

(by email)

Our reference: MGLA200125-8364

28 February 2025

Dear

Thank you for your request for information which the Greater London Authority (GLA) received on 20 January 2025. Your request has been considered under the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000.

You requested:

1. Demographics of Refugees Sleeping Rough

- *Data on the nationalities, age groups, and family structures of refugees who became homeless after leaving Home Office accommodation in 2024 and early 2025.*
- *The proportion of refugees granted asylum who subsequently became homeless due to systemic barriers, such as language difficulties, lack of employment opportunities, or challenges accessing housing support.*

2. Impact of Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) Funding

- *Outcomes achieved through the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding (2022-2025), including:*
 - *The number of individuals assisted.*
 - *The number of individuals moved into permanent housing.*
 - *Employment outcomes for those supported by these initiatives.*

3. Barriers and Effectiveness of Initiatives

- *Reports identifying the reasons for the limited success of the current 28-day move-on period in preventing homelessness, including recommendations for improvement.*
- *Assessments of the effectiveness of partnerships between councils and voluntary organizations in providing housing and support to refugees.*

4. Future Projections and Policy Impacts

- *Internal forecasts for refugee homelessness numbers in London for 2025, considering:*
 - *Increased asylum decisions.*
 - *Reduced reliance on hotel accommodations for refugees.*
- *Evaluations or impact assessments comparing the current 28-day move-on period with the proposed 56-day period, particularly regarding its potential to address homelessness among vulnerable groups.*

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Our response to your request is as follows:

1.1. Please see **Appendix 1**, a CHAIN report in an excel document, and see tab **'People leaving asylum support'**.

Information about the report

CHAIN (Combined Homelessness and Information Network) is commissioned and funded by the Mayor of London and managed by Homeless Link. It is a multi-agency database recording information about people sleeping rough and the wider street population in London. Inputting users of the system are professionals working in street outreach teams and other rough sleeping services.

Inputting users do record self-disclosed nationality information and age of people found rough sleeping. Family structures are not recorded.

When someone is found rough sleeping for the first time, or the first time after a long gap in their rough sleeping, their last settled base is asked and recorded (if known/disclosed). To provide the data that best meets the needs of your request, the report includes all new and returning rough sleepers whose last settled base was reported as asylum support accommodation (often referred to as Home Office accommodation or previously known as NASS) and whose cause of departure was something other than a negative decision.

1.2. Please note we do not hold the information requested. CHAIN does not specifically record if someone became homeless due to systematic barriers. It does record someone's preferred language; however, this is for the purpose of professionals to best communicate with that person rather than recording if language was a factor in their homelessness. Similarly, employment information can be recorded but it is not a mandatory field and inputting is relatively low. There is a function for inputting users to record if a person rough sleeping has approached a local council's housing options service, but again this does not indicate if this was a factor in someone's homelessness.

2. Based on the information we hold at the time of this FOI request, the cumulative number of outcomes since April 2022 in relation to individuals assisted by all GLA funded services for which funding came fully or partly from the Rough Sleeping Initiative funding (RSI 2022-2025) has so far been 17,796. Please note that many of these services have received RSI (2022-2025) funding as well as core GLA funding, and in some cases additional central Government funding. We do not hold the data disaggregating exactly how many individuals have been assisted solely through RSI funding. Number of individuals assisted is understood as number of individuals the services have worked with or supported in the period- exact wording of each service's relevant Key Performance Indicator (KPI) vary. In most cases the data covers from Q1 2022/23 to Q2 2024/25 as most services did not yet report on their outcomes for Q3 2024/25 at the date of this FOI request. Please note we have used either data from the services' monitoring reports or, for those services that only worked with clients with a CHAIN record, we have used a CHAIN report confirming the total number clients who stayed at the service or had any event recorded by it during the period. Do also please note that an individual will often have contact with multiple services during their rough sleeping episode (for example, with an outreach service, with an immigration advice service for rough sleepers and an accommodation service). Therefore, the outcomes for more than one service could be in relation to the same individual but given many of these services record their contacts on their own case management system we are not able to confirm unique individuals across all the services. Moreover, some services will be reporting KPIs based on number of people supported each quarter, which means there are duplicates when adding the data annually and across several years.

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In regards, to individuals moved into permanent housing, please note that services inputting on CHAIN can record accommodation outcomes there, including long-term accommodation outcomes. These outcomes are reported on quarterly and annually and are publicly available;

- Website: [Rough sleeping in London \(CHAIN reports\) - London Datastore](#)
- Latest report: Quarter 3 2024-25, published on 31st January. The accommodation data is section 8, pages 18-19 of the Greater London report. This is published in a PDF version for London as a whole, and for some specific boroughs.

Employment outcomes, as mentioned above, are not often recorded on CHAIN. This is partly because the employment field is not mandatory, therefore inputting is low, and because many people get employment support once in accommodation and most accommodation services do not record their data on CHAIN¹. There are also specific employment focused charities in the homelessness sector who again do not use CHAIN as their recording system. Rough sleeping services supporting those in accommodation might include outcomes around referring their clients to appropriate services to address their education, training, volunteering or employment needs- but they are less likely to offer direct employment support. Only one of the GLA services funded by RSI 2022/2025 since July 2023 included an element of direct employment support for a specific cohort that could lead to employment outcomes with 34 people receiving more than 3 sessions of employment support and 15 people starting work as a result of that support.

3. In relation to both 3.1. *reports identifying the reasons for the limited success of the current 28-day move on period in preventing homelessness, including recommendations for improvement*, and 3.2. *assessments of the effectiveness of partnerships between councils and voluntary organizations in providing housing and support to refugees*, please see below links to published documents, attached documents or relevant extracts of documents that the GLA has produced or that have been shared with GLA officers:

- Please see attached as **Appendix 2** the final version of the GLA report called Asylum Roadmap: Lessons Learned in London - for HASC. The version below is the final version as it has been submitted to the Home Affairs Select Committee in relation to their enquiry on Asylum Accommodation;
- Please see attached as **Appendix 3** Power Point presentation from Bridges Outcomes Partnerships on their London Refugee Services;
- Please see attached as **Appendix 4** a report from Bridges Outcomes Partnerships, Crisis and SHP on their Brent Refugee Service;
- Please see the [2018 Mayor's Strategy for Social Integration](#)
- Please see GLA's [Asylum Welcome Toolkit](#)
- Please see Refugee Council's reports: [Keys to the City: How the next Mayor of London can help end refugee homelessness](#) and [Keys to the City 2024: Ending refugee homelessness in London](#)
- Please see in **Appendix 5** relevant extracts from the following reports:
 - Asylum Welcome in London-full report;
 - Asylum Welcome in London- summary of findings;
 - Research Study on the Needs, Experiences & Capacities of People Seeking Asylum in London;

4.1. In relation to your question on internal forecasts for refugee homelessness numbers in London for 2025, considering increased asylum decisions and/or reduced reliance on hotel accommodations for refugees, please note that there are no such GLA internal forecasts for refugee homelessness numbers in London for 2025.

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4.2. In relation to your last request on evaluations of the 56 days move-on period, please note that the change has only taken place in December 2024 and that the Home Office have confirmed their intention to evaluate it and publish interim results in March. Please find attached **Annex 6** which confirms Home Office's intention to undertake an evaluation.

If you have any further questions relating to this matter, please contact me, quoting the reference MGLA200125-8364.

Yours sincerely

Information Governance Officer

If you are unhappy with the way the GLA has handled your request, you may complain using the GLA's FOI complaints and internal review procedure, available at:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/governance-and-spending/sharing-our-information/freedom-information>

**Non-UK national new and returning rough sleepers
01/01/24-29/01/25, whose last settled base was asylum
support accommodation, and whose cause of
departure was something other than a negative
decision**

Age	No.	%
Under 18	1	0.1%
18 - 25	299	29.1%
26 - 35	549	53.5%
36 - 45	135	13.1%
46 - 55	35	3.4%
Over 55	8	0.8%
Total	1027	100.0%

Nationality	No.	%
Africa	786	76.5%
Algeria	3	0.3%
Cameroon	2	0.2%
Central African republic	2	0.2%
Chad	4	0.4%
Congo (Democratic Republic)	1	0.1%
Cote d'Ivoire	1	0.1%
Egypt	11	1.1%
Eritrea	334	32.5%
Ethiopia	66	6.4%
Gambia	1	0.1%
Ghana	2	0.2%
Guinea	1	0.1%
Liberia	1	0.1%
Libya	16	1.6%
Malawi	1	0.1%
Mali	2	0.2%
Morocco	2	0.2%
Namibia	1	0.1%
Niger	2	0.2%
Nigeria	4	0.4%
Other area/Not known - Africa	3	0.3%
Senegal	1	0.1%
Sierra Leone	1	0.1%
Somalia	9	0.9%
South Sudan	30	2.9%
Sudan	282	27.5%
Tunisia	2	0.2%
Uganda	1	0.1%
Americas	6	0.6%
Bolivia	1	0.1%
Brazil	2	0.2%
Colombia	2	0.2%
Trinidad & Tobago	1	0.1%
Asia	230	22.4%
Afghanistan	72	7.0%
China	4	0.4%
India	6	0.6%
Iran	66	6.4%
Iraq	15	1.5%
Kuwait	9	0.9%

Malaysia	1	0.1%
Pakistan	1	0.1%
Palestine	6	0.6%
Saudi Arabia	2	0.2%
Sri Lanka	1	0.1%
Syrian Arab Republic	40	3.9%
Yemen	7	0.7%
Europe (EEA)	1	0.1%
Portugal	1	0.1%
Europe (Non-EEA)	4	0.4%
Albania	1	0.1%
Ukraine	3	0.3%
Total	1027	100.0%

Asylum Roadmap: Lessons Learned in London

A report from the Greater London Authority, February 2025

Submitted

Background

The Government is determined to deal with the asylum backlog and end the use of asylum hotels. There are several pathways for the Government to take this forward. This paper takes a 'lessons learned' approach based on previous efforts to clear the backlog of claims and makes recommendations for how the Government can deliver its ambitions, minimising harm to people currently stuck in asylum 'limbo', avoiding significant knock-on impact to wider public and voluntary services, and proactively shaping a positive agenda on welcome and integration. The GLA is aware that Government itself is undergoing a process of learning lessons, and we hope this will be a contribution to this exercise.

This paper assumes that in order to reduce the backlog the Government will need to increase the speed and efficacy of its asylum decision making, and reflects on London's experience of a recent rapid decision-making approach of the previous government through the rollout of the Streamlined Asylum Process (SAP) from February 2023. While fast decision making is possible and can bring huge benefits to individuals within the system, and wider public services, there is an increased risk of harm and destitution that we are keen to avoid through a renewed approach.

This paper also takes a holistic, place-based approach to the knock-on decisions that will need to be made by taking the same lessons learned approach to managing rough sleeping and homelessness risks, overseeing the closure of asylum hotels, and embedding an integration approach to work in London.

The paper does not deal with another significant government aim, which would also reduce the use of asylum contingency hotels: the expansion of the dispersal accommodation estate. This is in recognition of other real-time discussions taking place on this issue, and the need to build consensus in London for long-term solutions.

The paper is also informed by the Six Principle for a Place-Based approach developed by London local government in 2022. It draws on the following sources:

1. A GLA Migration Team review of the Streamlined Asylum Process with support from the GLA Rough Sleeping Team.
2. The submission of the London Strategic Migration Partnership (LSMP) to the Home Office's 2024 lessons learned review on hotel closures.
3. A lessons learned review by London Councils of Humanitarian Crises in recent years (in draft).
4. A document setting out London Councils' priorities for the new government.
5. The Asylum Welcome Toolkit, which was funded by the Mayor of London.

This paper has been presented to the London Asylum Oversight Group for feedback on 31.10.2024, and was shared with the London Strategic Migration Partnership Board on 17.12.2024 for partners to consider the recommendations.

1. Learning Lessons from the 'Streamlined Asylum Process'

In early 2023 a commitment by the previous Government to clear the backlog of asylum cases introduced the 'Streamlined Asylum Process' (SAP), which prioritised quick decisions on claims from countries which typically have a high grant rate. The SAP made a notable change to asylum processing that enabled decisions to be made on asylum claims without a substantive asylum interview.

While we understand that the Home Office is not considering a repeat of this exercise, the outcomes are nonetheless relevant to consider given any increase in the speed of decision making. The 'by whatever means' approach could have a similar impact on people seeking asylum and wider public services. We are also aware that the Home Office may look at options to prioritise nationals according to high grant-rate countries, and thus the lessons here will be relevant should this approach be adopted.

As a result of the SAP, along with an increase in asylum caseworkers, the Home Office processed over 41,800 asylum applications in the year ending in September 2023. This is 2.5 times more than in the previous year. In the same period, there were 17,316 withdrawn asylum applications, more than four times the number in the previous year, when there were 4,260.

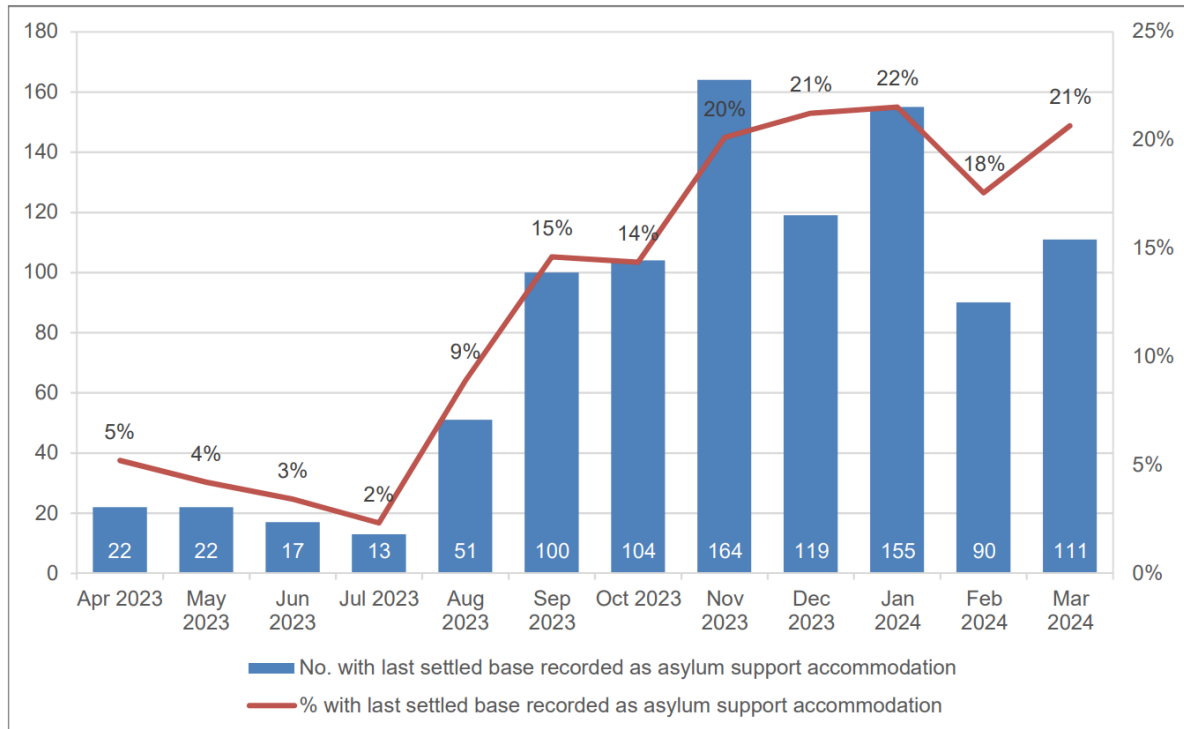
While withdrawn claims may occur for several varied reasons, the disproportionate increase in withdrawn claims compared to applications processed would suggest that the SAP process itself could have led to an increase in withdrawn claims. Indeed, during this time Home Office expanded the reasons for a claim to be considered implicitly withdrawn to include not keeping contact details up to date and in cases where someone misses a reporting appointment. There is considerable evidence in London that the process led to an increase in rough sleeping and homelessness amongst newly recognised refugees.

