



HELPING HOMELESS AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE SINCE 1860

## **EU10 Collaboration Project**

**September 2015 – December 2016**

### **Developing Collaboration in Romania**

#### **Introduction**

In September 2015, Providence Row, Thames Reach, and the London Housing Foundation joined in collaboration for the second phase of the EU10 project. The first phase of the Project, which was carried out in 2014, effectively raised the understanding in EU10 countries and highlighted comparisons between EU10 homelessness and homelessness in the UK. Furthermore, the first phase established a network of communication and resources between London-based agencies and solidified a wider partnership of agencies all working towards the same goal whilst facing similar challenges. With the learnings from the first phase, Providence Row, again in collaboration with London Housing Foundation, initiated the more in-depth phase of the project which is outlined in the sections below.

#### **Project Aims**

This phase of the project aimed to gather a comprehensive, in-depth understanding of the ongoing EU10 homeless issue and to establish a forward-thinking, sustainable system of helping the most vulnerable Romanians homeless in London. The project aimed to solidify a working partnership between London-based homeless agencies, led by Providence Row, and Samu Social, a homeless organisation based in Bucharest. In conjunction with the working partnership, the aim was for the London-based agencies to experience and learn first-hand about the current status and extent of services available in Romania and subsequently, to gain a better understanding of how London-based agencies can offer help in both London and Romania.

## Outline of Project Key Dates

October 2015 - January 2016	Data-gathering and analysis
January/ February 2016	First visit to Romania
February - August 2016	Pilot run and tracking period
June 2016	Samu Social's visit to London
September 2016	Second visit to Romania
December 2016	Dissemination event

The London-based team held meetings throughout this time span to be able to feedback, analyse, and plan each stage of the project.

## Research Methods

The research phase of the project aimed to gather a robust data-set which could be used to highlight and analyse trends amongst the Romanian EU10 homeless in London, whilst also highlighting a sample of clients who could be involved in the pilot stage of the working-partnership with Samu Social.

A sample size of 31 clients and six case studies were gathered and prepared over the months November and December 2015 in preparation for the team to decide the client criteria prior to the first visit to Romania in January 2016. This sample size was dependent on the number of clients who either presented themselves to a homeless service (represented in a First-Contact form) or attended referral meetings with the London Reconnections team (both a First-Contact form and a questionnaire).

A questionnaire, a First-Contact form, and the database CHAIN were all utilised to gather the desired data which was agreed on in collaboration by Providence Row and London Reconnections. The desired criteria included: the client's place of origin, their socio-economic background, their access to support services in London, and their access to services in Romania.

The desired data was often not available on CHAIN, and therefore CHAIN was mainly used to cross-check a client's history with a service. Additional context behind Romanians living in encampments in Greater London was gathered through Hot Spot visits with Thames Reach TRIO, during December 2015.

The clients' places of origins in Romania were recorded and displayed on a map to highlight migration trends and key areas. These specific areas were explored during the second visit to Romania.

## Data-analysis results

Data analysis showed significant trends amongst the 31 sample clients, such as: 87% of the sample group were male and single. 93.5% of the sample clients were rough sleeping (at the time of their referral meeting), and 68% had entered the UK for the first time in the last year (January 2015-December 2015). Between November and December 2015, out of the 31 sample clients, 15 were successfully reconnected and four expressed interest in reconnection. 8 of the 31 clients completed full questionnaires. Analysis of the questionnaires showed that 88% had never had a job in the UK and 75% came to the UK to look for a job. For 100% of the questionnaire respondents, the first service that they came into contact with was an outreach team and all stated that they were either unaware or disinterested in the support services in Romania. Overall, the respondents expressed a lack of interest in support back in Romania due to family contact there. However, support towards finding well-paying employment in Romania was highly desired.

This analysis enabled the team to see the recurring themes and trends amongst the data and, subsequently, enabled them to have a better understanding of which services to focus on during the first visit to Romania.

However, it is important to note that the results are representative of clients in the month of December 2015. The high level of clients that were reconnected during this month will have been influenced by the holiday season, the cold weather, and the desire to be with their families back in Romania.

## **Ethics**

The nature of research posed a risk to validity due to the client's personal interpretation of the questions and willingness to express personal information. This risk was reduced, however, by using CHAIN to cross-check client information.

## **Summary and key learnings from the first visit to Romania – Bucharest only**

Following a successful visit to Bucharest during Phase one of the project, this next phase required a larger team of London-based frontline workers. Eight team members were chosen, based on their applications, to participate in the second phase of the project. The key aims of this trip were for the team to meet Samu Social, consolidate a working collaboration with the Samu Social team, and learn more about the services available and the wider homeless situation in Bucharest.

In January 2016, the team members travelled to Bucharest to spend 5 days with the Samu Social team. Throughout the 5 days, the team visited a number of services and agencies within the city and spent a significant amount of time getting to know the Samu Social team. A meeting was held to discuss the pilot launch of their working-collaboration. This collaboration would aim to support a sample number of Romanian homeless, in London, to return to Romania. The two teams used the meeting to discuss the eight suggested clients by Providence Row and the logistics of this collaboration which would involve communication via skype link.

The team came away from the trip with a number of positives. Overall the Samu Social team was welcoming and willing to collaborate with the team to support reconnection. The team gained a better understanding of the services available in Bucharest: examples are; a Romanian equivalent to Job Centre, a number of NGOs focused around substance abuse in the city, and a centre for rough sleepers. Accommodation in Bucharest is limited to six shelters at varying levels of support. One example, the Municipal Shelter can accommodate 120 people during the winter months, with four people per room. However, this long-term accommodation can only be accessed with a valid ID card and medical record; same requirements are in place to receive benefits. Yet, these benefits or medical support can be refused at any time depending on the resources available from the local authority.

The team did find one organisation and one social enterprise that seemed to have a pro-active and positive approach to helping the homeless. One organisation established and funded by Austrian and German organisations, works to support clients, aged 18-35 and are HIV positive, with therapy sessions, social workshops, education opportunities, and employments skills. This organisation has limited accommodation but is willing to support referred clients from the UK, as appropriate.

However, the team did face a number of challenges during their time in Bucharest. The team went into the project very keen to support as many clients as possible. For Samu Social, an influx of clients who may require reconnection to regions outside of Bucharest, coupled with the fact that the definition of

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homelessness in the UK and in Romania is different, created an initial hesitance towards the project. Additionally, Samu Social are based in Bucharest and currently do not have the resources to support reconnection outside of the capital. It was explained to the team that this reluctance represented the wider opinion that is felt amongst Romanians towards individuals who have chosen to migrate to London. The data-analysis showed us that many of the sample clients have homes and families back in Romania and, therefore, many services do not feel the need to offer support to these individuals upon their return.

From visiting a number of services in Bucharest, the team agreed that there was a strong opinion expressed that the UK does not respect the rights of free movement for EU Nationals.

One major area of support that was identified as seriously lacking in Romania was mental health support. The team identified both significant barriers and a lack of resources amongst the services in Bucharest to be able to support mental health needs. An additional barrier was the inconsistent statistics around homelessness in Romania due to system failures, inconsistency in reporting, and corruption.

The barriers met by the team further confirmed the need to focus on clients who, the team felt, could actually be helped through this collaboration with Samu Social. Six clients were chosen to be taken forward into the next stage. The main criteria for clients became whether or not they have families in Romania who Samu Social could support in reconnection arrangements and, subsequently, hope to ensure long-term reconnection.

The lack of mental health and substance misuse services in Bucharest also raised the issue of whether this type of support should be given in the UK first before reconnection. These considerations and challenges were carried forward as the partnership with Samu Social was put into operational practice.

## **Tracking clients**

Following the trip to Bucharest, the team established a working skype connection and process with Samu Social. Samu Social agreed to discuss any appropriate clients that were brought forward by the team in London. The tracking process is comprised of: identification of clients for referral, checklist completion and approval from both Providence Row and Samu Social. Providence Row then collates the referrals into a spreadsheet and records any cases that are communicated with Samu Social.

