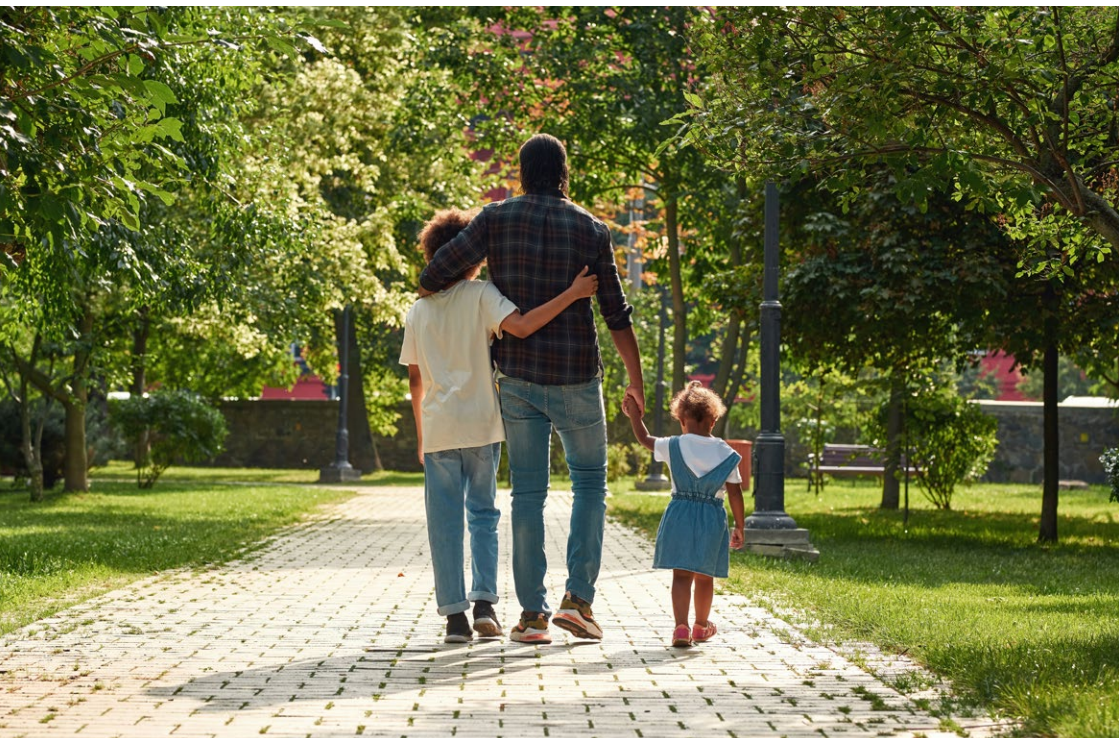


WORKING WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS: A TOOLKIT

A comprehensive resource showcasing the role that Housing Associations can play in supporting the accommodation of people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including those with no recourse to public funds and restricted eligibility.





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Feedback, corrections and suggestions:

If you have any ideas that you think would improve this publication, we would like to hear from you, including omissions and errors. We aim to regularly update the online version of this toolkit.

Please email: development@naccom.org.uk

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1 ABOUT NACCOM

NACCOM is the *No Accommodation Network*, a network of around 135 member organisations across the UK dedicated to ending destitution amongst refugees, people seeking asylum, including those who have been refused asylum, and other migrants with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or restricted eligibility. NACCOM's Full Members provide or facilitate accommodation and our Associate Members provide other types of services and solidarity to support and empower people out of homelessness and destitution.

NACCOM was set up in 2006 to bring together a diverse group of organisations, charities and projects to share ideas and develop practical solutions to provide accommodation for people seeking asylum who were facing destitution. Initially operating on a voluntary basis, the network grew and in 2015 it became a charity (CIO) that now works across the whole of the UK supporting members to, amongst other things, establish well-run and sustainable housing schemes.

OUR VISION

NACCOM's vision is for the UK to have a fair, just and humane asylum and immigration system, which enables people seeking asylum, refugees, and other migrants to be free from destitution and to live with dignity and agency.

OUR MISSION

We believe that destitution has no place in a fair, just and humane asylum and immigration system. NACCOM exists to promote solidarity, connections and good practice to assist the establishment and delivery of accommodation and support projects working with people facing destitution because they are in the asylum and immigration system in the UK. In addition, we work with member organisations, partners and supporters to use the evidence and testimony of NACCOM members and people with lived experience to influence change at a local, regional and national level in order to create pathways out of destitution and end destitution for good.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS TOOLKIT

THIS TOOLKIT IS AIMED AT TWO PRIMARY AUDIENCES



Firstly, **charities or groups** who are either considering the provision of housing as part of their accommodation offer to people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants; or are already delivering housing to one or more of these groups but want to improve, develop or diversify their current provision.



Secondly, **Housing Associations and other housing providers** who are interested in supporting refugee and migrant charities in either starting or improving their own accommodation offer to people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants; or are considering doing something themselves specifically to tackle homelessness amongst people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrant communities.

This is not a toolkit for setting up a housing scheme.

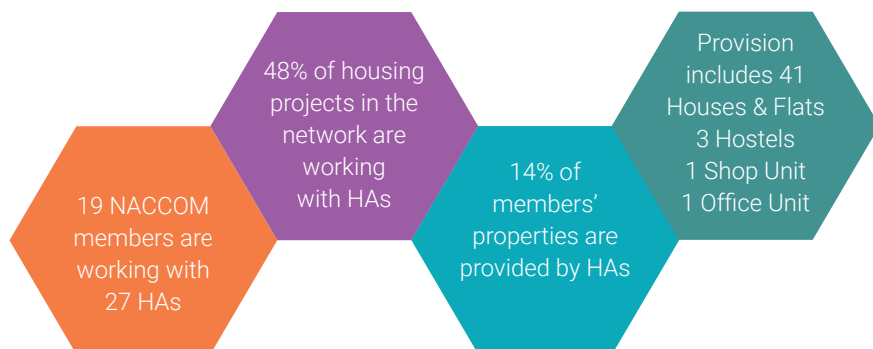
This toolkit does not cover the setting up, legal requirements and running of temporary housing, shared accommodation/houses of multiple occupation (HMO). In 2019 NACCOM produced a Housing Toolkit which is a comprehensive resource to help with the setting-up and running of housing schemes that accommodate destitute people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants with a particular focus on shared accommodation (HMOs). This **Housing Toolkit** can be downloaded for free from the NACCOM website.



HOUSING WITHIN THE NACCOM NETWORK

NACCOM members have been running successful housing projects for, in some cases, over 20 years. These projects are very diverse and range from single house faith-based start-ups to larger portfolios run by established charities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). Housing provides a vital pathway out of destitution and homelessness for thousands of people seeking support from NACCOM members. Each Full NACCOM member has their own criteria for who they house, with the core focus being to provide accommodation for people seeking asylum with NRPF, while some members also work with refugees and/or other migrants with NRPF or restricted eligibility.

NACCOM undertakes an annual members survey on the scale and depth of destitution and uses this data to produce an annual Impact Report. The provision of properties by Housing Associations (HAs) to NACCOM members has taken a variety of forms, and properties provided have been negotiated for several different purposes. At the time of writing, the contribution of Housing Association work was as follows:



Of the 19 NACCOM members currently working with Housing Associations:

- 15 have rooms for people refused asylum.
- 11 have rooms for refugees.
- 3 have rooms for EEA nationals.

For a list of NACCOM members working with Housing Associations referenced in this toolkit and the types of provision of property and broader support, see Appendix 3* and Appendix 4 for additional case studies.

*(*the list covers those members referenced in this toolkit and does not necessarily cover all NACCOM members working in some way with Housing Associations)*

THE AIM OF THIS TOOLKIT



To showcase what is already happening within the NACCOM network regarding support from, and partnership working with, Housing Associations.



To equip, guide, encourage and motivate Housing Associations and NACCOM members to do more together to tackle migrant homelessness and destitution, through sharing knowledge and good practice.

Just before the Covid-19 pandemic hit the UK in 2020, **Crisis**, **NACCOM** and *Homes for Cathy* held an *Ending Migrant Destitution Conference* in York, bringing together Housing Associations, charities and other accommodation providers to share ideas and explore solutions for expanding accommodation provision, specifically for people experiencing homelessness and destitution as a result of their immigration status. Since this conference, NACCOM has continued to explore and advocate for the benefits of working with Housing Associations.

The **principal aim of the Toolkit** is to continue the conversation and in particular to showcase the different ways in which NACCOM members are already partnering with Housing Associations in the provision of housing to people seeking asylum left with NRPF, as well as for refugees and other migrants who may or may not have NRPF or restricted eligibility.

We have included a comprehensive range of **case studies** taken from England, Scotland and Wales, which showcase the creative innovation and partnership working that already exists.

We have included sections on making the case for joint working, including those important “**why should we**” and “**what can we**” questions and considerations that can help Housing Associations and prospective partner charities to make the case to trustee boards and senior management teams. We have also highlighted important key learning points, which include challenges, opportunities and lessons from the case studies.

Hyperlinks to relevant resources are included throughout. If you are reading a hard-copy of the Toolkit, please refer to the online version at www.naccomm.org.uk/resources to access the full range of linked resources.

PREVIOUS INITIATIVES AND STUDIES FOSTERING LINKS BETWEEN MAINSTREAM HOUSING AND THE REFUGEE/MIGRANT SECTORS

Over the past decade there have been several commissioned studies and initiatives designed to foster greater understanding and working relationships between Housing Associations and charities, with a particular focus on addressing migrant homelessness.

