

Policy Motion: Asylum & Accommodation

1. Conference applauds Ed Davey's call for emergency action, comparable to the establishment of Nightingale hospitals, to speed up radically the processing of asylum claims together with allowing those awaiting decisions, the opportunity to work legally to support themselves and thereby integrate more effectively within the community. We deplore the Government's failure to take such steps.
2. In the absence of such action Conference notes with concern the actions of contractors such as SERCO, acting on behalf of Government, offering landlords management contracts for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) which they can then let at inflated rentals for asylum seeker accommodation.
3. Conference believes that such accommodation at best replicates and at worst exacerbates the issues associated with hotel accommodation;
 - a. Individuals are living in cramped accommodation which may be of a poor standard, within an unfamiliar culture, often with limited English language skills and no gainful means of occupying their time, remaining vulnerable to exploitation by the criminal gangs who brought them to this country or other criminal elements.
 - b. Those who have weak claims, including some with failed asylum applications in safe countries en-route, have opportunities to disappear into a black economy.
 - c. Should any small minority among them engage in anti-social or criminal behaviour, or if such behaviour is falsely attributed, then we have malign actors, ready, willing and well organised waiting to foment civil unrest which could include physical violence.
 - d. Dispersal across multiple locations increases vulnerability to attack.
 - e. Dispersal should not rely on the opportunistic acquisition of property by a for-profit company but should be organised in full liaison and cooperation with local police forces and local authorities the latter being particularly important in cases where children are involved.
 - f. Dispersal should be kept to an absolute minimum by re-allocating human and financial resources toward the rapid processing of asylum claims
4. Conference calls for;
 - a. Urgent Government action to implement the Davey Proposals for a rapid action task force to process asylum claims and for those awaiting decisions to be able to access temporary work visas so that they can self-fund their cost of living expenses.
 - b. Any dispersals into private rented accommodation to be conducted in full liaison with local authorities and police services who should be adequately resourced to cover the cost of additional support.

- c. The Officers of the NW Liberal Democrats to submit this policy to the Federal Conference either as a motion, or as an amendment to an existing motion, as appropriate.