Over the course of the tracking period, the Samu Social team visited London (June 2016). The Samu Social staff were exposed to a number of different London-based homeless agencies and services. The Samu Social team were overwhelmed at times by the extent of homelessness in the capital. Overall, the trip was seen as a success for the reason that the Samu Social team deepened their understanding of the UK context, the realities of rough sleeping in London, and the challenges faced by frontline staff.

The team identified two clients who presented as suitable cases to take forward to Samu Social. The first client, from the Routes to Roots programme, expressed a willingness to return to Romania and was supported back to Bucharest by the teams. Upon arrival in Bucharest, the client was intoxicated – Samu Social supported him to his mother’s flat where he now resides. Providence Row and Samu Social are now in the process of finding the best method to support the client’s addiction needs. This support will be funded by the project.

The second client also expressed a willingness to return to Romania after sleeping rough in London for three weeks. During Samu Social’s visit to London, the team was able to meet with the client and conduct an in depth assessment. The client was successfully reconnected to his home in Bacau, Romania.

The team faced a number of challenges when trying to track and connect clients to Samu Social. The main challenge was that many clients do not want to return to Romania. They have chosen to come to London to earn money and are happy to sleep rough or live in encampments as a means to send money home to their families. The wages in the UK are much higher than in Romania – this presented as a major socio-economic difference and barrier.

One key insight from the tracking process is that a Romanian-speaking staff member is vital to understanding the type of support the client needs and the details of the client's situation. A subsequent discussion with Samu Social could also offer further contextual explanations and insight.

## **Key learnings from the second visit to Romania – Regions outside of Bucharest**

Based on the locations identified on the map from the data-analysis, the team confirmed three cities/regions to travel to outside of Bucharest. These three areas were Brasov, Bacau, and Iasi. In September (2016), 4 members of the team took part in the second visit to Romania. The aim of this trip was to gain a still better understanding of the homeless situation and services available outside of Bucharest.

The visits to the regions outside of Bucharest offered a greater insight into the support available, the wider attitude towards homelessness, and the high level of individuals journeying to the UK from these identified regions in Romania. The team discovered one or two key shelters and services in each of the regions that they visited.

The top three key takeaways that came through from the trip were; firstly, the team felt that within the Romanian services there was a real emphasis on the importance of employment and clients' reintegration into society, and therefore, the services did not support individuals for a long-term period of time. Secondly, there was limited support available for mental health issues, HIV/AIDS, and substance misuse and the support that was available was approached with a lack of real understanding about the issues. Lastly, there were a high number of men from these outside regions who had already travelled to the UK, worked cash in hand there, and returned to Romania with saved money for their families. This was an ongoing trend and viewed as a highly favourable option for many Romanians.

## **Recommendations**

It became evident from the two trips that Romanian services do not have the resources to deal with complex, more challenging cases. UK services need to raise these issues as part of a wider strategy to tackling EU homelessness. The next steps to successfully move cases forward would be to identify the specific ways in which UK services can more substantially prepare cases for reconnection. UK services need to qualify clients more thoroughly for services in Romania, gain more financial transparency around the client, and determine appropriate local connections for the client's region – all of which can hopefully aid in the reconnection process and identify sustainable support.

The next steps for the partnership with Samu Social are to continue to use skype as a feasible way to discuss clients, consider ways to have Samu Social workers as consultants for specific cases, and continue to collaborate in supporting as many clients as possible to find sustainable living conditions either in the UK or in Romania, as appropriate.

This pilot study can now be used as a platform and a resource for other London services to use and build upon for all EU10 clients, especially Poland and Lithuania. Romanian individuals continue to represent the highest percentage of rough sleepers in Greater London. This is closely followed by Polish and Lithuanian

individuals. From CHAIN's [2016 report](#) on the nationality of rough sleepers, for the most recent months July-September 2016, Romania represents 12%, Poland 8%, and Lithuania 3%. This are high percentages in comparison to all other EU10 countries which are at levels of either 1% or 0%.

