



The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
Home Office Direct Communications Unit,
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF

Core Cities UK
C/O Manchester City Council
Level 3
Manchester Town Hall Extension
Lloyd Street
Manchester
M60 2LA

0161 234 5693
s.rainsbury@corecities.com

30 May 2019

Dear Home Secretary

Allowing people seeking asylum the right to work

We are writing to you in support of recent calls for people seeking asylum who have been waiting for more than six months for a decision on their claim to be given the opportunity to work.

As the leaders of the Core Cities, we represent areas that provide a home to a significant proportion of the dispersed population of people seeking asylum in the UK. We see first-hand the damaging impact that not being allowed to work has on both the individuals concerned and their relationships with the wider community.

The current policy of enforcing a 12 month waiting period before people can apply for permission to work and then restricting that permission to the jobs on the highly restrictive Shortage Occupation List operates in reality as a ban on work.

The evidence that has been set out about the negative consequences by the Lift the Ban Coalition - which is made up of more than 150 organisations including charities, businesses and trade unions - is compelling.

The reputation of the Home Office has been damaged by policies which are seen as unfair, inhumane and arbitrary. This was most clearly seen recently over the Windrush scandal.

We agree with the Coalition's proposed policy reforms that would allow work after six months and for that work to be unconstrained by the Shortage Occupation List.

Our reasons for supporting change include:

- **It would support integration** by encouraging greater interaction with members of the community and avoiding long spells of inactivity for those who are subsequently given permission to stay in the country.
- **It would be less wasteful.** 94% of people seeking asylum want to work but the current system forces them to be inactive for months or even years at a time.
- **It would save money for the Government and provide an economic boost.** People seeking asylum who are able to work would not need to be supported for extended periods and could contribute to the economy through increased tax revenues.
- **The public support change - 71% of the public supports the right to work after 6 months.**

- **No comparable countries in Europe or North America are as restrictive on work as the UK. We should follow the evidence of international best practice.**

We recognise that policy in this area is sensitive and challenging. However, we believe that the providing greater opportunities for people to provide for themselves and their families will be beneficial for everyone, and we believe that the proposed reforms offer a balanced and sensible way forward.

We would welcome a meeting with you to discuss this issue further and explore ways that we could help asylum seekers find appropriate employment should this policy change be made.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Ian Ward
Leader, Birmingham City Council



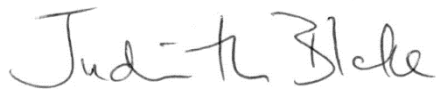
Mayor Marvin Rees
Mayor, Bristol City Council



Councillor Susan Aitken
Leader of Glasgow City Council



Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of Cardiff City Council



Councillor Judith Blake CBE
Leader, Leeds City Council



Mayor Joe Anderson OBE
Mayor, Liverpool City Council



Councillor Sir Richard Leese CBE
Leader, Manchester City Council



Councillor Nick Forbes CBE
Leader, Newcastle City Council



Councillor David Mellen
Leader, Nottingham City Council



Councillor Julie Dore
Leader, Sheffield City Council