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Dear Minister,

Last month, the APPG for Ending Homelessness held a meeting about the growing number of Ukrainian refugees who are at risk of or already experiencing, homelessness and destitution in the UK. Three Ukrainian women who have been directly affected by the conflict with Russia spoke at the meeting about the challenges they have faced finding a safe home in the UK.

They have provided their direct accounts of the situation from their individual perspectives. With their permission, as the secretariat of the APPG, I am contacting you to share two of their experiences.

Yuliia's experience

"My name is Yuliia and I am a medical doctor. Last May, the war forced me to leave my home in Ukraine, and I came to the UK via Poland alone. When I arrived in London, my sponsor told me that the landlord didn't want any refugees in his property.

I had to leave at short notice and go through the homelessness application process via the local council. The council told me that I must apply for Universal Credit and look for my own sponsor.

I briefly moved in with another sponsor, but in a few days, she decided that she did not want to go ahead after all, and I found myself homeless again. Luckily, I could stay with a friend for a few days and after that, I worked as an interpreter for the military so I could at least stay in the barracks. This made me feel very unsettled and anxious.

Finally, the council found a sponsor for me, and I have been living with them since September.

Since I arrived in the UK, lots of information has been thrown at me and there has been very little support to help me find a home or a job. This has significantly affected my mental health, which has been hugely challenging to access support for.



I think the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme should be improved by requiring Housing Officers to meet refugees to help solve issues with sponsors from early on. Councils should provide people with personal plans to prevent their homelessness ahead of time rather than when someone submits a homelessness application."

Victoria's experience

"I was forced to come to the UK with my 15-year-old son when the war in Ukraine began. We have been lucky with our amazing host family, and I have found a job that allows us to survive.

However, this is not a sustainable arrangement in the long term. We would now like to move out and rent a place of our own. But we cannot afford to because the cost of renting is so high, especially now I am no longer eligible for Universal Credit. After I had paid the rent, me and my son would have nothing to eat.

I have been advised to relocate to a cheaper area, but making my son change schools and lose the connections he has gained would be extremely unsettling for him, particularly after we have both been through so much trauma already. If I did relocate, it is still very difficult to find a place to rent because landlords insist on a guarantor, but my host family is not allowed to do this. The landlords asked me to pay six months' rent upfront which is impossible in my situation.

Because homes are currently unaffordable in the UK, some of my friends have been forced to leave and return to dangerous places in Ukraine with their kids. But I'm from Kherson and our city is being bombed every day. I'm homeless in Ukraine and I'm soon to be homeless here.

We need more affordable housing and better financial support to help us pay for this."

Thank you for your consideration and I hope to hear from you on this issue in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Downie', written in a cursive style.

Matt Downie

Chief Executive, Crisis