

# A Guide to Refugee Resettlement in England & Wales



**caritas**  
social action network

*“Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (Matthew 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the Church’s motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future.*

*This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.*

*In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that “our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote and to integrate”*

Pope Francis,  
World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018

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# Introduction

Pope Francis speaks of building the future with migrants and refugees in his 2022 World Day of Migrants & Refugees message. He calls for us to recognise and welcome migrants and refugees, to protect, promote and integrate them, highlighting the importance of inclusion, which he encourages the Catholic community to embrace wholeheartedly.

This guide aims to foster that support and assist the Catholic community in understanding the refugee resettlement programmes to further identify ways to get involved and support refugees within the community. It is important to note that Caritas Social Action Network – an agency of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales dedicated to tackling poverty and injustice with 54 Catholic charities in membership - operates only in England & Wales, but this guide refers to UK wide refugee resettlement programmes and visa schemes.

The guide outlines the programmes and schemes currently operating within the UK, including hosting opportunities, and identifies CSAN members on the ground providing support, including dioceses and Caritas diocesan agencies who may be contacted for further information. The guide further discusses good hosting practices whilst also raising awareness of exploitation and modern slavery.

In addition to helping refugees, we are acutely aware of the growing need at home due to the cost-of-living crisis. Christians are called to respond to need wherever it exists, with the gifts and resources at their disposal. We appreciate not everyone will have the ability to host, but there are many other opportunities to get involved, as outlined in the volunteer section of this guide.

## Note on terminology

Migration issues are frequently in the headlines but there is much confusion over terms used to identify individuals and their legal status. The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), a CSAN member organisation, has defined the terms and outlined the support they are entitled to:

### Asylum seeker:

An asylum seeker is someone who has arrived in a country and claimed asylum. Until they receive a decision on their claim by the country's government, they remain an asylum seeker.

### Refugee:

A refugee is a person who has claimed asylum in a country (not their country of birth) and whose claim has been accepted, meaning that refugee is a legal status. Those who obtain refugee status are given protections under international laws and conventions and are entitled to financial and other support from their host country.

### Migrant:

There is no internationally accepted legal definition of a migrant. 'Migrant' is not a legal status as 'refugee' is for example. Many NGOs and agencies understand migrants to be people who have moved from their country of origin to a different country.

*To view this document devised by SVP, please search 'SVP fact sheet - Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers'.*

# What is refugee resettlement?

Resettlement is the voluntary relocation through approved legal routes for recognised refugees from a country in which they have claimed asylum, to a third country (i.e. the UK) with the purpose of permanent settlement.

Those considered for resettlement are considered to be the most vulnerable amongst their population for whom resettlement is considered to be the appropriate safe and long-term solution. They may reside in refugee camps or urban centres in a country of asylum, having fled their country of origin for a myriad of reasons, including war and conflict. Their personal situation and vulnerabilities, coupled with a lack of available

support in the country of asylum may identify them as high need and suitable for resettlement to a third country.

Resettlement allows the UK Government to support the humanitarian response to the global refugee population whilst also extending support to those who neighbour countries with conflicts and thus host large populations of refugees.

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*“No one would exchange his country for a foreign land if his own afforded him the means of living a decent and happy life”*

(Pope Leo XIII, Rerum Novarum, 47)

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## Resettlement schemes

The UK currently operates four resettlement schemes:

- 1) **The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)**
- 2) **The Mandate Resettlement Scheme**
- 3) **The Community Sponsorship Scheme**
- 4) **Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme**

The UK works with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) who is charged with determining refugee status as per the Refugee Convention. The UNHCR is further charged with identifying and processing individuals for resettlement, prior to UK acceptance and security clearance. The UK Home Office thereafter works in partnership with local authorities to house and support those resettled. Local authorities often work in partnership with local charities for the provision of wraparound support.

Those resettled to the UK are granted Indefinite Leave to Remain and refugee status upon arrival.

## Differentiating between asylum and resettlement

Asylum is a protection granted by a state to individuals forced to flee their own country for fear of persecution, who are recognised as refugees as per the definition in the Refugee Convention.

Individuals may be considered refugees as a result of their experiences, but formal recognition is required via an asylum application in order for them to receive state protection. Applications for asylum in the UK can only be made from within the territory, hence the arrivals by boat which have dominated media headlines.

Applying for asylum is a right and is guaranteed in international law, which the UK is bound to uphold. Those applying for it cannot be penalised for their journey, nor their mode of entry, in consideration of the asylum application.

The UK has committed to resettle refugees globally, but this is complementary to its asylum system - the two are distinctly separate processes and resettlement programmes do not replace asylum systems.

On being resettled to the UK, individuals do not have to go through the asylum system as they have already been recognised as refugees by the UNHCR. Further, resettled refugees receive wraparound support on arrival whereas those granted asylum within the UK are required to support themselves upon receiving recognition of refugee status.



Cross of Lampedusa

## Other schemes

In addition to refugee resettlement schemes, there exist other schemes which the UK government may introduce to allow certain people of designated nationalities to obtain a visa according to need. Presently there are 3 such schemes:

- 1) Homes for Ukraine Scheme
- 2) Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Visa
- 3) EU Settlement Scheme

For a more in-depth exploration of these schemes, please turn to page 12.

# Resettlement in the UK: how to get involved

Though resettlement schemes are government initiatives, there are ways for communities to get involved. Below outlined are the schemes running in the UK, with links to further guidance and community action.

## 1) The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS)

UKRS is the government scheme launched following the conclusion of the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) which was targeted at Syrians, and the Vulnerable Children Resettlement Scheme (VCRS). Due to Covid, there were delays in launching the UKRS.

The aim is for the scheme to resettle approximately 5000 refugees within the first year of operations, with an expanded global focus. The scheme will continue to operate on a voluntary basis for local authorities – those local authorities wishing to receive resettled refugees can volunteer themselves and specify numbers.

Those resettled via Community Sponsorship will be in addition to the government's UKRS quota. Individuals and communities may write to their local authority to request that they commit to resettling refugees in their area – SVP, a CSAN member, published a toolkit to support refugees and asylum seekers, which includes a guide to writing to your local authority: <https://bit.ly/svp-toolkit-toolkit-refugees-asylum-seekers>

## 2) The Mandate Scheme

The Mandate Scheme is for recognised refugees with close family members residing in the UK. The family member in the UK can sponsor their minor child, spouse, parent or grandparent over the age of 65, to resettle to the UK where the resident sponsor will provide for them.

If you know anyone who may have refugee family members and would like to know more, kindly direct them to the Gov.uk guidance: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandate-refugees-process](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mandate-refugees-process)



Little Amal at The Walk in support of refugees - London



### 3) Community Sponsorship (CS)

The CS scheme, inspired by the Canadian model, was launched in the UK in 2016. It allows community groups to directly welcome and support a resettled family into their community.

