

SANCTUARY SEEKERS



At Macc, we believe that every individual, regardless of their background, nationality or circumstances, has the right to live in safety and with dignity.

We stand firmly for the principle that refugees and asylum seekers in Greater Manchester should be provided with a safe and stable place to call home.

We recognise that those seeking sanctuary in our country are fleeing war, destruction and danger, in search of a better life and safety for themselves and their loved ones. Behind the labels and terms, there are individual human beings who all matter and deserve a secure future.

Greater Manchester is known for its compassion for and support of individuals in their most dire situations. The remarkable efforts of Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in the region showcase this compassion, exemplified by groups within the GM Sanctuary Seekers group, a collaborative space convened by Macc. We are also proud to host the GM Migrant Destitution Fund, which provides critical financial assistance to individuals who are forced into destitution due to their immigration status. This vital support enables them to meet their basic needs, restore dignity and rebuild their lives.

We acknowledge the immense role of the VCSE sector, which has stepped in to fill the gaps where governments have repeatedly failed. Recent years have seen challenges and barriers made worse by unworkable policies and dehumanising language used for political point-scoring, as clearly seen in the Illegal Migration Act. Despite this, VCSE organisations have been working relentlessly continue to provide essential services under increasingly unmanageable pressure – and to make their voices heard in calling for change.

We recognise that progress has been made in Greater Manchester towards cross-sector collaboration, however, there are still gaps where improvement is needed. Therefore, we urge the UK government to develop a fair, humane and sustainable plan for refugees, prioritising dignity, adequate accommodation and integration into a safe and secure community;

call on local leaders to advocate for changes to central government policy on behalf of individuals experiencing and VCSE organisations working in the asylum and migration system; advocate for a collaborative, coordinated and cross-sector approach to making Greater Manchester a place of sanctuary for all.

We believe that integration and contribution are essential components of a successful refugee and asylum seeker experience. By ensuring access to education, employment and social services, we can help people develop new skills, make meaningful connections with their communities and contribute their unique perspectives and talents to society.

We reject divisive narratives and instead promote unity. Every person has the right to a safe and secure home. By standing together in solidarity, we can work towards a better system for everyone.