

# Refugees At Home: Refugees In Our Home

Polly lives in Cheltenham, and has the distinction of being one of the very first official Refugees at Home hosts in the area.

She's working with CWR to create a network of hosts by addressing some of the myths and reservations that people have about hosting. Here are her thoughts on her family's decision to host, and the effect that she's seen so far.



"Instead of writing a worthy article about why my family (myself, my husband and our two children aged 9 and 4) signed up as hosts in 2017 with Refugees at Home, or why we chose to relinquish our spare room to various refugee and asylum seekers for up to 6 weeks at a time - I thought I would ask each of the family two questions.

**Why did you agree to help, and host?**

**Would you do it again?**

Polly and Steve, why did you agree to host? Because it was a practical opportunity to make a difference in what can feel like an overwhelmingly enormous problem. We hoped that if circumstances were different and our children needed a safe place to stay, someone would take them in too. For us, it was as straightforward as that.

Would you do it again? Yes. We have hosted two gentlemen to date, and whilst it is a challenge to have someone new living with you, it is a great reminder of how fortunate we are in the UK to have the freedoms that we do. These are freedoms that we must share with those in need.

Wilf and Teddy, why did you agree to host? Because you get to meet new people and learn about new countries, and you get to play cricket and football!

Would you do it again? Yes.

The impact of hosting has been surprising. It's opened up discussions with friends and family, who thought we were a bit nuts and were kind enough to say so! But they soon came to see the benefits, as well as how easily things actually came together.

It's helped our sons see the world beyond their doorstep. It's helped them empathise, and understand complex situations a little better. Experiences like this can change their whole outlook for the better.

We were worried we might not connect with the people we host, but we've ended up making friends with them - they're absolutely lovely. We've stayed in touch after they've left, hearing their stories, sharing meals with them. We've learned about life in countries that you often only see as news headlines, and been lucky enough to find and help the human beings caught up in all the chaos.

Something we found reassuring is that hosting can be for as short or as long as you choose. As a host, you're always given control over how much you commit to. If for any reason the placement isn't working out, then Refugees at Home can organise other accommodation before issues spiral.

The positive differences you might be able to make by showing some kindness could be immeasurable. And all it takes is one spare room.

What are you waiting for?"

If you'd like to help host a refugee in your home, or to work as an assessor for potential hosts, please email [chelt.refugees@gmail.com](mailto:chelt.refugees@gmail.com) for further information.