary return:** These people may be entitled to help but do not realise this.

**People with no local connection due to secondary migration:** Sometimes people who have been dispersed come to London once they have status or when they have been refused because there are such large communities in London and because of the size of the city. This can be problematic even if they have status as they need a local connection to be eligible for housing by a local authority.<sup>5</sup>

**People unable to return to their country of origin:** This can happen if the country of origin is unable to give the necessary documentation.

**Victims of trafficking:** People trafficked to the UK for the purposes of exploitation and fraud, who often claim asylum at some point but sometimes not for several years.

**Over-stayers:** This group includes people who come to UK with a temporary visa which then runs out but they make a life here and settle over the years, perhaps working without documentation.

**Separation/relationship breakdown:** Relationship breakdown, divorce, domestic violence or change of circumstances can lead to vulnerability and non-EEA migrants will often get to a crisis point much faster due to lack of support networks. It is not necessarily because people have exhausted their appeal rights – it may be simply this change of circumstances that puts people into destitution. It may be hard to prove status – sometimes people can't find the relevant papers and replacements are hard to get. A woman may have been dependent on her partner for status.

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<sup>5</sup> A 'local connection' exists if a person: has lived in the area for six months out of the past 12, or three years out of the past five; has close family in the area; or if they work in the area.  
([http://england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/homelessness/help\\_from\\_the\\_council\\_when\\_homeless/local\\_connection](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/homelessness/help_from_the_council_when_homeless/local_connection))

**Older people from former colonies:** Older people from former colonies who are entitled to be here and have been here for a long time can have difficulty proving their status if all they were given was a stamp in their passport.

**Children enabling a right to stay:** Women with British children who have the right to stay in UK may have difficulties proving this and so have NRPF.

**Loss of job:** Someone who came in as a child and never got their status resolved may find this only becomes a problem when they lose their job or need to claim benefits. Health problems may lead to the loss of a job and many employers are becoming more rigorous about checking.

**The involvement of landlords and employers:** Both landlords and employers now have a duty to check that people are entitled to rent and to be employed. These checks mean that people are losing jobs they have had for a long time and find it hard to find accommodation, even if they are here legally.

**Lack of knowledge within the homelessness sector:** Staff working within the sector are not always well informed about the options for these groups so cannot advise or signpost clients appropriately.

### 3) How could services better meet the need of these clients to prevent further destitution?

Stakeholder responses to this question across all three regions were broadly consistent and are summarised below. Many responses focussed on a perceived need for changes in government policy and improved accessibility to timely and good quality specialist advice on immigration and support needs and entitlements.

**Build and strengthen strategic advocacy networks and activity:** Some stakeholders told us that a more coordinated and coherent approach in sharing data and information to support strategic advocacy and lobbying on a regional and national basis is, and will become, increasingly important especially if, as anticipated, the 2016 Immigration Act leads to increases in destitution. Small front line projects and larger organisations both have important information and experience that can vitally inform and strengthen policy work if it can be channelled and utilised by networks. Stakeholders in small but often very busy front line projects face capacity challenges but were generally keen to support joined up advocacy and policy work as much as possible. Augmented versions of the CHAIN database that exists in London might usefully be set up.

**Give people the right to work and rent (pending removal or voluntary return):** This suggestion was repeated both in interviews with project stakeholders and also with destitute service users. Enabling people to work and self-support pending their removal or voluntary return would reduce the incidence, impact, indignity and cost in human and financial terms of forced destitution.

**Establish criteria and a process to enable eligible people to regularise their status:** Stakeholders confirmed that amongst their service users it was not uncommon for individuals to have been living in the UK for many years, prior to or since becoming destitute. Of these, some feel unable to return to their country of origin for genuine fear of death, persecution or imprisonment. Some cannot return or be returned there (by the Government) due to documentation and other barriers and some have been living and working in the UK for so long that they have no remaining

links with the countries and communities that they left many years previously. Tragically, those fearing for their lives if forced to return often choose destitution in the UK as the safest and 'best' of two bad options. Others remain in the UK, perhaps working illegally, dependent on friends for places to sleep, vulnerable to sexual, financial and workplace exploitation. Establishment of criteria and a process to enable qualifying individuals to regularise their immigration status, contribute to and support themselves in UK communities would in the view of some stakeholders be a cost effective, durable and humane solution to reduce destitution in the UK.

**Provide more accessible and longer term accommodation:** Responding stakeholders consistently told us that there is insufficient supply of both short and long term appropriate accommodation that can be accessed by destitute migrants with NRPF. Many hostels and shelters for the homeless require that those accessing them have recourse to public funds. Those resources that can offer bed spaces to people with NRPF are often full or can only offer a bed space to the most vulnerable cases, for a few nights to provide very temporary safety and relief from life on the street. Consequently, these individuals are often surviving from day to day in a state of permanent crisis characterised by stress, emotional and physical exhaustion, poor diet, vulnerability and insecurity. The ability to think clearly, access and process information, make decisions, plan and problem solve becomes increasingly difficult.

A manager in one organisation advocated that local authorities could engage more with accommodation providers in order to increase provision or open up access to existing provision for people with NRPF. They observed that whilst local authorities might employ an outreach team to decrease homelessness they can't have an impact if there are no or too few housing options on offer. Speculatively, the costs incurred by local authorities in making a limited number of free beds available would be at least partially if not completely offset on a long-term basis through savings in health care provision, hospital admissions, police interventions etc. They also commented that commissioning practice is often too short term and narrow in scope and that longer-term benefits are not what win shorter term elections. The Street Legal Project (a partnership between Refugee Action, St Mungo's and Praxis to specifically tackle the issue of refugee and asylum seeker homelessness in London) is a fully commissioned service operating within London delivering accommodation, integrated immigration advice and support.

**Improve access to skilled immigration advice:** Stakeholders highlighted the importance of migrants and asylum seekers being able to access timely and good quality immigration advice as a vital factor in minimising the risk and incidence of them becoming destitute when their immigration or marital status change. Asylum seekers need to be aware of and understand their rights and entitlements, responsibilities, options and the implications of status changes or decisions. Survey participants indicated that availability and accessibility of specialist immigration advice varies both within and across the three survey regions. However, we also heard from stakeholders and service users directly that since the closure of regional One Stop Services and other direct contact services delivered by specialist refugee agencies, it is harder for migrants to access crucial information and advice or to be signposted or referred to specialist advisers when needed. Consequently, it is not unusual for individuals to become or remain destitute for months or years, when with the right information, advice and support this could have been avoided or shorter in duration. Several examples emerged in consultations of individuals experiencing long term destitution who, once they were able to access legal advice, were assessed as having grounds to make fresh asylum claims or to take steps that enabled them to re-access support, accommodation and entitlements.

Access to good quality immigration legal advice is recognised throughout the sector as being a huge gap in provision, the consequence of which is that some people have their asylum claim

refused and become destitute. The dearth of such provision is confirmed by several sources, including the Solicitor's Regulation Authority and surveys undertaken by regional strategic partnerships for migration.<sup>6</sup>

*"I think that the current [support] system only works for those people who are canny enough to know their way around. For some of the very vulnerable they struggle to access what they are entitled to because they just don't know how to." (Service provider)*

Several stakeholders advocated the value of 'skilling up' workers in grass roots and homelessness projects to make them more knowledgeable and skilled in recognising immigration advice issues and in providing basic advice including information about the Immigration Act, voluntary return options as well as signposting and referral to specialist advisers. Similarly, improving understanding of the options available to people within the relevant communities was felt to be extremely important. Several referred to Refugee Action's work in this area as a good example of this approach in action. This work includes information for communities, free access to training for front line immigration advice services as well as development guidance to organisations wanting to increase their advice work, along with guidance to the sector around assisted voluntary return and the Immigration Act.

**Improve access to asylum support advice:** Several stakeholders across all three survey regions reported increasing incidences of people losing entitlements and becoming avoidably destitute due to delays or issues relating to new or existing asylum support claims and payments. These issues would previously have been picked up and promptly dealt with in the course of face to face advice and support sessions with experienced caseworkers based in regional Refugee Council and Refugee Action offices and the NERS 'One Stop Services'. These services closed after withdrawal of funding by the Home Office in 2014 and the ability of service users to visit caseworkers and ask them to look at letters, clarify content, or identify and respond to problems ended. Section 95 ('NASS support') applications and related issues are now dealt with remotely, primarily through a national phone line managed by Migrant Help.

**Improve access to confidential, impartial information and advice on voluntary return:** A similar observation to the above was made by an experienced senior manager in a national refugee support charity but related to the closure of Refugee Action's 'Choices' service. Choices provided confidential and impartial information and advice for individuals and families wanting to explore assisted voluntary return to their country of origin as an option. The service provided a safe space for many refused and end of process (destitute) asylum seekers to think about and talk through voluntary return without fear of being 'handed over' to the Home Office for removal or being pressured into making a return decision. Whilst many Choices clients opted to tolerate destitution and all it entails as a safer and preferable option to voluntary return, many others made a considered and well informed choice to return to their country of origin thereby ending their destitution in the UK. Since the closure of Choices, information provision, communication and the application process for those wanting to find out, talk about voluntary return or to complete an application is now only accessible through the Home Office, although Refugee Action do still offer advice to the sector around assisted voluntary return and are recruiting a part time specialist worker.

Several stakeholders commented that in their experience destitute migrants and asylum seekers in constant fear of detention and removal by the police or Home Office are very unlikely to approach

<sup>6</sup> The Quality of legal service provided to asylum seekers. A report by the Solicitors Regulation Authority Dec 2016



the same organisations to ask about voluntary return. Consequently, it is likely that some who might qualify and otherwise opt to leave the UK as their least bad option, choose to live in long term and unresolvable destitution in the UK. Improved access to confidential and impartial advice provided by an independent organisation or trained workers based in regional organisations could help people safely explore their options and end their destitution.