Sponsors must apply to their local authority for consent to partake in the scheme and thereafter to the Home Office with proof of their ability to support a family, including fundraising for a designated support fund and identifying and securing accommodation. Refugee families to be resettled will be identified by the UNHCR and approved by the UK Home Office, prior to being matched.

Sponsors may comprise of community groups or church groups who decide to embark on this journey together and with the support of an identified Lead Sponsor – this may be a charity or organisation who would be approved by the Home Office to take on legal responsibility for the sponsorship and extend support to the sponsor group, such as a local Caritas organisation or diocese.

To become a sponsor, you may join an existing CS group or form one with like-minded individuals – you do not need any qualifications and do not need to know the others to form a group. Some groups may be small, and others may comprise of many members, each of whom will bring their unique personality to the role and offer tailored support. Getting involved with community sponsorship is an opportunity for individuals to learn more about their community and build new friendships in the process.

Sponsors must be able to house their sponsored family for a period of minimum 2 years and support

them financially for the first year. Support will also include welcome, integration, and signposting to assist them towards learning English, employment, and self-sufficiency.

The charity Reset has Home Office funding to provide training and resources for the scheme. All prospective sponsors will be required to undergo the training process. Reset have also published a CS guide and related toolkits on their website which provide information and guidance for those interested in the scheme.

The UK Home office has also published guidance for prospective sponsors, available on their website: <https://bit.ly/community-sponsorship-gov-uk>

Caritas Salford published a resource checklist for those partaking in the scheme, which provides a comprehensive understanding of what is required from sponsors, a link to which can be found on their website: <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/service-view/community-sponsorship-of-refugees/>

We strongly advise that those considering hosting/ sponsoring, read through the hosting guidance shared by CSAN, its members, and partners to fully understand what it entails, including the challenges for sponsors and hosts.

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***"The community sponsorship scheme personalises a huge, human drama, by enabling local communities to welcome and support refugees in a real and tangible way. This scheme opens a path for people to respond with compassion, providing welcome and integration, and should be taken up as widely as possible."***

Cardinal Nichols on Community Sponsorship

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# Sidmouth Companions

***In 2015, Pope Francis called for every parish in the world to welcome a refugee family, a call that was heard by many parish groups across the country. One such group is Sidmouth Companions, based in Sidmouth, Devon (Diocese of Plymouth).***



The group wished to support those fleeing the Syrian conflict but were unsure of how to do so outside of the traditional mode of donations. A Caritas Plymouth event allowed them to learn about Community Sponsorship directly from those with experience as a sponsorship group. With support from the Parish of The Most Precious Blood, Sidmouth, Sidmouth Companions began their sponsorship journey.

The Catholic Church in Sidmouth provided them with the initial £9000 required by the Home Office to sponsor a family, and with Caritas Plymouth as their Lead Sponsor, they were supported throughout the process. They also received overwhelming support from the local community.

***"The whole community in Sidmouth has been so generous, not just financially: with their time and with their welcome. It's been absolutely amazing. Groups are self-funding. There are grants available for some groups. We have been able to rely on donations and fundraising events."***

Sidmouth Companions secured accommodation for a period of 2 years and provided one year of support to the resettled Syrian family. They are now coming to the end of their Community Sponsorship journey but there are many such community sponsorship groups across the country, with many more needed as the community sponsorship programme grows to include other nationalities.

***"These families are a blessing to the community and if anyone is inspired or feels passionate about helping, this is a real tangible way to be able to help those in most need."***

Brigid McEleney-Smith is a group leader of Sidmouth Companions and interviewed with East Devon Radio to discuss the group's journey and the hospitality of the wider community in Sidmouth, as well as the importance of the Community Sponsorship scheme. The transcript of the full interview can be found on the Diocese of Plymouth webpage: [www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/sidmouthcs](http://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/sidmouthcs).





# “ Family testimonies

*In 2016, St Monica's, Flixton (Diocese of Salford), became the first Catholic Parish to welcome a Syrian family under the Community Sponsorship scheme. Caritas Salford have since supported many more such groups and families and we have collected some testimonies from those resettled regarding their experiences:*

*'On the first day of our arrival, I was afraid, I was very scared. I arrived at the airport in Manchester and we were welcome by the group. It was a difficult feeling, I started crying but they were very welcoming. [The group] prepared a family atmosphere in the house. In the way they have welcomed us, they made us feel that exile and what we were afraid of was reduced. As if they were friends.'*

Mother resettled with the support of Caritas Salford.

*We have overcome difficulties. For examples we would receive a phone call and did not understand. Or people would knock and ask about something and we didn't know what they wanted. That was really hard. To live somewhere new is like being born again you have to learn how to speak again.'*

Mother resettled with the support of Caritas Salford.

*'The group helped with a lot, and they were very good to us. Their job [role] is over but they haven't left us. They are like a family; they didn't treat us like stranger. When you feel their affection, it changes you.'*

Mother resettled with the support of Caritas Salford.

*'We saw it [Community Sponsorship] as an end to suffering and poverty by coming to a country that was safe. When I go to bed at night, I know there won't be sounds of planes [bombing] and I know that my children are safe. And that was our purpose. We might have felt a bit confused at first and a bit stressed because there were things we didn't know. But we were grateful.'*

Mother resettled with the support of Caritas Salford.

*'[the volunteers] were very helpful, they felt like a second family. We feel like we are related, whatever problems we face they would come over talk and help. They were part of our daily life.'*

Mother resettled with the support of Caritas Salford.



Little Amal in London

## 4) The Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)

The ACRS was launched in January 2022 with the aim of resettling more than 5,000 in the first year and thereafter up to 20,000 individuals. Those resettled will receive Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK and the option to apply for citizenship after 5 years.

Three referral pathways have been identified for those eligible for resettlement:

1. Those who arrived under the evacuation programme or were called for evacuation but unable to board flights;
2. Referrals from the UNHCR of those who have fled Afghanistan and are in neighbouring countries;
3. At-risk individuals who supported the UK in Afghanistan, as well as those identified to be particularly vulnerable (e.g. women and girls, minorities).

Under 'Operation Warm Welcome', an initiative to support new arrivals, local authorities are allocated funding packages per person to assist with integration. Additionally, the government committed to additional funds for housing costs, but it is at the discretion of local authorities as to whether they wish to be involved in the scheme. Those evacuated to the UK were placed in temporary accommodation and due to the lack of housing

available, they continue to reside there until local authorities are able to find appropriate housing. There are concerns regarding the suitability of such accommodation long-term for the Afghan families and the impact this may have on their wellbeing.

