



Roles within a Community Sponsorship Group

This document provides a list of potential roles and responsibilities of a Community Sponsorship group. This is not meant as a prescriptive list – this will vary according to the number of core group members, your approach to sponsorship, and volunteers’ skills and capacity. On average, groups have a dedicated “core team” of 8-12 people, with support from a wider network who help with fundraising, communications, leafletting, house preparations, etc.

We have broken the responsibilities into three stages: Preparing the Application, Before the Family Arrive (now you know who they are, when they will arrive, and where they will be living) and Working with the Family.

SUGGESTED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Lead Sponsor

This is an essential role. There must be a lead person within the Lead Sponsor organisation, who oversees the work of your group. They will be the main contact between the Home Office and the group, so they must be responsive to emails, have a close relationship with the group, and a good understanding of the scheme.

Preparing the Application	Before the family arrive	Working with the family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Sections 1, 2, and 3 of Application Form • Provide a letter to confirm that the group has raised £9,000 • Ensure the Safeguarding and Complaints Policies align with the Lead Sponsor organisation • Submit Application Form to the Home Office, and attend the Home Office Panel Meeting • Be first point of liaison with the Home Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all volunteers have been checked and are suitable, and if necessary, registered to your charity (with Safeguarding Lead and Family Support Coordinator) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure safeguarding concerns are managed in a timely and suitable manner • Support the group to troubleshoot issues • Act as mediator between volunteers, and between volunteers and family members • Ensure that the group are managing finances appropriately • In the unlikely event of group break-down, work with Local Authority and Home Office to arrange appropriate support for the family.

Chair/Project Manager/Project Co-ordinator

This is an essential role. It is important that the group has a leader, to oversee the group’s activities and ensure everyone’s work is joined up. Some groups choose to have Co-Chairs,

to share the responsibility. Being Chair does *not* mean you do all the work – see our guidance on leadership.

Preparing the Application	Before the family arrive	Working with the family	On-going
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Project Leads to complete the application and secure Local Authority consent • Liaise with Home Office on application amendments and panel meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all volunteers receive appropriate training • Liaise with Home Office and Local Authority in preparation of arrival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee activities, and ensure that family are receiving sufficient support • Convene regular group meetings • Troubleshoot problems • Liaise with Home Office and Local Authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate team activities and actions • Convene and chair group meetings • Oversee all activities and hold people to account for actions • Represent the group externally • Develop relationship with Local Authority • Liaise with Lead Sponsor

Treasurer

This is an essential role.

Ongoing	Preparing the Application
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee income and expenditure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a group bank account • Develop a group budget

Safeguarding Lead

This is an essential role. It would be best suited to someone who has experience in safeguarding – but that is not necessary. You can take basic courses, and Sponsor Refugees can help you understand your role. You are not expected to deal with safeguarding concerns yourself – but to be able to report them to the relevant statutory organisations.

Preparing the Application	Before the family arrive	Working with the family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write safeguarding policy and procedures. • Coordinate with Local Authority Safeguarding Team • Develop relationship with Safer Neighbourhood Police Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate DBS and reference checks for the Family Support team. • Deliver (or organise) safeguarding training for volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to safeguarding issues • Organise ad-hoc safeguarding training where necessary (e.g. for new volunteers, in response to issues)

Family Support Coordinator

Some groups see this role like that of a “Support Worker” – a key person who works directly with the family to identify their needs and brings in volunteers to help as necessary. Other groups have treated this as a Volunteer Coordinator role - someone who co-ordinates and supervises volunteers, but may not work directly with family members themselves

Preparing the Application	Before the family arrive	Working with the family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete appropriate Sections of the Application Form • Recruit and coordinate a team of volunteers who will support family. • Work with Safeguarding Lead to ensure all volunteers are fully checked and registered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise training for volunteers • Work with volunteers to develop a Code of Conduct • Write a Welcome Message for the family • Prepare a Welcome Pack of groceries for family's arrival • Prepare an Information Pack with key information (e.g. how to use appliances, emergency services, maps, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate a team to meet family at the airport • Act as the first point of contact with family, and coordinate necessary support • Ensure family are supported to navigate local community and access local services • Manage schedules for family, volunteers and interpreters • Work with family on Personal Integration Plans • Supervise the Family Support Team (regular peer-to-peer support sessions, 1:1 supervisions and check-ins)

Family Support Team/Befrienders

A group of volunteers who welcome the family and help them to achieve their goals and become self-sufficient. This team may absorb other responsibilities set out below, such as the Education Lead, Health Lead, and Benefits Lead.

