

# POSTSCRIPT: UPDATES, FEEDBACK, AND REACTIONS TO THE SLRA REPORT

Since we finalised the work on our report in February 2021, we had the great opportunity to start a fruitful and constructive conversation with Lambeth Council, in particular, the NRPf team and managers, to think about collaborative ways forward. We have met on several occasions and the Lambeth NRPf team have presented their work to SLRA and Lambeth Citizens; and the NRPf team has listened to the stories of the SLRA community leaders.

The council has confirmed their strong commitment to “supporting and welcoming families to settle in Lambeth” (Cllr Sonia Winifred) and the importance of developing strong partnership with civil society organisations such as SLRA to do this. At the heart of this partnership lies collaboration with those who are affected first-hand by the issues and ‘*learning from lived experience*’.

In publishing this report, we acknowledge the positive outcomes that Lambeth’s NRPf team have worked to achieve for families affected by NRPf –

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## ⇒ 1] **Transparency and access to information**

Lambeth Council’s NRPf team has accepted SLRA’s suggestion of improving access to information, and are currently working on a website to share information about their services for NRPf families experiencing hardship. The NRPf team agreed to work with SLRA’s lived-experience leaders on the new website and to have their insight guide the new resource in a community consulting project in collaboration with SLRA.

## ⇒ 2] **Learning from lived experience: Awareness and diversity workshops with NRPf team**

The NRPf team said they are interested in continuing to develop their client consultation and community engagement through working together with SLRA’s lived-experience leaders. The plan is for SLRA Community Leaders to deliver a workshop around lived experiences and awareness raising; participants in this training would include NRPf team officers and council members. The main aim is to create a unique space for communication,

ensuring that many families each year are able to move on to more settled, independent and positive lives. The findings of this report show, however, that there is more work to be done to reach those who are often most vulnerable and at risk, and to provide them with effective support. The Lambeth families who provided evidence for the report were dealing with multiple issues, including complex immigration cases, domestic violence and/or poor physical or mental health. These intersecting difficulties mean that families often struggle to access the information and support needed to move through the system without experiencing anxiety and trauma.

As a result of the conversations between SLRA, representatives from Lambeth Council’s NRPf team and social and children’s services, as well as other members of the Lambeth Citizens alliance, we have come up with three areas of priority that we want to work on together over the following months:

where council officers and service users can meet in a safe environment and learn from each other. This is a model that has recently been applied successfully in the borough of Lewisham by the Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network and Lewisham Citizens.

## ⇒ 3] **Immigration advice in partnership with SLRA**

Lambeth Council acknowledges that there is a lack of free specialised immigration advice in the borough. The council is keen to work with SLRA, which is the biggest advice provider in the borough, to improve and expand the capacity for immigration advice in Lambeth. In future meetings, we will discuss the gaps and barriers that people encounter when accessing existing immigration advice and explore potential funding opportunities in partnership.

We are incredibly excited about this opportunity to work with Lambeth Council. We believe that a meaningful commitment to listen, to learn from lived experience, and to work together across difference is invaluable in creating long-lasting local change.



## THE LAMBETH NRPF TEAM HAS ISSUED **THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE SLRA REPORT:**

Lambeth welcomes anyone affected by destitution and immigration issues for an assessment. More than 1000 families and single adults received support from NRPF service during the last 5 years and went on to receive immigration status.

Qualified social workers carry out assessments- All of them attended training provided by Islington Council. Social work team have considerable experience in assessing families and single adults with complex immigration situations.

All our assessments are shared with the families for their responses to adverse findings if any. If a family is not eligible they will still get information and advice from social workers.

Lambeth NRPF service have never ended their support because the family made home office application late or there was delay in accessing immigration support. Information sharing with Home Office is strictly consent based and in line with NRPF Connect terms of agreement.

In 2020 64% of families that requested support from Lambeth NRPF team were provided with S17 support following assessment.

Of the 36% of families who were ineligible none were at immediate risk of homelessness and alternative provision was available to them through other agencies or support networks including S95 support from the Home Office.

We sought service user feedback in 2020. All (11) children who gave feedback agreed or strongly agreed that “things have got better in my family since I met the Social Worker”