

Regional trusted intermediary courses on housing rights for women

Law for Life Final Report September 2021

Contents

- 1.1 Executive summary
- 1.2 Background and purpose of the programme
- 1.3 Aims and intended outcomes of the programme
- 1.4 Activities

- 2.1 Methodology
- 2.2 Programme outputs
- 2.3 Reach of the programme

- 3.1 Legal capability evaluation findings
- 3.2 South West course
- 3.3 Understanding tenancy agreements and contracts
- 3.4 Understanding disrepair
- 3.5 Understanding evictions
- 3.6 Confidence measures

- 4.1 North West course
- 4.2 Understanding tenancy agreements and contracts
- 4.3 Understanding disrepair
- 4.4 Understanding evictions
- 4.5 Confidence measures

- 5.1 Wider impact of the programme
- 5.2 Findings from the interview study
- 5.3 Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on people helped by attendees
- 6.1 Conclusions and recommendations

- Appendix A Demographics of course participants
- Appendix B Interview schedule with trusted intermediaries and social prescribers
- Appendix C Course feedback and satisfaction

1.1 Executive summary

About the Service

Law for Life works with trusted intermediaries from diverse organisations in order to equip them to support their service users on a range of legal issues. Trusted intermediaries are often front-line workers from community or public services who perform an increasingly vital role in helping others to navigate legal problems, connect them to sources of legal help and support the early interventions that are needed to avoid problems escalating. Trusted intermediaries provide people with legal information, make referrals to legal services, help clients fill out forms, and accompany people to meetings with legal service providers, including providing interpreting help. Community workers cannot give legal advice, but they can and do help people better understand the law and navigate the legal system.

Funding

With funding from the Ministry of Justice, this programme has enabled Law for Life to work proactively with frontline agencies working with vulnerable women who are at risk of experiencing housing and homelessness problems. The programme expanded activity to two new regions including North West and South West England. The purpose of the grant was to test how the trusted intermediary model can work in a variety of locations and support underserved communities outside of London where advice provision is less widely available. Evaluation of this training was also intended to generate evidence of trusted intermediaries' impact which may enable the Department to make more informed policy decisions in this area in the future.

Services delivered

Between February and March 2021, the programme delivered training to 44 front line organisations including NHS social prescribers, NHS link workers, women's shelter staff, food bank volunteers and drug and alcohol support workers. A total of 49 participants attended courses consisting of three modules of interactive housing rights training delivered online. These courses were supplemented by training videos and legal information guides published on the [Advicenow website](#). Training videos were viewed 1,411 times and online housing guides received 10,624 page views. It is anticipated that over twelve months the programme will reach 5,256 vulnerable women experiencing housing issues.

Methodology

The evaluation gathers evidence in the form of pre and post training participant surveys and semi-structured interviews focussing on measuring changes in legal capability. The questions in the survey aimed to collect data on the knowledge and confidence required to support vulnerable women with housing issues. This was augmented with the semi-structured interviews three months following completion of the course.

Findings

The evaluation provides evidence of positive changes across all legal capability measures. Objective testing indicates improved knowledge of participants in recognising and understanding disrepair, dealing with evictions and the understanding the role of tenancy agreements. Improvements in confidence were substantial across all aspects of housing covered in the course.

Evidence of wider impact linked to the course requires cautious interpretation. This is because attribution when considering cause-effect is difficult in light of the small numbers of people surveyed. There was also no control group. There was a short follow-up period which makes it difficult for participants to have time to apply their knowledge and report on its usefulness. However, the qualitative data provides a rich and valuable data set to build on our understanding of the ways in which participants were able to implement their newly acquired knowledge to assist vulnerable women with housing problems. These include signposting and referrals, working with other parties to advocate for vulnerable women and identifying housing rights that enable participants to take swift action to prevent further escalation of housing issues.

The programme provides important evidence about the potential role of social prescribers in bridging the health and advice needs of vulnerable women. In addition, research into the barriers experienced by participants working with women point to the challenges of digital exclusion as an aspect of the impact of Covid-19.

1.2 Background and purpose of the programme

Law for Life has designed and delivered education courses on housing rights to trusted intermediaries in the London area for some years, primarily funded by Trust for London. However, the need for similar courses for trusted Intermediaries in regions outside London has been growing. The Ministry of Justice was able to fund additional courses in the North West and South West of England where extensive need had been identified through the existence of housing advice deserts. A housing desert refers to an area where there is a dearth of services tailored to address housing need advice. There has also been substantial demand reflected in requests for housing and homelessness course attendance to Law for Life from organisations

based outside London.

A trusted intermediary is a frontline worker or trusted local community member who encounters a legal need and aims to develop a course of action for tackling it¹. This usually includes helping users to access relevant legal information and connecting them to sources of advice or representation they may otherwise not have been able to access themselves. There remains a relatively limited evidence base for legal services designed around trusted intermediaries, with a range of barriers and challenges for organisations to develop robust evaluations.² Primarily, where resources are constrained, many organisations will prioritise delivery over impact measurement. As a result, current evidence around trusted intermediaries and their wider impact is limited in the justice field in the United Kingdom. The focus of this programme is housing. It is critical for individuals and their families to understand their housing rights and know their options in light of the significant consequences on lives of families including their children of inadequate or unsafe housing or a lack of housing. There are safeguards to protect security and avert evictions with provisions around adequate and reasonable notice, consultations, processes and availability for remedies and redress all recognised as elements to adhere to human rights.³

The purpose of this programme is to test how the trusted intermediary model can work in a variety of locations and support underserved communities outside of London where advice provision is less widely available. Evaluation of this programme may also generate evidence of trusted intermediaries' impact which enables stakeholders to make more informed policy decisions in this area in the future.

1.3 Aims and intended outcomes of the programme

The overall aim of the programme was to improve the legal capability of trusted intermediaries in order to support women in precarious or vulnerable housing situations, including those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. In particular, the courses aim to ensure community volunteers and frontline staff are able to gain confidence in identifying and addressing relevant legal issues related to:

- housing in the private rented sector including basic tenancy rights

¹ 'Trusted Help: The role of community workers as trusted intermediaries who help people with legal problems' Mathews J, Thomson K, Smith G, Carol Lee C, Lassond, J (2018) Law Foundation Ontario. <https://cleoconnect.ca/resource/research/trusted-help-role-community-workers-trusted-intermediaries-help-people-legal-problems/>

² Effectiveness of public legal education initiatives: A literature review. Wintersteiger, L. Morse, S. Olatukon, M. Morris, C.J. Legal Services Board, 2021. <https://legalservicesboard.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/PLE-systematic-review-report-Feb-2021.pdf>

³ Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights & UN Habitat, 'The Right to Adequate Housing: Fact Sheet 21/Rev1, 3-7' https://www.ohchr.org/documents/publications/fs21_rev_1_housing_en.pdf

- how to deal with s21 eviction
- dealing with disrepairs
- how to deal effectively with local authorities in the context of homelessness application process

To achieve this, the activities provide an overview of key legal concepts and processes underpinning common housing problems experienced in the private rented sector. In consultation with training participants, the North West course was adapted to address the legal obligations of local authorities towards people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Specific Aims:

To increase awareness and knowledge of trusted intermediaries around key aspects of housing (such as contracts, disrepairs, evictions) and homelessness law.

To increase the skills and confidence of trusted intermediaries to address legal issues around housing and be able to support women in precarious or vulnerable housing situations, including those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

1.4 Activities

Promotion

Each course was delivered in two targeted regions, South West England and North West England. The courses were promoted mainly through social media and email invitations targeting community organisations in the regions. These organisations offer help and support on housing issues but staff had not received formal training in this area of law. Local organisations were identified through online research and by leveraging Law for Life's existing contacts and links with groups working on women's rights and housing rights across the country. Law for Life staff also promoted the courses at two online events for social prescribers where the need for knowledge and confidence to deal with housing and homelessness were highlighted.

The South West course was oversubscribed so it was closed within a week, indicating significant legal need in the realm of housing rights. Most of the registrations were from Cornwall due to Law for Life's existing links with the region as well as the fact that the area is a legal advice desert facing an unprecedented housing crisis⁴ which has been leaving many vulnerable residents homeless. This aligns with wider evidence of gaps in housing advice service provision in this

⁴ A prefect storm: The scale of Cornwall's housing crisis, ITV news, July 2021 Accessed 16th July
<https://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/2021-07-09/a-perfect-storm-the-scale-of-cornwalls-housing-crisis>

geographical area.⁵

The North West course was promoted at a social prescribers' event and was also immediately oversubscribed by social prescribers in the North West region, working either within community groups or the NHS. This interest by social prescribers and community organisations provided Law for Life with an opportunity to learn about the potential for upscaling legal education training to social prescribers.

Course structure

The courses were structured in three modules composed of online workshops (appx. two hours) and videos (appx. 30 minutes) that volunteers watched in advance.⁶ The videos provide highly accessible legal information on a specific issue, while the workshop modules offer opportunities for participants to deepen their understanding of the law and build their skills and confidence in dealing with concrete situations that they are likely to encounter in their life and work. The workshops were delivered by Law for Life staff together with expert legal professionals or specialist advisers.⁷ These interactive workshops address common problems, tactics, skills elements and shared solutions.⁸ Attendees were also signposted to specific resources on the Advicenow website and received copies of Advicenow guides where appropriate.

2.1 Methodology for the evaluation

The likelihood of relatively small sample sizes from each course and the nature of participants working in a range of settings in the community resulted in the decision to build on previous evidence of course outcomes via mixed methods suited to the scale and nature of the programme. Therefore, the approach to evaluation is reflective of the small sample sizes of people likely to attend the courses as well as the number that can potentially be reached with more in-depth survey techniques. A combination of online pre and post course questionnaires were sent to participants before the start of the course and at the end of the last module via online survey links. This pre and post approach to the questionnaires was designed to gauge

⁵ Society exposes catastrophic housing advice deserts, Law Society Gazette April 2019, Accessed 23rd July 2021 <https://www.lawgazette.co.uk/practice/society-exposes-catastrophic-housing-advice-deserts/5070051.article>

⁶ A summary was given of the content covered in the videos and attendees were separated into break-out groups to look at scenarios and decide how they could advise in specific situations, reporting back their decisions to the main group, with the opportunity to ask questions.

⁷ Legal professionals involved in the design and delivery of the two courses were David Thomas, Lecturer, Birkbeck College, University of London, and Angharad Monk, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers.

