

Questions about the House

Q: When will the house be ready?

A: As soon as we have reached our fundraising goal, we will start the process. Our aim is to have the home fully built and ready to move into in the early months of 2025. Follow The Independent for updates on the progress of the build!

Q: Where will the house be?

A: It will be in England. For the security of families, Refuge is not able to be more specific.

Q. How do you keep the location a secret?

A: Safety and security of survivors is critical. Refuge has over 400 refuge places, across 56 refuges. The process of supporting a survivor into a refuge is carefully managed and involves extensive safety planning, from securing or replacing phones and devices to helping a survivor to set themselves up in a new location where they cannot be found. Survivors in our refuges come from all over, it is a sad reality that moving far away is often the only option to increase safety. For this appeal, great care has been taken to anonymise the house location, and the type of house that we are showing is a model that is widely built across many developments, equating to many thousands nationwide.

Q: What will happen with upkeep and maintenance?

A: Refuge has a dedicated property team who oversee the health and safety, security and day-to-day maintenance of its properties. This house, built by Persimmon, is a brand new, energy efficient home that will be built with brand new interiors and to high quality standards and regulations. This will mean that maintenance will be kept to a minimum and the property is covered by a 10 year new homes warranty and insurance.

Q: Will the property be purchased with the help of a mortgage? What about legal costs and stamp duty?

A: The normal costs of purchasing and setting up a home, such as searches, surveys, solicitors and fees are all included within the fundraising goal. Where possible these costs have been minimised and because the property is a new build, from Persimmon, this should be a straightforward process. As a charity, there is no stamp duty payable.

Q: How did you choose Persimmon as the house builder and what are they contributing?

A: The Independent and Refuge sought a house builder for this campaign that shares our values and can build a house in a location that Refuge needs. We are delighted to be working together and are grateful for the Persimmon Foundation's generosity.

Q: Will the property be sold at any point in the future and if so, what will happen to the proceeds?

A: Refuge's intention is to retain the house for the long term, as it does with its other refuges. For example, Refuge has owned a property for more than 40 years and never had to consider selling it.

Refuge also commonly leases properties for 7-10 years. In the unlikely event that Refuge did have to sell this house in the future, all funds would be used towards Refuge's charitable aims.

Q: How does the house fit into how Refuge supports survivors?

A: What is special about this house is that a survivor and their children will be supported to rebuild their lives with the same level of practical and emotional support as if they were in a shared refuge. They will have their own space and their own front door. Shared living space is not suitable for everyone for example large families with three or more children, teenage sons, or family pets they can't leave behind. The house is also specifically chosen to be convenient for shops, transport links and other amenities.

Q: Will there be more properties like this in the future?

A: We hope so! Having more houses, of different types and sizes to provide safe accommodation is one part of Refuge's support for survivors and demand far exceeds supply. The housing market is dynamic and we do not yet know the total funds we will raise. Once we know this, an assessment will be done to make the most of the funds available. This includes an assessment of the availability and pricing of properties in our target areas to fulfil Refuge's housing-related needs.

Questions about the Appeal

Q: Can we support the appeal in other ways?

A. We kindly invite you to donate via the appeal page. Please note that due to confidentiality of our refuge locations, volunteering, visiting or donating items is unfortunately not possible. We have a community fundraising team that can support you to raise funds and awareness of Refuge. We can help with ideas and support. We also welcome donations from businesses and long-term partnerships with organisations that share our vision. There are many ways to stand in solidarity with us. You can also raise awareness and campaign to help challenge the attitudes that mean that domestic abuse is not taken seriously enough for the crime that it is and the devastating impact it has. Please visit refuge.org.uk for more information.

Q: What happens to donations if the target isn't reached?

A: The fundraising goal has been set at a level that we believe is achievable to build a complete house, a 2-bedroom family home built by Persimmon. This target will cover the full costs related to purchasing and setting up the property, getting the property ready to move into and kept up to standard for a full year, including legal costs of purchase, furnishing and security equipment such as an arson-proof letter box and CCTV for peace of mind. If the target for a complete house is not met, donations will be used for Refuge's activities related to housing survivors escaping domestic abuse.

Q: Will donations be increased by Gift Aid?

A: As long as an individual is a UK taxpayer and signs a Gift Aid declaration Refuge will reclaim the Gift Aid. Gift Aid does not apply to donations made by companies, so the charity cannot reclaim any tax. Companies, however, can claim tax relief on qualifying donations. Refuge advises that companies seek specialist advice as to whether they can claim tax relief on donations to this appeal.

Q: How come it costs £300k to buy the first house, but only £550k to buy two?

The original appeal target of £300,000 covers the cost of a completely new 2 bedroom house, built by Persimmon. It also includes all the associated costs of purchasing and setting up a home, such as

searches, surveys, and solicitors fees alongside the cost of furnishing the home and fitting it with security measures such as an arson-proof letter box and CCTV. With the purchase of two houses, these additional costs don't necessarily double – we have been able to secure the same levels of service and security, at a lesser cost.