

# **Crisis Pre-Employment Programme for A8 and A2 Nationals in London**

## **Evaluation Report**

Sarah Johnsen & Filip Sosenko  
November 2012



## **About Crisis**

Crisis is the national charity for single homeless people. We are dedicated to ending homelessness by delivering life-changing services and campaigning for change.

Crisis Skylight, our award winning and accredited education, training and employment centres, offer practical and creative workshops in a supportive and inspiring environment together with formal learning opportunities that lead to qualifications and finding work.

Crisis Employment Services help get single homeless people into meaningful, sustainable employment leading to a home, stability and better quality of life. Our Work and Learning Coaches work closely with individuals supporting them to achieve the goals they set on their route into employment.

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## Executive Summary

Homelessness and destitution amongst migrants have been elevated in the policy agendas of many European countries in recent years. In the UK, as elsewhere, there has been particular concern about the welfare of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), most notably Accession 8 ('A8') and Accession 2 ('A2') nationals since their countries of origin joined the European Union (EU). The overwhelming majority of CEE migrants successfully obtain employment and accommodation in the UK, but welfare entitlement restrictions mean that options have been very limited for the minority who find themselves without paid employment.

The Crisis Pre-employment Programme for A8 and A2 nationals in London was set up in response to a dramatic increase in the proportion of CEE migrants within the street homeless population in London and the failure of existing services to provide them with adequate advice regarding their rights and entitlements in the UK. The programme is based on the premise that paid employment offers an important route out of homelessness and potential destitution. It thus aims to support CEE migrants by improving the skills and employability of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the capital. The programme was funded by the Oak Foundation and has been independently evaluated by Heriot-Watt University.

The programme offers tailored one-to-one support, delivered by job coaches, who typically meet with service users once or twice per week. It also facilitates access to a range of on-site training courses, and/or supports users to access training elsewhere as appropriate. Additional forms of support include a job club, mock interviews and financial assistance for travel, clothing or equipment necessary to enhance users' employability. Job coaches also regularly support users in areas that are not directly related to employment, such as facilitating

access to housing or health services and/or assisting with welfare benefit applications (where applicable).

The programme ran from October 2009 until September 2012, during which time it supported 398 service users. The vast majority have been men, most commonly in the 25-44 age bracket. Most (82%) of the programme's service users were from A8 countries; 18% were A2 nationals. More specifically, Polish nationals comprised the largest proportion of participants, followed by Lithuanians, Romanians, Czechs and Latvians.

More than half of all service users were sleeping rough, and almost all others living in temporary or insecure housing (most commonly squats), at the point of recruitment. The vast majority were economically inactive, in that they were unemployed and not involved in training or education at that point. Self-reports of multiple vulnerabilities were relatively uncommon, but staff reported that a minority of CEE migrants are highly vulnerable, often because of alcohol misuse issues.

In total, 40% of service users acquired one or more jobs after becoming involved with the programme, thus the programme's employment acquisition outcome target (of 37%) was exceeded. Job retention proved difficult to measure, but the data available suggests that approximately half (49%) of service users sustained employment for at least six months. The programme thus did not quite meet its 55% job retention target, but its failure to do so should not be given undue prominence given challenges encountered in measurement, most notably difficulties in maintaining contact with service users who had obtained a job or returned to their country of origin.

Much of the work obtained by service users has been poorly paid. The majority (88%)

earned between the minimum wage and £10 per hour; the average (median) hourly wage was £6.50. The balance of starting wages was thus weighted more toward the lower end of the wage spectrum than programme targets had projected. A notable proportion of the jobs acquired by service users, especially those in the construction and agricultural sectors, have involved short-term contracts.

The programme has arguably been more successful in improving the knowledge and skills of service users, than it has in helping them gain and maintain paid employment. The vast majority of service users reported that they had gained knowledge and skills, via formal training and/or the one-to-one support of job coaches. The most pronounced programme outcomes were nevertheless arguably the enhancement of confidence, self-esteem and/or motivation, which were identified as key outcomes by virtually all service user interviewees and were reported to have had the greatest impact on the day-to-day lives and wellbeing of many.

Levels of service user satisfaction with the programme were very high overall. The support of job coaches was especially valued given their knowledge, efficiency and non-judgemental approach. Service user assessments of the helpfulness of other aspects of the programme, such as the training and access to IT facilities, varied depending upon the needs of individuals. Experiences of paid employment were mixed. Many of those who did find work reported struggling financially, given the costs of living and common practice of sending remittances to family in their country of origin.

Stakeholders were unanimous in agreeing that the programme addressed a significant gap in the service network, which had been particularly acute before legislative changes effective from 1 May 2011 (when A8 nationals became able to access the UK labour market on the same terms as other EU nationals). Crisis was thus regarded as a leader in the development of responses to the needs

of this client group, and the programme's creativity was widely commended.

Stakeholders were largely very positive in their assessment of the programme itself. Some did however have reservations about its effectiveness with service users who have high support needs. It was universally agreed that the programme tends to 'work best', that is, achieves the greatest employment outcomes, where service users have been closest to being 'employment ready' at the point of recruitment. All stakeholders commended the expertise and approach of the job coaches, and a number noted that the programme had inspired changes to their own practices as regards homeless CEE migrants with no recourse to public funds.

A number of challenges and barriers were encountered during programme delivery. The most significant have arguably been meeting the high level of demand for the service and the distance many service users have been from being 'work ready' at the point of recruitment. These inspired the adoption a more structured approach to service delivery, and required greater than anticipated investment of time in meeting needs not directly related to preparing for or acquiring employment. These were the main reasons underpinning the programme's failure to reach its target total caseload (of 496 service users).

Other challenges have related to language and/or substance misuse issues given the impact of these on service users' employability, and in the case of drinkers, on engagement with programme activities. Support needs, particularly those relating to alcohol, were generally greater amongst A8 clients than those from A2 nations. The insecure housing circumstances of the vast majority of service users have presented several further challenges, the nature and severity of which have altered (but not been entirely alleviated) for A8 migrants since the 1 May 2011 legislative changes.

Levels of misinformation and misunderstanding regarding the variable rights and entitlements of A8 and A2 nationals remain high within and beyond the homelessness sector. A lack of awareness regarding how National Insurance Numbers are acquired and inconsistencies in the application of the Habitual Residence Test also remain problematic for CEE nationals and agencies supporting them.

The evaluation has confirmed that many of the needs of homeless and insecurely housed CEE migrants, particularly as regards language and legalities surrounding their rights to work and/or welfare benefit entitlements, are unique to this client group, thus highlighting the value of dedicated services for CEE nationals.

The rights and entitlements of European Economic Area (EEA) migrants within the UK are continually evolving. The eligibility of A8 migrants to work and access various forms of welfare, for example, has altered dramatically since 1 May 2011, and will do so for A2s when transitional restrictions are lifted in 2014. Lessons learned during implementation of the programme will nevertheless remain invaluable in informing future service delivery, especially as other nations are set to join the EU (e.g. Croatia in 2013).

Recommendations, based on the findings of the evaluation, include:

- Expansion of the frontline staff team via recruitment of additional staff would increase the programme's capacity to meet levels of demand and enable job coaches to work more intensively with individuals if/when necessary.
- Whilst the programme's employment focus should be retained, there may be value in having a dedicated worker within the team to deal with non-employment issues, such as facilitating access to housing, health care, and/or benefits (where relevant).
- If possible, the job club should be held more frequently. The range of accredited courses might also be valuably expanded. Evidence suggests that painting and decorating would be a welcome addition to Crisis' training portfolio.
- There is a clear call for the development of more and stronger links with potential employers. This need not relate to the programme for CEE migrants specifically, but might represent a wider Crisis initiative to which other (indigenous) clients might also benefit.
- Given high levels of misinformation within (and beyond) the homeless sector, Crisis might valuably lead or contribute to an informational campaign regarding CEE migrants' rights to work and access welfare in the UK, targeted at other service providers and stakeholders.
- There is a particular need to redress widespread misunderstandings regarding the rights and entitlements of A2 nationals and what CEE nationals need to do to obtain National Insurance Numbers; so too inconsistency in the application of the Habitual Residence Test
- The impact of the 1 May 2011 change on A8 migrants' eligibility for benefits should be gauged, with the aim of balancing incentives to work with the 'stability' offered by access to mainstream hostel accommodation.
- The implications of the recent criminalisation of squatting in residential properties should also be closely monitored, given the proportion of service users living in this form of accommodation when first making contact with the programme.
- More generally, the evaluation has emphasised the ongoing imperative for authorities to monitor and combat the exploitation of vulnerable CEE migrants by traffickers and unscrupulous employers.





# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Homelessness and destitution amongst migrants have been elevated in the policy agendas of many European countries in recent years (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012; Pleace, 2010). In the UK, as elsewhere, there has been particular concern about the welfare of migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), most notably Accession 8 ('A8') and Accession 2 ('A2') nationals since their countries of origin joined the European Union<sup>1</sup> (Garapich, 2008). The overwhelming majority of CEE migrants successfully obtain employment and accommodation in the UK, but welfare entitlement restrictions mean that options have been very limited for the minority who find themselves without paid employment (Homeless Link, 2010).

The need to support such individuals is pressing given substantial increases in the proportion of CEE migrants within the UK's street homeless population in recent years: they comprised 9% of people witnessed sleeping rough in London in 2006/07, but 28% by 2011/12 (Broadway, 2011, 2012). Existing research suggests that CEE migrants are at risk of street homelessness and destitution from a lower 'threshold' of personal problems than are 'indigenous' homeless people, given migrants' restricted access to housing and welfare benefits (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012). It has also been suggested that it is rarely the younger and well-educated CEE migrants who experience street homelessness in the UK, but rather typically low-skilled men in their late 30s or 40s with limited English (Garapich, 2008; Homeless Link, 2006). Clearly, effective interventions supporting such individuals will

be essential if the Government's commitment to end rough sleeping in England is to be achieved (DCLG, 2011); so too the Mayor of London's pledge to end rough sleeping in the capital city by the end of 2012 (Mayor of London, 2009).

It was against this backdrop, particularly the noticeable increase in the proportion of CEE migrants amongst Crisis' own clientele and the failure of existing services to advise them sufficiently regarding their rights and entitlements in the UK, that the Crisis Pre-Employment Programme for A8 and A2 nationals in London was borne, supported by funding from the Oak Foundation. The programme aimed to support vulnerable CEE migrants by improving the skills and employability of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the capital. Programme clients were allocated a dedicated 'job coach', training opportunities, and one-to-one support across a wide range of areas (the full details of which are provided in Chapter 2). The programme ran from October 2009 until September 2012, during which time it supported a total of 398 service users.

It must be noted that the legislative context has changed significantly since the programme's inception, most notably since the ending of transitional arrangements affecting A8 nationals on 1 May 2011. From that date, A8 nationals have been able to access the UK labour market on the same terms as other EU nationals and access income-related benefits where they meet the requirements of the Habitual Residency Test and the conditions of the particular benefit (Homeless Link, 2011a)<sup>2</sup>. The former 'Worker Registration Scheme' affecting CEE nationals

<sup>1</sup> A8 countries include Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Slovenia, Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The A2 nations are Bulgaria and Romania.

<sup>2</sup> Regulations regarding CEE nationals' rights to work, as well as welfare benefit and service entitlements, are highly complex. A helpful overview is provided in Homeless Link (2011a). See also the following websites: [www.housing-rights.info/index.php](http://www.housing-rights.info/index.php) and [www.homeless.org.uk/cee-entitlements](http://www.homeless.org.uk/cee-entitlements).

ceased to exist at this time also. Restrictions affecting A2 nationals will be lifted in 2014 when transitional arrangements regarding Romania and Bulgaria come to an end. The implications of such changes for programme operation and the opportunities presented to CEE nationals are described in later chapters.

## 1.2 The evaluation

The Crisis Pre-Employment Programme for A8 and A2 nationals in London has been independently evaluated by Heriot-Watt University. The evaluation assessed the extent to which the programme has met its objectives, and examined how effective the project has been in supporting homeless A8 and A2 nationals in London to secure and sustain employment. In accordance with the original programme brief, the evaluation has focused on the following areas:

- What are the characteristics and needs of the client group?
- To what extent have clients accessed and sustained employment?
- To what extent have clients gained knowledge and skills?
- To what extent have clients gained confidence, self-esteem and motivation?
- What challenges have been faced in programme implementation?
- What has worked well and what might be improved?

A number of methods were used in the evaluation, including:

1. *Literature review*: A review of literature was conducted to place the evaluation findings within the broader context of issues relating to CEE migrant homelessness within and beyond the UK.
2. *Monitoring data analysis*: Crisis' internal Monitoring Information System (MIS) data was analysed to examine service users' characteristics, type and duration of support use, and programme outcomes<sup>3</sup>. Measurement of the achievement of overall programme targets (described in Chapter 2) involved analysis of data relating to the full duration of the programme (i.e. 1 October 2009 until 30 September 2012); all other analyses drew upon data collected up until the end of July 2012<sup>4</sup>. Clients had consented to this information being used for research purposes.
3. *Interviews with programme staff*: Semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with seven members of staff who were directly involved in the frontline delivery or management of the pre-employment programme for A8 and A2 nationals in London, as well as allied interventions (e.g. other employment-related services) offered by Crisis.
4. *Interviews with stakeholders*: Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with six stakeholders representing other agencies providing services for homeless migrants in London. Each had had direct contact with the programme and its clientele. All but one of these interviews was conducted face-to-face; the exception was conducted via the telephone.

<sup>3</sup> The MIS contains comprehensive data on service user characteristics, but the information on employment acquisition and maintenance is rather more limited, depending on the (variable) degree of contact service users maintained with job coaches in the long term, particularly after finding paid work.

<sup>4</sup> The bulk of MIS data analysis had to be conducted before the end of the programme period so that the evaluation could be completed within the timeframe required by the funders. A subset of data – which was only marginally smaller than the full one (containing records for 387 rather than 398 individuals) – was thus utilised for all analyses other than the measurement of overall achievement of target outcomes.

5. *Interviews with service users:* Structured telephone interviews were conducted with a total of 38 current or former service users, that is, approximately ten per cent of all individuals for whom records were available when fieldwork began (see above)<sup>5</sup>. Less than half of these were conducted in English, the majority in Polish. Service user interviewees were given £10 vouchers as a gesture of thanks for their participation.

All interviews were audio recorded (with participants' permission), transcribed, and analysed using a thematic matrix. Quantitative data were analysed with the aid of SPSS software.

### 1.3 The report

This report comprises five chapters. The next, Chapter 2, provides an overview of the programme characteristics and a profile of service users' characteristics and needs. Chapter 3 discusses the programme outcomes, experiences of service users, and stakeholder perspectives regarding its effectiveness. Chapter 4 focuses on the challenges encountered and 'lessons learned' during programme implementation. The report concludes, in Chapter 5, with an assessment of the extent to which the programme aims have been met, and an outline of recommendations based on evaluation findings.

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5 Service users' contact details were obtained from Crisis' MIS (with their consent). Up-to-date contact details were not recorded for every individual who had engaged with the programme since its inception (the phone numbers of some clients recruited early in the programme are no longer valid, for example). The sample was therefore limited to those individuals for whom contact details were still valid when the service user interviews were conducted (March-August 2012). Involvement (of non-Polish individuals) was also restricted to some degree by service users' proficiency in the English language. This is likely to account, in large part, for the over-representation of Polish individuals amongst those interviewed (see Chapter 2): of the 38 service user interviewees, 27 were Polish, 9 Romanian, 1 Latvian, and 1 Czech. The balance of men and women interviewed was broadly in line with the overall profile of the service user population: 30 were male and 8 female.

## 2. Programme and Service User Profile

This chapter provides an overview of the operational characteristics of Crisis' Pre-Employment Programme for A8 and A2 nationals in London. This is followed by a description of the characteristics of the programme's service users. The chapter draws upon interviews with staff and stakeholders, and MIS data.

### 2.1 Programme design, targets and operation

The programme adopts a 'work first' approach for CEE migrants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, that is, is based on the premise that paid employment offers an important route out of homelessness and potential destitution for this group. When the programme was first designed, paid employment was regarded as the 'only' feasible means of supporting homeless A10 migrants intending to remain in the UK<sup>6</sup>, given the ineligibility of most for welfare benefits at the time.

A number of outcome targets were established for the programme<sup>7</sup>. It aimed to support a total of 496 service users over the course of the three years of operation. Other targets included 37% of service users gaining employment, 55% of whom would sustain employment for at least six months. Targets regarding starting wage levels included: 50% earning the minimum wage; 20% between minimum wage and £10 per hour; 20% between £10 and £15 per hour; and 10% more than £15 per hour.

The programme is based in the Crisis Skylight centre – an education, training and employment facility for homeless and vulnerably housed people – in London<sup>8</sup>. Referrals are received via a range of other agencies working with homeless people and/or CEE migrants (including Job Centre Plus) or self-referral.

Two full-time job coaches are employed by the programme, both of whom are themselves CEE migrants and fluent in multiple languages. When the programme first began their job title was 'work and learning advisor', but this was subsequently changed to 'job coach' after staff were trained in 'life coaching positive psychology' methods.

The programme adopts a client-centred approach and requires service users to play an active role in identifying what it is they need to do in order to achieve their goals. After an initial assessment exploring service users' reasons for coming to London, where they would like to be in three months' and six months' time, and whether they have considered returning home, a personalised support plan is developed. Service users then typically meet with their job coach once or twice per week to review progress, with up to four appointments being booked in advance. The frequency of meetings does nevertheless vary, depending upon the needs of each individual.

During one-to-one meetings job coaches support service users to put together a curriculum vitae (including translating non-UK

6 A number of other agencies in London (and elsewhere) offer 'reconnections' services which aim to reconnect rough sleepers to an area where they can access accommodation and/or social, family and support networks (Homeless Link, 2011b). In the period April to September 2011, 31% of all rough sleepers reconnected from London under the No Second Night Out initiative were supported to return to a home country outside the UK (Hough et al., 2011).

7 Outcome targets were established at the outset of the programme and subsequently revised upwards in Years 2 and 3, as per conditions stipulated by the Oak Foundation. The original targets were: supporting a caseload of 480 individuals, of whom 35% would gain employment, of whom 50% would sustain work for at least six months. Wage targets were not altered.

8 Crisis currently operates Skylight centres in Birmingham, Edinburgh, London, Merseyside, Newcastle and Oxford and is planning to develop others elsewhere. For further details see: [www.crisis.org.uk/pages/what-we-do-crisis-skylight-centres-61897.html](http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/what-we-do-crisis-skylight-centres-61897.html)

qualifications), identify and enrol on relevant training courses, search for jobs, and complete job applications. They also support them with non-employment needs insofar as possible, by for example assisting them to access emergency accommodation, set up a bank account, or fill out benefit application forms. Any service user who expresses a desire to return to their country of origin is referred to an agency that will assist their reconnection.

Money for travel is provided where this is necessary for service users to conduct activities relevant to their support plan. The programme can also assist service users to buy tools, clothing or other goods necessary for work (e.g. safety equipment required for work on construction sites), with the aid of Vicars Relief Fund grants.

The programme runs in conjunction with other employment-related programmes offered by Crisis. The A8 and A2 programme users are encouraged to utilise these, especially the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, which are available from pre-entry to advanced levels. A range of other training opportunities may be accessed on-site at Crisis Skylight, including the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS), First Aid at Work, Food Hygiene, and HMRC self-employment courses, amongst others. Most courses are accredited and service users receive formal qualifications upon completion. Where relevant, service users are supported to access training opportunities provided elsewhere.

In addition, a 'job club' is held weekly, wherein groups of service users spend up to three hours looking for work and preparing job applications, with the support of the job coaches and use of information technology facilities at Crisis Skylight. Service users are also given opportunities to participate in 'mock interviews'.

In accordance with Crisis' broader admission policy, service users may not participate in

one-to-one support sessions or attend any other activity at Crisis Skylight if visibly under the influence of alcohol or illicit substances. Such exclusions are only temporary; service users are given repeat opportunities to attend when sober. Job coaches actively encourage individuals with substance misuse problems to engage with relevant treatment services, and those who are known to have a problem are required to demonstrate that they are dealing with the issue. Individuals with severe substance misuse issues are excluded from the programme.

The programme continues to support service users insofar as possible or necessary after they have acquired a job. The nature of this support varies substantially, depending on individual needs, but can include, for example, assisting service users to apply for in-work benefits (e.g. working tax credit), assessing potential employment contracts, filling in timesheets, and improving their accommodation circumstances.

The job coaches meet with representatives of other agencies working with CEE rough sleepers in London at regular intervals. Information about service users is shared (with their knowledge) during and between these meetings so as to avoid service duplication.

## 2.2 Service user profile

This section provides a profile of the programme's service users, including their demographic characteristics, personal histories, health, and housing and economic status at the point of recruitment. It draws almost exclusively upon data from the MIS, specifically data relating to the 387 individuals who were recruited to the programme prior to the end of July 2012 (see Chapter 1).

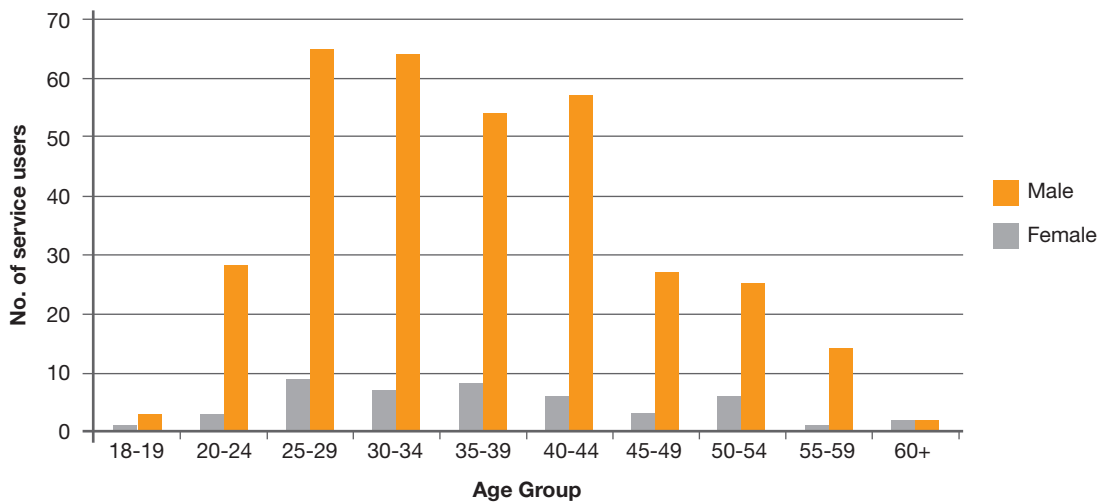
### 2.2.1 Demographic characteristics

The vast majority (88%) of individuals using the programme were men; and 12% women. The age distribution of service users at point

of first contact is presented in Figure 1. This reveals that the programme supported people of widely varying ages, but that service users were generally concentrated in the 25-44 age bracket: 69% were 25-44 years of age, 21% 45 years or older, and 9% under the age of 25. The average (median) age of service users at point of first contact was 36 years (35 for men, 36 for women). There was little difference in the overall age profile of men and women recruited to the programme, albeit that women were slightly over-represented in the 50 and older bracket (Figure 1).

The majority (82%) of service users were from A8 countries; the remaining 18% were A2 nationals. The nationality profile of service users is presented in Table 1, which also provides comparative data regarding the proportion of each nationality represented in the UK's A10 population more generally. This shows that whilst Polish nationals comprised the largest proportion of service users (39%), they were comparatively under-represented given that 59% of the UK's total recorded A10 population is Polish. The next most common nationalities supported by the programme were Lithuanians (16%), Romanians (16%), Czechs (9%), Latvians (9%), with smaller proportions from other nations. Further analysis indicated that there was no correlation between service users' nationality and either average age at programme recruitment or gender.

Figure 1: Age of service users at point of recruitment, by gender



Source: MIS. Base: 385.



**Table 1: Nationality of service users**

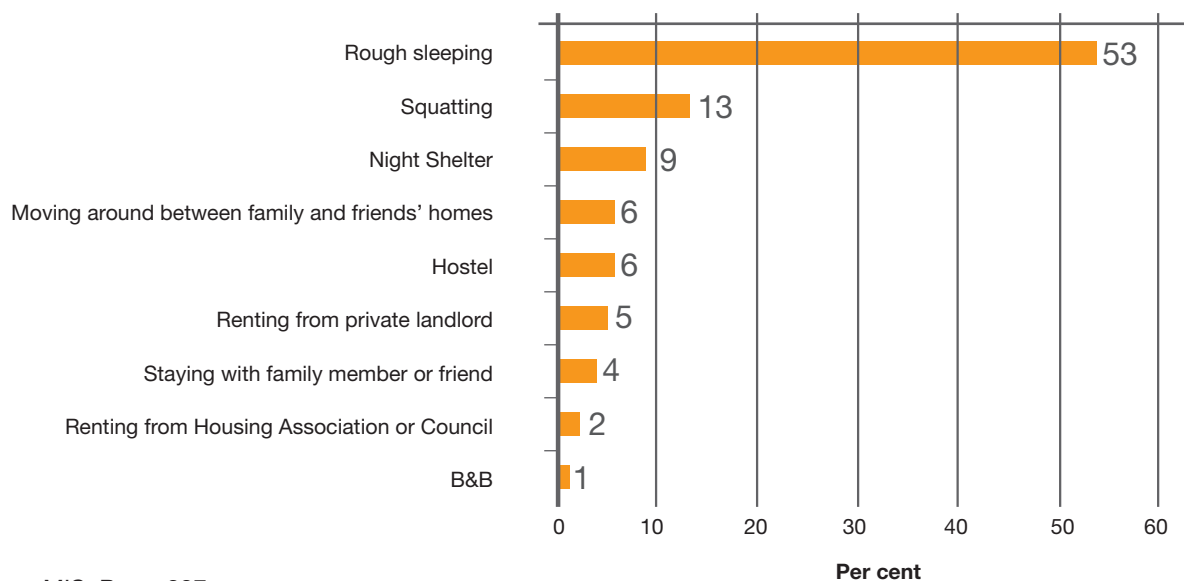
	No.	Percent*	Nationality as % of total A10 population in the UK in 2011**
Bulgarian	10	3	4
Czech	34	9	3
Estonian	3	1	<1.0
Hungarian	5	1	4
Latvian	34	9	6
Lithuanian	62	16	11
Polish	151	39	59
Romanian	61	16	8
Slovakian	19	5	5
Slovenian	0	0	<1.0
Not specified	6	1	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Population by Country of Birth and Nationality January 2011 to December 2011*

**2.2.2 Housing and employment status**

With regard to accommodation status, more than half (53%) of service users were sleeping rough when first recruited to the programme (Figure 2). A total of two in five (39%) were living in temporary or insecure accommodation, comprising: squats (13%), night shelters (9%), hostels (6%), moving around between family and friends’ homes (6%), staying with a family member or friend (4%), or bed and breakfast hotels (1%). Only a small minority (7%) were living in rented accommodation (5% privately rented, 2% social housing). More than half of the service users living in social or private rented housing at the point of recruitment considered themselves to be at risk of homelessness.

**Figure 2: Accommodation status of service users at point of recruitment**



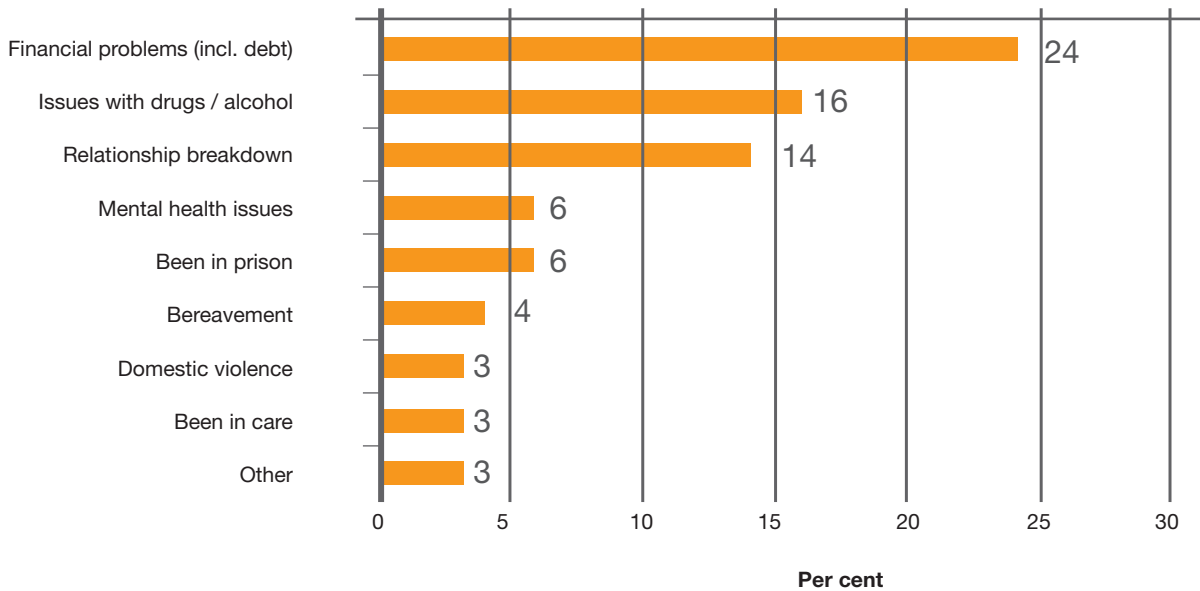
Source: MIS. Base: 337.

