Institutional Engagement with Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Becoming a University of Sanctuary.

A LITE student research placement project report.

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Key Recommendations

Organisational

* **Expand the Sanctuary Steering Group**
* **Create a ‘Leeds University of Sanctuary’ newsletter**
* **Create a ‘Leeds University of Sanctuary’ webpage**
* **Create a centralized sanctuary initiatives budget**
* **Create a centralized role** **to oversee Sanctuary activities**

Informational

* **Offer training to staff across schools and services**
* **Offer targeted training to those who work directly with refugee and asylum seeker students and staff**
* **Recommend approaching the above training as a jumping off point for further discussion**

Staff and Student Support

* **Establish a forced migration network**
* **Consider explicitly including all students from a sanctuary background in Plus Programme eligibility**
* **Explicitly include students from a sanctuary seeker background in Widening Participation criteria and EDI literature**

Community engagement

* **Invest in running further on-campus events, workshops and creative programmes**
* **Support Leeds University Libraries and Galleries in future Sanctuary initiatives**

Commitment to embedding

* **Commit to a higher number of Sanctuary Scholarships per year indefinitely**
* **Commit to a host a given number of CARA fellows per year**
* **Embed feedback and review mechanisms in all sanctuary initiatives**

1. Introduction

This report presents a summary of findings following a 6-week research project evaluating institutional engagement with those that hold refugee or asylum seeker status at the University of Leeds- whether they be current or prospective students, staff, or local communities. The short-term project is part of a wider institutional move towards achieving a University of Sanctuary (UoS) award.

The University of Leeds does not currently hold this award, but many committed staff across schools and services are working hard towards achieving it in line with the values of collaboration, compassion, inclusion and integrity that the university strives to uphold (University of Leeds, 2022a). Accreditation as a university of Sanctuary would bring well deserved recognition to the many successful initiatives already being run in this vein, create greater coordination and integration of current initiatives into one embedded ethos, and offer exciting opportunities to strengthen our support through new initiatives, projects and intra-institutional collaboration.

The report will used by the University of Sanctuary Steering Group (a collection of academic and professional staff with personal, professional and research interests in the issues surrounding forced displacement) to create actionable points that further the University of Sanctuary values of Share, Embed and Learn, building increased and improved institutional engagement with people seeking sanctuary.

This short-term research project will be extended through the employment of a PGR to carry out further research and assist with the submission of the University of Sanctuary application.

1.1 Objectives

* Present an in-depth understanding of the University of Sanctuary award and its values and success criteria.
* Review the current initiatives taking place that engage with staff, students and communities with a sanctuary seeking background at the University of Leeds.
* Summarise areas of strength, opportunities for improvement, barriers faced, and support needed, by staff at the University of Leeds working on or hoping to introduce Sanctuary initiatives.
* Identify examples of best practice in the existing University of Sanctuary network.
* Assess the feasibility of these actions and initiatives at the University of Leeds.
* Produce recommendations to improve or expand engagement with staff, students and communities of a sanctuary seeking background.

1.2 Terminology

As recommended in guidance provided by City of Sanctuary UK (2021, p.2), this report uses the term ‘*people seeking sanctuary’*. This refers to anyone who has left their country of origin and is looking to build a life in a country of safety.

‘*People/students/staff with a sanctuary seeking background’* has also been used to cover those whose parents may have arrived in the UK seeking sanctuary, and so are affected by issues surrounding this experience despite holding settled or citizenship status themselves.

Both terms include people with the following statuses, as used in UK immigration information (UK Government, no date):

*Asylum Seeker*s are people who have applied for recognition of Refugee status having fled danger or persecution in their country of origin but have yet to hear back on the decision on their claim.

*Refugee*s are those whose claim for asylum has been approved- the UK government agrees that they cannot safely return to their countries of origin for fear of persecution.

*Humanitarian Protection* is given to people who the UK government don’t see as meeting the criteria for Refugee status (i.e. facing persecution-related harm), but recognize as unable to return to their countries of origin for other reasons of safety.

Other terms used:

*Sanctuary scholarships* are packages of financial, personal and accommodation support awarded to students with a sanctuary seeking background.

*Sanctuary initiatives* (as named in a report produced by the University of Newcastle (Speed et al, 2020, p.6) are any projects, events or ethos that aim to support, work with or improve practice in regard to educational, employment and engagement opportunities with people seeking sanctuary.

*Experts by experience* are people with a sanctuary seeking background who provide testimony, advice or feedback in relation to their experiences.

1.3 People Seeking Sanctuary and Higher Education

Under Article 26 (the right to education) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, no date), Higher Education (HE) should be equally accessible to all and allocated on the basis of merit.

However, only 1% of the 89.3 million people forcibly displaced from their homes (including displaced within countries of origin) by the end of 2021 had access to Higher Education. 83% are hosted in low- and middle-income countries (UNHCR, 2022), contributing to severely limited access to HE compared to a global average of 32% (Gaulee et al, 2022). People are displaced for a myriad of reasons- war in their home country, personal danger as a result of holding persecuted protected characteristics or political opinions, or increasingly climate breakdown causing countries or regions to become unlivable.

HE remains unattainable for many people who have been forcibly displaced and go on to seek sanctuary in the UK. Only those with Refugee or Humanitarian Protection status have access to traditional routes of funding through Student Finance England (Student Action for Refugees, 2022). In addition, people with asylum seeker status are usually classed as ‘international’ students under university funding models (UCAS, 2022), meaning they have to pay significantly higher fees. Many wait years for a decision on their claim, and in the meantime are overwhelmingly not allowed to work (UK Visas and Immigration, 2022), live on £40.85 a week (UK Government, no date) and can be housed anywhere in the country by the Home Office. In addition, they live under the constant threat of a negative ruling and subsequent deportation to their country of origin.

1.3.1 Barriers to and benefits of HE for people seeking sanctuary

Undertaking a review of literature surrounding people seeking sanctuary’s experiences of HE, Speed et al (2020, pp. 8-10) and Goldfinch et al (2021, pp. 61-68) identified key barriers that reduce access:

*Gaps in education or loss of certificates* due to disruption or fleeing of home countries create disadvantages when applying.

*Limited recognition of prior learning and experience* often leads to ‘deskilling’.

*Financial barriers*- the cost of degree programs themselves, qualifications necessary to enroll on them, or the opportunity cost of missed employment for the period of the degree.

*Mental health and wellbeing issues* due to the trauma displaced people have experienced, and the stress (often financial or related to supporting family) that many experience whilst seeking asylum.

*Language barriers*- both academic (available ESOL classes may not reach university standards) and social, reducing the presence of vital peer support networks.

