*Please feel free to* ***adapt this template*** *as much or as little as you want. It is always powerful to share your* ***personal experiences****, or to describe the impact reform could have* ***on your community****. If you have personal experience of being banned from the right to work, you should certainly add this to the letter, and describe what change would mean to you or would have meant to you while you had your right to work denied. You should also attach the new* [*Parliamentary briefing*](https://lifttheban.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Lift-the-Ban-Parliamentary-Briefing-2024.pdf) *or the* [*Lift the Ban report*](https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Lift-The-Ban-Common-Sense.pdf) *to your email.*

*You can send this letter by email to your local MP. To find your local MP’s contact details, you can use an online* [*Find My MP*](https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP) *tool. If you would like further help with writing to your MP, please contact* *lifttheban@asylummatters.org**.*

[Your address]

Dear <MP’s name>,

I’m writing to you from [explain who you are]. We are part of the [Lift the Ban](http://lifttheban.co.uk/) coalition, made up of over 300 organisations across the country - including businesses, faith groups, trade unions, think tanks and local councils - all campaigning to ease restrictions on working for people seeking asylum.

[If they have spoken up for refugees in the past, or recently for the first time, begin by thanking them. E.g. We would like to thank you for the representations you made in Parliament in support of refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.]

I am writing to you as my MP to ask if you will consider meeting with [me/our group/members of our community] to discuss a popular policy change that makes sense socially, economically, and politically.

Asylum seekers are currently effectively banned from work and forced to subsist on a Government allowance of only £7 a day, or just £1.25 a day for those in barracks or hotels. Only those who have waited over 12 months and have an occupation on the narrowly defined Immigration Salary List, which includes professions such as nuclear scientist and classical ballet dancer, can apply for authorisation to work.

Something all political parties appeared to agree on during the recent General Election campaign was the UK economy’s need for **economic growth**, which lifting the ban on work for people seeking asylum would undoubtedly deliver. The [Commission for the Integration of Refugees](https://refugeeintegrationuk.com/commission-report/) estimate this would **generate £1.2 billion to the economy** within 5 years, whilst the [National Institute for Economic and Social Research](https://www.niesr.ac.uk/publications/economic-social-lifting-restrictions-people-seeking-asylum?type=discussion-papers) finds that lifting the ban after six months could **save the Government a total of £4.4 billion per year, increase tax revenue by £880 million and add £1 billion to GDP.**

The forced inactivity people seeking asylum currently endure is very harmful to the mental and physical health of people seeking asylum. It is also proven to have an economic scarring effect, harming both individuals and the economy as a whole, slowing down integration which harms social cohesion and preventing people from providing for themselves and their families.

[Add how the ban personally affects you, if relevant, or how you feel about the ban]

Today, over **76,000 people have been waiting more than six months for an initial decision on their asylum claim**, according to the Government’s latest immigration statistics.

Barring people from the labour market is at odds with Government policy which in most instances aims to support people to move away from welfare dependency and into work where possible. This wastes public money, and makes no sense, in particular at a time of labour shortages. Calculations show that if **even half of these people currently waiting over six months found employment then a saving of £280.6 million could be made to the public purse** **every year** through saved benefit payments and increased tax contributions.

It's also a politically sensible policy. **You Gov polling released in 2022 showed that 81% of the public support the right to work.** Majority support for the change has been found in opinion polls for the last 6 years, with voters from across the political spectrum expressing their support.

Businesses also support the change. A 2019 poll showed that **60% of businesses support permission to work** and the CBI, the Association of Labour Providers and the Recruitment and Employment Confederation are all members of the coalition calling for this policy change.

Critically, in successive years since 2021, **the Government’s own advisory body, the Migration and Advisory Committee,** has been advising that **restrictions on people seeking asylum working be reduced** and calling for a move away from the use of the Immigration Salary List to restrict their work.

Lifting the ban and granting full working rights after six months of having lodged an asylum claim would help **prevent exploitation and forced labour**, and **bring the UK into line with international partners and trading allies**. We are currently an international outlier in this policy area, as in all comparable countries across Europe, people are given an opportunity to support themselves at an earlier stage and with fewer restrictions. In France, Spain and the USA, it is a six-month wait and in Germany it is a three-month wait. In Canada and Australia, people can apply to work immediately.

 [Add something about why this change would mean so much to you or your group/organisation]

We would be delighted to meet with you to discuss this issue further.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

<Name>

<Post code>