



Petition by Rachel Austin-Francis, Operations Manager, Race Equality North Somerset (RENS) Weston-super-Mare Town Council and North Somerset Council Partner - <https://xtiles.app/67df1e9fd9d16d71c82ee1f0>

Letter sent to supporters 24.03.25:

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

Rachel Austin-Francis <rachel@rens.org.uk>

10:07 (4 minutes ago)

to Andy, Bridie, community.safetyteam@n-somerset.gov.uk, Dana, donna.king@rwns.org.uk, emma.hutchins@weston.ac.uk, enquiries@broadoakacademy.clf.uk, Gareth, Howard, jason.selormey@weston.ac.uk, jennifer.kerridge@uhbw.nhs.uk, Liz, louise.hilldavis@weston.ac.uk, Nabila, Rachel, support@nslgbtforum.com, alice.morgan, bridget.petty, angela, catherine.gibbons, david.crossman, deborah.porter, Jo.walker, emma.simmonds, chris.head, emma.wellard, Fadumo.Farah, heena.crabb, holly.law, ian.noah, jamie.barresi, jenna.homarris, louise.roberts, mandy.gardner, marc.robinson, michael.oconnor, sallyretallick, Sazia.salim, tracey.wells, zarmina.sultani, bcc: jameswillisboden, bcc: lee.kerslake, bcc: jonathan.murray, bcc: judeopogah, bcc: mohamed.berber, bcc: r.armstrong, bcc: saydahmed, bcc: yvonneccclark, bcc: zoe.almond, bcc: Alison, bcc: chairmfa, bcc: cdareynolds, bcc: ivijuliane, bcc: MP

Dear colleague,

At the Weston Town Council meeting this evening (Monday 24th March), a motion is being proposed for Weston to become recognised as a 'Council of Sanctuary'.

The Council motion is as follows:

Weston Town Council supports City of Sanctuary U.K. in its vision that the U.K. be a welcoming place of safety for all and is proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution. This council is committed to support the initiative to make Weston-super-Mare a recognised Council of Sanctuary. We already welcome those fleeing violence and persecution in their own country. We recognise their potential contribution to our town. We need a comprehensive, co-ordinated and forward-looking approach if both the welfare of people moving into our town and

community cohesion between new and existing communities are to be supported effectively.

Many cities, towns and councils across the UK have already taken this step to show their support for people fleeing war, forced displacement, violence and persecution -

<https://la.cityofsanctuary.org/>

Concerns raised by Reform UK:

RENS has learned that Reform UK Weston is planning to protest about this motion and, over the weekend, has been active on social media, spreading misinformation about the proposed motion. People have been led to believe that becoming a Council of Sanctuary will result in more asylum seekers coming to Weston, placing additional pressures on already stretched public services and housing availability. This is not the case. **Central Government is responsible for where Asylum Seekers are placed. Weston Town Council Policy has no impact on this.**

Some people feel that the UK should not be supporting people who are fleeing war, forced displacement, violence and persecution even though they have a legitimate claim to be given Refugee status and a right to remain, on the basis that 'we need to look after people who are already here first'.

At present, the UK is required to accept Asylum Seekers by international law. This is a separate debate. **Becoming a Council of Sanctuary is about ensuring that people who have a legitimate right to be here can feel safe and can become valuable members of our community.**

Reasons to support the motion:

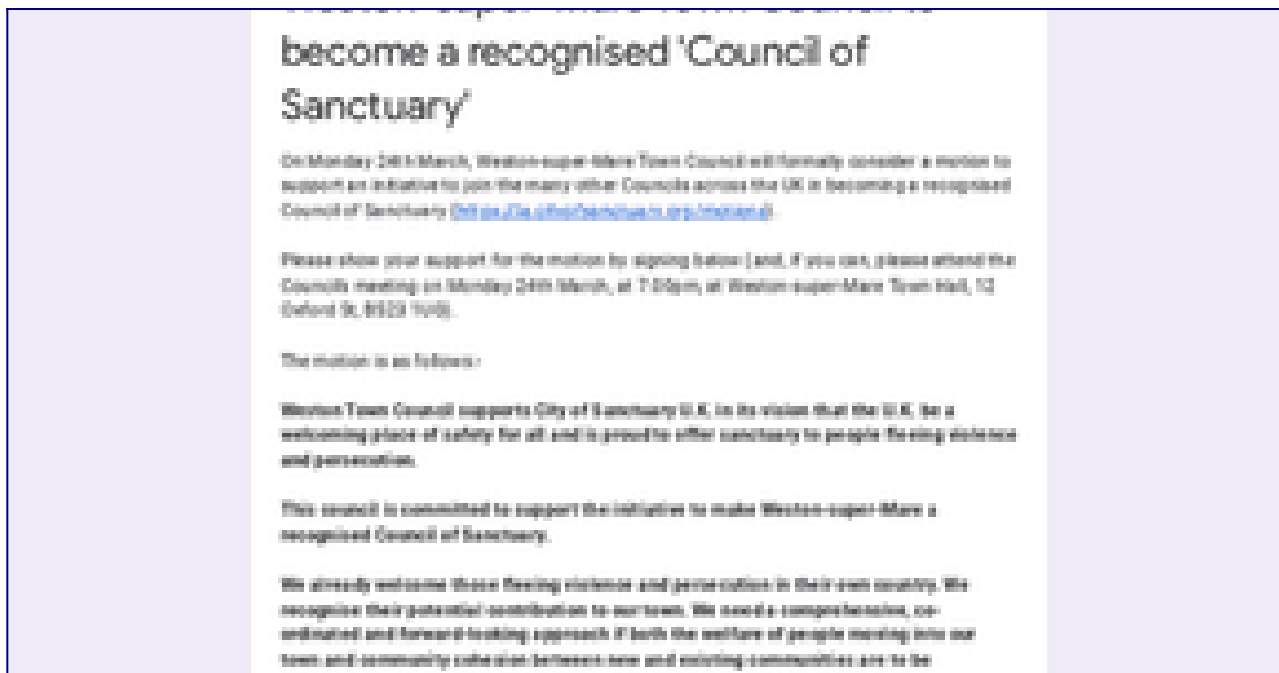
Asylum Seekers are in the most vulnerable position of all. They have been forced to leave their home, they have no recourse to public funds, and they live in limbo while waiting for a decision. **Showing care and compassion to those in the most difficult circumstances is a British tradition.** Sadly, attacks on Asylum Seekers are part of a wider narrative that targets all migrants. This is impacting everyone who is not white. When people are targeted and attacked on the streets, no-one stops to first ask if they are an Asylum Seeker, someone who was born here as a British citizen, or a professional who has been actively recruited to provide a valuable service in the UK, such as a medical staff to support our NHS. When times are difficult, it is easy to blame people who are vulnerable, but all it does is feed hatred and sow division.

