Draft Template letter to MPs.

*Please adapt this template, if you use it, it is intended as a guide only and you can write about your own examples or concerns regarding the asylum process. For example you can add what you do or the work of your group. If you write on behalf of a group, you can mention that your group covers the constituency of the MP. If a city group you can even write to county MPs. You can still invite your MP to attend even if you are not going yourself by asking them to take the opportunity to listen to refugees provide testimony of their experiences. You may also wish to use aspects of this template to invite your MP to meet you in your constituency to discuss the 3 strategic priorities. Please also provide your full postal address.*

Dear [add in the name of your MP]

**Sanctuary in Parliament** **2018**

**“Towards a Fairer System”
*12.00 – 16:00*Monday 12th November in Atlee Suite, Portcullis House**

**Cross-party MP and refugee panel 12:30 to 1:30**

I warmly invite you to attend the next **Sanctuary in Parliament,** an annual event which brings local City of Sanctuary groups and refugees from around the UK to Parliament to meet their MPs, on Monday **12th November 2018** in Portcullis House, Westminster.

This is an opportunity to talk to your constituents and with refugees and people seeking sanctuary with a view to positive dialogue and securing your support for a fairer and more compassionate system.

The aim of City of Sanctuary is to ensure that the UK is a welcoming place of safety for all and is proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

*[Local groups/organisations – you can add in information here about activities and events in your local area]*

After fleeing war, torture and persecution in their countries of origin, many people will face ongoing hardships in the UK while stating their claim for protection. This year’s Sanctuary in Parliament event will focus on working towards a fairer, more compassionate system for people seeking sanctuary in the United Kingdom. I believe that a fairer, more compassionate system is one in which no-one is detained without knowing when they will be released; it is the ability to enjoy a family life with loved ones and the realisation of the legitimate aspiration to provide for oneself and one’s family and to contribute to society through employment.

The event is being hosted by The APPG for Refugees and the chair, Thangam Debbonaire MP will open this session at about 12:15 and at 12:30 a panel of cross-party MPs and refugees will be discussing the above issues. This will be followed by a Q&A and I hope you will be able to join us for this session. I will be available to talk to you until 4pm. There will also be opportunities to hear directly from refugees themselves.

I believe that 2018 provides an important opportunity to advance these issues. The forthcoming Immigration Bill, expected towards the end of this year, will reform policy on immigration in the United Kingdom in an unprecedented way. Concurrently, the scandal over the treatment of the Windrush generation has brought greater awareness of the impact of the Government’s “hostile environment” policy and the Home Office’s burdensome bureaucracy on individual human lives. I believe that the public response to the scandal is indicative that the vast majority of the public would prefer government policies towards a welcoming environment, especially for those fleeing violence and persecution.

I do not want sanctuary seekers to be forgotten in the midst of the fundamental rethink of the immigration system and I/we hope to have a dialogue with you about some of the most harmful practices currently inflicted on people seeking sanctuary.

I will send you further information about why I am so passionate about the need for these reforms as well as a more detailed programme nearer the time. In the meantime, it would be great if you could me know that you have been able to put this into your diary.

My telephone number is XXXX if you would like to text me the time of your arrival on the day so that I can ensure that I don’t miss you at the event.

*If you are contacting your MP as a group and/or you plan to attend SiP, please try to arrange a specific time to meet your MP! We will have a separate room available for people to have conversations and further discussions*]

I hope you will be able to join us on **Monday the 12th November**, even if only for a short while. I will be in touch nearer the date with a full programme for the afternoon.

Yours sincerely

(*Add your postal address*)