

Dear **NAME OF MP**

I am writing on behalf of **NAME OF CHURCH, CHURCH ADDRESS**. We are a church of **XX** members and serve our local community by **WRITE THE WAYS THAT YOU SERVE YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY**. I am writing to you to express our concern about the government's New Plan for Immigration, presented to parliament by Home Secretary Priti Patel on Wednesday 24th March.

The concerns that we have as a church with this plan are echoed by many other organisations - both Christian organisations and those in the refugee sector. As the plan outlines three objectives, we have expressed our concerns in relation to each of these objectives below.

Firstly, increase the fairness and efficacy of our system so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.

It is good, and should be applauded that the government wants to continue to help some of the most vulnerable refugees in the world through resettlement programmes to the UK. However, we are concerned that the plan lacks clarity on how the government will do this - where refugees will be able to register for protection by the UK and how many refugees the government is willing to commit to resettle via these routes. In order for this objective to be successful, there needs to be a lot more detail on who will be prioritised for resettlement and how the process will work. It is also worth acknowledging that those who will be eligible for a resettlement programme are likely to be a different group of people to those who would make their own way to the UK to claim asylum - therefore many will still be forced to take alternative routes.

Secondly, deter illegal entry into the UK, thereby breaking the business model of criminal trafficking networks and protecting the lives of those they endanger.

The plan seeks to deter people making their own journey to the UK to claim asylum upon arrival. Under the government's proposals, people will be criminalised if they pay a people smuggler to get to the UK - they will never be granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK and their claim will be re-examined every 30 months. The people who pay people smugglers don't have many options available to them - to cross the channel on a boat involves risking your life, as does travelling on the back of a lorry. Many people who seek asylum in the UK have a genuine need of protection and this isn't reduced just because a person has felt that they have no option but to make their own, often life-threatening journey to the UK. Whilst it seems reasonable to go after people smugglers who are profiting from this extremely dangerous activity with no concern for human life, there is a concern that this won't actually stop people smugglers, and will only bring more harm to those seeking asylum in the UK.

Thirdly, remove more easily from the UK those with no right to be here.

It is unclear as to how realistic this proposal is from the government. As the UK has now left the EU, this has brought an end to the Dublin agreement, which previously allowed the UK government to return asylum seekers to other European countries if they had already started to

have their asylum claim processed in that country. With the end of the Dublin agreement, it is unlikely that the EU will want asylum seekers to return to other European countries (there is no alternative agreement currently in place). Therefore a backlog of cases is likely to happen very quickly and a realistic solution will be difficult to be found.

As a church, we have been committed to welcoming and supporting refugees and asylum seekers coming to the UK in the following ways: **WRITE ANY EXPERIENCE YOUR CHURCH HAS OF WELCOMING REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS.**

We are concerned that the New Plan for Immigration will reduce the values of hospitality and welcome in our nation, and mean that those seeking asylum in the UK will never be able to move on from the trauma they have experienced in their lives. We would like to ask for you to raise our concerns with the Home Office, and for you to work towards an Immigration Plan which is based on justice and compassion for those who have experienced persecution and trauma.

Kind regards,

NAME

ROLE IN CHURCH

CONTACT DETAILS