

# 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

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**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](http://lewisham.gov.uk/sanctuary)



and their contribution to our communities

1:16

### 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.

**“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.”**  
Cllr Juliet Campbell, Cabinet Member for Communities, Refugees and Wellbeing

**“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 for me means hope and a bright future.”**  
Abdul, Lewisham resident

#### 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:

- 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."
- 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!"
- 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](http://lewisham.gov.uk/sanctuary)

#### 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](http://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



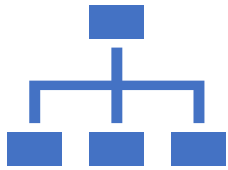
The Council plays an active role in the **Asylum and Refugee partnership meeting**



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

