



Housing Rights

Your quarterly newsletter from the Housing Rights website

Winter 2024/25

Our shorter-than-usual winter 2024/25 newsletter starts with some good news - the quietly announced extension to 56 days of the move-on period for those leaving asylum accommodation. The change is temporary and subject to review, and will not solve the many issues about refugees receiving their documentation, but it is a welcome move.

The newsletter has another update on the other issues facing the government and decisions being taken.

Four feature articles in this edition cover detailed issues relating to refugee homelessness, and a fifth looks at why we need to end the right to rent scheme.

We then have the latest news on refugees fleeing from world crises and, at home, on the ongoing problems in the asylum accommodation system.

Regular items include news on tackling domestic abuse and on the government's problematic moves towards eVisas. And we wrap up with the usual miscellany of other news items.

Our thanks to all the contributors to this issue. If anyone is interested in contributing to future issues, please email john.perry@cih.org. And, as ever, a special thanks to our sponsors Metropolitan Thames Valley.

Please share this edition with anyone you know who works in this area. And if you haven't already, please click [here](#) to subscribe and receive the newsletter direct to your email inbox each quarter.

The Housing Rights team

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Refugee homelessness - relief at last?

The biggest news in the last quarter of 2024 was the government's quiet announcement that - at least for a trial period - those leaving asylum accommodation whose claims have been granted will have a longer, 56-day "move-on" period from receipt of their notifications. The Home Office [told local authorities](#) that the extension would begin from 9 December and will be in place until June 2025, when the impacts will be re-assessed.

The Local Government Association [welcomed the change](#). "This move brings the asylum move-on period - the time in which people have before they must leave Home Office accommodation after receiving a decision on their asylum application - in line with existing timelines for other individuals and families at risk of homelessness," it said.

The change came shortly after [new homelessness statistics](#) revealed that, in the year to June 2024, a staggering 21,650 households were owed a duty because of leaving asylum accommodation, compared with 6,190 for the previous 12 months, a 250 per cent increase.

The change coincided with [Baroness Lister's Private Member's Bill](#), which had its second reading in the House of Lords [on 13 December](#). It would permanently extend the notice period for leaving asylum accommodation from 28 to 56 days and would also ensure that the paperwork that refugees receive arrives simultaneously to help in securing accommodation and benefits. "What should be a time of joy - the receipt of refugee status - [is when] refugees all too often face destitution," [Baroness Lister told Byline Times](#). "It's clear that it's a real problem only having 28 days to sort everything out before losing asylum accommodation and support."

However, the 56-day period can still leave refugees facing problems. *The 1 paper* [quoted Sophie Cartwright](#), from the Jesuit Refugee Service UK, who said: "We regularly have cases where people don't receive communication, it might be late, or it's been sent to the wrong address. That can even happen if they're living in Home Office accommodation - you wonder how those errors are made. We see that a lot and it's pretty worrying."

The need for a longer move-on period had been made clear in recent reports by both the [UNHCR](#) and the [Local Government Association](#). And various local authorities actively supported Ruth Lister's Bill, including Islington, Charnwood and Hertfordshire.

A recent webinar heard about a range of problems affecting those leaving asylum accommodation:

- Paperwork not arriving or arriving with errors or going to the wrong address; lack of clarity about when the move-on period starts, and very short effective notice being given in practice.
- Universal credit (UC) applications taking four to six weeks; applications sometimes being closed by the DWP on grounds that the refugee is still in supported accommodation.
- Problems occurring with eVisas - likely to get worse as the programme rolls out.
- Very inadequate or no support during the move-on period; Home Office are appointing liaison officers to help.
- Chronic housing shortages, exacerbated by discrimination by landlords against tenants on UC or without UK passports, and LHA levels not covering local rents. In some priority need cases, people move out of Home Office hotel accommodation into local temporary hotel accommodation.
- People leaving asylum accommodation who are not in priority need are often suddenly left with no support and no housing options at all, and initially no UC, and may not speak English or have local contacts where they can sofa-surf etc.

Leon Elliott of NACCOM pointed out that the 56 days' notice has to commence with the serving of paperwork that councils will accept as evidence of a person being at risk of homelessness, and this must be clearly communicated.

Anna Yassin of Glass Door said they she used to do refugee integration support under the Home Office's pre-2010 system, when it was judged that refugees needed one year of support in order to integrate properly.

Jon Featonby from the Refugee Council stressed that only so much can be done through legislation, and what is really needed is a refugee integration strategy, as existed under the last Labour government.

Do read the articles later in the newsletter, by Bridget Young, Sue Lukes, Arthur Lewis and Liz Davies on tackling refugee homelessness.

Latest news from government

Keir Starmer scraps Sunak scheme to help refugees find jobs

Sir Keir Starmer has [scrapped a scheme](#) to help refugees learn English and find jobs. The government is understood to be considering new measures to help refugees integrate, although there has been no official announcement.

Rishi Sunak and Robert Jenrick, then immigration minister, launched the scheme last year to help "overcome the barriers faced by refugees to integrate into local communities and society".

The Refugee Employability Programme was backed by £52 million of funding from the Home Office until June 2025. The programme helped refugees to write CVs, prepare for interviews, take English language classes, register with local childcare and healthcare and join local community groups.

The government announced that new refugees would stop being taken on from December.

Tackling the "small boats" conundrum

The autumn 2024 newsletter featured the government's interest in Italy's deal with Albania to process asylum claims "offshore". But the *Guardian* now [reports](#) that the deal has become a political disaster for Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni. Just a month after the much-publicised opening, only 24 asylum seekers had been sent to Albania, and none remain there now. All were transferred to Italy after Italian judges deemed it unlawful to detain them in Albania prior to repatriation to countries, such as Bangladesh and Egypt, considered "safe" by Rome.

However, the UK Government is apparently looking at another part of Italy's arrangements, where migrants are deterred from crossing the Mediterranean. Transport secretary Louise Haigh confirmed [reports](#) in *The Sunday Times* that the government is in talks with a range of countries to end the migrant crisis. Deals with countries like Vietnam will be similar to those which Italy has struck with countries such as Libya to prevent migrants from setting off in the first place.

In December, Yvette Cooper [delivered two updates to parliament](#) on agreements with other European countries aimed at tackling irregular migration and small boats crossing the Channel.

In one [written statement](#), Cooper set out details of a joint plan with Belgium, France, and The Netherlands to "break the business model of migrant smuggling networks". The home secretary also made a [written statement](#) on a joint action plan with Germany to tackle irregular migration.

In total, 36,816 people arrived in Britain via small boats in 2024, an increase of 25 per cent on the 29,437 who arrived in 2023, according to provisional Home Office figures. Most migrants now cross the English Channel in small boats. But a few - unable to afford smugglers' fees for boat crossings from France to the UK - [try to hide in trucks](#). They are likely to be discovered, due to increased checks and surveillance tech. Zoe Gardner [takes a look at possible solutions](#) to the "crisis".