1.1 Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Risks

The chart below provides a monthly breakdown of people who started a new rough sleeping episode during 2023/24, either as a new or returning rough sleeper, whose last settled base was recorded as asylum support accommodation. The month designation is based on the month in which their rough sleeping episode started, rather than the month they left the accommodation.

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Chart 8: New and returning rough sleepers during 2023/24 whose last settled base was recorded as asylum support accommodation, by month



Baseline for percentages is the total number of new and returning rough sleepers during the month who had information recorded about their last settled base (including that the last settled base was not known).

SAP was rolled out in February 2023. As questionnaires began being sent to Londoners seeking asylum and decisions issued, London witnessed an increase in new rough sleeping presentations, as newly recognised refugees left asylum accommodation. According to data recorded on CHAIN, increases in rough sleeping presentations of up to 22% were recorded. It is likely that the increase in the number of people seen rough sleeping after leaving asylum support accommodation is related to Home Office policy and operational changes made in 2023.

Additionally, during 2023 the Home Office temporarily amended their approach to the 28-day 'Move-On' period for all newly recognised refugees to vacate asylum accommodation. Operationally, the 28-day 'Move-On' period had previously been linked to when a Biometric Residence Permit (BRP) is issued and commenced with the notice of asylum support being discontinued. However, in August 2023, the Home Office revised this process so that the 28-day period started from the date that the individual was served their asylum decision. This meant that in practice, that the minimum 'Notice to Quit' period for newly recognised refugees following receipt of their BRP was reduced from 28 days to just seven days. The Home Office has stated that the normal process was reintroduced in September 2023. The first of these changes increased the number of evictions from asylum accommodation, while the second significantly reduced the window of opportunity to prevent homelessness among those who received a decision.

Of those new rough sleepers during 2023/24 with information recorded about their last settled base prior to sleeping rough in London, 951 (17% of the total) reported that they had been staying in asylum support accommodation. This is a significant increase on the proportion of 4% of new rough sleepers coming from asylum support accommodation in the second half of 2022/23. The growth in this group has had a significant impact on the overall total of people seen rough sleeping during the period, as well as on trends in demographics and other characteristics of the overall rough sleeping population. Further data with a break-down of nationalities, notably rough sleepers from SAP

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countries (Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen) are included in [Appendix A](#). The numbers of Eritrean and Sudanese people experiencing rough sleeping in London, after leaving asylum accommodation were particularly high.

There is further evidence of a wider impact on homelessness, which goes beyond just those categorised as rough sleepers by the CHAIN database. London Councils regularly survey London boroughs for those supporting anyone coming from asylum accommodation services (“National Asylum Support Service (NASS)”) and found that 1087 refugees were made homeless in London after eviction from Home Office accommodation in January 2024. Furthermore, 311 of these people were left to sleep rough. This marks an increase of 234% compared to September 2023, when London Councils began undertaking this survey, which found 93 refugees sleeping on London’s streets.

The London Councils data captures those who experience hidden homelessness and who may not be captured on CHAIN data, which requires rough sleepers to be “bedded down.” The data also shows that when London’s Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) was activated, in response to plummeting temperatures in January 2024, 242 (20%) of the 1,284 rough sleepers placed in emergency accommodation were refugees previously housed by the Home Office. SWEP is triggered when weather conditions pose a threat to life. The survey suggests the vast majority (over 90%) of those rough sleeping after leaving Home Office accommodation had received a positive asylum decision.

	Number of NASS-leavers who slept rough in London	Number of NASS-leavers presenting to homelessness services in London (Not necessarily rough sleeping)
September 2023	93	609
October 2023	112	846
November 2023	215	1,036
December 2023	<i>We do not hold December data due to initiatives like Crisis at Christmas which skews the figures for this month.</i>	
January 2024	311	1,087 ¹

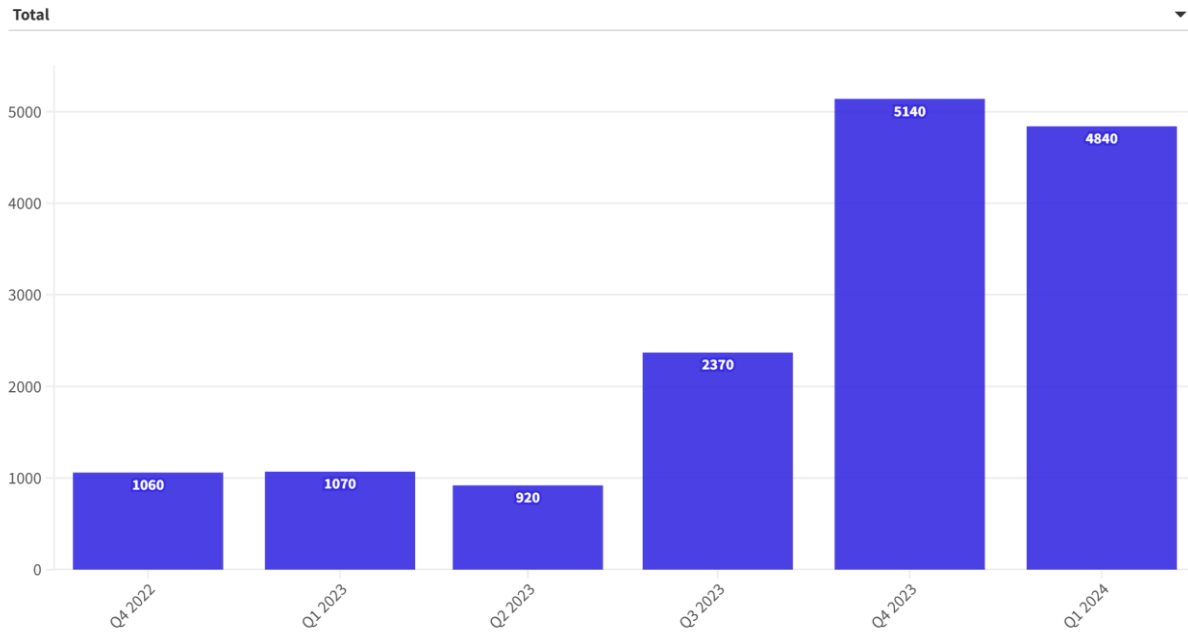
During the same period, data published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on statutory homeless saw a rapid up-tick in households owed homelessness relief duties after leaving Home Office accommodation across England.

¹ [Hundreds of refugees sleeping rough in London amid dramatic spike in homelessness, March 2024 | London Councils](#)

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Households owed homelessness relief duties after leaving Home Office accommodation

Statutory homelessness data, per region and Local Authority in England



Source: [Statutory homelessness \(DLUHC\)](#)

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Recommendations

- Continue to coordinate with the London Strategic Migration Partnership, London Councils, local authorities, and voluntary and community sector on asylum decisions to ensure that local services can prepare for an increase in evictions for asylum accommodation.
- Recognise asylum accommodation as supported/ hostel accommodation given the use of shared facilities in asylum accommodation and people's average length of stay is usually greater than three months. This would mean refugees could access the Private Rented Sector (PRS) accommodation at the higher self-contained Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate rather than being capped at the shared room rate. The shared room rate is unaffordable in the current PRS market in London; very few rooms are available and affordable at this lower rate.
- Invest in wraparound 'Move-On' support (see further detail in section 2).
- Recognise that mitigation will only go so far and invest in rough sleeping and homelessness services to be able to provide tailored multi-agency support to all those at risk of destitution.

It should be noted that:

- One of the recommendations of this review was for the Home Office to share disaggregated data in advance of decisions, showing which stage people are at in the asylum process (i.e., interview, decision, or discontinuation) to ensure that local services can prepare for an increase in evictions. We are pleased that the Home Office has now implemented this approach through their Place-Based Visibility Tool (PBVT) 3.

² [Households owed homelessness prevention and relief duties after leaving Home Office accommodation | Flourish](#)

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- Another recommendation of this review was for the Home Office to increase the 'Move-On' period from 28 days to 56 days in line with statutory homelessness duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act. We are pleased that the Home Office is trialling this approach for the next six months.

1.2 Access to Immigration Advice

Data published in October 2023 based on analysis from Freedom of Information data on Immigration Legal Aid highlighted that at least 51% of asylum applicants in England and Wales, 37,450 people, are now unable to find a legal aid lawyer. That is the deficit between the number of new legal aid cases opened ('matters') and the number of new applications for asylum for the contract year 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023. This compares with deficits of at least 25,000 people or around 43% in 2021-22 and 6,000 people in 2020-21.³

The SAP led to an urgent demand on services to support people to complete the survey response. The Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) provided a position that while only regulated legal advisers working at Level 2 and above could provide asylum advice to claimants completing the Asylum Claim Questionnaire, colleagues working with claimants could offer assistance, even if they are not regulated legal advisors. This support covered barriers related to language issues and the technicalities of completing and submitting the forms. Requests for time extensions to complete the forms could also be made by an unregulated person, supporting the claimant.⁴

However, many organisations representing people seeking asylum highlighted the risks that a person seeking asylum would face significant challenges completing the questionnaire without legal representation and noted that it was essential that people who need it are able to access legal representation before being required to return the questionnaire back to the Home Office. The sector raised the very high risk that anyone attempting to assist someone to complete the questionnaire would stray into giving regulated advice (which is a criminal offence), noting that immigration advice is defined in statute in very broad terms and a discussion with an individual seeking asylum about what information is relevant to a question will almost always involve immigration advice.⁵

There is extensive research that cites the gulf between supply and demand for immigration advice in London.⁶ Addressing this would require a change in both the scope and fee structure of legal aid. However, it is also clear that legal aid capacity cannot be increased rapidly enough to address this in the short-term with many organisations being unable to recruit and retain qualified immigration advisers. In many cases the lack of access to legal aid has increased spending in other parts of government and public services; while locally commissioned advice services are an important part of advice provision this cannot and should not plug gaps left by the inadequate cover provided by the legal aid system. There is an opportunity to work with local authorities as funders of immigration advice to support pipeline funding, increase the quality of advice provision, address unique local needs, and support the long-term sustainability of the advice sector.

³ [New Freedom of Information data indicates half of asylum applicants are unable to access legal aid representation - Refugee Law Initiative Blog \(sas.ac.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Streamlined asylum processing: OISC position. - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

⁵ [Open Letter RE: Remedying the 'Asylum Questionnaire' \(ilpa.org.uk\)](#)

⁶ [A Huge Gulf: Demand and Supply for... | Paul Hamlyn Foundation \(phf.org.uk\)](#)

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While many asylum claim decisions under the SAP were positive, a considerable number of asylum claims have also been withdrawn since the SAP was introduced. Asylum claims can be withdrawn for several reasons, including if the individual fails to maintain contact with the Home Office or fails to complete an Asylum Claim Questionnaire. If the individual is in asylum accommodation, this would end, leaving them at risk of homelessness and destitution and with an unregularized status. The individual would need to get their withdrawn asylum claim to be reinstated and are likely to require legal representation to request this.

In July 2023, the Home Secretary made changes to immigration rules which widened the circumstances that can lead to an asylum withdrawal, including failure to complete an asylum questionnaire. In [an inspection](#) led by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI), the Chief Inspector wrote:

"[...], I am concerned that the focus on clearing the legacy backlog 'at all costs' has led to perverse outcomes for claimants and staff. The number of claims that have been withdrawn and counted as 'outcomes' has soared – 22% of all decisions made since June 2022 were withdrawals, and, incredibly, only one underwent formal quality assurance. This is not acceptable. Routine quality assurance on interviews and decisions has also been sacrificed for increased productivity. This has the potential to add to the appeals queue because of poor-quality refusals, and to further prolong the length of time a claimant's life is put on hold."

Furthermore, as the Home Office continues to clear the backlog of asylum claims, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in negative decisions issued, as more decisions are made on asylum claims for people from countries with lower grant-rates. Homelessness interventions for people with a negative asylum decision or a withdrawn asylum claim will be different to the approach taken to support newly recognised refugees over the last year, as these individuals require immigration advice to appeal the decision or reinstate their claim. In addition to placing pressure on lawyers, this also puts pressure on the courts where decisions are necessary by the Tribunal.

Islington – Immigration Advice Pilot

The council have started a new LB Islington-funded pilot advice project (FTE 0.8) that provides advice to unrepresented asylum seekers in hotels. This project aims to mitigate the acute lack of legal aid solicitors by assisting clients in navigating the asylum system, preparing for interviews, submitting evidence, and advising on asylum claim withdrawals, refusals and removals/relocation (barge/barrack removals).

The project originated from Islington commissioning an advice service to best support people during the streamlined asylum process given issues around completing the questionnaires and the pace/scale of decisions. It has since evolved into a broader support offer for people facing refusal or withdrawals on their asylum claims.

Recommendations:

- Work to ensure that sufficient immigration advice is in place to support asylum processing.
- Explore the option to increase Home Office secondary asylum casework capacity to review withdrawals and asylum appeals to reduce pressure on the Courts and Tribunal.
- Consult on and address long-term challenges facing the legal aid sector with the aim to increase capacity and sustainability of advice provision to meet demand.

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- Work with the London Strategic Migration Partnership to coordinate and invest in a long-term sustainability strategy to develop a healthy pipeline of immigration advice provision and a diverse supply chain, including training and retention.
- Reduce the pressure on legal aid capacity by reviewing the speed and complexity of asylum pathways and the efficacy of decisions being taken.
- Consider the implications of the adequacy of legal aid provision for the speed of decision-making across different localities.

1.3 Access to Information and Advice

Partners in London identified a series of concerns with questionnaires under the SAP, beyond those already outlined above, regarding many requiring qualified immigration advice. Firstly, there was concern that people impacted by SAP, including the most vulnerable, were at risk of failing to return the form in time within 20 working days, leading to a withdrawal of their claim, or that they may fill out the form in a way that undermines their claim to asylum. SAP questionnaires were only available in English and had to be completed in English. If available, a legal representative could complete the questionnaire on behalf of the claimant. The Home Office advice stated that claimants could ask for help from a friend who understands English and who may also explain the asylum process but noted that they must not provide immigration advice.

While the Government has already outlined that it is unlikely to replicate the SAP process, this feedback did highlight the importance of wider support services offered to people seeking asylum in supporting signposting, referrals to advice services, interpretation and translation, and access to a range of other services that supports the health, independence and integration of people seeking asylum.