⁸ Curriculum included 'Basics on housing rights in the private rented sector (PRS), Videos on 'Tenancies and other housing agreements', online interactive workshop on private sector tenancies (2 hours). Dealing with disrepairs Video on disrepair in the private rented sector online interactive workshop of (2 hours). Dealing with evictions, Video on 'How to deal with Section 21 evictions' online interactive workshop (2 hours). After consultation with participants, the North West course also covered a local authority's legal obligations to help individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

growth in knowledge and utility of this information and developing skills in their practice about housing law and its possible application. Doing the pre- training questionnaire and a post training questionnaire enables a comparison and assessment of learning growth to be made using the data on these aspects.⁹ All questionnaires were matched to participants that complete the full course. Additional content adapted to the North West course on aspects of homelessness law could not be reliably evaluated due to the very small sample size.

Semi-structured follow up interviews were conducted with a sample of volunteer participants via a video call/telephone. Google Analytics data was collected to analyse website usage and YouTube visits. Some adaptations and changes were made during the evolution of the evaluation process to reflect the iterative process taken in the methodological approach to enable the evaluative practice of building, refining, and improving on the programme.

Key to data collection tools

PreCQ	Pre-course online questionnaire, sent to all registered participants before the start of the course
PostCQ	Post-course online questionnaire, sent to all participants at the end of the last session of the course
FollQ	Follow-up online questionnaire, sent to all participants three months after end of course
SSInt	Semi-structured interviews conducted with sample of participants via videocall/telephone
GA	Google Analytics

Designing the interview schedules

The programme designed a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix B), which permits an open-ended interview in which participants’ concerns and experiences can be included as well as a deeper exploration of the key research topics covered. The in-depth interviews aimed to gain further insight into the perceived effect of the trusted Intermediaries course, along with their legal knowledge about housing rights. Specifically, the schedule aimed to cover:

- The role of participant and who they help in the community
- Whether participating in the training had improved their ability to recognise and support people with housing issues
- Whether participants felt better able to support someone with homelessness processes, gathering evidence, preparing a vulnerability letter in the three months following the

⁹ L Curran ‘A Research and Evaluation Report for the Bendigo Health–Justice Partnership: A Partnership between Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Bendigo Community Health Services’ (October 31, 2016 published 22 November 2017, ANU & ARC Justice Bendigo Ltd, 37. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3076407>

course

- Whether the course impacted their confidence in dealing with housing issues
- Whether participants were more able to signpost effectively following the course

Participants on both the South West and North West course were invited to take part in interviews three months after attending the course. In total, eight participants from the South West and one participant from the North West volunteered to take part in interviews.

Legal capability indicators

Indicators were derived from the primary domains of legal capability developed in Law for Life's public legal education evaluation framework¹⁰. These include the ability to recognise and frame legal situations, the ability to find out more about a legal situation and the ability to deal with a legal situation. Indicators are developed to enable us to measure whether the specific legal capability objectives were met for the evaluation. These specific legal capability objectives are as follows to:

- Increase knowledge of key legal issues of housing rights amongst trained trusted intermediaries
- Increase skills and confidence of trusted intermediaries in addressing issues around housing

Objective testing was introduced by asking participants to take a quiz on key aspects of housing rights covered in the course before and after the course to measure how much their knowledge had been affected by what they had learnt on the course. Participants were given three scenarios about a fictitious tenant living in private rented accommodation. They were asked which statements they thought were true or false. Statements concerned the tenant's rights and responsibilities regarding:

- tenancy agreements
- disrepairs
- challenging a Section 21 eviction notice
- applying to her local council when she is made homeless by her landlord
- the legal obligations of her local authority to provide her with temporary accommodation

¹⁰ Public Legal Evaluation Framework. Collard, S. Deeming, C. Wintersteiger, L. Jones, M. Seargeant, J. Public Legal Education Network (now Law for Life) 2012:4 <https://www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/geography/migrated/documents/pfrc1201.pdf>

2.2 Programme outputs

Course participation

In total 49 participants attended the courses from 44 organisations. Intermediaries work with people experiencing housing issues on average nine times every month. Over twelve months the programme is anticipated to reach 5,256 beneficiaries experiencing housing issues. Information about the characteristic of the participants is available at Appendix A.

South West region course: 24th February - 10th March 2021

28 participants attended the course representing 21 organisations, attendees were predominantly from the Cornwall area.¹¹ They comprised staff and volunteers from a mixture of organisations, including three social prescribers. Organisations represented included:

- women's centres and women's refuges,
- organisations helping women with addiction and substance abuse,
- an organisation supporting BAME women who had suffered isolation and racial discrimination,
- organisation helping remove barriers to employment,
- education welfare organisation,
- voluntary organisations supporting female offenders on probation.
- a food bank

North West region course: 17th March 2021- 31st March 2021

On average 20 participants attended the course representing 24 organisations.¹² The majority of attendees (25) were based in Manchester or the Greater Manchester area, with three coming from Liverpool or the Wirral, one from Cumbria and one from Cheshire. Attendees were all social prescribers. Their organisations included:

- 16 working within the NHS:
 - GP practices
 - Primary care networks
 - hospitals
- Citizens Advice,

¹¹ 47 registered and a limit of 30 places were offered. Eight social prescribers applied but were unable to attend because of oversubscription - most of these attended a special social prescribers' course on housing rights funded by the Bar Standards Board and delivered in May/June.

¹² 53 participants registered with 30 spaces offered at a maximum. This course commenced just prior to Easter holidays in order to meet the funder deadline. The third week unfortunately therefore took place when most schools were already on holiday. Given that most attendees were female, it is reasonable to assume that they struggled to attend the course due to commencement of leave.

- organisation tackling social deprivation,
- mental health support services.

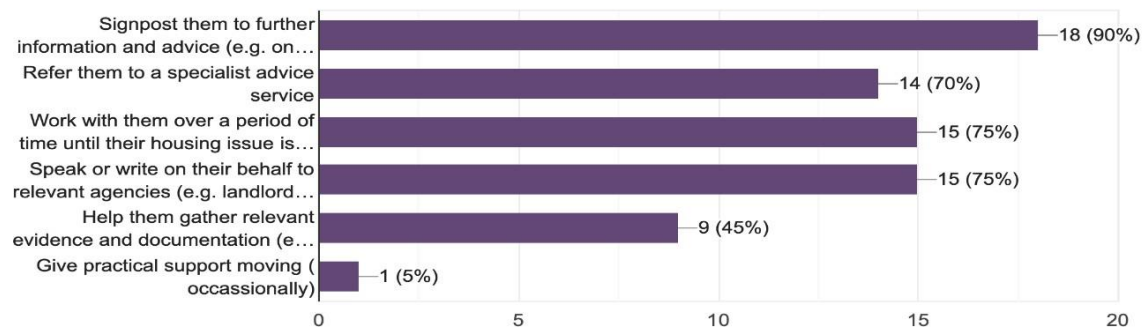
Role of social prescribers

As a result of the numbers of applications by social prescribers to the North West course, Law for Life carried out research and consultation into their roles and capacity to provide sustained support beyond signposting or referring to specialist advice services. To this end, questions were included in the North West pre-course surveys and post-course interviews undertaken with course attendees, most of whom were social prescribers. While roles varied depending upon the health provider they worked for, most reported that they would be able to allocate a reasonable period of time (often 10-12 weeks) to those patients they supported, which might include a range of interventions, referral to specialist services and regular appointments. The emergence of social prescribers as potential trusted intermediaries able to provide advice and support to women in precarious housing situations has been one of the unintended consequences of this programme.

Role of social prescribers in helping with housing issues

When you are helping someone who has housing issues, what action are you able to take as part of your role? (please tick as many boxes as apply to you)

20 responses



The majority of participants were able to undertake basic signposting and referrals, extending practical support with important elements of early interventions such as contacting relevant agencies on behalf of clients. A substantial minority also supported clients to collect evidence and preparing documentation.

When asked what barriers they faced in taking these actions, 85% of participants stated 'lack of knowledge', 25% said 'lack of time' and 20% mentioned 'not knowing who or where to go to for help'. The number of people they were able to work with was significantly higher than the South West course attendees (which was a more mixed group), even though there were fewer

of them (an average of 45 per month per trusted intermediary compared to 24). The social prescribers also helped more women with housing issues (an average of 14 per month compared to seven).

This data will be an important factor in future as we recognise the critical importance of training social prescribers of increasing their knowledge and capability given limited time and resources they have but their significant reach in terms of their ability to proffer practical support, assist in earlier intervention for people with housing problems.

2.3 Reach of the programme: Indirect beneficiaries

In order to establish how many people were reached indirectly through our programme, participants were asked to how many people they provide direct assistance on average each month in the pre-course survey, as well as asking how many people participants assist specifically with housing problems each month.

In total, the programme reach over twelve months to vulnerable people requiring help with housing issues was 5,256. There was substantial variation in the numbers reached by participants, with some assisting significantly more people.

Participants from the South West estimated that they provided direct assistance to 572 people each month, an average of 24 beneficiaries each.¹³ The number of people they helped with housing problems were lower, but still significant. In total 166 people per month were reached, an average of seven per participant per month.¹⁴

Participants from the North West estimated that they provided direct assistance to 893 people, on average 45 per month.¹⁵ In total the number of these assisted with housing issues was 272 per month, an average of 14 per participant per month.¹⁶

Reach of training videos and digital legal information resources

Housing guides promoted during the course and for a three-month period following the course attracted 10,624 page-views.¹⁷ Dealing with section 21 evictions attracted the highest page-views (8,136) followed by What to do if you are homeless (1,570). Guides covering challenging a homelessness decision (405) and what to do if you are threatened with homelessness (513). YouTube videos introducing topics to be covered in the webinars, also attracted extra views during both courses:

¹³ Answers ranging from 0 - 90 per month across 28 attendees, 38% said they saw 30 or more women a month.

¹⁴ ranging from 0 - 30 per month across 28 attendees, 37% said they helped 10 or more women a month

¹⁵ ranging from 0 - 104 per month across 22 attendees, 55% said they saw 30 or more women a month

¹⁶ ranging from 0 - 50 per month across 22 attendees, 55% said they saw 10 or more women a month.

¹⁷ It is not currently possible to differentiate analytics of course users, public users and users that course participants passed links to others within their organisation.

Housing rights for women: Tenancies and other housing arrangements	237 views
Housing rights for women: Dealing with Section 21 evictions	276 views
Housing rights for women: Dealing with poor housing conditions and repairs	571 views
Housing rights for women: Dealing with local authorities in the context of homelessness	327 views

3.1 Legal capability evaluation findings

The programme aimed to improve the levels of legal capability of the participants. This section reports the findings from before and after questionnaires for each of the evaluation indicators established for the legal capability outcomes within scope. In order to gain a more objective assessment of whether participants' understanding of housing law had increased after the course, questions on both surveys focused on specific aspects of the course.¹⁸

Not all participants completed both pre-course and post-course questionnaires. On the South West course 25 participants completed pre-course surveys and 14 completed post course surveys. In the North West 20 completed pre-course surveys and 7 completed post-course surveys. The data was isolated to those who completed both surveys.

