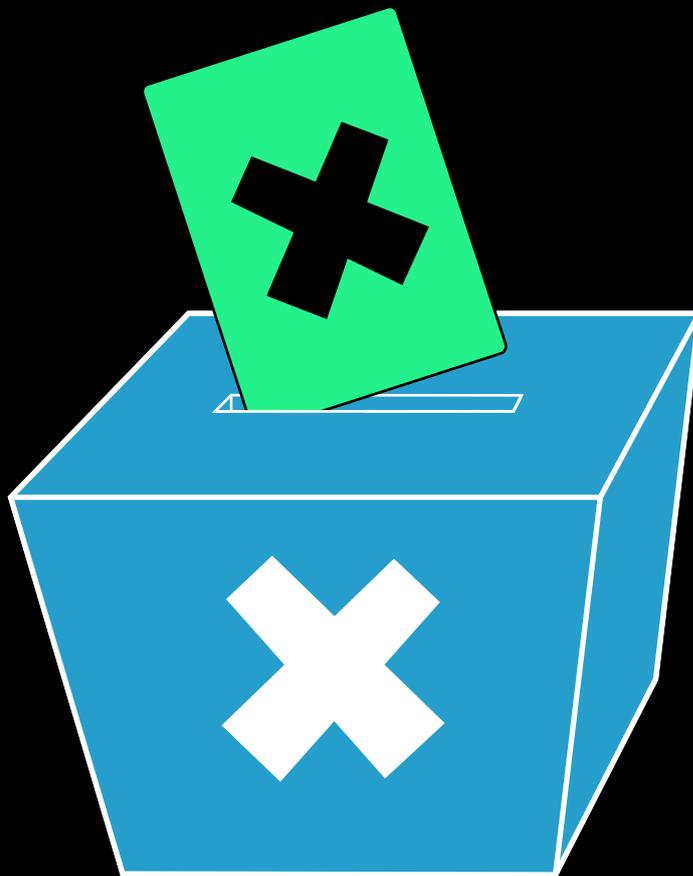


# DO YOU STAND WITH REFUGEES?

A campaigning guide for  
the 2019 general election



**REFUGEE  
ACTION**



Dear supporter,

The 2019 general election campaign is now underway. This is a key opportunity to ensure that Britain is a nation which welcomes and supports people fleeing war and persecution.

I have been in the asylum process for seven years now and it's been a traumatic experience. It feels like a different kind of persecution. Words cannot express the physical and mental health implications of being made to wait indefinitely. I personally have experienced depression, low self-esteem, isolation and uncertainty. I can only describe the feeling as being in a dark cage, not knowing when you'll see the sunlight, unable to move forward.

The politicians in parliament making laws that affect our lives – would they walk in the shoes of an asylum seeker? Would they be able to live on £5.38 a day? Would they be able to wait seven years or more, not knowing where their future is going?

I would ask you to talk to your candidates – we are here to be part of your communities. We want to contribute positively to society. We just want a safe place to call home, and the opportunity to provide for ourselves. When you think of refugees and asylum seekers, remember that they're people just like you, who hope to have a better life and bright future.

This pack sets out how you can encourage your candidates to care about refugees and asylum seekers as much as you do.

Thank you for standing with us – together, we can create a better society and a better world.

Best wishes,

Sam

# DO YOU STAND **WITH REFUGEES?**

The most important thing is that you let your candidates (Prospective Parliamentary Candidates, or PPCs) know that you care about refugees and people seeking asylum; and that you want to hear their opinions during this election campaign.

## **Do they stand with refugees?**

You don't need to be an expert – nor do you need to get drawn into long and detailed discussions, or work hard to convince them of your views. Instead, what counts is that you're a voter who cares about what happens to people seeking safety here in Britain.

There are many ways to make your voice heard with your local candidates over the course of the election campaign.

## → **Contact PPCs directly**



Email your PPCs directly to tell them you care about refugees and people seeking asylum; and ask them for their views. We've drafted a [template email](#) you can use or adapt and then **send to your PPCs**.

## → **Quiz your candidates**



You're likely to have candidates and members of their team canvassing by knocking on your door. This is a great opportunity to **ask them if they stand with refugees**, and hear their views on supporting and protecting refugees and people seeking asylum in Britain. Cut out the doorhanger below as a reminder of the kind of questions you might want to ask canvassers.

**CUT OUT AND KEEP OUR GENERAL ELECTION DOORHANGER**

Cut out the doorhanger as a reminder of the kind of questions you might want to ask canvassers.

## **DO YOU STAND WITH REFUGEES?**

### **PROTECTING RIGHTS**

What will they do to make sure the asylum system is compassionate, fair and effective?