*Communication barriers* due to a lack of clear support and information from HE institutions for people seeking sanctuary and the organisations that work with them can lead to isolation or missing out on the opportunities and provisions available.

*Cultural alienation*.

*Gendered barriers* such as higher likelihood of caring responsibilities and childcare needs.

Despite such limited access to HE, displaced people are one of the groups that could be most impacted by the benefits of attaining it. Experience of HE brings with it increased social, cultural, and economic capital- allowing people seeking sanctuary in the UK autonomy over their life choices and direction in addition to increased integration through peer networks, financially viable employment, and a job that fulfils them personally- boosting sense of self and a positive outlook for the future (Goldfinch et al, p.35).

The relationship is not one way- UK universities also benefit greatly from engaging with people seeking sanctuary, who have knowledge stemming from unique lived experiences as well as a diverse range of professional and personal skills and talents which are valuable to any dynamic organization.

The University of Leeds is a large institution with a wealth of resources and a vision that champions increased inclusion. Reducing barriers to access for people seeking sanctuary -and going beyond this to actively support them in successful academic journeys- is an essential part of fairly distributing these resources and tangibly embodying the responsibility to provide a higher education system where places are achieved based on merit and passion for knowledge, rather than relative wealth or nationality.

1.4 Universities of Sanctuary.

Universities of Sanctuary is an initiative that aims to build a movement to ‘make Higher Education Institutions places of safety, solidarity and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary’ (Universities of Sanctuary UK, 2022). It is a stream of the wider ‘City of Sanctuary UK (2022)’ umbrella organisation- founded in 2005 in response to a culture of political hostility towards people seeking sanctuary in the UK, with the goal of coordinating groups and initiatives designed to support and welcome them or facilitate change towards a fairer and safer society and includes partners from city and borough councils to libraries and local charities. Leeds is an established City of Sanctuary, having launched the city-wide movement in 2010 (Leeds City of Sanctuary, 2010).

 Through working with and supporting a range of HE partners and individuals, Universities of Sanctuary UK (2022) facilitates the building of a network where invested parties can work together, learn collaboratively and share successful initiatives to create and embed a culture of welcome in their institution and as a collective HE community. As part of this, partners that go above and beyond to embody the Sanctuary values and ethos are recognised through a ‘University of Sanctuary’ award. This involves an in-depth application process providing an overview of the sanctuary initiatives taking place at an institution. The award is valid for three years, after which a re-accreditation process takes place (Universities of Sanctuary, 2019a).

There are currently 27 Universities of Sanctuary and University Colleges of Sanctuary across England, Scotland and Wales. Five universities that hold the award are in Yorkshire. Eleven belong to the Russell Group, of which the University of Leeds is also a member. The University of Leeds would be the first university in the city to gain the award (Universities of Sanctuary UK, 2022., Russel Group, no date).

1.4.1 Values, criteria and application process.

A University of Sanctuary is one that champions welcome and inclusion and strives towards upholding equal access to education by tackling the previously explored barriers many people seeking sanctuary face.

The three core principles of the values that the Universities of Sanctuary (2019b, pp.6-15) network aims to uphold are:

**Learn** by taking steps to understand the lived experience of people seeking sanctuary in their local communities and within HE.

Examples of ‘Learning’ include: tailored training for staff, particularly those directly involved in sanctuary initiatives or with student support and welfare roles; attendance and feedback of relevant conferences; inclusion of sanctuary themes into course syllabuses and inviting experts by experience to give lectures.

**Embed** values of ‘welcome, safety and inclusion’ by considering the experiences of people seeking sanctuary across all levels of the institution. Additionally, integrating sanctuary initiatives into the policy, strategies and framework of the institution, to ensure they outlast individual staff members or student groups and show commitment to UoS values long term.

**Share** by building relationships with others in the Sanctuary network, local organisations and any interested parties, and disseminating findings, experiences and successful initiatives with them to create an ethos of collaboration and support. Holding creative and arts events, publicising initiatives through media platforms and running fundraisers supports the ethos of ‘Share’.

Within the three core principles, Universities of Sanctuary (2019b, p.16) provides guiding criteria for HEIs working towards the award. These include:

1. Endorsing the UoS charter.
2. Offering Sanctuary Scholarships that as a minimum cover the full cost of fees, and evidencing that they are advertised clearly and widely.
3. Committing to minimise the impact of government legislation on access to HEI for people seeking sanctuary.
4. Creating a website detailing sanctuary initiatives.
5. Supporting a student led group on campus e.g. STAR.
6. Having a dedicated and trained point of contact for sanctuary students.
7. Evidencing a three-year plan for developing sanctuary initiatives and values.
8. Engaging and collaborating with people seeking sanctuary, organisations that work with them, the national Universities of Sanctuary scheme and the wider City of Sanctuary network.

An emphasis is placed on engagement with people seeking sanctuary- through partnerships, consultations with experts by experience on initiatives and feedback mechanisms for students and staff seeking sanctuary on their perspectives of engagement with the HEI. There should be opportunities for anonymous feedback on initiatives or experiences to reassure contributors that they will not face ramifications. When running initiatives, chances to evaluate and improve their success should be ingrained. The university in question should take note of and recognise when an expert by experience has contributed to the development of an initiative (Universities of Sanctuary, 2019b, pp.8-16).

1.4.2 The University of Leeds and sanctuary values.

The University of Leeds (2022a) champions the values of collaboration, compassion, inclusivity and integrity in its institutional identity. Increasing support for and engagement with people seeking sanctuary within the university and in wider communities would be particularly beneficial to successfully embodying these values.

Collaboration is a key tenet of the University of Sanctuary network, encouraging engagement and partnerships with other Universities of Sanctuary, clearly exemplified through the principle of ‘Share’. ‘Compassion’ is embodied in the understanding and flexibility extended to students and staff seeking sanctuary that allows the university to support their journeys at Leeds to the maximum extent. In addition, a recognition of the university’s power and responsibility to enact positive change with communities seeking sanctuary and strive for the University of Sanctuary ‘culture of welcome’ is a clear chance for ‘Compassion’. ‘Inclusivity’ can be shown through a diverse and supported academic body, including those who have had to flee persecution and seek sanctuary in the UK. ‘Integrity’ can be viewed as a commitment to ‘Embedding’ sanctuary values through every level of the university, with a long term and sustainable approach that doesn’t end with achievement of the Sanctuary award.

Clearly, investing in sanctuary initiatives not only benefits communities of people seeking sanctuary but benefits the University of Leeds as an opportunity to fulfil its value-driven goals. Working towards University of Sanctuary status is an exciting chance to move towards the vision of ‘help[ing to] shape a better future for humanity, working through collaboration to tackle inequalities, benefit society and drive change’ (University of Leeds, 2021a).

