

# What should we offer illegal migrants?

There is a big divide in our society about people who cross the Channel by small boat to gain entry to the U.K. Some presume these people are asylum seekers or economic migrants from poor countries that we should help. Others are angry that the U.K. spends its resources on picking them up from the Channel and the placing them in accommodation with free board allowing them plenty of time to try to establish eventual legal entry. They point out these people cannot be asylum seekers as they are coming from France, which is a safe country. The migrants themselves are often frustrated that they are detained and not allowed to work whilst legal processes grind on.

Opponents say why cannot we return them, having made clear they are breaking the law by seeking passage without permission. They have often given substantial sums to criminal gangs to help them reach our shores, and have risked themselves and their families in unsuitable and overloaded boats. They have sought to cross on of the world's busiest shipping lanes in very vulnerable vessels. They must have calculated the U.K. will rush to their assistance because they and the people smugglers have chosen to put them at risk.

Supporters of the arrivals say we have a duty to rescue people from their own deliberate mistakes, and should show sympathy for people who are so keen to join us.

I would hope most could come to agree that people putting themselves at risk like this is undesirable, and devoting so much sea patrol and rescue resource to this dangerous criminal Business unsatisfactory. The Home Secretary has promised new clearer law in the U.K. and a more united effort to crack the smuggling gangs and put them out of business. It should be an aim which unites most of us. I believe the Home Secretary wishes to do this, but has found the current law unhelpful for the task and is looking to amend it. She has also initiated an enquiry into the recent actions of Border Force in going into French waters to pick people up, when the French should have taken them back to safety in France.