

'Understanding' the Hostile Environment

The 'Hostile Environment' is a set of policies, initially introduced in 2012 by then Prime Minister Theresa May, aimed to 'deter' irregular migrants (those without legal status) from entering and remaining in the UK. These policies make it difficult for these individuals to access services, and criminalise their existence by making it 'illegal' for them to work or for landlords to rent them a home. This saw the intensification of immigration enforcement and controls in many aspects of public, everyday life, and the development of personal data-sharing¹ and increased surveillance via cross-agency collaboration in what Migrant Rights Network refers to as the 'Digital Hostile Environment'². Whilst the Hostile Environment is meant to target irregular migrants, the impacts of this have caused disadvantage to all individuals with migrant status, as well as other racialised people. These policies have meant the UK is often an unwelcoming place for migrants, highlighted by the circumstances of the people reaching out to Migrant Action for support. The impact of these policies are multilayered including but not limited to irregularity, destitution, labour exploitation, restricted access to public funds even for migrant women who are victims of domestic violence, racial discrimination, deterioration of mental health which is exacerbated by rhetoric in the media. This article will explore some of the realities, issues and consequences of the UK's Hostile Environment.

The Difficulty with 'Remaining Lawful'

As mentioned, the Hostile Environment is meant to target 'irregular' migrants (those without lawful status). However, there are many barriers to migration in the UK which make it increasingly difficult to achieve or maintain legal status which the 'Hostile Environment' fails to account for.

Firstly, an asylum claim for the UK cannot be made from outside of the country, and there is currently no asylum visa that allows individuals to enter the UK to make a claim³. This means that individuals seeking safety have no choice but to enter the UK through irregular means in order to claim asylum. This lack of safe, 'legal' route to seek asylum in the UK creates a barrier which forces individuals into a position of inherent 'illegality', which mandates further illegislation of everyday activities like working and renting and subjects them to State hostility despite no simply having no other option. This exists as part of a broader system of criminalisation which

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https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Hostile-Environment-Guide-%E2%80%93-update-May-2019_0.pdf

² <https://migrantsrights.org.uk/projects/hostile-office/the-digital-hostile-environment/>

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<https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/migration-to-the-uk-asylum/#:~:text=To%20claim%20asylum%20in%20the,legally%20to%20apply%20for%20asylum>

systematically casts asylum seekers and refugees as inherently criminal, different, and threatening to the British public⁴.

Secondly, complicated and routinely changing immigration rules alongside significant financial barriers means that maintaining legal status is increasingly difficult. Research undertaken by Kato et al found that the majority of irregular migration in the UK derives from people changing their activity and/or status after they have entered the country through formal means⁵ (contrary to the 'small boats' moral panic driven by the government and media).

Already high, and increasing, visa fees⁶, alongside charges like the Immigration Health Surcharge⁷ means that there is an increasing financial challenge to maintaining legal status. Furthermore, many regular migrants do not have the financial means to buy a passport or papers to prove their legal status⁸. The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 removed a large number of matters from the scope of legal aid, which leaves many individuals without any legal support to access or enforce their rights, or gain advice on their status⁹. This establishes a barrier to justice for individuals with migrant status, which can result in human rights violations or unlawful removal, affecting vulnerable groups like children the most¹⁰. And finally, delays in the application and appeals process places many migrants in a position of illegality whilst they are waiting for outcomes¹¹. For example, Home Office data has shown that 19 asylum seekers have been waiting 10 years to receive an application decision¹²- which places them in a position of 'illegality' and subject to State hostility totally out of their control.

The barriers to lawful migration in the UK demonstrates both how the concepts of lawful and unlawful in the area of migration cannot be fairly defined, and how aiming policy at 'illegal' migration also negatively impacts those with 'legal' status. Rather than invoking policies which

⁴ Jotaro Kato and others, 'The nature of 'illegal' migration in Japan and the United Kingdom: the impact of attitudes towards migrants, social cohesion and future challenges' [2019] 35(1) IRIS Working Paper Series 1-19

⁵ Jotaro Kato and others, 'The nature of 'illegal' migration in Japan and the United Kingdom: the impact of attitudes towards migrants, social cohesion and future challenges' [2019] 35(1) IRIS Working Paper Series 1-19

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⁹ <https://publiclawproject.org.uk/content/uploads/2021/04/Legal-aid-briefing.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://publiclawproject.org.uk/content/uploads/2021/04/Legal-aid-briefing.pdf>

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<https://freemovement.org.uk/briefing-what-is-the-hostile-environment-where-does-it-come-from-who-does-it-affect/>

¹² <https://www.bigissue.com/news/social-justice/asylum-seeker-claim-decision-home-office-backlog/>

create an hostile environment based on ideas of criminality/illegality; safe routes should be established, and barriers to achieving and maintaining legal status should be dismantled.

The Impact on Access to Services

The Hostile Environment has intensified immigration enforcement in public life, and these everyday bordering practices carry repercussions on the ability to and experience of accessing public services for those with migrant status.

Since 2012, student visa fees and related charges have increased dramatically. In 2012, the estimated cost of a student visa was £244¹³. In 2024, the cost has nearly doubled to an estimated £490¹⁴. In 2015 the Immigration Health Surcharge was added to the visa fee¹⁵; and on 4 October 2023 student visas increased by 35%, and the health surcharge by 66%¹⁶. And most recently, The Home Office has increased the threshold for financial savings, or maintenance funds, required for international students applying to study in the UK from £2,400 to £2,900¹⁷. These increases evidence an increase in the financial barriers to being able to access higher education as a migrant in the UK.

In January 2024 the Home Office implemented new restrictions preventing most international students from bringing family members and dependents with them to the UK. Additionally, Universities are now required to inform the Home Office if a student on a visa has an attendance rate below 80%¹⁸. These policies create a sense of exclusion and hostile 'othering' for international students who not only face the hardship of being separated from their families, but also have to adhere to attendance requirements that do not apply to British students. The presence of immigration controls within the education system can be intimidating as well as alienating, creating an environment where individuals may not feel truly welcome. This increasing hostility has made it increasingly difficult for non-British individuals to access higher education in the UK, and this is reflected in the declining number of international students applying to UK universities has decreased over the last decade, a trend which has accelerated

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-involved-in-issuing-tier-4-student-visas-from-2012-to-2013/cost-involved-in-issuing-tier-4-student-visas-from-2012-to-2013>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/visa-regulations-revised-table/home-office-immigration-and-nationality-fees-31-january-2024>

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<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7274/#:~:text=A%20C2%A3200%20per%20year,their%20contribution%20as%20UK%20taxpayers>).

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<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9859/#:~:text=In%20July%202023%2C%20the%20Government,%20A32%2C400%20to%20%20A32%2C900>

¹⁷ <https://thepienews.com/maintenacnce-requirements-increase-uk/>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tough-government-action-on-student-visas-comes-into-effect#:~:text=From%201%20January%202024%2C%20tough.family%20members%20to%20the%20UK.&text=Restrictions%20to%20student%20visa%20routes.abuse%20of%20the%20immigration%20system> , <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-65683046>

since the recent policy changes in 2023 and 2024¹⁹. The irony is apparent knowing that many universities rely on international student fees for most of their income²⁰, yet the government is making it continually harder for migrants to study in the UK.

The Immigration Health Surcharge (IHS), which was added to visa fees, is one of multiple things which impact healthcare justice for migrants in the UK. This surcharge increased from £624 to £1035 per year of the visa in February 2024²¹, providing a huge financial strain to both accessing healthcare and the visa process generally. Also, migrants who pay the IHS still have to pay for certain NHS treatments, such as prescriptions and eye tests²².

Furthermore, access to data has been weaponised by the Hostile Environment. Treatment charges for overseas visitors has meant that in some instances NHS data is shared with the Home Office²³. The NHS is amongst the many public services which have become subjected to cross-departmental data-sharing arrangements with the Home Office- dubbed the 'digital hostile environment'²⁴.

A Memorandum of Understanding was established between the Department of Health and Social Care, the NHS and the Home Office to allow data sharing for the purposes of immigration enforcement, which was withdrawn in 2018 after legal pressure from human rights and migrant justice groups such as Liberty and Migrant Rights Network²⁵. However, data-sharing between the two organisations still exists. The NHS may check an individual's immigration status with the Home Office, sharing personal information such as one's address, Home Office reference number, nationality and gender²⁶. The NHS is not legally required to seek permission from or to notify individuals of this data sharing²⁷. This creates a climate of fear and uncertainty for

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<https://www.theguardian.com/education/article/2024/aug/08/sharp-fall-in-international-applicants-wanting-to-study-at-uk-universities>

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<https://www.channel4.com/news/factcheck/factcheck-one-in-six-universities-rely-on-international-students-for-more-than-a-third-of-income>

²¹<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9859/#:~:text=In%20July%202023%2C%20the%20Government,%2%A32%2C400%20to%20%2C%2%A32%2C900>

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<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nhs-entitlements-migrant-health-guide#:~:text=Data%20sharing,-Healthcare%20professionals%20will&text=These%20circumstances%20are%20strictly%20controlled.to%20protect%20a%20person%27s%20welfare>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-status-checks-by-the-nhs-guidance-for-overseas-patients/immigration-status-checks-by-the-nhs-guidance-for-overseas-patients>

²⁴ <https://migrantsrights.org.uk/2023/11/16/data-sharing-digital-hostile-environment/>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-status-checks-by-the-nhs-guidance-for-overseas-patients/immigration-status-checks-by-the-nhs-guidance-for-overseas-patients>

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-status-checks-by-the-nhs-guidance-for-overseas-patients/immigration-status-checks-by-the-nhs-guidance-for-overseas-patients>

migrants when accessing healthcare, as they may worry whether their information is being shared with the Home Office. For those without regular status, this fear can discourage them from seeking healthcare when they need it, with potentially disastrous consequences for their mental and physical health. Embedding immigration checks into healthcare communicates to migrants that their immigration status is prioritised over their humanity and wellbeing, contributing to an unwelcoming environment for all. At Migrant Action, we are witnessing increasing cases of people who have been charged for NHS treatment and other healthcare provisions including ante-natal care. In some cases, debt recovery companies have been involved who apply draconian debt recovery measures which in some cases have caused severe distress and in some cases triggered suicidal thoughts. Migrant Action has seen its role as intermediary advocate in these cases become quite important in negotiating debt payment plans and other forms of advocacy support.

Data-sharing is also abundant between the Home Office and the UK Police force, as well as the collaboration between the two organisations for the execution of immigration raids. Operation Nexus provides for immigration officers to be embedded in police custody suites to identify which people suspected of crime are migrants and refer them to the Home Office for removal if deemed appropriate²⁸. Data collected by BBC's Victoria Derbyshire Programme have found that this is being relied on by some police forces to deal with individuals who are not suspected of offending, such as victims and witnesses of crime²⁹. Lawyer Sulaiha Ali says 'victims of crime are being treated as criminals because of their immigration status'³⁰. Police officers do not have any legal obligation or duty to proactively share data with the Home Office on undocumented victims of crime, or witnesses to crime - yet they often do so³¹. In 2018, it was reported that more than half of UK police forces have referred undocumented victims of crime to the Home Office for immigration enforcement purposes.³² Beyond this, police forces regularly join Immigration Enforcement to carry out joint raids, especially on businesses³³. The Government has recently announced further investment into the Border Command Force to tackle 'illegal' immigration which includes further investment into the Police³⁴, highlighting the collaboration between the two for immigration enforcement. Moreover, the police can and do check an

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²⁹ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44074572>

³⁰ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-44074572>

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³⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-investment-for-border-security-command>

individual's fingerprints against the Immigration and Asylum Biometrics System database, emphasising the network of collaboration³⁵.

As Liberty has pointed out, this partnership has serious negative effects. Undocumented victims of crime are too afraid to come forward to seek help, leaving them left exposed to serious violence and exploitation. This environment enables perpetrators to harm undocumented individuals with impunity, often using a person's immigration status to trap them in abusive situations.³⁶ Ultimately, this approach leaves individuals unsafe, at risk of serious harm and violence, and creates distrust between communities and the police- who are ostensibly meant to provide safety.

Employers are also required to check right to work and immigration status, and can face criminal prosecution if they do not³⁷, which creates similar barriers for individuals wanting to work. Employers can face a prison sentence of up to 5 years for employing undocumented people, on top of financial penalties³⁸. Liberty identifies that criminalising working whilst undocumented does not prevent irregular migrants from working, but forces them into the 'shadow economy'- ultimately making them vulnerable to exploitation³⁹. Additionally, sponsorship requirements on visas makes it difficult for migrants to meet settlement requirements and secure employment⁴⁰. Making people's right to remain contingent on their employer gives those employers a disproportionate amount of power over individuals- leaving people vulnerable to exploitation. Migrants Rights Network regularly share stories of migrant workers who have had their employment sponsorship removed, have not been provided with work, have had their right to work revoked, or have had employers take money from them⁴¹ This also creates an environment where individuals may not feel empowered or safe to raise issues within their workplace, through fear of losing their job and consequently their legal status. In addition, wage inequality among migrants is higher than among non-immigrants⁴², highlighting the economic

