**Tips for making your press release effective**

* **Keep it concise.** The main text of your press release should be no more than 1.5 pages
* **Make it relevant.** Demonstrate the local connection by including a quote from a local decision maker or prominent figure and information about any other local activity.
* **Make it timely.** Send the release out before your event so that the media will have advance notice. If possible, follow up with local media on the phone to see whether they would be interested in attending the event.
* **Be considerate.** If you are including a quote from a refugee or asylum seeker or inviting journalists to your event, make sure that you take into consideration people’s need for privacy or anonymity, and ensure that people are aware of any cameras at the event.

**Media release**

**Embargo: until 00:00am [date of your event]**

**Campaigners in [town/city] call on the Government to allow people seeking asylum in the UK the right to work**

Politicians, campaigners, celebrities and members of the public will gather today ([date of your event]) to call on the Government to give asylum seekers the right to work in the UK.

This gathering is part of a series of events taking place across the UK throughout June organised by the Lift the Ban campaign - a coalition of close to 200 charities, think tanks, businesses, trade unions and faith groups calling for people seeking asylum to be allowed to work.

Speaking ahead of the event, [name of supportive local councillor/MP/celebrity] said:

Suggested example: ‘*Preventing people seeking sanctuary from working to support themselves and their families is unfair and inhumane. Current policy forces people to live in poverty while their talents are wasted. It’s a situation which delivers for no one. That’s why we’re calling on the Government to lead the way on this common-sense reform, which enjoys widespread public support.”*

Currently, people seeking asylum in the UK are effectively banned from working. They can apply for permission to work if they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over 12 months, but only for jobs on the Government’s Shortage Occupation List, a restrictive list that includes jobs such as classical ballet dancer and nuclear medicine practitioner. Instead, they are given just £5.39 a day to support themselves while waiting months, often years, for a decision on their claim. This means that destitution is too often an unavoidable outcome for many people seeking safety in the UK.

The event in [town/city] today will bring together members of the local community, with speeches from [names and roles] and [description of any activities at your event]. Participants will send postcards to the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid MP, calling on him to lift the ban on working for people seeking asylum.

The campaign has previously garnered attention in [local area] when [brief summary of any previous action taken on the campaign in your area e.g. action by your MP, council or any previous events].

[Include a second quote from a participant, preferably someone with lived experience of the asylum system, or a member of a local community or support group. *Our suggestion is that this quote includes something on the importance of working in providing a sense of dignity and fulfilment for people seeking asylum]*

‘XXXX’

**[ENDS]**

**Contact:**

[Include your name, email address and phone number so that journalists can contact you for further details, photos of the event or to arrange media interviews]

**Notes to editors:**

1. The event will take place at [time, date and location]
2. Lift the Ban is a national coalition of organisations campaigning for people seeking asylum, and their adult dependants, to have the right to work, unconstrained by the shortage occupation list after six months of applying for asylum or making a further submission. We want people who have risked everything to find safety in our country to have the best chance of contributing to our society and integrating into our communities. Further information about the campaign is available at [www.lifttheban.co.uk](http://www.lifttheban.co.uk)
3. Over recent years the number of people awaiting a decision on their asylum claim for more than six months has grown steadily. By mid-2018, the number of people waiting over six months for a decision on their asylum claim had risen to 14,528, the highest number since public records began and an 8% increase on the previous year, despite the fact that since 2015 asylum applications have been steadily falling. Currently almost half of main applications waiting for an initial decision on their asylum claim have been waiting for over 6 months, undermining the Government’s justification for the current policy, introduced in 2002, that a quick decision-making process makes ‘the employment concession’ irrelevant.
4. There is strong public support for this policy reform, evidenced in polling undertaken by British Future in 2018, which experts say would improve integration and allow people seeking asylum to contribute to the economy.
5. The UK’s approach to employment rights for people seeking asylum is significantly more restrictive than any other comparable country. Following the removal in 2018 of a near-total ban on people seeking asylum working in Ireland, no other European country now enforces a minimum 12-month waiting period. This is equally true of Canada and the USA. If the UK were to adopt a six-month waiting period, unrestricted by the Shortage Occupation List, it would go from being an outlier to joining the international mainstream.