

Outline of community sponsorship pilot for prospective sponsors

This document provides a summary of the current thinking for the planned community sponsorship pilot, to support prospective sponsors in developing their capability and resources to deliver effective sponsorship. This is a simplified version of what will become a Framework for the community sponsorship pilot and contains the key points for prospective sponsors to consider. The details set out here are subject to change and have not been approved by Ministers.

The following elements of community sponsorship are outlined in the following pages.

- A. Sponsorship process
- B. Criteria for approval to sponsor
- C. Resettlement plan template
- D. Agreement between Home Office and Sponsor
- E. Support for sponsors
- F. Monitoring and evaluation

A. Sponsorship process for the pilot

1. Prospective sponsor considers guidance on sponsorship provided by the Home Office, prepares resettlement plan, and informs local authority of intention to apply for sponsorship.
2. Prospective sponsor submits application to the Home Office.
3. Home Office considers application, carries out appropriate checks including visiting the accommodation, seeks input from the local authority, and makes a decision to grant or refuse permission to sponsor.
4. Home Office and Sponsor sign a contract/agreement, setting out the responsibilities of each party.
5. Home Office identifies a suitable Syrian family from UNHCR referrals that has consented to a sponsorship arrangement in the UK.
6. Home Office provides information about Syrian family and expected date of arrival in the UK to the sponsor and local authority.
7. Sponsor attends training and prepares to receive Syrian family, in accordance with resettlement plan and taking into account the specific circumstances of the family.
8. Syrian family arrives in the UK and is met by the Sponsor, is taken to accommodation, and resettlement plan is implemented by Sponsor.
9. Sponsor continually monitors progress against resettlement plan, and continually strives to deliver the best possible outcomes for the sponsored Syrian family. Sponsor engages with the local authority as appropriate.
10. Home Office monitors implementation of resettlement plan and Syrian family outcomes.
11. After ten months, the Home Office, sponsor and local authority will meet to assess the circumstances of the Syrian family and a decision will be taken on the support requirements of the family in their second year and how those requirements will be met.
12. Within 20 months, the Sponsor will consult with the Syrian family and make a decision about the continued availability of the accommodation. If the accommodation will no longer be available for the Syrian family to use, the Sponsor will support the Syrian family in their transition to alternative suitable accommodation, in consultation with the local authority where appropriate.

13. Sponsorship arrangement formally ends after two years.

B. Criteria for approval to sponsor

Prospective sponsors must demonstrate the following:

- that they are a registered charity;
- that they have a minimum level of funds available exclusively for sponsorship, currently estimated to be in the region of £5000 per adult;
- experience, which can be their own or that of a partner organisation, in working with at least one of the following:
 - refugees,
 - beneficiaries of resettlement schemes, or
 - supporting/housing vulnerable people;
- a credible plan for resettlement; and
- a suitable safeguarding policy.

Applications for sponsorship may be declined if the any of the above criteria are not met, and also where there is evidence of involvement of the organisation or individuals associated with the organisation in: criminal activity, terrorist activity, extremist activity, involvement in child abuse, facilitating illegal immigration or working, or making false declarations.

C. Resettlement plan template

Outcomes	Requirements	Detailed explanation of how requirement will be provided for (to be completed by prospective sponsor)
<p>Resettled Syrians have a home in which to settle in the UK, with adequate space and facilities to live in comfort and safety.</p>	<p>Source and fund (where required) suitable, sustainable, affordable accommodation.</p> <p>The accommodation must be available for a period of two years.</p> <p>A separate bedroom must be allocated to each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ married or cohabiting couple ○ adult aged 21 years or more ○ pair of adolescents aged 10-20 years of the same sex ○ pair of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex <p>Each bedroom should allow a minimum of 70 sq ft (6.50 sq m) per person.</p> <p>The property must be in a proper state of structural repair, must be maintained throughout in a good state of repair with safe electricity and/or gas supplies, and with adequate ventilation and lighting.</p> <p>The property should be appropriately furnished with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an appropriate number and type of beds; • a toilet, a washbasin and a fixed bath or shower with hot and cold water; • a fixed heating appliance in each room, which is capable of providing effective heating and which the tenant can control; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What accommodation have you identified?</i> • <i>When will it become available?</i> • <i>Will it be available for use by the resettled Syrians for a minimum period of two years?</i> • <i>Will the cost of rent be fully covered by Local Housing Allowance (LHA)? If not, do you have sufficient funds to cover the difference for at least two years?</i> • <i>What will happen after two years? If the accommodation will no longer be available to the resettled Syrians after two years, how will you support their transition (if required) to alternative accommodation?</i> • <i>How will you ensure that resettled Syrians are able to raise issues with their accommodation (e.g. non-functioning appliances, boiler failure) with the landlord, bearing in mind the potential language barrier?</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilities for cooking and for the hygienic preparation and storage of food (for example, a 4-ring hob with oven and grill, fridge-freezer, microwave oven, and kitchen sink); • access to a washing facilities (e.g. a washing machine or nearby laundrette); • access to facilities to dry clothes (e.g. outdoor clothes line or indoor clothes-drying rack); and • a fire blanket and smoke alarms <p>Assist with registration with utility companies and making sure arrangements are made for payment.</p> <p>Provide information to resettled persons on accommodation and health and safety, and emergency contact point.</p>	
<p>Resettled Syrians feel welcome in the UK and are able to quickly acclimatise to living in the UK.</p>	<p>Meet and greet arriving Syrian family from the relevant airport and escort them to their accommodation, briefing them on how to use the amenities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Who will meet and greet at the airport?</i> • <i>Will you have an interpreter?</i> • <i>Have you considered the means of transport to and from the airport?</i> • <i>Have you considered the need to maintain the family's privacy and dignity by not publicising their arrival and not overwhelming them on arrival?</i> • <i>Have you considered an appropriate person or group to meet the family at the airport, and are you prepared to take into account the reasons for their vulnerability (e.g. a woman who has suffered sexual violence should not be met by an all-male group)?</i> • <i>When the family arrive back at the accommodation, how will you ensure they are able to cook and look after themselves?</i> • <i>How will you help the family to</i>

