

Ukraine

Churches Together in Oxfordshire is working with Christian Concern for One World to try to support and enable people receiving Ukraine refugees in providing the best experience possible in this new resting place. The Government has provided, after much lobbying by Local Authorities, some payments to recipients, local councils and refugees, but the process of coming to this Country is still very slow with hurdles to negotiate. When Ukraine refugees arrive, the Local Authority is now informed and can help provide services to the incomers.

CCOW has compiled a questionnaire for host families so that, if the family wants, it can be linked with other host families in a supportive network. The letter about this, that I have asked to be distributed to churches in Oxfordshire, is below. I believe doing this is vital, many, if not all, of the refugees will have been through very difficult and harrowing situations. They will have left family and friends behind, perhaps to fight and die for their country. Many will have been in difficult situations, the decision to leave itself will have been awful for many. This means that, although there will probably be a 'honeymoon' period when the refugees arrive, there might well be problems linked to trauma.

Trauma is **an emotional response to a terrible event**. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea. This is something that many host families will have to work with at some time, it is a natural reaction and needs care, affirmation and the availability of professional support to work with individuals and families.

A network of host families can give each other support and encouragement in the difficult times that might be ahead. I have already heard of host families not wanting to accommodate the refugees and this, obviously, is a very negative impact on that refugee family. CCOW wants to work with families to ensure that they get as positive and constructive experience in the UK as possible.

The letter CCOW sent out through CTO reads:

Dear Friends,

As the first people arrive through the Homes for Ukraine scheme in our area, we're seeing churches in Oxfordshire and Berkshire unite to prepare welcome materials and to provide helpful support to hosts and guests.

Christian Concern for One World is working with denominations, individual churches, and community groups to put together a map which will enable people to locate

resources near them. You can see it on our website at <https://www.ccow.org.uk/ukraine-how-to-pray-give-and-welcome-refugees/>. We'd love to add activities being undertaken by your church, meeting, Churches Together group, or community group to our map - and have a [quick online form](#) you can fill in to be added.

That page also has resources that may be helpful to churches and Churches Together Groups. The resources include prayer and worship materials, links to materials about Homes for Ukraine, answers to frequently asked questions, information about language learning and translation, a template that you could use to create a local information sheet, and some suggestions for other activities. Please do let us know of any additional resources that might be helpful.

We will also be sponsoring some networking events during Refugee Week in June and an online briefing about Ukrainian history, culture, and particular issues facing refugees in early May. You can sign up for those [here](#).

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us, by emailing refugees@ccow.org.uk. We would be delighted to speak with you.

With all best wishes,

Maranda and Joanna

Maranda St John Nicolle, Director, Christian Concern for One World t: 07493 377580

Joanna Schüder, Refugee Networking Officer, Christian Concern for One World t: 07552 948688