



Full Council – 21 September 2022

Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Ending Heartless ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’

This Council notes:

That the Cost-of-Living Emergency declared at our last Full Council meeting will have a huge impact on all who live in Brent, including many here who are unjustly excluded from any financial or legal support from the state.

There are a growing number of people in our Borough who, through no fault of their own, are unable to access the help they desperately need. This number will almost certainly increase as we approach what will be an unprecedented and difficult few months ahead.

Elected Members and Council Officers are currently effectively prevented from supporting some of the most vulnerable people in our community, because of Section 115 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which states that a person will have ‘*no recourse to public funds*’ if they are ‘*subject to immigration control*’.

The restrictions in this section of the law do not recognise the reality on the ground, which currently means we have individuals sleeping rough outside our very own Civic Centre and elsewhere across Brent.

‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ restrictions have pushed migrants and their families into severe poverty and in some cases homelessness.

The limitations in our ability to support individuals with ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ and the need to apply further political pressure on the Government to act.

The commendable efforts of the voluntary, charity sectors and many in our community who seek to give individuals who currently have ‘no recourse to public funds’ the support they need, whether by offering shelter, food or legal advice.

The Council calls on the Government to:

1. Reduce the risk of people experiencing destitution and acknowledge that the current laws around eligibility for financial and legal assistance means that we are leaving far too many without any help at all

2. Ensure that no one is excluded from social services' support which operates as a short-term safety net
3. Urgently suspend 'No Recourse to Public Funds' conditions in order to offer needed assistance to people who are currently ignored by the state

This Council resolves to:

1. Work in a cross-party way to lobby the Government to remove the heartless 'No Recourse to Public Funds' restrictions on migrants and their families
2. Immediately ask the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition and Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group to sign an open letter to the new Home Secretary and Ministers in the Home Office highlighting our local authorities' huge concerns about the number of people with 'No Recourse to Public Funds' being pushed into acute poverty and therefore requiring immediate financial assistance
3. Make public the number of known individuals in our borough who are currently barred from any support whatsoever, due to them not having 'Recourse to Public Funds', as a way of highlighting the extent of the problem we face
4. Further strengthen the Council's relationship with the voluntary and charity sector and community groups who are already giving support to individuals who have 'No Recourse to Public Funds', by inviting them to the Refugee Summit (as agreed at the July 2022 Full Council meeting) in order to establish ways the Council can also intervene and offer any resource we have to help with the work that they do
5. Work with Praxis and other similar organisations, who have expertise in supporting people with 'No Recourse to Public Funds', to develop an easy access document, which consolidates all possible avenues of help (*largely in the voluntary and charity sector*) that can be distributed across the Council to make it easier for Elected Members, Council Officers and others to offer the best possible advice and guidance when approached for help
6. Produce a similar public document that the Council will make available to all interested groups in the community and voluntary and charity sectors, that can also be shared on the Council website and online channels.

Cllr Anton Georgiou
Alperton Ward