		<i>settle/acclimatise to their new environment over the following few days?</i>
	Provide a welcome pack of groceries, the content of which should take into account the culture and nationality of the resettled family.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What will you provide and what informed your decision?</i>
	Provide £200 per person (adults and children) in cash on arrival for initial expenses including groceries, toiletries, clothes, and ensure the family have sufficient funds to live on while their claim for benefits is being processed. Provide information and support to access local shops and transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have you thought about providing appropriate denominations of cash?</i> • <i>How will you support access to local shopping and transport?</i>
Resettled Syrians are able to make a life for themselves in the UK, through accessing community activities, medical care, language skills, education and employment.	Ensure resettled Syrians receive their Biometric Residence Permits within 7 days of arrival in the UK.	Biometric Residence Permits will be posted to the sponsor, who will provide them to the resettled family.
	Assist with registering children with local schools as soon as possible – to commence within 2 weeks of arrival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How will you do this and by when?</i>
	<p>Arrange for English language tuition for adults as soon as possible but certainly within one month of arrival.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide formal English language tuition by a suitably qualified ESOL teacher, for a minimum of 10 hours per week for the first twelve weeks, followed by a minimum of 5 hours per week for the remaining nine months. • There is an expectation that formal English language tuition is supplemented on a regular basis by less formal conversational English. • Whilst it is recognised that progress will differ between individuals, there is an expectation of at least one ESOL level of progress (in speaking and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How will you provide formal ESOL tuition?</i> • <i>Have you factored in the associated costs?</i> • <i>How will you provide additional conversational English language support?</i> • <i>How will you monitor progress?</i> • <i>Are you prepared to take additional steps to ensure progress is made?</i>

<p>listening, reading, and writing) over the course of the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the opportunity to obtain an English language qualification at the appropriate level, where this will support access to employment and education. 	
<p>Support attendance at local Job Centre appointments for benefit assessments, within 2 weeks of arrival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do you know where the local Job Centre is?</i> • <i>Have you familiarised yourself with the benefits available?</i> • <i>When do you plan to arrange Job Centre attendance after arrival?</i>
<p>Assist with registration with a local GP, within one week of arrival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do you know where the local GPs are located?</i> • <i>When do you plan to arrange registration after arrival?</i>
<p>Advice on accessing appropriate mental health services and to specialist services for victims of torture as appropriate.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do you have links with relevant organisations that can provide relevant support and advice?</i> • <i>How will you make resettled Syrians aware of these services?</i>
<p>Provide assistance with access to employment, including development of curriculum vitae, and education?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What action will you take to support access to employment and education?</i>
<p>Provide assistance with accessing digital services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>How will you assess ability to access digital media and services?</i> • <i>What support will you provide where a lack of digital skills are a barrier to independence?</i>
<p>Make aware of, and support attendance at, local community activities, within and without the sponsoring organisation, such as children's playgroups, coffee mornings, local clubs, local events, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What suitable community groups or activities have you identified?</i>
<p>Provide interpreting services, as required, for 12 months from arrival.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have you identified a suitable interpreter?</i> • <i>Have you considered the associated costs?</i> • <i>What will be their availability?</i>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Will resettled Syrians have access to telephone or text support for interpretation?</i>
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D. Agreement between HO and sponsor

The contract will set out general requirements around data protection etc, as well as the specific requirements of the Home Office and Sponsor, which are set out below.

Requirements for which the Home Office is responsible

Identifying Syrians for resettlement

The Home Office, working closely with the UNHCR, will identify vulnerable Syrians for whom resettlement in the UK is appropriate.

The Home Office will carry out relevant medical and security checks on individual Syrians, retaining the right to reject individuals on security grounds.

Provision of information regarding Syrians for settlement

The Home Office will, through information provided by the UNHCR and through pre-departure interviews where possible, provide to the Sponsor relevant details of the Syrians to be resettled in advance of their arrival in the UK (with the consent of the individuals concerned) to allow the Sponsor to tailor their resettlement plan accordingly.

