

# asylum matters

**Local elections in England are taking place on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2018. Make sure your candidates are ready to champion the rights of people seeking sanctuary!**

Local authorities deliver a range of services that refugees and asylum-seekers will access so they're important advocacy targets for many of our issues. They are also responsible for delivering a strategic vision for the area they represent, building inclusive communities and can themselves be powerful advocates for change including with national government.

The run-up to the election will be an opportunity to ask candidates what they plan to do on refugee and asylum issues in the local area if they are elected. Below are some questions that can be put to candidates, whether you're meeting them at a hustings event, at a street stall or on your doorstep:

**What steps will you take to ensure local communities and the council come together to provide a warm welcome to people who have come to our city to find safety from persecution?**

*Here you can discuss how isolating the experience of claiming asylum can be and the importance of ensuring local authorities champion inclusion and integration in their communities, for example by becoming a City of Sanctuary, passing a Destitution Motion, ensuring the availability of support and advice services, or ensuring safe and adequate housing standards for all in the community, to name only a few actions.*

**With growing numbers of both newly granted refugees and people seeking asylum now facing homelessness in our area, what role do you see the local council playing in addressing this?**

*Here you can discuss homelessness experienced by those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), refugees struggling to access support and housing after a positive decision on their asylum claim, and asylum-seekers who experience gaps or delays in their asylum support, as well as action already taken by local authorities (such as passing Destitution motions) and what more can be done to strengthen the safety net provided.*

**What commitment will you make to ensuring more refugees have access to ESOL, employment, training and other integration opportunities?**

*Here you can discuss the importance of providing ESOL, employment support and training opportunities to refugees, particularly those who will have become de-skilled after forced exclusion from the labour market during the asylum process, and explore how local authorities can work with other stakeholders like voluntary organisations, the private sector and central government to deliver these services locally.*

**People seeking asylum encounter many barriers to accessing healthcare and experience significant health inequalities. What role will you play in ensuring these individuals get the healthcare they need?**

*Here you can discuss the challenges faced by many refugees and asylum-seekers in accessing healthcare, proving eligibility, receiving specialist treatment and navigating the NHS, and discuss how local councils can support this process and ensure their particular needs are met.*

*Let us know how you get on! If you have an interesting conversation with a local Councillor, or would like any further support in preparing for a meeting, please get in touch with your local Campaigns Project Manager.*