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The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP  
Home Secretary  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

12<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Dear Home Secretary,

**Consultation on changes to the Office of the Immigration Service Commissioner's Office fee structure**

I note with real concern the plans outlined in the above consultation for the OISC to charge fees for the first time to organisations who currently provide free, regulated immigration services. As you will be aware, this much-needed legal advice is often provided by charities and community groups working on shoestring budgets to ensure some of the UK's most vulnerable citizens can navigate the complexities of the immigration system. The introduction of greater financial strains threatens their ability to continue to do so.

The UK Government is aware that the demand for regulated immigration advice far exceeds its availability, and is also aware of the risks posed by its absence. In the OISC annual report it states:

**“the current imbalance of supply and demand encourages those who seek to provide advice illegally, which often results in exploitation of vulnerable advice seekers”**

I know from my experience in Edinburgh North and Leith just how high the demand is for accessible, reliable legal advice to assist people who have valid cases to remain in the UK, and just how little is currently available for them. It therefore seems a counter-intuitive step to put more blocks on the road for the organisations who currently provide this advice without fees.

I would urge the government to rethink its approach on this issue and make sure adequate funding is provided so that vulnerable citizens can still get the legal support they need to make sure their cases are fairly heard. Ensuring applicants have safe advice will not only protect them from exploitation, it will reduce unnecessary errors and delays, cutting the burdens on the UKVI administration teams, reducing backlog and the costs to the taxpayer in the longer term.

Yours sincerely,

**Deidre Brock MP**

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