



Section 17 Support

A guide for families

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Introduction

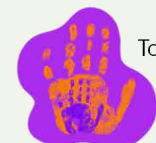
This guide was made by families who have lived experience of requesting Section 17 support from social services, and groups and organisations supporting families to access support from social services.

We ran a series of workshops to work out what would be useful to include in a guide. Real-life examples are used throughout but names of individuals and local authorities are not mentioned to protect confidentiality.

This guide is intended as a practical resource, with tips for people who need support from social services but do not know how to prepare and what to expect. It should not replace specialist advice, especially if your case is complex.

The workshops were organised by Hackney Migrant Centre as part of the Moving out of Hardship project funded by The National Lottery Community Fund in partnership with: Akwaaba, Project 17, Migrants Rights Network, North East London Migrant Action and Together with Migrant Children.

Thanks to everyone who took part and shared their experiences.



Together with Migrant Children
Securing migrant children and young people's safety,
belonging and identity.



Glossary

Leave to remain:

The term 'leave to remain' is a technical term used when someone is granted permission to stay in the United Kingdom by the Home Office.

Community care solicitor:

The term 'community care' is used to describe services provided by social services and the NHS to help adults and children with health and social care needs. Community care solicitors can help you to challenge decisions made by public bodies such as the NHS and social services.

Social services:

In this guide, we use the term 'social services' to mean services provided by local councils to children and families with no recourse to public funds.

These services are normally provided by children's services in your council, but sometimes they are arranged by other departments, such as housing.

No recourse to public funds:

The term 'no recourse to public funds' is a technical term for not having access to most mainstream welfare benefits (for example, housing benefit) or social housing (such as, council housing). People who do not have leave to remain in the UK have no recourse to public funds. Some types of leave to remain also have a no recourse to public funds condition.

What is Section 17 support?

Section 17 support is support available to children and their families under a law called the Children Act 1989. Different kinds of support can be provided (including accommodation and/or financial support), depending on your circumstances.

Can I access Section 17 support?

Section 17 support is support for children who are in need and their families. You might be able to access support if your child's health or development is significantly affected by your circumstances. For example, if you and your children are homeless or about to be homeless, or you do not have enough money to provide your family with essential things (like food, travel, clothes), you may be able to access this support.

Section 17 support is not determined by immigration status. Section 17 support is often needed by people with children, who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

People with NRPF cannot access mainstream welfare benefits or housing.

You could still access section 17 support if:

- ◆ You have leave to remain with a NRPF condition.
or:
- ◆ You do not have leave to remain, but you are waiting for the Home Office to decide the outcome of your application, or you are waiting for an appeal hearing or outcome.
- ◆ You may still be able to access support if you are the only person caring for a British child or a child who is an EEA (European) national, even if you do not have leave to remain.

If you have no leave to remain and no applications pending with the Home Office, you might still be able to request support. But this support will be affected by whether you have any grounds to make an immigration application.

Before requesting Section 17 support, you should first get immigration advice so that you can understand your options.

'I went to the Council for help, but they told me that they can't help me because I don't have an application in with the Home Office'

Your immigration status may affect the support you can receive from social services, but social services should not turn you away because you do not have leave to remain.

If you don't have leave to remain, social services should still assess your child. They should also make a second assessment of your family to explore whether your family can return to your country of origin. This is called a 'human rights assessment'.

There may be reasons why you cannot return to your country of origin. There could be legal reasons you cannot return. For example, you could be preparing an immigration application that you will soon be sending to the Home Office.

There also might be practical reasons you cannot return. For example, you might be heavily pregnant or you have health problems that mean you cannot travel.

Social services should help you with housing and/or money while they assess you if you urgently need support.

Tip

It is important that you get immigration advice as soon as possible if you do not have leave to remain. You should do this before you request support from social services.

See 'Where can I get advice' section p.34 for details of where you can get free immigration advice.

Who can give Section 17 support?

Social services in your local council can provide Section 17 support. Many councils now have a special team dedicated to individuals with NRPF, usually called the 'No Recourse to Public Funds Team' (NRPF Team). These teams are usually in Children's Services but may also be found in Housing or other departments depending on your council.

How do I get support?

