

Thank you!

A guide for hosts



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Space for any notes or questions

DISCLAIMER

Please note that, whilst the Boaz Trust will make every effort to ensure that the hosting of destitute asylum seekers is a positive experience for all concerned, it cannot accept any liability for private arrangements made between host and guest.

Useful Contacts

Boaz Office: 0161 202 1056

E mail: hosting@boaztrust.org.uk

Address: First Floor, 110 Oldham Road, Ancoats, Manchester, M4 6AG

Boaz out of hours phone: 07535 467877 (emergencies only please)

What to do in an emergency

If necessary, please dial 999 and speak to the emergency services.

Please also contact Boaz (office or out of hours phone).

What is the problem?

An asylum seeker is a person who has fled their home country because they face persecution. This might be due to civil war, or because of their religious or political beliefs. For example, asylum seekers might be political activists from Iran or Zimbabwe, or Pentecostal Christians from Eritrea.

Many find it impossible to prove their story to the Home Office, others suffer from poor legal representation. Two out of three asylum seekers are refused sanctuary in the UK.

Once refused, asylum seekers are not immediately deported or detained,. They are left destitute, with no right to work or to claim benefits. Many live in fear of being returned to their home countries to face imprisonment, torture or even death.

No one knows how many destitute asylum seekers live in Manchester. Some sofa-surf between friends, some may face exploitation in return for a bed, while others live on the streets.



What does the Boaz Trust do?

The Boaz Trust is a Christian organisation serving destitute asylum seekers and refugees in Greater Manchester.

We aim to provide accommodation for those who are homeless. This includes both our Boaz houses which are generously loaned to us by supporters, or rented by us at a low rate, and our Boaz hosts who offer spare rooms in their own homes. We also run night shelters over the winter months.

We provide practical support to our clients, with each person having a named case worker who will make sure that they are registered with a GP, and have access to food through one of the local destitution projects.

Advocacy is another key area within our work. Without our help many clients would have no access to health care or solicitors. We have a solicitor who works with us to help clients make a new asylum claim. Boaz is also actively involved with awareness raising as well as campaigning for a just asylum system.

In addition, Boaz runs a range of activities to help people make friends, practice English and learn and develop their skills. These activities change from term to term, but this year have included English and sewing classes, swimming, knit and natter, workshops and day trips.

What happens next?

We hope that this booklet has been able to give you some useful information about our hosting scheme and how it all works.

If you have any unanswered questions about hosting, or would like to take the next steps to register as a Boaz host, please do contact us by email: hosting@boaztrust.org.uk and we will get in touch with you as soon as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you very soon!



What if my guest has health issues?

At any time, some of our clients may be living with ongoing physical and / or mental health conditions.

Those who have been diagnosed with a specific condition will usually be receiving treatment and support but some health issues may have implications for their behaviour and specific needs.

We try to gain as full a picture as possible of the health issues faced by our clients but please be aware that they may not always want to disclose such information to us or may not have been given a diagnosis. Where relevant, we would brief you on any health related issues before making firm hosting arrangements with you.

If you have any concerns relating to the health of a guest, please contact the office, or in an emergency, please call 999.

What does a Boaz host do?

A Boaz host is someone who generously opens up their home to give a destitute asylum seeker somewhere safe to stay.

Some hosts have guests for a long time, perhaps several months. Others just offer accommodation for a shorter period (usually no less than 1 month). In the past, we have offered emergency hosting for just one or two nights, however over recent years we have found that this model hasn't worked (for guests or hosts) and so we now ask for a commitment of 1 month (including an initial one week trial period).

We will try our best to match hosts with suitable guests. For example, we would not ask a single woman host to provide accommodation for a single man.

We also aim to be as flexible as possible. You can decide your own living arrangements with your guest. If you go on holiday or ever need a break we can arrange another host to cover for you.

Our hosting coordinator, Cat Arundale, and our team at the Boaz Office are there to support you. If you have any questions or concerns please do get in touch.



"I have been amazed with the help Boaz provides to people like me. The thought of being housed with total strangers is very frightening but what washes off the fear is the welcome the hosts give you. They don't judge or label you."
- Kundai, Zimbabwe

How do I become a Boaz Host?

Firstly, get in touch with Cat, our hosting coordinator, or give us a call in the Boaz office. We will take your details and can try to answer any immediate questions.

Cat will arrange to meet with you to discuss the hosting process and what you feel able to offer. As with all our volunteers, we will also take character references.

We would advise you to talk the implications of hosting through with your household and make sure everyone is "on board".

When destitute asylum seekers are referred to us we meet them before we offer support. We assess what type of accommodation might be best, and what exactly we have available for them. We then contact hosts by phone to ask if you are available.

If you agree to host them, we make arrangements to bring the client to your home. A simple contract will be signed to ensure your guest understands their living arrangements and how long they can stay.

What if my guest needs to see a doctor?

Asylum seekers are entitled to register with GPs and access primary health care (including A+E in case of emergency). Getting registered can be hard but it could be worthwhile if your guest is with you for a while or has ongoing medical needs. They will need proof of address to register. You guest will also need a valid HC2 certificate entitling them to free medical treatment. Their case worker here at Boaz will help them with this process.

What if I have problems with my guest?

We recommend that firstly, you discuss any issues with your guest and try to come to an agreement. If this is unsuccessful please get in touch and we will see how we can help.

Every hosting arrangement starts with a trial period of up to one week. After this time you may well have built a good relationship and be happy for your guest to stay, but this gives you, and them, the option for change.

What if I want my guest to leave before the arranged time?

You can terminate the hosting arrangement at any time. We would just ask you to let us know in advance, where possible, so that we can try to make alternative arrangements. We understand that circumstances change, and that it can be draining to be a host long-term, so please don't feel guilty if you need to do this.

Some hosts decide to buy a weekly bus pass or phone credit to enable guests to stay in contact with friends and solicitors. But please do not feel obliged to support your guest in this way.

Will I need to help my guest with their asylum case?

In short, no! If clients need advice they can come and talk to us in the Boaz Office. Please encourage them to call first to make sure someone is available. We have a solicitor who works with our clients to help them prepare a fresh claim. We are currently able to pay for legal documents to be translated, and we will refund bus fares for people who come for advice or to get involved in our activities or classes. We will also pay bus fares to other solicitors or for medical appointments.

Will my guest need a lot of emotional support?

Some guests may be very independent and you may rarely see them! However, many asylum seekers who have just become destitute are often in a great deal of shock. Depression is also common due to traumatic past experiences and their experience of the asylum process here in the UK. Please try to be understanding; it may take your guest a while to learn to trust you and they may never want to talk about their background or home country. Try to encourage your guest to keep active. They may want to join in our activities or could volunteer for a charity shop or project. If you are worried about your guest, please get in touch with us.

Hosting Guidelines

This section unpacks some of our most frequently asked questions.

How well will my guest fit in?

Hosting can be a fantastic experience, but you may face some challenges when you invite someone from a different background to live with you. It is unlikely that your guest will be used to doing things the way you do, especially if they come from a different culture and climate, and even more if they have not been in the UK for long! However, since it is your home, you can set the parameters. Just remember– if it's a challenge for you, it will be for them too!

It may be helpful to set some simple house rules about mealtimes, use of the bathroom / kitchen / washing machine / TV, when you want quiet times, as well as clearly defining the guest's space and where you want bags to be kept. It might also be helpful to set clear parameters regarding visits from friends, to reduce the chance of misunderstanding.

Some guests might want to contribute something in return for your hospitality, so don't be afraid to say 'yes' if they offer to help out or perhaps cook a meal. Having said that, there should be no expectation that guests should do more than clean up after themselves.

Do I have to cook for my guest?

It is completely up to you. If you both agree, you can cook for them or share the cooking. You may want to find out if there are foods your guests do not eat (e.g. many clients will not eat pork). This may help determine whether you want to cook for them or not!

Alternatively you can let your guest cook their own food. Destitute asylum seekers can receive a basic food parcel each week from the Red Cross for up to 12 months. When this provision finishes, Boaz gives clients £10 a week towards food. We also run a monthly “free shop” where all our clients can collect food and toiletries.

If you are sharing your kitchen you will want to clarify when you need space to cook and how soon after cooking you like to tidy away. For many cultures the concept of sharing another person's kitchen takes a lot of getting used to – as does the concept of “helping yourself” – don't be surprised if your guest simply doesn't!

When do I give my guest a key?

While you are first getting to know your guest, we understand that you may not feel comfortable giving them a key right away. We would usually suggest guests are given a key within the first couple of days, so that they are able to come and go without feeling pressured to stay out all day, for example if a host is at work.

We would encourage you to exchange phone numbers early on so that you can let each other know about any change in plans, e.g. if you or your guest are going to be home late .

In the past, some hosts have preferred not to give their guests a key, however this can make life quite difficult for both sides. From our experience, without a degree of trust between the guest and their host, the placement may not work too well.

Will hosting mean I have to pay additional costs?

Having a guest should not be expensive – but if you are a long term host it may add to your living costs. If your property is rented, you may have to pay extra for an additional person. And if you are single, your council tax may go up, as you may no longer be eligible for the ‘single resident discount’. In 10 years of hosting, we have only ever had one small incident of theft but you may want to check your insurance policy just in case.

Boaz can help out with providing bedding and other essentials — just get in touch.

Should I give money to my guest?

Please think carefully before giving regular financial support– our clients will have no way of repaying you, and it may set a precedent that is difficult to break.