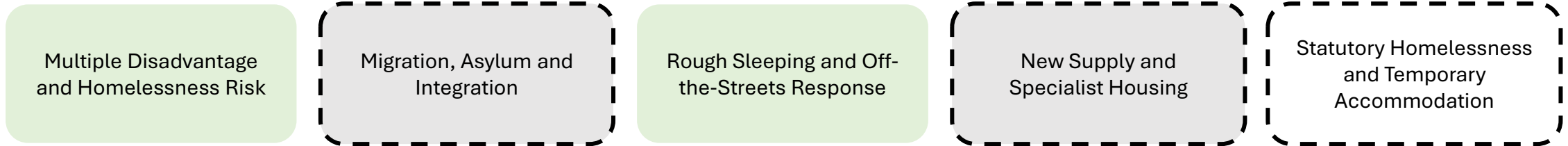


# Homelessness, Asylum and Migration

Understanding the challenges and opportunities for GM.

November 2023

## Team Focus and Evolution



- £17m+ of GMCA-commissioned programmes to support efforts to end and prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Almost all of this activity is focused on non-statutory homelessness, from accommodation-based services like ABEN (non-priority need) and those which go beyond the statutory minimum e.g. Youth Homelessness Prevention Pathfinder.
- Growing recognition of areas in which we GMCA can add value to Localities.
- Includes: a growing workforce development offer, integrating Asylum & Migration work and developing capacity to drive new supply of accommodation.
- In these newer areas, we have ideas but lack a clear strategic framework.
- The most pressing example is our work in Asylum and Migration.

# Diagnosis:

## Defining the extent and nature of the problem

1. The homelessness system is already overwhelmed.
2. Home Office policy is putting additional, unprecedented strain on Localities and communities.
3. This is not just a short term issue; we're in for sustained, long term pain.



Existing and historic demand pressures across all parts of the homelessness system

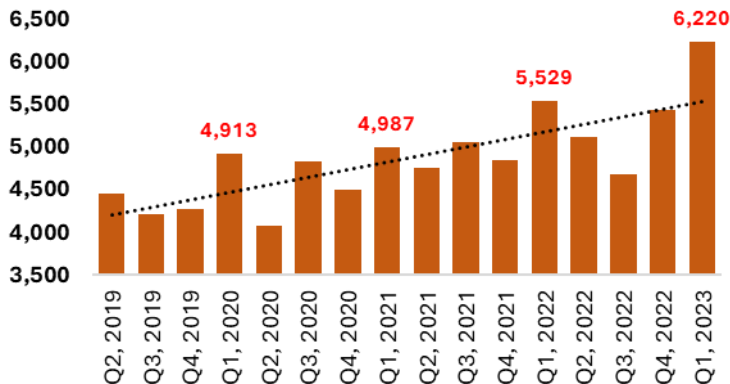
## Most services start from an all-time high in terms of demand – even before short-term policy conditions and impending socioeconomic shocks are considered

Services enter the winter of 2023-24 confronted with the greatest baseline demand volumes they have experienced in several years. As of the most recently available published data (Jan-March 2023), across GM:

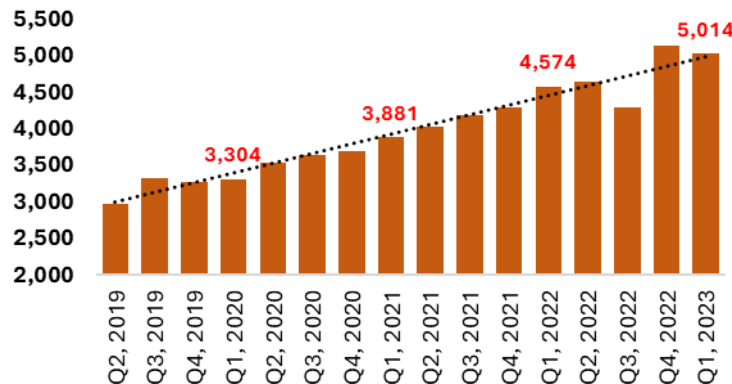
- 2,617 prevention duties were owed; the highest level on record, and 26% higher than the most recent equivalent pre-pandemic period;
- 3,603 relief duties were owed, the highest level on record, and 27% higher than the most recent equivalent pre-pandemic period;
- 5,014 households were resident in temporary accommodation – the highest level on record, and 51% higher than the equivalent pre-pandemic period. This includes 6,468 children.
- 145 people sleeping rough on a single night (in August 2023) – a 59% increase on the same month last year.

There is a considerable lag on published data used for this analysis – these datapoints are reflective of the pressure which the homelessness support system was under before the other pressures which have built up over 2023, expressed further into this analysis, are taken into account.