**Improve transitional accommodation arrangements and support for newly recognised refugees:** The survey and consultation process was tasked with exploring the scale and nature of destitution amongst non-EEA migrants with NRPF. However, it became clear that newly recognised refugees are also facing destitution when they are evicted from asylum support accommodation at the end of their 28-day notice period.<sup>7</sup> They constitute one of the biggest groups of service users for some projects in each region. The risk and incidence of destitution for this group of people could be reduced if the current 28-day transitional period during which newly recognised refugees have to leave asylum support accommodation could be extended. Closer communication and cooperation between the Home Office, local authorities and regional accommodation providers could also support a speedier and more seamless transition from benefits to out of work benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and Universal Credit and from asylum support accommodation to new accommodation (even if only temporary pending permanent solutions), thereby reducing the risk and incidence of destitution.

#### 4) How have the changes to legislation brought in by the Immigration Act effected services delivering accommodation and immigration advice to non-EEA destitute migrants?

*"The 2016 Act introduced stricter sanctions on illegal working and access to housing, driving licences and bank accounts, and new measures to make it easier to enforce immigration laws and remove illegal migrants including data sharing provisions that cover NHS data. These have, and will, increase destitution for those who are not forcibly removed from the UK or choose to leave voluntarily, which is likely to include those who are most desperate to remain for whatever reasons, in spite of the increasingly hostile environment."* (Stakeholder organisation)

Most participating stakeholders in all three survey areas reflected that it is too soon to report in detail on the actual impact of changes in legislation and practice brought in by the Immigration Act 2016. However, there is shared concern and anticipation that the impact of the Act will be to criminalise individuals, families, employers, landlords and other stakeholder organisations that they interact with. Significant increases in levels of destitution are expected, especially amongst refused asylum seekers who can't go back to countries of origin due to documentation problems, no proof of ID or no route. Increased hardship, vulnerability, sexual and other forms of exploitation are expected to rise amongst some non-EEA migrant groups. The broad range and nature of the issues and anticipated impact as expressed in the stakeholder consultations are summarised below. Each was expressed by several stakeholders in the semi structured phone interviews or online survey responses (precise response counts were not included in the survey design). Additional to the general increase in destitution levels expected by every stakeholder, the other issues and projections included:

<sup>7</sup> The British Red Cross Move on report 2014.

**It will be harder to appeal termination of support:** This is one of the core implications of the Act and a shared concern for all the survey stakeholders. One commented that in the previous year to date, their organisation had supported 230 client appeals. Under the new rules only 32 of these appeals could have been submitted. Stakeholders commonly foresee that under the new appeal rules, the practice of sending 'pre-action letters' and initiating Judicial Reviews will increase.

**Landlord immigration checks:** Landlord immigration status checks are expected to result in an increase in evictions of people who are working illegally in order to survive and stay off the street. Landlords are expected to become more wary of renting out accommodation to non-EEA migrants. Tenants in rented accommodation or asylum seekers in Home Office funded accommodation who to date have allowed destitute migrants and refused asylum seekers to sleep on their sofa's and floors are expected to become more wary of doing so for fear of jeopardising their own accommodation.

*"The Home Office is misguided - life is not better in the place where they come from! People choose to take their chances here rather than in their country of origin. It's the lesser of two evils and encourages people to do a bit of work for money - it forces people into that situation. I've met some women who are going out with men they don't like just so that they have a roof over their head." (Stakeholder organisation)*

**More people will be forced into illegal or exploitative work and living arrangements:** More people are expected to be forced into working illegally in order to earn rent and survival money whilst at the same time it will become harder to rent a room or other accommodation due to landlord immigration checks. Employers are also expected to become even more careful about employing people who do not have the correct documentation. The risk and occurrence of exploitation by unscrupulous landlords and the creation of a housing black market in which 'illegal' tenants are forced to live in sub-standard accommodation is expected to rise. Risk and incidence of sexual, labour and financial exploitation - for example women and vulnerable people pressured into having sex in exchange for a place to stay - is already an issue in the context of migrant and asylum seeker destitution but is expected to increase further as a result of the Act.

**Criminalisation and driving destitute migrants further 'underground':** Stakeholders commented that the increasingly hostile policy, law and approach of the Home Office will drive people further underground and away from authority figures. Effectively, access to many services, structures and processes linked to accommodation, health services and education by illegal immigrants or those considered to be in breach of the immigration rules is being criminalised.

*"If people have been in detention or have been destitute for a long time (or even a short time) then there can be mental health problems and an effect on general wellbeing and health as well as a lack of trust in services and the system. People get tired and disengage and so can't use services on offer. They also become vulnerable to exploitation and drugs and alcohol abuse with either to 'fit in' or to escape and forget." (Stakeholder organisation)*

**Avoidance of contact with authorities:** Several stakeholders told us that that destitute migrants and refused asylum seekers with NRPF are becoming increasingly nervous of contact with any Home Office personnel and others who they see as being potential authority or enforcement representatives due to fear of being detained and removed from the UK. Effectively people are and

will increasingly be forced into hiding and living invisible lives in an 'underground' existence. This will further impact on the willingness and ability of destitute individuals to approach and engage with health and support agencies.

*"As a homelessness organisation, we are seeing a change in rough sleepers to include more migrants over the last few years. There is definitely a change in the profile of people sleeping rough." (Stakeholder organisation, London)*

**Raised and changed profile of street homelessness:** Migrant destitution will become more visible on the street as more people are forced into begging and street working lifestyles as a result of the Act. This is likely to include more refused asylum seeker couples and children as result of the loss of Section 95 support when their application is at end of process.

**Non-EEA young people leaving Care:** The devolution of power to local authorities to decide locally whether to support people leaving care may also mean many will end up with a lack of support and be forced into destitution.

*"It is a very alienating and dehumanising experience. Life goes on hold and it's hard to build a life – if people are already vulnerable it's really hard for them. It is crippling for people – families with children with no recourse are being evicted. This situation is even worse for refugees dealing with past trauma. People may need medication and accessing this isn't easy if they are destitute and there are also restrictions on access to health care – people are not supposed to access treatment unless it is immediately necessary so conditions go undiagnosed and untreated." (Stakeholder organisation)*

**Impact on families:** Families are currently supported after appeal rights are exhausted but the Home Office intend to cut this off. Asylum seeking families may well end up destitute if their appeal rights have been exhausted with no rights under Section 95. They might be able to get Section 4 support but it is getting harder to access. Many families will have to be referred to Social Services with local authorities expected to pick up housing and support responsibilities though it's not yet clear if they will. Local authorities will not necessarily be obliged to offer services as people could be considered to have 'intentionally made themselves destitute by not returning to their countries'. One stakeholder also noted that local authorities may be expected to arrange for people to be returned to their countries of origin. Several stakeholders anticipated that people with NRPF may well not want to engage with local authorities or the asylum system at all and will opt to live illegally and without support in the UK rather than risk removal or return. One stakeholder referenced a Section 9 pilot period linked to the implementation of the 2004 Act which included powers to cut off support for families, noting that many families simply disappeared. Another reflected on the impact of uncertainty and potentially multiple upheavals for children in families that become short or longer term destitute, as they are moved to new accommodation and areas (and schools) for example if submitting fresh asylum claims, being dispersed and re-accessing asylum support accommodation.

*"Front line workers try to work with people with their immigration issues but demand is so high that the support they can offer is not enough." (Stakeholder organisation)*

**New knowledge and advice skills needed:** Many organisations and projects in the voluntary sector have developed expert knowledge, casework and advocacy skills and capacity in supporting clients with Section 95 and Section 4 applications and appeals. The roll out of the 2016 Act will require the same organisations and teams to learn and be able to work with a new system. Key front line staff will need to understand the law, its impact and the implications relating to illegal working, discrimination around renting and housing, and how to effectively challenge and advocate on behalf of those affected by it. Asylum support tribunals will be very different because the right to appeal will be curtailed and will need to use judicial review. Caseworkers will need training around appeal rights and processes in order to be able to understand best practice and when there is a right of appeal.

**Impact on voluntary returns:** Stakeholders commonly shared the view that Home Office policy for successive years has deliberately created an environment that is hostile and as challenging as possible for refused asylum seekers and other migrants with NRPF to sustain themselves or survive in. Many perceive and experience this policy as a tool to persuade or force people (especially refused asylum seekers) to go back to their countries of origin. However, several stakeholders commented that many people continue living in destitution in the UK rather than return to their home country for fear of what they would be returning to or because they do not know how to plan for or apply for return and what support could be available. In the past Refugee Action was able to provide discrete, impartial information, process and pre and post decision support to help people find out about, consider, apply for and complete their voluntary return. Whilst increasing numbers of refused asylum seekers with NRPF and other migrants are anticipated as an impact of the 2016 Act, accessibility to impartial and confidential voluntary return information and support is no longer available, although Refugee Action still offers advice to the sector in this area and are recruiting a part time specialist. Destitute individuals with NRPF are often in fear of detention and removal by the Home Office but would need to risk contacting the same organisation for information and help.

## Section two: Summary of regionally specific findings

The notes below summarise the main regionally specific issues and findings linking to the core questions specified for the mapping and consultation survey. Issues and findings that applied across all three regions are also reported under separate headings in Section One of the report.

### London

**Who responded to the consultation?** Initial mapping and stakeholder consultation identified many organisations and support projects that offer support to destitute non-EEA migrants in London. Key projects and organisations that were invited to feed into the consultation process through interview were: British Red Cross, Praxis, Connection at St Martins, Housing Justice, Refugee Action, Refugee Council, St Mungo's, Street Legal. The on-line survey was sent to: Notre Dame Refugee Centre, Migrant Resource Centre, Cardinal Hume Centre, The Passage, Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network, Hackney Migrant Centre, Greenwich Migrant Centre, Deighton Pierce Glynn solicitors, Southwark Law Centre, New North London Synagogue and Doctors of the World. Also, London Catholic Worker, Missionary of Charities, Shelter from the Storm, Just Homes, night shelters and a range of hosting organisations (Refugees at Home, Spare Room etc.) who offer bed spaces for people in London.

**What is the scale of non-EEA migrant destitution?** The CHAIN data (Combined Homelessness and Information Network), a multi-agency database recording information about rough sleepers and the wider population in London commissioned by GLA and managed by St Mungo's, is a useful guide to the extent of homelessness across London.<sup>8</sup>

Organisations in London submit data and this information is aggregated to give figures which offer a picture of numbers of people who are homeless across London. The information is on the GLA website and can be broken down by borough. Last year's figures showed that 14% of rough sleepers were from outside the EEA which translates into roughly 1000 people. Of this 1000, it's very hard to know how many have status. The CHAIN data is only indicative, offering a picture of only those street homeless people services know about. Sometimes people don't know their status themselves, staff are not equipped to find out or people don't want to say. There are many hidden people, for example women who tend to accept accommodation for transactional sex or sleep on night busses, or other 'hidden' homeless who are not rough sleepers but are in informal and sometimes exploitative living arrangements. British Red Cross in London saw 1336 people who were destitute non-EEA migrants in 2016, and again this is likely to be an underestimate of the full figures.

**What is the average length of destitution?** Service users in London who were interviewed as part of the survey were asked how many time they had become homeless and how long in total they had been homeless. The response of 13 people is shown in the following table:

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<sup>8</sup>(<https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/chain-reports>; <https://files.datapress.com/london/dataset/chain-reports/2017-01-26T18:50:00/Greater%20London%20Oct-Dec%202016.pdf>).

Since being in the UK, how many times have you become homeless?

Times became homeless:	Once	Twice	Several times	Four times	Eight times
People:	9	1	3		

Approximately how long have you been homeless for in total?

Total period of homelessness:	0-3m	4-12m	13-18m	18-24m	24m+
People:	1	3	1	0	8

**What are the reasons for being destitute in the first place?** In London, there is a good degree of secondary migration away from dispersal areas to a city where people have community links and feel more comfortable. Several of the destitute people interviewed had experienced racism and felt unwelcome in other parts of the UK but felt that people were kinder and more accepting of them in the capital. However, moving city can be problematic even if people have status due to the need for a local connection<sup>9</sup> to be eligible for housing by a local authority. Similarly, people from well-established communities who had come here from former colonies but have recently had to prove their status were experiencing destitution due to difficulty in gathering this proof. Supporting evidence of schooling and tenancy agreements takes time and can be hard if the evidence is from a period prior to computerised records.

**What access to accommodation is currently available?** Accommodation in the capital is very limited in part due to high house prices. People with high levels of need are often cared for better through statutory services (under the Care Act) or through Section 4/17/95 support than those who have fewer physical and mental health or substance misuse problems. Similarly, those with few problems can sometimes be accommodated by hosts offering a room in their houses. The people who don't have extremely high levels of need but who are not suitable for hosting find there is very little on offer for them. Friends and family also offer much help and many people are 'sofa surfing'. In winter the winter shelters increase provision but otherwise the following places offer bed spaces or shelter:

- Connection at St Martins Day Centre where people can stay overnight (although this not a night shelter)
- Winter shelters
- A range of hosting schemes (Housing Justice, Refugees at Home, Spare Room)
- The Passage
- London Catholic Worker
- St Mungo's
- Praxis
- Shelter from the Storm
- Missionary of Charities
- Robes Project

<sup>9</sup> [http://england.shelter.org.uk/get\\_advice/homelessness/help\\_from\\_the\\_council\\_when\\_homeless/local\\_connection](http://england.shelter.org.uk/get_advice/homelessness/help_from_the_council_when_homeless/local_connection) - a 'local connection' exists if a person: has lived in the area for six months out of the past 12, or three years out of the past five; has close family in the area; or if they work in the area.

**What access to immigration advice is currently available?** Immigration advice is very limited and people struggle to get the support they need. One stakeholder commented:

*“There could be immigration advisers in every borough and they would still be busy just working with people who are sleeping rough.” (Stakeholder organisation)*

There is however some provision through the following organisations:

- Praxis.
- A range of borough based services such as: Hackney Migrant Centre, Haringey Migrant Resource Centre and Westminster Migrant Resource Centre.
- Notre Dame Refugee Centre.
- Cardinal Hume Centre.
- The Passage Day Centre.
- Asylum Aid and a range of other solicitors take referrals from people entitled to legal aid.
- Afro-Asian Advisory Service.
- The Connection at St Martins.
- Street Legal (a partnership between St Mungo's, Praxis Community Projects and Refugee Action).
- British Red Cross.
- Refugee Action are assisting people to become Levels 1 and 2 OISC registered, working via the voluntary sector to skill staff up. They are also working to set up regional coordination groups to be a meeting point between the voluntary sector and the legal sector to reduce the possibility of siloed working practices. Organisations reported seeing more people with complex immigration issues.

## Greater Manchester

**Who responded to the consultation?** Initial mapping and stakeholder consultation identified the ten best known organisations and support projects offering support to and working with destitute non-EEA migrants with NRPF in Greater Manchester. Eight of these responded to consultation requests: The Boaz Trust, the Destitution Project in Bolton, Booth Centre, ASHA, Riverside, Revive, Refugee Action and the British Red Cross Destitution Project (supporting the work of six partner organisations working with destitute asylum seekers and refugees across Greater Manchester<sup>10</sup>. Review of 'Street Support' (<https://streetsupport.net/manchester/>), an online directory, lists an additional 80+ projects that provide a range of support and provision for homeless people across Manchester. However, none were identified as main or regular points of contact or help in the survey consultations with service users or other stakeholders.

**What is the scale of non-EEA migrant destitution?** Four of the five stakeholder organisations in Manchester that responded reported that they feel destitution levels amongst the non-EEA migrant groups they work with (mainly refused asylum seekers and new refugees) are rising and are likely to continue rising. One stakeholder felt they had stayed about the same. All responding stakeholder organisations in Manchester reported that the great majority of those that approach them for help

<sup>10</sup> Rainbow in Manchester; St Brides Church in Old Trafford; Oldham Unity; Salford Life Centre; SWOP in Wigan; Eagles Wing in Bury.

fall into the category of refused asylum seekers who are ARE with NRPF. Projects also reported that a growing number of newly recognised refugees (with status, broad entitlements and rights to public funds) also seek support to avoid or escape destitution as a result of the 28 day requirement to vacate their Home Office funded accommodation when they have been granted refugee status.

Contributing organisations each confirmed that they record at least basic details on the numbers of destitute people engaging with their respective services but there is no shared or coordinated monitoring arrangement that systematically counts and categorises numbers and status of people who are destitute non-EEA migrants. It is generally agreed that people visit a range of projects and services for essential shelter, supplies, contact and support several times each month. One of the current and prospective challenges reported by stakeholders both for individual and shared service monitoring arrangements is avoidance of double counting service users making repeat visits. Each stakeholder organisation is working under pressure and with minimal resources, requiring that data and monitoring practices balance necessity and value (in terms of reporting and fundraising) with the investment of time and discipline that is required to do it effectively.

Manchester and the North West is one of the largest dispersal areas in the UK<sup>11</sup>. One stakeholder reflected that Home Office data indicates that there are 6500 asylum seekers in receipt of Section 95 support and accommodation across Greater Manchester, all of whom will eventually receive grant or refusal decisions resulting in the loss of Home Office funded accommodation and support. No stakeholders were able to provide or signpost us to reliable statistics indicating the scale of non-EEA migrant destitution in Greater Manchester. One commented that whilst it is theoretically possible to estimate approximate numbers of destitute asylum seekers in a region by using Home Office data on numbers of dispersals, asylum grant and refusals, this approach is generally considered to be unreliable (for reasons below) and would not include data on other non-EEA migrant groups such as over stayers.

The paragraphs below summarise project statistics (or estimates) and observations on levels of non-EEA migrant destitution over the past calendar year period. As noted previously, this primarily means refused asylum seekers and newly granted refugees for the participating stakeholder organisations.

**The Boaz Trust:** The Boaz Trust works exclusively with refused asylum seekers (ARE) and refugees at risk of destitution, frequently due to their 28 day 'move on' period for NASS accommodation. They are currently the only formally established and managed source of stable accommodation for destitute asylum seekers in Manchester. From January to March 2017 over 70 new referrals were received. In the past year the Boaz Trust has experienced increasing numbers of destitution support requests and referrals relating both to refused asylum seekers (ARE) and refugees in the 'move on' transitional period.

In the last calendar year (2016):

- 112 refused asylum seekers (ARE) were referred to the Boaz Trust and there was a constant waiting list of approximately 60 people.
- 68 destitute men stayed in the Boaz Trust night shelter - this included 41 men who are ARE and 27 men who had been granted refugee status but had become destitute after having to move out of their NASS accommodation.
- 30 refugees were accommodated in Boaz Trust managed houses

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<sup>11</sup> Source is the Home Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/list-of-tables#asylum>



- 68 refused asylum seekers were accommodated (majority in Boaz Trust houses although 23 of them were hosted for at least one night with local families / individuals)

**British Red Cross Project:** The Red Cross works with partner projects across Greater Manchester to provide vital support for destitute asylum seekers and refugees through weekly drop in sessions. Partner organisations include St Brides Church, Rainbow Haven, Oldham Unity, Salford Food Parcels, SWAP and Eagle's Wing. The support provided includes:

- Food parcels, toiletries and small cash gifts (e.g. to cover bus tickets)
- Casework and help in accessing legal advice, support and accommodation
- Information on accessible health support and services

In our survey consultation, the Project Coordinator reported that in 2016, 653 new service users accessed the Destitution Project across Greater Manchester. 132 of these were refused asylum seekers (ARE) and 250 were newly recognised refugees facing or in destitution as a result of the 28 day eviction period for NASS accommodation. The following table shows the full breakdown of service usage:

Reason for destitution	Number
Refugee Status Granted	250
Issue with NASS support	190
End of Asylum Process (ARE)	132
Family reunion	56
Section 4 application	18
Pre-Asylum(Intend to claim)	7

Actual numbers of destitute asylum seekers and refugees supported by the partners are thought to be higher than is currently recorded across the partnership.

