

Council of Sanctuary

Strategy and Action Plan



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Foreword



In an increasingly interconnected world, the plight of those seeking sanctuary has become a pressing global issue. As we witness unprecedented levels of displacement due to conflict, persecution, and environmental crises, it is our collective responsibility to extend the hand of compassion and support to those in need.

This strategy represents Cambridgeshire County Council's unwavering commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for people seeking sanctuary. It outlines our comprehensive approach to addressing the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers, ensuring their rights are upheld and their dignity respected.

Our strategy is built on the principles of empathy, solidarity, and justice. We recognise the immense courage and resilience of those who have been forced to flee their homes, and we are dedicated to providing them with the resources, support and opportunities they need to rebuild their lives. This includes access to essential services, education, employment, and community integration.

We believe that only by working together we can create a society where everyone, regardless of their background, can thrive. This strategy is not just a plan for noting; it is a plan for action.

Together, we can build a future where hope triumphs over despair, and where every person is given the chance to live in safety and dignity.

Dr Stephen S. Moir
Chief Executive

Introduction



This document outlines our commitment to welcoming, supporting, and integrating people seeking sanctuary into our communities. By working collaboratively with our statutory, voluntary, community and faith organisation partners and residents, we aim to ensure that Cambridgeshire is a place of safety, dignity, and opportunity for all. Our vision aligns with the City of Sanctuary UK's goal of creating an environment that promotes understanding, respects differences, and recognises the potential of everyone.

Cambridgeshire County Council has set itself the vision to **'Create a greener, fairer and more caring Cambridgeshire'**. By pursuing seven key ambitions, we aim to strengthen our connections with all communities. Our approach involves working closely with all communities, tailoring our interactions with partners, communities, and residents to best meet their needs. This inclusive vision relates to everyone, including those seeking sanctuary.

Cambridgeshire County Council's vision is underpinned by these seven ambitions:



Our CARE values



Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to becoming a County Council of Sanctuary by demonstrating hospitality, solidarity and a warm welcome to everyone arriving in the area, which is reflected in our county council values. These values underpin everything we do.



Collaborative

We recognise that we work most effectively when we work together, with partners, and with our communities, to achieve the best outcome.



Accountable

We understand the importance of our individual responsibility in achieving good outcomes for our communities, are committed to achieving the best we can, and to owning both what we do and how we do it.



Respectful

We respect each other as individuals, who contribute our own skills, knowledge, and insight to the work we do.



Excellence

We have faith in our ability to exceed expectations, both our own and those of others.

Who we support



We support a diverse group of people seeking sanctuary including Hong Kongers, participants of the Afghan and UK Resettlement Schemes, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and the Homes for Ukraine initiative.

Our mission is to build a compassionate foundation for welcoming sanctuary seekers to our county, in line with our vision of **‘Creating a greener, fairer, and more caring Cambridgeshire’**.

We strive to provide immediate access to services and support for those seeking sanctuary, along with opportunities for them to engage in and contribute to life in Cambridgeshire.

By collaborating with partners, communities, and residents, we can offer personalised support tailored to the needs of the individual.



Families



Single Adults



People Seeking Sanctuary



Unaccompanied Children



Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) make up 15% of the number of looked after children in Cambridgeshire. They receive comprehensive support through various services and programs including a dedicated team of social workers and personal advisors who provide holistic assessments, support through the immigration system, and help with education and accommodation.



For those transitioning out of care, the Leaving Care Team offers additional support tailored to individual needs, such as help with education, employment, and independent living skills. Together these services aim to ensure that UASC in Cambridgeshire receive the necessary support to thrive and build a positive future.

Here are the stories of three of the 324 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children we are currently supporting.

“My journey was very harrowing, it took me around one and half years to get to UK travelling through various countries in addition to crossing the Sahara Dessert. In one of these countries, I was imprisoned and had to work almost 10 hours a night for them to gain my release since I didn’t have any money to pay them. This experience left me scarred and I was totally deflated and had to pluck up courage to continue. I am originally from South Sudan and the whole journey has left me traumatised. Once in UK I was initially placed with a family, and they were welcoming but very strict. For instance, I wasn’t allowed to use my phone when I wished. Subsequently when I turned 18, I was moved to a hostel. I am now attending college to do ESOL and spent some time on a construction site gaining valuable experience. As much as I enjoyed it, I would like to study IT. It is great to feel safe and additionally to my wonderful support worker, I have made friends who also support me.”

UASC - South Sudan



"It took me over two years to get to UK. I fled from Iran as it wasn't safe to remain there. To protect my family, I do not communicate with them which is hard, but I am building my life here. I am currently undertaking ESOL Level 1 alongside GCSE Maths. I am aiming to go on and do English GCSE. I would like to continue studying and get a degree in Mechanics. I am really grateful for the support I am receiving."

UASC – Iran

"I left Afghanistan in 2022 when Taliban took over. My journey has taken me through numerous countries and was quite treacherous. It felt like being in a horror movie. Enroute, I got separated from my brother and I am not sure where he is or whether he is alive. I miss him greatly. I meantime, I keep in touch with my mother who is also very worried about him. Though I miss my family I am very happy here and have received excellent support. I have a passion for stitching and would like to set up a tailoring business. In the meantime, I have enrolled in college which helped my confidence and gaining friends that I can trust."

UASC - Afghanistan

Context



Migration is an issue that is not going away and will only become more pressing in the next few decades as more and more people flee their homes following geopolitical instability and climate change.

The resident population of Cambridgeshire, like that of all areas of England, has experienced migration of people coming from non-UK countries to live, study, work or seek sanctuary for many years. Some people who sought sanctuary are now long-established in Cambridgeshire communities while others are recent arrivals.

According to the Commission on the Integration of Refugees the successful integration of people seeking sanctuary has been shown to impact society positively at individual, local, and national levels. At an individual level, positive integration experiences impact directly on the wellbeing of those seeking sanctuary and may also alleviate the effects of prior trauma. At a local level, integrating people seeking sanctuary can provide benefits for all members of the community – from civil society to businesses, healthcare, and public services. Integration also enhances social cohesion and builds stronger, more inclusive, and culturally diverse communities.



“As long as conflict, persecution and economic hardship exists in the world, there will always be people who will seek compassion and a new life in a country other than the one they happened to be born in. Migrants have made a huge economic, cultural, and social contribution to the communities they join in the UK. Councils across the UK play a key role in supporting asylum seekers, including unaccompanied asylum-seeking Children (UASC), as well as migrant residents more broadly – from providing direct services to signposting to specialist organisations and agencies.”

Councillor Alex Bulat (Migrant Champion) - December 13, 2022



Our journey to becoming a County Council of Sanctuary began on December 13, 2022, when Councillor Alex Bulat, the first English county councillor of Romanian background to be elected, introduced a motion advocating for improved support for asylum seekers and migrants in Cambridgeshire.

The council agreed to:

- Develop a 'City of Sanctuary' type charter to be implemented across Cambridgeshire.
- Establish the role of Migrant Champion.
- Urge the government to provide sufficient funding for local authorities to support resettled communities in Cambridgeshire. The No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) policy, which affects some non-UK residents, makes it challenging or impossible for local authorities to prevent destitution.
- Introduce a county-wide 'Place of Safety' pledge, ensuring everyone can seek services, advice, support, and representation without fear of negative repercussions.
- Engage council partners to refrain from contributing to a 'hostile environment'.
- Express concern over the worrying hostility towards migrants and asylum seekers.

The offer



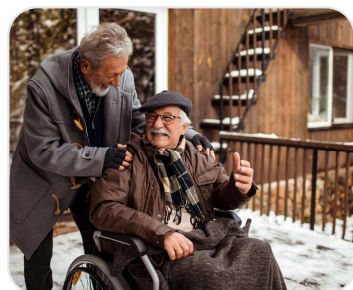
Cambridgeshire County Council operates within a four-tier local government structure, each with distinct responsibilities. It includes 240 town/parish councils, five district councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

Below are the Cambridgeshire County Council directorates and services that play significant roles in welcoming and supporting people seeking sanctuary.



Children, Education and Families

- Ensures that children and young people across Cambridgeshire are given the best possible start in life, are safe, well and supported through early years, education and later in life.



Adults, Health and Commissioning

- Focus on improving outcomes for adults and their carers
- Understand the health, wellbeing and care needs of local communities
- Tackle Health Inequalities by improving the health of the poorest members of the community
- Commission preventative public health programmes



Finance and Resources

- Customer service enquiries and requests
- Property compliance and life safety
- Finance transactions
- Budget planning, monitoring and reporting
- Rural and urban estate management
- Procurement governance and support



Place and Sustainability

- Road Safety
- Highways
- Active Travel
- Connecting Cambridgeshire – digital connectivity for people across the county
- Registration Services can support and advise on key areas such as registration of births, citizenships and bereavement




Strategy and Partnerships

- Communities, Libraries and Skills
- Community Safety
- Emergency Planning
- Policy Insight and Change
- Human Resources
- Communications

Strategic Framework




Our refreshed Strategic Framework 2023-2028 outlines the progress we have made towards realising the council's vision of a greener, fairer, and more caring Cambridgeshire. We remain committed to this vision by fostering closer connections with our communities and collaborating with partners and residents. This approach ensures that Cambridgeshire evolves in ways that best serve the diverse needs of its people and communities. The framework also highlights several initiatives already underway. Notably, under Ambition 6, it includes the recognition of the Library of Sanctuary, the establishment of our Migration Forum, and the appointment of our Migration Policy and Partnerships Officer.


