

Gloucestershire Homes for Refugees Q&A

What is the Gloucestershire Homes for Refugees scheme?

The Homes for Refugees (HFR) scheme has been created to provide short-term supported accommodation for refugees who have received a positive decision on their asylum claim and have been granted leave to remain in the UK.

Hosts provide a spare room for a short time as a stepping stone to help refugees in their first few months, while securing suitable employment and long-term housing.

Why is it needed?

The Home Office have been speeding up the process of making decisions on asylum claims, prioritising those who have been in this country for over 18 months, and living in Home Office asylum accommodation. Those who have received positive decisions are given refugee status and asked to leave their accommodation, often with short notice.

The County Council have introduced the Homes for Refugees scheme to give this group of new refugees a little more time to look for their own accommodation, secure benefits, find employment and work out their next steps.

Who can become a host?

You can become a host if you own your own property, or with your landlord's permission if you rent.

Hosts are subject to a brief housing inspection, a DBS check, and must have leave to remain in the UK for 6 months or more.

What will I be expected to provide?

Hosting agreements are very flexible, and for the most part can be decided in collaboration with your guest. The minimum requirements are suitable sleeping arrangements (such as a spare bedroom or annex), and access to bathing and cooking facilities.

Rent must not be charged, but fair and proportional contributions to expenses are permissible.

Other aspects are flexible so that hosting can be tailored to your individual household. Some hosts like to share cooking and meals with guests, whereas others keep their food expenses and cooking times separate.

What support is offered?

All hosts are entitled to receive £600 per month. In addition, you and your guest will receive wrap-around support to help with securing suitable employment and longer-term housing.

The HFR team is available to answer any queries and advise on all aspects of hosting. The team can be contacted via HFR@gloucestershire.gov.uk and further details are available on www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/homes-for-refugees

How long are the hosting agreements?

Placements are expected to last a maximum of 3 months, though guests may move out earlier once longer-term housing is secured.

How is my Council Tax affected?

Council tax discounts are protected or reimbursed under the HFR scheme.

How are guests and hosts matched?

Matching is a collaborative process. The HFR team will contact you with details of guests in need of accommodation. If you think the guest could be a suitable match for your household, we would then pass your contact details to our partner Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS).

You would then have the opportunity to meet the potential guests before deciding whether to go ahead with the placement or not.