**Sanctuary in Parliament 2018: Towards a Fairer Asylum System**

Social Media Guide

What is Sanctuary in Parliament?

Sanctuary in Parliament is an annual event held in Westminster, and organised by City of Sanctuary UK, in cooperation with partners. The event aims to further specific campaign goals, by providing an opportunity for MPs to listen to and engage with the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum from across the City of Sanctuary network.

This year, we want to encourage MPs to secure a fairer, more compassionate asylum system in the United Kingdom. The event will focus on three goals which we believe to be both achievable and essential to maintain the dignity of people seeking sanctuary. We will be asking MPs to support:

1. **The right to work for people who have asylum claims outstanding for more than six months;**
2. **Extension of refugee family reunion;**
3. **An end to indefinite immigration detention;**

The event will be held on Monday 12th November **(12-4pm)** **in Attlee Suite, Portcullis House, Westminster**

Supporting Sanctuary in Parliament through Twitter

There are many ways in which partners can help us make Sanctuary in Parliament a success and achieve our goals, whether you are attending or not!

**You can support the event by spreading the word on your social media channels using the hashtags #SanctuaryinParliament and #AFairerSystem for tweets about the event. Please also use the hashtags for our partner campaigns if you are tweeting about your specific campaign asks. These are:**

**#LifttheBan for tweets about the right to work for people in the asylum system**

**#FamiliesTogether for tweets about extending refugee family reunion and keeping families together**

**#Time4aTimeLimit for tweets about ending indefinite detention and introducing a 28-day time limit.**

It may be the case that one or other of the campaign asks is particularly relevant to your group. For example, your group may be in an area of high asylum dispersal, in which case achieving the right to work may be of importance to your members; or you may carry out welcome activities for resettled refugees, in which case an extension of family reunion may be a particular concern. **We would encourage groups to use the information in this document to come up with a strategy for promoting the event and capturing the attention of your local MP!** You can find specific tweets on the campaign asks at the end of this document.

1. **In the run-up to the event**

Our primary aim is to get as many MPs to the event as possible! **Please tweet your MP and encourage them to come!** The tweets below are just suggestions, please do adapt them according to your discussions with your MPs.

**@MP will you be attending #SanctuaryinParliament on 12 Nov in Westminster? Meet refugees and their supporters, learn about the issues they face and call for #AFairerSystem**

**@MP I’ll be coming from your constituency to #SanctuaryinParliament on 12 Nov to make the case for #AFairerSystem. Will you be there?**

**@MP I’ll be representing @YourOrganisation at #SanctuaryinParliament on 12 Nov. Will you stop by to hear more about #AFairerSystem for people seeking asylum?**

**@MP join us on 12 Nov to hear testimonies from people seeking asylum at #SanctuaryinParliament and learn about what you can do to ensure #AFairerSystem**

1. **On the day**

On the day, it could be useful to follow-up with your MP again before the event to ensure they’re attending. Otherwise, whether you’re attending the event or not, please echo our campaign messages, which you can also draw from the narrative we’ve shared below. Follow **@Cityof Sanctuary** and **@AsylumMatters** who will be live-tweeting on the day to get latest updates and retweet highlights from the day.

**Suggested tweets for attendees:**

**@MP hope to see you later today at #SanctuaryinParliament and discuss how we can make #AFairerSystem for people seeking Sanctuary**

**@MP Will be great to meet you at #SanctuaryinParliament to talk about how we can keep refugee families together #AFairerSystem #FamiliesTogether**

**@MP Heading to #SanctuaryinParliament to lobby for an end to inhumane indefinite immigration detention #AFairerSystem #Time4aTimeLimit**

**We’re pleased to have the support of @MP for lifting the ban that is preventing ppl seeking asylum from working at today’s #SanctuaryinParliament. Let’s move towards #AFairerSystem #LifttheBan**

**Suggested tweets on the campaign messages:**

**A fairer and more compassionate asylum system will ensure sanctuary seekers can rebuild their lives, support their families, and integrate into host communities. #AFairerSystem #SanctuaryinParliament**

**The right to work is integral to human dignity, individual autonomy and self-esteem #LifttheBan #AFairerSystem**

**We are all human. Family life is important for us all. It is unfair to deny refugees the opportunity to be reunited with their families. Support #FamiliesTogether #AFairerSystem**

**Time to stand up for justice and join hands to stop the inhumane, unjust and costly indefinite immigration detention of innocent people #SanctuaryinParliament #Time4aTimeLimit**

**Indefinite immigration detention has a long- lasting detrimental impact on people and society. It’s #Time4aTimeLimit #SanctuaryinParliament #AFairerSystem**

1. **Share visuals**

If you’re attending the event, the best visuals will be the ones you can capture on the day. **If you are taking photographs throughout the event, please ensure that you do not photograph attendees who are wearing a “No Photography” sticker.**

After you’ve had a meeting with your MP, why not ask if they’d be willing to take a photo with you to share on social media. We’ve created some banners that you can take pictures with as well. If you’re not at the event, those same banners as well as other designs can be shared on social media. **We’ve prepared a selection of images for you to use, which you can find at the end of this document.**

1. **Narrative**

We’ve developed a communications narrative for Sanctuary in Parliament 2018 which is below. Please feel free to use this in any messaging.

After fleeing war, torture and persecution in their countries of origin, many people will face ongoing hardships in the UK while stating their claim for protection. The asylum system puts extraordinary pressures on the people within it, who are not allowed to work to support themselves whilst their claim is processed and are forced to rely on asylum support of £37.75 per week. At every stage in the process sanctuary seekers risk being placed into detention if their claim is refused, without knowing when they will be released. Even if their claim for protection is granted, people with refugee status are often unable to sponsor their loved ones to come and join them in the UK, meaning that the pain of separation from family is constant.

City of Sanctuary groups work with refugees and asylum-seekers facing these obstacles every day, and we know the UK can do better. A fairer, more compassionate system is one in which no-one is detained without knowing when they will be released; it is the ability to enjoy a family life with loved ones and the realisation of the legitimate aspiration to provide for oneself and one’s family and to contribute to society through employment.

* **People seeking asylum should be granted the right to work after waiting for 6 months for a decision on their case. There should be no restrictions on the work that they undertake;**
* **Family reunion rules should be extended, so that refugees can sponsor their parents, and their siblings and adult children up to the age of 25 to join them. Legal aid should be reintroduced for these cases;**
* **There should be an end to indefinite immigration detention, with the introduction of a 28-day maximum time limit.**

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