

SPEAKING OUT,

imix

A practical communications guide
for grassroots organisations
working on migration and asylum

STAYING SAFE

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WHY THIS GUIDE?

In recent years, harmful and hostile attitudes towards migration have hardened. Many people with lived experience of migrating, and the organisations supporting them, have come under attack online and in person. It has never been harder to communicate in this space.

Things are moving fast. Far-right groups are increasingly targeting organisations in the migration and refugee sector. False information spreads quickly online. A post on a Facebook group can blow up overnight, and a local story can go national, even global, within hours.

We know organisations are already stretched. Volunteers are picking up the slack, and communications often gets pushed to the bottom of the list when there is so much else to do. Whether you run a small community group or a larger charity, whether you are new to communications or looking to sharpen your skills, this guide is here to help.

When we tell the human story of migration, rooted in shared values like community, family and dignity, we can change minds, build support, and help create the kind of welcoming communities we all want to live in.

In 2026, IMIX celebrates ten years of bringing humanity to the conversation about migration.

Over the past decade we have trained and mentored thousands of people working in communities across the UK and supported hundreds of spokespeople to share their stories in the media. We have learned a great deal about how to shift the public narrative, and this guide brings that knowledge together in one place.

You will find practical tools, tips and templates to help you navigate today's media landscape. Whether you are writing a press release, growing your voice online, responding to an attack on social media, or just trying to have a difficult conversation with a neighbour, this guide can help. And if you want to go deeper on any of the topics covered, there are QR codes throughout the resource which will lead you to more information on the IMIX website.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each section has a short introduction, a how-to guide, and a practical tool or real-life example. You do not need to read it from start to finish. Just go to whatever is most useful to you right now.

MESSAGING AND NARRATIVE CHANGE

If you've ever hesitated before starting a conversation about migration, online or in person, you're not alone.

Community organisers, charity workers, and people who care deeply about welcoming migrants and refugees are overwhelmed, under-resourced, and can feel uncertain whether their words are cutting through. With anti-migration rhetoric dominating headlines and the far-right growing more organised, the pressure is real.

Say the wrong thing and you risk online backlash. Stay silent and you cede the conversation to those spreading fear.

This section is here to help you find a third way: to speak with compassion, confidence, and strategy.

TOP TIPS:

10 PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

01

LEAD WITH VALUES, NOT FACTS:

Start with what you and your audience share: community, family, dignity. Values open the door. Facts can follow once the door is open.

03

GROUND YOUR MESSAGING IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

National messaging only goes so far. Use local examples, reference local concerns, and speak to the context you know.

05

NAME THE REAL VILLAIN - IT'S NOT MIGRANTS:

When communities are struggling with housing or NHS waiting times, those are real problems. Good messaging names the real causes: political choices, chronic underinvestment, and the corporations that profit.

02

KNOW WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO:

Think carefully about who you're trying to reach and what matters to them. A fundraising appeal to existing supporters needs different messaging from a response to misinformation about a local asylum hotel.

04

SET YOUR OWN AGENDA:

Responding point-by-point to far-right talking points keeps you on the back foot. Lead with your own positive vision of a just and humane migration system.

06

TELL A STORY, NOT A STATISTIC:

A single human story told with care and consent will almost always be more powerful than a chart. Try the Storytelling Triangle (see next page).

07

BE CAREFUL WITH “CONTRIBUTION” FRAMING:

Saying migrants “pay taxes” or “fill skills gaps” is well-intentioned but implies people only deserve dignity if they contribute enough. Language like “unlocking potential” or “community participation” speaks to the same ideas without reducing people to their economic value.

08

SHOW WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN:

A naked statistic is easy to ignore. Make the figures relatable by comparing the number to something your audience already knows, like a local landmark, a football stadium, or a town they’d recognise.

09

REPEAT YOURSELF:

Repetition isn’t boring. It’s how messages take hold. Find your core message, say it clearly, and say it often — across platforms, in different formats and voices.

10

WE, NOT THEY:

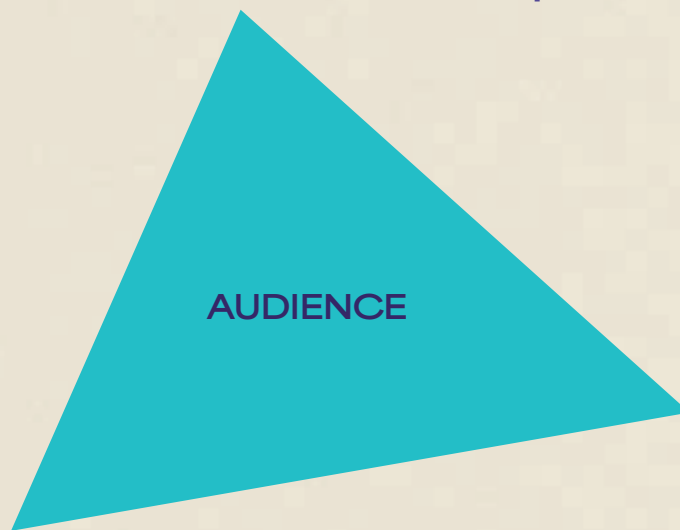
Using “they” and “their” reinforces an us-and-them divide — even when you’re being supportive. Try “we” and “our” instead: “Together, we can build a society where everyone belongs, no matter where we’re from.”

