



Move On Policy - Refugees Welcome North Somerset

1. Purpose

1.1 – To ensure operational longevity and sustainability of Refugees Welcome North Somerset (RWNS) and our joint services for Refugees and Asylum Seekers across the county.

2. Scope

2.1 – This policy applies directly to the voluntary and paid members of Refugees Welcome North Somerset, and shall inform public, private and non-profit organisations across the county of the current and future remit within which RWNS operates.

3. Policy Statement

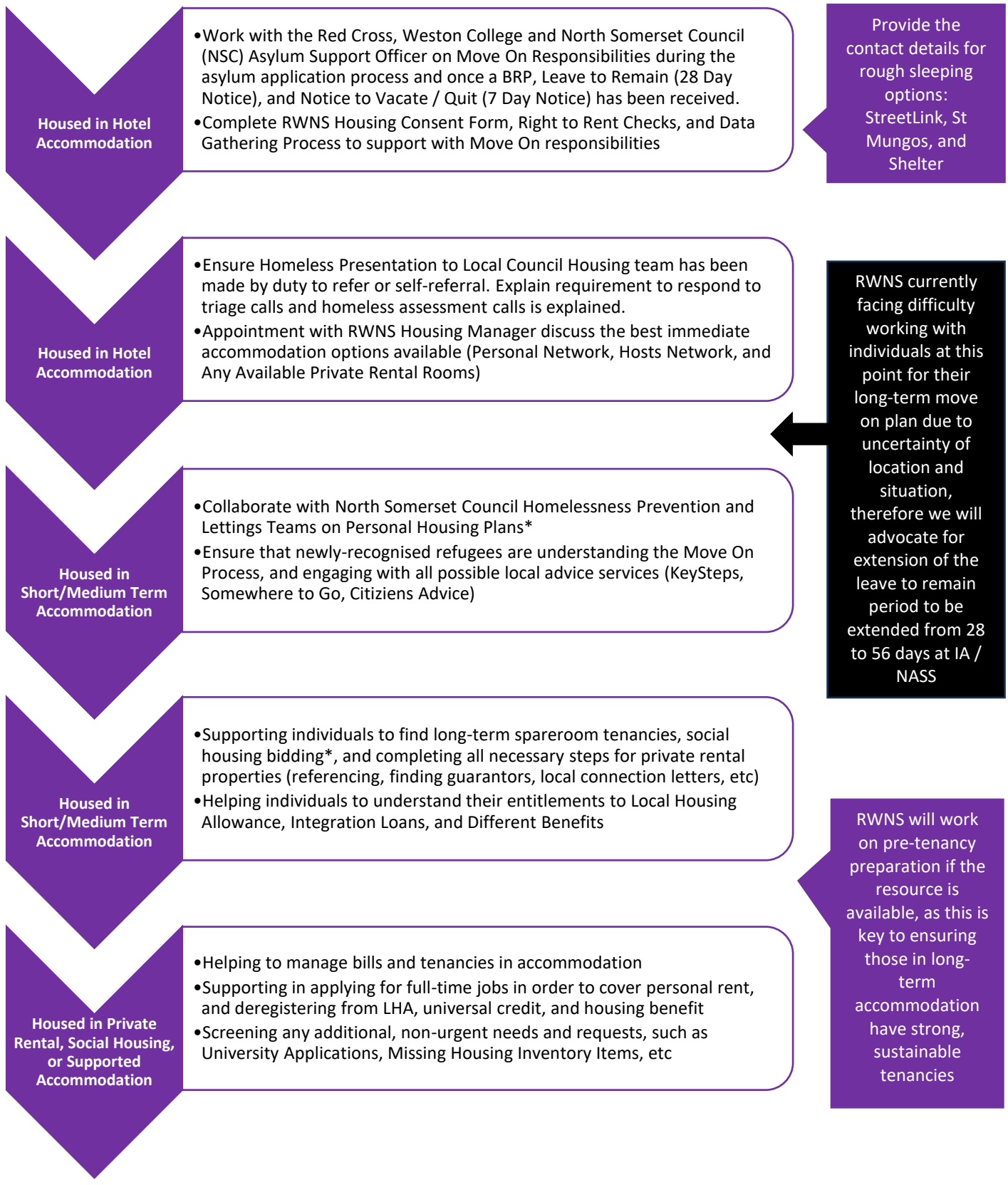
3.1 – RWNS is a community-based, volunteer-led charity which plays a vital role across North Somerset to integrate, befriend, and welcome displaced people into the area. Our expertise exist in friendship, support, and advocacy, relying significantly on the good will and generosity of those in the local district to deliver our services.

