<Address Line 1>

<Address Line 2>

<Address Line 3>

<Postcode>

 <Date>

Dear (Name of your Member of Parliament),

I am writing to you as I would like to raise my concerns over how the government is treating those people coming to the UK to seek asylum.

The UK asylum determination process for recognising refugees has many problems, as those inspecting the system have pointed out. The Home Office asylum statistics published in February 2018 show 37% of appeals were granted, indicating there are clear flaws in the determination process. Once refused those seeking international protection find themselves subject to a range of measures under ‘the hostile environment agenda’.

Since 2012, those individuals who have been refused asylum find themselves being made **purposefully destitute** by a number of policies and legal measures that make it ever more difficult for people to meet their basic needs, and criminalise many day-to-day activities for them. The difficulty faced by refused asylum seekers to access vital services, particularly housing and healthcare, makes it more complicated for individuals to advocate for themselves and receive international protection.

The recent changes to charging regulations denies healthcare to some of society’s most vulnerable people. This is partly because the rules demand that payment be provided for certain healthcare services before treatment, and destitution renders them unable to pay. It is also because doctors and nurses have been told they must now check their patients’ immigration status. This scares anyone whose status is precarious, and is likely to deter those without immigration status from seeking treatment, even where it remains free. Similarly, even where treatment is not denied because the treatment is deemed by a doctor to be urgent and necessary, those without immigration status are likely to be deterred from seeking it knowing that they will still be billed retrospectively and will be unable to pay. Furthermore, an unpaid medical bill is a source of fear for undocumented migrants because the Home Office count such debts against applicants seeking to regularise their immigration status.

By barring access to vital treatment, the new regulations around NHS charging risk the health and lives of many vulnerable people, many of whom have fled here for safety. Charging should be abandoned, and no one should have to answer questions about immigration status in order to access healthcare. Failing that, refused asylum seekers should be exempt from any charging that is in place, as they are in Scotland and Wales.

I would be happy to arrange to meet with you to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely,