

# One year on: Supporting Ukraine in Norfolk



Norfolk  
Community  
Foundation

# Executive Summary

## **Norfolk has an established reputation for welcoming refugees fleeing from conflict.**

However, supporting migrants from Ukraine presented us with a unique set of challenges. Firstly we needed a response that could support the high number of people arriving in a short space of time. In addition, Ukrainians were arriving across the many towns and villages of Norfolk and not just to our key centres where traditional support was more established.

### **Putting our heads together**

At Norfolk Community Foundation our challenge was to work quickly and in partnership to help people settle and integrate. We knew that a crisis response needs to be instant and evolve as situations change.

As we put our heads together to work out our plans, there were a few certainties that informed our action.

### **What did we know?**

We knew that it was going to be important to connect with Ukrainians first hand to hear their specific challenges and not to assume we could walk in their shoes.

We knew that key charities with deep experience of supporting migrants would play a critical role and they would need support to enable their action. Finally as the Homes for Ukraine scheme had already demonstrated, so many people in our communities wanted to give the Ukrainian arrivals the warmest welcome and so we needed to have an offer that backed that desire and energy.

### **A collaborative response**

With any quick response programme it is important that we join the dots to the great work being undertaken by our local statutory organisations, building on the cross-sector partnership working cemented during the recent pandemic.

The following report highlights some of the stories of our support for Ukraine, as always we are delighted to continue this conversation with you. Thank you for your interest in this journey. Our work is made possible by people coming together to help Norfolk shine brighter.



Claire Cullens, Chief Executive  
Norfolk Community Foundation

# Listening and connecting

One year on from the invasion of Ukraine, almost 1,500 people have made Norfolk their home.

“ I like people here. They are cheerful and always ready to help.

- Tamara

## Speaking to communities

Yuliia, one of the earliest arrivals from Ukraine to Norfolk, joined our team to help us find and understand the changing needs of those settling here. To do this, Yuliia ran a Facebook group, in Ukrainian, with important local information such as how to find a dentist or bus. Hundreds of people joined the group, sharing the information amongst friends and family. This has created a virtual community, which is especially important in a county with rural challenges.



“ Thanks to the group I finally understood the further steps for changing driving license - it looked so complicated before!

- Facebook group user

We are extremely grateful to Yuliia for the help she has provided, and to Chadwicks for supporting Yuliia to engage with us.

## Supporting Ukraine in Norfolk Fund

**26** projects funded

**£75 k+** awarded in total

**38** donor contributions



## How were the funds raised?

Funding was made possible by people, businesses and communities coming together. For example, the staff team at Aviva chose to donate their car parking fees, boosting our Fund by £30,000.

## What did our funding achieve?

It was our ambition to make sure that the organisations with deep experience and reach had the resources in place to respond to what was needed from them.

### The story behind one of our donations

Morley CofE Primary Academy inspired us with their fundraising efforts. As part of a 'Random Acts of Kindness' initiative, year 6 pupils decided to take advantage of the school's Platinum Jubilee Street party by running a range of activities. After the event, pupils chose to donate to our Fund.



Funding was focused upon key areas of support, such as:

- **Learning and improving English** in both formal and informal settings. For example, The Gateway Church offered a space for coffee, cake and a chat.
- **Opportunities for young people** to participate in social activities. Norfolk Hoopstars Basketball offered free spaces for Ukrainian children.
- **Providing local transport** to help Ukrainians connect with one another.
- **Providing essentials** including winter basics for those who fled their homes with only what they could carry.

## Supporting a specialist group

One of the key organisations we supported is Norfolk Polonia CIC. They provide effective practical assistance for Ukrainian Refugees, helping with employment, accessing financial support, English classes and providing basic necessities.

Norfolk Polonia are supporting Ukrainians who are on the next stage of their journey, making sure they have the items they need in their new homes.



**Nourishing Norfolk is a network of food hubs NCF co-created with community groups across the county. They offer people who are struggling with the rising costs of living a local place to shop on a budget and the chance to access the support they need to thrive.**

# Connecting with other funded programmes

Our Nourishing Norfolk network has been a critical help for many Ukrainian refugees, providing food and signposting to further support.

The Feed, part of the Nourishing Norfolk network, has had over 50 Ukrainian households become members. Two have gone on to become volunteers at the project to improve their English and gain new skills.

## Olena's journey - giving back

Olena fled the war in Ukraine and settled in Norfolk with her son in May 2022. Olena shopped at The Feed regularly, and when the opportunity to become a volunteer emerged, Olena jumped at the opportunity. Volunteering at The Feed allows Olena time to switch off from her worries about her home country and her family who still live there, improving her mental wellbeing. It has also given an opportunity for Olena's English to improve.



**Nourishing  
Norfolk**

# Current challenges

Many Ukrainians are met with challenges faced by communities across Norfolk. However, they have the added difficulties of navigating language and culture barriers in a time of turmoil.

## Housing

As the 6-month 'Homes for Ukrainians' scheme has come to an end, Ukrainian refugees have since faced challenges in securing alternative accommodation. The wait for social housing is long, and private renting is expensive.

## Rural isolation

Many Ukrainian refugees have settled in Norfolk's villages, where affordable and reliable transport is difficult to access.

## English as an additional language

Learning English as an additional language will enable Ukrainians to better navigate life in the UK. However, finding accessible and reliable English courses is an outstanding obstacle.



# Looking to the future

We are committed to supporting communities who have been forced to leave their home countries with our renamed Welcome to Norfolk Fund.

In the last year, we have demonstrated the power of collective action in changing lives, and now is not the time to stop.

**Help us to do more.**

## Find out more or get in touch

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Registered Charity Number 1110817  
Company Registration Number 05234236