



Annual Review 2017

Introduction from the

SPECIAL POINTS OF IN- TEREST:

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It is with much pleasure that I welcome you to our 2017 Annual Review. The review provides just a small snapshot of the work of the City of Sanctuary UK umbrella organisation, as well as some of the highlights from in and around the network.

2017 was yet another challenging and busy year for our staff, volunteers and trustees team. The main priority has been to support our growing network of groups across the UK. As you can see from this snapshot review once again our groups have been developing more activities and expanding their reach across their areas in order to foster and build

welcome for people seeking sanctuary. This is in itself evidence that people across the UK are continuing to respond to the ongoing refugee displacement with goodwill and generosity. So most importantly to all of you that are involved in efforts to make the UK a more welcoming place I introduce this review by extending my heartfelt thanks – thanks to the hundreds of volunteers and staff who, every day, make a huge difference to the lives of people seeking sanctuary across the UK.

Nonetheless, despite the continued expansion of our network and the positive strides in building a movement to welcome people seeking sanctuary we cannot underestimate the continued challenges. In 2017 we witnessed the hostile environment stretching into all spheres of society- housing, banks, health which has negatively impacted on the lives of many people seeking sanctuary. It is therefore now more important than ever that we look to develop our Streams of Sanctuary work as part of our strategy to build welcome across all sections of society. Whilst we have already seen an expansion in our streams work, particularly in relation to schools and universities, in 2017 we aim to develop our strategic thinking with regards to streams and partnerships. It is our aim to foster the expansion of welcome into other spaces, for example into libraries, and we hope that you will all continue to work with us in our efforts. We encourage you all to continue to be passionate and innovative and welcome all your ideas and insights.

So looking forward, by working together with national and local government, civil society, the business community, NGOs and the public, we should ultimately aim to become more than the sum of our parts as we strive to realise our vision to make the UK welcoming place of safety.

Sabir Zazai , Chair



Looking back over 2017

It remains a privilege to report on another year of achievement for City of Sanctuary – and 2017 was certainly another eventful and busy year for us all!

City of Sanctuary UK only has a very small team of staff and volunteers, supported by a board of trustees, but we have a hugely ambitious vision: ***The vision that the UK will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.*** We believe that together, with our

hundreds of dedicated and hardworking volunteers and staff from across our network, we can realise this vision. And it is without question that our network is already making a huge impact on the lives of many people seeking sanctuary. We are beyond proud of the difference our network made in 2017 – and we are hopeful that we will achieve much more in 2018 and beyond – many thanks goes to each and every one of you.

Nonetheless we recognise that the external context remains extremely challenging, with profound implications for people seeking sanctuary. The global refugee crisis and the challenges we face in making the UK more welcoming makes it critical that we all continue to increase our efforts to support those who have lost everything. It is clear from the continued support for our network that many people believe we should do just that, but equally that our country is more divided now than it has been for a long time.

Internally, during the year we have undertaken a strategic review and set our strategic objectives, with support for our groups remaining our top priority. In order to better support groups we have concentrated our efforts on a number of operational areas of work. We have improved our website and begun to develop more resources and signposting information. Another focus has been to improve our internal communication, we continue to provide information to our groups via our newsletter and social media, and we would encourage all groups to regularly update the website so we can share your positive stories of welcome across our network and beyond. And then in December 2017 we were very excited to announce the successful applicants of the second round of Guardian Grants!

We have also continued to run events and once again our regional conferences, and indeed our annual conference and AGM, have been hugely successful. Just as equally successful was our 2017 Sanctuary in Parliament event – and with the support of Asylum Matters and other partners we were able to sharpen our campaigning goals and focus.

In 2017 we have been working hard to ensure we are financially sustainable and going into 2018 we have some potentially positive fundraising opportunities. We therefore hope to increase our capacity in order to further our efforts in relation to our strategic priorities of expanding and supporting streams of sanctuary work and building a wider movement.

Finally, I must thank the trustees, staff and volunteers of the organisation - many thanks to them for their commitment, passion and hard work.

Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer

Our Strategic Objectives

- Provide network coordination and support to City of Sanctuary groups in order to increase the number of groups and bring about an expansion in the activities undertaken;
- Facilitate communications across the network to share information (internal) and promote a positive message of welcome for people seeking sanctuary (external);
- Develop and promote Streams of Sanctuary and awards work in order to embed the message of welcome within mainstream spheres of society;
- Contribute towards movement building through building partnerships and supporting advocacy and campaigning initiatives to ensure people seeking sanctuary are welcome and the aspirations of the Birmingham Declaration are realised.

Annual Conference & AGM 2017

Our 2016 Annual Conference and AGM was a huge success, it was inspiring to see so many groups represented at our conference in Reading in July. There were over 100 participants, including many people from sanctuary seeking backgrounds. The event enabled people from all across the UK and Ireland, who are part of our growing network of groups and individuals, to share, work and learn together.

The event got off to an exciting start with Reading being recognised as a Town of Sanctuary. The Keynote Speaker, Brendan Cox, who hails from Reading originally, spoke following the award and was inspiring, informative and passionate. We also heard from two City of Sanctuary trustees: Jonathan Ellis, who provided a really useful summary of how City of Sanctuary contributes to wider movement building, and Caroline Beatty, who formally launched our newly developed Charter.



A certificate was presented to the Reading group by the City of Sanctuary Chair

The afternoon session was an opportunity to learn more about a range of subjects, including influencing decision makers, engaging with the media, measuring the impact of our work and governance. The roundtable discussions were led by partners and were described in the feedback as informative and useful.

Our thanks go to the Reading group for also hosting and jointly organising such a hugely successful event.

Finally, thank you to those who attended for making the time to be with us - the event was a success because of you!

Regional events

In 2017, regional conferences/meetings were held in Derby, Wakefield, Preston and Swindon (which was a joint event with groups attending from the South West and Wales). These events were well received by groups, with the main feedback being that they welcomed the opportunity to network, share best practice and feel part of a wider movement. People also got a lot from the learning opportunities which included, but were not limited to: media, campaign and advocacy and streams work. The Charter was one of the main topics of discussion in the events in the later half of the year—and we are pleased to report that the Charter was met with resounding positivity and received widespread support.



Sanctuary in Parliament



The fourth Sanctuary in Parliament event, organised by City of Sanctuary, Asylum Matters and other partners, focused on the theme "Dignity Not Destitution"

About 40 MPs and members from the House of Lords attended the Sanctuary in Parliament event to listen to the voices of people seeking sanctuary and their supporters advocating for a more humane asylum system at the Palace of Westminster. The event was sponsored by Bristol West MP Thangam Debbonaire, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees (APPG). Ms Debbonaire started the proceedings with a powerful message for people seeking sanctuary and their supporters: *"You are entitled to be here, This is your Parliament."* She then



went on to set the scene by saying, *"This country should be a place for sanctuary not destitution"* and encouraged other MPs to join and listen to the powerful testimonies. The first session was led by Sabir Zazai, Chair of City of Sanctuary UK, who alongside partners from Refugee Action, NACCOM, British Red Cross and sanctuary seekers, called for an end to poverty and homelessness within the asylum system. The powerful testimonies from sanctuary seekers advocated for three specific

and simple changes to the asylum system:-

- 1. Permission to work to be granted to any person seeking asylum that has been waiting for longer than six months,**
- 2. The rate of asylum support to be raised from its current level of 50% mainstream income support to at least 70%,**
- 3. An extension of the 'move on' period for new refugees to 50 days.**

The second session provided an opportunity for some wonderful performances. The first performance was of thoughtful poetry readings by Greystone Primary school children. The poetry demonstrated that the children had learnt about the experiences of being a refugee and showed that they deserve the Schools of Sanctuary Award. The next performance was by Swansea City of Sanctuary who read poems from the book 'My Heart Loves In My Language.' The final performance was by the talented children's singing group from the Syrian Community of Sussex who sang wonderfully and enabled the audience to end the day by celebrating the contribution that refugees make across the UK.



Schools of Sanctuary

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Schools of Sanctuary has become our fastest growing stream—we have more and more schools who are committed to being a safe and welcoming place for all, especially those seeking sanctuary. Whilst the majority of schools have been supported through the process by City of Sanctuary groups we have also seen an increase in the number of local authorities who are driving forward this initiative. It is such an exciting time for Schools of Sanctuary—the passion and the enthusiasm from all parts of the UK for Schools of Sanctuary is immense. We can only capture a small number of schools in our Annual Review but we ask all those involved in Schools of Sanctuary initiatives to keep us informed of any new schools which have come on board (and remind groups to celebrate achievements through the website).

In 2018 we look forward to supporting Schools of Sanctuary stream as City of Sanctuary UK develops its plans and capacity for streams development.

The three principles to being a school of sanctuary

Learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary.

Take positive action to **embed** concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within your school and the wider community.

Share your vision and achievements – be proud!



Syrian refugee Mohammed hangs out with his new friends at Widden Primary School in Gloucester. The school supports seven refugee families, including 12 children. © UNHCR/William Davies CHECK WITH UNHCR if we can

Widden Primary School in Gloucester was awarded as a School of Sanctuary in 2017 and also featured in a UNHCR article.

We are immensely grateful to the Education Authority of Northern Ireland who have enthusiastically embraced Schools of Sanctuary. They are currently working with Belfast City of Sanctuary group to support many schools in Northern Ireland to become welcoming places of safety. They have produced a fantastic [resource pack](#) for schools to use across Northern Ireland.



Greystone Community Primary School in Ripon is working hard to ensure their school is a welcoming place of safety. The school's year four and five children have written a wonderful collection of poems. The booklet was given out to attendees at Sanctuary in Parliament. We wish them every success for 2018 and look forward to hearing all about their achievements.



Our Lady of Pity in Greasby and Kensington Community Primary School both celebrated their achievements in becoming Schools of Sanctuary. Both schools were supported through the process by the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS). EMTAS has launched a School of Sanctuary Charter in Liverpool and many schools have embarked on their Schools of Sanctuary journey—we look forward to celebrating their successes in 2018.

Birmingham City of Sanctuary continue to do great work in schools. In 2017 they used their Guardian grant to promote an exhibition of work from Schools of Sanctuary pupils on the theme of welcome and the stories of asylum seekers and refugees. A local poet also led workshops in nine schools as part of Refugee Week.

As part of Refugee Week 2017, Cradoc Primary School was recognised as a School of Sanctuary. Kirsty Williams, Assembly Member for Brecon and Radnorshire and



Following on from their very successful launch in June at which the first seven schools in the county were recognised as Schools of Sanctuary, Norwich Schools of Sanctuary is continuing to work with new schools interested in working towards the award and joining the Norwich Schools of Sanctuary network.



Education Secretary presented the award. The award recognised the fantastic work of students and teachers over the last year to welcome asylum seekers and refugees in Wales. Kirsty Williams, Welsh Education Secretary, said: "As a School of Sanctuary, Cradoc Primary School has demonstrated some of the most important values in our society – showing compassion, promoting equality, and upholding inclusion".

Congratulations to Ysgol Maesydderwen who became Wales' first secondary school to become a School of Sanctuary. They were supported through the process by Hay Brecon & Talgarth, Town of Sanctuary. Da iawn pawb!

It has been a successful year for Universities of Sanctuary, we are aware of around 19 universities who have either begun the process of making their universities a more welcoming place of safety or have indicated their interest. Additionally we have seen an increase in the number of universities offering sanctuary scholarships which have enabled sanctuary seekers who cannot access student finance, to participate in higher education

We are also pleased to announce that three universities obtained Universities of Sanctuary awards. Our congratulations go to The University of Edinburgh, University of Bradford and The University of Warwick.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Edinburgh with a wide range of educational support. At the Scottish Parliament, at the end of the sponsored Sanctuary Walk for Refugees in June 2017, Prof James Smith, VP International, highlighted the University's work in engaging with refugees and displaced peoples on many levels. The University then received a certificate of recognition for being the first University in Scotland to become a University of Sanctuary.

