



Annual report 2016-17

Charity number:
1152621

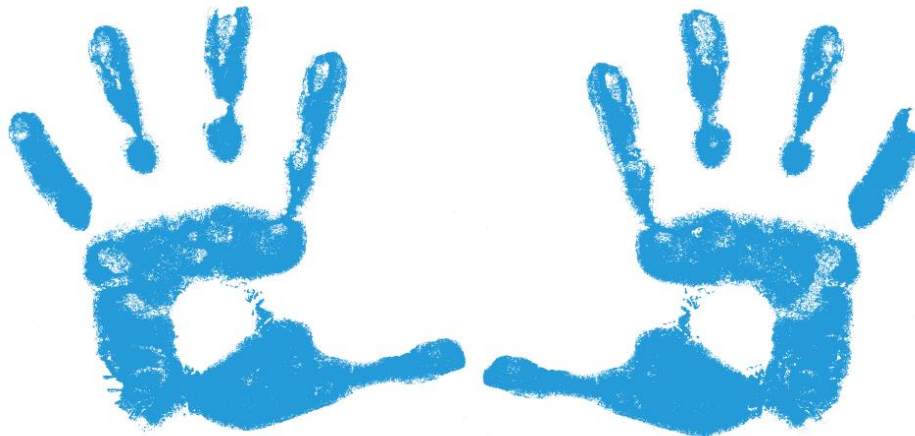
Project 17 works to
end destitution among
migrant families.

We believe all children
have the right to a safe
home and enough to
eat, regardless of
immigration status.

At a glance

Our work in 2016-17

- 355 clients
- Advice in 6 locations across London
- 25 training sessions and events
- 214 Advice Line calls
- Working with 10 partner organisations
- Supporting strategic litigation
- Engaging with decision makers
- Calling for change



Mission and vision

Project 17 is an organisation working to end destitution among migrant children. It works 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.

Project 17 works towards ensuring that local authorities comply with the duties imposed on them by Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need. Section 17 enables local councils to provide accommodation and financial support to avoid children being taken into the care of the local authority.

This duty exists even if the family has no right to work, no access to welfare benefits and social housing and no leave to remain in the UK. Project 17 exists to ensure that individuals eligible for support under Section 17 are able to access it effectively.



Introduction

2016-17 has been a year of growth for Project 17 in a difficult environment. We have responded to increasing demand by expanding our frontline and capacity building services, and developing our policy and advocacy work. Our advice service can now be accessed in 6 different areas across London. We delivered more training sessions than in previous years, and we engaged with local authorities to bring about policy change.

But this growth comes in a political context that is increasingly hostile towards our clients. Very sadly, in 2016-17 we saw more families left street homeless than ever before.

We spent time preparing for the new support provisions laid down in the Immigration Act 2016. If and when these provisions come into force, they will significantly impact our clients and increase the number of families that need support from local authorities

As legislative and policy changes bring immigration control into all areas of life, data sharing between the Home Office and local authorities is a serious concern.

We are looking ahead and considering the potential impact of Brexit, although the immigration and human rights landscape remains extremely uncertain.

Abi Brunswick, Director



Core values and behaviours

This year we spent time thinking about what makes Project 17 unique, and what behaviours and principles we want to inform our work. As an organisation, we hope to demonstrate these values through all our work.

Principles

1. A commitment to challenging social injustice with an inclusive and feminist approach
2. A commitment to learning from the experiences and the resilience of our clients

Behaviours

3. Working with a family-focused approach by displaying care and empathy and building trust through non-judgmental, honest relationships
4. Creating a supportive, warm and open working environment

Operations

5. Working hard to deliver expert services in an innovative, adaptable and professional way
6. Maintaining and strengthening external relationships that support our core principles

Our staff



Abi Brunswick, Director

Abi is the Director and one of the founders of Project 17, and is responsible for the overall running of the organisation. She has worked in the migrants' rights sector since 2008. Prior to establishing Project 17 she ran a small generalist advice service for migrants and refugees. Abi has an MA and a graduate diploma in law.



Amy Murtagh, Adviser

Amy joined Project 17 in 2014 as our part-time Adviser. She is now fulltime, doing a mixture of advice and policy work. Amy has a Graduate Diploma in Law and an MA in Human Rights. She previously worked at Rights of Women and worked and volunteered at Ashiana Sheffield.



