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Immigration Bill – Report stage Day 2

During the Immigration Bill Report stage debate on 15 March you raised some important issues on which I undertook to respond in writing.

You asked about the position under the Right to Rent scheme of migrants with an outstanding application with the Home Office or with obstacles to returning home and suggested that more guidance was required. I can confirm that the right to rent of any migrant whose application is outstanding can be confirmed swiftly by the Home Office Landlords Checking Service. The government set out how permission to rent may be provided to migrants who are here without leave but where there are genuine obstacles to their returning home: this was done during the passage of the 2014 Act and guidance has been published in our Short Guide for Landlords on Right to Rent. This is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/landlords-right-to-rent-checks-guide

Recent feedback is being considered and we will issue revised guidance shortly. The position on permission to rent was also set out in correspondence with the Joint Committee on Human Rights which they reported in their 12th Report on 3 March 2014. The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, whose concerns you have shared, have also made reference to the Home Office guidance on permission to rent in their recently published guidance about the Right to Rent scheme. It remains the case that migrants who do not understand whether they may qualify for permission to rent may contact the Home Office to establish whether this is the case.

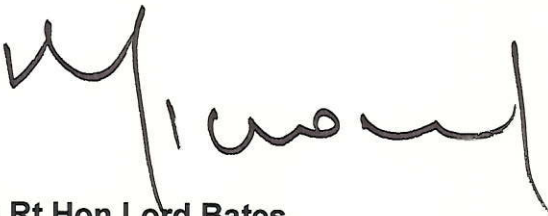
We also debated your amendment to extend from 28 days to 40 days the period before Home Office asylum support ends for those granted refugee status.

In response (column 1837-1838) I gave the following undertaking:

"The length of the grace period is set out in the regulations for Section 95 support. I can confirm that, if the further DWP evaluation which will be undertaken later this year – I have referred to that – shows that it is necessary to increase the length of the grace period consistently to enable newly recognised refugees to begin to receive the welfare benefits for which they are eligible before their Home Office support ends, we undertake to return to Parliament with a proposal to amend the regulations to reflect that".

I can also confirm that we will discuss the results of that evaluation with the British Red Cross, Still Human Still Here and other key partners, before making known publicly whether, and if so how and when, we propose to amend the regulations in light of it.

I am copying this letter to Lord Rosser, Baroness Hamwee, Lord Hope of Craighead and the Peers who spoke in the Report stage debate on 15 March. I will also place a copy of this letter in the House Library.

With best wishes,


The Rt Hon Lord Bates