Dear [insert the name of your MP],

I am writing to you as one of your constituents because I am gravely concerned by the proposals contained in the Government’s newly published Nationality and Borders Bill. [I have written to you previously to express my concerns and responded to the Government consultation on the New Plan for Immigration.]

The Nationality and Borders Bill is dystopian in its scope. It shows a complete disregard for human dignity, justice and right to life. What is being proposed is cruel, inhumane and unworkable.

The Government is seeking to introduce legislation that will create a two-tier asylum system, criminalising and punishing people who seek safety on our shores (as well as anybody who assists a person whose life is at risk). There is nothing in the Bill that gives any detail on refugee resettlement. Without this, desperate people will be forced to make desperate decisions, increasingly falling into the hands of smugglers. Under proposed legislation, people who enter the UK by any means other than an established resettlement programme will only be granted temporary protection and will be subject to removal from the UK at any time. This is a disgraceful proposition, which undermines the right to claim asylum, and attempts to judge a person on their means of entry into the UK, rather than the merit of their asylum claim.

The Bill will also raise the standard of proof required to determine if a person has a ‘well-founded fear of persecution.’ This undermines the 1951 Refugee Convention and the very principle of asylum.

Furthermore, the Bill allows for sanctuary seekers to be removed from the UK and held in off-shore processing centres. This ‘Australian model’ is dystopian in its scope and has allowed for major human rights abuses to be committed by Australia with seeming impunity. We have already witnessed what happens when people seeking sanctuary are held in asylum accommodation, such as in the Napier Barracks in Kent. There individuals have spoken about being housed in unsanitary and unsafe accommodation, leading to outbreaks of Covid and the deterioration of individuals’ mental and physical health. Everybody has the right to a safe place to stay and, in a global pandemic, this is an imperative.

I am gravely concerned by what this Bill signals. As a society that appears to be growing in hostility towards people seeking sanctuary and immigrants more generally, goaded on by political scaremongering, it is crucial that we challenge the frightening course that this Government has set us on.

We urge you to vote against the Nationality and Borders Bill and also to speak out against these proposed changes to the asylum system.

Yours sincerely,

[Insert your full name]