

Thursday 10 June 2021

Sent via email to:

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

Secretary of State for the Home Department

Dear Home Secretary,

Aspen Card Changeover

We represent **over 50 refugee organisations and representatives** concerned about the wellbeing of asylum seekers affected by the Home Office's introduction of new Aspen cards.

The Payment Card changeover (from Sodexo to Prepaid Financial Services) was supposed to happen over the weekend of May 21-24. Almost three weeks on, this is one of the worst asylum crises we have experienced because of the failed introduction of the replacement card. There are delays in getting through to MigrantHelp, the issue of replacement cards and Emergency Crisis Payments. Whole families are being left without money for food. Refugee and migrant organisations have been plunged into a full scale crisis trying to keep up with one emergency after another.

People have told us that they had not got their cards; second replacement cards are failing to activate because the Home Office has the incorrect dates of birth, and rely on NGOs to provide the correct data. Even cards that are activated were reported as not working after being used once. Some cards don't work at ATMs or checkouts, or they have no money in them. Others have the wrong

balance. Asylum seekers are unable to get through to Migrant Help or are kept waiting for hours, before being told to wait longer or go to charities for crisis grants.

Asylum seekers receive derisory sums of just over £5 a day, those in hotels just over £1 a day (but many get nothing) because they are forbidden by the asylum rules to find paid work or save money. Those affected include families with babies and children and new mothers. They include individuals left in hotels with no living expenses at all. People cannot afford to sustain themselves.

On Friday 28 May, the true scale of the crisis emerged when notes from a meeting with the Home Office were shared with NGOs. The Home Office had confirmed that about two thirds of people on asylum support have their new card and activate it. They are trying to identify the 'missing third' who either don't have a card or who haven't activated it by piecing together information from Migrant Help, Prepaid Financial Services and information coming from NGOs on the escalation email. Using the Home Office's own estimates, at least 20,000 people seeking asylum have been reduced to hunger and further impoverishment by the Aspen Card Crisis (61,000 people are on asylum support).

Privately, the Home Office acknowledged problems were being experienced up and down the U.K. and had issued an additional 6,000 new replacement cards to people in support to try and correct the missing cards or cards sent to the wrong address. However, since the new replacement cards were sent out on June 1st 2021, more problems have arisen concerning wrong names, faulty activation and wrong balances. The problems with the system appear to be endemic.

Publicly however, the Home Office has sought to minimise the crisis, giving the public the impression that the Aspen Card Crisis is a 4 day glitch affecting a small number of people.

On Monday 7 June 2021, Permanent Secretary Matthew Rycroft MP misled the Public Accounts Committee when he said:

“There was an error on the card that did last for a short period of time, like for instance, a weekend but that has now been resolved.”

It has not. Two weeks on and refugee organisations are still operating in a crisis.

The Home Office continues to minimise the scale of the crisis by referring to “a small number of asylum seekers” in an article by May Bulman in yesterday’s Independent Newspaper

This is not about a “small number of people”.

Asylum seekers continue to report that Migrant Help’s Helpline is jammed for hours before people can get through. NGOs are distributing food, vouchers and crisis grants to stop people going hungry. While we acknowledge that the Home Office has attempted to speed things up by removing some of the bureaucracy, for example by encouraging NGOs to contact the Home Office directly to escalate matters instead of going through Migrant Help, emergency cash payments and vouchers are not reaching people quickly enough.

Below are just a selection of the problems being experienced:

- The **New Citizens Gateway** has reported that at four hotels in Barnet, **268** asylum seeking individuals have not received their cards, and **38** received them but they are not working.
- **Welsh Refugee Council** - Over **560** cases for support on Aspen Card issues across the 4 dispersal areas in Wales. WRC and Asylum Right Partners have used emergency hardship funds to give people access to food and essentials. We are expecting to support clients on this issue - for the next few weeks, as resolutions are taking time.
- In **Glasgow**, the **Scottish Refugee Council** reports that since Monday 24 May, people have been contacting the charity in much higher numbers, on our Helpline and in our services, saying they have not received their replacement cards. Others have received cards that don't work, and they cannot activate them, or they don't have money loaded onto them. **This includes a large number of families and children. There are 1,600 children in the asylum support system in Glasgow alone.** When people have tried to get help from Migrant Help they either can't get through, or when they do, they are signposted to charities on the ground providing emergency cash grants. The truth is, too often the Home office and Migrant Help are not practically helping people. We fear some people will be starving in isolation and silence, or worse. It is unacceptable, and clear to us that too often since Monday 24 May, people have not had essential living needs met by the Home Office.”
- Also in Glasgow, **Positive Action in Housing** has received hundreds of requests for help since Monday 24 May, around 400 emergency cases in Glasgow, and more than 100 across the UK. We have had to upscale our systems in response. Our Emergency Relief Fund distributed £14,000 in crisis grants and food vouchers last week and this week. This current crisis is affecting children in particular, one third of whom form

Glasgow's refugee community. The main problems are cards not activating or not being posted out or having no credit on them, or being the wrong amount. The second replacement cards are being reported as not activating, having less money or having the wrong names. One family of four reported they were provided with £23 on the card for two weeks running. A 21 year old woman gave birth to her baby on May 17th and was without a working card or money since May 21st. Another woman had to walk 2.2 miles to her nearest Asda with her two young children after being given Asda vouchers. Yet another woman said she was humiliated when she handed over the new Aspen Card in a supermarket, only for it to be declined. She had to unload the shopping in front of other customers while her little girl asked, *Are we not getting the shopping, mummy?* Migrant help's phone lines were jammed and asylum seekers who got through after a two hour wait were told to go to charities to get crisis grants. A Palestinian man was told he had to wait five days on three separate occasions. Hotel asylum seekers are also suffering incredibly, having been forced to endure no agency in their lives for months or in some cases more than a year, with no money. One man lost his composure and displayed aggressive behaviour outside a city centre asylum hotel. It was clear the situation had severely affected his mental health. Where people receive £8 in their Aspen card, they cannot withdraw it until they get another £8 the following week, and then they can withdraw £10. So they are forced to spend in shops. **This is the hostile environment doing its dirty work.** In trying to mitigate the crisis, the escalation email to the Home Office proved proactive. However, we experienced red tape and bottlenecks with Migrant Help regarding the issue of Emergency Crisis Payments or food vouchers. Migrant Help's petty red tape is making a difficult situation hopeless for asylum seekers (imagine waiting two hours to be told to call other charities or to call back in five days - you would lose the will to live); and for agencies representing asylum seekers too. What is the purpose of

this “helpline”? We contacted Migrant Help’s Regional Director for Scotland. Sadly, our emails seeking assistance since March 2021 have largely gone ignored, as if we would go away quietly. This happened since we discovered over 100 hotel asylum seekers in Glasgow had no financial support of any kind despite the high court ruling. We sent emails for each client to ask for this to be chased, but experienced annoyance by Migrant Help staff who proceeded to send us useless cut and pasted standard responses. We have found it more efficient to bypass Migrant Help completely to deal with Home Office officials via the escalation email.

