

EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER...

... this is what I've experienced,
listen and listen good!

South London Refugee Association
Project 17
Community Education Project



Accompanying info brochure to our three short films
with key terms, links to resources, signposting guide.

01

No sense of humanity!

The hidden violence of No Recourse to Public Funds.

02

Don't give up!

Section 17 support for families with NRPF

03

We need Justice!

Immigration advice in the UK



EXPERIENCE IS THE BEST TEACHER...

South London Refugee Association and Project 17 Community Education Project



Project background and vision



In 2020, we started regular sessions at SLRA with a group of women with lived experience of destitution as a result of NRPF or insecure immigration status. For over one year we came together regularly to share our experiences with each other and organise to improve access to justice not only for ourselves but for all the members of our community who face similar forms of discrimination.

During our discussions we have found that there is a lack of awareness and understanding of what NRPF is, the harm it causes, the barriers migrants face to regularise their status in the UK's hostile environment and to access Section 17 support for themselves and their children. People with insecure status are often scared to speak up and ask for help. This makes our suffering invisible.

This is how we developed the idea to make these videos together with Project 17 in order to share our knowledge, empower others to access the services and support they need. The videos are guided by the belief that knowledge is power. We hope that the videos will teach many people about the issues of NRPF, raise awareness and encourage those who need help to seek support and speak up for their rights!

SLRA is a front line community organisation providing specialist advice and support to refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants who are at risk or in crisis because of past trauma or restrictions related to their current immigration status. We have been working in South London since 1991. Alongside immigration advice and casework support, we offer social groups, ESOL classes and a community leadership program.

Find out more: www.slr-a.org.uk

South
London
Refugee
Association



Project 17



Project 17 is an organisation working to end destitution among migrant children. We work with families experiencing exceptional poverty to improve their access to local authority support. We believe that all children have the right to a home and enough to eat, regardless of their parents' immigration status. To achieve our vision, we provide advice, advocacy and support for individuals. We build capacity in other organisations and we campaign for the improved implementation of statutory support.

Find out more: www.project17.org.uk

NO SENSE OF HUMANITY

01

The hidden violence of No Recourse to Public Funds



"NRPF should end.
It is injustice, unethical and
discriminates against people
in any way."

*** All quotes are from our lived experience community leaders participating in the project.***

NO SENSE OF HUMANITY

01



The hidden violence of No Recourse to Public Funds

No Recourse to Public Funds NRPF

... means that someone can not access 'public funds' based on their immigration status.

Who has NRPF?



A person with leave (permission) to enter or remain in the UK, which is subject to the 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF) condition. It is a condition put on your leave which restricts access to benefits categorised as 'public fund'.

A person who does not have valid leave to enter or remain in the UK.



Leave to enter as a visitor, spouse, student or granted under family or private life rules.

Research by the Citizens Advice Bureau found that 1.376 million people have the NRPF condition attached to their immigration status. Most of these people have been living in the UK for many years. Read more in their [2021 report 'How do I survive now? The impact of living with NRPF'](#).



You can also read more about the impact of NRPF in the Unity Project 2019 report ['Access Denied: The cost of the 'no recourse to public funds' policy'](#) by A. Woolley.

“Having No Recourse to Public Funds feels like you are in the dark, you feel humiliated, and have no sense of belonging, no humanity. You are stagnant, it is difficult for your mental health.”

NO SENSE OF HUMANITY

01



The hidden violence of No Recourse to Public Funds

What are public funds?

Most statutory support for:

- **Welfare benefits** (e.g. universal credit)
- **Housing** (e.g. housing benefits, council tax benefit, council tax reductions, homelessness assistance)
- **Disabilities** (e.g. personal independence payment, carer's allowance)
- **Parents and children** (e.g. child benefits, maternity Grants)

*** The list of what counts as 'public funds' can be subject to change. For more information visit the [NRPF Network website](#). These benefits are listed at paragraph 6 of the [Immigration Rules](#) and in the [Home Office guidance on public funds](#).

Free school meals for all

You can, from 2022, access free school meals if you have NRPF and earn below the income threshold! [Read more on the Project 17 Free school meal fact sheet.](#)



Find our more about NRPF

- Project 17 produces guides and regularly updated fact sheets about NRPF. You can find more information in their ['Guide to other support available for families with NRPF'](#).
- [The NRPF Network](#), hosted by Islington Council, provides advice and guidance to local authorities across the UK about statutory support for people who are excluded from mainstream benefits and housing assistance. They produce helpful guides and factsheets on their website for destitute families, adults and care leavers with NRPF.
- Check out the ['Know your rights Guide to NRPF'](#) by the Migrants' Rights Network



Check our **Signposting List** at the end of this brochure to find out where to get help and advice!

