

Housing Destitute Migrants

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Background to project

- JRF identifies causes of and solutions to poverty & influences to bring about lasting change
- Project to promote housing solutions for destitute migrants part of extreme exclusion strand of Housing & Poverty Programme
- UK wide study to define & enumerate destitution reports next year
- Working definition for this project - people with 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) - or perceived to be
- Project rooted in JRF work to identify & promote better management of housing and integration impacts of new migration
- Scoping of potential for replication of Hope Housing identified via Housing and Migration Network (2008 – 2011) as a model for housing destitute migrants

JRF's project

Small grant fund (£50K) and expertise to foster capacity, collaboration & cross-fertilisation by:

- Making links between HAs and groups housing destitute migrants
- Encouraging networking across sectors – hope to fund newly formed strategic alliance to run events & info.sharing
- Sharing expertise via networks e.g. NACCOM, strategic alliance
- Raising awareness of need & potential including amongst funders to encourage more and better giving
- Producing a report targeted at funders, investors and supporters to explain who we are talking about, interventions needed & legal implications.

Migration and destitution – data

- Very poor data – hopefully JRF study will improve this
- LSE study (updated 2009) estimated 618K undocumented migrants in UK – the central estimate between 417k to 863K! two-thirds in London
- CHAIN – data on rough sleepers’: 46% UK nationals; 40% EU nationals; 14% non EU nationals (911 of 6,508 in 2013/14)
- No comparable UK wide data

N.B. Many of non-EU homeless people could have status; not all NRPF but often perceived to be

Migration and destitution – focus

- Non-EU migrants with no recourse to public funds
 - People without documents
 - Over-stayer, irregular/undocumented.
 - people whose claims for asylum have failed, including those for whom the claim has not been fully assessed;
 - trafficked and forced migrants;
 - spouses of people with residency rights but whose relationships have broken down;
 - people who have entered the UK by clandestine means;
 - student and tourist visa over stayers
 - also refugees with status but without means due to bureaucratic delays

Case studies

- Based on real cases, anonymised and details removed
- Checked with sounding board for
 - Realism?
 - Accuracy?
 - Incidence?
- 14 in total, each with
 - Story
 - Status
 - What can she do?
 - The help she needs

Case studies: no documents

- Yvette and Olive
 - Have full rights but no papers/
 - Takes time and money to sort out
- Maria and Viktor
 - Trafficking often involves document theft
 - Route into services for trafficking victims but need immediate help and discussion about trafficking
- Abena
 - May need documents to “prove” status dependent on husband
- Gurbux
 - Homeless people often lose documents

Case studies: sorting out status/applying

Probably the largest group

- Gerry and Abraham
 - Fresh claim/judicial review for asylum
- Angie
 - Long residence/family life in UK
- Lily
 - Zambrano carer: numbers going up
- Abena
 - Family members of EEA citizens
- Maria
 - Trafficking victims

Case studies: time to make decisions

- Jo
 - Complicated options, family issue
- Besim and Gurbux
 - Run out of options
- Viktor
 - Needs help with understanding situation
- Maybe also Abena and Maria

Case studies: falling through the gaps

- Nandita and James
 - Included as example of emerging British needs
 - May increase with welfare conditionality
 - 3 month wait for claim introduced as measure against European migrants (v few cases of this!)
- Tariq
 - New asylum backlog
 - Reduction in services for new asylum seekers
 - Real concern about vulnerable new applicants
- Not included:
 - Newly recognised refugees
 - Many are homeless but circumstances better understood and some agencies do accommodate

What might an initiative look like?

- Operate at strategic & operational levels
- Collaboration & cross-fertilisation across housing, homelessness, migrant support, legal, VCS and faith groups
- Access to good quality advocacy support & legal advice
- Voluntary return as an option where appropriate
- Awareness-raising and training
- Effective sign-posting & collaborative case management
- Incorporate in-kind resources of Red Cross and other humanitarian charities, faith groups
- Improve knowledge & information systems through monitoring and evaluation
- Different forms of accommodation over time periods needed to regularise status; possibility of SROI approach ?
- Develop sustainability e.g. in housing for rent, joint working & statutory support

Funding – broad categories

- Campaigning & influencing – to gain recognition of problem & change
- Strategic – to improve & coordinate responses & use of resources
- Housing - for those with NRPF
- Legal – to improve routes out of destitution
- Subsistence – cash, food clothing & places to keep warm
- Role of community groups – to prevent homelessness & poor signposting & support participation

Campaigning & influencing e.g.

