



General Advice – Case Study

Slawomir (name changed), a client originally from Poland, has been receiving ongoing support from ICOS due to difficulties navigating services in the UK as a result of a significant language barrier. Although he is determined to manage his affairs independently, he often requires assistance understanding official correspondence, communicating with service providers, and accessing essential support.

One of the key areas where ICOS has supported Slawomir is with his Universal Credit claim. When his housing costs changed, he needed to report the new information to the Department for Work and Pensions. Due to language difficulties and uncertainty about the process, he sought assistance from ICOS. After obtaining the necessary documentation from his housing provider, we helped him submit the updated housing costs through his Universal Credit journal, ensuring his claim remained accurate and up to date.

Slawomir has also needed practical support with everyday issues. On one occasion, he experienced problems with his mobile phone account after running out of internet allowance and was unable to resolve the issue himself. ICOS helped him understand his account and access the services he needed.

In addition, Slawomir faced ongoing difficulties with waste collection services. He had previously been approved for a replacement bin, but when it was delivered, the collection worker refused to hand it over, incorrectly believing that Slawomir already had a bin. This left him without the necessary waste disposal facilities. ICOS contacted the council on his behalf, followed up with the relevant department, and ensured that the matter was escalated to the refuse manager. We also arranged for a green bin to be ordered and delivered to his property.

During a period of financial hardship, Slawomir required emergency food support. ICOS successfully arranged a food bank voucher and explained the conditions of the service, including the fact that food bank assistance is intended as short-term crisis support due to high demand. This ensured that he received immediate help while understanding the limitations of the service.

Housing was another significant concern. Slawomir had been waiting for more suitable accommodation and was anxious about the outcome of his housing application. ICOS maintained regular contact with his housing provider, Gentoo, to monitor the progress of his application and explain each stage of the process. Following property inspections and tenancy arrangements, Slawomir was successfully offered and moved into a new Gentoo flat. This represented a major positive outcome for him, providing greater housing security and improved living conditions. Throughout the process, ICOS helped him understand correspondence, liaised with the housing provider on his behalf, and ensured he was fully informed about the next steps.

Through ongoing support, advocacy, and practical assistance, ICOS has helped Slawomir overcome barriers created by language difficulties and has enabled him to access essential services, maintain his benefits, secure emergency support during a crisis, and successfully obtain more suitable accommodation. His case highlights the importance of tailored support for individuals who may struggle to communicate effectively with public services and service providers, demonstrating how targeted intervention can lead to meaningful improvements in a person's quality of life.