To get support, you will need to request it from social services in your local council, or you can ask an organisation to help you with this (see 'Where can I get advice?' section).

It is useful to go to the council in person, but if possible ask someone to accompany you to support you and witness what is said during any meetings.

If you go alone make sure you keep a note of who you speak to and what is said.

Whether you can access support depends on your individual circumstances and you should always try to get advice before requesting support so that you are aware of your rights.

What is a Child in Need Assessment?

Social services should start a Child in Need assessment to understand if your child needs support from them.

The assessment is a long process and can take up to 45 working days (but it should not take longer than this).

You will be asked a lot of very personal questions. Sometimes you might be asked the same questions over and over again.

Social services may check that the information you provide matches the information provided by other people or organisations (for example, your child's school).

If you are street homeless or urgently need money to meet your/your child's basic needs, social services should support you immediately, even if they have not finished their assessment.

During the assessment you might also be asked questions that you feel are inappropriate or irrelevant. This may be difficult and stressful, but it is important to always try to answer the questions you are asked.

You should be completely open and honest about your circumstances. You might not immediately have the answers to all the questions or all the documents you are asked to provide and that is ok, but you should explain why.

You can also agree to provide information or documents later. It is helpful for you to keep a note of any documents you have provided, and also any documents you have agreed to provide in the future.

Tip

It is important that you get immigration advice as soon as possible if you do not have leave to remain. You should do this before you request support from social services.

Always try to answer as best as you can, showing that you want to cooperate with the assessment. If you think you have been mistreated, you can complain later (see the 'Complaints' section on p.28).

How can I find my local social services?

You should ask for support from the social services in the area you live in or the area where your children are present at the time you need support.

If you are registered with services such as a GP or your children attend school in a particular area, you might also be able to seek support from the council in that area.

If you move between different addresses, or your children are not registered with a GP or school, you should approach the social services where your children are 'physically present'. This means the area that they are in at the moment.

To make sure you approach the right council, check your postcode on: **<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>**

Once you find the right borough, you can search online for your borough's social services and request support in person.



'I lived in one borough for years. My children went to school there. When we got evicted, we went to stay with a friend in another council for a few weeks.

We became homeless again. When we tried to get help from the council we were in, they said it wasn't their problem. They told us to go back to where my children were going to school. So we went there, but they said it was the other Council who should help us. We went back and forth for days. It was so exhausting. We had nowhere to stay.'

Many families find it hard to get an assessment if they are moving between two or more different boroughs.

Although both councils may have a duty to assess your children, in practice it can be difficult to get either to accept responsibility for your case.

There are often disagreements between councils in such cases and families can be sent back and forth from one council to the other. This can be very frustrating and tiring. If social services tell you that you need to go to another council, you should try to insist that they refer you to the council that they believe is responsible.



Councils are supposed to talk to each other if they disagree about who is responsible for a family, but in practice they often don't. If you are being sent back and forth between two or more councils and are struggling to get an assessment or the support you need, get some advice from one of the organisations listed on p.34 or contact a community care solicitor.

What to expect when requesting support and how to prepare.

Will I be assessed straight away?

Social services should start an assessment when you first explain your needs to them and request support. But it is often much harder than it should be for families to access an assessment.

When you first ask for support, you may be wrongly told you cannot access help and be refused an assessment. You may struggle to see a member of staff from the right team and be told to wait for long periods of time.

If your family is facing homelessness and/or does not have enough money to live, your children are likely to be 'in need'. This should be enough for the council to start an assessment.

Tip

Be persistent, assertive, and try to stay calm. Try not to give up, even if you are being given the wrong information or left waiting for hours.

If you are homeless and have nowhere to go, ask to speak urgently to a duty social worker and explain your situation. If they are not listening to you and you need immediate advice, contact the agencies or solicitors listed on p.34.

Who can be involved in the assessment?

One or more social workers or case workers will do the assessment.

Some social services will involve a **fraud officer**. They might not always meet with you, but they can perform checks and provide information to the social worker about you and other people involved with your case.

Social services may run a credit check on you and your family. Credit checks show social services all the bank accounts that are in your name, even those you are no longer using: Social services will look for things like bank accounts or credit cards that you have not told social services about.

