

Far Right Activity – Advice for Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Introduction

In the UK we are seeing a rise in far-right extremism and the activity of the groups that subscribe to this type of belief. Far right extremism is racist and Islamophobic and people who believe in it do not believe in immigration to the UK. They target black and asian people as well as people from minorities, Muslims, migrants and people seeking safety in the UK.

We have seen far-right activity on the streets of the UK including rioters and the targeting of accommodation housing asylum seekers and refugees especially in hotel accommodation.

This has involved groups of people attacking hotels, as well as using different tactics to campaign outside hotels and to spread lies, hate and misinformation about refugees and asylum seekers in the UK online and in communities.

These attacks are very frightening and can be very dangerous. It's important to remember that while these attacks are horrible, these people represent a minority of the UK. They are very loud & very angry, but most people in the UK want you to feel safe and welcome here.

You have the right to be in and feel safe in your local community. You also have the right to carry out your usual, daily activities. No one has the right to treat you badly because of your race, ethnicity or religion, but at this time you might want to take precautions if you feel unsafe.

Information to support keeping you and your family safe

Far Right Activity – What do I look for?

Far Right activity can come in many forms. Sometimes it can be coordinated and violent like the riots of August 2024 where they use violence in public places to get attention. Other times they can be good at hiding their behavior. We know they use the following tactics to spread lies, hate and misinformation and to intimidate and cause fear.

- Hold protests in prominent places in towns or cities with English flags, shouting racist abuse and being threatening
- Hold protests outside asylum accommodation with banners and creating noise, sometimes trying to cause damage to the property.

- Visiting hotels that refugees and asylum seekers are living in to make films
- Attempting to gain unauthorised entry to hotels to make films and/or to talk to residents.
- Shouting racist abuse
- Threats of violence to organisations offering support to asylum seekers and refugees

ALL these tactics are designed to intimidate and are used to create a bad feeling and fear about refugees and asylum seekers in local communities and to share on social media accounts.

Sometimes, far right protesters may seem friendly if they think this will help them gain access to you, your family, or your accommodation to get a good film but sometimes, they can also be aggressive and intimidating too.

Be careful about people claiming to be journalists. It is your right to speak to whoever you'd like to, but some people pretend to be journalists to get videos for sharing on social media. If you do want to speak to a journalist about your experiences, your local asylum or refugee charity may be able to help you do this safely.

Be cautious about social media posts that show your location. Especially during any Far Right activity. People in the Far Right are monitoring social media channels to gather information about where people are and what's happening in specific areas.

The Police

Sometimes speaking to the Police can be frightening too. In the UK the police have a duty to protect you & keep you safe. If you do not speak English but you need to speak to the Police you can ask for them to arrange an interpreter for you, they should always do this when you request it. You do not need to find your own interpreter. In the UK your race, ethnicity and religion are all protected characteristics under UK Law. You have a right for the police to treat you with respect and help you stay safe.

REMEMBER:

Emergencies – where the crime is happening at that moment or when someone is in danger at that moment: Call 999 on your phone. When the call is answered, tell them you need the Police.

If it is not an emergency – no one is in danger at that moment, but you want to report a crime or give information to the Police: Call 101 on your phone.

What do I do if I think there is the threat of Far Right Activity where I live?

FIND OUT

1. Ask trusted people in your community about any recent risks. This could include whether there have been any local attacks or threats of protests. This will help you to make good decisions about where it is safe and which places to avoid at certain times.
2. Talk to other people you know, staff in home office accommodation or accommodation providers, charities or local groups you attend to make sure you have the most up to date information.
3. Stay vigilant for anything that seems out of place or unusual near your home. If you see or hear something suspicious, trust your instincts and report your concerns to the police or accommodation staff immediately.

ACT

Before you go out:

1. Make sure your phone battery is charged and you have important numbers saved
2. Let people know where you are going and what time you expect to be back (this could be a friend or family member). They can check in with you or let someone know if they cannot contact you.
3. If you have to sign in or out of your accommodation – make sure you do this.
4. Think about whether it might be better to go out with someone else, not alone.

When you are out:

1. BE ALERT & AWARE – make sure you are aware of your surroundings when you leave your accommodation and when you are out and about. If you think your safety is at threat at any time, call the police on 999
2. Try to travel in well-lit areas and public spaces.
3. Try and use different routes to and from places you regularly visit.
4. *If you are approached by anyone who you think is involved in far right activity – do not interact with them. Find a safe public place as soon as possible, you can ask for help from people in public buildings like libraries or at police stations or in shops. Phone the police or ask someone else to help you call.*

5. *If someone approaches you with a camera or is trying to film you with a phone – walk away and do not respond or interact with them. Find a safe public place as soon as possible and call the police on 999.*

What do I do if the Far Right attacks my home?

If you live in a hotel:

1. **Follow the instructions of the staff on site.**
They will be working with the Police and the Home Office to keep you safe. This may involve moving you at short notice to another location.
2. Make sure accommodation provider staff know where you are by checking in at reception. Keep your phone charged.

If you live in a house in the community

1. Call the police immediately on 999 and tell them your home is under attack. Report any racist abuse being used
2. If you can, call your housing officer and tell them what is happening.
3. Find the safest space in your home to wait. Try and find a room with no windows or which have a far enough distance from windows to protect from entry or breakage. Ideally these spaces should be lockable from the inside and have clear unblocked fire escape routes.

What do I do if I am outside of my accommodation, and I have received information that there is far right activity at my hotel or home?

1. **Do not return to your hotel or home until you have been told it is safe to do so**
2. Find a safe public location to wait or stay with a friend and await further information from your housing provider
3. If you receive a text alert or call from your hotel or housing provider advising you of an incident at the hotel, then let them know you are outside of the hotel. Make sure they have a phone number for you.
4. Your housing or hotel provider will keep you updated with what to do next and will let you know when it is safe to return.