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⁴¹ https://www.instagram.com/migrants_rights_network/?hl=en

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<https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/inequality-and-immigration#:~:text=And%20while%20wage%20inequality%20among.the%20UK%20has%20been%20limited>

injustice faced by migrants wanting to work and live in the UK. Immigration raids in the workplace also foster a discriminatory and unsafe environment for migrants in their place of work, manifesting fear and distrust in the workplace⁴³.

Accessing housing is also made difficult by the Hostile Environment. The landlord checking proposal is modelled on the existing civil penalty scheme for employers of 'illegal' migrant workers⁴⁴. Landlords are now required to check the immigration status of individuals before renting to them under the 'Right to Rent' scheme, and they are liable to pay a civil penalty if they rent to somebody who is undocumented and does not have regular status⁴⁵. Landlords are also able to evict tenants if a property is occupied by anyone who is disqualified from renting because of their immigration status⁴⁶. Denying individuals housing because of their immigration status can force families into unaffordable, unsafe and inadequate housing, and place them in a vulnerable position⁴⁷. Furthermore, landlord immigration checks and the penalties for renting to undocumented individuals push landlords to favour renting only to British citizens or people who do not appear 'foreign'⁴⁸. This impacts legally residing migrants and British citizens of colour - exposing them to racial discrimination and prejudice based on appearance. A person's right to secure housing takes precedence over their immigration status.

Finally, the widening of the No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) policy leaves many migrants unable to access many public services and benefits. There is an evident link between these policies and poverty⁴⁹, and there is a real risk that where people affected by NRPF meet an unexpected circumstance or a point of crisis (e.g. a death in the family, a job loss, or a steep rise in household expenses) they will be left without support to help them get through it⁵⁰. Being assigned on NRPF severely limits a person's ability to pursue a stable life and access essential

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<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201314/ldhansrd/text/130703-wms0001.htm#1307035900077>

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<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fabd907e90e075c566998b6/right-to-rent-landlords-v7.0-gov-uk.pdf>

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<https://www.bevanfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Living-with-NRPF-in-the-Nation-of-Sanctuary-V2-FINAL-REPORT.pdf>

resources⁵¹. The notion that the government should deny assistance to migrants of any status is dehumanising.

Overall, the Hostile Environment creates an atmosphere in the UK whereby individuals are defined by their immigration status, and this often precedes their humanities and basic needs or desires to navigate a fulfilling life in the UK. Intensive and broad immigration checks within the public sector alongside intense financial barriers leave many individuals in a position where they are unable to access services which they deserve, and which many British people take for granted. This hostility doesn't just affect those with irregular status - it affects all migrants. As the lines between irregular and regular migration become increasingly blurred, it is time for the UK government to place the humanity of migrants at the forefront of their policies.

Community Impacts

Naturally, the impact on accessing community and public services and the ubiquitous profiteering from enforcement mechanisms seeps into the lives of the communities that we all live in. The state requiring employers, landlords, private sector workers, NHS staff and other public servants to check a person's immigration status means that citizen-on-citizen immigration checks have become normalised and embedded into everyday life. This shatters the trust between individuals and community workers by making them check the status of others, fostering a relationship of distrust in the community and leading to broader hostile attitudes towards migrants. This fear and distrust also leads migrants to not seeking services when they need them, such as avoiding seeking NHS care or reporting crime, resulting in real human impacts on health and wellbeing. Furthermore, this citizen-on-citizen immigration enforcement has the effect of 'othering' migrants, placing them as different (and arguably 'lesser') than British citizens, which harbours a negative and unwelcoming environment for individuals. This is exacerbated by the media and government rhetoric which repeatedly takes an anti-migration perspective and policy stance, fostering further hostility within communities.

Corporate Violence - The Border Industrial Complex

The Hostile Environment makes for an increased use of immigration detention, deportation and immigration raids, all of which is tied to capitalist profit and has catastrophic human consequences. The web and violence of the border industrial complex is a conversation in its own right, however this article will provide an outline of how it interacts with the Hostile Environment policies.

