

Information and Data Hub

Bulletin 11: 11 June 2021

[Executive Summary](#)

[Detailed Bulletin](#)

Executive Summary

In our 11th [Information and Data Hub](#) survey, we looked at two key themes, the EU Settlement Scheme and access to services for EU Citizens and support for people affected by the Windrush scandal. We also focused on the reopening of face to face services. This bulletin presents data collected from **42 organisations** working with people in the immigration system across the UK.

Client Needs and Barriers

The top three areas of *client need*:

1. **Housing** (57%) remains the highest areas of need, as across surveys 8, 9 and 10
2. **Social needs**, including isolation and loneliness (45%)
3. **Legal support needs** (43%)

The top *barriers to support* for clients:

- **Language/communication difficulties** exacerbated by remote service delivery and **inability to access digital/remote services** including remote payments, were the most commonly reported at 83%
- **Reduction or closure of relied-upon services** and **inability to access emotional support or meaningful activities in their community** (74%)

Organisational Needs and Funding

The main *organisational challenges* reported:

1. **Insufficient, inflexible or insecure funding** (52%) was the most common organisational challenge, rising by 14% since Survey 10 in April 2021.

2. **Lack of staff/volunteers** to meet increased client need (40%)
3. **Lack of physical space** to adapt services/relocation issues at (36%)

Reopening face-to-face services :

- **29%** of organisations are **currently operating face-to-face services** and continued to do so throughout the most recent lockdown.
- **38%** of organisations are **beginning to reopen their face-to-face services**
- **24%** are **not currently reopening face-to-face services but preparing to do so.**
- **63%** of respondents told us that **uptake of in-person services is the same** (26%) or **greater** than (37%) it was before the start of the pandemic.
- Organisations told us about which **adaptations from the pandemic they intend to implement in the long term**, including casework and advice, volunteer meetings and digital data storage.

“We did re-open for a couple of months last Autumn before lockdown came again. It’s confusing for staff and clients. With the remote service (phone/ zoom etc) we have changed clients expectations and reached new groups so we need to maintain this service, however, we have less capacity now as the emergency Covid funds have ended.”

EU Citizens: EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) and Access to Services

This section presents data from 24 organisations working with EU citizens and explores the key issues arising in light of the 30th June 2021 deadline for EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications.

- 54% of respondents are **confident that most of their clients who are EU citizens will have applied before the EUSS application deadline**
- 21% of respondents are **concerned that over half of their clients will not have applied before the deadline.**
- Most of these 24 organisations told us that alongside immigration advice, their EUSS clients also need **welfare and benefits advice, employment advice and housing advice.**
- 5 organisations told us they have clients who are EU citizens who have been asked to prove their immigration status when trying to access healthcare.
- The full Bulletin presents barriers faced by clients applying to the scheme and challenges faced by organisations offering EUSS advice.

“Publicity of the scheme has been catastrophically poor. Our local authority has no understanding of what will be the consequences for them and their residents if people don't apply. There is insufficient info about who is/isn't applying.”

People affected by the Windrush Scandal

- **41%** of respondents **were not aware that the Windrush Scheme is not just for people who came from the Caribbean** before reading the Government eligibility criteria.
- The three main issues that people need support with are **immigration legal advice** and support to apply for the Windrush Scheme, support to apply for the **Windrush Compensation Scheme** and **delays** with the application process or compensation payouts.

“Clients were not aware of the Windrush scheme. Most of those we have supported are pleased to receive the financial help they weren't expecting.”

Information and Data Hub

Bulletin 11: 11 June 2021

This is the eleventh bulletin of the COVID-19 Information and Data Hub presenting the findings from our latest survey of refugee and migration focused organisations.

The survey received **42 responses** from organisations working across the UK¹. The largest groups of respondents were operating in London (21%), followed by 12% in Yorkshire and the Humber, and 12% operating UK-wide.

Section 1: Needs and Barriers

- 1.1. [Current needs of people in the immigration system](#)
- 1.2. [Barriers preventing people from accessing services](#)
- 1.3. [Organisational Challenges](#)
- 1.4. [Reopening face-to-face services](#)

Section 2: Thematic Focus Areas

- 2.1. [EU Citizens: EU Settlement Scheme and Access to Services](#)
- 2.2. [People affected by the Windrush Scandal](#)

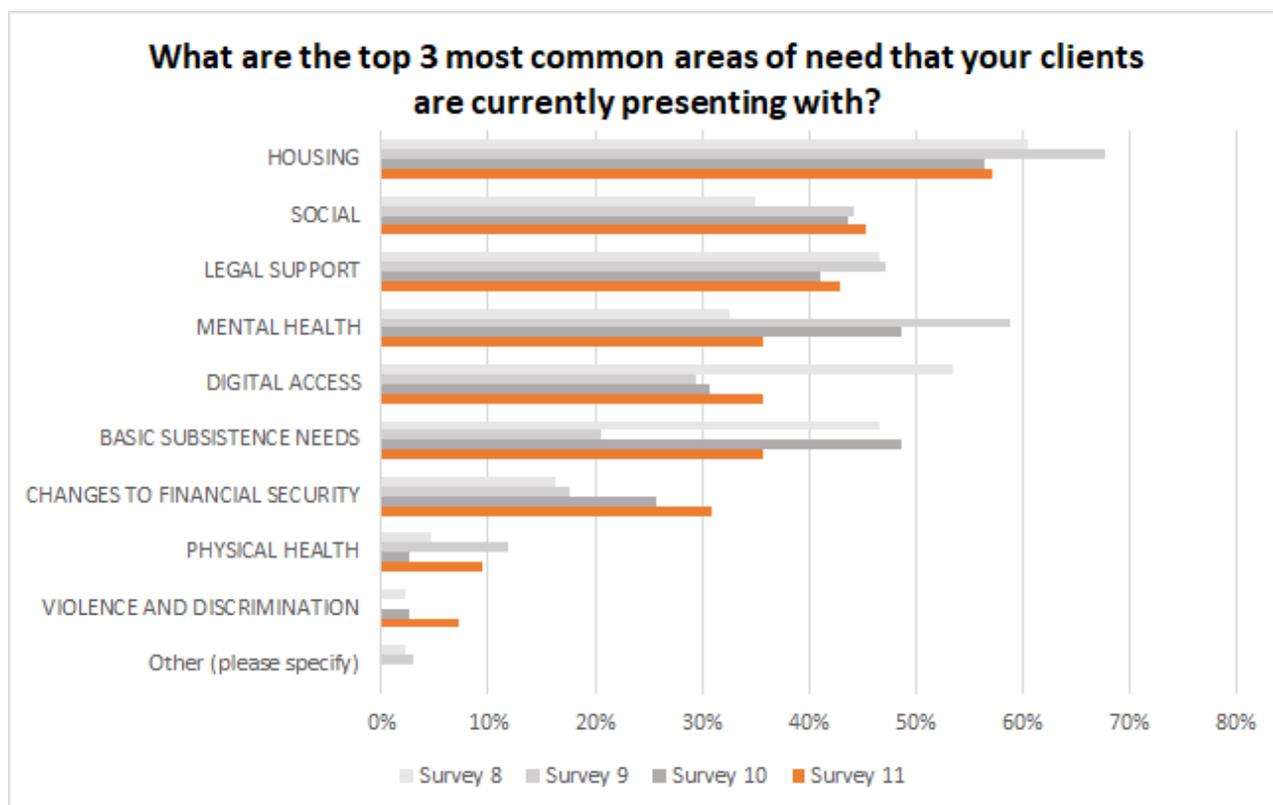
Section 3: Additional Resources

- 3.1. [Reports and Resources](#)

¹Respondent's turnover: 55% between £150,000 and £1,000,000, 31% £150,000 or under and 14% £1,000,000 or over.
Respondent participation across previous surveys: 38 of these organisations have participated in the Information and Data Hub before. 23 organisations participated in Survey 10 as well as Survey 11, and 17 of these also participated in Survey 9.

Section 1: Needs and Barriers

1.1. Current needs of people in the immigration system²



The most common areas of need reported include:

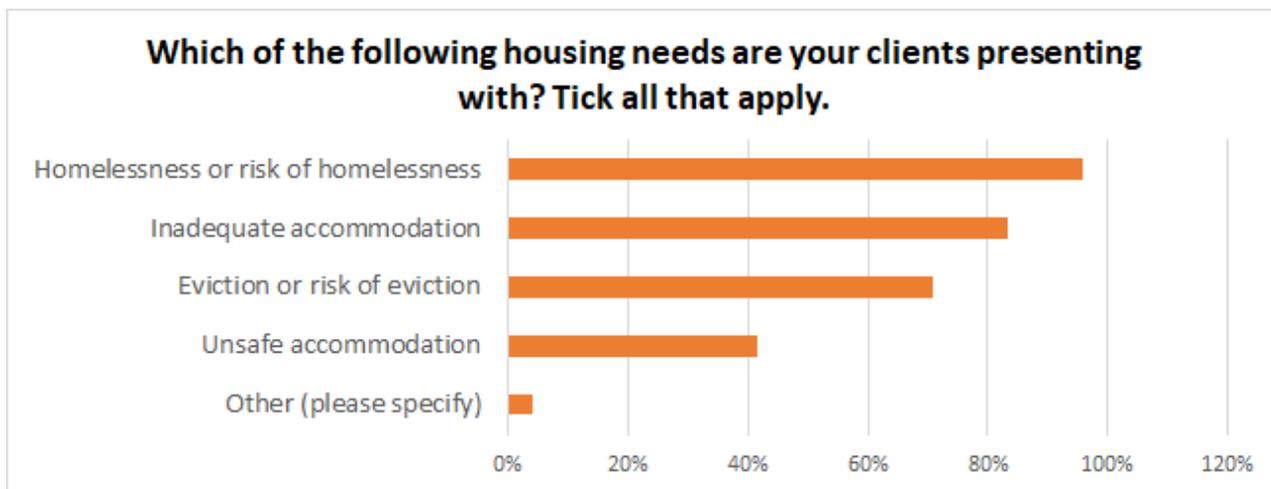
1. **Housing**, reported at 57% (24 respondents)
2. **Social needs** reported at 45% (19)
3. **Legal support needs** reported at 43% (18)

- Reports of needs related to **changes to financial security** have risen across the last 4 surveys. In this survey, it is notable that 11 out of the 13 respondents who selected this option are supporting EU citizens³. This, along with findings from Section 2.1, points to the rising precarity of EU citizens' access to benefits and services, as anticipated in Survey 8.

² 23 organisations completed Surveys 10 and 11; 18 Surveys 9 and 11; 22 Surveys 8 and 11.

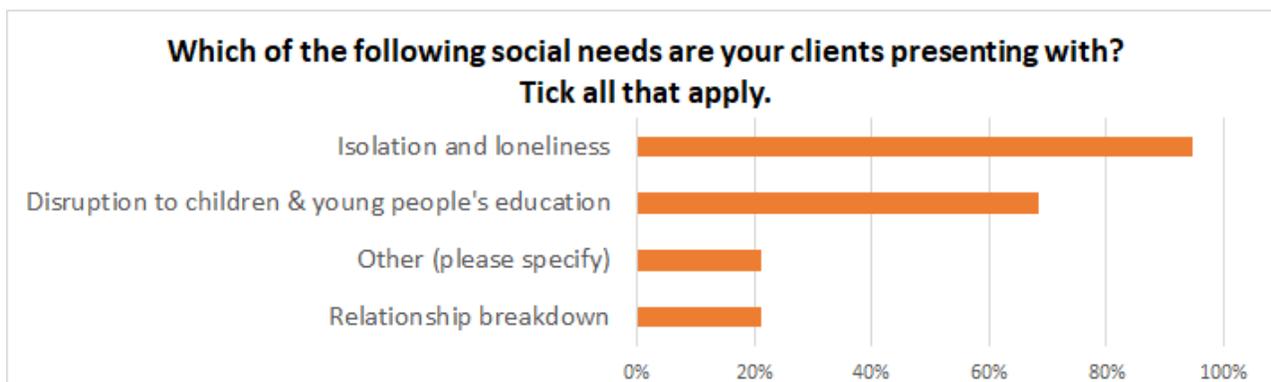
³ This is notable given that overall, 24 out of 42 respondents to the survey support EU citizens.

Housing



- **96%** of the 24 respondents who selected housing in the top 3 areas of need reported **homelessness or risk of homelessness**, **83%** (20) **inadequate accommodation** and **71%** (17) reported **eviction or risk of eviction**.⁴
- **‘Other’** responses included **housing uncertainty caused by no notice dispersal**.

