

THE REFUGEE CRISIS: Resources to guide our response



I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

Matthew 25.35

St Michael & All Angels London Fields

Open to God, open to all

As of mid-2016, there were more than 4.815 million registered Syrian Refugees, of whom more than half were under 18

(Source: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php> on 1.8.16).

The UK has committed to receiving 20,000 of these over 5 years, plus an as yet undetermined number of unaccompanied Syrian refugee children.

Our response as individuals could involve supporting a relevant charity either **financially** or **practically**.

Charities which could be supported financially:

(A) Agencies and charities operating internationally: These include:

1. **Christian Aid:** The official ecumenical development agency working with churches and other agencies in supporting humanitarian efforts in Europe and the Middle East. <http://www2.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies/refugee-crisis> or call 020 7523 2493.
2. **The 'Us' Rapid Response Fund:** Us is the Anglican mission agency, formerly USPG, <http://www.weareus.org.uk/rapid/rapidresponse/> currently supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon. You can donate online via the link at <http://www.weareus.org.uk/worldwide/syria/> or call 020 7921 2200.
3. **Tearfund's Middle East Emergency Appeal:** This appeal supports Tearfund's work on the ground supporting families who urgently need access to safe water, shelter and vital essentials: http://www.tearfund.org/en/latest/middle_east_emergency_appeal/ or call 0208 977 9144.
4. **Oxfam:** Providing clean water, sanitation and support for displaced families in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, and water, food, clothes, personal hygiene kits, and longer term psychological and legal support for those arriving in Greece, Italy, Serbia and Macedonia: <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what-we-do/emergency-response/refugee-crisis>.
5. **United Nations Refugee Agency:** The official fundraising campaign for the UNHCR, providing basic and necessary humanitarian aid for Syrian refugees and helps the most vulnerable refugees with urgently needed relief - cash for medicine and food, stoves and fuel for heating, insulation for tents, thermal blankets and winter clothing: <https://donate.unhcr.org/gb-en/syria/>.

6. **Save the Children:** Supporting refugee children across Europe and in the countries they are fleeing from to provide aid and support.
<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/about-us/emergencies/child-refugee-crisis-appeal> or 0800 8148 148.
7. **Refugee Action:** Supporting refugees in the UK: http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/support_us/give.

(B) Agencies and charities operating locally:

1. **Akwaaba:** A local Sunday Social drop in for refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants (founded by members of Green Lanes Methodist Church and the Hackney Migrant Centre): <http://akwaaba.strikingly.com/>.
2. **Dost Centre:** Improving the quality of life for young refugees and migrants in East London: <http://dostcentre.org>.
3. **Hackney Migrant Centre:** Runs a weekly drop-in for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants on Wednesdays, 10-4pm, offering free advice on immigration problems. They also have a health advocate that can help with access to NHS services and GP registration:
<http://www.hackneymigrantcentre.org.uk/>.
4. **London Churches Refugee Fund:** Raises money to give small grants to organisations assisting destitute refugees and asylum-seekers:
<http://www.londonchurches.org.uk/4.html>.
5. **Praxis:** Provides advice, support and a welcome meeting place for vulnerable migrants and refugees in London: www.praxis.org.uk.
6. **Refugee Support Network:** Supports young people affected by displacement and crisis to access and progress in education:
<http://refugeesupportnetwork.org>.
7. **Refugee Welcome Hackney, Tower Hamlets:** A broad network of civil society groups supporting the resettlement of Syrian refugees. Currently working with borough councils to find private rental accommodation for

Syrian refugees: <https://www.refugees-welcome.org.uk/campaigning-for-change/>.

If you'd like more information about these and other projects, you can find it at <http://www.capitalmass.org.uk/refugee-response/information-and-signposting>, or ask Daniel.

Initiatives which could be supported by practical action:

Volunteering for some of the above, plus:

London Hosting:

This could suit anyone with a spare bedroom and willing to make it available for a short stay. A project promoted by Housing Justice <http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/> in partnership with Praxis, Spare Room, London Catholic Worker and others, this provides spare rooms and temporary homes for destitute migrants and others excluded from public funds. During their stay, the project works with advisers to ensure that guests' asylum, immigration, legal and/or health issues are resolved, and in most cases that they can successfully move on to permanent homes of their own.

The length of the stay is up to the host; typically a guest will stay for around 2 months.

See <http://www.housingjustice.org.uk/pages/migrant-destitution-page.html>, <https://londonhosting.wordpress.com/>, or contact Tommy Cloherty mandb@HousingJustice.org.uk 07827 947016 or Alastair Murray a.murray@HousingJustice.org.uk.

Welcome Box Project: Trained volunteers deliver a box filled with small gifts and local information to welcome refugees who have recently arrived in their local area, going on to befriend the family or individual, help them to access support and link them into community. Would need a volunteer co-ordinator able to offer 7 hours a week initially. <http://www.welcomeboxes.org/> and <http://www.welcomeboxes.org/start-a-project/>.

There is more useful information at www.gov.uk/helprefugees 'How you can help refugees coming to the UK'.