Meanwhile, the Home Office revealed [the full breakdown of spending on the Rwanda scheme](#): £715 million over three years. A [new report](#) from the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit documents the impact of the Rwanda detentions on residents and local services, including detentions and arrests, a climate of fear, disappearances, and housing problems and homelessness. It also highlights some of the community responses to the detentions.



Stories from migrants crossing the Channel

- *The Daily Mirror* told the story of Karim, an asylum seeker from Afghanistan, who watched three people die as the boat carrying them across the Channel, sank. "I hope telling my story can help people understand why someone who can't swim could find himself in the middle of the English Channel."
- *The Guardian* has the news on a court decision that a family, separated when a boat sank, cannot be reunited. Two children, aged nine and six, arrived in UK alone after their mother fell overboard and their father tried to rescue her. They are now in foster care because the parents aren't allowed to join them.
- And *Prospect* describes the action against Ibrahima Bah, found guilty of manslaughter because he took control of a boat crossing the Channel. "But punishing him won't solve anything," *Prospect* adds.
- Aamna Mohdin was a young rookie reporter when she was sent to Calais to write about "the Jungle", an informal camp for people waiting to cross the Channel. In this *Guardian* podcast, she explains how it feels to report on the refugee crisis when it's also the story of your own family.

Tackling the asylum claims backlog

As the new government struggles to address the backlog of claims, it emerged that only half of the Home Office's recent asylum decisions have met its own internal quality checks, with errors and omissions driving a huge increase in appeals. Only 52 per cent of asylum decisions sampled in the Home Office's internal quality assurance process were satisfactory in 2023/24, **new figures show**, down from 72 per cent the previous year. In the same period, the number of appeals lodged rose from 8,000 to 29,000. Almost half of challenges are currently successful.

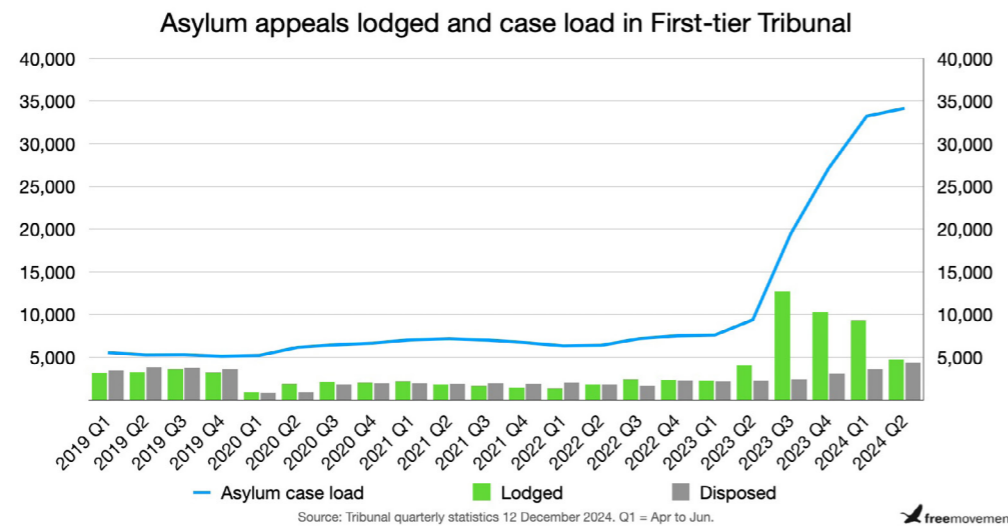
Statistics to September 2024 show that the asylum appeals backlog has stabilised (see chart), but waiting times have increased by four weeks. Colin Yeo in *We Wanted Workers* says that with around 30,000 asylum claims entering the tribunal system in the last year and a lot more to come, the asylum accommodation and support costs of that extra delay must be eye-watering.

The *Free Movement* newsletter also **pointed out** that a lot of asylum claims had been dubiously "withdrawn" in the same period: "This is a mess that is going to have repercussions for a long time, assuming that nothing will be done by the Home Office now to review and withdraw the faulty decisions."

A client of Asylum Aid, a 52-year-old man from Cote D'Ivoire seeking protection in the UK, **will receive an apology and compensation** from the Home Office after waiting over four years for a decision on his asylum claim. The client's win comes on the back of Asylum Aid's fight against delays in decision-making on asylum claims.

Looking at Labour's plans for more detention of undocumented migrants, barrister Colin Yeo argues for a radical new approach. Less detention spaces with stricter limits on their use would force the Home Office to focus on actual removals, **he says in *We Wanted Workers***. However, the government is planning to increase detention capacity **to hold 1,000 more detainees**.

In a separate article, Yeo puts forward a "**realistic agenda for change in the asylum and immigration system**", aiming for less bureaucracy and more integration. He argues that his proposals would not damage the government's immigration control agenda, but would complement and improve controls. "At the same time, they would help the Home Office and migrants themselves. And their families. And therefore all of us."



How housing providers are helping to tackle rising homelessness amongst migrants and refugees

Bridget Young, Director of NACCOM, looks at the evidence from NACCOM's experiences in 2023/24. For details of NACCOM's report, see page 19.

Being denied a home strips people of their humanity; everyone deserves to live with dignity and agency as part of their community. But a chronic lack of social and affordable housing in the UK is combining with our dysfunctional and punitive asylum and immigration system to create a hostile housing environment for refugees and migrants – a woefully under-reported aspect of the housing crisis in the UK.

Fortunately, local authorities, voluntary services, housing associations and other housing providers are stepping up to the challenge and providing vital, and innovative, pathways out of destitution and homelessness for people seeking asylum, refugees, and other migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

The scale of the challenge, however, is huge. Our data shows that NACCOM's UK-wide network of over 140 frontline organisations and charities provided safe, temporary accommodation, through hosting and lodging placements, housing schemes and emergency accommodation, to 11 per cent more people than last year, and 82 per cent more than in 2021/22.

There's a growing refugee homelessness emergency. In 2023/2024, our members accommodated an unprecedented 1,941 refugee adults experiencing homelessness, a 99 per cent increase on the previous year. More than in any other year, our data underscores the deep impact the housing crisis is having on refugee and migrant communities.

New refugees are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, and face unique barriers to accessing housing, as both private rental and social housing are hugely challenging spaces for them, and they often have nowhere to go after their move-on period from asylum accommodation ends. What should be a moment of joy for new refugees often turns into a nightmare.

We whole-heartedly welcome the interim extension from a 28-day move-on period to 56 days, announced in December. But it's vital that new refugees receive all documentation at the right time, including access to eVisas, and have info about their rights, responsibilities and options so that they can make the most of the 56 days. We'd also like to see the government make this a permanent change and widen it to include all people moving on from asylum accommodation.