**The Destitution Project (Bolton):** The project opens once a week on a Wednesday and people who are destitute are able to collect food parcels, toiletries (etc.) and ask for help. The project primarily works with refused asylum seekers, many from Iraq and Libya, many of whom cannot return or be returned due to ongoing conflict. In the last calendar year, The Destitution Project supported more than 40 destitute refused asylum seekers and is currently supporting 28. The numbers seeking support peak and drop due to people moving in and out of the area, being detained or simply disappearing - possibly because they being working illegally.

**The Booth Centre:** The Booth Centre established and have maintained a service use database since April 2016. Prior to this the immigration status of service users was not systematically recorded. Accuracy and completeness of data still depends upon the proficiency of students or volunteers using it and this is dependent on good initial training and supervision which is hard to maintain in a busy project with limited capacity. Data is consequently not thought to be completely accurate. Over the past calendar year, the project (according to records) has supported 190 destitute non-EEA migrants, about 40 of whom were refugees.

**ASHA:** Asylum Support Housing Advice (ASHA) is based in Manchester and helps asylum seekers whose applications have been refused and fully determined, and whose status renders them homeless and destitute. The charity's aims are to provide support, advocacy and advice for asylum seekers whose applications have been refused and fully determined, and whose status renders them

homeless and destitute. Since being established ASHA have made over 3,000 successful applications for support under the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999 and obtained over 8,000 HC2 certificates for full help with primary care health costs. During 2015 ASHA maintained 2 drop-in advice sessions per week and experienced dramatic increases in client numbers after Refugee Action lost the contract to provide face to face advice (ASHA's client numbers rose from an average of 47 to 71 per week). They made 113 successful applications for support under Section 4, 85 successful applications for support under Section 95 and also submitted 230 appeals against refusal or discontinuance of Section 4 support and won 113 (49%) cases.

Over the past calendar year, ASHA has seen an average of 52 people per week and the number of new clients has increased by 66. 47% of all clients who used the service were homeless (probably sofa surfing) or street homeless. During this period 2691 face to face advice sessions have taken place and the number of individual clients seen was 1680. 606 of these were new clients.

**Riverside:** Riverside provides hostel accommodation and support for new rough sleepers and 'entrenched' homeless people in Manchester. Hostel 'eligibility' is based upon an assessment process and people must have a right to housing and recourse to public funds. They usually refer destitute asylum seekers and other non-EEA migrants directly to the Boaz Trust. They are able to offer a few refused asylum seekers (ARE) temporary shelter for one week as respite from rough sleeping and to help them recover from ill health or recuperate. They estimate that they have supported and provided respite shelter for approximately six destitute non-EEA migrants over the past year. Riverside are receiving increased referrals and requests for help for newly granted refugees.

**What is the average length of destitution?** Stakeholders reported that the average length of destitution for their non-EEA (NRPF) client group is hard to estimate or comment on:

*"It can be days or years!" (Stakeholder organisation)*

In part this was due to the challenges of monitoring, recording and analysis practices for different status subgroups but is also (and mainly) because it often varies a lot for individuals in different circumstances. In interviews with destitute or formerly destitute service users in Greater Manchester, it was clear that individuals often move in and out of destitution as their status or circumstances change. This is illustrated in the table below:

Times became homeless:	Once	Twice	Four times	Eight times
People:	7	6	1	1

The cumulative or total time that 13 individuals reported that they had been destitute is shown in the next table:

Total period of homelessness (months):	0-3m	4-12m	12-18m	18-24m	24m+
People:	1	3	1		9

Stakeholders in support organisations commented that:

*"It depends on where they are in the system and what type of support they are eligible for."*

*"For refused asylum seekers who are or who become eligible for support it takes about 49 days - but they could have been destitute for a long time before they come to us. I suspect it's about 13-24 months. It's amazing how long people manage because they have to." (Stakeholder organisation)*

*"We supported someone for 5 years and another for 8 years. Many refused and destitute asylum seekers are able to make fresh claims if there is new evidence. On average, we probably support people for about 3 years - they become like family members." (Stakeholder organisation)*

*"It depends. One failed asylum seeker has been with us for a couple of months and will likely be with us for a few more months." (Stakeholder organisation)*

*"We can only help people for one year because they are end of process. Normally about 50% of people are supported for the whole year. Some of the others make a fresh asylum claim and get Section 4 support. Others disappear - they probably move to another city. So it's hard to say [what is] an average length of destitution." (Stakeholder organisation)*

**What are the reasons for being destitute in the first place?** The range of factors and contributing reasons for non-EEA migrant destitution are summarised in Section one of the report. Responding stakeholders in Greater Manchester confirmed that in their experience the most common reasons leading to destitution amongst non-EEA migrants with NRPF is the final refusal of an individual's asylum claim. Some are also experiencing increasing instances of newly recognised refugees at risk of or forced into destitution due to the short 28 day period within which they need to vacate 'NASS' accommodation. This is especially an issue for new refugees who are exercising their family reunion rights. Stakeholders also reported that the closure of key client contact and support services such as Refugee Action's One Stop Services and Choices have increased the number of instances that asylum seekers and refugees are forced into destitution as a result of previously avoidable or quickly resolvable delays and issues within the support system.

**What access to accommodation is currently available?** Stakeholders that contributed in the consultation reported that for non-EEA migrants with NRPF, BOAZ was the main or only organisation that they could refer destitute individuals to for accommodation. BOAZ works exclusively with asylum seekers and refugees and has established the following accommodation arrangements (with access prioritised according to needs):

- Approximately 20 host families (in last 12 months have hosted 22 ARE individuals with local families).
- 14 shared houses (76 bed spaces) - six for refugees who pay rent and eight for refused asylum seekers (ARE).
- A winter night shelter with 12 bed spaces a night.
- 7 sleeping spaces for men in Churches.
- A winter night shelter (open from October to April each year) offering 12 bed spaces a night.
- Next winter BOAZ will be piloting a winter night shelter specifically for women.

Responding stakeholders commented that to their knowledge, other shelters and accommodation in Greater Manchester could not generally be accessed by refused asylum seekers either due to criteria requiring that individuals were able to access public funds or because hostel and shelter beds are routinely unavailable. Only one other project (Narrowgate) is known to offer overnight shelter to people who are NRPF but spaces are difficult to access due to the level of demand. This is not to suggest that there are no other projects in Great Manchester that provide some form of temporary or overnight accommodation but consultation and basic mapping within the constraints of this survey have not identified them. As such, a key challenge for services in Greater Manchester is the over reliance on referrals to Boaz, which is unable to meet the demand and runs a waiting list all year round. As described under subsequent headings, destitute asylum seekers are known to heavily rely upon the good will of other asylum seekers and refugees allowing them to sleep on their sofa's and floors for several days at a time.

**What access to immigration advice is currently available?** Stakeholder experiences and comments on quality and accessibility of both legal representation and advice in Great Manchester varied. One stakeholder reported that whilst they are aware of approximately 13 legal aid solicitors across Greater Manchester, in their experience they are of mixed quality and have limited capacity for taking on cases. Generally stakeholders agreed that the closure of law centres and successive cut backs in legal aid over several years have made it increasingly difficult for people to access good quality advice and information that helps them to understand their options. Destitute migrants with little or no money find it difficult to travel in order to visit legal advisers. As one stakeholder commented, even asylum seekers receiving Home Office support can find it difficult to obtain legal advice:

*"Someone on S95 could be using half of their weekly money to get to see solicitor and if they're on Section 4 support they have no funds. It's a big barrier."  
(Stakeholder organisation)*

Greater Manchester Aid Unit was identified as a vital and reputable source of legal advice in several stakeholder consultations though there is great demand on its capacity. One stakeholder emphasised the importance of its drop in advice session held every Tuesday but noted that:

*"People need to get there very early - it's first come first serviced and only the first 15 people can be seen. People go at 3 a.m. and wait for them to open at 9!"  
(Stakeholder organisation)*

The other main points emerging through stakeholder consultations in Greater Manchester are summarised below:

- *Destitute individuals with NRPF are increasingly reluctant to present to health or other statutory services – hostile environments.*
- *There is no shared monitoring approach or tools used by all organisations working with destitute migrants and refugees to enable coherent cross project monitoring of numbers of different services uses and number of support episodes.*
- *It would be useful to establish more coordinated monitoring of this aspect of destitution.*

## North East

*“Homelessness is visibly and in reality, on the increase here [in the North East].”  
(Stakeholder organisation)*

**Who responded to the consultation?** There are several organisations who work with non-EEA destitute people in the North East and most of them participated in the mapping. They were: Action Foundation, British Red Cross (at an area and a national level), the Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Refugee Project, DePaul UK (Vincent de Paul Society), the John Paul Centre, Justice First, The Mary Thompson Fund, Methodist Asylum Project, North East Refugee Service (NERS), Open Door and the West End Refugee Service. Additionally, the University of Warwick also shared their perspective although this was not specific to the North East.

Some of the organisations consulted, such as NERS and the British Red Cross, work across the whole area, while others are based in one location. Most of the organisations have been working with the client group for several years and are very knowledgeable about the issues. All the organisations saw destitution as a prominent issue and some used a wide definition that included people receiving Asylum Support but who struggled to survive on the low rates. Some of the organisations focus solely on working with destitute clients while others provide services to a range of refugee<sup>12</sup> clients, including those who are destitute.

The North East covers a large geographical area that includes Tyneside and Teesside, both of which are quite different in terms of infrastructure and sense of identity. This is important to note when considering any follow-up from the mapping, for example promoting the sharing of data collection between organisations - what works in Middlesbrough might not be applicable to Newcastle.

**What is the scale of non-EEA migrant destitution?** It is useful to provide some context to destitution in the North East. The area is one of the largest asylum dispersal locations in the UK and asylum seekers have been dispersed there for over a decade. As an illustration, there are over 900 asylum seekers in dispersal accommodation currently in Middlesbrough.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, there are established refugee communities and support organisations in the North East. Unsurprisingly, many asylum seekers stay in the area when they receive a decision on their asylum claim, whether a positive or negative decision.

