

Overview and Scrutiny



Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee Supplementary Agenda

Wednesday, 13 March 2024

7.00 pm

Civic Suite

Lewisham Town Hall

London SE6 4RU

For more information contact: Benjamin Awkal (Tel: 0208 314 6000 (ext. 46147))

This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

Part 1

Item		Pages
3.	Borough of Sanctuary update Reasons for lateness – <i>This report is being published late due to the pre-election publicity rules that were in place until the 7th of March 2024.</i> Reasons for urgency – <i>This report needs to be considered at this Committee meeting as this is the last meeting of the Committee in this municipal year (2023-24) and consideration of this report will allow the annual work programme to be completed.</i>	3 - 76

4. Multi-agency response to child exploitation
Reasons for lateness – *This report is being published late due to the pre-election publicity rules that were in place until the 7th of March 2024.*

77 - 90

Reasons for urgency – *This report needs to be considered at this Committee meeting as this is the last meeting of the Committee in this municipal year (2023-24) and consideration of this report will allow the annual work programme to be completed.*



Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

Update on Borough of Sanctuary Programme

Date: 1 March 2024

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: all

Contributors: Katya Griffin, Borough of Sanctuary Programme Manager; James Lee, Director of Communities, Partnerships and Leisure

Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Borough of Sanctuary Programme, provide an update of work to date and outline our approach and some key actions going forward. It is recommended that the Committee review and comment on the update and our approach to the programme in the next year.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

- Lewisham was awarded the Borough of Sanctuary status in May 2021.
- Application to retain the status was submitted to City of Sanctuary charity (the awarding body) in October 2023.
- Pre-assessment meeting between City of Sanctuary and Lewisham voluntary sector organisations and sanctuary seekers living in the borough took place in January 2024 and feedback was very positive.
- Assessment panel is due to take place on 25 March 2024.

1. Summary

- 1.1. Lewisham is UK's first Borough of Sanctuary and currently in the process of reapplying for its sanctuary status. Our key achievements to date include:
- Resettled 127 refugee households and welcomed 650 Ukrainian nationals
 - Invested in immigration advice for those with insecure status
 - All Lewisham GP surgeries signed up to the Safe Surgery scheme
 - Set up employability programmes for refugees
 - Made sure sanctuary seekers had a say in our priorities
 - Set up a system of support for people seeking asylum and newly recognised refugees
 - Set up the cross-departmental Borough of Sanctuary Strategy group

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Committee review and comment on the update and our approach to the programme in the next year.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. Lewisham's Corporate Strategy for 2022-26 sets out four key values, one of which is that we respect all people and communities. Our strategy states 'We have a proud history of actively working to tackle inequalities, both across the borough and within the Council, and we will continue to build on this in everything we do'.
- 3.2. Our priority, Open Lewisham, commits to celebrating Lewisham's diversity, ensuring that we are a representative and inclusive council and workforce. It also specifically commits to maintaining our status as a Borough of Sanctuary and London's leading borough for refugee resettlement.
- 3.3. Our Borough of Sanctuary strategy commits to working across our services to take practical steps wherever we can to mitigate disadvantages related to being a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant.
- 3.4. A key aim of the strategy is to ensure that all services are able to demonstrate consideration of the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and that reasonable adjustments have been made to accommodate them where necessary.
- 3.5. We have committed to doing this by ensuring services are accessible to refugees and migrants. We will ensure:
- Staff know how to access our interpretation services
 - Our language is clear and universal
 - Remove requirements which inadvertently disadvantage certain groups
 - Promote our services to those seeking sanctuary

4. Background

- 4.1. Lewisham Council was awarded Council of Sanctuary status in May 2021, the first time a Council was awarded this status.
- 4.2. We developed a Borough of Sanctuary Strategy for 2020-25, approved by Mayor and

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Cabinet on 11th November 2020 (see attached Appendix 1), and appointed a Sanctuary Officer in 2020 to oversee the implementation of the strategy.

- 4.3. Our Strategy sets out a comprehensive approach to embedding sanctuary principles across all Council services so that the challenges particularly facing refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are considered and addressed in the way local services are provided.
- 4.4. To make our commitment real, we also helped create the Lewisham Migration Forum, which is comprised of local organisations that provides services and other support to migrants.
- 4.5. The Forum is a partnership and has a shared action plan, with different partners contributing to and/or leading on relevant actions as.

5. Borough of Sanctuary: Strategic Priorities

- 5.1. The following strategic priorities have been identified for our Borough of Sanctuary work: making sure the voice of sanctuary seekers is heard; working with local, regional and national partnerships and embedding a culture of welcome within the council and borough-wide.
- 5.2. Sanctuary seeker voice: Having secured a GLA grant, we have worked with a diverse group of sanctuary seekers on a co-production project. The group has reviewed our sanctuary priorities and has been working with the council teams on the three projects of their choice: employment-related networking events, after school activities for children and young people and internships for sanctuary seekers.
- 5.3. Partnership working: We have been playing a key role within local partnerships, such as the Lewisham Migration Forum and Refugee and Asylum multi-agency safeguarding partnership, which has been instrumental in advocating for vulnerable residents. We are a member of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority network steering group and an active member of the London Councils asylum working group. These networks allow us to share good practice and avoid silo working.
- 5.4. Embedding the culture of welcome: We have worked hard to ensure greater joined up working within the Council through the Borough of Sanctuary Strategy group, a group of high level stakeholders across the council. We have increased local capacity in the voluntary sector through a number of grants, such as the grant for wrap-around asylum support and mental health and wellbeing intervention. We are working to increase awareness of sanctuary issues in the borough through a resident campaign and Refugee Week celebrations e.g. Refugee Week picnic in 2023. We have developed a Borough of Sanctuary branding (please see Appendices 2 and 4), MS Teams background and promotional materials that have proven very popular with Lewisham staff and residents.
- 5.5. The following sections show how sanctuary is embedded across key areas. For a more detailed account our work please see Appendix 2.

6. Health and Wellbeing

- 6.1. All Lewisham GP surgeries have signed up to the Safe Surgeries scheme. We continue to work with our voluntary partners and the SE London ICS to support surgeries in upholding Safe Surgeries values through training, presentations at GP events and the ISC commissioning manager visits.
- 6.2. Enhanced primary care support has been provided to people in asylum contingency accommodation, including specially commissioned GP practices and vaccination outreach.
- 6.3. Wellbeing support is offered to resettled refugees which includes 1:1 and group

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therapy. This provision is soon to be expanded to people seeking asylum and those on Homes for Ukraine.

7. Housing and Homelessness

- 7.1. We have commissioned move-on support and housing advice for people leaving the asylum system.
- 7.2. Council and voluntary sector partners are working on a joined-up approach to support single people who receive refugee status, e.g. signposting to hosting schemes; making some spaces available in female only hostels for single women; system of emergency payments to prevent destitution .
- 7.3. Clear escalation route in the Housing team is established and shared with voluntary sector partners to make sure people at risk of homelessness are provided with emergency housing.

8. Children's Social Care

- 8.1. Clear pathway for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) immigration status, housing, ESOL and integration support has been established. Our service received positive feedback from Ofsted.
- 8.2. A more joined up approach between Children's Social care team and the housing team resulted in better outcomes for families.

9. Education, Culture and Leisure

- 9.1. Lewisham Migration Forum Schools of Sanctuary working group has been set up and has begun scoping the support Lewisham schools need to support students from sanctuary seeking backgrounds.
- 9.2. Our Integrated SEND services have a 'new to the UK' protocol in place for the learners with SEND and to facilitate their assessment placements in special schools.
- 9.3. Free laptops for all secondary-aged young people in asylum contingency accommodation, financed through a local charity and coordinated by the Council.
- 9.4. Free leisure centre memberships at any of GLL (operating as Better) managed leisure centres for anyone that has been granted refugee status in the last 12 months.

10. Employment

- 10.1. A specialist employment training programme for sanctuary seekers was commissioned by Lewisham Works.
- 10.2. Based on the feedback from sanctuary seekers, a new internships programme is currently being set up by the Council in partnership with DWP.
- 10.3. The Borough of Sanctuary co-production group has been working with the Council apprenticeships and job fairs teams to make sure they meet the needs of sanctuary seekers.

11. Campaigning for Sanctuary

- 11.1. Being a Borough of Sanctuary means campaigning on national policy issues relating to migrant justice. In 2023 we campaigned on the following issues:
- 11.2. Lewisham Children's and Adult Safeguarding boards officially expressed concerns about safeguarding and lack of data sharing in a letter to the Home Office.
- 11.3. We opposed the government's 'maximisation' policy on asylum accommodation in

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multi-agency meeting with the Home Office and Clearsprings.

- 11.4. Alongside 22 London Councils, we called for better conditions in asylum accommodation by signing an open letter to the Home Office.

12. Key Future Priorities

- 12.1. Further embed Borough of Sanctuary across all directorates. This includes continuing with the work of Borough of Sanctuary Strategy Group, online and face-to-face training on sanctuary across the council and including sanctuary work in our grant conditions.
- 12.2. Hold ourselves to account. This means reviewing our progress against the agreed outcomes through the Strategy group and with our local partners, with the particular focus on the service we provide to people seeking sanctuary.
- 12.3. Make sure people seeking sanctuary play a central role in our Borough of Sanctuary activity. This means building on the work of co-production project and developing an action plan for sanctuary seeker engagement.
- 12.4. Expand our wrap-around support to people seeking asylum. This will include a mental health and wellbeing intervention and clear pathways for people leaving the asylum system.
- 12.5. Continue to stand up for people seeking sanctuary through engagement with local and national networks.
- 12.6. Continue to engage with our residents through campaigns (e.g. lamppost banners) and events.
- 12.7. For a more detailed account of our plans, see Appendix 3.

13. Financial implications

- 13.1. All costs for activities relating to people seeking asylum and newly granted refugees are 100% financed through the Asylum Dispersal Grant funding received from the Home Office.
- 13.2. All costs for activities relating to resettled refugees and those on the Homes for Ukraine scheme are 100% financed through resettlement and Homes for Ukraine Grant received from the Home Office.

14. Legal implications

- 14.1. There are no legal implications arising from this area of work.

15. Equalities implications

- 15.1. The Borough of Sanctuary work directly relates to inequalities faced by refugees and asylum seekers and steps to address this inequality.

16. Climate change and environmental implications

- 16.1. There are no climate change and environmental implications arising from this area of work.

17. Crime and disorder implications

- 17.1. Move On support newly recognised refugees aims to prevent homelessness and destitution of this group and therefore make them less vulnerable to exploitation and modern slavery.

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18. Health and wellbeing implications

- 18.1. The Programme addressed in this report directly impacts on the health and well-being of refugees and asylum seekers.

19. Social Value implications

- 19.1. The Programme addressed in this report relates to the following Social Value objectives:
- Employment, Skills and Economy (employability programmes for sanctuary seekers)
 - Training Lewisham's future (Schools of Sanctuary work)

20. Background papers

- 20.1. Appendix 1 Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary Strategy 2020-2025
- 20.2. Appendix 2 Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary application Oct 2023
- 20.3. Appendix 3 Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary Priorities and Outcomes framework
- 20.4. Appendix 4 Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary presentation for assessment panel March 2024
- 20.5. *Please include a list of papers, documents and reports that relate to the report's subject matter with hyperlinks if the documents are available on our website.*

21. Glossary

Term	Definition
Sanctuary seeker/ person seeking sanctuary	A more inclusive term we use in Lewisham to talk about refugees, people seeking asylum and those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)
Person on no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	Someone who doesn't have access to mainstream benefits because of their immigration status
Unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC)	Children who arrived in the UK to seek asylum without their families and are looked after by the local authority.

22. Report author and contact

- 22.1. Katya Griffin, Borough of Sanctuary Programme Manager,
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Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary Strategy

A welcoming place of safety for all
2020–25



Mayor Damien Egan and Cllr Kevin Bonavia sign a letter to government calling for the extension of the refugee resettlement scheme, October 2018.

Our borough has a proud history of supporting refugees and migrants. The cruel concept of a “hostile environment” is anathema to us. Rather we celebrate and are strengthened by our diversity and the values we hold which enable and empower it.

As part of the Council’s Corporate Strategy commitment to be an open and welcoming borough, the Council is a founding member of the Lewisham Migration Forum which is co-ordinating the collective effort for Lewisham to become a Borough of Sanctuary, welcoming those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries and protecting the rights of all migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. Our aim within the forum is to persuade individuals and organisations across our borough to join us in enacting the principles of the Cities of Sanctuary movement.



The Council is also making changes across the entire organisation to create a supportive environment for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants who access our services and also to work with partners to identify national policy issues where we can work collectively to encourage and enable change. This strategy sets out the Council’s individual commitments towards the Sanctuary Borough goal, and provides a policy anchor for the wide variety of work the Council undertakes. It provides a common understanding of the meaning of sanctuary and a framework for its delivery by the Council.

I am very pleased to recommend this strategy as the expression of our collective determination to make this Council a champion for all those seeking sanctuary in Lewisham.

‘I am very pleased to recommend this strategy as the expression of our collective determination to make this Council a champion for all those seeking sanctuary in Lewisham.’

Councillor Kevin Bonavia

Cabinet Member for Democracy,
Refugees & Accountability

Introduction

This strategy governs the work of officers across the Council and informs our engagement with partners. It is tied to the wider work on sanctuary across the borough and formalises the Council’s role in this work.

This document is formed of the following parts:

- Introduction
- Principles of sanctuary
- Delivery approach
- Implementation, governance and accountability
- Appendix 1: definitions
- Appendix 2: action plan template
- Appendix 3: local data

Other documents, provided they align with the principles, can and should be developed locally in individual services and divisions to support the Council’s vision to deliver services which support the borough’s sanctuary status and promote and safeguard the rights of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.

This strategy is for five years with a review built in after the second year. This is to enable services to develop with the stability of a medium-term strategic directive while allowing the strategy to be responsive to any changes and progress towards the middle of the strategy term.



Photo: istock.com/FatCamera

Corporate Strategy: Open Lewisham

The Council’s Corporate Strategy 2018-2022 sets out the corporate objectives relating to making Lewisham a Borough of Sanctuary:

Open Lewisham: Lewisham is a welcoming place of safety for all, where we celebrate the diversity that strengthens us.

1. Lewisham will be a place where diversity and cultural heritage are recognised as a strength and celebrated.
 - We will publish a review of the cumulative impact of Council decisions on different groups in our community.
- We will establish an Accessibility Commission led by disabled people, which will make public services more accessible and make it easier to get around our borough.
- We will work with groups giving voice to the borough’s diverse lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) community.
 - We will work to understand and mitigate the impact of Brexit in the borough, so we can protect jobs and opportunities for our residents where possible.
 - We will strive to make the Council’s workforce more representative of our borough’s diverse population at all levels.

