

Facts over Fear.



Immigration, Asylum & Social Housing: Let's talk about it.



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A PRACTICAL TENANT GUIDE ON ALL THINGS IMMIGRATION, MIGRATION & ASYLUM SEEKERS



This guide is for social housing tenants.

It contains:

- Context and impact of rising tensions
- Language matters
- Social housing facts
- Suggestions for tackling misinformation online
- Other useful resources and signposting

FOREWORD:



Social housing is a lifeline for many tenants. But we know things are tough right now. In Wales, there are an estimated 94,000 households on the waiting list for a social home, part of a problem known as the 'housing crisis'.

We often see myths and untruths via word of mouth and social media, blaming immigrants and people seeking asylum for the lack of homes and resources. These claims are inaccurate, harmful and can turn tenants against each other in communities.

We want to reassure you that this is not the case. Not only is it untrue to blame immigrants & people seeking asylum for the lack of homes, it is also dangerous and carries real-life harms.

Even if immigration stopped completely, the shortage of homes would still exist.

As the Welsh Government appointed lead on Tenant Voice, that's why we've made this tenant guide—so that you can have the facts about social housing & immigration, migration & asylum, not the fear. **Forget about politics, this is about people.**

Olivia Browne, Policy & Engagement Officer.



LANGUAGE MATTERS

The terms we use and hear have an impact and language is important. Words hold power and so do the way we use them.

There are also terms which can be confusing or sound the same which is why we have created this list below.



1. Core UK Immigration & Protection Terms

Asylum Seeker: A person who has applied for asylum in the UK because they fear persecution in their home country and is waiting for a decision from the Home Office. Asylum seekers are not allowed to work and may be housed in Home Office accommodation. **People have a legal right to claim asylum under International Law.** Using the term Sanctuary Seeker is advised.

Refugee: A person who has been granted asylum in the UK. Refugees have the right to work, rent, and access public services, including mainstream housing.

Migrant: A general, non-legal term for someone who moves to the UK from another country, for work, study, family, or safety. **Not all migrants are refugees or asylum seekers.**

Immigrant: A person who has moved to the UK to live, work, or study. While widely used in everyday and policy discussions, 'migrant' is a broad term and not a specific legal status under UK law

Undocumented Person: Someone living in the UK without valid immigration permission (for example, after a visa expires). This is about paperwork, not criminality.

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF): A condition attached to many visas that prevents access to benefits and social housing. It does not mean someone has no housing rights at all.

2. Commonly Misunderstood UK terms:

"Illegal Immigrant": Not a legal term in the UK and a term which causes harm. People may not have a settled status, but they are not illegal.

Overstayer: Someone who stayed in the UK after their visa expired. This is an immigration issue, not a housing offence.

Appeal Rights: The legal right to challenge a Home Office decision. Some people are in the UK lawfully while appealing.



3. Harmful Terms



Dehumanising language is language that treats people as criminals or outsiders. It is not used in UK law and often used in a harmful and hateful way.

“Illegals”: A slur that removes personhood and is often used to justify discrimination in housing and services.

“Asylum Scrounger”: A harmful stereotype suggesting asylum seekers exploit the system, despite receiving minimal support.

“Economic Migrant”: (used dismissively) Often used to deny people’s need for safety, ignoring how poverty, conflict, and danger overlap.

“Boat People”: A dehumanising label used in UK media that reduces people to how they arrived, not who they are. These journeys can be dangerous and many risk their lives on the way.



BACKGROUND:



What is immigration?

Immigration is the movement of people into a new country to live there. It is not new. People have moved between countries for centuries.

Why do people migrate?

People move for many different reasons, including:

- Better job opportunities
- To study
- To join family
- To escape war, conflict, or danger
- To help fill job shortages. For example, after World War II, the UK invited people from Commonwealth countries to help rebuild the country.

Different types of people who move to the UK:

Not everyone who moves to the UK is the same:

- **Migrants:** people who move for work, study, or family
- **Refugees:** people forced to leave their country for safety
- **Sanctuary Seekers**, also known as **Asylum seekers:** people asking for protection.

Immigration in our communities

- People who move to the UK are part of everyday life. They may be neighbours, key workers, students, or families living in local communities.

UNDERSTANDING THE NUMBERS:

There is often a lot of discussion about immigration. Looking at official statistics can help give a clearer picture.

Fewer people are moving to the UK than before.

- In the year up to June 2025, about 204,000 more people came to the UK than left.
- This is much lower than the year before, when the number was about 649,000.
- It's now closer to the levels seen before the UK left the EU.

Why has it gone down?

- Fewer people from outside the EU are coming to the UK for work or study.
- At the same time, more people are leaving the UK than before.