DON'T GIVE UP

02

Section 17 support for families with
NRPF



“Support from the local authority under section 17 Children Act 1989 has become an essential safety net for migrant families who are unable to access mainstream welfare support because they have No Recourse to Public Funds”



Section 17 support for families with NRPf

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 is a form of support available from social services. It is most commonly provided in the form of accommodation and/or subsistence (financial) support. Section 17 is available to everyone, including to families who have NRPf.

When can social services help under Section 17?

Social services can help when a child (under 18) is...

physically present
in the local
authority's area



and

'in need'

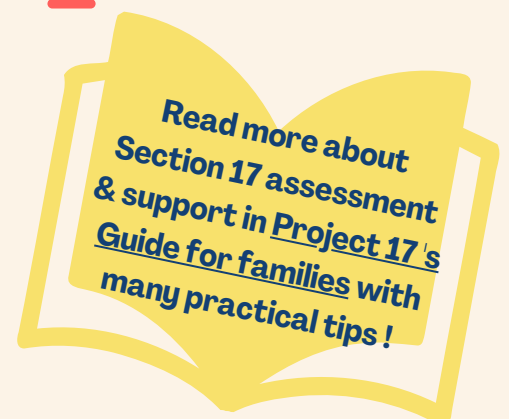
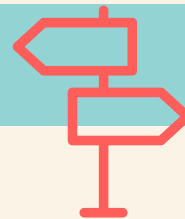


A child whose family does not have adequate accommodation or sufficient income to meet their essential living needs will almost certainly be 'in need'. A child will also be 'in need' if they are disabled.

How do I apply for Section 17?



Support under section 17 is accessed via an assessment. You, or a representative, can request a so-called 'Child in Need Assessment' by approaching the social services department or NRPf Team of your local authority.





Section 17 support for families with NRPF

I'm undocumented - can I still get help?



All families with NRPF with a child 'in need' can request an assessment under Section 17, regardless of their immigration status. Some adults are excluded from accessing long-term support because of their immigration status. Social Services might share your details with the Home Office. If you don't have immigration status or are unsure about your status, make sure to get regulated immigration advice before approaching social services!

"You are not alone!
Be positive,
seek help,
speak up!"

Support available from Project 17

If you are a family with NRPF who is facing destitution, homelessness, or have a low income, you can call 07963 509 044 to speak to someone at Project 17. If you are a professional working with a family that might be entitled to section 17 you can contact Project 17's advice line on 07701 330016. Please note, Project 17 are not able to provide immigration advice (read more on immigration advice in our signposting list at the end of this brochure).

Read more about section 17 and the support available for families with NRPF in the [Project 17 factsheets](#).

"What was difficult about getting the section 17 support was lack of information."

Support for adults with no children

Section 17 is available for families with children. If you are a vulnerable adult with NRPF, or you are pregnant with no other children, you might also be able to get support from your local authority under the Care Act 2014. You can find more information on the [NRPF network website](#).

WE NEED JUSTICE! 03

Immigration advice in the UK



"In my experience I get a lot of bad legal advice because my case was very complicated. That's why I always say be familiar with the people who take advantage and just want to get money from people because they are in crisis."



Immigration advice in the UK

In 2012 the UK government declared a 'hostile environment' policy for migrants. In the same year legal aid (free legal representation) was cut for most immigration cases, leaving many people not knowing where to go for free and quality legal advice with their immigration applications. The immigration system is complicated and hostile to go through on your own! Make sure you get advice from a regulated and qualified immigration adviser to understand your options and enable you to make informed decisions.



Access to free & qualified immigration advice is vital for survival in this hostile immigration system!

Make sure you get regulated immigration advice!



Only solicitors, barristers and immigration advisers who are registered with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) are allowed to give immigration advice.

Immigration advisers are only allowed to give advice on issues they are qualified to assist you with. You can check all registered advice services and their level of advice on the [OISC website](#).

Resources on immigration advice

Check the [Project 17 Quick Reference Guide to Immigration statuses](#).

You can search for a legal aid solicitor on the official [Legal Aid Agency website](#).



