



RESTRICTED ELIGIBILITY SUPPORT SERVICE

**SUPPORTING NON-UK NATIONALS FACING
HOMELESSNESS IN GREATER MANCHESTER**

Restricted Eligibility Support Service (RESS) Year 1 Impact Report 2023-2024

A partnership between:



With funding from:



WHO WE ARE

The Restricted Eligibility Support Service (RESS) is a partnership between the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU), Boaz Trust, and the Booth Centre. Commissioned by GMCA since 2023, RESS is a unique and innovative homelessness prevention and support service. Combining immigration advice with specialist floating support, it works with Greater Manchester (GM) residents facing immigration-related barriers, helping them to navigate complex systems in order to move on from homelessness, live well and thrive.

WHAT WE ARE DOING, AND WHY

No one should ever be forced into homelessness due to their immigration status. However, for many non-UK nationals in GM, navigating complex systems with restricted access to public funds can be insurmountable barriers, pushing them into homelessness and destitution.

Our data shows that three out of four individuals are already homeless when they are referred to RESS, and one in three are sleeping rough at the time of referral. In January 2024, for the first time, there were more people identified in GM as rough sleeping who are non-UK nationals (41.8%) than those with UK citizenship (41%).

RESS is a unique and innovative service nationally, which aims to demonstrate the value of embedded advice-led and solutions-oriented responses to non-UK national homelessness. By collecting and reporting nuanced data on the immigration status and barriers faced by service users, it also allows us to better understand unmet need in this group and gaps in our housing and support systems.

RESS provides person-centred and joined up support to non-UK nationals with restricted or undetermined eligibility for public funds in GM, who are either experiencing homelessness or at risk of it due to their immigration status. By offering a combination of legal advice and floating support, the service offers a pathway for individuals to claim their entitlements, dignity, and stability.

RESS also extends beyond direct service provision. As RESS partners collaborating with GMCA, we aim to facilitate system change, providing training and peer-to-peer advice to support professionals across GM's homelessness, health and probation services to help them to better support non-UK nationals.

We want to design homelessness out of the asylum and immigration systems in GM. Embedding a targeted and specialist approach to working with non-UK nationals into our homelessness response, while at the same time developing understanding across the system, is crucial to achieving this aim. We want to ensure that every individual has the opportunity to move on from homelessness, live well, and thrive in our communities.

YEAR ONE IN NUMBERS

450 people supported with immigration advice in regard to their immigration status

203 people supported with accommodation, employment, and/or wider circumstances



3/4 people referred for practical support and advice are homeless

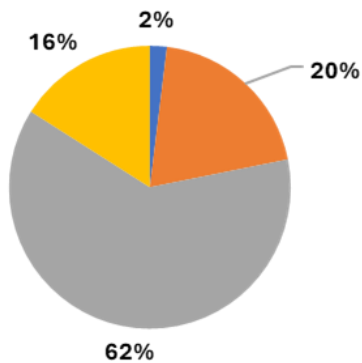


1/3 people referred for practical support and advice are sleeping rough



1/3 people referred for practical support and advice are sofa surfing

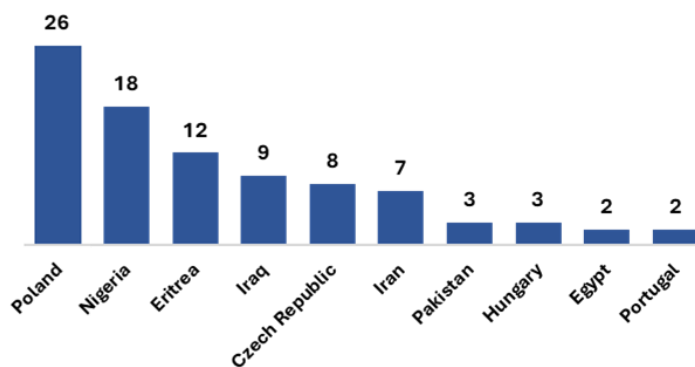
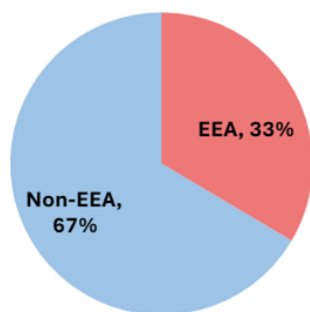
Profile of RESS service users



