

Council of Sanctuary¹ Award

Procedure and Criteria

Introduction

City of Sanctuary UK holds the vision that the UK will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution. In order to realise this vision, City of Sanctuary UK supports a [network of groups](#), which includes cities, towns, villages, boroughs and regions across the UK, and others engaged in Streams of Sanctuary, Sanctuary Awards and activities intended to welcome people seeking sanctuary¹. For more information see our [Charter](#).

In June 2020 the City of Sanctuary Network voted at the AGM to dispense with the city-wide recognition process and to establish a local authority network. Any local authority can apply to become an awarded or non-awarded member of this network –to join click [here](#).

What are Sanctuary Awards?

Sanctuary Awards are provided by the network of local groups and City of Sanctuary UK to recognise and celebrate commitment to our values and vision of welcome and inclusivity and enabling them to become active participants in the City of Sanctuary network. This document is specifically guidance for local authorities to apply for a Council of Sanctuary award.

Any local authority who has previously been awarded as part of a City of Sanctuary group city-wide recognition process, or awarded by a group as part of their self-recognition process, will not need to follow all the steps below but will need to submit an application form within six months of joining the network (step 4). Similarly any local authority which has made significant progress towards becoming a welcoming place of sanctuary may be in position to go straight to step. Please liaise with your local group and/or regional coordinator to discuss further.

The procedure

Award applications usually start with a conversation with your [local City of Sanctuary group](#) or a City of Sanctuary UK [officer](#) if no local group is available.

Here is a step by step guide:-

¹ We use the term 'local authorities' to include all types of local government from across the whole of the UK e.g. county councils, districts, boroughs or city councils, unitary councils, London boroughs, combined authorities, metropolitan boroughs as well as parish and town councils]

Step 1 – Contact your local group to pledge support and connect with their / your shared vision

Step 2 – Join the local authority network. In joining the network you are committing to work towards the Council of Sanctuary Award and are agreeing to sign up as a Supporting Organisation (this includes an endorsement of the [City of Sanctuary Charter](#))

Step 3 – Produce an Action Plan using the 'LEARN, EMBED, SHARE' criteria. Include how you will meet the City of Sanctuary UK Local Authority Network criteria within the plan.

Step 4 – Then when ready apply for recognition. You can submit a written application for an award using the generic [Awards Application form](#).

Step 5 – The nomination will be appraised by a Sanctuary Recognition panel which will normally include as a minimum, a local member of City of Sanctuary, someone who has lived experience of seeking sanctuary and a member of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Steering Group. The panel may request a visit to the nominated organisation during the appraisal, and will usually involve a conversation between councillors, officers and the panel.

Step 6 - When a local authority is able to demonstrate they have met all the criteria they would be given the right to use the Council of Sanctuary logo to recognise their commitment accompanied by the wording "X....*is a recognised County/District/Borough/City/Unitary/Parish/Town [delete as appropriate] Council of Sanctuary*"²;

Step 7 – Once the award is agreed, a plan should to be made for its presentation to include a celebratory event/ media statements etc. You are making a public declaration of support for people seeking sanctuary and City of Sanctuary.

Step 8 –The conversations begun during appraisal will continue throughout the three year award period and will inform a review at the end of the three years. A new application has to be submitted to renew the award after three years and if successful an updated certificate of recognition can be issued.

² Whilst this is the recommended terminology we acknowledge the need for flexibility due to the differing local government contexts, although in all cases we would encourage local authorities to discuss with their local group with the aim of achieving agreement between the two.

What is the Award criteria?

This guidance document aims to outline the criteria required for the award. We would encourage local authorities to build on the criteria in a way that best reflects their specific context.

The Process: Learn, Embed & Share

Any local authority contributing towards the vision of welcome can apply for the award by signing up to our charter, values and principles and demonstrating their commitment by providing evidence that they have integrated the following:

- **Learn:** learning about what it means to be seeking sanctuary, both in general, and specifically.
- **Embed:** taking positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion. To take steps to ensure this progress remains sustainable.
- **Share:** sharing your vision, achievements, what you have learned, and good practice with other local authorities, the local community and beyond.

The Criteria

- Join the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network which includes a pledge to support the vision of City of Sanctuary and an endorsement of its charter
- Pass a council motion setting out commitment to being a place of sanctuary
- Commit to working with the local City of Sanctuary (which could be via a specific local pledge) (and/or other refugee networks)
- Show evidence of the work with the local City of Sanctuary group (and/or other refugee networks) and receive the endorsement from those groups for the award application
- Commit to work with partners to identify national policy issues in order to make collective representations to government to encourage and enable change
- Produce a written strategy (either an independent strategy or as part of a broader strategy e.g. equality, migration etc) which is publicly available and sets out commitment for at least three years.

The 'Learn, Embed and Share' criteria are outlined below. Please provide evidence of meeting each of the criteria in the relevant section of the generic award application.

Learn

In this section of the application, we will be looking for examples of work which signals the commitment of the local authority to learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary. It is also important that include people seeking sanctuary in those learning opportunities if at all possible. We recognise that this may be challenging in certain locations and situations, and City of Sanctuary UK and via its local groups will try to assist.

To receive an award, the local authority must meet the following LEARN criteria:

- Criterion 1: **Awareness raising opportunities** are provided, and opportunities for discussion around the theme of welcome and sanctuary are facilitated.
- Criterion 2: **Evidence of refugee/asylum/migration awareness raising** is included into everyday business of the local authority e.g. staff induction/training.
- Criterion 3: Commitment to supporting **the voices of people seeking sanctuary to be heard.**

Embed

The second process used by City of Sanctuary UK for its awards is Embed. For City of Sanctuary UK, embedding means that the local authority is taking positive action to implement welcome, safety and inclusion. City of Sanctuary UK would like details on how the local authority will ensure a continuation of support for sanctuary on an ongoing basis.

To receive an award, the local authority must meet the following Embed criteria:

- Criterion 4: The local authority **must demonstrate how it has embedded** the concept of welcome and inclusion at all levels of the organisation. This should show how the local authority will continue to develop and sustain a culture of welcome beyond the award.
- Criterion 5: **Commitment to supporting initiatives** that **embeds welcome and fosters solidarity** between receiving communities and people seeking sanctuary e.g. participation in Refugee Week, more information about the annual event can be found here:
<http://refugeeweek.org.uk>.

Share

The third and final process in the City of Sanctuary UK model is Share. City of Sanctuary UK will be seeking evidence that the place is seeking to share its experience of sanctuary and welcome with the wider community, local organisations and spreading the word about their welcoming efforts.

To receive an award, the local authority must meet the following criteria:

- Criterion 6: A **public commitment** to the City of Sanctuary vision of welcome
- Criterion 7: The **local authority publicly highlights its work** in support of welcome and inclusion by making it visible on its website and noticeboards *NB. Once the sanctuary award is received, we would expect the logo and a link to the webpage on the website.*
- Criterion 8: Commitment to **on-going engagement with the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network**. This may include sharing resources, ideas and achievements via the network and City of Sanctuary UK website.
- Criterion 9: Work with the network to identify national policy issues in order to make **collective representations to government to encourage and enable change**

How to complete your application form?

Your written application needs to include:

- Evidence which demonstrates how the local authority has used the three step process of learn, embed and share and how through following the process the values and principles in the charter are being upheld.
- Evidence can be collected in a variety of ways and can include self-evaluation, photos and testimony, strategic plans, training records, policies and procedures and through consulting with people seeking sanctuary.
- Applications should be no longer than 4 pages, including supporting evidence. Only photos or organisational documents can be submitted in addition to these 4 pages.

Q: Please provide a summary of how the local authority engages with people seeking sanctuary.

In this section, outline the ways the local authority has engaged with people seeking sanctuary. How has the local authority sought to build relationships with local people seeking sanctuary? Has it formed partnerships with the City of Sanctuary group and/or local support organisations?

Q: Using the 3 processes of the sanctuary award, please reflect on how you have achieved these principles attaching evidence to support your answer.

Here we are looking for evidence of initiatives, projects, policies and progress. Even if something is ongoing, include it as it helps to build a picture of how the local authority is developing its culture of welcome. Try to

be concise but don't assume that the appraisal panel have the requisite knowledge (so please explain all acronyms and give context where necessary).

Q: Please identify how people seeking sanctuary have been involved in helping you achieve these principles.

All applications for a Sanctuary Award are expected to involve people seeking sanctuary in the planning, delivery and/or evaluation of activities for each of the principles, where appropriate. Building on the examples you have given, identify the ways in which people seeking sanctuary have contributed to these successes.

Q: How do you intend to build on your achievements over the next 3 years in order that your award is renewed?

We want to acknowledge and celebrate a local authority which shows a commitment to the principles in the long-term and which have a forward-looking approach; receipt of the sanctuary award is just the beginning! Each award is valid for 3 years and renewal will be required. So, use this section of the application form as an opportunity to share information about your planning.

Questions to think about include: Has the local authority demonstrated a sustainable commitment to sanctuary in the long-term? How will the local authority re-evaluate and adapt to continue to demonstrate sanctuary, welcome and inclusion? Can you provide evidence that this commitment will continue after the award is granted?

ⁱ A term used to describe people predominantly categorised as either a refugee or an asylum seeker (including those who are appeal rights exhausted)