

SUMMER 2026



ANTI-MIGRANT TRENDS IN THE FAR RIGHT

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**This report contains descriptions of racist rhetoric and violence –
please take care when reading.**

Introduction

SADLY, we've come to expect an uptick in far-right activity and violence over the summer months of each year, with higher temperatures attracting fair-weather participants to far-right mobilisations. The summer of 2026 was no exception – however, the patterns and trends we saw over the warmer months this year represent a marked shift from the profile established in previous years.

The most recent disorder in Dover and Portsmouth, which saw hundreds of masked men mobilise under the anti-migrant banner, is a shocking, but unsurprising, end to the summer. This type of mobilisation is the inevitable result of trends discussed in this report and over the past several years, trends that have gone without serious intervention. In fact, the scenes we witnessed at the

coast in early September 2026 are what HOPE not hate have been warning of since the riots in 2024 – a far right that is more confrontational, bolder and, most worryingly, quicker to mobilise.

This short report explores some emerging trends in far-right activity, drawing on analysis of the most explosive street mobilisations of summer 2026, and reflects on developments in far-right rhetoric in the Westminster political sphere.

The mobilisations of summer 2026 – capped by the large-scale disorder in Dover and Portsmouth – must be a wake-up call for the Government, exposing the dangers in its handling of immigration, cohesion and the far right. Until serious action is taken, we are just one trigger event away from serious disorder in communities across the UK.



Emerging trends in street mobilisations

THE SUMMER of 2026 saw devastating, divisive violence explode in towns across the UK. Some of these incidents are explored in more detail below. But in contrast to previous years, none of these incidents gained the momentum required to develop into multi-day, multi-location mobilisations similar to what we witnessed during the riots of summer 2024.

As well as the explosions of violence, communities across the UK also had to deal with an onslaught of smaller street mobilisations over the course of the summer. You can read some key statistics about the prevalence of these mobilisations in the next section. Many of these protests were tiny – often bringing together just a handful of people – but still damaged and divided our communities.

This section looks at some of the key trends that emerged in far-right street mobilisations over the long, hot summer of 2026, and what they might tell us about the direction of travel for far-right street movements in the UK.

Hyper-local organising and shifting rhetoric

A key trend that has characterised summer 2026 is the continued growth of the post-organisational far right. Many of the summer's far-right mobilisations were led by hyper-local groups, with activity often hard to trace back to an established far-right group.

Rather than a scene dominated by well-known established groups – for example, Britain First or Patriotic Alternative – we are now dealing with a more fractured picture. Loosely affiliated online groups, auditors, local anti-migrant groups, political parties and established organisations are all making noise.

Over the course of summer 2026, the far-right scene has also shown itself to be increasingly interconnected, with less of a distinction between established neo-Nazi and far-right groups and local organising. Lots of small, local protests, for example, hosted speakers from established groups, or featured their insignia.

Part of this closer affiliation between established groups and local organisers can perhaps be explained by the hardening of rhetoric we've witnessed over the course of the summer, with an outright turn towards explicit ethnonationalism. We've seen this in street movements and, as explored below, within Westminster politics, too: the shift from an anti-migrant focus to explicitly racist rhetoric that questions the 'Britishness' of all racialised people, from demanding mass deportations of

undocumented migrants to talking openly about remigration – the ethnic cleansing via deportation of all racialised people. The increasing normalisation of this rhetoric means it is no longer confined to the extreme fringes of the far-right movement.

Uptick in interpersonal attacks

In tandem with the growth of the post-organisational far right in summer 2026, we've also seen a rise in interpersonal attacks. This covers racist or hate crime incidents that are not necessarily affiliated with a particular group, nor occurring during an organised protest, but which are still linked to far-right ideology and hatred. Official hate crime figures covering summer 2026 won't be published until October 2027, but communities we work with across the country have noted an increase in hostility and racism experienced on a day to day basis.

[Research](#) by the British Muslim Trust, for instance, found that in the year to July 2026, a mosque was attacked every five days on average. We've also seen disturbing lone-wolf style attacks targeting asylum accommodation. Most recently, in late August, a man was charged with arson with intent to endanger life after a fire at a hotel accommodating people seeking asylum in Surrey, and in September an empty building rumoured to be used as asylum accommodation was set alight in Glasgow.

