

Green co-leader joins refugee English lesson to mark anniversary of Casey Review



29 November 2017

***Government has failed to respond to Casey Review**

***Green co-leader joins refugee English lesson and writes to Sajid Javid to demand action**

***Co-leader Jonathan Bartley: "Being unable to communicate is a huge barrier to refugees trying to start a new life in Britain"**

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley will today visit an English language lesson for refugees in Bradford ahead of the anniversary of the Casey Review.

Next week will mark one year since Dame Louise Casey's review into opportunity and integration [1] was published on December 5, 2016 and the Government has yet to respond.

The review highlighted English lessons as the most important factor in helping immigrants integrate into their new communities. However, funding for classes has been cut by more than 50 per cent since 2008 [2].

The Green Party has now written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid [3] to ask how the promotion of English language skills will be included in the Government's upcoming integration strategy.

Bartley said:

"It's disgraceful that the Government has firstly reduced access to such a vital service and secondly ignored the evidence that we are failing to ensure social integration. Being unable to communicate is a huge barrier to refugees trying to start a new life in Britain and will only lead to isolation and loneliness.

"All refugees want to do is settle into their new homes, rebuild their lives and become part of their communities. But the Government is effectively shutting them out by cutting off funding for the English language lessons they need to communicate.

"I'm looking forward to visiting Bradford and seeing firsthand what an impact English lessons can have on refugees' lives and making the case for them to be front and centre of the Government's new integration strategy."

Notes:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-into-opportunity-and-integration>
2. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrants-wait-years-english-classes-government-lessons-esol-a7517221.html>
3. Full text of the letter:

Dear Sajid,

I write to you regarding the Government's failure to respond to the independent review by Dame Louise Casey into opportunity and integration.

The Casey Review was published on December 5, 2016 and revealed a failure of governments to ensure that social integration policies and strategies kept up with immigration levels over the past decade. The report highlighted that access to English language lessons was the most important factor in integration and that resources for language lessons needed to be increased.

In January this year, the all-party parliamentary group on social integration also published a report recommending that migrants be enrolled in compulsory English language classes on arrival.

English lessons are essential for refugees to engage in day-to-day life. A shared language allows refugees to work, study, meet new people and even just share a meal.

However, the Skills Funding Agency has cut English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) funding from £212m in 2008 to £95m in 2015.

I would like to know how the Department for Communities and Local Government intends to respond to the Casey review and if it will be considering increasing funding for lessons in future years.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader

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