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Europaia supports the most vulnerable EU nationals in Greater Manchester, UK

For any person who is entitled to receive benefits in the UK, it is essential they have a bank account. To open a bank account, proof of address is required and for that a passport is essential. To build a regular life, we all need a foundation, and at Europaia, we know it can be a **horrible loop** when any link is missing. And if we add health, the equation just gets worse. This was the case of a 52-year-old Lithuanian man.

After 5 months in hospital in Bury, Greater Manchester recovering from a stroke, this man found himself with **virtually nothing**, apart from a small bag of clothes and an old mobile phone. Europaia discovered he had been in the UK for more than 10 years, healthy and working, although it had not always been formal work with all his record updated. Many migrants are not able to find lawful work and only find opportunities to work on a pay-as-you work basis.

Moreover, in that situation, the gentleman moved to an unsafe place, and he would occasionally end up sleeping rough or wandering the streets of Manchester city centre. After leaving the hospital, he found himself in a **very precarious situation**; no income and surviving on food from The Booth Centre, a community centre run with and for people affected by homelessness, and leftover food from his local takeaway. He had no passport and lost the ability to work due to his health condition.

Europaia committed to supporting him to achieve the most basic things – food and shelter. Working together with The Booth Centre, Europaia Support Team used their expertise to help him get a passport and apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. Once his situation was stabilised, we accompanied him to open a bank account which gave him proof of address, and the ability to register with the Job Centre. There, he was ready to claim Universal Credit.

The result is that now he is living in temporary accommodation from Manchester City Council, whilst he recovers, and he now has some income. He commented that he is happy to have a roof over his head; **he enjoys the peace and quiet atmosphere**, which will hopefully aid him in his recovery.

This case shows Europaia's approach to European nationals, who may speak English as a second language and therefore struggle with both language and cultural barriers they face. A combined effort from different organisations throughout Greater Manchester can make a great impact on each persons' unique situation and support them on their journey to a better life.

For information about free services and support for EU nationals in Greater Manchester, visit www.europia.org.uk | <https://www.facebook.com/EuropaiaMcr> | <https://twitter.com/EuropaiaMcr>

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