

Wandsworth Sanctuary Strategy

Introduction

Wandsworth has a long and proud record of welcoming those in need, and owes much of its history to those who have come to the UK and made Wandsworth their home.

This history begins with the Huguenots who came to the borough in the 17th Century, fleeing from persecution due to their faith. They found a place of safety where they could worship freely and use their skills and expertise to contribute to Wandsworth's economy, establishing the area as one renowned for fashion and tailoring in the 17th and 18th Century.

Since then, the area has welcomed further groups of migrants and refugees over the centuries, including Belgians escaping World War One, Caribbean migrants part of the Windrush generation, and Ugandan Asians expelled by Idi Amin. Each group have found a place where they can thrive and build new lives in an open and welcoming community.

Most recently, the Council has supported people fleeing conflict in Syria and Afghanistan to settle in the borough through the Government's resettlement programmes. In the past year, Wandsworth's residents have demonstrated their huge generosity and empathy, with over 500 households opening up their homes to Ukrainians displaced by the Russian invasion. This has enabled over 750 Ukrainians to find a place of safety in the borough, and reflects what can be achieved when the Council works in partnership with residents and community organisations.

The legacy of the Huguenots is now recorded in the borough's coat of arms, which features tears said to represent the tears of joy they shed at finding sanctuary in Wandsworth. It is this recognition of the value and importance of sanctuary for those in need that in July 2022 drove Wandsworth to pledge to become a Borough of Sanctuary. This strategy sets out what that pledge means for Wandsworth Council and how the Council will work to welcome and support those who seek sanctuary here.



The strategy begins with the values and principles which underpin the strategy, and which have been informed through discussion with sanctuary seekers and community groups. It then moves on to a section covering the borough's demographics, providing contextual information related to migration and asylum in Wandsworth. The main element of the strategy is the action plan, which outlines what steps the Council will take over the next three years to embody these principles and act as a borough of sanctuary. The areas for action have been identified in conjunction with sanctuary seekers and

organisations who work with them in Wandsworth and aim to ensure that there is a truly cross-council approach to working with those seeking sanctuary. As a Council strategy, the action plan is primarily intended to cover those areas the local authority is directly responsible for, however it is acknowledged that many of these will involve working with partners.

The Council would like to thank the members of the Wandsworth Migration Forum for their involvement in this strategy, and CARAS and Katherine Low Settlement for facilitating engagement with the asylum seekers and refugees they work with. These contributions have been instrumental in drawing up the strategy and action plan.

Values and Commitments

Wandsworth Council's approach to working with sanctuary seekers will be underpinned by the following five overarching principles. These have been identified through consultation with local organisations who support refugees and asylum seekers who were invited to advise what values and principles they thought should be at the heart of the Council's strategy.

Wandsworth Council's approach to sanctuary seekers will be:

- **Welcoming** - The primary guiding principle for the Council's response to sanctuary seekers will be make clear that they are welcome and valued in the borough. The Council will treat sanctuary seekers with respect and dignity, and on an equal basis with all residents.
- **Universal** - Sanctuary seeker groups were clear that "what is good for one marginalised group is good for all". The Council will work to make sure that wherever possible the services it offers are open to all on a consistent basis. Where there are differences due to the entitlements of different refugee/asylum schemes, the Council will lobby the Government via groups such London Councils and the Local Government Association to remove these.
- **Clear** - Organisations working with sanctuary seekers emphasised the importance of clarity - around services available, around policies on housing eligibility, on how to access services, and the time it may take. The Council will ensure that it is clear in its communication and interactions with sanctuary seekers about what they can expect and when.
- **Collaborative** - The Council recognises that it is just one part of a network of organisations and groups which support sanctuary seekers. It will endeavour to deliver joined-up services, to signpost to other services and providers when needed, and to work in partnership with community groups.
- **Accessible** - Sanctuary Seekers should be able to access the right service in the right place at the right time. The Council will make sure that services are accessible to sanctuary seekers, including access to translated documents and interpreters when needed.

Glossary

Definitions are based on those provided by the Refugee Council.

- **Refugee**

The definition of a refugee according to The 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees is:

“A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

In the UK, a person becomes a refugee when government agrees that an individual who has applied for asylum meets the definition in the Refugee Convention they will ‘recognise’ that person as a refugee and issue them with refugee status documentation. Usually refugees in the UK are given five years’ leave to remain as a refugee. They must then apply for further leave, although their status as a refugee is not limited to five years.

- **Person seeking asylum**

A person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been concluded.

- **Refused asylum applicant**

A person whose asylum application has been unsuccessful and who has no other claim for protection awaiting a decision. Some people who have their case refused voluntarily return home, others are forcibly returned. For some, it is not safe or practical to return until conditions in their country change.

- **Migrant**

Someone who has moved to another country for other reasons, such as to find work.

- **UASC**

UASC stands for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and refers to children who are outside their country of origin seeking asylum, are separated from parents and relatives, and are not in the care of someone who is responsible for them in a guardianship role.

- **Sanctuary Seeker**

An umbrella term used to describe those in the above categories.

Different cohorts have different rights and entitlements granted to them by the Government. People seeking asylum typically do not have the right to work or to access public funds including benefits such as Universal Credit, State Pension, Child Benefit and local authority administered discretionary payment schemes. People with no recourse to public funds are also not typically able to access homelessness assistance, although the Council may have a duty to house families under the Children Act 1989 or vulnerable adults under the Care Act 2014.

Individuals on formal resettlement schemes and those granted refugee status typically have the right to work and claim public funds. Migrants’ rights to claim public funds and work is dependent on the conditions attached to their visa.

