

Advice Worker Monthly Report - in centre appointments, August 2020

Clients seen: 61

Summary

- Housing referrals and housing intervention : 29
- Income maximisation including grants, freedom passes, DHP applications and foodbank referrals : 9
- Welfare benefit advocacy : 15 clients
- Immigration advice : 9
- Placed into accommodation : 8
- Bank account opening :1
- Customer rights advice : 1
- Employment : 1
- Help to get identity documents :2

Case Study: 'Hassan'

My client Hassan is an asylum seeker who came to the advice service needing help with his homelessness, and also his immigration case. When he first came to the UK, he had tried to claim asylum. However after facing a number of bureaucratic hurdles, including being given a phone number to arrange his second interview which didn't work, he had given up in hopelessness and frustration and gone to stay with a friend. However, the friend moved house and could no longer help, at which point he became street homeless and destitute. He had been in contact with a charity for asylum seekers, however the only help they had so far provided with accommodation was a series of texts signposting him to projects which were either closed, or which he couldn't access as an asylum seeker with no recourse to public funds. As an undocumented migrant he had to report every two weeks with the home office, which meant that if he was in another part of the city that day, for example to access day centres or if he had managed to find a friend to stay with for a night or two that he would have to then find money for travel. He was very frustrated with everything when he arrived at the Manna Centre.

Firstly we referred Hassan to Streetlink so that outreach workers could find him and hopefully get him into temporary accommodation. Initially, they were unable to find Hassan, as it is very hard for people to stay in one place while rough sleeping at night, due to fears of being targeted and attacked, and also the cold. However, we were able to coordinate between Streetlink and Hassan and keep both parties up to date so that he could be found.

Next we emailed several immigration solicitors who were able to take legal aid clients to see if they could help Hassan with his asylum case. We were able to find a solicitor from Hassan's home country who spoke his language and was happy to help, and put Hassan in touch.

We also applied for, and eventually obtained, funding for Hassan to travel. In the short term we were able to give Hassan an Oyster card with some money on it on the day, which had been kindly donated by our supporters. This meant that Hassan could travel around the city to get the help he needed, and fulfil his legal obligations to the Home Office.