3.2 South West course findings

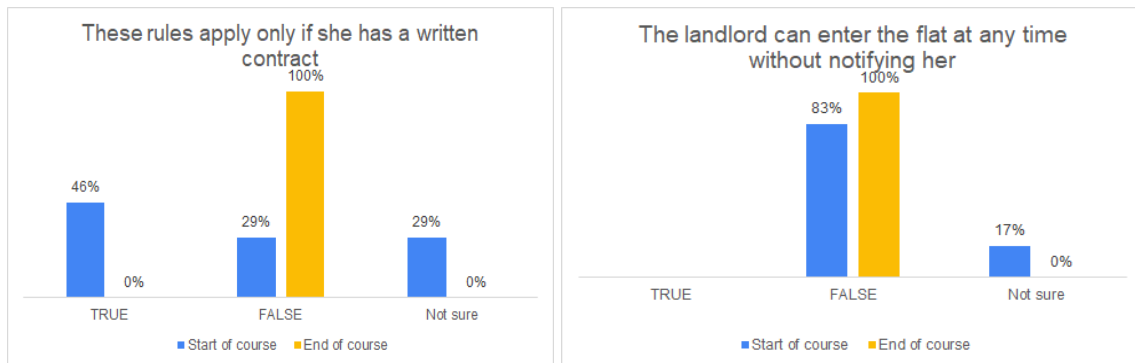
The following section reports the findings of any changes in the measures of survey participants' legal capability with a focus on increased knowledge of key legal issues of housing rights amongst trained trusted intermediaries including the role of tenancy agreements, rights in the context of disrepairs and in the context of eviction.¹⁹

¹⁸ Understanding tenancy agreements and contracts (participants were asked to identify whether six statements were True or False); Understanding disrepairs (participants were given a scenario about damp in a property and had to identify whether the tenant or the landlord was responsible for fixing it under the new legislation on disrepairs); Understanding Section 21 evictions (participants were given a scenario in which a tenant had been issued with a Section 21 notice and were asked to identify first steps in challenging the eviction notice then were asked to highlight advantages and disadvantages of challenging an eviction notice.

¹⁹ Participants were posed questions around the two following statements:
 Zara rented a flat on her own from a private landlord for six months. She is paying regular rent. Please say whether you think the following statements are true or false (or you are unsure about it).
 Zara has a problem with her bedroom. When it rains, the plaster and carpet under her bedroom window get damp. This makes the room really cold and impossible to sleep in. Please say whether you think it is the landlords' responsibility or her responsibility to fix this problem in the following scenarios.

3.3 Understanding tenancy agreements and contracts

A substantial change in knowledge was indicated by the data collected for this evaluation with regard to understanding the role of a written contract in the housing context, rising from 29% to 100%. Prior to the course 83% of participants recognised the rights of landlords to enter a flat, with a further 17% unsure. This increased to 100% at the end of the course.

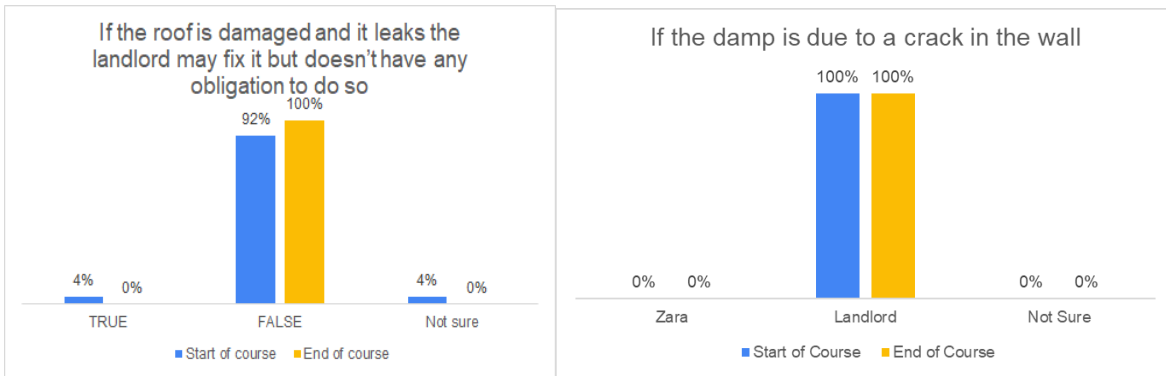


3.4 Understanding disrepairs

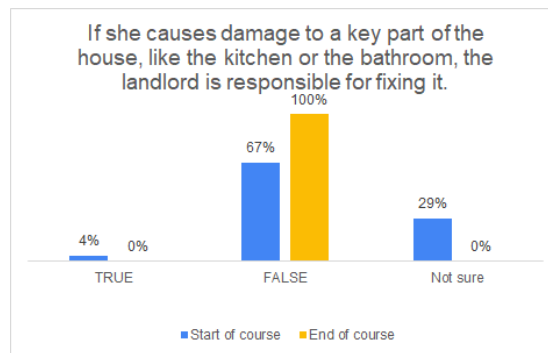
Strong pre-existing knowledge was evidenced in the data collected for this evaluation with regard to external repairs. 92% of participants before the course were aware of the responsibilities of the landlord for roof damage rising to 100% after the course. All participants were aware of responsibility for damp caused by a crack in walls.

There was some improvement in participants' understanding of the responsibilities to repair indicated in the data, with 100% of participants offering the correct answer at the end of the course, increasing from 92% offering the correct answer at the outset and a further 4% being unsure.

All participants were aware of landlord responsibility if damp is caused by structural issues before the course, so there was no change in understanding.

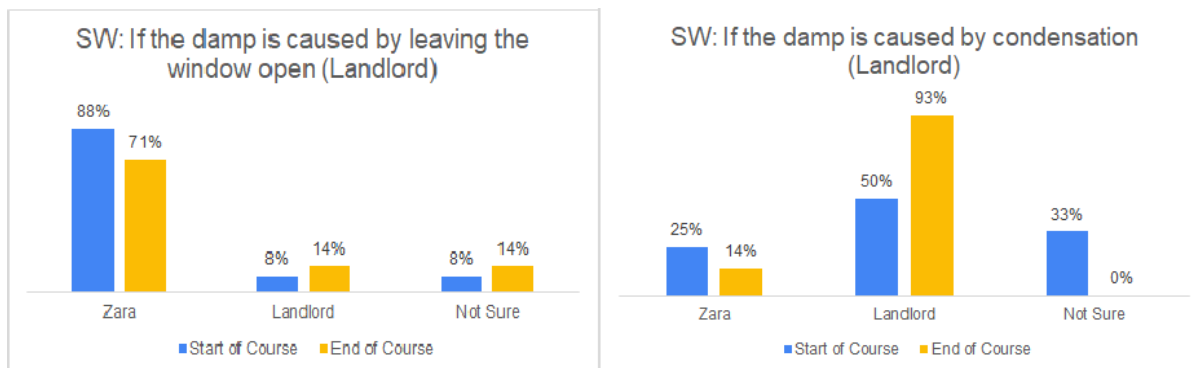


A moderate change in knowledge was identified regarding responsibility for fixing damage caused by the tenant, from 67% to 100%.



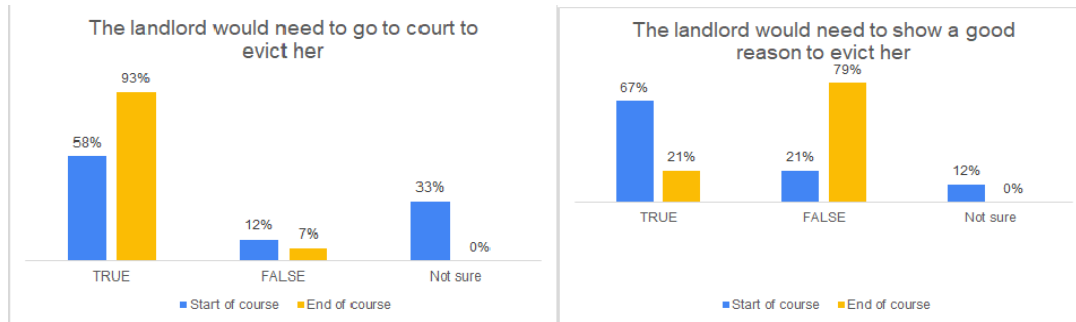
The data suggests that participant awareness of responsibility for addressing damp as a result of an open window increased slightly from 8% to 14%.

Understanding of the landlord's responsibility to address problems of damp caused by condensation increased significantly for course participants, from 50% before the course to 93% afterwards.



3.5 Understanding evictions

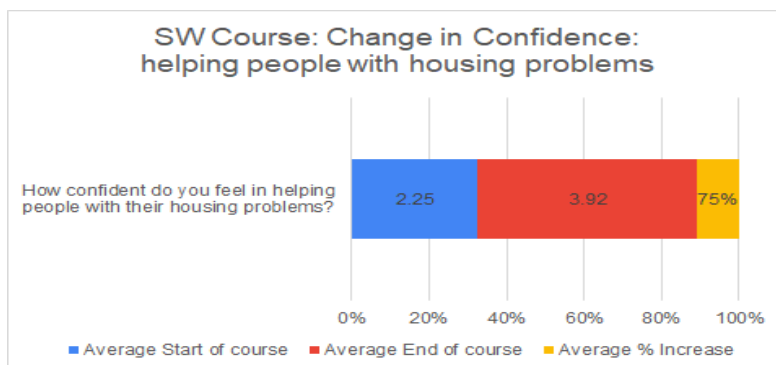
A significant increase in knowledge was evidenced in the data with regard to the need for the landlord to go to court in order to evict - at the start of the course 58% gave a correct answer rising by 35% to 93% at the end of the course. The most significant increase in knowledge related to the grounds required for eviction, increasing from 21% before the course to 79% after.



3.6 Confidence measures

Participants were asked to report on their confidence in helping the people they work with to deal with housing problems and also their confidence in dealing with housing issues in relation to specific scenarios. Participants were asked how confident they would feel on a scale from 1 - 5, 1 being not confident at all, and 5 being very confident.²⁰

The average confidence rating for this indicator increased from 2.25 before the course, to 3.92 after the course. This is an increase of 75%, indicating that participants became far more confident in helping people with housing problems.



