Welcome

Since the Spring, our network has seen a huge uptake in interest in our movement, both on a national level and locally, here in Norwich. This is partly in response to the war in Ukraine, and people seeing regular media footage of refugees piling onto trains, fleeing their homes to seek safety abroad. Staffed almost entirely by volunteers, our team continues to work hard to build our network and to expand our capacity so that we can respond to the increasing generosity and goodwill shown by the wider community.

In June, our fantastic Arts Stream supported local charity New Routes in creating a packed week of events for Refugee Week 2022, along with other local partners. Together, we offered our community various, creative ways to counter hostility with hospitality and humanity.

Across our 13 different streams, we have a growing number of large and small organisations, who support our movement. Together, we seek to create a tapestry of welcoming places, so that new arrivals are met with understanding wherever they go. More recently, our Awards Committee has received applications for two Theatres of Sanctuary, our first Garden of Sanctuary, a Workplace of Sanctuary and another secondary school. Many others, including Norwich City Council and Norwich City Football Club, are working with us to also gain accreditation.

Read on to find out more about what’s been happening in each of our streams, and how you can get involved.
University of Sanctuary

In September, UEA welcomed their largest cohort of sanctuary students to date, with people joining us from Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine and Egypt. We look forward to getting to know the students and supporting them during their time at UEA.

UEA Refugee Week 2023

Our Refugee Week will be taking place on 6-12 March 2023 – further details, including the full programme of events, will be available on our website, from late January 2023.

Public Lecture Series

Our public lecture programme for 2022/23 has been announced...

- Qualification Passport for Refugees
  8 March 2023, 12:00 – 13:00
- Adult Learning in Scotland & England
  21 June 2023, 16:00 – 17:00

Voucher of Welcome

UEA library are issuing a voucher for all local sanctuary seekers who wish to access the library and use the facilities during working hours. Further info can be found here.

Seeking Volunteers

Award Appraisers

As more organisations apply for our award scheme, Norwich City of Sanctuary are looking for additional volunteers to help us administer the awards appraisal process.

The Awards Committee meets twice a year, and training will be provided.

We welcome people from all walks of life and backgrounds. For more info, please email us at norwich.cityofsanctuary@gmail.com

Gardens of Sanctuary Stream

To celebrate Refugee Week 2022, Grapes Hill Community Garden hosted a Celebration of International Culture, in partnership with New Routes. Thank you so much to everyone involved and to those who came along!

We are grateful for all the wonderful projects that joined us in the garden to celebrate. This included New Routes and MaNGOma’s interactive information stalls; Ramses Street Food, who offered delicious Egyptian food; language taster sessions coordinated by New Routes; a family and children’s activity area, led by EmpowHER; global music from the talented Sefo Kanuteh and Salman Toheed; global crafts for sale from Mai Nye and refreshments from all around the world.

Faith Stream

We are currently booked to hold various workshops about the City of Sanctuary movement in Norwich, in conjunction with Simon Shreeve (People From Abroad Team). These include workshops with the Methodist Church and the Rotary Club.

The next one will be held on Saturday 5th of November, when our stream will be giving a talk on Norwich City of Sanctuary at The Quaker Meeting House on Upper Goat Lane, from 2-4pm.

St Stephens Church is working towards Church of Sanctuary status and Marie-Lyse is continually promoting the work CofS do in the groups she works with.
Norfolk Schools of Sanctuary

We are extremely proud to announce that we had a record number of schools take part in A Day of Welcome in June, with 362 schools participating, 182 of which were in Norfolk. 11,000 pupils viewed our live webcasts, which featured children’s authors Michael Rosen and Miriam Halahmy. You can read more about this year’s celebration on our recent news story.

Schools looking to register for A Day of Welcome 2023 can do so here.

During Norwich City of Sanctuary’s annual celebration this year, we were delighted to award and welcome Dereham Neatherd High School and Coltishall Primary School to our network. Huge congratulations also go to Hellesdon High, Wensum Junior, Bignold Primary and Hethersett Woodside Primary & Nursery, who all succeeded in renewing their award.

