

The Unity Centre Glasgow
Practical & Solidarity Support
Working with migrants and refugees

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
Secretary of State for The Home Office

26th March 2020

Dear Home Secretary,

Urgent policy amendment request for the provision of help with cost of funerals for deceased asylum seekers

Following the severity of the Covid-19 situation, the Prime Minister announced to the nation that many people are going to lose their lives including their loved ones.

We understand the difficulty that this issue presents to the whole nation and especially for those who are most vulnerable. The Unity Centre is one of many volunteer organisations that is currently supporting with this effort. We recognise that asylum seekers and those who are classified as destitute, would be severely affected.

The Unity Centre particularly wants to address and challenge the current asylum support policy on meeting the cost of funeral for deceased asylum seekers. The policy does not cater for the following categories of people;

1. Asylum seekers who are on temporary admission/bail
2. Asylum seekers who do not qualify for social funds

The current Home Office policy guidelines state that;

- The Home Office does not make any contribution towards the cost of funerals or deceased asylum seekers;
- The Home Office does not make any contribution towards the cost of repatriating the body.

The social fund funeral payment section makes it very clear that; for those asylum seekers who have been given temporary admission, **they may be refused on the grounds that the deceased was not ordinarily resident.**

The Unity centre believes that this provision is unduly harsh and it goes against the dignity and respect that every human being deserves when they pass away.

Further, the policy provision states that the assistance provision could be obtained from other sources such as family members of the deceased, NHS, religious communities or the local council.

The Unity Centre challenges this “expectation” that is imposed by this provision on the family of deceased asylum seeker. During this difficult time that the Government recognises, it will be impractical and financially impossible to expect those who are classified as destitute and asylum seekers to contribute to funeral costs. Asylum seekers who are eligible for support only receive a limited amount of £36.95 per individual.

The Unity Centre is a volunteer run organisation that provides support to all migrants and other grassroots organisations that offer assistance to destitute and asylum seekers. We are gravely concerned about the impact of the above stated matters.

It will be unreasonable, in humane and unjustifiably harsh not to give the appropriate amendments to this policy/guidance.

We urgently ask for these changes to be made and for all asylum seekers to be informed of the unconditional government support during this time in-case they or their love one's become deceased.

We ask that you would provide confirmation by email to unitycentremedia@gmail.com and tucadteam@outllok.com by no later than 5PM Tuesday 31 March 2020.

Yours sincerely

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Unity Caseworker

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