Property owners and organisations wishing to support the process can register homes that may be available, on the government's Afghanistan housing portal – this may be on either a commercial or charitable basis:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-housing-portal-offers-of-support](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghanistan-housing-portal-offers-of-support)

Those wishing to support Afghan people accommodated in hotels are advised NOT to take action on their own due to safeguarding concerns. The best way to support is to reach out to local charities and join their efforts so as to provide an effective and cohesive level of support whilst prioritising the wellbeing and safety of those in need of support.

Local councils are responsible for Afghan people accommodated in their area and they have partnered with local charities to provide support. Charities are coordinating support and activities, including day trips and educational activities. For those with time to spare and ideas for activities or fundraising, or simply wishing to contribute, we advise contacting your local Caritas agency for further information on how to get involved.



There exist other visa schemes which are not classified as resettlement.

These include:

- 1) Homes for Ukraine Scheme
- 2) Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Visa
- 3) EU Settlement Scheme

As per immigration rules, the Home Office processes applications and has published guidance on the Gov.UK webpage for each scheme. There are also many charities and organisations offering legal advice and guidance regarding eligibility and applications.

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*God defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.*

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(Deuteronomy 10:18-19)

Ukraine march and rally in London



### 1) Homes for Ukraine Scheme: Ukraine Matching Service

Homes for Ukraine was launched in March 2022 to allow Ukrainian nationals to apply for visas to join family/sponsors in the UK. The scheme is for Ukrainian nationals who were residents in Ukraine prior to January 2022 as well as their immediate family members, who may or may not be Ukrainian nationals.

There are many accounts and groups online offering/seeking sponsorship following which, concerns have been raised of possible exploitation – of both the sponsor and the sponsored. As such, it is advised that those seeking to host a Ukrainian (individual or family), reach out to registered charities who have developed a framework for support, to register their interest and be matched accordingly.

In partnership with CSAN, St John of God's Hospitaller Services (SJOG), launched a matching service for the Catholic community in September 2022 – it is a matching, training and support service for both hosts and guests. SJOG will work with European counterparts to support displaced Ukrainians in neighbouring countries to Ukraine, advising those willing to be matched to UK hosts and preparing them for life in the UK, whilst also arranging their transport to the UK – a safe route for them to reach the UK whilst receiving the necessary support and orientation.

Hosts will be volunteers able to offer a minimum 6-month accommodation, free of rent to the Ukrainian individual/family they are matched with – this may be a room in their home or a self-contained property. The local authority will support with wraparound support, but hosts should expect to support with the welcome and integration

process. The host will be eligible to receive £350 from the local authority to support with hosting. These 'thank-you' payments have been extended from 12 months to 2 years - if the hosting arrangement continues for over 12 months, hosts will be eligible for a £500 'thank-you' payment for their ongoing support.

Further guidance can be found on the SJOG webpage: <https://sjog-homesforukraine.uk>

#### Children:

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme was expanded in June 2022 to allow children under the age of 18 to travel to the UK via the scheme, without an accompanying parent or guardian, to reside with friends or relatives in the UK. Further information can be found on the Gov.UK page regarding the processing of applications from unaccompanied children: [www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-to-begin-processing-applications-from-unaccompanied-children](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-to-begin-processing-applications-from-unaccompanied-children)

Taking into consideration the wellbeing and safeguarding concerns for children, sponsors will be asked to host for up to 3 years, or until the child is 18 years of age, but with a minimum hosting commitment of 6 months. DBS checks are required for sponsors and if there is no relation to the child, it must be an enhanced DBS with barred list check.

For further information regarding responses to the war in Ukraine, kindly see the CSAN toolkit which is updated in line with government guidance: [www.csan.org.uk/ukrainetoolkit](http://www.csan.org.uk/ukrainetoolkit)



# Testimonies

Some testimonies from guests and hosts about their experience with the Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme:

*'The Homes for Ukraine Scheme has been truly incredible for me. I feel safe here, away from the sounds of sirens, curfew, and living in constant fear of shelling. The scheme has given me time to find my feet and build a new life in the UK.'*

Yevheniia, Guest

*'Humbling and rewarding. Overall a very positive experience whilst acknowledging it is something of an emotional roller coaster. You become more a part of their story with their family and friends still in Ukraine facing the challenges, anxiety, hardships and in some cases the bereavement that this senseless war brings.'*

David, Host

*'Moving to the UK was the decision to get stability and safety for my family and myself. My sponsors were very helpful with settling in the UK. They provided me with detailed information about local infrastructure: groceries, shops, restaurants, cafes, and many other points of interest. They showed me something we never used in Ukraine. They were accommodating in terms of cultural differences and were very patient.'*

Anonymous, Guest



## 2) Hong Kong British National (Overseas) Visa (BNO)

The BN(O) visa was launched in January 2021 in order to allow those who chose to acquire BNO status on Hong Kong's handover to China in 1997, to emigrate to the UK.

It grants individuals and their eligible family members permission to stay in the UK for a period of 2 years and 6 months, with the option to extend, or for 5 years, following which they may apply for settlement, and subsequently British citizenship.

Those with a BN(O) visa have the right to live, study and work in the UK.

Further government guidance can be found on their webpage:

[www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa](http://www.gov.uk/british-national-overseas-bno-visa)

The government has also published a welcome guide, with helpful information on settling in the UK and accessing services: [www.gov.uk/guidance/welcome-a-guide-for-hong-kong-british-national-overseas-visa-holders-in-the-uk](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/welcome-a-guide-for-hong-kong-british-national-overseas-visa-holders-in-the-uk)

For those wishing to support arrivals, UK Welcomes Refugees has posted a list of organisations providing support: [www.london.gov.uk/city-hall-blog/supporting-hong-kong-arrivals](http://www.london.gov.uk/city-hall-blog/supporting-hong-kong-arrivals)

## 3) EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS)

Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the EUSS was introduced to offer EU, EEA and Swiss citizens residing in the UK, to protect their residence in the UK.

The original deadline to apply was 30 June 2021 but late applications are permitted with a 'reasonable grounds' explanation for the delay in application. Further details regarding eligibility and application can be found on the Gov.UK webpage: [www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/eligibility)

There are two types of status, settled and pre-settled. Those who have lived in the UK for 5 years may apply for settled status, otherwise, an application is made for pre-settled status and after 5 years of continuous residence, an application may be made for settled status.

Citizens Advice Bureau have outlined the application process on their webpage: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/immigration/applying-for-settled-status](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/immigration/applying-for-settled-status)

If you know anyone who may need advice on their immigration status post-Brexit and guidance on the EUSS, please refer them to the above links, or an immigration advisor.

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*"I was a stranger and you welcomed me"*

(Matthew 25:35)

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## Guidance for hosts and sponsors



*Hospitality of Abraham*

*“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”*

(Lev 19:33-34)

Hosting is based on the principle of hospitality: extending warmth and welcome to a guest. Hosting should be like inviting any other guest to stay at your house or in your community. In hosting a refugee guest, you're committing to offering a safe and secure place to stay, facilities to wash, and somewhere to cook and eat.

There are two options for hosting: individual hosting and community sponsorship. Individual hosting is where the host offers a room in their house for a specific period and may support with signposting and integration. Conversely, community sponsorship involves a number of individuals who come together to form a group in order to support an individual/family with accommodation and to provide targeted wraparound support. Both require different levels of commitment and there exist different processes for each, nevertheless, the principle of hosting remains the same.

Potential hosts should be fully aware of what they are being asked to do, and whether this is something that they are able to commit to. You will need to consider the impact that offering a room in your home could have on your life and what it

may take to support someone. We recommend that any potential host or sponsor researches the support that people fleeing conflict may need and what is available in their area or build connections locally to offer support prior to hosting/sponsoring, for example with a local refugee action group and/or a charity that works with refugees and asylum seekers. There are anecdotal reports of a relatively high rate of breakdown in arrangements between host households and refugees who have no prior connection and 'found' each other online outside the Government's recognised matching services.



*Migrants Mass, 2019*

**We strongly encourage potential hosts/sponsors to read through the available literature and resources on hosting and its challenges, speak with organisations offering hosting/sponsoring opportunities and to contact your local diocese/Caritas agency to discuss any concerns you may have, as well as those in your community who may have previously partaken in such programmes.**



Some of those fleeing and being resettled may have suffered recent intense trauma. They have fled their homes, livelihoods and likely left family members behind in a situation of extreme uncertainty and danger. You should be prepared for the possibility of the refugee(s) you are hosting/sponsoring experiencing psychological trauma which may require medical attention.

There may also be language and cultural barriers – some of which may be immediately obvious, others may take time to learn and get to know. English language support will likely vary across England and Wales. Local charities working with refugees and asylum seekers will be best placed to assist with signposting and support for such issues.

If you are interested in hosting a refugee, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), a CSAN member organisation, has an 'At Home' scheme in London to offer destitute refugees accommodation:

[www.jrsuk.net/at-home-hosting-scheme](http://www.jrsuk.net/at-home-hosting-scheme)

The Vita Network have published some helpful resources for both hosts/sponsors and refugees, with a focus on trauma and recovery:

<https://vita-network.com/saferefuge>

The No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) has produced a Hosting Good Practice Guide which explains what hosting entails and key considerations with regards to planning and welcoming: [https://naccomm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NACCOM-Hosting-Good-Practice-Guide-2022\\_PART-1-FINAL-1.pdf](https://naccomm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NACCOM-Hosting-Good-Practice-Guide-2022_PART-1-FINAL-1.pdf)

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*“Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me”*

(Matthew 25:40)

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Installation of migrants' shoes at Westminster



# Enfield Refugee Welcome

## Welcoming as a community

At a public meeting in Enfield in response to the Syrian refugee crisis, members of the community felt strongly that they needed to do something. From this conversation Enfield Refugee Welcome was formed and came to be one of the first adopters of the Community Sponsorship scheme.

Alan and Denise from St Monica's Catholic Parish, Palmers Green, have been involved in the running of the group over the years.

Since the first public meeting, this group of different people from across the borough has welcomed three refugee families from Iran, Syria and Afghanistan. This repeated welcome, as well as the broad base of the community involved is a testament to the galvanizing effect that Community Sponsorship can have.

## Finding connection

Support has at times come providentially. One day the parish priest called up to say that items for a baby had been left in the presbytery and would the group have need for them? As it would transpire, the family just due to arrive would have an infant. Similarly, when the group was in the process of furnishing the house, somebody got in touch to offer a three-piece suite for the family living room. Whilst the families who have arrived find a safe home and support from the community in Enfield, it is hard for the families who have grandparents and parents still at home. When reflecting on Community Sponsorship Denise said; 'it connects us at a different level...we're all part of God's family, despite lots of differences there are so many similarities.'

Further information about Enfield Refugee Welcome can be found on their website: [www.enfieldrefugeewelcome.org](http://www.enfieldrefugeewelcome.org)

*Story shared by Caritas Westminster, Refugee Week 2022.*

*“Helping support a refugee family or individual, in any capacity, is a truly rewarding experience. To be in the privileged position to be able to help another human being makes you truly realise the unfairness in the world but allows you to do something about it. I would recommend to it to everyone, you will not be disappointed.”*

Alan Seldon, Enfield Refugee Welcome



# 5 Modern-slavery and the risk of exploitation for asylum-seekers, refugees and displaced individuals

Refugees, asylum seekers and those forced to flee their country of origin, may be in a vulnerable situation due to their experiences and by reason of flight. Having been uprooted, they are forced to leave behind their family members, their community and support networks, leading to social and cultural isolation. Where they were once self-sufficient, they are now unable to access basic resources and are forced to rely on others for support. Further instances of stigma and discrimination, such as racial prejudice, can exacerbate vulnerabilities and contribute to their layers of trauma.

Trauma related to an individual's flight from their country of origin and the subsequent journey to safety may be further exacerbated by their reception in the country of asylum. Depending on the level of support available, the security of their immigration status and work opportunities, their vulnerabilities may be exacerbated, thereby exposing them to possible exploitation in the UK. Hosts/sponsors can assist in minimising such risks via the wraparound support provided in conjunction with registered charities.

Psychological first aid is a method of helping people in distress, so they feel calm and supported in coping with their challenges. It is a way of assisting someone to manage their situation and make informed decisions. It is important to note that hosts/sponsors are not required to provide psychological support and are advised to refer individuals for specialist medical and psychosocial support, but there are some tools to support with basic psychological first aid, which includes listening, comforting, and signposting.

To further understand what trauma is and how it can affect individuals, NACCOM has published an appendix to their good hosting guide which provides an easy-to-understand overview: [https://naccom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/NACCOM-Hosting-Good-Practice-Guide-Part2\\_2022-05-04\\_Appendix7.pdf](https://naccom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/NACCOM-Hosting-Good-Practice-Guide-Part2_2022-05-04_Appendix7.pdf)

For those interested in learning further about psychological first aid, the IFRC Psychosocial Centre has published resources on psychological first aid and for those fleeing Ukraine: [https://pscentre.org/?resource=a-guide-to-psychological-first-aid-for-red-cross-red-crescent-societies&wpv\\_search=true&selected=single-resource](https://pscentre.org/?resource=a-guide-to-psychological-first-aid-for-red-cross-red-crescent-societies&wpv_search=true&selected=single-resource)

The World Health Organisation has published a psychological first aid guide which provides a framework for supporting people who have experienced crisis event. Though the guide is targeted at field workers, it is useful for all in a position to help and is available in multiple languages: [www.who.int/publications/item/9789241548205](http://www.who.int/publications/item/9789241548205)

Additionally, individuals may have been trafficked or exploited prior to their arrival in the UK. They may not have informed anyone or even discussed their experiences with others. As the supportive relationship develops between hosts/sponsors and the individual, such information may be shared by the individual in a trusting manner. It is thus important that hosts/sponsors are aware of such a possibility and what to do in such cases – hosts/sponsors are not to provide psychosocial support and are advised to refer individuals to specialist medical services for the appropriate psychosocial support.

**UK modern slavery & exploitation helpline:**

**08000 121 700**

For further guidance on modern slavery and exploitation in the UK, The Medaille Trust, a CSAN member organisation specialising in support for survivors of trafficking and modern slavery, have published helpful information on modern slavery and how to spot the signs: <https://www.medaille-trust.org.uk/modern-slavery/what-is-modern-slavery>

Another CSAN member organisation, St John of God (SJOG), have published a report on trauma informed care for survivors of modern slavery which helps with understanding what is modern slavery and what is trauma: <https://sjog.uk/pdf/Research/Establishing-an-evidence-based-Trauma-Informed-Care-Pathway-for-Survivors-of-Modern-Slavery-Final-19May22.pdf>

**It is equally important that hosts/sponsors take care to manage their mental health whilst providing such support and are aware of the risks of vicarious trauma. Vicarious trauma is the term for trauma experienced by individuals through indirect exposure to a traumatic event/experience – hosts/sponsors may be at risk of vicarious trauma through their engagement with those they are supporting, who in the course of their relationship may reveal information about their past and what they experienced, resulting in their flight and resettlement to the UK.**

**If you have any concerns regarding possible vicarious trauma, please contact your GP.**

**Hosts/sponsors may seek guidance from specialist organisations and charities they are partnered with:**

**Refugee Council:**

[www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-support-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-support-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers)

**Freedom from Torture:**

[www.freedomfromtorture.org/help-for-survivors/therapy-and-practical-help](http://www.freedomfromtorture.org/help-for-survivors/therapy-and-practical-help)

**Helen Bamber Foundation:**

[www.helenbamber.org/refer](http://www.helenbamber.org/refer)

Gov.UK has published a migrant mental health guide – though it is targeted to healthcare practitioners, it offers a good outline of some of the issues migrants may face:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-migrant-health-guide](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-migrant-health-guide)



## Volunteering locally



Cross of Lampedusa

*“This is not simply about how many people officials allow to enter this country. The response to refugees must be a welcome, and a welcome is not something a government alone can create, it’s up to everybody.”*

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, on Afghanistan on BBC Radio 4, 22 August 2021

***If you are unable to host, you may support in other ways, such as volunteering with a local charity or organisation offering frontline support.***

CSAN has 54 member organisations, of which many focus their support and advocacy on issues of migration – supporting asylum seekers and refugees in their communities, supporting homeless and destitute migrants and refugees, as well as with hosting resettled families.

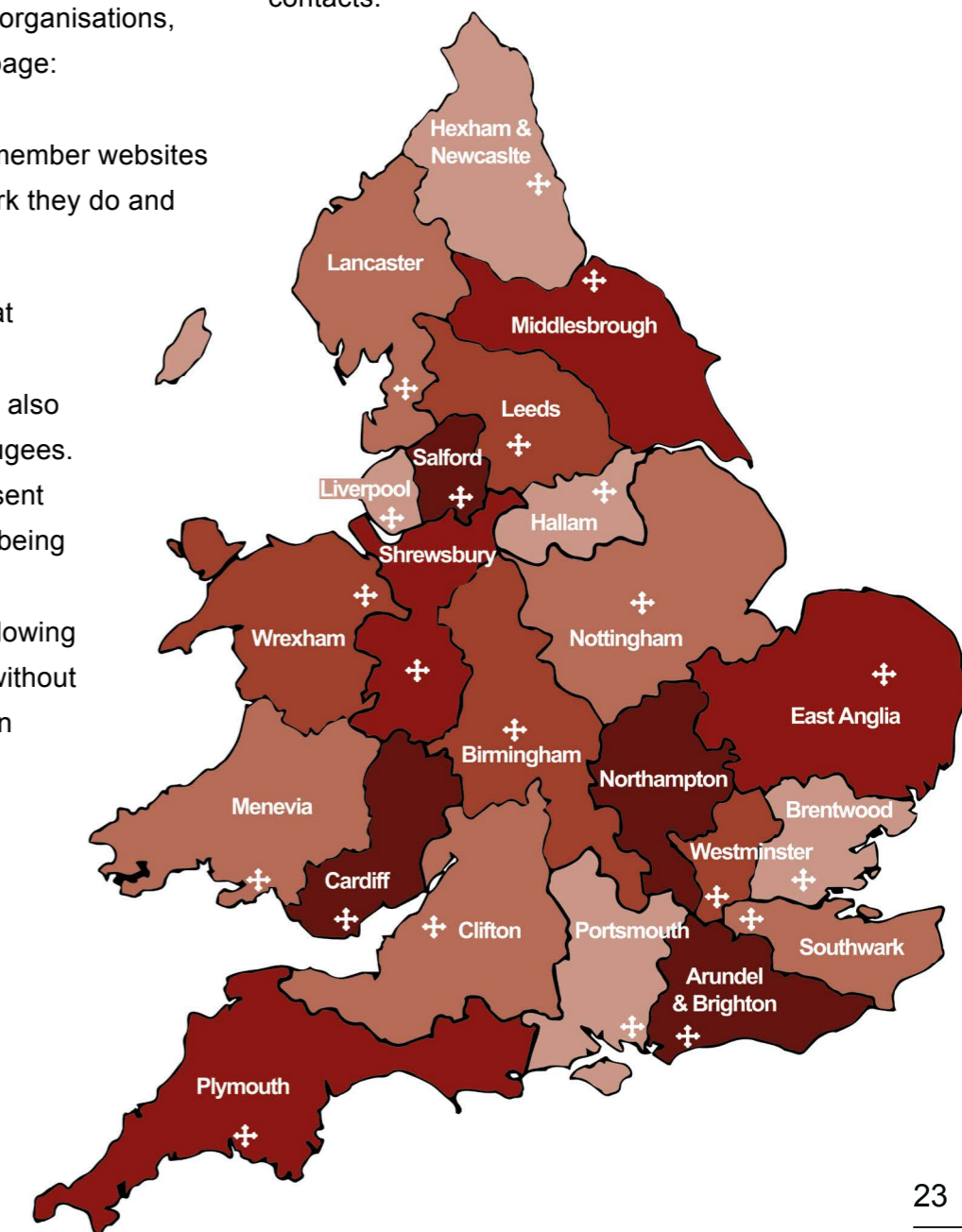
For further information on these organisations, kindly see the CSAN members page:

[www.csan.org.uk/member/](http://www.csan.org.uk/member/).

You may click on the individual member websites for further information on the work they do and ways to get involved.

Additionally, it is worth noting that many frontline support services, such as homelessness services, also support asylum seekers and refugees. Many such individuals often present to homelessness services upon being refused asylum or removed from Home Office accommodation following grant of refugee status and left without support. Should you wish to learn more, you may enquire with your local diocese or frontline organisations in your area.

The following is a map of the dioceses across England and Wales, including those with a diocesan Caritas agency, noting those offering refugee and hosting support services. To get involved, kindly visit their individual webpages for further guidance on projects, activities and contacts.





# St Nicholas of Tolentino RC Church

*St Nicholas of Tolentino, based in Bristol (Clifton Diocese), is a welcoming Christian community comprising of individuals from over 60 nationalities.*

The parishioners at St Nicholas of Tolentino come from mostly low paying occupations. Many parishioners find themselves in difficult economic circumstances, with a significant number seeking asylum and thus on minimal support, or even deemed destitute. Due to this acute need, parishioners in need of support are even more appreciative of the help they so vitally need.

The parish has long supported asylum seekers and refugees in the community, providing a welcoming safe space where they are valued. As the work grew, the parish in 2011 established the Charity, 'Borderlands from exclusion to Belonging' which now offers ESOL classes, mentoring and much more, assisting in their integration. 'Borderlands Charity' continues to be supported and hosted by the parish.

The parish has long provided food for the homeless, including for so-called 'failed' asylum seekers, but due to the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis, this has extended to the wider local community. Lockdown pressures saw an increase from 20 to 500 individuals per week accessing the food bank, resulting in the purchase of an adapted shipping container to meet demand. As of December 2022, the food bank now supports approximately 200 individuals which (because of the many families) amounts per week to

800-1000 people altogether, and operates 3 days a week. St Nicholas of Tolentino have noted an increase specifically in the number of Ukrainians using their food bank, in addition to the continuing numbers of refugees who are accommodated in a nearby hotel by the Home Office, where they are provided with insufficient and culturally inappropriate food.

The food bank is a vital service for the community at St Nicholas of Tolentino, but they rely on donations and the increase in need means there is a lack of food to support the community and the families they serve.

The parish through the parish office ministry has also established a fuel poverty fund, giving each person £10 once every four weeks: this currently amounts to £1400 per month! The Parish Office has become a real caring and pastoral inter-face with the local wider community as they bring a variety of needs for support.

To learn more about the parish and offer your support or to donate, see their website: <https://tolentino.org.uk>



## Province of Birmingham

### CARITAS SHREWSBURY

Lead sponsor for community sponsorship groups

The Well Project

Afghan support

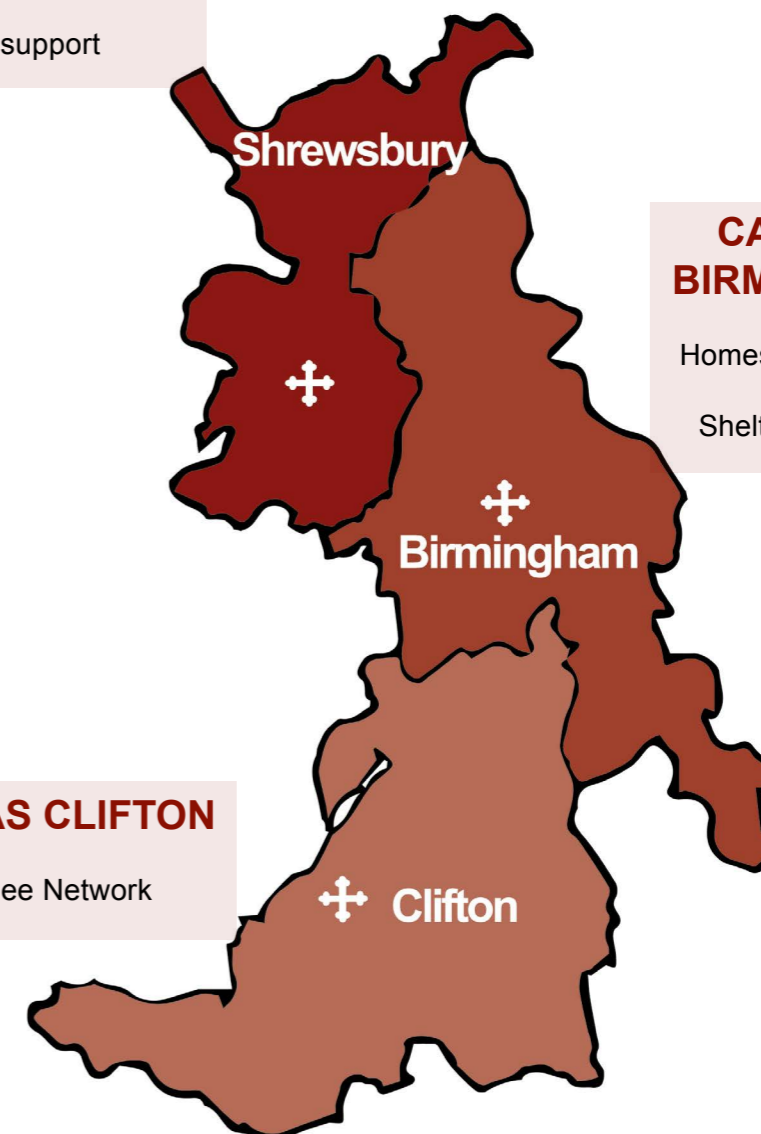
### CARITAS BIRMINGHAM

Homes for Ukraine

Shelter Projects

### CARITAS CLIFTON

Refugee Network





# Province of Liverpool

**LANCASTER**  
Kindly see the diocese website for further information

**CARITAS HEXHAM & NEWCASTLE**  
Justice & Peace Refugee Project

**CARITAS MIDDLESBROUGH**  
Kindly see the diocese website for further information

**CARITAS LEEDS**  
Refugee support group  
Lead sponsor for community sponsorship groups  
West Yorkshire Destitute Asylum Seekers Network (WYDAN)

**CARITAS Salford**  
Lead sponsor for community sponsorship groups  
Refugee education & wellbeing support

**CARITAS HALLAM**  
'Home from Home' community sponsorship programme

**NUGENT (LIVERPOOL)**  
Lead sponsor for community sponsorship groups

Map labels: Hexham & Newcastle, Lancaster, Middlesbrough, Leeds, Salford, Liverpool, Hallam