As noted in the values section above, this strategy is intended as far as possible to create a universal offer to all sanctuary seekers within the limits created by individual's status within the UK. Where a universal offer is not possible, the Council's priority will be to act compassionately and support the most vulnerable.

Local Sanctuary Seeker Populations

Wandsworth Council has fully participated in the three recent resettlement schemes (Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine).

Between October 2016 and May 2019, the Council facilitated the resettlement of 12 families under the Syrian resettlement scheme, which equated to 51 people including 29 dependent children.

Wandsworth supported the 9th highest number of Syrian refugees in London.

The two Afghan resettlement schemes (ARAP and ACRS) launched in August 2021, and to date the Council has supported eight families to settle in Wandsworth, with the most recent family arriving at the end of April 2023. The Council is still open to supporting more families under the Afghan scheme but this is dependent on suitable accommodation being offered by private landlords.

The Council has also supported a number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). In Wandsworth, we care for unaccompanied asylum seeking young people who present in borough, and those referred to us through the National Transfer Scheme. These young people become Children Looked After by the Council, and are offered the same love, care and support as every other child in our care.

We always prioritise placing young people in a foster family, and where possible that family will share their culture, language and/or religion. Where this is not possible in an emergency, we always make sure to build community links, and look to identify a more closely matched placement as soon as we can. We understand that familiarity and a sense of community is key to young people settling into life in the UK, and thriving. As of May 2023, Wandsworth was supporting 26 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children.

The Homes for Ukraine resettlement scheme launched in mid-March 2022, and operates differently to the previous resettlement schemes and at a different scale. As of May 2023, there have been 1,521 applications for visas from people intending to settle in Wandsworth, of which 1,021 have arrived in the borough. These applications have been supported by over 600 sponsors. Wandsworth has seen the fifth highest number of Ukrainian arrivals of any English lower-tier local authority, and the second highest of the London boroughs.

The Home Office is responsible for sourcing dispersal accommodation for asylum seekers, and as of May 2023 there were approximately 40 asylum seekers accommodated in the borough in a combination of contingency and dispersal accommodation. This relatively low number reflects the costs of private rented properties in the borough and the difficulties securing accommodation available at Local Housing Allowance Rates. However, the Home Office has announced its intention to move to a full dispersal model of accommodations for asylum seekers and ending the use of contingency site. This is likely to see the number of asylum seekers accommodated in Wandsworth increase significantly.

Additional information about the demographics of Wandsworth and local context relevant to asylum seekers and refugees are included in Annex A at the end of this strategy.

Actions Taken To-Date

As noted above, the Council has already been supporting the resettlement of many refugees and asylum seekers through the Government's resettlement schemes, and the activities associated with this will form the foundation of Wandsworth's work to be a Borough of Sanctuary. Actions the Council is already taking to support sanctuary seekers include:

- Appointing a Refugee Champion. In May 2022, Cllr Sarmila Varatharaj was appointed as Wandsworth's Refugee Champion, leading the Council's work at a political level and advocating for the rights and needs of sanctuary seekers in the borough. During Refugee Week 2022, Cllr Varatharaj hosted an event for groups who work with sanctuary seekers in the borough, celebrating the work that they do, and is heavily engaged with Wandsworth Welcomes Refugees, our local City of Sanctuary group.
- Recruiting two dedicated refugee and resettlement roles within the corporate policy team who have responsibility for coordinating activity across the Council. This team provides expertise to other departments on the Council's responsibilities to sanctuary seekers and sharing best practice from other local authorities.
- Creating a cross-directorate operations group which meets fortnightly to oversee the Council's response to resettlement programmes. The exact membership of this group flexes according to the needs at the time, but includes senior representation from across the Council and is chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive, reflecting the importance of this work.
- Meeting regularly with local charities and organisations who also provide support to sanctuary seekers to share information on the local sanctuary seeker population, their needs, and identify any gaps in provision of services. Recently this meeting has been formalised as Wandsworth's Migration Forum, with the membership expanded to include other partners such as the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and JobCentre.
- Our Work Match team works intensively with sanctuary seekers to support them into employment, providing information on employment opportunities and coaching on CV and interview skills. It has also held employment fairs for specific resettlement groups, including recent events for Ukrainians.
- Our Children's Services department provides a range of support to refugees and asylum seekers, including working with families to streamline school applications, providing free school uniforms, and expanding access to the holiday activities and food programme to refugees.
- The Life Long Learning service provides a variety of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for sanctuary seekers to help them gain the vital languages skills needed to integrate into life in the UK. Classes range from basic conversation skills through to formally accredited ESOL courses.
- The Council engages with peer-support networks and lobbying efforts, including membership of the NRPF Network, which shares good practice on assisting those with No Recourse to Public Funds status including asylum seekers, as well as London Council's convened meetings on refugee support to coordinate pan-London activity.
- The Council also writes annually with the Integrated Care Board to all GP practices in the borough to promote the safe surgeries campaign, which encourages practices to be proactive in facilitating access to all, regardless of their immigration status. As of December 2022 21 out of 39 surgeries in Wandsworth had signed up to the initiative.

- The Council works with local businesses and organisations to support their efforts to offer events for sanctuary seekers. For example, in 2022 the Council facilitated the distribution of over 500 free tickets to Wimbledon tennis tournament for refugees, provided by the All England Lawn Tennis Club. In addition, the Council's leisure and culture provider, Enable, provided 200 free tickets to the annual Battersea Park firework display for refugee families.
- Included two special awards in the 2022 Wandsworth Civic Awards, recognising a group and an individual that had gone above and beyond to help those affected by the war in Ukraine or in other conflict around the world.

Action Plan

Whilst the Council has taken many actions to support sanctuary seekers, it is acknowledged that it could go further to ensure that Wandsworth is a welcoming and supportive borough. The Council has therefore drawn up the action plan below in response to feedback from refugees, asylum seekers, and partners. The action plan is intended to be delivered over the next three years, with indicative dates for completing actions given. This plan focuses on areas within the Council's direct control; however it will look to work in partnership with other organisations including the voluntary and community sector, health bodies, and education and employment providers wherever possible. The Council will strengthen this partnership working via the recently established Wandsworth Migration Forum. In addition, the Council will explore working collaboratively with neighbouring boroughs who have also pledged to become Boroughs of Sanctuary.

The Council has created a £1.7 million fund to support the delivery of the actions contained in this strategy, drawing on funding it receives from a range of sources to support refugees and asylum seekers including funding from the Homes for Ukraine scheme, the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, and European Social Fund.

No.	Action	Service	Timeframe
	Review processes and customer journey from viewpoint of sanctuary seekers for key housing services such as accessing homelessness support and implement any improvements identified.	Housing	Complete review by September 2024
	Include reference to sanctuary seekers in housing and homelessness strategies as and when the opportunity arises.	Housing	July 2023
	Continue work with private landlords to increase numbers willing to let to refugees and/or asylum seekers.	Housing	Ongoing
	Review the existing No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) support team (alongside provision in Childrens) and consider best practice from other Local Authorities.	Housing	December 2023
	Continue work monitoring number of refugees and asylum seekers who are sleeping rough and use intelligence to target support.	Housing	Ongoing
	Continue work of the transition team which supports those granted asylum status to exit Home Office accommodation and find new settled accommodation.	Housing	Ongoing
	Explore options to apply for Local Authority Housing Fund funding to expand the Council's acquisition programme to provide additional homes for refugees.	Housing	October 2023
	Review customer journeys for sanctuary seekers accessing key services such as adult social care assistance (including Access team) from sanctuary seekers' point of view and make any improvements identified.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Complete Review by April 2024
	Assess how we manage data held on sanctuary seekers accessing ASC services including those we support with no recourse to public funds (NRPF)	Adult Social Care and Public Health	June 2024
	Work with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) to continue to encourage GP surgeries to sign up to the Safe Surgeries initiative, which means they will be welcoming to people, irrespective of immigration status and not ask for documentation when someone presents with a health need. This initiative is being championed by the South London Listens Mental Health Taskforce of which the Council is a member.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Ongoing

	Work with NHS partners to ensure there is an effective system response with NHS partners to address health needs of refugees arriving in the borough following their initial health assessment. This includes ensuring access to primary care, infectious disease assessment and treatment, and catch up vaccinations.	Adult Social Care and Public Health	Ongoing
	Review customer journeys for accessing key services including school admissions and early help services from sanctuary seeker's point of view and make any improvements identified.	Children's Services	Review of journey over the year, identifying key improvement areas with subject matter experts (31.03.2024) Review learning and adaptation across years two and three. (by 31.03.2026)
	<p>Review and strengthen the Council's offer to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) and young people through a working group of children's social workers, leaving care personal advisors, managers, IROs and foster carers.</p> <p>The working group will consider areas including, but not limited to: making our offer clear (rights and entitlements, education, housing, voluntary and community sector support); participation and support to settle into the UK and to Wandsworth (producing a young people's guide, a group dedicated to unaccompanied young people and run by unaccompanied care leavers); trauma, mental health and emotional wellbeing (ensuring practitioners, schools and foster carers have the skills and support they need to be the best corporate parents to our unaccompanied young people).</p> <p>Priorities for the group will be shaped by a reference group of unaccompanied young people, who will provide regular feedback to the working group.</p>	Children's Services	<p>Implementation across 12 months (by 31.03.2024)</p> <p>Review, learning and adaptation across years two and three. (by 31.03.2026)</p>
	Provide enhanced support for sanctuary seeker families and young people with no recourse to public funds over Summer holidays	Children's Services	September 2023

	<p>Review and increase participation opportunities for young refugees and people seeking sanctuary – e.g. accessibility of current groups (including young carer project). This includes supporting young people to become familiar with and understand day-to-day life in the UK – familiarisation of place, services, professionals and hobbies – as well as encouraging young people to join the Youth Council so they can be involved in the decisions which affect them.</p>	<p>Children’s Services</p>	<p>Progressing /underway (by 31.03.2024)</p> <p>Continuous drive and review throughout duration of three year strategy (by 31.03.2026)</p>
	<p>Ensure that access to free childcare offer is understood and promoted to sanctuary seeker groups.</p>	<p>Children’s Services</p>	<p>Continual development and raising awareness over 3 year period – learning from any new advertisement / engagement with Sanctuary Seeker Groups and responding as required to large groups of sanctuary seekers arriving in Wandsworth (31.03.2026)</p>
	<p>Review ESOL provision and any gaps for those with different types of status and ages. Ensure offer is accessible by linking with childcare provision and that information on offer is easily accessible online. Ensure that the offer continues to ensure participants are able to manage everyday situations e.g. dentist, doctor, speaking to teachers etc.</p>	<p>Children’s Services</p>	<p>Review learning and adaptation of ESOL language and employment skills offer (01.09.2023)</p> <p>Continuation of classes through Life Long Learning over Summer 2023 (01.09.2023)</p> <p>Continual review of provision with incremental growth of ESOL as number of Sanctuary Seekers increases across years 2 and 3 (31.03.2026)</p>

