

Safeguarding our children's futures

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones safe and well. What a concerning and worrying time we are in.

My mind boggles with the logistical challenge facing our education system

Today millions of students are leaving the schools gates for an indefinite period to help halt the spread of the coronavirus.

Already, many universities have closed their campuses and moved to online teaching.

I was a teacher and member of a senior leadership team. My mind boggles with the logistical challenge facing our education system, especially with nowhere near enough information from the government.

I welcome the news about safeguarding the vulnerable and continuing to teach children of key workers but I want to ensure no one falls through the cracks.

All teachers, parents, guardians and students will experience these closures differently. **Will you take a few minutes to let me know how they're affecting you and your family, as well as anything you think I should raise with the government?**

[Let me know →](#)

Everyone working in our schools deserves our gratitude. I've asked the Government to support supply teachers, who risk losing their entire income. We also need clear advice and resources to be made available to students and their families as soon as possible.

I'm determined to do all I can to safeguard our children's futures alongside our nation's health.

As an MP, I've been trying to strike the right balance between supporting the Government's need to act quickly in a crisis, while raising issues when needed. **But our members have an important part to play as our Party's eyes and ears.**

If you have any experience or concerns regarding the forthcoming school, nursery, sixth form, college and university closures please fill in this form: <https://digitallibdems.typeform.com/to/HJcila>

The more I know about what is happening on the ground, the more I can press for the most vulnerable children and young people to be protected and for the right information to be given to schools and parents.

I'm determined to do all I can to safeguard our children's futures alongside our nation's health.

Please look after yourself and one another.

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Author:

We must ensure the Windrush Scandal can never happen again

People who have every right to live in the UK were wrongly denied access to NHS treatment, housing and other services simply because they don't have the right documents to prove it. Many were wrongfully detained and even deported.

We need urgent action from the Home Secretary to dismantle the Hostile Environment altogether

The way the Government has treated the Windrush Generation – as well as other immigrants and people from BAME backgrounds – is shameful. It is the direct consequence of cruel, discriminatory policies and the toxic culture at the Home Office. Both of those must change.

This Lessons Learned Review is long overdue, and reports that Home Office has suppressed some of its criticisms and recommendations are very concerning.

The Government owes it to the victims of the Windrush Scandal to ensure that nothing like it can happen again, and that cannot happen without a transparent and honest assessment of the Home Office's policies and practices.

Another key recommendation from the [#Windrush](#) Lessons Learned Review:

“The department should run a programme of reconciliation events with members of the Windrush generation.”

pic.twitter.com/ldTAqCdY5p

– Isabelle Parasram Liberal Democrat Vice President
(@IsabelleParasra) [March 19, 2020](#)

Now that the report has finally been published, we need urgent action from the Home Secretary to dismantle the Hostile Environment altogether. That

should begin with repealing the discriminatory 'Right to Rent' law, ending immigration checks and upfront charging in the NHS, and establishing a firewall to prevent public agencies – such as schools, the NHS and the police – from sharing personal information with the Home Office for the purposes of immigration enforcement.

The Government must introduce compassion and common sense into our immigration system.

The Government must introduce compassion and common sense into our immigration system. That means making **detention an absolute last resort**, with a time limit and an end to the detention of vulnerable people.

And it means ending automatic deportations – and stopping altogether the practice of deporting people who came to the UK as children to countries they have never known.

Liberal Democrats celebrate those who choose to come to the UK to work, study or join their families for the enormous contributions they make to our society, our economy and our communities.

We are fighting for a fair, effective immigration system that treats everyone with dignity and respect.

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Author:

[The Liberal Democrat Coronavirus Update](#)

Lib Dems: Govt must act to prevent people falling into destitution



Responding to the Prime Minister's most recent update on the coronavirus, Acting Leader of the Liberal Democrats Ed Davey said:

"People cannot wait any longer for news about what they will have to live on **if they lose their jobs**. Few businesses are in a position to "stand by their workers" when their income stream has **collapsed**. This is about putting food on the table."

The government must act **now** to prevent people falling into destitution. We need to see **grants immediately for struggling small businesses** before they are forced to lay off staff. And we need bold Government action **subsiding workers' salaries** before we see tens of thousands of job losses.

