



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

NOVEMBER 2018 LD4SOS NEWSLETTER

DANGEROUS GROUNDS. This [Save the Children report](#) highlights how dangerous it is for minors to be sent back to Afghanistan. Roger Roberts [has been asking](#) if it is safe for UK citizens to travel to Somalia, Afghanistan and DRC. He has been told it isn't – so why is the Government sending back again people who have fled from there to claim asylum here? Has the Government gone there to check things out for themselves?

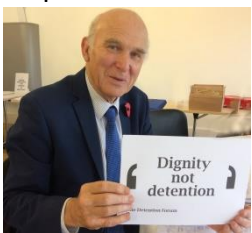
COST OF THINGS – BUT VALUE? Sally Hamwee has been [asking Parliamentary Questions](#) on the charges for contacting UKVI from abroad, which are £5.48 for an e-mail and £1.37/minute for phone! The Government says that this is for the good service they receive! We thought Government should be giving good service anyway! Roger Roberts then challenged, asking if the Government generally provides such good service, why is there a 40% success rate of asylum appeals (i.e. Government got those big decisions wrong first time)?

Sally Hamwee [also told the Lords](#) how, of the £1012 cost of a visa for a child, a whopping £640 profit [goes to the Home Office](#). It is [Lib Dem policy](#), para 4.2.10, that the fee should just cover admin costs.

ASYLUM HOUSING. In a debate on asylum housing contracts, Ed Davey spoke up on the need to end forced bedroom sharing, and for better monitoring & transparency of contracts, treating people with dignity and respect. [You can read more here](#). He also raised the disgrace of one of the housing subcontractors, Jomast, handing out very thin duvets to new asylum seekers arriving for the winter in the North East. Jomast are paid to provide a duvet – but the contract does not specify it has to be fit for purpose, and nobody appears to have the power to monitor the contract and rectify problems arising.

DETENTION. Detention Forum, leading the campaign on immigration detention issues, is made up of a number of campaigning organisations including LD4SOS. In preparation for a new Immigration Bill to be introduced soon, they are launching “Unlocked 18”, which in their words *“will be shining a light on the hidden corners of the UK's immigration detention estate and calling people to action.”*

They have done an excellent briefing pack [here](#) and an informative and easy to understand glossary and explanation of the issues [here](#). These can be used to raise awareness and lobby MPs.



Another way you can be involved is to be part of the “Selfie Campaign”. AGM time for most Lib Dem organisations is here now. Why not [look at this information](#), download and print some of the slogans, and take some of the selfies, tweeting them with the hashtag #unlocked18, a simple exercise that gets people involved, doesn't take much time, and adds interest to your AGM or other gathering. Let us know how you get on.

USEFUL INFORMATION. Right to Remain have [prepared this document](#) for anyone who might be at risk of being taken into detention. It is common sense, but well put together, and anyone who knows people who may be at risk ought to get a copy and make it available to them.

RIGHT TO WORK has long been a campaign for the Lib Dems. Roger Roberts has been campaigning on it for many years, and it has been part of our policies in the 2015 and 2017 elections. It is a major plank in the new policy paper too. We are delighted that there is now a coalition of over 100 organisations campaigning on “Lift the Ban”, and not only have Labour now made a statement (but only a statement!) but the Government seems to be softening, if only because it will save money. There is a lot of information and campaign ideas on the [Lift the Ban](#) website that you will hopefully be able to use.

Also, [read about Anna Scrivener's experiences](#) of helping refugees reach their employment goals through her employability programme in Nottingham: "My call to action to fellow Lib Dems lobbying on these issues is that we can't stop at the right to work, we also need to insist that the structures are in place for people to make the most of that right".

SUCCESS. Well done AsylumAid in [persisting in campaigning](#) for childcare for parents who are in asylum interviews. How can anyone concentrate on such an important interview whilst looking after a child, and divulge very personal relevant traumatic detail in front of that child? Asylum Aid told us about this campaign when they spoke at our fringe meeting 4 years ago. It goes to show the importance of keeping on and on raising the issue.

AFTER WINDRUSH. We agree with this statement from Asylum Matters on the lessons to be learnt from the Windrush Scandal, on asylum seekers and refugees. They say "*there is not a homogenous group of 'illegal migrants' and not all people without leave to remain in the UK will have had access to justice and the chance to regularise their status in the UK. It is increasingly difficult for individuals to access justice, leading to a growing underclass of undocumented and unsupported individuals living on the margins of society. Of particular concern to us is the plight of refused asylum seekers, many of whom, through no fault of their own, cannot be returned to their country of origin, and are currently facing a similar predicament to the Windrush Generation. They are unable to stay and live safely and humanely in the UK but they are also unable to return home, leaving them in a state of limbo and vulnerable to exploitation.*"

HOMELESSNESS amongst new refugees is a real problem. Crisis has just released a new policy report, '[Homelessness prevention: It's everybody's business.](#)' They note it is "*supporting an increasing number of people who became homeless because they had nowhere to live after leaving asylum accommodation. In 2016/17, 478 people (7% of new clients that year) approached Crisis for help for this reason.*" Crisis suggests extending the move-on period for new refugees from 28 to 56 days. Our new Lib Dem [policy is calling for 60 days!](#) We wrote a letter to the Observer, not yet published, on the issue, that you can read [on our website here.](#)

REFUGEE LED SUPPORT GROUPS. The role that these organisations play in the lives of refugees is highlighted in a new report from the Refugee Council: '[A bridge to life in the UK: Refugee-led community organisations and their role in integration.](#)' As the report says "*They have the ability to reach refugee communities as they have contacts, share languages and cultural affinity, and they are trusted*" and sadly "*Despite being remarkably effective agents for social integration, they are chronically underused, unrecognised and under-resourced.*"

SYRIAN REFUGEES. We continue to press the Government to offer safe and legal routes to the UK for at least 10,000 refugees each year by expanding the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme. This will both help a greater number of people from that region and cover other conflict zones such as Myanmar. Another avenue for [communities to work together](#) to bring a family to safety here is Community Sponsorship. More information here <http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1451>. There was a [very discouraging answer](#) to the Bishop of Durham on the future of the VPRB Scheme beyond 2020: A pretty weak answer, with no goals, no targets, and all in the face of increasing world problems.

SHARING THE MESSAGE (over to you !)

Our newsletters are written so that they can be shared with anyone else that you think might be interested, so please feel free to share with others, in or out of the party.

Also, for those of you who use social media, please like our Facebook page, follow us on Twitter, and share our postings where relevant to you.

These are the links to our policies, after the autumn conference, please do make use of them when using social or any other media on linked issues.

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1436> All our relevant new policies

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1439> detention

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1441> Right to Work

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1443> when the final decision is made

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1445> life as an asylum seeker

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1447> decision making

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1449> hostile environment

<http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1451> refugees

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/autumn-18-policy-paper-131> has the policy paper which was the first stage in creating these policies.