

TO: Assembly

FROM: Ella Turney

RE: Join the Lift the Ban Coalition

DATE: 3 June 2021

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**Assembly notes:**

- (i) Since 2002, people seeking asylum have only able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List (Source: Refugee Action);
- (ii) people seeking asylum are left to live on £5.39 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation (Source: Asylum Matters);
- (iii) the potential foregone economic gain for the UK economy of allowing people to work is estimated to be £42.4million via increased taxable income and reduced payments of accommodation/subsistence support (Source: Refugee Action);
- (iv) 71% of people polled agreed with the statement: "when people come to the UK seeking asylum it is important they integrate, learn English and get to know people. It would help integration if asylum-seekers were allowed to work if their claim takes more than six months to process" (Source: Refugee Action);

**Assembly believes:**

- (i) People seeking asylum want to be able to work so that they can use their skills and make the most of their potential, integrate into their communities, and provide for themselves and their families (Source: Asylum Matters, Help Refugees);
- (ii) restrictions on the right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes, and a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills both for the economy of Durham and the UK (Source: Asylum Matters);
- (iii) allowing people seeking asylum the right to work would therefore lead to positive outcomes for those seeking asylum in the United Kingdom and for the local and national economy (Source: Lift the Ban Coalition);

**Assembly resolves:**

- (i) Join the Lift the Ban Coalition and lobby the University to join the coalition, which is campaigning to restore the right to work for everyone waiting for more than 6 months for a decision on their asylum claim.
- (ii) Join other student unions across the country including Newcastle and lobby regional partners such as Durham City Council to support further amendment.