

# CITY OF SANCTUARY UK

## OUR IMPACT 2022





# OUR REFLECTIONS



Photo: 2022 City of Sanctuary conference in Bradford

This year has been tough for everyone – nonetheless we cannot help but be incredibly inspired, motivated and positive when looking to the year ahead. We acknowledge the huge challenges, the New Nationality and Borders Act, the Rwanda scheme, the cost of living crisis.... but if there is one thing that last year showed, it's that when we come together we can do incredible things.

In 2022 we once again witnessed a huge growth in our networks. Many more institutions have worked tirelessly to embed welcome within their settings and have been recognised through our awards schemes. We've also seen an increase in the welcome activities undertaken by our network of incredible local groups. Behind every group, and every awarded institution, there are thousands of people whose lives have been improved – whether it's a university providing scholarships or direct support for someone who has been forced into destitution. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this happen.

The City of Sanctuary networks have never been so active, important, or so incredibly impactful.

-Siân Summers-Rees, Chief Officer



# WE ARE BUILDING A MOVEMENT OF WELCOME

Wherever we come from, we all have a right to feel safe. That's why 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. Our vast network of local groups provide direct support and are building welcome within communities, whilst our work with mainstream organisations like schools, councils, libraries and more ensure that wherever someone seeking sanctuary goes, they are met with understanding, compassion and empowering opportunities. Together our networks provide support, dignity and welcome.

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 coordination, training and resources to unmissable webinars and collaboration opportunities, we do all we can to support and grow these networks of welcome.



Photo: City of Sanctuary team members Maryam and Nawal



# OUR APPROACH



Photo: City of Sanctuary trustee and ambassador, Alice

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 people 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.

# 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.





# SANCTUARY AWARDS

We all have a part to play in building a more welcoming, inclusive and compassionate society, and our Sanctuary Awards programme is key in getting more mainstream organisations involved. These awards celebrate the institutions and organisations who go above and beyond to support and welcome people seeking sanctuary, whilst creating structure and guidance for the organisations still finding their way.

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 formal awards process recognises and rewards good practice and progress within a sector, whilst encouraging other organisations to do the same.

In 2022, we presented 113 awards, that's a 169% increase on 2021.



Photo: Our co-chair Yusuf presenting awards at our conference

## OVERALL IMPACT

126

City of Sanctuary local  
groups across the UK

27

Universities of Sanctuary,  
7 awarded in 2022

14

Libraries of  
Sanctuary

7

Gardens of  
Sanctuary

388

Schools of  
Sanctuary,  
56 awarded  
in 2022

4137

people registered  
to attend

52

webinars and  
online  
events held in  
2022

34

Arts Organisations  
of Sanctuary,  
7 awarded in 2022

126

Local Authorities  
engaged in 2022, 32 in  
the network and 5  
awarded

14

Colleges of Sanctuary,  
7 awarded in 2022



# LOCAL AUTHORITY NETWORK

This year saw unprecedented growth and interest in our Local Authority Network. There are now five awarded Local Authorities: Lewisham, Bradford, Liverpool, Birmingham and Lambeth.

A total of thirty two local councils are now formally within the Local Authority network, and overall we are engaged with 126, including twenty-two out of thirty-two London Boroughs.

44 councils passed motions this year committing themselves to work with us to build inclusion and welcome within their policy and practice. We've had seventy-eight one-to-ones with local councils and have run five thematic network meetings covering the Homes for Ukraine scheme, resettlement and dispersal and No Recourse to Public Funds.





# UNIVERSITIES OF SANCTUARY



Photo: University of Sanctuary conference

Across the UK there are now sixty universities who either have the University of Sanctuary award or are working towards it. That's well over a third of all UK universities. The impact of this is huge.

Twenty-seven have been formally recognised as Universities of Sanctuary, six of which have been awarded this year with a further two being re-accredited.

There are also now eighty five universities with sanctuary scholarships – that's around half of all UK universities.

This year we have held ten events for our universities network including our annual conference and collaborations with Student Action for Refugees and SCAPP in Scotland.

We are proud to have partnered with the Scottish Refugee Council to develop a training programme for Institutions wanting to apply for the award.



# SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY

This year has seen huge growth in our Schools of Sanctuary network. There are now 388 awarded Schools of Sanctuary, with another 350 schools working towards recognition.

Schools of Sanctuary is being actively delivered in over forty areas across the UK by our team of local leads. Each of these leads is trained, advised and supported by City of Sanctuary UK. Where we don't have a local lead, schools are directly supported by us - and we're currently supporting fifty-five schools work towards the award.

Throughout 2022 we have organised five major events, shared resources and unique opportunities and connected the network with free workshops, teacher training events and book donations. We have collaborated with UNHCR, Refugee Education UK, Oxfam Education, the Families Together Coalition and the Together With Refugees coalition.





# CASE STUDY: EARLSDON PRIMARY

Earlsdon Primary School in Coventry became a fully recognised School of Sanctuary in July 2022.

