



## meet your MSP

**Organisation:** Scottish Faiths Action for Refugees

**What they do:**

We are working with Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Interfaith groups, and through our commitment to each other seek to demonstrate that building on common values by acting in partnership we have our own story to tell of hospitality and welcome. Our aims are to:

- Advise members of faith communities in Scotland on practical, societal and ethical issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers;
- Support and encourage faith-based humanitarian and advocacy efforts to promote the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers, and propose and co-ordinate joint initiatives;
- Challenge rhetoric in politics and the media which demeans refugees and asylum seekers or which seeks to exploit their vulnerability;
- Develop projects to assist with refugee and asylum seeker integration in Scotland;
- Encourage deeper interfaith working amongst Scotland's faith communities and stronger ecumenical relations amongst churches in Scotland.
- Develop a longer term strategy to support the engagement of Scottish faith communities with asylum seekers and refugees over the next generation.

**Issues of particular relevance today:**

**Brexit** – the decision by the UK to leave the EU has caused anxiety among migrant and ethnic minority communities following a reported upsurge in racist and xenophobic incidents.

**Asylum** – the UK asylum system has long been criticised by the churches, refugee groups and human rights organisations on issues ranging from poverty, standards of accommodation, difficulties with the legal processes and examples of dawn raids, indefinite detention and destitution.

**Integration** – for refugees arriving in Scotland, the need to integrate and make them feel at ease is a core part of the Scottish Government's New Scots strategy. Language, education, a sense of security and belonging as well as access to employment are critical factors.

**Humanitarian** – the global refugee crisis is a humanitarian catastrophe, and a response from individuals, organisations and governments in the developed world is required to support urgent need including access to food, water, medicine and to provide education for child refugees.

**Questions to ask your MSP:**

Decisions about asylum policy and immigration rules are matters reserved to the

Westminster Parliament, but the Scottish Parliament has responsibility for areas including community integration, education, housing and health; what kind of society do you want Scotland to be in welcoming refugees and asylum seekers, and what changes are required?

How can politicians and other leaders in society help to make public discourse about refugees and asylum more civil and respectful of human dignity?

Can local communities be given more encouragement and empowerment to do more to help offer protection to refugees, to enable them to integrate and for communities to offer welcome to new neighbours.

**For further information:**

[www.sfar.org.uk](http://www.sfar.org.uk)

[www.twitter.com/WithRefugees](https://www.twitter.com/WithRefugees)

07341 478 174

[dbradwell@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:dbradwell@churchofscotland.org.uk)

4th Floor, 121 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4YN