HIGH STREET CHALLENGE HANDBOOK

BRING BUSINESSES ONBOARD TO WIN THE RIGHT TO WORK
Right now, people seeking asylum in the UK are banned from working and forced to live in poverty. Instead of allowing skilled builders, chefs, farmers and medical staff to support themselves by working, they are forced to waste their skills and talents.

The ban is harmful to everyone. It takes the harshest toll on people seeking asylum, but also the UK economy misses out on tax revenue and much-needed skills by leaving people frozen out of work.

Since 2018, a coalition of almost 300 charities, trade unions, businesses, faith groups and think tanks have all been campaigning to overturn the Government’s ban on people seeking asylum being able to work.

Together we have won support for the campaign across political parties. Now we need your help to raise the profile of the campaign in your local community.

If we can build mass support with local businesses, it’s more likely that the Government will listen to common sense and overturn the ban.

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**THE PURPOSE OF THIS PACK**

This handbook is for individuals and groups who want to help bring about this change. By encouraging local businesses in your area to see and speak out about the benefits of lifting the ban, we’ll grow the momentum for the right to work for people seeking asylum.
WHAT WE’VE ACHIEVED SO FAR...

81%* OF THE PUBLIC SUPPORT THE RIGHT TO WORK FOR PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

180,000 PEOPLE HAVE SIGNED A PETITION TO THE HOME OFFICE TO LIFT THE BAN IN 2020

SINCE 2018 TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE HAVE EMAILED THEIR MP CALLING FOR CHANGE ON THE ISSUE

THE HOUSE OF LORDS VOTED 3 TIMES IN 2022 TO LIFT THE BAN

LABOUR, LIB DEMS, SNP, PLAID CYMRU & GREENS HAVE ALL PUBLICLY COMMITTED TO LIFTING THE BAN

NEARLY 70 CONSERVATIVE PARLIAMENTARIANS WROTE TO THE PRIME MINISTER IN 2022 TO GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE POLICY

*Liff The Ban campaigners gather in London

YouGov March 2022
We’re calling on local businesses of all shapes and sizes across the UK to become a Lift the Ban Business Ally. We need your help to ask businesses, shop owners and business networks in your community to back the campaign.

You can aim to get as many shops and businesses onboard as you can. Once they’ve agreed to be a Business Ally you can amplify their support by organising an event or by getting an article in your local media.

**WHY NOW?**

From the start, Lift the Ban has had strong support from large national businesses who see the economic benefits of giving people a chance. With skills gaps deepening across many industries and businesses struggling to find the employees to meet their needs, the case for lifting the ban has never been stronger. Now we need local businesses to support lifting the ban so local MPs see that businesses and people in their area want to see change.

Since the pandemic, many businesses have realised the crucial role migrants play in their local services and economy. As the Government has consistently rejected calls to give people seeking asylum the right to work, it’s vital that we continue to build public and business support to challenge this. It also raises awareness of the ban in our communities and brings new voices into our call for reform.

**WHY ARE BUSINESSES IMPORTANT?**

The Government looks to business voices to advise and guide its decisions. We know there are many businesses who would like to welcome people seeking asylum into work and benefit from their skills and expertise. National business groups including the CBI, REC and ALP are already members of the Lift the Ban coalition.

By joining other diverse voices within our coalition, businesses can help to show decision-makers that the business community sees people seeking asylum as an asset that would strengthen their workforce and boost the economy.

**WHICH BUSINESSES SHOULD I APPROACH?**

You can contact any! From high street shops to hairdressers, pubs, care homes and offices, we’re looking for support from a variety of businesses.
We’re asking businesses to sign up to become a Lift the Ban Business Ally to show their support:

“As a business serving my local community, I’m backing the Lift the Ban campaign. People seeking asylum should be allowed to work, in this community and across the UK.”

Businesses who sign up to be a Business Ally will have their name and logo on the supporter’s page of our website: www.lifttheban.co.uk

CASE STUDY: BUSINESS SUPPORT IN ACTION

Campaigners in Leeds have been busy approaching local business owners to ask their support for the campaign. Lift the Ban campaigner, Jita, who owns her own beauty business, has been promoting the campaign with posters in her salon and by chatting to customers about the campaign as she paints their nails.

She has also spread the word in her local community, sharing the campaign with residents who visit the local community centre which hosts her business.
THE HIGH STREET CHALLENGE

1. PREPARE AND JOIN UP WITH OTHERS IN YOUR AREA

2. HEAD OUT INTO YOUR COMMUNITY

3. TURN SUPPORT INTO ACTION

4. MAXIMISE THE SUPPORT

5. SHARE WITH LOCAL DECISION MAKERS

LIFT THE BAN HIGH STREET CHALLENGE HANDBOOK
**HIGH STREET CHALLENGE: A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE**

**STEP 1**
**PREPARE**

- Link up with other campaigners in your area to coordinate. Email us at: lifttheban@asylummatters.org to find out what others are doing in your area.
- Choose some target businesses in your community. This might be the local shops on your high street, shopping centre or business park.
- You can also contact local trade union branches and Chambers of Commerce.
- Check you have all the materials you need including a sign-up sheet to record the details of the businesses who agree to support the campaign. Download them here: www.lifttheban.co.uk/#high-street

**STEP 2**
**HEAD OUT INTO YOUR COMMUNITY**

- Approach local businesses in-person, by telephone, email or through social media.
- Introduce yourself and ask if they can spare you a minute to talk about Lift the Ban.
- Remember they might be busy and under pressure, so always be patient and ask them the best way for you to speak to them about the campaign.
- Tell them about the key arguments for lifting the ban. Find these in our latest report at www.lifttheban.co.uk and watch this brilliant video of campaigner Cathy for inspiration www.bit.ly/3gBzMvI
- Mention some of the businesses who are part of the campaign, like Ben & Jerry’s and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), as well as any other local voices.
- Once you have won their support, ask them to take action.
STEP 3
TURN SUPPORT INTO ACTION

- **Become a Lift the Ban Business Ally**
  Ask the business owner or manager to show their support by becoming an ally. Record it on your sign-up sheet, email us at lifttheban@asylummatters.org and they will be added to our dedicated web page.