This project sought to break down the barriers between services in the UK and services in Romania so that we can better understand the root causes, the contextual differences, and the complex issues related to Romanian homelessness, and subsequently, homelessness in general. Overall, the second phase of the project has been both a groundbreaking and eye-opening learning experience with a lasting partnership with Samu Social.

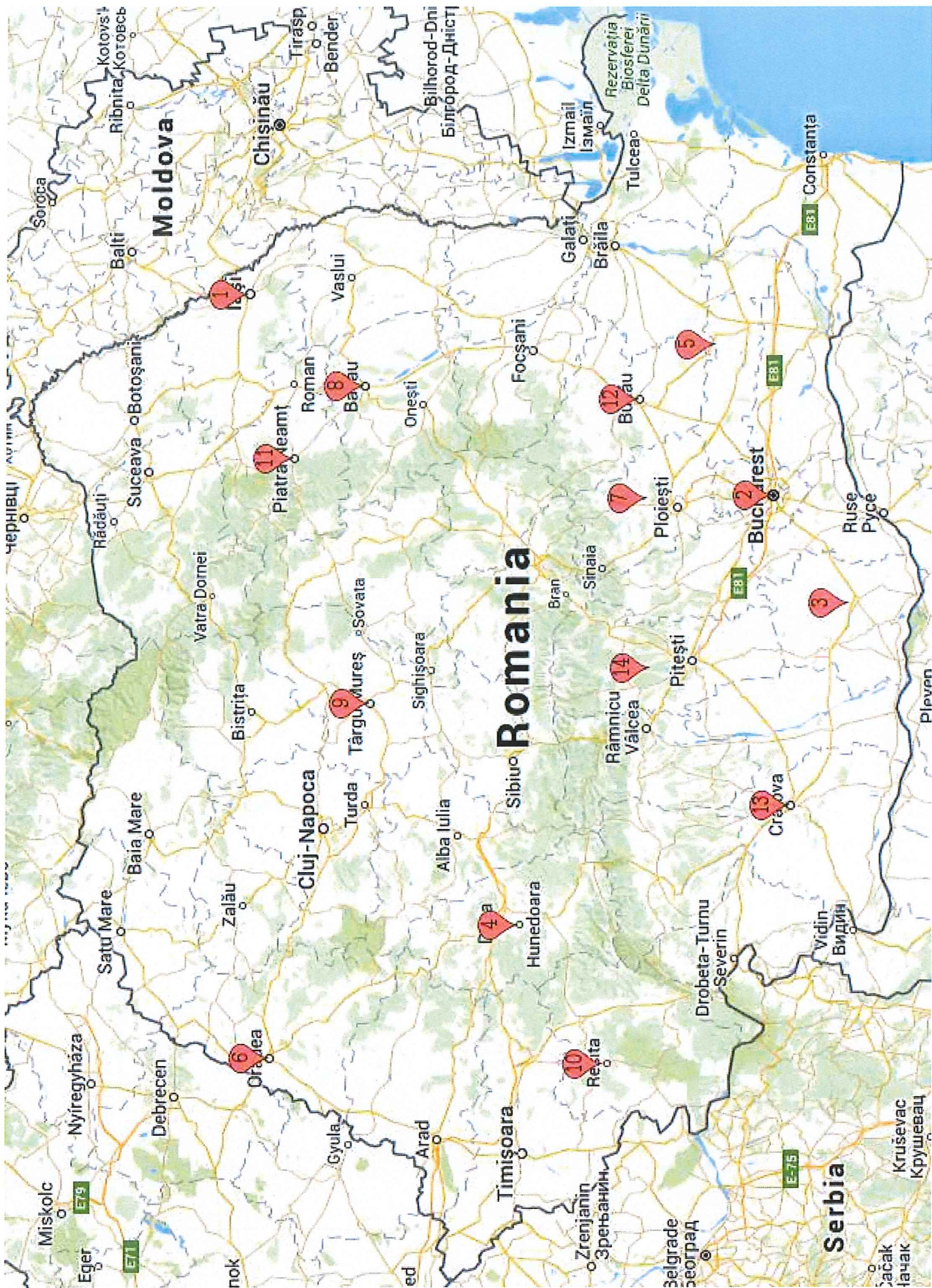


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**Appendix**

Research

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**rise**  
**bakery**  
[www.risebakery.london](http://www.risebakery.london)





