

Swansea City of Sanctuary – How Can your Church help?

People seeking sanctuary have much to offer, but face huge challenges.

Many live for years in fear of deportation. They strive for permission to stay here in safety but are not believed by the authorities.

They face mistrust from the general population, poverty, and often complete destitution.

Welcome, friendship, appreciation and practical help make a big difference.

In every church there will be two or three people who could make that difference. If a church acts together even more can be done.

Here are some ideas.

Awareness raising in your congregation

- Invite City of Sanctuary to give a talk or awareness raising session, or take part in a service.
- Ask us for regular articles in your newsletter
- Arrange for individuals or a small group to visit local drop-in sessions
- Offer a meal or outing to asylum seekers or refugees
- Display our "Asylum Seekers and Refugees are Welcome Here" sign

Look after people seeking sanctuary in your congregation. For example

- Write support letters
- Involve them in your activities
- Ask them to help. Use their skills
- Find out more about their support needs

Fund-raise for local asylum seeker and refugee charities

- Share Tawe – hosting and support project
- Asylum Justice (Free legal help project)

- Welsh Refugee Council Hardship Fund

Standing orders, one-off donations, group fund-raising all welcome

Donations in kind, e.g. of toiletries and cleaning products.

Some people are completely destitute and nearly all asylum seekers are living in poverty.

Volunteering. From an hour once a month to taking a lead role in a specific project!

- **Help at a drop-in.** Informal language support, befriending, driving, shopping or cooking
- **Offer temporary accommodation** for people who are destitute through Share Tawe. Bed and breakfast is sometimes enough!! 3 households in a church could share the responsibility for one person.
- **Organisational work:** Minute taking, volunteer organising, committee work, public speaking, training, facilitation, publicity
- **Helping to start new projects** – e.g. joining a group to research and manage different models of housing for people who are destitute
- **Work in your neighbourhood.** Pending new funding, Swansea City of Sanctuary is planning a scheme to visit new asylum seekers as they arrive, and to introduce them to local services
- **Involvement in national campaigns.** For example, Right to Remain runs national campaigns to stop people being unjustly deported. Still Human, still Here campaigns against destitution.

Involvement through your work or community role. All of the ideas above may be of interest to your colleagues or friends.

You may be able to offer a work placement or want ideas to make your service more accessible to people seeking sanctuary

NB for further details or a conversation about any of these ideas please email swansea@cityofsanctuary.org