

Homeless Link

Substance Misuse Toolkit

SUPPORTED BY
MAYOR OF LONDON

for Migrants Experiencing Homelessness

Aims of the Toolkit

Who this Toolkit is for

The aim of this Toolkit is to help non-UK nationals who are experiencing homelessness in London to access substance misuse treatment and support.

The Toolkit seeks to clarify entitlements around migrants' eligibility for drug and alcohol support and treatment, taking account of recent changes, including those resulting from the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

The Toolkit is a resource for frontline staff and managers who work with migrants experiencing homelessness – helping them to understand migrants' entitlements to drug and alcohol services and providing guidance which will help staff take decisions around accessing services and support, making best use of available resources and improving outcomes for their service users.

The Toolkit consists of a series of flowcharts which contain key questions to guide workers through the process of establishing service users' eligibility for drug and alcohol support and treatment.

We have aimed to make the information as clear as possible. Therefore, the flowcharts do not include detailed legal/technical information. Rather, hyperlinks are provided within the text to additional information and resources, including immigration advice and language support services.

The guidance contained in the Toolkit has been checked by a legal expert and is correct as of the publication date. However, as policy, legislation, and services are subject to change, people using the Toolkit may wish to seek further advice from relevant immigration and substance misuse services.

Key issues and considerations when assessing migrants' eligibility for drug and alcohol treatment and support

- Much support and treatment can be universally accessed free of charge by non-UK nationals who are experiencing homelessness. However, assessing access to inpatient detox and residential rehab is more complex. The main considerations are the service user's entitlement to free secondary care – which includes inpatient detox – and entitlement to Housing Benefit, which is required for access to residential rehab. See flowcharts on pages 4 – 7 for further details.
- Most funding for planned inpatient detox and residential rehab comes via local authorities, who will have their own access criteria and also some discretion as to how funding is made available for non-UK nationals. It is therefore worth contacting local commissioners and/or commissioned substance misuse providers for more information.
- Having access to a GP can be the starting point for treatment access, so it's important to encourage all service users to register with a GP. All people in the UK, regardless of their immigration status, have access to the following universal healthcare:
 - [GP and nurse consultations in primary care](#). Information on GP registration can be found [here](#).
 - Accident and emergency (A&E) services – at an A&E department or similar, e.g., urgent care centre, walk-in centre, or minor injuries unit.
- Don't make assumptions about service users' immigration status – remember to assess on a case by case basis.
- Remember to include immigration status within needs assessment and support planning reviews, as changes in status can affect service users' eligibility for some drug and alcohol services.
- Needs assessment and support plan reviews should also seek to review changes in the type and severity of service users' health needs, as these can also impact on entitlements to drug and alcohol support.
- NHS staff, local authority, and other professionals may not have a good understanding of UK immigration law and migrants' entitlements to drug and alcohol support. If a service user is being restricted access to free support or treatment, speak to staff to understand the basis for their decision making and, if necessary, use information contained in the Toolkit to advocate for service users.
- Determining eligibility for drug and alcohol services can be complex for migrants with certain types of immigration status. Some service users may not have a clear understanding of their own immigration status. If in doubt, seek support specialist immigration and benefits advisers to clarify entitlements.

London drug and alcohol inpatient detoxification programme

St. Thomas' Hospital provides two Addiction Clinical Care Suites which deliver personalised detoxification/stabilisation alongside physical and mental health care. This includes provision for people who are experiencing rough sleeping who are not UK nationals.

More information on the service and how to access it can be found [here](#).

What type of drug or alcohol support is the service user seeking?

●○○ Tier 1 Services

- Alcohol and/or drug-related information and advice.
- Screening and assessment.

○●○ Tier 2 Services


- Harm reduction intervention to reduce BBVs (including needle exchange).
- Interventions to minimise risk of overdose.
- Brief psychosocial interventions.
- Drug-related aftercare support after care-planned structured treatment.
- Outreach service to engage people into treatment/re-engage people dropping out of treatment.


○○● Tier 3 Services

- Community-based specialised assessment.
- Care planning, coordination and review in structured treatment, including keyword.
- Community care assessment and case management.
- Prescribing interventions, including for stabilisation and oral opioid maintenance.
- Community-based detox.
- Structured psychosocial interventions.
- Structured day programmes.

These services are counted as 'primary care'.
All service users, regardless of their nationality/immigration/residency status, can access all these services for free.
See the [guidance on implementing the overseas visitor charging regulations](#) (Section 4, p.34) for more details.
Access to these interventions/support is available via local commissioned drug and alcohol services and/or primary care services (GPs, nurses).

Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous Meetings for Polish Speakers:
[Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings – Przebudzenie](#)
[Narcotics Anonymous Meetings – NiedzielNA Medytacja](#)


Does the service user need language support?


Refer service user to local phone-based translation services.

Does the person want inpatient detox or residential rehab?

These services are classed as NHS 'secondary care'. Free access requires a person to be 'ordinarily resident' in the UK and this depends on the person's UK immigration status. Residential rehab is likely to be chargeable treatment if a patient is not 'ordinarily resident' in the UK.

Funding for residential rehab usually comes via local authority public health budgets. The residential element is rent chargeable, and this is funded via Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit entitlement depends on migrants' immigration status. Whilst lack of entitlement to Housing Benefit is not a legal barrier to accessing residential rehab, in practice it can be difficult to get the rent element of residential rehab funded. In these situations, speak to the local authority about options and seek further advice from a law centre or benefits advice service.

Can the person demonstrate their immigration status?

Without this, service users could be refused treatment or be charged for treatment.

Does the person know their immigration status?

This can be one of the following:

- EEA national with residence rights (having EU pre-settled or settled status).
- EU nationals without pre or settled status (people arriving after 30th June 2021).
- Leave to remain with recourse to public funds – Indefinite Leave to Remain (including people from Afghanistan), Refugees, People with limited leave to remain under family or private life rules with resource to public funds (including people from Ukraine).
- Leave to remain without recourse to public funds – leave to remain as a visitor, spouse or student, people staying under family or private life rules, pending immigration appeal, visa overstayer, or asylum seeker.
- Short-term limited leave to remain (visa holders).

Yes

No

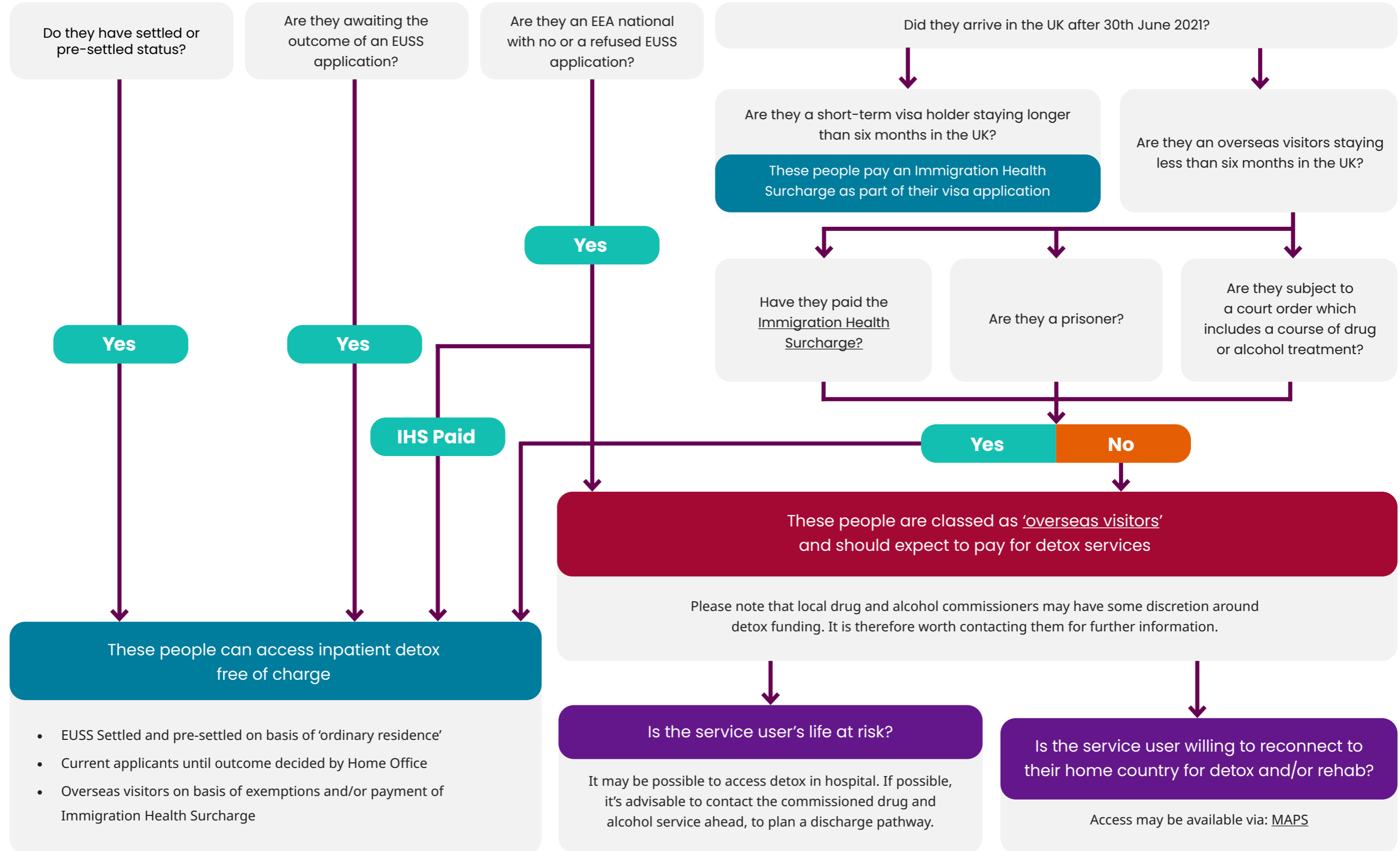
If they are an EEA national and want inpatient detox
If they are an EEA national and want residential rehab
If they are from outside of the EEA and want detox or residential rehab

Do they have an immigration or other caseworker who can assist?

Contact a local immigration advice service.
 More information is available [here](#).

Inpatient detox EEA National

Inpatient detox and residential rehab are classed as 'secondary care'. Free access to the treatment element of these services requires a person to be 'ordinarily resident' in the UK and this depends on the person's UK immigration status. Residential rehab is likely to be chargeable treatment if a patient is not 'ordinarily resident' in the UK.

