

Hosting Refugees – The No Accommodation Network

Jonathan Darling

The No Accommodation Network (NACCOM) is a network across the UK, aiming to prevent destitution among asylum seekers and refugees (NACCOM 2017). NACCOM brings together a range of voluntary organisations that all provide shelter and accommodation to asylum seekers and refugees. Some do this through the provision of night shelters and short-term emergency accommodation, others through hosting schemes that match destitute asylum seekers and refugees with hosts who have offered a spare room to accommodate those without housing.

The reasons for destitution among asylum seekers and refugees in the UK are manifold, with delays in gaining support upon receiving refugee status a common issue (Doyle 2014). At the same time, the government's policy of removing support to asylum seekers who have had negative decisions on their claims also leads to a significant destitute population reliant on charities for survival (Lewis 2007; Darling 2009). In this context, NACCOM bring together the work of small organisations across the country who run night-shelters for destitute asylum seekers, host refugees and asylum seekers in spare bedrooms, and in some cases have even been able to purchase property to enable asylum seekers and refugees to have a more secure future.

Alongside this direct accommodation work, NACCOM target policy change through campaigns to end destitute and raise issues of migrant homelessness with local authorities, MPs, and government ministers. In this way, the work of advocates and activists to house asylum seekers and refugees through NACCOM displays a critique of the exclusions of accommodation policies at



national levels. It illustrates how forms of hosting and supporting the displaced have extended beyond the boundaries of official accounts of refugee resettlement or dispersal accommodation, to form alternative networks that stand in opposition to the exclusions of the UK asylum system.

The work of organisations like NACCOM has grown in prominence in recent years due to the rising numbers of asylum seekers and refugees facing homelessness in the UK. At the same time, government responses to refugee emergencies in Afghanistan and Ukraine have increasingly relied on hosting by members of the public to help support and accommodate refugees in Britain, meaning that hosting has become a more mainstream response to displacement and homelessness.

Hosting brings with it many challenges, in negotiating the matching of hosts and guests, in navigating language and cultural barriers, safeguarding all of those involved, and setting defined timeframes and expectations around the hosting relationship. Organisations like NACCOM have used their experience of working in this field to help support individuals and groups to address these challenges and provide safe and secure accommodation to those in need. At the same time, they continue to work with other refugee groups to call for more sustainable, long-term, and secure housing for asylum seekers and refugees.

Find out more

The NACCOM website has details of their work but also a series of resources on hosting refugees and the varied challenges of this approach. When looking through these consider how the challenges of hosting might differ between the host and the guest, and how the needs of both parties might be met in this relationship.

The No Accommodation Network: <https://naccom.org.uk/about-us-2/>



Pathways Out of Destitution (a video on the work of hosting refugees):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vqs_Oe-eFfE

References

- Darling J (2009) Becoming bare life: asylum, hospitality and the politics of encampment *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27(4) 649-665.
- Doyle L (2014) *28 days later: experiences of new refugees in the UK* London, Refugee Council.
- Lewis H (2007) *Destitution in Leeds* York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- NACCOM (2017) *NACCOM: The no accommodation network* available at: <https://naccom.org.uk/about/>.