Different groups of people

- People from outside the EU are still the main group moving to the UK, but their numbers are falling.
- People from the EU are now more likely to leave the UK than move here.
- The same is true for UK citizens, with more leaving than returning.

What this means overall

- Migration to the UK is slowing down.
- More people are leaving, and fewer are arriving, compared to recent years.
- The situation is becoming more balanced than it was before.

FACTS

SOCIAL HOUSING & IMMIGRATION



People seeking asylum don't have a choice in where they live when they come to the UK

- They get put into hotels owned by private companies where they must wait until given legal status.
- These have basic facilities and are often overcrowded.
- While claiming asylum, those who live in these hotels receive £9.95 a week each. If the hotel does not provide food, they have £49.50 a week each, but this has to cover food, clothes & toiletries.
- They have no say where they are sent.

People seeking asylum do not get given free social homes

- They cannot get social housing.
- They are placed in temporary Home Office accommodation like hostels or basic shared buildings. As mentioned above, they have no say in where they are sent.
- Only if they are officially recognised by the government as refugees can they apply for social housing, which can take a very long time with many stages.

Migrants do not jump the queue for social housing.

- Most people who move to the UK for work or study are not allowed to use public housing at all. The law says they can't.
- Social housing is given based on need, eligibility, and local connection (living in the area for years).
- This means that new arrivals=usually don't qualify.
- There is no 'queue jumping'.

Immigrants do not 'take up' most social housing

- About 9 out of 10 social housing homes are lived in by UK nationals.
- Only a small percentage of residents are non-UK citizens.
- Many people born abroad are now British citizens after living here for years.

Immigration did not cause the housing crisis.

- The housing crisis comes from not enough homes being built.
- Evidence does not support the claim that immigration is the main cause of the housing crisis.
- Most migrants rent privately or live in shared housing, not social housing.
- Even if migration levels lowered, the existing shortage of social housing would still remain a problem.

WHAT DO I DO IF I HEAR SOMETHING HARMFUL:

A hate crime is when someone is targeted because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity, or disability. It can involve threats, bullying, violence, or damage to property, and it can happen **in person or online**. If you see a hate crime happen in-person:

- keep yourself safe
- note what happened
- call 999 if someone is in immediate danger
- try to calmly distract the situation, and check if the victim needs help.
- You can report hate crime to the Police via 101, or the Wales Hate Support Centre, and both can give support to anyone affected.

Useful resources/ organisations:

**STOP HATE UK**
0800 138 1625
24 HOUR HELP LINE



Canolfan Cymorth
Casineb Cymru
.....
Wales Hate
Support Centre



**VICTIM
SUPPORT**

SEEING THINGS ONLINE:



Misinformation= Something which is not true.

When we share things which might not be real, we might be putting people's lives in danger. There has been more misinformation about immigrants and refugees on social media lately which can be misleading and dangerous when people share it.

BEFORE SHARING: THE SIFT METHOD

S Stop

Pause for a moment before you read or share something. This short pause helps you notice if something looks strange, emotional, or too good to be true.

I Investigate the source

Look up who made the information. Search the name of the website, person, or organisation. You're checking whether they are known to be reliable or not.

F Find better coverage

See if trusted sources are saying the same thing. If only one unknown site is reporting it, that's a warning sign. If many reliable places confirm it, it's more likely to be true.

T Trace it back

Go to the original version of the claim, image, or quote. Check whether it has been edited, taken out of context, or changed.

FURTHER RESOURCES:

There are lots of other fantastic organisations who work in this sphere in relation to housing, such as:

- Hope Not Hate
- Full Fact
- Tai Pawb
- Victim Support
- Migrants' Rights Network
- The Welsh Refugee Council
- EYST
- Shelter Cymru
- Jo Cox Foundation
- Race Equality First (REF)
- Stonewall Cymru
- Stop Hate Crime UK
- Victim Support

We recommend looking at their work/materials.

TPAS Cymru support all tenants to engage and participate. We are aware of increasing hostilities and the spread of misinformation in the housing community. We do not condone any acts of harassment or violence towards members or perceived members of these groups.

We all deserve a safe place and community to call home.

We understand tensions are high and many people are struggling

Let's make sure our communities are respectful and have the facts, not fear.



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REFERENCING



1951 UN Convention-Status of Refugees.

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/internationalmigration/bulletins/longterminternationalmigrationprovisional/yearendingjune2025>

<https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get#:~:text=You'll%20usually%20get%20%C2%A3,cash%20from%20a%20cash%20machine.>

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stay-informed/explainers/the-truth-about-asylum/>

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