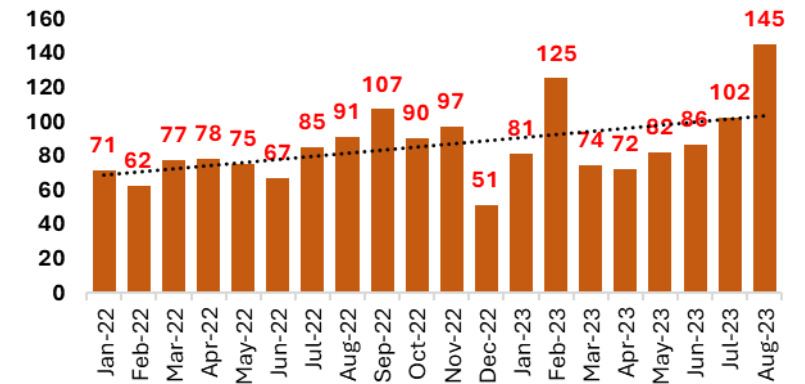
Number of households owed a prevention or relief duty in GM, quarterly, last four years



Number of households in GM in temporary accommodation, quarterly, last four years



Number of rough sleepers identified in the monthly count, monthly, since start of 2022





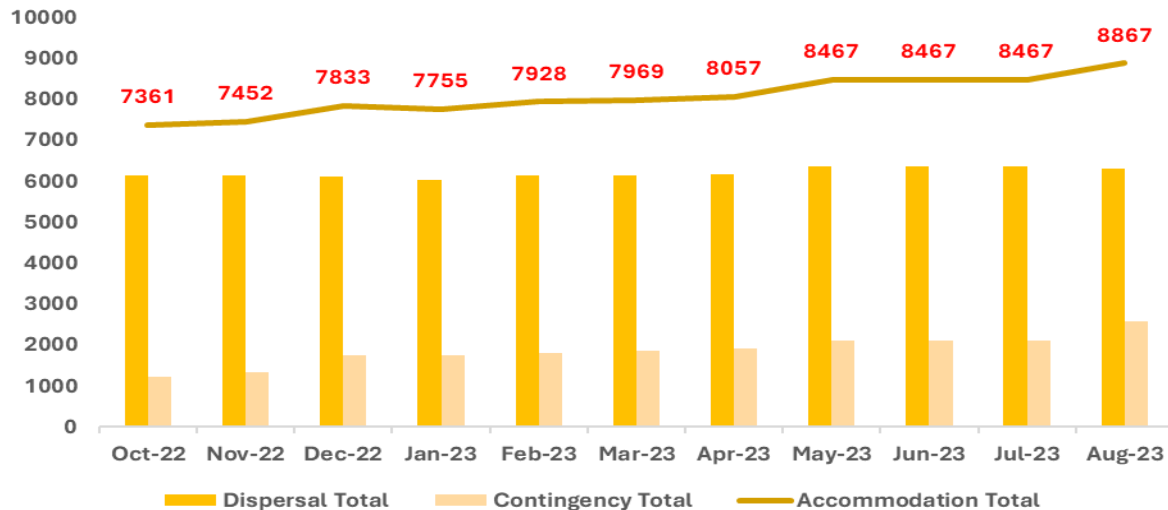
The decision to clear the 'asylum backlog' over a short window

# Asylum populations have continued to increase over the last 12 months, and recent acute rises in decisions are putting people at risk of homelessness and exploitation.

