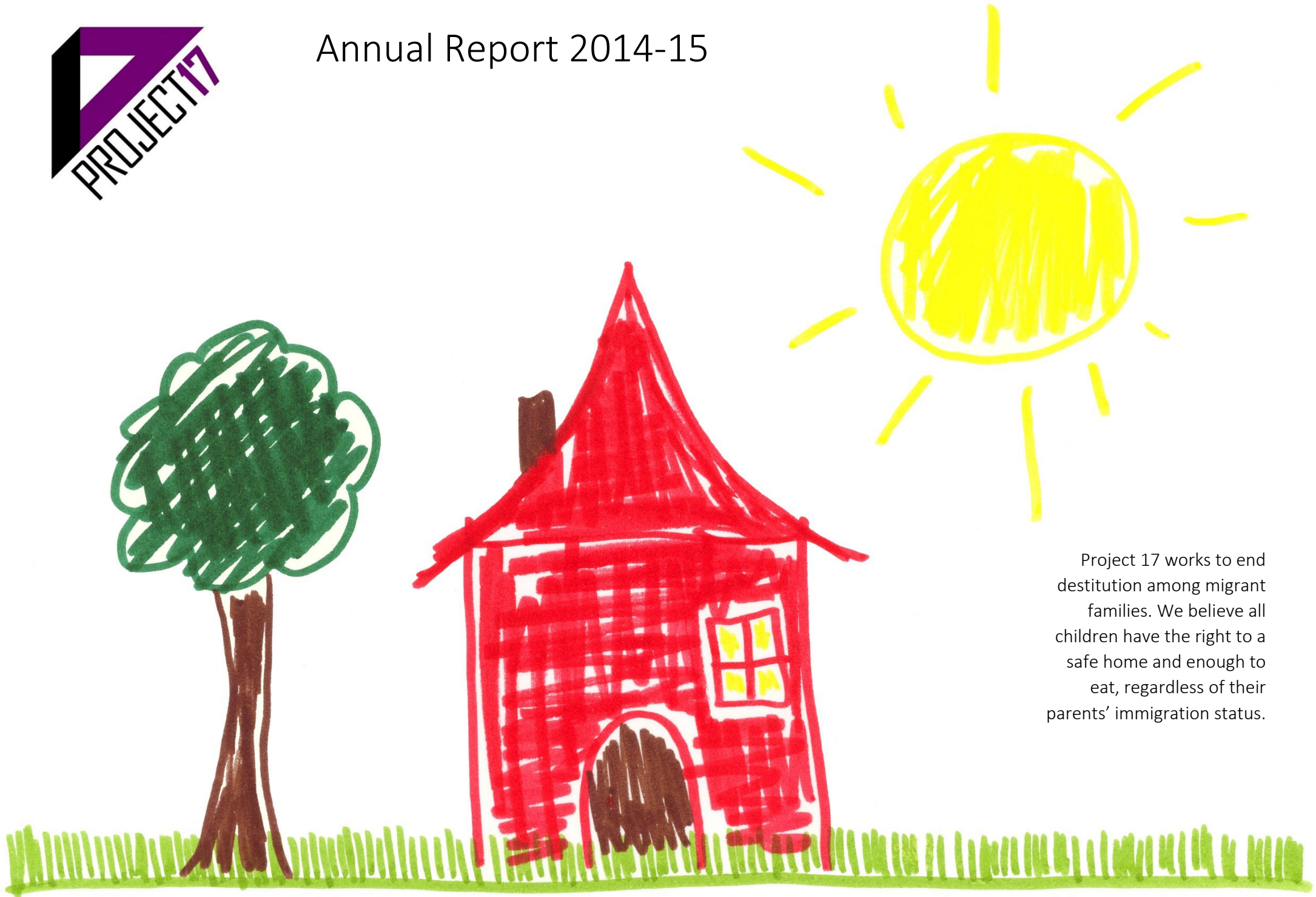




Annual Report 2014-15



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 their parents' immigration status.

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Our mission and vision

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 safe 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.

In particular, 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.