**Ambition 6**


Since launching this Ambition we have:

- ✓ Outlined Closer to Communities pilots and delivered Enabling Growth Outdoors to support young people aged 10-18 not in mainstream education at Wisbech Community Farm, as part of the pilot schemes. Enabling Growth Outdoors is designed to support young people with emerging mental health difficulties and difficulties within education to raise their aspirations and access informal education
- ✓ Extended access to libraries and achieved Library of Sanctuary status in recognition of our work to support those who are seeking refuge in our county
- ✓ Launched the Cambridgeshire Migration Partnership, bringing together statutory and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector organisations with a focus on working directly with refugees, those seeking asylum and others newly arrived in the UK
- ✓ Appointed a Migrant Policy and Partnerships Officer – a post created following a decision made by Full Council to increase local level support for asylum seekers and migrants
- ✓ Helped support economic growth through the provision of...
Cambridgeshire businesses since April 2024
- ✓ Exceeded the government's target of 85% eligible companies...
super...
Cambr...
shire pres...



Cambridgeshire County Council
Strategic Framework 2023-2028
(Refresh for 2025-28)





Ambition 6
Places and communities prosper because they have a resilient and inclusive economy, access to good public services and social justice is prioritised

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Migration Policy and Partnership Manager

This new role was created in April 2023 to maintain focus and help shape how the County Council approaches migration, asylum and refugee support.

It has oversight of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, the Afghanistan Resettlement Scheme, the Community Sponsorship Scheme, and all other current and future refugee and asylum programmes in Cambridgeshire.

The post-holder works in partnership with colleagues and elected members within the County Council, as well other public, private, and voluntary sector organisations to design the County's approach to people seeking sanctuary.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/finance-and-budget/business-plans#strategic-framework-3-1>

Library of Sanctuary



Cambridgeshire County Council runs 33 libraries, and the county also has 12 community managed libraries. Our three mobile library routes stop in 98 villages and communities on a regular basis. We recognise that public libraries play an important role in welcoming people into our communities, including people seeking sanctuary. Anyone is welcome to join the library. Membership is free, and people are welcome to join the library without any documents.

Cambridgeshire Libraries received Library of Sanctuary status in 2023. The link below is to our webpage which explains how our services can support new arrivals. It also signposts to other organisations that offer information and support.

<https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/advice-and-support/libraries-of-sanctuary>

Our libraries offer a range of free or low-cost resources for all ages to support new arrivals into our communities such as:

- **PressReader** gives library members free access to over 7,000 newspapers and magazine titles from 140 different countries that can be translated into several languages with a text to speech option.
- **Learn My Way** offers free digital skills courses. There are modules on managing your money and health online, finding a job, and using public services.
- **Laptops** available for loan for a period of 7 days, free to members of Cambridgeshire Libraries.
- **Foreign language and dual language books** and language learning resources.
- **Free mobile SIM cards** to those unable to afford internet access.
- **Activities, Exhibitions and Events.**
- **Information and Support** - This includes information about housing, internet access, learning English, finding a job and more.

Key information for new arrivals

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Housing | + |
| Internet access | + |
| Learning English | + |
| Studying and finding a job | + |
| Immigration and visas | + |
| Things to do | + |
| Health | + |
| New arrivals from Ukraine | + |
| New arrivals from Hong Kong | + |

Migration Forum



Cambridgeshire County Council recognises and values the support numerous voluntary and community sector organisations and statutory services, including District and City councils, offer to support sanctuary-seekers in the county. These partners have been providing the support to sanctuary-seekers for decades.

Cambridgeshire's Migration Forum was created to enhance the coordination of support, identify key priorities, and engage with sanctuary-seeking residents. This partnership has played a crucial role in developing the County Council of Sanctuary Action Plan and will continue to provide feedback on its progress. Its membership* is broadly made up from representatives from statutory and voluntary services, academia and people with lived experiences.

By working together, the forum aims to improve service delivery and ensure that individuals with lived experience are central to our efforts. For example, Refugee Week events will be coordinated by the forum avoiding duplication and clashes and providing an opportunity to achieve more with limited resources. It is also a place where members can share experiences and expertise.