However, reforming the move-on period isn't the only measure needed to stop people being evicted directly into homelessness. The legal aid system needs drastic improvement, because everyone should have access to justice to ensure a fair decision on their asylum claim. And the government must lift the ban on the right to

work for people seeking asylum so that they can be empowered to live in dignity.

There is clearly a great need for urgent reform to asylum and immigration policies – but housing providers can be part of the solution too. For people experiencing destitution and homelessness, stable accommodation provides a foundation from which to access other vital support, and is often the first step towards unlocking their full potential and rebuilding their lives.

So, what role can the housing sector play in tackling homelessness amongst people with restricted eligibility or NRPF?

First, housing associations are important allies. Currently, almost half of our members delivering housing are working with housing associations, and the properties provided amount to 14 per cent of the NACCOM network's total provision. There is enormous potential, and our toolkit is intended to inspire and equip charities looking to forge new relationships. Access to flexible lease arrangements and a rent-free or below-market rent property make working with housing associations a practical option. For their part, housing associations might choose to partner with a migrant charity because it fits with their mission, vision and values.

Second, many of our members speak positively about the relationships they have built with local authorities. Activities include collaborating with councils to develop lodging schemes, or making new arrangements to work with councils and asylum accommodation providers to support clients, including those in hotels, through the move-on process. Our members have also delivered two lodging schemes in partnership with local authorities, who funded the service in response to the increase in homelessness amongst refugees. Nevertheless, members report local authorities gatekeeping resources, as well as long waiting lists, which can make it difficult to house people in the asylum and immigration system. Even where the NRPF restriction places a limit to the support a local authority can give, solutions can be found, as our joint report with Homeless Link, [Unlocking the Door](#), highlighted.

Third, the UK urgently needs more social housing, because many people in the asylum and immigration systems face barriers to accessing this service, yet it's one of the main routes out of homelessness. We welcomed recent announcements about re-establishing local housing targets and boosting funding for social housing. The government must ensure improved access to housing for everyone, including people who are in the asylum and immigration system.

This is a challenge urgently requiring solutions. As it stands, government policies are pushing people needlessly into the trauma of homelessness. But housing providers can be part of a countervailing force, supporting and empowering people to rebuild their own lives because responding to migrant destitution and homelessness benefits not just individuals, but communities too.



How local authorities check “eligibility” for housing and homelessness help

Sue Lukes, a contributor to the housing rights website, looks at eligibility rules.

When taking a housing application, authorities ask about where people have lived before and usually work out, if they don't ask directly, that people have or have not been born in the UK. UK citizens born outside the UK will usually have a passport, even if expired, with which they entered.

So, if they have been properly trained, the officers should know that people born in the UK before 1 January 1983 are automatically British. For the rest, they should normally then ask whether the applicant's parents were British or settled and whether mother is or was married to father if mother was not either British or settled in the UK.

For housing, there is no requirement for specific types of proof, just that the authority “has reason to believe” they are eligible, initially for a homelessness application, and/or is satisfied that the applicant is eligible for an allocation or for help under homelessness duties. This is all, of course, in addition to investigating whether the applicant is otherwise eligible, homeless and in priority need.

The Code of Guidance does not specify how a local authority can satisfy itself that an applicant is not subject to immigration control (it does say more on the habitual residence test, which is another problem for UK citizens and others, dealt with [here](#) on the housing rights website).

What happens in practice is what we know from the Windrush scandal, or rather from the mysterious absence of white people (in any numbers) among those affected by it. After all, the first people without documents we saw after eligibility came in were often

those who had lost them because of other problems: mental health, substance abuse, etc. I got a call from a council days after the 1996 Act was implemented, saying they had an elderly man with dementia who needed rehousing from hospital because he had set his flat (and his documents) on fire, and who was not making much sense. I was able to point out that because of his age, if he had been born in the UK, he was British. But the trickle of homeless people getting turned away by councils after that were almost all Black people or people of colour. Statistically, there must have been some white people who lost all their documents too.

To spell it out: white people born after 1983 who do not have foreign-looking names or accents are usually given a pass by housing officers, and others are not. But of course, people know this, so most of those likely to face questions about whether they are British will have taken the precaution of having some sort of proof. Some will not, and they are likely to be the most vulnerable.

Apologies for the anecdote, but before 1996 when I taught housing rights courses, I started the day by “checking” that everyone had brought their passports with them. Because they had not been asked to do so, many looked confused and/or apologetic. But some said “yes” and reached for their passports (or a photocopy of them). And then I asked the room to look around and think about who among them routinely carries their passports and who does not, and what that said about passport checks. This was why, at that time (but not now), such checks were illegal (under the equalities legislation in force then) as well as racist.

And here we are, 30 years on, with that racism embedded in the system and, perhaps, about to get another boost with the introduction of eVisas.



Tackling refugee homelessness in Islington

Arthur Lewis, integration and inclusion officer with Islington Borough Council, explains how they tackle refugee homelessness.

In September 2023, Islington leveraged existing partnerships and innovative housing solutions to find last-minute accommodation for refugees in an impossible landscape. Now, enabled by the government pilot of the 56-day move-on period, Islington is looking towards holistic resettlement services as a sustainable route to eliminating refugee homelessness.

Since the start of the Home Office's streamlined asylum process in September 2023, more than 1,000 people have left asylum accommodation in Islington, of whom 738 have approached the council as homeless following a positive decision. Almost all asylum seekers placed in Islington are men, and most are under 35.

Islington had already established a presence in the borough's asylum accommodation, providing welfare support to people awaiting their decisions. In March, by comparing nationality data provided by the Home Office with the eligibility criteria for the Streamlined Asylum Process, Islington predicted the coming requirement for move-on support and began planning for a resettlement approach.

However, as evictions increased, the Home Office began a new, hard-line approach to the 28-day move-on period. With so many people looking for accommodation and such a short time until their eviction, many faced homelessness at a time that should mark the start of a safe life in the UK.

Islington's planned approach quickly became an emergency response with four key elements:

- Early identification of people potentially in priority-need through communication with partners and weekly drop-in sessions
- A refugee housing solutions team providing housing advice and sourcing accommodation options for newly granted refugees
- Identifying funding streams for deposits and landlord incentives
- Establishing and communicating a clear housing pathway for newly granted refugees:
 - Over-35s assisted to find accommodation in London
 - Under-35s assisted to find supported exempt accommodation outside London
 - Those in priorityneed provided with temporary accommodation where other solutions are unavailable.

The resulting emergency response brought some excellent results and averted a huge amount of homelessness, placing 130 under-35s and 117 over-35s in accommodation. Many newly granted refugees were also placed in temporary accommodation. However, with such a short time to find housing and limited options for people under-35, some refugees still became homeless or slept rough.

Before the crisis began, Islington had already established a programme of support services for asylum seekers, including an ESOL programme, welfare services, and in-reach primary health care. These services were funded by NHS and Home Office grants and led by internal expertise built from long standing experience of running NRPf services and Afghan resettlement.

