



Our messaging guide:

HOW TO HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

about the asylum seeker 'hotels'



HOW TO HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

With so much **negative language** about people seeking asylum in the media, amongst our politicians and online, it can be **difficult to know where to start** when navigating challenging conversations with friends and family. **All of us can make a difference** in our day-to-day lives by holding difficult conversations with people who may not agree with us.

This toolkit provides **calm, clear, and factual** responses to common myths about hotel use in the asylum system, to help you navigate difficult conversations with friends, family, neighbours, the media, or decision-makers.

Together, we can shift the conversation toward compassion, community, and common sense.

Use this toolkit to:

- Speak with your friends, family and neighbours
- Respond to people on social media
- Speak in community forums
- Engage with policymakers
- Support volunteers and campaigners

Tone Tips:

- Stay calm and kind
- Speak to our shared values (fairness, safety, dignity)
- Avoid getting drawn into dehumanising arguments
- Share stories and facts



HOW TO HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

1

"They're living in luxury hotels while Brits are homeless!"

Response:

Most asylum seekers are placed in disused or budget hotels, not luxury ones. They often have to share cramped rooms with strangers, can't cook, and have no control over where they're sent or how long they'll stay. It's not comfort, it's containment.

Reframe:

Nobody should be homeless - not British citizens or asylum seekers. We should be fixing the housing crisis, not blaming people fleeing persecution.



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2

"It's not fair on taxpayers!"

Response:

The hotel system isn't fair on anyone. It costs over £8 million a day and fails to meet people's basic needs. Community housing is far cheaper, safer, and more dignified.

Reframe:

If we're concerned about wasting taxpayer funds, let's invest in cheaper housing solutions that work for everyone.



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3

"It encourages more people to come here."

Response:

People don't risk their lives to get a hotel room. They come to escape war, torture, and persecution. Most don't know they'll end up in a hotel until after they arrive.

Reframe:

The real driver of migration is danger at home—not comfort abroad. 'Deterrence policies' - making things uncomfortable for asylum seekers when they arrive, to discourage them from coming - have been evidenced to have no impact on the amount of people arriving in the UK.



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4

"They're a burden on public services."

Response:

Asylum seekers aren't allowed to work and contribute taxes, even if they want to. Many have vital skills. With fairer policies, they could support public services, not burden them.

Reframe:

It's not the people, it's the system that holds them back.

5

"We should look after our own first."

Response:

This isn't an either/or issue. We can house both people experiencing homelessness and those fleeing danger. It's about political will and good planning, not scarcity.

Reframe:

Compassion doesn't have borders. We rise by lifting everyone.



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6

"They could be dangerous—we don't know who they are."

Response:

All asylum seekers are subject to screening. The vast majority are fleeing violence, not causing it. There's no evidence that people seeking asylum pose a threat.

Reframe:

Suspicion breeds fear. Understanding builds safety.



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7

"No one asked local communities if they wanted this."

Response:

I agree that this is a problem. Often, local councils aren't consulted and that's a failure of central government. But this isn't the fault of people seeking safety. The real issue is a lack of investment and planning.

Reframe:

Good policy involves communities and protects the vulnerable.



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8

"They're all young men, coming here to make money!"

Response:

Many people seeking asylum in the UK are young men. The journey is incredibly dangerous, with people experiencing slavery, imprisonment, and abuse on the way. Young men are more likely to survive the journey, and are therefore more likely to be the ones sent to seek safety by their families. They also deserve protection too!

Seeking asylum is a right under international law, not a job opportunity. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work while they wait for their claim to be processed, often for months or years.

Reframe:

People do not endanger their lives for job opportunities. Fleeing war or persecution isn't a career move. We should be judging people on their protection needs, not their age or gender.