*Membership

- Cambridgeshire County Council Colleagues e.g. UASC, Education etc.
- District/City Councils
- Cambridge Refugee Resettlement Campaign
- Ely Refugee Resettlement Campaign
- Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum
- Rosmini Centre
- Local City of Sanctuary Community Group
- British Red Cross
- Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and South Lincolnshire Mind
- Academia – Cambridge University and Anglian Ruskin University
- East of England Local Government Association – Strategic Migration Partnership
- Appropriate Faith Groups – Woolf Institute
- NHS Colleagues
- Department for Work and Pensions
- People with lived experiences
- Home Office
- Representation from Schools and Colleges

Communications



Effective communication is essential in promoting our shared goal of making people seeking sanctuary feel welcome. We have made efforts to convey this both internally and externally. Our communications so far include, but are not limited to:

- Our main website providing information about Libraries of Sanctuary, including links to support services and advice (1). <https://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/libraries-leisure-culture/libraries/advice-and-support/libraries-of-sanctuary>
- Informing all employees about our aim to become a County Council of Sanctuary through our internal network (2).
- The Communications Team creating a series of Teams backgrounds for use by anyone representing the council (3).
- An email signature available for staff to use (4).
- Participating in Refugee Week activities.
- Organising and participating in cultural events.
- Membership of the Local Government Association (LGA) and other relevant networks such as No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).
- Engaging with the regional Chief Executive group, making representations directly to the government.
- Providing access to information in different languages.
- Establishing a Migration Forum.

1



2



3

County of Sanctuary teams backgrounds - click on an image to download



4

Challenging Environment



Local authorities across the UK are working in a very challenging environment. These challenges have an impact on delivery of services, and it is important to acknowledge them.

Financial Pressures on Councils

Local authorities across the UK are facing significant financial pressures primarily due to rising costs, and increased demand for services. Cambridgeshire County Council is no exception, with constrained resources limiting its ability to meet growing needs effectively. People seeking sanctuary support services, such as skills, education, and social care, require sustained investment, and funding has not kept pace with inflation or local demand. These pressures necessitate innovative partnerships, resource-sharing initiatives, and a targeted approach to ensure that support for migrants can be delivered in a cost-effective and impactful way without compromising on quality.

Cost of Living

The ongoing cost of living crisis in the UK has had a profound impact on vulnerable populations, including people seeking sanctuary. Rising energy bills, housing costs, and inflation have left many families struggling to meet basic needs. For people seeking sanctuary, these challenges are often compounded by limited access to affordable housing, employment barriers, and a lack of familiarity with support systems. Cambridgeshire County Council recognises that economic hardship disproportionately affects people seeking sanctuary and therefore adopts a holistic approach by integrating financial support, skills development, and access to local resources to mitigate the effects of this crisis and foster resilience within migrant communities.

Global Crisis and Changing National Policy

Global financial instability and increasing rates of displacement due to conflict, climate change, and political upheaval have resulted in unprecedented numbers of people seeking safety and opportunity in the UK. National policies on migration and asylum are evolving rapidly, often placing additional administrative and resource burdens on local authorities. Cambridgeshire County Council must remain adaptable to these changes, advocating for fair policies and sufficient funding while developing local strategies to support those impacted. This requires proactive planning, enhanced collaboration with national bodies, and a focus on community integration to address the dual challenges of global crises and shifting legislative landscapes.

Challenging Environment (cont)



Unpredictability of Demand

The fluctuating nature of migration flows creates unpredictability in demand for council services, including housing, education, and health support. External factors, such as geopolitical events or changes in national policy, can result in sudden increases in the number of people seeking sanctuary requiring assistance. Cambridgeshire County Council must establish flexible frameworks to respond quickly to such demands. This includes creating contingency plans and maintaining strong partnerships with local organisations, in order to manage surges effectively. By embracing adaptability, the council can safeguard service quality while meeting its commitment to supporting migrant populations.

No Recourse to Public Funds

People seeking sanctuary with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) face heightened vulnerability, as they are ineligible for most forms of state support, including housing and financial aid. This status places additional pressure on local authorities, which often bear the responsibility of addressing immediate needs such as emergency accommodation, safeguarding children, and providing humanitarian support. Cambridgeshire County Council must ensure that its strategy accounts for NRPF challenges by collaborating with charities, faith-based groups, and community organisations to fill gaps in service provision. By creating pathways for advocacy and resource access, the council can provide critical lifelines to those who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

Local Demographics

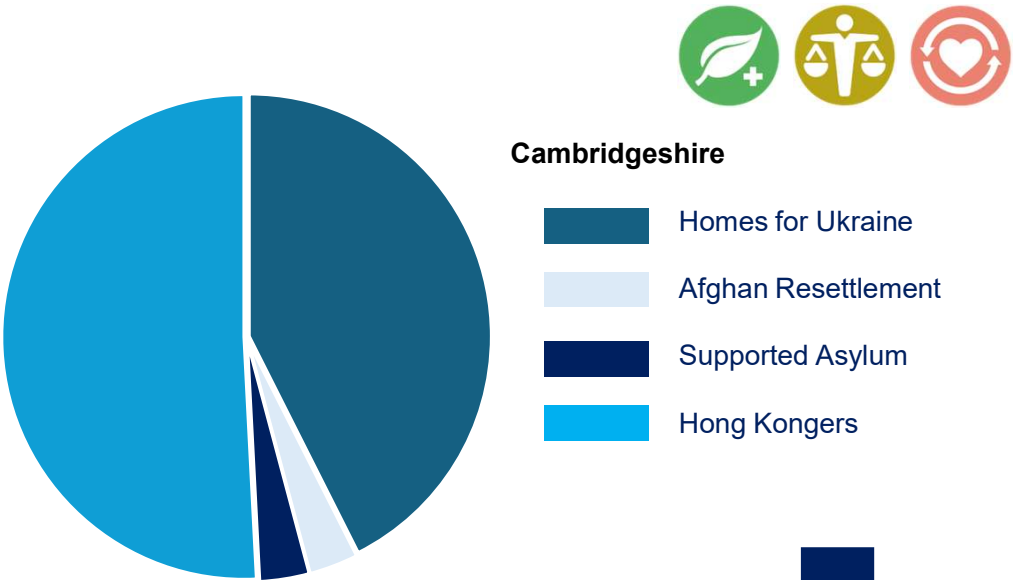
Cambridgeshire is home to a diverse population, with migrant communities contributing significantly to its cultural richness and economic vitality. The county's demographics reflect a growing proportion of residents born outside the UK, including both long-term sanctuary seekers and recent arrivals. Understanding the specific needs of these populations, such as language support, cultural sensitivity, and access to employment is essential for effective service delivery. By leveraging demographic data, Cambridgeshire County Council can tailor its strategies to address local needs, promote social cohesion and ensure that all residents feel valued and supported as part of a thriving and inclusive community.

| District | Homes for Ukraine (HfU) | Afghan Resettlement * | Supported Asylum * | Hong Kongers ** |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Cambridge City | 611 | 78 | 0 | |
| East Cambs | 317 | 0 | 0 | |
| Fenland | 188 | 4 | 0 | |
| Huntingdonshire | 459 | 48 | 16 | |
| South Cambs | 938 | 64 | 181 | |
| Cambridgeshire | 2,513 | 194 | 197 | 3,000 |

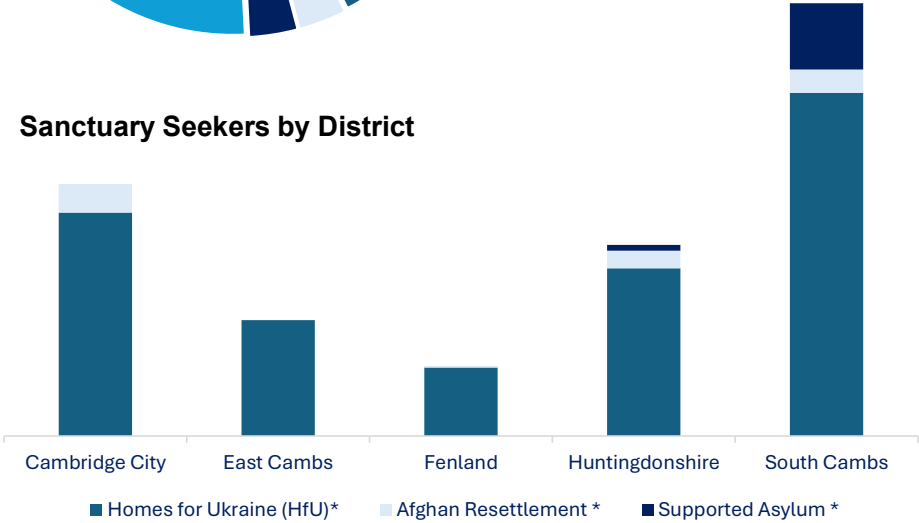
HfU, Afghan Resettlement and Supported Asylum stats are as at end September 2024. These are the latest available from MHCLG. Source Gov.uk

** Estimated - The data on Hong Kongers is very much estimated since there is no way of determining exact numbers in the County. As of March 2024, approximately 190,000 visas have been granted to the BN(O)s i.e. Hong Kongers. Of those 144,400 have arrived in the UK.

According to a report commissioned by MHCLG published in November 2023, 6.1% of BN(O)s have settled in the East of England and 1.6% have settled in Cambridgeshire. Almost all of them settling in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. This is somewhat born out by the number of Hong Konger children in schools in these two districts.



Sanctuary Seekers by District



Actions and achievements so far



Through partnership working and our existing corporate structure we have already made great strides towards becoming a County Council of Sanctuary.

Action taken to date includes, but is not limited to...

* "As an elected member/partner of Cambridgeshire County Council, I pledge to represent and advocate for all people living in Cambridgeshire as equal members of the local community, regardless of their immigration status.

My organisation and I are safe spaces, and I welcome all individuals in Cambridgeshire to seek representation free from fear of immigration enforcement. I will not report anyone who seeks my advice to the Home Office for immigration enforcement and will ensure my office correctly handles sensitive personal information to prevent this from happening."



