

SHOW YOUR HEART



**TOGETHER
WITH
REFUGEES**

A Response to the Nationality and Borders Bill



The Church of Scotland

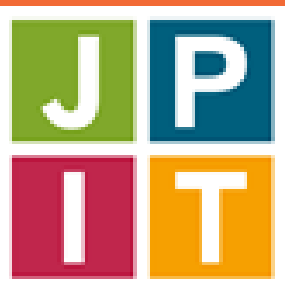


The
United
Reformed
Church

The **Methodist** Church



**BAPTISTS
TOGETHER**





THE POINT OF THIS PACK

EQUIPPING CONGREGATIONS TO

Prepare

Learn about the Bill and its consequences.

Pray

Make the safety of refugees part of your prayer life.

Participate

Publicly engage with the Bill.

Persuade

Start to change the wider narrative.

This pack is designed to help you start to think about the Nationality and Borders Bill and how Christians can respond to it. It is full of links to our updates and informative material, so you can stay on top of the latest developments to the Nationality and Borders Bill in more detail.



MORE INFORMATION

[Click here for our detailed briefing on the Bill.](#)

WHAT IS THE NATIONALITY AND BORDERS BILL?

It is a proposed new law, in the UK Parliament in Westminster, which would change the way that decisions are made about asylum claims for people who come to seek safety and sanctuary in the UK.

WHAT WOULD IT CHANGE?

New legislation in the bill seeks to:

- Make it a criminal offence to knowingly arrive in the UK without permission.
- Create a difference between 'regular' and 'irregular' routes into the country.
- Reduce the rights of those who enter the UK via unofficial routes. Including limiting welfare support, family reunion rights and their long-term right to stay in the UK.



WHY IS THE BILL CONCERNING?

- It would create two classes of asylum seeker based not on what forced them to flee their home but on the opportunities available to travel to seek sanctuary in the UK.
- It would give the government powers to expel people seeking asylum to a 'safe country' they have passed through on the way to the UK, regardless of whether they have connections there.
- The Bill outlines a shift to putting people seeking asylum in out-of-town 'reception centres', rather than housing them in the community where they have access to practical support.
- The Bill fails to set any clear target for resettling refugees in the UK through international resettlement programmes.



MORE INFORMATION

[Click here to read the open statement from church leaders.](#)

WHAT HAS THE CHURCH SAID AND DONE?

- Many Church leaders and Christian organisations have expressed concern about these proposals. In May 2021, more than 80 Church organisations issued an Open Statement to the Home Secretary challenging the "lack humanity and respect for human dignity" in the Bill.
- Many Church groups across the UK, including The Baptist Union of Great Britain, The Methodist Church and The URC, have joined 'Together with Refugees', a new coalition of more than 300 organisations, which is calling for a more humane approach to people seeking protection in the UK. [Click here to find out about Together With Refugees.](#)
- The Church of Scotland signed a civil society letter opposing the new plan for immigration and arguing that it intrude on the devolved competences of the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government, such as the Scottish legal system, anti-trafficking legislation and age assessment process. [Click here to read this letter.](#)

NAS' STORY

Nas was only 14 when he arrived in the UK from his native Afghanistan, after a journey through Iran, Turkey and across Europe, in 2010. His mother paid for smugglers to take him to the UK after it became clear that the Taliban, who controlled the tiny village Nas's family lived in, wanted to recruit him. His father had been kidnapped for refusing to join the group, and his brother and sister were killed. "You go with this man," his mother said, handing him over to the smuggler. Nas didn't know where they were going, but followed his mother's orders. Seven months later, he arrived in the UK in the back of a refrigerator lorry.

Once in the UK, Nas applied for asylum. He was placed with a foster family and started going to school in the West Midlands.

Nas still had to work extremely hard to get his asylum claim approved. He had to negotiate interviews with the Home Office, liaise with his MP and started a petition and media campaign to support his case.

Nas' claim was finally approved and he is a committed member of his community in the West Midlands. Nas supports the work of a national refugee charity and seeks to help people in a similar position to his to access the help they need and know their rights.

Because Nas was brought into the UK by an 'irregular route', under the proposed changes, he would not have been eligible to seek asylum. His story and his suffering would have been immediately dismissed.



The full article and its imagery were originally published by [Migrant Voice](#). It has been published here with the charity's permission.



