

Suggested points for letter to MP

NHS charging should be immediately abolished due to the adverse impact on individual and public health, the lack of cost-effectiveness of the charges and the negative impact of 'hostile environment' policies on vulnerable immigrants and on society.

- **Introduction of NHS charges in England** for those with no leave to remain in the UK in 2015, and expansion of these in 2017 with a requirement on NHS trusts to check eligibility, **has resulted in denial of essential healthcare and deterrence from seeking healthcare.**

This has resulted in *maternal and perinatal deaths and many other preventable deaths.*

It is of *detriment to public health* and has *undermined trust* between staff and patients.

In December 2018 *four medical royal colleges called for these regulations to be scrapped* and for an independent review.

- **Charges for NHS healthcare are confusing and complex for staff and patients and not cost-effective as they take time to administer, cannot be afforded by most of those charged and result in worse health outcomes.**

Over four-fifths of charges have *not been reclaimed* as those most likely to be charged are those least able to pay.

Many of these affected have been *resident* in the UK for years but unable to regularise their immigration status for various reasons including cost and lack of legal support.

Provision of free access to *timely healthcare* including for those with insecure immigration status is *more cost-effective* than forcing these people to turn to emergency care or to allow their condition to worsen.

- **It has been seen from the Windrush scandal that policies, including healthcare charging, designed to create a hostile environment for foreigners without indefinite leave to remain or lacking documentation, cause injustice and avoidable suffering.**

Lessons should be learned and applied from this episode particularly in relation to mindless bureaucracy, poor governance, failure to heed warnings and discrimination.

A culture of disbelief, denial, ignorance and indifference impoverishes society.

Judeo-Christian ethics which have been the foundation of UK legislation require justice and compassion towards vulnerable foreigners who do not have the full rights of a citizen.

For society to flourish, policy and practice should focus on *equity, empowerment and integration.*