1. Methodology

2.1 Web-based research

Web-based sources were utilised to inform research practice and the final report. This included academic research on barriers that students and staff of a sanctuary seeker background face when accessing Higher Education in the UK (Newcastle, Leeds reports)- used to contextualise initiatives and recommendations throughout the report. Research was undertaken into current sanctuary initiatives at UoL through institutional websites and outputs, as well as information shared with the UoL University of Sanctuary Teams channel. Webpages and resources produced by and affiliated with University of Sanctuary were explored to inform an in-depth understanding of the award. Research was also carried out into sanctuary initiatives at current Universities of Sanctuary, identifying areas of best practice.

* 1. Staff interviews

Due to the short-term nature of the project, the scope of interviews was limited to University of Leeds staff, however the value of platforming ‘experts by experience’ in sanctuary issues is recommended for future research. 9 staff working across schools and services were interviewed. Staff were selected through ability to advise on initiatives currently taking place, and identification of possible new initiatives to consider.

Semi-structured interviews were used to provide consistency in content whilst also allowing the flexibility to cover initiatives or questions specific to a school or service, or to ask follow-up questions when a relevant thread presented itself. As the interviews progressed, additional questions were added to the interview guide as new themes came up.

The interview guide was designed around an intention to find out about:

* The specific initiatives occurring in a school or service, and the feasibility of new ones.
* The willingness to and feasibility of enacting new initiatives.
* The barriers interviewees perceived as acting against the success of current or potential initiatives.
* The support the interviewees felt they currently had, or would need going forward, for the successful delivery of current or potential initiatives.

All participants received a participant information form and completed a consent form in advance of their interviews, in line with ethics approval.

1. Findings

3.1 Interviews: staff perspectives

3.1.1 General perceptions

All staff interviewed felt that working towards University of Sanctuary status was a positive move. One staff member noted its benefit in bringing new opportunities to students, and another its value in developing the community of students by facilitating non-standard pathways to education.

Multiple participants communicated that it was surprising UoL did not already hold Sanctuary status, and some that achieving the status was overdue. Several staff emphasized their view that people and communities seeking sanctuary had a wealth of talent, skill and experience to bring to the university, and that this should be recognised.

One participant emphasized the importance of a sustainable, integrated approach to getting status and better supporting refugees and asylum seeker background communities, as they had previously seen (at another institution) individual initiatives fail if a systemic approach that incorporates policy change was not taken.

3.1.2 Barriers

**Size/bureaucracy.**

One staff member identified the size of the University - and the corresponding level of bureaucracy - as a barrier to providing the levels of support to students with a sanctuary seeking background that they would have liked - adding it’s ‘hard to keep on top of what everybody is doing, and things are disconnected’.

The interviewee also identified the time-scale of gaining approval to provide support or set up initiatives as a barrier. ‘There are short term things that you need, and it takes so long to get any finance or tangible backing’ that they at times missed a chance to help.

**Lack of centralised commitment.**

One interviewee felt that they were having to ask for favours from individuals in other services when trying to provide support to people seeking sanctuary through an initiative in their school. They attributed this to a lack of explicit support and resources from higher up in the university- so other staff were having to find money in their own budget or make accommodations to fulfil requests.

The same interviewee expressed that whilst they had support from managers in implementing support initiatives, they felt it was not guaranteed that this would be the case across different schools and services, and lack of managerial support would have prevented any of the initiatives they are involved in from succeeding.

**Knowledge gap**

A lack of data on the numbers of students and applicants from sanctuary seeking backgrounds was expressed as a barrier to providing support.

It was raised that whilst some staff may be informed of the issues students with a sanctuary seeking background face due to having a personal interest, staff across schools and services were not well informed on how this might affect their professional, academic or personal support needs or what they could bring to the school or service.

There was also a self-identified lack of knowledge among participants on who a staff member should contact if they received a request for support from a seeker background student or staff member or wanted to create an initiative in this area. (PS) Whilst some interviewees recognized the channels they would use for certain issues (accommodation, financial hardship etc.), few felt that has sufficient knowledge for more specific issues that a person seeking sanctuary might face.

One participant identified the knowledge gap not just among staff, but for people from a sanctuary seeking background when it came to understanding how their status affected certain processes and the support available to them - through application and beyond. Due to this information not being clearly available, staff then ended up answering individual emails.

**University of Sanctuary visibility**

Several interviewees noted that the visibility of Sanctuary work or information relating to the attainment of Sanctuary status at the University was low, and this was a barrier to supporting and collaborating on initiatives.

3.1.3 Support needed

**Financial**

Multiple interviewees identified the need for financial support from the central body of the university. In one interviewee’s words ‘you can’t have this status without investing in it’. Participants identified that this investment would ideally take the form of a tangible and accessible finance budget that could be used to carry out sanctuary initiatives without going through multiple layers of management for approval.

**Resources**

One participant identified the need for increased resources- primarily time through increased staffing capacity. They said they had ideas they would love to implement but were too busy with preexisting commitments.

Another participant identified the support that a dedicated website would provide, increasing outward facing transparency of what is happening in relation to Sanctuary status and initiatives, demystifying various processes for current or prospective students from a sanctuary background, and making staff aware of the resources available when responding to requests of support.

**Centralized commitment**

Multiple participants expressed that support could be improved through more systematic collaboration across schools and services. Ideally, there would be a consistent answer of ‘yes we can support you with that’ due to it being more embedded in wider University policy with explicit backing further up the chain of command.

One interviewee expressed that whilst they saw suggested initiatives as feasible, their ability to implement them was dependent on the central body of the university making the commitment to absorb any resource consequences they might have. Another identified that whilst they felt there was a positive ethos of giving staff autonomy on projects and allowing them to ‘run with things’, the follow through on this ethos could be better when it came to establishing or embedding initiatives.

**Training**

Multiple interviewees raised the benefit that training could provide to staff across their services, and that this would better prepare them to support refugees and asylum seekers who interacted with the service. Several staff members suggested integrating tailored training into staff meetings, with one suggesting they would use this to initiate discussions of how they could expand and improve support across their service. One interviewee felt that training on the University of Sanctuary process itself, with information on what other universities are doing, would encourage senior management in their service to support initiatives.

**Feedback mechanism**

It was reported that unforseen barriers had arisen after the trialing of an initiative- it is helpful to have an opportunity to feedback, review processes and acquire funding to overcome them.

It was suggested that a formalised feedback mechanism for improving the provisions of schools and services would be beneficial - giving students and staff with sanctuary seeking backgrounds a chance to review and shape the initiatives taking place.

3.2 Areas of strength

*The information in this section has been gathered from staff interviews and the University of Sanctuary Teams channel. Where additional information has been found through research, the source is referenced.*

**Sanctuary Scholarships**

The University of Leeds (2022b) offer Sanctuary Scholarships to applicants who hold an offer for any taught degree (undergraduate or postgraduate), do not have access to mainstream funding through Student Finance England and do not already hold a degree of equivalent level from a UK university. Recipients of the scholarship are assessed as Home fee status.

Sanctuary Scholars receive £10000 per academic year to cover living costs, plus full tuition fees. Once accepted, scholars have a named point of contact through the Plus Programme (meeting criteria (f) of the UoS accreditation process as detailed above) and access to various other benefits that the Plus Programme offers.

There is no set number of scholarships offered each year, with provisions being subject to funding. A record 8 scholarships were awarded for 2022/23; four through standard funding routes, with courses ranging from MSc Transport Planning and Engineering to BA International Relations; and a fifth awarded by LUBS through a fee waiver by the School of Business along with alumni donations. This year saw a second wave of funding made available, after the war in Ukraine highlighted the plight of those seeking sanctuary in the UK. As Ukrainian refugees are eligible for Student Finance England funding, the three scholarships were awarded to applicants of alternate nationalities.

This fulfils criteria (b) of the UoS accreditation as outlined above, and tackles the financial barriers to HE faced by people seeking sanctuary.

**Student Action for Refugees**

Running through Leeds University Union, the University of Leeds has an active STAR society where student volunteers carry out face to face, fundraising and campaigning activities designed to support and engage local people seeking sanctuary. Leeds STAR runs twice-weekly conversation classes with student volunteers, have an active campaigns team advocating for measures to increase equal access to HE, and run a bike scheme where student volunteers are trained to fix abandoned or donated bikes, which are then distributed to local people seeking sanctuary.

This is fulfils criteria (e) of the UoS accreditation, and also the ‘Embedding’ of sanctuary values and initiatives across different areas of the University of Leeds community.

**Lifelong Learning Centre**

The LLC is a multidisciplinary school and support service at the University of Leeds (2022c) that focuses on mature and part-time learners, including those from non-traditional and underrepresented backgrounds. Since its establishment, it has partnered with local sanctuary seeker organisations including RETAS, PAFRAS and LASSN. Partnership activities include:

‘HE information sessions

* One-to-one and group Impartial Advice and Guidance Sessions
* Adult education provisions e.g. creative writing sessions, adult learners summer school.
* Engagement with local groups who are connecting with refugees and asylum seekers’.

This is a great example of embodying the UoS culture of welcome and inclusivity, by addressing barriers and demystifying HE, as well as the principle of ‘Share’ through building partnerships with local groups. The work at the LLC contributes to tackling the informational, communication barriers surrounding HE faced by people seeking sanctuary, in addition to reducing cultural alienation by familiarising people with the University and its campus.

**Partnership with CARA**

CARA (2022) is the Council for At-Risk Academics, and organization which ‘helps academics at immediate risk from around the world escape to a place of safety where they can continue their work’.

A new aspect of the relationship has grown through CARA’s partnership with The British Academy (no date) on the Researchers at Risk Fellowship Programme. This supports researchers with pre-existing connections to UK Universities or UK academic professionals to be hosted by those UK Universities as research fellows, with funding for research costs and living expenses. Currently the scheme is only open to Ukrainian researchers and academics (and must include the availability of an accommodation sponsor under the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ condition of the Ukrainian Sponsorship Scheme) but hopes to expand to displaced people of other nationalities. The University of Leeds has seen one successful grant approval towards the provision of this scheme, with an additional three pending (at time of writing).

The university also holds a long running partnership with CARA (2022) through their Fellowship Programme. This enables academics in danger to escape to a safe country, continuing their work at a host university who cover research and living costs for the academics and their dependents. The university is currently in the process of hosting it’s first fellows since before the Covid-19 pandemic, with one fellowship based in LUBS pending after the allocation of a £25000 grant and hopes to host additional fellows on the achievement of further grants. CARA fellows hosted by the University of Leeds are eligible for a wide range of support offered to all international staff.

In addition, through a working relationship with CARA (2022) Syria there is a scheme running in the Language Centre whereby staff can claim two work hours weekly to take part in an online Academic English mentoring scheme for CARA Syria fellows. This scheme was piloted with staff members who had been carrying out the mentoring in their own time, and then offered to other staff in the Language Centre. The partnership with CARA Syria also led to the hosting of two fellows (not hosted by the University of Leeds for their fellowships) on the fee waived Pre-Sessional English course trial.

These initiatives embody the ‘Learn’ principle of UoS, as hosting fellows from sanctuary seeking backgrounds allows the University to learn from them. Mentoring also builds valuable partnerships with fellows across different institutions.

**Partnership with Talent Beyond Boundaries**

The University has recently engaged in a partnership with international organisation Talent Beyond Boundaries (no date), which works to link highly skilled people who have sought sanctuary in a neighboring country (but due to local residency and work permit restrictions are not eligible to work) with vacancies in their field.

TBB has traditionally partnered with large private or public sector organisations – for example the NHS – and Leeds is only the second UK university to work with them. Currently, 5 vacancies in IT services are being advertised through TBB, with plans to expand the partnership to fill vacancies in various schools and services. The successful applicants will be supported with visa and relocation costs and provided with accommodation for an initial settling-in period. Staff employed by the university through TBB are eligible for a wide range of support offered to all international staff.

**ESOL Outreach activities.**

For the past four years the School of Education has, through the Employability and Placements office, offered students the opportunity to volunteer with LASSN, gaining valuable TESOL experience by working 1 to 1 with people seeking sanctuary. In addition, students are able to work in schools with children who have English as an additional need, many of whom are of sanctuary seeking background. Across the academic years 2018/19 to 2019/20 (cut short in March due to covid-19), approximately 90 students were gaining valuable experience in the community working with people seeking sanctuary.

This supports the ‘Learn’ principle of UoS, allowing UoL students to work with an learn from those with a lived experience of seeking sanctuary, in addition to the ‘Share’ principle aspect of building relationships with schools and local organisations. It also contributes to tackling the language barriers faced by people seeking sanctuary when trying to access HE.

**RefugEAP Online Pre-Sessional English Course.**

A staff member in the Language Centre is using their allocated 10% professional scholarship time to develop a free, online Pre-Sessional English resource in partnership with colleagues at the University of Leicester. The course is aimed at people seeking sanctuary and designed to be a ‘stop gap measure’ for those who are unable to access an in-person Pre-Sessional, but still want to progress in their academic English in the hopes of further university study or scholarships.

This initiative is a great example of embodying the UoS value of ‘Share’, through collaboration with another University of Sanctuary and the dissemination of valuable learning resources for the use of people seeking sanctuary and other HEIs. It directly targets the language barriers faced by people seeking sanctuary when trying to access HE.

**Hosting Ukrainian refugees**

In partnership with Leeds City Council, the University of Leeds has been hosting Ukrainian refugees in Lupton Halls of Residence free of charge, to allow them to travel to the UK under the ‘Homes for Ukraine’ scheme. The University provided up to 100 beds until the end of September 2022, with the option to extend 45 beds beyond this date.

**Seeing Stars: Beyond the Naked Eye project**

Developed with local community project ‘The Highrise Project’, ‘Seeing Stars: Beyond the Naked Eye’ was developed to provide a creative response and engagement with ‘Seeing Stars’, an exhibition on show in the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery from April-July 2022.

The ‘Beyond the Naked Eye’ project consisted of five workshops with participants from a sanctuary seeking background, running over February and March 2022. Participants were supported in using experimental photographic techniques to respond to themes and questions drawn from and inspired by the Seeing Stars exhibition. A freelance ESOL tutor was engaged to provide language resources to support the workshops. The ESOL support element was extended to include language learning and discussions around words related to the themes or artistic discipline that participants may not have come across previously.  An experienced artist assistant with lived refugee experience was employed to co-facilitate the sessions. Travel costs were reimbursed and food vouchers to use on campus were provided.

The final output was a 28-page A4 zine, printed and distributed to participants and their friends and families at the exhibition launch, alongside being displayed for visitors of the exhibition (University of Leeds Galleries, no date).

The project is a great example of a creative engagement event which builds towards fulfilling the ‘Share’ principle of UoS.

**Research Placement module with LASSN**

For the third academic year running, a group of undergraduate Liberal Arts students will have the opportunity to work collaboratively with Leeds Beckett University students, gaining academic credit in the process. The project (Educational Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) is in partnership with local sanctuary seeker support organisation LASSN and is centered round supporting people seeking sanctuary to navigate the English Educational System through creation of online resources. Students carry out person-facing initiatives including study buddying, running insight days on campus and directly supporting individual people seeking sanctuary in their journey towards Higher Education.

For the past two years a group of postgraduate students on various Taught Masters programmes at the UoL have undertaken research projects in partnership with LASSN. The 2020/21 cohort produced a research report entitled ‘Barriers to Higher Education for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Leeds’ ((Goldfinch et al, 2021) used to inform this report). Building on this initial work, the 2021/22 cohort created a campus tour of the University of Leeds, in the form of a pamphlet that would allow for self-guided navigation with information to locate and demystify the different support services and points of contact available, and QR code links to further relevant information (Burnely et al, 2022).

This programme clearly contributes towards fulfillment of the ‘Learn’ principle, carrying out research on lived experiences of people seeking sanctuary. In addition, it ‘Shares’ through building a partnership with LASSN. The outputs produced target the ‘communications’ barrier that people seeking sanctuary face when attempting to access HE.

**Research and Teaching**

The following initiatives contributing to the fulfilment of the ‘Learn’ and ‘Share’ principles of UoS, where the University of Leeds is researching on the lived experiences of people seeking sanctuary and shares that knowledge through inter-university collaboration and publications.

**Leeds Human Rights Journal** is a student edited, multidisciplinary initiative established in 2012 that allows undergraduate students at the University of Leeds (2022d) to publish peer-reviewed articles and creative works related to human rights. The 2022 edition centered around the theme of ‘Sanctuary’, including several features on sanctuary seeker topics and themes. Previous editions have included contributions such as ‘Indefinite Leave to Remain’ (Poem, 2021), China, the Refugee Convention and North Korean Refugees’ (Article, 2020) and ‘A State of Controlled Instability: The Restrictive Impact of Institutional Discourse on Refugees in France’ (Article, 2019).

**Leeds Migration Research Network** is an interdisciplinary network founded in 2015 and based at the University of Leeds (2022e), which aims ‘to develop a community of researchers with an interest in migration’ to ‘provide a contact point and source of expertise for policy makers, practitioners, migrant support groups and community organisations’.

Whilst the research network tackles migration more broadly, this includes studies and topics relevant to sanctuary seeker communities and experiences.

Various **taught academic modules** at the University of Leeds (2022f) focus on sanctuary themes and experiences or cover them in addition to other topics. Modules include ‘Europe on the move: Refugees and Resettlement’ (School of History), ‘Philosophy of Human Rights’ (School of Politics and International Studies) and ‘Exploring the Mediterranean Migration Crisis’ (School of Geography).

**Individual research interests** include:

School of Politics and International Studies

*Hope Bachmann –* Collaborative research project with Opera North (a Theatre of Sanctuary) considering ‘how arts engagement practices facilitate pathways to solidarity with refugees and asylum seekers’.

*Kerry Woods – ‘*LGBT+ asylum and epistemic injustice’.

*James Souter –* Research on the political theory of ‘understanding states’ responsibilities to protect refugees.’

School of Geography

*Louise Wait –* Research oriented around ‘forced migration, (im)mobilites, migration governance and intersections of the ‘modern slavery’ discourse with immigration politics.’

School of Languages, Cultures and Societies

*Rachel Johnson –* Research on ‘the role that film, particularly film festivals, can play in constructing counter-narratives about refugees and creating spaces for community and solidarity building’.

*(The above information was drawn from the University of Sanctuary Teams channel, of which all listed researchers are members).*

* 1. Opportunities for improvement.

*The information in this section was formulated by considering to what extent the current range of sanctuary initiatives fulfil the values, minimum criteria and suggestions outlined by the University of Sanctuary network for aspiring applicant institutions.*

**Learn**

*Consultation with local groups*

The University of Leeds has strong partnerships with many local sanctuary seeker support organisations through various schools and services. However, there has yet to be a coordinated approach to these partnerships, and further attempts to consult partners on how they could best be supported by or work with UoL could go further towards the goal of ‘Learn’.

*Feedback from and consultation with sanctuary seeker background students and staff.*

Formalised mechanisms for feedback and review of processes would act in line with the UoS suggestions for platforming experts by experience and also contribute the ‘Embedding’ of initiatives (e.g. the Sanctuary Scholarships and CARA fellowships) through maximizing their effectiveness and sustainability through targeted development.

*Accessible learning opportunities around sanctuary issues for students and staff delivered by those with lived experience.*

*...*in line with the UoS suggestions for training and platforming of experts by experience.

**Embed**

*Cross-institutional coordination.*

As detailed the ‘Areas of Strength’, there are many successful and developing Sanctuary initiatives at the University of Leeds. However, the only attempt at coordination across UoL is the ‘University of Sanctuary’ Teams channel. This is run by members of the working group and oriented towards achievement of the UoS award, and as a result is not embedded. An official hub or staff member that facilitated the linking and development of projects could benefit in this regard.

*Funding for initiatives.*

Whilst initiatives and partnerships such as the Sanctuary Scholarships and CARA fellowships are a credit to the university, both rely on funding applications and processes that must be repeated each year. This both threatens the continuation of the schemes should institutional financial priorities shift, creates more workload in the form of grant applications and management, and causes uncertainty both for staff within the school attempting to coordinate activities and plan in the long-term, and potential applicants for either scheme.

*Support for non- Sanctuary Scholarship students from a sanctuary seeker background.*

Whilst recipients of the Leeds Sanctuary Scholarships are well supported with a point of contact through the Plus Programme, there is no organised framework for consistently recognising, referring and supporting students of sanctuary seeking background who enter through alternate routes – for example those with refugee status who have access to student finance. Students in this scenario can self-refer to the Plus Programme (although are not explicitly included in its criteria), can apply for the means – tested Leeds personal circumstances scholarships (if they are successful, they will also be referred for Plus Programme support) and have access to all the traditional support available to all University of Leeds students, but there is a lack of clear information around these provisions or clear instruction on how and when to make this aspect of their background known to the university.

*Support for non-’international’ staff from a seeker background.*

Whilst staff with a displacement background who come as international staff through established routes such as CARA fellowships or (in the future) Talent Beyond Boundaries have access to a wide range of personal and professional support designed to facilitate social, cultural and institutional integration, staff members with a displacement background who take roles after their arrival and settlement in the UK have limited support. There is no cross-institutional group, support contact or framework for supporting these staff with specific issues they may face in relation to their background of displacement. Provision of this support is integral to embed[ing] concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion’ not just for students but for staff.

*Explicit inclusion in university values, Widening Participation and EDI plans.*

The University of Leeds’ commitment to Inclusion, Collaboration, Compassions and Integrity is a huge strength. However, the translation of these values into more explicit commitment to support people seeking sanctuary is limited. People seeking sanctuary are not named in the most recent Widening Participation Annual Report (2020/21 (University of Leeds, 2021b) or the Access and Student Success Strategy 2025 (University of Leeds, 2020).

**Share**

*Dissemination of University of Sanctuary related information.*

There is currently no route for a sanctuary seeker, staff member at the university (if they are not involved in the University of Sanctuary working group) or member of the public to easily access information about the different sanctuary initiatives taking place at Leeds, what support might be available should they be a student or staff member facing issues related to their sanctuary seeking background or receive updates on Leeds’ progress towards University of Sanctuary status. This is important not just in terms of embodying the University of Sanctuary ethos of ‘Share’, but in ensuring support can be accessed by those at the university who need it, projects and initiatives can be collaborated on by interested and relevant parties, and Leeds can successfully engage with other members of the University of Sanctuary network working on similar projects. This could be improved on through a targeted website concerning sanctuary information, in line with criteria (d) of the UoS award as detailed previously.

*Running creative, publicization, and engagement events.*

Whilst the ’Seeing Stars’ Highrise project is a strength of the UoL’s sanctuary initiatives, it is only one event. Running further, regular events (including for Refugee Week) is a key opportunity for improvement and vital to fulfilling criteria (h) of the UoS award process, which specifies engagement with people seeking sanctuary.

* 1. Examples of best practice

*This list of ‘best practice’ sanctuary initiatives is non-exhaustive, and has been formulated based on a review of the web-based and interview research carried out through the project, when evaluated against the core principles and minimum criteria of the Universities of Sanctuary award scheme.*

**Sanctuary Scholarships**

3.3.1 Sheffield and Bradford- 10 Sanctuary scholarships a year.

Both the University of Sheffield (2022) and the University of Bradford (2022b) offered 10 Sanctuary Scholarships for the academic year 2022/23. Bradford offers £4000 living bursary plus fee waiver (on the understanding that recipients will already live in the Bradford area), with Sheffield offering £9840 a year plus cost of tuition.

This initiative is a clear example of best practice as it shows a clear, tangible commitment to ‘Sharing’ the resources of the two universities, and contributing to the UoS principle of ‘Learn’ by taking steps to increase the diversity of viewpoints among their student populations by supporting more students with a sanctuary seeking background to access degrees than any other University of Sanctuary. It goes beyond the fulfillment of criteria (b) as detailed above, and contributes hugely to overcoming the financial barriers of accessing HE for ten students with a sanctuary seeking background a year.

3.3.1a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

Whilst the University of Leeds awarded a record 8 sanctuary scholarships for the 2022/23 academic year, five of these were from specific funding source (as detailed above) that are unlikely to recur next year. As a university, Leeds is larger than both Bradford and Sheffield, suggesting financial commitment to increased scholarships is plausible.

3.3.2 Exeter - indefinite commitment to scholarships

At the University of Exeter, the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group has made a commitment to continue awarding Sanctuary Scholarships indefinitely.

This is an example of best practice as it clearly embodies the University of Sanctuary principle of ‘Embed’ - it is a statement that sanctuary initiatives will continue in the long term, built into the strategy of the university, and will be protected from changes to funding or priorities.

3.3.2a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

A commitment of long-term support for Sanctuary Scholarships (and a certain number of them each year) should be an achievable goal for the University of Leeds, and would be a positive move towards gaining the University of Sanctuary award.

**Language support**

3.3.2 University of Leicester – English course scholarships

The University of Leicester (no date) provides up to 16 fee-waived places on 10-week full-time Pre-Sessional English courses each year- up to 4 places in each of 4 modules. The scholarships are available for anyone from a sanctuary seeker background who is suitably qualified for academic study in the UK. The attendees are not required to be Sanctuary Scholarship recipients or in the process of applying to the University of Leicester but must hold an intention to study at a UK university in the future. Leicester works with the charitable organisation RefuAid (no date) who can support course attendees with learning-related costs.

An interviewee reported (having been in contact with the University of Leicester language team) that the University of Leicester perceive any unfilled places on Pre-Sessionals as cost-neutral, therefor can offer them to a person seeking sanctuary without first applying for funding to offset a perceived deficit.

This initiative exemplifies best practice as it contributes to overcoming the language barriers and financial barriers that people seeking sanctuary face in accessing HE. It supports them in gaining high levels of Academic English (rarely provided in standard ESOL in the community schemes) and does so at no cost to the student. In addition, it is a clear example of the ‘Share’ principle of UoS as it shares access to the resources that the University holds and builds relationships with local people from sanctuary seeking backgrounds, as well as working with RefuAid. In addition, it is an example of an ‘Embedding’ ethos in terms of the internal process for allocating places on the courses- due to a view of empty places as ‘cost-neutral’ it builds allocation of the Pre-Sessionals into the strategy and framework of the Language Centre indefinitely. In addition, the initiative goes above and beyond to support criteria (b) of the UoS application, not only supporting those awarded Sanctuary Scholarships at the University of Leicester with their language, but supporting students with sanctuary seeking backgrounds who may go on to become Sanctuary Scholars at other universities.

3.3.2a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

The University of Leeds Language Centre (LC) is currently trialling fee-waived places on Pre-Sessional English courses for displaced individuals. The trial features five students from a sanctuary seeking background: three are successful recipients of the University of Leeds Sanctuary Scholarship who were identified during the interview process as requiring a higher level of academic English to fully engage with their upcoming degree programmes, and two are CARA Syria fellows referred through the University's connection with CARA Syria, who won’t be taking up fellowships at the University of Leeds.

Unforeseen barriers occurred during the trial. For example, all three of the Sanctuary Scholarship recipients chose to undertake the Pre-Sessional online at home, due to childcare responsibilities, work commitments, distance from campus and difficulty financing costs associated with learning on campus- namely travel and food. Whilst the online Pre-Sessional is academically equivalent to the in-person provision, it means that the Scholars may have missed out on important social interactions and the chance to gain familiarity with campus before the start of their course – Experiences that could overcome barriers of cultural isolation. In addition, one student did not have access to a laptop or suitable internet access- as a result, the Language Centre team provided a laptop and dongle.

Support from the Accommodation team allowed the CARA Syria fellows to complete the course on campus.

It was recognised that a faster, fairer and more structured application process was necessary before extending the trial – whilst the Sanctuary Scholars attending the Pre-Sessional had been fairly selected through the scholarship application process, the CARA fellows had been recommended to the University through a pre-existing partnership with CARA Syria and were successful in part due to happening to apply at the right time.

The perspective of one interviewee was that providing Pre-Sessional or General English scholarships would not require any increased staffing - the courses are already running so it would not make a significant impact on resources. It was also expressed that at the University of Leeds, scholarship places are viewed as financial deficits that have to be recouped.

Overall, it seems that the University of Leeds through the Language Centre is making positive progress towards increased language support provision, and that it is viable to expand this by building upon the current trial. This could involve increased places, a commitment to a certain level of provision each year, a shift in financial perspectives, and further commitments from across services to provide peripheral support- e.g. IT support, accommodation, the covering of bus passes for attendees.

3.3.3 University of Bradford- In-house language testing

The University of Bradford (2022a) offers the BASALT (Bradford Academic Skills and Language Test) for students who speak English as a second language and are applying to a degree programme at Bradford. The in-house testing is made freely available to students from a sanctuary seeking background applying for courses or scholarships at Bradford.

This is an example of best practice for sanctuary initiatives as it contributes to overcoming the language and communication barriers faced by students seeking sanctuary. In addition, it shows an ethos in line with the principle of ‘Learn’, as it exemplifies a commitment to diversifying the student body at Bradford.

3.3.3a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

Due to the size of the University of Leeds, and the percentage of international students, creating an in-house language testing programme for all who speak English as a second language would be a significant undertaking. However, there has already been progress towards greater flexibility and creativity to support refugee and asylum seeker background students and academics in meeting language requirement.

One interviewee reported that for the recent Pre-Sessional English scholarship trial, several attendees did not have the necessary language certificated traditionally accepted by UoL. However, the admissions team worked with the Language Centre were able to carry out and accept a hybrid assessment, where writing, reading and listening were assessed for free by [Password English Language Testing](https://www.englishlanguagetesting.co.uk/), and speaking assessed in house.

This suggests the potential for increased flexibility in assessing the language requirements of students from a sanctuary seeking background, with the potential to standardise and expand the trial into a free in-house or joint in-house and organisation run assessment available to those who found the financial cost of the IELTS a barrier.

**Partnership with CARA**

3.3.4 University of Newcastle – CARA fellow hosting commitment

The University of Newcastle (2022) hosts 3 CARA fellows at any given time.

This embodies the UoS principles of ‘Learn’ by platforming and engaging with the narratives of researchers from a sanctuary seeker background, and ‘Embed’ by having a regular number of fellows rather than numbers being dependent on grant applications.

3.3.4a *Viability at Leeds*

As detailed above, the University of Leeds has recently revived its CARA fellowship post Covid-19. As it stands, the number of fellowships offered is dependent on finding appropriate funding sources. A commitment to hosting a given number of fellows at any one time would be an achievable goal for the University of Leeds and a positive move towards gaining the University of Sanctuary award.

**Engagement with the community**

3.3.5 Sheffield Hallam University – Refugee Rights Hub

The Refugee Rights Hub is an initiative where undergraduate and postgraduate students at Sheffield Hallam University (2022) are trained by asylum and immigration law specialists, and work alongside them to support people seeking sanctuary in the community in making family reunification applications free of charge. Over 200 applications have been made with support from the hub. The scheme was designed with a view towards plugging the gap left by withdrawal of legal aid, and also benefits students through their gaining of valuable casework experience. The hub works with various community partner organisations across Yorkshire.

This initiative is a strong example of all three University of Sanctuary initiatives – Learn, Share and Embed. Through engaging students and staff in active casework surrounding sanctuary issues, members of the SHU are learning first hand about the lived experiences and barriers faced by people seeking sanctuary. ‘Share’ is embodied through the partnerships built with local sanctuary organisations, and ‘Embed’ is exemplified through the creation of a relatively devolved ‘hub’ rather than simply an initiative- providing a strong framework for the continuation of the project.

3.3.5a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

The University of Leeds is a larger university than SHU and as a result faces additional difficulties in processes. Further discussion with representatives from the School of Law would be necessary, but development of a similar initiative (starting on a much smaller scale) would be a valuable addition to Law programmes at Leeds.

3.3.6 University of Hull - Library access for people seeking sanctuary

Hull offers a ‘Sanctuary associate membership’ to the University Library. Any person seeking sanctuary can be nominated for membership (University of Hull, 2022).

This contributes to the sanctuary ethos of a campus that welcomes all, as well as ‘Sharing’ through building community links and sharing resources with the sanctuary seeking community.

3.3.6a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

Introducing an initiative of this kind is highly possible. Leeds University Libraries expressed support and intention to reduce practical barriers to access as part of a wider move to make the libraries more welcoming, accessible and community focused. It was reported that a change of this kind could easily be done due to devolvement of powers within the Library, and that plans for its implementation were ongoing.

**Academic support**

3.3.7 University of South Wales - Networking and institutional affiliation for CARA fellows.

Syrian CARA fellows partnered with the University of South Wales (2021) have ‘affiliate’ status, allowing them access to library resources for a period of five years. In addition, the status allows them to present as ‘USW Fellows’ whilst networking and publishing research. This facilitates their access to a wider academic community, and contributes towards knowledge building that will benefit their country of origin in the future.

