

Moving Forward

Local and national solutions for preventing refugee homelessness

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Homeless Link

NACCOM 
THE NO ACCOMMODATION NETWORK



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Foreword from Community Ambassadors

The move-on period is an important time in the journey of anyone seeking asylum in the UK. It could be a positive experience. For those who have received a positive decision, it could mark the beginning of a new time in their life, where they not only literally move on from asylum support, but also move on from past, often traumatic experiences and the journey that brought them here.

Instead, the process is full of challenges and difficulties, causing new problems which force people into homelessness and leave them vulnerable to exploitation.

This report is about all the problems with the current move-on process, and how it could be much better. As researchers with lived experience of destitution and immigration control, we have lived through many of the challenges discussed in this report. But we have also delivered several research projects over five years, interviewing many others who have been through this process, and sharing our findings through reports and speaking at events and conferences. For this project, we have gathered insights from across several previous research projects and worked with an illustrator, Ada Jušić, to produce an illustrated briefing, which captures real insights from people with lived experience about problems with the current move-on process and what a better system could look like.

A better move-on process would enable people to live independently, work and provide for themselves, and have somewhere safe to live. It would reduce impact on homelessness services, charities, local authorities, the NHS, and lead to healthier and more harmonious communities. It would be good for everyone.

This report lays out what needs to change for that to happen. We're proud to have been involved in this project, using our position as researchers with lived experience to amplify the voices of other people who have been through the same things. We hope it is widely read by people who make policy decisions at a local and national level, and we hope it leads to change – for a fairer, less hostile move-on process which doesn't push people into homelessness, but instead supports them to rebuild their lives and participate in their communities.



Acknowledgments

NACCOM and Homeless Link would like to thank NACCOM's Community Ambassadors and illustrator Ada Jušić for creating the illustrated briefing that served as a starting point for this report. Ada's designs feature on the cover of this report and in full on page 6, alongside quotes from research led by the Community Ambassadors.

We are also grateful to the frontline practitioners who generously shared their experiences and expertise throughout the research process, including during the engagement sessions held in Spring 2026.





Introduction and methodology

For someone who has spent months, or years, waiting for a decision on their asylum claim, being granted refugee status should be a moment for celebration, and the point at which life becomes more secure. In practice, a significant number of people find themselves homeless within weeks of being given protection in the UK.

A positive decision triggers a short transition out of asylum accommodation and into the wider housing system. Research has consistently identified this window – known as the ‘move-on period’ – as a pressure point in the asylum system and a key driver of homelessness among non-UK nationals.¹

The scale of the challenge has grown sharply in recent years. In 2024/25, 13,630 households in England were owed a homelessness duty by a local authority after being required to leave Home Office asylum accommodation, a five-fold increase on 2021/22.² In London, 18% of people newly recorded as sleeping rough in 2024/25 had come directly from asylum housing.³

Much of that increase can be traced to the acceleration of asylum decision-making at the end of 2023. As the Home Office worked through the backlog of outstanding claims, far more people were exposed to pressure points long documented by NACCOM's and Homeless Link's respective members and partners: a move-on period too short to secure both housing and an income, a fragmented and poorly communicated process for telling people what happens next, and a scarcity of affordable housing for single refugees who are rarely assessed as being in priority need.^{4,5} These pressure points remain, the Home Office is still making a high level of decisions on asylum claims (with a significant increase in 2025 compared to 2023), and homelessness among this group remains high.⁶

These issues are not inevitable, but the result of longstanding policy failures and a deliberately hostile environment that mean a high risk of homelessness is baked into the current asylum move-on process. The Government has defied evidence to set a 42-day move-on period, meaning people granted status still have inadequate time to find housing in a highly overstretched and unaffordable system. Asylum seekers continue to be denied the right to work in the vast majority of cases, harming their future employment prospects and leaving them more reliant on the welfare system after being granted status. ESOL provision is patchy and inaccessible in many places. There is still an inadequate central offer from the Government to prepare people living in asylum accommodation to navigate UK systems and access the support they need to successfully move on with their lives. Stretched local authority finances and insufficient funding for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) mean there is not always sufficient coverage of local services to fill in the gaps. And the Labour Government under Keir Starmer pursued a number of more recent harmful reforms to asylum and refugee policy, discussed further elsewhere in this report. Unless reversed by the new Burnham Government, these will further increase the risk of homelessness among asylum seekers and refugees.

On the ground, local authorities and VCS organisations are contending with the result of these failures. But as this report shows, successful local approaches to preventing and addressing refugee homelessness are still possible, and should be pursued as far as possible. Faced with a steady flow of people at risk of homelessness on leaving the asylum system, local authorities and voluntary sector organisations have built a range of responses from reactive measures developed at speed and under pressure, to more deliberate, preventative approaches refined over several years. This report describes that work and draws from it a set of principles that any area developing its own response might follow.

1. Qureshi, A., & Ormeike, A. (2026). *Closing the gaps: Immigration status and homelessness*. Institute for Public Policy Research. <https://www.ippr.org/articles/closing-the-gaps> — Wording follows IPPR's description of the move-on period as “a clear pressure point”.
2. BBC News. (n.d.). Number of homeless refugees in England soars, BBC finds. BBC <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cy9y3n43192o>
3. Combined Homelessness and Information Network. (2025). *Annual report: Rough sleeping in London 2024/25*. <https://data.london.gov.uk/download/2n88x/ecf7801d-9991426d-b0e9-693740033242/Greater%20London%20bulletin%202024-25.pdf>
4. British Red Cross & London School of Economics and Political Science. (2020). *The costs of destitution: A cost-benefit analysis of extending the move-on period for new refugees*. <https://assets.redcross.org.uk/82b1e254-5524-0172-0612-9ce813c7824c/d4d4c458-449f-48d8-8f29-d7bc45c431a1/The-costs-of-destitution.pdf>
5. NACCOM. (2018). *Mind the gap: Homelessness amongst newly recognised refugees*. https://nacom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NACCOM-Homelessness-Report_2018-10-24.pdf
6. The Migration Observatory. (2026). *The UK's asylum backlog*. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/the-uks-asylum-backlog/>

The starting point for this report is an illustrated briefing produced by NACCOM's Community Ambassadors, a group of researchers with lived experience of homelessness who have spent several years documenting the experiences of people leaving the asylum system. Building on their findings, and drawing on desk-based research and engagement sessions with local authorities and voluntary and community sector organisations, the report sets out what good practice looks like at each stage of the move-on journey, and what national government needs to do to make that practice possible everywhere.

Section 1 looks at how councils and the voluntary sector are using the period before a decision arrives to put the practical foundations for a successful transition out of the asylum system in place. Building English language skills, preparing people for work, opening bank accounts, connecting people to local services, and beginning conversations about housing well before a decision is made are some ways to help ensure that the move-on window itself can be spent securing accommodation, rather than completing groundwork that could have been done earlier.

Section 2 turns to the days and weeks that follow a decision, and to what a person needs in order to navigate them: clear, translated information about what is happening and what they must do; practical help with documentation, eVisas and Universal Credit claims; and proactive outreach that reaches people at the point of decision rather than the point of crisis.

Section 3 addresses the fact that many newly granted refugees, particularly single adults, will not be assessed as being in priority need. It sets out how some local authorities and their partners are nonetheless finding people stable homes through dedicated supported accommodation, hosting and lodging schemes, active sourcing of properties in the private rented sector, and financial support that broadens the scope of viable tenancies.

In a system with this many moving parts, no single service or organisation can prevent homelessness by itself. Section 4 examines partnership working and internal coordination. These arrangements, formal and informal, determine whether the various actors operate as a system or as a set of disconnected bodies, and they frequently make the difference between a smooth transition out of the asylum system and homelessness at the point support ends.

In his opening speech as Prime Minister, Andy Burnham issued his first instruction: 'to end rough sleeping in our country.'⁷ He subsequently announced a drive to offer everyone sleeping rough a route off the streets by Christmas.⁸ This report makes clear that if we want to end rough sleeping, we have to end homelessness driven by the asylum system. It therefore closes with recommendations for national government, outlining what is needed to make the local practice described here achievable everywhere, and to ensure that reform elsewhere in the asylum and immigration system does not undermine the outcomes government has itself set out to achieve. This includes the recent spate of reforms and proposed reforms to asylum and immigration policy that threaten to undermine the positive work being delivered locally across the country, Prime Minister Andy Burnham's pledges to end rough sleeping, national targets included within *A National Plan to End Homelessness*,⁹ and the forthcoming refugee integration strategy.

This report focuses predominantly on preventing and alleviating homelessness for newly recognised refugees, due to the challenges they face in transitioning out of Home Office accommodation and into mainstream UK housing and other systems once granted legal status. However, it must be acknowledged that there is also a significant risk of homelessness for those who have an asylum claim refused. These people have an even shorter window of time before they must leave asylum accommodation (21 days), and may be unaware of their legal options and entitlements, or unable to access them due to shortages in free representation.¹⁰ Many of those who initially

7. Prime Minister's Office. (2026, July 20). *Andy Burnham's first speech as Prime Minister: 20 July 2026* [Speech transcript]. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/andy-burnhams-first-speech-as-prime-minister-20-july-2026>

8. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2026, August 18). *Prime Minister launches national drive to get everyone in for Christmas* [Press release]. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-launches-national-drive-to-get-everyone-in-for-christmas>

9. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2025, December 11). *A national plan to end homelessness*. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-national-plan-to-end-homelessness/a-national-plan-to-end-homelessness>

10. NACCOM. (2023). *Refused? Experiences following a negative asylum decision*. <https://nacom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMBARGOED-17.7.23-NACCOM-Refused-Experiences-following-a-negative-asylum-decision-FINAL.pdf>

receive a negative decision will ultimately be found to have a legal right to claim asylum in the UK – between April 2025 and March 2026, approximately 40% of all asylum appeals resulted in the initial refusal being overturned and protection being granted.¹¹ The experiences of refused asylum seekers are explored in more detail in NACCOM's 2023 report, *Refused*.¹²

Methodology

The findings presented here draw on three strands of work, undertaken between August 2025 and August 2026.

The starting point for the report was an illustrated briefing produced by NACCOM's group of lived experience researchers, the Community Ambassadors. The Community Ambassador group worked with an illustrator, Ada Jušić, who also has lived experience of the asylum system, to produce an illustrated briefing depicting how the current move-on process works and what good move-on might look like. The volunteers had all previously been part of NACCOM's Community Research Programme, a space for people with lived experience of destitution and immigration control to design and deliver research into issues around immigration and destitution. The group worked between August and October 2025 to review their body of research from across a five-year period and gather insights around issues with the current move-on process, and how it could be improved. They identified six key areas: preparation before a decision, knowledge and understanding of the process and access to information, documentation issues, accommodation, employment, and other services. They pulled findings around these key areas and direct quotes from people they had interviewed, and shared these with Ada. Through a series of workshops, they then worked closely with Ada to plan and deliver the illustrated briefing that is included in this report, depicting the problems with the system as it currently is, and how certain changes could lead to a better, safer move-on process that prevents, rather than causes, homelessness.

The themes identified in this initial research informed the questions we put to participants in our engagement sessions, and the four stages around which this report is organised.

Alongside this, we conducted desk-based research to identify existing publications, research and evaluations of interventions relating to refugee homelessness and the move-on period. This included a mapping exercise of published research relating to the risk of homelessness posed by the move-on period, presented as a table in the Appendix. Separately we carried out a desk-based review to identify which examples of good practice in supporting people during the move-on period were available in the public domain. This was used to establish what is already well evidenced, where the gaps lie, and which practice examples merited further investigation.

We subsequently convened two online engagement sessions: the first attended by 21 participants from 19 voluntary and community sector organisations, and the second by 19 participants from 14 local authorities and two combined authorities.

Participants included local authority housing and homelessness officers and migration/resettlement leads, alongside frontline caseworkers and service managers from voluntary and community sector organisations supporting newly granted refugees at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The sessions explored what participants saw as the main barriers to successful move-on in their area, and what they had found to work in response. This was supplemented by evidence shared both formally and informally by members of NACCOM's and Homeless Link's respective networks.

Some contributions are included in this report without attribution at the request of the relevant organisation.

11. Matthey, E. (2026, August 27). *Faster asylum decisions, but at what cost?* [Blog post]. Bevan Foundation. <https://www.bevanfoundation.org/views/faster-asylum-decisions-but-at-what-cost/>

12. NACCOM. (2023). *Refused? Experiences following a negative asylum decision*. <https://nacom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMBARGOED-17.7.23-NACCOM-Refused-Experiences-following-a-negative-asylum-decision-FINAL.pdf>

Council housing waiting lists are years long
Can't afford deposits for private renting
Lack of awareness of charities offering accommodation

I've been on the housing list for two years

DEPOSIT REQUIRED

NO RIGHT TO WORK WHILE SEEKING ASYLUM

VOLUNTARY EXPERIENCE NOT ACCEPTED

JOB CENTRE

WARNING! CYGARS

Whether granted or refused, many become homeless after an asylum decision

People with status often lack knowledge of services that can help them

People who've been refused fear detention and removal
Lack of legal support and advice for people who have been refused
Legal process is complicated and hard to understand

Delays receiving documentation cause anxiety and stress

Can't apply for work or benefits without documents

While living in asylum accommodation:
Minimal, poor quality support

No continuity between services before and after decision

Can't work, can't save
Impossible to plan for move-on

Only 28 days to prepare for eviction after decision

More housing provision to bring down waiting lists!
Supportive local authority housing teams
Deposit schemes from local authorities
Well-resourced charities offering temporary accommodation

Referrals to support, advice, and accommodation at point of decision
Specific service from local authorities for help with move-on
More legal aid provision
Clear signposting to charities and community organisations

The right to work while seeking asylum would offer dignity, purpose, and independence

Dignity

ESOL PROVISION

RIGHT TO WORK while seeking asylum

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Move-on period begins after receiving all documentation

Can apply for work, bank account and benefits as soon as decision is received

Well-resourced community organisations offer support, volunteering opportunities and a sense of community

Person-centred support for people living in asylum accommodation

Continuity between support services before and after decision

At least 56 days to move-on after asylum decision

SECTION 1

Preparation and support while in asylum accommodation

Waiting in asylum support accommodation before receiving a decision on an asylum claim can be a time dominated by uncertainty, challenging conditions and a sense of being in limbo. For people living in hotels or large sites and receiving under £10 a week's allowance, or isolated in dispersal accommodation, there might be limited scope to access or engage with support services during this time. Without the knowledge or resources to tap into support pre-decision, there is a risk that people enter the time-limited move-on period with minimal preparation. This is highlighted by the fact that only one in ten newly granted refugees (10%) say they had all the information they needed after receiving their positive decision letter.¹³

However, the potential is there for this window of time to be used to support people awaiting a decision to begin building the knowledge, skills and connections they will need to move on successfully. Several voluntary sector organisations and local authorities have recognised this gap and are doing what they can to address it. Where the post-decision period is often dominated by the immediate task of finding housing and preventing homelessness, the pre-decision period offers scope for a wider range of activity to help people understand their rights and entitlements and how to access them, learn English, gain experience through volunteering, and prepare for what will happen once a decision arrives.

Previous research from NACCOM's Community Ambassadors suggests that people seeking asylum often have a limited understanding of the asylum process, their rights and entitlements within it, and the wider support that may be available to them in their local area.^{14,15} As one participant in the Community Ambassadors' 2025 research 'Treat Us Like Humans' put it:

“

The navigation of the new system here I think is what every refugee and asylum seeker needs. You know how we say that [this charity] is our family – it's just because they help us to navigate the system. They give us the information – to navigate the city, navigate the system of employment ... apply for college. If we can navigate the system, we can progress much faster.

”

Owing to the inconsistent availability and accessibility of local support, many people living in asylum accommodation are aware only of the government-commissioned support available from Migrant Help, whose remit is limited, and whose service some have found difficult to use.¹⁶

One significant obstacle preventing people from accessing support during this period is that local authorities often do not know who is living in asylum accommodation in their area. The Home Office does not alert local authorities when somebody is placed in asylum accommodation in their area, meaning councils depend on the contracted providers – Clearsprings, Mears, and Serco – sharing data with them, which frequently does not happen. In practice, as we heard in our engagement sessions, councils rely on people self-presenting either to them or to local charities and community groups, or on in-reach by council officers based in hotels and relationships with individual hotel staff. Identifying and offering support to people placed in dispersal accommodation (which might be a flat or a shared house) can be even harder, with some local authorities reporting going door-to-door to identify people in need of support.

13. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf

14. NACCOM. (2023). *Refused? Experiences following a negative asylum decision*. <https://nacom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMBARGOED-17.7.23-NACCOM-Refused-Experiences-following-a-negative-asylum-decision-FINAL.pdf>

15. Good Faith Partnership & NACCOM. (2024). *'Treat us like humans': A report on the lived experience of the asylum system*. <https://nacom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Treat-us-like-humans--FINAL-REPORT-January-2025.pdf>

16. Good Faith Partnership & NACCOM. (2024). *'Treat us like humans': A report on the lived experience of the asylum system*. <https://nacom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Treat-us-like-humans--FINAL-REPORT-January-2025.pdf>

While some people spend months or years in asylum accommodation before their case is decided, others may spend only one to two months in asylum accommodation before receiving a decision. People seeking asylum may also be relocated by the Home Office several times while they are waiting, out of reach of any support they were receiving, and separated from their college courses, volunteering placements, or GP registrations.

The Home Office has introduced two data sharing tools, the Place Based Visibility Tool and the Discontinuation Prediction Tool. These are intended to help councils plan resources around how many asylum decisions and discontinuation notifications are expected in their area, but neither provides the names, addresses, or other details that would allow a council to offer proactive support to an individual. Through the 'National Plan to End Homelessness' the Home Office has committed to ensuring councils receive information from accommodation providers for 100% of newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness — within two days of an asylum discontinuation of support notification, and within 14 days of family reunion visa issuance — so that a homelessness assessment can begin.¹⁷ Although this is a meaningful step, several local authority staff told us that it would be better to be notified when someone is housed in asylum accommodation in their area, rather than at the point of move-on, so that support can begin before the decision rather than afterwards.

Even where services are available and people know about them, the location of asylum accommodation and the cost of travel can put them out of reach. Isolation may also have a cumulative effect on people's capacity to engage at all, with links to anxiety and deteriorating mental health,¹⁸ emphasising the importance of proactive outreach from councils and local support services.

Some people arrive into the UK with very limited English, which can be a real barrier when it comes to understanding local systems, processes, and support services. Previous research carried out by NACCOM's Community Ambassadors emphasises the importance of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision for new arrivals in the country, with language skills being a major barrier to accessing employment for newly granted refugees.¹⁹ Meanwhile, in a survey by the London Refugee Advocacy Forum, 70% of respondents who had experienced homelessness said their English was a barrier when trying to access help after receiving refugee status.²⁰

Gaining English language skills helps unlock access to everything else that can facilitate successful move-on from asylum accommodation. Voluntary sector and local authority stakeholders in our engagement sessions emphasised that English language provision should begin as early as possible, ideally well before a decision. Yet there are a number of barriers to being able to facilitate this. National funding for ESOL has decreased, despite an increase in demand, resulting in courses often being over-subscribed and not running year-round.²¹ There is also currently a rule that people seeking asylum must have been living in the UK for six months before they are eligible for a fully funded ESOL course, excluding many people awaiting a decision.

The rule denying people seeking asylum the right to work undermines successful move-on for a range of reasons. Long waits for an asylum decision leave refugees deskilled and make it harder to find work, and without the means to prepare financially for life post positive decision or save for a rental deposit for somewhere to live.^{22,23} A survey of people with experience of the move-on period by the London Refugee Advocacy Forum similarly found that nearly nine in ten respondents (88%) believed that having the right to work before being granted refugee status would have helped them transition more quickly to independent living.²⁴ In lieu of paid work, the pre-decision period can be used for volunteering (although some VCS staff we spoke to to inform the report relayed that this can be complicated by the challenge of obtaining a DBS check for someone seeking asylum), pre-employment activity, and re-accreditation - yet these too carry the risk of being disrupted if a person is uprooted.

17. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2025, December 11). *A national plan to end homelessness*. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-national-plan-to-end-homelessness/a-national-plan-to-end-homelessness>

18. Good Faith Partnership & NACCOM. (2024). *"Treat us like humans": A report on the lived experience of the asylum system*. <https://naccomm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Treat-us-like-humans--FINAL-REPORT-January-2025.pdf>

19. Good Faith Partnership & NACCOM. (2024). *"Treat us like humans": A report on the lived experience of the asylum system*. <https://naccomm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Treat-us-like-humans--FINAL-REPORT-January-2025.pdf>

20. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf

21. Sutton, D. (2025, May 16). Why Labour's immigration plan misses the mark on ESOL. FE Week. <https://feweek.co.uk/why-labours-immigration-plan-misses-the-mark-on-esol/>

22. Focus on Labour Exploitation. (2024). *"I kept waiting and waiting": The realities of asylum seekers' restricted right to work in the UK*. <https://labourexploitation.org/app/uploads/2024/12/I-kept-waiting-and-waiting-The-realities-of-asylum-seekers-restricted-right-to-work-in-the-UK-Final-2.pdf>

23. Commission on the Integration of Refugees (2024) *From Arrival to Integration: Building Communities for Refugees and for Britain*. <https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/commission-report>

24. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf

The same London Refugee Advocacy Forum survey also found that nearly two thirds of those who contacted local authorities after becoming homeless (62%) did not understand their rights and entitlements, and just over half (54%) did not know what to do after being granted refugee status or how to seek support.²⁵ Given how short the move-on period can be, the pre-decision window provides an opportunity to help people seeking asylum to understand how the homelessness process will work once they are granted status.

This section sets out how some councils and voluntary sector organisations are already making use of this window to provide a warm welcome and orientation, build English language skills, prepare people for employment, put practical foundations such as bank accounts and GP registration in place, and begin conversations about housing well before a decision arrives.

Pre-decision welcome and orientation support

Our review of existing policy and research reports, and the engagement we undertook to inform this report, revealed a number of positive approaches that are happening among local authorities and local voluntary sector organisations.

The **Asylum Welcome Toolkit**, developed by the **Greater London Authority** alongside **British Future** and **Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP)**, contains guidance, case studies and resources aiming to support local authorities to improve the welcome support available to people seeking asylum.²⁶ Within this are several examples of how councils in London have developed strategies and approaches with the aims of understanding the needs of, and improving the social integration outcomes of, people seeking asylum living in their borough.

For example, **Barking and Dagenham Council** has developed an 'Asylum, Help Pack', translated into multiple languages and developed in collaboration with people seeking asylum via a series of focus groups.²⁷ The resource includes information about the borough and outlines peoples' rights and entitlements around asylum support, access to healthcare, education, employment, public services and public funds, whilst also signposting to mental health services, community-specific support and domestic violence support services. The council found that sharing the packs with GP surgeries and community hubs was an effective way to reach residents in dispersal accommodation and emphasised the importance of reviewing any information shared regularly to ensure it is up to date.

LSE's research found that building trust with people seeking asylum is crucial for councils, and that doing so requires councils to develop strategies for long-term engagement, including through regular information sessions, social events, dedicated hotel outreach or being a consistent presence in community hubs.²⁸ Partnerships with other local services, who may already have built trust with asylum seeking communities, is crucial.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) commissions a range of migration programmes across the city region, several of which begin working with people well before a decision is received. One initiative, the 'Refugee Welcome Programme – Work and Skills (RWP)' brings together local authorities and 60 voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver skills and employment support tailored to the specific needs of refugees and people seeking asylum.²⁹ **Mustard Tree** provide one of several welcome hubs for people claiming asylum in Greater Manchester, providing practical assistance, information, and a first point of contact for people seeking asylum in the city.

25. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf

26. Greater London Authority. (n.d.). *Asylum welcome toolkit*. London.gov.uk. <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/migrants-and-refugees/asylum-welcome-toolkit>

27. Greater London Authority. (n.d.). *Asylum welcome toolkit*. London.gov.uk. <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/migrants-and-refugees/asylum-welcome-toolkit>

28. Weihmayer, M. (2024). *How London's local councils build proactive responses to asylum*. London School of Economics and Political Science. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/geography-and-environment/research/lse-london/documents/Reports/LSE-Policy-Brief-on-Asylum-Report-FINAL.pdf>

29. Greater Manchester Combined Authority. (n.d.). *The Refugee Welcome Programme*. Retrieved August 13, 2026, from <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/homelessness-and-migration/migration-and-integration/the-refugee-welcome-programme/>

Newcastle City Council also described carrying out extensive work with people before they receive a decision on their asylum claim, such as supporting people with school applications, GP appointments, general integration support, access to informal ESOL provision, and applying for bank accounts. This has been made possible thanks to the partnerships and networks the council has built up over the years, which allow them to deliver a joined-up approach for those arriving in the city. Opening a bank account is a precondition for almost everything that follows a positive decision (i.e.: making a Universal Credit claim, getting paid employment, and paying rent) and is easier to do while a person still has a fixed address, given that several banks now allow people seeking asylum to open accounts.

Nationally, **City of Sanctuary UK** plays an important role in driving and sharing good practice across local councils and frequently produces resources and training to help councils expand and improve their approaches to welcoming people seeking asylum.

Volunteering, ESOL, and skill retention

In our engagement session, several organisations described running initiatives linking people in asylum accommodation to volunteering matched to their skills and interests.

Da'aro Youth Project, a community-led charity based in south London that supports young unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees from the Horn of Africa, runs a young volunteer scheme to prepare people for life and work experience. This is delivered alongside other youth activities, casework support, mentoring and advocacy opportunities aimed at building people's confidence and skills whilst they wait for a decision. The Youth Work Trainee programme runs for 12 weeks in total – six weeks of voluntary placement and six weeks of study, leading to a recognised qualification at the end.

Refugee Support Devon ran a successful project working with people awaiting an asylum decision who have a medical background. This project would link people in the asylum system with doctors for mentoring, support them to develop their English skills, and then assist them in applying for a job in the health sector once they received a decision. This project concluded at the end of May 2026 due to challenges in securing further funding.

Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (CARAS) works in partnership with non-refugee-specific charities to link people living in asylum accommodation to volunteering opportunities at those organisations. They also link the people they work with into employability initiatives and other activities in the wider community.

RefuAid offers interest-free loans for skills re-accreditation, with the aim of helping people seeking asylum and refugees to combat skill-loss and access high demand employment.³⁰

Islington Council works with voluntary sector organisations to match people seeking asylum to volunteering opportunities that suit their interests and skills, whilst **The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC)**, employs Outreach Officers who provide wrap-around support to asylum seekers and refugees, including troubleshooting, signposting, induction and orientation support, coordination with health, voluntary sector and council partners, support around housing and move-on, community integration activities, and safeguarding. Employability and volunteering opportunities may form part of this work.

RBKC also works with local partners to create opportunities for asylum seekers to access ESOL provision in community settings, including libraries, during their first six months in the UK when they are unable to access college-based provision. Another council cited in the LSE report described how a similar collaboration with a local adult education provider allowed it to secure a quota of ESOL places to offer to residents seeking asylum as soon as they arrived in the borough.³¹

30. RefuAid. (n.d.). *Home*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://refuaid.org/>

31. Weihmayer, M. (2024). *How London's local councils build proactive responses to asylum*. London School of Economics and Political Science. <https://www.lse.ac.uk/geography-and-environment/research/lse-london/documents/Reports/LSE-Policy-Brief-on-Asylum-Report-FINAL.pdf>

Having identified the gap left by formal ESOL provision in its area, **The Margins Project** has piloted a reading group project providing one-to-one support with the aim of helping people living in asylum accommodation reach Level 3 in English. Margins are currently reflecting on learnings from the pilot so that they can work with partners to tailor an enhanced, permanent service enabling them to reach as many asylum seekers and refugees as possible with varying literacy levels.

Pre-decision housing advice and information

Participants in the engagement sessions stressed the importance of local authorities relaying information about the reality of the post-decision housing system to people in asylum accommodation as early as possible. This should cover the social housing system, homelessness applications, priority bands and bidding, supported housing, and the private rented sector. Managing expectations from the outset was seen as crucial. Given that local authorities are unlikely to provide housing to many newly granted refugees, people need to understand their options in the instance that they do not receive an accommodation offer.

Considering the complexity of the UK housing and homelessness systems, we also heard how information needs to be pitched at a level people can process, without overwhelming them. Involving people with lived experience in the design and delivery of this information was seen as one way to strike that balance. Councils we spoke to also suggested that using trusted voices can help to challenge misinformation that may otherwise proliferate when people have a limited understanding of how local housing and homelessness processes work.

Our research identified several strong examples of local authorities and voluntary sector organisations delivering this work. **Tower Hamlets Council** has a dedicated resettlement and migration team, including council workers based in the asylum hotels in the borough. They deliver a welcome session and a series of courses on life in the UK, including housing information, facilitated by **Crisis**. The course runs monthly and is also offered to people in dispersal accommodation.

Islington Council ran monthly housing education sessions at their contingency hotels, with rotating translators, covering what to expect upon receiving status (these no longer run due to hotel closure), whilst **Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)**, through its Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project (RHPP) delivered by **Boaz Trust**, has funded tenancy ready training to prepare people seeking asylum for the responsibilities and practicalities of holding a tenancy in the UK (as well as other activities through the RHPP programme).³²

32. Boaz Trust. (n.d.). *GM refugee homelessness prevention project*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.boaztrust.org.uk/pages/gm-refugee-homelessness-prevention-project>

CASE STUDY: Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP) workshops and action pack

REAP deliver housing workshops as an add-on after people have participated in an ESOL class or Community Interpreters training. This is seen to be particularly effective as people are already in a learning environment from the ESOL work, and may have a better capacity to take in information. The interpreter trainees also gain knowledge that they can use in volunteering as 'housing connectors' to support REAP and Local Authority outreach staff in drop-in sessions in hotels.

REAP have also developed a comprehensive 'Get Ready to Find Your Own Room' Action pack delivered in plain English. It is not designed to be handed out, but to be most useful in workshop contexts and one-to-one discussions. It contains essential information about timelines and urgency, likely costs of rent and how much will be given in benefits, eVisas, the local authority's homelessness support and its limitations, how to find your own room in the private rented sector including how to use internet room-search sites, and encouragement to look outside as well as inside London. It also includes suggestions on how to make it easier to find a job after receiving a decision.

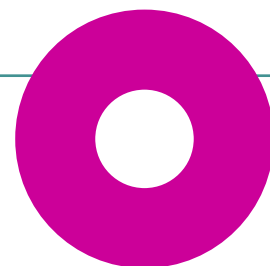
CASE STUDY: Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (CARAS)

CARAS, a refugee charity based in South West London, runs information sessions and workshops shaped directly by what people who have been through the asylum system say they find most useful to know. The monthly information and skills sessions were also developed with insight from the housing departments and refugee teams of the three nearest local councils, checked by housing solicitors to ensure all information was legally accurate, and shaped based on feedback from attendees. The sessions are aimed at those still awaiting a decision and those who have received one, and cover topics ranging from the homelessness application process, to private renting, housing costs, utilities, Universal Credit, ESOL provision and volunteering opportunities.

The workshops are designed to be fully ESOL-accessible. Sessions follow a translanguaging pedagogy to maximise accessibility – they are conducted in English but supported by translated materials and multilingual keyword sheets. Participants are seated alongside others who share a common language, and attendees are encouraged to discuss and share ideas in their own language. This enables those with stronger English skills to support their peers, encouraging collaborative learning.

In addition to the sessions, CARAS created an information guide and checklist of things to do during the move-on period. They have a team of volunteers who can provide one-to-one support with practical tasks, and a caseworker to support with more specialist issues.

Looking ahead, the programme aims to ensure support remains relevant, credible and informed by real experience by developing opportunities to pay people who have experienced the move-on process to deliver sessions and share their expertise.





Recommendations

For national Government

- Provide adequate funding to local authorities to support the commissioning or delivery of refugee homelessness support in their area. This should include adequate resources to provide pre-decision support, post-decision support, and support to open up access to housing with tenancy sustainment.
- Establish a consistent process to notify local authorities when someone is placed in asylum accommodation in their area, so that pre-decision support can begin and people in dispersal accommodation can be identified.
- Clarify the expectation that accommodation providers share information with local authorities as needed, with appropriate consent from residents, and monitor and enforce this where it does not happen.
- Give people seeking asylum the right to work after six months.
- Expand ESOL provision and scrap the six-month rule, so that people can start learning English as early as possible.
- Deliver a national refugee employability and integration programme — along the lines of the former Refugee Integration and Employment Service — which includes supporting people awaiting a decision to prepare for future employment.
- Make public transport free or affordable for people in the asylum system and newly granted refugees, so that they can reach services, education and employment.
- Improve the Migrant Help contract, providing more resource and capacity for consistent, accessible move-on support, including in-person help.



Principles for practice

For local authorities and their partners

- Commence pre-decision support with people living in asylum accommodation as early as possible, in partnership with specialist voluntary sector organisations. This should involve sharing accessible information about the UK housing and benefits systems, and other key parts of life in the UK, as well as a general understanding of what to expect when people receive their status.
- Develop volunteering schemes for people living in asylum accommodation, as well as pre-employment support and support with re-accreditation.
- Ensure that ESOL provision is sufficient to meet need, and can be accessed by people as soon as they arrive in the area.
- Develop free transport initiatives for people in the asylum system to ensure that people can access the services they need.
- Involve people with lived experience of going through the asylum system to co-design information resources, and, where possible, co-deliver sessions/support.
- Create a directory of local organisations offering support, highlighting who offers what and how to access it, to share with people living in asylum accommodation.

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SECTION 2

Post-decision navigation

Once a refugee receives a positive decision on their asylum case, the clock starts on a short time window – commonly known as the “move-on period” – before their asylum support is stopped, and they have to leave their accommodation. During this period, people are expected to obtain the documents that evidence their status, open a bank account, apply for Universal Credit, and find accommodation. Since 2002, the move-on period has been fixed at 28 days, although recent changes have seen a 56-day period piloted and then cancelled, before it was extended again to 42 days, as is explained in greater detail below. The inadequacy of this timeframe, combined with people's lack of knowledge of the systems, processes and requirements associated with it, and an inconsistent patchwork of support services across the country, means that there remains a steady flow of homelessness from the asylum system.

