

Building a Culture of Welcome

A sense of belonging



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Strategic Objective One

Provide network coordination and support to City of Sanctuary groups in order to increase the number of groups, bring about an expansion in the activities undertaken and improve the engagement and participation of people seeking sanctuary;

Strategic Objective Two

Facilitate communications across the network to share information, promote a positive message of welcome for people seeking sanctuary and enable the voices of people seeking sanctuary to be heard directly;

Strategic Objective Three

Develop and promote Streams of Sanctuary and awards work in order to embed the message of welcome within mainstream spheres of society and ensure that people seeking sanctuary are engaged and can participate in streams and awards initiatives;

Strategic Objective Four

Contribute towards movement building through building partnerships, ensuring people seeking sanctuary can participate and supporting advocacy and campaigning initiatives to ensure people seeking sanctuary are welcome and the aspirations of the Birmingham Declaration are realised.

We would like to express our gratitude to Jenny Whistler Design (jenny.whistler@icloud.com) for her generous design work on this annual review and helping us meet other design needs.

Sabir Zazai, Chair of Trustees

Welcome to our Annual Review 2018

In 2018, the Windrush scandal laid bare to the public the shameful, inhuman hostile environment policy of the Home Office. This is something City of Sanctuary supporters were, of course, fully aware of but the reminder makes us all more resolute in our vision to make the UK more welcoming. In our report below you will see how the network continues to grow in support of our vision and increases its efforts to support those who have lost everything and look for our welcome, support, and protection.

During this time the organisation came to the end of a period of reflection and strategic planning in which we restated the vision and set ourselves four strategic objectives to guide and shape our work.



This report is a snapshot of the work undertaken by the organisation to deliver upon the Strategic Objectives in 2018, and an even briefer look at the network and its work in making the City of Sanctuary vision of welcome a reality. We invite you to look at our website. It is important to note that none of what the organisation has achieved this year would have been possible without the generosity of our funders and supporters, and the commitment of our trustees, staff and volunteers. In the wake of Windrush and with Brexit looming, we need to continue our efforts to look broadly in building a sanctuary movement to bring about changes in the way we treat people seeking sanctuary in the UK. Public support for the principle of providing welcome is gaining momentum and we will continue our efforts to harness this support. Thanks to all our supporters and stakeholders!

Above all else as we continue to grow our support, we aim to ensure that all areas of our work are underpinned by the values which shape everything we do; first, to work with people seeking sanctuary; second, our determination to create opportunities for friendship and solidarity; and finally our commitment to identify opportunities for practical action for others who share our vision to effect longer term change.

Sabir Zazai
Chair of Trustees

Staff list

Siân Summers-Rees - Chief Officer

Colleen Molloy - National Development Officer
(Streams, Awards and Partnerships)

Forward Maisokwadzo - Media and Communications
Officer

Joanna Spooner - Finance and Administration Officer

Nawal Careem -Website and Communications
Support Officer

Ben Margolis - Regional Coordinator for the Midlands,
Eastern Region London and South East and Streams
Lead for Gardens and Universities

Gün Orgun - Scotland Coordinator

Nicola Walters - Regional Coordinator for the South West

Sam Slatcher - Regional Coordinator for the North East
and Streams Lead for Arts

Sara Trehitt - Regional Coordinator for Yorkshire and
Humburside and Streams Lead for Schools

Tiffany Allen - Places of Sanctuary Ireland

Rebecca Scott - Wales coordinator

Jeff Morgan - Volunteer Regional Coordinator for the
North West North West

Trustee list

Sabir Zazai (Chair)

Jonathan Ellis (Vice-Chair)

Jeni Vine (Secretary)

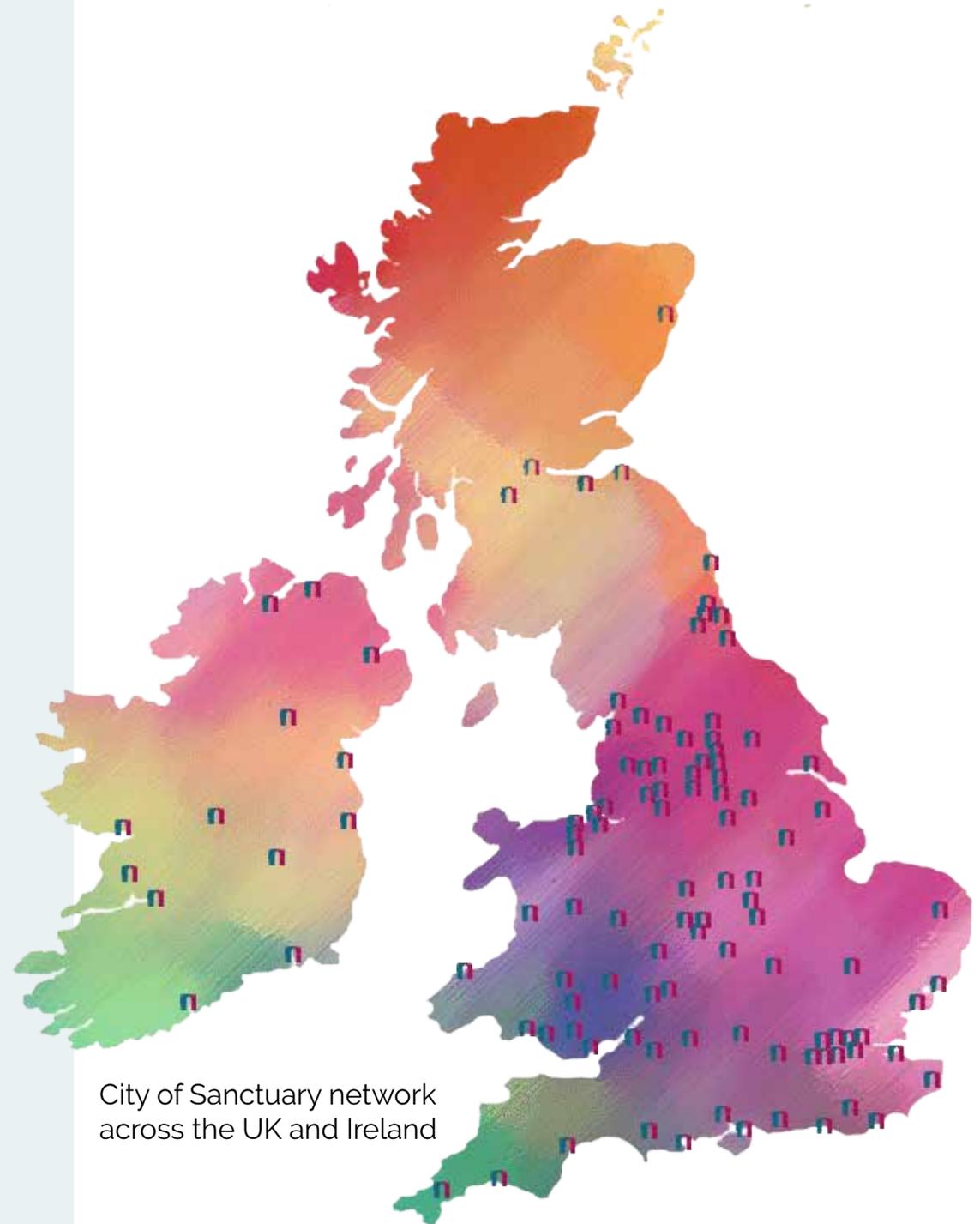
Andrew White (Treasurer)

Jeff Morgan Joseph Chivayo

Pam Inder

Herbert Dirahu

Caroline Beatty



City of Sanctuary network
across the UK and Ireland

Siân Summers-Rees - Reflections on the past year

2018 has been an incredible year of growth for the organisation and the network. The organisation significantly expanded its staff team in order to support our expanding network. We now have a fantastic team of regional and national coordinators covering the whole of the UK. As a result of the increased capacity we have been able to grow the amount of one to one support and advice for groups and were also able to facilitate seven regional gatherings, attended by over 400 people. The feedback received from the network was that these gatherings provide an opportunity to share best practice and learn from one another (see page 17 - 20 for a snapshot).

We also held two annual events – a conference/AGM and Sanctuary in Parliament; both of which were hugely successful and built upon learning from previous years (see page 5). City of Sanctuary organised two Sanctuary in Politics training courses based on a model developed in Ireland. The courses were tailored to the participants and offered learning and engagement opportunities for people seeking sanctuary.

The new coordinator appointments enabled our National Development Officer to take a lead on our Streams, Partnerships and Awards work. As a result, the work has significantly moved forward, including the establishment of steering groups for schools, maternity, health and universities. Overall I am delighted to report that we have once again experienced a growth in our network, both in terms of an increase in the number of groups and in the amount of activities/initiatives undertaken by groups. The expansion in Streams of Sanctuary activities in 2018 has been particularly phenomenal - schools, universities and arts institutions.

In the coming year, our primary focus once again will be on supporting the network to continue to grow and expand its activities. However, we also aim to play our part in building a wider movement for change. Looking forward, we will endeavor to use our Streams of Sanctuary and awards work as a strategic tool, to build both our network and engage the wider movement, through encouraging others to use our resources to build welcome in all sectors of society. Also, importantly, the organisation will be looking internally to improve the engagement and participation of people seeking sanctuary, as well as providing support to our network to do the same.

It is my hope that this time of political crisis will present opportunities to bring about changes that make a substantial difference to the lives of people seeking sanctuary. Looking ahead as an organisation, we need to further engage with national organisations with a wide reaching membership to engage them in our efforts to make the UK a welcoming place of safety. We will also engage in campaigning, as all political parties reflect on the approach to Asylum the UK should take in the future. Fortunately, we have the pleasure of hosting the wonderful Asylum Matters project to help support and guide us and others across the Sanctuary movement in campaigning.

To finish, my thanks go to our staff, volunteers and board of trustees – and of course the final words of thanks for the City of Sanctuary network, in the words of Margaret Mead:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has”.

Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer

Conference and AGM 2018

Newcastle proud to be a City of Sanctuary

We were given a truly Geordie welcome as scores of visitors gathered in Newcastle's Civic Centre for City of Sanctuary's annual AGM and conference.

The tone of a sunny and warm welcome was set on the Monday evening when the newly appointed North East Coordinator, Sam, welcomed everyone to Space 6. The informal atmosphere was conducive to lots of sharing and making new friends, while we worked together on a timeline of the City of Sanctuary story.

The conference itself was hugely successful, and the buzz of activity was guided by our skilled chairs for the day, Susan and Joseph. With so many stimulating ideas and interesting new friends to meet, the excitement was palpable. The morning's round table discussions really helped to focus and share ideas and experiences with new people, and the examples of Schools and Universities of Sanctuary along with the personal testimony of people seeking sanctuary were especially inspirational.

Sam's City of Sanctuary song, brought together strands of sanctuary over 1000 years, was a touching reminder that we were tapping into an ancient and time-honoured culture of welcome in this remarkable region. We parted feeling more connected, more equipped and more motivated than ever to make sanctuary a daily reality in our cities, towns and villages across these isles.

*"What a brilliant day.
Look forward to the next one."*

"Thanks so much for letting me attend - it was a truly fantastic day. I normally get very anxious in unfamiliar social situations but the people I met were so lovely and welcoming."