	Review Council Tax discount entitlements for refugees, asylum seekers and those hosting refugees or asylum seekers under the community sponsorship model.	Revenues and Benefits	March 2024
	Review the process for applying for discretionary support grants & criteria from the point of view of a sanctuary seeker, and implement any improvements identified.	Revenues and Benefits	Ongoing - TBC
	Review the discounts and concessions offered to sanctuary seekers for the use of council owned leisure facilities.	Leisure	July 2023
	Work in conjunction with GLL to support their aims of becoming libraries of sanctuary.	Leisure	December 2023
	Review customer journey from viewpoint of sanctuary seekers and make any improvements identified for key services used by these groups such as WorkMatch.	Economic Development	July 2024
	Continue to include sanctuary seeker's needs in the Council's Employment Strategies as these are refreshed.	Economic Development	Refreshed annually
	Review equalities data and include sanctuary seeker status where possible for key services accessed by sanctuary seekers.	Economic Development	April 2024
	Deliver specific employment and skills events for sanctuary seekers, and review outcomes.	Economic Development	Approximately three events per year
	Explore business start-up support for migrants and sanctuary seekers.	Economic Development	Tied into the customer journey work being undertaken by WorkMatch
	Continue to embed sanctuary seekers and celebrate their history and stories in arts and culture programmes, including Wandsworth Arts Fringe, Wandsworth Heritage Festival and other creative programmes.	Arts and Culture	Ongoing (although individual projects have end dates)
	Develop partnerships with services that support sanctuary seekers with qualification conversion and language support.	Economic Development	Ongoing work with partners
	Establish <i>Language 2 Work</i> model to support intensive English language learning tailored to employment sectors.	Economic Development	Piloting 3 courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April Hospitality / Retail L2W course

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June Construction L2W course • Care course (Sept – October 23)
	Collaborate with the Voluntary and Community Sector to facilitate greater development and volunteering opportunities for asylum seekers who are unable to access paid employment.	Community and Partnerships	Ongoing
	Incorporate support for sanctuary seekers into future reviews of the voluntary sector, establishing gaps in service provision. This could include reviewing whether an advocacy scheme for sanctuary seekers is needed.	Community and Partnerships	Outcome of Needs Analysis due in September 2023
	As part of the above review, explore the need and options for establishing a community navigator type support function for refugees and asylum seekers. This could be provided in-house or form part of a commissioned service.	Community and Partnerships	April 2024
	Ensure that Council officers continue to be represented on key VCS forums to help coordinate actions and highlight sanctuary seeker’s needs.	Community and Partnerships	Ongoing
	Continue to fund local organisations such as Citizens Advice Wandsworth, providing sanctuary seekers access to advice, and support on navigating systems.	Community and Partnerships	Annual
	New action: Encourage and assist VCS groups in providing culturally specific activities and programmes which promote integration for sanctuary seekers.	Community and Partnerships	Review Borough of Sanctuary Community Fund in April 2024
	New action: Support VCS groups who provide donations to sanctuary seekers in identifying and accessing long-term storage facilities so they can carry out their work across the borough more effectively	Community and Partnerships	Ongoing
	Review Modern Slavery and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) support pathways and information from a sanctuary seeker’s perspective, ensuring the survivor’s voice is central.	Community Safety	Q1 2025/2026
	Ensure sanctuary seekers’ needs are considered in plans relating to hate crime, including continuing to raise awareness and encourage reporting of hate crime.	Community Safety	Ongoing

	Provide training for staff based on the lived experience of sanctuary seekers, to enable staff to understand the particular needs and point of view of these groups.	HR	Initial options by October 2023
	Incorporate the Sanctuary strategy into the Council's corporate induction so all staff are aware from day one of the council's commitment to being a Borough of Sanctuary.	HR	September 2023
	Review the wording on the Council's recruitment webpages and look at best practice for how it can frame its openness to sanctuary seekers seeking employment with the local authority.	HR	December 2023
	Work with the staff equality groups including the Race Equality Network, LGBT network, and Women's network to raise awareness of refugee and asylum seeker needs and the work the Council does.	HR	2024
	Organise, facilitate, and promote events throughout the year, highlighting the Council's efforts to support sanctuary seekers.	Communications and Mayor's Office	Ongoing
	Facilitate two meet & greets with Leader/Deputy Leader/Mayor and refugees annually. Work alongside local organisations that support refugees to ensure refugees and asylum seekers from a variety of backgrounds are involved.	Mayor's Office	31 Mar 2024 / Ongoing
	Incorporate sanctuary seekers into the Communication Forward Plan, highlighting the contribution of sanctuary seekers in the borough, including a strong campaign during Refugee Week.	Communications	Ongoing, with a focus around: World Refugee Day 20 June Refugee Week 20-26 June Ukrainian Independence Day 24 August
	Support local organisations' lobbying efforts and campaigns on refugee related issues e.g. through social media, promoting events, collaborating with groups.	Communications	
	Re-issue an appeal for landlords to offer properties for use under the Afghan resettlement schemes.	Communications	
	Convene the Wandsworth Migration Forum, which will meet quarterly to provide an opportunity for groups and services involved in supporting sanctuary seekers to share information and collaborate.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	Ongoing
	Link in with other local 'X' of Sanctuary groups, including libraries, schools and cafes	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	Ongoing

Engage with the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network and in particular other London Boroughs of Sanctuary.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	Ongoing
Review how sanctuary seekers can be included in the Council's template Equality Impact Needs Assessments, so their needs are considered by services when policies or services are changed.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	By July 2023
Review and revise the existing Council webpages for sanctuary seekers.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	December 2023
Develop an internal resource for Council staff to share relevant information and resources relating to sanctuary seeker support and Council offers.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	February 2024
Lobby the Home Office and Government on relevant legislation and consultations relating to sanctuary seekers.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	Ongoing
Take a robust approach to the Council's relationship with the Home Office, working with them to support asylum seekers placed in the borough but challenging them when examples of poor or unsafe practice are observed.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	Ongoing
Review availability of legal advice services for sanctuary seekers in the borough. This includes continuing support offered to refugee children and Children Looked After to review their legal status and secure citizenship – including free legal support and advice, and guidance from the Refugee Council.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	April 2024
Review and strengthen staffing arrangements to ensure the Council can respond promptly to new and emerging sanctuary seeker needs, including new resettlement schemes and/or asylum seekers placed in the borough.	Refugee and Resettlement Policy	April 2024

Wandsworth Migration Forum

The Wandsworth Migration Forum held its first meeting in November 2022 and includes representatives from services across Wandsworth Council, key partner services, and voluntary organisations involved in supporting refugees and asylum seekers. The forum will provide an opportunity for all those involved in working with sanctuary seekers to share information, raise issues, and work together to deliver comprehensive support. The Forum will meet quarterly, and although convened by the Council, is intended to function as a partnership with any group or service able to raise agenda items. The Forum will play a key role in holding the Council to account on the delivery of this strategy.

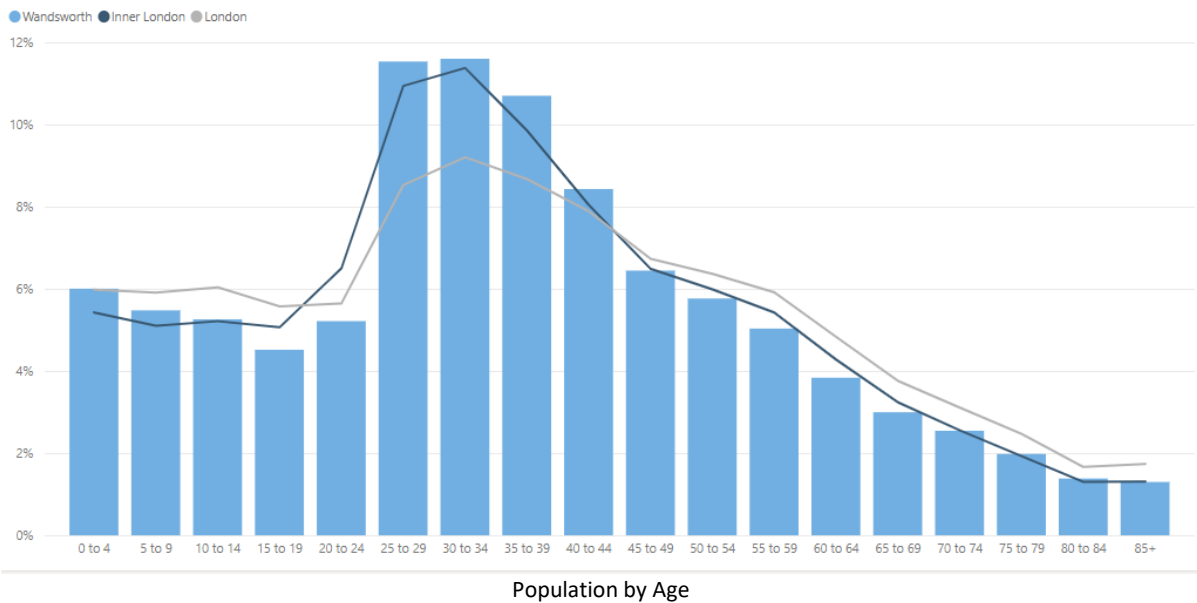
In addition, an annual update report on activity completed under the Borough of Sanctuary programme will be reported to committee.

Local Context and Demographics

Data on the demographics and needs specifically of asylum seekers and refugees is not generally available at local authority level. This section therefore attempts to collate data that is available on groups which are likely to include, or be reasonably used as a proxy for refugees and asylum seekers. This information may be drawn upon by Council services or partners to help inform service provision planning.

Borough Demographics Data

Wandsworth is home to an estimated 327,500 residents, the second largest population in Inner London. It has a mobile, young, educated and economically active population. By 2030 the population is expected to increase to more than 345,000, reflecting that Wandsworth also has one of the fastest rates of population growth in London.



Wandsworth is a relatively ethnically diverse borough, with a higher proportion of residents identifying as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic than the national average, but lower than the London and Inner London averages. Almost one in three residents identifies as Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic. The Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic population is younger, with a higher proportion of children and fewer older people; 45% of Wandsworth children’s population is Black, Asian, or Minority Ethnic, compared to 30% of the general borough population. Data on the ethnicity of asylum seekers and refugees is not published either at a national or local level, however in 2021 42% of asylum seekers were nationals of Middle Eastern countries, 23% nationals of African countries, 19% of Asian countries and 13% were European nationals.