A broad body of evidence has demonstrated that 28 days is an inadequate timeframe in which to safely move on from asylum support and accommodation given the extensive challenges people face obtaining documentation, applying for Universal Credit and finding accommodation in the context of a wider housing crisis. A permanent extension of the move-on period to 56 days for all recipients of an asylum decision has long been a central policy demand of many voluntary and community sector organisations working in homelessness or refugee rights.^{33,34,35,36}

Such a rushed timeframe, combined with administrative issues, a lack of knowledge and inconsistent support, has the effect of driving homelessness among newly granted refugees: MHCLG data shows that in 2024/25, 13,630 households required to leave Home Office asylum accommodation were owed a relief duty.³⁷ As IPPR note, the move-on from asylum accommodation is a ‘significant pressure point in the homelessness system’.³⁸

Following a 251% surge in the number of cases of homelessness after leaving asylum accommodation in 2023/24 as decision-making was sped up to address the asylum backlog,³⁹ at the end of 2024 the government implemented a number of initiatives to ‘enhance the move-on process’, including a pilot of the long called-for 56-day move-on period.

The Government's independent evaluation of these move-on initiatives itself found that a 56-day move-on period ‘afforded greater flexibility to individuals needing time to navigate the process of exiting support’ and ‘reduced the pressure faced by both refugees and support providers, giving people more realistic time to secure housing, apply for Universal Credit, and open bank accounts.’

The extension was ‘widely welcomed by all participant groups’, who reported that it led to ‘reduced homelessness, fewer safeguarding concerns and lower stress among refugees’.⁴⁰

Despite this – and before the evaluation was concluded – the pilot was abruptly cancelled for most adults in September 2025. In March 2026 organisations learned that the move-on period had now been amended to 42 days, with no public announcement or explanation.⁴¹ Given that under the 28-day move-on period the average stay in asylum accommodation post-decision was 41 days, this move does not, in reality, represent a meaningful extension. Moreover, the frequent changes to the timeframe, and poor communication from the Home Office, have left organisations facing the additional challenge of dealing with the confusion and adapting at very short notice to changes which have a considerable impact on the ground.

33. Qureshi, A., & Omeike, A. (2026). *Closing the gaps: Immigration status and homelessness*. Institute for Public Policy Research. <https://www.ippr.org/articles/closing-the-gaps>

34. Refugee Council. (2026). *Getting it right: The importance of the move-on period for newly recognised refugees*. [https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/428/Getting it right - the importance of the move-on period - Refugee Council March 2026.pdf](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/428/Getting_it_right_-_the_importance_of_the_move-on_period_-_Refugee_Council_March_2026.pdf)

35. UNHCR. (2024). *An uncertain future: A journey through the move-on period. Experiences of newly recognised refugees in England*. https://www.unhcr.org/uk/sites/uk/files/2024-10/an_uncertain_future_a_journey_through_the_move_on_period.pdf

36. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. [https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good News Bad News - Refugee Advocacy Forum March 2026 Report.pdf](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf)

37. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2025). *Statutory homelessness in England: Financial year 2024-25*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2024-25/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2024-25>

38. Qureshi, A., & Omeike, A. (2026). *Closing the gaps: Immigration status and homelessness*. Institute for Public Policy Research. <https://www.ippr.org/articles/closing-the-gaps>

39. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (2024). *Statutory homelessness in England: Financial year 2023-24*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2023-24/statutory-homelessness-in-england-financial-year-2023-24>

40. National Centre for Social Research & Fortia Insight. (2026). *Evaluation of the initiatives to enhance the move on process*. Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process>

41. Refugee Council. (2026). *Getting it right: The importance of the move-on period for newly recognised refugees*. [https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/428/Getting it right - the importance of the move-on period - Refugee Council March 2026.pdf](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/428/Getting_it_right_-_the_importance_of_the_move-on_period_-_Refugee_Council_March_2026.pdf)

In addition to the insufficient timeframe, the bureaucratic process by which someone is informed of their asylum decision and the next steps they must take is unnecessarily complex and poorly communicated, causing additional confusion and barriers to safe move-on at an already chaotic and fraught time. Since the switch from Biometric Residence Permits (BRPs) to eVisas in 2024, newly granted refugees receive four separate communications. Firstly, their Home Office decision letter, which tells the recipient that they have permission to stay in the UK, and that their asylum support will “end soon”, but does not give a timeframe. Secondly, the information to access the eVisa, which should be received within 14 days of the decision letter, which provides the information needed to access their UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) account, eVisa and National Insurance Number. Thirdly, an asylum support discontinuation letter is sent, which gives formal notice of the end of asylum support. Finally, the accommodation provider contracted by the Home Office will serve a notice to quit asylum accommodation, which is a formal eviction notice which must give at least seven days’ notice.

This fragmented process causes problems. Receiving four separate communications at different times, in English only, creates confusion for many, especially given the limited English of many newly granted refugees. Additionally, there are widely reported delays with receiving letters, causing sequencing issues in the move-on process by preventing people from accessing their eVisa, which is a prerequisite for applying for Universal Credit and finding accommodation.⁴² More than one in four newly granted refugees (28%) surveyed by the London Refugee Advocacy Forum said that they faced issues with either their UKVI account or their BRP.⁴³ Approximately two thirds of these respondents (67%) who faced delays in receiving their UKVI account details subsequently became homeless. The shift from BRPs to eVisa was welcomed in principle by many, but technical issues, difficulties navigating the English-only system and a lack of digital literacy have caused many barriers to a smooth roll-out of the system.⁴⁴

Earlier research suggests that many people seeking asylum are unsure of the steps to take once they receive a decision, which may lead to them not accessing the support they need.^{45,46} Although the Home Office does provide move-on advice to newly granted refugees, the way that this information is delivered is generally considered to be inadequate.^{47,48} Official communications urging people to start their move-on plans are written only in English, whilst the one channel offering interpretation, the telephone advice delivered through Migrant Help and Reed in Partnership, provides only basic, non-localised signposting and cannot be initiated by the person themselves.

Given the confusing and bureaucratic nature of the move-on process, a newly granted refugee’s ability to move on safely from asylum support and avoid homelessness is closely tied to the local support available to help them navigate this process. As underlined by a recent MHCLG-commissioned report by the Centre for Homelessness Impact, there is wide variation in local authority practice and voluntary sector service provision across the country.⁴⁹ Weak institutional coordination between the Home Office, local authorities and systems that people move into, results in a postcode lottery in terms of support available during the move-on process.

As explored below, many local authorities have developed good practice in response to the challenge. This includes using staff capacity flexibly and facilitating strong inter-departmental coordination across refugee and housing teams, establishing integration teams offering navigational support, providing financial support for upfront housing costs, unlocking housing provision through partnerships or commissioning, and working closely with local voluntary sector organisations.

42. Refugee Council. (2026). *Getting it right: The importance of the move-on period for newly recognised refugees*. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/428/Getting_it_right_-_the_importance_of_the_move-on_period_-_Refugee_Council_March_2026.pdf

43. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf

44. Refugee Council. (2026). *Getting it right: The importance of the move-on period for newly recognised refugees*. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/428/Getting_it_right_-_the_importance_of_the_move-on_period_-_Refugee_Council_March_2026.pdf

45. NACCOM. (2023). *Refused? Experiences following a negative asylum decision*. <https://naccomm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/EMBARGOED-17.7.23-NACCOM-Refused-Experiences-following-a-negative-asylum-decision-FINAL.pdf>

46. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf

47. UNHCR. (2024). *An uncertain future: A journey through the move-on period*. Experiences of newly recognised refugees in England. https://www.unhcr.org/uk/sites/uk/files/2024-10/an_uncertain_future_a_journey_through_the_move_on_period.pdf

48. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. Refugee Council. https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/documents/427/Good_News_Bad_News_-_Refugee_Advocacy_Forum_March_2026_Report.pdf

49. Centre for Homelessness Impact, RSM UK Consulting, & Cordis Bright. (2025). *Systems-wide evaluation of homelessness and rough sleeping: Interaction with the asylum system*. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping/systems-wide-evaluation-of-homelessness-and-rough-sleeping-interaction-with-the-asylum-system>



Help and information in the days following a decision

The previous section set out how councils and voluntary organisations are using the pre-decision period to build people's understanding of housing, entitlements and what status will mean for them, in anticipation of the asylum decision.

VCS staff we spoke to described the value of a warm handover and reported better engagement when there was a continuity of support than where people were left to find their way to a new service after a positive decision. This model allows services to build trust with people navigating the asylum process, thus allowing the move-on window to be spent securing housing, rather than completing groundwork that could have been done earlier.

However, this is not always possible. It is common for people to be moved to another part of the country shortly before receiving their decision, breaking any continuity that has been built.⁵⁰ Meanwhile, with the move-on window being short and disorienting, move-on related information issued whilst someone awaits their refugee status is only effective if a person can act on it once the decision arrives.

A number of resources have been produced at a local level by voluntary sector organisations and some councils to meet the need for accessible, person-centred support and information in the days following a positive asylum decision. In 2025, SOAS conducted a comprehensive review of the resources developed in London, where a range of voluntary and community sector organisations and councils have invested in move-on guides, from written guides to short films and workshops.⁵¹ That report, and our own conversations with local authority and VCS practitioners, identified some clear principles for the effective delivery of information in the days following an asylum decision.

Translation is essential: where guides exist only in English, the people who most need them are least able to use them. Organisations including **Care4Calais**,⁵² **Asylum Welcome**,⁵³ **Boaz Trust**,⁵⁴ and **Praxis**⁵⁵ have worked with translators to ensure that their resources are available in a range of languages commonly spoken by people seeking asylum, while others have deployed Google's website translation function on their digital resources.^{56,57}

Whilst information about options is most effective when it is targeted, resources that simply list local support organisations risk leaving people passed from service to service, wasting the limited time they have before eviction. One thing councils can do — as in the case of **Islington Council**⁵⁸ — is develop guides tailored to their own support offer which clearly lay out the options and entitlements available to people in their local area, and what they can expect from the local authority. Similarly, some move-on guides integrate illustrated route-maps that give people clear, easy-to-follow steps in the days after a decision.^{59,60}

50. UNHCR. (2024). *An uncertain future: A journey through the move-on period. Experiences of newly recognised refugees in England*. <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/sites/uk/files/2024-10/an-uncertain-future-a-journey-through-the-move-on-period.pdf>

51. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). *Refugee housing and homelessness: Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

52. Care4Calais. (2025). *New refugee status advice sheet* (January 2025 update). <https://www.care4calais.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Care4Calais-New-Refugee-Status-Advice-Sheet-January-2025-update.pdf>

53. Asylum Welcome. (2026). *After getting refugee status: Move-on guidance*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.asylum-welcome.org/services/move-on/>

54. Boaz Trust. (2024, November 5). *Positive decision guidance and signposting*. <https://www.boaztrust.org.uk/resources/rhpp-guidance-signposting>

55. Praxis Community Projects. (n.d.). *A migrant's guide*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.praxis.org.uk/migrants-guide>

56. Law Centre Northern Ireland. (2026, March 10). *Refugee move-on guide*. <https://www.lawcentreni.org/new-refugee-move-on-guide/>

57. Right to Remain. (2026, March 11). *What happens when you get refugee status? The Right to Remain Toolkit*. <https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/what-happens-when-you-get-refugee-status/>

58. Islington Council. (2025). *Refugee move-on guide* (Version 5). <https://www.islington.gov.uk/-/media/sharepoint-lists/public-records/housing/information/adviceandinformation/20252026/20251008-refugee-moveon-guide-islington-v5-28-days.pdf>

59. Asylum Welcome. (2026). *After getting refugee status: Move-on guidance*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.asylum-welcome.org/services/move-on/>

60. Boaz Trust. (2024, November 5). *Positive decision guidance and signposting*. <https://www.boaztrust.org.uk/resources/rhpp-guidance-signposting>

CASE STUDY: Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) have created a simplified homelessness prevention pathway for newly granted refugees, including a shortened, single-page homelessness application form. The borough work from the assumption that this group will require homelessness support after receiving a decision, and do not wait to see evidence of a Universal Credit receipt or eVisa to kick-start the process.

They have also developed a number of information resources aimed at refugees granted status in their borough. These include a move-on workshop covering topics such as benefits and income maximisation, Universal Credit, understanding rent and service charges, budgeting, and what to expect throughout the housing process.

Alongside a move-on booklet residents can refer to throughout their housing journey, RBKC has developed a London borough information resource for those who will be housed elsewhere, setting out local authority contacts and key services — welfare and emergency support, mental health provision, food banks and community organisations — across the capital.

This resource was developed in recognition of the fact that, owing to affordability in the borough itself, many residents may ultimately secure accommodation in a different London borough and can find it difficult to identify where to access support when relocating to an unfamiliar area.

The fast-changing policy context around the move-on period makes information that is easy to update preferable to static PDFs or paper packs. Smartphone-friendly digital guides, like that developed by **Right to Remain**,⁶¹ are both easier for people to use and easier to keep current.

A strong theme across the research was that information lands more effectively when it comes from — or is shaped by — people who have themselves been through the move-on period. VCS practitioners felt this both made guidance easier to understand and lent it credibility and suggested actively recruiting people who had recently and successfully navigated the process to share what they had learned when designing move-on oriented support.

The **North East Migration Partnership**, for example, has drawn on both lived experience and subject expertise to co-produce a series of ten leaflets and videos - setting out what refugees themselves wished they had known as they prepared to move into independent living. People who had been through the move-on period shaped the content directly, while the resources were developed in collaboration with the **Regional Refugee Forum North East**, whose members translated them into nine community languages.⁶² The same ethos underpins the move-on guides produced by Housing Justice.⁶³

61. Right to Remain. (2026, March 11). *What happens when you get refugee status? The Right to Remain Toolkit*. <https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/what-happens-when-you-get-refugee-status/>

62. North East Migration Partnership. (n.d.). *Move on information for newly granted refugees*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.nemp.org.uk/hubs/asylum-hub/move-on-information-for-newly-granted-refugees/>

63. Housing Justice. (2025, December 8). *Housing Justice helps Greater London Authority to create video for newly granted refugees*. <https://housingjustice.org.uk/blogs/2025/housing-justice-helps-greater-london-authority-to-create-video-for-newly-granted-refugees>

CASE STUDY: Housing Justice Asylum Move-On videos

Housing Justice has worked with the Greater London Authority to produce a set of short films for newly granted refugees, explaining the housing landscape and the options available to them during the move-on period. The videos were developed in recognition of the fact that existing communications and written guidance on the move-on period do not always reach or land with the people who need it.

Developed through a collaborative process, the videos were shaped through a dedicated workshop that brought together local authority representatives, the Greater London Authority (GLA), Housing Justice and the people with lived experience featured in the films, ensuring that the stories, tone and guidance reflect the realities of the move-on journey.

Produced in Amharic and Arabic, the videos highlight the experiences of participants from Housing Justice's Refugee Lodgings project as they navigate the transition from asylum accommodation. They were designed with the intention of being shown at community-based events, used with individuals as part of casework, incorporated into move-on sessions, or shared during local authority (housing) workshops and drop-in sessions attended by asylum seekers in hotels or newly recognised refugees.

Support with documentation, Universal Credit, and DWP processes

A refugee's ability to open a bank account, prove their right to rent and work, access Universal Credit, and be assessed by a local authority homelessness team typically depends on receiving the right paperwork on time, and knowing what to do with it once it arrives.

Some voluntary sector organisations and councils run regular weekly drop-ins to resolve issues with eVisas, National Insurance numbers, and proof-of-address. Staff report these as among the most useful interventions available as their frequency and accessibility means problems can be caught early.

Some councils run face-to-face advice sessions in hotels and community hubs to support newly granted refugees through the move-on period. We heard how these work more smoothly where the local authority has agreed arrangements such as client consent, so that evidence submitted by a voluntary organisation on a client's behalf is accepted without the person needing to be present. Councils can also take practical steps of their own, with **Islington Council**, for example, writing proof-of-address letters to help people set up bank accounts more quickly.

In certain local authority areas the Home Office has deployed AMLOs (Asylum Move-On Liaison Officers), who can provide a more hands-on version of the support offered by Reed in Partnership by meeting people in hotels to help them access their eVisa and, subject to capacity, assisting with bank accounts, Universal Credit claims and Refugee Integration Loan applications.

Some local authority areas have raised concerns about the inconsistent visibility and integration of AMLO staff within local services and confusion about their responsibilities.⁶⁴ The role of AMLO staff has often been limited to signposting rather than holistic support in hotels, which VCS and local authority attendees of our engagement sessions raised concerns about given that AMLO staff typically operate across wide areas of the country and may have limited knowledge of local housing markets and services.

Nonetheless, there is potential for AMLOs to bring clear added value where their role is embedded and well-coordinated within the wider support offer. We heard how AMLOs can play an important role in supplementing the support provided by councils and voluntary services by helping address urgent needs during the move-on period, particularly in resolving problems with documentation.

One council in **Greater Manchester** described a strong working relationship with its local AMLO team, built on an alignment of local and regional priorities and the AMLO's co-location with move-on support provided by voluntary sector partners and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Practitioners across both councils and the voluntary sector stated that the model worked best when the respective roles of the Home Office, Migrant Help, AMLOs and local authorities were laid out clearly, and clear escalation routes and accountability established.

This also helped to ensure that people receive consistent advice and avoided the duplication of efforts. In **Hounslow** for example, having dedicated housing officers attend hotels on the same day as AMLO staff has aided with immediate signposting and saved individuals and services time otherwise spent chasing eVisa errors.⁶⁵ A defined division of tasks, strategic buy-in, and regular standing meetings, were perceived as necessary ingredients for ensuring the AMLO model is effective.

Proactive support and hotel outreach

Within local authorities there remains a stark practice divide between areas that strive to prevent homelessness by reaching people as soon as a decision is received, and those that wait for a person to present as homeless once eviction is imminent.

A survey from the London Refugee Advocacy Forum identified not understanding one's rights and entitlements (44% of respondents) and not knowing how to ask for support (37%) as the most common barriers to starting independent life after a positive decision amongst refugees.⁶⁶ It is precisely these gaps that early, proactive contact can help to close.

Naturally, intervening as soon as a positive decision is received allows for more time to complete homelessness applications and explore housing options. Whilst council officers in our engagement sessions were candid about the resources and effort this involves, there are ample examples of councils identifying risk early and working with people in advance of their notice to quit being served, by establishing a proactive presence in asylum accommodation, and assigning dedicated officers or teams to the task.⁶⁷

Identifying people quickly is the first step, and several councils have found ways to do it rather than relying on individuals to come forward, or referrals from partners. Some use the Home Office data dashboard shared with local authorities to spot people entering the move-on period. **Tower Hamlets'** Resettlement and Migration Team, for example, uses positive case-outcome data to call new grantees within days of a decision and meet them in their hotel to begin a move-on checklist, and has developed a Rough Sleeping Risk Assessment Tool to identify

64. National Centre for Social Research & Fortia Insight. (2026). *Evaluation of the initiatives to enhance the move on process*. Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process>

65. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). *Refugee housing and homelessness: Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

66. London Refugee Advocacy Forum. (2026). *Good news, bad news: The move-on period and the issues people face*. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stay-informed/statistics-and-research/report-good-news-bad-news/>

67. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). *Refugee housing and homelessness: Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

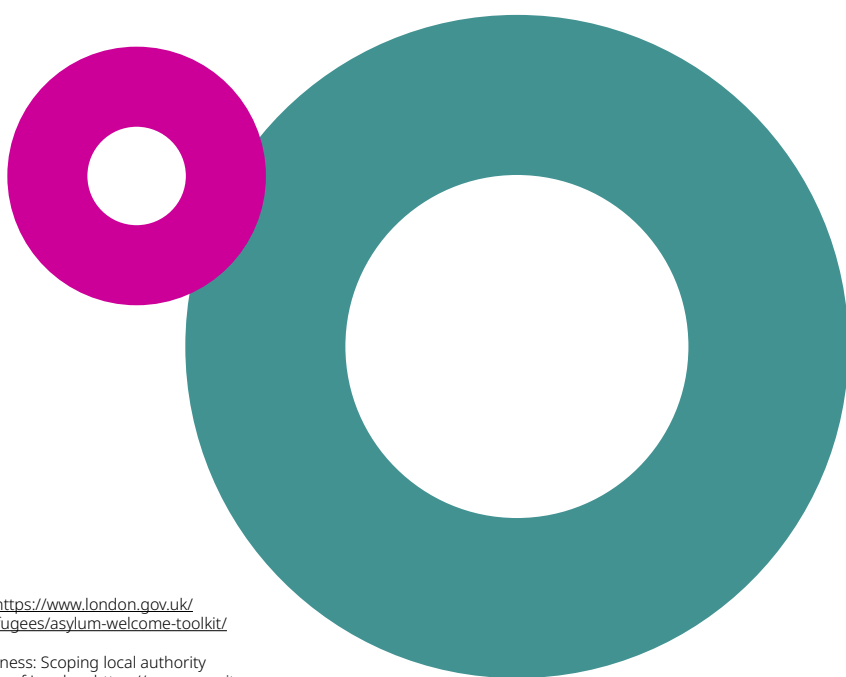
those at highest risk early and complete a risk assessment and housing referral as soon as possible. The team also described having a positive working relationship with AMLO staff, who assist in completing the rough sleeping risk assessment and making housing referrals.

Others have depended on outreach and a physical presence in asylum accommodation, with the team at Welcome Newham, part of **Newham Council**, frequently visiting asylum hotels to identify those at risk and link them into day-centre provision.⁶⁸ Data quality remains a real constraint, however. Several councils reported inconsistent or patchy data from the Home Office and accommodation providers, with incorrect contact details frequent and far less information about people in dispersal accommodation than in hotels. This has led some councils to develop their own methods. Some councils run daily checks of the Clearsprings portal, while others in our engagement session described resorting to door-knocking in dispersal accommodation where no resident list is available.

Where identification is paired with dedicated, specialist capacity and an in-person presence in accommodation, councils have been able to move quickly from decision to support. **Kensington and Chelsea** runs a dedicated NRPF and Refugees Service with a daily presence in contingency hotels. A Prevention Officer develops a Personalised Housing Plan with each person and provides self-search advice, supported by a dedicated Private Rented Sector Officer and an Employment and Financial Support Officer, and support begins without waiting for the eVisa or first Universal Credit payment to come through.⁶⁹ **Lambeth Council** offers a similarly developed model, with a seventeen-strong Sanctuary Services team and an AMLO presence in its hotels, and Sanctuary Housing Officers providing self-search advice and a guaranteed offer to prevent or resolve homelessness, supported by a housing guide translated into the languages residents most commonly speak.⁷⁰ Beyond London, we heard how **Newcastle City Council** supports people through the whole process with eight Refugee Transitions and Integration Officers, giving those it works with continuity of support.

Hotel outreach can also serve a coordination function as much as an information one. In Hounslow, the two-hour information sessions that the council commissions **REAP** to deliver serve a dual purpose of providing information on move-on to residents of asylum hotels whilst also bringing together Hounslow Council's Asylum and Refugee Support team, Housing team, and Community team to coordinate their outreach and the information being given in hotels.

The **Boaz Trust and GMCA** Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project demonstrates the benefits of taking a proactive, trauma-informed approach of working to reach people at the point of decision rather than the point of crisis.



68. Greater London Authority. (n.d.). *Asylum welcome toolkit*. London.gov.uk. <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/migrants-and-refugees/asylum-welcome-toolkit/asylum-welcome-design-lab-summary-report>

69. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). Refugee housing and homelessness: Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

70. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). Refugee housing and homelessness: Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

CASE STUDY: Boaz Trust and GMCA: Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project

Following the 2023 rise in refugee homelessness, Greater Manchester Combined Authority funded the Boaz Trust to deliver a year-long pilot Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project (RHPP) as part of GMCA's wider Refugee Welcome Programme, deploying dedicated outreach workers to provide trauma-informed, holistic support — property searches, benefits navigation, landlord liaison and tenancy sustainment — to single adults over 18 leaving the asylum system who had been assessed as having No Priority Need under the Homelessness Reduction Act. People are supported to secure housing predominantly in the private rented sector, including shared housing. In this model, having people referred by local authority teams upon receiving a positive decision allows intensive one-to-one support to begin at the point of transition rather than the point of crisis.

In its first year the pilot reached 242 people: 92 were supported into accommodation, all of whom sustained their tenancies; 130 were helped to access welfare or housing benefits; and the project recorded over 580 face-to-face support meetings and more than 1,500 further contacts.

On the strength of the pilot, Boaz has secured further funding to continue the RHPP across four Greater Manchester boroughs — Bolton, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford — and continues to provide outreach support in Manchester through a separate partnership with Mustard Tree. In two of these local authorities the project has also broadened its remit to work with families granted refugee status who are living in asylum hotels or temporary accommodation and need help finding onward accommodation. The support team has grown from two to four RHPP workers, and the project now offers training workshops and resources (including multilingual “positive decision” guidance) for voluntary sector, faith and community organisations across Greater Manchester, with recruitment underway for a dedicated Housing Access Training and Development Officer.

Recommendations

For national Government

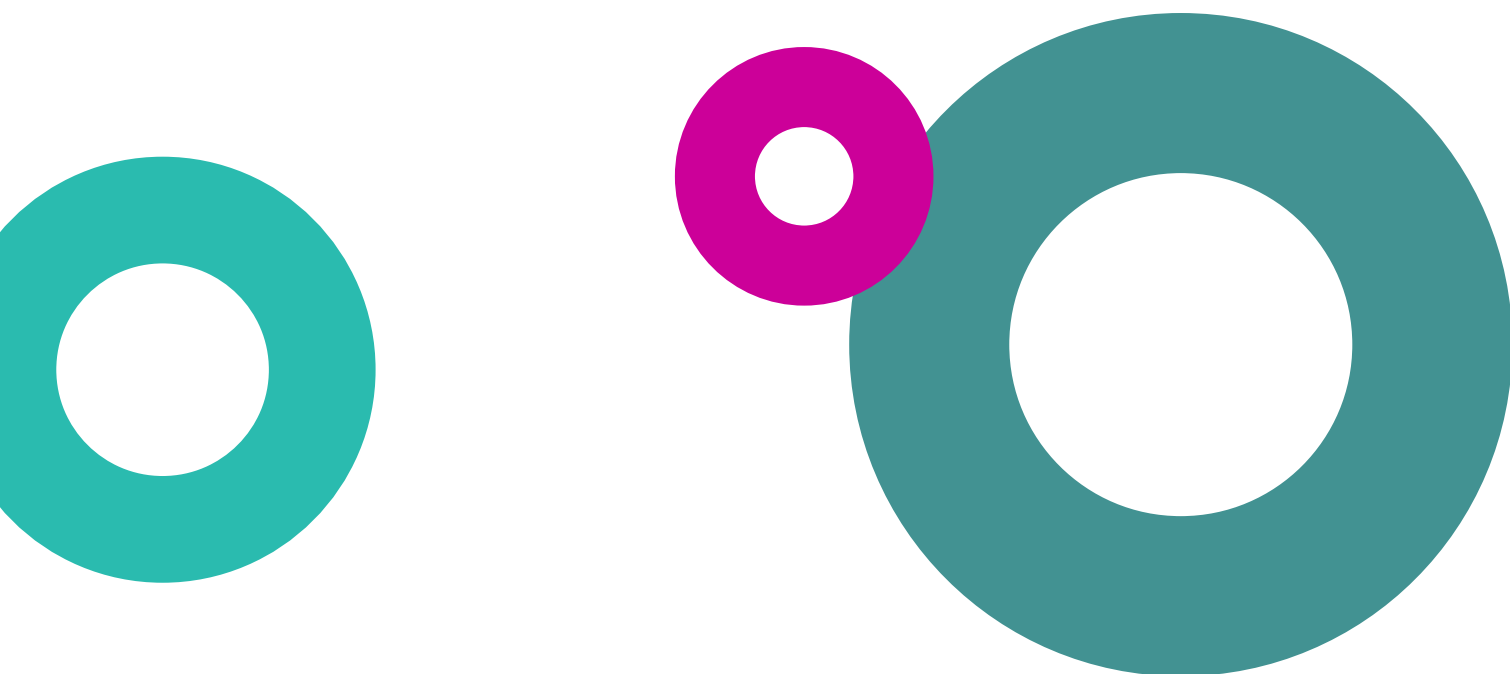
- Introduce a permanent extension of the move-on period to at least 56 days for all recipients of an asylum decision, commencing from receipt of all important documentation.
- Communicate any changes to the move-on period clearly and with adequate notice to voluntary sector services and local authorities.
- Automatically notify the relevant local authority when someone receives a decision on their asylum claim, so that councils can begin proactive support rather than waiting for the person to present as homeless.
- Guarantee a timely advance payment to newly recognised refugees whose Universal Credit payment will not arrive within the move-on period, including by ensuring that the Habitual Residence Test exemption for refugees is applied correctly and that problems with eVisas do not delay payment.
- Simplify and improve the way asylum decisions are communicated, replacing the fragmented sequence of separate English-only communications with a single, clear, translated notification setting out what is happening, the steps a person must take, and a clear move-on date.
- Explicitly state on the asylum support discontinuation letter, and in other official communications, that newly granted refugees at imminent risk of street homelessness can request a discretionary extension of their asylum accommodation, so that those who need it are able to access it.

- Ensure that there are clear and accessible escalation routes in place for resolving delays and errors with key documents, including eVisas, including to allow people to extend their asylum support as and when required.
- Improve the usefulness and accessibility of the information the Home Office provides, including translated, plain-language and easy-to-update digital resources co-designed with people who have been through the process.
- Include the Home Office in the duty to refer, and in due course the duty to collaborate, so that people entering the move-on period are reliably connected to homelessness services.

Principles for practice

For local authorities and their partners

- Provide continuity of support before and after a decision, using a warm handover so that trust built before the decision is not lost and the move-on window can be spent securing housing rather than repeating groundwork.
- Work with people as soon as a decision is received rather than waiting for an eviction date, using data dashboards, provider information and, where necessary, outreach and a physical presence in asylum accommodation to identify people early.
- Run regular, predictable drop-ins and advice sessions in hotels and community hubs to resolve issues with eVisas, National Insurance numbers, proof-of-address and Universal Credit claims early.
- Put arrangements in place — such as agreed client consent — so that evidence submitted by a voluntary organisation on a person's behalf is accepted without the person needing to be present, and take practical steps such as issuing proof-of-address letters to help people open bank accounts.
- Build a strong working relationship with the DWP to iron out problems with Universal Credit, including delays, the Habitual Residence Test and arranging direct payments to landlords where appropriate.
- Where AMLOs are present, embed them within the wider local offer with a defined division of tasks, clear escalation routes and regular standing meetings, and co-locate them with council, voluntary sector and DWP support where possible.
- Involve people with lived experience in designing and, where possible, delivering move-on information and support, and work with the trusted community networks people already use to ensure accurate information reaches them.



SECTION 3

Housing and homelessness support for those not in priority need

In our engagement sessions we consistently heard how efforts to prevent homelessness after an exit from asylum accommodation are greatly impeded by the national shortage of affordable housing. This is widely acknowledged, and has been corroborated by the Government's independent evaluation of the move-on initiatives, which found housing shortages to be the most significant barrier reported across every initiative, outweighing the benefits of both longer timeframes and additional support. The evaluation concluded that without addressing housing supply, the risk of homelessness persists whatever the length of the move-on period.⁷¹

Against a severe national shortage of social housing, voluntary sector representatives told us it is extremely difficult to get people without children recognised as being in priority need by some local authorities, even where they have been victims of trafficking. The most common options available to people are therefore supported housing or a privately rented tenancy. The private rented sector is increasingly unaffordable, particularly because frozen Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have not kept pace with actual rents, and even more so for those under 35 and subject to the shared accommodation rate, as many newly granted refugees are. It was on this basis that the Government's independent evaluation recommended a longer move-on period for single adults, and especially for men aged 34 and under, for whom housing is hardest to find.⁷² Some of the VCS and local authority teams we spoke to had used the exemption from the shared accommodation rate available to people who have spent three months or more in a qualifying hostel, but saw it as an unnecessary additional hoop to jump through, with the hostel stay itself often slowing a person's journey into long-term housing. Similarly, while newly granted refugees may request an extension of Home Office accommodation where they are at imminent risk of rough sleeping, this is discretionary and relies on a person having the evidence and support needed to exercise that right.

For some refugees supported accommodation may be the most suitable initial form of housing after moving on from asylum accommodation. However, several VCS practitioners we spoke to expressed concerns about placing refugees in supported housing owing to issues relating to the inconsistent quality of support, and because some people may end up placed there due to a lack of other general needs housing options, rather than because it matches the support they require. Placing someone in the wrong type of supported accommodation for their needs can be extremely harmful, particularly if they have experienced trauma as almost all refugees have. It risks exposing people to a retraumatising environment if they are living alongside others with very high support needs, or exposing them to behaviours they may be vulnerable to such as substance use. Implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act, expected in 2027, is intended to raise standards, implement the licensing of approved schemes and give local authorities better oversight and the ability to enforce against poor and negligent provision, which should improve the quality of what is available to refugees. As part of implementation, it will be important for local authorities to ensure that supported housing is not used as a default option for everyone they are otherwise struggling to house. However, local authorities should recognise the role that the right supported housing can play in alleviating refugee homelessness when drawing up their Local Supported Housing Strategies. Failure to do so would further narrow the pool of options for people exiting asylum accommodation.

Up until this point, the social security system has also caused issues for refugees living in supported housing. The interaction of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit created a financial penalty whereby residents could become worse off, and at risk of rent arrears, by working more hours. Most newly granted refugees want to work, but would have struggled to take on more than a few hours of work each week while in supported accommodation without losing out. However, the Government has set out plans to remove the cliff edge and ensure supported housing residents are always better off in work, which come into force from October 2026.⁷³ It is not yet clear whether these measures will resolve the issue in practice and address the scale of the problem – this will need to be monitored.

Councils' interpretation of local connection rules, set against the very different costs of different areas, generates another set of difficulties. These mirror the experience of anyone at risk of homelessness, but there are factors specific to this group. People understandably often wish to move from the area they were dispersed to in order

71. National Centre for Social Research & Fortia Insight. (2026). *Evaluation of the initiatives to enhance the move on process*. Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process>

72. National Centre for Social Research & Fortia Insight. (2026). *Evaluation of the initiatives to enhance the move on process*. Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process/evaluation-of-the-initiatives-to-enhance-the-move-on-process>

73. Department for Work and Pensions. (2026). *Supported housing residents to keep more of what they earn under new rules* [Press release]. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/supported-housing-residents-to-keep-more-of-what-they-earn-under-new-rules>

to be closer to family or friends, or to live somewhere perceived as safer, more welcoming to people of their background, or better for work. The result can be that a person leaves asylum accommodation for a place where no local connection can be claimed and no homelessness duty is accepted, and is then forced to return to the original area and present as homeless a second time.

The reverse is also common: people who have been advised by a local authority or other local support service that their best prospect lies in a cheaper area may be reluctant to go, and that reluctance can grow the less they know about where they are being asked to move to and what will happen once they arrive. Services expressed frustration that people may be initially accommodated in a relatively expensive area, build connections and good relationships with local services, and yet have no realistic prospect of being housed there permanently. Where a move is supported, for instance by paying a deposit elsewhere, there is often little due diligence about whether the tenancy will be sustainable, and no link made to services or alert to the receiving local authority.

Some VCS practitioners described examples of gatekeeping — local authorities placing barriers in the way of people accessing homelessness assistance they may be legally entitled to – when it came to supporting newly granted refugees in their area. This echoes evidence found elsewhere. Advicenow's 2026 study, drawing on the experience of 127 frontline practitioners, found gatekeeping at every stage of the homelessness process, including councils operating blanket policies under which single male refugees are treated as not being in priority need rather than each case being assessed on its own facts.⁷⁴ Anecdotally, VCS staff we spoke to for this report were aware of examples of local authorities not counting refugees in rough sleeping counts and gatekeeping access to certain forms of support, such as Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP), which some feared may have been exacerbated by the fraught political situation around refugees and people seeking asylum, and the polarised positions of the political parties leading local authorities.

The pause on new applications under the refugee family reunion route since September 2025 was described as a further barrier to successful move-on. Separation from family leaves people in limbo, and can make some single men less likely to move on from short-term single accommodation into something more suitable and permanent – both because they are reluctant to put down roots until the situation is resolved and they can be reunited with their family, and because they do not have access to family entitlements.

Underlying all of this is a highly variable level of knowledge, experience and provision across different areas, with local authorities taking markedly different approaches to supporting newly granted refugees, particularly those who are not in priority need.

This section highlights good practice being deployed by local authorities and services to prevent homelessness amongst this group by helping them to access supported accommodation, lodging and hosting placements, and affordable, quality housing in the private rented sector.

74. Advicenow. (2026). "Go away and fill out this massive form": *Local authority gatekeeping of homelessness assistance for refugees*. <https://www.advicenow.org.uk/sites/default/files/2026-08/Gatekeeping%20report%20-%20final.pdf>



Dedicated supported accommodation

For some newly granted refugees – particularly those needing further integration support such as ESOL for employability, or who have other support needs – supported accommodation is the most suitable first step out of asylum accommodation. VCS and council staff we spoke to described many people spending a period there before moving into the private rented sector. Both the existing literature and our engagement for this report point to examples where supported housing has been used effectively to prevent refugee homelessness.

Where supported accommodation is working well for this group, it tends to be because a local authority has deliberately created capacity for it rather than competing for existing bedspaces. **Gloucestershire County Council** converted a vacant council-owned building into short-term supported accommodation for newly granted refugees. The 36-bed property houses people for up to three months, alongside support to improve their English, find a job, and secure their next independent accommodation.

Basildon Borough Council has used MHCLG Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme funding to establish a 16-unit scheme of one-bed flats offering supported housing for up to two years, with ten units managed by the council and six by the **Salvation Army**. Meanwhile, **Lewisham Council** has developed a pathway into low-needs supported housing for refugees at risk of homelessness in the borough.

Oxford City Council have had success with placing newly granted refugees who would otherwise struggle to find affordable accommodation into 'rapid rehousing', i.e. supported accommodation. Housing Officers from the council will attend hotel drop-ins and start Homelessness Prevention Applications and provide housing advice and assistance with people before they have been evicted from asylum accommodation.

Since November 2025, Asylum Welcome have worked in partnership with a local housing provider association who have provided them with a six-bedroom house in Oxford for use as supported housing for refugees. Oxford City Council provide some funding toward the project and refer in recently-granted refugees who would otherwise struggle to find accommodation in Oxford and may become homeless. People stay for six months, receiving intensive support from Asylum Welcome including help towards employment, and are then supported into the private rented sector — a move made easier as a result of the council's tenancy deposit scheme, which covers the deposit and first month's rent.



Lodging and hosting schemes

Hosting schemes and lodging can be valuable in bridging the period when a person may otherwise face rough sleeping, whether because of a delay in accessing Universal Credit or simply because suitable housing has not yet been found.

In addition to their building-based innovation described above, **Gloucestershire County Council** also run a 'Homes for Refugees' scheme as another form of short-term supported accommodation. Hosts provide a spare room for a short time as a stepping stone to help refugees in their first few months, while securing suitable employment and long-term housing.⁷⁵ The county council offers hosts £600 per month to cover any increased household expenses, while **Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS)** provide support with referrals and casework. A representative from Gloucestershire County Council described that they were able to tap into their register of established hosts for previous schemes, such as Homes for Ukraine, to provide this scheme for other refugees following a similar model – a monthly payment, with hands-on support. Both models have been equally successful at preventing and reducing rough sleeping in the area.

75. Gloucestershire County Council. (n.d.). *Homes For Refugees*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/homes-for-refugees>

Asylum Welcome runs a successful hosting scheme, Sanctuary Hosting, which provides short-term accommodation for refugees, people seeking asylum and vulnerable migrants at risk of homelessness across Oxfordshire by matching them with volunteer hosts, who are themselves supported by dedicated staff and volunteers.

Housing Justice runs a pan-London Refugee Lodgings project funded by the GLA, offering six-month lodging placements and subsequent move-on support to recently recognised refugees at risk of homelessness.⁷⁶ Several London local authorities refer recently granted refugees with low support needs who are at risk of rough sleeping into the project, and Housing Justice matches them with local residents letting spare rooms at the shared LHA rate, whilst providing wraparound support to host and lodger alike.

Bristol City Council works with **Refugee Welcome Homes** to deliver a refugee lodging scheme under which Bristol households offering a room receive monthly rent at the LHA rate, tenancy sign-up paperwork and tenant support including a dedicated support worker, with Refugee Welcome Homes providing ongoing support and signposting to both lodger and host for 18 months.^{77,78} Lodgers receive holistic support and regular meetings, and are connected with access to deposits, education, employment, training and mentoring through partner agencies.

Many of the voluntary sector organisations we spoke to referred people to **Refugees at Home** as a means of preventing homelessness. Refugees at Home is a nationwide charity that recruits and supports volunteer hosts who are willing to offer a temporary home and assistance to refugees, carefully matches guests with suitable hosts, and provides advice and support to hosts before and during each guest's stay.

Sourcing and securing housing

For newly granted refugees assessed as not being in priority need, the private rented sector is, in practice, where most will end up. **The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC)**, for example, told us that almost all newly granted refugees who move on from their service ultimately secure accommodation in the private rented sector.

As laid out above, supporting someone into the private rented sector is rarely as simple as directing someone towards a property search. A variety of factors including frozen LHA rates, the shared accommodation rate for those under 35, deposits and guarantors, and the narrow move-on window all serve as barriers to entry for this sector.

Across our research, the areas securing tenancies most consistently were those working on four fronts at once: supporting the search itself, widening the pool of properties open to this group, bridging the upfront costs of taking a property up, and staying in touch once the tenancy has begun.

Voluntary services we spoke to described the value of helping people search for properties in the highly competitive and fast-moving market for affordable properties, for example by offering practical one-to-one support with sites such as SpareRoom or providing an interpreter at viewings.

Several councils have built this into their offer. The **London Borough of Hounslow** pursues a number of routes at once for those assessed as non-priority need, including encouraging people to search on Home Finder; referring into the **West London Refugee Service**, a sub-regionally commissioned service that coaches people through their own search; and through Find Your Own, where the council works with estate agencies to find warm leads for PRS housing, and links with a referral partner who can provide financial support to the individual.⁷⁹

76. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). *Refugee Housing and Homelessness: Scoping Local Authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London: <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

77. Bristol City Council. (n.d.). *Get Help With Renting to Refugees*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/business/housing-for-business-and-professionals/private-landlords/get-help-with-renting-to-refugees>

78. Refugee Welcome Homes. (n.d.). *Refugee Lodging Scheme*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.refugeewelcomehomes.net/refugee-lodging-scheme>

79. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). *Refugee Housing and Homelessness: Scoping Local Authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London: <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

Welcome Newham, part of **Newham Council**, runs a fortnightly Finding Accommodation Workshop for the same cohort. This is deliberately scheduled straight after its weekly one-stop shop so that people already attending for other reasons are drawn in, and offers support with sourcing properties, liaising with landlords, and with deposits or advance payments. **Home Finder** itself is used by a number of authorities to identify properties at or below LHA rates, usually outside London.⁸⁰

For many single adults under 35, a house share is the only affordable option, and several services have tried to make these work by keeping together friendship groups formed in asylum accommodation. **Hackney Council** reported success here through its outcomes-based commissioning arrangement with the **Single Homeless Project (SHP)**, which supports newly granted refugees into the private rented sector. Since 2023, the Council have funded SHP on an outcomes basis, based on when people are successfully housed and remain housed eight months later. SHP has secured tenancies in outer London boroughs and kept a number of hotel friendship groups intact. Other councils have found the approach harder to sustain, with the level of support required too resource-intensive to be feasible. Where it has worked, services suggested it helps to ensure some commonality within the group such as a shared language or the same dietary requirements.

When it comes to helping people to access the private rented sector, voluntary sector services we spoke to agreed that building relationships with local landlords is valuable. Some also noted that some former student landlords now appear to be pivoting towards housing refugees.

Norwich City Council operates a trusted landlord scheme called LetNCC, which provides incentives for local landlords to rent their property to the council to house people facing homelessness, including refugees. Landlords let their properties out through the council for up to four years, and a minimum of one year. Landlords who let properties to students can be a valuable group to engage with as part of this work. Rent is covered by Housing Benefit, and the council cover bills, so those living in these properties are just charged a small service charge, with any support required for the tenants to sustain their tenancies provided by the voluntary sector or the council's Specialist Support Team.

Colchester City Council offers a local housing charity an incentive of £1,500 for every person it houses for over a year within its portfolio of local properties. In Nottingham, **Yes Lets**⁸¹ is a social lettings agency and CIC aiming to help provide good quality, affordable, long-term homes for a range of people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, including refugees, who can live independently. They partner with local homelessness and refugee organisations, the council, and others, to help bridge the gap between organisations doing support work with people and the private rented sector. They have successfully housed a number of refugees and refugee families over the years, through this work with the council and other organisations.

In London, **RBKC** has funded a dedicated PRS Procurement Officer to source properties for refugees and other households moving on through homelessness services. Housing Justice's **London Lettings Network** approaches the same problem by listing rental properties across London and the surrounding boroughs which accept Housing Benefit, and allowing caseworkers and eligible individuals to search, contact landlords and book viewings.⁸² Housing Justice also offers support with paying costs to secure the accommodation for those successful in finding properties through this platform.

In response to high levels of refugee homelessness locally, **Action For Refugees In Lewisham (AFRIL)** reported having built a working relationship with the Lewisham Housing Team. They have reached an arrangement whereby AFRIL staff can refer directly into supported housing bedspaces, a route developed in recognition that Housing Officers do not always have capacity to complete assessments and referrals before the section 95 notice to vacate expires. AFRIL also attends a bi-weekly meeting with a Housing Manager to facilitate six-month PRS tenancies for refugees under 35 who are not in priority need.

80. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). *Refugee Housing and Homelessness: Scoping Local Authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London: <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

81. Yes Lets. (n.d.). *Your yes makes the difference* [Homepage]. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://www.yeslets.org.uk/>

82. Housing Justice. (n.d.). *London Lettings Network*. Retrieved August 12, 2026, from <https://housingjustice.org.uk/london-lettings-network>

Even where a property has been found, the offer can be lost in the days it takes to assemble a deposit. As explored later in this section, several local authorities aim to bridge this gap by issuing grants, deposits, or first month's rent payments.

Southend-on-Sea City Council has recruited a dedicated officer within its homelessness team to work proactively on resettlement cases, including asylum cases. This officer liaises closely with the council's Private Rented Sector (PRS) team, who help source accommodation — including HMOs and shared housing — for newly granted refugees. The council makes the deposit and first month's rent available through use of Asylum Dispersal Grant funding. Rental deposits are provided as a loan rather than a grant, although grants can be considered in appropriate circumstances.

Addressing the same issue in a different way, **Hackney Council** use the Asylum Dispersal Grant to fund an emergency accommodation reimbursement scheme for a local charity. This can be used to fund a few nights in a hostel to bridge the gap for people between their asylum support accommodation ending after receiving a decision. This has helped to prevent rough sleeping in the area by newly recognised refugees - in 2025/26, 98.8% of people supported through this intervention were confirmed to move into accommodation or a shelter at the end of the intervention rather than rough sleeping.

Finally, several of these areas have recognised that securing a tenancy, and sustaining one, are different tasks. **RBKC** provides tenancy sustainment support for up to three months from the point a resident moves into independent accommodation, with the aim of helping people settle, understand their rights and responsibilities, access the correct financial support, and address any additional needs that emerge during the transition. **Welcome Newham** offers up to six months of tenancy support once a property has been secured. **Hackney Council's** model is built on a similar principle, whereby payments are made to their commissioned provider after eight months of tenancy sustainment, rather than on placement.

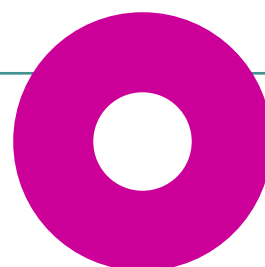
CASE STUDY: Brent, London

Bridges Outcomes Partnerships was initially commissioned by several local authorities to coordinate partnership-based outcomes contracts supporting newly recognised refugees at risk of homelessness who do not meet the priority need threshold, and now operates pan-London.

Within one such partnership, Crisis delivers housing advice and homelessness prevention support while Breaking Barriers provides specialist employment support to help refugees access sustainable work and progress towards financial independence, the intention being that people build savings and move into settled housing rather than becoming stuck in supported accommodation.

The partnership works closely with Brent Council and the Home Office's AMLOs on an upstream model that identifies and engages people before they reach crisis point. This approach has been supported by communications including short multilingual move-on and housing expectations videos, produced jointly with the Refugee Council.

By combining the expertise of statutory and voluntary sector partners, the service aims to provide a more seamless and preventative response that improves housing stability, employment outcomes and longer-term integration – mitigating the risk of rough sleeping.





Financial support to make tenancies affordable

Newly recognised refugees often require financial support to meet the upfront costs of entering the private rented sector, including deposits, the first month's rent and essential household items. In our engagement sessions we heard of offers in the private rented sector being lost because a deposit could not be assembled quickly enough.

Although the Government offers a Refugee Integration Loan of up to £500 per person to help with moving costs, education or training, this is often insufficient to cover a rental deposit in many parts of the country. Processing times can also be lengthy, with the Government website advising that people should usually receive a decision on the loan within six weeks and then be paid shortly afterwards. Whilst even the stated government timeline would make it difficult to access this loan to cover a rental deposit before the point at which people are required to leave Home Office accommodation, some have reported much longer waiting times for payments to arrive.⁸³ Take-up of the scheme has also been limited by its existence not being widely known, and the fact that the loan must be repaid through deductions from future social security payments.⁸⁴

Alongside government support, charities have developed schemes to help bridge this affordability gap. Housing Justice's **Boost-up scheme**, incorporated into the London Lettings Network in 2025, tops up the difference between the shared accommodation LHA rate and market rents for single adults under 35 who are not in priority need.⁸⁵

Meanwhile **RefuAid** provides grants and interest-free loans to cover upfront costs such as deposits and advance rent. Organisations we spoke to reported that RefuAid payments were generally available more quickly than local authority housing assistance, such as the former Discretionary Housing Payments (now replaced in England by Crisis and Resilience Fund Housing Payments).⁸⁶

Local authorities have also developed a range of approaches to help refugees secure sustainable private tenancies. While many councils draw on mainstream homelessness prevention funding to provide deposits or advance rent, some supplement this with refugee-specific support funded through the Asylum Dispersal Grant.

