

Advice Worker Weekly Report - in centre appointments
Week ending: 3rd July 2020

Clients seen: 12

Housing Referrals: 4

Synopsis of Activity

- Benefits advice for five clients
- Street link (rough sleeper outreach) referrals for two clients
- Advocated to client's housing provider
- Pursued previous housing referrals for one client
- Assisted one client to make a claim for Universal Credit
- Co-ordinated with other agencies for two clients
- Organised food and bedding for one client
- Applied to open a bank account for one client

Issues

Not able to quickly follow up with clients face to face, due to appointments filling up more quickly and further in advance, benefits system very complex and clients not easily able to understand it, night shelters not open so shortage of temporary accommodation, shortage of housing for people both working and claiming Universal Credit.

Case study

Ahmed has a young family and has been working and claiming Universal Credit to top up his earnings. He migrated to the UK from Italy and so has been subject to benefits rules for people from the European Economic Area, and has suffered from poor decision making about his claim on the part of the DWP in regards to his eligibility, which has complicated his benefits and often left him short of money. Because he has been here for 5 years, he recently applied for settled status, which would give him an unqualified access to benefits. He got stuck with the more complex parts of the process, so we referred him for specialist help. He now has his permanent residency to stay in the UK. He also wanted to find out why his childcare costs had stopped. I advised him that it is because he is no longer working and so not eligible – he was working in construction but had to stop because of Covid-19. I assisted him to find out how to get a discounted travel card while the job centres are closed. I assisted him to contact the benefits agency to find out.

Eleanor Smith

Housing & Welfare Advice Worker