

A national movement about welcome and belonging



Local people and community groups committed to creating a culture of welcome and safety, especially for people seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.



City of Sanctuary UK

Supporting Refugees: Responding to the Ukraine Crisis

17 March 2022

In this session we will cover:

- Hear a Ukrainian perspective
- Overview of current refugee situation in Ukraine
- Actions to take to support refugees
- How to foster welcome in your community
- Moment of reflection
- Q&A and Upcoming events



A Ukrainian Perspective

**Larysa Agbaso –
Expert by Experience**



Ukraine: What we know now



- As of 15 March, UNHCR reports that **3,063,095** Ukrainians have crossed international borders.
- Poland has received 1.8 million, Romania has received nearly 500K, and Moldova (345,000).
- 55 children a minute are being displaced.
- EU countries have agreed a Temporary Protection Directive to grant visa-free entry for Ukrainians and a protection status for up three years.

- The UK continues to require visas. As of 15 March, 4,000 visas granted, with another 32,000 started.
- The UK has announced two schemes to support arrivals
 - [Ukraine family Scheme Visa](#)
 - [Homes for Ukraine](#)

- Largest & fastest movement of people in Europe since World War II.

Background & Context

- *International Context* : Greatest number of people on the move since World War II – this was *before* the invasion of Ukraine and Afghanistan crisis in 2021. Vast majority remain in country or region of origin.
- *National Context*: Limited number actually arrive into the UK. Hostile policies & inaccurate rhetoric, culminating in the Nationality & Borders Bill.



What can you do to support people seeking sanctuary?

- Educate yourself
- Campaign for policy change & welcome
- Donate money
- Volunteer expertise & time
- Encourage mainstream & community organisations get involved in welcome



Educate yourself about Refugees & Ukraine

- **Learn the terms:** Why we use People seeking sanctuary.
- **Read** books & **Watch** films about migration, what is like to be a refugee, and to be seeking sanctuary.
- **Follow & share** information & social media posts from refugee sector organisations.
- **Research** the local support organisations in your area.
- **Check out Ukraine information** specific sites.



Helping refugees in the region/ surrounding countries

- **Make a donation** to a trusted organisation already working in Ukraine/surrounding countries. The [DEC](#) is an excellent way to direct money quickly.
- **Organise a fundraiser:** Find creative ways/ use your skills to raise funds. Tea parties/ sports events/bucket shaking.
- **Clothing Donations & Drives.** Logistical challenges & changing needs. If you must, ensure that the [organisation is coordinating](#) with the wider humanitarian response.



Helping refugees in the UK

- **Volunteer** your time & expertise. Identify your interests, time availability and skills. There are organisations across the UK, doing a range of work.
- **Be patient** with local organisations as they respond to incredible upsurge in interest.



Helping refugees in the UK

- Become a Befriender
- Support Drop in Centres
- Organise clothing/food drives
- Support social events & sanctuary breaks
- Offer administrative work & join a committee
- Campaign for better treatment of refugees
- Teach English
- Look at where you work or volunteer to see how your institution can get involved to support new arrivals: CoS UK has a range of resources



Contact your MP & Local leaders

Contact your MP & Local Councillors

- Find them at [Theyworkforyou.com](https://www.theyworkforyou.com) & local council websites.
- Tell them you & your community supports refugees & helping Ukraine – ask them what they are doing?
- Speak up about the [Nationality and Borders Bill](#).
- Check out template letters for inspiration & make the language your own.
- Sign petitions & Join the [Together with Refugee Coalition](#)
- Encourage local councils to join the [CoS Local Authorities network](#)
- Persistence pays off!



March 9 2022- PMQs – Julian Smith
“...people across the country are genuinely concerned by our response on refugees—by the bureaucracy and the tone of our response. I urge him to look again at resetting our policy and taking control of a more humane approach to those women and men fleeing from Ukraine.”

Raise Awareness & Show solidarity

- **Attend or Organise** a Vigil or Public Events to raise awareness
- **Ask** local institutions, churches, businesses & civic society what they are doing.
- **Share** your activities with media and social media outlets.



Ukrainian Hosting Scheme

- [Homes for Ukraine](#)
- CoS UK has significant concerns. Check out our [statement](#).
- CoS UK is not affiliated in any way with Sanctuary Foundation
- **Attend** CoS UK upcoming events
- **Reflect carefully** – this is a major commitment
- *Many ways to support the scheme & new arrivals if you cannot host*



What might refugees be experiencing

- Missing family, friends, familiar culture & language
- Lack of agency
- Trauma & violence
- Inability to plan for future
- Financial concerns
- Hate crimes, prejudice and discrimination
- Boredom





Gentle reminder

- Refugees are people who have experienced forced displacement. That is the only commonality – they are individuals with their own personalities, histories, interests, skills and dreams.
- Be sensitive. Asking someone about their flight, family or the current situation in their country of origin may be very upsetting. Be guided by what they want to share with you, and find topics that you have in common, music/gardening/hobbies to forge connections.
- Their moods and needs will change over time (as do ours!) and try to be patient and understanding
- Consider further training on how to support refugees. Many organisations offer training
- Check out our [Mental Health Resource Pack](#)

How to learn more about CoS UK and get involved with building welcome in your Community?



- Find your [nearest CoS group](#) or Regional Coordinator.
- Start a CoS group if you don't have one nearby!
- Check out our website: www.cityofsantuary.org
- Sign up to the [CoS UK monthly newsletter](#) or specific themed newsletters like Schools, Unis etc.
- Check out our [upcoming events](#) on Ukraine – free & online

Final Thoughts

- **Generosity & engagement is not a one-off.** Sadly, the current crises may be long-lasting. You will have many opportunities to get involved.
- **Take Sanctuary for yourself.** Pace yourself & remember you cannot help others if you burn out.
- **Moment of Reflection & Remembrance** for all those seeking sanctuary – and all of us helping them.



Questions & Comments



If you've found this presentation useful, please consider making a donation to CoS UK & [our emergency fundraiser](#)