HOW TO:

THE STORYTELLING TRIANGLE

KEY MESSAGE
+ personal story

This framework helps you quickly build any message, so it's super handy for quickfire interview prep!



KEY MESSAGE
+ values statement

KEY MESSAGE
+ statistic/research

STEP 1: PROBLEM

Name what's wrong, backed by a reliable fact or figure.

STEP 2: IMPACT

Bring it to life with a real, specific human story (with consent — see our section on ethical storytelling).

STEP 3: SOLUTION

Land on a values-driven vision of what could be different.

ALWAYS ASK:

What does my audience already care about, and how does this connect to that?

In practice:

PROBLEM

“People seeking asylum in the UK aren’t allowed to work while their claims are processed — sometimes for years.”

IMPACT

“For Amara, who was a nurse in her home country, that means sitting idle, unable to use her skills, while NHS waiting lists grow and her sense of purpose drains away.”

SOLUTION

“Ending the work ban isn’t just fair — it would add an estimated £280 million to the UK economy every year. It’s what a compassionate, competent country would do.”

HOW TO:

VALUE – VILLAIN – VISION

A simple formula for persuasive campaign messaging. Lead with common ground, name the real problem, and paint a picture of what’s possible.

VALUE



VILLAIN



VISION

What we all care about

The real cause of the problems (not migrants)

What a better future looks like for everyone

Start where your audience already is. Name what’s actually broken. Show what we’re building towards.

THREE CORE MESSAGES IN PRACTICE

ON COMPETENCE

“It’s natural to want confidence in how Britain manages migration. We can make this country fairer and safer for all of us through practical solutions: restoring the right to work for people waiting on asylum decisions, fast-tracking clearly well-founded cases, and replacing for-profit asylum accommodation with local-authority housing. We need both competence and compassion to build a system that works — one that is fair, safe, and well-run.”

ON SOCIETY

“People in this country look out for our neighbours — whatever our background or faith. From cheering on the same football teams to our NHS healthcare workers, we see every day how Britain pulls together. Our towns are strongest when everyone’s potential is valued. When we stick together — across race, religion, and background — we build communities that are safer, fairer, and kinder for all of us. That’s the Britain we believe in.”

ON THE ECONOMY

“We all want the same basic things — the chance to care for our loved ones, to rely on quality hospitals and schools, and to build a secure future. We deserve leaders who put people first and invest in the communities that keep this country running. Yet instead of tackling the real issues, some politicians point the finger at refugees and migrants. People who come to this country aren’t the problem; they’re part of the solution. They bring skills, culture, energy, and hope.”



For our full messaging guide, Narratives for Solidarity & Solutions, including audience research and more detailed guidance, scan the QR code.

A FEW USEFUL FACTS TO HAVE READY

Asylum seekers make up just

0.16% of the UK population

— that's roughly **1 in every 600** people you'd pass on the street (Home Office, 2025).

The UK ranked

17th in Europe per capita

for asylum claims in 2024 — Germany, Austria, and Greece each host proportionally far more (Migration Observatory).

3 in 4 people

agree that people should be able to seek refuge in other countries, including the UK (British Future, 2025).

1 in 5 people

working in the NHS in England report a non-British nationality (House of Commons).

The public thinks **28%** of UK residents were born abroad — more than double the real figure of

13% (British Future / ONS, 2025).

Ending the asylum work ban could bring an estimated

£280 million

to the economy every year (LSE, 2025).

MEDIA AND JOURNALIST ENGAGEMENT

Working with the media is one of the most powerful ways to get your story in front of the wider public. It can feel daunting — especially without a dedicated comms team — but with a little preparation and some key techniques, it becomes far more manageable than you might expect.

This section covers what makes a good story, how to pitch it, how to write a press release, and how to handle interviews with confidence.

TOP TIPS FOR

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

01

THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST:

Reporters need stories that are recent, relevant, and human. Before you pitch, ask yourself: would someone click on this? Does it connect to something people already care about?

02

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE YOU NEED THEM:

Get to know your local journalists. Follow their work, understand what they cover, and reach out before you have a story to pitch. The goal is to become their go-to contact for credible, human stories on migration.

03

HAVE YOUR STORY READY:

You should always be able to answer: Who? What? Why? Where? When? How? If you can't answer these quickly, your story isn't ready to pitch.

05

PREPARE THREE KEY MESSAGES:

Before any interview, write down the three things you most want the audience to take away — and find a way to get them across, whatever questions you're asked. Try the Storytelling Triangle from the previous section!

04

LEAD WITH THE HUMAN STORY:

The strongest migration stories put a real person at the centre. Readers and viewers connect emotionally first — facts and figures come second.

06

USE THE BRIDGING TECHNIQUE:

Journalists don't always ask the questions you want, but you can still get your message across.

Use the ABC method: Acknowledge their question, Bridge with a phrase like 'what's equally important is...', then Communicate your message. This keeps you in control without being evasive.

07

SET BOUNDARIES CLEARLY - AND IN WRITING:

Before agreeing to any interview, be explicit about what you can and can't discuss. Get it confirmed by email. This is especially important when people with lived experience are involved.

08

START WITH LOCAL MEDIA:

Local news — papers, TV, radio, podcasts, online outlets — is often far more open to positive migration stories than national outlets. Local journalists care about community impact, and local audiences are more likely to know the people involved.

09

OFFER THE FULL PACKAGE:

Journalists are busy. If you can offer a compelling story, a confident and safeguarded interviewee, strong photos or filming opportunities, and background briefing notes, you make their job easy — and that makes them more likely to run it.

10

FOLLOW UP - POLITELY BUT PERSISTENTLY:

After sending a press release, follow up with a brief, friendly call or email. Don't be afraid to pitch the same story to multiple outlets. Persistence pays off.

STORY CHECKLIST:

BEFORE YOU PITCH

Check your story ticks **at least four** of these boxes before picking up the phone:

- Human interest angle:**
A real person's story that brings the issue to life.
- Reliable facts and figures to back it up.**
- A unique angle:**
Something new or slightly different from what's been covered before.
- Clear messaging:**
A narrative you want to get across.
- Timeliness:**
It's happening now, or linked to a current event.
- Relevance:**
It matters to the audience of the outlet you're pitching to.

HOW TO:

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

A good press release gives a journalist almost everything they need to run your story. Think of it less as a formal document and more as a gift — you're doing the hard work for them.

Here's the structure to follow:

Press release — For immediate use: [date] or Under Embargo: [date/time]

Headline	55 characters or less. Write it last.
Paragraph 1	Who, What, Why, Where, When, How.
Paragraphs 2–5	Broaden out. Sub-headings for skim-readers.
Quotes (2–3)	Organisation • Lived experience • Expert/local figure
Notes to editors	Interviewees, filming opps, timings, contact details.
Briefing notes	Extra information, figures and context.

Headline:

Hook readers in 55 characters or fewer. Write it last — once you know what the core story is. Don't be clever; be clear. If a journalist doesn't immediately understand the story, they'll move on.

Paragraph 1:

Answer: Who? What? Why? Where? When? How? Write it like a news story — give editors something they can almost run as-is.

Paragraphs 2–4:

Broaden the story without padding it out. Sub-headings help skim-readers. Keep it tight.

Quotes:

Include 2–3 quotes: from your organisation, from someone with lived experience (with consent), and an expert or local figure. Quotes bring the human voice into your story.

Notes to editors:

List available interviewees, filming and photography opportunities, timings, location, and a direct contact number and email.

Briefing notes:

Extra context, statistics and background for journalists who want to go deeper. Keep this out of the main story — you don't want to overwhelm them up front.

TOP TIP:

Label your email 'Story Idea' with the catchy headline in the subject line. Journalists receive hundreds of emails a day — make yours easy to spot. Send it to the right person (news editor, features desk, or a specific reporter you know) rather than a generic inbox.

HEADLINE EXAMPLES:

**From Syria to Stevenage:
how one family found home**

**The knitting circle that's
rebuilding lives in Leeds**

**Newcastle café uniting asylum
seekers and locals — and the
food's incredible**

HOW TO:

PREPARING FOR A MEDIA INTERVIEW

The best interviewees aren't the most polished — they're the most prepared. Here's how to get ready.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

- Research the outlet and journalist — know what they've covered before.
- Note down your three key messages or 'storytelling triangle' and practise saying them out loud.
- Anticipate difficult or hostile questions and prepare your answers.
- If you're putting someone else up for interview, brief them thoroughly and check they're comfortable.

ON THE DAY:

- Speak in short, clear sentences — don't ramble.
- Use concrete examples and real stories rather than statistics alone.
- Don't be afraid of pauses — they're fine on radio and in TV interviews.
- If you don't know something, say so. Don't guess.

USEFUL BRIDGING PHRASES:

"That's an interesting question, but to put it in perspective..."

"I don't have the precise details on that, but what I do know is..."

"I can't speak to that particular case, but what we're seeing more broadly is..."

BRIDGING IN ACTION:

A Syrian refugee was doing press interviews about a piece of theatre he had written and starred in. A journalist asked, 'How did you get to the UK?' — a question that was both off-topic and potentially re-traumatising. Using the bridging technique, he responded: 'People are often curious about how refugees make their way to the UK.

But I'm not here to talk about my method of travel, which creates trauma for me. I am here today to talk about my performance in a piece of theatre that takes the audience on a journey through my life from Syria to Gateshead.' Acknowledge. Bridge. Communicate. The awkward question was turned around in seconds.



CASE STUDY

HERTS WELCOMES REFUGEES

When Herts Welcomes Refugees (HWR) first engaged with IMIX's Constituency Training Project in the Stevenage area, the feelings in the room were familiar: fear of misrepresentation, anxiety about saying the wrong thing, and uncertainty about how to present their work confidently to journalists. Board members, staff and volunteers all took part.

With IMIX's media training and ongoing comms support, HWR embraced values-based narrative techniques, safe interview practice and message discipline.

