

Housing, Health and Hope

Experiences of living in and moving on from asylum accommodation

Overview

This project looked at how living in and moving out of asylum accommodation, such as hotels, affects people's health and wellbeing. We spoke to **30** people with lived experience and **11** staff and volunteers who support them.



What we found

Having a safe, stable home is essential for health and wellbeing. However, many people face serious challenges during their time in asylum accommodation and when they are required to leave.

01

People told us that **living in asylum accommodation** often had a negative impact on their physical and mental health, even after leaving. Unsuitable food, overcrowding, poor conditions, and frequent moves created stress and uncertainty.



02

People are usually given up to 28 days to leave accommodation after receiving a decision on their asylum status, which is often **not enough time** to understand what to do, arrange benefits or find somewhere to live. Many participants said they **did not receive clear or timely information**.



03

Some people were housed in **unsuitable temporary accommodation**, including places with damp and mould, and no adjustments for disabilities. This made existing health conditions worse.



04

Others, particularly single adults without children, faced a high **risk of homelessness** because they are expected to find housing in the private rented sector, which can be expensive and difficult to access.



*"I became homeless for 10 days and **slept at the station**. This happens to most people. The time given (after eviction) to find a place is not enough." - Participant*

*"The support we are missing is information. We are not told where to go for anything—not for school registration, medical services, or other support. We had to **figure everything out on our own**." - Participant*

Health impacts

- High levels of stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Worsening physical health conditions
- Disruption to healthcare when moving to new areas.



What works well

- Voluntary and community sector organisations were described as the most trusted and helpful source of support.
- They provided practical help and a sense of connection.



What needs to happen

Participants highlighted the need for:

- Better living conditions in asylum accommodation (including food provided)
- Clear and accessible information earlier in the process
- More time and support to prepare for moving on
- Better access to safe and affordable housing
- Stronger coordination between services
- Long-term funding for voluntary and community sector organisations



Above all, participants wanted a safe home, the chance to work and study, and the opportunity to build an independent future.

We made recommendations to local service providers on how to deliver these changes. You can read their responses on our website.

"We hope to soon live in a house where we can cook our own food."

"I want to improve my English as I feel it is preventing me from taking part."

"I would like to feel better mentally"



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Read the full report and recommendations here.