

REFUGEE WELCOME SCHOOLS



CHAPTER 1

Around the world today, 222 million children¹ and young people have had their education directly affected by conflict, natural disasters, criminal violence, development projects and urban regeneration. Seventy-eight million children are out of school completely, with a further 119 million being in school but not achieving minimum proficiency in reading or mathematics.

There are currently over 21 million refugees registered with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees,² over half of which are under 18. Globally, conflict, violence and other crises left a record 36.5 million children displaced from their homes by the end of 2021, the highest number recorded since the Second World War.³

Worldwide, only half of child refugees are enrolled in primary school and less than one quarter are enrolled in secondary schools. Overall, a refugee child is five times more likely to be out of school than a non-refugee child.

Yet, for children in these situations, education is an absolute necessity.

In the midst of destruction, violence and instability, a school is a sanctuary; a haven of normality and hope; a place of learning and opportunity. Neglecting a child's right to education undermines not only their future, but also the future of their societies.

Lack of education leaves children more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including recruitment into armed groups, child labour and early marriage. Despite this desperate situation, just one per cent of the global humanitarian aid budget is spent on education.

The UK situation

In the UK, we have a proud history of welcoming refugees. Many of our communities are responding to the current crisis in the same enthusiastic, supportive and helpful ways that their predecessors did in the middle ages through to more recent times following the Second World War.

Yet, as a country, we have not always risen to this challenge as well as we could. Too often, our national media denigrates and undermines those who have come here from other countries. At the same time, our

government is becoming increasingly hostile to refugees and those seeking asylum, leaving people stuck in hotels, unable to work, and making changes to legislation to make it harder for people to seek asylum in the UK. In its 2021 annual report, Amnesty International stated that the 'rights of refugees and migrants were routinely violated' in the UK.⁴

What the NASUWT is doing

The NASUWT is committed to playing our part in responding to the refugee crisis both in the UK and internationally through our support for teacher trade unions in those countries that have been most affected. The NASUWT has a proud history of working with our teacher trade union colleagues in areas such as these.

The NASUWT has provided practical assistance, including financial support and training, through our significant links with teacher trade unions in Eastern Europe and Ukraine and in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan, where the vast majority of refugees from the Syrian and Iraq conflicts are currently in refugee camps.

We have worked to support teacher trade unions that are restoring education systems in war-torn countries such as Iraq, and we have been at the forefront of supporting teachers and trade unionists in Turkey as they suffer from the decline of democracy under President Erdogan.

The Union has maintained a long-standing relationship with teacher trade union colleagues supporting the Burmese Karin refugee community in Thailand and the PTUZ in Zimbabwe, as they respond to the ongoing situation there.

Our Refugee Welcome Schools project

Here in the UK, schools and colleges are at the heart of the community and have a huge role to play in ensuring young refugees and their families are welcomed and integrated.

It is our duty to ensure that children and young people who have fled war and persecution are given access to high-quality education and opportunities – this is critically important if their future potential is to be realised.



To play our part, the NASUWT has developed the Refugee Welcome Schools project, in partnership with Citizens UK.

We have worked with our activists, Citizens UK organisers and local schools in Birmingham, Cardiff, London, Leicester and Milton Keynes to develop and promote a Refugee Welcome Schools accreditation.

This accreditation serves two key purposes. Firstly, it highlights the excellent work that schools are doing to respond to children arriving as refugees. Secondly, it challenges schools and the wider community to do more to create a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for pupils who have been through horrors that many of us would struggle to imagine.

There is a lot more to do

As the refugee crisis continues, we must stay committed to placing all possible pressure on the UK Government to ensure that refugee children in the UK are given access to the full range of educational

support, mental health support and resources to enable them to achieve and succeed in our schools.

The NASUWT has heard many good things from our teachers about the work they are doing in this area. However, we have also heard from our members about how the lack of resources, absence of specialist support and failure to tackle problems (like workload and classroom behaviour) are undermining teachers' ability to deliver the high-quality education that all pupils are entitled to.

The NASUWT is committed to working with teachers to give these children and young people stability, opportunity and hope.

¹ UN Website – <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/06/1120922>.

² UNHCR website – <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-a-glance.html>.

³ UN Website – <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/06/1120642>.

⁴ Amnesty International Website – <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/europe-and-central-asia/united-kingdom/report-united-kingdom/>.

NASUWT Solidarity with Ukraine

The NASUWT stands in unity with the people of Ukraine and the international community in condemning the illegal invasion and military action by Russia in Ukraine.

The NASUWT stands with the people of Ukraine and Russia who strive for peace, democracy and security, and stands with our trade union sisters and brothers in Ukraine. We extend our solidarity and support to the Trade Union of Education and Science Workers of Ukraine (TUESWU) and the Free Trade Union of Education and Science of Ukraine (VPONU) in their efforts to protect children's right to education.

The NASUWT further extends our solidarity to trade unions across Europe and the world who are working to secure peace, democracy and human rights, and to provide vital humanitarian support and assistance to the people of Ukraine and those who have been displaced.

The NASUWT has called on the UK Government to play its part in providing humanitarian assistance and

support to the people of Ukraine who are being forcibly displaced as a consequence of the Russian military invasion, including the provision of safe passage to the UK, and we have called on the international community to work together to ensure the right of all children and adults to safe education in a peaceful learning environment.

The NASUWT has urged the international community to commit to take action against those who incite or perpetrate attacks on education institutions, facilities or teachers and to bring those culpable to justice.

More information on the NASUWT's solidarity with Ukraine, as well as information on ways to support Ukrainian refugees, can be found at:

<https://www.nasuwt.org.uk/news/international/international-news/nasuwt-statement-on-ukraine.html>.





Correct Terminology

The immigration system is complex and it can be hard to understand the different types of status that different migrants in the UK have. Using the correct language is important, as it enables us to challenge some of the myths that exist around migration.

This guide explains some of the most common terms. For more detailed explanations, visit Refugee Action's 'Facts about Refugees' website at: <https://www.refugee-action.org.uk/about/facts-about-refugees/>.

Migrant

A migrant is anyone who travels to live in a different part of the country or world. This can mean someone from any country in the world. Some people are economic migrants (they relocate for work), and other types of migrants include students, refugees and asylum seekers – 'Migrant' is an umbrella term and is not a form of legal status.

Refugee

A refugee is someone who has relocated to a different part of the country or world because they have a 'well-founded fear of persecution' – meaning there is a specific reason why they feel in danger where they live and need to leave. For some refugees, such as Syrian refugees, this can be because of war or political upheaval. For others, this can be because of oppressive laws related to their gender or sexuality; for example, in Iran, where homosexuality is punishable by death, or because their political activities put them at risk from the authorities.

In the UK, refugees must apply for asylum as soon as they enter the country, and provide reasons and evidence for their fear of persecution. If the Home Office accepts this evidence, they will be granted refugee status and the leave to remain in the UK for five years. Refugees are able to work and claim benefits.



Asylum Seeker

An asylum seeker is someone who has fled their country and is in the process of applying for refugee status. Whilst they wait for a decision, they are not able to work and are given benefits which usually amount to around £5 per day.

In 2021, roughly 59% of asylum applications in the UK have been successful.⁵ People who have had their asylum claim rejected are known as refused asylum seekers. They are not entitled to any help from the State, including healthcare, and are expected to return home, whether or not they feel it is safe to do so.

There is no such thing as a bogus or illegal asylum seeker – all those who claim asylum are ‘in the system’ and are entitled to stay in the UK until their claim has been processed. Asylum seekers in the UK cannot be penalised for entering the country illegally.

Trafficking

Some people are brought to the UK against their will. This is known as trafficking. People, including children,

may be tricked into or forced to make the journey to the UK by criminals. Victims of trafficking may be forced into illegal slave labour, domestic servitude, or the drug trade or may be enslaved in the sex industry.

Undocumented

An undocumented migrant is someone who does not have any legal documentation or status to live and work in the UK. They are not entitled to any benefits and are liable for detention and deportation if found by the authorities. Children can be undocumented, even though they were born in the UK, if (when they were born) their parents did not have the correct status or British citizenship. Sometimes, children will not know they are undocumented until they try to apply for a National Insurance card, driver’s licence or university place.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Fifty per cent of the world’s refugee population are children. Sometimes, children travel to the UK on their own in order to claim asylum because they might have

been orphaned or separated from their parents; their parents might have helped them to flee because of a specific danger they faced; or because their parents were unable to make the journey. These children are called Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). When they arrive in the UK, they are placed in the care of local authorities.

Citizenship

People with British citizenship are free from immigration controls and have the right to live and work freely in the UK. They are also entitled to a British passport.

You do not automatically get British citizenship if you are born in the UK, and it costs £1,012 per child to apply, which means that some people are priced out of the right to citizenship. Without citizenship, most children will have to pay international fees at university and will be unable to take out student loans, effectively blocking them from university. They will also bar them from being able to vote, participate in public life, and have the dignity of being recognised as a British citizen.



CHAPTER 3

What Can Schools Do?

Asylum seeking and refugee (ASR) children face a range of barriers to accessing education. Upon navigating the hostile asylum policy, refugee children are often subject to age assessments and lengthy admission processes. Once enrolled, ASR children remain confronted with barriers to learning. The journey of forced migration may lead to a disrupted education, meaning children are unable to access lesson content. ASR children must also become proficient in English – a task made even more challenging in light of inhibited native language development. Compounding these concerns are poverty, xenophobia and potential mental health problems.

It is important that ASR children are supported inclusively to avoid the process of 'othering'. Inclusive education may include: reduced exclusion from the curriculum, culture and wider community of the school; and a restructuring of existing practices to support a range of needs and the participation of all pupils throughout the school community.

Inclusive interventions are likely to extend beyond the immediate classroom environment. Support can range from whole-school processes to wider community action. Importantly, there is no one correct way of supporting ASR children; interventions will vary according to the structure, make-up and practices of each school. Nonetheless, below are a few examples of what schools can do to support their ASR students.

Classroom Support

Individualised learning plans can ensure teachers are aware of students' needs and encourage the implementation of strategies for support. For children with limited English, potential strategies include: involving teaching assistants experienced in supporting English as an Additional Language (EAL) children; access to personal resources such as bilingual dictionaries or access to computers for translation; and intervention classes attended by ASR children and their peers. For children with a disrupted education, whole-class revision classes and peer mentoring schemes can assist pupils with catching up on content knowledge.

Curricular amendments can also facilitate inclusive classroom learning. For example, the introduction of cultural studies can prompt learning on a range of cultural backgrounds. By learning about ASR children's culture, students can develop an understanding of cultural differences, while ASR children can learn about British culture, enhancing their understanding of their new community. Individual topics such as geography or personal, social and health care (PSHE) could be altered to include learning about mass migrations, refugee issues and xenophobia.

Wider School Support

Schools can also assist children with their social and emotional needs. Pastoral teams can refer children to school councillors, children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), or community mental health organisations to alleviate potential mental health problems.

Buddy support programmes can help children develop friendships and become involved in the school

community. Invites to lunchtime clubs can similarly assist with friendship building, and also ensure they have a safe space to go.

The celebration of diversity and multiculturalism contributes to the prevalence of tolerance and respect, signalling to ASR children that they are valued members of the student cohort. Activities may include form time projects, dedicated assemblies and award ceremonies.

Parental Support

ASR families may be in the process of rebuilding their lives, making home life turbulent for ASR children. Provisions such as a home-school link teacher can help families with broader resettlement needs, offer advice or information on entitlements and community services, and assist families with a smooth transition to the UK.

The link can ensure parents are involved in their children's education and the local community by inviting them to local gatherings or asking them to volunteer their time or apply for internal roles so they



are involved with the school – all of which help make ASR families feel welcome. Translation services – whether through a member of staff or community assistance – can prevent possible language barriers.

Community Support

Working with the local community can facilitate links with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community organisations, providing children and families with access to an array of services and networks through which they can seek support and advice. Additionally, networks provide an opportunity to work with the community on fundraising projects or listening campaigns to address xenophobia or potential misconceptions.

Finally, schools can work with community organisations to campaign for the rights of ASR children and their families. For example, schools can join a local Citizens UK alliance to campaign for the resettlement of more refugees, or campaign for the rights of ASR teachers to develop their careers in the UK.



The Refugee Welcome Schools programme – What is it and how does a school apply for it?

The Refugee Welcome Schools accreditation scheme recognises schools that have made a commitment to welcome refugees in their institution and community, educate all pupils and staff about the importance of refugee protection over the course of a year, and participate in campaigns to improve the lives of refugees in the UK.

In order to become a Refugee Welcome School, schools need to submit an application form which is available to download at: <https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/refugees-and-migrants-welcome/sponsor-refugees/refugee-welcome-schools/>. This form asks schools to provide details of a Refugee Welcome Plan, a Refugee Awareness Plan, and a Refugee Action Plan. Applications will be scrutinised by a Refugee Welcome Schools Panel, made up of teachers, educationalists, trade unionists, children and refugees themselves.

