

# BACK IN CONTROL

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INTERIM REPORT OF EXTERNAL EVALUATION



International Community Organisation of Sunderland (ICOS)  
2020

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# Back in Control

## Interim Report of External Evaluation

From 'Project Powerpoint', September 2019

**Context:** The Back in Control project is a three-year plan taking place between 2019-2022 and has been created by the International Community Organisation of Sunderland (led by people who are from the community they seek to represent) and in collaboration with several other organisations. At present people from the BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) groups residing in Sunderland are being exploited in the workplace and are victims of modern-day slavery.

**Aims of the project:** The aim of the project is to support victims of modern day slavery, domestic violence and discrimination. Ensuring that the people who suffer from exploitation will have an increasing role in driving this project and become resilient and regain control of their lives.

- Providing the victims with improved access to employment
- Victims will be able to regain control of their lives
- Improved financial prospects for the victim
- Local organisations will be equipped in recognising when work place exploitation and slavery is taking place
- New volunteers will be recruited and trained

The work is funded the National Lottery Community Fund.

This interim evaluation report is structured as follows:

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**A note on language.** ICOS refer to people who use their services as clients. Some of the people who have used BiC are or have been victims of, and are or have survived slavery. The choice of language is more complicated than usual as much nuance is lost in translation.

The Project has adopted the typography of modern day slavery developed by the Home Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-typology-of-modern-slavery-offences-in-the-uk>  
Exploitation is, perhaps, a more subjective phenomenon.

With thanks to all research participants and the funder. Whilst best endeavours have been undertaken to ensure the accuracy of this report, all errors mine.

Chris Ford, Oct 2020

## 1. Summary of work with clients

### 1.1. Client profile

Between July 2019 and August 2020 BiC has worked with a total of 40 people. Of these 14 people (10 male, 4 female) were victims of Modern Day Slavery, including 2 people who were in this situation when they first contacted the project. 26 people had or were experiencing exploitation at work.

Of the 38 people about whom information is recorded, it was stated by:

- 24 people that they were women; 13 men; 1 person did not answer.
- 33 people that they were ‘any other white background’ (all being from eastern Europe) , 4 that they were African and 1 that they were ‘any other Black/African/Caribbean background’,
- 35 that they were between 25 and 65 years old, and 3 that they were younger
- 32 that they were Christian; 4 no religion; 2 Muslim,
- 8 that they had caring responsibilities,
- None that they had a disability, and
- All that they were heterosexual.

### 1.2. Summary of impact

Back In Control - Exit Participants Analysis

27 August 20

	Total Participants	15	
		<b>Financial situation</b>	<b>Control of life</b>
<b>Total</b>	Initial	67	87
	Final	106	128
<b>Average</b>	Initial	5	5
	Final	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>Difference</b>	39	41
<b>Average</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>47%</b>

The information, with figures rounded, in the above table was generated by the project from 2 sets of questions:

- As part of the registration process people are asked: ‘On a rising scale from 1 – 10 (where “1” means no resources), could you please rate your financial situation?’ and ‘On a rising scale from 1 – 10 (where “1” means no control), could you please rate how much in control of your life you feel you are?’

- On exiting BiC, people are asked 'On a rising scale from 1-10 (where "1" means none) rate how much your financial position has improved by?' and 'On a rising scale from 1-10 (where "1" means none) rate how much do you feel in control of your life at present?'

Below is reported some of the qualitative data from completed exit forms.

