



# THE NATIONALITY AND BORDERS BILL

A COMPARISON OF COVERAGE BY THE  
BBC AND GB NEWS ON 6 JULY 2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

GB News launched on June 13, 2021, with a specific aim stated its editorial charter to present high quality balanced news and to ensure that all opinions were reflected and respected, including those from members of the public, in its output.

This survey was conducted to examine whether the news channel is meeting these editorial ambitions, and also to compare the quality and range of its news coverage with that of the BBC. In this connection the BBC's Charter stipulates that the news it provides must meet the highest editorial standards and provide 'a range and depth of analysis and content not widely available from other United Kingdom news providers'. In other words, better than its rivals.

The survey covered all the output of GB News and selected BBC news programmes from 6am to midnight on July 6, 2021, a day chosen at random. The treatment of one of the day's biggest news items – the government's Nationality and Borders Bill (details of which were announced on that day) – was the focus of analysis.

All relevant programme items were fully transcribed and 24 themes were isolated, including factual descriptions of the bill, the perspectives of the government and campaigners, statistics on the numbers making the crossing, possible solutions to the crisis, and opinions from members of the general public.

Significant differences in the quality and quantity of coverage emerged. GB News covered the bill and its ramifications, together with opinion for and against, in much more detail. The BBC devoted 3.3% of its available airtime in the monitored programmes, compared to 12.4% of total airtime by GB News.

The BBC's relevant content was skewed heavily towards that the new bill would deter genuine asylum seekers entering the UK. That of GB News also incorporated similar negative views of the bill, but contained a wider spectrum of views in its favour and unlike the BBC, included substantial input from members of the public on a matter of huge public concern<sup>1</sup>.

The BBC output in the survey – from 11 flagship news programmes plus the content of the News Channel – devoted just **54 minutes** of airtime to the story, half of which was repetitive short items on the News Channel. Six of the main news programmes (such as BBC2 Newsnight and the BBC1 News at Ten) ignored the story, and the biggest chunk of original coverage (approximately 12 minutes) was a discussion on BBC2 Politics Live.

---

<sup>1</sup> This was also despite that the total amount of monitored BBC programming added up to more than 27 hours, compared with 18 hours of the GB News output.

GB News, by contrast, devoted a total of **134 minutes** to coverage, and it featured prominently in all seven of the monitored programmes.

As is shown on the chart on page 44 of this report, on 18 of the 24 identified themes, the GB News coverage was more detailed than the BBC's. The biggest differences were in the following categories:

- Opinions from the Public - GB News 3,185 words, nothing from the BBC;
- People Smuggling Gangs and Illegality - 2,546 words on GB News against only 542 from the BBC;
- Were those crossing the Channel genuine asylum seekers or economic migrants? – coverage on GB News was 2,348 words, with only 53 words from the BBC.

Four themes were covered by GB News but not at all by the BBC:

- Opinions from the public;
- Criticisms from the UKIP/Brexit Party perspective about the potential effectiveness of the bill (672 words – an interview with Nigel Farage);
- That the incomers could be dangerous because they wished to do harm, including adults posing as children (339 words);
- The asylum system potentially being at breaking point (223 words).

Only two themes of the BBC coverage (amounting to less than two minutes) were not covered by GB News:

- UK cutting its international aid budget (131 words);
- Criticism of the general media coverage of asylum issues (118 words)

### **Interviews**

Substantial differences between the BBC and GB News also emerged from the interview sequences. The BBC interviewed six contributors about the bill compared with seven on GB News, but the word count discrepancy was much greater: **3,029 words (BBC) against 5,259**. Thus GB News devoted significantly more airtime to exploration of a range of opinion about the story.

On the BBC, most space was allotted to figures who opposed the bill because they believed it made it tougher for genuine asylum seekers to enter the UK, and who were deeply critical of the UK's record of the treatment of genuine refugees. The main interview sequence on BBC2 Politics Live (representing 25 per cent of the airtime devoted to the bill) featured a government

minister ranged against three spokespeople who, for a range of political, economic and human rights reasons, strongly opposed the bill.

GB News interviews included almost as much pro-asylum seeker/anti-bill opinion as the BBC (1,484 against 1,567 words), but also contained views from a range of perspectives which welcomed the bill, including the government, a think-tank worried about overall immigration levels and border control officials who wanted to stop people-smuggling.

The BBC's first public purpose in its Charter, covering news provision, states:

The BBC should provide duly accurate and impartial news, current affairs and factual programming to build people's understanding of all parts of the United Kingdom and of the wider world. Its content should be provided to the highest editorial standards. It should offer a range and depth of analysis and content not widely available from other United Kingdom news providers, using the highest calibre presenters and journalists, and championing freedom of expression, so that all audiences can engage fully with major local, regional, national, United Kingdom and global issues and participate in the democratic process, at all levels, as active and informed citizens.

Put another way, there is a requirement that the corporation provides a news service better than its rivals. The findings of the report are that only three weeks after its launch, GB News covered a major national story in greater depth and to a much higher quality than the BBC, not least because it better achieved 'due impartiality' in providing a range of views about the bill, including public opinion.

It is arguable that the BBC's coverage did not meet its public purpose obligations because it was both clearly biased and failed 'to provide a range and depth of analysis not available from other UK news providers.' In sharp contrast, GB News clearly met the requirements of its own Editorial Charter.

BBC Director General Tim Davie, when he appeared before the House of Commons DCMS Select Committee meeting of September 21, 2021, said that he was worried about what he described 'BBC groupthink' and was on a mission to ensure that an appropriate variety of opinion was featured in corporation output.<sup>2</sup> On the evidence of this survey, he has a very long way to go.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/2765/pdf/>

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	5
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW .....	7
1.3 AIRTIME .....	9
1.4 INTERVIEWEES.....	10
1.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS.....	21
1.6 CONCLUSION .....	43
APPENDIX I – FULL TRANSCRIPTS.....	45
Radio 4, Today.....	45
BBC1, Breakfast .....	46
BBC2, Politics Live.....	48
BBC1, News at One.....	53
Radio 4, World at One.....	53
Radio 4, PM .....	53
BBC1, News at Six .....	54
Radio 4, Six O’Clock News .....	54
BBC1, News at Ten .....	55
Radio 4, World Tonight .....	55
BBC2, Newsnight .....	55
BBC News Channel, 6am - 12am .....	55
GB News, The Great British Breakfast .....	61
GB News, Brazier & Muroki .....	65
GB News, De Piero and Halligan.....	70
GB News, McCoy and Phillips.....	78
GB News, Dewbs & Co. ....	88
GB News, Andrew Neil .....	91
GB News, Tonight Live with Dan Wootton.....	93
APPENDIX II – THE WIDER NEWS AGENDA .....	96

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

---

GB News launched on June 13, 2021, with a specific aim stated its Editorial Charter<sup>3</sup> to present high quality balanced news.

This survey was conducted to examine whether the new channel is meeting these editorial ambitions. It also compares the quality and range of its news coverage on a major news item of the day with that of the BBC. In this connection the BBC's Charter stipulates that the news it provides must meet the highest editorial standards and provide 'a range and depth of analysis and content not widely available from other United Kingdom news providers'<sup>4</sup>. In other words, that it is better than its rivals in those respects.

With a licence fee income of almost £4 billion a year, the BBC certainly has sufficient resources to attain such a requirement. But does it do so?

Andrew Neil, the former GB News Chairman, claimed during the channel's first programme that the enterprise would be, 'dedicated to covering the news that matters to you and to giving voice to those who felt side-lined or even silenced in our great national debates.'<sup>5</sup> He added that the service would concentrate on stories that other broadcasters were neglecting, 'and even when we are covering the same stories as others, we will come at them in a very different way.' He said that the new channel would encourage debate and conversation and 'include voices you don't often hear on other news broadcasts' and that it would be guided by the 'highest journalistic standards.'

In an interview with former BBC journalist Robin Aitken, GB News presenter Alex Phillips made a similar point to Mr Neil regarding the new channel's editorial aims:

I think really the GB News goal isn't to overcorrect, is not to become rabidly polemical. It's not to, you know, sort of deliberately and editorially try and espouse a certain political viewpoint. It's simply to do what should have been done all along and have all viewpoints. It's just to break the sort of cosy consensus.<sup>6</sup>

The aspirations of GB News thus seem to be aimed towards providing viewers with a service which compensated for perceived serious shortcomings in BBC news output.

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gbnews.uk/our-editorial-charter>

<sup>4</sup> The BBC's first public purpose in its Charter relates to news and stipulates:

"The BBC should provide duly accurate and impartial news, current affairs and factual programming to build people's understanding of all parts of the United Kingdom and of the wider world. Its content should be provided to the highest editorial standards. It should offer a range and depth of analysis and content not widely available from other United Kingdom news providers, using the highest calibre presenters and journalists, and championing freedom of expression, so that all audiences can engage fully with major local, regional, national, United Kingdom and global issues and participate in the democratic process, at all levels, as active and informed citizens."

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/watch-andrew-neil-s-opening-gb-news-manifesto>

<sup>6</sup> Heresies Ep. 5: BBC Bias Exposed - An Insider's Story [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATw\\_JG15opY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATw_JG15opY)

Such problems have also been identified in the systematic News-watch research undertaken over more than two decades<sup>7</sup>. This, too, has demonstrated that some political perspectives have been consistently marginalised or under-represented in BBC coverage, including pro-Brexit opinion generally and those expressing concerns about mass immigration and the EU's open borders policy.<sup>8</sup> Others such as Robin Aitken – as outlined in his book *The Noble Liar*<sup>9</sup> – have identified a deep-rooted strong bias to the liberal-left on a wide range of topics from the EU to religious affairs.

## 1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW

---

The goal of the survey is to explore – in the context outlined above of the requirements of the BBC Charter and the GB News Editorial Charter – the differences in the editorial approach between the two entities as news providers. Points covered include:

- Whether the BBC is meeting the public purposes obligation to provide a service of ‘a range and depth of analysis and content not widely available from other United Kingdom News providers’
- If GB News is providing a high quality service which is duly impartial under Ofcom’s regulatory codes and contains a ‘range and depth of analysis’ comparative to the BBC.

To generate comparative material, News-watch monitored the 18 hours of original programming broadcast by GB News between 6am and midnight on 6 July<sup>10</sup>. By this time, the new service was getting into its editorial stride. Eleven of the BBC’s main television and radio current affairs programmes were monitored for an identical period, along with the BBC News Channel, amounting to 27 hours and 10 minutes of airtime.

The seven programmes monitored on GB News were: *The Great British Breakfast*; *Brazier & Muroki*; *De Piero & Halligan*; *McCoy and Phillips*; *Dewbs & Co.*; *Andrew Neil*; and *Tonight Live with Dan Wootton*. The BBC programmes selected for monitoring were: *Breakfast*; *News at One*, *News at Six* and *News at Ten* on BBC1; *Politics Live* and *Newsnight* on BBC2; *Today*, *World at One*; *PM*, *Six O’Clock News* and *World Tonight* on Radio 4; and finally, 18 hours of the BBC News Channel.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://news-watch.co.uk/monitoring-projects-and-reports/>

<sup>8</sup> For example, between September 2002 and June 2015, News-watch monitored Radio 4’s *Today* programme for 324 weeks, amounting to 1,944 editions. There were 232 hours of EU-related feature coverage, and 5,113 guest speakers contributed to the EU debate. Only 174 speakers (3.4%) were identifiable advocates of withdrawal (and they were not always given the space to make an overt case for it.)

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07GQJ47Y2/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?\\_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B07GQJ47Y2/ref=dp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1)

<sup>10</sup> Between midnight and 6am GB News repeats previously broadcasted content from its daily schedule.

<sup>11</sup> Certain calculations later in this document focus only on proprietary content broadcast by the BBC News Channel and exclude simulcasts of BBC1 programmes, namely: *Breakfast*, *News at One*, *News at Six* and *News at Ten*. This ensures that certain statistics are not skewed by duplicated content.

The government's controversial Nationality and Borders bill<sup>12</sup>, sponsored by Home Secretary Priti Patel, was one of the top stories of the day covered by both the BBC and GB News and was chosen as the focus of the comparison.

The aim of the bill is to deter illegal immigration into the UK, including: to increase penalties for people-smuggling and those entering the UK without permission; and to introduce new powers to stop and return boats suspected of carrying illegal migrants from British territorial waters. It also seeks to prevent asylum seekers remaining in the UK if they had previously passed through a safe country and to introduce new powers to process asylum claims in offshore centres.

The BBC's coverage of asylum and immigration issues has, historically, been an area of contention. For example, a survey conducted by News-watch in 2005 across a range of BBC news programmes found that the distinction between 'asylum seekers' and 'immigrants' was clumsily blurred, with the result that a clampdown on those in the latter category was projected as a cruel and bigoted attack on incomers in need of succour and help<sup>13</sup>.

In 2012, the BBC Trust, noting audience concerns, commissioned an Impartiality Review which focused specifically on immigration as one of three areas of controversy (along with the EU and Religion).<sup>14</sup> The subsequent report found that the BBC had been 'slow to reflect the weight of concern in the wider community about issues arising from immigration'.<sup>15</sup>

Former Today presenter John Humphrys echoed these findings in his 2019 autobiography. He stated:

BBC News has become a machine-driven operation, running very fast to stand still, without a proper awareness of the world around it. That increases the risk that it can be taken by surprise – perhaps by Euroscepticism or immigration or the rise of Trump and populism.<sup>16</sup>

Control of immigration divides public opinion. For example, a YouGov survey in August 2020 found that almost half of the British public have little or no sympathy for migrants crossing the Channel from France.<sup>17</sup> In a poll by Ipsos Mori in June 2020, 51% of British respondents believed 'most foreigners wanting to get into Britain as refugees aren't refugees' and wanted to come for economic reasons or to take advantage of welfare services, compared to just 38% who disagreed with this perspective.<sup>18</sup> The same survey found just 15% thought that the Britain should be more open to accepting refugees than it was before the Covid-19 pandemic,

---

<sup>12</sup> <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/58-02/0141/210141.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> P2 <https://news-watch.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Report-for-Migration-Watch-UK-December-2004.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> The report, authored by former ITV producer Stuart Prebble was published in 2013. News-watch provided oral evidence to Mr Prebble [https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our\\_work/editorial\\_standards/impartiality/breadth\\_opinion.html](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/our_work/editorial_standards/impartiality/breadth_opinion.html)

<sup>15</sup> [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our\\_work/breadth\\_opinion/breadth\\_opinion.pdf p.63](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust/assets/files/pdf/our_work/breadth_opinion/breadth_opinion.pdf_p.63). This admission has also been reflected by senior BBC

<sup>16</sup> Humphrys, John. *A Day Like Today: Memoirs* (p. 346). HarperCollins

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrant-channel-crossing-yougov-uk-france-asylum-refugee-a9666041.html>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-06/world-refugee-day-2020-ipsos-mori.pdf> p.9



compared to 42% who believed it should be less open and a third who felt it should remain the same.<sup>19</sup>

Against that background, an investigation was undertaken to compare and contrast coverage of the Nationality and Borders Bill on the BBC and GB News. Both broadcasters were assessed to see to what extent their commitments to ‘due impartiality’ under Ofcom’s Broadcasting Code were met. Key questions were whether respective audiences were offered a sufficient range and depth of opinion; how the theme was framed and explored; and whether each broadcaster’s editorial stance might preference or exclude particular viewpoints.

## 1.3 AIRTIME

Five of the monitored BBC programmes carried coverage of the Nationality and Borders bill and six ignored it.

Channel	Programme	Airtime	Proportion of Available Airtime
Radio 4	Today	5 min	2.7%
BBC1	Breakfast	5 min 15 s	2.7%
BBC2	Politics Live	12 min	26.6%
BBC1	News at One	0	n/a
Radio 4	World at One	0	n/a
Radio 4	PM	4 min	6.7%
Radio 4	Six O’Clock News	1 min 45	5.8%
BBC1	News at Six	0	n/a
BBC1	News at Ten	0	n/a
Radio 4	World Tonight	0	n/a
BBC2	Newsnight	0	n/a

The amount of space devoted to the bill varied from 2.7% of available airtime on both Today and Breakfast, up to 26.6% on Politics Live. The total amount was 28 minutes across the 11 programmes, or 5.1% of their combined available airtime.

To avoid double-counting, the BBC News Channel, which incorporates in its schedule BBC1 Breakfast and the three main BBC1 bulletins, is treated separately. It included 26 minutes of coverage of the bill over 18 hours (2.4% of its total airtime). 5 minutes and 30 seconds of content simulcast on BBC Breakfast and 20 minutes 45 seconds of the channel’s own material.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, in total and across all its channels, the BBC devoted **54 minutes** to the Nationality and Borders story, from 27 hours and 10 minutes of total airtime, equating to **3.3% of its coverage**.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid p.11

<sup>20</sup> However, the 20 minutes and 45 seconds included some repeated content, notably a correspondent report by Daniel Sandford which was aired on four occasions during the 18 hour survey interval.

In contrast, GB News devoted **134 minutes** to the theme from its 18 hours of broadcasting and the story was included on all seven programmes, featuring heavily in six, as illustrated.

Programme	Airtime	Proportion of Available Airtime
Great British Breakfast	18 min 45	10.4%
Brazier & Muroki	17 min 30	9.7%
De Piero & Halligan	30 min	16.6%
McCoy & Phillips	38 min 45 s	21.5%
Dewbs & Co.	14 min 30 s	12.1%
Andrew Neil	8 min 15 s	13.8%
Tonight Live with Dan Wootton	6 min 15s	3.5%

Combined, GB News devoted **12.4% of its airtime** on the 6 July to the new Bill<sup>21</sup> – proportionately **almost four times more than the BBC**.

Two important concerns are raised by the BBC's more limited treatment of the story. The first relates to the concept of 'bias by placement': that bias may occur when a particular news item is given less prominence than it warrants, or broadcast in slots with the lowest audiences. The second is 'bias by omission'. This is when specific programmes or channels do not cover a story at all. . Bias by omission is generally harder for audiences to identify as it relies on an awareness of a story from other news sources to enable them to recognise that it is missing.<sup>22</sup>

## 1.4 INTERVIEWEES

Further differences between GB News and the BBC emerged in the treatment of items involving guest contributors who were chosen to illuminate and explain the content and likely impact of the proposed new legislation. The BBC – despite its superior resources to GB News – mounted a more limited exploration.

### BBC

There were six BBC guest interviewees during the 18-hour monitoring interval. Five of the total were on the 11 BBC1 and BBC2 programmes and one on the News Channel. They were as follows:

<sup>21</sup> In order to facilitate comparisons with the BBC output, no adjustment has been made in this calculation to reflect that GB News carries advertising and thus its available airtime is lower. Ofcom permits an average of 7 minutes of advertisements per hour on commercial channels, which means approximately 2 hours and 6 minutes of the 18 hour GB News schedule was taken up by advertising, meaning that in terms of available airtime, the Nationality and Border coverage accounted for 14% of the space available to the producers.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix II considers the positioning of the Nationality and Borders Bill in comparison to other stories on Radio 4's Six O'Clock news, along with the full running orders of the six BBC programmes that chose not to cover the bill to indicate the stories deemed more editorially important.

Channel/Programme	Interviewee	Organisation	Words	Position on the Bill
BBC2, Politics Live	Tom Hunt	Conservative Party	959	In favour
	David Linden	SNP	310	Opposed
	Ash Sarkar	Novara Media	669	Opposed
	Annabel Denham	Institute of Economic Affairs	228	Opposed
News Channel	Tim Naor Hilton	Refugee Action	360	Opposed
Radio 4, PM	John Vine	Former Chief Inspector of Borders	503	Raises logistical problems

A four-way discussion on BBC2's **Politics Live** featured three figures sharply against the bill and one in favour – the **Conservative MP Tom Hunt**. One of his main points was that those crossing the Channel were arriving from another safe European country – France – rather than directly from a war-torn nation (the implication being that they should thus not be classed as asylum seekers). He added that allowing the crossings encouraged more people to risk their lives and fed the 'evil' people-smuggling trade. He also asserted that those making the journey were overwhelmingly young men in their 20s and 30s (again implying that they were not asylum seekers but economic migrants). Mr Hunt said he believed that 'turning a blind eye to lawlessness in the Channel was 'totally wrong.'

One of those speaking against the bill was **David Linden from the SNP**. He began by highlighting the death in 2015 of Alan Kurdi, 'those incredibly moving images of a toddler washed up on the beach', although he did nothing to explain to audiences unfamiliar the case that the child's death had occurred not in the UK, but in Bodrum, Turkey rather than England or France, and that the little boy's family had been attempting to eventually migrate to Canada.<sup>23</sup> Mr Linden stated that the idea that people risked getting on these boats to the UK 'for a food bank voucher' was 'quite offensive.' He claimed that that there were no safe and legal routes into the UK and then moved on to speak about the broader treatment of asylum seekers, including the 'inhumane conditions' in Napier Barracks, the former Army Camp used to house migrants claiming asylum.

Mr Linden directly questioned Tom Hunt on why the government was cutting international aid budget and nutrition projects, given that, he claimed, people were fleeing countries because of famine and starvation. Mr Hunt answered that there were unprecedented pulls on the public purse at the moment and that prioritising domestic spending was 'the right thing to do.'

**Ash Sarkar** was billed by Politics Live only as senior commissioning editor at **Novara Media**, which, according to their website, attempts to battle the problems caused by 'capitalism, racism and climate change'.<sup>24</sup> Her biography says that she is an activist speaking from 'anti-imperialist, feminist, antifascist' perspective.<sup>25</sup> In 2018 on ITV's Good Morning Britain, she denied that Barack Obama was her hero, and asserted to Piers Morgan, 'I'm literally a communist, you idiot.'<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.macleans.ca/news/world/how-alan-kurdis-death-has-affected-canada-one-year-later/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://novaramedia.com/about/>

<sup>25</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash\\_Sarkar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash_Sarkar)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/ash-sarkar-communist-called-piers-morgan-idiot>

Because Novara Media is unlikely to be familiar with most viewers, they should have been given more information about her partisan stance towards immigration and asylum. On Politics Live, she called for a 'fact-based' conversation, noting that despite the increase in small boat crossings in 2020, the number of asylum claims to the UK had remained static. She alleged that scaremongering was being used to justify a 'draconian crackdown' and suggested that media coverage was warping perceptions of what was actually happening. As had David Linden, she raised the issue of the 'terrible' conditions at Napier Barracks asylum centre which, she claimed, had seen a 'huge outbreak' of coronavirus and a fire being set by residents because 'people were so miserable and felt so without hope.' Mr Hunt chipped in to accuse her of justifying illegality and criminal damage. She responded by asking Mr Hunt to put himself in the position of people who had fled war-torn countries, were deeply traumatised and many of whom were victims of torture. Mr Hunt countered that they had 'fled France'. Ms Sarkar then argued that the UK processed fewer asylum claims than countries such as France, Germany and Greece. She added that the Independent Monitoring Board had found that a third of detainees at Brook House Removal Centre were on constant suicide watch. She briefly made the point that immigration rules do not state that asylum seekers must stay in the first safe country and concluded her contribution by calling for an expansion in the number of safe and legal avenues for asylum seekers to come here, accusing the government's policy of 'immiserating the lives of asylum seekers.'

**Annabel Denham from the Institute of Economic Affairs** then outlined what she claimed was Britain's history of supporting and welcoming immigrants, and spoke about the 'unimaginable plights' of asylum seekers. She accused the government of 'responding to what it deems to be public hostility' and agreed with Ash Sarkar's point that this negativity may have been 'whipped up by the media and the images that we see splashed across the cover of newspapers.' She stated that she didn't believe the taking a hard line on asylum seekers was the right course and called for them to be allowed to work in the UK, learn English, and integrate, which would produce economic and social benefits. She expressed suspicion about Tom Hunt's argument that taking a hard line would prevent others making a perilous journey, stating 'that's a way of I think that that's a way of people who are hostile towards asylum seekers masking it in compassionate terms.'

Mr Hunt was given the final word in the interview sequence and suggested that those wishing to contribute to British society should 'apply for immigration status like everybody else' and accused Ms Denham of advocating a 'free for all, where anyone can just come into our country, they don't have to follow the rules.' Mr Hunt argued that millions had voted to leave the EU in order to take back control of borders, but 'they switch on the TV screen and they see this lawlessness, it's a million miles away from control of our borders'. He concluded by contesting Ms Denham's

point that the issue was being whipped up by the media, saying 'I think it's understandable anger.'

The next mention of the bill was on the **BBC News Channel** at 4.25pm. Following a location report by Daniel Sandford from Dover (which had first appeared on that morning's BBC1 Breakfast), presenter Shaun Ley conducted a brief interview with **Tim Naor Hilton, chief executive of Refugee Action**. Mr Hilton spoke about how Britain had contributed to the drafting of the Refugee Convention 70 years ago and accused ministers of 'ripping it up right before our eyes', with 'an extreme anti-refugee bill' that was against decency, against compassion and criminalises refugees. He said that the proposals were against international law and that people were making the dangerous journey because there were no safe routes into this country. Mr Ley, in a devil's advocate question, asked why those passing through safe countries such as Italy, France or Germany couldn't claim asylum there first, rather than waiting to come to the UK. Mr Hilton countered that those fleeing their countries were looking to rebuild their lives and may have family or friend connections here. He went on to note that three times as many asylum seekers end up in France and Spain and four times as many end up in Germany than in the UK. Mr Ley, in a soft question, asked, 'So is your argument that this is a . . . a kind of a kind of a sneaky way of reducing numbers of applicants, because almost nobody gets to this country without coming to it through another country first? Because we're an island.' Mr Hilton agreed and said that his organisation was calling for the government to establish humanitarian visas and a refugee resettlement programme of 10,000 a year to meet international obligations. He concluded by suggesting that the UK's standing on the international stage was shrinking as a result of not 'stepping up and playing our role.'

At 5.51pm on **Radio 4's PM**, presenter Evan Davis interviewed **John Vine, Former Chief Inspector of Borders**. Mr Davis asked about the practicality of sending boats back to France before they arrived here. Mr Vine said that the proposal would only work if there was a bilateral arrangement with the French and noted that successive home secretaries had tried to address the issue over the last decade. He noted a policy of pushback of boats had been introduced by the Australian government in 2013, but reiterated that a similar policy would only work for the UK if there was an arrangement with the French. Mr Evans asked what would be in it for the French. Mr Vine conceded, 'on the face of it, not a great deal', noting that the nation had its own issues with migrant encampments in the north of the country. He added that there was 'a massive health and safety issue' once people had set off in dinghies not fit for purpose and all the authorities can do in this situation – whether British or French – was to rescue the people on the boat. Mr Davis asked if this was only practical if those in the boats were 'picked up and deposited' in France, rather than simply 'shooing' the vessels into French waters. Mr Vine again reiterated the need for a bilateral agreement, expanding this to include other countries, such as Belgium, if that had been the departure point. Mr Davis asked whether asylum claims could be

processed in a safe, third country. Mr Vine said that, again, this had been done by the Australians who had paid the government of Papua New Guinea to set up camps, but there were logistical problems in having civil servants deal with asylum claims from that particular location and added, 'you've got to transport people who don't want to go to that location, to the location' (it was unclear whether he was referring to the asylum seekers or the civil servants themselves). Mr Vine noted the poor Home Office track record on removing those with failed asylum claims, and said that although there had been some suggestion of places like the Ascension Islands, 'they're a long, long way away' and he could foresee the 'logistics being very difficult indeed.'

### Summary of BBC coverage

Most of the BBC interviewees were strongly against the new bill, and deeply scathing about the UK's track record in dealing with asylum seekers. On Politics Live, which carried the bulk of coverage, Conservative MP Tom Hunt was able to put a case in favour, but he was pitched against three others who delivered 1,207 words compared to Mr Hunt's 959. The main thrust of their argument was that the bill was inhumane and against the UK's obligations towards refugees. Elsewhere in the day's schedule, anti-bill sentiment was amplified by Tim Noar Hilton of Refugee Action, who delivered a further 360 words, with no balancing opinion in favour. Although the former Chief Inspector of Borders John Vine made no obviously partisan points regarding either the bill or the wider treatment of refugees, his comments were fundamentally negative about the practicalities of stemming the tide of immigration, either at sea or via a third safe country. Thus, the six guests delivered 3,029 words against the bill. Of the total only 32% were in favour.

### GB News

On GB News coverage of the new bill featured interviews of seven invited guests on five of its seven programmes, as follows.

Programme	Interviewee	Organisation	Words	Position on the Bill
Great British Breakfast	Steve Valdez-Symonds	Amnesty UK	778	Opposed
McCoy & Phillips	Alp Mehmet	Migration Watch	558	In favour
McCoy & Phillips	Chris Philp	Home Office Minister	964	In favour
Dewbs & Co.	Emma Revell	Institute of Economic Affairs	706	Opposed
Dewbs & Co.	Rear Admiral Chris Party	Amphibious Task Group	531	In favour
Andrew Neil	Tony Smith	Former Director General, Border Force	957	In favour
Tonight Live with Dan Wootton	Nigel Farage	Former UKIP/Brexit Party Leader	765	Opposed

The **Great British Breakfast** programme featured an interview with **Steve Valdez-Symonds, Refugee and Migrants Director of Amnesty UK**. He began by suggesting that the Nationality and Borders bill was 'completely outrageous' and called on the government to 'fix the asylum system, not shut it down.' He claimed there were no safe, legal routes for those seeking asylum and said that refugee law specifically prohibited penalising people for crossing borders without prior permission. Mr Valdez-Symonds added that the government would become a 'pariah in the

international community' by turning its back on its obligations to those seeking asylum. Presenter Nana Akua put to him a point made by the home secretary, Priti Patel, that those crossing the Channel were coming from a safe territory, such as France. Mr Valdez-Symonds countered that those making the journey were not safe in France – and although the country took far more asylum seekers than the UK – a small proportion were not able to get into the asylum system and were therefore left 'in squalor', where they faced violence including from the police. Ms Akua asked why those aiming to come to the UK could not take the 'normal' approach and apply for asylum in this country while in France. She tried to suggest that the asylum seekers then had to pay £10,000 to cross the Channel, but before finishing her point, Mr Valdez-Symonds interrupted that it was not possible to claim asylum in the UK 'unless you get here first'. He posited that such rules had been in place for decades. This meant the only option was to try come across the Channel.

Ms Akua asked what he was proposing instead of the bill. Mr Valdez-Symonds suggested that it would be 'much more helpful' if people were able to claim asylum in the UK from France or other countries, rather than making a dangerous journey and putting money into the pockets of those who exploited them. Ms Akua suggested that entitlement to asylum was only applicable if there was permission be in the country and that those making the journey were coming without a legal right to be here. Mr Valdez-Symonds countered that the entitlement was there in international law and had been for decades, that those fleeing persecution has the right to seek and receive asylum in another country, including this one. He added that the UK received very few refugees, including from across the Channel. Ms Akua said she had 'looked at the rules' and they said that 'when you're in a safe country that's . . . the first port of call.' Mr Valdez-Symonds interrupted. He asked her to show him the rule, as he had studied and practiced this area of law for 'many, many years' and 'the rule that you have said does not exist.' Ms Akua repeated that she believed the rule was that asylum should be to the first country that was safe. Mr Valdez-Symonds disagreed, and asserted that the Refugee Convention made that clear, as otherwise, there would be no sharing of responsibility between nations, and the closest safe country to where people would be the one to take all the responsibility. He claimed that without such provisions, a country like the UK would not be obliged to take any refugees. He concluded that refugees sought asylum further afield, including in the UK, in places where they had family ties. Ms Akua thanked him for clarifying the rule.

Twenty minutes later, Ms Akua returned to the issue, noting that she had visited the government's asylum website. She suggested Mr Valdez-Symonds had been mistaken because there was a section headed 'Claim Asylum in the UK'. She said:

'So I don't know what he was talking about, but there is a way of doing it. It's on the website and, you know, to my knowledge, I see that there. So if he could clarify, that would be interesting.'

The next bill-related guest was **Alp Mehmet from Migration Watch UK**, who was interviewed as part of a feature on the **McCoy & Phillips** programme, at 3.13pm. Presenter Simon McCoy put it to Mr Mehmet that 'those seeking asylum are supposed to apply in the first free country they get to' and so 'they should never get as far as the UK, should they?' Mr Mehmet replied that, 'In theory they shouldn't, but they do'. He added that if the EU did its job properly at its external borders, such people would not reach as far as the northern shores of France. Mr Mehmet claimed that many of these 'asylum-seekers' were not strictly-speaking refugees under international law, but young men coming to the UK to seek a better life. He suggested that millions were in the same situation and then asserted he believed that most people in the UK would be opposed to them coming to the UK. Mr Mehmet said there was no question of those who genuinely qualified being granted asylum, but others should not be allowed in to the country simply by claiming asylum.

Co-presenter Alex Phillips then suggested to Mr Mehmet that the vast fees being paid for passage to people-traffickers suggested they weren't the poorest people from their country of origin, and that they were basically the middle-classes. Mr Mehmet said he didn't know if this were true, but that they were certainly 'strong young men with money in their pockets' to whom the traffickers were promising a better life. Simon McCoy asked about the prospect of sending asylum seekers to a third country for processing (potentially Rwanda) and asked if this was something he would welcome in principle. Mr Mehmet said he had nothing against the concept, but could see 'all sorts of practical difficulties.' He noted that this was an idea thought up by Tony Blair 20 years previously and he had been given 'short shrift' by the Brussels and other EU member states. He noted also that such a process would be expensive and questioned where the people involved would be sent back to their country of origin if they didn't qualify for asylum in the UK. He added that despite these problems, it doesn't really matter where people were accommodated while their cases were considered, so long as it was clean, safe, warm and they were receiving no ill-treatment.

Later in the same programme, Simon McCoy and Alex Phillips were joined by **Home Office Minister Chris Philp**. Ms Phillips noted that the proposed new rules had been 'very much welcomed by our viewers'. Mr Philp said he believed the asylum and immigration system 'is a broken system' and needed radical reform 'to get proper control of our borders and make sure people aren't entering the country illegally'. He said there needed to be a way to remove those without legal right to be in the UK in a reasonable way, and ensure that claims were considered fairly and quickly. He added that the government would not be turning its back on those in genuine need of protection, but this had to be done in a safe and legal way, not 'fuelled by dangerous illegal migration.'

Simon McCoy said suggested that such proposals had been heard before and asked how the new system would work in practice. Mr Philp outlined a range of new measures: additional



powers for the Border Force in terms of what could be done at sea; stiffer penalties for those entering illegally and for the people smugglers; the ability to declare inadmissible any who had entered illegally 'from a place like France' where they could have reasonably claimed asylum; and streamlining the domestic legal system. He said the 75 clauses in the bill would together 'fix this broken system.' Simon McCoy interrupted to ask what they were proposing to do at sea that differed from the current situation, in which those crossing were picked up by the UK Border Force or RNLI and taken to Dover. Mr Philp explained that the bill included powers to redirect a boat out of UK waters. He noted that other countries had done this in the past, including Australia, in a way which was compatible with international law. Mr McCoy suggested that, they would in reality be sent back to France, but the French would object. Mr Philp replied that those involved should not be leaving France in the first place because it was a safe country with a well-functioning asylum system. The UK's own asylum system was being changed to recognise that.

Mr Philp noted that there was currently no agreement in place with France, but added that 'another part of the jigsaw' was trying to deter the dangerous crossings 'organised by ruthless people smugglers' who had drawn guns on migrants on French beaches in recent days. He said that the British and French needed to work together to stop the traffic entirely. Mr McCoy concluded by asking if the UK had been in talks with Denmark about the use of an asylum processing centre in Rwanda. He asked who would happen if their claims were not successful, and who would pay for their application. Mr Philp said that the asylum and immigration rules had been changed a few months ago to lay the foundation for such a scheme, although for it to work practically it would require the agreement of a safe third country. He noted that Denmark was also considering a similar approach, despite the nation having 'a left of centre government.' He again said the Australian approach had acted as a deterrent, and would be implied in cases where people had entered the country clandestinely.

At 6.06pm **Dewbs & Co.** featured interviewees **Emma Revell from the Institute of Economic Affairs** and **Rear Admiral Chris Parry, former Commander of the Amphibious Task Group.** Presenter Michelle Dewberry began by noting that the new bill had been called 'inhuman and cruel' and asked Ms Revell if that was a fair description. Ms Revell agreed that it was to a certain extent and asserted that it was important to acknowledge the difference between failed asylum seekers and dangerous foreign criminals. She stated that asylum seekers needed to have a safe, legal way of getting to the UK – otherwise boat traffic would continue – and would benefit from the type of stability Britain could offer.

Ms Dewberry asked Rear Admiral Parry how the tally of more than 6,000 illegal crossings on unsafe boats this year alone could be stopped. He replied that it had to be accepted that – despite the views of some – the UK could not allow uncontrolled migration. He added that the new legislation would put an up-to-date legal framework in place, and that this would send the

message that the sovereign borders of the UK could not be crossed illegally, whether by air or sea. Ms Dewberry then asked Ms Revell how she would propose to stop the current unsafe crossings. She replied that they were incredibly expensive, and only used by people because they saw the crossing as their 'only hope.' She suggested granting more visas and then noted that asylum seekers once in the UK received only £37 a week – half the amount of a week's Jobseeker's Allowance – and were not allowed to work for the first year. She then asserted that many asylum seekers wanted to work, and pay their own way, but the current system prevented this. She added that this was 'peculiar' given that most people who objected to such incomers did so because they believed them to be a burden on the state. Ms Revell claimed that encouraging asylum seekers to work would help them integrate better and cost the tax payer less.

Ms Dewberry then asked Rear Admiral Parry about his personal experience of picking up migrants. He briefly said the goal had been to keep them safe at all times, then asserted that a possible solution to the current problems was co-operation between France, the UK and Belgium using latest technology in working to intercept boats as soon as they launched anywhere on the French border. Rear Admiral Parry added that the current Channel-crossing exodus was 'queue jumping' – something that Britons did not like. He concluded that the UK could not be a home for everybody. '

Ms Dewberry then asked Ms Revell what numbers of incomers would be tolerable. She replied that the quantities crossing the Channel were very small in comparison to the numbers coming into the UK each year from all across the world. She accepted that trying to establish how much immigration was acceptable was valid, but it was, 'also about what sort of country do we want to be?' Ms Revell asserted that she would rather live in a country open to the poorest and most in need of safety, and that the UK should thus be 'more open to asylum seekers, not less.' Ms Dewberry noted that Kent Council did not believe they could cope with current numbers because they were at record numbers and they showed no sign of slowing down. Ms Revell acknowledged the special pressures Kent was under, but repeated her belief that in the overall scheme of immigration numbers, the one crossing the Channel were quite small. She concluded by repeating that no-one wanted continuing migration by boat, but that the UK should be more open to asylum seekers so that dangerous Channel crossings were not seen as the only option.

At 8.04pm Colin Brazier, standing in as presenter of the **Andrew Neil** programme, interviewed **Tony Smith, Former Director General of UK Border Force**. Mr Brazier noted that new 'rules of engagement' for the Border force outlined in the Nationality and Borders Bill, allowed the use 'reasonable force'. Mr Smith replied that previously this had not been necessary and the main purpose of the Border Force in the Channel was to save lives, but he accepted there was now a need for proper powers to enable maritime intervention operations in the same way as other countries. In response to a further question, Mr Smith said it was hard to tell at the moment

whether the new bill would be sufficient but contained some 'very bold' measures. He claimed that few asylum seekers were being returned due to the UK's 'cumbersome bureaucratic system' which encouraged people-smugglers in France to recruit more people to attempt the dangerous crossing. Mr Smith suggested that there was a need to work with France to disrupt this business model. He warned it was important not to conflate that issue with the 'much bigger problem of the global refugee crisis.'

Mr Brazier referred to a Sunday Times report about laminated price lists of ways of getting to the UK being available in Turkey. He suggested a key issue also being addressed by the bill was that some of those making the crossing claimed to be minors (but were not) and they were then put in foster or care homes where they were a danger to the children there. Mr Smith accepted that age dispute cases were difficult and had 'haunted' the Border Force and the Asylum Directorate for a very long time. He explained that asylum seekers were often coached in how to fill in forms and tried to cheat the system by claiming to be a minor. They also often travelled without documents to conceal their identity and nationality, thus enhancing their application. He observed that because, at the moment, the UK was not really returning anybody 'success breeds success.' He added he wanted the new bill to disrupt the smuggling gangs and put them out of business.

Mr Brazier said that they had heard from a Border Force union official recently that the situation at Napier Barracks immigration facility was 'a tinderbox' with almost 'a mob mentality' among the young men detained there. Mr Smith replied the barracks were not properly suited to receive migrants in large numbers and added that there were issues of health and safety, both for the migrants and the officers charged with overseeing the processing centres. He wanted a much more solid reception facility to be established in Kent. He concluded by saying that he believed the bill would spark a real battle, particularly in the House of Lords, in terms of how the new proposals related to commitments under the 1951 Refugee Convention.

**Former UKIP and Brexit Party Leader Nigel Farage** appeared at 9.37pm on **Tonight Live with Dan Wootton**. Mr Wootton suggested that the new bill contained much that Mr Farage had been saying for months, especially in terms of the demographic profile of the migrants entering illegally via the Channel. Mr Farage suggested that the Home Secretary was 'paying lip service' to 'everything he'd been saying' for the last year when the mainstream media hadn't been covering the issue in the Channel. He questioned the idea that the new measures would lead to people going to jail for four years because prison were already full and claimed that The European Convention on Human Rights – still written into British law – would make this impossible. Mr Farage claimed that Priti Patel was 'saying tough things' and putting forward legislation in the hope that Parliament voted it down and she could then say it was not her fault. He suggested that crossings via the Channel were 'going off the charts' and noted he had seen new boats with a capacity of 70. Mr Farage alleged that these entrants to the UK were nearly all young males

aged between 18 and 30. They had left behind women and children, were 'not refugees in any classic sense of the term' and had arrived from 'a safe country called France.'

Mr Farage conceded that Ms Patel had said for the first time seriously that offending boats would be towed back across the Channel. He contended that such towing was the only solution, and pointed to the example of Australia in 2012, where migrant boats had been turned round and towed back to Indonesia. Mr Farage claimed that the scandal was that 60,000 people had entered the UK illegally and were now being put up, at tax payers' expense in four star hotels and private accommodation. He argued that Westminster didn't think this mattered, but to middle England it mattered hugely.

Mr Wootton suggested that aim of the bill was to reduce the risk of the asylum issue exploding into a massive story and scandal. Mr Farage replied that he was bored with government threats to send in the RAF and the Navy; Ms Patel talked tough often but delivered nothing and the Conservative party was stupid to believe her. He claimed that the government lacked the political will to deal with the problem and that Boris Johnson was 'wholly unconcerned' with legal or illegal migration. Mr Farage predicted that, by September, the asylum problem would be the 'biggest political story in our country.'

Mr Wootton noted that the Labour Party had said the new approach could break international law, and asked Mr Farage if this was correct. Mr Farage replied, 'Everything breaks international law.' He noted that following Brexit it would be assumed that the UK would be free of all the European institutions, but that, 'Boris didn't free us from the European Court of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, written into British law through the Human Rights Act.' He added that, 'we can't even get rid of terrorists because of the Human Rights Act', and that for as long we stay linked to European law there is 'actually very little we can do.' He concluded by conceding, 'those that say these proposals breach international law are right, because our exit from Europe has not been as complete as it needs to be.'

### **GB News summary of interviewee coverage**

GB News contained in its relevant interviews on July 6 a considerably wider breadth of opinion on the Nationality and Borders Bill than the BBC, which, as described in the previous section, showed a fundamental imbalance: a pro-bill backbench MP with four figures who believed that asylum seekers were poorly treated by the UK and who strongly opposed the new initiative on political and humanitarian rights grounds, together with a senior enforcement officer who was critical on perceived practical grounds.

In contrast, GB News carried a weighting in favour guests who either fully supported or broadly welcomed the bill's provisions, with four speakers (Alp Mehmet, Chris Philp, Rear Admiral Chris

Parry and Tony Smith) delivering 3,010 words between them, representing 57% of the total contributions.

Opposition to the bill was also prominent. Steve Valdez-Symonds from Amnesty UK and Emma Revell of the IEA were sharply critical of the bill in terms of how it would treat refugees, and from the perspective of believing that the UK had a bad track record in the treatment of asylum seekers which would grow worse under the new regime. They delivered a combined contribution of 1,484 words, or 28% of the total speaker wordcount.

Nigel Farage fell into a different class of opposition. He criticised the government for a bill which he believed was, in effect, cynical and unworkable, and would not be effective in stopping the influx of illegal immigrants crossing the Channel. Mr Farage contributed 765 words to the debate, or 15% of the total words spoken by invited guests.

Even though there were more GB News contributors in favour of the new bill, it also important to note that in the 18 hours monitored, GB News gave roughly the same amount of space to the pro-asylum seeker perspective as the BBC (1,484 words from speakers with this perspective on GB News, compared to 1,567 words on the BBC).

The seven invited guests on GB News were also able to outline their respective arguments at greater length and in more detail, receiving, on average 50% more airtime than the six guests who appeared in the BBC's output.<sup>27</sup> This represented a genuine range and depth of opinion

Furthermore, and as will be explained in more detail in the subsequent section, while neither broadcaster included live vox pops, GB News did also feature a range of opinions from the British public itself – both positive and negative on the issue – by way of correspondent reports and direct correspondence from the audience.

## 1.5 CONTENT ANALYSIS

---

This section explores in further depth the differences in approach to news coverage between GB News and the BBC. It covers all editorial mentions of the bill.

Both services must be 'impartial' by containing a 'wide range of significant views' as defined by Ofcom, their regulator.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> The seven invited guests on GB News spoke 704 words each on average, compared to 504 words each for the six speakers contributing to the BBC's coverage.

<sup>28</sup> f

In addition, the BBC Charter requires that its news service is impartial and of a high quality in keeping with its public service obligations (outlined in its first public purpose quoted in the introduction):

The BBC should provide duly accurate and impartial news, current affairs and factual programming to build people’s understanding of all parts of the United Kingdom and of the wider world. Its content should be provided to the highest editorial standards. It should offer a range and depth of analysis and content not widely available from other United Kingdom news providers, using the highest calibre presenters and journalists, and championing freedom of expression, so that all audiences can engage fully with major local, regional, national, United Kingdom and global issues and participate in the democratic process, at all levels, as active and informed citizens.

Transcripts of all items broadcast by the BBC and GB News on the Nationality and Borders Bill were analysed on a line-by-line basis<sup>29</sup> and all arguments, viewpoints, descriptions and questions – from all sources, including the invited guests, presenters and correspondents, or submissions from the audience – were classified.<sup>30</sup>

In total, 24 separate categories were identified and the number of words spoken on each distinct theme were tallied. They are detailed below. As there was a disparity in the overall amount of space awarded by each broadcaster to the Nationality and Borders story, a second calculation was made to show the relative prevalence of each of the 24 themes, as a proportion of each broadcaster’s total coverage of the story.

### Factual description of the bill’s provisions

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster’s Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	1,014	12.6%
GB News	1,549	7%

This category featured factual references to the Nationality and Borders bill and explanations of the specific provisions contained within it. These sequences tended take a neutral tone and served to provide audiences with an overview of the bill’s key intentions. Examples included:

*Today, the Nationality and Borders Bill entered Parliament with the promise of new Home Office powers to put the traffickers out of business, the power to deport people who arrive through illegal means or who travelled through a safe country, the power to force migrant boats out of British territorial waters and back into foreign ports, the power to process asylum seekers outside the United Kingdom. (Mark Easton, BBC Radio 4, Six O’Clock News, 6.19pm)*

*And we’re here today because of that new legislation that is being proposed today, the Nationality and Borders bill, which is going to cover immigration and asylum. Basically, it’s going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. So if it’s approved,*

<sup>29</sup> The full transcripts from both broadcasters are presented as Appendix I of this report

<sup>30</sup> When a particular speaker covered a number of separate points within the space of a contribution the component parts were divided accordingly – sometimes to the extent that individual sentences were split into one or more parts and placed into different categories.

*people could be imprisoned for up to four years, and that's up from six months previously. (Ellie Costello, GB News correspondent, 6.35am)*

As the data above show, GB News provided its audience with approximately 50% more factual description of the bill during the 18-hour survey interval. The broadcaster, especially in the interview with Tony Smith, Former Director General of UK Border Force, gave detailed coverage of the workings and aims of the proposed legislation. The corresponding BBC explanation made up proportionately more of their coverage, but was far less detailed.

**Description of the bill or arguments in favour of the bill from the government perspective**

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	1,010	12.6%
GB News	2,024	9.1%

This category included coverage of the provisions of the bill from the perspective of the Conservative government, the Home Office, or the home secretary Priti Patel. Key points were that ministers had said the draft legislation was designed to tackle ‘a broken asylum system’ and that the system, would be ‘firm but fair’ and ‘break the business model of people smuggling gangs.’

Both the BBC and GB News used similar descriptors in this aspect of their coverage, apparently taken predominantly from an article written by Priti Patel for the Daily Mail.<sup>31</sup> Similar points were also made at greater length by the two Conservative MPs who appeared during the day: Tom Hunt speaking on the BBC and Chris Philp who appeared on GB News, who both expanded on the points established by the Home Secretary. On the BBC, Mr Hunt’s contribution was directly challenged by the other guests as well as by presenter questions. Mr Philp had more undiluted space to present his explanation, thus giving viewers a clearer explanation of what was involved.

**Campaigners’ response/general criticism of the bill.**

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	732	9.1%
GB News	729	3.3%

This category included references to opponents of the bill from specific groups. In the BBC’s reporting, these were predominantly brief counterweights in bulletin items: the government position was outlined, followed by a short balancing statement as a ‘right of reply’ from either ‘campaigners’, ‘refugee groups’ or simply ‘critics’. For example:

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-9758693/PRITI-PATEL-sickening-trade-humans-vile-gangs-end.html>

*Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in future. (Newsreader Caroline Nichols, Radio 4 Today Programme, 6.30am)*

In a more substantive exchange, a correspondent report by Simon Jones for the BBC News Channel at 9.15am, mentioned that refugee groups were concerned that the bill would herald the creation of a two-tier immigration system, and noted specifically that the Refugee Council had described the bill as being ‘anti-refugee’ and ‘not fit for purpose.’

GB News also mentioned opponents of the bill. Their coverage gave more detailed explanations of the basis for opposition to the bill and were more specific in their naming of particular groups. Organisations mentioned included the Refugee Council, and the viewpoints of the Red Cross and The Law Society of England:

*Well, this bill is expected to get a lot of pushback from campaigners such as Red Cross and the Refugee Council. What they’re arguing is essentially that this is effectively a deflection. The problem with illegal migration isn’t what is being described by the Home Office. They’re saying that the UK doesn’t accept asylum applications made outside of the country. And so there aren’t actually legal routes for people that want to make that application to come here. There’s the UK Global Settlement Scheme, which only accepts 5,000 people and that actually was shut down in March 2020 due to Covid. So campaigners are saying that essentially there aren’t legal routes to come here. So it’s that policy, not actually what the Home Office is talking about, that is making it more likely that people are going to take those illegal routes to get to the UK. (Inaya Dolarin Iman, GB News correspondent, 1.25pm)*

*The Law Society, actually, have warned that the plans were likely to breach UK obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention. (Gloria De Piero, GB News Presenter, 1.25pm)*

There was also a brief, general criticism of the bill from the Head of Digital at GB News, Rebecca Hutson, who appeared on Tonight Live with Dan Wootton, when asked to name her ‘Great Briton’ and ‘Union Jackass’, she selected the Home Secretary for the latter:

*Priti Patel for the second week running for her heinous Nationality and Borders Bill, which will seek to make this an even more hostile environment for the most vulnerable people in the world.*

### **Factual information on the numbers making the crossing by small boats**

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster’s Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	537	6.7%
GB News	819	3.7%

Both GB News and the BBC explained to their audiences that there had been a rise in the numbers of migrants making the Channel crossing on small boats and provided figures to illustrate. Both broadcasters noted that over 6,500 people had made the journey so far in 2021, with 8,500 having crossed in 2020. For example:

*But so far this year more than 6,500 people have made the journey from France by boat. This month already we’ve seen 650 people. Just a bit of context though, the number of migrants arriving in the back of lorries has fallen dramatically during the pandemic. (Correspondent Simon Jones, BBC News Channel, 9.15am)*



*Last weekend, there were 300 people that crossed over. In June, it was a record breaking month: 2,000 people crossed over in the month of June. We did have some nice warm weather then. That tends to be when the crossings happen. So this summer, it could actually be a record if we do get – and I hope we do – a nice sunny July and August, we could see an increase in crossings coming over here. But today, nothing yet. (Correspondent Ellie Costello, GB News, Great British Breakfast, 6.35am)*

**The argument that asylum numbers are falling and the UK takes fewer asylum seekers than some EU countries.**

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	627	7.8%
GB News	425	1.9%

Both broadcasters aired the argument that although the numbers claiming asylum had doubled in the last 10 years, the figure was still less than half it had been 20 years ago and there were fewer currently claiming asylum in the UK than in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. Another point made was that the proportion of asylum seekers and migrants arriving on boats is very small compared to wider, legal migration. This argument received more space on the BBC, due in part to the repetition of a correspondent report by Daniel Sandford which aired first on Breakfast and was subsequently repeated four times more on the News Channel:

*Until the pandemic struck last year, the number of people claiming asylum in the UK had doubled since 2010. If you look back over the last two decades, the number of applicants was still less than half what it was 20 years ago. And the figure, including dependents, is significantly below the numbers in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. (Correspondent, BBC1 Breakfast, 6.04am)*

GB News correspondent Inaya Folarin Iman put forward similar points, but with a greater amount of detail:

*But I also think that, you know, I do understand a lot of the campaigners who are critical of many of these proposals as well. In terms of the . . . the numbers that are actually applying for asylum, we are far, far behind the numbers that Germany, France, Spain or even Greece receive. I mean, Germany last year received about 150,000 and we received about 30,000. And actually we're 17th in Europe in terms of the number of asylum claims. (Inaya Folarin Iman, GB News, 4.08pm)*

**The argument that those arriving are young men and are potentially not refugees, but economic migrants**

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	53	0.7%
GB News	2,348	10.6%

The demographics of those arriving by boat received only one brief mention during the BBC's coverage, with two brief contributions amounting to 53 words on the issue made by Conservative MP Tom Hunt during the debate on BBC2' Politics Live. He said:

*And they are, overwhelmingly, young men in their 20s and 30s, by the way. They are. Overwhelmingly.*

And later in the discussion:

*But actually there will be some who are, frankly, economic migrants. How can you say with confidence that every single one of them is . . . is a refugee fleeing you don't know that. You don't know that.*

On GB News, this argument was far more prevalent, with presenters, correspondents and guests all raising the point.

*You used the right wording when you said 'illegal migrants', you know, you can't just rock up in any old country and say, 'I want to live here now. It's better than my own.' There are grounds upon which you should make a case to say that, 'I need asylum, refugee status', so on and so forth. And I think any country has the right to protect its borders. And there will be people coming over from war-torn countries, you know, places in the Middle East, from, you know, countries that suffer extreme poverty. And you can't blame them for saying, 'I want to rebuild a better life.' But, you know, a lot of the people who are coming out of these countries are paying traffickers huge amounts of money who are, essentially, it's a huge international criminal network, usually tied to things like terrorism, drugs cartels, all sorts. You know, these aren't nice people. And they're paying vast sums of money. These aren't the poorest from those countries. Those aren't the most vulnerable. In fact, it's basically the country's middle classes. And you've got African presidents now, like Akufo-Addo of Ghana saying, 'Actually this needs to change. We're . . . we're losing young men who we need to work in our country and build up our economy, people with skills, people, you know, who could be our doctors, our lawyers, our teachers.' Instead, they're paying money to traffickers and getting on boats because they're told that there's this amazing life and all these opportunities and the reality when a lot of people get here isn't . . . isn't that. (Alex Phillips, GB News Presenter, 11.40am)*

*I mean, 74% of the people that are travelling are actually men between the ages of 18 and 34. So oftentimes people argue that that isn't necessarily the most vulnerable group, we're not talking about elderly people a lot of the time, we're not talking about women and children. The overwhelming majority are men. And if you look at many of the countries, the top countries is: Iran, Albania, Eritrea – these aren't necessarily the countries that people imagine are experiencing the most difficulty. Absolutely those countries are facing political instability and challenges, but we're not necessarily always talking about Syria and places like that that are having immediate war-torn situations at the moment. So I think that actually, when we look at a lot of the statistics, it doesn't necessarily stack up to all the time these individuals that are incredibly vulnerable from . . . from war-torn countries making this journey. Oftentimes it is young men paying thousands and thousands of pounds, which you often do wonder where they, often, get that money from. (Inaya Folarin Iman, GB News Correspondent 12.06pm)*

*The fact is that the vast majority of those who are seeking asylum are not, strictly speaking, refugees in the way that our laws and international obligations allow for. And that is really the reason why so many of these young people – and they are mostly young men, as we've just heard – seek to come over here for a better life. You said to me last time we spoke, Simon, 'Why shouldn't they?' Or rather, having said, 'Why shouldn't they come here for a better life?' you said, 'Why not indeed.' I agree. The fact is that there are millions of people in this situation. Are we saying that all of them should be able to come here if they so choose? I think that, quite rightly, most people in this country would say, 'No, they should not.' And there's no question of those who qualify for asylum to be granted asylum. And we do, we have granted thousands of people over the last few years, asylum and long may that continue. But what we must not do is allow this process, really, of people crossing the channel in ever greater numbers, likely to be something about 20,000 this year at this rate, for them simply to say, 'I claim asylum' and know that they're going to be able to stay here. That is wrong. (Alp Mehmet, Migration Watch, 3.13pm)*

## The argument that asylum seekers are leaving from a safe European country to enter the UK

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	350	4.4%
GB News	505	2.3%

A recurrent argument was that those crossing the Channel had passed through a safe European country – usually France – to reach British shores. On the BBC this aspect of the Nationality and Borders bill was mentioned briefly in neutral descriptions of the planned provisions, but also deployed as an argument by Conservative MP Tom Hunt in the debate on BBC2's Politics Live:

*Well, I hope so. I hope so. But ultimately, I think if you've . . . if you've made the conscious decision to leave another . . . because they're coming from a safe European country, another safe European country, France, and you've decided to break UK immigration laws, come over here. I think that you should be held to account for it. I mean, ultimately, these are individuals who are coming from France. They're not coming directly . . . from a war-torn country.*

The point was also used as a devil's advocate question by Shaun Ley in his interview of Tim Naor Hilton of Refugee Action on the BBC News Channel at 4.24pm.

*What a lot, what a lot of people will not understand is what can be the objection to saying that if you pass through a safe country, in other words, a country is deemed safe internationally, not a war zone, but a country, let's say, like Italy or France or Germany, that you shouldn't claim asylum first there rather than waiting until you come to this country? People won't understand why that is an unreasonable thing to say?*

On GB News the same point was put as a question to Steve Valdez-Symonds of Amnesty UK by presenter Nana Akua at 6.35am:

*Steve, you say that they're turning their back on the obligations for others, but one of Priti Patel's points was that they shouldn't come from a safe place. So, if they come from somewhere like France, which is a safe place, why do they then need to come to the UK? I mean, surely that's a reasonable thing to say? They've come they've left where they are, they've come to France. Why are they now getting a boat to the UK where they're already on safe territory?*

And later in the morning, when presenter Darren Caffrey put it to his co-host Mercy Muroki that she might be 'a fan' of the new legislation, she said 'fan' might be a strong word, but provided audiences with her own perspective on the matter, which used the 'safe country' argument:

*I support having stronger measures to tackle illegal immigration. You know, of course, we don't need to get into the fact, yes, they're vulnerable people and of course, they're flee-- . . . they're fleeing, okay, France often, which I think part of the argument is, if you're coming from a safe country then you don't have much a convincing case to be risking your life to come to England, if you're coming from France. (Mercy Muroki, GB News, 10.27am)*

## Opposition to argument that immigrants should remain in the first safe country they reach

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	37	0.5%
GB News	215	1%

A rebuttal of the previous point, that the Refugee Convention does not require asylum seekers to stay in the first safe country they reach was aired by both broadcasters, although only marginally on the BBC, when political activist Ash Sarkar attempted to contest the point as raised by Conservative MP Tom Hunt in a fragmentary exchange on BBC2's Politics Live:

*That's not immigration rules . . . you don't have to stay in the first safe country. You don't have to stay in the first safe country.*

Although, as mentioned in the previous section, the 'first safe country' argument was presented as a devil's advocate question by Shaun Ley to Tim Naor Hilton of Refugee Action on the BBC News Channel at 4.24pm, Mr Hilton did not counter the point directly in his response.

The argument was refuted at greater length and more robustly on GB News Great British Breakfast by Steve Valdez-Symonds from Amnesty UK:

*I'm sorry. Please show me that rule, because I have not only studied this area of law, I've practised it for many, many years. The rule that you have said does not exist. The immigration rules are there on the website. You can read them. The rules in international law sit at the Refugee Convention. So, yes, please, take me through the rules that you're referring to and I'll happily go through them with you. It's perfectly clear what the rules are . . . No, it is not the rule. And, indeed, the Refugee Convention makes clear that that is not the, rule because otherwise what would happen? We would not have a sharing of responsibility. Responsibility would always fall, wouldn't it, on one poor particular country that just happened to be closest to where people have to flee from. Countries like this one presumably would never receive people seeking asylum because, mercifully, France is not in a situation of torturing its citizens and needing people to flee from it. But we don't have that rule, because the responsibility is shared and some people do, very few as it happens, but some people do seek asylum further afield, including here, where, indeed, many have family and community where they wish to be safe with. (Steve Valdez-Symonds, Amnesty UK, GB News, 6.35am)*

## The plight and experience of asylum seekers/poor conditions in asylum detention centres.

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	848	10.6%
GB News	352	1.6%

The BBC devoted proportionally more airtime to this theme, perhaps unsurprising given the weighting towards pro-refugee guests. For example, David Linden from the SNP talked of the inhumane conditions at Napier Barracks in the discussion on BBC2's Politics Live, while activist Ash Sarkar, a guest talked about 'deeply traumatised' people who had fled famine and war. There

was, however, also a degree of overlap between the opposing perspectives on this argument, with those in support of the new government measures also touching on this theme. For example, BBC1 Breakfast reported on Priti Patel's Daily Mail article:

*Priti Patel says that she heard at the weekend there was a family trying to get across from France. They were forcibly separated by people smugglers, who forced the parents at gunpoint on to one boat. They were told their two young daughters would be on the next boat. But the parents haven't seen the daughter's since. Priti Patel says she wants to see an end to stories like this. (Simon Jones, BBC Breakfast, 8.08am)*

On GB News there appeared broad agreement across the various perspectives that the cross-Channel journey was dangerous, as observed by correspondent Inaya Folarin Iman.

*I think it's a very difficult one, obviously. I think people from all sides of the argument don't want people taking that incredibly perilous journey.*

While presenter Michelle Dewberry made a similar point against critics of the bill:

*Critics say the plans are inhumane. Well, personally, I disagree. What is inhumane is people being trafficked across a very dangerous crossing and very sadly losing their life and anything that can stop that should surely be seriously considered.*

### Focus on People Smuggling Gangs and illegality

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	542	6.7%
GB News	2,546	11.5%

Both broadcasters carried content that focused specifically on the illegality of the people-smuggling operations, although in the BBC's coverage – aside from a number of very brief mentions in the neutral description of the bill's provisions – it mainly fell to Conservative MP Tom Hunt to make clear arguments on this this aspect:

*Every single illegal immigrant who gets into this country and is seen to stay in this country encourages more people to try. And that risks more of them losing their lives. And it feeds this evil trade in human life. The message needs to go out, 'Do not try to come here illegally because you will not be successful.'* (Tom Hunt, Conservative Party, BBC2 Politics Live, 9.37am)

GB News, by contrast, focused much more heavily on this theme. A location report by correspondent Ellie Costello, subsequently repeated at various points during the afternoon, focused on the 'huge business' of people trafficking, noting the prices being charged for a seat – '£4000, £5000, sometimes even £10,000' – and referring to a study by a French researcher looking at increased numbers of people being packed into cheap, unseaworthy dinghies, from an average of 7 in 2018 to 16 at present.

At 10.27am presenter Mercy Muroki expressed her opinion on the criminal trade and its impact on migrants more generally:

*But I just think, yes, we need to crack down on illegal immigration. Yes, because of the fact it's a criminal, you know, trade, these people smugglers, but also because I think the more we the less we control migration, the flow of migration to this country and particularly illegal migration, the more people in society build up resentment against migrants, build up a resentment against illegal migrants.*

And 11.40am presenter Alex Phillips echoed this point:

*I do think, though, this has to be tackled because, you know, people trafficking is a very serious crime and people die, people die, and they're giving thousands of pounds to hardened criminals to make that passage. And so something has to be done. You can't just ignore it. You can't say and actually, the problem is, of course, if you're not tough about this and say, 'Look, if you get here illegally, you're not going to be legally allowed to remain,' then actually the people traffickers have got an incentive to carry on and more people, you know, will continue making perilous voyages. And a country has to manage its borders.*

Presenter Colin Brazier, standing in as host of the Andrew Neil show at 8.04pm, discussed the business model of the smuggling gangs in some detail, noting that criminal gangs in Turkey were presenting laminated price sheets to potential clients wishing to gain entry to the UK and schooling them in how to present themselves to the authorities.

### The need for safe, legal asylum avenues to be put in place

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	471	5.9%
GB News	1932	8.7%

The necessity for (or current lack of) safe and legal avenues for asylum seekers to enter Britain and lodge their claim was first put by the SNP's David Linden during the debate on Politics Live who said:

*I think that we've got to understand why it is that people sometimes are making these, you know, really dangerous journeys, perhaps because there are no safe and legal routes to the UK. (David Linden, SNP, Politics Live, 9.37am)*

This argument was expanded upon by activist and refugee campaigner Ash Sarkar in the same discussion:

*I'm saying expand the number of legal and safe avenues for asylum seekers to come here and lodge their claims when they're in this country. The fact is, is that most asylum claims don't even come to this country. And people who do want to come to this country, it's usually for reasons of language, familiarity, or they've already got a support network or family here. And what's going on with these policies is that they push people out of those safe and legal routes and into the arms of the people traffickers. So if we want to have a conversation based on reality where we agree, we don't want people traffickers and people who profit off human misery to be able to exploit poor and desperate people - that means expanding safe and legal routes. (Ash Sarkar, Novara Media, Politics Live, 9.37am)*

The point received more space on GB News. It formed the basis of an extended discussion between presenter Nana Akua and Steve Valdez-Symonds, the latter spending 332 words of

his 778 word interview making points specifically on the lack of safe legal asylum routes, including:

*There are no safe and legal routes for these people, just as there are generally no safe and legal routes for many people who must flee persecution. That is why refugee laws specifically prohibit penalising people for doing what they need to do, which is crossing borders without having permission in advance . . . with respect, there is no opportunity to claim asylum in this country unless you get here first. Those are this country's rules. They've been this country's rules for some decades now. It is not possible to claim asylum in the UK unless you get here. And there are no rules permitting you to make any journey for the purpose of coming here to claim asylum. So the only thing that's left are journeys like these, journeys which are not permitted, but they are the only means that you have to make the thing that you are entitled to do, which is claim asylum, but you must get here first. (Steve Valdez-Symonds, GB News Great British Breakfast, 6.35am)*

And GB News correspondent Inaya Folarin Iman put the argument from campaigners succinctly in two afternoon appearances, notably bringing up the issue of the pausing of the UK's Global Resettlement Scheme – a factor not raised at all by the BBC:

*Actually, if you look at it, there are no legal routes for asylum seekers to actually get into Britain. So, for example, you cannot apply for asylum outside of the UK. And the only scheme that is available, or one of the only schemes, which is a Global Resettlement Scheme, actually was shut down in March 2020 due to Covid. So actually, many people are arguing, particularly the campaigners, that the reason that many people are taking those illegal journeys is not just because of the people smugglers sending a narrative and expressing this measure that is convincing them. But it's actually very difficult for people to actually come to the UK without taking these routes. So that's the argument on the other side. (Inaya Folarin Iman, GB News, De Piero & Halligan, 2.46pm)*

### UK cutting international aid budget as a cause of migration

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	131	1.6%
GB News	0	0%

BBC2's Politics Live included a brief exchange in which the SNP's David Linden argued that a reason for people making the perilous crossing was the UK's cutting of foreign aid. Conservative Tom Hunt countered this point:

*DAVID LINDEN: You spoke about compassion. So if the UK is so focussed on compassion and people are fleeing countries because of famine and starvation, why is the UK government cutting the international aid budget and nutrition projects then?*

*TOM HUNT: Well, I think there's unprecedented pulls on the public purse at the moment. And, and I think that when we talking about it, we're already giving more money than virtually any other comparable country in the world, international aid. But I think, when there's unprecedented pulls on the public purse, I think prioritising domestic spend, school places, hospitals, I think is the right thing to do. And I support it.*

No comparable argument was made by any contributor or correspondent on GB News.

## The need for bilateral agreements between Britain and France or Belgium/The impact of Brexit

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	958	11.9%
GB News	141	0.6%

The BBC focused heavily on the necessity for cooperation between the UK and France, with the issue forming the foundation of the interview with John Vine, former Chief Inspector of Borders on Radio 4's PM. Mr Vine spoke about the Australian policy of boat 'pushbacks', but cautioned:

*But it will only work if there's some arrangement with the French. We can't return a boat to France without the French authorities, I suppose, taking possession of the boats and the people on it. (John Vine, BBC Radio 4, PM, 5.51pm)*

This was also a recurrent theme in correspondent analysis throughout the day. Simon Jones reported on BBC1 Breakfast, that 'the big problem' with plans to return migrant boats was that 'after Brexit there is no agreement in place to do this with any EU country.' He reiterated this point on the News Channel at 9.15am.

*The big problem is though that after Brexit, there is currently no agreement in place for this to happen. There used to be something called the Dublin regulation. Now, the government said it wasn't really working, but it did allow them to return some migrants. Now, since Brexit, the government has been negotiating with individual countries trying to draw up bilateral agreements but as far as we are aware, so far, the 6,500 who have arrived by boat so far this year not a single one has been returned to an EU country because there simply isn't the deal in place to do this.*

On the Radio 4 Six O'Clock News, Mark Easton noted that 'Without reciprocal agreements in place after Brexit, Priti Patel has been unable to deport a single one of the migrants her department has deemed inadmissible.' He concluded:

*But these powers require the agreement of other countries to make them work. And while negotiations continue behind the scenes, few deals have yet been struck. It is perhaps the paradox of Brexit that taking control of your borders requires more international co-operation, not less. (Mark Easton, BBC Correspondent, Breakfast, 6.19pm)*

The same line about this 'Brexit paradox' was also used in a slightly different report broadcast on the BBC News Channel at 5.20pm and 7.48pm.

On GB News, less space was devoted to the need for bilateral arrangements, although it did emerge briefly in an exchange between presenter Simon McCoy and Conservative MP Chris Philp. Mr Philp noted that 'a lot of work' was being done with the French, and that they had stopped around 5,000 people making the crossing so far and that the UK government was supporting them financially, but 'a lot more needs to be done over in France as well'. Mr McCoy suggested 'The French are not going to take that?' In response, Mr Philp reiterated his point about the two nations working together to 'stop the traffic entirely.'



The 'Brexit paradox' as characterised by the BBC's Mark Easton was not raised by GB News. Conversely Nigel Farage, interviewed by Dan Wootton, stated that the problem in enforcing the new provisions was that, post-Brexit, the UK was still tied to European institutions:

*Everything breaks international law. When you continue you see, Brexit, we thought we'd be free of all the European institutions. But what Boris didn't free us from was the European Court of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, written into British law through the Human Rights Act. You know, she talks about stopping the boats, sending people back, deporting people. We can't even get rid of terrorists, which takes years because of the Human Rights Act. All the while we stay linked to European law, there is actually very little we can do. So those that say these proposals breach international law are right, because our exit from Europe has not been as complete as it needs to be. (Nigel Farage, Former UKIP/Brexit Party Leader, GB News, Tonight Live With Dan Wootton, 9.37pm)*

### Discussion of whether asylum claims could be processed in another safe country

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	247	3.1%
GB News	992	4.5%

The proposal that asylum claims could be in a third country was put by presenter Evan Davis to John Vine, former Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration on Radio 4's PM at 5.51pm. Mr Vine noted that the government of Australia had paid the government of Papua New Guinea to set up camps in the country for asylum processing, but raised a number of concerns about the logistics of such an undertaking, noting the problems for the UK government of transferring people to places such as the Ascension Islands which are 'a long, long way away.'

The idea was discussed at greater length on GB News during an interview with Alp Mehmet from Migration Watch UK. Presenter Simon McCoy talked about negotiations with the Danish government to send asylum seekers to Rwanda for processing. Mr Mehmet said he was not against the idea in principle, although in his previous experience working as an immigration officer, he could see 'all sorts of practical difficulties' with such a proposal.

*When it comes to the practicalities, well, it's expensive. It's going to be dealing with people at far removed from, from this country. And in the end, if they don't qualify for asylum, what do we do with them then? Do we send them back to the country that they came from? The last a safe country that they went through? Do we send them back to their own countries that they originate from? So I can see all sorts of problems, although in principle, where you accommodate people while you consider their cases, it doesn't really matter where that is, so long as it's clean, it's safe, it's warm, and, indeed, they're not in any way being ill-treated. (Alp Mehmet, Migration Watch UK, GB News, McCoy & Phillips 3.13pm)*

Mr McCoy put a similar question to Conservative MP Chris Philp later in the programme, who explained the Government position at some length:

*Well, the bill . . . well, in fact, we changed the asylum rules, the immigration rules a few months ago to lay the foundations for something like this and the bill makes further provision. Clearly, it requires, for it to work practically, it requires agreement with a third country who . . . a safe third country, who would consider the asylum claim and of course, agree in the event the asylum*

*claim is not successful, not to send the person to anywhere that would be unsafe. That requires agreement with a third country. So we're sort of at the beginning, the beginning of that road? It's a road that Denmark, as you said, are looking to travel down as well. Interestingly, Denmark has a left of centre government, yet they are still, like us, looking to do this. Other countries have done it in the past. Australia did it for a period of time about five or six years ago, and again it's designed to act as a deterrent. It'd only be applied in cases where someone had entered the country clandestinely, without authorisation, from a safe place where they could reasonably have claimed asylum, like France. It wouldn't be applied on a blanket basis, and it would be designed as a deterrent to stop people making these dangerous and unnecessary journeys. (Chris Philp, Conservative Party, GB News, McCoy & Phillips 5.34pm)*

### Alternate solutions to the problems in the English Channel and lack of safe routes into the UK

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	81	1%
GB News	642	2.9%

On the BBC News Channel, Tim Naor Hilton from Refugee Action, outlined alternate proposals for tackling the issue of illegal crossings of the Channel.

*So, you know, we're calling for the government to establish systems of humanitarian visas, to increase routes of family reunion and to commit to a resettlement programme, a refugee resettlement programme, of 10,000 people a year in order to meet our international obligations, because right now our standing on the international stage is shrinking. We are not stepping up and taking our playing our role in helping people who are seeking safety and protection from war, human rights abuses and persecution. (Tim Noar Hilton, Refugee Action, BBC News Channel, 4.24pm)*

GB News devoted more space to possible solutions, including presenter Alex Phillips giving her personal view:

*I mean, on a broader scale, when it comes to immigration, I'd like to see something a bit more akin to the Australian points-based system where we can work sector by sector and look where our need is. At the moment, we've got coming up to a million vacancies. You know, we've got a special visa now for international scientists. I think that's a great move. We're clearly going to need to bring in workers for, you know, the health sector, for hospitality, you know, arguably for construction work again.*

And at 6.06pm, Rear Admiral Chris Parry, spoke at some length about the possibility of the issues of migrant crossings being solved using existing technologies:

*There is the technology, it does exist. We can scan the whole of the French border. And as soon as those boats go in the water, if the French are doing their job properly, they should be intercepting them well before they get out to sea. So what I would like to see, based on my experience, is a cooperative enterprise between France and Belgium and Britain to make sure that nobody actually gets in the water. The technology, as I said, exists. It just needs the organisation and the surveillance assets to be able to do that. Otherwise, people will continue to risk their lives, there's no question about that. (Rear Admiral Chris Parry, former Commander of the Amphibious Task Group, GB News, Dewbs & Co. 6.06pm)*

### Political frustrations and the asylum issue

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	219	2.7%
GB News	853	3.8%

BBC Correspondent Mark Easton said on the Radio 4 Six O'Clock News that,

*There is political frustration at the apparent impotence of the Home Office to deal with the people smugglers bringing their desperate human cargo into the United Kingdom.*

He expanded on this point on the News Channel in a package first broadcast at 5.20pm and repeated at 8.24pm

*Well, this, I think, really is a response to some deep political frustration in the Home Office. Priti Patel, of course, has committed herself to taking back control of Britain's borders after Brexit. But almost daily, we're seeing those dinghies pulling up into Tug Haven in Dover and that, each day, each migrant that walks up the ramp is, in a sense, a sort of political humiliation for the home secretary. And there is a real determination to do something to take on the people smugglers who are bringing over their desperate human cargo.*

On GB News, correspondent Inaya Folarin Iman said at 3.13pm that the issue had mired the Conservative Party for over a decade:

*Under Theresa May, she had the hostile environment policy, which was trying to prevent illegal immigrants from accessing public services. And when it comes to legal migration as well, they've had this promise for tens of thousands they've not been able to actually fulfil that. So I think it's going to be very tough for them, regardless of if this policy is actually practically implementable.*

In another appearance, at 4.08pm, she gave a similar analysis but added her own personal perspective:

*And I personally wish that Priti Patel would really level with the public about what's actually possible, what's realistic to expect in terms of the numbers and what can actually be done about it, instead of all the talk.*

### **Acknowledgement of asylum and immigration being divisive issues and difficult to solve**

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	0	0%
GB News	340	1.5%

Only GB News referred to the asylum issue being a divisive issue among the British public, primarily in introductory sequences, for example:

*It's always a fraught topic and one which evokes passions on both sides of the argument. Well, here at GB News, we don't shy away from difficult conversations and exploring all perspectives. (Alex Phillips, Presenter, GB News, McCoy & Phillips, 3.13pm)*

Or in concluding statements by correspondents:

*So at the moment, this is just proposed legislation, it's going to be debated in the House of Commons today, but clearly a very fraught, very emotional, divisive issue here in Dover. (Ellie Costello, Correspondent, GB News, De Piero & Halligan, 12.06pm)*

There was no overt reference in the BBC's reporting to asylum and immigration being divisive issues in the country at large.

### The Labour Party perspective

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	33	0.4%
GB News	177	0.8%

Labour's perspective on the Nationality and Borders bill was given very little space by either broadcaster. There were just two brief mentions across the BBC's output: headlines on the BBC News Channel at 2.25pm said that the government hoped that the overhaul of asylum rules will deter migrant Channel crossings, 'but Labour says the move potentially breaks international law.' The Radio 4 Six O'Clock News provided listeners with a similar formulation, 'But Labour said the proposals could break international law.'

GB News provided slightly more detail. Ellie Costello, on Great British Breakfast reported, 'Well, Labour has already said that they will oppose the bill. Their shadow home secretary, Nick Thomas-Symonds, says it's unconscionable', and there were further brief mentions of Labour having already said they oppose the bill. The point was also raised in a question from Dan Wootton to Nigel Farage, 'Labour says this policy could break international law, does it?'

### Location descriptions of Dover

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	27	0.0%
GB News	1,226	5.5%

Both broadcasters despatched correspondents to Dover to provide location reports. Simon Jones, in items on BBC Breakfast and the News Channel told viewers simply that any arrivals were unlikely due to the wet and windy weather, and presenters briefly commented on the 'blustery' and 'blowy' conditions.

By contrast, Ellie Costello on GB News set the scene at some length:

*Good morning, yes, from a very cold and a very windy Dover Port this morning. You might be able to see the sea is really rough today, you can see the waves crashing against the coast. I don't think we're going to be seeing any dinghies out on the Channel today. This is the strait just behind me. This is where Border Force vessels and lifeboats usually bring in people that they've rescued from dinghies. And I can see two Border Force vessels there. They haven't even gone out today. I assume the sea is too rough for crossing. So not a lot to see here in Dover today with*

*the conditions the way they are. (Ellie Costello, Correspondent, GB News, Great British Breakfast, 6.06am)*

She gave similar descriptions during later reports, and the total word count for this aspect of coverage was bolstered by one of her subsequent packages being repeated on a number of occasions during the afternoon.

### **Reported opinions from the public or impact on communities, including the soliciting of audience views**

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	0	0%
GB News	3,185	14.3%

Neither broadcaster included any direct interviews or vox pops from members of the public or 'ordinary' people. However, GB News did carry frequent and sustained discussion of public opinion on the issue, including both reported opinions and direct communications from its audience, who were regularly invited to submit their views.

On Great British Breakfast, reporter Ellie Costello spoke about her difficulties of securing interviews with people who were willing to talk on camera:

*And this is a big issue for people that are living here, especially down by the docks. I was here a few weeks ago and lots of people were talking to me down on the street about how they feel watching these . . . these boats come in every day with people that Border Force and lifeboats have saved that morning. People were happy to speak to me off record, but it was really difficult to get people on camera. But this is a huge issue for people down here, a contentious issue and a very divisive one, too. (Ellie Costello, Correspondent, GB News, Great British Breakfast, 8.22am)*

Later, Ms Costello elaborated further in an appearance on Brazier & Muroki, detailing how she had spoken to a woman who had seen a boat pull up on the Deal coast, 'filled with men' and had found it 'quite distressing'. The woman had said that she was sympathetic to refugees if they are here with their families to make a better life, but the experience had shaken her. Ms Costello balanced this with an account of another lady she had spoken to who worked in a café with a man who had come from Syria who had created a new life with his family, pays his taxes and is a fully-fledged member of society that contributes to his local community.

In the same programme, presenter Mercy Muroki read an email from a viewer:

*I've just had an email here from Sue who said – this is in relation to the government tightening immigration controls, particularly for illegal migration and asylum, bringing in that Nationality and Borders Bill later, and Sue says, 'My husband had to have a job secured and a work visa renewed annually and a certain amount of money or a sponsor to enter this country from a commonwealth country in the 60s. And he considered open borders crazy.' She goes on to say he is now passed, sadly, but he voted UKIP in 2015. Erm . . . you know, it goes to show, I think – and this is something I relate with when people tell me things like this, because the same thing happened to my mum who lived in this country for years and years and years, yes, from a*

Commonwealth country. But the amount of hoops she had to jump through to prove that she was entitled to live in this country as much as a European who just happened to arrive onto British shores that day was insane, the amount of money she had to spend sort of going through the system. And so when people say, you know . . . actually it's about a sense of fairness. You know, there are a lot of people who aren't . . . aren't from this country, and who think open borders are crazy, because we just think, you know, what we want is not just for everybody to come in. We don't want you to make it easier for us. We just want a fair immigration system. (GB News, 10.58am)

In a package at 4.08pm Simon McCoy and Alex Phillips read out a number of audience emails on the asylum theme, all broadly supportive of the government's policy or stricter rules.<sup>32</sup>

*SIMON McCOY: Inaya, thank you very much for that. Well, a lot of you getting in touch on this, a lot of emails coming in. Simon says, 'I absolutely agree that something needs to be done. And the proposal made by the home secretary is the only way' he says, 'we need to stop these economic migrants coming and putting a strain on our already swollen services.'*

*ALEX PHILLIPS: Margaret says, 'My view is and has always been that the migrants should be turned back instead of facilitated to arrive. Most of them are healthy young men who should be staying in their own countries to help their own people. We have no more room in this country. We need to first settle those already here legitimately.'*

*SIMON McCOY: Emily emailed. 'We cannot turn children away who are genuinely looking for a better life, but we cannot continue to take unskilled adults when they've already crossed through a safe country.'*

*ALEX PHILLIPS: John says, 'Anyone coming into this country by dinghy are illegal immigrants and therefore should not be allowed to enter and because they've committed a crime by doing so, they should then have their claim rejected. The problem is that they need to know this before they consider paying traffickers thousands of pounds.'*

### Criticism of the bill from a UKIP/Brexit Party perspective

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	0	0%
GB News	672	3%

The BBC primarily framed the debate as being the Conservative proposals on the one hand, being attacked by refugee campaigners/activists on the other. GB News broadened the range of opinion to include criticisms of the government from a UKIP/Brexit Party. GB News correspondent Inaya Dolarin Iman, herself a former Brexit Party candidate, raised this perspective in a discussion on the McCoy & Phillips programme:

*So these are very tough measures, but obviously there are critics of it, you know, some people on the different side of the argument. I mean, people have argued that . . . who want tough measures are saying that this is all talk and that they've had 10 years and it's just something that's not really going to be actually practical. (Inaya Dolarin Iman, GB News correspondent, 1.25pm)*

<sup>32</sup> Some of the points raised in these emails overlap with some of the previous categorisations, however, historically News-watch has categorised vox pops and other contributions from members of the public separately in its surveys, dating back to the now defunct 'Listeners' Letters' segments on Saturday editions of Today, and on Friday editions of PM.

At 9.37pm former UKIP and Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage – as is analysed in detail in the interview section above – discussed the bill in an interview on Tonight Live with Dan Wootton. He made numerous criticisms of the home secretary, and made points such as that the bill’s proposal of putting migrants in prison for four years was laughable. Overall, he claimed that Priti Patel was ‘posing, saying tough things’ but ultimately delivering nothing.

### The asylum system is at breaking point and there are too many immigrants

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster’s Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	0	0%
GB News	223	1%

Two points were made on GB News concerning infrastructural pressures on Kent. Rear Admiral Chris Parry in a two-way interview with Rear Admiral Chris Parry, former Commander of the Amphibious Task Group said to presenter Michell Dewberry:

*But also they’ll continue to queue-jump. Let’s face it, these people who are paying to come across the Channel are queue jumping, they’re not in the formal official system. And we hate we Brits hate queue jumpers, don’t we? We don’t like people jumping the queue, we like people to take their turn. And I think something that has to be answered is how much migration is actually tolerable in a society before the infrastructure starts to creak a bit? I think if you ask people in Kent right now, they’re feeling that. And we have to establish what levels of control that we put on the numbers of migrants coming across the channel, either legally or illegally. We can’t be home to everybody. It’s as simple as that.*

In turn, Michelle Dewberry used a similar point as a devil’s advocate question when interviewing Emma Revell from the Institute of Economic Affairs. She replied that the number of asylum seekers making the crossing was small and that ‘we should be more open to asylum seekers, not less.’

*Well, hang on there, Emma, because, I mean, you’re saying it’s quite small in the grand scheme of things, but if you obviously, I’m sure you’ll be aware when people follow the news now, Kent County Council, they’re not this is not small. This is not insignificant. They have, on more than one occasion now, threatened legal action against the government because they simply cannot cope. They are at breaking point. This is not insignificant numbers. These numbers are the highest that they’ve ever been and they absolutely show no sense of slowing down?*

### Points about asylum seekers representing a danger to the UK

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster’s Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	0	0%
GB News	339	1.5%

GB News raised some potential dangers of illegal entry into the UK. Presenter Alex Phillips spoke about fears that terrorist cells might use the Channel crossings to get people into Britain who wished to do harm (4.08pm) Colin Brazier, standing in as presenter on the Andrew Neil show at 8pm, voiced concerns about migrants destroying paperwork to obscure their age, leading to adults being placed into foster care or care homes, posing a risk to minors, and further

noted they had recently spoken to a Border Force union representative who had warned of a 'mob mentality' and 'tinderbox' atmosphere at the Napier Barracks detention centre.

None of these concerns were explored by the BBC in its coverage, or raised by its selection of invited guests.

### Criticisms of media coverage of the issue.

Broadcaster	Total Words	Proportion of Broadcaster's Total Coverage of the Story
BBC	118	1.5%
GB News	0	0%

Refugee activist Ash Sarkar, during the four-way discussion on the BBC2's Politics Live spoke of the 'huge explosion' of media images and 'scaremongering' being used to justify a 'draconian crackdown'. She suggested:

*So I think we need to question the way in which media coverage is warping our perceptions of what's really happening.*

Fellow panellist Annabel Denham from the Institute of Economic Affairs supported her point.

*I think that the government is responding to what it deems to be public hostility and as Ash says, this may have been whipped up by the media and the images that we see splashed across the cover of newspapers.*

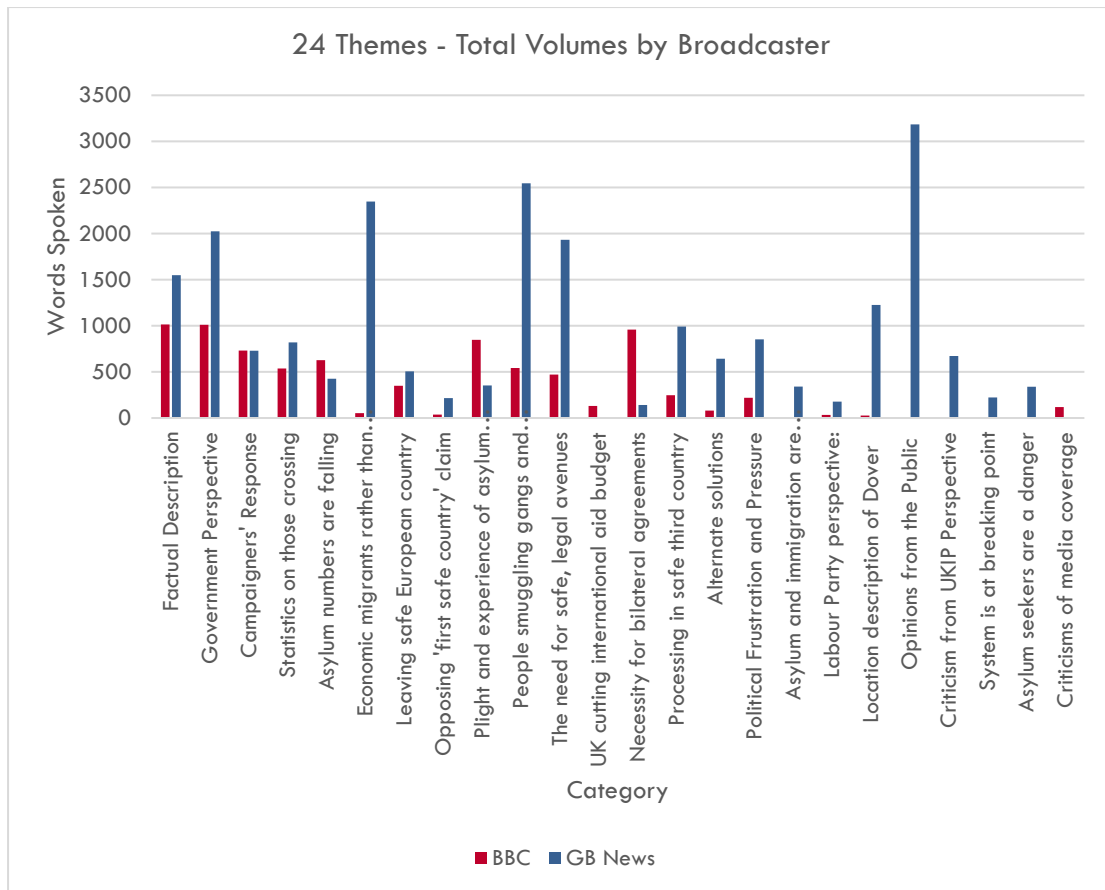
No similar arguments were made on GB News over the course of the 18 hours monitoring interval.

### Summary of findings

In total, the 24 arguments made in relation to the bill in the monitored programming by the two broadcasters amounted to 30,269 words. There were 8,035 words on the BBC (27%), compared 22,234 on GB News (73%).

The first chart shows the amount of space, in real terms, devoted to each of the 24 identified content analysis categories by each broadcaster.





As the chart illustrates, GB News devoted significantly more space than the BBC to 18 of the 24 identified themes and arguments made in connection with the bill. The biggest differences were in the following categories:

- **Opinions from the Public** - GB News 3,185 words, nothing from the BBC;
- **People Smuggling Gangs and Illegality** - 2,546 words on GB News against 542 from the BBC;
- **Were those crossing the Channel refugees or economic migrants?** – coverage on GB News was 2,348 words, with only 53 words from the BBC.

Four aspects were covered by GB News but not at all by the BBC:

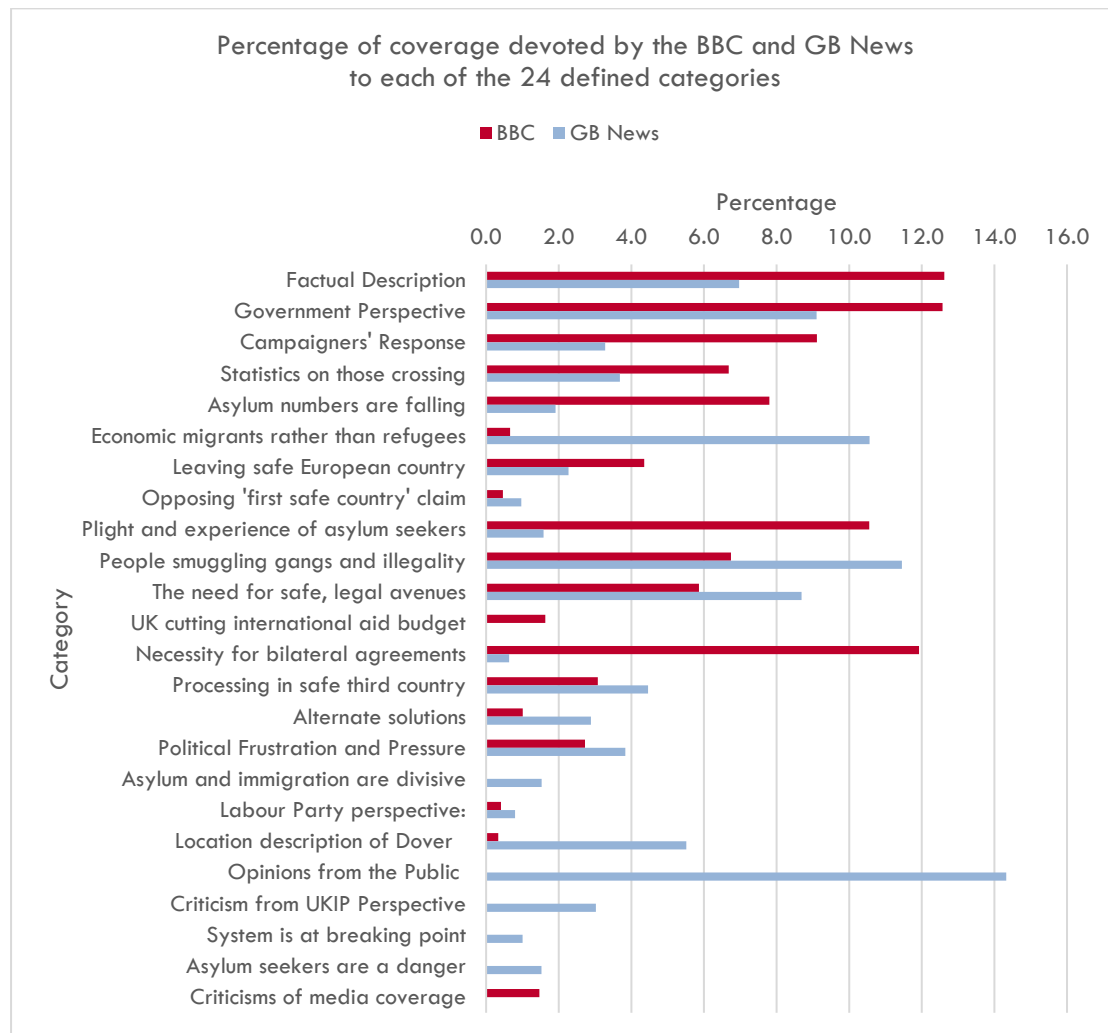
- **Opinions from the public (3,185 words – equivalent to almost a third of the BBC's total coverage of the topic);**
- **Criticisms from the UKIP/Brexit Party perspective (672 words – the interview with Nigel Farage);**
- **That the incomers could be dangerous because many were adults posing as children and not genuine asylum seekers (339 words);**

- **The asylum system potentially being at breaking point (223 words).**

Conversely, the BBC included two arguments that were not included anywhere in GB News coverage of the story:

- **UK cutting its international aid budget (131 words);**
- **Criticisms of media coverage of asylum issues (118 words)**

Given that GB News delivered approximately three times the space to the 24 arguments as the BBC, a second calculation was made to determine **what percentage of its own coverage** each broadcaster gave to the 24 identified themes and to assess and explore the **relative weight** apportioned to these arguments.



