

WINCHESTER: Spaces of Sanctuary (SOS): Safe spaces project

Background

The council's commitment to the City of Sanctuary movement was formalised in a motion put to [council on 12 January 2022](#).

Consequently, the Council resolved to undertake a number of objectives, one of which was to: *Support taking practical steps, in dialogue with the organisations, to welcome and integrate all people into our communities, activities and culture.*

The Spaces of Sanctuary (SoS): safe spaces project will help to meet this objective. We also needed to consider that in recent years the country has had to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, a cost-of-living crisis and an influx of refugees fleeing conflict all of which has had an impact on our residents in terms of their health and well-being. The Safe Spaces project has been developed to support people who are at their most vulnerable and need a quiet space and a friendly face to help them feel safe, listened to and valued.

What is a Space of Sanctuary (SoS)?

A Space of Sanctuary provides a physical and emotionally safe environment where people can go to seek peace and guidance to address their concerns without fear or prejudice.

When accessing the support at the Space of Sanctuary they will be treated equitably and with respect and their concerns listened to and taken seriously. The Safe Space is intended to be self-guided however, if required a triage service can be provided in order to enable people to find any further support they may need.

Approach

It is clear from the background research undertaken that there are already various forms of safe spaces in existence in and across Winchester, most of which are located in Winchester Town. They include:

- Hampshire County Council Safe Spaces - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/adultsocialcare/safe-place>
- Winchester Warm Spaces - [Warm meeting spaces in Winchester - Winchester City of Sanctuary](#)
- University of Sanctuary [University of Sanctuary - University of Winchester](#)
- UK Says No More – Safe Spaces (Boots, Morrisons pharmacies, Superdrug pharmacies, Well pharmacies, independent pharmacies, HSBC, TSB, The Co-operative Bank and selected Metro Banks) <https://uksaysnomore.org/safespaces/>

Each of these spaces offer slightly different safe spaces whether that's a place people they can go to keep warm, a space to welcome refugees and asylum seekers or whether it's a space they can go because they are feeling anxious and threatened.

WINCHESTER: Spaces of Sanctuary (SOS): Safe spaces project

Our approach to developing this project is to work with these organisations so that we are not duplicating any provision, but possibly extending or broadening the services currently offered. Mapping of the safe spaces will also take place so a clearer understanding of the geographical spread of facilities can be identified and more importantly where there may be potential gaps in provision. Where we identify gaps, we will work with organisations in both the 'Community' and the 'Commercial/Private' sectors to determine what might be done to improve the provision of safe spaces in their areas. The spaces that sign up to our scheme will have to agree the following core principles.

Core Principles

- To offer a physical space where people feel welcomed and supported
- Provide a space which has open access on a regular basis and easily identifiable
- To attend the 'Introductory' Safe Spaces Training module.
- To triage and signpost those accessing the safe space to relevant organisations that may be able to provide the necessary support to address their issues.
- To display the project (SoS) sticker in a prominent position that can be easily seen by members of the public.
- To attend the Social Inclusion Partnership meeting (as part of the community support/City of Sanctuary work stream)
- To have an on-line presence, which is able to promote and raise awareness of your safe space.

Customer facing notification:

Organisations who signs up to the core principles and undertakes the introductory training will be provided with a window sticker in order for passersby to identify with the available space.

Support

Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP)

In order to continue support and collaboration, the safe spaces organisations will attend the Social Inclusion Partnership in order to provide and an update on space usage and reporting on any significant progress or raising issues of concern. The Social Inclusion Partnership is run quarterly?

WINCHESTER: Spaces of Sanctuary (SOS): Safe spaces project

Training

The Introductory Safe Spaces training module will be generic training for the participants to gain an understanding of likely scenarios they are likely to encounter and protocols they must adhere to. They will also be provided with information on other organisations that they can refer people to.

Sessions that we can cover (with an appropriate selection for the district/nighttime economy/demographic):

LGBTQ Awareness
Neurodivergence Training
Migration and Asylum Training
Anti Racism
Gender violence - Forced Marriage/FGM

Training for Night time economy -
Trauma informed approach - Night time economy
VAWG - Violence Against Women and Girls

[Advice First Aid Partnership - Winchester City of Sanctuary](#)
[Our Partners - Citizens Advice Winchester District](#)