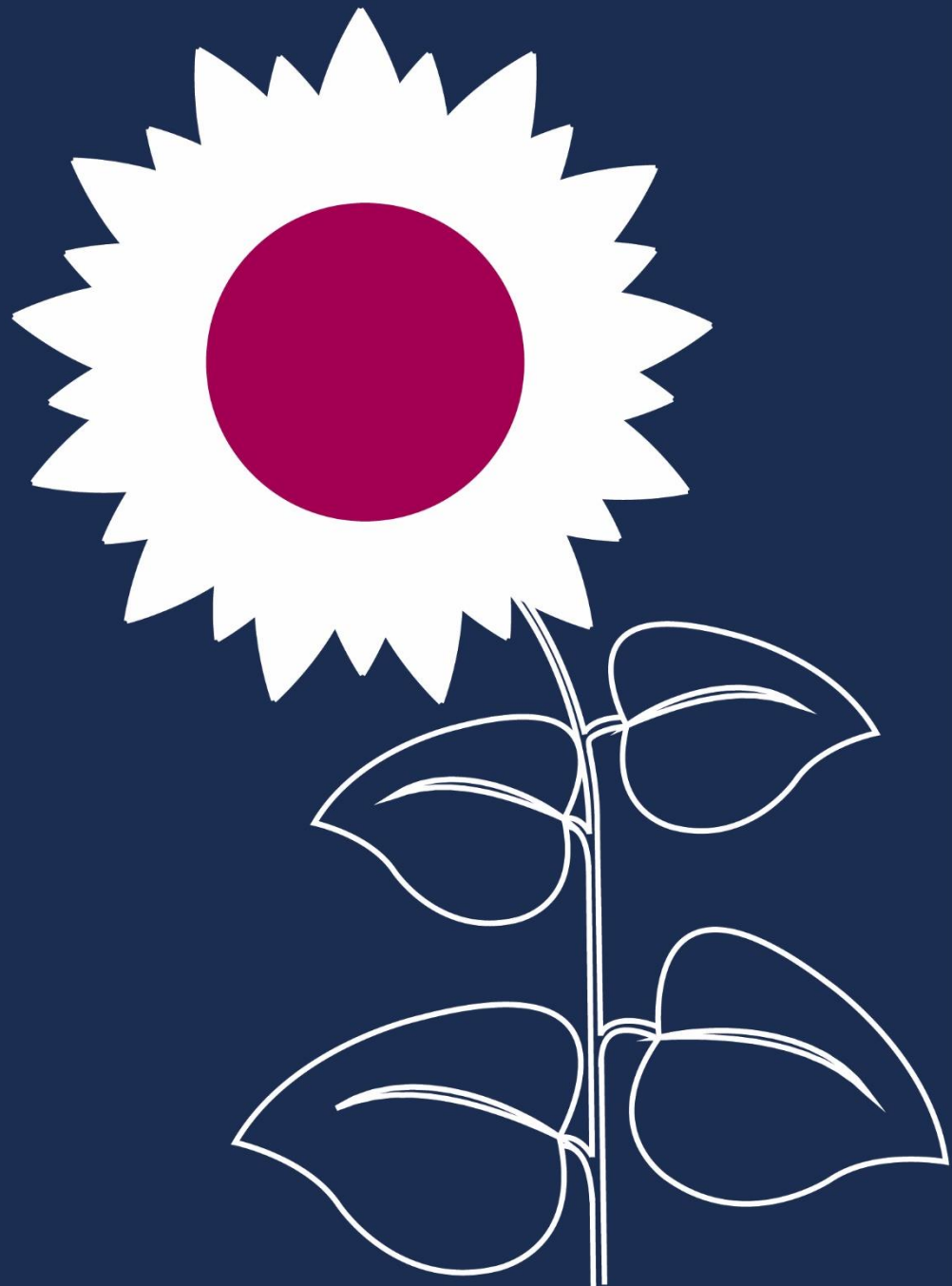


Section 17 Financial Support

Tri x 1_4_3 October 2021

Review date October 2022



- 1 Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 places a broad duty on local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. Local authorities are required as far as possible to promote the upbringing of such children within their families by providing a range and level of services appropriate to their needs.
- 2 The services provided by a local authority may include giving assistance in kind or in exceptional circumstances in cash
- 3 Local authorities do not have the responsibility to act as a general Income Support Agency - this is rightly the responsibility of the Department of Work and Pensions. Hence the local authority's limited resources should not be deployed in financially maintaining children where state benefits are normally available to eligible families.
- 4 However, as part of its broad duty under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, Children's Services can make payments or grants to families for specific purposes aimed at supporting arrangements for children. For this purpose, Team Manager and Service Managers can authorise payments within agreed limits from the Section 17 budget and in exceptional circumstances Strategic Managers can authorise higher levels of expenditure.
- 5 The local authority may require repayment of any assistance provided under Section 17 in whole or in part. However, regard has to be given to the means of the child and family concerned. The means test will therefore be used to assess the level of repayments to be made. No person receiving state benefits can be required to make any repayments.