The vast majority (90%) of service users were unemployed and were not involved in training or education at the point of recruitment. A minority, 4%, were unemployed but in training or education at the time; a further 6% were employed but wanting to improve their employment prospects via participation in the programme. Staff interviewees confirmed that the vast majority service users had worked in the past, usually before migrating to the UK. They also noted that many send substantial proportions of any income received back home, sometimes electing to live in temporary or insecure accommodation (e.g. night shelters) so as to maximise the amounts they might send to family. No data was available regarding the qualifications of service users at the point of recruitment.

**2.2.3 Personal history, health and vulnerability**

The MIS data on service users’ current or previous vulnerabilities, collected at the point of recruitment to the programme (shown in Figure 3), indicated that the most common issues self-reported included experiences of financial problems including debt (24%), substance misuse problems (16%), and relationship breakdown (14%). Only a small minority reported other issues such as having mental health problems (6%), having ever spent time in prison (6%), or experience of domestic violence (3%).

**Figure 3: Current or past vulnerabilities of service users**



Source: MIS. Base: 337. More than one response possible.



Although caution must be exercised given the relatively smaller number of A2 migrants participating in the programme (only 18% of all service users were A2 nationals – see Table 1), it can be noted that A2 migrants were less likely to report some of the vulnerabilities listed in Figure 3 than were A8 migrants<sup>9</sup>. Most notably, they were less likely to have drug or alcohol issues (reported by 3% of A2 migrants as compared with 20% of A8 migrants) and financial problems (reported by 15% and 27% respectively). Although other differences were less extreme, smaller proportions of A2 migrants also reported experience of mental health issues (4% of A2s as compared with 7% of A8s) and having been in prison (3% as compared with 7% respectively).

Reflecting the findings of previous research regarding homeless CEE migrants in the UK (Fitzpatrick et al., 2012), only a minority (self-)reported multiple vulnerabilities. In this regard, 17% of all programme users (self-)reported one (only) of the forms of disadvantage depicted in Figure 3, 12% two forms, 7% three forms, 3% four forms, and 2% five or more. Only one in ten (11% of) service users reported having one or more health problems at the point of recruitment. Reflecting the point made about differences between nationalities above, 66% of A2s reported none of the vulnerabilities in Figure 3, whereas this was true of only 56% of A8s.

That said, a number of staff and stakeholder interviewees emphasised that a minority of CEE migrants are highly vulnerable. Some were reported to have been trafficked into the UK and/or forced to work in very poor conditions for little or no pay, in what some stakeholders likened to a form of modern-day 'slavery'.

*It's been like 21<sup>st</sup> century slavery, with labour camps. Their documents were taken and they were kept there almost by force ... Many of these people are quite naive. They are men in their 30s even 40s and they work like slaves. I ask them when I meet them later 'Why didn't you leave?', and they say 'Oh we didn't know where to go and they had taken our passports'. They didn't know where to turn.*  
(Stakeholder)

Several interviewees also noted that substance misuse, particularly alcohol abuse, was a particular problem for a number of service users, albeit that high consumption levels were often not viewed as problematic by service users themselves (see Chapter 3).

## 2.3 Conclusion

In providing an overview of programme operation, this chapter has noted that it offers tailored one-to-one support, delivered by job coaches, to enhance service users' employability and assist them to acquire and maintain employment. It also facilitates access to a range of on-site training courses, and/or supports users to access other training opportunities as appropriate. Additional forms of support include a job club, mock interviews, and financial assistance for travel, clothing or equipment necessary to enhance users' employability. Job coaches also regularly support users in areas that are not directly related to employment, such as access to housing or health services and/or welfare benefit applications.

The vast majority of service users have been men, and most commonly in the 25-44 age bracket. The majority (82%) of service users were from A8 countries; the remaining 18% were A2 nationals. More specifically,

<sup>9</sup> Within the A2 group, there were no significant differences in the type and prevalence of vulnerabilities reported by Romanian and Bulgarian programme users.

Polish nationals have comprised the largest proportion of programme users, followed by Lithuanians, Romanians, Czechs and Latvians. More than half of all service users were sleeping rough, and almost all others living in temporary or insecure housing, at the point of recruitment. The vast majority were economically inactive, in that they were unemployed and not involved in training or education at that point. Self-reports of multiple vulnerabilities were relatively uncommon, but staff reported that a minority of CEE migrants are highly vulnerable, often because of alcohol misuse issues.

### 3. Programme Outcomes and Experiences

This chapter documents the outcomes of the programme, the experiences and views of service users, and stakeholder assessments regarding its effectiveness. It consists of three sections: the first focuses on the outcomes recorded in MIS data; the second reviews the perspectives of service users, and the third those of stakeholders.

#### 3.1 Programme outcomes

This section draws upon MIS data regarding the programme’s ‘hard outcomes’, most notably the achievement of targets relating to: total caseload, employment acquisition, employment retention, and wage levels (see Chapter 2).

##### 3.1.1 Total caseload

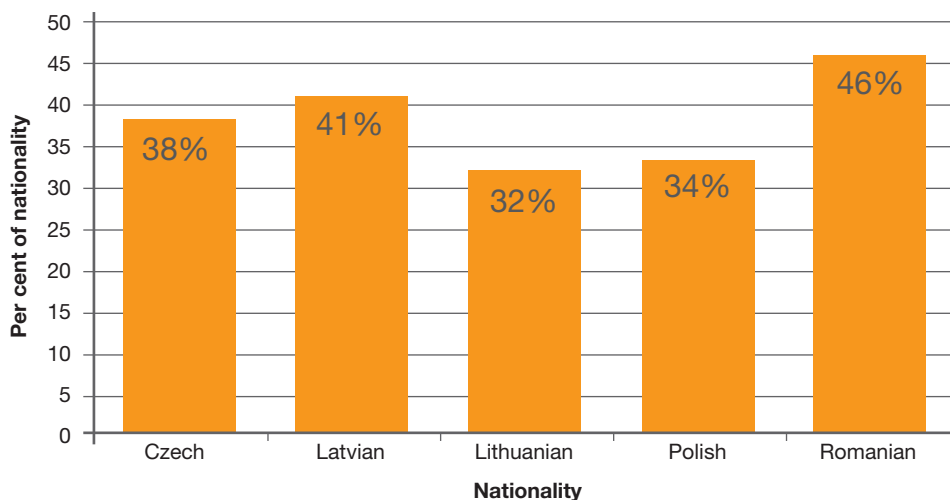
MIS data indicate that a total of 398 individuals were recruited to the programme over its three-year duration (October 2009 - September 2012), which was

substantially fewer than the target caseload of 496. This discrepancy was the result of a number of factors, including, perhaps most influentially, the fact that many service users presented with needs requiring more intensive, and prolonged, support than had been anticipated. The adoption of a more structured mode of service delivery further restricted the numbers that were worked with. Further detail regarding these and other factors limiting the number of individuals recruited to the programme, together with lessons learned when responding to such challenges, are provided in Chapter 4.

##### 3.1.2 Employment acquisition

MIS data indicates that paid employment<sup>10</sup> was secured by two in five (40%) of all service users recruited to the project. The proportion of service users finding employment thus exceeds the programme’s target of 37% (see Chapter 2).

Figure 4: Acquisition of paid employment, by nationality



Source: MIS. Base: Czech 34; Latvian 34; Lithuanian 62; Polish 151; Romanian 61. Nationalities with fewer than 20 participants were excluded from this analysis.

10 One or more jobs.

There was no variation in the degree of success of male and female service users in acquiring jobs, nor between individuals in different age brackets. There was also little variation between different nationalities, albeit that Romanian service users appeared marginally more successful in acquiring paid employment (Figure 4). This outcome may, potentially, be a consequence of their lower overall levels of vulnerability, as reported in Section 2.2.3.

The vast majority (88%) of individuals obtained full-time jobs (and only 12% part-time). Inconsistencies in MIS data recording mean that it is not possible to provide a comprehensive breakdown of the types of jobs acquired by service users, but the information available indicates that these most commonly involved work in the construction, agricultural, catering, and security sectors, with a number also working as carers, cleaners and warehouse workers. Staff report that many of these jobs, especially those within the construction and agricultural sectors, involved short-term contracts.

Table 2 reveals that the length of time it took for service users to acquire their (first) job after being recruited to the project varied greatly. Approximately one in three (29%) of those who successfully obtained paid employment did so within one month, one quarter (23%) took between five and ten weeks, with a similar proportion (27%) taking 11-15 weeks. Only a very small minority (4%) spent more than one year on the programme before acquiring work. The average (median) length of time taken to find employment was 10 weeks.

**Table 2: Length of time taken to acquire paid employment**

	No.	Per cent
1-4 weeks	38	29
5-10 weeks	30	23
11-25 weeks	36	27
26-52 weeks	22	17
More than 1 year	5	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>131*</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: MIS. \*inconsistencies in data mean that some service users were excluded from this analysis.

### 3.1.3 Employment retention

A number of factors combined to make measurement of job retention very difficult; so too interpretation of retention data. Job coaches had no way of knowing (and thereby recording) whether jobs were maintained, and if so for how long, if service users were no longer in contact with them and/or their contact details had changed after gaining employment. Further, as noted above, many service users had successive short-term contracts (especially in the construction and agricultural industries), thus rendering job retention measurements less meaningful. These factors should be borne in mind when interpreting job sustainment data reported below.

MIS data indicate that approximately half (49%) of the service users who obtained work retained it for six months or longer. The actual proportion may however vary quite substantially from this given the volume of missing data and associated margin of error in measurement (see above). Undue prominence should thus not be given to the programme's failure to meet the 55% six month work retention target.