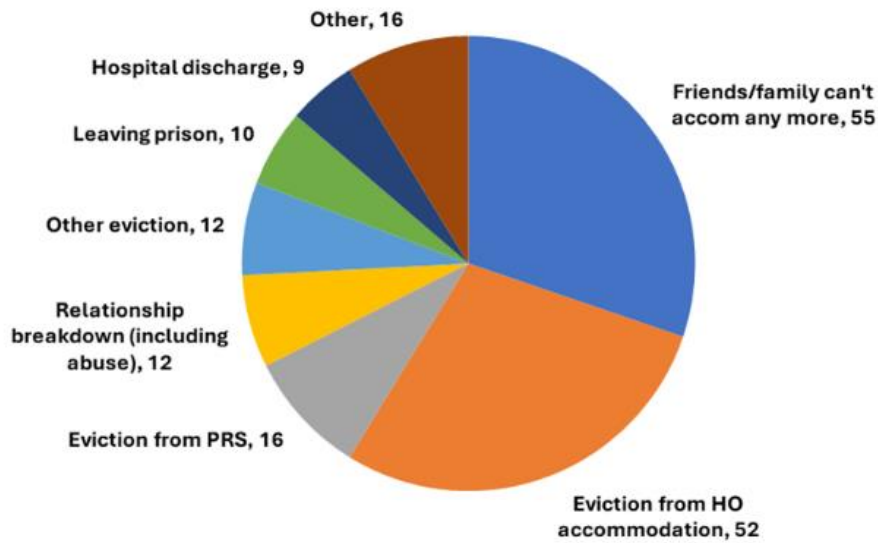
Immigration status

- Eligible for public funds
- Leave to enter/remain with restricted eligibility to public funds.
- Restricted eligibility due to lack of legal status in UK
- Unknown immigration status

Nationality (where recorded)



Reason for homelessness



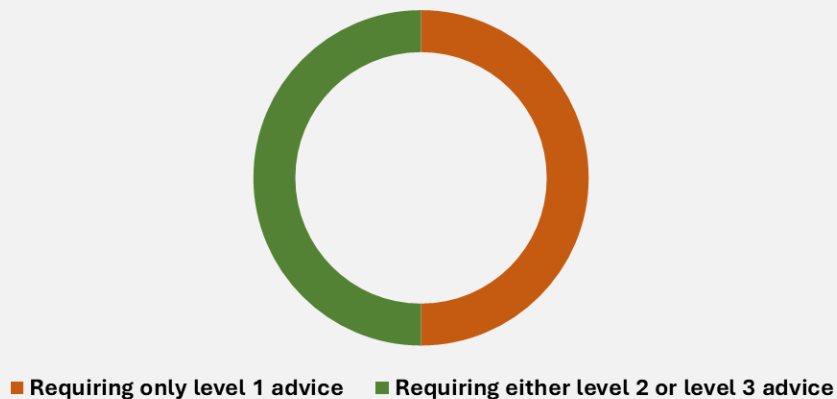
Service Delivery and Outcomes

Immigration and legal advice

470 people received an immigration assessment - of whom 450 were provided with advice. 128 had issues which could be addressed through one-off legal advice, and 322 were taken on for longer-term casework. So far, outcomes for this cohort include...

- ➔ ...108 immigration applications made
- ➔ ...67 gained access to public funds
- ➔ ...29 gained limited leave to remain
- ➔ ...5 gained indefinite leave
- ➔ ...26 gained pre-settled or settled status
- ➔ ...6 had NRPF conditions lifted
- ➔ ...9 gained access to Legal Aid
- ➔ ...5 gained Exceptional Case Funding
- ➔ ...17 Appeals being progressed
- ➔ ...58 supported with asylum support application
- ➔ ...22 Subject Access Requests made

OISC level required



Practical support and advice

203 people received wraparound support from the floating support service.

Outcomes for this cohort include...

- ➔ ...106 gained access to improved accommodation
- ➔ ...58 gained improved access to finances
- ➔ ...18 supported into employment
- ➔ ...72 involved in volunteering work or other meaningful activities

System change and outreach

193

drop-in and outreach sessions in Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Rochdale & Salford

116

professionals provided with training

87

unplanned calls for support from across 40 partner organisations

KEY BARRIERS FACED BY SERVICE USERS

RESS service users faced significant barriers in accessing support effectively and resolving their immigration status. Two key examples cited by RESS partners included the shortage of accommodation options, especially for people with restricted eligibility, and delays in Home Office decision-making.

The shortage of accommodation options forced individuals into homelessness, or rough sleeping, particularly those with complex needs, hindering their engagement with services and worsening mental health. The more limited availability of beds for those with No Recourse to Public Funds under programmes like A Bed Every Night (ABEN) was particularly cited as a challenge. This led to both service users and floating support workers spending considerable time securing emergency accommodation before being able to progress support work, e.g. gathering evidence for immigration applications.

Additionally, delays in processing applications by the Home Office exacerbated other challenges. Lengthy processing times prolong uncertainty and instability, further hindering individuals' ability to access essential services. Having unclear immigration status during this time in limbo prevented people from accessing income and renting privately and ultimately from moving on with their lives.

CASE STUDIES

All names changed to protect identity.

Salma's story

Salma has lived in the UK for over 20 years with an unresolved immigration status. Her journey began with a move from Pakistan after getting married, but soon turned into a nightmare of domestic abuse, where her immigration status became a tool of control. In 2014, with assistance from police and social services, Salma left the abusive situation. However, she faced ongoing instability, shifting between refuges and relying on sofa surfing for a place to stay.

