



We have received numerous expressions of interest in hosting refugees from the conflict in Ukraine. Compassion and solidarity are alive and well in the Diocese of Nottingham. That's why we're opening a **Parishes of Welcome** scheme, to help you find the support you need as a welcomer, locally and nationally, within the Church and beyond.

Even if you don't have spare accommodation, there are already plenty of opportunities to develop the care, support and accompaniment that will help those who have fled Ukraine to find a place of safety.

The government's Homes for Ukraine scheme has unleashed intense planning at national level between churches, charities, local authorities and government. The race is on to develop safe and robust systems which are nationally-led but locally-delivered - and meanwhile for Parishes of Welcome we're keeping an eye out for what is shaping up.

This issue of *Grapevine* brings you the current state of play - what we know and what we do not yet know. By the time you read it it will probably be out of date! Something you can do straight away is to subscribe to our Parishes of Welcome mailing list, which we'll use to keep everyone in the loop - see the link below.

In particular we invite you to a Zoom workshop on **Monday 28 March at 2.00 p.m.**, where you will be able to find out the latest situation, how to navigate the journey to sponsorship, and what you and your parish can do to ensure refugees find the warmest of welcomes.

Don't just watch this space - get in touch and we'll keep you posted

-- Paul

Caritas Diocese of Nottingham



Welcoming Ukrainian refugees: What can my parish and I do?

In principle there are three kinds of response we can make:

- **Hosting refugees in personal property:** Individuals can now register their own spare rooms or vacant properties direct through the government's [Homes for Ukraine scheme](#)
- **Hosting refugees in Diocesan property:** If you or your parish is considering offering accommodation in a presbytery or vacant diocesan property, please contact Rachael Oxspring (property.manager@dioceseofnottingham.uk) in the first instance.
- **Community support for refugees:** Caritas is exploring how best to help parishioner, parishes and Catholic groups to find local expertise for meeting the needs of refugees.

However you'd like to respond, please also sign up to our [Parishes of Welcome scheme](#). That way we can help you offer a welcome with support from within the Catholic community and beyond.



HOMES for UKRAINE

How does it work?

The Government's "Homes for Ukraine" scheme is currently accepting 'expressions of interest'. The scheme allows individuals and families to commit to sponsoring a Ukrainian individual or family in their home. Ukrainians who arrive on this scheme will be given leave to remain for up to three years and will have full access to the labour market, the NHS and to some state benefits.

Volunteers who express an interest will then be invited to sign up formally. Alternatively you can make an offer now with Reset, as explained below.

If you do either of these, please also sign up to our Parishes of Welcome scheme. Then we can help you find the support you will need as a host, from within the Catholic community and beyond.

At that point you will commit to sponsoring for at least six months. You will not be able to charge for rent, but will be able to receive a thank you tax-free payment of £350 a month from the Government. People in receipt of state benefits may apply to be a host.

Volunteers will have to be vetted and registered with the Local Authority, and the Ukrainians will also need to pass security checks.



Is sponsorship right for me... and my guest?

Potential sponsors should be fully aware of what they are being asked to do, and whether this is something that they are able to commit to. Besides answering the questions in the government's expression of interest form, here are some things we recommend:

- Consider what impact offering space in your home might have on you, and on a guest or family who may be traumatised or vulnerable
- Start building your connections with local groups and charities which work with refugees and asylum seekers
- Offer them help now to develop the support networks which you and fellow sponsors will need when refugees start to arrive
- Research the support that people fleeing conflict may need and what is available in your area.

Express your interest in Homes for Ukraine

How can I find refugees I can sponsor?

There are a number of matching services now developing. In common with Caritas Social Action Network which links Catholic dioceses nationally, we recommend Reset Communities and Refugees. Reset, as it is known, is a charity which already works with the Home Office on community sponsorship and has long experience of support for refugees.



Register for a refugee match with Reset

What other kinds of help are needed?

