



Role description: Volunteer Host

About Sanctuary Hosting

Sanctuary Hosting is a hosting scheme that provides temporary accommodation for refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable migrants at risk of homelessness across the Thames Valley by matching them with volunteer hosts who offer a free bed and a warm welcome. This gives guests a chance to tackle the causes of their homelessness. All of our hosts and guests are in turn supported by a team of dedicated volunteers.

About the host role

A 'host' is someone who generously accommodates a refugee, asylum seeker or vulnerable migrant - a 'guest' - in their own home. This is usually in a spare room.

How does it work?

It is up to the host to decide how long they are willing to accommodate someone. This could be for just a few days or considerably longer. The initial agreement is always for a week or two; then you can decide to extend if you wish.

People host in all sorts of different ways and we aim to be as flexible as possible. You can decide your own living arrangements with your guest - for example, whether or not to share meals. If you go on holiday, expect visitors or just want a break, we can arrange for the guest to move to another host (it's helpful to have as much notice as possible) and many guests stay with several different hosts while they are on the scheme.

Who are our guests?

Individuals need to meet our [eligibility criteria](#) before joining the scheme. When we receive a referral, we meet with the person and obtain two references. Each guest is required to work with other services to resolve their situation, which most often includes progressing an asylum or immigration case. This is usually a solicitor or caseworker from the Red Cross or another organization specializing in immigration advice.

How do I become a host?

First, please talk through the implications of hosting with anyone living with you, including children, and make sure they are on board. Then complete the host application form on the [For Hosts](#) page of our website. When we receive your application, we will arrange to meet at your home for an informal interview, to answer questions you may have about hosting, and to look at the accommodation you are able to offer a guest. After this, if both you and Sanctuary Hosting When we receive your application, we will arrange to meet at your home for an informal interview, to answer

questions you may have about hosting, and to look at the accommodation you are able to offer. After this, if both you and Sanctuary Hosting decide to go ahead, we will ask for two references and a DBS (criminal record) check, which Sanctuary Hosting will pay for. You will also need to attend our induction training.

Taking on a guest

When we have a guest we would like to place, we will contact you and tell you a bit about the person. Then an introductory meeting is arranged between host and guest, along with a Sanctuary Hosting support worker. (We do also have a few emergency hosts, who are prepared to take guests for a short stay where, due to a guest's circumstances, the introduction and move-in need to be fast-tracked. Please let us know on your application or at interview stage if you are interested in this.) After the introduction, we ask hosts to take a day to consider if they are happy to proceed with the placement.

With each new placement, there is an opportunity to talk through the details of the living arrangements in advance; we believe it is best for everyone if expectations are made clear from the outset.

What support would I get?

We allocate a volunteer support worker to every host and every guest, and they are an important part of the hosting scheme. They ensure that both host and guest feel well supported and have someone outside the hosting placement to talk to. Your host support worker will keep in regular contact and there will be plenty of opportunity to ask questions, seek advice, or discuss privately any concerns. Guest support workers also get involved in practical ways, perhaps helping someone join the library or find English lessons or get a bus pass, as this is not part of the host's role – hosts do more than enough by providing accommodation!

Can I get more information?

Please see FAQs for hosts. Then, if you still have questions before you decide whether to apply, please [email](#) us.