Social services will check your details and your immigration history with the Home Office when you ask for support. Some councils also have **immigration officers** from the Home Office who can attend the assessment. The immigration officer can check your records and any applications you have made, but they should not give you immigration advice! Advising you on how you can apply for leave to remain is immigration advice.

If you have not received a decision from the Home Office on an application you have made (e.g. an application to change your No Recourse to Public Fund condition), social services might ask the Home Office to make a faster decision on your application.

If English is not your first language, you have a right to request that an **interpreter** is present during the assessment. If you need an interpreter you should ask the social worker to book one for you.

What can happen during the assessment?

You will be asked to sign a form to give permission to social services to contact your child's school, your GP, the Home Office, and other organisations about your case.

Social services will need to speak to other agencies in order to carry out a full assessment. You have a right to refuse to sign this, however this might mean that social services will not be able to complete their assessment and might not provide you with support.

You will be asked to fill out forms with all your personal information.

A social worker might want to speak to your children alone, or to other professionals involved. They might also visit you in your home. Try not to bring your children to children's services with you during school times as they should not miss school (although they can join you after school has finished, or during school holidays).

'They told me I haven't declared all my bank accounts and they have asked me to meet with a fraud officer.'

It is very important that you are honest and open when you approach social services for support.

If social services think there is something you have not told them, they may be able to refuse your family support.

If there is something you have not told them, explain why you were worried about telling them and try to be open about your situation.

Fraud officers are often involved in assessments. You have a right to ask why a fraud officer is present and whether there are issues with your request for support.

If social services think you are not telling them something or has found out information about you that is different from what you have told them, they should explain this to you and give you a chance to respond.

Tip

Some people have experienced harassment and bullying when asking for support. Sometimes social services threaten to call the police if you do not leave their premises.

These attitudes are unacceptable and you can bring a friend, support worker or some organisations can refer you to NELMA (North East London Migrant Action), who can find a volunteer to go with you to social services.

It is useful to have someone with you as they can take notes of what happens during the assessment and they can offer emotional support.

Your finances.

Children's services will look in detail into your finances. They will ask you to provide a minimum of 6 months bank statements for **all** bank accounts you have ever opened under your / your partner's / your children's names (even if they are now closed). These include: current accounts, savings accounts, store cards, credit cards, or PayPal accounts, as well as any bank accounts or trust funds your children might have.

If other people are using your bank account, you should ask them to write a letter explaining this and take it with you to social services.

Allowing other people to use your bank account can often make your finances seem very complicated. It can sometimes be difficult to prove that money in your account is not yours. This can make social services suspicious. If possible, try to avoid letting other people use your account.

Tip

Before requesting support from social services you can run a credit check on yourself to see what information they will be able to see about you.

You can use a free service such as registering for a free trial of Equifax:

<https://www.equifax.co.uk/Products/credit/credit-score.html>

(if you enter any payment details, do not forget to cancel your trial!)

Your immigration situation



You will be asked to give information about how and when you and your family came to the UK. You will also be asked what applications you have made to the Home Office and when these were made. Your records will be checked with the Home Office.

Sometimes social services will ask for a copy of your immigration application to check if what you have told them matches the information in your immigration application.

'When I went there for the first time, social services told me to go back to my country. I said 'no' because my children were born here, I have nowhere to stay in my country and this is my home. They said that things are very hard in the UK and offered me £3000 to return.'

The council should not 'tell' you to return to your country and they have no power to remove you from the UK. You are fully entitled to refuse an offer of voluntary return.

However, it is important that you seek immigration advice as soon as possible if you do not have leave to remain.

'The council asked me to meet with an immigration officer from the Home Office. He was very intimidating and told me to stop requesting support from social services and to claim asylum.'

Some social services have immigration officers from the Home Office. They may ask you to meet with an immigration officer as part of the assessment.

We understand that this often makes families feel fearful and distressed. We believe many councils use immigration officers to intimidate people trying to access support.

These immigration officers are not legally allowed to give you immigration advice and should not do so. If they give you immigration advice, you should tell them that you want to get advice from a qualified immigration adviser or solicitor. You may also want to make a complaint.

