

# Equality Impact Assessments Toolkit EqIA Template



You must consider the [Equality Impact Assessment Guidance](#) when completing this template.

The EDI team can provide help and advice on undertaking an EqIA and also provide overview quality assurance checks on completed EqIA documents.

EDI team contact email: [edi\\_team@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:edi_team@sandwell.gov.uk)

<b>Quality Control</b>	
Title of proposal	Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy
Directorate and Service Area	Housing Housing Management & Solutions
Officer completing EqIA	Louis Bebb, Housing Policy and Strategy Lead Officer
Contact Details	Email: <a href="mailto:louis_bebb@sandwell.gov.uk">louis_bebb@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Mobile: 07342093138
Other officers involved in completing this EqIA	N/A
Date EqIA completed	10/08/2023
Date EqIA signed off or agreed by Director or Executive Director	11/08/2023
Name of Director or Executive Director signing off EqIA	Gillian Douglas
Date EqIA considered by Cabinet	13/09/2023
Where the EqIA is Published  (please include a link to the EqIA and send a copy of the final EqIA to the EDI team)	Modern Gov

## **Section 1.**

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required

The purpose of this proposal is to seek approval for the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy, for adoption subject to Cabinet meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

Our vision is for Sandwell to be a borough of sanctuary that welcomes those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries and protects the rights of all migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. A 'Borough of Sanctuary' is a borough which provides a welcoming place of safety for people who are asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants.

We recognise that the way in which individuals and families arriving in Sandwell are supported to settle and integrate is critical to enable them to feel welcome and part of the local community. This sees benefits for all of Sandwell's residents and communities across the borough.

This strategy sets out the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Partnership's and Sandwell Council's commitments to welcoming and integrating individuals and families who arrive in Sandwell. This strategy co-ordinates the approach of the council and other organisations, council-wide and borough-wide, delivering services to those arriving and settling in Sandwell.

The strategy is for five years with a review built in after the second year to ensure our approach continues to align with our vision and objectives and sets out how the council and partners will support those arriving in Sandwell. This will enable services to develop within a strategic framework while allowing the strategy to be responsive to any changes and progress.

## **Section 2.**

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data

The strategic outputs outlined in the document have been formulated around a considerable amount of research and associated data.

- City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network <https://la.cityofsanctuary.org/>
- Council of Sanctuary Award Procedure and Criteria <https://cdn.cityofsanctuary.org/uploads/sites/166/2021/08/Council-of-Sanctuary-Award-Minimum-Criteria.pdf>
- National Census 2021 England and Wales <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censusareachanges/E08000028/>
- Migrant Health in the West Midlands, Public Health England

[https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7890/phe\\_migrant\\_health\\_in\\_the\\_west\\_midlands\\_february\\_2017.pdf](https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/7890/phe_migrant_health_in_the_west_midlands_february_2017.pdf)

- Migration Statistics Briefing, West Midlands Migrant Strategic Partnership  
<https://www.wmsmp.org.uk/data/>
- Politics, Governance and the Shaping of Smethwick Since 1945  
<https://etheses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/6890/>
- Social and Public Service Impacts of International Migration at the Local Level  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/210324/horr72.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/210324/horr72.pdf)

In addition, a public consultation was carried out. We received a total of **119** responses to the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy public consultation (online and through both workshops and focus group events). Further details of this will be provided in the below section.

### **Section 3.**

#### Consultation

#### Borough of Sanctuary - Partnership Strategy Workshop

In April 2023, the partnership undertook a consultation exercise with over 40 attendees to understand what a 'welcoming Sandwell' looks like and to establish the approach we need to take to become a borough of sanctuary for all. The consultation workshop included representation from local and national groups, residents, the council, and people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in Sandwell to understand what issues meant the most to them.

During the workshop we aimed to gather thoughts and feedback on the proposed content of the Partnership Sanctuary Strategy and work together to build on suggested actions for the Council and local network organisations that will form the action plan that sits within the strategy. The consultation highlighted a need to further explore issues related to accessing healthcare, housing conditions, and communication with services and local authorities, as well as access to ESOL classes.

#### Summary of workshop feedback:

- Overall, support across the strategy document and action plan was relatively high, with a large proportion of the respondents either tending to agree or strongly agreeing with the strategy's

overarching objectives. Please note we are still in the process of documenting all the feedback from the workshop session.

- A large cohort of attendees were from organisations operating in either Smethwick, West Bromwich, Wednesbury or Oldbury – there were no attendees from Rowley Regis or Tipton. Therefore, we intend to run additional workshops to involve partner organisations from these towns.
- Partners felt asylum resettlement across wards in Sandwell needs to be more even, as there is currently a high concentration in particular areas, such as Smethwick and St. Pauls, but less so in areas such as Newton and Blackheath. It is important to acknowledge the different identities and needs of the 6 towns in the strategy's overarching vision and also to recognise where the current infrastructure is that supports asylum-seekers and refugees including key voluntary sector groups and faith based organisations.
- Within the narrative in the strategy about Sandwell's history of resettlement and inward migration, partners felt we need to ensure we acknowledge that international migration has helped to shape Sandwell's population, communities and identity for decades.
- Partners felt anything proposed needs to be actionable and realistic.
- The Borough of Sanctuary Strategy should include more content that celebrates the partnership work that goes on in the area.
- Partners wanted Sandwell Council to play a greater role in national campaigns around migration and resettlement and the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees.

The following joint objectives have been developed and agreed by Sandwell Council and the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Network:

- The partnership will work together as a network to make Sandwell a Borough of Sanctuary. We will strive to build a welcoming place for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, whilst also promoting integration and community cohesion.
- The partnership will promote a culture of inclusion between Sandwell residents and support a mutual understanding in which longer-standing communities feel able to understand and welcome migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.
- The partnership will enhance opportunities for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to utilise and develop their skills, to access opportunities to support themselves and their families which contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of the borough.

- The partnership will advocate the engagement of those seeking sanctuary in decision making processes at all levels and in all activities.

## Consultation

A 6 week consultation period took place from Tuesday 20 June until Tuesday 1 August. An online public consultation was published on the Citizen Space platform. Alongside this, a collective response from individuals with lived experience of migrating to and seeking sanctuary in Sandwell was received from service users of Brushstrokes.

The Community Partnerships Team supported the consultation to increase the number of residents and community groups we heard from by promoting the consultation across their networks, providing paper copies where required and supporting individuals to complete the consultation online. The aim of the consultation was to include as many different voices and points of view as possible.

The consultation was promoted and shared with community groups and residents by:

- Presented to and shared across the Sandwell New Arrivals Partnership
- Newsletters shared to the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary partners
- Shared via housing forums and networks such as the Homelessness Forum, the West Midlands Housing Officer Group, and the Housing Partnership Forum
- Shared via wider networks that the council are engaged with such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Faith Leaders Group, Community Safety Network, and the Sandwell Advice Providers Network
- Shared across an internal cross-directorate officer working group for officers to distribute across their networks and with the staff Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Networks
- Shared via internal communications- newsletters, Members updates
- Leaflets and posters distributed to Libraries, OCH Reception, West Bromwich Town Hall, to community groups via the Community Partnerships Team and to tenants at our first Tenant Conference
- Communications shared via social media and via Gov Directory mailing list
- Shared by wider organisations across their online platforms and networks (e.g. SCVO, Sandwell Churches Link)

In total, we received a total of **119** responses to the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy public consultation (online and through both workshops and focus group events).

In addition, responses were also received from elected members when the strategy was presented to the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny (SNAC) Board on 11th July 2023.

### Consultation Findings

In various feedback formats, quantitative and qualitative data has been gathered to help shape and inform the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy. The below provides a summary of the consultation feedback – however, if the reader would like a more detailed breakdown of the consultation findings and each individual question, they can read the accompanying 22-page Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy Consultation Report (Appendix Two).

- The public consultation contained 10 multiple choice questions – 2 relating to how welcoming Sandwell is, 3 relating to both the document's overall vision and strategic aims, and 5 questions in response to the main priorities set out for the Borough of Sanctuary partnership.
- Each question asked the respondent whether they agreed with a particular theme in the Borough of Sanctuary Strategy, with options of 'strongly agree', 'somewhat agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'somewhat disagree' and 'strongly disagree'.
- Support across all questions was fairly high, with respondents either tending to agree or strongly agree with the priorities of the partnership. The average agreement was 63%, demonstrating a reasonable level of support for the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy overall.
- Across all priorities for the partnership, the most well received amongst respondents was *'the partnership will enhance opportunities for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers to utilise and develop their skills, to access opportunities to support themselves and their families which contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of the borough'*, which generated a 65% agreeance overall.
- The response with the lowest level of support was when respondents were asked if they thought Sandwell is a welcoming place for those resettling.

Within the public consultation, respondents were given the opportunity at the end of every priority, and for the strategy as a whole, to feedback anything they felt was missing or any point they particularly wanted to



emphasise. This produced a range of responses, with a number of key words and phrases emerging repeatedly.

The top 5 phrases were:

- 1. Community** – respondents stressed the importance of ensuring there are opportunities for migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers to integrate within their local communities.
- 2. Support/Services** – respondents emphasised that there needs to be a provision of adequate resources to ensure Sandwell is able to support migrants, refugees and asylum seekers across all areas of the Borough.
- 3. Language** – concerns were raised regarding the language barriers those resettling face in accessing services across Sandwell.
- 4. Housing** – many respondents were supportive of housing as a means of ensuring those resettling are able to do so safely.
- 5. Work/Employment** – respondents wished to see individuals resettling engaging in employment and volunteering opportunities that utilise their experience, qualifications, and transferrable skills.

Detailed contributions and amendments:

The consultation also highlighted a number of additional suggestions which have been considered and adopted in the final version of the Sandwell Borough of Sanctuary Strategy.

Actions taken in response to consultation feedback:

Recommendation	Action Taken
That the Director of Housing considers the feasibility of embedding ESOL tuition for asylum seekers and refugees into the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Strategy.	An action planning workshop is taking place with partners to look at how this can be incorporated in the partnership's action plan that will sit beneath the strategy
That the Director of Housing considers the inclusion of the educational needs of asylum seekers and refugees under eighteen years old within the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Strategy including SEND, transport and language needs.	An action planning workshop is taking place with partners to look at how this can be incorporated in the partnership's action plan that will sit beneath the strategy



That the Director of Housing explores the cascading of consultations via town based community teams to increase response rates and to all Members.	There has been good cross-borough engagement in the consultation, but we do recognise that we need to support asylum-seekers, migrants and refugees across the whole borough, including in neighbourhoods where people have been less likely to settle.
That the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Strategy is publicised as part of the Windrush and 50 years of Sandwell celebrations.	Currently working with Sandwell's Communications team on how we can publish and promote this strategic document once it is finalised.
That the Director of Housing explores the inclusion of female health care, including access to sexual health and period products within the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Strategy.	An action planning workshop is taking place with partners to look at how this can be incorporated in the partnership's action plan that will sit beneath the strategy.
That training is provided to Members to increase awareness and better inform decision making in relation to the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Strategy.	This will be addressed at the All Member Briefing once the strategy has been finalised.
That the Director of Housing explores the adoption of a holistic approach when progressing the Borough of Sanctuary Sandwell Strategy.	Agreed.

In addition, recommendations were also received from elected members when the strategy was presented to the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny (SNAC) Board on 11th July 2023.

