



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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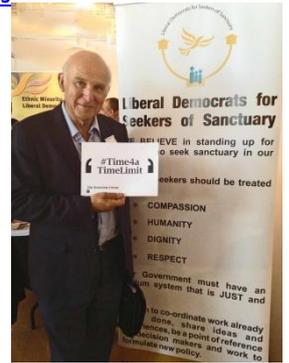
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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

LATE JULY NEWSLETTER

WELCOME TO VINCE CABLE.

At the Social Liberal Forum's Conference Vince Cable said "Our Government's response to refugees and asylum seeker issues has been pitiful and we must continue the work of Tim Farron in standing up for them". We welcome this initial statement and look forward to working with Vince as well as the rest of the Parliamentary team. We were pleased at Vince's support on the campaign to end indefinite immigration detention and here he is, 2 years ago, demanding "Time for a Time Limit".



NEWS FROM PARLIAMENT

Tim Farron called for a debate on unaccompanied refugee children, and you can see his passionate and principled speech in Parliament [here](#). There was a debate as a result of his call; you can read [here](#), along with the distrusting and destructive comments from the minister. You can sign the petition [here](#). The issue was [reported in The Guardian](#) too.

Importantly it has uncovered the fact that **not one child** has been admitted to the UK under "Dubs", giving rise to cross-Party anger, which will hopefully lead to progress. Tim said "it's hard to see the government's response as anything more than lip service" and he demanded to know when the "measly commitment" of 480 would be met.

THANK YOU TO TIM. This will have been Tim's last speech as Lib Dem leader. Thank you Tim, for taking up and pursuing this issue throughout your term of office. Thank you too for the brave and principled steps you took whilst leader on standing up for the asylum and refugee community. None of us will be letting it drop!

The House of Lords have been very busy raising issues and demanding answers on issues around asylum and refugees. They have put very good questions on taking unaccompanied refugee children from Europe under the Dubs amendment. You can see what Shas Sheehan and also the Bishop of Durham had to say [here](#).

Shas asked about the discrepancy of places local councils said were available, compared with what the Government said, and the Bishop asked if the cut-off date (no refugee child arriving in Europe after 20 March 2016) would be changed, given the delays.

The Bishop of Durham initiated a debate on the "Refugees Welcome?" report, that we had written about earlier [here](#). He [spoke](#) on the importance of welcome and how that welcome is reciprocated in offers of welcome by those who came earlier as well as it being key to good integration.

There were good speeches from:

[Paul Scriven](#) re problems affecting LGBT+ people claiming asylum as well as the awful experiences in detention where they were mixed with others who were not.

[Julie Smith](#) on health impact, including mental health, for those claiming asylum in UK

Roger Roberts who [spoke about](#) of his refugee choir and also about the refugee child in Canada, named after Justin Trudeau. (We note that no refugee child here is named after Theresa May) He ended by saying "Let us ask the Government to abandon their fear of critics. There are critics at the extremes who would deny any positive work with refugees. Let us take the lead from reports such as the one we are discussing this evening and take away the question mark in respect of Refugees Welcome?"

At the end of the debate the Government Minister had quite a bit to say on ESOL you might like to read it. (after the above links)

HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN. A background to the speeches above is that this report was released the week before. "[Nobody Deserves to Live This Way](#)" was released by the Human Trafficking Foundation. Not happy bedtime reading, about how children on their way through Europe have been abused and badly treated by both traffickers making money out of them and by police and officials who should be helpful not making matters worse. It is summed up in the report "Protecting children on the

move is not just an immigration issue but also a matter of child protection and preventing serious and organised crime. The UK must play its part in safeguarding the children and young people who are currently left without adequate protection and support in Europe.”

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS IN GREECE. [This report](#) by Pro Asyl sets out the awful issues of so many of these young people in Greece, where there are long delays in dealing with family reunification that so many are entitled to and asylum claims. Some are in awful detention situations, many are homeless, many are at risk of trafficking and, worst of all, they are losing hope. Not just the Greek authorities need to step up to the mark on this, the rest of the EU, including the UK, must play their part too. Political pressure is clearly needed, but also donations can be made [here](#).

TACKLING DESTITUTION AND HOMELESSNESS

NACCOM have produced a new toolkit to support hosting schemes across the UK, you can see it [here](#) and we have updated our document library with a new one on [hosting for destitute asylum seekers](#). (remember - we have a range of information documents on our website, under the “documents” tab).

DETENTION. The campaign continues. You can see more of Lib Dem campaigning [here](#)

Detention Forum are saying “New MP? Make sure they know about the issue.

They say the @UKLabour manifesto, which promised to end indefinite detention, was the election winner – tell your MP it’s #Time4aTimeLimit” so if you have a new Labour MP, something for the summer break to do.



“The current detention policy has been made in ignorance. This means it’s more open to the influence of institutionalised racism, xenophobia, and politics. And that’s why indefinite detention doesn’t work for anybody - those detained; their friends, family, communities; the government itself; the taxpayers. Enough is enough. It’s time for a time limit.”

Michael, Freed Voices

FROM REFUGEE TO DOCTOR. This is [the story](#) of how trained refugee doctors on Teesside are now able to practice again. It is “Win Win” as they can now continue their profession and we get the medical care. There is more on the work done by the Refugee Council through the Building Bridges programme [here](#)

FAMILY REUNION for all refugees is one step closer as [this Bill](#) is brought to the House of Commons, The Bill is being promoted by SNP MP Angus MacNeil, who came 7th in the Private Members ballot, so it does not have much chance of becoming law unless the Tories and DUP find the “magic compassion tree”, but it will do a lot to raise the profile of the issue. Please support the Refugee Council in its campaign on this issue through writing to your local MP (particularly if they are Tories or DUP) and publicising it on social media.

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP. Some good news. [Government has come up with](#) an extra £1 million to support the Community Sponsorship Scheme for those raising funds to support Syrian refugees when here.

BUS PASSES. Some Councils have been saying asylum seekers cannot have a bus pass even if they qualify – check the Council website – they can!

REMINDER ABOUT CONFERENCE AND HELP ON STALL

Do come and visit the LD4SOS stall at Conference (16-19 September Bournemouth) where you will be able to find lots of useful information on refugee issues. If you would like to help on the stall please contact Margaret Lally on Margaret.lally1@btinternet. Also please support our motion on improving the provision of ESOL which is critical to supporting integration and enabling refugees to build their life in the UK. We will be having our AGM is on Saturday 19.45-21.00 @ Blandford, Main room; and the Fringe is on Sunday 19.45-21.00 @ Branksome, Bournemouth International Centre. See last newsletter and agenda when published for details. Everyone is welcome to attend both.