Who we are

Staff



Abi Brunswick, Director

Abi is the Director and one of the founders of Project 17. She has worked in the migrants' rights sector since 2008 and has experience of developing small and emerging organisations. She is also a Trustee of Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark Samaritans. Prior to establishing Project 17, she was as the Advice Coordinator of Action for Refugees in Lewisham. Abi has an MA and a graduate diploma in law.



Amy Murtagh, Adviser

Amy joined Project 17 in November 2014 as part of our Advice Service. Amy has a Graduate Diploma in Law and an MA in Human Rights. Amy also works at Rights of Women, and has previously worked and volunteered at Ashiana Sheffield. She has a wide range of experience in supporting migrants, both in the voluntary sector and whilst working as an asylum caseworker for a solicitors' firm.

Trustees



Frederick Guobadia

Frederick qualified as a lawyer in Nigeria. He is single parent who used Project 17's advice services to access support under section 17. He subsequently joined the organisation as a trustee to ensure that support is readily available to all those who need the service.



Clare Jennings

Clare is one of Project 17's founding trustees. She is a solicitor at Matthew Gold and Co Ltd where she specialises in public law. She has particular expertise in acting for migrant families in challenging refusals of local authorities to provide appropriate s.17 support. Prior to this Clare worked as a solicitor at the Public Law Project and Bindmans LLP.



Claire McGuinness

Claire has an MA in Human Rights. She has worked in the refugee and migrant sector for the past six years, working for the British Red Cross, Refugee Action and The Children's Society mostly in casework and advocacy for children and families. Project 17 is closely linked to her current role and she has seen first-hand the extremely difficult circumstances destitute migrant families are living in and understands the overwhelming need for an organisation working specifically with this group.



Isabella Rossi (until February 2015)

Isabella is an independent gender violence advocate. She has worked and volunteered for organisations including Refuge, Action for Refugees in Lewisham and Detention Action. Isabella is passionate about supporting women and children experiencing domestic violence whose choices are limited by the restrictions to access to public funds.



Gwawr Thomas

Gwawr is a barrister at 1MCB (Chambers of John Benson QC). In addition to having a busy immigration, asylum and public law practice, she frequently acts for Claimants in judicial review challenges raising various issues surrounding access to, and provision of, section 17 support to migrant families. She is proud to have been one of Project 17's founding trustees.



Diana Trimiño Mora

Diana Trimiño Mora is a Women's Protection and Empowerment Policy Advisor for the International Rescue Committee. She has over 11 years' experience in women's rights and displacement issues. She has previously worked for the University of London's Refugee Law Initiative, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM).

Message from the Trustees

As Project 17 marks its second anniversary, we can justly celebrate both having consolidated the successes of our first year and having yet further expanded our capacity to work towards the elimination of destitution amongst migrant children. Thanks to a generous grant from Trust for London, we were able to employ Amy Murtagh as a specialist Adviser and also to expand our outreach sessions. As a result, we can now offer advice appointments in three different London boroughs. Additionally, we have continued our commitment to building capacity in other organisations: we are heartened by the positive feedback consistently received from those who have attended our training courses or called our advice line, both aimed at improving understanding of the potential and the pitfalls of approaching local authorities for support under section 17 amongst advisers working with migrants without recourse to public funds.

We are very much sensitive to the fact that local authorities are under increasing pressure to limit their spending, dependent as they are on ever depleting allocations from central government. Led by our dedicated Director, Abi Brunswick, and generously supported by Unbound Philanthropy, Project 17 has this year expanded our advocacy and policy work, aiming in particular to ensure that local authorities act lawfully and fairly in implementing 'gatekeeping' policies designed to address this pressure on their budgets.





At the same time, the need for our work is more acute than ever. Whilst we welcomed the ruling that the proposed 'residence test' was unlawful, the scything of legal aid means that access to free legal assistance - and, with it, access to justice - remains precarious. Perhaps the biggest imminent threat to migrant children living in destitution is the uncertain future of the Human Rights Act, which for many means the difference between a warm bed and a night on the streets: we anxiously await the Lord Chancellor's proposals.