All councils, even those that do not employ immigration officers, share information with the Home Office if you approach them for support and you do not have leave to remain. If you do not have leave to remain, you should get legal advice before you request support from your social services.

Social services may also share information with the Home Office if you approach them and you do have leave to remain (eg. with an NRPf condition). This may not be legal. You may want to get legal advice if this happens to you and you are unhappy about the way your information has been shared.

See p.37 for where to go for legal advice.



Where you have been living

Social services will ask you to provide full details of your current and previous addresses. They will also ask you for the dates that you stayed at each address. It is important that you try and give as much detail as possible. If you cannot remember certain addresses or dates, try and explain why this is difficult for you. For example, because you only stayed there for a short time, or you were never given the address.

Social services will also ask you about what kind of accommodation you have been living in (for example, the number of bedrooms, number of residents) and if you were paying rent and/or bills. If you were evicted, they will ask you why. It is helpful if you can provide documents such as eviction letters.

If you did not have a tenancy agreement, the person accommodating you should confirm in writing your address and the dates you have lived there. If they asked you to leave, they should say the date you need to leave and why.

If the place where you currently live is not suitable for your family (too many people, damp, mould, in disrepair), you should let the social worker/case worker know.

If you become homeless during the assessment, social services should provide you with accommodation. They should do this even if they have not finished their assessment.

Social services expect you to ask friends, family and people you know if they can help you before you approach them for support. They are only likely to help you if you have no other options. If you have close family or friends in the UK who have told you they cannot help you, try to get a letter from them explaining why (eg. they do not have space to accommodate you in their home).

Offering to take your children into care

Social services have a duty under section 17 to promote the upbringing of children within their family, as long as this does not put the child in danger. This means they can, and should, offer support to your family as a whole. You are entitled to refuse an offer of support to your child/children only.

If social services refuse to offer your whole family support, you should get advice from a solicitor or one of the organisations listed on p.34.

Social services are not normally allowed to take your children away without a court order. They can only apply for a court order if your child is at risk of 'significant harm', for example, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse or neglect. So if they have no concerns other than homelessness/destitution, they should not offer to take your children away. However, in emergencies children can be taken into care temporarily by the police for up to 72 hours, without a court order. This is called an 'emergency protection order' or being taken into police protection.



'They said they can only accommodate my daughter or I should take her to a relative or friend. I agreed to leave my child, but she didn't want to be separated...I was then initially refused accommodation and my case was closed. I was only granted support after a lawyer got involved.'

Who has been helping you?

Social services will ask you questions about your family and friends both in the UK and abroad. You will be asked why your friends and other people helping you (for example, your church or mosque) can no longer support you.

Social services will call people in your family and support network to check if the information you tell them matches the information your friends or family provide.

'My friend has asked us to leave and she says we can't stay there anymore. But the social worker says I have to "rely on my support network" until they finish their assessment. She was very aggressive towards me. She basically told me I'm a liar.'

Many families are treated badly by social services when they ask for support. You may experience aggression, intimidation, and disrespect. We believe this is totally unacceptable and that families should be treated with dignity and respect.

If you are treated badly by council staff, you can make a complaint (see p. 28). You can also bring a friend, advocate, or support worker to meetings you have with social services.

In many social services, families trying to access support are treated with suspicion and may be accused of withholding information or being dishonest.

If social services suspect that you are not telling them something, they should explain this to you and give you a chance to respond. Often social services will not give you a chance to explain. For this reason, it is helpful if you keep notes about what is discussed in each appointment.

If you and your children become homeless at any point during the assessment and you have nowhere else to go, social services should provide temporary or 'interim' accommodation if they have not yet been able to complete the assessment and make a final decision.

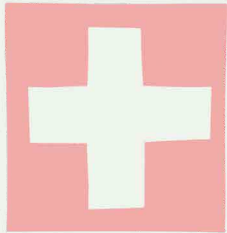


If you have nowhere you can stay, it is important to show them evidence of this. You should take letters from friends, family members or other people who have been supporting you to social services. These should state what support has been provided in the past, what support you continue to receive, what support cannot continue, and why.

If you have been asked to leave the property you are staying in, you should bring a letter explaining this. It should include the date you have to leave.

