

Priti Patel is turning her back on refugees

Priti Patel says refugees should come to the UK through safe and legal routes, and is threatening to punish any who don't.

The Conservative Government is failing to provide any safe and legal routes for refugees to take.

But at the same time, **the Conservative Government is failing to provide any safe and legal routes for refugees to take.**

The Government's latest figures show that just 353 refugees were resettled in the UK in 2020-21 – a drop of 93% since the previous year.

The UK has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those in need, but now the Conservatives are turning their backs on refugees.

Their failure to provide safe and legal routes is pushing desperate, vulnerable people into the hands of people smugglers and human traffickers.

Priti Patel's tough rhetoric and cruel policies only increases their profit margins. "We thank your government for our full pockets," one smuggler told the Guardian recently.

That's why the Liberal Democrats are calling on the Government to make an ambitious, ten-year commitment to resettle 10,000 vulnerable refugees a year from Syria and other dangerous conflict areas. Because that's how we will actually combat these criminal gangs and prevent people from making dangerous attempts to cross the Channel and the Mediterranean.

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And what about the people who do come to the UK seeking sanctuary, having left their homes fleeing war or prosecution? **They should be welcomed with compassion, not kept in limbo for months while their claims are processed.**

Those same statistics reveal that 50,084 asylum seekers have been waiting more than six months for a decision from the Home Office – a number that has doubled on Priti Patel's watch. That's the scandal she should be tackling, but none of her endless series of cruel proposals will actually help solve it. In fact, they'll just cause even longer delays.

The Home Office is clearly not fit for purpose. So instead of making it harder for refugees to claim asylum, let's take these decisions away from the

Home Office altogether.

A new arms-length, non-political agency should take over, with the staff, training and resources to process applications quickly, decide cases fairly, and get them right first time. And let's finally lift the ban and **give asylum seekers the right to work**. They should be enabled to contribute to our society, not trapped for months on just £5.66 a day.

Liberal Democrats are fighting to fix the broken asylum system, so that everyone can have confidence in it, and everyone's rights and dignity are respected.

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We want your views on how to improve the party's independent complaints process.

Any organisation with a hundred thousand members will have conflicts: what matters is how we deal with them. Wherever possible the process needs to be quick and effective – and it must always be transparent, fair and independent of political influence. It is key that if someone's actions are damaging to other party members or members of the public, they can't expect to be protected by who they know or what role they hold in the party.

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The campaign is growing rapidly and **this is a seat with a lot of potential.**

We came a strong second here in 2019. We have lots of local representation and a base of voters we can build on.

And the reception on the doors has been phenomenal.

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