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Data Brief: EEA Migrant Assistance

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About



This data brief provides an analysis carried out by MigrationWork CIC on a dataset collected on projects run by Law Centres Network which provide legal advice for European migrants. The dataset analysed contains cases from two projects; EULAMP and Pre-Brexit. The majority of data comes from two organisations; Indoamerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation (IRMO, EULAMP) and East European Resource Centre (EERC, Pre-Brexit), with the remaining data coming from Harrow and Lambeth Law Centres. There are two other LCN projects – the ongoing Home Office funded 'EUSS' project, and the Living Rights Project, from which data was also collected. This data was not included in this analysis, but makes up a larger pool of data from which further important findings could be found.

This data brief focuses on several aspects of the dataset, which contains a total of 964 cases. Firstly it examines some key demographics to give an overview of the cases in the dataset: data source, nationality, gender, age group, and type of advice sought. The second part of the brief takes a closer look at some potential groups of interest who may have unmet needs and/or potential barriers to engagement with advice services. These groups are older age groups (55+), family members of EEA clients and clients with dual nationality.

The data analysis was followed by a series of interviews where the major findings were discussed with key stakeholders and experts in the field, including representatives from Rights of Women, the European Commission, New Europeans, EERC itself, Work Rights Centre, the 3 Million, and the Greater London Authority, as well as interviews with two teachers from Polish Saturday schools, and two clients of Harrow Law Centre.

As such, you will find in this data brief a mixture of facts and statements around the data, with some of these elaborated on and extended through further insight and discussion.

Notes on the Data

While the dataset is likely to be one of the most comprehensive of its kind, providing unique information on the type of advice sought by EEA citizens living in the UK and some of their specific vulnerabilities, caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from the results shown here. Although it probably reflects the realities faced by EEA migrants in the UK, the dataset cannot be interpreted as representative of the wider EEA population living in London.

The organisations (IRMO and EERC) whose data comprise the majority of cases assist mainly Spanish and Portuguese citizens of third country origin and East European citizens respectively, and so these nationalities are heavily overrepresented in the data. In addition to this, there is likely to be a bias towards the type of client who is likely to seek out advice/information, meaning certain harder-to-reach groups may not be well-represented in the data. Whilst the data does effectively capture older Eastern Europeans – who are in themselves a hard-to-reach group – it does not capture the Roma community, for instance, who do not come to EERC. Conversely, users of the EULAMP project attending IRMO tend not to be in the older age bracket. Law Centres represent complex cases who are referred to them and so may support individuals from hard-to-reach groups, but they represent a small proportion of this dataset.

The interviews carried out with two Polish Saturday school teachers and two clients of HLC were not in any way intended to be representative of the broad range of experiences of the EEA population living in London, but were used to explore some of the themes and questions raised by the data.

Finally, it has been well-documented that existing data on populations of EEA citizens living in the UK are subject to statistical uncertainty, and are sometimes contradictory. As there are no completely reliable estimates of the population of EEA citizens, it is not possible to compare the dataset examined here to other statistical sources of population information or draw conclusions from the groups analysed here about the general profile of UK residing EEA migrants.

1 - Office of national statistics. 2020. Note on the difference between ONS population estimates by nationality and Home Office European Union Settlement Scheme (EUSS) statistics. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/articles/noteonthedifferencebetweenonspopulationestimatesbynationalityandhomeofficeeuropeanunionsettlementschemeuusstatistics/2020-02-24>,
- EU Settlement Scheme Statistics: Concerns About Data.

Notwithstanding these caveats, the dataset is still one of the most detailed available on migrants who seek advice and assistance from NGOs and other organizations in London, and valuable insights can be drawn from the analysis provided here, particularly on potentially vulnerable groups.

Vulnerability categories:

For ease of analysis, the different types of vulnerabilities have been grouped into wider categories. Throughout the brief, these main categories are analysed and then the three main subcategories for each group are also shown. The full list of categories and subcategories can be found on page 11.

The data was collected by the project staff and volunteers, and was then input into a database. The data was analysed in January and February 2020. We carried out a quantitative analysis of the dataset, focusing on analysing several main themes/categories. The themes were based on areas of interest identified by an initial review of the data and discussions with experts in the field and included; general demographics, length of stay and advice, older age bracket, dual nationalities and family members. Each of these themes was analysed by key variables such as age, gender, nationality, type of advice given, and vulnerabilities. Interviews were later carried out in April and May 2020, during the Covid-19 lockdown.

A great deal of this report focuses on the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS): the key issue around access to information and advice for EU migrants at the time of analysis. We are aware that within the topic of EUSS, there are a great number of complexities, nuances, vulnerable groups, and areas for concern that we have not covered in this data brief. This report is not an exhaustive analysis of issues and concerns around EUSS access, but is instead a look at what this particular dataset can and sometimes cannot tell us about EU migrants accessing advice and information, supplemented by insights gained from the structured interviews discussing some of the themes raised. It is thus intended as much to raise questions as to answer them, and to stimulate a discussion about what else it would be useful to explore, and what else might be possible to find out.

About the projects



PRE Brexit

The PRE-Brexit project was a partnership project funded by Trust for London for 26 months, from February 2018. It provided advice to EEA citizens and their family members living in London on protecting their rights in the wake of Brexit, and built the capacity of advisers across London working with EEA nationals. It also raised awareness among practitioners of EEA citizens' experiences and systemic barriers in the run up to Brexit.

The Law Centres Network coordinated the partnership, which was made of Harrow Law Centre, Lambeth Law Centre (which closed in July 2019), and the East European Resource Centre.

EULAMP

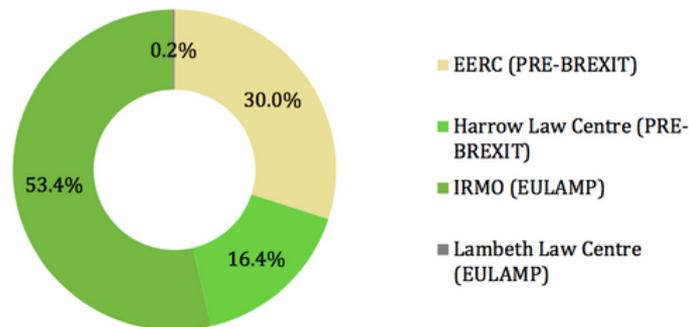
The EU Latin Americans Mobile and Participating Project (EULAMP) was a partnership project funded by the European Commission's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme for 27 months, from February 2018. It sought to facilitate the social, economic and political inclusion and participation of Latin Americans with EEA nationalities in the UK. It did so through advice and complex case support, ESOL classes, public legal education, staff legal training and voter registration campaigns.

The Law Centres Network coordinated the partnership, which was made of Indoamerican Refugee and Migrant Organisation (IRMO), Southwark Law Centre, Lambeth Law Centre (which closed in July 2019), and EDUGEP (which ceased project activity in June 2019).

Key Demographic Information

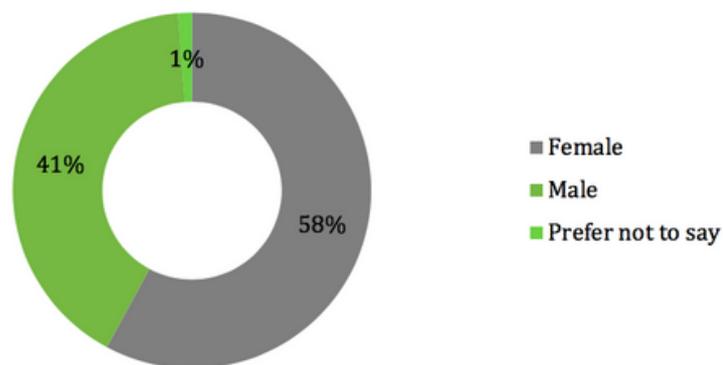
Sample size: 964 cases.

Partner Data Source



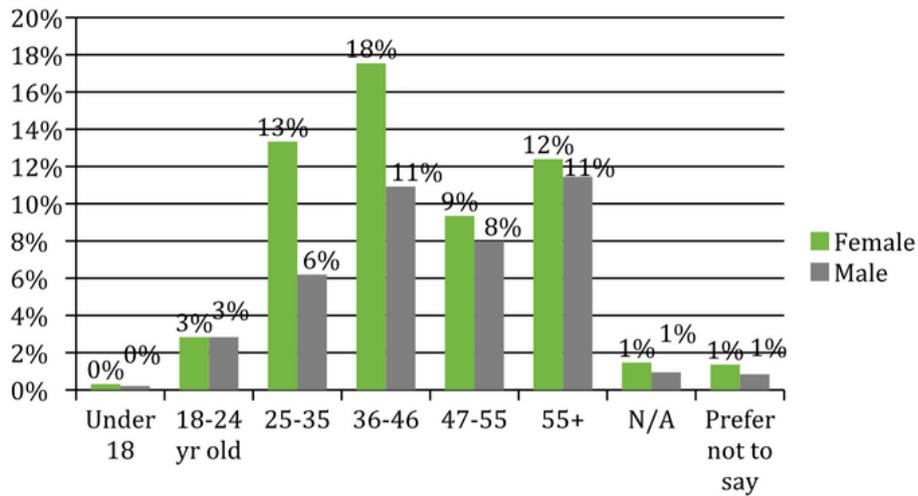
Just over half of the data in the dataset comes from IRMO, with almost a third from the EERC and the remaining data from Harrow and Lambeth law centres

Gender



Over half of cases self-report as female, while just over 40% of cases self-report as male.

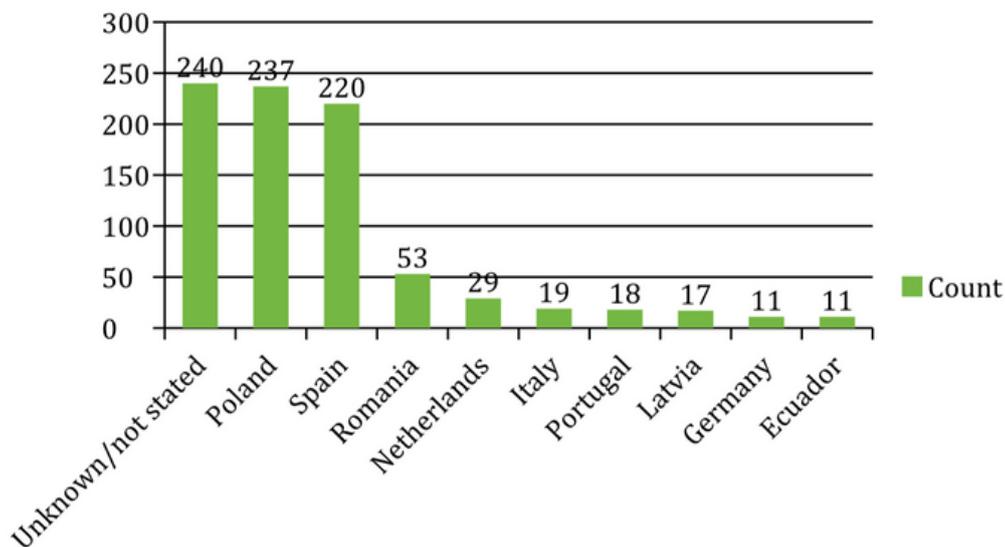
Age breakdown by gender



The split between male and female cases is fairly even under the age of 25. Beyond this age, there is a much higher proportion of females in the dataset aged between 25-46, after which the proportion of males and females in each age group evens out again.