"The City of Sanctuary annual meeting in Newcastle was an extraordinarily rich event, full of interesting examples of good practices from the length and breadth of the U.K. I was particularly taken by two activities - the Sanctuary in Health developments, including an impressive resource pack on mental health and Gardens of Sanctuary, which focuses on community gardens and environmental projects."



Streams of Sanctuary

Our increased capacity freed the National Development Officer to take a lead on Sanctuary Awards and Sanctuary Streams work in 2018.

The Sanctuary Award is available to organisations and institutions across any sector. New awards delivered during 2018 across the network include a Trades Council, an ice cream shop, cafés and a youth club and we have developed a generic award logo as well as those that reflect the more established streams.

Our streams work has evolved organically from within the grassroots network and increasingly we recognise its potential in engaging mainstream organisations outside of the refugee sector. This work, alongside Sanctuary Awards has become an effective strategic tool for building the movement for welcome and inclusion.

A strategic direction for all our streams work was developed and adopted in July 2018.

It was agreed that each stream should develop its own action plan led by a steering group made up of experts by profession, experts by experience (people seeking sanctuary with some experience, knowledge of or interest in the stream) and relevant partners. Objectives for the steering groups include providing opportunities to empower people seeking sanctuary to engage at strategic leadership and decision-making level. In addition, resource development and the application of minimum criteria for each award in order to maintain consistency and credibility has been recognised. Steering groups have now been set up for the following streams: schools, universities, gardens, health and maternity.



CITY OF
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

“Sanctuary Awards are used to recognise exemplary work in this field. These can be organisations which fall within a sanctuary stream, or not. A Sanctuary Award is given to any organisation that is able to demonstrate commitment to our values and vision of welcome and that has applied our network principles within the organisation and its projects or activities.”

(Taken from the City of Sanctuary Charter)

“A Stream of Sanctuary encourages professionals within communities of practices or interests to come together to embed the concepts of welcome safety and inclusion within their professions sectors and organisations, together with other interested individuals (including people seeking sanctuary), groups and organisations.”

(Taken from the City of Sanctuary Charter)

Schools of Sanctuary

This initiative has developed well across the grassroots network. There are now over 200 Schools of Sanctuary and many more working towards the award. We held a schools network meeting in Birmingham to consult on the way forward and set up a steering group. We have learnt a great deal from this work, and we are still gathering together examples of best practice. These include the embedding of sanctuary issues into the maths curriculum at Erdington Academy in Birmingham and the full engagement of the local community, including people seeking sanctuary in the school.

There are plans to update the schools resource pack and develop a discussion/sharing network of Schools of Sanctuary in order to further develop this area. We are aware that interest in schools awards sometimes outstrips our capacity, and we are seeking ways to work in partnership with others to sustain and develop its potential. This year we developed a new partnership with Wolverhampton City Council Schools Improvement Service to deliver the award. This is building on the model developed with councils in Belfast, the Wirral, Portsmouth, Lancashire and Liverpool.



SCHOOL OF
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Health Stream of Sanctuary

The new Refugee Mental Health Resource pack has huge potential to develop our Health Stream of Sanctuary work, and we are still seeking ways to fund and distribute this valuable resource. We have partnered with Doctors of the World, Asylum Matters and a Refugee Council health project in Yorkshire (HARP) to develop an action plan to further engage the network in the development of the Health Stream. We are keen for the network to promote Safe Surgeries (pioneered by Doctors of the World) and engage in campaigning around health charging in England. Currently the Health Stream across the network is providing opportunities for people seeking sanctuary for social connection, learning, physical activities and volunteering, significantly contributing to their well-being.



HEALTH SERVICE OF
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES



Universities of Sanctuary

The Universities of Sanctuary stream and awards has developed rapidly in 2018, ending with 8 awarded Universities of Sanctuary and over 25 universities working towards the award. There are five sanctuary scholars on the steering group in addition to academics, the director of the former Article 26 Project and the Equal Access to HE campaign lead from Student Action for Refugees (STAR). In late August, the legacy of the Article 26 Project was handed to Universities of Sanctuary. This is an honour and we take the importance and value of this work very seriously.

We began work to update the resource pack, in consultation with universities regarding minimum criteria. We have agreed that sanctuary scholarships need to be underpinned by the principles and resources developed by Article 26. We have also set up a Universities of Sanctuary email discussion group through Jisc which attracted over 200 subscribers in the first week. One of our highlights was being recognised by Sir David Attenborough at the University of Leicester centenary ceremony, when the University of Sanctuary award was presented.

Universities awarded in 2018:

University of Bradford (2017)
University of East Anglia
University of Hull
York St John University
University of Leicester
Cardiff Metropolitan University
University of Winchester
University of Warwick (2017)



UNIVERSITY OF
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES



Sir David said:

“This University has a wonderful reputation for humanity, for culture, for generosity as do the citizens of this ancient noble city. I believe it will continue because you have now become a University of Sanctuary offering scholarships to people who come here for many reasons to seek safety, sanctuary and learning. And you, the citizens of this city, will be supporting them and I hope will continue to support them.”

Maternity Stream of Sanctuary

This stream of work has been led by the Yorkshire and Humberside Maternity Stream of Sanctuary which is a separate “sister” charity and we are grateful to them for their inspiration and resource development. This includes the development of resources on the website and a series of excellent films involving women seeking sanctuary and maternity issues.

Together we produced a leaflet promoting the Maternity Stream of Sanctuary and this was distributed at a conference held at Oxford Brookes University aimed at midwives. The conference was addressed by women with lived experience from the Yorkshire and Humberside Maternity Stream. A small steering group has been formed and a resource pack planned to promote this stream and encourage connections between local midwifery services and City of Sanctuary groups.



MATERNITY OF
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Gardens of Sanctuary

We launched the exciting new Gardens of Sanctuary stream in partnership with Social Farms & Gardens and the Permaculture Association in 2018. The partnership received initial seed funding to carry out some research now published on our website at:

<https://gardens.cityofsanctuary.org>.

We have also produced a resource pack aimed to encourage and support any community garden or other growing space to engage with people seeking sanctuary in their area and outlining some of the many mental health, physical and community benefits that this can bring.



GARDEN OF
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Libraries of Sanctuary

Following the Sanctuary Award for Thimblemill Library, in Sandwell Borough, the local authority has taken on board the target of ensuring all Sandwell libraries become Libraries of Sanctuary. We are developing a partnership with Libraries Connected (formerly the Society of Chief Librarians) particularly in the West Midlands and delivered a workshop at their annual seminar in June.

We have agreed a joint plan of action in developing a Libraries of Sanctuary stream of work with Chief Librarians and engaging practitioners through their mass membership organisation. We have begun to recognise not only the value of grassroots connections with mainstream organisations but also the value of partnerships at national level to further enhance participation and learning.

Shops of Sanctuary

In 2018, City of Sanctuary UK launched a pilot partnership with Oxfam, working with all Oxfam shops in Yorkshire and Humberside to become Shops of Sanctuary. Part of the model involves the provision of volunteering opportunities in the charity shops for people seeking sanctuary and awareness raising amongst all staff and volunteers. This initial pilot has been a success, but we hope further roll out will take place next year by Oxfam and to develop and promote resource materials for all charity shops based on this experience. This is a new Stream of Sanctuary with great potential in the charity sector and possibly even the wider retail sector.

Arts Stream of Sanctuary

The Arts Stream has flourished in 2018 with three new theatres awarded a Theatre of Sanctuary Award including Norwich Arts Centre, the Octagon Theatre in Bolton for their REVEAL festival, refugee-led productions and women's storytelling and music sessions and Opera North in Leeds for working with over 100 community groups in Leeds. This year, Theatre Company of Sanctuary awards were given to PsychDelight Theatre Company in London and Maison Foo Theatre Company in Derby.

There are also a number of organisations this year who have either submitted or are working towards a Sanctuary Award. We are currently undertaking research and development work in partnership with Counterpoint Arts to gather good practice case studies to be published in a new resource pack to inspire the arts sector.



— THEATRE OF —
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Some news from across the regions of England

North West

- There has been interest from four new areas: the **Wirral, Salford, Warrington** and **Rossendale**.
- A drop-in centre for “new neighbours” formally opened in **Burnley**.
- A “lambanana” unveiled in **Liverpool** in the summer to celebrate the large number of schools in the city who have received the School of Sanctuary award.
- A new group was launched in **Chester** in front of the illuminated cathedral and a 3,000 strong crowd assembled there to watch the public screening of the documentary, “Walk my Journey”. There was also a 100 strong youth choir drawn from the city's schools together with a group of sanctuary seekers who had been willing to share their stories.
- **Preston's** College of Further Education became a College of Sanctuary and they co-facilitated the Sanctuary in Politics course.



London and the South East

- There has been a huge interest in London to develop Boroughs of Sanctuary. We are speaking to groups in **Southwark, Lewisham, Crystal Palace** and **Croydon** as well as to the **Greater London** Authority.
- This is on top of the fantastic work already happening in **Brent, Hackney, Camden** and in many schools, universities and others places across the capital. We look forward to the day when London becomes a City of Sanctuary in its own right!

East of England

- In **Colchester**, charities, businesses, schools and the council are part of an impressive effort to create a Borough of Sanctuary.
- **Colchester** Sixth Form College received a College of Sanctuary Award: their student group Friends Not Foes offer a variety of activities and English classes to welcome people seeking sanctuary and also campaign on asylum issues.

South West

- The **South West** had its first University of Sanctuary awarded at the University of Winchester and also facilitated the successful pilot of the Sanctuary in Politics course.
- St Nicholas of Tolentino became the first Church of Sanctuary in **Bristol**.
- A successful Sanctuary in **Cornwall** conference was held, encompassing a wide range of partner organisations, who came together to promote the ethos that Cornwall is a place of sanctuary, providing safety and welcome for all seeking sanctuary in their county
- **Portsmouth** City of Sanctuary supported Journeys Festival International Portsmouth, showcasing the work of artists from the refugee and asylum seeker community and sharing stories of sanctuary through art events, performances, screenings and workshops.
- 30 people attended their Schools of Sanctuary launch held by **Swindon** City of Sanctuary. They were all keen to learn more about what they can do to help their school work towards gaining a School of Sanctuary award.

Yorkshire & Humberside

- In **North Yorkshire** two schools achieved a Sanctuary Award - Outwood Primary Academy Greystone in Ripon, and the first school in the Craven district of - Glusburn Community Primary School.
- **Bradford** City of Sanctuary welcomed a new Schools of Sanctuary Coordinator.
- **York** City of Sanctuary launched the Welcome to York Programme which brought people seeking sanctuary to the city for day trips. York St John was awarded the University of Sanctuary Award.
- **Harrogate** District of Sanctuary organised a four night sanctuary break in the Dales for locally resettled refugee families.
- In **Sheffield**, the Sanctuary continued to expand its programmes over the year, and is the site of weekly city-wide multi-agency meetings.
- **Hull** University received the University of Sanctuary Award.





North East

- **Northumberland** County of Sanctuary, in partnership with the Red Cross, ran drop-in sessions with arts and crafts, English classes, NHS health support and legal support.
- **Tees Valley** of Sanctuary have been very active in asylum housing issues and also continue to support a number of Schools of Sanctuary.
- **Sunderland** City of Sanctuary have been supporting conversation classes ran with Friends of the Drop In and The Red Cross.
- **Newcastle** City of Sanctuary welcomed their new coordinator who is being employed by Newcastle City Council.

Midlands

- There has been ground-breaking work done by City of Sanctuary groups, local councils and others through the Mi-Friendly cities initiative. This is an EU funded programme to create Migrant Friendly cities in the West Midlands. In **Birmingham**, the council with the support of the local City of Sanctuary group have developed a detailed policy document that has been approved by the cabinet detailing their commitment to being a City of Sanctuary over the coming 4 years. It would be great to see similar from councils across the UK!

Guardian second round of funding - some examples

Sanctuary on Sea Global Social Club

The Global Social Club (GSC) was funded by the second round of Guardian funding and has now become a weekly youth club in central Brighton, bringing together young people seeking sanctuary and other young people from Brighton & Hove. Since opening, Global Social Club engaged with over fifty young people from more than fourteen different countries offering activities ranging from chess to capoeira.

“I am always telling my friends to come here. It’s the most welcoming place in Brighton”.

(Young person seeking sanctuary)

GSC is a great example of our Theory of Change in practice. GSC offers a positive vision of a culture of welcome for all. It promotes **‘Welcoming everyone’** and has been hugely successful in engaging and bringing together a diverse group of young people from many different backgrounds. It has clearly offered opportunities for relationships of friendship and solidarity between local people and those seeking sanctuary.



York City of Sanctuary The Welcome to York Project

The Welcome to York Project provides:

- **Day Outings to York from the region**
- **Weekend visits with Homestay accommodation**
- **Respite and short term accommodation available in York for local and regional partners**
- **Longer term housing support (up to 3 months) offering hospitality and welcome for asylum seekers and refugees in need of sanctuary.**

The project attracted match funding and was made possible by partnership working and network development in the city and across the region.

One of the trips to York welcomed 37 people seeking sanctuary from many different countries of origin.

The group had a fantastic time, comments included:

“It’s a really fantastic old traditional place in North of England. I also visited York Minster Church which is fabulous church... I would recommend this type of trip to anyone who’s interested in visiting an historical place”. Another stated **“These gatherings and trips really change our moods. The city is really beautiful and historical as well”.** **“Also I enjoyed chatting with my friends. I have made new friends”.**

Hay, Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees Project Get Together

The project brought 80 young people from diverse backgrounds together to Llwyn Filly for a residential weekend at PGL team-building activities centre. The project was made a reality by a creative and dynamic collaboration of a Welsh network of refugee-supporting groups. The weekend brought together British young people and young people seeking sanctuary over a residential weekend of outdoor activities. They spent quality time together – doing structured outdoor team building activities – and learning, leading, collaborating, laughing, connecting and being together.

'The hard work and commitment from so many people who believed in the project, trusting in the concept that bringing people together could be a once in a lifetime experience and a force for good!'

(Project Coordinator)

Llanishen Cub Scout Group was also hosted by the project at Tregoyd. One Scout leader commented:

"It's been good for our Cubs to meet refugees up close, being themselves, instead of just pictures on the news: to see that they're real people".

Since the end of the project the young people have sustained friendships and maintained social networks remotely.

The comments from young people, when asked what they liked best about the weekend, included:

'Amazing memories, great times, with incredible people, changing the world!'

'Evening time together, making friends'

'Thank you for the beautiful moments spent here'

'Meet new faces'

'Meeting new people'



And also huge congratulations to the other successful projects delivered by Greater Lincolnshire Area of Sanctuary, Derby City of Sanctuary, Manchester City of Sanctuary and Southampton City of Sanctuary.

A snapshot picture of our Regional gatherings

East of England

In October, around 50 people came together at First Site in Colchester for the first ever East of England gathering of the City of Sanctuary network. During the day we heard inspirational stories from, amongst others, Colchester Borough of Sanctuary who are offering casework and support to people in and around Colchester; Norwich City of Sanctuary which has grown rapidly since it was established in 2016 and has a thriving awards process which has led to recognition for several schools, a café, the Norfolk Museum Service and many others; Rattlesdon and Benefice in rural Suffolk who aim to welcome Syrian Refugees through the Community Sponsorship programme and Cambridge City of Sanctuary who support regular trips to Calais and have a thriving Schools of Sanctuary programme.

We are very grateful to Colchester Borough of Sanctuary and Colchester Refugee Action for hosting and helping to organise the gathering.



Midlands

More than 70 people from across the Midlands gathered in Wolverhampton on October 20th to share their stories and to learn from each other and from some inspirational workshop leaders. The morning featured a Q & A with two local MPs with a focus on the ongoing campaigns to Lift the Ban on the right to work, family reunification and an end to indefinite detention. We heard inspiring updates from Wolverhampton, Derby, Leicester, Stafford, Loughborough and Birmingham and were treated to fantastic food cooked by the local group. Since the gathering, there has been interest from several other towns and cities in the Midlands and existing groups are playing a vital role and existing groups are supporting nascent groups to get started'

We are grateful to Wolverhampton City of Sanctuary for organising the venue, the food and supporting the event.

South West and Wales

The Wales and South West of England regional gathering was held at Cardiff Metropolitan University in November, focusing on the theme of "Sharing Our Story", specifically looking at how groups can share their inspiring stories of local welcome and involve people seeking sanctuary in all aspects of their work.

The morning session focused on the plans to develop City of Sanctuary in the coming year, as well as highlights from across the regions. The floor was opened to the individual groups and organisations attending to share what had been happening in their local area which highlighted the inspirational breadth of activity taking place at a local level.

In the afternoon, sessions were delivered by Asylum Matters on the Lift the Ban campaign and iMix on communicating with different audiences and engaging with local media organisations. The attendees also received updates on the Network Voice initiative, Sanctuary in Politics course and Sanctuary Speakers, as well as taking part in a discussion on how to involve people seeking sanctuary at all levels in the City of Sanctuary network and groups.

Cardiff Met



North West

Delegates from most of the groups across the North West attended a Regional Meeting in November, which was hosted by the Blackburn with Darwen group. A range of interesting speakers was offered alongside plenty of opportunity to share best practice and ways of over coming challenges arising within either the groups themselves or the local community. Most significant was the number of people seeking sanctuary who contributed by providing an overview of what had been achieved during the past year. Encouraged by the friendly atmosphere, new groups attending for the first time were offered valuable support and information by more established and experienced groups.



Yorkshire and Humberside

One participant kindly shared her perspective on the day, writing that:

"...the joy for me was hearing the stories from all the groups about their initiatives. It was like unwrapping gifts of joy and kindness... So many stories of welcome, hospitality and voices of hope."

There were five workshops held, covering the following topics: Schools of Sanctuary; Working with Councils; Campaigning, Media & Communications; and, Health & Maternity. At the end of the exciting day, Sheffield City of Sanctuary shared with us the success of opening of The Sanctuary - new premises in the city centre - and challenged all groups to ensure we engage and bring sanctuary seekers front and centre to all our welcoming efforts.



North East

The first City of Sanctuary North East Regional Gathering took place in Durham in October, bringing together 50 volunteers, activists and refugees and sanctuary seekers. The gathering was a reminder of how important connections are across the region, with each group inspired by the activities of the other groups, sharing learning and developing links to help support individuals who move across the region during the asylum process. Each group provided a summary of their activities. The gathering also heard from the Asylum Matters Campaign Manager about the Lift the Ban campaign and from the Regional Refugee Forum's Health Working group. The Tees Valley group shared information on using an audit tool to promote reflection in the Schools of Sanctuary process and the Stories of Sanctuary refugee music project also performed.



London and South East

There has been a rapid increase in interest from groups around London to develop Boroughs of Sanctuary and conversations will soon begin with the Greater London Authority about London as a City of Sanctuary. This interest was reflected in a vibrant day at Friends House where more than 80 people from London and the South-East came together to learn about the City of Sanctuary movement and to share what is happening in their areas.

We heard updates from Reading, Epsom, Elmbridge, Camden, East Kent, Brent, Brighton & Hove, Hastings and East Hoathly and Halland. There is so much happening across the region and it is wonderful to hear how groups are responding to the specific needs of their local areas and working in partnership with such a wide variety of groups and institutions.

A highlight of the day was a performance from PsycheDelight Theatre Company who received a Sanctuary Award for their work, as did the Global Social Club from Brighton.



Highlights and updates from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Scotland

Throughout 2018 City of Sanctuary UK trustees had a number of conversations with key partners, including Scottish Refugee Council, and attended the uplifting Scotland Welcomes Refugees event in Glasgow to help us explore how we might be best placed to support developments across Scotland. We are pleased to report that at the end of 2018 we recruited a new Scotland coordinator.

New Scots Connect

Scottish Refugee Council has launched New Scots Connect - a new Scotland-wide network of local communities, groups, and organisations to enhance the welcoming environment for refugees. A key feature of New Scots Connect will be an online, interactive map and a communications platform. The map itself will be available for everyone to use - from local groups and third sector organisations to people rebuilding their lives in Scotland to find out what is happening in their area. New Scots Connect is part of a larger project to build on Scotland's leading role in refugee integration, and will be supported by five new Regional Integration Coordinators. We look forward to working with New Scots Connect.

Edinburgh Sanctuary Map

Edinburgh City of Sanctuary has built an online guide to places and initiatives across Edinburgh that provide welcome and support for refugees and asylum seekers. This is a free, public and interactive resource based on the data gathered during their community mapping event. The map will connect the many threads of activity already happening in Edinburgh to welcome asylum seekers and refugees, and to widen the scope of this welcome to include all areas of life in our city. The guide is now live, at www.edinburghsanctuary.guide

Forth Valley Welcome

Forth Valley Welcome – (formerly Stirling City of Sanctuary) actively supports Syrian Refugees who have been re-settled in Stirlingshire and Clackmannanshire. At the end of 2018, the group received the welcome news that they had been awarded lottery funding for the Clackmannanshire Support Worker. The group also runs monthly 'snack and chat' meetings, volunteer network get-togethers and ESOL classes for families resettled in the area.

Aberdeen City of Sanctuary

The Aberdeen group held an AGM and a 'Shared Futures' event as part of Refugee Festival Scotland 2018 at Pittodrie Football Stadium where there was a lunch, table conversations around Sanctuary streams, mapping places of sanctuary in the local area, music and children's activities. Syrian families meet monthly at the Mission Church for social activities and advice in an informal setting.

East Lothian County of Sanctuary

East Lothian County of Sanctuary - supports East Lothian Aid for Refugees and works with East Lothian Council in supporting refugee resettlement in the county. Their activities also include awareness-raising, organising and supporting intercultural events, and helping out with practical requests and support in general.

University of Edinburgh

University of Edinburgh – this University of Sanctuary welcomed a new team member, Sarah Hoey, in 2018 and since starting she has convened a Refugee Advisory Group made up of colleagues and students across the university.



Photographs
Emily MacInnis

Wales

The separately funded Wales Cities of Sanctuary project came to an end in June 2018.

The City of Sanctuary UK Chief Officer commented:

“Few involved in the creation of the Wales Cities of Sanctuary project back in 2014 (including myself) would have envisaged what the project would achieve. Thank you to everyone who has been involved”.

Central to the project has been the City of Sanctuary method of engaging local groups and organisations to pledge to our vision of a welcoming place of safety for all. A large number of organisations pledged their support to the vision of welcome and safety for all, making active contributions to making that vision a reality. Thirteen organisations were recognised with Sanctuary Awards.

Awareness-raising training was offered to a number of these groups and organisations throughout the project. 750 people across South Wales reported increased awareness following the project's training on asylum and refugee issues. Of those people, over 400 had the opportunity to hear directly from a Sanctuary Speaker – a volunteer speaker who is an 'expert by experience', having gone through or currently going through the asylum process.

Eleri Williams, Swansea Development Officer, said:

“Working with the Sanctuary Speakers has been a real honour. Their input and expertise brings the training to life, and makes all the difference to audience members. I'd like to thank them for all their hard work and enthusiasm in the years that I've known them.”

The project also provided integration support to people seeking sanctuary in Cardiff and Swansea, through advice offered at Oasis Cardiff and the 'Welcome to Swansea' project.

The project matches volunteer mentors with newly arrived asylum seekers and refugees to help them get to know the city and access services and activities of interest to them. Almost 300 people accessed the 'Welcome to Swansea' project, with 99% of those surveyed reporting feeling less isolated and better integrated as a result. In addition, Oasis Cardiff has provided 145 people with signposting advice to address specific issues. The project also took steps across Wales with many partners to build the world's first Nation of Sanctuary. We offer our thanks to everyone involved in the project.

What next for Nation of Sanctuary?

The Wales City of Sanctuary Coordinator is now employed by City of Sanctuary UK. Despite the significant reduction in capacity, the coordinator will continue to support City of Sanctuary groups in Wales, as well as work in collaboration to further the ambitious plan to make Wales a Nation of Sanctuary. Together with the Welsh Refugee Coalition and the Nation of Sanctuary sub-groups, the movement building continues and everyone is eagerly anticipating the launch of the Welsh Government's Nation of Sanctuary delivery plan.

Swansea City of Sanctuary received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – presented by HRH The Countess of Wessex

Around 50 Swansea City of Sanctuary volunteers attended the Award Ceremony.

Co-Chair, Amber Esther:

“We are very happy to receive this award and honoured to receive it from Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex. It brings recognition of the hard work undertaken by our volunteers, many of whom are themselves seeking sanctuary. The award serves as a celebration of the welcoming attitudes and behaviours demonstrated by individuals in Swansea, the UK's second City of Sanctuary.”



The Wrexham Town of Sanctuary campaign was launched in 2018 by organisations including The British Red Cross, TCC (Trefnu Cymunedol Cymru / Together Creating Communities), and UAREUK.

Cardiff City of Sanctuary recognised Cardiff Metropolitan University as the first University in Wales to achieve a University of Sanctuary award.

Cardiff City of Sanctuary also awarded Tongwynlais Football Club who are the first “Football Club of Sanctuary.”



Baroness Ilora Finlay of Llandaff, Chair of the Board of the University's Governors receiving award certificate from Sian Summers-Rees, Chief Officer, City of Sanctuary

Northern Ireland

City of Sanctuary supports groups in the network in Northern Ireland. Belfast City of Sanctuary in particular has been extremely busy in 2018:

Belfast City of Sanctuary

Have been working closely with the Education Authority of Northern Ireland to support the Schools of Sanctuary initiative. One exciting development was the training of appraisal teams, a mix of refugees, asylum seekers and local Belfast City of Sanctuary supporters, who have been going into schools and looking at the packs for the purposes of endorsing the award.

Then in March, a well-attended seminar was held to discuss the City of Sanctuary concept. The seminar heard directly from those who have arrived in Belfast with the expectation of a warm welcome and in the hope of being able to live here in safety. Belfast City of Sanctuary wishes to be a part of re-imagining Belfast as a Welcoming, Safe and Inclusive City.

And in June, the Great Refugee Picnic was held with Amnesty International - it was a gorgeous day of sun, fun, friendship, neighbours, diversity, music, food, clowns, juggling, face painting... and welcomes!

"It's been a wonderful experience for our teams in Belfast who have awarded the School of Sanctuary award to 11 new schools".



SCHOOL OF
SANCTUARY AWARD
WELCOMING ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

Places of Sanctuary Ireland

As well as providing support to the Northern Ireland groups, City of Sanctuary UK continues to work closely with Places of Sanctuary Ireland who are supporting an ever growing network across Ireland. There were lots of exciting developments in 2018 so check out the Places of Sanctuary Ireland website and newsletters. We extend our congratulations here in the UK for another successful year's development in Ireland!

<https://ireland.cityofsanctuary.org>



Sanctuary in Politics Courses

We piloted two courses in the UK which were inspired by similar courses run by Places of Sanctuary Ireland. The courses aim to raise the voices, educate, engage and empower people seeking sanctuary. We hope to learn from our experiences this year and facilitate more courses in 2018,

“Our aim is to equip a new generation of leaders to become ‘sanctuary ambassadors’ within the City of Sanctuary network and the wider sanctuary movement.” (*Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer*)

South West residential course

16 people seeking sanctuary from across the South West region took part in City of Sanctuary’s Sanctuary in Politics Course in December 2018.



Participants with Bristol’s Easton ward Cllr Ruth Pickersgill

Day One provided participants with an opportunity to gain an understanding of City of Sanctuary, the political system and ways of political engagement in the UK. It included an informative and educational political history delivered by City of Sanctuary Vice Chair, Jonathan Ellis. Tomas Williams from the Parliamentary Outreach Team then provided an introduction to the UK Parliament where he led a session about people, power and Parliament. The day ended with a powerful presentation by Bristol City Council Councillor Ruth Pickersgill who talked about the role of a local councillor and what Local Authorities can do to support asylum seekers and refugees.

Day Two was devoted to campaigning and advocacy. The day commenced with a session on ‘what is campaigning’, led by Jonathan Ellis. Asylum Matters Deputy Director, Estelle Worthington and Campaigns Project Manager for Yorkshire & Humberside, Mary Brandon then led a session on organising an effective campaign.

Day Three finished with a session on working with the media to raise the voice of sanctuary seekers, delivered by the MediaWise Director, Mike Jempson.

“Thank you very much. It was a pleasure as well as eye-opening for me.”

-Baila from Southampton

“It was really good to be able to get together and learn and encourage one another. Many thanks for your time and hard work together with your team in the City of Sanctuary movement.”

-J.P from Bristol

“I want to say special thanks to City of Sanctuary National for conducting such a useful training in a very professional manner. And once again thanks to everyone for making it a great learning experience.”

- Rana from Southampton



With Bristol East MP Kerry McCarthy sitting on the middle

Raise Your Voice

– A programme for people seeking sanctuary at Preston's College

City of Sanctuary UK worked in partnership with Preston's College to deliver four sessions, each lasting five hours of **'Raise Your Voice'** training course.

The four sessions were titled,

"What you want to say",

"How you are going to say it",

"Where and to whom are you going to say it?"

"Go ahead and do it".

The first session provided an opportunity for Joseph Chivayo and Ghassan Mahadi to share their experiences. Another session included Gary Hart, Parliamentary Outreach Officer, Jonathan Ellis (City of Sanctuary trustee), and Julia Savage from Asylum Matters who focused on

"Where and to whom are you going to say it?"

The last session was delivered by Adam Sharples, the College's Press and Communications Officer. He explained how local and national press operate, and how to contact broadcasters and journalists. In his write up of the course, Ghassan Mahadi, who also interpreted for some of the participants commented:

"The true value of this programme goes beyond teaching and learning; it also builds a sort of unique social relationship between the group and the locals and it broke many existing barriers to community integration".

PRESTON'S
COLLEGE 

asylum matters

2018 was a year of growth and learning for Asylum Matters, as it entered the second year of the project, which increasingly demonstrated a coherent and effective model built on the strength of its 'predecessor projects'. Asylum Matters explored a range of partnership-working models and facilitated collaborative working across its campaigns.

Notably, Asylum Matters partnered with Refugee Action to build and lead a trail-blazing and award-winning campaign, Lift the Ban, which grew to 170 members and achieved significant progress towards its goal of securing the right to work for people seeking asylum.

Asylum Matters also spearheaded campaigning for safe and dignified asylum accommodation in 2018, influencing the Government's tendering process for the new asylum accommodation contracts. This resulted in widespread public and parliamentary scrutiny of the asylum accommodation regime in the UK and secured a handful of concessions in the new contracts that will result in improved conditions for people seeking asylum.

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In addition, Asylum Matters made progress towards its other advocacy aims, like tackling destitution, by increasing support levels for the first time in three years by 80p, or defending the rights of people in the asylum system, by forcing the Home Office to U-turn after it imposed a study ban on people waiting for a decision on their asylum claim.

In parallel to the pursuit of policy change, Asylum Matters continued to build on its valued role of driving strategic collaboration, including by building the capacity and effectiveness of local organisations and experts-by-experience to effectively campaign for change.

www.asylummatters.org



Sanctuary in Parliament

- Towards a Fairer System

Around 40 MPs and members of the House of Lords joined sanctuary seekers and their supporters advocating for a fairer, more compassionate asylum system in the UK at the fifth Sanctuary in Parliament event. The event, provided an opportunity for sanctuary seekers to share their experiences alongside MPs. The testimonies from the 'Experts by Experience' were extremely powerful, moving and informative. Also, on the panel were Kate Green MP for Stretford and Urmston; Stuart C. McDonald MP for the Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East constituency and Tim Farron MP for Westmoreland and Lonsdale.

The campaign event focused on three key policy issues:

- **The right to work for people who have asylum claims outstanding for more than six months;**
- **Extension of refugee family reunion;**
- **An end to indefinite immigration detention;**

The day-long event, which attracted groups across the City of Sanctuary network was hosted by Bristol West MP Thangam Debbonaire, Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees (APPG), and the Brighton Pavilion MP, Caroline Lucas, Vice Chair, APPG.

Thangam Debbonaire MP in her opening remarks welcomed participants and said:

"I encourage you all to show your MPs that these issues matter to you. We need Government to help us rather than being a block."

As well as having Experts by Experience on the panel, Sanctuary Ambassadors were given the opportunity to ask questions directly to MPs. This ensured that the voice of sanctuary seekers were at the front and centre of the whole event.

A Sanctuary Ambassador movingly described the denial of right to work as tantamount to imprisonment, and said:

"The asylum system paralyses you. One can only exist but not live."



The Experts by Experience on the panel and the Sanctuary Ambassadors, ensured that the morning session laid bare the inhumanity and the unfairness of the asylum system. Despite their painful experiences they were prepared to speak out, share their stories and join together with others to call for change – we thank each and every one of them for their courage.

The afternoon session offered lighter moments of celebration through the sharing of food (the funding for which was kindly provided by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation), a music performance by the Stories of Sanctuary Choir from Durham and the announcement of the winners of the Stories of Sanctuary competition. Leicester City of Sanctuary won the first and third prize for their stories of sanctuary.

Anju, a sanctuary seeker from the Leicester group whose story won third prize said:



“You have given me my dignity back. I am a proud citizen of Leicester.”

Throughout the course of the day, MPs had the opportunity to meet and talk to people seeking sanctuary and their supporters from their constituency. We thank all the MPs and Peers who listened so carefully to the personal experiences of people seeking sanctuary and the concerns of their constituents.



With many thanks to our funders and individual supporters



The Joffe Charitable Trust



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