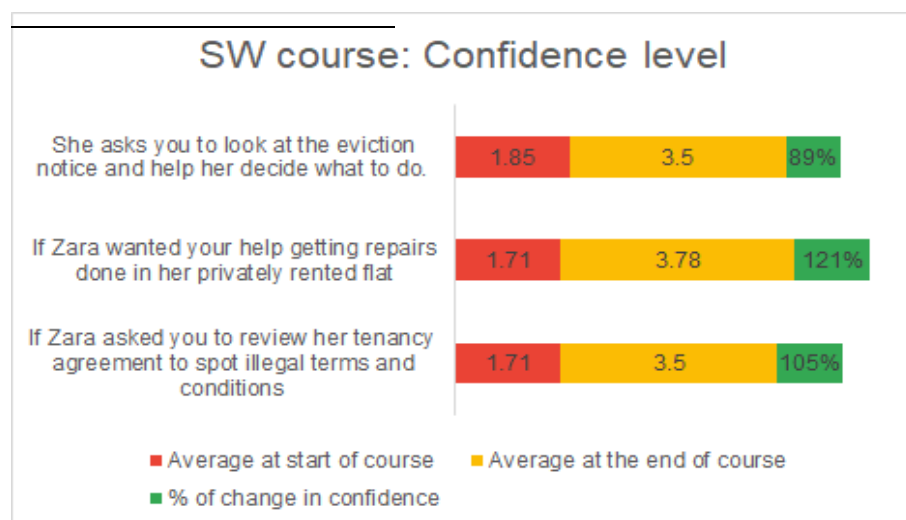
Scenarios based confidence questions were also posed. The first scenario considered

²⁰ A general confidence question was posed as follows "How confident are you in helping people with housing problems?"

confidence in helping to decide what action to take with an eviction notice. The average confidence rating for this indicator increased from 1.87 before the course, to 3.5 after the course, representing an increase of 87%.

The second scenario considered the right to repair. The average confidence rating for this indicator increased from 1.75 before the course, to 3.78 after the course, an increase of 116%.

The final confidence measure concerned reviewing a tenancy agreement for illegal terms. The average confidence rating for this indicator increased from 1.71 before the course, to 3.5 after the course. This is an increase of 105%.



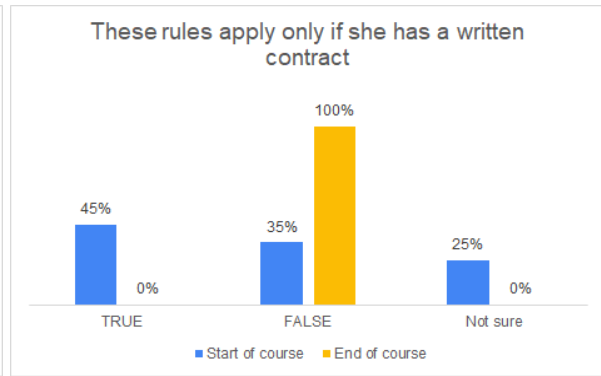
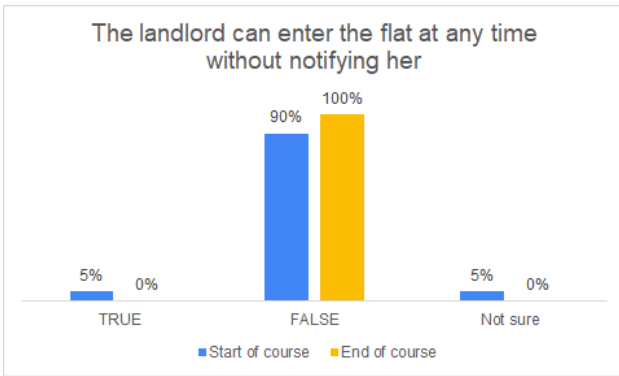
4.1 North West course evaluation findings

The following section reports the findings of any changes in the measures of survey participants' legal capability with a focus on increased knowledge of housing rights amongst trained trusted intermediaries including the role of tenancy agreements, rights in the context of disrepairs and in the context of eviction.²¹

4.2 Understanding tenancy agreements and contracts

There was evidence in the data of strong previous understanding on some housing issues. There was some improvement in understanding of tenants' rights to privacy (an increase from 90% before the course to 100% afterwards).

²¹ Participants were posed questions around the two following statements see footnote 14 above.

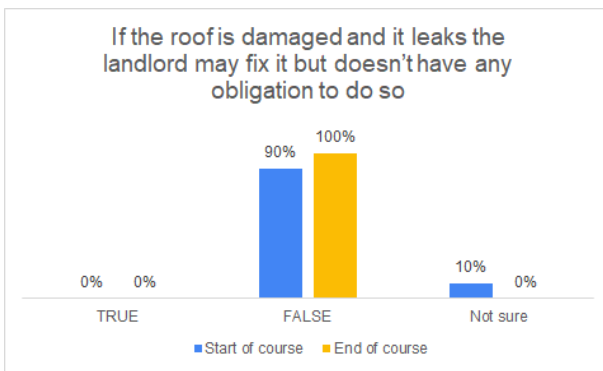
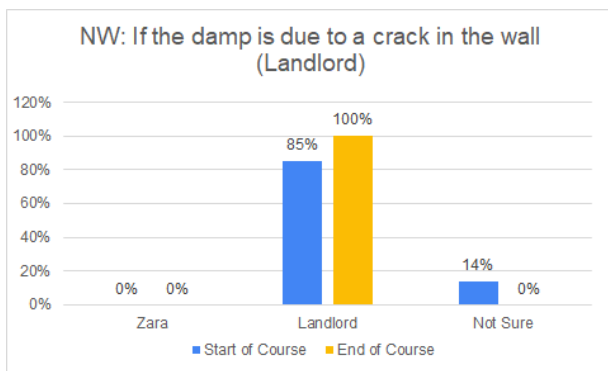


There was a substantial increase in knowledge related to the role of a written contract, increasing from 35% before the course and increasing to 100% after they had taken part in the course.

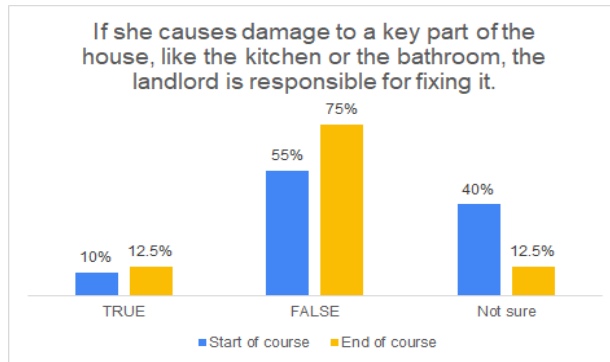
4.3 Understanding disrepairs

The data suggests that the participants had good knowledge of the rights to repair pertaining to external parts of a property, with understanding increasing from 90% before the course to 100% afterwards of responsibility for damage to a roof.

Understanding of the small percentage of participants who were not already aware of the landlord’s responsibility when damp is caused by structural issues before the course increased after taking part in the course, from 85% to 100%.

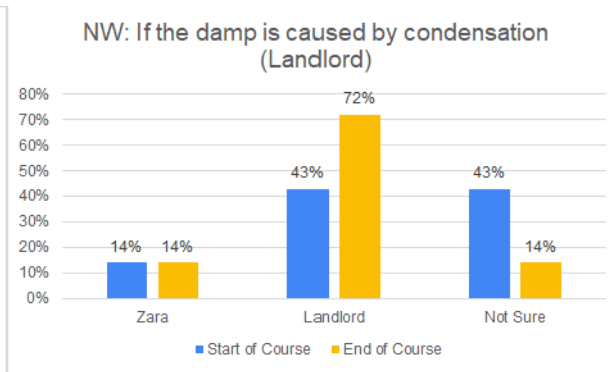
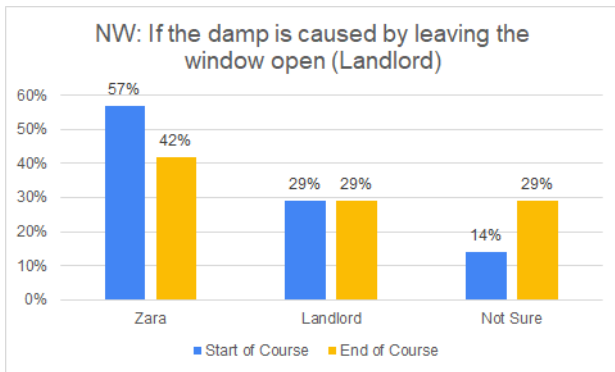


There was a moderate increase in knowledge over who had responsibility for damage within the house, rising from 55% before the course to 75% after taking part in the course.



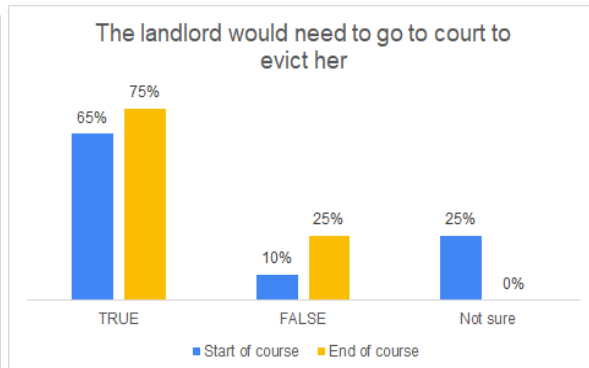
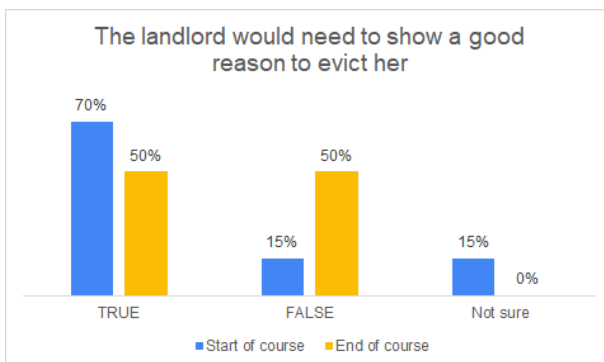
As with South West participants, the findings suggest a level of uncertainty regarding the question about responsibilities of landlords if the window is open, with the percentage of participants identifying the correct answer staying the same at 29%.

Understanding of the landlord’s responsibility to address problems of damp caused by condensation increased significantly for course participants, from 43% before the course to 72% afterwards.