As a City of Sanctuary, Edinburgh takes pride in welcoming global citizens in need of safety – whether that be from war, poverty, or as a result of the recent refugee crisis. The University demonstrated that it shared the values of its city by working to provide sanctuary seekers in



UNIVERSITY of BRADFORD

The University of Bradford have worked extremely hard to make their university a welcoming place of safety. They have proven, without doubt, a very deserving recipient of the University of Sanctuary award.

Their award followed five years of work by the University's Sanctuary Working Group, training staff and developing learning packages to educate staff and students and helping to develop Sanctuary Scholarships. The University also developed strong links with Bradford City of Sanctuary and refugee agencies across the City, and have encouraged students to take up volunteering opportunities to help welcome and support refugees and asylum seekers in the city.

Dr Mel Cooper, chair of the University of Sanctuary working group, said: *"We're delighted to achieve University of Sanctuary status and particularly pleased that we are one of the first in the country to do so. We have worked very hard to provide the help and support that we do for refugees and asylum seekers and it is testimony to that work that we have enabled 16 to be students here, more than anywhere else in the country."*

The University of Warwick

The University was privileged to host this year's annual Article 26 conference over three days in September 2017, which supported and welcomed sanctuary scholars and administrators from all over the country to look at the practical aspects of studying and working in the UK, and delivering university scholarships to students from a forced migrant background.

At the conference Craig Muir and Dr. Seyedeh F. Naseriniaki from Coventry City of Sanctuary presented Stuart Croft with their University of Sanctuary award in recognition of the ongoing commitment from Warwick to support refugees and forced migrants. This includes working to expand and improve the scholarships schemes at Warwick, along with awareness raising amongst staff and students, opening up facilities to asylum seekers and refugees living locally, and reaching out to schools and colleges in the region.



Welcome initiatives and activities

Learning English

There are lots of initiatives and activities across the network which aim to help sanctuary seekers to improve their English language, here is a just a small snapshot:-



- ⇒ Manchester, Wakefield and Camden City of Sanctuary all run a weekly conversation classes (The Manchester class is pictured above).
- ⇒ Doncaster Town of Sanctuary continues to work collaboratively with Doncaster Conversation Club (weekly drop-ins can be attended by up to 100 sanctuary seekers).
- ⇒ Birmingham City of Sanctuary used part of their Guardian grant to hold an ESOL forum to explore ways of increasing voluntary ESOL provision in the city. As a result, a number of providers are making ESOL available.
- ⇒ Medway City of Sanctuary used their Guardian grant towards induction support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children attending Mid Kent College, which helped them to access ESOL provision and understand the requirements and expectations.

Awareness raising— remains a key feature of all the groups in line with our network principles. However, here are just some specific standalone projects:-

- ◆ Liverpool City of Sanctuary has delivered awareness raising sessions at a range of venues, including churches and faith groups, youth groups, schools, CABs, universities and DWP/ local job centres, as well as working with the Local Authority.
- ◆ Southampton City of Sanctuary held a range of events for Refugee Week 2017, including a film screening with panel discussion, a 'Learning Day', a women's health fair and a 'RefuTea' party.
- ◆ Belfast City of Sanctuary organised a 'Great Refugee Picnic' as part of Refugee Week and have been working since then to develop their group.
- ◆ Hull City of Sanctuary has worked to raise awareness and build support among local businesses.
- ◆ Swindon City of Sanctuary organised a launch event – an evening of talks, music, poetry, drama and food. This formed the start of 'Harbour Fest', a three day festival of events.
- ◆ Bolton City of Sanctuary has organised outreach events and had a well attended AGM with food and entertainment.

Sport activities



Hull City of Sanctuary has organised cricket matches and coaching sessions, involving sanctuary seeking participants of all ages, in football sessions and swimming, as well as introducing women's badminton sessions at a local community centre.

Barnsley Borough City of Sanctuary used part of their Guardian grant towards transport to football competitions (with help from Amnesty International in Barnsley and volunteer drivers) for a team made up of refugee and asylum seeking members.

