

Shock revelation that Theresa May blocked EU nationals' right to stay is a "badge of shame"

The Liberal Democrats have criticised Theresa May as "cold and heartless," following the shock revelation she blocked attempts to guarantee the right to stay for EU nationals immediately after the referendum.

In a scathing editorial in the Evening Standard today, George Osborne revealed that "in the days immediately after the referendum, David Cameron wanted to reassure EU citizens they would be allowed to stay. All his Cabinet agreed with that unilateral offer, except his Home Secretary, Mrs May, who insisted on blocking it."

It comes as the Liberal Democrats have set out a list of four demands that must be addressed in the government's paper on the rights of EU nationals on Monday, including ending the "bureaucratic nightmare" faced by EU citizens applying for permanent residency.

A recent report revealed that at the Home Office's current workrate, it will take around 11 years to process the millions of expected residency requests from EU nationals.

Liberal Democrat Brexit Spokesperson Tom Brake said:

"It is a badge of shame that Theresa May blocked attempts to guarantee the rights of EU nationals after the referendum. It shows how cold and heartless she is.

"Now that mean-spirited decision is coming back to haunt her as we see an exodus of skilled EU workers, from nurses to academics.

"Simply setting out vague assurances without giving a clear guarantee or sufficient resources for the Home Office is not good enough.

"People who have made their lives here shouldn't have to face a bureaucratic nightmare to apply to stay, or see their applications arbitrarily rejected.

"We urgently need a new, streamlined process that gives all EU nationals who have made the UK their home an easy route to permanent residency."

Lib Dems table amendment on Single Market to Queen's Speech

The Liberal Democrats have tabled an amendment to the Queen's Speech calling for Britain to stay the single market and customs union.

The party is now calling on both Labour and Conservative MPs to support the amendment and inflict a historic defeat on the government, forcing Theresa May to soften her extreme approach to Brexit.

An amendment to the Queen's speech last year was accepted by the government after it received cross-party support.

Liberal Democrat Brexit Spokesperson Tom Brake commented:

"We've already seen living standards fall and prices rise since last year's Brexit vote.

"But this is nothing compared to the pain that would be caused by Theresa May's extreme version of Brexit.

"Tearing up Britain's membership of the world's largest market would mean fewer jobs, higher prices in the shops and a long-term blow to our prosperity.

"We will not give up the fight to protect our economy by staying in the Single Market and Customs Union.

"I am urging all like-minded Labour and Conservative MPs to be on the right side of history and back this amendment."

[Sign our single market petition](#)

Trade Bill just a job creation scheme for Liam Fox

The Trade Bill announced in the Queen's speech is simply a job creation scheme for Liam Fox, the Liberal Democrats have said.

Tom Brake, Liberal Democrat Brexit spokesperson, said: "In reality this is an Anti-Trade Bill, as it means leaving the single market and customs union, despite clear opposition from the Chancellor and the Bank of England.

"It might give Liam Fox a job with plenty of air miles, but many workers will

be worried that this bill will give them nothing but P45s.

“Leaving the single market and customs union would be catastrophic for the British economy, wrenching us out of the world’s biggest marketplace of over 500 million consumers. Our integrated European supply chains and international companies based here rely on free trade with Europe. Britain pushed to create this system to avoid exactly the regulatory nightmare we will now face.

“Every port will be clogged up with lorries arguing over export dockets, with companies less keen to include British goods in their supply chains, and a border between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland will further destabilise our union.

“Theresa May has no mandate to pursue this extreme Brexit, yet she is charging on with a package which will harm jobs, the economy and our country.”

Government’s social care funding plans in crisis – Norman Lamb

Ministers are to consult on reforming the system of social care funding in England after Conservative plans were slammed as a Dementia Tax during the election.

Commenting, Shadow Health Secretary Norman Lamb said: “Social care is in a state of total crisis. A million older people are missing out on care they need and services face a funding black hole of billions in this year alone.

“In Coalition we commissioned the Dilnot report – an independent, expert led review of social care funding -yet the Conservatives have chosen to ignore the recommendations.

“Now they are simply kicking the issue into the long grass again with more consultation, after their deeply unfair Dementia Tax was clearly rejected by voters”.

Repeal Bill must not be a bonfire of

health and safety and environmental standards

The Liberal Democrats have vowed to oppose any attempts to weaken workplace rights, health and safety standards and environmental protections as part of the government's Repeal Bill.

The party is also calling for proper oversight and transparency over the Repeal Bill, after the government's White Paper hinted at a power grab by ministers through the use of so-called Henry VIII powers.

Liberal Democrat Brexit Spokesperson Tom Brake commented:

"Many Conservatives have made it clear they want to use Brexit to scrap our hard-won workplace rights and environmental standards.

"But protections for workers and our environment are not just red tape to be tossed on a bonfire.

"Nobody voted to diminish their rights, make themselves poorer or to make our country less safe.

"The Liberal Democrats will strongly oppose any weakening of existing standards and fight to ensure proper oversight and transparency.

"We cannot allow this minority Conservative government to use Henry VIII powers to steamroller the democratic process."