



## Tees Valley Hosting Scheme

In 2015 we started a hosting scheme where volunteer hosts provide a spare room and the use of other facilities in their homes to someone in need for an agreed period of time.

Open Door North East supports people left destitute and vulnerable as a result of the withdrawal of Home Office funded accommodation. These are individual asylum seekers from the many conflict zones and oppressive regimes around the world.

Our aim is to feed and house everyone in genuine need while they are helped to reconsider their options surrounding their claim for asylum in the UK.

Unfortunately we do not have enough bed spaces in our own houses to help all those in need, **which is why we need your help!**

### Termination arrangements

You are free to withdraw from the hosting arrangement at any time. All we ask is that under normal circumstances a weeks notice is given. We understand that circumstances change and it can be draining to be a host long-term so please don't worry if you need to do this.

“ We had the room, we were a little nervous and had lots of questions but we really wanted to welcome someone into our home who had nowhere else to turn. Having Anna from Open Door to guide us through the process has been really helpful. ”

- Steve and Martha, first time hosts.

*Disclaimer: Please note that whilst Open Door will make every effort to ensure that the hosting of destitute asylum seekers is a positive experience for all concerned, we cannot accept any liability for private arrangements made between host and guest.*

*\*Names changed to protect identity.*

“ It is a long time since I have felt I belonged anywhere and I feel so much better. I can concentrate on my case without worrying about where I will sleep, I feel less tense and more positive about the future. I didn't realise how lonely and sad I felt without a sense of belonging but now I have been welcomed into a home. The feeling is priceless. ”

- Frances\* said this of her host home.

### What support do we offer hosts?

- We offer all hosts appropriate induction training before they host for the first time.
- We will provide regular opportunities for our hosts to meet for review/feedback.
- All hosts are given an information pack to help then signpost guests to appropriate support services.
- Where we can we try to match two or three hosts together (a hosting hub) to provide mutual support and respite so that no one household is hosting continuously.

### Are hosts breaking the law by hosting a 'refused' asylum seeker?

No. "Criminal law does not prevent assistance being given to undocumented people to alleviate destitution or meet basic human needs. Accommodation can also be provided to give a fixed address so a person can more readily remedy their immigration status".



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## Can you imagine...

arriving in a foreign country having fled war, persecution and torture, with no friends and family to turn to, and fearing for your life if you had to return to your homeland...

...and can you imagine what it must be like to find yourself destitute, with no access to food, no home and no government support or legal right to work?

“When I was hungry you gave me food, when I was homeless you found me a place to stay, when I was alone you heard my voice.”  
- Kamila\*

Could you host someone like Kamila\*? who was destitute and sleeping in a shop storeroom before receiving help from Open Door North East

# Q&A

## So what does hosting involve?

Being friendly and able to offer someone hospitality in your home. Every host needs to have a spare bedroom that they are willing to make available for a minimum of two weeks. In addition, our clients, the host's guest, will need to be able to store and cook food, and have access to laundry and bathroom facilities. There may be other things that a host would like to provide such as occasionally sharing a meal but there is no obligation.

## Who would I be hosting?

We need to find rooms for single adults from anywhere in the world who have been refused asylum in the UK. Whilst all destitute asylum seekers are vulnerable people, we will not refer anyone who has (as far as we are aware) a high level of extra support needs such as a serious mental health condition. We will also undertake appropriate background checks to minimise risk for both hosts and guests.

## How long would a hosting arrangement last?

We would agree an initial trial period usually of two weeks. If this is successful and both host and guest are happy with the arrangement, the hosting period will continue for a predetermined length of time. This ensures that there is no false expectation for the guest and no unhelpful obligation for the host.

## What does hosting involve?

The role of the host is to provide the guest with:



A friendly, safe and welcoming environment.



A clean, safe, dry and warm bedroom with their own bed.



Access to food storage, refrigeration, preparation and cooking facilities.



Access to laundry/bathroom facilities.



## So I am interested, what happens next?



Complete and application form & provide appropriate references (and possibly a DBS check)



Go to: [www.opendoornortheast.com](http://www.opendoornortheast.com)



Or email: [hosting@opendoornortheast.com](mailto:hosting@opendoornortheast.com)

Our hosting coordinator will arrange to visit your home and talk to you and to other household members as part of the host application process.

We take our time and want to serve both our hosts and our clients who will be your guests well.

We will arrange for you to meet and talk with experienced hosts.

We know from experience and the positive feedback we receive that hosting is both incredibly beneficial to clients but also immensely rewarding for our hosts.