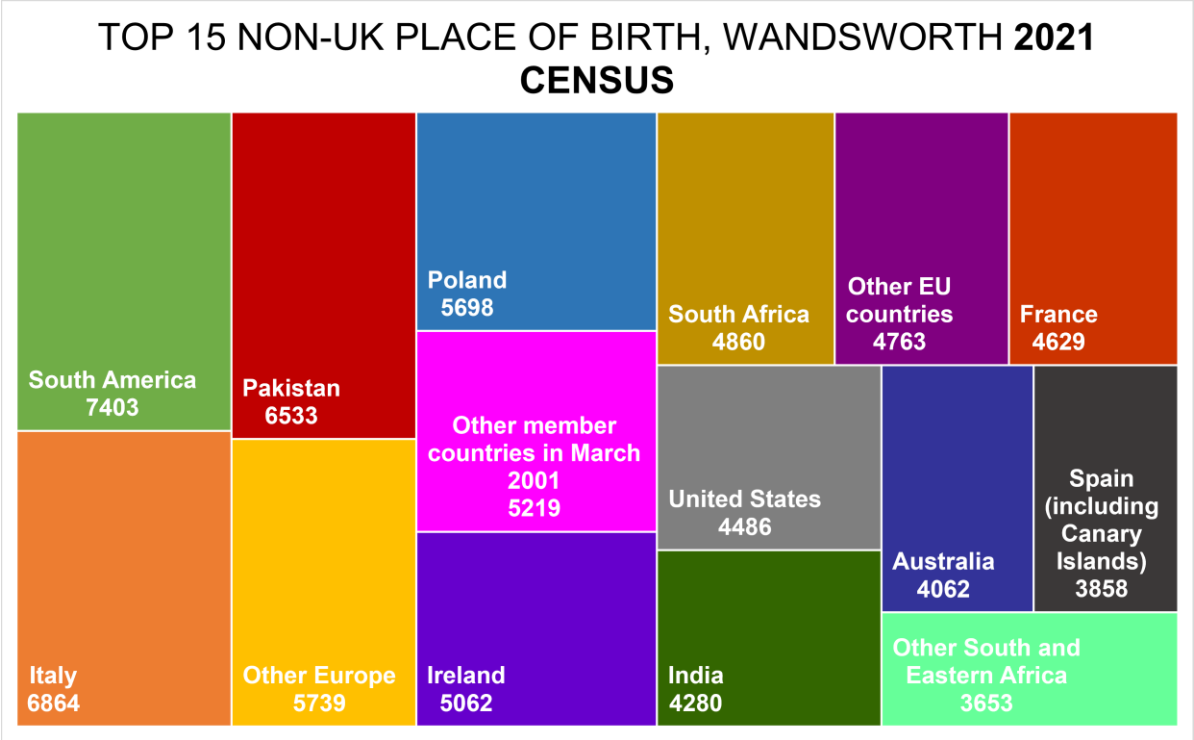
The table below provides more detailed information on the ethnic make-up of Wandsworth’s population.

Ethnicity	Wandsworth Persons	Wandsworth Proportion	London
White British	161,300	47.0%	37.9%
White Irish	10,080	2.9%	2.0%

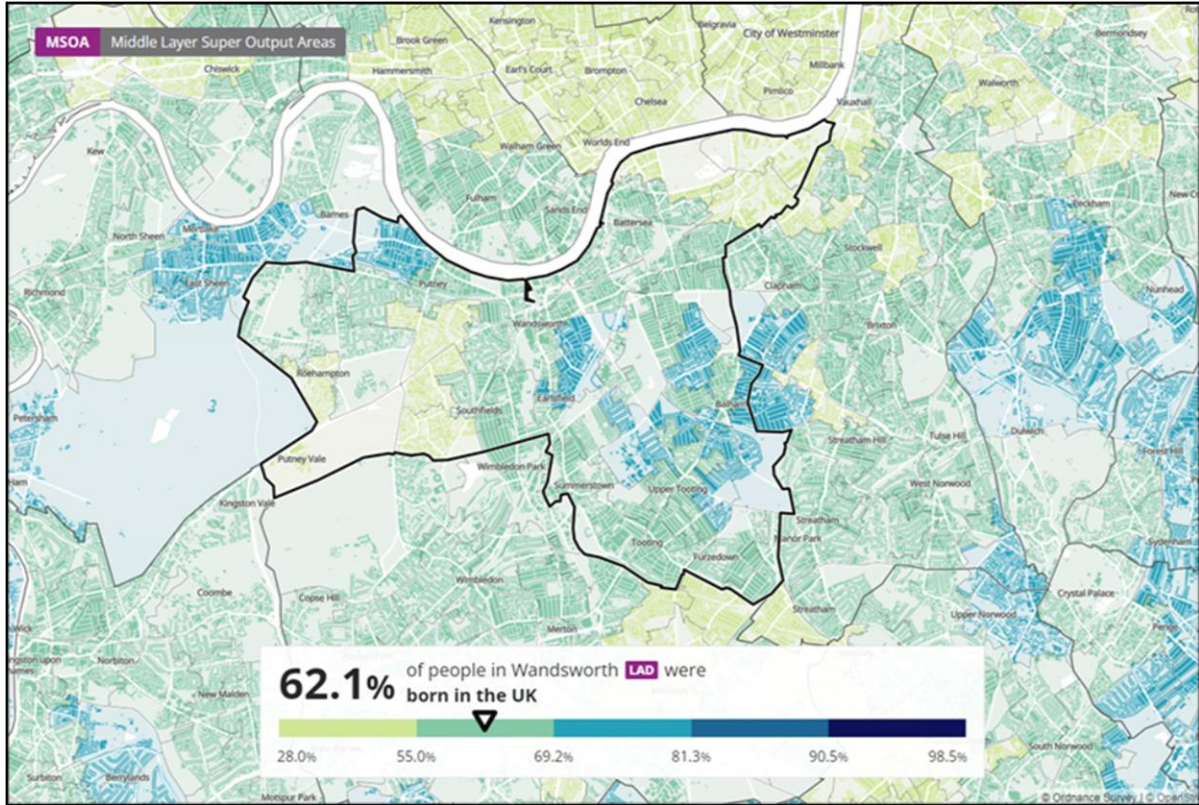
Other White	68,550	20.0%	16.2%
White & Black Caribbean	6,060	1.8%	1.6%
White & Black African	3,070	0.9%	1.0%
White & Asian	5,230	1.5%	1.5%
Other Mixed	7,280	2.1%	1.9%
Indian	8,500	2.5%	7.2%
Pakistani	10,990	3.2%	3.1%
Bangladeshi	1,440	0.4%	2.8%
Chinese	3,900	1.1%	1.7%
Other Asian	10,280	3.0%	5.7%
Black African	17,990	5.2%	7.3%
Black Caribbean	11,920	3.5%	3.7%
Other Black	7,040	2.1%	2.3%
Arab	3,820	1.1%	1.6%
Other Ethnic Group	5,710	1.7%	2.5%

Data from the 2021 Census indicates the levels of migration to Wandsworth. It records people's country of birth, which is the preferred measure for looking at changes in migration. This shows that 37.9% of people in Wandsworth were born outside the UK, up from 35% recorded in the 2011 Census.

