



Alnwick Homes for Ukraine Community Support Group

A new group has been set up to help support Ukrainian refugees and their hosts here in Alnwick. There are similar support groups in Rothbury, Warkworth/Coastlands, and other parts of Northumberland.

Watching the disaster unfolding in Ukraine, many people have been moved to donate to aid charities or to relief collections. Truckloads of clothing, kids toys and other needed items have already been sent from Alnwick and from communities all over the UK.

With over 6 million refugees fleeing the war zones, many of us would like to do more to help support desperate families and individuals. A number of households in Alnwick are already hosting or planning to host refugee families from Ukraine, and more are planning to do so.

Not everyone is able to accommodate a family, but there are lots of other ways to help. Refugees will need support to access advice, healthcare, education, training, work opportunities, and so on. Many of those arriving are women and children, so need items and other help for babies and youngsters.

Hosts will also need help and advice to prepare for their guests, and to link up with other community support.

With this in mind, the **Alnwick Homes for Ukraine Community Support Group** has been formed, to help hosts and their guests with such matters, and to help guests settle in and feel welcome.

Aims and activities of the Support Group

The purpose of the group is to help our Ukrainian guests and their local hosts to feel welcome and supported for as long as the crisis in Ukraine continues. We hope this will be a temporary situation, but we must be prepared for the long-haul.

The group has been set up to help with access to advice and information about local services, facilities and supplies of necessities (such as toiletries, children's clothes, baby equipment etc), English language courses, enlist volunteers for a range of practical tasks, organise activities for hosts and guests, and basically anything else that would help people to settle in for however long is necessary.

Volunteers/offers of help: *We have some volunteer task leaders, and we are looking for others willing to help with some tasks – the focus is on practical action!*

Potential supporters are invited to download our supporters' questionnaire. This is being used to provide hosts and guests information about all kinds of support available – for example, helping with filling in official forms, transport to medical appointments, arranging events, language tuition/translation, odd jobs that need doing to prepare accommodation, access to community facilities, leisure services and so on.

This and other initial information is available on a temporary web page hosted by Alnwick churches: www.christianstogetherinalnwick.co.uk/ukraine-support

We have also set up a private **Facebook Group** for participating hosts, guests and supporters to share news and advice. Anyone wishing to offer support is welcome to join. Search Facebook for “Alnwick Homes for Ukraine...”



Additional Information

The UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme enables UK nationals to volunteer accommodation and provide a route to safety for Ukrainian refugees. Sponsors must provide accommodation for a minimum of six months, and will need to help applicants with the visa process, signing up to local services, etc. You can sign up to the Homes for Ukraine scheme here: www.homesforukraine.org.uk/



Northumberland County Council's Asylum and Refugees Team has responsibility for the safeguarding and DBS checks, also signposting of advice and support services, emergency help, etc. They have also set up an informative advice page on Supporting Ukraine: www.northumberland.gov.uk/About/Supporting-Ukraine.aspx

Safeguarding

We take the safety of our refugee families and individuals seriously – and also the safety of host families and volunteers.

-  Northumberland County Council's Asylum and Refugees Team are responsible for checking the suitability of host accommodation and DBS checks.
-  The Alnwick Homes for Ukraine Community Support Group has a safeguarding lead volunteer. We plan to offer safeguarding awareness and DBS checks for volunteers.

Other local Facebook groups

-  **Homes for Ukraine Northumberland** Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/5072922672795384
-  **Northumberland Coast Sunflower Seeds** (Warkworth/coastlands) Facebook group: www.facebook.com/groups/720768832387861

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Chair of Alnwick Home for Ukraine Community Support Group