Afsana Aramesh, Outreach Adviser (since Dec 2016)

Afsana started working with us in December 2016 on part-time basis, and has since become fulltime. She covers advice sessions at various centres in Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey and Lambeth. She previously worked at Coram Voice for 12 years as a specialist advocate, providing advocacy for young refugees, migrants, looked after children and care leavers.



Chloe Levassor, Capacity Building Officer (since Jan 17)

Chloe delivers our capacity building services, supporting other organisations to work with NRPF families. Her background is in education advocacy and she previously worked at the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation and Refugee Migrant Justice.

Volunteers and trustees

We wouldn't exist without the hard work and dedication of our trustees and volunteers. They do an amazing job and keep our services running. Thank you.

Our trustees are:

- Clare McGuinness (Chair)
- Sue Causton
- Frederick Guobadia
- Clare Jennings
- Fatmata Sesay
- Gwawr Thomas

Our volunteers are:

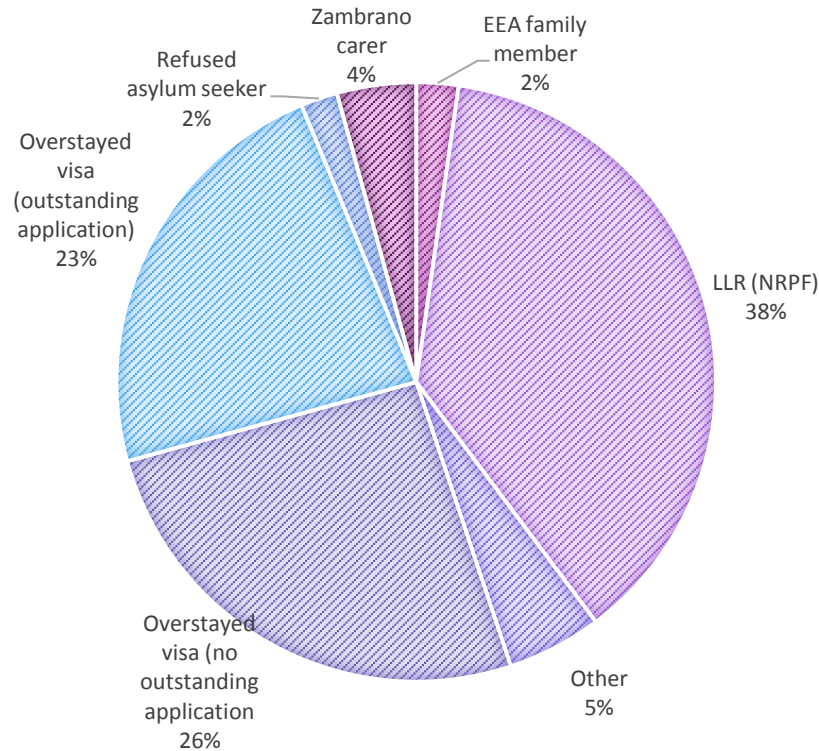
- Ifetayo Akingbehin
- Roli Aiyemi
- Eve Dickson
- Ivy Kawyisi
- Judith Lancet
- Esther Ogunsakin
- Felicia Owokoniran
- Fatmata Sesay
- Kameal Thomas
- Margaret Thomas
- Kofo Williams



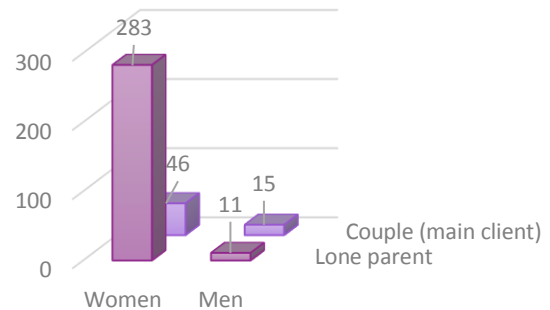
Advice service

In 2016-17 our advisers worked with 355 families, including 212 new cases.

Immigration



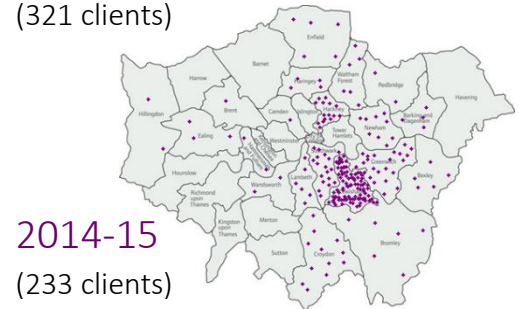
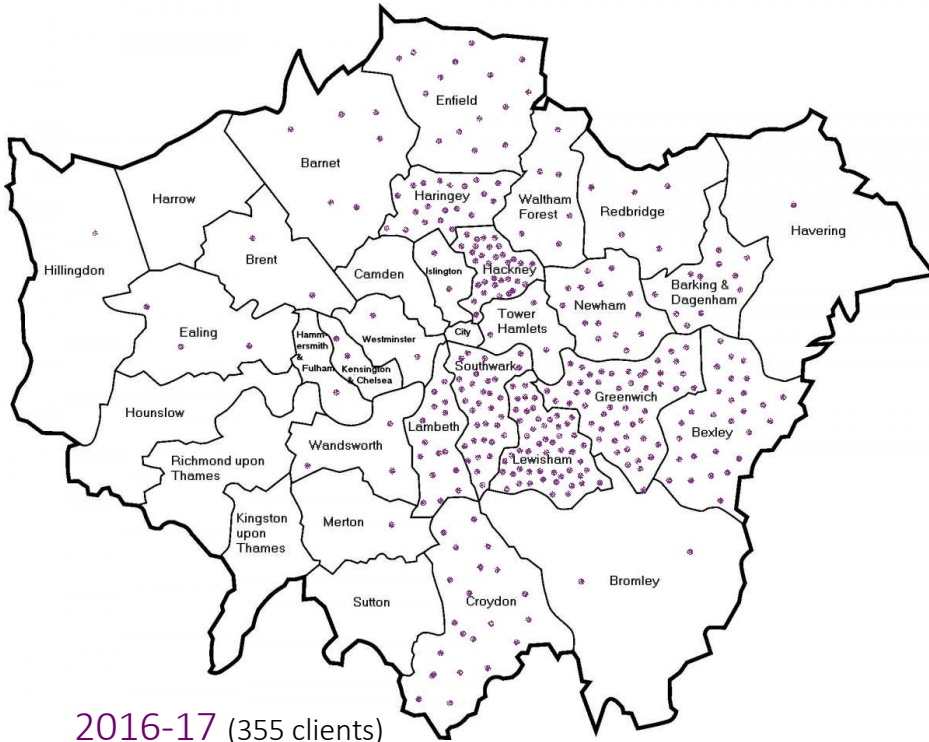
Gender & family



Clients from 40 different countries accessed our advice service. The largest numbers were from Nigeria (200), Ghana (55) and Jamaica (35).

Working across London

Clients can now access our service through outreaches in 6 boroughs: Islington, Hackney, Haringey, Lewisham, Greenwich and Lambeth. The graphic below shows how our client base has grown over time. Each dot represents a family accessing casework support from us.



Feedback

*“They follow up on every step I make.
They work along with me.”*

We asked every 10th client for feedback about our advice service.

- 100% said we understood their situation well, and explained their options effectively
- 88% said we helped them to make progress with their situation
- But accessing our service can be difficult – waiting times varied from 3 days to a month due to a lack of capacity

“I got someone to listen to me. I have been to different places that make you feel like you aren’t in your senses...[The adviser] was polite and respected me, unlike other places that make you feel like nothing.”

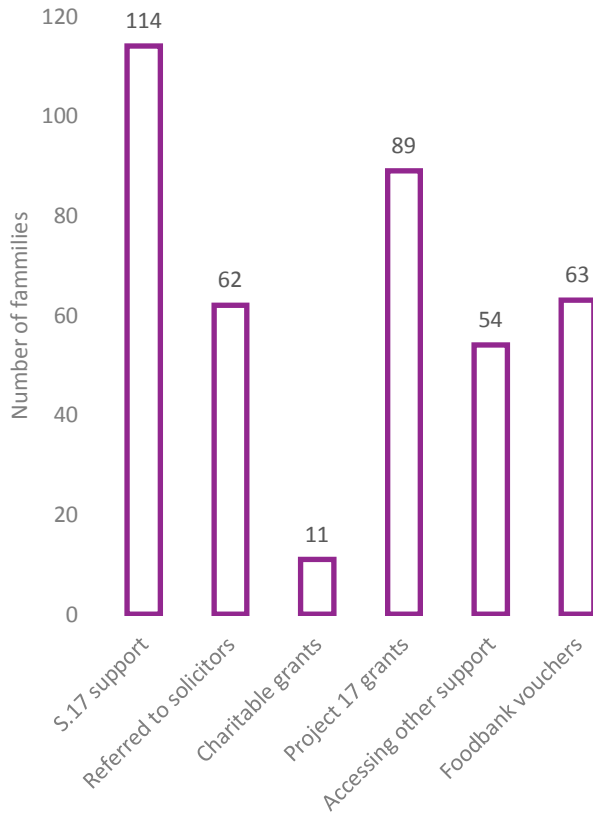
*“Before it was very horrible.
I was on the streets and now
I have a flat”*