Islington is now building on those services to offer a holistic package of resettlement for refugees in asylum hotels, recognising the many facets of UK life to which people may have to adjust. This package will include:

- Housing education: Helping people to understand how to find housing in the UK and what support the council can provide
- Housing services: Finding housing solutions, paying deposits, and relieving homelessness for those in priority need
- Legal services: Providing advice and making urgent applications, such as lodging appeals or reinstatements of support. This is particularly important when assisting people who have had negative asylum decisions
- Benefits advice: Signposting to assistance with basic applications and help with complex applications from Islington's in-house income maximisation team.
- An ESOL programme: Lessons delivered directly by teachers, conversation classes with volunteers, and signposting to additional opportunities in London
- Health services: In-reach GP sessions, mental health talking therapies, and health literacy education.
- Welfare services: Recreational activities and a team of caseworkers.
- Employment services: Employment skills sessions and CV writing from Adult Community Learning and personalised job coaching from Islington's in-house refugee employment team.

These services require strong relationships between statutory partners, such as the NHS, Home Office and DWP, internal relationships between housing, resettlement, and many other teams, and the voluntary sector, such as the Union Chapel who deliver welfare services in Islington and Praxis who deliver legal support.

High quality resettlement services will also incorporate refugees into their design and delivery. Already, football sessions, ESOL classes and welfare services are being co-delivered in Islington. The model has been hugely successful and is one that we intend to expand, particularly with group education in multiple languages.

In the last three years we have seen a system which pitted local authority priorities against Home Office priorities. The trial 56-day move-on period is a significant step towards a more joined-up approach to asylum, as it gives local authorities more time to assist their residents. By working together and promoting independence through resettlement services we can achieve a sustainable solution to homelessness amongst refugees and move towards a humane system which works for the country as a whole.



Asylum accommodation and local connection for rehousing purposes

Asylum seekers are reportedly being dispersed out of Manchester, where they have been accommodated in hotels for more than a year, and where they would ideally like to remain, a matter of weeks before they get their grant. They are then told that only their new local housing authority has a homelessness duty towards them. Liz Davies KC, of Garden Court Chambers, writes in response to this situation.

When a person applies for homelessness assistance under Part 7 Housing Act 1996, the question of whether they can be referred to another local housing authority under local connection arises at two stages: where the applicant is eligible for assistance and is homeless, and so a relief duty under section.189B(2) Housing Act 1996 would be owed; and where the applicant is eligible for assistance, homeless, has a priority need, has not become homeless intentionally and the relief duty has come to an end, so the main housing duty at section.193(2) Housing Act 1996 would be owed.

In both cases, the original local housing authority can only refer to another local housing authority if:

1. Neither the applicant nor any member of her or his household has a local connection with the local housing authority to which she or he applied; and
2. Either the applicant, or any member of her or his household, has a local connection with the district of another local housing authority; and
3. There is no risk of domestic abuse or other violence to the applicant or any member of her or his household in the district of the other local housing authority (s.198(2) Housing Act 1996).

An asylum seeker's last accommodation provided by the Home Office under section 95 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 gives rise to a local connection to the local housing authority in the district in which that last accommodation was situated (section 199(6) Housing Act 1996). An asylum seeker may also have a local connection with any local housing authority on the basis of other forms of local connection: residence, employment, family circumstances or special circumstances (section 199(1) Housing Act 1996). No one local connection has priority over another.

The local housing authority considering what local connection the applicant may, or may not, have must decide on the basis of the facts at the date of its decision (not the date of the application for homelessness assistance). Interim accommodation provided under Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (homelessness) constitutes "residence" for the purposes of local connection (Mohamed v Hammersmith & Fulham London Borough Council [2001] UKHL 57, [2002] 1 AC

547, HL). Accommodation provided to asylum seekers by the Home Office under Part 6 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 does not constitute residence, as it is not residence of the person's own choice (Al-Ameri v Kensington & Chelsea Royal London Borough Council [2004] UKHL 4, [2004] 2 AC 159, HL).

The starting point is whether the applicant (or any member of her or his household) has a local connection with the local housing authority to which she or he has applied. If there is such a local connection, no referral can be made to another local housing authority.

An application for homelessness assistance can be made to any local housing authority. There is no threshold requirement that the applicant must have a local connection to that local housing authority. The issue of local connection only arises, at the earliest, when a local housing authority has made inquiries and is satisfied that the applicant is owed the s.189B(2) Housing Act 1996 relief duty.

In the circumstances above, if an asylum seeker is dispersed to section 95 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 outside Manchester, and is subsequently granted refugee status, she or he will have a local connection with the district outside Manchester to which she or he was dispersed. She or he will not have a local connection to Manchester on the basis of s.95 accommodation (because the local connection only attaches to the last s.95 accommodation).

However, if she or he has a local connection to Manchester on any other basis, such as residence after leaving s.95 accommodation, employment, family associations or special circumstances, then an application for homelessness assistance could be made to Manchester and Manchester would not be able to refer. If the application for homelessness assistance is made to the local housing authority in whose district the most recent s.95 accommodation was situated, the applicant will have a local connection with that local housing authority and any local connection to another local housing authority is not relevant.

The analysis above applies across all local housing authorities in England and Wales. Manchester is only referred to because the example referred to Manchester.

2025 must see the end of right to rent

Tilly Smith from Generation Rent calls for an end to right to rent checks (all names mentioned in the article have been changed).

"You're not from here, you don't have a UK passport, and you can't prove your right to rent, you don't have previous renting history that your former landlord can give you a reference, it's been difficult for you to get accommodation. So, what most of us usually do is stay in Airbnb for more than three months."

This is what Adebola told us in roundtables we held in April 2024 with key workers. Right to rent was not the main focus of the sessions, but again and again it came up as an issue.

Another renter, Sam explained: "I had a friend that moved over from Belgium, who had a right to live and work in the UK. But we found that the fact that she was coming from Belgium, and she had a Belgium address, we were getting landlords saying, 'Well, we can't take you on, I don't want to have to go through the right to rent checks'.

A third renter, Margaret said: "I was new in the UK and the landlord said, in order for him to give me the house, I'll have to pay for six months. I had right to rent but, he said, because I was new the only way I could get the house was to pay six months deposit. And because I was desperate... I had to pay the six months' rent to get the house."

Right to rent checks, a part of the hostile or compliant environment policy, were introduced in 2014. Under the policy, landlords are legally required by the government to check their tenant's immigration status to confirm that they have a right to rent in England. Those caught out by the scheme can face a fine of up to £20,000 or a prison sentence of up to five years.

After more than ten years of right to rent, evidence has mounted showing the negative impact it has on the lives and wellbeing of many people and families who were not intended to be impacted by this policy. Namely, people who do in fact have the right to rent in England and minority ethnic people.

Although landlords and agents must not make assumptions about who has the right to rent, [government research](#) in 2022 found that 25 per cent of landlords were unwilling, on principle, to let to non-British passport holders, even though they would have the right to rent here.