Rise in vigilantism

Alongside the rise in hyper-local organising and the uptick in interpersonal attacks, summer 2026 saw the establishment of several new vigilante-style groups across the UK. Although this is an existing phenomenon, this trend seems to have increased in recent months. These groups often purport to tackle things like violence against women and girls, or to support homeless people in the area. Some of the groups look relatively official – they often organise publicly and have social media accounts, and some have official-looking uniforms (for example, vests that say 'Security' on them). Some even carry equipment, including protective vests, walkie-talkies and body cameras. However, many have been found to have links to the organised far right, and to have a racist, anti-migrant agenda.

As above, many of the groups state publicly that they are focused on 'protecting' women and girls, including by organising patrols of volunteers around the local area. However, these volunteers are often unvetted, and not DBS-checked. Unsurprisingly, many of these groups have been found to be linked to groups active on the organised far right, and/



Heywood Community Guard members in group hi-vis vests

or to be founded by or welcome members with convictions for things like racially aggravated assault. For example, the group Heywood Community Guard, based in the Greater Manchester town of Heywood, was co-founded by a man named Adam Farrell. Farrell had previously been jailed for racially aggravated grievous bodily harm after he left a man with life-changing brain injuries following an unprovoked racist attack outside a nightclub in 2022.

Some of those behind these groups may be well-known – even infamous – in their local areas, but there is a risk that people may be taken in by the official-looking setup, and drawn into a murky world with links to the organised far right.

Targeting of ‘HMOs’

As the government has sought to close down asylum hotels, people seeking sanctuary are increasingly being accommodated in the community. The move away from hotels, which were a highly visible target for the far right, is to be celebrated. However, the move to accommodation in the community – also known as dispersal asylum accommodation – entails huge risks in the current climate, risks that have not been sufficiently mitigated by those with the power to do so.

Whereas hotels used to accommodate people seeking asylum had hotel managers and, often, security staff, the same measures have not been put in place for dispersal accommodation. This means

that many do not have proper safety and security measures in place, at a time when far-right anti-migrant activism is at an all-time high.

In this context, one of the most prominent – and most worrying – trends to emerge over the course of summer 2026 is far-right targeting of places they suspect are dispersal asylum accommodation. Figures on the far right often use the term ‘HMO’ to refer to these sites.

HMO stands for House in Multiple Occupation. Landlords wanting to rent out separate rooms in a property to several unrelated adults must often obtain an HMO licence from the council, to prove that the property meets relevant fire safety regulations and so on.

HMOs are a really common type of accommodation, particularly in built-up areas or places with a large student population. However, over the course of summer 2026 the term ‘HMO’ has come to be used as a byword for dispersal asylum accommodation by the far right, and HMOs have been targeted up and down the country.

Through our social media monitoring, HOPE not hate’s Data Desk has identified a significant increase in online references to ‘HMOs’ on X (formerly known as Twitter), in relation to accommodation for people seeking asylum in the UK. Analysis of almost 500 posts, tracked between January and August 2026, shows that nearly 70% of all HMO-themed content was posted in just two months, February (26.1%) and August (43.0%), coinciding with major policy announcements about the closure of hotels for people seeking asylum.

Overall, online discourse around HMOs has increased over the course of the summer, with more than half of all UK HMO-related content sampled in this eight-month period posted in July and August alone (51.7%).

We know of HMOs being physically targeted in at least 10 places across the country, with many more being highlighted as potential targets by online agitators.



A 'night patrol' organised by Unite the Clans with Josh Fernie, an active member of the Homeland Party

It is important to note that this does not only put asylum accommodation HMOs at risk, but any HMO which may be incorrectly identified as one. As we moved into the summer months, for instance, a mob of people poured gravel in through the window of a house thought to be being used as asylum accommodation in Epsom. It was later revealed that the site was a home for vulnerable adults.

Increasingly confident 'auditors'

'Auditors' are far-right content creators who seek to manufacture controversial encounters, film them and edit the footage for YouTube. Whilst they are often less ideologically driven than others on the far right – for many, it's more about clicks, subscriber count and cold, hard cash – auditors nevertheless have a damaging impact on our communities. Auditors active in this scene see racism and far-right ideology as an effective vehicle for building a following and gaining attention.

Over the past few years, auditors have typically focused on producing content about hotels and other sites housing people seeking asylum, peddling well-worn lies about the luxury experience residents are supposedly enjoying.

In line with the trend outlined above,, auditors have also increasingly shifted their focus towards dispersal accommodation. We have seen instances of

auditors gaining access to buildings they understand to be asylum accommodation HMOs and filming residents inside.

