

News story: Home Secretary announces £1 million to help communities support refugees

The funding was announced by the Home Secretary to mark the one year anniversary of the [community sponsorship scheme](#) (Wednesday 19 July).

The community sponsorship scheme, which was launched by the Home Secretary at Lambeth Palace last year, enables community groups to take on the role of supporting refugees who have been resettled from the camps in the countries surrounding Syria in the UK.

Since the scheme launched last year, 53 refugees have been welcomed by 10 community groups across the UK. Community sponsors, including charities, faith groups and churches, provide housing for the refugee families, as well as helping them to integrate into life in the UK, access medical and social services, arranging English language tuition and supporting them towards employment and self-sufficiency.

The new 2 year £1 million fund will provide training and support for groups signing up to the scheme.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

“I am delighted that the community sponsorship scheme has got off to such an excellent start.

“The work of the volunteers who have welcomed refugees into their communities over the last year is inspiring, as is the compassion of the many local authorities who have provided their support.

“But this is just the beginning. I hope many more groups, from across England and Wales, will be inspired to get involved. That is why I have announced this funding, to help more communities welcome vulnerable families looking to create a new life and bring real benefits to the places in which they will live and work.”

One year ago Lambeth Palace became the first community group to welcome a refugee family. Since then community groups from Manchester to Cornwall and Wales have also welcomed these vulnerable families into their communities.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said:

“Last year we welcomed a family of Syrian refugees to live with us here at Lambeth Palace through the community sponsorship scheme. It has been an absolute privilege and joy to get to know this special family over the last year as we’ve supported them to start a new life in the UK. They have been a blessing to us in so many ways.

“It’s amazing to think that we are celebrating the one year anniversary of the scheme. In whatever way you can, I would encourage everyone to get involved with community sponsorship and support refugees. It is truly a life-changing experience.”

The UK scheme has been set up by the government working closely with civil society groups and international partners including the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative, which is jointly led by the Government of Canada, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Open Society Foundations, the Radcliffe Foundation, and the University of Ottawa.

The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, said:

“The success of Canada’s refugee resettlement program would not be possible without our private sponsorship program. I’m very pleased to see that the UK has already experienced similar success with its own sponsorship model within its first year.

“Through the community sponsorship scheme for refugees, the UK will be able to help bring more vulnerable people around the world to safety. I have no doubt that private sponsorship, which has been so positive in Canada, will also bring long-term advantages for individual communities in the UK and the entire country.”

Community sponsorship is just one way that the UK government is helping to support refugees. The government remains on track to meet its commitment of resettling 23,000 of the most vulnerable refugees through the vulnerable person and children’s resettlement schemes by 2020, with over 7000 refugees resettled as of March this year.