Interest in joining our stream continues to grow so we will be running two network meetings in November (one in-person and the other virtual), during which we will be supporting schools to work towards the award and to connect schools across our network. For further info on our upcoming workshops, please email us: info@norfolksos.co.uk

Before Christmas, we will also be delivering lectures to the students on both the primary and secondary PGCE courses, in which pupils and colleagues will be sharing what it means to be a School of Sanctuary – we hope to inspire the next generation of teachers to get involved in building a culture of welcome in their communities.
In the summer term, ESOL students at City College, which is currently working towards becoming our first College of Sanctuary, made regular trips to the Field of Joy in Reepham. Some of the teenagers had kept animals back in their home countries and enjoyed the contact with the farm animals – we got into the chicken coop, picked up guinea pigs, fed the animals and even braided some of the horses’ manes. The students also enjoyed meeting the staff volunteers, practicing their English and chatting about their lives over a cup of team by the campfire and some delicious lentil soup. We went on walks guided by a local wildlife specialist, where we saw kestrels hovering in the sky and wild deer in the orchard. Some students helped with the running of the field by feeding, carrying and building a poly-tunnel. We have plans to return and to help with gardening and improving the stream and to enjoy more time with our friends at Field of Joy.

– Ian Lain, City College

Sanctuary
by Chris Roe

Shafts of light
Through cathedral windows
Dappled shade
Upon the leaves
Beneath my feet.
Bird song
In the branches above.

In the distance
Hind and fawn
Cross the forest track.
The sweet fragrance of autumn
Fills the misty air.
A gentle breeze
Moving colours
To the forest floor.

So precious
Such beauty
So hard to find
Such peaceful sanctuary.

Together With Refugees

We are happy to share some good news about the campaign led by Together With Refugees and Freedom from Torture, which Norwich City of Sanctuary has been supporting (along with other grass root organisations around the country).

Privilege Style Airlines have recently confirmed that they are pulling out of their agreement to fly refugees to Rwanda. This shows that people power works and that, together, we can bring an end to the cruel Rwanda scheme. The most recent stage of their campaign is an open letter to the current Home Secretary, Suella Braverman. Read more
City College Reading Partners

Over 100 students aged 16-19 study English as an additional language at City College Norwich

Many students have been displaced from their home country and are seeking asylum in the UK. Helping students to build their English reading skills has a hugely positive impact on their lives.

Students who have benefited from Reading Partners support achieve higher grades in their exams and assessments leading to greater employment and higher education opportunities. At the same time, students build positive and supportive relationships and become curious and passionate readers.

Would you like to help them to achieve this?

Volunteer ‘Reading Partners’ spend around one to two hours each week helping students who have English as an additional language to gain lifelong literacy skills.

The time commitment is flexible – you might be able to offer an hour each week for several weeks or a few hours each day for one or two weeks.

All you need is a little bit of time, a little bit of patience, a love of reading and a desire to help others to learn.

City College will support you with some introductory training and supervision from experienced tutors, support staff and other volunteers.

To find out more or to volunteer, please email ian.duckmanton@ccn.ac.uk or call 01603 773 787
Arts Stream

Earlier in the year, we ran language classes focused on food and recipes, which culminated in a Welcome Feast. The event showcased dishes cooked by people from all over the world, who have made our city their home. 100 people came together to enjoy the feast and to tell stories. We are planning to share celebration cards soon, which feature some of the recipes included.

The Arts Stream was very active in supporting Refugee Week this year, with a variety of events, including a guided walk which told the history of people seeking refuge in Norwich.

The Birds of Hope workshop, which was held outside St Peter Mancroft Church during Refugee Week, celebrated Anthony Solempne, Norwich’s first printer who was himself a refugee from the low countries. The birds, created by passing families, took flight on the pillars in the church, where they flew over a special service of welcome.

The Garage also choreographed and filmed a dance inspired by migrant journeys, which was performed by three dancers as they wove their way through the city.