Social



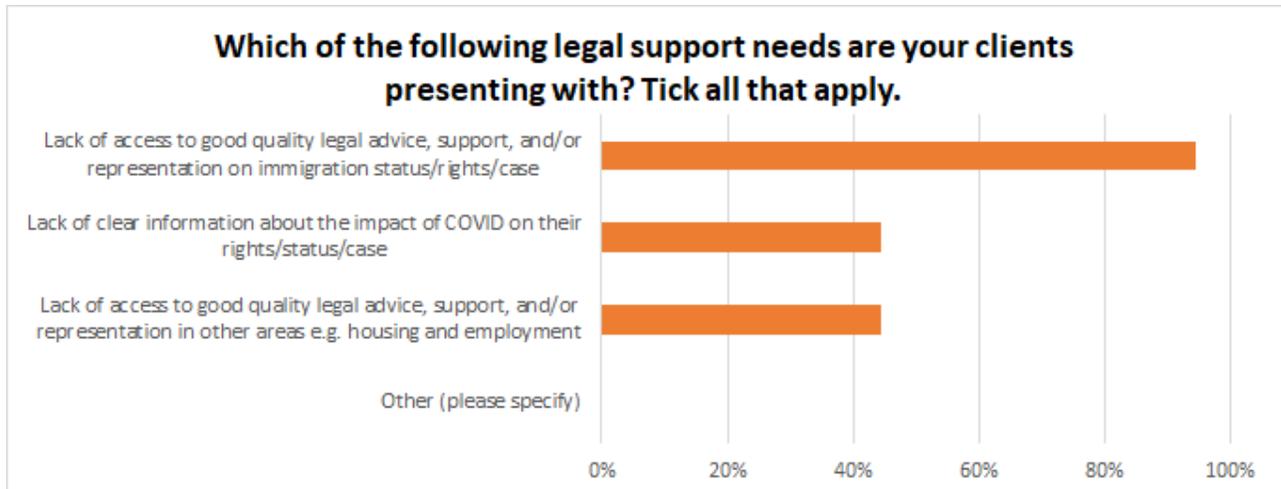
- **95%** of respondents (18) reporting social needs selected **isolation and loneliness** and **68%** (13) reported **disruption to children and young people's education**.
- **“Other”** responses highlighted the continued **lack of access to social activities** including leisure, sports and fitness and the impact of the lack of appropriate spaces for specific groups, notably LGBTQI+ and elderly people. As organisations

⁴ The government moratorium on evictions under COVID-19 was lifted on 1st June 2021.

re-open or increase in-person provision, some are prioritising face-to-face social activities in order to respond to high levels of social need (see Section 1.4.).

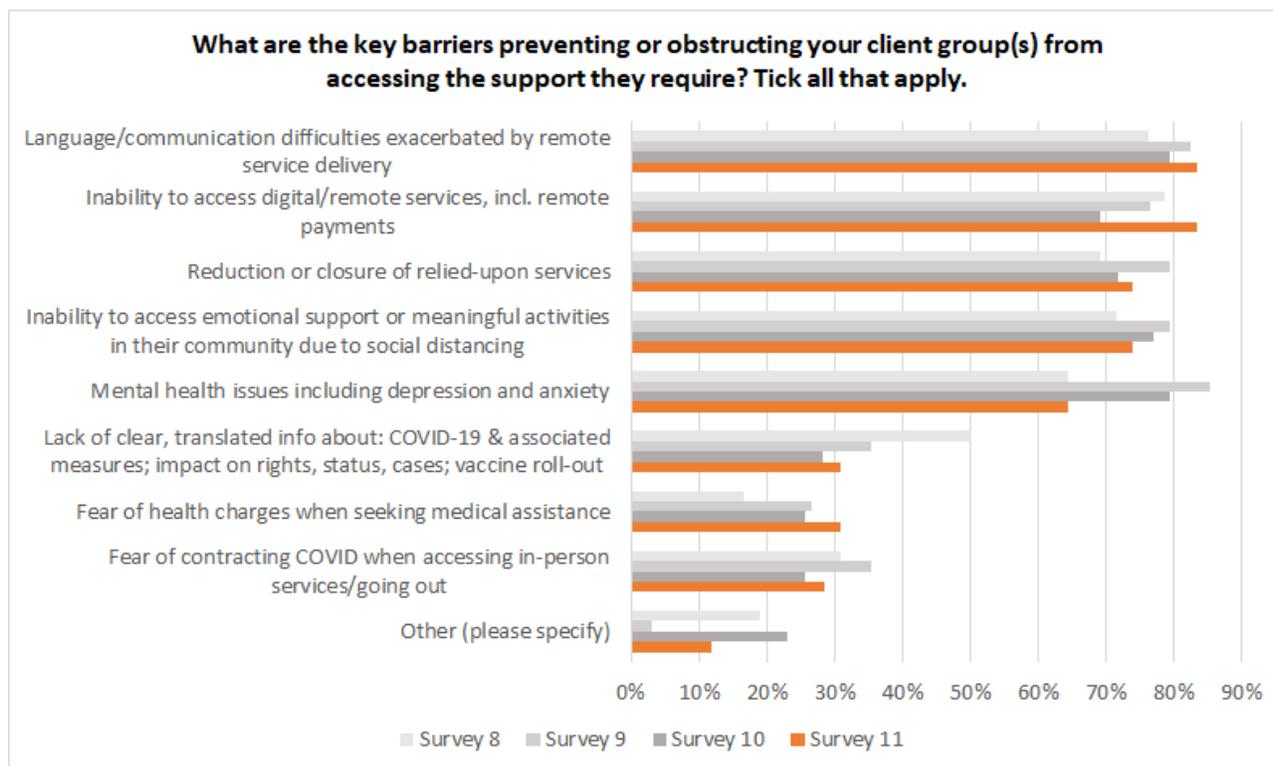
- One respondent used “**other**” to underline impacts of the hostile environment, including inability to work, “loss of dignity” and “vilification” which lead to poor mental health and isolation.

Legal Support



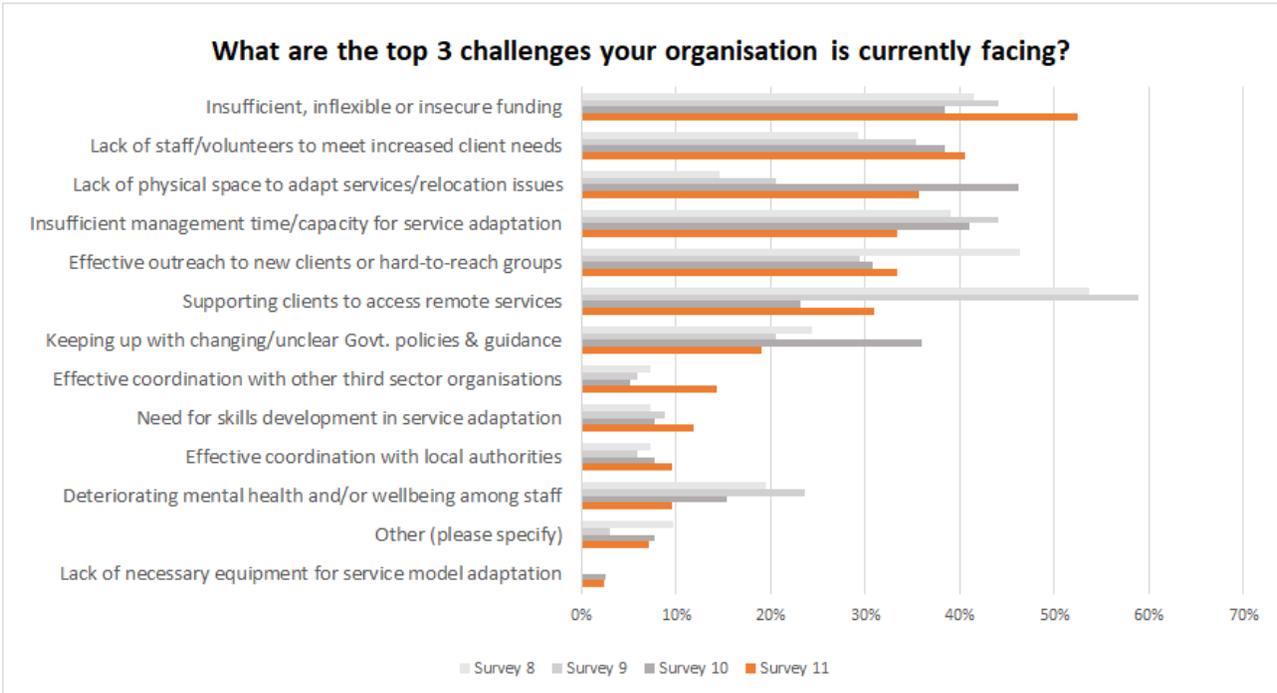
- **94%** of the 18 organisations who selected legal support needs, (17), reported **lack of access to good quality legal advice, support, and/or representation on immigration status/rights/case.**
- **44%** (8) each reported **lack of clear information on impact of Covid-19 on their case/status** and **lack of access to good quality legal advice in other areas, eg. housing and employment.**
- Access to different types of advice for EU citizens will be discussed in more detail in Section 2.1.