2. Hate Crime will not be tolerated.

- We will actively challenge all forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism, homophobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia, ageism, and all other forms of hatred.
- We will tackle unconscious bias and support local awareness campaigns.
- We will support events that bring our community together.
- We will work closely with the police so that perpetrators of hate crime are brought to justice.

3. Lewisham will be a Sanctuary Borough, welcoming those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries and protecting the rights of all migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

- We will become a recognised Borough of Sanctuary, working with partners to develop a pledge and practical steps we will take to welcome and include refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in our activities, and to actively seek ways of supporting them wherever we can.
- We will expand Lewisham’s refugee resettlement programme, with a target of supporting a further 100 vulnerable families from Syria and other areas of conflict.

City of Sanctuary: Charter, Vision, Values and Principles

The Council is committed to the principles and values of the City of Sanctuary movement. These are set out in their charter which can be found in full here: <https://cityofsanctuary.org/about/>

In line with their vision for the UK, Lewisham’s vision is that **Lewisham will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.**

The vision is underpinned by five values which Lewisham is also committed to adopting, adapted for the local context as set out below:

Inclusiveness

We welcome and respect people from all backgrounds, place the highest value on diversity and are committed to equality.

Openness

We are committed to a culture of working collaboratively and in partnership with others.

Participation

We value and recognise the contribution of all involved in making Lewisham a place of sanctuary. We aspire to ensure people seeking sanctuary are fully involved in decision making processes and are supported to become leaders within the borough and more widely.

Inspiring

We work with enthusiasm and positivity and are determined to surpass what has already been achieved to welcome refugees and people seeking sanctuary. We act as a catalyst for change by being open to new and innovative ideas and through sharing knowledge gained with others and working in partnership.

Integrity

We aspire to high standards of honesty and behaviour, and always to act in the interests of people seeking sanctuary.

The vision and values feed into the seven principles which the Council will use in the development and delivery of services.

City of Sanctuary: Charter, Vision, Values and Principles

Sanctuary Principles

We will...

Offer a positive vision of a culture of welcome and hospitality to all

Promote in our borough an unwavering commitment to equality, protecting and promoting the rights and welfare of all our residents.

Promote relationships of friendship and solidarity between local people and those seeking sanctuary

Support community development and foster good community relations, rejecting all forms of discrimination and hate crime.

Recognise and encourage partnership working

Work with our partners and communities to improve the borough for everyone who lives and works here, using our influence to create positive changes.

Identify opportunities for practical action and work on common cause issues to effect change within and across communities

Work across our services to take practical steps wherever we can to mitigate disadvantages related to being a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant.

Sanctuary Principles

We will...

Celebrate and promote the welcome and contribution of people seeking sanctuary

Proudly recognise and celebrate the diversity that strengthens our borough and continue to welcome those seeking sanctuary through our resettlement and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children programmes.

Engage people seeking sanctuary in decision making processes at all levels and in all activities

Keep at the heart of our work the idea that ‘nothing without us is about us’ and make sure those seeking sanctuary are enabled and empowered to have their voices heard.

Promote understanding of asylum and refugee issues, especially by enabling refugee voices to be heard directly

Seek to become practice leaders in our work with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, promoting awareness and understanding across the Council, borough and beyond

Delivery approach

Sanctuary in practice

Sanctuary is applicable to all work in the Council. Being a Borough of Sanctuary is described by different people in different ways and encompasses all of the above.

At its heart, the essence of sanctuary is to act in the spirit of the Equality Act in the case of the marginalisation of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, promoting and safeguarding the welfare of these residents as the Council would any other resident.

The council has a duty in our everyday work to do our best, by, for and with all our residents. This includes those seeking sanctuary.

The aim of the Borough of Sanctuary Programme is to ensure that:

- All services are able to demonstrate consideration of the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and that reasonable adjustments have been made to accommodate them where necessary.
- The Council collects relevant data on how refugees, asylum seekers and migrants

interact with our services to enable informed decision making.

- Council services have links with relevant community organisations, to provide feedback on service delivery and explore opportunities for partnership working.
- The Council helps to build and support local capacity to support the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.
- The Council acts transparently and welcomes internal and external review of our performance towards our Sanctuary goals.

We will do this by:

- Consulting with Council service leads, local stakeholders, and residents who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants to identify the needs of this group of residents.
- Conducting a Sanctuary review of services and advising them on steps they can take

to improve the service offer for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. In line with Equalities legislation, we will expect them to adapt services if it is reasonable to do so, and the agreed steps will form an action plan.

- Advising the Council corporately on the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and the sector that supports them within Lewisham, and developing strategies to support them.
- Building relationships within the wider Sanctuary Network and refugee sector to share good practice and work towards common goals.
- Reviewing the performance of the Council against Sanctuary goals at relevant internal and external fora.
- Ensuring services are accessible to refugees and migrants – do staff know how to access our interpretation services? Is our language clear and universal? Do we have any requirements which inadvertently disadvantage certain groups? Are we promoting our services to those seeking sanctuary?
- Considering refugees and migrants in service development – do we know which services are being accessed by people seeking sanctuary? Has there been explicit consideration of any needs these individuals may have?
- Including the specific marginalisation of refugees and migrants in their equalities considerations and adapting and amending delivery to mitigate any disadvantage – do services need to adjust their processes to avoid disadvantaging those seeking sanctuary? Do services understand the marginalisation those seeking sanctuary experience?

What this means for services

Listed below are examples of the kind of steps that services will be expected to take, and questions they will need to consider:

Delivery approach

- Listening to and understanding the experiences of those seeking sanctuary in Lewisham – do we know whether consultations include refugee, migrant or asylum seeker voices? Do we understand the service user journey of those seeking sanctuary?
- Providing the same level of service for refugees and migrants as for any other resident – do staff understand the rights and entitlements of different types of immigration status? Do services make clear how users can report any issues with the service they have received?

What this doesn't mean

This doesn't mean that any officer should act outside of the law or the Council's constitution. This strategy is superseded by any legislative or constitutional requirements.

Sanctuary is about working within these requirements in a sensitive and positive way to

promote and safeguard the rights and welfare of those seeking sanctuary.

What this means for the community

Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary has always been conceived as a partnership between statutory services and the community. We will continue to work closely with our local partners throughout the lifetime of this strategy, and aim to build a sustainable network which will continue beyond 2025.

Lewisham Migration Forum (LMF) was created to bring these stakeholders together and works towards the creation of the Borough of Sanctuary. This is an open forum for representatives of groups and organisations working with refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in Lewisham.

It will continue to have a leading role in realising our objectives as a Borough of Sanctuary through providing guidance on the issues affecting refugees, asylum seekers and

migrant residents and agreeing measures to resolve them.

We will develop and agree a Sanctuary action plan with members of the LMF which will set objectives, identify actions and allocate responsibility among partners. This will be regularly reviewed at LMF meetings and form part of the reports submitted to the Corporate Equalities Board and Executive Management Team. These action plans will run concurrently with the action plans that we develop with services, but the aims and objectives of each will inform the other.

We will also seek to build effective working relationships with a range of partners operating within the borough, including local and national organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector. We will actively look to create and pursue opportunities for partnership working, information sharing and improved service delivery with these organisations.

The overarching aim of the Borough of Sanctuary is to enhance the community

capacity within Lewisham to meet the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and help them to thrive as valued members of the community.

The impact of Covid-19 on programme delivery

Sadly, Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the situation of refugees, asylum and migrants in Lewisham. Through our work as a Borough of Sanctuary we will seek to understand this impact and develop strategies to mitigate this, both through the way we deliver services and the way we work with partners in the community.

The response to Covid-19 in Lewisham has involved a coordinated partnership between the Council and a range of community and voluntary organisations. We will aim to maintain and build upon these links to support the delivery of our objectives as a Borough of Sanctuary.

Implementation, governance and accountability

Corporate change and service review

Corporately, the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants will be more formally considered. In activities like service planning, consultation and equalities monitoring you will see more reference to the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and services will be expected to consider the needs of these groups of people more explicitly than in the past.

Whenever there is a proposal for a service to be changed, withdrawn or introduced, officers should carry out an Equalities Analysis Assessment (EAA). Guidance for this can be found in the Council’s Corporate Equality Policy. While our equality duty is specifically to the nine protected characteristics named in the Equality Act 2010, officers are able to, and should, consider wider inequalities and marginalised groups.

This should include being a refugee, asylum seeker or migrant. These groups of individuals often experience inequality related to other protected characteristics like race and religion, may have fled discrimination for characteristics like gender or sexual orientation, and may also be marginalised in other ways with an intersectionality to their immigration status.

Action planning

This strategy will inform an action plan with each Council directorate and division setting out how they are working to improve and develop their service offer for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The format for this action plan is laid out in Appendix 2. The action plan will be monitored centrally.

Governance and decision making

The corporate board for sanctuary is the Corporate Equalities Board. The scrutiny committee for sanctuary is Safer Stronger Communities Committee.

Reports will be made twice yearly to the Corporate Equalities Board on the action plan – once at the start of the financial year when service plans have been finalised and actions refreshed, to report on year progress and new targets, and once in the third quarter of the year to monitor delivery in-year. Following reporting at the Corporate Equalities Board an update on progress and key issues will be presented to the Executive Management Team.

Directorate Management Teams will need to ensure that each directorate is working on their actions and will be accountable to the Corporate Equalities Board and ultimately the Executive Management Team for their progress.



Lewisham Sanctuary Conference, June 2019

Appendix 1: Definitions

There are some core concepts that this strategy centres on which need to have a common meaning across the Council. These are defined for the purpose of this strategy as set out below:

Key Term	Description
An asylum seeker, or a person seeking asylum	An asylum seeker, or a person seeking asylum, is someone who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum but whose application has not yet been concluded, where asylum is protection or safety given by a government to people forced to leave their own countries for fear of persecution
A refugee	<p>A refugee is someone who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion; and ii. is outside the country of their nationality; and iii. is unable, or owing to their well-founded fear unwilling, to avail themselves of the protection of that country. <p>In the UK, a person becomes a refugee when government agrees that their application for asylum meets this definition (taken from the Refugee Convention) and recognises them as a refugee. The other route for refugee status in the UK is to be accepted onto one of the dedicated resettlement schemes prior to arrival.</p>

Key Term	Description
UASC	UASC stands for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and refers to children who are outside their country of origin seeking asylum, are separated from parents and relatives, and are not in the care of someone who is responsible for them in a guardianship role.
The Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme, Vulnerable Person’s Resettlement Scheme, or the Global Resettlement Scheme	The Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme, Vulnerable Person’s Resettlement Scheme (both up to 2020/21) or the Global Resettlement Scheme (from 2020/21) refer to specific programmes where the Home Office and United Nations Human Rights Committee identify the most vulnerable refugees for resettlement. The refugee resettlement programme is how we refer to this programme in the Council, where we accept referrals to welcome and resettle these families.
A migrant	A migrant is someone who has moved from one country to another, not for reasons of asylum or refuge. Often the move is for work, education or to be with family. People may also move to alleviate significant hardships that arise from natural disasters, famine or extreme poverty.

Appendix 2: Action Plan Approach

The action plans will be held in excel format. The below provides the information headings in an accessible format for indicative purposes.

Reference	_____
Directorate	_____
Division	_____
Service area	_____
Action	_____

Owner	_____
Milestones	_____

Status	_____
Date added	_____
Date due	_____
RAG rating (with date)	_____
Comments (with date)	_____

Appendix 3: Local data

Figure 1: Nationality

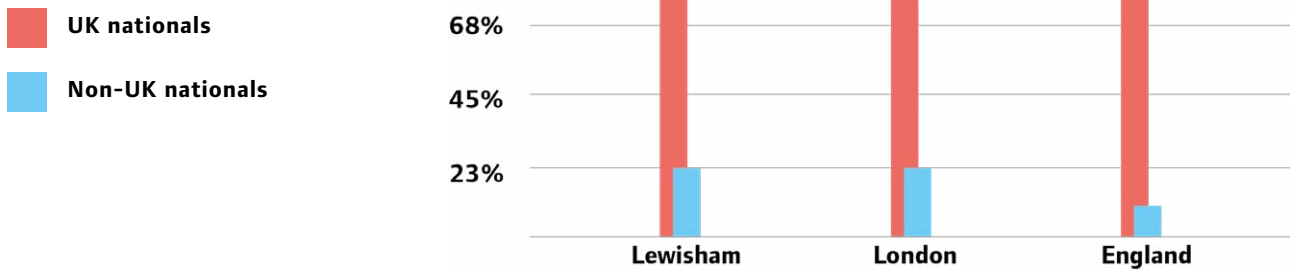


Figure 2: Long Term International Migration

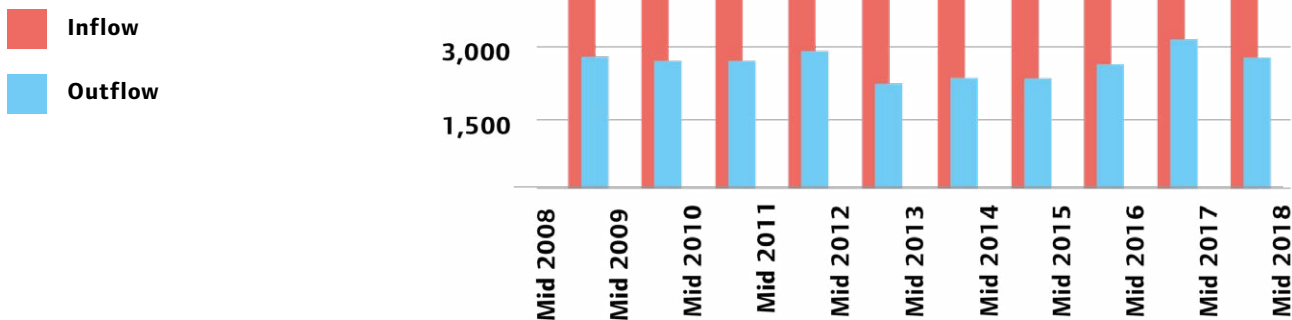
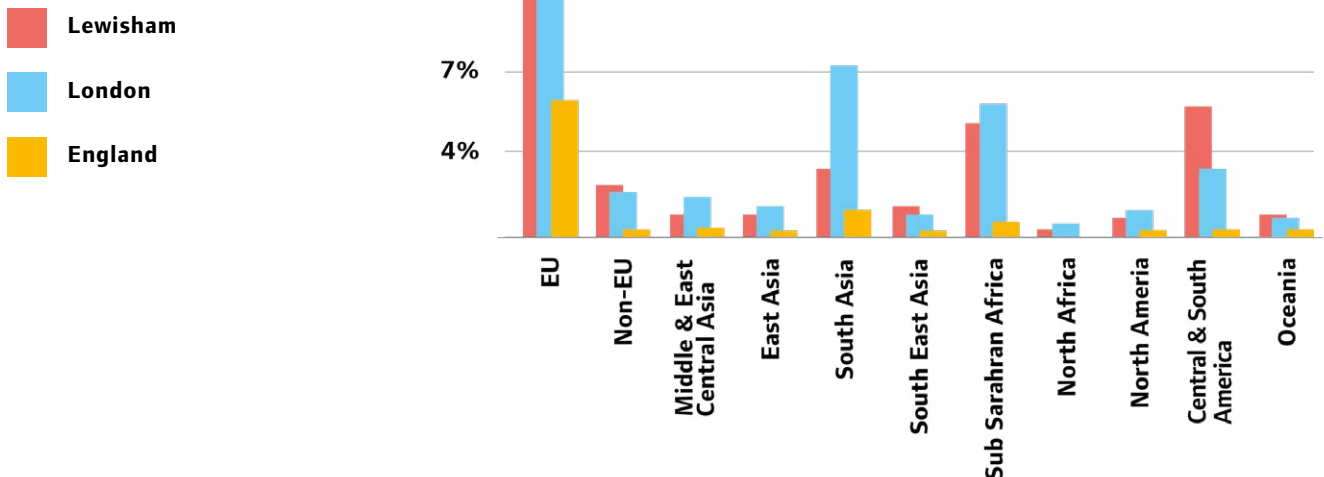


Figure 3: Country of birth excluding UK



Figures 1 and 3 chart data drawn from <https://www.observatory.lewisham.gov.uk/population/> projections for 2019. Figure 2 data drawn from ONS migration statistics <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/migrationwiththeuk/datasets/localareamigrationindicatorsunitedkingdom>.

Contact Us

**If you have any questions about this
Borough of Sanctuary Strategy
please contact:**

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sanctuary

1. refuge or safety from pursuit, persecution, or other danger.





Application for Sanctuary Award



Name and type of organisation: **Lewisham Council (Local authority)**

Town / City you are based in: **London Borough of Lewisham**

Name / position of lead applicant: **Katya Griffin,
Borough of Sanctuary
Programme Manager**

Contact (phone no. and e-mail): **katya.griffin@lewisham.gov.uk
07826 898406**

Date of application: **19 October 2023**

Please put an 'X' this box if you are happy for your application to be shared with other organisations applying for sanctuary awards	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Lewisham is proud to be the UK's first
Borough of Sanctuary





Please provide a summary of how your organisation engages with sanctuary seekers

Lewisham is proud to be UK's first Borough of Sanctuary. The award follows our [Corporate Strategy](#) to be an open and welcoming borough.

Corporate Strategy Priorities relevant to Borough of Sanctuary:

Open Lewisham

- **We will maintain our status as a Borough of Sanctuary and London's leading borough for refugee resettlement.**
- We will celebrate Lewisham's diversity, ensuring we are a representative and inclusive council and workforce.
- We will maintain and strengthen the Lewisham Way of working in collaboration with our voluntary and community sectors and seek new areas where we can partner together.
- We will co-design services with those affected by them and ensure strong consultation processes that reach out to people whose voices are seldom heard.

Quality Housing

- We will deliver more social homes for Lewisham residents.
- We will aim to improve the conditions in the borough's housing stock, working with all housing providers in the borough to develop a Lewisham Repairs Charter.
- We will provide more support to renters through further landlord licensing and enforcement of poorly managed homes, holding landlords to account and giving a voice to renters across the borough.

Children and Young People

- We will relentlessly focus on pupil achievement, working with our schools and communities to build on our inclusive and high-achieving system of local comprehensive schools.

- We will ensure the most vulnerable children are protected from harm, driving improvement in children’s social care and aiming to reduce the number of children coming into care through earlier targeted support for families in crisis.

Health and Wellbeing

- We will partner with local food banks, food growing groups, schools and communities, through our joint Lewisham Food Action Plan. Together, we will ensure that everyone can access food and other essentials.
- We will learn from our Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review, aiming to mitigate and ultimately end, structural racism and discrimination as a driver of health inequalities.

Partnership working is at the heart of our approach to the Borough of Sanctuary. We helped create the **Lewisham Migration Forum (LMF)**, which is comprised of local organisations that provide services and other support to migrants. Please see Appendix 1 for the list of members. The Council led on the Refugee Week 2023 LMF working group and is part of the Schools of Sanctuary working group. Other key local networks we participate in and lead on include the Asylum and Refugee Lewisham Partnership – a multi-agency forum to address concerns around asylum contingency accommodation, the Food Justice Network and the Homelessness forum.

We are proud to be a leading borough on **refugee resettlement** and have fulfilled our commitment to resettle 110 refugee families by July 2023. In addition to resettling refugees, we have committed to welcoming higher numbers of **UASC** than other boroughs by being part of both national transfer scheme and we are on the pan-London rota. We have commissioned high quality services to support refugees arriving under government schemes such as UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), Afghan Relocation Assistance Programme (ARAP) and Homes for Ukraine. The package of integration support includes person centred and intensive casework provision including areas such as housing, welfare benefits, access to education and employment support, community development support and wellbeing services. We are, however, aware that we need to ensure that **all people seeking sanctuary thrive in Lewisham.**

W, refugee from Syria, resettled in Lewisham:

“...The most beautiful moment in my life when the plane landed at London airport because I feel safe for the first time since the war started in Syria.

The challenges in first year were the lack of knowledge of housing and benefits system, dealing with bank card and no one of our relative or family living in the UK. But with the passage of time and the support from Lewisham Council and Refugee Council I have started to learn a lot and go over all challenges. Now I begin to thrive and integrate in my community by volunteering with non-profit organisations, and I started my first step become a community interpreter...

I hope to achieve all our dreams, to be good citizens and see my children to achieve their ambitions and study at universities. Thanks to everyone who contributed to support the refugee project in the UK.”

Summary of engagement with people seeking sanctuary across key areas:

Health:

- **All Lewisham GP surgeries** have signed up to the **Safe Surgeries** scheme. We continue to work with our voluntary partners and the SE London ICS to support surgeries in upholding Safe Surgeries values through training, presentations at GP events and the ISC commissioning manager visits.
- **Enhanced primary care support** to people in asylum contingency accommodation: GP surgeries commissioned to provide an enhanced assessment and regular time slots reserved for residents; specialist health visitor support has improved advocacy for asylum seeking families; screenings for latent TB and vaccinations outreach in CA. Nursing outreach in the CA is currently being commissioned.
- **Community health hub** run by North Lewisham Primary Care network: mobile health hub offering free health checks, workshops, health and wellbeing support from NHS and community groups running in one of the asylum contingency hotels.
- **Wellbeing support** is offered to resettled refugees which includes 1:1 and group therapy. 80% of the beneficiaries reported improved physical and mental wellbeing and 70% improved social inclusion. There is a view to expand this provision to people seeking asylum and those on Homes for Ukraine.
- **Embedded mental health practitioner**, funded by the SE London ICS – linking people seeking sanctuary to existing services and removing access barriers.
- **Driving for change** – mobile unit providing a number of services, incl. dental care, podiatry and vaccinations for homeless people or those at risk of homelessness. This service is open and promoted to people on NRPF and people in asylum contingency accommodation.
- Lewisham and Greenwich Trust conducted an enquiry on [Hospital Migrant Charging](#) and accepted its 37 recommendations for improvement following a campaign by Save Lewisham Hospital and LRMN. Progress is monitored through the [Healthier Communities Select Committee](#).

Housing and Homelessness:

- **Homelessness prevention and reducing reliance on temporary accommodation.**
 - **Dramatic reductions to date in the number of families accommodated B&Bs.**
 - **Move-on support and effective housing advice** are part of the complex case work provided by our VCS partners, funded by the Council through the asylum dispersal grant.
 - Council and VCS partners are working on a **joined-up approach** to support single people who receive refugee status, e.g. signposting to hosting schemes; making some spaces available in female only hostels for single women.
 - Through the asylum support grant, our VCS partner AFRIL has conducted assessments of all vulnerable residents in an asylum CA due to close, which resulted in **many residents being moved to a more appropriate accommodation.**
 - Clear **escalation route** in the Housing team is established and shared with VCS partners to make sure people at risk of homelessness are provided with emergency housing.

- Effectiveness of arrangements is **monitored** through the Homelessness Forum which includes VCS providers.
 - [Single person council tax reduction for people housing refugees](#) has been reinstated.
 - Concerted efforts to prevent homelessness for **people leaving the HfU scheme** through targeted support, procurement of properties and rematching. As a result, only three families who arrived in the borough under the Homes for Ukraine programme are currently accommodated in temporary accommodation.
 - The housing services is applying for [DAHA accreditation](#) and is committed to creating a sanctuary scheme – safe houses for women fleeing gender-based violence.
 - A more **joined-up approach between children’s social care and housing**. See *Embed Criterion 4*.
- **Addressing homelessness of people on NRPF**
 - The housing department’s Rough Sleeping Initiative team does engage with rough sleepers with **insecure immigration status**. The assessment work will include access to qualified immigration assessment. The council is particularly proud of the work undertaken during the Brexit transition when over 40 individuals were assisted to secure settlement rights.
 - **Designated spaces** for people on NRPF in GLA funded *No Second Night Out* hub.
 - **No cooperation with the Home Office** on rough sleepers. Whilst complying with its legal obligations the council is careful not to go *beyond* these clearly defined duties in our interactions with the Home Office.
 - **Increased housing provision for young people on NRPF leaving care** – now four properties.
 - **Improvements of service for residents in Council Housing**
 - Improvement of **escalation process** through a new app and online reporting.
 - Significant **reduction in call waiting times**.
 - **Focus on accessibility**: links to letters are sent in PDF format to enable translation.
 - **Improvements to emergency hostels** are a priority. New bathrooms and kitchens were fitted in one of the hostels. Major improvement works are starting in two others in 2024.

Children’s and Adult Social Care

- Supporting UASC, children with insecure immigration status in care and adults on NRPF discharged from Lewisham hospital to **regularise status/ have NRPF condition lifted**.
- Clear **pathway for UASC**: immigration status, housing, ESOL, integration support. Our service received positive feedback from [Ofsted](#). Lewisham was recommended to the Children’s Commissioner for this [positive case study on Channel4 news](#).
- **Staffing levels in the UASC team** have been increased to meet the needs of young people.
- VCS partners reporting a more **joined up approach between Children’s Social care team and the housing team** resulting in better outcomes for families.
- A number of **safeguarding concerns relating to vulnerable adults and children in the asylum CA** have been addressed through the Asylum and Refugee

Partnership, a multi-agency partnership between the Council services, SE London ISC, voluntary partner organisation, Clearsprings Ready Homes and hotel management.

Education, Culture and Leisure

- Lewisham Migration Forum **Schools of Sanctuary working group** has been set up and has begun scoping the support Lewisham schools need to support students from sanctuary seeking backgrounds.
- **Schools of Sanctuary:** St Mary's Primary School has gained a School of Sanctuary award, two have more applied, one more is preparing application.
- Our Integrated SEND services have a 'new to the UK' protocol in place for the **learners with SEND** and to facilitate their assessment placements in special schools
- **ESOL provision:**
 - Adult Learning Lewisham (ALL) provides bespoke **non-accredited ESOL courses** and supports learners' ongoing progression towards recognised ESOL qualifications and employment opportunities through partnership with other borough organisations.
 - **Number of courses** have increased from one to three per term.
 - **Number of people progressing into mainstream accredited ESOL** courses is steadily increasing.
 - We have a number of **non-accredited community-based ESOL courses** in libraries, community centres and asylum contingency accommodation.
 - **Accredited provision**, with a number of courses linked to employment provided by Lewisham College.
 - [An up-to-date list of ESOL providers](#) is shared regularly through the VCS partners and community organisations.
 - **Virtual school** provides bespoke ESOL courses for post-16 UASC and an evening ESOL study club for all UASC.
- Council Housing **study clubs** with St Dunstan's college and Goldsmiths University – offering prioritised tutoring for Y 5 and 6 in temporary accommodation and free desk space and access to mentoring for all young people.
- Council Housing Creative coding collective - **coding training and work experience for young people aged 16-25 in temporary accommodation** who struggle with mainstream education.
- AFRIL Rainbow club **supplementary school** for children from sanctuary seeking backgrounds provides English, maths, sport and music tuition.
- **Family Information Service** work with groups supporting refugees by assisting with childcare brokerage.
- **Free laptops** for all secondary-aged young people in asylum contingency accommodation (CA) financed through [a local charity](#) and coordinated by the Council.
- **Free laptops** for people seeking sanctuary through local partnerships (LRMN - Catbytes charity).
- **Migration Museum and Horniman Museum** conduct outreach to residents in asylum contingency accommodation and migrant community groups and run sanctuary and migration themed festivals and events.
- Blackheath Conservatoire provides **free places in children and adult music, art and drama** classes to all sanctuary seekers and offers **bespoke classes** for

Ukrainian refugees. Outreach to asylum accommodation was coordinated by the Council.

- Lewisham Music runs **Sonic minds** – a programme for displaced and care experienced people provides a space for young people to create own music and record it.
- **Free leisure centre memberships** at any of GLL (operating as Better) managed leisure centres for anyone that has been granted refugee status in the last 12 months; local gyms and pottery studio near asylum contingency accommodation offering **free places** to people seeking asylum (coordinated by the Council).
- Free **school holiday activities** for all children eligible for free school meals advertised to families seeking sanctuary.

Employment

- **Lewisham Works**, a free employment support service delivered by the Council for Lewisham residents:
 - Has supported **89 refugees** since its launch in 2022. Support includes 1:1 coaching, CV support, interview skills coaching, support to engage with employers and ongoing support after residents have started work.
 - It has a **multi-lingual advisor** who speaks Russian and Polish, who has provided bespoke support to Ukrainian clients.
 - Where residents have required a Ukrainian or Arabic speaking translator, the service looked to engage with **qualified translators from the local community**.
 - Specialist **self-employment/ business start-up support** from 'Amaze Associates'.

Feedback from a sanctuary seeker from Ukraine:

Lewisham Works - Last year taught me to not plan anything. My nightmare was if someone ask me: What do you plan? or How do you see your career path in the future? Now I have answers to these questions. I renewed my ability to plan and dream.

I would like to say thank you for that, for your support and compassion. It's really valuable.

- **Employability projects aimed at people seeking sanctuary**
 - [FaceWork Ukraine](#) – a specialist employment training service for **Ukrainian** nationals commissioned by Lewisham Works has provided training to more than 50 participants. 84% of Facework Ukraine trainees reported that training courses helped them improve motivation and feel more confident in job interviews.
 - Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network (LRMN) received an NCIL grant from the council to support refugees and migrants in the borough to **build employability skills** and **undertake work experience placements**.
 - Groundwork UK provides an **employability service** aimed at sanctuary seekers. It includes CV writing and 1-2-1 support.
 - **Refugee Café** received funding from Council Housing Community Fund to support refugees into employment in the catering industry.

Community Safety

- Council's Prevent Lead and contracted provider for VAWG – Athena conduct **training sessions in asylum accommodation.**
- **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking network** meeting works closely with the voluntary sector partners to understand specific issues affecting people seeking sanctuary and highlight local support pathways.
- Lewisham CYP Services have won the bid from the Home Office to become a scale up site for the **NRM devolved decision making pilot.** The benefit of the pilot is that decisions are made locally by professionals who know the CYP and in a **considerably timelier way.** Conclusive grounds decisions are made in up to 90 days, down from up to 500 days previously. Other benefits to potential victims include support from Barnardo's Independent Child Trafficking Service and additional support to professionals working in CYP.
- **Workshops on hate crime** with refugee communities run by Refugee Council and LRMN.

Using the 3 processes of the sanctuary award, please reflect on how you have achieved these principles attaching evidence to support your answer. Please refer to the generic minimum criteria or the specific criteria available for your organisation type. See [The Awards Process Guidance for Applicants](#).

NOTE: There are minimum criteria for all applications, however some streams have specific minimum criteria and guidelines which can be found in the following [resource packs](#). Please reference in the application how your efforts have met the minimum criteria

Learn

Criterion 1: Awareness raising opportunities are provided, and opportunities for discussion around the theme of welcome and sanctuary are facilitated

- The creation of a dedicated **BoS manager post** has meant that awareness raising and learning about sanctuary in the borough has increased significantly.
- For example, **discussions of issues relating to welcome and sanctuary** have taken place at Lewisham Migration Forum, Civic University Partnership meeting, Food Justice Network, Lewisham Local Care partners strategic board, Asylum and Refugee Partnership meeting, Schools Race Equality Conference, Lewisham GP Practice Training Event, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Partnership, Homelessness Forum and Sanctuary stalls at outdoor events.
- The Cabinet Member for Refugees is also a representative for Race and Equality at the **Lewisham Strategic Partnership** and has raised issues relating to people seeking sanctuary with the partnership.
- **The** quarterly **Lewisham Migration Forum** facilitates discussion and information sharing around the themes of sanctuary between local groups and people seeking sanctuary.
- **Articles on Sanctuary- related issues** were published in Headteachers bulletin, GP bulletin, on Council Housing webpages, [Council newsletter](#) and [Lewisham Life](#), the Council's magazine that goes to every household and business in the borough.
- **Promoting #SimpleActs campaign** – suggestions for action based on experiences and suggestions of Lewisham's sanctuary seekers.

- **Packs for Local Assemblies** are being developed to be used by the assembly teams.
- Our voluntary partners Refugee Council, AFRIL and LRMN run **awareness raising assemblies and workshops in schools**.
- Refugee Council is commissioned to provide **awareness raising sessions and 'Insights into issues experienced by refugees'** events in the borough. Such sessions have been delivered to or attended by agencies such as: job centre, health services, schools, voluntary sector.
- **Cultural and educational institutions** run events that raise awareness of issues around sanctuary and migration, e.g.
 - [Migration Museum Taking Care of Business: Migrant Entrepreneurs and the Making of Modern Britain - Migration Museum](#)
 - [Postcards from Limbo](#)
 - [Goldsmiths Library Research Café : Refugee Week | Goldsmiths, University of London](#)
 - [Flee - Film screening](#)

Criterion 2: Evidence of refugee/asylum/migration awareness raising is included into everyday business of the local authority e.g. staff induction/training.

- **Online module on sanctuary** is nearing completion and will be made a mandatory part of staff induction. The module will be promoted through internal channels and all staff will be strongly encouraged to complete it.
- BoS manager routinely attends **team and staff network meetings**, such as Children and Young People, Policy and Scrutiny, MASH, Prevention and Inclusion, Cost of Living group and Change Network, presents and leads discussion on issues affecting people seeking sanctuary.
- The monthly **Borough of Sanctuary Strategy group meeting**, attended by high-level stakeholders from all relevant directorates has a standing item of Sanctuary update, which features the latest developments nationally and locally. Please see Appendix 2 for the list of members.
- **External training**, e.g. City of Sanctuary thematic meetings; Solidarity Knows No Borders training event series **and good practice guides and policy briefings**, e.g. [Taking Care](#), [Supporting residents in temporary asylum accommodation](#), [Cost of living crisis and NRPF](#) are promoted to service leads.
- Teams have started including sanctuary in **information sessions to new applicants and inductions** for new staff.
- Borough of Sanctuary **MS Teams background** is widely used in the organisation.
- As Lewisham Homes, the Council Housing provider transitioned into Lewisham Council, **BoS was included in Welcome packs** and now features on **internal webpages**.
- **Training for frontline staff** on issues faced by people seeking sanctuary was delivered by LRMN, Lewisham Citizens and St Mary's School of Sanctuary in 2021. Further training sessions are currently being planned.
- Housing staff are routinely enrolled on trauma informed training.
- At **'Emergency Housing'** roundtable between Housing, Adult Social Care, Children's MASH and voluntary sector partners, specific issues

around housing and NRPF were explored, and escalation routes agreed. Progress is monitored and further changes agreed in a subsequent meeting and through the Homelessness Forum.

Criterion 3: Commitment to supporting the voices of people seeking sanctuary to be heard.

We are using a number of strategies approaches to make sure the voices of people seeking sanctuary are heard in Lewisham.

- **Co-production:**

- **Borough of Sanctuary co-production project:** Following a successful bid to the GLA, we have convened a diverse group of people seeking sanctuary. The group has reviewed the Borough of Sanctuary Priorities and Outcomes and has made a number of amendments, e.g. focus on employability and professional networking, the need for a survey to capture the experience of people seeking sanctuary when accessing key council services and intercultural activities in different parts of the borough. It will then work with teams in the council to redesign services and produce a material (e.g. Welcome pack for migrants). The projects will be decided by the group itself.

Feedback from K., one of the participants from an asylum seeking background:

The team of volunteers are diverse, and I have noticed that we all take this pivotal role very seriously. We have been brainstorming together and we have so far come up with many really good ideas for making things better. The commitment and willingness to find solutions for the current issues are abundant amongst the team.

Feedback from Z, one of the participants from an asylum seeking background:

Attending the Borough of Sanctuary session has increased my team working, communication skills and also given me an opportunity to interact with people from different races and backgrounds. This is very important to me as I get to learn about people's way of life. I believe with the zeal we all have coupled with our interests, if our agreed points upon each deliberation are entertained and put into action, Lewisham will make a better borough.

- **Community development activities and programmes** developed by Refugee Council such as men's football group, perinatal group and 'Astra' group (for older Ukrainian women) are co-designed by resettled refugees and Ukrainians who arrived under HfU scheme.
- **UASC and children with insecure immigration status** are strongly represented in Junior in Care council and Elevation council (older children) and have been involved in the development of the Corporate Parenting and Sufficiency strategy and Participation strategy and the housing pathways strategy.

- **Training to frontline council workers** was co-produced and co-delivered by people seeking sanctuary who talked about their experiences with Lewisham Council services.
- Horniman Museum – runs a yearly **Crossing Borders** event co-produced and co-run by people seeking sanctuary.

- **Feedback/consultation**

- Concerted effort is made to include sanctuary seekers in the Council's **regular resident engagement activities**, e.g. any website testing focus groups include sanctuary seekers, Lewisham Strategic Partnership Lewisham 2030 survey project includes outreach sessions in a foodbank for people seeking sanctuary, mainly those on NRPF.
- Our **VCS partners routinely consult with their service users and advocate** for them through a variety of forums, such as the Lewisham Migration Forum, the Homelessness forum and the Food Justice Network.
- **People with lived experience are invited to speak** at these network meetings, e.g. a mother on NRPF spoke directly to the conference that produced the food justice action plan.
- **Listening exercises** with people seeking asylum have been conducted by LRMN at the two asylum CA and presented at the Lewisham Migration Forum, asylum multi-agency meeting and Modern Slavery and Human trafficking meetings. Some of the issues that came up (e.g. loneliness, lack of community, prohibitive travel costs) have been addressed through the complex case work, community building activities and travel grant given out to VCS organisations.
- **Councillors visited asylum contingency accommodation** that was due to close and listened to the residents' concerns before signing the VCS letter to the Home Office advocating for better management of such moves.
- **Community embedded mental health practitioner** collects feedback on barriers faced by sanctuary seekers and reports back to the service providers.
- LRMN conducted a **Secret Shopper exercise** in Lewisham's GP surgeries. Feedback was then shared and discussed with individual practices by the SE London ICS commissioning manager.
- Council Housing practice in every consultation is to compare data received through surveys with the composition of particular estates. Where they feel that certain groups have been underrepresented, they do a **door knocking exercise** and task specific **community groups** to approach residents on their behalf.

- **Visibility of people seeking sanctuary**

- Staff **Online Training** includes voices of people seeking sanctuary talking about their experience (please see [here](#) , [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#))
- Council communications on Sanctuary activity includes **voices of sanctuary seekers**, e.g. [#SimpleActs](#) ideas are based on suggestions of sanctuary seekers themselves.

Embed

Criterion 4: Produce a written strategy which is publicly available and sets out commitment of the council for at least three years.

[Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary Strategy](#)

As part of the strategy the council should demonstrate that it has a clear plan to develop a **transparent approach to supporting people with NRPF**.

Lewisham's approach to NRPF:

- Council removing the embedded Home Office staff and **invested in accredited immigration advice**, which was cited as an [example of good practice by the charity Homeless Link](#) and by [Justice Together report on local authority funding for immigration legal advice](#).
- The following **groups** have been supported:
 - Rough sleepers.
 - People discharged from hospital and requiring adult social care.
 - Families on NRPF in economic distress.
 - UASC and young people with insecure immigration status in care: their immigration status is addressed as soon as they enter the system.
 - Survivors of domestic abuse and gender-based violence, through our commissioned service Athena.
- **Improving our service to people on NRPF**
 - We have made improvements **in the coordination between Children's Social Care and housing teams**. As part of these arrangements a housing manager and dedicated officer is seconded to work with Children's Services. One of our VCS partners has remarked on a more joined-up service at the 'Emergency Housing' roundtable.
 - We have recently **overhauled our front door** to make the access to all s17 services streamlined and user friendly for all families and referring agents.
 - **Clear protocol** for dealing with people on NRPF has been developed by Adult Social Care. Social Workers are well briefed on the importance of careful examination of s19 obligations.
 - **NRPF subsistence rates** have been reviewed and are higher than similar neighbouring boroughs.
- **Addressing homelessness:**
 - London Councils- **funded places for people on NRPF** with high needs in supported housing.
 - All relevant voluntary partners and advocates are part of **homelessness forum**.
 - Athena, our contracted service in **VAWG** refer to a variety of specialist services that provide grants, accommodation, funding and immigration advice and support to people with NRPF.
- **Addressing access to food**
 - Key VCS partner AFRIL supporting people on NRPF is part of **the food justice network** and has contributed to the [Food justice action plan](#).
 - **Specialised foodbanks and food projects for people on NRPF** run by AFRIL and LRMN are supported by Lewisham Essentials Fund.

- **Improving expertise**
 - We have begun work with **schools** to increase understanding of support pathways for students on NRPF.
 - Change Grow Live – the council-contracted organisation is recruiting a **Foreign Nationals Support worker** with the relevant language skills to meet the needs of street homeless population with substance misuse needs (mainly NRPF).
- **Making sure people on NRPF are included in and aware of the Council's offer** by informing the organisations that are part of the LMF. Services include:
 - Driving for Change (bus offering dental care, hairdressing services and other support to people who are homeless or in risk of homelessness).
 - Breakfast club and services for single homeless people, sexual health and substance misuse service, universal services co-funded by the Council.
 - Lewisham Donation Hub.
 - Lewisham Warm Spaces.
 - School holiday clubs.
 - Lewisham Household Support Fund for help with fuel costs.

Criterion 5: 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 and across all council services.

Our **progress** in relation to Borough of Sanctuary Aims as outlined in the [Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary Strategy](#)

- All services are able to demonstrate **consideration of the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants**, and that **reasonable adjustments** have been made to accommodate them where necessary.

Progress made:

- **Sanctuary review** as part of BoS Strategy group: all key services are asked to report back to the group on their approach to people seeking sanctuary
- **Examples of reasonable adjustments (removing barriers for sanctuary seekers):**
 - Housing staff are being enrolled on **trauma informed training**.
 - Focus on ensuring **our translation facilities** are geared towards the needs of emerging demographic groups.
 - UASC service has established **a bespoke process** when a child comes into the system - addressing immigration status, accommodation and ESOL in line with [Good practice recommendations by SLRA](#).
 - Council Housing send out **letters as PDFs** to enable translation.
 - To enable co-production with people seeking sanctuary, participants are offered **a loan of a tablet** and **interpreting support** and receive **travel reimbursement** and **shopping vouchers** to enable participation.

- The Council collects **relevant data** on how refugees, asylum seekers and migrants interact with our services to enable informed decision making.

Progress made:

Data is collected in a number of key areas:

- **Sanctuary seekers under UKRS and HfU** supported by Refugee Council to integrate into life in the UK and be in control of their own journey of change by using the [Integration STAR tool](#), which measures personal development and areas of support across a range of categories including 'community and connections' and 'health and wellbeing'. This is monitored by the Council on a quarterly basis. The data shows **significant improvement across all categories**. Please see Appendix 3 for more details. Similarly, outcomes are monitored for the Refugee Council **wellbeing project**.
- **UASC Services** collect relevant data on UASC and children with insecure immigration status in care and report to the Corporate Parenting board on a quarterly basis.
- **Lewisham Works** collects data on refugees accessing their service and their progress to ESOL provision, training and employment.
- **Qualitative data** on how people seeking sanctuary interact with our services is collected and shared through our voluntary partners in a number of forums, through the co-production group, including sanctuary seekers in focus groups and consultations on service design. See *Learn Criterion 3*.
- More **systematic data** collection on sanctuary seeker interactions with the key Council services, such as housing, MASH and adult social care through voluntary sector partners has been agreed as part of Borough of Sanctuary Outcomes Framework.
- **Consulting** with Council service leads, local stakeholders, and residents who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants to identify the needs of this group of residents.

Progress made: please see *Learn Criterion 3*

- Council services have links with relevant **community organisations**, to provide feedback on service delivery and explore opportunities for partnership working.

Progress made:

- **Partnership working** is a strength of the BoS. Examples of effective working with community organisations include:
 - Lewisham Migration Forum, which is attended by many local groups
 - We encourage a culture of real partnership, with the key partner organisations, such as AFRIL and LRMN holding us to account through a variety of forums. The wrap-around asylum support grant to local organisations was developed and refined through a continuous dialogue with them.

- Ukrainian Greenwich and Lewisham Polish Centre to identify gaps in our provision.
- Save Lewisham Hospital campaign.
- Community food growing and volunteering projects.
- Faith groups.
- Small resident community groups, such as Vietnamese Family Partnership as part of Council Housing consultation.

- The Council helps to **build and support local capacity** to support the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

Progress made:

- Council's leadership in becoming a Borough of Sanctuary has **inspired organisations in the borough to expand their work in** supporting people seeking sanctuary and **to join the sanctuary movement**, e.g. Goldsmiths' [Civic Strategy](#) includes commitment to work with local partners to support Lewisham BoS status through joint projects, research expertise and use of their venues; Migration Museum has applied to become a Museum of Sanctuary; the Blackheath Conservatoire offers free courses to sanctuary seekers.
- BoS programme manager **signposts the Council offer** to local partners and **coordinates support** to sanctuary seekers by businesses and organisations (e.g. free places and courses, funding for laptops for all secondary-aged children in asylum hotels).

Note from one of the young people:

'Thank you so much for the laptop because it helps me to do homework, or to get any information I need, or to watch a movie. Thank you again!'

- The Council plays an active role in the **Asylum and Refugee partnership meeting**, putting pressure on Clearsprings and the Home Office to improve conditions and coordinating the Borough's response to challenges such as asylum CA 'maximisation'.
- Partner organisations' capacity is significantly increased through **Council grants**, e.g.
 - Grant awarded to Refugee Council for casework, advocacy and integration, community development activities and wellbeing support for resettled refugees and Ukrainians arriving on Homes for Ukraine scheme.
 - Grant for complex case work, incl. legal work, community building, help with travel in asylum CA to AFRIL, LRMN and Southwark Law Centre, which has ensured that residents were assessed for vulnerability and representations made to the Home Office for appropriate onward accommodation when one of the 'hotels' was closed down.
 - Grant for community building activities for Ukrainian older people and teenagers – Ukrainian Greenwich.
 - Grants for food projects from Lewisham Essentials Fund
 - Employability support grants to LRMN and FaceWork Ukraine.
 - Refugee Week small grants.

6. The Council **acts transparently and welcomes internal and external review** of our performance towards our Sanctuary goals.

Progress made:

- **Internal Review:**
 - Regular reviews of performance through the **Scrutiny Committee, BoS Strategy Group and Executive Management Team**. This will be further enhanced through the **Borough of Sanctuary Outcomes Framework**.
 - **MASH:** regular auditing of cases relating to a number of factors, incl. quality of decisions (above 70% scored good or above), timelines (93% decisions made on the day).
 - **Housing:** performance checks on meeting deadlines for prevention, relief and main duty. We also review the social housing allocations policy and publish waiting times.
 - Service review through **joint Social Services – Housing strategic and operational meetings**.

- **External Review:**
 - Regular consultation with the **Lewisham Migration Forum steering group**.
 - Scrutiny through **Homelessness forum** and a one-off thematic meeting - the **'Emergency Housing' roundtable**.
 - **Secret shopping exercises:** e.g. Safe Surgeries through LRMN and Housing working with Shelter to monitor and improve customer journey.
 - **Adult Social Care** through Service User and Carers surveys twice yearly.

Criterion 6: Commitment to supporting initiatives that embeds welcome and fosters solidarity between receiving communities and people seeking sanctuary e.g. participation in Refugee Week

- **Refugee Week** events are planned each year.
 - In 2022, [large-scale Refugee Week event](#) took place at the Horniman Museum as part of the Borough of Culture initiative.
 - In 2023, Lewisham Council gave out small grants to organisations putting on events as part of Refugee Week, and held an event celebrating its resettlement work [Lewisham Council - Refugee Week 2023](#).
 - Additionally, the council coordinated Refugee Week schools and libraries unifying action – [Orange hearts](#).
- The Council and voluntary partners promote the [BoS pledge](#) and [#SimpleActs](#) campaign – opportunity for residents to get involved in sanctuary work and express solidarity with people seeking sanctuary.
- The Council encourages local businesses and organisations to offer **community-sponsored free memberships or workshops to people seeking asylum**, with several gyms and local businesses participating, e.g. [The Find Store](#).

	<p>Criterion 7: The Council is able to demonstrate a commitment to being an anti-racist organisation and has policies and practice in place that align to their work to become a 'Council of Sanctuary'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham Council - Our work to tackle racial inequalities. • As a part of the Tackling Racial Inequality Group, coordinated by London Councils, Lewisham signed up to both the London Local Government Anti-Racist Statement, and the Chief Executives London Committee's Tackling Racial Inequality Standard. • The Council coordinates a 'Race and Equality Working Group', which brings together partners from across the borough to tackle shared objectives around Race and Equality. • We have recently reviewed our Single Equality Framework and are currently expanding our capacity in this area of work by recruiting a Lead Equalities officer. • Lewisham Council - Tackling race inequality in education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All schools signed race equality pledge. ○ Reducing exclusion rates of students from Caribbean background. ○ Lewisham Young Leaders Academy – new programme supporting Black Caribbean and dual heritage (Black Caribbean/White) boys. • Reducing health inequalities: Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grants to local organisations to tackle issues outlined in the report. • Housing applying for DAHA accreditation, which includes commitment to intersectional and anti-racist practice. <p>CYP services have adopted anti-racist, trauma informed and restorative practice approaches.</p>
Share	<p>Criterion 8: A public commitment to the City of Sanctuary vision of welcome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Manifesto - Lewisham Labour Party - Lewisham Labour • Lewisham Council - Borough of Sanctuary <p>Criterion 9: 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lewisham Council - Borough of Sanctuary. • Lewisham Corporate Strategy. • Outreach sessions at festivals and local assemblies. • Council newsletter and magazines, social media, local news outlets, outdoor screens. • High engagement rates for all Sanctuary posts in June with a huge reach of over 40k and average of 5.18% engagement rate on Twitter (1%-5% is considered a good engagement rate).

- Sanctuary and Refugee Week posts had **the highest levels of engagement** on Council communications channels in June 2023.

Criterion 10: 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.

- Lewisham has been a member of the **LA steering Group** since the network developed in December 2020.
- We have an ongoing commitment to support and shape the network, **shared insights and resources**, such as the Council's Borough of Sanctuary online module.
- Lewisham Council members have attended and contributed to a number of **LA Thematic meetings** and the **City of Sanctuary conference**.
- BoS Programme manager has been part of two **BoS LA assessment panels** to date.

Criterion 11: Work with the network to identify national policy issues in order to make collective representations to government to encourage and enable change

- Through LA network, e.g. contributing to the City of Sanctuary letter on Illegal Migration Bill.
- As part of the [Lift the Ban coalition](#).
- [Advocating for Refugee resettlement](#).
- [Advocating for safe routes](#).
- [Advocating to open the borough for Ukrainian refugees](#).
- [Challenging the government plans on immigration reform](#).
- [Calling for the Government to improve living conditions in asylum accommodation](#).
- Lewisham Children's and Adult Safeguarding boards officially expressing concerns about safeguarding and lack of data sharing in a letter to the Home Office.
- Opposing the government's 'maximisation' policy on asylum accommodation in multi-agency meeting with the Home Office and Clearsprings.
- Co-signing a letter by our voluntary partners advocating for safeguarding assessments when closing asylum accommodation and joining a meeting with the Home Office to give evidence and reinforce the points made in the letter.

Please identify how sanctuary seekers have been involved in helping you achieve these principles

The most impactful ways sanctuary seekers have been involved in achieving our goals have been:

- Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary strategy was produced with significant input from the **Lewisham Migration Forum**, which conducts regular formal and informal listening exercises and works closely with people seeking sanctuary.
- The BoS Priorities and Outcomes Framework was co-produced by the **BoS co-production group**.
- UASC and children on NRPF **co-producing relevant policies and pathways** as part of Junior in Care and Elevation Councils.

For a comprehensive account of sanctuary seeker involved see also *Learn Criterion 3*.

How does your organisation intend to build on your achievements over the next 3 years in order that your award is renewed?

We are proud of what we have achieved on our journey as a Borough of Sanctuary so far and are keen to continue to learn and expand our work. We have developed the **Priorities and Outcomes Framework** (please see attached) to define where we are going next and what the parameters of success look like.

Our key priorities for the next three years are:

- Further **embed BoS across all directorates**. We will do this through the BoS Strategy Group, online and face-to-face training across the council and including sanctuary work in our grant conditions.
- **Holding ourselves to account**. We will do this by reviewing our progress against the agreed outcomes through the BoS Strategy group and with our local partners, with the particular focus on the service we provide to people seeking sanctuary.
- Making sure **people seeking sanctuary play a central role** in our BoS activity. Building on the work of co-production project, we will develop an action plan for co-production and BoS.
- Expanding our **wrap-around support to people seeking asylum**. We will do this through our grant programme and developing clear pathways for people leaving the asylum system.
- Continue to **challenge the hostile environment**. We will do this through continuous engagement with local and national networks.

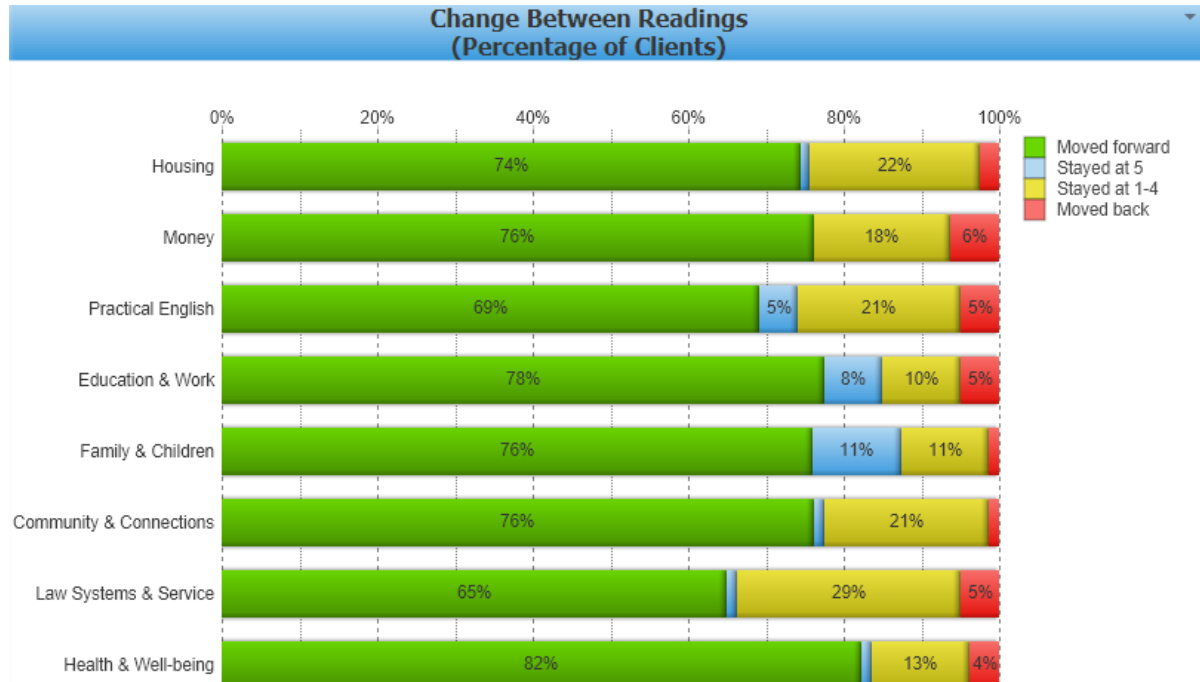
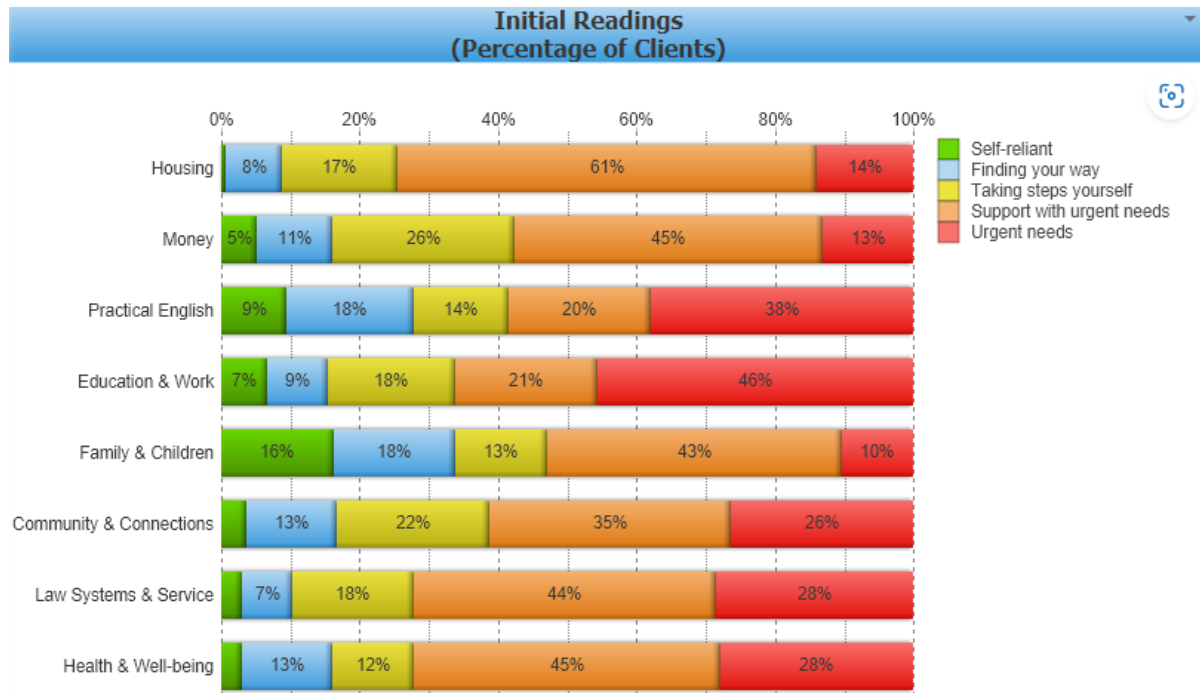
Appendix 1: Organisations involved in the Lewisham Migration Forum (regular attendees)

Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network (LRMN)
Actions for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL)
Refugee Council
Lewisham Council (councillors with interest, Lewisham Sanctuary Manager, Resettlement, Ukraine)
NHS - specifically Waldron Centre, Amersham Vale
GRACEaid
Lewisham Anti-Raids
The Phoenix Federation (two schools)
Southwark Law Centre
Citizens UK - Lewisham and Greenwich Alliance
Bloom Money
Flotsam Sessions
Create Without Borders
Goldsmiths University
Age UK
Lewisham Keep Our NHS Public
Lewisham Patients Not Passports group
Fair Beats
V22 Libraries
HostNation
Lewisham Local
One Health Lewisham
Friends of Refugees Lewisham
Refugee Cafe
Forest Hill and Sydenham Welcomes Refugees
Brockley Max Festival
Athena
Public Health Lewisham
Vietnamese Family Partnership
Together South
LewCAS
Institute for Race Relations
Migrant Voice
Community Connections Lewisham
Salvation Army
Migration Museum
ESOL providers e.g. Catford ESOL

Appendix 2: Borough of Sanctuary Strategy Group Membership

James Lee, Director of Communities, Partnerships and Leisure - Chair
Fergus Downie, Specialist Housing Support & Refugee Resettlement Manager
Harriet Jannetta, Head of Corporate Parenting
Katya Griffin, Borough of Sanctuary Programme Manager
Glynn Jones, Joint Health & SC Service Manager
Helen Clarke, Director of Communications and Engagement
Simon Whitlock, Head of Joint Commissioning, CYP
Catherine Logan, Senior Policy and Strategy Officer
Sakthi Suriyaprakasam, Head of Culture and Community Development
Nikki Sealy, Head of Early Years Quality & Sufficiency
Jannet Hall, Head of Safer Communities
Vicky Penner, Senior Media and Campaigns Officer
Sidra Hill-Reid, Head of Community Education & Cultural Assets
Fenella Beckman, Director of Housing Strategy
Shaba Dachi, Adolescent Safeguarding Consultant
Donna Simeon, Head of Strategy and Improvement
Keith Cohen, Head of Youth Offending Service
Matthew Henaughan, Head of Business Infrastructure, Compliance and Education Operations
Carly Davis, Head of External Communications
Sara Taylor, Head of Principal Social Work Lead
Lucie Heyes, Director of Children's Social Care
Ceri Jacobs, South East London ICS
Jon Kanareck, Lewisham Homes/Council Housing
Angela Scattergood, Director of Education Services
Joan Hutton, Director of ASC
Vicky Rogers, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance
Sara Rahman, Director of Families, Quality & Commissioning
Ellie Eghtedar, Head of Housing Needs & Refugee Services

Appendix 3: STAR Questionnaire Readings all resettlement clients (UKRS, VPRS, VCRS, ARAP and ACRS) since 2021





Learn

Objective	Action	Outputs/Outcomes	By when
Frontline staff are aware of issues and legal framework relating to people seeking sanctuary All staff are aware of sanctuary principles and have understanding of issues affecting people seeking sanctuary	Bi-annual training for frontline staff co-produced and co-delivered by voluntary partners and people seeking sanctuary	50% of frontline staff in housing, adult and children's social care attend training	Dec-24
	Online module on sanctuary is mandatory part of the induction and advertised to all staff Bi-annual lunch & learn sessions for all staff are offered	95% of new staff complete the module 20% of all staff complete the module 10% of all staff attend sessions Ongoing measurement of resident awareness through surveys and data insight from social media campaigns and e-newsletters.	Oct-24 Dec-25
	Ongoing resident engagement campaign (Lewisham digital channels, street advertising, assemblies), with resource allocated in the central comms team	25% of residents are aware of BoS, as evidenced through the resident engagement survey conducted by comms	Jul-25
Residents are aware of sanctuary principles The Council builds a better picture of the experience of people seeking sanctuary when approaching our services.	Scope the survey/listening project with the key VCS partners and conduct the survey through them.	Survey/listening template created 50 people seeking sanctuary take part	Aug-24

Embed - general

Objective	Action	Outputs/Outcomes	By when
Build meaningful welcome for all sanctuary seekers	People seeking sanctuary are signposted to relevant services and activities Schools of Sanctuary group convened to create an action plan to support children seeking sanctuary in Lewisham	Welcome packs (in paper and digital form on Council's webpages) for sanctuary seekers with sections for specific groups are created and distributed to schools, libraries, community centres Action plan is created and operationalised	Jul-24 Mar-24
	Lewisham Works to continue its 1-2-1 support for refugees and to commission two additional employability programmes for sanctuary seekers	65 participants trained through new programmes	Dec-24
	Council to review strategy for supporting businesses which employ refugees and expanding female workforce participation amongst this cohort Council to support organisations to put on intercultural events across the borough to support integration of people seeking sanctuary	Amendments to strategy made 65% of women on resettlement programme are in education, training or employment 5 events organised	Oc-24 Dec-25

Embed a 'rights first' approach in the Council: smooth, timely and compassionate decision making process	Partners to collect data on referrals to adult social care, children's social care and housing: number of referrals, number of times escalation routes was used, number of pre-action protocols, number of judicial reviews	Quarterly monitoring meetings 50% reduction on the use of escalation route 50% reduction in successful legal challenges No household to be left street homeless when housing duty owed	Jul-24
	Trauma informed practice training is mandatory for all housing staff	75% of housing staff complete training	Oct-25
Forge proactive and mutually beneficial relationships with the third sector organisations to secure optimal outcomes for vulnerable families and adults	Continually review and improve working joint working protocols	Quarterly review of joint working protocols in housing referrals through the Homeless Forum	Oc-24
High-level buy-in across the council and a joined-up approach are maintained	Continue the work of the BoS Strategy Group (group of high-level representatives of directorates across the council)	The group continues to meet every two months to oversee and monitor performance and progress of the strategy/action plan.	Dec-25
Ensure robust monitoring of the meeting of Borough of Sanctuary goals	Quarterly monitoring of the BoS Action plan and BoS work against the Outcomes framework through the Bos Strategy Group and twice yearly through the Scrutiny Committee	BoS goals are met or mitigations are put in place where there is a problem, as evidenced through meeting minutes	Dec-25
People seeking sanctuary have meaningful input in the Borough of Sanctuary activities	Co-production group decide on projects that are meaningful to them and redesign services or co-produce materials with the relevant service teams in the Council	2 projects selected and completed	Mar-24
GP practices uphold the Safe Surgeries values	Once the co-production project is completed and evaluated, produce a co-production and sanctuary seeker engagement action plan for BoS	Co-production action plan (including removing barriers for participation) produced and operationalised	Dec-24
	Partners complete another Safe Surgeries secret shopper exercise to track compliance.	100% of surgeries allow registration without ID and proof of address 50% of surgeries have Safe Surgeries materials displayed	Oct-24
Capacity to support sanctuary seekers in the borough is further increased	NCIL and main grant conditions to include commitment to sanctuary	Main grants and NCIL grants contract wording is changed Contract monitoring template is changed Community development staff are updated	Dec-25
Barriers to digital access are addressed	Free WiFi is installed in temporary accommodation	10 projects explicitly include people seeking sanctuary Residents have access to free WiFi across all temporary accommodation sites	Jul-25
Work on anti-racism is further embedded.	Race and Equality Working Group develops an action plan that the entire Strategic Partnership signs up to.	Action plan is created and signed by all organisations	Aug-24
	Creation of a post of the Lead Equalities Officer	Officer starts their role	Mar-24

Each of the Council's Directorates to create an equalities action plan which focuses on the work they can do internally (e.g. representation amongst staff), as well as externally (service delivery).

Action plans are created

Jan-24

Embed - asylum

Objective	Action	Outputs/Outcomes	By when
Build meaningful welcome for all sanctuary seekers	Resource and co-ordinate wrap-around support for people seeking asylum	180 people are supported through voluntary partner, of which,	
		50 people receive move on support on gaining refugee status	Oct-24
		100 people are engaged in community building activities by voluntary partner	Oct-24
		100 people are supported with travel costs to access activities by voluntary partner	Oct-24
		All people seeking asylum in have access to bespoke therapeutic support services commissioned by the SE London ICS	Jun-24
		Dedicated nursing support in CA with regular clinics is set up to ensure a timely GP registration, health checks immunisations processes and smooth working with agencies in the borough	Dec-23
		LA led inspection of CA with the focus on safeguarding, fire safety and hazards. Issues followed up through Asylum and Refugee partnership.	Dec-23
		All persons granted refugee status have access to case work support who assist individuals with part vii applications and those whose applications were unsuccessful apply for S4 support, where possible.	Dec-24
Ensure integrated housing pathway between asylum accommodation providers, council commissioned VCS partners and housing services. Expand options in the private rented sector to meet the special circumstances of single female refugees who have recently acquired refugee status in Lewisham, particularly where no statutory housing duties exist. UASC are enabled to integrate and reach their goals post 18.		Using asylum dispersal funding to create dedicated female spaces in the private rented sector. Target of 6 through HMO procurement	Dec-24
		All UASC have status regularised where possible. All individuals living in the UK for 10 years are naturalised.	Dec-24

Embed - NRPF

Objective	Action	Outcomes/Outputs	By when
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Reduce disparity in living standards and reliance on crisis services of residents on NRPF	Ensure residents on NRPF and those supporting them are aware of their entitlements	Produce a leaflet on rights, entitlements and support services for people on NRPF in Lewisham	Apr-24
	Conduct a review of accessibility of access to immigration advice (level 1 OISC advice in particular) to persons with an NRPF restriction.	Review profile of persons approaching food banks to assess hidden demand	
	Ensure that all women on spousal visas and experiencing abuse have access to domestic violence destitution concession through accredited immigration advisers	Invest in additional Level 1 OICS advisor resource, if necessary	Dec-25
Ensure parity between women with and without NRPF who are victims of VAWG.	Ensure safe female spaces are available for NRPF VAWG victims	100% of women approaching the council receive concession	Dec-24
		100% of families in emergency accommodation as a result of VAWG are in safe female spaces	Dec-23

Share

Objective	Action	Outcomes/Outputs	By when
Contribution of Refugees is celebrated in the Borough	Council commits to support VCS partners to run Refugee Week event(s) in the Borough	Yearly high profile event(s), coordinated with VCS partners and promoted in the borough	Dec-25
Continue to make representations to the government on national policy issues to enable change	Pass council motions, write letters to the Home Office	5 instances of high-profile engagement	Dec-25
Contribute to the development of City of Sanctuary movement	Continue to be part of the CoS LA steering group, participate in events, work with other local authorities on specific issues	3 instances of visible engagement (e.g. contributing to policies; speaking at events) 2 partnerships/ projects with other London Councils	Dec-25

Lewisham Borough of Sanctuary re-application



Lewisham is proud to be the UK's first
Borough of Sanctuary



Introduction from the Mayor



Key Achievements



Resettled 127 refugee households



All Lewisham GP surgeries have signed the Safe Surgery pledge



Established system of wrap-around support for people seeking asylum



Welcomed 650 Ukrainian nationals



Set up bespoke employment and employability programmes for sanctuary seekers



Set up Asylum and Refugee Partnership multi-agency meeting



Invested in immigration advice people on NRPF and UASC



Strengthened the voice of people seeking sanctuary



Set up the Borough of Sanctuary Strategy group

Advocating for Sanctuary



Lewisham Councillor urges Priti Patel to open borough to Ukrainian refugees

2nd March 2022

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

LEWISHAM



By Aisha Nozari
@AishaNozari

Share



4 Comments



Lewisham Council
@LewishamCouncil

♥ "Lewisham means hope and a bright future."
Abdul, a Lewisham resident since March 2022.

🌍 We celebrated welcoming our 100th refugee family to our borough
this #RefugeeWeek.

👑 We are proud to be the UK's first Borough of Sanctuary.
lewisham.gov.uk/sanctuary



and their contribution to our communities

Borough of Sanctuary

Celebrating sanctuary

Lewisham has a history of supporting sanctuary seekers and we are proud to have been recognised as the UK's first Borough of Sanctuary. We welcome those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries and protect the rights of all migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees.

11 In Lewisham, we celebrate and promote the welcome contribution of people seeking sanctuary in our borough and prove that diverse communities like ours can be both happy and cohesive.

12 Cllr Juliet Campbell, Cabinet Member for Communities, Refugees and Wellbeing

13 We enjoyed celebrating World Refugee Day in Lewisham. It's been here since March 2022. Lewisham has a great community of people. There are lovely people here. Lewisham has a warm, hope and a bright future.

14 Abdul, Lewisham resident

Celebrating our 100th resettled refugee family

On Tuesday 20 June it was World Refugee Day, and some of Lewisham's refugee families attended a celebratory picnic in Mountrifield Park. It was an opportunity to celebrate the 100th refugee family resettled in Lewisham. There was amazing food provided by local charity Platfah Cafe, fundraising, giant bubbles and community music provided by Give a Song.

We work with our partners, the Refugee Council, Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network and through the Lewisham Migration Forum to support sanctuary seekers in the borough. In addition to our policy of resettling vulnerable refugee families from Syria, Afghanistan and other areas of conflict, we are also committed to providing the best standards of care to unaccompanied child asylum seekers. When newcomers are supported in rebuilding their lives, the entire community benefits. We are proud of local voluntary organisations, businesses and individuals who have been working together to welcome people seeking sanctuary in Lewisham.

For more information about our Borough of Sanctuary work and how to get involved, visit our website lewisham.gov.uk/sanctuary

What can we do in our community?

We've asked people seeking sanctuary in Lewisham about the simple acts that community members have done that made them feel welcome:

15 Welcome newcomers, whether it's at work, in the neighbourhood or at the school gate. Offer to add new families to a parent WhatsApp group, extend a lunch invite to a new colleague or greet your new neighbour. "People reaching out to me really helped - I made a big effort to be more outgoing."

16 Consider organising a community event, big or small like a BBQ or a picnic in the park. "Shortly after we arrived, our neighbours organised a BBQ and invited us along. It made such a difference!"

17 Slow down a little when talking to someone who is learning the language, simplify what you say and repeat words when you need to. "A little patience with the language barriers goes a long way!"

Offer to help someone navigate the systems that are new to them. "I really appreciated when people showed me where to go for help and support."

Support local organisations that help migrants and refugees such as Action for Refugees in Lewisham and Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network. "People at this charity stand up for me and encourage me. They give me a listening ear and help me find solutions."