More recently, [research conducted by the Tenancy Deposit Scheme](#) (TDS) Charitable Foundation in June 2024, based on a survey of over 2,000 landlords, found that around a quarter (24 per cent) said they felt unable to rent to non-UK passport holders.

Of these, over half (56 per cent) cited the risk of civil penalties as a result of the right to rent policy and 47 per cent said they found the right to rent checks too difficult or time consuming.

The impact that this policy is having on people in need of a home is extremely concerning. The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI), for example, [found that it takes twice as long](#) for Black and minority ethnic groups and migrant peoples to find a home to rent compared to a white British person.

As well as this, in a mystery shopping exercise conducted by the JCWI, out of 150 enquiries from potential tenants who asked landlords to conduct an online check, 85 per cent received no response.

There are of course a number of reasons why a landlord or letting agent may not rent to someone born abroad. However, right to rent remains a permanent thorn in the side of every migrant person looking for a home to rent. Simply put, many landlords are too worried to rent to migrant people, for fear of accidentally renting to someone who does not have the right, or they are just unwilling to engage with government right to rent checks.

For many who are unable to get a landlord to rent to them the only options are to stay in extremely pricey hotels or holiday-lets, to be forced to live in exploitative living arrangements by predatory landlords (in what is often referred to as the shadow rental market), or homelessness. This 'choice', if it can be called that, is not one anybody should be forced to make.

Removing right to rent would not solve all problems that migrant communities face in finding safe and secure homes, but it would bring an end to one obstacle which impacts all migrant renters in England.

At Generation Rent, we are campaigning to end these discriminatory checks, so that each and every one of us is able to live a happy, healthy life in a good-quality home. We are fighting so that 2025 finally sees the end of right to rent.

To find out more about this topic, [read our report here](#). Interested in supporting our fight against discrimination? [Sign up here](#).

Migrants and housing in the UK

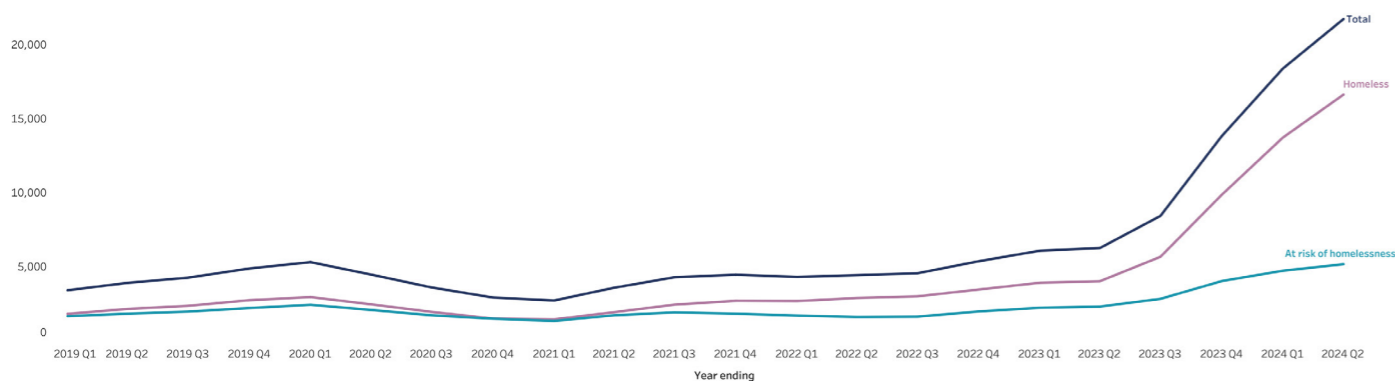
The Migration Observatory has published a [new edition of its briefing](#), which summarises what we know about migrants and the UK housing market.

Key points are:

- People born abroad had lower homeownership rates than the UK born (43 per cent versus 67 per cent). The foreign-born were more likely to be in the private rental sector but had similar levels of participation in social housing.
- Migrants' homeownership rates increase over time: In 2021, 68 per cent of foreign-born people who arrived in the UK at least 20 years earlier owned their own home, compared to 17 per cent of those who had arrived in the past five years.
- Social housing allocations in the UK are not made on the basis of immigration status or nationality. In 2021, 15 per cent of people living in social housing were born outside the UK, lower than the foreign-born share of the UK population.
- There is some evidence that migration has contributed to increases in average UK house prices.
- Migrants and UK-born households living in privately rented homes in London spent more than a third of their net income on rent.
- Households where at least one of the adult members was foreign-born were more likely to be in overcrowded conditions.
- In the financial year 2023/24, non-UK citizens were the head of 22 per cent of households assessed as being either homeless or at risk of homelessness.



Number of households eligible for homelessness support after being required to leave asylum accommodation
England only



Source: MHCLG Statutory homelessness live tables, April 2023 - June 2024, England: Tables A2P and A2R.

Note: Households at risk of homelessness are owed a prevention duty, while households deemed homeless are owed a relief duty. The figure for 2024 Q2 is provisional.



Latest on refugees fleeing world crises

Still no UK help for refugees from Palestine

The Scottish Green Party [joined new calls in December](#) for the UK Government to create safe routes to the UK for those fleeing the war in Gaza, like those available to Ukrainians. But the government's response still helps only UK citizens rather than offering any wider assistance, even to children in Gaza urgently needing medical treatment after Israel's destruction of its hospitals. The UN's children's fund renewed its call for [urgent action](#) to save children in Gaza.

[One in six of the world's refugees is a Palestinian](#): according to the UN, the plight of Palestinian refugees remains the longest unresolved refugee crisis in the world.

Look [here](#) for the Refugee Council's guidance on Palestinian refugees. See the [Autumn newsletter](#) for the limited UK help for evacuees from Lebanon.

Response to the crisis in Syria

In December, Islamist militant group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham and allied factions seized control of the Syrian capital Damascus. On 9 December, the home secretary paused asylum decisions on cases from Syria. She said:

"We know that the situation in Syria is moving extremely fast after the fall of the Assad regime. We have seen some people returning to Syria, but we also have a very fast-moving situation that we need to closely monitor. And that is why, like Germany, like France, and like other countries, we have paused asylum decisions on cases from Syria while the Home Office reviews and monitors the current situation."

Although there are reports of refugees returning to Syria, there is still considerable violence and persecution of minorities, creating uncertainties around the stability of the country. The Home Office says that the situation is under review and it will issue further updates.

Conservative MP Robert Jenrick argued that Syrian refugees in the UK should now "go home".



