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STATIONS OF SANCTUARY REPORT

PRODUCED BY SOUTH EAST LANCASHIRE CRP
& BOLTON CITY OF SANCTUARY



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The 'Stations of Sanctuary' project aims to make Railway Stations a more accessible and welcoming place for refugees and people seeking asylum, by developing a system of accreditation for all stations to consider the way in which they offer support for service users from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

The pilot for this project took place at Bolton Station, and was created in partnership between South East Lancashire Community Rail Partnership (SELCRP) & Bolton City of Sanctuary, with the help of funding from Community Rail Network, Northern & Transport for Greater Manchester.

RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN

During the project we had a student from the University of Bolton joining us on a community work and action research placement. As part of this, the student worked alongside Community Rail Officer Dr Stephanie Dermott to plan and deliver a series of focus groups.

These focus groups were attended by participants of different genders, from a range of different ethnic and religious backgrounds, and a mix of ongoing and resolved refugee experiences.

KEY FINDINGS

QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED:

'We did not know who to ask for help'

'I couldn't find any staff to help me'

'The tickets were confusing and the staff went through the process too fast for us to understand. A member of our group did not speak English and was told to stand to the side away from us. No help was offered to him.'

'It was difficult for us to understand how to use the ticket machines'

'I didn't know where to stand or which platform I needed to go to'

'I was confused by the wording – I didn't know "calling at" meant the train would be stopping there'

'We felt very vulnerable and unsure where to go'

'I would never travel at certain times in the evening as I would feel unsafe'

'We were abused by other passengers and nobody said anything'

'I was ignored by some of the staff, they didn't want to help'

'One of the staff was really rude and mocking me'



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RECOMMENDATIONS:

AS A RESULT OF OUR FINDINGS, WE PROPOSE A NUMBER OF SHORT AND LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAIN OPERATORS TO POTENTIALLY CONSIDER:

SHORT TERM



Staff at stations to be more visible, willing to actively offer help, and trained to identify individuals or families who may be in need of any assistance

LONG TERM



Additional language translations to be made available on ticket machines

A process whereby staff can be alerted to people arriving at stations who may need assistance or translation services (similar to the Passenger Assist service)

A Rail Card Scheme for Refugees and People Seeking Asylum who receive very limited income and therefore face significant barriers to travel

Stations of Sanctuary accreditation to be offered to all stations with resources held by Community Rail Network and support from all train operators

PILOT PROJECT OUTPUTS

THE STATIONS OF SANCTUARY PILOT PROJECT PRODUCED A NUMBER OF KEY OUTPUTS:

- Improvements to information and signposting at Bolton Station
- Development of a resource booklet and engagement with station staff
- Installation of artwork from diverse cultures produced in artist-led workshops
- Creation of a large painted 'Welcome to Bolton Mural' containing the word 'Welcome' in different languages spoken in Bolton
- Participation and inclusion of City of Sanctuary service users in existing 'Platform Planters' and 'Station Walks' programmes
- Final project report and recommendations
- A draft accreditation scheme presented to City of Sanctuary UK, with a proposed rollout to other stations and eventually across the whole rail network!

WE HOPE THAT THROUGH THIS PROPOSED SCHEME WE CAN MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE TO A RANGE OF RAIL USERS WITH ADDITIONAL ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS THAT MAY NOT HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN CONSIDERED



WITH THANKS TO OUR PROJECT FUNDERS

