



Priti Patel MP
 Secretary of State for the Home Department
 2 Marsham Street
 London
 SW1P 4DF
 CC: Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
 Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing

18th March 2022

Dear Home Secretary,

Re: the implications of clause 11 for destitution and homelessness

As a group of 46 organisations with decades of experience working with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants facing destitution and homelessness, we are writing to ask you to urgently rethink Clause 11 of the Nationality and Borders Bill, to ensure that no-one who has found refuge in the UK is unnecessarily put at risk of homelessness. The devastating war in Ukraine has brought home how critical it is that we make sure the right support is in place for people fleeing conflict so they can recover from trauma and start to rebuild their lives.

There is strong evidence to suggest that Clause 11 will expose at least an additional 3,100 people fleeing conflict and persecution, including children to destitution and homelessness on an annual basis, by creating a new tier of refugees and denying them access to a safety net. This will significantly add to the thousands of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers already facing these problems every year. Applying these conditions to refugees, many of whom have experienced trauma and may have specific mental and physical health care needs, is particularly harmful and will expose them to an additional risk of modern slavery and exploitation.

We are aware that guidance on how the measures listed in Clause 11 will be used is currently being developed. However, in the absence of more detailed information and ahead of Lords considerations, we urge you to reconsider Clause 11 of the Bill to ensure that no one who has been granted sanctuary in this country is left facing homelessness because they do not have access to a proper safety net. This runs counter to the Government's wider commitments to ending rough sleeping and to levelling up. This Government has made exceptional progress in tackling rough sleeping in recent years, by rapidly responding to the Covid-19 crisis and bringing Everyone In. However, the latest

statistics show that migrant rough sleeping remains a persistent challenge and finding solutions for people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) is a key concern for services and local authorities.

The situation in Ukraine highlights the need for a compassionate response when people are fleeing violence that does not create extra bureaucracy and restrictions, which make it harder for people to recover from trauma and move forward with their lives. As a group of 46 organisations with extensive experience of working with migrants facing poverty, destitution and homelessness, often as a direct result of the NRPF condition, we believe that Clause 11 would expose refugees to serious risk of harm.

The war in Ukraine vividly reminds us that people fleeing conflict can't wait weeks for new visa schemes to be set up. Everyone in this situation has a right to long-term safety, and the UK approach to immigration and asylum should reflect its proud history of welcome – instead of pushing yet more people into destitution. We urge you to rethink this Bill in its entirety, but in particular to abandon the harmful and counterproductive idea of treating refugees differently based on how they arrive in the UK and make sure that no one who finds refuge from conflict in the UK is needlessly put at risk of homelessness.

Yours faithfully,

Sally Daghlian OBE, CEO, Praxis
Matt Downie, CEO, Crisis
Polly Neate, CEO, Shelter
Bridget Young, Director, NACCOM
Rick Henderson, CEO, Homeless Link
Abi Brunswick, Director, Project 17
Denise McDowell, Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit
Barbara Drozdowicz, CEO, East European Resource Centre
Sonya Sceats, Freedom from Torture
Steve Douglas, CEO, St Mungo's
Satbir Singh, CEO, Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI)
Sian Summer-Rees, CEO, City of Sanctuary
Paul Hook, Director, Asylum Matters
Jenni Regan, CEO, iMix
Nicole Francis, Chief Executive, Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA)
Beth Gardiner-Smith, CEO, Safe Passage
Jude Lancet, Welfare Advisor, Haringey Migrant Support Centre
Sonja Miley and Maddy Crowther, Co-Executive Directors, Waging Peace
Jared Hodgson, CEO, Hope at Home
Rebecca Kogan, Project Coordinator, Host Nottingham
Ros Holland, Chief Executive, Boaz Trust
Stuart Hearne, Director, Islington Law Centre
Annie Viswanathan, Director, Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID)
Dave Stamp, Senior Caseworker, Asylum Support and Immigration Resource Team (ASIRT)
Sophie Beech, Homeless Migrant Project Manager, South London Refugee Association (SLRA)
Nicola Wood, Charity Manager, Swindon City of Sanctuary
Eleanor Brown, Managing Director, Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Beth Wilson, CEO, Bristol Refugee Rights
Liz Hibberd, Strategic and Partnership Lead, Manchester City of Sanctuary
Annika Joy, Chief Executive, Safe in Scotland
Dr Edie Friedman, Executive Director, Jewish Council for Racial Equality
Steve Newman, Chair, Friends of the Drop in for Asylum Seekers, Sunderland (FODI)
Sarah Teather, Director, Jesuit Refugee Service UK
Fizza Qureshi, CEO, Migrant Rights Network
Jonjo Warrick, Reading City of Sanctuary and Reading Refugee Support Group
Elli Free, Room to Heal
Kat Lorenz, Director, Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP)
Karen Pearse, Director, PAFRAS
Kerry Smith, CEO, The Helen Bamber Foundation
Loa Pour Mirza, Ubuntu Women's Shelter
Nicholas Hatton, CEO, the3million
William Gomes CEO, The William Gomes Podcast
Ged Allen, Volunteer Director, Refugees & Mentors CIC
Amber Bauer, CEO, forRefugees
Jo Cobley, CEO, Young Roots