This is an example of best practice as it contributes to the ‘sharing’ of resources and knowledge, as well as building partnerships with academics and institutions outside of the UK.

3.3.7a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

The feasibility of a similar scheme at Leeds is in the early stages of investigation. A representative of the Library, who oversee resource access, expressed support should the scheme be legally and practically viable.

**Financial Support**

3.3.8 University of Leicester - Classification of asylum seeker students under home fees.

Blanket reclassification of all students with asylum seeker status under ‘home’ fees (£9250 a year for undergraduate courses (University of Leicester, no date)) goes towards ‘embedding’ of sanctuary values, through formalising a commitment to equality in access to education for all holding asylum seeker status, not just those in receipt of sanctuary scholarships. In addition, it contributes towards the principle of ‘Learn’ through a commitment to diversifying the student body and reducing financial barriers to HE.

3.3.7a *Viability at the University of Leeds*

Whilst further consultation on the practicalities of the initiative would be needed with the Fees and Funding team, blanket reclassification of students with asylum seeker status or background under ‘home’ fees would be a beneficial initiative for bringing the University of Leeds towards University of Sanctuary values. Many other UoSs already do the same.

1. Recommendations

4.1 Organisational

* **Expand the Sanctuary Steering Group** to include 1 optimally placed representative from each school or service, so that there is a clear point of contact when intra-university collaboration is needed, in line with barriers identified for staff in 3.1.2 - namely the size of the university and need to ask for ‘favours’ of other departments- and in line with an ethos of ‘embedding’.
* **Create a ‘Leeds University of Sanctuary’ newsletter** to go out at regular interviews for those interested in updates on progress towards the sanctuary awards, including details of new initiatives, opportunities for collaboration and requests for support in developing initiatives to address the knowledge gap identified by staff interviewees in 3.1.2.
* **Create a ‘Leeds University of Sanctuary’ webpage** that caters to students from a sanctuary seeking background and prospective students to overcome communication barriers (including information about application processes, requirements, support available and scholarships, as well as contact details for the named point of contact and support available e.g. finance, the Plus Programme, wellbeing services). In addition, the webpage would cover up to date information on all sanctuary initiatives being run at the university, to fulfil criteria (d) of the award process and overcome the knowledge gap identified by staff in 3.1.2.
* **Create a centralized ‘sanctuary initiatives budget’** that can be allocated in addition to pre-existing school or service budgets, to enable the development of new and existing initiatives and address the need for financial support identified by staff interviewees in 3.1.3.
* **Create a centralized role** **to oversee Sanctuary activities**, work towards and subsequently maintain Sanctuary status, facilitate smooth coordination across schools and services, approve sanctuary initiative funding requests in a streamlined capacity, update the Sanctuary webpage and act as an official point of contact (both internally and externally) for students, staff and communities seeking sanctuary, and the organisations working with them. This would facilitate ‘embedding’ sanctuary values and initiatives and address the ‘disconnectedness’ and lack of central organisation and bureaucracy identified by staff in 3.1.2.

4.2 Informational

* **Offer training to staff across schools and services** to increase awareness of the issues faced by refugee or asylum seeker background students and staff. This might take the form of an online module (as at Bradford), training delivered by a third-party organisation and integrated into staff meetings (e.g. Scottish Refugee Council or Refugee Education UK, or a local organisation such as LASSN) or in-house tailored training that could be given by students or a staff member at staff meetings to respond to the need identified by staff interviewees in 3.1.3.
* **Offer targeted training to those who work directly with refugee and asylum seeker students and staff** (for example the Plus Programme team)**,** covering finer details of the different types of legal status, visa conditions and the process of navigating the asylum system to respond to the need identified by staff interviewees in 3.1.3.
* **Recommend approaching the above training as a jumping off point for further discussion** in schools and services, to brainstorm around new initiatives or areas where support and engagement could be improved.

4.3 Staff and Student Support

* **Establish a forced migration network** supported by the university, to allow for informal support and networking of staff from a sanctuary seeking background, overcome the barrier of cultural isolation and facilitate raising awareness of the support available to staff to address the gap in ‘support for non-international staff seeking sanctuary’ identified in 3.2: Embed.
* **Consider explicitly including all students from a sanctuary background in Plus Programme eligibility** to address the gap in ‘s*upport for non- Sanctuary Scholarship students from a sanctuary seeker background’*identified in 3.2: Embed.
* **Explicitly include students from a sanctuary seeker background in Widening Participation criteria and EDI literature,** to enact change at a policy level, send a message of support across schools and services, and address the opportunity for improvement identified in 3.2: Embed.

4.4 Community engagement

* **Invest in running further on-campus events, workshops and creative programmes** with local people seeking sanctuary through Leeds University Libraries and Galleries, with committed financial support be able to compensate refugee and asylum seeker participants in consultations, or contributors of artworks, at the same level as other contributors.
* **Support Leeds University Libraries and Galleries in future Sanctuary initiatives** they are considering, including....
  + Integrating sanctuary seeker art onto campus
  + Providing free Library access to sanctuary seeker communities (example of best practice 3.3.6).
  + Aiming to diversify collections, including covering more sanctuary seeker narratives.
  + Providing levels of free access to the Skills@Library workshops for local sanctuary seeker communities.
  + Exploring the possibility of a jointly funded Sanctuary Scholarship between LUL&G and an appropriate school or faculty (e.g. for MA Art Gallery and Museum Studies where additional professional development support could be provided through the Libraries and Galleries).

4.5 Commitment to embedding

* **Commit to a higher number of Sanctuary Scholarships per year indefinitely**in line with the best practice detailed in 3.3.1 and 3.3.2, to strengthen fulfilment of criteria (b) (section 1.4.1), to tackle financial barriers to HE, to work towards the principle of ‘Embed’, and ‘Learn’ through the resultant higher number of students from a sanctuary seeking background at UoL.
* **Commit to a host a given number of CARA fellows per year** in line with the best practice detailed in 3.3.4, to strengthen commitment to the principles of ‘Embed’ and ‘Learn’.
* **Embed feedback and review mechanisms in all sanctuary initiatives** allowing people seeking sanctuary anonymous input and ensuring improvement of initiatives to ensure sustainability, address the need for support identified in 3.1.3 and in line with criteria (h) of the sanctuary award process (engaging with people seeking sanctuary), the ethos of ‘Learn’ through platforming sanctuary seeker experiences and perspectives and ‘Embed’ through maximising success and longevity.
* **Consider blanket reclassification of all students with asylum seeker status** under home fees in line with best practice example 3.3.8, and the principles of ‘Embed’ and ‘Learn’.

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