



## Blessing Afghan people arriving in the UK and those helping them



It is impossible not to be aware of the desperate need of the Afghan people leaving their country to seek a life of safety and sanctuary elsewhere, including in the UK, or to feel a deep impulse to help alleviate their suffering.

Across the diocese, we have already shown great goodwill. What can we now do to be most useful?

### **Building on goodwill - considerate giving**

Beyond the immediate moment of crisis there is now better information emerging so that we can be better informed, more purposeful and more focused. **Let us aim to be considerate givers, giving what is most needed and wanted by those agencies on the ground working alongside families and individuals in need.**

Our part is largely to work alongside the Red Cross, Discover Islam, Care 4 Calais and others who are deeply experienced at supporting asylum seekers and refugees and are active in communities welcoming Afghan people.

### **Focusing on three communities - Watford, Luton, Bedford**

The vast majority of communities will not see any Afghan people: in our diocese there are currently just three communities actively engaged alongside civic authorities and voluntary agencies in seeking to offer welcome and support.

**But we can all be contributors. Every shred of generosity is vital.** Nothing that is given need go to waste and what does not meet the needs of Afghans will help to fill the deep chasm of need of existing asylum seekers and refugees in our diocese.

### **Factual Information**

The situation requires sensitivity. Facts and information aid understanding. The Church of England has highlighted Home Office documents on policy and resettlement and these contain useful information for parishes and to inform individuals. See: [churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/afghanistan-crisis-advice-parishes-helping-refugees](https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/afghanistan-crisis-advice-parishes-helping-refugees)

**Turn over to see how you can be of most help**

## Actions we can take

What will be most helpful, when those on the ground are already inundated with donated goods not all of which are appropriate and which require labour intensive handling.

- **Money** is, at this point, the simplest and most effective contribution. Below is a list of those offering direct help to whom donations will be invaluable.
- **Time.** There is a great deal that making ourselves available can accomplish -whether for general tasks like sorting through donations of goods already made and cooking for mother and toddler groups or for more specialised help like teaching English as a foreign language or offering legal advice and support.
- **Meeting specific needs** in response to specific requests will make a world of difference. We could not imagine the needs that are being expressed and the care and thought that has gone into making these needs known. Some of the current needs are for suitcases, hair clippers, teach yourself English books chess sets and prayer mats. Activities that don't need English language such as chess sets are helpful. Needs are made known through the websites overleaf.
- **Working together with our Muslim brothers and sisters** One of the most precious gifts we can give the Afghan people arriving here is to show them that they are arriving in a country where faiths speak together and work together for the common good. They are coming from an environment where this is not true. One of the strongest acts of welcome will be to show in our words and actions that faith communities and churches are friends, that they contain diverse populations and that we live a country where there is freedom of belief.

## List of contacts and websites

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| St Mary's Church, Watford - The Revd Tony Rindl              | <a href="mailto:tony.rindl@gmail.com">tony.rindl@gmail.com</a>   |
| All Saints with St Peter's, Luton - The Revd David Kesterton | <a href="mailto:dkesterton01@gmail.com">dkesterton01@gmail.com</a>   |
| St Paul's Church, Bedford - The Revd Luke Larner             | <a href="mailto:lukelarner@hotmail.co.uk">lukelarner@hotmail.co.uk</a>   |
| Care4 Calais:  | <a href="http://care4calais.org">care4calais.org</a>   |
| Red Cross:   | <a href="http://redcross.org.uk">redcross.org.uk</a>   |
| Discover Islam Luton:  | <a href="http://discover-islam.co.uk">discover-islam.co.uk</a>   |
| Herts Welcome Refugees:                                      | <a href="http://hwsf.org.uk">hwsf.org.uk</a>   |
| Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership:                | <a href="http://wtrrp.org.uk">wtrrp.org.uk</a>   |
| Luton Council:   | <a href="http://m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/news/Pages/Afghan-refugees.aspx">m.luton.gov.uk/Page/Show/news/Pages/Afghan-refugees.aspx</a> |
| Luton Just Giving page:                                      | <a href="http://justgiving.com/campaign/refugees">justgiving.com/campaign/refugees</a>   |
| Bedford Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support:                   | <a href="http://brassbedford.org.uk">brassbedford.org.uk</a>   |

The Church of England Toolkit for parishes can be found here:

[churchofengland.org/resources/community-action/toolkit-supporting-afghan-refugees](http://churchofengland.org/resources/community-action/toolkit-supporting-afghan-refugees)

The Home Office documents on policy and resettlement can be found here:

Policy: [homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/16/factsheet-uk-support-to-resettle-afghan-nationals/](http://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/16/factsheet-uk-support-to-resettle-afghan-nationals/)

Resettlement: [homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/19/factsheet-resettlement-routes-for-afghan-nationals/](http://homeofficemedia.blog.gov.uk/2021/08/19/factsheet-resettlement-routes-for-afghan-nationals/)

This document can be downloaded from:

[www.stalbans.anglican.org/afghanistan-meeting-the-immediate-needs-of-refugees/](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/afghanistan-meeting-the-immediate-needs-of-refugees/)