News on Afghan refugees and asylum seekers

- *The Communities for Afghans project.* This will support the resettlement of households eligible for Pathways 2 and 3 of the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) to the UK. [Revised policies](#) have been issued for checking suitability of sponsors and matching eligible households to offers of accommodation.
- *Briefing on Afghan asylum seekers and refugees in the UK.* Migration Observatory's [new briefing](#) on the migration of Afghan asylum seekers and refugees to the UK has data on the numbers arriving via small boats, and those given protection in the UK under the two main resettlement schemes.
- *Afghan homelessness.* [Management information](#) on homelessness duties owed by English authorities to households resettled in the UK through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) show that 1,074 households were assisted in the period 1 July - 31 October 2024.
- Asylum for Afghan women might not be so straightforward in future. Activists fear governments will come under pressure from the populist right and consider third country repatriation, [says Politico](#).

Ukrainian migration to the UK - latest news

The government has [three schemes](#) which have brought over 215,000 Ukrainians to the UK. You can see details of the help available on the [housing rights website](#).

Data on homelessness among those housed under the Homes for Ukraine (HFU) or family schemes in England is provided [here](#). As of 31 October, 10,980 households had been dealt with as homeless, two-thirds of them (over 7,000) because hosting arrangements under the HFU broke down or ended (the figures are likely to be underestimates, as many councils are not submitting data).

The government is also [producing statistics](#) on Ukrainians in employment. By September 2024, some 48,800 were in work.

Policy changes came into effect on 1 October covering three areas of the Ukraine scheme, "thank you" payments, unaccompanied minors and fraud.

- Sponsors who are in close relationships with their guests are no longer eligible for "thank you" payments
- Unaccompanied Ukrainian children already living in the UK with a close family member should not be treated as a Homes for Ukraine sponsorship
- Guidance has been issued on how to avoid fraudulent sponsorships or the misuse of the scheme. There is guidance for [councils](#), for [sponsors](#), and for [guests](#).

The [Ukraine Permission Extension \(UPE\) scheme](#) will be open for applications on 4 February 2025. A Ukrainian national, or the family member of a Ukrainian national, living in the UK with existing permission on one of the Ukraine schemes, may be eligible to apply for UPE to continue living in the UK for up to a further 18 months.

Home Office minister Lord Khan [wrote to local authorities](#) with an update on "thank you" payments.

Payments for eligible hosts will be extended for the 18 months they are covered by the visa issued under the UPE scheme and will then discontinue. The funding is designed to provide guests and sponsors with time to plan to live independently. Hosts will be signposted to the "rent a room" scheme for those who wish to convert their lodging arrangements with their sponsors. Guests are eligible for universal credit to assist in these costs. With effect from 1 April, thank you payments will be paid at a flat rate of £350 per month.

Hong Kongers in the UK

[Working it out: Hong Kongers, employment and the cost of living](#) is a report by British Future, drawing on detailed interviews with recently arrived BN(O) Hong Kongers. It examines the challenges that some face in finding employment and coping with rising living costs.



Hotels, military bases and barges - still in use

Among continuing reports of high costs and poor accommodation for asylum seekers, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee announced [an inquiry into asylum accommodation](#). It will accept evidence until 3 February.

Experiences of living in hotels as asylum seekers

The Mental Health Foundation has produced a [video](#) where four asylum seekers share their experiences of living in a hotel long-term, how this has affected their mental health and tips and advice for coping.

Asylum seekers whose hotel accommodation in Rotherham was attacked in the summer, [told the Guardian](#) about the impact it has had on their lives.

BBC's File on 4 [investigated](#) the government's plan to stop the use of hotel accommodation for asylum seekers, hearing from those who live in the hotels and from people who live nearby.

Wethersfield base to house hundreds more migrants after Starmer vowed to close it

The Home Office has confirmed it is [looking into ways to expand an ex-RAF base](#) to take in more migrants after Sir Keir Starmer vowed to close the Essex facility. RAF Wethersfield, which currently houses around 540 migrants, sparked outrage among local politicians when first used.

Asylum seekers to be housed in disused care homes and student digs

The Guardian [reports](#) that asylum seekers will be housed in disused care homes and student digs under a Home Office plan to find 800 new accommodation sites and cut a bill that has risen to £5.5 million a day.

Lou Calvey, director of the charity Asylum Matters, said: "News that government intends to open asylum accommodation in disused care homes and student blocks is deeply concerning. People should be accommodated in our communities with a clear, developed, support offer. Government need to be working with communities, investing in them, to ensure places of welcome."

Bibby Stockholm barge now empty

The last asylum seekers have been moved out of the Bibby Stockholm barge: "a symbol, according to its critics, of all that is wrong with government asylum policy". *The Guardian* [interviews some of those who were forced to move there](#). One said that "they dreamed they were disappeared from the UK in the dead of night, the boat slipped from its moorings by the Home Office, drifting into the open sea towards Rwanda".



Latest news on tackling domestic violence and trafficking

New Home Office minimum standards for responding to domestic abuse in the asylum system

The government published new “minimum standards” setting out the role and responsibilities of the Home Office and its subcontractors and what actions should be taken when there is a disclosure of domestic abuse in the asylum system. It references safety, confidentiality, consent and that the victim/survivor should make an informed decision on what happens next and what accommodation is suitable for them.

Some key points are:

- If a survivor/victim is in Home Office accommodation, they should have a choice to either stay or be moved, and their request should be accommodated as much as possible. Their preferences on location and whether they should be in self-contained accommodation, etc. should also be considered. If suitable accommodation can't be secured immediately then a plan should be put in place.
- Accommodation for survivors/victims should be single gender.
- Transport should be organized in a safe manner, avoiding women being picked up late at night with little information.
- The victim/survivor should choose what happens next.
- The Home Office can pay for asylum seekers to enter refuges and the refuge can invoice the Home Office's safeguarding hub at the same rate as that paid for those on universal credit.
- In urgent cases, the accommodation provider should just be carrying out the move; they don't need to wait for Home Office approval if there are safeguarding risks.
- There are no set timeframes in the policy, but actions are to be carried out as soon as possible – and immediately if risks are high.

Pre-settled status and the domestic violence concession

The DWP advises on a [court case](#) in which the appellant with pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme claimed universal credit. She had separated from her partner due to his domestic violence. As a result of the case, DWP made a concession that the right to reside rule should be disapplied in the appellant's case under section 3 of the Human Rights Act 1998. This is because the appellant was discriminated against as she was not able to benefit from the Destitution Domestic Violence Concession even though her circumstances were comparable to a person who had been given leave under that concession and who qualified for universal credit on the basis of that leave.

The DWP conceded that the difference in treatment was not justified.

Changes on dealing with survivors of trafficking

[Free Movement](#) explains changes to the policy on granting survivors leave to remain once they have received a positive “conclusive grounds” decision, which is the second and final stage of the trafficking identification process.



“No recourse” and migrant destitution

NACCOM's annual briefing paints a shocking picture

NACCOM's [latest data briefing](#), Understanding destitution and homelessness in the asylum and immigration system, paints a comprehensive – and shocking – picture of the extent, impact and root causes of migrant destitution and homelessness in 2023/2024. It shines a spotlight on the increasing complexity of service provision in the sector, as voluntary organisations adapt to a turbulent policy landscape. The briefing also lays out a set of recommendations for policy reform to ensure that the asylum and immigration system doesn't actively drive up levels of destitution and homelessness, as it is currently doing.