The BBC devoted most time – and almost equal space – to two categories: **Factual Description of the Bill** and **The Government perspective** with both accounting for 12.6% of total reporting. This was followed by the **Discussion of the Necessity for Bilateral Agreements**, which was

allotted 11.9% of the total space given over to descriptions of, or arguments surrounding, the Nationality and Borders bill.

On GB News, the largest proportion of space was given over to the same three themes identified by the first graph: **Opinions from the Public**, which accounted for 14.3% of the channel's coverage; **People Smuggling Gangs and Illegality** 11.5%; and discussions around whether those crossing the Channel were **Economic Migrants rather than Refugees** 10.6%.

## 1.6 CONCLUSION

---

This survey is new territory for News-watch in making comparisons in terms of the quality of news and current affairs provision between two broadcaster. The aim was to establish whether GB News and the BBC news services meet regulatory requirements for impartiality, and in the BBC's case, whether it fulfilled the special demands of its first public purpose relating specifically to news. In that domain, there is a specific requirement that the corporation provides a service better than other news providers not funded by the licence fee.

Some stark and very concerning differences have emerged.

The BBC gave significantly less airtime to the launching of the bill, despite its much greater resource base, and despite the new bill being a news event of national importance.

Six of the flagship national BBC news programmes included in the survey did not cover the bill. Only three did so, but in each case relatively briefly. The bulk of the coverage was on Politics Live (BBC2) and the News Channel.

Furthermore, the range of viewpoints on the BBC was limited, and narrow in scope. The government spokesman who presented the case for the new proposed legislation was pitched against six speakers who either strongly opposed the new measures or foresaw problems with their implementation. No reference was made at all to public opinion on the issue of asylum, immigration or the Channel crossings, nor were the voices of ordinary people included anywhere within the coverage. The content analysis also revealed that the BBC placed emphatically greater emphasis on aspects such as the response of pro-asylum and immigration campaign groups, the plight of individual asylum seekers, the total numbers of asylum seekers falling and the necessity for more bilateral trans-national agreements. Specific points of public concern on the news agenda – for example, recent polling indicating that 51% believe that most attempting to enter Britain as refugees aren't actually refugees but wanted to come for economic or welfare reasons<sup>33</sup> – were barely addressed by the BBC.

---

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/documents/2020-06/world-refugee-day-2020-ipsos-mori.pdf> p.9

By contrast, GB News broadcast 134 minutes of coverage (12.4% of its total airtime) compared to the BBC's 54 minutes (3.3% of airtime). This allowed GB News to explore numerous aspects of the issue (both pro- and anti-the bill) in considerably more detail, and deliver a wider breadth of opinion. It included detailed consideration of the government perspective along with challenges from guests and presenters who believed the measures to be too harsh, or who believed that the measures were unworkable or did not go far enough. An additional factor was that GB News also devoted the biggest proportion of its coverage – 14.3% - to opinions from the general public, gathered by GB News reporters speaking to local people or through the reading of on-air of correspondence. Contributors were broadly in favour of a tougher stance on immigration (in line with public opinion polls), a perspective completely excluded from the BBC's presentation of the story.

Overall, the absence on the BBC of elements carried by GB News survey provides clear indicators of how the BBC might potentially have handled and delivered this story differently. They could have given more time to the story and included it in more programmes; given more space to the government's reasons for introducing the bill with more criticism from both left and right; and broadly, those for and against the bill; and the included the opinions of ordinary people.

Broadly, the evidence presented in the survey chimes closely with comment from former BBC journalist Robin Aitken :

Even if GB News is a success (in presenting different news perspectives from those on the BBC), that doesn't absolve the BBC of the need to reform itself. As it stands, the BBC serves half the country well, the socially liberal left-leaning half, and is out of touch with the other half. And given that we all have to pay for it, that's not good enough.<sup>34</sup>

BBC Director General Tim Davie, appearing before the House of Commons DCMS Select Committee meeting of September 21, 2021, said:

We need to be comfortable taking a diverse range of views. That needs to happen on our output, and we are making progress. If you talk to editors, this message is getting through. Slowly, people want different voices. We need to be comfortable with different opinions. I do worry about institutional groupthink. We need, then, to make sure that the groups of people making decisions, the groups of people that we attract to the BBC, come from a wide socio-economic background and have a diverse range of views. The BBC is nothing if it is not a good facilitator of proper open debate and diverse views. That is essential to us. It is mission-critical. It is us. It puts us in a very different place to where the rest of the world is heading, in my view, which is a dangerous place around just partial media. I and others feel very passionate about this.<sup>35</sup>

On the evidence of this survey, the BBC still has a long way to go in Mr Davie's mission to incorporate sufficient diversity of opinion.

---

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATw\\_JG15opY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATw_JG15opY)

<sup>35</sup> <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/2765/pdf/>

### BBC – 6 July 2021

Radio 4, Today

#### 6am Bulletins

CAROLINE NICHOLS: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a broken asylum system starts its passage through Parliament today. There's been a sharp rise in the number of migrants attempting to cross the Channel on small boats since the start of the pandemic, although the number of people claiming asylum in the UK is still less than half that of 20 years ago. Our home affairs correspondent Daniel Sandford reports.

DS: The home secretary, Priti Patel, says she wants to create a fair but firm system that will break the business model of the people-smuggling gangs. The Nationality and Borders Bill will allow the UK government to return people to a safe country if they've passed through it on the way to Britain. Campaigners say this will result in thousands of valid claims being deemed inadmissible and call it a shameful dereliction of duty. The bill will also allow asylum claims to be processed outside the UK, potentially paving the way for controversial offshore centres for processing.

#### 6.30am Bulletins

CN: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a broken asylum system will be introduced to parliament. The Home Office says the bill will help prevent people who've passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in future.

#### 6.38am (2 min 45 sec)

NICK ROBINSON: A new law on asylum will break the business model of people-smuggling gangs, so claims the home secretary. But her critics say it will criminalise thousands of vulnerable migrants. Daniel Sandford is the BBC's home affairs correspondent. What does the new law say, Daniel?

DANIEL SANDFORD: Well, what they're trying to do is to tackle a few issues that are going on. One is the doubling of asylum applications in 10 years, though they're still half what they were 20 years ago. And the other is the increase in people arriving in Britain by small boats, which were 8,500 last year, and are clearly going to surpass that number this year if the current trend continue. So one of the key sections of this bill is going to be a power to remove people that have arrived in Britain illegally to a safe country. So essentially, you're creating a two tier asylum system where people who've arrived in Britain illegally might not get the same automatic right to stay in the country and claim asylum as those who arrive by another route. And that's what's causing the greatest concern with refugee campaign groups, because they're saying that that will remove asylum from about 9,000 people who would otherwise have been successful, who would effectively be removed back to France or somewhere else and wouldn't have their asylum application processed in this country.

NR: So in other words, many people who reach these shores who can be proved to have escaped persecution or to have fled war, would no longer get asylum here?

DS: That's correct, or they would be removed somewhere else where they could either then claim asylum there or would continue their asylum application from there. So when Priti Patel is saying she plans to break the business model of the people-smuggling gangs, what refugee

groups are also saying, she's also breaking the convention, that anyone coming to this country seeking refugee status is treated the same, regardless of how it was that they got here. And that's at the heart of this, is that they're basically saying that if you come here, for example, on a small boat, then you won't automatically get the same rights as if you come through another route. So, for example, if you can't be removed to a safe country, your . . . the rights that you have here will actually be slightly different. You'll get some kind of temporary protection status, rather than the right to settle. And as I say, the government's motivation is to try to stop the illegal people-smuggling routes into Britain. But refugee groups are quite concerned that what they're really creating is a two-tier refugee system.

NR: Daniel Sandford, thank you.

**8am**

CAROLINE NICHOLS: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a broken asylum system starts its passage through Parliament today. The Home Office says the measures in the bill will break the business model of people-smuggling gangs. Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in the future. Here's our home affairs correspondent, Daniel Sandford.

DANIEL SANDFORD: Until the pandemic struck last year, the number of people claiming asylum in the UK had been rising steadily, though the number was still less than half what it was 20 years ago and it is significantly below the numbers in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. The pandemic triggered a change in how people tried to get to Britain, with the number crossing the Channel on small boats rising sharply. The Nationality and Borders Bill will allow the UK government to return people to a safe country if they've passed through it on the way to Britain. Campaigners say this will result in thousands of valid claims being deemed inadmissible and call it 'a shameful dereliction of duty.' The bill will also allow asylum claims to be processed outside the UK, potentially paving the way for controversial offshore centres for processing applications.

**BBC1, Breakfast**

**6.04am - Asylum System. Report by Daniel Sandford.**

LOUISE MINCHIN: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a 'broken asylum system', is being introduced to Parliament today.

DAN WALKER: The Home Office says the bill will help prevent people who've passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK.

LM: Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in the future. Our home affairs correspondent Daniel Sandford has this report.

DANIEL SANDFORD: Until the pandemic struck last year, the number of people claiming asylum in the UK had doubled since 2010. If you look back over the last two decades, the number of applicants was still less than half what it was 20 years ago. And the figure, including dependents, is significantly below the numbers in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. The pandemic also triggered a change in how people try to get to Britain, with the number crossing the Channel in small boats rising sharply. It was 8,500 last year and it's heading for an even greater number this year. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, says she wants to create a fair but firm system that will break the business model of the people smuggling gangs. The Nationality and Borders Bill will allow the UK Government to return people to a safe country if they've passed through it on the way to Britain. Campaigners say this will result in thousands of valid claims being deemed inadmissible, and call it a shameful dereliction of duty. The bill will also allow asylum claims to be processed outside the UK, potentially paving

the way for a controversial offshore centres for processing applications. Daniel Sandford, BBC News.

### **7.07am Asylum System. Simon Jones, from Dover.**

LOUISE MINCHIN: A government bill which will reform what ministers have called the broken asylum system , is being introduced to parliament later today.

DAN WALKER: The Home Office says the bill will help prevent people who have passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. But refugee campaigners say that would mean thousands of people who are currently being given asylum being turned away in future.

LM: Let's get more from our reporter Simon Jones who's in Dover for us this morning. And Simon, what is your assessment? What kind of difference might this make?

SIMON JONES: Well, the Government is certainly hoping that it's going to reduce the number of migrants who have been crossing the Channel by boat. They have been using that word 'broken' to describe the asylum system at every opportunity. Now, on a calm day, unlike today, you can stand up here on the cliffs and you see scores of migrants being brought to shore by the Border Force. So far this year, around 6,500 people have reached the UK by boat. 650 already this month. Now the weather can often prevent it. But the big idea from this bill going before Parliament today is if a migrant has already passed through a safe EU country before getting on a boat then there'll be an assumption that they will be turned back and sent back to the EU country they've come from. The big problem though is after Brexit there is no agreement in place to do this with any EU country. And as far as we are aware, so far this year of the 6,500 people who have arrived, not a single one has been returned to the EU.

LM: Simon, from a very blustery Dover, thank you very much indeed.

### **8.08am Asylum Bill**

DAN WALKER: Now, a government bill which will reform what ministers have called the broken asylum system, is being introduced to parliament later today.

LOUISE MINCHIN: The Home Office says the bill will help prevent people who have passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. But refugee campaigners say that would mean thousands of people who are currently being given asylum, being turned away in future.

DW: Our reporter Simon Jones is in Dover for us this morning. Simon, morning to you. So, give us an idea of the likely impact that this bill might have on the number of migrants arriving in Dover?

SIMON JONES: Well, the Home Secretary is certainly hoping it's going to reduce the number of migrants who have been crossing the Channel by boat. Now today, given this blustery weather, we are unlikely to see any arrivals. But so far this year more than 6,500 people have arrived by boat. And so far this month, the figure is around 650. Now, writing in the Daily Mail today, Priti Patel says that she heard at the weekend there was a family trying to get across from France. They were forcibly separated by people smugglers, who forced the parents at gunpoint on to one boat. They were told their two young daughters would be on the next boat. But the parents haven't seen the daughter's since. Priti Patel says she wants to see an end to stories like this. The big idea that if migrants have passed through safe EU countries before getting on a boat over to the UK, the assumption will be that they won't be granted asylum here. But that's has been criticised by groups supporting refugees.

DW: Simon, thank you for that. Take care in that weather there in Dover this morning.

LM: Yeah, a little glimpse outside and it looks pretty dramatic there.

## BBC2, Politics Live

*Jo Coburn is joined by the Conservative MP Tom Hunt; SNP MP David Linden; Novara Media's Ash Sarkar and Annabel Denham from the Institute of Economic Affairs, to discuss the easing of lockdown restrictions and the government's new immigration bill.*

### 9.15am Headlines

JO COBURN: Will Priti Patel's crackdown on illegal migrants stop any more of these small boats landing in Kent?

### 9.37am Nationality and Borders Bill

JC: Let me just show you this newspaper headline, because we're going to talk about moves by Priti Patel, the Home Secretary, to cut down and crack down on the illegal trade of migrants crossing in small boats over the Channel. This is Priti Patel: 'This sickening trade in humans by vile gangs must end.' This comes ahead of a bill being published tomorrow, an immigration bill. We don't have the details as yet, but what we understand is that there will be a new offence for those arriving in the UK without what is called a valid entry clearance and target people traffickers with penalties for aiding illegal immigration. Now, the change is intended to help authorities to prosecute migrants who attempt to travel to Britain on those small boats and are intercepted by Border Force officers. At the moment entering the country without leave doesn't cover migrants intercepted and then brought to shore by Border Force officers. Tom, will this actually put anyone off crossing the channel?

TOM HUNT: Well, I hope so. I hope so. But ultimately, I think if you've . . . if you've made the conscious decision to leave another . . . because they're coming from a safe European country, another safe European country, France, and you've decided to break UK immigration laws, come over here. I think that you should be held to account for it. I mean, ultimately, these are individuals who are coming from France. They're not coming directly . . .

JC: (speaking over) Sure.

TH: from a war torn country. And I think we need . . . the government is right to be taking a more robust approach to this. My constituents are very angry by what they've seen, the images they've seen. And I actually think this limits our capacity to show compassion towards the most genuine refugees who are fleeing directly from these war torn countries. So, yes, a step in the right direction.

JC: David?

DAVID LINDEN: Well, I think in this whole process, Jo, I mean, I think of the three year old toddler, Alan Kurdi. Let's not forget, you know, in 2015, those incredibly moving images of a toddler washed up on the beach. The idea that people get on these boats or put children on these boats and they're coming to the UK for a food bank voucher really is quite offensive. And the references to asylum shopping that we've seen in the media in recent days I think is extremely distasteful. I represent a constituency that's got one of the highest numbers of asylum seekers in the UK. I think that we've got to understand why it is that people sometimes are making these, you know, really dangerous journeys, perhaps because there are no safe and legal routes to the UK. We also have to look as well about the broader treatment of asylum seekers, those dawn raids, the Napier barracks, the inhumane conditions that we keep people in. And there is a reality here that the UK's asylum system and this dog whistle politics that we



hear so often from the British government is just deeply offensive and completely misses the point of the much wider issue when it comes to the treatment of asylum seekers.

JC: Tom?

TH: I totally disagree. Every single illegal immigrant who gets into this country and is seen to stay in this country encourages more people to try. And that risks more of them losing their lives. And it feeds this evil trade in human life.

DL: So, so, so why not . . .

TH: (*speaking over*) The message needs to go out, 'Do not try to come here illegally because you will not be successful.' We need to have a process in place. We need to have a legal process in place. And yes, you know, make the argument for why we should take more refugees legally, in the correct way. But turning a blind eye to what is illegality, lawlessness on our Channel is totally wrong.

DL: So why not follow the advice, for example, of Amnesty International and try and open up some safe and legal routes?

TH: Well, I, I . . . that's a, that's a debate. Let's have that discussion. This is a separate issue. This is about lawlessness and it's about, it's about saying . . .

DL: (*speaking over*) I don't think (*words unclear*) can't have the debate in isolation.

TH: (*speaking over*) And it's about sending out a message, that . . . 'Oh yeah, try it, you know, because once you get in, you're in.' What that sends, the message that sends is it just encourages more people to do it, more people to risk their lives. And they are, overwhelmingly, young men in their 20s and 30s, by the way. They are. Overwhelmingly.

DL: So, so, so let's look at why it is that people are making these dangerous crossings. Now, for example . . .

TH: (*speaking over*) From France.

DL: . . . you, you spoke about . . . you, you spoke about compassion. So if the UK is so focussed on compassion and people are fleeing countries because of famine and starvation, why is the UK government cutting the international aid budget and nutrition projects then?

TH: Well, I think there's unprecedented pulls on the public purse at the moment. And, and I think that when we talking about it, we're already giving more money than virtually any other comparable country in the world, international aid. But I think, when there's unprecedented pulls on the public purse, I think prioritising domestic spend, school places, hospitals, I think is the right thing to do. And I support it.

JC: Ash, can I return to the issue, which is: will it stop people making the crossing by tightening up the laws and the regulations in terms of when people can actually be arrested? More than 2,000 migrants have crossed the channel on small boats in June 2021 alone, setting a new record. Is Tom right that, actually, all it's doing is encouraging more people to risk their lives?

ASH SARKAR: Well, what we need to do is have a fact-based conversation. So you're right, there was an increase in small boat crossings in 2020, but overall, the number of asylum claims remained static. So you had this huge explosion of images and I think a lot of scaremongering around small boat crossings and asylum claims, in order to justify quite a draconian crackdown. But actually, the numbers were remaining flat. So I think we need to question the way in which media coverage is warping our perceptions of what's really happening. And what is really happening is that, one, making conditions more miserable for migrants isn't really having an

effect on either asylum claims or small boat crossings. We've seen the conditions in Napier barracks, which are terrible, a huge outbreak of coronavirus, a fire that was set because people were so miserable and felt so without hope . . .

TH: *(laughing over)* Justifying illegality.

AS: . . . that they ended up burning down their own accommodation.

TH: Justifying that.

JC: Tom?

AS: Erm, no, no, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait . . .

TH: *(speaking over)* Well, I mean, she's justifying illegality . . .

AS: Oh *(word or words unclear)*

TH: Criminal damage. Criminal damage.

AS: Oh, but can we just have, again, a fact-based conversation here, all right?

TH: *(speaking over)* Well it is a fact. They, they, they broke the law.

AS: When you've got people . . . when you've got people . . . wait, if you were . . . hang on a second. If you were in a barracks . . .

TH: *(speaking over)* I wouldn't burn it down.

AS: . . . and literally dozens of people around you had coronavirus. You yourself may have been deeply traumatised and suffering from PTSD because you have fled a war-torn country. Many of these people are victims of torture. Do you expect that you would behave within the same bounds of civility as you, or me with our privileged existences would? No, I don't think that you would.

TH: *(speaking over)* It, it, it . . . with the greatest respect.

AS: *(speaking over)* I think the way in which you deal with . . . I, I think, no, wait, wait, wait, because I think the way in which you deal with deeply traumatised people who have fled famine, fled war . . . yes, many of them . . .

TH: *(speaking over)* From France.

AS: . . . haven't stayed in the first . . .

TH: *(speaking over)* Fled France.

AS: I was going to . . . place. I was going to come to this point. Yes. Many of them haven't stayed in their first country where they've arrived, but actually most of them do. The UK processes fewer asylum claims than France, Germany, Greece. And in fact, Europe overall takes fewer asylum claims than countries neighbouring the ones that people have just fled.

TH: *(speaking over)* It, it . . . it does . . . it does seem to me . . .

AS: *(speaking over)* It's a relatively small number.

TH: *(speaking over)* It does seem to me, it does seem to me there that you have just justified individuals doing criminal damage, setting fire to property. Erm . . . it just seems that you've justified, that *(fragment of word, or word unclear due to speaking over)*

AS: No, I'm saying the way in which you stop this from happening . . . right? I want to prevent any scenes like that from ever happening again, is that you treat people like human beings. And you take a look at Brook House Removal Centre. The Independent Monitoring Board found that a third of detainees at Brook House had to be put on constant suicide watch. Do you think that's acceptable? Do you think that that's a good way to treat human beings?

TH: *(speaking over)* What I . . . what, what I . . . what I think is acceptable is we have a system based on rules that are followed. What I think is acceptable is if somebody breaks our immigration laws . . .

AS: *(speaking over)* Then why does the Home Office lose so many of its appeals?

TH: . . . and comes here from another safe European country, that we do not allow them to stay in our country. I think most people in our country . . .

AS: *(speaking over)* That's not immigration rules . . .

TH: *(speaking over)* Most people in our country . . .

AS: *(speaking over)* . . . you don't have to stay in the first safe country.

TH: . . . think there should be . . .

AS: *(speaking over)* You don't have to stay in the first safe . . .

JC: *(speaking over)* Hang on, Ash.

AS: . . . country.

TH: . . . clear rules that are followed. You are . . . this is very much an extreme view that you've got. It's not in keeping with the majority of people in our country who are actually compassionate and do actually want to represent the most genuine of refugees. This . . . this trade in human lives makes this harder. It makes this job harder. Your position is not a compassionate position and it is not a moral position.

AS: I'm saying expand the number of legal and safe avenues for asylum seekers to come here and lodge their claims when they're in this country. The fact is, is that most asylum claims don't even come to this country. And people who do want to come to this country, it's usually for reasons of language, familiarity, or they've already got a support network or family here. And what's going on with these policies is that they push people out of those safe and legal routes and into the arms of the people traffickers. So if we want to have a conversation based on reality where we agree, we don't want people traffickers and people who profit off human misery to be able to exploit poor and desperate people - that means expanding safe and legal routes.

JC: All right.

AS: And if what you want to do and what your government wants to do is just immiserate the lives of asylum seekers, you're not going to do anything to numbers . . .

JC: Okay . . .

AS: . . . and all you're going to do is create more human misery.

JC: Tom?

TH: I think, as I say, not being robust in dealing with this issue, which is illegal immigration, limits our capacity to show compassion to these other individuals. I also think that, yes, there'll be, there'll be some people who have come from this other safe European country, France, who are . . . who have, who have had a difficult . . . difficult lot. But actually there will be some who are, frankly, economic migrants. How can you say with confidence that every single one of them is . . . is a refugee fleeing . . . you don't know that. You don't know that.

JC: Hang on, Ash. I'm going to bring Annabel just briefly. And I want to get your view on it, Annabel, but in the light of a figure from 2019, because I think that is the most up to date figure we have, 4,000 unauthorised Channel arrivals. Fewer than the figures I've read out so far for this year, actually equalled less than one percent of all immigrants, just to put it in some perspective. But what is your view about the legislation that Priti Patel is proposing to deal with this?

ANNABEL DENHAM: (*fragment of word, or word unclear*) so, the first thing I'd say is that since World War Two, the UK has been known for supporting and welcoming immigrants and to those displaced to the UK. You know, these asylum seekers face unimaginable plights of the kind that we cannot imagine living in Britain today. And I suspect to the point on asylum shopping, that many don't actually know their final destination when they flee. I think that the government is responding to what it deems to be public hostility and as Ash says, this may have been whipped up by the media and the images that we see splashed across the cover of newspapers. But I don't think that, that . . . well, perhaps Tom can, you know, explain why it is, but I don't think taking this hard line on asylum seekers is the right course. And I think in terms of policy, you know . . .

TH: (*words unclear, speaking under*)

AD: . . . a low hanging fruit might be to allow them to work in the UK where they can learn English, they can integrate, and we would get the economic and social benefits from that. And to the point about this preventing . . . taking a hard line and that preventing other people from making a perilous journey, I'm just a little suspicious of that. I think that that's a way of people who are hostile towards asylum seekers masking it in compassionate terms.

JC: Tom?

TH: Total-- . . . totally disagree. I think ultimately, if somebody wants to move to this country because they want to make a contribution, then they should apply for immigration status like everybody else. Like everybody else. And ultimately, we can make a determination about whether or not they should be granted immigration status or not. I mean, ultimately, it seems as though what Annabel's arguing for is a kind of free for all, where anyone can just come into our country, they don't have to follow the rules. And once they're in, they're in. That is essentially what you are calling for, by making the comments you've made. I think we have to have a rules-based immigration system, both when it comes to . . . both when it comes to those who want to come here, but also in terms of, erm, with regards to refugee status. I think this kind of free for all, you know, frankly, we did vote to lim-- . . . millions of people in this country voted to leave the European Union because they wanted to take back control of our borders. And when they, they, they switch on the TV screen and they see this lawlessness, it's a million miles away from control of our borders. And I can understand why they're angry. I don't think it's been whipped up by the media. I think it's understandable anger.

JC: All right. We're going to have to leave it there. I know, David, you want to come back in, we'll have to do this in even more detail on another occasion.

*Moves on to the Free Market Institute for Economic Affairs publishing new research looking at the political attitudes of young people.*

## BBC1, News at One

No coverage of *Nationality and Borders bill*.

*Stories included: Covid restrictions being lifted, Covid-related absences among school pupils, second man charged with accosting Professor Chris Whitty; Vauxhall investment in electric vehicles; Euro 2020; campaign for change to abortion laws; Test and Trace app; Wimbledon; Damien Hirst;*

## Radio 4, World at One

No coverage of *Nationality and Borders bill*.

*Main stories: Anyone who is a close contact of a positive Covid case will no longer have to self-isolate if they have been fully vaccinated, also discussion of school bubbles being abolished; England have been forced into naming a completely new squad for their one day international series with Pakistan this week, after three cricket players and four staff members tested positive for Covid; New investment by Vauxhall in Ellesmere Port; A new exhibition by Damien Hirst, drawn from more than 100 paintings of Cherry Blossom, is opening in Paris today.*

## Radio 4, PM

### 5.51 pm Asylum Bill

EVAN DAVIS: Now there is a new border . . . Nationality and Borders Bill that's been introduced to parliament today. Amongst the goals, it aims to make it easier to remove someone who arrived here by an illegal route and potentially give the power of the authorities to stop and divert boats suspected of carrying illegal migrants here and trying to return them to where their sea journey began. For example, in France. We can talk to John Vine, former Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration. John, we haven't got very long. Can we talk about the practicality of effectively sending boats back before they arrive here to France? Is that going to work?

JOHN VINE: Well, it'll only work if there's a bilateral arrangement with the French. So, you know, for about the last decade, successive home secretaries have been trying to address this issue, which has got steadily worse over recent years. And, of course, organised crime groups are actually exploiting the vulnerabilities of people desperate to come to the UK. So, yes, pushbacks were introduced by the Australian government in 2013. That's what they're called, where boats were pushed back to Papua New Guinea and another island just off the coast of Australia to try and prevent them arriving in Australia and people then being able to claim asylum. But it will it . . . will only work if there's some arrangement with the French. We can't return a boat to . . . to France without the French authorities, I suppose, taking possession of the . . . the boats and the people on it.

ED: I'm trying to work out what's in it for the French.

JV: Well, yes. I mean, on the face of it, not a great deal. I mean, the . . . the French have had their own issues with encampments in northern France, which from time to time they've had to address. And I think one of the other problems is, of course, the problem for the British is that once people set off from the coast of France, you've then got a massive health and safety issue. You can't really do a great deal if someone's bobbing around the Channel and in a dinghy that's not fit for purpose. And really all the authorities can do, whether they be French or British, is rescue . . . you know, the people on the . . . on the boat.

ED: (*speaking over*) So, pushing back and keeping them safe is only practical if you . . . if you basically pick them up and then deposit them in France, rather than literally push the boat in, and sort of shoo it into France . . . French waters?

JV: Yes. So there needs to be some bilateral agreement with France and other countries, if, you know, for example, they set off from the Belgian coast, it'd have to be the Belgian authorities.

ED: (*speaking over*) I mean, the other thing, of course, is the idea that you might remove asylum seekers, particularly if they'd come in illegally to a safe country while you then process their claim. Now, again, I guess you need a . . . you need a safe country to say, 'Yes, we'll take your asylum seekers. We'll hold them while you . . . while you think about it.' Is that going to work?

JV: Well, again, it's been done before by the Australians. They paid the government of Papua New Guinea to . . . to set up camps in . . . in that country from which people could lodge an asylum claim and then that be considered by the Australian authorities. What it means in practical terms is you've got to set up the . . . the logistics of having civil servants dealing with asylum claims, from that point of view, er, from that particular location. You've got to transport people who don't want to go to that location, to the location. And of course, the Home Office doesn't have a very successful track record in removing people who, you know, from the UK who are here, who've . . . who've . . . their asylum claim has failed. So it's not easy to do in practical terms. And of course, it depends which territory you're talking about. I know there's been some suggestion of places like Ascension Islands - they're a long, long way away.

ED: That's a long way, yeah, to (*word or words unclear*) yeah.

JV: (*speaking over*) And so I can just see the logistics being very difficult indeed.

ED: John, lots of interesting questions to ask about that . . . that Nationality and Borders Bill, we'll follow some of those up later, John Vine, thanks so much for that.

## BBC1, News at Six

*No coverage of Nationality and Borders bill.*

## Radio 4, Six O'Clock News

### 6.19pm Asylum Bill

ALAN SMITH: Knowingly arriving in the UK without permission will become a criminal offence under new laws set out in the Nationality and Borders Bill, which was published today. The government hopes the overhaul of asylum rules will deter people from making dangerous Channel crossings to try to get to the UK. But Labour said the proposals could break international law. Here's our home affairs editor, Mark Easton.

MARK EASTON: The migrant dinghies being towed into the Tug Haven at Dover Docks almost every day represent a humiliating challenge to the Home Secretary and her commitment to control the country's borders. Without reciprocal agreements in place after Brexit, Priti Patel has been unable to deport a single one of the migrants her department has deemed inadmissible. Her appointment last summer of a clandestine Channel Threat Commander to stop the crossings has been followed this summer by record numbers of migrants arriving on the Kent coast. There is political frustration at the apparent impotence of the Home Office to deal with the people smugglers bringing their desperate human cargo into the United Kingdom. Today, the Nationality and Borders Bill entered parliament with the promise of new Home Office powers to put the traffickers out of business, the power to deport people who arrive through illegal means or who travelled through a safe country, the power to force migrant boats out of British territorial waters and back into foreign ports, the power to process

asylum seekers outside the United Kingdom. But these powers require the agreement of other countries to make them work. And while negotiations continue behind the scenes, few deals have yet been struck. It is perhaps the paradox of Brexit that taking control of your borders requires more international co-operation, not less.

## **BBC1, News at Ten**

*No coverage of Nationality and Borders bill.*

## **Radio 4, World Tonight**

*No coverage of Nationality and Borders bill.*

*Main stories: US Leaving Afghanistan; Middle East and Israel's new ruling coalition; New documents seen by the BBC conclude that the Columbian military probably committed war crimes during Operation Berlin against FARC guerrillas, 20 years ago; lifting of Covid restrictions, and a report on Covid from Australia; New research suggests that while planting extra trees in Europe helps to combat climate change, it could also increase rainfall; an new museum celebrating Hans Christian Andersen is opening;*

## **BBC2, Newsnight**

*No coverage of Nationality and Borders bill.*

*Main stories: state pensions are predicted to rise this year by 8% - can the Conservatives cling on to their triple-lock promise? The reality of unlocking with an anticipated 100,000 cases a day. Is this herd immunity through a different name? Report on England manager Gareth Southgate;*

## **BBC News Channel, 6am - 12am**

*Note – only additional content not included on BBC Breakfast, or the main BBC1 Bulletins:*

### **9.15am Nationality and Borders Bill**

**NEWSREADER:** Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a 'broken asylum system' is being introduced to Parliament. The Home Office says the bill will help prevent people who've passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in the future. Our Home Affairs Correspondent Daniel Sandford has this report.

**DANIEL SANDFORD:** Until the pandemic struck last year, the number of people claiming asylum in the UK had doubled since 2010. But if you look back over the last two decades, the number of applicants was still less than half what it was 20 years ago. And the figure, including dependents, is significantly below the numbers in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. The pandemic also triggered a change in how people try to get to Britain, with the number crossing the Channel in small boats rising sharply. It was 8,500 last year and it's heading for an even greater number this year. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, says she wants to create a fair but firm system that will break the business model of the people smuggling gangs. The Nationality and Borders Bill will allow the UK Government to return people to a safe country if they've passed through it on the way to Britain. Campaigners say this will result in thousands of valid claims being deemed inadmissible, and call it a shameful dereliction of duty. The bill will also allow asylum claims to be processed outside the UK, potentially paving the way for a controversial offshore centres for processing applications. Daniel Sandford, BBC News.

N: Our correspondent, Simon Jones is in Dover. Gosh, it looks blowy there, Simon. Can you give us a give us a sense of the impact of the bill on the number of migrants who might arrive at Dover?

SIMON JONES: Well, 'broken' is the word the government has been using repeatedly in recent months to describe the asylum system. And they'll certainly be hoping changes being put forward today will reduce the number of migrants particularly crossing the Channel by boat. We are unlikely to see any arrivals today given this wet and windy weather, but so far this year more than 6,500 people have made the journey from France by boat. This month already we've seen 650 people. Just a bit of context though, the number of migrants arriving in the back of lorries has fallen dramatically during the pandemic but the big change the government is hoping is the way they're treating people who arrive illegally. Now, the idea is that if someone gets on a boat over from France, they will have passed through several safe EU countries before arriving in the UK, so there will be an assumption that their asylum claim won't be valid and the government will seek to return people arriving by boat or arriving illegally to safe EU countries they have passed through. The big problem is though that after Brexit, there is currently no agreement in place for this to happen. There used to be something called the Dublin regulation. Now, the government said it wasn't really working, but it did allow them to return some migrants. Now, since Brexit, the government has been negotiating with individual countries trying to draw up bilateral agreements but as far as we are aware, so far, the 6,500 who have arrived by boat so far this year not a single one has been returned to an EU country because there simply isn't the deal in place to do this.

N: Tell us a little bit more about some of the reaction to this proposed legislation?

SJ: Well, it is proving controversial, because effectively what the government is proposing is really a two tier asylum system. So, the assumption that people arriving by boat will be turned away, but what the government wants instead is to take people directly from war zones or refugee camps further afield. And people will be brought to the UK, they will be granted asylum immediately, so there won't be long delays about having their asylum claims assessed. But groups supporting refugees say a two tier system is not fair because it is not taking into account the type of persecution or war zone someone has been escaping from. And, for example, the Refugee Council have said today that they think this is an anti-refugee bill and they describe it as really not fit for purpose. Priti Patel though says she is determined to tackle the people-smugglers who are operating these crossings. Writing in the Mail today, she says she heard at the weekend from Border Force there were a family of four who were trying to get to the UK from France, now the two parents, she said, were separated from their two young daughters by smugglers at gunpoint who forced the parents to go on one boat across the Channel, the smugglers then told the parents their two young daughters would be put on the following boat, but the parents haven't seen the daughters since. Now, Priti Patel says she's determined to stop human tragedies like this, but the reality is the asylum system, it isn't going to be quick or easy to change and that's something that the government is going to have to contend with.

N: Simon Jones in Dover, thank you for that update.

### **9.32am Headlines**

NEWSREADER: A draft law is being introduced to Parliament to prevent asylum seekers staying in the UK if they've already passed through a safe country.

### **10.27am Nationality and Borders Bill**

NEWSREADER: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a 'broken asylum system' is being introduced to Parliament. The government says the bill will help prevent people who've passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in the future. Our Home Affairs Correspondent Daniel Sandford has this report.



DANIEL SANDFORD: Until the pandemic struck last year, the number of people claiming asylum in the UK had doubled since 2010. But if you look back over the last two decades, the number of applicants was still less than half what it was 20 years ago. And the figure, including dependents, is significantly below the numbers in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. The pandemic also triggered a change in how people try to get to Britain, with the number crossing the Channel in small boats rising sharply. It was 8,500 last year and it's heading for an even greater number this year. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, says she wants to create a fair but firm system that will break the business model of the people smuggling gangs. The Nationality and Borders Bill will allow the UK Government to return people to a safe country if they've passed through it on the way to Britain. Campaigners say this will result in thousands of valid claims being deemed inadmissible, and call it a shameful dereliction of duty. The bill will also allow asylum claims to be processed outside the UK, potentially paving the way for a controversial offshore centres for processing applications. Daniel Sandford, BBC News.

## **2.25pm Headlines**

The Nationality and Borders Bill will introduce longer maximum sentences for anyone entering the UK without a legal reason. The government hopes the overhaul of asylum rules will deter migrant Channel crossings. But Labour says the move potentially breaks international law. The long-anticipated legislation will face detailed scrutiny from MPs and peers later in the year.

## **4.24pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

SHAUN LEY: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a 'broken asylum system' is being introduced to Parliament. The government says the bill will help prevent people who've passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in the future. Our Home Affairs Correspondent Daniel Sandford has this report.

DANIEL SANDFORD: Until the pandemic struck last year, the number of people claiming asylum in the UK had doubled since 2010. But if you look back over the last two decades, the number of applicants was still less than half what it was 20 years ago. And the figure, including dependents, is significantly below the numbers in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. The pandemic also triggered a change in how people try to get to Britain, with the number crossing the Channel in small boats rising sharply. It was 8,500 last year and it's heading for an even greater number this year. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, says she wants to create a fair but firm system that will break the business model of the people smuggling gangs. The Nationality and Borders Bill will allow the UK Government to return people to a safe country if they've passed through it on the way to Britain. Campaigners say this will result in thousands of valid claims being deemed inadmissible, and call it a shameful dereliction of duty. The bill will also allow asylum claims to be processed outside the UK, potentially paving the way for a controversial offshore centres for processing applications. Daniel Sandford, BBC News.

SL: Well, let's hear now from Tim Naor Hilton, who's chief executive of Refugee Action. Mr Hilton, thank you very much for speaking to us on BBC News. Straightforwardly, what's your reaction to this Nationality and Borders bill?

TIM NAOR HILTON: Well, look, 70 years ago, Britain was contributing to drafting the Refugee Convention that would provide support and safety and protection for people fleeing persecution, war and human rights abuses. And now here we're seeing ministers actually ripping it up right before our eyes. This is an extreme anti-refugee bill. It's against decency. It's against compassion. It criminalises refugees. And it also is against international law. And it doesn't do what the government is saying it needs to do. There's nothing in there about

commitments to safe routes. People make these terrible, terrible, dangerous journeys because there are no safe routes into this country. And this bill does not answer those questions.

SL: What a lot, what a lot of people will not understand is what can be the objection to saying that if you pass through a safe country, in other words, a country is deemed safe internationally, not a war zone, but a country, let's say, like Italy or France or Germany, that you shouldn't claim asylum first there rather than waiting until you come to this country? People won't understand why that is an unreasonable thing to say?

TNK: Look, we're, we're talking about people who are fleeing war, human rights abuses and persecution . . .

SL: *(speaking over)* Indeed.

TNK: . . . in their countries of origin. Absolutely. What, what . . . when people flee those countries, they're looking for home, they're looking for safety. They're looking to be able to rebuild, then, their lives. And what we see a lot is people coming to this country who have family and friends connections here. They maybe speak the language. Maybe there's a historical connection. But we have to remember that most people don't come into this country once they've arrived in Europe. Three times as many people end up . . .

SL: *(speaking over)* Sure.

TNK: . . . in France, three . . . four times as many in Germany, three times as many in Spain. But the few that do come here have got links and connections. And I think we would all understand people wanting to be able to create a new home for themselves, rather than just simply getting out of a war zone.

SL: So is your argument that this is a . . . a kind of a kind of a sneaky way of reducing numbers of applicants, because almost nobody gets to this country without coming to it through another country first? Because we're an island. *(laughs)*

TNK: Absolutely. Well, and there are no safe routes into this country. So, you know, we're calling for the government to establish systems of humanitarian visas, to increase routes of family reunion and to commit to a resettlement programme, a refugee resettlement programme, of 10,000 people a year in order to meet our international obligations, because right now our standing on the international stage is shrinking. We are not stepping up and taking our . . . playing our role in helping people who are seeking safety and protection from war, human rights abuses and persecution.

SL: Tim Naor Hilton of Refugee Action, thank you very much for speaking to us.

TNK: Thank you.

## **5.20pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

JANE HILL: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as a 'broken asylum system' is being introduced to parliament. The Home Office says the bill will help prevent people who've passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will in the future be turned away. Well, let's find out more about the proposals. Our home editor, Mark Easton has been looking through them. Explain more about what is on the table here, Mark?

MARK EASTON: Well, this, I think, really is a response to some deep political frustration in the Home Office. Priti Patel, of course, has committed herself to . . . to taking back control of Britain's borders after Brexit. But almost daily, we're seeing those dinghies pulling up into Tug Haven in Dover and that, each day, each migrant that walks up the ramp is, in a sense, a sort of political humiliation for the home secretary. And there is a real determination to do

something to take on the . . . the people smugglers who are bringing over their desperate human cargo. And the Nationality and Borders Bill, really perhaps the most standout parts of it are designed to try and put those traffickers out of business. There is a . . . there is a plan to perhaps deport more easily asylum seekers who arrive here, particularly if they've come in from an illegal . . . by an illegal route. There will be a new criminal offence of arriving in the UK without permission. They also want to try and send people back, as you say, to a safe country that an asylum seeker may have come through or perhaps deport them to another country if it's deemed that . . . they don't have the right to come to the UK. And also there are plans to, you know, particularly with the migrant boats to turn those boats around in foreign waters and . . . or push them back into foreign waters, potentially into foreign ports. Now, the problem with all of this, and it really has been the problem since the beginning of the year, is that you need, essentially, an agreement from another country to make most of that happen. And at the moment, the Home Office has not got those agreements. There's lots of negotiations going on behind the scenes. There are lots of hopes that we might be able to do some kind of . . . of deals. But when it comes to deporting asylum seekers, when it comes to offshoring, as they call it, actually setting up asylum systems on, you know, we've heard stories about putting them on Ascension Island and so on. In the end, all those require cooperation. And it is perhaps the, you know, the paradox of Brexit in a way that actually taking control of the borders is going to require greater international cooperation, not less.

JH: Interesting. Thank you very much for now, Mark – Mark Easton, our home editor there on the bill.

#### **7.48pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

ROSS ATKINS: Draft legislation is about to be published in Britain that would make it a criminal offence to enter the country without permission. The Home Secretary says she aims to repair 'a broken asylum system'. Campaigners are condemning the plans as shameful. Our home affairs correspondent Daniel Sandford has this report.

DANIEL SANDFORD: Until the pandemic struck last year, the number of people claiming asylum in the UK had doubled since 2010. If you look back over the last two decades, the number of applicants was still less than half what it was 20 years ago. And the figure, including dependents, is significantly lower than the numbers in Germany, France, Spain and Greece. The pandemic also triggered a change in how people try to get to Britain. The number crossing the Channel in small boats rose sharply. It was 8,500 last year. It's heading for an even greater number this year. The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, says she wants to create a fair but firm system that will break the business model of the people-smuggling gangs. The Nationality and Borders Bill will allow the UK Government to return people to a safe country if they've passed through it on the way to Britain. Campaigners say this will result in thousands of valid claims being deemed inadmissible, and call it a shameful dereliction of duty. The bill will also allow asylum claims to be processed outside the UK, potentially paving the way for controversial offshore centres for processing applications. Daniel Sandford, BBC News.

#### **8.24pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

NEWSREADER: Draft legislation intended to tackle what ministers describe as 'a broken asylum system' is being introduced into parliament. The Home Office says the bill will help prevent people who've passed through a safe country claiming asylum in the UK. Refugee campaigners warn that thousands of people who are currently given asylum will be turned away in the future. Well, our home editor, Mark Easton has been explaining the political context to this proposed legislation.

MARK EASTON: Well, this, I think, really is a response to some deep political frustration in the Home Office. Priti Patel, of course, has committed herself to . . . to taking back control of Britain's borders after Brexit. But almost daily, we're seeing those dinghies pulling up into Tug Haven in Dover and that, each day, each migrant that walks up the ramp is, in a sense, a sort

of political humiliation for the home secretary. And there is a real determination to do something to take on the . . . the people smugglers who are bringing over their desperate human cargo. And the Nationality and Borders Bill, really perhaps the most standout parts of it are designed to try and put those traffickers out of business. There is a . . . there is a plan to perhaps deport more easily asylum seekers who arrive here, particularly if they've come in from an illegal . . . by an illegal route. There will be a new criminal offence of arriving in the UK without permission. They also want to try and send people back, as you say, to a safe country that an asylum seeker may have come through or perhaps deport them to another country if it's deemed that . . . they don't have the right to come to the UK. And also there are plans to, you know, particularly with the migrant boats to turn those boats around in foreign waters and . . . or push them back into foreign waters, potentially into foreign ports. Now, the problem with all of this, and it really has been the problem since the beginning of the year, is that you need, essentially, an agreement from another country to make most of that happen. And at the moment, the Home Office has not got those agreements. There's lots of negotiations going on behind the scenes. There are lots of hopes that we might be able to do some kind of . . . of deals. But when it comes to deporting asylum seekers, when it comes to offshoring, as they call it, actually setting up asylum systems on, you know, we've heard stories about putting them on Ascension Island and so on. In the end, all those require cooperation. And it is perhaps the, you know, the paradox of Brexit in a way that actually taking control of the borders is going to require greater international cooperation, not less.

# GB News - 6 July 2021

## GB News, The Great British Breakfast

### 6.35am Nationality and Borders Bill

NANA AKUA: Good morning. You're watching The Great British Breakfast. Now, the government have vowed to reform the UK's asylum system and (*sic, omits 'are'*) preparing to put forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons. The proposed legislation, under the Nationality and Borders Bill is due to be introduced to parliament later today. And then we'll hear more details.

KIRSTY GALLACHER: Well, the south east of England reporter Ellie Costello's in Dover Port this morning. Good morning to you, Ellie. What can you see from where you are right now?

NA: Ooh . . . Ellie, are you there?

ELLIE COSTELLO: . . . above the Port of Dover.

NA: Yes, we can hear you. Thank you.

EC: Good, good. Yes. I'm just above the Port of Dover and it's very cold, it's very windy, I hope you can see the port behind me. And just through the centre there is where lifeboats and Border Force vessels come in when they've intercepted dinghies out in the Channel and they bring those people and those dinghies in just up here on the right and bring them in to Dover Port. And we're here today because of that new legislation that is being proposed today, the Nationality and Borders bill, which is going to cover immigration and asylum. Basically, it's going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. So if it's approved, people could be imprisoned for up to four years, and that's up from six months previously. So this legislation is described by the Home Office as containing the most radical changes to the broken asylum system in decades. And it's basically going to make it harder for those who come across the channel in a dinghy to stay in the UK. Priti Patel, the home secretary says it's intended to fix the UK's broken asylum system. So it is just proposed legislation at this point. Like you say, it's going to be debated in the House of Commons today. And another point of the legislation that I thought was quite interesting is cracking down on people-smuggling gangs. Now, this is really big business over in France and in Belgium, people, human trafficking gangs are charging up to £10,000 for a seat on a dinghy. Those are dinghies that you or I could find in a sports shop for about £200 pounds. And they are packing those dinghies full of people. A French researcher said that back in 2018, you'd have an average of about seven people on a dinghy. In 2020, it was closer to 16. So you can imagine – I don't know if you can see how choppy those waters are behind me – but that is a perilous journey for 21 miles packed onto a dinghy that's really just meant for a lake or a river. It's not designed for a sea crossing. So Priti Patel says this is fair, but firm. She will welcome people through safe and legal routes. But this is about cracking down on illegal entry. Well, Labour has already said that they will oppose the bill. Their shadow home secretary, Nick Thomas-Symonds, says it's unconscionable and refugee charities are completely opposed to the proposals. They suggest that 9,000 people who might be able to come in at the moment be recognised as refugees would now no longer be able to be granted asylum because of the way that they entered.

NA: Ellie, this morning have any boats come in with people or what's the latest on the numbers of people who've come in over the last sort of few days or so?

EC: We wouldn't see anything at the moment, as you can see, it's very, very choppy. Usually when you see crossings, it's very early in the morning when the sea is flat. Last weekend, there were 300 people that crossed over. In June, it was a record breaking month: 2,000 people crossed over in the month of June. We did have some nice warm weather then.

That tends to be when the crossings happen. So this summer, it could actually be a record if we do get – and I hope we do – a nice sunny July and August, we could see an increase in crossings coming over here. But today, nothing yet.

KG: Ellie, for now, thanks very much. We'll check back in with you a bit later on. Thanks for that.

NA: Thank you. Well, we're joined by Steve Valdez-Symonds, Refugee and Migrants Director of Amnesty UK. Steve, what do you make of these tougher penalties and the rules?

STEVE VALDEZ-SYMONDS: Well, I mean, they're completely outrageous. This country is obligated, as are all countries, to provide protection to people fleeing persecution. And what our government is about to do is to seek to not fix our asylum system, actually to shut it down. There are no safe and legal routes for these people, just as there are generally no safe and legal routes for many people who must flee persecution. That is why refugee laws specifically prohibit penalising people for doing what they need to do, which is crossing borders without having permission in advance. And so I'm afraid what our government is about to do is to set itself as a pariah in the international community by turning its back on the obligations it shares with others.

NA: Steve, you say that they're turning their back on the obligations for others, but one of Priti Patel's points was that they shouldn't come from a safe place. So, if they come from somewhere like France, which is a safe place, why do they then need to come to the UK? I mean, surely that's a reasonable thing to say? They've come . . . they've left where they are, they've come to France. Why are they now getting a boat to the UK where they're already on safe territory?

SVS: Let's be absolutely clear. The people who make these journeys are not safe in France. France is a safe place for, as it happens, a very much larger number of people who claim asylum there and receive asylum there, very much larger than this country. But, for a very small proportion of people who seek asylum in France, they cannot get into the French asylum system. They are left in squalor, often face violence, including from local police in northern France. And for a number of them, they also have family and communities here. So it is perfectly reasonable for them to seek asylum here rather than in France.

NA: (*speaking over*) Well can't . . . why can't . . . sorry, Steve, why can't they do it the normal way then? If they're in France, surely they can apply for asylum in this country? I mean, or . . . I mean, I don't see what, you know . . . and then they also somehow have come up with £10,000 to get across, which . . .

SVS: With, with . . . with respect, there is no opportunity to claim asylum in this country unless you get here first. Those are this country's rules. They've been this country's rules for some decades now. It is not possible to claim asylum in the UK unless you get here. And there are no rules permitting you to make any journey for the purpose of coming here to claim asylum. So the only thing that's left are journeys like these, journeys which are not permitted, but they are the only means that you have to make the thing that you are entitled to do, which is claim asylum, but you must get here first.

NA: Look, I mean, do you not think that something needs to be done, though. I mean, are you saying that you should just leave it as it is and carry on as . . . what, what are you proposing instead of some of the changes that Priti Patel has put forward?

SVS: Well, for example, it would be much more helpful if people could claim asylum in the UK from France or from other countries, without having to make some of the extensive and dangerous journeys that they make and without putting money into the pockets of people who exploit them, such as the smugglers that you mention. We'd be all for that. But simply saying that, 'No, if you travel here, then you will be punished and penalised and potentially cast out and refused asylum, even though you are entitled to it.' And while at the same time making no

effort to provide for people who seek to make claims in this country with a means to do so safely and without relying on smugglers, that, I'm afraid, is just sheer hypocrisy.

NA: Steve, you say they're entitled to it, but the entitlement is once you've actually got permission to be in the country. The point is that these people are coming without a legal right to be here.

SVS: I'm really sorry, no. The entitlement is there in international law. It's been there for decades. This country even framed that international law. The entitlement is one that every person who flees persecution has, to seek and receive asylum in another country, including this one. And by the way, this country receives very few refugees, including from across the Channel. So I'm sorry to say, no, this is these people's right. And I'm afraid it is this government that is turning its back, reneging on its obligations.

NA: Well, I mean, I looked at the rules and it said that when you're in a safe country, that, that, that's the first port of call.

SVS: *(speaking over)* I'm sorry. Please show me that rule, because I have not only studied this area of law, I've practised it for many, many years. The rule that you have said does not exist. The immigration rules are there on the website. You can read them. The rules in international law sit at the Refugee Convention. So, yes, please, take me through the rules that you're referring to and I'll happily go through them with you. It's perfectly clear what the rules are . . .

NA: *(speaking over)* Well, I thought the rule, I thought . . . right . . . well, I thought the rule, you said, 'take you through the rule', so I thought the rule was that if you are in a safe country, that that you should claim asylum in the first country, rather than moving around to find a country that . . . is that not the rule? Because that, that's what I thought it was?

SVS: *(speaking over)* No, it is not the rule. And, indeed, the Refugee Convention makes clear that that is not the rule because otherwise what would happen? We would not have a sharing of responsibility. Responsibility would always fall, wouldn't it, on one poor particular country that just happened to be closest to where people have to flee from. Countries like this one presumably would never receive people seeking asylum because, mercifully, France is not in a situation of torturing its citizens and needing people to flee from it. But we don't have that rule, because the responsibility is shared and some people do, very few as it happens, but some people do seek asylum further afield, including here, where, indeed, many have family and community where they wish to be safe with.

NA: All right. Well, well, *(fragment of word, or word unclear)* thank you for that, Steve, anyway. I appreciate that and thanks for clarifying that as well, if that is the rule. But, you know, something does need to be done about the asylum system anyway. Steve, thank you very much for joining us. That's Steve Valdez-Symonds from Amnesty International, Amnesty UK.

### **6.55am Nationality and Borders Bill, Addendum.**

NANA AKUA: And I just wanted to come back to the asylum story, because Steve said that there was no way that people could claim asylum. But I'm looking on the government's website here and it says 'Claim asylum in the UK.' There's an overview, it tells you that you must apply for asylum if you want to stay in the UK as a refugee. It also says that to be eligible, you must have left your country and be unable to go back because your fear of persecution and then there's a section here and it explains how you do it. So I don't know what he was talking about, but there is a way of doing it. It's on the website and, you know, to my knowledge, I see that there. So if he could clarify, that would be interesting.

### **7.21am Nationality and Borders Bill**

NANA AKUA: Good morning. You're watching The Great British Breakfast, this is GB News. Now, the government has vowed to reform the UK's asylum system and is preparing to put forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons. The proposed legislation under the Nationality and Borders Bill is due to be introduced to parliament later today and then we'll hear more details. Our south east of England reporter Ellie Costello is in Dover Port this morning. Ellie, what can you see from where you are?

ELLIE COSTELLO: Good morning, yes, from a very cold and a very windy Dover Port this morning. You might be able to see the sea is really rough today, you can see the waves crashing against the coast. I don't think we're going to be seeing any dinghies out on the Channel today. This is the strait just behind me. This is where Border Force vessels and lifeboats usually bring in people that they've rescued from dinghies. And I can see two Border Force vessels there. They haven't even gone out today. I assume the sea is too rough for crossing. So not a lot to see here in Dover today with the conditions the way they are. But we're here because of new proposed legislation that is going to be debated in the House of Commons today. It's called the Nationality and Borders Bill, and it covers immigration and asylum. Basically it's going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. And if approved, people could be imprisoned for coming here without permission. They could be imprisoned for up to four years – that was just six months previously. It's described by the Home Office as some of the most radical changes to the broken asylum system in decades. Priti Patel says it needs fixing. So it's just proposed legislation at this point. It's going to be debated in the House of Commons today. Another thing that's proposed in the legislation is a crackdown on illegal human trafficking gangs that operate in France and Belgium. They are bringing people over on those dinghies, those really unsafe dinghies there, probably about £200, £300 pounds in a sports shop. They are packing them full of people, 16 people sometimes on a dinghy and crossing them over 25 miles of what, you can see, can be really, really rough choppy waters. It's very dangerous, the risk of drowning is high. A risk of hypothermia is high as well. Well, under this new legislation, people who are found guilty of bringing people over, of human trafficking, could serve life in prison. And that was 14 years previously. So very harsh sentences. But this is part of cracking down on people coming here without permission and also people who are smuggling asylum seekers and refugees. And so Priti Patel says, the home secretary says, this is a fair but firm. But the response from Labour, they've already said they're going to oppose the bill. The shadow home secretary, Nick Thomas-Symonds says it's unconscionable and refugee charities are completely opposed to the proposals. They are calling on the Home Office to give safe routes and safe passage to people who want to cross over to this country and claim asylum.

NA: Thank you Ellie for that, that's interesting stuff. We'll find out more from Priti Patel later on.

## **8.22am Nationality and Borders Bill**

NANA AKUA: Good morning. You're watching GB News. It's The Great British Breakfast. Now the government has vowed to reform the UK's asylum system and is preparing to put forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons. The proposed legislation under the Nationality and Borders Bill is due to be introduced to parliament later today. And then we'll hear more details as south east of England. Reporter Ellie Costello is in Dover Port this morning. And what can you say about what's going on and what can you see from where you are?

ELLIE COSTELLO: Hi. I can't really see a lot, to be honest with you this morning, as you can see, the conditions here are really, really bad. The sea looks quite treacherous today. The waves are crashing up there just on the coast. We actually just had a dog walker walk past us and said, 'You're not going to see anything today.' Usually at this time of the morning, we were here about five o'clock, you would see Border Force and lifeboats bring people and dinghies up this sort of central strait here, people that they've rescued from dinghies out in the Channel. That isn't the case this morning. The conditions are too poor for dinghies to even be out on the Channel. The Border Force boats are still very much parked up. They haven't even



gone out today. So that's not what we're going to see today. But we're here because of new proposed legislation. It's called the Nationality and Borders Bill and it's going to cover immigration and asylum. Basically, it's going to make it a criminal offence for people to come to the UK without permission. And previously, if you came to the UK without permission, you could serve six months in prison. Under this new legislation, it could go up to four years. There's also, in the legislation, it also involves trafficking gangs, people in France and Belgium who are bringing these people here into Dover on dinghies and in small boats. They can charge up to £10,000 per seat in those dinghies, those dinghies are not (*fragment of word, unclear*) not equipped for these kind of conditions out here. It's really, really dangerous for people crossing. There's a high risk of drowning and of hypothermia as well. And people who are found guilty of trafficking people on small boats into Britain could now face a life sentence in prison – and previously that was 14 years. So it's a really tough bill that is being debated in the House of Commons today. Priti Patel, home secretary, says it's fair but firm. But Labour have already said they will oppose the bill, with shadow home secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds calling it unconscionable. Refugee charities are also both opposed to the proposals, they say it's inhumane. And this is a big issue for people that are living here, especially down by the docks. I was here a few weeks ago and lots of people were talking to me down on the street about how they feel watching these . . . these boats come in every day with people that Border Force and lifeboats have saved that morning. People were happy to speak to me off record, but it was really difficult to get people on camera. But this is a huge issue for people down here, a contentious issue and a very divisive one, too. Last year, 8,500 people crossed the Channel in small boats, and already this year, nearly 6,000 people have already done so. In June, it was a record-breaking month, 2,000 people came over in the month of June. So if we do have fantastic weather this summer, it doesn't look like it today, but if we have a great July and August, we could actually see the highest number of people coming over in small boats than there's ever been before.

NA: Thank you very much for talking to us about that. Interesting. That story will run, we'll be finding out more about what will actually be happening.

## GB News, Brazier & Muroki

*Presented by Darren Caffrey and Mercy Muroki*

### 9am Headlines

DARREN CAFFREY: Coming up, a crackdown in the Channel as home secretary Priti Patel will announce her plans for harsher sentences to deter illegal migration in the House of Commons later this morning. Our reporter, Ellie Costello is in Dover with the latest.

### 10.27am Nationality and Borders Bill

MERCY MUROKI: Well, welcome back to GB News. Priti Patel, the home secretary, and the government are introducing the new Nationality and Borders Bill into parliament today. The legislation is intended really to crack down on illegal migrant crossing channels . . . er, crossing across the Channel and reform the asylum system. Priti Patel's hoping to include provisions in there really to do things like send migrants, potentially illegal migrants, to offshore processing centres abroad. And she also wants to make it illegal to claim asylum once people have arrived in this country, if they have passed through a safe country such as France. And we have Ellie Costello with us, one of our reporters, who is on the coast there, very windy Ellie. Ellie, what can you tell us about these measures Priti Patel is introducing? And what have you been seeing where you are today?

ELLIE COSTELLO: Yes, hello, good morning from a very wet, very windy Dover, very bad conditions out on the sea today. I was hoping that we could show you Border Force bringing in some people that they perhaps had rescued from dinghies. That's often what we see down here in the early hours of the morning. We've been here since 5 a.m. And this strait

just behind me here is where Border Force and lifeboats often come in, having rescued people from the Channel. But that's not the case today. As you can see, the conditions are really, really bad. The waves are crashing up against the coast over there. They're really high. There's just one ferry that we can see out there, so there's no migrants coming across today, it doesn't look like at least. A dog walker just walked past and said, 'You're not seeing anything today.' But we're here to talk about the Nationality and Borders Bill, which covers immigration and asylum. Basically, it is going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. Now, previously, if you did arrive in the UK without permission, perhaps on a dinghy here through Dover, you could serve up to six months in prison. Under this new legislation, it could be four years. Another really interesting thing in this legislation, which, you know, is proposed at this point, is going to be debated in the House of Commons today, but something else I thought was quite interesting is targeting human trafficking gangs. They are huge business over in France and Belgium. They charge between four and ten thousand pounds for a seat on one of those dinghies. So desperate people will pay that money in order to get across the Channel here to the UK. But it is a perilous journey. I mean, as you can see, the waters are so choppy if you're in a dinghy – and those dinghies are, you know, what we would get in a sports shop for £200, £300 – they are putting their children and their own lives into the trust of that dinghy, which is not built for conditions like what we're seeing today. This is a huge topic for people here in the south east, especially here in Dover, I'm hoping to spend a lot of time here this summer. But I came down a few weeks ago and I was speaking to people about how they felt about migrants coming through on dinghies. Most mornings, they say, it's a very frequent occurrence. Lots of people would speak to me off the record, not many people wanted to speak on camera. So it's a really divisive political issue here. In 2020, last year, 8,500 people crossed the Channel in small boats and in 2021, so far this year, nearly 6,000 people have already made that journey. In June, 2000 people made that journey, that's the highest record in a month so far. And the thoughts are, obviously not today, but if the weather gets better in July and August and when that sea is flat, that's when we'll see a record number of asylum seekers and refugees trying to cross the Channel and come here.