4.4 Understanding evictions

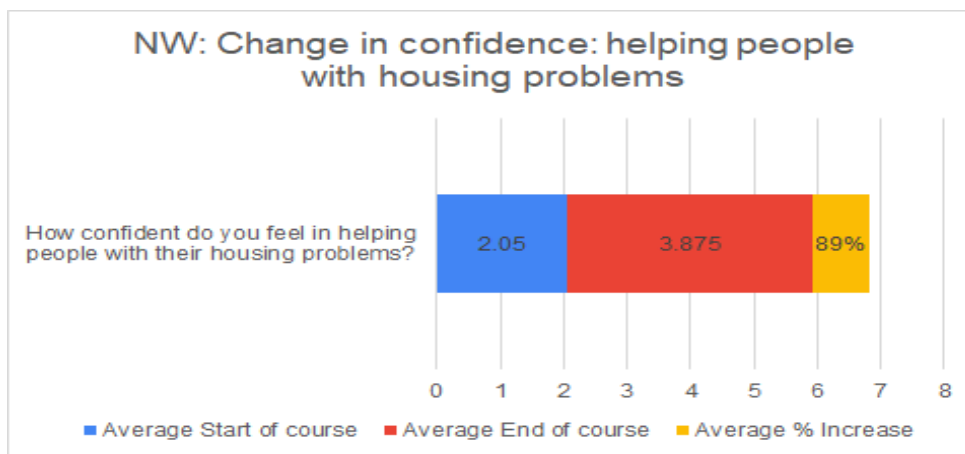
There was a significant improvement in levels of knowledge about the grounds required for eviction, increasing from 15% before the course to 50% after as well as in the recognition of the need for a landlord to go to court to evict a tenant (rising from 65% before the court to 75% afterwards).



4.5 Confidence measures

Participants were asked to report on their confidence in helping the people they work with deal with housing problems and also their confidence in dealing with housing issues in specific scenarios. Participants were asked how confident they would feel on a scale from 1 - 5, 1 being not confident at all and 5 being very confident.²²

The average confidence rating for this indicator increased from 2.05 before the course, to 3.875 at the end of the course. This substantial increase of 89% indicates a significant improvement in participants' confidence in helping people with housing problems.

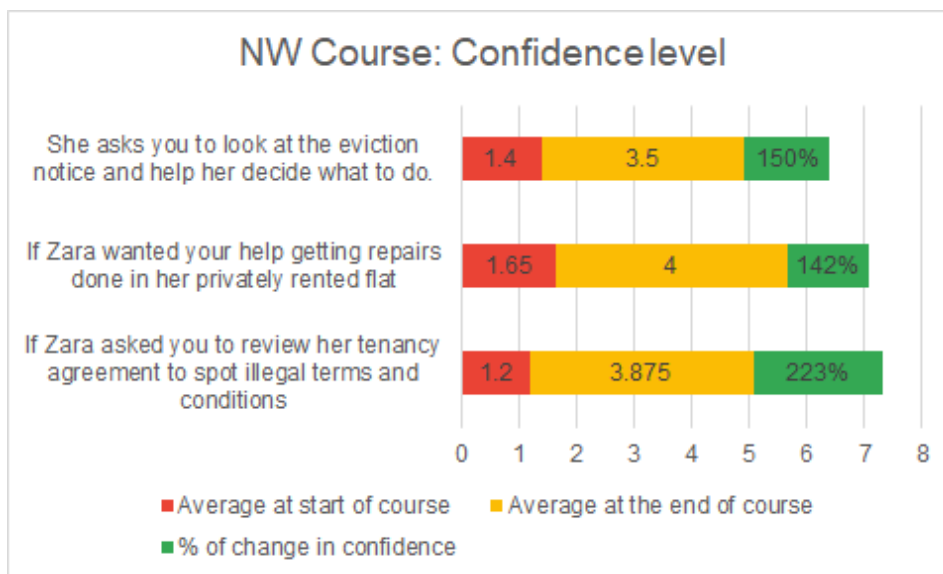


In the second scenario-based confidence measures the average confidence rating for the first eviction issue at the start of course, the average level of confidence was 1.4. At the end of course, the average rose to 3.5, showing an increase in confidence of 150%. This indicates that participants on both courses, had become more confident in dealing with eviction notices.

The average confidence rating for the second indicator increased from 1.65 before the course to 4 after the course, an increase of 142%. This indicates a significant increase in the confidence of participants on both courses in helping people to get their repairs done by their landlords.

Confidence with regard to reviewing a tenancy agreement rose from 1.2 before the course, to 3.87 after the course, an increase of 223%. This indicates a significant increase in the confidence of participants on both courses in assisting people to check their tenancy agreements.

²² A general confidence question was posed as follows: How confident are you in helping people with housing problems?



5.1 Wider impact of the programme

Wider impact data was collected from participants through a combination of online surveys and inter-views.

Characteristics of the interview sample

The programme set out to understand the potential for wider impacts. In particular, to find out in what ways the participants had applied their knowledge with their individual clients.²³

We interviewed seven participants from the South West course and one participant from the North West course. Key details of the eight interviewees are described in table:

Interviewee role	Organisation
Senior social prescriber	Citizens Advice (NW)
Social prescribing link worker	Eden Project/PCN (SW)
Social prescriber	2 GP practices, Cornwall (SW)
Social prescriber	Pentreath Ltd (Mental Health project) (SW)
Social prescribing manager	GP practice, Cornwall (SW)
Community champion (volunteer)	Food Bank, Cornwall (SW)
Manager	Inspiring Women Network (vol sector org) (SW)
Criminal justice support	Women's Centre, Cornwall (SW)

Demographic data is included in Appendix A.

²³ The purposive sample and recruitment process for the follow up study was described at above.

5.2 Findings of the interview study

The interview study was held via video call or telephone. The interviews took (on average) one hour. The schedule of sixteen questions has been grouped around key areas of information sought about the programme.

- The role of participants and who they help in the community
- Whether participating in the training had improved their ability to recognise and support people with housing issues
- Whether participants felt better able to support someone with homelessness processes, gathering evidence, preparing a vulnerability letter in the three months following the course
- Whether the course impacted their confidence in dealing with housing issues
- Whether participants were more able to signpost effectively following the course

The role of participants and who they help in the community

Participants interviewed were drawn from a variety of organisations, including a foodbank, a women's centre, Citizen's Advice, and an organisation supporting women from immigrant communities. Four worked as social prescribers, either based in GP surgeries or attached to voluntary sector organisations.

The people they helped included;

- those referred from GPs with mental health issues;
- women involved in the criminal justice system referred by Probation Service;
- people with mental health issues seeking employment;
- People on very low incomes using foodbanks;
- Isolated women from immigrant communities;

Participants indicated that they usually helped people over a period of time, often working intensively to address a range of issues as well as housing, and liaising with several other agencies. Some advocated on behalf of those they helped. They indicated that they attended the course because housing issues were a significant barrier to improving the health and wellbeing of people in vulnerable circumstances.

Whether participating in the training had improved their ability to recognise and support people with housing issues.

All of the interviewees reported that the training had substantially improved their ability to

identify and help people with housing issues.

“We are receiving frequent referrals for people whose wellbeing is affected by ongoing or imminent housing issues. I had little experience and now feel much better informed and competent to understand nuances and key criteria consulting notes and links.”

“When we encounter clients *in distress that* disables them because they’re overwhelmed by what’s happening. We support them even if they’re no longer confident to talk to DWP, the Housing Office or doctors. We can help them gather evidence to build a case for a homelessness application or communicate with their landlord. What we can’t do is give information and advice we’re not certain about, but we can signpost to other organisations that can.”

Case studies - Examples of housing support provided in the three months following participation in the training.

A number of examples were provided by participants of the kinds of support they had provided following the course. Examples include providing assistance to ensure suitable offers of accommodation were made. There were also examples of direct assistance being offered with women at risk of eviction:

Case study 1

One woman recovering from drug dependency and ‘sofa surfing’ had been offered accommodation in a city several miles away from the family and social networks she considered this essential to help maintain her mental health. Using their knowledge that the woman was in priority need, the social prescriber spoke to the local council and was able to get her into temporary accommodation and then social housing.

Case study 2

One woman was a victim of hate crime, which affected both her and her young child. Aware of her rights as being in priority need, the social prescriber contacted the regional organisation responsible for allocating social housing, who increased her banding, enabling her to move to a more appropriate area, where she has settled into her new home with good neighbours and her child is finally able to sleep at night.

Case study 3

A woman who was very stressed as a carer for her mother had been arrested for drug-driving after she took cannabis. Although she had lived in her private rented accommodation for 15 years without incident, her landlord served her with a Section 21 notice. She was very frightened and panicked at the letter. The interviewee was able to explain what it was and what to do next. She stated “before the course I wouldn’t have been able to do that. It’s important to be able to

do that in the moment - if I'd had to look it up or ask someone else, it wouldn't have helped her."

Case study 4

A woman was "living in a property that was not ideal and was struggling financially. She was going to ask her landlord to serve her a Section 21 eviction notice because she could no longer afford the rent (although she wasn't yet in arrears - had used her savings up) which would have made her 'intentionally homeless' and she would not have been able to apply to the council for temporary accommodation". The interviewee was able to give her the woman the right information with confidence and "signpost her towards getting financial aid so she could pay her rent and avoid eviction.

Whether participants felt better able to support someone with homelessness processes, gathering evidence, preparing a vulnerability letter in the three months following the course

Several interviewees reported that, since completing the course, they had been better able to support vulnerable people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness:

"Before I did the course, I knew a little and would usually signpost to other services, e.g., Citizens Advice, but this has given me the knowledge and confidence to be able to support a person and give reassurance, which helps improve their mental health in the short term and establishes a relationship of trust in what I say - better than referring them to Housing Office."

"What we have learnt from the course will be invaluable in my role as a social prescriber. Since October 2021, I have supported three homeless people and three people wishing to move due to different circumstances."

Participants had not had experience of contributing to personal health plans yet, as this is a comparatively recent development, but were aware that they had the knowledge of housing right and legislation to facilitate that:

"I'm not doing PHPs at the moment - [colleague] does that - but changes mean I will start doing it and that will be better for clients."

One of the interviewees had mentioned during the South West course that social prescribers were able to assist GPs with preparing vulnerability letters to determine priority need in homelessness applications, so this information was only included in the North West course content. However, their ability to implement this knowledge depends upon factors such as their

role within the primary care network, GP policy and practice and whether they are based in a GP surgery - most social prescribers cover at least two surgeries with several GPs in each, which restricts their time and ability to support in the preparation of vulnerability letters.

“It's frustrating! I can see what the housing officers aren't doing - I could ask more specific questions but Housing Officers can still refuse to put vulnerable women on their list. One woman was offered a house last week - there are concerns about her mental health and she has two children, one who has ADHD, one in special school. They'd only give her a 2-bedroomed place, but her children cannot share because of their needs, so she shares a room with one child, who sleeps in a mattress on the floor. She missed out on two suitable houses because of an error by Homefinder. I challenged this and now she will get a 3-bedroomed house which will reduce the family's stress considerably.

Whether the course impacted the participants' confidence in dealing with housing issues

All interviewees reported an increase in confidence in dealing with housing issues, which enabled them to provide information and support for those they helped rather than signposting to other organisations, many of which may have long waiting lists.

