

Section 17 Information sheet

LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT FOR DESTITUTE
FAMILIES IN GREATER MANCHESTER



- Support options
- Applying for support
- Destitution advice
- How immigration status impacts S17 support



What support is available for people with 'no recourse to public funds' (NRPF)?

If you have 'no recourse to public funds', you cannot access housing or benefits like Universal Credit, but you may be eligible for housing and financial support from social services under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. This is known as 'section 17 support', and is not classed as a public fund for immigration purposes.

What support **SHOULD** look like

Following assessment of needs, accommodation and/or financial support for all family members if deemed to be facing destitution.

Although local authorities should not use B&Bs or hotels for families, in practice you may be placed in temporary accommodation like a B&B at first and moved again before settled housing is found, sometimes requiring a change of area or schools.

If you are assessed as having no alternative income, cash support should be at least £49.18 per week per family member (including parents). In some circumstances it may be higher. The amount provided should be based on an assessment of your family's needs, rather than fixed support rates.

Help to access mainstream benefits and housing where possible, including referrals for specialist advice.

What support should **NOT** look like

Being told you must wait to be evicted by a court before help is provided.

Being offered food parcels instead of cash support. Or being given financial support only for the children in the family.

Being told your child will be taken into care because you ask for help.

Being required to make an immigration application before receiving support.

Being told you are not entitled to section 17 support because you have "no recourse to public funds".

How do I apply and are there any risks?

Contact your local children's services – [find your local authority here](#). You will need evidence of your finances and immigration status. For more detail about the process, [see Project 17's guide](#).

Children's services will contact the Home Office to confirm your immigration status. The risks depend on your circumstances. If unsure, seek legal advice before applying.

Where can I go for advice?

[Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit \(GMIAU\)](#) offers free, confidential immigration advice. They may not take all cases but can advise on your situation. They will only refer to social services without consent if there are serious child welfare concerns. Contact GMIAU's advice service [here](#).

For further information about section 17 and other support for destitute families, see [Project 17's website](#).

For up-to-date information about the immigration and asylum system, see the [Right to Remain Toolkit](#).

How children's services will decide what to offer

They will assess:

- Your income and finances
- Your immigration status
- Whether there is a "barrier to leaving the UK" (for example, serious health issues, lack of travel documents, or safety risks)

Children's services must not leave a child homeless. Temporary support should be provided while your situation is assessed.



How your immigration status may affect section 17 support

Your circumstances	What you're likely to get	Things to be aware of
Limited leave to remain (private/family life)	S17 support until benefits can be accessed.	You may be encouraged to apply for a Change of Conditions (CoC) . This can affect your route to settlement. Seek legal advice first.
EUSS Pre-settled Status	S17 support until benefits can be accessed.	Some people with pre-settled status can claim benefits, so advice is recommended. After 5 years, you can apply for settled status (full access to benefits).
Work, student, post graduate visa	S17 support for duration of the visa should be granted.	Long-term support may affect visa conditions. A CoC application could risk curtailment. Seek legal advice.
Visit visa	Emergency s17 support while you prepare to leave the UK.	Support may be conditional on voluntary return. Seek advice if there is a barrier to leaving.

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Your circumstances	What you're likely to get	Things to be aware of
No current immigration status: - British child - Child with indefinite leave - Child who has lived in the UK for 7 years and it is not reasonable to leave the UK	S17 support until an immigration application based on family/private life is approved and benefits accessed.	You may be encouraged to apply quickly. Seek legal advice before submitting any application.
No current immigration status – waiting for a decision on an application to the Home Office	Temporary s17 support while waiting for a decision. Unless you have applied for asylum as you can access asylum support.	Social services will contact the Home Office, which may result in a quicker decision being made on your application.
No current immigration status / Immigration status unknown	Temporary s17 support only if there is a barrier to leaving the UK.	It is important that you seek advice first to understand if you have a valid barrier to leaving the UK, as Home Office contact could lead to removal.
Fleeing domestic abuse – seek advice as soon safe to do so	Emergency s17 support should always be provided. Longer term support will depend on immigration options and advice.	You may be advised to apply for temporary immigration leave (3 months) called the MVDAC. Always seek legal advice first – this can limit your immigration options and curtail leave.