At the same time, over the course of summer 2026 we've seen auditors grow increasingly confident and aggressive, with multiple reports of physical assault allegedly perpetrated by auditors. We have also had reports of auditors employing increasingly disturbing tactics to create content targeting migrants, for example, trying to trick their way into migrant drop-in centres to film people inside.

Worryingly, we are also aware of a number of auditors who have been using Meta glasses to film unsuspecting people. Up until now, auditors had been relatively easy to visually identify, as they often used body-worn phone rigs or carried other filming equipment. With the advent of Meta glasses, it may now be more difficult, or take longer, to identify auditors, relying more on assessing their behaviour than what they are wearing or carrying.



Alan Leggett (AKA Active Patriot), from Grimsby in Lincolnshire, was one of the first prominent "migrant hunter" activists in the UK.

The summer in stats

BETWEEN the 1st May and the 31st August, we recorded 166 far-right protests – that's an average of nearly 10 a week.

Of the 166 protests we recorded, 40 featured physical violence – just over 24%. (A note that, here, physical violence can signify anything from a punch being thrown or a scuffle to all-out rioting).

55

were about asylum accommodation in the local area

43

were responses to local violent incidents

31

were about general anti-migrant sentiment

23

were in response to violent crime elsewhere

9

were specifically themed on women's safety

3

were about children's safety

21

of the protests themed around a local incident featured violence – nearly 49% of these kinds of protests

11

of the general anti migrant events featured violence – 35% of these incidents overall

5

of the protests themed around local asylum accommodation featured violence – 9% of the total protests about local asylum accommodation

2

of the protests responding to violent crime elsewhere featured violence – nearly 9% of these kinds of protests

1

of the protests themed around women's safety featured violence – 11% of the protests themed around women's safety

While the above breaks down the overriding themes for each protest, there is of course lots of overlap. However, the above is based on how each protest was branded and publicised.

Flashpoints of violence over the summer

Southampton: 2 June

Henry Nowak, an 18-year-old student from Essex, was killed by Vickrum Digwa in Southampton in December 2025. In the early hours of 2 June 2026, police body camera footage of the night Nowak was killed flooded social media, triggering national outrage. Many Southampton residents were understandably grieving, angry and shocked at such a horrendous murder in their city.

However, in line with a consistent trend, the far right framed Nowak's death as evidence of a police system corrupted by equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) measures, and more broadly, of the failure of multiculturalism. That evening, a protest of around 1000 people began with speeches from far-right figures: Stephen Yaxley-Lennon (aka Tommy Robinson) claimed that "this is about race," and that if Nowak had not been white, he would not have been handcuffed by police whilst gravely injured. UKIP leader Nick Tenconi said that Digwa had been "armed with intent, and saw a chance to kill a white man," blaming "the left" and EDI for Nowak's death.

While most major figures left early, the crowd turned their attention to the road where Digwa's family were thought to live, and the evening escalated into violence. The mob chased riot police, pelting them with bins, office chairs, logs, bikes, deckchairs, scooters, glass bottles and food waste bins. Some lit a wheelie bin on fire and sent it flying towards the police line. Others pulled bricks and wood from a nearby front garden to throw.

A total of 37 people were detained in connection with the Southampton riot, of whom 35 were charged. As of the 12th June, 13 men between the ages of 18 and 44 have been sentenced for their roles in the violent disorder.

Despite the far right's common claim to protect women and children, an investigation by the Guardian [showed](#) that of the 37 people detained, 22 had been previously reported to the police for domestic abuse.

For the rest of the summer, Henry Nowak was a common theme at anti-migrant protests; posters and banners displayed his face, many with the caption 'White Lives Matter'. Protesters across the country chanted "I can't breathe," a reference to Nowak's words as he repeatedly told police that he had been stabbed and could not breathe. This was also pitched as a direct comparison to the murder of George Floyd in 2020, with protesters claiming that 'the left' don't care about Nowak's murder because he is white. His death was also used by the far right to campaign against EDI training in the police force.

Belfast and Beyond: 9-10 June

On the evening of 8 June, Hadi Alodid, a Sudanese national, stabbed Stephen Ogilvie multiple times in the face and neck with a kitchen knife in Belfast. Ogilvie survived, but lost his left eye and suffered horrendous injuries. Overnight, footage of the attack captured by a bystander spread rapidly online, causing widespread outrage.

Early the next morning, a list of roads to be closed for anti-migrant protests in and around Belfast spread on Northern Irish anti-migrant Facebook groups. Some of these posts were addressed to men over 18, requesting they wear dark clothing and be prepared to fight or be arrested. Many ordered protesters not to bring phones or cameras, to protect the identity of those attending. By midday that day, a list of over 70 English, Scottish and Welsh locations had also been shared. Both Tommy Robinson and Elon Musk reposted said list.