*“There is hope. There is light at
the end of the tunnel and I’ve
made progress. I’m not scared
and I am making steps.”*

*“Project 17 [is] one of the genuine organisations that truly
supports destitute and poor people without considering
their social or religious background or immigration status”*



Outcomes



Explanatory notes

- Access to s.17 support can be accommodation and/or subsistence support under s.17 Children Act 1989
- 'Referrals to solicitors' are referrals to community care solicitors to challenge refusals of support by local authorities. The vast majority of these clients are successful in accessing s.17 when the local authority is challenged, suggesting poor decision initial decision making
- Charitable grants come from small grant-making organisations and normally range from £100-£300
- Project 17 grants come from our Destitution Fund, which can provide small one-off payments in urgent situations
- Other support includes accessing immigration advice, healthcare, free prescriptions and school meals. It also includes child maintenance, relevant benefits and declarations of parentage
- We hold foodbank vouchers for 11 local authority areas.

Accompanying project

Approaching the local authority for support can be **frightening** and **intimidating**. Families are in crisis - usually facing **homelessness** or extreme poverty. Our experience shows that local authorities often wrongly **refuse support** when first approached.

Our **accompanying volunteers** go with clients to request help, providing **emotional** and **practical** support and keeping a clear record of what happens so our advisers can follow up effectively.

All our accompanying **volunteers** are ex-clients who have **personal experience** of s.17.

This year we worked with **6 volunteers**, who went on a total of **53 visits** to local authorities. Clients told us they felt more **confident** approaching the council with a volunteer and were better able to explain their situation.



Case study

Names and identifying features have been changed

Margaret was facing homelessness with her baby, Christopher, when she approached us in the summer of 2016. She and Christopher were sleeping on the floor of a friend's living room, and had been asked to leave.

We referred the family to Haringey for support under s.17. Initially, we got no response from the council. We were then told the assessment would take 45 days and support could not be provided before it was finished. As the family had an urgent need for accommodation, we thought this blanket refusal was unlawful.

Haringey then said they would not provide support because Margaret had no leave to remain and no outstanding immigration application. Again, we



EUROPEAN UNION

UNITED KINGDOM OF
GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND



PASSPORT

Case study (continued)

believed this was wrong as Margaret was trying regularise her immigration status.

We referred Margaret to a solicitor who threatened Haringey with legal action. We provided two payments of £20 from our destitution fund as well as baby blankets and clothes. Following the solicitor's intervention, Haringey provided accommodation and subsistence, although we believe the level of subsistence was too low to meet the family's basic needs.

Christopher's father, Michael, wanted nothing to do him. Although Christopher inherited British citizenship from his father, Michael refused to help prove his nationality. We helped Margaret apply to the Family Court for a Declaration of Parentage and helped her apply for child maintenance. She was then able to make an immigration application herself. Fortunately, Margaret has now been granted leave to remain with recourse to public funds.

Telephone Advice Line

Our advice line provides specialist advice and guidance for professionals.

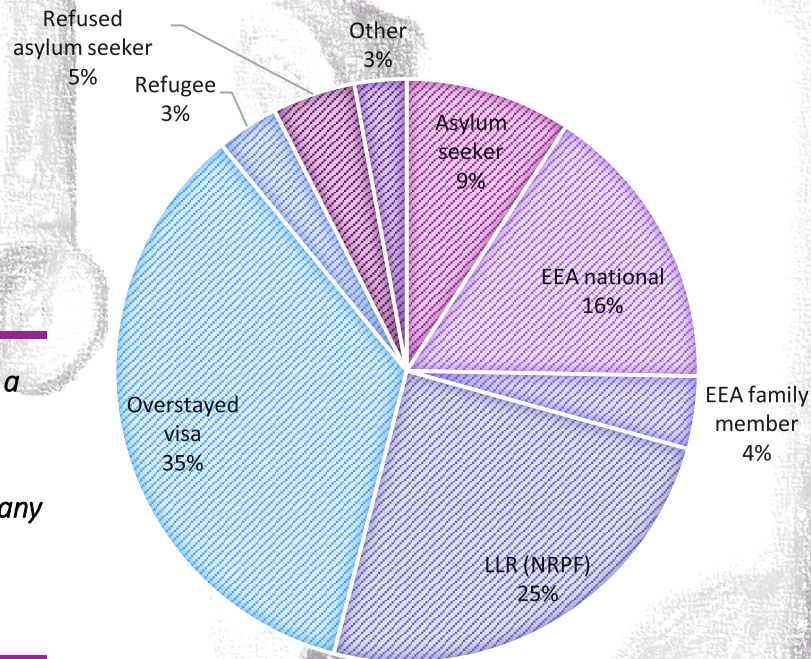
In 2016-17 we:

