

Lodging for refugees in clergy homes – Guidance

Dear Clergy

We have received a number of enquiries about how clergy might offer lodging for refugees in their own home. This guidance, on behalf of the Diocesan Board of Finance, is being sent to all clergy occupying board or parsonage housing for information.

Additional guidance will be issued as soon as it is available further to consultation with other Diocese, legal bodies, and our own safeguarding team.

Background to the guidance

We want to give clergy the freedom to make the right decision for themselves and their families within an appropriate legal framework.

Currently the “Clergy Housing Handbook” provides guidance on subletting of property and requires you to apply to the Property Department for prior written consent and to enter into a Lodging Agreement. Further consultations do need to be carried out however it is thought that the same process will be used for lodging of refugees

The additional guidance to be published will clarify how a “Lodging Agreement” will be set up to protect the interests of the refugee lodgers, the clergy host family, and the Diocesan Board of Finance. The guidance and agreement will be available in English and Ukrainian, so all parties are fully aware of what they are signing up to.

Important things to think through

In making the decision to volunteer to offer accommodation to a refugee family it is important that a number of important issues are thought through.

- **What do you have to offer?** Spare room is obvious, but, how much time do you have available? What is the wider network that will support you and your guests - is there a community that you are welcoming people into?
- **What about you?** Refugees are vulnerable, they are likely to be experiencing some level of trauma. The behaviour of traumatised people can be unpredictable, challenging, and not as you expect. Think about how much emotional resilience you have and who will support you? The chances of finding yourself out of your depth are very real, please do not try to be a solo hero; only offer your home if you have a strong support network around you and you know that you are motivated by “their” need, not just our western guilt or our need for company and purpose.
- **Who will you welcome?** We strongly recommend that clergy do not offer homes to unaccompanied children, or adults who do not have mental capacity (as per the Mental Capacity Act)
- **Safeguarding.** If you have children or vulnerable adults already in your household or visiting, you will need to take this into account in your decision-making.
- **How long?** It is important to be clear with your family, us, and most importantly the potential refugee, about how long you expect the arrangement to last. A Lodging Agreement is not open-ended and is not intended to create a permanent arrangement.

Next Steps

1. If you are considering offering accommodation to a refugee and have expressed interest then you should fill in the attached form and email it to the Property Department as soon as possible and also copy into the email your Archdeacon, so they are fully aware.
Email = property.dept@salisbury.anglican.org

The form requests the immediate important information, such as which room(s) you are proposing to use, for how long, and for how many people. How many adults and children are in the house currently?

2. The Property Department will check to see if there are restrictions on the use of the property, if the room(s) are suitable and if there are any planning or building regulation issues. This should be a quick desktop exercise.
3. Once we know that the number of Clergy properties that are available and are also suitable, should an approach be made, a decision can be made by the DBF and where agreed arrangements can then be made to set up the Lodging Agreements and offer accommodation.

Lodging for refugees in clergy homes Questionnaire Form

Name:				
Address:				
No of people currently:	Adults:		Children:	
No of Rooms available & type:	No:		Type:	
Estimated No of Refugees:				
Estimated duration of stay:				
Date available:				