- Also in Glasgow, **Katani & Co Solicitors** have made numerous attempts to support vulnerable clients who have not received new cards or where cards are inactive. **All attempts to liaise with Migrant Help have gone unanswered.** A recent attempt to email Migrant Help, to raise concerns regarding the position of a particularly vulnerable asylum seeker with documented mental health concerns and a history of self-harm, was deleted without even being read (as revealed by a read receipt). Others have simply been told by Migrant Help that they “must wait” without providing any practical or qualitative support.
- The **Jesuit Refugee Service UK** has been in contact with 15 men currently accommodated at **Napier Barracks** who had not received their new ASPEN cards the week following the changeover. They understand that very few men currently accommodated there had the new cards. The one individual who had received his card was unable to activate it as he was told the information he was inputting was invalid despite having a correct card number and DOB in the correct format. Although some individuals have since received their new ASPEN cards they continue to face difficulties with using them after activation and the majority have still not received the new cards. In a number of instances individuals

have been transferred out of Napier Barracks to other accommodation without receiving their ASPEN cards causing further confusion in resolving this situation and ensuring cards are posted to the correct address.

- **Brighton Migrant Solidarity** reported around 100 asylum seekers who struggled to activate the card or never received it.
- **West London Welcome** reported that 38 asylum-seeking families and individuals have been left without any money or food, because they either never received their new cards or their cards haven't worked.
- **Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent** reports that most of their clients have not had cards or emergency cash payments. All of those without cards struggled to get through to Migrant Help. Some never did manage it and we used the escalation email.
- **Refugee Action in Colchester** reported that 13 asylum seeking people have not received their cards. Some had cards which didn't work, others had no Aspen Card and no emergency cash payments or vouchers for 17 days
- In **Derby**, over **30** people plus their family members, who were affected by the Aspen change over, have contacted the **Derby Refugee Forum**. People have contacted **Migrant Help** and also needed food while they had no support. Two weeks following the changeover, the organisation is still seeing people without Aspen Cards - not having received a new card at all, having a new card but unable to activate it, or activating it but no funds were available.

- **Harbour Project Swindon** - 28 people came in with Aspen card issues such as non receipt of new Aspen cards, card working for a couple of days then not working or duplication of new Aspen cards. This took place over a 3 week period. There are currently still some issues.
- **Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group** was contacted by 11 clients who spent 2 weeks or more without funds due to the changeover of the provider. Some people did not receive their ASPEN card at all, most individuals received the card but the activation did not work, for others there were no funds on the card and another person was given the wrong PIN number.

We find it absolutely unacceptable that a government department that thinks people should be living on less than £40 a week (£8 for hotel dwellers) can't prioritise getting people access to that money.

This ongoing crisis needs to be fixed immediately. Small charities cannot continue to fill the gap in provision caused by maladministration by the Home Office and its contractors. Since May 25, there has been no explanation as to how this crisis arose. We would therefore also like to know:

1. *How many asylum seekers are affected by the crisis across the UK?*
2. *Can you confirm (a) that asylum seekers adversely affected by this transition since 21 May will automatically receive due back payments of their support (and therefore not have to apply for such) and (b) that there will be no overpayment claw-backs by your Department or contractors, against those people who received emergency payments as a result of this transition? People must not be penalised for this situation, which is in no way their fault, and they must be given money they are due.*
3. *NGOs have been left to provide crisis grants, vouchers and food packs to asylum seekers. Can you assure us that asylum seekers will not be subjected to questioning*

- by your contractors or have their derisory allowances deducted for receiving food, vouchers or small crisis payments from NGOs or via Emergency Crisis Payments.*
- 4. What exactly went wrong with the changeover of the Aspen card from Sodexo to Prepaid FS?*
 - 5. What piloting or testing of the new Aspen Card did the Home Office undertake before it was rolled out on 24 May 2021?*
 - 6. In light of the recent concerns highlighted in the press about Prepaid Financial Services, even before it took over the contract, what due diligence checks did the Home Office do?*
 - 7. How did this contract get awarded? What was known about Prepaid Financial Services at the time the contract was awarded? What due diligence checks were undertaken to check its reputation? What relationship existed between this company and members of the government?*
 - 8. People have waited over 2 weeks for emergency payments. What is the legal time frame for delivery of Emergency payments?*

The current crisis has put an already vulnerable group in a very precarious position, where they literally have no other back up plan or safety net to fall back on.

Asylum seekers are wholly dependent on your Department for their housing and support. However, the overwhelming majority of people do not wish to be dependent on the Home Office. They tell us that while they endure inordinate Home Office delays in processing their asylum cases, they wish to work and contribute taxes and do something worthwhile for their community. It makes absolutely no sense to force people to depend instead on an inefficient government agency and its contractors.

We do not see this crisis going away in the next few days. As Home Secretary it falls upon you to explain what has gone wrong and publicly acknowledge the full extent of this crisis.

We await your response.

This letter is signed and supported by:

Positive Action in Housing (Robina Qureshi)

Scottish Refugee Council (Sabir Zazai - CEO)

Welsh Refugee Council (Andrea Cleaver)

Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (Satbir Singh)

Refugee Action (Tim Naor Hilton)

Afghan Human Rights Foundation (Mohammad Asif)

UNESCO Chair, Refugee Integration, University of Glasgow (Alison Phipps)

Asylum Link Merseyside

Brighton Migrant Solidarity (Jacob Berkson)

Baobab Women's Project (Sarah Taal/Bridget Obi)

Baobab Centre for Young Survivors in Exile (Jodie Bourke)

Berlow Rahman Solicitors (Jelina Berlow Rahman)

Borderlands South West LTD

Bristol Refugee Rights (Beth Wilson)

Bosnia Herzegovina Centre

Chair of Church Action on Poverty (John Dale)

Caritas Diocese of Salford (Amir Raki)

Derby Refugee Forum

Derby Refugee Advice Centre

Devon & Cornwall Refugee support - Plymouth (Pat Joyce)

Doncaster Conversation Club (Jan Foster)

Essex Migrant Agency Forum (Philip Horner)

EYST Wales (Sophie De Marco)

Edinburgh Poverty Commission (Craig Sanderson)

Edinburgh Women's Aid family support worker (Marina Chatzivasileiou)

Emeritus professor, Durham University (Geoff Moore)

Empower Women for Change, Thistles & Dandelions Project Manager (Hailey Maxwell)

Free Movement (Colin Yeo)

Freedom From Torture - Glasgow (Fiona Crombie)

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group (Karris Hamilton)

Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit

Glasgow North West Citizens Advice Bureau (Adebimpe Otufale)

Harbour Project Swindon

Haringey Migrant Support Centre

Humans of Glasgow (Dr Rachel Smith)

Hackney Migrant Centre (Rayah Feldman)

Hestia, advocate (Julia Elfert)

Jesuit Refugee Service UK (Sarah Teather)

Katani & Co Solicitors, Glasgow (Sarah McKeeve, Darius Katani)

Khai Tzedek CIC (Carmen Clarke)

Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network (Rosario Guimba-Stewart)

Loughborough University (Ruth Webber)

Members of the Iona Community (Iain and Isabel Whyte)

Migrant Voice, Director (Nazek Ramadan)

Migrants Organise (Brian Dikoff)

North Staffordshire CAB (Jude Hawes)

Nottingham & Notts Refugee Forum

Penrith and Eden Refugee Network (Sarah Wilson)

Professor Migration, Mobilities and Citizenship (Bridget Anderson)

Rainbow Home (Alessandra Mondin)

RAIS Lancaster (Lizzy)

Refugee Action Colchester (Maria Wilby)

Refugees in Effective and Active Partnership (REAP)