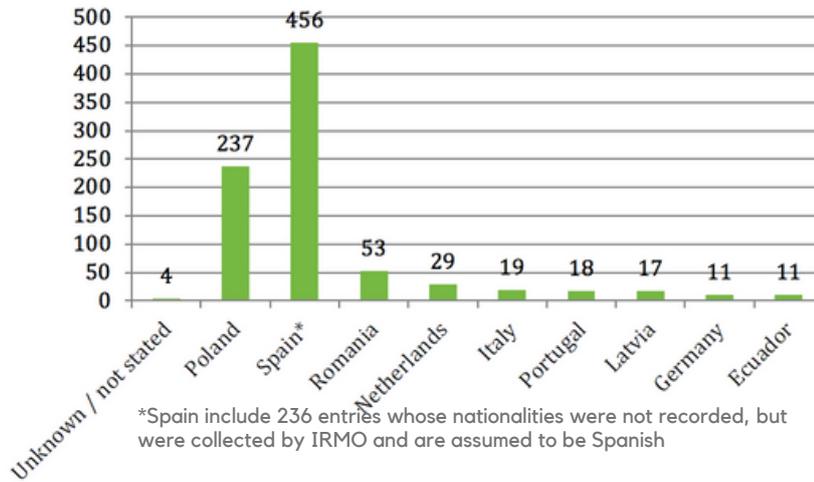
Top ten nationalities

Nationalities table a)



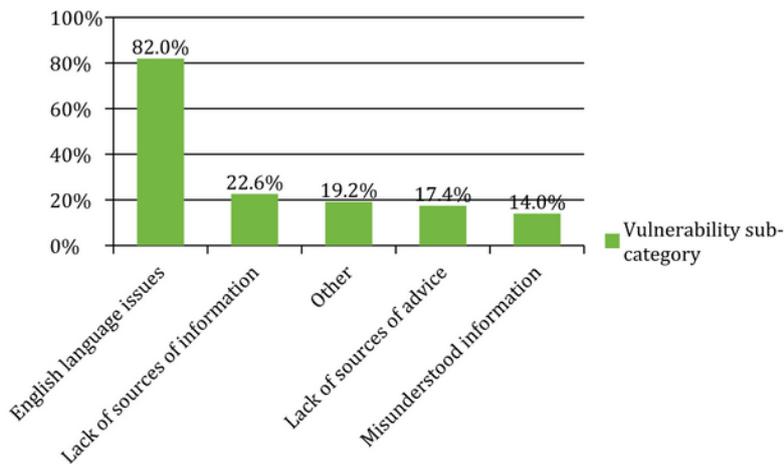
The data collected included 240 'Unknown / not stated' nationalities. 236 of these entries were collected by IRMO, whose clients are Latin Americans - usually dual nationals with Spanish citizenship. There is a well documented problem of the 'invisibility' of Latin Americans as an ethnic or national category (see page 41 for a more detailed overview of the Latin American Community in the UK). Thus, the 236 entries have been re-profiled in the dataset as Spanish to represent this group, making Spanish the primary nationality in the dataset, and Polish the second. The nationalities table b (next page) is more accurate, taking into account this re-profiling of the data.

Nationalities table b)



This table reflects the caseload of the two principal contributing organisations IRMO and EERC.

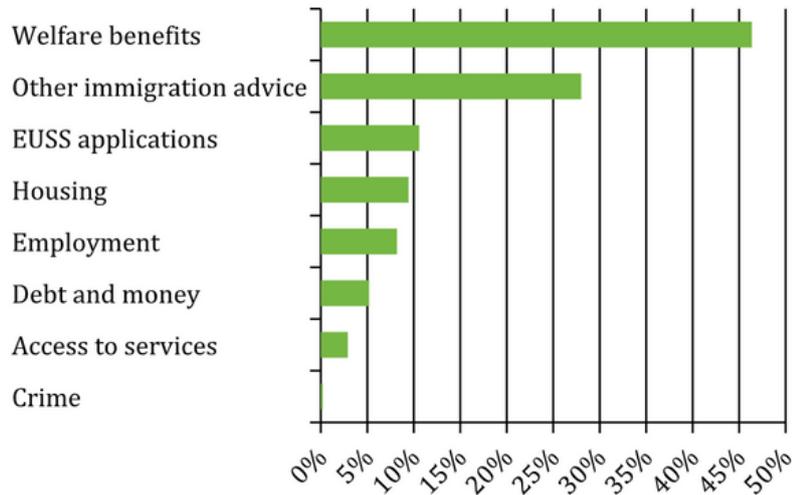
Main vulnerability sub-categories



Most clients (over 80%) report having issues with the English language. After this, the main vulnerabilities are related to a difficulty with sources of information and advice (either a lack of understanding or not being able to access them), or another non-specified vulnerability. The subcategories are explained on page 10.

Please note that one client can have multiple vulnerabilities, therefore vulnerabilities are calculated from the total proportion of clients which selected each individual vulnerability category.

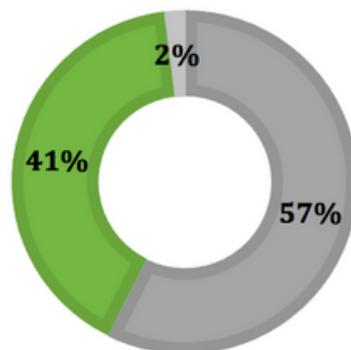
Type of advice



Over half of clients seek advice for problems relating to welfare benefits, and just over a quarter seek advice for immigration advice. Just over 10% of clients needed advice on making an EUSS application, and a similar proportion seek advice on employment and housing.

Length of stay

■ 0-5 years ■ 5+ years ■ N/A



57% of clients had been in the UK for less than five years.

Vulnerability Table

This table shows how the vulnerabilities were grouped in the analysis. The analysis refers generally to the broader vulnerability categories. However occasional references are made to the subcategories. Please note people can have multiple vulnerabilities.

Vulnerability category	Vulnerability sub-category	
Accessing info and advice	English language issues	646
	Literacy issues	1
	Unable to understand written communication	5
	Literacy issues (Digital)	62
	Lack of sources of information	167
	Misunderstood information	127
	Lack of sources of advice	109
	Received misleading information/bogus advice	3
Housing	Homeless/rough sleepers	13
	At risk of homelessness / in insecure housing	2
	Unsuitable housing	1
Autonomy	Adult in care	22
	Adult lacking capacity	13
	Child/Young person-informally fostered	1
	Child/Young person-looked after	1
	Child/Young person-vulnerable	0
	Elderly	26
Other	Single parent	1
	Care leaver	2
	Bereavement	1
	Gypsy	1
	Other	173
	Victim of modern slavery	Victim of modern slavery / exploitation
Victim of domestic abuse / family exploitation		2
Immigration	Complicated immigration history	7
	Worried about status/situation	10
	Issues with Right to Reside	4

Vulnerability category	Vulnerability sub-category	
Health	Disability-Physical Health Disability-Mental health Serious condition-Physical health Serious condition-Mental health	77 25 2 8
Low income/poverty		11
Drug/alcohol issues		8
No vulnerability		20

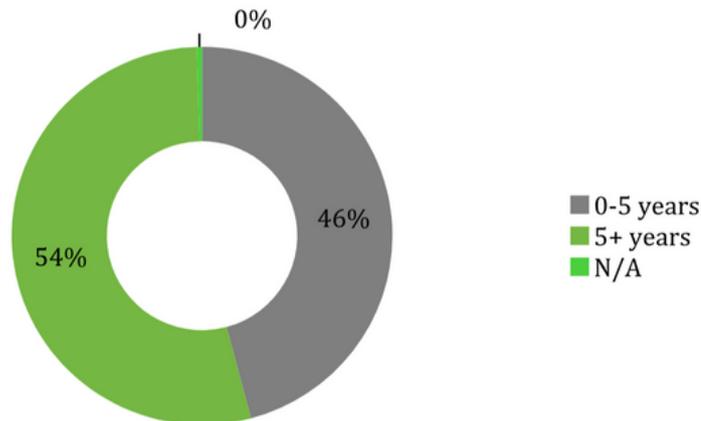
Type of Advice Sought and Length of Stay

Among those seeking advice around Welfare Benefits, the proportion of those who had been here less than five years remained almost in line with the sample (46% whilst the sample shows 41%). By contrast, all other types of advice apart from EUSS applications were disproportionately needed by those who had been here less than five years (housing 76%, access to services 71%; debt and money 86%; other immigration advice 67%; employment 91%).

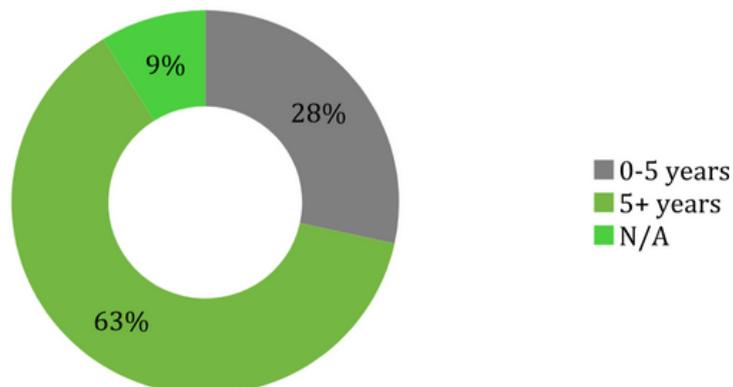
Of those clients that needed advice on EUSS applications, almost two thirds have been in the UK over 5 years.

Please note that clients are able to seek advice for more than one type of issue.

