



City of Sanctuary UK

CoS UK Network Consultation on implementation of an accreditation fee for Further Education Colleges

Following an upsurge in interest in developing a stream of work around Further Education (FE) Colleges in 2020-2021, CoS UK is now consulting the CoS UK network on charging a fee (£450) for FE Colleges when they are accredited as a FE College of Sanctuary to ensure the growth and sustainability of the stream. This follows a consultation with several FE Colleges in summer 2020 which indicated that FE Colleges felt the fee was appropriate.

Background of Sanctuary Awards

Sanctuary awards are provided by the CoS network of local groups and City of Sanctuary UK to recognise and celebrate mainstream organisations' commitment to our values and vision of welcome and encourage them to become active participants in the City of Sanctuary network. Sanctuary awards provide an opportunity to celebrate and share good practice as well as to reflect on how services for and support to people seeking sanctuary can be improved in organisations such as schools, libraries, museums, gardens/allotments, health bodies and theatres.

Any organisation, public sector service or other bodies which contribute towards the vision of welcome can apply for the award by signing up to CoS [charter, values and principles](#) and demonstrating their commitment using the following process:

- Learn: find out what it means to be seeking sanctuary; and be actively involved in awareness raising.
- Embed: take positive action to make welcome and inclusion part of the values of your organisation or community, to support people who are

seeking asylum and people who are refugees, and to include them in your activities.

- Share your vision and achievements: let others know about the positive contribution people seeking sanctuary make to our society and the benefits of a welcoming culture to everyone.

The full description of the sanctuary award process can be found [here](#). Awards are valid for a three year period after which point awarded institutions are asked to undergo an re-appraisal process. This is to ensure that the recognised organisation continues its commitment to supporting sanctuary for the long-term.

We encourage all supporting organisations to donate [to CoS UK](#), if they are able to, with recommended amounts commensurate with their size. The only other Award which charges an accreditation fee is the University of Sanctuary Award, the fee for universities is £3000. The fee for Universities was introduced in March 2020 following a consultation exercise with Universities, partner organisations and the CoS UK network.

Growth of the FE College Stream

The first Further Education (FE) College receiving a sanctuary award was Preston College in 2018 in recognition of its excellent support for refugee and asylum-seeking students on campuses. By the end of 2020, there were four recognised FE Colleges of Sanctuary and an additional ten other institutions working towards recognition. In response to the demand from the sector, in 2020, two webinars were organised in support of the stream, and the CoS UK team developed [a resource pack](#) full of case studies which outlined how FE Colleges can be recognised with a sanctuary award. Over 50 persons representing over 25 FE Colleges attended the 2 February 2021 launch event of the FE Colleges resource pack, a strong reflection of the huge level of interest in the growing stream.

Why is an application fee proposed?

The FE Colleges stream can play a crucial role in connecting Further Education Institutions (FEIs) and bringing them together to form a collective group with the potential to influence positive change in the

further education sector and to help us move closer to our vision of communities which are welcoming to all.

At present, the FE Colleges of Sanctuary stream is supported by the Regional Coordinator for Yorkshire, Humberside & NE in addition as an extension of her work on Schools of Sanctuary and this is not sustainable in the long-term. City of Sanctuary UK is a small national charity and cannot independently continue to cover all the costs of the growing stream.

Following a positive consultation with FE Colleges in the summer of 2020 and organisational partners, CoS UK is now surveying the wider CoS UK network about establishing a fee for the FE College of Sanctuary award. The proposed fee is £450 for a three year period of validity or £150 per year. The fee will contribute to the creation of a sustainable source of funding for the stream to allow us to support the increasing number of FE Colleges working towards recognition and provide on-going support and networking opportunities to accredited institutions.

In situations where difficulties arise, a FE College can contact FE College of Sanctuary to discuss adjustment. Each request of this kind will be assessed on its own merits by the FE College Sanctuary Steering Group.

What would an accreditation fee support?

Fees raised from the accreditation fee will contribute to securing additional capacity for the programme coordination of the growing Colleges stream. Expanded staff capacity will allow CoS UK to better support CoS local groups engage and support FE Colleges through the application and accreditation process. Increased capacity would also enable more tailored advice on good practice and signposting to other charities and experts allowing for closer support and coordination with local groups to create appraisal committees. Ideally, once the Covid crisis has passed, this will also include site visits to FE Colleges in coordination with local groups during the application process.

In addition, CoS UK needs additional capacity to coordinate the expanding FE Colleges of Sanctuary stream which involves developing communication and collaboration between FE Colleges and local groups, including the organisation of the regular on-going FE Colleges of Sanctuary events, such as webinars and in person meetings (when this is permitted). This also includes more staff time dedicated to maintaining the website, updating and

sharing case studies and regular communications to current and prospective FE Colleges of Sanctuary. More capacity is needed to further develop our key partnerships within the FE sector including with the [Association of Colleges](#), and the [College Development Network](#) in Scotland and the [Refugee Support Network](#). These partnerships are a vital part of our work to develop coherence and a strong collective voice across the network, share best practice, and work together to influence relevant policy.

Why should a FE Colleges seek recognition through a sanctuary award?

There are many benefits for a FE College to become a place of sanctuary, including:

- Sanctuary seeking students enrich discussions and campus life by bringing new perspectives and cultures together.
- Establishing a culture of welcome for sanctuary seekers, where people feel valued and safe, will have knock-on benefits for all learners who will be able to achieve more because of the nurturing environment of the college.
- The notion of sanctuary fits with the values and strategic plans of most colleges in respect of widening participation aims; it contributes towards progress in inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability.
- Student pressure is a key driving force in the movement, and this reflects the expectations of students who want to attend a college which is compassionate and socially progressive as well as having good results.
- Equipping students to go into a range of professions with the necessary skills to address barriers to equal opportunities and ensure welcome and inclusion.
- Being a part of a dynamic group of colleges in a network working to improve the culture of sanctuary in education and in society generally.
- Taking a practical, public step towards inclusion, and countering discourses of xenophobia and racism both within and outside college life.
- Creating a campus which is more inclusive and diverse and compassionate.
- Improving pastoral care at colleges as a result of recognising the background that sanctuary seekers may have experienced.
- Making a strong statement of principle in support of the Black Lives Matter Movement and against the hostile environment and dehumanising immigration policies.

Following accreditation, College will be included on the Colleges on the Sanctuary website and recognised on social media. All FE Colleges, regardless of whether they have received an award, will be welcome to participate in events and activities related to the stream. More detail is available in the [College of Sanctuary resource pack](#) and on the [College website page](#).