These include:

- ➞ The Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution (2014 – 2018)

- ➞ The Housing Association Migrant Pledge (2017)

- ➞ Homes for Cathy Commitment No. 5 'To understand the inequalities that result in the over-representation of ethnic minorities among people affected by homelessness and commit to meeting the needs of ethnic minority groups, including migrants.' (2016, formerly Commitment 8; updated 2023)

- ➞ Fairway Scotland - Gateway to a safe destination, support and advice for people with no recourse to public funds (2021)

- ➞ The Wales Nation of Sanctuary Plan (2019)

- ➞ Refugee Housing and Support Feasibility Study - Wales (2019)

- ➞ Providing Accommodation for Refused Asylum Seekers Feasibility Study – Wales (2020)

- ➞ Good Practice Report on Refugee and Asylum Accommodation - Wales (2023)

For more details and links to the above initiatives please see **Appendix 1 on page 40.**

UNDERSTANDING NRPF, DESTITUTION AND HOMELESSNESS

Migrants are more vulnerable to destitution and homelessness than people with UK citizenship, and those with restricted or undetermined eligibility for public funds even more so.¹ In 2020, it was estimated that over one-quarter (28%) of destitute households in the UK were migrants.² Meanwhile people born outside of the UK are disproportionately represented in the Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England.³

Fortunately, local authorities, voluntary services, Housing Associations and other housing providers across the UK are stepping up to the challenge of tackling homelessness amongst people with restricted eligibility or no recourse to public funds.

For people experiencing destitution and homelessness, stable accommodation provides a foundation from which to access other vital support, and is often the first step towards unlocking their full potential in our communities and rebuilding their lives. Meeting the housing needs of people typically excluded from homelessness support can also generate positive health and wellbeing, as well as more secure immigration and housing outcomes for individuals - including for those who have been rough sleeping for many years.

For more information on framing around NRPF, and the imperative for housing providers, statutory and voluntary services to mobilise together to tackle migrant homelessness, see **Appendix 2 on page 44.**



¹ Boobis, S., Jacob, R., and Sanders, B. (2019). A Home For All: Understanding Migrant Homelessness in Great Britain. London: Crisis

² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-2020#:~:text=This%20study%2C%20the%20third%20in,been%20pushed%20to%20the%20brink.>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2022/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2022#:~:text=There%20were%203%2C069%20people%20estimated,people%20or%2035%25%20since%202017.>

WHY REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHARITIES SHOULD EXPLORE PARTNERSHIPS WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

“ If we can trigger a response from Housing Associations of all sizes around the country, we will make a major difference to the lives of new communities.

John Delahunty

CEO of Innisfree HA, quoted in Inside Housing Magazine, May 2017

”

At the time of writing this report, NACCOM has 70 Full Members providing accommodation to people seeking asylum left destitute with NRPF. Some are also accommodating newly granted refugees and other migrants. 40 of these accommodation projects (roughly 85%) are providing housing as opposed to hosting or other forms of accommodation, as a vital pathway out of destitution and homelessness.

The main reason refugee and migrant charities explore partnerships with Housing Associations is to gain access to property suitable for the clients they are looking to accommodate. The case studies referenced in this toolkit and its appendices provide more detail on the reasons why NACCOM members have explored partnerships with Housing Associations.



SOME OF THE MAIN REASONS WHY A CHARITY MIGHT WANT TO PARTNER WITH A HOUSING ASSOCIATION:

- ✓ Access to suitable rent-free or below-market rent property.
- ✓ Access to property that is well-maintained and already fit-for-purpose.
- ✓ Access to move on accommodation for people they serve.
- ✓ Access to accommodation for people being supported through refugee resettlement.
- ✓ Access to housing management and ongoing repairs and maintenance expertise.
- ✓ Access to mentoring, training and other forms of support.
- ✓ Access to funding or help with funding bids.
- ✓ Access to corporate sponsorship or in-kind practical support.
- ✓ Access to office, meeting and training space.
- ✓ Flexible lease arrangements.
- ✓ Positive publicity and enhanced corporate reputation.
- ✓ Recruitment of board and staff members as well as volunteers with key skills and expertise.



WHY HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS SHOULD ENTER PARTNERSHIPS TO SUPPORT REFUGEES, PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM AND OTHER MIGRANTS WITH NRPF

“ **I'm a firm believer that no human – or organisation for that matter – survives alone....**

We'll keep working with ASSIST ... and our wider partnership to ensure that we walk the talk in helping to contribute to ending migrant homelessness. Together we are stronger and we cannot walk alone.

Charlotte Murray

South Yorkshire Housing Association's Co-Director of Care, Health and Wellbeing, talking about the importance of partnership working in tackling migrant homelessness in a 2021 [blog for Homes for Cathy](#).

”

Perhaps you are reading this and work for a Housing Association and need to make the case internally to your senior management team or board. Or perhaps you work for a refugee and migrant charity and want to help your contact at a Housing Association make the case internally.

Here are some of the many reasons why Housing Associations have decided to enter into a partnership with a local NACCOM member charity or support in other ways.

- 1 **Charitable/social good** - "It fits with our mission, vision and values and is even within our memorandum and articles."

- 2 **"It's in our DNA"** and at the core of what we are about as a local Housing Association." This is particularly relevant to [BME National](#) Housing Associations, including those whose roots are in previous migration responses.

- 3 **Social values** – Housing Associations working with local charities to support and empower migrants and refugees maximise their social value within the communities they serve.

- 4 **Homelessness prevention** – Contributing to homeless prevention strategies and particularly homelessness faced by refugee and migrant communities.

- 5 Homes for Cathy Migrant Pledge** – "We are an English Housing Association and member of Homes for Cathy. Providing a house(s) to a local refugee charity helps us fulfil Homes for Cathy's pledge number 5 which focusses on ending homelessness for ethnic minority groups including migrants."

- 6 Deeds Not Words** – "We are a Welsh Housing Association supporting Tai Pawb's pledge to action, calling on members to commit to creating tangible changes to improve racial inequality within the housing sector."

- 7 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)** - It helps to address and raise the standards of EDI policy and practice throughout Housing Associations' work, ensuring fair treatment, participation and opportunity for everyone.

- 8 We have flexibility in our housing stock** - This may include stock that is funded in a way that does not restrict how a Housing Association can use it or that is part of a long-term regeneration site.

- 9 Legally it can be done** – Migrants with different types of immigration status, including those with insecure status or those claiming asylum, can be supported with accommodation in different ways. Immigration and asylum law is layered, complex and evolving, particularly in light of the Illegal Migration Act 2023. However, there is no law banning the provision of accommodation for people with no recourse to public funds or restricted eligibility, bar the provision under the Right to Rent legislation in England of a tenancy for which a rent is charged (see further guidance on legality on [page 14](#) and in the glossary). Specialist organisations can guide Housing Associations through any complexities of immigration and asylum law.

- 10 Voids** – Void properties which don't currently have high demand, or a viable use, can be brought back into service for a new purpose, reducing costs, crime and anti-social behaviour as well as preventing a deterioration of the asset and potential future costs associated with this.

- 11 Planned redevelopment/refurbishment** - Voids associated with future redevelopment can blight an area and lead to crime, a breakdown of social cohesion and higher costs. Formal property guardian schemes can be costly so the short-to medium-term use of such properties by refugee and migrant charities mitigates risks and saves money.

- 12 Local connection** – "Our vision is to champion the local communities in which we deliver housing. Supporting refugees and migrant charities within our communities allows us to extend our reach and support for marginalised groups."

- 13 Positive publicity** – Both the Housing Association and the refugee/migrant charity have the opportunity for positive news stories.

- 14 Supporting people experiencing extreme need** - A way for Housing Associations to support people experiencing some of the most extreme forms of poverty and marginalisation in the UK, and contribute to anti-racist practice.
-
- 15 Potential savings on Corporation Tax and Business Rates** - Charities do not pay corporation tax and can get a 90-100% rebate on business rates, allowing Housing Associations to save money when leasing property to a charity rent-free.
-
- 16 Building trust with refugee and migrant residents** – Working in partnership with a refugee/migrant charity with a high level of trust in the community can build refugee/migrant residents' trust in their Housing Association landlord.
-
- 17 Area-focused support** – Housing Association housing officers often have a large geographical area to cover. Refugee/migrant charities often focus on specific areas, helping them to more easily build relationships and community cohesion.
-
- 18 Improvement in housing management** – Housing Associations already working with refugee/migrant charities report reduced housing management and repairs and maintenance costs.
-
- 19 Closing skills gaps and improving standards** – Post Covid, Housing Associations are often being allocated tenants with more complex barriers to accommodation. Partnering with organisations who have expert knowledge on specific cohorts helps to close skills gaps in staff teams and drive up standards.
-



WHAT HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS CAN DO TO SUPPORT REFUGEES, PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM AND OTHER MIGRANTS WITH NRPF

In August 2020, the National Housing Federation published '**Helping people with No Recourse to Public Funds avoid homelessness - What Housing Associations can do**' to help Housing Associations supporting people at risk of returning to homelessness and rough sleeping as Covid initiatives such as 'Everybody in' came to an end. Whilst written from an England perspective, the good practice examples in this guide are relevant to the whole of the UK. We recommend that NACCOM members and Housing Associations exploring working together refer to this excellent resource alongside this toolkit.

DIRECT PROVISION BY HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

Although people with NRPF cannot access homelessness assistance and an allocation of social housing through the **council register**, some people with NRPF may still rent from - or be directly housed rent-free by - a Housing Association. Two good examples of **direct provision by Housing Associations** are Broadland and Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Associations.



