CRN BRIEFING PAPER

WWW.CTBI.ORG.UK/CRN CRN@CTBI.ORG.UK

Churches' Refugee Network (CRN) is an ecumenical network advocating for fair treatment, dignity and justice for refugees and migrant communities across Britain and Ireland.

UPDATES:

- CRN Annual Report 2026
- European Churches Update
- Northern Ireland Update
- The British Government's New Asylum and Refugee Policies
- Justice and Peace Scotland
- Update from a Ukrainian Church Leader
- London Churches Refugee Fund
- Stay Informed

CRN Annual Meeting - October 2026

Theme: Churches and immigration and asylum in Britain, Ireland and Europe

Bishop Rose chaired the latest meeting of the Churches' Refugee Network (CRN), leading a full agenda focused on hearing updates on asylum and immigration across Europe, the UK, Scotland and Northern Ireland, including practical examples of church advocacy and welcome.



The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover

CRN ANNUAL REPORT 2026

The CRN Annual Report, produced by **Dr Richard Reddie, Director of Justice and Inclusion, CTBI**, is now available on the CTBI website.

The report reflects on the work of the CRN over the past year, highlighting discussions from meetings and the valuable updates shared by colleagues from across the four nations and Europe. These contributions provide insight into both the important work being undertaken and the key issues facing their respective contexts.

We would like to express our gratitude to those who contributed to discussions on refugee and asylum issues, as well as to all who attended and participated in these important conversations.

We also extend our thanks to Bishop Rose for her leadership, time, and gracious chairing of the meetings.

READ THE REPORT IN FULL

EUROPEAN CHURCHES UPDATE

Dr Torsten Moritz, General Secretary of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME), highlighted ongoing developments and concerns from Brussels.

The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, which came into application in June 2026, continues to raise concerns around screening and safeguards. Churches are providing legal and practical support while urging authorities to uphold fundamental rights. Plans for 'return hubs' in third countries, including discussions with Rwanda, are also facing criticism.

Other concerns include unaccompanied children in Ceuta and changes to church sanctuary arrangements in Germany, where the period before Germany becomes responsible for an asylum claim has increased from 12 months to three years.

CCME's discussion paper, *Protecting People More Than Borders*, proposing an alternative pan-European asylum system, is expected to be shared in early 2027.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CHURCH ASYLUM AND SANCTUARY IN GERMANY – CLICK HERE

NORTHERN IRELAND UPDATE

As **Revd Dr Livingstone Thompson** (Moravian Church) was unable to attend due to travel disruption, **Revd Eileen Cremin** spoke in his place, noting recent attention surrounding events at Drumcree in Northern Ireland and related protests.

ACTION: Revd Dr Livingstone Thompson will speak at the next CRN meeting in 2027.



THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S NEW ASYLUM AND REFUGEE POLICIES

Dilys Alam, Policy Adviser, Church of England, and **Revd Steve Tinning**, **Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)**, provided a joint update on immigration and asylum matters in Britain.

Dilys outlined the Government's proposed safe and legal routes policy, including resettlement, named sponsorship, study and employer routes, highlighting concerns about limited and capped provision and protection being linked to economic potential. She also summarised the forthcoming Immigration and Asylum Bill, including changes to appeals, family-life rights and modern slavery provisions, and a proposed 'refugee tax'.

Steve reported on JPIT's family reunion campaign. The route has been closed since September 2025, and a letter signed by over 700 faith leaders has not secured a commitment to reopen it.

Discussion also covered asylum hotels, detention, misinformation and online hate.

Sian Summers-Rees (City of Sanctuary UK) shared examples of challenging online hate using the Online Safety Act and legal advice, while **James Lynch (Welcome Churches)** described how local churches have been connected across towns hosting asylum hotels.

FIND OUT MORE

JPIT

- Members are encouraged to join the ***Interfaith Lobby on Asylum and Refugees Matters*** **on 17th November 2026** (11.30am-4:30pm) in Westminster organised by JPIT with HIAS+JCORE and René Cassin. A briefing will take place on 3 November.
- ***Family Reunion Information/Campaign***
- ***New Hymn*** **– Jesus, You Have Shown a Welcome** to the tune of 'Ode to Joy'
- ***Blog*** **–** Drowning Out the Better Instincts of a Nation. Reflection on Reform's latest policy announcement that they would shut down Britain's asylum system if they ever came to power.

CHURCH OF ENGLAND

- Dilys' presentation can be found by ***clicking here***

CITY OF SANCTUARY

- *Speak up for Sanctuary*

WELCOME CHURCHES

JUSTICE AND PEACE SCOTLAND

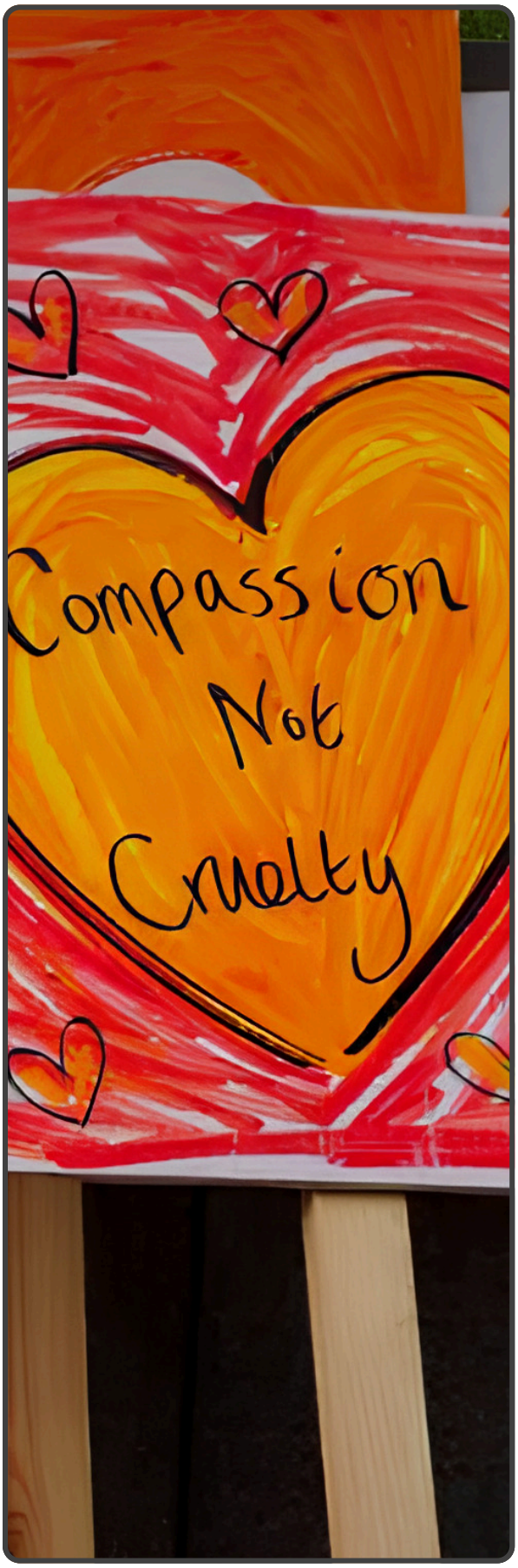
Anne-Marie Richmond, Catholic Social Teaching Engagement Officer for the National Justice and Peace Commission under the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, highlighted three examples of church engagement in Scotland: a joint Catholic and Church of Scotland briefing that helped defeat a motion opposing free bus travel for people seeking asylum (a pilot scheme that enabled almost 120,000 journeys); an ecumenical service and shared meal in Maryhill; and the annual Dignity Not Detention vigils at Dungavel detention centre.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:
www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk

UPDATE FROM A UKRAINIAN CHURCH LEADER

Valentyn Syniy, President of Tavria Christian Institute, with Serhiy Dzhyshkariani translating, began a presentation on the destruction of their seminary campus, displacement in Ukraine and the challenges churches face in balancing hospitality with identity. Due to time constraints, the presentation could not be completed, and Valentyn will return to share the full presentation at a future meeting.

