



Nottingham Trent
University

Department of Social and Political Sciences

Securing Protection for Destitute Asylum Seekers

Addendum to the Evaluation of Hope Projects (West Midlands) Ltd Legal Service

Tom Vickers, Konrad Rekas and Fatima Rezai

Hope Projects seeks to tackle asylum destitution by providing a range of integrated services, including high-quality legal advice, to support people who have had an asylum claim rejected and exhausted appeal rights to move out of destitution by securing leave to remain and consequent rights to access mainstream housing, employment and services.

Hope Projects commissioned Nottingham Trent University to evaluate this process, with findings published at: www.ntu.ac.uk/hope-project. This addendum draws together findings from this evaluation that specifically evidence the numbers of people eventually securing some form of leave to remain in the UK following support from Hope Projects. These findings need to be taken in the context that the vast majority of clients registering with Hope are in a desperate legal situation and have little or no prospect of regularising their immigration status. Hope's legal service does not filter to select only stronger cases, it offers advice to anybody who has been refused asylum. Yet as shown below, following support from Hope many do secure status.

In a final survey of Hope clients by Nottingham Trent University, 41% of respondents reported they had now secured leave to remain and a further 36% reported having an asylum claim or appeal currently under consideration - totalling 77% of clients successfully progressing their immigration claim from a very bleak starting point prior to accessing Hope's legal service.

Taken together with the findings published in the evaluation final report, this demonstrates two important and far-reaching findings:

- The UK asylum system is currently failing to recognise large numbers of refugees whose asylum claims would be upheld with the right support but are being denied protection and consequently becoming destitute;
- Organisations like Hope Projects have a vital role to play in assisting people to access justice and escape destitution but currently lack the resources to meet the level of urgent need.

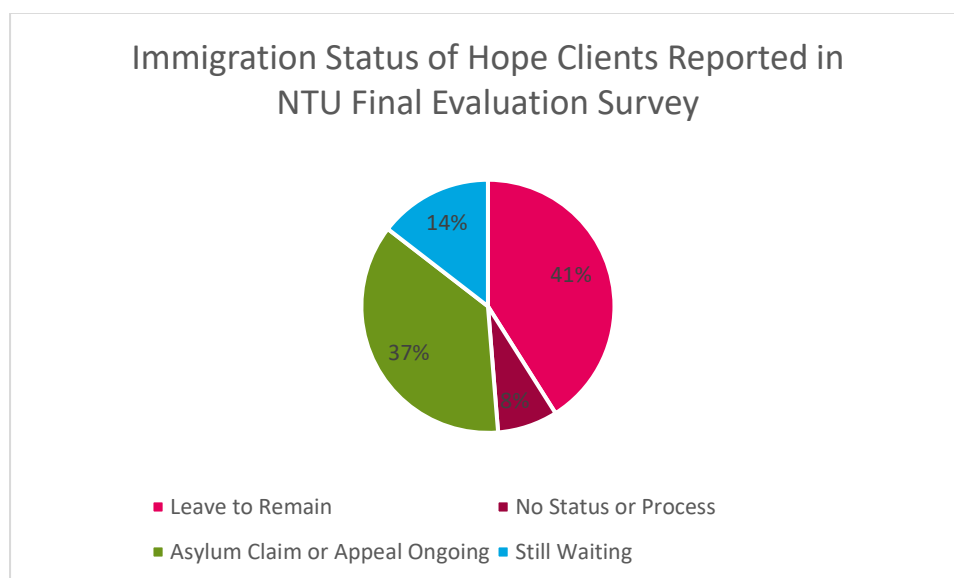
We further support these conclusions with data from three different sources:

Hope's own records shared with the evaluation team show that as of 18 December 2024, 79 clients, or 20%, of the 393 clients on file had secured some form of leave to remain, over 65% of which took the form of refugee status.

The evaluation team conducted two rounds of a survey during 2022 and 2023, which included phone calls to 222 clients and received 92 respondents. This survey asked if clients had secured leave to remain since accessing the Hope legal service, of which 16 clients, or 18% of respondents, reported that they had.

In November 2024 NTU researchers phoned all of the 440 clients who had registered with the Hope legal service between June 2020 and October 2024. All those who answered were asked if they now had leave to remain (or 'status' as this is commonly known) and a follow-up question asked their current immigration status. Putting these responses together with the findings from our previous surveys, 48 (41% of those who could be reached) reported

they had now secured some form of leave to remain and a further 43 (36%) confirmed they had an asylum claim or appeal currently under consideration - in total representing 77% of clients who had managed to progress their immigration claim and had either regularised their status or had a reasonable prospect of doing so, from a starting point prior to Hope's support where they had little or no prospect of regularisation. A further 17 (14%) could only describe their current immigration status as 'still waiting' or 'no information', which might indicate a current application but with a low level of understanding of the legal process. Nine confirmed they had not (as of November 2024) secured status and gave no indication of an ongoing process that could result in status, and 324 were not contactable or chose not to answer.



The difficulties reaching all clients is a reflection of their highly precarious situations at the point they accessed Hope services and provided their phone number (or in some cases were provided a SIM card by Hope as part of the package of support to progress their legal case). Based on available evidence, clients becoming uncontactable is likely to result from a combination of the widespread use of six-month sim cards, destitution, people not updating their contact details with Hope because their situation has improved and they no longer need support, or deportation. There is therefore no reason to think that clients who were uncontactable skew these findings in any particular direction.

Conclusions

NTU's evaluation final report used the first two of the data sources above to project 83 clients (18%) progressing to regularise their immigration status over the first five years of the Hope legal service, but cautioned this was likely to be an underestimate due to the time taken for cases to be resolved. The additional data reported here from the final survey confirms that earlier projection as a minimum, and suggests the real figure is likely to be considerably higher, with the 41% found to have status in the final survey projecting 205 plus a proportion of the 37% with current claims projecting up to an additional 185 individuals.