The patterns of dispersal locations within the area have fluctuated because of the changing availability of accommodation. For several years, Newcastle was the main location, then it shifted to Teesside and now it is moving back to Tyneside. This is relevant because it is difficult for support organisations to provide services in multiple locations and in turn clients find it more difficult to access support. Some clients become very isolated as they are accommodated in remote places with no support structure. The area is also recognised as having levels of deprivation higher than the national average<sup>14</sup> and homelessness and destitution are on the rise amongst the general population in the area.

The organisations below are key support providers working with destitute clients in the North East. We asked them how many destitute they were regularly supporting:

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<sup>12</sup> The term ‘Refugees’ is often used in the report to encompass people with a range of immigration status, such as asylum seeker, Refugee Status, humanitarian leave to remain, Etc.

<sup>13</sup> Source is the Home Office website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-october-to-december-2016/list-of-tables#asylum>

<sup>14</sup> Destitution in the UK, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, April 2016.

**West End Refugee Service (WERS) in Newcastle** is working with 110 – 130 destitute individuals at any one time, most of whom are ARE. Clients are referred to them by NERS and as well as ARE include asylum seekers and refugees. WERS helps ARE clients with: £15 cash payments from the hardship fund, provision of toiletries, clothing, advice, individual advocacy and emotional support. They have a befriending scheme that helps particularly with the latter. They refer clients to Action Foundation if that organisation has a vacancy in their accommodation. They host a monthly advice surgery run by Newcastle Law Centre.

**The Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Refugee Project** works with an average of 120 destitute ARE individuals at any one time. There may be some duplication with the people supported by WERS. Their support is delivered entirely by volunteers and includes the provision of: food, clothes, shoes, cooking utensils and toys for children. They also make a weekly £5 payment to destitute clients. Additionally, they support people within the asylum system and people with status, their combined client numbers (including destitute people) amounting to 300. They do not have the capacity to offer advice.

**The North of England Refugee Service (NERS)** offers advice to asylum seekers and refugees and has specific projects aimed at promoting integration. Over 50% of their clients have what they describe a resource issue which includes being destitute, the majority of the latter group being people who are ARE and all of these clients they refer to WERS (see above). NERS aim to prevent destitution in the first place by providing advice in a timely manner and enabling good referral pathways to other providers, including the Mary Thompson Fund, the British Red Cross, Open Door and Action Foundation. They don't have the capacity to work with long-term destitute clients. They have witnessed an increasing difficulty in asylum seekers accessing Asylum Support, usually in terms of delays and breaks in support. Resolving these has become harder as it is difficult to access the Home Office to sort them out.

**British Red Cross:** is working with an average of 507 destitute individuals at any one time of which 50% are ARE. Nationally the British Red Cross are working with more refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants than any other organisation. They offer advice and material support, working in partnership with other organisations to provide this throughout the area. The British Red Cross destitution fund enables the organisation to make cash payments to destitute clients for a limited period while casework is conducted. They highlighted that there is a group of long-term destitute clients who are stuck in a cycle of deprivation, often with associated health or social problems. Additionally, the British Red Cross offer a range of other services to refugees and asylum seekers (including those who are destitute) such as Restoring Family Links, access to first aid training and volunteering opportunities.

**Open Door in Teesside:** provides food, accommodation, advice, signposting, other material help and emotional support to destitute asylum seekers. They run a weekly drop in that, along with the aforementioned support, provides a space for clients to access the internet and socialise. They also provide a support group for female refugees. On average they have 31 people in their accommodation at any one time, including their short term – two to eight weeks - hosting scheme and a night shelter, which has a capacity of 16 bed spaces.

**Action Foundation:** is based in Newcastle and offers a range of services to asylum seekers, refugees and other vulnerable migrants. This includes English language teaching and supported housing provision for destitute clients. They currently have 13 NRPF clients in private rented accommodation in four houses in Newcastle, Gateshead and Sunderland. The rent is paid for by the

organisation who at the same time offer advice and seek routes out of destitution for those clients. A smaller number of destitute clients are hosted in the houses of local volunteers. They also run a housing scheme for clients with status.

**Justice First:** based in Stockton on Tees specialises in providing advice (including legal advice) to destitute asylum seekers at the end of the asylum process when other avenues to legal support have been exhausted. They work closely with other organisations in Teesside who they refer clients to for material support (the Mary Thompson Fund for example). Their support includes accompanying clients to immigration interviews and medical appointments. They also provide language support and a place where clients can have social interaction and establish friendships.

**The Mary Thompson Fund:** support destitute clients in the Tees Valley with: food packs; expenses associated with attending Home Office or solicitor's interviews; maternity wear; phone cards; travel; uniform costs for school children; and travel costs to visit relatives. They also provide a weekly payment cash of £5 (£10 in cases where there is a health need) from a hardship fund. They provide access to advice and referral to legal advisers.

There is something of a mixed picture in terms of the understanding of whether the numbers of destitute clients have been rising. Many destitute clients that organisations had been working over the years were given a way out of destitution through the Case Resolution process that was conducted between 2007 and 2012<sup>15</sup>. Since then the numbers of destitute clients that organisations have been working with have fluctuated. WERS felt that they had broadly stayed the same over the last couple of years whereas the British Red Cross, the Catholic Diocese and Action Foundation had noted an increase in numbers and complexity. In Teesside, it was felt that the overall numbers of destitute were increasing.

There is a trend of more women amongst the client group. Others have noted an increase in the numbers of people being refused Asylum Support or just not having their claim processed quickly, leading to periods when they are destitute.<sup>16</sup> Overall most organisations estimated that approximately 10% of their destitute clients are repeat clients (alternatively referred to as long term clients).

Trying to obtain an overview of the numbers of destitute people in the area is difficult as there is no mechanism for sharing or collating data amongst the supporting organisations. There is an openness to developing such as mechanism in the North East and taking some 'snap shots or benchmarks'.

**What is the average length of destitution:** The general pattern is one of clients moving in and out of destitution, rather than being destitute for long continuous periods, although there is a small number of long term destitute (approximately 10% of the cohort). People move around within the area and elsewhere in the UK to seek support, sometimes coming back to the North East months or years later.

*"It can range from two days to ten years." (Stakeholder organisation)*

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<sup>15</sup> The Case Resolution Directorate was established by the Home Office in 2007 to work through a backlog of hundreds of thousands of asylum cases, sometimes referred to as legacy cases. Most people whose cases were considered and who were located received a form of leave to remain. This meant that they could access mainstream support or take up employment more easily. Consequently, most of those people within this cohort who had been destitute found a route out destitution.

<sup>16</sup> ASAP quarterly report Oct – Dec 2016 available at: <http://www.asaproject.org>

Finding a figure for the length of time someone has been destitute is difficult because several organisations do not collect the data that makes such an analysis possible. Similarly, several projects have criteria that means that they can only support clients for a limited period, for example, the British Red Cross can only support people for a maximum of 12 weeks and often don't see the client or keep contact with them after this period. Analysing the data that is available and combining this with the anecdotal impressions we would estimate that average length of time that clients were destitute is between one and two years. The seven clients that were interviewed in the North East had experienced the following periods of destitution:

Total period of homelessness (months):	0-3m	4-12m	12-18m	18-24m	24m+
People:		1		4	1

The biggest concern in the context of the length of time was about those clients who had been destitute for many years, including those who had periods of respite from destitution. Many such clients were experiencing mental and physical health problems, for example, Tuberculosis. Others had problems with substance and alcohol abuse or addiction. No one organisation or agency has a responsibility for this long-term cohort who could be described as 'destitution plus'.<sup>17</sup>

**What are the reasons for being destitute in the first place?** The range of factors and contributing reasons for non-EEA migrant destitution are summarised in Section one of the report. In the North East, stakeholders identified the most common reasons as:

- Final refusal of asylum applications (Asylum Rights Exhausted).
- Increases in delays from the Home Office in processing of Asylum Support claims. Coupled with an increasing difficulty in contacting the Home Office to sort out administrative problems it is resulting in more people being destitute at different stages of the asylum process (initial claim, break in Asylum Support and end of process).
- The impact of Immigration Act 2014<sup>18</sup> and 2016<sup>19</sup> measures by Immigration Enforcement, such as withdrawing driving licences, restricting NHS treatment, closing bank accounts (or making it hard to open one) and the Right to Rent measures<sup>20</sup> are all contributing causes of clients becoming destitute.
- Poor English – not able to access or understand services.

**What access to accommodation is currently available?** Several organisations have specific accommodation projects for destitute clients that include:

- Access to private rented housing where the rent is paid for by a support organisation, for example, the Action Foundation scheme in Newcastle (see above).
- Hosting schemes where destitute clients stay in a host's house, for example the scheme run by Action Foundation in Newcastle (see above).
- Nightshelter accommodation, for example that offered by Open Door in Teesside.
- Short term accommodation for people granted refugee status but who are seeking to secure longer-term accommodation. Often this group includes single people who have been evicted from their Asylum Support Accommodation. Open Door runs a scheme in Teesside that refugees can access.

<sup>17</sup> The Care Act 2014

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-bill>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/immigration-bill-2015-16>

<sup>20</sup> Passport Please – the impact of Right to Rent checks, JCWI February 2017



While these schemes are very good they are limited in capacity and cannot match the demand. Additionally, these schemes are not always appropriate for clients with behavioural problems (such as mental health or addiction). Several mainstream homelessness providers (for example, the Salvation Army) are restricted to accommodating clients that have access to state benefits, which excludes most of the non-EEA destitute cohort. A further barrier is that several mainstream providers face resistance from their other clients (what might be termed as local homeless clients) to their supporting non-EEA people.

*“We have had to establish services just for this client group [non-EEA migrants] to keep it separate from the services that we provide for other homeless and destitute clients.” (Stakeholder organisation)*

There is some street homelessness amongst the non-EEA cohort, but not a huge amount. Most of the homelessness is hidden. Most people are staying with friends in overcrowded, unsafe and unsuitable accommodation.

**What access to immigration advice is currently available?** Newcastle Law Centre takes referrals, although they are struggling with capacity. In Teesside, there are legal providers: Justice First, Open Door. There is a concern that as destitution amongst this group increases that there are more unprofessional organisations cropping up that either give incorrect advice or at the worst exploit clients.

