



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

LD4SOS MANIFESTO for 2017 GENERAL ELECTION

1. SAFE AND LEGAL ROUTES

- a. Re-open the Dubs unaccompanied child refugee scheme, ensuring Britain meets its responsibilities by taking in 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children. Liberal Democrats would offer these children indefinite leave to remain, meaning they will not be deported once they turn 18.
- b. Expand the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to offer sanctuary to 50,000 people over the lifetime of the next Parliament.
- c. Speed up processes for taking unaccompanied children with established family links in the UK.
- d. Offer safe and legal routes to the UK for refugees to prevent them from making dangerous journeys, which too often result in the loss of life, for example via reform of family reunion rules to make it easier for refugees to join relatives already living in safety in the UK.
- e. Participate in EU search and rescue operations. Tackle criminal people-smuggling.

2. WHEN ASYLUM SEEKERS ARRIVE IN THE UK

- a. Asylum seekers should be treated humanely, with compassion and respect, including those being returned. A climate of fear helps no one.
- b. Improve the asylum system so it both properly upholds obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and minimizes potential for abuse.
- c. Speed up processing asylum claims whilst ensuring careful consideration of all evidence and provision of legal advice.
- d. End the culture of disbelief, increase understanding of cultural differences and provide better training to Home Office staff, particularly those dealing directly with vulnerable groups. This and better interpretation and translation services must be available at each stage, ensuring more decisions are right first time, reducing the cost, number of appeals and stress.
- e. Offer asylum to people fleeing countries where their sexual orientation or gender identification means that they risk imprisonment, torture or execution, and stop deporting people at risk to such countries.

3. ENDING INDEFINITE DETENTION

- a. End indefinite immigration detention by introducing a 28-day limit.
- b. Provide alternatives to detention in the community.
- c. Those most vulnerable should never be detained unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- d. Implement the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Immigration Detention and the Shaw Report.

4. LIFE IN THE UK

- a. Destitution for asylum seekers is unacceptable, especially as they are not allowed to work. We expect working-age asylum seekers who have waited more than six months for their claim to be processed to seek work like other benefit claimants, and only to receive benefits if they are unable to do so.
- b. The new way of paying benefits via the Aspen card should not discriminate between asylum seekers who are supported by different sections of immigration legislation. In particular asylum seekers who are supported through section 4 should have the same entitlement as those asylum seekers supported through section 95, and be able to receive cash and not limited to using the card in certain stores.
- c. The level of benefits must be reviewed to ensure they are set at a fair level. Benefits for asylum seekers should be updated in line with other benefits.
- d. Whilst waiting for a decision, appropriate training and volunteering opportunities should be available and allowed.
- e. Contracts for housing and transportation services must be drawn up to ensure the welfare of users as well as value for money, and be effectively monitored.
- f. Local Authorities must be informed of asylum seekers dispersed into their area to facilitate planning of services, improving integration and support.

5. INTEGRATION

- a. Provide additional government funding for English as an additional language classes to help migrants and residents gain independence and integrate with their local communities
- b. Support and help must be given for learning life skills, and what can be new and different norms for living in the UK.