

# Short term winter accommodation: Emergency Hosting - FAQs

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## Boaz hosting

Boaz started life as a hosting organisation back in 2004. Since then hundreds of people have been hosted in peoples' homes around Greater Manchester. Over the years we have learnt a lot of lessons about how to do hosting well, to make sure that the experience is positive for both hosts and guests. We currently operate 2 different models of hosting:

- a) long term hosting which is usually for a minimum of at least a month, during which guests receive a full package of support from Boaz
- b) pilot winter emergency hosting for women. This scheme has evolved out of our pilot women's night shelter which successfully accommodated 10 woman from October- December 2017

## What does winter emergency hosting involve?

Boaz emergency hosts are amazing people who welcome destitute asylum seekers and refugees to stay for a short time in their own homes (up to 3 days initially). Every host (individual or family) offers their guest a spare bedroom as well as access to kitchen, laundry and bathroom facilities. For emergency hosting, we ask that hosts offer an evening meal (although this may not always be required or desired by the guest).

The offer of a friendly, safe and welcoming environment in which to stay can be life changing for our clients, and also for our hosts.

The aim of winter emergency hosting is simply to provide a safe place to stay for a destitute asylum seeker or refugee during the winter. There is no expectation that hosts would provide support with a client's case, or financial support or in-depth emotional support. Individuals hosted through our winter emergency hosting scheme are offered support through our partner organisations, primarily the British Red Cross.

## Who would I be hosting?

The people we place to be hosted in our winter emergency hosting scheme are women aged over 18 who have applied for asylum in the UK, but have become homeless either having had their claim for asylum refused, or having been granted a

positive decision.

Individuals can be referred to us by local organisations and projects, and we meet with all potential clients before offering them emergency hosting. We would not place anyone for hosting (as far as we are aware) who has a high level of extra support needs such as a significant physical or mental health condition.

How long does a winter emergency hosting placement last?

Winter emergency hosting is different to our regular longer term hosting and wider offer of accommodation and support. Emergency hosting is initially for a period of up to 3 days, to ensure that no woman is left street homeless, especially during this winter season.

The length of the stay will be agreed at the beginning of the placement.

What support does Boaz offer to hosts?

Our hosting scheme has been running since 2004, and we have learned a lot along the way. We have received invaluable feedback from hosts over the years that has helped us improve the way we support our hosts. Our winter emergency hosting scheme is very similar to our regular hosting scheme, and so we offer:

- An initial home visit to discuss hosting in more detail before you sign up
- An induction session with a member of the Boaz staff team prior to any hosting placement being set up
- A copy of the Boaz Volunteer Handbook including information on Boaz, the asylum system, case studies and Boaz processes
- An out of hours contact number for emergencies
- The chance to debrief after all hosting placements so that we can all learn from the experience

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

No. Even if someone has had their claim for asylum refused, they are given a set of papers granting them "temporary admission." This means that they are not breaking the law by being here, although they may be liable to detention or removal by Home Office officials at any time.

It is an offence to help someone hide from the authorities if they have escaped from a detention centre or committed a crime and also to deliberately withhold information from an official of the state if this is requested from you.

Criminal law does not prevent assistance being given to undocumented people to alleviate destitution or meet basic human needs. It is the Home Office's responsibility to remove those they believe should not remain in the UK.

Do you accept everyone who applies to be a host?

We have been overwhelmed by peoples' kindness and generosity in offering beds for asylum seekers and refugees, especially over the last two years since the refugee crisis first hit the news. In certain circumstances though, there may be reasons why we might have to turn an offer of hosting down. For example if the host lives too far from central Manchester, if the accommodation isn't suitable (e.g. if there isn't a separate spare bedroom), or if the potential host has misunderstood the purpose of hosting (e.g. if they are looking for a carer or cleaner).

Sometimes we simply reach capacity in terms of the number of clients we can support here in the office and we don't want potential hosts to feel frustrated that they have signed up to host with us, but then don't get used!

We realise this can be frustrating when you want to reach out and make a difference, but if we can't sign you up to become a Boaz host right now, we'd be happy to chat through some other ways in which you can welcome asylum seekers and refugees.

How can I find out more?

To find out more about winter emergency hosting with Boaz, please email [info@boaztrust.org.uk](mailto:info@boaztrust.org.uk) . If you are more interested in longer term hosting, or would perhaps like to explore both, please drop our hosting facilitator, Cat, an email on [hosting@boaztrust.org.uk](mailto:hosting@boaztrust.org.uk)