



Church of Ireland

Guidance for Churches responding to the Crisis in Ukraine

The RCB Property Department has been requested to prepare guidance to parishes and dioceses who are seeking use of church property to accommodate Ukrainian refugees.

[What you need to know about Ukraine and the humanitarian situation](#)

The United Nations is preparing for up to seven million internally displaced persons and as many as five million refugees.

Many of these refugees will wish to remain as close as possible to Ukraine or to join family and friends in countries neighbouring Ukraine.

Nevertheless, we anticipate that many refugees may choose to come to the UK or Ireland, either due to family or personal ties, because they can speak English (which is a widely spoken second language in Ukraine), or simply because they believe it represents a safe and secure refuge.

There may be differences in the level of support required compared to other recent refugee movements. For example, while many of those who were forced to flee Afghanistan or Syria have little prospect of ever being able to return to the land of their birth and so are seeking a permanent home in the UK or Ireland, it is anticipated that many of the Ukrainians leaving the current conflict will hope to return to Ukraine once peace is restored.

Most of the refugees who have left Ukraine are women and children and therefore child and vulnerable adult safeguarding should be assessed as part of any offer of accommodation.

[What needs to happen?](#)

For members of the clergy considering hosting refugees in their tied house

Before any member of the clergy offers accommodation in a house vested in the RCB the normal approvals of the Select Vestry, Dioceses and RB will apply. However, to facilitate timely approval applications may be dealt with under an Emergency Approval Process. (See Approval Process below.)

Whilst the accommodation may only be short term there is a chance it could be required beyond the expected long-term expectations of three years and in such instances, clergy need to ensure that any time commitment does not exceed the member of clergy's term of office associated with the offered accommodation.

It would not be considered appropriate to allow a rectory/glebe to be used during a time of vacancy in the parish as this may encumber the possibility of filling the vacancy.

In addition to the guidance issued by Government the following may also be useful to consider:

- Consider who else lives in or regularly visits the house.
- Consider how to keep any sensitive information held in the house secure in line with GDPR guidelines.
- If there are already children and/or vulnerable adults in the home, consider the impact of bringing additional children or vulnerable adults in this situation – for both sides
- People who are seeking refuge in the UK or Ireland are likely to be traumatised by the situation they have left and may exhibit challenging behaviour as a result. Consider your own capacity and resilience to deal with this.
- The primary responsibility for welfare support to the refugees remains with the statutory services however any safeguarding concerns or incidents should be reported in the normal manner.
- Your insurer should be notified, and you should adhere to any recommendations from your insurer so that your insurance cover remains adequate.

For Parishes considering hosting refugees

Before any parish offers accommodation in property vested in the RCB the normal approvals of the Select Vestry, Dioceses and RB will apply. However, the Emergency Approval Process detailed below may apply.

Parishes will need to consider the following:

- Ensure that all offered accommodation meets the required standards of the statutory services. More information on this can be found at the websites listed below.
- Consider the parishes long term plans for the property.
- All expenses incurred in bringing property up to standard will need to be covered by the parish or statutory agency.

Approval Process:

A member of the clergy or Select Vestry should submit their application to the Diocesan Glebes and Finance Committee. The Diocesan Secretary should submit application to the RCB Property Manager, for approval by a sub-committee of the RB Executive Committee.

The decision in relation to any application will be sent to the Diocesan Secretary for communication to the relevant member of the clergy or Select Vestry.

The member of the clergy or the Select Vestry may then apply through the relevant Government website depending on the jurisdiction where the property is located.

Republic of Ireland accommodation offers can be registered through the Red Cross website <https://registerofpledges.redcross.ie>

Northern Ireland accommodation offers can be registered through HM Government website <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>

Insurance

If a parish or member of the clergy are accepted under the Red Cross or UK Government schemes, then it is essential that they notify their Insurance Providers to make sure the insurance cover they have in place remains valid.

Safeguarding

The parish Safeguarding Panel should be notified and provided with the details of those you are hosting and any contact details for the referring agency.

Funding

The UK Government has announced a payment of £350 per month for host families, parishes/clergy will need to account for any grant funding including any application of funding towards incurred costs.

At present there is no similar scheme in the Republic of Ireland.

Non-residential Property

If a parish wishes to offer property for use other than residential property then an application should still be made through the Diocesan Glebes and Finance Committee. If recommended by the Diocesan Council then the Diocesan Secretary should forward the application on to the RCB Property Manager for consideration under the Emergency Approval Process.

For further information please contact:

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