Dear ,

I am writing to you as a resident of ……. Ward, Reading, a City of Sanctuary, to express my support for refugees and asylum seekers within our community.

I am deeply concerned by the escalating hostility being directed towards people seeking asylum who are currently housed in our county. Dehumanising language, as well as actions such as intimidating asylum seekers, should have no place in our communities. They cause real harm, fuelling division and danger, and inflict fear and distress on already vulnerable people.

Seeking asylum is a legal right under UK and international law, regardless of how someone arrives. Article 31 of the 1951 Refugee Convention makes clear refugees must not be penalised for entering a country irregularly to claim asylum.

I acknowledge that the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers can raise questions within the wider community. It is important to approach these concerns with facts and empathy. There is no credible evidence that people seeking asylum commit more crimes than the UK-born population. Evidence demonstrates that refugees do not “take away” resources; rather, with appropriate support, they contribute to economic growth, innovation, and social cohesion. The vast majority are keen to make a positive difference and are grateful for the opportunities afforded to them.

Local councils such as Reading play a critical role in providing support to those fleeing persecution. From ensuring access to housing, healthcare, and education, to fostering spaces for cultural exchange and community participation, the actions taken locally have a profound impact on the lives of refugees and asylum seekers.

I respectfully urge the council to:

* Continue to champion refugee and asylum seeker rights through policy and practice, in line with international and domestic human rights law.
* Increase engagement with organisations supporting, working with or led by refugees, ensuring that their perspectives shape local decision-making.
* Celebrate the contributions of refugees and asylum seekers through public events, education, and the arts.

Our city’s reputation as a place of sanctuary is something to be cherished and strengthened. History will judge us not just by the words we speak, but by the actions we take. In reaffirming our commitment to human rights, we safeguard both the dignity of newcomers and the integrity of our own community.

Thank you for your attention to this vital issue, and for your ongoing service to the people of Reading.

Yours sincerely,