



# Supporting households with no recourse to public funds – sharing and implementing best practice

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# Content

- Data on households supported by local authorities from NRPF Connect – caseloads, costs and trends for 2023-24
- Updated children and families practice guidance – key issues
- New guidance to support service delivery
- What needs to change – for councils and government

# Households with NRPF supported by councils

## NRPF Connect data 2023-4

## Overall costs and households supported (end of March 2024)

- 85 councils in England and Scotland were collectively spending £82m supporting:
  - Adults with care needs (£24.5m – 59 councils – 999 adults)
  - Families (£34m – 78 councils - 1563 families)
  - Care leavers (£23.4m – 36 councils - 912 young people)
- £68.2m (83%) = property-related costs
- £13.6m (17%) = person-related costs (subsistence)
- Increase in overall costs since end of March 2023 (£77.6m)

## Time on support and long-standing cases (end of March 2024)

- Average time on support remains high:
  - Adults with care needs - increased from 903 to 949 days
  - Families - decreased from 580 to 568 days
- Proportion of households supported for 1000 days or longer increased:
  - Adults with care needs – increased from 28% to 32%
  - Families – 17% to 19%
- This is a key area of concern for councils - for the majority, support ends following a grant of leave to remain (70% families & 59% adults)

# Assessing and supporting families with NRPF

## Updated practice guidance for councils

## Section 17 and supporting families with NRPF

- ‘The local authority is empowered [under section 17] to rescue a child in need from destitution where no other state provision is available’ - R (AC & SH) v London Borough of Lambeth Council [2017] EWHC 1796, para. 42
- ‘If a victim of domestic abuse has children, local authorities have a duty to provide financial support and/or accommodation under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard the welfare of those in need, regardless of their immigration status or that of their parents’ - Domestic Abuse Statutory Guidance (Home Office, April 2023), para 207.

## Students, work visa holders and their dependants

- Parents with these visas are increasingly approaching councils for support
- Students and sponsored workers are:
  - Restricted in the employment they can undertake to increase their income
  - At risk of having their leave cancelled (or curtailed) if the sponsor arrangement ends
  - Potentially in need of section 17 support on a long-term basis if they are still studying or working but have insufficient income to support their families
- For more information, see chapters 6 (assessing need) & 9 (pathways off support)



## Meeting a child's needs by providing accommodation & subsistence

- Meeting a child's needs must remain central to decision-making
- Will need a strategy to procure & manage housing for families receiving section 17 support - nearly 80% of support costs are accommodation
- When placing families out-of-area, councils must consider essential learning points from local child safeguarding practice reviews into child deaths - ('Ellie' and 'Child G')
- Will need a subsistence policy to specify how the amount of financial support provided to a family will be determined – policy can include minimum rates but must be flexible to meet a child's assessed needs
- For more information, see chapters 7 (accommodation) & 8 (subsistence)

## Subsistence case law

- Must not pay financial support to any family at a level lower than Home Office asylum support (plus utilities and council tax)
- Most families will need to be paid more than asylum support levels:
  - A family must be supported to a ‘welfare standard’ when a parent has leave to remain
  - Parents without lawful status who are making or have a pending Article 8 immigration claim (or have an established private/family life)
  - If there is a British child in the household
- Key case law: BCD v Birmingham Children’s Trust (2023)
- For full info see section 8.2 (subsistence: statutory requirements)

## Pathways off support

- Families are supported on a long-term basis but 70% leave support following a grant of LTR and only 5% left the UK
- Essential to establish route out of destitution:
  - Signpost to immigration advice as early as possible – councils need to consider funding this to fill local gaps
  - Access to employment services, childcare schemes, employment rights advice where appropriate
- But...immigration routes now more complex (such as MVDAC) and some people have no clear immigration pathways
- For more information, see chapter 9 (pathways off support)

# Supporting households with no recourse to public funds: key elements and service models

## New guidance for councils

# Overview

- Provides local authorities with the key elements of service delivery and the organisational models used to deliver them.
- Brings together UK-wide experiences from a survey, interviews, training sessions, regional network meetings, and other contacts with our services.
- **Key elements of service delivery**
- **Models of support**
  - Dedicated social work teams
  - Dedicated caseworker teams
  - No dedicated services
- **Specialised roles**

## Key elements of NRPF support

Oversight

Training and  
supervision

Referral routes

Assessment of  
need

Provision of  
accommodation  
and subsistence

Provision of  
social care  
beyond  
destitution relief

Discretionary  
support and  
edge of care

Pathways off  
support

Hospital  
discharge

Transition to  
mainstream  
support

## Dedicated NRPF social work teams

An individual or team of social workers responsible for case-managing families and/or adults with NRPF who are being provided with accommodation and financial support.

- NRPF expertise is built
- Care is provided holistically
- Focus on social work principles
- Easier oversight
- Can upskill other teams

### **Challenges**

- Ensure consistency of social work
- Avoid gatekeeping
- Continuity of care for child protection and specialist needs
- Relationships with both adult and children's social care

## Dedicated NRPF caseworkers (non-social work)

An individual or team of caseworkers who specialise in the elements of support that are specific to immigration status related exclusions and hold a caseload jointly with social workers.

- NRPF expertise is built
- Consistency of NRPF and other social work provision
- Easier oversight
- Can upskill other teams
- Work with all social work teams

### Challenges

- Clear roles and expectations
- Avoid gatekeeping
- Consistency of social work
- Planning and service development must include social services



## No dedicated workers

Social workers in generic social work teams case manage families or adults with NRPF alongside their other cases. Responsible for meeting all care and support needs, including accommodation, subsistence, and finding long-term routes out of destitution.

- Suits smaller caseloads
- Consistency of social care
- Focus on social work principles
- Resilient to variable demand

### Challenges

- Consistency and oversight of NRPF services
- Balancing mixed needs of child in need caseloads
- Inefficiencies with repeatable tasks

## Specialised NRPF roles

Rough sleepers  
NRPF Lead

NRPF social  
work champion

Political  
champion

Hospital-based  
NRPF discharge  
officer

NRPF  
administrator

NRPF housing  
team

# Addressing challenges

# Action for councils and government

## Recommendations for councils

### Invest to save

Develop a specialist response and coordinate services, fund immigration advice if lacking in area, and ensure staff access training

### Use NRPF Connect

Maximise use in ASC, ensure data is up-to-date and system is routinely used to get updates from the Home Office, and access user support from the NRPF Network

### Share practice & learning

Across the council, across the region (through the regional NRPF Networks), referring to and sharing NRPF Network guidance & resources

## Recommendations for government

### Funding for councils

Grant funding to invest in delivery of accommodation and financial support for families and adults with care needs who have no recourse to public funds

### Short-term support

Home Office to implement proportionate policy and operational solutions so support becomes a short-term rather than long-term intervention

### Immigration impacts

Address impacts of immigration policies & processes to achieve cross-government policy ambitions such as ending homelessness and tackling child poverty and VAWG

## Further reading!

- Assessing and supporting families with no recourse to public funds: <https://guidance.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/reader/practice-guidance-families>
- Supporting households with no recourse to public funds: key elements and service models: <https://guidance.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/reader/key-elements-service-models>
- Data reports: <https://nrpfnetwork.org.uk/nrpf-connect/data-reports>
- Policy recommendations: <https://nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information-and-resources/policy/summary-of-policy-recommendations>

## Further resources



- Rights and entitlements information
- Guidance for councils
- Email advice service
- Training
- How to join/use NRPF Connect

Web: [www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk](http://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk)

Contact: [nrpf@islington.gov.uk](mailto:nrpf@islington.gov.uk)