

14 MARCH 2022

GENERAL BRIEFING1-22 | UKRAINE

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) has joined the Local Government Association (LGA) in endorsing a statement from the political leadership of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), which strongly condemns the multiple attacks and violations of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine.

We are in continuing contact with the LGA and government, flagging up the role of local (parish and town) councils and encouraging principal councils to ensure they are liaising with county associations and local councils on local support.

It is pleasing to note that our sector again has stepped up to the plate and is showing solidarity and support through flying the Ukrainian flag and lighting up buildings with its colours, holding vigils or moments of silence including at council meetings, passing motions and statements of support and solidarity, making council and community buildings available for donations of items, organising donations of items including to their twin towns, signposting to information on charities and aid agencies, and making a financial donation themselves.

The minister for refugees, Lord Carrington, has met with NALC's chair, Cllr Keith Stevens, to discuss the Ukraine Local Sponsorship Scheme and Keith has flagged up the potential for the sector to provide support.

What can councils do?

Councils and councillors should consider expressing solidarity through [signing up](#) to the statement from the political leadership of the CEMR.

Councils can fly flags from public buildings in line with the government [guidance](#) on flag flying.

Councils can use social media such as Twitter, Facebook etc to express their support for Ukraine, though as ever councils should consider what you post and how it might be perceived including by local Russian residents.

Councils with the general power of competence (GPC) are able to make a donation to a charity operating overseas. Those councils without GPC cannot as they are restricted by section 137(3) of the Local Government Act 1972. Councils

should always check the legitimacy of organisations being supported. The key national charities and aid agencies are the [Disasters Emergency Committee](#) and the [British Red Cross](#).

Councils may be able to help other local organisations who themselves are able to make donations.

Other Issues

This is a difficult time for everyone, especially for many people with links to Ukraine or Russia. Some communities with Ukrainian or Russian residents might be facing particular challenges or tensions too.

We can expect a number of refugees to be offered support in the UK and again we will be discussing with LGA and the government how local councils can help. Councils without the GPC can use section 137 (3) to fund local charities providing assistance to Ukrainian refugees. We would remind you of NALC's general advice on powers contained in Legal Topic Note 31.

Whilst it is unclear how the current crisis will develop councils should ensure they are cyber prepared against any potential risks and that they are aware of their disaster and emergency plans and considering updating them.

To help our engagement with the LGA and the government, please do let us know what you are doing and if you have any questions or further issues you would like us to consider, please email policycomms@nalc.gov.uk