



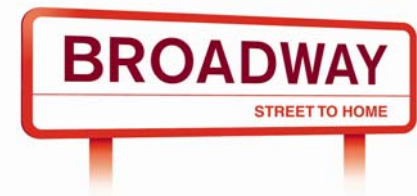
# Routes into London's homelessness services

The experiences of A8 nationals



# Who are the A8s accessing homelessness services?

- 32 A8 nationals interviewed in first languages at five of London's homelessness services:
  - What is the story behind their migration?
  - What is their experience of life in the UK?



# Unprepared

*I couldn't speak English but didn't think this lack of knowledge could create such problems.*

*I had no knowledge whatsoever but felt secure as acquaintances had promised work.*

*I hoped to go to a Polish agency and find a job with accommodation.*



# Unlucky & exploited

*An agency in Poland promised to find me a job and accommodation and meet me on arrival. It cost me 1800PLN but they didn't show up. The Head Office in Poland looked credible.*

*I was expecting it to be more honest – on several occasions I wasn't paid all the money due to me – sometimes as little as 50% what I should have received.*

*I had my passport stolen; I couldn't find a job and consequently cannot afford accommodation.*



# Unregistered

*The only place I knew from television was Victoria station. I went directly there to meet Polish people who told me it was possible to find a job round the station.*

*There are many Polish people who are ready to take any job even for as little as £30 a day because of this its more difficult to find a good job now.*

*I practically do not speak English. It makes it so difficult to find work and until I have work will not be able to afford accommodation.*

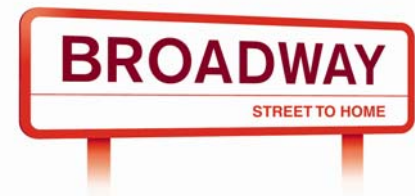


# In insecure accommodation

*It was a job with accommodation so when I lost the job... I lived... on a street.*

*The realities of accommodation in the UK are much more difficult than I ever expected....prices are very high and my experience of a squat was very bad.*

*Life at Victoria is not safe but I don't know any other place it is possible to stay.*



# Better off?

*So far my experiences are quite good. On one hand I did not expect that there will be so many formalities... I thought it will take me less to find legal work. But on the other there is extensive support and soon I will have the necessary documents.*

*So far my life in the UK has been rather difficult. I thought the cost of living here would be lower and finding work easier. Still, even though life has not been very easy for us the overall experience and quality of life in England is better than Poland.*



# Conclusions

- Information and advice before and after arrival is required
- Support to quickly rectify the problems that lead to homelessness and destitution could make a huge difference to peoples chances
- This group are generally not registering for work and most plan to stay for more than a year
- Employment accessed is often illegal
- Rough sleeping and living in squats is common – the expense of other accommodation is often not anticipated
- Language barriers and poor knowledge of the system are the key barriers to getting decent work.

