

Home Office
2 Marsham St
London SW1P 4DF

Department for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria St
London SW1H 0EU

By email only

22 May 2020

For the attention of Rt Hon. Priti Patel MP and Rt Hon. Matthew Hancock MP

Dear Home Secretary, dear Secretary of State,

We welcome the announcement made on 21 May 2020 that NHS and care workers will not have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge. As young migrants and organisations working with children, young people and families, we are writing to ask you to ensure that this change is applied in a way that will truly benefit the people who work in health and social care on whom we all rely.

We understand that the detail of removal from the IHS is right now being considered by officials. We write to you today to highlight that, in order to be meaningful, the exemption must apply to **all NHS and care workers with all types of leave and their families**.

We work every day with children and families who have to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge on top of their immigration fees. In a large number of these families there is a parent working in the NHS or the care sector. The Immigration Health Surcharge has to be paid for all family members who apply for leave. We know that your intention is to recognise the contribution made by NHS and care workers and you will appreciate that removing the IHS for example for a nurse but then expecting her to pay £2350 in IHS fees for her two dependent children would undermine the spirit of the policy. It would amount to a minimal discount but no meaningful exemption at all.

The families of NHS and care workers are at this time at heightened risk. Their mothers, fathers and partners are making sacrifices not just in carrying out their vital work in hospitals and care homes up and down the UK but in potentially exposing the rest of their families to increased risk when they go home. We expect that your policy intends to recognise this.

That many of our essential workers are low paid is well known to you. We see day in day out the struggle that working families face in saving up for the Immigration Health Surcharge and immigration fees that come around again every couple of years. We urge you to consider expanding removal from the IHS to **all essential workers** in recognition of what they are doing to keep this country going at a time of crisis.

We continue to maintain that the **Immigration Health Surcharge and level of Home Office fees require a comprehensive review**. More people than ever face growing financial difficulties and escalating worry about how they can afford to pay these charges to remain lawfully in the UK.

We would be happy to work with your officials on the detail of your new IHS policy in the coming days to ensure that in practice it has the effect you intend it to have in recognising the tremendous contribution made by so many.

Yours sincerely,

Coram Children's Legal Centre

We Belong

Doctors of the World

British Association of Social Workers (BASW)

The Children's Society

Bristol Law Centre

Bail for Immigration Detainees (BID)

Welsh Refugee Council

Praxis

Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit (MiCLU)

Kids in Need of Defense UK

South London Refugee Association

Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit

Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (CARAS)

Immigration Law Practitioner's Association (ILPA)