Analysis of service users' employment pathways nevertheless indicates that there was at least some degree of job loss and/or turnover. For, of those service users who

obtained employment, 31% subsequently lost their job and MIS contained no record of them having obtained another; in contrast, 12% obtained a new job after their first one ended or was lost<sup>11</sup>.

Data regarding reasons for leaving jobs was recorded by the MIS for a small number of cases. Of the 41 such cases, 18 were dismissed, 9 left because they did not like the job, 7 jobs ended because they were short-term contracts, 3 individuals were made redundant, and 1 found another job (the remaining 3 left for ‘other’ reasons).

### 3.1.4 Wage levels

Table 3 presents an overview of the starting wages of service users who obtained employment, comparing them to the programme’s wage-related targets (see Chapter 1). It shows that the balance of wages was, overall, weighted more toward the lower end of the wage spectrum than targets projected, with 22% earning the minimum wage<sup>12</sup>, and a further 66% between the minimum wage and £10 per hour. Only a small minority (5%) earned more than £10 per hour. A few earned less than minimum wage in the first two years of the programme, with low wages being offset by the provision of accommodation, for example. The average (median) wage over the duration of the programme was £6.50 per hour.

**Table 3: Starting hourly wages**

	Actual per cent	Target per cent
Less than minimum wage*	4	(n/a)
Minimum wage*	22	(50)
Minimum wage* - £9.99	66	(20)
£10 - £14.99	4	(20)
£15 +	1	(10)
Not specified	3	(n/a)
Total	100	(100)

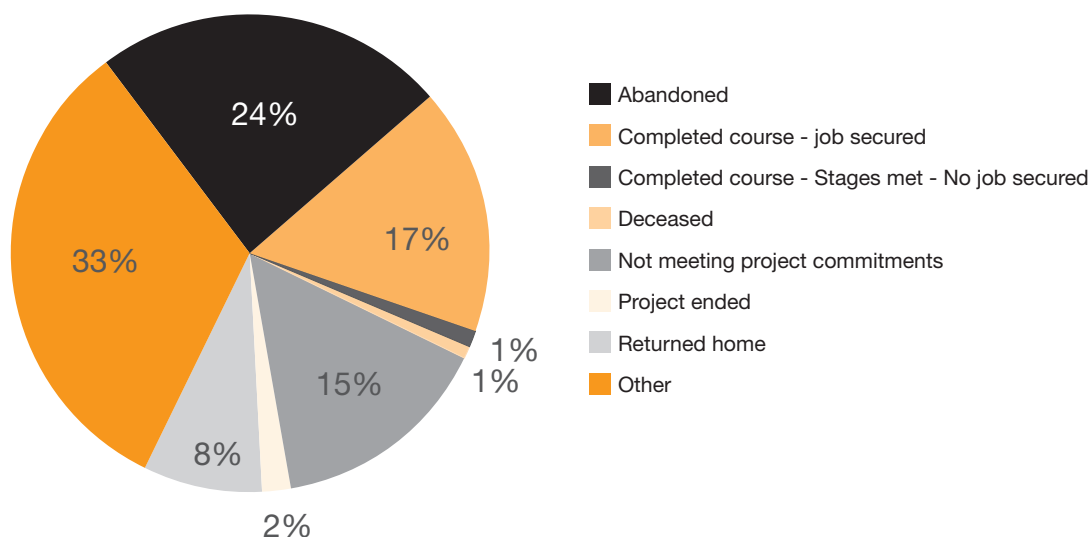
Source: MIS. Base: 145. \* as at the point of job recruitment.

Staff interviewees confirmed that most of the jobs obtained by service users were poorly paid. They noted that CEE nationals with high level qualifications and/or skilled work experience from their home country do not necessarily acquire jobs of equal status in the UK, often because of language barriers (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, the short-term labouring work obtained by many is generally poorly paid.

<sup>11</sup> This analysis was not able to take into account the length of time any individual job was maintained for.

<sup>12</sup> Minimum wage levels increased over the time period of the programme (rising from £5.73 April 2009-April 2010 to £5.93 April 2010-April 2011, and then £6.08 April 2011- April 2012). Figures described in this section represent hourly wages in relation to the minimum wage at the time each service user gained employment.

Figure 5: Reasons for leaving the programme (closed cases)



Source: MIS. Base: 197.

### 3.1.5 Case closures

The MIS provides data regarding 210 ‘case closures’, wherein service users’ participation in the programme ended. Reasons for leaving could be either ‘positive’ (e.g. a job had been secured and the service user felt they no longer needed the programme’s support), or ‘negative’ (e.g. participants were asked to leave the programme). As Figure 5 indicates, 17% of relevant cases were closed because a job had been obtained. Approximately one quarter (24%) of closed cases were recorded as abandonments, and a further 15% were closed because service users had failed to meet project commitments (e.g. attend appointments with their job coach). A total of 8% were closed because service users had returned to their country of origin. The largest proportion of cases were however closed for ‘other’ reasons, these largely being related to substance misuse problems.

As Table 4 indicates, nearly half of closed cases had used the programme’s services for more than one year, and a further one in three (29%) for between 27 and 52 weeks. Only a small minority (5%) used the programme’s services for less than one month. The average (median) length of time these individuals spent on the programme was 52 weeks.

There was no relationship between the length of time service users were involved with the project and reasons for case closure (i.e. whether they acquired a job, abandoned the programme, or failed to meet programme requirements). There was also no significant difference in the average length of time that male and female were engaged with the project before their cases were closed; nor was there a correlation between the length of time on the project and nationality, with the exception that Romanian participants tended to spend less time on the programme (median 33 weeks, as compared with the overall median of 52 weeks).

Table 4: Time spent on the programme (closed cases)

	No.	Per cent
Less than 4 weeks	10	5
5-13 weeks	18	9
14-26 weeks	29	14
27-52 weeks	60	29
More than 52 weeks	93	44
Total	210	100

Source: MIS

### 3.2 Service user experiences

This section draws upon the interviews with service users (see Chapter 1) to outline their experiences of the project and thoughts regarding its strengths and weaknesses.

Case profiles illustrating the experiences of a few individuals are provided in the boxes throughout this chapter.

Most of the service issuer interviewees had heard about the programme via word of mouth from other CEE nationals; others had been referred by other homelessness agencies. Levels of service user satisfaction with the programme were very high overall. Virtually all service users reported that they would recommend the programme to other CEE nationals.

*I would recommend it, 100 per cent.*

(Service user, male, in 50s)

*I've already told lots of central and eastern Europeans about it.*

(Service user, female, in 50s)

With only one exception, service users were unanimous in their high praise and appreciation of the support provided by their job coach. The job coaches were described as highly committed, efficient, and knowledgeable.

*She was always professional and to the point.*

(Service user, female, in 50s)

*[Name of job coach] knows exactly where to refer you to.*

(Service user, male in 40s)

Their non-judgemental approach, understanding and 'moral support' was highly valued by service users. Related to this, a few reported being grateful that the job coaches did not 'give up on them' should they miss appointments.

*They behaved like people and not like clerks. They were non-judgemental and they treated me like a person rather than like a case or record.*

(Service user, male, in 30s)

*They do not forget about people... The atmosphere is nice, they are interested in you.*

(Service user, male, in 40s)

Most agreed that their frequency of meetings with their job coaches, typically once or twice per week, was appropriate. Many greatly appreciated the fact that they could contact their job coach in between appointments, including after they had acquired employment. The majority reported that they had not had difficulty arranging appointments to see their job coach, but a few had done so, noting that their job coach 'was too busy' or 'overbooked'. Most were very satisfied with the intensity of support offered, albeit that a very small minority reported that they would have appreciated a greater level of practical assistance with job searches and applications.

Service users' degree of engagement with other aspects of the programme varied, depending on individuals' needs and preferences, as did their assessment of which elements of the programme they found most helpful. Some identified the language courses as the most helpful aspect of the programme; others valued the opportunity to gain formal qualifications most of all; for yet others access to computers and telephones to use for job searches and applications was regarded as the most beneficial aspect. The job club was also very positively received, with a few service users calling for it to be held more than once per week. The provision of financial support with travel to job interviews and/or purchase of equipment necessary for work was also greatly valued.

Several service users had also received advice and assistance to access health care and/or welfare benefits. Very few expected



that the programme would assist with accommodation, but many noted that their housing situation had improved as a result of assistance from their job coach, via referrals to faith-based shelters offering three month stays, mainstream hostels and/or private rented sector schemes, for example.

*I did not spend a day on the streets thanks to [name of job coach].*  
(Service user, male, in 20s)

A few however noted that a greater level of assistance with accessing accommodation would have expedited their route into employment.

*This was a big problem ... Crisis is good for jobs but not for accommodation.*  
(Service user, male, in 40s)

Many of those who had acquired paid employment attributed this, at least in part, to the qualifications gained on the programme and/or assistance received with putting together a CV, completing application forms and so on. A minority of interviewees however felt that the courses attended had not enhanced their employability; a few felt that more of the courses should have been formally accredited. Some suggested that the programme would benefit from accredited courses offering more practical skills: painting and decorating was identified as a potentially valuable addition to the training portfolio by a number of interviewees. The language courses were generally very highly regarded. A small number had worked as a volunteer in the Crisis Skylight Cafe and believed that this had been influential in enhancing their employability.

Experiences of paid employment, for those service users that had successfully acquired it, were mixed. Some interviewees were enjoying

### Case Study

W is Polish, and is in her 30s. She has had three jobs since starting the programme and is currently working as a child minder. She has a permanent contract but says she would find her financial situation very difficult if it were not for support from her partner because she regularly sends money home to relatives. W explains that she had felt 'depressed and lost' about her work situation when she first sought support from the programme. She found the meetings with her job coach very helpful, and says that she was 'mobilised' by her coach's moral support, good will and willingness to 'go the extra mile'. She found the courses available at Crisis helpful not just for gaining new qualifications, but also escaping social isolation. Her job coach helped her put together a CV and prepare for job interviews. W used to live in a squat but is now living in private rented accommodation. She never sought information about welfare benefits as she was always determined to find employment. She intends to set up her own business in the future.

their work and had developed clear career progression plans. A few had successfully set up their own businesses with the aid of a 'Crisis Changing Lives' grant<sup>13</sup>, acquired with the support of their job coaches. A number, however, reported quite negative experiences of the UK labour market: typically of working long hours in 'exhausting' work, for low pay. Most were on low wages and were struggling to cope financially, especially those whom were trying to send as much money as possible home to relatives. A small minority reported having had difficulties communicating with employers and/or experiencing racist abuse in the workplace.

<sup>13</sup> Crisis Changing Lives is a grants programme aimed at helping homeless people achieve their educational and career goals. Grant applications can be made to facilitate access to training, buy tools for work, or set up a business. For further details see [www.crisis.org.uk/pages/crisis-changing-lives.html](http://www.crisis.org.uk/pages/crisis-changing-lives.html).



The most consistently positive, and arguably most pronounced, impact of the programme identified by service users related to the enhancement of confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Many, including those who had not yet found work, argued that an increase in confidence – derived from their positive interactions with job coaches and development of knowledge and skills, had had the greatest impact on their day-to-day lives and sense of wellbeing. It had been key in motivating them to persist with job searches.

*It is very helpful to know that someone is interested in my wellbeing and genuinely wants to help me.*

(Service user, male, in 30s)

One service user noted that the programme offered refuge from the ‘chaos’ and volatility of life on the street. For others it alleviated feelings of loneliness and social isolation (see case profile boxes, this chapter).

The vast majority recalled having been asked whether they would like to return home when they first made contact with the programme. In all but one of these cases (when the individual concerned returned home with assistance from a reconnection agency but later came back to the UK), service users expressed a desire to remain in the UK and exercise their Treaty<sup>14</sup> rights. Reasons for not wanting to return were varied, but most commonly related to perceived prospects for better employment and higher income in the UK, thus enabling them to support family back home financially. Some explained that they had ‘nothing to return to’ in terms of family or broader social support networks in their country of origin.

*I have no-one there and nothing to return to.*

(Service user, female, in 40s)

*The pay is much better here.*

(Service user, male, in 30s)

### Case Study

X is from the Czech Republic and is in his 40s. He started using the programme because he needed a Construction Skills Certification Scheme card to work in the construction industry in the UK. He has had two jobs since becoming involved with the programme, first in the catering industry and then as a builder. He is currently unemployed, however, as he was exposed to racist abuse at the workplace and quit after his employer failed to do anything about it. X is currently receiving Job Seekers Allowance and is doing a training course so that he will be qualified to work in interior decorating, his previous trade. He has made contact with an agency that specialises in that area and is optimistic that he will get a job upon completing the course. He found the programme offered by Crisis very helpful overall, especially the language course, moral support, and assistance with putting together a CV. He explains that he would nevertheless have appreciated more help accessing accommodation as he was homeless for a long time.

<sup>14</sup> The Treaty of Rome and its subsequent amendments provide a right of free movement of citizens of the EU, including rights to remain (for workers and other categories of people) and of residence, provided that EU citizens do not become a burden on the finances of the host Member State (Homeless Link, 2011a). Individuals are considered to be exercising their Treaty rights if they are a worker, a self-employed person, a job seeker, a student or a self-sufficient person.

### 3.3 Stakeholder perspectives

As noted in Chapter 1, a range of stakeholders were also asked to comment on the effectiveness, strengths and/or weaknesses of the programme. They were unanimous in agreeing that it addressed a significant gap in the service network, which had been particularly acute before the legislative changes on 1 May 2011. Crisis was thus viewed as being at the forefront of responses to the needs of CEE migrants who were homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The programme was said to be a 'brave' and 'creative' initiative, which was commended by a number of stakeholders for 'thinking beyond housing'. It is still regarded as being particularly innovative in its responses to the needs of those A2 migrants who have no recourse to public funds.

*The main difference is that Crisis works quite creatively with the A2s. So, they remain the kind of lead for us in working with people with no recourse to public funds. I don't think other organisations are as proactive, or are willing to put as much energy into this group, because it does feel sometimes like bashing your head against a wall when you're trying to sort out national insurance numbers for people.*  
(Stakeholder)

The programme's job coaches were described as being highly dedicated and knowledgeable, and identified as representing a key strength of the programme. The flexibility with which they have worked with individuals, and willingness to support service users in a wide range of areas – including those not directly related to employment – were similarly regarded as key contributors to the programme's success.

Some stakeholders particularly valued the job coaches' willingness to allow service users a 'second chance' after failures to meet programme requirements (e.g. re sobriety). Some commented that if Crisis were to

change anything about the programme, it should be to increase the number of job coaches, to increase its capacity and enable more intensive work with individuals if/when required.

*Crisis have been pretty good with my lot, you know, they've emailed me and said so-and-so's drinking ... and is there a way around it? You know, they've taken them back when they've been sober again and then they've relapsed and said sorry we can't help them furthermore. Then when they've stopped they've taken them back again, you know. They've constantly given them chances...*  
(Stakeholder)

#### Case Study

Y is a Romanian in her early 50s. She has lived in London for some time and used to work but was made redundant several months ago. She was evicted from her private rented flat when she lost her job and could no longer afford the rent. She applied for her blue card, with assistance from her job coach, and is now living in a private rented flat paid for by Housing Benefit. Crisis helped her enrol on, and paid for, two training courses so that she will be qualified to work as a self-employed teacher and interpreter. She is optimistic that her courses will lead to employment. Y explains that she had become very depressed after losing her job and talks of having felt 'stuck in a dead end'. She notes that the programme has helped her regain confidence in her employability and says that the 'psychological rehabilitation' has been the best thing about it. She continues to meet with her job coach weekly and reports that she now has confidence and feels capable of doing things. She has recommended the programme to lots of other CEE nationals.

### Case Study

Z is Polish and in his late 40s. He had arranged work and accommodation before coming to the UK but upon arrival discovered he had been ‘scammed’ and ended up sleeping rough. He spoke very little English back then but his language skills have improved dramatically after doing ESOL courses at Crisis. In his view, street homelessness ‘brings the animal side out of people’, thus the programme provided a valued reprieve from life on the streets. Z has had a number of jobs since being in the UK, mainly in bars and restaurants. Most were temporary. He quit one because the pay was terrible; another because the working conditions were appalling. Z is now living in a shared rented flat and hopes to get independent accommodation soon. He is currently working full-time on a low wage and is struggling to cope financially, in part because he sends money home to support his children. He only contacts his job coach when he has difficulties, so has not been in touch for some time. Z reports that the programme staff ‘do their best’ and that the effectiveness of the programme hangs largely on the ‘genuineness’ of clients’ intention to work.

Stakeholders generally felt unable to comment on the effectiveness of the programme as regards service users’ acquisition and maintenance of employment, but frequently attributed ‘soft’ outcomes, notably an improvement in CEE migrants’ self-esteem and motivation, to programme participation.

*Some of our clients have got no confidence over the years of rough sleeping and they’ve lost that kind of self esteem and ... for some of my clients the courses were really really good, because although they felt they weren’t at a head space for looking for work or doing CVs or stuff, it was too*

*structured, but actually things like the build a bike course was hands on and it’s really worked well with them.*

(Stakeholder)

Virtually all commented that they believed the programme to be most suited to service users with low support needs, that is, those who are (or are near to being) ‘work ready’ (see Chapter 4 for more detailed discussion re this issue). Some expressed reservations about its potential effectiveness for those with higher level needs, given concerns that a focus on employment with such individuals may risk ‘setting them up to fail’.

*If a migrant is low need then Crisis would be the perfect place ... For me they are doing a really great job but the clients need to be motivated.*

(Stakeholder)

*It’s all very well thinking that they are doing a lovely thing in accepting someone that, who if they didn’t accept, the only other route for them would be an administrative removal. When in actual fact, it’s just enabling them to continue living the life that they’re living without taking any responsibility ... The further they slip into destitution, the more difficult it is to get them to work with services, anyway.*

(Stakeholder)

This latter view was however countered by those stakeholders who believed that as long as European Economic Area (EEA) nationals have the right to remain in the UK when exercising their Treaty rights – as a worker, a self-employed person, a jobseeker, a student or a self-sufficient person – then support services are obliged to assist them to do so.

The development of the programme and ongoing efforts of the job coaches were reported to have been influential in the improvement of joint working amongst agencies supporting homeless CEE migrants in London. Further, in achieving the outcomes

it has (see above), the programme has shown that 'something can be done' to support people with no recourse to public funds. This has influenced the practices of other agencies by encouraging them to make (more of) their support services available to CEE migrants:

*I think that people attending Crisis and seeing that, you know, we can do stuff, has impacted on the way that we work. Initially we were unsure of how we were going to work with Eastern Europeans and what we could offer ... And because people have found work through Crisis, this has made people go 'we can help people find work' and we've given people a longer stay in the day centre to find work as a result. (Stakeholder, emphasis in original)*

### 3.4 Conclusion

In documenting programme outcomes, this chapter has revealed that the programme supported a total of 398 individuals, which was substantially fewer than the target of 496. However, 40% of all service users acquired one or more jobs since engaging with the programme, thus the employment acquisition outcome target of 37% was exceeded.

Job retention proved very difficult to measure, but MIS data indicates that 49% of service users who gained employment maintained it for six months or longer. The programme's failure to meet the 55% six month retention target should not be given undue prominence, however, given limitations in retention data resulting from difficulties maintaining contact with service users in the long term.

Most of the work obtained by service users was poorly paid. The majority earned between the minimum wage and £10 per hour; the average (median) hourly wage was £6.50. The balance of starting wages was thus weighted more toward the lower end of the wage spectrum than projected in programme targets.

The vast majority of service users reported that they had gained knowledge and skills, via formal training and/or the one-to-one support of job coaches. The most pronounced programme outcomes were nevertheless arguably the enhancement of confidence, self-esteem and/or motivation, which were identified as key outcomes by virtually all service user interviewees.

Levels of service user satisfaction with the programme were very high overall. The support of job coaches was especially valued given their knowledge, efficiency and non-judgemental approach. Service user assessments of the helpfulness of other aspects of the programme, such as the training and access to IT facilities, varied depending upon the needs of individual service users. Experiences of paid employment were mixed. Many of those who did find work reported struggling financially, given the costs of living and widespread practice of sending remittances to family back home.

Stakeholders were largely very positive in their assessment of the programme, which they regarded as a creative initiative responding to the needs of a previously neglected group. Some did however have reservations about its effectiveness with service users who have high support needs. Stakeholders also noted that the programme had inspired changes to their own practices as regards homeless migrants with no recourse to public funds.

In discussing the effectiveness of the programme, stakeholders and programme staff also highlighted a number of challenges and 'lessons learned' during programme operation. These are reviewed in the next chapter.



## 4. Operational Challenges and Lessons Learned

As is the case with any new initiative aiming to serve vulnerable groups, a number of operational challenges and barriers to service delivery were encountered during programme implementation. These are recounted below in order that they might inform future policy and practice regarding CEE migrants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within and beyond London.

### 4.1 Scale and level of need

The first significant challenge encountered was described by one member of staff as a ‘tsunami’ of demand when the project was established, wherein the numbers of individuals self-referring exceeded expectations. As a consequence, the job coaches (or work and learning advisors as they were at that point) were unable to work as intensively with each client as they would have liked. Changes were therefore made to the mode of delivery, such that the programme became far more ‘structured’ and required a greater degree of commitment from service users as regards attending one-to-one appointments. Communication and information-sharing with other service providers were also improved to streamline delivery and ensure that duplication was avoided insofar as possible. Staff reported that this shift in approach enabled them to work far more effectively, in a more focused manner, with service users. As previously noted in Chapter 3, a number of stakeholders reported that the programme would benefit from an expansion of the staff team, so as to reduce the pressure on job coaches and enable them to work more intensively where necessary.

The most significant challenge faced since then has arguably related to the ‘distance’ many service users have been from being ‘work ready’ at the point of recruitment. Some have required little more than

assistance with translating qualifications into UK equivalents and/or access to the IT and telephone facilities on-site for job searches and applications, but a number have presented with a much higher level of need. In many cases, such needs have related more to accessing basic shelter and/or health care than to employment *per se*. Staff believe that this has constrained the programme’s overall success as regards employment outcomes (although the programme exceeded its target regarding the number of service users accessing paid employment even so – see Chapter 3). One interviewee suggested that there would in fact be value in having a dedicated member on the programme team to focus on non-employment needs, such as accessing accommodation and health services.

*The distance that people have to travel at the point of arrival at our door to be able to be mainstreamed into the employment market is very long and complicated, except for maybe 20%. 20% come though highly capable, highly organised, highly equipped to make the necessary changes to get into the labour market. But 80% arrive with emotional issues, substance misuse issues, health issues, emergency accommodation issues, legal issues... That whole gamut of need.*

(Staff member)

*They want to work, so badly, you can tell that they want to work. But if you don’t have National Insurance, if you don’t have a passport, if you have a drinking problem, if you have been rough sleeping for five years ... it will take some time for you to get into work.*

(Staff member)

## 4.2 Language and substance misuse issues

Language issues were identified by many interviewees as a key challenge. These did not present insurmountable difficulties as regards communication with the vast majority of service users given that the job coaches are fluent in many CEE languages. Staff did however acknowledge that the participation, and hence nationality profile, of service users will inevitably have been affected by the range of languages spoken by the job coaches. Language issues also presented a challenge for Crisis Skylight's reception services.

Limited English severely restricted the employability of some service users, especially those looking for work in sectors where competition for jobs is intense. A number of staff and stakeholder interviewees also noted that limited language skills made it difficult for CEE migrants to access a number of services (including emergency health care) and, furthermore, restricted the ability (and inclination) of some CEE migrants to interact with UK nationals in the workplace and/or other settings. Clearly, ongoing support with language is key to promoting CEE migrants' service access, employability and community integration.

*If their English wasn't very good then unfortunately there could be loads of jobs but there are always loads of people applying for jobs. If they cannot communicate well they won't get the job.*  
(Staff member)

Most staff and stakeholder interviewees also reported that substance misuse issues, particularly alcohol abuse (the incidence of which tended to be higher amongst A8 than A2 nationals), presented a significant challenge for service delivery (see also Chapter 2). The failure of many service users to view their level and pattern of alcohol consumption as problematic, and tendency to assume that all their difficulties would be

resolved when work was obtained, meant that managing expectations regarding the employability of drinkers was challenging.

*If somebody is a street rough sleeper, with huge alcohol problems, then they will not have a clear path for a career. They just want work and they think that work will solve their drinking problem. This is a challenge.*  
(Staff member)

Long-standing alcohol problems were also said to make many service users susceptible to losing employment. Such challenges were compounded by the ineligibility of CEE migrants for substance misuse treatment services, although this is no longer the case for most A8s. A few interviewees noted that the meaningful activities offered by the programme, and requirement that Crisis Skylight premises remain 'dry', were beneficial in helping many service users limit levels of alcohol consumption.

*The problem cannot be ignored, because even if these people find work, when they've got money they start drinking ... They may then lose the job very quickly because they don't turn up for work.*  
(Stakeholder)

## 4.3 Housing issues

The insecure housing status of many service users, as described in Chapter 2, created a number of additional challenges to service delivery. Staff, stakeholders and service users alike emphasised the extreme barrier street homelessness represented for those attempting to commit to training and/or hold down a job. A number of service users successfully managed to achieve these outcomes whilst sleeping rough, but sleep deprivation and difficulties maintaining basic levels of personal hygiene, compounded by the emotional strain of street homelessness, were said to be profoundly challenging for the majority in such circumstances.

*If they were rough sleepers it was the most difficult because even if you get them a job, it's difficult to stay in a job if they had nowhere to sleep, nowhere to take a shower ... At the end they are just so tired they can't continue working. And if they can't shower the employer might have a problem with their hygiene. It was just really really difficult...*

(Staff member)

*How can you ask someone to attend an ESOL course if they don't have a place to stay? I've had people in the past who'd be doing CSCS training and sleeping rough at the same time but then to go to work from the streets, it's quite difficult.*

(Stakeholder)

Squats were reported to afford a greater degree of shelter, and some would argue 'stability' than street homelessness, but these also represent highly insecure forms of accommodation. Stakeholders frequently expressed concern about the wellbeing of A10 migrants living in squats, given reports regarding the volatile environment and/or unsanitary conditions in some. Furthermore, until recently when squatting in residential properties was made a criminal offence<sup>15</sup>, squatting law dictated that at least one occupant had to be present at all times to avoid eviction, thus restricting squatters' ability to commit to work or training.

*There are different types of squats and different types of squatters. If you talk about the squatters who are kind of normally street drinkers, rough sleepers ... it's a lifestyle that I don't think that those people were actually looking for work. But I know people who live in squats and work but ... working is a bit more difficult because of the law, somebody has to be in the actual house all the time ... But, I know plenty of people who live in like proper squats and they work, so it basically*

*depends. I don't think that squatting necessarily means that you can't work.*  
(Stakeholder)

Housing issues often continued to generate challenges even after service users acquired accommodation and/or paid work. Many CEE migrants work in sectors offering tied accommodation (e.g. in agricultural and hospitality industries), thus placing them at risk of homelessness when short-term contracts end. Moreover, poorly-paid jobs restrict many service users' access to the private rented sector; as does the reticence of many landlords to accept welfare beneficiaries as tenants (typically in the case of A8s).

#### 4.4 Legislative change

Staff and stakeholders reported that the 1 May 2011 change has alleviated some of the pressure involved in working with A8s, but has in itself created a number of new challenges. Most welcomed the change, noting that it 'took the pressure off' when dealing with A8s in crisis situations, by enabling them to access welfare benefits and hostel accommodation and thereby devote more time to the preparation and/or search for work (and thereby less to meeting basic material needs such as acquiring shelter and food).

*I was able to refer five, six people last year into hostels. They are still in the hostel and they are looking for work and they are in a more stable situation. One guy was sleeping, squatting, rough sleeping for the last eight years and this is his first place that he has a place to stay and a place that he can call his own home ... because he was more stable he then came to us to ask for help with his drinking. So, even though he's not working now, hopefully, in a year's time he will be working because he will be more stable.*  
(Staff member)

<sup>15</sup> Squatting in residential properties became a criminal offence in England on 1 September 2012. Squatters can be arrested, and if convicted, imprisoned for up to 6 months, fined up to £5000, or both.

Others, however, cautioned that the use of hostels was not entirely unproblematic, given concerns about either: (a) the prevalence and culture of substance misuse in many hostels; and/or (b) potential disincentives to work, particularly given that some misinformed hostel staff reportedly discourage residents from looking for work on grounds that doing so will make the hostel unaffordable.

*When people get into the hostel system here, they usually say goodbye to employment. I haven't had anybody [any A10 migrant] who went into a hostel and then got a job.*

(Stakeholder)

*I've personally heard a key worker say during sign-up to a client that they can't start working while they are living there because then their housing benefit will stop ... But there are all kinds of ways, that you can get it when you're starting a job like you've been on JSA for 26 weeks. Then you can get up to four weeks of housing benefit, for example, and that helps you get the money for the deposit and move out into private rented.*

(Stakeholder)

Furthermore, stakeholders highlighted poor levels of awareness regarding A8 migrants' eligibility for benefits, and hostel accommodation, across the homelessness sector. This, they noted, sometimes led to situations where A8 migrants were being inappropriately turned away from hostels by misinformed staff. One noted that some hostels refuse to accommodate A8 migrants on grounds of their poor English. Language issues remain highly problematic for some A8 migrants even when they do access hostel accommodation, by restricting their ability to engage with the support offered.

