

Sanctuary in Parliament: Practical Guide 28th November 2017

This document outlines key practical and logistical information for Sanctuary in Parliament as well as guidance on how to get the most out of meeting with your MP.

- **REGISTRATION is from 12:00pm. START TIME is 12:30pm.** The programme is tight so there will be no slippage on start time and we expect to have everyone registered and settled in the room by 12:30pm.
- **Travel:** If you are arriving from Victoria Coach station it is about a 15 to 20 minute walk and directions can be found [here](#). The nearest Underground Station is Westminster.
- **Entrance:** Please use St Stephen's Entrance, marked 9 on the [Parliamentary Estate map](#), also attached.
- **Security:** There is airport style security. Some police officers will be carrying guns. Please allow at least 30 mins to get through security. You do not need to bring ID. Large bags will not be allowed through. You can find a [visual guide to banned items here](#), which includes guns and drugs. There is more information about the security procedures and banned items here: <http://www.parliament.uk/visiting/access/security/>
- **Children:** Please don't bring children to the event, unless already discussed with us.
- **Location:** The event is taking place in **Committee Room 14 from 12pm to 4 pm. Committee Room 13 is available from 2-4pm for small group conversations with MPs.** The Principal Floor Plans (attached) shows the route from Westminster Hall, through Central Lobby to the Lower Waiting Hall, from where you take the stairs to the Upper Waiting Hall. The First Floor Plan (also attached) shows the route from the Upper Waiting Hall to Committee Room 14. Toilets and lifts are also shown.
- **The space is very limited and there will not be room for large bags.** Contact us if you need somewhere to leave an overnight bag before attending the event.
- **Registration:** Please appoint one person to register your group. If you are arriving **before 11:30am, please register in the Jubilee Café area just off Westminster Hall. After 12.00pm, please register outside Committee Room 14.**
Look out for the City of Sanctuary sign. If you are coming later and won't be able to register by 12:30, please let us know.
- **Delays:** If you are delayed on the day, please **ring or text Colleen on 07443575231 or Forward on 07982 136368.**
- **Identification:** We will supply sticker badges to which you can add your name. We will also have cards to display in front of each group so that MPs can easily identify where you are in the committee room. Feel free to bring along any other identifiers from your groups such as place

name badges/ T-shirts / colour sashes etc. if you have them. We would also be grateful if you can nominate a lead person to keep an eye out for your MP if possible.

- **Food:** The public café is off Westminster Hall and has normal prices and basic sandwiches and hot snacks. You can keep **food** in your bag but not eat in the building, other than purchased food in the café. It may be a good idea to plan an **early lunch before** the event starts.
- **Drink:** Please bring **water** bottles with you. There will be no other drinks or refreshments in the committee room.
- **Toilets:** There are porta loo **toilets** outside the main entrance and there are also toilets along the committee room corridor. Other toilets are shown on the accompanying maps.
- **Breaks:** Our programme is jam packed until 2pm so you may want to plan a break for your group, possibly at the end of a session, if you feel you will need one.
- **Dress Code:** There is **no dress code** so wear what is comfortable for you.
- **Speakers:** You should know already if anyone from your city / organisation will be speaking and when. Guidelines for speakers will be sent to you separately. Some speakers will speak from the front, others directly to the media and all can speak to visiting MPs.
- **Programme:** The full programme will be sent separately to these guidelines.
- **Volunteers and Media:** We will need other volunteers to stay in the Lobby to talk to MPs as they pass, tell them about Sanctuary in Parliament and provide briefings. We also hope to have groups/individuals willing to talk to the media throughout the event.
- **Arranging MP Meetings:** Please send the draft programme to your MP and make arrangements for when you will talk to them privately in Committee Room 13 (between 2pm and 4pm). We have booked this room to manage these discussions but we don't want this to stop MPs from listening to our testimonies in the main event so please encourage your MP to have time for both. Please also ensure that your MP has a copy of the policy briefing, which will be available on the day.
- **Photography:** We will have a photographer available in Committee Room 13 with a banner and campaign signs. Please encourage your MP to have their photograph taken with you in front of this banner for tweeting/social media and follow up.
- **MP Engagement:** Lobbying your MP directly can be a daunting prospect for many people but it needn't be stressful or difficult. Preparation before the meeting will improve the chances of a positive outcome.
 - Read the policy briefing on destitution and make sure you understand the key messages. Similarly, if you intend to talk about other topics make sure you have done your research.
 - Research your MP before the meeting. What is their background and interests? Have they spoken publically about asylum and refugees previously? Do they hold a specific portfolio within their party?
 - Make some brief notes of what you want to say and what you want to ask your MP to do.
 - Remember that MPs aren't experts on everything and it is likely that you will know more about the subject than they will. Avoid jargon and explain the issues as clearly as possible.
 - Make a clear and unambiguous request for their support. In our follow-up engagement with MPs we will be asking them to table parliamentary questions on what the Government

intends to do to tackle destitution. The Home Office will then answer these questions in Parliament in January. **Ask if your MP will agree to put questions to the Home Office on your behalf.** If they ask for details on what kind of questions these will be, we've included our proposals in the annex below.

- **MP Engagement Feedback:** An MP engagement form will be available on the day. This will record some of the basic details of your conversations with your MP. Please try to complete this form as it will allow us to target our follow up actions more effectively.
- **Follow up with your MP:** As noted above, we will be asking MPs to follow up the event by asking the Home Office questions on the Government's actions on destitution. We will provide full guidelines and information on follow-up activities after the event. If your local MP could not attend the event then please send them the briefing and try to arrange to meet them in your constituency to discuss the issues raised.
- The Twitter hashtag for the event is #DignityNotDestitution and #SiP2017

We are very excited about this opportunity and are looking forward to a great day!

Contacts

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Forward 07982136368

Annex: Questions for the Home Office

The below are proposed questions on destitution policy for MPs to ask the Home Office (see the MP Engagement section above for more info).

Permission to work:

If she will make it her Department's policy to grant asylum applicants who have been waiting for longer than six months for a decision on their application permission to work without the Shortage Occupation list restrictions?

How many asylum applicants have been granted permission to work in the last twelve months?

Move on period:

What assessment her Department has made of whether the period given to newly recognised refugees to transition from asylum support to other forms of support is adequate?

If she will increase the period refugees continue to receive asylum support after receiving a positive decision on their asylum application to 50 days?

Asylum support:

What plans she has to increase the levels of financial support given to people seeking asylum?

What assessment has been done of the impact of living on £36.95 per week on the physical and mental well-being of people seeking asylum who have been waiting on a decision for prolonged periods of time / or for more than 6 months?

General:

What steps she is taking to ensure that people seeking asylum and refugees do not experience destitution?