

REFUGEE WEEK 2025



Refugee
Week



24th May – 28th June

The Chester City of Sanctuary Group is leading the Refugee Week celebrations this year and there is a busy programme of events in the week leading up to Refugee Week and the week after.

CELEBRATING REFUGEE WEEK 2025

Refugee Week is 15th – 22nd June



This year's theme

COMMUNITY SUPERPOWER

Community is the incredible everyday. Ordinary and extraordinary. Simple acts of shared generosity. Kindness multiplied to become an unstoppable force!

Communities can bring people together. Bridging divides and offering support. Spaces of resilience and places for healing.

This Refugee Week everyone is invited to spend time with friends and build new connections in and beyond our neighbourhoods. From communal meals and open air film screenings, to football matches and music making, let's share the feelings of welcome and belonging. Listening, learning, laughing together.

It's amazing what we can do when we move together towards a shared goal. So let's redefine and rediscover our collective power to shape hopeful futures and begin by practicing, celebrating and rehearsing it every day.

Join us for Refugee Week, 16–22 June 2025, and together let's unleash the superpower of community.

CHESTER A-Z TRAIL

We have the A-Z Trail to celebrate and highlight Refugee Week 2025 Chester City of Sanctuary group have collaborated with The Bishops' Bluecoat Church of England High School, Chester to produce an 'A – Z Art Trail'.

The young people have produced 26 display posters to make up an A-Z on the theme of Sanctuary and Refugees. A QR code on the Trail leaflet takes you through to the City of Sanctuary website where more information can be found about the words chosen and the issues faced by Sanctuary Seekers.

Words include Community, Hope, Xenophobia, Understanding. We can't tell you them all as you need to do the trail! Their designs have been professionally printed in A4 size.

The posters are displayed in 17 different locations in the city. An accompanying trail guide details the route to discover the 26 pieces of art and there is a map to also assist people with the route. Locations include High Coffee in Rufus Court – a special Ukrainian connection, Wesley Church Centre – a Church of Sanctuary which was recently featured on the Chester Blog along with Chester Cathedral - a cathedral of Sanctuary.

To encourage children, families, and members of the public to complete a trail booklet, there is the chance to win a prize if they complete the trail and leave their form in the SHARE Shop in the special box.





City of Sanctuary will have a stall in Storyhouse where members of the public can take part in our activity inspired by the theme of Refugee Week 2025 (June 16th -22nd) which is Community as a Superpower; Chester City of Sanctuary Group are inviting members of our local community to show their support for sanctuary seekers by taking photographs of groups or individuals holding A4 posters which say: "We are using our Community Superpower to support those seeking sanctuary from war and persecution" and then posting the photographs on social media using the hashtag #mythbusters. You can also send your photographs to us via e-mail - info@chester.cityofsanctuary.org



**SCAN THE QR CODE OR HEAD TO
STORYHOUSE.COM/CALENDAR
TO SEE UPCOMING EVENTS**

CINEMA

THURSDAY 5TH JUNE 12.30PM AND TUESDAY 10TH JUNE 6PM



Mediha

Directed by Hasan Oswald

A powerful testament to the human spirit, *Mediha* follows the remarkable journey of one girl's fight to find her missing family members, revealing the strength of a young survivor. From Executive Producer Emma Thompson, this award-winning film from Hasan Oswald is an incredible story of resilience.

Mediha, a teenage Yazidi girl, turns her camera on herself to process her trauma after surviving captivity from ISIS. Through her personal video-diaries, she confronts her pain, while also initiating investigations into her captors. *Mediha's* journey is one of courage and determination as she steps towards a future of justice and healing.

The screening on Tue 10 June at 6pm will include a post-screening discussion with founder member and trustee of Chester City of Sanctuary Neil Gibbons and trustee Heather Swainston.

AN EVENING WITH DR WAHEED ARIAN



Born in 1983 in Kabul at the height of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, Waheed Arian's earliest memories are of soldiers and bombs. When he was five, his family joined the millions seeking refuge in Pakistan. With the borders closed, they had to make the journey on foot and horseback across remote and dangerous mountainous terrain, travelling at night to avoid military attack. It was a journey they were fortunate to survive. His story not just one of a remarkable survival and of passion, resilience, hope and dedication, but of the unbreakable bonds of familial love. A love that began with Waheed's mother and father and grew into compassion for a wounded community, and then the world.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL

Wings of the Sky - 12th June

A new musical play involving a cast of young people from different backgrounds, a Ukrainian opera singer, and an Iranian percussionist, all living in Chester, will be premiered in the city next month as a prelude to Refugee Week events. *Wings of the Sky*, written by Richard Wiseman and composed by Mat Baker tells the story of a tribe of people who work the fields in order to eat and survive. Tensions rise as another group of people arrive in the valley seeking a place to live. Whilst the children seem to play happily, hostility between the elders grows. The story, unfolds alongside the river, over which fly the white doves of peace, unable to recognise borders. The story has been inspired by the ideas and experiences of young people, some of whom are facing the challenges of seeking asylum. Mat Baker said, "It can feel as though we are living in an increasingly hostile world. And yet, this project has drawn the very best out of people of very different ages and backgrounds, and shone a very bright light on positivity in community."