 1	7	Iași, Romania	 12	1	Buzău, Romania
		clients			client
 2	5	Bucharest, Romania	 13	1	Craiova, Romania
		clients			client
 3	1	Teleorman County, Romania	 14	3	Argeș County, Romania
		client			clients
 4	2	Hunedoara, Romania			
		clients			
 5	1	Mișoști, Romania			
		client			
 6	1	Oradea, Romania			
		client			
 7	1	Prahova, Romania			
		client			
 8	3	Bacău, Romania			
		clients			
 9	1	Târgu Mureș, Romania			
		client			
 10	1	Calea Timișoarei, Reșița, Romania			
		client			
 11	1	Piatra Neamț, Romania			
		client			

## Analysis of First Contact forms

### Patterns of First Contact forms

#### Gender

Majority of the sample clients are male- 27/34 clients

- As far as it is known, these clients are single/ living alone

Female- 7/34 clients

- Two couples- One couple is pregnant, one couple has a child

#### Rough sleeping

YES 29/31 entries

- Majority of sample clients are currently or were, before being reconnected, sleeping rough

NO 1/31 entries

- Client is male and from Bucharest. He was reconnected to Romania on 11/12/2015.
- CHAIN 267554

Unknown 1/31 entries

- This client has no Chain number and the location of origin is unknown. We know he is male and wants to return to Romania.