Broadland Housing Association is a Homes for Cathy member with ten flats in Norwich for people with NRPF who have the right to rent but are homeless due to a variety of often complex and interrelated issues. Individuals are initially housed rent-free while they are supported to resolve issues such as documentation, improve their language skills and find employment, which ultimately leads to being able to sustain their own independent tenancy. This project is delivered in partnership with Norfolk County Council's People from Abroad Team.



Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) – Another good example is MTVH which runs two projects in Derby. **Re-Start Point** is a supported hostel for men with ten self-contained one-bedroom flats accommodating a broad range of migrants at risk of homelessness, including newly-granted refugees, people seeking asylum with NRPF, people making a fresh claim, EEA nationals and others with NRPF conditions. The facility has two larger rooms on the ground floor that can cater for people with mobility issues.



Re-Start Point is fully funded by the [*Migration Foundation*](#) set up by MTVH with a vision to reduce migrant destitution, particularly amongst refugees and people seeking asylum. Referrals can be made from local charities and a holistic approach is taken to support those housed who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness on account of their immigration status.



Milverton House is a four-bedroom property for those with status looking for temporary shared accommodation during the 'moving on' period. The property belongs to MTVH and the project is funded by the **Migration Foundation**. Rent is received for rooms in this property covered by housing benefits.

See **Appendix 4** Case Study No 7 for more information on Metropolitan Thames Valley's work tackling migrant destitution. This is available online at [**www.naccomm.org.uk/resources**](http://www.naccomm.org.uk/resources).

LEASING PROPERTY TO REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHARITIES

For a Housing Association to make houses, flats or any other property available to refugee and migrant charities, there needs to be a formal legal agreement drawn up called a **lease**. A business lease is a contract between the owner of a property (lessor) and the business or charity who wants to use it for their purposes (lessee). The lessee pays a rent to the lessor, who in turn agrees to allow them exclusive possession of the premises for a set period of time. The lease will also typically set out the duties and responsibilities of both parties regarding the repairs and maintenance of the building.

LEGALITY

Migrants with different types of immigration status, including those with insecure status or those claiming asylum, can be supported with accommodation in different ways. Immigration and asylum law is layered, complex and evolving, particularly in light of the Illegal Migration Act 2023. However, there is no law banning the provision of accommodation for people with no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or restricted eligibility, bar the provision under the Right to Rent legislation in England of a tenancy for which a rent is charged (**see further guidance on legality on [page 14](#)**). Specialist organisations can guide Housing Associations through any complexities of immigration and asylum law. For further information please see the section on Right to Rent and Legal Opinion in the Glossary, **[pages 36](#)** and **[37](#)**.

TYPES OF PROVISION

The provision of accommodation by Housing Associations to refugee and migrant charities across the UK has taken a number of forms, and properties provided have been negotiated for a number of different purposes, including: the provision of accommodation to people seeking asylum with NRPF while they are supported to regularise their immigration status; rented accommodation for newly granted refugees or refugees entering the UK as part of a resettlement programme; and shorter-term emergency accommodation for a range of people with precarious immigration status or lacking the means or agency to take on a tenancy in their own right.

This section will highlight the range of arrangements and the types of end-use, drawing examples from several case studies. To read all the case studies in full go to **Appendix 4**.

Houses or flats provided rent-free or on a peppercorn rent

Case Studies

Hope Projects – Birmingham

Hope Projects house people seeking asylum with NRPF while they receive internal and external legal support to regularise their immigration status. Hope Projects was the first NACCOM member to negotiate rent-free lease agreements with Housing Associations. They are working with five Housing Associations including **Bournville Village Trust, Longhurst Group** and **Midland Heart**, who are all Homes for Cathy members. A total of six 3 to 4 bedroom houses were initially provided rent-free on three-year leases. At the end of the initial three-year period, negotiations led to all leases being extended by another three years. This has been repeated on several occasions and the houses are still being made available to Hope Projects rent-free.

All the Housing Associations continue to be responsible for external repairs and maintenance while internal repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of Hope Projects.

Open Door North East - Middlesbrough

In Middlesbrough, Homes for Cathy member **Northstar Housing Association** provided a five-bed house (which was difficult to let due to the bedroom tax) on a rolling annual lease for a peppercorn rent with a full refurbishment to HMO standard and an ongoing external repairs and maintenance service. As part of the charity's cross-subsidy model, the house has been used by both newly-granted refugees and people seeking asylum excluded from Home Office support.

Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC)

In Coventry, two Housing Associations have been able to make property available to CRMC because the work and ethos of the charity fits with their social values and they recognise the importance of filling voids to reduce the risk of antisocial behaviour, crime and substance misuse in residential areas.

Orbit Housing Association provided a three-bed and an eight-bed house on ten-year leases on peppercorn rents with a full repairs and maintenance service. The fit was a relatively straightforward one as these properties had previously been used for **Supporting People Contract*** needs, having already been converted to HMOs (provision of wired smoke alarms, fire doors throughout etc.). **Citizen Housing** also made a three-bed void property available rent-free, which became available due to delays in area redevelopment work. CRMC's primary housing work is in the provision of supported housing for newly granted refugees and other migrants at risk of homelessness who have the right to work and access to public funding. The provision of rooms to people who are allowed to rent cross-subsidises the provision of rooms for people with NRPF while they receive internal legal and non-legal casework support to resolve their immigration status.

for more information on supporting people contracts please go to **Glossary and Further Resources on page 33*

Home4U - Cardiff

In central Cardiff Home 4U are working with four different housing providers and lease a range of properties of different sizes with easy access to amenities. For example, **Wales and West Housing Association** have provided two two-bed flats and one one-bed flat on a two-year rolling rent-free lease. All the Housing Associations' obligations comply with a full housing-management service that covers all repairs, maintenance and emergency call-outs. The properties offer a range of options for people seeking asylum with NRPF while they are supported to regularise their immigration status.



Houses or flats provided on discounted rent

Case Study

Action Foundation

In Newcastle-upon-Tyne, **Oasis Community Housing (OCH)** have leased two -bed properties - that were difficult to let despite their excellent condition - at below-market rent with OCH retaining responsibility for all internal and external repairs and maintenance. OCH also agreed to bring the properties up to HMO standard, including the installation of smoke alarm systems and fire doors. The properties were originally leased for a six-month trial period, then extended to 12 months, and are now being reviewed and renewed on an annual basis.

Both houses are being used for **Exempt Accommodation*** supported housing for newly granted refugees as part of Action Lettings' portfolio. Earned income from Action Foundation's social enterprises helps to cover the costs of a number of beds for people seeking asylum with NRPF within their Action Housing project.

For more information on Exempt Accommodation go to **Glossary and Further Resources.*

Houses or flats provided at Local Housing Allowance Rates

Case Studies

Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT)

NAT has three 3-4 bed properties on five-year leases from **Framework** and **Tantum Housing Associations** for which they pay local housing allowance (LHA) rate for the number of bedrooms (properties from Framework were rent-free for the first 3 years). The houses are set up and managed as small HMOs with a downstairs reception room in each property, turning them into either 3 or 4 bed houses.

NAT receive a higher income than the LHA family rate by letting individual rooms to newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness as part of a cross-subsidy portfolio.

The properties house a varying mixture of rent-paying refugees and people seeking asylum with NRPF.

Both Housing Associations provide a full repairs and maintenance service and emergency callouts.

The Gap Newport

Since 2021, The Gap have been providing supported housing to newly-granted single refugees in a 3-bed flat leased at the 3-bed family rate by **Pobl Housing Association**.

The property was empty in a difficult to let area where The Gap were working. Pobl recognised that an offer to The Gap would both fit with its charitable objectives and directly contribute to reducing refugee homelessness.

Pobl shared its existing supported housing expertise to help The Gap set up the right operational policies and procedures and guided them through the application process with Newport City Council. A key aspect of this was satisfying the council of the vulnerable nature of newly-granted refugees and making the argument that they are in need of supported housing.

The project aims to provide around six months of intensive short-term supported living with eventual planned move-on to a secure tenancy either with Pobl, another Housing Association or in private rented accommodation.

Pobl have recently made a second 3-bed property available for newly granted refugees.

Pobl undertake all internal and external repairs and maintenance while The Gap provide wraparound support.

Refugee Survival Trust (RST) - Glasgow

In Glasgow **Queens Cross Housing Association** currently provides RST with two 2-bed flats at a rent equivalent to local housing allowance, which is significantly cheaper than anything similar from the private rented sector. An initial 1-year lease was agreed, which has since been renewed annually but has just a 30-day notice period for either party.

The lease is a standard rental lease where the Housing Association looks after the structural elements of the property, the installation and maintenance of fire alarms, dealing with leaks, building security and the heating and hot water system.

Former supported living hostels/HMOs not currently required for commissioned work, provided either rent-free or for a discounted rent either short, medium, or longer term.

Case Studies

Safe In Scotland/Simon Community - Glasgow

In 2019 **Queens Cross Housing Association (QCHA)** made a 17-bedroom decommissioned former supported living hostel available on a £1 per annum peppercorn rent. The facility is made up of bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms and access to communal facilities, and in some cases their own kitchenette. QCHA also agreed to undertake a number of upgrades, mainly to meet fire safety requirements.

An initial 1-year lease was agreed which has since been renewed annually. This is a standard rental lease where the Housing Association looks after the structural elements of the property, the installation and maintenance of fire alarms, building security and the heating system etc.

ASSIST Sheffield

Following a successful joint grant application to the general homelessness charity Crisis, ASSIST and **South Yorkshire Housing Association (SYHA)** commissioned a feasibility study on possible joint working that led to the offer of a property previously used as a specialist supported living house for another client group. The property had been left empty for some time as a service contract with Sheffield City had ended and more suitable alternative accommodation had been found for the original client group.

The property was already set up as an HMO, so needed little work to allow ASSIST to provide short-term emergency accommodation for single males seeking asylum with NRPf, before moving them to longer-term housing provision where they could continue to be supported to regularise their immigration status.

A short-term six-month lease arrangement was negotiated and later extended to eight months before SYHA took the property back when their internal development team found a new commercial use for it. ASSIST was then offered a second void property on similar terms.



It was a successful use of an empty property, helped us fulfil our pledges under Homes for Cathy and offered a property for asylum seekers that otherwise would have been empty for many months. ASSIST is a well organised responsive partner. ASSIST have been a pleasure to work with. We want to provide more properties when we can and would recommend ASSIST if you have suitable properties.

Phil Parkes

South Yorkshire Housing Association Head of Service



Houses made available on a short-term lease ready for allocation to families under a refugee resettlement programme/community sponsorship.

Case Study

King's Arms Project - Bedford

King's Arms Project (KAP) started refugee resettlement work in Central Bedfordshire in 2016 and began working with local Housing Association and Homes for Cathy member [Grand Union Housing Group \(GUHG\)](#) and Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) to provide new homes for Syrian, Rohingya and Afghan refugee families fleeing conflict in their home countries.

This fits with GUHG's mission to provide homes that people can call their own, where they can feel safe and put down roots.

To date GUHG have made about 20 houses available for resettled refugee families as part of a partnership with KAP. Between 2017 and 2020, GUHG made 3 houses per year available to KAP. Following the increase in Afghan families being resettled since 2021, KAP asked GUHG to increase the number of houses they make available. The current commitment is to make up to 6 houses available per year but this is not a guarantee.

GUHG make houses available from their private stock, which represents 25% of their housing portfolio. The remaining 75% of GUHG stock is for the Central Bedfordshire Council to use for general allocations as part of its homelessness prevention function and not for resettlement work.

“ Everyone deserves a safe place to call their home, and through this partnership we've been able to provide that to these families... I can't begin to imagine what some of these families have been through, so I'm proud that as an organisation we've been able to play our part.

Aileen Evans

Grand Union Housing Association's Chief Executive and past president of the Chartered Institute of Housing

”

HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES

To a greater or lesser extent each Housing Association that leases properties to NACCOM members provides some form of ongoing housing management, typically taking the form of responsibility for external repairs and maintenance together with annual servicing and repairs of boilers, plus inspection and certification of electrical and fire alarm systems. NACCOM members are usually left with responsibility for the repair and maintenance of internal fixtures and fittings, although work may be undertaken by Housing Association contractors and charged to the project.

In Manchester, **Boaz Trust** have taken things a stage further in their partnership with **Arawak Walton Housing Association**, which came about out of Boaz Trust's desire to improve the quality of their housing and support services for both refugees and people seeking asylum.

“ Our work with the Boaz Trust underlines our fundamental belief that the provision of decent quality, truly affordable homes kickstarts hope and a fresh start in life.

Evelyn Asante-Mensah

OBE Chair of Board – Arawak Walton Annual Report 2022

”

Case Study

Arawak Walton and Boaz Trust

Background to Housing Association Support

Boaz Trust had been running a cross-subsidy housing model for several years but were struggling with keeping their houses maintained and to an acceptable standard. They were also suffering with lower-than-expected income levels from their refugee lets which were essential in providing cross-subsidised beds for people seeking asylum with NRPF. The charity began to consider a partnership with a provider with both expertise and capacity to support them in improving these two key areas of operation.

In July 2015, one of Boaz's board members introduced the charity to members of the senior management team at Arawak Walton, one of the largest independent Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) Housing Associations in the North West, with over 1,000 houses and 30+ years' experience working in diverse communities in Manchester, Salford and Stockport. Arawak Walton's Chief Executive also chairs [*BME National*](#), a network of Housing Associations working in diverse communities.

Service Level Agreement

Boaz's initial negotiations were not about acquiring property but were for a service level agreement and fixed fee per property for property management. The agreement reached was that the Housing Association would cover routine inspections, repairs, maintenance, and emergency call out for all properties within Boaz's portfolio (owned, rent-free and leases) as well as rent collection from refugee tenants.

The agreement has freed Boaz staff up to do what they do best: non legal casework for people seeking asylum with NRPF and supported living client support for newly granted refugees.

Boaz receives a monthly invoice which includes any additional works and repair costs not covered by the agreement.

The relationship became established and Arawak gained a greater understanding of Boaz's work (in tackling NRPF homelessness and homelessness amongst newly granted refugees) and in October 2017 Boaz was able to negotiate the provision of two houses from Arawak Walton.

What are the benefits for Boaz Trust in partnering with Arawak Walton?

- ✓ Overall Improvement in quality of accommodation through inspection, repairs and maintenance, and emergency call out services.
- ✓ Increased income through greater cash flow and reduction in debtors by having a third party leading on rent collection.
- ✓ A greater confidence in taking on new houses and therefore providing more homes for those in need because staff are not weighed down with housing management issues.
- ✓ Other added benefits of the close relationship with a Housing Association include: management mentoring support; access to a bank of knowledge and expertise; increased donations; access to new volunteers; awareness of new opportunities; corporate credibility; and networks.

Benefits of the partnership for Arawak Walton

- ✓ Contributes to their objectives, core purpose, corporate good and values.
- ✓ Provides a way for the Housing Association to directly support people left with NRPF.
- ✓ Provides volunteering opportunities for staff.
- ✓ Positive impact: Arawak Walton received the government endorsed Compliance Plus Customer Service Excellence Award, which referenced their partnership work with Boaz.



PROVISION OF SHOPS, OFFICES AND COMMUNITY CENTRES

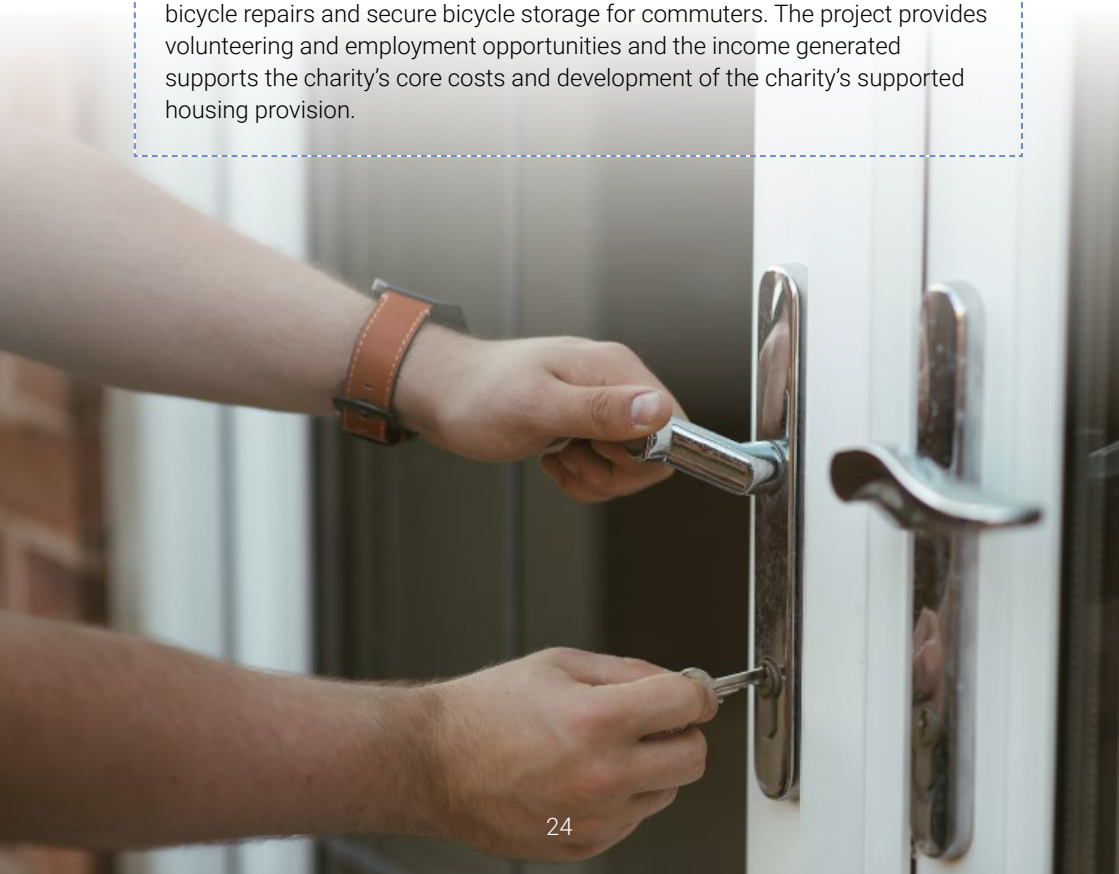
Empty shops, offices and in some cases community centres still command a business rate from their owners, so the provision of a shop or office rent-free is a win-win for both the Housing Association and the receiving charity. The charity can apply for a charity discount on business rates which, at the discretion of the local authority, can be as much as 100%.

In the case of community centres, making these available to charities at a peppercorn rent may allow for the provision of services that may also benefit Housing Association tenants.

Case Study

Newport City Homes

Newport City Homes Housing Association was not able to offer housing stock to **The Gap** but instead made a shop available on a peppercorn rent for 12 months with the possibility of negotiating an extension. The shop is being used to develop an income generating social enterprise through the provision of bicycle repairs and secure bicycle storage for commuters. The project provides volunteering and employment opportunities and the income generated supports the charity's core costs and development of the charity's supported housing provision.



12 OTHER FORMS OF HOUSING ASSOCIATION SUPPORT

The table below lists some of the other ways that Housing Associations can support refugee and migrant charities or, more directly, the people that they support. Most of these examples are taken from the case studies showcased in this toolkit and are highlighted where appropriate. Only one example Housing Association has been used for each area of support offered.

Support Offered	Example Housing Association	Charity	Case Study
Community grant funding (for something other than housing)	North Star	Open Door North East - Middlesbrough	9
Staff training/mentoring of senior charity staff	Tuntum	Nottingham Arimathea Trust	8
Corporate sponsorship including decorating/ refurbishment of houses	North Star	Open Door North East - Middlesbrough	9
Provision of board members with housing sector knowledge and experience	Spring Housing	Hope Projects - Birmingham	6
Support with funding bid	South Yorkshire	ASSIST Sheffield	2
Rent collection & void management (lettings)	Arawak Walton	Boaz Trust - Manchester	3
Staff volunteers	South Yorkshire	ASSIST Sheffield	2
Direct management of properties that do not fit with charity's core delivery model	Spring Housing	Hope Projects - Birmingham	6
Access to HA tenant support, e.g. employability / mental health	Tuntum	Nottingham Arimathea Trust	8
Provision of Supported Housing (Exempt rents) move on accommodation for newly granted refugees	Spring Housing	Hope Projects - Birmingham	6
Project grant funding including covering rental costs	Bournville Village Trust	Hope Projects - Birmingham	6

CROSS SUBSIDY

In 2019 NACCOM published a **Funding Toolkit**, which included a detailed section on income from housing and cross-subsidy.

In simple terms, **cross-subsidy** is the use of income generated from the letting of rooms or whole houses, usually to individuals or families with the right to rent who are at risk of homelessness, to help fund rooms or whole flats and houses for people with NRPF or restricted eligibility while they are supported to regularise their immigration status.

NACCOM's Network Development team have also designed some modelling spreadsheets to help members explore how cross-subsidy might support their work. For more information email **development@nacom.org.uk**.

Several NACCOM members have championed cross-subsidy over the years and those who have houses provided by Housing Associations within their property portfolios are listed in the table below.

NACCOM Member	Main Location	Case Study Number
Boaz Trust	Manchester	3
Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre	Coventry	4
Nottingham Arimathea Trust	Nottingham	8
Open Door North East	Middlesbrough	9

In addition to the above we wanted to highlight the work of **EYST** (Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team) in Swansea, which provides targeted, culturally sensitive and holistic support for BAME young people, as well as people seeking asylum and refugees in Swansea. In 2021 EYST took over a hosting project called **Share Tawe** that was providing accommodation for people seeking asylum with NRPF.

The Covid pandemic severely hampered Share Tawe's ability to recruit and retain hosts and accommodate all those in need, so discussions started with **Pobl Housing Association** on possible joint working to provide rooms for people seeking asylum with NRPF and newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness in Swansea. Following negotiations Pobl made a two-bed flat available.

Case Study

EYST and Pobl Housing Association

Unlike many partnerships where a property is leased to a NACCOM member by a Housing Association, Pobl agreed that they would retain full control of the flat both in terms of day-to-day management and in directly running the house as a home for one newly granted refugee and one person seeking asylum with NRPF.

EYST agreed to be the referral partner, signposting newly granted single refugees in need of accommodation to Pobl. Refugees were offered a shorthold tenancy agreement with Pobl for a single room for a rent inclusive of utilities, council tax and broadband. The rent is based on the local authority shared accommodation rate, plus a top up of 50% of the cost of the utilities, council tax and broadband.

The second room is made available to EYST to house someone who has NRPF who would otherwise be destitute, so that they can undertake a full review of their asylum claim and work towards submitting a fresh claim at a future date. The shortfall in the rental value between the two-bedroom LHA rate and a single shared accommodation rate is Pobl's charitable gift to EYST. EYST are responsible for paying to Pobl the second 50% of the utilities.

EYST retain the option, if they wish, to pay for both rooms for allocation to two people seeking asylum with NRPF. This gives them greater flexibility as need arises.



Benefits for EYST

- ✓ Low risk as the property is not leased and they have no day-to-day management responsibility.
- ✓ Flexibility in allocations depending on need.
- ✓ The opportunity of Pobl allocating further properties to the project as need arises.
- ✓ Although not a formal supportive housing scheme, EYST is able to concentrate on what it does best: client support.
- ✓ Minimal cost to the charity if one room is let to a rent-paying refugee who becomes Pobl's tenant.

Benefits for Pobl

- ✓ Pobl were able to step into the market in providing affordable accommodation to newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness in Swansea.
- ✓ Pobl were able to demonstrate a response and a commitment to Tai Pawb's Deeds Not Words campaign to support initiatives that reduce homelessness or the risk of homelessness amongst BAME communities in Wales.
- ✓ Pobl achieves almost full cost recovery, so the project represents value for money while achieving real social good.
- ✓ Positive publicity and enhanced reputation in Swansea.
- ✓ Refugee tenants are supported to navigate life in the UK so are better prepared to be independent tenants of Pobl at some future date.



SOME OF THE KEY LEARNING POINTS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

Legal and Immigration Advice

- Supporting people to resolve their immigration status through the provision of legal support linked to housing is at the heart of most housing projects and is particularly highlighted by Case Study 6 (Hope Projects in Birmingham) and Case Study 7 (Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing's Re-Start Point in Derby).

Building Relationships/Partnerships

- Investing in relationships can bring great rewards beyond the original vision.
- Long-term commitment to the relationship on both sides is vital to success.
- Wider community cohesion work can help in building a relationship with the prospective Housing Association partner.
- Starting small can be a good thing - letting the relationship evolve and testing/trying new things out provides an opportunity to test competences, build trust and confidence.
- Building partnerships can be slow but this isn't necessarily down to weaknesses. Patience, vulnerability and openness can provide strong foundations to partnerships.
- Building partnerships can be complicated - different stakeholders have different priorities so it's important to research and have ownership of your prospective partner's strategic objectives and corporate mission.
- Partnership working can help with achieving general mission and in meeting a Housing Association's Homes for Cathy membership commitment to tackle migrant homelessness.
- Find common ground in mission e.g. Tuntum is a BAME-led Housing Association and, for them, supporting BAME communities was a key motivator in agreeing a partnership with Nottingham Arimathea Trust.
- Partnership working brings additional knowledge and expertise to both Housing Associations and refugee/migrant charities.
- The close working relationship between Hope Projects and Spring Housing Association (SHA) has led to Hope Projects providing legal training to SHA staff on asylum and immigration matters.



In my former role as CEO of Nottingham Arimathea Trust I reached out to a local Housing Association in order to gain mentoring, advice and guidance on a separate and related matter which led to the establishment of an excellent working relationship and clear understanding of the charity's vision, mission and values, ultimately leading to the offer of several properties.

Caron Boulghassoul

Former CEO of Nottingham Arimathea Trust and Chair of NACCOM's Board of Trustees



Corporate Reputation

- An organisation's reputation and public profile, including, for example, delivering commissioned work locally and winning regional and national awards, can lead to direct approaches and help build relationships with Housing Associations.
- Established relationships built on trust, professional understanding and competency are likely to lead to more opportunities for joint working and strategic partnerships.
- Housing Associations recognise the benefits and corporate good that comes from partnership working with an established voluntary sector player with an excellent reputation within the region.
- Positive publicity and promoting a successful partnership can lead to conversations with - and stock release from - other Housing Associations wanting to emulate the good deeds of others.



Senior management and board commitment to effective partnership working with housing providers was key. If you have not worked together previously, then trust, goodwill and clear communication are important, backed by quick learning and formal agreements to mitigate any financial or reputational risk.

Quote from an interview with ASSIST Sheffield regarding their partnership work with South Yorkshire Housing Association



Staff Recruitment

- Having staff with Housing Association experience not only brings a wealth of knowledge but helps to better understand the ethos, culture and business models as well as aiding negotiations with Housing Associations.

Volunteering and board membership

- Recruiting Housing Association staff to become volunteers and board members has, for many NACCOM members, been the start of the journey to more formal partnership working, with property and other forms of support being made available to support their work.
- A board that lacks housing management experience may be more risk averse and less able to grasp the opportunities that come from working with Housing Associations.

At the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre, the recruitment of a board member who had senior management experience within a local Housing Association aided negotiations and ensured better understanding of the ethos and business model of each party.

Strategic Vision and Theory of Change

- Having a clear strategic vision and theory of change helps with negotiations with Housing Associations. They need to see the potential win-win and outcomes of supporting a charity's work.
- Linked to the above point, intentional networking and communication of strategic vision is more likely to lead to the release of a property.
- Being able to communicate a clear vision linking time-limited housing with focussed legal support to overturn poor asylum/immigration decisions can aid negotiations.
- Attendance at housing sector gatherings and conferences can help shape the vision while providing opportunities to meet and begin to build relationships with prospective Housing Association partners.
- It's important to be able to show how a proposal fits with the Housing Association's charitable and community aspirations.
- Effective engagement with local authorities' housing and homelessness leads and elected members (Homeless Reduction Act 2017) to champion solutions to the unique challenges facing refugee and migrant communities and influence their homelessness prevention planning and implementation is important.

Having a project lead with clear strategic vision and transferable project management and fundraising skills has been a key factor in the negotiations with the partner Housing Association and implementation of Safe in Scotland.

Win-wins

- Being prepared to take on a Housing Association property with no immediate alternative use presents a win-win for the Housing Association, reducing voids and local blight where future demolition and remodelling is planned for a later date.
- Properly assessed and supported refugee and asylum-seeking clients with no substance misuse or serious mental health issues represent a low-risk group to Housing Associations.
- Well-managed occupancy that prevents vandalism and reduces void property costs.

