

# HOMES NOW FOR AFGHANS

## A Proposal

**In August 2021, over 20,000 Afghan citizens who had risked their lives to support the British diplomatic and military mission in Afghanistan were evacuated by the British military.**

**Nearly two years later, over 8,000 refugees are still being housed in hotels, costing £1.5 million per day. This is not only disproportionately expensive, but dehumanising.**

**The Afghan refugee housing crisis is shining a light on the wider housing crisis facing the UK.**

**This paper outlines an innovative, humane, economic and politically viable solution that can quickly be rolled out nationally.**

**By installing a large number of high quality, sustainable and demountable homes, refugees can be offered a cost-effective mid-term solution that not only meets their housing needs, but provides for the social and emotional welfare of the entire family. These housing projects will be deployed such that they help both local need for social houses and serves the Afghan refugee communities.**

**This solution will not only save the government money but will help our Afghan allies to rebuild their lives.**

# The Problem

As of February 2022, the government is spending over £6 million a day housing asylum seekers in hotels. In addition, the government is spending **£1.5 million a day housing 8,000 Afghan refugees** - a cost of circa £55k per person per annum in often inadequate and insecure accommodation.

Pressure on demand and budgets for additional refugee and social housing provision is set to increase significantly and the cost-of-living crisis will exacerbate the current problem further.

The average size of Afghan family is often significantly larger than the average British family with many families having 4-6 children. There is little social housing stock accommodating families of this size.

Separately, Local Authorities (LAs) are under additional significant financial pressure due the subsidy loss they suffer in providing legally required [Temporary Accommodation \(TA\)](#)

The latest figures for England show there were 96060 households in temporary accommodation at the end of September 2021, including 1700 households with children in bed and breakfasts. That subsidy loss is created through the difference that LAs pay to secure accommodation (often inadequate B&Bs) from the private rental sector and the amount of Local Housing Allowance the government then pays by way of contribution.

To give a sense of scale – in Bristol there are currently nearly 900 units of TA and creating a subsidy loss of over £9 million.



# The Solution

The proposed installation of demountable, sustainable, high quality homes on meanwhile use land is an innovative solution that serves the needs of the Afghan families, provides better outcomes and improves use of public funds.

Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) – ‘manufactured housing solutions’ - offer a clear pathway to utilise relocatable and demountable housing at pace and scale, without compromising on build quality.

‘[Volumetric](#)’ homes (3D components) are manufactured off-site, located, and later relocated, unlocking existing land supply for meanwhile use.

MMC homes commissioned would have a structural warranty of 60 years and can be (subject to verification of warranty terms) relocated a number of times without breach.

MMC is already gaining momentum across the UK and is uniquely geared up for delivery of high-quality, sustainable homes.

Bristol City Council has taken a pioneering role, most notably through their Innovate UK funded project ‘[Enabling Housing Innovation for Inclusive Growth](#),’ an 18-month programme working with multiple partners towards the delivery of a major Research, Development, and Innovation (R,D&I) project in the use of MMC.

As a result there are now a number of important case studies that show the effective deployment of MMC to both deliver meanwhile use of land ([LaunchPad](#): 7 year lease) and optimise grey field sites ([Hope Rise](#): utilising air rights for homes above car parks that are retained for car parks).

We are working with [J49 a registered provider](#) of social housing on an a couple of exciting projects one in Henley on Thames working with the county, district and town council which is focussed on refugee housing and **key worker housing**.





## The Partnership

A Bristol Partnership could create a replicable and scalable solution.

The allocation of homes focuses on **50% for Afghan refugees (those currently living in Bristol in hotels) and 50% TA / social housing**. This provides the opportunity to align with national government and local government and drive shared political opportunity (critical to align with planning policy and local consultation).

By way of illustration the anticipated capital cost of scheme is £4 million. This provides:

- 30 2-bed homes (we may want to increase this to 3 and 4 bed homes)
- high quality, sustainable homes that are relocatable
- all capital costs, maintenance and wrap around support services for tenants.

Over 10 years, the cost is around £1k pm per home and then capital fully paid off, or £7k per person per annum for a better outcome. This is much less than the £55k per annum per person as current model with no legacy asset.

# Alignment with National Government Objectives

Utilising MMC technologies for meanwhile use will provide a new supply of much needed housing with the scope to save national and local government millions of pounds.

It will also help create the aggregation of demand needed to incubate the MMC supply chain.

It will also provide a vehicle for delivering a wider industrial strategy, including decarbonisation, upskilling, digitisation, improved productivity, and increased diversity.

Public body leadership in this space will also help incubate the right values into the emerging MMC supply chain ecosystem as it evolves and matures.

As a result, this programme – if scaled and replicated – could help support the following outcomes:

- Investing in the new MMC housing supply chain and driving increased productivity in construction
- Enabling inner city meanwhile use of land and unlocking new land supply for urgent housing need
- Improving dignity and an improved economic and social value housing solution to those in urgent need
- Driving improved sustainability for housing delivery in the wider market and supporting net zero targets
- Supporting an industrial strategy for developing a new supply of homes and the investment that Homes England has given into MMC to increase productivity



# Sanctuary Foundation

**Sanctuary Foundation** is a charity led by Dr Krish Kandiah committed to working quickly and collaboratively finding solutions to issues involving vulnerable people groups. Following successful civil society and community-based campaigns for Syrian, Afghan and Hong Kong new arrivals, Sanctuary has been catalysing **Ukrainian refugee welcome and support** across the whole of the UK.



*"Keeping refugees in temporary accommodation stops recovering from trauma. These men and women bravely supported our military and diplomatic mission and had to flee for their lives from Afghanistan. We must find them the homes they need so that they can rebuild their lives. At the same time there is a local housing crisis. This innovative project will help both groups of people."*

**Dr Krish Kandiah, Director Sanctuary Foundation**