Country of Birth	Wandsworth	London	UK
United Kingdom	62.10%	59.40%	83.20%
Other European Countries	15.70%	15.50%	7%
Africa	6.20%	7.10%	2.70%
Middle East and Asia	8.50%	13%	5.60%
Americas and the Caribbean	5.60%	4.20%	1.35%
Antarctica, Oceania (including Australasia) or other	1.90%	0.80%	0.30%



There are areas with a particularly high proportion of people born outside the UK living in Nine Elms, Queenstown Road and Battersea Park, East Putney, West Hill, and Roehampton (show in lighter shades on the map below). As sanctuary seekers are by definition born outside the UK, these areas may therefore also be more likely to contain sanctuary seeker households.



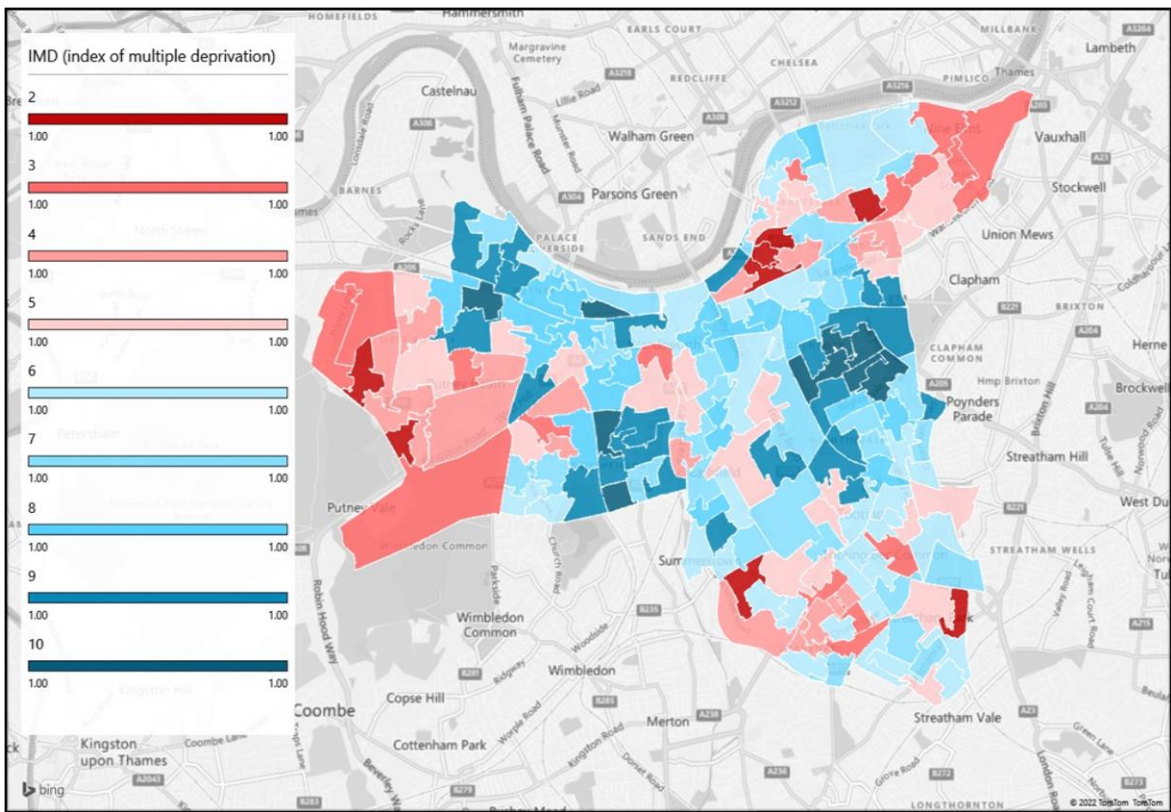
Wandsworth is home to a combination of recent arrivals to the UK and those who have been here for many years. 3% of Wandsworth residents had lived in the UK for less than 2 years, 5.6% for

between 2-5 years, 7.3% for 5-10 years, and 20.8% for more than 10 years. Whilst the Council’s strategy is addressed at all sanctuary seekers, it is likely that more recent arrivals will require a higher level of support.

0.5% of Wandsworth’s population in the 2021 Census identified as Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma, higher than the national average of 0.3%. There is one authorised Gypsy and Traveller site in the borough, with 11 pitches, providing accommodation to 21 residents. As of April 2019 there were no households on the waiting list for pitches at the Wandsworth site. National data records that 81.6% of people from the Gypsy or Irish Traveller ethnic group were born in England. This population is distinct from sanctuary seekers, but may face similar issues and therefore benefit from the proposals in the strategy.

Deprivation Data:

In 2019, the borough of Wandsworth ranked 173rd out of 317 local authorities across England for deprivation (where 1st equals most deprived) according to the Index of Multiple Deprivation, placing it within the 50% least deprived local authorities in England, and the top-third least deprived London borough. However, it does have three Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA, a sub-ward geographical measure covering around 650 households) which are amongst the 10% most deprived in London, including two in Latchmere and one in Tooting. In addition, all LSOAs in Roehampton and 88% of LSOAs in Latchmere were within the 50% most deprived. These areas correlate with the areas with higher proportions of people born outside the UK which were noted above. This in turn may mean that sanctuary seekers are more likely to live in relatively more deprived areas.

