

# 'We are all human beings.' Understanding the effects of the vouchers scheme on 'Section 4' claimants in Sheffield.

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## **Aims**

To assess the experience Section 4 claimants have using vouchers and gift cards in Sheffield.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative survey was conducted with 33 respondents accessed through the Northern Refugee Centre advice drop in and M&Q office where vouchers are distributed.

## **Key issues**

The report identifies a number of problems with the cashless voucher system relating to: being unable to use public transport to shop or collect vouchers; stigma; isolation without money to pay for telephone or internet use; expense of shops that accept vouchers, and not getting change; getting the right foods for health needs; and not being able to buy appropriate foods, a haircut or clothes.

## **Conclusions**

The voucher system creates practical problems, hardship and psychological problems, leaving people angry, isolated and feeling victimised, punished and exploited.

## **Recommendations**

Replacement of vouchers with cash support through legislative change. In the interim, the introduction of a Visa gift card [such as the 'Mint card']; offering bus passes; allowing choice of a mixture of vouchers and gift cards; delivery of vouchers or multiple collection points.

Migrant Group

Asylum seekers

Refused asylum seekers

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Policy

Destitution

Section 4

Welfare entitlements

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