



Falmouth & Penryn Welcome Refugee Families (Welcome)
registered charity no. 1181196

Charitable Aims:

- 1) *To resettle families fleeing war and climate change within our local area via the Community Sponsorship scheme, and to support them to achieve financial and social independence within their new community.*

- 2) *To help existing refugees living in the local area via additional educational and social opportunities.*

Welcome have now resettled two families and given much support to the wider refugee community in our area to provide and facilitate activities and opportunities to the families.

History

A group of friends started this charity at the beginning of 2018 as a response to the growing global migration crisis. We were then a small group of friends who were very upset about the global refugee situation, and our government's inadequate response to help. We all signed petitions, and some people went to help in the 'Jungle' in Calais, but we all wanted to be able to make a bigger difference in our home county, Cornwall.

We found out about the Community Sponsorship scheme because there was another group in a town called Bude in the far north of Cornwall, who had resettled two families. Bude is a much smaller town than Falmouth, and we felt strongly that Falmouth ought to be doing this too! It took a long time to get started:

- **8 months** to become a legally registered charity. This was required so that we could raise money and have a bank account in the charity's name, and be accountable to the public for how we use the money.

- **12 months** to gather enough volunteers with the right skills
- **18 months** to raise the £9000 required to submit a Resettlement Application
- **20 months** to find a suitable property
- **22 months** to welcome the first family

Community Sponsorship in the UK

More than 70 million people are displaced across the world. The UK Government has committed to resettling just 5000 refugees from 2020-2021. The UK Community Sponsorship scheme was set up by the government in 2016 in response to communities and faith leaders who said that they wanted to do more to help. It is an international scheme based on a model that existed in Canada for many years. It's a unique programme enabling a group of ordinary people to welcome a refugee family into their local area and support them as they rebuild their lives.

It's the only programme that works **in addition** to the number of refugees able to access safe and legal routes to resettlement in the UK. If every town in the UK had a community sponsorship group with 2 families in their care the overall UK refugee resettlement programme would double in size.

In the UK the legal requirement is for Community Sponsorship groups to:

- Find and furnish an affordable home for a refugee family for a minimum period of 2 years.
- Raise at least £9,000 (to cover various costs like translation, furnishing the house, and English classes)
- Welcome the family at the airport and settle them in their new community (helping them register for benefits, access health services and enroll children in schools)
- Provide support and encouragement to the family for one year so that they can live securely and independently

Reset is the UK's Community Sponsorship training provider. All Community Sponsorship Groups must be trained by Reset in order for the Home Office to approve an application to resettle a refugee family. They are funded by the government and additional charitable organisations to provide a lot of advice and learning resources, and monitor the wellbeing of both groups and resettled families during their first year in the UK. You can find out more by looking at their website which can be found here, in <https://resetuk.org/> Arabic: <https://resetuk.org/arabic>.

Who are Welcome?

Welcome is managed by a group of trustees and many other volunteers. **Charity trustees** are the people who share ultimate responsibility for governing a **charity** and directing how it is managed and run, through regular meetings and conversations.

Our **Trustees** are:

Jude Munden Chair
Caroline Cox Vice Chair
Jayne Howard Secretary
Steve Bond Treasurer

Rufus Maurice
Hannah Stephens
Sue Topf
Linda Cole
Elaine Johnson
Glyn Winchester

Our **Volunteers** are the people who have face to face contact with resettled families, and have a range of different roles. We split these roles into two groups, **Befrienders** and **ESOL Teachers**. All of our volunteers are DBS checked (a scheme which ensures no one with a criminal record can work without that information being known by the charity) and undergo Safeguarding Training which teaches them how to respond correctly and safely to a range of situations that may affect the wellbeing of the resettled families.

All of our **Trustees** are also **Volunteers**. All of our **Trustees** and some of our **Volunteers** are also **Board Members** which means they attend regular meetings to make decisions, and also hold special responsibilities within the group.

