



Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
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From the Chair

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister

27 May 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for giving evidence to the Liaison Committee this afternoon. I am writing now to seek some further information arising from your answers to my questions about people whose immigration status means that they have no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

I was grateful for your undertaking to find out how many people in the UK are subject to NRPF conditions. The Children's Society estimates that about 1 million people, including at least 100,000 children, may be affected. Frustratingly, however, there are no official figures in the public domain.

1. Might you please let us know how many people in the UK have no recourse to public funds, and how many children are affected?

You were surprised to hear that people like my constituents, who have lost a substantial proportion of their income, cannot access support from the benefits system—including Universal Credit. Many people would surely agree with your instinct that the social security system should be there to help law-abiding people who face destitution through no fault of their own, in the midst of a global pandemic.

The couple I mentioned are typical of many. They came to the UK initially as students. Both work. Their two children were born here. They are now on the “ten year pathway” to indefinite leave, reapplying for leave every two and a half years, and in the meantime have “no recourse to public funds”. That means, in answer to your very good question to me, they are not allowed to apply for Universal Credit. The husband's income has been cut to zero because of the crisis, and they are sinking into destitution.

The Home Secretary assured me on 23 March that work on this issue was happening across Government “at pace”. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster told me on 28 April that the situation was under review. But nothing substantial has been done yet.

2. Could you confirm that you agree that support should be available quickly, including through the benefits system, for people with NRPF who would otherwise face destitution in the current crisis?

3. Can you now set out the results of the work that has been happening across Government on this for more than two months, as a matter of urgency? Will you, for example, lift NRPF conditions temporarily for the duration of the crisis?
4. In particular, would you now consider bringing forward support for children whose parents have no recourse to public funds?

I will be placing this letter, and in due course your reply, in the public domain.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee