



A World without Prejudice

Earned Settlement Policy Brief for LGBTIQ+ Refugees and People Seeking Asylum in the United Kingdom

About Us

African Rainbow Family is the Leading UK based Expert-by-Lived-Experience Grassroots Charity (**Reg: 1185902**) Campaigning and Advocating for Racial Justice and Human Rights of LGBTIQ+ Refugees and People Seeking Asylum of African Heritage and the Global Majority. Our psychotherapeutic supports include counselling, health and wellbeing, financial, training, integration, and immigration advice. We provide inclusive LGBTIQ+ safe space for practical and social activities for mutual support, empowerment, and solidarity. African Rainbow Family has developed a national network of over 1,500 service users who we refer to as Siblings; with centres in Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, London, and Swansea respectively.

African Rainbow Family provides holistic support in accommodation, mental health and wellbeing, as well as free, confidential immigration advice under our Refugee Access to Justice Initiative following accreditation by the UK's Immigration Advice Authority (IAA).

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Introduction

On the 17th of November 2025, the UK's Secretary of State for the Home Department, The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP, before the Parliament, announced sweeping reforms of the UK's asylum

system. The changes, which are, in its entirety, criticised by the African Rainbow Family is based on [Denmark's draconian asylum system](#), which is also currently [challenged at the Court of Justice of the EU](#). The Home Secretary believes that the reform will make it harder for people fleeing persecution to be able to claim asylum in the UK and will make it easier to remove or deport refugees, including those who have already been recognised as refugees by the UK Government.

The African Rainbow Family has created a [short film](#) and [petition](#) the UK Government to **Retain 5-year ILR Pathway for LGBTIQ+ Refugees in the UK**.

Why This Matters

1. Security and Stability for Vulnerable Refugees

Refugees granted protection currently qualify for **settlement (ILR) after five years**. This pathway allows them to rebuild their lives with certainty, securing employment, housing, and community integration. Temporary, short-term renewals after 30 months, potentially repeated over many years, will create instability and harm people's mental health.

For LGBTIQ+ refugees, the absence of a dependable settlement route exacerbates existing vulnerabilities. Many have fled violence, discrimination, and criminalisation based on their sexual orientation or gender identity and require long-term stability to integrate and recover.

2. Impact on LGBTIQ+ Refugees

Heightened Risk of Exploitation and Destitution

Daily interactions with our Siblings reveal that repeated temporary protection renewals will increase their risks of:

- **Psychological harm** and mental health breakdown
- **Homelessness** and housing instability
- **Economic exploitation** and precarious employment
- **Disrupted access** to healthcare and community support

- **Sexual exploitation**, domestic abuse and/or domestic servitude

These risks are particularly acute for LGBTIQ+ refugees, as they face doubly discriminations, face additional discrimination in housing, employment, and public life due their intersecting identities.

Undermining Effective Protection

The current five-year ILR route aligns with international humanitarian protection standards by offering refugees a clear path to settlement. Delaying settlement rights runs counter to principles that underpin refugee protection and integration.

3. Impact on the Frontline Migration Services

Since this announcement, African Rainbow Family has recorded significant increase in the number of our Siblings accessing our free LGBTIQ+ specialist counselling services from 47% to 84%.

Our Access to Justice free Immigration Advice Services continue to experience high demand for Asylum and Protection Legal Advice services. Referral to our free Access to Justice Immigration Advice Services has jumped from 53% to 90%. Consequently, our expert-by-lived-experience Caseworkers are struggling to meet the demand for our immigration legal advice.

4. Impact on the wider society

- Bureaucracy in renewing refugee status every 30 months within the Home Office.
- Increase in Home Office's workload, backlogs, and legal disputes due to continual reviews.
- Implications flowing from the poor mental health and anxiety of refugees on and/or in the performance of their jobs.
- Pressures on frontline services such as the NHS will increase due to poor and/or deteriorating mental health.
- High demand on frontline organisations such as African Rainbow Family.
- High demand on Immigration Advice Services.

5. Recommendations

An overhaul or a reform of the immigration and asylum system is welcomed by the African Rainbow Family. There is appetite for this in the wider communities too. African Rainbow Family recommends therefore, the following:

- Any reform or overhaul to the immigration and asylum system must put into consideration, humanity, dignity and fairness.
- Dis-apply any changes to immigration and asylum rules/policies retrospectively
- Legal passage for people to claim asylum.
- Allow people seeking asylum to work legally upon arrival in the UK. This will significantly take the burden of the current system of government support off the tax payers.

6. How Peers and MPs Can Support

Actions You Can Take

1. **Amplify our call for justice:** We currently have an active petition. We would welcome your support in promoting this link to your followers to encourage broader public engagement.
2. **Formally present the petition:** Even if the petition is still growing, a formal presentation in the House of Commons and the House of Lords ensures the "Lost Generation" narrative is recorded in **Hansard** and requires a formal Government response.
3. **Raise scrutiny in Committees:** Raise questions in relevant sessions, such as the **Home Affairs Select Committee** or **Women and Equalities Committee** or **Early Day Motion**; to elevate the specific risks this policy poses to LGBTIQ+ refugees and many others.
4. **Seek Government clarity:** Submit a **Written Parliamentary Question** to the Home Secretary regarding the policy's impact on long-term refugee integration, the mental health of vulnerable groups and the wider society.

7. Constituent & Advocacy Testimony

- **Many LGBTIQ+ refugees report chronic insecurity** due to temporary protection statuses, compounding mental health stress and barriers to rebuilding their lives.
- Stakeholder evidence shows that **stable settlement rights support social integration, prevent destitution, and reinforce public protection goals.**

Conclusion

Granting LGBTIQ+ refugees a clear and achievable pathway to **Indefinite Leave to Remain after five years** is essential to uphold the UK's commitment to humanitarian protection, integration, and anti-discrimination. Peers' and MPs' engagements, whether through petition presentation, questions to Government, or public support, can play a pivotal role in amplifying the petition's impact and ensuring that vulnerable communities are not left behind.

End

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