City of Sanctuary UK
Our impact
2021

We are building a movement of welcome

City by city, community by community, we are building a more welcoming UK for people forced to flee their homes.

Since we started our work in 2005, we have been committed to making welcome widespread. From schools to councils, libraries to theatres, there are hundreds of groups now within the City of Sanctuary networks all working to provide support, dignity and welcome to refugees and people seeking sanctuary in the UK. From small acts of kindness to big political change, this inclusive movement is building a better, fairer, kinder society - for everyone.

We're there every step of the way. From practical training and resources to unmissable webinars and collaboration opportunities, we do all we can to support this network of welcome.

Photo: Together With Refugees London rally, October 2021

Our approach

We believe that a UK that truly welcomes refugees is possible. By bringing people together, celebrating our shared humanity and encouraging people to put their compassion into action, we can build strong, welcoming, cohesive communities.

Our networks offer a positive vision of welcome and hospitality to all. We create opportunities for friendship and solidarity between local people and those seeking sanctuary and we encourage partnership on common causes. We promote understanding of asylum and refugee issues, especially by enabling refugee voices to be heard directly. We celebrate and promote the welcome and contribution of people seeking sanctuary and engage people seeking sanctuary in decision making processes at all levels.

Photo: Journeys Festival. The UK's first festival of Sanctuary

Our values

Inclusivity
We welcome and respect everyone, place the highest value on diversity and are committed to equality.

Openness
We are committed to a culture of collaboration across our networks and in partnership with others.

Participation
People seeking sanctuary are involved in all areas and are supported to become leaders in this movement.

Inspiration
We work with enthusiasm and positivity and are determined to surpass what has already been achieved to create welcome.

Integrity
We should welcome people, celebrate their contributions and support them to integrate and thrive.

Photo: Hastings Community of Sanctuary

Sanctuary Awards

To celebrate the organisations who go above and beyond to support and welcome people seeking sanctuary, we have the Sanctuary Awards programme.

We all have a part to play in building a more welcoming, inclusive and compassionate society. Any community group, private organisation, public sector service or other bodies which contribute towards the vision of welcome can apply for the award. Appraised by a panel including someone with lived experience of seeking sanctuary and an expert in the field, this underline formal awards process recognises and rewards good practice and progress within a sector, whilst encouraging other organisations to do the same.

Photo: Gower College Swansea, awarded in August 2021

Our impact

123 City of Sanctuary regional groups across the UK

13 Libraries and Musuems of Sanctuary - 8 awarded in 2021

337 Schools of Sanctuary - 51 awarded in 2021

77 Local Authorities engaged in 2021, 18 in the network and 2 awarded

27 Arts Organisations of Sanctuary

30 Universities and Colleges of Sanctuary

3 Gardens of Sanctuary - all awarded in 2021

55 webinars and online events held in 2021

4 New resource packs compiled in 2021

2931 People subscribed to the monthly newsletter

18 Sanctuary Ambassadors

250k People reached per month on social media

Case study

Photo: Ripon & Skipton Sanctuary groups, London rally, Oct 2021

Ripon:
City of Sanctuary Group

Ripon is a small rural community with a big heart. In April 2021 the Sanctuary group launched a successful Community Sponsorship project which will see two families relocated in the area.

This year the group worked with more local schools, seeing two awarded with Sanctuary status, making fifteen schools in the area either awarded or working towards the award.

The group coordinated the collection and distribution of thousands of items of clothing for newly arrived Afghan families and helped furnish the houses of people resettled in the local area.

Using their wide reach in the community, the group have also campaigned tirelessly against the government's proposed Nationality and Borders Bill, as well as raising awareness about the damaging affects of asylum processing centres.

Case study

Photo: Together With Refugees week of action, October 2021

St Dunstan's Primary: School of Sanctuary

Awarded Sanctuary School status in November 2021, this Birmingham primary school shows that no one is too small to make a difference.

After finding out about how people seeking sanctuary were not allowed to work, pupils invited their local councilors to talk about their support for the "Lift the Ban" campaign, they then wrote letters to their local MP.

The councillors were so impressed by the commitment and passion of the pupils that they arranged for some of them to attend the Birmingham Migration Forum to discuss what they had done and to read out their letters.

This school's incredible dedication to promoting compassion and welcome has had enormous ripple effects throughout the local community.
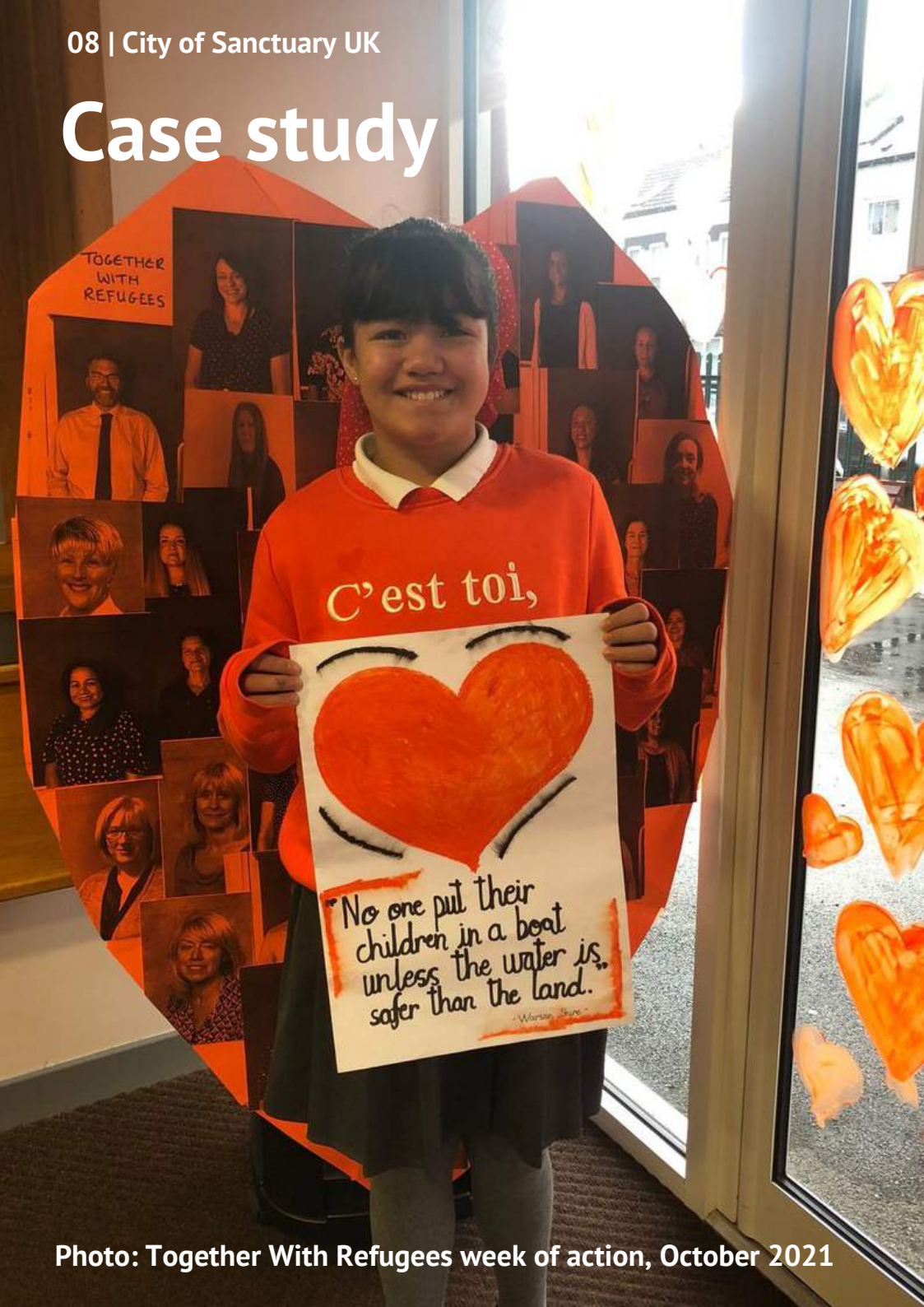
Case study

Photo: Lewisham celebrates Refugee Week, June 2021

Lewisham: Borough of Sanctuary

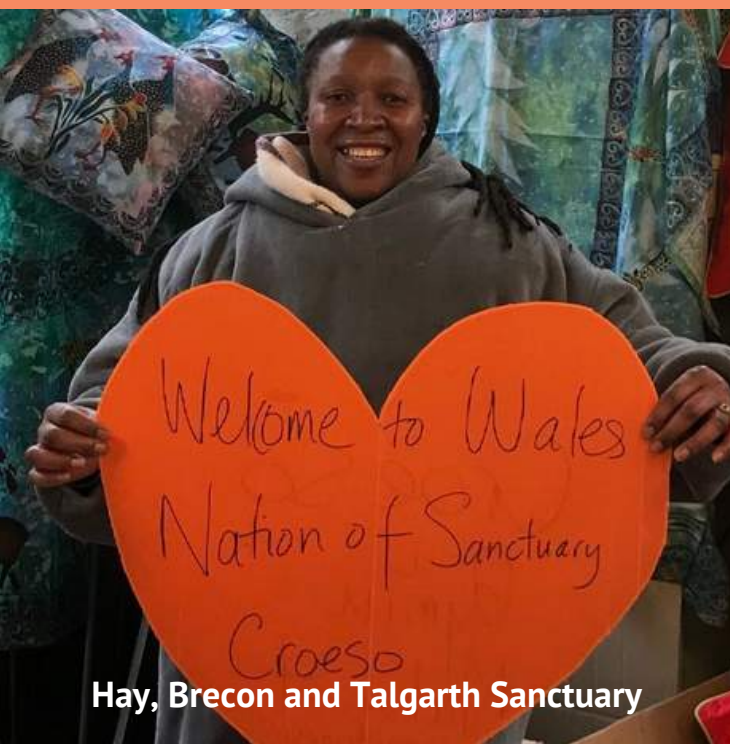**Awarded in December 2021, Lewisham is the first ever Borough of Sanctuary in the UK.**

This award is the result of two years incredible work driven by a commitment from Lewisham Council to make sure the area could be a true place of sanctuary for migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum.

Coordinating their work with local community groups, health providers and campaigners, this local authority are a glowing example of what City of Sanctuary is all about.

From resettling refugees and welcoming unaccompanied minors, to lobbying the Home Office and improving access to healthcare for migrant communities, this local authority are committed to making Lewisham an open and inclusive borough for all.

WALES

There are now nine City of Sanctuary groups in Wales, with Newport being the latest addition and Swansea celebrating their 10th anniversary. The Schools of Sanctuary network is growing fast, with ten schools now recognised. 2021 saw Wales' first College of Sanctuary, Gower College, and Wales's first Art Gallery of Sanctuary, Glynn Vivien.

SCOTLAND

We have worked with the Scottish Refugee Council to develop specialist training for universities. This year saw University of St Andrews welcome its very first cohort of Sanctuary Scholarship holders, University of Edinburgh has been re-accredited, whilst four more Scottish universities are working towards the award.

N.IRELAND

Belfast City of Sanctuary has worked in partnership with Education Authority of Northern Ireland to deliver Schools of Sanctuary in the Urban Villages areas of Belfast and Derry/ Londonderry. 2021 saw the 50th schoolin Northern Ireland being awarded with Sanctuary status.

Hay, Brecon and Talgarth Sanctuary

University of St Andrews

Wheatfield Primary School

Sanctuary Ambassador Network

Sanctuary in Politics is an innovative learning course developed to empower and inform people seeking sanctuary about how the UK political system works, campaigning techniques and how to work with the media effectively.

Guided by experts in the field, this course helps equip a new generation of refugee and migrant leaders to reach their full potential. The ultimate aim is for a new generation of Sanctuary Ambassadors to be empowered and equipped to bring the voice of people who seeking sanctuary into mainstream society. The Ambassador network is a vibrant, inclusive and creative team of advocates passionate about building a culture of welcome and encouraging others to join the movement for a fair, effective and humane asylum system.

Photo: Sanctuary in Politics, September 2019

Standing up for refugee rights

This year saw the government's new Nationality and Borders Bill, a proposed overhaul of the asylum system that could be one of most significant roll backs of refugee rights that this country has ever seen. As members of the Together With Refugees coalition, we are proud to mobilise and empower the City of Sanctuary networks to campaign for a better, fairer deal for people seeking safety. We continue to be active members of the campaign coalitions, Dentention Forum, challenging the UK's use of immigration detention; Lift the Ban, campaigning to give people seeking asylum the right to work; and Families Together, fighting for more refugee families to be reunited in the UK.

Photo: Together With Refugees London rally, October 2021

Join the movement

It's on all of us to start to build the world we want to see - a world of justice and love, for everyone. Whether it's volunteering, campaigning, raising awareness or fundraising, we all have a part to play.

1. **Volunteer**
From teaching English to serving soup, there are many ways to support your local group or stream.

2. **Donate**
Even a small donation will go a long way in growing these networks of welcome.

3. **Get up to date**
Sign up to our newsletter and follow us on social media.

4. **Campaign**
Join your local group and get expert help to mobilise behind refugee rights campaigns.

Photo: Hempen Cooperative Gardenin Reading, awarded in December 2021

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