**£500,000 support package for Ukrainian refugees arriving in UK**

**Benefact Group’s owner, Benefact Trust, has awarded £500,000 to charities supporting refugees arriving into the UK and Ireland from Ukraine.**

The charitable owner of Benefact Group has released the final tranche of its £1million funding package to support charities providing support for those affected by the devastating conflict in Ukraine.

Benefact Trust responded quickly to the conflict in Ukraine by awarding an initial £250,000 to charities on the ground in Eastern Europe, followed by a further £250,000 donation in June 2022.

With over 140,000 Ukrainian evacuees already in the UK and Ireland, Benefact Trust is now responding to the urgent needs of these vulnerable people who have arrived without basic English language skills, accommodation, adequate clothing and food.

Benefact Trust’s funding coincides with the UK government’s announcement that they are now accepting visa applications for unaccompanied children and minors. With vulnerable young people arriving in the UK alone, the support from these organisations is even more vital than ever.

To support those organisations helping to make a difference to the lives of those refugees arriving in the UK and Ireland, the board of trustees has agreed to award a total of £500,000 in grants to the following good causes:

* [**Church Urban Fund (CUF)**](https://cuf.org.uk/) – £140,000 funding will help CUF to run a grants scheme on the Trust’s behalf, awarding funding between £500 and £5,000 to churches and registered Christian charities in England who are supporting Ukrainian evacuees to resettle.
* [**Love Your Neighbour (LYN)**](https://www.loveyourneighbour.uk/) – A £140,000 grant will support LYN’s ‘Love Ukraine’ grants scheme, which launched in April 2022. Trust funding will enable LYN to scale the scheme further across its network of church hubs in the UK, helping them provide both emergency and longer-term support to Ukrainian evacuees as they arrive, including clothing, food, toys, advice clinics, employment support and language lessons to help them successfully settle in the UK.
* [**Baby Basics**](https://baby-basics.org.uk/) – Baby Basics has grown to be the largest network of baby banks in the UK, providing much-needed essentials for babies and their families. So far, the charity has supported over 1,820 Ukrainian children and families, and with a grant of £50,000 from the Trust, it will be able to do even more.
* [**Sanctuary Foundation**](https://www.sanctuaryfoundation.org.uk/) – The Sanctuary Foundation is a newly formed charity, established in February 2022 as a rapid response initiative to inspire families, individuals, churches, community groups and businesses to welcome Ukrainian evacuees to the UK. £20,000 funding will support training for evacuee hosts, so that they have the resources they need to open their doors to vulnerable families.
* [**The Church of Ireland**](https://www.ireland.anglican.org/) - £85,000 will support The Church of Ireland to run a grants scheme on behalf of the Trust. The Church of Ireland has already identified a number of projects within its parishes involved in supporting the integration, accommodation and safety needs of Ukrainian evacuees – all of which need vital funding support.
* [**The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland**](https://www.catholicireland.net/) – £40,000 will also help The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland to operate a grants scheme to help projects working to support Ukrainian evacuees.
* [**The Irish Red Cross (IRC)**](https://www.redcross.ie/) – The IRC is the main agency supporting Ukrainian evacuees arriving in Ireland. In April 2022, the charity took over an 8,000 square foot warehouse in Dublin, which has been kitted out to provide basic language skills, arts and crafts for children, Irish dance and yoga, and serves as a general meeting place for Ukrainian evacuees. The site also includes a computer centre and offers psychosocial support and help with resettlement and future employment in the area. £25,000 from the Trust will help replicate the warehouse model across other sites in Ireland.

These grants are possible because of the Trust’s charitable ownership of the Benefact Group, a unique family of financial services businesses, including Ecclesiastical Insurance and EdenTree, which gives all its available profits to charities and good causes.

**Mark Hews, Group Chief Executive at Benefact Group, said:** “The conflict in Ukraine continues to have a devastating effect on innocent civilians. As a business committed to the greater good of society, both in the UK and abroad, I’m delighted our charitable owner Benefact Trust is able to support these seven organisations who are doing outstanding work in supporting the refugees fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. This donation is only possible thanks to the support of all of our customers, partners and supporters across our family of businesses. On behalf of those beneficiaries, who are so much in need, thank you for your support.”

**Lesley King-Lewis, Benefact Trust Director, said:** “We’re overwhelmed by the level of support churches and charities are providing for Ukrainian evacuees, who are arriving with nothing but the clothes on their back, scared for their futures. We’re proud to partner with these organisations to make a real difference to the lives of children, individuals and families who have experienced such devastation.”

**Rachel Whittington, Group CEO, Church Urban Fund said:** “Church Urban Fund would like to thank Benefact Trust for supporting our work equipping local churches to welcome refugees arriving from Ukraine and Afghanistan.

“This generosity will help us increase our support for churches who want to take action locally, but lack funding and other resources. Together, we will continue to provide practical support – food, clothing, and hygiene items – as well as trusted tools and training to help connect refugees with the local community and build networks of lasting support.”

**The Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, Archbishop John McDowell, said:** “On behalf of the Church of Ireland, I would wish to pass on our heartfelt thanks to Benefact Trust for the generous financial support they have provided to help Ukrainian refugees who have arrived here in Ireland. Our partnership with Benefact Trust is also a recognition that, with parishes which together cover the whole of the island, the Church of Ireland is well placed to identify local needs.”

Benefact Group, previously Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, is the fourth-largest corporate donor to charity in the UK¹ and gives all its available profits to good causes. It has committed to triple matching any donations made by employees to recognised Ukrainian support charities up to £50,000.

**\*\*\*ENDS\*\*\***

**Notes to editors:**

1. UK Guide to Company Giving 2021/2022