These are the headlines (and you can read more in [Bridget Young's article on page 6](#)):

- 4,146 refugees and migrants were accommodated by the network in 2023/24 – the highest number ever recorded by NACCOM
- 99 per cent more refugee adults experiencing homelessness needed support
- 125 per cent more people were rough sleeping in 2023/24
- Over half a million nights of accommodation were provided by NACCOM members
- 1,257 people with NRPF were accommodated
- 4,151 people could not be accommodated

Here are links to the various resources:

- [NACCOM data briefing executive summary](#)
- [NACCOM full data briefing](#)
- [Press release](#)
- [Media toolkit for NACCOM members](#)

Why reform of ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ conditions would be good for London and the UK

New Centre for Social Policy Studies research for Trust for London on the impact of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) says there is No reason for No Recourse.

The report finds a clear link between NRPF and poverty. New estimates show that 208,000 households covered by an NRPF condition are at risk of needing support to avoid destitution and 64,000 households are likely to be subject to NRPF conditions and already be living in poverty. Within London, the research estimates that 120,000 households are subject to the NRPF condition and are at risk of destitution and that 36,900 households are in poverty in London while subject to the NRPF condition.

More news on “no recourse”

- High Court finds no lawful system in place for expediting change of conditions applications. *The High Court* has found that the home secretary does not have an adequate system in place for processing change of conditions application to reduce, to a reasonable and proportionate minimum, the risk of inhuman and degrading treatment caused by the “no recourse to public funds” condition. The case is [SAG & Ors v Secretary of State for The Home Department \[2024\] EWHC 2984 \(Admin\)](#). [Free Movement](#) discusses the case [here](#).
- *Better Pathways for people with no recourse to public funds*. The 14-month [Better Pathways project](#), led by Brushstrokes Community Project, worked with people with NRPF in the West Midlands, and produced a series of briefing papers to assist practitioners working with NRPF cases.
- *Girl, two, who drowned in bin was failed by council, coroner finds*. Two-year-old Mazeedat drowned in a bin, after her mother had been treated in a “dehumanising” way because of her immigration status. Social workers declined to provide short-term foster care for Mazeedat Adeoye whose mother had overstayed her visa, [The Guardian reports](#).

Dangers of the new "eVisas"

Residents could be barred from UK due to eVisa confusion, say rights groups

Migrant rights groups warned that British residents could still be barred from returning from abroad because of the switch to digital visas, despite the government extending the deadline by three months.

The UK's new eVisa system faces several challenges, including:

- **Technical issues.** The system has experienced technical glitches, such as system downtime and user errors. Some users have reported that their eVisas contain incorrect information, such as incorrect expiry dates.
- **Exclusion from services.** Individuals who have difficulty accessing their eVisas may be delayed or denied access to housing, healthcare, or social benefits. This could be especially problematic for those who rely on timely access to these resources.
- **Home Office errors.** Some users have reported that Home Office errors have led to employers losing confidence in their immigration status.
- **System design.** The system's design appears to be prone to glitching because it relies on algorithmic logics to generate online status from multiple databases.
- **Impact on migrants' rights.** There are claims that the risks associated with the eVisa system could lead to a repeat of the Windrush scandal.

The Home Office has taken steps to address some of these issues, including:

- Extended deadlines - expired biometric residence permits and EU Settlement Scheme biometric residence cards will now remain valid for travel until at least 31 March 2025, an extension on the original 31 December deadline, provided the individual holds valid status.
- Setting up a [24-hour helpline for airlines](#)
- Streamlining the application process
- Providing specialist support services for vulnerable individuals
- An eVisa "[partner pack](#)" (including factsheets and posters).

Migrants Organise update on eVisas

Migrants Organise offer the following guidance for those having problems with eVisas.

Pre-November 2024 grantees with no biometric residence permit (BRP)

- This is the cohort of people who were supposed to get a BRP, but it didn't come or there were issues with the BRP which was supposed to be fixed, etc.
- It's causing confusion as the BRP team now insist that they don't produce BRP anymore and sends automatic response saying this.
- The Home Office should produce eVisas for this cohort. What is supposed to happen:
 - o BRP teams, e.g. BRP Delivery (BRPDelivery@homeoffice.gov.uk) should send the case to the eVisa creation team, who then creates the eVisa.
 - o Individuals should call the resolution centre who then pass it to the eVisa team. If they don't do this when you call, raise a complaint.
 - o At the moment, Migrants Organise recommend doing both - email the relevant team, and call the resolution centre (or if the wait time is too long, push it through the error webform).

Groups for whom will the Home Office create eVisas automatically

- Definitely all refugees (regardless of whether they have immigration documents or not), and people granted under human rights routes without valid documents (where the Home Office still accepts the application as valid).
- The eVisa set-up letter will be sent after the positive decision and they will use the registered email address.
- If a person doesn't have a registered email address or phone, they will use a "Home Office" inbox that needs to be used in the first instance. You will then need to use the error web form to provide the details. Click "no problem the error is something else", tick "email" and "phone" and provide the details.
- Migrants Organise asked for templates of the decisions and what it should be saying given that there seems to be a lot of confusing letters being sent out by the Home Office.

Escalation of complaints about eVisas

- There is still no external escalation route. Again, with the resolution centre you can try raising it as a formal complaint.
- The [webform](#) has now been updated to contain more options. There's also a lot of textboxes, so do not hesitate to push through an issue if it doesn't fall neatly in one of the options (i.e. just put the most appropriate explanation in the textbox - a person will be reviewing these)
- ILPA and 3million have a [reporting tool](#) - please report things there.
- Funded organisations (full list [here](#)) have a special helpline to the Home Office.

Third party checking issues

- Landlords, employers, and other statutory bodies also have access to Status Verification and Enquiries Checking (SVEC) where they can check status directly with the Home Office.
- Banks are still not accepting eVisas - the Home Office says they will keep working on this, and in the meantime have referred to [this guidance](#) they've produced for banks which says that eVisas should be acceptable.
- The DWP has provided the [instructions](#) they have sent out to DWP staff on this.

Migrants Organise has a new "[bust card](#)" to help migrants with eVisas explain their rights, if they are challenged.

Are you and your community worried about the transition to eVisas? Get in touch with leah@righttoremain.org.uk to request a legal education officer from [Right to Remain](#) to give a short presentation about eVisas at your community meeting.



Right to rent checks and the Renters' Rights Bill

A range of organisations wrote to housing minister Matthew Pennycook on 21 October strongly urging the Department to use the [Renters' Rights Bill](#) to abolish the right to rent scheme which is causing active discrimination in the private rental market in England. Other organisations are also working to improve the Bill's provisions, as they affect migrants.

Here are some of the key developments:

- The Bill's committee stage finished on 31 October and the report stage is due in January. At the committee stage there was discussion of Gideon Amos MP's amendment to extend the Decent Homes Standard to include asylum seekers' accommodation, which he withdrew in response to the minister's promise of clarification about the status of a MOD review of their accommodation standards. The minister claimed there are already enough safeguards in place to ensure decency of asylum seekers' accommodation. Carla Denyer MP (Green) challenged this assertion while expressing her support for Gideon Amos' amendment. The minister promised to follow up with her. The amendment was opposed by David Simmonds MP.
- Generation Rent (GR) co-leads the Renters Reform Coalition. GR wrote to Matthew Pennycook and David Bolt (the independent chief inspector of borders and immigration) regarding ending the right to rent; the latter has responded and offered a meeting. There has been no reply from Matthew Pennycook. GR's report on right to rent has been distributed to key people.
- London Councils published a briefing on the Decent Home Standard, shared with the Bill Committee; they are focused on influencing the Bill in the Lords.
- The Bill will create a Private Rented Sector Ombudsman service which all private landlords in England will be required to join. A group of organisations, including CIH, is pursuing an amendment to ensure the new ombudsman is accessible to migrants.

Published in November, Generation Rent's *It's Time to End Right to Rent Checks* is available [here](#). Do read the article by Tilly Smith on page 13.



Legal aid rates improve

Asylum legal aid rates set to increase for first time in almost 30 years

The Big Issue has the news on improved legal aid rates which will "ease the backlog" of cases, lawyers say. Legal aid rates, which fund solicitors to help asylum seekers through their cases, have not increased since 1996, a real-terms cut of 48 per cent. An announcement made by the government after a challenge from law firm Duncan Lewis means the rates will be uplifted to £69 in London and £65 outside London, or a 10 per cent rise - whichever is higher - for housing, debt, asylum and immigration work. Fixed-rate fees will also be increasing in proportion with the increase in hourly rates, and lawyers say the increase could be as much as 29 per cent.

More on legal aid:

- The legal system is failing asylum seekers, and wider solutions are needed as well as increased fees, [writes solicitor Sairah Javed](#) in *The Big Issue*.
- JCWI has produced [a practical toolkit](#) on securing access to justice.
- Windrush survivors need access to free legal advice to get the compensation they deserve. Southwark Law Centre's work shows why. Read more in the Law Centre's [new Annual Review](#).



Latest court cases on accommodation issues

Can asylum accommodation providers be prosecuted for not having an HMO licence?

Liz Davies KC, of Garden Court Chambers writes:

Clearsprings Ready Homes Ltd is contracted by the Home Office to provide accommodation to asylum seekers, who are provided with accommodation under Part 6 Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Clearsprings was prosecuted by Swindon Borough Council for breach of Management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (England) Regulations 2006. A preliminary issue arose as to whether Clearsprings was a “person managing” as defined at section. 263(3) Housing Act 2004. The definition focuses on receipt of rents or other payments from persons who are in occupation of the house in multiple of occupation. Clearsprings’ payments are received from the Home Office, not from the asylum seekers in occupation. The District Judge decided that Clearsprings did fall within the definition and that the prosecution could continue. Clearsprings brought a judicial review claim against the District Judge’s decision.

The Divisional Court held, in *R (Clearsprings Ready Homes Ltd) v Swindon Magistrates* that Clearsprings did not fall within the definition of “person managing”. However, it left open the question about whether, alternatively, Clearsprings was a “person having control”, and thus continue to be subject to the Regulations. That is a question that will be determined by the Magistrates’ Court in the course of the prosecution.

Homelessness eligibility for pre-settled status holders

In the case of *Fertre v Vale of White Horse District Council*, Ms. Fertre challenged the Vale of White Horse District Council's decision to deny her housing assistance based on her pre-settled status (PSS) under the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement, arguing that this status should grant her the same rights to housing as a British citizen.

The High Court ultimately ruled against her in July, finding that pre-settled status alone did not entitle her to a housing allocation under the Housing Act 1996.

The Court of Appeal has now agreed to hear an appeal; permission was granted on the ground that PSS holders may be entitled to equal rights. The interveners at the High Court stage were all also given permission to participate in the Court of Appeal.

The earliest listing will be March 2025, but may well be later.



Other migration news

Can asylum seekers work while waiting for a decision on their case?

In October the government published an updated version of their guidance on permission to work and volunteering for asylum seekers.

Free Movement gives the lowdown on when and if asylum seekers can support themselves by getting jobs. The article provides an overview of the right to work rules for asylum seekers including reference to the latest changes such as the introduction of an Immigration Salary List.

Kalayaan has a new report, *Ready, Willing and Able*, the fourth in a series which sets out the case for the right to work.



Children with potential special educational needs and no educational support

Ariane Ordoobadi, public law caseworker at Southwark Law Centre, is taking on cases to challenge the fact that local authorities are failing to meet their duty under section. 22 of the Children and Family Act 2014 to identify children and young people in their areas who have or may have special educational needs (SEN), or who have or may have a disability.

If you come across any types of cases (Care Act, Housing, children-in-need assessments, etc.) whereby the local authority is assessing a family and should identify that there is a child or young person (up to 25 yrs old) who has or may have SEN or a disability, and who would benefit from an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment or special provision for education or training, but does not have one, please refer the case to ariane.ordoobadi@southwarklawcentre.org.uk. They are taking on cases from across all London boroughs to show that it is a system-wide issue.

It is likely that this issue will arise more often for families for whom English isn't their first language as thus this creates an additional barrier to navigating the system, or where the child is out of school or in between schools, and thus the school is unable to make a referral.

From Rooted to Recognised: Unblocking the Pathway to Citizenship

A new report from *Citizens UK* argues that new, quicker routes to citizenship would assist migrant integration. It makes recommendations for changes that can be made within this parliament as well as outlining principles for longer-term reform.

Section 3C Leave and employer responsibilities: a guide

Section 3C leave automatically applies when a person has made an in-time application to extend their leave to remain. RAMFEL recently won a significant case regarding digital proof of 3C leave.

However, there are countless cases where employees on Section 3C leave have been wrongfully suspended due to confusion about their right to work. In response, RAMFEL has created *Section 3C Leave and Employer Responsibilities: A Guide* to address this issue and provide clear guidance for employers.

This guide explains:

- What Section 3C leave is and how it ensures a person’s right to work
- How employers can use the Home Office’s Employer Checking Service (ECS) to verify status
- Why suspensions are unnecessary and how to avoid them.

RAMFEL hopes the guide will reduce the number of wrongful suspensions and ensure that employers are well-informed about their responsibilities.

Getting help from your local councillor

Councillors can be a very effective route for addressing housing-related problems in a quick way that doesn't cost anything. Housing rights' contributor Sue Lukes has a [podcast](#) on how to get the most out of your interactions with councillors.



Do you have any comments on this newsletter?

send them to policyandpractice@cih.org

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