



## Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

## SEPTEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

### DETENTION

You will all have heard by now of the Panorama programme exposing the awful ways that people have been treated in Brook House Immigration Detention Centre. Of course it is good to hear that offending officers caught out on camera have been suspended, but much more has to be done. There are 8 other immigration detention centres, and the real push is to drastically reduce such detention and for those where there really is no alternative, a maximum of 28 days is needed. [This statement](#) from Detention Forum says more.

Also [this briefing](#) says why it is important to contact your MP, and has an excellent briefing on the issue for them (and anyone else of course).

Just released is [this report](#) from Detention Action, and also calling for all (that includes all of us!) to contact our MPs about it.

Lib Dem policy says :

*“End indefinite immigration detention by introducing a 28-day limit; Provide alternatives to detention in the community.*

*Those most vulnerable should never be detained unless there are exceptional circumstances; Implement the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Group on immigration detention and Shaw Report.”*

### FACTS

Nothing like the facts when so many myths and misunderstandings around about refugees and asylum seekers. [Refugee Council’s “20 top facts”](#) is a good one to use and share around.

Facts just released from Government statistics show that far too many asylum claims are over 6 months, [see this report](#) from Refugee Action.

### GOOD NEWS

[This is just one of the many](#) great success stories, illustrating that many who came here to flee violence and terror are not lounging around expecting benefits but doing well in the recent exam results, with plans to make real contributions to our society.

### DESTITUTION

The problems of living on asylum seekers income of £36.95 a week are highlit in [this Guardian article](#). We could all manage for a week or so - but to do so for years - and probably no family to help out or existing items in the cupboard, is very tough. If only they were allowed to work to supplement the income, what a difference it would make.

[This Guardian article](#) exposes the problems that so many new refugees face after being given leave to remain here. As it quotes, *‘Home Office will give you refugee status, but not refuge,’ says a victim of bureaucracy and delays in survey for the Guardian*

Lib Dem policy says :

*“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.*

*The level of benefits must be reviewed to ensure they are set at a fair level. Benefits for asylum seekers should be uprated in line with other benefits.”*

### ASYLUM CLAIMS

Guess which country is worst at processing asylum claims ? [This report by Axios](#) highlights how well Canada processes claims, and although it lists the UK as taking 12 months, it is often much longer, as

Refugee Action [point out from latest Government stats](#), over 10,000 are waiting over 6 months for a decision, a 51% increase since this period last year

Lib Dem policy says:

*"Speed up processing asylum claims whilst ensuring careful consideration of all evidence and provision of legal advice".*

We are all delighted that LGBT activist Aderonke Apata [has finally worn her case](#) and is going to be allowed to remain here. However there is no way that anyone at all should have to battle for 13 years.

Lib Dem policy says

*"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".*

## **HOSTING**

Can anyone help with this? Calling those in London, Barking / Dagenham, Edgbaston / Birmingham; Northern Cities where a lot of women and young asylum seekers need hosts. [Details here](#)

## **ALL CAN GIVE SUPPORT.**

You don't have to live in an area with asylum seekers in it to be able to provide some much appreciated support, out of their usual environment. [Well done 2 Dales Action for Refugees](#) in the Yorkshire Dales.

## **LEGAL HELP FOR YOUNG ASYLUM SEEKERS**

Can you sign the [petition by the Children's Society](#) for young asylum seekers to get proper legal help.

This is what Roger Roberts was trying to get a Private Members Bill through on, [as reported here](#), but it came too far down the ballot to have a chance of becoming law.

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF CHILDREN.**

This month is United Nations World Day Against Trafficking. There was a debate in Parliament about the scandal of unaccompanied young people in Europe.

A background to the speeches 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".

The shame of the UK admitting not ONE child under the Dubs Amendment this year came out during this debate. Can everyone contact their MP to ask them to urgently address this issue, as soon as Parliament returns?

## **NEWS FROM CALAIS**

[This newsletter](#) from Care4Calais, has solid, if upsetting, news of what is happening over the channel, and a plea for sleeping bags and cash.

Lib Dem Policy says: *"Speed up processes for taking unaccompanied children with established family links in the UK."*

## **SYRIAN REFUGEES**

It is now 2 years since David Cameron announced that the UK would take 20,000 Syrian Refugees under the UNHCR scheme direct from the camps. Only 8,500 have arrived here so far though, and that is a long and traumatic wait for those living in very difficult conditions in the camps. Meanwhile most Syrians arrive here via dangerous routes over the Mediterranean. They then have the problems of claiming asylum and not being treated as being believed and having many difficulties to overcome.

Lib Dem Policy says : *"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.*

*Expand the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to offer sanctuary to 50,000 people over the lifetime of the next parliament. "*