

THE COMMISSION ON THE INTEGRATION OF REFUGEES: ASYLUM, PROTECTION AND THE COMMON GOOD

Terms of Reference

Objective

The Commission on the Integration of Refugees has been convened by the Woolf Institute, Cambridge, to:

- Investigate how the current UK refugee and asylum system¹ impacts integration outcomes.
- Assess the effectiveness of integration-focused services across the UK (in terms of housing, education, health care, social services and access to employment), and compare practices across the country.
- Explore refugees' and asylum seekers' experiences of the UK refugee and asylum system and integration-focused services.
- Understand how the wider UK general public and civil society perceives and interacts with refugees and asylum seekers, especially at a local level.
- Propose evidence-based changes to the UK refugee and asylum system to ensure the meaningful integration of refugees which respects their rights and commands support from diverse stakeholders with contrasting views.
- Provide and compare economic modelling for the costs of the current and newly proposed UK refugee and asylum system in so far as they affect integration outcomes.

¹ Refugee and asylum system' refers to all those aspects of UK law, governance and society pertaining to those seeking protection in the UK, including the asylum system; resettlement schemes; phased and ad hoc visa schemes, such as those for British Nationals (Overseas) in Hong Kong or Homes for Ukraine; and the local government and third sector agencies involved in the integration of people seeking protection. 'Refugee' refers to any person who has sought or is seeking sanctuary in the UK, including those currently going through the asylum system; granted asylum; resettled via a government backed resettlement scheme; and granted permanent or temporary leave to remain following visa adjustments for BN(O) and Ukrainian residents.

Chair

Chair: **Dr Ed Kessler**

Steering Group

The Commission is assisted by a Steering Group whose members are:

- **Trixie Brenninkmeijer** (Chair, The Arise Foundation and Vice-Chair, Woolf Institute)
- **Ben Jackson** (Director, Asylum Reform Initiative)
- **Professor Cornelius Katona** (Medical Director, Helen Bamber Foundation)
- **Dr Edward Kessler** (Founder President, Woolf Institute)
- **Professor Hanna Kienzler** (Associate Professor and Co-Director of the ESRC Centre for Society and Mental Health at King's College)
- **Mishka Pillay** (Refugee Campaigner and Advocate)
- **Nicola Thomas** (Head of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, Southwark Diocese)

Membership

The Commission's membership reflects a range of backgrounds and professions in terms of age, gender, geographical location, occupation and religion. Each member serves in an individual capacity and not as an official representative or delegate of an institution. There is a full list of members below.

Meetings of the Commission

Commissioners will participate in five all-day meetings and seven Local Engagement Hearings around the UK from September 2022 to December 2023. A pre-commission day event was held on 15 June 2022 to discuss a preliminary schedule of themes and issues to be discussed at these meetings.

Local Engagement hearings

There will be six city hearings – in Birmingham, Manchester, Croydon, Newcastle, Glasgow and Cardiff – and one rural hearing. Each will be organised locally. At each hearing, the Chair will be accompanied by 3–4 Commissioners.

The Commission will invite individuals and organisations to the hearings to give evidence, engage in discussion and air views. The hearings will be by private invitation. The Commission will seek to hear from a broad range of views, including those seeking protection, academics, employers, health care professionals, faith leaders and politicians.

Public Call for Evidence

The Commission will issue a general call for evidence in early 2023 from individuals and organisations. All evidence taken from the hearings and the public call will be considered by the Commission when compiling its final report.

Visits

The Commission will visit locations which play a role in the asylum system or in providing integration support for refugees, such as refugee accommodation and charity drop-in sessions.

Reporting

The commission will issue its report with recommendations in late 2023. The report will be accompanied by webinars and media activity to disseminate its findings.

Funding

The commission is funded by the Woolf Institute.

Full list of members

The full list of members of the commission are as follows:

- **Trixie Brenninkmeijer**
- **Jacqui Broadhead**
- **Lord Alex Carlile**
- **Carolyn Downs**
- **Bishop Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani**
- **David Goodhart**
- **Baroness Brenda Hale**
- **Kevin Hyland**
- **Diana Johnson**
- **Professor Cornelius Katona**
- **Professor Hanna Kienzler**
- **Dr Ed Kessler**
- **Janice Lopatkin**
- **Jehangir Malik**
- **Bishop Paul McAleenan**
- **Rabbi Baroness Julia Neuberger**
- **Professor Jenny Philimore**
- **Mishka Pillay**
- **David Simmonds MP**
- **Tony Smith**
- **Enver Solomon**
- **Nicola Thomas**
- **Sabir Zazai**

Secretariat

Day-to-day management of the commission's business is supported by a secretariat at the Woolf Institute, led by Senior Research Associate, Dr Emanuelle Degli Esposti. She is assisted by Sharon Cunningham.