

The Prime Minister must not turn his back on child refugees

The UK has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those in need, but now the Conservative Government is turning its back on child refugees and failing to live up to our obligations to them.

That's why over 40 Liberal Democrat parliamentarians have signed letter to the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, urging them to uphold the UK's proud tradition of providing sanctuary to unaccompanied refugee children from elsewhere in Europe and to deliver on the Government's commitment to continue reuniting unaccompanied asylum-seeking children from across the EU with their families in the UK.

Provide sanctuary to unaccompanied refugee children

The government must not to turn their backs on the children who need us now.

Providing refugees with safe and legal routes to sanctuary in the UK is also the best way to combat people smuggling and human trafficking, and to prevent people from making dangerous attempts to cross the Channel.

Section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 (the "Dubs amendment") has been a lifeline for the 480 children resettled under it, offering them a safe home and hope for the future.

However, the Lord Dubs' original amendment called for the Government to resettle 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children – and it is heart-breaking to think of the children who have been left behind.

We are urging the government not to turn their backs on the children who need us now, and to make a new commitment to resettle 10,000 unaccompanied refugee children from elsewhere in Europe over the next ten years.

Reunite unaccompanied asylum-seeking children with their families

The government must reunite unaccompanied asylum-seeking children with their families.

We are also deeply concerned about the Government's proposals for refugee family reunion in negotiations over the UK's future relationship with the EU.

The Government's draft working text for an agreement with the EU would end the UK's mandatory obligation to reunite unaccompanied asylum-seeking children with their families.

That would have terrible consequences: leaving hundreds more child refugees separated from their families and without a safe home, pushing more desperate people into the hands of people smugglers and human traffickers, and leading to more perilous attempts to cross the Channel in small boats.

We are therefore urging the government to change their negotiating position to match previous commitments to maintain refugee family reunion rights after the transition period.

The UK has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those in need. The government must uphold this important British tradition.

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Author:

Government must not use new commission to avoid tackling racism straight away

Yesterday the Government announced it would undertake a cross-governmental commission to address the inequalities that BAME communities face.

It is vital that the commission has full representation from across different BAME communities.

The Liberal Democrats have joined with BAME communities in calling for a government-wide race equality strategy, so this commission is a welcome first step.

It shows that the Black Lives Matter protests are working, and that is to the credit of everyone who has raised their voices against racial injustice since the appalling killing of George Floyd.

To be successful, this commission must be wide-ranging, far-reaching as well as truly cross-departmental and cross-party.

It is also absolutely vital that the commission has full representation from across different BAME communities.

Its findings must not become simply another report on a shelf in Whitehall – the Government must implement them without delay.

The government must not use this commission to avoid tackling racism & injustice right now.

There are measures they could take now such as scrapping their hostile environment policies or suspicion-less stop & search, that would begin to heal inequality.<https://t.co/80dXm1YZwa>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [June 15, 2020](#)

Responding to the announcement, our Equalities Spokesperson Christine Jardine said:

“Conservative Ministers must not use this commission to avoid tackling racism and injustice right now.

There are measures they could take tomorrow, such as scrapping their Hostile Environment policies or suspicion-less Stop and Search, that would begin to heal the divides and achieve true justice for BAME communities.”

Too many people’s lives are blighted by discrimination, inequality and injustice. The Government must move further and faster to redress institutional racism in the criminal justice system and many other parts of our society.

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Author:

[The Prime Minister must abolish suspicion-less stop and search powers](#)

The Black Lives Matter protests have demonstrated the urgent need to tackle racial injustice and address the pain and harm these injustices cause.

A Black person is 47 times more likely to be stopped and searched than a white person.

We are urging the Prime Minister to look again at some of the harmful policies his Government is pursuing. One of these is his expansion of Stop and Search powers.

Black people are disproportionately likely to be stopped and searched by the police, and for suspicion-less stop and search the figures are particularly stark.

Under suspicion-less Stop and Search powers, **a Black person is 47 times more likely to be stopped and searched than a white person.**

On too many occasions stop and search seems to mean being black is enough to suspect someone of being a criminal.

The Conservative Government is increasing the use of suspicion-less Stop and Search dramatically. Home Office figures show that the number of Section 60 searches has risen from 631 in 2016-17 to 13,175 in 2018-19 – a 20-fold increase in just two years.

On too many occasions stop and search seems to mean being black is enough to suspect someone of being a criminal.

Suspicion-less Stop and Search is also unnecessary. Without it, police would still have the power to stop and search people for weapons if they have reasonable suspicion. Stop and Search powers can be used fairly and effectively if they are focused on people who commit crime.

Boris Johnson must abolish suspicion-less Stop and Search powers and end the pain and injustice they wreak on so many people from Britain's black and minority communities.

On too many occasions, stop and search seems to mean 'being black is enough to be suspected of being a criminal'. – Acting Leader [@EdwardJDavey](#)

It is clear – we must move further and faster to redress institutional racism in the criminal justice system.
[#BlackLivesMatter](#) [#PMQs](#) pic.twitter.com/AS5cqAUSwg

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [June 10, 2020](#)

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Author:

[Starting a caring revolution](#)

Coronavirus teaches many lessons. For me, one stands out: **the importance of**

caring and carers – in care homes, supporting vulnerable people at home and millions of unpaid carers looking after loved ones.

A caring revolution isn't only the right campaign, it's smart politics too

People who've never appreciated how the NHS and care sector needed to work more closely together have seen that all too clearly, with the tragedy of COVID care home deaths.

As someone who's a carer now, after being a carer in my teenage years, the need for our society to value caring and carers properly has always been a personal driver.

My young carer experience began when I was 12. My Dad had died when I was four, so when Mum was diagnosed with terminal cancer, my brothers and I nursed her at home for three years.

From looking after her personal care needs to cooking her food, from administering morphine for her pain to talking with her for hours, we were left to it, albeit thankfully with the help of family and neighbours. **Still today too many young carers bear the burden alone, isolating them and affecting their education and life chances.**

Of course, people can end up with caring responsibilities at any age. Most unpaid carers are adult women, and people from our black and ethnic minority communities are disproportionately employed as carers on low incomes: issues of equality are firmly bound up with the caring revolution we need.

A caring revolution isn't only the right campaign, it's smart politics too. Carers UK estimate there were around 9 million carers in the UK pre-COVID, and that as many as 4 million more people have become carers during the pandemic.

We must champion a more caring society that rewards the role carers play and face up to caring's long term challenges

So I'm determined Liberal Democrats offer far more to this huge group. **I'm starting today by introducing a new Bill in the Commons to secure more flexible employment rights for carers**, alongside my five-point plan for carers:

- Employers would have to make reasonable adjustments for carers – helping carers who wish to work to combine a job with caring
- Carers Allowance would be boosted immediately to £75 a week – a 12% increase
- The amount carers can earn before losing out on Carers Allowance would rise from £128 a week to £160 a week
- Young carers would receive free travel on **all** public transport

- Carers would be made a protected characteristic in the Equality Act – securing equal rights and protections for carers in the workplace and beyond

This would be only the start: we must build a caring society to stand the test of time.

My 12-year-old son John has an undiagnosed neurological condition, meaning he can't walk or talk properly. He needs care 24/7. As his condition isn't degenerative, he'll live far longer than my wife Emily or me. Our single greatest worry is how he will be cared for after we've gone. Huge numbers of parents live with similar anxieties.

As Liberal Democrats, we must champion a more caring society that rewards the role carers play and face up to caring's long term challenges.

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Author:

The Government must commit to an inquiry into its handling of COVID-19

After failing to provide adequate PPE, testing and public health advice, it's no surprise that public trust in the Government is waning. People have made heartbreaking sacrifices. They deserve to know the truth. The Government must commit to a public inquiry to ensure it does not repeat the mistakes of the past.

The Government must not only be held to account, but step up and solve these crises as quickly as possible.

The fact remains that a comprehensive test, trace and isolate system is still the only way to keep people safe as we move out of lockdown.

Yet the Government still hasn't delivered on this, and apparently won't be able to until September. Ministers can't even provide figures for the number of people being tested day-to-day.

The Prime Minister needs to be utterly transparent about the barriers to opening schools, the limits to testing capacity and the issues affecting the test, trace and isolate system.

The British public deserve to know the truth.

As more and more questions are raised about key decisions throughout this crisis, Boris Johnson must now commit to an independent inquiry into his Government's handling of this pandemic. **The British public deserve to know the truth.**

Yesterday, Acting Leader Ed Davey asked the Prime Minister to confirm there would be a full independent inquiry into the Coronavirus so that we can learn from the mistakes that have been made, and ensure our communities are never thrown into a crisis like this ever again.

Whether it is the scandalous lack of PPE for frontline workers, the current failure to properly test, trace and isolate, or the true number of deaths, **the Government must not only be held to account, but step up and solve these crises as quickly as possible.**

As more and more questions are raised about key decisions throughout this crisis, Boris Johnson must now commit to an independent inquiry into his Government's handling of this pandemic.<https://t.co/SEjHGu3Ytl>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [June 11, 2020](#)

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