



Borough of Sanctuary Strategy 2025–2028

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A borough of
equity and justice



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About this document

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Introduction

As set out in our Lambeth 2030 Borough Plan, we are committed to making Lambeth a borough of equity and justice. We are proud to have been accredited as a Borough of Sanctuary since 2022 and of the services we deliver for those fleeing war and persecution.

People seeking sanctuary are valued members of our community, and their experiences are at the heart of this strategy. This document and our three-year action plan will play a crucial part in our commitment to make Lambeth a place that we can all call home.



Foreword

From Cabinet Members for Healthier Communities Councillor Nanda Manley-Browne and Councillor David Bridson

For years, Lambeth has been woven together by the contributions of communities who have sought sanctuary within our borders, and by diverse communities pioneers who have shaped our local history.

We are the home of Windrush, the heart of London’s largest LGBTQ+ community, and home to the capital’s largest Portuguese-speaking population alongside our growing Latin American community. From South Bank and Waterloo to Brixton, Streatham, and West Norwood, Lambeth has been shaped by generations of people who chose to make the borough their home.

Supporting people seeking sanctuary is important to who we are as a borough. Our compassion means standing with those who have fled persecution and violence to seek safety here. We recognise the challenge it is to

rebuild a life in a new country. Yet despite this, people seeking sanctuary bring strength, skills, and cultural richness to Lambeth, contributing to our communities in countless ways.

Over the past three years, Lambeth Sanctuary Services has coordinated support across the borough. We have increased access to advice, strengthened partnerships with community organisations, and helped ensure that people seeking sanctuary can access the opportunities they need to thrive. This work has created a strong starting point, but we know there is still more to do.

We are working in a difficult environment, with local services under pressure and national policies creating challenges. Even so, our commitment remains strong. We will keep working closely with our partners to respond with care and real action.

Our vision for Lambeth as a Borough of Sanctuary supports our broader Lambeth 2030 ambitions and our commitment to be a borough of equity and justice.

We want a future where people seeking safety are welcomed as valued members of our community and known for what they bring to Lambeth. This strategy explains how we will work together to make that happen. It is based on partnership, shaped by the voices of people with lived experience, and rooted in Lambeth’s long-standing values of welcome and support.

We invite everyone in Lambeth to be part of this work, because building a true borough of sanctuary means working together to create a place where everyone who seeks safety can feel they belong and can thrive.



**Nanda Manley-Browne,
Councillor**



**David Bridson,
Councillor**

What Do You Need To Know About This Strategy?

Lambeth has proudly been an accredited Borough of Sanctuary since 2022, only the second London borough to get this recognition from City of Sanctuary. This shows our commitment to welcoming people seeking safety, helping them feel secure and access support and opportunities.

Being a Borough of Sanctuary is about more than helping individuals seeking safety. It strengthens our whole community by celebrating diversity and promoting fairness and justice – values at the heart of Lambeth. Our commitment remains strong, even as recent national events put people seeking sanctuary' at greater risk. All our sanctuary work is funded entirely by central government grants.

Our vision as a Borough of Sanctuary is to make support easier to access for people seeking safety and to raise the voices of those with lived experience.

This aligns with Lambeth's 2030 goal to be a borough of equity and justice.

Our 2025–2028 strategy sets out how we will achieve this through:

- Better access to health, education, and employment
- Safer, decent accommodation
- Support for independent living and awareness of refugee rights.



Since creating our Sanctuary Services team in 2021 and gaining Borough of Sanctuary status in 2022, we have:



Welcomed 1,000+ guests through Homes for Ukraine. Lambeth has maintained one of the lowest host–guest breakdown rates in the UK.



Resettled 116 people through Afghan schemes.



Helped 124 individuals seeking sanctuary and 100 families move from hotels to stable housing.



Supported education: Five schools gained sanctuary status, 35 children joined international classes, and 177 adults enrolled in learning.



Delivered health and wellbeing initiatives, including Active Lambeth access for 230 asylum seekers and therapeutic support.



Improved safeguarding through education and the Holiday Activities and Food programme.

Lambeth currently supports diverse people seeking sanctuary across multiple programmes.

56

Our **asylum accommodation** hosts guests from 56 nationalities (most commonly Colombia, Afghanistan, and Eritrea) speaking 28 languages, with 39% being families.

37

Through the **Afghan Resettlement Programme**, we have resettled 37 households totalling 114 individuals since 2021, with 38% aged 17 or younger.

32

Our **Syrian resettlement schemes** have supported 32 families into private rented accommodation since 2016, exceeding our initial pledge.

1,039

The **Homes for Ukraine scheme** has welcomed 1,039 Ukrainian guests since April 2022. These guests have been predominantly female (65%) and aged 21–40 (44%), demonstrating Lambeth’s sustained commitment to providing sanctuary across diverse communities and circumstances.

Our strategy is supported by our action plan, which sets out the specific actions the council is delivering and will undertake to achieve our vision. **The actions in the plan are split into six strategic themes:**



1. Theme: Promoting Integration and Access to Accommodation

We will: Support access to safe, affordable housing for people seeking sanctuary, ensuring they understand their rights as tenants and receive coordinated support to integrate and thrive in the community.



2. Theme: Communication and Raising Awareness

We will: Inspire greater understanding of asylum and refugee experiences and actively engage people seeking sanctuary to co-produce processes. Increase awareness of council and commissioned services, empowering people seeking sanctuary and ensuring fair, inclusive support for all Lambeth residents.



3. Theme: Providing Access to Education, Skills, and Employment

We will: Create opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to improve language skills and access employment, training, volunteering, and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).



4. Theme: Enhancing Health and Wellbeing

We will: Expand access to health and well-being services for people seeking sanctuary, ensuring support for mental, physical, and social needs.



5. Theme: Strengthening Safeguarding

We will: Strengthen our support to ensure the safety of people seeking sanctuary.



6. Theme: Supporting Young People

We will: Address the specific challenges young people face when seeking sanctuary, empowering them to integrate into communities and making sure they receive the support they deserve.

This strategy and action plan were developed in partnership with people seeking sanctuary, statutory partners, and community organisations, and we will continue to rely on their support for its delivery. Lambeth Sanctuary Services will maintain engagement through meetings, events, and forums to ensure people seeking sanctuary remain central to this strategy. Additionally, sub groups within the Sanctuary Forum will create safe spaces for people with lived experience to co-deliver the plan and ensure it delivers the best outcomes for all involved.

What is a Borough of Sanctuary?

A Borough of Sanctuary is an accredited status given as part of the City of Sanctuary initiative. It identifies a welcoming place where all those seeking sanctuary can feel welcome, safe and are able to access opportunities and the support needed to thrive.

Lambeth stands proudly as a Borough of Sanctuary since 2022, joining this initiative that coordinates networks across the UK to support people seeking safety in our communities.

Being a Borough of Sanctuary is not just about supporting individual asylum seekers coming to Lambeth. It is also about building a stronger community where diversity continues to be celebrated and everyone has a chance to thrive. Lambeth has been and continues to be a Borough of Sanctuary because our values of equity and social justice are fundamental to who we are as a borough.

As only the second London borough to achieve this official status, we embrace the profound meaning of sanctuary – providing a safe place for those who have fled their homes due

to violence or persecution and continuing to offer support to those who may face ongoing insecurity in their new home. This includes asylum seekers, resettled refugees, sponsored arrivals, long-standing Lambeth residents experiencing immigration insecurity including those affected by Windrush, children in our care with uncertain status, and women fleeing violence who face restrictions due to their immigration circumstances.

Our commitment to support those seeking sanctuary and keep them safe has only strengthened in the face of recent developments across the country which has placed them under greater risk.

Our ongoing work to be a Borough of Sanctuary is funded entirely through grant funding supplied by central government.

This funding is specifically designated to support people seeking sanctuary who arrive through safe and legal routes, and activities outlined in the action plan are dependent on the continuation of this funding.



Our Vision

“Lambeth’s vision as a Borough of Sanctuary is to improve access to support for all people seeking sanctuary and raise the voices of people with lived experience.”

This document is our Borough of Sanctuary Strategy, which sets out our 2025–2028 plan for how we will deliver on this vision and how we will support people seeking sanctuary in Lambeth to thrive.



The strategy is supported by our Borough of Sanctuary Action Plan 2025–2028 (at the end of this document). The action plan sets out clear steps on how we will achieve our vision. Actions include:

- Improving the accessibility of health, education, employment, and other support services for people seeking sanctuary services
- Supporting people seeking sanctuary in Lambeth to access safe, decent accommodation
- Enabling people seeking sanctuary to have a smooth transition into independent living, such as improving awareness of refugee rights and resources available to them.

We will keep reviewing our actions as we deliver this plan. It supports Lambeth’s 2030 goal to create a borough where everyone can flourish and ensures people seeking sanctuary are part of our future. Our aim is for Lambeth to be not just a Borough of Sanctuary, but the best place to grow up and age well—a place we all call home. Equity and justice guide everything we do.

Our Achievements as a Borough of Sanctuary

Lambeth Council created its Sanctuary Services team in 2021 to support those seeking asylum, the Homes for Ukraine Programme, and the Refugee Resettlement teams. In July 2022, Lambeth passed the motion to become a Borough of Sanctuary and was officially awarded this status by the City of Sanctuary in December 2022.

Since then, the Lambeth Sanctuary Services (LSS) programme has achieved many milestones and successes:

1. Promoting Integration and Access to Accommodation

- Lambeth residents have welcomed over 1,000 guests through the Homes for Ukraine programme. We have one of the lowest number of host/guest breakdowns in the UK Homes for Ukraine scheme
- LSS have resettled 116 people from this Afghan Resettlement Programme in Lambeth
- We supported 124 single people seeking sanctuary who were granted status to leave hotel accommodation and move into private rented sector housing to prevent homelessness
- We supported 24 single women to move into safe, supported accommodation to prevent homelessness. Each individual received wraparound support and tailored move-on assistance to help them transition toward independent living
- We assisted 100 families granted status to move from hotel accommodation by explaining their housing options and providing essential bedding and kitchen items to support their move.

2. Communication and Raising Awareness

- In January 2025, Lambeth Libraries received the Libraries of Sanctuary award for their role in welcoming people seeking sanctuary. They are the second library service in London to achieve this
- We have held 147 drop-in engagement sessions, held three times a week for those living in hotel accommodation within Lambeth
- We held three incredible weeks of World Refugee Week events, partnering with arts charities, Clapham Park Run, and theatre groups. The celebrations featured food, music, performances, and storytelling, highlighting the experiences and contributions of people seeking sanctuary, challenging myths, and showcasing our work.

3. Providing Access to Education, Skills, and Employment

- We supported five schools to achieve sanctuary status
- We provided 89 free school uniform grants to reimburse schools who purchased uniforms for children from sanctuary-seeking families
- In response to the lack of availability of school places for Year 10 and 11 students, Lambeth Education launched international classes – only the second borough in London to do so. 35 children have enrolled in these classes
- In collaboration with Lambeth Adult Learning, we delivered two ESOL classes with digital skill courses for people from the Lambeth hotels and other asylum seekers
- In collaboration with Lambeth Adult Learning, we engaged 177 learners from asylum seeking or refugee backgrounds in adult learning courses. This included 20 learners on the Ukraine Scheme, 73 people seeking asylum and 84 refugees
- In collaboration with the Good Things Foundation, we received and distributed 50 laptops and 200 SIM cards.

4. Enhancing Health and Wellbeing

- We provided access to Active Lambeth for approximately 230 asylum seekers. The council also currently provides free access to talented local athletes and looked after children
- LSS collected 166 donated coats and 88 donated shoes for sanctuary-seeking families in need
- Working with Lambeth Adult Learning and High Trees, students with lived experience of asylum engaged in a course called Shared Stories, to design a Welcome to Lambeth Guide to support other people seeking sanctuary that are new to the borough
- We arranged therapeutic support for residents arriving under the Afghan resettlement schemes, delivered through the Refugee Council
- Working with Lambeth Child Looked After Mental Health Service we delivered an initiative open to Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) which provided fast-track mental health assessment and care service.

5. Strengthening Safeguarding

- We work with partners such as the Home Office to respond to safeguarding concerns for vulnerable residents, including conducting reviews of safeguarding policies and procedures
- We work with NHS Health Inclusion Teams, who run clinics for people seeking sanctuary, ensuring a joined-up approach with Public Health and community services involved
- We regularly engage with hotel staff, the Home Office, and contractors to reduce risks related to the wellbeing of people seeking sanctuary who are living in hotel accommodation.

6. Supporting Young People

- We ensure fair access to education for children from sanctuary-seeking families through regular engagement with primary and secondary school admissions and community organisations. These meetings help ensure children have all the support they need to attend school
- Promoted the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme among sanctuary-seeking communities through engagement sessions and by working with Fight for Change young advisers who directly engage other young people and families in hotels
- We delivered welcome projects for families with young children that offer non-clinical interventions to improve wellbeing and build understanding of UK systems

- The UASC team organised two football competitions in 2025 and 2022 for our UASC and UASC care leavers to bring them together and help them settle into our communities
- We have received money from the Department for Education for a mentoring programme which we have distributed to local charities including South London Refugee Association and Da'aro Youth Project for mentoring. This supports newly arrived UASC and links them to local facilities, communities and legal firms to support their applications.

The support we offer is varied to address the challenges those seeking sanctuary face. This strategy includes three case studies to highlight the impact our support can have ensuring individuals and families become settled members of the Lambeth community.



Who We Work With

The Lambeth Sanctuary Forum, our multi-agency partnership working alongside the voluntary and community sector, will coordinate delivery of this long-term plan.

Together, we will continue Lambeth’s proud tradition as a place of sanctuary, ensuring we never turn our back on those seeking our help, and that every person who arrives here can rebuild their lives safely.

Membership in the Sanctuary Forum includes:

Lambeth Council	South London Refugee Association	The Baytree Centre	Care4Calais
St Vincent de Paul	English for Action	Citizens UK	Department for Work and Pensions
South London Refugee Association	Single Homeless Project	NHS South East London ICB	City of Sanctuary
New Vision for Women	Guys & St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust	Individuals with lived experience	Learning Unlimited
High Trees	Department for Works and Pensions Representative	Lambeth College	Morley College



Case Study – Refugee Resettlement In Lambeth

My name is Abdul*. I arrived in the United Kingdom in 2021 from Afghanistan together with my mother, father, and brother.



When we first came, everything was completely new – the culture, the language, and the expectations for the future. During the first year, we lived in different types of accommodation, including hotels and other temporary placements. It was a very uncertain and difficult time. After that, we moved to Lambeth, where we stayed in temporary accommodation for two years.

With the support of Lambeth Council and the Single Homeless Project (SHP), we were finally able to move into a council house. This was a huge achievement and a great relief for us, as finding stable accommodation had been extremely challenging.

When we first arrived, none of us understood the English language or the culture, and we were unaware of many of the difficulties we would face. Thanks to the support from Lambeth Council and SHP, we were introduced to services and integrated into society.

I successfully completed my English language studies. My brother, who could not understand a single word of English when we arrived, has now finished school and works as a cricket trainer, teaching young children.

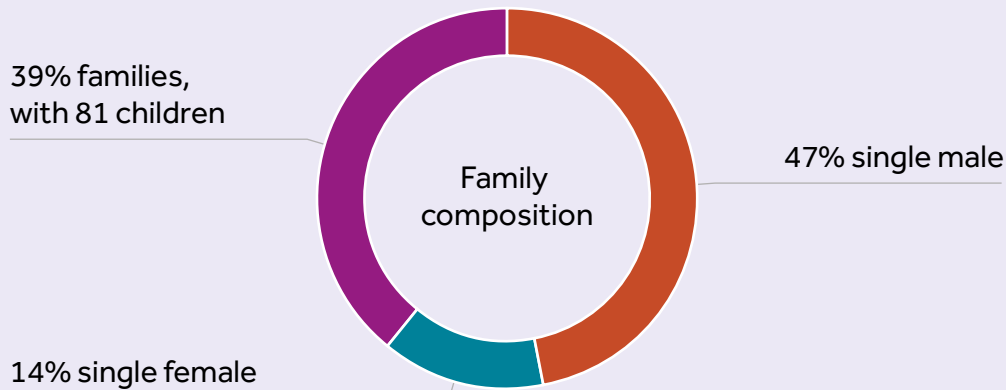
Now, I live with my parents, but I am expecting my wife and two children to arrive in the UK shortly. Again, I am very grateful to Lambeth Council and SHP for supporting me in preparing suitable accommodation for them. My father has also established his own grocery shop, and he is very happy and comfortable in his career.

As a family, we are now more confident and independent. With the help of Lambeth Council and SHP, we have been able to integrate successfully into the culture, language, education, housing, and health system here in the UK. We are thankful for the guidance and opportunities provided, which have made a real difference in our lives.

*Name changed for confidentiality purposes. Stock image posed by a model.

What We Know About Sanctuary Seeking In Lambeth

Asylum Hotel Demographics



56 nationalities represented.

Most common nationalities in order of prevalence are:

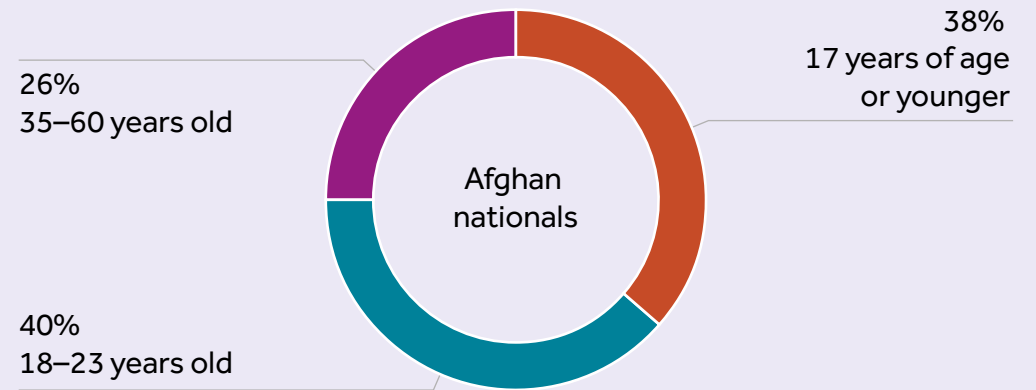
- 1) Colombia
- 2) Afghanistan
- 3) Eritrea,
- 4) Iran
- 5) Somalia
- 6) Kuwait
- 7) Pakistan
- 8) Jordan
- 9) Georgia
- 10) Albania

28 languages spoken.

Most common languages in order of prevalence:

- 1) Arabic
- 2) Spanish
- 3) English
- 4) Tigrinya
- 5) Pashto, Pushto

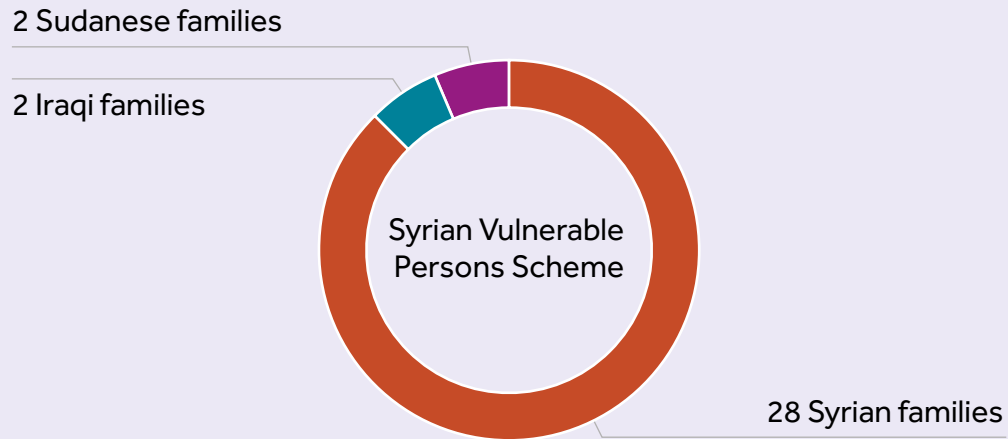
Afghan Resettlement Programme



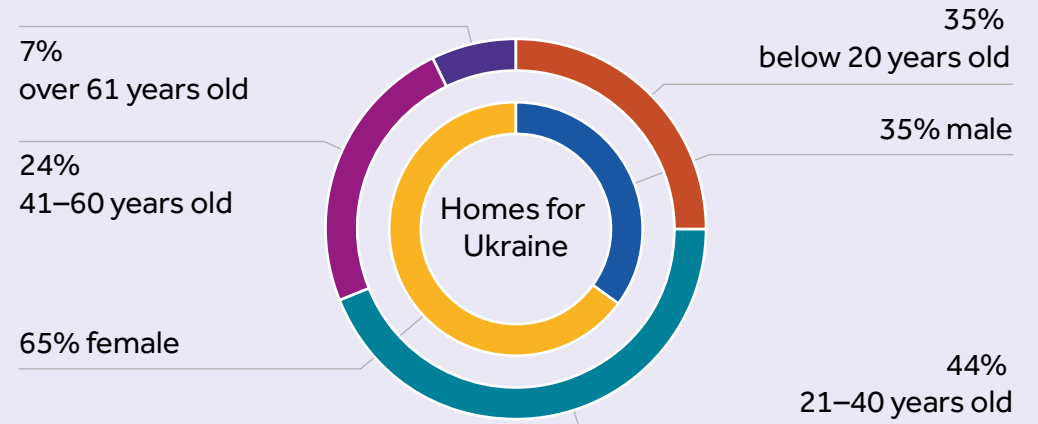
The first arrival in this programme was a family of three in 2021. Since then, we have resettled a total for 37 households in private rented accommodation.

There are 114 Afghan nationals in this programme, the majority of which are families.

Syrian Resettlement Programme (Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and Vulnerable Children’s Resettlement Scheme)



Homes for Ukraine Scheme



From April 2022 to August 2025, Lambeth has hosted 1,039 Ukrainians in Lambeth.

Our Strategic Themes

Our strategy sits alongside our action plan (at end of this document) which sets out the specific steps the council is delivering to achieve our vision. Actions in the plan are split into six strategic themes.



1. Theme: Promoting Integration and Access to Accommodation

We will: Support access to safe, affordable housing for people seeking sanctuary, ensuring they understand their rights as tenants and receive coordinated support to integrate and thrive in the community.

Creating a true sense of home means more than providing walls and a roof. For people seeking sanctuary, safe and decent accommodation is the foundation that helps people feel part of their community. Across

our engagement sessions, we often heard how finding safe accommodation is one of the top issues for people seeking sanctuary in Lambeth. Community organisations and people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary also told us that the support services that go alongside housing are equally important, whether this is strengthening the ways we share information to people moving into Lambeth or by supporting staff and volunteers who work directly with asylum seekers to share available services.

We will treat every person seeking sanctuary as a valued future neighbour who will contribute to our community. This means we support people to move from temporary Home Office accommodation into stable private housing. It means we make sure existing housing is safe and good quality. We welcome new arrivals and create clear pathways that lead to real independence. Through better communication and stronger support services, we will make sure that every person who seeks sanctuary in Lambeth has the opportunity to not just survive, but to thrive and contribute to our borough's future.

Our actions for the theme of 'Promoting Integration and Access to Accommodation' fall under these areas of activity:

- **Providing safe, decent accommodation:** Expand housing stock outside of London. Support those most in need seeking sanctuary to move from Home Office hotels into the private rented sector. Support the Home Office to ensure accommodations are safe.
- **Increasing awareness of support services:** Improve communication of services available. Review the LSS resettlement offer for refugees' post-status grant to ensure support for a quick transition to independent living.
- **Welcoming new people seeking sanctuary:** Welcome new people under the UK Government Resettlement Schemes in 2025/2026.



2. Theme: Communication and Raising Awareness

We will: Inspire greater understanding of asylum and refugee experiences and actively engage people seeking sanctuary to co-produce processes. Increase awareness of council and commissioned services, empowering people seeking sanctuary and ensuring fair, inclusive support for all Lambeth residents.

Arriving in the UK as a person seeking sanctuary can feel overwhelming. Learning new systems and dealing with language barriers can make it hard for people seeking sanctuary to feel fully settled away from their homes. We want to create clear, easy ways for people seeking sanctuary to connect with services no matter where they are in Lambeth, so our borough feels more like home.

In Lambeth, our approach to communication is focused on providing easy, clear ways to access services. Often, the main reason why

people seeking sanctuary do not use the resources available to them is because they do not know that these resources exist. The more information we can share about local services, the more people seeking sanctuary can feel a part of their local communities. People with lived experience of seeking sanctuary reminded us in our engagement sessions that a key part of this work is continuing to support those who speak little or no English with materials in their languages and opportunities to take English language classes.

We also want to make our own staff better at helping people seeking sanctuary, so as part of this theme we will give training to our employees. We will create campaigns to promote local events and celebrate our values of equity and welcome, inside and outside the council. We will work with other London councils, organisations, and government to learn from and connect to others.

Our actions for the theme of 'Communication and Raising Awareness' fall under these areas of activity:

- **Involving people seeking sanctuary:** Provide a single point of access for people seeking sanctuary. Invite the Sanctuary Forum to nominate new members with an interest in supporting people seeking sanctuary, including those with lived experience
- **Regional and national coordination:** Work with other councils on key issues and share national updates with the Sanctuary Forum
- **Campaigning and advocacy:** Promote campaigns on equity and justice throughout the year. Create a community-wide communications plan that shares local events, including for future Refugee Week events
- **Strengthening Lambeth's role:** Make sanctuary training available for Lambeth staff. Ensure Lambeth Libraries embed principles of the Libraries of Sanctuary accreditation.



3. Theme: Providing Access to Education, Skills, and Employment

We will: Create opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to improve language skills and access employment, training, volunteering, and ESOL.

Work and school are at the heart of our community. These places connect us, give us purpose, and let us use our talents to make the places we call home stronger. Helping people seeking sanctuary to join Lambeth schools, find jobs, and volunteer is central to this strategy. It helps people keep learning while becoming valued members of local communities.



The actions in this theme will help new schools achieve School of Sanctuary status, increase volunteering opportunities, and provide job support. Through talking with our community of community organisations and people seeking sanctuary, we heard directly that English language support is often the key to finding job opportunities. By making it easier to access English as a Second Language classes and making sure people seeking sanctuary know about opportunities, we can create ways for people to settle fully in our borough.

We also learned how important it is to use a refugee-centred approach in schools so young people feel included, supported, and safe to continue their education. By working with more schools and volunteers, we want to strengthen and spread this approach.

Our actions for the theme of ‘Providing Access to Education, Skills, and Employment’ fall under these areas of activity:

- **School Accreditation:** Support schools who wish to achieve school of sanctuary status
- **Awareness of support:** Increase awareness of the support available for employment, ESOL and volunteering opportunities
- **Improving volunteering:** Working with VCS to offer volunteer opportunities.



4. Theme: Enhancing Health and Wellbeing

We will: Support access to health and wellbeing services for people seeking sanctuary, ensuring support for mental, physical, and social needs.

Accessing health and social care services in a new country can be a challenge for people seeking sanctuary, especially if English is not their first language. Yet, many people seeking sanctuary arrive in the UK with health conditions, often from their prior experiences. For example, people seeking sanctuary face the stress of leaving their home countries and may need support with their mental health. Through our discussions we heard how accessing health care for previous health conditions can be a challenge – often this can lead to people



seeking care only when they've reached a crisis point. The actions under this theme to promote health services aims to better support this group by encouraging early care.

