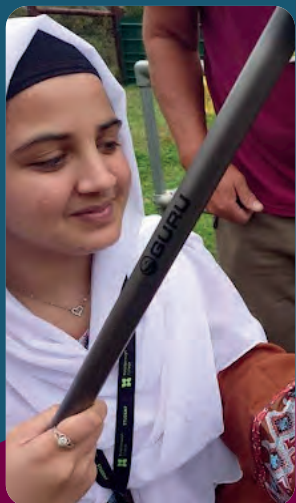




College of  
**SANCTUARY AWARD**  
Welcoming People Seeking Sanctuary

# OUR STORIES:

## COLLEGE OF SANCTUARY



**Peterborough**  
College



**Stamford**  
College

**2023-24**

# WELCOME

**Young asylum seekers and refugees carry immense potential, but they arrive in a foreign land facing immense challenges. Uprooted from their homes, they often endure traumatic journeys and carry deep emotional scars. Many arrive alone, without family support and struggle with language barriers and cultural differences.**

At Inspire Education Group (IEG) we are proud of the work we do to support some of our most vulnerable communities and we feel privileged to share some of their stories and our success as a College of Sanctuary.

Supporting these young individuals isn't just an act of compassion, it's an investment in their future and ours. With the right guidance, they can overcome adversity, rebuild their lives and contribute positively to their new communities. By providing them with safety, education, and opportunities, we unlock their potential and create a more just and inclusive society.

Inspired by Kate Milner's wonderful book, 'My Name is not Refugee', a young male in Cardiff wrote this poem to tell his own story of having to leave his home in Ukraine and rebuild his life here in the UK.

*Last year, this boy you see  
he was not a refugee  
but just a child, who loved to read  
to walk his dog, along the street  
the nights were loud, we had to flee  
so now, you call me refugee  
he is a child, may he be free  
he could be you, that boy is me  
but remember that, my name is not,  
refugee.*

## Their Story

In the tapestry of Inspire Education Group's College community, the threads of resilience are woven with extraordinary strength. These case studies are a testament to the human spirit, showcasing the courage, determination and hope of our students who have sought asylum and refuge.

Their journeys are marked by challenges unimaginable to many, yet they have found within themselves the fortitude to rebuild their lives and pursue further education. Through their words, we invite you to share their experiences, to understand their aspirations and to celebrate their triumphs.

These stories are not merely narratives; they are beacons of inspiration, reminding us of the power of education to transform lives and the importance of creating a welcoming and supportive college community.

Let us honour their courage by listening to their voices and sharing their experiences.

**Laila Bentley**  
**Assistant Principal**  
**Student Experience and Support**

# WHAT IS A COLLEGE OF SANCTUARY?

**A 'College of Sanctuary' is a Further Education institution which is recognised for its commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for refugees, asylum seekers and other groups of individuals who have been forced to migrate.**

The accreditation is part of the wider City of Sanctuary movement, which aims to build a culture of welcome, compassion and support in local communities for those who are seeking safety from persecution, conflict and hardship.

## College of Sanctuary Pledge

We are committed to being a safe and welcoming place for those seeking sanctuary and have pledged to be a 'City of Sanctuary' supporting organisation for those fleeing violence and persecution.

## Here are some key reasons why we are proud to hold this designation:

- **Empowering individuals:** We believe in the potential of every student, including those seeking sanctuary. By providing access to education and support, we are helping to rebuild lives and create brighter futures.
- **Enriching our community:** Refugees and asylum seekers bring diverse perspectives, skills and experiences that enrich our college culture. Their presence fosters a more inclusive and understanding community for all students.
- **Leading by example:** As a College of Sanctuary, we demonstrate a strong moral compass and inspire others to follow suit. We are proud to be a beacon of hope and a place of safety for those in need.

- **Building bridges:** Our work with refugees and asylum seekers strengthens our ties with the local community.
- **Upholding human rights:** By protecting the rights of those seeking sanctuary, we contribute to a more just and equitable society.



*Assistant Principal Laila Bentley receiving the College of Sanctuary award.*

IEG is proud to have achieved the College of Sanctuary status in December 2022. Being a **College of Sanctuary** is not just about fulfilling a requirement; it is a fundamental part of our identity and mission. We are proud to make a positive impact on the lives of our students and the wider community.

# ACCESS AND SUPPORT

**At Inspire Education Group we offer those seeking asylum a safe place to study free from judgement and filled with welcome and compassion. We offer a range of tailored support services, including ESOL classes and dedicated pastoral care, to help students build the skills needed to succeed in education, employment and independent living. All separated migrant children have dedicated welfare support and individual education plans working in collaboration with specialist agencies and the local authority.**

**To support student success, Inspire Education Group offers:**

- Multilingual key documents.
- Partnerships with local refugee and migration organisations.
- Tailored enrichment programmes and opportunities.
- Dedicated Student Wellbeing and Engagement support.
- Adapted student feedback and voice collection methods.
- Student engagement activities to foster community connection.
- Celebration of diversity and cultural contributions.
- Recognition opportunities such as access to Rising Leadership programmes and Peterborough Citizens Youth community training.
- Celebrations of success and annual College of Sanctuary Award.
- Funding for initiatives and sponsorship.





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# ANTONIO CERQUIGLINI:

Studying **Level 1 Construction**  
at Peterborough College

## **“When did you move to the UK?”**

*“I moved to the UK in September 2020 and I only spoke Italian then, but now I can speak four languages that I have learnt during my time in the UK.”*

## **“What has your time at College been like?”**

*“I started college in 2022 because before then it was difficult to communicate and understand the English school system until I had learnt the language. I started in Learner Engagement and then progressed to Level 1 Construction.”*

## **“What have you enjoyed about College?”**

*“I like the people, especially the staff. Everyone is friendly and I have mixed with people from different cultures and learnt new languages and religions. Everyone is very accepting at this College.”*

## **“What are your future aspirations?”**

*“I work alongside my Dad’s friend in construction so I can better my skills and gain experience. I would like to start a business in construction with my Dad, because my Dad has Italian qualifications so he can’t do it in England yet, but if I get the qualifications and start a business he can work alongside me.”*

Aspires to work in **Construction**



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# WILTON PUNZA:

Studying **ESOL Entry Level 1** at  
Peterborough College

## **“What is your favourite part about IEG?”**

*“I enjoy learning and have also enjoyed being a part of the basketball team. I play as a point guard on Wednesdays with the Peterborough Pumas (the College team). I have enjoyed the friendships I have made through the basketball team.”*

## **“What are your future aspirations?”**

*“Once completing my ESOL qualifications, I want to go on to the Sports Course, I am interested in sport and business.”*

## **“What will you do after you finish College?”**

*“I want to be able to move to the USA to be more involved in basketball.”*

Aspires to **pursue a career in Basketball**



# EDUCATION AND PROGRESSION

## **ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)**

Peterborough College offers full-time ESOL courses for 16-18-year-olds with refugee or asylum seeker status living in the UK. These courses help students integrate into society, progress to further education, and become fluent in English. We also provide part-time and online ESOL options for adult learners. Our 16-18 programme includes a holistic enrichment programme with trips, skills workshops, and physical activities.

## **Progression into other Further Education courses**

Our ESOL and Wellbeing teams help students transition into further education and training. We provide support with maths and English qualifications, including Functional Skills, to prepare students for mainstream courses.

Our students have successfully progressed to various further education programmes in Construction, Sport, Health and Social Care, Travel, IT and Business.



# ENGAGEMENT AND ENRICHMENT

**This year we have offered a variety of enrichment activities and trips to our ESOL students.**

A highlight was a fishing excursion with Peterborough and District Angling Association. Angling coaches guided students in pole fishing, an exciting new experience for many.



Football was another popular choice. Students enjoyed friendly matches on our 3G pitches, providing an inclusive opportunity for all skill levels.



Cricket is a popular sport among our Afghan students, so we organised weekly indoor cricket sessions. This proved to be a joyful and enriching experience for everyone involved and brought a smile to everyone's face.



Arts and Crafts are also made available during enrichment time. Many students have made bracelets, designed key rings and other accessories.







# SEZAR ZAKARI:

Studying **Level 1 Construction**  
at Peterborough College

## **“When did you move to the UK?”**

*“I moved in May 2020 during lockdown and did not speak any English when I first moved here. I had support from my Social Worker who helped me learn English with dictionaries and I watched YouTube, cartoons and movies in English to help me.”*

## **“What has your time at College been like?”**

*“I started College in September 2020 on ESOL Entry 1 and then progressed on to Entry 2 and 3 and passed both of those. I went on to do Level 1 Construction alongside Functional Skills English and maths which I achieved my Level 1 in. I am now on a bespoke course to better my skills and maintain my wellbeing and I hope to go on to Level 2 Construction next year, even if I have to keep doing it until I get there.”*

## **“What have you enjoyed about College?”**

*“I like College, I have learnt everything I know from College. I learnt about different religions, cultures and countries. I have made good friends who help me, if we don't help each other we will all fall down.”*

Aspires to **pursue a career in Plumbing or Electrical**



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# DAWIT TILAHUN:

Studying **Level 1 Construction**  
at Peterborough College

## **“What has your time at College been like?”**

*“I moved to the UK in 2022, started College in 2023 and completed ESOL Entry 2 and 3, then progressed and I’m now doing Level 1 Construction alongside Functional Skills English and maths.”*

## **“What have you enjoyed about College?”**

*“I have learnt everything from College, everyone is very friendly and I have met a lot of different people and learnt new languages.”*

## **“Are you doing any enrichment activities?”**

*“I play football outside of College and I cycle.”*

Aspires to **work in Plumbing**

In collaboration with Peterborough Asylum and Refugee Community Association (PARCA) students built a selection of Bug Houses to put around the College garden spaces to encourage and attract the insects and wildlife.



Students have enthusiastically embraced our garden project, cultivating a variety of herbs and vegetables in a raised bed. We plan to expand this initiative next year with an additional bed to grow more produce. Students will be actively involved in planting and caring for the garden throughout the growing season.



We've taken students on various local outings to explore their local community. A highlight was a visit to Peterborough Museum and Cathedral. Students learned about the city's history, explored the cathedral and its surrounding buildings and enjoyed breathtaking views from the tower.



Our Pre-Entry students visited a Blueberry Farm and Yarwell Mill, these local places provided a great opportunity for students to walk in the countryside, learn a bit about a local business and practice their English with different people.



The students loved the outdoor activity and walking through wooded areas along a short part of the Nene Valley footpath.



During Work Experience Week the Entry 3 students visited local businesses including Amazon and Photocentric. They learned about business operations, met employees and explored potential career paths.



This hands-on experience provided insights into workplace environments and job requirements.

This was a great opportunity to interact with workplaces where the students could see staff working, get a feel for the types of jobs available and ask questions about the qualifications required for the different types of roles they could choose to apply for.

A visit to the Peterborough United football stadium was a highlight for our students, many of whom are passionate fans.

They enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour, including holding one of the team's championship cups, and gained a unique insight into stadium operations that are usually off-limits to the public. The visit was fantastic.



Our students enjoyed an orienteering adventure at Nene Park Ferry Meadows. Pre-entry and Entry level 1 students successfully completed a self-guided walk, developing map reading, instruction following and timekeeping skills. Despite language challenges, they excelled at the task.







# FAISAL MOKHAMMAD-AIUP:

Faisal Mokhammad-Aiup was originally from Afghanistan but became a refugee at the age of nine and was sent to live in Ukraine. After living in Ukraine for 25 years, he became a refugee again and was able to escape the war and arrive in the UK in 2022.

Before coming to the UK, Faisal had his own successful mobile phone business in Ukraine. However, when he arrived in Peterborough, he needed to find a new direction. He contacted Peterborough Asylum and Refugee Community Association (PARCA) and JobCentre Plus, who directed him to Jobsmart, where he attended the selection day for the Security programme.

After performing well on his BKSB English assessment during the selection process, Faisal was offered a place to complete stewarding qualifications for the first two weeks. If he did well, he would be allowed to continue onto the professional qualification, leading to a Door Supervisor licence.

Faisal did exactly that, demonstrating great determination and making good progress, passing three out of four Door Supervisor exams on the first go! The College funded his Door Supervisor licence, and the Jobsmart staff helped him with the paperwork to get his Sworn Oath notarized by a local solicitor since he couldn't obtain a DBS check in the standard procedure from Ukraine.

Faisal is now waiting for his badge to come through and speaks highly of his experience at Jobsmart, saying, "I feel very good. I am very happy for the support I have been given and I tell a lot of people about what I've done."

In May, Faisal Mokhammad-Aiup was awarded Student of the Year at the IEG Student Awards 2023 after being recognised for consistently displaying unwavering dedication and becoming a role model for his peers through his commitment to overcoming challenges and surpassing expectations. Along with earning Faisal this prestigious award, his remarkable ability to rise above obstacles has given others the inner strength to strive for excellence.



# GULL AHMADI AND IKRAMULLAH SALARZAI:

Gull and Ikramullah enjoy their learning at Peterborough College, they enjoy working with their lecturer, Tom, and have built friendships with their peers. Both students enjoy their enrichment sessions with the Student Engagement team, enjoying cricket and football and recently taking up boxing with Peterborough Boxing Futures.

Both students are progressing from their ESOL 1 courses to ESOL Level 2 courses with aspirations to progress on engineering and business courses.

Gull Ahmadi won the Care Experienced Student of the Year Award at our annual IEG Student Awards 2024.





As part of Mental Health Week, students enjoyed a trip to Cadbury World. Students learned about the history of the Cadbury family and the culture of the time and 19th-century culture. They enjoyed the free chocolate during the tour and got involved in the demonstrations and activities.



Our London trip was a huge success. Students immersed themselves in the city, experiencing the Horizon of Khufu VR and enjoying a scenic South Bank walk. This popular trip was a memorable highlight.



Our asylum seeker and refugee students were a huge part of our cultural awareness showcase during our cultural awareness week. The showcase centred around art, food and dancing with students dressed up in traditional dress.

The cultural awareness event connected many of our students with those who they may not of spoken to previously, discussing traditional dances which were performed in their home countries and the history behind art, traditional clothing and the connection between different countries throughout their history.

The showcase dancing saw traditional dancing from across the globe including our asylum seeker and refugee students leading traditional Kurdish, Sudanese and Afghan dancing.

The week also saw educational sessions delivered across the group to all college students about understanding and celebrating migration, how and why people become asylum seekers and refugees and their reality. The session focused on the city of sanctuary's ethos of leading with welcome and compassion.



**Have questions?  
We are here to help.**



**Peterborough  
College**

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