The [Right to Remain Toolkit](#) is a really helpful online guide to the UK immigration and asylum system. For more information on lawyers, legal aid, and complaints see their section on legal advice [here](#).

You can find more information about Change of Conditions applications on the [Project 17 website](#).



Immigration advice in the UK

Immigration advice * Key terms



Fee waiver

The fees for immigration applications can be very expensive, some applications can cost more than £2500 per person. In some situations you can apply to have the applications fee lifted, for example when you are destitute, or at risk of destitution and unable to afford the fees. This is called a 'fee waiver application'. However, fee waivers are not available for all immigration applications. There are some charities who give immigration advice that can help you with these fee waiver applications.

Legal aid

For some immigration applications you can get legal aid. This means that you don't have to pay for your solicitor's fees, it's paid for by the Legal Aid Agency. Not all solicitors are registered to take on legal aid clients, some only take private clients. You can search for a registered legal aid solicitor in your area on the [Legal Aid Agency site](#).

Change of Conditions

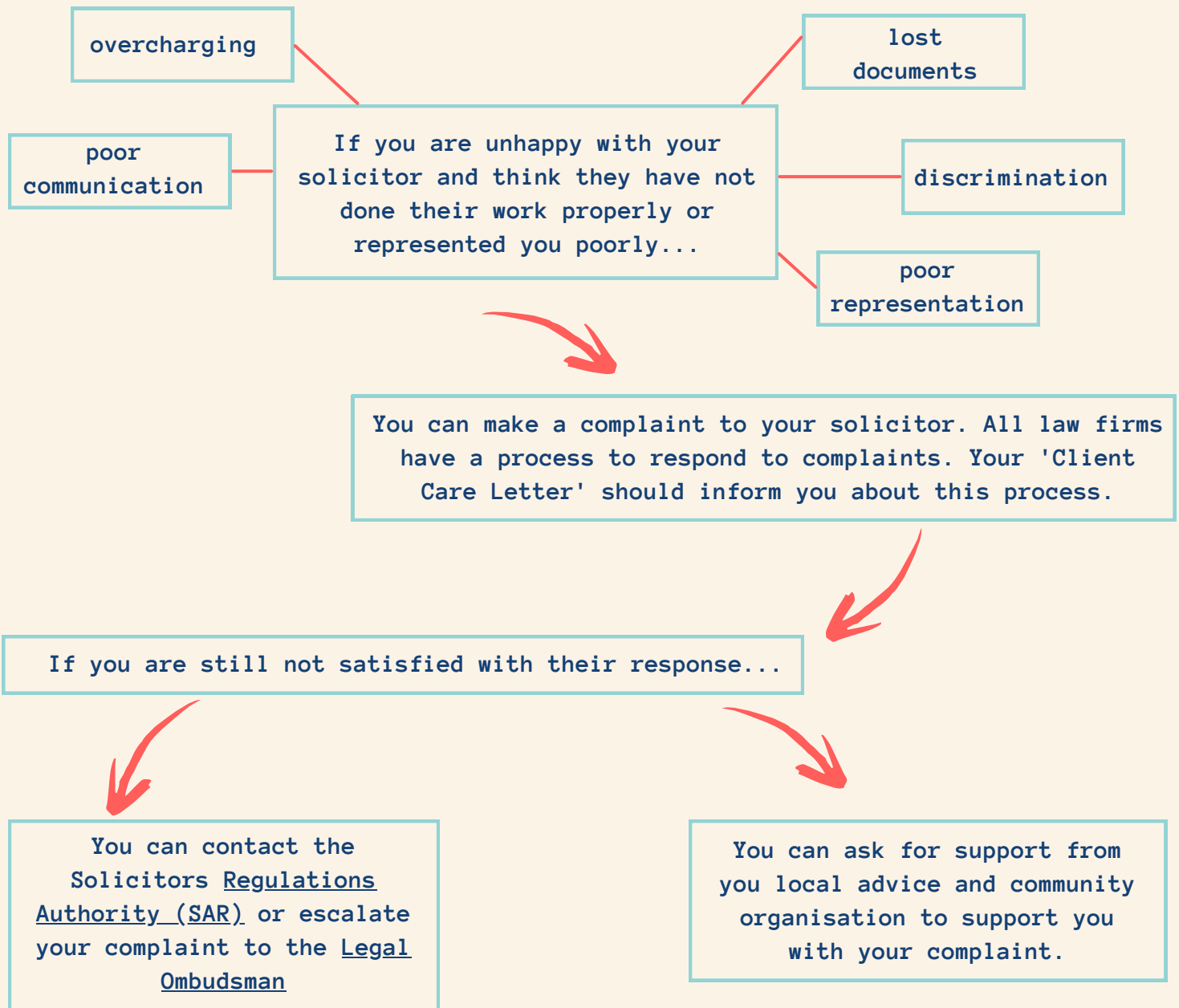
Exceptional Case Funding

Legal Aid is not available for all immigration applications, it depends on the kind of application. For some immigration applications you don't get legal aid automatically but you can access it through an 'Exceptional Case Funding Application' even if your case is not within the scope of legal aid. These exceptional case funding applications can be very complex as you have to put detailed information about your case. Therefore, you may need specialist advice and support by a qualified immigration adviser when applying for exceptional case funding. This might for some be the first step in order to get free legal representation for their cases.

It is sometimes possible to apply to the Home Office to remove the NRPF condition from your immigration status. If the application is successful, you will be able to access all welfare benefits and housing assistance for the remaining period of your leave.



What to do if you are unhappy with your solicitor?



Find out more on the [Law Society Website](#).

“Get informed. I always repeat that. That’s very very important. Get legal advice, information, being informed and if you don’t understand it keep asking people.”

SIGNPOSTING GUIDE

South London Refugee Association
Project 17
Community Education Project



“Having access and good information is very important because it helps you to leave your stress, your anxiety and it gives you hope.”

SIGNPOSTING GUIDE

South London Refugee Association
Project 17



NRPF and Section 17

Always double-check & confirm updated capacity and eligibility criteria for each organisation & support service!

The two organisations behind this project:



provide advice around homelessness and Section 17 support for families with NRPF experiencing exceptional poverty to improve their access to local authority support.

Advice line: 07963 509 044.

Please note, Project 17 are not able to provide immigration advice.