Action: Valentyn Syniy will speak at a CRN meeting in 2027



London Churches Refugee Fund

Christmas Cards and Welcome Gift Cards 2026



"Joy Peace and Warmth" this charming image was painted for us by a refugee friend who is a community member of a refugee project, regularly supported by grants from LCRF"

"Finding Sanctuary - Mary and Joseph arrive at the stable": This intimate Christmas scene was painted especially for us by artist Alastair Burn, a supporter of LCRF.



LCRF supports destitute asylum seekers in London
Buying our Christmas cards and Welcome gift cards makes a real difference to the lives of those in desperate need

Two beautiful Christmas cards - see images above

Welcome gift cards - purchased on behalf of family and friends help destitute refugees with phone credit, food, and warm clothing as you offer the gifts of friendship, hope, and love

A stunning Wall Print - "Flight to Egypt"

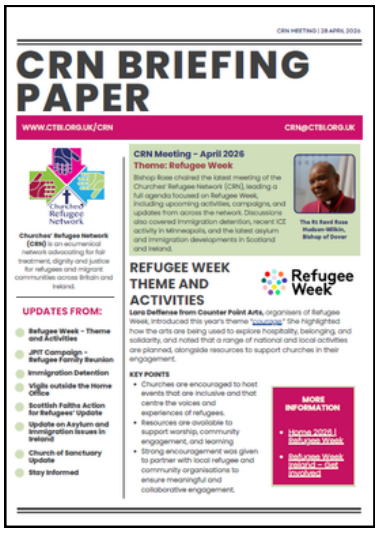
To see the full range and buy safely on line, go to:
https://LCRF.onlineweb.shop (Thank you!)

STAY INFORMED

CHURCHES' REFUGEE NETWORK (CRN)

Keep up to date with the latest news, developments, and upcoming meetings from the Churches' Refugee Network.

Find out more about the work of the CRN by clicking here.


CRN MEETING | 28 APRIL 2026

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Churches' Refugee Network

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UPDATES FROM:

- Refugee Week - Theme and Activities
- JPIT Campaign - Refugee Family Reunion
- Immigration Detention
- Visits outside the Home Office
- Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees' Update
- Update on Asylum and Immigration Issues in Ireland
- Church of Sanctuary Update
- Stay Informed

CRN Meeting - April 2026
Theme: Refugee Week

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, Bishop of Dover

REFUGEE WEEK THEME AND ACTIVITIES

Refugee Week

Lora Dellenbaugh from Counter Point Arts, organisers of Refugee Week, introduced this year's theme "Welcome". She highlighted how the arts are being used to explore hospitality, belonging, and solidarity, and noted that a range of national and local activities are planned, alongside resources to support churches in their engagement.

KEY POINTS

- Churches are encouraged to host events that are inclusive and that centre the voices and experiences of refugees.
- Resources are available to support worship, community engagement, and learning.
- Strong encouragement was given to partner with local refugee and community organisations to ensure meaningful and collaborative engagement.

MORE INFORMATION

- Home Office | Refugee Week
- Refugee Week Impact - Last Updated

THE BULLETIN

Issues of '*The Bulletin*' will be published on the CTBI website, featuring news, updates and resources from the Churches' Refugee Network (CRN).

Read previous editions here.

CTBI MAGAZINE



Edition 14 of the CTBI Magazine, Autumn Edition, is out now.

Find the latest information and resources from CTBI and its networks, including an overview of work of the CRN.

Read previous editions here.

Churches' Refugee Network

churches together IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND©