

NOVEMBER 2022

The case for the future of sponsorship

How community-led
welcome is transforming
refugee welcome in the UK.

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INTRODUCTION

Community-led welcome is a volunteer-led approach to refugee welcome and integration, with evidenced, positive outcomes for refugees and communities. This briefing provides examples of how community-led welcome is already working.

In addition to the Global Resettlement Programme, which enables the most vulnerable refugees to find sanctuary in the UK, there are several ways in which communities have welcomed refugees through so-called complementary pathways.

This briefing outlines the pathways Reset has been involved with. We believe that, in addition to a fast and fair system of asylum, there is public appetite for an ambitious approach to community-led welcome.

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GLOBAL RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME

The UNHCR identifies the most vulnerable people in need of resettlement and submit these candidates to the UK Government who decide which cases to accept. The arrival of resettled refugees to the UK is carefully planned; local authorities and charities work together to make sure that everything is in place pre-arrival. Refugees on the scheme are supported throughout their first years and are given support to get jobs, secure school places and access services. Refugees are normally housed in rented accommodation. Once settled, refugees can rebuild their lives in safety and contribute to our country in a variety of ways. Refugees who have been resettled in the UK include people who have gone on to work in our NHS, teach our children, and open their own businesses.



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NEIGHBOURS FOR NEWCOMERS

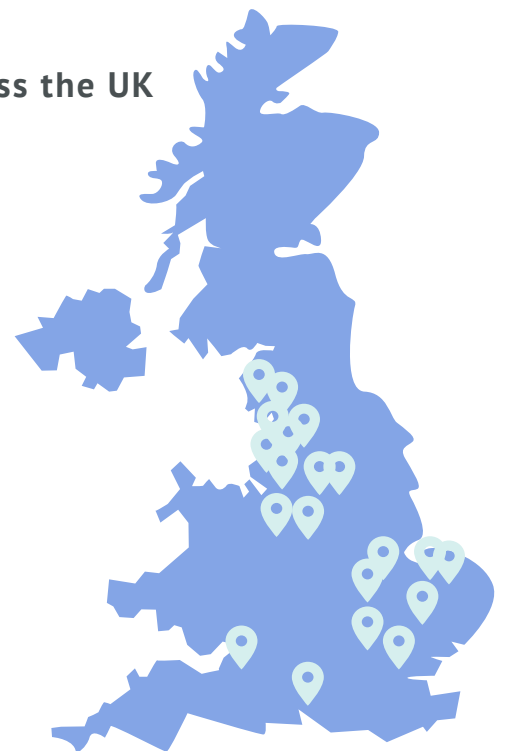
There are many skilled refugees who could meet shortage gaps in the UK but need support to apply for jobs, visas and settle in the UK. Through our Neighbours for Newcomers programme - a joint initiative with Talent Beyond Boundaries – we have welcomed nurses to work in the NHS through the Displaced Talent Mobility programme.

This programme is funded through a partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, and NHS Improvement. The programme was piloted in mid-2021 and since then, volunteers have welcomed 98 nurses to 25 different UK locations.

Neighbours for Newcomers groups across the UK

- 3 cohorts
- 25 UK locations
- 98 Nurses
- 147 Volunteers

Ashton Under Lyne	Great Yarmouth
Bristol	Hillingdon
Bury St. Edmund's	Lincoln
Cambridge	Norwich
Chester	Oldham
Chorley	Portsmouth
Colchester	Preston
Derby	Stoke on Trent
Dewsbury	Warrington
Doncaster	London*



*Camberwell, Chelsea, Euston, North London, South London, Whitechapel

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RESET'S SERVICE

WITH NEIGHBOURS FOR NEWCOMERS

"We believe that the evidence from this small-scale programme has shown that talented refugees from other disciplines could be brought to the UK"

Reset trains local volunteers to support the newcomers, as we believe that people who are expert in their local area can provide the warmest welcome to those arriving there. Our volunteers have helped with important activities, from opening bank accounts to providing opportunities to connect socially. Nurses and volunteers have been playing badminton together, going on bike rides, doing DIY, fishing, having picnics, going to the cinema, and volunteering together in their local communities. Volunteers are also there to answer questions that nurses do not feel comfortable to ask their employer. This support is in addition to that which the NHS provides including training, pastoral support, and initial accommodation for the nurses on arrival.

The programme has been highly successful and is now being taken on wholesale by NHS England. We believe that the evidence from this small-scale programme has shown that talented refugees from other disciplines could be brought to the UK, and with the right support from their communities will be able to contribute and thrive.

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STORIES FROM NEIGHBOURS FOR NEWCOMERS

There are numerous examples of neighbours coming together to help welcome newcomers to their areas from Preston to Portsmouth or Chorley to Chelsea.

It all begins with volunteers, and we have been lucky to work with some incredible ones! They bring a wealth and diversity of experience and have included university lecturers, retired head teachers, NHS workers, civil servants and teachers of English as a Foreign Language as well as refugees themselves.

They all bring compassion and desire to positively impact the lives of refugees and their communities.



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PLANNING THE WELCOME OF NURSES

In Camberwell, volunteers like Sam and Ella drew maps of their local areas. Kate and Molly in Greater Manchester made handmade cards and home-made Lebanese sweets and bought welcome gifts such as orchids to brighten up the nurses' new home. Once the nurses arrived, groups bonded over homecooked meals in London and countryside walks in Chester; they toured the local areas and found halal butchers in Stoke on Trent, and sourced free gym memberships and helped the nurses to set up their Wi-Fi.

AS REFUGEE NURSES SETTLED...

Sourcing accommodation became a priority – and there were no easy solutions here. Volunteers, armed with their experience, knowledge and tailored resources supported nurses on their search for a home. As well as helping newcomers know how and where to look, volunteers such as Caitlin in Colchester have accompanied nurses to Estate Agents or to their first viewings, explained what questions to ask and have been there when nurses have questioned an advert which seems 'too good to be true.' Once they have found their home, volunteers have helped the nurses move their belongings, build flat-pack furniture, put up curtain rails and helped source essential items like beds.

FAMILY MEMBERS OF NURSES ARRIVE

As partners and children arrived, volunteers were on hand to support nurses with school applications and groups such as the Whitechapel volunteers set up informal English practice sessions to help improve their language and give spaces to connect. As groups became more comfortable with each other, nurses turned to volunteers for more significant questions, what to do after a break- in or even when they have experienced racism at work or how to get emergency dental treatment.

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THE PROCESS



Step One

The journey of people who arrive via a displaced talent mobility scheme begins when an employer recognises the mutual benefits of recruiting those with a refugee background and identifies the skills gaps in their institution.

Step Two

Talent Beyond Boundaries then begin their search for the right candidate, matching refugees with the right skills with employers and connecting them for interviews.

Step Three

Once a job has been accepted and while visa preparation and relocation arrangements are being made, Reset and the Neighbours for Newcomers programme begin recruiting community volunteers and matching them to candidates based on support needs and location.

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THE PROCESS

Step Four

Neighbours for Newcomers volunteers form groups, complete training, and begin to prepare for the arrival of refugee candidates. Each area has a group of around 5-9 volunteers who bring a diverse set of experience and expertise as well as bags full of compassion. Volunteers and Newcomers are then ready to connect pre-arrival. Groups connect via WhatsApp and Zoom which helps volunteers to get to know candidates interests and concerns such as, 'how can I join a football team?' or 'how will I commute to work?'

Step Five

Armed with their training and new connections, Neighbours are then ready to welcome newcomers to their area and Reset are on hand every step of the way to guide and support everyone through the six-month placement.

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COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