### **SAFE AND LEGAL ROUTES**

What will they do to expand and extend the commitment to refugee resettlement?

### **ACCESS TO ENGLISH**

Will they support change to ensure all refugees receive access to English language classes?

### **RIGHT TO WORK**

Will they support reform of the rules to restore the right to work for people seeking asylum?



# ASK THE CANDIDATE **WHERE THEY STAND** ON SUPPORT FOR REFUGEES AND PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM IN BRITAIN

These could be about the following suggested areas, which are some of the most in need of reform.

## **Protecting the rights of people seeking asylum**

No one should be destitute or homeless in the UK; yet our asylum system currently leaves people in poverty, waiting for months and sometimes years for a decision on their asylum claim.



**What will they do to make sure the asylum system is compassionate, fair and effective?**

## **Expanding safe and legal routes**

Refugee resettlement programmes provide a safe route to the most vulnerable refugees to reach the UK; but these are not guaranteed to continue beyond 2021.



**What will they do to expand and extend the commitment to refugee resettlement?**

## **Improving access to English classes**

All refugees should have free and immediate access to English language classes, which they desperately need to help them rebuild their lives here.



**Will they support change to ensure all refugees receive access to English?**

## Restoring the right to work

Currently people seeking asylum in the UK are effectively banned from working. Instead, they're forced to live in poverty, unable to use their skills, while they wait for a decision on their asylum claim.



**Will they support reform of the rules on the right to work?**

### → Attend a local hustings

A hustings is a meeting at which candidates from all parties address and take questions from voters on a range of subjects. Attending a local hustings is a great way of seeing several candidates at once. There's certain to be at least one taking place in your constituency – you'll be able to find the details online, via social media or in your local paper. **Go along if you can and ask your candidates if they stand with refugees?**



**Ask your candidates if they stand with refugees**

# THINGS TO REMEMBER

**Parliamentary elections in the UK are governed by electoral law – so it's important to make sure you're familiar with a few key points on what you can and can't do:**

- ➔ Refugee Action is a charity, and is politically impartial. We operate under strict charity law and **do not support or favour any political party or candidates** – instead, we work with representatives of all mainstream parties.
- ➔ You are not contacting your PPCs as a Refugee Action representative. Instead, you're a **concerned member of the public who supports Refugee Action**, using information supplied by us to inform your questions.
- ➔ Whatever your own political views or allegiances, **it's important to contact representatives of all the main parties**. It doesn't matter how likely or unlikely they are to be elected in your constituency – it's important to treat all candidates the same.
- ➔ It's important that you only contact PPCs who are **standing for election in your parliamentary constituency**. PPCs in neighbouring constituencies are unlikely to be able to engage with you as they're not standing for election in your seat.
- ➔ Even if you think you can be fairly certain about who'll be elected in your area – remember, politics can be unpredictable! Plus, unsuccessful candidates may well stand in a more winnable seat at the next election and end up being elected to parliament – **the conversation you had with them about refugees and people seeking asylum could stay with them**.
- ➔ Most PPCs will be happy to be contacted – but some may not respond. If so, not to worry – **the most important thing** is that you have tried to contact them all.

# LET US KNOW HOW YOU GET ON

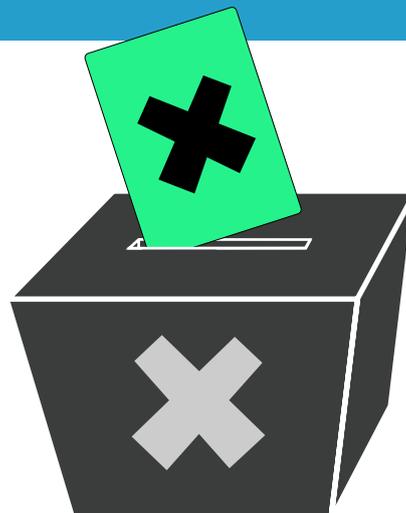
We'd like to say a huge thank you for taking action to speak up for refugees during this election campaign – and to ask you one last thing.

Knowing how many PPCs have heard from our supporters, and whether they stand with refugees, will give us insight into the new parliament.

If you've had contact with any of your candidates, we'd really appreciate it if you could tell us about it.

→ You can email us some notes on what you've done and how you've got on at [\*\*campaign@refugee-action.org.uk\*\*](mailto:campaign@refugee-action.org.uk)

Thank you again for your support. Together, we can make sure the voices of refugees and people seeking asylum are heard during this election campaign and beyond.





November 2019

### Head Office

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London SW1V 1RB



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Company number 01593454. Registered charity number 283660

To make a donation towards our work please go to  
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