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OUR CHARTER

MISSION

Places of Sanctuary Ireland's mission is to support the network of groups and Streams of Sanctuary and to contribute towards building a Sanctuary movement. In practical terms, we work to build a culture of welcome, hospitality and inclusiveness right across every sphere and sector of society, so that wherever people seeking sanctuary go they will feel safe, find people who welcome them and understand why they are here, and have opportunities to be included in all activities.

OUR VISION

We hold the vision that Ireland will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

AIMS

- To support the creation of a culture of welcome and inclusion across every sphere and sector of society to ensure that wherever sanctuary seekers go they will find places of safety
- To promote the voices and celebrate the contributions of people seeking sanctuary across every sphere and sector of society
- To increase understanding of why people seek sanctuary and the difficulties they experience whilst living in Ireland, north and south
- To express the collective voice of the network, advocating for and alongside sanctuary seekers
- To work in partnership with other organisations and groups that support refugees and migrants, together building a broader sanctuary movement across Ireland.

SANCTUARY CHARTER

Places of Sanctuary Ireland is part of the wider City of Sanctuary movement. This Charter is closely aligned to the charter adopted by the UK City of Sanctuary organisation.

Values The organisation and network will be guided and informed by commitment to the following values:

Inclusiveness – We welcome and respect people from all backgrounds, place the highest value on diversity and are committed to equality.

Places of Sanctuary Ireland is a network of groups in towns, cities and local communities which share the objectives of promoting the integration, inclusion and welfare of refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants, by encouraging every sector of society to make a practical commitment to becoming places of welcome and safety.

Openness - We are committed to a culture of working collaboratively within the network and in partnership with others.

Participation – Those who support our vision work together with people seeking sanctuary. We value and recognise the contribution of all involved. We aspire to ensure people seeking sanctuary are fully involved in decision making processes and supported to become leaders within our organisation and network as well as within the wider movement.

Inspiring – We work with enthusiasm and positivity and are determined to surpass what has already been achieved to welcome refugees and people seeking sanctuary. We act as a catalyst for change by being open to new and innovative ideas and through sharing knowledge gained with others and working in partnership.

Integrity – We aspire to high standards of honesty and behaviour, and always to act in the interest of people seeking sanctuary.

We also support the aspirations of City of Sanctuary UK's Birmingham Declaration. The Birmingham Declaration was launched at the first Sanctuary Summit in the UK in 2014 and has since been endorsed by more than 320 organisations. The core principles in the Declaration are:

1. All asylum seekers, refugees and migrants should be treated with dignity and respect.
2. A fair and effective process to decide whether people need protection should be in place.
3. No one should be locked up indefinitely.
4. No one should be left sick or destitute in our society.
5. We should welcome the stranger and help them to integrate.

THE ORGANISATION

Places of Sanctuary Ireland (PoSI) is the umbrella body for the City of Sanctuary groups in Ireland, north and south, providing a focus for coordination and development of the network. This contributes to building a wider Sanctuary movement. In addition to undertaking City of Sanctuary activities and initiatives at an all-island level, the role of the organisation is to ensure that there is good communication across the organisations that form our network, to coordinate decision-making and to help raise the profile of the City of Sanctuary movement. We recognise that we are part of a much broader movement that is multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional.

NETWORK PRINCIPLES

The Places of Sanctuary network is part of a mainstream, grassroots movement working towards achieving the overall vision. Whilst there is flexibility in determining how best to work towards the vision, the following principles apply to all groups, networks and streams operating under the name of Places of Sanctuary:

- Offer a positive vision of a culture of welcome and hospitality to all;
- Create opportunities for relationships of friendship and solidarity between local people and those seeking sanctuary;

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- Recognise and encourage partnership working and network development across localities;
- Identify opportunities for working on common cause issues within and across communities;
- Celebrate and promote the welcome and contribution of people seeking sanctuary;
- Engage people seeking sanctuary in decision making processes at all levels and in all activities;
- Promote understanding of asylum and refugee issues, especially by enabling refugee voices to be heard directly.

PLACES OF SANCTUARY GROUPS

When a group first registers with Places of Sanctuary Ireland, they agree to:

- Work towards making their city, town or county into a City, Town, County or Area of Sanctuary by creating a culture of welcome and hospitality for people seeking safety;
- Work to connect people seeking sanctuary with other local people and to celebrate their contribution to our communities, towns and cities;
- Seek to be inclusive in generating a culture of welcome, involving different sectors such as education, local government, health, sports and arts, as well as refugee organisations;
- Work as an alliance between local people and sanctuary seekers to run the group wherever possible and appropriate;
- Be prepared to share successes, ideas and learning with other groups and the network;
- Join in regional events where possible;
- Avoid bringing the name of Places of Sanctuary Ireland into disrepute, in particular by not engaging in abusive, racist, discriminatory, exclusionary, offensive or dangerous behaviour.
- Identify between three and five contacts to enable the City of Sanctuary to keep in touch and keep the team updated when changes to these contact details occur, providing full name, telephone and email details for each contact where possible.

There is no single formula for developing a successful and effective Places of Sanctuary group. In general terms groups should work towards undertaking the following actions:

1. Develop a strategy, agreed by the main supporting organisations, for how the city, town or county is to continue working towards greater inclusion and equality for refugees and people seeking sanctuary, as well as greater public awareness, through a range of initiatives, projects and activities;
2. Gather resolutions of support from a significant and representative proportion of groups and organisations;

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3. Encourage supporting organisations (whether formally pledged or not) to turn their commitment into actions;
4. Engage with other groups across the network, in the expectation that such a conversation will lead to a mutually beneficial sharing of good practice;
5. Support and work alongside refugees and people seeking sanctuary in the Places of Sanctuary group, including representation on its steering group or committee;
6. Wherever possible sustain engagement with the local authority or other relevant authorities.

Groups may, if they wish, apply to Places of Sanctuary Ireland for sanctuary recognition for their city, town or county by submitting an application for appraisal.

STREAMS OF SANCTUARY

Streams of Sanctuary encourage professionals within 'communities of practices or interests' to come together to embed the concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion within their professions, sectors and organisations, together with other interested individuals (including people seeking sanctuary), groups and organisations. Any individual or organisation working within a Stream of Sanctuary must be committed to the vision and values of Places of Sanctuary Ireland. The development of new activities, projects and initiatives within a Stream must be aligned with Sanctuary network principles. A Stream will also enable the sharing of best practice, resources and ideas.

SANCTUARY AWARDS

Sanctuary Awards are used to recognise exemplary work in this field. A Sanctuary Award is given to an organisation that is able to demonstrate commitment to our values and vision of welcome, and that has applied our network principles within the organisation and its projects or activities. A committee is nominated by the Board of Places of Sanctuary to undertake an appraisal of the process either locally, regionally or nationally (depending on the circumstances) and the recommendation of that committee is ratified by the PoSI Board. At least one person on the committee must be a sanctuary seeker. We encourage groups to actively review awards every three years.

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