Framework HA is a collaboration formed from two local church homelessness organisations in Nottingham. They are focused on eliminating homelessness and realised refugees were a group that they don't normally work with. A partnership with Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT), who have particular knowledge and expertise, was a win-win and an easy way of supporting this client group.

NACCOM Network Development

- The technical support, advice and connections coming from NACCOM's Network Development team has been cited as being invaluable in gaining a deeper understanding and insight into how refugee and migrant charities can develop effective partnerships with Housing Association partners.



The ongoing relationship and technical support from NACCOM's Network Development Team gave us reassurance that we could do this, and that what we were wanting to do was possible

Mark Seymour

Project Manager at The Gap Newport, talking about the development and running of their supported housing project



GLOSSARY AND FURTHER RESOURCES

1. [Asylum Accommodation Principles: What should a home have?](#)

In 2023 **Refugee Action** produced a very helpful document – [Asylum Accommodation Principles](#) – setting out the accommodation principles needed to ensure that people seeking sanctuary have a home that keeps them safe from physical and mental harm while having a space to recuperate and call home.

2. [BME National](#) is a collective of over 45 Housing Associations working in some of the most disadvantaged parts of the country. Many Black and minority ethnic (BME) Housing Associations were set up in the 1960s and 1970s and now manage over 65,000 homes, acting under the auspices of the [National Housing Federation \(NHF\)](#) as well as collaborating with the Federation to influence national housing policy. BME National also provides a consultative and promotional platform for BME housing issues.

3. **Exempt Accommodation / Exempt Rents / Supported Accommodation**

[Exempt accommodation](#) is a term used in [Housing Benefit](#) (Local Housing Allowance) and [Universal Credit](#) to describe [supported accommodation](#) where the rules that normally limit the amount of rent covered by a benefit award do not apply. The usual meaning of “exempt accommodation” is where the accommodation is provided by a landlord in the social or voluntary sector and the benefit claimant is provided with [care](#), [support](#) or [supervision](#) by the landlord or by someone acting on the landlord’s behalf. Several NACCOM members provide Exempt Rent/Supported Housing. For example, [The Gap Newport](#) does so in partnership with [Pobl Housing Association](#) (See Appendix 4: Case Studies).

4. **Homes For Cathy** is a national group of Housing Associations and charities working together to end homelessness. Formed in 2016, the group has grown to 116 members. Homes for Cathy members sign up to nine homelessness **commitments**, developed with the homelessness charity Crisis, which guide and benchmark best practice within their organisations. Members meet for workshops to share knowledge around meeting the commitments, including tackling migrant homelessness. Homes for Cathy also facilitates regional events hosted by members to galvanise action at local level, uniting stakeholders from Housing Associations, local government and charities to address local challenges and solutions to ending homelessness. The Homes for Cathy group is administered by **Hightown Housing Association**.
homesforcathy.org.uk

5. ***Housing Associations and Provision for Destitute Migrants - A practice pack***
A detailed case study on Hope Projects and their work with Housing Associations. A resource produced back in 2012 by **HACT (Housing Association Charitable Trust)**, the Housing and Migration Network, the Joseph Rowntree Trust (JRF) and Metropolitan Migration Foundation to help Housing Associations link their charitable mission and status with meeting the needs of people seeking asylum with NRPF.
hact.org.uk

6. **Local Housing Allowance (LHA)**

Local Housing Allowance is used to calculate the maximum amount people renting from a private landlord can claim in Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

LHA is not a benefit in its own right. It sets maximum amounts claimants of Universal Credit and Housing Benefit can usually get in housing support for private rented properties of different sizes within specified areas. Maximum support is determined by a number of factors, including the size of property a household is entitled to, with bedroom entitlement based on family size and characteristics.

www.gov.uk/guidance/local-housing-allowance

7. **[Models of Accommodation and Support for Migrants with NRPF](#)**

This is still a useful report although published in 2015. Written by Ceri Hutton and Sue Lukes for Housing Justice, NACCOM & Praxis, it is a resource for practitioners and groups who want to get involved in the provision of accommodation and highlights a range of projects across the UK, including some who are working with Housing Associations.

8. **National Housing Federation (NHF)** is a membership organisation representing Housing Associations in England. It aims to use its knowledge and leadership to: (a) Shape national policy and create an environment where Housing Associations can deliver social purpose; and (b) Enable collaboration and share insights across the social housing sector.

www.housing.org.uk/about-us

The NHF has a Refugee and Migrant Group that brings together people from across the country who have an interest in improving housing and services for refugees, people seeking asylum and migrants.

www.housing.org.uk/get-involved/shaping-our-sector/refugee-network



9. **Right to Rent - Criminal Law and accommodating people subject to immigration control.** On the 1st February 2016 the government rolled out a scheme in England linking the right to rent to a person's immigration status. As of that date (2014 in certain parts of the West Midlands), people seeking asylum and people whose claims have been refused do not have an automatic right to rent.

www.gov.uk/government/news/right-to-rent-checks-what-they-mean-for-you

The law is primarily targeted at the private rental sector so certain types of tenancies are excluded, including:

- Accommodation provided under sections 4, 95 and 98 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
- Housing provided by local authorities or others nominated by them to fulfil statutory housing duties (both allocations of social housing and provision for people experiencing homelessness).
- Accommodation provided by the local authority to people experiencing homelessness under a statutory duty.
- Hostels and refuges (such as accommodation provided by or leased to NACCOM member projects to accommodate people with NRPF while they are supported to regularise their immigration status).

10. Legal Opinion

In 2015 prior to the full rollout of Right to Rent in England, a Legal Opinion was provided by Garden Court Chambers for Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) and the Association of Charitable Foundations, looking at the legality of supporting people with NRPF. See the summary below:

1. Criminal law does not prevent assistance being given to undocumented people to alleviate destitution or meet basic human needs. Accommodation can also be provided to give a fixed address so a person can more readily remedy their immigration status.
2. Assistance to those subject to NRPF ['no recourse to public funds'] is affected only by the 'public funds' limitation itself. It is quite specific, including statutory housing allocations and nominations or homelessness assistance, and entitlement to Housing Benefit. Importantly, support for rough sleepers is not included, nor is an allocation from a Housing Association outside a local nomination scheme.
3. Additionally, if a Housing Association has had a government grant to provide a property, this does not mean that it could not be occupied by someone with NRPF.
4. This new requirement to check the 'right to rent' only affects tenancies that involve rent payments, and most charitable schemes for undocumented migrants do not. Some types of accommodation, such as hostels and refuges, are in any case excluded. Where a body such as a Housing Association provides a property for another body (e.g. a charity), the second body becomes the landlord and there is no obligation on the property owner.
5. Individuals with NRPF who lack housing and employment and/or are destitute can be supported by charitable foundations. A charitable foundation's assets are not 'public funds' for the purpose of immigration law and therefore can be used to assist people with NRPF.
6. Although there is a criminal offence of assisting unlawful immigration, it is the legal opinion that charities offering food, money, services or accommodation to relieve the destitution of people unlawfully present in the UK would not be covered by this and would be unlikely to face prosecution.

11. Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and Registered Provider (RP)

Throughout this toolkit we have used the term Housing Association which is interchangeable with the term **Registered Social Landlord (RSL)**, now more commonly referred to as a **Registered Provider (RP)**. Social housing is lower-cost rented housing provided by landlords registered with the Regulator of Social Housing, known as Registered Social Landlords. Social landlords can be a local council or a Housing Association.

12. Scottish Housing Federation

The Scottish Housing Federation is a membership organisation representing Housing Associations in Scotland. It exists to represent, support and connect its members. Its vision is that its members are central to Scotland's social and economic recovery and renewal, and it is everyone's right to live in a safe, warm and affordable home, in a thriving community.

www.sfha.co.uk

13. Supporting People Contracts

Supporting People Contracts were a method of procuring supported living and supporting people services. Tenders were usually issued by local authorities to provide standard or floating support for a range of people in need, including:

- People experiencing homelessness (including refugees and other migrants)
- Adults with mental health illnesses/needs
- Young people with mental health illnesses/needs
- Young people with learning disabilities
- Adults with learning disabilities
- Care leavers aged 16+
- Young offenders

14. Tai Pawb (Welsh for “Housing For All”) is a charity and membership organisation that works to advance equality and social justice in housing in Wales. Tai Pawb has over 75 members including Housing Associations, local authorities, third sector organisations, community groups and representatives from the private rental sector. Tai Pawb is very supportive of the refugee and migrant sector and has helped in the brokering of introductions between Housing Associations and NACCOM members.

www.taipawb.org/about/what-we-do

15. The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) (came into force 2018) places new duties on housing authorities in England to intervene earlier to prevent homelessness and to take reasonable steps to relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants, not just those that have priority need under the Act. The London Borough of Haringey have produced a useful summary of the [key tenets of the act](#).

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/13/contents/enacted

16. Illegal Migration Act

On 7th March 2023, the Government introduced the Illegal Migration Bill to Parliament and it subsequently received royal assent in July 2023.

According to Government, the purpose of the Illegal Migration Act is to ‘prevent and deter unlawful migration, and in particular migration by unsafe and illegal routes, by requiring the removal from the United Kingdom of certain persons who enter or arrive in the United Kingdom in breach of immigration control.’¹

In practice, the UN Refugee Agency claims that the Illegal Migration Act ‘extinguishes access to asylum in the UK for anyone who arrives irregularly, having passed through a country – however briefly – where they did not face persecution’.²

Whilst many of the measures are not yet in force, NACCOM and many other organisations working across the homelessness and migrant sector are deeply concerned about its impact on migrants, which could include homelessness and destitution.³

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/37/contents/enacted>

² <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/what-we-do/uk-asylum-and-policy-and-illegal-migration-act/uk-asylum-and-policy-and-illegal-migration#:~:text=Illegal%20Migration%20Bill&text=UNHCR%20expressed%20profound%20concern%20in>

³ <https://naccomm.org.uk/open-letter-to-michael-gove-the-illegal-migration-bill-risks-pushing-thousands-more-people-into-homelessness-and-destitution/>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Previous initiatives and studies fostering links between mainstream housing and the refugee/migrant sector

Over the past decade there have been several commissioned studies and initiatives designed to foster greater understanding and working relationships between Housing Associations and charities with a particular focus on addressing migrant homelessness. We cannot cover them all in this document, but the following are particularly relevant:

Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution

Hosted by Homeless Link, the Strategic Alliance on Migrant Destitution was formed in 2014 and ran to 2018, bringing together professionals from the homelessness, refugee and migrant sectors to work together to tackle the problem of destitution. In 2017 Homeless Link published the Migrant Destitution Toolkit, which contained 7 early good practice case studies from the Housing Association sector, three of which are from NACCOM members working in partnership with local Housing Associations and are brought up-to-date in [this toolkit](#).

The Housing Associations' Pledge to Migrant People

In 2017 [Innisfree](#) and [Arhag](#) Housing Associations, along with migrant support charity [Praxis Community Projects](#), were involved in drawing up a three-point [Housing Association Pledge to Migrant People](#) to encourage the better provision of support for migrants. It calls for Housing Associations to:

- Provide a safe and welcoming environment for migrants.
- Train staff and board members so that they are able to be informed advocates for vulnerable migrants.
- Engage with staff, communities and partners to increase understanding of the issues facing migrants and to break down prejudice.



If we can trigger a response from Housing Associations of all sizes around the country, we will make a major difference to the lives of new communities.

John Delahunty

CEO of Innisfree HA, quoted in Inside Housing Magazine, May 2017



Homes For Cathy – Commitment No.5 (formerly No.8)

Homes For Cathy are a group of Housing Associations and charities based in England that formed in 2016. Homes for Cathy members sign up to nine homelessness commitments, developed with the homelessness charity Crisis, which guide and benchmark best practice within their organisations.

Commitment 8 originally read “**to contribute to ending migrant homelessness in the areas Housing Associations operate**”. The revised Commitment no.5 (updated 2023) now reads “**To understand the inequalities that result in the over-representation of ethnic minorities among people affected by homelessness and commit to meeting the needs of ethnic minority groups, including migrants.**”

In 2023, seven of the 27 Housing Associations working with NACCOM members in England were Homes for Cathy members.



I'm a firm believer that no human – or organisation for that matter – survives alone....

Charlotte Murray

South Yorkshire Housing Association's Co-Director of Care, Health and Wellbeing, talking about the importance of partnership working in tackling migrant homelessness.



Initiatives and Collaborative Working in Scotland and Wales

In addition to the largely England-focused initiatives outlined above, there have been a number of initiatives in Scotland and Wales that have either directly or indirectly encouraged collaboration between Housing Associations and refugee and migrant charities providing - or considering the provision of - housing to clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Initiatives in Scotland:

Fair Way Scotland

Homeless Network Scotland's 'Fair Way Scotland' is a Scotland-wide strategic partnership between four refugee and homelessness charities the (Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Survival Trust, Simon Community and Turning Point), working together to provide information, advice, support and accommodation for people left destitute with NRPF or restricted eligibility. Fair Way Scotland grew out of the Everyone Home Collective, which itself grew out of discussions that took place during the Covid pandemic about keeping people with NRPF or restricted eligibility safe and supported. The Scottish Housing Federation is a strategic partner in Fair Way Scotland and

has raised awareness amongst its members of Fair Way's need to access Housing Association stock. Stock availability is, however, constrained by the requirement in Scotland that 90% of housing be allocated to general homelessness provision. That said, to date both Simon Community (through its Safe in Scotland project) and Refugee Survival Trust have access to properties provided by [Queens Court Housing Association](#) and [Mary Hill Housing Association](#), who have committed to lease up to ten properties to accommodation providers within the Fair Way partnership at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. In November 2023 a [one year review](#) of Fair Way Scotland was published.

Initiatives in Wales:

The Wales Nation of Sanctuary Plan

The Welsh Government launched its [Nation of Sanctuary Plan](#) in January 2019. One of its objectives is to mitigate destitution amongst asylum seekers and included the recommendation to explore opportunities to reduce refugee homelessness by working with Housing Associations and others to identify clearer pathways into accommodation during the 28 day 'move on' period when people receive a positive decision on their asylum application.

Refugee Housing and Support Feasibility Study - Wales

In 2019 NACCOM member [Tai Pawb](#) (a charity promoting equality and social justice in housing in Wales) published its [Refugee Housing and Support Feasibility Study](#), looking at improving the housing situation of refugees in Wales. The report, commissioned by the Welsh Government and authored by Joy Kent, explores the feasibility of establishing temporary accommodation and support for refugees in Wales, based on models already established by specialist providers in England, some of which are working closely with Housing Associations. The report makes recommendations aimed at ensuring the feasibility of any potential refugee housing provision. It also recommends that further work be carried out by Tai Pawb in collaboration with housing, refugee organisations and other partners to progress the development of the recommended housing solutions.

See the [Glossary and Further Resources section on page 33](#) for more information about the work of Tai Pawb.

Providing Accommodation for Refused Asylum Seekers Feasibility Study - Wales

In 2020 the Welsh Government published another feasibility study, this time exploring ways of increasing accommodation options available to refused asylum seekers who may be able to challenge a negative decision on their asylum claim or who have grounds for a fresh claim, but need stability to facilitate access to and engagement with immigration advice to identify a pathway out of destitution. A key objective of the work was to consider how accommodation models, including housing operating in Wales and in other parts of the UK, can be further developed and/or replicated. Section 4.6 covers shared accommodation and highlights the important role played by Housing Associations in the work of Cardiff-based Home4U (see case studies) and a number of English refugee and migrant charities.

www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/feasibility-study.pdf

The report led to specific funding being released by the Welsh Government that has supported the development of, among other things, new partnerships with Housing Associations in both Newport and Swansea. See case studies in **Leasing Properties to refugee and migrant charities on page 14**, and **Cross Subsidy models on page 26**.

Good Practice Report on Refugee and Asylum Accommodation - Wales

In April 2023 Tai Pawb launched its [Good Practice Briefing](#) on refugee and asylum accommodation. This report is the result of extensive research, consultations and collaborations with experts in the field of refugee accommodation, including housing providers, local authorities, charities and refugees themselves. The report offers valuable insights and recommendations on how to create and maintain inclusive and welcoming communities for refugees. It includes examples of best practice and success stories, touching on a wide range of topics related to refugee accommodation, and was produced with partners [Housing Justice Cymru](#), the Welsh Refugee Council, Oasis Refugee Centre and [Home4U](#), with funding from Comic Relief. The report covers important examples of Housing Associations' working with NACCOM members in Wales, including [Cadwyn Housing Association](#) in Cardiff who have supported Home4U to increase bed spaces for people seeking asylum, and Pobl Group who have worked with The Gap to develop a supported housing scheme for newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness in Newport.

Initiatives in Northern Ireland:

At the point of writing this toolkit we are aware of a pilot project between Choice Housing and a number NACCOM members that has now come to an end. We will endeavor to add case studies relating to Northern Ireland to Appendix 4 as soon as possible.

Appendix 2: Framing NRPF, Destitution and Homelessness

Introduction

No-one wants to live in a community where people are forced to endure destitution and homelessness. Sadly, this is the reality for many thousands of people each year, who are unable to meet their basic needs, including housing, or fully participate in their communities, due to restrictions placed on them because of their immigration status. Finding solutions to migrant homelessness and destitution is in all our interests; we cannot create thriving, inclusive communities, or claim to be a welcoming society, when so many people are left on its margins.

Fortunately, voluntary services, Housing Associations, local authorities and other housing providers across the UK are working to deliver safe and stable accommodation to those facing destitution and homelessness, including those barred by their immigration status from the support available to everyone else. For migrants experiencing destitution and homelessness, stable accommodation provides a foundation from which to access other vital support, and is often the first step towards unlocking their full potential in our communities and rebuilding their lives.

The challenge of migrant homelessness and destitution

Migrants are more vulnerable to destitution and homelessness than people with UK citizenship, and those with restricted or undetermined eligibility for public funds even more so.¹ In 2020, it was estimated that over one-quarter (28%) of destitute households in the UK were migrants.² Meanwhile people born outside the UK are disproportionately represented in the Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England.³

The challenges of migrant homelessness and destitution are driven by complex factors at both national and local levels, but perhaps the most important driver is people having no recourse to public funds (NRPF) or restricted eligibility.⁴ Having NRPF or restricted eligibility creates barriers to accessing the welfare safety net, including most benefits, homelessness assistance and social housing.⁵ Even when support is available for people with NRPF or restricted eligibility, establishing need and eligibility can be a challenge. This makes both preventing and ending homelessness and destitution amongst this population very difficult.

