

End Hostile Environment

“As a city of sanctuary, Belfast City Council recognises the need for refugees, migrants and asylum seekers to feel safe and welcomed in our communities. Moreover, the Council recognises the important cultural diversity and richness that newcomers to our communities bring, as well as all they contribute beyond this.

The Council further notes the important work carried out by community and activist groups across the City in working to ensure that people who move to Belfast are connected to services and supports where needed.

However, the Council acknowledges the detrimental and often damaging impact of Hostile Environment policies which are set by the Home Office but administered here locally. These include the ban on the right to work for asylum seekers, temporary accommodation facilities, such as Larne Detention Centre and hotels, ‘dispersals’ to regions in Britain, and punishing conditions designed to create a climate of fear and hostility, criminalising and impoverishing those who may find themselves without status.

The Council recognises that the Hostile Environment is a xenophobic policy of the UK Government which encourages an ‘othering’ of people who move here.

This Council, therefore, expresses its opposition to the Hostile Environment and calls on the Home Office to end this policy and immediately offer the right work and access services for people who arrive on our shores fleeing war or persecution. The Council further calls on the UK Government to put in place a right to remain policy, which is focused not on discouraging people to come here to better their lives, but ensuring the pathway is simplified and welcoming.”

Proposer: Councillor Ferguson

Seconder: Councillor Matt Collins