Welfare benefits

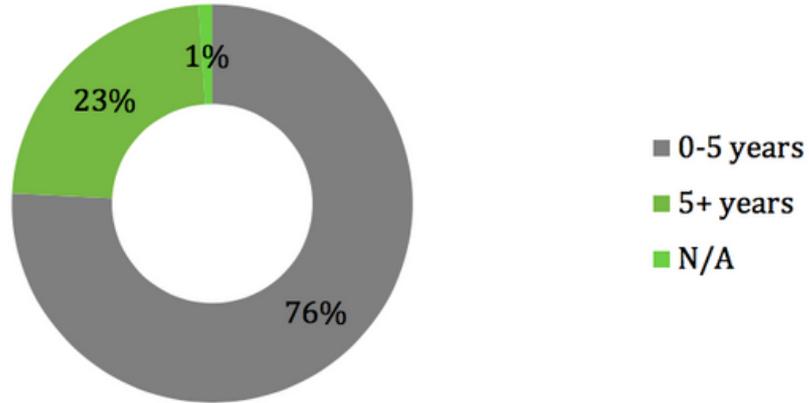


EUSS application

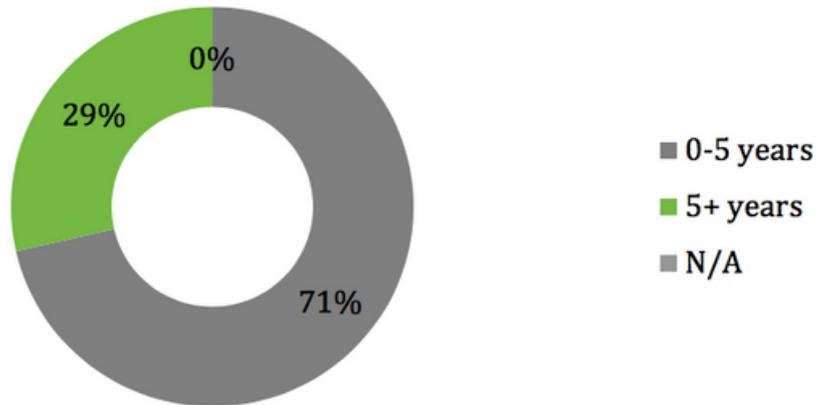


Type of advice sought compared to length of stay

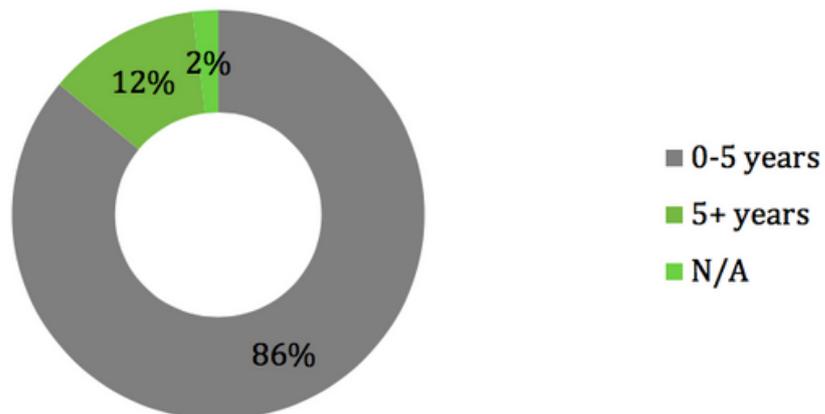
Housing



Access to services

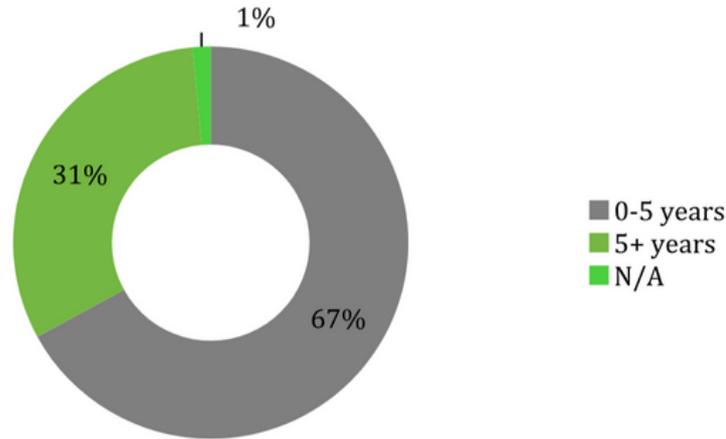


Debt and money

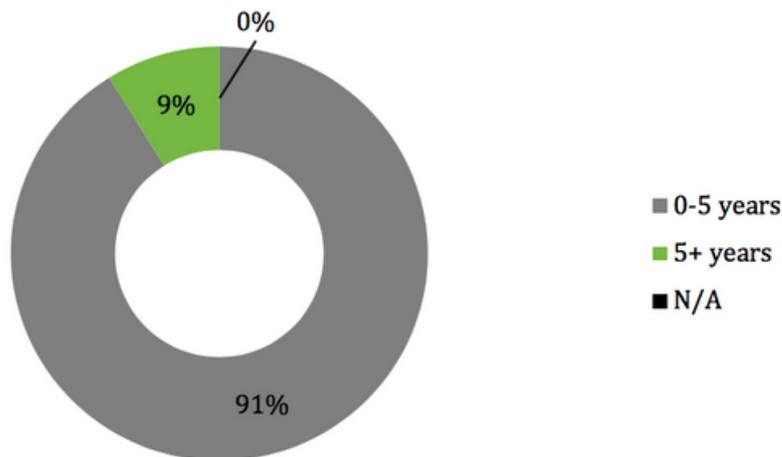


Type of advice sought compared to length of stay

Other immigration advice



Employment

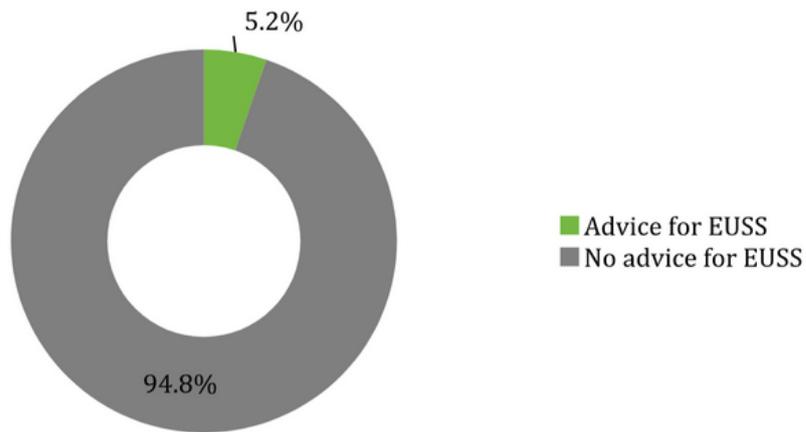


The chart below shows the proportion of clients who have been in the UK for less than 5 years who seek advice for making an EUSS application – which is around 5%. Why are so few people seeking EUSS advice? This low proportion could be attributed to a misconception that Settled Status is 'automatic' – once you have been here five years, you will automatically get the status.

Others are waiting to see what happens – aware that the political situation in the UK is ever shifting, and unsure whether they should commit now or wait until something becomes clearer. People are having doubts about staying at all and many people have already left the UK, or plan to do so soon – not liking the way that the UK is changing. At the start of the Covid-19 outbreak, many people returned to their home country, including many Romanians and Polish people – aware that they would lose their precarious employment, concerned for family members "at home", worried about what would happen in the UK, whether Covid19 arrangements would cover them, and what would happen next. One interviewee told us that 200,000 small business owners from countries such as Bulgaria and Romania have left the UK in the past year.

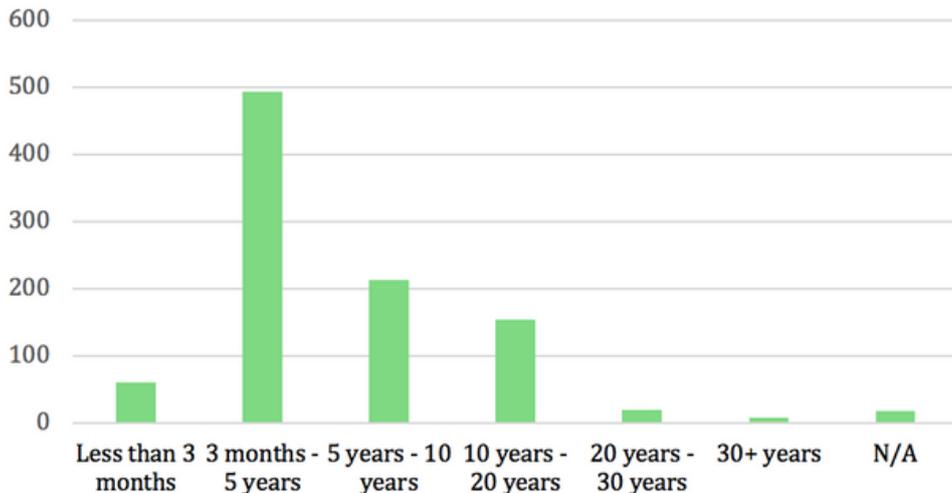
Other people do not know they have to apply - the information about the scheme does not reach everyone. Our interviewees expressed concerns especially about EU nationals of third country origin, such as Dutch and Scandinavian Somalis, Italian Bangladeshis, Portuguese Angolans, Spanish and Latin American South Americans and French Africans, for whom the information may have not been translated into their own language, or targeted at them and their communities thus does not reach them. They may not identify as European, they may not go to "European" community centres and businesses, they may work in remote areas, or they may be isolated by their employers or agents from information. Others don't believe it is for them: they may not perceive themselves as a migrant, and their passport may not match with how they identify. They may own businesses, homes, or they may be refusing to apply on principle or in protest.

EUSS application advice for clients less than 5 years in the UK



In looking closer at the breakdown of the length of stay, we can see that the majority of clients seeking advice had been here between 3 months and 5 years:

Number of years spent in the UK



45% of very recent arrivals (less than three months) came for 'Other immigration advice', and 23% came for Employment advice.

Those who had been in the UK between three months and five years needed mostly Welfare and Benefits advice (35%) and other immigration advice (28%).

After five years, all other types of advice service become less needed, except for Welfare and Benefits advice which remained the primary form of advice sought by those who had been here between 5 and ten years (64%).

60% of those who had been here for between 10 – 20 years came for Welfare Benefits advice, as did 53% of clients who were here between 20 – 30 years.