The results speak for themselves: over the course of a year, the organisation placed upwards of 20 pieces of coverage across local and national print, radio and online outlets - all featuring consistent messaging voiced by people with lived experience.

Frontline staff such as Helen Singer and members of HWR's lived experience advisory board — including young people who had sought safety in the UK — appeared in the St Albans Times, on BBC News during the conflict in Syria, in the Herts Advertiser covering refugee artists at Trestle Arts Base, and on BBC Three Counties Radio and Mix FM. These weren't just media appearances. They were community members speaking with skill, confidence and safety about the world they live in.

The impact went beyond coverage. HWR was awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service — a recognition of the strength of their model and the dedication of their community. Their journey shows what becomes possible when grassroots organisations embrace the tools, the practice and the confidence to tell their own story: not as victims of the news cycle, but as the people who can change it.

KEY LESSON:

Establish local relationships with journalists before you need them. When HWR had a strong stories with a timely news hook, they had the contacts, confidence and the messages ready to go.

TELLING STORIES SAFELY

a practical guide for grassroots
organisations

Sharing the stories of people with lived experience of migration and asylum is extremely powerful. It shifts public attitudes, puts a human face to complex issues, and can change minds. But it carries real responsibility.

Once an interview is published or broadcast, it's extremely difficult to remove. A poorly handled media interaction can retrigger trauma, create legal challenges, expose someone to online abuse, and even endanger their family. Getting safeguarding right isn't a box-ticking exercise — it's how you make sure people are protected, respected, and in control of their own story.

One principle to keep front of mind throughout:

Anyone still awaiting a decision on their asylum claim should remain anonymous until they have refugee status.

And don't forget: many people in your organisation may have personal experience of migration or seeking asylum.

Safeguarding applies to your team too, not just the people you support.

BEFORE ANY INTERVIEW

Run through the checklist

Give the person you're working with at least a day to think this through before they commit to anything. Go through these questions and have a conversation together:

- Do you understand what “on the record” means — and that published content is very hard to take down?
- Do you have legal status in the UK? If not, have you talked about staying anonymous?
- What do you hope to get out of this?
- Are you happy to be named and/or photographed?
- Is there anything you don't want to be asked about?
- Could any details put you, a family member, or a friend at risk — including people outside the UK?
- Do you know that hostile social media comments are common on public-facing stories? Does that change the way you feel about taking part in this interview?
- Would you like someone with you — a friend, support worker, or IMIX rep — during the interview?

KNOW

YOUR

MEDIA

It's worth making sure anyone speaking to a journalist understands what these words, or 'journalist jargon,' mean. When in doubt, assume everything is on the record.

TERMS

TERM

WHAT IT MEANS

On the record

Everything said may be published.

Off the record

Not for publication.

On background / unattributed

Can be used, but not traced back to you.

On air

Being recorded or broadcast live.

If ever unsure, just say clearly:

“This is for publication” or “This is not for publication.”

SETTING BOUNDARIES WITH JOURNALISTS

Interviewees have every right to set conditions before speaking to a journalist. Put these in writing before the interview where possible. Here are some phrases that work:



I am not able to talk about my family for security reasons.



The interviewee must remain anonymous - this is a condition of the interview.



I don't wish to discuss that topic as it is very traumatic.



If my boundaries are not respected, I will end this interview.

ON

THE DAY: Making it work practically

SET THE SCENE:

Choose a quiet, private space. Check whether the person needs an interpreter or a trusted caseworker present. Share questions in advance where possible, especially if English isn't their first language.

BEFORE FILMING OR RECORDING, CONFIRM:

- Does the person fully understand where their footage or quotes will appear?
- Are they comfortable being identified — and aware of the risks?
- Do spokespeople from your organisation need any media coaching?
- Could appearing publicly put them or their family in danger?

IF THERE'S A TV CREW INVOLVED:

Assign one staff member to accompany them throughout. Agree camera angles in advance if anonymity is needed — filming from behind, close-ups of hands, or background scenery all work well. Avoid face blurring, which risks dehumanising subjects and associating them with criminality.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW: Don't stop there

The support doesn't end when the camera stops rolling.

- Prepare interviewees in advance that hostile social media comments are common, but are almost always a **loud minority**. Don't let it come as a shock.
- Monitor comments on their behalf rather than sending them the link themselves.
- Request that journalists disable comments where possible.
- Hostile or hateful comments can be reported to social media platforms; content inciting hatred can be reported to the police.
- Advise people not to engage with trolls directly.
- Debrief and check in — a follow-up message or call can make a real difference.

QUICK REFERENCE:

DOs & DON'Ts

✓ DO

Brief interviewees on the audience, purpose, and key messages.

Make sure consent and safeguarding are in place **in writing** before anything is agreed.

Let people tell their story in their own words.

Pair newer lived experience voices with more experienced peers where appropriate.

Debrief and offer follow-up support after any media engagement.

✗ DON'T

Tokenise individuals or use people to "tick a box."

Overexpose someone or put them in uncomfortable situations.

Assume lived experience automatically makes someone a spokesperson.

