



## Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary

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President Lord Roger Roberts of Llandudno

### PEOPLE TRAFFICKING

The Liberal Democrats are resolutely opposed to people-trafficking and modern-day slavery. While a more humane immigration policy in itself will go some way to eradicating this, there will always be individuals brought here under false pretences or duress, afraid to speak out against their kidnappers for fear of reprisal. The Liberal Democrats are committed to supporting these victims, and to ensuring their safety. Immigration rules must not make them liable to deportation if they come forward.

Many people who enter the UK do so involuntarily or under false pretences through no fault of their own, as the victims of people traffickers. People-trafficking feeds modern-day slavery and Liberal Democrats remain committed to its eradication.

We support measures in the Modern Slavery Act that increased maximum sentences from 14 years to life imprisonment. There will remain, however, a difficulty in securing convictions while victims are concerned about the consequences of coming forward to the police.

Most people tarred with the “illegal immigration” brush are not criminals: for the most part, they are either people who have overstayed their visa, having entered the UK legally, or vulnerable victims of people trafficking. They are not “illegal”.

By separating itself from the EU, Britain diminishes its capacity to respond to many of the threats and challenges of the 21st century, including the market power of major multinationals, the impact of climate change and global poverty which force people to leave their homes, and the criminal gangs who traffic them when no safe routes are provided.

We would prioritise government spending on the things that matter most to people’s wellbeing – both now and in the future; this includes helping people who are homeless, and/or victims of trafficking and exploitation. Help can include counselling and providing safe accommodation.

We need a properly resourced National Crime Agency to combat serious and organised crime, and tackle modern slavery and human trafficking through proactive, intelligence-led enforcement of labour market standards. People trafficking is a matter of extensive international networks; and the numbers involved require international cooperation in responding.

We need to invest in officers, training and technology, to make evading controls at Britain’s borders harder, to assist seekers of sanctuary and to combat human trafficking and the smuggling of people, weapons, drugs and wildlife. The Border Force must be effective and accountable.

Meanwhile the Conservatives have slashed Britain’s Border Force, to the delight of organised crime gangs involved in trafficking vulnerable people.

#### LIBERAL DEMOCRATS 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;
- Provide better training for staff, particularly those dealing directly with more vulnerable groups e.g. victims of torture or trafficking, mentally ill people, pregnant women, children & LGBT+ people;
- Ensure that victims are always supported and treated with compassion.