



## Lodging for refugees in Clergy Homes – Guidance

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The Diocese has received a number of enquiries about how clergy might offer lodging for refugees in their own home. This guidance, on behalf of the Rochester Diocesan Society and Board of Finance (RDSBF), is being sent to all clergy occupying board or parsonage housing for information. If this does not reflect your circumstances then this guidance does not apply to you, so please read no further.

Please be aware that we may need to issue further guidance if the government change the rules or if further advice comes from the National Safeguarding Team.

### **BACKGROUND TO THE GUIDANCE**

We want to give clergy the freedom to make the right decision for themselves and their families within an appropriate legal framework.

In this guidance we list some of the things you should consider before offering lodging to refugees. We also explain the process you will need to go through with the Diocese to confirm your intention to offer a space in your home.

This is so that all the appropriate checks can be made to allow final approval to be granted by the RDSBF. A 'Lodging Agreement' has also been created to protect the interests of the refugee lodgers, the clergy host family, and the RDSBF.

The guidance is in three parts:

- Things that you should think through first
- Next steps
- Additional information and best practice

### **THINGS TO THINK THROUGH FIRST**

- **What do you have to offer?**

Spare rooms are obvious, but think about how much emotional resilience you have, and how much time you have available. What is the wider network that will support you and your guests – is there a community that you are welcoming people into?

- **What about you?**

Refugees are vulnerable, they are likely to be experiencing some level of trauma. The behaviour of traumatised people can be unpredictable, challenging, and not as you expect. Who will support you? The chances of finding yourself out of your depth are very real, please do not do this on your own.; only offer your home if you have a strong support network around you and you know that you are motivated by their need, not just our western guilt or our need for company and purpose.



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- **Who will you welcome?**

We strongly recommend that clergy do not offer homes to unaccompanied children and that as far as possible, hosting reflects the arrangement already in the household. For example, if the host household contains only male adults, it is not advisable to receive female adult refugees, even if accompanied by adult male refugees. Or if the host household contains only female adults, not to receive male refugees

- **Safeguarding**

If you have children or vulnerable adults already in your household or visiting, you will need to take this into account in your decision-making.

- **How long?**

Be clear with your family, the Diocese, and most importantly the potential guest, about how long you expect the arrangement to last. The Lodging Agreement is not open-ended and is not intended to create a permanent arrangement.

- **What if I am thinking of moving post?**

If you are thinking of moving to a new post in the next year or so, it is recommended that you do not offer your home to house refugees.

## **NEXT STEPS**

If you still wish to offer your clergy home, you will need to go through the following process, which is designed to help us assess whether approval can be granted, as well as enable pastoral conversations to be had with clergy directly about whether this is the right step for them.

### **How to express your initial intention**

If you are considering offering accommodation to a refugee, please refer to the flow chart which sets out a 3-stage process covering:

- 1) The Application
- 2) The Review
- 3) The Implementation

#### **1) The Application**



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If you are considering offering accommodation to a refugee, please complete our online Clergy Accommodation Offer - Application Form Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/6wC01fCv88>

The form asks some initial questions about the property, and the make-up of your household.

Initially, the incumbent is to complete the application form which can be downloaded directly from our website utilising the link below, hard copies can also be requested by emailing: [ukraine2022@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:ukraine2022@rochester.anglican.org) or calling 01634 560000

The information will be collated and circulated to Diocese of Rochester Teams for review.

### 2) The Review

We will check to see if there are any restrictions on the use of the property, if the room(s) are suitable and if there are any planning or building regulation issues. The Safeguarding Team will also review the request.

Once we know that the property is suitable, we will provide a recommendation to the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon may initiate follow-up conversations with the member of clergy as required.

The Archdeacon will agree the proposal with the Bishop.

### 3) Implementation

Once approval is granted, you will receive:

- i. an outline permission of the RDSBF
- ii. a draft Lodging Agreement with a translation into Ukrainian.

The Agreement needs to be signed, and a copy returned to the Diocesan office, which will trigger the final permission of the RDSBF.

You must then check that your current DBS included a home working check and that all individuals aged sixteen or over were declared when the check was completed if not a new DBS will be required. Bishops court will be able to assist you with this if you are unsure.

Please take a look at our attached flow diagram, which explains the process in more detail.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND BEST PRACTICE**

- The Lodging Agreement will be under a legal form called a "Licence" – this is different to a tenancy - and will usually be between you (or the incumbent if



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that is not you) and the refugee(s). The RDSBF has an interest in this but will not usually be a party to the agreement. You should understand that “accidentally” creating a tenancy, for instance, by charging rent or calling them “my tenant” needs to be avoided.

- The Agreement gives the refugee “a home” in legal terms, it protects them from being made to leave the property without warning and gives them a legal basis for being there. This is likely to be important to them if they need to use the address for legal purposes.
- The Agreement sets out obligations on both sides, for instance relating to privacy, or provision of utilities, and keeping the space clean and tidy etc.
- All existing safeguarding guidance in respect of you and those who live in your household as well as any refugees will continue to apply. For example, no one-to-ones with children. Check that your current DBS included a home working check and that all individuals aged sixteen or over were declared when the check was completed if not a new DBS will be required. Bishops court will be able to assist you with this if you are unsure.
- The primary responsibility for therapeutic/welfare support to these refugees remains with the statutory services, however any safeguarding concerns or incidents should be reported in the normal manner
- Provide some basic safeguarding information and guidance. For example, Childline numbers, Samaritans in the guest’s language.
- You may need to notify your home insurance provider, it is up to you to check that, and if you or members of your household claim benefits you may need to check that these are not affected.

### ***Please remember:***

Before offering your home, you must express your interest to the Diocese via the online form to initiate our assessment process.

If approved, you must return a signed copy of the completed Agreement to the Diocesan Office.

**If you have any questions about filling in the form, please contact [ukraine2022@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:ukraine2022@rochester.anglican.org) . If you have any questions about the approval process, please contact your relevant archdeacon.**