**Re: Protecting people seeking refugee protection from evictions into homelessness**

Dear [name of MP]

I am writing to bring your attention to the Home Office’s recent and sudden decision to resume eviction proceedings for those who have been refused asylum. I have grave concerns that without immediate action, people seeking sanctuary in our communities could be forced into street homelessness in a matter of weeks.

Since 23rd March 2020, evictions from asylum accommodation were suspended in order to protect people seeking asylum from street homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, on Monday 15th September, the [Home Office announced](https://migrationpartnership.org.uk/home-office-announce-negative-decisions-for-asylum-seekers-and-evictions-commence-with-immediate-effect-17th-september-2020/) that evictions will resume in England for people who have been refused asylum. The intention is to resume evictions in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland at a later date that has yet to be confirmed.

Unlike those who have been granted asylum, people who have been refused asylum have no recourse to public funds. They are given 21 days notice before being evicted from Home Office accommodation, and left with very few options open to them as they are not allowed to work or access welfare support.

As it stands, the outcome for members of our communities who have sought asylum is likely to be street homelessness. That people are now facing this situation in the midst of an escalating public health crisis, with winter around the corner, is profoundly dangerous.

This isn’t the only option. In response to the threat of coronavirus, the UK and devolved governments, local authorities made important changes to prevent homelessness. These included the suspension of evictions from asylum accommodation and the directive to provide homeless people with emergency accommodation, including those with NRPF. These policy changes have allowed councils across the UK to keep all members of their communities, regardless of immigration status, safe and housed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having made this vital progress, we cannot now return to a business as usual in which people routinely face homelessness and destitution. **As an urgent measure, the Home Office must halt their plans to resume evictions for people who have been refused asylum.** In light of rising COVID infection rates, and at a time when voluntary and statutory services are under intense and increasing strain, it is clear that this is the only sensible course of action in the interests of the safety of people seeking asylum and public health.

**I am asking you to write to the Home Secretary Priti Patel MP to ask her to immediately halt plans to resume evictions from asylum accommodation** and to commit to the necessary, cross-departmental action required to protect everyone from rough sleeping and homelessness.

[ I would like to request a meeting with you to discuss this further.]

I look forward to receiving your response on these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

X