



Dear refugees of Bristol and the South West

This Valentine's Day we are writing to share love and solidarity with you, to make it clear to you and to our political leaders that we welcome you into our community.

As people from all walks of life in Bristol and the South West - from trade unions, business, sports teams, faith groups, charities, the arts and music - we are signing this joint message to you to show that Bristol is standing together with refugees and calling for a fair new plan.

Given the chance, we know communities like ours go the extra mile to welcome refugees – opening our homes, befriending, speaking up, volunteering and donating to provide practical and moral support. Given the chance, refugees do so much to enrich our society as they build new lives.

There are so many inspiring and heartwarming initiatives across our communities to support and welcome those seeking refuge here. The Bristol City of Sanctuary Transport Fund is only one shining example – a project where First Bus matches the money raised from our communities to provide free bus tickets for destitute asylum seekers, thus enabling them to attend crucial solicitor and medical appointments, and to visit the several Welcome Centres, where they can share food and the company of others.

We're so grateful for your wonderful contributions to our communities, culture and economy.

We want you to know that there is overwhelming support across the region for a fair new plan for refugees, one that's rooted in fairness, justice and compassion - a positive alternative to the current uncaring, costly and chaotic refugee system. Now is the time for a fairer and more compassionate approach towards refugees in the UK.

With love from

Shahid Akram, Managing Director, Ummah Funerals

Jacob Anderson, actor and musician

Rachael Bee, Co-Founder, Refugee Welcome Homes

Mijanou Blech, Director, Bristol Hospitality Networks

Will Brown, CEO, Gloucestershire County Cricket Club

Dave Chapple, Chair, Bridgwater Trades Council

Hannah David, PCS National Vice President and Chair of South West Regional Committee and South West TUC

James Davies, PCS South West Regional Secretary

Robert Del Naja, Musician, Massive Attack

Rt Revd Vivienne Faull, Bishop of Bristol

Dan Green, Co-founder and Managing Director, Bridges for Communities

Donovan Hawley, Chair, Bristol and West Progressive Jewish Congregation

Lawrence Hoo, Poet

Layla Ismail, Development Manager, Refugee Women of Bristol

Ken Loach, Film Director

Abdul Malik, Chair, Easton Jamia Masjid

Andrew McCarthy, Acting CEO, Bristol Refugee Rights

Rev Richard McKay, St Nicholas of Tolentino Church, Bristol

Seb Michnowicz, Secretary, Bristol ASLEF Branch

Tariq Modood, Professor of Sociology, Politics and Public Policy at the University of Bristol

Sir Michael Morpurgo, author, poet, playwright and former Children's Laureate

Lady Clare Morpurgo

Reverend Sue Parfitt, Climate Justice Campaigner

Alex Raikes, Chief Executive, SARI, and former High Sheriff of the County of City of Bristol
2022-2023

Farooq Siddique, Columnist

Phoebe Westwood, Development Manager, Bristol Refugee and Asylum Seeker
Partnership (BRASP)

Amber Williams, President, Bristol NEU

Dom Wood, CEO, 1625 Independent People

Waqar Younis, Secretary Pakistan Association Bristol (PAB)