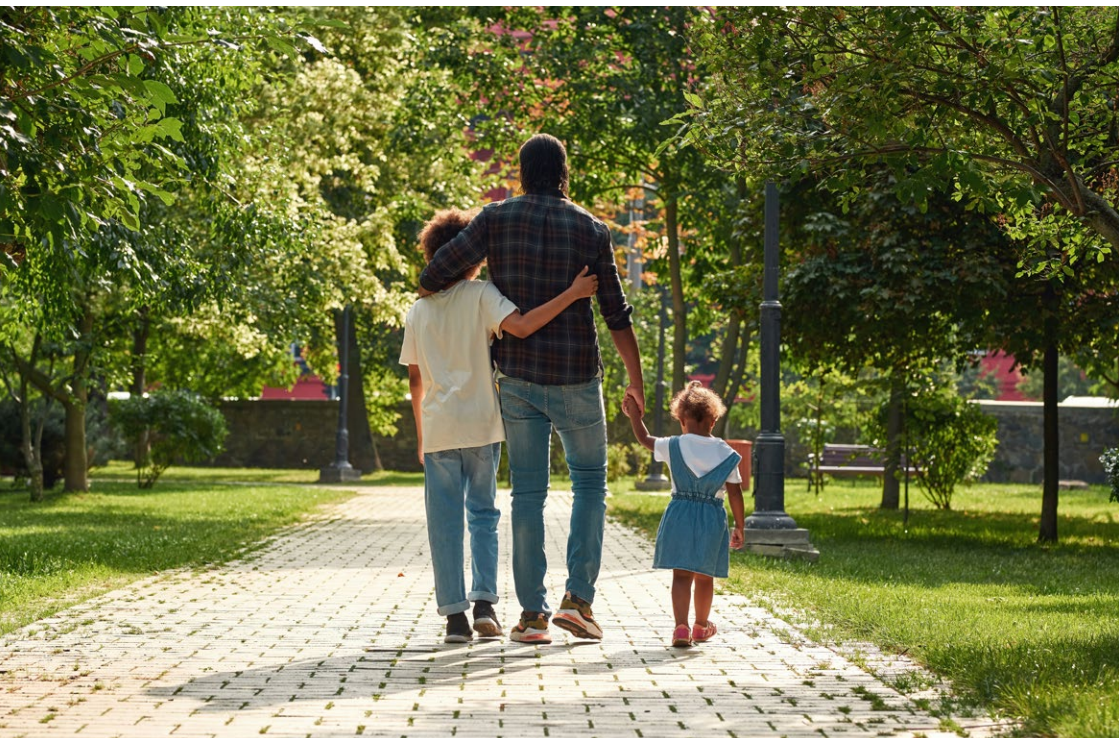


## WORKING WITH HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS: A TOOLKIT

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](mailto: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.**

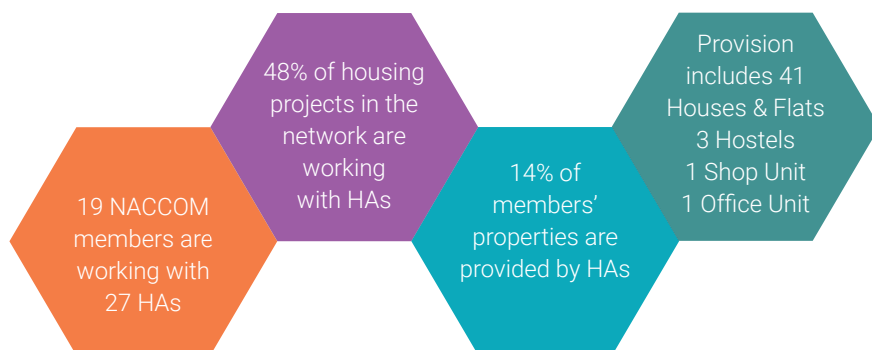
This toolkit does not cover the setting up, legal requirements and running of temporary housing, shared accommodation/houses of multiple occupation (HMO). In 2019 NACCOM produced a Housing Toolkit which is a comprehensive resource to help with the setting-up and running of housing schemes that accommodate 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 Associations to this 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](http://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)

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- ➔ The Housing Association Migrant Pledge (2017)

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- ➔ 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)

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

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- ➔ The Wales Nation of Sanctuary Plan (2019)

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

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

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

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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.<sup>1</sup> In 2020, it was estimated that over one-quarter (28%) of destitute households in the UK were migrants.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile people born outside of the UK are disproportionately represented in the Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England.<sup>3</sup>

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.**



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

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

<sup>3</sup> <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."

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- 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.

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- 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.

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

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- 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."

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- 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.

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- 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.

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- 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.

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- 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."

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

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- 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 Vulnerable Adults 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.

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**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.

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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. 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](#).

# 11 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** [www.naccomm.org.uk/resources](http://www.naccomm.org.uk/resources).

## 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 **Tuntum 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

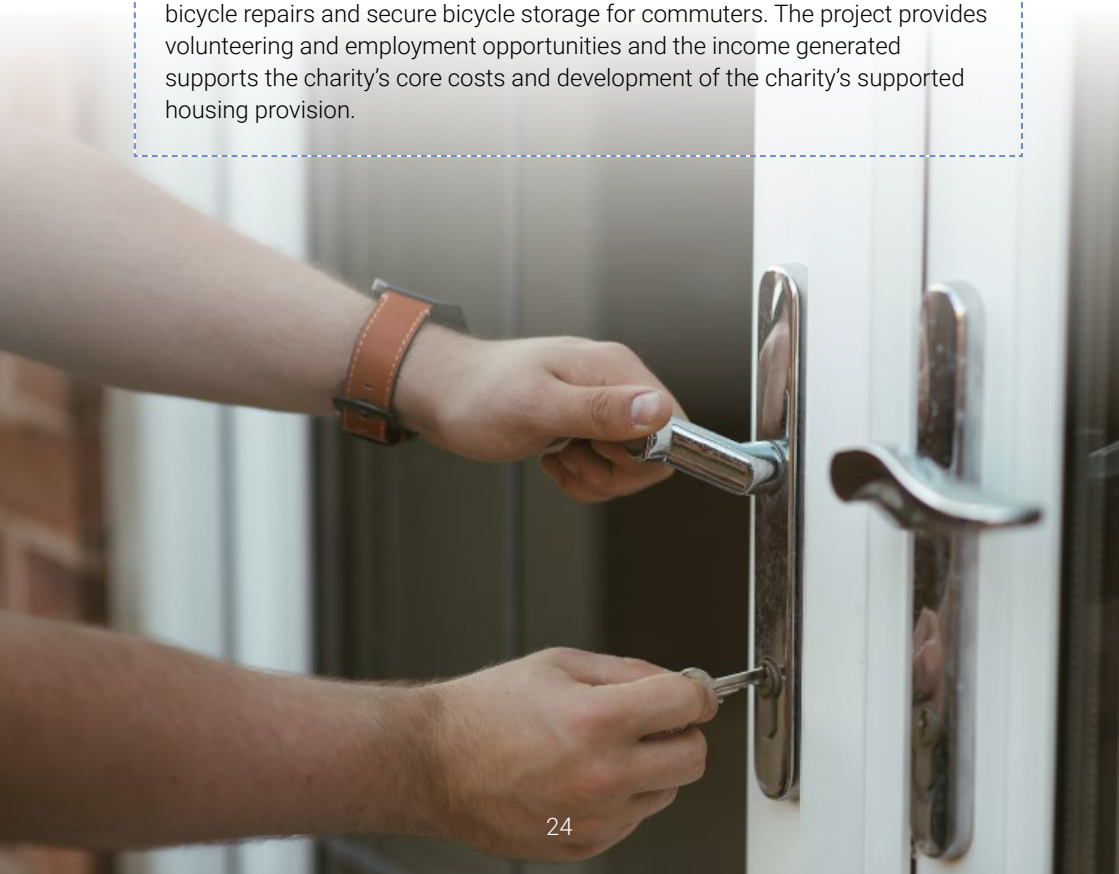
Empty shops, offices and in some cases community centres still command a business rate from their owners, so the provision of a shop or office rent-free is a win-win for both the Housing Association and the receiving charity. The charity can apply for a charity discount on business rates which, at the 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](mailto: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



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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.

<https://www.housing.org.uk/events/national-groups/community-integration-group/>



**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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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.’<sup>1</sup>

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’.<sup>2</sup>

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.<sup>3</sup>

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

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

<sup>3</sup> <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 39](#) 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](http://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.<sup>1</sup> In 2020, it was estimated that over one-quarter (28%) of destitute households in the UK were migrants.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile people born outside the UK are disproportionately represented in the Rough Sleeping Snapshot in England.<sup>3</sup>

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.<sup>4</sup> Having NRPF or restricted eligibility creates barriers to accessing the welfare safety net, including most benefits, homelessness assistance and social housing.<sup>5</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> <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.>

<sup>4</sup> <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.>

<sup>5</sup> <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.<sup>6</sup> 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 exhausted<sup>7</sup> and 21% were people who had not claimed asylum, the majority of whom were from within the European Economic Area (EEA).<sup>7</sup>

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,<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <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/>

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

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

<sup>9</sup> [https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking\\_the\\_door\\_-\\_Roadmap\\_Report\\_2022\\_final.pdf](https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking_the_door_-_Roadmap_Report_2022_final.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> [https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking\\_the\\_door\\_-\\_Roadmap\\_Report\\_2022\\_final.pdf](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.<sup>11,12</sup> 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.

<sup>13,14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup> 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 spent<sup>16</sup>, 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.<sup>18</sup>

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,<sup>19</sup> 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.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.7%20HEALTH%20AND%20HOMELESSNESS\\_v08\\_WEB\\_0.PDF](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.7%20HEALTH%20AND%20HOMELESSNESS_v08_WEB_0.PDF)

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

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.jcwi.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=17805c35-d3bc-4251-9ada-6dfdae8dbca6>

<sup>15</sup> [https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking\\_the\\_door\\_-\\_Roadmap\\_Report\\_2022\\_final.pdf](https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Unlocking_the_door_-_Roadmap_Report_2022_final.pdf)

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

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

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

<sup>19</sup> <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	Oasis Community Housing	1	England	No		1				1				Exempt Rents Supported Housing
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 and NRPF Asylum	Yes	Arawak Walton	1	England	No		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	8 bed was originally used for LA commissioned work
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			Now closed due to high staffing costs. Replaced by 1 / 2 bed flats
11	The Gap	Newport	3	3 bed flats & shop	Refugees	No	Pobl & Newport City Homes	2	Wales	N/A		1				1		1		Exempt Rents Supported Housing
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](http://www.naccomm.org.uk/resources)

## Appendix 4: Case Studies

### Case Study 1: Action Foundation – Tyneside & Wearside

[Action Foundation](#) was set up by NACCOM's founding Chair of Trustees, Julian Prior, in 2007 as a local church response to people seeking asylum left destitute with NRPF on Tyneside. Over the years, a number of services have been developed by the charity, including Action Housing, which provides accommodation and support for people seeking asylum, and Action Lettings, which provides supported accommodation for newly granted refugees in Newcastle and Gateshead.

#### **Partnership working with local Housing Associations**

Action Foundation (AF) were approached in 2021 by [Oasis Community Housing](#), (OCH) who have a similar Christian faith-based background coupled with shared values and ethos. Senior managers from both charities met and looked at the options for two 3-bed properties that Oasis were finding it difficult to let despite their excellent condition. The flats were leased to AF 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 standards, including the installation of smoke alarm systems and fire doors. AF furnished the properties and are responsible for PAT testing and any tenant damage. 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 supported housing for newly granted refugees as part of Action Lettings' portfolio. AF are able to provide a number of beds for people seeking asylum with NRPF within Action Housing. Once accommodated, individuals are supported to regularise their immigration status.

Both AF and OCH have experience of delivering commissioned services, and because of the good working relationship and shared ethos of each organisation, are considering joint bids for commissioned services, such as for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

#### **Other work with housing associations**

AF have had a longstanding informal relationship with [Your Homes Newcastle](#) for the provision of move-on accommodation for refugees leaving Action Lettings. AF are also working with the supported accommodation provider [Changing Lives](#) who are the main contractor for a Newcastle City Council Supported Accommodation and Supported People Contract.

### **To-do list**

AF are keen to explore establishing a service level agreement with a Housing Association for the day-to-day management, repairs and maintenance of all their housing stock.

### **Key Observations and Insights**

- Both AF's current Chief Executive and Head of Housing have been recruited from Housing Associations in the Northeast, which has brought in a wealth of knowledge, experience and confidence in housing-related matters.
- Having staff with Housing Association experience has helped AF to better understand the culture and business models of Housing Associations as well as aiding negotiations with Housing Associations.
- The organisation's reputation and public profile, including regional and national awards, have helped to open doors and build relationships with Housing Associations and led to direct approaches from 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.

### **Case Study 2: ASSIST Sheffield**

ASSIST is a charity that was founded in 2003 that works to ensure that nobody who is seeking asylum has to sleep on the streets of Sheffield after their application has been rejected. ASSIST is the sole accommodation provider in Sheffield for people seeking sanctuary with NRPF. The charity runs an initial support house, a hosting scheme and nine shared houses, alongside housing management, welfare support, and other related services.

#### **Working with a local Housing Association**

Over the years, ASSIST has established a large volunteer base including people from a management background within the mainstream housing and homelessness sector.

A senior manager from [South Yorkshire Housing](#) (SYHA) had previously volunteered in ASSIST's pre-covid night shelter. This led to conversations with ASSIST's accommodation manager as to how SYHA might support ASSIST's work accommodating people seeking sanctuary left with NRPF. It was also agreed that a senior manager from SYHA would be invited to join ASSIST's Board of Trustees.

The board member from SYHA accompanied ASSIST's accommodation manager to the joint Crisis, Homes for Cathy and NACCOM conference on Ending Migrant Homelessness held in York in February 2020. SYHA are a [Homes for Cathy](#) member, so were keen to explore how they might work towards fulfilling Homes for Cathy's nine commitments to end homelessness, including commitment number 8 to contribute to ending migrant homelessness. In addition to directly supporting work to end migrant homelessness in Sheffield, SYHA also felt that supporting ASSIST fitted well with their policies, board strategy and [race action plan](#).

### **Feasibility Study**

ASSIST and SYHA decided that they wanted to explore bringing one or more of SYHA's void properties into use to support ASSIST's work accommodating people seeking asylum left with NRPF. A key barrier for ASSIST was having the staff capacity to lead on the project feasibility, negotiation and implementation. In 2020, ASSIST applied to [Crisis for a "Homes for All"](#) grant. The 'Filling the Void' project included a feasibility study for the use of a vacant SYHA property and running and staff costs for a pilot phase. It created a space for the two organisations to get to know and understand each other's operational remit, strategic vision, culture and delivery model.