Divide and rule is a well established tactic. If we do not stand together, how far will things go? Who will be next? Who will stand with all those in need, in all sectors of our community?

How you can help:

To show your support for the Council motion, you can:

1. Click on the link below and sign the petition:



become a recognised 'Council of Sanctuary'

On Monday 24th March, Weston-super-Mare Town Council will formally consider a motion to support an initiative to join the many other Councils across the UK in becoming a recognised Council of Sanctuary (<https://www.cityofsanctuary.org/>).

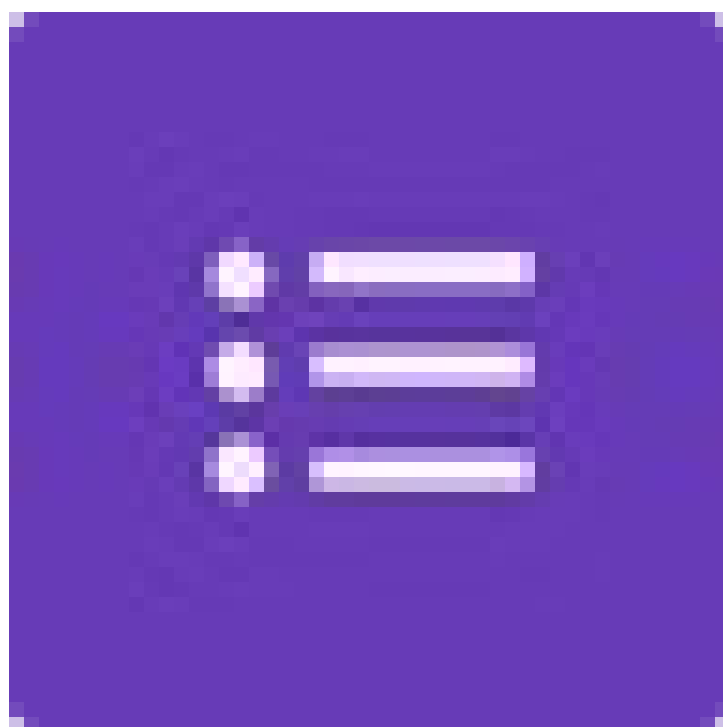
Please show your support for the motion by signing below (and, if you can, please attend the Council's meeting on Monday 24th March, at 7.00pm, at Weston-super-Mare Town Hall, 12 Oxford St, BS23 1UB).

The motion is as follows:

Weston Town Council supports City of Sanctuary U.K. in its vision that the U.K. be a welcoming place of safety for all and its growth offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.

This council is committed to support the initiative to make Weston-super-Mare a recognised Council of Sanctuary.

We already welcome those fleeing violence and persecution in their own country. We recognise their potential contribution to our town. We need a comprehensive, coordinated and forward-looking approach if both the welfare of people moving into our town and community cohesion between new and existing communities are to be



bit.ly/WTC...ctuary

2. If you live or work in Weston-super-Mare, send a letter to your local Councillor, asking them to support the motion.

There are examples of letters that you can copy and paste, from the following link:

Template Letters - <https://xtiles.app/67defb3b371f416439272186>

You can find your local Councillor's email address here:



wsm-tc.gov.uk/tow...illors

3. Share positive posts on social media showing your support for an inclusive community where all can feel they belong.

For ease, you can share the post on the RENS Facebook page.



facebook.com/REN...harity

Thank you for your help.

Kind regards

Rachel

Rachel Austin-Francis

Operations Manager

Race Equality North Somerset (RENS)

#manyculturesonecommunity

81-83 Meadow Street, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1DQ

Website: <https://rens.org.uk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RENScharity/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/wearerens/>