1.2. Barriers preventing people from accessing services



- The most common reported barriers were **language/communication difficulties** exacerbated by remote service delivery and **inability to access digital/remote services including remote payments**, both reported by 83% of respondents (35). Section 1.4 shows how organisations are working to reduce these persistent barriers in the ways they are prioritising re-opening in-person services.
- **Reduction or closure of relied-upon services** and **inability to access emotional support or meaningful activities in their community** were both reported by 74% (31 respondents).
- **Mental health** as a barrier, at 64%, has decreased after peaking over the last two surveys, echoing the pattern seen in mental health as an area of need (see above).
- Under ‘**other**’, respondents mentioned the general effect of the hostile environment limiting and segregating service access for migrants, the disruption of no-notice dispersals after which people have to find services and support networks anew, and a general lack of legal capacity for immigration work.
- One respondent also described, as a barrier, the ‘disengagement’ from services of the cohort who have arrived to the UK during periods of the pandemic when face-to-face contact was not on offer.

1.3. Organisational Challenges



- The most common organisational challenge was **insufficient, inflexible or insecure funding** at 52% (22 respondents), showing an increase of 14% since Survey 10. One respondent specifically mentioned COVID grants coming to an end. In our February survey, 41% organisations reported that their **main grants/funding was ending within the next 3 months**. This rise in **insufficient, inflexible or insecure funding** suggests that some organisations may have reached the ‘funding cliff edge’ they had reported concerns about.
- The second most commonly reported challenge was a **lack of staff/volunteers to meet increased client need** at 40% (17), followed by a **lack of physical space to adapt services/relocation issues** at 36% (15).
- Under ‘**other**’, one organisation commented specifically on the capacity issues they are facing in trying to maintain the benefits of online and remote service provision while also reopening in-person services.

1.4 Reopening face-to-face services

| Please select the option that best reflects your organisation's use of face-to-face services | |
|--|------------|
| We are beginning to reopen face-to-face services | 38% |
| We are currently operating face-to-face services and continued to do so throughout the most recent lockdown | 29% |
| We are not currently reopening face-to-face services but preparing to do so | 24% |

- Of the organisations starting / planning to reopen services, **42%** said this is the **first time** they have been open since **March 2020**, whilst **58%** have reopened before.
- The main reopening challenges reported include **limited physical space** and **limited time and capacity** to plan and deliver services, echoing the organisational challenges presented in 1.3.
- **63%** of respondents told us that **uptake of in-person services is the same** as (26%) or **greater** than (37%) it was before the start of the pandemic. **37%** of organisations reported a **reduced uptake of in-person** services compared to pre-pandemic levels.

We asked respondents which **activities or services they are prioritising** as they reopen or increase in-person service capacity. Some of the key areas were:

- **Case work & advice:** 13 organisations mentioned using various triage and priority criteria to assess which individuals to see in person. These criteria include:
 - limited English/requirement for in-person communication
 - new clients or those who services have never met in person (including people who arrived during the pandemic)
 - new arrivals with no local support networks
 - safeguarding concerns
 - lack of digital access
 - level of isolation or mental health deterioration
 - people without status
 - complex cases
 - time sensitivity of cases (such as EU Settled Status applications)
- **Social activities to reduce isolation**, mentioned by 6 organisations, including restarting the social aspects of drop-ins, befriending & support groups. As one

organisation highlighted, addressing isolation impacts clients' engagement with other services including advice

- **ESOL/ English language learning**, mentioned by 3 organisations, as this has a significant impact on clients' access to other areas of support
- **Wellbeing & mental health support**, mentioned by 3 organisations, particularly important for clients who are struggling to access this remotely

Long-term changes to service model following changes made during lockdown

"We'll never return to [our] previous drop-in model fully. Asylum casework will continue to be by appointment only. We'll continue to triage welfare needs as this system has proved more efficient."

Most organisations are opting for a **'hybrid' model** going forward. Components of service delivery developed under lockdown that respondents intend to implement in the long term include:

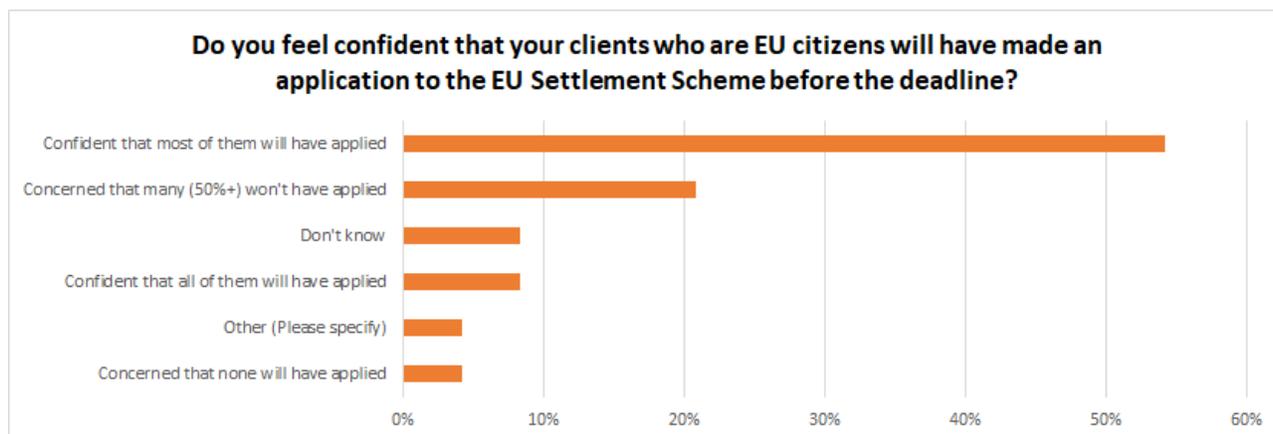
- **Phone/remote advice**, which can be more accessible to clients living further away or working during service opening hours
- **Remote wellbeing activities** where clients have adapted well or which have turned out to be more accessible
- **Use of WhatsApp and Zoom for client contact** enabling more direct contact and diverse means of remote communication e.g. sending photos and voice notes
- **Digital screening**
- **Digital client documentation storage** (replacing paper storage system)
- **Remote volunteer meetings/trainings** which were better attended than in-person
- **Flexible working from home** (and adapting policies and practices accordingly)
- **Use of online networking and campaigning**
- Use of **outdoor spaces for meetings and activities**
- **Support staff going to clients** (instead of clients coming to services), for example in the form of 'orbital hubs'
- One organisation told us they are **collecting client feedback** on which adaptations they should implement long term.

*"With the remote service (phone/ zoom etc.) we have **changed clients expectations** and reached new groups. We need to maintain this service, but we have **less capacity now that emergency Covid funds have ended.**"*

"I think a hybrid model is the answer for clients but not sure we have staff capacity for both at the moment."

2.1. EU Settlement Scheme and Access to Services for EU Citizens

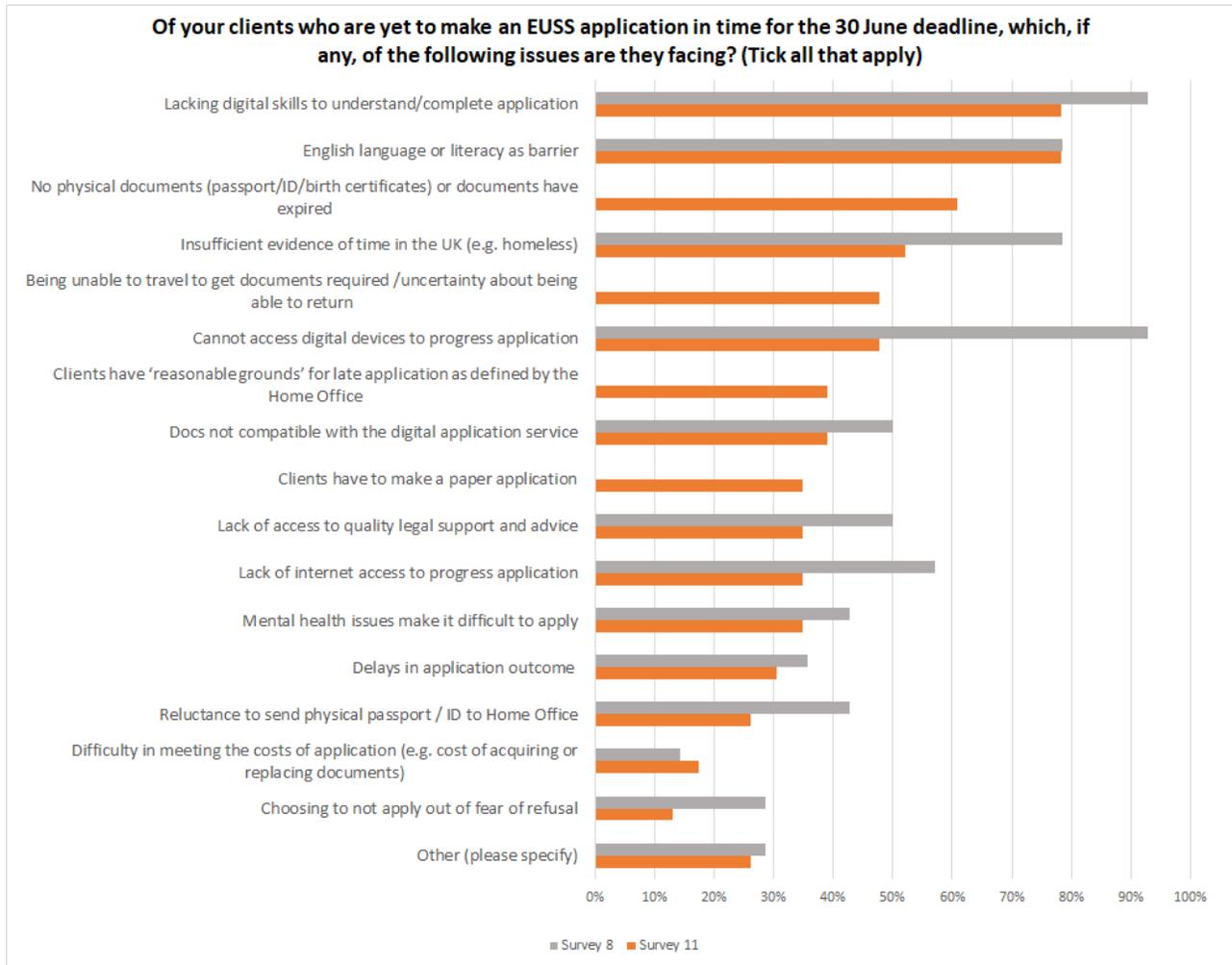
24 organisations told us that they are supporting EU citizens and answered the following questions on the EU Settlement Scheme and access to advice.



- 54% of respondents (13) told us that they are **confident that most of their clients who are EU citizens will have applied before the deadline.**
- 21% (5) are **concerned that over 50% of their clients will not have applied before the deadline.**
- This number only reflects existing client groups. One organisation told us they were unable to answer this question as their work around EUSS involves active outreach to support people with applications, so they do not have a 'fixed' number of clients.

"We are still encountering people who have not heard about the scheme or didn't think they needed to apply."

Difficulties in making an EUSS application



- **A lack of digital skills to understand or complete the application and English language or literacy as a barrier** were the most commonly reported client issues in relation to the EUSS application process, at 78% each (18 organisations). These have remained high since we last asked this question in Survey 8 (Jan/Feb 2021).
- **No physical documents or documents have expired** was the third most commonly reported issue, by 61% of respondents (14).
- **Insufficient evidence of time in the UK** has been reported 27% lower than in Survey 8 (down from 79% to 52%) and **inability to access digital devices to progress application** has almost halved in its reportage from 93% to 48%.

- Under ‘**other**’, organisations told us that there remains a lack of awareness of the scheme and the eligibility criteria⁵.
- Additional issues reported were sporadic client engagement with services, complicated cases, and clients leaving their application to the last minute out of fear that if they are granted pre-settled status they will lose access to their benefits.

Difficulties faced after making an application:

- 10 told us they have clients who **do not realise they have to submit more evidence to complete their application.**
- 9 have clients who **have difficulty understanding the absence rules of their pre-settled status.**
- 7 have clients who **have been incorrectly granted pre-settled status.**
- ‘**Other**’ issues reported include the use of digital-only status, significant delays (especially for clients with criminal convictions), or clients being supported to complete part of their application and not realising it hasn’t been submitted.

One respondent told us they have an ongoing issue with clients using ‘**AdviceSharks**’⁶: people with poor English, illiteracy in their own language, and digital are paying someone to complete the EUSS application for them. These ‘Advice Sharks’ are unregulated, charge between £120-£300, and retain the email address and password so that applicants must pay them again each time they want to update their application, which also means that if applicants have not heard the outcome they cannot access the account.

Access to EUSS Advice

We asked organisations whether or not **all their clients have been able to access advice on the EUSS process:**

- 38% (9) told us that **all** their clients **have** been able to access advice.
- 33% (8) told us they have clients who have **not** been able to access advice.
- 29% (7) don’t know.

⁵ One respondent mentioned a lack of awareness around the eligibility criteria for family members of ‘eligible persons of Northern Ireland’, including among staff at the EUSS Resolution Centre. Another mentioned ‘non-vulnerable’ individuals who may not be in contact with services not realising they need to apply.

⁶<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2019/11/27/long-read-unsettled-status-vulnerable-eu-citizens-may-lose-their-uk-residence-overnight/>

Respondents told us about the following **particular groups they are supporting who are less likely to access advice**:

- Destitute women who cannot speak/understand English, are more likely to lack digital access, and often have young children with no passport
- Rough sleepers
- Roma people, including families
- Older people
- Third country nationals

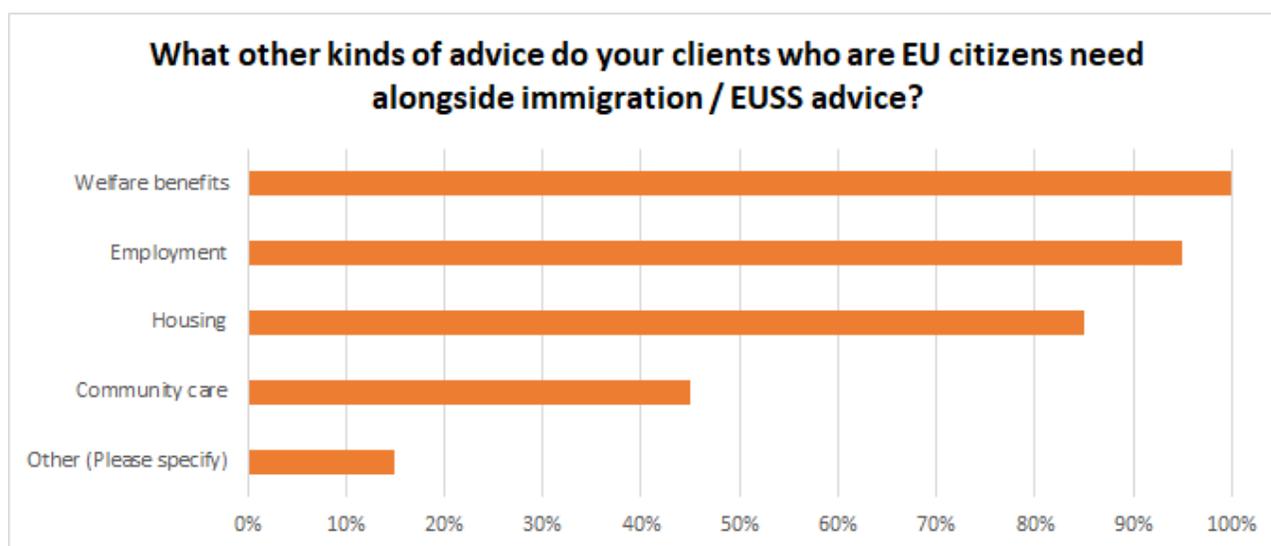
Providing EUSS Advice

58% (14) of respondents working with EU citizens are providing advice directly. **42%** (10) are not, but **all of these organisations told us they know where to signpost or refer people for EUSS or other immigration advice**. Among those respondents providing advice, the number of open cases ranged from 4 to 400, with a mean of 110. Half have fewer than 50 open cases.

The **main difficulties** raised in relation to providing EUSS advice were:

- Issues with **checking and gathering evidence** or documents not being in order
- **Incorrect popular beliefs** about the process, especially the idea that children or dependants acquire status automatically along with their carer
- From an organisational perspective, respondents highlighted the difficulties of **working across language barriers**, increasingly **complex cases** (which they may not be qualified to work on), and the increasing need to complete longer **paper applications** for clients without valid ID, which put pressure on advice capacity
- **Certain groups** are particularly hard to support in their applications: it is almost impossible for someone to apply from **prison**; access to support **care home residents** to apply been heavily disrupted by COVID and lockdown; and clients who are **lacking mental capacity** to instruct anyone on their immigration case

Intersecting advice needs



Organisations highlighted that it is **common for EU citizens to have multiple advice needs**:

- 20 respondents answered this question, of which **100%** told us that their clients who are EU citizens need **welfare and benefits advice** alongside immigration/EUSS advice, 95% (19) also need **employment advice**, and 85% (17) **housing advice**.
- ‘**Other**’ kinds of advice or related support listed were pensions advice, financial advice (e.g. on mortgage debt and loan issues), and advocacy support around violence, abuse and exploitation.
- Challenges in referring clients for the other forms of advice alongside immigration/EUSS include: **lack of capacity in external services, limited availability of and resources for interpreters, lack of legal aid funded advice** in certain areas and **limited understanding of immigration** by external solicitors and advisors in other areas of law (housing, employment, family).

One organisation reported that a large volume of work is created by needing to reverse **incorrect decisions made by public sector services**. This organisation is piloting a new approach to tackle this issue, through holding “**Collaborative complex case meetings**” which bring together advisors and the local authority to discuss difficult cases with effective outcomes, both upskilling the local authority staff and helping the advisors to navigate the public sector on a local level.

Organisations told us about **how they are preparing to support EU citizens whose settled status is not confirmed, or who have been unable to make an application by the 30th June 2021⁷.**

- Supporting people with **submitting late applications**
- **Providing letters** for those awaiting decisions to explain their rights (e.g. to employers)
- **Developing advice sheets** for clients (3) including on how to apply for settled status if you have pre-settled status, and continuing to provide accommodation.
- **Liaising with partners and local authorities**, including to develop referral pathways, and keeping up to date with Home Office and DWP communications.
- **Collecting evidence** for the EU Delegation and House of Lords Enquiry
- **Providing additional and ongoing training** for staff and volunteers, as well as other advice providers in the local area, on grounds for late applications, and highlighting the ‘Late Applications’ guidance to statutory agencies.
- **Increasing the capacity in immigration teams** to continue EUSS work and applying for funding to address the lack of resources for this work after 30th June 2021.

Access to Healthcare for EU Citizens

In collaboration with Doctors of the World, we asked organisations whether they had encountered EU citizens being asked to prove their immigration status or entitlement to NHS services when trying to access health services.

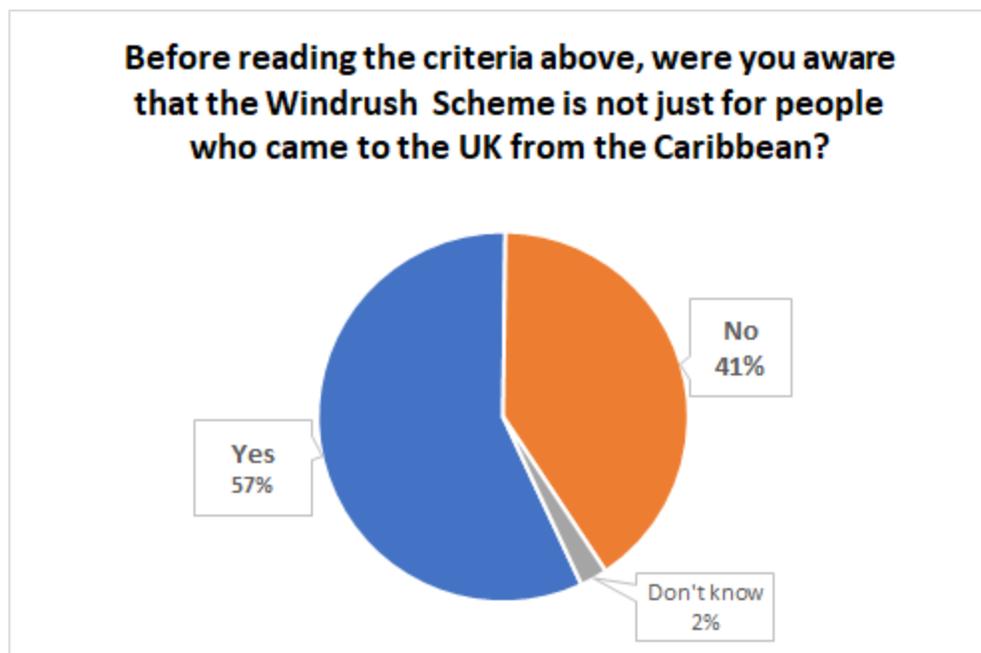
- 4 organisations reported one or more cases of **clients being asked to prove their immigration status when accessing NHS hospital or community services.**
- 3 organisations have encountered **clients who have been asked to prove their immigration status when they try to register with a GP.** One organisation reported that clients were told they need to wait for their status to be able to register at a GP and were unable to book their COVID-19 vaccine without GP registration.
- The forms of **identification/proof of status** requested included: a ‘share code’, passport or national ID card, proof of address, biometric residence card/permit, certificate of EUSS application, and proof of submission of EUSS application.

“People suffered in silence and were charged for [health] services. They had to borrow the money to be able to get treatment because they had no proof of their status.”

⁷ The deadline for EUSS applications and when the grace period for EU citizens’ right to reside under existing EU law ends.

2.2. People affected by the Windrush Scandal

This set of questions was designed to gauge organisations' levels of awareness about the criteria for the Windrush Scheme, the proportion offering support to this group and their experiences of providing support to people affected by the Windrush Scandal.

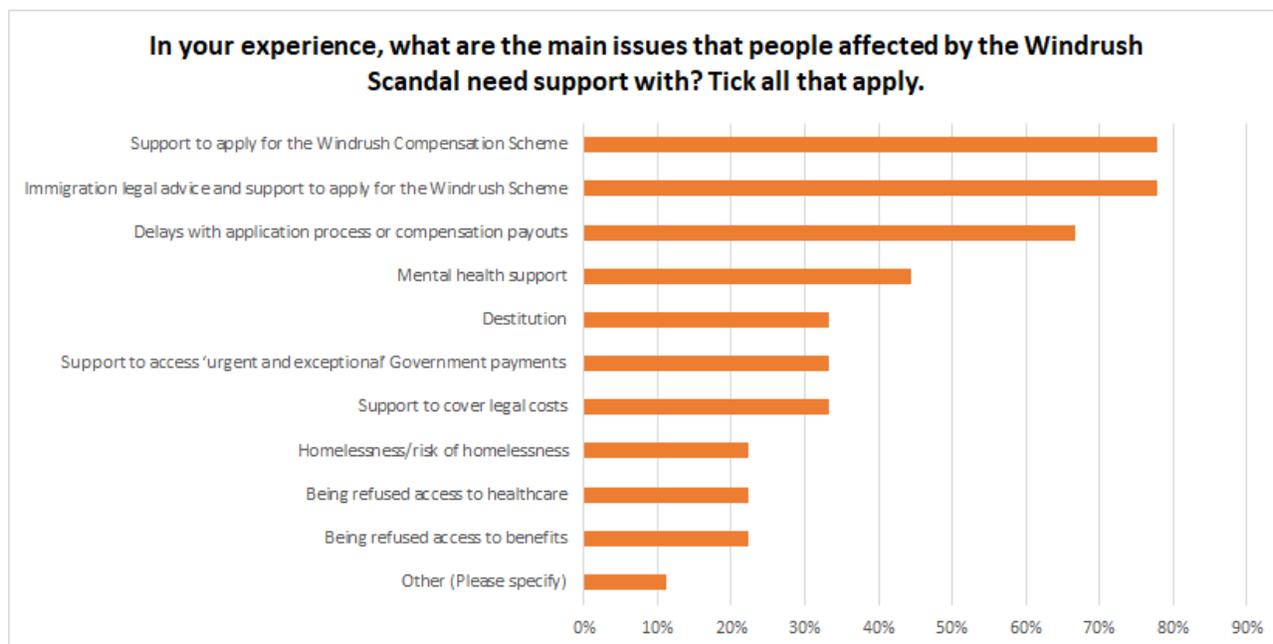


- **41%** of respondents said they **were not aware that the Windrush Scheme** is not just for people who came from the Caribbean⁸ before reading the Government eligibility criteria (provided in the survey for respondents to read - see [Appendix 1](#)).
- **26%** of respondents (11) are **supporting people eligible for the Windrush Scheme**, whilst **64%** (27) are **not** working with this client group. 10% (4) said they didn't know.
- One organisation has encountered **second or third generation windrush migrants who have had passport applications refused, or eligibility for healthcare or public funds disputed** because of uncertainty about their parents' status.

⁸ This question aimed to understand the impact among respondents of one of the findings of the Windrush Lessons Learned Review (WLLR). As highlighted in a briefing by JCWI (March 2020), the exclusion of non-Caribbean Commonwealth Nationalities from the The Windrush Historic Case Review “*may have left other nationalities unaware that they should also contact the Windrush Taskforce, or that they could still be vulnerable to immigration enforcement measures.* WLLR, p.13”

<https://www.jcwi.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=1e049995-b82f-4727-bc5a-a0cd8abf0d15>

Main support needs



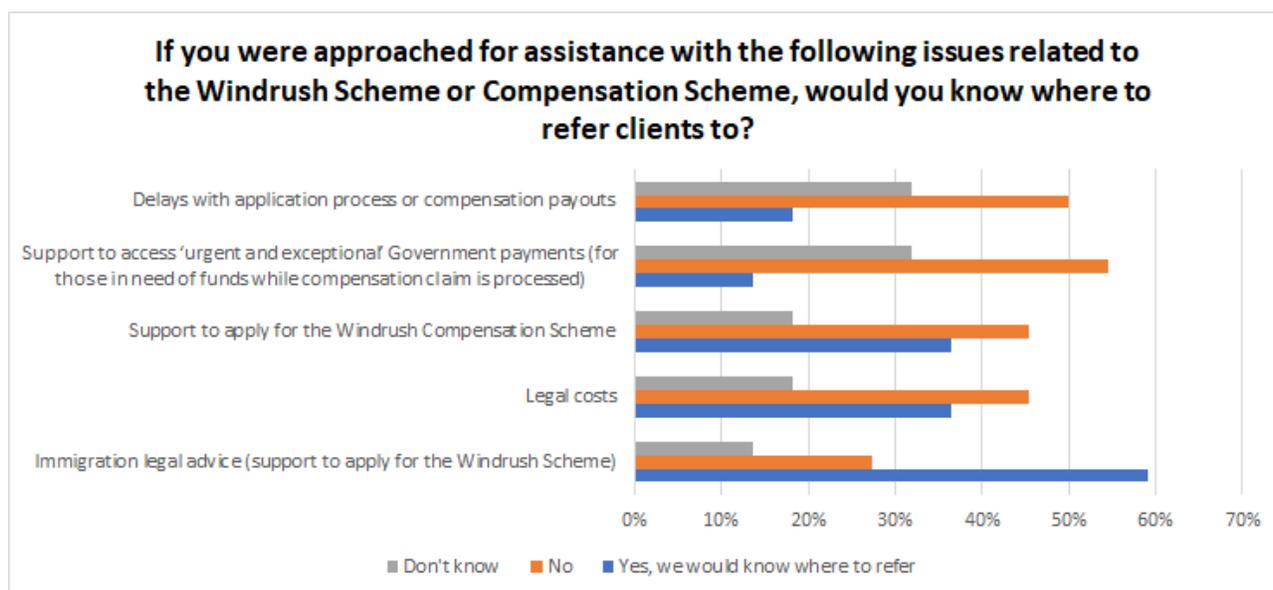
9 respondents answered this question. The three main issues that people need support with are:

- 1) **Immigration legal advice and support to apply for the Windrush Scheme** (7 organisations)
- 2) **Support to apply for the Windrush Compensation Scheme** (also reported by 7)
- 3) **Delays with application process or compensation payouts** (6 organisations)

Over half of the organisations working with this client group could not provide direct support for the top 3 most common issues which are more specialist areas related to the Windrush Scheme.

The majority of organisations working with this client group were able to provide more general basic support for people facing destitution, homelessness/risk of homelessness, or being refused access to healthcare or benefits.

Referrals



22 organisations who are not directly supporting this client group responded to this question:

- **59%** of these organisations **would know** where to refer clients for **immigration legal advice** and **27%** would not know where to refer clients for this type of support.
- The **majority of respondents would not know** where to refer clients to get support for the following issues: **legal costs, support to apply for the Windrush Compensation Scheme, accessing urgent and exceptional payments, or issues with application delays.**

Barriers to support

We received a few written responses in this section of the survey which suggested that those organisations working on these issues were working with small numbers of people affected by the Windrush Scandal, or were only recently contracted to start to work on these issues and had little awareness of them. These comments, along with the finding that only 57% of respondents were aware of the full criteria, echo the findings of the Windrush Lessons Learned Independent Review as reported by JCWI:

“not only is there a lack of awareness of the scheme resulting in the low numbers of applications but there are also serious concerns surrounding the lack of legal support available for the applicants, exacerbated by the fact that legal fees can only be claimed for some applications”⁹.

Organisations told us about the following barriers that this client group face to accessing support:

- Language barriers and illiteracy making information on entitlements inaccessible
- Lack of digital skills and devices
- Finding the process overwhelming or being unable to cope
- Poverty and destitution, and issues with access the welfare benefits
- Domestic violence
- Social isolation
- Covid causing delays to support to this client group
- One respondent that works specifically with black and minoritised women and girls highlighted that many women and girls in this client group experience a combination of the factors above, having ‘multiple and complex needs’ which compound each other.

“Clients were not aware of the Windrush scheme. Most of those we have supported are pleased to receive the financial help they weren't expecting.”

⁹ <https://www.jcwi.org.uk/news/new-free-legal-advice-for-windrush-victims>

3.1. Reports & Resources

Links to relevant resources shared by sector organisations related to the issues explored in this Bulletin:

EU Citizens and EUSS

Engaging with the Roma community on the EU Settlement Scheme

Toolkit for local authorities and community organisations

https://www.romasupportgroup.org.uk/uploads/9/3/6/8/93687016/rsg_toolkit_roma_euss_outreach_for_las.pdf

Report: An Uncertain Future For Roma Rough Sleepers In A Post-brexit Uk

https://www.feantsa.org/public/user/Resources/magazine/2020/Winter%20Roma/An_Uncertain_Future.pdf

Videos:

Aluna's message regarding EU Settlement Scheme (Roma Support Group and The3Million)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo6cNZYhSsk&t=1s>

EU Settlement Scheme - Reminder Of Deadline For Applications (Roma Support Group)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=606yishEKLQ&t=12s>

Appendix 1

Windrush Scheme and Windrush Compensation Criteria

The Windrush Scheme and Windrush Compensation Scheme were introduced by the government following the Windrush Scandal, where it emerged that hundreds of Commonwealth citizens, many of whom were from the 'Windrush' generation, had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights.

People may be eligible to apply for a document to prove they can live and work in the UK via the **Windrush Scheme** if:

- they came to the UK [from a Commonwealth country before 1973](#)
- their [parents came to the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973](#)
- they came to the UK [from any country before 31 December 1988](#) and are now settled here

People may be eligible to apply for the **Windrush Compensation Scheme** if they have experienced losses due to their or a relative's inability to prove their right to stay in the UK, and:

- they came to the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973
- their parents or grandparents came to the UK from a Commonwealth country before 1973
- they came to the UK from any country before 31 December 1988 and are now settled here