Push for emotional stories if there's a risk of retraumatisation.

Ignore power dynamics — everyone deserves equal respect and agency.



CASESTUDY

BBC NEWSNIGHT & THE IMPORTANCE OF BOUNDARIES

When BBC Newsnight requested an interview with a resident of asylum accommodation about the impact of far-right protests, IMIX supported a contributor, Alex — a PhD student from Sudan, living with his wife and baby at a hotel in Wolverhampton — to participate safely.

What good safeguarding looked like in practice:

- He agreed to take part on two conditions: full anonymity, and questions shared in advance. The BBC couldn't provide questions in advance but were able to share the angles they would be exploring and confirmed the interview would be pre-recorded and could be paused at any time.
- IMIX arranged a pre-interview call to agree boundaries and confirm an IMIX staff member would be present throughout.
- When questions during filming moved onto topics beyond what had been agreed, the interviewee felt confident to stop the interview and re-record the conversation within the agreed boundaries.
- After broadcast, hostile comments appeared on social media. IMIX monitored these, encouraged him not to engage, and offered ongoing support from multiple staff members, including the CEO.

The contributor reflected afterwards:

- Ahmed [IMIX staff] was there to support me and ensure my identity and boundaries were respected throughout... I'd like to thank IMIX for their time and effort.

THE LESSON:

Good safeguarding isn't just preparation; it's active support throughout and beyond the interview.

DIGITAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Social media gives you direct access to public attention and support — bypassing traditional media. But it can be overwhelming with limited resources.

This section helps you make smart choices about which platform to choose, what content to post, how to manage it, and how to stay safe.

CHOOSING YOUR PLATFORM

Before picking a platform, ask yourself: who am I trying to reach, and what am I trying to achieve?

If your main goal is reaching outward (reaching new supporters or the general public), you need open, public-facing platforms. If it's staying connected and

engaged with existing supporters, for example to encourage them to attend events or take part in campaigns, you need closed community tools. Knowing which platform to prioritise is fundamental, especially if your team has limited resources and capacity.

OPEN PLATFORMS FOR EXTERNAL AUDIENCES:

Facebook:

Local communities, events, public groups, fundraising; oldest user base but includes local politicians and councillors. Videos are increasingly promoted by the algorithm.

Instagram:

Visual storytelling through reels and carousels; younger audience, strong for activist networks.

TikTok:

Short, person or presenter-centred video; best reach to new audiences who'd never otherwise see your work.

X (formerly Twitter):

Fast-moving, political, where journalists and politicians pay attention. Increasingly hostile.

LinkedIn:

Professional networks, funders, commissioners; personal stories of impact perform well.

CLOSED TOOLS FOR INTERNAL COMMUNITIES:

Email newsletter (Mailchimp, Substack):

You own your audience; no algorithm can take your mailing list away.

WhatsApp or Telegram:

Quick coordination, event mobilisation, community organising.

Facebook Groups:

Moderated, searchable space for peer support or volunteer coordination. Popular in local communities.

TOP TIP:

One platform done well beats four done badly. Always consider what you have the capacity and resources to deliver. Pick the one that matches your audience, commit to two or three posts a week, and don't feel guilty about ignoring the rest.

Scan the QR code to use our handy Platform Picker tool.



WHAT TO POST: Why video matters

Right now, **video is the most powerful format on every major platform.**

Algorithms prioritise short video — especially under 60 seconds, vertical and with captions. Still images and text get less reach than they used to.

This matters for migration storytelling. Video shows tone, emotion, and personality — a person sharing their story filmed simply on a phone can be more powerful than any polished campaign. You don't need a production budget. You need a willing person, a phone, and a free editing app like CapCut, Instagram's Edits tool or TikTok.

What makes a video work: Open with emotion — you have three seconds before someone scrolls. Always add captions (most people watch on mute). Stay authentic. Real moments beat polished content every time.

If video isn't possible for you, Instagram carousels designed in Canva are a strong alternative — great for explaining complex topics. Keep your visuals simple and striking. Use brand colours and fonts as well as a consistent visual style.

A word on the algorithm: The algorithm rewards content that is emotional, reactive, and polarising; however, our mission needs accuracy, dignity, and long-term trust. Before posting ask: does this show someone's strength or only their trauma? Does the tone persuade or fuel outrage? Lean into authenticity — but always with consent and dignity at the centre.

CREATING CONTENT WHEN CAPACITY IS LIMITED

Let's be honest — if you're reading this, you're probably doing comms alongside casework, fundraising, volunteer management, and everything else. But you don't need a whole content team to make great social media posts.

Co-create with your community:

Volunteers, supporters, and service users (with informed consent) are your greatest resource. A 30-second phone clip from a volunteer about why they support your work is more compelling than anything you could write at your desk. Build this into your routine — ask people at events, invite short contributions, and remember that unpolished content performs better.

Repurpose everything and batch your time:

One case study becomes a quote graphic, a Facebook post, a newsletter paragraph, and a stat for X. Set aside 90 minutes a week to create and schedule the week's content in one go using free tools like Meta Business Suite or Buffer. Use Canva to build branded templates you can reuse — set them up once, swap the text each week. And don't forget, sharing content from IMIX, Refugee Council, or local partners with your own perspective added is still valuable comms.

KEEPING YOUR

Working in migration comms means hostility is a real risk. Every major platform has content moderation tools built in — comment filters, word blocklists, the ability to restrict who can reply, and options to hide or automatically review comments before they appear. Take time to explore your platform’s safety settings and set them up before you need them, not during a crisis. Bookmark the help pages somewhere your whole team can access them.

TEAM

AND

Safeguarding is critical:

Never tag people with lived experience into hostile threads. If a post attracts abuse, don’t draw them into it. Always check in with anyone who’s been mentioned or quoted online.

COMMUNITY

Protect your staff too:

Give clear escalation routes so nobody handles abuse alone. Encourage debriefs after difficult episodes and give people time out away from their screens if they need a break. Remind your team they don’t have to respond to hostility at the expense of their own wellbeing. More on this in our crisis comms section.

SAFE



OPEN PLATFORM CASE STUDY

PRAXIS ON INSTAGRAM



Why Instagram:

Facing increasing difficulty placing op-eds and securing consistent press coverage, Praxis shifted to prioritising Instagram video to speak directly to audiences and respond rapidly to news. They found that short-form video significantly outperformed static posts on platforms such as BlueSky and offered greater engagement while countering misinformation in real time.

THE RESULTS:

Since adopting this strategy, Praxis has seen significant growth in just three months, including a **728.5%** rise in accounts reached, a **363.8%** increase in followers and profile visits up **595.4%**.

Their approach:

- The first second (the hook) grabs viewers' attention. Hooks have included a staff member doing a cartwheel, filming in recognisable locations such as Big Ben, or bold on-screen text such as "Our Government wants to crash the economy."
- Videos are paced quickly, use varied shots and movement.
- They end with a clear call to action, often encouraging viewers to comment to boost engagement.
- They spend around one hour to script, one hour to film and one hour to edit.

LESSONS FOR THE SECTOR

Praxis told us:



Teamwork makes the dream work! Our best ideas come from bouncing off each other, and dividing production tasks helps when capacity is limited. We prioritise speed over perfection.

UNICEF WHATSAPP CHANNELS

**CLOSED PLATFORM
CASE STUDY**



Why WhatsApp Channels:

For supporters who want to hear more from an organisation, a WhatsApp Channel offers a clean, opt-in platform within an app they already use for personal communication. Unlike Communities, Channels are a one-way broadcast tool. Channels are currently

less widely used in the UK, but they are extremely popular across many countries, so many people supported by refugee and migrant organisations will already be familiar with the format.

UNICEF on WhatsApp Channels:

- They run 20 separate channels on different issues, to prevent content from becoming irrelevant or overwhelming.
- Its Health channel updates 4 million followers with timely information, often linking back to the organisation's website or other platforms.
- GIFs and short videos keep the channel engaging, such as a recent explainer video about malaria.
- Followers can easily forward posts to their own contacts, allowing information to circulate naturally through everyday messaging habits.

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS AND DISINFORMATION

A crisis used to mean something in the offline world had gone wrong. These days, you're just as likely to be dealing with something that didn't happen, or something being completely twisted. A screenshot of your post circulating with a

misleading caption. A coordinated wave of hostile comments.

A journalist calling for comment on a story you knew nothing about, with a 30-minute deadline. You can't prevent all of this, but you can be ready for it.

10 PRINCIPLES FOR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

01

PAUSE BEFORE YOU POST:

A rushed response can make things worse. Give yourself time to gather the facts, assess the situation, and agree your approach before going public.

02

PEOPLE BEFORE REPUTATION:

Make sure anyone who could be affected is informed, supported, and protected before planning public statements.

03

RESPOND IN PROPORTION TO THE THREAT:

Not every provocation deserves a public response. Ask yourself: is engaging likely to amplify the issue or help contain it? More on this below.

04

KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY INFORMED:

Funders, partners, and communities respond best to organisations that communicate openly, acknowledge what's happened, and show they're taking it seriously.

05

BRIEF STAFF BEFORE THEY HEAR IT ELSEWHERE:

Staff and volunteers should hear from you first. A short internal message acknowledging what's happening and what to do goes a long way.

06

ONE VOICE, ONE MESSAGE:

Agree who will speak on behalf of your organisation and make sure everyone else knows not to comment publicly.

07

DON'T ENGAGE WITH ABUSE:

If the content is hateful, abusive, or designed to intimidate — do not respond to it directly. Screenshot and document it, report it to the platform.

09

KEEP A RECORD:

Document everything as the crisis unfolds: screenshots, timestamps, who said what and when, decisions made and why. This both protects you and helps you learn from the experience.

08

LEAD WITH YOUR VALUES:

Whatever you say publicly, make sure it reflects who you are. Any statement should be calm, clear, and rooted in the values your organisation stands for.