#### Date of entry to UK for the 31 entries

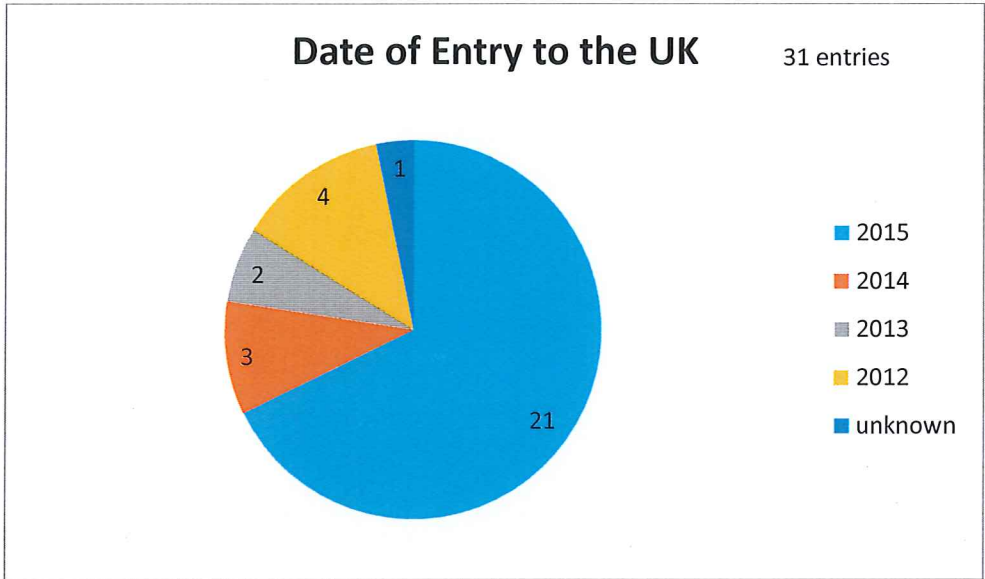
2015 21/31

2014 3/31

2013 2/31

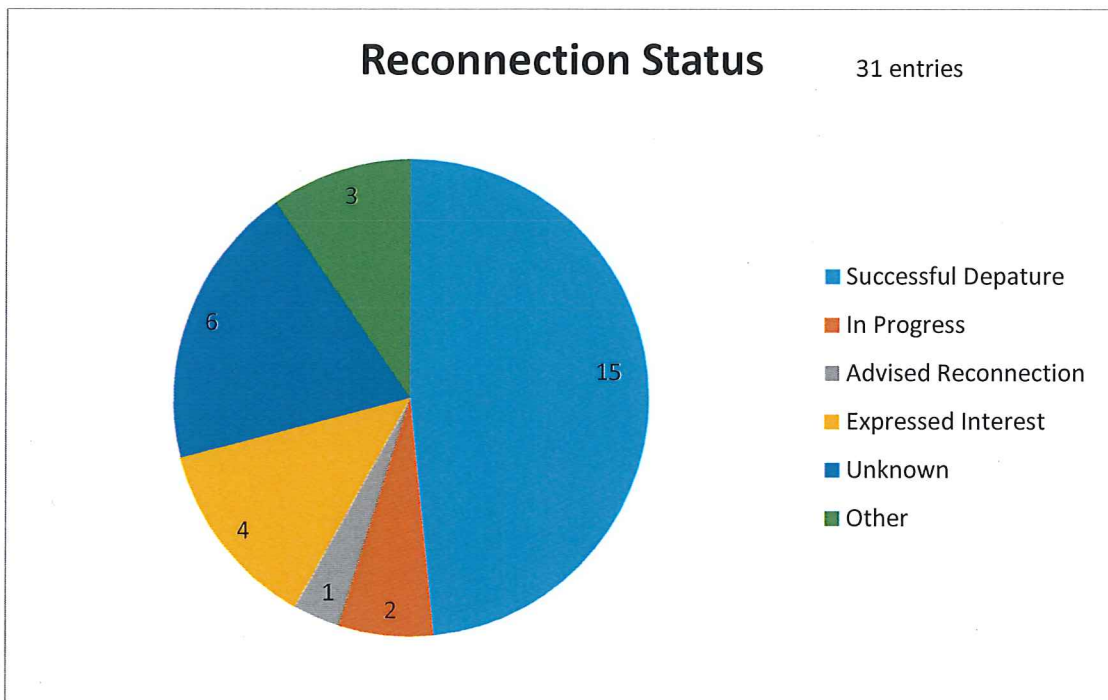
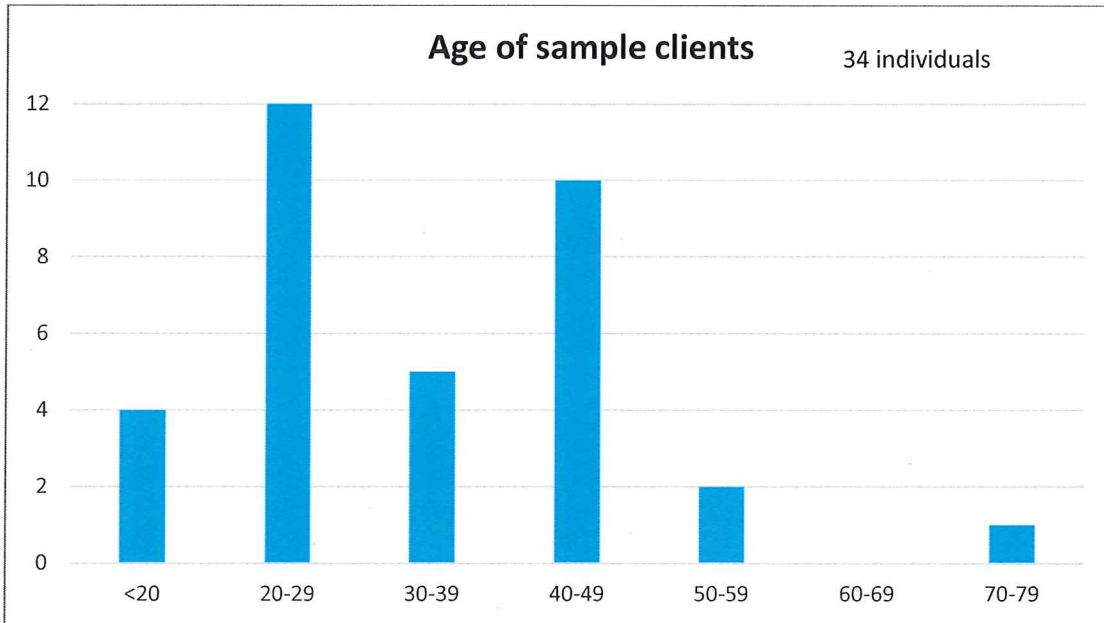
2012 & earlier 4/31