“Before the course, I dreaded when people asked me about housing issues - now I'm more confident and will ask them about their housing issues.”

“I now feel more confident when I am discussing housing options with clients. I feel that I will use my knowledge to empower the clients to advocate (where appropriate) for themselves) which will help build their confidence and resilience. I will be able to offer advice and explore more options with them, rather than feeling stuck or waiting to get advice from another agency. I have also shared the course content with other team members.”

“I'm much more confident now - before, I didn't know much about what the law was - but also frustrating! Now I know - before I signposted and it was all I could do - but now I'm frustrated at the system.”

“It was just great. I didn't actually realise either how much I had learnt until I was able to assist one of my clients with advising about poor housing conditions. It really gave me confidence so thank you.”

“So I can advise clients and be confident to lay out next steps for them and help them with these steps if needs be. I feel good that I know where to go for further information as well should I not know the answer.”

“More confident to support if required and some knowledge to back it up.”

Whether participants were more able to signpost effectively following the course

The participants were asked who they would signpost to and the impact of the course on signposting. Most participants had developed good local partnerships or connections with local organisations providing specialist help. However, they acknowledged that these organisations were often stretched to capacity, or not available in certain areas of the county in which they were based. Participants commented that getting correct information or advice often depended upon individuals within the local authority housing office and some had only recently become aware of contacts at the homelessness prevention service that is statutory within every authority as result of the training.

“I am now able to advise patients on housing rights depending on the scenario and advise which services could help further if needed.”

In order to assess whether the course had improved knowledge of where to signpost or refer women to for legal advice, participants on both courses were asked where they would go for information and support before and after the course. At the start of course, the most common sources were Shelter, the local council housing office website, and Citizens Advice. At the end of course, the responses reflected a wider range of sources other than those mentioned above, such as “Law for Life”, “Advicenow”, “the course material”, “a local MP’s office”, and “joining a renters’ union”. This suggests the course was successful in improving and broadening knowledge about the range of legal advice sources.

Whether the course resources were helpful and whether they shared information from the course with colleagues.

Participants interviewed stated they were now able to access a wider range of resources as a result of the training, and that they regularly referred to the notes they had taken during the course when helping people. Participants received links to relevant resources on the Advicenow or other specialist websites, which they found useful, and also links to specially developed YouTube videos introducing the topics covered on the course.

Several commented on the usefulness of these as a precursor to the webinars and in refreshing their knowledge afterwards:

“The pre-course video was really helpful to prime for learning and made it manageable - time to digest the info before the course and set the scene. Also a great resource to review regarding client issues. Invaluable. Perfect level of info, interesting, knowledgeable presenters.”

“The video was a great idea prior to the course as you could watch it several times and had more understanding of the case study to be discussed”

“I would have liked a copy of the PowerPoint used in videos, just as a reminder for future use.”

In addition, several interviewees had passed on the knowledge and resources they had obtained to other colleagues who had been unable to access the training. This suggests the training may be able to assist agencies beyond those who were participants in the course, thus extending the reach of the programme in the way in which others can support the community beyond the participants:

“My colleague had two patients with housing issues - she contacted me and together we discussed what we thought could be done, using the Law for Life website, Advicenow and my notes from the course.

I’ve emailed the link to Advicenow website to other social prescribers in my area and on a local app, which is also shared with patients.”

5.3 Understanding the impact of Covid-19 on people helped by attendees

The pre-course surveys presented an opportunity to take a snapshot of the impact of Covid-19 on the work of trusted Intermediaries in local areas at a time when face-to-face work was still restricted. This formed part of the exploratory needs assessment which aims to inform a better understanding of aspects of service impact including remote working and digital exclusion and barriers faced by clients in effectively accessing services. Participants from both regions were asked how they were communicating with the people with whom they were working.

Participants reported overwhelmingly that communication happened via phone. The next most common mechanism was email. This points to the limited digital capability of clients being assisted by trusted intermediaries.

50% of attendees from the South West reported that isolation and loneliness were the main challenges faced by those they worked with, closely followed by mental health issues and lack of IT skills. 75% of those working in the North West emphasised the key challenge to communication was lack of access to the internet/technology and poor IT skills. This is important evidence and demonstrates the additional challenges the agencies face in trying to support community members in light of impacts of Covid-19 and the limitations of phone and on-line service delivery for certain groups. The data below suggests the importance of phone over other technical applications.

Descriptions included the following statements:

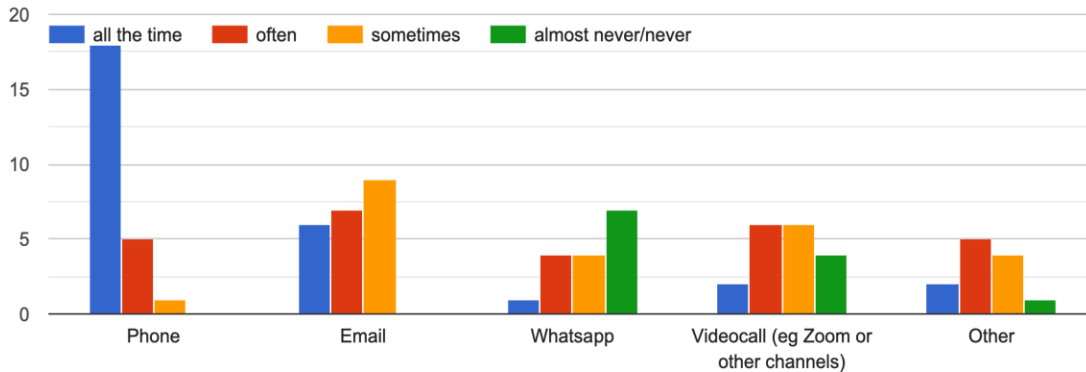
“Communication barriers are harder to tackle when not doing face to face contact.”

“It is difficult to understand the scale of a housing issue sometimes just over the telephone. Expectations re: time scales/resources.”

“How can we help vulnerable people to avoid becoming homeless since they are maybe struggling with Literacy, Numeracy, No Digital Access! This is a big problem currently regarding applications and lack of telephone contact available to providers.”

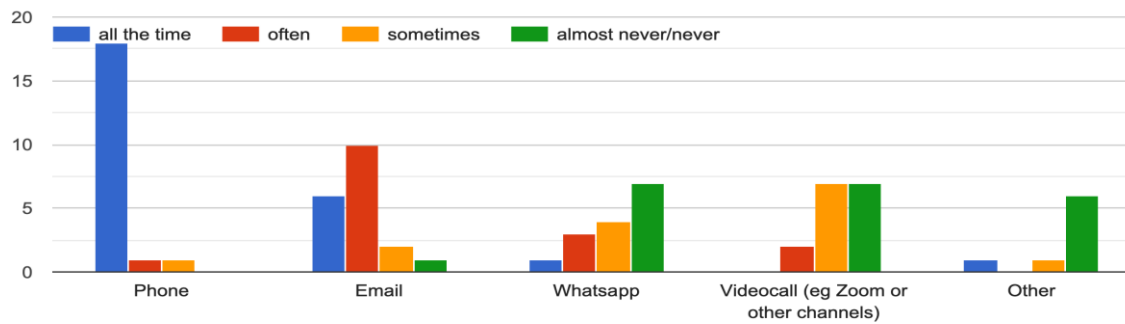
South West Course

Which tools are you using most frequently to communicate with the people you help in the current situation?



North West course

Which tools are you using most frequently to communicate with the people you help in the current situation?



6.1 Conclusion and recommendations

This programme has provided evidence of the effectiveness of targeted public legal education courses for trusted intermediaries working with vulnerable women. The programme has been successful in exploring and testing how the trusted intermediary model can work in a variety of locations and support underserved communities outside of London where advice provision is less widely available. Evaluation of this training has also generated valuable evidence of trusted intermediaries' impact and of the value of this training in enabling trusted intermediaries to do their work more effectively, competently and confidently. It also suggests that it has broadened their capability in seeking out broader resources than they would have previously in their future work.

Meeting output targets

The programme fell just short of its overall target of reaching 50 trusted intermediaries, reaching 49 participants. However, despite oversubscription, course attendance fell during the final module of the final course by a significant margin. This was likely due to the impact of time constraints for programme delivery created by the grant conditions. The delivery had to be completed by the end of the financial year (March 31, 2021). In turn, this pushed the final course module into the Easter holiday period when schools closed resulting in drop off in attendance during the last stages of the curriculum delivery. This also impacted on the number of post-course questionnaires being completed.

Participants represented diverse organisations reaching vulnerable women in the two regions of delivery. Participants were a combination of staff and volunteers working community organisations. An over-represented cohort were social prescribers. Additional research into this cohort under the auspices of the programme revealed their important role in the context of vulnerable women at risk of housing difficulty. Social prescribers were potentially offering an alternative route to advice and support on housing issues than other trusted intermediaries. This is because patients are referred to them by health practitioners from a range of primary and secondary care provision, including GPs, primary care networks and hospitals. One respondent was motivated to attend by encountering several families at risk of homelessness in their role as a senior registrar in an A&E department. The link between poor housing and homelessness and ill health (both physical and mental) has been identified in the research literature for some time but the shift towards increasing social prescriber involvement in helping to resolve such issues is a comparatively recent, but growing, trend²⁴.

Social prescribers tend to work within teams or as part of a wider network of specialist support services, for example, Citizens Advice, local charities or community organisations. Their capacity to share their knowledge and good practice with colleagues and other practitioners is often greater than those based within smaller organisations. This is a significant and unanticipated benefit of the training, as the data reveals that as a result of the training, the sharing of new knowledge with other colleagues can occur. This enables this modest programme to greater impact down-stream for other staff who may not have had the time or availability to undertake the training.

The range of barriers described by trusted intermediaries that impacted on their work were

²⁴ Stafford, Amanda, and Lisa Wood. 2017. "Tackling Health Disparities for People Who Are Homeless? Start with Social Determinants" *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 14, no. 12: 1535. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph14121535>

well matched to the nature and content of the course since the knowledge of housing rights was flagged by the majority of participants as a barrier to supporting clients effectively as was knowing where to refer clients. The research also sought to understand specific barriers caused by the impact of Covid-19 on their work. These findings provide crucial insight into the ways in which trusted intermediaries work with clients, and the difficulties that are encountered. Specifically, this research describes extensive problems caused by digital exclusion, with many people relying on telephone to work with clients. Beyond digital access, common issues described by participants were social isolation and loneliness and mental health.