STRATEGY

- Elected member as a Migrant Champion
- Launched Cambridgeshire Migration Forum
- Made a pledge to ensure access to services and advice for sanctuary seekers without fear of negative consequences, and encouraged partners to make the same commitment*
- Appointed a Migration Policy and Partnerships Manager
- Achieved Library of Sanctuary status
- Equality Diversity and Integration Strategy 2023-27
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion training required for staff
- Monthly Equality Diversity and Inclusion events and support via staff IDEAL (Inclusion, Diversity and Equality for All) Network
- Produced an International Worker Welcome Guide
- Publicity highlighting the councils support of welcome and inclusion



NETWORKING

- Joined City of Sanctuary LA Network
- Joined No Recourse to Public Funds Network
- Member of Resettlement Local Authority Network (RLAN)
- Supporting district and city councils to deliver the Homes for Ukraine
- Supporting district and city councils regarding asylum seeker hotels
- Attend Regional Resettlement and Ukraine Group and East of England quarterly asylum and Ukraine meetings
- Working with East of England Regional Resettlement group
- Working with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority via ESOL Local Planning Partnerships to support Asylum seekers with English language tuition
- Serious Organised Crime FUSION Anti-Slavery working group



COMMUNITY

- Refugee Week
- Hong Kongers Mahjong/games
- Outside Activity Day for refugees
- Meet, Eat and Arts Projects
- No ID requirement for library membership
- Library induction sessions for sanctuary seekers
- Online courses
- Cambridgeshire Skills – Adult Learning – ESOL
- Books and publications in a variety of languages
- Refugee opinion sought as part of County Youth Survey
- Requested input from people seeking sanctuary in the annual Quality of Life Survey
- Established Youth Club for Lithuanian young people
- Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children residential

What's next?



We recognise this is just the beginning, but we are committed to making Cambridgeshire a welcoming place for people seeking sanctuary. To enable this, we have sought perspectives of key stakeholders as well as considering past information and current data.

We consulted with:

- People with lived experience
- District and City Councils
- CCC Adult and Children's Social Care
- CCC Education
- CCC Public Health
- CCC Communities Team
- CCC Libraries
- ESOL providers and Cambridgeshire Skills
- Voluntary and Community Sector partners
- City of Sanctuary UK and local City of Sanctuary Community Group

Following this, the strategic priorities and actions were presented to our Migration Forum and the appropriate Council Officers and Elected Members for feedback.

The resulting action plan will guide our support for those seeking sanctuary over the next three years.

Action plan



Cambridgeshire County Council 2025 – 2028

- Health and Wellbeing
- Education and Language Support
- Employment and Training
- Community Cohesion and Social Support
- Legal and Financial Support
- Housing and Accommodation
- Implementation and Delivery

Note – The actions outlined in this action plan are in addition to our existing offer.

Welcoming - Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to treating sanctuary seekers with respect and dignity, ensuring they are welcomed and valued equally alongside all residents in our County.

Explicit - Cambridgeshire County Council will ensure clear communication and interactions with sanctuary seekers, outlining what they can expect and when.

Learning - Cambridgeshire County Council will upskill its officers who work directly and indirectly with sanctuary seekers, by providing relevant training opportunities.

Collaborative – Cambridgeshire County Council will strive to provide integrated services and collaborate with all partners, ensuring that individuals with lived experience are central to our efforts.

Opportunity – Cambridgeshire County Council is dedicated to helping sanctuary seekers fully access the opportunities available in Cambridgeshire including education, employment and training.

Migrant Champion - Cambridgeshire County Council has appointed a County Councillor to be a voice for sanctuary seekers in Cambridgeshire, ensuring they have access to necessary help and support.

Empowering - Cambridgeshire County Council will work alongside sanctuary seekers, ensuring they are not only active participants but also empowered to be involved in decisions that affect them.

Health and Wellbeing



Accessible healthcare support services are vital to the wellbeing of people seeking sanctuary. CCC will work with partners to ensure that language barriers and other challenges do not hinder access to essential services.

Health and Wellbeing

| Aims/Objectives | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|--|--|
| Mental health support, particularly trauma-informed care, for refugees who may have experienced distressing events before arriving in the UK | In line with the Council's ambition to become a trauma-informed County we will work with appropriate partners to explore the feasibility of establishing provision of Trauma Support for those seeking sanctuary | Pilot Provision of Trauma Therapy Support | Roll out Provision of Trauma Therapy Support if proved successful in Y2 |
| Research into health provision for people seeking sanctuary | Support the MigRefHealthProject led by Anglia Ruskin, Greenwich and Middlesex Universities on creating asset and place-based approaches to tackling refugee and migrant health exclusion | Continue supporting the MigRefHealthProject | Consider recommendations from the research and feasibility of implementing in partnership with other appropriate organisations |
| Involve our Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in the Child in Care Council (CiCC) to empower some of them by giving them a platform to share their views and to influence decisions about their care | To have 1 or 2 young people from the UASC cohort on the Child in Care Council | | |
| Ensure appropriate public health services for people seeking sanctuary | Include in the re-commissioning of services recognition of the needs of migrants | Embed addressing health inequalities into all Public Health services - consider bespoke response | |
| Opportunities for people seeking sanctuary to access sports activities, swimming, gyms etc | Continue to develop, with Living Sport, how we may be able to work in collaboration to achieve this aim. Start appropriate initiatives | Continue successful initiatives | |

