

# RESPONDING TO FAR RIGHT ATTACKS PRACTICAL TIPS FOR LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

HOPE not Hate tracked a 102% increase in anti-migrant far right activity in 2022, with frequent demonstrations across the country taking place outside asylum accommodation. In response, [Together With Refugees](#), [HOPE not hate](#), [IMIX](#) and [City of Sanctuary UK](#) have put together this 10 point plan of what local organisations can do if any similar situations happen in their area.

HOPE not Hate research shows that while sometimes counter-protests are a good tactic, when held at the same time or same place as far-right protests these can further ramp up hostility and give far-right groups something direct to rail against. Instead, positive acts of solidarity in communities can be far more impactful. Here are some suggestions and guidelines.



*The orange heart symbol represents compassion for people fleeing war and persecution.*



*Inspired by the refugee nation flag and the colours of a lifebelt, the heart symbolises hope and kindness.*

## WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION CAN DO TO RESPOND TO FAR RIGHT ATTACKS IN YOUR AREA

### ♥ 1 Build local solidarity

Get involved with other organisations and bring them onboard. Reach out to local institutions such as charities, schools, arts and sports organisations, trade unions, business groups, places of worship, and your [local City of Sanctuary group](#).

### ♥ 2 Organise a positive local event to show solidarity

Do what feels right for your community and your capacity to organise. Some suggestions for events could include a 'refugees welcome' rally, a vigil, a community picnic, a litter pick, a choir concert, a craftivism session making orange hearts. [Click here to see how one Welsh town responded to the far-right with Welsh cakes](#). It is best to hold any events on a different day and location to any far-right action. If you feel comfortable, write to your local media to invite them to the event/to cover it.

### ♥ 3 Organise a statement of support from local leaders

It's important that local leaders from different sectors – politics, charity, public sector, business, faith – speak out to condemn far right attacks. Sometimes they need encouragement from local people – you can do this by writing letters or contacting them on social media. Aim to get local media coverage of any statements to increase the impact.

### ♥ 4 Write to your MP and local Councillors – and Metro Mayor if you have one

It can work well to write as representatives of a range of local organisations. You could write about the acts of solidarity being organised locally and send them an orange heart, explaining its symbolic meaning. Plus you could use [HOPE not hate's 3 key asks](#):

It's clear the Government needs to take responsibility for its inflammatory language that fuels the far-right. It must also do much more to protect asylum seekers. We are calling for:

- 1 An end to the use of inflammatory language by the Government and the media which feeds and enables the far right.
- 2 The Home Office to put the right safeguards in place for those in unsafe and unsuitable accommodation.
- 3 The Government to 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.

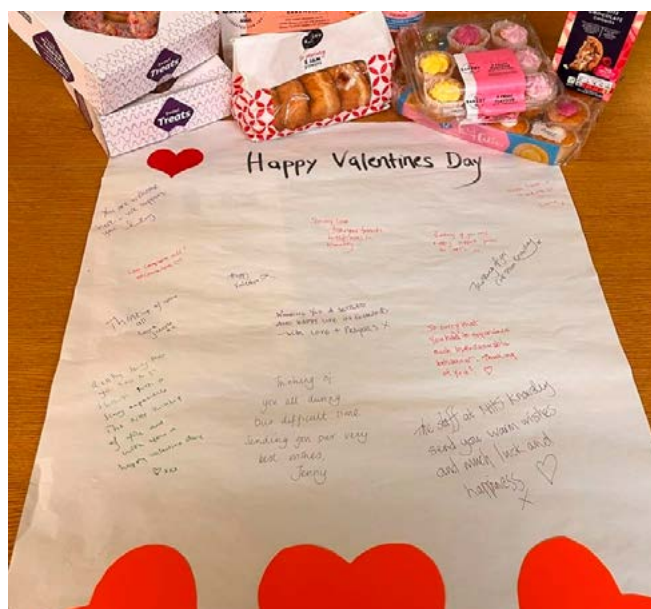
### ♥ 5 Display and share orange hearts to show solidarity

Positive and compassionate visuals and messaging have the most impact. Invite people to put orange hearts and a supportive message in their windows and then share online (remember to use the orange heart emoji ♥ and the hashtag #TogetherWithRefugees). Get creative or download [this window sign](#). Emphasise the local context, and share on local social media groups if you feel comfortable (if you receive any negative backlash, please see point 9 below on how to respond).



### ♥ 6 Show your love for people working locally to support refugees, and people staying in the accommodation affected

[SHARE Knowsley received a wonderful parcel with supportive messages, orange hearts and food treats from their friends at Knowsley NHS](#), which they shared on social media to further spread the love. You could ask the local organisations that visit the accommodation sites if they could pass on orange heart greetings cards to people staying there (SHARE Knowsley did this in their area). Some Schools of Sanctuary have written welcome notes to new arrivals – you could [share this guidance for schools about how to talk about hotel accommodation](#), and invite local schools to do the same.



### ♥ 7 Write a letter to your local paper

Research has shown that countering misinformation with the facts doesn't always help, in some cases it can lead us to further repeat the misinformation we are trying to disprove. That said, it might be useful to share with your local media outlets a short explanation about why people are in hotels and what the actual situations are really like inside. There are some helpful tips on messaging in this IMIX blog: [When is a hotel not a hotel? How to talk about hotels and the asylum system](#). You could write about the acts of solidarity being organised locally, and explain the symbolic meaning of the orange heart.

### ♥ 8 Follow messaging guidelines

Focus on positive narratives and the kindness of the community. Focus on the lived experience of those inside the hotels (great example organised by [IMIX here](#)). Don't name hotels or identify locations, and avoid naming upcoming protests, as we don't want to inadvertently give the far-right publicity.

### ♥ 9 Get advice and training from IMIX on how to deal with social media backlash – [please contact IMIX](#).

♥ 10 Capture information on any incidents and raise concerns locally with police, and please continue to share any information about far-right activity with HOPE not hate – [rightresponse@hopenothate.org.uk](mailto:rightresponse@hopenothate.org.uk) – who will continue to monitor and produce guidance on the far-right threat. You can report hate crimes anonymously and on behalf of other people to police, which is important so they can understand local tensions and patterns of behaviour.