

Sanctuary in Parliament IV | 2017

Dignity not Destitution: Ending Poverty and Homelessness in the Asylum System

Social Media Guide for Partners

What is Sanctuary in Parliament?

Sanctuary in Parliament is an event held in the Houses of Parliament every year by City of Sanctuary and its partners. The aim of the event is to provide an opportunity for politicians to better understand the issues in the asylum system by listening to the experiences of refugees from across the City of Sanctuary network. **This year, we want to encourage Parliamentarians to take action to end poverty and homelessness in the asylum system.**

The event will be held on Tuesday 28th November (12 – 4pm) in the Houses of Parliament and will focus on issues relating to asylum support, permission to work, and refugee destitution. Our key campaign asks are:

- People seeking asylum should be granted permission to work after waiting for 6 months for a decision on their case. There should be no restrictions on the work that they undertake;
- Asylum support should be raised to at least 70% of income support;
- The move on period should be increased to at least 50 days to avoid any gaps in support.

Supporting Sanctuary in Parliament through Twitter

There are a number of ways that partners can help us make Sanctuary in Parliament a success, whether you're attending or not!

You can support the event by spreading the word on your social media channels using [#DignityNotDestitution](#). If you are live tweeting from the event, please also use [#SiP2017](#).

Below are suggested tweets and posts but feel free to adapt and highlight the messages that you think are most important.

we stand for
#dignitynotdestitution

1. In the run-up to the event:

In the run up to the event, our aim will be to get as many MPs to the event as possible. Please tweet your MP or others that you know who might be interested in asylum issues, and encourage them to come to the event:

@.MP will you be attending Sanctuary in #Parliament on 28 Nov? Meet refugees & their supporters, learn about the asylum system and call for #DignityNotDestitution <http://bit.ly/2hzLTnT>

@.MP I'll be coming from your constituency to Sanctuary in #Parliament on 28 Nov to make the case for #DignityNotDestitution in the asylum system. Can we meet there?

@.MP I'll be representing @YourOrganisation at Sanctuary in #Parliament on 28 Nov. Will you stop by to hear more about an asylum system that offers #DignityNotDestitution & how you can help?

@.MP Join us on 28 Nov to hear testimonies from people going through the asylum system at Sanctuary in #Parliament & learn about what you can do to give them #DignityNotDestitution <http://bit.ly/2hzLTnT>

2. On the day:

On the day, it could be useful to follow-up with your MP again before the event to ensure they're attending. Otherwise, whether you're attending the event or not, please do tweet with the hashtag #DignityNotDestitution in order to echo our campaign messages, which you can also draw from the narrative we've shared below. Follow @CityofSanctuary and @AsylumMatters who will be live-tweeting on the day to get latest updates and retweet highlights from the day.

"@.MP hope to see you later today at Sanctuary in #Parliament and discuss how our asylum system can ensure #DignityNotDestitution for people seeking sanctuary <http://bit.ly/2hzLTnT>"

"Today, Sanctuary in Parliament is bringing #refugee voices to the heart of Westminster. We hope MPs listen to our calls for #DignityNotDestitution."

"Today, over 100 #refugee activists will be taking their stories to Westminster for Sanctuary in Parliament. It's time for #DignityNotDestitution"

3. Share visuals:

If you're attending Sanctuary in Parliament, the best visuals will be the ones you can capture on the day. If you are taking photographs throughout the event, please ensure that you do not photograph attendees who are wearing a 'No Photography' sticker.

After you've had a meeting with your MP, why not ask if they'd be willing to take a photo with you to share on social media. We've created some banners that you can take pictures with as well.

**we stand for
#dignitynotdestitution**

If you're not at the event, those same banners as well as other designs can be shared on social media. We've prepared a selection of images for you to use, which you can find at the end of this document.

4. Narrative:

We've developed a concise communications narrative for Sanctuary in Parliament IV which has been used below. Please feel free to use this in any messaging.

For people seeking refugee protection in the UK, the risk of falling into poverty or homelessness is very real. After fleeing war, torture and persecution in their countries of origin, many refugees face ongoing hardships in the UK whilst stating their claim for protection from persecution.

We have legal obligations towards those who seek protection here. However, far too often statutory systems, structures and services fall short of their responsibilities, with devastating consequences on people's lives.

City of Sanctuary groups across the UK and Ireland work with asylum-seekers and refugees in this situation every day. We see families struggling to get by on asylum support that's set at less than 50% of mainstream income support, many parents skipping meals to ensure their children eat enough. We see vulnerable people having to choose between sleeping on a stranger's sofa or in the streets after their applications for support are wrongfully refused. We see people with incredible skills, hungry for human interaction, and eager to contribute what they can, but forced into social isolation and banned from working to support themselves and their families. We even see newly granted refugees starting their new lives in the UK in homelessness and poverty, thanks to a complex bureaucratic system.

The picture that emerges is one of an asylum system with many obstacles and pitfalls and a fragile safety net that too often fails to protect vulnerable people from falling into destitution. Not only do these policies take an enormous toll on the physical and mental well-being of asylum-seekers and refugees, but they are damaging to communities, preventing integration and hampering their ability to rebuild their lives in the UK.

We know that things could be different. Across the City of Sanctuary network and the wider Sanctuary Alliance, we are committed to building a system of refugee protection which is just and fair for all, and allows those seeking safety to live in dignity not destitution. Our communities stand for a culture of welcome and hospitality, where people seeking refuge are able to integrate, contribute and find sanctuary.

No-one in the UK should be forced into poverty or homeless, including those who have sought refugee protection here. We can do better.

- **People seeking asylum should be granted permission to work after waiting for 6 months for a decision on their case. There should be no restrictions on the work that they undertake;**
- **Asylum support should be raised to at least 70% of income support;**
- **The move on period should be increased to at least 50 days to avoid any gaps in support.**

we stand for
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I support an asylum system
free of poverty and
homelessness.



#dignitynotdestitution

No-one seeking sanctuary
should be forced into
destitution.



#dignitynotdestitution

I welcome people
seeking sanctuary.



#dignitynotdestitution

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#dignitynotdestitution

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