

## **Local Authority City of Sanctuary Network**

### *Potential NRPF Position paper – bullet points for consideration and discussion*

- During the Covid-19 pandemic, councils have also accommodated people with no recourse to public funds that were rough sleeping as part of the public health response.
- The Network very much welcomed the Government's 'everyone in' policy and the funding to address Covid-19 related service pressures.
- The Network also commends the UK Government, and the devolved Governments, commitment to the extension of those with free school meals to children whose parents are subject to NRPF conditions.
- Unfortunately it has been noted that there was a lack of clarity in England and confusion at various times during the pandemic as to whether council's had the legal power to house people with NRPF conditions. The lack of clarity led to local authorities in England often applying discretion leading to different approaches and outcomes for people. This is at odds to the clarity provided to local authorities in Wales<sup>1</sup> and Scotland<sup>2</sup>.
- It has been widely reported that funding was insufficient to cover all costs incurred.

### In the short term

- The network calls on the Government
  - To extend the 'everyone in' policy and funding to address the ongoing Covid-19 related service pressures,
  - Suspend NRPF conditions entirely to also allow people to access mainstream benefits (not just the lift on housing restrictions)
  - Retain the pause on evictions for people who have been refused asylum whilst COVID-19 remains.
  - Retain access to free schools meals for children whose parents are subject to NRPF conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> NRPF briefing was developed by Welsh Government and sent to local authorities, here is the WG public statement -

<https://gov.wales/10-million-emergency-support-rough-sleepers-wales-during-coronavirus-outbreak>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.cosla.gov.uk/news/2020/may-2020/framework-produced-by-cosla-to-help-local-authorities-support-those-with-no-resource-to-public-funds>

Why:-

- People unable to afford to self-isolate
- Debt - especially rent arrears
- Redundancy: people with NRPF are disproportionately likely to work in sectors worst affected by the economic crisis
- People finding it difficult or impossible to make a change of conditions application to have NRPF lifted,
- Disproportionate impact of NRPF on people from minority backgrounds
- Longer-term support is likely to be needed for many of those accommodated under 'everyone in'
- Rise in need for social services' support throughout the forthcoming months as the economic impacts of the pandemic continue to be felt.

In the longer term

- The NRPF system is broken and needs a review:-
  - Review all immigration policies that give rise to homelessness and child poverty,
  - Provide adequate funding and clear guidance for local authorities, so they are able to fully support everyone at risk of homelessnessIndefinitely allow children with parents who are subject to NRPF conditions access to free school meals if they meet the income requirement.

Why:-

- Local government has a duty to provide support when social services' duties are engaged to safeguard the welfare of children and adults with care needs. There will be continued need to provide accommodation and financial support to people with no recourse to public funds that are at risk of homelessness and are prevented from accessing mainstream benefits due to their immigration status. There is no funding for councils to provide that social services support.