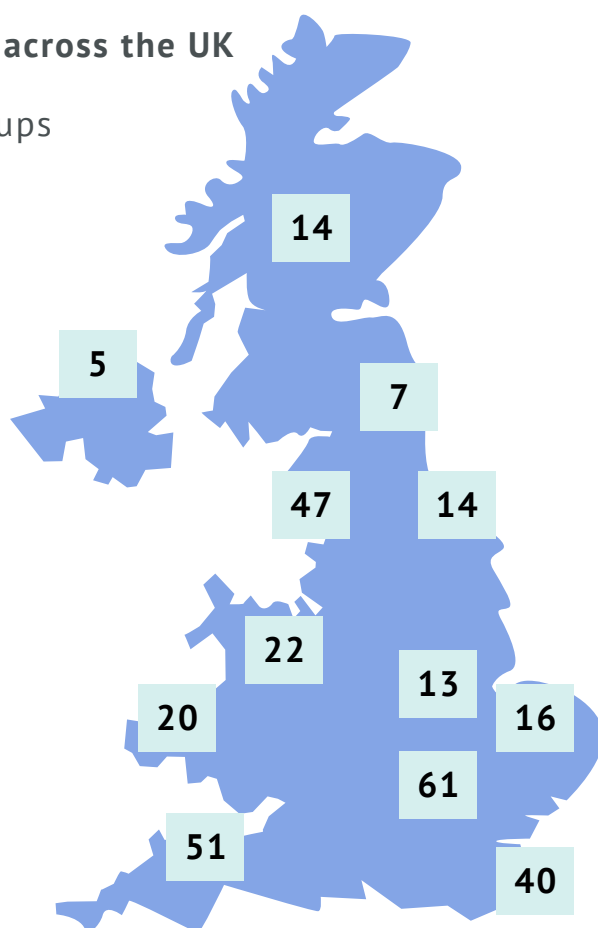
In 2015 the Government announced that the UK would welcome 20,000 refugees affected by the crisis in Syria and established the Syrian Resettlement Programme. While the scheme was welcomed, many charities and faith organisations felt we could do more and asked the government to introduce a sponsorship scheme, like the successful Canadian scheme, to allow people in the UK to play a direct role in supporting refugees. This scheme ‘Community Sponsorship’ has been thriving ever since.

A new chapter of Community Sponsorship began in early 2021 with the launch of the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS). The scheme focuses on resettling those who are registered with UNHCR in host countries in the Middle East, North Africa and elsewhere. The UKRS is designed to welcome the most vulnerable families who have been waiting the longest for resettlement and unlike previous resettlement schemes, the UKRS has a broader, global scope.

Community Sponsorship groups across the UK

Region/Nation Number of groups

East of England	16
East Midlands	13
London	61
Northeast England	7
Northwest England	47
Northern Ireland	5
Scotland	14
Southeast England	40
Southwest England	51
Wales	20
West Midlands	22
Yorkshire and the Humber	14



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COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP IS A SHARED ENDEAVOUR;

“We’ve supported more than 300 Community Sponsorship groups across the UK to welcome 815 refugees. With new groups forming we hope to see this form of community-led welcome grow.”

It requires a local network to come together to plan how to support a refugee family into their community. The group needs to work with the local authority to create the right environment for the refugee family they welcome to thrive. The Community Sponsorship group supports the refugee family through their first year in the UK to live independent lives, learn English, and access schools, benefits, healthcare, and employment and participate fully in the community. These groups receive training and support from Reset through every stage of their journey and are also supported by their Lead Sponsor, who takes legal responsibility for the project.

Community Sponsorship is a movement that is set to continue growing and thriving. Since September 2021, Community Sponsorship groups have been able to welcome those who were forced to flee Afghanistan. Since its inception, we’ve supported more than 300 Community Sponsorship groups across the UK to welcome 815 refugees. With new groups forming we hope to see this form of community-led welcome grow.



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STORIES FROM COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

Kirkby Stephen – or ‘Kirkby’ as it is known by the locals – is a small, thriving market town on the edge of the Cumbrian Dales. Mike, a retired teacher who lives there, set up a Community Sponsorship group with his friend Carl.



“We’ve all seen the way war and extreme regimes devastate the lives of individuals and families, because the news brings this trauma into our front rooms. But then we just switch off the TV and go to our safe, warm beds. It’s easy to feel helpless about it. I spotted the Reset website and Community Sponsorship scheme and then spent about a year umming and ahh-ing about it with my wife Jill, my friend Carl and two other close friends. Finally, we thought, ‘If we can help one family, why not?’

“Kirkby is a very hands-on community. I spent 29 years teaching in the small secondary school here and I’m still involved through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Carl is a retired GP who worked in Kirkby for many years, so we know the community very well and how the locals respond when families arrive here from different parts of the country.”

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Carl and Mike presented the idea of Community Sponsorship to groups across Kirby and received over 20 very powerful emails and letters from parish councils, the county council, the district council, community support groups, the WI, the Rotary club, walking groups, conservation groups, junior schools and the secondary school offering support. Reset introduced Mike to Caritas Salford, which will act as Lead Sponsor.

One area of concern for groups is housing, but the team in Kirkby had some good fortune when one of the core group volunteers offered a fully furnished three-bedroom flat in town. The group has also been encouraged by the response of local schools. Three primary schools are offering places and the secondary school is already considering training a staff member to teach English as a second language, in preparation for the arrival of the family.

While raising £9k can feel daunting, the team in Kirkby has found the process relatively easy, “Before we’d even launched our fundraising campaign, local people had donated over £4500, which qualified us to work with Caritas on a fast-track application. Within the first 10 days of fundraising, our JustGiving site has recorded £8,555 from 39 supporters, 95% of our initial target of the £9K requested by the Home Office.” The Kirkby application has been accepted and the refugee family will arrive imminently, Mike is looking forward to “welcoming a family, nurturing them, offering them security and a chance of a brighter future. “



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THE PROCESS

Form a Community Sponsorship group

The first step is getting a group of people together. Anyone can form a Community Sponsorship group, and groups can come in all shapes and sizes. Group members may have met each other through places of worship, sports teams, book clubs, as well as other community initiatives. They may have even met simply through being neighbours.

Connect with a Lead Sponsor

Once a group has been established, they need to partner with a charity or community interest company. In Community Sponsorship, this organisation is known as a 'Lead Sponsor'. Community Sponsorship applications must be supported by a Lead Sponsor organisation that will take on legal responsibilities, as well as offer their support and guidance.

Application

Applications to sponsor refugees through Community Sponsorship are submitted to the Home Office, and groups need to:

- Complete the application form on the GOV.UK website
- Get permission to apply from their local authority
- Raise a minimum of £9000
- Secure a property for the family to rent for a minimum of two years.

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THE PROCESS

Welcoming a family

The Home Office will then match the group with one of the families identified by the UNHCR as being in priority need for resettlement. Once a match has been accepted, the Home Office will then organise flights and agree the arrival date with the group. This is usually 8-12 weeks after the group has accepted the family referral. On the day of arrival, some of the group members will be at the airport to welcome the family and bring them to their new home.

Supporting the family

After the family's arrival, the group will deliver support to the family as detailed in their application form. Over the family's first year in the UK, they'll be supported to learn English and access benefits, education, healthcare, and employment. Over the course of the year, less support will be needed as the refugee family become more independent and adjusted to life in the UK.



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HOMES FOR UKRAINE



Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, the UK Government launched the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, more commonly known as 'Homes for Ukraine'.

The public response was, and continues to be, overwhelming, with over a hundred thousand people expressing an interest in hosting a refugee or providing support in their community.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme enables Ukrainian people with no relations or friends in the UK to find a sponsor who supports them through the visa application process and offers them a home for six months. As well as access to a home, refugees can work and access public funds where needed; hosts are being giving £350 per month for up to 12 months.

Thousands of people from Cumbria to Cornwall have opened their homes and hearts to Ukrainians. To date (25/10/2022) 138,900 visas have been issued, this is in addition to the 55,400 family visas that have been issued.

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STORIES FROM HOMES FOR UKRAINE

Hope for Humanity

“We felt supported the whole way through”

When Sean Larkins and Shahidul Miah, a gay couple in their fifties, decided that they wanted to offer a home to someone from Ukraine they weren't sure where to start. But, says Sean, once they registered with Reset's Home for Ukraine scheme, that all changed.

“We felt supported all the way through” said, Sean, “From the first contact to the initial webinar and training, and throughout the matching process, we had really good quality conversations with Reset team members that helped us to set our expectations and prepare. Reset staff posed questions that we hadn't even thought of. It meant that we went into this process with our eyes open.”

Sean describes the initial Zoom call they had with Dymtro, who ultimately came to live with him and Shahidul at their South London home, and the preparation and support they were all given.