DC: Ellie, I'm just going to pick up what you just said there about people not talking to you on the record. But what are they saying to you off the record at least, or not on camera? What is the feeling there in Dover about this? Because in many ways, they . . . they are on the front line, aren't they?

EC: Yes, completely. I actually came down here, this is the first place I came to when I started at GB News, I came down here for reccy, if you will, to try and get a sense of how people feel about immigration, about migration, about refugees coming in to Dover, I know it's a huge issue. One of the ladies that I spoke to said that she actually saw a boat pull up on Deal Coast . . .

MM: (*Thinking she's off-mic*) How long have we got on this?

EC: . . . just up that way, and it was filled with . . . with men. She found it quite distressing. They were later picked up by police. She says, you know, she is completely sympathetic to refugees coming to this country if they're here with their families to make a better life, but that experience really shook her. She didn't want to share that experience on camera, but that's something that she told me. I also spoke to another lady who worked at a cafe with a man who had come here from Syria and created a new life with his family. He pays his taxes. He's a fully-fledged member of society that contributes to this local community. So there's definitely a lot of thought and feeling and emotion on both sides. But unfortunately, with the issue of migration, it's not easy or a magic answer (*sic*).

MM: Thank you Ellie, Ellie Costello there, out South East Reporter. And go get yourself a warm drink.

DC: Yeah, a nice . . .

MM: *(speaking over)* And get, get inside.

DC: A nice . . . a nice cup of tea I think is . . .

MM: Yeah.

DC: . . . well-deserved there, in a very, very blustery Dover this morning. Weather very not pleasant in most parts of the country.

MM: Yeah.

DC: You kind of . . . you're kind of a fan of these measures, is it fair to say?

MM: I mean, I think 'a fan' would be a strong word . . .

DC: *(speaking over)* Or a . . . a supporter?

MM: *(speaking over)* I, I . . . I support having stronger measures to tackle illegal immigration. You know, of course, we don't need to get into the fact, yes, they're vulnerable people and of course, they're flee-- . . . they're fleeing, okay, France often, which I think part of the argument is, if you're coming from a safe country then you don't have much a convincing case to be risking your life to come to England, if you're coming from France. Obviously something people disagree with. But I just think, yes, we need to crack down on illegal immigration. Yes, because of the fact it's a criminal, you know, trade, these people smugglers, but also because I think the more we . . . the less we control migration, the flow of migration to this country and particularly illegal migration, the more people in society build up resentment against migrants, build up a resentment against illegal migr—

DC: *(speaking over)* But we are still talking about . . .

MM: *(speaking over)* And it harms . . .

DC: . . . relatively small numbers, though, in terms of the illegal migrants crossing across the Channel, often in desperate situations. As you say, they are literally risking their lives.

MM: Yeah.

DC: But 8,500 out of net migration figures that we normally see running into the hundreds of thousands, we, we . . . we shouldn't lose context of the fact that these are still relatively small numbers.

MM: No, I don't take the argument and I know we had somebody on on the Breakfast Show from . . . not Migration Watch . . . Amnesty, we had somebody on from Amnesty earlier. And he was arguing, well France and all these other European countries, they take way more than us. But I don't care about France, so to speak. I'm a British citizen and I care about the, erm . . . you know, the laws of this country. And I care that people have a need to feel like they have control of immigration into this country. What France does is up to France and the French people, so . . .

DC: *(word or words unclear)* that's to see. Well, I'm sure you've got a view on this . . .

MM: Yeah.

DC: Particularly, also, if you do live on the coast down in Dover, get in touch at GB News . . . or GBviews@GBnews.uk

## 10.58am Viewer's Email

MERCY MUROKI: I've just had an email here from Sue who said – this is in relation to the government tightening immigration controls, particularly for illegal migration and asylum, bringing in that Nationality and Borders Bill later, and Sue says, 'My husband had to have a job secured and a work visa renewed annually and a certain amount of money or a sponsor to enter this country from a commonwealth country in the sixties. And he considered open borders crazy.' She goes on to say he is now passed, sadly, but he voted UKIP in 2015. Erm . . . you know, it goes to show, I think – and this is something I relate with when people tell me things like this, because the same thing happened to my mum who lived in this country for years and years and years, yes, from a Commonwealth country. But the amount of hoops she had to jump through to prove that she was entitled to live in this country as much as a European who just happened to arrive onto British shores that day was insane, the amount of money she had to spend sort of going through the system. And so when people say, you know . . . actually it's about a sense of fairness. You know, there are a lot of people who aren't . . . aren't from this country, and who think open borders are crazy, because we just think, you know, what we want is not just for everybody to come in. We don't want you to make it easier for us. We just want a fair immigration system.

DC: (speaking over) There's no . . . there's no, there's no suggestion, though, that we have open borders, is there?

MM: No, there's no suggestion. I mean, that's one, one view, I think . . .

DC: Yeah.

MM: . . . perhaps she's suggesting that lax immigration is crazy. Perhaps EU immigration, when we were still in the . . . in the European Union, could be classed as open borders for EU citizens.

DC: Well, let us know what you think about that this morning, whether it's on immigration, whether it's on mask wearing and the opening up of restrictions. Clearly a big debate about that taking place.

## 11.40am Discussion with GB News Presenter Alex Phillips

*First part of discussion is on Vauxhall investment in Ellesmere Port;*

MERCY MUROKI: Well, another story we've touched on across today is, of course, this Nationality and Borders Bill, which the government are bringing in, trying to make it harder for illegal migrants to come to this country and to claim asylum. Essentially, they come from a safe country, to make it illegal. There'll be provisions in this bill to make it illegal to come here without permission, essentially.

ALEX PHILLIPS: Well, you've got . . .

MM: (speaking over) And face a jail term of up to four years. She's increasing that from six months. Obviously, you were with the Brexit Party. You were formerly, years and years ago, UKIP.

AP: Hmm.

MM: This is obviously an issue very close to your heart and at the centre of your political career.

AP: (speaking over) You used the right wording when you said 'illegal migrants', you know, you can't just rock up in any old country and say, 'I want to live here now. It's better than my

own.' There are grounds upon which you should make a case to say that, 'I need asylum, refugee status', so on and so forth. And I think any country has the right to protect its borders. And there will be people coming over from war-torn countries, you know, places in the Middle East, from, you know, countries that suffer extreme poverty. And you can't blame them for saying, 'I want to rebuild a better life.' But, you know, a lot of the people who are coming out of these countries are paying traffickers huge amounts of money who are, essentially, it's a huge international criminal network, usually tied to things like terrorism, drugs cartels, all sorts. You know, these aren't nice people. And they're paying vast sums of money. These aren't the poorest from those countries. Those aren't the most vulnerable. In fact, it's basically the country's middle classes. And you've got African presidents now, like Akufo-Addo of Ghana saying, 'Actually this needs to change. We're . . . we're losing young men who we need to work in our country and build up our economy, people with skills, people, you know, who could be our doctors, our lawyers, our teachers.' Instead, they're paying money to traffickers and getting on boats because they're told that there's this amazing life and all these opportunities and the reality when a lot of people get here isn't . . . isn't that.

DC: (speaking over) If you were in . . . if you were in their circumstances, would you not do the same?

AP: Yes. Oh, no, of course I would. No, I totally sympathise in that respect. And like I said, you can't blame anyone for saying, 'I want to move to a country that I think is perceptibly better than mine, where I can make a life for myself and become prosperous.' But like I said, the reality for a lot of people isn't that when they arrive, because they're not going through the formal route, they haven't got job security when they get here, they're often in the hands of criminals, these (word or words unclear) don't care about their lives.

MM: (speaking over) But the, the . . . the way you've framed it there sounds you know, you mentioned they're in the hands of criminals, they get kind of almost sold lots of fibs about what will happen when they come to this country. And some people might say, 'Well, exactly, they're, they're vulnerable. They're almost victims of this criminal enterprise.' And so to then come here and criminalise them by sending to jail, some people will say, 'That's far too harsh. You're adding insult to injury for no good reason.'

AP: It's difficult. How do you police this? How do you stop this issue? I mean, look, we've had about 6,000 people already this year make the passage across the Channel into England. By and large, I think the vast majority are not what you'd call refugees. I keep hearing when people are speaking about this today in the media, you know, bleeding hearts saying, 'Well, they're escaping persecution, they're es—a . . .' I'm like, from whom? When you look at these boats of young men, a lot of them are coming from countries where, arguably they are not being persecuted. And again . . .

DC: (speaking over) (fragments of words, unclear)

AP: . . . they are not the most vulnerable in their society. They are not the women and the children.

DC: (speaking over) They are relatively small numbers. I mean, we saw 8,000 last year, like, in the grand scheme of things, you know, when you look at net migration that runs into hundreds of thousands every year, they are still very small numbers, aren't they?

AP: Yeah, I think if you if you were going to look in the sort of wider picture of all the immigration, you know, net immigration into the country, then yeah, it is a small . . .

MM: (speaking over) But I don't take that argument, because those people come here legally. I mean, surely the crucial, crucial distinction between this net migration figure and the number of people coming here illegally. Those people come here under British law made by British lawmakers, the people who come here legally. And so, you know . . .

DC: No, I'm not disagreeing with that, I'm just saying . . . but you could focus on this issue too . . . way you much to make it sound like, as some have, that Britain's being invaded sometimes, couldn't you?

AP: Well, the problem . . . the problem, yeah, I wouldn't . . . I wouldn't go down that road personally. I know . . . I know who you're talking about, *(laughs)* erm, but . . .

MM: *(speaking over)* Couldn't possibly *(word or words unclear)*

AP: *(speaking over)* *(word or words unclear)* my old boss. Erm, I do think, though, this has to be tackled because, you know, people trafficking is a very serious crime and people die, people die, and they're giving thousands of pounds to hardened criminals to make that passage. And so something has to be done. You can't just ignore it. You can't say. . . and actually, the problem is, of course, if you're not tough about this and say, 'Look, if you get here illegally, you're not going to be legally allowed to remain,' then actually the people traffickers have got an incentive to carry on and more people, you know, will continue making perilous voyages. And a country has to manage its borders. I mean, on a broader scale, when it comes to immigration, I'd like to see something a bit more akin to the Australian points-based system where we can work sector by sector and look where our need is. At the moment, we've got coming up to a million vacancies. You know, we've got a special visa now for international scientists. I think that's a great move. We're clearly going to need to bring in workers for, you know, the health sector, for hospitality, you know, arguably for construction work again. There's many sectors that we're going to probably need people to . . .

DC: *(speaking over)* *(fragment of word, or word unclear)* And, and isn't . . . isn't it amazing that, even though, like, Brexit's proved kind of one of the biggest issues over the last kind of couple of years, sorry . . . around the Brexit referendum, that actually, recently, it's really ebbed off the political map to the point where when you ask people what's their main issue, immigration has gone from, like, number one and number two right down the line, so it's probably less of an issue. Alex, as always, thanks very much. On air from 3 to 6 today with Simon. Thank you.

AP: Thank you.

## GB News, De Piero and Halligan

**12.06pm**

GLORIA DE PIERO: Now, it's one of those eternal political dilemmas and very much on the front pages of the papers, asylum and legal immigration - two very separate things, of course. But I know from my time as an MP the passions that they stir.

LIAM HALLIGAN: They certainly do. And the government's vowed to reform the UK's asylum system today and is preparing to put forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons.

GDP: The proposed legislation under the Nationality and Borders Bill is due to be introduced to parliament later today, and then we'll get more details.

LH: According to research by the Times newspaper, more than 6,600 migrants have arrived this year across the Channel via small boats. That includes 404 last weekend alone.

GDP: Last year, there were 8,420 crossings and experts reckon 2021 is on course to exceed that.

LH: That's right, because the main months for crossing are the summer months of July and August and into September.

GDP: Our south east of England reporter Ellie Costello is in the Dover port this morning. Ellie, what can you tell us from where you are? What can you see?

ELLIE COSTELLO: Hi, Gloria and Liam, yes, a very windy, very cold Dover Port today, you'd never believe we're in July. And like you said, you'd usually see lots of crossings happening behind me. What usually happens is this middle strait here, there's Border Force boats here, you can see them. They're parked up, they haven't moved today. And there's lifeboats here that also haven't moved. The sea is so rough and choppy, the waters are really, really rough today, so there's no crossings happening today. But usually in July and August, what you would see is the Border Force boats and lifeboats coming down this middle strait, bringing people that they have rescued from dinghies that have tried to cross over from the Channel (*sic*) and they've brought in here. That is obviously . . . isn't happening today. But we are here to talk about the Nationality and Borders Bill, which kind of covers immigration and asylum as a whole. It is basically going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. So people getting in those dinghies and coming here without permission were previously facing or are currently facing six months in prison. That could go up to four years in prison if they are caught. Another thing I think is very, very interesting in this proposed legislation is kind of tackling a range of human trafficking gangs. These this is a huge business in France and Belgium. People charge £4,000, £5,000, sometimes even £10,000 for a seat in one of those dinghies that then comes across to the UK. Those dinghies are not fit for purpose. They're what we would find in sports shops, for maybe £200 or £300 pounds. But these dinghies are packed full of people. There's a French researcher who released a study a few months ago. He said back in 2018, there was an average of seven people on a dinghy. Now it's about 16. But there have been dinghies seen outside Dover with up to 30 or 40 people packed onto them. And they're just not fit for purpose. Labour has already said they're going to oppose this bill and refugee charities are absolutely distraught at the idea that this could come into force. They estimate that 9,000 people a year who are currently accepted as refugees because they are fleeing persecution in their home countries could now not be granted asylum because of the way that they came into this country. So they say it simply cannot happen. So at the moment, this is just proposed legislation, it's going to be debated in the House of Commons today, but clearly a very fraught, very emotional, divisive issue here in Dover.

LH: Thank you for that, Ellie, very comprehensive update there. Priti Patel, the home secretary, in the newspapers today, she's been trying to focus on the human dangers involved in making these cross-channel passages in small boats, as you say. And also, she's targeting the trafficking gangs. She calls it 'a sickening trade in humans by vile gangs'. You've been down there reporting for a while. How do you think the home secretary's words will go down there in Dover, as opposed to in the House of Commons when this legislation is debated?

EC: This is an issue here in Dover that they see every single day, Dover is the first place that I came to when I started reporting for GB News, I came here on a reccy, if you will. I wanted to hear what people thought about illegal migration and refugees trying to come here for a better life. And it's really, really divisive. I spoke to a lady who said that she was walking with her daughter on Deal Beach, which is just up that way, and she said that a boat arrived, there was a boat landing and it was full of young men and it really distressed her, it really upset her and she left the beach with her daughter. She said she has huge sympathies for families that are coming here to start a better life, but that isn't what she wants to see happening. She worries about her tax payers' money supporting men that are coming here illegally. And then I spoke to another lady just down at the beach front earlier who said that she's . . . she works in a cafe with a man from Syria who's come here with his family. And he is an integrated part of society, he pays his taxes, he's law abiding, and she is just so happy to know him and really thinks he's just such a benefit to our society. So it's a hugely emotional, divisive issue. And when I did speak to that lady on Deal Beach, she said, 'If you speak to local people here, it's a lot different from other people in the UK, perhaps, because what they do

see in July and August, obviously not today, but they do see those Border Force boats going out and bringing back the dinghies with asylum seekers and migrants on them. And that is an emotive thing for people to see every day. So, you know, the migrant crisis is a really, really difficult topic. And unfortunately, there is no easy or magic answer.

LH: Ellie Costello there, GB News South East Correspondent, reporting from Dover, thank you, Ellie.

GDP: We are now joined by our own Inaya to tell us a bit more about this. There's one thing that I can't get my head around. Why don't people, rather than risking their lives by travelling on dinghies, we have obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention, so why don't people use legal means to seek asylum here, which they are entitled to do?

INAYA FOLARIN IMAN *GB News Presenter*: I think that's a very good question. I mean, as Ellie alluded to, a lot of the time, these people smugglers sell them a dream. You know, they say, 'If you pay this amount of money we will, we will make sure that you are able to get asylum, we'll . . . we'll protect you all of the way there.' And they sell them this . . . this narrative, which is incredibly convincing. So many of those people don't take the options that are available and think that this might be an easier way to actually get into Britain. And obviously, that is a lie that is told in order to allow those people to pay thousands upon thousands of pounds, make this incredibly unsafe journey that actually causes lots of people to lose their lives. And actually, when they arrive in Britain, they're actually often ending up in an incredibly precarious situation. You know, they're not allowed to . . . to work. They may be vulnerable to criminal gangs in the UK as well. So I think a lot of it is, part of this narrative, which is sort of those people incorrectly by many of the people smugglers.

LH: I think Gloria's put her finger on it. The key to this debate is the distinction between economic migration and asylum seeking. You know, the UK has an honourable record of granting asylum, from the Second World War, the . . . you know, Priti Patel's own family are part of a generation of Ugandan . . .

IFI: Asians, yeah.

LH: . . . Indians, Asians who came to the UK in the 70s seeking asylum, rightly. I guess, that she feels and some others in government may feel that a lot of these people wouldn't actually qualify for asylum, because they're coming from relatively safe countries, albeit company . . . countries which aren't as economically advantaged as the UK, right?

IFI: Absolutely. I mean, 74% of the people that are travelling are actually men between the ages of 18 and 34. So oftentimes people argue that that isn't necessarily the most vulnerable group, we're not talking about elderly people a lot of the time, we're not talking about women and children. The overwhelming majority are men. And if you look at many of the countries, the top countries is: Iran, Albania, Eritrea – these aren't necessarily the countries that people imagine are experiencing the most difficulty. Absolutely those countries are facing political instability and challenges, but we're not necessarily always talking about Syria and places like that that are having immediate war-torn situations at the moment. So I think that actually, when we look at a lot of the statistics, it doesn't necessarily stack up to all the time these individuals that are incredibly vulnerable from . . . from war-torn countries making this journey. Oftentimes it is young men paying thousands and thousands of pounds, which you often do wonder where they, often, get that money from.

GP: Inaya, thank you so much for joining us. You're around all day to help us understand the moves. And thank you so much.

## **1.25pm Nationality and Borders Bill**



GLORIA DE PIERO: Now, the government has vowed to reform the UK's asylum system and is preparing to put forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons.

LIAM HALLIGAN: The proposed legislation under the Nationality and Borders Bill is due to be introduced to the Commons later today, and then we'll hear more details.

GDP: According to research by The Times, more than 6,600 migrants have arrived this year via small boat.

LH: That includes 404 last weekend alone.

GDP: Last year they were 8,420 crossings and experts reckon 2021 is on course to exceed that.

LH: Now, our south east of England reporter Ellie Costello has more on this, and has sent us this report from Dover.

ELLIE COSTELLO: Like you said, you'd usually see lots of crossings happening behind me. What usually happens is this middle strait here, there's Border Force boats here, you can see them. They're parked up, they haven't moved today. And there's lifeboats here that also haven't moved. The sea is so rough and choppy, the waters are really, really rough today, so there's no crossings happening today. But usually in July and August, what you would see is the Border Force boats and lifeboats coming down this middle strait, bringing people that they have rescued from dinghies that have tried to cross over from the Channel (sic) and they've brought in here. That is obviously . . . isn't happening today. But we are here to talk about the Nationality and Borders Bill, which kind of covers immigration and asylum as a whole. It is basically going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. So people getting in those dinghies and coming here without permission were previously facing or are currently facing six months in prison. That could go up to four years in prison if they are caught. Another thing I think is very, very interesting in this proposed legislation is kind of tackling a range of human trafficking gangs. These this is a huge business in France and Belgium. People charge £4,000, £5,000, sometimes even £10,000 for a seat in one of those dinghies that then comes across to the UK. Those dinghies are not fit for purpose. They're what we would find in sports shops, for maybe £200 or £300 pounds. But these dinghies are packed full of people. There's a French researcher who released a study a few months ago. He said back in 2018, there was an average of seven people on a dinghy. Now it's about 16. But there have been dinghies seen outside Dover with up to 30 or 40 people packed onto them. And they're just not fit for purpose. Labour has already said they're going to oppose this bill and refugee charities are absolutely distraught at the idea that this could come into force. They estimate that 9,000 people a year who are currently accepted as refugees because they are fleeing persecution in their home countries could now not be granted asylum because of the way that they came into this country. So they say it simply cannot happen. So at the moment, this is just proposed legislation, it's going to be debated in the House of Commons today, but clearly a very fraught, very emotional, divisive issue here in Dover.

LH: Thank you for that, Ellie, very comprehensive update there. Priti Patel, the home secretary, in the newspapers today, she's been trying to focus on the human dangers involved in making these cross-channel passages in small boats, as you say. And also, she's targeting the trafficking gangs. She calls it 'a sickening trade in humans by vile gangs'. You've been down there reporting for a while. How do you think the home secretary's words will go down there in Dover, as opposed to in the House of Commons when this legislation is debated?

EC: This is an issue here in Dover that they see every single day, Dover is the first place that I came to when I started reporting for GB News, I came here on a reccy, if you will. I wanted to hear what people thought about illegal migration and refugees trying to come here for a better life. And it's really, really divisive. I spoke to a lady who said that she was walking with her daughter on Deal Beach, which is just up that way, and she said that a boat

arrived, there was a boat landing and it was full of young men and it really distressed her, it really upset her and she left the beach with her daughter. She said she has huge sympathies for families that are coming here to start a better life, but that isn't what she wants to see happening. She worries about her tax payers' money supporting men that are coming here illegally. And then I spoke to another lady just down at the beach front earlier who said that she's . . . she works in a cafe with a man from Syria who's come here with his family. And he is an integrated part of society, he pays his taxes, he's law abiding, and she is just so happy to know him and really thinks he's just such a benefit to our society. So it's a hugely emotional, divisive issue. And when I did speak to that lady on Deal Beach, she said, 'If you speak to local people here, it's a lot different from other people in the UK, perhaps, because what they do see in July and August, obviously not today, but they do see those Border Force boats going out and bringing back the dinghies with asylum seekers and migrants on them. And that is an emotive thing for people to see every day. So, you know, the migrant crisis is a really, really difficult topic. And unfortunately, there is no easy or magic answer.

LH: Ellie Costello there reporting for GB News from Dover earlier.

GDP: Joining us now is our very own Inaya Folarin Imam. Hello. Why are campaigners angry about these proposals?

INAYA FOLARIN IMAN *GB News Presenter*: Well, this bill is expected to get a lot of pushback from campaigners such as Red Cross and the Refugee Council. What they're arguing is essentially that this is effectively a deflection. The problem with illegal migration isn't what is being described by the Home Office. They're saying that the UK doesn't accept asylum applications made outside of the country. And so there aren't actually legal routes for people that want to make that application to come here. There's the UK Global Settlement Scheme, which only accepts 5,000 people and that actually was shut down in March 2020 due to Covid. So campaigners are saying that essentially there aren't legal routes to come here. So it's that policy, not actually what the Home Office is talking about, that is making it more likely that people are going to take those illegal routes to get to the UK.

LH: We spoke earlier, didn't we, the three of us, about the key distinction between economic migration and seeking asylum. And of course, this country has an honourable record in granting asylum over the years and decades. I think, correct me if I'm wrong, Inaya, what Priti Patel is trying to do is to introduce two classifications of asylum. So asylum under the UN definition, where people apply from outside, from areas where there is genuine persecution, war zones, political persecution and so on – as opposed to people coming here and seeking asylum when they've arrived. Those people who may be suspected of merely being economic migrants and I use the word 'merely' advisedly, I'm from a family of economic migrants, one generation ago, so I can see how difficult these issues are.

IFI: Yeah, obviously, she wants to present this as tough new measures, as a range of things that are involved, making it a new crime to enter the country illegally and increasing the prison sentence, the maximum prison sentence for people that are people smuggling and also taking into account whether you came here legally or illegally in your asylum application. So these are some of the measures that are being proposed in order to, essentially, what she argues, break or destroy the economic model of these people smugglers. Because actually what is found is many of these people smugglers are linked to drugs and trafficking of many different types. And actually what they do is tie many of those people taking that journey into those much more unsafe and criminal behaviour, actually making them live a much more precarious and dangerous situation when they arrive in the UK. So these are the proposals. But whether or not they will be effective obviously remains to be seen. And it is expected that campaigners are going to be pushing back against this quite hard.

GDP: The Law Society, actually, have warned that the plans were likely to breach UK obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention. But, you know, these things are difficult. And I think wherever you stand on this debate, nobody . . . nobody wants to see people going into

dinghies and risking their lives to cross the Channel. I think everybody in Britain agrees that that is wrong. How we resolve it is a bit more contentious.

LH: As we heard . . . as we heard from Ellie earlier, I mean, Gloria says there's going to be pushback from many campaign groups like the Law Society of England, but there's also going to be push back in the House of Commons, isn't there? We expect Labour to oppose this legislation. I mean, is the government in danger of losing this legislation, do you think? I mean, what do we all think about that? It won't take many Tories to rebel, will it?

IFI: Well, I think that this is one of the things that has mired the Conservative Party for a number of years. I mean, under the Theresa May (*sic*), we had the hostile environment policy . . .

LH: Yeah.

IFI: . . . which actually was, according to the polls, supported by the British government (*sic*, means 'public'?) but it did lead to, some might argue, the Windrush scandal, which was incredibly controversial. So anything in relation to issues like immigration often has a lot of pushback and a lot of challenges.

GDP: Inaya, sorry to cut your short, fascinating as ever, we're expecting an announcement, in fact, we do know that Gavin Williamson is on his feet. And we're going to cross live to the House of Commons now.

*Moves on to live from House of Commons on Covid restrictions.*

## **2.46pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

GLORIA DE PIERO: Now, the government has vowed to reform the UK's asylum system and is preparing to put forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons.

LIAM HALLIGAN: The proposed legislation under the Nationality and Borders Bill is due to be introduced to parliament later today, and that's when we'll see all the details.

GDP: According to research by The Times, more than 6,600 migrants have arrived this year via small boat.

LH: That includes 404 last weekend alone.

GDP: Last year they were 8,420 crossings and experts reckon 2021 is on course to exceed that.

LH: Now, our south east of England reporter Ellie Costello has more on this, and she sent this report earlier from Dover.

ELLIE COSTELLO: Like you said, you'd usually see lots of crossings happening behind me. What usually happens is this middle strait here, there's Border Force boats here, you can see them. They're parked up, they haven't moved today. And there's lifeboats here that also haven't moved. The sea is so rough and choppy, the waters are really, really rough today, so there's no crossings happening today. But usually in July and August, what you would see is the Border Force boats and lifeboats coming down this middle strait, bringing people that they have rescued from dinghies that have tried to cross over from the Channel (*sic*) and they've brought in here. That is obviously . . . isn't happening today. But we are here to talk about the Nationality and Borders Bill, which kind of covers immigration and asylum as a whole. It is basically going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. So people getting in those dinghies and coming here without permission were previously facing or are currently facing six months in prison. That could go up to four years in prison if they are

caught. Another thing I think is very, very interesting in this proposed legislation is kind of tackling a range of human trafficking gangs. These this is a huge business in France and Belgium. People charge £4,000, £5,000, sometimes even £10,000 for a seat in one of those dinghies that then comes across to the UK. Those dinghies are not fit for purpose. They're what we would find in sports shops, for maybe £200 or £300 pounds. But these dinghies are packed full of people. There's a French researcher who released a study a few months ago. He said back in 2018, there was an average of seven people on a dinghy. Now it's about 16. But there have been dinghies seen outside Dover with up to 30 or 40 people packed onto them. And they're just not fit for purpose. Labour has already said they're going to oppose this bill and refugee charities are absolutely distraught at the idea that this could come into force. They estimate that 9,000 people a year who are currently accepted as refugees because they are fleeing persecution in their home countries could now not be granted asylum because of the way that they came into this country. So they say it simply cannot happen. So at the moment, this is just proposed legislation, it's going to be debated in the House of Commons today, but clearly a very fraught, very emotional, divisive issue here in Dover.

LH: Thank you for that, Ellie, very comprehensive update there. Priti Patel, the home secretary, in the newspapers today, she's been trying to focus on the human dangers involved in making these cross-channel passages in small boats, as you say. And also, she's targeting the trafficking gangs. She calls it 'a sickening trade in humans by vile gangs'. You've been down there reporting for a while. How do you think the home secretary's words will go down there in Dover, as opposed to in the House of Commons when this legislation is debated?

EC: This is an issue here in Dover that they see every single day, Dover is the first place that I came to when I started reporting for GB News, I came here on a reccy, if you will. I wanted to hear what people thought about illegal migration and refugees trying to come here for a better life. And it's really, really divisive. I spoke to a lady who said that she was walking with her daughter on Deal Beach, which is just up that way, and she said that a boat arrived, there was a boat landing and it was full of young men and it really distressed her, it really upset her and she left the beach with her daughter. She said she has huge sympathies for families that are coming here to start a better life, but that isn't what she wants to see happening. She worries about her tax payers' money supporting men that are coming here illegally. And then I spoke to another lady just down at the beach front earlier who said that she's . . . she works in a cafe with a man from Syria who's come here with his family. And he is an integrated part of society, he pays his taxes, he's law abiding, and she is just so happy to know him and really thinks he's just such a benefit to our society. So it's a hugely emotional, divisive issue. And when I did speak to that lady on Deal Beach, she said, 'If you speak to local people here, it's a lot different from other people in the UK, perhaps, because what they do see in July and August, obviously not today, but they do see those Border Force boats going out and bringing back the dinghies with asylum seekers and migrants on them. And that is an emotive thing for people to see every day. So, you know, the migrant crisis is a really, really difficult topic. And unfortunately, there is no easy or magic answer.

LH: Ellie Costello there reporting for GB News from Dover earlier on Gloria & Liam.

GDP: Inaya is with us in the studio. You've been looking into this story. Proposals are going to be put to the House of Commons today by the home secretary. But she has her critics, doesn't she? What are their points?

INAYA FOLARIN IMAN *GB News Presenter*: Absolutely. I think Ellie is absolutely right to say that it does divide a lot of people on different sides of the argument. So some people that are in favour of clamping down on . . . on, on illegal migration will say, 'Well, they've had 10 years, more than 10 years to do this and they haven't done anything.' But actually, a lot of campaigners are very critical of these proposals. They've called it an anti-refugee bill, it's saying criminalising refugees. And I think that they've got some good reason for that. Actually, if you look at it, there are no legal routes for asylum seekers to actually get into Britain. So, for example, you cannot apply for asylum outside of the UK. And the only scheme that is available, or one of the only schemes, which is a Global Resettlement Scheme, actually was

shut down in March 2020 due to Covid. So actually, many people are arguing, particularly the campaigners, that the reason that many people are taking those illegal journeys is not just because of the people smugglers sending a narrative and expressing this measure that is convincing them. But it's actually very difficult for people to actually come to the UK without taking these routes. So that's the argument on the other side. But on the other hand, as well, many people are pointing to what the actual data says in relation to the . . . the makeup of many of the people making these applications, 74% are people between the ages of 18 and 39. People are saying, well, that's a brain drain on many of these countries. So people are taking away their able bodied, active population. And also the overwhelming majority of those people are men. So they're not necessarily the most vulnerable, such as the elderly, women and children. So it really splits opinion on all sides of the argument.