Out of the seven clients who had been here for more than 30 years, six were supported to make an EUSS application.

Clients Receiving EUSS Advice

Sample size: 102 cases

EUSS applicants form about one tenth of the overall dataset. Many of the EUSS applicants also accessed other forms of support. We do not know whether their primary reason for coming was to seek advice with EUSS, and then they accessed other forms of support as a consequence; or the other way round (that they came seeking other support and then accessed EUSS support while they were there or as a result of seeking other advice e.g. on benefits). Either way, the EUSS client group does show distinct differences when compared to the rest of the dataset.

There is a much lower rate of English Language issues among EUSS applicants than within the client group as a whole (39% against 82%). EUSS applicants also showed a low rate of 'other' vulnerabilities compared to the overall sample (6.86% against 19.21% average). This group also demonstrated a low rate of physical disabilities (3.92% against 13.19% average).

By contrast, there was a distinctly higher rate of homelessness among clients accessing EUSS advice than across whole population: 12.75% of people accessing EUSS advice were homeless, compared to 2.28% of the total population. 13 out of 22 people with 'homelessness' vulnerability were seeking EUSS advice; 12 of these 13 had English language issues.

Interviewees discussed the problems involved in applying for EUSS. They raised the issue of evidence and ID documents, both in terms of application and in terms of output. When applying, many people do not have the right ID documents, and people making paper applications do not trust that their ID documents will be secure if they must post them to the Home Office.

EUSS is digital, and people will not have a physical document to evidence that they have secured their status – causing huge anxiety among applicants, in particular older citizens. People distrust the Home Office due to their poor track record of keeping documents safe, and because of the Windrush scandal. Many come from countries which have physical ID documents which are routinely used to access everything. As such, the digitisation of status leaves them feeling powerless and at the mercy of the state – as well as being at risk of discrimination by landlords and employers who might not believe they have the status.

Concern about the Home Office's approach extends into communication, which is explored later in this data brief.

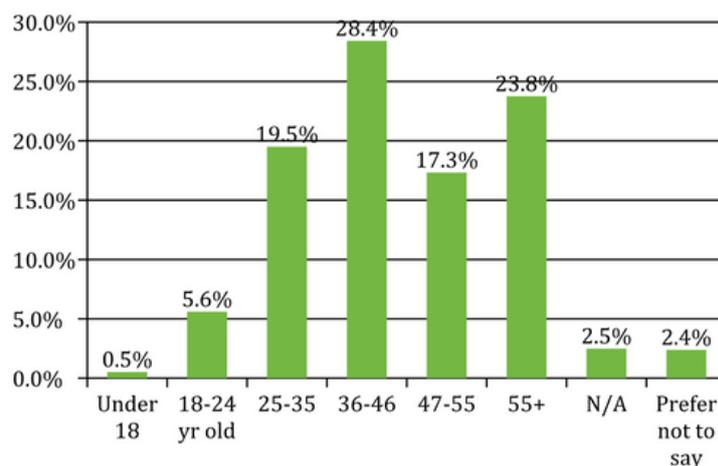
Older Clients: Aged 55+

Sample size: 229 cases.

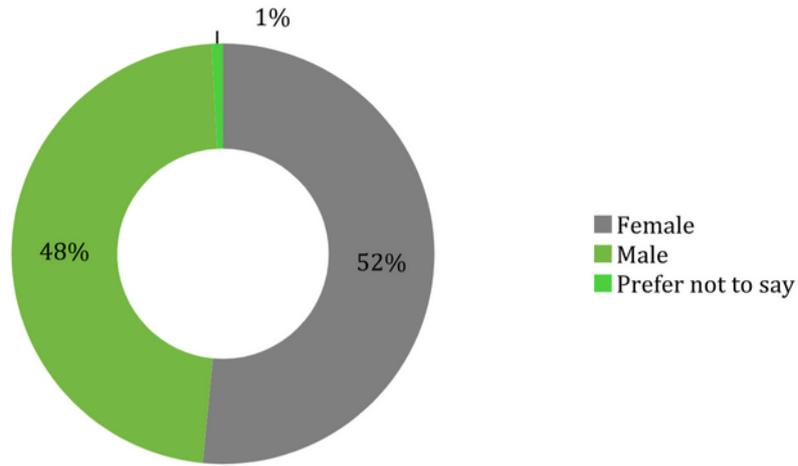
Older clients form a considerable proportion of the dataset; almost a quarter are aged over 55. This contrasts with just over 5% of clients being from a younger age group (less than 25). Although it is difficult to say why older clients are overrepresented and younger clients are underrepresented compared to population estimates, it may be that younger clients inform themselves through means such as the internet and social networks, whereas older people are more likely to use more traditional routes of information and advice such as community advice centres, particularly if they cater to clients with English language difficulties.

The East European Resource Centre saw a high proportion of people over the age of 55 (46% of clients, 134 individuals), whilst other data sources saw a wider spread of ages. Who were these clients? We were told that people tend to learn about EERC by word of mouth, and that older people may be in the sort of community networks that may publicise their services. Lots of economically active over 50s also might be parents or grandparents of EU workers, and live with their adult children, as might also those who need care. Very few seniors in these communities live on their own, not necessarily by choice, since it is also too expensive in London.

Age breakdown

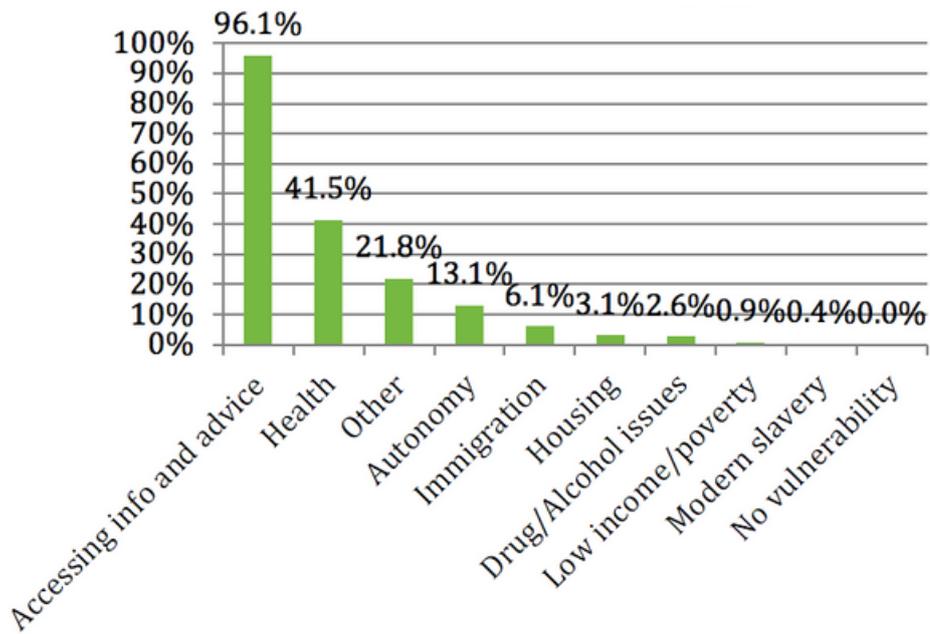


Gender of older clients



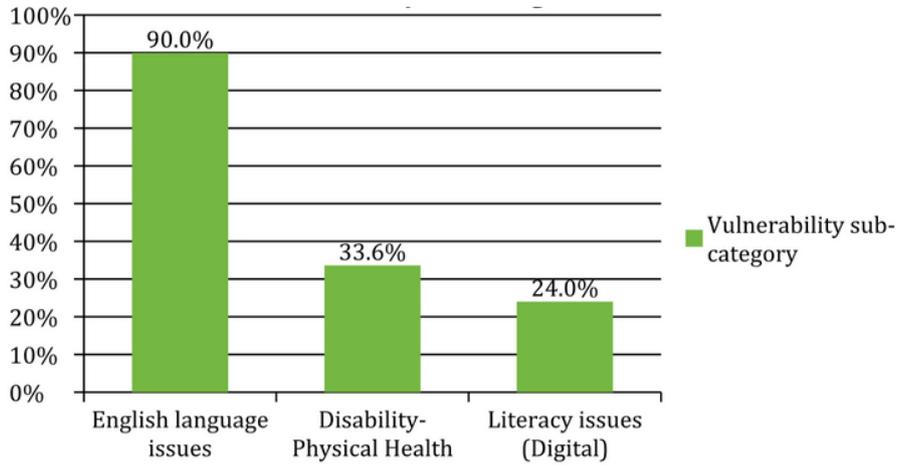
The gender split between older clients is more or less in line with the sample as a whole, with just a slightly higher proportion of men than women.

Vulnerability type among older clients (55+)

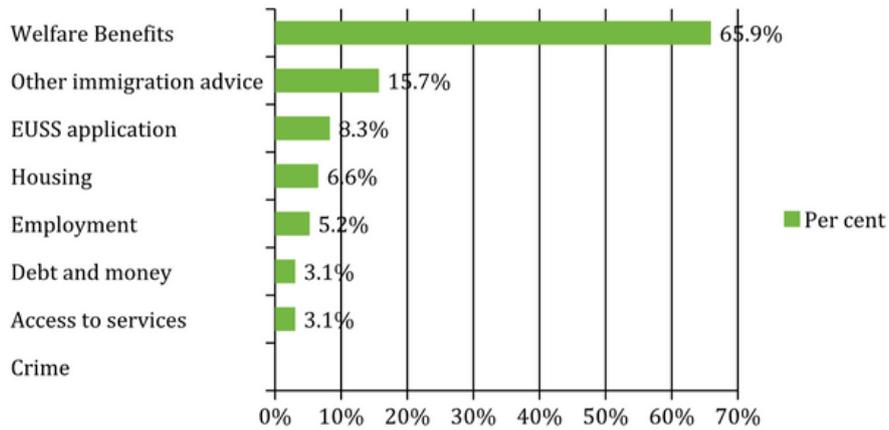


Almost all clients aged 55+ reported difficulties with accessing info and advice. A very high proportion compared to the rest of the dataset also seek advice for health-related reasons (almost 42%).

Main vulnerability sub-categories of older clients



Type of advice sought by older clients



The most common type of advice sought is welfare benefits, with over 2/3 of clients aged over 55+ attending advice sessions for this. As people get older, they may need support with pension credit, disability and illness benefits, PIP.

