



Ms Rita Gava and Ms Avril Sharp
Kalayaan Justice for Migrant Domestic
Workers
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London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

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20 July 2020

Dear Ms Gava and Ms Sharp,

Thank you for your letter of 17 October 2019, to my predecessor Seema Kennedy, regarding the impact of differential rights of work for overseas domestic workers referred to the National Referral Mechanism. I am responding as the Minister for Future Borders and Immigration and I am very sorry for the considerable delay in responding to your letter.

First, I would like to thank you for your continued commitment to supporting overseas domestic workers. The Government recognises overseas domestic workers are in a position of unique vulnerability and we will continue to work to safeguard these workers. We share a common goal of eradicating the exploitation of overseas domestic workers and making sure victims are provided with the support they need to begin rebuilding their lives. I understand your concerns and my officials have taken a close look at the recommendations you have published as part of your report, "Dignity, not destitution".

The Government already takes a proactive approach to informing overseas domestic workers about their rights. During the visa application process, commercial partners operating Visa Application Centres have a contractual obligation to issue every applicant with a copy of the *Leaflet for Persons Coming to the UK as an Overseas Domestic Worker*, which details the safeguards in place. We are currently updating this leaflet to make sure every applicant has the most up to date information and understands their rights and where they can turn to if they require help. I would also like to thank you for your expertise and contributions to the ongoing procurement exercise in relation to information sessions for overseas domestic workers. The results will be released in due course.

On the recommendations you have made about overseas domestic workers and the right to work, I can confirm overseas domestic workers who have received a positive reasonable grounds decision are told in their notification they have permission to work while awaiting a conclusive grounds decision, and 28 days thereafter. Additionally, we accept your recommendation reasonable grounds notifications should expressly state overseas domestic workers have the right to apply for further leave to remain if they are not granted discretionary leave. We are making the necessary changes to the relevant reasonable grounds notifications to make sure overseas domestic workers are aware of options available to them.

The Home Office is also currently undertaking a review of our policy on asylum seekers' right to work. Once this review has been completed, we will consider whether to bring forward any specific schemes for victims of modern slavery. In the meantime, support

workers within the Victim Care Contract can support an individual who has the right to work but no access to their documentation.

Lastly, I want to reiterate the Home Office understands the importance of updating workers on the status of their claims under the National Referral Mechanism at each stage of the process. The Single Competent Authority is continuously working to improve the process to achieve higher quality and quicker decisions for victims.

My officials are happy to meet with you, in line with current social distancing guidelines, to discuss the findings of the report and your recommendations in more detail.

With my very best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Foster', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Kevin Foster MP
Minister for Future Borders and Immigration