LH: We've been reporting in this show, we've been reporting this story since midday, we're still waiting for proposals from Priti Patel. But maybe let's open it up a little bit. There is going to be a big political battle as this legislation goes through the parliament. You know, a lot of people feel strongly about the UK's role as a haven for refugees over the years. The refugee lobby, it's got a lot of pretty well-paid lawyers in its corner as well, it must be said, a lot of influential high profile people. On the other hand, the strength of public feeling about this is very strong, not least in poor communities like Dover, as Ellie Costello was saying there. I mean, we think Labour are going to oppose this. If some Tories oppose it as well, then the home secretary may lose her legislation, right?

IFI: Well, it's going to be a really difficult one. The issue of immigration, legal or otherwise, has been a really challenging issue for the Conservative Party for a long time. We all remember that David Cameron's (*sic*, 'was') going to reduce it to the tens of thousands.

LH: Yeah.

IFI: Legal immigration, we, in the last few weeks, have found out that the EU settlement scheme actually almost doubled the amount of people that were expected to be here actually applied for full settlement from the EU. And then obviously there is the question of illegal immigration, Theresa May, tried to do something in relation to the hostile environment policy, so this is an issue that keeps coming back and back for the government and it seems to be something that they're finding really challenging to actually deal with. So we're going to have to see.

GDP: Yeah. And I do think it's a problem that our . . . that the issue of asylum, where we have legal international obligations and economic immigration, where there is a live political debate about, I think it's unfortunate that they're conflated.

IFI: I think it is really unfortunate because one is under lots of international obligations and people that are meant to be fleeing war-torn and really challenging circumstances that need protection and a place to be safe. And the other is, obviously, people are entitled to want to travel economically, but actually mix something up (*sic*) mixing it up with people that are struggling for . . . to have a safe place, is a completely unfortunate thing.

LH: Inaya Folarin Iman, our colleague here at GB News, thanks so much for joining us this afternoon to report on that story.

## GB News, McCoy and Phillips

### 3.13pm Nationality and Borders Bill

ALEX PHILLIPS: Anyway, moving on, it's always a fraught topic and one which evokes passions on both sides of the argument. Well, here at GB News, we don't shy away from difficult conversations and exploring all perspectives.

SIMON MCCOY: So we want to hear your views on this issue. GBviews@GBnews.uk. We are, of course, talking about the government vowing to reform the UK's asylum system and putting forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons.

AP: So, how many people have made the voyage across the Channel this year? Let's have a look at the figures. According to research by The Times, more than 6,600 migrants have arrived this year via small boats, including 404 last weekend alone.

SM: Well, last year there were 8,420 crossings and experts reckon 2021 is on course to exceed that. Well, joining us on set with us now, our very own Inaya Folarin Iman who's been looking at this. It's a very emotive, very divisive issue this, but what is your take on what Priti Patel is proposing?

INAYA FOLARIN IMAN *GB News Presenter*: I think it's a very difficult one, obviously. I think people from all sides of the argument don't want people taking that incredibly perilous journey. Priti Patel is right when she says that actually a lot of these criminal gangs are linked to drug trafficking and many other criminal behaviour in the UK. So anything that contributes to their criminal network and funding absolutely needs to be disrupted. But campaigners are very critical on this and they've been pushing back incredibly hard in the last few hours. They are arguing that actually there are not many legal routes for people that want to apply for asylum to get into the UK. So you can't actually apply from outside of the UK and one of the schemes that was available, the Global Resettlement Scheme, was actually closed down or suspended in March 2020 because of Covid.

SM: (*speaking over*) Well, that was meant for Syrians, wasn't it, mainly?

IFI: Well, exactly. So . . . so there's not that many legal routes, which many campaigners argue is actually one of the main reasons why some asylum seekers take this incredibly perilous journey, because the other ways to get there for asylum or refugee status is not actually very accessible for them.

AP: Now, one of the comments that comes up quite regularly and a lot of the reportage surrounding this talks about people fleeing persecution. But public opinion tends to go down the route of, 'Well, are they or are these just economic migrants?' And we're used to seeing boats largely full of young, you know, working age men, not women, not children, but young working age men who you'd imagine, if there was a conflict, they would be part of defending their country. Well, what's your take on that? How many of these do you think are people who genuinely really require asylum and how many not?

IFI: I think you're absolutely right to point to the actual make up of many of these people on the boats. Over 70% are aged between 18 and 39, and over 80% are actually males. And many people say that, actually, that is contributing to a brain drain in many developing countries, where their able bodied, productive members of society are actually leaving those countries to make this journey into the United Kingdom. And actually, if you look at many of the countries that have the highest numbers of asylum applications, Iran is one of the highest, Albania. These aren't necessarily countries that we often regard as the most significant war-torn countries that are fleeing persecution. (*sic*) Absolutely, many of them may well still be having very difficult and challenging circumstances in their home country, but it's not obvious

that all of those people, as you mentioned, are actually the most vulnerable people that need asylum very desperately.

SM: Don't go away. Just want to bring in the chairman of Migration Watch, Alp Mehmet who joins us now. And the issue with those who are seeking asylum is that they're supposed to apply to the first free country that they get to. They should never get as far as the UK, should they?

ALP MEHMET *Migration Watch UK*: Well, in theory, they shouldn't, but they do. And I would argue that if the EU at its external borders, or even France at its borders with others countries actually did their job properly, then perhaps they wouldn't reach as far as the northern shores of France. The fact is that the vast majority of those who are seeking asylum are not, strictly speaking, refugees in the way that our laws and international obligations allow for. And that is really the reason why so many of these young people – and they are mostly young men, as we've just heard – seek to come over here for a better life. You said to me last time we spoke, Simon, 'Why shouldn't they?' Or rather, having said, 'Why shouldn't they come here for a better life?' you said, 'Why not indeed.' I agree. The fact is that there are millions of people in this situation. Are we saying that all of them should be able to come here if they so choose? I think that, quite rightly, most people in this country would say, 'No, they should not.' And there's no question of those who qualify for asylum to be granted asylum. And we do, we have granted thousands of people over the last few years, asylum and long may that continue. But what we must not do is allow this process, really, of people crossing the channel in ever greater numbers, likely to be something about 20,000 this year at this rate, for them simply to say, 'I claim asylum' and know that they're going to be able to stay here. That is wrong.

AP: But even . . . even among those that we consider economic migrants, the vast sums they're paying to people traffickers, these aren't the poorest people from the countries of origin, are they? These are basically the middle classes?

AM: Well, I don't know if they're the middle classes, but they're certainly strong young men, in the main, with money in their pockets. And that's why when the . . . the traffickers go to them and say, 'Look, I can promise you a better life. I can promise you that you will get somewhere and frankly, you will not be turned back or thrown out,' of course, they will pay a small amount of money for them, overall, in order to come here and make that better life for themselves. But at what point do we say, 'No more'? That is the question.

SM: Well, the question really is how do we deal with those that do arrive in this country? Now, what about this proposal, one that we're supposed to be talking to the Danes about where, if they arrive and they're found not to be entitled to be here automatically, that they're put on a plane after a few days and sent to Rwanda, where the process is then officially undertaken to see if they should be in the UK? Is that's something that you would welcome in principle?

AM: In principle, I have nothing against it. I can see all sorts of practical difficulties, having worked as an immigration officer in years gone by, I know what the difficulties are of doing this. It's not a new idea. Tony Blair came up with it 20 years ago and was given short shrift by Brussels and other EU member states. So it's not new. When it comes to the practicalities, well, it's expensive. It's going to be dealing with people at . . . far removed from, from this country. And in the end, if they don't qualify for asylum, what do we do with them then? Do we send them back to the country that they came from? The last a safe country that they went through? Do we send them back to their own countries that they originate from? So I can see all sorts of problems, although in principle, where you accommodate people while you consider their cases, it doesn't really matter where that is, so long as it's clean, it's safe, it's warm, and, indeed, they're not in any way being ill-treated.

SM: Alp Mehmet, it's always good to see you. Thank you very much for joining us on this particular issue.

AM: Thank you.

SM: Inaya, very quickly, I mean, there are those people in this country who will say, 'If they are not here, that's all they care about,' I mean, and that is a very common view?

IFI: Yeah, I think that the public opinion on this is very strong. They want the government to be quite tough on the issue of illegal immigration. But it has been an issue that has marred the Conservative Party for a decade now. Under Theresa May, she had the hostile environment policy, which was trying to prevent illegal immigrants from accessing public services. And when it comes to legal migration as well, they've had this promise for tens of thousands they've not been able to actually fulfil that. So I think it's going to be very tough for them, regardless of if this policy is actually practically implementable.

AP: *(word or words unclear due to speaking over)*

SM: *(speaking over)* You're going to join us through the afternoon, I hope, because this is a story that obviously we really want to explore in much greater detail. But for now, thank you very much indeed.

IFI: Thank you.

SM: Thanks.

#### **4.08pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

AP: *(audio cut-out)* is a fraught topic and one which evokes passions on both sides of the argument. Here at GB News we don't shy away from difficult conversations and exploring all perspectives.

SM: So, we want to hear your views on this. GBviews@GBnews.uk, because the government has vowed to reform the UK's asylum system and is putting forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons.

AP: So how many people have made the voyage across the Channel this year? According to research by the Times newspaper, more than 6,600 migrants have arrived this year on small boats, including 404 last weekend alone.

SM: Well, last year there were 8,420 crossings. Experts say 2021 is on course to exceed that.

AP: Our south east of England reporter Ellie Costello has more on this and has sent us this report straight from Dover.

ELLIE COSTELLO: Like you said, you'd usually see lots of crossings happening behind me. What usually happens is this middle strait here, there's Border Force boats here, you can see them. They're parked up, they haven't moved today. And there's lifeboats here that also haven't moved. The sea is so rough and choppy, the waters are really, really rough today, so there's no crossings happening today. But usually in July and August, what you would see is the Border Force boats and lifeboats coming down this middle strait, bringing people that they have rescued from dinghies that have tried to cross over from the Channel (*sic*) and they've brought in here. That is obviously . . . isn't happening today. But we are here to talk about the Nationality and Borders Bill, which kind of covers immigration and asylum as a whole. It is basically going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. So people getting in those dinghies and coming here without permission were previously facing or are currently facing six months in prison. That could go up to four years in prison if they are caught. Another thing I think is very, very interesting in this proposed legislation is kind of tackling a range of human trafficking gangs. These this is a huge business in France and Belgium. People charge £4,000, £5,000, sometimes even £10,000 for a seat in one of those



dinghies that then comes across to the UK. Those dinghies are not fit for purpose. They're what we would find in sports shops, for maybe £200 or £300 pounds. But these dinghies are packed full of people. There's a French researcher who released a study a few months ago. He said back in 2018, there was an average of seven people on a dinghy. Now it's about 16. But there have been dinghies seen outside Dover with up to 30 or 40 people packed onto them. And they're just not fit for purpose. Labour has already said they're going to oppose this bill and refugee charities are absolutely distraught at the idea that this could come into force. They estimate that 9,000 people a year who are currently accepted as refugees because they are fleeing persecution in their home countries could now not be granted asylum because of the way that they came into this country. So they say it simply cannot happen. So at the moment, this is just proposed legislation, it's going to be debated in the House of Commons today, but clearly a very fraught, very emotional, divisive issue here in Dover.

LIAM HALLIGAN: Thank you for that, Ellie, very comprehensive update there. Priti Patel, the home secretary, in the newspapers today, she's been trying to focus on the human dangers involved in making these cross-Channel passages in small boats, as you say. And also, she's targeting the trafficking gangs. She calls it 'a sickening trade in humans by vile gangs'. You've been down there reporting for a while. How do you think the home secretary's words will go down there in Dover, as opposed to in the House of Commons when this legislation is debated?

EC: This is an issue here in Dover that they see every single day, Dover is the first place that I came to when I started reporting for GB News, I came here on a reccy, if you will. I wanted to hear what people thought about illegal migration and refugees trying to come here for a better life. And it's really, really divisive. I spoke to a lady who said that she was walking with her daughter on Deal Beach, which is just up that way, and she said that a boat arrived, there was a boat landing and it was full of young men and it really distressed her, it really upset her and she left the beach with her daughter. She said she has huge sympathies for families that are coming here to start a better life, but that isn't what she wants to see happening. She worries about her tax payers' money supporting men that are coming here illegally. And then I spoke to another lady just down at the beach front earlier who said that she's . . . she works in a cafe with a man from Syria who's come here with his family. And he is an integrated part of society, he pays his taxes, he's law abiding, and she is just so happy to know him and really thinks he's just such a benefit to our society. So it's a hugely emotional, divisive issue. And when I did speak to that lady on Deal Beach, she said, 'If you speak to local people here, it's a lot different from other people in the UK, perhaps, because what they do see in July and August, obviously not today, but they do see those Border Force boats going out and bringing back the dinghies with asylum seekers and migrants on them. And that is an emotive thing for people to see every day. So, you know, the migrant crisis is a really, really difficult topic. And unfortunately, there is no easy or magic answer.

SM: That was Ellie Costello speaking from Dover to Gloria and Liam a little earlier. Well, let's speak now to our very own Inaya Folarin Iman and every day, not today because of the weather, but every day, if you look on . . . on Twitter and online, there are images of these boats being brought in by UK Border Force, even the RNLI are bringing them. And it does seem to be a regular thing with thousands of asylum seekers, we'll call them, wanting to get into the UK. And people, as we were hearing in Dover and in much of the country, are wondering how on earth we stop this, but treat these people with the respect that some of them deserve – not all of them, because a lot of them are illegal?

INAYA FOLARIN IMAN *GB News Presenter*: Well, absolutely. I mean, nobody wants people to be making that journey, it's incredibly perilous. Many people have died making that journey. And obviously, the journey funds criminal gangs who are connected to drug and human trafficking rings across the globe. And actually enabling those people to continue that journey does contribute to the . . . what Priti Patel described as the business model of many of these people. But I also think that, you know, I do understand a lot of the campaigners who are critical of many of these proposals as well. In terms of the . . . the numbers that are actually applying for asylum, we are far, far behind the numbers that Germany, France, Spain or even Greece receive. I mean, Germany last year received about 150,000 and we received about

30,000. And actually we're 17th in Europe in terms of the number of asylum claims. And a critical point that many of the campaigners have mentioned is that one of the reasons why many people are taking this journey is because the legal routes to actually enter the UK are shut down. You can't necessarily apply from outside of the UK. The Global Resettlement Scheme was suspended in March 2020. And so Britain is far from the most affected country when it comes to illegal migration.

SM: Does that mean there's no legal way to get into the UK?

IFI: Well, there's very, very . . . one of the routes, there's only a few, and it's incredibly difficult. And one of those issues was that scheme, which had about 5,000 people and that was suspended. So actually, many of the people coming in don't actually have other routes to apply for asylum and refugee status. But that doesn't diminish the fact that not all of these people are actually legitimate refugees and asylum seekers.

SM: Hmm.

AP: Yeah, I mean, that's an important point to make, isn't it? Because like a lot of the commentary that I've heard, you know, this morning, listening to the radio and watching TV keeps using this word, 'asylum seekers' – persecution, asylum seekers fleeing persecution. But that's not necessarily the case for the vast majority of these people. And they're not necessarily the most vulnerable in their countries. They're not women and children. They're, you know, potentially men of what some people might call a fighting age, if there was conflict going on back at home. But even some of their countries of origin, you know, they're not war-torn places.

IFI: I think you're right to point out the demographic or the makeup of many of those asylum seekers or the people wanting to make those applications. I think more than 70% are people between the ages of 18 and 39, more than 80% are males. Obviously, they are not elderly people . . .

AP: (*speaking over*) So, 80% are male and 70% are between 18 and 29 (*sic*) . . .

IFI: Exactly.

AP: It's a huge number.

IFI: Absolutely and many people have criticised this as a brain drain, as you mentioned, that are fighting age, or people that are the productive members of society that can help rebuild the social or political or economic turmoil that those countries are facing. But I still think obviously, even in those situations, some of those people might be legitimate. So I think it is important to make that distinction between economic migrants and refugees and asylum seekers. And I think that the Home Office absolutely needs to make sure that in the application process they're assessing people properly and the right people are able to get through the system.

SM: We have been talking about this problem for a long, long time. We're hearing of possible solutions. I mean, what do you make of this idea of somewhere in Rwanda or . . . or a centre where those that arrive in the UK . . . to be properly assessed, are then sent away for that assessment to take place? Is that something that could work?

IFI: Well, I think it is something that other countries have done, such as Australia. There is precedent for it, but practically it's open . . . there's a huge open question whether or not it would work. What if they are rejected, will they then be deported to their country of origin? Who's going to be managing that? It potentially could be incredibly expensive. So I think one of the reasons why . . .

SM: (speaking over) But I know people are watching you right now and they're saying, 'Yes, but not as expensive as them staying here and being looked after by the state for potentially the rest of their lives and all that follows there.'

IFI: Well, the Conservative Party in particular have been trying to, in some way or another, deal with illegal immigration for more than 10 years now. Under Theresa May, we had the hostile environment policy. And now Priti Patel has been talking tough on this for very long. So I think that if there was any real easy solution, it may have been done a long time ago. And I personally wish that Priti Patel would really level with the public about what's actually possible, what's realistic to expect in terms of the numbers and what can actually be done about it, instead of all the talk.

AP: I mean, it's interesting, isn't it, because, you know, this is happening at the same time that we're withdrawing troops from Afghanistan. The Taliban are, you know, gaining ground over there. And there's still a fear, isn't there, that, you know, terrorist cells could use these crossings to potentially get people who want to do harm to this country onto boats and here illegally?

IFI: Well, absolutely. These trafficking rings are connected to all sorts of horrendous things globally. But I think you are right to mention some of the wars and political instability in other countries. There are deep structural reasons internationally why there are different movements of people across the globe. And I think any attempt to create a kind of all-encompassing, simplistic solution to deal with this international problem, I think will fall short.

SM: Inaya, thank you very much for that. Well, a lot of you getting in touch on this, a lot of emails coming in. Simon says, 'I absolutely agree that something needs to be done. And the proposal made by the home secretary is the only way' he says, 'we need to stop these economic migrants coming and putting a strain on our already swollen services.'

AP: Margaret says, 'My view is and has always been that the migrants should be turned back instead of facilitated to arrive. Most of them are healthy young men who should be staying in their own countries to help their own people. We have no more room in this country. We need to first settle those already here legitimately.'

SM: Emily emailed. 'We cannot turn children away who are genuinely looking for a better life, but we cannot continue to take unskilled adults when they've already crossed through a safe country.'

AP: John says, 'Anyone coming into this country by dinghy are illegal immigrants and therefore should not be allowed to enter and because they've committed a crime by doing so, they should then have their claim rejected. The problem is that they need to know this before they consider paying traffickers thousands of pounds.'

SM: Well, email us at [GBviews@GBnews.uk](mailto:GBviews@GBnews.uk).

### **5.09pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

AP: Now back to what is always a fraught topic and often evokes passions on both sides of the argument. And of course here at GB News we don't mind difficult conversations and we like to explore all perspectives. So we do want to hear your views on this, [GBviews@GBnews.uk](mailto:GBviews@GBnews.uk).

SM: Yeah, it's the issue of the government, which has vowed to reform the UK's asylum system and is putting forward a range of measures to be debated in the House of Commons.

AP: So how many people have made the voyage across the Channel so far this year? Well, according to research by the Times newspaper, more than 6,600 migrants have arrived this year on small boats, including 404 last weekend alone.

SM: Last year, there were 8,420 crossings and experts reckon 2021 is on course to exceed that.

AP: Our south east of England reporter Ellie Costello has more on this and sent us this report from Dover.

ELLIE COSTELLO: Like you said, you'd usually see lots of crossings happening behind me. What usually happens is this middle strait here, there's Border Force boats here, you can see them. They're parked up, they haven't moved today. And there's lifeboats here that also haven't moved. The sea is so rough and choppy, the waters are really, really rough today, so there's no crossings happening today. But usually in July and August, what you would see is the Border Force boats and lifeboats coming down this middle strait, bringing people that they have rescued from dinghies that have tried to cross over from the Channel (*sic*) and they've brought in here. That is obviously . . . isn't happening today. But we are here to talk about the Nationality and Borders Bill, which kind of covers immigration and asylum as a whole. It is basically going to make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without permission. So people getting in those dinghies and coming here without permission were previously facing or are currently facing six months in prison. That could go up to four years in prison if they are caught. Another thing I think is very, very interesting in this proposed legislation is kind of tackling a range of human trafficking gangs. These this is a huge business in France and Belgium. People charge £4,000, £5,000, sometimes even £10,000 for a seat in one of those dinghies that then comes across to the UK. Those dinghies are not fit for purpose. They're what we would find in sports shops, for maybe £200 or £300 pounds. But these dinghies are packed full of people. There's a French researcher who released a study a few months ago. He said back in 2018, there was an average of seven people on a dinghy. Now it's about 16. But there have been dinghies seen outside Dover with up to 30 or 40 people packed onto them. And they're just not fit for purpose. Labour has already said they're going to oppose this bill and refugee charities are absolutely distraught at the idea that this could come into force. They estimate that 9,000 people a year who are currently accepted as refugees because they are fleeing persecution in their home countries could now not be granted asylum because of the way that they came into this country. So they say it simply cannot happen. So at the moment, this is just proposed legislation, it's going to be debated in the House of Commons today, but clearly a very fraught, very emotional, divisive issue here in Dover.

LIAM HALLIGAN: Thank you for that, Ellie, very comprehensive update there. Priti Patel, the home secretary, in the newspapers today, she's been trying to focus on the human dangers involved in making these cross-Channel passages in small boats, as you say. And also, she's targeting the trafficking gangs. She calls it 'a sickening trade in humans by vile gangs'. You've been down there reporting for a while. How do you think the home secretary's words will go down there in Dover, as opposed to in the House of Commons when this legislation is debated?

EC: This is an issue here in Dover that they see every single day, Dover is the first place that I came to when I started reporting for GB News, I came here on a reccy, if you will. I wanted to hear what people thought about illegal migration and refugees trying to come here for a better life. And it's really, really divisive. I spoke to a lady who said that she was walking with her daughter on Deal Beach, which is just up that way, and she said that a boat arrived, there was a boat landing and it was full of young men and it really distressed her, it really upset her and she left the beach with her daughter. She said she has huge sympathies for families that are coming here to start a better life, but that isn't what she wants to see happening. She worries about her tax payers' money supporting men that are coming here illegally. And then I spoke to another lady just down at the beach front earlier who said that she's . . . she works in a cafe with a man from Syria who's come here with his family. And he is an integrated part of society, he pays his taxes, he's law abiding, and she is just so happy to know him and really thinks he's just such a benefit to our society. So it's a hugely emotional, divisive issue. And when I did speak to that lady on Deal Beach, she said, 'If you speak to local people here, it's a lot different from other people in the UK, perhaps, because what they do see in July and August, obviously not today, but they do see those Border Force boats going out and bringing back the dinghies with asylum seekers and migrants on them. And that is an

emotive thing for people to see every day. So, you know, the migrant crisis is a really, really difficult topic. And unfortunately, there is no easy or magic answer.

SM: That was Ellie Costello talking to Gloria and Liam a little earlier. Well, let's talk now to our very own and Inaya Folarin Iman. And there is no easy answer to this, but the difficulty the home secretary faces is: somehow it has got to be . . . the motivation to get on a boat and risk your life, that motivation needs to be removed. And the only way you do that is to persuade people it's not in your interest, it's not going to work. In fact, you'll end up back where you started?

INAYA FOLARIN IMAN: I think Ellie Costello's report was absolutely right, that it is a complex issue and there's divisions on all sides of the argument. But I think that is a very powerful argument that I think Priti Patel is making, that actually if you deter people, if you show that it's not worth it to make that journey, and as she said, disrupt the business model of these criminal gangs who are actually involved in many horrendous things such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, profiting off of the exploitation of very vulnerable people, then you deter people from making that journey. So she's obviously suggesting a range of measures, such as making it a criminal offence to come into the country in that way, making the sentencing, the maximum sentencing for people-smugglers much higher, and actually taking into account how you came to the country and whether or not you will get refugee and asylum seeker status. So these are very tough measures, but obviously there are critics of it, you know, some people on the different side of the argument. I mean, people have argued that . . . who want tough measures are saying that this is all talk and that they've had 10 years and it's just something that's not really going to be actually practical. But other people are saying that there's not enough legal routes for people to get here as well. So you have the Global Resettlement Scheme, which only has a maximum of 5,000 people. You have family reunion schemes, which is also quite tough. So sometimes, actually, when the legal routes are shut down, people are more likely to take the illegal route. So it is quite complex, but public opinion is incredibly strong on this. The overwhelming majority of people want tougher measures. So I think that Priti Patel and the Home Office are feeling that pressure.

AP: I mean, language surrounding this debate is crucial, isn't it? Because you've got a lot of reports out today using terms such as 'fleeing persecution', 'refugees', 'asylum seekers', but they're not necessarily refugees fleeing persecution, are they?

IFI: Well, I think that you're right to kind of bring up the makeup of many of the people that are taking those journeys. Over 70% of those people are between the ages of 18 and 39. And those are obviously the types of people that you would expect to be the productive members of society . . .

SM: And they're male.

IFI: . . . in a particular country. Over 80% are male. So this is quite a specific demographic of people, not necessarily what you might imagine as the most vulnerable people, such as elderly people, such as children, pregnant women and so on and so forth. So actually, that is very understandable why people are sceptical of whether or not these are genuine refugees and asylum seekers when they're actually the able-bodied, strong people of a society that are fundamental, in terms of rebuilding any broken society.

SM: There is huge pressure on any home secretary and Priti Patel is not the first to try and deal with this problem, obviously. Whilst nobody wants these people to be drowning in the English Channel, nobody wants them to be making the journey in the first place. It is, how do you disrupt it? Now, one of the proposals, highly publicised, is that when they get to the UK, they're immediately processed and then sent to a . . . a centre. Rwanda's been mentioned because we're in talks with Denmark, who have a system like that. Would that work, in your view, if they go somewhere else, are processed there and a process that, at the moment, let's be honest, doesn't really exist, where they are fairly treated and then the decision is made offsite, if you like?

IFI: I mean, I think with any of these things in principle, it could work, but practically speaking, we'd have to see what those proposals would be. I mean, there is precedent for this. Australia have a similar system and it's really the practical implications of this. Would they be staffed by British people or would they be employing people over there? What happens if they're rejected? Will we pay for their deportation? So there's so many different factors to consider. But obviously this has been a question that the Conservative Party have been trying to deal with in particular for around ten years now. We had Theresa May's 'Go Home' buses, which were quite infamous. We had the hostile environment policy. And obviously many people, such as Nigel Farage, has been raising awareness of this issue for several years. So it has been a big challenge for them. Whether or not this policy will actually be effective in dealing with the quite complex issue really remains to be seen.

SM: It's really good to see you Inaya, thanks very much.

IFI: Thank you.

### **5.34pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

SM: OK, let's go back to one of our lead stories today, and that is the issue of migration. The government proposing tougher rules, including the right to intercept boats as they cross the Channel.

AP: We're delighted that joining us now is Chris Philp, a minister at the Home Office. Thanks very much for joining us. And, well, it's been very much welcomed by our viewers, that's for sure.

CHRIS PHILP: Good. Well, I think the asylum and immigration system is a broken system. It needs radical reform to get proper control of our borders and make sure people aren't entering the country illegally. And then, where we find people in the UK with no legal right to be here, we need to be able to remove them in a reasonable way. What's happening with our legal system as it stands is people make repeated claims for asylum and so on, often without merit, often strung out over many years. And we need to make sure that the system can consider those claims fairly, but do it quickly. So this bill introduced into parliament today will help us get back control of our borders, particularly across the English Channel. It will make sure our legal system operates properly. But of course, where we do find people who are genuinely in need of protection, we're not going to turn our back on them. We are going to offer them protection. But it's got to be done in a safe and legal way, not fuelled by dangerous illegal migration.

SM: With great respect, we've heard this all before. How is this system actually going to work in practice?

CP: Well, this bill contains a whole range of new measures which will work together to prevent and deter illegal migration. There's additional powers for Border Force in terms of what they can do at sea. There are stiffer criminal penalties for people who enter the country illegally, but also critically for people smugglers who are smuggling them. It allows us to declare inadmissible to the asylum system people who have entered the country illegally, from a place like France, where they could reasonably have claimed asylum. It's going to speed up and streamline our domestic legal system, there's a whole number of different provisions, about 75 clauses in total, which, taken together, will fix this broken system, but it requires *(word or words unclear due to speaking over)*

SM: *(speaking over)* Yeah, but can I . . . can I just pick up on the point about what you're going to do at sea. I mean, what are you going to do that you're not . . . at the moment what you do is you put them in a . . . in a boat belonging to UK Border Force or the RNLI ends up doing this and you're bringing them back to Dover. What are you proposing that's different?

CP: Well, the powers in the bill include an ability, for example, to redirect a boat out of UK waters. Other countries have done this in the past in slightly different circumstances. The Australians did this about five or six years ago. They did it in a way that was compatible with international law and there was no loss of life. Other countries have done it as well. So it contains that power . . .

SM: (*speaking over*) Back to France? I mean, in reality, what you're saying is, 'We're just going to send them back to France', but that that cannot be, can it? The French are not going to take that?

CP: Well, I mean, if a boat, is, is is, for example, were turned around, obviously it would sail back into French waters. But that's, I mean, I'm not saying that's the panacea. We want to make sure the entire system is reformed. We are also, by the way, doing a lot of work with the French to stop the embarkation. And the French have stopped about 5,000 people this year so far. But they need to do a lot more and we're supporting them financially to do that. They stopped about half the attempts this year so far, but that is obviously not enough. And to stop the route, a lot more needs to be done over in France as well.

AP: Now, one thing that concerns me about these proposals, the fact that, you know, we're going to be saying, 'If you're not a genuine asylum seeker, then, you know, you might face criminal proceedings.' How are you going to tell? Because a lot of the people getting in those boats don't have their papers with them, or in fact, they use other people's papers. They say they're coming from countries they're not. They say they're fleeing from persecution, that perhaps they are not. It's not exactly the sort of thing that, you know, naturally has a lot of evidence to stack up these claims.

CP: Well, the point about people coming across the English Channel is that they should not be leaving France and coming to the UK in order to claim asylum in the first place, whether their claim is genuine or not, because they're in France, which is a safe country, obviously, a safe and civilised country. France has a well-functioning asylum system. Typically, the people have to travel to other European countries first before even getting to France, like Belgium, Germany, Italy or Spain or wherever. So they should be claiming asylum in one of those countries. And one of the things we're doing is changing our asylum system to recognise that. And if we are able to return someone to some other safe country, whether that's France, with their agreement, which we don't currently have, by the way, or some other safe country somewhere else, then we'll have a legal basis on which to do that. If we can't return them to a safe country after a reasonable period of time, yes, we'll consider their asylum claim ourselves. But that is another part of the jigsaw to try and deter these crossings. These crossings are not only unnecessary, they're also very dangerous, and they are organised by ruthless people smugglers. We've seen them drawing guns on migrants on French beaches in recent days. We need . . . we and the French together need to just stop these . . . this traffic entirely because it's . . . it's not necessary, right? People can claim asylum in France.

SM: Can you just focus in on a proposal that has been talked about a lot, of . . . you've been talking to the Danish government, I think, about this, a centre - Rwanda has been mentioned - where they are processed in this country, they're . . . they're detained for a couple of days and then sent to this . . . this place in Rwanda, where their . . . their claims are then fully assessed. And if, if they don't pass that they're then, what? Are they sent back home? And who pays for that?

CP: Well, the bill . . . well, in fact, we changed the asylum rules, the immigration rules a few months ago to lay the foundations for something like this and the bill makes further provision. Clearly, it requires, for it to work practically, it requires agreement with a third country who . . . a safe third country, who would consider the asylum claim and of course, agree in the event the asylum claim is not successful, not to send the person to anywhere that would be unsafe. That requires agreement with a third country. So we're sort of at the beginning, the beginning of that road? It's a road that Denmark, as you said, are looking to travel down as well. Interestingly, Denmark has a left of centre government, yet they are still,

like us, looking to do this. Other countries have done it in the past. Australia did it for a period of time about five or six years ago, and again it's designed to act as a deterrent. It'd only be applied in cases where someone had entered the country clandestinely, without authorisation, from a safe place where they could reasonably have claimed asylum, like France. It wouldn't be applied on a blanket basis, and it would be designed as a deterrent to stop people making these dangerous and unnecessary journeys.

AP: Chris, thank you so much for joining us and explaining that to us. That's Chris Philip, MP who's Home Office and Justice Minister.

## GB News, Dewbs & Co.

### 6pm Introduction

MICHELLE DEWBERRY: Chaos, that's the word that I would use to describe what's happening in the channel at the moment. Chaos. More than 2,000 migrants have crossed the Channel on small boats in June alone, bringing the total number this year to over 6,000. This crossing is illegal and it is wrong. It is also incredibly dangerous. The majority of those choosing to make this crossing are men, men who have left their wives and children behind in conditions described as dangerous. And who would have chosen to leave a safe country, France, in order to reach the UK. Priti Patel is today talking tough on this issue. She threatens prison sentences on both the traffickers making a fortune from these people and the migrants themselves. Many people think this is a long time coming. Many on the other side are absolutely outraged. I say for both the safety reasons and to stop abuses of the system, these crossings must be stopped. No ifs, no buts, no maybes. I'm Michelle Dewberry and this is Dewbs & Co.

### 6.06pm Nationality and Borders Bill

MD: First, our top story, the Nationality and Borders Bill was unveiled in parliament today. And under the bill, migrant boats could be sent back to France and asylum seekers who land in Britain illegally could be arrested. Home Secretary Priti Patel wants to increase penalties to act as a deterrent against refugees trying to come to the UK in small boats across the Channel. And for the first time, the way in which a person arrives, legally or illegally, will have a bearing on whether their asylum application is accepted. The home secretary is under mounting pressure as hundreds of migrants make the dangerous crossing every month. That should say thousands, not just hundreds, I would suggest. Critics say the plans are inhumane. Well, personally, I disagree. What is inhumane is people being trafficked across a very dangerous crossing and very sadly losing their life and anything that can stop that should surely be seriously considered. And I'm joined in a moment by Rear Admiral Chris Parry, who's former commander of the Amphibious Task Group, and Emma Revell from the Institute of Economic Affairs. Plus, GB News's Tom Harwood. Tom, let me start with you. Just update our viewers, if you will, on the bill that's been discussed today?

TOM HARWOOD: So the Nationality and Borders Bill, as it's called, has been published today. It's been long-anticipated, and it's what the Home Office describe as the most radical changes to the broken asylum system in decades. So the way that the Home Office is describing this is that legal migration has been controlled with the ending of freedom of movement and Brexit and now they're turning their attention to illegal migration. And there are a sweeping number of reforms in this bill to try and clamp down on, as you say, particularly those dangerous crossings. And some of them are that it's going to be made a specific criminal offence to arrive in this country without permission. It's going to be easier for the Home Office to remove people to a safe country while their application is being processed. So they're not necessarily having to stay here while they're in limbo. It's also going to mean life imprisonment for people-smugglers. So that's a huge increase on the . . . on the criminality that we're applying to those who are smuggling these people, these, these criminal



gangs. And also one of the smaller things in the bill is changing how the age of applicants is assessed, so we know the age of the people coming in much more accurately and they're . . . and they're dealt with in the right way. There's been a lot of controversy in recent years about people claiming to be child migrants who might not have been, but also, sadly, sometimes people who are children ending up in the adult application system. So aims to solve all that as well. Ultimately, there's also a bit of emphasis on strengthening safe and legal pathways. So encouraging people to do the right thing, apply in the legal way, and hugely discouraging people to do the wrong thing and come here illegally.

MD: Well, that's very interesting, Tom, because a lot of people have criticised the bill today. And what they're saying is that there are not enough routes for safe and legal applications. So, I mean, we will all remember, I certainly remember it as a mum to a little boy, myself, the 15 . . . the 15 month old little boy, you know, a month or so ago that, he was found when his family had tried to make that crossing. You know, he died, he was 15 months old. Nobody wants to see people risking their life like that. So how many safe passages are actually open to people? Because the criticism is there's not enough?

TH: That's certainly the criticism. What the bill makes clear, though, is that the UK Resettlement Scheme is being strengthened. This is a new scheme to allow people to come in the legal way. And also there's going to be a new power for the home secretary to herself, personally grant citizenship for people who've sort of fallen through the cracks in the system. So there's a couple of ways in this bill to actually strengthen the legal pathways for people, as well as a lot of ways of cracking down on the illegal path of people.

MD: And Tom, very, very briefly, what is the next steps? When is this bill going to reach a resolution?

TH: Well, it's been published today, it's then got to go through all the stages of parliament. So that's the, you know, first reading, the second reading and multiple votes in both houses. I'm sure there'll be attempts of amendments. We know that the House of Lords, particularly these days, likes to get involved in migration-related bills, but we will be seeing it go through the House of Commons in the coming weeks and months.

MD: Tom Harwood, thank you very much. Now, let me bring in, if I may, my guest now, Rear Admiral Chris Parry and also Emma Revell. Emma, let me start with you. This has been called inhumane and cruel. Is that fair?

EMMA REVELL *Institute of Economic Affairs*: I think it is fair to a certain extent, because this bill and certainly the way it's been communicated, especially on social media, lumps together failed asylum seekers with people-smugglers as people who will be deported most quickly or face tougher sentences. And I think it's very important to acknowledge that a failed asylum seeker is in no way the same as a dangerous foreign criminal who should be deported from this country. These are people who are overwhelmingly in need of our support and would benefit greatly, I would argue, from the stability that Britain can offer them. As Tom mentioned, there is some provision to strengthen legal routes to the UK. I think this should be our main focus really, is giving people a safe and legal and legitimate way to move to the UK and to claim asylum, because as long as those options are not available, people will seek . . . will still keep coming in boats, because they see it as their only way.

MD: Rear Admiral Chris Parry, let me bring you in here. So I mentioned some figures already. 6,000, more than 6,000 migrants have come to the UK on these . . . you know, they're very unsafe boats, and that's this year alone. How do we stop this?

REAR ADMIRAL CHRIS PARRY *Former Commander, Amphibious Task Group*: Well, I think, first of all, we've got to accept that the country can't accept uncontrolled migration, there seems to be a view that somehow we can take as many people that want to come here. I think that's got to be an issue straight away. There are only certain numbers of people that can actually come to this country. They're going to be legal frameworks in place, that's what the proposed

legislation says. And we also have to say, look, if you get in the water, it's unsafe and it's illegal. If you're trying to penetrate the sovereign borders of the UK by air or by ship, that's illegal. And it's just the same as if you're doing it in the water as well. What I think this bill does is make it very plain that the large amount of legislation that has existed really in the past at a time when we didn't have mass migration, certainly not across the Channel, is . . . is unsuitable for purpose. And what I see this legislation doing, when it finally comes to parliament, is bringing up to date some of the realistic aspects of having to maintain a secure and safe border around the UK.

MD: And Emma, let me come to you. I mean, if we're all in agreement that there should be a safe and legal way for applicable and relevant people to . . . to make these applications, how do you propose we deal with what's happening at the moment, which is these very unsafe crossings?

ER: Well, these unsafe crossings are incredibly expensive. That's why people-smugglers do it, because they're able to charge thousands, if not tens of thousands of pounds to people to secure a crossing to Britain. I say 'secure' but, you know, as we tragically know, many boats do not make it across the Channel. This is because it's their only option. So, you know, no one's choosing to get into a boat because they think it's the best route. They just think it's their only hope. If we granted more visas, more asylum visas to people, many more than the UK does now, you know, people wouldn't feel pushed to take this choice. And I think it's important that we say, as well, that people who do make it to the UK and try and claim asylum once they get here do not have a particularly enjoyable or generous life. They get £37 a week to spend on food, that's less than half what we give people on Jobseeker's, and they're not able to work for the first year. Many asylum seekers want to work. They want to contribute, and they expect to pay their own way. But the current UK system prevents them from doing that, which is very peculiar when most people's issue with immigration, asylum sorry, or refugees is that, you know, it's a . . . it's a burden to the state. Well, we actively prevent these people from working. Perhaps if we encouraged them to do that, they would integrate better and cost the taxpayer less.

MD: Rear Admiral, let me come back to you. I mean, you've had experience on kind of operations where, you know, you're collecting, receiving migrants. Tell us a little bit about what that's like?

CP: Well, the issue relates to the fact that you have to keep people safe at all times, there's no way you want to put people in any danger at sea. But the key issue, and I think experience around the world tells you this, that you have to actually maintain a really secure border and you have to push the surveillance as far out as you can. And what we should be doing is cooperating with the French right now and stopping these boats going in the water. There is the technology, it does exist. We can scan the whole of the French border. And as soon as those boats go in the water, if the French are doing their job properly, they should be intercepting them well before they get out to sea. So what I would like to see, based on my experience, is a cooperative enterprise between France and Belgium and Britain to make sure that nobody actually gets in the water. The technology, as I said, exists. It just needs the organisation and the surveillance assets to be able to do that. Otherwise, people will continue to risk their lives, there's no question about that. But also they'll continue to queue-jump. Let's face it, these people who are paying to come across the Channel are queue jumping, they're not in the formal official system. And we hate . . . we Brits hate queue jumpers, don't we? We don't like people jumping the queue, we like people to take their turn. And I think something that has to be answered is how much migration is actually tolerable in a society before the infrastructure starts to creak a bit? I think if you ask people in Kent right now, they're feeling that. And we have to establish what levels of control that we put on the numbers of migrants coming across the channel, either legally or illegally. We can't be home to everybody. It's as simple as that.

MD: Emma, so let me put that point to you then. You know how do we know, at what point are we saying that the numbers are tolerable versus intolerable there, in answer to that point?

ER: Well, I mean, people trying to enter the UK across the Channel and other similar routes are very small in comparison to the total number of people coming to the UK every year from . . . from all across the world. And I think, you know, Chris is right, it is about, you know, what we can tolerate. But I think it's also about what sort of country do we want to be? And I would much rather live in a country that said to the, you know, poorest and most in need of safety across the world, you know, that Britain is here for you and would like to offer you a safe place to live and to . . . to, you know, support your family. I think that's the sort of country we should be. We should be more open to asylum seekers, not less.

MD: Well, hang on there, Emma, because, I mean, you're saying it's quite small in the grand scheme of things, but if you . . . obviously, I'm sure you'll be aware when people follow the news now, Kent County Council, they're not . . . this is not small. This is not insignificant. They have, on more than one occasion now, threatened legal action against the government because they simply cannot cope. They are at breaking point. This is not insignificant numbers. These numbers are the highest that they've ever been and they absolutely show no sense of slowing down?

ER: Well, yes, I mean, in the grand scale of . . . in the grand scheme of immigration to the UK, you know, these numbers are quite small. Obviously, for people living in Kent and the surrounding areas then, you know, the pressure on the system is greater. And I don't think, you know, no one's arguing in favour of continued migration via boat. I want to relieve the pressure on Kent. I want to make it . . . I want to make sure that fewer people make these journeys because they are incredibly unsafe. And we've seen, you know, sadly, many examples of people who've died trying to make the crossing. My argument is that we should be more open, through safe and legal means, so that people don't feel that they have to make this terrible journey by boat as their only option.

MD: Okay, Emma Revell and Rear Admiral Chris Perry, thank you very much for your time there.

GB News, Andrew Neil

### **8pm Introduction**

COLIN BRAZIER: Tonight, Priti Patel promises to send Kent's boat people to prison for up to four years.

### **8.04pm Nationality and Borders Bill**

CB: Now, firm, but fair is the phrase Priti Patel is using to describe a tougher approach to migrants. Today, the Nationality and Borders Bill began its journey through parliament. The backdrop to the bill is the arrival of record numbers of migrants in boats across the Channel, more than 2,000 in the last month alone. The bill proposes to make arriving in the UK without permission a new criminal offence, as well as introducing longer maximum prison sentences for those coming to the UK illegally; to make it harder for adult migrants to pose as children; to downgrade the status of asylum seekers who escape deportation as well; and set a maximum life sentence tariff for those convicted of people smuggling. Well, let's turn to Tony Smith, the former Director General at UK Border Force, who joins us now. Tony Smith, thanks very much indeed for your time this evening. We're told that within this bill, there are effectively new rules of engagement for Border Force that will allow people who work for Border Force to use, quote, 'reasonable force'. How will that work?

TONY SMITH *Former Director General, UK Border Force*: Well, good evening. Yes, there has been a problem in terms of maritime interventions and our capabilities on intercepting vessels on the Channel, because it's a relatively new problem for the UK Border Force, not for other countries, where we are required to board vessels and detain vessels. And so I think that actually enables us to plug that gap. But let's be clear, the Border Force, the main mission of

the Border Force in the English Channel, first and foremost, is to save lives. And we're out there making sure that people don't drown, making sure that people are safe and well. But having done that, we do need to have proper powers to enable us to conduct maritime intervention operations in the same way as other countries who are more versed in this than us, such as in the Mediterranean and around the US border, are able to do.

CB: Given that and listening to me enumerating the points that . . . some of the points that will make it into the bill. Do you think this is a bill that will make enough of a difference?

TS: It's really hard to tell at the moment because, you know, there are some measures in there that are very bold, the attempt to distinguish people arriving from what they term 'safe third countries' such as France from others, I think is a bold one, because ultimately this is a government that was elected largely on a ticket of taking back control of our borders. People coming across the English Channel at the moment, once they're within our territorial waters, can claim asylum. And the net effect of that is that they are brought ashore, they're introduced into a very cumbersome bureaucratic system and at the end of the day, very few of them are being returned, you see. And so that gives encouragement to the people-smugglers on the French side to recruit more people to come across and try this dangerous crossing. And we're not able to disrupt this business model. So we do need to find a way, with our friends in France, of disrupting that business model. And I think we need to make sure we don't conflate that issue with the much bigger problem of the global refugee crisis.

CB: And it's fair to describe it as a business model, isn't it? There's amazing reportage from Turkey recently by the Sunday Times and people literally looking at a laminated sheet of prices for different ways of getting into the UK. Can we just go through some of the specific points in the bill one by one? This idea of checking the age of people who are coming into the UK, we hear these stories, don't we, about people destroying their papers? It's not in their interest to . . . to make our job easier in terms of identifying who they are and how old they are. We've had situations where sometimes people who are definitely not children are placed in foster care or in care homes, where they are potentially a risk to minors. How do we determine really how old somebody is?

TS: Well, that's been a very difficult question that's haunted the Border Force and the Asylum Directorate for a long, long time, in terms of what we call age dispute cases. But what happens - and we know this because we do debrief asylum seekers, of course, when they come to us - is that they are coached in certain aspects of an application and there are certain things that will be to their advantage. One would be if they can demonstrate a case that they are below age, because minors are treated, quite rightly, in a different way to adults. And so people do, I'm afraid, cheat . . . try to cheat the system and . . . and pretend to be younger than they actually are. And it's really quite hard for . . . for us to say, well, how old somebody is. It's relying upon various aspects of medical evidence which . . . which come into play. And then the other things which you mention, you know, people are coached sometimes to . . . they very rarely have documents, quite often to conceal their identity and sometimes their nationality as well, if it will enhance their application for asylum. And these are the sorts of things that are part of the package you described. When, you know, these, you know, when, when the smugglers are in play, is that they will say, 'Well, these are the things that you need to do.' But yeah, 'First and foremost what you really need to do is get up here to Calais and get in one of these boats and pay me X amount of money. And pretty well, Bob's your uncle. You'll be getting into the UK. This is what's going to happen. You'll be interviewed by . . .' a lot of things. 'These are the sorts of things that you should be making clear to the authorities.' And at the moment, we're not really returning anybody. And so success breeds success. And that's the cycle that I'm really keen that this legislation tries to disrupt and put these smuggling gangs out of business.

CB: And the coaching you describe, we heard from a union official, a Border Force union official recently who said there's almost a sense of entitlement amongst particularly predominately young men when they arrive somewhere like Napier Barracks, which I know has got a question mark over its future. But they arrive there and there's almost a mob mentality

sometime . . . sometimes. And she was fearful that it was a tinderbox, potentially. I just wonder whether, in terms of the people you still talk to, presumably, in the Border Force, how they feel about the temperature this summer amongst those trying to get in?

TS: Well, I think the first thing is the infrastructure that we have to receive migrants in these numbers is not very well-developed. It's . . . it's ill-equipped to deal with large numbers. This is temporary accommodation where Border Force officers and officers from Immigration Enforcement are deployed. They often have very little predictability about the numbers. And quite often people can be left in difficult circumstances, sometimes in unsuitable accommodation, particularly in inclement weather, to be processed. And I think there is an element there of the health and safety of the . . . of the applicants, the migrants themselves, but also of the Border Force officers. So, you know, we need to decide, are we going to . . . is this going to be an ongoing perennial issue, it's been going on for two or three years now? If it is, we need to establish a much more solid reception capability in Kent. And then the second thing we need to establish is how quickly can we process these claims and get to a point where 'no means no' and that you will actually be returned. And I think, you know, this bill goes some way to trying to address those issues, but I do think there's going to be a real battle, particularly in the House of Lords when we come to the tension between international law and, you know, the . . . the international . . . which we all subscribe to, to give people protection if they're genuinely fleeing persecution. These are 1951 Conventions, remember, which we all ascribe (*sic*, 'subscribe') to, to tackling international human smuggling. That's the real battle that the government has here.

CB: Tony Smith, former boss of the Border Force, appreciate your time this evening. Thanks a lot.

TS: Thank you.

## GB News, Tonight Live with Dan Wootton

### 9.37pm What the Farage Nigel's take on the top stories (Extract)

*Discussion of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong and China's crackdown; Michel Barnier gave an interview where he discussed Nigel Farage and populism within the EU;*

DAN WOOTTON: Nigel Farage is back with me now for more WTF – What the Farage, that is. Nigel, let's talk about Priti Patel and the Borders bill, I know you've been harsh on her, but if you looked at what she said today, does it give you any more confidence? Because she's quoting a lot of the stuff that you've been saying for many months, especially in terms of the demographic makeup of the migrants that are entering illegally via the Channel?

NIGEL FARAGE: Yes, you're right. Oh, she's paying lip service to everything I've been saying for over the last year, I mean, a year ago Dan, you know, when the numbers were really increasing, mainstream media wasn't covering this. I went out into the Channel to . . .

DW: (*speaking over*) Correct.

NF: . . . make some YouTube films and then they started to talk about it. But my What the Farage moment of this week is the idea that Priti Patel is going to put all these people in prison for up to four years. Oh, really? Don't make me laugh. 2,000 came last month, and as the next few months go by, it'll be even more. The prisons are full already. The European Convention on Human Rights is still written into British law, which would make that, frankly, impossible. This is, once again, a home secretary posing, saying tough things, getting . . . getting the public at home, saying, 'Oh, isn't she wonderful?' And putting forward legislation, almost hoping Parliament votes it down, so she can say it wasn't her fault. She has presided

over something that she's condemned since August 2019, that is now, in terms of numbers, going off the charts. I predicted a few weeks ago that 20,000 people would come this year. Now that I've seen myself some of the new boats - and these aren't 16 man boats or 20 man boats, as you're showing now - the new ones take up to 70. This could be well in excess of 20,000 people this year. And yes, they are nearly all young men between the ages of 18 and 30 who come from war-torn parts of the world. They've left behind the women, left behind the children. They are not refugees in any classic sense of the term, and they've come here from a safe country called France. Now, what I will concede is this: for the first time today, she seriously said that we might tow boats back to France.

DW: Yes. Yes.

NF: *(speaking over)* If she's serious, if she . . . now, okay, I'm being fair, you know, I know in the past I've called her 'Priti Useless', but I'm being fair because that is the only thing that will stop this happening. And Australia . . . Australia in 2012 faced a very similar crisis. Tony Abbott, a brave prime minister, turned those boats around, towed them back to Indonesia. And do you know what happened? The boats stopped coming. And that is the only remedy for this situation. We now have in this country, 60,000 people who've entered illegally, who we are putting up at tax payers' expense in four star hotels, in private accommodation. And the whole thing is a scandal. And Westminster don't think it really matters. Let me tell you . . .

DW: *(speaking over)* No.

NF: . . . out there in middle England, it matters hugely.

DW: Well, what's so interesting, Nigel, the clear reason why they are taking action on this is they can see the potential for it to explode into a massive story and a scandal. It was interesting to me, reading what some government sources are saying, they predict that this could end up becoming the biggest non-Covid story of the summer. So clearly, the government are . . .

NF: *(speaking over)* Yes.

DW: . . . trying to mitigate the risk of that. But I guess, as you say, the proof is going to be in the pudding.

NF: Yeah, and time and time again, I mean, you know, frankly, I'm bored with the number of times Priti Patel says, 'We're sending in the RAF, we're sending in the Royal Navy, we're putting up drones, we're going to give life imprisonment to the traffickers. And now even those that come across face four years in prisons that we haven't even got because they're full already.' She keeps on doing this. And the remarkable thing is the stupidity of the Conservative Party who believe her every time. You know, Tory Party conference, 'Oh, isn't she wonderful?' Well, no, she talks tough, delivers nothing. And frankly, what she said today was designed to cause outrage amongst the human rights lobby, which it's done. She puts forward legislation, as I say, she hopes Parliament votes it down and then says, 'It's not my fault.' This government does not have the will to deal with this problem. Boris Johnson is wholly unconcerned with legal or illegal immigration. And I will predict right now this problem, by September, will be the biggest political story in our country.

DW: Nigel, Labour says this policy could break international law. Does it?

NF: Everything breaks international law. When you continue . . . you see, Brexit, we thought we'd be free of all the European institutions. But what Boris didn't free us from was the European Court of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, written into British law through the Human Rights Act. You know, she talks about stopping the boats, sending people back, deporting people. We can't even get rid of terrorists, which takes years because of the Human Rights Act. All the while we stay linked to European law, there is

actually very little we can do. So those that say these proposals breach international law are right, because our exit from Europe has not been as complete as it needs to be.

*Moves on to discuss England vs Denmark in the Euro semi-final.*

### **11.55pm Greatest Briton and Union Jackass**

*With Darren Grimes, Rebecca Hutson and Daisy McAndrew;*

DW: And who's your Union Jackass, Becca?

REBECCA HUTSON: Priti Patel for the second week running for her heinous Nationality and Borders Bill, which will seek to make this an even more hostile environment for the most vulnerable people in the world.

## APPENDIX II – THE WIDER NEWS AGENDA

The table shows the full running order of Radio 4's Six O'Clock News on 6 July 2021, indicating the relative prominence given to the Nationality and Borders bill story by BBC producers in comparison to other items on the day's agenda.

Time	Story or Theme	Duration
6pm	Headlines: Change in Covid isolation policy for those with two vaccine doses; school bubble system scrapped; Office for Budget Responsibility says UK must be prepared for risky financial future; the Stockwell Six have had their convictions overturned; Tour de France	1m
6.01pm	People in England who have had two Covid jabs will no longer need to self isolate/Future of NHS Covid-19 App	6m 30s
6.07pm	A man has appeared in court charged with assaulting England's Chief Medical Officer, Chris Whitty	30s
6.07pm	The education secretary, Gavin Williamson, has announced the lifting of most covid measures for schools, colleges and early years settings in England from July the 19th	2m 30s
6.10pm	The government's fiscal watchdog has warned that the chancellor will have to cover a 10 billion pound funding gap for key public services caused by the pandemic	1m 30s
6.11pm	Three black men who were part of a group which became known as the Stockwell six have had their convictions for robbing a police officer in 1972 quashed by the Court of Appeal	1m 15s
6.13pm	A teenager who believed he'd made a pact with a demon to sacrifice women in order to win the lottery has been convicted of murdering two sisters	2m 30s
6.15pm	Headlines: Change in Covid isolation policy for those with two vaccine doses; school bubble system scrapped. Still to come: Tennis player Emma Raducanu talks about how her Wimbledon dream evaporated	30s
6.16pm	Afghanistan's national security adviser has acknowledged that the army has been overstretched following the withdrawal of US troops.	1m 30s
6.17pm	A prominent opposition leader in Belarus has been jailed for 14 years without the possibility of appeal.	1m 15s
6.19pm	Knowingly arriving in the UK without permission will become a criminal offence under new laws set out in the Nationality and Borders Bill, which was published today.	1m 45s
6.21pm	Gary Lineker remains the BBC's top earner, even after agreeing a £400,000 pound pay cut, according to the corporation's annual report published this afternoon	1m 15s
6.22pm	Vauxhall's owner has said it will start building electric vans at its Ellesmere Port factory in Cheshire from next year	2m
6.24pm	Stock market and currency news	15s
6.24pm	Tennis player Emma Raducanu has spoken about having to retire from her fourth round match at Wimbledon	1m 45s
6.26pm	The England cricket team have been forced to name an entirely new squad because all those due to take part in a one day series against Pakistan are self-isolating	1m 15s
6.27pm	Downing Street has confirmed that licencing laws are to be temporarily relaxed to allow pubs to stay open later for Sunday's Euro 2020.	15s
6.28pm	The Isle of Man cyclist Mark Cavendish has sprinted to victory in the 10th stage of the Tour de France, his third win of this year's race	1 min
6.29pm	Closing headlines: Change in Covid isolation policy for those with two vaccine doses; school bubble system scrapped; Office for Budget Responsibility says UK must be prepared for risky financial future; the Stockwell Six have had their convictions overturned;	30s

Prime position was given to four Covid-related items: the ending of rules on self-isolation for people who are double vaccinated; the scrapping of 'bubbles' in schools; a short reference to the court appearance of a man accused of assaulting the Chief Medical Officer, Chris Whitty;



and an Office for Budget Responsibility report on a predicted funding gap for key services triggered by the pandemic.

The dominance of this theme was to be expected given the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the life of the nation and the importance of the public awareness of any changes in the rules and regulations. Most of the national press were also in agreement that these announcements warranted front page treatment<sup>36</sup> and the story was also covered extensively during the day by GB News.

Perhaps more revealing, however, are the four stories which followed – all considered editorially more significant and newsworthy than the Nationality and Borders bill. Two were domestic: the Stockwell Six having their convictions overturned and the conviction of 19 year old Danyal Hussein for the murder of two sisters in a London park in June 2020; and two were international: an acknowledgement by Afghanistan's security advisor that his country's army was overstretched following US troop withdrawal; and that a former challenger for the Belarusian presidency, Viktor Babaryko, has been sentenced to 14 years in jail.

Arguments surrounding the relative importance of particular stories are difficult to resolve – studies dating back to the 1960s suggest interlocking and overlapping frameworks that operate in unison to elevate events to the level of 'news'<sup>37</sup>, but the processes governing the elements of news selection are opaque and ultimately reliant on editorial judgement. In this example, while it could be said that some sections of the audience might believe that the prison sentence of a Belarusian politician was more newsworthy and relevant than attempts by the government to tackle the asylum crisis in the English Channel, it is likely another section of the audience would not – but here, the Six O'Clock News's editors sided with the former to include reporting.

Elsewhere in the BBC schedule, editors of six of the 11 monitored programmes omitted any mention of the Nationality and Borders bill. To investigate which news themes and stories were deemed to be more newsworthy, the full running orders of each of these six programmes (the three main BBC1 bulletins, Radio 4's World at One and World Tonight, and BBC2's Newsnight) were analysed, categorised and timed. The results are presented in the table:

---

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.thepaperboy.com/uk/2021/07/06/front-pages-archive.cfm>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.jstor.org/stable/423011> Galtung and Ruge's seminal 1965 paper on 'news values' and 'news selection' identified 12 'news factors': Frequency, Threshold, Unambiguity, Meaningfulness, Consonance, Unexpectedness, Continuity, Composition, Reference to elite nations, Reference to elite people, Reference to persons, Reference to something negative; and suggested that the more an event satisfied their 12 criteria, the more it would be likely to be registered as news.

Story/Theme	News at One	News at Six	News at Ten	World at One	World Tonight	Newsnight	Minutes	%
Changes to Covid-19 restrictions	14.25	10	9.75	32.75	11	17.25	95	44.0
Euro 2020 Football semi finals	2.5	4.25	5	0	1	7.5	20.25	9.4
Government scrapping the pensions triple lock	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	7.9
Vauxhall and Ellesmere Port	4.75	3.5	3	3	0	0	14.25	6.6
Claims that US forces left Bagram airport without warning	0	0	0	0	11.25	0	11.25	5.2
Conviction of Danyal Hussein for the murder of two sisters in a London park	0	3.25	3.5	0	1.25	0	8	3.7
Emma Raducanu feeling better after withdrawing from tennis match	2	2.75	2.25	0	0	0	7	3.2
Damien Hirst launches new exhibition	2.5	0	0	3.75	0	0	6.25	2.9
Tensions have surfaced in Israel's ruling coalition	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	2.8
Columbian Army committed war crimes against FARC guerrillas 20 years ago	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	2.8
Hans Christian Andersen Museum opens in Denmark	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	2.3
Woman with Down's syndrome takes Sajid Javid to court over abortion law	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	1.4
Policing bill will limit the extent the police can request information from rape victims	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	1.4
England Cricket team fully replaced for match against Pakistan due to Covid	0.25	0	0	2.5	0	0	2.75	1.3
Authorities in Nigeria are dealing with a new spate of kidnappings	0	0	2.5	0	0	0	2.5	1.2
Health Minister under investigation over parliamentary pass for Matt Hancock's lover	0	0.25	0.75	0	0.5	0	1.5	0.7
New York Mayor Andrew Cuomo's executive order declaring guns a Disaster Emergency	0	0	0	0	1.5	0	1.5	0.7
The Stockwell Six have had their convictions quashed	0	0	0.25	1	0	0	1.25	0.6
Report says UK needs to be better prepared for further economic shocks	0	0	0	1.25	0	0	1.25	0.6
Planting extra trees in Europe helps combat climate change, but could increase rainfall.	0	0	0	0	1.25	0	1.25	0.6
Second man charged with assaulting the Chief Medical Officer, Chris Whitty	0.5	0.25	0	0.25	0	0	1	0.5
Cycling and the Tour de France	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.5
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29.75</b>	<b>27.25</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>45.75</b>	<b>41.75</b>	<b>216</b>	

Overall the six programmes gave space to 22 separate stories and themes. While Covid-related news accounted for almost half of all airtime across the six programmes, there was still ample space available for a range of other topics: the launch of a new Damien Hirst exhibition, the opening of the Hans Christian Andersen museum and coverage of New York Mayor Andrew Cuomo issuing an executive order on guns. The table indicates that editorial staff and producers working on these six BBC programmes believed all of these 22 themes to be more important and newsworthy than the Nationality and Borders story.

Although the BBC could rightly make the point that there was coverage of the Nationality and Borders bill elsewhere in its news schedule, it is important to appreciate that viewers who chose any of these programmes – or indeed any mix or combination of the six – as their source of news on Tuesday 6 July 2021 would have been provided with no details at all of the bill.