

News Release

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North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Invitation to open Lincolnshire's first doors to Ukrainian refugees

As the first stages get underway today (Friday, March 18) in connecting would-be hosts with Ukrainian refugees seeking sanctuary in the UK, everyone seeking to offer help and assistance is asked to be patient as more detail on the resettlement process emerges.

While it is not clear how many Lincolnshire residents have answered the call to freely offer up accommodation to house those fleeing from their war-torn country, it is known that there has been a generous expression of support and goodwill.

Nationally more than 120,000 people registered within the first 24 hours of the Homes of Ukraine appeal going live – and more registrations can still be made at: [Homesfor Ukraine.campaign.gov.uk](https://www.homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk).

Today, (Friday) where people know an individual or family with whom they wish to connect, the Visa application process has opened. This is for the hosts or the refugees to identify their named connection and begin the process of being matched; in anticipation of securing a resettlement link and undergoing various police, safeguarding, health & safety and property checks.

As more information and guidance emerges, it is not yet known when the subsequent process for people who do not have an identified person in mind as host or guest will begin.

In the meantime the network of Lincolnshire councils, police, public bodies and charitable and community organisations working up Lincolnshire's welcome is continuing to put everything in place, in readiness for the arrivals.

Councillor Richard Wright, Leader of North Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire representative on the East Midlands Migration Board, said he understood and shared the frustration of people who felt things were not moving fast enough, but assured everyone that there was significant activity underway.

“We know there are hundreds, if not thousands of Lincolnshire people, opening up their hearts and homes in response to this dreadful humanitarian crisis and I thank everyone for all that they are doing, giving, donating and putting in place.

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“I know that it’s frustrating, because we all want to do the best we can, but I encourage everyone to be patient and wait on the next set of guidance. It makes sense to start with matching people who already know each other or have a connection, to get them placed and begin supporting them as soon as we can. Following this first phase I’ve no doubt that the Government will move forward as fast and as securely as it can,” he said.

“Meanwhile, here in Lincolnshire, we are working together at pace to prepare to welcome Ukrainian refugees as part of Phase 1 of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. While we await more detail on how the resettlement scheme will be applied, this hasn’t stopped us joining up to develop plans and put in place effective partnership arrangements to oversee the local response.

“Our initial focus is on providing links to local services, developing local donations and appropriate property and safeguarding checks.”

A further process through which UK or Ukrainian nationals living in the UK who have direct family connections can reach out to offer refuge in their homes is in place. Details at www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa

As the refugees arrive and settle in Lincolnshire, there is a network in place to ensure connections are made for all the advice and support they need, as well as statutory services such as healthcare, education, benefits and council services. This is operated through the county-wide Wellbeing Lincs service. Ukrainian arrivals or their hosts can connect by email to: Ukraine.Wellbeing@e-lindsey.gov.uk or call on 01507 613044 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Thursday; 10am to 4:30 pm Fridays.

A first of its kind within the country, there is also a fund dedicated to supporting those arriving in Lincolnshire, set up by the Lincolnshire Community Foundation at www.totalgiving.co.uk/appeal/LincolnshireCF-Ukraine . Every penny received will go towards helping people who come to Lincolnshire for resettlement, helping the new arrivals to access transport, broadband and digital resources, access to leisure facilities, vouchers for toys, etc.

An overview on ways to help in respect of the Ukraine situation can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/news/ukraine-what-you-can-do-to-help

See also: [Homes for Ukraine scheme: frequently asked questions - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/homes-for-ukraine-scheme-frequently-asked-questions)

The [Disaster Emergency Committee](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disaster-emergency-committee) (DEC) launched the Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal to raise funds for food, water, medicine, protection and trauma care for people in Ukraine and those arriving in neighbouring countries. Government has pledged to match donations.

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