A freelance housing consultant with a supported housing and Housing Association background was appointed. The appointee had also previously volunteered for ASSIST, so understood the mission, vision and values of the charity and was therefore well placed to facilitate conversations between the two organisations.

The feasibility study was originally intended to have a wider reach in exploring how SYHA might support the work of ASSIST, however with the onset of Covid 19 in early 2020, the focus quickly became concentrated on finding an alternative to ASSIST's dormitory-based night shelter, which provided emergency accommodation and a gateway into ASSIST's longer-term accommodation provision. The general idea was to use void properties made available to ASSIST on short-term leases of initially three months.



## **The offer**

The first property found had previously been used as a specialist supported living house for clients with substance misuse needs. The property had been left empty for some time as SYHA's contract with the service provider had ended. The property was already set up as an HMO, so needed little work to allow ASSIST to house unrelated single males who were new to its service. A short-term three-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, which had previously been used for supported accommodation of people with learning disabilities.

## **The future of using vacant properties for social impact and benefit to landlord**

ASSIST is now using the knowledge and expertise gained through working with a housing association to look to build wider relationships both with housing associations and private landlords with vacant properties that might be made available on a short-term rent-free basis to provide accommodation for unrelated individuals with a clear move-on path to ASSIST's longer-term shared housing. In parallel, ASSIST is using lessons learned from the project in a further feasibility study for the long-term replacement of its pre-covid communal night-shelter, which is funded through the Night Shelter Transformation Fund via Homeless Link.

## **Key Insights and Observations**

- Inviting Housing Association staff members to become volunteers with one joining the board was the start of ASSIST's journey to a HA property being made available to support their work.
- The ongoing relationship and technical support from NACCOM's Network Development Team was seen as invaluable in gaining deeper understanding and insight into how things have been - and could be - done.
- Attending the Crisis/Homes for Cathy Ending Migrant Destitution Conference helped shape the vision and build a relationship with the prospective Housing Association partner.
- ASSIST's commitment to effective partnership work with housing providers was key. SYHA and ASSIST had not worked together previously, so trust, goodwill and clear communication were important, backed by quick learning and formal agreements to mitigate any financial or reputational risk.

- The scheme fitted the Housing Association's charitable and community aspirations and provided a well-managed occupancy to prevent vandalism and reduce void property costs.
- ASSIST clients had no substance misuse or serious mental health issues, making them a seemingly low-risk group.

## Testimonials

“ It was a successful use of an empty property, helped us fulfil our pledges under Homes for Cathy and offer a property for people seeking asylum 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, SYHA Head of Service**

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

We'll keep working with ASSIST on the Filling the Void project 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. ”

**South Yorkshire Housing Association's Co-Director of Care, Health and Wellbeing, Charlotte Murray**

<https://homesforcathy.org.uk/2021/07/05/a-place-to-call-home-for-asylum-seekers-in-south-yorkshire/>

### Case Study 3: Boaz Trust - Greater Manchester and the surrounding areas

<https://www.boaztrust.org.uk/>

The Boaz Trust was founded in 2004 to address the needs of the growing numbers of people facing destitution in Greater Manchester whose asylum cases had been refused and who had nowhere to turn to for help. The charity provides shared accommodation with 1-to-1 support for people who have become homeless after claiming asylum or are at risk of homelessness after being granted refugee status. In addition, Boaz offers a Floating Support service for people who are facing homelessness in Greater Manchester but who have restricted eligibility to access mainstream homelessness services because of their insecure or unclear immigration status.

Boaz Trust housing is a cross-subsidy model housing 36 single adults seeking asylum with NRPF and 34 refugees in 19 houses all located in Manchester and Salford.

Boaz's property portfolio is made up of; rent-free and low-rent privately owned property sourced from individual benefactors; property owned and leased from the social investor [Green Pastures](#); and property owned by Arawak Walton, a Housing Association with homes across Manchester, Stockport and Trafford, specialising in homes for BME communities in these areas [Arawak Walton](#).

#### **Background to Housing Association Support**

Boaz had been running a cross-subsidy housing model for several years and wanted specialist support to improve standards within the houses they provide. In addition, rent income received from refugee lets was not at a level to provide sufficient cross-subsidised beds for people 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, who had over 1000 properties and 30+ years' experience working in diverse communities in Manchester, Trafford and Stockport. Arawak Walton's Chief Executive also chairs BME National, a network of Housing Associations working in diverse communities (<https://bmenational.co.uk>).

## **Management Agreement**

Initial discussions between Boaz and Arawak Walton were not about acquiring property but were about developing a management agreement and agreeing a 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 as well as rent collection from refugee tenants. The agreement was reached and signed within nine months and has freed Boaz staff up to do what they do best: non legal casework and holistic support for people seeking asylum with NRPF and 1:1 support for newly granted refugees. Boaz receives a monthly invoice which includes any additional works and repair costs not covered by the agreement.

As the relationship became established, Arawak Walton wanted to further support Boaz's work (to tackle homelessness amongst people with NRPF and newly granted refugees) and so the charity was able to negotiate the provision of two houses in October 2017 and July 2018.

## **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 service provided.
- 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; increase in 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.

“Our longstanding partnership with Arawak Walton is a key relationship for us as a charity. Some of the benefits for us are that it ensures that the properties are maintained to a high standard, that rents are collected from our refugee clients, and that policies and procedures are in line with statutory and regulatory requirements.... We draw on Arawak Walton's expertise in areas such as repairs, maintenance and rent management. It's a partnership based on shared values that plays to the strengths of each organisation.”

## **Rob Clarke, Head of Operations at Boaz Trust**

### **Summary of Provision**

Arawak Walton has:

- a) Provided two houses for a lease fee which has enabled Boaz to then rent the same houses out as shared accommodation (to refugees who have leave to remain in the UK) for a higher yield.
- b) Entered into an agreement with Boaz to manage all housing maintenance and collection of refugee rents. This strategic management arrangement has freed up Boaz staff and volunteers to do what they do best in supporting their NRPF clients to achieve positive move on and their refugee tenants to integrate and take steps into employment, education and independent living with successful tenancies.

Boaz employ a part time housing manager (0.8FTE), a full-time Head of Support Services and four support workers (3.2 FTE) working with people who are living in Boaz accommodation. People who have become homeless at any stage of the asylum process can be referred to Boaz through an online referral system. In 2022, referrals were received from over 50 different organisation including local council housing teams, NHS and social services and local voluntary sector organisations. Once a referral has been received, the support team will liaise with the referrer, follow up any queries and arrange an initial assessment and introduction meeting with an interpreter as and when appropriate.

The aim of all Boaz accommodation and support is that the people they are supporting will be able to move on positively from Boaz into longer-term accommodation. For those who have had their asylum applications refused, accommodation and support is usually offered for a period of up to 12 months. This can be extended, for example where there are delays in accessing legal advice. Due to the challenge of finding affordable accommodation (private rented or social housing) and then being able to sustain a tenancy, people who have been granted refugee status may sometimes require a longer period of accommodation and support before they are able to move on.

### **Reality Check!**

Boaz's intention was to identify a number of Housing Associations that they could partner with in the Greater Manchester area.