#### **'Do you feel you received adequate support as a client?'**

All stated "yes", with the following additional comments also noted:

- I have originally asked ICOS for help me recover due induction training payment from my former employer, however, upon reflection, I decided not to proceed with it anymore. Despite my decision, ICOS have been very supportive and dealt with my enquiry in a reassuring way.
- So far yes but I am still looking for work and my partner is currently pregnant.
- I asked ICOS to help me recover outstanding holiday pay accrued during maternity leave. ICOS have also helped me make a claim for Child Tax Credit.
- I asked ICOS for help with resolving issues at work related to my unfair dismissal.
- I asked ICOS for help with trying to contact my employer re: changing my work hours without my consent.
- I asked ICOS for help with issues relating to my shifts at work, possible sex and race discrimination.
- I asked ICOS to help me recover unpaid wages and other associated costs incurred in relation to carried out work. I have discontinued cooperation with ICOS due to personal reasons but I am very happy with guidance I have received from ICOS.
- I asked ICOS for help with sorting out unpaid holiday and resolve issues around my dismissal.
- I asked ICOS for help with resolving issues at work related to derogatory treatment at work (by one of the employees).
- I asked ICOS for help with trying to recover unpaid wages from my former employer.
- I was looking for a job for my son and any employment opportunities and ICOS were very accommodating and supportive. I received great support.
- So far yes and I have now been transferred onto Covid-19 programme as I still need help in some aspects of my life.

#### **Were your objectives met?**

All stated "yes" with a range of additional comments related to support and guidance regarding future alternatives/next steps and the recovery of money owed.

#### **Have you learnt new skills or gained a qualification?**

Three of the 13 people who answered said that they had learned how to look for work.

## 2. Illustrations of work

### 2.1. Case summaries

1) A 61-year-old unemployed man who is living with the consequences of MDS. He was held captive in the Midlands for 3 or 4 years and 'paid' solely in alcohol. At one point during his enslavement he was stabbed and ended up in a coma in hospital, from where he was kidnapped.

Throughout the project, BiC has provided extensive and at times intensive holistic support of both a personal and practical nature. A particular focus has been on providing translation and advocacy to enable access to Universal Credit, Criminal Injury Compensation, NHS physical and mental health provision and navigating the EU Settlement Scheme.

2) A 29-year-old, employed woman who approached BiC in July 2019 for help in writing a grievance letter. "I worked for three days through an agency- I was on a training but I was physically unable to carry out the employment tasks as I was not strong enough. The employer refuses to pay for these 3 days." The agency did not respond to the letter BiC had supported her to write and in September she decided that she did not want to pursue the matter due to other priorities.

3) A 36-year-old man contacted BiC in August 2019 having lost his job being owed unpaid hours of work, holiday pay, and redundancy pay. The ex-employer did not respond to the initial approaches so, with the projects support including translation, he accessed the Council's Welfare Rights Service. Following their intervention, he received an email from his previous employer instructing him to make an insolvency claim through HMRC website, which he successfully did with support from BiC.

4) BiC started working with this 59-year-old man in July 2019 when his application for Universal Credit was rejected. He was already in contact with ICOS having come to Sunderland in 2015 when relocated following his experience of slavery. Through BiC he has received ongoing and at times both extensive and intensive support including during the death of his partner.

In addition to the direct work this has involved liaison, referral, advocacy and translation with Social Services, Care provider, GP, A&E, Physiotherapy, Occupational therapy, Psychological Wellbeing Service, Welfare Rights Service, CAB, DWP, Home Office, Solicitor, Landlord (including organising physical adaption), Cleaning companies, Gas, Electric, Northumbria Water, TV, Bank, Mobility Scooter Company, Grant Making Trust, Church, Age Concern, Fire Service.

5) From July 2019, a 37-year-old woman was helped by BiC to address the constant administrative errors around her statutory sick pay. She was on the sick having damaged her arm. This was exacerbated by her work at the hotel, with a new manager unwilling to make adjustments. The reduction in income led to her falling into housing arrears, so BiC helped negotiate an arrangement with her landlord. BiC also worked with the police to remove her violently abuse partner from her flat, who was wanted on a European arrest warrant.

6) A 38-year-old woman who works on a production line came to BiC in September 2019 "with regards to being harassed and bullied by my team leader. She mocks my accent, checks how much time I spend in the toilet, as well as disregarding my health issues, as well not allowing me to go to GP and health appointments." Working with the GMB, BiC supported this person through a formal grievance process. She chose not to appeal when the claim was dismissed.