Whilst the road ahead is thus strewn with challenges, we are confident that Project 17 is well placed not only to overcome them, but indeed to continue to expand our reach so that we can ensure that even more families are assisted to access somewhere safe to sleep and enough to eat.

Summary of our work in 2014-15

We assisted **233 families** through our advice service

We developed advice services in Lewisham,
Hackney and Haringey

We took **149 calls** to our telephone advice line

We delivered **12 training sessions** for professionals

We developed free downloadable letter templates
for advisers

We campaigned for the improved implementation
of support through research, consultation and
strategical litigation



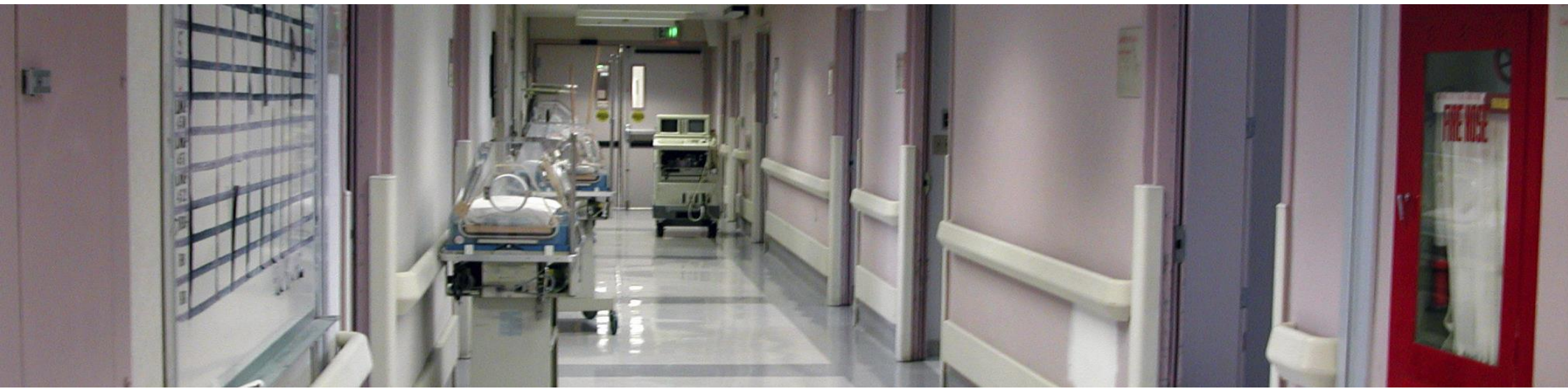
Case study

Names and identifying features have been changed

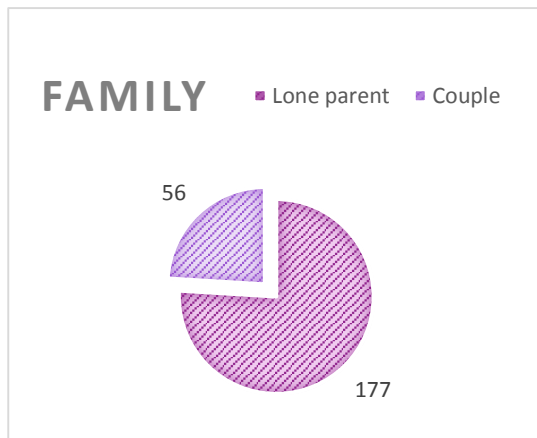
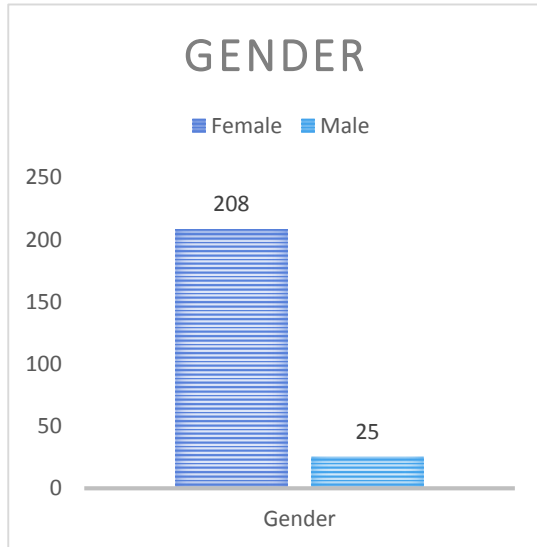
Damilola approached us through our advice outreach service at Hackney Migrant Centre. She was pregnant and had a 3 year old son. Damilola had leave to remain in the UK with a 'no recourse to public funds' restriction preventing her from accessing welfare benefits or social housing. Unfortunately, Damilola had been told that her unborn baby had multiple health problems and would require extensive surgery just after birth.