If social services refuse to provide accommodation and you are facing homelessness, you should get legal advice (see p. 34 - 36). In an emergency out of working hours, you can go to your local police station and they can make an urgent referral to social services.

Health issues you or your children have



Social services may ask you if you or your children have any medical issues or disabilities. They may want to talk to your GP or any other medical professionals supporting you and/or your children.

You should let the Social Worker know of any medical issue you or your children have.

If your child has a disability, he or she should be considered a 'child in need'.

What support will I receive?

Money



Social services can, and should, provide money for your family if you and your children are in need. This support can be provided before they have completed their assessment, if you need it urgently.

If you need money, you should explain this to social services. If your request is refused, you should get advice about challenging social services' decision (see 'Where can I get advice' section on p.34).

'Social services are giving me money, but there's not enough food in the house. We run out before our next subsistence payment arrives. There's also not enough money for the children's clothes.'

It is important that the money you receive is enough for you to meet your and your family's basic needs, such as food, toiletries, transport, and clothing. Financial help (also called 'subsistence') should be provided for the whole family, not just for the children.

Some social services have set rates of financial support, whilst others decide what each family gets on a case by case basis. In either case, social services must consider the needs of your family and make sure that you have enough money to meet these needs, even if that means providing you with a rate of support higher than their set rates.

Don't be afraid to tell social services that you are struggling and/or that you need more money. Social services cannot stop supporting your family simply because you have asked for more support.

To make your case to social services, you should keep all your receipts and write down what you spend your money on. Write down what you cannot afford and make a note if you are skipping meals or giving your children less food than they need. You may want to consider the costs of food, clothing (including school uniform), transport, household items, utility bills if you pay them, your mobile phone, and medicine you and your children need.

****Tip****

If social services tell you that they cannot increase the money they give you, get legal advice or support from one of the organisations listed at the end of this guide to find out if you can challenge the decision.

Accommodation

'The place they gave us was two hours from my children's school. Everyday we would get two trains and two buses. We had to wake up at 6am. By the time they got to school, they were so tired. They started falling asleep in class.'

If social services house you, they are likely to find accommodation for you outside of your borough. You may be offered accommodation very far away from your child's school and your support network. Sometimes accommodation is even provided outside of London.

If you refuse the accommodation, social services may not offer any alternatives, so if you think the accommodation you have been offered is unsuitable you should not refuse it without getting advice first.

If you do not have time to access advice before you have to move, it may be better to accept the accommodation and then seek advice later about whether it is possible to be moved to alternative accommodation. It can be difficult to challenge the location of your accommodation, but you may have a stronger case if:

- ◆ Your child has a disability or special needs and attends a specialist school in the borough;
- ◆ You are working and are struggling to take your children to school and to get to work because the accommodation is so far away;
- ◆ Your children are taking important exams, such as GCSES or A-Levels so they need to remain in the same school to avoid disruption;

- ◆ You or your children are receiving medical treatment from a specific hospital in your local area;
- ◆ There are medical reasons that make it difficult for you to travel;
- ◆ There are special reasons relating to you or your child's needs that make it hard for you to be housed far away.

To get advice on challenging the location of your accommodation, see the list of organisations you can go to for help on p.34.

If you need extra funds to travel to your child's school, social services should provide you with travel costs. But they may expect you to change your children's school if you do not have special reasons why you cannot do so.

'There were no fire alarms in the property social services gave us. The money provided for the heating was too low.'

'The housing agents are very irresponsible – you ask them to help and they don't. I stayed in the house for 15 hours in the winter without heating. There's damp all over the house – it's not safe for children. The children keep getting sick.'

Accommodation provided to families under section 17 is often unsuitable and far away. If you cannot afford the costs of heating and/or other utilities, social services should give you enough money to cover these costs.

If there is damp in the property, or you are experiencing other problems such as rats, overcrowding, or antisocial behavior from your neighbours, you should alert the property manager and your social worker/caseworker.

If they do not help you to resolve the issues, you should get legal advice or support from one of the organisations at the end of this guide or make a formal complaint see below.