Unknown 1/31 (Same client with unknown location origin and unknown Chain number)



Date of entry to UK for the 31 entries

2015	21/31
2014	3/31
2013	2/31
2012 & earlier	4/31
Unknown	1/31 (Same client with unknown location origin and unknown Chain number)



Other (3)-

- 1) Female client returned to Romania prior to LRT meeting
- 2) Failed departure- Departure date 29/12/2015- was due to depart in November but was drunk and not allowed to fly
- 3) Currently in rented accommodation in Hounslow 04/01/2016- TRIO team

Unknown (6)-

All due to lack of CHAIN client numbers to enable follow up status

## Case studies

To represent a sample of the different client profiles

These are based on the questionnaire (if available) and First contact/ NSNO assessment answers followed up with CHAIN information (if available).

### Case 1) Reference no. 3, Questionnaire no. 1

- Male, age 23, in relationship, no children, rough sleeping
- From/ Address: Strada Progresului, nr 2, Cãmănești, Bacau, Romania
- Successful reconnection
- CH269893

The client arrived in the UK in 03/01/2012 and was first noted on CHAIN on 11/11/2015 by London Street Rescue. Believe to be in a couple with the client with First Contact reference no. 1

Information from questionnaire answers- The client stated that after finishing his university degree he started working in construction for two and half months. After not being paid for two months work, he decided to come to the UK to get a job, save money, and return to Romania to buy a flat. From January 2012 until January 2013 the client was working mainly in cash in hand jobs. He then acquired documents (NINO/CSCS/UTR/ Bank account) and was able to get a legal job in 2013. Since 2013 the client was receiving payslips and paying taxes.

The client lost his accommodation on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015. Streetlink was the first support service he came in contact because another homeless client gave him the Streetlink number.

The client was reconnected on 17/11/2015. Follow up reconnection check was successful.

The client would like to return to the UK once he has enough money to rent a room and support himself. He said that he can earn much more money through a job in the UK than in Romania.

In regards to any support needed back in Romania, he said he needs financial support until he finds a job but that he has accommodation.

### Case 2) Reference no. 2

- Family; husband, wife, and baby
- From: Near Bucharest
- The family have been provided accommodation in Wandsworth, London
- The male client CH268450
- The male client has a NI number and both adults have passports.

Contact reference- Ben Sebok

The family were previously rough sleeping in a bush in Wandsworth whilst the female client was pregnant. The male client was working in McDonalds on a zero hour contract. They were given temporary housing by Wandsworth Housing before the baby was born. After the baby was born their housing legibility was reassessed and declined. The family were referred to LRT on 12/11/2015.

The couple have family back in Romania and both clients are in contact with their respective mothers. The female client also has an older son back in Romania.

During the First Contact referral (12/11/2015) the male client agreed he would contribute financially for the family to return to Romania.

The baby was born 08/11/2015. After the baby was born, the couple were not eligible for further support by the hospital in the UK and, upon discharging, were sent to LRT for reconnection. The couple were then reconnected back to Romania.

The male client returned to the UK in December to continue working at McDonalds whilst sleeping in a tent on the Trinity roundabout. The client was warned if he did not find accommodation the area he was camping would have to be cleared.

The beginning of January, the male client started renting a flat in Feltham. He is using the McDonalds salary to pay rent and send money to his family. His wife is still in Romania looking after the baby, who is currently sick.

