



Welcome the Stranger

Deal Town of Sanctuary Strategy & Action Plan 2023 – 2026

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1. Purpose of Document

On 31 January 2023 members resolved to sign the pledge of membership to become part of the City of Sanctuary initiative.

RESOLVED that the following objectives be approved and submitted as the shared vision for the City of Sanctuary accreditation application:

1	Deal Town Council is committed to welcoming asylum seekers and refugees to Deal.
2	Deal Town Council recognises the potential of refugees and their contribution to our town
3	Deal Town Council adopts a comprehensive, co-ordinated and forward-looking approach to the needs and welfare of people moving into the town and supports building community cohesion between new and existing communities
4	Deal Town Council, in conjunction with DARA, will work to implement the City of Sanctuary pledges through its action and policies together with its partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors
5	Signing the membership pledge means Deal Town Council will develop a "Town of Sanctuary" strategy and ensure the needs of refugees and asylum seekers are considered in its policies and working practices.

The Strategy & Action Plan has been prepared in collaboration with Kent Refugee Action Network, The Samphire Project and DARA and with an open minded view to work with all stakeholders for the benefit of people seeking sanctuary.

The Strategy & Action Plan sets out what Deal Town Council will do to make Deal a welcoming town for people seeking sanctuary.

2. Background

City of Sanctuary is a mainstream, grassroots movement. It works by creating opportunities for relationships between local people and those seeking sanctuary, and by offering a positive vision of a culture of hospitality and practical assistance for those in need of safety.

Deal Town of Sanctuary as part of this organisation, will be made up of different people and organisations who work in different ways to make the town a place of welcome and safety for people seeking sanctuary from violence, war, and persecution. In support of this work, it builds on practical experience of welcoming strangers to Deal for many years.

Deal is aiming to apply for City (Town) of Sanctuary status in autumn 2023.

Deal Town Council has signed up to the Local Authorities City of Sanctuary Networks Group.

3. Principles

Our aims and priorities are underpinned by a *Human Rights* approach with an emphasis on self-help. Deal Town Council will seek to act in accordance with City of Sanctuary principles to demonstrate good practice in working with people seeking sanctuary and to encourage others within the town to offer the same good practice.

Deal Town Council will work in partnership with the voluntary sector and with asylum seeking and refugee communities, and with all organisations who support City of Sanctuary principles and who are committed to welcome, inclusion and equality.

We recognise the influence which Deal Town Council can have on public perception and understanding of asylum seekers and refugees, and their reasons for seeking sanctuary in Deal, if we use positive and accurate language about people seeking sanctuary in all media, policy statements and publicity materials.

4. Aims & Priorities

Priorities & Aims:

	Priority & Aim	How	Who
1	The relief of financial hardship amongst those granted and seeking refugee status and their dependents living (temporarily or permanently) in Deal and the surrounding area.	To provide funding opportunities through Deal Town Council's Grant Streams. To signpost to relevant organisations who can assist.	DTC Finance & General Purposes Committee DTC Communications Officer
2	To advance the education and training of those granted and seeking refugee status and their dependents in need thereof so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.	To assist in facilitating workshops for schools on sanctuary issues in partnership with Samphire, KRAN and DARA. To assist in advertising via DTC website the provision of other awareness raising events.	DTC Sanctuary Grant Stream DTC Communications Officer
3	To advance the education of the public in general, including landlords and local authorities, on the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.	To facilitate information days at the Town Hall. To participate in social and cultural events where people seeking sanctuary and local people interact To be involved in the promotion of events and activities for Refugee Week.	Council to provide Free Use of the Town Hall for one information day/evening in addition to DARA's information day during refugee week. Information day to be organised by the Councils Event Manager, Facilities Officer and Communications Officer in liaison with DARA, Samphire and KRAN Mayor to attend social and cultural events in the town. Communications Officer to signpost events on DTC website and Facebook page. Communications Officer to signpost on DTC website and Facebook page.

4	The provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship, or social and economic circumstances.	<p>To grant free use of the Town Hall Chamber for concerts, drama productions, and art events by Refugee artists.</p> <p>To provide funding opportunities through Deal Town Council's Grant Streams.</p> <p>Broader advertising of Deal Warm Welcome in additional languages</p>	<p>DTC Finance & General Purposes Committee</p> <p>Communications Officer</p>
5	To develop the capacity and skills of the members of the refugee community of Deal in such a way that they are better able to identify, and help meet, their needs and to participate more fully in society.	<p>Improve consultation with refugees and asylum seekers on town issues.</p> <p>To explore projects which help Refugees to feel more welcome and included.</p>	<p>Communications Officer in liaison with DARA, Samphire and KRAN</p> <p>Town Clerk and Officers</p>

5. Consultation

The strategy aims to improve consultation with refugees and asylum seekers on local town issues. The strategy also aims to improve consultation and shared working with those involved in providing services for refugees and asylum seekers.

DARA (Deal Area Refugee Aid) was formed in 2021 as a humanitarian response to the emergency evacuation from Afghanistan and with the increase in people arriving after hazardous journeys across the Channel. The group's main activity developed with active fundraising with increasing support from the public in the town.

Samphire started life as the Dover Detainee Visitor Group back in 2002. It came into being as a result of concerns felt by a number of local residents about the plight of the people detained at the newly established Dover Immigration Removal Centre – a Prison Service operated facility for detaining up to 400 migrants on the site of a disused borstal on Dover's Western Heights. Their mission is to improve the lives of people released from immigration detention and experiencing destitution in the UK, and to support the development of well-informed, cohesive, and diverse communities in the Dover area and beyond.

KRAN was established in 2003 to support refugees and asylum seekers (RAS) in Kent. Over the past years, it has grown to develop several projects in response to the needs of young RAS. One of our first projects, which continues today, is the Mentoring partnership project matching local volunteers in the community with young people.

6. A Co-Ordinated Community Response

The Town of Sanctuary accreditation will raise the profile the work being undertaken for the benefit of refugees and asylum seekers and how the community can support this work, seeking to encourage a coordinated community response to bring people together to identify who does what and when to enable a service user or issue onto the relevant organisation.

It also seeks to start and share the evidence of good practice that is already taking place by other local authorities and voluntary organisations to enable awareness of this, how the community in general can assist in these operations.

Some people seeking sanctuary need generic services to help them rebuild their lives and flourish and others have specialist care or health needs and need to use specialist services. Generic services need to be supported to ensure they have sufficient understanding to include people seeking sanctuary in everything they do, but also understand when to refer to specialist support services. It is noted that some specialised knowledge is needed to work with people seeking sanctuary, especially when offering advice, legal advice, and advocacy.

As the Strategy & Action Plan is implemented a more coordinated and transparent Community Response will develop to ensure better outcomes for the refugee or asylum seeker. In addition, it will aim to ensure that everyone, who wants to do more to support refugees and asylum seekers, is able to contribute.

Resettlement programmes in particular, where people seeking sanctuary are brought into the UK and are given full citizenship rights from arrival, provide opportunities for active citizens and volunteers to volunteer and contribute to improving the lives of resettled families. Any volunteering must comply with safeguarding best practice and there should be supervision of volunteers working with resettled families.

7. Conclusion

Deal Town Council will work closely with DARA, KRAN and Samphire and the local community to ensure it provides a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for people seeking sanctuary within the town of Deal.