These are difficult and uncertain times. **We are calling on government to act now to give people financial security.**

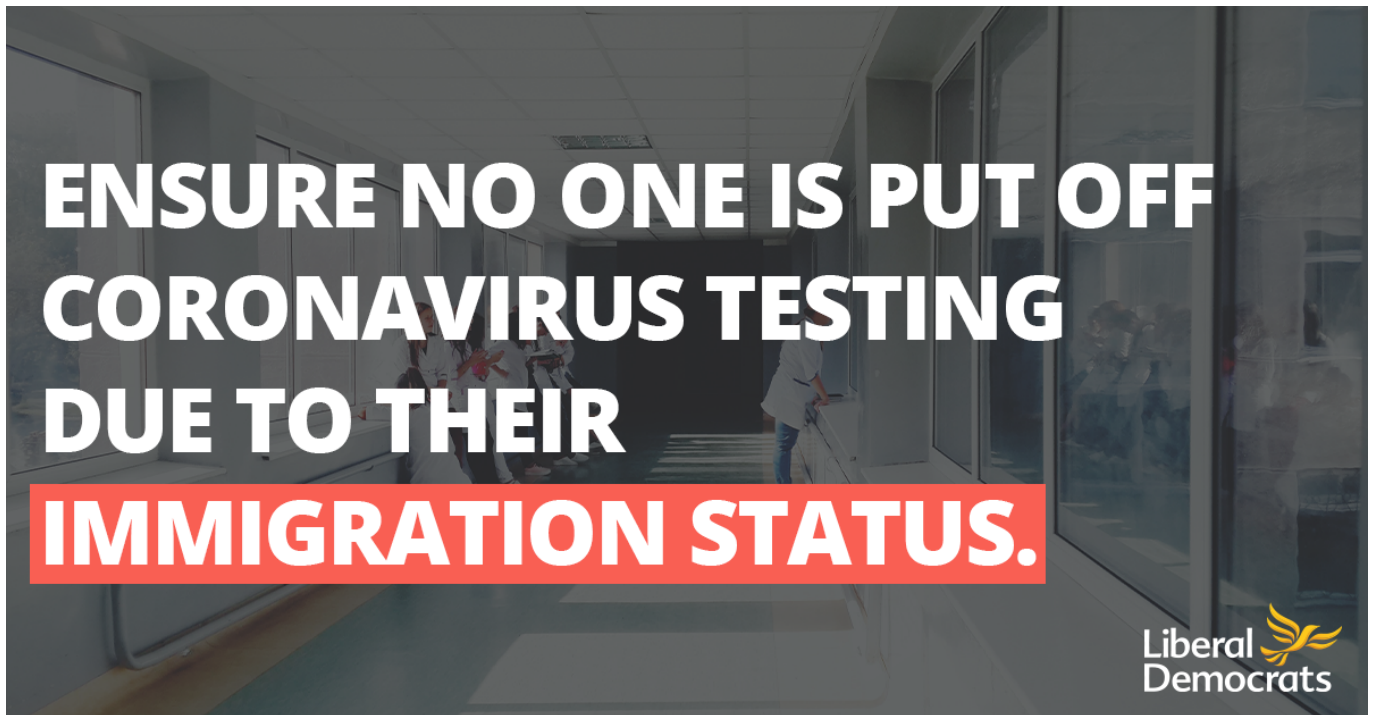
Liberal Democrats want to make sure that everyone gets the help they need as soon as possible throughout this [#covid19UK](#) crisis.

That's why [@EdwardJDavey](#) has called on the government for 4 further financial support measures to help those who are particularly vulnerable. pic.twitter.com/ngCLTBOGJF

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [March 19, 2020](#)

Lib Dems raise concern over migrants' access to

coronavirus testing



Yesterday we called on the government to guarantee that no data will be passed from the NHS to the Home Office during the coronavirus crisis for the sake of public health.

Speaking in the House of Commons yesterday, Wendy Chamberlain MP called on the Home Secretary to make sure that “no one who needs to be tested in relation to Covid 19, or indeed seek treatment, is **put off by uncertainty over their immigration status**”.

Under the hostile environment, there is a real risk that people who find themselves gravely ill with Covid-19 will be **too scared to seek treatment** in case it leads to **questions about their right to live in the UK**. This fear risks putting people off going to hospital for testing, which in turn may lead to **greater transmission** in the wider community.

We've called on the Govt to guarantee that no data will be passed from the NHS to the Home Office during the [#coronacrisis](#) for the sake of public health

“No one should be put off being tested due to uncertainty over their immigration status”-[@wendychambLD](https://t.co/WmpeP2zgTK)

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [March 20, 2020](#)

The Home Secretary's failure to provide immediate clarity here is deeply troubling. This is purely about what is in the interest of public health, rather than any wider ideology about immigration.

We have urged the government to urgently make clear that, regardless of your

immigration status, if you are seriously ill, go to a hospital. That is the only way to effectively provide **life-saving treatment** to the most unwell, and to **limit the prospect of people transmitting this virus to others**.

EU citizens must have automatic right to stay, as Settled Status refusals soar



We are calling for EU citizens to be given the automatic right to stay in the UK, as new official figures show the number of people refused Settled Status soaring last month.

Yesterday Christine Jardine MP urged the Government to back the Private Members' Bill she tabled last month that would **guarantee the rights of EU citizens in the UK**.

The Home Office statistics, published today, show that **300 applications were refused in February**, after a total of only 7 refusals in the scheme up to the end of January.

They also show that **just 1.7 million of the estimated 3.6 million EU citizens** in the UK have been granted Settled Status so far. A further **1.2 million have only been given the temporary "Pre-Settled Status"**, which forces them to reapply within 5 years. Meanwhile, there is a backlog of **345,000 applications waiting for a decision**.

Even before the [#CoronaCrisis](#), Liberal Democrats warned that tens of thousands of EU citizens will be left without Settled Status when the government's arbitrary deadline hits next year.

It will be a new Windrush Scandal on an even bigger scale. <https://t.co/jas0UeAYcj>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [March 20, 2020](#)

EU citizens in the UK have been living under a cloud of uncertainty for far too long. They are our families and friends, our colleagues and carers. **They must have the right to stay.**

Even **before the coronavirus crisis**, we were warning that tens of thousands of EU citizens will be left without Settled Status when the Conservative Government's arbitrary deadline hits next year.

That would leave thousands of people effectively undocumented and at risk of eviction, detention and even deportation. It will be a new **Windrush Scandal on an even bigger scale.**

We will keep fighting for the rights of EU citizens. The Government should back our Bill to give them the automatic right to stay in the UK, as Boris Johnson has **repeatedly promised.**

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Author:

[Scottish member? Have your say on your new committees](#)

Elections for Scottish Executive and Policy Committee are going ahead – and here's your chance to hear from the candidates. We've put together the submitted manifestos so you can make an informed decision on who to choose.

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Author:

[Coronavirus Community Taskforce](#)

I'm so proud of our movement.

On Monday, I emailed asking members to pause their normal campaigning and

prioritise community action to help those affected by coronavirus. Since then I've been overwhelmed by the response.

Day in, day out, Liberal Democrats all over the country do all they can for their communities. **But now, when it counts more than ever, you're stepping up to protect the most vulnerable in our society. I couldn't be prouder to be a Liberal Democrat today.**

Our team has put together a resource kit to help you help your community. We'll be adding to this kit all the time – please share it widely.

[View resources](#)

But as this outbreak worsens, there's more we need to do. This coming weekend should have been our huge National Action Weekend for the elections this spring. In light of the cancellation of those elections, we need to turn our people power and resources to the matter at hand.

That's why I have launched a Coronavirus Community Taskforce.

It's time to do what Liberal Democrats do best. We're campaigners and community champions. We know what works, and our members are fizzing with new and innovative ideas. We need to use our knowledge, resources, and true care for our communities for support for the most vulnerable.

To find out how to get started with the Taskforce, click here:

www.libdems.org.uk/coronavirus.

I've asked Sir Stuart Etherington, who has been the Chief Executive of the National Council for Voluntary Organisations since 1994, to Chair our group.

We also recognise that this is a difficult time for all of you. It's completely normal to be feeling anxious or worried, especially if you or someone you know is vulnerable.

We're in the process of putting together mental health resources for our members. In the meantime, I've found this advice from Mind really useful – www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing.

Each and every one of us needs to do what we can during this difficult time. I'm so proud of everything you've already done, and I know you'll step up to do whatever more you can.

Please take care of yourselves, your families, and your communities.

If you have questions about party activities, you can always find the latest advice here: www.libdems.org.uk/covid19. This advice will be updated on a rolling basis.

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Author: