

## Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network

### Unmasking and Unmaking the Hostile Environment

The Hostile environment has been 10 years in the making

**QARN** - <https://qarn.org.uk/> - is a Quaker network that builds links and connections with other organisations that are working within their aims.

#### AIM:

Lends a quakerly voice on steering groups and brings back into quaker communities. Works to convince, critique and guide the corporate quarter within BYM

To change the current system

Guiding principles - to campaign for justice and compassionate system

#### Current priorities and organisations working alongside:

**NAPIA BARRACKS** - <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/aug/27/controversial-napier-barracks-in-line-to-house-asylum-seekers-until-2025>

It is a contingency accommodation detention centre

**LEVEL of CURRENT FEES** for those seeking indefinite stay to remain

**RWANDA** - <https://qarn.org.uk/concerns-about-the-use-of-army-barracks-etc/>

Quaker Congo partnership - <http://www.quakercongo.org.uk/>

- minerals being mined main beneficiary the Rwanda Army

**CRN - Churches Refugee Network** - <https://ctbi.org.uk/category/witnessing-together/asylum-and-refugees/crn/>

A Weighty large faith group- Barbara Forbes is the Quaker link on the steering group

#### RETHINKING SECURITY

<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/>

Asylum seekers with lived experience have stated that the system is not broken it has purposely been designed that way.

Need an alternative strategy can try human security

Currently in three year process of challenging security system. A Series of roundtable discussions have ensued. Pritti Patel is stating there are no other ideas on the table. One idea has been to take it out of the Home Office and spread it over several ministries to become less monolithic and it can come up various social policies and agendas. So the policy process becomes more open and inclusive.

The current Levelling Up is managing the Ukraine Scheme.

## **STATUS NOW** - <https://statusnow4all.org/>

A campaign network started during COVID. QARN has a rep on it's diverse steering group, with people who have direct experience of the current system. It's highlighted a large group of largely overlooked Filipino migrant workers who work in domestic and care.- <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/6/filipino-women-migrant-workers-fact-sheet>

## **DETENTION FORUM** - <https://detentionforum.org.uk/>

A network of over 50 organisation to challenge the use of detention centres and to illuminate the dehumanisation and injustices involved in immigration detention centres. No legal process involved. Despite it being a human right to seek asylum. Have been working on is to reduce the time limit to 28 days as it has been recognised that this is when peoples mental health begin to suffer and set in.

## **NO TO HASSOCK FIELD** - <https://notohassockfield.org.uk/>

13 miles NW of Durham

An old govt facility opened recently to detain women. Every third Saturday of the month can participate in a Demonstration (Durham Cathedral).

## **TOGETHER WITH REFUGEES** - <https://togetherwithrefugees.org.uk/>

Brings big organisations together especially around the Border Bills. Works to strategise together. Bigger campaigns.

All meetings and individuals can display an orange heart in their windows of noticeable places to raise awareness and send a statement that we are standing with refugees.

## **WOODBROOKE - Quaker learning centre** - <https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/>

QARN is working to change and challenge the current narrative and to include people with lived experience.

June Refugee Week - QARN course at Woodbrooke **June 16** - to change the conversation and keep it going even though the Borders Bill went through.

## **SAFE PASSAGE** - <https://www.safepassage.org.uk/>

Legal routes to safety. Campaigned against Borders Bill. Worked with faith organisations, open letters, letter writing to House of Lords and petitions. It's a diverse and democratic and young group with people who have refugee experience. It empowers young people to speak with journalists and have made films around these issues and there is a written report safe routes. Supports child refugees and has helped over a thousand children to be reunited with their families.

## Where do we go from now post Borders Bill?

### What shall we do next?

Legislation has hastened and strengthened the hostile environment

Any further ideas forward to QARN -

[info@qarn.org.uk](mailto:info@qarn.org.uk) – [INFO@QARN.ORG.UK](mailto:INFO@QARN.ORG.UK)

QARN is ambivalent about sponsorships as it let's the govt off the hook.

However Hosting is an option.

**Community sponsorship groups** - <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/get-involved/other-ways-to-help/community-sponsorship/> for e.g. Settle in Harrogate has done this

and found it very rewarding for all parties. Found a rented property for a Syrian family his has brought people together and provided support for refugees.

Also has been part of a weekend host scheme for refugees in Leeds who came to a rural setting for the weekend. The volunteers involve help to spread the word and it can help all involved to have direct experience and change the narrative.

**SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY** - <https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/>

It enables young people in schools to think about refugees learn about social justice - Barbara Forbes involved in one in Brimingham.

Participate **June 16** course **CHANGE THE CONVERSATION** - pay as you go -

<https://www.woodbrooke.org.uk/product/changing-the-conversation/> There will be strong voices with speakers with lived experience

Quakers public affairs - Grace Da Costa - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/blog/author/gracedacosta/>

**The FRIEND** - QARN submits articles

Lynsey Burtonshaw - Friends House London part of Standstead 15 - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-55859455>

**SANCTUARY MEETINGS** - connect with sanctuary meetings - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/social-justice/migration/sanctuary-meetings>

**SANCTUARY CITIES - Bristol** - <https://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/our-stories/supporting-bristol-city-of-sanctuary>

Being involved can keep hope and energy alive

**CARE FOR CALAIS** - <https://care4calais.org/>

MP's House of Lords, letter writing, petitions. Newspapers, articles. Social media.

**Some of the traditional ways we need to continue, yet have not been effective with challenging the Borders Bill**

**The instruments of democracy are being removed from us so it is imperative to carry on**

**‘Better to light a candle than curse the darkness’**

**‘Start with hope and change will follow’**

Instead of using **change** the system use **transform** the system

Links with UNCHR Geneva Quaker UN office - use more

Awareness consciousness raising - **Transformative Justice** - Countering the lies on immigration. Creating a reference guide. Changing challenging the narrative amongst **lay people**, local communities, faith groups, all groups, town centres, libraries, concerts, gyms, shopping centres, grass roots levels. Use stories, art, films, comic books, illustrations, digital media

Freedom from Torture - Changing the conversation message guide - <https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/changing-the-conversation-on-asylum-a-messaging-guide>

Refugee Action - Facts about refugees - <https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/changing-the-conversation-on-asylum-a-messaging-guide>

Right to remain - videos resources for posting - <https://righttoremain.org.uk/>

Safe Passage - films and stories made by young leaders - <https://www.safepassage.org.uk/young-leaders>

People’s tribunals - E.g Ireland’s challenge abortion laws - article an example - <https://ptmurderofjournalists.org/what-is-a-peoples-tribunal/>