

One day of uncollected taxes could fund support to child refugees, Greens say



Green Party

5 March 2022

The Green Party has voted overwhelmingly to introduce schemes which reunite unaccompanied child refugees with their families and to make permanent the current temporary scheme mandating councils to take unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).

Since July last year, the number of small boat crossings to the UK has increased [1]. This pressure has forced many child refugees to be held in hotels and intake centres across the south coast, waiting for a council to accept them into care through the national transfer scheme. [2]

Under current arrangements, councils receive grant funding of between £113 and £143 per day to place UASC in their local authority areas through the national transfer scheme. Taking part is voluntary, however the Government temporarily mandated the scheme at the end of last year. [3]

The Deputy leader of Brighton and Hove Council, Cllr Hannah Clare, said:

“This motion, passed overwhelmingly at our Spring conference, makes clear there can be no exceptions: councils must take responsibility for supporting some of the world’s most vulnerable people while the government must fund councils adequately to enable them to provide such support.”

“Closing the funding gap for councils so they can support UASC could be achieved with an increase of grant funding by around £100m. This is equivalent to approximately one day’s uncollected taxes in the UK. [4]

“Many local councils, often where Conservatives are in power, are failing to provide a warm, safe home for child refugees. Other councils are doing everything in their power to welcome child refugees into their area, despite massive cuts to their budgets and the lack of available placements for children in care. This includes Green-led Brighton and Hove, and Solihull, where Greens are a powerful opposition.

“Ensuring UASC get support immediately when they arrive on our shores is the

humane and compassionate response. It is also vital that we create mechanisms for such children to be reunited with their families.”

Green Party conference called on the government to:

- make the mandatory rota through the national transfer scheme permanent, with no exceptions allowing councils to opt out
- ensure that the national transfer scheme takes account of UASC best interests and wishes, and that the prescribed 0.07% quota should be a minimum not a maximum for councils supporting UASC in their area
- fund councils adequately to enable them to provide support to UASC in care and care leavers
- introduce schemes which reunite unaccompanied child refugees with their families
- address the lack of placements for all children in care, by funding councils to develop in house provision and end the practice of profit-making private residential homes and foster agencies
- over the long term, work with other governments to address the underlying causes of unaccompanied child refugees arriving on our shores.

Notes

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/sep/27/more-small-boat-channel-crossings-this-year-than-during-all-of-2020>

[2]

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/25/child-refugees-were-dumped-in-unsafe-hotel-claims-brighton-council>

[3]

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-transfer-scheme-to-become-mandatory-for-all-local-authorities>

[4] <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/unpaid-taxes-the-tax-gap/>

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