



The main issues of concern with the Nationality and Borders Bill

- 1. Enshrines two classes of refugees based not on *why* they came (what forced them to flee their home) but on *how* they came (for example, if they were forced to come by 'irregular' routes such as in lorries or boats).** *This could mean an estimated 9,000 to 21,600 people a year that the UK currently accepts as refugees would be turned away in future. Under the new law, the government would be empowered to rule that their claims for asylum would not be heard (no matter how valid their case) and expel them to another country – even though the UK has no current agreements with other nations to do this. Or, if unable to do this, the new law would mean the government could grant such people a new limited status to be in the UK, with fewer rights to reunite with their family or get support to live on. They would be kept in limbo with the constant threat of being expelled from the country. The new law could also criminalise those helping people seeking asylum reach the UK – not just people smugglers, but refugees themselves or others providing help, such as those rescuing people at risk of drowning.*
- 2. Gives the government powers to expel people seeking asylum 'off-shore' to a country where they have no connection and before their claim for asylum has been given a fair hearing in the UK.** *This would be similar to the controversial, expensive and failed approach used by Australia. While the government does not have the agreements or infrastructure to put this into practice now, the powers in the Bill would enable them to move to it in future.*
- 3. Leads to a sweeping shift to putting people seeking asylum in out-of-town institutions, rather than housing them in the community where they can get practical help, legal support on their claim for refugee status, and start to rebuild their lives.** *This is despite the disastrous recent experience of the government putting people in segregated institutions by using disused army barracks, which was condemned by the High Court for their appalling conditions and preventable Covid outbreaks.*
- 4. Fails to set any clear target for resettling refugees in the UK through international resettlement programmes.** *This is despite the government's declared support for 'legal' routes which it uses to justify proposals to block refugees coming to the UK via 'informal' routes. Together With Refugees is calling on the government to commit to a clear target to resettle at least 10,000 refugees a year through internationally-agreed programmes. It is also pressing for the government to ensure more safe routes for people to come to the UK to seek asylum, including through enabling refugees to be reunited with their families in safety in the UK in line with the calls of the Families Together campaign.*
- 5 Does not address the right to work whilst seeking asylum.** *Overall, 71% of the public believe that it's time to #LiftTheBan and would save money as well as restoring dignity. If 50% of people currently seeking asylum were in work on the national average wage, not getting cash support but still receiving accommodation support, it would save £180.8 million.*



This Bill is an opportunity to improve the asylum system. We would offer our full support to a system that: –

*Provides a clear target to resettle at least 10,000 refugees a year through internationally agreed programmes and the provision of more safe routes for people to come to the UK to seek asylum, including through enabling refugees to be reunited with their families in safety in the UK .

*Stands up for people's ability to seek safety in the UK no matter how they came here.

* Ensures people can live in dignity while they wait to hear a decision on whether they will be granted protection as a refugee.

*Grants the right to work whilst awaiting the result of the asylum claim which would assist integration, improve English language and mental well-being. This would also save the Treasury over £41Million. ** [An editorial in the Times last weekend notes 'It beggars belief that we have a potential workforce of willing workers in our asylum system standing on the sidelines, forced to watch as the potential for a post-Covid bounce ricochets out of reach.'"]

* Empowers refugees to rebuild their lives, and contribute to their communities

* Means the UK works with other countries to do our bit to help people who are forced to flee their homes.

**Data released on 12/10/21

Lift The Ban Coalition updated the financial analysis they undertook last autumn to discover how much lifting the ban would save the Treasury, taking into account the increased asylum decision making backlog. The results were:

Low-end estimate: £41.4m (25% of people in work on the minimum wage, not getting cash support but still receiving accommodation support);

Their estimate: £180.8m (50% of people in work on the national average wage, not getting cash support but still receiving accommodation support);

High-end estimate: £650.6m (100% of people in work on the national average wage and not receiving accommodation support).

Recent polling

Lift The Ban undertook polling with Focal Data to discover what people in all constituencies across the country think about lifting the ban on the right to work for people seeking asylum. Overall, 71% of the public still believe that it's time to #LiftTheBan and similar results are replicated right across the country.