



# Inclusive Cities Action Plan

COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL

---

Autumn 2022



## Background information

Inclusive Cities is a programme working with 12 cities across the UK to help them achieve a step-change in their approach towards the integration of newcomers in the city. It was launched in March 2017 and is facilitated by the Centre on Migration, Policy, and Society (COMPAS) at Oxford University. In addition to Coventry, the cities taking part are Belfast, Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool, London, Newport, Newry, Mourne & Down and Sheffield. Coventry was proud to join phase 2 of the programme in June 2021, and have benefited from sharing ideas, experience, and knowledge with the other cities.

The programme provides cities with innovative ideas and practices from the UK, Europe and around the world and aims to support the development of an approach to inclusion, which is strategic across the city administration. This approach consistently uses positive messaging to develop an inclusive narrative for the city, which informs and drives practice and is local authority led, working in close partnership with business, the public and voluntary sector organisations to achieve shared goals. The inclusive cities framework has informed the action plan set out in this document.

## Inclusive Cities in Coventry

Coventry has a long and proud history of welcoming people to the city from all over the world. These people have brought new skills and expertise with them and have been proud to make the city their home. Coventry was devastated by war and renewed to become a city of peace, reconciliation, and sanctuary, later welcoming migrants fleeing war and persecution, providing a place of safety to rebuild their lives. In recent years, people have come to Coventry from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, Hong Kong and Ukraine, as well as many European and African countries. Coventry has the largest Syrian resettlement programme in the West Midlands, and a large asylum seeker population.

Coventry is a diverse and cohesive city with a relatively young population, with a median age of 32 years compared to the UK average of 40 years. In recent years, the city has experienced an 8.9% growth in its population, from 316,915 in 2011 to 345,300 residents on Census Day 2021.

The city has a population of approximately 380,000 and is significantly younger and more diverse than most cities in the UK, with a fast-growing population of young adults aged 18-29 and a median age of 32 years compared to the UK average of 40.

“Coventry was devastated by war and renewed to become a city of peace, reconciliation, and sanctuary, later welcoming migrants fleeing war and persecution, providing a place of safety to rebuild their lives.”

## Your Vision Your Future



In 2021, Coventry was the UK City of Culture. The city embarked on delivering a successful year-long programme, with a range of events celebrating culture, including the rich contribution refugees and international migrants have made to our city and UK culture. Coventry welcomed a giant 11-foot puppet named Little Amal, who represented a nine-year-old Syrian girl in search of her mother, symbolic of all displaced children many separated from their families.

Coventry City Council's, 'One Coventry Plan' explicitly states we will work together to improve our city and the lives of those who live, work and study here. It focuses on enabling people to live their best lives in a vibrant and prosperous city, positioning Coventry as a city:

- with a strong and resilient economy, where inclusive growth is promoted and delivered, businesses are enabled to innovate and grow, and new local jobs are created.
- where our residents get the best possible start in life, experience good health and age well, in a city that embraces diversity, protects the most vulnerable and values its residents and communities. This includes the integration of our refugee and migrant communities.

## Citizenship ceremony



The city has always strived to be progressive in its approach towards the integration of newcomers to the city. Coventry is currently pursuing the development of its first citywide One Coventry Together, Integration Strategy that will include objectives that complement our Inclusive Cities plan. Our vision is of 'One Coventry together that is welcoming to newly arrived communities to rebuild their lives from day one in a place of safety and belonging, to find hope and opportunity to prosper'.

The following themes will be addressed as our plan evolves. They were chosen as part of an extensive engagement process with refugees and asylum seekers with lived experiences of migration, Coventry City Council's internal services and local strategic partners.

**Get in touch**

[info@compas.ox.ac.uk](mailto:info@compas.ox.ac.uk)

**Priority 1: Supporting and driving inclusive growth** – Improving employment support to enable newly arrived communities to have economic independence and for all to fulfil their potential.

**How this supports the strategic priorities of the city:**

Developing and building on the strength of Coventry's economy to deliver inclusive growth. Actively supporting residents through tailored programmes and initiatives to improve their skills (targeting skills as required), secure better jobs and help people into work. Working with the education system to ensure Labour Market Information (LMI) is understood and appropriate pathways to employment exist for young people aged 14+.

Working together to support delivery of our Economic Development and Skills Strategy with specific focus on providing support to newcomers:

- A skills system, which meets the needs of all residents and is widely accessed by all Coventry communities, including newly arrived communities.
- We aim to achieve economic growth in Coventry that is inclusive and accessible to all communities across the city, including creating the right environment for more inclusive employment opportunities to flourish.

**IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT TO ENABLE NEWLY ARRIVED COMMUNITIES TO HAVE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE AND TO FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL**

Actions to achieve this priority	Progress to date	How this supports the strategic priorities of the city	Lead responsible for delivery	Resources needed to accomplish the priority and action	Time scale	Success Criteria
<p><b>Intensive employment and skills development support through tailored programmes and initiatives to improve skills (targeting skills as required), secure better jobs and help people out of work into work.</b></p> <p><b>In collaboration with our internal Economic Development Service engage local businesses in identifying new employment routes that target emerging growth sectors and labour supply shortages.</b></p> <p><b>Create opportunities for enterprising migrants to start successful businesses.</b></p>	<p><a href="#">MyCoventry</a> project awarded £1.7m to deliver a 2-year initiative addressing local, social and economic inequalities that hinder the way young people and adults from migrant communities interact and become an integral part of Coventry. The foundations of the project focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment skills and development</li> <li>• Community and social links</li> <li>• Language and learning.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Your Vision Your Future</a>, ESF funded to support refugees and migrants who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to move into employment, training, apprenticeships and education. A comprehensive needs assessment of young NEETs, their barriers to progression enables the provision of tailored mentoring and case work support to help individuals integrate into the city.</p>	<p>The city's new jobs and labour supply challenges increasingly require qualified people to meet the needs of the businesses expanding and growth sectors in the city.</p> <p>This priority will support and contribute towards promoting inclusive economic growth, fair and accessible skills system available to all communities, which supports the City's One Coventry Plan, Economic Development and Skills Strategies.</p>	<p>Coventry City Council (CCC) – cross service delivery Migration Team (lead)</p> <p>Key Voluntary Sector and Community Organisation (VSCO) partners to support mainstream delivery</p> <p>Employment and Skills for Growth working with CCC's Employment and Skills &amp; Economic Development services.</p> <p>Business Start-up – CCC Economic Development Service</p>	<p>Human Resources from key services and partners</p> <p>Commitment from businesses and employers.</p>	<p>1.5 year</p>	<p>Number of employers in Coventry engaged and seeking to recruit and support newly arrived communities into work.</p> <p>Number of people into employment following new employment pathways agreed and applied to address labour supply shortages.</p> <p>Number of migrant start-up businesses / social enterprises</p>

**Priority 2: Connecting Communities** – Newly arrived communities will be empowered to engage in the community to form lasting social connections and contribute to the city’s culture and diversity from day one.

**How this supports the strategic priorities of the city:**

By placing diversity and inclusion at the heart of our Cultural Strategy, we will become a stronger, more connected and more welcoming place. Where communities and individuals are empowered to celebrate and share their heritages, cultures, abilities and identity and participate in the cultural life of the city. Diversity is one of Coventry’s strengths and resources. We will aim to create the right environment to encourage mutual understanding, celebration and learning between newcomer and longstanding communities.

**NEWLY ARRIVED COMMUNITIES WILL BE EMPOWERED TO ENGAGE IN THE COMMUNITY, FORM LASTING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE CITY’S CULTURE AND DIVERSITY FROM DAY ONE**

Actions to achieve this priority	Progress to date	How this supports the strategic priorities of the city	Lead responsible for delivery	Resources needed to accomplish the priority and action	Time scale	Success Criteria
<p><b>Working collaboratively to develop local opportunities to reflect the diversity of newcomers and develop inclusive arts and culture events.</b></p> <p><b>Proactively, support opportunities, activities and initiatives that bring communities together.</b></p>	<p>Asylum seekers in contingency hotels engaged in City of Culture events and took part in the closing parade celebrating the diversity of cultures in the city.</p> <p>Supporting the establishment of a Faith Compact for the City, between faith communities and Coventry City Council to a set of principles that guide engagement, aiming to improve collaborative partnerships, and to promote open, practical working at all levels.</p> <p>Facilitated opportunities for newcomers to experience variety of cultural and arts events such as Warwick Arts Centre International Film festival, BBC Big Weekend.</p> <p>Lord Mayor Welcome Event at the Council House for Ukraine newcomers.</p> <p>Theatre of Sanctuary work in the hotels continues.</p> <p>Coventry Welcomes – Refugee week and cultural events aligned with bringing communities together.</p>	<p>Supports the Cultural Strategy goal focused on diversity and communities celebrating and sharing their culture, abilities, and identity.</p> <p>City of Culture legacy for continuing to work with and support the inclusion of newly arrived communities in culture and arts.</p>	<p>A partnership approach bringing together CCC, communities, charities, VCSO’s, and cultural sectors</p> <p>Sponsor Cllr David Welsh Cabinet Member Housing and Communities</p>	<p>Identification of key partners and organisations</p> <p>Funding opportunities to support activities</p> <p>Events calendar</p>	<p>1.5 year</p>	<p>Positive community connections, leading to a greater sense of mutual understanding, celebration and learning of cultures.</p> <p>More opportunities for newly arrived communities to engage in cultural activities, form lasting social connections and contribute to the culture from day one.</p>

### Priority 3: Mainstreaming and building inclusive public services – Development of Coventry's Integration Strategy

#### How this supports the strategic priorities of the city:

The Councils 'One Coventry Plan' priority focuses on 'improving outcomes for local people and tackling inequalities in order to build prosperity across the city, the most vulnerable and supporting and valuing the contribution of our residents.' This includes supporting our most vulnerable – including people who are street homeless, experiencing mental ill health and the integration of our refugee and migrant communities.

Effectively delivering the essential services that matter most to our communities; strengthening our [Marmot city approach](#) to ensure it remains at the heart of what we do; working with NHS partners to encourage healthy lifestyles and provide quality healthcare to all communities across the city; working with businesses, residents, partners, and education providers to ensure that all our communities' benefit from job opportunities created by investment in the city; tackling inequalities through a collaborative approach, with our residents, communities, and partner organisations and through alignment with our [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

#### A CITYWIDE INTEGRATION STRATEGY TARGETING MAINSTREAM INCLUSION THROUGHOUT THE CITY WITHIN THE CITY COUNCIL AND WITH OUR PARTNERS

Actions to achieve this priority	Progress to date	How this supports the strategic priorities of the city	Lead responsible for delivery	Resources needed to accomplish the priority and action	Time scale	Success Criteria
Building on CCC's Migration Team's work, develop 'One Coventry Together' integration strategy with strong priorities and actions to support the integration of newly arrived communities to better access service provision.	Engaged with ~190 individuals, including 80 refugee & asylum seekers, CCC colleagues and local strategic partners to establish key themes, priorities, and challenges. Early emerging themes from the engagement include Housing, Health and Wellbeing, Employment, Language Acquisition, Education and Training.	One Coventry Plan tackling inequalities protecting the most vulnerable, supporting, and valuing the contribution of our residents. This includes supporting our most vulnerable – including the integration of our refugee and migrant communities.	Coventry City Council – Migration Team  Sponsor Cllr David Welsh Cabinet member for Housing and Communities	Involvement of key internal city council services, key partners, Cabinet member for Housing and Communities	May 2023	Coventry's 'One Coventry Together' integration strategy is adopted by the Council and widely recognised and priorities/actions understood and acted upon.

#### EQUITABLE ACCESS TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES FOR NEWLY ARRIVED COMMUNITIES IN THE CITY

Actions to achieve this priority	Progress to date	How this supports the strategic priorities of the city	Lead responsible for delivery	Resources needed to accomplish the priority and action	Time scale	Success Criteria
Work with Health and Wellbeing and social care services to provide equitable access to services for all newcomers.	Health Inequalities Strategic Plan focuses on transient communities including newly arrived communities. Involves greater co-production with those with lower rates of access or poorer outcomes in response to the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.  Community Champions increase outreach and engagement, raise awareness and promote public health guidance for communities disproportionately impacted by Covid. Migrant Health Champions recruited to raise awareness and champion health messages to transform health and well-being in their communities.	<a href="#">5-year Health Inequalities Strategic Plan</a> sets out how to reduce health inequalities amongst the city's population including newly arrived communities, refugees and asylum seekers.	The Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System	Key Local Authority services including Public Health, Migration Team and health providers.	2 years	The Health Inequalities Strategic Plan influences and delivers improvements in health outcomes, and reduced health inequalities experienced by the population of Coventry

#### Priority 4: Encouraging civic participation and representation

The civic participation of newly arrived communities, asylum seekers and refugees in the formulation of Coventry's integration policies and measures, to support their integration. The city aspires to encourage the active participation of newly arrived communities in the life of the local community and the development of its prosperity by enhancing opportunities and overcoming some of the challenges to participate in local public affairs.