**Stakeholder suggested good practice models in the North East:** The following 'good practice' examples were identified in survey consultations:

- The police in Newcastle employ a psychiatric nurse to help their response to destitute people who are suffering from mental health problems.
- In Teesside, there is good communication between the Asylum Accommodation provider and a local charity (Open Door) that offers accommodation support to ensure that no one is evicted from their asylum accommodation without having somewhere to stay, even if it is a temporary option.
- Providing opportunities for destitute non-EEA migrants to volunteer.

### Section three: Individual experiences and impact of destitution

*"The airport is good as no one disturbs you there. Also the 25 bus as it goes from Oxford Street to Ilford so you can get a good sleep on it and then it ends at Tottenham Court Road where there is a 24 hour Macdonald's." (Destitute person)*

We asked stakeholder organisations and a total of 35 people (non-EEA migrants) who were currently or had previously been homeless about their experience of being destitute with NRPF. The summary of findings below draws upon their responses and comments in consultation interviews and an online survey (for organisation based stakeholders). The statements in italics are based on the notes taken by interviewers when consulting individual services users. Names and potentially identifying information have been removed. Additional 'in own words' consultation responses and comments noted in interviews with destitute services users in all three regions can be also be reviewed in Appendix 1 (What is the personal impact of destitution - extracts from interviews).

#### Where do people sleep and find shelter?

*"Friends supported me 100%. Other asylum seekers. I slept at their houses but it was breaking NASS rules." (Destitute person)*

*"I never slept outside; I moved from place to place. Men took advantage in return for accommodation. I was abused - offered accommodation for sex." (Destitute person)*

*"I rent a small room. I have no choice and work (illegally) for £3 and hour!" (Destitute person)*

*"I had a tent in XXXX town centre. I was banned from [another city] as I was stealing form shops." (Destitute person)*

Region specific summaries of accommodation access is included in Section two of the report. Most service users across all three regions reported a shortage and lack of options in terms of night shelters and temporary accommodation generally and especially for migrants with NRPF. Commonly, they are forced to sleep on the floors or sofas of friends or sympathetic peers with their own, often overcrowded accommodation. In the case of refused asylum seekers (the largest group reported in the survey) this is often with other asylum seekers still in receipt of asylum support. Individuals often have to move on to new sofas and addresses to minimise impact and risk of asylum support issues for their hosts. In this and similar consultations, end of process refused asylum seekers also told us they often have to rise and leave the premise very early, stay out of the accommodation and only return at night. Other individuals, both male and female, described being forced to sleep on night buses, in bus stations and in parks during periods when no other shelter could be accessed.

*"I worried I would get raped. You see men offering to help but you know they're not offering for free." (Destitute person)*

**How and where do people get food, clothing and basic provisions?** The range and location of projects and organisations varies within and across the survey regions but usually includes a mix of

small and larger charities and voluntary sector support organisations working with homeless people, asylums seekers and refugees. The main regionally based support organisations we identified in the survey are listed in Section two under the regional summaries. The general strategies and experiences of destitute people in feeding and clothing themselves are similar. End of process asylum seekers and other migrants with NRPF are often initially signposted or referred by mainstream and specialist refugee supports to food, clothing and emergency support providers. Examples identified in survey consultations included day centres, community groups, food and clothing projects, food banks, Churches and Mosques.

Friends with their own income or support are important providers of food and basic provisions, and of overnight shelter. Other sources include shops and food based businesses that offer left over or unsold food and individual members of local religious communities. Over time, and through contact with peers in the same situation, people often develop an extensive knowledge of their local homeless support networks, their opening times and support criteria and repeat visit during periods of destitution according to need and any project rules. Support is provided in different forms including food parcels, items of clothing, food and clothing vouchers and in some cases small cash gifts. One destitute survey participant in London commented that in their experience food is easier to come by than clothes or toiletries.

*"I used to have to use underwear as I couldn't afford sanitary towels. I couldn't shower during my period and it was like torture. Life as a woman was awful."  
(Destitute person)*

*"I begged for food on the streets and went to friends who helped but they had problems too so could not help for long." (Destitute person)*

**How do people get money?** Stakeholders from support organisations and service users themselves in each region described the financial desperation, hardship and indignity experienced by destitute migrants with NRPF. Severe deterioration in both physical and mental health in many destitute people is observed and attributed to a combination of poor diet, homelessness, the stress of survival living and extreme poverty. Whilst some charities and support organisations offer small amounts of money on a hardship or crisis basis, often this can only be given for a fixed short term period. Some organisations can give travel money so people can get weekly bus passes. Other sources of money identified in consultations included friends, family (possibly abroad or legally working in the UK), local community groups, Mosque and Church communities or individuals.

However, this money is usually irregular and insufficient for day to day and longer term needs. In our conversations with people experiencing destitution and support organisations we heard of destitute women who had been offered and sometimes accepted shelter and an opportunity to escape street homelessness by a male with accommodation in exchange for sex. Some destitute migrants turn to illegal working in order to earn money, often in poor working conditions, earning exploitative cash in hand wages in exchange for very long hours and no work place rights or protection. In individual interviews, some people described being forced to beg on the streets, to shoplift or otherwise break the law in order to earn some money, be able to feed themselves and possibly access shelter.

*"I had to sneak in and out of the house for the nights but be out all day- if I was seen I would be thrown out." (Destitute person)*

*"[I moved] from place to place; I never slept outside but often couldn't go to a house until midnight. They threatened that I'd be on the street if I ever complained. They found out about my HIV status. They were pushing me out, scared of me - stigma."*

**How and where do people access help and support?** The main regional support providers we were made aware of in the course of the survey are identified in the regional summaries in Section two of the report. As commented on elsewhere in the report, the closure of specialist regionally based One Stop Services has made it increasingly difficult for asylum seekers (and refused asylum seekers) to raise and get timely help with asylum support and other issues often identified in the course of 'in person' casework appointments and drop in sessions. Information, basic advice provision and signposting and referral to specialist legal and other support for clients whose asylum applications are refused is now much harder to access for many people. As a consequence, some have become avoidably destitute or remained destitute with NRPF for long periods before accessing legal support and being assessed as having grounds to make a fresh asylum claim. We understand that non-EEA migrants with NRPF have faced similar challenges in accessing advice and support due to the impact of funding cutbacks in the advice sector and increased demands on support provision generally.

## Concluding comments

We hope that this destitution survey report provides a useful insight and overview of the nature and impact of destitution suffered by thousands of individuals from refugee and non-EEA migrant backgrounds in the three areas. We also hope that it goes some way towards recognising the skill and dedication of the staff and volunteers of the organisations who are supporting this destitute client group. What they witness in their work with destitute non-EEA people are the appalling consequences of the policy and practice of the current asylum system. There must be a better way to treat people who have come to the UK seeking protection, for the benefit of the individuals affected and the communities around them. The combination of advocacy based on evidence, the promotion of good practice and the continued provision of support to destitute non-EEA people will hopefully contribute to change for the better.

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## Appendix 1: What is the personal impact of destitution - extracts from interviews

We asked support providers and destitute service users to reflect upon and describe the personal impact of destitution on individuals. Physical and mental health deterioration, depression, anxiety, stress related illness, loss of self-esteem, confidence, shame and hopelessness, desperation, substance misuse as a coping mechanism - all feature almost routinely in the responses of everyone that contributed in our consultations. In undertaking the survey, part of our aim and we hope its value, is to 'give voice' to those experiencing destitution. The following are some of the statements and comments that were made and noted in interviews with destitute service users. They're presented under the relevant interview questions and reflect the range and common themes in responses:

### How does being homeless affect you?

- *I felt emotional. Uncertainty. Unstable. Physically drained. Can't plan. Where will I sleep? I had to drop out of college - couldn't concentrate.*
- *You go mad. Health conditions worsen, can't eat. Stress. Unable to take education consistently. Situation unsettled; people don't see you as a person anymore; seem abandoned; people don't want to know you.*
- *It really affects you. You have nowhere to stay; can't even buy things if you get any money as nowhere to keep them. Staying with friends I had to leave every morning even if nothing to do. Health - I was pregnant and had to sleep on a cold floor in winter; scared to go to GP after I was refused as I didn't think I was allowed to go and I didn't have any money to pay. I had stress and depression, always thinking and worrying about where to stay - I think I needed meds but was scared to go to GP. I feel guilty, feel bad, always relying on friends; no independence. Leads to stronger friendships with people who helped but at time always felt bad and guilty.*
- *It affected me in so many ways. Difficult for friendships - I have no contact now. The situation spoiled friendships. They don't acknowledge me, think I'm useless. Physically - it gives stress; 'not free' and dependent on others. I was scared to do things - like bathing and washing. Scared to use facilities as it's not my own home; I was scared to make a mistake and upset or annoy them.*
- *I got depression and am now on tablets. I am living like an animal but I'm human.*
- *Mentally - it's very difficult. I can't sleep. It's worse in the mornings. Affects me physically - I'm always tired and have no food.*
- *I felt vulnerable and scared. Very stressed. Missing my family.*
- *It is a very bad situation. I am angry. Why would I come here if I had no problems in Iraq? It's not like I'm a criminal.*
- *It was cold living in a tent. I had no phone credit, no friends and no money. Struggled for food and had no medication for my depression.*
- *It had a massive effect – I'd never been homeless before – you need to be humble and ask for help. I didn't want to ask family and friends because of pride but found help with Connections who picked up my case. I used time to volunteer which kept me busy and stopped me getting into trouble and drink and drugs.*
- *It made existing health issues worse – I have sickle cell and this was made worse but all the family developed problems.*
- *This has affected my life badly and made me feel like a criminal – I was never a criminal in my country but sleeping on the street and having no family or money and medical problems is awful. It's very hard.*
- *Had to sneak in and out of the house for the nights but be out all day- if I was seen I was thrown out.*

