Nationality and Borders Bill synopsis of briefings for local / smaller groups.

On Monday 19th & Tuesday 20th July MPs will debate the Nationality and Borders Bill, a piece of legislation that we, \*advocates for refugee protection/ insert name of organisation\*, believe will make it more difficult for people with legitimate claims to asylum to find safety here in the UK. We are deeply concerned that this legislation will allow people to be judged - and treated differently – based on *how* they arrived in the UK not *why* they are fleeing their homeland.

As well as criminalising people for seeking asylum – which is a legal right – the Bill could criminalise people who help those in need like, Sir Nicholas Winton who saved hundreds of refugees via the Kindertransport.

In addition, the Bill introduces an institutional model for asylum accommodation; makes provision for the offshore processing of asylum applications and fast-tracking appeals process that, according to [legal experts,](https://www.jcwi.org.uk/nationality-and-borders-bill-second-reading-briefing) makes procedural changes that put refugees at

greater risk of being denied the protection they vitally need.

I am writing to you, my local MP, to take a stand for refugee protection and \*(for opposition MPs) vote against this Bill / (for Conservatives) work with us to make improvements to the Bill\*. Some of the key areas of concern for us are providing routes to safety, treating all people seeking asylum fairly and equally and providing adequate support and care for people while they are negotiating the system.

**Routes to safety**

While we agree with the Government that people smuggling and trafficking are criminal enterprises which ruin people’s lives, we know that this Bill will not stop these practices. No one pays to be smuggled across the channel unless they feel they have no other choice. Instead of criminalising people for having no legal options, the Government needs to provide safe ways for people to come to the UK.

Since 2015, we have successfully resettled 25,000 refugees; with other routes being closed off to people, we are calling on the Government to demonstrate that the UK is genuine in its offer to provide safety to those in greatest need, the Government should commit to resettling 10,000 refugees each year, on an ongoing basis.

**How people arrive should not determine how they are treated**

The Bill proposes to categorise refugees into [two distinct groups](https://media.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/12150236/Nationality-and-Borders-Bill-Second-Reading-Refugee-Council-briefing.pdf), with different

rights depending on how they have arrived in the UK. We firmly believe protection must be offered on need, not on how someone arrives in the UK and that all refugees should have the same rights to things like family reunion, the length of leave given and whether a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) condition is attached.

We know from our work that people feel more settled and thrive when they are with their family as such all refugees should have full and equal access to [family reunion rights](https://familiestogether.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Families-Together-briefing-for-MPs-on-the-Nationality-and-Borders-Bill.docx-1.pdf), regardless of how they enter the UK.

**Accommodation**

The Bill focuses significantly on asylum accommodation centres, one such centre is

currently in use at the disused Napier barracks, where people are kept in sub-standard, has been found by the High Court that it did not meet the minimum legal standards for asylum accommodation.

We are concerned that the use of [detention-like](https://www.jrsuk.net/news/where-is-our-shared-sense-of-humanity-jrs-condemns-governments-new-borders-bill/) settings reduce people’s ability to access the support they need to integrate well within our communities and believe that people seeking asylum should live in regular housing in the community.

**Offshore processing**

We are greatly concerned by the plans for asylum seekers to be removed from the UK while their claims are being processed. Apart from being highly impractical and costly it undermines our commitment to processing claims fairly and offering sanctuary to refugees. We think it is much better to focus on clearly the backlog

There are many other areas of concern / opportunity in the Bill and would be pleased to meet you (where appropriate) along with those with lived experience of the system.