MORE RESOURCES

[Click here to find resources to help you pray for refugees, both personally and as a church.](#)

3 THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

1. Asylum Seekers - Pray for people seeking sanctuary in the UK. Pray for their safety and the meeting of their needs throughout their time in the UK. Pray that they would be treated with dignity and justice.
2. Decision Makers - Pray that Parliamentarians would be moved to legislate in a way which protects the rights and needs of asylum seekers. Pray that they would listen to the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees, and help that shape their decision making. Pray for successful amendments to the Bill which would remove the two-tier system and the differentiation between asylum seekers.
3. The Country - Pray for citizens of the UK. Pray for an attitude towards asylum seekers characterised by grace and welcome rather than fear. Pray for those working to create a welcoming society. Pray that organisations and individuals would act with generosity to serve the needs of asylum seekers.

PARTICIPATE



WHAT'S THE IDEA?

Join with thousands of others across the country who believe that welcoming asylum seekers is part of who we are! Display an orange heart as the symbol of the Together With Refugees campaign, declaring that we stand together with those seeking sanctuary in the UK.

SHOW YOUR HEART CAMPAIGN

ACTION PLAN

1. Alongside your church congregation, collect signs of support for refugees. These could be photos of people holding orange hearts or hand-written messages of support for refugees. Think about how you can include the voices of asylum seekers in your community or congregation in a way which amplifies their experience but is sensitive to their desires.
2. Collate these signs into one orange heart display such as the one on the left of this page. [Click here to see other examples.](#)
3. Unveil your display! Host an event where people can gather to celebrate welcoming refugees. Take a look on the next page for ideas.



PARTICIPATE

HOST AN EVENT TO REVEAL YOUR DISPLAY

[Click here to find information from Together With Refugees about Show Your Heart displays across the UK.](#)

WHERE?

Host an unveiling event of your display at your church or at a local landmark. Somewhere which will catch the attention of passers-by.

WHEN?

Together with Refugees are suggesting that events take place on 6th December 2021. There are several key dates coming up over the passage of the Bill. Coordinate your unveiling to coincide with one of these to maximise relevance and potential coverage.

HOW?

Give your unveiling event its own character and identity. Give the event structure and intrigue by integrating it with a prayer vigil, a special refugee service or your church's advent programme.

TO WHOM?

Garner as much attention for your event as possible. Write to your local newspaper and encourage them to cover the event. Create as much buzz as you can on social media, sharing photos, videos and write-ups.



MORE INFORMATION

[Click here to check out our detailed guide on how to connect with your MP and what to say on issues surrounding the Nationality and Borders Bill.](#)

SHOW YOUR HEART CAMPAIGN

CONTACT YOUR MP

It is so important to use the momentum of your congregation's Show Your Heart event to influence policy and decision-making.

Contacting your MP, sharing your concerns and inviting them to participate in your Show Your Heart Action is a great way of amplifying the voices of asylum seekers in Parliament.

There are lots of things your MP can do to help fight for the dignity of asylum seekers. Ask them to publicly state their support on social media, ask a question in parliament or write to the Home Secretary about the Nationality and Borders Bill.



PERSUADE

MORE INFORMATION

[Click here to read our report on the hostile environment which refugees and asylum seekers face.](#)

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

We believe that as Christians, we are called by God to welcome the stranger and to build a society where the poorest and most marginalised are at the centre. Part of that call is to seek to change any narrative which opposes these values.

There is often a culture of suspicion towards asylum seekers in the UK. New legislation in the Nationality and Borders Bill may associate asylum seekers with criminality, which could heighten suspicion. This can make it difficult for refugees to integrate economically and socially into communities, and instead creates a society which is hostile towards them. We believe the by engaging in the 'Show Your Heart' campaign, we are turning the volume down on distrust and hostility and turns the volume up on hospitality and welcome. We can change the narrative to be one of cohesion rather than separation or fear.

How could you use the Show Your Heart campaign to open up conversations in your community about what welcoming refugees and asylum seekers might look like?

NEXT STEPS

TELL US HOW YOU GOT ON

Remember to use the hashtag [#TogetherWithRefugees](#) and [#WhoWeAre](#) so we can follow you and count your activities towards the national picture.

Contact us on enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk if you think there is anything we can do to help with your campaign.