Get involved - take the Sanctuary Pledge

If you are an individual or an organisation, please pledge your support to asylum, migrants and refugees in Lewisham by signing our Borough of Sanctuary Pledge. Once you have pledged your support, we will keep you updated about our sanctuary programme via a regular newsletter. We will also send you details of Sanctuary events in Lewisham and a digital pack to help you share information on social media channels. Take the Pledge lewisham.gov.uk/sanctuary

Recommendations from 2020 application



Incorporate Safe Surgeries work into Borough of Sanctuary Programme



2020

Doctors of the World campaign taken up in Lewisham by Citizens UK and LRMN

2022

Training and outreach conducted by LRMN and Doctors of the World

Jul-Dec 2023

Secret shopper exercise by LRMN > targeted response by SE London ICS
DoW present at Practice Managers Forum

By Oct2024

100% of surgeries allow registration without ID and proof of address
50% of surgeries have Safe Surgeries materials displayed

2021

Support through Council and SE London ICS - All surgeries are sent a letter and the majority sign up to the scheme

Jan-Jun 2023

DoW and BoS stand at the Lewisham GP Practice Meeting. All surgeries sign up. Safe Surgeries are a standing item on the agenda for the SE London ICS surgery visits

2024

Safe Surgeries on all practice websites, further secret shopper exercises



1. Investing in accredited immigration advice



2. Improving our service to people on NRPF



3. Addressing homelessness



4. Addressing access to food



5. Improving expertise



6. Making sure people on NRPF are included in and aware of the Council's offer

- Outline the Council's approach to NRPF

Delivery of the Borough of Sanctuary Strategy-

- Progress against Borough of Sanctuary Aims



Borough of Sanctuary
Strategy group



Sanctuary review



Removing barriers for
sanctuary seekers



- All services are able to demonstrate **consideration of the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants**, and that reasonable adjustments have been made to accommodate them where necessary.



Systematic data collection
by **services**, e.g. UASC
Services, Lewisham Works



Qualitative data:

co-production
group
VCS partners
focus groups
and
consultations



Outcomes monitoring
reviews of services delivered
by VCS partners

- The Council collects relevant **data** on how refugees, asylum seekers and migrants interact with our services to enable informed decision making.

Consulting with Council service leads, local stakeholders, and residents who are refugees, asylum seekers or migrants to identify the needs of this group of residents.



Co-production



Consultation/ Feedback



- ❖ Borough of Sanctuary **co-production group**
- ❖ Commissioned **community development activities** co-produced by beneficiaries
- ❖ **Training to frontline council workers** co-produced and co-delivered by people seeking sanctuary
- ❖ **UASC and children with insecure immigration status** involved in development of key strategies

- ❖ Sanctuary seekers in the council's **regular resident engagement activities**
- ❖ **Listening exercises** with people seeking asylum
- ❖ Advocacy by VCS partners and people with lived experience at **borough wide forums**
- ❖ **Councilors visit to asylum contingency accommodation**
- ❖ **Secret Shopper exercise** in Lewisham's GP surgeries

Council services have links with relevant **community organisations**, to provide feedback on service delivery and explore opportunities for partnership working



Lewisham Migration Forum



Campaign groups



Council Networks



Food growing and volunteering projects



Community groups



Faith groups



Organisations in the borough **joining the sanctuary movement**



BoS programme manager **signposts to the Council offer** to local partners and **coordinates support** to sanctuary seekers



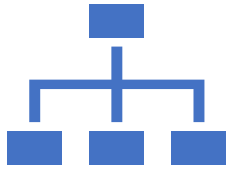
The Council plays an active role in the **Asylum and Refugee partnership meeting**



Partner organisations' capacity is significantly increased through **Council grants**

- The Council helps to **build and support local capacity** to support the needs of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.

The Council acts **transparently** and welcomes internal and external review of our performance towards our Sanctuary goals.



Internal Review:

Regular reviews of performance through the **Scrutiny Committee**, **BoS Strategy Group** and **Executive Management Team**. This is further enhanced through the **Borough of Sanctuary Outcomes Framework**.



External Review:

Regular consultation with the **Lewisham Migration Forum steering group**

Scrutiny through **Homelessness forum**

Secret shopping exercises: e.g. Safe Surgeries through LRMN and Housing working with Shelter to monitor and improve customer journey

Our plans for the future – key priorities



Further **embed BoS across all directorates**: BoS Strategy Group, online and face-to-face training across the council and including sanctuary work in our grant conditions.



Holding ourselves to account: reviewing our progress against the agreed outcomes through the BoS Strategy group and with our local partners, with the particular focus on the service we provide to people seeking sanctuary.



Making sure **people seeking sanctuary play a central role** in our BoS activity: Building on the work of co-production project, we will develop an action plan for sanctuary seeker engagement



Expanding our **wrap-around support to people seeking asylum**: mental health intervention and clear pathways for people leaving the asylum system.



Continue to **challenge the hostile environment**: continuous engagement with local and national networks

Questions and Comments





Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee

Report title: Multi Agency Response to Child Exploitation

Date: 13 March 2024

Key decision: No.

Class: Part 1

Ward(s) affected: All

Contributors: Patricia Garner, Sara Rahman, Mark Humphreys, Peter Haycock

Outline and recommendations

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview to the Safer Stronger Select Committee on the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) arrangements in Lewisham.

It is recommended that the Safer Stronger Committee take note of the contents of this report for information.

Timeline of engagement and decision-making

N/A

1. Summary

- 1.1. Lewisham has recognised for some time the risks facing some of our children and young people in relation to exploitation. Initially this involved working with the police to establish a Concern Hub, but with the development of a pan-London multi-agency child exploitation model and a review by the Lewisham Safeguarding Partnership, in February 2022 Lewisham replaced the Concern Hub with a Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE). The MACE leads and monitors practice for extra-familial harm and exploitation of children and young people up to the age of 25 and this includes Serious Youth Violence.
- 1.2. The Lewisham MACE has 3 layers that includes the Strategic MACE board, the Tactical MACE Group and the Pre-MACE Operational Meeting. The Ofsted report published on the 31st of January 2024 judged Lewisham Children's Services to be 'Good' in all categories. The commented positively on the work taking place in relation to child exploitation and shared that 'Children who are potentially at risk of exploitation benefit from a prompt and highly effective response from the 'Safe Space' service. Assessments are thorough and carefully consider cultural and push-and-pull factors. Detailed planning supports interventions to reduce and mitigate risk. At a strategic level, multi-agency child exploitation meetings are well attended by key stakeholders. Leaders have developed an effective partnership response to exploitation, for example identifying exploitation 'hot spots' to inform disruption activities'.
- 1.3. The function of the MACE system is to ensure agencies are sharing information and working together effectively, using powers and resources at their disposal; to safeguard children and young people at risk of criminal and/or sexual exploitation and violence, taking necessary steps to pursue and disrupt individual and groups who exploit children and young people. Case responsibility remains with the lead professional (normally the Local Authority children's social work team), MACE/Pre-MACE actions are monitored monthly and a CYP review takes place every 12 weeks, with the lead professional attending MACE

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. The Safer Stronger Select Committee is asked to note the contents of the report for information.

3. Policy Context

- 3.1. The Council's Corporate Strategy 2022 - 2026 outlines the Council's vision to deliver for residents over the next four years. Of relevance to youth violence, the strategy states "we will continue to focus and develop our successful public health approach to youth violence, aiming to tackle knife crime and reduce sexual exploitation across the borough".
- 3.2. Statutory requirements from the Police and Justice Act (2006), introduced additional duties, which were updated by subsequent legislation that includes the Crime and

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Disorder Regulations 2011. The requirements included the production of a Strategic Assessment and a Partnership Plan.

- 3.3. The Safer Lewisham Partnership Plan 2023, highlights priority areas the Council have identified to focus on as a Partnership for Lewisham.
- 3.4. There are three priorities identified in the Plan, one of which includes, a Public Health Approach to tackling violence, with a focus on youth violence
- 3.5. The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) operating protocol is being fully utilised to manage child exploitation and violence concerns. The Child Exploitation Strategy and Strategic plan was agreed by the Lewisham Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- 3.6. The Government announced legislation introducing a new Serious Violence Duty on public bodies. The Duty is part of the Government's programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence, taking a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focused on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence.

4. Background

- 4.1. The Lewisham MACE is an Enhanced Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) model. The MACE panel operates in line with Pan London MACE Guidelines (2021). The current Pan London MACE guidance was developed following consultation with a number of London local authorities including Lewisham.
- 4.2. MACE panels operate in accordance with established statutory procedures relating to protecting children under the London Child Protection Procedures 2017, Working Together 2018 and The Pan-London CE Operating Protocol 2021.

5. The Multi Agency Child Exploitation Framework

- 5.1. The developing Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) dashboard allows us to view a breakdown of the referrals received by MACE and some of related demographic information. This information is used to analyse any themes and trends and particular areas that need to have focus such as any disproportionality, referral sources and so on.



MACE Referrals - Jan & Feb 2024

Summary

There have been 15 people referred in 2024. 66.7% of these referrals shown are currently open. 33.3% of referrals were assessed to be an emerging risk, 53.3% were assessed to be a moderate risk and 13.3% a significant risk.

Demographics of people referred (numbers shown in brackets are comparisons with Lewisham's population aged 10-21 yrs):

- 73.3% (~34%) were black; 13.3% (~36%) were white.
- 60.0% (50%) were male.
- 86.7% (33%) were 14-17 years old, inclusive.

Referral Numbers

15

Closed at Pre-MACE

5

Open to Pre-MACE

10

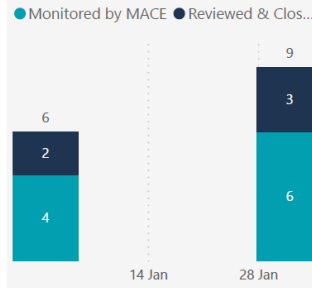
Closed at MACE

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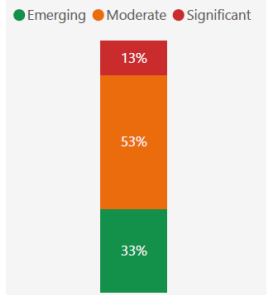
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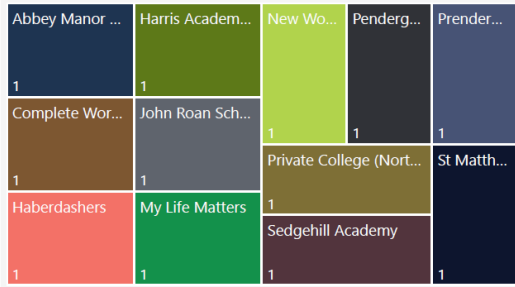
Referral Totals by Month



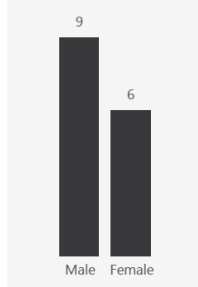
Risk Rating %



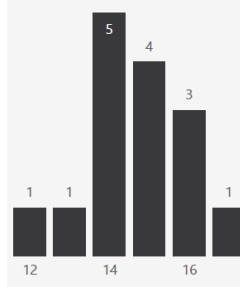
School



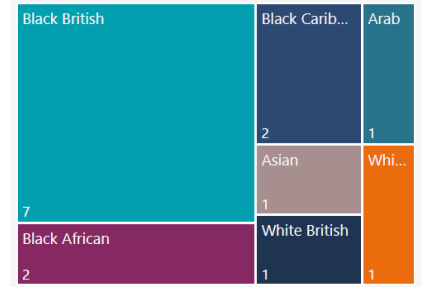
Gender



Referral Age



Ethnicity

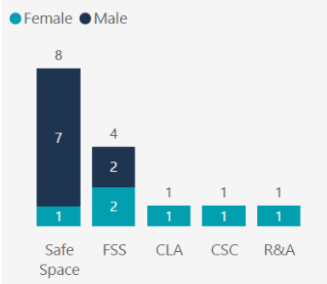


Updated to the end of February 2024

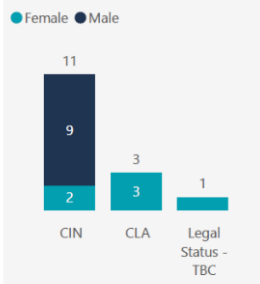


MACE Referrals - Jan & Feb 2024

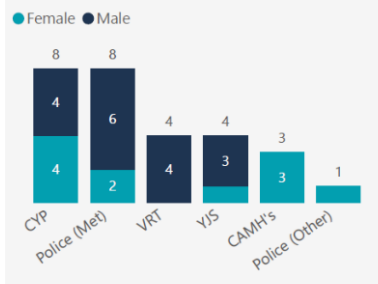
Key Team



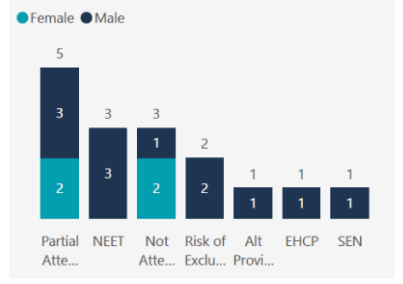
Legal Status



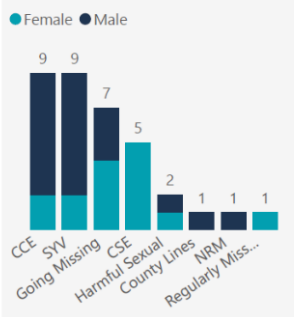
Known To



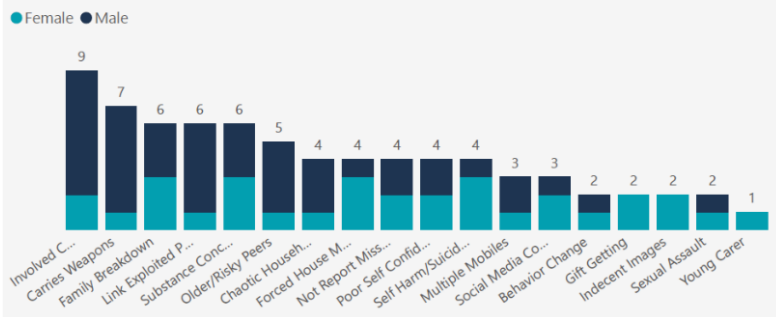
Education Status



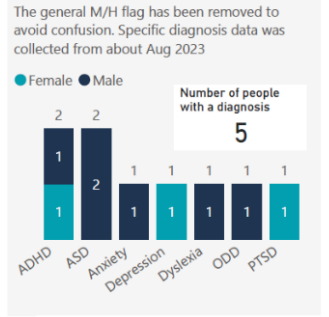
Primary Risk Category



Wider Risk Factors / Vulnerabilities



Neurodiversity Diagnosis



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5.2. An annual Exploitation and Missing report is produced to provide an overview of the MACE activity and performance, and the first one published in June 2023 was presented at the Corporate Parenting Board.