Here is a list of **Board Members** and their special roles:

Jude Munden Chair
Caroline Cox Vice Chair
Jayne Howard Secretary
Steve Bond Treasurer
Rufus Maurice Events and fundraising
Hannah Stephens School Lead
Ellie Stacey School Team and Safeguarding Lead
Elaine Johnson Health Lead and Safeguarding Team
Mohamad Alassadi Health Coordinator and Interpreter

Linda Coles Befriender Support, Volunteer Team
Glyn Winchester Events, Fundraising and Social Media
Sue Topf ESOL Teaching Lead, Volunteer Team
Alan Munden Housing Team and Landlord
Anna Retallack Housing Team, Volunteer Team, Landlord and Safeguarding team
Robin Andrews Benefits and Employment Support Lead
Jayne Howard Befriender Support and Safeguarding advisor
Taziri Gadmour Interpreter support
Rachel Preston Interpreter support

We now have over 50 volunteers (including those above). Some are **ESOL Teachers** some are **Befrienders** and some help with things as they can, helping out with admin behind-the-scenes or at fundraiser events and other community events.

Being a **Volunteer** means that you want to help an organisation without being paid. Nobody who is a part of **Welcome** receives any money and gives their time freely because they are committed to the work that **Welcome** does. We are always seeking new members to help us with our work, and new members often join because they have met someone from the group, or through the public fundraising events that we do, like jumble sales.

The responsibilities of a Community Sponsorship group

When we first formed as a group, we received training from RESET to help us understand our responsibilities and to be able to carry them out. Our primary roles in the first year are of the following General Support:

- To create a welcoming home environment for a new family to arrive into
- To help families to navigate the UK Benefits system
- To help with practical needs such as arranging phone contracts and utilities bills
- To ensure children have school places
- To help families communicate with essential services
- To provide a lot of initial interpretation, and then enough ongoing interpretation
- To help families to feel a part of their local community
- To ensure that families health needs are met
- To provide a minimum of 8hrs/week of ESOL teaching This needs to continue for at least a year or until a refugee has reached what's called Entry Level 3 (whichever is the sooner)
- To help adults to access employment at the first opportunity

All Sponsorship groups have made a legal obligation to provide the support listed above

only during the first 12 months of a family's resettlement period. The property that the families first live in is required to be guaranteed for the first 2 years. **Welcome** decided to extend the periods of commitment for both Year 1 (general support) and Year 2 (housing security) as we felt that more support would greatly benefit any resettled family. All families supported by **Welcome** will receive general support (as listed above for Year 1) for **two years** and security of accommodation for **three years**.

Working towards independence

In our training from RESET there has been great emphasis placed on ensuring that our support always builds the empowerment of refugee families, and that every action we take should have this intent at its core. Basically our entire purpose is to make ourselves redundant! Sometimes this might mean that we make decisions not to help families around certain issues, or to help in a different way than is being asked. This might sometimes put strain on relationships or make the families feel less supported.

We want to make it easy for families to both understand and question our decisions and also understand how to make a complaint if they feel unfairly treated.

Welcome and Money

Everything we do is only possible because of the generosity of the community we live in. This community provides the money and the volunteers we need. Public fundraising events achieve two things:

- Make the charity visible, so we get more people talking about the issues around refugees both locally and globally
- Raise much needed funds which allow us to do the work we do

We know that in many places in the world money raised by charities is often misused or mismanaged. In the UK all registered charities are accountable to the Charity Commission who ensure that all money raised is used correctly and honestly for the purposes stated at the top of this document, and is never used secretly to benefit the wrong people. We are happy to make our accounts publicly available at any time necessary.

Community Sponsorship and Family Reunification

At present, the UK does not operate a 'naming' system whereby refugees already in the UK can apply to bring in family members or friends through sponsorship. Any refugee from the Syrian conflict has to be selected for resettlement by the UNHCR before the UK will consider resettling them here, *and that includes through sponsorship*. So the choice of which refugees get to come to the UK through community sponsorship is made by the UN and the UK government not by sponsoring groups or Sponsor Refugees.

Welcome understands that all of the resettled families we support are likely to have family members living abroad in difficult circumstances, and that they feel a great responsibility to seek any opportunity to help their loved ones. We are powerless to help and have no control or power to help with family reunification, however frustrated we are with the inhumane government systems in the UK at present.