

Government's immigration policy leaves families facing destitution as energy price rises bite

Praxis is deeply concerned that the Government's punitive No Recourse to Public Funds policy leaves many of the poorest in our society facing serious risk of destitution and homelessness as the worst income squeeze in a generation begins to bite.

Josephine Whitaker-Yilmaz, Policy and Public Affairs Manager at Praxis, says:

“Even before prices began to spiral out of control, our advisors were already seeing people struggling to make ends meet every single day, as a result of the NRPF policy which prevents them from accessing most types of welfare benefits, even if they're living in poverty.

As the energy price cap rise comes into effect today, we are really concerned that even more of the people we work with are going to be pushed into destitution, and even homelessness.

We already know that the support put in place by Government is [simply not enough](#) to help people living on low incomes. But people affected by the government's No Recourse to Public Funds policy, many of whom also live on very low incomes, have no safety net to fall back on.

We believe that everyone deserves access to a safety net, so that a crisis like the one we're experiencing at the moment does not leave people with nothing. That's why we're urging the Government to scrap the No Recourse to Public Funds policy.”

Anna Berry, a member of the No Recourse to Public Funds action group at Praxis, says:

“If people are struggling already, do they now have to choose between food and gas? It's like you are in constant battle all the time in order to be able to survive: food, internet, everything is going up, and that hits especially hard for those who have No Recourse to Public Funds and those not earning enough.

The government knows it's hard on people - I don't know how hard we can spell it out.

It's time for the government to make sure that everyone has access to a safety net: No Recourse to Public Funds has to be scrapped, so that everyone can stay warm and feed themselves.”

Notes to editors:

1 – [Praxis](#) is a human rights charity. For over 35 years we have supported people who have made the UK their home with immigration advice, peer support and campaigning. We use the evidence from our frontline work to influence change so that all people in the UK can live in safety and dignity.

2 – The **No Recourse to Public Funds Action Group** is a group of people with lived experience of the immigration system campaigning to abolish this policy. You can find out [more about them here](#).

3 – Spokespeople – the following are available to talk about this campaign:

- Josephine Whitaker-Yilmaz, Praxis' Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Please contact Laura Stahnke, Stories and Media Coordinator, if you'd like to arrange an interview.

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4 – Policy Notes:

No Recourse to Public Funds

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is a government policy which prevents millions of people who have made the UK their home from accessing most forms of public support, even when they are experiencing crisis. The policy is applied based on a person's immigration status, to people in one of two categories: (i) those who have permission to live and work in the UK on the condition that they don't access public support (estimated 1.3M people), and (ii) those without legal permission to be in the UK (estimated 650,000 people).

No Recourse to Public Funds prevents people from accessing most publicly funded forms of support, including but not limited to child benefit, housing benefit and universal credit. The condition deprives people of a safety net when the worst happens – loss of a job, an accident, domestic violence, illness or even death can remove a family's entire income.

As such, No Recourse to Public Funds has been shown to be a key driver of poverty.

While many people with No Recourse to Public Funds are working, those on low incomes or in precarious jobs are pushed into destitution because they cannot access benefits designed to top up incomes and prevent in-work poverty. Even those who are unable to work, for example due to care responsibilities, are denied access to government support. Having no safety net also means that a crisis, such as the loss of a job, injury at work or an episode of poor mental health, can easily push families into deep poverty. Families affected by NRPF are therefore more likely than the general population to be living in destitution, often for extended periods, putting them at high risk of homelessness, exploitation and abuse.