**EMAIL TO MP TEMPLATE**

*Dear xxx,*

*During this crisis, it is important that all members of our society are protected and supported. This includes those seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.*

*Our organisation, [add organisations/group name here], works closely with people seeking asylum and are finding that they are struggling more than ever to survive on inadequate asylum support payments.*

*[Give further details here about your organisation / group: provide examples from your work to support the call for change; case studies; statistics.]*

*The already substantial challenge of living on £5.39 per day is made more acute in this time of crisis, especially for families with children; ASPEN payment cards (through which people receive asylum support) are only uploaded with subsistence support weekly, making it very difficult for people in the asylum system to buy food and other essentials in sufficient quantity to minimise trips or prepare for self-isolation.*

*Some people seeking asylum may be housed a significant distance away from large supermarkets and local shops, requiring the expense of a long journey for each shopping trip.*

*With many support services on which people usually rely closed, people seeking asylum are having to make choices between food and medicine.*

*People seeking asylum are already forced to live on significantly less than mainstream benefits.* *Nobody should be put at risk in this way, and particularly at this time.*

*In the context of the current pandemic, the Home Office must urgently ensure that asylum support rates also receive the same £20 COVID-related uplift as Universal Credit.*

*Further, as a more permanent solution, the link with mainstream benefits should be reinstated by setting asylum support at 70% of Universal Credit, (the level asylum support rates were set at against income support until 2008). This would ensure people seeking asylum are able to meet their needs both during this pandemic and beyond.*

***We are asking you to write to the Home Secretary to ask her to make these two changes, to help ensure that people seeking asylum can avoid danger and destitution during the crisis.***

***We would also like to request a meeting with you to discuss this issue further, so that we can share some of the experiences of the people we work with and how you can further support people seeking sanctuary during the COVID-19 pandemic.***

*Will you commit to doing so?*

*I look forward to receiving your response on these important matters.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Xxx*