



# LODGINGS SCHEME

## KEY INFORMATION FOR REFERRERS

# About the Refugee Lodgings Scheme

This project has been developed in response to the rise in new refugees ending up street homeless once they have to leave their Home Office accommodation.

The project has been designed to bridge the gap between Home Office accommodation and future, long term accommodation.

The project has been funded by GMCA as an initial six-month pilot, to explore whether a lodgings scheme could work in Greater Manchester, and could help reduce the numbers of new refugees facing homelessness.

The project launched mid-November 2025, and we expect to start placing lodgers in early 2026.

Please note that this is a pilot project with limited numbers of spaces available.



# What additional barriers do refugees face in finding housing?

Refugees face a unique and often overwhelming set of challenges when trying to secure a safe, stable place to live. Our programme was created in response to the growing gap between what people need when they receive refugee status and what current housing systems can offer.

## 1. A Sudden End to Home Office Accommodation

Once someone is granted refugee status, the accommodation provided during the asylum process ends, currently after 28 days. Although some support exists, it is not enough to help people understand the UK's complex housing system or navigate their new rights and responsibilities as tenants in the time available to them.

## 2. Limited Access to Local Authority Support

Local councils have a duty to assist people who are homeless, but many newly recognised refugees do not meet the requirements for "priority need" or "local connection." Because people seeking asylum are often moved around the country with no control over where they live, these criteria can leave them with very few options for council support.

## 3. Barriers in the Private Rented Sector

For many refugees, renting privately is the only route available, but significant obstacles make this extremely difficult:

- Financial barriers: Most people leave the asylum system with very limited income or savings. Deposits, rent in advance, and guarantor requirements are often impossible to meet.
- Documentation challenges: Landlords routinely ask for payslips, bank statements or rental histories that refugees simply do not have yet.
- Affordability: High rents make private accommodation out of reach for people who are still looking for work or just beginning to build financial stability.
- Discrimination: Misunderstandings about refugees' rights, "right to rent" checks, or the use of benefits can lead landlords to refuse applications.

## 4. Additional Pressures

Even when support is available, it often falls short:

- Universal Credit delays: While newly recognised refugees can claim Universal Credit, payments can take weeks to arrive, leaving people without money for rent.
- Shortage of charitable housing: A few charities offer accommodation, but demand is far higher than what is available.
- Inconsistent rent-guarantee schemes: Some areas offer deposit or guarantor schemes, but coverage is patchy and not all landlords accept them.
- Reduced confidence and skills: After long periods in temporary accommodation without the right to work, many people feel disempowered and unprepared to manage a tenancy independently.
- Lack of social housing and the low turnover of stock.

# The Referral Process

We are currently accepting referrals from across the 10 Greater Manchester Local Authorities.

The Lodgings Scheme is for:

- Single Individuals who have received their refugee status in the last 6 months, who are not "in priority need" and therefore do not have a duty owed to them by their local authority.
- Individuals who have received their refugee status whilst living in Greater Manchester.
- Individuals who are eligible for housing benefit or are able to pay rent (set at LHA level).
- Individuals with no/very low support needs.

The Lodgings Scheme is not for:

- Couples, families with children, or people expecting imminent family reunification.
- Refugees who have complex needs, as they should be redirected to their local authority.
- Individuals who have an active asylum claim (as they should be accommodated by the Home Office).
- Individuals who have had a negative decision on their application for asylum.
- Individuals who have pets.

Ideally, individuals being referred should have been known to the referrer for period of time so that the referrer is able to comment on their suitability for the scheme.

All referrals must be made via our online referral form. Please ensure that the person you are referring has the right to rent in the UK.

The online referral form asks a range of questions to help us ascertain the suitability of the person you are referring.

All individuals will be required to meet with one of our Support Workers for a further assessment to understand their circumstances, their housing needs and to assess if they are suitable for the scheme.

If accepted, they will be put forward to be matched with a landlord. They will be expected to attend an introduction meeting to view the property and meet the landlord prior to both parties accepting the match.

If a potential lodger does not attend their initial appointment, or the introductory meeting, they may forfeit their place on the scheme.

Due to the nature of the scheme, the lodger may be matched with a landlord anywhere across GM. Wherever possible we will take into consideration the preference of the lodger, their existing community links etc.

All rents will be set at no more than the LHA rate, this will be exclusive of utility bills or any service charge.

Lodgers will be expected to pay rent by Standing Order - we can provide support to set this up.

# What is provided?

A single or double room in the house of the landlord, for a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months.

All accommodation provided via our scheme will have to adhere to our minimum standards. This includes the size of the room, the furniture provided, access to other facilities (kitchen, bathroom, laundry etc.).

All accommodation will have an annual Gas Safety Check and an electrical safety check every five years. The property will be fitted with smoke alarms and a carbon monoxide detector (if relevant).

All lodgers will be given a key to the property and be able to come and go freely.

Lodgers will be asked to complete a 'Living Together Agreement' which will outline any additional arrangements (e.g. cleaning, smoking, visitors etc.)

All lodgers will be allocated a Support Worker, who will help them settle into the property, into the community, and work with them to create a plan around education, training and employment, as well as connecting them to social opportunities etc.

Lodgers will also be provided with move-on support, helping them to explore their housing options following their lodgings placement.

Our staff will also be available to mediate between the landlord and lodger if any issues arise.

Lodgers will be expected to take responsibility for engaging with the support offered, and be open to move-on options, including shared accommodation.

