

Homes for Ukraine Host surveys

Exploring Trauma Awareness &
Mental Health Support for Hosts

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Survey Insights

2022

In April 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we asked hosts about the mental health needs of their guests and what support they had been given to provide adequate care in their hosting roles.



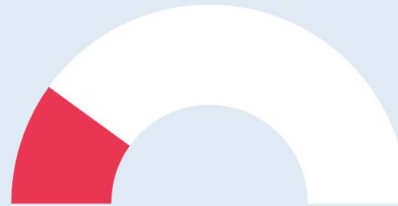
Over 90% of people had not received any information about trauma through the process of signing up to host.

Of those that had, this information was received online, e.g., through Facebook, or from the workplace.

100% of respondents said they had not received any information about how to look after their own mental health when hosting a refugee.

Most respondents requested information on:

- ✓ How to support someone who has experienced trauma
- ✓ The Dos and Don'ts of how to talk to someone who has experienced trauma
- ✓ How to look after one's own wellbeing, and that of their family, as hosts



Only 20% of hosts said they knew how to manage their own feelings when exposed to other people's trauma

“I think it's a great idea to give hosts the basics and signposts for where to get help.”

“I am worried about not being able to support my guest and my family emotionally. I would like my guest to feel safe and relaxed.”



Respondents told us that a leaflet to explain the key issues surrounding the trauma of refugees and how to best support a guest in their home would be extremely valuable; so TTI developed a document and video explaining our [Top Tips for Hosting](#), developed by our clinical psychologists.

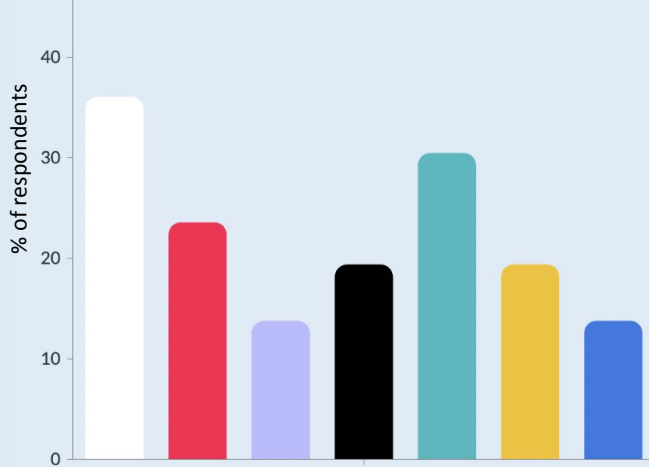
Thanks to the Allen Lane Foundation and CFC Insurance, we were also able to run multiple training sessions for organisations supporting hosts and guests around managing trauma in the workplace. The organisations included Migration Yorkshire, Entraide, Lewisham Migrant and Refugee Network and the National Care Forum. These training sessions explored how vicarious trauma in staff supporting traumatised individuals can be prevented by understanding how trauma works and how to protect themselves from secondary trauma reactions by looking after their own wellbeing, workload and relationships.

TTI also developed peer support groups for hosts, to provide a forum for hosts to share experiences and gain support. These sessions were facilitated by a psychologist to guide the group and be on hand for any questions or trauma-related discussions.

2023

A year on, in May 2023, we wanted to check in with Homes for Ukraine hosts to understand how the needs of them and their guests had changed.

The most common difficulties expressed were the emotional struggles of guests, or hosts themselves; and the future plans for guests. It should also be noted emotional struggles are not always recognised as such, but may present as having difficult conversations or stresses around discussing space boundaries and moving on.



- emotional struggles of your guest or yourself
- any specific needs of your guest(s)
- having difficult conversations
- your own space and possible holiday arrangements
- moving on plan and housing
- issues are mainly practical ones
- other, including financial worries, schooling, language barriers

72 hosts responded to our surveys. Only 23% said their needs in the areas outlined above were being met.

Uncertainty about the future

A key finding from our research points to the uncertainty around guests' future, the capacity of hosts to continue hosting and how difficult conversations can be navigated. Understandably, guests also want independence and a future beyond being hosted by someone.

“We have an agreed date for termination of the hosting, but no idea where our guests may end up.”

“We are struggling to approach our guest regarding moving on.”

“They want some independence, a place of their own ... a future beyond simply living in our house”

The trauma of war

Hosts told us how challenging it was to see and hear news of the war, especially when this involved graphic imagery. The effects of the war are ongoing for hosts and guests, yet finding accessible and timely mental health support is extremely difficult.

“I worked in mental health but I am still deeply affected by the horror of the war myself. I wasn't expecting this.”

“I am still shocked by the Ukrainian footage of the war that my guest shares with me, it is very graphic.”

“The experience of trying to access mental health services has been awful despite several attempts.”

Cultural differences

Compatibility of hosts and guests has further been significant, specifically the impact cultural differences have when living together for a long period of time. This has mostly manifested as language barriers, parenting styles and different schedules.

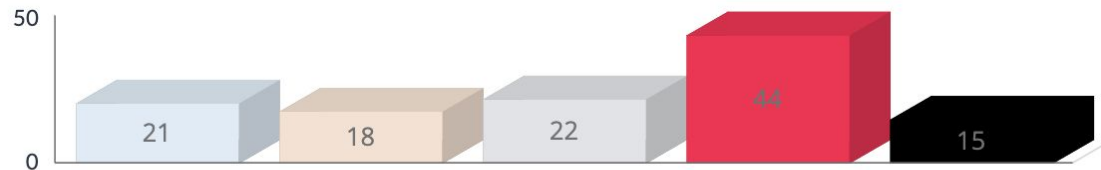
“Trying to accommodate for their culture and level of trauma without properly understanding it was hard.”

“Guidance to people arriving from Ukraine about common parenting practices in the UK (bedtime, supervision, expectations regarding childcare) would be useful.”

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Current needs

Support has varied significantly depending on Local Authorities and resources available. Many hosts have been thankful for the excellent support several charities have been providing. However, other hosts have felt isolated without sufficient knowledge, training and on-hand support. We asked hosts what support they would currently benefit from, after hosting for over a year in some cases.



- Peer groups with other hosts to discuss all things hosting related
- Training (e.g. How to spot the signs of trauma, how to prioritise your mental health and avoid burnout)
- Hosting handouts with key advice on hosting and managing your mental wellbeing
- Nothing right now
- Other

21% of respondents said peer groups with other hosts would be valuable, to discuss their experiences with those in similar positions. One individual told us that whilst mixed host/guest groups are great, they “limit free conversations about difficult areas”. 22% of respondents agreed that handouts with key advice on hosting, including how to manage their own mental health, would be beneficial.

The emotional toll on hosts has been significant yet hosts were not adequately prepared on how their new roles would impact their own mental health. These two areas highlight the need to address the wellbeing of hosts, who may be exposed to high levels of trauma and at risk of burnout.

“I have been incredibly lucky with my guest and our relationship has worked well. I know of hosts who have not been as fortunate and have experienced a lot of problems with their own and their guests' mental health.”

Whilst there have been many successful hosting experiences, the lack of support widely available for Homes for Ukraine hosts has meant many host/guest relationships have broken down for reasons which could have been prevented.

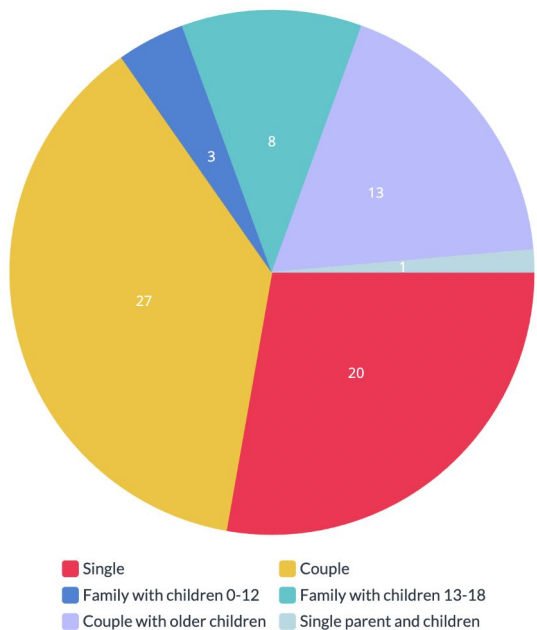
The time hosts have invested in seeking resources, completing tasks outside of the hosting role remit and worrying about how to best practically support their guest, and themselves, has been huge. This is different to established hosting schemes, where practical needs of guests are addressed by a third party supporter/case worker.

Where there has been information available, the knowledge and training on trauma and supporting refugees who have experienced trauma is really limited. Yet, a year on, the biggest difficulty remains how to emotionally support a guest, oneself and one's own family when hosting.

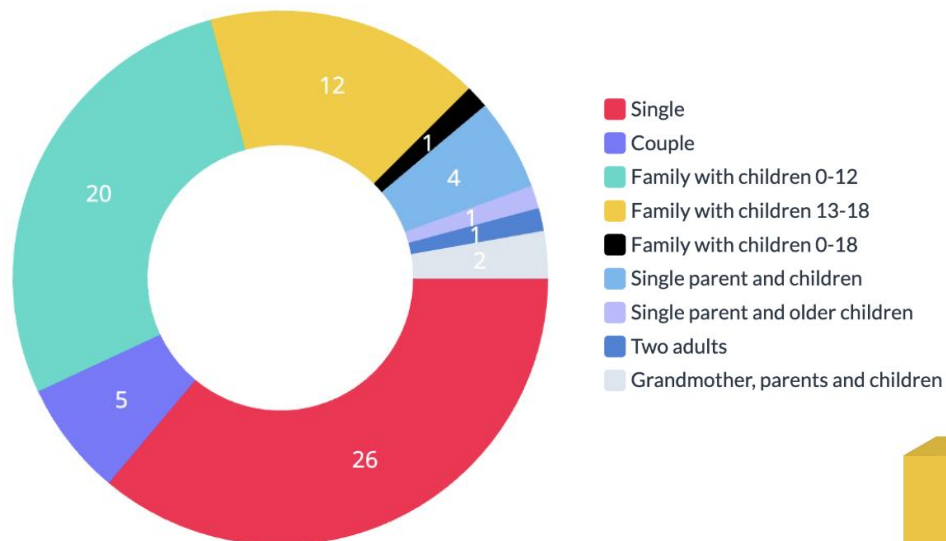
“Private appointments to support mental health services appear to be the only avenue”

Respondent Demographics 2023 survey - 72 hosts responded

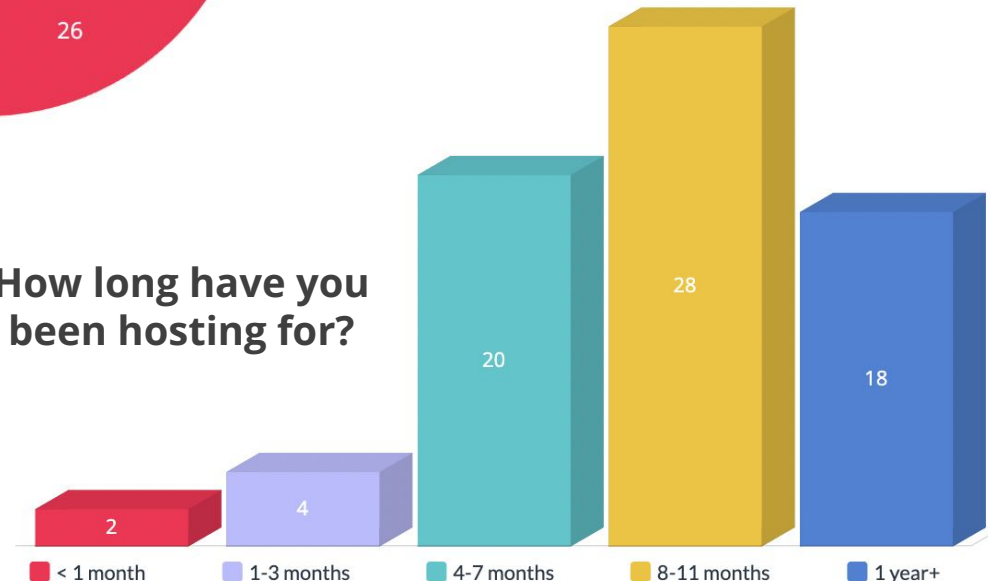
What is the makeup of your household?



Who are your guests?



How long have you been hosting for?



Note. Quotes used in this report are direct quotations taken from our surveys but anonymity has been maintained.

TTI would like to thank all **hosts** who contributed, for their time, **Migration Yorkshire, Entraide, Refugee Action** and members of the [Trauma Informed Hosting Coalition](#) for sharing this survey with hosts. Thanks also to **Allen Lane** and **CFC Insurance** for funding this work.