The variations in participants' roles also reflected on the number people they were able to reach. Social prescribers on the whole reached significantly more clients other participants (an average of 45 women per month per participant compared to 24 for non-social prescriber roles). The social prescribers also helped more women with housing issues in particular (an average of 14 per month compared to seven). This suggests social prescribers have the potential to offer significant reach in communities lending added value to courses directed toward this cohort. The ability of the training for this cohort suggests the regional trusted intermediary programme has been effective and could, in future iterations make further inroads and have an impact in supporting advice and informed decision-making. The overall target of indirect beneficiaries to be reached over a twelve-month period following the programme was exceeded. The estimated monthly reach of participants to vulnerable women in housing need rose from 3,000 to 5,256.

Course content and design

The programme demonstrated that a combination of remote training, videos and information guides was an effective format for participants to build their knowledge and confidence to address housing issues. Attendees universally reported that the delivery methods were a very effective approach to the course, which allowed them to prepare for each session at their own pace, try and apply what they had learnt to real-life scenarios and ask questions about specific cases they had dealt with. This aligns with literature on pedagogy in adult learning as to what is effective as an approach to training.²⁵ Respondents' comments included: "It was perfect and really informative. It's a great idea to access the video first, summarise it at the beginning of the call, and then work through the questions to implement what we learnt. The whole structure helped to consolidate the learning." Several pointed to the accessibility of a very technical subject:

²⁵ P Gouthro (2019) 'Taking the Time to Learn: The importance of theory for adult education', 69 (1) *Adult Education Quarterly*, 60-76 DOI: 10.1177/0741713618815656.

“It is housing law so yes, it was technical but it was also made more layman friendly!”.

The importance of group work and sharing experience as well as tactic was also emphasised:

“The use of group exercises was essential and really good to break up the "heavy" content.”

Measuring changes in legal capability

In terms of achieving the aim of enhancing levels of legal capability in course participants the use of objective testing proved an effective method for assessing change in knowledge acquisition. In assessing changes in knowledge of tenancy agreements and housing contracts significant increases were measured in the context of the role of written contracts. Both courses concluded with 100% of participants providing correct answers. This evaluation does not claim all knowledge was a result of its training. For instance, knowledge of disrepair suggested good prior understanding of the requirements of landlords to repair external damage. However, there are areas where the data suggests that the Law for Life training did impact on legal capability For example, in damage caused by the tenant. This saw substantial increases in knowledge in both courses, as did issues of condensation. Aspects of damp raised less clear positive knowledge acquisition where the tenant may themselves have contributed to the issues, such as opening a window. Both courses recorded minor improvements in understanding but with overall poor results. This suggest either confusion about the question or a need to strengthen teaching content. Some areas saw minor changes included the right of the landlord to enter premises, indicating a good pre-existing knowledge. Understanding of the reasons for eviction and the need to attend court measured significant improvements in both courses.

Overall, the data indicates the courses achieved substantial changes in the confidence of participants to assist people with housing issues, with South West participants reporting an increase of 75% in confidence and North West participants reporting an increase of 89% on average. When measuring confidence with regard to specific housing scenarios there was once again substantial improvement in supporting tenants to challenge landlords over disrepair, reviewing tenancy agreements and helping a tenant decide what to do when receiving an eviction notice.

Measuring the wider impact of the programme

In order to consider the impact of the programme, time and funding constraints prevented a more rigorous empirical study that enabled the evaluation to make clearer claims of causation. While a control group was considered, the difficulty in ensuring a random sample of sufficient size precluded this element of research design. A longer follow up period to assess longitudinal

impact was also precluded but could if it were commissioned provide useful information to guide evidence-based programme provision.

Nevertheless, the qualitative interview study provides a rich source of understanding of experiences of trusted intermediaries and the ways in which they applied the knowledge and skills that had been obtained from the course. It also highlights the value of the tailored, scaffolded and scenario-based training through the courses provided can have a follow on impact in terms of better supporting members of the community to exercise and ensure housing rights due to access to expert legal information and options.

The interview study closely reflects empirical findings in providing evidence that the course enhanced participants' legal capability in recognising and framing housing issues in their legal dimensions. Moreover, participants describe the ways in which they were better equipped to find out more information about the issue from a range of reliable sources, as well as a number providing examples of the ways in which they successfully tackled an issue through identifying relevant housing rights and supporting contact with other parties. One participant reported:

“What we have learnt from the course will be invaluable in my role as a social prescriber. Since October 2021, I have supported three homeless people and three people wishing to move due to different circumstances.”

Interviews also revealed and supported empirical findings with regard to the extent to which participants felt confident to address a housing issue when it presented. One participant described this as follows:

“I can advise clients and be confident to lay out next steps for them and help them with these steps if needs be”.

This confidence was also reflected in signposting behaviour. Crucially the range and reliability of sources of assistance was expanded, alongside a better understanding of what steps the participants can take themselves. This provided important lessons for the role of intermediaries in facilitating early intervention and effective triage to expand the availability of advice. One participant describes this well “Before I did the course, I knew a little and would usually signpost to other services, e.g., Citizens Advice, but this has given me the knowledge and confidence to be able to support a person and give reassurance, which helps improve their mental health in the short term and establishes a relationship of trust in what I say - better than referring them to Housing Office.”

Recommendations

1. Remote and integrated teaching resources should be scaled up and adapted to range of social welfare rights issues faced to vulnerable communities in both urban and rural settings. This programme evaluation provides some important insights into the role of trusted intermediaries. The evidence points to the potential for this model working in a variety of locations and supporting underserved communities outside of London.

There are a number of additional ways in which evaluation of the trusted intermediary role should be developed to provide more detailed evidence of the effectiveness of this approach. In particular it is recommended to rigorously establish:

- how many clients are supported by trusted intermediaries
- what outcomes are achieved by clients supported by trusted intermediaries.
- How the roles compare between social prescribers and other trusted intermediaries?
- Whether some clients resolved their problems satisfactorily without the need for further referral
- Whether the clients themselves increased their legal capability as a consequence of working with participants.

Rationale: The programme builds the evidence base for the impact of training for trusted intermediaries on housing rights. However, there are limitations to the data available to track the impact and effectiveness of the programme over the medium and long-term. The limited resources available for evaluation have restricted the scope of the methods employed, for example larger samples and adequate resource to instigate control groups. Developing rigorous research takes time and larger sample sizes than Law for Life is able to work with in the current funding context.

2. Key research questions should be tested over medium and long-term intervals.

Rationale: This would provide additional and valuable evidence of the duration of knowledge and confidence measured on intermediaries, participant retention rates within their roles, and whether follow-up courses or information resources are beneficial and providing lessons around what works effectively and why.

3. Further research into the nature and extent of digital exclusion and links to legal capability is recommended.

Rationale: Participants confirmed the most common form of communication they deployed with the people they assisted was telephone in both regions, with email being the second most common form of contact. Other platforms such as WhatsApp and video conferencing were not being used. This underlines the value of working with intermediaries to overcome barriers to digital support for their clients.

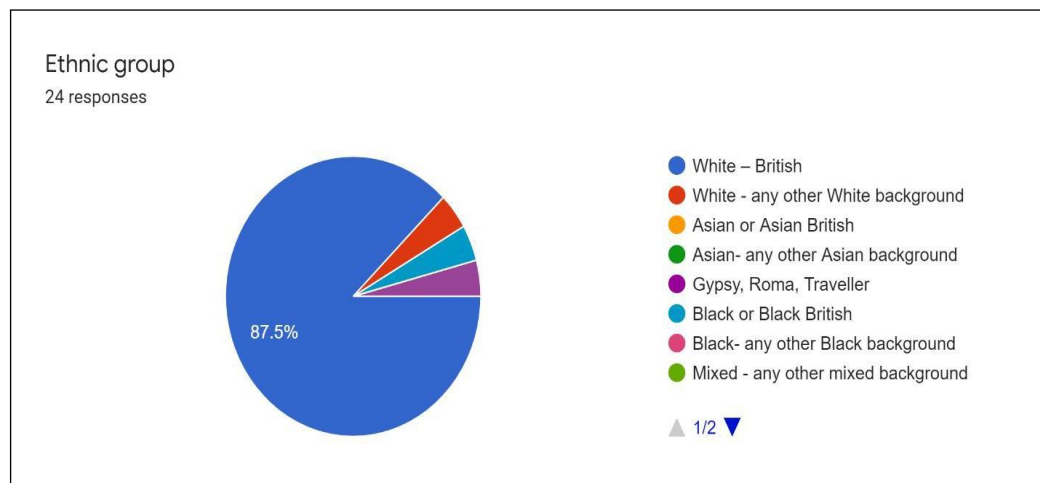
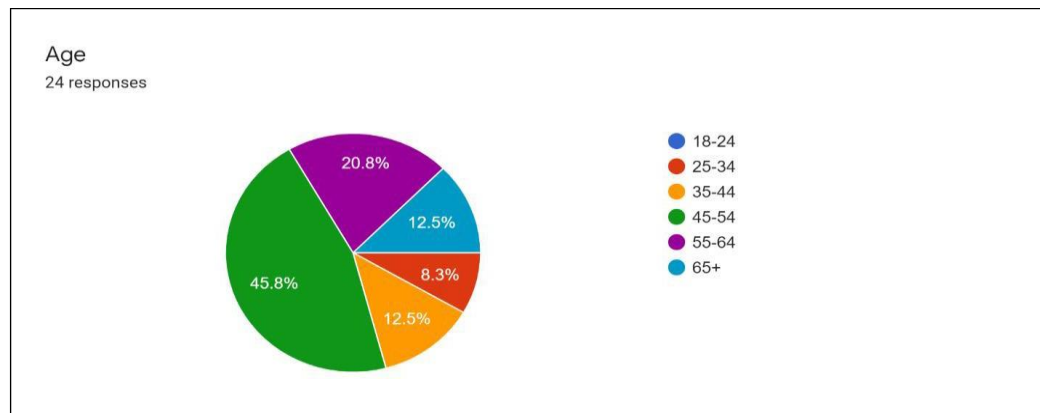
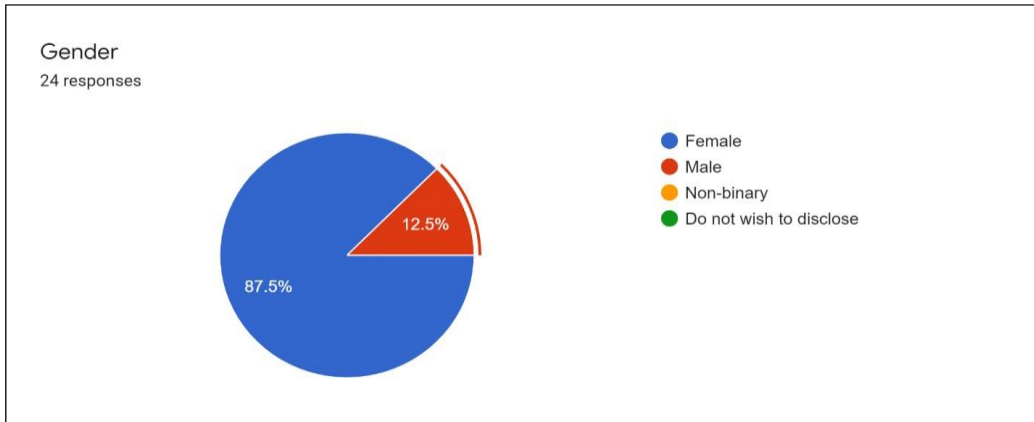
4. Further courses would benefit from a module extension with additional development of understanding the duties of Local Authorities in the context of housing and homelessness. Rationale: Due to Covid-19 restrictions, teaching shifted from in person to online. From a teaching perspective, this meant being able to engage with new audiences in new regions, but it also required condensing day-long (and highly engaging) sessions into a few hours of online teaching. Evaluation data from the course and feedback suggest the courses would benefit from a module extension with additional development of understanding the role of Local Authorities. Skills elements were difficult to measure and understanding how these components are best developed on or offline is a further important strand of development and research.