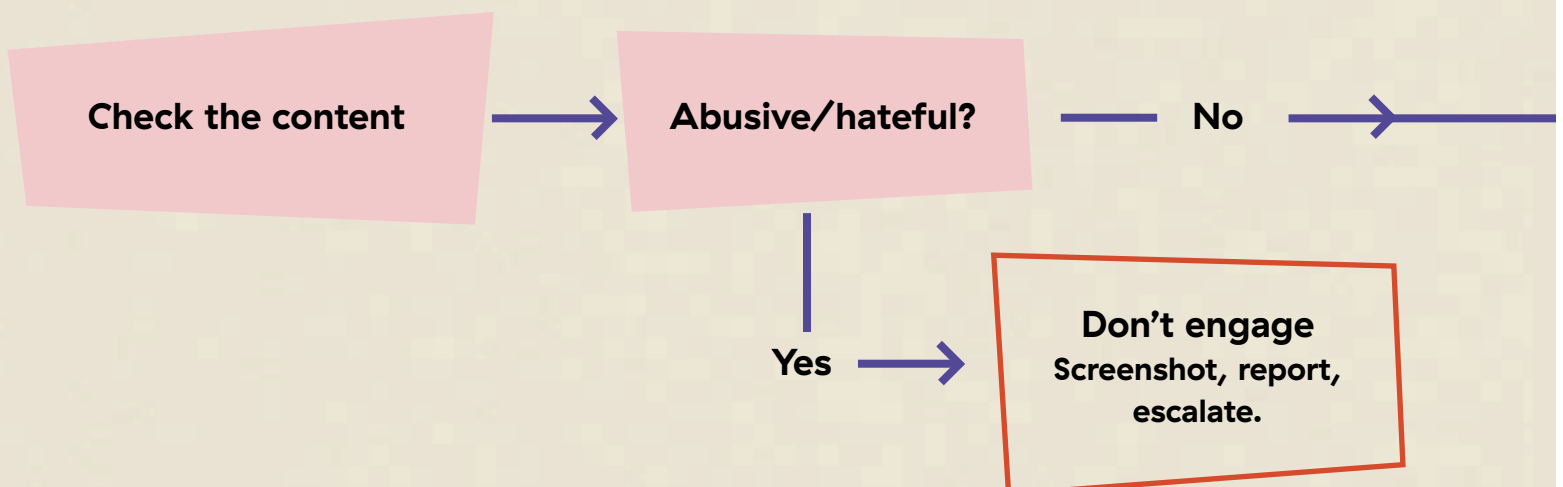
10

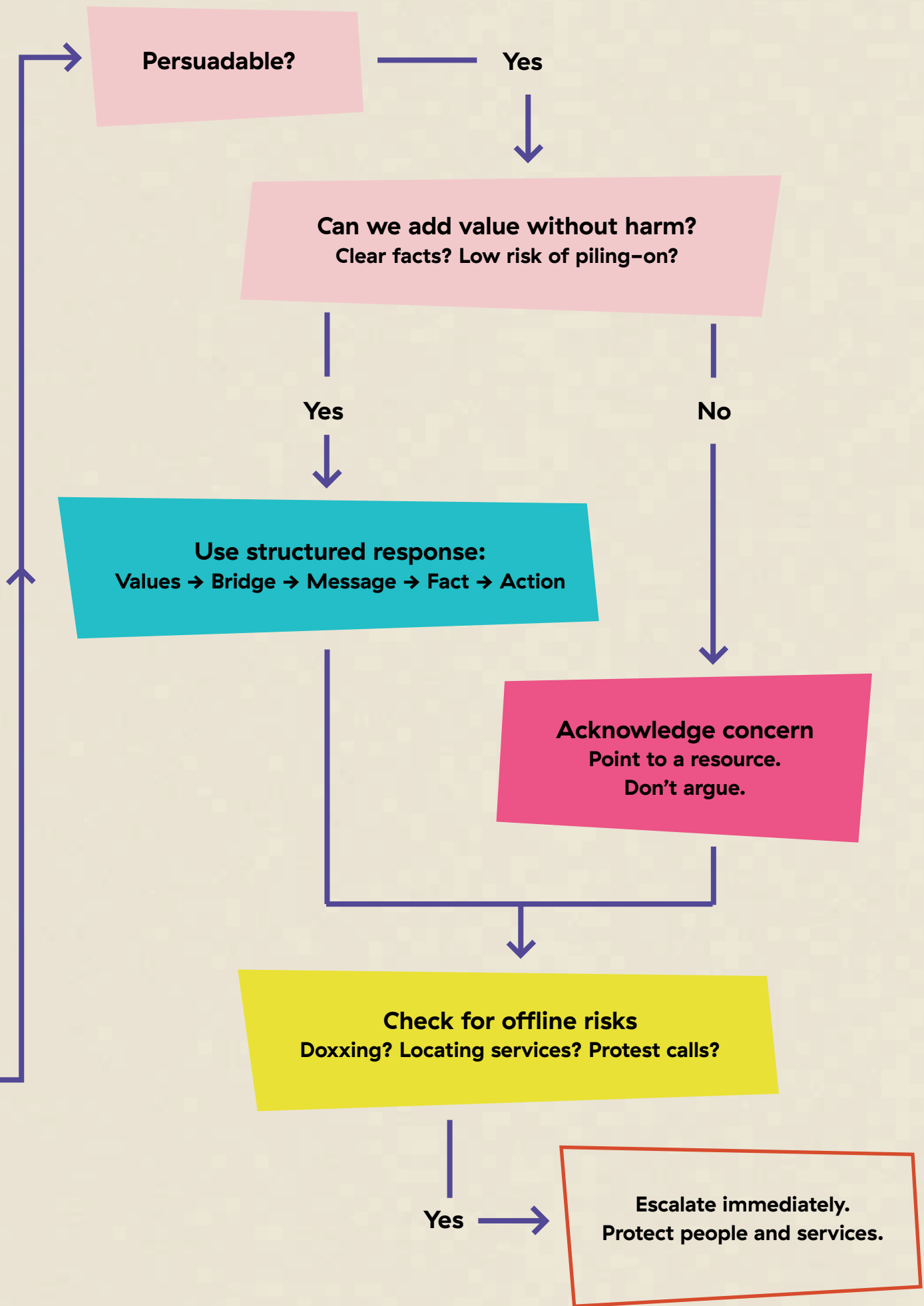
PLAN TO DEBRIEF:

