

Homes for Ukraine - Guidance for Clergy

Background Information

This document aims to answer questions and provide practical information to support and empower clergy households to be able to register for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, alongside the work they may already be doing to welcome refugees.

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme could offer a lifeline to those forced to flee their homes and our aim is to help clergy to welcome refugees into their homes, should they wish to do so. Anyone in the UK (of any nationality and any immigration status providing they have at least six months leave to remain in the UK) with a spare room, or separate self-contained accommodation that is unoccupied, can come forward to help.

This guidance will be updated as further information on the scheme is released and if further advice comes from the National Safeguarding Team.

You may also wish to look at the advice on the Church of England's parish toolkit:

www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-e-manual/homes-ukraine

What to do first:

Once you have registered your interest on the Homes for Ukraine website (homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk), **please let the Property Team know**. Contact:

Ruth Beard / Jaine Simm - Parsonages@cofe-worcester.org.uk / 01905 732806.

Read the FAQ on the government website: www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions

Look at the Church of England's advice and guidance:

www.churchofengland.org/resources/community-action/war-ukraine-responding

The Parsonages Handbook (you can find this on the diocesan website: www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/parsonages-team.php) has information on Page 17 regarding lodgers and subletting which you should familiarise yourself with but initially, please ensure you notify the Property Team of your intention to volunteer for this scheme. They will then provide you with the approved Licence Agreement template, and any other help and assistance required.

Important things to think through:

- **What do you have to offer?** You can offer just accommodation and there is nothing stopping sponsors offering meals should you wish to. You will not be expected to cover the costs of food and living expenses (although you may wish to offer this). We see absolutely no financial or tax reason why clergy could not claim the £350 if they house a refugee.
- Think about the **emotional support** you might need to offer 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. Think in advance of the people who might support you – this may help you feel more

prepared. There are other organisations who will be able to offer support with things like access to benefits, registering with a GP, school placements etc. The government website will provide guidance with links to such organisations so you can help to signpost your guests. They will also be asking local councils to provide wrap-around support for refugees and are providing new funding for the councils to do so.

- **Who will you welcome?** Those arriving will have met standard security checks (sponsors will also be subject to checks). We strongly recommend that clergy do not offer homes to unaccompanied children, or adults who do not have mental capacity (as per the Mental Capacity Act)
- **Safeguarding:** If you have children or vulnerable adults already in your household or visiting, please take this into account in your decision-making. This link provides advice as to what to do if you think a safeguarding issue has arisen and who you can contact: www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/safeguarding/reporting-abuse/
- **How long?** Be clear with your family, us, 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.

Next steps

- If you are considering offering accommodation to a refugee, then please contact Ruth Beard and Jaine Simm in the Property Team on the details above. It would be helpful to give them some initial information such as which room(s) you are proposing to use, and how many refugees you think you might be able to accommodate.
- The Property Team will check to see if there are restrictions on the use of the property, if the room(s) are suitable etc. This should be a quick desktop exercise.
- They will then provide a draft Lodging Agreement with a translation into Ukrainian.
- Once the Agreement is signed you will need to let the Property Team have a copy for their records.

Some golden rules

- 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 that is not you) and the refugee(s). The DBF has an interest in this but will not usually be a party to the agreement. You should understand that “accidentally” creating a tenancy, for example 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 asked to leave on a whim and gives them a legal basis for being there. This is likely to be particularly important 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.
- You may need to notify your home insurance provider and it is up to you to check this. If you or members of your household claim benefits you may need to check that these are not affected, although it is understood that they will not be.