- *I became depressed and even tried to kill myself in 2014. I lost my confidence and now I shake – my whole body shakes. I used to be able to type/write but I can't now when I'm shaking. Once when I was homeless and sleeping on the streets a man urinated on me. I now have mental health problems. Being homeless destroys your life as a human being. You have to carry a big bag and you don't know when you'll next have a shower or where you'll sleep.*
- *I had a fibroid so needed to go to the toilet all the time and this was hard.*
- *I have lots of stress and depression and BP is high and I have a problem with my feet – they swell – sometimes I can't walk properly.*

### **When you are (or were) homeless, what are your main problems or worries?**

- *Sleeping arrangements – it was easier to get food and a shower than accommodation. Lots of day centres and Pret do food – that's easy enough – it's just hard to get accommodation. Can have a shower at the day centre and food at soup kitchens and day centre.*
- *All the family were all affected mentally – we were living all together but no longer could and were all split up – we went to live with friends or the church helped us. We moved from place to place with no access to money.*
- *Somewhere to sleep – everything is hard – homeless people are human and have feelings, a heart and a family and problems that caused them to escape their countries – you cannot imagine it. The main problems are how to survive and where to sleep and live and how to continue. And the hopelessness.*
- *I can stay with my host for a bit but this can end at any time – it's uncertain.*
- *Somewhere to sleep for me and my son.*
- *Somewhere safe to be as I felt very vulnerable being a woman particularly as I'd been sexually assaulted.*
- *Somewhere to sleep for me and my baby. Had NRPF so very hard.*
- *Accommodation – staying with a host family now but this comes to an end at the end of the month and I have to be out all day.*
- *Depression and health and somewhere to sleep.*
- *Accommodation – can go to churches for help and people will help for a bit but then get fed up and you end up not feeling welcome in the end.*
- *Made health bad – got TB and lost a kidney.*
- *Can't access GP as no address and same for college. Health got worse and couldn't get help. My belongings were scattered and hard to get at. I couldn't think about anything only how to survive.*
- *Nowhere to stay, definitely nowhere safe; No key - you don't know when you can go back to the house; always feel like you're disturbing people; you don't want to tell people you're hungry - they're helping so much you feel bad asking for more.*
- *Freedom; at friend's houses I was denied food, lost weight and was starving. They were trying to get rid of me. I knew they could afford to give me food but they did this so I'd want to leave I think. I feel on edge the whole time.*
- *Having no house and no money. I have no choice but to work illegally and rent a small room.*
- *I am unable to work legally. Finding a place to stay, food, friendship.*
- *I was scared. Other homeless people were on drugs and alcohol. I was in fear of being attacked.*

## How do you get food and other things you need?

- *From Pret, Mission of Charity who do a soup kitchen every day. Sometimes you have to pay a small amount or it can be free.*
- *It was easy to get food but the main issue was somewhere to stay.*
- *From charities who give money and vouchers sometimes. It's not easy as you need to travel to the charities and the place I live now is far away so I have to pay for travel costs.*
- *Food is easy to get – Pret and Greggs give leftover food out at the end of the day at 6pm. You can wash at the station – it's still free at Kings Cross but you have to pay at Liverpool Street and Euston. The best place to wash and sleep is at the airport as no one disturbs you there.*
- *I can go to Red Cross every day but Weds. I can't eat fatty food as I have a fatty liver and fibroids but I manage. Clothes are more of a problem but I can get these free from the Red Cross and a Jewish charity I know.*
- *I work a bit and get £250 but I have to pay for cabs to get my baby to childcare, for travel for me and for pull ups and powdered milk. I have no washing machine so have to pay to do washing and it doesn't go very far.*
- *I can't cook with my host family which is hard so I get food at Red Cross.*
- *If I eat once a day I'm OK.*

## How could support for homeless people in your situation be improved?

- *More accommodation – people cannot help themselves if they haven't slept for three nights in a row – then it's hard to get to appointments. You need energy to get help. Churches try to help but they have limited numbers they can help due to health and safety rules.*
- *I don't know... I worry because I'm here illegally and am scared to be arrested and detained again. Safety is such a worry – I'm always worried.*
- *This situation is so inhumane – to put people on the streets and not allow them to work – everyone is blaming Trump for things but UK is worse – they bomb my country but won't help me when I come here – the judge asked me why I came!*
- *The right to work is really important. If you stop people working and they become homeless they develop mental health problems and this is so expensive for NHS. Just cheaper and better to let people work. In Germany, Italy and France people can work in this situation – this is the only country where you can't. Then you can pay rent.*
- *Stop NRPF for mothers with children – the children suffer this way.*
- *Need accommodation and legal advice and also need training for people in this situation – I can't go back to my country because of my health but can't take forward my ideas here easily. It's better not to return people forcibly.*
- *Accommodate more people - more charities like BOAZ. Don't make refused people homeless. As long as people are in the UK they should be entitled to accommodation. Don't make people homeless. Temporary Leave to Remain - look at a case again. Allow people to work and support themselves.*
- *We need to be considered as human; less judged and our stories considered; as women people need to know what we've been through. The Home Office need to be better informed - they're the reason I'm homeless.*
- *Give people somewhere to stay; everyone is human and deserves somewhere of their own so they are not depending on other people - people who can abuse you if they're not good people. You can't tell anyone or call the police or do anything as they would make you leave and then you have nowhere again. The people making decisions (policy, Home Office) need to think about people as humans more, more about peoples' situations. Think - is moving from place to place*

*good for her? You are not free - worst news that you're refused and can't even cry as it's not your own place and there are always people around. It's too cold. It's not safe to be outside or homeless.*

- *Counselling helped a lot. I often break down, something negative affects me and counselling is so important.*
- *Accommodation.*
- *I don't know. Advice? What to do next?*
- *I was lucky that I could go back and stay with my mum. The Home Office must recognise this situation.*
- *More shelters for failed asylum seekers.*
- *The Home Office must allow us to work until we do voluntary return or make a fresh asylum claim.*
- *More shelters.*
- *The Home Office must not stop support. The Government should help homeless people.*
- *I don't know.*

### **Can you get immigration advice if you need it?**

- *I went to Revive - you can access it without having a fixed address. Other places were overstretched.*
- *1st time - no. I was new to this country and no one had told me anything. Finally I got advice. 2nd time - I was scared to approach in case I was deported. The I got some advice.*
- *Spoke to solicitor before leaving house but couldn't help; not aware of where I could go for advice - especially free advice.*
- *Greater Manchester Immigration Unit.*
- *Yes - Jackson Canter in Piccadilly - a legal aid solicitor (through Refugee Action).*
- *Yes - from the Home Office.*
- *Yes - from my solicitor and Compass Law.*
- *Yes.*
- *Yes from CAB and Compass Law in Bolton.*
- *Yes - CAB, Compass Law.*
- *Yes - my solicitor, CAB Bolton.*
- *Yes I have a solicitor.*

### **Are there things that you need or cannot get help with - please explain?**

- *Seeing a solicitor. Need updating. Finances - I appreciate what BOAZ provides but need more.*
- *When you're refused you can't access education or jobs and. can't be independent. You often have to pay for legal help and scared to access legal help with no finances and you need proof of address. I can't get papers or a resolution of my case.*
- *When homeless I had no money or food. Now it's better but sometimes I still need more money.*
- *Before - homeless accommodation, finances. Though no major problems now accommodated.*
- *I needed asylum support.*
- *I need a house. I will put in a fresh claim then get Section 4 support.*
- *I want to be allowed to work!*
- *I want to work legally (currently working illegally for £3 an hour).*
- *Yes - voluntary return. I applied over a year ago. We have contacted the Home Office but there's no news.*



- *I need to do a fresh asylum claim but it's hard to get evidence from (my country).*
- *House and money.*
- *Paying for medication.*

## Appendix 2: Statistical summaries of service user profiles and destitution experience

The following tables show recorded data from consultations with service users in all three regions who are or have been previously been destitute at the time of interview.

NR - not recorded; GMR: Greater Manchester; NE: North East

### Gender of service users:

Gender	GMR	London	NE	Total
Male	7	8	4	19
Female	8	6	2	16
NR	0	0	0	0

### Service user countries of origin:

Country of origin	GMR	London	NE	Total
Africa	2			2
Algeria		1		1
Eritrea		1		1
Ethiopia		1		1
Guinea	1		1	2
Iran		2		2
Iraqi/Kurd	1			1
Iraq			1	
Ivory coast	1			1
Libya	2		1	3
Nigeria	1	6	1	8
Pakistan	1			1
Sierra Leone	1	1	1	3
Somalia	1			1
Syria	1			1
Tanzania			1	
Zambia	1			1
Zimbabwe	2	1		3

### Immigration and support status of service users:

Immigration & support status	GMR	London	NE	Total
Asylum Rights Exhausted (without support)	15	3	1	19
Back in in asylum support (previously destitute)	0	4	3	7
With immigration status & support (previously destitute)	0	6	2	6
NR	0	1	0	3

**Approximate age of contributing service users:**

Age	GMR	London	NE	Total
20 years old	1			1
25 years old	3	1		4
30 years old	2	3		5
35 years old	2	1	3	6
40 years old	3			3
45 years old	3	3	3	9
50 years old		2		2
55 years old		2		2
60 years old		1		1
NR	1	1		2

**How long have service users been in the UK?**

Time in UK (to nearest year)	GMR	London	NE	Totals
1 year			1	1
2 years	4		1	5
3 years				
4 years	1			1
5 years	1	1		2
6 years	1			1
7 years			1	
8 years	1	1	1	3
9 years	1	4		5
10 years	1			1
13 years		3		3
15 years	1	1	1	3
18 years		2		2
27 years			1	1
34 years		1		1
NR	1			1

**Duration of service user destitution (in total over time and approximate):**

Homelessness duration (months in total)	GMR	London	NE	Total
0-3	1	1		2
4-12	3	3	1	13
13-18	1	1		1
18-24			4	8

24+	9	8		10
Other			1 x 23 years	1
NR	1	1		1

### Appendix 3: Three case studies

The following are three case studies provided by support organisations that fed into the SAMD destitution survey and that help to illustrate some of the challenges and issues commonly experienced by asylum seekers, refugees and migrants who become destitute in the UK. The stories are shared with consent and with names or identifying information changed to ensure anonymity.