When appropriate, take time to reflect. What triggered it? What worked? What would you do differently? A short debrief turns a hard experience into useful learning.

HOW TO:

THE DECISION TREE: When to engage?





TOOL:

BUILDING YOUR ORGANISATION'S BOILERPLATE

A boilerplate is a short, ready-to-use paragraph that describes who you are and what you stand for. It's a foundation text that you can drop into any statement. (The term originally comes from the newspaper industry, who used steel printing plates with pre-set text.)

What to include:

- Who you are (name and brief description).
- What you do (your main work or services).
- Why it matters (your mission and values).
- Optional: how long you've been operating and where.

BOILERPLATE TEMPLATE

[Organisation name] is a [type of organisation] based in [location], working with [who you support] since [year]. We [describe your main activities — what you do day to day]. We believe [your core values — e.g. that we all deserve to be treated with dignity and compassion, regardless of where we come from]. Our work is guided by our communities, and we are committed to [your mission — e.g. creating safe, welcoming spaces where people can rebuild their lives].

TOOL:

BUILDING A PUBLIC RESPONSE / STATEMENT

01 ACKNOWLEDGE:

Start by briefly acknowledging what has happened or what is being said — without amplifying or legitimising false claims. Keep it factual and calm.

“We are aware of reports circulating about [issue/situation].”

02 CLARIFY:

Provide the facts clearly and simply. Correct any inaccuracies without being combative. You don't need to respond to every point — focus on what matters most.

“To clarify: [accurate description of the situation]. [Correct any specific false claim if necessary].”

03 AFFIRM YOUR VALUES:

Bring it back to who you are and what you stand for. This isn't waffle — it's essential. People want to know that your organisation has a moral compass.

“Our focus remains on [mission]. We are committed to the safety and dignity of everyone we work with, and we will not be distracted from that.”

04 CLOSE AND DIRECT:

Tell people what happens next, or where to go for accurate information. Keep it simple.

“If you have questions or concerns, please contact us directly at [email/phone]. We will continue to update our community as the situation develops.”

HOLDING STATEMENT

(for when you don't have all the facts yet):

A holding statement buys you time without creating a vacuum — which is where rumour and speculation tend to fill in.

“We are aware of [issue] and are taking it seriously. We are reviewing the situation and will provide a full update as soon as possible. In the meantime, we remain committed to [mission/values]. If you have concerns, please contact [name/email].”

TOOL:

CRISIS PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Use this to check you're ready before a crisis hits.
Review it once a year.

- Key policies are up to date: safeguarding, data protection, complaints.
- It's clear who is authorised to speak publicly on behalf of the organisation.
- We have a named crisis lead, a media contact, and a backup for each.
- We have a current boilerplate and agreed key messages — stored somewhere everyone can find them.
- We have a list of trusted external contacts who can support us if capacity is limited (e.g. IMIX, peer organisations).
- Staff know how to flag a potential issue and who to tell.
- We have a simple escalation process that everyone understands.
- After any significant incident, we commit to a debrief and update our plan.

FURTHER RESOURCES



This guide brings together resources, toolkits and research developed by the IMIX team and informed by partners across the sector.

You can find more detail and in-depth work on our website resource page, via the QR code.

BEFORE YOU GO...

We hope this resource has been helpful as you reflect on your communications. Have confidence in the depth of knowledge you hold about your work. It will often far exceed that of any journalist and certainly that of any social media troll.

Good communications can change how people think and talk about migration, and right now, that really matters. Every conversation you have, every story you tell, every post you share is an opportunity to build understanding, counter hostility, and stand up for the values that bring communities together.

You don't have to do everything in this guide at once. Start with what feels most urgent for your organisation and build from there.

And remember — you're not doing this alone.

**IMIX and the wider migration sector
are here to support you.**

Please do reach out to the IMIX team if you would like to discuss how we can work with you on any communications needs which you have, including training, mentoring and consultancy, at media@imix.org.uk.

Design by Migrants in Culture and Geli Luna, 2026.

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