*The hostels I've been referring to are trying to reject my clients on the basis that they don't speak English which I normally contest and say that you're not allowed to*

*do it. Check your policies! But then they completely fail to provide the language support and it's frustrating for the clients and for the staff.*

(Stakeholder)

#### 4.5 Other issues

Frontline staff and a number of stakeholders reported that levels of misinformation about the variable rights of A8 and A2 nationals and what is needed to obtain National Insurance Numbers were high amongst both service users and some of the support and advice agencies working with them. Misunderstandings relating to, and inconsistencies in the application of, the Habitual Residence Test were other ongoing challenges identified.

A number of interviewees also highlighted difficulties proving service users' status under the Worker Registration Scheme, prior to its abolition on 30 April 2011, given the failure of employers to follow due protocol.

*Sometimes the employer does not register them, does not make national insurance contributions on their behalf, so they don't kind of exist within the system. That was a big issue with the worker registration scheme and people not being registered on that.*

(Staff member)

A few staff and stakeholder interviewees also identified a lack of confidence on the part of service users as a barrier to service delivery given the constraints it placed on users' aspirations.

*They know what they want to do, but they always go for the lowest jobs, even if they could do a bit more. They were scared, they thought you know 'I am a foreigner I can't really do this job because my English is not good enough'. So it was persuading them that they actually can do a bit more than they think.*

(Staff member)



For some service users, this was compounded by feelings of shame or embarrassment which made them reluctant to remain in contact with family and/or consider returning home when this may have led to a positive outcome for them.

*Some think 'Now I can't go home because I'm too embarrassed about having spent the last 12 months on the street, so I'm going to stay here'. I think embarrassment's one of the biggest barriers, especially for men.*  
(Stakeholder)

There was widespread consensus amongst staff and stakeholders that the programme 'works best', that is, that job acquisition and retention are most likely, with service users who have low support needs and a high degree of motivation. These outcomes are far harder to achieve with those who are further from being 'work ready', albeit that many still benefit greatly from the support provided.

*It is like with everybody, like with us, some of us are in a better position to get a job because we're stronger, we're more confident ... I think that usually when I have highly motivated people, and people who are very focussed on getting a job, they will find a job faster.*  
(Staff member)

*Crisis' approach is far more structured. So for those that are really proactive and really want the work and don't have support needs, they can move on quite quickly. Because obviously they are not drinking so they can attend the classes and regular appointments. For my group [clients] it's been difficult because they are really chaotic.*  
(Stakeholder)

On a related note, whilst all staff and the majority of stakeholders thought there was

value in supporting CEE migrants who are apparently a 'long way' from being 'work ready', there was universal agreement that a planned return home, with the support of reconnection initiatives, may be the most appropriate intervention with individuals who are failing to exercise their Treaty rights and/or whose behaviours are having a severely detrimental impact on their own welfare and/or the wellbeing of others (e.g. in the case of extreme substance misuse problems<sup>16</sup>, antisocial behaviour and/or involvement in criminal activity).

## 4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the key challenges and barriers encountered during programme delivery. Of these, the most significant have arguably been meeting the high level of demand for the service and the distance many service users have been from being 'work ready' at the point of recruitment. These inspired the adoption a more structured approach to service delivery, and required greater than anticipated investment of time in meeting needs not directly related to preparing for or acquiring employment. Other challenges have related to language and/or substance misuse issues given the impact of these on service users' employability, and in the case of drinkers, on engagement with programme activities.

The insecure housing circumstances of the vast majority of service users have presented several further challenges, the nature and severity of which have altered (but not been entirely alleviated) for A8 migrants since 1 May 2011. Other barriers to service delivery identified included widespread misinformation regarding the rights of A8 and A2 nationals within and beyond the homeless sector, as well as a lack of confidence, and in some cases feelings of shame, on the part of some service users. It

<sup>16</sup> Particularly in the case of A2s, most of whom are not eligible to use mainstream substance misuse facilities.

was universally agreed that the programme tends to work best, that is, is most likely to lead to paid employment, with service users who have low support needs and a high level of motivation. Recommendations informed by the programme's experience of and responses to these issues are provided in the next, concluding, chapter.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter outlines the key conclusions and recommendations drawn from the evaluation of the Crisis Pre-Employment Programme for A8 and A2 nationals in London, which aimed to support CEE migrants by improving the skills and employability of those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

### 5.1 Conclusions

The programme has supported a total of 398 individuals, which is substantially fewer than the target of 496. This shortfall results, in large part, from the fact that many of the individuals presenting required more intensive support than had been anticipated and a more structured mode of service delivery was adopted. Even so, 40% of service users obtained one or more jobs after being recruited to the programme, thus the employment target (37%) was exceeded.

Job retention proved difficult to measure, but the data available suggests that approximately half (49%) of service users sustained employment for at least six months. The programme thus did not quite meet its 55% job retention target, but its failure to do so should not be given undue prominence given difficulties encountered in measurement. Most of the work obtained by service users was poorly paid, such that the balance of starting wages was, overall, weighted more toward the lower end of the wage spectrum than projected in programme targets.

The programme's achievement regarding employment outcomes are however notable given that many service users were deemed to have been a long way from being 'work ready' at the point of recruitment. The programme has thus had to invest substantial resources in supporting CEE migrants in areas not directly related to employment (e.g. housing, health etc). As might be expected, the programme is widely regarded as having 'worked best', that is, achieved the greatest

employment outcomes, where service users have been closest to being 'employment ready' when first coming into contact with the programme.

The programme has arguably been more successful in improving the knowledge and skills of service users, than it has in helping them gain and maintain paid employment. Levels of engagement with training have been high, and the courses generally assessed very favourably by service users. The programme has also been highly successful in improving service users' confidence, self-esteem and motivation. Many service users noted that these outcomes had had the greatest impact on their lives and general wellbeing. Levels of service user satisfaction with the programme were very high overall. The expertise, commitment and non-judgmental approach of the job coaches were identified as having been key to the programme's successes.

The programme has generally been well received by other agencies. Crisis was regarded by stakeholders as a leader in the development of responses to the needs of this client group, and the programme's creativity was widely commended. Views regarding the appropriateness of the programme for individuals with high support needs varied: some stakeholders expressed concerns that attempts to direct vulnerable individuals into the labour market risked 'setting them up to fail'; others held the view that as long as EEA nationals have the right to remain in the UK, support services are obliged to assist all those who are committed to exercising their Treaty rights to do so. There was nevertheless a widespread consensus that in some cases, a supported return back to their country of origin may be the most appropriate course of action.

A number of challenges have been encountered during programme operation,

including: addressing the distance many service users were from being ‘work ready’ at the point of recruitment; language issues; substance misuse problems (particularly alcohol misuse in the case of A8s); insecure housing circumstances; and a lack of confidence and/or aspiration on the part of service users. Levels of misinformation and misunderstanding regarding the variable rights and entitlements of A8 and A2 nationals remain high within and beyond the homelessness sector. A lack of awareness regarding how to acquire National Insurance Numbers and inconsistencies in the application of the Habitual Residence Test are also problematic.

The evaluation has confirmed that many of the needs of homeless and insecurely housed CEE migrants – particularly as regards language and legalities surrounding their rights to work and/or welfare benefit entitlements – are unique to this client group, thus highlighting the value of dedicated services for CEE nationals (see also Fitzpatrick et al., 2012).

The rights and entitlements of EEA migrants within the UK are continually evolving. The eligibility of A8 migrants to work and access various forms of welfare, for example, has altered dramatically since 1 May 2011, and will do so for A2s when transitional restrictions are lifted in 2014. Lessons learned during implementation of the Crisis Pre-Employment Programme for A8 and A2 nationals in London will nevertheless remain invaluable in informing future service delivery, especially as other nations are set to join the EU (e.g. Croatia in 2013).

## 5.2 Recommendations

Recommendations, based on the findings of the evaluation, include the following:

- Expansion of the frontline staff team via recruitment of additional staff would increase the programme’s capacity to meet levels of demand and enable job coaches to work more intensively with individuals if/when necessary.
- Whilst the programme’s employment focus should be retained, there may be value in having a dedicated worker within the team to deal with non-employment issues, such as facilitating access to housing, health care, and/or benefits (where relevant).
- If possible, the job club should be held more frequently. The range of accredited courses might also valuably be expanded. Evidence suggests that painting and decorating would be a welcome addition to Crisis’ training portfolio.
- There is a clear call for the development of more and stronger links with potential employers. This need not relate to the programme for CEE migrants specifically, but might represent a wider Crisis initiative to which other (indigenous) clients might also benefit.
- Given high levels of misinformation within (and beyond) the homeless sector, Crisis might valuably lead or contribute to an informational campaign regarding CEE migrants’ rights to work and access welfare in the UK, targeted at other service providers and stakeholders.
- There is a particular need to redress widespread misunderstandings regarding the rights and entitlements of A2 nationals and what CEE nationals need to do to obtain National Insurance Numbers; so too inconsistency in the application of the Habitual Residence Test.
- The impact of the 1 May 2011 change on A8 migrants’ eligibility for benefits should be gauged, with the aim of balancing incentives to work with the ‘stability’ offered by access to mainstream hostel accommodation.

- The implications of the recent criminalisation of squatting in residential properties should also be closely monitored, given the proportion of service users living in this form of accommodation when first making contact with the programme.
- More generally, the evaluation has emphasised the ongoing imperative for authorities to monitor and combat the exploitation of vulnerable CEE migrants by traffickers and unscrupulous employers.

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## About Crisis

Crisis is the national charity for single homeless people. We are dedicated to ending homelessness by delivering life-changing services and campaigning for change.

Our innovative education, employment, housing and well-being services address individual needs and help people to transform their lives.

We are determined campaigners, working to prevent people from becoming homeless and advocating solutions informed by research and our direct experience.

We have ambitious plans for the future and are committed to help more people in more places across the UK. We know we won't end homelessness overnight or on our own. But we take a lead, collaborate with others and, together, make change happen.

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