Refugee Radio (Gemma Challenger)

Room to Heal

RAMFEL, Casework Manager (Alice Giuliano)

Research Associate, University of Glasgow (Maureen McBride)
Scottish Refugee Council, Chair of the Board (Peter Lloyd)
Secretary - Kilmarnock and Loudoun Trades Union Council (Arthur West)
Secretary' Dumfries & Galloway Trades Union Council (John Dennis)
Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Lancaster University (Ala Sirriyeh)
Shelter, Team Leader (Kristi Rocha)
South London Refugee Association (Bettina Patel)
South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group (Stuart Crosthwaite)
St Mungo's - Street Legal Assessment Worker (Sarah Hamlin)
Samphire (Indre Lechtimiakyte)
Sante Refugee Mental Health Access Project (Edward Milner)
Scottish Refugee Council (Lynne Barty)
Slough Refugee Support (Rose Njoroge)
Staffordshire North CAB
St Augustine's Centre, Halifax, West Yorkshire (Laurence Larroche)
The Cotton Tree Trust (Dr Janet Gilbert, London)
TimePeace (Grace Burgess)
Vauxhall Community Law Centre, Liverpool (Siobhan Taylor-Ward)
West London Welcome (Joanne MacInnes, Leyla Williams)
Young Roots
Quakers (Mary Alice Mansell)
Voices in Exile, Director (Mel Steel)
Welfare Scotland, Chair (Rob McDowall FRSA)

Supported by 258 Additional Signatories (with more to be added)

Ima Jackson, Academic - Glasgow This is criminal and needs to be addressed. People when at their most vulnerable should be effectively and expertly supported- not made more vulnerable through harmful, couldn't care less process change.

Karen Hill, Admin - Camborne We are all equal.

Helen Riordan, Admissions Assistant - Reading I believe that all asylum seekers should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect, whilst awaiting the outcome of their claim. This includes adequate provision, in terms of housing, health care, finances etc.

It's completely unacceptable that often already traumatized and vulnerable people are being left without even the basic provision of sufficient money to buy food.

Anne-Marie Harrison, Advice Volunteer - London It is high time we treated all people within our borders with a proper level of respect as befits a human being.

Kirsty White, Amazon, Operations Lead - Glasgow To hold the government accountable for its negligence towards refugees

Melanie Kowal, Antiques Curator - Gainsborough The most vulnerable people in our society are being left without food and basic essentials for too long , I feel this is morally wrong.

Rachel Casey, Arc Blackburn caseworker - Blackburn Inhumane treatment towards asylum seekers in the uk

Victoria Hughes, Architectural Assistant - Glasgow Basic human decency

Alison Scott, Archivist - Glasgow I think the treatment of refugees is shameful and an open sore on our society

Martin Gollan, Artist Union England (member) - Newcastle upon Tyne I'm appalled by the continuing hostility of Conservative Government's towards asylum seekers and refugees and the impact government actions have on individuals and families

Shidrati Ali, Bank Manager - Edinburgh To ensure that everyone gets a fair treatment and basic human rights.

Lucy Garrett, Barrister - London I want government recognition of the true scale of the problem and fast government action to address it.

Miranda Butler, Barrister, Garden Court Chambers - London I work with vulnerable asylum seekers and I know first hand that they are at extreme risk if they don't receive the limited financial support provided by the government. They have nothing else to fall back on.

Sean Clerkin, Campaign coordinator Scottish tenants organisation - Glasgow
The time is always right to do what is right.

Clare Moseley, Care4Calais - Manchester

T Jonkers, Care4calais - Reading People have been three weeks with no Money or food. It is heart-breaking. Charities have done their best to support, but it's cost us a lot of money and there are people who don't know us.

ammer shah, Carer - Blackburn I feel so hurt refugees are being treated like this.

Hafsa Badat, Carer - Bournemouth All people should have the right to be safe and live a life of dignity. Providing support to those in need is a fair and equitable distribution of wealth to ensure all people are treated respectfully and as deserving of that right.

Hannah Smith, Carer - Glasgow To try to find ways to help those in need!

Bettina Patel, Caseworker , Youth Team at South London Refugee Association - London To show my support of the action against the switch over which has resulted in destitution for the most vulnerable people in our society. And to make noise about the lies that have gone along with it

John Dale, Chair of Church Action on Poverty - nairn I feel so disgusted by Home Office actions in this matter

Sarah Wilson, Chair, Penrith and Eden Refugee Network - Penrith Vulnerable people are being made more vulnerable by the inaction and incompetence of private companies and Government contracts.

Mandy Burke, Citizen - Glasgow Because I want refugees to be treated as human beings who deserve dignity

Christine Puckering, Clinical and forensic psychologist - Stirling It is simply inhumane to treat anyone like this. Asylum seekers already live on minimal funding, grudgingly awarded by a fundamentally hostile immigration system. To fail to give them access even to a paltry allowance is cruel and degrading. It is shameful to treat any human being like this and say it is a minor brief interruption!

Lynne Barty, Co-Founder Scottish Refugee Council - Edinburgh Asylum seekers' basic needs and rights are not being met.

Emma Baillie, Community Connectors, Client Liaison Officer - Glasgow Because I believe that asylum seekers should be treated with dignity and respect

Rachel Brennan, Community worker - Glasgow We need to support people fleeing violence, oppression and trauma with compassion and dignity. It's a scandal that skilled people aren't allowed to contribute to the society that they have had to become part of, instead being kept beholden to it, weakened, stripped of any rights or sense of self esteem. This is inhumane!

Adebimpe Otufale, Coordinator, Equalities Project ,Glasgow North West Citizens Advice Bureau - Glasgow I work directly with Refugees and Asylum Seekers and have an insight into the difficulties that they face daily .The level of cash support Asylum seekers receive is bad enough, but to be left without is unimaginable .

Donald Shaw, Creative Producer - Glasgow I am appalled at the way asylum seekers in this country are being treated by the Government.

Paul Gibson, Crofter, Isle of Mull - Isle of Mull Fuelling stigma of asylum seekers whilst shadily propagating then delaying desultory lifeline payments is an insulting way for a government to rule all of its people. Ignorance blinds us to the struggles and drives further ignorance. It should not stand.

John De Valts, devalts - reading because I have been asked to

Bridget Scott, Development Officer - Aberdeen Because I think the punitive way refugees are treated by our government is shameful.

Hermione Berendt, Digital Marketer & Volunteer - Brighton The Home Office has made it so that asylum seekers rely on them and these aspen cards to be able to feed themselves and in some cases their whole families, when they stop working people who have fled to the UK for safety are left starving and penniless! This is so so awful!!!

Najimee Parveen, Director - Glasgow policy violates international human rights

Gloria Saffrey, Director - London To support Asylum seekers and those destitute

Elli Free, Director - London To help sort out the problems for asylum seekers affected by the ASPEN card rollout

Maslow 's Community Shop, Director of Maslow's - Glasgow We support asylum seekers and have seen the unnecessary hardship they have experienced during tons change.... and that hardship. It continues.

Paul Philippou, Director Tippermuir Books - Perth The current payment card crisis is an abhorrent, immoral act of wanton neglect by the British government of its humanitarian duties. You cannot both forbid and prevent people from supporting themselves and fail to support them.

