

COVENTRY – CITY OF SANCTUARY

Do you have a personal place of sanctuary – a place where you can feel safe and comfortable? For refugees, Coventry is becoming, if not already, just such a place of sanctuary.

For many years, especially since 2000 when Coventry became one of the Government's twelve major dispersal-cities away from London, Coventry has had a proud tradition of offering a home to refugees and asylum seekers, whose lives were in danger in their own countries. Many have lost homes and families but they have brought new skills, music, food and hard work to contribute to the life of the city.

The City of Sanctuary Movement – cities which welcome those seeking safety

City of Sanctuary is a national grassroots-movement of local people, churches and faith groups, community groups, business, schools, GP surgeries and many other organisations. They share a common aim to ensure that their city is a welcoming place for people seeking sanctuary from war or persecution, and other vulnerable migrants.

Sheffield in 2007 was the first city in Britain to be designated a City of Sanctuary after receiving over 70 letters of support and commitment from local organizations and undertaking an ongoing programme to support their status as a City of Sanctuary. More than twenty other cities are now interested in following Sheffield's example. Coventry is right up there aiming to be the second. To achieve this status wide support will need to be gathered backed up not only by words but positive action.

Bishop Christopher wrote after his arrival in the Diocese: 'As a newcomer to Coventry I am deeply grateful for the warm welcome I have received over the past weeks. I would very much like to see the same hospitality extended to those seeking sanctuary from abroad in this city, often having had to flee their homes for fear of losing their lives. I hope that as many churches as possible will join in supporting this initiative to have Coventry designated a City of Sanctuary.'

Supporting organizations promise to welcome and include people seeking sanctuary in their activities. By doing this, they help local people and new arrivals to meet and work together to improve their communities.

A 'Coventry City of Sanctuary' task group, including Churches Together with Refugees in Coventry, after an informal meeting of enthusiasts on the way back from Sheffield in May 2008 was formally established in September 2008, with a vision to see this culture of welcome and hospitality developed across the city of Coventry.

Please send a pledge of support from your church, or from yourself as an individual, to 'Coventry City of Sanctuary', c/o Coventry Peace House, 311 Stoney Stanton Road, Coventry CV6 5DS. If you wish, you can use the statement below as a model. Feel free to add to it and to vary the wording to fit your circumstances. Your pledge of support is really important to us. Thank you.

For further information:

- Visit the City of Sanctuary website www.cityofsanctuary.org,
- Read the 'Coventry, City of Sanctuary' Newsletters, (issue 2, June 2009 click [here](#))
- Contact Penny Walker at Coventry Peace House (024 7666 4616) or the Secretary of Churches Together with Refugees in Coventry (CTRIC), the Revd Tim Brooke (024 7667 9126) or Rev Dr John Hall (024 7652 1326)
- Return your pledge and contact email: coventry@cityofsanctuary.org

City of Sanctuary Pledge of Support

Model statement of support

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[Name of organization/individual]

declares support for Coventry to be designated a City of Sanctuary.

We/I are/am committed to welcoming, and including in our/my activities, those who seek sanctuary in our city. We/I also pledge to identify ways in which we/I can continue to improve the welcome offered.

Signed

Date

Name (in capitals)

Position held

We/I would like to have information on future developments:

Contact name

Tel no.

Contact address

Email