Around a quarter seek advice for other immigration advice and EUSS applications – though there is a real concern around older people as only 2% of EUSS applications are made by people over 65. Migrant support and immigration advice services generally are concerned about low numbers of older people who show up to the kinds of services where they might find out about EUSS.

The concerning low statistic of older EUSS applicants in part reflects some of the complexity around older people's need to apply. People who already have indefinite leave to remain (usually because they arrived and settled in the UK before their country of citizenship joined the EU) technically don't need to apply, but will gain extra rights and protections if they join the 'new system'. Some older people would be entitled to access the Windrush scheme, because they arrived so long ago, and thus would not need to apply for EUSS. Others have permanent residency, and need to apply, but don't believe or understand that they need to. For many older Europeans who have been living in the UK a very long time, they simply don't believe that they should need to make an application – and the request for them to do so after being here so long is taken very personally and has a considerable emotional impact – in some cases seen as humiliation.

Of course, digital exclusion impacts the older population's ability to apply for EUSS, which relies on use of an up-to-date smart phone. Older people might also have old ID documents and thus not be able to scan their passport using the EUSS application. They may not want to post these to the Home Office for risk of losing them, and so therefore may delay or decide against applying.

The government does not currently report data on EUSS applications by age, and chose not to use data collected by the European Commission with age break downs. Several interviewees expressed real concerns that the Home Office are not addressing this "age deficit" sufficiently.

Children and Young People

All of the projects saw low numbers of clients under the age of 24 (1% EERC, 15% Harrow, IRMO 7%). This could be because young people are better at finding their own information online or over the phone, or it could be because parents seek information and advice on behalf of the whole family. Other children and young people may be relied on by their parents to find or translate advice and information.

The data set showed that younger people (under 24) tended to access housing advice more than other age groups, which is reflective of the lack of housing provisions for single young people especially men.

Regarding EUSS applications, there is a concern about low numbers of children and young people applying. Some of this can come down to confusion around who is British. Many families and young people may assume that children born in the UK are British – though this is not always the case. Thus they may not apply, and later find themselves lacking rights.

Others may actually be British, by virtue of having been born to a parent who had the permanent right to reside. However, often these parents do not know they have this status, and thus would not know their children are born British, or not be aware that having a “settled” parent is a criterion for citizenship. Therefore some children (or parents on their behalf) apply for EUSS although they are entitled to a British passport – thus losing out on rights. Others who were brought up here may identify as British and consider themselves as European, or may simply not bother to apply. Others may struggle to evidence their British status, perhaps by virtue of family relationship breakdown. Many children lack passports, and some embassies require the permission of both parents to apply for them – leaving children without the evidence necessary to make an application for EUSS. As such, there may be high numbers of children and young people who lose out on the rights they are entitled to.

Family dynamics also play in here – as young people simply may not listen to their parents and may choose to ignore the fact that they are told to apply. Young people, especially those from visible minorities, are more likely to have criminal convictions, and some convictions disbar them from PSS or EUSS. However, it is also possible that people with minor convictions may believe wrongly that they are also disbarred. Those outside families may rely on carers to inform them of the application process. One interviewee cited a survey of councils about the 9000 EU children estimated to be in care, and it was found that 270 have Settled Status, others have Pre-Settled Status, and the rest of the councils did not respond.

Furthermore, young people may not exist on the government systems through which EUSS is automatically checked. Despite having been in the UK for more than five years, they may not have been employed, received benefits, or paid tax in this time – and thus the system may offer them Pre-Settled Status rather than Settled status due to a lack of evidence.

Schools are a key link between families and official information, and have been the site of many outreach activities in the Pre-Brexit project. It is considered key that the information disseminated through schools is translated in order to effectively reach all the parents. EERC delivered very popular info sessions around EUSS in Polish schools and Saturday schools and the Work Rights Centre even managed to deliver sessions with distancing.

"I hope they [EERC] can come more often! Some parents you need to explain one thing a few times. Grandparents also contact with school. They don't speak English. In my school it [EUSS info sessions] was so important. The queue was already there before we opened school." Polish Saturday school teacher

Children and young people are in general reliant on their parents to secure their status for them. This can lead to anxiety and uncertainty about the future.

"My older one was worried if I didn't get status she might be deported to Holland, 'how would I go back, how would I learn the language now?' She was worried to have to study there in language she doesn't know. She was only 5 when she came here... When we applied she was relieved. They feel more secure and excited to get the status, more than me."

Gender

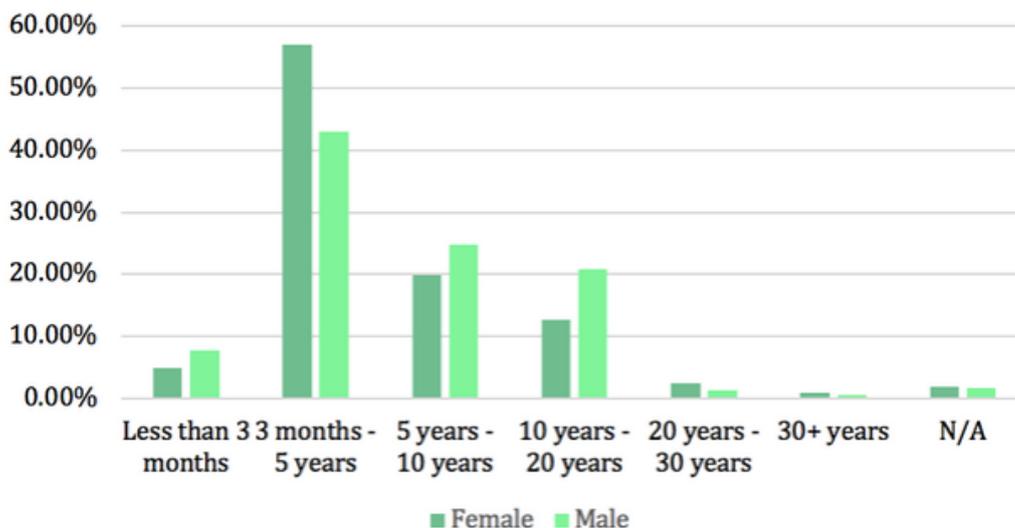
As mentioned previously, 58% of clients were recorded as female, whilst 41% reported as male, and 1% preferred not to say.

Women were slightly underrepresented among Polish clients, making up 49% of 237 clients. They are overrepresented among the Spanish clients (62% of 220) and among the 'Unknown/not stated' nationality group (62% of 240).

Women tended to come for support when they were younger: 68% of the 25-35 age group were female (compared to a 51% average overall), and 62% in the 36-46 age group, meaning that in general women were overrepresented under the age of 46. By contrast, they were underrepresented over the age of 46, making up 54% of the 47-55 age group and 52% of the over 55's. Of the women aged between 25 – 35, 48% of those needed support with Welfare Benefits.

Both men and women were more likely to come earlier during their stay for advice. However, the percentages were greater for women, with 57% coming between 3 months and 5 years, whilst for 42% of men came during this period. By contrast, 21% of men came between 10 – 20 years, whilst only 13% of women came in this period.

Percentage of men / women by length of stay



In general, men were found to be much more likely to have problems with their physical health, which is perhaps because men are overrepresented in the older groups. Men were also more likely to be homeless, which reflects housing provision; and women were more likely to have problems accessing sources of advice, perhaps because these are associated with recent arrival, and seeking help with benefits.

Regarding EUSS, women who aren't working, or who work cash in hand, and who aren't named on household and council tax bills risk not having the evidence base needed to secure their status. They are then reliant on their partners for status, and so if their partner becomes abusive the same problems inherent on spousal visas persist. Immigration status can be used as a tool for control, and many women are misinformed by abusive partners about their rights and entitlements. It may not be until they have accessed domestic violence services that they come to understand what their rights are. Women who don't speak English are particularly vulnerable in this context.

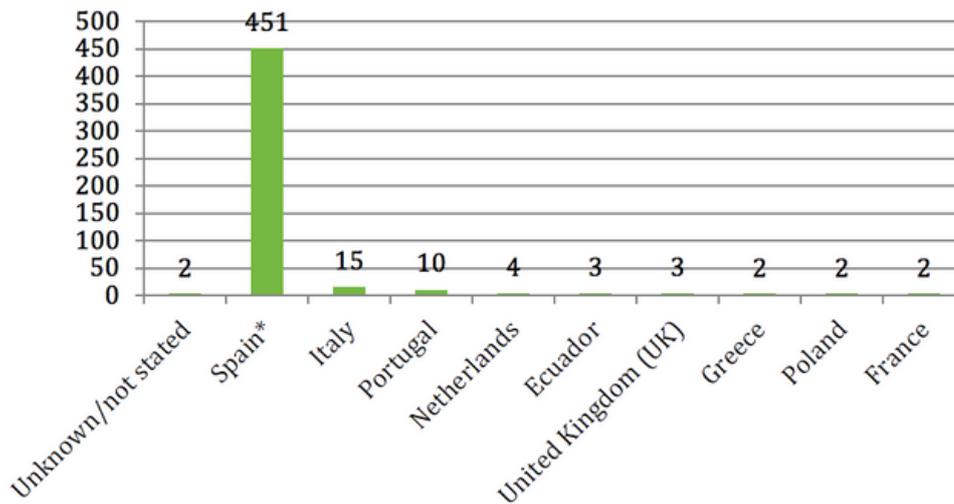
For female third country nationals (and their children) who have fled abusive relationships with British citizens or those with rights to permanent residence, it can be difficult to establish and demonstrate entitlements, as documents may have been withheld by partners and the relationship may be difficult to prove. One solution proposed by Rights of Women is a call for the Home Office to accept statements from respected members of the community – teachers, priests, lawyers – to attest to the existence of a relationship. There is however no legal aid to do this work and few centres have the expertise or resources to engage in it.

There is a big concern for people who have more complex applications to make, especially now with the Covid-19 lockdown: Zambrano carers for example are not covered by the withdrawal agreement and so must apply before December 2020, and must make their application on paper. However, paper applications are not currently being accepted because of lockdown, as so this group could be at risk of 'slipping through the gap'.

Clients with Dual Nationality and Third Country Nationals

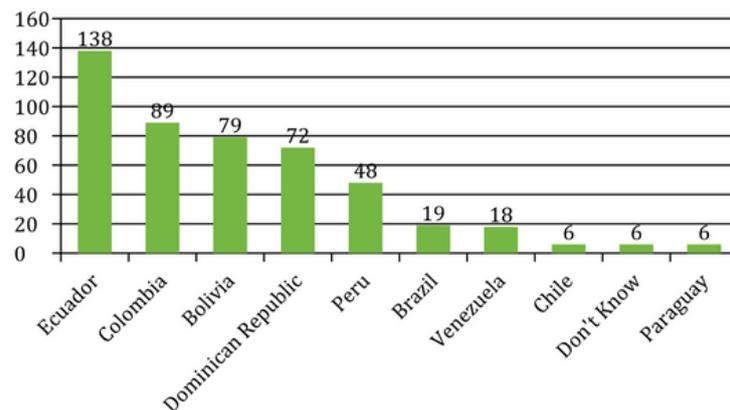
Sample size: 504 cases

Top first nationalities



As explained in the previous demographics section, 236 of IRMO's clients were recorded as 'unknown/ not stated' nationality, but are considered to be Spanish. This means the most common nationality for clients with dual nationality is Spanish, accounting for most cases in this sub-group.

Top third-country nationalities



Most third-country nationalities are from Spanish speaking countries, as most dual nationality clients also have Spanish citizenship.

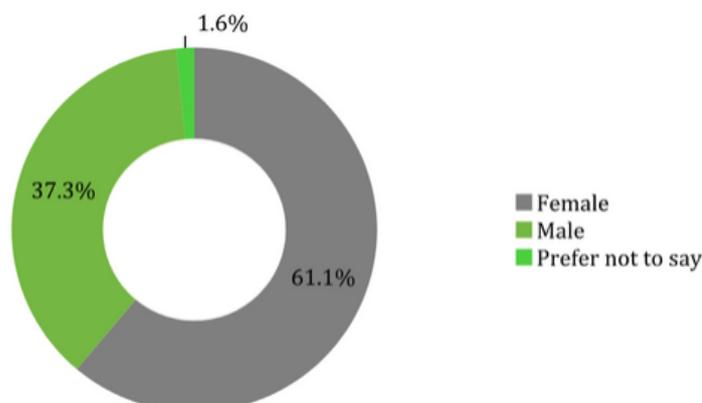
Regarding EUSS applications, third-country nationals are known to be experiencing delays with the processing of their applications. However, there has been no research that we are aware of into how many third country nationals should be applying for EUSS, and therefore how many people might be at risk of being impacted by these delays.

Interviewees explained the complexities of these cases. Eligibility refusals began in March of this year, and half of the refusals were third country nationals, which is vastly disproportionate to the rate at which they would be applying compared to EU citizens. Many of those who were refused had to wait several months for the decision – in one case up to seven months. These waits have consequences. For example, if the refusals are on the grounds that the person did not have a family member residence card, deadline to apply for such a card is December 2020. People were not told initially that they even needed such a card to apply for the scheme. Thus there is a real risk that people subject to such delayed decisions may miss deadlines to acquire essential documentation and be unable then to apply. This is a problem exacerbated by lockdown, of course.

In general, service delivery staff noted that third country nationals fear immigration control more so than EU citizens, and thus prioritise immigration advice and support more so than EU citizens do.

Dual nationals are also having their nationalities questioned: "in particular those who are brown". People may even find that they are effectively stateless. Third country family members need their passports to apply for EUSS or PSS. One African embassy denied that an applicant was a citizen in this situation, and the applicant now needs to get a lawyer to sort out citizenship there. European countries may also deny or question whether people who have acquire citizenship in their countries have actually done so, even years after they have exercised those rights.

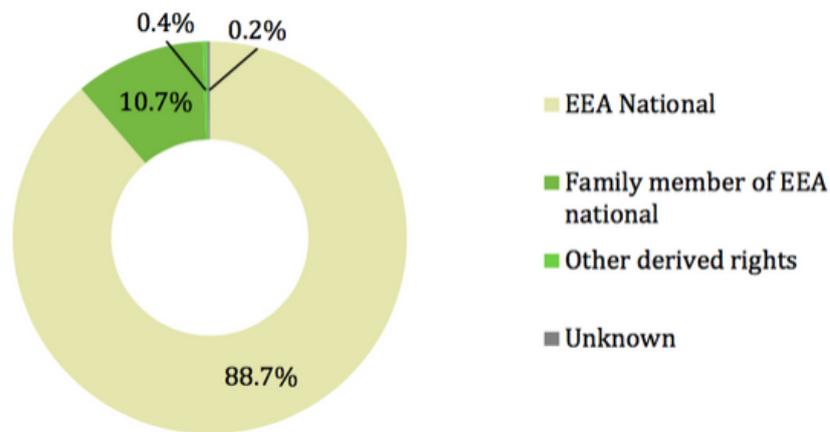
Gender dual nationality



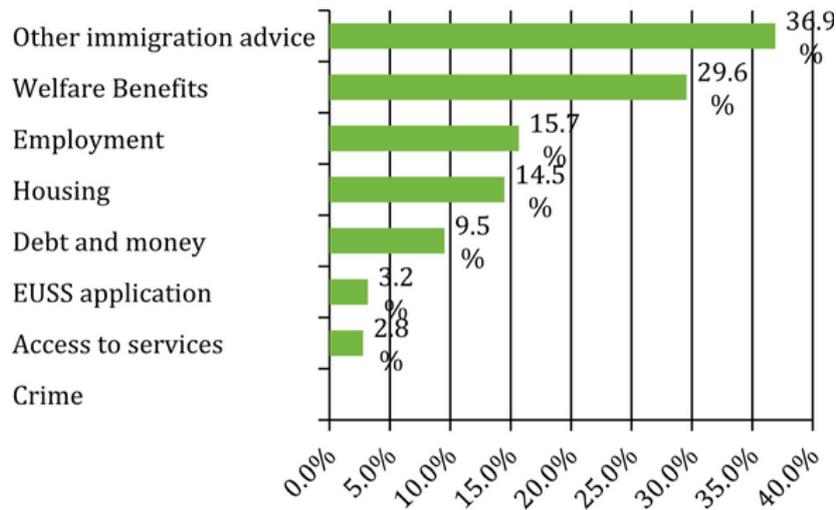
There is a higher proportion of female clients with dual nationality (almost two thirds), than the sample as a whole. Most clients with dual nationality have citizenship of an EEA country, with family members of EEA nationals forming just over 10% of the sample.

In fact, two thirds of people whose EEA rights were those of family members alone are women. This is a group that are particularly vulnerable because they may struggle to establish mechanisms for proving their presence in the UK.

Source of EEA rights, dual nationals

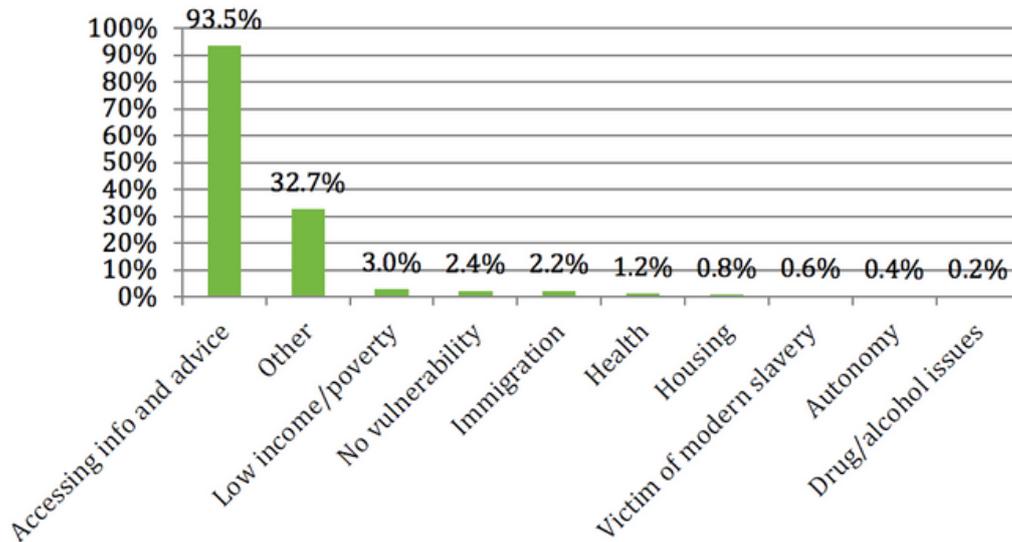


Type of advice, dual nationals



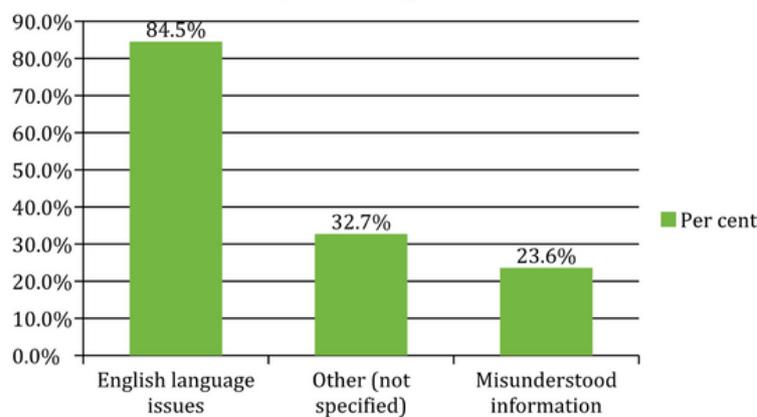
Just over a third of dual nationality clients seek advice for immigration issues other than EUSS applications. A further two thirds seek advice for welfare benefits, employment or housing.

Type of vulnerability, dual nationals



A very high proportion of dual nationality clients seek advice for accessing information and advice. It is worth noting that the 'Other' category here refers to a Single parent (1), Care leavers (2), a case of bereavement (1), a "gypsy" (1), and 'other' (173). The data collected for those classified as 'Other' includes notes on the individuals. The most frequent note explains that the case complexity / source vulnerability for these individuals is 'Complex problems' (67); 'Affordability of advice' (25) and 'New Arrival' (17). Others within this category include one refugee, and a woman who is nine months pregnant.

Main vulnerability sub-categories for dual nationals

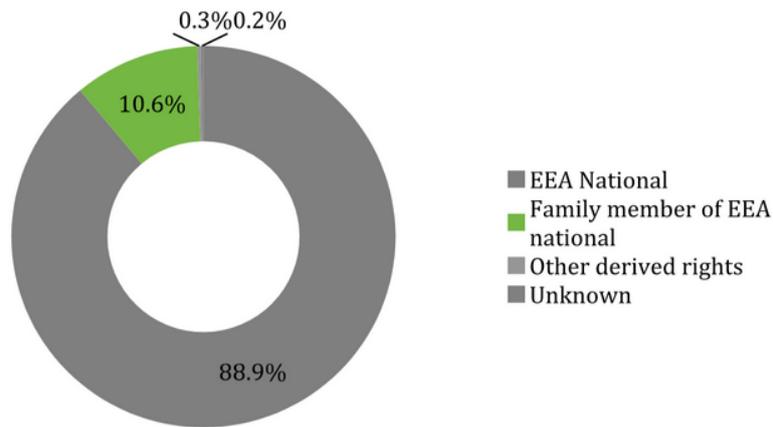


Importantly, English language issues affect three quarters of clients with dual nationality. Almost a third have another type of vulnerability which was not specified.

