

DECEMBER 2022



THE FUTURE OF SPONSORSHIP

HOUSING ROUNDTABLE SUMMARY

Based on our learning across different forms of community-led welcome, Reset is advocating for a single future sponsorship scheme (details are set out in our discussion paper [here](#)). In December we brought together stakeholders experienced in accommodation challenges and solutions to discuss in-home hosting and other housing options for the future of sponsorship in the UK.

QUESTIONS

Session 1:

- (1) How long should it be acceptable for a refugee family to be hosted in someone's home?
- (2) What needs to be in place to ensure move-on support to 'own front door'?
- (3) Should hosts receive a form of payment?

Session 2:

- (4) Should other forms of emergency accommodation be used in a future sponsorship scheme and if so, what is acceptable?
- (5) What other housing schemes/options should be provided, for example, for move-on support or to make more properties available?

PARTICIPANTS

- Audacious Church, Julian Wolstencroft
- Blue Thread - Lucie Graham
- Blue Thread, Karen Lam
- Citizens UK, Tracy Hart
- COSLA, Ania Tajsiaak
- GLA, Marc Simo
- GRSI, Hannah Gregory
- Homes with Purpose, Robin Peake
- Hope into Action, Stephen Brown
- IOM, Bindu Osaac
- Jubilee Capital, Dan Berelowitz
- NAACOM, Bridget Young
- National Residential Landlords Association, Eleanor Bateman
- Opora, Stan Benes
- Refugees at Home, Lauren Scott
- Reset Trustee, Ellie Stacey
- Reset Trustee, Shilla Mutamba
- Sanctuary Foundation, Krish Kandiah
- Social Finance, Georgia Hill
- Southwest SMP, Bronwyn Prosser
- Wales SMP, Emma Maher
- Wales SMP, Michael Smith
- Welcome Churches, Emily Shepherd

(1) How long should it be acceptable for a refugee family to be hosted in someone's home?

- Hosting should be part of a range of options that would give more agency to refugees
- In theory, a good timeframe is determined on a case-by-case basis (depends on the host, the refugee(s) and the situation/context). In practice, it is difficult to scale a scheme using a 'case by case' model
- Suggested acceptable timeframes ranged from as short as possible; through 3, 6, 9 and 12 months; to as long as necessary. Move on process and support for hosts throughout is key
- Best outcomes will require quality matching; expectation management, guidance and training for hosts and refugees; clear timeframes from the start (with regular reviews and chances to build in flexibility). Who is responsible for this framework?

Considerations raised

- Research around the cultural adjustment curve shows people need time to gain the mental strength to understand and navigate next steps and make adjustments (Universal Credit; orientation; ESOL classes etc)
- Cultural differences (or even differences within cultures) may have an impact
- Consider the school year so children don't have to move mid-term
- The timeframe may have an impact on integration outcomes
- Does hosting play a positive or negative role in empowering refugees and developing independence?
- Cost of living may impact move-on (more difficult in expensive areas)
- Complex cases need careful matching (to allow for extra in-house support) or may not be suitable for hosting (which may require navigating new relationships at a difficult time)
- Canada's programme highlights positive outcomes for diaspora and ethnic minority groups (often between friends and family with shared cultural alignment, support and longer timeframes of hosting)
- More research is needed to understand how expectations impact hosting length and outcomes, and whether hosts more likely to sign up with a guaranteed end date

(2) What needs to be in place to ensure move-on to own front door?

- Suitable and affordable housing should be available
- More schemes to help gain access to the housing market (deposit/guarantor etc)
- Expectation management; training and access to support for hosts and guests throughout (understanding roles and responsibilities as a host/guest and planning for the end of hosting)
- Education for hosts and guests on UK housing options, housing rights, tenant rights, how the rental housing market works, budgeting; life in rural UK (NB many Ukrainians believed rural UK was like rural Ukraine, no running water or electricity)
- Incentives for landlords to rent affordably; grants for landlord rent guarantee insurance; incentives to increase the number of landlords
- Securing employment or having benefits in place

Barriers

- The need for a guarantor/bond and rent in advance (NB In Scotland, deposit and guarantee are provided by the Scottish Government but people still struggle because of market pressures)
- Huge competition for housing between lots of vulnerable groups including people in need of resettlement (who haven't made it to the UK)
- Private rental sector prices are above Local Housing Allowance rates

(3) Should hosts receive a form of payment?

- A payment helps to diversify sponsorship; removes barriers; increases sustainability; removes complexity around financial concerns
- Not all hosts need it and funds should be diverted to those who need it more
- Payments should go to guests rather than hosts (would support independence, give a sense of dignity and pride, give freedom to guests to move, prevents hosts coming forward for the wrong reasons)
- Should be a framework/guidance on what the money is for rather than a 'thank you' (mitigation and alleviation of bills/food etc and it should reflect the financial burden)
- Concern about making hosting easier for one cohort over another and creating competition (hosting is often the only option for those in the asylum system)
- How much and should it be consistent? (Disparity between LA areas are causing issues however, it depends on house size, council tax band, and not one size fits all)

(4) Should other forms of emergency accommodation be used in a future sponsorship scheme and if so, what is acceptable?

- Emergency needs to be clearly defined; length of time and a framework for move-on should be in place
- Temporary should mean temporary, being in limbo deteriorates mental health
- People should have dignity and safety always; those are key parameters to work within (desperation shouldn't determine the quality of housing offered)
 - *Good quality and safe; connected to a community, cooking facilities; living spaces; reliable and affordable or free transport links; access to healthcare and mental health care; places of worship; Wi-Fi; education and access to support for move on; cultural considerations to prevent tensions*
- Barracks; ships; hotels and hostels are unacceptable if they don't meet certain criteria. Move-on is difficult once people have a community (in hotels); it can feel like detention; must be a cautious balance between innovation vs safe and dignified
- The lack of affordable housing impacts many vulnerable groups. To reduce competition, solutions, should also be solutions for others too (care leavers and those seeking asylum etc)
- Utilise the millions of spare bedrooms in the UK by turning hosts into lodgers (Homes within Homes) what are the barriers (housing allowance)
- Underused spaces are converted into accommodation. Community centres; church buildings; office spaces; schools; local council premises, improve existing housing stock (look at barriers – change of use permissions and incentives/ grants for landlords)
- Some LAs have concerns about competition between groups in need of social housing (solutions shouldn't depend on social housing to alleviate pressure)
- Research is needed to understand best practices from other emergency schemes (the Housing First model has proven to be beneficial for people with persistent street homelessness)
- Is it the best use of funding? (It needs to be well funded to work well)

(5) What other housing schemes/options should be provided, for example, for move-on support or to make more properties available?

- Property investment schemes (eg, Homes with Purpose). With support from Local Authorities and Government, it could be scalable and sustainable
- Schemes that build affordable but longer-term housing such as tiny homes scheme (Australian example); modular homes; shipping container conversions (must follow current housing standards)
- Ethical landlords (Homes for Good based in Scotland) buy and lease affordable properties
- Would policy changes on benefits; caps for single and under 35s etc, open up more housing options?
- House of Multiple Occupancy (HMO) for single under 35s (must have access to support)
- Collaborations with corporate partners: Airbnb (short term)/IKEA (house building)
- The Government could provide financial incentives/grants for:
 - Upfront rental costs, deposits, and guarantors (resourced, accessible and available)
 - Home extensions or improvements to create more liveable spaces
 - Refurbish empty/ uninhabitable homes / repurpose buildings
 - Landlords (specifically tax/VAT) as landlords are also in a cost-of-living crisis
 - Topping up Local Housing Allowance rates
 - Rent Guarantee Insurance for Landlords (elevate some risk)
 - Incentivise (or encourage) second homes to be released for private rental (not Airbnb)
 - Developers to extend terms within the 'community support policy' to include building homes for refugees (currently developers must fund schools or school places)
- Education and engagement work with landlords to help understand barriers facing newcomers to the UK. Leading to a national register of social landlords or those willing to consider private rental within Local Housing Allowance (LHA)
- Engagement work with LAs and Housing Associations to revisit migrants' pledge and understand barriers (NACCOM launching a toolkit)
- Employment and hosting linked schemes. Needs a strict framework and safeguards in place as accommodation linked to employment leaves guests at risk of exploitation (unable to leave their employment without losing their home)
- Schemes must prevent groups in need from being pitted against each other (LAs/ Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) or private organisations working together for one universal offer)
- Explore DLUHC's private developers for community support policy (state developers will build a school or fund school places). Can we add terms on homes for refugees?
- Long-term investment is needed