



Home Office

Home Secretary

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Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
Westminster
SW1A 0AA

09 August 2022

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your correspondence of 27 July, in which you asked for updates on the Immigration Enforcement Migrant Victim Protocol and the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme pilot. Thank you for your questions which I have responded to below with an update on each of these workstreams.

Immigration Enforcement Migrant Victim Protocol

As you will be aware, in December 2021, the Home Office published its review in response to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' 'Safe to Share' Report. The review concluded that the Government did not support a permanent cessation to the sharing of victim and witness data to the Home Office by the police for immigration enforcement purposes. Instead, the Government undertook to develop a Migrant Victim Protocol which will provide relief from enforcement action and assurance to victims that there is a safe pathway to report crime.

The Protocol, in itself, will not solve some of the wider positions around No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and other changes which sector groups are campaigning for, such as restrictions on data sharing between public authorities and Immigration Enforcement. The Government has been clear, however, that the Home Office shares a commitment, with other agencies and authorities, to safeguard all vulnerable individuals, and to ensure the sharing of information enables organisations to perform an active collaborative role in protecting the wellbeing of migrants.

Furthermore, information sharing enables agencies and authorities to acquire a fuller understanding of a migrant's particular needs and circumstances

which may assist in determining the most appropriate and effective intervention(s). Migrant victims' safety and well-being will always be a priority.

Following recent engagement on the Migrant Victim Protocol with external stakeholders, the Home Office are carefully considering all the feedback received and seeking input from those with lived experience to further inform this work. In addition, we are also considering what further internal safeguards and controls for data management may need to be established to ensure the Protocol can be implemented as safely as possible.

Stakeholder feedback and insights from individuals with lived experience will inform the detailed development of the Migrant Victim Protocol over the coming months. This will ensure we develop robust guidance and a clear process, to build victims' confidence in reporting; and to enable the police to carry out their public functions to protect victims, investigate crime as effectively as possible, and develop and implement a comprehensive stakeholder outreach programme to promote the reporting of crime amongst migrants with irregular immigration status. We are aiming to have the Migrant Victim Protocol finalised by autumn 2022.

Support for Migrant Victims Scheme

As set out in recent correspondence to the Home Affairs Select Committee, regarding the Support for Migrant Victims Scheme, this Government remains fully committed to supporting all victims of domestic abuse. Furthermore, this Government recognises that anyone who has suffered abuse, should be treated as a victim first and foremost, regardless of their immigration status.

The Support for Migrant Victims Scheme launched as a pilot in April 2021, and has since been extended by a further year to continue to provide vital wraparound support for migrant victims of domestic abuse, in line with the commitments made within the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan we published in March 2022. The Scheme has helped to remove some of the barriers those with insecure immigration status can face in seeking support, and crucially, has provided immediate emergency relief for victims and survivors, including through accommodation, subsistence and counselling.

The pilot and the independent evaluation, by Behaviour Insights Ltd, aim to ensure that we have a robust evidence base in order to inform any future policy decisions on supporting migrant victims and survivors with NRPF. We will receive the final evaluation report in the summer and share the pilot's findings as soon as is practicable.

We will be carefully considering the evaluation findings, alongside the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's own upcoming research on migrant

victims with NRPF, which seeks to build on the Commissioner's first *Safety Before Status* report published last year.

Thank you for your ongoing engagement and support on these important matters.

Yours sincerely,

With all good wishes
P. Patel

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP