

**Motion for Time Limited Debate  
Declaration of an Illegal Migration Emergency in Kent**

**Submitted by the Reform UK Political Group**

**Proposer – Mr David Wimble  
Seconder – Mr Jeremy Eustace**

**Motion:**

This Council resolves to declare an Illegal Migration Emergency in Kent as follows:

**The Declaration**

Kent County Council declares an Illegal Migration Emergency in Kent.  
The County is the frontier for the influx of illegal migrants via small boats into the UK.

Kent residents and taxpayers are dealing with the consequences of illegal migration in terms of

- Cost (financial)
- Culture
- Community Cohesion
- Crime

Therefore, the Council calls on the Leader of the Council to:

- (a) demand the Labour government stops the arrival of migrants by small boats immediately
- (b) seek to ensure that the Labour government provides full funding to cover the costs to the County Council and partner public agencies in dealing with the consequences of illegal migration, and
- (c) press for Kent's emergency services, resilience structures and emergency planning to be appropriately supported and funded to deal with this crisis.

**Background Information provided by the Reform UK Group**

**Introduction**

1. The current Labour government and the previous Conservative government have overseen the unprecedented illegal mass influx of thousands of unvetted, primarily adult, male migrants into the country on boats from the safe country of France.
2. Kent is at the forefront of the invasion, with 'small boat' arrivals at Dover being the primary route. Most of the arrivals are taken from boats mid-Channel and brought to Dover by the UK Border Force and the RNLi. However, the number of additional migrants who are not aided in this way and arrive in the County is unknown.
3. As Kent is the frontier County for this illegal invasion, it is the County as a whole that suffers many of the consequences, putting a strain on its public services and finances. It

represents a failure of the State under both national Labour and Conservative administrations.

4. Clearly, the Reform administration on Kent County Council cannot take national-level actions; however, until there is a change in central government and/or a change in a national agreed approach, the County will continue to suffer the consequences in a way that is disproportionate to the rest of Country. Hence, the need for a “Declaration of an Illegal Migration Emergency” in Kent by Kent County Council will focus attention on Kent’s specific needs with this local crisis, and would put pressure on central Government to take meaningful action.

### **Legislative Context**

5. Many migrants dispose of their passports or other identification on the way to the UK. According to Migration Watch, only 2% of small boat migrants have their passports on arrival in the UK. It is illegal to enter the UK without identification.

Section 3.1(a) of the Immigration Act 1971 states that “...where a person is not a British citizen, [then] he shall not enter the United Kingdom unless given leave to do so...”. Formal immigration assessments for each individual arriving into the UK must inevitably happen before a decision is able to be made for each individual. In the event that a decision is made that their entry to the UK is without leave then that may be an illegal entry. (S. 33(1) Immigration Act 1971, as amended.) There is also a Government produced Guidance entitled “Irregular or unlawful entry and arrival”.

6. Kent County Council has a statutory duty under the Children Act 1989, to safely accommodate and care for all unaccompanied asylum-seeking children who arrive in Kent and are notified of it prior to their dispersal around the UK.

7. Kent County Council now receives Government Funding for Children up to 18. That funding reduces between of ages of 18 to 21 and drops off entirely for the 21 to 25 age bracket, leaving KCC entirely responsible for the cost of housing, feeding, clothing and other care needs. Because these young adults qualify as care leavers, KCC is statutorily obliged to care for them up to the age of 25. This places a huge strain on an already overstretched service.

### **Background**

8. Between 2018 and 2025, 194,000 people arrived by small boat. In 2025, 41,500 people were detected crossing the English Channel in small boats, which was an increase of 13% on the previous year. Small boats make up more than 80% of all detected unauthorised arrivals in the UK. In the first three months of 2026, 3400 people have arrived on our shores.

9. Most arrivals by boat are from the safe country of France, but they originate from a large number of other countries. Between 2018 and 2024, Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania, Syria and Eritrea made up 70% of people crossing in small boats. There are few returns, with the number to the end of 2024 being only 3%, with the majority of those being returned to Albania.

10. Most of the men are leaving their women and children in their home countries; many of whom will plan to follow if asylum is granted for the male relatives. Much of the small

boat 'industry' is organised by gangs and can involve people trafficking and modern slavery.

11. Some 76% of those crossing the Channel are military-aged men over the age of 18 years, but there is a relatively small number of women and children too. The vast majority of the men arriving via small boats are unvetted, and often from unstable countries with misogynistic cultures and histories of violence.

## **Impact of the Illegal Migration on Kent**

### **(a) Financial**

12. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's Audit of in-year spending pressures facing the new Labour government in 2024 stated that the costs relating to asylum and illegal immigration amounted to £6.4 billion of pressures on day-to-day spending in 2024/25. Reform UK has stated that the cost of illegal migration is currently running at £7 billion per annum, excluding many hidden costs such as the burden on the NHS. The national welfare bill for migrants is approximately £10 billion per year in the UK

13. Based on the current known populations of the UK and Kent, and using the lower of the cost estimates, the following costs are deemed highly likely:

- The cost of illegal migration and its associated asylum costs is £92 each year for every man, woman and child in the UK, calculated on a pro-rata basis.
- The annual cost of illegal migration for a Kent family of four is £368 pro-rata (excluding hidden costs).
- Equating it to Kent's population and calculating national costs on a proportionate basis, Kent residents' share of the national costs of illegal migration and associated asylum is £151 million per year pro-rata (excluding the 'hidden' costs e.g. those met by the police, the NHS and local authorities).
- Equating it to Kent's population and calculating national costs of migrant welfare of £10 billion per annum on a pro-rata basis, Kent taxpayers are paying £236 million in benefits to migrants per year.
- The share of costs of illegal migration and associated asylum, plus the costs of migrant benefits totals just under £600 per annum pro-rata for each of Kent's 648,393 households.

As mentioned, all costs above are estimates calculated on a pro-rata basis. The real costs are likely to be significantly higher than those stated, due to the greater tax take in Kent compared to many areas in the UK.

14. Kent County Council's costs of establishing and managing the 10 centres for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) up to the age of 18 years in the County prior to their dispersal around the UK are met by the Home Office. Costs are partially met for 18-21 year olds but not for 21-25 year olds. As those facilities have a current market valuation of approximately £20 million and were developed using funding from the DfE and the Home Office, it is fair to state that public money totalling £20 million is tied up in those properties. Additional costs to Kent County Council would include the opportunity cost of staffing involved in the service to UASC.

### **(b) Community Cohesion and Culture**

15. Many of the migrants come from countries that have very different cultures, norms and values to the UK. Some come from countries where extreme violence is common, where LGBTQ behaviour is not acceptable, where 'honour killings' are rife; where inter-family marriage is allowed, and where there is misogyny with little respect for women and girls. Attempts to 'be kind' and tolerant of others' cultures and behaviours by certain political parties has led to a woke and divided society and weakened our British culture. Evidence of this is seen in the recent aversion to the flying of the Union Flag and Flag of St George; a reluctance of politicians to emphasise that British foundations are rooted in Christianity; perceived two-tier policing under the Labour government where some cultures are protected more than the native population; and the huge public outcry against hotels being used for asylum seekers and the subsequent dispersal policy direct into communities that has been introduced by the Labour government. In September 2025, the number of asylum seekers in hotels was 36,273, which is an increase of 4,232 from June 2025 and 7,000 higher than when Labour took office. Plans are underway for the government to house asylum seekers in newly-built council houses. The impact is an overall negative cost to our social cohesion.

### (c) Crime

16. It has been reported that the Home Office is aware that the arrivals are likely to contain a number of potential terrorist cells, supporting ISIS and Al-Qaeda; and evidence shows this to be the case. The threat of terrorism in the UK is significant, with more than 39,000 Islamists being on the UK Counter-terrorism Watch List. Islamist terrorism is the most significant terrorist threat to the UK by volume, with roughly 75% of MI5's investigation work dedicated to it. However, illegal migration is also a threat to domestic order and security. Government data compiled by the Centre for Migration Control (2025) using Freedom of Information requests has shown that Afghans are 22 times more likely to commit sex crimes than British; Albanians are 152 times more likely to commit drug crime than British, and Congolese are 11 times more likely to commit violent crime than British.

17. Foreign nationals commit a crime every three minutes in the UK, with 170,000 across the past year. This is of epidemic proportions. Conservatives and now Labour have been reluctant to compile and release the crime data on foreign nationals and certainly on illegal migrants. However, if we look at other European countries, we see worrying data. For instance, in Italy, foreigners commit 43% of all recorded crime including 60% of robberies, although they make up only 9% of the population.

18. It is clear that the number of convictions or incarcerations vary according to nationality. Certain nationalities, notably Albanians, Iranians and Afghans, are amongst the most common non-UK nationalities in the prison population, with Indians and Sudanese also high. Some crimes are more common amongst foreign nationals, such as drug and sexual offences.

### (d) Public Health

19. Newly arrived migrants in the care of 'the state', are given free NHS checks and treatment and dental care, often in priority to native UK citizens, and putting strain on our health services through NHS triage and screening, treatment, interpreter services and 'overseas visitors teams'. A number of infectious diseases are believed to be on the increase, potentially due to having been carried by migrants e.g. Tuberculosis (TB). The most common countries of origin for non-UK born people with TB are India, Pakistan, Romania, Somalia and Eritrea. Migrants have been seen by Kent residents urinating and

defecating on public beaches. Inappropriate cultural norms have become commonplace, such as cousin marriages, which have poor health (and subsequent cost) outcomes for offspring.

(e) Partner Organisations

20. Some district councils have declared that they are 'sanctuary districts' welcoming 'refugees' e.g. Thanet. Other districts have noted a steep increase in the number of 'Homes of Multiple Occupancy' in their areas. There is also an increase in demand for social housing. (For reference, 47.6% of social housing in London is occupied by immigrants – Migration Watch 2026).

21. Bodies such as Kent Police, the NHS and the UK Border Force are having to use their limited resources in dealing with the impact of illegal migration (and more generally, all immigration). The reputation of some charities such as the RNLI have suffered due to them being diverted to assist with the migrant influx.

**Sources:**

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