Damilola was not working because of her pregnancy. She and her son were staying with a friend, who provided a room and food for the family. However, her friend did not feel able to accommodate a sick baby, and told Damilola that they would have to find somewhere else to stay once the baby was born. The family had nowhere else to go.

Damilola gave birth to a son, who had to stay in hospital for several months. We helped her access accommodation and financial support from social services under s.17 to help the family avoid street homelessness. We also assisted Damilola to apply to the Home Office to remove the 'no recourse to public funds' restriction on her leave to remain. Damilola and her children are now in stable housing and claiming welfare benefits to meet their needs.



Profile of our clients



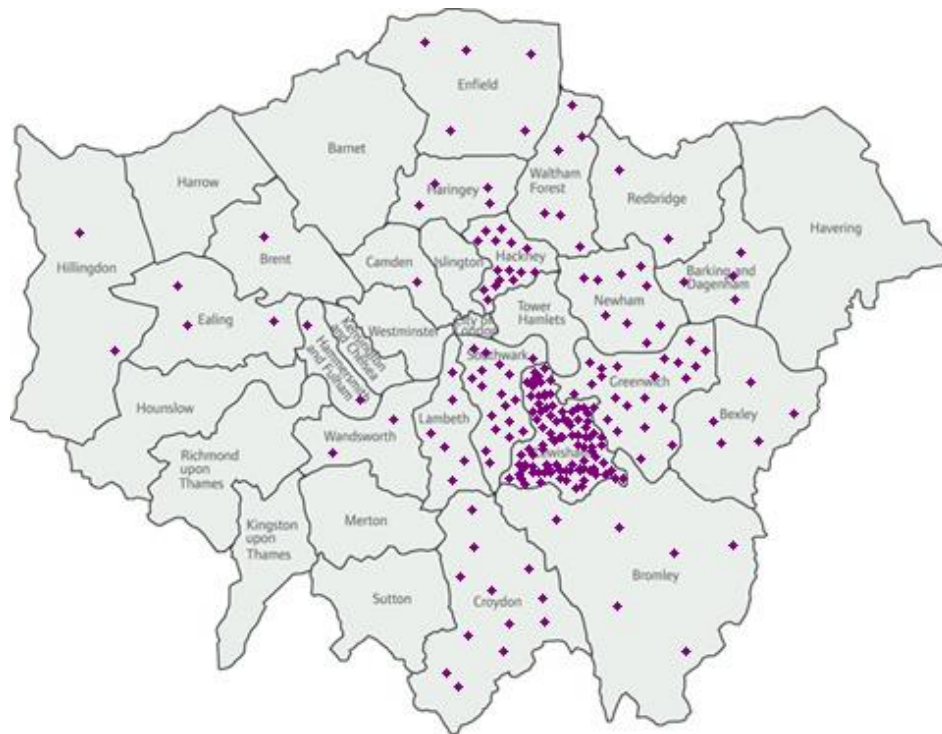
We assisted 233 families in 2014-15 through our advice services in Lewisham, Hackney and Haringey

Our clients came from 19 different London boroughs

67% of our clients are from Nigeria, Ghana and Jamaica. The remainder came from 32 different countries