Richard Malfait, Director, R.Malfait Consultants Ltd. - Bideford Asylum seekers are human and have basic needs and rights that should be respected. Their treatment at the hands of this government has been and continues to be inhumane. The ineptitude of the government and its contractors in

implementing the transfer of the card system is completely unacceptable but sadly not surprising. It is entirely consistent with the cynical and deliberately hostile attitude of the government in developing policy and practice to make the lives of asylum seeking individuals and families as difficult as possible.

David Gering-Hasthorpe, Director, Southside Immigration Ltd - Glasgow It's a simple question of humanity. People are starving without these basic funds.

Jamie Spurway, Diversity Trainer - Glasgow It is outrageous that bureaucratic errors are leaving people who are not permitted to work with no financial support. This crisis needs to be fully resolved urgently and those who missed payments given backdated support.

Caroline Thompson, East Dunbartonshire Action for Refugees - Glasgow To alleviate suffering of fellow human beings

Elsa Hamilton, East Dunbartonshire Action for Refugees - Milngavie, Glasgow I am horrified by the suffering inflicted by the callous approach of the Home Office

Elizabeth Macdonald, East Dunbartonshire Action for Refugees, Secretary - Milngavie to protest against the continuing lack of regard for the needs of asylum seekers in this country

Dorothy Parkin, East Dunbartonshire Refuge Action Group - Glasgow I just think it is disgraceful how asylum seekers are being treated and left in this chaos with nothing! What are they supposed to do? Shocking!!

Craig Sanderson, Edinburgh Poverty Commission - Edinburgh This could condemn countless numbers of families to poverty.

caroline forbes, edinburgh resident, world citizen, supporter of human rights
- **Edinburgh** It breaks my heart that people are treated this way in the UK and particularly in Scotland. I did not vote for this cruelty, and no way do I support it. I have volunteered in Calais and seen how migrants live (exist) there. The UK is a rich nation state. Our treatment of asylum seekers and refugees is a disgrace and a source of shame. Can we imagine ourselves in their place for just an instant?

Marina Chatzivasileiou, Edinburgh Womens Aid family support worker - **Edinburgh** Because I believe that every human deserves to have equal rights and opportunities and it is a disgrace how people who have fled their countries are treated

Jenifer Evans, Editor, grocer - **Bristol** I am pro-immigration and I don't believe there is any reason to leave people hungry or homeless

Geoff Moore, Emeritus professor, Durham University - **Durham** Because of the effect of the failure of the system on vulnerable people

Hailey Maxwell, Empower Women for Change, Thistles & Dandelions Project Manager - **Glasgow** Because all people deserve safety, dignity and care.

STEPHEN SHARP, Engineer unemployed - **Glasgow** To stop the evil stamping down on the weakest in our society

Amin Shaikh, Equity Analyst - **Glasgow** Justice for the refugees.

Najma Mir, Esol teacher - **London** I'm extremely concerned about venerable asylum seekers and their children. It's appalling to treat people in this way, who have already suffered so much, and are seeking help from us.

Robin Sivapalan, ESOL Teacher, English for Action - London This issue is affecting some of our students who have not received their new card. It is leaving people totally destitute and it is putting massive strain on all the voluntary and charitable organisations taking up the strain.

John McFadden, FBU - Glasgow Asylum seekers are being subjected to literal destitution by the repeated failings of the aspen card changeover and the disgraceful lack of support from "migrant help" This intolerable situation has to be resolved immediately and back payments and compensation made available

MARGARET CLARKE, Former Volunteer - Welsh Refugee Council - Oswestry
TO FIGHT UNFAIR TREATMENT OF ASYLUM SEEKERS

Margaret Okole, Freelance editor - Birmingham The Home Office actions in exposing people to the risk of death by starvation are criminal. Time and again the courts have found against the Home Office on issues of asylum. It's a national disgrace.

Nicola Lawton, Freelance Producer - Glasgow The system in the uk for migrants, asylum seekers & refugees is not fit for purpose and leaves people destitute, I am completely against everything the government are doing with this hostile environment leaving already vulnerable and traumatised people in horrendous situations

Rebecca Woodward, GGC NHS family support worker - Glasgow It is completely unjust and inhumane that people have been left without money and that once knowing there was a problem there hasn't been immediate action taken to support the people impacted.

Claire Low, Glasgow Must Act, Chapter Focal Point - Glasgow Families are left without money

Kathy Legg, GP for NHS - Newcastle upon Tyne I have a friend who understands the plight of refugees very well and I have agree to help her to fight on their behalf for what appears to be a just cause

Rayah Feldman, Hackney Migrant Centre - London 'Mistakes' like this by the Home Office are not hiccups or glitches. They are the result of a fundamental lack of respect for people who seek asylum.

Lucy Nabijou, Haringey Welcome, Coordinator - London

Maria Rossini, Head of Education, BSA - Tyne and Wear It is unacceptable for thousands of vulnerable human beings to be abandoned and hungry in this country

Julia Elfert, Hestia, advocate - London People are left without any money to buy food for over three weeks. It is impossible to reach Migrant Help. We need the Home Office to take responsibility and pay the people the money they have promised to fulfil their most basic needs. This transition has not been handled. People cannot make ends meet.

Fozila Choudhury, homemaker - bristol Refugees have every right to be here. Current foreign policies are enabling them to lose their homes, become destitute and their fate hangs on the goodwill of others.

Anne Phee, Hwupenyu health & wellbeing project. Mental health worker - Glasgow Our organisation deals with many asylum seekers and know the hardship this continued screw up is causing

Maureen Waugh, I am a GLASGOW Quaker and a local supporter of Positive Action in Housing - Glasgow I am concerned about the treatment of refugees in Glasgow by the Home Office

Yousef Ahmadi, Iran - Glasgow I transferred to house this week I need money please, My house so far from city centre I need money for bus pass and food please

Barbara Henderson, Journalism lecturer - Newcastle upon Tyne It is inhumane to leave refugees and families in this crisis

William Bramley, Law Offices of William A. Bramley, P.C. - San Diego Ask for help.

Meg Bateman, lecturer - Isle of Skye people for whom we have responsibility are suffering through our blunders

Ruth Webber, Loughborough University - Loughborough Nobody's free until we are all free

Sara Crosswell, Maggie & Rose, Head of Classes - London Because what is happening is wrong and should not be happening in this country.

Lainy Bedingfield, Managing Director of Kingsway Community Connections - Glasgow Kingsway Community Connections stands in solidarity with those affected by the Aspen crisis and those organisations working on the front line to support people who are suffering. Although not a campaigning organisation, Kingsway CC has a strong background in campaigning against injustice, demonstrated by the iconic community response to the Dawn Raids and the rise of the Glasgow Girls. We are proud of our multicultural

community here and many of our residents will be affected by this. We stand with you and lend our voice loudly to the campaign to end this crisis.

Antonia Ineson, Market gardener - Meigle I am appalled at the failure to treat asylum seekers with respect and care by the Home Office.

Rachael McLean, Mature Student - Glasgow I am strongly opposed to the inhumane and cruel treatment of refugees and asylum seekers under the Tory's hostile environment. Home office should be ashamed. Immigration policy needs a complete overhaul with humanity at its heart. Refugees are welcome here and people should be allowed to work and live with dignity.

Lucinda Broadbent, media co-op - Glasgow It's an outrageous injustice

Iain and Isabel Whyte, Members of the Iona Community - North Queensferry
Because this is a massive and callous denial of human rights to our sisters and brothers in need

Nazek Ramadan, Migrant Voice, Director - London We are concerned by the Aspen card crisis and have at least one member who has been unable to access money on her new card.