5.3. **Thresholds for referral to MACE**

The decision to attend the Pre-MACE Operational Panel will be made following a strategy discussion, where there are clear concerns regarding contextual safeguarding matters. When a decision has been made that a child or young people should be discussed the allocated social worker and/or manager will be invited to attend and key partners and other professionals will provide any information they hold about the young person or family. In advance of the meeting, the social worker will complete a referral including a risk assessment and have a clear safety plan, which should be collaboratively undertaken with a young person and family. When the social worker and manager attend the operational panel, they will clearly set out the risks and safety plan as well as sharing any concerns or barriers faced. Multi-agency partners will contribute with intelligence and solutions to enhance safety and protective measures and unblock identified barriers.

5.4. The pre-mace referral form includes the following risk descriptors for all referral categories:

- Emerging Risk – some evidence that the child or young person is at risk of exploitation and/or places him/herself at risk. Some concerns that the child/young person is at risk of being targeted or groomed, but there are some positive protective factors in the child’s life. The child/young person may require a referral to targeted early intervention services for education/intervention.
- Moderate Risk – Child is vulnerable to being exploited but there are not immediate/urgent safeguarding concerns. There is evidence the child/young person may experience protective factors but circumstances and/or behaviours place him/her at risk of exploitation.
- Significant Risk – Evidence/disclosure suggests that the child is at immediate and/or continuing risk of criminal exploitation and extra-familial harm. The child/young person is engaged in high-risk situations/relationships/risk taking behaviour. Evidence/assessments, suggest that the child is experiencing exploitation (they may not recognise this).

5.5. Significant risk factors including when exploitation is suspected, where there is concern that the abuse involves one or more abuser, multiple victims, a group, or where additional focus is required to monitor peer networks, locations and activities, the case is escalated to MACE for consideration.

5.6. There was a review of MACE in August 2023 with a focus on how the partnership could work more effectively to disrupt activity where child or young person are at risk of exploitation and or missing episodes. The data and intelligence shared at the MACE panel is used to identify locations and individuals of concern. For example, there was a cohort of young people who were brought to MACE as regular missing persons frequenting an address of an adult female. Police colleagues were able to service a Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) on the adult to disrupt the activity at the address. MACE partners were also able to link in with housing colleagues to consider enforcement under housing legislation as another way to disrupt the activity.

5.7. External organisations including Safer London and Red Thread regularly attend MACE panel to contribute to intelligence tasking and solutions, with Police, Safer Communities, Safer London, Health and Education, to enhance safety and protective measures and unblock identified barriers.

5.8. Intelligence covers cross-border issues that impact multiple Basic Command Units

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(BCU) and boroughs, including overview of children placed in and outside of the borough. Mapping and the sharing of this intelligence is key.

5.9. All professionals give appropriate consideration to the following Victim Offender Location Themes (VOLT) areas:

- a) Victim/children at risk of being exploited. Where an individual presents with concerns in more than one area (e.g. harmful behaviour and being exploited) they will be prioritised and discussed as a victim in the first instance.
- b) Offender(s)/perpetrators/persons of concern
- c) Location(s)
- d) Theme(s)

5.10. **National Referral Mechanism (NRM)**

5.11. In March 2023 Lewisham Children's Services launched its first National Referral Mechanism (NRM) panel after a successful Home Office bid for devolved decision-making pilot sites. The benefits of a local multi-agency decision-making process is that NRM decisions are informed by professionals who know the children and young people and the family, who have access to the latest information on the children.

5.12. Where the panel decide there are reasonable grounds to believe a child or young person is a victim of modern slavery, they qualify for a service from Barnardo's Independent Child Trafficking Guardian Service (ICTG). ICTGs are an independent source of advice for trafficked CYP in England and Wales and somebody who can speak up on their behalf. They are independent of those authorities responsible for making decisions about children. An ICTG direct worker provides one-to-one support for children for whom there is no one with parental responsibility for them in the UK.

5.13. Under the pilot we are achieving timely outcomes for children and young people, in particular for those who have entered the criminal justice system, as a positive NRM decision influence how they are dealt with by the courts for offences that they have been forced or coerced into doing.

5.14. **Case studies/outcomes**

5.15. Case Study 1

5.16. In July 2023 two Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) were served to disrupt and adults association with 5 children reported missing residing at Adult X's (female) address. The children were between 12 and 16 years of age and three were known to Lewisham Children's Social Care. There were concerns around sexual activity at the address and the adult female was known to misuse substances and had a mental health diagnosis of bi-polar known to misuse substance. In July Adult X was located at a property where a male was shot and wounded.

5.17. *Impact/Outcome:* Two Child Abduction Warning Notices CAWNs have been served on Adult X. Adult X's children have been made subject to CP plans. The case was discussed at MACE in September 2023 for perusal of a Slavery Trafficking Risk Order as some of the YP continued to frequent the address. MACE will use this cohort of YP as case study to plan a level 2 Contextual Safeguarding response, which is a response to contexts of harm as well as the individuals impacted.

5.18. Case study 3

5.19. A young person (male) convicted of supply of class A drugs offences linked to modern

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slavery, and sentence of a 10-month referral order. The young person received a negative National Referral Mechanism (NRM) on conclusive grounds as the young person was involved in exploiting a vulnerable adult in Southwark in his family home that he used as a cuckooed address. The themes picked up with this case was that the young person was not known to any services prior to this incident and questions were raised around the possibility of the young person's needs and vulnerabilities being missed historically. It is unusual for a child in this situation to have never been known or come to the attention of children's services.

5.20. Case study 3 (example of contextual safeguarding response from partners)

5.21. In July 2023, a large group of young people (15-20) from a Lewisham School were seen by an education colleague entering a location underneath the railway arches (Westdown Road, SE6). Concerns that weapons or drugs were being concealed in the area or that it could be a cover for activity that was occurring in the neighbourhood.

5.22. *Actions:* Education colleague reported the incident to the school's police and the Local Authority MACE Chair. The Safer Neighbourhood Team and Safer School's officers were deployed to the location and consider a weapon sweep of the area.

5.23. *Outcome/Impact:* The key holder for the location was spoken to and the location has since been secured preventing access. Therefore, activity at this location has successfully been disrupted. The MACE Chair has linked in with School's Officers who have agreed to attend MACE or pick up actions from MACE.

5.24. **Operation Make Safe**

5.25. In September 2023, Police colleagues visited local businesses to raise awareness around exploitation and how they can support with protecting children and young people if there are signs or indicators of exploitation observed during their contact with them. In total, 18 visits were conducted by the South East Child Exploitation Team as their contribution to the Met wide initiative. Venues included branches of McDonalds, Travelodge's, KFC, Costa Coffee, Independent Convenience Stores.

5.26. **Strategic MACE panel**

5.27. The strategic MACE panel is a multi-agency partnership that considers strategic matters that are fed through from the Pre-MACE operational panel, as well as local, national learning and good practice. It is co-chaired by the Police and Director of Families Quality and Commissioning.

5.28. The objective of this panel is a strategic oversight, accountability and ensuring the tracking of impact. Where there are blockages to plans, themes, locations, and persons of interest; these will be discussed here with a view to early identification, planning, and disruption.

5.29. The multi-agency responsibility includes adhering to and complying with Data Protection laws and regulations, understanding that the purpose of information sharing is to safeguard vulnerable children and/or to detect and prevent crime. The oversight also extends to ensuring that the oversight and actions from the panel is recorded.

5.30. Safeguarding as a result of MACE meetings has led to improved multi-agency protocols with reference to contextual safeguarding. Roles, responsibilities and procedures are clearly understood, accountability is clear and accepted.

5.31. Safety planning has been strengthened through robust multi-agency working which has led to timely investigation by the Police and evidence-based decision making in response

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to peer connections (including when specific cohorts and individual children are missing), location-based issues and contributed to disruption activity. The risk profile of children and those who exploit them within the extra-familial context is better understood so children and young people can receive specific support to reduce escalation and vulnerability to risk.

- 5.32. The MACE Purpose Statement has been updated to incorporate the promotion of Anti-Racist / Anti-discriminatory practice (appendix 1).
- 5.33. There is an existing Terms of Reference for the MACE, however this is currently being updated by the MACE partnership.
- 5.34. Individuals discussed at MACE panels are open to Children's Social Care and the rationale for sharing sensitive information is made explicit within the minutes. Information discussed by agency safeguarding representatives within the panel meeting is strictly confidential and generally not be disclosed to third parties without the agreement of the partners at the meeting.
- 5.35. Multi-agency partners will contribute with intelligence and solutions to enhance safety and protective measures and unblock identified barriers through consideration of the VOLT factors.

- 5.36. **Themes and trends**
- 5.37. County lines intensification week took place in Oct 2023. Police colleagues visited local businesses to raise awareness.
- 5.38. Safer Communities colleagues flagged an address in Bellingham as a location of concern to the MACE partnership. This enabled Children's Social Care and Police to complete checks to establish if any children were at the address. It was confirmed that no children were residing at the address, and it was already on the police radar due to concerns around substance misuse and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.39. The MACE Serious Youth Violence police partner and the MACE chair linked in the Children's Social Care Elevation Group with the police Stop and Search Charter to ensure that the voices of children and young people in Lewisham are heard. Questionnaires were completed by the young people to reflect their experiences and suggestions.
- 5.40. An estate in Catford was flagged as a hotspot. A location assessment is planned for this estate linking in with the Violence Reduction Team, Housing and Contracts Manager, and Safer Communities.
- 5.41. Police colleagues have shared police audit/risk assessment of the estate undertaken in 2022 which will feed into the children's services and Safer Communities location assessment of the area.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1. This report is for information and there are no expected cost implications. In a wider context, Lewisham have a vision to improve outcomes for young people by improving prevention for serious youth violence and exploitation and reducing higher costs at a later stage.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1. There are no significant legal implications arising from this report.

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8. Equalities implications

- 8.1. A priority in the Safer Lewisham Plan 2023 is Lewisham's Public Health approach to violence reduction and the reduction of disproportionality. The Committee will consider wider Equalities matters when reviewing the Plan and when making any recommendations. The Integrated Adolescent Service and the MACE framework adopts a trauma informed, anti-racist approach that builds on the successful work of the Lewisham Youth Justice Service. Disproportionality is now a standing feature of the MACE performance reporting such as ethnicity and gender, and this will assist in identifying areas that need attention in relation to anti-racist practice and the journey of the black and mixed heritage child.

9. Crime and disorder implications

- 9.1. The purpose of the Safer Lewisham Partnership Plan 2023 is to set out the strategic approach to crime and reducing violence. The approaches outlined in this report are in line with this plan in partnership with the wider Council.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

- 10.1. The overall purpose of the Public Health approach is to improve the overall health and wellbeing of all residents in the borough. Crime and serious violence have wider implications for the borough such as resident safety, desirability to live in Lewisham, mental health, education, and employment outcomes and so on. Taking a public health approach allows the partnership to take a place-based approach to tackling these issues.

11. Background papers

- 11.1. [London Borough of Lewisham - Open - Find an Inspection Report - Ofsted](#)

12. Glossary

Term	Definition
MACE	Multi-Agency Child Exploitation A multi-agency case management forum coordinating support and interventions to reduce the risk of child exploitation to children and young people up to the age of 25 year where they are screened at medium/high risk of being criminally or sexually exploited.
MAPPA	Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements The process through which various agencies such as the police, the Prison Service and Probation work together to protect the public by managing the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community.
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference A meeting where information is shared on the highest risk domestic abuse cases between representatives of local police, probation, housing, and other specialists.
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation When a child or young person is exploited, they're groomed by being given things, like gifts, drugs, and money in exchange for carrying out a criminal activity.

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Term	Definition
VOLT	The VOLT mnemonic is used to ensure that key information and intelligence is properly captured, as follows, V - Victim, O - Offender(s)/perpetrator/person of concern, L - Location, T -Theme(s)
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls An umbrella term used to cover a wide variety of abuses against women and girls, including domestic homicide, domestic abuse, and sexual assault.
CAWN	Child Abduction Warning Notice A measure of protecting a child who is regularly missing but may also be used to address controlling, grooming type behaviour which is not associated with missing episodes.
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder A developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. People with ASD often have problems with social communication and interaction, and restricted or repetitive behaviours or interests.
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder A condition that includes symptoms such as being restless and having trouble concentrating.
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation A term used to describe where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child under the age of 18 into sexual activity.
SYV	Serious Youth Violence Defined as any offence of most serious violence or weapon enabled crime where the victim is aged 1-19, i.e. murder, manslaughter, rape, wounding with intent and causing grievous bodily harm.
YJS	Youth Justice Service Multi-agency service made up of several professionals from different agencies, who work together to prevent children and young people entering the youth justice system for the first time, supporting them to move away from offending.
HSB	Harmful Sexual Behaviour Involves one or more children engaging in sexual discussions or acts that are inappropriate for their age or stage of development. These can range from using sexually explicit words and phrases to full penetrative sex with other children or adults.
NRM	National Referral Mechanism A framework identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. Modern slavery is a complex crime and may involve multiple forms of exploitation. (NRM first launched in Lewisham in March 2023).

13. Report author and contact

13.1. Patricia Garner, Head of Service, Integrated Adolescent Service

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13.2. *Patricia.garner@lewisham.gov.uk*

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MACE Purpose Statement

Lewisham's Tactical MACE (Multi-Agency Child Exploitation) is a strategic panel which has oversight of children & young people (10-25 yrs.) where the primary concerns relate to extra-familial risk including but not limited to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation including County Lines (CCE), Missing Children and Serious Youth Violence (SYV) in Lewisham.

The main purpose of the panel is to promote the safety and well-being of children, young people and communities from harm in a collaborative and multi-agency manner. Ensuring that all agencies are making necessary use of the powers and resources at their disposal to safeguard children and young people. Tapping into resources to share information; planning for safety for young people, organisations & locations; delivering interventions to prevent and disrupt violence and exploitation in LB Lewisham.

The MACE is committed to promoting Anti-Racist, Anti-Discriminatory & Anti-Oppressive practice. This includes challenging biases, adultification, micro-aggressions and all forms of prejudice. Collectively, the MACE seeks to achieve and uphold these standards and practices by creating safe spaces in which to discuss and consider children and young people whilst challenging itself and others when these standards are not being upheld (*i.e., calling out racism, discrimination and biases*); by incorporating inclusive language which doesn't victimise or blame young people & by encouraging and promoting cultural competence and cultural sensitivity at all times.

We encourage all partners to adopt the same guiding principles and to share positive and critical learning in order to promote our mission.

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