- Some funding was secured to scope out possibilities and take this forward
- Boaz arranged a lot of meetings, proactively networked, attended housing sector events, delivered presentations and mapped out a number of options and models, but...
- To date have only secured the partnership with Arawak Walton.

### **Case Study 4: Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre**

<https://www.covrefugee.org>

Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC) welcomes and empowers asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants in Coventry to rebuild their lives and achieve their potential.

The charity has grown considerably over the past two decades and now assists over 4,000 people each year. This includes destitute families and single people, victims of trafficking and modern slavery, unaccompanied children and those escaping conflict zones from around the world.

The charity delivers a wide range of front-line and partner services to meet all the immediate support needs that clients may have. Services range from employment support and immigration advice to therapy services, English classes, social groups and much more.

#### **Housing Association provision**

Two Coventry-based Housing Associations have been able to make property available to CRMC because the work and ethos of the charity fits with their social values. A trustee link helped with the negotiations with one of the Housing Associations.

CRMC made a direct approach to [Orbit Housing Association](#) regarding the possibility of acquiring properties on a peppercorn or below market rent. Orbit offered a 3-bed and an 8-bed house on 10-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 provision



and when this came to an end the properties were not suitable for general needs, having already been converted to HMOs (with the provision of wired smoke alarms and fire doors throughout)

A second Housing Association, [Citizen Housing](#), was also approached and made a void 3-bed property available rent free with a full repair service. This property was originally due for demolition and redevelopment, however delays in the planned work made it possible for the property to be offered to CRMC for several years. The area has now been developed and the property was handed back.

### **Cross-subsidy**

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 have the right 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 precarious immigration status.

The charity currently manages a total of 11 properties and has 60 beds available. 11 of these beds are within the housing associations' properties. 2 of these 11 beds are reserved for people seeking asylum or other migrants with NRPF who are then supported to either regularise their immigration status or re-enter the job market to a point where they can pay rent and sustain a tenancy.

### **Management Agreement**

The properties have not been formally leased to CRMC. The management agreement stipulates that housing association staff must be used for repairs and evictions.

### **Key Observations and Insights**

- CRMC have senior staff with Local Authority and mainstream housing sector experience, which is a real asset in building links and partnerships with mainstream housing and homelessness sector.
- CRMC recruited a board member who had a senior staff role within a local Housing Association, which aided negotiations and ensured better understanding of the ethos and business model of each party.
- CRMC have an excellent reputation within the city and do commissioned work for the City Council, including more recently leading on the Ukrainian crisis response. This positioning has been very useful in raising the charity's profile and in negotiations with Housing Associations.

- CRMC's core work with people with recourse to public funding aided negotiations with a local Housing Association who did not have any shared accommodation on offer within its portfolio. Partnership with CRMC could therefore be seen as filling a gap with low risk to the HA.
- CRMC took on property with no immediate alternative use, thereby reducing voids and local blight where future demolition and remodelling is planned.

## Case Study 5: EYST – Share Tawe – Swansea City

<https://sharetawe.wordpress.com/>

<https://eyst.org.uk/>

Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST) was set up in 2005 by a group of young people from ethnic minority backgrounds in Swansea. It aimed to fill a gap in provision for young BAME people aged 11-25 by providing targeted, culturally sensitive and holistic support to meet their needs. Since then, EYST has expanded its mission and vision to also meet the needs of BAME young people, families and individuals, including refugees and people seeking asylum living in Wales.

Share Tawe was originally a project of Swansea City of Sanctuary but was adopted by EYST in 2021. It seeks to offer hospitality through accommodation and support to people seeking asylum with NRPF in Swansea. Up until 2021, accommodation was offered through volunteer hosts offering rooms in their own homes.

### Housing as an alternative to hosting

In 2020 the Covid-19 crisis hit and it became very difficult to both retain and recruit new hosts. The then management committee of Share Tawe also became aware of the difficulties newly granted refugees were having in finding affordable accommodation in Swansea.

The management had sight of NACCOM's [Housing Toolkit](#) which contains a number of case studies showcasing member projects involving the cross-subsidising of beds for people seeking asylum with NRPF through the letting of rooms to refugees.

Share Tawe were aware of [Pobl](#) Housing Association's presence and work in Swansea, so arranged an introductory call. Following several meetings, Pobl made the offer of a two-bedroom flat at standard market rate.

Share Tawe had at this time begun the process of a hand-over to EYST, who lacked experience in housing management and had concerns over affordability as they would need to fundraise to run the flat.

A member of NACCOM's Network Development team was invited to a three-way meeting with Pobl and representatives of Share Tawe and EYST and was able to both explain how cross-subsidy was working in other settings and was also able to model, through a spreadsheet, how it might work with a two-bedroom flat.

### **Partnership Agreement**

Unlike many of working partnerships involving NACCOM members and Housing Associations where the property is leased to the member by the 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 in shared accommodation 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. The only criteria are that they are the same sex as the refugee housed, and they sign an occupancy agreement recognising that they have no tenancy under law and agree to engage with both EYST and external support agencies as directed in order to 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.

### **Case Study 6: Hope Projects/Housing – Birmingham**

<https://hope-projects.org.uk/about-hope/>

Hope Projects has existed since 2003 and became a registered charity in 2010. Hope Projects began Hope Housing in 2007 as a destitution fund connected to Birmingham Law Centre and with limited experience of housing work but a clear vision of overcoming poor asylum application decisions through the provision of legal support linked to housing.

Hope Housing Project provides emergency short-term accommodation to people seeking asylum while they are supported to overturn poor initial asylum decisions. As demand for a place in Hope Housing is always higher than availability, referrals are assessed to ensure there is a reasonable chance of positive move on back into some form of statutory support following, for example, the submission of a fresh claim. Funding raised largely from grant-making trusts covers electricity, gas, water, council tax and other bills such as repairs, maintenance and management costs.

### **Partnership Working with Housing Associations**

Hope Housing has benefited greatly over the years from established contacts with key individuals such as church leaders and politicians, as well as from partner organisations and local Housing Associations. When Hope Housing was started, letters were written to all the members of the Birmingham Social Housing Partnership (a network of Housing Associations in the city) requesting properties on peppercorn rents. However, all the successful approaches to Housing Associations were through personal contacts with staff or board members of Housing Associations via a Hope Project board member who had professional contacts with Housing Associations at the time.

Agreements were negotiated with 5 Housing Associations, including [Bournville Village Trust](#) (BVT), Longhurst Group and Midland Heart, who are all members of the [Homes for Cathy](#) group of HAs. Each Housing Association felt that the proposal was compatible with their general values, ethos and social good, and each had a clear understanding of local need facing people seeking asylum left with NRPF. Once negotiations were completed with BVT, it was easy for others to follow suit and a total of six 2-4 bed houses were provided rent-free on three-year leases. At the end of the initial three-year period, negotiations led to leases being extended by three years. This has been repeated on several occasions and the houses are still being made available to Hope Projects rent-free. One Housing Association has stopped renegotiating the lease but continues to provide and maintain the properties.

All of the Housing Associations continue to be responsible for external repairs and maintenance while internal repairs and maintenance are the responsibility of Hope Projects. The question of replacing boilers when needed has always been a grey area and subject to individual negotiation.

### **Other services/benefits**

BVT is one of several Cadbury family trusts that have a strong West Midlands focus. Over the years, Hope Projects has managed to access small amounts of funding from trusts linked to Housing Associations such as BVT, which have contributed towards the running costs associated with Housing Association properties.