Recommendations

- Any form of information requirements or questionnaires to Londoners seeking asylum should be made available in relevant community languages, along with accessible options for Londoners with disabilities, literacy needs, or health and mental health needs.
- Invest in models of support that ensure people seeking asylum have access to the right information, signposting, and coordination of local services.

2. Supporting Move-On and Integration

A positive asylum decision is an enormous change for an individual or family, and what should be a moment of celebration can easily become a crisis. Newly recognised refugees often have no savings, no bank account and limited digital access, partially because of not being allowed to work, while awaiting a decision on a claim. There is also a delay in receiving an initial Universal Credit payment, although Advance Payments can be applied for, however not always guaranteed.

In addition to the lessons learned directly from the Streamlined Asylum Process, there is more that must be done on to assist people seeking asylum to adjust from one reality of living, and set of support, to another. Some key points are outlined below.

2.1 Wrap-Around Support

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There is significant learning which can be extracted from the approach the Home Office has taken in introducing Home Office Liaison Officers (HOLO) to support newly recognised refugees in pilot areas. The Home Office's own evaluation, as well as feedback shared by Brent and Hillingdon, where pilots have taken place, suggest that there were successes in providing wrap-around support to people and improvements in them accessing services in their boroughs.

A key element in this success is the 'Place-Based' nature of these pilots, whereby the HOLOs were providing support in person, and as such were able to assist people and resolve issues locally, with escalation routes into local authorities established if required. This shift in culture and investment in this resource has led to positive outcomes for people in those respective boroughs, where previously systems were felt to be disjointed. For example, HOLOs have been evidenced to provide a useful conduit for swift and efficient communication between people seeking asylum, charity workers, officers from the council, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and accommodation providers.

We welcome that the Home Office is currently implementing the roll-out of a national programme of AMLOs (Asylum Move on Liaison Officers) off the back of the successes of pilots. We ask the Home Office to do such work in continued partnership, drawing from learnings from this Place-Based approach.

Similarly, improved data flows have been suggested to be an important outcome of the pilot schemes. For example, HOLOs were able to share early notice of people with positive decisions such that support could be established early on throughout the 'Move-On' process. This was helpful in accessing support such as Universal Credit, where the DWP were able to provide a faster resolution to cases.

A few local authorities also offer a 'Move-On' support service, in addition to meeting statutory duties, that can provide information, advice and referrals to a range of relevant services for residents receiving a decision on their application. This points to the need for investment in local authorities' in-house models of providing 'Move-On' support. In some areas, it has been argued that the HOLO model is not needed, as local authorities' already have established ways of working to provide support pre- and post-decision; however, resourcing and funding is needed to ensure their sustainability in the long-term.

For example, Lambeth set up a 'Move On' support, appointments booking system, with a simple online questionnaire filled in with help from hotel management or other support. There after, a case worker contacts the person back, within 5 days, to develop a support pathway as they make the transition. Lambeth Sanctuary Services also hold weekly engagement sessions with hotel guests.

Welcome Newham - Move On service

Newham's Move On support is delivered through a ['one stop shop'](#). This originally supported Ukrainian refugees, but branched out after the team noted that many of the services provided (housing, employability) were very similar for people seeking asylum. The service offers support with:

- Help with GP registration
- Universal Credit queries
- Housing costs and child benefit queries
- School admissions support
- Homelessness support
- BRP guidance
- ESOL registration
- Job seeking assistance
- Affordability assessments for private rented sector (PRS) accommodation
- Tenancy sustainment support.

Results and lessons include:

- The importance of trusted spaces to host 'one stop shops' eg. Local libraries
- Setting expectations from the outset
- Support cross-departmentally to meet needs

Successful Collaboration: Bridges Outcomes Partnerships & Brent HOLO/ AMLO Service

The Bridges Outcomes Partnership and their delivery partners operate across Brent, Hackney and West London to deliver services designed to reduce rough sleeping for single newly recognised refugees. The intervention has four key components:

1. Face-to-face engagement with individuals to complete a housing and integration plan.
2. Support accessing accommodation
3. Integration support.
4. Sustainment of accommodation

The service is securing accommodation at above set targets, despite fewer-than-expected referrals.

The service is adapted to local operating context. Bridges Outcomes Partnership has identified a range of actions that need to occur for a person prior to, at the point of, and after a positive decision. The service delivery owner for each intervention may be different depending on the local context and the role of other partners locally.

In Brent, where the delivery partner is Crisis and where the funder is the London Borough of Brent, the HOLO pilot was a set up a few months after start of the service. There was considerable added value gained from collaboration between the two programmes.

Recommendations

- Continue to work with Hillingdon, Brent and Hounslow and other pilot areas to implement lessons and success from the HOLO Pilot programmes as the AMLO (Asylum Move On Liaison Officer) model is rolled out across all local authorities. (This engagement is currently 'live.')
- Learn from local authority move-on support programmes. London Councils have been making the case that funding for local authorities to provide wrap-around services should be considered alongside the programme.
- Learn from the collaboration demonstrated in Brent in particular. Careful consideration should be made of what the most effective allocation of resource should be in the future across local authority and Home Office delivery in an ideal model.
- Consider providing wider housing support as part of a rolled out national programme, acknowledging that accommodation is key in ensuring the first step to integration. This should include an expansion of rough sleeping prevention programmes.
- Home Office should restart discussions with London Councils and GLA on improved data sharing with local authorities to support positive outcomes locally.

2.2 Integration

To support a long-term vision for this work, it is also necessary to consider wider strategies around welcome and social integration.

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There are a variety of different definitions for 'social integration' and specific definitions for the integration of people seeking asylum. However, definitions tend to frame the concept as a two-way process, involving newcomers being able to function well, and becoming active and thriving members of their community; and hosts and institutions helping to welcome and support arrivals to settle and lay down roots in their new home. It should be noted that integration is distinct from the concept of forced 'assimilation' into a majority culture. Instead, integration requires responsive and equitable policy and services, and a shared sense of community and a respect for differences between people from diverse backgrounds.

The GLA has defined social integration as "the extent to which people positively interact and connect with others who are different to themselves. It is determined by the level of equality between people, the nature of their relationships, and their degree of participation in the communities in which they live."⁷

The mayor's work on social integration has four parts:

- Relationships – promoting shared experiences
- Participation – supporting Londoners to be active citizens
- Equality – tackling barriers and inequalities
- Evidence – improving London's evidence base to measure, evaluate, and share findings on the state of social integration.'

Barnet: Understanding that people seeking asylum are 'long term residents'

Barnet has noted the advantages of framing their asylum strategy around a commitment to see people seeking asylum as 'long term residents' in the borough.

Results and lessons:

- This has helped the borough to design its services within a perspective of providing welcoming support over multiple years (rather than months), reflecting the experiences of many asylum-seeking residents impacted by the current backlog in application processing.
- The framing has also encouraged the borough to develop its strategy with a view to supporting residents to spend their lives in London once they receive refugee status, encouraging a focus on initiatives that help residents become active members of their local area, forming social connections in their community.

In the Asylum Welcome Design Labs funded by the Mayor, partners stressed that integration must begin on 'day one' for people seeking asylum – and that this will help with the move-on process. If someone can speak English, for example, they are far more likely to be able to navigate the processes required in the move-on process.

⁷ <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/social-integration#:~:text=All%20of%20us%3A%20The%20Mayor's%20strategy%20for%20social%20integration&text=It%20is%20the%20extent%20to,the%20nature%20of%20our%20relationships>

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Several practical toolkits and information briefings are available to support the process of evaluating initiatives, measuring social integration, and tracking success towards objectives and key performance indicators:

- The [GLA Social Integration Measurement Toolkit](#)
- The Government's briefing pack on [Measuring Outcomes for Integrated Communities](#), which also includes a list of integration indicators and examples on how to collect data to track changes in this over time. Similarly, the [Home Office also provides a list of indicators of integration](#).
- The GLA's [Asylum Welcome Toolkit](#) provides examples and a guidance to support local work to develop welcome and integration strategies.

Lambeth - Borough of Sanctuary accreditation

Lambeth was awarded Borough of Sanctuary Status in 2022 and attributes the scheme as helping the borough to improve co-ordination and outcomes in its asylum and resettlement strategy.

Results and lessons:

- The process of participating in the scheme has enabled the borough to develop a [Borough of Sanctuary Strategy](#) from 2022-25.
- Their accreditation has also helped the borough secure consensus for a dedicated Sanctuary Services team.
- The scheme has supported the borough to establish a 'Sanctuary Board', comprising refugees, people seeking asylum and people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). The team consults the board to gather lived experiences on the needs of 'sanctuary seekers', using this data to design and implementing new initiatives that support and welcome new arrivals to successfully settle and become active in their local community.

Recommendations:

- Work with local authorities to establish an end-to-end asylum system that considers wider impact on public services, and integration outcomes for newly recognised refugees as key success factors.
- As savings are realised within the asylum estate, reinvest some of this funding back into communities to enable local authorities and voluntary sector organisations to implement and scale local integration strategies.
- Review asylum policies through the lens of integration and consider recommendations that improve asylum seekers' ability to learn English, participate in their communities and access decent work and quality housing.

2.3 Improved Data Sharing

Improved data sharing with local authorities would significantly help with the processes of integration and move-on.

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The position of local authorities in London is that people seeking asylum and newly recognised refugees share a set of vulnerabilities, risks and barriers to services that mean a greater level of information sharing is required to ensure that local authorities can fulfil statutory duties (as well as deliver non-statutory, preventative services) than is required for the general public, and thus this data sharing is justifiable under GDPR. These additional vulnerabilities faced by people seeking asylum are a factor that increases the need for local authorities to intervene to support and safeguard these individuals, as part of the fulfilment of their statutory duties.

The vulnerability of people seeking asylum is explicitly recognised in government guidance, such as the Office for Health Disparities [Migrant Health guide and in the work of the Home Office Mental Health Team](#). This guide sets out that the below groups are considered vulnerable based on their potential health needs which are informed by experiences either before, during or after migration.

- Asylum seekers and refugees
- Unaccompanied children
- People who have been trafficked
- Undocumented migrants (those who are living in the UK with no legal status)

The Home Office has recognised the need for personal-level data sharing for asylum seekers in contingency hotels on safeguarding grounds. However, this personal-level data sharing is not being routinely shared with local authorities for people in dispersed accommodation.

There is a high rate of homelessness presentations and homelessness prevention duties owed among newly recognised refugees leaving Home Office accommodation, and this group lack resources that may prevent or delay homelessness for other groups (e.g. local connections, ability to access Universal Credit ahead of eviction). Proactive action is required to address this.

Recommendation

- Home Office should establish a Data Protection Impact Assessment and Data Sharing Agreement with statutory and civil society partners supporting people seeking asylum directly. This will ensure that appropriate information on individuals is shared with partners working to support individuals.

3. Closing Hotels

Should the backlog be cleared, this will inevitably lead to the closing of asylum contingency hotels.

The way in which hotels are closed can have a significant impact on any remaining accommodated asylum seekers who need to be moved to a new location, the services that are set up to support them including education providers, and the wider community. Coordinating with local authorities and local service providers around the closure of hotels is paramount.

Extensive detail has been provided by London boroughs to the Home Office for its lessons learned review on hotel closures, in addition to extensive commentary from London boroughs on Clearsprings' hotel closures Standard Operating Procedure. We have not yet had a response to this feedback. The below are some high-level recommendations from that work.

Recommendations

- Ensure early engagement with local authorities and secure data sharing with local authorities about vulnerable residents being moved to ensure that they are appropriately supported and there is continuity of care.
- Ensure adequate notice for residents and local authorities to ensure that support can be put in place, expectations managed, and people have time to prepare if they are moving accommodation. This should include capacity to undertake vulnerability assessments so that the needs of all vulnerable residents can be met.
- Prioritise engagement and direct communication to residents – ensuring consistency, transparency and clear expectation setting as early as possible.
- Engage with the Strategic Migration Partnerships to establish an overall strategy around hotel closure to minimise the impact on residents, reduce the pressure on local authorities and work within London's 'fair share' principles.

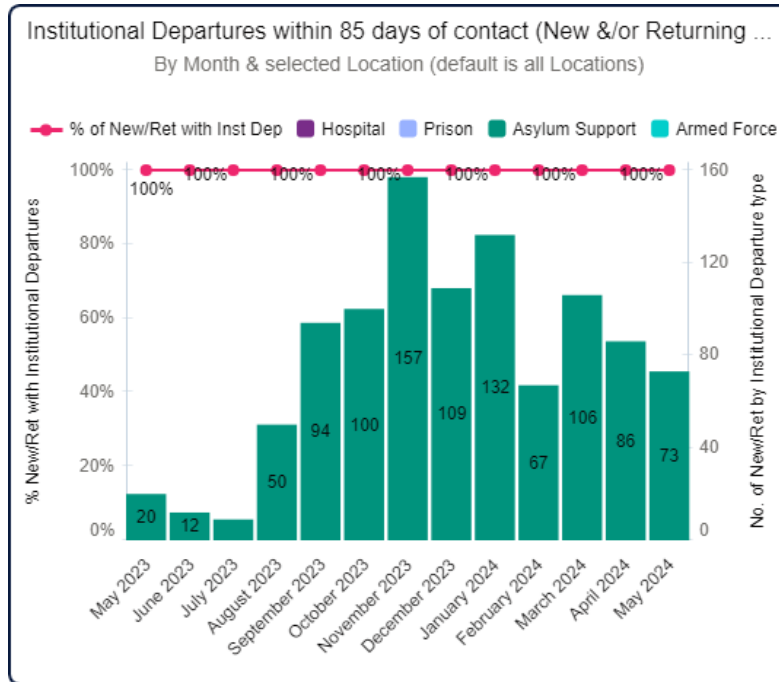
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Appendix A

CHAIN institutional departures data – asylum support accommodation by nationality

These figures relate to people starting a new rough sleeping episode (new or returning rough sleepers) following departure from asylum support accommodation.