Broxbourne Borough Council used Rough Sleeper Initiative funding (now superseded by the consolidated Homelessness, Rough Sleeping and Domestic Abuse Grant) to provide six weeks' rent in advance, whereas **Norwich City Council** uses the Asylum Dispersal Grant to cover deposits and the first month's rent for refugees entering the private rented sector and has also provided essential items such as door locks, mattresses and kitchen appliances. Through its LetNCC scheme, Norwich City Council issues a £1,000 deposit bond instead of requiring tenants to provide a cash deposit. The bond is repaid to the grant if there are no rent arrears, damage or cleaning costs at the end of the tenancy.

Lewisham Council provides emergency payments where delays to Universal Credit leave newly recognised refugees unable to meet essential moving costs, such as transport or basic household items.

Dacorum Borough Council has taken a different approach by strengthening joint working with the Department for Work and Pensions and the voluntary sector, attending monthly meetings with these partners to ensure early intervention as needed. This supports refugees to navigate Universal Credit, arrange direct payments to landlords where appropriate, and access the higher one-bedroom Local Housing Allowance rate available to people who have spent at least three months in hostel or hotel accommodation.

83. Rainbow Migration. (n.d.). *A guide for when you have been granted refugee status*. Retrieved September 10, 2026, from <https://www.rainbowmigration.org.uk/a-guide-for-when-you-have-been-granted-refugee-status/>

84. Klier, S. (2021). *Keys to the city: How the next Mayor of London can help end refugee homelessness*. Refugee Council. <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Keys-To-The-City-Report-Feb-2021>

85. Housing Justice (2025). *Boost-Up: Now taking referrals*. <https://housingjustice.org.uk/news/2025/boost-up-now-taking-referrals>

86. RefuAid. (n.d.). *RefuAid: Interest-free loans for refugees and financial inclusion*. Retrieved August 11, 2026, from <https://www.refuaid.org/>

CASE STUDY: Lewisham's three-pillar response

As the UK's first Borough of Sanctuary, Lewisham Council developed a coordinated three-pillar response to reduce homelessness among newly recognised refugees, including those who are not owed the main homelessness duty because they are assessed as having no priority need. The model combines personalised support, financial assistance and access to housing. The approach includes:

- Holistic move-on support covering benefits, employment, education and referrals into Refugees at Home, Housing Justice Refugee Lodgings and the private rented sector
- A financial safety net providing targeted emergency payments to newly recognised refugees during Universal Credit delays, emergency accommodation, white goods and furniture payments for those in unfurnished temporary accommodation
- Additionally, all eligible Lewisham residents in permanent accommodation have access to deposit payments and support grants for furniture and white goods
- Maximising all LA housing routes through a dedicated effort to procure additional properties and maximising the use of low-support supported housing

The council reports strong outcomes from this approach:

- All clients who presented as rough sleeping have been helped out of homelessness
- At least 85% of refugees receiving move-on support now have access to benefits
- 83% of refugees maintained or improved the security of their accommodation

Recommendations

For national Government

- Introduce a permanent extension of the move-on period to at least 56 days for all recipients of an asylum decision, commencing from receipt of all important documentation
- Explicitly state on the asylum support discontinuation letter, and in other official communications, that newly granted refugees at imminent risk of street homelessness can request a discretionary extension of their asylum accommodation, so that those who need it are able to access it.
- Scale up the delivery of social housing, accelerating to the delivery of 90,000 homes a year as soon as possible.
- Unfreeze LHA rates and lift the benefit cap.
- Scrap the shared accommodation rate for under-35s.
- Acknowledge the role of supported housing in preventing and alleviating homelessness among refugees, and ensure this is reflected in local authorities' supported housing strategies and in future guidance on the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.
- Provide local authorities with sufficient revenue funding for the supported housing services needed in their community, including for refugees.

- Following the GLA's approach and building on the existing commitment in the National Plan to End Homelessness, issue a national directive to move away from requiring people to be verified as sleeping rough before receiving support, with clear timelines.
- Give local authorities a clear, multi-year commitment to Asylum Dispersal Grant funding, and move the grant determination to a tariff model based on the actual number of people being supported rather than on bedspaces occupied at a point in time.

Principles for practice

For local authorities and their partners

- Local authorities should complete a housing/homelessness assessment with people as soon as they receive a decision on their asylum claim. There is no need to wait for documentary proof, e.g. a Universal Credit receipt or an eVisa, to commence support if they know the person has received a positive decision.
- In partnership with the local voluntary sector, develop and disseminate materials to ensure that newly granted refugees receive clear and digestible information about the likelihood of securing housing in their desired areas and any risks around this.
- Commission high quality, refugee-specific supported housing, or set up or refer into refugee hosting or lodging schemes.
- Consider the needs of refugees in the development of Local Supported Housing Strategies.
- Proactively support newly granted refugees to source housing in the private rented sector, for instance through introductions to trusted landlords, landlord incentives, translators at viewings where required, and grants for deposits and upfront rental payments.
- Seek to keep people who are friends together in house-shares where feasible.
- Develop a tenancy sustainment offer for refugees placed in the PRS.
- Develop a support package for any out-of-area moves, including notifying the new local authority and new local network of voluntary sector organisations, and signposting to support.
- For anyone who falls through the gaps and is forced to sleep rough, the local authority and partner agencies should commence immediate support without requiring verification.



SECTION 4

Partnership working and internal coordination

The preceding sections have described a move-on process whereby no single organisation holds all the levers: the Home Office issues the initial documentation, contracted providers issue move-on advice, accommodation providers oversee the ending of support, and local authorities conduct homelessness assessments. All the while, voluntary services fill any gaps in support. For a newly recognised refugee with only weeks to secure housing and income, whether these actors work as a system, or as a set of disconnected bodies, can be the difference between a person's smooth transition out of the asylum system, or homelessness at the point of their support ending.

Across our research, the areas that seemed to be working most effectively to prevent homelessness were consistently those that had built partnerships across these boundaries. This coordination can take several forms. Whilst many councils are working closely with the voluntary and community sector to reach people earlier and extend support beyond what statutory services can offer, some are also building crucial working relationships with the DWP, health services and private landlords – all of whom play an important role in a person's transition into independent living.

However, in lieu of a national, joined-up approach to preventing homelessness amongst people exiting the asylum system that spans homelessness, health, and employment services, the extent to which this coordination exists is largely dependent on local capacity, resources, and leadership. As explored below, internal coordination and senior leadership can also go a long way to ensuring that a local authority's approach to preventing homelessness amongst newly granted refugees is sufficiently cross-organisational.

Local authority and voluntary sector partnerships

For newly granted refugees assessed as not being in priority need, the private rented sector is, in practice, where most will end up. **The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC)**, for example, told us that almost all newly granted refugees who move on from their service ultimately secure accommodation in the private rented sector.

SOAS's scoping of approaches in London boroughs found that strong council–voluntary sector partnerships were a recurring feature of areas taking a proactive approach to preventing refugee homelessness, as opposed to those that waited for a person to present as homeless once eviction was imminent. The research points to several recurring features, including meetings and working groups between both statutory and voluntary sector partners, joint drop-in sessions where council and voluntary sector staff provide support side by side, and commissioning or micro-grants that steer voluntary sector capacity towards the specific gaps in housing support.⁸⁷

The example of **West London Welcome**, a refugee community centre and registered charity in Hammersmith who operate in a three-way arrangement with local councils and **St Mungo's**, illustrates how such a partnership works in practice. As soon as a West London Welcome service user receives refugee status, caseworkers assess housing need, help open bank accounts and if needed register people as homeless with the council, making referrals to named council staff within their refugee support service or housing departments. The council then makes an outward referral to **St Mungo's**, which can often source temporary accommodation and support to find longer-term private rented accommodation, with West London Welcome providing hosting, hostel placements or other housing solutions as a fallback.'

CARAS also described a collaborative approach to providing holistic support for asylum seekers and refugees. As well as inviting those who are already supported by CARAS to their regular information sessions, they also share flyers with their local authority teams and other NGOs working in the area who will advertise them. They liaise weekly with their local AMLO teams, who share information about how many people have newly been granted

87. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). Refugee housing and homelessness: *Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

status, and advertise their support to asylum seekers and refugees. As part of their one to one work with people, they notify the local authority team once a homelessness application has been made, to highlight any additional access needs, and follow up if there are delays. They also have a referral pathway to housing solicitors where challenges to decisions are necessary.

Often, arrangements such as this work not because of formal procedures but because of a web of trusted, clearly delineated relationships, with each partner contributing a specific capability that no one organisation could provide alone.

CASE STUDY: St. Augustine's Centre, Halifax

St Augustine's Centre in Halifax operates a standard move-on procedure built around a sequence of trusted referral relationships, each handling a distinct part of the transition.

After an initial appointment, service users are referred to a local refugee integration service that helps them register on the council's housing system and set up Child Benefit. Although this local service also works with people independently, in practice the two organisations operate collaboratively and discuss cases together. Because the integration service has access to the council's systems, St Augustine's uses it as a route for adding evidence to a service user's record before the case is allocated to a Housing Officer.

Being a recognised referrer to a local advice agency allows St Augustine's to route debt-related problems and disability benefit applications through a dedicated referral form that assists those who would otherwise struggle to access the service at all, owing to language barriers or other vulnerabilities.

St Augustine's works closely with specialist housing partners, referring service users who need supported accommodation to a local housing provider. It has also collaborated intensively with a local young people's service — including joint meetings with service users and shared housing advocacy — which staff felt had produced better outcomes not only in housing but in access to healthcare, education and employment.

Where service users face homelessness, the centre works alongside a refugee hosting organisation. This division of labour has expanded the centre's capacity, since it does not have to manage the hosts directly, and some hosts are themselves involved in the centre, which helps with arranging appointments. Staff described the benefits of hosting as going well beyond a bed for the night: the stability and breathing space it offers builds service users' confidence and, in turn, makes the housing work itself easier, as people are better able to engage with the process.

Internal council coordination

How a council organises itself internally — where refugee move-on sits, whether specialist capacity is dedicated, and how well its own teams talk to one another — can be just as consequential as its external partnerships. A newly recognised refugee typically has to be picked up by a migration or refugee team, passed on to housing colleagues, and sometimes connected to a rough sleeping team as well. Where those internal handovers are undefined, there is a risk that people fall between the gaps.

Across our engagement sessions, the councils achieving the most were those that had made deliberate internal arrangements rather than leaving refugee move-on to a generalist service. Dedicated capacity, located in the right team, was key to success. **Liverpool's** Refugee and Migration Team, sitting within Housing Solutions, was

highlighted as being more proactive and trauma-informed than a generalist service. This was attributed to the team's frequent communication and smaller, dedicated structure, which helped foster strong working relationships with both the Home Office and the accommodation provider. As a result, individuals were assessed more quickly after receiving a decision. Councils also stressed the value of internal relationship-building, so that housing, community and asylum teams share information and are not each developing a separate response to the same cohort. Co-location — bringing services together in one familiar venue and across directorates — was seen as one practical way to achieve this, ensuring people are not passed between disconnected teams.

Dacorum Borough Council runs its single refugee cohort through a dedicated in-house team, deliberately keeping single adults separate from families so they are not deprioritised, and finds that delivering in-house rather than commissioning gives it the flexibility to respond.

Norwich City Council has established dedicated pathways and specialist roles to support groups who are particularly vulnerable to homelessness, including refugees. The refugee pathway includes two officers dedicated to supporting refugees - one focused on homelessness prevention and the other on homelessness relief. The service is also supported by an administrative assistant who manages housing-register bidding, Temporary Accommodation (TA) placements and the transition of customers out of TA. In addition, a specialist support officer provides tailored support to help refugee customers sustain their tenancies, alongside trauma-informed, person-centred support, signposting and referrals to relevant local charities and services.

A number of London boroughs — among them **Lambeth**, with its Sanctuary Housing Officer, and **Newham** — have similarly designated named officers or teams for people leaving asylum accommodation, often including staff with competency in common asylum languages and specific training.⁸⁸

Making this work depends on having clear internal referral routes or arrangements, such as the migration team acting as first point of contact and referring into housing; shared access to case-management systems so a client's progress can be tracked across teams; and housing officers attending hotels to take homelessness prevention applications directly. The importance of joined-up working has been echoed in the wider literature, which finds that the councils responding best had established defined referral routes between migrant and housing teams.⁸⁹ What ultimately distinguishes these councils, though, is less a particular structure than senior ownership of the issue, with a response being most effective when move-on is treated as a shared council priority and backed at a senior level.

Partnerships with the DWP, health services and landlords

Beyond the strong collaboration between the local authority and the voluntary sector, our research highlighted the value of building deliberate partnerships with the DWP, health services, and private landlords; rather than treating them as external systems to be navigated case by case.

The typical five-week wait for a Universal Credit payment means that a person must act fast, and processes must run smoothly, if they are to receive their first payment prior to their asylum support ending. For those supporting people during the move-on period, having a standing relationship with the DWP can help to iron out problems with the Universal Credit process, such as failure to pass the Habitual Residence Test and delays in payments, as soon as they emerge. **Greater Manchester's** positive experience of AMLOs rested partly on their co-location with the DWP, whilst **Dacorum Borough Council's** approach for achieving early intervention in helping people navigate the Universal Credit system, as detailed in Section 3, was underpinned by monthly meetings with the DWP and VCS partners. A regular touchpoint of this kind can help to prevent individual claims from stalling on avoidable errors.

88. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). Refugee housing and homelessness: *Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

89. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). Refugee housing and homelessness: *Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>

The value of partnerships with healthcare services was also discussed in our sessions. Some local authorities have commissioned enhanced GP services for their hotels, whilst others, such as **Kensington and Chelsea**, have built mental health and wellbeing provision into their move-on pathways. Council and VCS staff we spoke to also saw scope for hotel outreach as a means of reaching people whose health needs may otherwise go under the radar.

Given how many refugees must secure a private tenancy without savings or a guarantor, landlords are an indispensable partner. Rather than leaving people to fend for themselves in a hostile rental market, several councils have increased the pool of private rented accommodation available for refugees by building relationships with landlords (such as former student landlords now pivoting to housing refugees), attending landlord forums, and offering tenancy guarantees and intermediary services. As detailed in the previous section, there are several concrete examples of how councils are using partnerships and relationships with landlords to open doors for newly granted refugees in an adversarial, competitive market.

Working with people with lived experience and frontline partners

A theme running through all of our research is that support works better when it involves people who have themselves been through the asylum and move-on process and are willing to use their experience to help others. As covered in Section 2 of the report, many VCS practitioners we spoke to believed that involving people with lived experience when designing workshops, briefings, and guidance, made the relevant information more effective and easier for audiences to understand.

Another insight from our sessions is about how information itself travels. If a person finds communication about the move-on period to be confusing and inaccessible, they will instead learn from the people and networks they already trust. Local authority and VCS practitioners stressed the importance of tapping into these existing information sources rather than assuming people will engage with statutory ones. However, the same trusted networks that spread good information can just as easily spread incorrect information. Some councils described how, in some areas, people receive confident but wrong advice through community WhatsApp groups which can lead them to make decisions that leave them worse off.

Rather than working around informal networks, the most effective response can be to work with them to get accurate, trusted information into the channels people already use. Councils in our sessions recommended targeted work to challenge misinformation through these trusted voices, with peer and volunteering routes one way to build this capacity from within. One London council described embedding translators within their homelessness outreach team when there were high numbers of people experiencing homelessness after leaving asylum support accommodation. While in place, the translators were instrumental in supporting the cohort, helping to dispel myths and enabling clients to better understand the realities of their entitlements and the support available to them.

Likewise, where councils embed a dedicated, person-facing role at the point of transition, people are more likely to receive consistent guidance from someone they can build a relationship with. **Brent Council's** Refugee Navigator — a role sitting within the council's homelessness team, providing self-search advice, liaising with landlords and sourcing properties for those not in priority need — illustrates how a single trusted point of contact can hold together the many threads of the move-on process.⁹⁰ Combined with the involvement of people with lived experience, these frontline roles help ensure that the information reaching newly recognised refugees is not only accurate but comes from a source they trust.

90. Lindley, A., Sanders, C., & Bush, E. (2025). Refugee housing and homelessness: *Scoping local authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need*. SOAS University of London. <https://soas-repository.worktribe.com/output/844213>



Recommendations

For national Government

- Develop a national, joined-up approach to preventing homelessness among people leaving the asylum system, spanning homelessness, health, employment and benefits services, rather than leaving effective coordination to depend on local capacity and leadership.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of new immigration policies and laws to ensure they do not contribute to increased destitution and risk of homelessness.
- Clarify the respective roles of the Home Office, Migrant Help, Reed in Partnership, AMLOs and local authorities, and ensure AMLOs are embedded and co-located with councils, voluntary sector services and the DWP, so that support is joined up rather than duplicated or missed.
- Provide training to relevant DWP staff on the issues facing newly granted refugees, including the impact of Universal Credit delays and how to support people to access the exemption from the shared accommodation rate.
- Support health outreach in asylum accommodation so that people's health needs are identified and met during the move-on period.



