

News story: Home Office announces extension to deadline for Grenfell Tower survivors to access leave to remain

Foreign nationals affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy have been given an extra two months to come forward to access leave to remain in the UK, the Home Office announced today.

A policy on leave to remain outside the Immigration Rules for eligible residents of Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk was introduced in July to ensure victims of the tragedy get the access they need to vital services, irrespective of immigration status.

In October, it was announced that those who qualify under this policy and are granted an initial 12 months' leave outside the rules will be eligible to have their leave extended and qualify for permanent residence after five years' leave under the policy subject to meeting security, criminality and fraud checks.

Extension

The time period for people to come forward had been due to expire today (30 November) but the Home Office confirmed it will be extended until 31 January 2018.

Immigration Minister Brandon Lewis said:

The welfare of survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire is a top priority for this government. The policy we have introduced will enable those who are eligible to regularise their stay in the UK, ensure there is a firm legal basis for providing support, and enable these victims to assist with the Inquiry in the knowledge that their immigration status is secure.

Pushing back the deadline will give survivors an additional opportunity to come forward if they have not done so already.

In addition, the Immigration Minister has also announced today a widening of the switching policy so that any survivor of the Grenfell Tower fire with leave to remain in the UK through a different immigration route can come forward if they wish to switch into the dedicated Grenfell Tower immigration route before 31 January 2018.

They will no longer be required to demonstrate that their leave is due to

expire in the next 12 months or that they can not qualify under another immigration route in order to be eligible.

Independent advice

Anyone considering taking this course of action is advised to seek independent legal advice as to whether switching or remaining in their existing immigration route is the best option for them.

Finally, it has been confirmed that anyone who has leave to remain in the UK through another category, such as family or work, who comes forward by 31 January 2018 and qualifies under the Grenfell immigration policy to access public funds and permission to work will continue to have recourse to these in any further periods of leave granted under the Immigration Rules.

Anyone who has not yet come forward can find out how to do so by calling the Home Office Grenfell Team on 0208 196 4531 (open 24 hours a day).

News story: Showcasing the successes and achievements of government scientists and engineers

The Government Science and Engineering (GSE) has released 'The GSE Strategy: one year on' report.

The report reflects on the successes and achievements of the profession over the last 12 months. It also highlights areas where more work is needed and where the GSE profession will be focusing its efforts in the upcoming year. This includes a continued drive to improve diversity across GSE, and meet its commitment to be a diverse and inclusive profession.

The report brings together case studies from departments and demonstrates how the [GSE Profession Board](#) has taken ownership of the strategy to ensure it is being embedded and implemented in departments.

Professor Chris Whitty, Interim Government Chief Scientific Adviser (GCSA) and Head of GSE Profession, said:

I congratulate the profession on its impressive achievements over the past year. I am confident that we are on an upwards trajectory, and certain that if we continue to work together, we will achieve our shared vision for a 'high profile, proud and effective GSE profession.'

To find out more about the report, read [Chris Whitty's introductory blog post](#).

To register to become a member of the GSE profession, please [fill out this short survey](#).

News story: £45m boost for young people with SEND

The Government today announced a package of support worth nearly £45 million to provide additional help for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill confirmed the additional funding for councils and organisations to continue transforming SEN provision and put families at the heart of the system.

The reforms which began in 2014 introduced Education, Health and Care plans which are tailored to the individual needs of the child or young person.

In addition to the funding to bolster the roll out of these reforms, a new £9.7million fund has been set up to create new supported internships, helping to bridge the gap for some of the most vulnerable young people between education and employment. The announcement has been welcomed by the National Children's Bureau

Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill said:

We have taken action to fundamentally reform support for children with special educational needs, making sure that families are at the heart of the process and care plans are tailored to individuals – and our survey of parents tells us that this has made a difference to so many of these families.

Councils are making encouraging progress, but there is still work to be done to fully embed this improved system across education, health and care sectors.

That's why I am pleased to announce this additional investment for councils and other groups who have been instrumental in getting us to this positive stage. Their hard work is raising the aspirations of these young people and giving them access to the same opportunities as their peers, helping them fulfill their full potential as adults.

The package of funding announced today includes:

- £29 million to support councils and their local partners to continue pressing ahead with implementation of the reforms to the SEND system;
- £9.7 million to establish local supported internship forums, which will create work placements for young people with SEND to provide them with the skills and confidence they need to move into paid work. The funding could also be used to train job coaches, who are vital to the success of supporting those with learning difficulties into paid work; and
- £4.6 million for Parent Carer Forums, which bring parents together with local decision makers and help to provide them with a voice in the process.

Annamarie Hassall MBE, Director of Practice and Programmes at the National Children's Bureau, said:

The funding announced today will help more children with disabilities and special educational needs get the support they need to live normal lives in their home communities. In particular, we welcome funding for internships, which will provide young people with valuable work experience as they make the transition to adulthood.

The Minister also confirmed that further funding would be available to build capacity in the system and support the ongoing delivery of the SEND reforms over the next two years. Invitations to bid for these contracts, which will include providing families with access to information, advice and support, continuing support for the SEND workforce, and expert support to local areas, will be published online shortly.

Press release: Yorkshire Water fined for raw sewage leak

On 27 November 2017, Yorkshire Water Services Limited appeared at Sheffield Crown Court and pleaded guilty to charges relating to a water pollution incident in Doncaster which led to the deaths of several hundred fish.

They were fined £45,000 and ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £24,762.56 as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

Proceedings were brought by the Environment Agency following the pollution incident in April 2014 where raw sewage was discharged from the defendant company's pumping station at Sandy Lane, Belle View in Doncaster, South Yorkshire into a water course and ultimately into 2 local ponds.

The discharge of sewage resulted in a raised level of ammonia in the water of the ponds and a reduced level of dissolved oxygen for a considerable period of time. The pollution from the illegal discharge was traced for over 3.5km downstream from the pumping station and a large number of fish died due to the toxic effects of ammonia.

Yorkshire Water Services Limited operates the pumping station under an environmental permit, and is required to ensure the site operates correctly. There was a breach of conditions of the permit on this occasion which caused an unlawful discharge.

Richard Moore, Team Leader at the Environment Agency said:

Safeguarding the environment is an essential part of how all water companies must operate. The sentencing in this case shows we will continue to take companies to task where they fail to meet environmental standards.

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