Pamela Cairns, Mortgage Consultant - Edinburgh People are suffering

Julie McGahan, NHS - Glasgow It's crucial that people are not left destitute

vivien stewart, NHS Lanarkshire, Health Improvement Practitioner - Lanark
I am horrified at the way these poor people have been treated by an uncaring Westminster Government

Alison Hauenstein Swan, NHS psychologist - Glasgow I have seen regularly the impact of poverty and lack of agency on asylum seekers and the very significant impact this has on mental health.

Anna Nakamura, NHS, doctor - Glasgow The UK government is failing to provide the support they are obligated to provide to asylum seekers, it is illegal and inhumane.

Anya Liew, Nurse - Cheshire I feel strongly that the government should answer why this untenable situation has firstly occurred, secondly has continued to be an issue and thirdly has been played down as an ongoing by the government themselves.

Marjorie Murray, Nurse - Glasgow By delaying payment of the small amount of support that is given to asylum seekers the British government is being cruel and inhumane. This situation should be addressed immediately.

Keith McIvor, Optimo - Glasgow this crisis needs to be resolved asap. The situation is unacceptable, if not inhumane. Surely as a nation we are better than this?

Pam Laurance, Part time counsellor - London Because everyone should be able to live without fear or want.

Erim Ali, Pharmacist - Glasgow

Riffit Khan, Pharmacist - Glasgow When we see the sheer cruelty of this Westminster government, it makes Scotland want to go independent.

Adam Paterson, Positive Action in Housing volunteer worker - Glasgow Once again, short-sighted, poorly thought through plans have been enacted by the UK Home Office, only for glaring problems to have been highlighted.

Which group of people are worst affected? Destitute, vulnerable people, families with young children, pregnant women, survivors of civil war, genocide, torture, sexual violence, human trafficking.

What is the likely outcome? More disillusionment, feelings of abandonment, isolation, mistrust of British institutions and figures of authority, possibly even suicidal ideation.

I am signing this letter, because once again, I am astonished by the inhumane, cruel, "hostile environment" that has been constructed in order to deter migrants coming to Britain - no matter how horrific their lives have been prior to arriving and beginning their asylum application.

The culture within the Home Office, can be best described as a combination of negligent; insensitive towards culture, religion and race; disbelieving; always prioritising profit over what is fundamentally 'right'.

This culture within the Home Office was highlighted in the independent report by Wendy Williams (2020), 'Windrush Lessons Learned Review', ordered by the House of Commons. The recommendations made by the report seem to have been swept under the proverbial rug, in their entirety, as this latest scandal with vulnerable people having no access to the funds they're legally entitled to.

Mary Mc Manus, Positive Action in Housing, Volunteer - Glasgow Disgusted by the treatment of individuals by this government, in my name

Sabina Toor, Post Office Limited, Business Analyst - Coatbridge To support Asylum Seekers and ensure that they are having their basic human needs met

Clare Younger, Primary teacher - Edinburgh There are many refugee families who attend my school. These families are real people who have experienced trauma and want to make a better life for themselves. We have the right to move to another country to better our lives so why can't they? Sometimes we have refugee children who take time to settle in to the school, we work closely with the families and build up strong positive relationships and see the pupils blossom, they sometimes are then moved with short notice and expected to start life all over again. Some of our pupils spent 3 years in an asylum camp and have or are still working through that trauma. They have a right to education and are both willing and able to learn so they should have the opportunity.

Laura Jarvis, Private citizen - Glasgow The ongoing crisis is inhumane.

Fiona McOwan, Private citizen - Dunfermline Because I believe the Home Office is acting unlawfully by failing to provide asylum seekers with proper access to the limited amount of money they are entitled to.

Rachel Newman, Private citizen - Glasgow To show support to vulnerable fellow citizens

Rosie Nimmo, Private citizen - Edinburgh I find it absolutely unbelievable that this government are not attending to the needs of the refugees in our country and that they are creating an increasingly hostile and unhelpful 'support' system for them, which actually is resulting in much more hardship for people who have suffered so much already. In this, one of the richest countries in the world, we should be showing compassion and financial support for those who, through no fault of their own, are in such a vulnerable position. Shame on this government.

Helen Oliver, Private citizen - Luton I can't tolerate people being left with no resources

Anne-Marie Kennedy, Private citizen - Glasgow Because it is disgraceful and I believe that the Home office are being obtuse, hostile and dishonest

Jo Walker, Private citizen - Hemsworth Because people should be treated with dignity and respect and part of that is ensuring that they have money for the things that they need since they are unable to work to earn money. Also because our nation has responsibilities for the crises that made most of these people into refugees.

John Russell-Milnes, Private citizen - Inverness Britain created post-imperial horror and we must support people fleeing from the horror - it is also the kind of country I want to belong to not a country promoting racism, bigotry and denial of our imperial and genocidal past which is why I despair of "England" and campaign for Scottish independence because our free Scotland would have the power to welcome and support asylum-seekers/refugees more substantially than we are able to do now with our limited devolved powers.

Sarah Leslie, Private citizen - Edinburgh I feel strongly that we should welcome and support refugees in Scotland

Karen Ewing, Private citizen - Glasgow I am appalled by the Home Office's uncaring attitude towards Asylum Seekers over the crisis with the Aspen Cards, which has left many people hungry and penniless for three weeks now. People who are obliged to exist on £5 a day, and some even less, have had no access to their money through no fault of their own. This is a shocking way to treat people, unfortunate individuals and families, who have been deprived of the right to work and contribute by senseless U. K. bureaucracy and hostility.

Frances Corr, Private citizen - Glasgow This is discrimination and punishment against vulnerable people in desperate situations through no fault of their own. They are being deprived of the most basic human needs by a callous government made up of over privileged individuals who should never be allowed to be in a position of power.

George Paxton, Private citizen - Glasgow Everyone should be treated decently

hugh mathie, Private citizen - stirling to get justice for asylum seekers

Heidi Stewart, Private citizen - Glasgow Because refugees should get adequate support to live their lives here not get further traumatised and arsed about!

Seema Sood, Private citizen - Glasgow We should be looking after people and ensuring they have the financial support they need. It is an absolute disgrace that we are allowing people and children to feel unsupported and anxious due to a total lack of care.

Hasan Abdullah, Private citizen - Glasgow Affected by the crisis

Sonia Williams, Private citizen - London This govt must put this shameful situation.

Rosie Chandler, Private citizen - Pershore Minimising/negating the impact upon people, leaving them without funds & lying about duration is totally unacceptable & reprehensible. Folk who've escaped unimaginable circumstances need care, compassion, consideration & support, not further degradation & invisibles

Keith Pattison, Private citizen - Berwick Upon Tweed appalled by the contempt shown for those in extreme need

Amir Sadeghpour, Private citizen - Glasgow Lack of ASPEN and ARC card

Lianne Hitchen, Private citizen - Hertfordshire I have done several years of work with people who depend on Aspen cards, and have experienced personally what it costs in wellness and physical health when the state fails in its duties to provide what it has agreed to in the form of benefits or support. This is a scandal that must be learned from, publicly apologised for and compensated for.

Pauline Hall, Private citizen - Wirral This situation is totally and utterly unacceptable and disgraceful and has to be corrected NOW

Aileen Strachan, Private citizen - Glasgow Because it's an appalling and unfair situation

Dorrie Bilson, Private citizen - whitchurch Hampshire This situation is unacceptable and unjust

Wayne Kelly, Private citizen - Bristol Because I think the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers by the home office is disgusting

Kerri Bissoonauth, Private citizen - Edinburgh The Home Office have repeatedly failed in their legal and moral duties in supporting refugees, asylum seekers, and people with irregular migration status'. Politicians use the fact that the public don't know details of what's happening to get away with inhumane treatments of vulnerable people. This has to stop now.

Irune Gurtubai, Private citizen - Edinburgh

shaben begum, Private citizen - Edinburgh

Malcolm Dunn, Private citizen - Edinburgh Because this is an unacceptable position for vulnerable people to be placed in.

Fiona Barnett, Private citizen - Edinburgh This is no way for people to live. Imagine not caring that people are being forced to live this way. This is a critical failure of empathy.

Martin law, Private citizen - Glasgow because what is happening is a disgrace, to leave already vulnerable people without the basic things of living. This is also a deliberate strategy, part of the hostile environment, and the UK should be doing more for displaced people, not less.

YASMINE MOHAMMED, Private citizen - Glasgow I am appalled the way asylum seekers are being mistreated both financially and physically in order for them to survive basic human rights.

Vanessa A, Private citizen - Glasgow

Emilie McSwiggan, Private citizen - Glasgow I volunteer with Positive Action in Housing's Humans of Glasgow network and I've seen the impact of this crisis on asylum seekers. I want to see immediate action to put it right, and for the UK Government to apologise to asylum seekers for the serious harm it has caused & to make proper amends for the suffering experienced by asylum seekers on their watch.

A Jootun, Private citizen - Glasgow

Margot Sagan, Private citizen - Glasgow

Anabel Marsh, Private citizen - Glasgow This is a crisis affecting some of the most vulnerable people in society.

Michelle Muirhead, Private citizen - Glasgow

Farah Javed, Private citizen - Glasgow I feel the pain of being homeless and trying to stand on your feet again

Phoebe Warren, Private citizen - Glasgow I can't imagine how stressful this situation must be for people in the asylum system and I want to help bring light to the situation.

Margaret Young, Private citizen - Glasgow The UK Government is penalising already vulnerable people and being dishonest in their public response.

Gwen Stirling, Private citizen - Glasgow Because the treatment of Asylum seekers in the UK is shameful

Mirren Taylor, Private citizen - Glasgow I am signing in the hope that this crisis is resolved quickly and that thousands of people are no longer suffering.

Michael Gorman, Private citizen - Leeds To show the government's actions are not the will of the people

Scott Bradbury, Private citizen - London Solidarity

John Whalley, Private citizen - Newcastle upon Tyne

Elizabeth Perez-Powell, Private citizen - Pontypool I am utterly appalled at the treatment of people seeking refuge, it is a betrayal of this country.

Ellie Herman, Private citizen -

Jacqueline Noltingk, Private citizen -

Sarah Storn, Private tutor - Leamington Spa I am disgusted by the way that the government has handled this situation.

Johanna Blair, Producer - Glasgow Because it is important in order to resolve this and not let it happen again

Barbara Orton, Producer - Glasgow It's outrageous that the govt continues to ignore the fact that the Aspen card does not work, and continues to deny it. We will not have the wool pulled over our eyes - it's not right, and a disaster for those this pittance is designed to help.

Ian Wall, Professor - Edinburgh No civilised country should treat anyone in this manner.

Bridget Anderson, Professor Migration, Mobilities and Citizenship - Bristol Because the very least that asylum seekers could expect is straightforward access to assistance

Helen Beaton, Publisher - Glenrothes I am enormously concerned about the Home Office's attitude towards asylum seekers.

Umran Amin, QA Engineer - Glasgow the treatment of asylum seekers and migrant communities by this government has been nothing short of atrocious and this is a long line of errors that have resulted in making their lives even more miserable for which they need to be held to account.

Mary Alice Mansell, Quakers - Glasgow The situation was disgraceful before the current crisis, now it is sickening to know that this is how "civilised" we are

Maurice Mcleod, Race on the Agenda, CEO - London Housing is one of the biggest drivers of inequality and everything must be done to ensure we have suitable housing for everyone living in this country.

Margaret MacKenzie, Ralph Logistics, Director - Shaftesbury I am sick of the way vulnerable people are being treated. The 'Hostile Environment' is a dreadful thing that makes me ashamed to be British.

Alice Giuliato, RAMFEL, Casework Manager - London Because the Home Office needs to be held accountable for their mistakes and poor practices which often have a very negative impact on very vulnerable people

John Parker, Refugee host - Dunstable The rights of refugees should be the same as all other residents of the UK. This is not treating refugees as equals

Robyn Moffat-Wall, Refugee Integration Adviser - Glasgow

Faith Polya, Refugee supporter - London Because people are suffering unnecessarily

Jarmila Vasickova, Religious sister - Glasgow Create justice for people who don't count in society

Helena Dodwell, Renewables Manager - Gloucester To support the most vulnerable in society

Maureen McBride, Research Associate, University of Glasgow - Glasgow

Eleanor Grieve, Researcher - Glasgow We need a society that treats asylum seekers with dignity and respect.

Kathryn Gulliver, Retired - East Ayrshire In support and compassion for fellow human beings

Catherine Riddle, Retired - Edinburgh The way we treat these people is unacceptable. It is only luck/fate that means we are not in their desperate position. Priti Patel might think about that.

Elizabeth Edwardson, Retired - Edinburgh To give support

Fiona Knowles, Retired - Edinburgh I think the situation is inhumane, refugees are not getting the money they need to survive and are suffering because of this.

Catherine Norman, Retired - Edinburgh This is a scandalous situation in one of the richest countries of the world which states it believes in democracy, the rule of law and humanitarian action.

Margaret Whitelaw, Retired - Glasgow Because of Human Rights are being violated here by an institution of the state. It is the institutionalisation of cruelty which is utterly deplorable from the 'Mother of all Parliaments'!

Steve Banks, Retired - Glasgow Long term commitment to the rights of refugees/asylum seekers

mary agbo, Retired - Glasgow Folk can't survive on air and empty promises and pockets

Mary Colin, Retired - Glasgow I am horrified at the serious absence of support and compassion for refugees.

Margaret Tomlinson, Retired - Glasgow To support asylum seekers as a humanitarian and Soroptimist

Julia Walker, Retired - Greetham The situation is disgraceful and I am ashamed of the people acting in my name and those who go along with it - ask yourselves 'What if that was me and my family?'

Lynda Stark, Retired - Kelso because I am appalled at the casual indifference and cruelty shown towards refugees and asylum seekers by the UK Government. People should be treated with respect and kindness especially in this kind of situation

Anne Hunter, Retired - Linlithgow I am appalled that people who have come to this country seeking sanctuary are being left destitute by the Home Office's hostile environment policy.

Martin Mansell, Retired - Lochwinnoch To support those who have been unfairly treated by the government

Seamus O'Connell, Retired - London I support the efforts trying to sort this out

Duncan Toms, Retired - Machynlleth People should not be going hungry due to this. I know people who are affected.