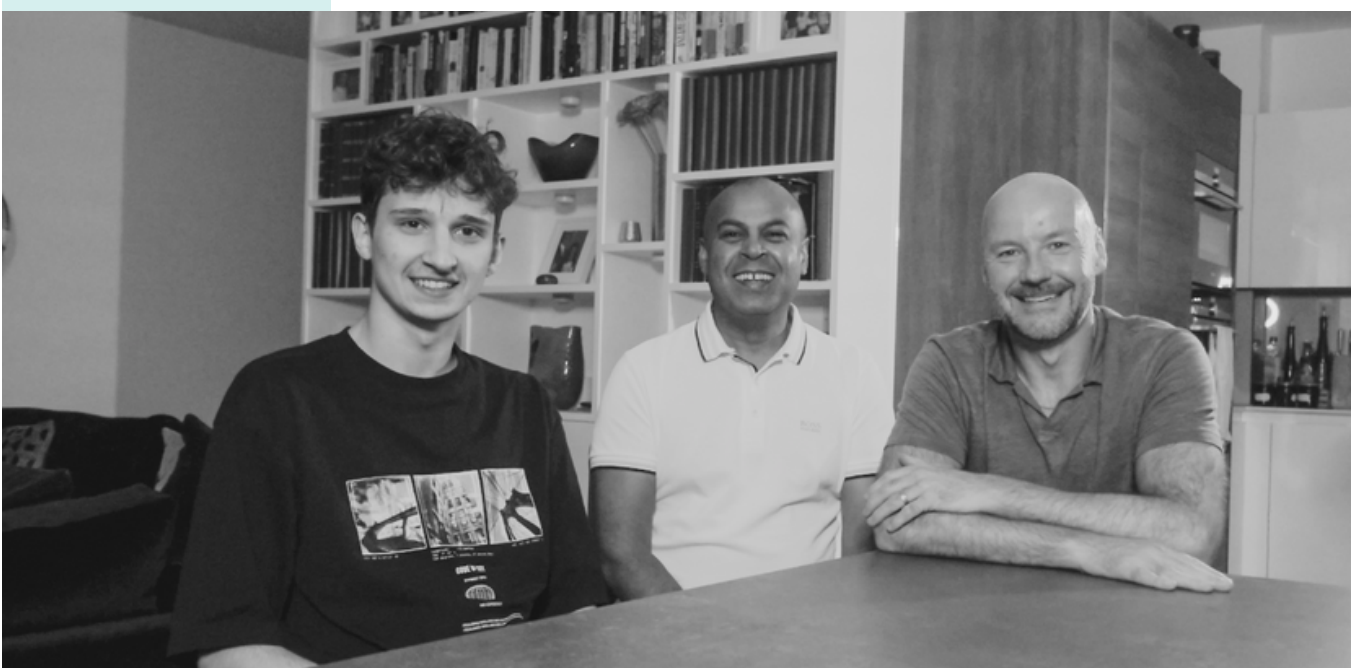
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“We were advised that none of us should make any decision while we were on the call” he said, “That meant that we could focus properly on the conversation, and on Dymtro, and he on us. It took the pressure off, meaning that we could relax and get to know each other. It made space for us all to make the right decision.”

Sean also comments on the speed and quality of the response from the Reset team when he and Shahidul had questions about the process. “They were always there,” he said, “And their support was bolstered by expertise, for example being able to advise on how trauma might have affected any potential guest, and signposting to high quality resources.”

The advice and support from Reset has been so good, says Sean, that he’s recommended it to others considering hosting.

Three months on from Dymtro’s arrival, Sean says it’s working out well. “He has fitted in perfectly, and we enjoy having him around. Of course, there have been bumps in the road, but overall, it’s been a really positive experience for all of us.”



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HOW MATCHING WORKS

Many people have found Ukrainians to support via their personal networks and social media, others have used portals such as the one Reset operates (www.homesforukraine.org.uk). Our Homes for Ukraine matching portal, while data-driven relies on our teams' insights on what works in building human connections, is based on the core principles of refugee choice, host preparation and safety; the process is simple and outlined here:

Step One: Register Interest

Refugees and sponsors register their interest in the scheme via our registration forms. For refugees, we collect information about the composition of their group and any special needs or preferences they might have in terms of accommodation (e.g. location preferences, details about pets, access needs). For hosts, we ask who lives in their household and what they might be able to offer in terms of accommodation, including location and accessibility. We also ask other questions, such as whether they are willing to accommodate pets.

Step Two: Training and Advice

Before being considered for matching, sponsors are asked to complete two online training sessions, a 45-minute webinar informing hosts about what to expect and key considerations, and an e-learning course. Hosts and refugees are also given information through our resources for every step of their journey.



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Step Three: Matching

Our data-driven approach identifies potential hosts depending on the needs of the refugee group. We also consider the availability and household composition of the sponsors, as well as stated preferences of both hosts and refugees for example, hosting children, pets, smoking indoors.

We offer refugees two potential sponsors to talk to and provide both refugees and hosts information on how to have the initial conversation. People either agree to go ahead and apply for a visa or they ask for an introduction to another host.

Step Four: Post Match Process

Once people are 'matched' they jointly apply for a visa, local authorities undertake checks to ensure that the host is suitable and if that is successful, transportation can be arranged.

We thank you for your
ongoing support of
community-led
welcome across the UK