### **Key Observations and Insights**

- From its inception Hope Projects had fostered strong foundational connections with local politicians, faith leaders and charitable trusts.
- Having a board member with senior management experience within a local Housing Association made it much easier to make the ask and negotiate locally.
- Being able to communicate a clear vision linking time-limited housing with focussed legal support to overturn poor asylum/immigration decisions aided negotiations.
- Each initial three-year lease has been renewed with each Housing Association providing stability, enabling Hope Projects to focus on overturning negative decisions and achieving positive move-on for clients.
- Housing Associations have both individually and collectively recognised the benefits and corporate good of supporting Hope Projects.

### **Further Reading**

For a more detailed case study on Hope Projects and their work with Housing Associations please read [Housing Associations and Provision for Destitute Migrants - A practice pack](#), a resource produced back in 2012 by [HACT](#) (Housing Association Charitable Trusts) Housing and Migrants Network, 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.

### **Partnership working with Spring Housing Association**

[Spring Housing Association](#) (SHA) is a small values-based social housing provider which was set up in Birmingham in 2014 with a particular focus on migrant communities. As a new organisation, SHA were looking for refugee sector partners when the now Director of Hope Projects (who was working for Refugee Action at the time) met with senior staff in 2015 to discuss how to support the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS).

In December 2016, Spring Housing Association became the housing provider for the SVPRS across the West Midlands, providing accommodation in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Shropshire. SHA works in partnership with [Refugee Action](#) in delivering support to the families that arrive under SVPRS.

### **Working with Hope Projects**

In 2018 Hope's new Director continued to develop the relationship with SHA, who had already, on occasion, used some of their **out-of-scheme** (outside normal allocation process) housing for people with NRPF while referring those accommodated to Hope Projects for both legal advice and destitution payments. In 2016 and again in 2021, Hope Projects were offered houses by individual donors in locations that were not ideal for accommodating people seeking asylum with NRPF. Rather than completely turn down the offer, Hope Projects reached an agreement with SHA whereby SHA manage one of the properties as a home for refugees, charge a 25% management fee, find tenants and manage voids, and pass on any surplus income to Hope Projects, which helps cross subsidise its own provision for people seeking asylum with NRPF.

### **Other Benefits of Partnership Working**

In 2022 HP invited the CEO of SHA to join its board of trustees, bringing a wealth of housing and related senior management experience. The close working relationship between Hope Projects and SHA has led to Hope Projects providing legal training to SHA staff on asylum and immigration matters.

SHA also provide newly granted refugees with supported accommodation (exempt accommodation) and have been a driving force behind regulatory change and bringing quality into the sector. Finding appropriate move-on accommodation for people when they receive a positive decision on their asylum application has become more challenging, however the relationship with Spring Housing allows vulnerable individuals who get LTR when with Hope Projects to move directly into Spring Housing accommodation.



### **Key Observations and Lessons**

- Intentionality on the part of senior management at both SHA and Hope Projects to build relationship and understanding has allowed each to focus on their strengths and seen a number of win-wins benefiting both organisation and clients.
- Having a board member with senior management experience within a local HA has brought a wealth of housing management knowledge as well as wider knowledge and expertise.
- The established working relationship provides a platform for exploring new things together in the future.

### **Case Study 7: Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing**

<https://www.mtvh.co.uk/about-us/>

Metropolitan Thames Valley (MTVH), formed from the merger of Metropolitan Housing Trust and Thames Valley Housing Association in 2018. Metropolitan has its origins in the provision of good quality, affordable housing for the 1950's Windrush generation of migrants from the Caribbean. MTVH's main areas of operation are London the South East, East Midlands and East of England.

#### **Migration Foundation**

As well as being a Housing Association whose roots are in migration, MTVH created the Migration Foundation which has a vision to reduce migrant destitution, including amongst refugees and people seeking asylum, and to make migration work for migrants and their communities. The Migration Foundation is the only fund dedicated to tackling migrant destitution in the UK. MTVH recognises that migrant destitution is a national issue and MTVH's Migration Foundation exists to serve both residents and non-residents.

One of Migration Foundation's strategic goals is to see better housing, support and opportunities for migrants to participate in society and to tackle the circumstantial reasons for destitution. MTVH has a number of initiatives that directly support this goal. For more information on the Migration Foundation, its aims and strategic goals, go to [Migration Foundation](#).

### **Refugee Resettlement Work**

Like many Housing Associations, MTVH has been involved with refugee resettlement work, originally with Syrian resettlement but more recently the ambition of supporting 50 Afghan families to be resettled. Meeting this target has proved challenging to date, especially in the East Midlands due to the lack of availability of 4-bedroomed general needs properties.

### **Re-Start House Derby**

In Derby MTVH run a supported hostel for men with 10 self-contained one-bedroomed flats accommodating a broad range of migrants at risk of homelessness, including newly granted refugees and people seeking asylum with no recourse to public funds, people making a fresh asylum claim, people from the European Economic Area (EEA) countries and others with NRPF conditions. There are two larger rooms on the ground floor that can cater for people with mobility issues.

The project is fully funded by the Migration Foundation. Referrals can be made from local charities (but not Local Authorities) 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.

Depending on their immigration status, residents can receive small hardship grants and food donations. Residents have opportunities to socialise, play sport and grow in confidence and are supported to volunteer or access employment if they have the right to work.

While most residents already have legal representation or are receiving support from referral organisations, MTVH are currently seeking to develop a partnership with a legal project to support people with more complex cases. As part of this process, they have subscribed to [Free Movement](#), and intend to explore their legal advice services for such cases.

The project also supports clients to move into more sustainable tenancies in the area, once they are ready to do so, and can also provide accommodation and support to those signing up for the Home Office's Assisted Voluntary Return Scheme.

## **Re-Start Point**

[The Restart Point Project](#) came about following conversations in 2015 with various organisations working in the refugee/migrant sector, including NACCOM, about finding new ways of accommodating people experiencing destitution. MTVH felt they needed a service that showed commitment and met the needs of all migrants who were homeless or at risk of homelessness and which could demonstrate what could be done.

The building had become vacant after Derby City Council decommissioned an older people's mental health service. At the time the building's value was such that a sale would have brought minimal financial gain and to convert it for another use would have been expensive and again promised minimal financial gain. MTVH therefore carried out a needs assessment and found that tackling the high level of local migrant homelessness was a high priority that also fitted perfectly with their ethos and history.

## **Running Costs**

While the building is owned by MTVH, day-to-day running costs are paid for by the Migration Foundation. While housing benefits/rents could be claimed from those who have status, MTVH decided it would be better to cover all costs and make the project as homogenous as possible in terms of funding and support given to those accommodated.

## **Connected services**

MTVH have developed a transition process, encouraging people to budget and save for a deposit if they have leave to remain.

Residents are given a licence agreement which, as MTVH customers, means they are eligible for wider support such as employability and debt advice.

If residents have recourse to public funding, they can apply to join the [Derby Homefinder](#), a choice-based lettings scheme that advertises social housing in Derby that is available to rent. Once they have joined the housing register, they can log in to bid on properties. They can also join MTVH's own hard-to-let waiting list for properties available for direct provision that are not on the housing register. MTVH also have a tenant welfare fund which, following an assessment, enables people in need to apply for support in acquiring white goods and other items needed to set up their home and live independently.

### **Possible replication of Re-Start Point?**

Nottingham is a city that has been considered for replication but to date a suitable property with a reasonable stock value and condition has not been found.