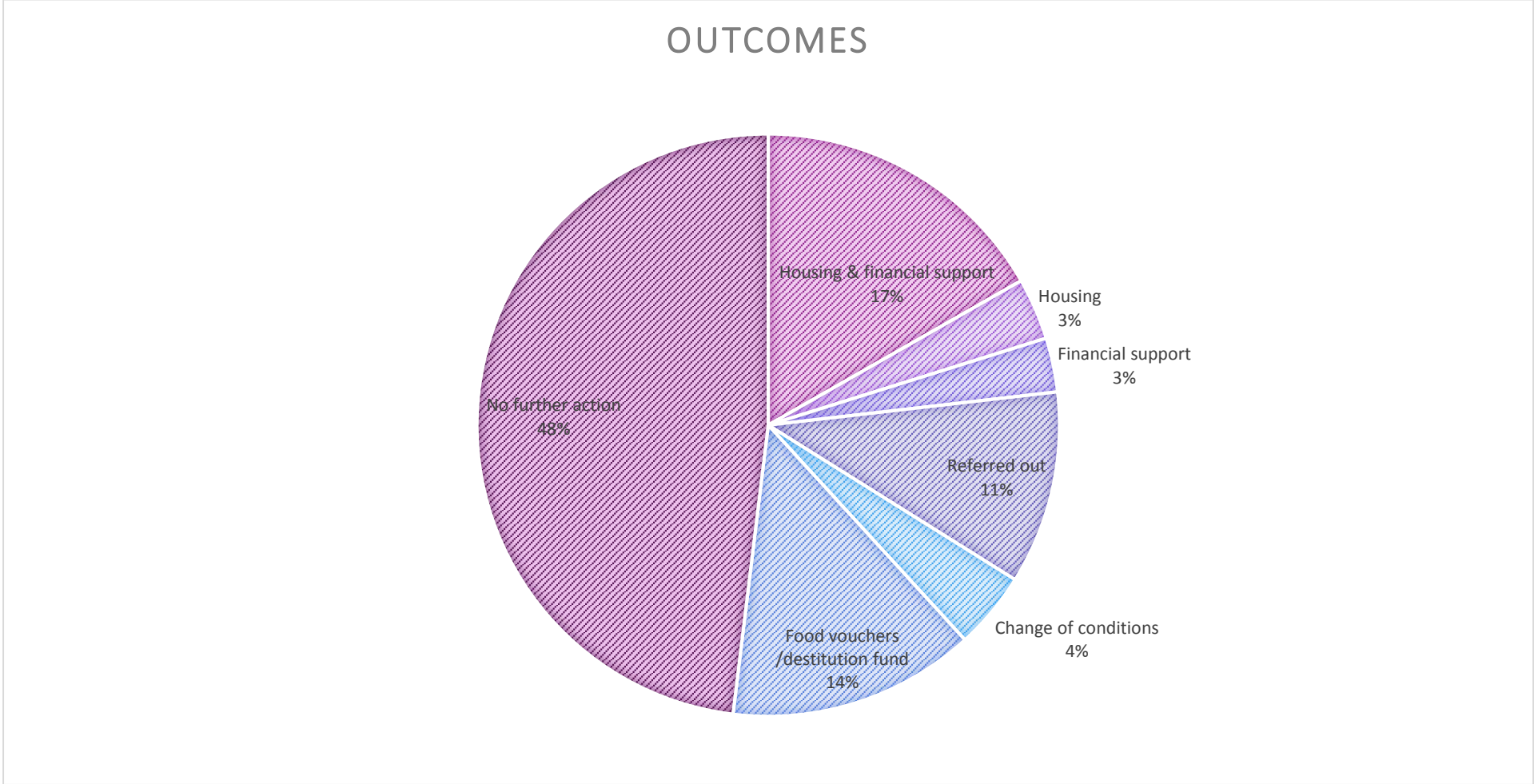
100% of our clients are living in poverty with household incomes well below the rate of child poverty

Our clients by London borough



Barking & Dagenham: 4	Haringey: 4
Bexley: 5	Hillingdon: 2
Brent: 1	Lambeth: 6
Bromley: 6	Lewisham: 95
Camden: 1	Newham: 9
Croydon: 12	Redbridge: 2
Ealing: 3	Southwark: 18
Enfield: 5	Waltham Forest: 6
Greenwich: 22	Wandsworth: 2
Hackney: 15	
Hammersmith & Fulham: 2	<i>Outside London: 17</i>

Advice service outcomes



Feedback

We requested feedback from every 10th client who used our advice service over a period of 5 months. Here are the results.

- 80% rated the overall service as 'excellent'. The remaining 20% rated it as 'good'
- 90% were seen within 2 weeks of requesting an appointment
- 100% felt they were treated 'very well'

"The adviser understood my situation 100%. To have someone actually listening to you and understanding you - I made vast progress. I definitely know who to go to now if I need help - you have done everything necessary to help me."

"I wouldn't be where I am without Project 17... They found me a lawyer within 24 hours. I had confidence in [the adviser], she gave me all the information and really helped me to understand my situation and know what to do next. She always called me back quickly. I have made 1000% progress - I am not exaggerating! Thank you."

"I was happy, I felt welcome. They understood how I felt"



Telephone advice line

149 calls

105 organisations

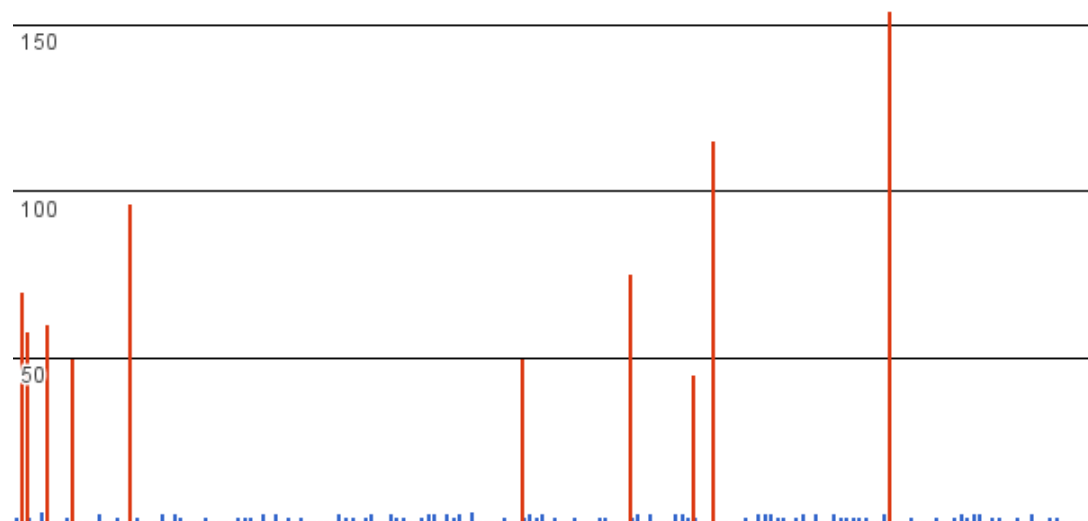
36 local authorities



Our telephone advice line is open three days per week. It allows advisers and professionals to get specialist advice on section 17 support, ask questions regarding their clients' circumstances and talk through possible courses of action

Number of children / S.17 financial support (per week)

■ Number of children ■ How much money are they receiving from social services?



Dear whomever it may concern

I am writing to express my feelings that my family has been through, difficulties like almost being thrown out from acomadation wich is not right, struggles financially make ^{me} and my sister sad especially when my mom was very ill and ~~struggling~~ struggling to survive. please consider my family to have access to public fund, to make our life easy whilst she is recovering to get back to work and find a perminant job.

yours Faithfully

Letter from a client's 10 year old daughter

on the social services for accomodation. As we have lived in this country our whole lives and know nothing else, not even a holiday, i solemnly feel that it would be most helpful if you please assist us with this so my sister and i can have the simplest things we need, so i dont have to continue attending school with no lunch money or packed lunch and so my

Case study

Names and identifying features have been changed

Ola is Ghanaian and has leave to remain in the UK for two and half years. She has two British children, aged 17 and 11.