This award was a whole school effort. As well as receiving extensive training, the staff - many of whom are multilingual - put in place a buddy system for new students, a welcome committee and flexible programmes of support for students new to English learning.

Students in every year group learnt about sanctuary themes, including writing letters of welcome for their new peers. Over the course of the year, the entire school helped to raise funds and gifts for a local refugee charity.

For their award ceremony, pupils explained to their local MP about why they have become a School of Sanctuary and about how they think people seeking safety should be treated with compassion and kindness.



Photo: Earlsdon Primary School in Coventry



# ARTS NETWORK OF SANCTUARY



Photo: Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art

This year the number of awarded arts organisations has grown by a third. From platforming playwrights from a refugee background to making galleries accessible and inviting to everyone, our arts network is reaching across divides and platforming the voices that urgently need to be heard

There are now thirty two formally recognised arts organisations, including twenty two theatres and theatre companies, five museums, three festivals, two art galleries - and new this year, our first ever Choir of Sanctuary, Together Productions, and first Magazine of Sanctuary, The Other Side of Hope.

We were delighted to welcome Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art, Good Chance Theatre, The People's History Museum and Derby Theatre and many more - and to reaccredit Opera North and Journeys Festival who continue to grow and develop their programmes of empowerment and welcome.



# MATERNITY AND HEALTH

There are now five awarded maternity organisations, three of which were awarded in 2022, including Scotland's first Maternity Project of Sanctuary, Amma Birth Companions.

We currently have seven more organisations working towards awards including two NHS maternity departments.

Our Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing project is one of our newest and we are delighted that The West Yorkshire and Care Partnership received an award in 2022, with several other health trusts starting the journey towards the award.

This year we have started an ongoing collaboration with The Mental Health Foundation to embed wellbeing practices within City of Sanctuary UK and the wider network with ongoing plans for the following years.

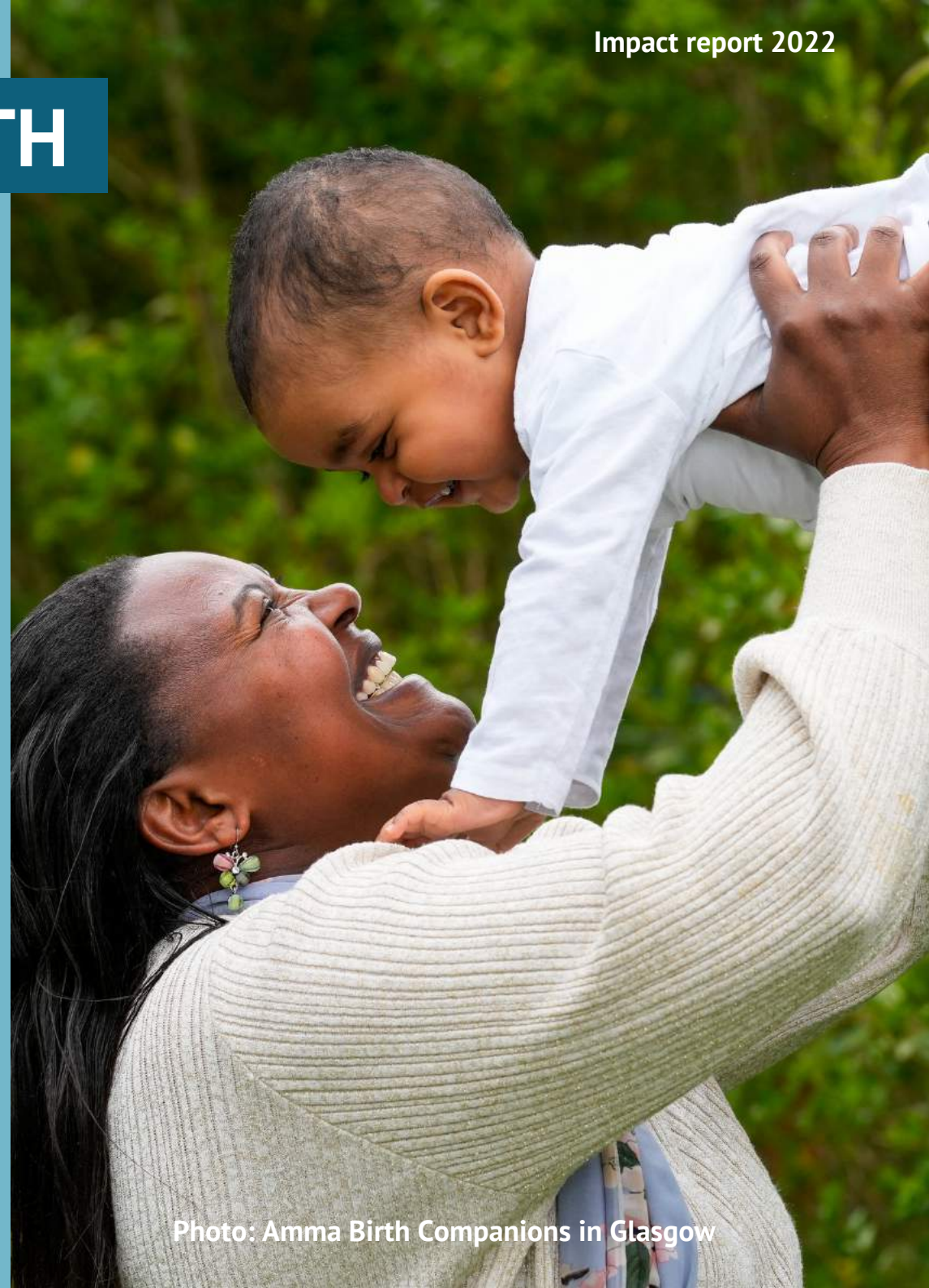


Photo: Amma Birth Companions in Glasgow



# LOCAL GROUPS



Photo: Hastings Community of Sanctuary

There are now 126 local groups across the UK, from large cities like Sheffield and Manchester to small rural locations like East Hoathly and Halland Village of Sanctuary.

In light of events in both Afghanistan and Ukraine, our groups have stepped up like never before. Whether it's arranging distributions of vital supplies, getting involved with community sponsorship, supporting those housed in hotels, promoting welcome and inclusion, raising awareness in schools or campaigning for political change - our local groups do everything possible to stand in solidarity with people forced to flee their homes.

Groups go beyond what they themselves can do to help people seeking sanctuary. They act as a rallying cry to other organisations and individuals in an area to offer sanctuary and welcome.

See a full list of City of Sanctuary groups [here](#).



# CASE STUDY: PORTSMOUTH

This year Portsmouth City of Sanctuary won The High Sheriff Award for their work supporting people seeking sanctuary. An incredible achievement for an incredible group.

The group runs 'Sanctuary Refugee Hub', a multi-agency collaboration with Citizens Advice Portsmouth, The Moving on Project, Vista, Portsmouth City Council Community Connectors, Aspex Gallery and Baby Basics. The hub provides casework, orientation support and signposting to key agencies as well as English lessons and arts activities.

This year saw incredible achievements in their refugee youth football club, welcome boxes for new arrivals project, dance classes, community tree planting, a bicycle distribution project, community cleaning initiatives and a men's wellbeing group.

The group also ran a community Jubilee Concert and hosted visits from their local MP and councillors.



Photo: Portsmouth City of Sanctuary gardening project



# WALES

We have continued to work with the coalition on our aim for Wales to be a Nation of Sanctuary. There are now 24 awarded schools, with Cardiff City Council aspiring to have all schools awarded over the next three years. We have now partnered with the Church in Wales to work towards all their schools getting sanctuary status. Cardiff University and Cardiff Met have been re-accredited as Unis of Sanctuary.



Protesting outside Welsh Senedd

# SCOTLAND

Two more Scottish unis have been awarded this year, bringing the total to four. Lochardil Primary School in Inverness was recognised as Scotland's first School of Sanctuary, celebrated with a motion tabled by their MP. This year we were delighted to have been hosted by SCAPP, CILIP Scotland and CDN to speak about ensuring unis, libraries and colleges are welcoming spaces for people seeking sanctuary.



University of Glasgow award ceremony

# N.IRELAND

Following a conference organised by Belfast City of Sanctuary, Belfast City Council voted to officially become Local Authority of Sanctuary. Other local authorities in Northern Ireland are keen to follow suit - we look forward to developments in 2023. After years of successfully delivering Schools of Sanctuary Awards, interest in Universities, Colleges and Libraries streams are also now growing.



Schools of Sanctuary event, Belfast



# 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. Graduates of the course are encouraged to then become Sanctuary Ambassadors. In 2022 we ran three courses focusing on UK politics and migrant rights, equal access to maternity services and climate justice.

We now have thirty seven active ambassadors who support our Sanctuary Awards programme and partner campaigns like Lift The Ban, as well as bringing the voice of people seeking sanctuary into mainstream society.

This year saw our ambassadors undertaking social media take-overs, op-eds in the Metro, and interviews with ITV, Amnesty International Magazine and local radio.



# STANDING UP FOR REFUGEE RIGHTS

This year saw the passing of the Nationality and Borders Act, one of the most significant roll backs of refugee rights that this country has ever seen.

We want the UK to be a welcoming place of safety for all, so to achieve our vision in the face of such hostility we work as part of a wider movement as members of the Together With Refugees coalition. We are proud to mobilise our networks to campaign for a better and fairer deal for people seeking safety - we led the way in several days of action including a Valentine's Day themed campaign, initiated a Twitter campaign in the run up to the Tory leadership contest and have overall been instrumental in bringing a message of welcome into the heart of mainstream society.

We continue to be active members of the campaign coalitions, Detention 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 campaign against the Rwanda policy



# 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: Manchester City of Sanctuary Women's Football





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