

The Rt. Honourable Boris Johnson
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

Date: 19th March 2020
jessie@naccom.org.uk

Dear Prime Minister,

RE: Coronavirus - policy recommendations to protect people who are experiencing homelessness and insecure migration statuses.

In light of UK Government guidance on combatting Covid-19, over 60 organisations which provide essential services for people who are destitute and homeless because of their migration status have come together to consider how we can support the effort to minimise risks around the spread of the virus. We recognise that a concerted cross-departmental approach is needed and we are writing to you with clear recommendations that should be immediately implemented.

Many of the people we work with are unable to access healthcare or housing because of No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and benefit restrictions. This includes; people who are appeals rights exhausted, EU and EEA migrants, people with existing visas, those whose status is not regularised, domestic workers and other migrant workers, and victims of trafficking and torture.

The challenge is pressing, but one we think that can be met if the Government makes some pragmatic policy changes to enable people who are destitute to self-isolate, seek healthcare and buy basic provisions.

Emergency public health measures do not work unless they apply to everyone living in our communities and we must have assurance that any data collected should not be shared with the Home Office for the purpose of immigration enforcement. Our suggestions to mitigate the risks outlined above are listed below;

Enabling social distancing and self-isolation

- Everyone should be able to access self-contained accommodation and self-isolate safely, regardless of immigration status.
 - Hotel spaces should be block booked so that people who are rough sleeping or sofa surfing can access safe accommodation. These spaces should be open to all and should be available with light-touch engagement.
- All evictions from Home Office asylum support accommodation should be stopped. This includes the evictions of people who are appeals rights exhausted and of those who have recently been granted their refugee status.

Accessing healthcare

- All NHS charges should be abolished and a public communication campaign launched to ensure that everyone is aware of their rights to access healthcare.
- No one recovering from Covid-19 should be discharged from NHS care to rough sleep, sofa surf or to stay in accommodation in which maintaining self-isolation and good hygiene is not possible.

Providing financial support for all

- NRPf conditions should be removed for all migrants, enabling everyone to access Universal Credit and Statutory Sick Pay where needed.
 - These must be available by emergency cash support for people without access to bank accounts.
- All applicants for section 95, section 4 or schedule 10 support should be automatically and appropriately accommodated within the Home Office asylum support system while applications are being processed. Any decision that someone is not, in fact, eligible for support should not be actioned until after the current health emergency has passed.
- Any introduction of a Universal Basic Income or Universal Self-Isolation Pay should be available for everyone, including those with NRPf.

The voluntary sector stands ready to play its part in preventing the spread of Covid-19 by supporting groups in vulnerable situations, and the changes above will enable us to do this better.

Yours Sincerely,



Hazel Williams, Director, NACCOM

Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive, *Crisis*
Sabir Zazai, CEO, *Scottish Refugee Council*
Sarah Teather, Director, *JRS*
Marley Morris, Associate Director for Immigration, *Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)*
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Stephen Hale, CEO, *Refugee Action*
Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer, *City of Sanctuary*
Fizza Qureshi, CEO, *Migrants' Rights Network*
Maurice Wren, CEO, *Refugee Council*
Sonya Sceats, CEO, *Freedom from Torture*
Alice Webb, Director, *Asylum Support Appeals Project*
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Marta Welander, Executive Director, *Refugee Rights Europe*
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Lizzie Briggs, Director, *Bristol Hospitality Network*
Alison Moore, CEO, *Refugee Women Connect*
James Clayton, Chair of Trustees, *Hope Housing Bradford*
Rev. Sally Smith, Managing Director, *Sanctus St Marks*
Ewan Roberts, Centre Manager, *Asylum Link Merseyside*
Salma Ravat, Manager, *One Roof Leicester*

The No Accommodation Network (NACCOM)

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Katy Armitstead, Team Leader, *Bradford Ecumencial Asylum Concern (BEACON)*

And numerous NACCOM supporters and volunteers. Please see NACCOM's website for the full and up-to-date list of signatories.

CC: *The First Minister of Scotland, the First Minister of Wales, Home Secretary, Health Secretary, Work and Pensions Secretary and the Secretary for Housing, Communities and Local Government*