In Lambeth, we know that good health is an important part of feeling settled and happy in a new place. We want to make sure that people seeking sanctuary can easily find and use the doctors and health services in their area. We also understand that food is important for staying healthy. People with lived experience of seeking sanctuary have told us the difference that finding culturally appropriate, healthy food can make to their wellbeing. For people seeking sanctuary who are staying in hotels, we will help make sure that hotel food meets public health standards.

Our actions for the theme of 'Enhancing Health and Wellbeing' actions fall under these areas of activity:

- **Upholding food standards:** Support hotel accommodation providers to ensure their food safety standards align with public health recommendations, with a particular focus on providing suitable, nutritious foods for children aged 0–5.
- **Promoting health services:** Enhance accessibility and increase use of primary care health services. Develop and provide inclusive materials outlining how to access essential NHS services. Explore a specialised Asylum Mental Health service.



5. Theme: Strengthening Safeguarding

We will: Strengthen our support to ensure the safety of people seeking sanctuary.

Having fled from areas of insecurity and often violence, people seeking sanctuary deserve to feel and be safe in our borough. Refugees and asylum seekers have the same right to safety as any other person. This includes protecting the data of people seeking sanctuary to maintain their privacy. This also applies to those providing support who must ensure sensitive data is kept confidential.

Our approach to safeguarding is part of all other themes. This is because all services, resources, and activities provided for people seeking sanctuary should be delivered in a respectful manner that supports people seeking sanctuary's right to safety and privacy. Lambeth Council will continue promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults who are engaged in this work.

Our actions for the theme of 'Strengthening Safeguarding' actions fall under these areas of activity:

- **Safeguarding in hotel accommodation:** Review safeguarding policies and procedures with hotel contractors to ensure safe accommodation.
- **Data protection:** Ensure there is an up to date contingency plan to mitigate against any security concerns for people seeking sanctuary and providers in Lambeth.





6. Theme: Supporting Young People

We will: Address the specific challenges young people face when seeking sanctuary, empowering them to integrate into communities and making sure they receive the support they deserve.

Young people seeking sanctuary face challenges that often require support to become part of new communities, join schools, and support their mental health. This is especially the case for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), who are under the age of 18, applying for asylum, and are separated from both parents and not in the care of a legal or customary guardian. Sanctuary seeking can be a challenging experience, but additional language



barriers, trauma from family separation, and a difficult asylum process can make things even harder. Our partners who work with young people shared opportunities to make services supporting young people more joined-up and refugee-centred.

There is also a continued need for awareness of the needs and rights specific to UASC and those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), especially among schools and service providers. This strategy aims to provide support for age dispute cases in Lambeth’s Home Office accommodation. We are also committed to better promoting our services for young people to make sure that they receive the services and support they deserve.

Our actions for the theme of ‘Supporting Young People’ actions fall under these areas of activity:

- **Promote education services:** Ensure children from sanctuary-seeking families have equitable access to education and receive support to integrate into schools
- **Awareness raising:** Increase awareness of NRPF and of UASC Children. Provide support for age dispute cases in Home Office accommodation in Lambeth.

How We Will Know We Have Been Successful

The success of this Borough of Sanctuary strategy will drive our progress toward our Lambeth 2030 vision and outcomes, including for Lambeth to be recognised not just as a borough of sanctuary, but as the best place to grow up and age well – a place we can all truly call home. Our Golden Thread of Equity and Justice runs through this work, so that everything we do is grounded in our values of fairness.

To follow our progress, we will ensure our Borough of Sanctuary actions are reported and tracked through the Lambeth 2030 Outcomes Framework and reported at Sanctuary Forum and LSS Oversight Board.

We know that over the course of a three-years strategy, a lot can change when we are delivering this work. We want this action plan and strategy to be flexible to any changes in nationally, in funding, population, and community needs.

We will speak to the Sanctuary Forum and LSS Oversight Board to discuss how LSS can respond to any changes that may change the delivery of this strategy. Where needed we will speak to the community to make sure that those who are impacted by this work have a say in its direction. We will review our action plan annually, and it will remain subject to financial planning.



Case Study – Homes for Ukraine

My name is Sofia*. When I first arrived in London through Lambeth’s Homes for Ukraine program, I hoped to be able to rebuild my life in safety. However, I found it difficult to navigate the UK job market with no guidance or connections, and I felt lost in a system I didn’t understand. Most painfully, I felt the loneliness of being in a new country without friends, family, or a familiar community.

Ukrainian Support stepped in and transformed my experience. The team assessed my housing situation and connected me with a new host family. The relationship with this family flourished so well that I maintain contact with them, even after our formal hosting arrangement ended. Recognising my employment struggles, the Ukrainian Support team provided personalised job coaching, helping me craft my CV, identify relevant opportunities, and offering practical advice. This support paid off quickly when I quickly found a job.

Perhaps most meaningfully for me, Ukrainian Support regularly hosted events and gatherings that allowed me to explore London and meet other Ukrainians in similar situations. I began to meet new friends, and my loneliness started to fade.

When the time came for me to transition to independent living, Ukrainian Support orchestrated what felt like a fresh start. They arranged the deposit for my new accommodation and thoughtfully provided everything I needed to establish my own home, including kitchen essentials, bedding, bathroom supplies, and work-related items. This meant I could focus on building a new independent life rather than worrying about basic necessities.



