

PRE-ARRIVAL & ARRIVAL CHECKLIST

Part 1 – Airport Pick-Up / Transport

Arrivals are often overwhelming for families, so careful planning and a calm, organised approach can help create a safe and reassuring first impression.

Checklist: Airport Pick-Up (if applicable)

- Confirm the family's travel itinerary and expected arrival time.
- Track the flight to stay updated on delays or schedule changes.
- Ensure that only DBS-checked group members attend the pick-up
- Do not overwhelm the family, only send a couple of members for the pick up.
- Clearly explain (and have translated) who you are. Do not assume they will know.
- Prepare seasonally appropriate clothing and immediate essentials in case the family needs them upon arrival
- Arrange interpretation support, either in person or by phone
- Carry a discreet, legible placard with the family's name in English and their language
- Identify and address any urgent medical concerns immediately upon the family's arrival
- Report any lost luggage promptly and keep the family informed.
- Request consent before taking any photos.

Checklist: Transport (if applicable)

- Ensure the vehicle is safe, reliable, and appropriate for the family's needs (seat belts, car seats for children, enough space for luggage)
- Ensure interpretation is available support if needed during the journey

Part 2 – Home Safety Orientation

As soon as the family arrives, the first priority is their safety in the home. A home safety orientation ensures they understand how to navigate their new environment safely, reduces the risk of accidents, and provides reassurance. A clear, gentle introduction helps the family feel secure, especially as UK housing features may be unfamiliar. A more detailed orientation can be provided later during the first formal home visit, allowing for deeper guidance once the family has settled in.

Checklist: Home Safety Orientation

Fire Safety

- Show smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and emergency exits.
- Explain how to call 999 and provide translated key words (“fire,” “police,” “ambulance”).

Kitchen & Appliances

- Demonstrate how to use the stove, microwave, kettle, oven, and other key appliances.
- Point out safety features or unfamiliar controls.
- Encourage the family to take their time while learning the appliances.

Bathroom & Water

- Show how to use taps, adjust water temperature, and operate the shower.
- Explain any quirks, such as slow-warming hot water or stiff handles.

Doors, Windows & Locks, General Safety

- Demonstrate how doors and windows lock and unlock, including any security features.
- Highlight potential hazards: stairs, radiators, heaters, electrical outlets, uneven floors.

Part 3 – Tenancy Agreement

Signing the tenancy agreement early helps the family understand their rights and responsibilities, while also providing the proof of address they need to register for services such as schools, healthcare, and benefits.

Checklist: Tenancy agreement

- Provide a translated version so the family can review it fully.
- Go through the agreement with interpretation support as needed.
- Arrange for it to be signed within the first 72 hours of arrival.
- Clarify that meeting the landlord can happen later and is not required immediately.

Part 4 – Welcome Pack

A well-prepared welcome pack helps the family settle quickly, reduces stress after travel, and ensures they have what they need for their first days at home. Below, we will unpack each item in the welcome pack and explain its purpose and use. This list is not prescriptive and can be adapted to include any additional essential items the family might need.



Hot Meal & Grocery Pack

Why it matters

Providing a hot meal and grocery pack is an important way to support families in settling into their new home. Many families arrive fatigued, jet-lagged, and without immediate access to shops or kitchen facilities, so having food available on arrival can significantly ease this transition. The hot meal should be culturally appropriate, reflecting the family's religious or dietary requirements, such as halal, vegetarian, or other specific preferences, to ensure they feel respected and cared for.

The grocery pack should contain essential culturally appropriate food items to cover the first few days, enabling families to meet immediate needs and establish a sense of stability. Delivering a thoughtfully prepared food welcome pack in this manner helps reduce stress and facilitates a smoother adjustment.

Checklist

- Provide a culturally appropriate hot meal that reflects the family's dietary or religious preferences.
- Include essential food items in a grocery pack to cover the first few days and support immediate needs

Household Essentials

Why it matters

Providing household essentials is an important part of supporting families as they settle into their new home. Families should have access to toiletries and personal hygiene items, along with clean towels for each household member. The kitchen should be equipped with basic items necessary for preparing meals, such as plates, cutlery, pans, and utensils. Bedding should be fresh, newly purchased, and kept in its original packaging to ensure it is hygienic and ready for use.

Ensuring these items are in place from the outset helps the home feel welcoming and functional, supports daily routines, and reduces the stress associated with moving into a new environment.

Checklist

- Provide toiletries and personal hygiene items for each family member
- Supply clean towels and basic kitchen items, including plates, cutlery, pans, and utensils
- Ensure bedding is fresh, newly purchased, and kept in its original packaging

Cash Allowance

Why it matters

The cash allowance is a one-time payment for newly arrived families who are not yet receiving benefits. It helps cover immediate essentials, such as food, clothing, and other basic items, during the first few days after arrival. Many families may not receive their first benefits payment for several weeks and may have limited familiarity with the UK banking system. Providing this allowance can help bridge that gap, supporting families to meet essential needs and feel secure from the outset.

It is suggested that at least £200 per family member be offered during the initial home visit within 24 hours of arrival. For Communities for Afghans groups, the provision and amount of any cash allowance is discretionary and should be discussed and agreed with the principal sponsor.

Cash should be given to the adult(s) in the household, with records kept according to the group's financial procedures. Provide guidance on UK currency, safe cash handling, and basic budgeting, and make clear this is temporary until benefits start. Distribution should be managed only by the designated money lead for accountability and safety.

Checklist

- HO Community Sponsor groups:** provide at least £200 per family member during the initial home visit (within 24 hours of arrival)
- Communities for Afghans groups:** confirm with the principal sponsor whether a cash allowance will be provided, and agree the amount based on the group's budget and whether Universal Credit or a Universal Credit advance is already in place
- Give the cash directly to the adult(s) in the household
- Record the transaction according to your group's financial procedures
- Explain UK currency, safe cash handling, and introduce basic budgeting and money management
- Ensure only designated money lead or volunteers authorised by the group handle and distribute the cash

Emergency, Health, and Additional Items

Why it matters

A welcome pack should address families' immediate safety, health, and comfort needs. This can include a basic first aid kit. Additional items, such as warm clothing or vouchers in winter, or culturally appropriate and personalised items, can further support families' comfort and help them feel safe and welcomed in their new home.

Checklist

- Include a basic first aid kit.
- Add warm clothing or vouchers if arriving in winter
- Include culturally appropriate or personalised items as relevant

Welcome Booklet

Why it matters

A welcome booklet is an essential resource for families arriving in a new home, providing clear, accessible information that can be referred to at any time. The first days can be overwhelming, and while much will be learned gradually, having written guidance helps families feel supported, safe, and confident in their new surroundings.

The booklet can act as a comprehensive reference, covering practical details about the home, local services, and emergency procedures. It also serves as a tool to help families integrate into the local community, understand routines, and access essential services independently. For families who are not literate in their first language, incorporating pictures, diagrams, or symbols can make the information more understandable and user-friendly.

The content should be flexible, reflecting the practical needs of each family and the resources available in your local area.

Checklist

Key elements include:

- Welcome message** from your group, including photos, contact details, and information about each member (e.g., languages spoken, hobbies, family) to help build strong relationships
- Emergency information:** how to call 999, and key words such as “fire,” “police,” and “ambulance,” with translations if needed
- Local essentials:** supermarkets, pharmacies, parks, and other important amenities.
- Transport guidance:** local bus, train, or other public transport timetables and instructions
- Household guidance:** using heating, hot water, appliances, and waste/recycling routines.
- Complaints and feedback:** your group’s complaints form or policy
- Visual aids:** pictures, diagrams, or symbols for families not literate in their first language.