Response Received	Action Taken
Victims of violence, exploitation and modern slavery and our offer to them as a partnership needs to be included within the strategy.	Included an additional objective for the partnership in relation to modern slavery. Also, we have now expanded our definitions section (Appendix 1) in order to include Modern Slavery and Trafficking victims, setting out the scope for who the strategic document and who it is aimed at.

<p>Acknowledgement of Windrush Generation needs to be included into this strategic document.</p>	<p>Included an additional section in the strategy to acknowledge the Windrush Generation in Sandwell.</p>
<p>Strategy needs to acknowledge that there are pockets in Sandwell where new arrivals aren't made to feel part of the community.</p>	<p>Further information added into Appendix 2 to accompany the resettlement map in order to show how Sandwell Council will help to ensure a holistic approach is adopted so that all those resettling can integrate into their community, no matter what part of the Borough they live in.</p>
<p>All resettling individuals must be part of the political decision-making process to truly reflect our community needs and the problems they face.</p>	<p>Under the objectives for the partnership on page 11, we have added that 'The partnership will challenge and question policy changes at a local, regional, and national level that support the rights and needs of asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. We will assist and educate those seeking sanctuary as to what rights and entitlements they do have'.</p>
<p>Language support must be integrated into the strategic aims of this document.</p>	<p>In our strategic objectives (p.13), we have added a strategic commitment of providing language learning for adults (ESOL) and committing to this. We have also added a strategic commitment of providing language learning for children and young people.</p>
<p>I think accessibility is the key challenge. Transport is expensive for people resettling in Sandwell.</p>	<p>We have added the following onto our strategic outcomes 'We will work to ensure there is a cohesive transport model across the six towns that helps to promote social connectedness.          -Social connectedness and accessibility to services          -Access to and affordability of public transport</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Clear information about public transport and how to get around the borough</li> <li>-Signposting to wider support services and community activities’.</li> </ul>
The strategy should acknowledge that systems are complex. Even with language support it is difficult to explain and navigate the systems for schools, housing and other council services.	Under the objectives for the partnership on page 13, we will add ‘We will enable individuals and families to settle in Sandwell by sharing information and signposting to wider support services and community activities’.
Greater emphasis needed on community cohesion within the strategic objectives of the document.	<p>In our strategic objectives (p.13), we have added in that ‘we will work with communities to build relationships, support each other, and celebrate communities and culture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Building welcoming communities</li> <li>-Taking part in community activities</li> <li>-Create more opportunities for community enterprise</li> <li>-Sharing and celebrating communities and cultures’.</li> </ul>
Housing support needs to be mentioned within the strategy.	<p>We have expanded on our commitment where ‘We will take a holistic approach and support individuals throughout their housing journey’. Adding... ‘-Wrap around support for transition from temporary accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Support individuals and families to feel safe and at home</li> <li>-Provision of affordable and quality homes</li> <li>-Provision of move-on accommodation’.</li> </ul>

**Section 4.**

Summary assessment of the analysis at section 4a and the likely impact on each of the protected characteristics (if any)

Refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Sandwell represent a number of different protected characteristics, most notably race, age and religion. The strategy will provide a framework in order to promote a culture of inclusion between Sandwell residents and support a mutual understanding in which longer-standing communities feel able to understand and welcome migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Sandwell Borough of sanctuary will be guided and informed by commitment to the following value:

- **Inclusiveness:** We welcome and respect people from all backgrounds, place the highest value on diversity and are committed to equality.

There is no negative impact arising in relation to any of the protected characteristics/equality groups identified in the Equality Act 2010.

**Section 4a - What are the potential/actual impacts of the proposal on the protected characteristics?**

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Age	P	<p>A strategic approach is necessary to meet the community and support needs of Sandwell's younger resettling population, whilst also acknowledging Sandwell's older population too. We want Sandwell to be a welcoming place for all, whether they have newly arrived in the borough, were born in Sandwell, or have a long history of their families migrating to the borough. The document considers the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the strategic outcomes of this document is to give the best start in life to children and young people. We will do this by supporting families to be able to engage with relevant providers of services such as childcare, family support, schools and activities for children and young people.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Education and language learning for children and young people</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dedicated support for newly arrived children and young people in school environments</li> <li>○ Early years support</li> <li>○ Family support</li> <li>○ Activities for children and young people outside of school</li> <li>● It is also important that longer standing generations of those resettling are covered within this document too. Older people will have improved supply of suitable and accessible homes where they in particular feel safe and supported. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In addition to new arrivals, we wish to continue promoting a culture of inclusion between Sandwell residents and longer-standing communities of resettled individuals. For instance, we want to recognise and celebrate the contributions of these individuals and also the families who have contributed to</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		the borough and their local communities for generations, such as the Windrush Generation.		
<b>Disability</b>	P	<p>Migrants, asylum seekers and refugees will need support with any disabilities and guidance together with understanding the support available in this country:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the strategy states, we will enable individuals and families to settle in Sandwell by sharing information and signposting to wellbeing activities, healthcare, and welfare provisions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This includes support for individuals to know their rights and access healthcare and welfare benefits.</li> <li>○ We will also strengthen collaboration and partnerships between healthcare providers, and other organisations to support the integration and inclusion of</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		



<b>Reviewed Characteristic</b>	<b>Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)</b>	<b>Details of impact</b>	<b>Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)</b>	<b>Owner of action/ Timescale</b>
		refugees and migrants in the community – including those with disabilities.		
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Ne	There is no evidence that the strategy would impact negatively on this protected characteristic.		
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	Ne	There is no evidence that the strategy would impact negatively on this protected characteristic.		
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Ne	There is no evidence that the strategy would impact negatively on this protected characteristic.		
<b>Race</b>	P	The strategy will have an impact on ethnic minority groups in several ways. These individuals have distinct characteristics in terms of their community and support needs which may leave them disadvantaged in some way. Further, there is the potential of a hostile environment towards individuals resettling in the borough based on racial prejudice. Rather, we will		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		<p>celebrate and be strengthened by our diversity and the values we hold which enable and empower it. How the strategy will strive for racial equality is outlined below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ There is, a clear link to the race and ethnicity of individuals affected by this policy due to the broad range of countries and nationalities represented in refugee and migration trends.</li> <li>○ The focus of the BoS Strategy are new arrivals to Sandwell who have not been born in the UK. There is a wide collection of ethnicities and nationalities affected across more than 120 countries of origin including pre-dominantly from across Europe, Africa and Asia.</li> <li>○ The strategy states that the partnership will strive to build a welcoming place for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, whilst also promoting integration and community cohesion – we will challenge</li> </ul>		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
		the negative perceptions and misleading narratives of ethnic minority groups.		
Religion or belief	P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We believe it is important that we create a society that builds bridges between our residents regardless of culture or religion. We will work with communities to build relationships, support each other, and celebrate communities and culture. This includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Taking part in community activities that share and celebrate diverse communities and cultures.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		
Sex	Ne	There is no evidence that the strategy would impact negatively on this protected characteristic.		
Sexual Orientation	Ne	There is no evidence that the strategy would impact negatively on this protected characteristic.		

Reviewed Characteristic	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of impact	Actions to address negative impact or promote positive impact (use section 8 table)	Owner of action/ Timescale
Other	Ne	There is no evidence that the strategy would impact negatively on this protected characteristic.		

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, then please move to Sections 6.

5. What actions can be taken to mitigate any adverse impacts?

6. Section 6: Decision or actions proposed

7. Monitoring arrangements

**Section 8 Action planning (if required)**

Question no. (ref)	Action required	Lead officer/ person responsible	Target date	Progress

If you have any suggestions for improving this process, please contact [EDI\\_Team@Sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:EDI_Team@Sandwell.gov.uk)