Olwyn Owen, Retired - North Berwick I am appalled and ashamed at how our country treats such vulnerable people. It is imperative that the Home Office rectifies the situation immediately. It is also high time that the rules were reviewed. It is absurd that there are thousands of asylum seekers desperate to

work but kept in misery and penury by the state, when there are businesses up and down the land facing staff shortages. Asylum seekers deserve a chance to contribute while they are here. This would give them back some dignity and independence, while also enabling them to contribute to our society by working and paying taxes.

Colin Birks, Retired - Tighnabruaich I believe we should treat asylum seekers and refugees with the respect and dignity they deserve and which we have guaranteed in the past.

Gavin King-Smith, Retired - Tynron, Thornhill I am appalled at the continuing difficulties facing refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. Please make more effort and resources available to sort the payment issues and be kind.

Patrice Van Cleemput, Retired but Trustee of Global Link - Lancaster The impact on Asylum seekers, forced to rely on the minimal payment that they should receive via their aspen card, and now can't access even that is enormous, and it is also impacting on the other important work that refugee organisations undertake on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees

Janet Saunders, Retired civil servant - Edinburgh I am appalled by the current plight of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK

Michael Nightingale, Retired computer engineer - Basingstoke These people are our most vulnerable. They have really suffered and only want a safe home where they can work to support themselves. These delays amount to torture.

John Dowling, Retired Engineer - Newcastle upon Tyne I used to run a refugee support charity. This is an important issue for me.

Giles Waley, Retired engineer - Stirling Because it is important to press those in power to meet their obligations

Lorna Ross, Retired Environmental Consultant - Markinch I have met thousands of refugees over the years, and have cried on hearing their stories. So many have overcome so much trauma and anguish to get to a safe place. Surprisingly, very few want to come to the UK as the UK has a reputation for not supporting refugees & asylum seekers compared to other countries. When they arrive, they rely on volunteer organisations.

Now the UK government is leaving thousands of refugees / asylum seekers to starve. It is deplorable!

June Waley, Retired environmental educationalist - Stirling Because those in authority need to act

Helen Groom, Retired GP - Gateshead Because it matters

Helen Frampton, Retired GP - Whitley Bay Because it matters

Alison Hore, Retired guidance worker - Selkirk Previously I worked with asylum seekers in Glasgow. I know the extremes which have driven them to leave their own countries and that they are intelligent resourceful people whose only wish is to work hard to make a safe life for themselves and their families.

Alex Stewart, Retired housing, hospitality and development Director - Edinburgh Because refugees and migrants deserve better than the dishonest, mean minded and cruel treatment meted out by Priti Patel and her crew of incompetents and jobsworths in the totally dysfunctional Home Office. The UK is better than that (or ought to be) and here in Scotland we do not wish to be associated with such cruelty.

kathy maclachlan, retired lecturer - Glasgow Because I fully agree with all that was said in the letter

Cecilia McRitchie, Retired Lecturer - Glasgow Refugees and migrants are trying desperately to rebuild their lives. It is disgraceful that the problem with the Aspen card has not been resolved after all this time and adults and children are being left destitute.

Doris McCann, Retired nurse - Cromarty As a supporter of Positive Action, I contribute to what is deemed necessary

Mary Woodward, Retired person - Musselburgh, Scotland Because I am outraged that asylum seekers who came to the UK expecting to receive assistance are continuing to be treated in such an inhuman way by a government which claims to have a good human rights record

Teresa Belton, Retired research associate - Norwich Refugees, many of whom have already suffered horribly, are entirely dependent on the state while they wait to rebuild their lives in a new country. It is intolerable that they are denied the means to feed themselves by the state's incompetence, and have to face a deliberately created hostile environment.

Penny Lilley, Retired social care worker - Castle Douglas I feel very strongly that asylum seekers should be treated with respect and the money they are supposed to receive should be given to them in full and back dated if they have not been given this money on time. The card system appears to be flawed and the company which operates it must ensure it works properly or have the contract removed and given to another company.

John Murray, Retired Solicitor - Glasgow This is all too typical of the Government's attitude towards asylum seekers - make life as difficult as

possible for them and if they don't like it they can just go back where they came from - even if they can't! It is perfectly clear that even when it works, the financial support system is inadequate and if it doesn't work, as in the present case, then life becomes impossible for the supposed recipients. I have known a number of asylum seekers all of whom are keen and able to contribute much to UK society. I know that it can take years (12 years in one case I'm familiar with) to get leave to remain and if the government's latest proposals are introduced it will become almost impossible for any new asylum seekers to succeed - regardless of how dire their circumstances are or what skills they are anxious to make use of.

Sue Lowe, Retired teacher - Brixham Because I really want the desperate situation of asylum seekers to be resolved.

Anna Hogan, Retired teacher - Isle of Mull Because this crisis needs sorting now, and a totally new, and compassionate approach to asylum seekers is required

Elizabeth Thomas, Retired teacher - Leeds I know people personally who are affected by this crisis.

Bridget Fowler, Retired university professor (Sociology) - Glasgow I have had asylum-seekers to stay in my house in the past and know how tight their finances usually are. The absence of the usual access to money because of the failure to work on the Aspen card will lead to extreme consequences, such as starvation.

Susie Boyd, Retired, but I volunteer with refugees. - Glasgow Refugees would not leave their country and all that they hold dear unless they were frightened for their lives, living in fear every day! They have a terrifyingly awful journey to their new place of safety. Surely if you are a human being who cares about

others, you would do anything you could to help refugees and asylum seekers. They deserve a life without fear too!

Roger Sturrock, Rev Professor Roger Sturrock Wellington church Glasgow - Glasgow I am very concerned about the government's neglect of asylum seekers

Laura McMahon, Scientific Director for a Medical Communications Company - Glasgow I am signing this letter because all these people are humans. It could be any one of us affected. If I had to escape my home and travel els

Linda Haggerstone, Scottish Pagan Federation, National Interfaith Officer - Paisley In addition to interfaith and chaplaincy work, I teach English for asylum seekers and refugees. I take this fiasco and the subsequent lies told about it by the government very personally. When my students, friends, and people I care deeply about reports that they have no money, no Aspen card, no food, and little English to help them understand what is happening to them, I fear for their mental, physical and spiritual well-being. How can I not? Would, you, Priti Patel, and all those lying through their teeth, be able to maintain your health and composure if placed in such an awful situation? God forbid any of you should ever have to walk a mile in the well-worn shoes of the asylum seeker or refugee. Please do better by them and by those of us who hear their stories, in this failed system of heartlessness and hostility. Thank you.

Peter Lloyd, Scottish Refugee Council, Chair of the Board - Dunfermline, Fife Because the Home Office is in denial on the scale of the problem, indifferent to the suffering it is causing to vulnerable families and not taking adequate, effective measures to fix it as a top priority.

Vivienne Harvey, Screenwriter - London Because people's lives are in danger. Because companies should not be profiting so much from the suffering of refugees. The treatment of refugees by the British government is inhumane.

Arthur West, Secretary - Kilmarnock and Loudoun Trades Union Council - Irvine Because our organisation thinks that asylum seekers and refugees should be treated with fairness and justice .

John Dennis, Secretary' Dumfries & Galloway Trades Union Council - Dumfries D&G TUC believes that refugees should have the right to work and contribute to society while their asylum applications are being processed or appealed.

Ala Sirriyeh, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, Lancaster University - Lancaster It is unconscionable that people are placed in such dire circumstances and have been effectively abandoned.

