

Second passenger ship to be used as temporary accommodation for Ukrainians arriving in Scotland

Second passenger ship to provide additional accommodation.

The Scottish Government's Super Sponsor Scheme has now offered sanctuary to 10,056 displaced people from Ukraine to travel to safety in Scotland, many more than the original commitment to host 3,000 people.

The total number of people from Ukraine offered a place in Scotland through the Super Sponsor Scheme and the UK Government Homes for Ukraine scheme with individual sponsors is more than 13,000 – representing 16.5% of the total UK population share to date.

To accommodate more displaced Ukrainians whose visas have been approved under the Super Sponsor Scheme, the Scottish Government has chartered a second passenger ship, M/S Ambition, to be located in Glasgow.

The ship, which is due to be fully operational by September, will provide accommodation for up to 1,750 people with the same level of facilities and support currently available to those in Edinburgh.

A parliamentary question and answer regarding the use of the first passenger ship docked in Leith was lodged at The Scottish Parliament on 12 August. You can read that in full [here](#).

When The Edinburgh Reporter visited MS Victoria which is docked in Leith and is providing temporary housing for between 1,500 and 1,700 people, we met Joyce who is Chief Executive of Landry & Kling – the company which is contracted by the government to provide the ships for people from Ukraine. She explained that a ship is ideal as it has everything to meet everyone's needs from laundry to healthcare. We witnessed some people arriving on a bus with some luggage. These families had come from Ukraine, possibly through Poland to Edinburgh Airport. It is there that they are then given the option of moving to a ship rather than a hotel or other accommodation. Joyce said: "I understand it is at the welcome hub at the airport that people are looked at as a family and it is determined at that point where they should be. It depends on where there are the services that they will need or even some already have family in the area.

"But we are in a great location compared to some of the hotels. We are right here in the centre of Leith close to the centre of Edinburgh, the shops and services. We feel very fortunate to be here.

"The ship has complimentary wifi, food of course and an evening social. There is a pub on board where we serve beer and wine at a very modest price. We want a place for people to gather and the local council have brought in a lot of services. So instead of having to go into town to find out about benefits or their visa situation or permanent housing the people living here can do it all here."

During a visit to MS Victoria a couple of weeks ago we spoke to the CEO of [@landryklingGCS](#) who explained more about the facilities offered to their new guests arriving from Ukraine 739 rooms and 2,200 beds but the ship will be a temporary home for between 1,500 and 1,700 people pic.twitter.com/XoliwRSAMC

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [August 12, 2022](#)

MS Victoria which is berthed in Leith.

Normally MS Victoria normally holds 2,500 people on a voyage. The ship has 739 rooms available with 2,200 beds – but all of these will not be used. Some families have adjoining rooms for adults and children, and the accommodation is pretty flexible.

Minister with Special Responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine Neil Gray said: “The Scottish Government’s Super Sponsor Scheme has now enabled more than 10,000 people to come to Scotland following the humanitarian crisis caused by Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine. Unfortunately, there is currently no end to the war in sight. We are firmly focused on supporting displaced people from Ukraine who are seeking sanctuary in Scotland as they flee the war in their homeland.

“Following the arrival of the M/S Victoria I – which has been well received by people on board – The Scottish Government is chartering a second passenger ship – the M/S Ambition – which will be located in Glasgow from early September. This will further enhance our ability to provide safe and secure accommodation for those who need it.

“We are getting close to capacity for the temporary accommodation currently available, particularly across the Central Belt. While areas like Glasgow and Edinburgh are more familiar to Ukrainians, we are encouraging everyone arriving here to consider other areas across Scotland, especially as we see more visas being issued. We can guarantee that anyone arriving here will receive a warm welcome from communities across the country, keen to provide support and open their homes.

“As a humanitarian crisis requiring a whole-of-Scotland response, The Scottish Government continues to work closely with local councils and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities to ensure those displaced people who are already here, and those who have applied and are granted permission to travel, will be safe, secure and supported for as long as they

need.”



MS Victoria docked in Leith and offering temporary homes for those fleeing war in Ukraine PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter