



Refugee Resettlement: Community Sponsorship request for police consultation:

Background note

1. Introduction

This advice seeks to achieve a national position regarding the exchange of information with the community sponsorship programme. The scheme enables community groups to be directly involved in supporting the resettlement of vulnerable people fleeing conflict. This will require a collaborative effort between the local community, local authority and UK government to support and integrate vulnerable resettled families. This guidance seeks to reinforce the principle that they are safeguarded and protected and that both police and Home Office are able to manage their response to the individual appropriately.

2. What is community sponsorship?

- Community sponsorship is a practical way for communities to help transform the lives of a vulnerable refugee family who is being resettled to the UK.
- Through providing integration and accommodation support, sponsor groups take on the responsibility of welcoming them into their new environment and supporting them on their journey as they build a new life.
- Find out more about the scheme by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-for-full-community-sponsorship>

3. The application process

- To become a sponsor, a community group will need to send a completed application form to the Community Sponsorship Team (CST) at the Home Office.
- Upon receipt of an application, the CST will undertake due diligence checks on the organisation and the Lead Sponsor.
- Before an application can be approved, the CST must ensure that a prospective sponsor group fulfils the following criteria:
 - has sufficient resources (financial and personnel) to support a resettled family
 - has a credible plan for supporting a resettled family, backed by relevant experience
 - does not present a risk to the resettled family
 - is a registered charity or Community Interest Company
 - has the consent of the local authority
 - has suitable and sustainable accommodation for use by a resettled family for a minimum of two years - this includes inviting the local authority to inspect the accommodation and consultation with the police to check that they do not have any concerns with the proposed address
 - has a safeguarding and complaints policy in place
 - completes the required training
- Subject to the quality of the application and the outcome of the due diligence checks, the application will move through a series of stages, including the Application Review Panel and the Pre-Approval Visit before final consideration and decision by the Chair. Throughout the process the CST may ask for changes to be made before an application can be approved.



Home Office

- If an application is approved, the Home Office will identify and propose a suitable family for resettlement. The community sponsor and the local authority will have to confirm agreement to the proposed family before the family can be resettled in the UK.
- Once confirmation has been received, the family to be resettled will be notified, and arrangements will be made for their arrival in the UK approximately six weeks following notification.
- Post-arrival, the Home Office will arrange monitoring meetings with the resettled family, and with the sponsor group.

4. Home Office Request for police consultation

As part of the application to the Home Office to become a Community Sponsor, the Home Office require:

- a) **Community sponsors** to make contact with their local police safer neighbourhood team (or equivalent police team) to advise them of their application and intention to house a refugee family in the local area (should their application be successful).
- b) **The police** to provide a comment on the suitability of the potential address in terms of any known issues of concern such as community tension/anti-social behaviour/hate crime.

Note that, whilst the police's overall view will be shared with the community sponsor group, details of the view will only be disclosed to the community sponsor where the police have provided permission to do so in the attached form.

Why is this requirement necessary?

Due to their vulnerability, incoming refugees may be at risk of being exploited and/or targeted. Good practice identified from the wider Resettlement Programme has indicated that as a result there are significant safeguarding benefits to ensuring that local authorities, police, agencies and community organisations are as joined up as possible when resettling vulnerable refugees.

Whilst the vulnerabilities of the incoming refugees do not in themselves pose a risk, the cumulative effect of also being isolated from their usual communities, a significant lifestyle change and in some cases, difficult financial situation, could mean that they are more likely to be targeted by those who wish to exploit their vulnerable circumstances.

Whilst Community Sponsors are also required to seek the support of the local authority, the benefits of the community sponsor group and the police being joined up in particular include:

- it is a means by which the community sponsorship group can proactively establish a relationship with the police - which may be of assistance during the resettlement period
- it provides an opportunity for the police to flag any known safeguarding concerns with the potential resettlement area such as hate crime/community tensions, local gang activity



Home Office

- it alerts the police to the fact that a vulnerable refugee family may be resettled in the area so that they have the opportunity to consider the need for any proactive community engagement measures and/or engagement with the family

To note, the family composition will usually include at least one adult and a child/children of varying ages. It is not possible to provide further information on the specific family to be resettled at the initial police consultation stage. This is because a family is not allocated to a group until their application has been approved.

We encourage community sponsorship groups and police teams to maintain regular engagement throughout the resettlement process and share information where necessary, in line with relevant data protection considerations.

If you have any questions or feedback on the police consultation process please contact the RASI Resettlement Security team at RASIRS@homeoffice.gov.uk.