The UK Government has wide immigration detention powers. Those who are subject to immigration controls may be held whilst they wait for permission to enter the UK, or before they are deported or removed from the country⁵². Immigration detention is an administrative process

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52 <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7294/>

and is not related to any criminal procedure⁵³. As recent headlines have evidenced, individuals are subjected to negligence and abuse in detention centres⁵⁴, and UK centres have allegations of abuse, sexual violence, negligence, denial of medical treatment, racial abuse and failure to investigate unlawful deaths⁵⁵. Immigration detention in the UK costs lives⁵⁶. Additionally, the process and very threat of detention is inherently violent. It is unjust to detain an individual, removing their liberty, on the basis of where they were born, or for administrative convenience. This is dehumanising. Moreover, most detention centres in the UK are managed by the private sector⁵⁷ - meaning that profit is being made from the deprivation of individual liberty and cruel conditions.

The UK also increasingly utilises deportation and removals, often targeting individuals who have their whole lives in the UK but have been convicted of petty crimes⁵⁸. Migrants who receive a prison sentence must face deportation under the guise of 'public interest', although they have to serve the prison sentence first⁵⁹. This subjects them to a discriminatory 'double punishment'⁶⁰ which they are only subjected to because they are migrants. Deportation tears lives and families apart, and can often leave children in precarious situations⁶¹. Deportees are also often sent into dangerous environments without any support or protection, and human rights are regularly called into question with deportation⁶². Human rights protections and exemptions to deportation in UK law are harsh, rigid and subjective⁶³, which repeatedly results in unjust deportations despite an individual having their entire life, partners and children in the UK. These defence of 'public interest' which allegedly justifies deporting migrants convicted of criminal offences are reliant on the criminalisation, dehumanisation and othering of migrants which is fostered by the Hostile Environment policies themselves. Migrant individuals who have committed a crime are not any more dangerous than British citizens who have.

⁵³ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7294/>

⁵⁴

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/article/2024/aug/04/worrying-deterioration-in-safety-at-uk-immigration-removal-centres-warns-chief-inspector-of-prisons>

⁵⁵ <https://peopleandplanet.org/divest-borders> Action Guide

⁵⁶ <https://www.inquest.org.uk/deaths-of-immigration-detainees/>

<https://www.ein.org.uk/blog/deaths-and-abuse-uk-immigration-detention-my-research-shows-extent-mental-health-problem/>

https://www.amnesty.org.uk/press-releases/uk-distressing-bibby-stockholm-death-must-lead-drastic-change-course-asylum?utm_source=google&utm_medium=grant&utm_campaign=BRD_AWA_GEN_dynamic-search-ads&utm_content=&qad_source=1&qclid=CjwKCAiA0rW6BhAcEiwAQH28lpWVE_3TRoaTiedOWRsShsFMGL7dqXzhhbnB3q26M9u84mbclJD3KBoCT-gQAvD_BwE

⁵⁷<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7294/#:~:text=Detainees%20are%20held%20in%20immigration.operated%20by%20the%20Prison%20Service.>

⁵⁸ <https://peopleandplanet.org/divest-borders> action guide

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<https://righttoremain.org.uk/toolkit/removal/#:~:text=Deportation%20after%20a%20criminal%20sentence.-If%20the%20Home&text=The%20rules%20state%20that%20if.and%20in%20the%20public%20interest'.>

⁶⁰ https://pure.hud.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/19087406/Suspended_Deportation_Orders_First_Look.pdf

⁶¹ <https://peopleandplanet.org/divest-borders> action guide

⁶² <https://peopleandplanet.org/divest-borders> action guide

⁶³ https://pure.hud.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/19087406/Suspended_Deportation_Orders_First_Look.pdf

This criminalisation of immigration has seeped into public life, evidenced by immigration checks and raids occurring in the streets, at transport stops, in restaurants and other businesses. Immigration Enforcement Officers do not have the same powers as the Police to stop and search, though their powers have been increasing⁶⁴. A 2015 report into immigration enforcement raids by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration found that Immigration Enforcement Officers had warrants to enter premises and conduct a raid in only 43% of cases⁶⁵. However, Immigration Enforcement Officers often enter premises, sometimes by force, knowing that those inside are unaware of their legal right to refuse entry⁶⁶. Immigration enforcement raids are often carried out to symbolically demonstrate force against vulnerable communities⁶⁷, making people feel unsafe and scared. Further, the ‘intelligence’ that Immigration Enforcement officers use to apprehend individuals is often based on racial profiling⁶⁸.

Although governments are responsible for creating immigration policy, they are regularly outsourcing the implementation of most of this violence to the private sector⁶⁹. The border regime consists of a web of hundreds of companies, many of which are common companies. For example, the UK Government contracts with EasyJet to facilitate deportations and removals⁷⁰. The privatisation of the border industry sees these companies reinforce and support one another in service of mutually profiting from suffering (alongside the arms and prison industry).

Discrimination fostered by the Hostile Environment

The Hostile Environment policies mean that many individuals are subjected to discrimination. An Institute for Public Policy Research report in 2020 found that the Hostile Environment had fostered racism, pushed people into destitution, wrongly targeted people who are living in the UK legally, and had “severely harmed the reputation of the Home Office”⁷¹.

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69 <https://theferret.scot/profit-from-brutality-privatised-uk-immigration/>

70 <https://theferret.scot/profit-from-brutality-privatised-uk-immigration/>

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<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/09/uks-hostile-environment-policies-disproportionately-im-pact-people-of-colour>

This can be seen on multiple levels. For example, the requirement for individuals to have papers or identification disproportionately affects the young, the homeless and those who are on lower incomes as they may be less able to afford passports or papers to prove their status, even if they are 'legal'⁷². In addition, racial discrimination is fostered by the Hostile Environment when checking one's immigration status⁷³. People of colour, and visibly 'foreign' people are more likely to be asked for proof of their entitlement to services than White people, regardless of what their immigration status is⁷⁴, and this is cited to have taken place in healthcare settings⁷⁵ and with housing⁷⁶. Furthermore, an investigation by the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants found that 58% of landlords turned down or ignored an enquiry from a POC tenant without a passport⁷⁷, and High Court Judge Mr Justice Spencer found that requiring landlords to check immigration status caused racial discrimination against anyone without a British passport and against ethnic minorities, and that the Government had failed to show that the checks had any actual effect on encouraging undocumented migrants to leave the country⁷⁸.

These findings are just a segment of examples of how the Hostile Environment fostered racism and discrimination towards migrants, regardless of their legal status.

Resisting the Hostile Environment

While the Hostile Environment fosters an unwelcoming, frightening and sometimes violent atmosphere for individuals with migrant status in the UK, stories of migrant resilience and community are important to acknowledge. Listening to these stories allows us to understand migrants not as passive subjects but as individuals with unique experiences.

Multiple local charities and migrant-run organisations help foster access to essential services and an understanding of these policies, as well as providing Hostile Environment resistance training for the wider community to band together to resist and restructure the Hostile Environment into a welcoming, tolerant one. Many UK cities also have anti-raids community groups which help to inform individuals of their rights in a raid but equip the wider community to recognise and resist immigration raids in their area, and show migrants that they are welcome.

Groups like Migrant Action and Migrants Rights Network create public resources and information that support collective resistance to the Hostile Environment. Migrant-led organisations like these help to establish grassroots movements which centre lived experience, creating transformational change against harmful policies like the Hostile Environment. They

⁷² https://jcw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2017_02_13_JCWI-Report_Passport-Please-1.pdf

⁷³ https://jcw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2017_02_13_JCWI-Report_Passport-Please-1.pdf

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https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Hostile-Environment-Guide-%E2%80%93-update-May-2019_0.pdf

⁷⁵ <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/bmjopen/10/2/e033202.full.pdf>

⁷⁶ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/1468-2427.12731>

⁷⁷ https://jcw.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2017_02_13_JCWI-Report_Passport-Please-1.pdf

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https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Hostile-Environment-Guide-%E2%80%93-update-May-2019_0.pdf

amplify the lived experience of migration, centering migrant experiences and ensuring these experiences guide the efforts to challenge and reshape the policies which are hostile towards them. These grassroots organisations also harness the power of collaboration and community to target and resist specific sectors of the hostile environment - for example Migrant Action's collaboration with MedAct and Patients not Passports to work towards health justice within migration justice. Within this campaign it is important to connect the work operating at different levels of the Hostile Environment- which Migrant Action is intentional on doing.

United, we are stronger than government hostility. Together, we will make the UK a welcoming space for all, regardless of status.