

Summary of ways to get involved in supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Lancaster and Morecambe district

September 2021

1. **Lancaster and Morecambe City of Sanctuary** is an umbrella body for the various groups working to support Asylum Seekers and Refugees (AS&R) in the district. It has the following aims:



- To help provide a welcoming place of safety for people fleeing violence and persecution, building a culture of hospitality and inclusiveness within the city.
 - To promote health and well-being by raising funds to support e.g. Welcome packs, grants, interpreters, social activities, bike accessories, extra free English lessons, school uniform...
 - To liaise regularly with the network of partner organisations and relevant agencies, working collaborative to ensure holistic support for all our asylum seekers and refugees
 - To work with councils, politicians, churches, schools, agencies and local authorities to raise awareness of the issues faced by those seeking sanctuary, and communicating and facilitating the exchange of information with the general public
 - You can find out more info about the different groups and ways to get involved at: <https://lancasterandmorecambe.cityofsanctuary.org/getting-involved> or <https://www.facebook.com/lamcityofsanctuary/>
 - Contact admin@lancaster.cityofsanctuary.org for more information
- **English Classes**, coordinated by Eleanor Denvir with support from Caro Slaski in cooperation with Lancaster and Morecambe College.
For those interested in participating direct them to this email:
esol-admin@lancaster.cityofsanctuary.org
Please get in touch with Jennifer MacLennan and Pol Marshall at volunteers@lancaster.cityofsanctuary.org to volunteer or if you feel you can help with:
- 1) Assisting in teaching English at the different classes.
 - 2) Supporting in extra ways – e.g. by providing extra input/have English conversation.

- 3) Assisting in the financial support for stationery, rent, resources for teaching English and sponsoring cinema or museum tickets etc.
- 4) Providing simple reading books for children and adults, and magazines or providing monetary donations for this.
- 5) Providing visual aids like posters, world maps etc. or providing monetary donations for this.

➤ **Band of Brothers (BoB) A new group that has started and aimed solely for ASR men**

- The core event is BoB café and takes place each Friday from 11-1pm. The café offers space for chat, food, drink, IT support and games as well as offering advice or signposting to other ASR services.
- BoB has also expanded into many other activities, especially during the summer period, which have included Football, Pottery, Walking and Music among others. This initiative is still growing and will need more volunteers to support its expanding programme of possible activities.

Please get in touch (admin@lancaster.cityofsanctuary.org – reference BoB) if you can offer any time to support these activities; the amount we can offer will depend heavily on the availability of volunteers.

2. Red Rose Refugees

At Lancaster University the Red Rose Refugees group works alongside the Students Union, the Sanctuary Network, local NGOs (like City of Sanctuary) and students to provide opportunities and support to asylum seekers and refugees. They host many fundraising events and have held panel discussions and Q&As in the past year, as well as collections for Calais, and have run campaigns to secure student scholarships for Asylum Seekers and Refugees (AS&R) in Lancaster University.

For more information about their activities and how to join in visit their Facebook page <https://en-gb.facebook.com/Redroserefugees/>



3. City and County Councils, contact person: Caroline Jackson

If you would like to know more about what is being done by the City and County Councils to support asylum seekers and refugees, please contact – caroline54jackson@gmail.com

4. **Global Link at the YMCA, New Rd, LA1 1EZ** - <http://www.globallink.org.uk/> , email g.renolds@globallink.org.uk

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/globallink.dec>

Phone number: 01524 36201



- Provides support, information, advice, advocacy and onward referral for asylum seekers and refugees, and is open to AS&R from Mondays - Thursdays.
- Global Link also runs activities for asylum seekers and refugees, including workshops, courses and well-being activities such as the Sunday Claver Hill food growing project.
- They coordinate a range of community cohesion activities, such as the weekly Lunch Drop in, and community celebrations.
- Donations of good quality clothes or shoes are collected, but please call **01524 36201** to see whether they have space in our storeroom.
- Information FOR and ABOUT refugees and asylum seekers is provided at www.refugeehome.uk

5. **East meets West, Baptist Church LA1 1PT**

(cross-cultural group for women)

- They run a Drop-in for women and young families on Thursdays from 12 to 2 pm at Dallas Road Gardens, or on Zoom during wet weather. To attend or get involved, contact Hilary Hopwood on eastmeetswest6@gmail.com
- Other ways in which women can get involved - e.g through donating items for women and young families, providing storage space for items that have been donated, www.open.ac.uk or housing single women or those with young families for the short term.



6. **RAIS, The Cornerstone , Sulyard Street LA1 1PX**

Email: coordinator@rais.org.uk or info@rais.org.uk

Contact via Website: <http://rais.org.uk/contact-us/> **Helpline:07731552259**

- Drop-in Monday and Thursday 3.00-5.00pm for advice and help with correspondence from the Home Office, housing, practical issues, emergencies, etc. Volunteers will be allocated to families and individuals as contact person to help in all sorts of different areas, translators are available.
- **Their immigration solicitor**, Susan Liew, will also be at the Cornerstone on Mondays for legal advice. To make an appointment please call the Helpline



- The RAIS helpline **07731552259** is open Monday – Thursday, 10.00 – 12.00. Asylum seekers, refugees and volunteers are welcome to call us if you think we may be able to help:
- For furniture Donations please contact Hilary on hilarychuter@yahoo.co.uk
Website <http://rais.org.uk/>

7. **Claver Hill Community Food Growing Project, LA1 3JY** – supporting asylum seekers and



refugees who want to volunteer at the community food growing project near Central High School. Anyone who wants to find out more can come at various days and times which can be arranged with whoever is on site that day. They also have a multi-lingual co-ordinator named Ziaur. To find out ways to get involved contact:

Ziaur Rahman Ajab Khan Telephone: **07483237596** Email: z.khan@globalink.org.uk
or kathybarton54@yahoo.com

8. **Bikes for Lancaster-** Bikes are a brilliant way of getting around our district cheaply. They provide a way to exercise and the independence to, for example, take a trip to the seaside, to access less expensive shops, and to travel to English classes and volunteering workplaces. Bikes for Lancaster repairs donated bikes to make them usable and then loans them to asylum seekers and refugees. They sometimes sell bikes to fund the purchase of spare parts and accessories (helmets, lights etc). Their ongoing work includes fixing mechanical problems as they arise and replacing stolen bikes. They would also like to run workshops to teach basic maintenance skills, and to teach people how to ride, or to improve their cycle skills.

- **Contact: Sue Holden: holdensue@gmail.com**

Ways to get involved:

- if you know how to fix bikes come and join one of our regular sessions at our workshop - or take a bike home and fix it there
- teaching people who cannot ride how to do so
- accompanying asylum seekers on bike rides (for leisure, or to show them key safe routes)
- donating bikes of reasonable quality which you no longer need, or money to enable us to buy spare parts and accessories

9. The Sewing Café



Uses creative ways of engaging with asylum seekers and supporting them - through sewing gatherings, also free clothes, shoes, bedding available and opportunity to mend clothes. Contact Victoria Frausin for more info

sewingcafelancaster@gmail.com

Website: <https://sewingcafelancaster.com/>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/sewingcafelancaster/>

10. Tara Centre, The Storey LA1 1TH, Wellbeing

The therapies they offer can help with relaxation, reducing stress and inducing a sense of wellbeing. Due to the situation over the last year wellbeing drop ins are not currently taking place but a new service offering a range of therapies free to asylum seekers and refugees is starting up. These sessions take place on Monday afternoons by appointment only. Appointments are made through Dorothea Williamson from City of Sanctuary or by texting **07830107008**.



Contact elham@taracentrelancaster.org.uk to find out more about what they offer in terms of wellbeing for asylum seekers and refugees.

Website: <https://www.taracentrelancaster.org.uk/>

11. St Thomas Church, Marton Street, Lancaster LA1 1XX

The aim of the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Support Network within St Thomas church is to provide a coordinated response in relation to supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees (AS&R). They work alongside the key groups that already work with AS&R in Lancaster and Morecambe District (such as City of Sanctuary, Global Link, RAIS, East meets West and others).

Members of St Thomas church who are part of the network are all connected via a mailing list that gives them updates about ways in which they could volunteer, provide items and other forms of support to AS&R. The network is gradually getting more involved in supporting the work of Lancaster City of Sanctuary especially in relation to hosting AS&Rs (by providing accommodation) and providing English conversation classes. The church also provides information and support to AS&R who are interested in exploring Christianity. Members of the network are also active in mobilising support for AS&R through their workplace or through informal/community networks that they are part of.

To find out more contact: asr@st.tees.org.uk

12. Other ways in which you can engage:

- Translating - looking for Arabic, Kurdish Sorani and Farsi speakers.
- Donating furniture – Please contact Hilary Chuter at RAIS (see above) or Mandy Whitehouse on mandywhitehouse@sky.com
- Providing Storage Space for items that have been donated
- Do you have skills in repairing household items, DIY or decorating? Help is much appreciated on a one-off or regular basis.
- Become part of St Thomas church Asylum Seeker and Refugee support email data base, and we will inform you regarding AS&R activities, donation or accommodation requests, possibilities of getting involved such as opportunities for social interaction and other forms of support - all these activities relate to helping AS&R during their stay in our city. you of any events or requests for items/help needed in relation to asylum seekers or refugees living in our city. Contact Maja Moller on asr@st.tees.org.uk to subscribe or for any more information about the support network.

Compiled by St Thomas Church, Lancaster