



Home Affairs Committee Work and Pensions Committee

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From the Chairs

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Home Secretary

Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey MP
Secretary of State
Department for Work and Pensions

3 April 2020

Dear Home Secretary and Secretary of State for Work and Pensions,

We are writing to you about the impact of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) on those who have no recourse to public funds due to their immigration status, meaning that they are ineligible for most benefits. This group covers people working in frontline services, including the NHS, and many self-employed people.

The Government's own guidance advises against leaving the house for non-essential reasons. We are concerned that, if people will have no source of income if they are unwell or otherwise unable to work, they will have to choose either to follow the public health guidance and face financial hardship or risk exposing themselves or others to the virus in order to make ends meet.

Beyond those subject to visa conditions, there are hundreds of thousands of people whose status is insecure. Among these people are vulnerable individuals such as asylum seekers and victims of torture or trafficking, who may be particularly hard to reach. Due to their status, many of these people will struggle to access basic financial support, healthcare and accommodation.

We were grateful for the Home Secretary's assurance on 23 March that work is taking place across Government on this issue, and the Financial Secretary's statement on 25 March that the Government stands ready to support those who could fall through the social safety net. Given the urgency of the situation, it would be helpful to have an update on the discussions that are taking place between your Departments, including answers to the following questions:

- 1. When do you expect your consideration of how to best support this group to conclude? Is this likely to result in a suspension of the 'no recourse to public funds' condition?**

- a. **If not, what other forms of support are your Departments providing to those with no recourse to public funds?**
2. **Will those with no recourse to public funds be able to access support from their employer under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, or the Self Employed Income Support Scheme?**
 - a. **How are you ensuring that those with no recourse to public funds receive clear communications about what support they are and are not entitled to?**
3. **Can you provide any assurances that non-UK nationals who receive public funds in breach of their visa conditions due to the outbreak will not have this held against them when making future visa applications?**
4. **How are your departments ensuring that people whose immigration status is insecure are able to access support?**
 - a. **Many in this group face difficulties accessing accommodation due to their immigration status. What steps are you taking to ensure that these people can be housed safely during the outbreak?**

This is a matter of concern for many people across the country, and it is only right that those in need of support, regardless of immigration status, can access it without putting themselves or others at risk.

We would be grateful for a response by Tuesday 14 April.



Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP
Chair, Home Affairs Committee



Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee