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Current Pressures on the Asylum Agenda in Leeds

Winter 2023





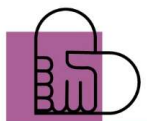
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Who does this impact?

People seeking asylum

The United Nations definition is:

When people flee their own country and seek sanctuary in another country, they apply for asylum – the right to be recognised as a refugee and receive legal protection and material assistance. An asylum seeker must demonstrate that his or her fear of persecution in his or her home country is well-founded.



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Clearing the Asylum Application Backlog

- In December 2022, the PM announced clearing the backlog of outstanding asylum applications
- Home Office intended to clear 73,000 outstanding asylum cases by 31 Dec 2023
- All LAs, including Leeds, are seeing a **significant number** of people seeking asylum receiving decisions on claims





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Discontinuations:

A Home Office decision on an asylum claim results in a positive or negative decision

Negative decision:

- A **negative decision** does not mean the end of the asylum process as people can **lodge an appeal against the decision**, once completed people can again access asylum support (accommodation and subsistence support), however people may become destitute during the gap.
- People seeking asylum have **no recourse to public funds** therefore Leeds Housing Options cannot offer accommodation.
- PAFRAS provide support to **destitute asylum seekers** with support for the asylum appeal and referral to destitute accommodation providers.

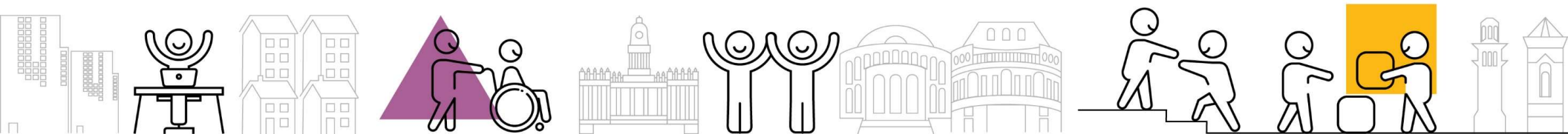




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Discontinuations: Positive Decision

- Individuals and families have **28 days to transition from asylum to unfamiliar mainstream support** (housing, benefits, bank accounts, schools etc).
- Asylum accommodation provider Mears are required to **evict from the accommodation** at the end of the 28-notice period
- **Leeds Housing Options** contact people with positive decision to **complete homelessness assessment**
- **Universal Credits** requires **5 weeks** from claim to payment
- A British Residency Permit is required to access some services and bank accounts





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Positive Decision – Current Pressures

- The **28 notice periods varies** with the vast numbers of asylum decisions
- LHO seeing people with **just 2 days left before eviction.**
- The rapid number of asylum decisions – **resulting in potential homelessness** for people with positive and negative decisions.
- LHO may be provided **incorrect contact details delaying connection.**
- **High number of singles** (in particular males) who are 'Not in Priority Need', therefore LHO owe no duty to offer emergency accommodation.
- **People likely to approach services** who may be unfamiliar with these client/needs
- **Increased risks** of victimisation, exploitation, modern slavery, organised crime, rouge landlords, illegal money lending etc.



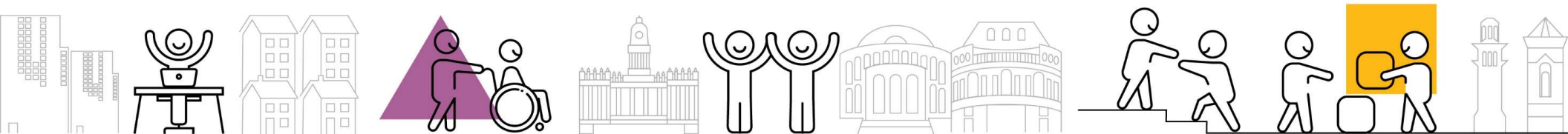


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What you can do:

People seeking asylum are often more vulnerable, unfamiliar with mainstream support and may feel less confident seeking support:

- Share this presentation and the asylum decisions flyer with frontline services.
- **Connect** people to services as appropriate including:
 - Leeds Housing Options
 - RETAS
 - Services detailed on the asylum decisions flyer
 - Basic needs support (e.g. food)
- If rough sleeping these clients are more likely to be in places which are less visible





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Impact across the UK

Huge rise in refugees sleeping rough after Home Office cuts notice period to leave accommodation

Sky News has seen evidence that many refugees are getting much less than their normal allocated period to leave state-provided homes once their status is accepted - sometimes as little as a week, forcing them into homelessness.

By Matthew Thompson, news correspondent

🕒 Thursday 23 November 2023 03:43, UK

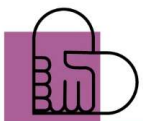
Up to 1,000 asylum seekers in Birmingham at risk of homelessness by Christmas

The 'unprecedented' figure is what Birmingham City Council would usually deal with over three years or more, said a cabinet member

Up to 1,000 asylum seekers in Birmingham face homelessness in the lead-up to [Christmas](#) this year - an unprecedented number according to a cabinet member. The figure is typically what [Birmingham City Council](#) would expect to deal with over three years or more, said Coun Jayne Francis.

The cabinet member for housing and homelessness said the authority was informed "an estimated 1,000 asylum seekers" would leave Home Office-supported accommodation between August 1 and December 31, 2023. Many of those refugees will "seek assistance" from the council, added Coun Francis.



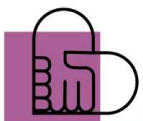


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Discussion

- What are the implications for your service?
- What can your service do to prepare?
- What does the council and the city need to do to prepare?
- Any other comments or points to raise?





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Contact Information

- **New to Leeds:** You can find information about services in Leeds translated in 26 languages on the New to Leeds website www.newtoleeds.org
- **For further information**, to share feedback and to flag urgent issues:
Contact Leeds City Council Migration Team
- Pria Bhabra: pria.bhabra@leeds.gov.uk
- Samantha Powell: samantha.powell@leeds.gov.uk