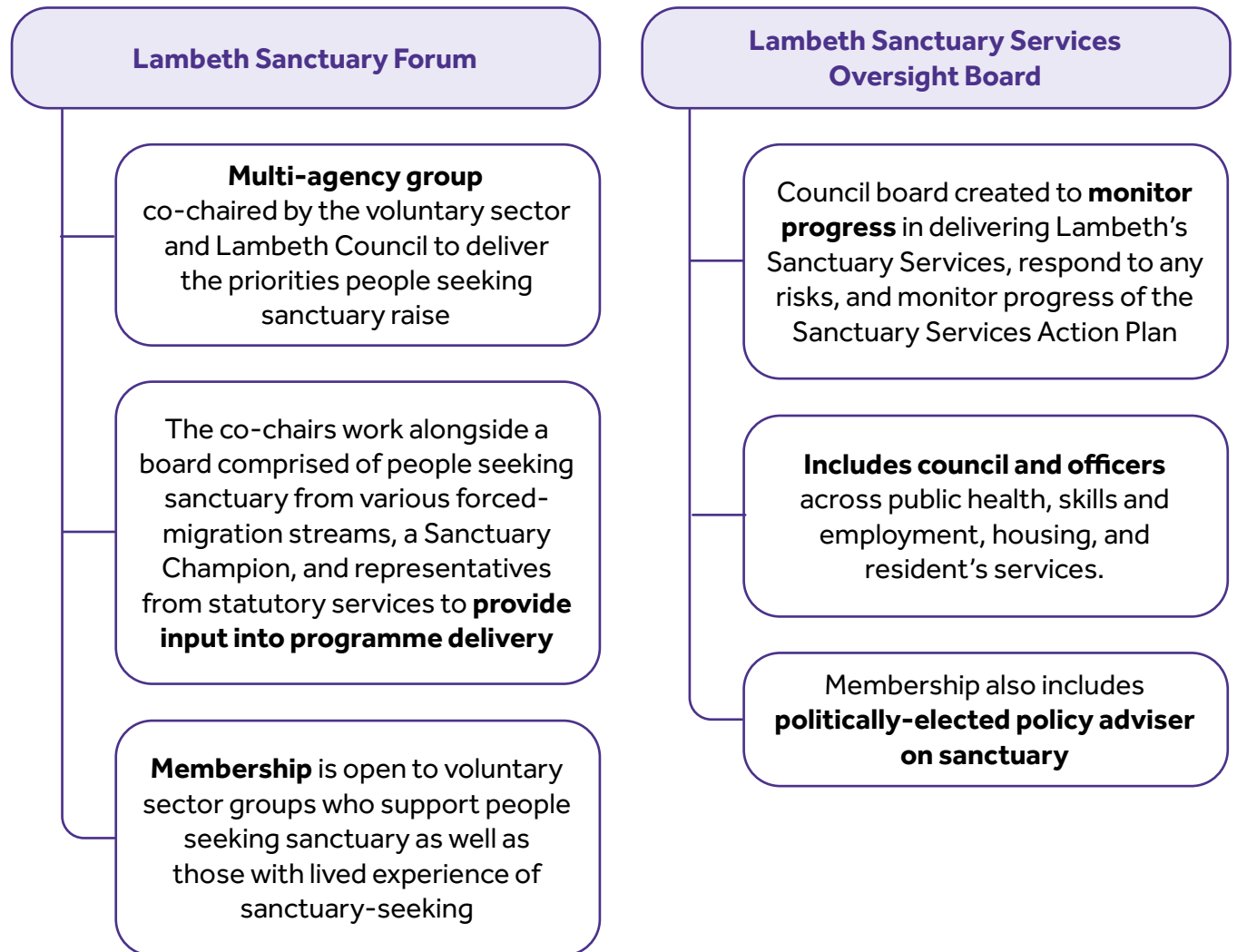
*Name changed for confidentiality purposes. Stock image posed by a model.

Delivery Approach and Partnership Working

Our mission as a Borough of Sanctuary is to improve access to support for all people seeking sanctuary and raise the voices of people with lived-experience. To achieve this vision, we will need to work with community partners, faith groups, and service providers across Lambeth.

How We Will Make Decisions

Together, the Lambeth Sanctuary Forum and the LSS Oversight Board will support the delivery of this strategy and will act as a safe space for people seeking sanctuary to provide feedback on the delivery of this work. Through meetings with both groups, voluntary and community sector organisations, faith groups, statutory partners, and people seeking sanctuary, we offer an ongoing space to contribute to the direction and delivery of this strategy.



Working Regionally and Nationally

Many of the risks Lambeth faces in delivering this strategy are shared throughout London and the UK. To respond LSS is committed to **working with regional partners** across London to share and learn best practices.

Lambeth frequently works with **national government bodies** such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Home Office, to deliver support.

Working with the Community

The creation of this strategy and delivery of this action plan (at the end of this document) would not have been possible without the views of people seeking sanctuary, statutory partners, and community organisations, for which we are deeply grateful. Partnership will remain at the heart of this strategy as we deliver it – the actions we have set out require support across council services, external partners, and people seeking sanctuary to carry out.

Community views were important to the creation of this strategy. While this strategy is now published, this does not mean that engagement ends. Throughout the lifetime of this document, LSS will use the meetings above, in addition to events, forums and conversations to make sure that people seeking sanctuary continue to have a voice. The Lambeth Strategic Partnership will explore the role partners can play to deliver this Borough of Sanctuary action plan as part of our ambition to make Lambeth a place we can all call home.

LSS will organise sub-groups within the Sanctuary Forum with people with lived experience to create a safe space where people seeking sanctuary can provide ideas about how this programme is working. Together, we will co-produce the LSS programme so it can deliver the best outcomes for all involved.