Clients who are Family Members of EEA Citizens

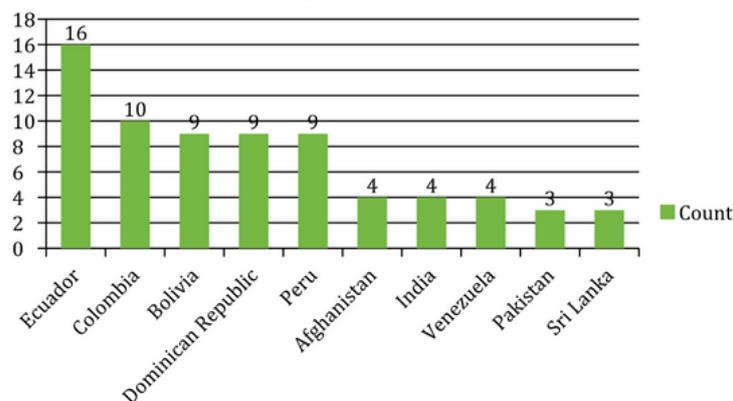
Sample size: 102 cases

Source of EEA rights



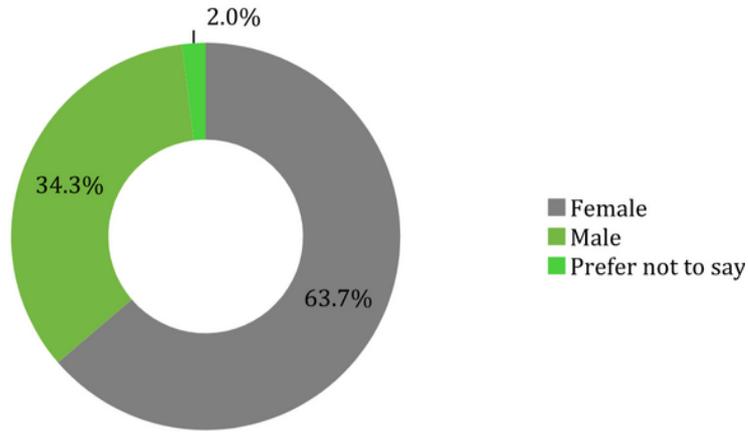
Family members of EEA nationals represent just over 10% of the dataset as a whole.

Top nationalities of family members



Out of 102 clients who are family members of EEA citizens, most come from Spanish speaking countries.

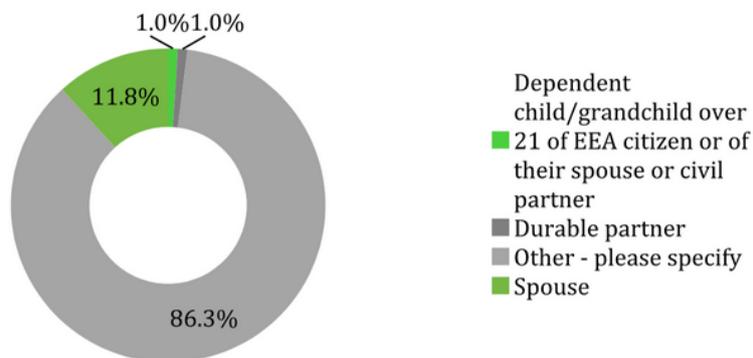
Gender of family members



Almost two thirds of family members of EEA nationals are female.

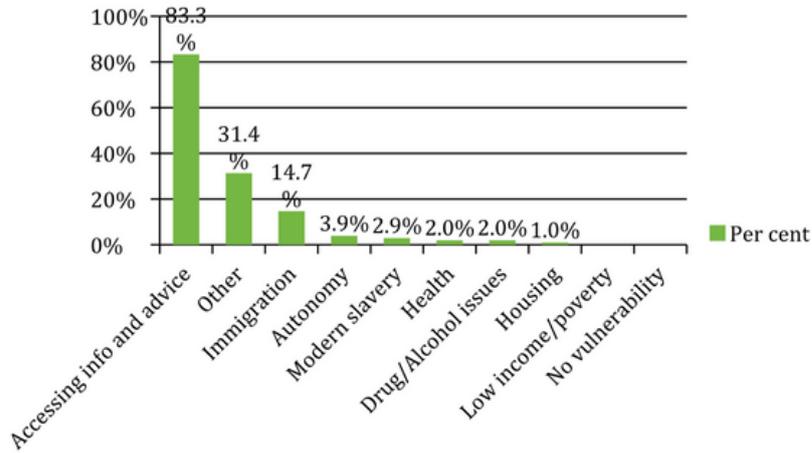
Information about the type of relationship is less clear. Rules on rights to reside cover spouses, civil partners, "durable partners" (i.e. some cohabittees), children under 21, dependant children over 21 and adult dependants of various sorts. However, the data on what type of relationship is unclear, with a lot recording "other"

Relationship to EEA family member



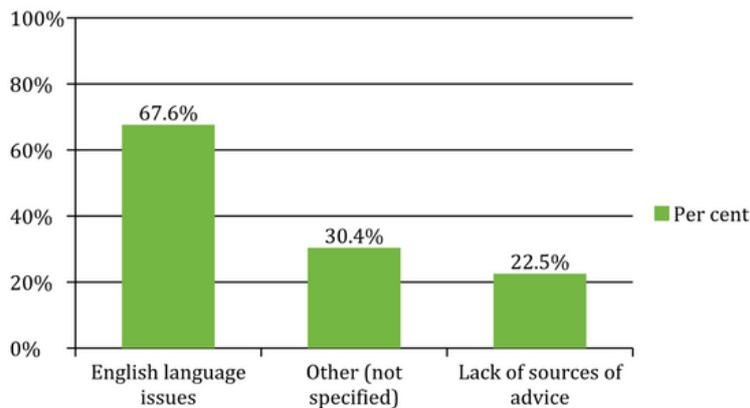
Importantly, English language issues affect three quarters of clients with dual nationality. Almost a third have another type of vulnerability which was not specified.

Vulnerability type, family members



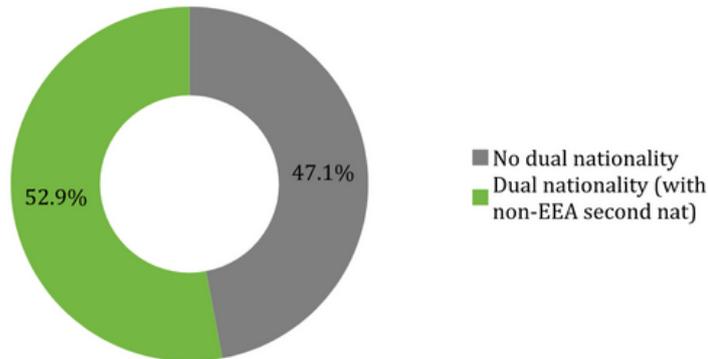
Similarly to other groups analysed in this brief, the majority of family members have one or more vulnerabilities around accessing information and advice. A higher proportion of family members than other sub-groups have some vulnerability around immigration issues, as perhaps would be expected.

Main vulnerability sub-category, family members



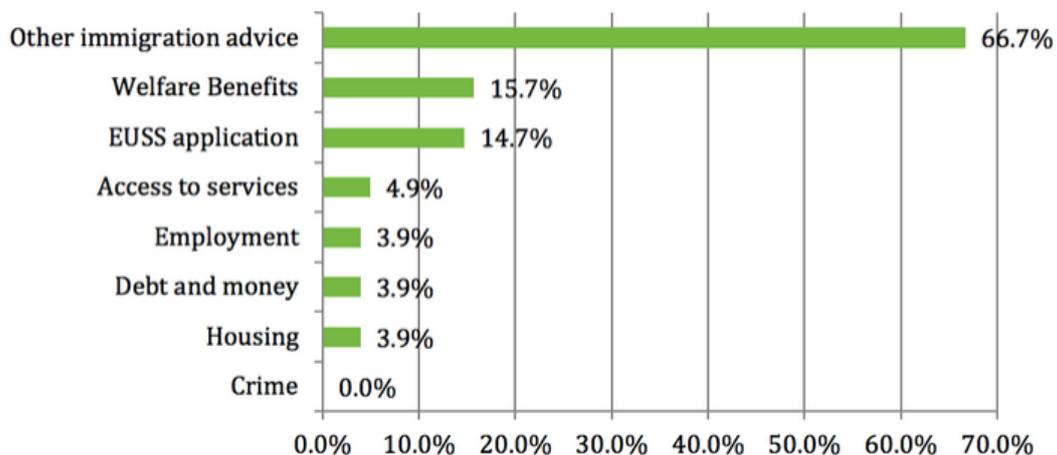
Over two thirds of family members have English language issues. Almost a quarter report having problems with a lack of source of advice.

Family members: dual nationality



Just over half of family members were of a dual nationality from a non-EEA country.

Type of advice, family members



In contrast to the rest of the sample, family members primarily seek advice for immigration issues (other than EUSS application), and a relatively small proportion seek advice for welfare benefits.

English Language Issues

Among clients to all services, English Language issues were found to be very common: 82%, or 790 clients, had 'English language issues' listed as a vulnerability. This vulnerability can have a real impact on communities, who are increasingly vulnerable to misinformation and to rogue and costly 'advisers'. One interviewee noted that among the Polish community, 'fear mongering' takes place in Polish language newspapers and websites:

"They give them lots of wrong information – they try and fear them, you guna lose this, you have to go back. Lots of people go back because they're scared, they don't understand, they have no one to ask what's really going to happen. It's really sad."

Whilst many clients have excellent day to day English, they may lack the technical and specialist language required to make an application or appeal a decision. Others may understand the information in English, but prefer to seek the information in their own language in order to confirm their understanding – legal information is the kind that you want to be doubly sure about. Confidence in language is often undermined by the immigration system which penalizes inaccuracies, and political rhetoric can be unclear, leading to confusion and misinterpretation.