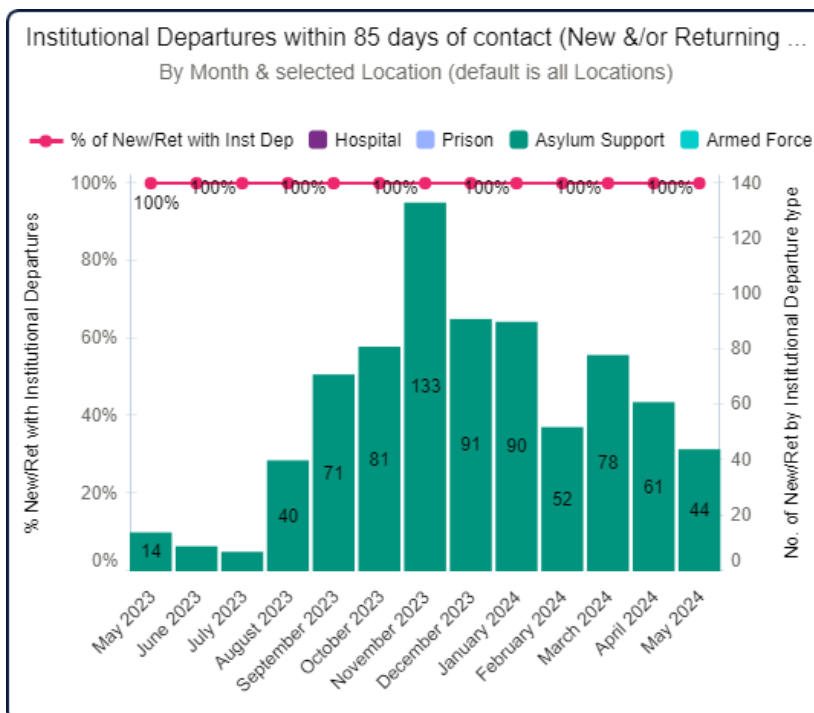
All nationalities:



SAP countries (Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria, Sudan, and Yemen):

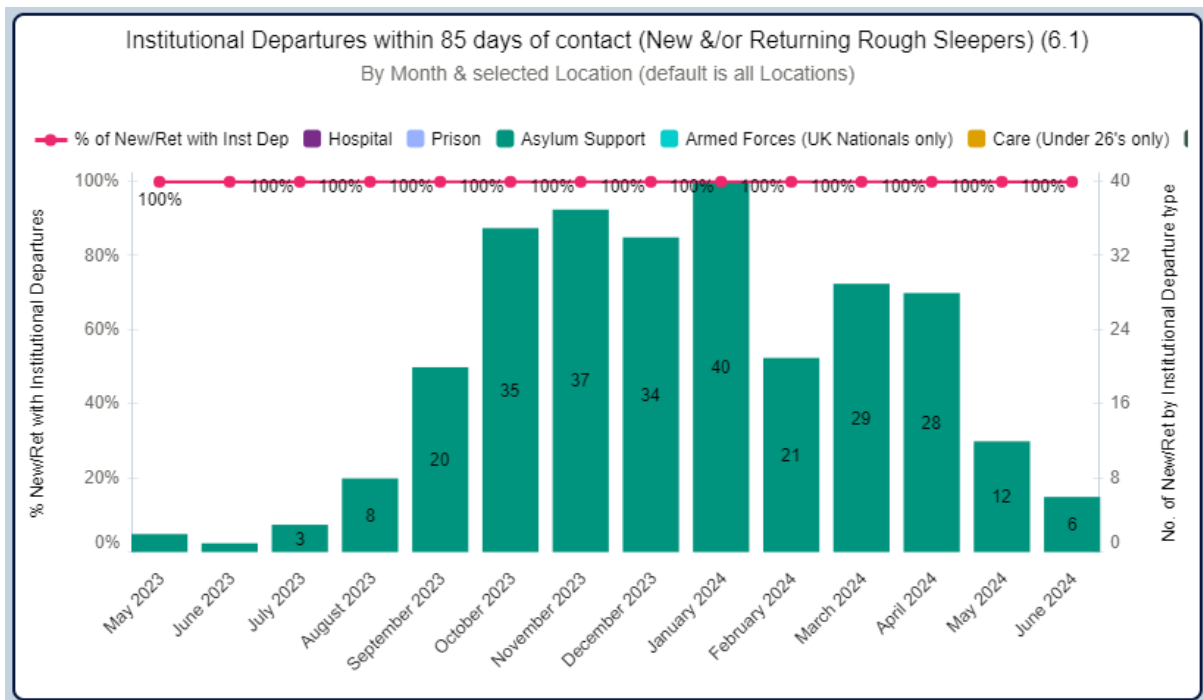
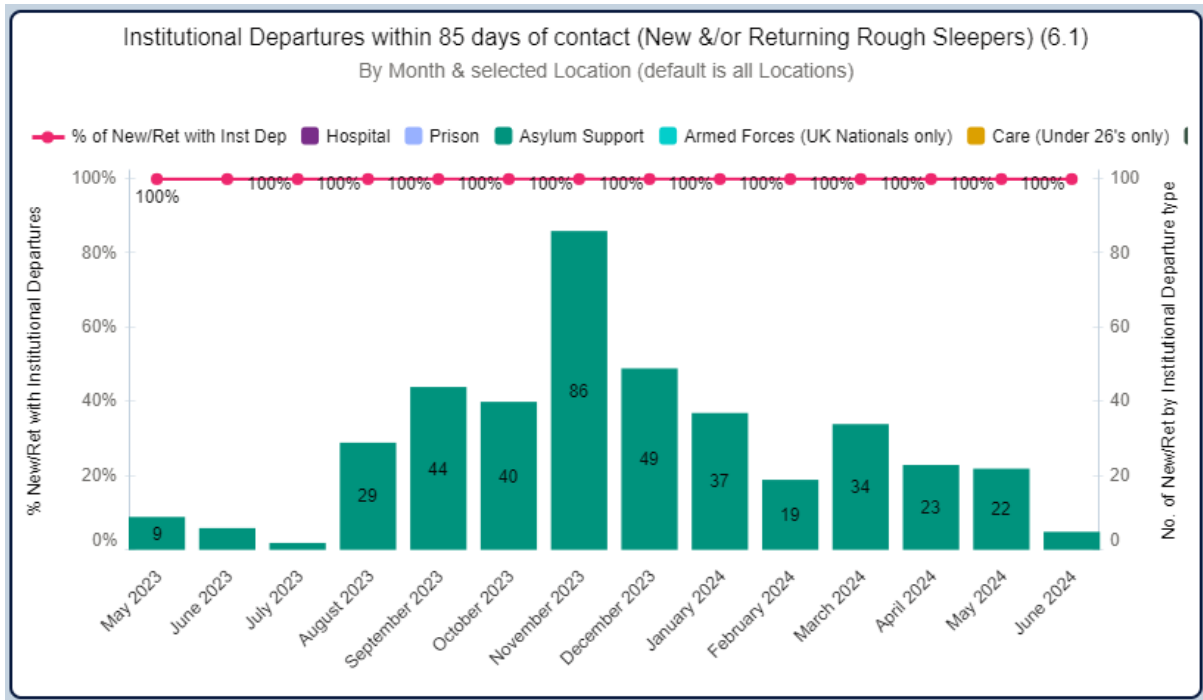
The numbers of Eritrean and Sudanese people (both included in the SAP nationalities) who experienced rough sleeping in London after leaving asylum accommodation were particularly high:

Eritrea:



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Sudan:



London refugee services

Better outcomes for people and better value for government

November 2024

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Asylum seekers journey and support requirements



Overview of Actions Across the Three Stages

- On the following page, we outline the key actions required at each stage: prior to, at the point of, and after a positive decision. These actions reflect insights gained from our extensive experience delivering refugee services in London, the north-east of England, and Plymouth.
- The allocation of action ownership has been left intentionally blank, as this will depend on the specific service structure, including the roles of HOLO, responsibilities assigned to local authorities, and tasks carried out by partner charities.
- Our experience demonstrates that integrating housing, employment, and other support services under a single provider significantly reduces the risk of service gaps and ensures timely delivery of support. For example:
 - **Before securing housing:** Access to ESOL classes and training can be facilitated to build foundational skills.
 - **After securing housing:** Employment support becomes effective and integration activities can commence, as relocation often occurs outside the borough or even outside London. More than 50% of moves fall into this category.
- Collaboration is essential for achieving successful outcomes. During the Brent pilot, we prioritised the needs of refugees by fostering a strong partnership among all stakeholders, including Bridges Outcomes Partnerships, Crisis, the Home Office, and Brent Council. By maintaining a solution-focused approach and positive behaviours, we were able to deliver meaningful and lasting results.

Asylum seekers journey and support requirements



Prior to Positive Decision		
Owner	Actions Required	Method of Delivery
	ESOL Classes enrolment	Group setting or one to one
	What to expect - next steps after a positive decision	Group setting in Hotels
	Upstream messaging around accommodation and entitlement	Group setting in Hotels
	Upstream conversation around education and employment options	Group setting or one to one
	Cultural & risk awareness sessions (held with community reps & police)	Group setting
	Signpost to any other services required	One to one
	Provide planned positive decision-making profile to LA/charity partners	N/A

At Point of Positive Decision		
Owner	Actions Required	Method of Delivery
	Notify LA/Charity partners of positive decisions to allow full 28 days-notice	N/A
	Set up of Universal credit & training on portal	One to one
	Open a bank account	One to one
	Complete Bio card online application	One to one

Post Positive Decision		
Owner	Actions Required	Method of Delivery
	Complete an integration and housing plan	One to one
	Register with GP	One to one
	Register with Dentist	One to one
	Open a bank account	One to one
	Complete Bio card online application	One to one
	Respond to escalation of queries	One to one
	Introduction to local services	One to one
	Search and secure new home	One to one
	Complete integration activities related to health, employment, community	One to one
	Coaching and empowerment workshops on private rented sector	Group setting or one to one
	Complete housing sustainment journey (sign off 8 months after moving into home)	One to one
	Sign posting to any further services required.	One to one



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Learnings



Key Learnings from Refugee Service Delivery

We have identified three critical learnings from our experience in delivering refugee services, each supported by data demonstrating the positive impact of implementing these changes.

1. Upstream Engagement: Addressing Misconceptions Before a Positive Decision

Undoing misinformation that individuals have already accepted is significantly more challenging than providing accurate information from the outset. For example, misconceptions about "council housing" created challenges during the early rollout of London-based services. Many refugees believed they were entitled to a low-rent, one-bedroom home from the council in a location of their choosing. This misunderstanding led to widespread refusal of housing offers and an increase in rough sleeping.

To address this, we developed a presentation clarifying refugees' rights and the council's obligations. This presentation was delivered in group settings within hotels. As a result, housing refusals dropped substantially over the following six months, illustrating the importance of proactive and clear communication.

2. Managing Expectations After a Positive Decision

Managing expectations is crucial, particularly regarding housing locations. Many hotels used for temporary accommodations are situated in premium areas, such as Zone 1 or central Wembley, leading to unrealistic expectations among refugees.

By addressing these expectations early, through transparent and honest discussions during initial meetings, we successfully facilitated moves to more affordable locations in Zones 4–6 and areas outside London. This upstream intervention significantly improved outcomes by aligning refugees' expectations with available housing options.

3. Long-Term Success: Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness

Our Single Homelessness Prevention Service (SHPS) serves as a model for empowering individuals to avoid future reliance on council support. We applied the same coaching-based approach to refugee services.

This involves teaching practical skills, such as how to search for a home, navigate property listings, attend viewings, and understand tenancy agreements. Additionally, we provide eight months of sustainment support to help individuals address challenges as they arise, equipping them with the knowledge and confidence to manage their tenancies independently. Importantly, our role is not to solve problems for them but to empower them with the tools to do so themselves.



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Contract Summary



- The three contracts across London started at various points within the last year with a minimum 6 months of referrals.
- Brent and Hackney referrals periods have both been extended until March 2025 with the aim of supporting an additional 143 refugees to secure accommodation.
- The West London programme referrals are currently ending at the end of December 2024; however, we are in talks to also extend referrals here until March 2025.
- Further extensions of these contracts will be dependent on future funding structures.

Contract	Contract start date	Referral period end date	Contract end date
Brent	August -23	March - 25	February - 26
Hackney	October – 23	March - 25	February - 26
West London	March- 24	December - 24	July - 25



Impact up to Oct 24 – Contract breakdown



Across the contracts, we are securing accommodation above the set target, despite lower than targeted referrals. We fully expect to exceed the referral target over the coming months, as the lower numbers of referrals were a direct result of a halt in decision making during the election period.

Combined referrals, outcomes and performance

	Actuals	KPI Target		Target Conversion	Combined Success Rate
Referrals	658	824	Housing and Integration Plan (% of referrals)	85%	96%
Housing and Integration Plan (H&I) Complete	634	654	Housing outcomes (% of H&I Plans)	65%	71%
Housing Secured	376	364	Sustainment outcomes (% of Housing outcomes)	85%	93%
Housing Sustained	96	100	H&I Plan Goals Achieved (% of plans H&I Plans)	75%	51%
Resettlement Activities	196	254			

Contract Breakdown

	Brent		Hackney		West London	
	Actuals	KPI Target	Actuals	KPI Target	Actuals	KPI Target
Referrals	266	285	230	320	162	219
Housing and Integration Plan Complete	262	213	229	255	143	186
Housing Secured	177	143	151	139	48	82
Housing Sustained	59	60	37	41	0	0
Resettlement Activities	96	115	100	109	0	30

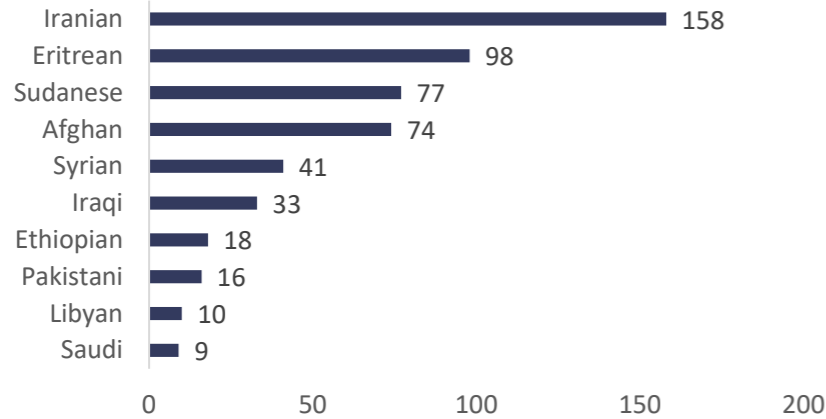
- West London outcomes are impacted by their low referral numbers.
- Across all the contracts the completion of integration activities was slower to start than expected however we continue to see progress in these being achieved.



