# Anti-immigrant posters spark community tension in south Belfast loyalist areas



In recent days, disturbing posters advocating for "local homes for local people" have surfaced in the loyalist areas of Belvoir and Milltown in south Belfast. The campaign appears to reflect a rising tide of anti-immigrant sentiment, echoed in similar incidents across Northern Ireland. Positioned conspicuously on bus shelters, phone boxes, and other street furniture, these posters not only demand that private landlords and housing associations heed local concerns but also invoke a perceived historic openness of the communities in question.

The messaging within these posters suggests that for over sixty years, residents have embraced individuals from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds, highlighting their contributions to the community. Yet, the posters express a stark concern: local residents struggle to secure housing close to their families and lifelong neighbourhoods. A declaration within the posters insists, "This is not acceptable," illustrating a growing tension between long-standing community values and current housing pressures.

The police have acknowledged the gravity of the situation. Superintendent Finola Dornan, District Commander for South Belfast, stated that the police are aware of the community's concerns surrounding this issue. She pointed out that incidents of this nature can severely impact the sense of safety within the local area, noting, "We know that incidents like this have a really damaging impact on everyone living in the local area."

This incident is not isolated. Reports indicate that similar anti-immigrant posters emerged in the Rathcoole estate of Newtownabbey, further north of Belfast. These posters similarly called for vigilance over housing allocations, particularly targeting "illegal immigrants." The police have classified these postings as hate crimes and are working closely with local representatives to mitigate the tension and safeguard community harmony.

Local political figures have reacted strongly to these episodes of discriminatory messaging. Dónal Lyons, an SDLP councillor who removed racist posters in the Belvoir area, described the content as "sinister" and "deeply racist." Many residents expressed relief at the removal of such materials, which they felt fostered intimidation and division within their communities.

As these sentiments gain traction, the implications are profound. Beyond the immediate concerns of housing and community integration, these incidents reveal deeper societal fractures within Northern Ireland. Political reactions have ranged from condemnations of such actions to calls for increased community solidarity against hate-driven messaging. The Housing Executive has reiterated its commitment to fostering inclusive neighbourhoods, demonstrating a determined stance against the growing tide of exclusionary attitudes.

Such actions, underscored by a visibly mounting community concern over housing, highlight the urgent need for open dialogue and proactive measures to ensure that all residents feel safe and valued. As local authorities and communities work to address these divisive messages, the hope is that a spirit of inclusivity and understanding prevails, reaffirming the regions' legacy of acceptance and support for all residents, regardless of their background.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1: Article 1, Article 6
2. Paragraph 2: Article 1
3. Paragraph 3: Article 2
4. Paragraph 4: Article 3
5. Paragraph 5: Article 5
6. Paragraph 6: Article 4, Article 7

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/2023/11/08/news/further_posters_erected_with_anti-immigrant_message_in_newtownabbey_loyalist_estate-3758756/> - In November 2023, anti-immigrant posters appeared in the Rathcoole estate of Newtownabbey, a predominantly loyalist area north of Belfast. The posters, warning against housing 'illegal immigrants,' were placed on lamp posts and railings, urging the Housing Executive and private landlords to 'take note.' Police treated the incident as a hate crime and engaged with local community representatives to address the issue. This followed similar incidents in other areas, including south Belfast, highlighting growing concerns over anti-immigrant sentiments in Northern Ireland.
3. <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 Dónal Lyons removed racist posters from the Belvoir area of south Belfast. The posters, warning landlords against housing 'illegal immigrants,' were described as 'sinister' and 'deeply racist.' Residents supported the removal, expressing concerns over the intimidation caused by the anonymous distribution of these materials. The PSNI treated the matter as a hate incident, with local community representatives collaborating to address the issue and ensure the safety of residents.
4. <https://belfastmedia.com/anti-immigration-posters-erected-in-newtownabbey-warning-against-facilitating-the-settlement-of-muslims> - In September 2024, anti-immigration posters appeared in the Rathcoole estate of Newtownabbey, warning against facilitating the settlement of Muslims or 'illegals.' The posters, which included threatening messages, were condemned by local political figures, including Sinn Féin MLA Gerry Kelly, who described them as 'sickening' and 'despicable.' The PSNI removed the posters after community concerns were raised, treating the incident as a hate crime and emphasizing the unacceptability of such actions in the community.
5. <https://belfastmedia.com/belvoir-anti-immigration-housing-posters> - In November 2023, anti-immigration posters appeared in the Belvoir area of south Belfast, warning against the re-housing of 'illegal immigrants.' The PSNI treated the incident as a hate crime, with local SDLP councillor Dónal Lyons removing the posters after receiving support from residents. The Housing Executive and private landlords were urged to 'take note' of the community's stance. The incident highlighted growing concerns over anti-immigrant sentiments in Northern Ireland and the need for community solidarity against such actions.
6. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/posters-demanding-local-homes-for-local-people-appear-in-loyalist-district-BRRVD3R5IJDTXMPKCF3LNI4354/> - In May 2025, menacing posters demanding 'local homes for local people' were put up in the Belvoir and Milltown areas of south Belfast. The posters, targeting the Housing Executive, private landlords, and housing associations, emphasized the areas' history of welcoming diverse communities. They expressed concern over local residents' inability to find housing near their families and called for 'local homes for local people.' The PSNI acknowledged community concerns and worked with local partners to secure the removal of the posters.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/northern-ireland/residents-concern-over-unacceptable-anti-immigration-posters-in-south-belfast-C25ZECOPPBFU7EIAL32B3MOSZE/> - In March 2024, anti-immigration signs appeared in the Finaghy area of south Belfast, demanding 'locals only' and warning against housing 'undesirables and immigrants.' The signs were removed by local residents and SDLP representatives, with police treating the incident as a hate crime. The Housing Executive emphasized its commitment to inclusivity and diversity, expressing disappointment over such incidents. The PSNI increased patrols in the area to provide reassurance and prevent further occurrences.