Preparing the Application	Before the Family Arrive	Working with the Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Family Support Coordinator to complete the relevant sections of Application Form • Work with Family Support Coordinator to develop a Code of Conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend trainings (such as Safeguarding training, Boundaries training, etc.) to prepare yourself 	<p>Support the family to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigate life in community (e.g. understanding cultural practices, how to find key services, best places to shop, etc.) • Register and access local services • Meet their health needs • Use public transport • Go on day-trip • Join local clubs or faith institutions • Feel safe and welcome • Achieve their goals

Accommodation Lead

This role changes a lot at different stages in the process. Initially, while you are looking for property, this is largely an outreach role, requiring networks, persuasion, and negotiation. Later, it requires great project management, as you manage a team of handymen and donations of furniture. Once the family arrive, the role requires mediation between the family and the landlord. As a result, it is not abnormal for different volunteers to occupy this role at different moments.

Preparing the Application	Before the Family Arrive	Working with the Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a house for a minimum of 2 years, with it's own front door • Ensure that rent is sustainable • Get the Local Authority and Safer Neighbourhoods Police Team to check the suitability of the house and provide consent • Agree a tenancy agreement with landlord 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect all necessary furniture, crockery, furnishings for the house • Coordinate a team of volunteers to refurbish, decorate and prepare the house. • Organise utilities. • Get enough keys cut for family members • Act as main contact with landlord. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the family how to use appliances in the house • Support the family to address any issues with house, acting as liaison with landlord if necessary • Empower the family to manage housing issues themselves where possible • Support the family to find sustainable housing solution after their two-year tenancy

Community Outreach Lead

This may not necessarily be the role of one person, but a responsibility that is taken by all members of the team – or perhaps led by the Chair. However, by giving this as a key responsibility of a group member, you can ensure that community integration and partnerships are at the forefront of your approach to sponsorship, and that you are not “going it alone”.

Preparing the Application	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a lead role in building the group • Organise outreach events (e.g. Launch event) • Map local community • Complete Section 3.5f of Application Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationships with key local organisations and individuals (e.g local mosques, volunteer centres, migrant & refugee charities, other Community Sponsorship groups)

Fundraising and Communications Team

Fundraising is a big job, so you will need a larger team of volunteers before the family arrive. Some members of this team may want to transition into the Family Support Team once the fundraising target is met, and the family arrive – but it is helpful to keep at least one person in charge of Communications.

Preparing the Application	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise fundraising activities to reach £9,000 target. • Create logo • Set up group email addresses • Develop a Communications Policy • Develop a Data Protection Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run social media accounts and website. • Internal comms (e.g. setting up a Slack channel, sending group emails) • Design and distribute leaflets and posters (for example, to recruit volunteers, to advertise events, to look for housing, for donations). • Liaise with local press.

Interpreters

This is essential. If you cannot find voluntary interpreters, you must pay for professional services. The family will likely need very intensive support initially, with needs decreasing time. It is most likely that the family will speak Arabic. You will be asked on application which languages you can cater for and matched with a family accordingly.

Preparing the Application	Before the Family Arrive	Working with the Family
Translate the Welcome Pack, Safeguarding Policy and Complaints Policy	Translate the Welcome Message (a 2-page letter that is sent to the family before they arrive)	Interpret face-to-face and via telephone for the family as needed

English Language (ESOL) Lead

Meeting the ESOL requirements of the family is a large job. Even if there is good formal ESOL provision where you live, most families have said that they value the 1:1 tuition and conversation practice provided by volunteers. We therefore recommend that there is a lead person who can coordinate ESOL volunteers – overseeing their schedule and curriculum.

Preparing the Application	Before the Family Arrive	Working with the Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ESOL classes and clubs in the community Build a team of volunteers to provide private tuition and conversation practice Complete Sections 3.5e to 3.5h of the Application Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once arrival date is known, coordinate with ESOL providers to register family members Develop provisional curriculum and schedules for ESOL volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support family to do an initial assessment and register with formal ESOL classes Coordinate ESOL volunteers -develop a schedule and curriculum Monitor progress Organise extra tuition/conversation practice where necessary

Benefits and Finance Lead

The family will need help to navigate the complex benefits system. Since there are often inconsistencies with how rules are applied, they may also need you to advocate on their behalf. We strongly recommend that you find someone who has existing knowledge of the benefits system (perhaps someone who has experience of claiming themselves), or someone who will dedicate the time to learning about it.

