



Dear colleagues,

You will be aware that the Illegal Migration Act places a duty on the Home Secretary to set a cap on the number of entrants to the UK arriving via safe and legal routes for humanitarian purposes and for this cap to be defined following consultation with local government.

Today the Home Office is officially launching the consultation to inform the level at which the cap on safe and legal routes is set. Home Office officials will have shared this directly with local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Executive Office in Northern Ireland.

Local authorities are integral to delivering these routes through their role in housing and integration services. It is with thanks to the efforts of local authorities across the UK that we have been able to welcome over half a million people through our safe and legal routes since 2015. They have also borne much of the pressure caused by housing asylum seekers who would otherwise be destitute. The largest number in our country's history in any comparable period. However, these have imposed a considerable burden. It is important that we now consult local authorities to assess their capacity to support vulnerable people moving forward and ground the decisions made in Westminster in the realities faced in the communities we represent.

The cap will ensure the UK is able to welcome, accommodate, integrate and support those arriving via these routes in an orderly and appropriate way. This will ensure we do not take more refugees than our public services and communities can cope with.

By determining a realistic and evidenced-based picture on capacity - which we can only do with your support - the UK can continue to operate safe and legal routes and ensure these routes form part of a well-managed migration system. In making commitments through the consultation local authorities must carefully consider their capacity and make detailed, specific commitments. We will expect them to deliver these commitments and so they should not be made lightly. If you simply do not have capacity, it is important that you are honest.

The consultation, which provides the basis upon which the Home Office will propose the cap to be agreed in Parliament, will be open from 20 October 2023 until 15 December 2023. The responses will be reviewed and considered at a national and regional level before a total figure is recommended and debated in Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Minister of State for Immigration