



Carla Denyer MP
Member of Parliament for Bristol Central
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Helen Godwin
Mayor for the West of England

28th July 2025

By email

Dear Helen,

Free bus travel for asylum seekers

We are writing to ask you to consider providing free bus travel for asylum seekers in the WECA region.

You will likely be aware that the [current financial support](#) provided from the Home Office for people waiting for a decision on their asylum claim is £49.18 a week — just over £7 a day. For those who have been placed in hotels, their allowance is just £9.95 a week. Most asylum seekers do not have the right to work in the UK and so their weekly allowance has to cover all living costs, including travel.

In Bristol a single bus ticket is £2.40 and a day pass is £6.50; for asylum seekers living in hotels this means over half their weekly allowance spent on just one day of bus travel.

We recently attended an event organised by Bristol City of Sanctuary where we heard powerful testimonies from asylum seekers about the lifechanging impact that free bus travel would have on their lives. Many of them currently have to make the incredibly difficult choice of whether to spend their money on bus travel to access important support services over other essentials such as phone credit to speak with family members, printing costs for legal documents or suitable clothing. No one should be put in a position which means taking the bus to see a doctor or to take their children to school then means they can't afford other essential living costs.

To give a specific example here in Bristol, many asylum seekers are required to report to Patchway Police Station as a condition imposed on them by the Home Office. Failure to comply with this has severe consequences including the loss of asylum support, accommodation and potential rejection of their asylum application. Patchway is over 5 miles from Bristol City Centre; this means people seeking asylum either have to walk a 10 mile round trip or spend a significant amount of their weekly allowance, meaning less money for food, clothing and other vital costs.

Bristol City of Sanctuary, in partnership with FirstBus, have been administering a Transport Fund for asylum seekers in Bristol. This has been made possible thanks to the fundraising effort by Bristol City of Sanctuary and the generosity of FirstBus who have match funded Bristol City of Sanctuary's

Carla Denyer MP
Bristol Central
Parliamentary Issues: carla.denyer.mp@parliament.uk
Local issues & Casework: bristolcentraloffice@parliament.uk
Constituency Office Phone: 0117 440 3977



Carla Denyer MP
Member of Parliament for Bristol Central
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

donations and provided a single bus ticket for half the price. However, this funding is limited and cannot match the demand of the number of asylum seekers needing to take essential bus journeys; this situation has been exacerbated by the increase in bus fares in January 2025.

According to data shared with us by Bristol City of Sanctuary, nearly 50% of the bus tickets given out from their Transport Fund are used to take young children to a creche and over 30% are used to travel to mandatory Home Office reporting. In 2024 alone they provided 8640 free bus tickets for destitute asylum seekers. Evidently the need for bus travel among this group is great, but sadly the funds that Bristol City of Sanctuary are able to provide are finite.

Oxfordshire County Council have recently undertaken [a pilot](#) to provide free bus travel for asylum seekers in the city of Oxford. Will the West of England Combined Authority join them in leading the way on this, or at the very least estimating the costs of such a scheme?

Providing free bus travel to this group is a simple yet practical way that our region can demonstrate compassion and kindness to asylum seekers and to support them to integrate into life in the West of England.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Carla Denyer MP
Member of Parliament for Bristol Central

Councillor Ed Plowden
Chair of the Transport and Connectivity Committee

Carla Denyer MP
Bristol Central
Parliamentary Issues: carla.denyerp@parliament.uk
Local issues & Casework: bristolcentraloffice@parliament.uk
Constituency Office Phone: 0117 440 3977