

7 May 2022

Dear Supporter

We wanted to update you on our efforts to support refugees from the war in Ukraine, and to ask for your help. Bruton and the surrounding area remain very supportive of this effort and we are grateful for that.

A small number of refugees have already arrived locally and, where appropriate, we are in touch with their hosts to see how we can help to welcome and support them.

With those already here, and any coming in the future, in mind, we would like to work on setting up a number of 'champions' in our community to help with some of the specifics of resettlement. Each champion would take the lead on one issue, gather information and resources to share and, where appropriate, directly support the refugees in dealing with the issue.

For example, one supporter has already volunteered to be our Healthcare Champion. She will gather and share information on accessing all levels of healthcare, liaise with Bruton Surgery on registration of new patients and accessing healthcare, liaise with Bruton Surgery on the need for translation/translators when appropriate, provide relevant information to Bruton Supports Ukraine so that it can widely available via the website and facebook page.

Now we are looking for supporters to become a champion for each of the following areas. In brackets are some thoughts on the likely information/activity needed):

- Banking (are any local/online banks particularly supportive or easy to deal with; what information do refugees need to open accounts; how long does the process take)
- Connectivity – phone and internet (which phone companies are supportive of refugees, how do people open new accounts, what information is needed, what support is offered, which companies are offering free cards/phones/data, which charities are offering support in this area)
- Universal Credit and other government and local government support (who can people contact for help with UC, how do people register for UC, what information is needed, how long does it take, what emergency financial support exists whilst being registered for UC, what other support or benefits is on offer locally and nationally)
- Education (which are the local preschools, primaries, secondaries, post secondaries; how do you apply for places; what help is available; what help is available for uniforms, educational resources and transport)
- Transport (what public transport serves the local area, how is it accessed, is any support available; how can private support with transport be accessed)
- Religion (where are the closest places of worship and associated community groups, what local multid denominational support exists)
- Social Activity (what local groups, clubs and societies exist and how can refugees access them; what 'youth' activities exist locally; is it possible to 'buddy up' with a local resident of a similar age and how would this be done))
- Sports (what local clubs/groups/teams exist and how can refugees access them; where are local sports/gym facilities and how can refugees access them)
- Cultural (what local groups and clubs exist and how can refugees access them)

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- Counselling and Mental Health (how can refugees access mental health and counselling support, what support exists locally, which relevant charities can help)
- Language (what support exists for language tuition and how can refugees access it).

In addition to specific champions, we would really like to nominate a Volunteer Coordinator, who can support the champions and ensure the flow of information. If you feel you could take on this role, please get in touch.

If you feel able to help with any of these areas, do please get in touch as soon as possible.

Thank you for your ongoing support.