Education and Language Support



| Aims/Objectives | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|---|---|--|
| Offering English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes through our in-house adult education service Cambridgeshire Skills | Work with Cambridgeshire Skills and ESOL partnership to bridge the gap in provision | | |
| Ensure ESOL classes are accessible to people seeking sanctuary | Explore barriers to people seeking sanctuary accessing ESOL classes | If found to be required and/or feasible pilot support initiatives , e.g., childcare/creche at ESOL classes | If successful or feasible develop the pilot offers |
| Ensure that all children seeking sanctuary are supported receive a suitable education | Raise awareness within schools to understand migrant needs. Including, but not limited to, ensuring that all new arrivals are given the information needed to apply for school places and schools are supported to meet the needs of children who may have experienced trauma and have limited or no English. | | |
| Raise Awareness of Education and School Admission Process | Plan and implement initiatives to raise awareness | | |
| Support schools to access training to equip them to meet the needs of children who may have experienced trauma and have limited or no English | Promote 'Healing Classrooms' training to schools alongside encouraging schools to take part in Anglia Ruskin University's 'A Day of Welcome' and make use of their resources for schools | Continue promoting 'Healing Classrooms' training to schools alongside encouraging schools to take part in Anglia Ruskin University's (ARU) 'A Day of Welcome' and make use of their resources for schools | |
| Identify educational centres/colleges with different courses not ESOL only, even apprenticeship courses relevant to UASC needs in relation to their English knowledge and other educational qualifications | Identify more educational institutions in Cambridgeshire that offer a variety of further education course and or apprenticeship programmes that be beneficial for UASC | Increase numbers of UASC attending further education courses and or apprenticeship programmes | |

Education
and
Language
Support

Employment and Training



| Aims/Objectives | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|--|--|----|
| Ensure there is appropriate initiatives in place for people seeking sanctuary to access employment and training | Develop and implement a scheme to support people seeking sanctuary into employment, training or business | Continue the agreed scheme, subject to success/resources | |
| Support for the recognition of international qualifications and upskilling opportunities | | Work with employers to explore the possibility of converting of non-UK qualifications to UK recognised | |
| Ensure that people seeking sanctuary are able to volunteer within the County Council (CCC) schemes which will improve their language skills and provide experience | Review CCC volunteering policy to ensure it is accessible and make any necessary changes | Encourage more people seeking sanctuary to volunteer within the council schemes | |
| Promote wider volunteering opportunities | Work with other partners such as the Support Cambridgeshire - Volunteer Cambs (https://www.volunteercambs.org.uk/) to promote opportunities | | |

Employment and Training

Community Cohesion and Social Support



| Aims/Objectives | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|---|--|
| Reduce inequality of access to library services for communities of new arrivals by embedding our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan across the service | Library-specific EDI working group to meet quarterly and monitor progress | | EDI action plan to be renewed in 2027; updated version to continue to embed the principles of Libraries of Sanctuary into our offer and to consider the specific needs of new arrivals |
| Work towards the renewal of our Libraries of Sanctuary award | Submit first renewal of Sanctuary award in 2026 | Sanctuary Award successfully obtained for another 3 years | Work towards second renewal in 2029 |
| Proactively engage with local sanctuary seeking communities | Continue to support people in contingency accommodation for as long as it remains open. Continue to support local Hong Kong community | Continue to work with internal and external partners to reach different communities of new arrivals and identify how best to support them | |
| Offer training/refresher sessions to all library staff on working with new arrivals and signposting to relevant information | Refresher trainer delivered before first renewal of Sanctuary Award in 2026 | Training embedded in Essential Learning for all staff | Training updated and rolled out before second renewal of Sanctuary Award in 2029 |
| Ensure there is up to date provision of relevant information for people seeking sanctuary | Review current provision and support | Review information to ensure it is up to date | |
| Views of people seeking sanctuary are sought in the annual Quality of Life survey | Engage with the cohorts by gathering their perspectives through focus groups or surveys, ensuring these are translated into their respective languages. This approach will help amplify their voices as a vital part of our community. Make results available to both sanctuary seekers and the professionals who support them | | |

Community Cohesion and Social Support

Community Cohesion and Social Support (Continued)



| Aims/Objectives | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|--|---|----------------------|
| Organising community events and cultural exchange programmes to build understanding and reduce social isolation. | Explore initiatives with partners | Support appropriate initiatives | |
| To organise events like sports tournaments, cultural fairs, or arts and crafts workshops that involve both UASC, professionals and residents to facilitate social inclusion. | Organise 1 event during the summer holidays in conjunction with the Participation Team. | Increase events to 2 | Increase events to 3 |
| To encourage UASC to become ambassadors who share their stories in schools and community groups, fostering empathy and understanding of their plights. | Use focus groups to discuss ways of how this could be achieved. Take note of young people's views and take them on board. | Commence providing the young people the platform to share their stories in a safe way. | |
| Ensure that individuals with lived experience contribute to the Migration Forum and have opportunities to help shape support services | Set up accessible, permanent mechanisms to regularly gather views and feedback from individuals with lived experiences. | Develop and embed further by creating user-friendly platforms for feedback collection, ensuring diverse representation, and establishing a review process to integrate feedback into service improvements | |
| Clear and appropriate communications internally and externally. | Continue to create appropriate communications, adapting as necessary to the changing needs of people seeking sanctuary and council priorities. | | |
| Raise awareness of the need to recruit carers to support sanctuary seeking children. | Develop a plan to raise awareness and recruit appropriate carers | | |

Community Cohesion and Social Support

Legal and Financial Support



| Aims/Objectives | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|--|--|--|----|
| Providing access, by signposting, to specialist support not provided by CCC such as legal advice and advocacy services for immigration, employment rights, and housing issues. | Identify what support services are available | Sign post to appropriate organisations who can provide advice on these issues | |
| Financial guidance and support, including help with applications for benefits or other public assistance for eligible individuals. | Support City and District Councils and the VCS organisations in advising People Seeking Sanctuary as resettlement and wrap around support is undertaken by them | | |
| Data Poverty – Provide access to IT to support with learning and employment | Provide access to IT for those seeking employment/training - or those with no online access - via the National Device Bank Scheme | Explore the provision of a laptop loan scheme for those seeking employment/training or those who have no online access. Primarily targeting those in contingency accommodation | |
| Data Poverty – Provide access to free data SIMs | Provision of free data SIMs for phones, and other SIM-enabled devices, via libraries, from the National Data Bank, an initiative run by the Good Things Foundation | | |
| Signposting to support for those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) | Explore and offer initiatives to support people seeking sanctuary who have no recourse to public funds | | |
| Review existing council NRPF procedures | Review the council's NRPF procedures, using the 'City of Sanctuary model NRPF framework for LAs' as a benchmark. | | |
| No Recourse to Public Funds Network | Continue membership of NRPF and learn from any good practice from other LA's | | |
| Ensure people seeking sanctuary are protected from becoming victims of modern slavery and exploitation | Continue playing a key role in SOC (Serious Organised Crime) FUSION Anti-Slavery working group | | |

Legal and
Financial
Support

Housing and Accommodation



Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) is an upper-tier local authority, with primary responsibility for housing resting with the District and City councils. These authorities are best positioned to offer housing support to people seeking sanctuary. In collaboration with various partners, they work to secure long-term housing solutions.

CCC provides additional support as needed, including direct support in contingency accommodation. CCC is also responsible for providing accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

| Aims/Objectives | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |
|---|--|--|----|
| Partnership Working | Continue providing appropriate support to District/City councils and voluntary and community organisations with housing solutions for people seeking sanctuary | | |
| To identify more appropriate accommodation providers for both semi-independent and foster placements in Cambridgeshire. Currently 70% of our young people are placed out of county. | To reduce the number of young people placed out of county by 10% | To reduce the number of young people placed out of county by a further 20% | |
| To arrange a day tour for out of county young people to visit Cambridge town centre, colleges, museums, libraries, mosques and churches in preparation for post 18 accommodation. | To have the tour during February Half-term in 2025 | Repeat tour if successful | |

Housing and Accommodation

Implementation and delivery



- The delivery of this strategy will require a coordinated, cross-directorate and cross-service approach by the county council, ensuring alignment across services and active collaboration with key stakeholders.
- This action plan will be updated regularly as new challenges and opportunities are identified due to changes in the local, regional, and national landscape.
- The Migration Policy and Partnerships Manager in conjunction with an internal officers' group will lead on overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the actions, supported by the Cambridgeshire Migration Forum to monitor progress and accountability.
- Partnerships with stakeholders will be vital for providing support to deliver on this plan.
- Delivery will focus on accessible, community-based outreach programmes, adapting to the emerging needs of people seeking sanctuary.
- To ensure inclusivity, the council will build community capacity and establish mechanisms for continuous feedback from people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary.

Conclusion



This strategy signifies Cambridgeshire County Council's pledge to build a community that embraces diversity and supports people seeking sanctuary in achieving their potential.

By implementing this action plan, we are determined to enhance the quality of life for all residents and make Cambridgeshire a true County of Sanctuary.

Thank-You 多謝你

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