

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**

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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



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