- Took 214 calls (a 21% increase from 2015-16)
- From 127 different organisations
- Across 55 different local authority areas

"Your clarity of advice and information – given in such a calm and powerful way – enabled me to support this family through this afternoon's events. Without your support I would not have been able to give this family any support this afternoon."

Jane, National Autistic Society

Immigration status



Training

We support other professionals to work with NRPF families by delivering training and workshops.

We Delivered 25 sessions:

- 14 training sessions
- 5 workshops, and
- 6 events

“Every worker should attend this course” participant, May 2016

Covering:

- S.17 support
- Challenging refusals
- Immigration Act 2016

“I am new to my role and need increased knowledge in this area. This course gave a really good overview as well as practical understanding of NRPF and LA support”

participant, September 2016



Policy & advocacy

Our policy and advocacy work focuses on systemic problems with the implementation of support

We submitted evidence of poor practice to officials in **Hackney, Southwark** and **Barking & Dagenham**. In response, Hackney updated its policy, Southwark consulted us on its assessment process, and Barking & Dagenham heard our evidence as part of a review.

We submitted a **group complaint**, detailing experiences of nearly 20 families in **Haringey**. We continue to pursue the complaint, and the local authority is now conducting an independent review of the service.

We supported **strategic litigation** by providing evidence of institutional malpractice and discrimination. One of our clients brought a successful judicial review against the local authority's refusal to provide support. The High Court in *S and J v LB Haringey* found the local authority's assessment to have been unfair, and confirmed that the council was wrong to conclude the family had other support available. This case sets a precedent that can be relied upon in future cases.

Unfortunately, we still see 'gatekeeping' from local authorities in the majority of cases. Our data shows common poor practice includes:

Aggression

Attacking credibility

Doubting destitution

Assessments by

Home Office officers

Threatening to take children into care

Failure to respond

Refusing assessments based on immigration status

Partnership working

We are proud to work in partnership to deliver our services. We believe that working together increases our scope and our efficiency. Sharing resources reduces duplication and helps provide more holistic services. It also gives us a broader view and helps us better understand the implementation of support for NRPF families.

Thank you to all our partners.

Beecroft Garden Children Centre – we deliver weekly outreach advice from the centre in Lewisham

Coram Children’s Legal Centre – delivering joint training on immigration and support options

Greenwich Migrant Hub – we attend the Hub to provide advice once a month

Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network – joint advice project (until November 2016)

Hackney Migrant Centre – we attend the centre to provide advice once a month

Haringey Migrant Support Centre – we attend the centre to provide advice once a month

Migrant Family Action – working with families to provide more holistic social work support

Refugee Action – delivering workshops on the Immigration Act 2016

South London Refugee Association – we attend the centre to provide advice once a month

Southwark Law Centre – advice focusing on short and longer-term outcomes and shared learning

Looking ahead

We expect the political and legislative environment to continue to reflect anti-migrant rhetoric. As NRPF parents find it increasingly difficult to provide for their children, demand for local authority support is likely to increase. We worry that councils will respond to this financial pressure by turning more families away. As ever, we will work hard to reduce destitution and ensure that children are not left homeless as a result of their parents' immigration status. Our new plans include:

Advice service:

Working more holistically - supporting clients to tackle wider issues impacting destitution

Working with clients to complain against poor treatment from local authorities

Policy and advocacy:

Mapping the provision of support in a format that be used by other organisations and legal representatives

Placing the voices of parents and children at the centre of our advocacy work



Capacity building:

Increasing our presence outside London

Working intensively with organisations to improve their capacity to work with NRPF families

Infrastructure:

