

Sorted: scores of volunteers at The Hive in Dalston, east London, sort through piles of donations bound for the migrant camps in Calais

CREDIT: DEMOTIX



Left: People in Nottingham pledge to help refugees

The Refugee Crisis: How can we help?

OFFER ACCOMMODATION

Offers of accommodation are unlikely to be taken up immediately, as the Government will continue to house asylum-seekers through local authorities. On the other hand, as more offers are made, this policy might change. To register a rooms in your own home, or a vacant property, try:

Positive Action in Housing: www.paih.org

Citizens UK: www.citizensuk.org

No Accommodation UK: nacom.org.uk

Although spare rooms are helpful, local governments are most in need of landlords to offer up family-sized rental properties in the UK. Landlords must be prepared to offer it as a home for any refugee family, not just Syrians, and to offer a three-year tenancy. The first 12 months of the rent will be paid for by the European Union under a scheme for placing vulnerable refugees.

With some databases such as PAIH you can specify whom you are willing to accommodate, for example a refugee of the same gender, and for how long. You are also under no obligation to say yes if the match comes through at a bad time.

You may also try asking your council to resettle 50 refugees, or write to your MP asking to fulfil the resettlement quota.

OFFER TO FOSTER

You could also help a refugee find a home by expressing an interest in fostering unaccompanied children.

Visit Home for Good: www.homeforgood.org.uk

Local council screening to become a foster-parent may take several months, and there is no guarantee of success.

DONATE

A number of charities and non-governmental organisations have organised appeals to help the plight of refugees. They include:

Tearfund: www.tearfund.org/en/refugeecrisis
Save the Children: <https://secure.savethechildren.org.uk/donate/>
Refugee Council: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk
UNICEF: www.unicef.org.uk/landing-pages/donate-syria
British Red Cross: www.redcross.org.uk/syriacrisis
Justgiving: <http://about.justgiving.com/content/calais-migrant-crisis>
The Diocese in Europe is partnering with aid agency Us (formerly USPG):
www.weareus.org.uk/europe

On Thursday, Christian Aid was due to launch a special appeal to raise funds for its partners in the Act Alliance, working with refugees in Europe, and to help those from the Syria and Iraq conflicts. Christian Aid's Head of Middle East, Frances Guy, said that countries in the region were hosting an "overwhelming number of refugees", and more support for their partners in the region was needed.

You can read more about this and other appeals, and how to donate, by visiting the web pages listed.

PROTEST

There are a number of petitions you can sign online, campaigning for, among other things, the Government to accept more refugees; for British people to be able to foster unaccompanied children; and to open homes to refugee families.

For example: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/105991>
www.barnabasfund.org
www.change.org/p/david-cameron-britain-must-accept-its-fair-share-of-refugees-seeking-safety-in-europe

SHARE EXPERIENCES

Spread the word on social media about the crisis and how people can help, or raise awareness. Share articles (including this one) so that other people are aware of the crisis and know how to help. Update your knowledge about the organisations and charities you support. And let friends know you've signed online petitions.

PRAY

Most of all seek God's mercy and help. The following prayer is from the Church of England:

*Heavenly Father,
you are the source of all goodness, generosity, and love.
We thank you for opening the hearts of many to those who are
fleeing for their lives. Help us now to open our arms in
welcome, and reach out our hands in support,
that the desperate may find new hope,
and lives torn apart be restored.
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ your son,
our Lord, who fled persecution at his birth,
and at his last triumphed over death.*

Amen