That evening, racist rioters across Belfast smashed windows, kicked doors in, and set houses alight. Rioters specifically targeted the homes and property of racialised residents, with masked men shouting that they were "getting the foreigners out." Businesses were targeted in racially-motivated attacks, and a "migrant car checkpoint" was established, where protesters checked drivers' ethnicity.

On the same evening, violent protests were seen in Glasgow, Liverpool and at a recorded 10 other locations in Northern Ireland. The following evening, Belfast and Northern Ireland more broadly endured a second night of violence, though this time there was more focus on property damage than targeting individuals.

The pogroms in Belfast have had a devastating impact that will be felt for a long time to come. During and immediately following the violence, we had reports of racialised people in Belfast who were too afraid to take their bins out, go to the shops or travel to work. Recent figures released by housing authorities show that at least 88 families have been forced out of their homes as a result of the riots, either due to their houses being burned down, or local intimidation.

Thetford: 4-7 August

Over the course of three nights in early August, protesters gathered outside a number of residences believed to be HMOs housing people seeking asylum in Thetford. On 4 August, around 40 people attempted to gain access to a property, while a

further 100 protested outside, and there were additional disturbances on nearby roads. Across the locations, properties had their windows smashed and fences broken.

The next evening, 5 August, saw similar activity return, with over 200 protesters targeting a single house. Once again, people attempted to break into the residence, with others throwing rocks and eggs while chanting “we want them out.” One police officer was hit by a rock and another spat on, and a female officer was bitten, drawing blood.

The unrest continued into a third night. On all three nights, residents of the targeted properties had to be evacuated from their homes for their safety. A final protest on the fourth night was much more subdued.

Analysis of Flashpoints

The violent protests of summer 2026 bear some similarities with those of past years, but also present some key differences.

In 2024, the Southport attack triggered a wave of nationwide riots over the span of a week; they were exceptionally violent and quick to take hold, but were also relatively short-lived.

The summer of 2025 saw a sexual assault case in Epping trigger a single case of localised rioting, but also a much longer-term wave of protests that kept momentum throughout the summer and into the autumn. The number of localised protests jumped, with over 20 separate events logged some weekends. It was during this period that many of the localised anti-migrant networks mobilising today were initially established.

In 2026, we have seen a collection of trigger events which peak locally with intense violence, but which have not resulted in nationwide rioting or protests as in 2024 and 2025. Instead, anti-migrant protests have been steady and regular, often mobilised around long-term campaigns against accommodation for people seeking asylum.

Furthermore, riots in Southampton and Belfast showcased the growing importance of video footage of a violent attack as a trigger point for protests or rioting. Visceral footage which triggers strong emotions spreads quickly online, resulting in mass outrage that far-right organisers then exploit.

As above, the organised far right have in large part shifted their attention towards ‘HMOs,’ but the summer of 2026 also saw frequent protests against large-scale asylum accommodation sites like army barracks. These protests have tended to be less violent, partly due to high levels of security around the accommodation sites, with protesters kept at a distance. Additionally, the rhetoric at these protests is largely less extreme. This is due in part to the more politically diverse campaigns against the use of these sites. For example, some residents are campaigning against the sites due to concerns about

the wellbeing of people seeking asylum having to live in what are effectively camps.

Anti-migrant activity of the Westminster radical right

THE RISE of the political far right, in the form of Reform UK and Restore Britain, has conferred legitimacy to anti-migrant hatred and even, to a lesser extent, ethnonationalism. At local elections in May 2026, Reform UK's performance highlighted the scale of electoral threat the party could pose, with Farage's outfit securing a net total of around 1050 seats in England – the largest net gain by a political party outside the main two in the history of English local elections. Meanwhile Restore Britain, the party helmed by ex-Reformer Rupert Lowe, won all 9 seats it stood for in Great Yarmouth, its leader's constituency.

However, both parties underperformed at a handful of crucial by-elections during the summer, including the Makerfield by-election, which secured Andy Burnham's route to becoming Prime Minister. Though their talking points are becoming mainstream, there is evidence that the Westminster radical right may be failing to achieve their full electoral potential.

In August 2026, Reform leader Nigel Farage held on to his seat in a self-triggered contest in Clacton, and even managed to increase the number of votes he received. However, the number of anti-Reform votes cast for comedy candidate Count Binface (the most votes ever received by a comedy candidate) reveal that it is not enough for far-right parties to attract voters: they also have to stop attracting an active opposition.

Compared to the summer of 2025, where Reform filled the weeks of July and August with an onslaught of policy announcements and headlines, this summer was quiet. There are two main reasons for this. Firstly, Nigel Farage was avoiding the spotlight due to investigations into his personal finances. Other figures in Reform, such as George Cottrell and Richard Tice, were also embroiled in allegations of financial misconduct and sleaze. Secondly, for most of July and August, Farage's Clacton by-election subjected him to broadcasting rules that gave him less airtime. In many ways, Reform's honeymoon period with the mainstream media appears to have expired, with the Daily Mail, Spectator, Telegraph and Times all publishing critical stories about the party.

Restore Britain also failed to make an impact at by-elections, functioning principally to skim percentage points off Reform's vote in its first electoral outing under the party name, at a council by-election in Dover (Lowe and other Restore councillors stood under the name Great Yarmouth First).

However, Restore might be a contributing factor



Reform leader Nigel Farage. Photo: Gage Skidmore

in compelling Farage to push Reform's policy and rhetoric even further to the right. Rather than hold together the broad Reform coalition, which includes fed-up conservatives and populist chancers, Farage is taking a risk by speaking only to Reform's hardcore supporters. After the murder of Henry Nowak in Southampton, Farage gave a speech that included the white supremacist slogan "White Lives Matter," saying that the moment demanded "pure, cold rage." Later in the summer, he brushed off the racist pogroms in Belfast, saying "the vast majority want action." This shift in rhetoric is unlikely to play well with a large chunk of Reform's voters, and we have seen the party's national poll rating drop over the last few months. What this means long term for the direction of travel of their anti-migrant rhetoric, remains to be seen.

Lessons for the Government

THE SUMMER of 2026 – culminating in the mass mobilisation in Dover and Portsmouth in early September – has to be a serious wake-up call for the Government. An urgent shift in how it handles immigration, cohesion, and the far right is essential.

- 1. The activity seen over the summer must be condemned,** and cannot be normalised or explained away as an expression of “genuine concerns.” Not everyone who turned up to a protest in the summer is part of an organised far-right group, but many are repeating far-right narratives and, often, hosting far-right influencers. The ideologies underpinning a lot of this activity are extreme, and must be treated as such.
- 2. Intelligence sharing must be improved.** Since 2024, we have called for a more rapid process that disseminates intelligence, resources and support to those responding to far-right activity and community tensions. This cannot only extend to police forces, but must also include community

groups who are often on the frontline of the fallout. Our work supporting community groups over the summer has highlighted an absence of Government leadership in coordinating a civil society response.

- 3. The Government needs to stand up for, and support, impacted communities.** Silence from key figures in Government leaves them feeling abandoned and unsafe. The absence of solidarity is not only a moral failing, but also further normalises far-right rhetoric and violence.
- 4. The Government needs to seriously rethink how it speaks about immigration.** In attempting to be seen as ‘tough’ on immigration, far-right narratives about ‘invasions’ have become normalised. The migration sector, and the progressive ecosystem more broadly, has raised concerns about the impact of this for years, and offered their expertise in creating a solution. It’s high time for the Government to take them up on this proposal.

Conclusion

THE SUMMER of 2026 – marked by a succession of heatwaves and a long-predicted change of leadership in Westminster – did not see the sustained far-right disorder many had feared. Instead, anti-migrant activity has followed the wider trend towards a post-organisational, fractured far right, whose narratives have largely been mainstreamed. Whilst headline-grabbing violence and huge, disruptive protests remained low this summer, what we’ve seen replace it is a more insidious violence embedded in the day-to-day interactions within communities. This sets us in a dangerous direction where extreme racist, anti-migrant and far-right ideologies, and the violence they promote, become ‘business as usual’.

That being said, there still remains the threat of widespread disorder similar to what we saw in 2024. The scenes in Dover and Portsmouth in early September 2026 have made clear the results of past inaction that continues to put communities at risk, as we now have a far-right that is increasingly organised, confrontational, and quick to mobilise. Without swift and radical changes to how the Government handles immigration, cohesion and the far right, any trigger event has the potential to ignite serious disorder in communities across the UK.



HOPE not hate

Telephone 020 7952 1181

Email: info@hopenothate.org.uk

Registered office: 167-169 Great Portland Street,
5th Floor, London, W1W 5PF