



KALAYAAN

justice for migrant domestic workers

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Government review into data sharing practices for migrant victims of crime is a missed opportunity

The government has today published their review into data sharing practices between the police and Immigration Enforcement regarding migrant victims and witnesses of crime with insecure immigration status. This comes three years after Liberty and Southall Black Sisters lodged a super complaint setting out the harm such practices cause women and wider communities across the UK. Their complaint was followed by an investigative report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct which called for an overhaul of the laws in this area given the significant harm to the public interest in tackling abuse.

Earlier this year, the Home Office undertook a series of workshops with representatives from the domestic abuse sector including Liberty, Southall Black Sisters, Latin American Women's Rights Service and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner. Representatives from the modern slavery sector including ourselves, Focus on Labour Exploitation and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner were also invited to take part in this work. During these engagements, representatives from both sectors have endeavoured to make clear that Immigration Enforcement does not have a safeguarding role given the clear conflict of interest in upholding our immigration laws. Representatives also have first-hand experience in supporting their clients to access various safeguarding mechanisms so are well familiar with migrants having mistrust in authorities, an issue that has been longstanding for years now.

Kalayaan is of the view that a complete firewall between police and Immigration Enforcement is the only model capable of ensuring confidence in the systems that migrant victims and witnesses of crime need put their trust in.

It is therefore disappointing that despite our engagement, the Home Office has ultimately ignored our concerns and found that a firewall is not the appropriate solution. Instead, they have said they will be introducing an Immigration Enforcement (IE) Migrant Victims Protocol which they believe will allow migrants to feel safe in the knowledge they can report to the police, who in turn will then automatically share data with Immigration Enforcement. We believe such a protocol will serve to do only the opposite and will deter individuals from coming forward to make reports to the police with the net result that perpetrators continue their cycle

of violence. Once again, we fear that immigration enforcement has been prioritised over the safeguarding of migrants as either victims or witnesses of crime.

Kalayaan does not consider the Home Office's proposal will achieve the aim of supporting migrant victims and witnesses of crime to report to the police and support prosecutions. We urge them to reconsider the numerous benefits in a complete firewall.

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