The Migration Foundation's current relationship with MTVH also places some limits on the ability to potentially make money from rents and other investments that might release capital to purchase, refurbish and grow a portfolio that could generate sufficient income to cross subsidise more beds for people left with NRPF.

### **Partnership with Micro Rainbow**

<https://microrainbow.org/>

MTVH are currently working on a partnership with Micro Rainbow to provide housing for LGBTQI+ people in London. Micro Rainbow (MR) is a charity which, since 2017, has been supporting LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees with safe housing in a number of cities across the UK. MR also provide activities to tackle isolation, foster social inclusion and move-on, including employability, education, training and volunteering opportunities.

The relationship between MTVH and Micro Rainbow has been developing for some time. The first work MTVH did with Micro Rainbow was funding an evaluation of MR's management systems and in supporting capacity building. MTVH then acted as a critical friend in reviewing MR's safe houses.

### **Motivations**

MR's work with one of the most marginalised and persecuted groups within the refugee and asylum-seeking community fits with MTVH's general ethos and objectives. MTVH typically only offers external support for projects that they wouldn't do themselves because, for example, they lack the specialist knowledge and expertise. MR has the expertise and mission to support the LGBTQI+ community and MTVH consider themselves an LGBTQI+ friendly organisation. A senior staff member of MR has also been invited to join the Migration Foundation's advisory board.

### **The London Housing Project**

In certain circumstances a Housing Association may have estate redevelopment voids that may stay empty for a number of years. MTVH currently pay [Guardians](#) for placing working professionals in development voids which provides protection of the property and maintains community. MTVH are in discussion with MR about making some former supported housing units which need minimal repair available on a site in London undergoing an 8-year redevelopment programme. Micro Rainbow has been tasked by the Home Office to directly support Afghans identified

as having LGBTQI+ support needs. Initially MTVH are looking at making ten 1-bed flats available for the project. This would be a supported housing community. MTVH will cover some costs and provide housing management and training such as debt support. MR will provide specialist and community support. Some costs will be picked up by Micro Rainbow and the Home Office who refer vulnerable people who are LGBTQI+ to MR. Once granted leave to remain, individuals housed by the project will be able to put themselves forward for Local Authority social housing provision but will also be able to apply directly to MTVH.

### **Potential for the future**

There are 50 units on site which will become empty over the next few years. MTVH hope to be able to scale up, either with Micro Rainbow or other refugee and migrant sector accommodation partners.

Looking further forward, MTVH are considering building a brand-new transition accommodation for people experiencing homelessness as part of the scheme and looking at having some rooms available for people with NRPF.

### **Other support for Micro Rainbow**

Until recently, the MF was funding a Micro Rainbow staff position working on MR's NRPF project in Leeds, which is a single house for people with NRPF. MF also provided funding for a project aimed at supporting LGBTQI+ Afghan refugees arriving in the UK under a Government protection scheme.

### **Legal Support Provision**

The Migration Foundation recognises the challenge nationally in finding immigration lawyers for people seeking asylum and others subject to immigration control. With this in mind, one of the Foundation's strategic priorities is access to justice. MF have made a substantial grant to the [Justice Together Initiative](#), a collaboration of funders with a vision for people who use the immigration system to be able to access justice fairly and equally, so that they can move on with their lives.

Approximately half of the Foundation's grant making goes either directly towards funding access to justice or forming an element of the work of grantees working with refugees and people seeking asylum. In the East Midlands, MF works in partnership with OISC registered charities and legal firms to fund provision, which includes university law clinics.

Consideration is also being given to the MF paying for an initial legal opinion on the merits of people being referred for a place at Re-Start [Point](#) in Derby.

## Case Study 8: Nottingham Arimathea Trust

<https://www.nottinghamarimathea.org.uk>

Nottingham Arimathea Trust (NAT) was started in 2007 by the Church of England Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham where a house was allocated to the Trust from surplus housing stock to begin to meet the growing need of people seeking asylum with NRPF.

The charity now manages over 20 properties and provides accommodation and support to around 70 people including people seeking asylum with NRPF, newly granted refugees, victims of modern slavery or human trafficking and other vulnerable migrants in Nottingham and Derby.

Alongside accommodation, individuals are supported to access legal support either internally or externally so they can work towards submitting fresh claims for asylum; or if they are refugees, long-term independent accommodation.

### **Background to Housing Association support**

In 2013 Nottingham Citizens, a Citizens UK local chapter, was formed (an alliance of schools, universities, trade unions, faith groups, charities and community groups) which came together to fight injustices. One of the first pieces of work undertaken was to look at homelessness in Nottingham, which highlighted the injustice of people seeking asylum left with NRPF. The outcome of this work was the offer of properties from two local Housing Associations.

[Framework Housing Association](#) identified two houses which were not subject to Government funding via the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), which both regulates and funds Housing Associations. These properties were made available to NAT for their cross-subsidy work with people seeking asylum with NRPF. The houses were a 4-bed and a 2-bed and were initially provided rent-free for three years on rolling leases with a three-month notice period. Later, Framework had grown, resulting in a full audit by the HCA, making it difficult to continue providing these houses for free when there were people with recourse to public funding who were considered priority need. Following renegotiation, a market rent was applied to the 4-bed, whilst the 2-bed was handed back as NAT felt this would not be economical to run as part of its cross-subsidy model. Although close to a full-market rent the 4-bed was kept as it was already set up as an HMO and Framework agreed to continue with providing a full repairs and maintenance service.

In 2015 NAT began to develop a relationship with another Nottingham Housing Association called Tuntum, who are a traditional Housing Association established by members of BAME communities to provide affordable housing for those communities in Nottingham.

The relationship began when Tuntum agreed to be the Housing Association mentor for NAT who were using a Big Lottery Local Sustainability Grant to explore whether it was appropriate to become a Registered Social Landlord (RSL is another name for a Housing Association), which would then have allowed NAT to apply for Government funding administered by the HAC. A proposed change in the Government's position regarding the funding of supported housing led to NAT not pursuing RSL status. However, a strong relationship with Tuntum had by then been forged, which meant that NAT's then CEO was able to shadow and learn from Tuntum's senior leadership team as well as their board. At the time Tuntum were looking more closely at their own direct provision for refugees and agreed to provide NAT with three 3-bed houses at market rent, which were converted and licensed as small HMOs (Nottingham has local licensing for any property where two or more households are living together). Tuntum provide a full repairs and maintenance call-out service. NAT use the houses to provide single rooms for both newly granted refugees leaving Home Office accommodation and beds for people seeking asylum with NRPF as part of their cross-subsidy model.

### **Summary of Current work with Housing Associations**

- NAT currently has 4 properties on five-year leases from Framework and Tuntum Housing Associations.
- All houses provided are currently 3-bed houses.
- NAT pays a monthly rent for each house, which equates roughly to the LHA family rate for the property size.
- NAT receives 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 houses are set up and managed as small HMOs. Each house accommodates a mix of people with NRPF and newly granted refugees.
- The Housing Associations deal with emergency callouts. NAT passes emergencies on to the Housing Associations.



- Both Housing Associations provide a full repairs and maintenance call-out service and are responsible for plumbing, electrics and annual gas certification, energy performance certification (required for lettings) etc.
- NAT is responsible for internal decoration.