5. There is a need to scale up the provision of training around housing rights for social prescribers across England, particularly in those areas (both urban and rural) where there is greatest need and least access to specialist advice. This programme provided an invaluable opportunity to engage with social prescribers. As part of the course development the evaluation sought to better understand the role social prescribers can play to help vulnerable patients tackle legal issues around housing and homelessness. The evaluation study findings suggest a need to scale up the provision of training around housing rights for social prescribers across England, particularly in those areas (both urban and rural) where there is greatest need and least access to specialist advice.

Appendix A

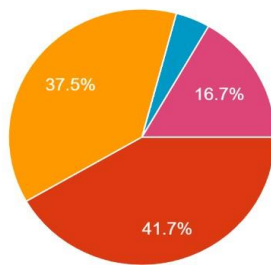
Demographics of course participants

South West Course



Status

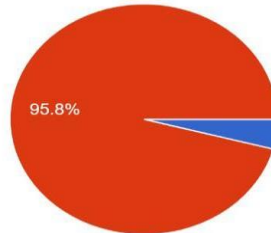
24 responses



- In education
- Full time employed
- Part time employed
- Unemployed
- Looking after home or family
- Out of work due to sickness/disability
- Retired
- Carer
- Other (please specify)

Do you have a disability?

24 responses

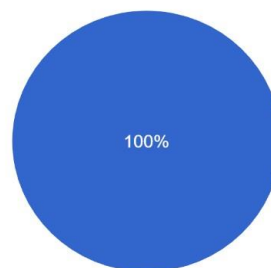


- Yes
- No
- Do not wish to disclose

North West Course

Gender

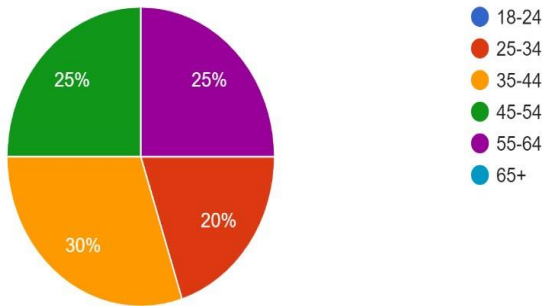
20 responses



- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Do not wish to disclose

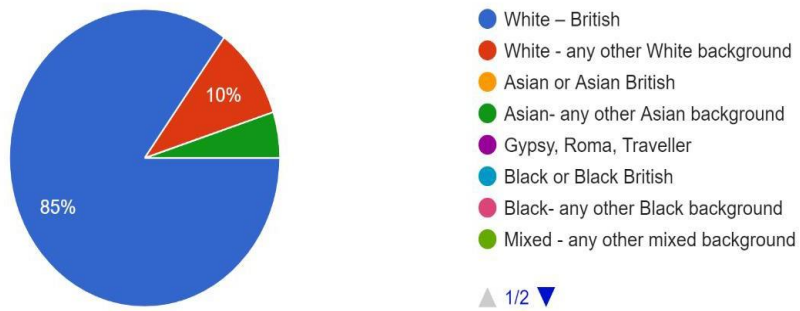
Age

20 responses



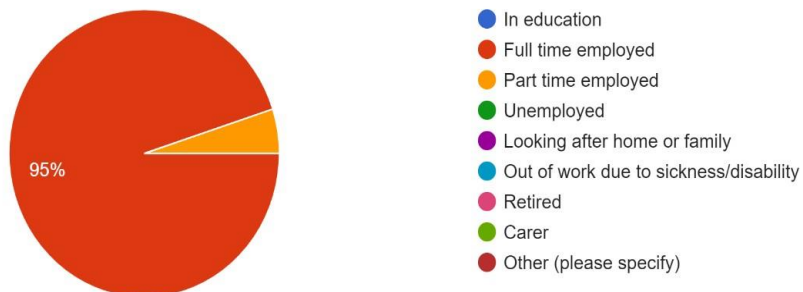
Ethnic group

20 responses



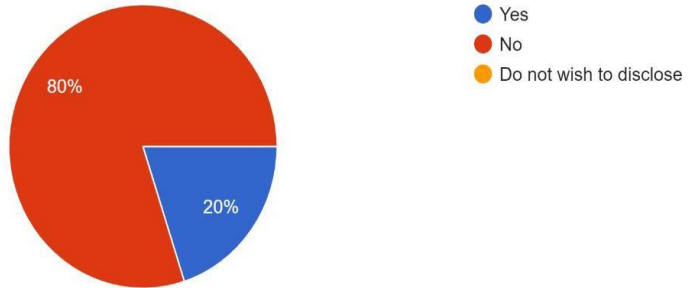
Status

20 responses



Do you have a disability?

20 responses



Appendix B

Interview schedule with trusted intermediaries and social prescribers

- 1) What is your role?
- 2) What type of organisation do you work/volunteer for? [If a SP: what type of SP (within NHS/charity etc)?]
- 3) What types of people do you help?
- 4) How do you get referrals?
- 5) Since attending the course with Law for Life, have you found you are better able to identify housing issues in your work?
- 6) If you have identified housing issues since attending the course have you supported any vulnerable women to deal with their housing issues? (A1)
If yes, approximately how many?
- 7) Could you please share any examples of work you have done with women you've supported with housing issues in 3 months after training? (A2) Outcomes?
- 8) Thinking about the training with Law for Life, in what way has the knowledge you gained on the course helped you to provide support? (K1) For example:
 - What role do you play in supporting people through the homelessness application process? (explain role in process step-by-step)
 - Personalised housing plans - PHP (remind them of what they are): Have you been involved in developing PHPs? If yes, how?
 - What challenges have you faced in each of these steps?
- 9) Have you specifically helped anyone threatened with homelessness? Can you describe the work you did with them?
- 10) With regards to people who may be vulnerable under homelessness law - are you able to support them with their evidence gathering?
- 11) Have you ever supported someone by writing a vulnerability letter for the homelessness process? If yes, what did you write/how do you put together the content? What do you say there? (e.g. Do you make references to homelessness law)

12) How has the course impacted on your confidence in dealing with housing issues with women in vulnerable circumstances? (C1/2)

13) Is there anything else you think you need to know to be able to support women with housing issues?

14) What organisations do you signpost or refer women to if you can't help them? What are the challenges with regard to referrals? How has the course impacted your knowledge of where to signpost/refer women to? (K2)

15) Which resources mentioned on the course have you found most useful in helping vulnerable women with housing issues? (R1)

Please could you give us any examples of using these resources? (R2)

Are there any other resources you think it would be helpful to have to support vulnerable women with housing issues?

16) Please could you give any examples of knowledge and skills shared with other colleagues who didn't attend the training programmes? (K3)

Appendix C

Additional course feedback

Course feedback and User Satisfaction (Post-course surveys)

“Easy to follow and not full of legal jargon. Trainers and facilitators were brilliant.”

“Content was time consuming and heavy but unsure if this could have been done differently.”

“The delivery with questioning is very effective both on video and live. You formulated questions I may have struggled to communicate or clarify.”

“The context was easy to follow and I enjoyed the case studies, as it was good to share ideas and knowledge.”

“I found the webinars easy to follow and understand. The literature was explained well and I found the examples helpful. The videos were quite long though, but I am aware that this was due to all the content that needed covering.”

“I thought the delivery was good and worked well via Zoom. Breakout rooms was a good idea. There was a lot of technical information but this was expected as the topic was housing law. The content could have been targeted more to the role of a social prescriber in terms of sign posting to help available.”

“Didn't always have a chance to watch video prior due to workload, content a little too detailed.” “The course was excellent in content and presentation. Content necessarily fairly intense but in good balance.”

“It was technical in places and heavy in others but that was the nature of the subject but the format worked well for me overall.”

“Was easy to follow and the experts running and facilitating the course were very helpful.”

“Videos very helpful as primer to webinar and construct fine. Would have liked more time for Group Exercises.”

“I found the presentation very interesting and informative, a friendly atmosphere which encouraged questions and different perspectives to be aired by group members.”

“Very easy to follow and down to earth. Covered scope but was flexible enough to adapt.”

“On the second week I did not have time to watch the video but there was enough information and discussion on the subject to catch up, I enjoyed the group work as I felt we all brought a different element to problem solving.”

“I found the presentation very informative and interesting. I liked the format as it provided time to assess information and prepare questions if unsure about anything.”

Other topics suggested by participants

In the post-course survey, participants were asked to identify additional topics that could be useful in the work they did on housing rights and several suggested topics not covered by the course, e.g., on how to support individuals experiencing with anti-social behaviour from neighbours:

“Maybe advice about wanting to move out of the area to a new place where they have no local connection.”

“medical cases - rights for transfer moves within housing associations/how to help clients with nuisance neighbours.”

“how to write supporting letters”

“More about poor housing conditions and how to approach the landlord.”

“Moving from private rented to social housing.”

“Domestic abuse - If a tenancy can be kept open if a person has to flee on a temporary basis to a refuge where they have to pay rent for.”

“A specific module on dealing with Antisocial Behaviour, Noisy/Nuisance neighbours would be helpful in future as this comes up regularly as a social prescribing issue too. We expect the number of referrals related to homelessness and evictions to increase in the months to come particularly when the furlough scheme ends and there are more redundancies.”

“If a client has rent arrears, they have set up a payment plan to pay these arrears but their landlord is not making much needed repairs. What rights do they have? I am thinking it has to be fit for human habitation but the landlord says they haven't paid their rent in full.”

“Scenarios shared with the group by participants and how you would help in situation. This was touched on but was mainly case studies that had been pre-written.”
