

Access to Health Care for Vulnerable Migrants

The Government is currently considering charging refused asylum seekers and undocumented migrants for NHS primary health care. We are concerned such charges could prevent vulnerable people including pregnant women and children, from accessing vital treatment.

Attached is a statement on primary care and charging. We hope that you, your colleagues and/or your organisation will support this campaign by signing the statement.

You can offer your support to the campaign in the ways listed below.

Sign the statement on line at <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/access/>

Or

Print out the statement sign it and return as indicated

Send an email to the Secretary of State for Health expressing your concern at the proposed changes. Please write the email in a way that makes clear your own concerns on this matter

[http://voiceyourviews.net/eactivist/vyv.v?v=2121:861:14332:](http://voiceyourviews.net/eactivist/vyv.v?v=2121:861:14332)

A briefing paper explaining the proposed changes and their potential impact along with copies of the statement to download are available from the Medact website http://www.medact.org/ref_entitlement_page.php

If you are a health professional please consider contacting your professional organisation and ask them to speak out on this issue

Discuss this issue with colleagues who may not be aware of the review and its possible implications

We will be using this statement of support in a variety of ways including in a response to an upcoming review and consultation by the Home Office and Department of Health on charging and may reach out to press and the media.



We the undersigned strongly oppose the proposal that General Practitioners, and other primary care staff, be forced to charge refused asylum seekers or other undocumented migrants for NHS care. Any such requirement would:

- Deny vulnerable and often destitute individuals the chance to identify serious and sometimes life-threatening conditions which need immediate treatment
- Contribute to maternal and infant mortality by delaying or preventing access to maternity care
- Condemn many children to a life without primary healthcare, inevitably resulting for some in serious illness and death
- Increase the likelihood of serious communicable diseases such as TB and HIV going undiagnosed and being transmitted, thus endangering public health
- Remove an important source of support for women experiencing domestic abuse
- Increase avoidable costs to the NHS resulting from late diagnosis and additional administration, and increase avoidable admissions to hospital
- Overburden Accident and Emergency Departments both with those who should be treated (at significantly less cost) in primary care and with those who have become seriously ill because primary care was unavailable
- Deny GPs their current discretion to judge how best to meet the healthcare needs of their local population
- Breach basic international human rights obligations of the UK¹ and entrench discrimination in the NHS

Name	Address (incl. postcode)	Email address

¹ For example Art 12 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Arts 2, 3, 8 and 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights