

'Homes for Ukraine': Guidance for clergy in the Diocese of Lichfield

24 March 2022 (v1)

Background to the guidance

Senior clergy and diocesan staff have received several enquiries from clergy in the Diocese of Lichfield who are interested in being part of the UK Government's 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. We have put together this guidance, drawing from the experience of running our existing Clergy Hosting scheme. We hope that it provides some useful considerations as you think through hosting.

It is important to note that the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme itself is being run by the UK Government, and so the Diocese is not part of the actual administration of the scheme. You can find details of the scheme itself on the Government's [Homes for Ukraine](#) website, where you can also register your interest in hosting, as well as [Frequently Asked Questions](#) related to the scheme.

As well as registering on the government website, clergy in the Diocese of Lichfield who wish to offer to host refugees in their homes should contact [their Archdeacon](#) who will ensure that our safeguarding and property teams are aware of your intention to host.

Things to think through as you consider hosting

The opportunity to be a host and open your home to someone in need can be a unique, humbling and deeply enriching experience. However, before you commit to hosting, it is important to think through carefully what this will mean for you (and your family). Whilst not claiming to be an exhaustive list, below are some areas it may be helpful to think through.

Reflecting on our motivations for hosting

It is important to reflect on our own motivations for hosting, as well as on our previous experiences of hosting. Asking questions such as the following may be helpful, as we think through the realities of hosting:

- What experiences do we have previously of having people to stay for longer periods? How have we found those periods? What have been the joys, and also the challenges?
- What are our motivations for hosting and ensuring that these are not wanting to host on a whim, or out of feelings of guilt or powerlessness?

Reflecting on our expectations of those we host

It is important to think about our expectations of those we host. Do we have a preconceived idea of what a Ukrainian refugee may be like? Are we aware of how refugee family 'units' may be different from our expectations (eg including in-laws or grandparents?). How do we expect them to behave? Do we expect their gratitude? Do we expect them to participate in family life?

These are hard questions, but it's important to consider that those arriving may be traumatised, shocked and probably a bit nervous. It's important not to place expectations on them. They will probably be exhausted arriving in the UK. Your guest may want to interact a lot with you as the host (and family), or they may prefer to spend more time alone, in their room, or with their friends outside the home. They may want to join in family life and eat with you, they may not. It's important that we manage our own expectations and respect our guest's desire for privacy.

Wider family impact of hosting

Hosting impacts all the members of a household, and so it is important to consider all of those living with you (including any children), as you consider hosting. Talking to those close to you, and how they feel about the prospect of hosting, will be an important part of working out if this is right for you to pursue.

Safeguarding considerations

If you have children or vulnerable adults already in your household or visiting, you will need to consider the impact of bringing additional children or vulnerable adults into this – for both sides. You can find more advice on safeguarding considerations on the [national CofE website](#).

In preparation for hosting, it will be important to ensure that you as the host have any up-to-date DBS check (within the last 3 years), and we would recommend getting one also for any other adult family members you live with. Your local authority will also be expected to carry out pre-arrival checks on both hosts and refugees.

For clergy we would recommend ensuring you have completed the Leadership Training, (previously known as C2/C3). For others, we suggest, if not already completed, to do the Basic Awareness (C0) and Foundation (C1) safeguarding training courses. These can all be accessed through the [CofE Training Portal](#). More information from the Safeguarding team about training is on [our website](#).

Reflecting on our own resilience

It's important to think through the impact of hosting on ourselves. Refugees are vulnerable, and they are likely to be experiencing some level of trauma. The behaviour of traumatised people can be unpredictable, challenging, and not as you expect. It is currently not clear what provision there may be for mental health needs under the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme. It is therefore important to think through how much emotional resilience you have at present, and who will support you? The chances of finding yourself out of your depth are very real, so only

offer your home if you have a strong support network around you. If you don't already know, then learn a little about trauma informed approaches.

Reflecting on our wider support networks

The integration of refugee individuals and families works best where those hosting have a network who will support both the host and the guest. There are so many aspects of settling into life in a new country. Refugees arriving under this scheme should receive some support from the local authority to settle in, but this level of support is not yet clear. In practice you should be prepared to help them with basic integration requirements such as finding and registering with a GP and using public transport. Perhaps helping them to access benefits or apply for school places. You are not required to provide meals although of course you may choose to do so.

It's important to think about how much time you will have to support your guest's integration needs, and who in your wider networks you can draw in to support their integration, including identifying any local support organisations.

It will also be important to think through the wider provisions locally - are school places or GP places available locally? Is there the prospect of social links with the wider community for your guest? It may be a good idea to familiarise yourself with your local authority's online school (or local FE college) admissions process if you're anticipating hosting children (who make up most of the refugees) and bear in mind practicalities like school uniform provision. Is there a local parent & toddler group, after-school club, or youth group available to help with befriending?

Duration of Hosting - how long can you commit?

The government scheme requires the offer of accommodation for a minimum period of 6 months. It is not currently clear from the government what further accommodation may be provided after this initial six-month period, if required. It will be helpful therefore to consider from the outset the possibility that the need for accommodation may extend beyond this initial six months, and whether you would be happy to continue hosting after this point if needed?

What can you offer?

The 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme requires the offer of a spare room, or separate self-contained accommodation that is unoccupied. You should also think through the use of shared spaces – such as the use of the kitchen, bathroom, as well as utilities such as the telephone, computer etc. It is important to agree boundaries on both sides from the outset. The following are some areas which it may be useful to talk through with your guest at the start of hosting, to manage expectations on both sides:

- Security of the house. Whether you will provide a set of keys for the property/ sleeping area?

- Any times of the day/ holiday periods when it is expected that guests will be out of the house?
- Meals, cooking and food storage
- Use of washing machine, provision of and washing of towels/ bed linen?
- Use of bathroom(s)
- Use of household equipment (e.g. Wi-Fi, telephone, computer, TV)
- Guests' own electrical equipment
- Use of portable heaters
- Storage space for guests' personal belongings
- Smoking
- Use of alcohol
- Covid Risk considerations, such as vaccination status
- Normal bed and waking times
- Cleaning
- Guests' visitors
- Household pets

Communication

It's important to think through communication, and how you will discuss any issues/concerns as they arise. It can be helpful also to think about building in some review points with your guest after a week, and then month, to be able to talk through how things are going on both sides, and any adjustments which may be needed.

In terms of language, it may be that those hosted have a good level of English, but it's also important to think through how we would manage communication if there is a language barrier. Are there people who can help translate where required? Is there local provision for English language learning if required? If you need assistance in this area, contact [your Archdeacon](#) who may be able to put you in touch with someone who can translate.

Next Steps

Assuming that you decide to proceed with your intention to host, this process would be administered by the UK Government/ any matching organisation. However, we would ask that you inform [your Archdeacon](#) if the Government are looking to match you with a guest. We will then ensure that the property and safeguarding teams are aware, and that you are sent a hosting agreement, which will need to be signed by the host and guest at the start of the hosting period.

Thank you for considering this generous act of hospitality to those fleeing the war in Ukraine. We are praying for you!

Thank you to the Diocese of London for allowing us to use its guidance as the basis for this document.