



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

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SOME GOOD NEWS

There are many stories of how children seeking sanctuary in the UK have made something remarkable of their lives once settled here.

As a child seeking sanctuary, Gulwali made it across the Mediterranean, through Europe and finally to the UK. He grew up to graduate from University, co-found an organisation supporting young refugees and write a [wonderful book](#).

An asylum seeker who was helped 15 years ago on his journey to Citizenship by an LD4SOS Council member is now a qualified social worker doing valuable work in the community.

The Refugee Council is [celebrating the different types of bread](#) around the world, and invites us all to make some. *"It's way more than a piece of bread, it's a treat for our bodies that helps us heal..."* – Maaz, refugee and member of our bread group.

RIGHT TO WORK

At Spring Conference 13-15 March, you are welcome to visit us on Stand 13 in the Exhibition hall of York Barbican. You will be equally welcome at our fringe: "Lift the Ban" - campaign for the right to work for asylum seekers'. Speakers are Mary Brandon from Asylum Matters, Dr Ruvy Ziegler from LD4SOS, and Christine Jardine MP, who speaks for the party on Home Affairs. The fringe takes place on 14 March, 19.45-21.00, in the Riverside Room of the Novotel. Both stand and fringe give you the opportunity to find out more, ask questions, and get involved.

You can see Lib Dem policy on the Right to Work [here](#).

In the meantime, a [brilliant question](#) from Roger Roberts in the House of Lords: "My Lords, if we want a cap on net triggers, what about a cap on what is happening in Syria, in Afghanistan and in terms of climate change? These are things we must respond to, if we have any heart at all. Will the Minister go along with this: we must prepare for increased numbers instead of reduced numbers?"

If, as successive Conservative governments have claimed, they wish to help refugees in their home countries, they should not limit the numbers coming to the UK but limit the forces that drive people to migrate.

RIGHT TO REMAIN TOOLKIT

[This toolkit](#) from Right to Remain is a valuable and important resource for those working with and for people claiming asylum. Their guide to the UK immigration and asylum system provides an overview of the legal system, and actions that can be taken.

DISPELLING THE MYTHS.

Refugee Council have produced another set of facts on refugees and asylum seekers, to dispel the myths. [This is the link](#), and at our stall at conference we will have paper copies for you to take away.

WAITING TIMES FOR DECISIONS

The Government has published its final immigration statistics for the year 2019, with the number of main applicants waiting over six months for a decision on their asylum claim increasing for the seventh consecutive quarter. It showed that 56% of the 43,632 asylum cases waiting for a decision were more than six months old. This is the largest backlog recorded in asylum statistics, and it is getting worse every year. Lib Dem policy on better decision making, and a radical change in how the Home Office works, are in this [document](#).

MOVE ON TIME LIMIT

[This report](#) from Red Cross shows the huge problems caused by the too short period new refugees have (28 days) to find new accommodation and a means of supporting themselves, whether through work, benefits or a combination of both.

The cost / benefit analysis shows that it costs tax payers more to keep the present system.

There is an urgent need for the time to be extended to 56 days.

Parliament is going to debate it on March 4th – if you have time lobby your MP, and there is a [good briefing here](#) from NACCOM. Our Lib Dem Policy is clear; more time is needed for those granted refugee status to move on, [as stated here](#).

DESTITUTE ASYLUM WOMEN

The report, [Will I Ever Be Safe? Asylum-seeking women made destitute in the UK](#), by Women for Refugee Women and their Regional partners, explores the experiences of over 100 women from 29 different countries who have been made destitute in the UK after seeking asylum here. They found that:

- Nearly a third of the women they spoke with had experienced sexual violence both in their countries of origin *and again* while destitute in the UK.
- Almost half were street homeless in the UK.
- 95% were hungry, and the same percentage of women were depressed while they were destitute.
 - These women were fleeing violence in order to seek asylum in the UK.
- A third said that they had been raped by state authorities in their countries of origin.
- A quarter of the women had been targeted because of their political activities; 16% are lesbian or bisexual and had been targeted because of their sexuality.

As Liberal Democrats we strongly believe that all who seek sanctuary here should be safe. Destitution should not be happening in our society, and people should be given the right to work. For those unable to work, there must be support for them throughout the time it takes to consider their case and hear any appeals.

DEPORTATION to JAMAICA

This has been much in the headlines, and rightly so.

Christine Jardine, **responding to the news that the Court of Appeal has halted the deportation of many who were set to be sent to Jamaica by the Government, said:**

“What will it take for this Government to learn? Even after the appalling Windrush scandal, Conservative Ministers were brazenly defending their plans to deport people just hours before the court ruled it unlawful. These deportation flights must stop until the Government has published the Windrush Lessons Learned Review in full. No one can trust the Home Office to get these decisions right, and we owe it to the victims of the Windrush Scandal to prevent anything like it from happening again.”

HOW DEPORTATIONS, IF THEY REALLY HAVE TO HAPPEN, SHOULD WORK.

[It is Liberal Democrat policy](#) that deportations should only be done with humanity, so should follow the recommendations of the National Independent Commission on Enforced Removals (NICER).

THE UNJUST SYSTEM

[This report](#) by Amnesty on an unjust deportation system highlights how bad it has got.

Reports like this show the huge cost to the public purse of today's deportation system, as well as the huge cost in ruined lives of people and their families.

The [Guardian report](#) highlights the cost of £12,000 per person to remove them. More wasted lives, wasted resources, wasted public money. Just think of the better lives and better uses this time and

money could be put to, if indefinite detention and unlawful deportation were ended. Humanity and Justice doesn't have to cost.

When people have served their sentence for any crime committed, they are then punished again, by being sent to a country of which they have little or no recollection. And this double punishment creates injustice to others, children and partners in particular who are suffering the loss of a loved one.

For British citizens, [this barbaric practice ended in 1868](#), when Western Australia, the last British colony receiving convict ships, joined others in refusing to do so any longer.

The Home Office tell us that no British Citizen is deported, but omit to say that it costs over £1,000 for a child from countries such as Jamaica to gain citizenship here. Application fees are meant only to cover administrative costs, not to make money or to be an obstacle to citizenship.

SAFE ROUTES FOR REFUGEES

There is an excellent [letter in The Times](#), responding to a piece by their journalist Clare Foges, from Dr. Ruvy Ziegler, a member of the LD4SOS Council, on the need for Safe Routes for those who have to flee their home country. We need to work to make [#RefugeesWelcome](#) and stop the [#HostileEnvironment](#)

THE PROPOSED NEW IMMIGRATION SYSTEM.

A [letter to the Guardian](#) about the new proposed system from one of our LD4SOS Council members was not published by them, but here it is from Lib Dem Voice. An article, originally written for The Guardian, has [now been published](#) by Liberal Democrat Voice.

SPARE ROOM?

If you have a spare room and would be willing to share it with a refugee or asylum seeker, do contact Refugees At Home at <https://www.refugeesathome.org/>. There is an LD4SOS paper on hosting, with more information [here](#).

NO VALENTINES FOR SOME

As many celebrated Valentine's Day recently, our heart goes out to those who cannot be together on any day, and are apart from their children because of cruel Family Reunion rules. We continue to support changes to those rules.

*DON'T FORGET, if you are coming to Spring Conference 13-15 March,
to visit us on Stand 13 in the Exhibition Hall of York Barbican.*