

Communities for Afghans: The Welcome Circle Programme

Overview

After the final evacuation and the Fall of Kabul, the UK Government established the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) with a commitment to resettle 20,000 Afghans, but without a [Community Sponsorship](#) element. Since March 2023, [Citizens UK](#) has been working with the UK Government to explore how to develop an improved Community Sponsorship scheme for Afghans: '***Communities for Afghans***'. Citizens UK are now working to support groups to welcome an Afghan household into their local community and support them over a period of **two years**, to fully integrate and rebuild their lives.

In support of Citizens UK, HIAS+JCORE has launched the ***Communities for Afghans: The Welcome Circle Programme***, an initiative that facilitates small groups of private individuals to form certified Welcome Circles in their local Jewish communities to directly support the integration of newly arrived Afghans.

How does the programme work?

The support of newcomers through the Welcome Circle Program is a partnership between HIAS+JCORE, Jewish communities across the UK, and Citizens UK. This program was established to create additional sponsorship capacity, streamline the recruitment and application process for sponsor groups, and reduce the fundraising requirements that exist under traditional community sponsorship.

Jewish Communities within the UK will need to

- ***Recruit a small team*** of at least 6 people committed to offering a warm welcome to an Afghan family in your community for the next two years;
- Nominate a ***Named Sponsor*** who will be listed on the application form and will receive the monthly payment from the Local Authority;
- Help identify and ***secure a property*** to house the family (it needs to have its own front door and meet the standard of the local authority);
- Support the family to ***access benefits and public services***, and move towards sustainable employment;
- ***Complete training*** provided by Citizens UK;
- Undergo ***DBS checks*** and government ***suitability checks***;
- Sign a ***Sponsor Declaration*** and adhere to the Citizens UK's ***code of conduct***.

HIAS+JCORE provides guidance, resources and technical know-how to sponsorship groups. HIAS+JCORE will also act as a point of contact for Sponsor groups and Citizens UK, guiding the recruitment of Jewish community groups, and supporting groups with voicing any concerns. HIAS+JCORE will also offer a space to discuss challenges and successes of the program and HIAS+JCORE's Integration Coordinator is there to make the jobs of the community members easier and to offer guidance and support when needed.

Citizens UK will act as the ***Principal Sponsor*** and will have overall responsibility for recruitment, training and support for Community Sponsorship Groups, success and quality of integration, specialist knowledge and skills, family allocation, and relationships with the local council.

To learn more please contact David Mason, HIAS+JCORE's Executive Director on david.mason@hiasjcore.org