



Ending Destitution Together

Scottish Government have published *Ending Destitution Together*, the anti-destitution strategy from the Scottish Government and COSLA. The Strategy encompasses all individuals who have No Recourse to Public Funds, within the context of the Scottish Government's devolved powers. This joint strategy builds on an inquiry by the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee and its report: *Hidden Lives - New Beginnings*.

The vision for the strategy is that *'No one is forced into destitution and everyone has their human rights protected, regardless of their immigration status.'*

GCP were privileged to have been part of the process in developing this strategy, ensuring that the voices of lived experience of the asylum community in Scotland were represented in this process and commend the current Scottish Government and COSLA for acknowledging the importance of ongoing engagement with experts by experience through the implementation stage and hope that our next Scottish Government will also retain this commitment.

"Destitution affects people, real human life and our safety. It has affected us. Because of that, we know that any policy to overcome destitution must, always, be based on learning from those who have overcome it in their own lives. Who understand what destitution does to dignity. We want to stop it happening to anyone else."

Lived Experience Asylum Destitution Group

The strategy identifies 3 main strands for action.

Essential Needs; Advice and Advocacy; and Inclusion and is underpinned by 3 main principles of **Prevention, Partnership, and Personalisation**.

The strategy identifies 13 key initial action points:

1) Essential Needs:

- We are piloting a Hardship Fund to support people with NRPF across Scotland who are facing crisis situations
- We will improve dignified access to culturally appropriate food
- We will contribute to the ambition of ending homelessness
- We will strengthen provision of financial assistance and wider local authority support to destitute families with children and vulnerable adults.
- We will update guidance and training to support local authority provision of services to people with NRPF
- We will improve access to primary health services,
- We will improve access to mental health services for adults and children with NRPF

2) Advice & Advocacy

- We will invest in the provision of diagnostic legal advice delivered in partnership with advocacy support
- We will increase access to specialist immigration advice to support local authorities assisting people with NRPF.

3) Inclusion

- We will extend financial support to people subject to NRPF where that is possible to do so
- We will ensure that employability support is accessible for people subject to NRPF who have permission to work
- We will contribute to development of the next Race Equality Action Plan
- We will work with people with lived experience of destitution and NRPF to continue to inform and shape the strategy during implementation

"At a time when the UK Government are pushing forward proposals for an immigration system which promotes further exclusion and escalates risk of harm to vulnerable individuals and families, the Scottish Government's approach to being more inclusive and working towards providing safety nets which leave nobody behind in Scotland, regardless of immigration status is valued and welcomed and we hope that the post-election Scottish Government will continue the commitment and prioritisation this piece of work has been given by the current Scottish Government."

Traci Kirkland, Head of Charity, Govan Community Project

The full report can be accessed on the Scottish Government Website [here](#).