



The Muslim Council of Britain's 5 Step Guide to Welcome Refugees | 2021

Empowering Muslim communities to achieve a just,
cohesive and successful British society



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Learn how our Mosques and Muslims can help support refugees with this MCB 5 step approach.

<https://mcb.org.uk/community/afghan-refugees-what-role-should-muslims-organisations-play/>

Important Fact: According to UNHCR statistics, at the end of 2020 there were 132,349 refugees, 77,245 pending asylum cases and 4662 stateless persons in the UK. **

** <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-in-the-uk.html>



1. The Plight of Refugees

The prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: "Whoever helps ease someone's difficulty, Allah will make it easy for him in this world and in the Hereafter." (Hadith Sahih Muslim)

Who are refugees?

- Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country.
- They often have had to flee with little more than the clothes on their back, leaving behind homes, possessions, jobs and loved ones.
- Refugees are defined and protected in international law.
- The 1951 Refugee Convention is a key legal document and defines a refugee as: "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."

What can our Mosque do to help refugees

- Ensure Mosque management teams, staff and volunteers learn about refugees and the history of refugees as per the Quran and sunnah.
- Plan on ways to inform the community on the importance of looking after refugees through a khutbah and small local group discussions.
- Post MCB infographics on supporting refugees at the mosque.
- Treat all refugees with respect and dignity irrespective of who they are as per the saying of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) "you are not a muslim until you wish for others what you wish for yourself".



Types of refugees

Refugees from different countries will have different cultures and different experiences in their country of origin. Refugees may have come from very difficult and challenging situations and we must respect their privacy and support them in a non judgemental manner.

A few examples about Refugees as per the Quran and Sunnah

- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) instructed some of the Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia when they were suffering from ongoing oppression and torture in Makkah. This led to these companions becoming refugees in Abyssinia.
- The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself was a refugee. He, along with the majority of the Muslims at the time in Makkah, fled Makkah and sought refuge in Madinah. This is the most important migration in the history of Islam and because of its significance it marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. The Muslims arrived with very little in Madina & were supported by the people in Madina.
- When they planned to harm Prophet Musa (AS) he fled Egypt and fled to Madyan as a refugee where he was provided with housing, employment and other amenities [Quran 28: 20-26].



2. The Rights of Refugees moving to the UK

So give his due to the near of kin, and to the needy, and to the wayfarer. That is better for those who desire to please Allah. It is they who will prosper. (Quran 30,38)

Universal declaration of human rights

“Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 14)

Some rights of refugees in the UK

- Freedom of opinion and expression.
- Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.
- Freedom from torture or degrading treatment.
- The right to life, liberty, security and freedom from discrimination.

Rights of refugees once living in the UK

- Detailed information on rights of refugees coming to the UK about life in the UK and what to expect.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962463/English_only_-_web_accessible.pdf
- When a person achieves official refugee status, they are usually given leave to remain in the UK for up to five years, after which time they can apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.
- On receiving refugee status, individuals are given 28 days to find new accommodation and apply for benefits. To find support with council housing or local council support please visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>
- Refugees can apply for a permanent UK visa after 5 years, also known as Indefinite Leave to Remain.
- Refugees are granted permission to work in the UK within any profession, at any skill level and those unable to work can also apply for welfare benefits.
- Right to be provided with food and clothes when they may have nothing on arriving in this country.

