

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).