

# Community sponsorship scheme launched for refugees in the UK

From:

[Home Office, Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for International Development](#) and [The Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP](#)

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Home Secretary and Archbishop of Canterbury launch new scheme to encourage community groups to sponsor a refugee family.



The [full community sponsorship scheme](#) will enable community groups including charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to take on the role of supporting resettled refugees in the UK.

An [online service to help refugees in the UK](#) has been developed to make it easier for any member of the public to support refugees in the UK and allow local authorities to focus support on the goods and services that refugees need.

The sponsorship scheme and online service have been launched as part of the government's commitment to resettle thousands of the most vulnerable refugees in the UK.

The Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, said:

The response of the British public to the refugee crisis has been one of overwhelming generosity and many have been moved to make kind offers of assistance.

This is a ground-breaking new development for resettlement in the UK and I wholeheartedly encourage organisations that can help to offer their support.

I hope that this new approach will help bring communities together and support these often traumatised and vulnerable families as they rebuild their lives, and contribute to and thrive in our country.



Sponsoring organisations must have status as either a registered charity or community interest company, the consent of the local authority in which they wish to operate, and a comprehensive plan for resettlement in order to apply for the scheme.

The Home Office will consider all offers of sponsorship and check that they have the agreement of the relevant local authority.

All resettled refugees arriving in the UK, including those under [full community sponsorship](#), will have been through a thorough security vetting process.

Sponsors will provide housing for the refugee family, as well as helping them to integrate into life in the UK, access medical and social services, arranging English language tuition and supporting them towards employment and self-sufficiency.

Lambeth Palace is the first community group to be approved to receive a refugee family and the government is working with a number of prospective sponsors and local authorities to enable their participation.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said:

The full community sponsorship scheme presents churches and other civil society groups with the opportunity to provide sanctuary to those fleeing war-torn places.

Refugees, like all people, are treasured human beings, made in the image of God, who deserve safety, freedom and the opportunity to flourish.

It is an enormous privilege to welcome a family to live in a cottage in the grounds of Lambeth Palace. I am hugely grateful to the Home Office and Lambeth Council for their tireless work and support in enabling this to happen.

## **New online service for donations**

Members of the public are already volunteering to support resettled refugees in many different ways. The [online service to help refugees in the UK](#) is being launched today to help target that help where it is most needed.

It is initially being piloted in 9 local authorities and has been designed to enable local authorities to specify the type of donations they most require to support refugees in their area.

Users can select from a range of options for donations, including goods such as baby equipment and clothes, group and cultural outings and the use of vacant housing that must be self-contained and available for a period of at least 12 months.

Offers of help can be made by members of the public across the country. In non-pilot areas these will be considered centrally by the Home Office before being passed on to local authorities.

Further local authorities will be added to the online service in the coming months.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

This is an historic opportunity for individuals, charities, faith groups, churches and businesses to support refugee families directly.

By bringing together the voluntary sector and local and central government, we can better support those fleeing conflict to fully integrate into life in the UK.

### **The Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement scheme**

In September 2015 the government pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrian refugees via the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement (VPR) scheme. The latest published statistics show that more than 1,800 Syrians in need of protection have so far been provided with refuge in the UK.

More than 160 local authorities have already signed up to accept refugees via the VPR scheme, on a voluntary basis. Often with the support of community groups and the voluntary sector, local authorities have played a vital role in helping those arriving here to feel welcome and adjust to a new life in the UK, and will continue to do so.

In addition to the refugees arriving under the VPR scheme, the government has also committed to accepting up to 3,000 vulnerable children and family members directly from the Middle East and North Africa.

The full community sponsorship scheme will apply to families from both resettlement routes.

The details of the scheme have been developed in consultation with the National Refugee Welcome Board (convened by Citizens UK), Churches together: for refugees, local authorities and a range of other stakeholders including those who have come forward as prospective sponsors around the country.

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