# Province of Westminster

**CARITAS NOTTINGHAM**  
Kindly see the diocese website for further information

**CARITAS EAST ANGLIA**  
Kindly see the diocese website for further information

**CARITAS NORTHAMPTON**  
Lead sponsor for community sponsorship groups  
Homes for Ukraine

**CARITAS BRENTWOOD**  
Lead sponsor for community sponsorship groups  
Member charities with volunteering opportunities

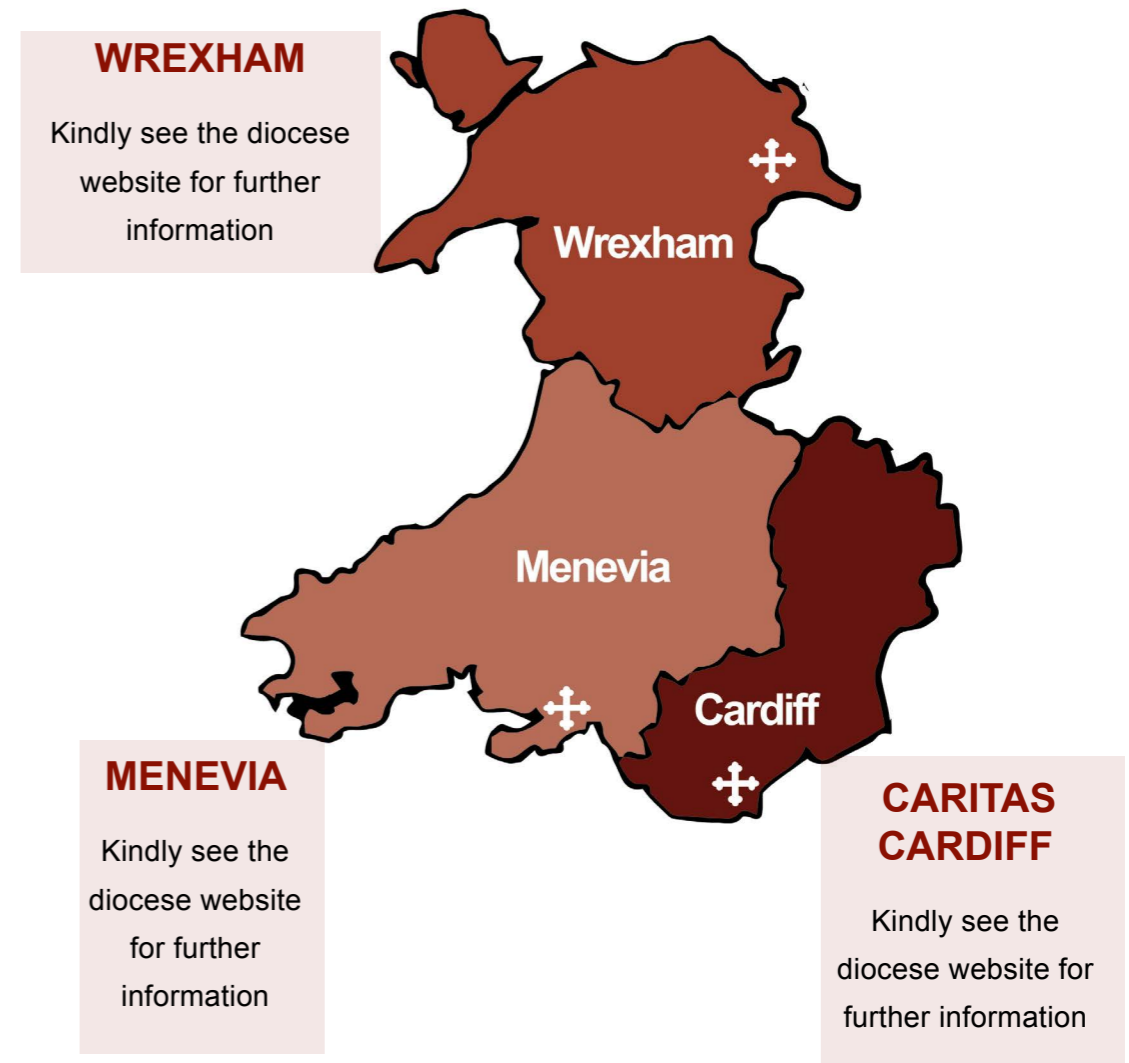
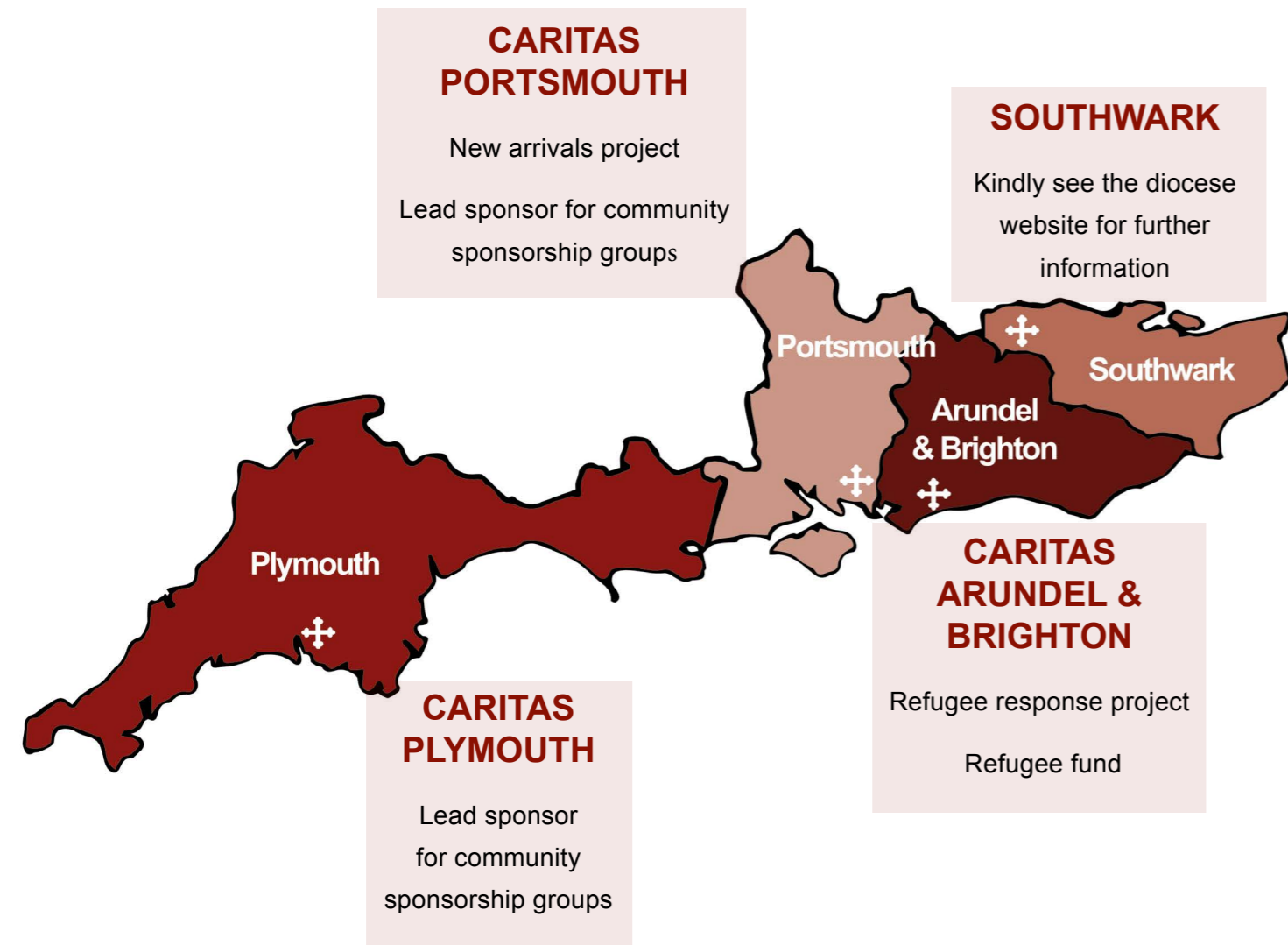
**CARITAS WESTMINSTER**  
Refugee hosting diocesan community of support  
Lead sponsor for community sponsorship groups  
Afghan response

