

Minimum Criteria: Churches of Sanctuary

What are the award criteria?

This guidance document aims to outline the process and minimum criteria required for the award. We would encourage church settings to build on the minimum criteria in a way that best reflects their unique situation and aim to get everyone involved.

The Core Processes: Learn, Embed & Share

A church can attain an award if they are able to provide evidence that they have integrated our three core processes:

- **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 within the church. To take steps to ensure this progress remains sustainable
- **Share:** sharing your vision, achievements, what you have learned, and good practice with other churches, people from other faiths, the local community and beyond.

The Church of Sanctuary criteria have been structured to fit into the three overarching processes of Learn, Embed, and Share, which are used for all sanctuary awards. **Please provide evidence of meeting each of the criteria in the relevant section of the generic award application.**

Learn Criteria

In this section of the application, we will be looking for examples of work which signals the commitment of your church to learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary. It is also important that you 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 a church that has limited links to people seeking sanctuary. **To receive an Award, a health setting must meet these minimum criteria:**

1. Awareness raising opportunities are provided through acts of worship, and facilitating other opportunities for discussion around the theme of welcome and sanctuary e.g. Bible Studies, Meetings, House Groups etc.

2. Evidence of refugee/asylum/migration awareness raising is included into church everyday life.
3. Commitment to supporting the voices of people seeking sanctuary to be heard within the church.

Embed Criteria

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

To receive a Church of Sanctuary award, a church must meet the following minimum criteria:

4. The church must demonstrate how it has embedded the concept of welcome and inclusion in the church and provide practical examples of how people have been made to feel welcome e.g. sign at the door. This should show how the church will continue to develop and sustain a culture of welcome beyond the award.
5. Recognition of/participation in the annual Refugee Week event. e.g through an Act of Worship for a Sanctuary Sunday or for the established Racial Justice Sunday which is observed on the second Sunday in February. The event or activity must highlight the contribution of people seeking sanctuary to the UK.
- 6: Commitment to supporting a practical initiative that embeds welcome and fosters solidarity between receiving communities and people seeking sanctuary e.g. supporting a destitution project.

Share Criteria

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

Churches can also tap into the national networks such as the Churches Refugee Network to spread the ethos within the sector. **To receive a Church of Sanctuary award, a church must meet the following minimum criteria:**

7. A public commitment to the City of Sanctuary vision of welcome including the endorsement of the City of Sanctuary charter through [joining the movement](#) and if applicable joining a local City of Sanctuary Group.
8. The church publicly highlights its activities in support of welcome and inclusion by making it visible on noticeboards, newsletters, social media post and their websites
9. Commitment to on-going engagement with the Faiths Stream of Sanctuary. This may include sharing resources, ideas and achievements via the church's website or the City of Sanctuary UK website, and/or with other churches or at CoS UK events and meetings.
10. Where appropriate, supporting relevant campaigns which call for improvements to the asylum system.