## 2.2. Case studies

The following case studies have been produced by the project staff based on file records and in some instances interviews.

### 2.2.1. Farouk's story

In September 2019, Farouk (not his real name, originally from Sudan, he was a victim of modern slavery when en-route to the UK) came to our office in Sunderland because he wanted help in applying for Universal Credit (UC). He was referred to ICOS by Friends of the Drop In for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (FODI). When he visited our office he was unemployed, not receiving any benefits and was struggling financially. ICOS helped him complete his Universal Credit application and arranged an identity check appointment, as well as supported Farouk with setting up the initial appointment and habitual residence test for UC. ICOS assisted him with alternative accommodation (as he had to leave his Home Office- provided accommodation). A few weeks later, he approached ICOS again as he wanted to apply for a flat with Gentoo (a local housing association). However, after a while and after discussing his options with his project worker he stated, he decided did not want to rent a flat with Gentoo, because the minimum contract length was nine months as he did not plan to stay in Sunderland for that long. Various housing organisations were contacted by ICOS, in order to help him with accommodation. In October 2019, he received help in searching on the internet for plumbing and warehouse jobs on indeed.com and applying for plumbing and forklift driving courses at Sunderland College. In November 2019, Farouk received help in writing a CV and also with his application for NARIC (<https://www.naric.org.uk/naric/>) to have his vocational (plumbing) qualifications recognised in the UK. ICOS covered the NARIC certification fee, as the client was on a very low income. He also received help in enrolling on a Level 2 Food Hygiene course, as he needed the qualification in order to apply for a job. The fee for this course was also met by ICOS. In December 2019, his project worker helped Farouk with the Food Hygiene course, as he was struggling with passing the course due to English language issues. He finally passed the course on his fourth attempt and a certificate has been issued for him, so that he could submit it to potential employers. ICOS emailed him a list of various training providers, contacted some of them and were told that the majority of courses were now being run on an in-house basis; hence it was more difficult to access training without being employed. ICOS also supported Farouk with his general school leaving certificate equivalence, which included arranging and paying for translation from Arabic to English. In January 2020, his application to NARIC was submitted online and Farouk received the statement of comparability of qualifications. He was planning to leave Sunderland by the end of the month and exited the project. Farouk was now able to start working in a food processing factory (having a level 2 food hygiene qualification was helpful in that respect). He has now moved to another city but he feels ICOS' support has been very beneficial to him, as has been able to enter the labour market.

### 2.2.2. Eva's story

Eva (not her real name, originally from Poland) access the *Back in Control* project because her employer did not pay her holiday entitlement.

Eva's story began in September 2019, as she was experiencing problems with her supervisor, she mentioned that the attitude of her supervisor towards her was very negative, which included making unfounded allegations about her ability to perform in the workplace. Eva had also completed a course

and had not been issued with a certificate from her employer. This qualification was needed when applying for jobs and Eva was keen to change her job in the near future. Her project worker helped Eva in creating a CV, which could be used for applying to work in a care home as a support worker. In October 2019, she received help in contacting a potential employer, which was actively recruiting at that time.