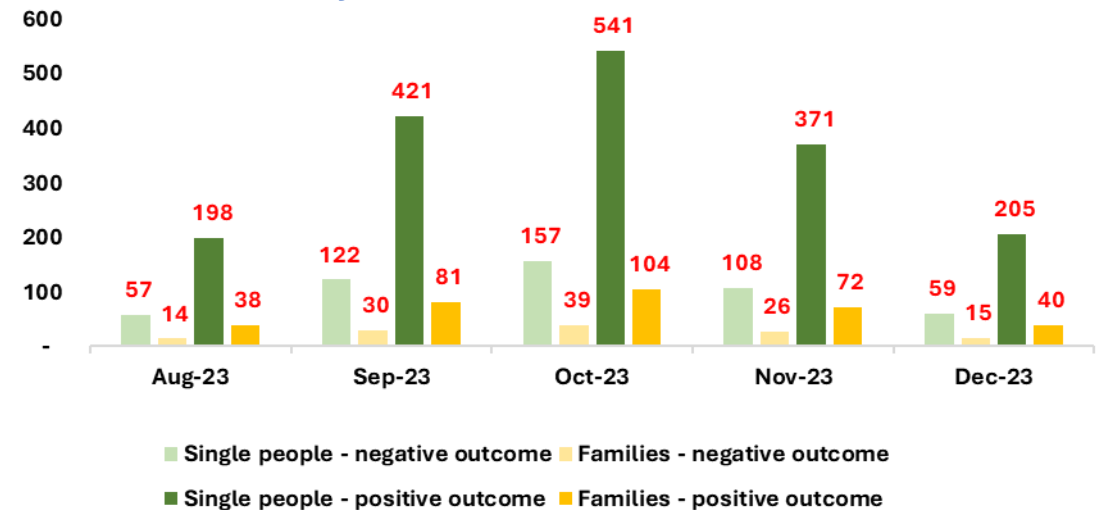
Greater Manchester's received a disproportionate share of asylum dispersal for many years and our asylum population continues to increase. Government's commitment to clear the 'asylum backlog' by the end of 2023 has meant an acute increase in the pace of decisions, and has driven a notable surge in Home Office evictions since August. Due to the way in which people seek support after receiving a decision from the Home Office, these decisions may not be immediately felt as a short-sharp shock by Homelessness services and impacts are likely to occur over the longer-term.

- People seeking asylum often have a **limited understanding** of the system, and what they should do when they get their decision. The Home Office only provides **limited phone-based support** via Migrant Help for positive decisions, except in exceptional cases.
- People who get **positive decisions** have full recourse to public funds but may not be deemed priority need as most asylum households are singles.
- Those with a **negative decision** will not be owed a duty by local authorities and are therefore at heightened risk of rough sleeping and/or Modern Slavery. They may need assistance from a **Legal Aid** solicitor to make an appeal within 14 days to allow them to remain in accommodation. If they do not appeal then, they will be evicted, but may be able to appeal or make a 'fresh claim' later with legal aid support.

Increase in the population resident in Asylum dispersal accommodation in Greater Manchester



Projected number of asylum claims likely to be processed in GM in the last five months of the year





The decision to clear the ‘asylum backlog’ over a short window

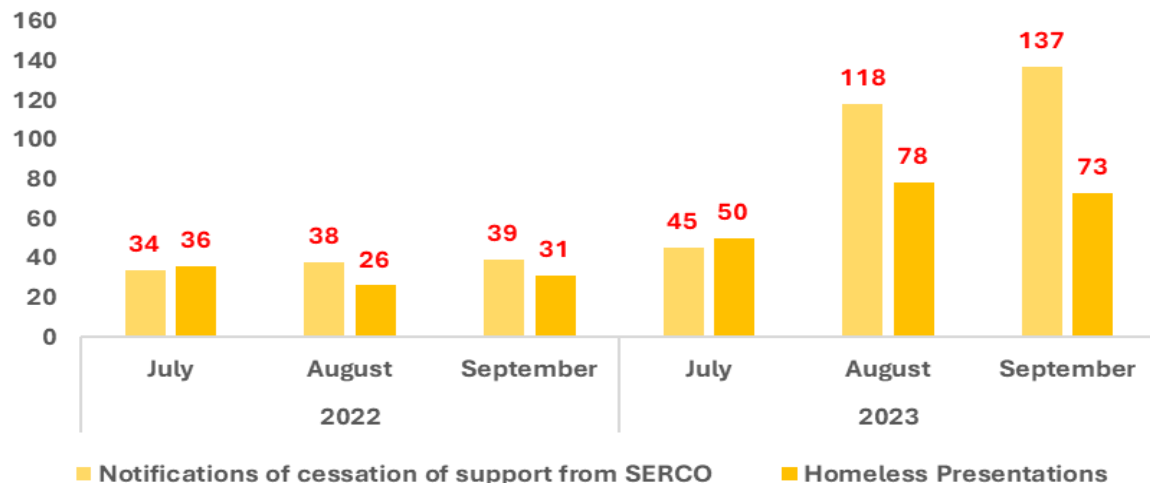
## The clearance of the asylum backlog is creating an additional shock to homelessness support services – for both statutory and emergency support.

A stock take of the pressure created by the current clearing of the Asylum decisions backlog has been undertaken across several GM LA’s, namely Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Trafford and Wigan. This has shown that the pressure on the Homelessness system is rising, as a result of the increase in asylum decisions. From July – September 2023, when compared with the same period in 2022, analysis shows a:

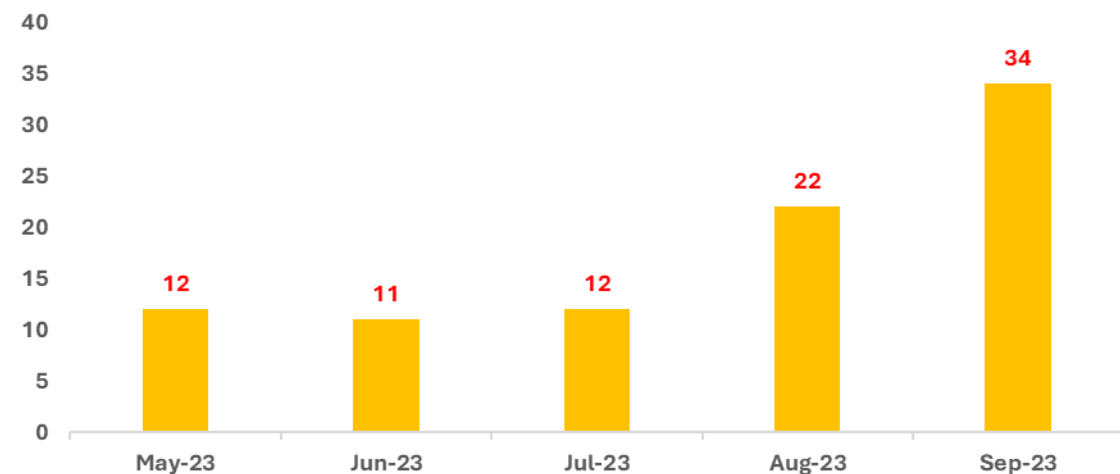
- **116% increase in the number of Homelessness presentations** from Households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of leaving Home Office accommodation;
- **52% increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation** as a result of needing to leave Home Office accommodation;
- **170% rise in the number of notifications** received from SERCO to inform a Local Authority of a household’s impending eviction due to Home Office support cessation.

The number of individuals who have been seen sleeping rough in-month who have left Home Office accommodation is steadily rising, and September saw a **55% increase** from August.

Notifications of cessation of support from SERCO and Homeless Presentations received due to the household being required to leave Home Office accommodation



Rough sleepers seen in-month across GM, who left HO accommodation in last 86 days



# Response: Strategic, Preventative and Progressive.

1. We need to resist knee-jerk responses to what is a long-term policy direction and inevitable international phenomenon.
2. We are unlikely to see progressive national policy shifts any time soon.
3. GM already leads the way nationally on to migration responses (e.g. RESS).

# Response: Strategic, Preventative and Progressive.

1. On asylum, we are almost stepping into a vacuum.
2. Solutions and assets exist within the VCSE sector, and there is no bad time to invest in upstream prevention.
3. The rising far-right threat highlights the need to lead from the front on integration and harnessing the potential of diversity.



## Developing our Homelessness Prevention Response.

# We need to assume that help isn't coming.

- We face medium-long term pressures, in a single-minded policy environment, and hamstrung civil service
- We're getting warm words and keen interest from government, but no funding or sense of direction.
- No obvious local funding mechanism for a GM asylum homelessness prevention response (Dispersal Grant only option, generally covering LA staffing)
- There is limited capacity or benefit to expanding ABEN to meet the overwhelming demand.
- Meanwhile, pressures continue to build on Homelessness Teams from all factors – Section 21, increased presentations, LHA affordability issues.
- We need to...

Find a way to fund an asylum homelessness prevention response which mitigates the worst of the risk

Help ease as much pressure as we can on the homelessness 'front door'.

Develop a sustainable system that is resilient to future demographic change and crisis.

## Team Focus and Evolution

Multiple Disadvantage  
and Homelessness Risk

Migration, Asylum and  
Integration

Statutory Homelessness  
and Temporary  
Accommodation

Rough Sleeping and Off-  
the-Streets Response

New Supply and  
Specialist Housing

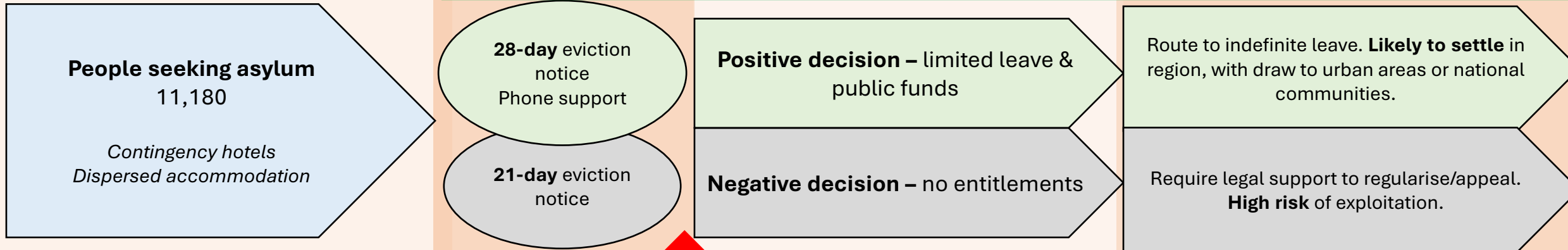
# Developing our Homelessness Prevention Response

