

**You can adapt the press release template below and send it (ideally with the press release in the body of your email to known journalists) with the following template email:**

“Hope you don’t mind me getting in touch.

A coalition of 240 organisations, including from [your city] and the [your region], has this week released a report that shows the benefit of giving people seeking asylum the right to work.

Research shows that the treasury could save £100m.

I wonder if it’s something you’d like to cover from a [your city] angle? Alongside spokespeople from organisations working in the area, such as XXXX, who can be interviewed, we have an expert by experience who is willing to share their story, too.

I have included the press release below.”

[Organisation] **joins 240 others to push Government to let people seeking asylum work**

A **[town/city/area]** organisation has backed calls for the Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work.

**[Name of organisation here]**, which **[what organisation does]** in **[town/city/area]** has co-signed [ or fully supports ] a report that shows lifting the ban on people seeking asylum that could add £98 million to the Government purse every year.

Businesses, economic think tanks, recruitment firms, trade unions, refugee organisations and faith groups from across the country joined **[organisation]** as the Lift the Ban coalition in backing the report.

The coalition says the savings could be as much as £350 million per year.

**[Name]**, **[position]** at **[organisation]**, said: **“[Add a three to four line quote that addresses the problem, the impact of the issue.**

**“Use the quote as your opportunity to express your opinion, not just repeating the facts.]”**

The report reveals that Australia, the United States, Canada and other European countries have far less restrictive waiting periods and rules for people seeking asylum getting work.

Almost one in two of the 133 people who responded to a question in a skills audit carried out by the coalition – which asked about their occupation before coming to the UK – would be defined as a critical worker in the UK.

This included one in seven who had previously worked in health or social care.

Currently, people seeking asylum are effectively banned from getting a job while waiting for a decision on their claim – which often takes years – and instead must exist of a meagre government allowance of just £5.66 a day, which causes destitution and declining mental health.

People can apply for the right to work after 12 months but are restricted to a small number of roles on the Government’s Shortage Occupation List, which includes classical ballet dancer and hydrogeologist.

At the end of March 2020, 32,000 people in the UK had been waiting more than six months for a decision on their initial asylum claim. It is the highest number since records began and a 68 per cent increase on the previous year.

The coalition is calling on the Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work after six months from making their initial claim.

According to the coalition, lifting the ban on people seeking asylum working is common sense because:

* It lets people support themselves, it takes people off state support, and it increases tax and National Insurance contributions.
* It creates a diverse workforce that can help the UK respond to coronavirus and support the national economic rebuild.
* It helps people who have fled war and persecution to integrate into their communities, learn English and live in dignity.
* People can put their skills to good use to benefit their communities, rather than let them go to waste.

The right to work would make a huge difference to the lives of people seeking asylum in **[town/city/area]** would bring wide-ranging benefits to the community here.

Among those unable to work include businesspeople and entrepreneurs, who could help Britain build back better following the Covid pandemic, and key workers who could support in the continued response to the health crisis.

**[Here, include the story of someone who you support locally who is not allowed to work because they are seeking asylum. Reflect on their skills, their occupation, and the ban on working has on their mental wellbeing and their finances.]**

The latest report builds on previous research by **[organisation]** and the Lift the Ban coalition, which found that:

* 71% of people in the UK say giving people the right to work would help them integrate.
* 94% of people seeking asylum said they would like to work if given permission.
* More than one in three people seeking asylum held an undergraduate or postgraduate degree, while 74% had at least a secondary school education.
* 67% of business leaders think people seeking asylum should be able to work after six months.

**Notes to editors**

1. To calculate the cost-benefit we looked at annual contributions from National Insurance (NI), income tax and savings from asylum subsistence support. For all but the high-end estimate (£356.9million), we did not include annual savings in relation to the cost of asylum accommodation (£6,720 per person). The latest immigration statistics (released May 2020) show that 77% of people seeking asylum are over 18. As such, we estimate 24,000 people waiting more than six months for a decision on their asylum claim are over 18 (out of a total of 31,516 currently waiting more than six months). For national average wage, the taxable income would be £17,914.80 at 20% tax rate, equalling annual tax of £3,582.96. For the same earnings, NI of 12% would give an annual payment of £2,507.96. Annual savings per person on asylum support (£39.60 per week) would be £2,059.
2. Other scenarios:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Annual savings for Government** | | | | |
|  | **£16,777 (minimum wage)** | **£20,000** | **£25,000** | **£30,414.80 (UK average wage: ONS)** |
|
| *NI & income tax paid per person* | £1,727 | £2,758 | £4,358 | £6,091 |
| *Savings per person including £2,059 asylum support* | £3,786 | £4,817 | £6,417 | £8,150 |
| 25% in employment | | | | |
| *Total NI & income tax paid* | £10,362,000 (£10.4m) | £16,548,000 (£16.5m) | £26,148,000 (26.1m) | £36,546,000 (£36.5m) |
| *Total asylum support saved* | £12,354,000 (£12.4m) | £12,354,000 (£12.4m) | £12,354,000 (£12.4m) | £12,354,000 (£12.4m) |
| **Total savings for Government** | **£22.8m** | **£28.9m** | **£38.5m** | **£48.9m** |
| 44% (employment rate for people seeking asylum in Ireland) | | | | |
| *Total NI & income tax paid* | £18,237,120 (£18.2m) | £29,124,480 (£29.1m) | £46,020,480 (£46m) | £64,320,960 (£64.3) |
| *Total asylum support saved* | £21,743,040 (£21.7m) | £21,743,040 (£21.7m) | £21,743,040 (£21.7m) | £21,743,040 (£21.7m) |
| **Total savings for Government** | **£39.9m** | **£50.8m** | **£67.7m** | **£86m** |
| 50% in employment | | | | |
| *Total NI & income tax paid* | £20,724,000 (£20.7m) | £33,096,000 (£33.1m) | £52,296,000 (£52.3m) | £73,092,000 (£73.1m) |
| *Total asylum support saved* | £24,708,000 (£24.7m) | £24,708,000 (£24.7m) | £24,708,000 (£24.7m) | £24,708,000 (£24.7m) |
| **Total savings for Government** | **£45.4m** | **£57.8m** | **£77m** | **£97.8m** |
| 55% (employment rate for people seeking asylum in Quebec) | | | | |
| *Total NI & income tax paid* | £22,796,400 (£22.8m) | £36,405,600 (£36.4m) | £57,525,600 (£57.5m) | £80,401,200 (£80.4m) |
| *Total asylum support saved* | £27,178,800 (£27.2m) | £27,178,800 (£27.2m) | £27,178,800 (£27.2m) | £27,178,800 (£27.2m) |
| **Total savings for Government** | **£50m** | **£63.6m** | **£84.7m** | **£107.6m** |

1. In May 2020 Lift the Ban carried out a skills audit with 283 people seeking asylum. 45% of 133 people who answered a question on their previous occupation had jobs that would have defined them as “critical workers”.
2. Survation polled more than 1,000 business leaders in 2019. Two thirds said people seeking asylum should have the right to work, while the same number said they would employ someone seeking asylum. 66% also said giving people the right to work would help tackle the skills shortage.
3. People seeking asylum in the UK are only able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for one year. However, only a few are granted permission and even fewer find work because employment is restricted to the narrow list of highly skilled professions on the Government’s Shortage Occupation List.
4. The Lift the Ban Coalition is a group of more than 240 organisations including businesses, recruiters, think tanks, trade unions, refugee organisations and faith groups who back policy change to give people seeking asylum the right to work six months after they make their initial claim.