

K (originally from Sri Lanka, an asylum seeker, male, 35), learned about ICOS from his friends who had used our services before, and were happy with the support they had received from ICOS. K first approached ICOS in February 2024, and was registered with the Links for Life project, receiving support from Vanessa- his key worker.

K struggled greatly with several issues in his life, including his mental health, the ongoing immigration process in relation to his asylum application, and his financial situation- as an asylum seeker he was receiving Home Office support funding, which meant that he did not have enough money for emergencies and unplanned spending (such as buying clothes should his clothes become damaged or worn out).

The project worker- Vanessa was able to establish rapport with the client, and K was able to openly discuss his struggles with Vanessa, which enabled ICOS to provide a more effective support. Vanessa has referred K to Fiscus where he was able to receive clothes and essentials such as toiletries from this organization.

Due to mental health problems and severe stress, caused by being abandoned by his solicitor and going through the appeal process, the client misplaced several crucial items, including his ASPEN card (<https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support>), and keys. Vanessa helped K to contact the Home Office, explaining the mitigating circumstances for not being able to appear at his appointment in Middleborough (caused by not being able to pay for the travel due to having lost his ASPEN card). She also liaised with MEARS (accommodation provider) staff to ensure that the client was able to get a replacement key, and enter the property.

Vanessa then had to provide emergency support to the client on a vital issue- he had been called by the Home Office, who offered him a voluntary return to his country of origin. Due to language barriers, the client misunderstood the email, and mistakenly agreed. K did not feel safe coming back to his country of origin, and Vanessa supported him to clarify to the Home Office that he did not want to take part in voluntary return. Vanessa's help saved the client from a very dangerous situation.

K did not know how to apply for healthcare costs remission, which was a barrier to receive free medication he was entitled to. This was immensely important, due to the fact that he was facing severe health problems. Vanessa supported K to successfully apply for healthcare costs' support, filling in the HC1 form with them.

K feels more confident and safer as a result of the support he has received from Vanessa and the project and he feels he can trust ICOS if he needs further support.