

Information on Community Sponsorship

Community sponsorship is starting small and within certain limits:

- It only applies to Syrians (not refugees of other nationalities)
- It only applies to Syrians currently living in the region of Syria (not those in other European countries or in Syria itself)
- Syrian refugees coming to the UK under community sponsorship will be included in the 20,000 resettlement quota up to 2020 that the government has already announced (so it will not increase the numbers resettled)
- Community sponsors will NOT be able to identify Syrians in the region that they wish to sponsor (so Syrians already in the UK will not be able to bring in family members)
- Community sponsorship will NOT be used to house and support unaccompanied children

The entitlements sponsored Syrian refugees will have:

Refugees will be selected and screened for resettlement via community sponsorship by the UNHCR (the United Nations High Commission of Refugees) and the British government.

- Before they leave the region they will receive training on life in the UK and learn about their sponsoring group and the local area in which they will live
- Their flight to the UK will be paid for by the British government
- They will receive a 5-year humanitarian visa (and thereafter will be able to apply to stay in the UK and eventually become citizens)
- The adults will be entitled to work from Day 1 or to claim Job Seekers Allowance
- The children will be entitled to free schooling
- They will have free access to the NHS
- They will be able to claim Housing Benefit and other benefits

Who can become a sponsoring group?

The beauty of community sponsorship is that all sorts of different groups of people can be involved

- Faith communities
- Local community groups
- Businesses
- Universities

The role of the sponsoring group

The main responsibility and motivation of community sponsors is to provide a warm and personal welcome to the refugee family they are sponsoring. Other key tasks will include:

- Welcoming the refugee family at the airport and escorting them to their new home
- Providing a 'welcome pack' of food, other essentials and some cash to keep them going in the first few days
- Helping them to settle into their new home (how to work the appliances and sort out household bills)
- Helping them to register with the Job Centre, for benefits and with a GP

- Helping the children find their feet at their new school
- Helping the family to find their way around their new community (showing them public transport, leisure facilities and places of worship)
- Enrolling adults in official English classes (and helping them with English conversation)