



smouth relaunched its appeal to find hosts for refugees; and speaks to

Hayling Island vicar Jenny Gaffin comes from a family that knows what it's like to be refugees - her grandparents fled from Hungary after the Second World War and settled in the UK. So, like many other local worshippers, Jenny was only too happy to throw open her home to Ukrainians who have left behind their homes, families and possessions.

And on the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Friday 24 March), the [Diocese of Portsmouth](#) is relaunching its appeal to find hosts for Ukrainian refugees. The diocese has already found new homes for 51 Ukrainians in the past year. They're now looking for 50 families to host 100 more Ukrainian refugees by Easter.

In late December, the Rev Jenny Gaffin welcomed Kateryna Hluhan and her daughter Nelya, aged 7, as well as Anna Borodulina, and her five-year-old son Leonid, to her Hampshire vicarage.

Anna, who comes from Kharkiv, said: "When the bombing started, we stayed in our house for 11 days and didn't leave. When a shell landed near our house, Leonid became very frightened. We thought the next time, the shell would hit our house and we'd die.

"I didn't sleep much the night before we left. It was scary in our house, but it felt even scarier to leave, because I thought the road would be dangerous.

"I have left my mother and father, my sister and her husband and children in Kharkiv. They didn't want to leave their homes and travel, but they have no light, no water. They are coping only because they have got used to the war. It is insanely hard."

Anna left her home in March 2022 and spent 10 months in a hotel in Bulgaria before being matched with Jenny as part of Portsmouth's diocesan scheme. During that time, she met Kateryna and Nelya, who had left Odessa in March too. They decided to join forces.

"We had no light, no water and no heat for two months in Odessa," said Kateryna. "The windows were rattling with the rockets being fired on the city, and there were cars and sirens screaming. There were times when rockets hit kindergartens and schools, and every time you were worried that it was the school where your child was. Every day was very tense for us."

Both mums are keen to find work, as well as learn English. Anna has continued to teach online, but Kateryna's job in Ukraine was with a grocery business which she can't do from the UK.

"Hayling Island is beautiful, and people have been very welcoming", says Kateryna, "There has been no problem with school and the children are learning English very well. We are very grateful to Jenny, who has been very kind to us."

Jenny offered to host refugees for six months through the diocesan scheme, which was created in partnership with the charity [Citizens UK](#).

She said: "Because my grandparents were refugees, I was quite motivated to help. My family was welcomed, and we've settled here and have

thrived.”

- Find out more about the Diocese of Portsmouth’s scheme to find new homes for Ukrainian refugees at

www.portsmouth.anglican.org/ukraine.

- Anyone living in Hampshire or the Isle of Wight who is able to host Ukrainian refugees can learn more and apply at

www.portsmouth.anglican.org/ukraine. You don’t have to go to church to take part in the scheme. Those living elsewhere can find out how to host refugees via Citizen UK’s website: www.sponsorrefugees.org/

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