¹ Boobis, S., Jacob, R., and Sanders, B. (2019). A Home For All: Understanding Migrant Homelessness in Great Britain. London: Crisis

² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitution-uk-2020#:~:text=This%20study%2C%20the%20third%20in,been%20pushed%20to%20the%20brink.>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2022/rough-sleeping-snapshot-in-england-autumn-2022#:~:text=There%20were%203%2C069%20people%20estimated,people%20or%2035%25%20since%202017.>

⁴ <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/2022/destitution-in-the-uk-how-the-no-recourse-to-public-funds-immigration-condition-affects-poverty/#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20there,condition%20attached%20to%20their%20visa.>

⁵ <https://www.nrpfnetwork.org.uk/information-and-resources/rights-and-entitlements/benefits-and-housing-public-funds.>

It is estimated that up to 2.3 million people living in the UK have NRPF or restricted eligibility because of their immigration status.⁶ This population is extremely diverse and includes both people who have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) as a visa condition, and people without immigration status.

Meeting the need

Local authorities, voluntary services, Housing Associations and other housing providers across the UK are stepping up to the challenge of tackling homelessness amongst people with NRPF or restricted eligibility.

Voluntary services play an essential role in addressing housing needs that cannot be met by local authorities and other statutory services. In 2021-2022, NACCOM members accommodated 948 people with NRPF or restricted eligibility. Of this cohort, 79% were people who had been refused asylum and were appeal rights exhausted⁷ and 21% were people who had not claimed asylum, the majority of whom were from within the European Economic Area (EEA).⁷

Meanwhile, some local authorities are going beyond their statutory duties to deliver targeted support to migrants facing homelessness, including accommodation support. In the report '[Unlocking the door: A roadmap for supporting non-UK nationals facing homelessness in England](#)', published by Homeless Link and NACCOM, we explored how local authorities across the country are taking additional steps to unlock access to accommodation for people with undetermined or restricted eligibility, up to the limits of the law.

In addition to using all statutory powers available to accommodate certain groups with restricted eligibility,⁸ many local authorities are developing partnerships with voluntary services, faith-based organisations and other accommodation providers as an additional way to deliver 'universal' bedspaces to people experiencing homelessness regardless of their immigration status.⁹

As explored earlier in this toolkit, Housing Associations and housing providers often play a central role in these partnerships, which include models where the local authority has a facilitative role, e.g. in 'peppercorn rent' and reduced fee schemes, and in cross-subsidised housing schemes; and models where local authority has a funding role, e.g. in the use of meanwhile premises.¹⁰

⁶ <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/commentaries/between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place-the-covid-19-crisis-and-migrants-with-no-recourse-to-public-funds-nrpf/>

⁷ <https://naccom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/NACCOM-Briefing-Annual-Survey-Data-UK-Version-.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.lawcentres.org.uk/asset/download/1204>

⁹ https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking_the_door_-_Roadmap_Report_2022_final.pdf

¹⁰ https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking_the_door_-_Roadmap_Report_2022_final.pdf

Health and wellbeing benefits of stable accommodation

Beyond the moral and rights imperatives, meeting the housing needs of people typically excluded from homelessness support can generate positive health and wellbeing, immigration and housing outcomes for individuals - including for those who have been rough sleeping for many years.

On average, the health of people experiencing homelessness is significantly worse than that of the general population, yet they often face multiple barriers to accessing health and social care services as a result of their homelessness.^{11,12} Simultaneously, migrants with NRPF, including people who have been refused asylum, face unique barriers to accessing health services, both as a direct and indirect result of their immigration status.

^{13,14}

During our research with Homeless Link, frontline services told us that they had greater success assessing and addressing the health and wellbeing needs of people who are in stable accommodation than those who were rough sleeping or in temporary accommodation.¹⁵ For local authorities, there is evidence that investment in universal accommodation provision can have a cost-saving effect on wider services. A cost-benefit analysis of the A Bed Every Night scheme in Manchester estimated that the savings generated for the health and social care system equated to £1.59 for every £1 spent¹⁶, with the cost of keeping somebody in stable accommodation for a year - £11,680 – approximately half the estimated cost to public services of a rough sleeper.

Legal routes out of homelessness

Although people within the diverse NRPF cohort may have varied support needs, and depending on their situation and status require distinct, tailored approaches, stable housing is a prerequisite for an individual wanting to explore the legal routes available to settling their status and moving on from homelessness for good. It is important to recognise that restricted eligibility is rarely a fixed state, and should instead be treated as a support need to be assessed and addressed.¹⁸

Our research with Homeless Link found that the provision of a stable accommodation base - with key worker support - was particularly helpful to progressing EUSS applications,¹⁹ whilst [research recently conducted by our Community Research team](#) reveals the transformative impact that shelter and stability can have on a person's ability to explore the available legal routes out of destitution following an asylum refusal.

¹¹ https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.7%20HEALTH%20AND%20HOMELESSNESS_v08_WEB_0.PDF

¹² <https://www.nice.org.uk/news/article/new-draft-guideline-to-help-reduce-health-inequalities-in-people-experiencing-homelessness>
¹³ <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-122-people-seeking-asylum-access-to-healthcare-lived-experiences.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.jcwi.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=17805c35-d3bc-4251-9ada-6dfdcae8dbca6>

¹⁵ https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking_the_door_-_Roadmap_Report_2022_final.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/media/5229/aben-evaluation-full-report.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/insight/a-bed-every-night-has-manchesters-mayor-succeeded-in-helping-every-rough-sleeper-in-the-city-61727>

¹⁸ <https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/unlocking-the-door-a-roadmap-for-supporting-non-uk-nationals-facing-homelessness-in-england/>

¹⁹ <https://homeless.org.uk/knowledge-hub/unlocking-the-door-a-roadmap-for-supporting-non-uk-nationals-facing-homelessness-in-england/>

Our Annual Survey provides strong evidence of the success that is possible when a person is supported with stable accommodation and the advice and casework needed to challenge poor Home Office decision-making. During 2021-2022, the NACCOM network accommodated 748 people who had been refused asylum and were considered 'appeal rights exhausted' (ARE) by the Home Office. In the same period, 329 people in this cohort were able to successfully move on from member projects, with 109 being granted some form of leave to remain, and 142 moving into Section 4 asylum support, either with a fresh claim for asylum, a further appeal on their claim, or another application for leave to remain being considered by the Home Office.

Appendix 3: NACCOM Members Working with Housing Associations referenced in this Toolkit

Case Study	Name of member organisation	Town / City	No. of Properties	Type of Property	People Housed by project	Part of Cross Subsidy Model	Housing Association(s)	No. of HAs working with	Country	Homes for Cathy signatory?	Rent-free or peppercorn rent	Discounted or below market	Full market rent	HA Led	HA provides full housing management service	Difficult to let, change of use or planned redevelopment	Hostel	Office or Shop	Cross Subsidy	Notes
1	Action Foundation	Newcastle-Upon-Tyne	2	3 bed houses	Refugees and NRPF Asylum	No	Oaisis Community Housing	1	England	No		1				1				
2	ASSIST	Sheffield	1	5 bed hostel	NRPF Asylum	No	South Yorkshire Housing	1	England	South Yorkshire Housing		1				1	1			Short term lease. Second property made available when HA required original property back
3	Boaz Trust	Manchester	2	3 bed houses (turned into 4 bed HMOs)	Refugees	Yes	Arawak Walton	1	England	No		1			1		1		1	Full property management and rent collection service (refugee tenants only) provided by HA
4	Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre	Coventry	2	3 bed & 8 bed	NRPF Asylum, Refugees and EEA	Yes	Orbit Group	1	England	No	1					1			1	
5	EYST - Share Tawe	Swansea	1	2 bed flats	Refugees and NRPF Asylum	Yes	Pobl	1	Wales	N/A			1	1					1	Properties are not leased to EYST but retained by Pobl EYST refer individuals to Pobl
6	Hope Projects	Birmingham	6	3-4 bed houses	NRPF Asylum	No	Bournville Village Trust, Yardley Great Trust, Longhurst Group, Midland Heart & Spring Housing	5	England	Bournville & Midland Heart	1									Hope Projects only work with NRPF. Spring Housing provide supported housing using property made available by a benefactor to support Hope Projects.
7	Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing - Re-Start Point	Derby	1	12 bedroom hostel	NRPF Asylum, Refugees and EEA	No	Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing	1	England	No				1		1	1			Metropolitan Foundation pays for the running costs.
8	Nottingham Arimathea Trust	Nottingham	4	3-4 bed houses	NRPF Asylum and Refugees	Yes	Framework & Tuntum	2	England	No			1						1	Initially rent-free then changed to LHA rate.
9	Open Door North East	Middlesbrough	2	5 bed house & office unit	NRPF Asylum and Refugees	Yes	North Star & Thirteen Group	2	England	North Star	1	1				1		1	1	Difficult to let 5-bed house due to bedroom tax. Office is a change of use from a local library and owned by Thirteen Group
10	Simon Community	Glasgow	1	17 beds	NRPF Asylum	No	Queens Cross	1	Scotland	N/A		1				1	1			
11	The Gap	Newport	3	3 bed flats & shop	Refugees	Yes	Pobl & Newport City Homes	2	Wales	N/A		1				1		1		
12	King's Arms Project	Bedford	6	Brokered for clients as required	Refugee resettlement	No	Grand Union Housing Group	1	England	Grand Union Housing Group			1	1						Max. 6 houses a year made available but not guaranteed. Resttled refugees become HA tenants on arrival in UK.
13	Home4U	Cardiff	4	1 and 2 bed flats	NRPF Asylum	No	Wales & West, and Cadwyn	2	Wales	N/A	1									One property's rent paid for by another HA
14	Refugee Survival Trust	Glasgow	2	2 bed flats	NRPF Asylum	No	Queens Cross	1	Scotland	N/A			1							
			37					22			4	6	4	3	1	7	4	2	5	

Additional case studies are available to view online at www.naccomm.org.uk/resources

Thank you for reading.
Please get in touch via the contact details below
if you want to find out more about our work.
Please note hard copies are available via the NACCOM office (details below).

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