Strengthening our Board and governance

Consolidating our services to improve efficiency and make better use of our data

Financial information

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2017	Total Funds 2016
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources:				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income:				
Grants & donations	11,165	172,335	183,500	72,056
Other income	4,506	25	4,531	10,854
Total incoming resources	15,671	172,360	188,031	82,910
Resources expended:				
Charitable activities	5,442	114,593	120,035	48,118
Governance costs	-	-	-	-
Total resources expended	5,442	114,593	120,035	48,118
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	10,229	57,767	67,996	34,792
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	14,656	41,570	56,226	21,435
Total funds carried forward	24,885	99,337	124,222	56,226

A copy our full accounts can be obtained from Project 17, Resource for London 356 Holloway Road, N7 6PA

Our funders

Thank you to the generous funders who have made our work possible

Trusts and Foundations

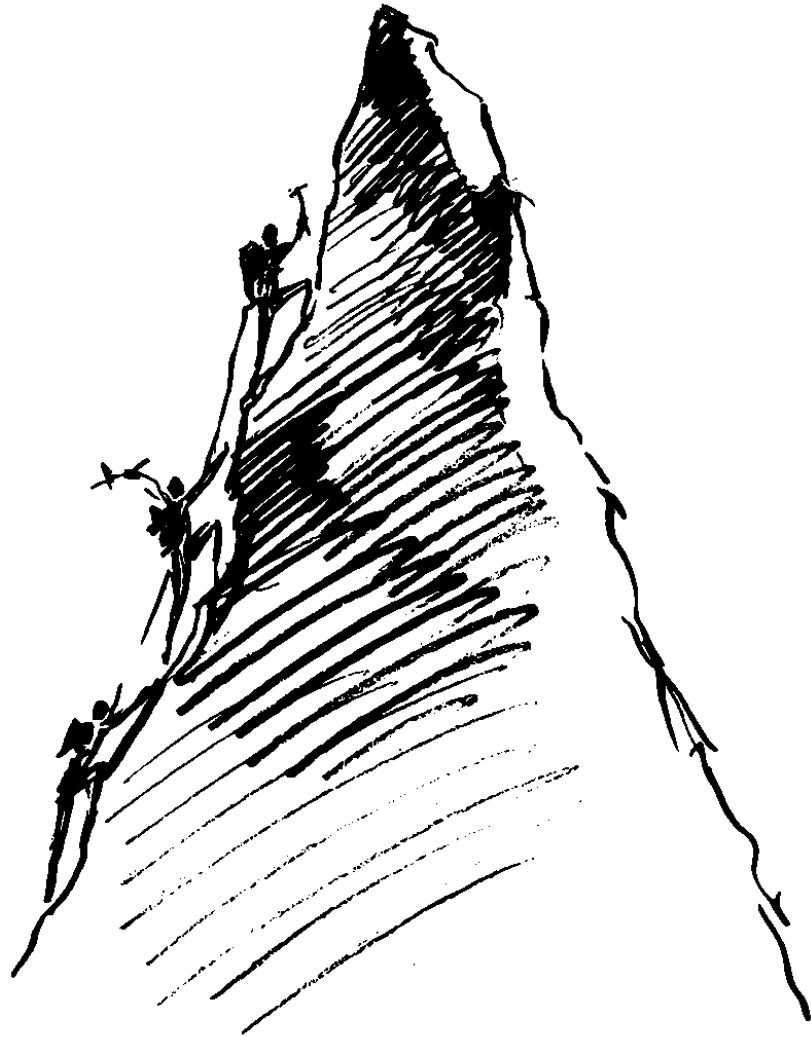
- A B Charitable Trust
- Lloyds Bank Foundation
- MSN
- Network for Social Change
- Oak Foundation
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- The Sam and Bella Sebba Trust
- Trust for London
- Tudor Trust

Other Groups

- Deep Throat Choir
- Individual donors

Grants for our clients

- Buttle Trust
- Mary Strand Trust
- Vicar's Relief Fund



THANK YOU

As well as our staff, volunteers, partners, trustees and funders, we would like to thank the following for their support

Bright Spark Digital for pro bono website management

Clare Jennings, Matthew Gold & Co. Ltd for pro bono legal advice and representation

Eric Metcalfe, Monckton Chambers, for pro bono legal advice and representation

Louise Mankau, 1MCB Chambers, for pro bono employment advice

Matthew Gold & Co. Ltd for fundraising efforts

Everyone who walked with us at the London Legal Support Trust

The individuals that give regular and one-off donations to support our work

Project Seventeen

Resource for London

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www.project17.org.uk

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Charity number:

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