



Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for the Home Department
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

Thursday 23rd April 2020

Dear Home Secretary,

We are living through the biggest global health crisis of a generation and it is having a profound effect on the lives of everyone. Every day we hear about the tragic number of deaths and new cases, but it is not only the health implications that are taking their toll, it is the financial ones as well.

Families are seeing their incomes decimated and sadly it is those who already live in poverty – who are struggling to put food on the table, clothe and provide for their children and pay for everyday essentials – who are seeing the biggest losses.

Many can and have turned to the government for help. While we welcome the support that is being offered to many families facing financial crisis, this lifeline is not available to all. There are a group of people who are still excluded: those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

As you will know, but many may not, NRPF is a condition imposed on some due to their immigration status. It prevents migrant families who have not yet qualified for permanent residency in the UK from accessing essential support like Universal Credit, Tax credits, child and housing benefits.

The families and children affected by NRPF come in all shapes and sizes. Some will have heart-breaking stories; they may have been trafficked here, or may be victims of criminal, sexual and domestic exploitation. Some will be single parents. Most will be juggling various low paid jobs or working on zero-hours contracts – the very roles most likely to have disappeared as a result of coronavirus.

Some are the NHS heroes battling on the front line – nurses, nursing home staff and care workers – on whom we are counting. Yet if something goes wrong for them, who can they count on?

Shockingly, many of the children from these families are British – they were born in this country but are denied vital support because of their parents' immigration status.

Whatever the reason they have NRPF, during this worldwide crisis their immigration status should not prevent the government from giving them support. That is why we are supporting The Children's Society campaign to suspend NRPF. Without recourse to public funds thousands of children face extreme poverty. In one of the richest countries in the world, that is a disgrace.

During these times we all need to unite in common decency and humanity. Please join me to ensure all children and families can turn to the government at this time of national emergency. We cannot leave them to fend for themselves.

Yours sincerely,

Dame Emma Thompson DBE

Miriam Margolyes OBE

Thandie Newton OBE

Sir Tom Stoppard CBE