

2025 IMPACT REPORT



Bristol City of Sanctuary



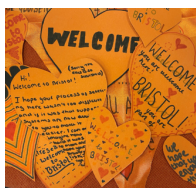
Building a City of Welcome, Safety and Hope

Your friends at City of Sanctuary remain deeply committed to building a more cohesive, compassionate Bristol, a city where individuals, communities, and organisations across all sectors stand shoulder to shoulder with those seeking sanctuary. Our vision is bold and hopeful: an island of solidarity, where welcome and belonging replace fear and division; not an island of strangers, but a shared home for all.

Yasmin Millican, Bristol City of Sanctuary Director.

Highlights from Our Programmes:

Schools of Sanctuary



- We now have over 25 Schools of Sanctuary in Bristol, with 7 new schools receiving the award at this year's Awards Ceremony!
- Our Schools of Sanctuary network is ever-growing; BBC Point West produced this [feature](#) and two schools have enjoyed MP visits from Darren Jones MP and Damien Egan in their constituencies.
- Our partnerships with BCC, the Refugee Employability Programme, Bristol Refugee Festival and the Bell Foundation are growing stronger. Three Schools of Sanctuary have now successfully welcomed refugee volunteers or staff members.
- Additionally, we've secured funding to launch a new initiative that will train 'Education Champions' with lived experience, who will help sanctuary-seeking families connect with and engage in their school communities.

Universities of Sanctuary



- The University of Bristol was granted Sanctuary Status in 2019 and has been awarding 10-15 scholarships annually, covering both full tuition fees and living costs. Since 2016, this has amounted to nearly 100 scholarships, valued at over £7.8 million.
- UWE Bristol was awarded Sanctuary Status in June 2025 and has been offering sanctuary scholars a full tuition fee waiver along with a maintenance grant since 2020.
- In January 2025, UWE staff and students organised the annual Asylum Seeker and Refugee Wellbeing Conference and have spearheaded the design of the Memorial Garden.
- BCoS facilitated student workshops at both universities, focusing on how to leverage the student community's potential to support refugees..

Bristol City Council as a Local Authority of Sanctuary



- This year, Bristol City Council (BCC) was re-accredited as a Local Authority of Sanctuary and marked the achievement by hosting a sector-wide celebration event in January 2025.
- As of March 2025, the service supports 315 individuals with NRPF, 486 resettled refugees, and 630 Ukrainians. BCC has agreed to resettle 30 families every year which is well above the national average.
- BCoS contributed to the development of the new strategic plan for sanctuary services and remains actively involved in the City of Sanctuary Strategic Partnership Forum.

Arts Organisations of Sanctuary



- This year, we expanded our work to include new partnerships with local businesses and arts organisations in Bristol, hosting participatory workshops for cultural and industry leaders at the Bristol Beacon in October 2024 and February 2025.
- We have established a Sanctuary in Arts Steering Group made up of 13 of Bristol's much-loved cultural institutions, who lead on widening participation for sanctuary seekers in the arts.
- Excitingly, Arnolfini is now the first Arts Organisation of Sanctuary in Bristol and Dovetail the first Orchestra of Sanctuary in the UK!
- 'We've really appreciated all the support you have given us and I think the Arts Sanctuary steering group is the first time that I have been able to connect with some of the arts venues across the city' – Keiko, Arnolfini.

Engaging Faith Organisations



- There are now 5 Churches of Sanctuary across Bristol offering practical and spiritual support to refugees and asylum seekers, including bilingual prayer groups and food bank services.
- Muslim faith leaders from Bristol Muslim Strategic Leadership Group joined the faith network this year.
- ECFC hosted a special service to announce their Sanctuary Award on 27th April, with bilingual prayers and songs from long-term members of the congregation as well as sanctuary seekers. St Andrews will do the same on 27th July.

Bristol Sanctuary Transport Fund



- We have a long standing partnership with First Bus to provide free bus tickets for people seeking sanctuary in our city, who would otherwise not be able to access vital services and appointments.
- Through this partnership, First Bus agreed to issue 500 free tickets for the Refugee Week celebration in Queen Square.
- During this period, we provided 8876 free tickets for destitute asylum seekers.
- We organised three community fundraising events at the Watershed and St George's which collectively raised over £1500 for the Transport Fund

Memorial Garden



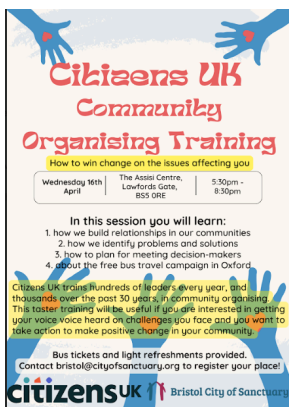
- Through our engagement with the Avon & Wiltshire Mental Health Trust, Bristol Quakers and BCC, we successfully protected the Quaker Burial Ground in Redcliffe from being repurposed as a builder's ground and developed a plan to turn this area into a new safe space for people seeking sanctuary.
- Together with sanctuary seekers, we co-produced an engagement event in the garden using natural materials found on-site, as well as Sanctuary Walk to the garden during Refugee Week.

Health



- There are now over 20 Safe Surgeries across Bristol.
- We continue to collaborate with Doctors of the World, Public Health consultants at Bristol City Council, the Haven, Montpelier Health Centre, and Bristol University Medical School to engage clinical leads in GP practices.
- In April 2025, City of Sanctuary UK relaunched the Maternity Stream of Sanctuary.
- In partnership with Project Mama, we are supporting both NHS Trusts in their efforts to achieve the Sanctuary Award.

Influencing and advocacy



- We have partnered with Citizens UK to deliver campaign training for 15 individuals with lived experience with lived experience to help hone their messages, understand the political system and prepare to speak with decision makers.
- This culminated in a partnership campaign event for people with lived experience to tell local decision makers about challenges they face, namely barriers to public transport.
- "I am so happy today that my voice has been heard". "I am happy to be here, to be in a room with ministers / organisations, I feel blessed to be here!"