#### **Victoria's story (case study provided by the Boaz Trust, Manchester)**

Victoria comes from a country in West Africa and shared her story, along with her experiences of living in Manchester. She is keen to share her story but has asked us to change her name and not to disclose her country of origin.

*In 2014, I came to the UK to ask for protection because in my country I was arrested and they wanted to kill me. I fled my country to come here for protection. I wasn't prepared, I had to run.*

*I came for protection but, for me it is like double torture. In my home country I was tortured, and now again in the UK it has been more torture – even now, because I don't have that protection. Last year, everything stopped - no support, no money, nothing since I have been refused.*

*Since I have been in the UK I've had mental health problems and taken medication for depression, and I've had sessions with a psychologist. When I received the refusal letter, it made me go down further. I was very depressed at that time. I didn't know what I could do, because after I was refused, the accommodation stopped as well. I had nothing to eat, and I was very depressed.*

*It is worse for a woman to be homeless, than a man. You have no security and you are very vulnerable. Something can happen to you at any time because you are a woman. I have heard stories from people who say that when there is no security women can be raped or sexually exploited. Men say that they can help you, but then you go and in the night it is not safe.*

*One night, I had to sleep in a bus station. But then I came to Boaz. I am a survivor. Boaz house is my therapy. I found friends in Boaz houses. Boaz activities help de-stress me, for example conversation club helped me with my English, and going out on trips makes me feel good. Having a bus ticket helps me so much – it helps me travel to see my lawyer, go to medical and psychological appointments and helps me to visit different places in Manchester. Boaz are also helping me with my case for asylum. Life without Boaz would be like madness. I would be very down, desperate and depressed. I would have lots of sickness. Having a case worker at Boaz is important, and it is important that it is a woman so that I can be very, very open. If it was a man it can bring back bad memories. I hope that one day the Home Office will believe me and they will agree that what I am saying is true. In the future, when I work, I want to help people. Not just asylum seekers, anybody.*

*My experience of Greater Manchester being welcoming is bad and good. There were bad times when I was living in my first house in the UK, and there are lots of bad memories. In this first house in Greater Manchester my asylum was refused and support was stopped. College was stopped, and psychological support was stopped. I felt very closed and depressed. I had no friends and I didn't know where to go to pass the time, and where to meet new people.*

*After this, I came to Manchester city and moved to a Boaz house. Until now, my asylum case is not resolved, I am still in part of the process. This process is scary as I have been refused before, but Manchester is welcoming to me. Since being in Manchester, I feel I am a survivor. Manchester is a friendly city, and I have met so many people around me – in Boaz, and across Manchester. I've found some friends.*

*In Manchester, since being at the GP, medical professionals have welcomed me and helped me. Mental health professionals have made me feel welcome, and some other groups too that I didn't know in Manchester. Before, it was like a prison, but Manchester makes me feel like I've woken up. It feels like a weight is slowly being lifted from me – but not all of it, as I still don't have refugee status. In Manchester I am involved with lots of different groups, with a lot of asylum seekers and refugees. I don't have many British friends but people on the bus are friendly and will make sure you have a seat on the bus, the driver says hello. When you are queuing, people let you go before them if it is your turn. Most people in Manchester are friendly. In my street, people say hello when you walk past. But some are not friendly – one person was very racist, and shouted at me in the Arndale recently.*

### **David's story (case study provided by the Boaz Trust, Manchester)**

*My name is David and I come from Ethiopia. Life was not good, and towards the end of my time there, life was getting worse. Whilst I was at University I used to write. I wrote about the lack of water in my country, people dying from dirty water, people dying from malaria. I was told to stop writing or I would be killed. Because of these threats, I stopped my education. They took my family away from me, my father, brother and sister, and they were killed.*

*I was hunted, and my picture was in the news. I was put in prison for two years without being in court or seeing a judge. When I was released I was told to leave the country or I would be killed. But I didn't want to leave because my mother was still left. One day they killed her too.*

*A woman helped me come to England and I was able to live with her for one year. After that I was sleeping on the streets for over a year. If you are hungry and have no language, how do you explain that to people? I ended up using sign language to communicate. There is very limited support.*

*Life is very up and down. I start to question my life, am I useless? I did not want to come near to anyone, I was a lonely, hopeless person, not even eating once in a day. I was diagnosed with cataracts, and was going blind. I had no GP, and didn't know where to find help. I lost all hope, and felt as if I just wanted to die.*

*Then I found Boaz and I started to stay at the night shelter. When I went there, it just felt like I was at home. There was hot food, I met friends and there was no rain! I started to feel more able to change things. I began to feel much more like a person again. Less worthless. More like a person who is worth something. I was even able to shower and change my clothes and even have new socks! Boaz introduced me to a GP and I was referred on for surgery.*

*I stayed in the night shelter for 5 weeks. My GP said that I needed to rest, eat properly and stop stressing otherwise I would affect my health even more. That is when I moved from the night shelter into a Boaz house.*

*The difference it made having the house how can I explain it? Words cannot express what I get from Boaz. Now I can stand like a person and think about my future. Without Boaz, with all of these problems and the stress, perhaps I would not be alive today.*

*I can only eat certain foods, and the kitchen gives me room to prepare the right foods. I use the £10 I receive weekly, and make it go as far as it can. Sometimes I get the bus and travel to get the cheapest food that is appropriate for my condition. I am able to use the bus pass that Boaz has given to me.*

*When I get refugee status, I want to help others as much as I can. I want to be able to speak out about people's problems. I want to tell the truth and help bring freedom. I want to give back to Boaz, so I'm starting to volunteer for the night shelter to help others, either in translating or any other work.*

### **Efe's story (case study provided by Praxis Community Projects, London)**

*Efe had been sleeping rough for around three months before a friend told him about Praxis. He attended a drop-in session and explained that he was spending nights sleeping in the park or on buses. He had approached social services for support several times, but had not heard back from them. He was also undocumented and struggling with ill health.*

*A Praxis adviser immediately began to look into Efe's case, and managed to find him a place in a shelter on the same night. Efe had no money, so Praxis provided him with the funds to travel to the shelter and to buy some much needed food.*

*Praxis helped Efe to access healthcare and advocated on his behalf to social services, who agreed to support him. They also supported Efe with specialist immigration advice with the aim of regularising his status in the UK. He was referred to Brighter Futures, Praxis' peer advocacy and support group for young people. Group members take part in creative workshops, campaign on migrant issues, and support each other. Efe has made a lot of friends through the group and got involved in a wide range of activities.*

*"Brighter Futures is an amazing group. When you're undocumented, it's very hard to talk about your situation because you don't want to cause issues for yourself. It was nice to have a group where everyone had that in common, so you can talk openly and safely about it. Having that support was really great."*

*Through the group Efe took part in Brave New Voices, a creative writing project through which he had poems published. It turned out he was a very talented writer and got a lot of pleasure from his writing. He also learned new skills at Making Tracks, a workshop where the group learned instruments, wrote and recorded a series of songs.*

*Recently, Efe found out that he has been given leave to remain in the UK, with a clause of no recourse to public funds (NRPF). The NRPF clause means he cannot access mainstream welfare benefits or housing support, but most importantly the leave to remain means he is no longer undocumented. "It was a big, big relief. It's a very long and complicated process. The help I've had from Praxis has been immense!"*

*Just when Efe's situation seemed to be more stable, he suddenly stopped receiving support from social services. The reasoning for this was questionable and he was not notified, which he should have been. Praxis sent information to Efe's community care solicitor to challenge the local authority for terminating his support. In the meantime Efe was once again at risk of destitution and homelessness, so Praxis provided a small subsistence grant enabling him to buy essentials such as food and personal care items. Social services eventually reinstated his support after receiving a letter*

*from his solicitor. Praxis has now applied for Efe's NRFP condition to be lifted, which would enable him to access support such as housing benefit and Jobseeker's Allowance. This application is currently pending, as there is an average response time of around 6-7 months for NRPF lifts.*

*Despite all the challenges he has faced, Efe is positively looking forward to the future. He hopes to study for a degree in computer science, find employment and be independent.*



**Appendix 4: Contributing stakeholder organisations**

<b>Contributor</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Alex Fraser	Head of Refugee Services	British Red Cross
Julian Prior	CEO	Action Foundation
Hilary Hodgson	Area Manager	British Red Cross
Amer Ratkusic	Integrated Advice Team Manager	North of England Refugee Service (NERS)
Paul Catterall	CEO	Open Door (North East)
Lindsay Cross	Manager	West End Refugee Service (WERS)
Kester Young	Manager	Night Stop North East (Depaul UK)
Pete Widlinski	Manager	Justice First
Bini Araia	Coordinator	Based at the John Paul Centre, Middlesbrough
John Dowling	Project Manager	Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle Refugee Project
Mike Dolan	Preventing Asylum Homelessness Project Coordinator	Refugee Action
Helen Bourne	Housing Advice Co-coordinator	The Passage
Andrew Jordan	Senior Immigration Advisor	Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
Timothy Lawrence	Solicitor / Head of Immigration Department	Southwark Law Centre
Ros Holland	CEO	Boaz Trust
Shaheda Magerah	Caseworker	Bolton Destitution Project
Romy Muller	CEO	Booth Centre
Eleanor Watts	Area Manager	Riverside
Maria Houlahan	Manager	ASHA
Nizam Zanganah	Destitution Coordinator	British Red Cross
Aidan Hallett	Ops Manager	Refugee Action
Lidia Estevez Picon	Migration Lead	Connection at St Martins
Alison Gelder	CEO	Housing Justice
Sally Daghlian	CEO	Praxis Community Projects
Hugo Tristam	London Ops Manager (refugees)	British Red Cross
Kellie Higgins	Destitution Coordinator	Refugee Council
Dan Olney	Deputy Director	St Mungos
Carolina Albuerne	Good Practice and Partnerships Manager	Refugee Action
Addison Barnett	Project Manager	Street Legal
Sofia Roupakia	London Projects Manager	Migrant Rights Network

An additional four stakeholders also opted to not share their names and organisational details.