### **Case 3) Questionnaire answer no. 6-8**

*(All three have similar backgrounds and origins)*

- Males, single, rough sleeping
- From: All from the Argeş region, near Bucharest (See reference 7 & 8 for detailed location)
- Successful reconnection
- The clients were assessed by NSNO at the end of November 2015

All three clients had jobs in Romania working in the forest, cutting tree branches. Reference 7 has been unemployed for two years; reference 8 has been unemployed for 8 months.

All three clients expressed a similar reason for coming to the UK. All three were promised by friends that they would be able to get a job, with no problem, once they arrive in the UK.

All three clients have not worked since arriving in the UK. All three have expressed that they would like to be reconnected back to Romania and do not have the intention of returning to the UK in the future. All have expressed that they do not need help getting at job back in Romania.

### **Case 4) Reference no. 23**

*(Represents a case with vulnerabilities e.g. alcohol)*

- Male, age 29, single, rough sleeping, alcohol dependency
- From: Resita- Timisoara, Banat region
- CH247152
- Failed reconnection

The client arrived in the UK 29/08/2013

The client has a history of alcohol related problems and aggression. A reconnection was planned for the client on 29/11/2015 but he was not allowed to board the flight due to being drunk and aggressive. Additionally, the client was due to return to Romania back in November 2014 but failed to do so.

The client has been most recently rough sleeping at Saint Martin-in-the-fields Church, Westminster. The last face-to-face contact with the client was on 29/12/2015 by LRT.

### Case 5) Reference no. 16, Questionnaire answer no. 5

*(Representative of the typical case of a high proportion of the male clients)*

- Male, age, family back in Romania, travelling alone, rough sleeping
- From: Iasi, Moldova
- CH251250
- Successfully reconnected 04/12/2015

The client arrived in the UK 28/11/2015

Prior to coming to the UK, the client was working in construction in Romania on a 'poor salary'. The client came to the UK to find a better paying job. The client had a friend contact in London but upon arriving he stated he was not able to contact this friend.

The client is unsure at the moment whether he will try to return to the UK after being reconnected. The client's wish, like many other Romanian homeless in London, for support in Romania would be through better paid work.

The client was first assessed by NSNO and referred to LRT.

### Case 6) Reference no. 27

*(Represents a female case study)*

- Female, age 47, travelling alone, rough sleeping
- From: Hunedoara, Transylvania
- CH268754
- Reconnection in progress

The client arrived in the UK 03/10/2015

The client's reason for coming to the UK was to seek work. The client was first noted Bedded down on CHAIN on 13/10/2015 in Westminster, Southampton Street.

The client was issued removal direction papers 14/12/2015 and her ID has been retained by Immigration. The client has been advised to report to Beckett House until flights to Romania can be arranged for her. The client is happy to return back to Romania. She has stated she has a home to return to but is not in contact with family/friends back home.

The client is considered a vulnerable woman.

Last contacted by Westminster CAS via phone on 18/12/2015

### Overall thoughts/ key points from questionnaire responses

- 7 out of 8 respondents have not worked since arriving in the UK
- 6 out of 8 came to the UK to find a job
- For all respondents the first support service they came in contact with was an outreach team
- All respondents stated that they were unaware/ disinterested in support services in Romania
- 3 out of 8 respondents **do** plan to return to the UK. 4 out of 8 **do not** plan to return. 1 is unsure
- On a whole, the majority of respondents said they do not need support back in Romania. A few respondents said they would like help with getting a job with a good salary/ to ensure they can financially support themselves.

### Thoughts on specific clients to further investigate

- Ref 26- interesting because of the client's mental illness status- may need more support back in Romania
- Ref 27- interesting because the client has been given enforcement papers and has not been reconnected yet. Would be interesting to learn more about her situation in Romania
- Ref 22- interesting because the client has been in hospital- needs physical support- and husband is at home in Romania. Known address- which would enable a follow up.
- Ref 11 – interesting because the client has been previously reconnected

Extra client (not in data)

CH248664

- offer made for reconnection in 2013 was refused- she was seen again 29/10/2015
- DOB 05/06/1988