



Item 16.2

Full Council – 11 July 2022

Amendment submitted by the Labour Group to the Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Proposed amendment – To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated

Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

This Council notes:

That refugees and asylum seekers are human beings who deserve our full respect and support.

The way in which Boris Johnson's government talks about and presents refugees, who face their plight through no fault of their own, is deeply un-British, offensive and shameful.

Our own borough is home to people from all corners of the world and all wish to make a valuable contribution to our international community.

Brent ~~must remain~~ is welcoming of refugees and asylum seekers. ~~and offer required leadership from a local government level by~~ The collective leadership of every councillor is essential in ensuring that refugees who arrive in our community have access to needed support and are given the basic opportunities afforded to all in order that they can ~~make a contribution~~ contribute to society.

Organisations like Care 4 Calais, English for Action, Salusbury World, Young Roots, amongst others, are doing crucial work in our community to help settle refugees and offer basic support, whether through English classes that they run or by seeking to address the immense mental trauma many refugees have and are experiencing.

The Brent Labour Manifesto promised that under Labour leadership, Brent Council will stand "ready to support refugees fleeing war in any way we can". With the help of our outstanding voluntary sector and local residents, Brent has already given sanctuary to 154 people under the Homes for Ukrainians Scheme.

This Council believes:

In the UN Refugee Convention statutes that give right to any individuals seeking asylum. We believe that Brent has a moral duty to help those fleeing war and

persecution. We continue to support the Alf Dubs amendment to the 2016 Immigration Act to allow unaccompanied child refugees in Europe to reunite with family members here in the UK after Brexit.

This Council therefore calls on the government to:

1. Drop its shameful, un-British Rwanda policy. The Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has set out the Labour Party position that “it is not a long term plan; it is a short term stunt and government gimmick.”
2. End the hostile environment pursued by successive Conservative Governments that seeks to criminalise people who have been forced to flee their homelands through no fault of their own.
3. Reverse the cuts to legal aid that have disproportionately affected those on lower incomes, BAME groups and women as well as refugees. The legal aid and family reunion system requires urgent reassessment and significant reform, with refugees denied justice due to drastic legal aid cuts.
- 3.4. Acknowledge asylum seekers are making dangerous, tragically, all too often, fatal journeys across Europe to seek sanctuary and safety and therefore must allow asylum seekers the legal right of passage into the UK.
- 4.5. Give refugees and asylum seekers the ability to play a full part in our society and economy by giving those who arrive in the UK a right to work quickly under defined and reasonable terms.

This Council also resolves to:

1. Immediately establish and publish a directory of ESOL provision within our borough on the Council website and also provide easy access benefit and other advice to those who need it.
2. Continue the award winning work of Brent Start which provides affordable training, including ESOL and English Language courses to over 8,000 learners a year. This Council continues its commitment to investing £43m into creating a new state of the art adult education centre at Morland Gardens – enabling many more ESOL learners to benefit from the Brent Start service.
- 2.3. Make representations to London Council as the body responsible for the Freedom Pass, to consider ~~Extend~~ extending free bus travel to asylum seekers through the existing payment card system.
3. Organise a Brent Refugee Summit by the end of this year (2022), bringing together organisations, mainly in the voluntary sector, who are currently working to support refugees and asylum seekers locally. This will show a united and concerted effort from this Council that people who arrive locally are welcome here and that Brent will play our part in helping to settle people who given the tools will make hugely valuable contributions to our borough - as those who came before them always have.