"People think the new immigration bill applies for all Polish people here. It's all about language. On Polish facebook and website, lots of info saying that we need to go home, Boris Johnson wants us to go home, etc etc... people only checking in Polish, panicking straight away. It's confusing."

This vulnerability tends to improve with clients' age and length of stay in the UK – and reduces a little among those who have been here for over ten years.

However, parents over 50 who come to join their children and who never learnt English at school, or who were schooled to a lower level, are less likely to learn the language successfully. Other clients may be illiterate or have low levels of literacy - common among the older generation within the Roma community, among Somali women, and among members of the Somali community who were children in Somalia in the past thirty years of war and no schooling. "English language issues" can be a more socially acceptable vulnerability, which can be used to hide others which feel less acceptable, such as low literacy.

Many nationality communities are long established and self-sufficient, and information is effectively disseminated through community networks. People may come to the UK already knowing a relative, friend or neighbor living here. When they get here, they may manage perfectly well simply speaking Somali for example – being supported to access whatever they may need and therefore not needing to learn to read, or indeed to speak English. This is true of many

communities – among the Polish, Somali, Bulgarian communities – all of these groups have many people who have lived in the UK for a long time without needing to learn English. Whilst offering translated information offers some solution to the language problem, knowing that you need to access this information tends to be the first hurdle.

Many of these communities can be slightly closed off and self-contained – and may not be the 'obvious contenders' when outreach programmes are designed – for language classes, say – thus missing out. Therefore raising awareness and disseminating information within these communities requires tailored outreach. Trust is important; disseminating information via trusted community leaders is often effective; but each community must be considered on its own terms, bearing in mind the communities' particular histories and relationships to the state. The Roma community, for instance, would not permit photographs during info sessions run as part of the various LCN projects – and trust had to be carefully brokered between partners and key leaders in the Roma community.

For example, in the Welsh Harp area of Brent, there are shanty towns occupied by mainly Romanian workers, who come to work often in construction roles. These workers may get by without speaking English day to day, though their access to information is no doubt limited and they exist somewhat on the margins, perhaps lacking support to which they are entitled. Having information online in Romanian is one thing, but informing these groups that they need this information, and how to find it, is something else altogether – requiring tailored outreach and careful brokering of trust. Small local radio stations, nationality and language based websites, magazines, newspapers should all be used; schools, churches and cafes should be informed and supported to disseminate information.

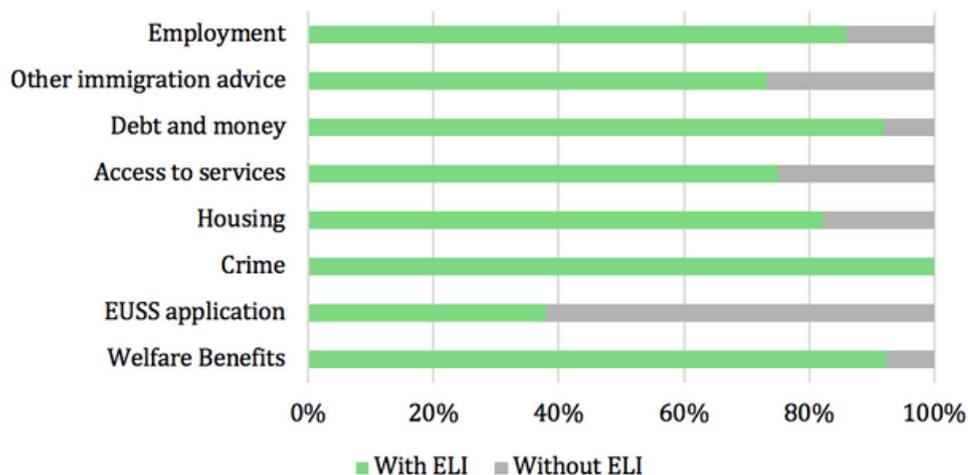
The older generation are also less likely to have the digital skills in order to navigate online services and applications, and thus some rely on children to translate, interpret, and to navigate online resources and applications. This creates and suffers from its own problems in relation to family dynamics. Digital and language literacy are both required for applications such as EUSS, and people such as the older Roma community can lack both of these skills, whilst also experiencing race and social stigma which impacts their trust of the system and their willingness to engage with 'official' processes.

A slightly higher proportion of clients between the ages of 18-46 have English Language issues, compared to those who are 47+. This may, however, reflect time since arrival in the UK.

The vulnerability is found to be almost the same between men and women. However, interviewees noted that gendered roles within particular workplaces and communities can determine the language acquired: women in cleaning roles will acquire a particular set of words, whilst Roma women are more likely not to work, and thus may learn less English. People who don't speak English are reliant on others to inform them and translate for them – children, husbands, friends. Given that traditional gender roles may already undermine women's autonomy, further reliance on others may have a disproportionate impact. This impacts ones' autonomy – the impact of this can be disproportionately felt by women.

A high proportion of people who access support with welfare benefits have English language issues, which could demonstrate an unsurprising correlation between language skills and wealth: more jobs are available to those who speak English. However, it could also point to the fact that difficulties with benefits could be a result of language issues, as an initial misunderstanding can turn into problems with benefits, work, or housing. Again, this can be an issue around lack of 'technical' vocabulary. By contrast, among people seeking EUSS advice, the proportion of those facing English language issues is extremely low. See graph, bearing in mind the average is 82%.

English Language Issues by advice sought



English Language Issues are acutely experienced by the Deaf community. British Sign Language is British – and thus migrants who can neither read English, nor sign BSL, are twice excluded from accessing reliable information and legal advice. Whilst information services may provide support for the Deaf, this signing is invariably in the wrong language of signing. A Portuguese member of the Deaf community may therefore be reliant on just one person who is able to sign to them in their own sign language, leaving them vulnerable to misinformation, fear and coercion.³

COVID-19

The dataset analysed in this report does not cover the Covid-19 lockdown period, however some of the interviews took place during Covid-19 lockdown, as so it is worth noting some of the impacts on EU citizens in this time.

Those we spoke to felt that those with language and digital literacy skills would be confident accessing advice and information during lockdown – indeed, two of the interviewees had been in touch with an advisor during lockdown, and one had made EUSS applications for her and her family, with no problems. However, those without digital literacy skills would struggle to access information and advice. Many members of the Polish community were thought to have gone home at the start of the outbreak, before lockdown, out of fear.

Furthermore, it was acknowledged that many EU workers work in precarious and low paid jobs and may not be covered by the Government's furlough schemes – in particular cash in hand workers. Others might be legally entitled to support but not know how to access it. Therefore the closing down of workplaces and fears around the future of the British economy were thought to have an impact on EU Londoners. The closure of advice and community centres and the move to online and telephone access only will cause further problems. On the other hand, government funding to get all rough sleepers "in" may provide new opportunities to access a previously hard to reach group.

Questions to Explore Further

Throughout this report, we have used the data collected by the EULAMP project and the Pre-Brexit project as a starting point to explore some – though not all – of the issues around access to advice and information among the EU London community. Through our subsequent interviews, we focused on access to the EU Settlement Scheme. Our research was not exhaustive and did not cover all of the groups who might be impacted by the EUSS. We identified groups that would benefit from further research and support in order to better understand who they are and how to support them to access advice and information in regards to the Settlement Scheme.

- People who have been here a long time and are not applying for Settled Status: they may not feel able to; they may be severely isolated; they may believe that they don't need to apply and that it doesn't apply to them, they may even be too angry to apply because of the perceived loss of rights. This group are of concern because they are older and may not be in touch with the relevant services who would be able to support them in applying or inform them to do so.
- People with English Language Issues: there are many self-sufficient communities, such as some among the Somali community, the Polish community, and others – among whom many individuals are able to get by without learning English, and thus never do learn. This means that it is harder for them to find out about information and advice, even if the information is provided in relevant languages: they have to know it is there to look for it! Within this group, women can be disproportionately impacted by the lack of access to information and advice.
- Third country nationals: are experiencing issues around waiting times, and there is no knowledge of how many third country nationals are due to apply for EUSS. More research would better enable advice services to support this group – identifying and mapping them is the first hurdle. Women are disproportionately represented within this group. Who else is collecting data on this group?

Furthermore, we recommend that the Law Centres Network explore these questions to frame ongoing research:

- Did EUSS bring in a whole new set of clients that services had not previously seen before? What were the vulnerabilities that were characteristic of this new set of clients?
- Understanding both older and younger people: who are the older and younger people that are not reached by these services? Why? What other agencies can we work with to better understand them? Who do they interact with, and why? What are their advice needs?
- To what extent are ethnic minorities discriminated against through the EUSS application process? What are the forms that discrimination takes?

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- Monthly and quarterly statistics on the EU Settlement Scheme published by the Home Office at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/eu-settlement-scheme-statistics>
- The European Commission is currently commissioning research into who is missing out on EUSS.
- GLA, 2020, London's children and young people who are not British citizens: A profile
- ONS's Migration Statistics Quarterly Report can be downloaded from: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/migrationstatisticsquarterlyreport/february2020>
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Appendix A.

Overview of the Latin American community in the UK, by Lucía Vinzón

The Latin American community is one of the fastest growing non-EU migrant populations in London. In 2013, there were around 250,000 Latin Americans in the UK, of which 145,000 were in London, with particular concentrations in Lambeth and Southwark. These numbers are comparable in size to other large migrant communities such as the Somali, Chinese and Romanian. From 2009, as a result of the economic recession in southern Europe, Latin Americans that had migrated to EU countries started migrating to the UK.

Despite its size, the Latin American community remains invisible in national statistics. With a large proportion having dual citizenship, either EU or British, Latin Americans are not being recorded or are misrecorded in different categories.

In spite of the community's high rates of employment (close to 70%), many experience exclusion, poverty and disadvantage in the labour market. Large numbers work in low paid, precarious jobs, mostly in the cleaning or catering sectors, and experience 'in work poverty' and isolation linked to working anti-social and fragmented hours. These conditions leave people vulnerable to exploitation: over 40% have experienced workplace abuse and exploitation; 11% are illegally paid below the National Minimum Wage, which is 10 times higher than the average rate for the UK population (1.1%). In addition, many experience 'deskilling' on arrival in Britain (70% attended higher education in their countries), as they cannot access professional jobs due to lack of recognition of their qualifications and/or the language barrier.

High proportions of Latin Americans live in private rental housing (70%). In order to cope with living in an expensive city, almost a third of Latin Americans share their housing with other families in Multiple Occupancy Homes and many live in cramped, overcrowded conditions.

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