What can our Mosque do to help refugees

- Appoint a refugee lead or champion at the mosque who can support refugees and advice on rights of refugees and benefits available and become the main point of contact for supporting refugees.
- Signpost and advise on living in the UK safely without fear.
- Understand that refugees have freedom and rights we must all respect and understand.
- Support refugees who risk becoming homeless after 28 days by signposting for work, benefits and accomodation at an early stage.
- Support those refugees arriving at airports or when moving to their first accomodation with essential items for adults and children such as coats, jeans, jogging bottoms, hooded tops, trainers or shoes, T shirts, Bras (new), underwear/boxer shorts (new), socks (new), prayer mat if Muslim, pushchair, baby grow for babies, new packs of nappies and toiletries. Link in with local charities to support refugees and consider becoming a drop off point in a locality for these essential items.
- Consider setting up a community sponsorship scheme via your mosque to support refugee families.
- Some refugees may struggle with finances and purchasing food. Mosques should support those in need with food items via your local food hub or signpost to one locally. In this locality we have the following food hubs:

Name of food hub	Full address of food hub	Opening days	Opening times

Please complete the above details to support refugees in your locality.



3. Essential places to shop for refugees in a new locality

Help one another in acts of piety and righteousness. (Quran 5,2)

What can our Mosque do to help refugees

- Please consider contacting local supermarkets and shopping stores to see if any discounts can be provided to refugees and recommend these for refugees.
- If shopping stores do offer discount and for the sake of privacy please consider producing local discount vouchers in collaboration with shopping stores to reduce the burden for new refugees.
- The Mosque refugee champion to complete table above of local shops to purchase common items.
- Provide details of a few shopping stores for variety and choice for refugees.

- When arriving at a new location it will take some time for refugees to find shopping centres or other shops for purchasing essential items.
- By providing a list of places where these can be purchased along with the opening times it will make it easy for them to purchase essential items.
- It is important to clarify this is only for advice and it is the choice of the individual where they go for shopping.



Main items to purchase	Name of shopping store with address and opening time	Name of shopping store with address and opening time	Name of shopping store with address and opening time
Food and drink			
Fresh meat and fresh vegetable/ fruit			
Clothing			
Gas and electric cards			
Mobile phone top up vouchers			
Local takeaway for cooked food			
Uniform for children			
Petrol or diesel for vehicles			
Charity shops			
Electrical or household items			
Cleaning items			

Please complete the above details to support refugees in your locality.

4. Essential Services Available for Refugees new to this country in your locality

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: “There are two blessings which many people do not appreciate: Health and free time.”

- Social welfare system support for benefits and housing if not working in the UK You can claim benefits in the UK if you have refugee status. Further information on the following link. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/claiming-universal-credit-and-other-benefits-if-you-are-a-refugee/refugee-guide-urgent-things-you-need-to-do>
- Health- register with a general practitioner (GP) to look after your health needs in the UK you can register with your general practitioner (family doctor) as a refugee and receive free health care. You can register with a GP even if you do not have full set of documents for ID. <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/gps/how-to-register-with-a-gp-surgery/>
- School-Enroll children to a local school. Refugee pupils aged 5-16 have exactly the same entitlement to full-time education as other UK pupils. <https://www.gov.uk/schools-admissions>
- Open a bank account locally. To receive benefits or pay if you are working you will need a bank account which can be opened with a local bank. Please visit a local bank for more details.
- Community support groups in your locality. Community groups can help support you and make new friends and meet people who are from different backgrounds to help support you and your family in your locality.
- Post office use. A post office is a public facility that provides mail services, such as accepting letters and parcels, providing post office boxes, and selling postage stamps, packaging, and stationery. A post office allows you to receive pensions, benefits and tax credit without needing a bank account. At a post office you can pay your bills for home utilities, top up your gas card or electricity key.
- Internet access for refugees-allow access at the mosque for essential use if needed
- Use of emergency phone numbers in the UK:
 - 999-This is the emergency number for police, ambulance & fire brigade and only for emergencies.
 - 101-Use 101 when you want to contact the police, but it's not an emergency – i.e. an immediate response is not necessary and/or will not serve any purpose.
 - 111-Use this for illnesses and minor injuries where life isn't threatened, but you would like some advice on what to do next.



- Use of dentist. The NHS will provide any clinically necessary treatment needed to keep your mouth, teeth and gums healthy and free of pain. <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/dentists/>
- Use of opticians. You will be examined by an ophthalmic practitioner or optometrist who is trained to recognise abnormalities and conditions, such as cataracts or glaucoma. <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/opticians/>
- Use of a pharmacy. Pharmacists are experts in medicines who can help you with minor health concerns. They can offer clinical advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, tummy trouble and aches and pains. <https://www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/prescriptions-and-pharmacies/pharmacies/>
- Learn to drive. You need a UK driving licence to drive in the UK. First, you need a provisional licence so you can practise driving, prepare for your practical test & book your theory test. When you pass your driving theory test, you can book your practical driving test. When you have passed both tests, you will receive a full licence. If you have an international driving licence, it will become invalid when you apply for a UK provisional licence. Insurance connected to an international licence also becomes invalid when you get a UK provisional licence. <https://www.gov.uk/apply-first-provisional-driving-licence>
- Public transport details and how to use this and receive concessions. Contact your local council for any concessions or discounts available and use of local public transport.
- Covid tests process. Covid 19 is an infection that can be passed onto others. For information on this infection please click the following link. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- Covid vaccination clinics locally. If you live in England and are aged 18 or over, you can get a COVID-19 vaccine from a walk-in COVID-19 vaccination site without an appointment. A small number of walk-in vaccination sites are also available for people aged 16 and 17. You do not need to be registered with a GP or bring any ID. To book an appointment or find a local clinic click on the following link. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/find-a-walk-in-coronavirus-covid-19-vaccination-site/>
- Support for those with disabilities. If you have a disability and want to know about services available locally please do click on the following link. <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Disability-information-and-support/LocationSearch/334>

What can our Mosque do to help refugees

- Ask the local Mosque refugee champion to recruit a few volunteers who are male and female to support refugees sign up for these essential services.
- Provide internet access at the mosque for access to information for the above essential services.
- Support refugees with appointments as needed to sign up for a GP or other services.



5. Education & Training Opportunities for Adult Refugees

*Recite: In the name of thy Lord who created man from a clot.
Recite: And thy Lord is the Most Generous Who taught by the pen,
taught man that which he knew not. (Quran, 96:1-5)*

What can our Mosque do to help refugees

- Sign post to language courses which maybe free and held locally to help learn English.
- Help with work opportunities if available.
- Help with training to increase chance of acquiring jobs if available.
- Volunteering opportunities in your locality for refugees along with Supporting, engaging and mentoring youth refugees at your Mosque.

- Education can help people become better citizens, show the difference between good and bad. Education shows us the importance of hard work and, at the same time, helps us grow and develop. Thus, we are able to shape a better society to live in by knowing and respecting rights, laws, and regulations.
- Coming to a new country brings with it many challenges including settling in a new country with a different culture and system and coming at times with limited resources. Education and training are readily available in the UK for people of all ages and backgrounds to help with training and work.
- Language issues can be overcome with support and learning English and undergoing training.
- Volunteering at your local Mosque or community centre can help and create many opportunities.
- Hyderi Islamic Centre and several other affiliates have successfully hosted refugee families and have best practice which we should not ignore.



- English classes to learn new language for refugees. Learning English is essential in this country with many free courses available along with some other courses. <https://www.gov.uk/improve-english-maths-it-skills>
- Local libraries. Your local library provides many services such as book loans, CD rental and internet access. <https://www.gov.uk/local-library-services>
- Further education for refugees. Over 70 UK universities offer scholarships for refugee and asylum-seeking students to allow them to study. <https://www.ucas.com/connect/blogs/uk-university-scholarships-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>
- Training and courses for refugees. Opportunities exist in the UK for learning and training. <https://www.refugee-study.co.uk>
- Finding work as a refugee. Jobs are available in many fields and can be found on the internet and by visiting a local job centre. A few of the sources are as follows. <https://www.gov.uk/find-a-job>, <https://www.gov.uk/contact-jobcentre-plus>, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>



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