**Re: Protecting everyone from homelessness during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.**

Dear [Council Leader] and [Housing/Migration Cabinet Members],

As an organisation that [brief description of your work], we are writing to request your support in calling for greater protections against homelessness for people who have sought sanctuary in the UK.

We are extremely concerned that despite a further [national lockdown](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-address-to-the-nation-4-january-2021) in England from 4th January 2021, the Home Office have not yet provided a public confirmation of their policy position in relation to evictions.

Unlike those who have been granted asylum, people who have been refused asylum have no recourse to public funds and are left with very few options. Through our work in [X local area], we have seen the terrible impact of enforced destitution and homelessness. [You could include here a few lines about your work, potentially including a case study or testimonial that demonstrates the impact of destitution.] This is not acceptable under normal circumstances, but in a pandemic in the middle of winter, it is manifestly unsafe.

We know this isn’t the only option. In response to the threat of coronavirus, the UK and devolved governments, and 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. We recognise and value [X Local Authority’s] efforts to keep all members of their communities, regardless of immigration status, safe and housed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, we know that local authorities are under increasing financial pressure, and while additional funding has been made available through the [Everyone In initiative](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/extra-covid-protections-for-rough-sleepers-and-renters),it is unclear how funds will support people with NRPF. In this fragile recovery phase from Covid-19, and at a time when voluntary and statutory services are under intense strain, we cannot now return to a business as usual in which people routinely face homelessness and destitution.

As England exits lockdown, the Home Office must retain the current pause on evictions for people who have been refused asylum. It is clear that the only sensible course of action in the interests of the safety of people seeking asylum and public health.

**We are therefore requesting that [X Local Authority] writes urgently to the Home Secretary Priti Patel MP, copying in the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Robert Jenrick MP, asking them to retain the pause on evictions for people who have been refused asylum for as long as COVID-19 remains a threat [change this to ‘further extend protections from evictions’ if you are in Scotland/Wales]**,and to commit to the necessary, cross-departmental action required to protect everyone from rough sleeping and homelessness.

**We also ask that [X Local Authority]** [**join other local authorities**](https://migrationpartnership.org.uk/political-support-from-lcc-to-help-halt-home-office-evictions/) **in making a public statement opposing evictions into homelessness during the pandemic.**

As we move forward, we are keen to continue working with you to address the longer-term measures and solutions needed to protect everyone from the threat of homelessness and COVID-19; we are ready to help [X Local Authority] with this challenge and would value the opportunity to meet with you to discuss this in more detail. [We would also welcome an update on your planning around provision for people with NRPF].

However, for now, we urge you to recognise the critical need to ensure that no-one in our community is evicted into homelessness from asylum accommodation, and hope that you will take the action outlined above.

Please let us know if you have any questions, and we look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,