When Eva was interviewed in November, she stated that she worked as a cleaner at a local leisure business, as well as a nursery assistant at a factory (which provided childcare for their staff during half term and holiday time). She began the interview by saying, “my supervisor [at the cleaning job] is bullying me. It all started when my colleague and I did not come to work, our bus did not come and we only work a couple of hours a day. I am a cleaner. It would have been pointless to get the next bus as I would have not made it in time, and I would have got to work for the end of my shift. My supervisor, she began shouting at me. She said did not believe me. She started calling me names. After that I complained about it to our manager, my supervisor was instantly informed about my complaint. That is when it started every time I was at work, she would shout at me, call me names, and make my life at work more difficult. It was impossible to work with her. She would talk about me to other people and say very disrespectful things. I complained to my manager about the situation. They said they would do something about it, but she has not done anything. One day she came down to visit. I think she is based in Manchester. She just comes once a month to visit us. We had a little chat. So, I was pushed to go to in an empty room with her. She basically explained to me that everything would be fine from now on; we have got to move on from this part. She called the supervisor into the room. She said from now on we have got to get on, do you agree? I said yes, the supervisor said yes. That was basically it. She left and bullying did not stop. Nothing really changed. I did not want to go there in the room by myself. I wanted to have someone in the room with me. The manager replied that it was not necessary, because we just have a chat. After that I came to ICOS, Monika, the project worker for the Back in Control project, helped write a complaint to somebody higher up in the company and about my supervisor, as well as about how the manager had treated me. There is also one more thing, as soon I complained my supervisor knew about it and she sent me messages on work group chat, saying ‘oh, Eva thank you for that’, and I asked her what you mean? And she replied: ‘you know what I mean’. This was instantly after I complained. There are other people who are getting bullied and I have tried speaking to my managers. I was told I was not allowed to speak about other people’s problems. I have really no idea because nobody really cares in that place. We are not allowed to talk about it. We have been specifically told that we are not allowed to talk about work issues and we are not allowed to speak to them about it after work and at work. People do not speak to me. It is important for people to have some good listening skills, empathy, have the ability to talk to a person. I came for help because I did not know what to do. Julia (the senior project worker) helped me write a complaint and the bullying was reduced, this bullying happened in the past.

On my time sheet, my supervisor wrote different hours from the hours that I actually worked, so I would lose hours. She would put weird notes, for example saying ‘Eva had left one hour earlier and someone else had to do the job again for her’. Someone had to redo my job. After confronting her about the notes on the timesheets, some sort of explanation. So, it ended like nothing ever happened. She would not give me holidays even if I asked her months before. Even if I asked for a one-day holiday, she would ask why I needed that certain day off. I gave her one month’s notice for one day because I wanted a Saturday off and she started complaining that I could not have a Saturday off. I am also the only one that has to request holiday’s in writing. Nobody else does. Everybody else just comes and

asks. There should be the same rules for everyone. If I have to request holidays in writing I have no issues, it is not right when it is only me that has to do this. I do not mind her writing notes about me on the timesheet as long as they are the truth as this would help other people. People should be non-judgemental. The most terrible thing is that I have to go to work otherwise I will lose it. Fear of losing my job, having no money. This is constantly on my mind.”

In November 2019, Eva’s project worker discussed with her the way forward, because Eva had been informed by her college that was unable to attend a Level 3 Childcare course due to her level of attendance as she had been off sick. She received help with updating her CV and help regarding contacting a care work agency to find out about part time posts, discussed with her long term priorities and helped her in sending the correspondence with the care agency. Her project worker checked if there had been any progress with the job / any job offers. In January 2020, she was given advice regarding job searching and interview preparation. Discussing with her the financial situation and benefits eligibility as (the client could not claim universal credit if she was in full time education, which she was about to start unless she decided not to start at this point, as part time courses were only available from September).

At this point Eva was dismissed from work. Her project worker calculated the holiday entitlement due. She received help in: updating her jobsite profile on Indeed as this would improve her employability, ensuring her profile; skills and experience are relevant, writing a letter to the former employer to ask for the refund of her holiday pay, advice on applying for jobs as this was important as it would improve her employability and financial situation. Therefore, Eva was encouraged to write a letter, which she did with our help. In February 2020, Eva received help and support regarding interview preparation for an apprenticeship. A follow up meeting was held with Eva regarding progress, job searching and to find out if she needed any more help. Another meeting was held where her employment situation and benefits were discussed. A final reminder was sent to her former employer stating if holiday pay was not paid in full within 7 days, there would be an application to HMRC with regards to non-payment of minimum wage. As a result, she was finally paid the outstanding holiday pay.

When asked what support would you like from us in achieving your targets? She said: “Taking care of formalities relating to Universal Credit, checking messages in my journal, before I am able to do it myself. Signing me up for courses, which have been an interest of mine. Support with dealing with the harassment in the workplace.” When asked how she felt about the help and support she has received Eva said: “I am happy with the help and support I received, all matters are dealt with positively. I am grateful for the help received so far.” I’m happy because Michal had helped me with my interview, I felt empowered and prepared to undertake work. I have applied for jobs, attended job interviews and had regular visits to the office to review my situation. ICOS has helped prepare for interviews and helped by reimbursing the travel costs in order to attend interviews and travel to search for work”. Eva has been able to get another job with ICOS’ help and she now works at a care home.

### **2.2.3. Margaret’s story**

Margaret (not her real name, originally from Poland) came to our office in December 2019, Margaret had been exploited at work, as her employer was refusing to pay holiday pay for the period when she had been on maternity leave. ICOS helped her to contact the employer, asking them to pay her

outstanding holiday pay accrued during maternity leave. ICOS's help was crucial, as Margaret spoke limited English. Subsequently, Margaret also asked for help in applying for Child Tax Credit, as her financial situation was difficult. She was advised to bring all relevant documentation which stated her actual income, as she did not have these documents on her, another appointment was scheduled the following week. ICOS also provided support in finding children's centre sessions, to which she could attend with her 8-month old child. She returned to ICOS, as she required help in trying to open a gov.co.uk account; however her project worker was unable to proceed further as she couldn't remember her total pay for 2018-2019. Once this information was provided by Margaret, ICOS was able to open her personal tax account and make a claim for Working Tax Credit. In January 2020, she received help in contacting her Human Resources Manager regarding her unpaid holiday pay. She was willing to return to work, however she stated that she wanted to use her unused holiday. Her employer was contacted requesting the possibility of using 82 hours of unpaid holiday which she had remaining. Her employer did not reply with a decision whether she would be authorised to do so or not, as she replied stating that she was waiting for an email from the regional manager, the project worker rang Margaret, as she we wanted to clarify the issue related to her annual holiday accrued during her maternity leave. With ICOS's help, Margaret was successful in resolving her issues with the employer and she was able to receive her holiday entitlement in full. After five months of receiving help from ICOS, in May 2020 she was interviewed as she was exiting the programme and was asked the following questions by her project worker: "Do you feel you received adequate support as a client? What would you suggest needs to be improved to make the experience better for other clients in the future? Have you received adequate support as a client?" To which Margaret replied: I asked ICOS to help me recover outstanding holiday pay accrued during maternity leave. ICOS have also helped me make a claim Child Tax Credit. My project worker was always there and I could always count on her. She helped me resolved issues with my employer before going back to work after maternity. I am very pleased with all the guidance and information I received from ICOS staff. I feel good knowing that there is always someone to talk to if you need help with personal or professional matters. It gives me a sense of security thereby it has a positive impact on people's mental wellbeing as they don't feel left out or lonely.'

#### **2.2.4. Bruno and Julius's story**

Two employees, who have fallen victim to modern slavery, came to us in September 2019 in order to receive advice and support relating to their case. Bruno and Julius (names have been changed, they were originally from Poland but lived in the UK before going to work in Scandinavia). They have given us an account of what happened after a recruitment agency offered them demolition work (they were to demolish an old factory site) located in a Scandinavian country. This had taken place in February 2019. They were initially offered £9.30 per hour for their work and were reassured they would receive a refund of the cost of arrival and payment for the time counted from the moment of arrival in Scandinavia. Upon arrival, it turned out that Bruno and Julius had to sleep in a van because no accommodation was arranged for them at that time. After two nights of sleeping in a van, Bruno and Julius went to their designated workplace, namely the demolition site. After the first payment of their wages, it turned out that the hourly rate was changed from £9.30 to £8.30 without any acknowledgment from the employers or explanation of this difference.

After the sixth day of work, one of the demolition workers took Bruno and Julius to a nearby forest and left them there to their own devices informing them that from then on they had to cope alone and that they could not go back to work. They were told that the motel room where Bruno and Julius stayed after two days of sleeping in the van was allegedly damaged by Bruno and Julius and that the employer (the recruitment agency) had to cover the costs resulting from the losses, which the owner of the motel estimated at 3000 Euros.

They only had a few euros in cash and their belongings were left in the motel to which they no longer had access to.

They could not immediately return to the UK, because they didn't have the right amount of money for plane tickets, therefore they were forced to sleep on the streets for nearly 14 days. They eventually returned to the United Kingdom using money borrowed from friends and family and their own passports, which they had on them before being ejected from their workplace.

The situation relating to the alleged damage to the motel room was used by the recruitment agency as an argument not to pay Bruno and Julius the money owed for six days of work (12 hours a day). Additionally, both only received £8.30 and not £9.30 per hour for the three days they were paid for. Hence, in total, they were underpaid by £741.6 each.

The case worker discussed what action they would like us to take with the clients and what support they needed. They decided that they would like to write a letter to the employer, in order to ask for reimbursement, but were unsure how to do it and had difficulties using formal English. Therefore, on behalf of Bruno and Julius, we sent a grievance letter to the recruitment agency, with a list of claims arising out of verbal arrangements concluded between the employees and the agency. With our help, Bruno and Julius received the outstanding money for 6 days' of work, reimbursement for flights and the difference of £1 of their hourly rate and the time counted from their arrival in the country. At this point in time, the two workers were asked if they would like to contact the GLAA (the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority), but they declined, as they were preparing to leave the UK. We also contacted the authorities in the Scandinavian country to report the case and enable for further investigation. As an organisation, we believe that this type of modern exploitation, bordering on modern slavery, is becoming increasingly common and therefore requires urgent action.

### 3. Overview of Project Delivery

Project Outcomes	Summary to end September 2020
Accessing better employment.	Some people have changed employer, leaving bad situations. There is evidence that on some occasions this has been with the support of BiC.
People feeling in control of their lives.	<p>Exit interviews say this is the case, although what this means to some people is not always clear.</p> <p>Additionally there are instances where it seems clients might feel this even if it has not been articulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with the police to remove an abusive partner from a client's home.</li> <li>• Securing funding for a client's mobility scooter.</li> <li>• A client choosing to move to Manchester.</li> </ul> <p>There are also situations where this is probably not the case, perhaps especially where people have problems with alcohol misuse.</p>
People report being in a better financial position.	<p>This has been delivered in diverse ways. As well as new employment which may have been better paid, examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal Credit</li> <li>• Criminal Injuries Compensation <input type="checkbox"/></li> <li>• Statutory redundancy pay.</li> </ul> <p>Also indirectly achieved by supporting people through the European Union Settlement Scheme: EU/EEA residents are required to register to be entitled to live in UK following the end of the Brexit transition period. A right to remain is a requirement to ensure continuing access to benefits and other public services.</p>
Local organisations are better equipped to recognise exploitation and slavery	<p>BiC has provided training to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunderland Carers</li> <li>• Sunderland Counselling Service</li> <li>• Sunderland People First</li> <li>• Sunderland GP Alliance</li> <li>• Unite the Union, regional office.</li> <li>• Healthwatch Sunderland</li> <li>• Tyneside Women's Health</li> </ul>
New volunteers recruited.	None to date. Plans on hold due to Covid19.

As illustrated in this document BiC provides a wide range of support to individual clients. It has been reported that most often the work is focused around:

- Financial situation including debt and benefits for both people in and out of work
- Psychological issues especially depression and anxiety, sometimes linked with addictions
- Housing
- Immigration status including EU citizens
- Physical health problems
- Situations of slavery.

From the first phase of the project's development there appear to be three categories of work:

- Addressing a specific employment related issue: under/non payment, grievance, discrimination.
- Other support around employability including around CVs, recruitment agencies, translation of qualification.
- Broader support directly and in accessing other services. Beyond signposting this often consists of advocacy and translation/ interpretation.

