



Strategic Plan 2022-25

Introduction

Leicester City of Sanctuary (LCoS) has been operating in one form or another in our city and county since 2007 and is part of the wider City of Sanctuary movement UK. It has had charity status for most of that time and became a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) in 2017, at a point when we began to employ staff working alongside volunteers. Our first formal Strategic Plan was drawn up in 2018 covering the period 2019-22 and this one has emerged from reflection on its predecessor, getting the views of users and other key stakeholders, both internal and external, and a facilitated Consultation Day on 23 February 2022. Further background and contextual information can be found in Appendix A and for the benefit of non-specialists in the field a short glossary of language used is in Appendix B.

Vision, Mission and Values

As a member organisation of City of Sanctuary UK, this document should be read in tandem with their stated aims and values, which are available on their website [here](#).

Our **vision statement** describes the future we desire. It is idealistic and reflects the long-term impact we expect our work to contribute to.

Our vision is that all people fleeing violence and persecution are provided with sanctuary and are given opportunities to thrive

Our **mission statement** describes the specific contribution of LCoS to making the vision a reality. It seeks to give a sense of overall purpose and a broad outline of our approach.

Our mission is to welcome asylum seekers and refugees in and around Leicester, and support them to rebuild their lives, develop their skills and feel part of the community

Values

Our **values** underpin the work of Leicester City of Sanctuary and how we behave as an organisation and as individuals. The staff, board and volunteers seek to model these values and behaviours to those we work with, those we seek to influence, and wider society.

Value...	So...
Welcome	We create and encourage an environment in which all people can mix, feel safe, be valued and participate. We ensure all cultures and ways of life are respected, promoted and celebrated.
Empathy	We work towards a deep understanding of the difficulties those we support experience/have experienced. We make sure we are available to listen and respond to their needs, hopes and aspirations, standing alongside them in the challenges and anxieties they face. We acknowledge that not everyone will want to share and recognise the importance of respecting confidentiality as the basis of building trust.
Empowerment	We encourage people (those we support, volunteers and staff) to recognise their strengths and we support them to build on their abilities and confidence. We actively engage asylum seekers and refugees in decision making. We encourage them to be ambassadors for LCoS work and to assist in the delivery of services to others.
Education	We encourage people to be open to learning and create pathways for asylum seekers and refugees to gain access to education. We challenge half-truths, mistruths and prejudice, attempting to help the wider community understand the real experience of asylum seekers and refugees.
Cooperation	We encourage compassion, care and consideration to others; conversation, communication and connection between people; and recognise the need for compromise and consensus. This enables us to work effectively as a team and to collectively deliver LCoS aims and mission.

Strategic Aims

Based on the vision and mission statement, values and the situational analysis Leicester City of Sanctuary have set the following six strategic aims for the coming period. Whilst all of these strategic aims are important, they are organised in a way that reflects relative priorities when it comes to planning and resourcing.

More focussed operational planning will take place based on these, and our Theory of Change document in Appendix C indicates how we intend to put them into practice.

Supporting those seeking sanctuary

1. To support asylum seekers in meeting their basic and social needs.

Commentary: There is a hierarchy of needs when supporting people. Before confidence and skills can be built, basic needs, such as food, housing and having a sense of belonging, must be addressed. With limited or no recourse to public funds, asylum seekers' needs are likely to take priority over those with more settled status.

2. To support asylum seekers granted leave to remain in the transition to settling into the community

Commentary: There are particular needs for support at the point when Home Office support is promptly withdrawn, whilst alternative provisions can be slow to access. This can be a key moment to target support for a time-limited period.

3. To support all those seeking sanctuary to rebuild their confidence and develop their skills, enabling them to feel part of society

Commentary: Those we work with are usually disempowered by their experiences, many have experienced trauma and high stress which adversely affects their emotional well-being. LCoS role is to provide opportunities to those we work with to rebuild their confidence and skills, and to encourage them to use these within our own work and the wider community.

Promoting sanctuary principles in our society

4. To educate and encourage people in and around Leicester to welcome asylum seekers and refugees into their communities and to support our work

Commentary: The more complete the host community's understanding of the issues affecting those seeking sanctuary asylum, the more likely they are to be supportive of our vision and mission and to align with us in practice. This will also lead to local society becoming more accepting and welcoming. We recognise that many other groups have similar aims and expertise that can help asylum seekers and refugee and are keen to work with others, avoiding duplication, adding synergy and improving/co-ordinating support available.

5. To work with the wider sanctuary movement, regionally and nationally, arguing for changes to the legal and practical frameworks that provide for those seeking sanctuary

Commentary: As part of a national movement, we can benefit from and contribute to the energies of others. The amount of time that can be given to this will depend on individuals' own circumstances and, preferences and abilities.

Ensuring the stable functioning of our own organisation

6. To continue building organisational and financial capacity to support increased levels of activity.

Commentary: There are always more calls on us for action than we can readily resource. Increased capacity is dependent both on growth of resourcing (eg staff, volunteers, IT and premises etc) and increasingly adaptive models of structure and governance. The ways we recruit, resource and engage with our volunteers, alongside our staff, is a particular area for further attention in this coming period.

Appendix A – Background and Context

During the last triennium we also formally re-committed LCoS as part of the national City of Sanctuary movement, who renewed their own Charter, Values and Theory of Change and this Strategic Plan should be read within that context.

LCoS is governed by a Board of Trustees which in March 2022 comprised ten members (the minimum number is 5 and the maximum number 12). At every AGM one third of the trustees retire by rotation. Retiring trustees may stand for re-election unless they have served for three terms in which case one year must pass before they can stand for re-election. Trustees meet bi-monthly and are responsible for overall governance, delegating operational matters to staff.

Current staffing in March 2022 consists of a coordinator, two assistant co-ordinators and a finance and admin officer – all are part-time in varying degrees.

LCoS is supported by up to 60 volunteers in a range of capacities and a significant number of these are previous or current service users.

Appendix B – the language we use

The area we work in is one fraught with confusions when it comes to language. What follows is a short glossary of terms we use, and what we mean by them. There are other terms which are sometimes used less accurately, and often pejoratively. We aim to avoid these wherever possible.

Refugee – a displaced person who has crossed national boundaries and who cannot or is unwilling to return home, due to well-founded fear of persecution. The UN 1951 Refugee Convention established a list of internationally recognised grounds for this status. In the UK, once that claim is accepted a refugee is entitled to live, work and claim support on the same basis as a citizen – although the status may well need to be reviewed at defined intervals.

Asylum Seeker – a person in a country not their own, applying for the right to be recognised as a refugee. In the UK asylum seekers are given a certain level of support pending resolution of that claim, which includes being assigned a place to live and minimal financial support and health care, but not allowed to work or claim any benefits. Anticipated changes to the law may further reduce this entitlement.

Migrant – anyone seeking to live or settle in a country not that of their birth or current residence, for whatever reason. This definition includes refugees, but extends to many other categories, for example economic migrant, or simply people wishing to experience life in a different part of the world.

People seeking Sanctuary – a person seeking refuge in the broadest sense, irrespective of legal status of that claim. The focus is intentionally on the person as much as the situation in which they find themselves.

Citizen – status granted by a state to those regarded as owing it allegiance and being entitled to its protection. It normally includes the right to hold a passport and to leave and return to that state freely. The basis for this is determined by each state separately.

Appendix C – Theory of Change

