



Jess Phillips MP
Minister for Safeguarding and
Violence Against Women and Girls
2 Marsham Street
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By email only

30 April 2025

DECS Reference: MIN/1278641/25

Dear Minister,

We want to thank you for your response to members of the House of Lords dated 24 March 2025. We commend your work at the Home Office, in particular your project to get rid of the backlog of cases in the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

However, we remain concerned about the wellbeing of the survivors currently in the NRM who will continue to wait for excessive periods until the backlog is dealt with – in two years' time. We believe granting the right to work to these survivors will dramatically improve their situation and will benefit the UK economy.¹

Thousands of migrant survivors do not have the right to work while they await a Conclusive Grounds decision,² and do not have access to public funds beyond the limited NRM financial support meant to cover only basic necessities. These survivors will often become destitute due to having to support their families back home (which is the reason why most of them accepted to come to the UK to work). Some become destitute after paying for legal representation due to a scarcity of Legal Aid lawyers.

These survivors are falling through the cracks. They risk destitution, decline in their mental and physical health,³ and even re-exploitation if they find they have to work irregularly to survive.⁴

¹ Kalayaan conservatively estimates that the Government could raise £36 million a year from the income tax and National Insurance contributions of those in the NRM currently without the right to work:

<https://www.kalayaan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Ready-Willing-Able-Report-2-Nov-2024.pdf>

² See Kalayaan's full series of reports "Ready, Willing & Able", available here:

<https://www.kalayaan.org.uk/campaign-posts/ready-willing-able-series-of-reports-published-making-the-case-to-grant-all-survivors-in-the-nrm-the-right-to-work-with-just-a-simple-change-in-policy/>

³ <https://www.kalayaan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Ready-Willing-Able-Report-3-Nov-2024.pdf>

⁴ Kalayaan's reports include testimonials of the devastating financial effect of not being able to work while in the NRM: <https://www.kalayaan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Ready-Willing-Able-Report-4-Dec-2024.pdf>

We look forward to hearing your solution to the urgent and present issues faced by thousands of survivors without the right to work in the NRM while they wait for the backlog to be cleared.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Alton of Liverpool, Crossbench Peer
Baroness Bakewell of Hardington Mandeville, Liberal Democrat Peer
Baroness Blower, Labour Peer
Baroness Brinton, Liberal Democrat Peer
Baroness Doocey, Liberal Democrat Peer
Lord Fox, Liberal Democrat Peer
Lord German OBE, Liberal Democrat Peer
Lord Goddard of Stockport, Liberal Democrat Peer
Baroness Goudie, Labour Peer
Baroness Hamwee, Liberal Democrat Peer
Baroness Harris of Richmond, Liberal Democrat Peer
Lord Hendy KC, Labour Peer
Baroness Kramer, Liberal Democrat Peer
Baroness Lister of Burtsett CBE, Labour Peer
Lord Mohammed of Tinsley, Liberal Democrat Peer
The Rt Hon. Lord Newby OBE, Liberal Democrat Peer
The Rt Hon. Lord Randall of Uxbridge, Conservative Peer
Earl Russell, Liberal Democrat Peer
Lord Wigglesworth, Liberal Democrat Peer
Baroness Young of Hornsey, Crossbench Peer