Our team is currently busy considering how it can best support and raise funds for new arrivals in Norwich.

Museums Stream

Colleagues from across Norfolk Museums are keen to extend a warm welcome to all their visitors, especially newcomers to Norfolk who are perhaps more in need than most of some genuinely open arms. Since February, we have been looking at different ways to enable newly arrived Ukrainian refugees to visit our museums. We have been working with Norfolk Libraries, tapping into their Community Help sessions to encourage new arrivals to make independent visits.

The regular Museum Club, run by colleagues at Museum of Norwich and Strangers Hall, continues. The club is a chance for a more established group to take a deeper dive into some of our displays, share stories and handle objects. Our colleagues also worked with a local tour guide to run a walking tour about the heritage of the ‘strangers’ and Huguenot refugees in Norwich. The event was a sell out and extremely well received, with many participants commenting on how they had learnt so much more about this aspect of the city’s history.

At the end of summer, English+ were able to bring a group of all ages to Gressenhall Museum and Workhouse – a great experience where people of all ages and backgrounds are able to find something that inspires, engages and evokes memories. The Textile Treasure project produced by English+ members has also been featured in a recent film by Norwich Castle Museum, which you can now view here.

Objects and stories have the power to evoke memories, bring people together, consolidate experiences and reinforce the fact that we all have more in common that what divides us.
Workplaces of Sanctuary

Recent interest from local businesses has sparked the need for this new stream, as more places around the city begin working towards accreditation.

One of these workplaces is Fountain Partnership, whose wonderful team have been running free workshops for sanctuary seekers in Norwich. With support from R13 Recruitment Ltd, the sessions offer one-to-one CV writing advice and interview preparation skills for local refugees that may be unfamiliar with UK job search processes.

If you know anyone in Norfolk who could benefit from one-to-one support in this area, please direct them to Rebecca at Fountain Partnership.

Library Stream

We are continuing to host welcome sessions for migrants and have appointed two new migrant support coordinators to support across the county.

We are hoping to host English Exchange classes in the locations where welcome sessions are held, and are in discussion with the Forum Trust and Norfolk Polonia to about further provision for language classes.

King’s Lynn, Thetford, Yarmouth and Dereham are all on our target list to join our stream by becoming Libraries of Sanctuary.

Places of Sanctuary

Norwich Theatre * The University of East Anglia * Norwich Arts Centre * Frank’s Bar * The Octagon Chapel * Norfolk Museums Service * Avenue Junior School * Notre Dame High School * Jane Austen College * Bignold Primary School * Magdalen Gates Primary School * Wensum Junior School * Framlingham Earl High School * Hellesdon High School * Hethersett Woodside Primary & Nursery School * Preston Primary School * Saxlingham Nethergate Primary School * Angel Road Infant School * Garboldisham Primary * Ashleigh Primary School * Taverham Junior School * Recreation Road Infants School * Norfolk Knitters and Stitchers * Dereham Neatherd High School * Coltishall Primary School * Norfolk Millennium Library * Bicycle Links *

Working Toward Our Sanctuary Award

Nelson Infants School * The Common Lot Theatre Company * The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts * City College Norwich * Field of Joy * The Garage * Sheringham Little Theatre * Norwich Puppet Theatre * Norwich City Council * Norwich City Football Club * The Julian Centre * St Peter Mancroft Church * Grapes Hill Community Garden * Aylsham High School * Fountain Marketing * King’s Lynn Library * Thetford Library * Dereham Library * Gt Yarmouth Library * Norwich Baroque * East Norfolk Sixth Form * Thetford Academy * Sewell Park High School * Woodton Primary School * Shouldham Primary School * Martham Primary School *

Dates for the Diary

7 Feb 23  Annual Celebration at Norwich Arts Centre
04-12 Mar 23  UEA Refugee Week
16 Jun 23  A Day of Welcome
19-25 Jun 23  REFUGEE WEEK!

Web: https://norwich.cityofsanctuary.org/  E:mail: norwich.cityofsanctuary@gmail.com