Relevant details will include:

- arrival date/time/location;
- the number of people, age and gender;
- the language spoken;
- ability to communicate in English;
- any known physical or mental health issues;
- any known specific cultural or social issues.

Training and support for the Sponsor

The Home Office will provide training and a mechanism for back-up support, to aid the Sponsor to deliver effective sponsorship.

Monitoring

The Home Office will, periodically and on the basis of risk, review the Sponsor's performance against this agreement. Where issues or concerns are identified, the Home Office will engage in a dialogue with the Sponsor to seek a swift resolution.

Termination of the Agreement

If the Sponsor is unwilling or unable to comply with the terms of this agreement, or the Sponsor no longer complies with the criteria for approval as a Sponsor, the Home Office may terminate this agreement at any time.

In the event of the early termination of the agreement, the Home Office will notify the relevant local authority to ensure that alternative provision is made for the resettled Syrians.

Requirements for which the Sponsor is responsible

Support for resettled Syrians

The Sponsor will abide by the requirements in the attached resettlement plan.

The Sponsor will not require participation by the resettled Syrians in activities associated with the sponsoring organisation.

The Sponsor must not profit financially from the sponsoring arrangement.

Safeguarding

The Sponsor will comply with their policies and statutory duties to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and will notify the relevant authorities (e.g. local authority and/or police) where there are concerns for a sponsored individual's well-being.

Monitoring and record-keeping

The Sponsor will implement their resettlement plan (attached) and will have procedures in place to ensure implementation is regularly monitored and reviewed.

In the event that a resettled Syrian develops new needs, or unexpected needs are identified, the Sponsor will take appropriate steps to address these. This may include engaging third parties, such as the local authority or police, or supporting the individual to access appropriate healthcare.

The Sponsor will facilitate visits by Home Office staff for monitoring purposes, when requested.

The Sponsor will maintain accurate and up-to-date records of sponsored individuals, as prescribed by the Home Office.

Inform the Home Office of any changes in circumstances

The Sponsor will:

- notify the Home Office if the Sponsor is unable to deliver the agreed resettlement plan;
- notify the Home Office of any change in organisational status (e.g. loss of charity status, closure);
- notify the Home Office of any change in circumstance that would have had to have been declared as part of their application for sponsorship.

Training

The Sponsor will attend relevant training arranged by the Home Office to ensure they are able to fulfil their sponsorship responsibilities effectively.

Sponsorship breakdown/termination

The Sponsor will make every effort to avoid a breakdown in the sponsor arrangement, unless it is in the best interests of the resettled Syrians.

Where the resettled Syrians cause the sponsor arrangement to breakdown (e.g. they decide to move to a new area) the Sponsor will inform the Home Office and local authority immediately.

In the event of a breakdown or termination of the sponsorship relationship caused by the Sponsor, the Sponsor will inform the Home Office and local authority immediately. The Sponsor will make every effort to collaborate with the local authority and support the transition of the resettled Syrians to alternative arrangements.

E. Support for sponsors

In developing their resettlement plan, it is anticipated that sponsors will carefully consider the resources that they will require to deliver effective sponsorship. Sponsors may already have access to the necessary resources and expertise within their organisation, or through members of the local community. Alternatively, sponsors may choose to go into partnership with another organisation that can provide the necessary resources or expertise.

Nevertheless, a need for a support package has been identified to provide (a) an introduction to sponsorship for new sponsors; and (b) a 'backup' support mechanism for sponsors.

The proposed objectives for the introduction to sponsorship are as follows.

- To equip sponsors with the practical knowledge and tools to deliver effective sponsorship of resettled Syrians in order to support the well-being of resettled Syrians, the establishment of a positive and settled life in the UK, and community cohesion.
- To do this by providing sponsors with:
 - a basic understanding of the political, cultural and social situation in Syria;
 - an understanding of how resettlement works in the UK;
 - an insight into the background of resettled Syrians, how they may feel about their personal tragedy and how they may feel about coming to the UK;
 - practical and sensitive advice on how to support resettled Syrians to thrive in the UK, including advice on dealing with difficult situations;
 - an understanding of the role of the local authority and how to work with the local authority when required; and
 - a basic understanding of safeguarding and the risks resettled Syrians may face depending on their specific vulnerabilities.

The proposed objectives for the backup support are as follows.

- To provide a means by which sponsoring organisations can access ad hoc support and advice throughout the period of sponsorship, should particularly difficult or complex issues arise.
- To provide a mediation service between sponsors and resettled Syrians, as a last resort, to help resolve difficulties that arise and avoid the breakdown of the sponsorship arrangement.

F. Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring will take place to ensure sponsors are adhering to their agreement with the Home Office and to obtain evidence to support evaluation of the community sponsorship model. This could take the form of requests for information, visits to accommodation, interviews with sponsors and resettled Syrians, or other assessments of performance.