

MS Victoria newsletter #2

MS Victoria will no longer be used as accommodation from 11 July 2023 - there are only nine weeks until the ship leaves Edinburgh.

To ensure we disembark all guests timely and safely we need to disembark the ship in advance of 11 July and expect all guest to have left the ship by 4 July.

You cannot wait until the ship leaves to find alternative accommodation.

Next steps and actions

Update your information

- A small number of guests have not yet provided updated information to the MS Victoria reception team.
- We need this information urgently so that we can help you to find alternative accommodation.
- If you have not already done so, please give your information to the MS Victoria reception team. Bring passport numbers and dates of birth for everyone in your immediate family as well as your visa number.

Meeting the matching team

While meetings have started, it will take time to meet every family. The [matching team will contact you to make an appointment](#).

Find out about staying with a host

Staying with a host is a good way to get to know areas across Scotland. [Read about what it's like to stay with a host](#) and speak to the matching team about opportunities to stay with a host.

Information sessions

Updates on [visits from other councils and housing options sessions](#).

Matching team meetings

The matching team has been making appointments with guests to review their needs and options for accommodation. It will take time to meet every family. The team is doing this as quickly as they can and will arrange meetings to suit your schedule as we know many of you work during the day.

The team hopes to have had an initial conversation with you by early May.

Each household will be given a named contact in the matching team and they will be your main point of contact for the next few weeks to support you to move to your new accommodation.

If you have any urgent concerns, please come to the reception in the conference area on level 6. If your named contact in the matching team is available, you will be

able to speak with them. If they are not available, the team will make an appointment for you to meet with them as soon as possible.

Accommodation update

The best outcome for you is to find onward accommodation, either with a host or rental. We strongly recommend you carefully consider all accommodation options put to you by the matching team.

If this is not possible, everyone on board will be offered alternative welcome accommodation. This may be in hotels. We can only offer welcome accommodation where it is available through our accommodation provider contract. This may mean accommodation is offered to you outside of Edinburgh. We will continue to try to identify accommodation options that can best fit your needs as much as possible.

Staying with a host

Like many Ukrainians in Scotland, you can stay with a host family. Staying with a host is a good way to get to know areas across Scotland and hosts will be able to support you to settle in the community. There are host families in the regions around Edinburgh and across Scotland. Please speak to the matching team on board who can give you more information about hosted accommodation options.

Please refer to the information leaflet on hosting we have attached to this newsletter. The leaflet on hosting is also available on: [Information for MS Victoria guests – The City of Edinburgh Council](#)

Availability of social housing

Given the housing pressures in Edinburgh, there is very limited availability of social housing and significant waiting lists for housing. Available social housing will be offered on a case-by-case basis and prioritised for people with greatest need. You cannot rely on being offered social housing within Edinburgh. You may wish to think about options across Scotland which may offer you better longer term accommodation.

If you find your own accommodation

Remember, if you find your own accommodation, please make sure to tell:

- the matching team - give them your new address and let them know your plans, including tenancy or occupancy agreement if appropriate.
- the ship's reception team – give them your departure date and proof of departure, tenancy or occupancy agreement if appropriate.

Your safety is important to us. If you find alternative accommodation yourself, the matching team can give you information and advice about checks you should make when looking at the different types of accommodation.

Information and drop-in sessions

Councils from across Scotland will continue provide information sessions about their areas and accommodation. Please check the on board screens and on board WhatsApp group for regular updates on events.

Meeting other councils

Two councils have held sessions so far:

- Scottish Borders on 25 April about the region and accommodation
- South Lanarkshire Council on 26 April about share apartments for single people in Hamilton.

If you were unable to attend the sessions and would like to find out about these regions or the accommodation on offer, please speak to your matching team contact.

Housing options drop ins

Drop in sessions are hosted by AUGB for advice about housing options and you can meet with organisations that can signpost you to services and social tenancy organisations. This includes the Scottish Government, The City of Edinburgh Council, Scottish Refugee Council and Social Security Scotland. Voluntary sector partners will attend as many as they can within their limited resources.

Date	Time	Venue
4 May	10:00-13:00	AUGB Edinburgh, 14 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5AB
11 May	15:00-19:00	MS Victoria
18 May	15:00-19:00	AUGB Edinburgh, 14 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5AB
25 May	10:00-19:00	MS Victoria
1 June	10:00-19:00	AUGB Edinburgh, 14 Royal Terrace, Edinburgh EH7 5AB

Leaving the ship for more than 5 days

In the ship's code of conduct, which was issued by MS Victoria on 12 April, we said if you leave your accommodation for more than 5 days then you may not be allowed back to the same accommodation, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Please let the team on board know if you plan on leaving the ship for more than 5 days so we can provide advice on your accommodation for when you return. If you have got tickets booked already then you need to let the matching team know as soon as possible.

When you move

Once your new accommodation address is confirmed, where possible please avoid having parcels and mail delivered to the ship. After you have moved, the ship will not hold or forward mail and it will be returned to sender.

- The [Royal Mail redirection service](#) will help you redirect mail. There is a cost for this.
- Amazon has [collection points and hub lockers](#) that you can use for collecting online deliveries instead of having it delivered to the ship.

Helpful resources and information

- The Scottish Government has updated its [guide for displaced people from Ukraine](#). It is available in English, Ukrainian and Russian. The guidance includes information on housing options and life in Scotland.
- [Where to Live in Scotland](#) provides helpful information on the different council areas across Scotland.
- Opora provides helpful information on housing, including on rental: [Opora - Housing in the UK](#)
- [Finding a private rented home: Shelter Scotland](#)
- [CityLets](#) is one of the main websites where properties to rent in Scotland are advertised.
- Scottish Refugee Council offers a free and confidential helpline for information – call 0808 1967 274, Monday to Friday between 09:00 to 17:00.
- Bank holidays in May: 8 May and 22 May are public holidays in Scotland. Some organisations and public services will be closed such as schools, health centres and GP surgeries, pharmacies, and some government offices. For information on ordering prescriptions: [NHSGCC - How to order medication presentation in Ukrainian - YouTube](#)