Accredited Refugee Welcome Schools are encouraged to display their accreditation certificate prominently, and are welcome to use the logo on materials.

The form has three sections – focused on developing a Welcome Plan, an Awareness Plan, and an Action Plan.

Designing a Refugee Welcome Plan

To achieve Refugee Welcome School accreditation, welcoming refugee children and their families must be at the heart of what a school does. How schools seek to welcome, include and support refugee children and their families is a critical and often untold part of the refugee welcome story.

In order to set out a school's welcome plan, think about the systems and processes you will put in place to make refugee pupils and their families welcome in your community. For example:

- a buddy system for all newly arrived refugee pupils;
- considering parents of refugees for Teaching Assistant or other staff roles; or



- hosting a welcome celebration and engaging the wider community.

Designing a Refugee Awareness Plan

A key aspect of being a Refugee Welcome School is to work out how the whole school can become refugee welcome. With the current political climate and mainstream debate on immigration, people can become confused and hostile towards people from different backgrounds. Taking a whole-school approach to refugee awareness, including tackling racism and prejudice around immigration, is crucial to ensuring that the school is a safe and welcoming space for refugees.

To create a school's awareness plan, think about how you can ensure all pupils and staff are educated about the importance of welcoming refugees over the course of a year. For example:

- using Refugee Week as an opportunity to theme assemblies for every pupil;

- assign a class to make posters about welcoming refugees for display in the school;
- identify parts of the curriculum in which pupils could learn about refugee protection; or
- engage with staff to encourage participation among teachers and support staff.

Designing a Refugee Action Plan

Schools are central to the community. They can be places which bring people together when they would otherwise not meet. Schools can be essential parts of community coalitions that seek to deliver change in the immediate area. Creating community actions around Refugee Welcome Schools can help to make the local area more inclusive for migrant children and their families.

For ideas on how to develop a Refugee Action Plan think about how your school can participate in community campaigns to improve the lives of refugees and those seeking sanctuary.

For example:

- run a 'listening campaign' to identify problems for refugees in your area;
 - campaign for refugees with teaching backgrounds/aspirations to be supported to develop their career; or
- join a local Citizens' Alliance and support efforts to resettle more Syrian refugees, such as through Community Sponsorship.



CHAPTER 5

Case Studies from some Refugee Welcome Schools

The Refugee Welcome Schools programme has successfully accredited almost 40 schools, creating a network of educational establishments which welcome ASR children. Each school has implemented a Refugee Welcome Plan, a Refugee Awareness Plan and a Refugee Action Plan. Provisions introduced vary according to each school. Whilst strategies differ according to the context, the Radcliffe School, St David's College and St Gabriel's College provide examples of good practice which schools can adopt to accredit as a Refugee Welcome School.

Ideas for creating a Refugee Welcome Plan

The Radcliffe School welcomes students through a comprehensive induction process. In addition to supporting students with logistical matters, such as transport arrangements, pupils are given a welcome pack which consists of information ranging from the routines of the school day to after-school clubs and house

activities. Refugee students are also assessed for the purpose of creating a tailored integration programme. Whilst students may receive EAL support, students are quickly introduced to lessons, particularly in classes where limited English may prove less of a barrier. To accelerate participation in lessons, students are provided with EAL Teaching Assistant (TA) support, EAL-adapted resources, and bilingual dictionaries or computer access to aid communication.

The Radcliffe School has also developed a refugee welcome pack, co-produced with the Red Cross, to support families with navigating the education system. Parents are invited to attend a coffee evening where they can learn more about the school system and attend a tour of the school site. To help with this process, the school asks staff or members of the local community to act as interpreters to assist with communication.

St Gabriel's College has a welcome team composed of a group of student volunteers who participate in the induction of the new pupil by conducting tours of the school site and answering questions. Team members

also accompany students to classes, including EAL lessons. In doing so, refugee children are made to feel supported by their peers whilst they resettle into the school community.

St Gabriel's College celebrates their refugee children through Refugee Week, an annual event which highlights the resilience, contribution and achievements of refugees. Students participate in assemblies, reflect upon a series of films and decorate the college with wall displays. Similarly, St David's College celebrates the diverse and vibrant cultures which comprise the college population. The college invites schools within their municipality to participate in celebrations, spreading the message of welcome across the community.

Suggestions for designing a Refugee Awareness Plan

The Radcliffe School ensures that staff members are the focus of awareness strategies. Teachers participate in workshops led by the Red Cross to increase

awareness of refugee children's needs, the barriers confronting their learning. and support mechanisms to aid their progress. In addition, the EAL coordinator regularly attends Ethnic Minority Achievement meetings which discuss the needs of refugee children and strategies for support. These meetings are shared by the EAL coordinator by attending department meetings, therefore ensuring the whole school is prepared to respond to the needs of refugee children.

St David's builds staff awareness through the work of a steering group, which aims to ensure whole-school implementation of the Refugee Welcome School plans. The group includes teaching staff, support staff, SLT, and the pastoral team. By including different members of staff, the group raises awareness throughout the school's departments and allows for collaboration on how they can most appropriately support their refugee children.

St Gabriel's College raises awareness amongst students by including refugee issues in the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum. Students learn about the



migration experience and engage with the hostile policies governing UK immigration. Students are also presented with newspaper articles to analyse how refugees are portrayed in the media. Pupils are encouraged to recognise and challenge hostile attitudes prevalent within the public domain.

Examples of building a Refugee Action Plan

The Radcliffe School has built relationships with refugee families through the work of both the EAL coordinator and parent ambassador. The coordinator and ambassador encourage parents' involvement with the school through invitations to school events. In addition, they help families with the resettlement process by offering information and introducing families to relevant support organisations.

St David's College invites students to conduct listening campaigns and associated workshops to uncover any misconceptions pervading the college community. The campaign raises awareness of the plight of refugees and encourages students to

empathise with families forced to flee their homes. In doing so, the college aims to establish a school culture which welcomes their refugee students.

St Gabriel's works with the Refugee Welcome Team to campaign for the community resettlement of refugee families. In doing so, the school presses the council to accommodate more families. The college not only assists with campaign efforts, but it also works with the team to find suitable housing. St Gabriel's also collaborates with CUK on the Children into Citizens campaign. The campaign aims to help children access citizenship by calling on the Government to reduce the cost of the application. St Gabriel's has assisted the campaign by meeting ministers to raise the issue and ask for support.

Other Campaigns

The NASUWT encourages teachers to get involved in, or find out more about, the following campaigns and organisations:

Lift the Ban

The NASUWT is a member of the Lift the Ban Coalition – www.lifttheban.co.uk/.

People seeking asylum in the UK are only able to apply for the right to work after waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year. Even then, the few people who are granted such permission are rarely able to work in practice because their employment is restricted to the narrow list of highly skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List.

This means that people are essentially banned from working whilst they wait for a decision on their asylum claim. Instead, they are left to live on just £45 a week – struggling to support themselves and their families,

while their talents are wasted and their integration set back.

The Lift the Ban coalition, made up of almost 300 non-profit organisations, think tanks, businesses, trade unions and faith groups, is calling on the UK Government to give people seeking asylum and their adult dependants the right to work:

- unconstrained by the Shortage Occupation List; and
- after they have waited six months for a decision on their initial asylum claim or further submission.

Hope Not Hate

<https://hopenothate.org.uk/communities/in-schools/>

Hope Not Hate works to build communities and celebrate shared identities. It campaigns for a world free from mistrust and racism.

Hope Not Hate's Education Unit was formally launched in 2016, and since then it has worked with schools to train teachers, and with students to challenge



prejudice, reaching nearly 90,000 students across the UK.

The work the organisation delivers in schools has its roots in a community organising approach. Its aim is not just to educate students about prejudice and stereotyping, but also to be a catalyst towards positive behavioural change in schools across the UK, which can act as a springboard towards a more inclusive society. Its education team works closely with researchers, reporting on trends spotted in the classroom, and identifying the most up-to-date ideas and groups circulating in far-right spaces online and off, particularly where there is a risk of teenagers becoming attracted to violent extremist groups.

As well as educating students directly, Hope Not Hate runs continuing professional development (CPD) training for thousands of teachers each year. Teachers are particularly keen to learn about contemporary and extremist threats, how to spot signs of radicalisation and how to engage productively with students about whom they have concerns.

In a country that is increasingly divided into those who are comfortable with multiculturalism and those who feel threatened by it, Hope Not Hate develops training tools that can be used in all kinds of contexts to allow people to engage with others who hold different views from them, and to use those conversations to bring people together.





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