### Key Lessons and Observations

- **Find common ground in mission:** Tuntum is a BAME-led Housing Association and, for them, supporting BAME communities was a key motivator in agreeing a partnership with NAT.
- **How can a win-win be achieved?** Framework HA is a collaboration formed from two local church homelessness organisations. They are focused on eliminating homelessness and realised refugees were a group that they don't normally work with. A partnership with NAT, who have particular knowledge and expertise, was an easy way of supporting this client group.
- **Invest time in building relationships.** NAT's CEO intentionally reached out to a local Housing Association to gain information, advice and guidance on a separate and related matter which led to the establishment of a relationship, respect and working knowledge of the charity's vision and mission, ultimately leading to the offer of property.

### Case Study 9: Open Door North East – Middlesbrough Teesside

<https://www.opendoornortheast.com/>

Open Door North East (ODNE) provides housing and a range of other support services to people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants in Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees and other areas of Teesside.

ODNE owns, leases or manages 38 houses in Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees, providing accommodation for approximately 20 single people seeking asylum and 100 refugees and other migrants.

The letting of rooms to newly granted refugees, as well as whole properties to refugee and migrant families, not only provides homes to those at risk of homelessness but also cross-subsidises the provision of rooms to people seeking asylum left homeless with no recourse to public funding (NRPF) and no legal right to work or rent. Once housed, people with NRPF are supported to regularise their immigration status through a combination of internal and external non-legal and legal casework.

ODNE began housing people with NRPF in 2003 with the gift of a rent-free house before expanding initially by renting houses to accommodate more people with NRPF who are excluded from Home Office support, and then renting and subletting to newly granted refugees who were at the time low priority need with the Local Authority homelessness team.

ODNE developed its housing portfolio by working with ex-student landlords and first-time investors interested in providing shared accommodation to refugees. ODNE now owns three houses bought with individual financial gifts and grant funding (including from the [Quaker Housing Trust](#)). A number of other privately owned houses are provided rent free; One was bought in 2022 by the social investment charity [Green Pastures](#), while another has been provided on a pepper corn rent since 2016 by [North Star Housing Association](#).

### **Background to Housing Association Support**

2015 saw the Syrian Refugee Crisis hit Europe. This coincided with ODNE applying to North Star Housing Association for a small community grant to start a women's enterprise project designed to upskill both refugee and migrant women and other women living in the same deprived wards in Middlesbrough.

The project was successful not only in upskilling and empowerment but also in fostering community cohesion amongst women who ordinarily might not mix together.

The project also drew the attention of the North Star Board to the charity's core work of housing both newly granted refugees and people seeking asylum. In early 2015, through his involvement with the Strategic Alliance for Migrant Destitution ODNE's then CEO was introduced to the then CEO of North Star Housing Association a member of [Homes For Cathy](#) group of Housing Associations.

### **Negotiations**

In early 2015, ODNE made representations to senior management at North Star about their work and their need to access additional housing, both for people seeking asylum with NRPF and for newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness.

### **Three things were key to these negotiations:**

- Firstly, that housing support should be time limited and not indefinite, with each individual housed with NRPF having an action plan to work towards positive move on which in most cases meant getting to a position to make an application for Home Office support following a fresh asylum claim.

- Secondly, that there was a clear business plan of a self-funding sustainable housing model based around the cross-subsidy of rooms for people with NRPF through letting to newly granted refugees and other migrants.
- Thirdly that there was no reputational risk to North Star and their board were satisfied that any offer would fit with their charitable objectives.

### **What was provided?**

In July 2015, a 5-bedroom 3-storey townhouse was offered at a peppercorn rent. The property had become difficult to let due to the [Bedroom Tax](#).

North Star agreed to install fire doors and a smoke alarm system to bring the property up to HMO standard. North Star's decorating contractor agreed to redecorate the property for free as part of their agreement with North Star to deliver a certain amount of third-party charitable work each year. All refurbishments other than the provision of carpets were at no cost to ODNE. The lease agreed was a one-year rolling lease for the peppercorn rent of £1 with a six-month notice period on the part of the Housing Association and a two-month notice period for the charity.

Under the terms of the lease the housing association is responsible for all external repairs and maintenance plus internal repairs and maintenance except for painting and decorating.

Annual gas safety checks and certification plus checks and certification of the fire alarm system are also the responsibility of the housing association.

### **Key Insight and Observations**

- The brokering of an introductory meeting with appropriate senior members of management at North Star greatly helped the process.
- Knowledge of ODNE's wider work to tackle homelessness and foster community integration and resilience helped negotiations. ODNE had, for example, been awarded BAME Community Organisation of the Year award in 2014, which raised its profile within the mainstream housing sector and with North Star.
- ODNE's then CEO had prior experience within local government of working with senior housing managers.
- North Star had access to difficult-to-let housing stock that was not subject to Homes and Communities Agency (formerly Housing Corporation) grant funding.

- North Star understood the business model, ethos, and aims and objectives of ODNE in tackling migrant homelessness.
- The property has now been leased to ODNE for seven years providing a home for a mixture of newly granted refugees and people seeking asylum with NRPF.
- ODNE's initial financial outlay was limited to the provision of carpets, furniture, white goods, and other communal kitchen equipment.
- Although a 5-bedroom property, ODNE made the early decision to manage the property as a 4-bed following fire risk assessments and the lack of a second bathroom. The 5th attic bedroom has been used for much needed storage of spare furniture items.

### Case Study 10: Safe in Scotland / Simon Community Scotland

<https://www.simonscotland.org>

<https://www.safeinscotland.com>

Safe in Scotland — formerly Glasgow Night Shelter for Destitute Asylum Seekers — has been preventing homelessness among people seeking asylum since 2011. Safe in Scotland is now part of the homelessness charity Simon Community and continues to provide safe, dignified accommodation and trauma-informed support for people experiencing asylum-related destitution in Glasgow.

Safe in Scotland (SIS) currently provide 24/7 accommodation 365 nights a year for up to 17 individuals at a time. Guests have access to dignified private accommodation and are given time, space and support to explore their options and regularise their immigration status together with access to other services to help improve their wellbeing.

#### **Collaborative Working**

SIS are now also one the delivery partners in [Fair Way Scotland](#); a partnership between refugee and homelessness charities, including the Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Survival Trust, Simon Community and Turning Point, who are working together to provide information, advice, support and accommodation for people left destitute with NRPF. Fair Way Scotland grew out of the Everyone Home Collective, which itself grew out of discussions that took place during the Covid-19 pandemic about keeping people with NRPF safe and supported.

## **Partnership with Housing Associations**

SIS have access to a decommissioned former supported living hostel that was no longer deemed appropriate for its original use. The former hostel is situated above a row shops in Glasgow which has been provided since June 2019 by Queens Cross Housing Association (QCHA) on a £1 per annum peppercorn rent. The facility is made up of 17 bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms and access to communal facilities, and in some cases their own kitchenette.

## **How the partnership came about**

On joining the then Glasgow Night Shelter, the new Director had a clear vision, supported by the board, to find a more dignified and holistic alternative to the mattress-on-the-floor dormitory style overnight accommodation. While this had been the norm for the preceding ten years for anyone seeking asylum facing homelessness and destitution in Glasgow, and with the best of intentions, research clearly showed that night shelters were not appropriate accommodation for anyone.

Between 2017 and 2019, intentional networking took place, including a meeting with the Glasgow and West of Scotland Housing Forum of Housing Association. This led to conversations with senior management at QCHA who already had an interest in refugee issues and were providing several flats to the Refugee Survival Trust, and other Housing Associations with an interest in this work.