## GM Refugee Homelessness Prevention Model

### Interventions

Early prevention - universal	Crisis prevention	Crisis support	Move-on and integration
GM strategic coordination and collaboration – LAs, VCFSE, NHS GM and partners			
Asylum crisis support – asylum system-facing challenges and appeals			
'Life in the UK/GM' learning sessions	Destitution funds/personal budgets		
Holistic face-to-face support work – VCFSE with LA navigator links			
Employability support (volunteering)	PRS navigation support		Immigration advice
English language education – ESOL and informal integration-focused classes			
Employment support – VCFSE with formal LA links			

### Asylum journey



Mental health & isolation    Far-right harassment    Poor nutrition

Lack of face-to-face support    Lack of understanding of rights and systems



Homelessness risk

Landlord misinformation & discrimination    Employer misinformation & discrimination

Lack of legal advice capacity    ESOL waiting lists

### Cohort-specific risk drivers

Developing our Homelessness Prevention Response.

# GM Asylum Homelessness Prevention Response

## Strategic Oversight and Development

GMCA Coordination resource and small innovation grants fund.

## Migrant Skills Programme

Early language and employability support service, including ESOL.

## PRS Navigation Service

Including tenancy support and financial support.

## Migrant Homelessness Prevention

15x Local Authority Keyworkers

## Immigration Literacy

Training, development and best practice for Local Authority staff

## 01 Wellbeing and Integration: Universal

- Development and oversight of a cohesive integration strategy across GM.
- VCFSE sector-led offer to promote individual wellbeing and community cohesion.

## 02 Employment and Skills: Targeted

- Coordinated and expanded ESOL & pre-ESOL pathways
- Volunteering & work experience network for community participation and skills
- Specialist Employment & training support aligned to local need and complements Refugee Employability Programme

## 03 Safety Net: Crisis and Emergency

- Dedicated keyworkers in Local Authorities working with people at the point of transition (+ve or -ve) from the asylum process
- Specialist immigration advice for non-UK nationals who find themselves at risk of homelessness.
- An immigration-literate mainstream homelessness prevention and relief support offer.
- Support and resources to facilitate access to the Private Rental Sector.

Developing our Homelessness Prevention Response.

## Towards a GM Migration and Integration Strategy

Overarching  
Vision

A Greater Manchester in which everyone, no matter their immigration status, can access a **basic safety net** and the support of **effective, appropriate** services to keep them **safe and well**.

A Greater Manchester that harnesses the **diversity** of our communities and supports non-UK national residents to **settle, connect and thrive**.

Welcome

All non-UK nationals can thrive and connect in safe, welcoming and cohesive communities.

Services

All NUKN can access well-coordinated, appropriate services that meet their needs.

Homelessness

Homelessness is designed out of the migration and asylum journey in GM.

Self-advocacy

Understanding & exercising rights, entitlements and responsibilities.

National change

GM speaks with a shared, evidence-based voice for wider change.



## Likely next steps

- Continue DLUHC and Home Office **lobbying** on funding ask (without expecting much)
- Explore all avenues to secure GM funds for a **GM Refugee Homelessness Prevention Model** that enhances and builds on existing local VCSE responses.
- Continue scoping & building cross-sector support for the GM **Migration and Integration Strategy**
- Development of frontline LA asylum worker **Community of Practice** to support workforce development
- Continue supporting **statutory services** with improved asylum-migration responses via RESS training and guidance.

Easing Pressure on the 'front door'

**VFM Exercise**





## Likely next steps

### Temporary Accommodation

- Establish Temporary Accommodation policy lead within Homelessness and Migration Team.
- Digest VFM report and socialise amongst homelessness leads
- Develop an action plan based on the outputs of this and the APPG report on TA.
- Get lead officer and portfolio leads buy-in to progress this action plan.
- Scope Project Management resource to drive this work forward.
- Utilise GMHAN to coordinate voluntary sector input.
- **Explore opportunities for immediate and long term supply.**

## Likely next steps

### Housing Options

- Sessions on immigration literacy by GMIAU in December and January.
- Establishing regular seminar/workshops for Housing Options staff in 2024.
- Exploring opportunities to invest in training and development across GM teams.
- Improving linkages between RESS and Housing Options.