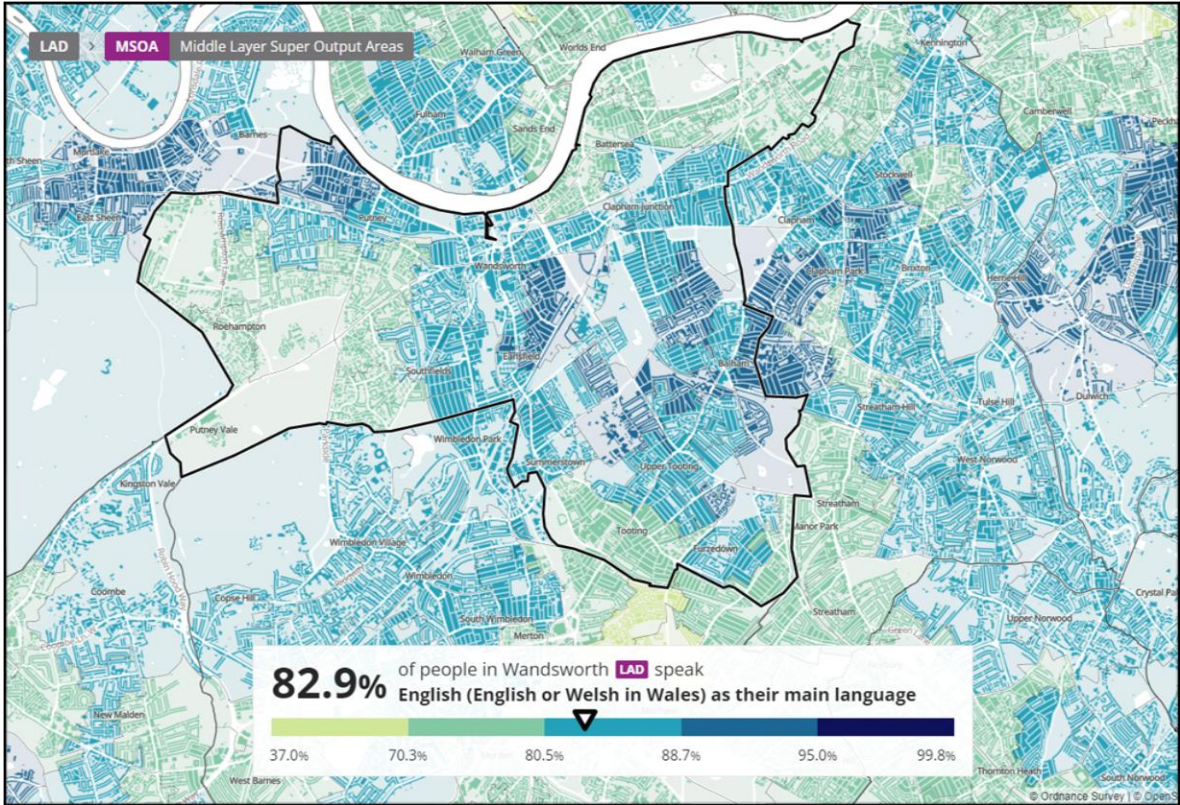


English Language Data

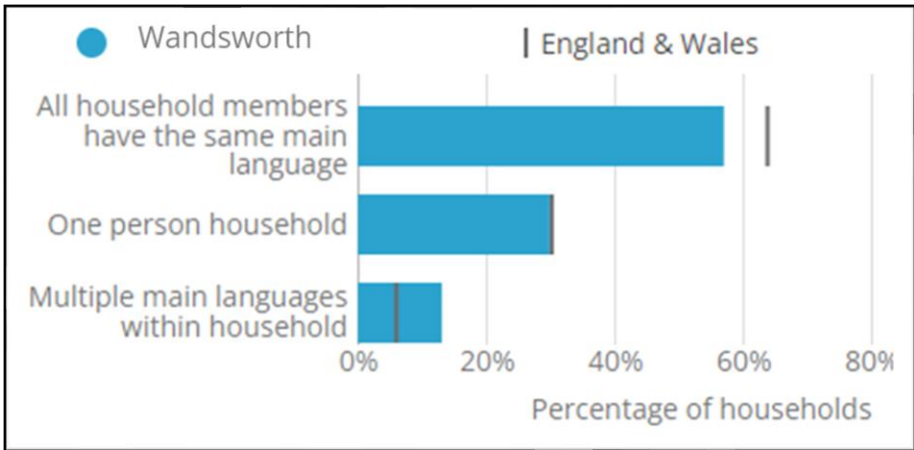
English is the main first language of the population of Wandsworth and English Proficiency is high. According to the 2021 Census:

- 82.9% of Wandsworth residents (who were at least three years old) had English as their main language. This is higher than the London average of 78.4%, but below the national average of 90.8%.
- 2.3% of residents were not able to speak English or could not speak it well.

The map below shows the variance across Wandsworth, with lighter shaded areas indicating a lower proportion of households who have English as their main language. As would be expected, this correlates with the areas with a higher proportion of people born outside the UK.



13.1% of Wandsworth households had multiple main languages, where different household members reported having a different main language. This is over double the national average of 6%.



After English, the most common languages were Spanish (1.9%), Italian (1.64%), Urdu (1.5%) Portuguese (1.36%) and Polish (1.3%). In 2021, 15 languages other than English were spoken by 1,000 or more Wandsworth residents.

The linguistic picture is more diverse at among school pupils, and this may reflect the fact the under-18 population in the Borough is more ethnically diverse than the overall population. According to 2018 estimates:

- 45% of Wandsworth primary school pupils did not have English as their first language, an increase from 41% in 2007.
- 44% of Wandsworth secondary school pupils did not have English as their first language, an increase from 38% in 2007.