Ola's leave to remain contains a restriction preventing her from accessing public funds. Even though she can live and work in the UK, she can't claim benefits. She has two jobs, but both pay minimum wage: she works in a factory and as a support worker for elderly people. Despite working all hours, she doesn't earn enough to rent a property and she's not entitled to extra help from Housing Benefit or Tax Credits.

The local authority provided accommodation for Ola and her children under section 17 of the Children Act. But they then terminated their support when she got a job, stating that she should be able to support her family on her employment income, without really looking at how much she was earning.

We successfully argued that social services should continue to support the family because they could not afford to rent privately. We also helped Ola to apply to the Home Office to lift the restriction on accessing public funds.

Excerpts from a letter written by Ola's older daughter

be entitled to public funding, it would be...
we have been struggling for a long period of time now and i can't remeber a time where we were well off or able to purchase something without having to sacrifice something else that may have been just as needful. We have also been at risk of being homeless a few times, which i feel may have affected my concentration and performance at school, as i have been quite anxious and depressed at times, thinking of our situation. Although we have a roof

Training

We delivered 12 training sessions for professionals over the course of the year, helping over 240 voluntary sector advisers to better support their NRPF clients.

We expanded our programme to include courses on applying for a change of conditions of leave from the Home Office.

We delivered training with: British Red Cross, Refugee Council, Hackney Community Law Centre, Hackney Migrant Centre, SHP, Pre-School Learning Alliance, Migrants Rights Network and many others...

- 100% of participants said the content was organised and easy to follow
- 98% of participants felt the training was clear
- 100% of participants said the training was excellent (79%) or good (21%)

“One of the best training sessions I have attended in paid and voluntary work”

Participant at training in August 2014

“Brilliant training. Would recommend to colleagues and friends”

Participant at training in March 2015





Policy and Advocacy

Our policy and advocacy work tackles the poor implementation of support through research, lobbying and strategic litigation.

This year we began researching a report that we hope to publish in September 2016. The research details systemic poor practice such as refusing to assess a child if their parent has not yet submitted an immigration application; bouncing families between different local authorities and requiring the family to be street homeless before support is provided.

Parallel to this research, we are bringing a strategic legal challenge against Lewisham local authority, where we are based. Our challenge looks at the local authority's 'robust front door' approach, which purportedly leads to 87% of families being turned away without an assessment, raising serious safeguarding concerns.

In addition, we sit on the steering committee of Hackney Community Law Centre's project researching the adequacy of accommodation provided under s.17, and we participated in research by the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society at Oxford University on the implementation of support.

Thank you!

To our wonderful volunteers:

Rachel Balabanoff
William Flack
Bushra Khalidi
Judith Lancet
Heike Langbein
Sarah Parker
Alice Twaite



To our generous funders:

Strategic Legal Fund
Trust for London
Unbound Philanthropy

To our dedicated partner organisations:

Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
Hackney Migrant Centre
Haringey Migrant Support Centre

Project 17 Annual Report 2014-15

Registered charity: 1152621

Legal name: Project Seventeen

Registered office: 39c Tressillian Road, SE4 1YG

Thank you also to 1MCB and International Rescue Committee for hosting our Trustee meetings

Financial information

	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds 2015	Total Funds 2014
	£	£	£	£
Incoming resources:				
Incoming resources from generated funds				
Voluntary income:				
Grants		36,529	36,529	10,250
Other income	2,121		2,121	4,555
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total incoming resources	2,121	36,529	38,650	14,805
	_____	_____	_____	_____
Resources expended:				
Costs of generating funds	-		-	
Charitable activities				
Core Activities	407	24,905	25,312	7,115
Governance costs	-		-	
Total resources expended	407	24,498	24,905	7,115
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources	1,714	12,031	13,745	7,690
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward	3,433	4,257	7,690	
Total funds carried forward	5,147	16,288	21,435	7,690

The financial information shown above is a summary of the financial statements for the year ended 31/03/15, which were approved by Project 17's Board of Trustees on 25/07/15. The full financial statements can be obtained from Project 17 at 341 Evelyn Street, London SE8 5QX.