

Contact: [NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OF
PRESS CONTACT]

EMBARGO: Immediate



Liberal Democrats to call for Right to Work for all

In a motion to be discussed at the Full Council meeting on **DATE, AREA** Liberal Democrats are calling for the council to sign up to the Lift the Ban's campaign to give people seeking asylum the right to work so that they can use their skills and live in dignity.

This follows a Bill currently before Parliament tabled by Lib Dem MP Christine Jardine which calls on the Home Secretary to grant the right to work to asylum seekers after three months.

COUNCILLOR NAME said:

"People seeking asylum in Britain are forced to live off a government stipend of £5.39 per day.

"That's because the Home Office denies them the dignity of working, leaving genuine asylum seekers facing poverty, homelessness and destitution.

"It has to change and that's why we are calling on the council to join the Liberal Democrat campaign and stand up for the thousands who are genuinely seeking asylum, who have fled atrocities abroad in the hope of finding sanctuary in the UK. "

NAME added:

"The Liberal Democrats are demanding better for people seeking asylum.

"We're denying ourselves the skills of some incredibly ambitious and talented people – doctors, engineers, mechanics, teachers, business managers, hairdressers, and gardeners.

"Everyone has something to give to others and if offered the platform would step up and add new energy to their communities."

ENDS

Notes for Editors

For more details about the Lift the Ban coalition campaign here:
www.lifftheban.co.uk/

Council motion below:

Motion - Right to Work

This Council notes that:

- since 2002, people seeking asylum have only been able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List;
- asylum decisions are getting slower with over half (53%) of asylum decisions taking more than 6 months in 2017. This situation is getting worse: it was 41% at the end of 2016 and 20% at the end of 2015.
- people seeking asylum are left to live on a government stipend of £5.39 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation;
- the UK spends between £70 and £100 million per year housing and supporting asylum seekers who could be working, earning, and fending for themselves;

This Council further notes the work of the Lift to Ban Coalition, which includes more than 150 organisations from across the UK who have come together to call on the Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work

This Council believes that:

- people seeking asylum who are unable to work are unable to properly integrate with their local area, can't get to know their neighbours, and find it more difficult to learn English;
- restrictions on the right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes, and a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills both for the economy of [OUR AREA] and the UK; and
- The Liberal Democrats are right to campaign for people seeking asylum to be given the right to work unconstrained by the shortage occupation list after they have waited three months for a decision on their initial asylum claim.

This council resolves to:

- join the Lift to Ban Coalition; and
- call on the UK Government to support the Lib Dem Campaign to give people seeking asylum the ability to seek work under the conditions outlined above.

Contact: [NAME AND PHONE NUMBER OF
PRESS CONTACT]

EMBARGO: Immediate



AREA council backs Liberal Democrats to call for Right to Work for all

In a motion debated at last night's Full Council, AREA Liberal Democrats called for the council to sign up to the Lift the Ban's campaign to give people seeking asylum the right to work so that they can use their skills and live in dignity.

Speaking after the meeting, COUNCILLOR NAME said:

"I am thrilled to have championed a move by AREA Council to back the campaign for those seeking asylum to be given the right to work in AREA.

"The Home Office currently denies them the dignity of working, leaving genuine asylum seekers facing poverty, homelessness and destitution - this is just not fair to the thousands who are genuinely seeking asylum, who have fled atrocities abroad in the hope of finding sanctuary in the UK."

NAME added:

"The Liberal Democrats are demanding better for people seeking asylum.

"We're denying ourselves the skills of some incredibly ambitious and talented people – doctors, engineers, mechanics, teachers, business managers, hairdressers, and gardeners.

"Everyone has something to give to others and if offered the platform would step up and add new energy to their communities."

Stockport Council will now write to the Prime Minister and the Minister asking them to consider the moves by the Lift the Ban coalition to reduce the time those seeking asylum have to wait for the right to work so that they can use their skills and live in dignity.

ENDS

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