

'MIGRANT HUNTERS': WHO, WHAT AND WHY?

Immigration has always been a focus for the far right, but over recent months the explicit targeting of people who are migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and the organisations that support them has rightly triggered concern.

HOPE not hate research has shown that far right activity around asylum accommodation increased by 102% in 2022 from the previous year with 253 separate incidents. Far-right activists are turning up to asylum accommodation sites to protest, harass residents, and film content in order to boost their online profiles and encourage anti-migrant activism.

We are seeing some protests and opposition groups being organised locally, but far right agitators have been quick to latch on. Find out more about the most prolific 'migrant hunters' [here](#).

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Local governments can support the community to resist and combat far-right activity. As a councillor, you can champion these recommendations and take ownership of their implementation:

- [Here's a really useful thread](#) on what Local Authorities and support providers can do to reduce risks around hotels.
- Factual information doesn't always help in tackling far right rhetoric but a statement of solidarity might be useful to share with public/local media. See a great example of this from Llantwit [here](#).
- Consider becoming an official [Migrant Champion](#), supported by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants.

Where demos are taking place, we recommend sharing the following information with relevant groups:

- To ensure safety, hotel staff, and where possible residents, should **not interact with anti-migrant activists**. Where they are agitating, containing the threat and limiting their ability to organise as much as possible, e.g. briefing security around hotels. Please raise any concerns locally with police, and share any intel with us, via: rightresponse@hopenothate.org.uk.

- Counter protests, at the same time or place of far right protests are not advised. This can further ramp up hostility and divide more into us and them, as these can give far right groups something direct to rile against. Instead, **positive events of solidarity** within communities are suggested. If in person, this should ideally be at a different location and a different day to any far right action.
- **Seek a multi-sectoral response**. For example, the situation in Knowsley was triggered by a video showing inappropriate attention towards a child. Encourage links between refugee and VAWG groups in the area to address these issues together.
- Harmful rumours and myths should be challenged, but be careful calling out misinformation. We know that these groups are jumping on real concerns so there may be an element of truth to the focus of the agitation. Instead, highlight how condemning an entire hotel of people with completely different backgrounds and experiences is wrong.

POLICY RESPONSE

We are calling on the Government to mitigate the circumstances that give rise to far-right activity around asylum hotels.

- **End the use of inflammatory language** by the Government and the media which feeds and enables the far right. See our [petition](#).
- The Home Office must **put the right safeguards in place** for those in unsafe and unsuitable accommodation.

As a councillor, you can also seek to **build resilience at a local level**. For example, you could establish a local tension monitoring unit; see [guidance](#) from the Welsh government.

Additionally, the Government must:

- **Put together a long-term plan to provide suitable community-based accommodation** for people seeking asylum, and to take action to **address the backlogs** that trap people in unsuitable accommodation where they become targets for hate.