- Still Human Still Here – campaign to end asylum destitution
- STAR & regional asylum activism – back the SHSH campaign priorities at regional level e.g. motions passed by 10 LAs to support SHSH's objectives
- City of Sanctuary movement – growing and recently held a Sanctuary Day
- Migrant Rights Network – one of new national bodies addressing wider migrant group
- Changing Minds – funder collaboration

Strategic developments - what's going on

- Strategic Alliance of national migrant and homelessness agencies formed led by Homeless Link with BRC, Housing Justice, NACCOM, RC, RA & MRN to lead a national and 5 – 6 local events in 2015
- NACCOM looking to register as a charity and grow its development role
- Funder collaboration under discussion led by London Funders, & from ACF IBNs and JRF
- London Housing Network & Praxis' housing development work
- R&D projects to define housing and support models including outcomes and sustainability & legal provision (NACCOM & Praxis funded by Metropolitan Migration Foundation, HTF, Unbound)

Need more housing options

- Most people accommodated and supported by family and friends
- People often on streets for short periods of time but extremely vulnerable & at risk to being picked up by traffickers
- Use of poor and insecure housing e.g. beds in sheds
- Access to hostels etc limited without recourse to public funds
- Very few homelessness or housing providers make beds available at no cost but this is beginning to change
- Nightshelters & faith groups are key providers – sustainability?
- NACCOM – nascent network of 32 voluntary providers
- No. of charitable bedspaces offered falls far short of need (about 300 provided by NACCOM members & around 150 beds in London via nightshelters etc)
- Many destitute migrants may be able to regularise their position with good legal advice – complex & difficult to access

Forms of accommodation available for NRPF

- Hosting – individuals or households staying in people's homes
- Whole houses – donated by HAs, individuals, institutions e.g. CoE, social investors. Sometimes used for rent to refugees in housing need
- Donated bedspaces e.g. women's refugees, Emmaus 'solidarity beds'
- Religious houses
- Bedspaces as part of tackling homelessness/NSNO contracts – commissioned bedspaces?
- Other ideas: property guardianship, shared housing models
- How to pay for housing costs? Developing housing for rent to support sustainability?

Need more and better immigration advice

- Home Affairs Select Committee condemned culture of disbelief and bureaucratic failings resulting in destitution - over one-quarter of asylum cases successful on appeal
- Not all undocumented migrants 'illegal' or even NRPF but need correct legal advice & help to secure or update docs
- Advocacy support for asylum seekers to access Section 4 support
- Too many people use very poor private advisers or legal firms
- More 2nd tier support & innovative partnerships between law centres, housing & homelessness agencies
- Importance of Street Legal partnerships linking street outreach and immigration advice
- Improving signposting advice within communities

Example: Open Doors, Middlesbrough

- Christian based charity started with drop in service & 1 donated flat
- 15 houses housing:
 - 17 destitute asylum seekers for up to 1yr & support to make informed choice
 - 37 refugees paying rent
- Night shelter provision involving 6 churches in Middlesbrough & Stockton
- Daily drop in & advice services
- Sewing club
- Works in partnership with Justice First on asylum advice

Example: Street Legal

- Unique cross-sector collaboration (Praxis, St Mungos, Refugee Action) to reduce rough sleeping
- Vital partnerships with law centres (funded by LHF), faith & community groups, Choices AVR, volunteer & per input & HO
- Advice & casework via Street Outreach Teams & hospitals' Homeless Pathways Team
- Accommodation – developing as much provision for NRPF as poss. Praxis' housing specific post critical (Oak/MMF funded) but still not enough to ensure cases can be resolved more easily
- Training & capacity building – staff & community groups
- Monitoring & evaluation - incl link ups with CHAIN data