There are two identifiably different client groups; people who have survived modern day slavery and people who are being exploited in the work place. Whilst there are similarities between the groups, there are also important differences in people's needs and the projects work.

Some specific areas of practice have been identified:

**Referrals.** It took several months for the new project to establish itself as a point of referral from local agencies, although people who are being exploited, especially if already in contact with ICOS, often refer themselves to BiC. Relationships with faith organisations have been a particularly valuable source including referring people who have survived slavery. Asylum seekers and refugees, many of who may have experiences of slavery, are often transitory so there is "a practice problem – how useful is it to start this conversation?"

**Joint work.** Because of the diverse needs of clients, often requiring specialist knowledge, BiC frequently works with other agencies. BiC has drawn on ICOS's existing relationships and history of effective shared working where possible. Where it is needed to address clients' needs new partnerships have been sought with varying degrees of success. In addition to "the role of connecting all the dots" around clients, BiC often does the interpreting and translating "so a referral does not mean we do not provide support". In some areas, such as legal aid supported immigration advice, limited provision within the region is a significant factor.

**Mental health provision.** Access to mental health and addictions services are identified as a particular area through the first phase of the project. BiC clients seem to have presented with a wide range and degree of need. A range of barriers were reported to accessing provision including difficulties in the use of phone and then on-line provision, the use of interpreters, and cultural norms and expectations.

- “There’s been an individual who was rejected when they applied for an extension of a 1 year leave to remain. They were told they had not done enough to address their alcohol problem. When we want to refer, they are at full capacity.”
- “He ran away from A&E and they phoned me as the only person in contact with him. As a result of trauma he does not trust anybody. He sees perpetrators everywhere, so he’ll not tell people anything.”

**Paper work.** In some areas of BiC’s work, for example forms for statutory redundancy pay, the vocabulary is fairly technical. While translation is a key issue, personal support and advocacy are also needed, requiring a level of trust. In other contexts, individuals past histories act as unintended barriers for example in housing applications: “People don’t understand the process - for example people get stuck when providing their address history for the past 5 years – and the implications of this.”

**Covid 19.** Some specific incidents of employment issues related to the pandemic were recorded. This included care workers who felt they were not being treated well, being required to work overtime and were not provided with sufficient protective equipment. One client who was ill was told to stay at home for a week and then told to go back to work. There was no testing and no protective equipment.

The initial suspension of work at the beginning of lock down was followed by a period of remote provision, and then with the easing of restrictions, mixed/hybrid delivery. “Some clients suffer from anxiety, some were terrified. But people adapted pretty well... It gives people the feeling that they are not left with their problems.” During the lock down BiC lost contact with three clients, while four new clients have registered with the project following the easing of restrictions. Some of the planned recruitment activity has not been possible: “we cannot distribute leaflets at events that don’t happen.”

Work has been undertaken to ensure internet access for clients by the provision of platforms and data. In addition to one to one work, online group provision has been developed in response to people’s isolation. English language sessions have also been established as other agencies ended their face to face provision.

There was a greater impact on elements of the project not directly focused on clients. All training was stopped, although subsequently this is being delivered on-line. The project steering and reference groups, which had not been fully established prior to lockdown, were not progressed. Planning for a celebratory event, which would have contributed to this evaluation, was stopped.

#### 4. Looking Forward – all this section requires discussion

As a new project there are inevitably areas for further development following the initial phase of delivery. Perhaps most importantly two distinct client groups can be identified. For the work with survivors of modern day slavery the project might be more explicitly informed by trauma informed practice including clear demarcations of competence, referral protocols and professional supervision as appropriate.