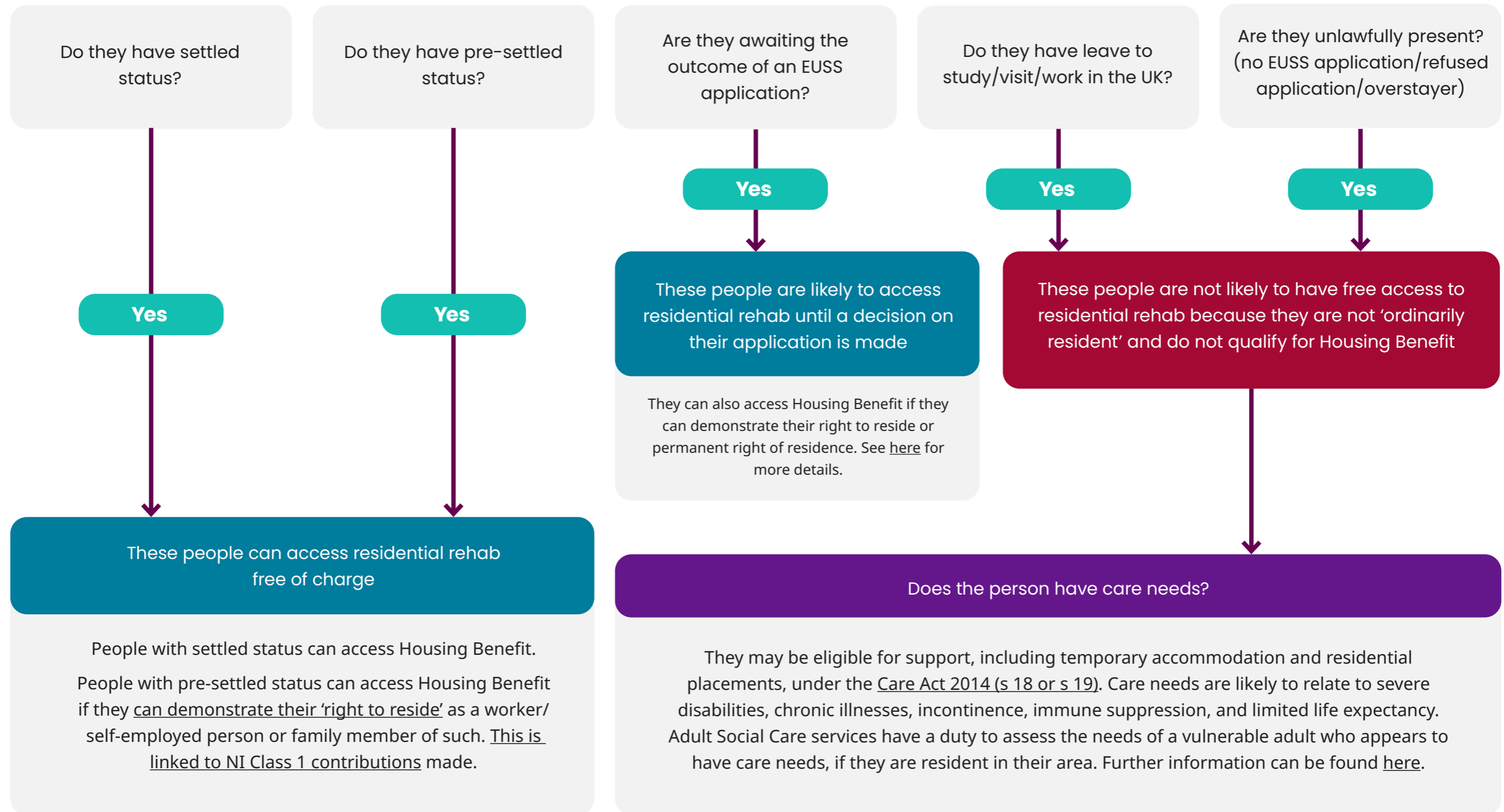


- EUSS Settled and pre-settled on basis of 'ordinary residence'
- Current applicants until outcome decided by Home Office
- Overseas visitors on basis of exemptions and/or payment of Immigration Health Surcharge

Residential rehab EEA National

Inpatient detox and residential rehab are classed as 'secondary care'. Free access to the treatment element of these services requires a person to be 'ordinarily resident' in the UK and this depends on the person's UK immigration status. Residential rehab is likely to be chargeable treatment if a patient is not 'ordinarily resident' in the UK.

