# Anti-immigration posters stir fear and tension in south Belfast loyalist areas



Menacing posters demanding “local homes for local people” have recently appeared in a loyalist area of south Belfast, sparking concern among residents and authorities alike. The emergence of these anti-immigration messages in the Belvoir and Milltown neighbourhoods follows a troubling trend of similar sentiments escalating across Northern Ireland.

These posters, affixed to bus shelters and other public spaces, are directed at the Housing Executive as well as private landlords and housing associations involved in the community. They assert that, while these areas have historically welcomed individuals from various backgrounds, the current situation is deemed unacceptable due to a perceived shortage of housing for long-time residents. The message highlights a tension between historical hospitality and contemporary fears regarding housing scarcity, culminating in a demand for prioritising local residents.

Superintendent Finola Dornan, District Commander for South Belfast, acknowledged the community's unease regarding these developments. Addressing the harmful nature of such incidents, she stated that they “have a really damaging impact on everyone living in the local area and their sense of safety.” The police have committed to removing these posters in collaboration with local community leaders.

In November 2023, SDLP councillor Donal Lyons took action by removing similar anti-immigrant posters from the Belvoir area, denouncing them as harmful to the community’s inclusive spirit. Local reaction supported these efforts, with residents stressing their commitment to diversity and mutual respect. This echoes sentiments in other regions, such as Rathcoole in Newtownabbey, where parallel posters also emerged, prompting police intervention and community discussions about the growing anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The posters in Belvoir are not isolated incidents but are part of a broader pattern that has become increasingly visible in Northern Ireland. Anti-immigrant messages have appeared in various forms, from demands for “locals only” to outright warnings against rehousing migrants. The frequency of these occurrences raises serious questions about the narrative of community and belonging in a society striving to heal from its turbulent past.

Concerns over such exclusionary tactics are compounded by attacks on local properties where these posters have been displayed. For instance, incidents of vandalism targeting homes in Belvoir underscore the potential for social unrest stemming from these divisive messages. The Northern Ireland Housing Executive has condemned these actions, reiterating that they jeopardise the safety and security of all residents, regardless of their background.

Furthermore, even in more rural areas, anti-immigrant sentiments have manifested disturbingly. In locations such as Lurgan, alarming signs target specific demographics within schools, raising community fears about the implications of such messaging on the safety of children and families.

The observations emerging from these recent events starkly highlight a conflict between longstanding community values of inclusivity and the potent, albeit misleading, narratives surrounding immigration. While the posters call for solidarity among local residents, they simultaneously fracture the very community spirit they purport to protect. As local leaders, residents, and authorities strive to confront these challenges, the response to these divisive attitudes will ultimately determine the resilience of community ties in the face of rising exclusionary pressures.

The need for proactive engagement in promoting understanding and acceptance seems more urgent than ever, with hopes that the spirit of diversity that has, for over six decades, characterised these neighbourhoods can rise above the currents of division and negativity.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
2. Paragraphs 4, 5
3. Paragraph 6
4. Paragraphs 7, 8
5. Paragraph 9
6. Paragraph 10
7. Paragraph 11

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/posters-demanding-local-homes-for-local-people-appear-in-loyalist-district-BRRVD3R5IJDTXMPKCF3LNI4354/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/11/01/news/sdlp_councillor_removes_racist_posters_highlighting_housing_of_illegal_immigrants_-3741343/> - In November 2023, SDLP councillor Donal Lyons removed anti-immigrant posters from the Belvoir area in south Belfast. The posters, which warned landlords against housing 'illegal immigrants,' were condemned by local residents and officials. Police treated the incident as a hate crime and worked with the community to remove the material. Residents expressed support for the removal, emphasizing the area's diverse and inclusive nature.
3. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/11/08/news/further_posters_erected_with_anti-immigrant_message_in_newtownabbey_loyalist_estate-3758756/> - In November 2023, anti-immigrant posters appeared in the Rathcoole estate in Newtownabbey, north of Belfast. The posters called for 'locals only' and warned against re-housing 'illegal immigrants.' Police treated the matter as a hate incident and engaged with local community representatives. This followed similar incidents in other areas, highlighting growing concerns over anti-immigrant sentiments in Northern Ireland.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cwy89wgzwl3o> - In January 2025, two signs with anti-Islam sentiments and the phrase 'Local homes for local people' were found outside a primary school in Lurgan, County Armagh. Police removed the signs and treated the incident as a potential racially-motivated public order offence. The community expressed concern over the targeting of a school and the promotion of exclusionary messages.
5. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/pathetic-anti-immigration-signs-in-south-belfast-removed-by-sdlp-councillor-O5JLOVW5URF65FKKL2IZH6RXUA/> - In March 2024, anti-immigration signs appeared in the Finaghy area of south Belfast, stating 'locals only' and targeting landlords and housing associations. SDLP councillor Donal Lyons led the removal of the signs, describing them as 'pathetic and indefensible.' Police treated the incident as a hate crime, and local residents supported the removal, emphasizing the community's inclusive values.
6. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/residents-concern-over-unacceptable-anti-immigration-posters-in-south-belfast-C25ZECOPPBFU7EIAL32B3MOSZE/> - In March 2024, residents in the Finaghy area of south Belfast expressed concern over anti-immigration posters demanding 'locals only.' The posters targeted landlords, housing associations, and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. Police treated the incident as a hate crime, and local community leaders worked to have the material removed, emphasizing the area's commitment to inclusivity and diversity.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northernirelandnews/2023/11/03/news/windows_doors_smashed_in_estate_where_offensive_posters_erected_warning_against_re-housing_illegal_immigrants_-3749439/> - In November 2023, windows and doors were smashed at Belvoir House in south Belfast following the erection of offensive posters warning against re-housing 'illegal immigrants.' The Northern Ireland Housing Executive condemned the attacks as an assault on residents' safety and security. Police treated the incidents as hate crimes and worked with the community to address the situation.