

Malvern Open Homes



General Information sheet for those interested in applying to be a host

How to apply

Please read through the below information, which will help you decide if this is a project you would like to be involved in. Once you think it is something you want to do, then please contact us on info@malvernwelcomes.org to register your interest in applying to be host - and we will then send you information more in-depth information about the scheme and how to apply. When your mind is made up, potential hosts then need to apply directly to Refugees at Home.

We also suggest you visit www.refugeesathome.org, where you will find loads of information in their FAQ's on their website, but some of the most common questions are covered below.

Who might stay with me?

Refugees at Home match hosts with guests who are asylum-seekers or refugees. As part of the registration process you will specify what you can and cannot offer to ensure a good match. The people who might stay with you will fall into two categories, and are most likely to be young men.

1. Those who have been refused asylum and are appealing. This includes the majority of asylum-seekers in the UK from different countries.
2. People who have been granted refugee status but have to vacate their housing within 28 days. This includes people of a range of nationalities, including Syrians, Iraqi, Afghani and Somali.

How do I know a potential guest is OK?

RAH do their best to make some checks on potential guests, most of whom will have been referred by refugee agencies who will conduct background checks, (eg to establish there is no criminal record). They take references for those who are referred informally and will talk to you about your guest and send you the guest application form so you can decide. It's your home and your decision, and if you want to meet a potential guest before you decide if you can host, RAH will try to facilitate that.

Will Refugees At Home check up on me?

RAH will arrange for a home visitor to meet you and your family and see your home before approving you. It's important for RAH to ensure everyone who lives in your home is happy to take in a guest and has thought things through. They also want to ensure you're not expecting rent or services from your guest in return for accommodation.

Malvern Welcomes specifies all hosts and people over 18 in a home where refugees are being hosted should have an in-date Level 1 DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Service). We can recommend an organization to provide these, usually within 2 weeks of applying, for £26.00. We ask hosts to pay for these themselves but where there is more than one person over 18 in a home we may be able to assist. This needs to be completed before your guests can arrive.

What happens after a guest arrives?

RAH ask the Home visitor to call and check how it is going after a week and again (if wanted) after three weeks. Refugees At Home assumes it is matching consenting, informed adults who will take responsibility for their continuing relationship, but you will have RAH's email address for any queries. Malvern Open homes will offer a support network to both the hosts and the guests, and usually guests will have been referred by a refugee organization and will have a contact there who should be able to help if problems arise.

How long am I expected to host for?

This is up to you. Some people do emergency hosting - for one night to a week (this is usually very short notice). You can host for a short time: 1-2 weeks, for a middling time: 2-6 weeks or for a longer period. It's up to you.

Should I have house rules?

Yes, experience shows that the relationship works best if everyone is clear about what is acceptable in your home. If you cannot bear smoking, say so. If you expect help with the washing up, say so. Do you have particular concerns about laundry, the treatment of the cat, loud music? It's best to have these clear at the start.

What happens if it all goes wrong?

It's your home and if you want a guest to leave, you just have to tell them, and contact Refugees at Home and Malvern Welcomes so we can work together to find them an alternative placement. Unless there is a critical/safeguarding reason for you wanting someone out immediately, it is best if you can give them a few days' notice so they can try and find another placement.

What are my financial responsibilities?

Most guests are pretty much destitute. If you can provide meals, that's really helpful. Some hosts help with travel expenses to help your guest maintain contacts, get to appointments and not to be isolated. We have links with local charity People in Motion who can help with clothing, toiletries, bedding etc.

Coverage offered by insurance policies varies and you may need to notify your insurer, so you should talk to them, as there may be a cost involved.

DBS checks cost £26.00 per adult and need to be completed prior to becoming a host.

How will Malvern Welcomes support me to be part of the Malvern Open Homes project?

The Malvern Open Homes project is supported by a wealth of information and volunteers that exists within the Malvern Welcomes group. We are building a network that support both Hosts and Guests in this endeavour. We will offer the following assistance, amongst other things.

- Volunteers happy to help your guests settle in to the local area, get orientated, and access services they require.
- The opportunity to meet with fellow hosts, get to know each other and learn from each other
- The opportunity for guests to make contact with each other
- Social events that bring the whole network together
- Support in language skills, from qualified ESOL teachers, to volunteers to assist with English conversation practice, paper work etc.