

Local councils prevented by government from helping Ukrainian refugees, warn Greens



2 March 2022

Local councils who want to help Ukrainian refugees are being prevented from doing so by the Government's failure to adequately fund support services, the Green Party has warned.

Green Party councillors in Brighton and Hove and in Lewes District Council say they are desperate to provide refuge for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion but unless the Government provides funding for affordable housing and resettlement of refugees then those seeking asylum will be forced to live in unacceptable conditions.

The Government is offering to take in 200,000 people fleeing Ukraine [1], but the Greens warn that there could be a repeat of the catastrophic handling of the Afghan refugee crisis last year. [2]

The Greens have repeatedly warned over the last year that refugees and asylum seekers, including children, are being accommodated in overcrowded and unsuitable hotels due to the lack of appropriate housing. [3] They have also warned that the lack of funding for fostering and children's services is leaving children without the support they need to recover from trauma.

The Green Party is calling on the Government to provide the funding that is needed for local councils to resettle refugees in secure accommodation where they can restart their lives.

Green Party Migration and Refugee Support Spokesperson Benali Hamdache said, "Councils all over the country are ready to step up for Ukrainian refugees, just like they were for Afghan refugees. But the biggest barrier is this Conservative government.

"We need to match the generosity of our European neighbours by waiving visa requirements for refugees fleeing war and we need money unlocked to provide decent accommodation and adequately fund support services. Councils with support can provide housing by repurposing empty homes, partnering with private landlords and building affordable new homes."

Green Deputy Leader of Brighton and Hove Council and lead member for children's services Hannah Clare said, "The Conservative government seems to have no conception of the urgency or the scale of what is needed to save lives now. Councils are doing all they can to support the most vulnerable, including those who are now fleeing the horrific events in Ukraine.

"But we are stretched to breaking point and unless the Government steps up

its funding, support services including those provided by voluntary sector organisations will not be able to cope.

“As a City of Sanctuary, we proudly welcome refugees and continue to commit to doing all we can to help those fleeing conflict and persecution. The Government’s chaotic response is insufficient.”

Green Leader of Lewes District Council Zoe Nicholson said, “Councils are giving all they can to help people in desperate situations, but unless the government ensures that councils have the resources to help then refugees will be left stranded and without support. Commitments to take in more refugees have to be backed with the support services that these people need.”

Notes

1

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/uk-could-over-200-000-130221772.html>

2

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/08/18/green-party-warns-government%E2%80%99s-pledge-to-resettle-afghan-refugees-is-%E2%80%9Cempty-pr%E2%80%9D/>

3

<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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