

What to do where there are no refugees (yet):

6 practical ideas for new City of Sanctuary groups in rural or non-dispersal areas

[from www.cityofsanctuary.org]

1 Collect money or goods for refugees in European cities or camps (Calais, Lesbos etc.) - best to do this through one of the international NGOs working on the Refugee Crisis in different places throughout Europe and beyond such as *Medecins du Monde*, *Red Cross* etc. They all need money! If anyone wants to collect goods, clothing etc. or even to drive to a particular place to help, please check online for a very latest list of what particular organisations and places require as some places have received quite a lot of inappropriate donations while being in great need of other things.

2 Supporting refugees in the nearest dispersal area by fundraising or volunteering for a *local City of Sanctuary group* or other organisations. Some cities have voluntary hosting schemes for destitute asylum seekers which are likely to be in huge need of funds and voluntary help – contact *NACCOM* for details of where these are. In many places, local City of sanctuary groups or other organisations run drop-ins or welcome projects or provide limited face-to-face advice and signposting and other services for asylum seekers and refugees which probably need more voluntary help,

3 Respite breaks and holidays – it can be really valuable for asylum seekers and refugees to get away for a few days into the countryside – to experience some local hospitality and culture, to practice English, and just to meet and share with people (don't forget they have a great deal to offer as well as having needs). For other places doing this already see <http://www.thegrangenorfolk.org.uk/index.php/blog/22-being-a-home-of-sanctuary> or <https://maternity.cityofsanctuary.org/2015/07/25/smiles-shrieks-and-sanctuary-in-malhamdale-the-best-weekend-ever> or https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFof48l_EqA&feature=youtu.be

4 Lobbying and campaigning - there are lots of online petitions etc. At present the Immigration Bill (which will make it possible, among other things, for families to be made destitute, hence for children to be put on the streets) will have its Third Reading on 1 Dec – see <https://cityofsanctuary.org/2015/11/18/a-quick-update-on-the-progress-of-the-immigration-bill-at-committee/> for more information and suggestions for writing to your MP etc, and look out for further updates.

Also you can ask your MP to join the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Refugees and watch out for follow-up from Sanctuary in Parliament 2 on 1 December – see <https://cityofsanctuary.org/2015/11/30/sanctuary-in-parliament-useful-documents-and-information/> If you are in Wales, please note Sanctuary in the Senedd on 10 December - more information very soon. There will be similar events in Scotland and Ireland next year.

5 Working with your Council on Syrian resettlement – if you are not in touch already, do find out who in your Council is dealing with this. Many Councils have already pledged to take a small number of Syrians but may need reassurance that local people are supportive and will be welcoming in practical ways; others may still need pushing to join in.

6 Local awareness-raising. - you could approach local organisations to pledge support (see *Resources* for sample pledge forms) or perhaps arrange for someone, especially a refugee, to come and talk to e.g. a school, church group or other local organisation. Ask either your nearest City of Sanctuary group or one of the national team if they can help find someone to do this – we will do our best, though can't promise to meet every request.