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**GREATER  
MANCHESTER**

# **Everyday support and welcome for migrant community members**

**A toolkit for faith-based  
communities and groups  
in Greater Manchester**

This toolkit has been Produced by Greater Manchester's Faith and Belief Advisory Panel, an equality panel established and funded by Greater Manchester Combined Authority.

# Introduction

GMCA and the Greater Manchester Faith and Belief Panel are proud to share this toolkit, which has been developed in collaboration with communities and leaders in Greater Manchester. It follows requests from faith communities for guidance and information that might help them better support new arrivals in their neighbourhoods to settle and live well. It provides ideas, tips and links to relevant resources under the following themes:

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## Welcome, belonging and safety

People often turn to faith communities and spaces for connection, comfort and belonging after arriving in a new place. This is especially important for migrants who too often face hostility and discrimination in their day-to-day lives.

### Bright ideas



**Be loud and proud.** Find ways to get the word out. Put posters up and use social media or WhatsApp groups to advertise what you offer so that everyone can see, including those of all faiths and none.



**Shape your approach around the needs of the community.** Take every chance to make people feel listened to and understood, building on people's strengths and passions. Ensure people have the chance to give and as well as receive.



**Open your doors.** If you have a building, make it available to charities or groups.



**Use food and creativity to celebrate cultures.** Welcome people to share culturally appropriate food or prepare food bundles, especially during festive periods. Share creative skills and learn from each other.



Hello!



Welcome



**Collect donations.** Many people seeking asylum don't have access to essential items they need to live in dignity. Clothes (particularly for men), shoes and toiletries are all useful. Before you collect items on a significant scale:

- Set up a system to quality check and store donations.
- Link in with local partners. **Care4Calais** accept donations and distribute to asylum hotels.



**Be friendly and understanding.** Moving to a new place can be scary, but a friendly smile and listening ear can make all the difference and help people to feel at ease.

## Useful resources

GMCA has produced **translated leaflets** and **guidance** to support people seeking asylum to report crime and get support in the face of hostility.

**Welcome Churches** and **Churches Together** offer guidance about welcoming and supporting new residents.

**The Greater Manchester Muslim Alliance for Refugees** offers guidance on how to organise and provide support to refugees in your community.

City of Sanctuary's **Faiths Stream of Sanctuary**, which supports groups welcoming people seeking sanctuary.

London Plus have **collated various resources** on dealing with anti-migrant hostility and hate.



## Wellbeing and integration

Faith communities are well placed to support with integration because they bring people with diverse backgrounds together over shared beliefs and values, improving understanding and reducing division.

**Support**

### Bright ideas



**Hold coffee mornings, 'chai and chat' or conversation classes.** Informal meetings where people can connect and practise English.



**Help with the basics.** Getting the basics done can be intimidating when you don't know the language or the system. Help people to register with a GP, dentist, set up a bank account, utilities, and understand how renting works.



**Get out and about.** Organised walks help new residents get comfortable and get to know key spots, e.g. supermarkets, post office, library.



**Put on wellbeing activities.** Lots of activities can bring people together without the need for a high level of English, e.g. cooking classes, sports, arts & crafts.



**Help people find a job (if they're ready).** Signpost to the Job Centre or employment support and help look for jobs online.



**Host health clinics.** Sometimes places of faith can host health partners for health checks or drop-in clinics.

**Safety**

# Housing and homelessness

## Giving the right advice

Over the last few years, there has been a worrying increase in homelessness and many charities and faith groups are seeing more people come to them for support. Giving and signposting to accurate advice is crucial to keep people safe and well.

The Boaz Trust has produced resources designed to help people to get and give the best possible advice:

[www.boaztrust.org.uk/resources/housing-guide](http://www.boaztrust.org.uk/resources/housing-guide).

## Community solutions

While councils should always be the first port of call for anyone facing homelessness, charities, faith organisations and communities play a key role, including through providing accommodation. There are lots of ways for you and your community to help with the current crisis in a safe and supported way:



**Belonging**

- 1. Hosting:** If you have a spare room, consider hosting someone experiencing homelessness for a short period (usually a few weeks) whilst they search for accommodation. Look up organisations like [Refugees at Home](#).
- 2. Lodging:** You can also rent your spare room to someone experiencing homelessness for a period (often a few months). This would offer stability to someone whilst they search for a longer-term place and help with your expenses.

- 3. Fostering:** Consider becoming a foster-parent for an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child in need of a home. Look up the North West **Safe Space in a New Place** campaign.
- 4. Landlord for good:** If you have a house you aren't using, consider leasing to your local council or working with a charity to make it available to people in need. Make the rooms affordable by setting rent at the Local Housing Allowance rate or lower.
- 5. Faith groups could consider repurposing surplus land or redundant buildings** for new social homes or homelessness accommodation. See **Housing Justice** for more information.

## Partnerships

There are many organisations and networks supporting migrants across Greater Manchester. Work alongside them to make a bigger difference!

## Bright ideas



**Nothing can be achieved in isolation.** Make sure that you are connected to other organisations and groups in your area so that you can share information, resources and signpost well.



**Join networks** and multi-agency forums in your area that focus on faith and/or migrant support. Your local voluntary sector infrastructure organisation should be able to support you to find these. See **10GM** to find out more.

**Community  
power**

## GM networks and resources

**GM Sanctuary Seekers Community Response Group:** This network is for organisations who support people seeking asylum, refugees, and other migrants. All who have an interest in how people seeking sanctuary are supported can attend.

**GM Homelessness Action Network (GMHAN):** Partnership of organisations working to tackle homelessness, with a dedicated work stream on supporting faith groups. To get involved contact [info@gmhan.net](mailto:info@gmhan.net)

**North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership:** The North West RSMP works with partners to welcome and support those seeking sanctuary. Their website has useful information about [council homelessness pathways](#) and contacts.

**Faith and Belief Advisory Panel:** One of seven equality panels established and funded by the GMCA, consisting of 33 organisations that aim to represent diverse faith and beliefs across Greater Manchester.

**Kompasi is a directory of migrant** support organisations in GM and is searchable by postcode.

**To find out more, see an online version of this toolkit with links here:**

