

Action notes summary: 24.3.22 refugee response planning meeting

A group of Coventry Christian organisations already working with refugees met on 24th March to discuss how the local church can support refugee action (both re Ukraine and more widely).

There are 3 possible areas of refugee response. We must focus on the church response as our Unique Selling Point. What can churches and Christians specifically do to help? We should fill in the gaps, not replace Coventry Council's role.

Individual response - hosting Ukrainian families via Coventry City Council scheme, and other refugees via other schemes

Church response - churches can get involved and support hosts & refugees in ways **unique to us**

Organisational response e.g. Together for Change, Carriers of Hope – offer support tailored to their specialisms

Church response will likely be in these categories:

- organise emotional & spiritual support for hosts
- offer hosting and church support training e.g. from Matt & Jess & Adele on **Thursday 7th April 19:30 (see blue slip for more info)**
- provide spiritual support and relational community connections for incomers
- provide worship in refugees' own languages,
- organise corporate gathered prayer
- send out materials to Romania via our supply chains.

Useful wider info

Initially 200 people replied to Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre to host Ukrainian refugees through Coventry City Council. 70 people came to an information event at Methodist Central Hall. Potential hosts had concerns

about refugee mental health support, longevity of placements, practical support available, and the matching process. Further advice is anticipated.

Warwickshire Council held a similar info event - tinyurl.com/2p8hhu22

A national welcome pack is available in Ukrainian:

www.ukrainewelcome.org/

It was noted that **refugees from other countries also need support and hosting**. We need to hear refugee voices on what support they want: both from church community, and from hosts who house them.

Representation on 24th March was from:

Organisation	Name	Contact
Refugees at Home / Hope at Home / HOPE Coventry	Jess Day-Pollard	jess@hopecoventry.org.uk
HOPE Coventry	Chris Edwards	Chris.edwards@hopecoventry.org.uk
Carriers of Hope	Karen Everitt	karen@carriersofhope.org.uk
Fresh Start (TfC) / St Peter's Hillfields	Matt Robinson	matt.robinson@coventry.anglican.org
Together for Change [TfC]	Jet Jones	Jet.Jones@coventry.anglican.org
St Francis of Assisi, Radford	Selina Read	selina@stfcov.org
Feed the Hungry	Gavin Kibble	gavin@feedthehungry.org.uk
Feed the Hungry	Gwyn Williams	gwyn@feedthehungry.org.uk
Hope into Action: Coventry	Adele Harris	Adele.Harris@hopeintoaction.org.uk
Bishop Christopher / Diocese of Coventry	Matthew Murphy	matthew.murphy @bishop-coventry.org

This action group will reconvene after 30th March. Further details available on request from jess@hopecoventry.org.uk .

What refugees / survivors of modern slavery would like potential hosts to know

EXPERT ADVICE

What would you like to say to our hosts?

- Video tour of the house, including bedroom before move in
- Build trusting relationship
- Give choice
- Encourage autonomy
- Find out about the guest's likes and dislikes
- Show respect
- "Be aware survivors will have their bad days" -Sarah
- Recognise/Validate guest's trauma.

"Don't hide the trauma. Bring it out in the open: 'are you feeling trauma today' -relaxes the atmosphere and makes it easier. Its ok to talk about it. They don't want to be treated differently but be gentle as well".
Sarah

"Survivors lack trust...need trust between hosts and survivor to be built".
Fatou

"Choice builds confidence. But small and restricted initially. So its not too hard if you give too much choice".
Lukasz

safe homes for survivors of slavery