Map labels: Nottingham, East Anglia, Northampton, Brentwood, Westminster

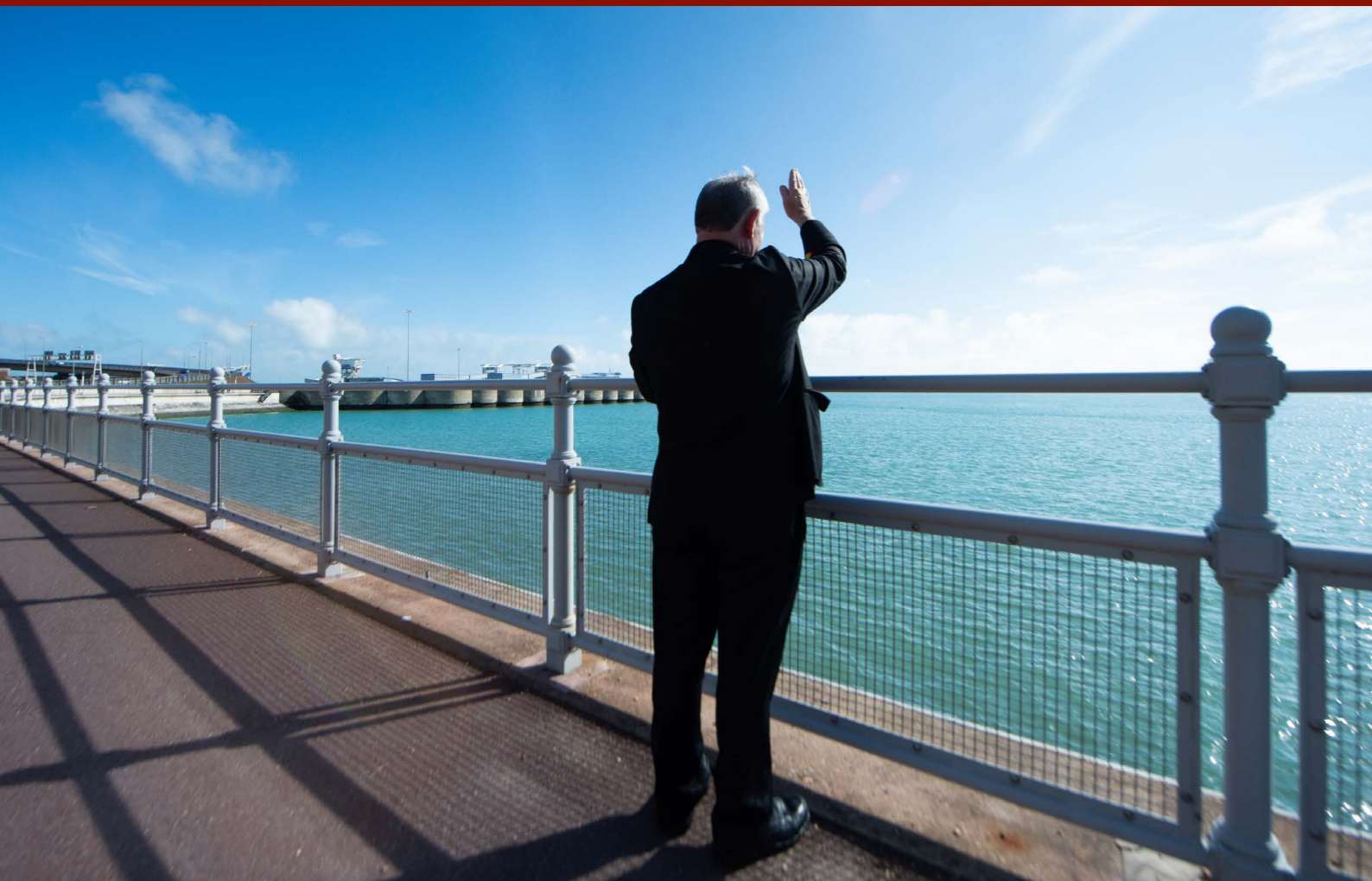


# Province of Southwark

# Province of Cardiff







Bishop Paul McAleenan at Dover seafront

*Lord, make us bearers of hope, so that where there is darkness, your light may shine, and where there is discouragement, confidence in the future may be reborn. Lord, make us instruments of your justice, so that where there is exclusion, fraternity may flourish, and where there is greed, a spirit of sharing may grow. Lord, make us builders of your Kingdom, together with migrants and refugees and with all who dwell on the peripheries. Lord, let us learn how beautiful it is to live together as brothers and sisters.  
Amen.*

Prayer for World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2022, Pope Francis

**If you would like to share your experiences supporting refugees and migrants, or if you would simply like some more information, please get in contact.**

**You can write to us at:**

*Caritas Social Action Network  
Romero House  
55 Westminster Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 7JB*

Or send an email to [admin@csan.org.uk](mailto:admin@csan.org.uk).

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*"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me"*

(Matthew 25:35-36)



**caritas**  
social action network