Case Study – Adults Education, Skills And Employment

My name is Robert*. From March to July 2024, I studied a Digital Skills for Work IT course with High Trees. During this time, I gained valuable skills in software use, especially Microsoft programs, which have boosted my confidence and will help me in future work opportunities.



When I joined the course, I had recently moved to the UK and had no friends. The sense of community I found at High Trees was invaluable. Guiseppe and Alex understood my situation and supported me during this adjustment period.

Midway through the course, I faced a major challenge. The Home Office relocated me from my accommodation in London to the horrible Bibby Stockholm barge. Despite this, the High Trees team ensured I could continue learning by providing a laptop for remote classes. This support allowed me to complete my course and maintain contact with the team, who had become like family.

The course went beyond IT training. I received self-assessment materials that helped me stay engaged during my time on the barge. The laptop also allowed me to access therapy sessions, which were critical for my mental health. Without this support, I don't believe I would have managed through such difficult circumstances.

Lambeth Adult Learning's funding and delivery of these courses is making a significant difference.

- Through my IT training, I have confidently searched for jobs and attended online interviews.
- The course fostered a strong sense of community. In my class, people from all over the world sat in the same class and shared stories and experiences, often staying after lessons to continue our conversations.
- These courses don't just teach skills—they connect people and create friendships that ease the isolation many newcomers like me face.

*Name changed for confidentiality purposes. Stock image posed by a model.

Appendix One: Action Plan

This is a high-level version of the final action plan which details the theme, long-term outcome and associated action.

1. Promoting Integration And Access To Accommodation

Long-Term Outcome	Actions
Increase access to safe, affordable housing for people seeking sanctuary, ensuring they understand their rights as tenants and receive coordinated support to integrate and thrive in the community.	Support people seeking sanctuary to access safe, secure, and affordable housing in the Private Rented Sector, reducing homelessness and reliance on temporary accommodation.
	Ensure people seeking sanctuary in Lambeth have clear, accessible information on health, housing, education, and employment by creating simplified, translated resources.
	Welcome new families under the Government Resettlement Scheme including Afghan Resettlement Programme and the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme in 2025/26.
	Review the resettlement offer for people seeking sanctuary through co-production to ensure residents receive holistic support and experience a smooth transition to independent living.
	Boost training and information-sharing for professionals supporting people seeking sanctuary enabling them to assist vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers in navigating their situation.
	Collaborate with Lambeth Council Housing teams to advocate for safe, secure living conditions in ensuring alignment with council standards with a key focus on Home Office Accommodation in Lambeth.

2. Communication And Raising Awareness

Long-Term Outcome

Inspire greater understanding of asylum and refugee issues and actively involve people seeking sanctuary in training and awareness-raising initiatives.

Increase awareness of council and commissioned services, empowering people seeking sanctuary and ensuring inclusive support for all residents.

Actions

Expand the membership of the Sanctuary Forum, with a focus on supporting and including people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in Lambeth.

Work collaboratively with other London councils to identify key issues, share best practices, and cooperate on solutions to improve support for people seeking sanctuary in London.

Contribute national policy updates impacting on people seeking sanctuary with lead members in the Sanctuary Forum and key stakeholders to strengthen Lambeth's advocacy on challenges facing people seeking sanctuary and service providers.

Deliver a programme of events annually for Refugee Week to amplify local events and initiatives and connect people seeking sanctuary and Lambeth Council supporters.

Increase awareness of NRPF across key stakeholders including people seeking sanctuary.

Promote internal and external campaigns on inclusivity, anti-discrimination, equity and justice throughout the year.

Make sanctuary-specific training available for all Lambeth employees, including on topics such as trauma-informed approaches for working with vulnerable groups.

Ensure Lambeth Libraries continues to embed principles of their accreditation as a Libraries of Sanctuary, including by providing materials in multiple language and offering tailored support.

Review LSS's current support for asylum seekers to assess service effectiveness, identify gaps, and explore opportunities to adapt services.

3. Providing Access To Education, Skills, And Employment

Long-Term Outcome

Create opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to improve language skills and access employment, training, volunteering, and ESOL

Actions

Support Lambeth schools to achieve School of Sanctuary status.

Work and partner with borough stakeholders to improve access to ESOL through sustainable models like an ESOL single point of contact (SPOC) and raise awareness of ESOL opportunities for people seeking sanctuary, especially those with historically low service access.

Partner with local VCS organisations to create a structured plan offering volunteer opportunities for people seeking sanctuary.

4. Enhancing Health And Wellbeing

Long-Term Outcome

Encourage food providers to meet guidelines and nutritional standards for a healthy balanced diet in alignment with Public Health recommendations, with a particular focus on children aged 0-5.

Actions

Encourage food providers to **Home Office Hotel Accommodation** to meet guidelines and nutritional standards for a healthy balanced diet in alignment with Public Health recommendations, with a particular focus on children aged 0-5.

Explore the potential for a specialist mental health service designed to support people seeking sanctuary, particularly those who face disadvantages and struggle to access mainstream health services.

5. Strengthening Safeguarding

Long-Term Outcome

Strengthen our support to protect and empower people seeking sanctuary.

Actions

Conduct a review of the safeguarding policies and procedures of hotel contract providers.

Ensure there is an updated contingency plan to mitigate against any security concerns for people seeking sanctuary and providers in Lambeth

6. Supporting Young People

Long-Term Outcome

Address the specific challenges young people face when seeking sanctuary, empowering them to integrate into communities and making sure they receive the support they deserve.

Actions

Support children from sanctuary-seeking families to have equitable access to education and receive the necessary support to integrate effectively.

Increase awareness of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children among key stakeholders and provide support for age dispute cases within Home Office accommodation in Lambeth.

A borough of
equity and justice