CAFOD are a partner in the Disasters Emergency Committee's humanitarian appeal for Ukraine. Your donation will help Caritas in Ukraine support families who are in desperate need, providing food, water, healthcare, shelter and clothing, before they even travel across Europe. [You can donate to CAFOD here.](#)

Those who arrive from Ukraine will need a network of help and support ready to swing into action. Your local refugee support group needs people like you who can help to knit the local safety net. Find out about groups operating locally, how you can help, and what you can recruit others in your parish to do. Perhaps you could form a small group to co-ordinate the parish's interface with other churches and organisations locally. Here at Caritas we can introduce you to other Catholics who are helping to build local responses around the diocese.

We are currently developing a diocesan map of organisations with the expertise to support Ukrainian refugees. Please let us know of any local knowledge you have on local responses, so that we can share the information with others - use the [Parishes of Welcome sign-up form.](#)

As the local landscape takes shape, there may be an opportunity to open a place of welcome in your parish hall, once a week or once a month, in coordination with others locally. We can be sure there will never be too much help on hand to help people settle in in their first few weeks. Join us at **Parishes of Welcome on 28 March** to explore the possibilities.



So if you can't offer spare accommodation, there is still plenty to be done!

What's the diocese doing?

A key step will be our **Parishes of Welcome** workshop on **28 March**. Not only will it help you develop your response, it will also help us learn how the diocese can support you. There remain a number of questions on which we are seeking resolution at national level, such as:

- The roles and responsibilities of churches, charities and Local Authorities, particularly around matching hosts and guests and ensuring safeguarding.
- Hosts' liabilities to insurers and other parties with a legal interest (e.g. mortgage provider, freeholder, management company)
- How to ensure appropriate and trauma-informed support for guests from Ukraine, and minimise the risks to each party

The diocese's own insurers have given advice which is helpful for clergy and parishes who would like to offer accommodation in diocesan property. Anyone considering doing so should [contact Rachael Oxspring](#) in the diocesan property office in the first instance, so that we can establish the property's suitability.

The national Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency is working with the Home Office to explore how DBS can best support the scheme, and what role parish and diocesan safeguarding representatives can play.

Our wider humanitarian response as Catholics will be most effective if we work ecumenically - not least with the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy, which serves the



Ukrainian Catholic diaspora in the UK. Caritas, Bishop Patrick and fellow clergy have been in touch with Fr David Senyk, parish priest for the communities in Derby, Leicester and Nottingham to offer support and solidarity. In your area partnerships may be developing through Churches Together groups and county networks such as Transform Lincoln and Transforming Notts Together.

In Caritas, if there is a need, we could potentially offer peer-support for prospective sponsors in the diocese, to help you navigate the journey to sponsorship. We could also help parishes offer a regular place of welcome and social friendship where refugees and parishioners can meet. If any of these is of interest, or you have further ideas, please let us know via the link below. The first opportunity to engage is coming up at our Zoom workshop at **2.00 p.m. on Monday 28 March**. If you can't make that, sign up in any case and we'll keep you posted..

Parishes of welcome

A workshop for anyone interested in developing the Church's welcome for Ukrainian refugees in the Diocese of Nottingham.

Monday 28 March 2022

2.00 - 3.30 pm. on Zoom

Find support in developing your response to the refugee crisis, as an individual and as a parish. Caritas is working with colleagues in the



Property and Safeguarding Departments to offer an online workshop. **Parishes of Welcome** is an opportunity to:

- Review your own circumstances, and find inspiration from Scripture and Catholic social teaching, to discover how you might be called to respond
- Learn how the Church is responding nationally with guidance from Caritas Social Action Network and others - you can access CSAN's guidance below
- Get the latest picture on matching of sponsors with refugees, safeguarding, use of parish property, and issues still to be resolved
- Explore how the Catholic community can help make a wider welcome, working with other churches and charities, local Ukrainian communities and local authorities.