3.2 – Our core services experience high pressure and threat of permanent discontinuation during periods in which Refugee 'Move-Ons' (the receipt of refugee status and subsequent short-term removal from accommodation provided under Section 98(S98)) are significantly high, as the provision of accommodation for immediate homelessness post- eviction from asylum accommodation does not sit within our economic parameters.

3.3 – RWNS currently operates as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), and we are not registered as social housing provider (SHP), nor as a registered Community Interest Company (CIC) currently authorised to manage long-term, host lodgings for newly-recognised refugees. Within our scope as a CIO, we are able to:

- Work within the 'Leave to Remain' period at S98 accommodation with newly-recognised refugees so that they understand their immediate requirements within the [UK GOV guide for new refugees](#).
- With the signed consent of newly-recognised refugees, search and apply on their behalf for private rental accommodation, social housing, host accommodation, and Spareroom providers
- Guide newly-recognised refugees through the procedure of homelessness presentation, ensuring that they have presented as homelessness with the Local Authority Homeless Team
- Make sure that newly-recognised refugees have presented themselves to the DWP at a local job centre, to demonstrate their active participation in the search employment and / or benefits.
- Support individuals to manage their tenancies once secured, providing guidance with bills, as well as how to access local housing allowance benefit, deposits, and loans.
- In limited situations of unique desperate need, authorise charity crowdfunding drives so that we are able to secure paid accommodation for a maximum of 5 nights, for those who have no alternative

3.4 – A process map for this provision has been provided on page two (2) of this policy, with the inclusion of public, private and non-profit organisations also supporting in this area.



* Section 189A of the Housing Act 1996 says that because you are threatened with homelessness in the next 8 weeks, you have the right to an assessment and a personal housing plan which says how the council will work with you to find somewhere to live

* Local connection requirement (24 months in North Somerset), plus queueing based on priority need. Noted that demand for social housing is exceptionally high and availability is scarce - See HomeChoice [NSC Lettings and Assessment Policy](#) for full details.

4. Commitments to Partnership Organisations

4.1 – This policy commits RWNS to play its role in the prevention of homelessness within the refugee community, and will work regularly with local homelessness and destitution prevention services identified by <https://homeless.org.uk/>, including yet not exclusive to:

- North Somerset Council
- British Red Cross and Weston College
- KeySteps, Somewhere to Go, Citizens Advice, and Weston Housing Action
- Shelter, Streetlink, St Mungos, YMCA, and other Emergency Rough Sleeping Response teams / initiatives
- Livewest, Julian House, Ashley Housing Community and other South West-based social housing initiatives
- Bristol Hospitality Network, Refugees Welcome Homes and other South West-based hosting initiatives
- Refugees at Home, Housing Connect, Evolve Housing, Single Homelessness Project and other UK-based NACCOM initiatives

4.2 - Within this policy, RWNS recognise the limited availability of emergency accommodation for refugees after serving their notice to vacate period at S98 accommodation. Whilst newly-recognised refugees are highly vulnerable during homelessness due to reasons including, yet not exclusive to:

- Racism, hate crime, and prejudice
- Exploitation, forced employment, and involuntary relocation
- Accessibility to education and ability to meet the English language requirements for academic services
- Lack of financial legacy, reserves or support in the United Kingdom

RWNS recognise that priority needs assessments based on vulnerability whilst homeless are outside of our sphere of influence, and therefore we will work to increase the breadth of our refugee host network in North Somerset, as well as supporting newly-recognised refugees to make contact with their national connections for the purpose of temporary housing. We will also actively support with the search and secure process for private rental properties, and social housing (if eligible through statutory local connection definitions).

Whilst RWNS welcome the speeding up of asylum claims being processed, swapping an asylum problem for a homelessness and jobless problem puts intense strain on the third-sector as well as local authority, and we will therefore communicate these issues to the Home Office where evidence-based data demonstrates increases in Refugee Rough Sleeping, Homelessness or Discrimination to accessing accommodation.

5. Policy Review

5.1 – RWNS are committed to reviewing our policies and procedures regularly. This policy will be reviewed by the board of trustees every six months, when there is a change in UK law and/or best practice or when an incident / event occurs which highlights the needs for a change – whichever occurs first