



## Don't believe the lies about refugees

The number of asylum claims per population in Britain is lower than the EU average and far lower than in developing countries where 85% of refugees live.

### Are refugees “illegal”?

- Everyone has the right to apply for asylum in any country like the UK that has signed the 1951 UN Convention and to remain there until their claim has been assessed, despite claims they are “illegal”.
- The Convention recognises that people may have to use irregular means to reach the country where they want to claim asylum.
- Most ‘safe’ routes to claim asylum from abroad have been closed. The solution is to provide safe passage like the Ukraine Visa Scheme did for example.
- Over 80% of asylum seekers in the UK have successful claims, and are awarded refugee status or humanitarian protection!

### Claims taking 3 years to process

- The reason additional housing for refugees is needed is because government agencies are taking up to two to three years to process a claim.
- If claims were dealt with promptly, extra housing wouldn't be needed; refugees could get on with their lives, work in vacancies that cannot be filled and contribute to the system by paying taxes. About 1,200 medically qualified refugees are recorded on the British Medical Association data base.

### Are they likely to be criminals?

- No! they are far more likely to be qualified, trained and skilled workers. Statistics show they are less likely to commit a crime than those born in the UK

### Who is getting rich on taxpayers' money?

- Not refugees! People seeking asylum are not allowed to claim benefits or work in the UK. Asylum support for those living in hotel accommodation is £9.10 a week.
- Hotel owners and outsourcing companies are cashing in on the need for emergency accommodation for refugees caused by the Home Office backlog on processing applications. Clearsprings which provides housing management for the Home Office, paid its owners a dividend of £28m in 2022.

*Blackwater Valley Friend of the Earth are an antiracist group with diversity and inclusion at our core.*

Acknowledgments: International Rescue Committee; The Migration Observatory; House of Lords Library; Refugee Council.



## Statement for Rushmoor

We, as residents of Rushmoor and representatives of organisations that work in the borough, wish to make this statement:

The UK has a proud history of providing protection for refugees. In our increasingly unstable world, the 1951 UN Refugee Convention remains one of the bedrocks of the international rules-based order.

The right to seek asylum is a legal right we all share. Sharing responsibility for global issues is the fair thing to do. Welcoming people from other countries strengthens us by making our community more diverse and more flexible in our fast-changing world.

Those escaping war and persecution come to the UK in search of a safe haven. They want to rebuild their lives and contribute to our communities. Many will feel alone and isolated because they have lost the support networks that most of us take for granted – communities, colleagues, relatives and friends. Some will have endured persecution, torture and bereavement. We believe refugees and those seeking asylum should be welcomed. Everyone has the right to seek safety.

We oppose the demonstrations taking place in Rushmoor, in front of asylum seekers' accommodation, demanding that the people living there must be removed. We oppose banners making false claims and chants intended to intimidate. Together we must counter the misinformation circulated by the far right, and stand up to racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism.

We stand with the majority in our community who oppose violence and racism. We will work to bring our community together, tackle the crises we face and build unity against those seeking to divide us.

Acknowledgments: Red Cross; Refugee Council; Amnesty International; Refugee Action; Asylum Matters; Friends of the Earth; Stand up to Racism.