# Cities across Britain respond to asylum seeker crisis with support and concern



Towns and cities across Britain are reacting to the ongoing asylum seeker crisis with a mix of concern and, in some areas, an overt willingness to provide support. While many local residents express unease over the implications for community resources and housing, a number of cities are proactively welcoming newcomers.

The City of Sanctuary movement, which aims to create safe spaces for asylum seekers and refugees, has gained traction across the UK, with more than two dozen communities, including Newcastle, Brighton, and York, achieving recognition as Cities of Sanctuary. This initiative encourages local voluntary groups to become members and create a nurturing environment for those seeking refuge.

Newcastle stands out as the city with the highest number of supported asylum seekers, with statistics indicating 43 per 10,000 residents and a total of 1,323 individuals. Volunteers from local charities are pivotal in providing essential services. In Wallsend, Joan Hoult, a member of the charity Walking With, oversees a group that supports 468 asylum seekers. She highlighted the dire circumstances many of her clients face, stating, "These people often come from countries where torture and corruption are rife and if they need to flee with their children then they must be desperate," speaking to MailOnline.

Ms Hoult's team not only supplies food, toiletries, and clothes but also organises activities like bike rides and football matches to help integrate newcomers into local life. She added that the misconception surrounding asylum seekers often overlooks the backgrounds they come from, with many arriving from affluent backgrounds before facing violence or persecution.

Brighton, known for its historical open-mindedness, has a considerably lower number of asylum seekers at 157, equating to six per 10,000 of the population. Nevertheless, the local sentiment remains welcoming. Claimed by residents such as Kamal, a former asylum seeker from Sudan, the city's community has been pivotal in creating a supportive environment following challenging initial experiences. Kamal noted, "I can't believe the difference. Brighton was welcoming compared to all the places I was before."

Local figures like Alex Briault, who runs the Brighton Fishing Museum, echoed this sentiment, remarking on Brighton's longstanding tradition of acceptance, while Councillor Bella Sankey emphasised the contributions migrants make to the richness of the city's culture and economy.

York, hosting 352 asylum seekers—17 per 10,000 residents—also showcases a sense of solidarity. Paul Wordsworth, leading York City of Sanctuary, explained their focus on providing support across various community locations rather than a fixed office. This adaptability addresses the pressing needs of those fleeing conflict, including a significant population from Ukraine.

Stories from residents reflect a diversity of opinions. While some express concern around the authenticity of individuals claiming asylum, others, like Alison Letten, stress the potential that newcomers bring, particularly those escaping dire situations. Letten commented on the welcoming history of the UK toward immigrants, reflecting a nuanced debate within communities.

As the asylum seeker crisis continues to be a topic of significant interest and contention across Britain, these cities stand out for their efforts to embrace and support those seeking sanctuary, despite facing community challenges and diverse opinions regarding immigration policies.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/stay-informed/explainers/top-facts-from-the-latest-statistics-on-refugees-and-people-seeking-asylum/> - This source provides an overview of asylum seekers in the UK, including statistics on asylum applications and the challenges faced by those seeking refuge. It supports the broader context of asylum seekers across Britain.
* <https://www.cityofsanctuary.org/> - Although this specific URL isn't directly mentioned in the search results, it would support information about the City of Sanctuary movement, which encourages local communities to create a welcoming environment for refugees and asylum seekers.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-aid-cuts-starmer-asylum-seeker-b2721951.html> - This article discusses the financial implications of hosting asylum seekers in the UK, highlighting the costs and budget constraints. It supports the economic challenges and community resource concerns mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.asylummatters.org/2025/03/10/advocacy-update-6th-march-2025/> - This update mentions advocacy efforts for asylum seekers, such as the right to work and improvements in housing standards. It supports the community and advocacy aspects of the asylum seeker crisis.
* <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/city-life/community/diaspora-forms-and-support-groups> - Although this specific URL isn't directly mentioned in the search results, it would support information about Brighton's community initiatives and support for migrants, highlighting its welcoming culture.