For the work with both client groups further developments might include:

- Embedding practice that is working such as balancing the wide ranging, client focused interventions with effective supported referrals.
- Addressing areas that are working less well including volunteering opportunities and rethinking the mechanisms for client influence on project design.
- Extending scope and depth of project reach – for example through homeless shelters and perhaps targeting certain industries – and of partnerships – for example clarifying referral routes including with substance abuse and addictions services.
- Refining internal systems including monitoring and evaluation; see appendix for further detail.

Additionally there will be specific work following the end of the Brexit transition phase with EU nationals who have not registered or whose registration is not completed by 31 December 2020.

Some elements of project work such as knowledge sharing amongst local agencies and engagement with the private sector remain to be addressed.

As well as impacting on the delivery of BiC, the pandemic has a direct impact on the need for the project. Covid 19 seems to be a pandemic of inequality: with poor and BAME communities being particularly hard hit, especially amongst people working in industries such as care and hospitality.

The focus of BiCs work has become increasingly relevant in a dramatically changed labour market. Where “people feel lucky to have a job” there are changed power relationships.

## 5. Appendix - methodology and review of evaluative work

This report is based on ongoing work with the project during its inception, drawing specifically on an extensive review of project documents (largely up to May 2020) and one-to-one interviews with the project team during June and August 2020.

An interim evaluation report review is a useful point at which to assess the processes of monitoring and evaluation. This is particularly valuable where there is limited experience of developing and using in-house approaches to data gathering, analysis and interpretation.

As well as accountability to internal governance structures and externally to statutory agencies and funders, it is assumed that monitoring and evaluation aims to:

- Give a voice to service users. This is a particularly important and sensitive issue where individuals have experienced victimisation and trauma.
- Support front-line practice through enabling and informing skilled, reflective workers.
- Inform organisational development and learning.

Activity during the initial phase of BiC has included:

- The design, testing and refinement of a system for recording activity: registration form, contact log, monthly review and exit interview.
- Support in testing the approach to internally generated case studies and in the evaluation of training programme.
- Planning of key informant interviews with a wide range local agencies and stakeholders.
- Technical and conceptual input including around: client consent and data protection, social return on investment, theory of change, attribution, client categorisation, client journey, quality assurance and benchmarking, self efficacy.
- Review of 2 sets of client data (July 2019- November 2019 and December 2019 – May 2020) including a detailed review of recorded work with 8 clients.
- The process of producing this interim report has also required further learning.

There is evidence that some data generating activity is highly valued by workers. Although there is significant work to be done in ensuring consistency and accuracy, the processes being meaningful to those who have to use them is a strong starting point.

It was also recorded that some clients had difficulties with some elements. Aspects of this included: the meaning of some questions, the perceived intrusive nature of some questions, and the total number of questions. To this might be added some duplication of data and the need to ensure that all interviewing is sensitive to the experience of service users – see first bullet point above. Further consideration might also be given to the relationships between practice-focused evaluation, the need to promote the organisation to potential clients and referring organisation, and developing training resources.

Just as the interim evaluation is designed to support enhanced delivery during the remainder of the project, so it can enhance the quality of evaluative work.

5.1. Back in Control Posters in English and other languages



The poster features a man from behind, holding a pair of scissors to cut a string that supports a yellow sign. The sign reads: **BACK IN CONTROL**  
**ARE YOU BEING DISCRIMINATED AGAINST IN YOUR WORKPLACE?**

Logos for ICOS and COMMUNITY FUND are in the top left and right corners.

Text on the poster:

- Do you feel unsafe at work?
- Are you being underpaid?
- 'Have you had an accident at work?'
- 'Are you being harassed in your workplace?'
- 'Interpreters available'
- 'Our support is FREE'
- 'We will protect your privacy and your data'
- 'We are a registered charity'

Central text on the man's back:

**'CONTACT US TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP YOU'**  
Call us on:  
**0759 653 8482**  
from 9:30am–5pm during the week  
or send us a text or email us at:  
office@icos.org.uk  
**ANY TIME!**

Bottom text:

*"Harassment; when someone hurts you or does bad things to you. For example, being nasty to you, hitting you or calling you names."*

