

How do the rules affect refugee family reunion?

Age range: 11 +

Time: 40 - 50 minutes

Outline

The Families Together campaign aims to change the rules which restrict refugees' universal rights to family life in the UK. The Ukraine Family Scheme, launched by the UK Government in March 2022, shows that a more generous policy towards refugee family reunion is possible.

This activity focuses on case studies about families fleeing conflicts in other parts of the world, and the urgent need to provide adequate safe routes for people fleeing war, conflict, and persecution to family life in the UK, wherever they are from.

In this activity, young people examine four real life case studies¹ and learn about some of the rules governing refugee family reunion in the UK. They also explore their own and their peers' values and opinions and learn how the Families Together campaign seeks to change the existing rules.

The workshop's audience is young people who are organising the Families Together campaign in their school and young people who are writing MP messages – either letters, postcards, or jigsaw pieces - as part of the campaign.

This activity and the Families Together campaign could be submitted as part of the LEARN, EMBED or SHARE criteria for the Schools of Sanctuary award.

Learning objectives

- Young people understand the rules which prevent refugee families from being reunited in the UK and decide whether they are fair.
- Young people empathise with and have a greater understanding of some of the challenges faced by refugees in the UK.
- Young people understand how UK refugee rules could be changed to allow more refugee families to live together in the UK.

Outcomes

- Young people feel knowledgeable and enthusiastic about supporting the Families Together campaign.
- Young people write a message to their MP – either a letter, a postcard or a jigsaw piece - and urge them to take action to support refugee family reunion.

Key questions

- How do some of the UK's refugee rules keep refugee families apart?
- How could current UK refugee rules be changed to help reunite more families?
- How do current UK refugee rules affect refugees' lives?

Resources

- Four case studies – students may work individually or in pairs.
- MP postcard templates
- MP letter templates
- Jigsaw message template
- Posters
- Paper

¹ All case studies and factual information in this activity have been adapted from the Joint Agency Briefing Note (2017) [Together Again: Reuniting refugee families in safety – what the UK can do](#)



Activity 1 (20 minutes)

Introduction

Show and discuss the Families Together presentation.

This may be done in a classroom lesson, an assembly or young people could read through the presentation individually or in pairs.

By the end of the activity young people should have a basic understanding of current UK refugee family reunion rules. The rules say that a refugee settled in the UK may sponsor the following family members to join them in the UK.

- Their partner
- Their children under 18 years of age
- In exceptional circumstances, their dependent children over 18 years of age

Legal aid to help refugees navigate the complicated application process has been ended.

In addition

Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads.

‘The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.’

The summary of Article 22 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child reads.

‘If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.’

**Activity 2 (20 - 30 minutes)***Role-Play Activity*

This activity may be done in the classroom in small group or pair work or completed for homework and reviewed in a classroom plenary.

The activity consists of four real-life case studies. Names and personal details have been changed. The case studies are.

1. Mariam
2. Nabil
3. Tesfa
4. Vimbai

Young people read each case study and the attached statement about UK law. In the empty box or on a separate piece of paper they write notes to explain.

- Why this family is divided.
- What the current UK rules say about each case.
- The changes the Families Together campaign would like to see so each family can be reunited.
- Students' own opinions about what they would like to see happen next.

Depending on the time available, the young people could look at as many of the four case studies as possible.

**Activity 3** (10 – 15 minutes)*Plenary*

Divide the board in two with these headings.

What the UK refugee rules say **Changes proposed by the Families Together campaign**

Collect feedback from the different case studies and summarise it on the board.

Ask whether the young people agree with the changes proposed by the Families Together campaign. Are these the changes they would wish to see if they were in the position of the people in the case studies?

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