

Greens welcome planned announcement of a mandatory system for councils to take in refugee children



23 November 2021

The Home Office is set to announce today that it will become mandatory for local councils to take in their fair share of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children [1]. This follows a Green Party campaign in the summer to make the National Transfer Scheme mandatory to relieve pressure on the handful of councils who were already playing their part. [2]

Responding to the announcement, Green Party Migration and Refugee Support Spokesperson Benali Hamdache said:

“After a Green Party campaign to get all local councils to take in and support refugee children, the Government’s announcement today of a mandatory rota is a big step forward.

“Under the current system, councils like Brighton and Hove are stretching themselves beyond capacity by taking in as many asylum-seeking children as they possibly can, and more, while predominantly Tory councils refuse to play their part.

“Today’s announcement will mean that hundreds of vulnerable children can leave the hotels on the south coast where they have been left stranded and be moved to councils where they can get decent housing, support, and the care they need to restart their lives.

“This is a step forward, but the Government needs to go further and reinstate the laws that mean refugee children can be reunited with their families. That would be a first step to creating a caring asylum policy that seeks to save lives rather than stoke hatred against refugees.”

Hannah Clare, Deputy Leader of Brighton and Hove council, said:

“Children arriving in this country after fleeing persecution and war are in desperate need of support, and in Brighton and Hove we have done all we can to house them. But other councils are choosing to look the other way. This has meant the Home Office has placed vulnerable children in hotels while they wait for local authorities to make secure accommodation available.

“It is a huge relief that other councils will now be forced to play their part and it will not just be left to a handful of councils to care for these vulnerable children. Spreading responsibility more evenly will mean thousands of children can be given the vital support they need.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/23/home-office-tells-councils-to-take-unaccompanied-migrant-children>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/08/17/green-party-urges-local-authorities-to-take-in-fair-share-of-child-refugees/>

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