

Brock welcomes Ukrainians to Leith

Edinburgh North & Leith MP, Deidre Brock, has welcomed news of the arrival of the first Ukrainian refugees to the MS Victoria passenger ship, docked in Leith.

Following the announcement that the vessel would provide temporary accommodation for displaced people, Ms Brock wrote to the Minister for Refugees from Ukraine and received assurances that The Scottish Government, the council, and their partners were fully accounting for issues such as safeguarding, public health and security.



MS Victoria docked in Leith PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter
The MS Victoria has a capacity of 739 cabins, which can host up to 2,200 people, but in the first instance no more than 1,700 will be accommodated. The ship has been chartered for six months, but the Scottish Government is clear that people will not spend more time in temporary accommodation than absolutely necessary.

Services on-board include restaurants, child play facilities with toys and books, shops, laundry, cleaning, Wi-Fi access and communal spaces. Guests will also have access to benefits support and healthcare services, including a GP service onshore with outreach on-board the ship. A reception with Ukrainian speaking staff and security will also be present, with a security perimeter around the vessel. All of the crew will have child and adult protection training. The ship will be docked at all times and guests able to come and go as they please, with a shuttle bus to The Shore available 24/7.

The Ukrainian Consul-General and members of Edinburgh's Ukrainian Community Centre have visited the ship and expressed satisfaction with the provisions and facilities. The Community Centre also released a statement confirming their support for the temporary accommodation programme.



Deidre Brock MP

Ms Brock said: "When this programme was announced, many of my constituents

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After writing to The Scottish Government, I'm pleased to have received assurances that the contractor has carried out a rigorous risk assessment and due diligence on health and safety on-board the ship.

"I'm also encouraged that the Consul-General and members of Edinburgh's Ukrainian Community Centre have had an opportunity to visit the ship and are satisfied with the facilities on-board.

"While some concerns about this temporary accommodation solution are understandable, it is important to deal with

facts not supposition, never more so than when we're supporting vulnerable people fleeing unimaginable horrors.

"I will be closely monitoring the programme and have also arranged a meeting with the Minister for Refugees from Ukraine to discuss how the local community can best offer support."