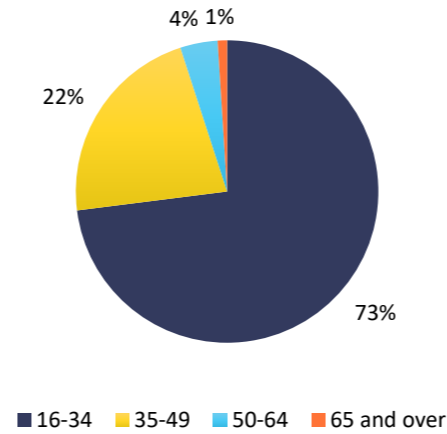
Demographics of programme starts



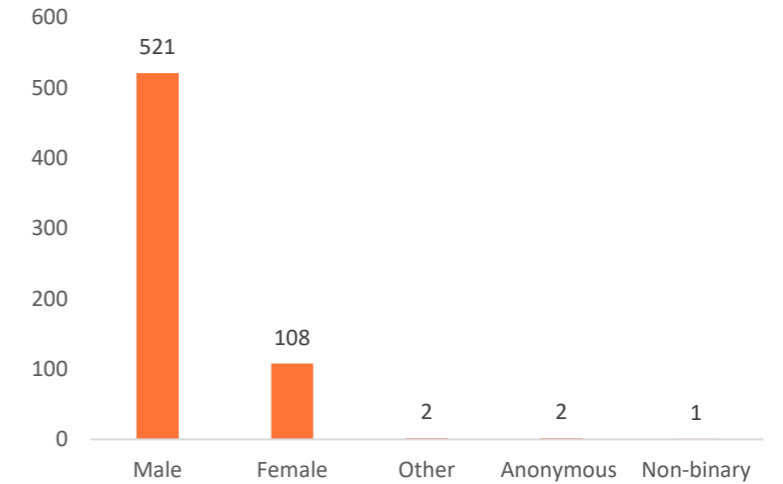
Nationality – top 10



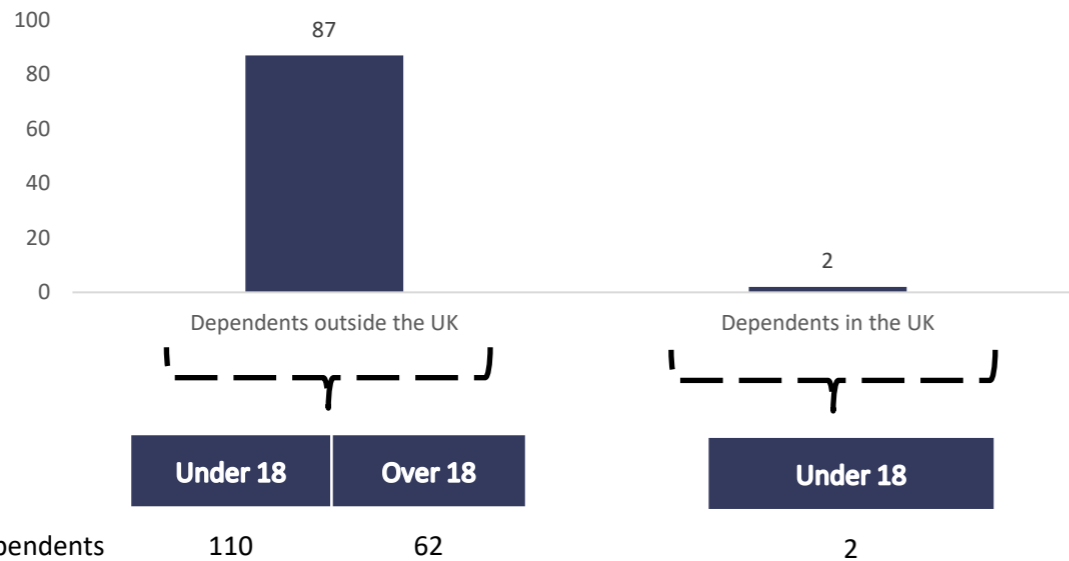
Age Profile



Gender Profile



Participants with dependents



Support needs



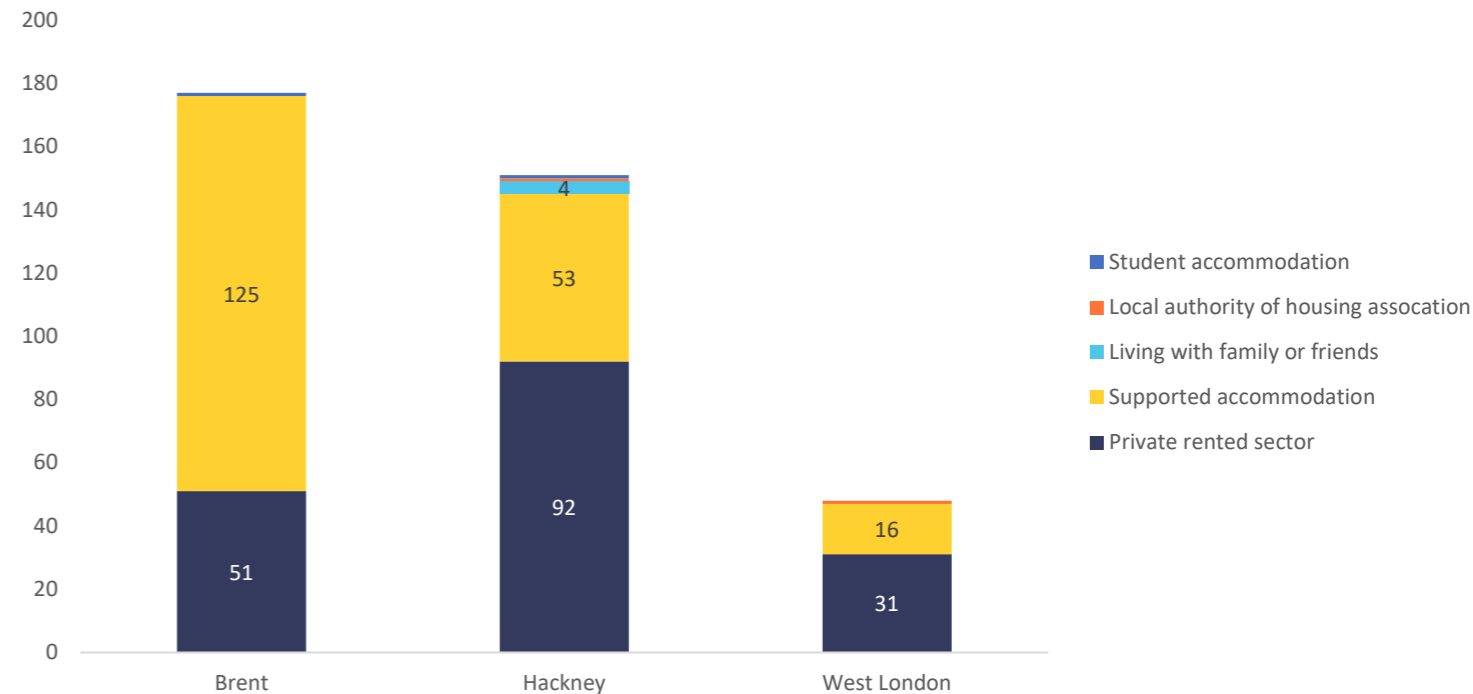
Number of dependents

Accommodation secured and Geography of Moves



- 46% of participants have secured accommodation in the private rented sector across the 3 contracts.
- The teams continue to build relationships with landlords and estate agencies to find new properties for participants.
- We fully intend to continue working with participants living in supported accommodation and move onto affordable PRS when they are ready to work and live independently.
- 64% of participants move outside of their referral borough to find accommodation.
- 16 participants have moved outside of London to find a home. This is typically in areas surrounding London such as Essex or Slough. In some cases, participants have been supported to move further away, e.g. Manchester or Leeds. These moves typically occur when participants have family/friends in these areas.

Type of accommodation secured



Contract	In Borough	Out of Borough	Out of London
Brent	87	84	6
Hackney	27	117	7
West London	6	39	3

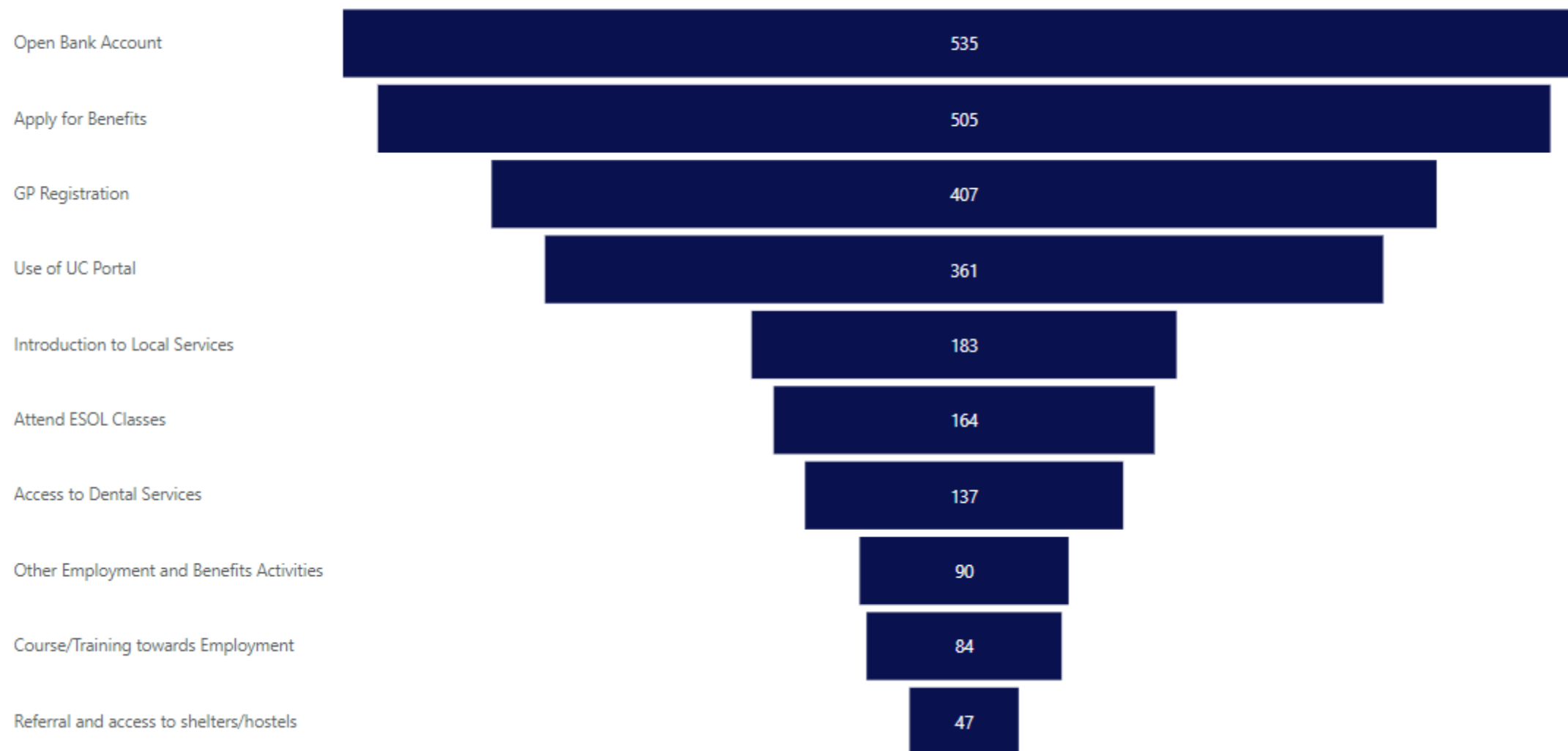


Integration activities



Practical actions continue to be the most completed activities by participants followed by activities related to improving their language and employment / training.

Top 10 Integration Activities achieved across the Programmes



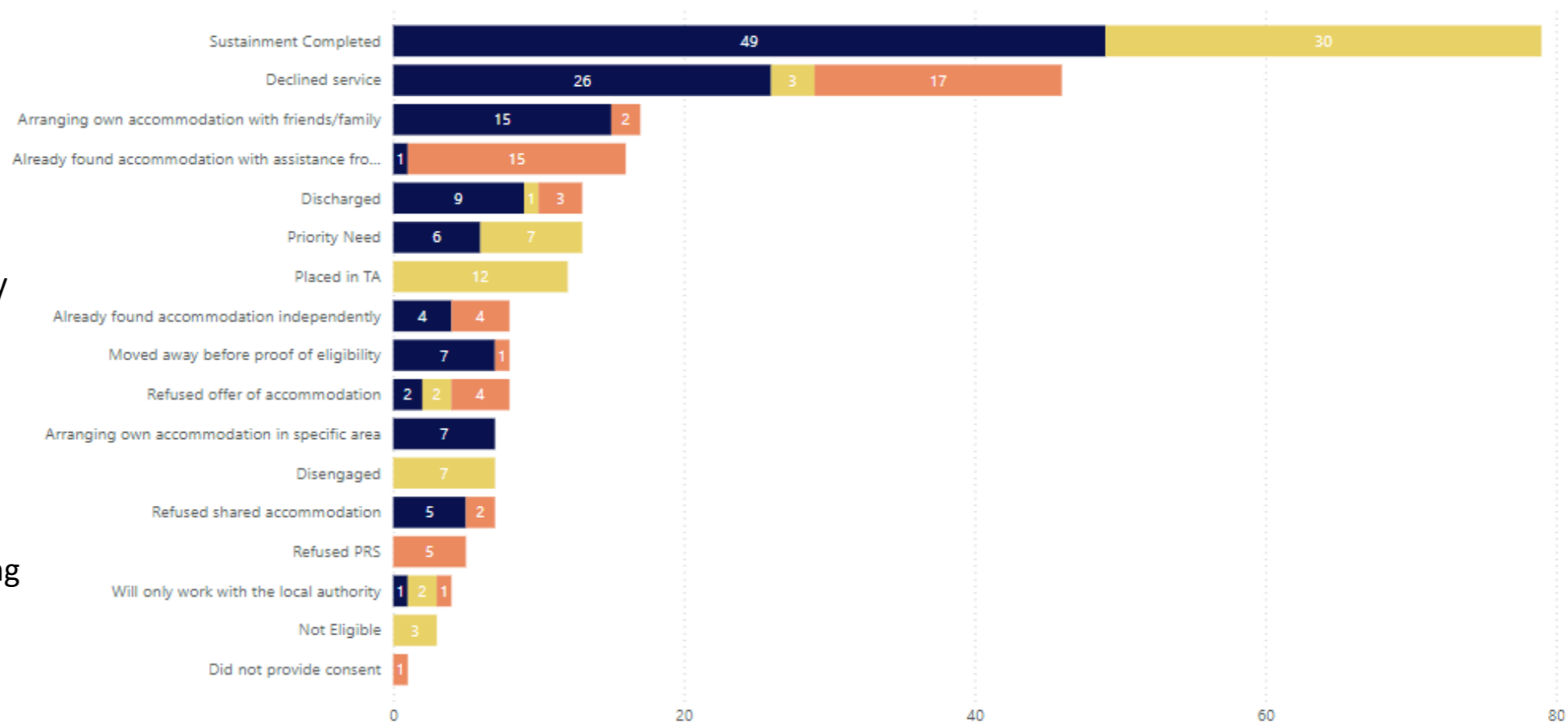
Case closures and Next steps



- The most common reason for case closure across all participants is sustainment complete. This signifies that many people are successfully completing their full journey.

Reasons for case closures- Cumulative

Area Category ● Brent - Refugees ● Hackney ● Rough Sleepers



- There are 41 participants across the programmes that have had their cases closed due to arranging accommodation with external assistance or independently following our coaching sessions. These demonstrate positive case closures even though they have closed prior to full completion of the journey.

- We set clear expectations at the beginning that the programme focuses predominantly on PRS moves and that these could be outside of their current area. As a result, several cases close as participants are not always seeking PRS or want to stay in their current area.



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Cost savings



Refugee Services: Delivering Measurable Impact

Bridges Outcomes Partnerships' three refugee services in London have successfully prevented **376 individuals** from sleeping rough. Delivered through outcomes-based contracts, each housing placement is rigorously evidenced to ensure accountability and impact.

The Crisis of Rough Sleeping statement

The financial and human costs of rough sleeping are substantial:

- **Economic Cost:** The estimated annual cost of one person sleeping rough in the UK is **£20,128**.
- **Human Cost:** Homelessness profoundly impacts individuals, leading to social isolation, barriers to education and employment, and deteriorating mental and physical health. Prolonged or repeated homelessness exacerbates these effects, creating severe declines in well-being and resilience.