It will be performed in Chester cathedral under thousands of paper doves which form part of internationally acclaimed sculptor Peter Walker's installation "Peace Doves".

Seeking Sanctuary Ukrainian dance 12pm and 1.30pm - 14th June

Seeking Sanctuary is a new 20 minute dance performance created by Whispered Tales that shares the story of how Ukrainians were forced to leave their home and seek sanctuary here in England.

3pm Refugee Week Evensong All welcome - 15th June

Refuge Island - 18th June

Refuge Island is an exhilarating 20 minute dance performance that explores stories of female migration and the human capacity to offer a place of refuge. As a lone woman appears on a pedestrian refuge island, images begin to flicker within the bollard and soon we hear why this brave woman was forced to leave her home.

Assemble with stories of seeking sanctuary - 19th June

Conversations with Refugees: Reclaiming the Narrative

Chester Cathedral is many things to many people, and we want to be a place where people gather to discuss the BIG topics. Assemble is an invitation to come and hear engaging speakers on topics that are relevant in our modern world.

Our next Assemble will take place during Refugee Week and explore Conversations with Refugees and how to reclaim the narrative around refugees.

Join us to explore this pertinent question.

Book your free ticket to Assemble at Chester Cathedral.

Refreshments available from 6.15pm

**FIND MORE AT
[CHESTERCATHEDRAL.COM/EVENTS](https://chestercathedral.com/events)**





CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER LIBRARIES

All libraries will be creating their own Peace Dove artwork – with messages of hope. This is to complement the Chester Cathedral's Peace Dove sculpture. Ask in your local library for a dove to write your message of hope – they will also be available in half term for children to take part.

In the run up to Refugee Week they will be giving out the A-Z trail and asking people to have their photo taken with Community as a superpower card. During Refugee Week they will have class visits (Peace Doves, Back Pack activity and talks by people with lived experience). Contact your local library for details.

THEATRE PORTO

Afloat - Live Theatre

A one hour piece of Theatre for Social Change in partnership with Asylum Link, it is a show about English people being put in the situation of having to flee to understand and develop empathy for people in the asylum process. The piece is created by a group of professional artists working with artists and performers currently seeking asylum/ with previous experience of seeking asylum.

Theatre for Social change in association with Asylum Link at THEATRE PORTO

Theatre Porto, Saturday 7th June, 7pm

Ticketed are Pay As You Like (<https://theatreporto.org/afloat/>)

Everyone's Welcome - Exhibition

Come and see a collaboration of work created by local school children in response to the importance of our spaces and community being places of Sanctuary and ensuring Everyone is Welcome!

Local Schools @ Theatre Porto

(Ellesmere Port Catholic High, Great Sutton Primary School, Meadow Community Primary, St Bernard's Primary & Nursery, Whitby Heath Primary, The Oak Community Primary, Theatre Porto Community)

Saturday 14th, Monday 16th and Tuesday 17th 10am - 4pm

FREE

Home Cooked With Love - Food Sharing Event

*Theatre Porto are delighted to be hosting our 2nd 'Home Cooked with Love', a relaxed and enjoyable food sharing event to welcome and celebrate families new to the area and those seeking sanctuary. Families are invited to come along on the 20th, bring some food to share (but it's not compulsory), enjoy our cafe area and outdoor terrace, and enjoy music, conversation, games and crafts in a welcoming and friendly environment. *Please note, if you are bringing food to share on the day, we would appreciate a list of the ingredients to help those with food allergies/ intolerances*

Theatre Porto

Friday 20th June, 5-7pm

FREE

Email natasha@theatreporto.org for information





WESLEY CHURCH CENTRE

There will be a Church of Sanctuary display and a Sanctuary Seeker activity “What would you take if you suddenly had to leave home?” to encourage empathy and compassion. Two of the A-Z art trail pieces will also be displayed at Wesley. Don't forget there is a café and Fairtrade shop too.

Open Tues – Sat 10.00am – 2.00pm



CROSSROADS COMMUNITY HUB

The Crossroads Community Hub are hosting a community picnic on Saturday 28th June. The whole community is invited including refugees and asylum seekers, creating a space for connection and celebration of unity, diversity and solidarity.

Address: Crossroads Community Hub, The New Church Building, Dickson's Drive, Newton, CH2 2BN. Time: 12:30pm - 3:00pm

What: BYO picnic, free tea coffee and cake, outdoor games, face painting, 'celebration of culture' interactive art installation.

Cost: FREE

UNITY CENTRE / CHAWREC

A small Eid and Refugee Week celebration with the Asylum Hub on Tuesday 17th June

Cheshire Halton & Warrington Race & Equality Centre,
The Unity Centre,
17 Cuppin Street,
Chester,
CH1 2BN
Tel: 01244400730
www.chawrec.org.uk





Refugee Week

