

# How the next Mayor of WECA can make our combined authority a safe and welcoming place for asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants

A request by BRASP and other asylum seeker and refugee support organisations working across Bristol and South Gloucestershire



# Our Asks of Our WECA Mayor

**We ask you to take the following local actions over which you will have influence.**

1. That WECA reviews its governance structure to ensure that the voices of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are adequately represented in all strategic planning, decision making and preparation for any future emergency response.
2. That WECA acknowledges the unique transferable skills and experience that refugees and migrants bring to the region and reflect the positive contribution that they can play in economic regeneration in all their strategic plans.
3. That WECA will take positive action to fund initiatives that help migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to prepare for entering the UK workforce, such as tailored training courses, careers advice, mentoring, work experience and taking action to influence key employers to create pathways to employment.
4. That WECA continue to support the West of England Growth Hub to build capacity for work with entrepreneurs from refugee and migrant communities.
5. That WECA works with the refugee sector to quantify the economic contribution of refugees to the region and to identify skills gaps that they may be able to fill.
6. That WECA reviews its CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) provision to ensure there is specialist support available to young people who have had limited education in the UK, which provides a range of opportunities to find out about the job market and sector skills gaps, and to undertake work experience.
7. That WECA develop a clear strategy to ensure that young people with English as an additional language in the City have the same range of post 16 education and training opportunities as their peers, accompanied by appropriate ESOL support.
8. That WECA reviews the ESOL provision across the region and uses the adult skills funding available to ensure there is accredited and non-accredited provision available in the right locations to serve the needs of the population who have English as a Second Language.
9. That WECA commits to funding and implementing the Regional ESOL Strategy developed in partnership with ESOL providers.
10. That WECA works with the Local Authorities and key transport providers (like First Bus) to find ways to make bus travel affordable and accessible to asylum seekers who do not have a disposable income.
11. Where WECA does not have expertise to deliver direct services to refugees and asylum seekers, that WECA explore funding options (including commissioning) for third sector organisations to deliver necessary services.
12. That WECA be a public voice on asylum seeker, refugee and migrant issues locally, nationally and internationally.
13. That WECA play an active role in global migration related networks e.g. the Mayors Migration Council; UN Migration Network; Global Parliament of Mayors; The Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity.

**We ask you to advocate and lobby on the local and national stage, for a humane asylum system for all. We ask you to give your support for:**

14. National campaigns to [Lift the Ban](#) on working, to end No Recourse to Public Funds, to end asylum destitution, for better legal aid provision, to Close the Barracks, to abolish reporting ([These Walls Must Fall](#)) and for [Patients Not Passports](#).
15. Replacing reporting to UKVI at Patchway Police Station with landline or digital reporting.
16. Accepting evidence for fresh asylum claims by post or email instead of requiring travel to Liverpool to present documents in person.
17. Raising asylum seeker payments by an equivalent amount to the rise in Universal Credit.
18. Ensuring that Home Office contracts include provision of Wi-Fi in asylum accommodation.
19. Further reduction in use of immigration detention, and holding no-one for more than 28 days.
20. Scrapping all health care charges for people seeking sanctuary, including refused asylum seekers.

**We ask you to recognise the link between Climate Change and Migration.**

21. Recognising that environmental disasters are a growing cause of migration, and so to work with residents, regional partners and international networks (e.g. C40) to explore the nexus of Climate change and migration, giving a platform to local migrants who have been impacted by climate change, and consider mitigation of climate change in all new WECA policies adopted.

## **Please Pledge Your Support**

**This Request has been prepared by:**

Beth Wilson, Director, Bristol Refugee Rights

Caroline Beatty, Co-Chair, Bristol City of Sanctuary

On behalf of:

**Bristol Hospitality Network, Bristol Defend Asylum Seekers Campaign, ACH, Bridges for Communities, Refugee Council (Bristol), Trauma Foundation South West, Aid Box Community, Bristol City of Sanctuary, Bristol Refugee Rights, Bristol Refugee Festival, Bristol Signing Support, Refugee Women of Bristol, Borderlands, Project Mama**

**For further information, please contact:**

Beth Wilson, Director, Bristol Refugee Rights

[beth@bristolrefugeerights.org](mailto:beth@bristolrefugeerights.org)

07704 291 171