Mairi Norman, Service Coordinator - Edinburgh Because it is really important to do so.

Kristi Rocha, Shelter, Team Leader - London Food and basic provisions are a basic human right!

Paula Johnston, Skills Development Scotland, Careers Adviser - Glasgow I focused my university project on refugee women particularly and it has opened my eyes to the amount of barriers asylum seekers and refugees face when entering the UK.

Douglas Lindsay, Software Engineer - Largs We have a duty to care for the vulnerable. The current situation makes me profoundly ashamed to call myself British.

Shumon Farhad, SOLA Arts, Social Worker and Development Manager - Liverpool To raise the awareness of this very important issue.

Nancy Carney, Solace Women's Aid, Domestic Abuse Caseworker - London

Sarah Booth, Solicitor - Glasgow I'm horrified at the way the most vulnerable in our society are treated. Asylum seekers should be treated fairly and their rights should be upheld.

Stuart Crosthwaite, South Yorkshire Migration and Asylum Action Group - Sheffield We are appalled at the unnecessary and foreseeable hardship caused by the failure to introduce the Aspen card in a timely and effective manner

Sarah Hamlin, St Mungo's - Street Legal Assessment Worker - London The government must respond immediately to prevent any further suffering of all those affected by this preventable crisis. It should be highest on the agenda of our leaders to bring an end to this inhumane and shameful treatment. We are able to do so much better than this.

Aileen Johnson, Staff Nurse - Glasgow It is disgraceful to leave vulnerable people without access to what little money they are given

Iorna Logan, Stewart Investors - Edinburgh To give refugees the dignity and human rights they deserve.

Sarah Hutchison, Student - Edinburgh The current situation for asylum seekers is inhumane and more must be done to support.

Niamh McGuire, Student - Glasgow Because asylum seekers deserve human rights, just like any other groups of individuals

ieva jaskunaite, Student - Glasgow i care about people's quality of life

James Steele, Student, UWS - Glasgow Asylum seekers should be welcomed here without restrictions stopping them from contributing to this society. The character of AS to make the journey here should be admired, and considering the UK will be desperate for immigration to cover social care in the future, it's a no-brainer to being more welcome. End the British imperialist mentality and show some humanity.

Tariq Mahmood, Sufi Festival, Chair - Glasgow It's important to be kind

Jerome Kyndt, Support Worker - Glasgow Because everyone has the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination, which is not happening in our society.

Francoise Uwamahoro, Support Worker - Glasgow I am signing this letter to raise questions about the Aspen card crisis. A big number of asylum seekers in the UK are unable to access funds and this situation is causing a lot of stress as many people are left without food or money. This needs to be resolved as soon as possible

Emma Holliday, Support worker at Safe in Scotland - Glasgow This kind of negligence of the basic human rights of people seeking asylum in the UK is disgraceful and the Home Office's attempt to play down the severity of the crisis is scandalous.

Peter Bee, Teacher - Bristol No one should be forced to go hungry because of government ineptitude and deliberate hostility towards people who are from another country.

Ann Falconer, Teacher - Ullapool I am appalled and saddened by the treatment of some of the most vulnerable people in our society - once again. This situation needs to be resolved urgently.

Ali Wilson, Team leader social care charity - Edinburgh I think we gain a lot by welcoming others. Preventing them from working holding bank accounts etc is unethical and to our detriment and must be stopped. This card fiasco is a massive injustice that should cause an outcry from all of us. It is inhumane and i'd like to think we're better than that - than leaving people unable to fend for themselves or feed themselves

James Martin, Telecoms, Customer Service - Dundee

Jude Munden, Theatre designer and chair of refugee support charity - Falmouth Because I am currently ashamed of the brutal and incompetent systems my country is imposing on good people who have suffered enough, who we should be welcoming with kindness.

Susan Cueva, Trustee - London It is important to ensure that refugees live with dignity

Alison Phipps, UNESCO Chair, Refugee Integration, University of Glasgow - Glasgow Plunging people seeking asylum into absolute destitution with no safety net is an unconscionable failure of systems on every level. It must be rectified and the practice of rendering people seeking asylum destitute reversed.

Susan Mary Anthony, University Lecturer, Retired - Glasgow I am ashamed of how few refugees we admit to this country; and how badly and with what inhumane inefficiency they are treated. This Home Office debacle is only the

latest among numerous bureaucratic failures stemming ultimately from a culture of cold hearted cruelty at the top.

Carole Jones, University of Edinburgh, Senior Lecturer - Edinburgh To express concern about the crisis regarding payment cards to refugees which are not being dealt with by the Westminster government.

Teresa Piacentini, University of Glasgow, Senior Lecturer - Glasgow Because the bureaucratic violence people in the asylum system are subjected to is a breach of human rights, is humiliating and shaming and causing great societal harm

Tamara Al-Om, University of St Andrews - Dundee Because I want to see an end to the hostile policies of the HO

Jessica Maguire, Veterinary surgeon - Birchington People are coming to our country to seek asylum. We should be providing food, shelter and the means to work for these people so they can find dignity in their lives, start to rebuild them and become productive members of our society.

Dave Sherry, Vice Chair Glasgow Unite Retired Members Branch - Glasgow For justice, proper support and fair treatment of refugees.

Mel Steel, Voices in Exile, Director - Brighton Because this situation is appalling and requires urgent resolution

Helen Paisley, Volunteer - Glasgow I am shocked & deeply concerned about the unjust and uncaring treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

gareth glynn, Volunteer - London because the Home Office needs to treat vulnerable people who rely on the very meagre support it provides with more humanity, dignity and respect

Karyn Baxter, Volunteer british red cross - Glasgow Because i have witnessed first hand the devastating impact this is having on asylum seekers in Glasgow. Once again the community has had to pull together to provide BASIC ESSENTIALS to ensure people and children don't starve. This is the responsibility of the Home Office and I believe this "error" was more intentional hostile tactics by them.

Babs Gwynne, Volunteer caseworker Asylum Link Merseyside - Liverpool I have spent the last few weeks dealing with the chaos this debacle has caused. The roll out and the measures put in place to deal with problems arising from the change in Aspen cards have been lacking in all respects, badly organised and shambles. Without charity organisations like mine many would have starved.

Heather Donaldson, Volunteer development officer, Who Cares Scotland - Glasgow

Sue Bramall, Volunteer in Stoke-on-Trent - Stoke-on-Trent I have met people who have been affected by this and struggled to access money and food as a result

Margaret Fisher, Volunteer, retired nurse - Clydebank The way refugees and asylum seekers are being treated by the UK Government is inhumane and makes me ashamed to say I am a citizen.

Rob McDowall FRSA, Welfare Scotland, Chair - Glasgow We have a duty to protect people, often at the most vulnerable time in their lives. Government is

failing in its duty and exposing asylum seekers and refugees to real harm and significant stress and anxiety. We need to do better and the government needs a step change in how it treats asylum seekers and refugees, now!

Grace Franklin, Wellington Church INTERNATIONAL WELCOME CLUB - Glasgow It is a shocking scandal people are left in this situation without money. I am ashamed this is happening in my country. It strengthens the case that all asylum seekers should be allowed to work.

Paul MacNeil, West of Scotland Housing Association. Volunteer. - Glasgow
Because I care.

Lynda Radley, Writer - Glasgow How the Home Office treats refugees and asylum seekers shamefully.