Sanctuary Suppers - Leeds City of Sanctuary have been developing their Sanctuary Suppers project – where a local group such as a church group hosts a supper and invites sanctuary seekers to join them. One example is the Carlton Hill Quaker Meeting House who have started hosting Sanctuary Lunches once a month following on from hosting a Sanctuary Supper.

Sanctuary Breaks

Many new groups have sprung up in non-dispersal areas and there are people all over the UK and Ireland who want to find a way help sanctuary seekers, even when there is no such demographic within their own communities.

Sanctuary Breaks are an excellent way to connect asylum seekers and refugees with local people who wish to host them for a short period – a day, a weekend or even a week. These breaks provide very welcome respite for asylum seekers who are sometimes stuck for many years and are unable to travel, cannot afford any leisure activity or holidays and are unable to take a break from the city to which they have been dispersed. There are many wonderful stories of hosting and activities that have brought hope and resilience to asylum seekers, enriched communities, enabled new friendships and support networks and made a real difference to the lives of all involved. Here are just a few



Causeway Borough of Sanctuary organised a trip for Syrian resettled families from Derry Londonderry to the Ballycastle site of the Corrymeela Community outside Coleraine. There was a play area for the children; the women had a 'pampering' session and the men played football. There was also a walk on the beach, sandcastle building and some brave people had a swim in the sea!

Greater Lincolnshire Area of Sanctuary organised 23 Sanctuary Breaks for 5 sanctuary seekers and 7 sanctuary seeking families as well as one day out involving local sixth form students, 10 sanctuary seekers and 1 sanctuary seeking family. These trips involved a visit to the beach and taking part in an art project.



Doncaster Town of Sanctuary go Canoeing

For the third year running, the Doncaster group enjoyed the hospitality of Kevin and Sharman Jones and of the Kool Kayakers Canoeing Club, at Barnby Dun. A total of 87 people enjoyed a BBQ in their garden, including 53 sanctuary seekers. The sanctuary seekers who attended had a wonderful time - comments included, "... it was a very nice day in my life, so thank you to everyone who did that" and "It was a very special day. We enjoyed with all people and thanks for all the staff for everything. Everything is better."



Malhamdale City of Sanctuary working with the 'People and the Dales' project organised 39 events involving 658 individuals between Sep 2016 and Oct 2017, including 32 day events and 7 residential. Their Guardian grant from CoS went towards the core costs involved. Participants attended from across Yorkshire

and the North West and visits have included walks in various locations of varying lengths, farm visits, tree planting, woodland management, dry stone walling, cave visits, boating on the canal plus various indoor activities during the winter months.



Somali woman helping to deliver a lamb. The trip organisers didn't realise she is a qualified vet until she jumped in to help!



Wales: Nation of Sanctuary

The Wales Cities of Sanctuary project and City of Sanctuary UK are working in partnership with the Welsh Refugee Coalition, and its members from across Wales, to make Wales the first Nation of Sanctuary.

There has been considerable activity in Wales, including a Nation of Sanctuary conference in April 2017. The conference examined what the criteria might be for Wales to becoming a Nation of Sanctuary and how, between all the groups and individuals across Wales, we can make that happen. It was also an occasion for as many as possible of the refugee support groups across Wales, both affiliated City of Sanctuary groups and others, to meet, share experiences and learn from each other.



Photos: www.leeshawilliamsphoto.com



Following on from the conference the Nation of Sanctuary Steering Group developed the vision for Wales: ***A Wales where people seeking sanctuary are met with welcome, understanding of their circumstances and celebration of their contribution wherever they go.*** There are now pledge forms for organisations to commit to making Wales a Nation of Sanctuary. We are pleased to report that the TUC signed up and we hope to see many more following in suit!

The Welsh Refugee Coalition and members of the Nation of Sanctuary steering group are meeting with the Welsh Government to discuss how they can work together to support the development of the new Asylum and Refugee Delivery Plan. It is hoped that many of the recommendations of the Equalities, Local Government and Communities Committee report, '“I used to be someone”: Refugees and asylum seekers in Wales,’ will be taken on board by the Welsh Government. Most especially the recommendation that the Welsh Government should take steps to become a Nation of Sanctuary.

Key highlights from groups

- ⇒ Abergavenny Town of Sanctuary - a motion of support was passed unanimously through the Town Council
- ⇒ Croseio Teifi - is part of a network of towns providing Community Sponsorship and welcomed two Syrian families
- ⇒ Hay, Brecon and Talgarth, Town of Sanctuary for Refugees - oversaw the award of two Schools of Sanctuary and continue to offer Sanctuary Breaks
- ⇒ Mid Wales Refugee Action - progressed their work to make Machynlleth a Town of Sanctuary
- ⇒ Neath Port Talbot - held a Syrian / Welsh Culture launch event which was attended by Michael Sheen
- ⇒ Swansea City of Sanctuary - launched an Advocacy Forum for asylum seekers and refugees, thanks to Welsh Government funding and logistical support from DPIA and City of Sanctuary
- ⇒ Cardiff City of Sanctuary - underwent a 'rejuvenation,' with the view to getting new and enthusiastic volunteers involved

Places of Sanctuary Ireland

Places of Sanctuary Ireland is our partner organisation in Ireland. City of Sanctuary UK works extremely closely with Places of Sanctuary Ireland to support the City of Sanctuary network across Ireland. City of Sanctuary UK has particular responsibility for supporting groups and activities in Northern Ireland; Places of Sanctuary Ireland works across the whole of Ireland (visit the [Places of Sanctuary Ireland webpage](#) for further information).

Highlights from Northern Ireland

- ⇒ The launch of the flagship resource book 'Schools of Sanctuary' created with help from the Education Authority and Urban Villages
- ⇒ Over 10 visitors from groups in Northern Ireland attended the Places of Sanctuary Ireland conference, forming lasting links and friendships across the border
- ⇒ Belfast's first School of Sanctuary, Blythfield Primary, was formally awarded and ten new schools embarked on the journey
- ⇒ The Belfast group moving from strength to strength with events such as the Great Refugee Week Picnic held in June
- ⇒ Universities and Colleges in Belfast (Queens and University of Ulster and Belfast Met) have registered their interest in becoming Universities of Sanctuary
- ⇒ The Causeway group worked with the Derry group and North West Islamic Association to host a Sanctuary Break in Corrymeela's breathtaking and inspiring reconciliation centre, Ballycastle



Highlights from the Republic of Ireland:

- ⇒ The first Conference of Places of Sanctuary was attended by over 120 people from all over the island of Ireland
- ⇒ Over 70 people attended the second Sanctuary in Politics courses, culminating in the first Sanctuary in the Oireachtas event in May, with a Sanctuary manifesto presented to the minister
- ⇒ The Dublin group organised a high profile follow-on Right to Work conference; over the following months the draconian laws were changed
- ⇒ Joy Bells: Christ Church Waterford with President Mary McAleese started the movement of church bells for sanctuary message which was taken up in over 20 countries world-wide
- ⇒ Irish School of Ecumenics, Portlaoise Parish Centre and Christ Church Cathedral, Waterford were all awarded Honorary Places of Sanctuary
- ⇒ Thriving new groups began in Cork and Galway
- ⇒ Following DCU in late 2016, new universities become Universities of Sanctuary (Limerick, UCD and Cork); at least four other universities have registered
- ⇒ A Sanctuary football tournament in Dublin brought together Chinese and Syrian teams in memory of the world cup qualifier won by Syria
- ⇒ Portlaoise Culture Night and many other Culture Night Sanctuary celebrations across Ireland in September



Scotland

The first exciting piece of news of Scotland is that our very own Chair of Trustees, Sabir Zazai was appointed as the new CEO of Scottish Refugee Council. Huge Congratulations Sabir!

Scotland leads the way.....

...in Syrian resettlement - Scottish cities, towns and small communities continue to give a huge welcome to Syrians being dispersed the length and breadth of Scotland.

... in refugee integration - Scotland launched its integration strategy this month which was the result of a collaboration between the Scottish Government, the council body Cosla and the Scottish Refugee Council, and sets out the main goals for refugee integration in Scottish communities over the next four years. The updated 'New Scots' strategy focuses on education, housing, healthcare and employment. Moving away from the strict distinction in UK immigration law between refugees and asylum seekers, it aims to support the integration of new arrivals into Scottish communities from day one, not only after leave to remain has been granted.



Highlights from the network

- ⇒ A new thriving group in Aberdeen was formally launched
- ⇒ A new group was formed in East Lothian
- ⇒ Edinburgh City of Sanctuary hosted a well attended gathering



for groups from all over Scotland during June 2017

- ⇒ Edinburgh City of Sanctuary launched a ground breaking mapping exercise, with groups across Scotland keen to learn from this great model
- ⇒ University of Edinburgh became Scotland's first University of Sanctuary

City of Sanctuary hosts Asylum Matters, which is an independently funded advocacy and campaigns project that works in partnership locally and nationally to improve the lives of refugees and people seeking asylum, through social and political change. The project is independent in setting its objectives and remit but works very closely with City of Sanctuary at a local and national level. The mandate of Asylum Matters is to secure the goals identified in the Birmingham Declaration:-



- ⇒ All asylum seekers, refugees and migrants should be treated with dignity and respect.
- ⇒ A fair and effective process to decide whether people need protection should be in place.
- ⇒ No one should be locked up indefinitely.
- ⇒ No one should be left sick or destitute in our society.
- ⇒ We should welcome the stranger and help them to integrate.

Some highlights from the Project



- **Bridging the Gap Between Asylum Policy & Practice**
 - Mobilised regional networks to collect evidence and case studies, for example the work to improve the standard of asylum accommodation helped to discredit the Government's complacent narrative and encourage an evidence-based debate.
 - Supported partners to raise their issues in appropriate advocacy forums, for example concerns about medical consent forms that implied that sharing medical data with the Home Office was mandatory – a practice which was then discontinued
- **Engaging in High-Level Insider Advocacy**
 - Led the Asylum Matters (formerly SHSH) Advocacy Forum with Head of Asylum Policy at Home Office;
 - Facilitated engagement between the Archbishop of York and Home Secretary (the Home Secretary, Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP, noted "*the positive collaboration with Asylum Matters*").
- **Acting as a Catalyst & Convenor of Campaigning Action**
 - Provided a regular forum for the sector to exchange intelligence, updates and campaigning plans;
 - Coordinated the development and delivery of campaigning ahead of key influencing moments, for example challenging the amendments made to the 'NHS Overseas Visitors Charging Regulations'
- **Reinforcing Links Between Local and National Campaigning**
 - Informed local partners of national policy change and mobilising them to campaign, for example Asylum Matters supported Sanctuary in Parliament 2017;
 - **Building Voice and Local Campaigning Capacity**
 - Built capacity and skills of local partners to support campaigning and advocacy initiatives, for example training, talks and general campaigning support for local and national partners;
 - Provided a platform for refugees, people seeking asylum and their supporters to tell their stories and campaign for change, for example the facilitation of 'Speaker Training'

We have endeavoured to select a cross section of activities, initiatives and groups in this review.

We continue to encourage everyone to use our website to post their inspirational stories of welcome - we want to highlight all the amazing work through our monthly newsletters and the annual review

Trustees

Alan Thomas - *Swansea*
 Andrew White (Treasurer) - *Southampton*
 Betty Nyamwenge - *Cardiff*
 Caroline Beatty - *Bristol*
 Herbert Dirahu - *Newcastle*
 Jeff Morgan - *Manchester*
 Jeni Vine (Secretary) - *Sheffield*
 John Mellor - *Ripon*
 Jonathan Ellis (Vice-Chair) - *London*
 Jon Featonby - *London*

Joseph Chivayo - *Derby*
 Kay Polley - *Wrexham*
 Marzia Babkarkhail - *Oldham*
 Pam Inder - *Leicester*
 Philip Berman - *Dublin*
 Rodrigo Edema - *Sheffield*
 Roger Nyantou - *Leeds*
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