



Guidance Notes on using the Petition:

We are organising a petition to ask the government to moderate their stance on the way refugees and asylum seekers are treated in this country. This is what you need to do:

1. Go to the website and download the form and print out as many copies as you need. Each form holds 15 signatures.
2. Ask your parish priest if he or you can make an announcement at Mass that forms are available to sign after the service.
3. Have various Conference members attend Mass at different times to encourage people to sign the petition.
4. Bring copies of the petition to Conference meetings and to other events being held at the church to ask as many people as possible to sign.
5. Please ensure that all fields are filled out: name, address, postcode and signature. Without these they will not be counted.
6. Post the forms back to the SVP, **c/o Campaigns Team, or c/o Bryan Allen, SVP, 9 Larcom St, Walworth, London, SE17 9RX. The deadline is December 5th.**
7. If people want to know more details, you can show them the wording below which lays out in more detail why the SVP is so concerned about the government's treatment of refugees, and gives some examples of the recommendations that we would like them to adopt.

Over one hundred SVP parish groups are currently working to ensure that the human rights of all asylum seekers are upheld in the face of :

1. arbitrary detention of those who have committed no crime.
2. destitution, where those seeking sanctuary are left homeless, without permission to work and with no access to funds or benefits.

Our Vincentian values motivate us :

- to welcome those seeking sanctuary in our country and to treat them with respect and dignity
- to seek justice and freedom for those living on the margins of our society, trapped in an existence of poverty and despair.

We are gravely concerned about the manner in which all asylum seekers are currently treated in the UK. The 2015/6 Immigration Bill threatens to make those seeking sanctuary even more vulnerable. The proposed Bill will increase the powers of immigration officers, leave more families homeless and unable to support themselves and further isolate and stigmatise an already marginalised group.

We believe we have a moral responsibility as Christians to be a voice for those who have no voice, for as Pope Francis reminds us, refugees and asylum seekers are our brothers and sisters.

We deeply regret the exclusion of the recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Inquiry into the Use of Immigration Detention, and we urge the government to reconsider and to adopt these recommendations.

Here are some of the key recommendations made by the Inquiry:

1. Introduce a time limit of 28 days on the length of time anyone can be detained in immigration detention.
2. Women who are victims of rape and sexual violence should not be detained.
3. Pregnant women should never be detained for immigration purposes.
4. Individuals with a mental health condition should only be detained under very exceptional circumstances.