Other services

Most families with no recourse to public funds who request section 17 support only need accommodation and/or money. But some families may need other services. This may be the case if your child is disabled or has additional needs. Section 17 allows social services to provide other services if your child needs them.

They're not listening to me. What can I do?

Complaints

You can make a complaint against social services if you are not happy with the way you were treated. Please be aware that complaints can take a long time to be processed, so if your situation is very urgent, you might want to seek advice instead of making a complaint. It is normally better to make a complaint after your immediate problems have been resolved if you are not happy with how your case was handled.

To make a complaint, you'll need to write a letter to the Council. This should state that you are making a formal complaint against Children's Services or the No Recourse to Public Funds Team.

In the letter, you should try to clearly explain the problem and what you think went wrong. It's important to be as specific as possible. If you have any evidence to help you prove what happened, it's very useful to send this to the Council with your complaint.

For further information on making a complaint and a template letter visit: <https://www.project17.org.uk/resources/making-complaints/>

Legal challenges

It is often necessary to take legal action in order to access support. If social services have refused your family support and you believe the decision is wrong, you should seek legal advice from a community care solicitor to find out if you can challenge their decision.

This area of law is covered by legal aid, so if you are destitute you will not have to pay for your solicitor.

You can find a solicitor by talking to your advocate or contacting one of the law firms on p37. This area of law is covered by legal aid, so if you are destitute or on a low income you will not have to pay for your solicitor.

Contact your MP

If you cannot access the organisations below, you may want to contact your MP to see if they can speak to the council on your behalf.

You can find contact details for your MP online at this address: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>

In short: Requesting Section 17 support



Evidence checklist: requesting support from the local authority

Try and collect as much evidence to support your application as possible. You won't be able to collect all the documents on the list, but try to get as many as possible. You will need the original documents.

Financial information:

- 6 months' bank statements
(if printed out, get them stamped by the bank)
- 6 months' payslips
- P45 and or P60 from your jobs
- Child Benefit letter
- Child Maintenance letter
- Letters confirming support from friends and family. If this support is limited, irregular, or temporary, make this clear
- Letter confirming support under s.17 from local authority
- Letters from professionals confirming financial and housing situation (e.g. charities, GP, health visitor, school, church)
- Income/expenditure breakdown: keep a record of all the money you receive and all the money you spend for 3-4 weeks
- Bills
- Letters confirming debts
- Receipts

Housing information

- Letter confirming support under s.17 from local authority
- Letter from person providing housing (e.g. friend or family member). If you are being asked to leave, the letter should say when.
 - Tenancy agreement
 - Rent account showing arrears
 - Notice to quit
 - Possession order/
warrant from the court
 - Photos

Employment

- If job-hunting, copies of applications / rejection letters
- Contract of employment
- 6 months' payslips

Immigration

- Copy of your original immigration application
- Biometric residence permit
- Home Office letter granting leave to remain
- Passports
- Acknowledgement of outstanding application
- Letter of advice from solicitor

Other

- Birth certificates for children
- Medical evidence
- Evidence of domestic violence

Where can I get advice?

Welfare and Housing Advice;

Hackney Migrant Centre

Drop-in every Wednesday 10am -4pm. Registration starts at 8:30am. We can only see the first 20 people so arrive early to make sure you can be seen. Visit our website or contact us for the address of the drop-in:

T: 07504 332 706

E: info@hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk

www.hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk

Project 17

(various locations, by appointment only)

T: 07963 509 044

www.project17.org.uk

Haringey Migrant Support Centre

St John Vianney Church Hall,
386 West Green Road, N15 3QL.

T: 07544 078332

E: info@haringeymsc.org

www.haringeymsc.org

Drop-in on alternate Mondays 11:00am – 1pm for registration. See website to check which Mondays. Arrive early to make sure you can be seen.

CARIS Haringey (Haringey families only)

St Philip's Church, Philip Lane, N15 4HJ

T: +44 020 8801 3004

E: info@carisharingey.org.uk

www.carisharingey.org.uk

Call to book an appointment.

Just for Kids Law

T: 0203 174 2279

E: info@justforkidslaw.org

<https://www.justforkidslaw.org/contact-us/>

Youth Legal

T: 020 3195 1906 / 07956 039039

<https://youthlegal.org.uk/contact-us/>

Praxis Community Projects

(Tower Hamlets residents only)

Pott Street, London E2 0EF

Drop-in Thursdays 10am- 12:30pm

Immigration, Welfare, Housing advice

Telephone advice line: 020 7749 7608

(Wednesdays: 2pm – 4pm)

E: advice@praxis.org.uk

<http://www.praxis.org.uk/index.php>

South London Refugee Association (SLRA)

SLRA runs Advice Drop In sessions in Wandsworth and Lambeth. Please call 02034903443 for details and to check that Drop-Ins are open.

Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network

The Sayes Court Clubroom, 341 Evelyn Street,
Deptford, London SE8 5QX
Immigration, welfare and housing advice.

Call to book an appointment.

T: 0800 231 54 53 (Mondays – Fridays 9.30am – 5.30pm)

<https://lrmn.org.uk>

Red Cross Refugee Support Essex

202 New London Road
Chelmsford, ESSEX. CM2 9AB
T: 01245 291 017

This guide is focused on organisations in and around London. But other local migrant organisations outside of London (for example, your local British Red Cross) may be able to offer advice and support.

Finding a community care solicitor

You can find a list of legal aid community care solicitors in your area here: <https://find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk>

Immigration Advice ;

Coram Children's Legal Centre Advice Line

T: 0207 636 8505 – line open 10am to 12pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

E: mcpadvice@coramclc.org.uk

Notre Dame Refugee Centre

Maison Pierre Chanel, 16 Leicester Square,
London WC2H 7LE

Immigration advice line: 0207 440 2669

(Fridays 10:30 – 13:30)

E: website@notredamerc.org.uk

Drop-In Mondays and Thursdays 11am -4pm. Reach the Centre as early as possible and preferably by 8am.

Southwark Citizens Advice Bureaux Immigration

Peckham Citizens Advice Bureau, 97 Peckham High Street, LONDON SE15 5RS

Drop-in: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am - 1pm

Free legal advice and assistance for people living, working or studying in Southwark

Tuesday and Thursday 10am-1pm

Bermondsey Citizens Advice Bureau, 8 Market Place,
Southwark Park Road, LONDON SE16 3UQ

Telephone Advice: 3844 499 4134

Monday, Weds, Thurs, Fri 9:30-4pm

Tues 9:30-7pm

Hackney Community Law Centre

8 Lower Clapton Rd, London E5 0PD
Telephone advice line 02089858364 (Mondays and
Wednesdays 10am – 1pm)

Camden Law Centre

2 Prince of Wales Rd, London NW5 3LQ
Weekly drop-in every Wednesday (10.00am -12 noon)
T: 020 7284 6510

Tower Hamlets Law Centre

789 Commercial Road (Entrance on St Anne Street),
London E14 7HG
T: 020 7538 4909
(Call between 10am and 1pm or 2pm and 4pm)

Lambeth Law Centre

UNIT 4, The Co-Op Centre, 11 Mowll Street, SW9 6BG
T: 020 7840 2000

Southwark Law Centre

Hanover Park House, 14 -16 Hanover Park,
Peckham, London SE15 5HG
T: 0207 732 2008

South London Refugee Association

SLRA runs Advice Drop In sessions in Wandsworth and
Lambeth. Please call 02034903443 for details and to
check that Drop-Ins are open.

Useful Resources and Peer Support ;

Project 17 resources:

<https://www.project17.org.uk/resources>

NRPF Network:

<http://migrantfamilies.nrpfnetwork.org.uk>

Akwaaba:

<https://akwaaba.org.uk>

Sundays 2-6pm at Princess May School, Barrett's
Grove, N16 8AJ

Akwaaba is a Hackney-based social centre for migrants. We offer a space for rest, play, learning and mutual support. Akwaaba is for all migrants regardless of immigration status, 'race', religion, country of origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and (dis)ability. We believe that no-one is illegal. We are committed to actively opposing racism and all other forms of discrimination and oppression. Our aim is to build community and foster care, cooperation and solidarity. As a community, we try to make decisions collectively and give all members an equal say in how the social centre is run. Akwaaba is a volunteer-run space.



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