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PCS vows not to let government get away with demonising refugees

Mark Serwotka urges other unions to support PCS / Care4Calais Safe Passage policy

The PCS has vowed not to let the government “get away” with demonising refugees ahead of the next General Election.

The union, which represents Border Force officers and coastguard, has condemned Rishi Sunak’s plans to remove from the UK all asylum seekers who arrive in small boats on the Channel.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka and Care4Calais founder Claire Moseley have written to the leaders of UK trade unions seeking their support for a Safe Passage policy.

The letter states: “The Tories have been keen to demonise refugees in order to deflect from their catastrophic failures to address the current cost of living crisis. They intend to make the issue of small boat crossings the subject of legislation to use it as a battleground ahead of the next general election.

“It is vital our movement does not allow them to get away with it. This letter is a rallying cry not to fall for the Tories’ ruse. It is also designed to highlight how the Tories could easily and humanely stop the small boat crossings if they so wished.”

The union last year [published a pamphlet](#) addressing small boat crossings in the Channel and proposing a humane alternative to Rwanda deportation.

Its key demands are:

- implementation of a Safe Passage Visa Scheme, to allow refugees to enter the UK safely and begin their asylum claim.
- Greater investment in the Home Office to ensure that staff in the department have the time, space and resources to properly determine asylum claims;

free from political pressure and interference.

- Reform of immigration detention centres, so refugees are helped rather than punished; and to provide a better working environment for staff to produce better outcomes and a supportive environment for refugees.

Mark Serwotka added: “It is not immigration that’s driven down wages and cut public services to the bone – it’s conscious political choices.

“But instead of facing up to the consequences of their actions, the government acts to criminalise refugees and make them scapegoats for the cost-of-living crisis.

“The UK is the sixth richest economy on the planet and can afford to take care of its own citizens and take its fair share of refugees.”

ends