Principles for practice

For local authorities and their partners

- Build deliberate, trusted partnerships across organisational boundaries — with the voluntary and community sector, the DWP, health services and private landlords — rather than treating these as external systems to be navigated case by case.
- Involve people with lived experience in designing and delivering support, and work with trusted community networks to get accurate information into the channels people already use.
- Dedicate specialist capacity to refugee move-on and locate it in the right team rather than leaving it to a generalist service, keeping single adults from being deprioritised in favour of families.
- Establish clear internal referral routes and shared access to case-management systems so that migrant, housing and rough sleeping teams work as one, and use co-location to prevent people being passed between disconnected teams.
- Treat move-on as a shared council priority with senior ownership, backed at corporate management level.
- Embed a dedicated, person-facing role at the point of transition, such as a refugee navigator, so people receive consistent guidance from someone with whom they can build a relationship.





National policy context

In this report we have sought to highlight a range of examples of local authorities and VCS organisations that demonstrate good practice in preventing and addressing homelessness resulting from the asylum move-on process. But the current national policy context is holding back, rather than enabling, their efforts. Continuing to deny almost all asylum seekers the right to work harms newly granted refugees' employment prospects and leaves them more dependent on the flawed welfare system. The lack of a consistent, established national process for preparing people for what they will need for life in the UK, both pre- and post- asylum decision, means that many refugees are still falling through the cracks when granted status, forced to sleep rough. Not everyone who needs ESOL tuition can access it. Ongoing affordable housing shortages leave refugees mostly reliant on the expensive and oversubscribed private rented sector.

The Labour Government under Keir Starmer pursued a number of changes to asylum and refugee policy, intensifying an already hostile environment. These reforms further undermine efforts to enable successful resettlement and to reduce homelessness among asylum seekers and newly granted refugees. Prematurely ending the 56-day move-on pilot and then setting a new move-on period of 42 days has left people granted status with insufficient time to find housing in a highly overstretched and unaffordable system. The introduction of a new 'core protection' model, meaning refugee status is now temporary and subject to review every 30 months for all those granted status from March 2026, will leave refugees in greater precarity and subject to a greater risk of missing deadlines and being unable to afford fees or prove status, which increases the risk of homelessness. In June 2026, the Government revoked the Home Office's statutory duties to provide accommodation support to destitute asylum seekers, instead making this discretionary – removing a guaranteed safety net for asylum seekers most at risk of homelessness. The Government's 'earned settlement' plans, still under consultation, contain a number of provisions that would certainly increase homelessness among refugees and other non-UK nationals, if implemented. The proposal in the Immigration and Asylum Bill to require refugees to make payments to the UK Government, expected to be set at £10,000, if they received asylum support, could also cause more instances of destitution and, therefore, homelessness. Meanwhile, local government finances remain under enormous strain, with targeted support such as the Asylum Dispersal Grant facing an uncertain future.



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Conclusion



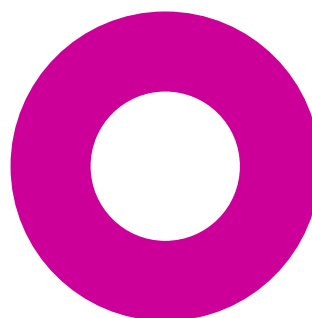
Conclusion

Local authorities and VCS organisations committed to addressing refugee homelessness are carrying out their work in a challenging environment that is at risk of getting worse. But they continue to demonstrate that meaningful and effective action still can – and should – be taken at the local level to improve the situation for asylum seekers and refugees. Coordinated, proactive action can prevent and alleviate homelessness and enable a future where refugees can put down roots, live with dignity and contribute to life in the UK.

In many areas, councils and the voluntary sector are making best use of the period before someone receives a decision on their asylum claim, providing practical support and information, and helping people to build skills that will increase the likelihood of a successful transition out of asylum support accommodation. Local services are also often responding rapidly after someone has received a decision on their claim, using the limited move-on period to proactively commence housing and homelessness support. Many areas have developed a range of approaches to opening up suitable housing options outside of limited social housing stock and supporting people to sustain them – in supported housing, hosting and lodging schemes, and the private rented sector – for refugees who are not assessed as meeting a priority need. And several are doing so aided by collaborative partnership working across councils and the VCS, flexing the available local capacity and resource to its most effective, to ensure people are unlikely to fall through any cracks.

We have suggested themes and principles that can be identified across the examples and case studies, in the hope that other organisations may be able to use them as a starting point to enhance and develop their own work. We also want the national Government to learn from existing good practice and consider how this can be scaled up.

If we want to end rough sleeping, we need to put an end to an asylum system that drives destitution and homelessness. As well as being the right thing to do for individuals claiming sanctuary, this is likely to have economic benefits,⁹¹ and could also pave the way for stronger, more cohesive communities - because a secure home is the foundation that allows refugees to make a positive start in this country, find work, and participate in local life. As highlighted in our appendix and throughout this report, there is an extensive body of evidence that demonstrates how we can do this. With a new political impetus behind ending rough sleeping, the Government must now give its full support to local authorities and VCS organisations, and fix asylum move-on as an essential piece of the puzzle.



91. British Red Cross & London School of Economics and Political Science. (2020). *The costs of destitution: A cost-benefit analysis of extending the move-on period for new refugees*. <https://assets.redcross.org.uk/82b1e254-5524-0172-0612-9ce813c7824c/d4d4c458-449f-48d8-8f29-d7bc45c431a1/The-costs-of-destitution.pdf>



Recommendations to national government

Time to move on safely

- Introduce a permanent extension of the move-on period to at least 56 days for all recipients of an asylum decision, commencing from receipt of all important documentation.
- Explicitly state on the asylum support discontinuation letter, and in other official communications, that newly granted refugees at imminent risk of street homelessness can request a discretionary extension of their asylum accommodation, so that those who need it are able to access it.
- Communicate any changes to the move-on period clearly and with adequate notice to voluntary sector services and local authorities.

Documentation and communication with people receiving decisions

- Simplify and improve the way asylum decisions are communicated, replacing the fragmented sequence of separate English-only communications with a single, clear, translated notification setting out what is happening, the steps a person must take, and a clear move-on date.
- Guarantee a timely advance payment to newly recognised refugees whose Universal Credit payment will not arrive within the move-on period, including by ensuring that the Habitual Residence Test exemption for refugees is applied correctly and that problems with eVisas do not delay payment.
- Ensure that there are clear and accessible escalation routes in place for resolving delays and errors with key documents, including eVisas, including to allow people to extend their asylum support as and when required.
- Improve the usefulness and accessibility of the information the Home Office provides, including translated, plain-language and easy-to-update digital resources co-designed with people who have been through the process.

Data, notification and referral

- Establish a consistent process to notify local authorities when someone is placed in asylum accommodation in their area, so that pre-decision support can begin and people in dispersal accommodation can be identified.
- Automatically notify the relevant local authority when someone receives a decision on their asylum claim, so that councils can begin proactive support rather than waiting for the person to present as homeless.
- Clarify the expectation that accommodation providers share information with local authorities as needed, with appropriate consent from residents, and monitor and enforce this where it does not happen.
- Include the Home Office in the duty to refer, and in due course the duty to collaborate, so that people entering the move-on period are reliably connected to homelessness services.



Roles, coordination and national strategy

- Develop a national, joined-up approach to preventing homelessness among people leaving the asylum system, spanning homelessness, health, employment and benefits services, rather than leaving effective coordination to depend on local capacity and leadership.
- Clarify the respective roles of the Home Office, Migrant Help, Reed in Partnership, AMLOs and local authorities, and ensure AMLOs are embedded and co-located with councils, voluntary sector services and the DWP, so that support is joined up rather than duplicated or missed.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of new immigration policies and laws to ensure they do not contribute to increased destitution and risk of homelessness.
- Improve the Migrant Help contract, providing more resource and capacity for consistent, accessible move-on support, including in-person help.
- Provide training to relevant DWP staff on the issues facing newly granted refugees, including the impact of Universal Credit delays and how to support people to access the exemption from the shared accommodation rate.
- Support health outreach in asylum accommodation so that people's health needs are identified and met during the move-on period.

Work, English language and integration

- Give people seeking asylum the right to work after six months.
- Expand ESOL provision and scrap the six-month rule, so that people can start learning English as early as possible.
- Deliver a national refugee employability and integration programme — along the lines of the former Refugee Integration and Employment Service — which includes supporting people awaiting a decision to prepare for future employment.
- Make public transport free or affordable for people in the asylum system and newly granted refugees, so that they can reach services, education and employment.

Housing supply and affordability

- Scale up the delivery of social housing, accelerating to the delivery of 90,000 homes a year as soon as possible.
- Unfreeze LHA rates and lift the benefit cap.
- Scrap the shared accommodation rate for under-35s.
- Acknowledge the role of supported housing in preventing and alleviating homelessness among refugees, and ensure this is reflected in local authorities' supported housing strategies and in future guidance on the implementation of the Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act.
- Provide local authorities with sufficient revenue funding for the supported housing services needed in their community, including for refugees.
- Following the GLA's approach and building on the existing commitment in the National Plan to End Homelessness, issue a national directive to move away from requiring people to be verified as sleeping rough before receiving support, with clear timelines.

Funding local areas

- Provide adequate funding to local authorities to support the commissioning or delivery of refugee homelessness support in their area. This should include adequate resources to provide pre-decision support, post-decision support, and support to open up access to housing with tenancy sustainment.
- Give local authorities a clear, multi-year commitment to asylum dispersal grant funding, and move the grant determination to a tariff model based on the actual number of people being supported rather than on bedspaces occupied at a point in time.



Principles for practice for local authorities and their partners

Preparation and support while in asylum accommodation

- Commence pre-decision support with people living in asylum accommodation as early as possible, in partnership with specialist voluntary sector organisations. This should involve sharing accessible information about the UK housing and benefits systems, and other key parts of life in the UK, as well as a general understanding of what to expect when people receive their status.
- Develop volunteering schemes for people living in asylum accommodation, as well as pre-employment support and support with re-accreditation.
- Ensure that ESOL provision is sufficient to meet need, and can be accessed by people as soon as they arrive in the area.
- Develop free transport initiatives for people in the asylum system to ensure that people can access the services they need.
- Involve people with lived experience of going through the asylum system to co-design information resources, and, where possible, co-deliver sessions/support.
- Create a directory of local organisations offering support, highlighting who offers what and how to access it, to share with people living in asylum accommodation.

Post-decision navigation

- Provide continuity of support before and after a decision, using a warm handover so that trust built before the decision is not lost and the move-on window can be spent securing housing rather than repeating groundwork.
- Work with people as soon as a decision is received rather than waiting for an eviction date, using data dashboards, provider information and, where necessary, outreach and a physical presence in asylum accommodation to identify people early.
- Run regular, predictable drop-ins and advice sessions in hotels and community hubs to resolve issues with eVisas, National Insurance numbers, proof-of-address and Universal Credit claims early.
- Put arrangements in place — such as agreed client consent — so that evidence submitted by a voluntary organisation on a person's behalf is accepted without the person needing to be present, and take practical steps such as issuing proof-of-address letters to help people open bank accounts.
- Build a strong working relationship with the DWP to iron out problems with Universal Credit, including delays, the Habitual Residence Test and arranging direct payments to landlords where appropriate.

- Where AMLOs are present, embed them within the wider local offer with a defined division of tasks, clear escalation routes and regular standing meetings, and co-locate them with council, voluntary sector and DWP support where possible.
- Involve people with lived experience in designing and, where possible, delivering move-on information and support, and work with the trusted community networks people already use to ensure accurate information reaches them.

Housing and homelessness support for those not in priority need

- Local authorities should complete a housing/homelessness assessment with people as soon as they receive a decision on their asylum claim. There is no need to wait for documentary proof, e.g. a Universal Credit receipt or an eVisa, to commence support if they know the person has received a positive decision.
- In partnership with the local voluntary sector, develop and disseminate materials to ensure that newly granted refugees receive clear and digestible information about the likelihood of securing housing in their desired areas and any risks around this.
- Commission high quality, refugee-specific supported housing, or set up or refer into refugee hosting or lodging schemes.
- Consider the needs of refugees in the development of Local Supported Housing Strategies.
- Proactively support newly granted refugees to source housing in the private rented sector, for instance through introductions to trusted landlords, landlord incentives, translators at viewings where required, and grants for deposits and upfront rental payments.
- Seek to keep people who are friends together in house-shares where feasible.
- Develop a tenancy sustainment offer for refugees placed in the PRS.
- Develop a support package for any out-of-area moves, including notifying the new local authority and new local network of voluntary sector organisations, and signposting to support.
- For anyone who falls through the gaps and is forced to sleep rough, the local authority and partner agencies should commence immediate support without requiring verification.

Partnership working and internal coordination

- Build deliberate, trusted partnerships across organisational boundaries — with the voluntary and community sector, the DWP, health services and private landlords — rather than treating these as external systems to be navigated case by case.
- Involve people with lived experience in designing and delivering support, and work with trusted community networks to get accurate information into the channels people already use.
- Dedicate specialist capacity to refugee move-on and locate it in the right team rather than leaving it to a generalist service, keeping single adults from being deprioritised in favour of families.
- Establish clear internal referral routes and shared access to case-management systems so that migrant, housing and rough sleeping teams work as one, and use co-location to prevent people being passed between disconnected teams.
- Treat move-on as a shared council priority with senior ownership, backed at corporate management level.
- Embed a dedicated, person-facing role at the point of transition, such as a refugee navigator, so people receive consistent guidance from someone with whom they can build a relationship.



APPENDIX

Collation of existing literature

Date	Title	Author	Summary
January 2018	<u>Out in the cold: Homelessness among destitute refugees in London</u>	Jesuit Refugee Service UK	Report examining patterns of homelessness among the destitute refugees supported by the JRS in London, informed by a survey conducted at their Day Centre. Makes recommendations for the alleviation of destitution among refugees and asylum-seekers.
May 2018	<u>Mind the Gap: Homelessness Among newly Recognised Refugees</u>	NACCOM	Report looking at the extent of refugee homelessness, the causes and the routes out of homelessness for refugees, based on data from NACCOM members, winter night shelter data, refugee case studies and testimonies and policy analysis. Makes recommendations about improving the move-on period, preventing homelessness among newly granted refugees, and protecting specialist supported housing provision.
July 2018	<u>Homelessness Among Refugees: Briefing for Westminster Hall Debate</u>	Refugee Council, NACCOM, Crisis, Asylum Matters (joint publication)	Policy briefing synthesising existing research for Westminster Hall debate on 17th July 2018. Makes recommendations for improving the move-on period and widening access to benefits and housing for refugees.
December 2018	<u>Still an Ordeal: The Move-On Period for New Refugees</u>	British Red Cross	Report looking at how the 28-day move-on period results in destitution, based on surveys with refugees applying for mainstream benefits, case file reviews, focus groups with volunteers and staff, in-depth interviews with service users, and data and insight from existing literature. Makes recommendations about improving move-on period and boosting access to benefits and finances.
May 2019	<u>28 Days: The Impact of the 'Move On' Period for Refugee Mental Health</u>	Aileen Voit guest post for Oxford University Centre for Criminology (Oxford Law Blogs)	Blog based on interviews conducted with caseworkers and therapists working with refugees in London as part of a research study on the impact of post-migration stressors on refugee mental health in the UK.

June 2019	<u>Mind the Gap: One Year On</u>	NACCOM	Follow up report on homelessness among newly recognised refugees, updating from May 2018 report, based on NACCOM member data. Makes recommendations about improving the move-on period, including by trialling a 56-day pilot, boosting access to benefits and housing for newly-granted refugees, and improving local authorities' support and intervention.
February 2020	<u>The Costs of Destitution</u>	LSE and British Red Cross	Report outlining the cost-benefit analysis of extending the move-on period from 28 to 56 days, based on the findings of the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion at LSE. Makes recommendations for extending move-on period, addressing the administrative barriers faced by newly-recognised refugees, and improving the support available during the move-on period.
May 2020	<u>The Newly-Recognised Refugees Most at Risk of Homelessness in England</u>	Lavinia Mitton in the Journal of Social Policy	Academic analysis of statistical data to assess whether homelessness among people recently been granted refugee status in England is concentrated among particular groups of refugees. Concludes that policy responses could significantly address the issue of refugee homelessness, including a longer and more flexible move-on period and better support for those leaving Home Office accommodation, and increased intervention by local authorities.
February 2021	<u>Keys to the City: How the Next Mayor of London Can Help End Refugee Homelessness</u>	Refugee Council	Campaign report in the context of London mayoral election, focusing on refugees' ability to access private tenancies as a way of preventing and ending homelessness, using insight from Refugee Council's Private Rented Scheme and local authority data. Makes recommendations for incoming Mayor as to how to increase access to the private rented sector and support tenancy sustainment for refugees.
June 2021	<u>Understanding the health and housing experiences of refugees and other migrant populations experiencing homelessness or vulnerable housing: a systematic review using GRADE-CERQual</u>	Harneel Kaur MD and others in the Canadian Medical Association Open Access Journal	Academic study to understand the enablers and barriers of accessing fundamental health and social services for migrants in precarious housing situations, using international evidence, based on a systematic review of qualitative studies using GRADE-CERQual. Makes recommendations for how health care practitioners in Canada can respond to the barriers faced by migrants facing precarious housing situations.