is a local organisation in South West London providing immigration advice and casework support for asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants who are at risk, working with adults and young people (registered with OISC to provide immigration advice level 3). Also offer free ESOL classes, social groups, youth club, community food bank and lunches. Please call the office to enquire about advice capacity: 020 3490 3443.

- The Unity Project supports people who are facing poverty and/or homelessness as a result of the NRPF restriction on their immigration status. They are the only organisation in the UK that specifically assists with Change of Conditions applications, the complex immigration application needed to gain access to public funds.
- Migrants' Rights Network is a charity that works alongside migrants in their fight for rights and justice.
- Together with Migrant Children provides support to migrant and refugee children, young people and families across the UK. They aim to empower and support individuals, families and communities through advocacy, specialist assessment, family & youth work and social work
- Migrant Children's Project at Coram Children's Legal Centre provide free legal advice and information on issues affecting children and families subject to immigration control, including immigration, asylum and nationality law; legal representation; age assessments; children's services and support; trafficking; education and healthcare.

SIGNPOSTING GUIDE

South London Refugee Association Project 17



- There are also several local organisations working with families and individuals with NRPF, they include: [AFRIL](#), [Lewisham Refugee & Migrant Network](#), [Hackney Migrant Centre](#), [Haringey Migrant Support Centre](#), [Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit](#), [Asylum Welcome](#).

Immigration Advice

Always double-check & confirm updated capacity and eligibility criteria for each organisation & support service!

- [Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens](#): provide advice and advocacy around registering children and young people as British Citizens.
- [Praxis](#): provide expert support to migrants and refugees in the UK. Praxis also run other community building services, training, advising on rights and entitlements and accessing services.
- [Rights of Women](#): provide vital, free and confidential legal advice to women on family law, immigration law, criminal law and other related issues.
- [Asylum Support Appeals Project \(ASAP\)](#): provide advice and representation for asylum-seekers appealing a decision to the Asylum Support Tribunal, they offer second-tier advice on asylum support issues to advice agencies via an advice line.
- [Asylum Support and Immigration Resource Team](#): not-for-profit OISC regulated advocacy organisation, provide legal support and representation to asylum seekers and other undocumented migrants in the West Midlands.
- [Joint Council Welfare of Immigrants](#): As well as providing quality immigration advice, JCWI is a campaigning organisation challenging unjust laws and practices that restrict rights and lead to discrimination and provide online resources about the UK immigration system.
- [Notre Dame Refugee Centre](#): provide support for undocumented migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and other human rights applicants in the UK.
- [Cardinal Hume](#): Provides free legal advice on immigration, asylum and nationality law.



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THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS



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