During this tough time, Salma relied heavily on her Boaz Trust support worker to advocate for her in all aspects of her life as she isolated herself from the outside world. Finding it hard to talk about her past, Salma struggled to engage in matters concerning her case. Her support worker helped her access to medical appointments and psychological therapy.

With advice from GMIAU, Salma started the process of putting together a written statement and a late domestic abuse application. It took significant effort, but GMIAU and Boaz Trust worked closely together to gather the necessary evidence, including subject access requests and medical records.

Through a combination of legal aid and floating support, Salma received the life-changing news after over two decades of uncertainty: indefinite leave to remain in the UK. This milestone not only grants Salma the right to work, claim benefits, and access housing but also provides her with the long-awaited security to move forward in life.

Salma's journey shows that with the power of teamwork in making a difference to someone's life. Her story is a reminder that no one has to face difficulties alone, and there's always hope for a better future.

"The first time I saw Salma after she received the indefinite leave to remain decision, I knew that a huge burden had been lifted from her. She had a spring in her step and smiled like I hadn't seen her smile before. From my meetings with Salma since being granted status, I've noticed her confidence has hugely improved. I can see it in her face - she looks like a new person!"

- Boaz Trust support worker



Ali's story

Arriving at the Boaz Trust drop-in at Booth Centre just days after his arrival in the UK, Ali sought advice on his asylum claim, expressing his need for safety due to persecution based on his sexuality in his home country. Ali was very distressed and struggling with trauma relating to events leading up to fleeing his home country.

The support worker from Boaz Trust assisted Ali to claim asylum. Together, they secured an appointment with the Home Office for the following week, much to Ali's relief. Ali was also supported by Boaz Trust in accessing essential medical care for his health condition.

The support worker guided Ali on how to get to the appointment in Liverpool, and what to expect. Following his asylum claim appointment, Ali was provided accommodation in Liverpool, where he felt safe. He then accessed support services and secured an Aspen card through Migrant Help to meet his basic needs.

Ali faced challenges after being relocated to a small town, where he felt vulnerable due to his sexuality. However, RESS remained a steadfast source of support, providing practical advice and a listening ear to him.

Having someone to talk to and being heard were invaluable to Ali. With RESS assistance, Ali has been able to navigate the complexities of asylum with resilience, empowering him to move forward.

"Speaking with you [the Boaz Trust support worker] has been enlightening and comforting. A listening ear and offers honest, sound advice and whenever I'm in crisis and reach out, you always respond."

- Ali



Nico's story

"I came to the Booth Centre as my brother-in-law told me that he got help from here with his passport. I met the support worker at the Booth Centre, and she explained how she could help me. I just needed help with my passport as I tried to get one, but the Romanian consulate would not help me unless a worker was with me.

My support worker asked for my status, my health and where I was staying. I had a lot of papers with me, and she went through them. I had a sense of relief when someone was going through my bag of papers as it was getting too much. I was not expecting a lot, as I said, I only wanted to sort out my passport so I can work. My support worker explained to me what my rights were regarding employment, benefits etc and she said that the first step is to come and seek advice from GMIAU.

I came the day after, and the adviser at the GMIAU went through all my paperwork. I have been working for the last seven to eight years and I have all my bank statements. The adviser said that she would help me apply under the EUSS. In the meantime, my support worker emailed the Romanian consulate. I was at the Booth Centre when they rang her, and they wanted to speak to me. They gave me an appointment within ten days and my support worker agreed to come with me.

When we went to the consulate, I got my passport, and I was very happy. My support worker asked me if I would like to be referred to a hostel, and I said that she could try. She said that she could not guarantee a room, but I said that it is better than nothing. My support worker rang a week after, and said that she did a referral to Supporting People In Need (SPIN) and they would like me to go for an interview. She also gave me a weekly bus pass. I met the staff at SPIN on Friday and I moved in. It was all so overwhelming.

I went to the Booth Centre to get help with my passport, and now I have a room as well as a passport. I have now sent it to the Home Office to support my EUSS application. I have put myself down for volunteering at the Booth centre as I do not like just sitting around. My support worker asked me if I wanted to apply for PIP and I said of course but, in the past, I was told not to bother as I do not qualify. My support worker reassured me that it's better to try than not, and that has given me even more hope.

My support worker asked me many times what I want to achieve? Job, house, work and a normal life really. I know that I have to take it step by step and that's ok.

On the 28th of December, my support worker rang me and told me that my settled status has been granted and I was so happy that I started crying. There are no words to describe the feeling. I feel lighter and it's like I can start my new life."



KEY REFERRING PARTNERS

Statutory referring partners



Other referring partners



REFERRALS AND PROFESSIONAL ENQUIRIES

The online referral form can be found [here](#).

Referral enquiries can be emailed to: ress.referrals-gm@boothcentre.org.uk