



10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

4 June 2020

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your letter of 27 May following my appearance before the Liaison Committee and your question about people whose immigration status you said meant that they were unable to access Government support during the coronavirus pandemic.

The public interest in migrants being financially independent and not being a burden on the State is long established, and protected by successive Governments. No recourse to public funds has been a long-standing condition applied to those staying here with a temporary immigration status in order to protect public funds.

At the same time we are committed to protecting vulnerable people and have acted decisively to ensure that we support everyone through the coronavirus pandemic. As you will know, many of the wide-ranging coronavirus measures that we have put in place are not considered public funds and therefore are available to migrants with no recourse to public funds.

For example, the assistance being given under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the Self-employed Income Support Scheme is not classed as a public fund and is available to all those in work or self-employment respectively, including those with no recourse to public fund status.

Statutory sick pay and some other work-related benefits are also not classed as public funds and so are also available. And if an individual has been working in the UK and sufficient national insurance contributions have been made they may be entitled to claim contributory Employment and Support Allowance.

They are also covered by the measures that we have introduced to protect renters from evictions, a mortgage holiday for those who need it, as well as support for those who are vulnerable and need assistance with access to medication and shopping.

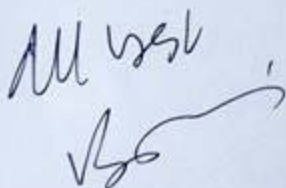
We also announced additional funding for local authorities in England and additional funding for the devolved administrations. This additional funding to councils in England means we have now provided them with over £3.2 billion during this pandemic to support vulnerable groups. This funding means councils can continue to provide vital services, including adult social care and children's services. The Chancellor also announced the provision of an additional £750 million in support for the charitable sector.

And during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have temporarily extended free school meals eligibility in England to include some groups who have no recourse to public funds in recognition of the difficulties they may be facing during these unique circumstances.

You raised a specific case during my appearance. Migrants with leave under the Family and Human Rights routes can apply to have the no recourse to public funds restriction lifted by making a 'change of conditions' application if there has been a change in their financial circumstances. We have recently digitised the application form to make sure that it is accessible for those who need to remain at home. Applications receive careful consideration in the light of the applicant's circumstances, and the welfare of any children involved. If you could provide the Home Office with more details about this particular case, I know that Ministers would be happy to investigate the matter further.

Finally, you asked for more details on numbers of people subject to no recourse to public funds. I know that you have also written to the Home Secretary seeking the same information, as well as the number of people who applied to have the condition lifted in the last year. The Home Secretary will respond to you about these queries separately.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'All best' followed by a stylized signature.

The Right Honourable Stephen Timms MP



## Work and Pensions Committee

House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA  
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From the Chair

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister

27 May 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for giving evidence to the Liaison Committee this afternoon. I am writing now to seek some further information arising from your answers to my questions about people whose immigration status means that they have no recourse to public funds (NRPF).

I was grateful for your undertaking to find out how many people in the UK are subject to NRPF conditions. The Children's Society estimates that about 1 million people, including at least 100,000 children, may be affected. Frustratingly, however, there are no official figures in the public domain.

**1. Might you please let us know how many people in the UK have no recourse to public funds, and how many children are affected?**

You were surprised to hear that people like my constituents, who have lost a substantial proportion of their income, cannot access support from the benefits system—including Universal Credit. Many people would surely agree with your instinct that the social security system should be there to help law-abiding people who face destitution through no fault of their own, in the midst of a global pandemic.

The couple I mentioned are typical of many. They came to the UK initially as students. Both work. Their two children were born here. They are now on the “ten year pathway” to indefinite leave, reapplying for leave every two and a half years, and in the meantime have “no recourse to public funds”. That means, in answer to your very good question to me, they are not allowed to apply for Universal Credit. The husband's income has been cut to zero because of the crisis, and they are sinking into destitution.

The Home Secretary assured me on 23 March that work on this issue was happening across Government “at pace”. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster told me on 28 April that the situation was under review. But nothing substantial has been done yet.

**2. Could you confirm that you agree that support should be available quickly, including through the benefits system, for people with NRPF who would otherwise face destitution in the current crisis?**

3. Can you now set out the results of the work that has been happening across Government on this for more than two months, as a matter of urgency? Will you, for example, lift NRPF conditions temporarily for the duration of the crisis?
4. In particular, would you now consider bringing forward support for children whose parents have no recourse to public funds?

I will be placing this letter, and in due course your reply, in the public domain.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Timms". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the name.

**Rt Hon Stephen Timms MP**  
Chair, Work and Pensions Committee