Our Intervention

We address this crisis through a comprehensive and evidence-based approach that includes:

- Developing and completing an **Integration and Housing Plan** for each individual.
- Achieving **successful housing outcomes** with tailored support.
- Facilitating **integration activities** to build stability and community ties.
- Providing **8 months of tenancy sustainment support**, ensuring no risk to tenancy.

This intervention is delivered at an average cost of **£3,400 per case**—a fraction of the costs associated with prolonged rough sleeping.

Demonstrating Value for Money

By preventing rough sleeping for even a single year, we generate significant savings. For the 376 cases we have successfully housed, we have achieved an estimated **net saving of £6.2 million**.





Successful Collaboration

Brent Refugee Service



The Intervention

To address the risk of a new rough sleeping population, we created a housing and support intervention for newly granted refugees. It is designed to empower and create independence through a coaching and knowledge sharing approach.

The intervention has four key components:

1. **Face-to-face engagement with individuals** to complete a housing and integration plan. This will be conducted at either the home office hotel or a preferred space. This element of the service is a critical first step to build trust and manage expectations.
2. **Support accessing accommodation** – either directly into the Private Rented Sector (PRS), building on the landlord networks established through our Single Homelessness Prevention Service (SHPS), or through supported accommodation providers with move-on arranged into PRS after three to twelve months. Affordability is a key fundamental to long-term intervention success, therefore if they gain employment while in supported housing, we will arrange a move to PRS. As soon as possible
3. **Integration support** – support over at least a 6-month period to help refugees secure employment and integrate into their new communities. This can also include activities related to mental health and well-being.
4. **Sustainment of accommodation** – support for up to 8 months after they move into accommodation to ensure the long-term success of the tenancy. We also use this opportunity to deliver more coaching and knowledge around tenancy rights and obligations.



The Challenges

After the first couple of months of rolling out this service, we conducted a review to figure out what was working well and what could be improved. This included looking at data, along with staff, and referral feedback.

- The main challenges we found were around notice periods, with a majority of refugees approaching the service with a week or less notice to vacate the hotels. This didn't give us much time to build a relationship with them or find a home.
- This was coupled with the secondary challenge of documents, such as BRP cards, not being received; without these, they are not able to claim benefits or start work.
- When reviewing the referrals property acceptance levels in terms of offers made and accepted, there was a significant disconnect between expectations and the reality of the situation in terms of housing and areas to live. Often, the term "council housing" was used with a clear expectation that they would receive this type of home.
- Further, individuals were unclear about the next steps once a positive decision was made, what their options were, and who they could go to for support.
- Ultimately, there was no forward planning in place or upstream work for refugees so they could figure out for themselves what were the best next steps. This, in turn, was impacting the effectiveness of our service in achieving successful outcomes for all our referrals.



Collaboration Partners



- Brent met with Home Office, feeding back data and explaining some of the challenges the service had identified.
- This was followed by a meeting of all partners to figure out if a collaborative service could be created.
- This collaboration was unique, involving a London Borough, a not-for-profit social enterprise, an established charity, and a central government Home Office team.
- The key to the success of this collaboration was initially agreeing on “the purpose, which was to support refugees to integrate and find a home – in turn avoid rough sleeping” and ensuring every decision made reflected this purpose.
- There were challenges, as we had four separate organisations, with four distinct cultures and four ways of approaching an issue; this is why keeping a focus on the purpose was fundamental to ensuring success.
- We adopted a one-team approach, with each action by a team feeding into the next step, to create a seamless service. We reviewed each challenge together to decide the best solution.



SHPS Single Homeless
Prevention Service



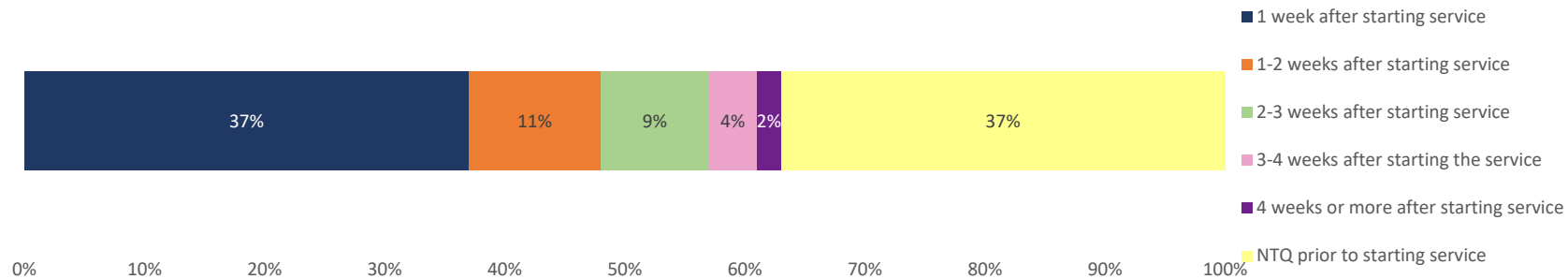
Collaboration Outcomes



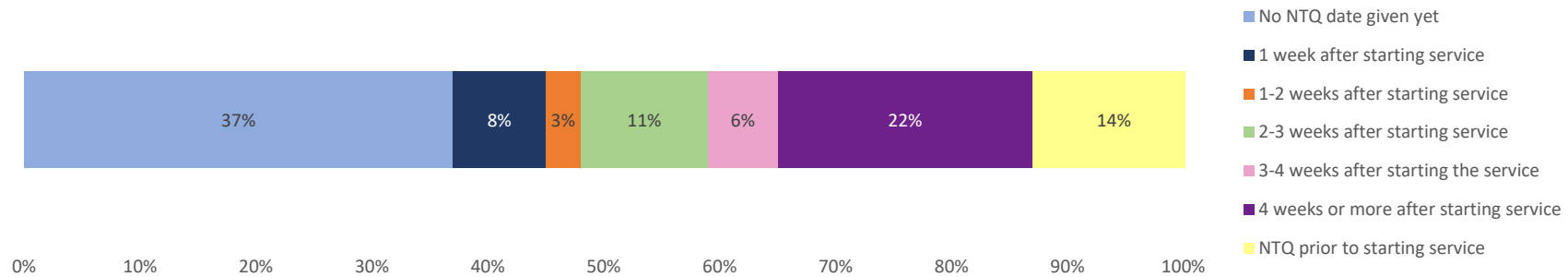
Notice Periods

- To address the issue of notice periods of a week or less, the Home Office agreed to provide us with referrals at the point of a positive decision being made – giving at least 28 days for us to work with them and find them a home.
- From the profile of the graphs below, we went from having 1 week or less notice in 74% of cases to a reduction after the rollout of the collaboration to 22%.
- This was a game changer, as it allowed us enough time to work with individuals prior to eviction. Further, the Home office and Crisis agreed messaging around “next steps” which the home office also delivered further upstream, prior to a positive decision being received.

Time from NTQ Date to Referral to service- Prior to focus on preventative work (any notice period, notified by hotel notice letter)



Time from NTQ Date to Referral to Service – Post focus on preventative work (20 days or more, HOLOS referrals)

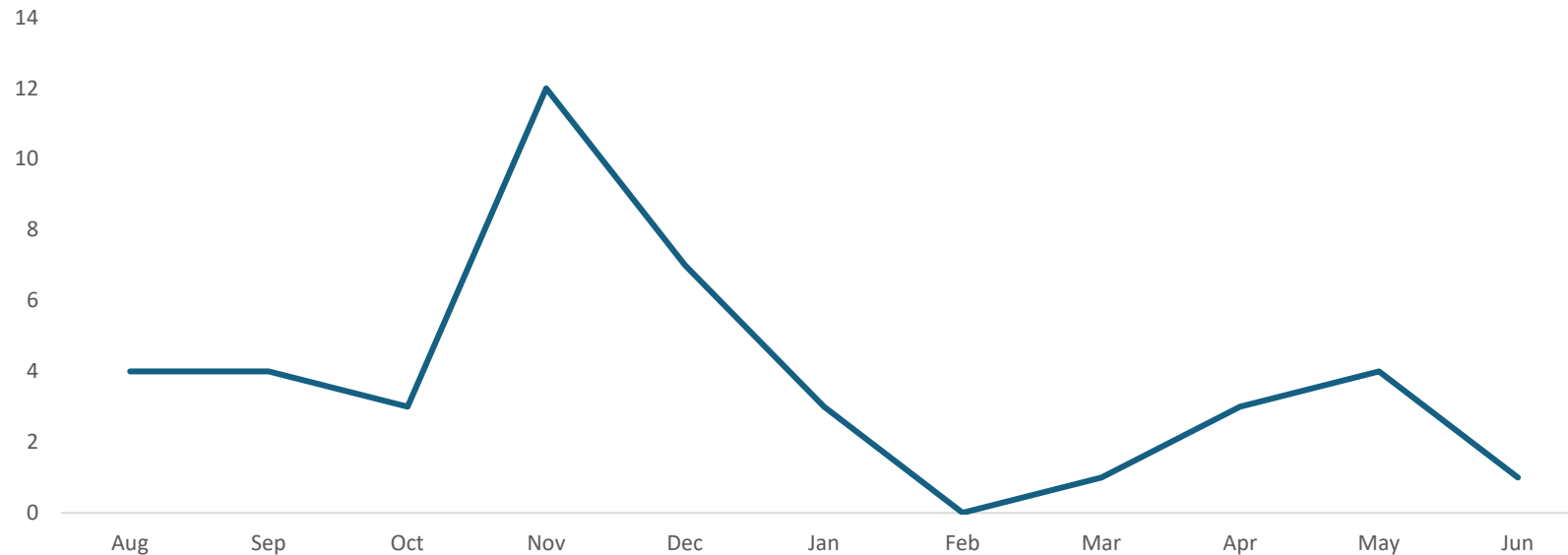


Rough Sleeping



- A further positive impact of having more notice meant that the number of referrals we had rough sleeping also reduced from the point of the collaboration going live and has continued to steadily decrease.
- The graph below profiles the number of rough sleepers reduced in December as night shelters were found for them to stay for up to six weeks.
- Another positive change was the ability to escalate directly to the home office when BRP cards or other documentation had not been received and arrange extensions to notice periods to again allow Crisis the time to work for a full 28 days with an individual prior to eviction.

Participants homeless and rough sleeping at referral

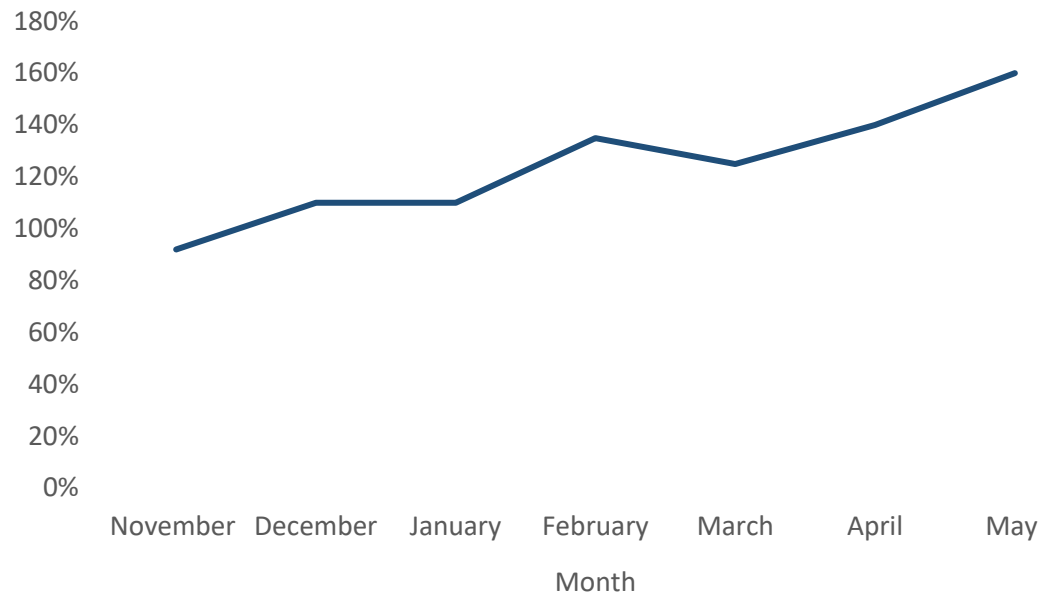


Housing Outcomes

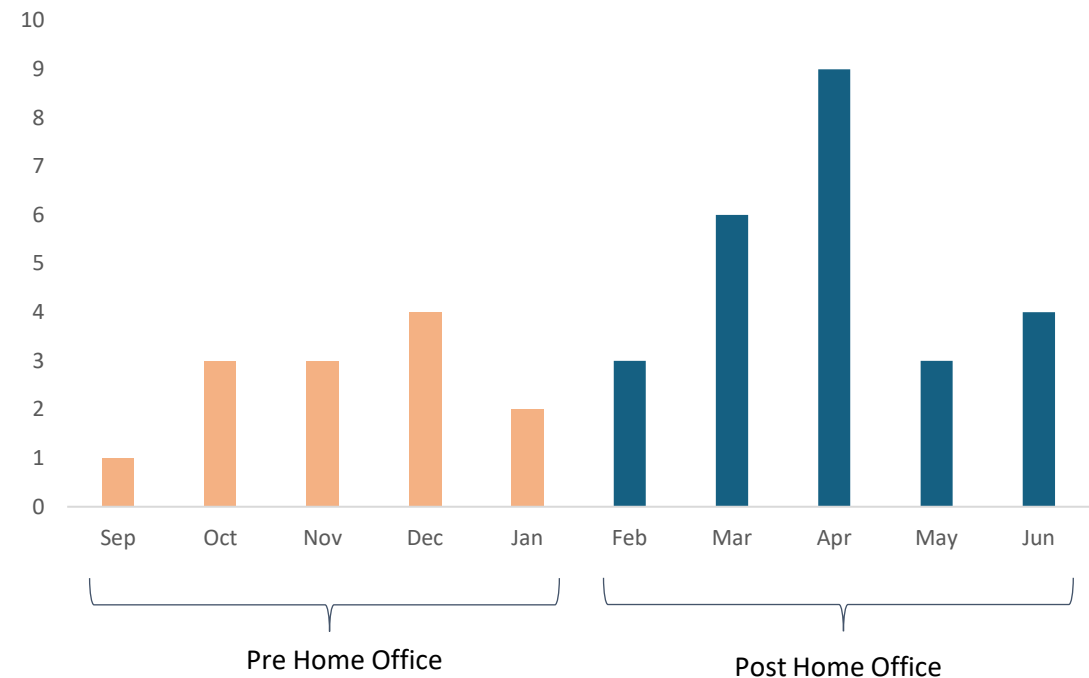


- A further challenge for us was managing expectations around affordability, property size, and areas to live.
- The Home Office and Crisis collaboratively worked together to create succinct messaging around this, with both teams delivering this to all hotel occupants.
- This was delivered both prior to and when a positive decision was given.
- As a result, the graphs below demonstrate an increase in our housing success rate against the 65% target and an increase in PRS properties being accepted from February 2024 (after Home office collaboration).
- The PRS properties secured decrease in May and June due t a pre election decrease in referrals.

Housing Outcomes Success Rate Actual against Target



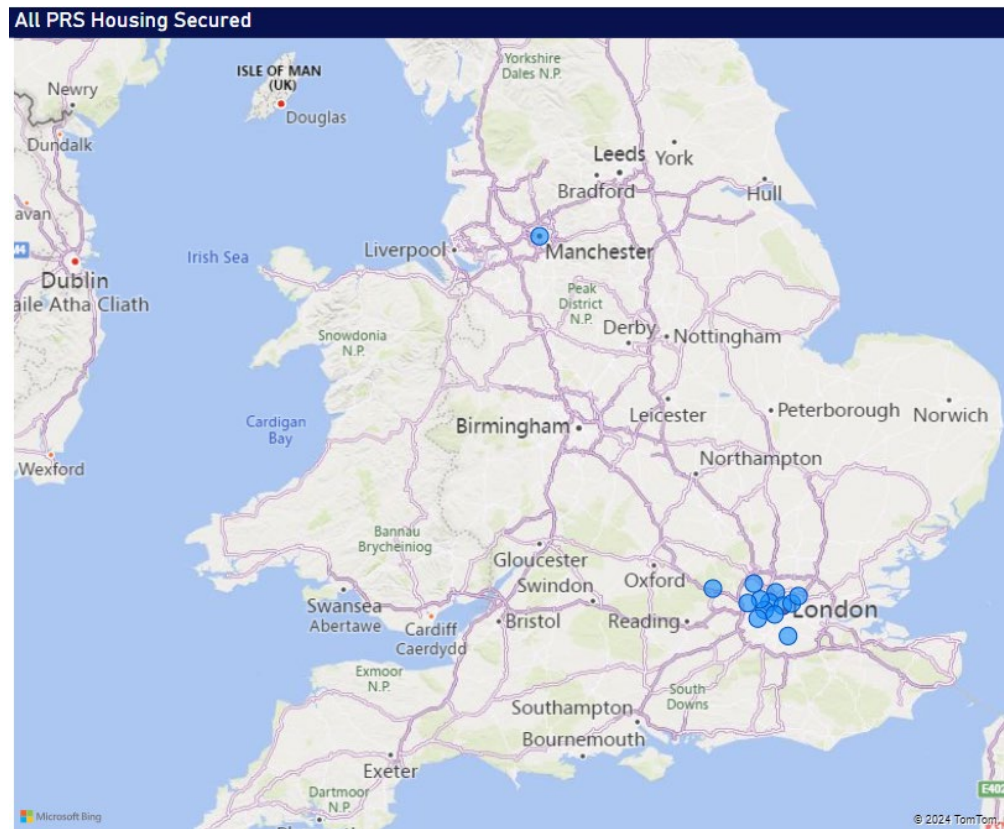
PRS Properties Secured



Location of PRS Accommodation



- Below we have profiled the geography of homes secured.
- Prior to the introduction of the collaborative working, there were no moves outside of London, and over 50% of moves were within the home borough.
- Post the collaborative working we noted a significant increase in homes being accepted, and change in the geographical profile, with a majority of moves outside of the home borough and moves to outside of London.



Area	Pre Home-Office Support	Post Home Office Support
Barnet	1	1
Brent	6	6
Camden	0	1
Croydon	0	1
Ealing	3	0
Hackney	0	1
Hammersmith and Fulham	0	1
Harrow	1	8
High Wycombe	0	1
Hillingdon	0	0
Hounslow	0	1
Manchester	0	1
Waltham Forest	0	2
Watford	0	1
Total	11	25





SHPS Single Homeless
Prevention Service



Thank you

amarjit.bains@bridgesoutcomes.org





Successful Collaboration

Brent Refugee Service



The Intervention

To address the risk of a new rough sleeping population, we created a housing and support intervention for newly granted refugees. It is designed to empower and create independence through a coaching and knowledge sharing approach.

The intervention has four key components:

1. **Face-to-face engagement with individuals** to complete a housing and integration plan. This will be conducted at either the home office hotel or a preferred space. This element of the service is a critical first step to build trust and manage expectations.
2. **Support accessing accommodation** – either directly into the Private Rented Sector (PRS), building on the landlord networks established through our Single Homelessness Prevention Service (SHPS), or through supported accommodation providers with move-on arranged into PRS after three to twelve months. Affordability is a key fundamental to long-term intervention success, therefore if they gain employment while in supported housing, we will arrange a move to PRS. As soon as possible
3. **Integration support** – support over at least a 6-month period to help refugees secure employment and integrate into their new communities. This can also include activities related to mental health and well-being.
4. **Sustainment of accommodation** – support for up to 8 months after they move into accommodation to ensure the long-term success of the tenancy. We also use this opportunity to deliver more coaching and knowledge around tenancy rights and obligations.



The Challenges

After the first couple of months of rolling out this service, we conducted a review to figure out what was working well and what could be improved. This included looking at data, along with staff, and referral feedback.

- The main challenges we found were around notice periods, with a majority of refugees approaching the service with a week or less notice to vacate the hotels. This didn't give us much time to build a relationship with them or find a home.
- This was coupled with the secondary challenge of documents, such as BRP cards, not being received; without these, they are not able to claim benefits or start work.
- When reviewing the referrals property acceptance levels in terms of offers made and accepted, there was a significant disconnect between expectations and the reality of the situation in terms of housing and areas to live. Often, the term "council housing" was used with a clear expectation that they would receive this type of home.
- Further, individuals were unclear about the next steps once a positive decision was made, what their options were, and who they could go to for support.
- Ultimately, there was no forward planning in place or upstream work for refugees so they could figure out for themselves what were the best next steps. This, in turn, was impacting the effectiveness of our service in achieving successful outcomes for all our referrals.



Collaboration Partners



- Brent met with Home Office, feeding back data and explaining some of the challenges the service had identified.
- This was followed by a meeting of all partners to figure out if a collaborative service could be created.
- This collaboration was unique, involving a London Borough, a not-for-profit social enterprise, an established charity, and a central government Home Office team.
- The key to the success of this collaboration was initially agreeing on “the purpose, which was to support refugees to integrate and find a home – in turn avoid rough sleeping” and ensuring every decision made reflected this purpose.
- There were challenges, as we had four separate organisations, with four distinct cultures and four ways of approaching an issue; this is why keeping a focus on the purpose was fundamental to ensuring success.
- We adopted a one-team approach, with each action by a team feeding into the next step, to create a seamless service. We reviewed each challenge together to decide the best solution.



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Collaboration Outcomes

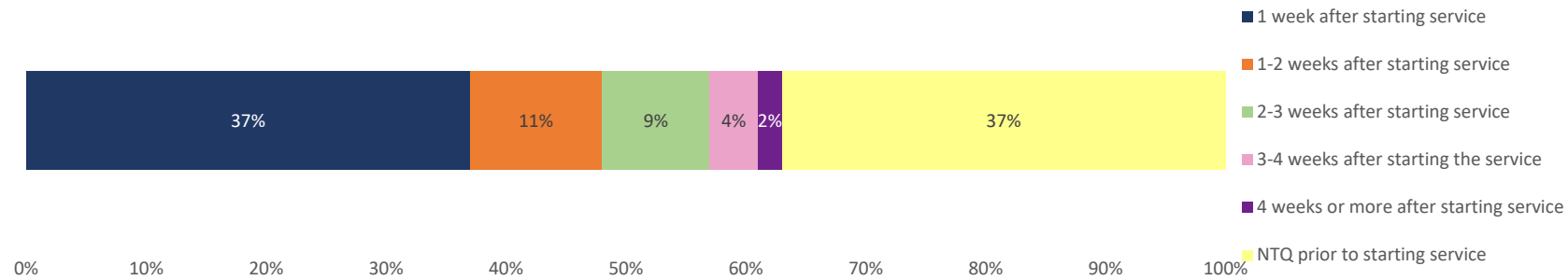


Notice Periods

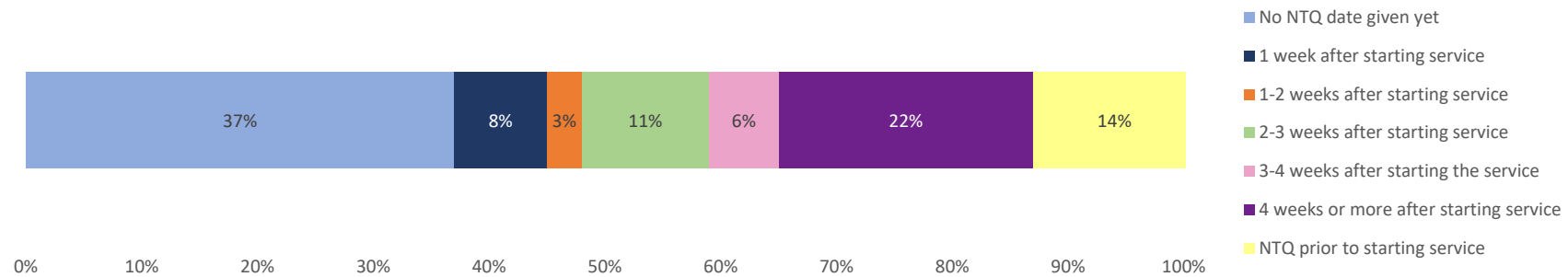


- To address the issue of notice periods of a week or less, the Home Office agreed to provide us with referrals at the point of a positive decision being made – giving at least 28 days for us to work with them and find them a home.
- From the profile of the graphs below, we went from having 1 week or less notice in 74% of cases to a reduction after the rollout of the collaboration to 22%.
- This was a game changer, as it allowed us enough time to work with individuals prior to eviction. Further, the Home office and Crisis agreed messaging around “next steps” which the home office also delivered further upstream, prior to a positive decision being received.

Time from NTQ Date to Referral to service- Prior to focus on preventative work (any notice period, notified by hotel notice letter)



Time from NTQ Date to Referral to Service – Post focus on preventative work (20 days or more, HOLOS referrals)

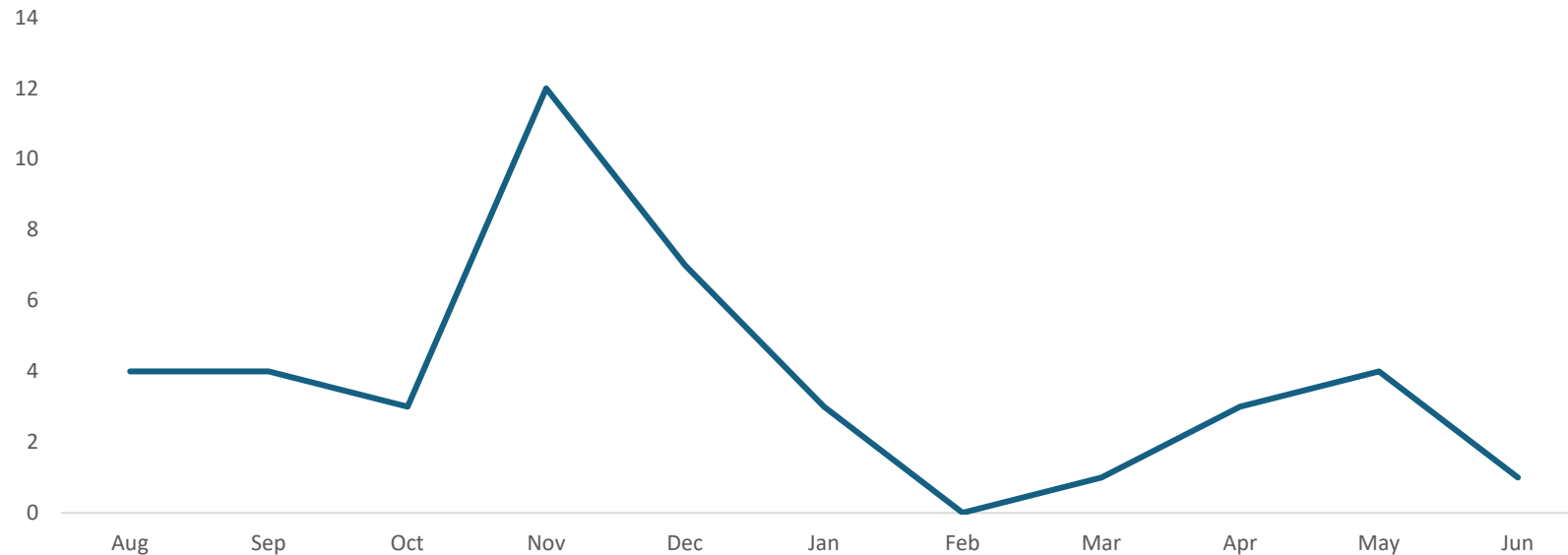


Rough Sleeping



- A further positive impact of having more notice meant that the number of referrals we had rough sleeping also reduced from the point of the collaboration going live and has continued to steadily decrease.
- The graph below profiles the number of rough sleepers reduced in December as night shelters were found for them to stay for up to six weeks.
- Another positive change was the ability to escalate directly to the home office when BRP cards or other documentation had not been received and arrange extensions to notice periods to again allow Crisis the time to work for a full 28 days with an individual prior to eviction.

