

UK City of Sanctuary – Case Study Examples

The following brief case studies provide evidence of initiatives which have been undertaken to support people seeking sanctuary in Perth and Kinross.

- Bike Station – since the first arrivals of people seeking asylum into local hotels in 2021 support has been offered by the community outreach programme at the Bike Station in Perth to provide access to bicycles to the residents. This has allowed them a sustainable and affordable means of transport in the local area.
- Celebration of Key Dates in Calendar – Perth and Kinross has an equalities calendar of key dates and events for our diverse communities in place. Events and meetings are always popular and help people from different backgrounds and cultures to have a sense of belonging in the area. We continue to be involved with and encourage our communities to take part in major events such as Chinese New Year, Perthshire Pride and Mela festival. We also provide advice and support to new community led initiatives such as Mela Markets and Ukrainian Independence Day. The lighting of Perth Bridge and other key buildings, in appropriate colours, has been a visible way of highlighting these dates to the wider community and continues to prove extremely popular with equality groups, sending a clear message of inclusiveness, that everyone's experiences, matter, that we are all valued members of the community and everyone is welcome here in Perth and Kinross.
- Children Alone Seeking Asylum Team - the CASA (Children Alone Seeking Asylum) team now support 40 young people aged 15 – 23 (can be eligible for support up to aged 26 if in education) from 11 different countries. The Team continues to engage with the National Transfer Scheme which became mandatory in October 2021 with all Local Authorities in the UK participating in the relocation and reception of young people mostly from Kent and South East of England. They have consistently met their obligations under the rota to place a young person within 5 days of referral – there is no choice over age/gender of young person being transferred via mandated referrals. The CASA team have expanded to meet the needs of our young people, the small team now has 4.5 workers. Youth Services have also employed a youth worker and an ESOL worker to support the holistic needs of the young people and this ensures their learning journey and integration begins as soon as they arrive in Perth & Kinross. The Home Office have given positive feedback about the services offered by PKC and our good practice and expertise in this area has been shared with a number of smaller local authorities, when looking to begin supporting young people in a similar situation.
- ESOL Support - the Communities Service offer free English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes in central Perth, Crieff, Eastern and Highland Perthshire areas. The main goal is to teach English, improve community

integration, create networks, and build people's confidence to access other services. Our ethos is to work in partnership with other organisations to provide free, local and friendly learning through collaborative work. ESOL classes have a positive impact on individuals, communities, and society. Learning fosters self-confidence, enabling adults to be more active and engaged in their community. Participants report positive impact on their health and wellbeing and reduction in their feelings of isolation. Participants progress onto other upskilling opportunities including digital skills, cooking skills, short courses and accredited qualifications.

- Football Coaching qualification - in August 2023 10 members of our sanctuary seeking population took part in a ground-breaking Scottish FA Level 1 football coaching course tailored specifically to allow them this opportunity. The course was delivered at McDiarmid Park by Gavin Beith the Scottish FA East Region Development Officer who said it was "one of the most enjoyable" he's delivered because of the attitude, enthusiasm and effort of the participants. Funding for this initiative came from the Apprenticeship Employer Grants. The longer-term aim is now to offer those who successfully completed the course to have the opportunity to be mentored to undertake some voluntary community football coaching in the local area.
- Friendly Welcome Football – weekly football sessions take place during the winter months for our sanctuary seeking population supported by the Councils Equalities and Safer Communities Teams with equipment provided by Saints Community Trust. On alternate weeks games take place against other teams to allow new friends to be made – since October 2023 games have taken place against teams of Elected Members; Perth & Kinross Council Staff; a combined Police and Safer Communities Team; a Live Active Leisure staff team and a community group from Dunkeld.
- International Cafés and Drop In Café – (i) ESOL – International Café - started when the Syrian refugees arrived and started at Blend Café. It provides a warm and welcoming social area for all people who are new to Perth. It is a chance to meet new people and to ask ordinary questions and make new connections. The aim is for everyone to feel safe, included and integrated in the community. The meetings are now held monthly on the second Monday of the month 7-8.30pm in the civic hall, 2 High Street, Perth. Each month there is a new theme with different speakers and entertainers. (ii) Blairgowrie & Rattray International Café - meets twice monthly in St Catherine Hall from 2.30pm, it is open to anyone of any nationality. The café is open to adults but also offers activities for children including arts & crafts, dancing and refreshments for all. The aim is for the community to meet local organisations, find support and meet new people. (iii) Trinity Church Coffee and Chat – offers a drop in coffee, cake, and chat session for asylum groups on a Tuesday 2-4pm, with the aim of reducing social isolation and to make everyone feel welcome and included. The church looks to organise events, share ideas and help asylum seekers to make friends.

- Leadership Course for members of the Asylum population - our new Leadership Programme aimed at helping members of the local asylum community has now seen six participants successfully complete the course. The Leadership Programme is a 3-week course for members of the local asylum population who have received restricted rights to work. It offers participants the opportunity to enhance their skills to assist them in their employment journey. The course covers leadership, employability and presentation skills, while offering relevant talks from local role models like Danny Griffin from St. Johnstone Community Trust and Imam Ibrahim of Perth Masjid as well as the Council's Chief Executive Thomas Glen. The first participants to complete the course did so after delivering individual presentations on their personal journey and hopes for the future to an invited audience of senior council staff and Elected Members.
- Resettlement Team/Multi Agency Response Perth & Kinross resettlement team has been developed to provide a frontline multi agency response to enable refugees to access a range of services from a single point of contact. The team is made up of specialist housing resettlement officers, support officers and social workers, as well as social prescribers, community education and integration workers. The team also links in with a range of additional third sector organisations, employability partners and adult learning groups.
- Weekly Drop-in sessions /Community Warm Spaces – members of our asylum-seeking population who are currently resident in 2 hotels in Perth and Kinross receive weekly drop-in visits from key Council staff and partner organisations in the third sector to allow them the opportunity to access information and advice as required. 2 of our local community groups which support local minority ethnic community members also provide Warm Spaces each week which are frequented by our sanctuary seeking population.
- Welcome Packs refugees arriving in Perth and Kinross are provided with a welcome pack containing a range of information about Perth & Kinross and its history, local customs, culture and laws. The guide includes practical information about shopping, specialist diets, places of worship along with details about accessing housing, education, health services and employment. Much of this information is also discussed in person by the support officers who provide individual support to refugees resettling in Perth and Kinross