March 2022	<u>The Impact of Housing on Refugees: An Evidence Synthesis</u>	Philip Brown and others in Housing Studies Journal	Academic paper synthesising existing evidence to understand several issues in refugee settlement, including: the role and impact of housing systems and policies, the impact of housing quality, tenure, housing support workers and how the diversity of the refugee population is reflected in the evidence. Systematic synthesis focusing on UK context but drawing on international literature. Points toward gaps in the knowledge base and calls for housing studies scholars to focus on the plight faced by refugees to help challenge the wider structural inequalities impacting them.
July 2023	<u>Refused? Experiences Following a Negative Asylum Decision</u>	NACCOM	Peer-led research designed, led and delivered by NACCOM's volunteer Community Researchers (now called Community Ambassadors) with NACCOM staff. Explores the impact on individuals and trauma following a negative asylum decision and the systemic and practical barriers preventing resolution of immigration status, based on in-depth qualitative interviews with service users in NACCOM network. Makes recommendations as to how these systemic and practical barriers could be addressed.
October 2023	<u>Why the changes to the 'move-on' period mean more refugees are facing homelessness and destitution – joint parliamentary briefing</u>	Refugee Council and others	Parliamentary briefing produced by Refugee Council with organisations across housing and asylum sector, containing analysis of two key operational changes announced in August 2023 affecting newly recognised refugees and causing increased homelessness. Recommends that the Home Office should abandon the recent changes and make further improvements to the move-on process so that it does not drive homelessness.
January 2024	<u>Briefing: Refugee homelessness in Greater Manchester</u>	Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit	Policy briefing based on casework evidence from GMIAU, drawing on direct client experiences, qualitative testimonies, and consultation with local voluntary sector organisations, community groups, local authorities and the combined authority. Makes recommendations for how national Government should improve the asylum move-on process so that it does not drive homelessness and provide localised financial support to areas facing particular pressures.
January 2024	<u>Lords debate briefing on the integration of newly recognised refugees</u>	Nicola Newson, House of Lords Library	Parliamentary briefing providing background information for a short Lords debate on 18th January 2024 on pathways for newly recognised refugees to integrate. Summarises existing UK integration policies including the Refugee Employability Programme and the Integrated Communities Action Plan, and notes the absence of a UK-wide refugee integration strategy (contrasting with Scotland and Wales strategies, and draft Northern Ireland strategy).

January 2024	<u>Homelessness, refugees and resettlement</u>	Philip Brown, Santokh Gill, Jamie P. Halsall, Tom Simcock and Akosiwa Agbokou in partnership with Centre for Homelessness Impact	Academic report seeking to understand the housing pathways and experiences of refugees who had settled in the UK over a 30-year period, drawing on published evidence, available and relevant data and insights from recent research undertaken by the authors with refugees and policy actors and practitioners. Covers routes to refugee status in the UK, the known relationship between homelessness and those with refugee status, homelessness risk factors affecting all refugees, known and emerging outcomes from refugee resettlement programmes and which factors lead to positive outcomes for refugees. Makes wide-ranging recommendations on how refugees can be better facilitated in their housing pathways.
March 2024	<u>How London's local councils build proactive responses to asylum</u>	Melissa Weihmayer - LSE	Policy brief describing the responses that London's borough councils have been developing to address challenges asylum-seekers face. Based on semi-structured interviews and consultations with London borough council officers and participation in the GLA Asylum Welcome Programme, a 6-month action learning process. Makes recommendations for national Government, pan-London stakeholders and local authorities for how to maximise existing capacity and build new capacity to address the issues faced by asylum seekers.
April 2024	<u>Community integration, quality of life, thriving, and mental health among refugees and asylum seekers. A London service provider perspective</u>	Hannah Kienzler in Frontiers in Public Health	Academic article exploring how systemic injustices and social inequalities affect refugee and asylum seeker integration, thriving, and mental health in London, based on interviews with mental health/psychosocial support service providers in London third-sector organisations. Makes recommendations for reforming asylum system, centring human rights and improving equitable health access for asylum-seekers and refugees.
April 2024	<u>Keys to the City 2024: Ending Refugee Homelessness in London</u>	Refugee Council	Follow up report on rising homelessness and destitution among newly-recognised refugees in London, updating on February 2021 report. Highlights worsening homelessness among refugees in London and barriers to refugees being able to access privately rented accommodation. Reiterates recommendations to the Mayor of London and makes recommendations to national Government on extending and improving the move-on period and working effectively with local government.

April 2024	<u>Effects of UK Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Policy on Poverty</u>	APPG on Migration and APPG on Poverty	Report of a Parliamentary inquiry into whether the UK's immigration and asylum policies are causing poverty and destitution, based on evidence submissions from individuals with lived experience and expert organisations, oral evidence sessions held in Parliament and a lived experience roundtable. Makes recommendations around improving access to employment and wages, social security and welfare, public services, and housing; reducing direct immigration costs; implementing an integration strategy and ensuring those affected by immigration policy have their voices heard and are listened to.
May 2024	<u>A Slow Violence: How immigration control forces people in Greater Manchester into destitution</u>	Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit	Report combining insights from individual experiences with policy analysis examining how hostile environment policies force people into long-term destitution, and what local interventions work as ways of combatting this. Incorporates qualitative research based on in-depth interviews with five Greater Manchester residents experiencing destitution due to immigration status. Makes wide-ranging recommendations for reform of the immigration system, including recommendations about how to improve asylum move-on process and safeguard against evictions into homelessness.
July 2024	<u>Home Beyond the Home Office: Addressing Refugee Move-On Challenges in the Oxford Area</u>	SOAS and Asylum Welcome	Report exploring access to housing for newly-recognised refugees, focusing on men who've been living in contingency asylum accommodation in Oxford and sharing learnings from Asylum Welcome's work supporting people as they transition into mainstream housing. Draws on existing research and statistics; interviews with refugees and stakeholders; a survey of asylum claimants attending 'moving on' briefings; and Asylum Welcome's casework experience. Makes recommendations for improvements to the move-on process, increased collaboration between local partners and improved guidance and awareness for refugees.
September 2024	<u>Moving on from asylum accommodation: The impact and learning from councils on the asylum backlog clearance</u>	Local Government Association	Report based on survey conducted with 92 responses from local authorities across England, Scotland and Wales, gathering views of how authorities have experienced impacts from the cessation of support for asylum seekers and which initiatives respondents felt could help on reducing costs and impacts to councils and helping build a more effective move-on process. Respondents expressed support for extending the move-on period as the most effective change that could be made, and highlighted need for increased funding for both move-on support and upstream support pre-decision.

September 2024	<u>Destitute and in Danger: people made homeless by the asylum system</u>	Jesuit Refugee Service UK	Report based on survey research conducted mostly with people refused asylum living across different areas of London and supported by JRS, examining experiences of homelessness among those refused asylum in context of cost-of-living crisis and following Covid-19 pandemic. Makes recommendations about improving the move-on process, ending hostile environment more generally and creating simplified routes to settled status.
October 2024	<u>An Uncertain Future: A journey through the move-on period</u>	UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency	Report presenting the experiences of newly recognised refugees in England and insights from organisations that support them, informed by refugee testimonies and a survey of organisations. Makes recommendations for improving how the move-on process works, equipping and empowering refugees, ensuring that people don't fall through the cracks and providing additional support to those who need it.
December 2024	<u>Asylum Support (Prescribed Period) Bill – Lords Library Briefing</u>	James Goddard – House of Lords Library	Parliamentary briefing prepared to inform the Second Reading debate on 13th December 2024 of Baroness Lister of Burtersett's Private Members' Bill. Comprehensively summarises the background to the Bill, current issues with asylum move-on and homelessness among newly recognised refugees, and the arguments for and against changes to the move-on period. The Bill proposed to permanently extend the move-on period to 56 days and ensure a clearer documentation process.
May 2025	<u>Understanding asylum seeker and asylum-route refugee vulnerabilities, needs, and support (2022)</u>	Home Office (funded by AMIF)	Report exploring the interrelated factors that contribute to the vulnerability of asylum seekers and refugees arriving to the UK, informed by a review of the literature and secondary data, and in-depth interviews with Home Office staff, NGOs, academics, service providers and frontline workers. Identifies seven principles designed to provide the Home Office with a basis for reducing vulnerability among asylum seekers and refugees. Also makes 24 specific policy recommendations.
May 2025	<u>Vital Solutions to Ending Migrant Homelessness</u>	Homeless Link and NACCOM	Policy briefing report synthesising a wide range of evidence on migrant homelessness, outlining the ways in which immigration policy drives and entrenches homelessness and destitution. Makes recommendations for reform of immigration system and embedding a cross-departmental approach to ending homelessness, including specific recommendations to stop the flow of homelessness from the asylum system by improving the move-on period.

July 2025	<u>From Surviving to Thriving: Preventing homelessness in Greater Manchester among people recently granted refugee status</u>	Boaz Trust	Report sharing learnings from Boaz Trust's Refugee Homelessness Prevention Project and research with people with lived experience, informed by interviews with single people recently granted refugee status, facilitated focus group discussions, and insights and feedback from support staff. Highlights potential for regional place-based responses to achieve positive outcomes, and makes recommendations for both local statutory services and national Government for improvements to the move-on period and the support available.
August 2025	<u>Theorising legal gaps geographically: Exploring the transition from asylum seeker to refugee in the UK</u>	Sarah M. Hughes in Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers	Geographical and legal analysis of move-on period using qualitative interview data with newly recognised refugees in the North of England. Examines the role of material technologies, particularly Biometric Residence Permits, in mediating and creating a transition gap between asylum seeker and refugee legal categories.
September 2025	<u>Refugee Integration Outcomes (RIO) Insights: Embarks, Economic Activity, and Housing between 2015 and 2021</u>	Home Office, ONS, MHCLG	Longitudinal cohort study aiming to create a comprehensive dataset of refugee integration outcomes to inform the Government's understanding and provide a robust evidence base for interventions. Links Home Office refugee data with Census 2021 and administrative data. Considers refugee departure from UK, labour market integration, English language proficiency, and housing and living conditions.
November 2025	<u>Refugees, Homelessness and the 'Move-On' Process</u>	Sasha Eykyn, Social Sciences Journal (MDPI)	Academic paper presenting research findings about the institutional coordination of homelessness and housing insecurity in the lives of newly granted refugees navigating the move-on period in Wales, informed by data from focus groups, peer research, practitioner interviews, observation and text analysis. Uses Institutional Ethnography approach.

November 2025	<u>Refugee Housing and Homelessness: Scoping Local Authority responses to newly granted refugees not in priority need</u>	Lindley, Anna; Sanders, Charlotte; Bush, Ellie (SOAS University of London)	Research report outlining the refugee homelessness situation in London and how local services are responding, in order to foster the development of more effective approaches. Informed by interviews with 20 people working in 14 local authorities across London, 13 interviews with other relevant parties including the VCS, qualitative research with asylum-seekers and refugees in the Hillingdon area in collaboration with REAP, visits and conversations at local services and meetings, and a survey carried out by GLA and London Councils in June 2025 of local authorities and civil society organisations. Makes recommendations on improving the asylum move-on process and its timeframe; improving homelessness prevention practice; ensuring effective navigational support; confronting financial barriers; and opening up housing solutions.
November 2025	<u>Navigating Statutory Homelessness Support: Impacts of Asylum and Refugee Policy</u>	University of Huddersfield	Academic report discussing evidence on how asylum and immigration policies have combined with housing market pressures to exacerbate the likelihood of homelessness for newly recognised refugees, creating conditions where homelessness is foreseeable. Informed by conversations with practitioners and campaigners working across health, housing and migration, multiple primary and secondary sources, and a range of case studies and interviews. Makes a number of recommendations including improving the asylum process, improving statutory homelessness support, and increasing the availability of suitable accommodation.
December 2025	<u>Systems-wide evaluation of homelessness and rough sleeping: Interaction with the asylum system</u>	Centre for Homelessness Impact, in consortium with RSM UK Consulting LLP and Cordis Bright (commissioned by MHCLG)	Report produced as part of the Systems-wide Evaluation of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, informed by qualitative insights from across England. Identifies factors that can increase the risk of homelessness throughout the transition of refugees from the asylum estate, and identifies opportunities to build on local examples of good practice. Makes a number of operational policy recommendations as well as recommendations for system change and improved information and data sharing.
January 2026	<u>UK Refugees at Risk: How Current Move-on Policy Generates Homelessness</u>	SOAS University of London, University of Huddersfield	Policy briefing to inform Parliamentary debates, summarising recent research and evidence. Highlights inadequacy of 28-day move-on period, acute pressure of rental market, and failures of local authority homelessness prevention and relief. Makes recommendations to reduce harm and prevent homelessness.

February 2026	<u>Proactive local government: How London borough councils build capacity to respond to asylum</u>	Melissa Weihmayer in Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space	Article based on research investigating the capacity-building processes of local governments that operate within restrictive migration policy contexts. Based on observation of the Asylum Welcome programme, especially its 6-month 'design lab' learning process with eleven London borough councils from January to June 2023, six months of insider research, and semi-structured interviews, and drawing on public administration and urban planning literature.
March 2026	<u>Getting It Right: The Importance of the Move-On Period For Newly Recognised Refugees</u>	Refugee Council	Peer-led research project conducted in partnership with A&M Consultancy and a team of peer researchers who have lived through the UK asylum system and the move-on period, informed by interviews and questionnaires with people who have gone through the move-on period, representatives from support organisations, and local authority staff. Examines the impact of changes to the move-on period, including the temporary extension to 56 days. Makes recommendations for improvements to the move-on period and to increase access to housing.
March 2026	<u>Good News, Bad News: The move-on period and the issues people face immediately after being granted refugee status</u>	London Refugee Advocacy Forum	Research aiming to identify, understand, and document the experiences of people with lived experience of the move-on period including newly recognised refugees - particularly the challenges they face in accessing information, support, accommodation, and services during the move-on period. Informed by a review of selected literature and internet research; a survey conducted by ten London-based refugee community organisations; and interviews with selected refugees with lived experience of the move-on period. Makes recommendations for national Government on improving the move-on period, as well as recommendations for the GLA on housing and homelessness, recommendations for VCS organisations, and recommendations for local authorities.
June 2026	<u>Evaluation of the initiatives to enhance the move on process</u>	National Centre for Social Research (commissioned by Home Office)	Independent evaluation of the impact of the Government's 56-day asylum move-on pilot, the deployment of Asylum Move-on Liaison Officers (AMLOs) in select local authorities, and the £2.8 million in recognition payments paid to local authorities most affected by increased asylum decisions, based on fieldwork conducted between April and September 2025. Informed by 76 qualitative encounters with 110 participants with a range of expertise, two online surveys, analysis of Home Office operational data and MHCLG homelessness data, and a cost-benefit analysis. Makes recommendations including extending the move-on period, improving communication and guidance, strengthening the AMLO role and its integration, addressing housing shortages.

June 2026	<u>Closing the gaps: Immigration status and homelessness</u>	IPPR	Research report on the scale, drivers and impacts of migrant homelessness in the UK. Informed by qualitative interviews capturing the experiences of those with lived experience, and quantitative data exploring the scale and pattern of migrant homelessness across four English regions. Makes recommendations to improve the 42-day move-on period, and other holistic recommendations on how homelessness services, local authorities, the Home Office and the wider Government can better prevent and address migrant homelessness.
July 2026	<u>The Effects of Recent Changes to UK Immigration, Asylum and Refugee Policy on Poverty and Inequality: A Joint Follow-Up Inquiry</u>	APPG on Migration and APPG on Poverty	A joint inquiry following up on the two APPGs' 2024 report, considering the likely impact of the Government's recent sweeping asylum and immigration reforms on poverty and inequality. Informed by a call for evidence inviting submissions from academics and researchers; charities, NGOs and community organisations; legal and policy professionals; and local authorities and service providers, as well as two oral evidence sessions, one of which received evidence from people with lived experience. Updates the recommendations made in the previous report, across a range of areas: immigration routes; fees and costs; social security and welfare support; housing; public services; and communities and integration.
July 2026	<u>Local authority gatekeeping of homelessness assistance for refugees</u>	Advicenow	Research report providing evidence that local authorities are placing barriers in the way of refugees accessing homelessness assistance to which they may be legally entitled, based on analysis of comments, questions and case examples from 127 participants in Advicenow training courses on housing rights for refugees delivered in 2025 and 2026. Those attending the training were staff and volunteers from frontline charities, grassroots and community groups, advice organisations, health professionals and faith groups across England. The report makes suggestions for future research on the specific manifestations and impacts of local authority gatekeeping on people from migrant communities, including new refugees.



About Homeless Link

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

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About NACCOM

NACCOM is a national network of over 130 frontline organisations and charities across the UK, working together to end destitution amongst people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants who aren't able to access public funds because of their immigration status.

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Charity number 1162434



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