



Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

LD4SOS NOVEMBER 2019 ELECTION SPECIAL NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANT FIRST ASK

Can you all please make sure that your Parliamentary candidate has access to our mini manifesto <http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/330>, (all based on Liberal Democrat agreed policies) **and maybe even print it off for them**. Also let them know that all of our documents, condensing different policy areas, are available on our website under “documents”.

If you could let other candidates you know too, that would be helpful. Whilst much of this election is about Brexit, there will be issues around refugees and asylum seekers raised in hustings, questions and on doorsteps. We have excellent policies so let's get them out there.

It will also be helpful if you could retweet and share items on our twitter feed and Facebook page. The selection below does not cover everything, but does highlight our Liberal Democrat values.

DECISION MAKING

The Freedom from Torture [report](#) *Lessons not learned* “calls on government to deliver an overhaul of the asylum and immigration system that champions and preserves the dignity of the individual.” It says that “the Government must hit the reset button on the Home Office.”

We strongly agree, and [our Liberal Democrat policy](#) calls for radically different ways of decision making.

DETENTION

LD4SOS has signed [this petition](#) for a 28-day maximum time limit, which is completely in line with what we stand for and campaign on. Please sign the petition for more justice for those unjustly and inhumanely held in indefinite detention.

Time and again the Government hasn't listened to reports from INDEPENDENT Monitoring Boards, and hasn't acted on their recommendations. People suffer needlessly as in [this report](#). There must be an urgent radical overhaul, to make detention a last resort as in <http://libdemfocus.co.uk/ld4sos/archives/1676>

We think we are going through troubled times, but it is so much harder for those trapped in indefinite detention. As well as campaigning for radical reform, please send a message of support to someone in detention, using [this link](#).

[Here is](#) yet another example of people being wrongly detained, this time a victim of trafficking and human slavery. The government has had to pay out compensation. We need to ensure that trafficked people are not returned and detention is only when absolutely necessary as in our mini manifesto.

DETENTION and HEATHROW

Also if you live in the Hounslow constituencies it is planned to build a new 1000 place detention centre to replace Harmsworth and Colebrook if the proposed third runway goes ahead. LD4SOS accepts that there will need to be near the airport a small amount of well-run suitable accommodation for migrants who (after all due process) have to be removed.

We do not believe 1000 places are required – particularly if all the policies we are campaigning for are implemented. As well as being inhumane, this type of centre is a total waste of money and will take up land which could be better used to meet the needs of the local community. Please raise this with your PPCs.

TRAFFICKING

All reading this will have read about the tragedy of those who died in the lorry on the way to the UK. These deaths have made the headlines because so many people died, all at once. But there are deaths connected with trafficking every day that we don't hear about.

There are also those who are trafficked here, and are victims of slavery. There are many examples, from the many recently reported, of how victims of trafficking have been badly treated in the UK after arriving here. It is criminal for our Government to send those who have been trafficked (and proved to be so) back to where they are so vulnerable to be trafficked again. Every possible effort must be made to stop the smugglers and their agents, who profit from trading human beings.

Safe and legal routes to the UK must be implemented and traffickers and smugglers combatted through cross border co-operation; having border controls in France and Belgium makes it easier to refuse seekers of sanctuary without the due process required for those who reach the UK.

The Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) UK [has renewed its call](#) for safe and legal routes to migrate and seek asylum following the publication by MPs of a report indicting the UK's excessive focus on border security. The report argued: "*A policy that focuses exclusively on closing borders will drive migrants to take more dangerous routes, and push them into the hands of criminal groups.*" Former Liberal Democrat MP Sarah Teather said "*We welcome the call for more pathways to seek asylum from outside of Europe. At JRS UK, we work with Vietnamese victims of trafficking. They were vulnerable to traffickers because there were no regular routes by which they could migrate. Many asylum seekers we serve have also been forced to make dangerous journeys, because the alternative was certain death if they stayed where they were. This will continue for as long as governments in safe countries cut off routes to reach them.*"

Our Liberal Democrat Policy says we would “**Ensure that victims of trafficking are supported** so that they can give evidence against their traffickers and never be returned against their will to their country of origin, where their traffickers would have access to them all over again”. We also call for better training for all Home Office staff making decisions, particularly those dealing directly with more vulnerable groups such as those trafficked.

A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Yet again the Home Office was paying compensation for being overzealous, and a tragedy happening with a wrongful detention, [as here](#). Not only is there no common sense being used, there is no compassion or understanding either. An asylum seeker, on hearing this story, said to us "*it costs nothing to be respectful and do things properly, it would even save money*".

Ending the "Hostile Environment" is the key to what we stand for. There is more detail (it is more than warm words!) in this information [leaflet here](#)

SUPPORT FOR TRAFFICKED CHILDREN

The Children's Society has [raised concerns](#) about the increase in referrals of children as a result of trafficking, gang violence and domestic violence. There is a £3 billion funding shortfall facing children's social care by 2025 and they say that councils must be able to offer better early support. Liberal Democrats on the LGA have made [strong representations](#) as part of a cross party call for the funding gap to be closed.

UNACCOMPANIED CHILD REFUGEES

The [SAFE project](#) is an excellent project for these unaccompanied children in Europe. How many of us who know kids in their teens would want them to be literally out in the world with nobody to support them. Liberal Democrat policy on unaccompanied children, as well as refugees, is [here](#).

LEGAL AID

The Guardian [did an article](#) on the complex maze that asylum seekers had to navigate on their own, many without legal help. Indeed, a complex maze that people can't be expected to navigate on their own. Our Liberal Democrat policy from last year is "support restoring the arrangements for legal aid for seekers of sanctuary that existed before The Legal Aid, Sentencing & Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act 2012"

LGBT ISSUES

Amnesty International have released [a report](#) on the awful dangers for anyone who is LGBT in Uganda, or even helping and supporting them. It makes it even more urgent that [our proposals](#) on LGBT asylum seekers are implemented.

RIGHT TO WORK

Nothing in the news recently, but the "Lift The Ban" campaign has had to be suspended for the election period. There was lots in [last month's](#) newsletter though and feel free to spread the message about how we support it, [as here](#)!

REGISTERING TO VOTE

[This article](#) on our website gives important information for refugees who are Commonwealth Citizens. It clarifies who is able to vote, as well as how to register, and get postal and proxy votes.

AN ALTERNATIVE QUEEN'S SPEECH

We agree with everything in this [alternative Queen's Speech](#) from Amnesty International, with its priorities to challenge injustice. Most if not all are already **Liberal Democrat** policies, such as **Indefinite Detention & Family Reunion** which are embedded in our values.

CAMPAIGNING SUCCESS

We are intensely relieved that the Government has agreed to reverse plans to cut vital refugee services in the event of a no-deal Brexit! LD4SOS as well as individual members were part of the 50,000 who signed an open letter set up by the Refugee Council. Whilst not needed now, it easily could have been, and it shows that campaigning does work!

When you are out on the stump, let people know that we are part of a multitude of campaigns to bring about a more welcoming, just, and fair society, treating with dignity those seeking sanctuary in the UK.