One of the greatest challenges the family will face is 'getting by' on a very tight income, particularly if they are impacted by the benefits cap, so you may also need to support the family to budget. Alternatively, this responsibility could be delivered by the Treasurer, Benefits Lead, or a member of the Welcome Team.

Preparing the Application	Before the Family Arrive	Working with the Family

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarise self with benefits system, and understand family's entitlements • Calculate what family are likely to receive in benefits • Identify an appropriate bank, and understand what ID documents they will accept • Complete Sections 3.3a-d and 3.5i to l of the Application Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop relationship with the Partnerships Manager of your local Job Centre • Pre-book appointments at Job Centre and the Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help family to set up a bank account • Help family to develop a budget • Help family to understand the value of UK currency and cost of living in your region • Help family to identify the cheapest places to buy goods and services • Explain the Benefits system to family • Support family to apply for benefits • Accompany family to first Job Centre appointments • Advocate for family where necessary • Support the family to complete online journals and other Job Centre requirements
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Employment Lead

Finding work is a vital part of the family's integration. However, they may need time first to settle in and learn English first. If you have someone with experience in employment and HR, this could be an excellent addition to your team. Yet, if you are short of group members, this could also be a responsibility absorbed by the Family Support Team.

Preparing an Application	Working with the Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Section 3.5p & 3.5q of the Application Form • Develop links with potential employers, employment support organisations and volunteer opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand family members goals and work with them to find work • Support family members to find volunteering opportunities • Support family members to write CVs and prepare for interviews • Help family to transfer existing qualifications to UK equivalents

Education Lead

Your most important task will be to help children register with and adapt to their new school. A lot of children arrive having never received formal education, so coordinating extra tuition to help them to catch up could be invaluable. Adults may also need to access further training to help them reach their employment goals. As with the Employment Lead, this could potentially be a responsibility that you could decide to absorb into the Family Support Team.

Preparing the Application	Before the Family Arrive	Working with the Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Section 3.5c & 3.5d of the Application Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-register the children in schools • Prepare school uniforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take children and parents to their school • Coordinate with the schools to ensure they can provide relevant support • Organise supplementary tuition where necessary (children may not have been to school for many years, if ever) • Help adult members to access relevant training

Health Lead

Families often arrive with complex physical and mental health needs. Navigating the NHS can be complicated, and there can be barriers to accessing services. You will need to support the family to register and attend appointments, and where necessary, to advocate for them. This could be a responsibility of one lead person or absorbed by the Family Support Team. It can be helpful to have a Health Professional, such as a nurse or GP on the team to provide advice.

Preparing the Application	Before the Family Arrive	Working with the Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete Sections 3.5 M to O of the Application Form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a GP, Dentist, Optician and Pharmacy in the local area, that is accepting new patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the family to register with GP, Dentist, Opticians and Pharmacy, and to attend appointments (e.g. arrange for transport, interpreters) Help the family to access mental health services where necessary

The Importance of Clear Roles and Responsibilities

Having a clear role description will help group members know what they are expected to do, so that they can plan and be held accountable. It helps people to set boundaries about what support each person you will or will not offer.

It will also help you to know when you have completed your volunteer role and are ready to transition from a formal volunteer to an informal friendship with the family.

It is important to consider the distinction between being a friend, and volunteering. Friendship is a private mutual relationship. As a volunteer with a Community Sponsorship Group, you are providing a service which is open to scrutiny by others. We recommend that you run an activity as a group – **What is the difference between a Friend and a Volunteer?**

FRIEND	VOLUNTEER

Transitioning from Volunteer to Friendship

One of the great things about Community Sponsorship is the lasting friendships created in the local community. However, we also know that Groups find the transition and boundaries between being a volunteer and being a friend one of the most difficult areas to manage. Volunteers offer a commitment of time, to fulfil a role. Once that role is complete, or no longer needed, the volunteer role can end, and friendship can begin. It is important that you make this a formal process, so that everyone is clear when the volunteer relationship has ended. Transitions may be difficult for some volunteers and families, so a debrief and monitoring will be important.

You will need to be flexible and adaptable but try to make the transition part of the wider plan. **Being clear about your role is an important part of working safely.**