

The Bishop of Blackburn
The Rt Revd Julian T Henderson

To all clergy in Blackburn Diocese
Sent by email only

16th March 2022

Regarding the Homes for Ukraine scheme

Dear brothers and sisters

We have all been deeply moved by the images of the war in Ukraine on our T.V. screens and in newspapers over the last 20 days. The feeling of powerlessness in front of such terrible scenes should turn us to prayer and remind us that the God we serve hears His peoples' cries and remains sovereign over all things.

But if we are to be people of hope and of prayer, we are also called to be people of action. It is therefore no surprise that, immediately following the announcement regarding the Ukrainian Refugee Settlement Scheme, 'Homes for Ukraine', we have had a number of emails from clergy in the diocese asking for advice as to how they would offer space in their homes.

This scheme has been commended by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Bishops of Blackburn Diocese would also like to articulate their support. The Church of England has produced a tool kit for people and parishes wishing to support Ukrainian refugees which you can find [here](#). It has also produced safeguarding advice for clergy wishing to welcome people into their homes and this can be found [here](#).

I recommend everyone who seeks to offer space to refugees read these resources carefully. This advice seems useful and comprehensive, and a contact email is provided should there be any further questions. It also asks people who are confirmed as hosts to contact their local DSA and the safeguarding team will be on hand to support you.

In addition to this I would also ask that you contact our DBF property team should you be accepted to take in refugees. They will be able to give practical advice. You may also need to inform your insurance company regarding any change in household circumstances.

When offering space either in your own house or in rented accommodation a minimum period of six months is required, but it might be longer, and it is possible that visas will be granted for a number of years. This does make it more complicated for some clergy to offer long time placements for refugees and people such as curates, for example, should consider the practical implications of what they are able to offer. Please consider this alongside the IME2 team or my Chaplain should you have any questions.

You may also wish to work together with other local churches and faith groups so please do bring this matter to Deanery Chapter meetings or contact others via email and text using your local networks.

As we all consider how we can respond to this crisis we continue to pray for refugees from all around the world and I am conscious that, although Ukraine is very much in the public eye at the moment, there are still ways in which we can support and even offer accommodation to refugees from other conflicts around the world. We also remember that the Holy Family themselves fled persecution and could not return until they would be safe in their home land, and so we pray for peace to come quickly in Ukraine.

*Almighty God, seated above all the affairs of humankind
and sovereign over nations and leaders,
hear our prayer for Ukraine at this time of war,
that lives may be spared, that national boundaries
be respected and that forces of aggression be restrained.
Grant, Lord God, peace in your world in our time.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen*

As ever

+ *Julian*