# Can you rent your property to a refugee family?

*ADD* *SHORT DESCRIPTION OF YOUR GROUP NAME AND WHO YOU ARE.*

We are working together to bring vulnerable Syrian refugee families to live in our borough through the Government’s Community Sponsorship Scheme. As part of this commitment, we must provide affordable, privately rented accommodation. This document outlines our plans and housing requirements.

**About Community Sponsorship**

Community Sponsorship of refugees is a new initiative launched in 2016 by the UK Government. As a community sponsor, we will be allocated a family fleeing conflict, and it will be our responsibility to support the resettled family from the moment of arrival in the UK. Find more information at [www.sponsorrefugees.org](http://www.sponsorrefugees.org)

Resettlement is offered to the following people:

* Refugees from the Syrian conflict who are stuck in camps or cities in the Middle East *or*
* ‘At-risk’ children and their family members, who have fled conflicts in the Middle East and North African regions *and*
* There is no potential for them to live securely where they currently are *and*
* The UN has identified them as especially “vulnerable”

**Overview**

GROUP NAME will support the refugee families in every way they might need to make a settled, secure and enjoyable life in AREA, and ultimately, to become independent. The group will offer ongoing support through the months and years of the family’s life in AREA.

Part of this includes finding a suitable home to house the refugee family.

**Housing details**

GROUP NAME needs to find an affordable home to settle a refugee family. The family will be selected by the UK Home Office according to the number of rooms and size of property. We need to find accommodation with a minimum 2-year tenancy (with the option to extend preferred to provide stability and long-term resettlement). The larger the property, the more people we can bring to safety in the UK.

**Rent**

The refugee family will be eligible for the full range of benefits, including Local Housing Allowance (LHA). In AREA, the LHA rate is equivalent to:

* 2 bed property - £XXX per week
* 3 bed property - £XXX per week
* 4 bed property - £XXX per week

*Calculate here:* [*https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx*](https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/Search.aspx)

GROUP NAME can top-up housing benefits, to a maximum of £X per week. However, in an ideal situation, the LHA would cover the cost of accommodation, as this will be more likely to offer a sustainable future for the family, without relying on top-ups. **(delete/amend as applicable)**

They will be given employment opportunities and English language education to help them move to full independence after a two-year settling in period.

**Deposit and Guarantors**

To ensure that the family has the right balance of independence, as well as support, the family will sign the rental agreement, with GROUP NAME acting as guarantors. GROUP NAME will provide the cost of deposit. If GROUP NAME need to top-up rent, this will be paid directly to the landlord (delete/amend as applicable)

**Length of Contract**

The property would need to be guaranteed for minimum of 2 years. In an ideal situation, there would be the possibility of extension, should the family wish to stay – and a six-month break clause, in the unlikely event the family would like to move earlier.

**Timings**

It takes roughly six months from the point of finding a suitable property, to the family’s arrival. It is possible to ask the Home Office to delay the family’s arrival until the end of an existing tenancy agreement.

*NOTE: Home Office advise that it currently takes an average of 6-months from point of application to the family’s arrival. This is broken into:*

* *Full review of application: 19 working days*
* *Book Pre-Approval Meeting with group and Local Authority representative*
* *After Pre Approval Meeting 🡪 Granted Approval: 6 working days once amendments are made*
* *Approval 🡪 Match with a Family: 5 working days*
* *Family Matched 🡪 Family arrive: 6-8 weeks (any void costs for empty housing during this period can be reclaimed from the Home Office, at LHA rate).*

**What can we offer?** (delete/amend as applicable)

* GROUP NAME can contribute skilled volunteers and a small fund to home improvements, which would increase the value of the property.
* The knowledge that you are changing the lives of a vulnerable refugee family
* Guaranteed rental income for two years
* An interpreter to support communication between landlord and family
* A network of support for the family, to ensure they treat the property appropriately, and will pay utilities, council tax and rent in a timely manner.

**Next steps**

Representatives from GROUP NAME would be delighted to join a meeting or call to discuss our plans and requirements in more detail. Contact EMAIL / PHONE NUMBER

**Appendix - additional background information**

* A blog from a landlord who rented their home to Syrian refugees can be read [here](https://www.citizensuk.org/north_london_open_house_for_landlords)

* A case study of the first family helped by community sponsorship to resettle in the UK can be viewed [here](https://www.itv.com/news/granada/update/2017-05-05/syrian-refugees-saved-from-war-by-community-church/) (ITV broadcast clip from May 2017).
* More information about the community sponsorship process can be viewed [here](http://www.sponsorrefugees.org/)