QCHA offered the 17-bed former hostel subject to SIS making a successful business case and receiving the approval of the Housing Association's Community Board, which has 50% tenant representation. Once approval was reached in 2020, QCHA agreed to undertake a number of upgrades, mainly to meet fire safety requirements and an application for an HMO.

## **The Lease**

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, dealing with leaks, building security and the heating and hot water system and internal wear and tear, while SIS generally maintains the interior of the property but not damage that goes beyond wear and tear.

## **Project Management and Funding**

The SIS Director has both fundraising experience and experience of developing and delivering capital projects, which meant that the project was able to be prepared during the Covid-19 pandemic and has generally made for a smoother working partnership with QCHA.

HMO regulations require 24/7 staff cover, by two people. The high cost of sustaining this is the biggest fundraising challenge to keep the project going in this location.

## **Other work with housing associations**

The [Scottish Federation of Housing Associations](#) (the membership body for, and collective voice of, Housing Associations and co-operatives in Scotland) 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 is allocated to general homelessness provision. That said, to date [Mary Hill Housing Association](#) have committed to lease up to ten properties to accommodation providers within the Fair Way partnership at Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.

## **Key Insights and Observations**

- Having a project lead with clear strategic vision and transferable project management and fund-raising skills has been a key factor in the effective implementation and success of Safe in Scotland to date.
- Linked to the above point, intentional networking and communication of strategic vision led to the release of a property.
- Covid-19 and the focus of statutory bodies in finding workable solutions for people with NRPF, coupled with Covid-19 funding streams, helped get Safe in Scotland's hostel open and operational.
- The HMO and the fire risk assessment requiring 24/7 staffing is making the project very expensive to run and threatens its long-term viability.
- QCHA have been very generous in their support, provided it does not cost them more than it would if the property was left empty.
- The high demand for social housing in Glasgow is cited as a reason why more housing associations have found it difficult to offer stock.

## Case Study 11: The Gap Newport – Newport Wales

<https://thegap.wales/>

The Gap Wales is a charity committed to serving the people of Newport, South Wales, and the surrounding areas. Their mission is to find opportunities to ‘fill the gap’ where existing services and charities are not able to meet the needs of members of their community.

Newport is currently home to about 450 people seeking asylum and a larger number of refugees. The Sanctuary is a project of The Gap and supports people from refugee and asylum seeker communities by building friendships, restoring a sense of belonging and community, and providing emotional and practical support such as housing.

One of the challenges facing newly granted refugees in Newport is accessing both social and private rented housing, which has been made worse through the removal of the Severn Bridge toll, which has enabled Newport to be an affordable commuter town for people working in Bristol. Newport has grown by 10% since the last census, double the growth of Cardiff, its nearby big city neighbour.

### **Background and local strategic vision**

The Gap had been engaging with [Tai Pawb](#) (the Welsh charity promoting equity and social justice in housing) and the work of the Welsh Refugee Coalition that led to the Welsh Government launching its National Sanctuary plan in 2019 and commissioning two reports: the first produced by Tai Pawb, looking at improving [Housing for Refugees](#) living in Wales; and the second looking at [accommodation provision for people seeking asylum](#) with NRPF. Both these reports included examples of housing schemes developed by NACCOM members in England to address homelessness amongst newly granted refugees and people seeking asylum left with NRPF.

In February 2020, The Gap’s Project Manager attended the Ending Migrant Homelessness Conference organised by Crisis, NACCOM and Homes for Cathy group of housing associations, which brought 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. The conference served its purpose and gave The Gap confidence that, in their words, “If they can do it, why can’t we!”



## **Getting to know one another**

The Gap's evolving relationship with Housing Associations in Newport had three strands:

- Firstly, in 2020 Tai Pawb began conversations with housing associations about their [Deeds Not Words campaign](#), which aims to tackle, amongst other things, racial injustice and inequalities in housing across Wales. These conversations led to a meeting between The Gap, two local housing associations ([Pobl](#) and [Newport City Homes](#)) and a member of NACCOM's Network Development Team who was able to provide an overview of a number of the successful partnerships between Housing Associations and refugee charities in England.
- Secondly, other formal and informal meetings took place, including a chance meeting between a Pobl manager and a senior staff member from The Gap who recognised each other's lanyards while walking in town.
- Thirdly, The Gap began to raise its profile with local housing associations and the city council through its intentional actions to support the local community, which included environmental improvements in one of the poorest wards in the UK.

## **The offer from Pobl and the project outline**

Pobl identified a three-bedroom flat that was already set up for use as supported accommodation in the difficult-to-let inner city ward where The Gap had been working and which was also popular with people from a BAME background.

The property was empty and time and was an oddity in their housing stock. Pobl recognised that an offer to The Gap would both fit with its charitable objectives and directly contribute to reducing refugee homelessness. The property was leased to The Gap to allow it to begin a supported housing scheme for newly granted refugees.

While the flat is managed by The Gap, Pobl undertake all internal and external repairs and maintenance, allowing The Gap's staff to focus on the provision of support.

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.

The Gap provide all wraparound support, including benefits, ESOL, employability and move on.

The Gap work with a local letting agent to help clients move on into secure private rented accommodation.

The Gap now have access to a second three-bed property from Pobl, allowing them to provide three supported beds and three rooms for refugees who need less support and may be working.

The vision is to build up the provision organically to 12-15 beds and to be able to cross subsidise some provision for people seeking asylum left destitute with NRPF whilst they are supported to regularise their status.

### **Other things that Pobl did**

Pobl also had a number of one-bedroom flats in the same street and, recognising that at the time the street had a 50% void rate and a history of drug dealing and antisocial behaviour, Pobl also put in place a local letting policy to achieve greater control on who could be housed in the street. This approach transformed a street and has led to 100% occupancy, with at least 78 % of the properties let to those in priority housing need, including a lot of single male refugees who were supported by the Gap.

The Gap were also eager that their properties are therapeutic, relaxed and safe spaces, where new refugees can recover, process their experiences and plan for the next part of their life.

### **Other things The Gap did**

Recognising the importance of community cohesion in bringing about change in a local area, The Gap intentionally engaged refugees in implementing practical improvements, including the clearing and replanting of raised beds with vegetables, herbs and flowers, as well as facilitating the construction of a mural. These initiatives reclaimed the street, leading to a significant reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour to almost zero, as well as zero voids.

### **The offer from Newport City Homes**

Newport City Homes were not able to offer housing stock but did make a shop available on a peppercorn rent for 12 months with the possibility of negotiating an extension.

Welsh Government had funded the conversion of offices into accommodation but had insisted on shops being retained beneath.

The shop is being used to develop an income generating social enterprise through the provision of bicycle repairs and secure bicycle storage.

### **Key Insights and Observations**

- The ongoing relationship and technical support from NACCOM's Network Development Team was seen as invaluable in gaining deeper understanding and insight into the development and running of a shared accommodation supported housing project.
- Attending the Crisis/Homes for Cathy Ending Migrant Destitution Conference helped shape the vision and coupled with early support from Tai Pawb, gave The Gap confidence to start conversations with local Housing Associations.
- The Gap's community cohesion work helped in building a relationship with the prospective housing association partner.
- The Housing Association saw a win-win in making a difficult-to-let property available in an area where The Gap had presence and influence.
- Newport Council's recognition of newly granted refugees as 'priority need' helped in The Gap's application to have their accommodation treated as Exempt Rent Supported Accommodation.

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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