#### AS A LEGACY OF THE [MIFRIENDLY CITIES](#) PROJECT, COVENTRY CITY COUNCIL'S PLEDGE TO RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF CITIZENSHIP TO YOUNG PEOPLE AND CHILDREN

Actions to achieve this priority	Progress to date	How this supports the strategic priorities of the city	Lead responsible for delivery	Resources needed to accomplish the priority and action	Time scale	Success Criteria
Hold an annual ceremony that celebrates and honours Coventry's newly registered British citizen children. To complement the work Central England Law Centre are undertaking to support children eligible for citizenship to get legal advice.	<p>The council held what is believed to be a UK first Citizenship Ceremony for children and young people in 2021. Looking to build on this success and hold a second ceremony in 2022.</p> <p>Little Amal – the 3.5m high refugee girl travelling over 8,000km across Europe to the UK, representing all displaced children was part of the ceremony met with families and was presented with a citizenship certificate.</p>	Becoming a British Citizen is a significant milestone for migrants and helps to support integration, whilst there is an official ceremony for adults to mark the occasion, there isn't one for children and young people. It is the priority of The Council that security is provided to children's British citizenship through formal officiation. This recognition can be far reaching and profound, with the practical, social, and economic impacts reverberating in the every-day lives of children and young people.	Coventry City Council – Migration Team	<p>Lord Mayor, Coventry City Council Register Officer, KIND UK at Central England Law Centre, Schools</p> <p>Citizenship Certificates.</p> <p>Event resources.</p>	Date of ceremony 21 September 2022	<p>The second annual children ceremony takes place.</p> <p>All newly registered British Citizenship children in Coventry are welcomed and officially recognised as citizens at the ceremony.</p>

#### TO IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES AND CREATE BETTER CONDITIONS FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION, WHERE THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND NEEDS OF NEWCOMERS TO THE CITY ARE BETTER REPRESENTED IN COUNCILS' KEY POLICIES AND PROCESSES

Actions to achieve this priority	Progress to date	How this supports the strategic priorities of the city	Lead responsible for delivery	Resources needed to accomplish the priority and action	Time scale	Success Criteria
Engagement process with newly arrived communities with lived experience of migration to help inform the priorities of new 'One Coventry Together' integration strategy.	<p>80 refugees and asylum seekers in the city at different stages of their integration journey were engaged; results analysed to help set the priorities for the Integration Strategy. Continue to actively review the Strategy, which will include an element of sustaining engagement with refugees and asylum seekers.</p> <p>Consultation with newly arrived communities on the City Councils One Coventry Plan which outlines what the Council vision and priorities should be up until 2030.</p>	Civic participation of newly arrived communities, asylum seekers and refugees in the formulation of Coventry's integration policies and measures, to support their integration.	Coventry City Council – Migration Team	<p>Human resource from Migration Team to run sessions.</p> <p>VSCO partners to provide access to participants.</p>	November 2022	Refugees and asylum seekers actively participate in the engagement process and the needs are understood and represented in Coventry's integration policies and measures.

## Case Study

As a legacy of the [MiFriendly Cities project](#), Coventry City Council (CCC) has pledged its commitment to recognising the importance of British citizenship for children and young people. To make that commitment visible, in October 2019, CCC hosted what is thought to be the UK's first Citizenship Ceremony dedicated to children and young people, honouring Coventry's newly registered British citizen children.

Becoming a British citizen is a significant milestone. For adults, it is marked by an official ceremony, whereas there is not currently an equivalent ceremony for children outside of Coventry.

In conjunction with several partners, including Coventry England Law Centre, the inaugural ceremony proved extremely successful with positive feedback from the children and their families. The ceremony also featured an appearance by Little Amal, a giant puppet of a refugee girl that was touring the UK at the time.

Building on this success, the Council is planning a second Children's Citizenship Ceremony in September that will feature a poem by the City's Young Poet Laurette and a short video of a young person who was involved in the ceremony last year. Coventry City Council has committed to making this an annual event.



My Coventry



Little Amal Citizenship Ceremony

## INCLUSIVE CITIES

---

Inclusive Cities is a knowledge exchange initiative supporting UK cities and their local partners to achieve a step-change in their approach towards the inclusion of newcomers.

Drawing on innovative ideas and practices from Europe and the United States, Inclusive Cities aims to support the development of an approach to inclusion which is strategic across the city administration. This approach consistently uses positive messaging to develop an inclusive narrative for the city which informs and drives practice and is local authority led, working in close partnership with business, public and voluntary sector organisations to achieve shared goals.

Inclusive Cities is supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

[www.compas.ox.ac.uk/inclusive-cities](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/inclusive-cities)

## THE GLOBAL EXCHANGE ON MIGRATION AND DIVERSITY

---

The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity is an ambitious initiative at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS), University of Oxford, opening up opportunities for knowledge exchange and longer term collaboration between those working in the migration field.

[www.compas.ox.ac.uk/global-exchange](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/global-exchange)



Centre on Migration, Policy & Society (COMPAS)  
University of Oxford  
58 Banbury Road  
Oxford, OX2 6QS

[www.compas.ox.ac.uk/inclusive-cities](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/inclusive-cities)  
[info@compas.ox.ac.uk](mailto:info@compas.ox.ac.uk)