

APSE Housing - Breaking New Ground Seminar
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Homes for Refugees

How can local authorities prevent homelessness and promote refugee inclusion?

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Living our values every day




Accountable



Integrity



Empower



Respect



Excellence



What this talk will cover

- The impact of national immigration policy on local services
- Preventing homelessness at the point of move-on
- Filling gaps in the statutory homelessness pathway
- How local action can build trust and cohesion, despite the challenges faced by local authorities



The 'move on' policy and its impact

- Asylum-seekers are placed in asylum accommodation (i.e. shared houses; re-purposed hotels)
- When an individual is granted refugee status, they enter a notice period of 42 days before they must leave their asylum accommodation.
- This short move-on period is exacerbated by the barriers faced by this cohort, including limited income, documentation, and understanding of the UK system.

National impact

In 2023/2024:

- The [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government](#) reported an increase in households owed a prevention duty (up 113.9%) or a relief duty (up 251.2%) for newly recognised refugees compared to the previous year.
- The No Accommodation Network ([2024](#)) accommodated 1,941 refugees experiencing homelessness, a 99% increase from the previous year.

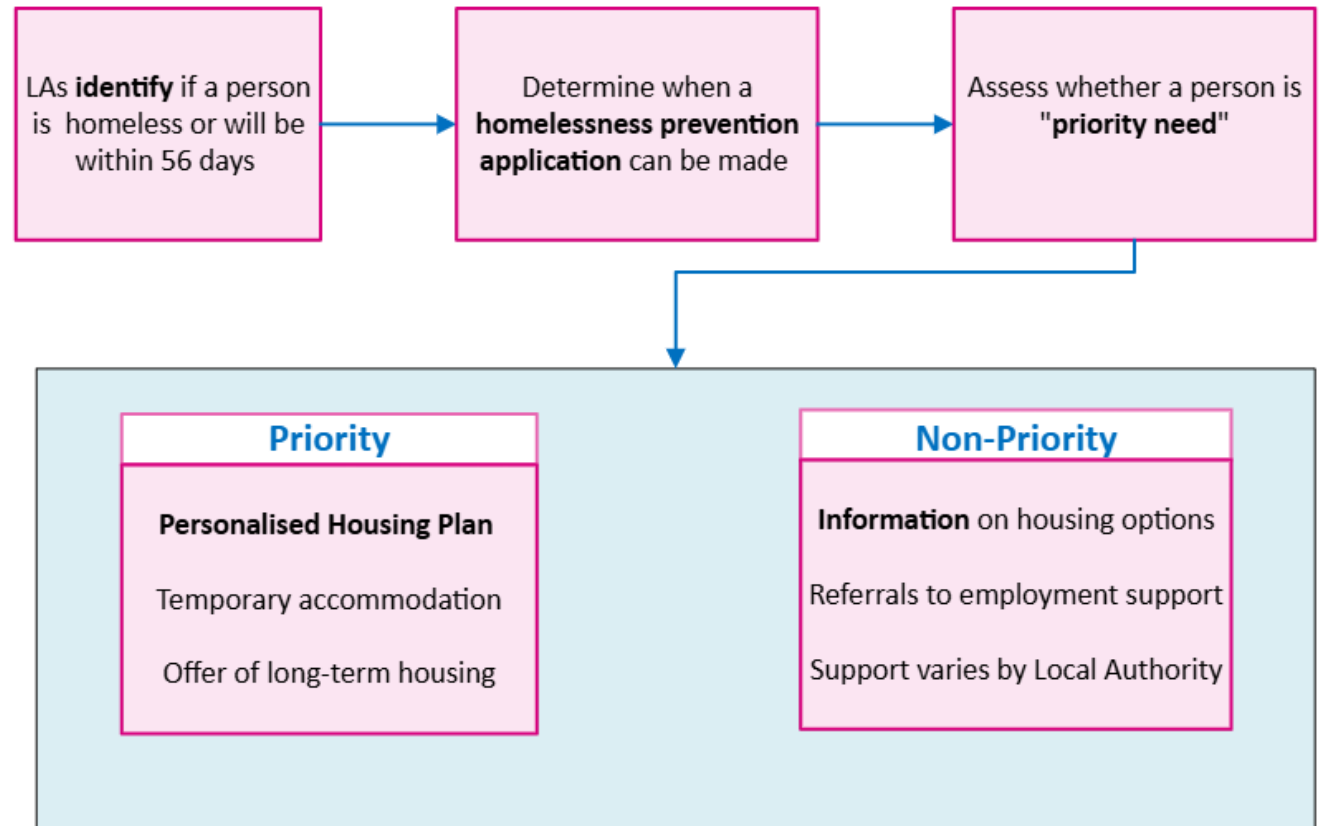
Local impact

- Between 2022 and 2024, the number of former asylum seekers granted a homelessness duty in the region increased by almost 10 times (GCC, [2024](#)).
- Rough sleeping also increased, as observed by Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS).



Local authority approach: responding to refugee homelessness

- Newly recognised refugees are one of the most at-risk groups for homelessness (Royal London, [2025](#))
- Additional barriers include mental health challenges, delays in asylum processing, deskilling due to restricted work rights, and language barriers [Lindley et al., [2024](#)].
- There is a risk some non-priority refugees will be left behind.



Homes for Refugees

A community-based, innovative solution

- Public health–led homelessness prevention
- Set up in January 2024 in response to <28 days notice
- Short-term, supported accommodation (up to 3 months)
- Offered to non-priority newly recognised refugees
- Two routes:

Council-owned supported accommodation

Placement in private accommodation provided by a host in the local community

Homes for Refugees

What we know about its impact

- As of June 2026, Homes for Refugees has housed 251 individuals
 - 235 placed in council-owned accommodation
 - 16 hosted by community members
- 80% of referrals secured independent housing within three months.
- Minimised pressure on housing services
- Positive outcomes were also felt by local residents (GCC, 2024)

What makes the model work

- Early intervention at point of move-on avoids rough sleeping
- Clear referral pathway (LA + partners)
- Dedicated casework support
- Short-term, move-on focused
- Use of existing assets (buildings + community)



Lessons and reflections

What can local authorities learn from Homes for Refugees?

1 Local authorities play a central role in preventing refugee homelessness and supporting inclusion

2 Local authorities can repurpose existing models and infrastructure to support refugees and maximise resources available

3 Refugee homelessness prevention has wider benefits and early intervention is far more cost-effective than a crisis response

4 Local Government Reorganisation will create challenges but models like HfR could work even more effectively in unitary authorities



Recommendations

Local authorities

- Invest in early homelessness prevention for refugees
- Share best practice with other local authorities and work closely with voluntary and community sector organisations
- Share (translated) information more widely and co-production with people with lived experience

Central government

- Extend the move-on period for the cohort
- Increase funding to address homelessness prevention amongst this cohort
- Invest in community-based approaches to refugee resettlement



Thank you

To learn more about Homes for Refugees:

- Read our Director of Public Health Reports from 2024: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/director-of-public-health-report-2024/housing/homes-for-refugees/> and 2025/26: https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/ohplooi2/12388-gcc_home-is-where-the-health-is-report_v4.pdf
- Read our COMPAS Blog: <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/article/homes-for-refugees-how-can-local-authorities-prevent-homelessness-and-promote-refugee-inclusion>

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