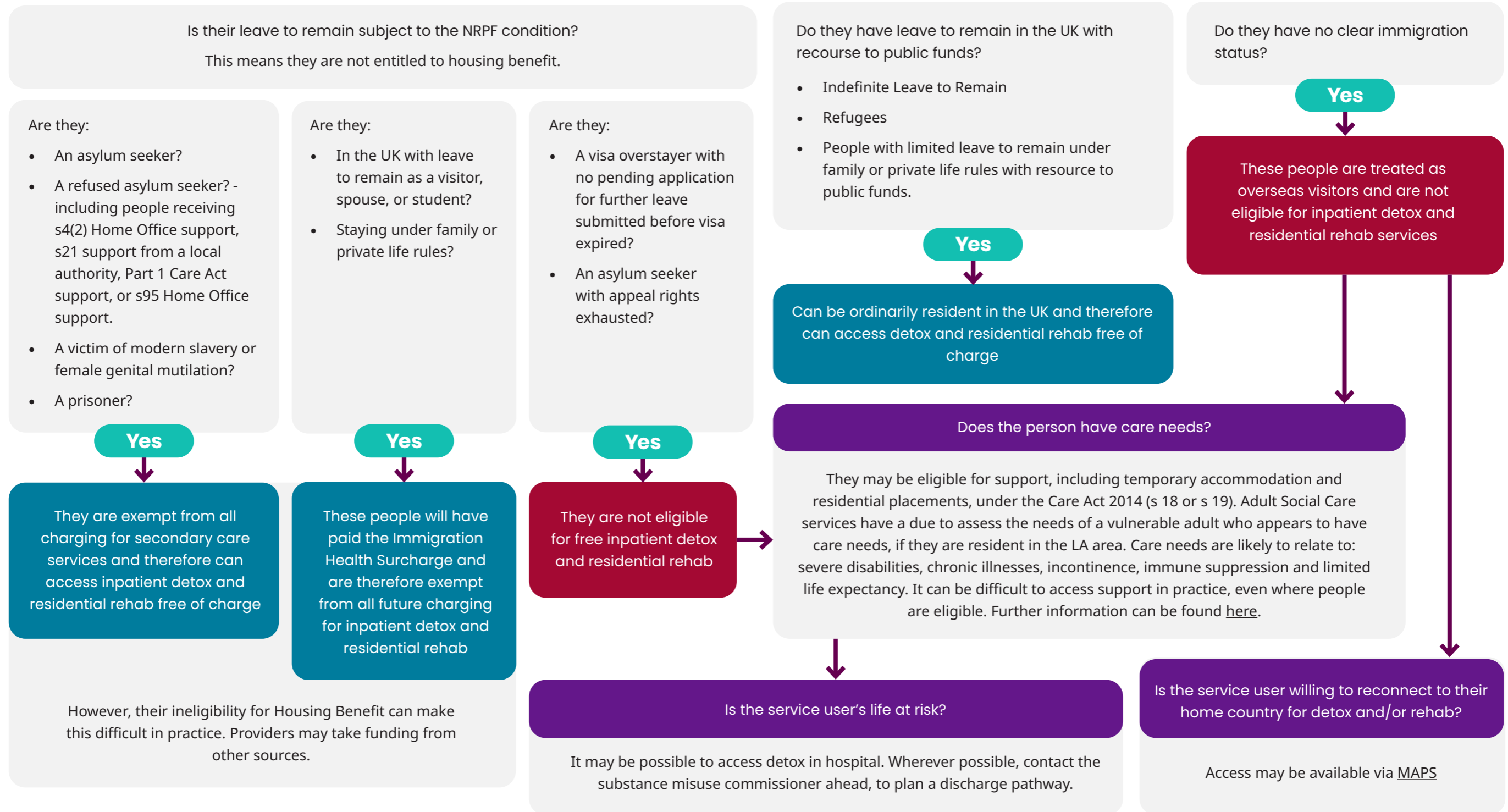
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Detox and rehab Person from outside of the EEA

Inpatient detox and residential rehab are classed as 'secondary care'. Free access to the treatment element of these services requires a person to be 'ordinarily resident' in the UK and this depends on the person's UK immigration status. Residential rehab is likely to be chargeable treatment if a patient is not 'ordinarily resident' in the UK.

Funding for residential rehab usually comes via local authority public health services. The residential element is rent chargeable, and this is funded via Housing Benefit. Housing Benefit entitlement depends on migrants' immigration status. Whilst lack of entitlement to Housing Benefit is not a legal barrier to accessing residential rehab, in practice it can be difficult to get the rent element of residential rehab funded. In these situations, seek further advice from a law centre or benefits advice service.





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What we do

Homeless Link is the national membership charity for frontline homelessness services. We work to improve services through research, guidance and learning, and campaign for policy change that will ensure everyone has a place to call home and the support they need to keep it.

Minorities House
2-5 Minorities
London
EC3N 1BJ
www.homeless.org.uk
[@HomelessLink](https://twitter.com/HomelessLink)