- **Take a photo or video to share**
  Ask whether you could take a photo or video with them in their shop or business to use on social media or in the media to show their support. Remember to use the hashtag #LiftTheBan.

- **Put up a poster or sticker**
  Shops and businesses can put our Lift the Ban sticker or poster in their window to share their support for the campaign.

STEP 4
MAXIMISE THEIR SUPPORT

Once you have a good relationship with the business, you can think about how you can publicise that support to ensure it has the maximum impact.

- Organise a local event and bring together local businesses, people with experience of the asylum system, local MPs and councillors, and members of the public to hear more about the campaign.

- Use our template press release to let your local media know about the support of the business and gain more awareness of the issue: www.lifttheban.co.uk/#high-street.

- Ask the businesses to put you in touch with others in their network who could support the campaign. For example, you could approach the local Chambers of Commerce, local business associations and trade union branches.

STEP 5
SHARE WITH LOCAL DECISION MAKERS

- Share all your hard work with local decision makers, such as your MP and local councillors. This helps them to know how important this campaign is to their constituents. You can find template letters you can adapt at: www.lifttheban.co.uk/#high-street.
FIND YOUR MP
Your local MP is responsible for representing you in Parliament. You can find out who they are and their contact details at:

members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP

Many MPs are also on Twitter, so you can tweet them about the campaign.

FIND YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLORS
Local decision makers have an important role to play to help raise the profile of the issue in your area. You can find the names and contact details for your local representatives at:

gov.uk/find-your-local-councillors

MATERIALS TO HELP YOU
We can send you posters, stickers and leaflets to help you with your campaigning. Email us at

lifttheban@asylummatters.org

You'll find a sign-up sheet, a template press release and other template letters on our website:

www.lifttheban.co.uk/#high-street

CASE STUDY: BUSINESS SUPPORT IN ACTION
When Belfast pub owner Pedro Donald was approached by a local Lift the Ban coalition member, the Participation and the Practice of Rights network (PPR), he immediately saw the practical and compassionate reasons for getting behind the campaign.

Pedro recognised the benefits of helping people seeking asylum, as well as the advantages to the hospitality industry in his area which was struggling to recruit enough staff. He took part in an interview with a local newspaper, recorded a video of support and gave his backing in social media posts.

Pedro went on to hold an event for Lift the Ban at his pub alongside PPR, which was covered on the local TV news, giving experts by experience like Mohammed a platform to share lived experience.

Campaigner Flo meets MP Holly Lynch in Halifax

Campaigner Flo meets MP Holly Lynch in Halifax

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Social media can be a powerful way to support campaigns. You can use it to raise awareness, encourage others to get involved and connect with people in your local area who may want to help.

Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are all great platforms to use in your campaigning. Remember to always use the hashtag #LiftTheBan in your tweets and posts. Use the hashtag for your local area too, for example #Southampton, so that others near you can find your posts.

IDEAS OF WHAT TO POST

- Visit your local high street and take a photo of yourself there. Use your post to explain your aim and what the campaign is all about.
- When a business has signed up to the campaign, work with them on some posts, photos and even videos to announce their support and encourage other businesses to get involved. Don’t forget to tag the business’ own social media accounts in your posts.
- If you’re a refugee or a person seeking asylum, you can consider posting about your own experience of the ban.
- Alternatively, if you don’t have lived experience yourself, you can see if there are any refugees or people seeking asylum who may feature in your social media to talk about their experience.
- Share any links to local media coverage your High Street Challenge generates.

VIDEO

Short videos are popular on social media. You can film yourself on your high street talking about the campaign, your own experience if you’re a refugee or someone seeking asylum or ask a supportive business to talk about why they think lifting the ban is a good idea.

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

Here are some suggested social media posts to get you started but do adapt these to your local area and circumstances.

TWEETS

I’m looking for businesses in #InsertNameOfTown to help #LiftTheBan so people seeking asylum can use their skills, support the local community and rebuild their lives. Get in touch to find out more.

Right now, people seeking asylum are banned from working. I’m looking for local businesses in #InsertNameOfTown to back #LiftTheBan so that people can use their skills and help our community thrive. Contact me to find out more about the campaign.

FACEBOOK

Right now, people seeking asylum are banned from working. This means that skilled builders, chefs, farmers and medical staff can’t help our local community thrive. It takes the toughest toll on people seeking asylum, but also the UK economy misses out on tax revenue and much-needed specialists. I’m looking for businesses in #InsertNameOfTown to help #LiftTheBan – get in touch to find out more.

INSTAGRAM

Right now, people seeking asylum are banned from working. I’m looking for local businesses in #InsertNameOfTown to back #LiftTheBan so that people can use their skills and help our community thrive. Do you know a local business that wants to hear more? Get in touch.
SAFETY FIRST

Always ask people for their permission if you’re taking photos of them to post on social media.

Avoid sharing sensitive or revealing information that you or they wouldn’t want to be seen in public.

TOP TIPS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

- Follow other people and interact with them.
- Always use the hashtag #LiftTheBan so we can find your posts.
- Share interesting news and updates on the campaign.
- Take some relevant photos and use them in your posts.

Thank you for helping raise awareness of the campaign in your community.

TOGETHER, WE CAN LIFT THE BAN.