

Homes for refugees: how housing associations can help

July 2020





**Across the world there are
more than 70 million displaced people,
fleeing from conflict, persecution
or humanitarian disaster.**



Here in the UK, community groups have formed to welcome refugee families and provide long-term resettlement support through the Community Sponsorship programme.

Since the scheme began in July 2016, 449 refugees have been welcomed by 91 community groups.

Community Sponsorship draws on the knowledge, skills and life experience of local people, working with local authorities, schools, health and housing services to provide wraparound support.

Groups raise funds, adopt safeguarding policies, undergo training and apply to the Home Office for approval. If successful, the group is matched to a refugee family, meets them at the airport and supports them as they get to grips with the practicalities of living in the UK and accessing local services.

One of the main tasks of a Community Sponsorship group is to find accommodation for the family for a minimum of two years.

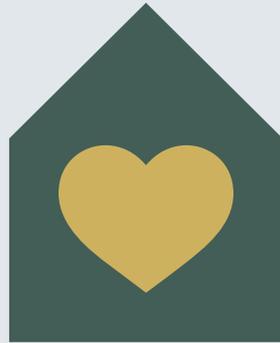
Some have invested in property, some have negotiated discounted rent with private landlords, and others have developed relationships with housing associations. Some groups top up rent payments, paying the difference between what is received in benefits and the level of rent.



Homes for Cathy Commitment 8:
to contribute to ending migrant homelessness
in the areas housing associations operate

At Homes for Cathy, we're working with housing associations to secure affordable accommodation that can be offered to Community Sponsorship groups.

We want to play our part in welcoming more refugees to the UK, making use of the creativity, care and social capital of our neighbourhoods.



By working with Community Sponsorship groups, there are several ways you can help provide a home to a family who needs it...

- **Make a home suitable for a family**

Groups raise a minimum of £9,000 to support each refugee family, though many raise much more. Rather than using these funds to top up rent payments, they could be spent on converting a shared house into a family home, or bringing an empty property up to the Future Homes Standard.

- **Broker benefits to the wider community**

Community Sponsorship groups often have a variety of skills to offer. In return for support with housing, many will be keen to volunteer within the local community or extend their existing services.

For example, a group in the West Midlands recognised a lack of support for language learning, and began to offer classes to the local community. This in turn increased awareness of volunteering opportunities, with local people coming forward to offer help to refugee families.

- **Get your people involved**

When housing associations worked on another government scheme, the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme, many staff were inspired to volunteer their own time to support the families. Working with a Community Sponsorship group – or even forming their own – enables your staff to support a cause they are passionate about. It creates value for them and for your organisation, while strengthening community cohesion and resilience.

- **Offer a home to a refugee family**

Community Sponsorship groups need homes for the families they support. By offering a home to a group, your organisation demonstrates its commitment to vulnerable people.

The rent is guaranteed for at least two years, and the family will move in with a ready-made support network – which is a lot more than most families do.

“Alongside our campaigning to support new migrant communities, helping a family with a home through Community Sponsorship has been a practical way for Innisfree to deliver on our social purpose.

The commitment, resourcefulness and care that the sponsorship group have shown to the family has been amazing – and has inspired our own team in the way we work.”

John Delahunty CEO, Innisfree

If you are able to work
with Community Sponsorship
groups to provide homes
for refugee families, find out
more and get involved at:

resetuk.org



homesforcathy.org.uk



**NATIONAL
HOUSING
FEDERATION**

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