Participants homeless and rough sleeping at referral

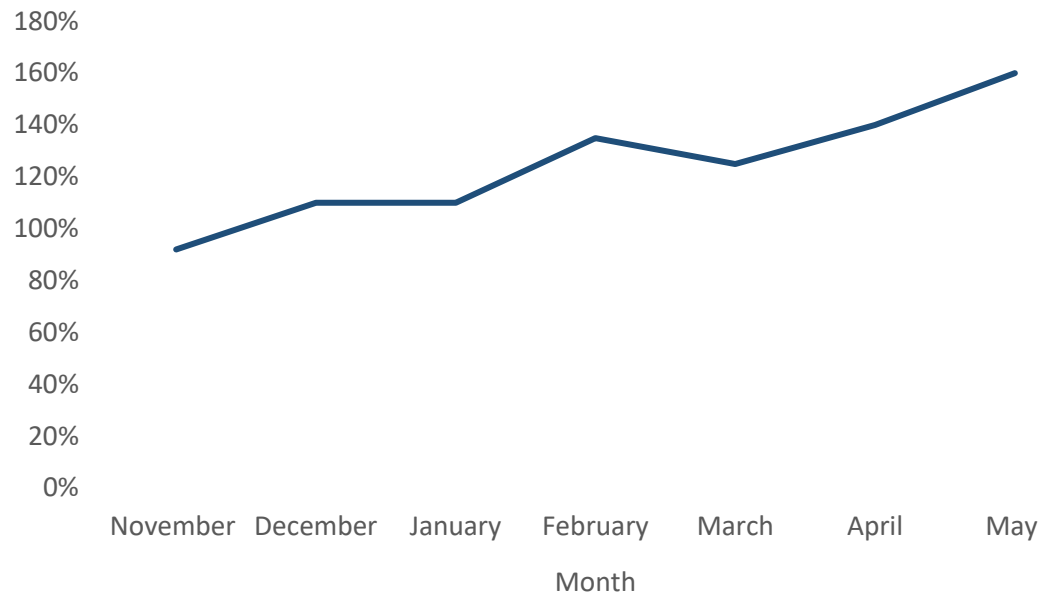


Housing Outcomes

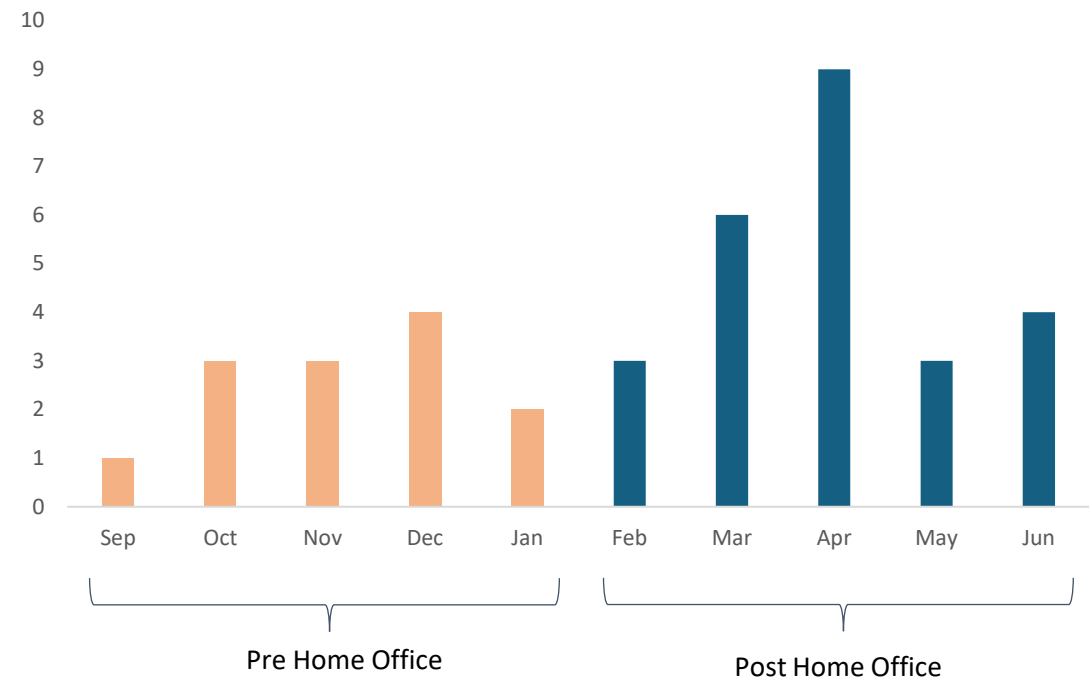


- A further challenge for us was managing expectations around affordability, property size, and areas to live.
- The Home Office and Crisis collaboratively worked together to create succinct messaging around this, with both teams delivering this to all hotel occupants.
- This was delivered both prior to and when a positive decision was given.
- As a result, the graphs below demonstrate an increase in our housing success rate against the 65% target and an increase in PRS properties being accepted from February 2024 (after Home office collaboration).
- The PRS properties secured decrease in May and June due t a pre election decrease in referrals.

Housing Outcomes Success Rate Actual against Target



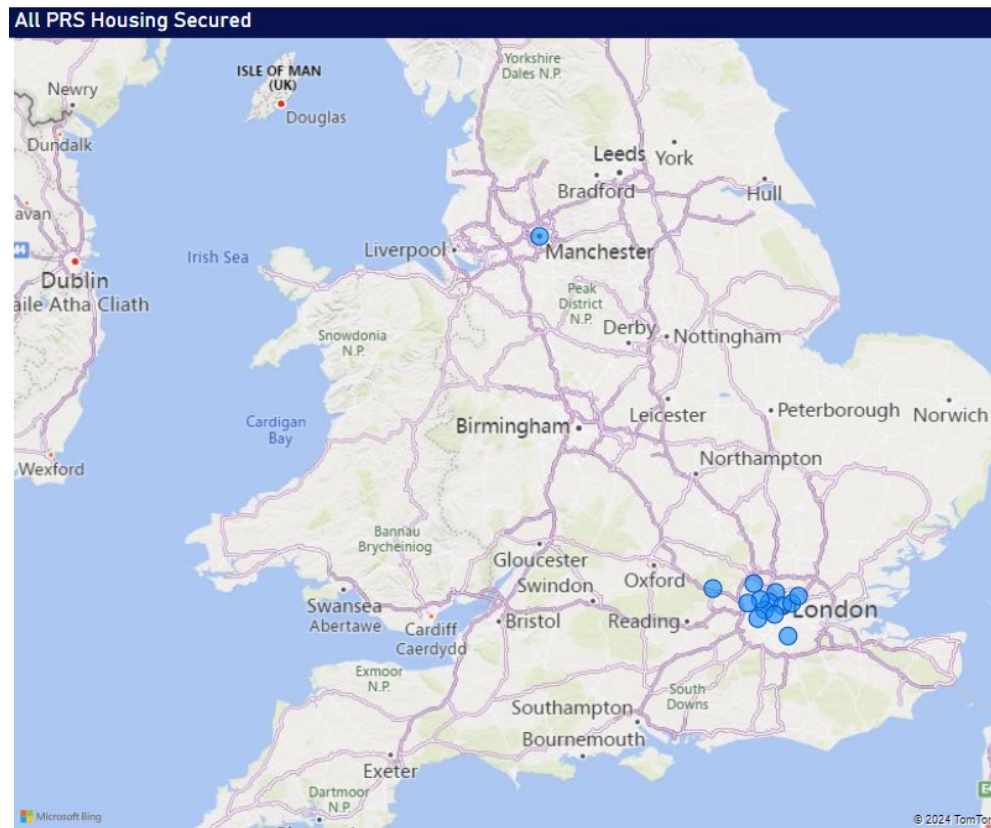
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Manchester	0	1
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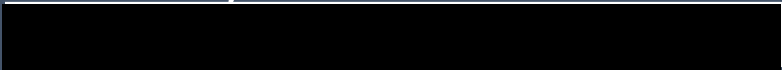




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Thank you



Annex 5: Barriers and Effectiveness of Initiatives- extracts of reports:

1. Asylum Welcome in London a Review of The Asylum Procurement Framework Agreement– BACKGROUND, EVIDENCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS, Heather Petch, Revised report 20-09-2021

	Recommendation 11 Although not central to this report, the Home Office should recognise the ongoing and long-standing concerns about the brevity of the 28-day grace period for those with status before they leave asylum accommodation	
11.1	Consider extending the period to ease the pressures on people seeking asylum, LAs and civil society organisations that result from this	Home Office
	Recommendation 12 The relevant agencies should consider what improvements could be made in liaison arrangements once the 28-day period starts	
12.1	Consider how to minimise delays in assistance with housing, employment, etc. required urgently at this stage by those granted status including considering whether the ‘duty to refer’ should be applied to HO contracted agencies	Migrant Help with Clearsprings and London Councils HO GLA SMP
12.2	Consider the recommendations in the Refugee Council’s ‘Keys to the City’ report on ways to tackle refugee homelessness in London	GLA London Councils HO Clearsprings Migrant Help and Reed in Partnership

...

A number of boroughs reported that they felt the increase in DA in London from 2016 to 2019 appeared to have happened by stealth. Anecdotal evidence and comments in borough interviews identified that some boroughs became aware of DA in their borough when taking action to drive up standards in HMOs, or when asylum seekers ended up in the rough sleeping population or those with status applied for housing assistance.

“A few years ago we found a new demographic of rough sleepers and it turned out they’d been placed in the borough by the HO. The support systems they have seem pretty poor for people. Two years ago they didn’t even give them a letter in a language they can read when they had to move on. Some people just left when they got a 28-day letter as they didn’t realise they can stay for 28 days and get further advice. 70% will be singles and 30% families. A lot of singles will be refused and that will have an impact on our homelessness.” [Interview; Outer London Borough, East]

....

The biggest wider concern comes back to housing. The quality of advice and support during the 28-day period is an area where LAs felt unclear about responsibilities. Should contracted providers have a duty to refer during the 28-day period? Civil Society organisations believe they pick up the pieces in addressing the need for advocacy support resulting from confusion about respective responsibilities. There are also extreme limitations on the roles of contracted providers, including that of Reed in Partnership which is sub-contracted by Migrant Help to provide signposting support at the move-on stage. Some of the recommendations in a recent Refugee Council report about the gaps in housing advice, support and provision for refugees have received a sympathetic hearing from the Mayor.² The Home Office, however, points to positive feedback in its most recent customer survey about services provided under the AIRE contract including move-on support.³

Beyond the signposting and support concerns is the fear that expectations will be raised of being able to settle in London when the housing situation is such that for many this is unlikely. Not long before the interview one senior housing officer related having met with a refugee single mother who had been in DA in the borough for three years and was facing a move to a town in the West Midlands where a property had been secured for her and her children and she had no contacts whatsoever.

...

Once status is granted refugees are able to access mainstream benefits and seek work but are given only 28 days-notice to move out of their DA. London boroughs and London-wide bodies as well as civil society organisations are all concerned that this period is too short to resettle elsewhere although from the HO and Clearsprings' viewpoint they are keen to use bedspaces for newer arrivals.

The AIRE contract specifies a telephone support service at this stage which is operated by Migrant Help. The Migrant Help First Response Centre (FRC) , is used to make contact with the newly granted refugee to offer the positive move-on service. Assuming contact is made and the individuals agrees an appointment is then made with Reed in Partnership (sub-contracted by Migrant Help) to deliver the Positive move on service. Civil society organisations running advice and move-on services still find they get very involved at this stage and are concerned about inadequate case coordination arrangements which may result in duplication. Although there is some help available for costs such as rent deposits – a Rent Integration Loan from the HO – this is deemed inadequate. Many refugees become homeless at this stage. Lack of clarity about a public body's 'duty to refer' homeless people to local homelessness assessment services and assessment duties within LAs were all raised as problematic areas which fail to facilitate move on and rehousing at a critical time for refugees.

The Home Office referred to positive feedback about services provided under the AIRE contract in its annual customer survey.

A report for the Greater London Authority ASYLUM WELCOME Summary of findings Heather Petch 11-10-2021

Move-on

Once status is granted refugees are able to access mainstream benefits and seek work but are given only 28 days-notice to move out of their DA. London boroughs and city-wide bodies as well as civil society organisations are all concerned that this period is too short to resettle elsewhere⁴ although from the HO and Clearsprings' viewpoint they are keen to use bedspaces for newer arrivals. The AIRE contract⁵ specifies a telephone support service at this stage which is operated by Migrant Help and its subcontractors. The Migrant Help First Response Centre (FRC) is used to make contact with the newly granted refugee to offer the positive move-on service. Assuming contact is made and the individual agrees an appointment is then made with Reed in Partnership (sub-contracted by Migrant Help) to deliver the positive move on service.

Civil society organisations running advice and move-on services still find they get very involved at this stage and are concerned about inadequate case coordination arrangements which may result in duplication. There is some help available for costs such as rent deposits – a Rent Integration Loan from the HO – but this is deemed inadequate.

Many refugees become homeless at this stage. Lack of clarity about a public body's 'duty to refer' people to local homelessness assessment services and assessment duties within LAs were all raised as problematic areas which fail to facilitate move on and rehousing at a critical time for refugees. The Home Office is not prepared to consider an extension of the 28 day period and also cites positive responses to the AIRE service in their customer survey.⁶

There is also the challenge of a lack of housing which is affordable and accessible for people dependent on benefits and the employment bar on asylum seekers. A number of boroughs pointed out that Government is accommodating people seeking asylum at greater expense in London only for many to face moving to other parts of the country afterwards, which is disruptive and potentially detrimental to integration and especially in relation to children's education and welfare.

...

Recommendation 10: Although not central to this report, the Home Office should recognise the ongoing and long-standing concerns about the brevity of the 28-day grace period for those with status before they leave asylum accommodation.

Recommendation 11: The relevant agencies should consider what improvements could be made in liaison arrangements once the 28-day period starts.

Research Study on the Needs, Experiences & Capacities of People Seeking Asylum in London MAY 2022, Jo Pettitt & Natasha Tsangarides, PREPARED FOR THE GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

People seeking asylum both in hotels or dispersed accommodation were unaware of what would happen once their asylum application had been processed and were focussed on meeting their present needs. In general, people expressed a desire to stay in London and spoke of their desire to work and study. Most people in Borough B wanted to stay in the borough, especially those with children settled in local schools. One person interviewed had been accommodated in emergency accommodation post-status. However, according to the local authority, due to acute pressures on housing it is unlikely people will find long-term accommodation in the borough. A local agreement between the local authority, DWP and asylum accommodation provider sought to prevent destitution at the point of receiving status by speeding up the processing of Universal Credit claims to meet the 28-day deadline. Two people interviewed in Borough A had recently got their status and were supported by a national NGO in liaising with the local authority to find new accommodation and transition into the welfare system. A local authority representative noted the pressures placed when asylum applications are rejected, and people receive no recourse to public funds. Between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022, Borough A local authority received 108 homeless approaches from refused asylum seekers out of a total of 3,198 statutory homeless applications.



5th December 2024

By email only

Move On Period

Dear Colleagues,

We shared communications with you in early November on temporary changes to the “move on” period following the roll-out of eVisas. You will be aware that we have been considering proposals to support LAs and newly granted refugees during a period of increased decision making. This communication provides an update on the grace period for asylum seekers who have received a positive decision on their asylum claim.

From 9th December the grace period will be extended from 28 to 56 days and will be initiated from the point the Asylum Decision Letter is issued to a newly granted refugee. This change will be implemented as an interim measure during the period of increased decision making and the transition to eVisas. We expect it to be in place until June 2025.

The Asylum Decision Letter will set out that support will end in 56 days and actions to be taken to move on. The Asylum Support Discontinuation Letter (ASDL) will not be issued until an individual has been issued with their UKVI account details to access their eVisa. The ASDL will provide the exact end of support date, which will be calculated as 56 days from the date of decision or 28 days from the date on the ASDL, whichever is the longest in date.

Individuals will also continue to be notified of this end of support date in a ‘notice to quit’ (NTQ) or ‘notice to vacate’ (NTV) letter from their accommodation provider. The NTQ/NTV should be issued around the same time as the ASDL but will always give at least 7 days’ notice as required by the Asylum Support Regulations 2000.

This means individuals will have:

- 56 days to commence arrangements to move on from asylum accommodation and support following a grant of leave;
- More than 28 days on support with access to their eVisa;
- At least 28 days’ notice of their exact end of support date, as indicated in the discontinuation letter.

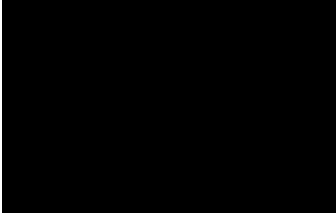
An evaluation will be undertaken to measure the impact of these changes on LAs and newly granted refugees. It will also explore delivery and value for money and gather stakeholder perceptions on early outcomes and effectiveness. The evaluation will take place over a six-month period from late January to July 2025 with interim results in late March. It aims to generate evidence to support future decisions around the “move on” process and will be carried out by an independent research contractor.

As part of the evaluation, we will be seeking views of Local Authorities, Devolved Governments, and wider stakeholders who provide support during move on. Your input would be greatly valued and will help the Home Office to develop and improve decisions around the move on process.

Thank you for your continued support as we work to improve the move on process. We will continue to keep you updated in our regular engagement forums.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]



Move On Operations
Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation